

1965

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

I slept late, Glory be! We went to Johnson City in time for the 11:00 o'clock service at the Christian Church, where a mass of photographers awaited us, outside the simple frame building. Inside there were just about thirty four in the congregation or so I noticed for last Sunday's attendance. Songs were familiar. Most faces were familiar to Lyndon and a good many to me. Several generations of ^UStephensons and going out there was a great shaking of hands and at the door more picture-taking.

Then we drove by the Sam Johnson house, still with the press behind us and here is where I parted company with Lyndon because I did not want to take the press through the still unfinished place, especially when I had refused to take lady press through or to talk to them about it. So naturally he went through with dozens of them in tow while I walked across the street to Lucia's house where I had seen her car parked, ^{and} talked to her about the latest acquisitions for the house. She has become so wonderfully interested. It has drawn Lyndon and her and me much closer together and given me an increased admiration for her ability when she gets going. Then when we thought the press was out, she and I slipped across and went in the back door with the two English prints of fox hounds, one on each side of the red sofa, the new purchases, the ^{last} ~~fine~~ way her Mother's picture had turned out

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once it was tinted and put in the oval frame. The handsome White House ^{place} setting ^{in this is} -- ~~its~~ a nice touch. The place mat I had brought down to go under it was a gift from the Philippines and the dinner this exhibit portrayed was for President Macapagal of the Philippines.

Lyndon had appeared, had just rushed in, thrown his arms around Jessie Hunter and said, "Are you going to the Inaugural?" She said, "No." He said, "Well, get ready, you are going" and that was just the beginning! We had Air Force One waiting at Bergstrom and also a followup plane so there was a good deal of room. I had gotten on the phone the day before and asked Ava, who is always at the end of everything, the one who gets the least attention, to go with us. At first, as I expected, there were any number of reasons why she couldn't, but I said, "now you think it over. You try. I bet you have got some friends that would lend you the evening dress. I bet you could get packed up and get ready and go with us at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon," and I had told approximately the same thing to Uncle Huffman and Aunt Ovilee, who had declined a couple of weeks ago. But sure enough, all three of them phoned back during the day that yes they could go. Lyndon kept on rounding up old friends, the Melvin Winters, the Ernest Stubbs, who actually departed on about three hours' notice, the Bill Deasons--I had already asked Josse Kellam, [#] But the next two hours were spent in a far different way.

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He picked up one of his favorite newspapermen, Garnett Horner, I think his name is, but he is called Jack Horner, and with him in the front seat, the pool of press in the station wagon with us, a long convoy following us over the dusty caliche hills, we went to the Lewis place and on to the Logans, while Lyndon gave a running account to Jack Horner about what it meant to him. — Our seeing the deer was worth paying the taxes, freely admitting it was no land you could make a living out of, that is with white face^d Herefords. Maybe you could with sheep.

The countryside is gray and drab, the sky -- the Western sky--is gold and blue and there were plenty of deer and, of course, armadillo, but we didn't have the thrill of seeing a ^{paisano} ~~paisano~~, or my small and charming friends the skunks. We wound up back at the ranch for a very late lunch of hamburgers, goodbye and lots of thanks to James, Mary, and Gertrude. And dear Lyndon, bless his heart, the last word he said as he went out the door was, "now Gertrude, you talk to Jesse about making you that loan so you can buy that house. You will save a lot of money, but don't you get hooked up with any loan sharks. You let us help you." He has a wonderfully departmentalized mind and can think of so many things. All day he has been getting versions for the Inaugural Address from Dick Goodwin, who is holed up over at the Lewis working, but what he turns out Lyndon reads, changes, suggests and keeps on demanding

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that it be shorter, shorter, shorter--no more than 900 words.

Finally we left by helicopter for Bergstrom and then on Air Force One to Washington with the most wonderful manifest of those near and dear. Besides those I have already mentioned, it included for Lynda Bird, Carolyn Kellam and her husband and dear little Warrie Lynn. For Luci her friends the Rays, a young married couple from Lubbock, and Betty Beale, whose presence in Washington always throws society into a comedy of mistaken identities because of Betty Beale, the columnist, and for me Tony and Matianna. Their children, ^{Quincy} ~~Gary~~ and Jack had already gone up on the backup plane, and Susan. Sarah was already in New York and would fly down from there, so were Becky and Bobbitt and Philip and Rodney in New York, and they would have joined us--rather have arrived at the White House ahead of us.

Never did a small town like Johnson City send so many to an Inaugural! Later when we counted them up there was something like fifteen. Lyndon had offered a ride to Kitty Clyde Leonard, his old sweetheart and classmate, and her husband, Jimmy Leonard. Mabel Stribling, alas, couldn't accept his offer of a ride to her because she and Minnie Cox had reservations up which they had already paid for and couldn't get refunds on. But the Winters, the Moursunds, the Stubbs, Ava and Jessie Hunter, Uncle Huffman and Aunt Ovilee, and Aunt Josefa were aboard and I spent my time shuttling

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^{the} back and forth, ^{to} sit beside Lyndon and me and get in an appropriate family group ^{for a souvenir picture} ~~in a picture for a souvenir~~, aloft on Air Force One headed for the Inaugural! I think it will be something they will all love. ~~And~~ The prime guests aboard were Mr. and Mrs. Sam Fore, for fifty years a small newspaper publisher and for some thirty three or thirty four years Lyndon's close and dear friend, ~~He was~~ ^{He was} the first to announce that some day he would be President, and John and Nellie, whose presence always make everything happier for me, and their brother Merrill Connally and his wife.

Just before we went aboard Air Force One, we had gone by the Federal Building to see the new office suite which had been prepared for Lyndon's. The views are superb, the lighting excellent. It had been planned and furnished during the hectic months of September and October when neither he nor I had one hour to give to choosing, directing, selecting anything so that it in no way reflects our personalities or choices, and it looks like it came out of a Department Store, very handsome and very, very impersonal, with such an Oriental flavor that I felt like turning to one of the secretaries and saying, "Girls, go to Hong Kong and get all of your office clothes."

It was a pleasant ride up with that self satisfied feeling that you are making others happy, a good dinner, and then arriving at the White House about 9:45. Lynda was out on a date at Mrs. Mesta's party, I believe, as were several of our house guests who had already

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gotten there and we were met by a distraught Luci, an almost hysterical Luci who kept on shouting, "Mother, Mother" from floor to floor while I went from floor to floor to catch up with her, at the same time dispensing house guests in various rooms. It appeared she hadn't taken her last final -- for some reason it had been postponed. Everything is always a crisis with Luci. She was going to have to take it the next day and she was petrified with fright. I calmed her, we got everybody to bed and then I had a chance to look at some of the papers. The pictures of our Inaugural clothes looked quite handsome really, especially in the Star, which used the one with the coat on and also I was delighted to see one of Lynda and also a very sweet, accurate enough and substantive enough story by Marie Smith of what I planned to do with the coming year, help on the Poverty Program, help on the Beautification Program, and continue the Women Doers' luncheons and very especially to apply myself to working on what one day will be the Johnson Library.