



Heritage Academy's

INDEPENDENCE

Fall 2016

UNCHAMPIONED LIBERTY

Our Mission

Thomas Jefferson stated, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” It is the goal of Independence and Heritage Academy as a whole to keep our nation from a state of ignorance. To accomplish this, Independence will promote learning through the essays of Heritage Academy scholars.

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Freedom in this Country: Then and Now

Donovan Blau

Freedom. It's a part of our lives that people do not quite notice as much as they should. Our ancestors and predecessors struggled to find a place where they could live a life of freedom. The colonists lived happily for a while, but then they were forced to start giving up freedoms once again. However, this time they had enough, and started to rebel. And they fought; they fought and died so that this country could live a life of freedom, a life with choices, a life where we could live the way we wanted to. There were people from different countries that came to fight because they understood why freedom was important and wanted to help others achieve it. Lafayette, a leader during this time, once said, "...I will now tell you of the country [America] and its inhabitants. They are as agreeable as my enthusiasm had painted them. Simplicity of manners, kindness, love of country and of liberty, and a delightful equality everywhere prevail" (Lafayette 52). He had a love for freedom and what that freedom did to a country. He knew that few would have to make a sacrifice for the many. Unfortunately, that sacrifice and struggle is not recognized as frequently as it should be in today's world. We go throughout our days living with the rights and freedoms that have been fought for, but we do not realize the impact on our lives that they are making. Some of the things that we overlook in our everyday lives are some of the freedoms which have been given to us, how they affect every one of us today, and what we could be doing to appreciate them in the way they deserve.

The Constitution of the United States is an extremely powerful document that tells

everybody just exactly what our freedoms are. The articles tell us the duties of our government, but the amendments tell us all about our freedoms. Just the first amendment says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" (Constitution 21). The very first amendment of The Bill of Rights is probably the most important of all 27 of them. It tells us how Government cannot interfere with our choice of religion, our freedom of speech and press, or our freedom to assemble and to petition. When the Bill of Rights was compiled, its creators knew exactly what needed protection, what kind of rights or beliefs would be targeted and attacked. In just the next amendment it says, "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a Free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" (Constitution 21). Yet another subject that the Founding Fathers understood would be important; they put this in because they knew it would be a sore subject. And they were entirely correct.

The previously mentioned amendments affect our lives in such a good way but few truly realize it. The rights given to the people of the United States of America from Amendment One are extremely underappreciated. That single statement relays to us the ability to practice the religion of our choosing. Because of it we can rally and we can protest and we can write articles that we want to write. We can speak freely

because we have the freedom to do so. And with the second amendment we have been given rights of extreme importance as well. Ben Franklin said to George Washington once that:

when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does... Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best (Franklin 71).

Benjamin Franklin himself praised the value of the Constitution. So why is it that in today's world people take these gifts and try to get rid of them? There are people constantly trying to get rid of some of these rights. For example, some want gun control because having a gun is a "risk". Yet, our country was built upon the risks of men. There are people who would punish a child in school for praying over his lunch. After all those years of struggling to gain religious freedom? People do not realize what an amazing privilege they have been given. And there is no reason for that at all.

So what can a person do? They are given a wonderful gift and there are people trying to convince them to throw it away. And those people might succeed because the gift is barely ever thought about. Freedom is

something that is not usually thought about on a day to day basis. In Washington's Farewell Address, he says:

I shall carry it with me to my grave as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it (Washington 81).

In easy to understand words, we have made something beautiful and marvelous. We banded together and created a land; a land which belongs to the free and is a home to the brave. We need to remember that fact every day, that the land we live in was not just given to us like this. It was because of the blood and the sweat and the tears of those before us that we live in a time where we can choose how to live our life. We too must work for this land so that those who come after us will be able to have an even better life than we do.



“So Great an Object” Benjamin Hill

Is liberty, that ultimate goal, free? The thought makes logic tremble. Liberty is not free; that we have found through the mountainous history of our country, with its incredible hardships, such as the wars which devastated the land. However, there are more important kinds of wars than physical. Words can cut sharper and deeper than knives. This makes wars of opinion potentially more devastating than even the corporeal problems. Although freedom has “free” in its name, it is anything but free.

