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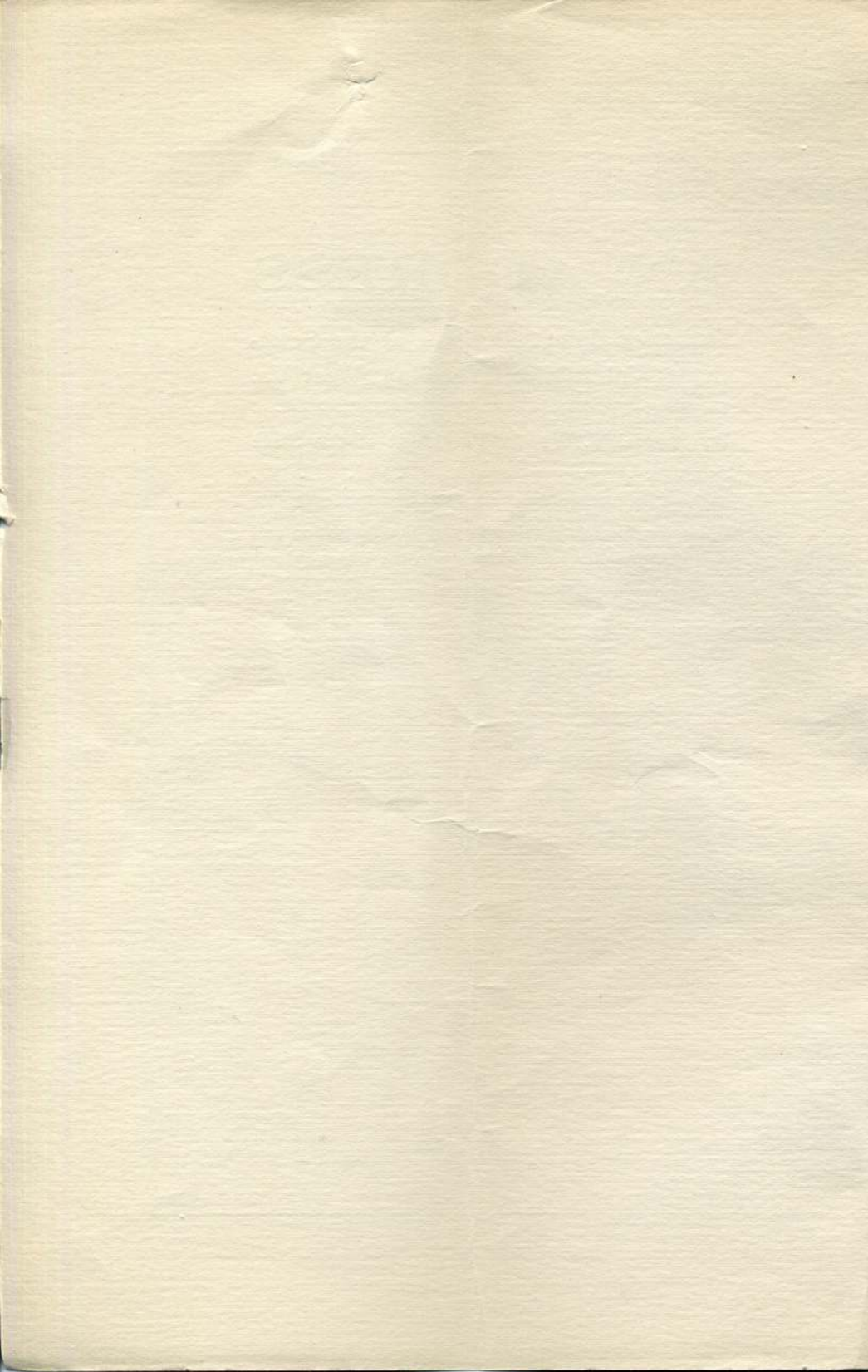
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