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THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1968

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
AT THE WOMEN DOERS LUNCHEON ON
"REDISCOVERING AMERICA" - THE WHITE HOUSE

Welcome to the White House. We can begin our do-it-yourself "Discover America" program right here. You are sitting in a house which is discovered anew by over 1,730,000 visitors each year -- sometimes 30,000 a day!

Yet our national landmarks, monuments and large museums are only a small part of the joy of really seeing our country.

Travel is changing and so must the habits of travel -- if we are to really discover America.

Our great wide ribbons of super highways are a first step. Without our wonderful system of interstate and primary highways, it would not be possible to travel throughout ^{the} land, to travel to adventure. And yet these miracles or rapid motion are only a prologue to the drama of seeing this nation.

To explore the side roads -- to take the time to travel to the pockets of charm -- that is the essential part of the process of discovery. We must be willing to take the hour's side trip off the interstate.

I remember visiting the Strawberry Banke restoration in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Miss Dorothy Vaughan, who first had the idea of turning an urban renewal project into a whole living history of an early New England seaport town, is sitting in this room. Strawberry Banke does not lie along a super highway. You have to take the time to discover it. Yet what a worthwhile side trip it is!

Some highways are adventures in discovery in their own right. My own memories of America will never be without a vision of the first scenic highway in California -- the Big Sur Highway -- which winds down the Pacific coast from Carmel to San Simeon. It is not the most direct route between those two points -- but the true drama of the gateway to the Pacific could not be performed for the traveler who has not traveled that road.

No adventure in America is complete without a visit to one of our 263 areas within the National Park System. Perhaps our parks are our greatest pride, for they preserve for our future the incredible sights of the Grand Tetons, or the breathtaking foliage of the Peaks of Otter in nearby Virginia. Every time I visit a National Park, I thank again the Creator who fashioned those natural wonders, and those with the foresight to keep them for us all. There is a park site, too, for every taste and every means. You can camp in the wilderness for no money, or sleep in plush accommodations.

The list of only partially discovered wonders in America goes on and on. It would include the little towns of Jefferson and Fredericksburg, Texas with their histories waiting to be explored.

Since 1961, when the Joint Government Industry VISIT THE USA Program was launched, the number of pleasure visitors only from overseas countries has increased by 208 percent. And in the three years since 1965, the number of these visitors has increased from 864,458 to 1,258,335 in 1967 -- an increase of 46 percent. We must all work to help these visitors in many ways. We must marshal our language resources so that the foreigner will not feel lost due to a language barrier. We must bring tourists, and point with pride, to the many places where the best of American products are sold. We must open our homes even more to visitors from abroad. And we must increase the number of visitor centers so that they are available in smaller cities as well as the larger ones -- and have available information about the little town, the delightful seashore, the little-known history which lies beyond the bustling downtown.

It is easy for a visitor from other lands to come to America and see only our big cities, which lie along our major highways and airline routes. But to truly discover America -- to leave with the feeling that "I've been there" -- "I know that country" -- visitors and tourists must be encouraged to take the time and find the joy which lies along the not so well trodden paths.

Gathered in this room today are experts in many fields -- museum curators who have brought history to life, camping enthusiasts who have brought wilderness areas within reach, those who have worked to make their own towns and cities more lovely for residents and visitors alike.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce three of them to you today. Mrs. Ed Edmondson, the wife of the Congressman from Oklahoma; Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke, wife of our Chief of Protocol and former Ambassador to Spain; and Miss Frances Koltun, travel editor of Mademoiselle Magazine.

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