

ADDRESS, RATIFICATION DAY

ANNAPOLIS

January 14, 1966

Today, January 14, 1966, is the 182nd anniversary of an event which ended the American Revolution. In a very real sense, therefore, this day is the 182nd birthday of the United States of America. This announcement would come as a surprise to some Americans who think of July 4, 1776, as the date of our national birth and the date of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown as the day which ended our War of Independence.

By the Declaration of Independence, the 13 colonies announced to the world that we were free and independent of England, but it took six years of bloodshed and fighting to persuade the British of this fact. Washington's army, with the help of our ally France, finally defeated the British forces under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. This decisive battle ended most of the fighting but until a definitive peace treaty could be negotiated, some military action continued and the main issue between ourselves and the British was still unresolved. On New Year's Day, 1784, the United States legally did not yet exist as a sovereign nation.

I am sure that every school child knows about Paul Revere's ride, the battles of Lexington and Concord, and the Philadelphia meeting which proclaimed our Declaration of Independence. These dramatic actions have obscured some other, but no less important, historic events of the Revolution, one of which occurred here in Annapolis, and which we observe here on the very stage where it took place. Marylanders should take pride in the fact that our State, as one of the 13 original colonies, played a very active role in the American Revolution. We are proud that four Marylanders, all of whom lived here in Annapolis, were signers of the Declaration of Independence. We can point with pride to the fact that Maryland made substantial contributions to the cause of liberty, in terms both of men and material. The famous Maryland Line, known as the "Bayonets of the Revolution," under General Mordecai Gist, actually saved Washington's army by a valiant rear guard action in the Battle of Long Island. As a result of that heroic stand, Maryland was to become known as the "Old Line State." General William Smallwood, of Charles County, and General John Eager Howard, of Baltimore, distinguished themselves in the war. Colonel Tench Tilghman, of Talbot County, an aide to General Wash-