
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself.” FDR
and the New Deal**

File No. 1216

1939 April 14

Mt. Vernon, VA - Address

Cartier
STATEMENTS FILE

#11

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Delivered at Mt. Vernon, Virginia
April 14, 1939, 2.47 P.M.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

MOUNT VERNON

APRIL 14, 1939

MADAM REGENT, MISTER DIRECTOR GENERAL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have come to the home of George Washington today in memory of another day, exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, when the owner of Mount Vernon received a message from the first Congress of the United States.

Here in his beloved Mount Vernon he listened to the formal message from the Congress announcing his election as the first President of the United States of America.

Charles Thomson, his guest, had ridden hither from New York to bring it -- Charles Thomson, native of County Derry in Ireland, a Pennsylvania Irishman, with a passionate zeal for liberty, who, through fifteen eventful years, had served as the Secretary of the Continental Congress.

We who are here today can readily visualize that scene from this porch -- the sprouting lawn, the budding trees and the dogwoods, and the majestic Potomac running by at the foot of the hill. We can visualize the thoughts, too, which flowed through General Washington's mind. Saying farewell to his army in 1783, the independence of the Colonies assured, he, already the Father of his Country, had returned to his beloved Mount Vernon with the hope and expectation that his task was done and that he would live a happy and useful life on his broad acres during the remainder of his days.

But trying times still lay ahead for the struggling nation, and those years after 1783 proved the most critical peace years in all our history.

Called from his home, he had presided with skill and patience over the Constitutional Convention in 1787. And anxiety and doubt had attended him for many months thereafter while he waited for belated news that the Constitution itself had been ratified by the States.

I take it that when the permanent framework of the Union had been assured in the Summer of 1788, the elections ordered and the First Congress summoned, General Washington must have known that the task of the Presidency would, without question, fall on him.

It meant that once more he would leave Mount Vernon behind him, with no certainty of his return, and that on his shoulders, in the far off North, would lie the burden of initiating the civil leadership of a new, untried Republic.

He knew that his would be the task of ending uncertainty, jealousy between the several states and creating, with the help of the Congress, a functioning national government fit to take its place among the organized nations of the world.

Two days later he and his family were to set forth on that long and difficult journey by highway and ferry and barge, which was to culminate in his Inauguration as President on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York on April 30, 1789.

Doubtless on this very porch he sat with Charles Thomson hearing at first-hand of the long efforts of the first Senate and the first House of Representatives to obtain a quorum, learning of the unanimity by which the votes of the Electors were cast for him, listening to the precedents that were being set in the conduct of the first Legislature under the Constitution, and thinking doubtless that his own every move from that day on for many years to come would be chronicled for future generations and thereby set the tempo and the customs of the Presidency of the United States.

But I am to be forgiven if I, the Thirty-First President, dwell for a moment on the feelings within the heart of him who was about to be the First President.

Washington was essentially a man close to mother earth. His early training on a plantation, his profession of surveyor, his studies in agriculture and the development of farm lands were never replaced by his outstanding military service under Braddock or as Commander-in-Chief for the eight years of the Revolution.

We know that when Mount Vernon came to him by inheritance, here his heart was planted for all time. Here he could talk with his neighbors about the improvement of navigation on the river, about grist mills on the creeks, about the improving of highways, about the dream of a canal to the western country, about saw mills and rotation of crops, about the top soil, which even then had begun to run off to the sea, about the planting of trees, new varieties of food and fodder crops, new breeds of horses and cattle and sheep.

Here, too, he had his books and was in touch with the authors and artists of the new and old worlds.

Here at the junction point of the North and of the South, at the foot of one of the main arteries that led to the exciting new lands beyond the Mountains, the travelers and the news stopped at his door.

Rightly he must have felt that his labors in the service of his State and of his Nation had rounded out his contribution to the public weal. Rightly he felt that he had earned the privilege of returning for all time to the private life which had been his dream.

That Washington would have refused public service if the call had been a normal one has always been my belief. But the summons to the Presidency had come to him in a time of real crisis and deep emergency. The dangers that beset the young nation were as real as though the very independence Washington had won for it had been threatened once more by foreign foes. Clear it must have been that the permanence of the Republic was at stake and that if the new government, under the Constitution, should fail in its early days, the several states falling out among themselves would become so many small and weak nations subject to attack and conquest from overseas.

So it came about that once more he put from him the life he loved so well and took upon himself the Presidency.

That cannot have been a happy day for General and Mrs. George Washington on the fourteenth of April, 1789 --- a day of torn emotions, a day of many regrets.