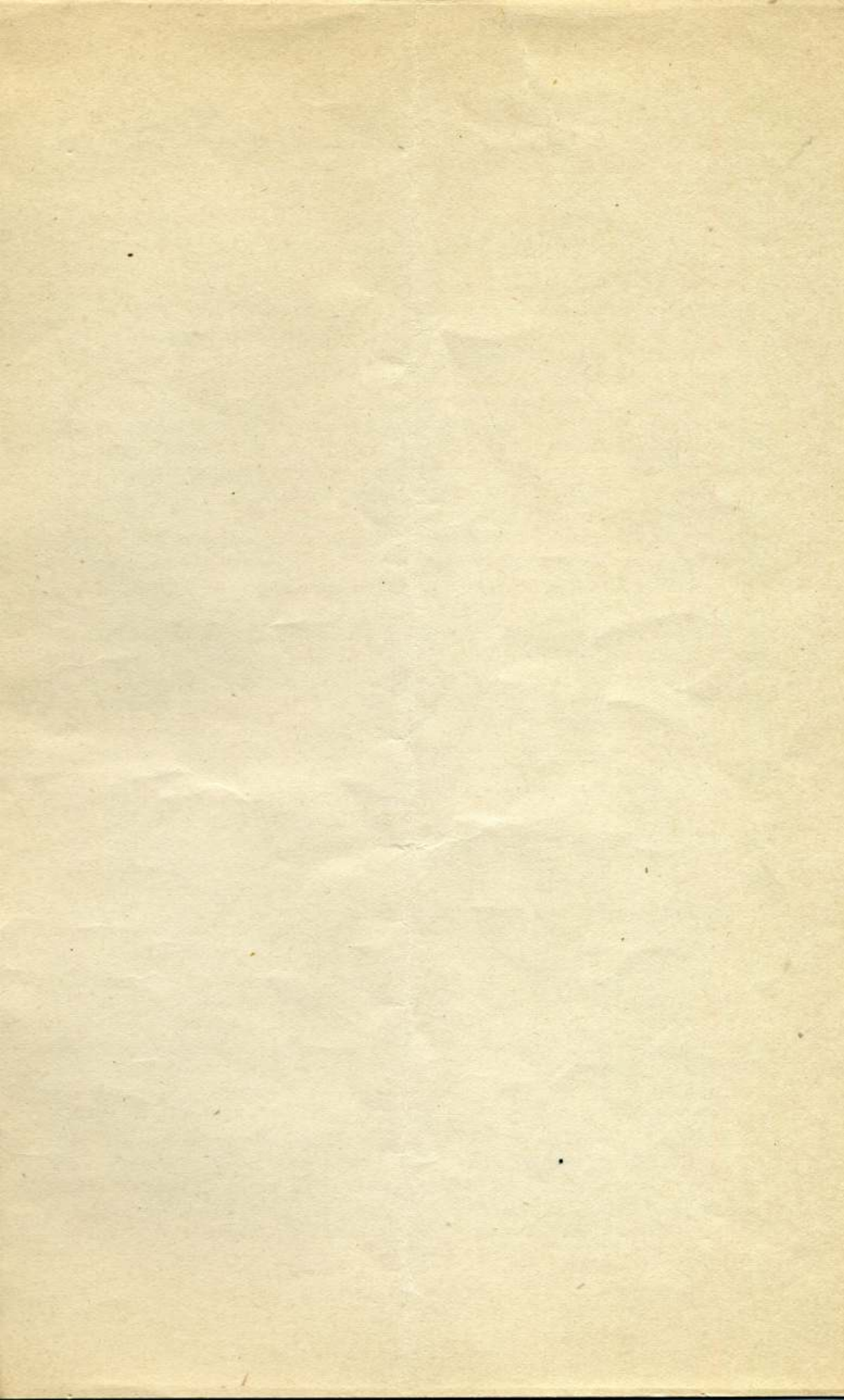
Delivered June 16th, 1913, at the Semi-Centennial Jubilee, Wheeling, West Va.

