

1964

Friday, September 11th

Began my planning for the Whistle Stop trip to the South. Put in calls to the Governors of the States I would travel through, and to the Senators of those States, most of them. Governor Albertus Harrison of Virginia said that yes, he and Mrs. Harrison would be glad to ride with me on the train through Virginia and would be co-chairmen for their State. Later he called back and said not to announce it until after September 25th.

I put in a lot of calls simultaneously and then naturally I answered them as they came in. Tactically, that wasn't quite the right thing to do. I should have called Senator Byrd before I called anyone else. Dealing with him is a matter of instinct -- it's not written in the book anywhere, and I think I have the instinct. This time I didn't use it right. I reached his two daughter-in-laws, Helen (Mrs. Richard Byrd) and Gretchen (Mrs. Harry Byrd, Jr.) before I got to him. Helen sounded eager and interested and said she would phone me back. Gretchen said she thought she would probably have to accompany her husband to an Associated Press meeting in New York and she would write me back. And when I found the Senator, he couldn't have been more jovial and courteous and darling. And then when I mentioned, in quite a straightforward manner, the purpose

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

of my call, an invisible silken curtain fell across his voice, and he said that because of the death of Mrs. Byrd he and his sons had decided not to participate in any public affairs for 30 days. Which is very understandable and, besides, it's not in me to be hurt at Senator Byrd.

Senator Robertson regretted he was going antelope hunting in Montana. A lovely place, and I'm sure he'll have fun.

Now, for North Carolina, Governor and Mrs. Sanford will be delighted to be co-chairmen and would ride the train. An immediate call to their successor and somewhat hostile fellow Democrat, Governor-nominee and Mrs. Dan Moore, failed to find them in. That's one of the many schisms in the State that I will encounter, and I shall have to pursue them and get them to ride the train also. Both Senator Ervin and Senator Jordan and their wives answered right away, yes indeed, they would be delighted to ride the train with me through North Carolina, and Senator Jordan particularly had several suggestions of people to call, towns to go to, and things to do.

The most hilarious call probably was to Senator Strom Thurmond. Here too I quickly gave my reason for the call -- that I recognized fully the many differences that divided him and Lyndon ideologically,

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

but I knew they were both Democrats and I would be proud and happy to have him by my side when I went through the State of South Carolina. Senator Thurmond said he had to make a really basic decision within the next two weeks and, though he thanked me very much, he must regret. That sounds interesting, and we'll see. The decision could be any one of several roads -- the old road of Dixiecrat, bolting the Party in some fashion, or the complete severance of going over to the Republicans.

On the other hand, Senator Olin Johnston said why, yes, indeed, he and Gladys would board the train at the first stop, unless the Senate was in session. Gladys was in the hospital right now, but he felt sure she'd be well enough to get out and go. And he certainly wanted to say that he had two daughters who were mighty good hard-working Democrats, and they ought to be in on it. He is a very courageous man and has shown it times without number.

Also, in his State Governor and Mrs. Donald Russell will be co-chairmen for the State, and Mrs. Donald Russell is, of course, going to take on the difficult job of being co-chairman for the whole journey, along with Lindy Boggs, lending a lustrous name and, according to all I hear about her, a good organizing ability.

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

And so, here we go marching through Georgia!

Not at all to my surprise, the dearest of them all, Dick Russell, said that probably, no, he would very likely be travelling, but that he would be glad to let us have as advance men one, or if Congress was out, two of the best people in his office, and that the State of Georgia would certainly welcome me courteously and happily. He had advice about where to go, he was interested -- I think it very likely that at the last, he might even ride the train or come out for us. But his difference with Lyndon on Civil Rights is that of a man ten years older and deeply imbedded in the mores of his State.

Senator Talmadge said that, why, yes, if his schedule permits, he would certainly ride the train with us. That is an elastic and dependable phrase, but he said Betty for sure would ride it all the way with us.

I talked to Mrs. Sanders, and she and Governor Sanders are among our strongest friends on the whole route, will be glad to be co-chairmen for the State, and will ride the train.

And so into Florida. Here I found Senator Holland deeply engaged in a race of his own, with many dates throughout the month. He thought he could be with us at Tallahassee and could not be with us the rest of the trip. George Smathers will travel the whole trip

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

and Rosemary also. And Governor and Mrs. Bryant were among the most available and interested. They have the difficulty of having an engagement and a house guest, but they thought they could work it out for the whole trip.

