

There is no evidence in the appearance file to indicate that Humphrey actually officiated at the library dedication. His itinerary for the visit to Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio on September 28-29, 1967, plus speech materials, suggest that Humphrey remained in Cincinnati.

Rosemary Palmer

June, 1984

*Visit to  
West Virginia  
cancelled due  
to bad weather*

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

ROMNEY, WEST VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 28, 1967

On the way here, my dear friend Governor Smith told me a little of the history of this place. I was very much impressed.

"Mr. Vice President," he said, "Romney is one of the two oldest towns in West Virginia. George Washington surveyed all this land when he was 16 years old."

I said, "That's fascinating, Governor."

He said, "Mr. Vice President, during the Civil War this was one of the most hotly disputed battlegrounds. Why, Romney shifted from one side to the other 56 times during the course of the war."

I said, "Governor, is that history -- or current events?"

Of course I already knew one important fact from Romney's history -- it gave Hubert Humphrey a 300-vote majority in the Democratic primary of 1960.

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The library we dedicate today will be not only a shrine to history and literature -- it is also a guide to current events.

And so today I think it is right to talk for a moment about both the past and the future; to ask, in President Lincoln's words, "where we are, and whither we are tending."

This town, so rich in history, is a good place for asking such a question.

In the Revolution, this town and county felt the pain of divided loyalties. One band of Tories pledged "a health to George II and damnation to Congress" == and others joined the Continental Army.

And in the Civil War there was scarcely a family here that did not lose one man or more.

For two centuries, this place has reflected the struggles and victories of America.

That is no less true today.

It may be that this town is little known outside the boundaries of West Virginia. But small as it is, Romney still offers some important lessons about what goes on in America today.

What is happening here, I think, proves the vitality of a central idea of today.

Soon after he became President, President Johnson told the nation that the solution to our problems "does not lie in a massive program in Washington."

"Today's problems," he said, "require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism between the national capital and the leaders of local communities."

Governor Smith, Congressman Staggers, and the people of Hampshire County must have been listening closely to that speech. It didn't take you long to put that idea to work.

Thirty years ago, someone wrote in the typically obscure prose style of a WPA Handbook --of Romney:

"The quiet of this town is not disturbed by the hum of industry."

You are changing all that.

When the Congress enacted the Appalachian Regional Development Act, Romney became one of the first towns to participate in its programs.

Under programs of the Economic Development Administration, Romney has attracted new industry, provided new jobs.

You built a new hospital recently with Federal funds.

Romney was the first rural town in West Virginia to take advantage of the Library Services and Construction Act.

All of this activity, locally inspired, locally directed, but federally supported, is part of a new wave of constructive cooperation in America.

I saw more of the same last week in South Carolina, and I have seen it in cities and towns in every state across this country.

The people themselves are deciding their destiny as never before, and they are getting results in their own communities and in the nation as a whole. That is why I am an optimist about America.

I believe historians will record that the 1960's were a time when America built up new momentum and a better way of doing things for the 21st century ahead.

The prosperity of this nation has increased steadily and dramatically during each of the last seven years.

That is a remarkable achievement in economic terms. But far more important, it is a great victory in human terms for it means more jobs for the heads of families, a bigger budget for the housewife, better food and clothing, health and education for millions of American youngsters.

And our abundance is better distributed every year. In that same seven years, the percentage of Americans trapped in poverty has declined from 22 to 15.

That kind of progress is the fruit of careful planning and constant work -- not only in Washington but by community leaders, businessmen, workers and farmers across this land.

It is the kind of progress brought about by Medicare -- a compassionate program which eases the lives of our fathers and mothers.

It is the kind of progress that comes from Head Start -- an imaginative concept which gives young children the skills and hope they need to begin a successful education.

It is the kind of progress that comes from the Job Corps -- a dollars-and-cents idea that saves

young men from lives of idleness and frustration -- and lets them earn their own way in self-respect.

Yes, these things add up to a new departure for our nation -- a movement forward toward the kind of society where people, because they are people, can break free of the old bonds of economic dependence and be self-sufficient and truly free.

Yes, we are entering the final stage of the path begun by Franklin Roosevelt a generation and more ago.

We are heading down the road toward the time when, once and for all, every single American can lift his head up high and stand equal beside his neighbor.

All these things are true: but as every one of us knows, this community, this state, this America are still far from what we want them to be.

Yet, I think they will be.

I know that every one of you here today has felt pain in his heart at the events of these past weeks in the ghettos of our American cities. You have not felt that pain because it has brought you direct personal hardship. You have not felt it because it brought any immediate threat to your family's safety.

But you have felt it -- as I have felt it -- because you knew that something was wrong in America...that we had somehow fallen short in our journey toward "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

And it is precisely because you have felt this pain that I know that we will one day have the America of our dreams. For this is, deep down,

one nation -- and one people -- beyond the artificial bonds of geography, of race, of color, of religion or last name.

Yes, and we shall succeed together, nobly -- or fail together meanly.

In 1960 I campaigned across the beautiful face of this state against a young man who was to become, a few months later, our President.

And when he did become our President, John F. Kennedy said:

"Let every nation know, whether it wish us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

When John Kennedy spoke those words, most

of us who heard them thought of the world at large. But those words have just as much meaning -- and are just as much a call to action -- right here in America.

For today, every nation and every person -- wishing America well or ill -- must know that we shall pay the price....shall meet the hardship...shall support the friend...shall oppose the foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty in this land.

Our foe here at home is not any missile wielding international menace. And the price and the burden -- here at home -- are not simply those of bearing arms or defending our borders. They are, perhaps, even more difficult prices and burdens than those.

The price we are called on to pay today in our own American streets and communities must be

measured in the resolution...the determination...  
the humility...and courage of the words that John  
Kennedy spoke when he called this nation to action  
from his inaugural platform.

There is pain and trouble in America because  
even the progress and the efforts of these past  
seven years have not been enough to lift all the  
people and places in our country to their equal chance.

And so, while we celebrate the opening of this  
new library --what better symbol could there be of  
faith in the future?-- and while we celebrate this  
achievement which reflects the creative cooperation  
of people working across old lines of jurisdiction and  
authority, let us remember this: While one American  
citizen in six still lives in poverty, he is one too  
many...while one American community still lies

outside the blessings of this prosperous land,  
our work is not done and America is not yet made.

I give you the last words of President  
Franklin Roosevelt:

"The only limit to our realization of  
tomorrow will be our doubts of today.  
Let us move forward with strong and  
active faith."

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