The foremost and most obvious way that freedom comes with a price is in the process of wars. Many wars have come and gone in this country, in which we have fought vigilantly for our liberty. The most striking instance of a man advocating for this warfare for independence is in Patrick Henry’s speech at the Virginia Convention, “Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death.” In this speech, he argues that the colonies have procrastinated the fight against Britain for too long, and that there is no reason they should not begin. He asks of the crowd, “But when shall we be stronger? Will it be next week, or the next year?... Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction?” (Henry 32). His questions exemplify the situation the members of the convention were in: stuck in a corner with no other option other than to declare war on the tyranny of the British. Patrick Henry continues, saying, “Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!” (Henry 32). In other words, freedom is worth everything that can be given it, including one’s own life. This quote is quite well-known, all except for the last part.

The way that part in particular is worded shows just how absurd he believes the idea to be, that we should sell our freedom for a life of misery. The idea is utterly ludicrous! The American Revolution was not simply a war for independence from Great Britain; it was also a war for hope, liberty, and – to some, the most important – the right to worship God as they wished. Clearly, Patrick Henry understood this point because he had wonderful insight into the intents of his country and the people in it. Singlehandedly, he refuted all arguments to wait longer for war. However, though the members of the Virginia Convention were convinced by his moving speech, the road would be far rockier ahead.

Along with fighting comes sacrifice, and not only physical wars require such. Thomas Paine wrote a document which works excellently in illustrating this point. He stated, “’Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death” (Paine 50). In other words, people with a strong determination will do and sacrifice anything, including their lives, to achieve it. Benjamin Franklin is an exceptional model for this kind of attitude. He said in one of his speeches to Congress that he did not entirely agree with the Constitution as it stood at the time of voting, but,

I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information... to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to

doubt my own judgement, and to pay more respect to the judgement of others. (Constitution 70)

Franklin, in his incredible wisdom, decided to put aside even his own highly enlightened opinion in favor of the common good. In doing so, he made an impression on the other delegates, prompting them to remember to act for the good of the people, not for their own pride. This is a difficult sacrifice to make, and this type in particular seems to require high intelligence paired with close introspection and retrospection, all of which Franklin had. Usually, we can get along without the object we are sacrificing, but our pride has us ignore this within ourselves. However, despite the difficulty of the required sacrifice, Franklin made it and cleared the way for others to do the same, by inviting them to follow his example and put aside their own views for the common good.

And last, but never least, freedom necessitates the ability to work as a team, with each other, and with God. Displaying the essentiality of such a skill, Thomas Paine wrote in his paper “The Crisis” the following statement: “Better to have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake” (Paine 49). It is far better to have many people working toward the same goal than only one, alone, unaccompanied in the cause. This “great object” is obviously the liberty of the United States, which was at the time this was written still under attack by the British in the Revolutionary War. During this war, and alongside this form of working together, was another form of such an idea: following the Lord. Ezra Stiles conveys this idea through a sermon in 1783, in which he says that “God will not forsake his people; for whom he has

done such marvelous things” (Stiles 60). The supposition that God even played a part in this country’s history may stun many, but scores of others, including many of the Founding Fathers, believe it to be true. On any account, it cannot be completely discounted. The first phrase of this quote – God will not forsake his people – brings a profound idea: God watches over this country. Even nonbelievers must admit that it would be comforting to have a Deity on their side. Using this as a base, it can be inferred that the Founders relied on God to aid in the establishment of the now-great nation of America. Again in the wise words of Franklin, “If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?” (Address of Prayer 69). This weighty question only proves how much the Founders relied upon Him to support the blossoming nation. America was instituted on the principles of working together toward a common goal, as well as working with God to establish something that will persist for years and generations to come.

