



SALUTING AMERICA®

Honoring Military Service: Past & Present

The American's Creed

I believe in the (1) United States of America (1) as a government of the people, by the people, for the people (2); whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed (3); a democracy in a republic (4); a sovereign nation of many sovereign states (5); a perfect union, one and inseparable (6); established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes (7). I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it (8); to support its constitution (9); to obey its laws (10); to respect its flag (11); and to defend it against all enemies (12).s

The American's Creed was developed by William Tyler Page, clerk of the United States House of Representatives in 1917, in answer to a national contest for such a creed. He incorporated in a brief, clear statement the basic American traditions and ideals, as expressed by the founders of our country and by its leading statesmen and writers.

The contest was the idea of Henry Sterling Chapin, Commissioner of Education of New York State. Over three thousand entries were received, and William Tyler Page was declared to be the winner. James H. Preston, the mayor of Baltimore, presented an award to Page in the House of Representatives Office Building on April 3, 1918. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the commissioner of education of the state of New York accepted the Creed for the United States, and the proceedings relating to the award were printed in the Congressional Record of April 13, 1918. It was a time when patriotic sentiments were very much in vogue. The United States had been a participant in World War I only a little over a year at the time the Creed was adopted.

William Tyler Page was a descendant of John Page, who had come to America in 1650 and had settled in Williamsburg, Virginia. Another ancestor, Carter Braxton, had signed the Declaration of Independence. Still another ancestor, John Tyler, was the tenth president of the United States. William Tyler Page had come to Washington at the age of thirteen to serve as a Capitol Page. Later, he became an employee of the Capitol building and served in that capacity for almost sixty-one years. In 1919, he was elected clerk of the House. Thirteen years later, when the Democrats again became a majority party, they created for Page the office of minority clerk of the House of Representatives. He held this position for the remainder of his life.



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Referring to the Creed, Page said: "*It is the summary of the fundamental principles of the American political faith as set forth in its greatest documents, its worthiest traditions, and its greatest leaders.*"

His wording of the Creed used passages and phrases from the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and Daniel Webster's reply to Robert Y. Hayne in the Senate in 1830.¹

Key to the The American's Creed:

1. Closing words of Preamble to the Constitution
2. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
3. Declaration of Independence
4. James Madison in *The Federalist*, No. X
5. Speech by Daniel Webster, Jan. 26, 1830
6. Preamble to the Constitution
7. Adapted from closing words of Declaration of Independence
8. Speech by John Hancock
9. United States Oath of Allegiance
10. George Washington's Farewell Address
11. War Department Circular, April 14, 1917
12. Oath of Allegiance.

1 <http://www.usflag.org/american.creed.html>

The American's Creed Print – Sample



THE AMERICAN'S CREED

"I believe in the United States of America ... established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives.... It is my duty to my country to love it, support its constitution, to obey its laws, to respect the flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

William "Uncle Pops" Page | Released by the House of Representatives, April 8, 1918