

McClintock House
Watertown, New York
7/15/98

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
M'Clintock House/Women's Rights National Historic Park
Waterloo, New York
July, 15, 1998

Thank you so much. Thank you all. I am just delighted to be here with all of you. And I apologize for how late we were. We've made a number of stops today and somehow got a little behind schedule so thank you so much for being so patient, I understand that you have had a bit of ice cream to help you pass the time and I am sorry I missed that.

I am delighted to be here. I would like to thank the Mayor for making me feel so welcome. And for being here with us here this evening. I see Robert Stanton who is the director of the National Park Service and Marie Russ, the Northeast regional director of the National Park Service, who are here with us. I am also delighted to be here with the superintendent of the Women's Rights National Park and that's Josie Fernandez. And I am especially pleased to be surrounded by all these Girls Scouts because, as it's already been said, I am deeply honored to be the National Honorary President of Girls Scouts of the USA.

Many years ago, more than I care to remember some days, I was a Girl Scout myself. Just like all of you who have come from around this region to be here with us this week. I can remember how special it felt and how much work was involved in adding each new badge to my sash. And I am delighted that you have this new badge to work toward. But I have to confess that after hearing Carey, you did an excellent job didn't she--I think we want to thank you again Carey. I looked at the back of Carey's vest and there is hardly any room left she has so many badges; but these badges represent real commitment to learning and service on behalf of the community and that's one of the reasons that I am so proud to be associated still, after all these years, with the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. Because you are teaching and learning new lessons every day about what it means to be a citizen and I think that is one of the most important roles any of us possibly can fill.

That is, in fact, what motivated the women who came to the M'Clintock house. They wanted to be citizens, they wanted to feel that their contributions and opportunities would be considered equal to those of their husbands, and fathers and brothers and sons. And we're on this tour that ends here at Waterloo and Seneca Falls because we want to help all Americans honor the past and imagine the future. We want all Americans to think about how to protect the sites and monuments that really tell us the story of who we are and how we became the Americans we celebrate.

So for all of you who are Girl Scouts or Junior Rangers, who I know are here as well, you're helping to remember and perpetuate the ideas and values that make America such a great country. And at the center of that is the idea of being a citizen. Something that no one can ever take away from you.

I am delighted that we could come here to the M'Clintock home because I cannot not think of a better place to unveil the Girl Scout "millennium patch" than right here. It is because that many of us here, all of us who are girls and women, owe a debt of gratitude to those courageous women who met in this house. Imagine, if you will, how much courage it took to come together, to say loudly and clearly, to write out that Declaration of Sentiments, that we as women deserve to have equal rights as men. That was a very radical idea in 1848.

When this house is restored, everyone who passes through it will know more about two very exemplary Americans: Maryann and Thomas M'Clintock. They and their children were an activist Quaker family who, in addition to their efforts on behalf of women's rights, organized anti-slavery events, wrote and signed anti-slavery petitions and cared for African American children in this house, perhaps as part of the underground railroad. Everyone who passes through this house will see the parlor where Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Martha Right, Jane Hunt, and Maryann M'Clintock drafted the Declaration of Sentiments. Where they poured over speeches and reports and resolutions for inspiration and where they decided to model their efforts after the Declaration of Independence. Anyone who passes through this house will hear loudly and clearly what they did to make the Declaration of Independence apply to all of us. For ever more they will be able to imagine in their heads these voices that say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal."

In order for that to happen a lot of work has to be undertaken and, yes, a lot of money has to be raised. In order to restore the M'Clintock house, nearly a million dollars has to be raised and yet I think that is a million dollars that is very well invested. Because just as Josie said it will draw people here, it will become a tourist attraction, and it will serve as a reminder for generations to come about those brave women and men who decided to take stand on behalf of the right of a woman to become a citizen of our country.

The National Park Service the Seven Lakes Girl Scouts Council and so many of you here today are part of the effort to restore the M'Clintock house. I'm also pleased to announce that Anne Bartley of San Francisco will be making a generous contribution to the restoration of the M'Clintock house that will move us toward meeting the goal we need to raise the money to restore this house, as it should be a tourist attraction and reminder of what happened here 150 years ago.

Part of the reason that I am on this tour and going from place to place is to remind all Americans that every community has a place that should be saved and remembered. If we think about our history, we want to see it as it truly was: a history that included the contributions of all kinds of people. And we want to be able to make sure that those contributions are memorialized and that the legacy of brave men and women of all races and backgrounds and experiences are remembered for generations to come.

So let's be sure that just as the Girl Scouts will be doing their part to earn their badges that those of us who are no longer Girl Scouts, or no longer eligible to be Girl Scouts, will do our

part to earn, if you will, our badge as a citizen who honors the past and imagines the future. Let us be good care takers, let us be good ancestors of those who come after. Let us be good citizens and honor the work of the women and men who met in Seneca Falls 150 years ago and let us also, along with these young girls and women, imagine the kind of future that we want for all our children.

Thank you all very much.