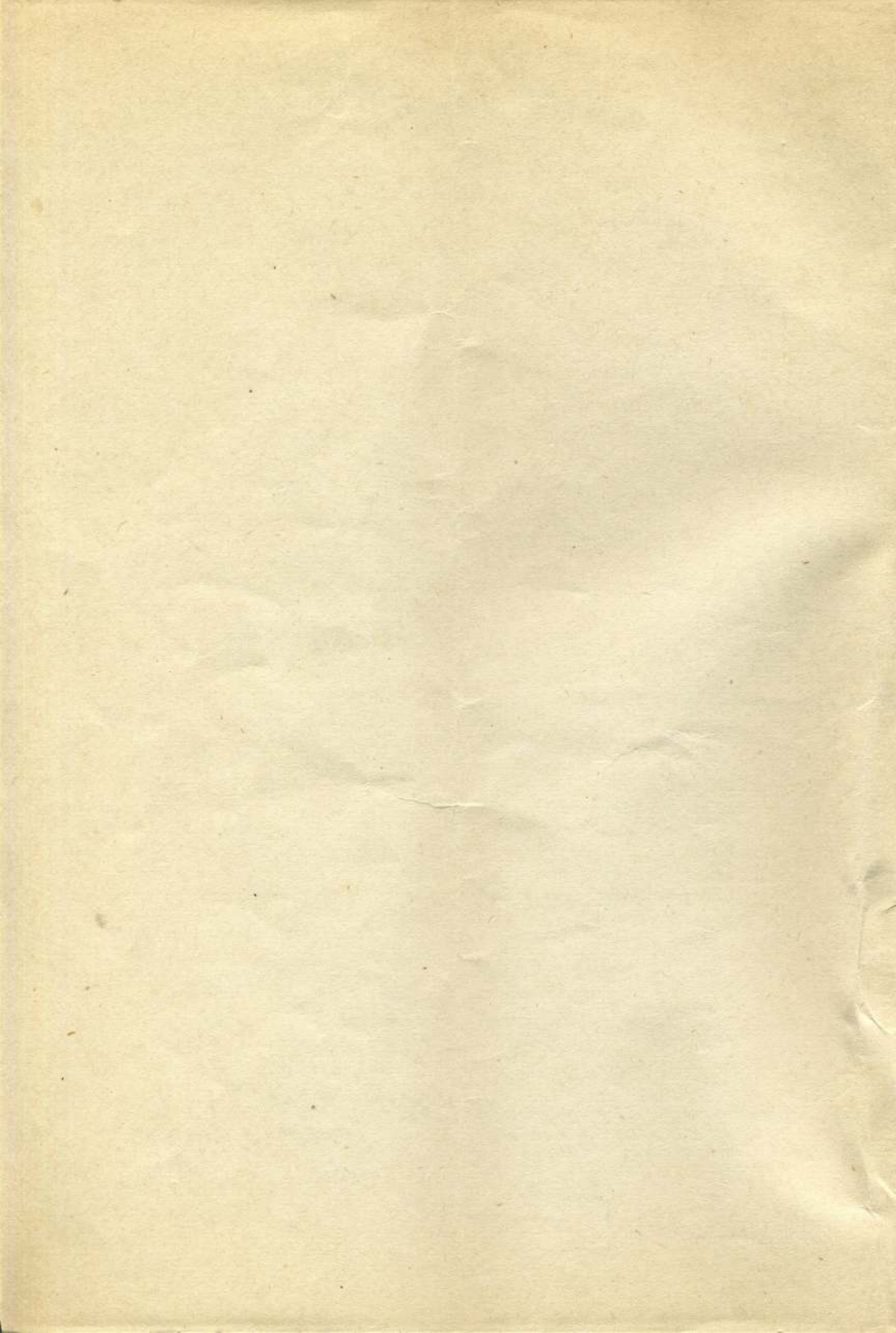
By Samuel V. Woods, President of the State
Senate

