

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, July 5, 1965

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Once more I woke early -- 5:30 -- the myriads of sparrows in the high-rise apartments they've built in our live oak trees chattering, chattering -- the morning pink and pearly. But I, too washed out and frustrated, to enjoy it. But if I can't lick em, I might as well join em.

So at 7:00 I got up and dressed to go walking. I didn't mean to wake Lyndon. But he said, "Wait a minute, I'll go with you." So we walked up the Hodges' fence line and presently found them, Ernest and Marie and their son Buddy and his wife, with sacks slung around their necks, picking peaches. We shook hands over the fence and talked farmer talk -- "Not a very good peach crop this year" -- "How's our coastal Bermuda doing?" They searched around in their sacks to give us their very best peaches, eyeing them ruefully they said. "You have to pick them green to beat the birds to them." Sure enough, the birds had pecked holes in some of the loveliest specimens. I ate a delicious one, skin and all, right on the spot, licking the juice off my fingers.

Anybody who thinks you subsidize the farmers too much ^{ought} ~~or~~ to live a ^{while} ~~little~~ closely with the daily hazards, the uncontrollable things they face.

Then Dale picked us up in his truck. Bouncing along in the pickup, we looked at the coastal. It's doing beautifully in some places. Down by one of the tanks the sunflowers and the bullne^{ts} ~~ed~~les are getting it -- even on the caliche hill as you approach Dale's house. ^{But} It's a good stand.

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I await for the day when it waves in the wind like it does at John's ranch.

A little later the late sleepers -- happy folks -- we picked up Jean and Heidi and drove down to Johnson City with Jesse and Beagle -- no joy for Jesse and me because Beagle must look out a window, and he much prefers parking his back feet on a ladies nice soft legs than on a car seat. He doesn't laugh a bit when Lyndon says, "Sic em, Beagle!" and then Beagle goes to fairly stomping with his back feet as he looks ravenously out for any fleeing rabbit or squirrel.

It was Monday, so of course Lyndon's boyhood home was still open to the public. And the road was lined with cars. We went in the back door, and Lyndon himself was Jean's guide, with me interposing homey stories about the vintage cowboy hat on the hat rack, the blue ~~back~~ speller, Mrs. Johnson's first picture of Lyndon.

I always love the chance to thank all of the volunteer hostesses for helping.

We spoke to all the tourists that were there. Some of them said the most extraordinary things to me -- "Oh, Mrs. Johnson, I am so glad we've got this in Texas. We have to go so far in Texas to see any history." And they say Texans brag! I said, "Oh, no, we have lots of history. We just don't point it out enough, make enough of it."

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As we went out the fences were lined with tourists with clicking cameras and poppas holding up their children saying, "Mr. President. Will you shake hands with my little boy?"

Then we drove by the bank. I am really quite proud of it. I am getting ideas about pictures of this part of the country that we might hang on the walls.

And then on to the Sharnhorst where we were lucky enough to see three bucks, all traveling together. I wanted so much for Jean and Heidi who had been truly appreciative of "our own, our native land," to see some deer. But it was hot and they were all lying down in the shade. So I felt it was a real coup to suddenly come up on three bucks.

Back home for lunch -- and I hoped a nap would follow. But Lyndon these days seems determined to fill each one to the full. Some inner urge keeps him going on and rest is not in him -- not rest as I know it.

So after lunch, traveling in the helicopter, but met by cars -- the Secret Service -- at the spots we stopped, ^We went with A. W. first to "3 Springs" -- my first real exploration of "3 Springs", and I shall not forget it. The river is swift and clear and tumbling over rocks, -- the wide rock bed as though some giant had strewn around boulders at will. It was a giant -- a giant of water power.

Jean was frankly scared as I have been so many times traveling

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in that Lincoln over what wasn't really a road, but a narrow precipitous river-side path.

A. W. and I stopped and walked on up to see the swallows' nest while Jean and Heidi climbed out on the rocks and put their feet in the cool, swift water.

The cliffs are rather soft, chalky limestone -- rise high, almost bending out above us like a shelter, making a shadow in which we walked. Overhanging the top, there was a huge cactus or a crooked, misshapened cedar. It was weird country. And then the swallows. Their small nests are made of mud, about the size of a man's fist with a tiny hole only about the size of a 50-cent piece in which the bird enters. And they are built along the side of the cliffs in clusters -- dozens, hundreds, grouped together; on the ground as much evidence of their occupancy -- droppings. And on the ground I saw flint -- lots of it -- remarkably sharp. And it is interspersed into soft, chalky wall of the cliff which you can practically cut with your pocket knife while the flint is one of the hardest substances I've met in nature. This must have been a happy hunting ground for the Indians once -- great arrow heads they would make.

The first colony of swallows' nests was silent, deserted. They had raised their families and flown. The next one -- only a few yards away -- was alive with chirping and noise and shrill cries of excitement

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and flutter of black wings -- hundreds of them. It was a sight to see.

