

Armistice Day Address, WEWOKA  
November 11th, 1936.

Eighteen years ago today and in this hour the great guns of the Western Front thundered into a somber silence. The great guns, with their muzzles pointed toward the sky, standing in brooding rows, surrounded by their kakki clad friends; surrounded by silence after thunderous sound, standing like sentinels frozen in death; with shadows huddled almost at their base cast by the fast approaching noonday sun; the great guns amidst the living and amidst the dead thundered into brooding silence. Their chore was finished, their duty done. Peace had been declared.

In wondering silence, too, a million men stood, scarcely grasping the full import of the silence. Peace had again come to the world. Life was again assured to those who hourly had expected death.

Not only were those men, but all the world, held in momentary awe and astonishment. Had peace really come?

Then the truth dawned upon the world and great shout of rejoicing and happiness went up. Teaming millions back of the lines in frenzied happiness rejoiced that loved ones and kindred would be returned to them. (in health and whole of limb.)

But there were those who died on the fields of Flanders and of France, died amidst the screaming shells and the enfilading fire of machine guns, (died with their faces bravely fronting the foe.) Those who cannot be here today, friends who did not return, and for them we can but pause in silence and breath a prayer that such men have lived. Theirs was a sacrifice of duty, heroes all, (may they rest in peace. We are only left with tenderest memories and an aching void.)

Eighteen fleeting years have journeyed into the past. The boys that were soldiers of that day are middle aged men of this day. They have children of their own (blooming into the estate of men and women.) Those soldier boys of the great war have rendered as heroic service in times of peace as in war. They comprise the backbone and the fighting strength of the citizenship of today. They deserve the same high acclaim as citizens as they did as fighting men. The nation should be and the nation is as proud of them in the business suit as in the khaki brown. And it is our wish and hope that the sons and daughters of those gallant men find it within themselves to develop the same sturdy characteristics as upheld their fathers. We hope and wish that they may develop and possess the same hardy selfsufficiency, the same strong self reliance, the strength to practice self denial in upholding honor of manhood and womanhood as did their fathers before them. The same frank patriotism to their country and government as belonged to their parents. Let us hope and pray for strength in them to avoid being a mendicant patriot, subsisting upon the public accounts relying upon government for sustenance and support. For such are but beggars bought for a certain sum by government and the same supplicant frame of mind will permit and oft times prompt the selling out of one's government for a prompt down payment.

It was in strength of character that this nation was builded. It is in strength of character that it must be maintained. The children of today are the citizenship of tomorrow. (If they be not strong and worthy, if they be not self disciplined, if they be not capable of practicing self denial for a worthy objective, then this nation must perish from the earth.) Upon the children of today the nation of tomorrow depends for its greatness. (Greatness is

not predicated upon a weak citizenship. So let us hope and pray that the children of those who were soldiers but yesterday will prove as brave and strong as their fathers. And let our children strive in strength of character to excel their parents; upon this premise is the nation's safety assured. Let us hope that the children of those strong men will not weaken into demanding a social security for themselves as slaves of a government or an apparent condition but that, in the strength of body and mind and a belief in their individual capacities, they will demand, as their fathers did, AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY to carve their niche in the halls of time. It is a confession of weakness in one's capabilities to seek a sordid security rather than a glorious opportunity.

Now eighteen years have flown let us pause and take stock of our nation and the changing times; take stock of the opportunities before us and the menace of a false step, remembering that it is only safe to be guided by the light of experience. We have no adequate means of judging the future except by the past.

Like a mighty picture <sup>made</sup> contrived by the dexterous hands of some long dead master, the history of our country appears before us. We note the tiny ships bearing the patriots of yore to the shores of our nation in search of religious freedom, in search for liberty of thought and action. We see them settled and by the might of their sturdy strength grow into thirteen forciful colonies. We see them accomplish the Revolution (and wrest their freedom from despotism's grasp). We see them set up their own government founded upon the Rights of Man. We view the blessings that have come to us by reason of that government; blessings both necessary and essential to make us a happy and prosperous people.

Blessings that have in a bare one hundred and fifty years placed us head and shoulders above all others nations. A nation of more conveniences, comforts, opportunities; a nation of more schools and churches; a nation of peaceful thoughts and a neighborly consideration for other peoples. Under a government that was wise and frugal; that restrained men from injuring one another, but left them free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvements, and that forbade the taking from the hands of men the fruits of their labor or achievement; a government that encouraged self initiative, that protected individual achievement. Under such a government we have prospered into our greatness.

