

ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE DINNER, SOUTHERN HOTEL

December 7, 1942.

Baltimore

It has, with justice, been said that America is not always alive to historical observance compared to the nations of the Old World. Tonight, however, we are marking two anniversaries, each one of which has special significance in the lives of every American. It is gratifying to have with us on this occasion the representative of a great people whose interests are so closely allied with ours in respect to both anniversaries.

One year exactly has passed since the treachery of murderous Japanese militarists plunged our Nation into a world-wide struggle for her very existence, a struggle for which we were not prepared, spiritually or physically; a struggle which no earnest, thoughtful American citizen ever really expected to experience.

Likewise, we are memorializing tonight the 39th anniversary of the sailing of the Ark and the Dove, an event representative of as much in the progress of the world as the treacherous Japanese attack represented in its infamy of civilization.

In comparison to the countries of the old world, it must be conceded, America has an abridged history. Short though the span of her existence has been, the world-shaking events in which America has assumed leadership might well be said to make up for the lack of years that go into the making of our history.

The first occasion we are memorializing tonight—the sailing of the hardy colonists to establish in a new, uncharted world a system of Government that would give the fullest opportunity for the exercise of their rights—has left an indelible impress upon all the history of the world since that time. It is an impress that will be felt as long as civilization endures.

The very basis of life today here in America and in the still-free Democratic nations of the world,—freedom of the individual to think and act and worship as he may please—stems from the courageous decision of those early English individualists. They had the temerity to visualize for themselves and those to follow them, a form of Government embodying soul-satisfying principles that could be found in no other system then existing.

Down through the years that precious seed of personal liberty, planted on the shores of St. Mary's County in Maryland in 1634, has sprouted and borne fruit a thousand-fold. It was the seed from which later sprang the noble American Constitution, which has been for so many years the guiding star of free men in this free Country, to enslaved or oppressed people everywhere.

Today, with millions of once-free people ground beneath the heel of the most despotic brutality known to civilization, and with the thousand million in-