

Palace of the Governors
"Save America's Treasures" Tour
Santa Fe, NM
05/21/99

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

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Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Sante Fe, New Mexico
May 21, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. It is such a great pleasure to be back here in Sante Fe and to be here once again at the Palace of the Governors. This is my third visit, and every time I come back I just feel so energized by the atmosphere, the support, the enthusiasm of the people who are here in Sante Fe and who are committed to maintaining the historic importance not only of this site, but as we've already heard, really the entire culture of this extraordinary state.

I want to thank Dick Moe for his incredibly hard work on behalf of historic preservation and the leadership he has given the Trust. I am delighted to be back here in your city, Mr. Mayor, and thank you for the warm welcome that I have received. I am always pleased to be with your Congressman who has brought his incredible energy to Washington where it is much needed and where he is already making his mark on your behalf.

To Lynn Sebastian and everyone who works with her, I want to thank you for your commitment and your leadership on behalf of preservation in this state. I know that there are members of the state legislature who are here today, and I thank you for being here and supporting this effort. And I congratulate the museum and the Palace for this designation as one of America's treasures. It is certainly well deserved and an important additional recognition that I hope will bear a lot of fruit now and into the future.

I am delighted that I could be part of this gathering this morning when this designation is formally made. But more than that, to talk with people who are committed to the history of this state and this city and to draw as much national and public attention as I'm able to the treasures that are part of New Mexico's heritage.

When we began Save America's Treasures, we wanted to use the millennium as an opportunity to bring people's attention to what we had here at home in the United States through our incredible diversity, and do everything we could to bring more awareness to what we must save if we're to go into the next century, and indeed the next millennium, with our understanding of our past intact with its lessons available to us for the future. To that end we adopted a theme for our White House Millennium Council activities—"Honor the Past; Imagine the Future."

And there isn't any place in the United States where that theme is more fitting, because certainly here the past is all around. You heard Lynn recite just briefly some of the ways that the past still lives here in the present, and yet New Mexico is a dynamic, forward-looking place. So "honor the past" and "imagine the future" truly go hand in hand here.

I'm also pleased there are so many committed people who understand the importance of preservation. I know that the work that has been done in New Mexico and in Sante Fe goes back many years, and that it has been pioneering work that the rest of the country has learned from.

On Wednesday morning in the White House, as Dick has already referenced, we were able to announce \$30 million in federal grants to support America's treasures. This will help 62 projects across the nation, from repairing the Washington Monument to rediscovering Hispanic literary texts. It was an extraordinary effort that brought people together from all over the country, and it matched what we have tried to do this past year in raising additional private funds for preservation needs. Through the work of the Trust and its partners, particularly the National Park Foundation and Heritage Preservation, we've been able to raise more than \$30 million in private funding. So within the first year of Save America's Treasures we have, between the public money and the private money, raised more than \$60 million that go directly to preserving the sites, the monuments, the documents, the artifacts, and the treasures that we hope will stand the test of time.

I was privileged to see one of those treasures that is right here at the Palace, the Segesser Hide Paintings, which are an incredible treasure and I'm delighted that they are here where they belong and the people are able to see them and study them. But everywhere in America there are treasures that we may not be as fully aware of as we need to be, and that is part of the mission of the White House Millennium Council's Save America's Treasures effort. When we started talking about it, we knew that we had to look to people who really understood what our past meant.

Here in New Mexico you can see by looking at the Hide paintings that the past is not something that is forgotten, but indeed is something that is very much alive in the lives of so many people here in New Mexico. I was told inside that indeed there are people in this audience who are descendents of the people pictured on the Hide paintings. And if you look at those Hide paintings and you can see particularly the depictions of the battle, these are indeed hearty people who are descended from those who survived those early struggles here in New Mexico. I know that one of them, Tom Chavez, is the director of the Palace of the Governors, a 13th generation New Mexican who descended from one of the soldiers in the painting. So it's not something we just look at and say, "Well that's an interesting depiction of the past," but something that really, truly tells us something about who we are today.

That is the case about what has gone on here at this Palace over the decades. Think about Governor Lew Wallace riding Ben Hur right here. Think about the activities that were in this plaza and will indeed be here again when Community Days start. Think about the records that were kept of those who paid a tax to help support the American Revolution and create the nation we have today.

So when we designate this site as a Treasure, it is not just a treasure for New Mexico, it is a treasure for America. And I want not only those who loved and supported it here in New Mexico to appreciate that, but really all of our country to understand how unique this particular site is. There isn't any more appropriate place in the entire United States to talk about historic

preservation. After all, it was Sante Fe that passed its own preservation ordinance to protect the historic district a full decade before Congress passed the National Act of 1966. It was in Chaco where the looting of archeological sites eventually led to the Antiquities Act of 1906, the first federal legislation addressing preservation. And it was the Pueblo of Taos where the return of Blue Lake Wilderness Area marked the first time the federal government gave land back to Native people.

