

1965

SUNDAY, APRIL 18

Easter Sunday, April 18. Unhappily I awoke early with the sun streaming in. I had slept in the little back room because Lyndon sleeps so little these nights, and <sup>3</sup> got in several hours of work before we left by car for the little Episcopal Church in Blanco for an eleven o'clock service which sounded appealing the night before so we planned to go to St. Michaels and All Angels, Lyndon, Marvin and I. It couldn't have been a more beautiful ride in the golden sunshine over ~~the devil's backbone~~ the winding road that follows the crest of the hills. We reached the little picturesque stone and redwood church just in time. Neva and I had been there the day it opened about ten years before. There was a <sup>2</sup> Lay Preacher and small congregation, a very simple service and then afterwards a cup of coffee in the Parish Room adjoining and shaking hands with all of the visitors and regular members. This Hill Country has turned into quite a place for people to retire to. I had worn my two piece silk dress and stiff prim sailor hat with a big bow. I felt quite satisfied for once.

After Church we found ourselves at the head of a long caravan, Lyndon driving. We passed the house that Mrs. Johnson had lived in as a young woman, in fact, spent most of her life there until she married, a comfortable looking stone house on the banks of the river. It must have been quite impressive sixty-five years ago and then we went by a nursing home to see Mr. Percy Brigham, the banker from whom Lyndon had

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borrowed sixty dollars to go off to San Marcos to school back in 1927 and he had helped us in all of the campaigns since. Long ago he had been Lyndon's grandfather's law partner, one of the two big men of the town. Lyndon showered him with pictures and presents, Oakie quietly took some pictures of them together. In the coin of human dealings, it was time well spent.

As we left to drive home, Lyndon asked someone to quietly find out whether his Mother's old home could possibly be for sale and then we drove back to Johnson City where I stopped off at the house to do a few chores and Lyndon raced ahead to A. W.'s and on by chopper to the Haywood place, accumulating along the way besides the Moursunds, Wesley and Neva and Jesse and Marianne Means. I drove to the Haywood and on my way stopped at a roadside park, bounced out of the car, went over and introduced myself to the family gathered around the picnic table and talked to them about how nice it was to have such parks along the way while Oakie took a picture of us. I intend this for our Beautification Committee. Surprisingly they recognized me right off and greeted me as Mrs. Johnson. It was our last good day and we made the most of it. We spent hours out on the river, in fact, we had our lunch-- sandwiches of chicken salad, which Lyndon had asked Neva to whip up on the spur of the moment. Their cook said he always had a chicken standing by and cheese and ham and everything that always tastes better out of doors to our undoing. We talked about the short nights Lyndon had been having for

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several months. He asked to be waked up whenever there was an operation going out. He won't leave it alone. He said I want to be called every time somebody dies. He can't separate himself from it. Actually, I don't want him to, no matter how painful. In Washington he seldom gets to sleep until about two, so these days down here have been balm to his soul. He talked a good deal about the job to his close friends--A. W. and Jesse and Wesley. He used the expression "when you get to be President, you have to be just." I am aware of a conscious effort on his part to change himself many times because of the job. Perhaps it is the same with everyone.

We rode around, sunned on the top deck, played bridge down below--Neva, Mariallen, Ookie and I. One of the nicest moments was finding that Neva's daughter and the three grandchildren were there on the boat when I arrived. They had ridden over in the helicopter. It was a treat I had wanted to arrange for them, but it was Lyndon who just quickly bundled them up, took them along and then arranged for them to get home.

I drove over the Nicholson place and never before have I seen it so lovely. There was grass knee high with a head on it. Some of it was wild oats. Most of it was what A. W. called a sort of "love" grass, but luscious, good to eat-- a paradise for cattle and none on it. We had been letting the land lie idle. We decided to move all the stock in the next morning. It was our farewell to the bluebonnets. Their whitening top showed they are getting past their peak. It was like an African safari-- heading off in a Lincoln

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with no roads, deep in grass through fields, climbing steep banks, fording streams. A. W. said with a deep contented sigh of a born rancher, "there ain't nothing the matter with this land that a good rain won't cure." And speaking of how to get the work done around the place, he used his earthy expression "There is no fertilizer for a man's ranch like the footsteps of the owner." More and more I begin to believe that Lyndon could be a contented retired man, but it would not always be spring and there would not always be rain. <sup>#</sup> We hate to see the sun go, but when dark fell we went to the Haywood Ranch and Marie and Marvin joined us and we had a wonderful enormous dinner on the patio, a big roast, chicken pie, fried chicken, something like "all-day-singing-and-dinner-on-the-ground" with everybody bringing covered dishes, Neva and the Moursunds and us and then we left by chopper, dropping off the Moursunds and the Wests at their ranch and then home for the end of our holiday at the LBJ Ranch with a feeling of deep contentment and farewell.