The decision had been made. We, their successors, are thankful for that decision and proud of it. And I think that it would have made General and Mrs. Washington happy if they had known that one hundred and fifty years later tens of millions of Americans would appreciate and understand how they felt that day in their Mount Vernon home.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Original reading copy

George Washington's Mount Vernon

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Delivered at Mt. Vernon, Virginia
April 14, 1939, 2.47 P. M.

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We have come to the home of George Washington today in memory of (another) that other day, exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, when the owner of Mount Vernon received a message from the (first) Congress of the United States, the first Congress of the United States.

Here in his beloved Mount Vernon he listened to (the) that formal message from the Congress announcing his election as the first President of the United States of America.

Charles Thomson, (his guest) the bearer of this message, the guest of Washington, had ridden hither from New York to bring it -- Charles Thomson, native of County Derry in Ireland, a Pennsylvania Irishman, with a passionate zeal for liberty, who, through fifteen eventful years, had served as the Secretary of the Continental Congress.

We who are here today can readily visualize that scene from this porch -- the sprouting lawn, the budding trees and the dogwoods, and the majestic Potomac running by at the foot of the hill. We can visualize the thoughts, too, which flowed through General Washington's mind. Saying farewell to his army in 1783, the independence of the Colonies assured, he, already the Father of his Country, had returned to his beloved (Mount Vernon) home with the (hope and) expectation that his task was done and that

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

he would live a happy and useful life on his broad acres (during) the remainder of his days.

But trying times still lay ahead for the struggling nation, and those years after 1783 proved the most critical peace years in all our history.

Called from his home, he had presided with skill and patience over the Constitutional Convention (in) of 1787. And anxiety and doubt had attended him for many months thereafter while he and the thirteen States waited for belated news that the Constitution itself had been ratified (by the States).

I take it that when the permanent framework of (the) this Union of ours had been assured in the Summer of 1788, the elections ordered and the First Congress summoned, General Washington must have known that the task of the Presidency would, without question, fall on him.

It meant that once more he would leave Mount Vernon behind him, with no certainty of his return, and that on his shoulders, in the far off North, would lie the burden of initiating the civil leadership of a new, untried Republic.

He knew that his would be the task of ending uncertainty, of ending Jealousy between the Several States and of creating, with the help of the Congress, a functioning national government fit to take its place among the organized nations of the world.

Two days later he and his family were to set forth on that long and difficult journey by highway and ferry and barge, which was to culminate in his Inauguration as President on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York City on April 30, 1789.

Doubtless on this very porch he sat with Charles Thomson hearing at first-hand of the long efforts of the first Senate and the first House of Representatives to obtain a quorum, learning of the unanimity by which the votes of the Electors were cast for him, listening to the precedents that were being set in the conduct of the first Legislature under the Constitution, and thinking doubtless that his own every move from that day on for many years (to come) would be chronicled for future generations and thereby set the tempo and the customs of the Presidency of the United States.

But I am to be forgiven if I, the Thirty-First individual who has borne the title of President, if I dwell for a moment on the feelings within the heart of him who was about to be the First President.

Washington was essentially a man close to mother earth. His early training on a plantation, his profession of surveyor, his studies in agriculture and the development of farm lands were never replaced by his outstanding military service under Braddock or as Commander-in-Chief for the eight years of the Revolution.

We know that when Mount Vernon came to him by inheritance, here his heart was planted for all time. Here he could talk with his neighbors about the improvement of navigation on the river, about grist mills on the creeks, about the improving of highways, about the dream of a canal to the western country, about saw mills and rotation of crops, about the top soil, which even then had begun to run off to the sea, about the planting of trees, new varieties of food and fodder crops, new breeds of horses and cattle and sheep.

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Here at the junction point of the North and (of) the South, at the foot of one of the main arteries that led to the exciting new lands beyond the Mountains, the travelers and the news stopped at his door.

Rightly he must have felt that his labors in the service of his State and of his Nation had rounded out his contribution to the public weal. Rightly he must have felt that he had earned the privilege of returning for all time to the private life which had been his dream.