Freedom must be fought for with words, and with knives if need be. It is necessary to do everything we can to win that liberty. But if that is not enough, we must turn to God; “[He] will not forsake his people” (Stiles 60). Remember always to fight for freedom; it is not free, despite its name, and it is fought for daily by many. There is no sacrifice possible that is too large for the cause of retaining liberty. “Better to have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake” (Paine 49).

Freedom is More Than Just a Word

Justin Mortensen

What does freedom mean? Freedom is defined as, “the power to determine action without restraint” (*Freedom*, Dictionary.com). Basically, this means freedom is the right to choose, but is there a bigger meaning behind the word?

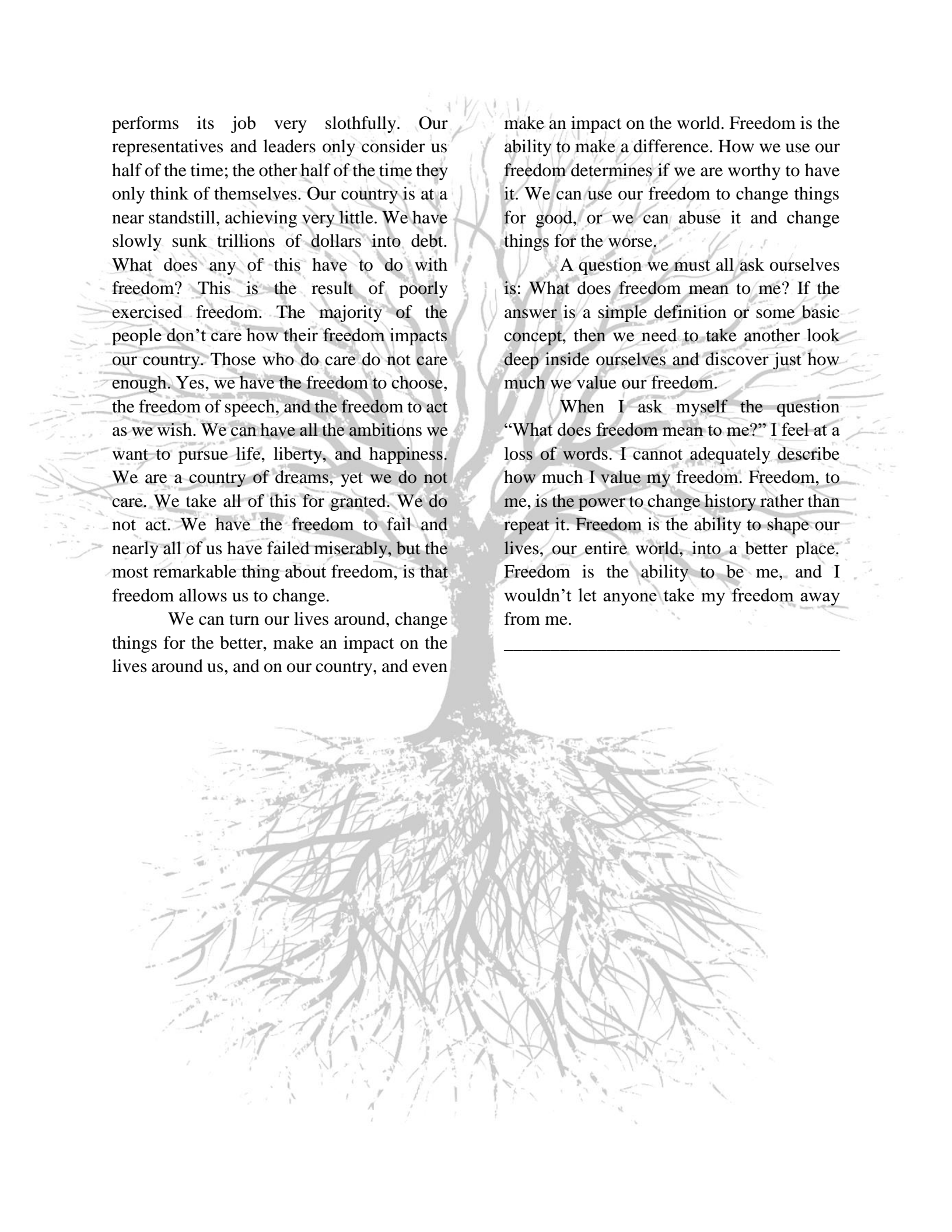
Freedom is more than just the right to choose. It is a way of life. The United States of America is unique in the world, as it was founded on principles of freedom. There are countries such as Qatar or Andorra that are ruled by a monarchy (Bhadra). There are other countries such as China that are governed by Communism (*How China*). Neither of these forms of government are based on freedom of the people. Freedom can be found; however, no freedom is secure. Our Founding Fathers knew how strong the tool of freedom could be, yet they also knew how delicate it was to hold together. Here we are, hundreds of years later, and we still enjoy the way of life known as freedom.

