

President Gerald R. Ford's handwritten reflections, 1977 or 1978

Scanned from the collection **Gerald R. Ford: Materials from the writing of *A Time To Heal*** at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

While writing his autobiography, *A Time to Heal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), President Gerald R. Ford composed a series of personal reflections on twenty-seven topics. What makes these documents so unusual is not only their introspection but also their form. President Ford recorded these observations by hand, writing in blue ball point on his favored yellow writing tablets. He did not expend time and energy to polish and edit his writing, apparently planning to do so when incorporating them into the book. Therefore occasional spelling or grammatical errors or incomplete thoughts appear.

For each reflection the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library has scanned President Ford's handwritten document and added a Library-produced transcription below to aid in reading the reflection.

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Changes in U.S.A.

- 1) Interstate Highway system
- 2) Birth control pill
- 3) Fast foods - what they have done to American diet.

Reasons I read home-town newspaper - G. R. Press.

1) Interstate Highway System -

In the early 1950s it became obvious that the federal highway system was in shambles. During WWII there had been a slow-down or halt in modern highway construction. Federal, state & local funds for future highway construction were inadequate. Following the limitations on auto travel during WWII caused by gas rationing, the American public was in a mood to travel & they wanted safe & modern highways. In addition the Dept. of Defense realized the need for a network that would connect defense installations.

To meet the need Pres. E. proposed the highway Trust fund, an increase in gas taxes & other taxes on highway users, 90% federal funding & a network of 30,000 plus miles & an estimated cost of — & completion by —.

The Interstate System is about 93% completed with about 41,000 miles ~~and~~, about 10 yrs late plus the diversion

I Trust Found money to mass Transit at the
option of the local Communities.

The impact has been most significant. America
has become more mobile. The individual citizen & family
move more frequently, more easily & more safely on
the interstate system. The auto industry has prospered.
The railroad industry has suffered in passenger traffic
& lost a percentage of business to the trucking & bus
industries. Mass transit systems in metro areas because
of the trust fund discussions have been helped. The
Dept. of Defense has a network of highways that bolster our
national security.

2) Birth control pill - probably led to more
extra marital relations among the young & had an
impact on the rate of population growth in the
U.S. I would assume it reduced the number of
illegitimate children & reduced the number of abortions
altho with the legalization of abortions by The Supreme
CT the official statistics would probably appear otherwise.

There is some evidence that users of the pill have
weight control problems & other health maintenance difficulties.

3) Fast foods - what they have done to the American
diet? The impact has been two-fold. The fast food
chains have enticed the American family to "set-out" far
more frequently. This has had an impact on the

family at home. The restaurant rather than the home is a gathering point for the family. The atmosphere is totally different. The menus are more varied by the anchor of a home cooked meal by Mother is no longer there.

The fast or frozen food business for home use has probably expanded the variety of foods available at home have probably expanded the diet but decreased the delicacy. Mothers have more variety in the frozen food shelves and the time of preparation in the kitchen is significantly reduced. However, few would argue that a fresh, home cooked meal can be surpassed in taste or quality.

With more wives in the work-force there is an inevitable pressure to move to the fast food chains & to frozen foods in the kitchen. The impact on the diet is debatable but the impact on the family life has pluses & minuses.

Reasons I read the home-town newspaper - N.P. Press.

A home-town newspaper, one you have read all your adult life, prints the news of people you know, what is going on in the local institutions - govt & otherwise - and what federal & state programs are working or doing in the local community. In addition international news

is printed for local information or interpretation.

national

As a member of Congress or as President ^{benefits} federal programs and appropriations ^{for nationwide local} are approved ^{or} all with good intentions and most with ^{attractive} titles. At the Wash. D.C. level the proposals, bill and final laws are designed to achieve certain objectives but you cannot design it for each community. The best way to check on how a national program works at a specific community is to read a home town newspaper where you know the area, the people and public attitude.

A home town newspaper also is a good sounding board especially by reading the letters to the Editor column. Most good local newspapers have a fair & broad part of the editorial page devoted to citizen comment. A thorough reading of these letters give you a good feel of public sentiment.

Changes in U.S.A.

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- 2) Birth control pill
- 3) Fast foods – what they have done to American diet

Reasons I read home-town newspaper – G.R. [Grand Rapids] Press.

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The impact has been most significant. America has become more mobile. The individual citizen & family moves more frequently, more easily & more safely on the interstate system. The auto industry has prospered. The railroad industry has suffered in passenger traffic & lost a percentage of business to the trucking & bus industries. Mass transit systems in metro areas because of the trust fund diversions have been helped. The Dept. of Defense has a network of highways that bolster our national security.

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