Upon the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Formation and
Admission of the State into the Union









THE ADDRESS

Mr President, and Fellow-Citizens: arm southward and westward nearly to Cincinnati.

We meet today on historic ground, made sacred by the blood of heroes, to express in part, the pride and pleasure of a great people, upon the Fiftieth Anniversary of that day when the State of West Virginia was proclaimed, and declared to have a legal right to take her place as an equal among the proud and independent States which constituted the American Union of the States.

It is difficult to realize, after the lapse of two score and ten years, that the necessity for the existence of this State, and its admission into the Union of States, was both political and military.

Political, because in the great war between the States, the administration of Mr. Lincoln needed the aid in Congress of the two Senators, and three Congressmen, to which the new State was entitled; and military, because the Union army needed, and was bound to have, a loyal State, extending from Washington west to the Ohio river, and bordering upon the loyal States of Ohio and Kentucky, over which to transport, in security, the men and munitions of war, which the critical situation of the times rendered absolutely necessary for the effective operations of the Union army, at a time (1863) when the Commonwealth of Virginia had seceded from the Union of the States, and when one arm of her territory extended northward on the Ohio river, into the loyal territory of the country, nearly to Pittsburg, and another

But the formation of the State of West Virginia, and the primal reason for her existence as a State, was a fundamental reason; it was a moral reason, and it had its foundation laid in the Declaration of Rights, formulated and proclaimed by the good people of Virginia, in a full and free convention held by them at Williamsburg, on the 12th day of June, 1776.

In that convention, where the hearts of the people of Virginia throbbed with patriotic devotion to the colony, and to the rights of the humblest citizen, they proclaimed and declared Sixteen Articles, which they denominated "The Declaration of Rights of the people of Virginia, which do pertain to them and their posterity as the basis and foundation of government."

These Articles, among other things, declared:

"1. That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and as such, have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they can not, by any compact, divest or deprive their posterity, nameley:

"The enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

"2 That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.

"3. That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people or community; and that when any government shall be found inadequate, or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, inalienable and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as should be judged the most conducive to the public weal."

* * * * *

"15. That no free government or the blessings of liberty can be preserved to any people, but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

"16. That religion, or that duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, and not by force or violence;

"And therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity for each other."

What people in any age, land or country, ever had a broader, deeper, better, or sounder foundation upon which to build a great State, for the abode and happiness of a mighty people?

What citizen could ever have been familiar with these Declarations of Rights, who did not hand them down as a precious heritage to his children, and charge them with the duty of having these fundamental principles of government engraven upon

tablets of stone, and preserved as a perpetual memorial for them and their posterity?

These great principles, hung about the Colonists of Virginia, like the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, which protected and guided the Hebrew children, in their wanderings through the wilderness.

When the Colonists of Virginia, on the 29th day of June, 1776, formulated their grievances against King George the Third, they declared, among other things:

"That his government had perverted his kingly office into a detestible and insupportable tyranny. By prompting our negroes to rise in arms against us, those very negroes whom, by an inhuman use of his negative, the king has refused us permission to exclude by law from our territory."

These Declarations of Rights, these fundamental principles of free government, found their way into the Declaration of Independence, and into the Constitution of the United States, and in the Constitution of the several States, and they have become the foundation and bedrock upon which all our greatness, as a people, has been builded, and they are as fixed and immovable in the hearts of American freemen, as are the eternal hills. And the people of Virginia, west of the Allegheny mountains, were the people who never forgot these sacred precepts; they were followed by this pillar of cloud through the day, and they were guided by it as by fire through the darkness of the night, when it afterward enveloped their country.

Is it any wonder, then, that the

hardy, bold and fearless men of Virginia, who were without fortunes, and who had only their labor and the power of their strong arms, and the courage of their patriotic souls, with which to make the battle of life, were impatient, restless, and discontented, when they found themselves coming daily into closer contact and competition with slave labor, and the emasculating evils which attend it?

The State of Virginia, with these firm principles fixed in the minds of her statesmen, and engraven in the hearts of her people, and intending to make them perpetual, with a generosity, and patriotic devotion to the general good of all, which is unsurpassed in the history of civilizations, ceded to the United States, on the 2d day of January, 1781, all her territory lying northwest of the Ohio river. This cession was made upon the expressed condition, "That neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the person has been duly convicted, should ever exist in this territory."

Out of this vast domain have since been created the great states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin—all the free gift of Virginia.

