

FOR RELEASE AFTER 10:00 A.M.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1968

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
NATURALIZATION CEREMONY
EAST ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE
NOVEMBER 22, 1968

Welcome to your house -- for it is your house now. And welcome to your country -- for from this moment, America is your country.

It is appropriate, I think, to begin our trip around the New America of 1968 by greeting a group of new Americans.

It remind us that all the new buildings, all the new programs, all the scenery, all the new initiatives of recent years are only important insofar as they affect people.

Today, as in the beginning, the idea of America is to give the individual a place to stand tall and breathe free -- regardless of who he is or where he comes from. It has been in pursuit of that goal that we have undertaken so much of the activity of the past few years.

As you may know, in an hour I will begin a trip across the country.

As we travel these next few days, I hope we will see ways in which America has become a better place for our citizens to lead better and fuller lives. What we will see is not perfection; what we will see will be the restless beginnings of a people yearning to improve life in the United States.

In New Orleans, we will see that Americans care deeply about the education of their children. We will see the Teacher Corps at work; we will see an imaginative program of the National Council on the Arts that introduces young Americans to the best of the theater.

At Cape Kennedy we will see that Americans have not lost their zest to challenge the frontier; that we are grasping the limitless opportunities that present themselves in our time.

In Denver, we will see in action a way that all Americans can have good health care in their neighborhoods -- and in the renaissance of a blighted downtown area -- just the kind of "coming-alive" our cities are seeking.

In California, we will see a new national park; see how deeply Americans cherish their right to lose themselves in the beauty and stillness of Nature in this lovely land of ours.

We will see, in short, the America of today: a nation yeasty and excited, sometimes even strident in its quest to get on with its unfinished business.

And so it's a special delight to welcome today a group of new Americans who will be joining with us in the effort to make this an even better land.

The new American, his children and his grandchildren have been a major force in this nation ever since there was an America.

It is true, as Franklin Roosevelt said, that all Americans are descended from immigrants. We are, to use the title of a book by President Kennedy, "a nation of immigrants." But what we often fail to realize is how quickly new Americans and their families make their contribution to a better America. We have with us today, for example, a number of White House staff members who, like you, are naturalized Americans.

To the new Americans here today, I would say this:

This ceremony of naturalization is among the most sacred in American life. Not only do you vow to accept American citizenship, without reservations. America in return vows that without reservations, it will henceforth accept you as full-fledged Americans.

We need you all: from Japan and Jamaica, from Italy and India; from Greece and Great Britain. There are surgeons and teachers, homemakers, and seamstresses among your number. We need your talents.

I think I may now address you as "fellow-Americans" -- which you know is a familiar phrase around here! To each of you, my "fellow-Americans," in this room -- and to my fellow-Americans around these United States -- I ask one thing: Let us join together; let us build together a better nation. Let us look at all the good things which have happened recently and vow to continue.

That, I want to assure you all, is exactly what two private citizens from Johnson City will be doing starting on January 21.

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