

LBJ LIBRARY DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Doc #	DocType	Doc Info	Classification	Pages	Date	Restriction
	Transcript	Lady Bird Johnson's Diary, Monday, March 29, 1965, Pages 1-2		2	3/29/1965	C

Collection Title Lady Bird Johnson's Diary
Folder Title Lady Bird Johnson's Diary March 17-29, 1965 [Book 18]
Box Number 2

Restriction Codes

- (A) Closed by Executive Order 13292 governing access to national security information.
(B) Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
(C) Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in the donor's deed of gift.

11/17/2014

Initials

1965

Monday, March 29th

Began on an ugly note, with NEWSWEEK greeting us with a story, "In contradiction to the President's expressed hope that Americans would travel in the United States this summer, his two daughters, Lynda Bird and Luci Baines, were planning a Grand Tour of Europe." Lyndon reacted in a very natural manner.

SANTIZED

Later in the day Luci came to the rescue by releasing to the press her own plans, saying that she phoned her employer, Dr. Robert Kraskin, and said, "Of course I'm not going to Europe. You hold onto my job, because I'll be there." She said, "This takes the plaid rabbit."

I went early over to the East Wing to see the results of the painting-up job and the new office for Christine and a little cubby-hole for Simone. "For the first time in four years," Christine says, "We are current. All of the boxes and drawers of stuffed-away mail have been opened and answered."

A little past twelve I went down to the China Room to greet Sir John Gielgud, here for one of the Cabinet's Culture Nights. He is doing "The Ages of Man," Shakespeare. He was slight, easy to talk to. I told him how much I had enjoyed seeing him from the other side of the footlights and that tonight Lynda Bird would be in his audience.

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

And then it was time to greet our first State visitors since we were sworn in, President and Mrs. Maurice Yameogo, of Upper Volta. I met Lyndon in his office just in the nick of time, we walked out on the South Lawn, with the flags cracking in the breeze, the military stiff at attention, the uniformed musicians on the balcony of the White House bugling their arrival of the President's party.

Up they drove, and out stepped Lloyd Hand to escort the small, bespectacled figure whom the New York Times described as "the soft-spoken, tough-minded Moderate, who believes that the future of Africa lies with the Africans and not with the Chinese or other foreign Communists."

SANTIZED

The day was bright and sunny, and the South Lawn colorful with uniforms, flags, and pomp and circumstance. The ceremony took longer than usual, because after the reviewing of the troops, Lyndon's speech of welcome had to be translated into French, and President Yameogo's speech in French was translated into English.

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

President Yameogo spoke without notes, very fluently, but I found myself so interested in looking at the scars on his face, the ritual tribal scars of the Mati Tribe, that I rather lost track of the expressions of friendship from his little country of five million to ours.

Lyndon took President Yameogo into the bubble-topped limousine and I escorted Mrs. Yameogo and an interpreter into a following car, and we went on an abbreviated parade -- two streets, amply lined, I am glad to say, with waving people and decorated with flags of the two countries, down ceremonial Pennsylvania Avenue, I pointing out the Capitol and explaining the history of the street, up 14th to New York and back to Blair House, where, with a quick delivery-of-the-key ceremony and a response by President Yameogo, again without notes, we bade them goodbye.

This afternoon she is to have a steady fare of social service work in this country -- it is at the Friendship House -- showing how we keep a nursery for working mothers' children, our working people on low incomes -- that is, \$55 per week or less, can get free legal advice and other services. How strange that must be to someone coming from a country where the annual income is \$50!