In the foundation of government laid in these states, we will find imbedded the same Declaration of Rights made by the people of Virginia.

These declarations and these rights were the possession and heritage of all the people of Virginia, who carried them with them wherever they went, over the mountains, across the rivers, into the prairies, southward into Texas, and westward to the Pacific Ocean. Every place where they set the sole of their foot, these sons

of Virginia, and their descendants, carried with them and planted these principles of free government.

Upon the soil of this State, at Fort Henry, where we now stand, at Point Pleasant, and in the valley of the Great Kanawha River, the white pioneers fought the savage Indian warriors for the possession and control of this State.

These Indians followed the great buffalo and elk trails which crossed this State, and through which the myriads of these wild creatures came for pasture and water, and through this State they have left their trails, which are as well marked today, and as well known to the white inhabitants as they were known in the early days to the Indian tribes.

In these wars between the settlers and the Indians, the white men obtained the mastery, and they have left this land to use, with all its blessings and benefits, and we trust a kind Providence will permit our children to possess it.

When the northwest territory was ceded, the hardy pioneers of Virginia, possessed of no money or property, but abounding in courage and patriotism, and anxious to establish for themselves homes, and acquire property, where none dare molest or make them afraid, with rifle and ax, ever followed by the faithful dog, with abounding courage and indomitable fortitude, one by one, family by family, took their way across the Allegheny Mountains into this western wilderness, which they found abounding in wild game, with a fertile soil, a mild climate, watered with streams as clear as crystal, which, for purity and cleansing, were better than

Abenar, Pharpar, and all the rivers over of Damascus.

By the banks of these rivers, in these fertile valleys, and among these hills, they felled the forests, built their cabins, erected their altars, and here they fought the wild beasts and savage men for the mastery of this country.

Here these hardy pioneers and their descendants have planted themselves, here they have lived, and loved, and died.

When the great war between the States began in 1861, when the proud old Commonwealth of Virginia had passed her Ordinance of Secession, and severed the ties of political life, which bound her to the American Union, she had, as these hardy Western Virginia pioneers believed, violated her Declaration of Rights, and had undertaken to carry them, without their consent, and against the majority of the community, into a great war, designed to subvert one of the principles upon which they believed the foundation of all government was erected, and that was, the right "to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, and the declaration that all men were by nature free and equal, and that of these rights they could not divest their posterity."

The people who then inhabited the counties west of the Allegheny mountains in Virginia, were a free, fair, and fearless people, and they were typical in every respect, of the legend which adorns the motto of the State of West Virginia: "Montani Semper Liberi—"Mountaineers are always free."

These were the men who were the

descendants of the early pioneers who, with rifle in hand, with rod and ax, took their weary way westward over the Allegheny mountains, into the untrod wilderness, to lay the foundations here of a great State, and to prepare the way for their posterity, and for the march of civilization and enlightenment.

And they brought with them, and laid in the foundations of this new State, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, and also the Declaration embodied in the cession of the northwest territory, and they believed, and inculcated the belief that the sentiment and principle embraced in the cession of the northwest territory belonged to the people of Virginia, and the country lying west of the Allegheny mountains, and they adhered to that conviction, with an unalterable tenacity, which they never relaxed, either in peace or in war, and for this principle thousands of them gave up their homes and surrendered their lives, to make it perpetual.

These men builded better than they knew, and under the inspiration of God, moved by a fervent patriotism, based upon sound principles, they made possible the formation of the new State of West Virginia.

In the war between the States, West Virginia furnished an army of 35,000 men—greater in number than all of the army under General Lee at the time of his surrender in 1865.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in this great war, these people west of the mountains, who were isolated from the old State of Virginia, while always taxed for its maintenance, should take sides in that war against the old State, especially when they

believed that the war was designed and intended, and if successful, on the part of the seceding States, would certainly result in the continuance, if not the perpetuation, of the institution of slavery, which was contrary to their religious and political convictions, and abhorrent to the Declaration of Rights.

The result was that the State of West Virginia was made a battleground in the war between the States. Her farms and fields were wasted, her people were scattered, her property was destroyed, the lives of her heroic sons were sacrificed, and the soil drank up her people's blood on the field of battle.

