

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, May 13, 1964

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The day began with a frontal assault on my desk., Much reading and signing of mail, Liz, Bess and Ashton, in rotation, to settle each of their problems. Liz and Bess are so capable of handling many on their own; and Ashton, being pure velvet, seldom brings me any. But the remnants of a puritan conscience, drives me to insist on knowing most everything, to read a lot of the mail, even - and sometimes especially - the bad mail.

And then when the desk was clearer than it's been in a long time, I went to Mr. Per's for a permanent wave, the second important item on my vacation agenda.

A little after four, I returned to the mansion for a date with A. W., signed papers in regard to the Alabama property, talked with him about getting his family up to visit us during the first few weeks in June. Got Liz down, to go over with him, the disquieting inquiries she had received from the press.

It appears that two Republican Congressmen, have made a trip to Alabama, to ^{Autauga} ~~Attalla~~ County, have gone out to interview some of my tenants, concealed tape recorders in their brief cases, have taken pictures of the houses, and quite miserable indeed, they are, and are all prepared to try to prevent Lyndon's poverty bill - a massive and important piece of legislation, I think it is - with the flashy, gossipy, ugly information - that Mrs. Johnson has tenants who live in squalor.

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I told Liz, *J* that where we used to have about 20 tenants on the whole place, *J* we now have about four, *T* the reason was, *A* cotton had ceased to be an economic crop long ago in that region. Charlie Cutler and his mule, *J* in that hilly country, *J* can't compete with Lubbock, *J* and the flat acres, *J* and the rich land, *J* and the tractors. And so, it has wound up that some three or four of the oldest families - one at least, Charlie Cutler, has lived on the place since grandfather's time, previous to 1912. *A* Are just living their life out there. Charlie pays \$60 a year for his house and a few acres of land. One or more of the others, *J* pay a quarter of their cotton production.

A. W. supplied the figures from last year's information. We talked about the prospects of putting it in the pine trees. We put as much as we can into pine trees during the last eight years, but we cannot move the remaining tenants off. There's no place for Charlie to go. *U* Uneducated, unskilled, and I believe, *J* in his 80's although the papers said 75. However, we'll have to batten down the hatches for a nasty storm.

And then at 5:30, I thought that everything was settled enough. Luci had already departed in her car, and I left with Bea *th* Jenkins and Jerry Kivett, *J* for Huntland. How lucky I am to have an agent who is educated, a gentleman, a good companion, and a good friend!

On the way down, *J* it rained heavily, as it has almost all this spring, and was chilly. But by the time we reached Huntland, *J* the rain had stopped.

Jerry?

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Bill Anderson greeted us on the front porch, grinning from ear to ear, with word that "Miss Luci had taken a nap."

I walked into the hall fragrant with lilacs, and the peace of Huntlands enveloped me. Beth and Luci and I had dinner in the cozy little downstairs room that is like what an English pub may have been in the 18th Century, paneled oak walls, a fire place, windows with small, wavery panes^{of glass}, pewter on the shelves.

Then after dinner, I settled down to my very special self-indulgence, reading Bill White's book on Lyndon. ⁹ For awhile, in front of the fire, for it was a chilly night, and then in bed... Lyndon called me, sounding lonesome, and at a reasonable midnight I went to sleep.