

1965

Thursday, March 11th

Was a day divided between work on the Library, the Diplomatic Corps, and the 10th and last Congressional reception. But it was played against the strange background of loud, incessant chanting from the Civil Rights marchers parading with banners in front of the White House. They had made so much noise the children couldn't sleep.

In the morning I had a meeting with Clark Clifford, Buzz, and Liz in the West Wing, to talk about the one-two-three steps towards the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library. A few moments before 11 Buzz answered the phone -- somebody was giving him the startling news that some of the Civil Rights marchers had marched right into the building with the tourists, had taken up their seats on the Ground Floor, and had refused to budge. A sit-in in the White House! Some 12 of them, mostly young folks.

The meeting came to a quick halt while Buzz got the news to George, and there was a brief, hurried discussion about how to proceed with the tourists. I believe it was Lyndon who decided to let them keep right on coming, not to close the White House to them, but route them in such a way that they did not march past the sit-inners, but left the sit-inners in quiet anonymity, alone on the Ground Floor, with a minimum

1965

Thursday, March 11th (continued)

of White House Guards. I would have loved to have had a peek, but that would have destroyed the whole idea.

For me the second event of the day was to go to lunch at the Venezuelan Embassy, where Mrs. Tejera-Paris, one of the loveliest young wives of the Diplomatic Corps, had invited all the wives of the Latin-American Ambassadors to be with me. I had accepted several weeks ago <sup>one</sup>, because I want to get to know the wives of the Diplomatic Corps better in a quiet fashion (not 100 at a time), two, because Mrs. Tejera-Paris is a member of my old international group and I know and like her, though not <sup>closely</sup> well. It sounded innocuous enough, meeting all the wives together, and it was only later that I discovered the hurdles along the way. One, that Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa of Nicaragua, who is the wife of the Dean of the Corps, would probably expect, so the State Department said, to extend such a courtesy first in our Hemisphere if I accepted any such invitation. This I solved, and once more it was Liz who thought of it -- she is full of ideas -- by asking Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa to accompany me in my car to the luncheon. Actually, I enjoyed the ride very much. Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa is quite a woman. She was probably a very pretty girl. Now she is much too heavy, the mother of nine, but refreshingly outspoken, really quite funny, a change in diplomatic circles. She is a

1965

Thursday, March 11th (continued)

member of the Somosa clan, and she informed me that her father was no General at all, but that the United States Merchant Marine several decades ago, after some upheaval in Central America, had installed her father to keep the peace. Another difficulty, I discovered, is that Venezuela, alas, does not have relations with some of its Latin-American neighbors, and therefore how could they invite the <sup>wives</sup> wife of the <sup>as</sup> Ambassador? These just happen to be out of town at the time. Their Ambassadors' wives to the OAS did come in most instances.

At any rate, it was an interesting two hours. There were Venezuelan art works on the walls and artifacts of pre-Columbian days, and we ate in a solarium that is typically Venezuelan, they told me. It's filled with tropical plants and orchids, the native flower of Venezuela. We had the most delicious dessert -- meringue a caramel -- that I can remember. And afterwards there was petite concert by Morelia Muñoz, an internationally known Venezuelan concert singer, who seemed to be part Indian and whose voice was magnificent.

The Latin-American ladies were elegant and charming, for the most part, and their conversation was light and did not really touch upon the things I would have been interested to hear them explore: the economy of their countries, what they are doing to lick poverty and further education. In all that seething cauldron of Latin America there must be so much

1965

Thursday, March 11th (continued)

happening -- I wish they had shed some light on it for me!

I dropped Senora Sevilla-Sacasa off. And then at five there was another diplomatic interlude, when Lady Harlech arrived to say goodbye. She is returning to England. She is the gentlest lovely lady, so very British, and I would have liked to have known her better. We had a long, good visit in the Yellow Room. She told me she was going to stop off in New York to say goodbye to Jackie Kennedy -- her husband had been the special close friend and, I think, schoolmate of President Kennedy. She told me about the Queen's habit of inviting two or three foreign diplomats to each of her dinners, so that in the course of a few years she got around to all the countries. Maybe the Queen has dinners so often that she gets around to them sooner.

And then at 6:30 came the tenth and last of the Congressional Receptions! This time one of the problems had been how to get them in past the twelve sit-inners, but luckily those twelve had departed, after some urging, very civilly done, I am told, by the Police at about six o'clock.

This was a larger group than most of the others, because we had tried to wrap up and include all of those who had been out of town on other occasions but had expressed a regret at not being able to come. Among

1965

Thursday, March 11th (continued)

them were Texans Earle Cabell and Kiki de la Garza, very Latin, very gay, very attractive, and the Richard Whites from El Paso -- she is from my home town of Marshall. My old-time campaigning friends, the Cecil Kings of California, and the Carl Perkins of Kentucky -- she had gone with me on my trip to Lick Branch School. And pretty Patsy Mink from Hawaii with her husband. And Congresswoman Edith Green, who has given us so much trouble on the Education Bill because she fears the Pope's influence at every turn. And Republican Leader Les Arends and his pretty wife. And, dramatically enough, the Congressman from Selma, Alabama -- I think their name's Glynn Andrews.

It was the same routine -- greeting and pictures, briefing for the men, the theatre for the ladies with a movie on White House art, and then reminiscences by several of the ladies, this time including Mrs. Humphrey. Upstairs for all the ladies who wished to go to the Second Floor, and then in the State Dining Room for refreshment. We were very late in being joined by Lyndon and the Congressmen tonight. They told me it was one of the best sessions they had ever had -- obviously it was one of the longest, because it was 9:30 when they emerged. These briefings have gone longer and longer.

When the news had come that the Reverend Reeb had died, Lyndon and I excused ourselves for a moment, a helpless, painful moment, to

1965

Thursday, March 11th (continued)

talk with Mrs. Reeb. But what is there to say?

We went upstairs a little past 10, but we could hear the Congressional guests still laughing and the music still going below, and out in front the chanting of the Civil Rights marchers. What a house. What a life.