Then we see the coming of additional states, the purchase of the great estate of Louisiana. We count the myriad host travelling from the East to West to populate the plains and forests of that section west of the Mississippi. We see them come in ox drawn wagons seeking opportunity to hew a new home out of the forest. We see them self sufficient, resourceful beyond our present understanding. With their hands they could contrive for all their needs, they were not afraid to work. They refused to become dependent upon others, they labored with their own strength of character and body and mind. They asked no man for aid and scorned all proffered assistance as unbecoming a worthy citizen. From such as these the nation grew by leaps and bounds. When such men live and strive success is inevitable. So our nation continued its progressive stride; selfreliant, resourceful, mighty.

Then again we saw them journeying into the far West. There raising up a mighty section, contributing a vast addition to the growing nation. There we found the same strong men, the same

helpful womanhood; the same strength of character and might of brawn and brain. Marvels were accomplished, the nation continued its steady progress. It was the strength of manhood and womanhood, under the encouragement of a beneficent government, that made all this possible. Can it be thought that the sons and daughters of such as these will not continue to bear the banner forward? If self denial and frugality accomplished the greatness of the past can we believe that the future will not find the same strength of character, of mind and body, of resourcefulness and initiative, in the children of those stalwart citizens? A diversity was but a strengthening influence to them, can we expect less of their children? The onward march demands it, the unity and strength of our nation demands it, common sense and respectability demands it. I, for one, have sufficient confidence in the children of today and the citizenship of tomorrow to believe that the might of our nation, the strength of our government, the contentment of our people will be maintained. But hardship must not be avoided, self denial must be practiced, moral stamina must be maintained and absolute belief in one's own capabilities must be fostered; otherwise we are lost.

Then we saw the nation develop from a few millions to a hundred million and more. We saw the mountains and the forests and the plains give up their wealth to progress. We saw the hills and the valleys dotted with school houses and churches, breathing strength of character and genial goodfellowship. We saw our victorious arms strike the shackles of slavery from helpless men and women at home and abroad. We saw the glistening steel of the railroads span the nation; saw the canals and the steamboats, the

glittering wires of communication, encompass the nation. We saw the inventive genius of our citizenship give to the world new light; new power. I saw it give to the world new modes of transportation and saw the spans of concrete lend added facilities. Saw the buffalo disappear from the great plains and the sturdy farmer appropriate his grazing lands. Heard the sound of hammer and saw on every hand, the semblance of peace and progressiveness. I saw our farmers prosperous and contented, our factories humming with gainful work, our laborers employed and happy in their own homes. Peace reigned supreme in our midst. A just government, that belonged to the people, provided encouragement for a kindly consideration for all mankind. Under that government we had prospered to the richest, most progressive and happiest people on the face of the earth. Our people went about their way with kindness in their hearts and love and consideration for their fellow man. With firm determination we refused to listen to the rumbles of war abroad; three thousand miles of ocean provided a safety zone, a vast expanse of protection. The broils of those foolish people there, were not our troubles; we were a peaceful people.

And then, then, in the midst of 1914 the war dogs of Europe were turned loose. The great guns bellowed their defiance in every recess and corner of that stricken land. Millions of marching men struggled toward each other to convert their peaceful lands into a charnel house. Their world had gone stark, raving mad.

The great Republic of the west held aloof. It was not our quarrel. Subtle invitations, insidious propaganda, inflaming information were surreptitiously broadcast throughout the land. People began to take sides, began to discuss in ever increasing tones. What was going on over there. Money was loaned to the

participants in that struggle. Louder grew the discussions of the cruel things done in the name of war. Subtly there crept into the press and the mouths of the people inflaming declarations. Wise heads admonished forbearance. Foolish heads bemoaned their neighbors who were alien born. The fever of war began to enter the blood and mount to the brows of our people. Bleeding France must be saved; our Anglo-Saxon civilization must be preserved. Our ships must plow the seas in times of war with the same security as in times of peace or we must fight to preserve that right. A<sup>n</sup> American life must be protected even though it thrust itself between the fighting lines of war stricken peoples--and for this we would fight. The fever had entered our brains.

And then, then, again on April 6th, 1917, the Great Republic of the West declared war and hastened to the assistance of one side of the combat. We gave our means, we furnished our <sup>men</sup> means, we threw our strength into the fray. And what did the people of this nation gain by it? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Nothing but sorrow and anxiety, nothing but tears and trembling hearts.

The past rises up like a nightmare, a nightmare that continues with us to this present day. We hear the sounds of preparation; the rumble of beaten drums and the awakening call of soldiers bugles on every side. We hear the discussion of men with flushed faces, the sonorous appeals of the orators. We see the flaming streamers across the face of the public press. And we hear the hushed voices and see the pale faces of our women folk. We are at war.

