

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, January 18, 1964

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This was a morning of work and then at 2 o'clock Abe Fortas came over and we spent a couple of hours talking about operation Art, because on Monday I will be going to New York and I will be having lunch with Mary Lasker and possibly Mr. ~~Fossberg~~<sup>Wright</sup>. And I want to be a little bit prepared for how I'm going to start this thing moving. I've been digging into the file, I had some plans, wanted to further them with Abe, so we spent a while on it.

And then, at 4:30, I went to Explorers' Hall at the National Geographic building, with Lyndon. It was his job to dedicate the new headquarters building of the National Geographic Society, and Melville Grosvenor met us at the front door and took us in.

One of the things that delights me about Lyndon, is that he always naturally gravitates to the excellent -- and the National Geographic really is excellent.

Lyndon's speech really was poetic in quality and I was quite proud of it. But then I must say that Mr. Grosvenor outdid him, with just the simple, human simplicity of his when he talked about looking back into the files and finding that a lady named Mrs. Sam Johnson, back in 1919, had subscribed to the National Geographic in the name of her son, Lyndon Johnson. And she - Lyndon has later said that his mother sent him off to school with the Bible in one hand and the National Geographic in the other.

The Geographic Society is celebrating its diamond anniversary. Actually it was going to be celebrated last year but because of President

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Kennedy's death, they didn't open the building and it was postponed and that is why Lyndon is doing it today.

And it just so happens, dramatically enough, that it is in this very issue, in February, that there's an article <sup>by</sup> ~~about~~ Lyndon, describing his trip to the Scandinavian countries last fall, when Lynda Bird went along with us.

After they had both completed their speeches, Mr. Grosvenor handed me an electric button, which I pushed, and an enormous globe of the world, eleven feet in diameter, thirty-four feet around, began to revolve. I think all of us held our breath a second, until the impulse reached the globe and it actually began to revolve.

Then we went into a reception, and there I met all the officials of the National Geographic, and was surprised, but I shouldn't have been, to see Senator Byrd there, because, after all, his brother the great explorer, Richard Byrd, who went to the South or North Pole, was enough to cause him to be intensely interested in the National Geographic.

And there too, was his darling daughter-in-law, Helen Byrd, with a big, handsome, tall mountain climber, that she had told me about last summer, with a glint in her eye and I don't blame her. I wonder if it was Sir Hilary. He's somebody she'd known about 25 years ago, before she married, and hadn't seen since. This was just an unexpected reunion.

Liz had very thoughtfully asked me to put a list of people I'd like to have, who would be invited to the ceremonies, and I had Diana and her husband;

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and Susan and her date, and Patsy Derby and her date, and I tried to see that they met a few people around.

The National Geographic presented me with a small replica of the globe, with Johnson City marked with a diamond, probably the most lustrous thing that had ever happened to Johnson City. I'll put it in our family room somewhere, and treasure it always.

After a fairly brief time of meeting everybody there, in which I'm so glad to say I got to see my old friends, Bart McDowell and Kurt Wentzel from my Scandinavian trip, we left, rode back to the White House swiftly, boarded the helicopter and picked up the people whom we had already phoned to join us; the Bill Whites, Jack Valenti, the Busbys, and <sup>Marianne</sup> ~~Mary Ann~~ Means, and out we put for Camp David.

As far as I'm concerned, the curtain draws between me and care when I get to Camp David. I walk in the door and forget all my troubles.

After dinner, I just said goodby folks and went off and watched Gunsmoke, leaving everybody outside to see The Wheeler-Dealers, which I would also have liked to have seen, but Gunsmoke outranked it.

~~The next~~