That Washington would have refused public service if the call had been a normal one has always been my belief. But the summons to the Presidency had come to him in a time of real crisis and deep emergency. The dangers that beset the young nation were as real as though the very independence

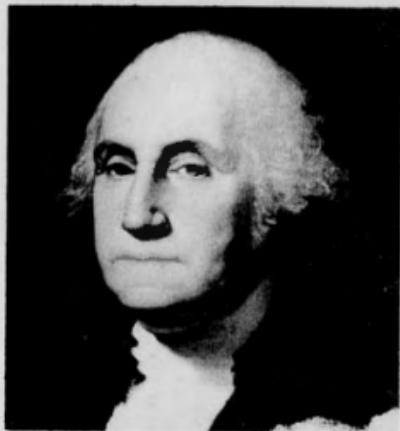
that Washington had won for it had been threatened once more by foreign foes. Clear it must have been that the permanence of the Republic was at stake and that if the new government, under the Constitution, should fail in its early days, the several states falling out among themselves would become so many small and weak nations subject to attack and conquest from overseas.

And so, my friends, it came about that once more he put from him the life he loved so well and took upon himself the Presidency.

That cannot have been a wholly happy day for General and Mrs. George Washington on the fourteenth of April 1789 -- it must have been a day of torn emotions, a day of many regrets.

But the decision had been made. And we, their successors, are thankful for that decision and proud of it. And I think that it would have made General and Mrs. Washington happy if they had known then that one hundred and fifty years later tens of millions of Americans would appreciate and understand how they felt that day in their Mount Vernon home.

1789



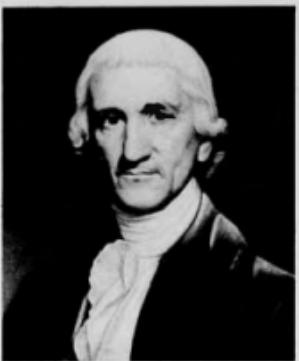
1939

*The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the
Notification by Charles Thomson of the
Election of George Washington as First President
of the United States of America
at Mount Vernon, Va., April 14, 1789*

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

MOUNT VERNON, VA., APRIL 14, 1939



CHARLES THOMSON
ARTIST UNKNOWN

*Official messenger selected by the
First Congress of the United States under the Constitution
to notify George Washington of his election
as First President of the United States*

Musical selections by the United States Marine Band

Invocation by the Chaplain of the United States
House of Representatives, Rev. James Shera Mont-
gomery, D. D.

Mr. Conrad Thibault—Musical selection

Home Sweet Home

Mrs. Horace Mann Towner, Regent, Mount Vernon
Ladies' Association of the Union

Representative Sol Bloom—Reading of message de-
livered to George Washington from the First Con-
gress by Charles Thomson, notifying him of his
election as First President of the United States.
Reading of George Washington's reply.

The President of the United States

Mr. Conrad Thibault—Musical selection

Star Spangled Banner

Benediction by the Chaplain of the United States
Senate, Rev. Z. Barney Thorne Phillips, D. D.

Musical selections by the United States Marine Band

*The musical selections by Mr. Conrad Thibault were made possible
through the courtesy of the National Broadcasting Company*



MOUNT VERNON
FROM AN OLD PRINT

HOUD FOR RELEASE

HOUD FOR RELEASE

HOUD FOR RELEASE

April 14, 1939

GREETING: This address of the President, to be delivered at the White House, ~~WILL BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.~~

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets of NEW YORK CITY 2:30 P.M., E.S.T., April 14, 1939.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

1239

SECRETARY EARL
Secretary to the President

MADAM ROBERT, MISTER DIRECTOR GENERAL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have come to the home of George Washington today in memory of another day, exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, when the chief of Mount Vernon received a message from the first Congress of the United States,

Here in his beloved Mount Vernon he listened to the formal message from the Congress announcing his election as the first President of the United States of America.

Charles Thomson, his guest, had ridden hither from New York to bring it -- Charles Thomson, native of County Cork in Ireland, a Pennsylvania Irishman, with a passionate zeal for liberty, who, through fifteen eventful years, had served as the Secretary of the Continental Congress.

Let us, too, here today can easily visualize that scene from this March -- the spreading lawn, the budding trees and the blossoms, and the majestic Potomac running by at the foot of the hill. We can visualize, the thoughts, too, which flamed through General Washington's mind. Saying farewell to his army in 1783, the Father of his Country, had returned to his beloved Mount Vernon with the hope and expectation that his task was done and that he would live a happy and useful life on his broad acres during the remainder of his days.

But three years still lay ahead for the struggling nation, and those years after 1783 proved the most critical peace years in all our history.

Called from his home, he had presided with skill and patience over the Constitutional Convention in 1787. And anxiety and doubt had tortured him for many months thereafter until he waited for sufficient news that the Constitution itself had been ratified by the states.

