REMARKS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., AT 3 P.M., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1964, AT BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, DEDICATING THE USS CONSTELLATION AS A REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The designation of a famed fighting ship as a national historic landmark may seem anomalous. But it is not unprecedented—the Constitution is now moored in Boston, and the Olympia of Manila Bay fame is berthed at Philadelphia.

Equivalent semantic disputes are quite common. The National Park Service wrestled for a long time with the question of whether the beach, dunes, and related natural phenomena associated with seashores at Cape Hatteras, Cape Cod, Point Reyes, and Padre Island—each of which is a unit of the national park system authorized by Congress as a "National Seashore"—were sufficient precedent to justify calling similar areas on the shores of the Great Lakes "national seashores." Proposals at Sleeping Bear and Pictured Rocks, as well as Indiana Dunes, all had to have names as they were sent to Congress, and the Department and the Park Service decided to stick with the established name—"National Seashores."

It is one of my vivid recollections of President Kennedy to be in his office with Secretary Udall going over a proposed message on these and other proposals, and seeing him, reading the pages with lightning speed, stopping on the word "seashores." "You've made a mistake," he said; "you mean "lakeshores"." And "Lakeshores" I'm sure they'll be, when and if Congress authorizes them.

The honor which we today pay to the Constellation is long overdue and the long labors of the Flag House Association in preparing for this occasion are to be highly commended.

President Franklin Roosevelt aptly named this venerable vessel "a ship of destiny". She is also a symbol of America's destiny. As the first naval vessel of the United States to take to the seas, her history spans the period from the administration of George Washington to that of Lyndon B. Johnson. She served under active commission from the wars with the Barbary pirates to World War II. She was an active ship of the combat line for nearly seven decades of this nation's struggle against foreign enmity and internal discord.

The story of the Constellation contains a lesson for the present and the future of our nation, as well as recalling its great past. With but a brief few months of premature retirement in 1858 and 1859, this proud vessel did courageous combat duty as a ship of the line for
sixty-five years—in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, in defense of Hampton Roads in 1812, in the inland waters of China, in protecting the independence of Hawaii.

Consider the equivalent span, in terms of military hardware. Sixty-five years antedates the airplane itself; now major weapons systems become obsolete before they can be built. The B-70 bomber, for example, has been discarded before the first one reached production.

And consider relative costs. Even by the standards of the 18th and 19th century, the Constellation could not have been an expensive instrumentality of war. Far more has been spent rebuilding her than her original cost, I'm sure. The complexity of the modern world precludes us from using our military hardware for one decade, much less six, and half of our national budget goes for defense.

These are the facts of the 20th century. However much we might wish otherwise, we can't turn back the clock.

Challenges to American greatness were answered in the eighteenth century by the hard oak beams of such ships as this. The challenges we face today demand more—resiliency for change must become a key part of our armament. Let us put our past in true perspective. We must honor it and derive inspiration from it. But the future belongs to vision and invention. Neither weapons systems nor social institutions of another generation can meet today's needs—any more than the Constellation can substitute for Polaris mobility and fire power.

Baltimore, home of the clipper ship, was the birthplace of the Constellation, this city's contribution to defense of a young and vibrant nation. Now she is back home—as a reminder to us of the sacrifices made in the past so that our generation might push on to the magnificent future that Americans all seek.

The face of America is changing. Our people cannot be expected to live at a twentieth century pace under the housing and transportation standards of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, any more than our defense can be handled by the Constellation or its counterparts. We will soon be 300 million strong in these United States, compared to the 4 million who lived here when the Constellation took to the seas. Living space for such a populace dictates that the obsolete tenement and the tortuous lane give way to modern, safe and comfortable facilities. But in the rush to modernize, we must carefully screen for the symbols of our rich heritage.

Just as the Constellation nearly succumbed to neglect and the ravages of the seas, so are our other landmarks threatened by the wrecking ball and bulldozer. Today we mark an achievement in protecting a significant chapter out of a brave and colorful naval tradition. This
work must go on so that our children and theirs may relive for a few hours the magnificent deeds of western exploration, the literary and philosophical contributions to our culture and the great discoveries out of which our technological prowess emerged.

I am indeed proud to have as one of my duties in the Department of the Interior that of participating in the Registered National Historic Landmark Program. We Americans derive strength from the lessons of the past. We take pride in honoring our past--but we make no attempt to live in it. In order to receive this inspiration, however, we must preserve and protect the landmarks of national history.

The National Park Service, under my Department, plays a significant role in this preservation effort. We have in the National Park system more than 50 units which are owned, developed and maintained by the United States because of their historical significance to the nation. We have saved for future generations the holy place of the Polynesian people of Hawaii, Spanish forts at St. Augustine and San Juan, the cradle of American democracy at Independence Hall, the remnants of ancient Indian cultures in New Mexico and Ohio--and in your own city, the birthplace of the national anthem, Fort McHenry.

At the same time, however, the richness of America's past is identified with many places throughout the land which remain, and ought to remain, in private or non-Federal ownership. The Park Service stimulates and encourages the preservation of such sites--by close cooperation with state and local historical societies and by giving recognition to the historical significance of their work through the National Historic Landmark program. In accepting such recognition, the owners of these historic sites undertake to maintain them in good condition for the future and to open them to periodic inspection.

The Historic Landmarks Program is an outgrowth of the Congressional declaration, in 1935, making a national policy of the preservation for public use of historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance.

That came during the second wave of the Conservation movement. The first swept forward under a great Republican President, Theodore Roosevelt. Then the effort ebbed until the Thirties, when the second period came under a great Democratic President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And as President Johnson said 10 days ago when he signed two landmark conservation bills:
"Anyone that objectively studies the record of the 88th Congress I think would have to conclude that another historic period has begun this year."

He added: "No single Congress in my memory has done so much to keep America as a good and wholesome and beautiful place to live. I think it is significant that these steps have broad support not just from the Democratic Party, but the Republican Party, both parties in the Congress . . . So it seems to me that this reflects a new and strong National consensus to look ahead, and more than that, to plan ahead; better still, to move ahead."

True leadership, he pointed out, must provide for the next decade and not merely the next day.

The men who sailed the Constellation recognized that truth. We are in debt to them for preparing the way for us, and we in our turn must prepare the way for future Americans, not call a halt.

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