

1963

Sunday, December 29th

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The second of the big days dawned beautiful and clear, but so cold that I praised the Lord we were not having the barbecue out under the live oaks.

Lyndon and I and the nucleus of the German party helicoptered in to Fredericksburg early in the morning, about 9 o'clock, I think, and went to the Pioneer Memorial, the octagon house that sits right off the main street, where we were met by the leading citizens of the community, — quite a big crowd of people. We passed the statue of Baron Von <sup>M</sup>Neusebach, who had brought in 120 German families in covered wagons back in the 1840's to settle this area.

We stood in front of the little octagon house and had a little ceremony. . . Bill Petmecky and Arthur Stehling -- both of whom made welcoming speeches, rather well done, I thought -- and then a lady, the head of the Historical Association of Gillespie County, made a little speech and gave a little book called Pioneers in God's Hills to Chancellor Erhard.

The Chancellor made response and then we went on to church services at the Lutheran Church. Of course, that is what the Chancellor is a member of. And there was a curious blending of the old and the new, the elderly minister spoke in German -- conducted a large part

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of the sermon, a large part of the service in German -- and a handsome, vital young man spoke in English, gave us a little sermon in English.

There was a beautiful man's choir that sang Silent Night in German. That, I think, was really the most tranquil moment of all Christmas.

We returned to what has become the cauldron of activity that is our home now to find the guests were already arriving in the gymnasium. They were invited for 1 o'clock; I guess it must have been a little past 11 by then.

The Germans continued their talks and there was no interrupting them -- this is real business. They were in one room, our people in another, and then they met jointly, together, in a third room.

So I dispatched Lynda Bird up to the gymnasium to be the representative for the Johnson family and greet anybody who came and be our hostess. And I also asked Luci and Jack to do the same, and discovered to my delight that Jack (Jack Olsen from Wisconsin) can speak a few words of German. And I heard later that they both did a real good job.

And I took my post at the guest house to meet and greet a good many guests who came in by private planes from various parts of the State. There was Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lee<sup>^</sup>. He's a really FINE

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Southwestern artist from El Paso -- they came with the Thornberrys...  
John Jones of Houston, the Wesley Wests, von Braun and his lovely  
young wife. There was Bob Kerr, Jr. and <sup>Dean McGhee</sup> ~~Dale McGhee~~, who flew  
in from Oklahoma and had a slight accident on the runway. It didn't  
hurt anybody but the plane -- nobody could go in or out for several  
hours because the plane was jamming the runway.

And then, very importantly -- I wanted to take care of and make  
feel very welcome Mr. and Mrs. Cliburn, the parents of Van Cliburn,  
who was playing for us that day. Later on Van Cliburn himself came  
down -- I guess he'd been up testing the piano, and he came in and I  
tried to introduce everybody to everybody, with the help of Eloise  
Thornberry.

Throughout the whole day Angier Biddle Duke was weaving his  
silken way -- he is, well, he always knows what to do, and I practically  
feel like laying my head on his shoulder and saying, "O. K., you tell  
me what" -- together with Liz and Bess.

So, at the <sup>appointed</sup> ~~atomic~~ hour all of the guests were asked to get in  
their vehicles and ride up to the gymnasium for the barbecue, and I  
stood by the fence waiting for Lyndon and the Chancellor, and I jumped  
in the car, I, just only in the nick of time, and rode up to the barbecue  
myself, arriving at the gym just a few minutes late.

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We found the gym rather gayly transformed with red checkered table cloths and red lanterns on the table and bunting everywhere, with the colors of the German flag and the German insignia displayed, and as a backdrop for that enormous handsome piano and Van Cliburn, there were bales of hay, saddles, lariats, a lantern or two, and a good deal of very different things <sup>than</sup> ~~that~~ I'm sure that he's used to playing by.

I steered the Chancellor into the chow line, we loaded our plates heavily and made our way among the guests to the head table with about, I would say, 12 or 14 of the top Germans and some of the local people, and thank the Lord it wasn't my job to seat them!

Then Lyndon himself said grace and we laid to on the barbecue. The beans (pinto beans always) and the really delicious ribs, the slaw, and later on pies and lots of hot coffee. And plenty of beer.

The little gym would only take about 300 people and by the time we had all the German press, all the White House and local press, the German party itself, and our group, it was possible to only invite some, oh, 75 or at the most 100 other people.

But as I looked around I was glad to see a great deal of Texans represented. There was, from the University, Dr. and Mrs. Ransom and Dr. and Mrs. J. Frank Dobie.

From the cattle industry, Bob Kleberg and Jay Taylor.

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After the barbecue came the entertainment, and if that wasn't a job for Cactus, to meld together that very diverse entertainment! I think they did a masterful, dignified job.

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We had a group of girls from Fredericksburg who did folk dances, brought over from the Old Country, including the Heir<sup>12</sup>/<sub>1</sub>schmidt. Then we had St. Mary's Choir, led by a nun, who sang some beautiful German songs and then sang Deep in the Heart of Texas, and that caused the Chancellor to smile and lean over to me and say -- and he does speak some English -- "We know that in Germany, too."

Then we had Van Cliburn, who was the climax to the entertainment. He was born and raised in Deep East Texas, just about 40 miles from where I was, and he's turned out to be one of the world's great pianists. And it was a masterful introduction that Cactus gave him, and I was just as proud of Cactus as I was of anybody in the whole show.

Van Cliburn did the Appassionata from Beethoven, I think, isn't it? And then he did a beautiful Schumann love song and some other things that I didn't know, and everybody was very impressed, especially when he said that he was so glad to play for us because he had heard that the Chancellor himself was a pianist as a young man and that he had expected to be a concert pianist.

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Cliburn is going to Germany for a concert piano tour some time this Spring, which added to the interest of his being there.

Next -- and I'd almost swear that there was no planned agenda -- Lyndon got up and introduced the outstanding Germans, giving a little -- a few words about each. Then he introduced the outstanding members of our own party and his introduction of Secretary of State Dean Rusk was one of the most eloquent and moving and beautiful things that I've ever heard him do.

Somewhere in the agenda came the talks. The Chancellor's talk -- which I didn't understand, of course, until the translation came -- was pure poetry. It was a great talk, and it made me think that all the effort was worthwhile and that maybe we had put a little more cement into the building of good relations. Lyndon's talk was brief and good.