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Roberta



GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Archival Archives and Records Service

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

From the Papers of
Harry L. Hopkins

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Administration

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service
Frances B. Hopkins Library

Wash. D. C.
MAY 1964

From the Report of
Jerry L. Hopkins

From Sol Bloom

Ceremonies under the auspices of the United States Constitution Bicentennial Commission will be held on Friday, April 14th at 2:30 o'clock at Mount Vernon, Virginia, to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Notification by Charles Thomson of the Election of George Washington as First President of the United States. At this ceremony, the President of the United States will speak.

Below will be found Highlights in the long and useful life of the Irish born American Charles Thomson who served for fifteen years as a Secretary of the Continental Congress. Thomson who was called the "perpetual Secretary" and the "hand and pen" of the Continental Congress was unanimously elected by that body to notify the then retired General Washington of his election as First President of the United States. It was a hard journey from New York to Mount Vernon, Virginia, in those days, especially at the season of Thomson's trip. But, nevertheless, the venerable Thomson set out for Mount Vernon on April 7th, 1789, arising early and riding late between stops, reaching Mount Vernon on the 14th.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES THOMSON

Charles Thomson was born in the town of Cortedo, parish Maharan, County Derry, Ireland on November 29, 1729. He was the son of John Thomson, one of the most respectable men of Ulster. Charles Thomson was born at a time when Protestant emigration was robbing Ireland of thousands of her best people. More than twenty thousand left Ulster and settled along the Atlantic seaboard on the destruction of the woolen trade and the enforcement of the Test Act.

John Thomson, the father, having been left a widower with six small children, determined to make a home for them in America. They set sail from Ireland in 1739 expecting to live in Pennsylvania, then known in England as the land of Milk and Honey. During the voyage the father was attacked with a violent sickness and died within sight of the American shore. His body was cast into the ocean near the capes of the Delaware. His expiring prayer was: "God take them up." The death scene was always very affecting to Charles and when referred to the occasion, he said: "I stood by the bedside of my expiring and much loved father, closed his eyes and performed the last filial duties to him." Little Charles was ten years old then. The children were now left to the mercy of the sea captain while they were turned on shore at New Castle, Delaware.

On landing at New Castle, the six Thomson children were separated and it is quite possible that they were bound to serve as apprentices. According to some authorities, William drifted to South Carolina and in the Revolutionary War distinguished himself by his great bravery. Alexander became a prosperous farmer near New Castle and a number of descendants of his son, John, are still living in Newark, Delaware and Easton, Pennsylvania. Charles, with whom we are concerned, resided for a time with the family of a blacksmith at New Castle who thought of having him indentured as an apprentice.

Little Charles chanced to overhear them speak on this design one night and even at that age, he had determined to devote himself to better business. The child arose one night and made his escape with a pack upon his back. As he trudged the road, not knowing whither he went, it was his chance to be overtaken by a woman of the neighborhood, who, entering into conversation with him, asked him what he would like to be in future life. He promptly answered that he should like to be a scholar and that he wanted to gain his support by his mind and pen. This reply so pleased the woman that she took him home and put him in school.

The name of the woman who befriended Charles Thomson is unknown, but her act of kindness changed the whole course of his life and Charles soon became a student in the Academy at New London, Chester County, Pennsylvania. This was with the help of his brother, Alexander. In a spirit of gratitude, Charles afterwards presented his brother with a farm in the vicinity of New Castle. On leaving the New London Academy, Charles Thomson at once became a teacher and resided on a farm on the edge of New Castle County. He opened a subscription school in the cooper shop that stood on the farm and he was considered the best teacher in all that region.

While a student at the New London Academy, Thomson made the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin who frequently sought his advice in regard to the prospects of a suitable vocation in Philadelphia. Being President of the Board of Trustees in the new Academy of Philadelphia, Franklin made use of the opportunity to secure a

position for Thomson in the school. (This institution was founded in 1749 as an Academy and Charitable School. In 1776 it was chartered as The College, Academy, and Charitable School, and after a series of troubles during the Revolution, it was finally incorporated in 1791 as the University of Pennsylvania as we know it today).

Thomson began his duties in the Academy on June 7, 1751. Evidently his services must have pleased the authorities, for new responsibilities were soon added to his position. Thomson remained as a teacher in the Academy until July 1755 and from the reports at the school at that time, he was a most capable instructor and considered one of the best scholars in the province, especially in the classics.

Two years later, Thomson again became a teacher and was elected to a position in what is now known as the William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia, taking charge of the Latin School. We next hear of him engaging in the mercantile business, as an importer receiving large invoices of dry goods, hats, etc., from various London firms. At the same time, he was concerned in the Batsto Furnace. This furnace was built in 1766, by Charles Read and was near the junction of the Batsto and Egg Harbor rivers, New Jersey. There was mention made of it in the journals of the Continental Congress. During the Revolution, it was employed in casting cannon-shot and bomb-shells for the American army.

