

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/5/76 - Remark at Naturalization Ceremony at Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. . . .

REMARKS AT MONTICELLO

MONDAY, JULY 5, 1976

I AM PROUD TO WELCOME YOU AS FELLOW-CITIZENS OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I INVITE YOU TO JOIN FULLY IN THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE
AND TO SHARE OUR COMMON GOAL AND OUR COMMON GLORY.

OUR COMMON GOAL IS FREEDOM + THE LIBERTY OF EACH
INDIVIDUAL TO ENJOY THE EQUAL RIGHTS AND TO PURSUE THE
HAPPINESS WHICH, IN THIS LIFE, GOD GIVES AND SELF-GOVERNMENT
SECURES•

OUR COMMON GLORY IS THE GREAT HERITAGE FROM THE PAST
WHICH ENRICHES OUR PRESENT AND ENSURES OUR FUTURE•

IN 1884 FRANCE, AS A BIRTHDAY GIFT, PRESENTED THE
UNITES STATES WITH THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IN NEW YORK HARBOR.

THIS YEAR SCORES OF FRIENDLY NATIONS HAVE SENT US BICENTENNIAL
GIFTS WHICH WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE AND WILL LONG CHERISH.

BUT YOU HAVE GIVEN US A BIRTHDAY PRESENT BEYOND PRICE
YOURSELVES, YOUR FAITH, YOUR LOYALTY AND YOUR LOVE.

WE THANK YOU WITH FULL AND FRIENDLY HEARTS.

AFTER TWO CENTURIES THERE IS STILL SOMETHING WONDERFUL

ABOUT BEING AN AMERICAN•

IF WE CANNOT QUITE EXPRESS IT,

WE KNOW WHAT IT IS

+ YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS OR YOU WOULD NOT

BE HERE•

WHY NOT JUST CALL IT "PATRIOTISM?"

THOMAS JEFFERSON WAS A VIRGINIA PLANTER, A POLITICIAN,

A PHILOSOPHER, A PRACTICAL PROBLEM-SOLVER, A PALLADIAN

ARCHITECT AND A POET IN PROSE. WITH SUCH GENIUS HE BECAME

A BURGESS, A DELEGATE, A GOVERNOR, AN AMBASSADOR,

A SECRETARY OF STATE, A VICE PRESIDENT AND A PRESIDENT

OF THE UNITED STATES.

BUT HE WAS, FIRST OF ALL, A PATRIOT.

THE AMERICAN PATRIOTS OF 1776 WHO PLEGGED THEIR LIVES,

THEIR FORTUNES AND THEIR SACRED HONOR TO DECLARE AND DEFEND

OUR INDEPENDENCE DID MORE THAN DISSOLVE THEIR TIES WITH

ANOTHER COUNTRY TO PROTEST ABUSE OF THEIR LIBERTIES•

JEFFERSON AND HIS COLLEAGUES VERY DELIBERATELY AND

DARINGLY SET OUT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW KIND OF NATION•

"MEN MAY BE TRUSTED," HE SAID, "TO GOVERN THEMSELVES

WITHOUT A MASTER."

THIS WAS THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY IDEA IN THE WORLD

AT THAT TIME. IT REMAINS THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY IDEA

IN THE WORLD TODAY.

WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN, ADAMS, JEFFERSON, HAMILTON,

MADISON AND ALL PATRIOTS WHO LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM

IN OUR DECLARATION AND OUR CONSTITUTION CAREFULLY STUDIED BOTH

CONTEMPORARY AND CLASSICAL MODELS OF GOVERNMENT TO ADAPT

THEM TO THE AMERICAN CLIMATE AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

JUST AS JEFFERSON DID IN DESIGNING MONTICELLO, THEY WANTED
TO BUILD IN THIS BEAUTIFUL LAND A HOME FOR EQUAL FREEDOM AND
OPPORTUNITY, A HAVEN OF SAFETY AND HAPPINESS ~~NOT FOR~~
THEMSELVES ALONE BUT FOR ALL WHO WOULD COME TO US THROUGH THE
CENTURIES.

HOW WELL THEY BUILT IS TOLD BY MILLIONS UPON MILLIONS
WHO CAME, AND ARE STILL COMING.

