

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY
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REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

FRIENDS -

What a delightful spot to start my Whistle Stop trip - here in Alexandria, in view of the monument to one of your first and foremost citizens, George Washington.

I am delighted to be here on this platform with two Johnsons, both candidates for office. This is a campaign trip and of course I would like to ask you for your vote for both Johnsons.

But -- because this is the beginning of a four-day trip that will take me down the railroad track 1,682 miles to New Orleans, I would like to tell you some of the reasons I am going.

For me, this trip has been a source of both anxiety and anticipation. Anxiety because I am not accustomed to whistle-stopping without my husband; anticipation because I feel that I am returning to familiar territory and heading into a region that I call home.

I wanted to make this trip because I am proud of the South, and I am proud that I am part of the South.

I love the South. I am fond of the old customs -- of keeping up with your kinfolks -- all your uncles and aunts and cousins right down to the fifth cousin -- of long Sunday dinners after church -- of a special brand of gentility and courtesy.

I am even more proud of the new South -- the glistening new skylines of its cities -- the spirit of growth -- the signs of prosperity both in the factory and on the farm. There are so many advances in the South -- in its economy, in its interest in the arts, in its progress in education.

I am proud of what the South has contributed to our national life. I am proud of the valor with which Southerners have served their country in every war in which we have been engaged. Even before we were a nation, Southerners were supplying learning and leadership to the task of building our great country. We all can recite the record of our Southern statesmen through the many years of our nation's trials and triumphs: 12 Presidents, 15 signers of the Constitution, 15 Secretaries of State from Thomas Jefferson to Dean Rusk.

Yet in recent times, we recognize the strain in the South from national life as a whole.

I have shared with many of you the concern that has come with this strain. I share the irritation when unthinking people make snide jokes about "corn pone" and "rednecks" as if the history and tradition of our region could be dismissed with ridicule.

None of this is right. None of this is good for the future of our country. We must search for the ties that bind us together, not settle for the tensions that tend to divide us.

A great southerner, Robert E. Lee, said it best when he advised his fellow-Southerners: "Make your sons Americans."

So these are the main reasons I wanted to make this trip. I want to tell you from Alexandria to New Orleans that to this President and his wife the South is a respected and valued and beloved part of the country.

I know that many of you do not agree with the Civil Rights Bill or with the President's support of it, but I do know the South respects candor and courage and I believe he has shown both.

It would be a bottomless tragedy for our country to be racially divided. And here I want to say emphatically, this is not a challenge only in the South. It is a national challenge - in the big cities of the North as in the states of the South.

The laws that have been passed are national laws. This bill is not a Northern measure, or an anti-Southern measure, or a Democratic measure, or a Republican measure.

The law passed by Congress, with three-fourths of the Republicans joining two-thirds of the Democrats, has been received by the South for the most part in a way that is a great credit to local leadership -- to mayors and ministers, to white merchants and Negro leaders, to all the Mr. and Mrs. John Citizens who live in our communities. This convinces me of something I have always believed -- that there is, in this Southland, more love than hate.

I have -- as you have, I am sure -- thrilled to see Southern legislatures put education as its top priority, to watch city councils make headway with community conflicts.

Certainly there are problems ahead. But my husband has always felt that problems are there to be solved, not simply deplored.

I think we all understand that the hard duty of assuring equal rights to all Americans falls, not only on the President of the United States, but upon all who love this land. I am sure we will rise to that duty.

I asked for this assignment for many reasons. This trip takes me not only to the queen-like cities of the South, but to the small towns and rural areas -- I was born in such an area and I am at home there.

I believe that it is well for the people in the cross-road villages, in the back-country, in the timberlands, and mountain coves and the sand hills where the pavement runs out and city people don't often go, to have a personal part in this election. They all have an equal share in their government.

To me, as to you, the South is not a place of geography, but a place of the heart. And so, it is with great joy that I undertake what is -- for me -- in every sense, a journey of the heart.

And now -- I yield to the speaker in the family -- my husband and the President of the United States.