

1964

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

WHD

Yesterday, Thursday, January 16, was a real pleasant and a real full day. It began by me taking the exercises prescribed by Dr. Crouse in the morning. It took about forty minutes. It would have been a far, far better thing if I had started them ten years ago, but since I can't go back those ten, I will just have to take what there is of me and do the best I can from now on, and then I worked on the logistics of the luncheon today, going over the guests that are coming and thinking of my points of contact with each of them and the same of the dinner tonight.

At one o'clock I really had what to me is the most pleasant type of luncheon--not given for any particular person or purpose, but just to have fun. The Senate wives who I enjoy like Betty Fulbright, Henrietta Anderson and Mary Ellen Monroney and Abigail McCarthy, and then from a long ways off, Mrs. Phillip Hoff, the wife of the Governor of Vermont, amazingly enough, a Democrat, and I got to bring her up on the state of my maple tree that was given to me when we were in Vermont that I have planted at the ranch, and told her all about where I have my picture of the sugar mill in the office at the ranch. And then, there was Mrs. Bob Kintner (Jean Kintner) whom I've known for so long and been so fond of, and Miss Katherine Quinn, who is "Miss Democrat," of Connecticut. It must have been sort of an unusual note for some of the

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

other guests. She, if you ask her just how the vote went in Precinct 14 back in Stamford back in 1948, I bet she could tell you and she could tell you how to get it to go a certain way in the next upcoming one. She is a real "savvy" woman in her line of business and not perhaps what a great many of the other guests were quite used to. And then, what an utter joy it was for me to meet and have at my own table Helen Hayes, who is playing here in Miss Dove. I have watched her from the other side of the footlights for so many years and just loved her and found her enchanting in person.

After we got to our coffee, Ellen Stotenburg got up and told us about her life and times with the UN. She is the one who brought down the 28 delegates to the LBJ Ranch last April, and I thought just a little information about what some private people are doing to show those UN delegates confined in -- well in that vast steel and stone thing which is New York, to show them what something else of the United States looks like would be a good idea and she has taken them to places like Wyoming, California, Nebraska, and also I am glad to say to Texas. They all seemed to enjoy it. It was over rather quickly, and then I spent the afternoon getting back to signing my bushels of mail and waiting for Luci to come in so I could give her the good, good news of a talk that I had had with Miss Katherine Lee, of NCS, who told me that yes, she thought she could rearrange one of Luci's finals so that she could have it on

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon so that she could get away one day early and have her trip to Wisconsin, a trip that I fear will not meet with the approval of all the members of our family, but which I--maybe I am a softie-- but I very much want her to have. And she presented me with a problem which would make a good play, as she is in a position where she could save lives or ruin lives and I don't quite have the judgment or the courage to tell her which is which. One of the best pieces of news, Miss Lee told me is that the teachers say that Luci's attitude is getting so much better. She doesn't panic anymore, she is organizing her time better and that they really think that, if the Doctor agrees, that she might go back after finals are over next week to taking that course that was knocked out when she began to have this eye trouble so that she won't have to be tied all summer long to work. That would be a great joy because I would love for her to go back to Camp Mystic, although therein lies some of the problem that she was telling me about.

We had an early dinner this evening-- seven o'clock, business suit, about sixty-four guests for the heads of the Senate Committees and their ranking members and the Leadership on both sides. The purpose, as is so often with Lyndon, was really truly business. He invited in McCone, of Intelligence; McNamara, Secretary of Defense; Rusk, Secretary of State; and Kermit Gordon, of Budget, spelled in capital letters, to brief them. As soon as we had all filed into the Blue Room and

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

shaken hands and had a drink, Lyndon got up and announced that he would like the gentlemen to accompany him to the Little Theater where there would be a briefing and I said I wished that all the ladies would go upstairs and perhaps some of them might like to see the second floor, the family living quarters, so we trooped up and, of course, Senator Margaret Chase Smith went with the gentlemen and speaking of Senator Smith, she said something really quite dear-- she and Senator Aiken together.

