

## Address of Welcome

By President Pro Tem John Quincy Adams

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This is a copy of the Address of Welcome delivered by President Pro Tem John Quincy Adams during an April 17, 1896 organizational meeting at the Hotel Normandie, New York City.

As Chairman of your Order, it devolves upon me, as a pleasant duty to extend you a cordial welcome on this occasion, in behalf of the incorporators. We are met for the purpose of electing you as Charter Members in an organization that stands as preeminently American; it requires that we have our ancestry in an unbroken line, from the pioneers of the first fifty years of Colonization through patriots of the Revolution --thus embracing two of the most important epochs in the history of our country.

We may speak with pride of our colonial ancestors, for in considering the settlement of America, two points must be clearly established: in the first place, that the people who came to America during the first fifty years of colonization were pioneers; in the second place, that those who have come here since, have come as emigrants. That a distinction should be drawn between pioneers and emigrants is manifest when we consider the work that these two classes perform.

The pioneer is one who has in his soul a spark of fire that impels him to look beyond the narrow streets of his native town, the confines of his paternal farm that he may find for this spark, fresh and unsullied atmosphere. And thus we find him, axe in hand, blazing his path through the virgin forest, penetrating the dreary wastes of the desert, or crossing the trackless oceans, ever impelled forward toward an uncertain destiny.

It is the pioneer who awakens in the morning with a feeling that he is being drawn toward the setting sun by an irresistible impulse; and yielding to this impulse, he opens to mankind new fields. He shows to his brothers that the wonders of the world lie beyond; he solves for man the most important questions in science by the discoveries.

Climbing to the height of some steep mountain by torturous steps, the pioneer stands on its summit and peers at the grand scene that lies spread before him. He sees valleys more beautiful than he has known, a nobler river, and a forest more vast. Turning towards his brothers, he calls, "Here lies a nobler land than you know of, Come, cross these mountains", and arising, they follow him. Man makes another progression.

In all the ages man has had his pathfinders. The Jews had their Moses, who led them to the Promised Land, the Greeks had their Alexander, who took his people from the narrow confines of Macedonia, to give them as a heritage a domain embracing Turkey, Persia, India, Egypt. Yet, it was reserved for the English to have as their pathfinders those who would lay open to man a

land that was not to be held in the narrow limits of the Promised Land of Moses, that was not to yield even to Alexander's conquests as sufficient to be spoken of in the same breath. From the days when the first tribes of the Aryan family began to wonder from the plateaus of Persia, down to the landing of Colonists in America, the path of progress has been blazed, through Europe to the Western Coast of Ireland, a distance of three thousand miles, and it had taken three thousand years. Let us turn, then, to contrast the achievements of the Continental pathfinders, with those of our own.

With the landing of the first pioneers at Jamestown and Plymouth, our forefathers began their work of blazing a path to liberty for the down-trodden of the world.

They pushed one and on, westward, ever westward. Valleys and rivers were crossed that surpassed in grandeur and extent those of the old world. Mountains were met that made the alps seem insignificant. Yet they were scaled, and as a fitting achievement, for their first discovery, on climbing to the summit to one of the Sierras, the pioneers' eyes rested on the setting sun as it dipped in the crimson waters of the grand Pacific.

The British pioneer had snatched the tomahawk from red-skinned savages, and blazed in less than three hundred years, a path three thousand miles in length, which opened a land that is capable of being the asylum of the peoples of the world.

This is the accomplishment that was made possible through the efforts of the pioneers who landed at Jamestown or Plymouth during the first fifty years of colonization. It is most fitting that we should hold up to reverence these men who were the architects on whose plans we do but build.

Ours would indeed be a worthy Order, did we require no stronger claims for eligibility than that we descended from pioneer ancestors; yet in founding our Order, the Clause of Eligibility proposed by Col. Prime, which stipulates that our line of descent come down through Revolutionary Patriots, makes our Order doubly significant. For turning from the Colonial epoch, we may dwell upon the deeds of the Revolution, knowing that we, one and all, had ancestors who braved death in the war against oppression -- from Lexington to Yorktown, from Champlain to the Mississippi. We may rejoice that we descend from those heroes, who lived in an age that tried men's souls, and who came forth from their ordeals - triumphant and unsullied.

It is my belief that the Founders and Patriots of America look down from the high battlements of Heaven, and that they note with joy that we are taking gigantic strides in advancing they work they began. They see that where they, at landing, had to blaze their paths, did they penetrate but an arrow-shot into the virgin forest, there now spreads waving cornfield, and prosperous villages. The fathers find that where they had stopped to quench their thirst at some dashing mountain stream, we, their children, have erected mills that, turned by Nature's inexhaustible power, furnish products for the markets of the world. The pioneers and patriots see that we are toiling with the same vigor and are imbued with the same patriotism that they displayed. Only our

efforts are expanded in other fields. We may rejoice that Peace smiles upon us, and that the grim visage of War is but a memory.

And we may ever hope to dwell in harmony among ourselves and the world, if we keep to the principles which our fathers provided. Men come and go and parties may change, but the principles of the American people are constant. We, as a nation, have pledged ourselves to give man his liberty. He may worship his God under the cross or the crescent. He may bend his knee in the synagogue or at the altar of Buddha. He still will give him the hand of friendship, if he do but pledge himself to uphold the principles of our country. There is to us by one creed that every American must accept, and that is our Federal Constitution.

We, as an order, will perform our greatest work if we install in the people a deep reverence for the Founders and Patriots of their country. Let the deeds and words of the early settlers become familiar in the household of today and their influence will be potent.

Let me revert to the pioneer in closing. I would paint you a picture that stands out clearly in my memory's hall.

The picture presents the land of the Pilgrims. The chafing waves of an angry winter's sea are dashing against the rugged shore of Massachusetts. On a rock that projects far into the sea -- a rock that has now become the most beloved possession of Americans, but which then as a point of observation for the red-skin -- stands the stalwart form of the chief of the Massasoits. He is there in the early morn to bid defiance to the day and to look his sun god in the face with eyes that never flinched. Scanning the broad main, his eye rests on a speck that is far out to sea. Little by little this tiny object approaches, until the outline of the Mayflower is distinguishable. The silent watcher on the shore has no misgiving at the sight of this single craft, for behind him in the forest, within call, are his trusty band, and behind them, even to the Pacific, are spread countless thousands of his brethren. This chief does not dream that on the boat that comes to anchor there is being housed a soul that is immortal, that is destined to drive him and his race from the face of the earth -- the soul of Progress and Liberty. He does not know that the little band of Pilgrims who disembark and approach him are invincible. But when his eye meets theirs and he sees them to be men with eye clear, brain sober and soul pure, the dauntless Indian for the first time turns his back to the rising sun and begins his retreat toward the Pacific.

Again, let me congratulate you on behalf of the incorporators upon your being Charter Members of so noble an Order as the Founders and Patriots of America. I will take advantage of this occasion to express my deep appreciation to the incorporates for the honor they have bestowed upon me by calling me to the President's chair, during the period of organization and this our initial meeting as an Order.