A few years ago I stood at the grave of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery just across the river from Washington. I stood

out  
there where many mothers, who had lost their sons on the battle fields of Europe, had shed their tears in memory of a never to be forgotten boy. And as I stood there I thought that those bones in that sad and solemn tomb might be the remains of one whom I had known and cherished, whose gladsome smile had welcomed me in the past and whose hand I had grasped in friendship and affection. And as I stood there thinking my mind went back in retrospect to those hectic, stirring days of 1917 and 1918,. And again I saw the countless thousands of marching men; saw the troop trains rushing by with windows crowded with human freight; saw the drafted groups at depots bidding farewell to loved ones and friends; saw the tear dimmed eyes of sweethearts and and wives and the drooping forms of sorrowing mothers and the stern faces of anxious dads. Again I heard the click of needles as loving fingers fashioned garments for fighting men. I saw the millions contributing to the needs of Red Cross, W.M.CA and Salvation Army. Saw the wheat bread and corn pone take its place. Saw the restrictions of sweets in lowly homes that fighting men might be provided. I saw the government selling bonds to finance a great war and little war savings banks spring up in every town.

And then, again, I heard the shouts of the multitude acclaiming the valor of those marching men; saw the wide streamers in the daily press proclaiming their bravery and their worth. Heard the oratory in the halls of Congress telling what indebtedness the nation was under to its fighting men and that it would never forget.

Saw our boys continued to be dragged from their homes and their jobs and their businesses; their kindred and loved ones. I saw them take their places in the troop trains and move away into the unknown. Some of them never to return, some of them to return maimed and



torn; with lungs consumed and health destroyed.

And then I <sup>came</sup> saw the close of the war and our boys come dragging back; some with empty sleeves and wooden legs; some with hacking coughs from poison gas; maimed and bruised and bodies torn and minds deranged. Saw them dribble home with torn uniforms and tired faces. No multitudes to welcome them back- no bands to play--- just a few dear ones, with love and tenderness, to welcome them home.

And as I stood there and pondered on these things it seemed a small, thin voice issued from the silence of that tomb. It said: "I am the unknown soldier and may I ask: what of my buddies? Are they doing well? Have all the promises been kept that were so freely made? Have my wounded buddies found the helping hand ~~are~~ or are they selling pencils on the streets? Has our death driven war from the face of the earth? Has places been made for the empty sleeve and the wooden leg? HAS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GREAT REPUBLIC BEEN PRESERVED?

And as I moved away, in awe and dread, I wondered if it were but the breeze gently sifting through the trees or did I hear the voice of anxious enquiry from the illustrious dead.

Has the government of the Great Republic been preserved? So far it has and let us hope that a kindly and thoughtful consideration of its people will continue it. But other governments have disappeared. Of those governments who participated in that great war two alone maintain the government they possessed at the start of that great struggle. Democracy was not made safe, it was shattered. Despotism has reasserted itself on every hand. England and the United States alone of the nations have preserved that democracy with which they entered the war. Other nations

have surrendered their liberties and their self respect. Their people do the bidding of despotism. If we as a people preserve our liberty and freedom, we too, must be watchful and scrutinize every encroachment upon a free government. Every encroachment whether great or small should be important enough to awaken the attention of a suspicious public--awaken the interest and attention of those entrusted with the safety and preservation of a constitutional government. We must not complacently await the coming of great public mischiefs-- wait until the government is overthrown, or liberty itself will be consigned to extreme jeopardy. We would not be the worthy sons and daughters of our fathers were we to disregard all questions affecting general freedom. Our forefathers gained our freedom on strict questions of principle. They wrote those principles in the constitution of the United States. Those principles have not changed, time will not change them, they are eternal. Two and two made four, four thousand years ago and will do so forty thousand years in the future: That is a principle. We may all, with justice and the best interest of society, disagree as to how best government may serve its people but there should never be any disagreement as to the form of our government, because it is based on principle. On checks and balances that-- on divisions of power-- that insure to the people protection against the despotism of government. Those founding fathers saw with clear vision and contrived to avoid the semblance in our government of unjust power. They sought it out, dragged it from concealment and plausible disguises and struck it down. There was the enlightenment of experience-- they were not acting blindly. With steady and purposeful eye they sought out and destroyed in the government they formed all that had the possibility of the despot.

And under the principles of freedom and liberty they entrusted to our people by means of the Constitution those forces that have made our nation great. Not for war and terror, but for peace and contentment. The mightiest heights of Rome never equalled the glory of our achievements under a free government. Rome may have dotted the then known world with her possessions and outposts but she never equalled the influence upon the people of the earth that our nation wields. We have given to the world-- we have made it possible for the world to possess-- because of our peaceful state of mind engendered by a free government, comforts and conveniences unthought of in the past. By reason of our peaceful pursuits we have had time to think and contrive-- our initiative and inventive genius have been unhamp-<sup>ered</sup>ed by government restrictions-- we have had freedom of thought and action. It is our duty as worthy citizens to preserve to our children and our neighbors children those glorious opportunities, immunities, rights and liberties that we have enjoyed.

