

Universal Visions of America

“For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” John Winthrop, Mass. Bay Colony

“A constitution is not the act of a government, but of a people constituting a government; and government without a constitution, is power without a right.”
Rights of Man, Thomas Paine

“Government is nothing more than a national association; and the object of this association is the good of all, as well individually as collectively. Every man wishes to pursue his occupation, and to enjoy the fruits of his labors and the produce of his property in peace and safety, and with the least possible expense. When these things are accomplished, all the objects for which government ought to be established are answered.” Rights of Man, Thomas Paine

“Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles, he can only discover them.” Age of Reason, Thomas Paine

“The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government.” Thomas Jefferson

“A Bill of Rights is what the people are entitled to against every government, and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference.” Thomas Jefferson

“Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of the body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.” Thomas Jefferson

“Freedom of speech is a principle pillar of a free government; when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved, and tyranny is erected on its ruins.” Ben Franklin

“Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.” Ben Franklin, 1755

“Americans are so enamored of equality, they would rather be equal in slavery than unequal in freedom.” Alexis de Tocqueville

“Intellect annuls fate. So far as a man thinks, he is free.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

“To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men--that is genius.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

"In America the geography is sublime, but the men are not: the inventions are excellent, but the inventors one is sometimes ashamed of." —Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Yet America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for meters." Ralph Waldo Emerson

"You cannot spill a drop of American blood without spilling the blood of the whole world . . . We are not a nation, so much as a world." Herman Melville

"With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." Abraham Lincoln, 1865

"Is it not the interest of the human race, that every one should be so taught and placed, that he would find his highest enjoyment to arise from the continued practice of doing all in his power to promote the well-being, and happiness, of every man, woman, and child, without regard to their class, sect, party, country or color?" Robert Owen, 1841

"I deny and utterly scout the idea, that there is now, properly speaking, any such thing as a negro problem before the American people. It is not the negro, educated or illiterate, intelligent or ignorant, who is on trial, or whose qualities are giving trouble to the nation... The real question, the all-commanding question, is whether American justice, American liberty, American civilization, American law, and American Christianity can be made to include and protect, alike and forever, all American citizens.." Frederick Douglass, 1889

"My dream is that as the years go on. . . that America will come into the full light of the day when all shall know that she puts human rights above all other rights and that her flag is the flag not only of America but of humanity."

"Sometimes people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am an American." Woodrow Wilson

"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in." Theodore Roosevelt, 1901

“America is much more than a geographical fact. It is a political and moral fact – the first community in which men set out in the principle to institutionalize freedom, responsible government, and human equality.” Adlai Stevenson

“I pledge allegiance to the Earth, and to the flora, fauna and human life that it supports, one planet, indivisible, with safe air, water and soil, economic justice, equal rights and peace for all.” Women’s Foreign Policy Council, 1989

“The battle we have fought, and are still fighting, for the forests is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it. ... So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for.” John Muir, 1895

“The God of our fathers is a God of revolution. He will not be content with anything less than perfection in His children and in their society. It is this strong biblical tradition which has been the foundation of the freedom struggle for the past three centuries. . . A Christian movement in an age of revolution cannot allow itself to be limited by geographic boundaries. We must be as concerned about the poor in [India](#) as we are about the poor of [Indiana](#).” Martin Luther King Jr., 1965

“We are electromagnetic fields of energy and many of us may become Glorious Beings rising like mountains on new horizons. As the poet William Blake said, we can kiss joy as it flies and live in eternity’s sunrise.” Frank K. Kelly

“Intentional communities can also arise out of a revolutionary vision of what is conceivable but has yet to be tried; it is gestated by a shared vision of the few for a better society -- one that integrates the spiritual, intellectual and material in a more wholesome and original way than presently occurs in contemporary culture.” James Tepfer

“This (parapolitical) revolution alters man’s inner response to external events and is grounded in his very conception of himself. It depends for its force and direction on the nature, range, and depth of his self-consciousness. It is furthered whenever a man comes to see himself as a creator rather than a creature, as an agent not a victim, as a subject not an object, as being necessarily involved in the act of defining himself through self-determination, self-expression, self-fulfillment to any degree, and self-actualization in whatever form.” Parapolitics, Raghavan Iyer