Senator Aiken said to Lyndon "Boy, if you keep on acting this way, some day you are going to be President of the United States" and Senator Smith said "Well, if he keeps on behaving as he is, he will be President again." Kermit Gordon remarked while we were having our drinks that "I have seen more of your husband in the last three weeks than you have," and I said that both his wife and I had a complaint to enter but just so it wound up in saving a few million dollars, I think we can be content.

The ladies, I guess about twenty-six or seven of us, trooped upstairs-- most of us up the steps and some in the elevator because Louella Dirksen had a broken ankle and Henrietta Hill had one that was healing and several more it developed was better for them, and then we began in the Yellow Room and I pointed out all the things I know and love and gave a sort of conducted tour, interrupted by everybody telling how they remember this or that, but the surprising thing-- the most surprising thing of all--was how many said they had never been on the

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

Second Floor before and they are the wives of the ranking members of the Senate!

We did practically everything except Luci's room where she was studying for finals and Lynda Bird's room because we got the call that dinner was ready before we had finished it, and Mrs. Goldwater was particularly interested in the Catlings because, after all, they are from her part of the world. Some of the old-timers confirmed my belief that the beautiful still ^{life of} flowers that is in the Queen's Room above the fireplace was the gift of Princess Elizabeth, the present Queen Elizabeth of England, when she was our guest here a good many years ago and it used to hang in the State Dining Room above the buffet to the right as you entered.

I believe as always the Lincoln Room attracted the most interest and I was glad that I had gone through that room enough to say that five pieces of the furniture, the Victorian settee and two of the little slipper chairs, were original pieces that had belonged to the Lincoln family. I did point out that that was not the room that he actually slept in--that it was our own bedroom where he slept--and several people later on looked at the plaque above the fireplace in our bedroom that points that out and also the little one below that says "This is the room where President John Fitzgerald Kennedy slept with his wife Jacqueline during his two years, ten months, and ¹¹ however many days was it? ¹¹ of

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

his life in the White House."

All the time, as much as I enjoyed the ladies, I kept on wishing I could have been eavesdropping with the men because that was what the whole thing was for-- to acquaint them with what the Administration was trying to do, not to push or convert or sell, but to lay it out and say we think this is best and please try to understand and if you can't go along you can't, well I hope there is some residue of good will and a good deal more knowledge because that is what we invested the evening in.

When we went into dinner, we were at round tables in the State Dining Room and I found myself delightfully enough between Senator Dick Russell, who was on my left, and Senator Carl Hayden, who was on my right. Carl Hayden used a sentence I have heard all my life vaguely and never heard accurately and that is the one about Horatius at the bridge and it went something like this: "I take my stand on thy right to guard the bridge." I am glad to have him there. It was interesting to see everybody's reaction to the things as I took the ladies around upstairs. Of course, Mrs. Paul Douglas' most delightful reaction was to the bust of Houdon because her own father is a sculptor. And, of course, all of us had a lot to talk about--the Senate Ladies Red Cross, which I am going to miss more than nearly anything because that was therapy and solace and quiet and companionship and just plain fun as well as a slight sense of doing something good.

After dinner they went home at a very early hour-- about a

Thursday, January 16 (Continued)

quarter to ten I would say, but then the party had begun at seven, and just a few of us trooped upstairs for one more drink--the Humphreys, the Fulbrights, I believe the O'Briens and Lyndon and I--with nobody upstairs to do it, so I went in the kitchen and took back my usual job of doing the bartending. And presently they left and I hoped that would be the end of the evening, which it was for me and unhappily it wasn't for Lyndon. There was a large stack on Panama to read, which Rusk had sort of shaken his head and warned me about the possibility of, as he entered at 7:00 o'clock that evening, so it was another two o'clock night for him. One of my last thoughts was being grateful to Bess for concocting a menu that was about as inexpensive as you could work out for a group that was this important. There was just one wine and there was chicken. I have a feeling chicken is going to frequently be a part of our menus at the White House. Breast of capon, _____. At any rate, it was really a beautiful dinner.

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