Remarks of Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr., at the Meeting of the Steering Committee, American Landmarks Celebration, International Monuments Year, at 11 a.m., Tuesday, June 2, 1964, Georgetown City Tavern Club, Washington, D. C.

It is always a heavy burden to appear as a substitute for Stewart Udall, whatever the subject of the meeting. On the subject of this meeting, it is akin to being sent in to pinch-hit for Willie Mays, in other words, unthinkable.

President Johnson in his historic commencement address at Ann Arbor, and in several speeches since, has called upon Americans to strive upward to the Great Society. His challenge deserves emphasis, and reaffirmation, as a theme for the American Landmarks Celebration:

"For half a century, we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people. The Challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization. Your imagination, your initiative and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society . . .

"It is harder and harder to live the good life in American cities today. The catalogue of ills is long. There is the decay of the centers and the despoiling of the suburbs. There is not enough housing for our people or transportation for our traffic. Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated."

This is the theme which appears as a counterpoint through Secretary Udall's fine book, The Quiet Crisis, and in his chapter on Cities in Trouble, he says:

"There is an unmistakable note of urgency in the quiet crisis of American cities. We must act decisively -- and soon -- if we are to assert the people's right to clean air and water, to open space, to well-designed urban areas, to mental and physical health. In every part of the nation we need men and women who will fight for man-made masterpieces and against senseless squalor and urban decay."
One of my own proudest moments in office came when the distinguished AIA Journal reprinted, with beautiful illustrations, a talk I gave to the American Association of State and Local History in San Francisco. I emphasized that where the conflict of values, the paradox which the President himself mentioned when he referred to the lack of "transportation for our traffic", prevents preservation, we can have the symbolic preservation of measuring and recording the details looking toward reconstruction:

"So the HABS contemplates measuring and recording the complete field of early American architecture from the earliest aboriginal structures to the latest buildings of the Greek Revival period and later. It covers all types, from the smallest utilitarian structures to the largest -- barns, bridges, mills, jails, fences, markers. A complete picture of the culture of the time is to be catalogued.

"All this is important, it seems to me, because right now freeways and real estate developments are swallowing up our land at an accelerating pace, and they cannot always be turned aside from our historic places -- whether these historic places have or haven't achieved the magic designation of 'national'.

"What we can't protect in physical being, we can protect in spirit."

Now for a brief status report:

a. The Concurrent Resolution is not yet before Congress. I have some suggestions concerning it.

b. The Governors Conference is important, and it meets this week.

c. The Presidential kick-off is not set, and at this late date you may have to turn to someone like Secretary Udall at Fort McHenry on July 4 -- he would be a worthy substitute.

You will see the Secretary this evening. He sends his warmest greetings for your deliberations.