As early as 1755, Thomson became a man of great influence throughout the province of Pennsylvania; he began to display that character which he maintained throughout his life and in those days, it was a popular mode of affirming the truth of anything to say "It is as true as if Charles Thomson's name were to it." For several years, the frontier inhabitants of the colony were held in a state of terror on account of the Indian outrages. There was then formed the Friendly Association Organization by a number of prominent Quakers in 1756 to pacify the Indians. Conversations were held by the Association and the different Indian tribes. Charles Thomson of Philadelphia was at once appointed Secretary to the Association, and he soon won the confidence of the Indians by his truthfulness and his efforts to secure justice for the various tribes. Thomson determined to prevent any intrigues against the Indians, and he labored to have the whole truth appear in all proceedings. Two treaties were held at Easton in 1758, at the last of which a general peace was settled for Pennsylvania and all the other provinces. At one of these treaties, Thomson was adopted into the tribe of the Delawares and given the name "Wagh-wu-law-mo-and," which translated means "The man who tells the truth." From this time, his name was regarded as an emblem of truth, and in all the factional disputes of the Revolutionary period, his judgment was respected.

Charles Thomson was an elder in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. The passage of the Stamp Act brought him into the arena of politics, and he threw his whole soul into the cause of the colonists, laboring with no intorse a zeal that he became known as "The Sam Adams of Philadelphia." His interest in politics began with his residence in the city. In 1750, he assisted to organize a society modeled after that of the famous Junta, to which Franklin had belonged, in which it was the custom to discuss political questions, while the members were constantly on the alert to render assistance to their fellow citizens.

On October 3, 1774, Thomson was elected as a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly. In this body he displayed the same shrewdness that had marked his conduct in the town meeting and as a member of the committee of correspondence. Here he labored zealously with the other patriots to adopt measures for the common defense.

Thomson not only gave freely of his time for the cause of independence, but he also subscribed of his means. At a critical point of the Revolution, when there was great danger of the dissolution of the American army for want of provisions, he was one of the patriotic gentlemen who gave their bonds to the amount of \$1,300,000.00, his own subscription being \$15,000.00.

The cause of the colonists had steadily advanced during the summer of 1774 and on October 5th of that year, the first Continental Congress assembled at Philadelphia. Thomson's active services at the head of the liberty party naturally led to his selection as Secretary of this Congress, which was done without opposition. The manner of Thomson's appointment is interesting. He had wed a second time to Miss Hannah Harrison on Thursday September 1st, and coming to Philadelphia in his carriage with his wife on the following Monday, he had just alighted when a message came to him from the President of Congress that he must see him immediately. Thomson went and was told that they wished him to take their minutes. He began the duty as a temporary affair, but the service continued throughout the Revolutionary period. And so for fifteen years, Thomson was retained as a Secretary of the Continental Congress, in some respects one of the most remarkable legislative bodies the world has ever seen. During all those years of service, his relations with the members of that body were of the most agreeable character. Thomson's salary varied

from \$2000 in 1780 to \$2600 in 1787.

Thomson knew better than any other man the secret history of Congress and the motives which influenced its members. In his position, he beheld the national consciousness slowly develop, and he was present at the dawn of independence.

After the Declaration of Independence, Congress began to deteriorate in quality, and it was Thomson's opinion that no later Congress could compare with the first one in ability and patriotism.

Through all these vicissitudes Thomson's faith in the American cause remained unshaken. As the Revolution proceeded, Thomson was required to perform many of the duties which are now more properly the business of the Secretary of State. He kept the "Secret Journal of Foreign Affairs," and had charge of the correspondence with our representatives abroad.

Thomson's political career drew to a close with the death of the old Continental Congress, and his mission to Mount Vernon in April 1789. A quorum being present in the United States Senate for the first time on April 6th, that body

"appointed Charles Thomson, Esq., to notify George Washington, Esq., of his election to the office of President of the United States."

Thomson set out for Mount Vernon on April 7th, and having reached his destination on the 14th, he communicated the purport of his mission to Washington in the following words:

"Sir, the President of the Senate, chosen for the special purpose, having opened and counted the votes of the electors in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, I was honored with the commands of the Senate to wait upon your Excellency with the information of your being elected to the office of President of the United States of America. This commission was intrusted to me on account of my having been long in the confidence of the late Congress, and charged with the duties of one of the principal civil departments of the Government. I have now, sir, to inform you that the proofs you have given of your patriotism and your readiness to sacrifice domestic ease and private enjoyments to preserve the happiness of your country did not permit the two Houses to harbor a doubt of your undertaking this great and important office, to which you are called, not only by the unanimous vote of the electors, but by the voice of America.

