

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Honor the Past,

Many years ago, more than I care to remember some days, I was a Girl Scout myself. 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, the "Honor the Past, Imagine the Future" patch, to work toward, because it represents a real commitment to learning and service on behalf of the community. 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. 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 can possibly fill.

That is, in fact, what motivated the women who came to 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 the Millennium Council Save Our Treasures 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 as a nation.

So for all of you who are Girl Scouts, 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 House because I cannot think of a better place to unveil the Girl Scout "millennium patch" than right here. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those courageous women who met in this house, especially those of us who are girls or women. Imagine, if you will, how much courage it



From left to right, Senior Girl Scout Carrie Logan and Junior Girl Scouts Elyse Pfeiffer and Gabrielle Wadhams with Elinor Ferdon, National President of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the newest Girl Scout badge.

took to come together, to write out the Declaration of Sentiments, to say loudly and clearly that women deserve to have equal rights. That was a very radical idea in 1848.

When this house is restored, everyone who passes through it will know more about MaryAnn and Thomas M'Clintock, two very exemplary Americans. In addition to their efforts on behalf of women's rights they 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 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, MaryAnn M'Clintock, and others drafted the Declaration of

Imagine the Future

Sentiments, where they poured over speeches and reports and resolutions for inspiration, and where they decided to model their effort after the Declaration of Independence. Everyone who passes through this house will hear loudly and clearly what they did to make the Declaration of Independence apply to us all. 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 it is a million dollars very well invested. Restored, this house will draw people here, and it will serve as a reminder for generations to come of those brave women and men who decided to take a stand on behalf of the right of a woman to become a citizen of this 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 our

goal of restoring this house to serve as a reminder of what happened here 150 years ago.

Part of the reason 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. When 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, backgrounds, and experiences are remembered for generations to come.

So let's be sure that just as Girl Scouts will be doing their part to earn their badges that those of us who are no longer 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 at 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.

M'Clintock House
July 15, 1998

Official White House photos.



First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton unveils the "Honor the Past, Imagine the Future" badge, which is identical to the "Save America's Treasures" logo.