News release on address by Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) during ceremonies for unveiling historical marker on Farm Day of Calhoun County's Golden Jubilee celebration, at Calhoun County Courthouse, St. Matthews, S.C., 1958 May 10

Strom Thurmond

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HOLD FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY AT 11:30 A.M., SATURDAY, MAY 10, 1958

NEWS RELEASE ON ADDRESS BY SEN. STROM THURMOND (D-SC) AT CALHOUN COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ST. MATTHEWS, S. C., DURING CEREMONIES FOR UNVEILING HISTORICAL MARKER ON FARM DAY OF CALHOUN COUNTY'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION, MAY 10, 1958.

St. Matthews, S. C., May 10 -- Senator Strom Thurmond declared in a speech here today that the issue of States' Rights versus Federal usurpation is "the most important domestic problem facing this country." In discussing the dangers of Federal encroachment he lauded the people of the South for development of a "determination and a spirit that is not going to accept Federal dictation, outside domination, or tyranny in any form."

The South Carolina Democrat spoke at St. Matthews on the final day of Calhoun County's Golden Jubilee celebration, during ceremonies in connection with the unveiling of an historical marker commemorating the establishment of the county fifty years ago.

Thurmond cited John C. Calhoun, for whom the county is named, as "South Carolina's greatest statesman." He reviewed the States' Rights principles which Calhoun defended, and declared that the same fundamental issues confront this country today. He pointed to the "remarkable and startling -- one might almost say ominous -- parallel between today's events and those of the 1850's."

Observing that today was also Confederate Memorial Day in South Carolina, Thurmond paid tribute to the soldiers of the Confederacy, "who sacrificed their lives and their all in defense of their homeland." Taking issue with those who would characterize the cause they fought for as the "Lost Cause," he declared that "a fight for principle is never lost." He pointed out that, although the Confederacy had suffered military defeat, its heroic struggle had left the South's "sense of separate identity, its unity, its solidarity, stronger than ever."

Thurmond insisted, moreover, that the cause which the Confederate soldier upheld "is still a living cause today... Local self-government in the sense of complete national independence may no longer be an issue, but local self-government in the form of States' Rights definitely is an issue, and those who battle for States' Rights today are waging a fight for governmental principles which are founded on the bedrock of the Constitution."

The 1948 States' Rights presidential candidate said that individual liberty and the right of self-government were in grave danger in the United States, due to the fact that "the essential foundations" of constitutional government "have been perilously weakened... by relentless Federal encroachment." Thurmond spoke confidently of the future of the South, however, "No matter what
changes our form of government may undergo," he stated, "...the South is going to maintain its identity and the distinctive values of its way of life." He further asserted that the South would eventually "regain at least a measure of its autonomy, its independence," and would become "master of its own destiny."

Paying tribute to the character and to the progress of the people of the South, Thurmond continued: "We have witnessed over the past few years the beginning of a great historic movement. We have seen a great stirring, a reawakening, of the Southern people, on all fronts -- political, spiritual, economic, and intellectual. But especially have we seen a rebirth of the Southern people's awareness of their own identity and their heritage. And we have seen this reborn awareness give rise to a determination and a spirit that is not going to accept Federal dictation, outside domination, or tyranny in any form."

Thurmond also paid glowing tribute to Calhoun County's farmers, who were also celebrating Farm Day today. He praised them highly for the manner in which they were meeting the serious problems "which are besetting our farm families today." The Senator cited their progress in crop diversification, mentioning the increased production in the county of dairy and beef cattle and the increased planting of peach trees. He spoke of the increasing production of soybeans and said that Calhoun County, which ranks second only to neighboring Orangeburg County, "is rapidly becoming the soybean capital of the United States." He pointed out that a new and highly successful shatterproof variety of soybean was developed by seed breeders in Calhoun County. Citing the "initiative and ingenuity" which has characterized the Calhoun County farming community, Thurmond declared that "if such progress continues, it may be necessary to move the Department of Agriculture from Washington to Calhoun County so the bureaucrats can keep in step with true agricultural progress."

Thurmond had high praise for the county's efforts to obtain new industry. "As a result of the setback which agriculture has suffered in recent years," he declared, "it is more urgent than ever that we locate more industries in our rural areas."

Thurmond also spoke of the area's "rich heritage" and "colorful history" which extends back more than two and a half centuries although the county was not established as a political entity until 1908.

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