"I have it, therefore, in command to accompany you to New York, where the Senate and House of Representatives are convened for the dispatch of public business."

To which Washington replied as follows:

"I wish that there may not be reason for regretting the choice, for, indeed, all I can promise is to accomplish that which can be done by honest zeal."

The notification took place in the Banquet Hall at Mount Vernon. Present was the Washington family, Dr. Craik, David Humphries, Mr. Herbert of Alexandria, Virginia, and Tobias Lear, Washington's Secretary.

Throughout his life, Thomson had an absorbing interest in science. He was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society on September 22, 1758 and was Secretary of the Society from 1759 to 1770 and served as one of its councillors from 1781 to 1783. He was very active in the Society and was frequently appointed on some of its most important committees. Thomson's activities in the American Philosophical Society marked the beginning of the correspondence with Thomas Jefferson on scientific subjects, extending over many years. Like Jefferson, he had a great passion for philosophy and the natural sciences. Thomson had many traits of character in common with Jefferson. Both had served their country with distinction in the Revolutionary period, and sacrificed the enjoyment at ease for the cares of public life. Both were men of sense and learning, representing the best scholarship of the day, and their interest was great in the advancement of all the useful sciences. Both made substantial contributions to the sum of knowledge, Jefferson in the philosophy of Government, and Thomson in Biblical literature. The correspondence between the two men from 1784 to 1787, is attended with a peculiar interest. Jefferson was in France during these years and he kept his friend constantly informed of the progress of science in the Old World as existing letters today show. Jefferson was continually meeting with fresh experiences, and learning of new inventions and discoveries during his stay abroad, and he was always prompt in communicating a knowledge of them to Thomson.

In peaceful retirement at HARRITON, his country place near Philadelphia, the most interesting chapter in Thomson's life began. It was a period of literary activity and scholarly pursuits although he had written many letters and papers of great historical value during his public career. It appears that Thomson began work on his translation of the Bible (Greek version of the old Testament) in the year 1789 and he was constantly employed in it until 1808, the year in which the translation was published. Jefferson was very much interested in this translation and he wrote to Thomson in January 1808 making a number of suggestions. The convenient octavo form in which the Bible appeared indicates that Thomson followed the suggestions of Jefferson.

Thomson and Jefferson in the closing years of their lives, spent much time in meditating on the subject of Christianity. They made a comparison of the merits of Jesus with those of others, embracing a comparative view of the ethics of Christianity, Judaism and ancient philosophy. Correspondence between Jefferson and Thomson on this subject shows, in a very clear light, the religious side of their nature. It appears that Jefferson in his "Philosophy of Jesus" and Thomson in his "Synopsis of the Four Evangelists" were striving towards the same great end--to find the truth in its simplest form. Thomson frequently had his resentment stirred up by the charges of infidelity made against Jefferson, and he always defended him.

Although free from the cares of public life, Thomson continued to take an active interest in the welfare of his country. His share in the struggle for independence had been so great that he could not be indifferent to the preservation of the new Republic. He was conscious, too, of the many insidious and dangerous enemies that were menacing the liberties so dearly won; but he never despaired of the ultimate triumph of free institutions.

Thomson was a man of cheerful temper, his happiest hours were those spent in conversation with his friends. He was endowed with a large share of natural sagacity, which enabled him to understand the motives and characters of men. He had accepted the truths of Christianity in his early youth, and his whole life displayed a beautiful, upright character that was a constant inspiration to those about him. He not only became a Christian in the usual sense of the term; but he retired from public life, and for twenty-five years was a student of divine truth. Some have called him a Presbyterian; others insist that he inclined toward the Friends, while a few claimed that in later years he was inclined toward the Baptists. He was a man of truth in all things, and his beautiful rendition of the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, shows that he was a Christian who believed in the new commandment of Christ, "That ye love one another."

Thomson was a man of striking personal appearance, at least six feet tall, and he looked quite venerable, even before arriving at middle age. He was of meagre figure, furrowed countenance, hollow sparkling eyes and straight hair. Thomson had frequently expressed the belief that he would live to the age of 100 years. His life was prolonged to almost a century, for he died on August 16th, 1834 at the age of 95 years.

