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1-26-1972

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To Provide for the Establishment of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko
Home National Historic Site**

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**Statement of Senator Edmund S. Muskie
In Support of S. 1973
To Provide for the Establishment of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Home National Historic
Site in the State of Pennsylvania
Before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
January 26, 1972**

Mr. Chairman:

I wish to express my strong support for S. 1973, to establish the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Historic Site. In evaluating this legislation, I think we must be sensitive to three considerations: the role of Thaddeus Kosciuszko in United States and Polish history; the historical significance of his residence in Philadelphia; the importance of this question for our Polish-American citizens.

I. The Role of Kosciuszko in United States and Polish History

Thaddeus Kosciuszko, already trained in engineering and artillery, was living in Paris when he first heard about the American struggle against tyranny. Borrowing money for the trip, he sailed to America to join the fight for independence. Kosciuszko served that cause brilliantly. As a trained engineer, he constructed the successful fortifications for the Delaware River and for those at West Point, New York. His choice of battlefields and the erection of fortifications at Saratoga contributed materially to the American victory over John Burgoyne at Saratoga. Later he distinguished himself as an officer of cavalry in General Greene's Carolina campaign.

In 1784, Kosciuszko returned to Poland, where he became a Major General of the Polish Army. In the spring of 1792, he led the tiny Polish Army in its brave, but vain, resistance against the Russians. After several brilliant successes, and only after the most fierce resistance and a nearly fatal wound, he was defeated and captured by the Russians. After two years of captivity, he returned to the United States, where he was warmly welcomed as a revolutionary hero. During his second stay in America, he lived at 301 Pine Street in Philadelphia.

II. The Residence in Philadelphia.

The historical significance of the Philadelphia residence of Kosciuszko cannot be viewed apart from his special relationship with Thomas Jefferson. During his term as Vice-President, Jefferson visited Kosciuszko at the Philadelphia residence and asked him to travel to France on behalf of the United States to act as a peacemaker. The relationship between the two men was so close that Kosciuszko, while living at the Pine Street residence, wrote and delivered to Jefferson his will and testament in which he bequeathed his fortune for the purchase of freedom of enslaved blacks.

As for the Philadelphia residence itself, where Kosciuszko took up lodging on November 29, 1797, it appears that most of the brick walls, and probably the flooring, are original. Although the house is in poor condition, and although many changes were made in the house during the 19th century, it seems quite feasible, on the basis of various insurance surveys, to restore the house to its general appearance at the time General Kosciuszko lived there. Moreover, such a restoration would enhance restoration projects already under way in Philadelphia. The residence is located near the Philadelphia Society Hill Project, where many other colonial homes are being restored for posterity. The inclusion of Kosciuszko's residence as a National Historic Site in this project would be a fine and appropriate addition.

III. Importance of this Question for Our Polish-American Citizens.

We must never forget that historical landmarks are more than preserved buildings or stone monuments. They are, in their deeper significance, symbols which evoke pride in a heroic past or recall the special qualities and contributions

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of a people. I believe several quotations will make my point clearer.

Casimar I. Lenard, Executive Director of the Polish-American Congress, in a letter to Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton, wrote: "The name of General Thaddeus Kosciuszko had great meaning then, and has great meaning now for Americans of Polish descent. Our children are constantly being taught the ideals and goals of this man. In a time fraught with a fight for freedom, more than ever we need museums and historic shrines to preserve our heritage and our beliefs, especially with the forthcoming Bicentennial. At that time we will want to point with pride to every tangible piece of evidence of our Revolutionary War heroes."

The officers of the State of Indiana Division of the Polish-American Congress, in another letter to Secretary Morton, wrote: "For every American of Polish ancestry, Thaddeus Kosciuszko has become a symbol of our participation in the struggle of this country for independence. It is there where our American patriotism was born...patriotism that needs the feeling of belonging to grow and recognition to bloom."

An article in the Elmira, New York Star-Gazette, commenting on the Kosciuszko residence, declared: "To a group of Polish-Americans, there's no price that represents its true value."

I believe these statements capture a vital dimension of the issue now before this Committee. The very real historical significance of the Kosciuszko residence in Philadelphia, is greatly enhanced by its enormous symbolic importance to the Polish-American people of our country. No other structure in this country associated with Kosciuszko has apparently survived. No other structure offers a more appropriate, permanent memorial to the remarkable contributions which Polish-Americans have made and continue to make to our country. We must not, in the face of all this, allow the destruction of this building. This Committee, by favorably reporting on S. 1973, can greatly advance the effort to save it.

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