

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
AT THE HOME OF MARK TWAIN - HANNIBAL, MISSOURI

FOR RELEASE AFTER 1:45 P.M.,  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1967

Office of the Press Secretary  
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

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One of the challenges of my childhood was to conquer the spelling of Mississippi.

Those eleven letters in that romantic, lyrical word took new meaning for me as I ventured into history and geography. But the real windows of the Mississippi were opened by your illustrious Missourian, Mark Twain.

My coming here today fulfills a lifelong yearning to see the world of Tom Sawyer and his friends. For Mark Twain molded of them not only symbols of happy, carefree youth, but examples of youngsters facing the realities of life.

As we tugged along the legendary Mississippi today, I was reminded of the quotation in Mark Twain's Life on the Mississippi ".....you'll have lovely prairies, and then come to Thousand Islands, too beautiful for anything. Green? Why, you never saw foliage so green, nor packed so thick; it's like a thousand pin cushions afloat on a looking-glass -- when the water's still."

From Hannibal one sees neither the source nor the mouth of this great river. But Mark Twain sensed its majesty, and in the same manner, he sensed the majestic flow of human life.

His strength was his simplicity. He told the story of the adventuring American children and a river, and with it, he produced an honest description about the pain and the glory of being alive as an American child.

I love discovering Hannibal, Mr. Mayor, and may I say to all who come this way -- you will have the enchantment of rediscovering some of your own childhood.

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