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Friday, July 17th

A very special day -- my day with Lynda. But it began with the presentation of the one-millionth copy of The White House Guide Book to an astonished tourist family -- a husband and his wife and two children who were, like several thousand others, making a visit to the White House on a summer day, ^o And suddenly they encountered, as they purchased their volume at the entrance desk, a volley of cameras, newspaper folks, and me. We went out in the Rose Garden and had a separate picture taken together.

How much these million copies are helping in the restoration of the White House but, even more so -- far more so -- in making homes across the country acquainted with the tradition and the beauties and the history of this old place.

We were all packed, and Lynda and Simone and I left for Friendship Airport for our long-planned trip to President Truman's Library at Independence. Lynda Bird and I had been talking about it for two years, and when I was with President Truman on the trip to Greece he promised me that, "Come some time and I'll give you the five-dollar tour myself." So here we were, and part of the joy was being with just Lynda.

We got to Kansas City humming, "Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City, They've Gone About as Fur as They Can Go," and feeling real gay and silly. There was no crowd at the airport. We really felt

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we were deliciously alone -- maybe a photographer or two. And then we drove out to Independence and there, at the entrance to the Library, which sits on a beautifully landscaped hill, a very simple, contemporary structure with lines that will be as good a century from now as today, we met President and Mrs. Truman, and quite a large crowd of townspeople and tourists and the press. Here the photographers were in full array, but not the least bit bothersome.

We went into the President's office and the photographers, at his invitation, asked us a few questions about why we had come and what we expected to see -- a nice little innocuous beginning and lots of pictures -- and then we said goodbye. And had the most wonderful trip through the Library anybody could hope to have! I loved especially the cartoons -- those caustic or humorous capsules of history. He told me how many hundreds he had -- the originals, of course -- but I don't trust my memory.

From each President there was a picture and an original document signed by the President. I loved the choice. From Thomas Jefferson there was a request to Congress for funds for the Lewis & Clark Expedition, from Andrew Jackson there was a pardon issued to Sam Houston for having assaulted a Congressman, for which offense he was supposed to pay a \$500.00 fine, and from Franklin D. Roosevelt there was the Pearl Harbor

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Message, written in his own hand, a good many words scratched out and rewritten, and from President Truman himself the Victory Day Proclamation.

Something any lover of the White House was sure to notice was the ~~mantle~~ ^{mantel} removed from the State Dining Room in the White House during its renovation -- the one that has the inscription of John Adams: "I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof." And it has the heads of buffalo on each side, because Theodore Roosevelt, who designed it, wouldn't permit the lions that had been planned by the sculptor to go there. He said, "It's got to be an American animal."

There was a great mural by Thomas Hart Benton called "Independence and the Opening of the West," which I liked very much except I thought the colors were awfully bright. MY West is grey and brown and green and blue and white.

And then there was a replica of the Office of the President. How many succeeding Presidents may copy this!

The most delightful thing of all, I think, is the fact that in the auditorium President Truman meets and talks to busloads of school children who come all summer long. He says he spends several hours

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some three or four days a week in the summertime talking to the students about the Office of the Presidency.

In a reading room we saw some dozen or so students who were using papers from his library, presumably to write their theses.

And, finally, there was a big storeroom, full of all the odds and ends that one accumulates. I can already visualize how full such a room would be for us!

One of the most poignant things was a letter from former President Hoover to Truman, thanking him for appointing him to some Commission, and he spoke of going back to the work, the only work that he knew how -- public service -- after a long interim of not having been called upon in the preceding Administration. Let me remember that lesson!

It was really a delightful tour, not to be equalled by many. At the end of it I gave him a flag that had stood in Blair House in the study during the years that he was there.

And then I went with Mrs. Truman to the old-fashioned white house, freshly painted, comfortably settled among the trees, with a wrought-iron fence around it. How many like it up and down the main streets of America! And we had a soft drink while we looked at the pictures of Margaret and

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their three grandchildren, and the Greta Kempton portraits of Mrs. Truman, Margaret, and President Truman. So little does their house seem affected by the years they spent in the White House. Mrs. Truman was serene, happy, assured, rather gingery -- ^{we} talkd of Roberta Vinson and Fay Gardner.

Then we drove back into the Muehlbach, where I had time to get the latest news from Lyndon. Before I left the White House it had been very uncertain whether he would go to Texas for the weekend or stay in Washington. The news was that he had left the White House in the early afternoon, was already at the Ranch, and wanted me to come on the courier plane about 9 o'clock.

At about 6:30 President and Mrs. Truman arrived at the Presidential Suite and we had a drink--- Mrs. Truman, too -- and it was a delightful moment when the President put his drink down, arose, went to the piano, and played for a few moments. Chopin, I think it was. He repeated to me that he wanted to do whatever he could to help Lyndon. I am so proud that he likes him.

He told us one ridiculous story about a priest who got lost on a walking trip through the Ozark Mountains, stopped at a cabin, asked the farmer if he could have some supper. The farmer looked at him rather

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angrily and said, "No. I don't like your religion." The priest explained that he had walked a long time and he was very hungry and he thought surely the farmer would be kind enough to give him something to eat. The farmer felt a little abashed and said, "All right. Come on in." He sat down at the table, had his supper, and he looked up at the mantel and there was a picture of Pope Pius. So the priest said to the farmer, "Would you please explain to me, sir, why, if you dislike the Catholic Church so much you've got that picture of Pope Pius up there above the mantel?" The farmer looked at him incredulously and said, "Do you mean that's who it is? Well, I'll be goldurned -- the salesman that sold it to me said it was Harry Truman in his ceremonial Masonic clothes."

We had a delicious dinner. We talked about the reconstruction of the White House which took place during his years. He said he used to have his lunch brought to him on a tray in the Oval Room, now the Yellow Room, and the tall, heavy butler was bringing it in one day when he looked up and saw the floor literally shaking under the waiter's feet. He picked up the phone and called the Architect -- I am not sure just who -- of some government department. He came over immediately with his staff, did a lot of probing of the old mansion and, before night, told

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President Truman that they must get out immediately, it was literally unsafe to live in.

The Trumans said goodbye at 9 o'clock. I had enjoyed it so much, and the nicest part was that Lynda Bird entered into it so fully. And now it was time to go to the airport to catch the courier plane that was enroute to the ranch to join Lyndon. Then the problem was whether to send Lynda Bird back commercial, when she would arrive about four o'clock in the morning, or take her to the ranch, which is always a rather uncertain place to be -- that is, for knowing exactly when you will get away from it. But she decided to fly with me, and it was two swift and pleasant hours, and then down the runway into the hangar where the white golf cart waited for us.

Lyndon had arrived in time for an afternoon with A. W. and, most importantly, with John, who spent the night with us.