Is freedom actually free? The answer is no. Freedom never has been, never is, and never will be free. We were given our freedom as a gift from the Founders of our country, but that gift was paid for by the pain and suffering of the American colonists. George Washington once said that the liberty we possess is the work of “joint councils, and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings, and successes” (Washington 83). Since then, the upkeep price of our freedom has been paid in blood, and the lives of our citizens. Despite the steep cost of freedom, many seem to take it for granted. We seem to assume that we will always have our freedom no matter what happens, but the truth is this: freedom only exists if you truly care about it.

All throughout history, people have fought for their freedom. Examples include the Revolutionary War of France, the Cuban uprising, and our very own break away from Britain. As Ezra Stiles said, “[L]et us recollect, with affectionate honor, the bold and brave sons of freedom, who willingly offered themselves, and bled in the defense of their country” (Ezra Stiles 60). But not all of these revolutions were successful in establishing freedom. Why? Because freedom is not a right, it is a privilege. Because the people who led these failed uprisings didn’t care about freedom enough to keep the freedom they had fought for.

Even in our own country, we see a lack of care. Our country was founded on virtue, principles, freedom, and rights. We were considered “One nation, under God.” Our Founding Fathers wanted to make sure that those who fought for our country did not die in vain. They said “that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth” (Lincoln 169). Now we have tossed out everything good our nation once valued. We have ripped out the very heart of our country. We still have freedom, but at what cost? Without the heart of our country, freedom does us little good. We are but a shell of our former country. We have surrendered our power to the government, and the government exceeds even that power which it is allowed. We are in a dangerous situation. We have gambled our freedom on a corrupt government.

The government we have still serves the people like it was meant to, but it



performs its job very slothfully. Our representatives and leaders only consider us half of the time; the other half of the time they only think of themselves. Our country is at a near standstill, achieving very little. We have slowly sunk trillions of dollars into debt. What does any of this have to do with freedom? This is the result of poorly exercised freedom. The majority of the people don't care how their freedom impacts our country. Those who do care do not care enough. Yes, we have the freedom to choose, the freedom of speech, and the freedom to act as we wish. We can have all the ambitions we want to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. We are a country of dreams, yet we do not care. We take all of this for granted. We do not act. We have the freedom to fail and nearly all of us have failed miserably, but the most remarkable thing about freedom, is that freedom allows us to change.

We can turn our lives around, change things for the better, make an impact on the lives around us, and on our country, and even

make an impact on the world. Freedom is the ability to make a difference. How we use our freedom determines if we are worthy to have it. We can use our freedom to change things for good, or we can abuse it and change things for the worse.

A question we must all ask ourselves is: What does freedom mean to me? If the answer is a simple definition or some basic concept, then we need to take another look deep inside ourselves and discover just how much we value our freedom.

When I ask myself the question "What does freedom mean to me?" I feel at a loss of words. I cannot adequately describe how much I value my freedom. Freedom, to me, is the power to change history rather than repeat it. Freedom is the ability to shape our lives, our entire world, into a better place. Freedom is the ability to be me, and I wouldn't let anyone take my freedom away from me.

