

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY  
MONDAY, APRIL 4, 1966 -- 11:00 A.M. CST

REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
DEDICATION OF FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
FORT DAVIS, TEXAS

It is certainly a pleasure -- especially after some of my experiences of the last two days in Big Bend National Park -- to enjoy with you this remarkable restoration of Old Fort Davis and the construction of the new visitor center.

My delight in seeing this land of the Davis and Chisos Mountains has been especially enhanced by also having the opportunity to see it through the penetrating observations of the Washington writers and photographers who have accompanied Secretary and Mrs. Udall and me on this wonderful trip.

We've had two days of wilderness -- blue skies, clear air -- and, I think, we are immeasurably better for it.

From experiences in the park -- hiking the Lost Mine Trail, floating the Rio Grande through Mariscal Canyon -- standing on the heights and looking from yesterday into tomorrow -- I can better understand the courage, stamina and drive of the pioneers who pushed back the Western Frontier and the qualities of those soldiers who guarded their safety from this isolated post.

Today it is equally significant that we are meeting a challenge -- a challenge which demands of us all to make the most of every gift and power we possess, to preserve every page of history, to emphasize and illustrate our heritage for future generations.

The real significance of this dedication of Old Fort Davis is in what it says about the character of the American people. Although Gemini Eight has taken us one step closer to the moon, we still have time to walk back in our past, still have time to preserve our heritage for the guidance of future generations. While we continue to explore new frontiers in outer space, we must exert more effort into making the world in which we live a better and more attractive place to work, to play, and to raise our families.

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The journey which brought us here today can be traced back 50 years when another President took pause in a troubled world to look after the needs of the future. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson looked beyond the mounting war in Europe and his concern with poverty and pestilence. He signed into law the bill which created the National Park Service. Today again we see the past as prologue. We are looking beyond the temporary trials and great personal sacrifices of Vietnam to protect and preserve a part of our past.

It is now with a deep sense of gratitude that I dedicate Fort Davis National Historic Site, this magnificent restoration work and the new visitor center. My gratitude extends -- like the land which surrounds us -- in all directions.

I am grateful that I can join you all in furthering the President's deep desire to preserve the historic and scenic heritage of this land.

I am grateful that we, as a people, were wise enough 50 years ago to establish the National Park Service to be the custodians of our natural and historic heritage.

I am grateful that you people of West Texas saw the importance of Fort Davis, and, following the leadership of Judge Scobee, worked so hard to make possible the establishment of Fort Davis National Historic Site. The Fort Davis Historical Society, Jeff Davis County, and the Mile High Club deserve special honors for their unflagging efforts to insure that this ceremony would some day take place.

Now I wish to join with all of you in this great moment when Fort Davis National Historic Site formally becomes a part of our national heritage.

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