

fill a national need. It involved no military exploit and was not a grave national emergency. But it nevertheless manifested the strong and abiding interest of Marylanders in the strength and success of the new nation. I mentioned a moment ago that the United States received its capital from the State of Maryland. It happened in 1791, when it became known that a new city was to be built to serve as the seat of the national government. Maryland, by an Act of the General Assembly, promptly ceded to the federal government the land that now comprises the District of Columbia. And today the city of Washington is virtually surrounded by our State. The United States Capital was the gift of Maryland.

Nor was this gift of 1791 the only time the State of Maryland offered the national government its terrain and territory as an official seat of government. There was an earlier occasion, and it is this occasion of Maryland generosity to the struggling young national government that appeals to me most.

It happened in 1783, when the national government—at the time of the Continental Congress—also was hunting for a place to meet. It had been to Philadelphia, and had been grossly insulted there. So that, it moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where it had been compelled to work in intolerably cramped quarters. Where was it to turn to find a meeting place of safety and of suitable dignity? That was the question before it, and Maryland supplied the answer. Maryland offered its handsome new State House and its charming capital city, a truly princely gesture.

Need I say that Congress accepted the offer? And that Annapolis, in 1783, became our national capital? Need I? I am sure that we Marylanders know about this, but how much of it is a part of our thoughts as we consider our lovely Annapolis today? Do we remember the year when the eyes of the whole nation turned toward us, when George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe were familiar figures upon the streets of Annapolis? When we go into our State House, do we recall that its walls echoed with Jefferson's voice, as he called upon Congress to take the action that would make us an independent nation—that is, to ratify the treaty with Great Britain that formally ended our War for Independence?

Another instance in which Maryland met an emergency for the whole American nation occurred within a few miles of where we are here this evening. It occurred on August 27, 1776, when, on Long Island, the newly formed and as yet untrained American army lay almost surrounded by a mighty force of British regulars, supported by