

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL MARITIME DAY, 1976

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Maritime enterprise is one of the keystones upon which America's economic strength has developed. The spirit and vitality of this great Nation have been linked with the sea for more than 200 years. As we celebrate this Bicentennial year, all Americans should be aware of our proud maritime heritage.

After winning independence, the Founding Fathers considered shipping and trade so crucial to the survival of the new Nation that five of the initial acts passed by the first Congress were designed to foster American trade and maritime development.

Over the years, in war and peace, the American merchant marine has served the Nation. Today, in its position of world leadership, the United States continues to rely on its maritime industries. Shipping, shipbuilding, and the vast flow of trade through our ports contribute to the Nation's economic development and security.

To promote public awareness of our maritime heritage, the Congress, in 1933 (48 Stat. 73, 36 U.S.C. 145) designated the anniversary of the first transatlantic voyage by a steamship, the SS SAVANNAH, on May 22, 1819, as National Maritime Day, and requested the President to issue a proclamation annually in observance of that day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby urge the people of the United States to honor our American merchant marine on May 22, 1976, by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and other suitable places, and I request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

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