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REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON AT THE
DEDICATION OF GLEN CANYON DAM, PAGE, ARIZONA

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

----- THE WHITE HOUSE -----

My husband's distinguished Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, and his wife, Lee, have told me of Glen Canyon. Coming here today, I almost feel I am seeing its wonders for the second time.

This is a unique kind of country, and I don't have to tell you, it's my kind of country.

The beauty of the sculptured earth of the Colorado Plateau country is one that alters with the light and sky. Its coloring is luminous and delicate. It is found in chambers and arches and tapestried canyon walls. Its texture is ancient. It consists of eons of time laid bare -- on stone pages or in the treasure troves of Indian myths and artifacts.

It is these attractions that are beckoning, and will beckon visitors from all over the world to the Southwest. There are alps in many places, and raging seacoasts, and sandy deserts. But there is only one sculptured earth of painted canyons, and that is here on the Colorado Plateau.

Two hours ago, I was in California, and I am impressed by the fact that this secluded and peaceful spot is within mere minutes of all the population centers of the Southwest -- a magnet for tourists.

As our plane glided down into this immense canyon landscape, I could see from afar the "plug" in the River, the place where Glen Canyon Dam stands, and now that I am close I can get a feeling for the vastness of what has been done here.

Those of you who have worked for months and years to bring this about must have a justifiable pride in your accomplishment. My hat is off to the men who figured the stresses and the strains, and who diverted the River during construction, and to all the rest of the dreamers and doers who brought this project, live -- born, into its rocky cradle.

Glen Canyon is not just a Colorado dam. It belongs to the Nation. Many hopes were born because of Glen Canyon. Many hopes will be fulfilled because of it. Water is a vital commodity in the Southwest today. A dam such as this one is a dramatic element in the whole story of water conservation, and the story of water conservation is of increasing concern to every single American, no matter where he lives.

The hard core water and power benefits of this dam are well known. Its bonus is the heavenly blue lake that begins here and winds its way through Navajo country towards the labyrinth of the new Canyonlands National Park -- created by Congress two years ago.

One cannot explore Lake Powell's 1800 miles of shoreline in a hurry, but the places invite exploration: places like Rainbow Bridge, Cathedral in the Desert, Hole in the Rock; canyons like Hidden, Driftwood, and Pickaxe, Dungeon, Forbidden, and Catfish.

As one who has been shown many a lovely prospect, I still could not have foreseen the drama and the winning beauty of Lake Powell.

I am sure you have seen, as I have, those disfigurements of rock or tree where someone with a huge ego and a tiny mind has splashed with paint or gouged with a knife to let the world know that Kilroy or John Doe was here. As I look around at this incredibly beautiful and creative work -- it occurs to me that this is a new kind of "writing on the walls" -- a kind that says proudly and beautifully, "Man was here."

I was glad, too, when I came in, to see those trees up on the mesa in Page. I hope there will be more of them, for Page can be not only a pretty town blooming in the desert, but a leafy oasis.

All over the United States, towns and cities are giving new attention to ways of becoming more beautiful. A young town like Page need not battle old blight. It can write its own future, and the road to beauty should be an uncomplicated one.

In paying tribute to this striking engineering achievement today, and to this landscape, and the new town of Page, I would also like to pay tribute to the strong people who live in this land, and are its stewards. The ruggedness of your task has demanded that you all be conservationists, parceling out resources judiciously, enjoying, and not depleting them.

To me, the appealing genius of conservation is that it combines energetic feats of technology -- like this dam -- with the gentle humility that leaves some corners of nature alone -- free of technology -- to be a spiritual touchstone and recreation asset.

America is only beginning to discover the natural beauty that is here. Our country is entering a new era of wise water conservation.

I am proud to dedicate such a significant and beautiful man-made resource. I am proud that "Man is here."

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