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About 850 words

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION IN PREPARATION
OF HIS REMARKS TO BE BROADCAST OVER A NATIONAL HOOK-UP FROM
MOUNT VERNON ON APRIL 14, 1939 at 2:30 PM, E. S. T.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Regent:

The place where we stand today is holy ground. This is
~~the~~ national shrine. The heart of the nation must ever beat
with quickened pulse at the home and tomb of George Washington.

In this spot hallowed by its association with the life
and work of the Father of Our Country, we dedicate ourselves
anew to the institutions of democracy established in the
Western Hemisphere under his leadership. Though other nations
may fail or falter, we of the New World will never renounce our
allegiance to the democratic way of life.

We shall continue to hold aloft and to sustain by every
resource at our command the great torch of liberty which
Washington raised that its light may ever shine more brightly,
that its glory may be seen even from afar.

Such is the resolve we make here today, the pledge of
liberty which we give to all the world, to all nations and
peoples from Mount Vernon. And what thoughts and reflections

come to us on this one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of that day in April, 1789 when the venerable Charles Thomson officially notified George Washington of his election as first President of the United States. A native of County Derry ^{who} ~~he~~ had brought to the colony of Pennsylvania the Irishman's passionate zeal for liberty, Thomson had through fifteen eventful years served as Secretary of the Continental Congress.

The burden which Washington was about to assume as a result of the tidings brought to him by Thomson was a heavy one as he must have realized in the hours of reflection and meditation in this quiet retreat through the years from Yorktown in 1781 and the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

I am afraid Tom Paine's enthusiasm got the better of his judgment when he declared in the last number of the "Crisis", published after peace negotiations had been concluded that "The times that tried men's souls were over".

Rather were the most trying times still ahead for the struggling nation, /the leadership of which Washington had

been called by the suffrage of his countrymen. One of our greatest historians, summing up the problems that beset the ⁽¹⁾ ~~Conf~~ Government of the ~~Federation~~, declared that "the period of five years following the peace of 1783 was the most critical moment in all the history of the American people. The dangers from which we were saved in 1788 were even greater than were the dangers from which we were saved in 1865".

When the Constitution had been safely ratified, Washington may well have had a premonition that he would be the choice of his countrymen as the first President of the United States and the situation which confronted him was not an easy one.

He, in common with other thoughtful men of the time, could

~~not but have discerned the steady drift toward anarchy under the Articles of Confederation.~~
~~that the victory of arms over the mother country brought the infant nation face to face with far more difficult problems of civil administration.~~
Washington had seen that the equilibrium between state

and national governments was unstable under the Articles of Confederation; that there was a steady drift toward anarchy, uncertainty and chaos. For it must be remembered that even

(1) John Jay

after the adoption of the Constitution which had made Washington's election possible, there still was the problem of welding thirteen separate republics into a nation.

Previous to the adoption of the Constitution, each state had established its own ¹~~commercial~~ ^{industrial} and fiscal systems, its own trade regulations, including import duties, shipping regulations and the rest. The result was that when Washington on this day a hundred and fifty years ago received word in the dining room of Mount Vernon that he had been elected President, he was faced with a medley of conflicting and contradictory state laws and antagonistic sectional interests. There were also many and serious disputes among the states regarding their territorial boundaries. Threats of secession among dissatisfied states added to the friction.

Washington, during those days of contemplation and meditation here at Mount Vernon, dearer to his heart than any other place, saw the necessity of strengthening the spirit

of union by cementing all of the component parts of the nation into one entity. His problem was to make thirteen separate republics function as a nation under the new and untried Constitution.

How well he succeeded is attested by all our subsequent history through the stress and storm of a century and a half. The example of his courage, his patience, his vision and his fortitude remains to inspire us today. In these anxious times when the solution of grave economic and social problems challenges us at home and the assault on democratic institutions abroad threatens the peace of the world, we may turn to Washington for hope and courage and new strength.

Against fearful odds he led the colonists to victory over superior forces and in darker days that were to follow he gave the new nation a form and pattern which have endured to this day. Ours is the duty to adapt the principles which Washington established to the needs of a twentieth century nation to the end that the happiness and security of all the people may be safe against all assault.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT
MOUNT VERNON
APRIL 14, 1939

MADAM REGENT, MISTER DIRECTOR GENERAL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have come to the home of George Washington today in memory of another day, exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, when the owner of Mount Vernon received a message from the first Congress of the United States.

Here in this beloved Mount Vernon he
(Doubtless he sat on this very porch and) listened
to the formal message from the Congress announcing his election as the first President of the United States of America.

Charles Thomson, his guest, had ridden hither from New York -- Charles Thomson, native of County Derry in Ireland, a Pennsylvania Irishman, with a passionate zeal for liberty, who, through fifteen eventful years, had served as the Secretary of the Continental Congress.

