

Not far from this very spot a Maryland regiment distinguished itself in the Battle of Long Island, defending New York City from threatened destruction. Indeed, it may truthfully be said that these two States formed an axis about which many great national events evolved. Have any of us forgotten, for instance, that both Annapolis and New York City once served as capital of the United States? Or that George Washington spanned his military and civil career when he resigned his army commission in the old State House on the Severn and later took oath as President up here by the Hudson?

Before that, and afterwards, there have been events drawing our two regions into an historical affinity. The Convention which first announced the need of a National Constitution was called by a great New Yorker, Alexander Hamilton—and it met in Maryland, again at Annapolis.

Years passed, and other momentous happenings linked together the names of our States. In the last century two feats of engineering helped to bring the American midlands closer to the seacoast. One, the Erie Canal, was the brain-child of New York's Governor DeWitt Clinton; the other, a railroad line from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River—the historic Baltimore and Ohio—was exclusively a Maryland product.

It is not strange to find the peoples of the two States enjoy similar benefits, both as to physical environment and culture. New York and Maryland may each be proud of her natural advantages—for do we not both have mountains for our backbones, wide fertile valleys for our agricultural mid-section, and a great seaport which sets our faces where they look out upon the world? Moreover, as New York stands on the threshold of New England, so Maryland is doorway to the South—each of us not quite confined and yet enjoying the virtue and advantage of a middle position.

If I have spoken in praise of the State which I have the good fortune to represent, I do not do so in any spirit of boastfulness or false pride but to thank a benign Providence for all these blessings. The disease which poison a body politic cannot make inroads against health which abounds in spiritual and physical vigor.

In Maryland we like to call ourselves the "Free State." It is a title in which we take not only pride but a lot of comfort. We have not forgotten that our earliest settlers were men who became disgusted with the narrow jealousies that existed across the ocean, and who came over to found a colony where human liberty was not only a political fact but a personal privilege. Nor is it difficult, in these troubled times, to realize how men and women the world over looked to America as the hope and promise of salvation.

For myself, as Governor of Maryland, I am happy to recall that these first colonists were a democratic group. It was an oddly-assorted company which sailed from England more than three centuries ago and beached their two vessels in what was to become "Free State" soil. In modern parlance, some were white-collared men, others were, let us say, "diamonds in the rough;" and just as there was a mixture of classes, so too, was there a mingling of beliefs. We cannot evaluate the significance of this unless we recall that Europe was running red with strife of every kind and class conflict. Yet the founders of Maryland had the courage to believe that creed and breed and birth need not be matters of bloodshed, bigotry and intolerance.