[I went upstairs for some desk work and the unhappy necessity of talking on the phone with Dale Miller about the LOOK article, which did its best to picture us as a Harding crowd. Dale said he did not discuss

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

one word of his trip to the White House with Texas Congressman and Dallas businessmen with this report, but, horrifyingly enough, the reporter's version was true enough to make you wonder angrily where they DID get it. Dale said, "I guess I just drew the black bean" -- knew the story they would write beforehand, and they just "hung it onto him."] *Amr*

At the State Dinner I wore my red dress, and Jean Louis arrived to put my hair up on top of my head. The first hitch is that the guests, who were supposed to arrive at five minutes to eight, did not arrive until about twenty minutes past, and I kept running in the Yellow Room to chat with the Rusks and the G. Mennen Williams, and back to stand at attention at the elevator, waiting for the call from Blair House.

I asked Lyndon how the day had been. He smiled and said, "How would you like to have an old live oak tree for a watch for?" That's one of those non-sequiter jokes that goes back to his childhood and that not many people besides us would understand.

When they arrived, Mrs. Yameogo was resplendent in a white gown that was intricately embroidered and tucked and was encrusted all over with loopings of beading that shimmered and made a soft whispering sound as she stepped -- and a chinchilla wrap around her neck. In her ears, on her wrist, on her finger, were red and white stones of what

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

may have been diamonds and rubies. I had read somewhere that she purchased some of her clothes from Balmain in Paris.

Back upstairs in the East Room we hastened to pass drinks and have the exchange of gifts, ours an Indian drum for the President and a portrait of the Lincoln family, together with a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, and one of Lincoln's great quotes engraved on a cigar box. And for Mrs. Yameogo, a silver Indian necklace, handmade, squash-blossom design and, to me one of the most intriguing things, a picture made by Tiros the ninth of their country as the satellite flew over it last month. For us they had gold pins, a delightful chess set, colorful and very African, a red leather saddle with a high back -- looks like the Sahara -- and a replica of a tribal village, five round huts surrounded by a wall. The huts had thatched roofs, with tiny figurines of animals and people to complete the scene. The whole can be used as cigarette contain^{er}s and ashtrays.

Downstairs in the line we rather belatedly received our 121 guests. It was mostly oriented to an interest in African-American affairs. Among them the Theodore Browns, Director of the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa, the John Davises, President of the

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

American Society of African Culture, and the Waldemar Nielsons, President of the African-American Institute. There was, of course, a small brigade from the Senate. The Tom Dodds, always among my favorites, and the Gale McGees -- I hear he has a whole wall filled with pictures of our Western safari last summer. Republican Hugh Scott and Senator Hiram Fong alone, and the Tom McIntyres. Among the House contingent was Jake Pickle, and a sprinkling of old friends -- Mercedes Douglas Eichholz and her new husband, (blonde and laughing, she always makes any party go better), and Mrs. Charles Marsh, looking quite dignified and elegant, probably one of the first times she has gotten out since Charles' death. And I was delighted that Diana was there. She was being very busy with her French and her knowledge of Africa from her days with the Peace Corps. And one of her scientists and engineers, Dr. Russell Lee of Palo Alto, California. The world of scientists has played an interesting role in the life of Upper Volta. They had been stricken by a scourge of measles some years ago, and a Dr. John Enders had produced a vaccine that did a great deal to harness and control the epidemic. It was allied with the Sabin vaccine. I was so pleased that he was there, together with one or two guests from the Merck Laboratories, who had dispensed it throughout Upper Volta.

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

And from the world of Arts and Letters, there were the Walter Kerrs. I told his wife I had flinched on every page of his book, The Decline of Pleasure. Unhappy^{il}, it applied to me at times. And I had enjoyed her Please Don't Eat the Daisies, and longed to see Mary, Mary. And there was Herman Wouk, author of Marjorie Morningstar, Mutiny on the Bounty and, more lately, Youngblood Hawk. I was glad to see that some of the guests recognized the name and the man and clustered about him. It must be pretty discouraging to be famous and not to be recognized. And singer Edie Adams, whom we had last seen on the steps of the Capitol, practically, in Austin, Texas, on the night of November 2nd, the last night of the campaign. She sang for us, as she had many times during the Fall. Blonde and cute and gay, she was having a good time all evening.

