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	Transcript	Lady Bird Johnson's Diary, Friday, May 28, 1965, Pages 3-4		2	5/28/1965	C

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Initials

1965

Friday, May 28th

Began very early. Poor dear Jean Louis was routed out of his bed to be down at the White House at seven o'clock and comb me for my ABC day at Mount Vernon.

I left about 7:30 -- a jewel of a day, fresh-washed by the rain the night before, clear, bright, golden, the river sparkling, Mt. Vernon so green and orderly and impressive.

We went into the Curator's office, and there they had hot coffee and strawberries fresh from George Washington's own garden, with powdered sugar to dip them in. It was a little past 8, they didn't open to the public until 9. The cameras were on the front lawn, where all of our narration took place, and it was a wonderful two and a half hours. Miracle indeed, we finished on time, including pictures of me and all the staff. I am getting quite chummy with these people now.

John and Helen Jeanne Secondari, his wife -- they have a two months-old baby -- their Director, I think he was, with a broad infectious grin, who keeps on talking about getting a toupe. It went fast, though we had to stop and do it over with an occasional plane flying over. The script was in tune with what I think of George Washington's relation to the capital itself and this Virginia countryside. The only trouble was, it kept the public from this view for a whole hour. The curator told me, to my surprise, that a top crowd for them was 15,000 a day. The White

1965

Friday, May 28th (continued)

House had 17,000 in two hours this summer, and on a peak Saturday, a four-hour day last year, we had over 25,000. We talked about the problems of upkeep, crowd control, all the things that happen when you are preserving a house that is really a shrine. How interesting to think that this was still in private hands 60 years after General Washington's death, and it has only been open to the public for a little over a hundred years, and that by the devotion and persistence of a group of women, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

The curator showed me some early paintings of Mt. Vernon -- "primitives," I suppose you would call them -- that had recently come into their hands by will from someone who lived in Massachusetts.

On the way back we filmed the drive and the river, because the rivers' relations to cities are one of the big problems and the big opportunities today in the beautification program.

And then, getting home about 11:30, I spent the next three hours on desk work. But it was too beautiful to be indoors, so I set up shop on the Truman Balcony. First Ashton and I worked, and then Bess and I, and then lunch on a tray, and then Liz and I talked about the Virgin Islands trip. She had just gotten back the night before, and looked exhausted.

1965

Friday, May 28th (continued)

I went in and talked with Luci. High on a mountain-top, her last final the day before, ready to burn her saddle shoes that she has worn for four years at National Cathedral! She says she tied them the first day she went to school and never has untied them since. They look it. I am thinking of bronzing them, as one does a baby shoe.

Bill Hitchcock has been our house guest for about two weeks now. Luci calls him her brother. She leans on him. Really he's a very congenial, quiet but sophisticated, youngster, and he has just returned from a year in Germany with his father, who has a business machine organization rather like IBM over there.

Something's abrew with Luci. We'll soon see.

SANITIZED

SANITIZED

But she's happy as a lark, full of glorious plans for the summer, and a serious plan, too. She reminded me that on her birthday, July 2nd, she wanted to be confirmed or baptized, whatever you call it, into the Roman Catholic Church. She goes to work on June 21st and between now and then she says, "Mother, you've never seen anybody play like I'm going to play." She looked lovely. Nothing remains of NCS except practice and Flag Day and preparation for final graduation Tuesday, June 1st.

And Lynda Bird -- for her, too, finals are over.

SANITIZED

1965

Friday, May 28th (continued)

SANITIZED

I hope mostly she will sleep. She has deep circles under he eyes. She looks too thin. She has worried much and slept little this last week. She strives so hard for A's, and she'll probably make them.