We who are here today can readily visualize that scene from this porch -- the sprouting lawn, the budding trees and the dogwoods, and the majestic Potomac running by at the foot of the hill. We can visualize the thoughts, too, which flowed through General Washington's mind. Saying farewell to his army in 1783, the independence of the

Colonies assured, he, already the Father of his Country, had returned to his beloved Mount Vernon with the hope and expectation that his task was done and that he would live a happy and useful life on his broad acres during the remainder of his days.

But trying times still lay ahead for the struggling nation, and those years after 1783 proved the most critical peace years in all our history.

Called from his home, he had presided with skill and patience over the Constitutional Convention in 1787. And anxiety and doubt had ~~undoubtedly~~ attended him for many months thereafter while he waited for belated news that the Constitution itself had been ratified by the States.

I take it that when the permanent framework of the Union had been assured in the Summer of 1788, the elections ordered and the First Congress summoned, General Washington must have known that the task of the Presidency would, without question, fall on him.

It meant that once more he would leave Mount Vernon behind him, with no certainty of his return, and that on his shoulders, in the far off North, would lie the burden of initiating the civil leadership of a new, untried Republic.

He knew that his would be the task of ending uncertainty, jealousy between the Several States and creating, with the help of the Congress, a functioning national government fit to take its place among the organized nations of the world.

Two days later he and his family were to set forth on that long and difficult journey by highway and ferry and barge, which was to culminate in his Inauguration as President on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York on April 30, 1789.

Doubtless on this very porch he sat with Charles Thomson bearing at first-hand of the long efforts of the first Senate and the first House of Representatives to obtain a quorum, learning of the unanimity by which the votes of the Electors were cast for him, listening to the precedents that were being set in the conduct of the first Legislature under the Constitution, and thinking doubtless that his own every move from that day on for many years to come would be chronicled for future generations and thereby set the tempo and the customs of the Presidency of the United States.

(4) But I am to be forgiven if I, the Thirty-~~Second~~ ^{First} President, dwell for a moment on the feelings within the heart of him ^{Abigail} who was to be the First President.

Washington was essentially a man close to mother earth. His early training on a plantation, his profession of surveyor, his studies in agriculture and the development of farm lands were never replaced by his outstanding military service under Braddock or as Commander-in-Chief for the eight years of the Revolution.

We know that when Mount Vernon came to him by inheritance, here his heart was planted for all time. Here he could talk with his neighbors about the improvement of navigation on the river, about grist mills on the creeks, about the improving of highways, about the dream of a canal to the western country, about saw mills and rotation of crops, about the top soil, which even then had begun to run off to the sea, about the planting of trees, new varieties of food and fodder crops, new breeds of horses and cattle and sheep.

Here, too, he had his books and was in touch with the authors and artists of the new and old worlds.

Here at the junction point of the North and of the South, at the foot of one of the main arteries that led to the exciting new lands beyond the Mountains, the travelers and the news stopped at his door.

Rightly he must have felt that his labors in the service of his State and of his Nation had rounded out his contribution to the public weal. Rightly he felt that he had earned the privilege of returning for all time to the private life which had been his dream.

That Washington would have refused public service if the call had been a normal one has always been my belief. But the summons to the Presidency had come to him in a time of ^{The dangers that beset the young nation were as real as though} real crisis and deep emergency. ^{thus it was as much as as if} ^{Washington} the very independence ^(he) had won for it had been threatened once more by foreign foes. Clear it must have been that the permanence of the Republic was at stake and that if the new government, under the Constitution, should fail in its early days, the ^{several} states falling out among themselves would become so many small and weak nations subject to attack and conquest from overseas.

So it came about that once more he put from him the life he loved so well and took upon himself the Presidency.

That cannot have been a happy day for General and Mrs. George Washington on the fourteenth of April 1789 -- a day of torn emotions, a day of many regrets.

The decision had been made. We, their successors, are thankful for that decision and proud of it. And I think that it would have made General and Mrs. Washington happy if they had known that one hundred and fifty years later tens of millions of Americans would appreciate and understand how they felt that day in their Mount Vernon home.

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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HOLD FOR RELEASE

April 14, 1939

(11)

CAUTION: This address of the President, to be delivered at Mt. Vernon, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 2:30 P.M., E.S.T., April 14, 1939.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

✓ 4:2 PM
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(in front) the house
(the message of the
President of the United States)
(Mount Vernon) home
(in) 4

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STATEMENTS FILE

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