



*The*  
AMERICAN'S CREED

*A Summary of American  
Civic Faith*

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## THE AMERICAN'S CREED



I BELIEVE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS A GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE; WHOSE JUST POWERS ARE DERIVED FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED; A DEMOCRACY IN A REPUBLIC; A SOVEREIGN NATION OF MANY SOVEREIGN STATES; A PERFECT UNION, ONE AND INSEPARABLE; ESTABLISHED UPON THOSE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY FOR WHICH AMERICAN PATRIOTS SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES AND FORTUNES.

I THEREFORE BELIEVE IT IS MY DUTY TO MY COUNTRY TO LOVE IT; TO SUPPORT ITS CONSTITUTION; TO OBEY ITS LAWS; TO RESPECT ITS FLAG; AND TO DEFEND IT AGAINST ALL ENEMIES.

(AUTHORIZED VERSION)

## The STORY of THE AMERICAN'S CREED

THE idea of laying special emphasis upon the duties and obligations of citizenship in the form of a national creed originated with Henry S. Chapin. In 1916-17 a contest, open to all Americans, was inaugurated in the press throughout the country to secure "the best summary of the political faith of America." The contest was informally approved by the President of the United States. Through Mayor James H. Preston, the city of Baltimore, as the birthplace of the Star-Spangled Banner, offered a prize of \$1,000, which was accepted, and the following committees were appointed: A committee on manuscripts, consisting of Porter Emerson Browne and representatives from leading American magazines, with headquarters in New York City; a committee on award, consisting of Matthew P. Andrews, Irvin S. Cobb, Hamlin Garland, Ellen Glasgow, Julian Street, Booth Tarkington, and Charles Hanson Towne; and an advisory committee, consisting of Dr. P. P. Claxton, United States Commissioner of Education, governors of States, United States Senators, and other National and State officials.

The winner of the contest and the author of the creed selected proved to be William Tyler Page, of Friendship Heights, Md., a descendant of President Tyler and also of Carter Braxton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

[From the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD]

The complete proceedings in regard to the official acceptance of The American's Creed may be found in the Congressional Record, No. 102, April 13, 1918, from which is taken the following explanation of the doctrinal origin of the creed:

- "The United States of America."  
—Preamble, Constitution of the United States.
- "A government of the people, by the people, for the people."  
—Preamble, Constitution of the United States; Daniel Webster's speech in the Senate, January 26, 1830; Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg speech.
- "Whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed."  
—Thomas Jefferson, in Declaration of Independence.
- "A democracy in a republic."  
—James Madison, in *The Federalist*, No. 10; Article X of the amendments to Constitution.
- "A sovereign Nation of many sovereign States."  
—"E pluribus unum," great seal of the United States; Article IV of the Constitution.
- "A perfect Union."  
—Preamble to the Constitution.
- "One and inseparable."  
—Webster's speech in the Senate, January 26, 1830.
- "Established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes."  
—Declaration of Independence.
- "I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it."  
—In substance from Edward Everett Hale's *The Man Without a Country*.
- "To support its Constitution."  
—Oath of allegiance, section 1757, Revised Statutes of the United States.
- "To obey its laws."  
—Washington's Farewell Address; Article VI, Constitution of the United States.
- "To respect its flag."  
—National anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*; Army and Navy Regulations; War Department circular on flag etiquette, April 14, 1917.
- "And to defend it against all enemies."  
—Oath of allegiance, section 1757, Revised Statutes of the United States.



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