In West Virginia, this great highland country, standing way up here among the clouds, where the rivers have their sources, where the high mountains touch the sky, and where the graceful fronds of the tall cedar and hemlock trees wave their green branches among the clouds—'way up here in this highland country, men fought, and suffered, and starved, and died, to establish and confirm the principles of right, embodied in the Declaration made by the people of Virginia, on the 12th day of June, 1776.

The State of West Virginia is a great State, and its greatness is little known, and less understood beyond its borders, and is frequently and inaptly characterized, even by citizens of West Virginia, as the "Little Mountain State."

The State of West Virginia is greater in territorial extent than Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware and New Jersey combined, and the Thirteenth Senatorial district,

which I have the honor, with my distinguished colleague, to represent in the Senate of West Virginia, which is composed of the four great counties of Randolph, Barbour, Pendleton and Upshur, is greater in territorial extent than Delaware, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia.

Eleven counties of this State—Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel, Tyler, Pleasants, Wood, Jackson, Mason, Cabell, and Wayne—lie for three hundred miles upon and along the bed and banks of the Ohio river, and for one hundred and fifty miles six of the counties of this State—Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire, Mineral and Grant—lie upon the west bank of the Potomac river. It is a great State.

The State of West Virginia has an area of coal equal to the two States of New Hampshire and Vermont.

This State stands midway between the North and the South, between the East and the West, to the Mississippi River. Her population is now composed of people from every land, kindred, tribe, and tongue, but they all speak, think, and trust in Virginia's Declaration of Rights, and when the State of West Virginia was proclaimed, on the 20th day of June, 1863, the work had already been done, the foundations had already been laid, the superstructure had been erected for a mighty State.

Every man, woman and child, within the bounds of this State, rejoices now, that the unhappy days of servitude, of war, insurrections, and rebellion, have passed away.

The State of West Virginia has been endeared to its people, and they are moved with pride at the mention of

the sacrifices of their fathers, who came here to lay the foundations of this State.

They thrill with pride to be reminded that almost every hill, every mountain pass, every limpid stream of sparkling water, every fertile valley, every line of the frontier, has its thrilling story to tell of the valorous and historic deeds of the men and women who came into this country, and fought for the mastery of this fair land.

For fifty years our people have followed the pursuits of peace.

They have endeavored to pursue the paths of righteousness, to deal justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly before God.

The land has been blessed with peace and plenty. Its unsurpassed resources of coal, oil, gas, timber, and fertile soil, are in process of development. And in the richness of these resources, no people could be more blessed.

In the frugality, sobriety, and industry of her people, no State could be more fortunate. They dwell now in peace, among the hills of West Virginia, and in the pleasant valleys, till the fields together, and share, each with the other, his brothers' toil.

No more the thirsty entrance of this soil shall daub her lips with her own children's blood; No more shall trenching war channel her fields, nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs of hostile races;

Those opposed eyes, which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven, all of one nature, of one substance bred,

Did lately meet in the intestine shock, and furious butchery.

Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks, march all one way, and be no more opposed against acquaintance, kindred, and allies: The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife, no more shall cut his master.

And now, after the lapse of half a hundred years, the people of this State, with grateful hearts, and with a firm reliance in the guidance and protection of that God in whom their fathers put their trust, rededicate and reconsecrate this State to the principles of liberty, justice, frugality, temperance, and virtue.

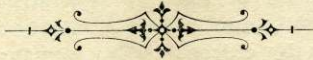
In this consecration, we are relying upon the power of God, the God of our fathers, whose goodness, and whose grace, shall be unchanged when all the worlds which He hath made, have ceased their revolutions.

When the sun that burns in yonder sky has poured his last, his dying glory o'er the remains of space, still God shall be the same, in love, in majesty, and in mercy.

So relying on faith in Him, we look confidently toward the future, and to the next fifty years of our history as a State—and we shall not find hope disappointed, nor reliance vain.

Philippi, W. Va.,

June 14th, 1913.



CONGRES