Throughout the day I will be meeting with New Mexicans who are following this proud preservation tradition. They are, yes, honoring the past, but they are imagining a brighter future as well. I will go to the Pueblo of Acoma and see one of the oldest, if not the oldest, church still standing on American soil. It took hundreds of men carrying tens of thousands of pounds of stone, adobe, wood and water up to the top of that mesa. And yet even during the Pueblo revolt, the people of Acoma chose not to destroy their church, and for generations since they have been its caretakers. It's especially meaningful for me to visit Acoma on the eve of an historic day as Native Americans reclaim over 2,000 remains and burial objects from Eastern museums so they can finally rest in their ancestral lands.

Later I will visit South Martinez Town in Albuquerque where a community adopted a famous outdoor sculpture. It combines ancient myths and modern materials and explores the diversity of our people and the universality of emotions. The community has used this sculpture to teach their children about reading and geography, about the power of the arts and about our responsibility to care for our cultural treasures.

So here in one place we have Native American, Hispanic and Anglo treasures all coming together to make New Mexico what it is today. All of the values that flow from those traditions create a very exciting future. Over the last few years I've tried to highlight the homes and headquarters of people who reflect our diversity of Americans. Dick mentioned Harriet Tubman. But I've been to many places perhaps where the names are not as well known as hers, like a young woman named Kate Mullany who led the first labor movement back in the middle of the 19th century, representing young women who sewed collars and cuffs together. Or visiting the home of Longfellow, who helped to really put into words much of what we were experiencing as we began to look at our history in the 19th century.

In many ways what we are doing is trying to expand our understanding of historic preservation and to encourage people to think about the treasures that might be in their own backyard or, in New Mexico's case, in the sky. I'm pleased that New Mexico has named the night sky by its rightful name, a universal treasure. Well that's how we need to be thinking today when it comes to preservation. We have an opportunity to really expand our horizons and think more profoundly and richly about what it means to preserve and what we're going to preserve for and what values that preservation represents.

And certainly it is true that saving our treasures today is no longer a specialized or isolated practice, no longer a province of a select group of private citizens acting alone. Literally any American can give a gift to the future. And many of you in this gathering here today have been extraordinarily generous in giving the gifts that you have. And I particularly want to thank some

of the individuals who are with us who have stepped forward to serve on the National Trust's Committee to Save America's Treasures.

There's a lot of work for us to do, and it doesn't always take big bucks—though big bucks are always welcome. It can take pennies for preservation. It can take just those extra efforts of paying attention to what we do have in our own backyard. None of us owns our history, but each of us can be a caretaker of it. Each of us does have a responsibility to safeguard that history and pass it down to our children and our children's children. We can use this millennium time to think about not only our past, as we do honor it, but about our future.

Tom mentioned that the President and I were in Littleton yesterday, and just last week I was in Macedonia. I've been with people who've suffered unimaginable horrors, losses, and atrocities. Certainly being with the Kosovars who've been driven out of their homes, who've lost their loved ones, who are living in tents wondering when they'll be able to go back and resume their normal life, makes me even more grateful to be an American. Yet standing and sitting and talking and listening to the families who lost loved ones in Littleton makes me even more determined to help build the kind of America we can all be proud of. And that's a job for every one of us.

We can see clearly in our world today, both abroad and here at home, what happens when hatred and violence are allowed to destroy lives and even hope. But I have also seen the best of the human spirit. I've seen so many Americans working in those refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania, people who are both professional in terms of their work on behalf of relief and people who dropped whatever that were doing to dig latrines or hold babies or pass out medical supplies. And in Littleton I saw the spirit of a community coming back together, children having the courage to rebuild their lives again, and families finding strength in each other.

Which vision of the 21st century are we going to imagine today? And how will we each work to make that vision a reality? We have many gifts in America today, and the most important may not be the material but the intangible. Yes, they may need to be embodied in a building such as this, but it's more about who we are and where we came from and what kind of people we intend to be. We can give our commitments to make our future better. We can commit ourselves to freedom and respect for people who are not like us. We can pledge to spend more time and give more support to our young children and teenagers so they feel they're part of a community that cares for them. And we can give the most priceless gift of all—that gift of hope that every generation can do better than the last. In doing so, yes, we honor the past. But we take from it the best it has to offer and leave behind the tragedies that should no longer stalk our world. And by doing so, indeed, we help not only imagine a better future, but help create it—here in Sante Fe, in New Mexico, and across the United States.

Thank you for your work.