

REMARKS OF UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., IN ACCEPTING A CITATION PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN RECOGNITION OF ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY BY THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA DURING CEREMONIES BEGINNING THE OBSERVANCE OF FREEDOM WEEK IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, JUNE 27, 1966

The Interior Department is deeply moved by the honor paid to the National Park Service in saluting its fiftieth birthday as the opening event of Freedom Week.

The National Park Service is fifty -- not old by the standards of the other Philadelphia institutions receiving awards here today, but at least as old as all but thirteen of the fifty-five signers of the Declaration whose 190th birthday we are honoring all this week.

Furthermore, the Park Service's relations with your city are, in my observation, as fine as in any city where the Service has a major mission to perform. The bonds are firm, the disagreements are outnumbered by agreements, and all in all we think it has been a healthy and fine cooperation. We are, as I said, touched by the honor of this tribute.

Here at Pennsylvania's old State House the Park System has at one time its most difficult and its most satisfying task in its mission of interpreting the Nation's historic sites. To tell visitors what the place is all about, when what it is all about is the freedom of men everywhere, is worth the effort in 1966 as it was in 1776.

It is a noble task -- the interpretation of the meaning of our freedom and liberty both at home and abroad.

America's great strength since its founding has had its source in the people who were attracted to its promise of freedom and opportunity. They were the people who dared the wilderness or braved an unknown future

in a new society. Their hard labor, their idealism, their ingenuity created the wealth and the institutions which made the democratic state an unassailable reality.

Yet they would have been condemned to failure and disillusionment had it not been for a provident nature. America offered the richest base and the most universal variety of natural resources that men had ever encountered in a single land. Forest and stream, sweeping prairie and fertile valley, precious metals and basic ores, all of these were the raw materials for the technological mastery and industrial empire that grew out of the statement enunciated here 190 years ago.

Above all, America was "America the Beautiful." With all its riches, its most perfect gift, except for its people, was a natural environment which could elevate the spirit of its people, offer refreshment in a life of toil and inspire man's noblest thoughts and deeds.

In the mood of the task of interpretation, and in the spirit of the preservation of our heritage, let us on this observance of the anniversary of the Declaration which immortalized the phrase "unalienable rights", turn to another Presidential statement:

"The time is ripe to set forth a creed to preserve our natural heritage -- principles which men and women of good will support in order to assure the beauty and bounty of their land. Conservation is ethically sound. It is rooted in our love of the land, our respect for the rights of others, our devotion to the rule of law.

"Let us proclaim a creed to preserve our natural heritage  
with rights and the duties to respect those rights:

--- The right to clean water -- and the duty not to pollute it.

--- The right to clean air -- and the duty not to befoul it.

--- The right to surroundings reasonably free from man-made  
ugliness -- and the duty not to blight.

--- The right of easy access to places of beauty and tran-  
quility where every family can find recreation and refresh-  
ment -- and the duty to preserve such places clean and  
unspoiled.

--- The right to enjoy plants and animals in their natural  
habitats -- and the duty not to eliminate them from the  
face of this earth.

"These rights assert that no person, or company or government  
has a right in this day and age to pollute, to abuse resources, or  
to waste our common heritage."

Philadelphia's urban renewal effort is true to this spirit. It is  
one of the happier success stories in a book full of urban disasters.  
The Independence Hall area is a bright jewel, an inspiring example of  
cooperation among government bodies and private enterprise.

Thomas Jefferson, draftsman of the American charter, architect of  
Monticello, whose concerns were as broad as the universe, said that  
communities "should be planned with an eye to the effect made upon the  
human spirit by being continually surrounded with a maximum of beauty."

Our First Lady, your guest just two weeks ago, opened an 18th century garden near here, created by the Horticultural Society of Philadelphia. The Horticultural Society, one of the oldest societies in this old city, has helped to interpret our past. It has done so by providing a living garden.

"These efforts," the President said, "are of particular concern to me, because they will determine the kind of America my daughters -- and all the children of America -- will inherit."

City Solicitor Bauer, I accept with pleasure this very handsome "Freedom Week" citation on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service.

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