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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
GREAT FALLS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

1:08 P.M. EDT

Mayor Pat Kramer, Governor Byrne, Senator Pete Williams, distinguished Members of the House of Representatives, Congresswoman Fenwick, Congressman Forsythe, Congressman Rinaldo and Congressman Roe, your own Congressman, Mr. Haines, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I am really delighted to be here this afternoon to join you in participating in this historic occasion. Let me say that listening to both of your excellent school bands makes me think of a very important day coming up in November, a great contest that must be on the minds of all of you. I mean, of course, that Thanksgiving Day game between the Knights and the Ghosts.

Today, the Great Falls Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers' Historic District takes its place alongside such sites as Mount Vernon, Monticello, as a national historic landmark.

That makes this a very important day in Paterson, not just for Paterson, but for the entire United States.

Many of you -- and I emphasize many of you -- have worked hard in Paterson to bring about this designation to be a part of this wonderful park, Haines Memorial Park.

I compliment and congratulate all of you for the participation and you -- each and every one of you -- should be very, very proud of what we see here today in this designation.

All America can look at this landmark and consider what it really represents. Great Falls is joining 21 other landmarks which were the settings for important facts and important acts in the drama of our nation's industrial development.

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But this site has a very historic significance. Within that very select group they share a number of different industries that were established here to make this site very unique. Great Falls represents the first attempt within the United States to harness the entire power of a major river. The development of the Great Falls industrial site was always a distinctly American project in another important aspect.

In addition to native-born Americans, the original developers, as I understand, included immigrants from France, Britain and Ireland. But most of all, far more important than anything, the industrial history of the Great Falls goes back to the very first years of our United States and this engineering achievement employed our most basic political and economical goal.

Independence and prosperity, the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufacturers was stimulated by our first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton. To use Paterson as a place to encourage America's economic independence and demonstrate the value of American industry, let me add that this city and what it represents remain very important to our Secretary of the Treasury today, a native of Paterson, my good friend and yours, Bill Simon.

Others in Hamilton's day, a good many years ago, came here to Paterson to admire the Great Falls. They saw its beauty as its only natural resource. But, Hamilton found more than just the beauty of the Great Falls which delighted his eyes.

When Hamilton first saw the falls as an aide to General Washington, they fired Hamilton's imagination. He saw them as a power supply with raw materials, abundant labor and ready markets nearby.

Paterson was much more than a name on a piece of paper. Hamilton saw it as the cradle of American industrial might. A lot of water has flowed over the Great Falls since those days. Paterson did become a cradle which nurtured such American industrial products as Roger's locomotive, the Colt revolver, the Holland submarine and the Curtis-Wright aircraft.

Today, we are making this historic district a monument to the genius that the efforts of the workers, the engineers, the businessmen who turned Hamilton's vision of an industrial powerful nation into a reality.

We can see the Great Falls as a symbol of the industrial might which helps to make America the most powerful nation in the world, a nation that each and every one of us can be very proud of in 1976, our Bicentennial year. We can see it as a symbol of industrial democracy which makes a vast array of material goods available to all of our people. You yourselves are making this district much more than just a monument. You are using the historic part of Paterson as an asset to future growth. You plan to reactivate the Great Falls hydroelectric plant close by this site.

In addition to its historical value, the plant could provide a very useful amount of electrical energy. It will serve as a symbol of Paterson's rebirth and, Mr. Mayor and all of the citizens of Paterson, I congratulate you on your vision, your energy, and your drive and I look forward, as all of you do, to Paterson moving up and up as a place for industry, as a wonderful place to live, and I love being here today.

It should also serve as a reminder that America's dependence on imported energy paralyzes our country's future economic growth. We have tried to do our part by proposing an effective energy program, and with the help of the United States Congress, that program will go along, long way toward solving America's energy program and problems.

In Paterson, you are using your vision and your imagination yourselves, and I am proud that the Federal Government has played its part by giving Paterson some of the financial aid that will help make it once again a booming example of what America's mighty economy has to offer.

The ancient energy of the Great Falls themselves and the new energy of the citizens of Paterson can propel this area into a new age, even greater than that foreseen more than 200 years ago by Alexander Hamilton.

Those same natural resources, the American earth, and the American people, will insure that his vision of a free and prosperous nation will remain a reality for a long, long time.

Thank you. It is wonderful to be here.

END (AT 1:18 P.M. EDT)