Time is Running Out

Samuel Reynolds

Throughout the course of Mrs. Palmer's American History class, she would take multiple opportunities to share experiences with her classes from previous years at Heritage. On one occasion, she recalled a scholar standing up and proclaiming that "Freedom doesn't work. It *is* work." As that variation on Mr. Dalton's famous saying is true, I would like to make my own version of the phrase "Freedom Works." Throughout this year and many of its predecessors, I have come to realize the truth of this new statement: "Freedom doesn't work *without* work." This is the premise of my paper, and I hope that the words I speak will provoke our thoughts and turn our minds back to the essential principles of American Freedom. In order to do that, however, we must travel back to the days of the past, and observe for ourselves the crucial lessons of freedom taught through bitter hardship and unimaginable sacrifice.

One of the many Founders who demonstrated that freedom requires sacrifice is George Washington. Throughout the American Revolution, he led the Continental Army through harsh weather conditions, bloody battles with the British, and the eventual surrender at Yorktown in 1781. When Washington's time as the President came to somber close, he delivered these excellent words of wisdom in his Farewell Address on September 19, 1796.

This government, the offspring of our own choice...has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of

true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitution of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. (Washington 87)

This statement cannot be faltered. As he outlined, Washington states that the government we have in America was the result of the choices we made, not the choices of anyone else. This makes us accountable for the state of our own government. If the Constitution of the United States is the law of the land, then it is the mandate of every man, woman, and child to follow that sacred document and abide by its principles. Such duties that Washington explained are the responsibility of every American citizen. Without obeying, respecting, following, and consenting to the Constitution, we cannot enjoy the Freedoms that it safeguards. And unless we as the people *work* to preserve the Constitution and our liberty, no matter what the cost may be, then the counsel given by Washington and many of the other Founding Fathers would serve no purpose and thus become meaningless. Disregarding the Founders' counsel has only proven to be unwise.

To look at the opposite effects, also known as ignorance and apathy, Willard Cleon Skousen describes many of them in his book, *The Naked Communist*. He begins

with, "What is wrong with our 'state of mind?' First and foremost we have been thinking the way the Communists want us to think" (Skousen 120). What does Skousen mean by this statement? In the chapter, he points out many of the current goals of Communism, and allows the reader to take in the reality of each and every one. From accepting propaganda on total disarmament, to the breakdown of the family unit and morals of society, and even to the promotion of vulgarity, homosexuality, and the slandering of the American Founders and the Constitution, it is easy for one to have uneasy feelings about these horrific ambitions. Unfortunately, many of these Communistic principles are being implemented in our society today, and I would hope that we can recognize many of them, though some would rather be left uncovered. These are the impending outcomes if we neglect to work for our freedoms. Let me paint a mental picture with this scenario.

Imagine a typical family in a society that is similar to America today. Liberty is its foundation, but corruption and lust for power are threats to freedom. Though the family is aware of these issues, they simply believe someone else can fight the fight and preserve liberty for the rising generation. When the parents are invited to participate in political rallies, primary elections or even consulting with state representatives, they turn the offers down because they would rather be involved in affairs with their family and friends, such as sporting, school, or social events. Then, as time progresses, the problems in the country grow exceedingly severe, there is an economic collapse, and any shred of a humane society is gone. Suddenly, the military takes control of what remains in the states and begins to execute any and all

citizens that fail to comply with their orders. In what seems but a short moment, the husband's wife and children are brutally executed before his very eyes. He is gagged, blindfolded, and the next thing he knows, he is beaten and lying on the ground with a pistol aimed at his forehead. With only a few moments to live, his last thoughts turn to a sorrowful regret, and he thinks to himself, "If only I had done my part in preserving this nation's freedom, I wouldn't be waiting here helplessly to die. I should've chosen to fight when I had the chance." This idea is not as far-fetched as it sounds.

Skousen outlines the Communistic goals to show their prevalence in today's world. From the scenario that was given, we can see a possible result if the divine obligation of preserving liberty is neglected for too long. Hopefully, the day will come when every American will realize the corruptions and evils plaguing his once great nation, will have the burning desire to fight for the freedoms that have not yet been revoked, and rally a battle cry among his peers to rise above the clutches of the hellish claws of Tyranny itself. There will never be any regrets in upholding and defending liberty, even if it be with your very life, your fortune, and your sacred honor.

