

1965

Sunday, March 21st

Was another gold and blue day and idyllic, although very cold. We went to the Christian Church in Johnson City -- Lyndon and I and the Thornberrys. The church was painted, had a new floor, clean and bright inside, only, alas, with colored windows that would have been better left clear.

Lyndon was in an exuberant mood. He made friends with two little boys on the bench in front of us. He greeted nearly everybody by name when the service was over, stopped in the doorway with the Reverend Aiken for pictures, and then we drove to the Johnson City house. Melvin has put rich, black dirt on about one-sixth of the lawn. Lucia had gone to church with us. One of the nicest things about working on this house has been the renewing, the strengthening, of ties with her, and she has been tremendously capable about it, and her enthusiasm has been unflagging. I like to see them close to each other.

Like the Pied Piper, the press followed us en masse to the house, and Lyndon took them all in while Lucia and Jesse and I pursued our small matters in as quiet a group as we could and they flocked through the house, listening to his explanations. If ever an opening takes place, it will be old stuff to the press!

Then he left with the press in tow to drive around over the Lewis place, while we stayed to make a few decisions about the color

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of the porch furniture, deciding to make it ivory, the placing of the old telephone, and whether to hang a colored picture of Howard Chandler Christie's, a painting of the Constitution which hangs in the Capitol, which he had finished shortly before Lyndon took office in May of 1937 and which he himself had autographed to ^{the} Honorable Lyndon Baines Johnson -- one of the first gifts Lyndon received in office, I am sure. Lucia had kept it all these years.

Hunger finally drove us home. We heard enroute on the talking machine that Lyndon was still with the press at the Lewis Ranch, but we couldn't wait a minute longer. As soon as we walked in the door the Alexanders and Marvin Watson and I sat down to a delicious Mexican meal, every bite tasting wonderful. There's nothing like hunger for a sauce.

Poor Marianne was restively chomping at the bit, wondering what Lyndon was saying to her colleagues. Lucia and I made a last trip to the birthplace house to decide about some of the latest gifts or purchases. The small red-and-white quilt on the white iron bed, the baby bed, is quaint perfection, and the ruffled white pillow, bolster-type, made by Jewel, completes the picture. Both of us are delighted with the old-type coffee grinder, the still life of fruits, without which no dining room would be complete, given to the place by Mr. Ketchum's father when he broke up housekeeping and went to live in the Old Folks Home. While we were

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there, Lyndon and his entourage returned and ate lunch, and then we all -- the Thornberrys, the Donald Thomases, Marianne, Jesse, the Moursunds and us -- embarked on a trip, first by helicopter and then by car, to tour the new ranch -- that is, the Davis Place. I want to name it Live Oak Ranch, or maybe Big Trees Ranch. There is a stream running through it with some water in it now, bordered by enormous live oaks, the largest I've seen anywhere in this country. It has the best topsoil of any ranch we are acquainted with. There was a wonderful job of clearing -- almost, sometimes, a little too bald, and, because a former occupant had his house blown away in a tornado, he built the next one out of concrete, so there it sits, squat and rather ugly, but very solid indeed.

Don and I talked about the East Texas estate. The sum of it is that apparently it will be siphoned off during the years of Ruth's life, and all Daddy's work will come to nought but the joy of work.

We watched sunset over the hills in a delicious state of relaxation, consciously aware of two wonderful days of vacation, knowing that we will be heading back to Washington and the Governors at noon the next day.

Lynda and Warri^oLynn, Dave and a date for Warri^aLynn, chaperoned by Ashton and her husband, had gone up to Camp David, cloaked in a deep white blanket of snow, had enjoyed tobogganing down

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the slopes, sitting by the fire, a perfect aftermath for a birthday party.