

## LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MONUMENT TO GENERAL PULASKI

Patterson Park, May 4, 1941

Baltimore

**T**ODAY'S occasion, which marks the laying of the cornerstone of the monument to General Casimir Pulaski, is one that will bring gratification to the hearts of not only Americans of Polish descent, but of every real American.

We pay honor, and rightly so, to our military and naval heroes of American birth who have distinguished themselves on the field of battle in defense of our Country. How much more should we, therefore, pay outstanding honor to a patriot, not of American birth, who voluntarily and because of his desire to see that freedom was enjoyed by all nations of the world, joined with our infant Country in its struggle for freedom, and made the supreme sacrifice by laying down his life.

General Casimir Pulaski was of noble birth, a man of wealth, and a gentleman in the truest sense. No mere soldier of fortune was he, seeking adventure wherever he might find it. In coming to the American Colonies to assist our valiant forefathers in their struggle for independence, he was merely responding to an instinct of the heroic people from whom he sprang.

The people of Poland traditionally had fought for the liberation of oppressed nations throughout the world. And it was in keeping with this tradition that Casimir Pulaski rushed to the support of General George Washington.

Not only did he contribute his personal services, but he contributed generously of his material wealth, his soldierly attainments and military experience. He made the outstanding contribution of a noble soul, and the loftiness of an ideal—the ideal of freedom for all peoples, everywhere.

So thoroughly were the abilities and the bravery of Casimir Pulaski appreciated by our Colonial military authorities, that he soon was accorded the rank of General, and placed in command of the Cavalry forces of the Continental Army. It is one of the tragedies of our struggle for independence that this Polish-born American patriot never was destined to see the attainment of his ideal of freedom for this Country. On October 11, 1779, he fell, mortally wounded, leading a cavalry charge on the City of Savannah. He died as he had lived, in the pursuit of an ideal. His accomplishments won for him immortal fame, and the undying gratitude of the American people.

It is truly fitting that the people of Maryland, one of the States that knew the achievements of General Pulaski, should assist in the erection to him of this lasting tribute of honor and esteem.

In doing honor to the memory of General Pulaski, we desire also to express our gratitude to all of the Polish people, those born in Poland who have come to our State and those fine citizens of Polish blood and extraction whom we are pleased to include in our citizenry.