Even if a world that grows more vulnerable and corrupt every day, there is still hope. Though it may be dim, there is still a light to be seen in the dark and dreary forest of our society. To turn to comfort, one can read the remarks of President Ronald Reagan from his first inaugural address on January 20, 1981:

We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding-we are going to be act, beginning today...Above all, we must

realize that no arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women. It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have. It is a weapon that we as Americans do have...[and with] our best effort, and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds; to believe that together, with God's help, we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us. And, after all, why shouldn't we believe that? We are Americans. (150, 153,155)

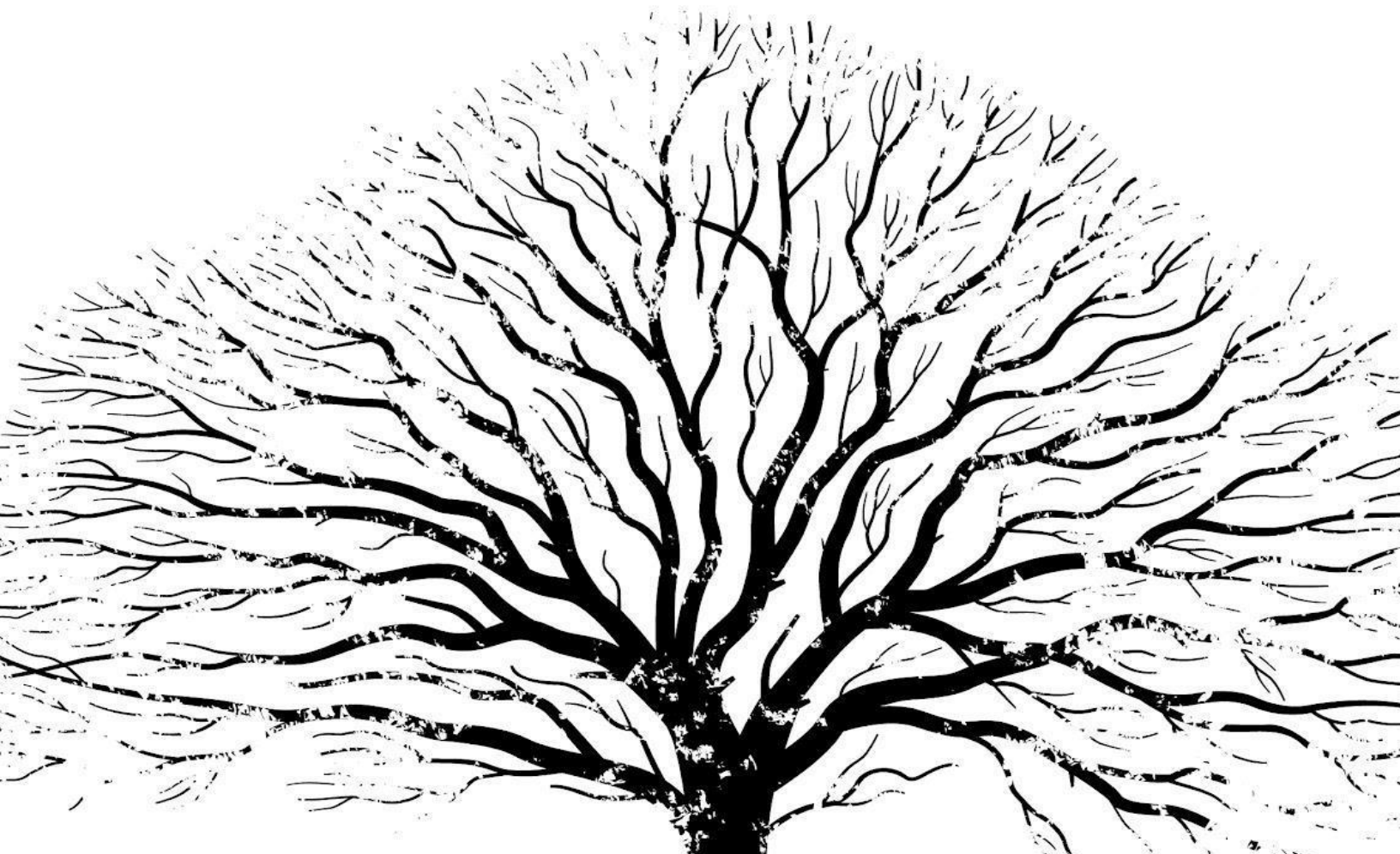
There is nothing more that is needed to make this deliberation more profound. Fortunately, Reagan points out American characteristics that allow us to preserve our freedom. Agency is a key factor in determining if liberty will survive in a nation. All choices possess consequences, whether for better or for worse, and those outcomes are unavoidable. If the Congress makes a foolish decision and constructs an unconstitutional law, if it is implemented, it rips away the agency of the American people. Fortunately, the choices of many people can lead to necessary change, and I know that if we use our agency wisely, we will be able to secure better footing for America to push forward in the many difficult and trying years ahead of us.