A call in to Governor-nominee and Mrs. Hayden Burns did not find them immediately.

And now for Alabama, the State most adamantly against us and the State to which I have the most bonds. There was no use in calling Governor Wallace, not even for courtesy's sake. I called Senator Lister Hill in ^{the} hospital, and he and Henrietta said yes, if he's well enough they would go with us to the State.

Senator Sparkman said yes, indeed, he would -- he would be mighty glad to, unless Congress was in session, and, if so, Iva would.

And so, on into Mississippi. Here once more there was no need to call Governor Johnson. A call to Senator Stennis was rather sad. He said no, I think I can do more good in a different way. He is up for reelection, he faces a difficult time, I hear. Senator Eastland I could not reach. He was in Mississippi.

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

And then the last State, Louisiana, in which we are to wind up. I reached Governor McKeithen, father of the attractive Fox McKeithen that Luci Baines had talked so much about on her ship-christening trip. He too said no, he felt that he had better not be co-chairman for the State of Louisiana or ride on the train. That he was working for the Democrats, you understand, but that he could accomplish more by doing it in another way. I hung up with the feeling that he faced a formidable and angry populace and was either too cautious or timid to take them on in the outspoken bulldog way of an Olin Johnston, for instance.

Russell Long was in Tokyo and would return on Saturday. When I reached Senator Ellender he replied that yes, indeed, he would be happy to ride with us on the train, getting on in Biloxi, Mississippi, or wherever, and continuing on to New Orleans.

These calls occupied two or three hours, interspersed with conversation about the train with Lindy, Bill Brawley, and Liz.

In the afternoon I worked on the mail. And then, at 4:30 the Cabinet Wives came in for tea in the Yellow Oval Room. Virginia Rusk, Margy McNamara, Mrs. John ^{Row} Gensowski, whom I had not known well before, Lee Udall and Jane Freeman, Jane

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

Wirtz, Ann Celebrezze, Mrs. Katzenbach (new to me). And then, to represent Muriel Humphrey, her press secretary, a young, attractive girl, Pat Griffith. And from the Democratic National Committee, Margaret Price, Carrie Davis of the Women's Speakers' Bureau, and Scooter Miller, volunteer for many endeavors. I welcomed them, Margaret Price talked, Carrie Davis told us some of the invitations that were received. The whole purpose of the meeting was to discuss what we could all do in the campaign for the next seven weeks, to lay out the type of invitations we were getting from all over the country, and to see who could most effectively and happily fill them. Many of them were invitations to me to which I must say no, and which it would be very nice if we were able to suggest that instead, perhaps, Jane Freeman or Ann Celebrezze or some other Cabinet wife might be able to attend. The two most politically active and astute are, in my opinion, Jane Freeman and Ann Celebrezze, both of whom have been making trips to Democratic gatherings for weeks, and Jane Wirtz, very eager, very intelligent, but not wanting to speak. And Margy McNamara, one of the most valuable of all in certain places, for instance Texas, and I would think parts of Michigan, ardently enthusiastic. I do not know to what

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

degree she should be restrained because of her husband's job, but I certainly hope the right kind of appearances will be worked out for her.

It totaled a lot of conversation and not much achievement, I expect. It got us together, laid out some of the problems, helped us all feel that we share them and are needed in them.

Later there was more telephoning and signing of mail.

And then finally, at long last, I got to my house guests, Bob and Helen Jackson. It had been Lyndon's idea to invite them up for the weekend, and it's relaxing and fun to be with old friends, particularly when they are as eager and interested as the Jacksons were.

We arranged the usual routine for the next day -- a visit through the House with the Curator or the best Guide. We sat out on the Truman Balcony in the lingering warmth of the summer evening, just as twilight was cloaking the Monument in changing colors, and I said, "Why don't we invite Bob, Jr. up here?" They were delighted. At my insistence, they picked up the phone immediately, called him, and he will catch the plane tomorrow.

1964

Friday, September 11th (continued)

Lyndon had departed hurriedly on a chopper while I was engaged in my talks with all the Governors and Senators, for Florida and Georgia. In fact, that was one of the big stalls in my reaching Florida and Georgia Senators.

From the Truman Balcony,