

1965

TUESDAY, APRIL 13

My second day of vacation. I had called Liz Odom, an old standby for sudden trips, and asked her to save the day. So after a boring two hours out for a hairdo in Austin she and Jessie Hunter and Lynda Bird and I flew to Denison-- us to see the Eisenhower birthplace while Dale took Lynda Bird back to Dallas to do some shopping at Neimans. It was an interesting experience, a simple little white house with three gables and a very well kept green and flowery lawn with a railroad track running within twenty feet of the front porch and a friendly, capable woman keeping it, who was obviously no curator but then there was very little there really. President Eisenhower had been born there but he had left when he was seven months old so in no way remembered it. It was just a town's effort to make a President belong to them and a good effort it was. Furniture of the day gathered together by the townspeople. The Gold Star Mothers had been the driving force. Only two things bespoke the life that had been lived there--an old fashion ^lchromotype picture of President Eisenhower's mother and father and a quilt she had made in the young days of her marriage, helped, so this card said, by her young sons.

Jessie and I learned a good deal about "no smoking" ^{and} "exit" signs and a fountain, how to handle the public, how many come, what days are the most popular. I also came away with a rather puffed up feeling that we really have something to be proud of, both at the birthplace house and at

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Johnson City, and rather satisfied with all of the work I have put into it and very grateful for the talent Lucia has put into it and work on her and Birge's part more than anyone.

We had lunch at Holiday Inn. I was unrecognized. In fact, I had the blissful feeling I had parked this title like a heavy coat in the closet and started walking lightly in the Texas sun. Then we went to Fort Worth to the Museum of the Southwest to be greeted at the door by Ruth Carter Johnson and taken through for a wonderful tour. I ~~mainly~~ wanted to see it because it had been built by Phillip Johnson and I must learn something about architects ^{and museum design} in preparation for a recommendation for the Johnson Library. This was a gem of a building, but the greatest gem of all was the foresight, the daring, the vision, the toughness it must have taken by Amon Carter to find, buy, and hold this beautiful site, many acres, in the ~~populace~~ middle of a growing city--Fort Worth. Now it is an art complex, the park, the children's museum, the Will Rogers Auditorium, and about to be built ^{the} Kimball Museum, I think the name is, ^a great legacy for his city and it was his.

Ruth has inherited many of his qualities. She is capable, a driver and very pretty. She took us through and told us a lot about the museum, that it takes two-thirds of the space to do the work and one-third to show the exhibits. I thought it was all exhibits! It is no mausoleum certainly.

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They have constantly changing exhibits and they send many things on tour. As the name says, they specialize in paintings of the Southwest, owning many Remingtons and Russells, and I was particularly delighted with the watercolors, which I was completely unfamiliar with by Russell.

Ruth's mother, Mrs. ^{Norman} Carter, came down--pretty, vivacious, her memory more on the past and Ruth's so much on the present and future.

This building, elegant, simple, imaginative, is a gem and the planting a perfect setting for it. We drove on to ^{Deer} ~~Austin~~ and I had a brief time in Neimans. So much is the same one almost forgets, but some things have changed. As I turned the corner I looked instinctively for the portrait of Mrs. Neiman. It is gone. It burned.

We got word that tornadoes were in the air, but still we shopped for a while ^{with} small success but fun to see Miss Griffith and Dorothy Parker and then we flew to Austin. What a good companion Liz Odom is! We reminisced about various trips. We had a drink in route, and then when we landed ^{Kellan} Jesse joined us and the Deaths and we went to a new Spanish restaurant, Mi Casa, Su Casa-- wonderful for atmosphere and good enough food and enjoyed tacas and enchiladas as only a Texan long away can and on to the ranch to bed, making ^{Hunter} Jessie who has found a strange new career as curator rather late in life spend the night with me because it was too late for her to drive to Johnson City.