I had been adamant about not going to Texas with Lyndon last night because I wanted to fill this date with ABC, and also a month or so ago I had accepted an invitation from the Regents and the Secretary of the Smithsonian for a dinner and then to cut the ribbon at the Stuart Davis Memorial Exhibition. So, at seven o'clock in my white sari dress -- the first time I've worn it -- I went to Barney House, a relic of days past ^{cf. name} on Massachusetts Avenue. The ghost of Charles Marsh went with me. He lived not more than a block away.

In its day it was an elegant, though odd, old house, built by a wealthy family, with a sort of studio. The wife painted. There was a little stage in the house, rooms on different levels, carvings, arched windows with leaded panes. I was told that Walt Whitman used to come there to read his poetry and Sara Bernhardt to act, just as a guest. It was frequented by many artists in his day and is full of the paintings of Mrs. Barney, quite reminiscent of Whistler and very good, I thought.

Somebody that she had painted looked to me like Edward the Reining Monarch of England, and another looked like Whistler, quite

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Friday, May 28th (continued)

romantic looking paintings, most of them.

I sat next to Dillon Ripley and across from Mrs. Adeline Breeskin. Strong, patrician features, looks like a Dutchess, and has, amazingly, very avant garde taste in paintings.

The widow of the artist whose paints were to be shown, Mrs. Stuart Davis, and her young son, rather forlorn looking little boy, not more than ten, he looked, were among the guests. Also, very surprisingly, George Mahon of Texas and Helen, who is one of the Regents of the Smithsonian. I hope he enjoys it as much as Lyndon. And the Bill Fullbrights -- no surprise that he should be a Regent -- very appropriate.

One of the things that delighted me most about that many-^{faceted} husband of mine is that his works as Vice President included two things I had thought he would not take much interest in -- being a part of the Smithsonian and a part of the National Geographic -- and they turned out to be two things he liked most, studied most, and attended.

In the group of 70 there were many arty people. Bill Waldon^t was there making things livelier. I had talked with him about trying to make our ABC film more down-to-earth, able to give more ideas to the lady watching it in her living room in Sioux Falls or Dime Box, and he has been searching for some ideas. Lively, attractive man. No wonder Mrs. Kennedy found him so congenial.

1965

Friday, May 28th (continued)

Then down to the Smithsonian -- familiar scene -- that is, a whole phalanx of retreating cameramen with flashing bulbs. But suddenly something quite unfamiliar -- an enormous elephant right in front of us, one of the Smithsonian's main exhibits.

The ribbon was stretched close by. I cut it, and then we had about thirty minutes of viewing the paintings. Stuart Davis (I had looked at his brochures earlier) was billed as being one of the American Greats for the last 30 or so years, having died only three years ago. Bold, primary colors -- I liked his earlier things much better. They looked like the inspiration for a lot of attractive modern wallpapers, household designs, amusing familiar things all thrown in together in a sort of a montage.

And winding up his life with great splashes of brilliant reds, oranges and yellows, to which I do not relate at all. I asked Mrs. Davis if I could arrange a little private tour through the White House for her and her little boy the next day. I tried to make my visit mean a little something to all the Smithsonian people who are so helpful to us at the White House.

And left about 9:30 for freedom, a quick change of clothes, out to the airport in a gust of rain with a threatening sky, on to the little plane, and Texas-bound. And high time. I felt such a sense of release, so glad to be going home for a few days.

1965

Friday, May 28th (continued)

It had been a bad day for Lyndon. We had gotten word of his trip to Waco to receive the honorary degree through NATO warnings, the press plane carrying his little podium and teleprompter and being held up by the storm and never getting there, but I know he had finally gotten home to the ranch to rest, to haven.

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hope

I fell asleep shortly after we got aboard, and lucky it was that I did, because when I got to the ranch the pilot said, rather apologetically, "I am sorry, Mrs. Johnson, about that bad weather." I didn't even know it had been, but they tell me it was as rough a trip as we have ever had.

And so, deliciously at home and crawling into bed with Lyndon at about two o'clock -- instead of landing at the ranch, we had had to land in Austin and drive out because of the weather.