

1965

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

I asked Simone to go into Johnson City with a lace place mat from the Philippines to go under the Roosevelt China, White House setting, as part of our little display for a State Dinner from the invitation to a picture of the Chief of State with the President and his wife. In this case it was Macapagal of the Philippines, and fittingly enough, the place mat was from the Philippines.

And then I had a two hour session with Mr. Roy Rodman, the chief landscape designer of Dewitt Greer's Highway Department. He is the "papacito" and the most knowledgeable man about what Texas has done to plant native shrubs along the highways and also the carpet of wild flowers that appears from March through June, if it rains. The program was begun about 1933 by ^{Jac Grebbels} ~~Joak Gobelis~~, whose assistant Rodman ^{was} ~~was~~, so for more than thirty years they carried it forward making Texas one of the most progressive states for beautification for highways. Their philosophy is only native things that once planted on the right-of-way and given minimum care until they establish themselves -- that is one to two years -- can then be left alone and never tended again. In East Texas that is dogwood and redbud and wisteria. They have twenty miles of wisteria on Highway 80 West of Marshall! In our own Central Texas where the East Texas crepe myrtle begins to play out or grow smaller ^{there are} ~~senisa~~ and retama and mountain laurel, and going on down toward the border you come into the huisache country and the palm

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country.

In West Texas in the Panhandle, they must be hard put to it. They rely on the century plant, Spanish dagger, all sort of varieties of yucca and then for fall color in much of the State, there is sumac. But the wild flower program is really the unusual one. Thirty two years ago they began sprinkling along the highways about twenty of the commoner Texas wild flowers. We have five hundred varieties in Texas. Bluebonnets head the list because they are showy in mass and the Texas State flower, but Indian paint brush and Indian blanket (gallardia), wild phlox, wild ^{berdina}~~vergenia~~, wine cups, varieties of thistle and poppy make the right-of-ways of Texas a glorious sight ^{for} ~~of~~ three or four months when it rains. They deliberately do not try to have late summer or fall flowers because by about June ~~and then~~ the Spring flowers have formed their seed pods and can be mowed. They have to cut down the growth for safety sake so when they mow it that would put an end to things that are going to bloom in the fall except for those that are inaccessible or in rocky places along the right-of-way and are there by God's chance and not the Highway Department's. I am deliberately exposing myself to learning about what our State and others have done about beautification in case I become involved in Lyndon's program because I've got to be somewhat knowledgeable if I do.

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We were among the first states to take advantage of the Federal Government's Highway Bill which made a portion of the money it allotted to states for highway use tagged for landscape work.

I rushed back from the birthplace just in time to meet Secretary Rusk's plane. He was bringing with him McGeorge Bundy and Mary, always my favorite house guests, and Mr. Paul Martin, his opposite number, the Secretary of State for Canada. A few minutes behind them with well planned precision arrived beaming Florida-tanned Prime Minister Pearson and Mrs. Pearson with the briefest, most informal remarks of greeting, out by our airplane hangar, to the gathered newspapermen and then we got in the helicopter without even giving the ladies time to get into flatheeled shoes, flew to the West Ranch and I took Mrs. Pearson and her secretary and Mary Bundy and the four of us rode until twilight seeing at close hand three armadillos, which fascinated Mrs. Pearson, herds of deer grazing in the valley, a ballet of deer jumping the stone fences and the beautiful outline of the hills against the twilight.

Over the talking machine I heard Lyndon ask John and Nellie to come to dinner. The ladies drove home in time to change. By about 7:30 all gathered in the living room for a delightful two hours. The talk, of course, centered pretty much on Churchill who has lapsed into a coma and there is no hope for him. Everybody reminisced about how his life had touched theirs. We talked about how ^{could} anybody

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~~could~~ use words eloquent enough to express what he had meant to the twentieth century when on his death it becomes necessary to make such a statement. Mr. Pearson pretty well summed it up when he said, "Only Churchill himself would be equal to the occasion."

Mr. Pearson is quite a ^{recount} ~~recount~~ himself. He told about a gathering in Canada where the delegation of Russians, among them Gromyko, at a particularly tense time when there had been a spy episode and very strained feelings and of the following conversation. Gromyko apparently wanting to ~~stay~~ on a bland and safe subject inquired, "Do you raise apples in Canada?" "Yes," said General McNaughton, the Canadian opposite number. "What are your best brands?", said Gromyko. Without hesitation and with honesty General McNaughton replied, "Our best brands are Northern Spies and MacIntosh Reds.", You never hear what happens next after these punch lines in stories that good. And then he told a story about how Leland Stan^Nford, the famous philanthropist, was visiting President Elliott of Harvard University and he said, "How much would it cost today to build Harvard?" President Elliott said, "~~I wonder if it~~ ~~could be~~ with the ponderous assurance that it could never possibly be done," "It would take a hundred million today." Mr. Leland Stamford turned to his wife and said, "Mama, we can do it." ?

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It was a good evening of interesting interchange. John Connally told the story about him and Lyndon, as young Naval Officers in San Francisco about to set out on some unknown destination in the South Pacific going into a little shop owned by a Japanese who knew that within a week's time he would be in a concentration camp and therefore, and naturally, had some bargains, and buying for us -- for Nellie and me -- some lovely things. I still have and cherish my pearls and then he went on to say how when he and Nellie were out there just before Christmas they went into the same shop, found exactly the same proprietor. He remembered John's face. He was delighted to see him, told him that he knew the other man had become President of the United States and he had followed his career with so much interest and about that time his wife punched him and said "but you don't know who this young Officer is now?" The man did not and was delighted to discover that the other young man of twenty three years ago is now the Governor of Texas!

But Pearson topped it when he told ^{of a London Tailor} that he had ~~only~~ visited ^{only} ~~London-tailor~~ twice in his life. The first time was in 1917 when as a young Lieutenant which he pronounced "^{Lieutenant} ~~Litenant~~" brought a suit -- a Military Uniform from a London shop and then he went back in the same shop in 1964. The man who made it was still there. What's more, he opened his books, turned back his records to the very day

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in 1917, told him his measurements and how much he had paid for his uniform. Both proprietor and tailor were still on the job! That speaks something of England, something that the world has become to expect of it, rather.

It was an early to bed evening, but one of the most delightful State Dinners I can remember and apparently satisfactory, from Rusk's and McGeorge Bundy's standpoint.