OUR FIRST NATIONAL CENSUS IN 1790 RECORDED A POPULATION
JUST UNDER FOUR MILLION. THREE-FOURTHS OF THEM TRACED THEIR
ANCESTRY TO THE BRITISH ISLES, THOUGH MOST HAD CONSIDERED
THEMSELVES AMERICANS FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. THERE WAS
ALREADY TALK THAT FURTHER IMMIGRATION SHOULD BE SELECTIVE AND
RESTRICTED, BUT THIS WAS SWEPT ASIDE BY THE GREATEST MASS
MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY.

IMMIGRANTS CAME FROM ALMOST EVERYWHERE, SINGLY AND
IN WAVES. THROUGHOUT OUR FIRST CENTURY THEY BROUGHT THE
RESTLESS DRIVE FOR BETTER LIVES AND THE RUGGED STRENGTH THAT
CLEARED THE WILDERNESS, PLOWED THE PRAIRIE, ~~AND~~ TAMED THE
WESTERN PLAINS, PUSHING ON INTO THE PACIFIC AND ALASKA.

LIKE THE MAYFLOWER PILGRIMS AND THE EARLY SPANISH

SETTLERS, THESE NEW AMERICANS BROUGHT WITH THEM PRECIOUS RELICS

OF THE WORLDS THEY LEFT BEHIND:

A SONG, A STORY, A DANCE

A TOOL, A RECIPE, A SEED -- THE NAME OF A PLACE, THE RULES

OF A GAME, A TRICK OF THE TRADE•

SUCH TRANSFUSIONS OF TRADITIONS AND CULTURES AS WELL
AS OF BLOOD HAVE MADE AMERICA UNIQUE AMONG NATIONS AND
AMERICANS A NEW KIND OF PEOPLE. THERE IS LITTLE THE WORLD
HAS THAT IS NOT NATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES TODAY.

UNFETTERED BY ANCIENT HATES, THE PEOPLE OF THE YOUNG

UNITED STATES REALLY BELIEVED THAT "ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL."

WE ADMIT THEY HAD STUBBORN BLIND SPOTS IN THEIR LOFTY VISION

FOR BLACKS, WHOSE FOREBEARS HAD BEEN AMERICANS ALMOST AS LONG

AS THEIRS AND FOR WOMEN, WHOSE POLITICAL RIGHTS WE TOOK

EVEN LONGER TO RECOGNIZE.

THIS IS NOT THE DAY, HOWEVER, TO DEPLORE OUR
SHORTCOMINGS, OR TO REGRET THAT NOT ALL NEW CITIZENS HAVE BEEN
WELCOMED THE WAY YOU ARE TODAY. THE ESSENTIAL FACT IS THAT
THE UNITED STATES AS A NATIONAL POLICY, AND IN THE HEARTS
OF MOST AMERICANS HAS BEEN WILLING TO ABSORB ANYONE,
FROM ANYWHERE.

WE WERE CONFIDENT THAT, SIMPLY BY SHARING OUR AMERICAN

ADVENTURE, THESE NEWCOMERS WOULD BECOME LOYAL, LAW-ABIDING,

PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS. AND THEY DID.

OLDER NATIONS IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES GRANTED

THEIR NATIONALITY TO THE FOREIGN-BORN ONLY AS A SPECIAL

PRIVILEGE, IF AT ALL. WE OFFERED CITIZENSHIP TO ALL,

AND WE HAVE BEEN RICHLY REWARDED.

THE UNITED STATES WAS ABLE TO DO THIS BECAUSE WE ARE

UNIQUELY A COMMUNITY OF VALUES, AS DISTINCT FROM A RELIGIOUS

COMMUNITY, A RACIAL COMMUNITY, A GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY OR AN

ETHNIC COMMUNITY. THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED, 200 YEARS AGO,

NOT ON ANCIENT LEGENDS OR CONQUESTS, OR PHYSICAL LIKENESS OR

LANGUAGE, BUT ON CERTAIN POLITICAL VALUES WHICH JEFFERSON'S

PEN SO ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED.

TO BE AN AMERICAN IS TO SUBSCRIBE TO THOSE PRINCIPLES

WHICH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE PROCLAIMS AND THE

CONSTITUTION PROTECTS: THE POLITICAL VALUES OF SELF GOVERNMENT,

LIBERTY AND JUSTICE, EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

THESE BELIEFS ARE THE SECRET OF AMERICA'S UNITY FROM

DIVERSITY - IN MY JUDGMENT, THE MOST MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENT

OF OUR 200 YEARS AS A NATION.

"BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL" WAS A MOTTO OF GENIUS WHICH

UPLIFTED US FAR ABOVE ITS FIRST INTENTION. ONCE AMERICANS HAD

THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND PERCEIVED ITS TRUTH, WE BEGAN TO REALIZE

THAT SO ARE BROWN, ~~WHITE~~, ~~RED~~ AND YELLOW BEAUTIFUL.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER TOLD US THAT

THE BEAUTY OF JOSEPH'S COAT WAS ITS MANY COLORS.

I BELIEVE AMERICANS ARE BEAUTIFUL INDIVIDUALLY,
IN COMMUNITIES, AND FREELY JOINED TOGETHER BY DEDICATION TO
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I SEE A GROWING DANGER TO THIS COUNTRY IN CONFORMITY
OF THOUGHT AND TASTE AND BEHAVIOUR. WE NEED MORE
ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROTECTION FOR INDIVIDUALITY.

THE WEALTH WE HAVE OF CULTURAL, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL
TRADITIONS ARE VALUABLE COUNTERBALANCES TO THE OVERPOWERING
SAMENESS AND SUBORDINATION OF TOTALITARIAN SOCIETIES.

THE SENSE OF BELONGING TO ANY GROUP THAT STANDS FOR
SOMETHING DECENT AND NOBLE, SO LONG AS IT DOES NOT CONFINE
FREE SPIRITS OR CULTIVATE HOSTILITY TO OTHERS, IS PART OF THE
PRIDE EVERY AMERICAN SHOULD HAVE IN THE HERITAGE OF HIS PAST.

THAT HERITAGE IS ROOTED NOW / NOT IN ENGLAND ALONE,
INDEBTED AS WE ARE FOR MAGNA CARTA AND THE COMMON LAW; / NOT
IN EUROPE ALONE / OR IN AFRICA ALONE / OR IN ASIA / OR THE ISLANDS OF
THE SEA. THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE DRAWS FROM THE BEST OF ALL
MANKIND'S LONG SOJOURN HERE ON EARTH AND NOW REACHES OUT INTO
THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

YOU CAME AS STRANGERS AMONG US AND YOU LEAVE HERE
CITIZENS, EQUAL IN FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW,
WITH AN EQUAL SHARE IN THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE.

JEFFERSON DID NOT DEFINE WHAT THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
MEANS FOR YOU OR FOR ME. OUR CONSTITUTION DOES NOT
GUARANTEE THAT ANY OF US WILL FIND IT. BUT WE ARE FREE TO
TRY.

FOREIGNERS LIKE LAFAYETTE ~~AND~~ VON STEUBEN AND PULASKI

CAME TO FIGHT IN OUR REVOLUTION BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED ITS

PRINCIPLES WERE UNIVERSAL. IMMIGRANTS LIKE ANDREW CARNEGIE

CAME AS A POOR BOY AND CREATED A GREAT STEEL INDUSTRY, THEN

GAVE HIS FORTUNE BACK TO AMERICA FOR LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITIES

AND MUSEUMS.

MARIA FRANCESCA CABRINI CAME AS A MISSIONARY SISTER

TO SERVE THE SICK AND THE POOR. SAMUEL GOMPERS WORKED

IN A SWEAT SHOP ~~AND~~ SPENT HIS LUNCH TIME HELPING OTHER

IMMIGRANT WORKERS LEARN TO READ SO THEY COULD BECOME CITIZENS.

WE HAVE GAINED FAR MORE THAN WE HAVE GIVEN TO THE MILLIONS WHO

MADE AMERICA THEIR SECOND HOMELAND.

REMEMBER THAT NONE OF US ARE MORE THAN CARETAKERS OF

THIS GREAT COUNTRY. REMEMBER THAT THE MORE FREEDOM YOU

GIVE TO OTHERS, THE MORE YOU WILL HAVE FOR YOURSELF.

REMEMBER THAT WITHOUT LAW, THERE CAN BE NO LIBERTY.

AND REMEMBER, AS WELL, THE RICH TREASURES YOU BROUGHT

WITH YOU FROM WHENCE YOU CAME, AND LET US SHARE YOUR PRIDE

IN THEM.

THIS IS THE WAY WE KEEP OUR INDEPENDENCE AS EXCITING
AS THE DAY IT WAS DECLARED, ^{keep} AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN JOSEPH'S COAT.

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