I feel deeply indebted to the great nation we live in today. Due to the strife and eventual success of liberty-loving Americans nearly 239 years ago, we now live in a world where such freedom can exist through virtuous and enlightened decisions. Though it may seem like there is little left to hold on to, I know that America will not fall. There is no need for us to shun the fight simply because we believe there is no hope in allowing the

nation to continue. This should not be the attitude in approaching this responsibility. If we rise up as "We the People" with a hope in saving this nation from teetering off the edge into an endless abyss of tyranny, we can save America. You may be thinking to yourself, "What on earth can I do? My contribution would be merely insignificant." That kind of attitude toward liberty is what kills it. In the American Revolution, only three percent of the colonists fought for their independence. Due to those valiant fighters, they earned liberty for a new nation. That is the same situation our country is in today. There are very few who are willing to fight for such a noble cause, and though that saddens me, it does not lead me away from what I know to be right. If you believe that you cannot fight for your freedoms, whether you are sixteen or ninety-six, I would strongly advise you to perform a thorough reality check. In this never-ending conflict between the freedoms and privileges we enjoy in our lives and the ruthless tyranny that never ceases to combat them, there is something that every individual in America can do to ensure that our freedoms will be protected and guarded for the future generations to experience. What can you and I do to aid in this fight? Here are some possible examples: attending political rallies, becoming a citizen lobbyist in the State Capitol, or even considering running for an elected office. However, these types of actions may not be everyone's cup of tea. If you believe you can do nothing else, the sole obligation of every American is to educate themselves on the principles found in the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence. Found in those sacred documents are the clear and distinct truths of Freedom and self-government, both of which have been applied this year in our

American History experience. However, simply skimming through these documents is an unacceptable excuse for inaction. Along with educating yourself on these words, you must also inform yourself of those running for elected offices so that you can ensure candidates understand and follow the Constitution. And education would be nothing if you weren't also obligated to share your knowledge and discoveries with those all around you. With much that there is still to do in bringing America back to its rightful state, we as the rising generation must not

neglect the work it will take to secure our freedom for ourselves and our future posterity. And the only way we will be able accomplish such a task to preserve our nation is by working both individually and together. Freedom can only exist in a nation of workers, not a nation of slackers. To conclude, I wish to combine the lyrics of two songs from the band "Sons of Liberty". "It's time to make a stand my friends, stop living for today. Put the fear outside your head, and say, 'I'm alive, and I'm awake.'...Liberty or Tyranny? It's your choice to make."



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“WITHOUT AMBITION ONE STARTS
NOTHING. WITHOUT WORK ONE
FINISHED NOTHING. THE PRIZE
WILL NOT BE SENT TO YOU. YOU
HAVE TO WIN IT.”
-RALPH WALDO EMERSON



HERITAGE ACADEMY

"Building America's Heroes"