A. W. who knows so much about nature could not tell me where they came from or where they were going -- just that they come each year at about the same time to this same spot as far back as he remembers.

On the way back I found a new flower that I did not recognize -- yellow -- and I want more things that bloom in July. So little does.

We went on to the Nicholson and drove around. I was wondering what Jean must think of this white Lincoln on non-existent pasture roads.

And then to the Coca-Cola Cove over a new road for a rendezvous with the big boat. This was a device to escape encountering an armada at our own boathouse at the Haywood. Also so we could have some safe skiing without traffic hazard or a gallery in the quiet little cove.

We met for the first time the owner of the place, Mr. Tennison, and his wife and child. Feeling a little crimson in the face, I thanked them for letting us land there and use it. A. W. had asked their ranch foreman sometime before, but we had never met the boss.

It was still blistering hot, and I in a dress realized the amusing truth that I must never walk out of my house at the Ranch, no matter where I think I'm going, unless I've got everything in my very own hands or on my body that I will need all day long -- such as a bathing suit and

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a cap and some sun oil. All of that remained in the helicopter some place back.

The Bill Heaths joined us and the Will Davises and the Tom Millers. A boat had brought them down from the Haywood. And a newspaper man named Sid Davis and his wife and very small, very sleepy son and John Chancellor of NBC came with Bill Moyers and Buzz and George Reedy in a car to meet us there.

Lyndon, for all the world, ^{is} proud of the new fast boat as Luci is of her green Sting Ray -- took all of the pretty ladies he could gather -- Jean and Mary Jo Miller and Mavis Heath and Will Davis' wife -- by turns for a ride -- Jean giving us an excellent demonstration as a water skier. And later he took the men -- several at a time while I clung happily to the big boat and the shaded upper deck talking to Mavis ^H Heath about her trip to the Orient. And to George Reedy about something serious and sad that worries me. He's having trouble with his feet. He will have to leave to have an operation. He wants to go to Mayo. It will take two months. And it may or it may not be successful. It has been excruciatingly painful for months. I flinched to think of George as a very old and kindly natured bull in a pen, the daily object of the sharp darts of a host of rather brutal picadors. He's conquered a lot. He must have lost 50 pounds this last year or more. And he does not drink at all. He feels like he's at his ropes end and will leave for this operation

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just as soon as Lyndon gives the go signal on somebody for a Press Secretary. Lyndon had spoken about Bill Moyers.

And I talked to Will Davis who is gung-ho on history -- on John Connally's plan to let the world know about Texas, to bring tourists, to put on the map anything we have of historical significance. I wanted very much to talk about the brick house in a way that might bring something to happen but didn't know how.

We drove back to the Haywood in two boats and a beautiful twilight sky with pink powder puff clouds and a silver, almost half, o moon getting brighter. And the lake was still dotted with sailboats -- white and red and blue and orange sails -- so gay.

The Billy Baileys were waiting for us at the Haywood, and we had dinner on the patio -- about 24 of us -- two NBC men -- Mr. Northshield and another one had joined us there -- small ⁵lucious steaks and garden vegetables.

I had telephoned home to tell them to take a roast out of the deep-freeze to add to the dinner when the group expanded. But no, they didn't need to. I am constantly amazed at the good humor, the efficiency, the industry of James and Mary and Gertrude and Filippinos -- all of the people that take care of us because we do lead a most unusual life.

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Then after dinner we went in the living room and saw a rough cut of a documentary that NBC is doing. The working title is "A President's Country", and I hope that remains the finished title.

John Chancellor warned us before beginning this was a rough version, there would be some color corrections, this was only about a third of the shots they had, narration would be put in and music. But what we saw was absolutely thrilling and out of this world. There were the native sounds of gurgling water and shrilling birds and even humming bees and rustling leaves. And though it had been made in about mid-June, and the height of the season had been about mid-April, they still had enough of the lovely wild flowers -- the great variety -- red and yellow and pink and white and orange and blue expanse of countless acres -- small little nooks in between the rocks.

It thrilled us all. I loved it. I can only think that however the one I am doing about Washington into which I put so much effort, however it turns out, how can I compare it with the one that is about the country I love.

We said goodbye and helicoptered home -- a little late tonight -- after 11:00 -- pleased that we had shown Jean, ^{some} ~~one~~ of our favorite people of Austin, hoping she had liked the country we liked so much, and feeling really so fond of her and Heidi. Lyndon had told her in his absolutely straightforward fashion that sometimes makes me cringe a bit that he

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wanted her to help on our beautification program. Perhaps rather startled after only half a second she said, "Why, I will be glad to. What can I do?"

It had been one of the best days we'll ever know, one that I hope sends Lyndon back armored for the week ahead. I think I do not remember three successive days at the Ranch with such a minimum of calls from McNamara and McGeorge Bundy and Dean Rusk -- just one or two that I overheard. Briefly the world has stopped to take a breath. And I am grateful.