

1965

Sunday, March 28th

What a glorious night of sleep! I treasure it for Lyndon like I would a four-carat diamond on my finger. We had coffee in bed, and then all of us gathered around the breakfast table at about ten, having disposed of the idea of going to church and, I, a great advocate of going to church, was delighted to omit it. And then we ate like we were never going to have another meal. First came scrambled eggs and fried eggs, with home-cured bacon, thick and luscious, that even Buford Ellington, used to incomparable Tennessee ham, acknowledged as superior. I had had my mind on grits, and sure enough in came a big dish of grits, followed by a dish of hot pancakes and more bacon, and syrup and melted butter. We all threw discretion to the winds and had a banquet! The sun was shining golden, although it was crisp, cold weather.

We all went for a walk -- not a long one -- and then over to bowl. We played three games and my score of 138 was the best I have ever gotten. Jack and I were on one side, Lyndon and Mary Margaret on the other, and the Ellingtons and Whites divided between us. It was the first time, practically, for the last two couples. But everybody was a good sport and good fun.

We thought we never would eat again, but hamburgers were welcome by the time Marianne Means and her beau arrived and the Marvin Watsons.

1965

Sunday, March 28th (continued)

Then both Lyndon and I lay down for a nap, and I barely brought myself out of bed in time to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King at six o'clock on MEET THE PRESS. He was quiet and measured and dignified -- a very wise attitude, I thought.

I discovered that everybody else had had some more walk and some more bowling while I was still asleep, but some were ready for another try at bowling and I had three more games -- two awful, but once chalking up 134.

The day has seen another shot in the arm for the beauty program. We gave out the story and it was fairly well carried, of Mary Lasker's giving 9,300 azalea bushes, flowering dogwood, and other plants, to put along Pennsylvania Avenue, a total of \$25,000 gift. It will be a blaze of eye-catching color in the late Spring.

All of which made me think that Eastman Camera Company, or whoever it is that makes most of the film, ought to be interested in this program, ought to be a contributor to it. I talked to Buford Ellington about it, and he said he knew a good many of the heads of the company and would explore it. He also talked to me about going to Ponte Vedra, Florida, for a meeting sponsored by Sears Roebuck of Hands -- their community development program to paint up, fix up, plant up communities. Sears and Roebuck

1965

Sunday, March 28th (continued)

has given \$200,000 a year, channeled through garden clubs, for such purposes.

It was a good weekend of talk, ranging the field from press relations to appointments.

1965

Date *March 28, 1965*

March 28, 1965

Lyndon

He talked about the circumstances under which he started to college. He made one abortive attempt which he had gone a few weeks, made bad grades and quit, with his father scornful and his mother weeping. Then followed several years of adventures--California, running an elevator, working in a gin, working in a cafe, working in a law office and then finally back in Johnson City working on the highway driving a truck. On one particular Sunday morning, his mother came into his bedroom to find him sprawled out on the bed with a broken nose which was spread all over his face. To hear Lyndon tell it, he had been to a country dance the night before, had gotten into a fight with a Dutch boy, as he expressed it, over a girl. The boy had broken his nose--at least he and a group of companions had pitched in together and had given him a considerable beating and there lay Lyndon--a pretty sight. His mother must have thought "a truck driver by day, a brawler by night." She began to cry. She said "My son, my first born and then she began to talk to him about working with his mind and going to college. She must have gotten under his skin because he said, "all right, mother, you write me a letter and get me a job and I will go to college." On the other hand, his father administered a completely different sort of medicine. He said, "No need of your going. You can't make it. You haven't got what it takes to get a college education. Just keep on and you might be a pretty good truck driver." I expect that was calculated. At any rate, it did the job.

Lyndon left for San Marcos with \$25 borrowed from A. W.

Moursund's father who had the Johnson City Bank. Later he borrowed \$50 from the Blanco Bank from Mr. Crist. So he was off to college-- San Marcos State Teachers College. Dr. Evans was the President. A letter which Mrs. Johnson wrote and signed her husband's name to persuaded Dr. Evans to give Lyndon a job working on the campus, cleaning it up. It is the rockiest, hilliest campus I have ever seen. Lyndon soon discovered the paths by which Dr. Evans went to and from his duties and he always managed to be along that path, working with extra vigor at exactly the time Dr. Evans would come by. Dr. Evans noticed him and within six weeks he was working in Dr. Evans' office. Meals at a boarding house--Mrs. Pirtle's, I think the name was--\$16 for two meals, lunch and supper, or ten dollars for one meal. Lyndon for a long time had the two meals, but he discovered his good friend Booty Johnson always just had lunch. He said, "no, no I am not interested in supper-- just don't like to eat supper." Booty became Lyndon's fast friend. He learned several things from him. One, he found that Booty was sleeping in the top of Dr. Evans' garage unbeknown to the business manager of the college or anyone in authority, except I wouldn't be surprised if the old gentleman, Dr. Evans didn't know it and winked at it. He brought a cot and some bedclothes from home--heaven knows what he did for any other furnishings--and he went down to the gym for his bath. Lyndon moved in with him and there he stayed until his college career was completed-- hideaway, so to speak.

He also found the secret of why Booty didn't eat that second meal.

Booty was a night watchman. In that capacity he had keys to most of the places around the campus, including the cafeteria. Lyndon began to stick around close to him while he was doing his night watching. Booty would say, "Goodnight, goodbye. I'll see you later. Meet you over the garage. Goodnight." Lyndon said, "That's all right. I believe I will just stay up and wait with you." At last Booty, either from weariness in waiting for Lyndon to depart or reassured that he would be a safe accomplice, took Lyndon with him to the cafeteria where he carefully unlocked the pantry door, went into the vast refrigerator, opened it up and there lay the remains of such things as the roast, some fried chicken, the banana pie. He got a little paper plate, helped himself--abundantly. Lyndon did likewise. So they made their way through college on a shoestring!

The day was full of many delicious reminiscences like that and it was a marvelously restful day, the company soft and easy and from Lyndon's standpoint no fear of throwing names around. I hope it never happens.

We sat down to our final big meal of roast beef and then got into the chopper and went back to the teeming city to face our jobs--but considerably refreshed. I know it has been good for him and was one small point of service for me because he did it more to please me than anything, I think.