

FOR RELEASE AT 12:00 NOON (EDT)
FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 1966

REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
AT PRESENTATION OF SOCIETY HILL MEDAL
AND DEDICATION OF 18TH CENTURY GARDEN
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

I feel a particular surge of pride this afternoon for our country and the courageous men who here chartered the American dream.

For, within this greatest concentration of historic sites and buildings in the nation--and more specifically in our revered Independence Hall--two far-reaching events took place: the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and the completion of work on the Constitution.

But the founding of a new nation was not the only concern of the patriots. Beauty was part of Philadelphia's planning from the first. The founders of your Horticultural Society--men like Nicholas Biddle and John Hare Powell--(in those days women were not supposed to lift a trowel)--were fulfilling with foresight the instructions of the first Colonial Assembly that "the grounds near the statehouse shall remain a public open green forever"--and "walks may be laid out and trees planted, to render the same more beautiful and commodious."

That was the hope of 1737 and it is the hope of today. Society Hill, between then and now survived a period of decay that makes this renaissance of today even more meaningful.

Society Hill and Independence National Historical Park--with a blending of new apartments, old homes, and historic buildings, set an example of past and prologue.

There are here many examples of leadership of government and private enterprise to which we could point. But certainly one outstanding milestone was the action seven years ago when Philadelphia, with foresight, passed a unique clause in its City Building Code--the 1 percent Beautification Ordinance, to assure that at least that amount of the total cost of any project paid for by public funds would be set aside for Fine Arts-approved beautification.

It has paid off. It will continue to pay off for people who live here to enjoy day after day and for the added pleasure of the visitor.

The President asked me especially to bring his greetings to those of you who have made it all possible.

In a few minutes, we will be going to the 18th Century Garden, now preserved like rose-leaves in some lovely old jar. It is surrounded by houses and streets where patriots walked, where the government of this country began.

For any history-minded American, and I am one, a trip to Philadelphia is a pilgrimage into a proud past.

That eminent Philadelphian Benjamin Franklin in his practical minded way would have appreciated this garden, for it serves two purposes. It is part of a nation-wide movement to bring beauty and nature back to the city and it is also a memorial of our historic past.

I would like to dedicate it to the foresight of our founding fathers who brought our nation into being and the vision of the city planners of today who are blending the heritage of the past and the beauty of the present into contemporary living.

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