There was a heavy sprinkling of Negroes, naturally, who had made a success in our country, all the way from James Farmer, President of the Congress of Racial Equality, to Judges and educators.

The line completed, we went in to dinner. I had on my right the President and on my left the President of the National Assembly. They have a one-house Parliament for Congress of 50 Members. The going was a little tough conversationally, since I have no French whatever, but the President was articulate and helpful in his own language. He said

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

several things I remember with interest. One, that in the high schools of his country and several adjoining African countries, Lyndon's speech on voting rights was being read and studied. He is a Roman Catholic in a country where 75% of the population still practices animism, and I discovered that he was very proud that he was the first African Chief of State to be received by the Pope. It was the present Pope, not Pope John whom we had met. He also was proud that they had nine Bishops in his country and one Cardinal. Of the Cardinal he said something like this -- that when our red meets their red -- that means the current infiltration from the Chinese Communists -- our red will disperse them.

On the subject of communism in Africa, I asked him how they went about working their way into a country's government, and he said they offered to step in and balance the budget of the country. Once in, they did not balance the budget, and they would not leave.

Just before the toasts, there was a tense moment when one of the butlers came in with a message on a tray which he passed to the President. The President opened it, and I am sure every eye there was trying to read in his face its contents. He then handed it to Secretary Rusk, who read it, folded it, rose, and excused himself from the table, while all sorts of Gotterdamerings went through our minds. And then, great honor to him, Lyndon proceeded with his part of the toast without

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

a flicker of an eyelash. The toasts actually were interminable -- 45 minutes because of the translation. I must say I took my hat off to President Yameogo for being so fluent without any sort of a script, and really a nice combination of dignity and graciousness.

At last we rose to have coffee in the hall and the Red and Green Rooms, and then on into the East Room for the entertainment, which Maxine Cheshire described as "they whooped it up at the WhiteHouse last night -- it was an evening that was as American as the old Buffalo nickel, when Indian braves in war paint performed tribal dances for the visiting President of Upper Volta and Mrs. Maurice Yameogo." There were 35 students from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe -- my brother Tony had helped round them up -- and they were introduced, delightfully enough, by a young Indian girl who made a small speech in French.

We were a theatre in the round. All the guests grouped around a large central stage for this first time that American Indians ever gave an entertainment in the White House. They shuffled and chanted their way through the Buffalo dance, the Swan dance, the Apache Mountain spirit dance, the tail-feather dance, and, most interesting of all, the hoop dance, in their beads and buckskins and belts and four-foot-high masks, that being the Apache Mountain spirit dance, the most

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

frightening-looking of all -- black masks over their faces and only slits for the eyes, and a series of crosses on their heads forming a sort of forest. It's a dance to drive away evil spirits and restore the health.

The hoop dance required the most skill -- only one man dancing agilely around in a whole armful of hoops, first one and then on up till all 18 or so were gyrating around his body.

I thought of the time that Theodore Roosevelt had the Japanese wrestlers in the East Room for his entertainment. Thank goodness he set such a precedent!

Lyndon had warned Bess that after twenty minutes he was going to get up and make his goodnight. Thank goodness he stayed for twenty-five, and so had the chance to thank all the Indians, who were really so thrilled to be there.

And then, another unusual event for a State Dinner took place, -- as the President and Mrs. Yameogo departed with their party Lyndon accompanied them to the Lincoln Memorial to walk up the steps and stand silently reading the Gettysburg Address, and then as silently turn and leave, while I stayed with the rest of the guests for a little dancing and goodbyes.

1965

Monday, March 29th (continued)

But that was not the end of the night for him, because the message handed him during the dinner had been about a bombing in Saigon, right in front of the United States Embassy, in which several Americans and a good many more Vietnamese were killed or seriously wounded.

So after Lincoln came VietNam -- talks with Rusk, the Situation Room -- a late night. I went on to bed and it was three o'clock when Lyndon came into my room and wearily pulled up the cover.