

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1974

Administratively Confidential

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JOHN MARSH

FROM:

ANNE ARMSTRONG

SUBJECT:

BICENTENNIAL OVERVIEW

The following may be helpful as you become more directly involved in the Bicentennial. While this report is by no means all-encompassing, it should provide a basic scenario of where we stand to date. I will be happy to brief you further or answer questions you may have. Dick Lukstat and John Borling are also available to offer any assistance.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Under Public Law 93-179, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) will have been in existence for one year on December 11, 1974. The Bicentennial Administration was created as a replacement to the original American Revolution Bicentennial Commission which phased out of existence under Congressional and public allegations of ineptitude and partisan politics.

John Warner, former Secretary of the Navy, was nominated to be Administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration by President Nixon, confirmed by the Senate on March 13, 1974, and sworn in by then Vice President Ford on April 11, 1974. To date, ARBA still lacks its Deputy, a complete Board, and the 25 member Advisory Council.

The Deputy nominee, Mrs. Marjorie Lynch, was nominated by President Ford in October of 1974 and Senate confirmation hearings by the Judiciary Committee are being held today, December 4. Although the DAR is raising objections to her appointment because of her British birth, confirmation appears to be no real problem.

The 25 member Advisory Council has been approved by President Ford (Attachment 1), the members have accepted, and the White House announcement of their appointment awaits completion of individual background checks. These should be complete by mid-December.



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Once the Advisory Council has been announced and a Chairman and Vice Chairman elected, the 11 person Bicentennial Board will be complete as listed in Attachment 2. The Board has thus far been functioning in a decision-making capacity with a six member quorum.

ARBA OVERVIEW

Presently, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration has approximately 160 employees and currently has a request into the Office of Management and Budget for authority to increase its staffing complement by 30 positions. The cost incurred would be absorbed in the ARBA budget. Plans are underway internally at ARBA for a reorganization around the first of the year, although no discussion of this has been held with the staff.

In brief, for the past year the Bicentennial Administration has operated without a Deputy, full Board or Advisory Council as provided for under its legislative authority. Warner has done an excellent job of personally carrying the Bicentennial message across the country, and he has done much to reverse a previously negative image of the Bicentennial.

In the absence of a Deputy Administrator, certain administrative and operational details have not been carried out as well as possible. These problem areas are currently being addressed by Warner, the Department of the Interior, which furnishes administrative support to the Bicentennial Administration, and Dick Lukstat of my staff. Marjorie Lynch is an extremely competent administrator and, upon her confirmation, will significantly assist in managing ARBA.

The most current ARBA information identifies 2752 Bicentennial projects and 960 Bicentennial events around the nation. (Attachment 3) Also, there are approximately 1600 official Bicentennial communities now recognized by ARBA.

Although the Bicentennial is essentially a domestic commemoration, there is a significant international aspect. A summary is included of the 148 activities that are international in scope. (Attachment 4) It is expected that numerous heads of state may visit the United States during the Bicentennial period. White House position should be determined and sent through diplomatic channels at the earliest opportunity.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Administration's structure for handling Federal Bicentennial policy and implementation matters is primarily composed of two groups

which I chaired: (1) The Cabinet-Level Domestic Council Committee on the Bicentennial (Attachment 5) and (2) the Federal Agency Bicentennial Task Force (Attachment 6).

Basic policy decisions on Federal programs and projects in the Bicentennial were made by the Domestic Council Committee in December of 1973. A compilation of these is attached.

Within the confines of appropriated monies received to date, the Federal Bicentennial programs operate under the Domestic Council Committee guidelines.

The Federal Agency Bicentennial Task Force is a decision-making, working group and is composed of Department and Agency representatives at the Under or Assistant Secretary level (Attachment 6). This body is convened as necessary for decision-making and implementation of Federal participation in the Bicentennial. Three subcommittees operate under the Task Force: (1) The Subcommittee on D.C. and Philadelphia Federal Funding (chaired by Assistant Secretary of HUD, David Meeker), (2) the Subcommittee on Logistics and Transportation (chaired by Deputy Under Secretary of DOT, Bob Clement), and (3) the Subcommittee on Visitors Facilities (chaired by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior, Richard R. Hite).

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PHILADELPHIA
AND D.C. FUNDING

Meeker's Subcommittee is responsible for producing specific amounts of Federal funds to Philadelphia and D.C. These monies -- \$100 million for Philadelphia and \$18 million for D.C. -- were committed by President Nixon in early 1973, and are being furnished under the standard categorical grant process through the Departments and Agencies.

To date, Philadelphia has received approximately 25.5 million and the District approximately 2.0 million in categorical grants against the original commitments. Meeker's Subcommittee has set a goal of producing FY-75 funding expectations for each city by early 1975, in the amounts of 51.5 million to Philadelphia and 11.0 million to D.C. The balance of the original commitments are to be provided in FY-76.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LOGISTICS
AND TRANSPORTATION

A final report on the D.C. Bicentennial transportation plan was presented to and adopted by the Federal Agency Bicentennial Task

Force on October 10, 1974. Presently, Clement's Subcommittee is working with the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration to implement the plan, which is based on the establishment of a visitor fringe parking system.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON VISITORS FACILITIES

This Subcommittee is primarily concerned with producing a workable alternative to the National Visitor Center. Despite all efforts, it appears doubtful that the Center will be operable in time to handle the majority of visitors in 1976. Hite's group consists of representatives from the Federal Departments, Agencies and D. C. Government.

PRESIDENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE BICENTENNIAL

To date, President Ford has personally participated in three public Bicentennial events:

- (1) Making the keynote address on September 6, 1974 at the 200th anniversary of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.
- (2) Presenting the official Bicentennial flag to Dr. David Mathews, President of the University of Alabama, in a White House ceremony on November 8, 1974. This was in recognition of their being chosen the first official Bicentennial University.
- (3) Receiving the first Bicentennial coins (quarter, half-dollar and dollar) from Mary Brooks, Director of the Mint, in a White House ceremony on November 13, 1974.

In the immediate future, the President is scheduled on December 19 for a ceremony granting official ARBA recognition to the American Freedom Train Foundation, a non-commercial, non-profit Bicentennial project.

Additionally, a schedule proposal has been submitted for the President to keynote address the upcoming ARBA Bicentennial National Conference which will be held in Washington on February 24, 25, and 26, 1975.

A Bicentennial theme is to be incorporated in the FY-76 budget and the State of the Union Address in accordance with the President's directive.

FIRST LADY PARTICIPATION IN BICENTENNIAL

Thus far, the First Lady has not publicly participated in Bicentennial events or programs. Mrs. Ford has accepted an appointment as Honorary Co-Chairperson of the National Capital Historic Society's "Capital Sound and Light" project and is currently being sought as honorary Chairperson for the American Freedom Train Foundation.

She has also been invited to present the official Bicentennial recognition to the Tournament of Roses in Pasadena, California this month. I recommended against this because of the travel distance involved.

FUTURE POLICY

The official Bicentennial period begins in March of 1975 and will continue through December of 1976. Most naturally, requests for Presidential and First Lady participation will steadily increase.

Over the next one and a half years, selected participation should be scheduled in major Bicentennial public events for the President, the First Lady, or designated representatives. Development of a procedure to provide film clips, audio clips, telegrams and letters in absence of the President and First Family is imperative, especially in 1976. This can be done with ARBA.

Regardless of any effort to create a "grass root" celebration, the President will ultimately be identified with the success or failure of the Bicentennial since it will be the Ford Administration in office during the 200th year of this country's independence.