

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

This morning, Lyndon went to New York, to Mrs. Robert Wagner's funeral. I did not go. I felt like I was letting him down, letting him endure something painful and hard, without me being there to share it, which in some way does it relieve it, sharing it? But I had not been close to her and it would take a great bite out of a day that was already filled, leaving over to tomorrow, other things, that would be hard to fit in.

So this morning I had a fitting, and then I had a long, long conference with Jim Webb, of NASA, about the trip to the space installations. It all boils down to this - he thinks the one to Huntsville can be well - and constructively handled, in a natural fashion. He foresees difficulties in the ones in Mississippi and Louisiana, particularly in Mississippi, close to the town of Picayune, where really it's just a bare beginnings of a space installation. What's there now is bulldozers and dug-up earth and confusion. When the land was condemned by the government, and the people had to move out, it made a great many of the landowners mad, so instead of being a boon to the community at present, it's a bone of contention. Also, some of the towns close by, that had hoped to get the families to beef up their economy, their payrolls, their general way of life, have applied for government help expanded in such things as sewers, ~~handcarts~~ schools, roads - they've been turned down on every application, because of the integration problem, or so they think. And so there's more pain and trouble right there now, than there is happiness, over the NASA installation.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 2

And then when you get on to the one out from New Orleans - this installation is not actually under the control of NASA, it has been leased to, I think, Chrysler Corporation.

So it all boils down to more difficulties than I think I want to walk into; that is, except the one at Huntsville.

I had lunch in my room. A session with Mr. Ketchum, in which we — or I learned about the family dining room on the second floor, and we carried a lot of paintings around and decided where we were going to hang some and what others we were going to return.

And then there was a perfectly hilarious session of picture taking, with Lynda and Luci, on what may turn out to be a cover for Look on Mother's Day. Poor Luci looked more and more wooden and couldn't get her head close to Lynda's and mine, and couldn't smile - and everyone kept on saying .. "But Luci, smile!" And she got more and more hysterical, and said "How can you put on, how can you smile if you don't feel like smiling?" I felt so sorry for her, I didn't know what to do. I must find somebody, a sort of drama teacher, because that little girl is prettier than either Lynda or me, and she doesn't come across in pictures as well as she should. A color picture is her chance, because her complexion is so radiant and her eyes and hair so pretty. But she doesn't turn the light on inside - that animation, that spirit, that is so much a part of Luci, just comes to a dead halt when faced with a camera.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 3

Tonight is the night of the fifth in a series of our sessions with the House members. Only 127 this time.

Lyndon was on time immediately to meet them and we began in the Blue Room at 6 o'clock. There was an unusually large number of Texas members this time. Bob Casey; the Jake Pickles' from Austin, who had wanted to be here particularly, so that they could be with the Homer Thornberry's; the Graham Purcell's; that humorous Walter Rogers, and how I would love to stop and listen to him make a report on the finances of the club; and, I must add Bruce Alger, and I felt a little flicker when he came down the line, and I very dignified and composed, said hello to him. It was necessary to remind myself that this is the business of all the Congress.

Veteran Mrs. Frances Bolton was there, and a good Congresswoman she's been for a long time, Lyndon thinks; and ^{Carrie}~~Gene~~ Davis of Tennessee, it was so nice to look around and see her, because she's carried a load for women in this town, more than anybody with the exception of Lindy Boggs. And there were the Herlongs who I remember from my long ago, happy family vacation trip to Florida. That's just about the ^[one] time, I think, that the four Johnson's (no, not the only - one of the few) [^] that all four of us went off on a gay, silly, family vacation together. And there was handsome, young Ogden Reed, Republican of New York, whose family controls a sizeable amount of that newspaper. And also handsome Roman Puchinski, whom I remember from our trip to Illinois, where we met all the Czechs in Chicago,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 4

I think. And the Neil Stabler^s, of Michigan, I never see them without remembering that night in the hotel in Detroit, in October of '61, during the Cuba crisis, when the President made his speech, and when you didn't quite know whether you were going to wake up the next morning to a living world, or wake up the next morning at all.

And Basil Whitener of North Carolina, whom I remember from a much happier day, on just a real, rural campaigning day, in North Carolina.

The men had an unusually good briefing, it must have been because it was so long. The ladies and I did all the surveying of the family rooms and official rooms on the second floor that we wanted to, and then we still beat them down to the East Room, where the buffet table was spread out, by about 10 minutes. Usually they are timed for just immediate coincidence.

Here are several of the things that I remember, with pleasure, from that evening. We were talking about how different families had used the house, and how different changes had taken place in it. And one of the Congressional wives turned to ^{Carrie}~~Carrie~~ Davis and said, "^{Carrie}~~Carrie~~, what was it like in this room, back in the (I forget what Administration she said)." And ^{Carrie}~~Carrie~~ sort of smiled and said, "I don't know, I've been here 32 years, and I've never been upstairs before."

And then while we were dancing, one of the Congressman said to me, "This is the first night I have felt important here. Usually I just feel like a

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 5

cipher because there are so many of us."

The dancing was fun and I got handed around from Congresssman to Congressman, and it's sort of nice being the belle of the ball without having to earn it! But at least, I might be able to learn it, because I'm certainly getting to be a better dancer from practice.

When everybody had departed about 9 o'clock, we went to the pool, with the Thornberry's and the Pickles' because nothing further could happen to my hair - it's had it, and I'm going to the beauty parlor in the morning and so I knew I could have the luxury of swimming up and down about 20 times in this warm water. And besides, I regret all the times I don't share it with Lyndon, this swimming - it's just that I can't afford the hours and the money at the beauty parlor.

It's been such fun to have the Thornberry's here - it's not exactly stimulating, but so pleasant and happy and true - and so very restful for Lyndon. But that does remind me of what has been the most stimulating hour of the day.

Lyndon had asked Helen Gahagan Douglas to come from the banquet the night before ^{and} spend the night with us. He had supplied with her, apparently, with my night gown and robe and there she was on the third floor. So, at breakfast, I called her to come down, in her robe (my robe), and have breakfast with me in my room, while we watched Lyndon depart

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 6

by helicopter ^g from the south lawn ^g for the funeral. There's a line of poetry I wish I could remember to apply to Helen! It's something about, ... Time does not stale nor age (something) ^{her} infinite variety. And she is, indeed, still the same vivid person I knew back in 1939, '40, somewhere along there, and on up to President Roosevelt's death, and her defeat from Congress in '46 or thereabouts. She's an extraordinarily handsome woman, with an enormous appetite for life, and encyclopedic accumulation of information, and a regular machinegun way of imparting it. Rat-a-tat-tat.

I spent a wonderful hour and a half with her, at the end of which I had gotten in probably twodozen words, was exhausted, and had simply loved it. I asked her what she'd been doing. She'd been lecturing on foreign affairs; or she'd been taking trips to South American, to Asia. She was going to Russia next. Among the interesting concepts she dropped, was, that man ^{who} had been floundering around on this planet for an awfully long time, and had lived here more or less as a beast until the first Revolution, which was the Agricultural Revolution; wherein he learned to use bronze, iron and other tools for agriculture. Many, many eons had elapsed and then, finally, about 1800 or so, came the second Revolution, the Industrial Revolution; and then, not quite 200 years later, here comes the third important Revolution, Automation, which is going, according to Helen, change the course of our lives, producing more plenty than there has ever been before, ^g more time for leisure, for real intellectual pursuits, than there ever has been before. But what's

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 5, 1964

Page 7

going to happen to poor old human nature, that's been used to working.

And what's going to happen to our Puritan consciences[?] I guess that's the problem of the next two decades.