

ADDRESS, REDEDICATION OF CONFEDERATE CEMETERY

HAGERSTOWN

September 3, 1961

We are today commemorating a series of events which happened one hundred years ago. Notwithstanding, I am going to begin this address by asking you to cast your memories back not one century, but two. For it was almost 200 years ago that there was performed the first official public act to assert the freedom of the American people. That act took place here, in Western Maryland. November 25, 1767, the citizens of our neighboring county, Frederick, solemnly and by due court action, repudiated the unjust tax laws levied on the American colonies by Great Britain.

So began a century in which the United States was born and was firmly set upon a course that promised a new order for the whole of mankind. Viewing those 100 years with the understanding that our present day gives us, we can see that that claim is not too great. In its birth, our nation offered hope to the formerly hopeless and its century of growth and success turned that hope into courage and emulation. Then—also here in Western Maryland—occurred another act of vast consequence, the act that, more than any other single one, precipitated the American Civil War—the plotting of the wild enterprise known as John Brown's raid. After that, for four years, the life of our country hung in the balance.

To the world, looking on as we fought our fratricidal strife, more was at stake than the existence of a single government. The real question was the survival or cessation of the original ideal to which the United States was dedicated—what we now call the democratic way of life. It is my purpose to review today the contributions our State made to the ultimate decision. I do not think that the greatest of these is to be counted in war materials, or—even—in soldiers, in men. Rather, it was in the philosophy with which our State historically was imbued. This brought us through the furious—and often infuriating—shocks of war. This saved us from the all-too-natural post-war bitterness.

We may go far back in our history—back to its very beginning—and find that we have always been a community in which there are groups, normally opposed to one another, living in deliberately determined concord. The Maryland custom did not begin in the field of politics. It began in that of religion, for in the 17th century, when our land was first settled, religion was the great preoccupation. Many, very many of