

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, February 14, 1964

WHD

This morning began happily, with a pretty little bouquet and a valentine, homemade, from Warrie Lynn. Lynda Bird had already given me hers, a picture of herself, with a delicious inscription, typical of that child - and Lyndon, a book called Reuben, Reuben by Peter de ^{Wries} ~~Wiese~~, with a saucy little message inside, addressed to Claudia Taylor Johnson, and but he and I signed by a name that nobody would remember, something I used to call him a very long time ago, about 29 years ago in fact, and something that cannot be repeated here. I shall put it away in an envelope entitled "Among My Treasures".

The first working bit of the day was to go downstairs and have my picture taken with Margy McNamara, for the D.C. League of Women Voters. They are putting on a benefit called The Affair and the actor, Louis Edmonds, presented me with tickets, the idea being of course, to raise money, so that the League ^[of] Women voters can tell people why they ought to get out and vote and to explain the issues to them. No sides taken, make up your own mind, but do, for heavens sake, learn about it. Then quickly, there were some more pictures for News Week by a man named Ward, outdoors, on my way toward Lyndon's office.

And then there was the Heart luncheon, an annual affair, to which I've been every year for a great many years, and for which I, like every other woman in town, get dressed up in the best thing I have. This time it was my white Alaskan ^{me} ~~me~~ suit, with the rhinestone buttons and a "cafe-au-lait hat, with flowers cascading down the back, or so ~~Aileen~~ ^{Ed} ~~Ed~~ ^{Ed}

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said in the column. At any rate, I was pretty well pleased with the way I looked and the way the picture came out, and even more pleased at the fact that there were 1400 women in the Sheraton Park room, each of whom had paid a nice little sum, and the coffers of the Heart Research are 'beefed-up' thereby. ,,

Was there ever such a nation of doers and goers and givers as we are? Although it's easy sometime to get to thinking how much activity and how much achievement?

There was a style show, the first of them I've seen in a good long time, that almost made me want to compete with the lovely, sleek ladies except that I - it's easy to count up the bills that have already come in.

You can always count on the British to help out, and Lady Ormsby-Gore was at the head table, as was that darling Madam Platzner from Austria.

I got back to the White House in time to be hostess for a very odd and interesting threesome, that was sent to me by the U. S. Travel Service, sponsored by my friend, Hodges, ^[by the] Department of Commerce, trying to bring foreign visitors into this country to get foreign dollars for tourism. We Americans have been touring the wide, wide world for long enough and it's high time folks started seeing us. The effort

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of this aspect of the U.S. Travel Service is to get communities to invite visitors into individual American homes. My guests were Mrs. Johanna Bouchuwer, from Amsterdam, Holland, and she told me more about my country than I could tell her. She's travelled 14,000 miles by bus across the United States, and for the --I can hardly believe I'm telling the truth, but I think she said for \$99. Of course she'd spent most of the time here with friends in the United States, and, oddly enough, they were friends that she had made because she had rented out her canal boat in Amsterdam to visiting American tourists. And, ^{as} as they stayed there, as her paying guests, they got to be friends and they all said, ^{when} when you get to come to the United States you must stop by and see us. She said, "You know one thing I found out - all Americans are not rich." And I said "Yes ma'am, you got us down right." She and I both agreed that travelling by bus and taking three and a half months to see a country, was a wonderful way to do it.

My other guests were Señor and Señora Vali Valliano, from Lima, Peru. He owns a mine and she had been named woman of the year in Lima several years ago - ^{both} ~~but~~ because she raised a big family of children and then she had had a lot of other children in ^{her} ~~her~~ home, among them visiting Americans, ^{who had stayed} ~~would stay a~~ for quite some length of time with them.

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Well, so much for the grist that comes to my mill and the delightful variety it has.

As soon as they had departed, I had two more guests, the John Steinbecks, whom I had been looking forward to very much to spending an hour with. — Mr. Steinbeck, because I'm an old, old fan of his, way back to the days of Grapes of Wrath and Of Mice and Men - and Mrs. Steinbeck, because when she was Elaine Anderson, at the University of Texas, back about 1932, I had seen her in Curtain Club plays, or rather, particularly one, "Hayfever". She later married Zachary Scott and went to New York and then to Hollywood, where, as so many marriages do, that one perished. And later on she became Mrs. Steinbeck. And another ^{reason} I wanted to see her was because her sister, Jean Covert Boone, has worked for me at KTBC for 10 or 12 years, on the woman's world.

It turned out to be an absolutely delicious hour, they had spent some six months behind the Iron Curtain, traveling in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Russia, meeting artists, meeting people wherever they could in an attempt to explain America to those people, One of the cultural exchange ideas. They had many things to say about the Russian people - that they were very hospitable people, that they were very out-^{going}~~going~~, also that they absolutely, like a stone wall, refused to believe a lot of things that you would tell them that our country was like. For instance, Steinbeck tried

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to tell them about the time when their leader, Mr. Krusch^{ev}, took off his shoe and very angrily pounded home a point on the desk at the United Nations, when he was making a speech. They said "You lie". "Our great leader is a very cultured man, he would never do anything as uncouth as that." They also told me one very delightful incident about how, when they were returning from some evening engagement, they emerged on the street at 11 o'clock, they could find no taxi or didn't have anybody with them from intourists, tried to summon the policeman and get help, asked for help from first one and then other, were not able to get the man to find them a taxi anywhere, and finally John Steinbeck sat down in the middle of the street and refused to budge. And then Elaine began to tell it, she said ... he had on this great big black, Russian fur hat and great big overcoat, and he just sat there and said, "I'm not going to move 'til you get me a taxi." Presently, while everybody stood around, in bewilderment and not knowing what to do, a cultured gentleman walked through the crowd, looked at him, leaned over, said "Ernest Hemingway"? Steinbeck said, "No." Shook his head. The man looked at him again and said "John Steinbeck?" and he said "Yes". The man turned around, gave some swift orders, and in about five minutes, up rolled a taxi, they got in, thanked him, and off they went.

Shortly after they left, I had a couple of hours of desk work, and then supper on a tray and Mary Lasker arrived enroute from Florida to New York, to spend the night with me, to talk about my art project.

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Lyndon is in St. Louis, ^amaking a speech, celebrating its, —
I suppose ^{AB}bicentennial, and it looked like a good nite for Mary and me
just to sit around and talk about the possible Arts Committee, the
continuation of all the things that need to be done; the places where I
may be able to get pictures on loan for Lyndon's office, the Fish Room,
,eventually,
and my little study, and perhaps /for the family room upstairs.

It was an early-to-bed night, and high time too - one needs
them every now and then.