February 19, 1952

Honorable Herbert H. Lehman
United States Senator from New York
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator:

Several years ago St. Paul's Church, Mt. Vernon, New York, was designated a National Shrine by Congress and by the Department of the Interior. The Church and its grounds are steeped in history and tradition, and St. Paul's is recognized as the cradle of our Bill of Rights.

For the past few years, I have served as President of the Society of the National Shrine of the Bill of Rights at St. Paul's. During this period, I have become increasingly concerned about the deterioration of the old Church and the adjoining cemetery, where numerous heroes of the American Revolution are buried. Moreover, the surrounding countryside has changed completely from a residential area to a zone of great industrial activity, and this landmark of American freedom has been hemmed in by oil storage tanks.

As the residential neighborhood disappeared, so did St. Paul's congregation, so that today this national shrine is without any means of self-support. The National Shrine Division of the Interior Department has been helpful with suggestions as to how this Shrine might best be preserved, and its representative for this area has stated quite frankly that something should be done by the Government as soon as possible. However, as you probably know, nothing can be done unless Congress makes a special appropriation to cover the cost thereof.

The cost would be almost nominal, considering the project to be accomplished. It is anticipated that a satisfactory program of preservation could be completed if the Congress would appropriate the sum of approximately $75,000.

Although I realize the many pressures and demands which are
made today upon our national financial structure, I feel nevertheless that few things are of greater importance than the preservation of our American heritages and those hallowed places where our forefathers fought for and founded the basic freedoms upon which our entire system of government depends. Thus, I sincerely hope you will find it possible to sponsor in the Congress a bill authorizing the necessary appropriation.

It is impossible to state in one letter all of the pertinent details. Consequently, I would appreciate very much your permitting me and a committee of interested New Yorkers to call upon you at your earliest convenience to discuss the matter.

Thanking you in advance for any attention you might give to this letter, I remain,

Sincerely,

[Signature]

SG:es