It is their rightful heritage and we would be derelict in our duties were we not to assiduously scrutinize every encroachment upon the principles enthroned in our famous charter. The charter that the great Gladstone proclaimed " the most wonderful work ever struck off at one time by the brain and purpose of man."

Anticipate the attacks upon our liberties and avoid what the Spaniard is doing today to regain his freedom-- brother killing brother--wholesale destruction of women and children--being embroiled in all the horrors of civil war.

And with anxiety that I may tire you with the length of this address allow me to briefly refer to one other growing menace.

Again today the dogs of war are growling within their chains. The minions of war in liberty lost Europe are again feverishly fumbling with these chains. Any moment now may see the dogs of war hurtling at each others throat. The roar of the great guns will against blast the silence of eighteen years. Men will be killing men and nations will be on their way to bankruptcy.

Future years will be sacrificed to war-- to struggle for retrenchment-- for readjustment, accompanied by the tears and sorrow, the anxiety and anguish of an impoverished people.

Let us steel ourselves to avoid that horror. Let us preserve our national integrity by avoiding entrance into another war, sanguinary struggle. We have no interests there, let us see that we are not again kidded into the belief that we have interests there. Let us think of children and children's children rather than the warred <sup>people</sup> populous of wartorn Europe.

It has been said that the world will never be really civilized until the nations of the earth settle their differences otherwise than with cannon and bomb; battle ships upon the sea and battle planes in the air; submarines under the waves and countless thousands of fighting men upon the land. The barbarian still settles his disputes with the club, but when he learns to submit his controversies to his fellow men, leave them to an impartial arbiter, then we call him civilized. But today the nations of the world sustain the same relation to each other as the barbarian sustains, that is: they settle their differences by force, each nation being the judge of its own righteousness and that judgment depending upon the strength of its arms; and always it remains that the strongest nation is the nearest right.

Now it can well be maintained that until the nation settle their differences in a world court, backed by the united armies and navies of the world, pledged to sustain the court, to police the world as it were, this world of ours will remain uncivilized.

But that time for which we so devoutly wish will never arrive until more of the great nations of the earth set the worthy example. Sets the example unselfishly and with nothing but justice in mind.

And until that time comes I, for one, am in favor of the United States being armed. Until that time has come it will give me joy to know that another armored fleet has been launched; another battle fleet has taken wings. The olive branch, that token of friendship, to be of any force or importance must be offered by the strong arm, the mailed fist; and offered out of justice and not for gain. At least, that is true until the coming generations have been educated to a higher standard of thinking that exists today. For individuals make up the nations and the ideas inculcated in youth bear fruit in manhood and womanhood. Peace today must be offered by the nation have force back of the offer. When offered by a weakling as we have so lately seen, it becomes ludicrous and meets with scorn. The powerful, the imperial, must offer the olive branch, and offer it in such a manner as to establish an example for the world to profit by. In such a manner it will be accepted in the true spirit, otherwise it will be laughed out of existence. So, for me, until the world is better civilized than it is today, I am in favor of bigger guns, the largest fleets the largest and swiftest destroyers of the air to be had. I do not want a navy or an air fleet unless it be the best, for otherwise it will be but a gift to the enemy when the dogs war are loosed. It is imperative to my mind that that we must be ready at all times to defend ourselves against the world. Unless we are able to defend ourselves

being the richest nation on the earth, we become the enviting bait for the hungry wolves of the world. The powerful nations are sitting there now envying us our wealth and position, and such envy engenders hatred and ultimately war. Until the world enters into the spirit that makes for universal peace we must be armed, and armed better than the others. Any other condition will be but an invitation to the bloodshot eyes, the greedy jelous maws of the war torn nations of Europe and the far East. We cannot depend upon pursuasion, what good will pursuasion or talk or treaties do when the fleets of the enemy steam into our harbors?

Let us strive to lead the world in justice that makes for peace. Let us avoid entangling alliances, as one of our great men once admonished us, they promise only discord. Let us remain a good neighbor but a well armed one that engenders respect in those who dream of war.

Under our free government we have been granted considerate hearts. We live at peace with our neighbors on the north and south. No unsightly, costly and fear provoking fortifications line the border line between ourselves and our neighbors. By continually <sup>being</sup> doing justice we will preserve this condition. Let us always strive to avoid the horrors of war.

And finally it is necessary that we maintain a free government in order to maintain a wellbalanced national mind. Let us inspect ourselves and the trend of the times and should we find that which app are suspicious to ard our freedom, after a calm investigation, let us strike it down. Let us not by our indifference defer the investigations to long. Thus we will preserve to our children that heritage to which they are entitled.

"  
Thou, too, sail on, Oh! Ship of State  
Sail on, O Union, strong and great;  
Humanity, with all its fears,  
With all its hopes for future years  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate."