

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY
FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 1964 - 12:00 noon MST

MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S REMARKS
ON ARRIVAL AT BILLINGS, MONTANA

It is for me a great thrill to be here at the beginning of this happy trail, which will take me through Montana, Wyoming, and Utah over the next four days.

I know Lyndon wished he could have come -- for he loves this Big Sky Country. He sends you his greetings.

This kind of country has special meaning for the President. His grandfather used to drive cattle on the trail from Texas to Montana in 1870.

But Montana has been important to him in 1950 and today. Back in the 1950's, his Democratic colleagues elected him Majority Leader. When Lyndon needed someone to be the Assistant Leader -- and help him round up the votes -- he turned to Montana to pick one of his oldest and most trusted friends, your Senator Mike Mansfield.

This year the Senate is busy writing such an impressive record -- (Lyndon says this Congress has written one of the most impressive records he's seen in 33 years on Capitol Hill) -- that Senator Mansfield could not be with us on this visit. But, he sent his helping hand -- Maurine Mansfield.

I have one advantage over Maurine, as a wife away from home on vacation, I don't have to worry whether the lights are turned out around the house.

It is a special treat to me to come to Billings on the occasion of your Centennial, a time of heightened interest in the history and the character of Montana and the West.

I am very conscious that on the trail we will follow the next few days, we will be traveling in comfort and safety along a way that your grandparents and great-grandparents traveled under great duress and peril.

Nothing impresses the visitor to the West so much as the awareness that only yesterday in the long calendar of time, an undaunted people drove wagons across these plains and mountains and settled here.

They put their brand of optimism on the American character. It is a strain that runs deep in the Congress of the United States -- and in the White House. It is a strain that a sometimes weary and anxious world needs.

This is not a part of the world that looks backward or listens to those who do.

Billings is often called the gateway to the West. I am glad to begin my journey here to see the great Western tapestry: the rolling plains from here to the Crow Agency; the rising peaks of the Grand Tetons in Wyoming where we shall spend tonight, and the valleys of the Great Salt Lake.

I hope to see some of the most superb trails an American family on vacation can follow in our magnificent land; to view what water conservation has meant to the West; to meet the youth of this country at one of the West's great universities.

And all along the way I know I shall be meeting the people who have a vision of America's future that is even greater than her past.

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