

1965

SUNDAY, APRIL 11

Sunday, April 11 at the ranch on a balmy April day. Yesterday it had gotten up into the 80's. What more could Lyndon want of life? We went to the Methodist Church at Johnson City, taking Anne Brinkley and Admiral Rayborn and Lyndon's old schoolteacher in the Primer, Miss Kate Dedrick she was then, now Mrs. Loney--from Rough and Ready California--and her husband. We stopped by and picked up the Alexanders.

The interior of the Church was freshly painted and quite nice. Could it be my imagination or is it true that Johnson City is perking up, cleaning up, painting up, having a new sense of pride and community spirit, living up to having a President in its midst even if he is just Lyndon? He was born and raised hereabouts. The songs were the songs of my childhood in the Karnack Methodist Church. I remember them far better than any Episcopal songs. Coming out was a slow process because Lyndon recognized many people and stopped to talk to them all. The press was there in full cry and also an instant crowd that had accumulated--Heaven knows from where--to see us.

We went by the old Johnson house. The lilacs out back are a fountain of lavender, most beautiful. Mrs. Johnson would be so proud of them! And then we went back to the ranch by the slow way, that is, detouring by the Lewis place. Lyndon told the Secret Service to just let the press in if they wanted to follow him and they said, "but we've picked up some tourists". He said, "I don't care, just let anybody in that wants

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to." There followed one of the most amusing ^{entourages}~~enterages~~ I have ever seen--at least thirty cars winding up those caliche hills and down into the little green valley. Miss Kate had run into some of her old students and some old friends in the Church. It was fun to watch how much this was meaning to her.

We had some guests at home I was very anxious to see. Senator McCarthy had been in Austin making a speech to the University of Texas on "An Intellectual in Politics." He was part of a panel. We had asked him out and Congressman Albert had come down--both of them to watch the signing of the bill this afternoon and then to fly back with Lyndon.

For me the next two hours were a bit of a turmoil in making arrangements about Susan. Whether and how she would fly back to Washington to stay at the White House and attend the funeral of General Hester. It was complicated by the fact that I yearned to stay down a few days and would not be there to tend to her--her leg so badly broken makes it a problem.

About two thirty or three several schoolbuses and two large chartered Greyhound buses rolled up, debarking Lyndon's former students from Cotulla, Texas, from Houston and his former classmates came in cars from all around this locality. It was delightful to greet Gene Latimer and have him sit by me at lunch, still boyish after thirty years and to see tall, still slim L. E. Jones, graying, looking quite distinguished and confident, successful--not the awkward, brash out-at-elbows young man

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I had known. His intellectual ability always so far outdistanced his social know-how. One student even called in and said he wanted to fly his Piper Cub in from Yazoo, Mississippi. We gave him permission to land, but, alas, I never ran into him. Bess and Lyndon and I had gone up earlier and surveyed the grounds of the little one room schoolhouse called the Junction Schoolhouse where Lyndon ~~went to Miss Katie Dedrick, sitting on her lap and going through the Primer in a one room schoolhouse called the Junction School, where Lyndon~~ went to Miss Katie Dedrick when he was four years old going through the Primer and the First Grade both in that year--according to Miss Katie. A family now owns it and lives in it through the summer months, but it was vacant this weekend. They had given us permission to use the premises and we had mowed the grass.

Fortunately there was a lovely display of yellow and purple flowers around the stone steps that led up to the entrance. Bess had found some of the old double desks that were used in the school and had put one or two out front.

47 It was an accurate, corny, warm, rather delightful setting for the signing of a great education bill, one of the landmarks, one of the victories, one of the real triumphs to be cherished by the Johnson Administration. So we all converged on the place about 4:00 o'clock--some 300 or so people--students, classmates, a few passing tourists, sizeable press, Lyndon,

Lynda Bird and I and Miss Katie. Among us was a Strawberry Princess from ~~Paris~~ ^{Pateet}, who had arrived laden with enormous gorgeous strawberries as a gift, ^{and} had her picture made with Lyndon. She was an emissary for

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Mr. Sam Fore. With his dying breath ^{my one} ~~he~~ will be pushing some local product or person, making his contribution to his community and his state, and it has been sizeable, what with a President and a Governor and a Federal Judge among his boys.

We brought up a picnic table and benches from the ranch. Lyndon sat down at it facing the TV cameras. Miss Katie, dignified and very sweet, sat down by him. He made a small speech about what education had meant to him, about the bill, giving much credit to the Congress, about how much he wanted to further and broaden education through the entire warp and woof of our nation. Then he signed it and gave the pen, the only one, to Miss Katie. A brief ceremony, but a moment to remember. Then there was a great shaking of hands and I went around greeting all of the Latinos from Cotulla and trying to make up for not having been present every moment when the cookies and coffee were passed to the guests in the ranchhouse yard. And Lyndon announced to the group of newspapermen that he had just made Admiral Rayborn head of CIA and Mr. Helms, his Deputy. That was the second big news of the day. Miss Katie lingered, but the rest of us went hurriedly back to the ranch to ^{enjoy} ~~see~~ every minute of the sun and Lyndon took Admiral Rayborn and Mr. Helms, A. W. and Jesse, Senator McCarthy and Congressman Albert with him in one helicopter and I followed as soon as I could change into ranch clothes with Mariallen, Anne Brinkley and Lynda. Such a joy to have her here! We rode over the Davis Ranch and Okamoto got some wonderful pictures of Lynda lying in

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the bluebonnets with a stage setting of crooked liveoaks, boulders along a winding creek, and a blue sky full of fluffy white clouds.

Then we hurried to the lake to watch the sunset from the boat. Lynda said, as I have often said wryly, that we rush madly to rest, that we are always in a moving vehicle and so we are. But what nicer moving vehicle than the boat going slowly, the Llano River turning scarlet with the sunset with Pack Saddle Mountain limbed sharply against the sky, and a luminous three quarter moon when you look down toward the Colorado. As we lay on the deck of the boat, ^{the} smell of the bluebonnet fields--buffalo clover is what they really are--was heavy in the air. Lyndon said, "This is what I call Heaven." ^{He} told Carl and Senator McCarthy that he was going to be a teacher, come back here and live. He is getting more and more enthusiastic about it. It would be a great course! He took Anne Brinkley riding in the little amphibious car to the hilarity of everybody, stopped by Mary Margaret's house and watched TV a few minutes, and then we returned to the ranch and to dinner, which was inevitably ham since I had baked up three enormous hams against the possibility that a large part of the 250 or so people might linger on to the dinner hour. One of the hazards around here you never know. Thank Heavens, ham freezes well.

Lynda Bird and I found willing bridge partners--Carl, Senator McCarthy, Mariallen, five of us cut in and out. It is my favorite end of the day. Then when the rest of them went to see Oriole I went to bed. There could not be a happier day--the Education Bill for work and riding on the river for play!