

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, July 10, 1965

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I hope I shall remember as remarkable for one thing -- the launching of a plan to bring the brick house back to some restoration, some fulfillment for future use. But that came later in the day.

First, I did wake up in time to tell all the kinfolks goodbye.

They had had breakfast around the kitchen table with Lyndon, and seemed most especially pleased to do so -- particularly Griffen.

And a plane roared in from Washington, and the Califanos, who worked close to Bob McNamara and Dick Goodwin and the Jack Valentis came in.

Lyndon, with the top down and the sun broiling us, convoyed the group of us around the Ranch.

The coastal Bermuda is beautiful in the two pastures close to Oriole's. And the cattle are fat and fine.

~~About every 10 minutes he picked up the talking machine to give Dale a job to do.~~

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About every 10 minutes Lyndon picked up the talking machine to give Dale Malechek a job to do -- hinge off a gate here, a cow has got a cancer eye, put in a cattle guard there -- Dale needs a stenographer's pad in his pocket when we are at home!

We had a swim before lunch and that was the end of my hair-do -- most hapless of women when it comes to personal adornment. How did I have Luci for a daughter?

The peacocks were strutting across the lawn. I told the Califanos how they roosted on top of the house and were likely to cry "help" in the very early morning to the alarm of our guests who thought surely some crime was being committed nearby after being waked up three mornings by this.

Liz, who had been helping me out by preparing the menus for our stay, put on the next days luncheon -- "roast peafowl under glass."

Lyndon left right after lunch for his [?]~~navannah~~ ^{Niwanah} -- his true love -- the boat. He has every reason to feel fulfilled and proud this weekend. Last week the voting rights bill passed and the Medicare bill -- that impossible bill. It had been a great week legislative wise. The headlines even said, that factions in Santo Domingo had gotten together on an interim President for that violent Island has reached a temporary peace it seems. It's a good weekend in spite of the sadness of George going, and Jack Valenti is writing Lyndon a letter that he too thinks it's

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time that he left the staff. I hope he won't. He's staying at a very considerable sacrifice because he is capable of making between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year in private business. And he probably gets about \$25,000 or \$28,000 in the Government. He fills so many roles in Lyndon's life, and all with great quickness and kindness and a brightness that frequently has a touch of the brilliant it seems to me.

His letter came as a bombshell to me. I had expected it two or three years down the road simply because Mary Margaret's ambitions for a beautiful home and a free social life -- and a husband who was often in attendance -- could not be served by a man who made the salary and spent the hours that Jack has with Lyndon. But I thought it would be two or three years. I think the Herb Lock cartoon following Jack's speech in Boston added to the lack of an exact title in line of authority and then a long build up of phrases like "Jack of all trades" and "valet to the President" has resulted in this decision. I hope it will not happen, and yet I see in them both an air of a certain detachment and release.

I stayed behind because I wanted to meet the Marshall party at the Sam Johnson House in Johnson City and show them our small little venture into preservation and the interest it was causing. And so a little before 4:00 Liz and I drove into Johnson City where we met

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Cameron and Lucille McElroy and Winston and Vivian Hackney and his wife.

We arrived at the house just about the time it was supposed to close and the tourists to depart. But as we went in a few of them were still lingering. In fact many cars were parked all around. So we met the lady hostesses and then I gave them -- with Jessie Hunter -- a leisurely tour that was, I hope, sparked with personal reminiscences and intimate vignettes and a cup of coffee with Jessie who told us that in a almost two months that it had been open -- it still lacks three days -- it had pushing ^{above} ~~over~~ 10,000 -- over 9,700 and something had signed the register and you can't tell about those who don't sign. Yes, from about 47 States and 11 foreign countries.

One of the nicest things of all to me was to learn that not a single thing had been lost as a souvenir. I like to have my ^{faith in} ~~faith in~~ human nature ^{justified} ~~justify it.~~

We drove home and met John Ben Sheppard and Mamie and their two daughters and friend, and got the three girls settled for a swim and then dinner and a movie with the military down at the LBJ Bldg. That's what we call the guest house now when they have the movies at night. And then the rest of us departed in two helicopters for the Nicholson. We landed there and drove to the Haywood -- this to escape drawing the armada of boats that surround the Haywood very naturally.

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when two inescapably conspicuous helicopters land.

The Don Thomas ~~were~~ were there waiting for us. We got in the big boat with Jessye, gathering up our pictures of the brick house, and proceeded leisurely down the Llano River toward the cliffs and the railroad bridge where the lower Colorado River joins it.

Lyndon was somewhere around -- we didn't know quite where -- in the small boat with the Califanos and Vickie doing ski demonstrations. I was sure and enjoying the release that that boat gives him. Our communications -- so much a part of the day-to-day efficiency of our operation -- was somehow not working which only shows that they are run by men and subject to uncertainty.

I climbed up on the front deck with pillows and asked some of the key people of the project to join me. What I hoped we could work out tonight was some beginning of a preservation of the brick house, and I had just instinctively asked those I thought might be sensitive and helpful to the project -- John Ben Sheppard, because he is a key figure in historical preservation in the State; Winston, because he is my anchor to east Texas and my closest kin; Cameron, because he's got the most vitality, a sort of mover and shaker, in anything that happens in east Texas; Vivian Hackney, because as President of the Marshall National Bank, though he has nothing to do with Ruth's separate estate, and that is the brick house and the 175 acres around

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it along with other things, ^{he} He at least has very considerable control over all other income that supports her and might have some influence on her decisions. And Don Thomas because he has the most background on all the legal matters since Senator Wirtz' death relating to my Daddy's business and now to the T. J. Taylor estate -- that sadly withering giant.

We sat up on the front deck on our pillows with our drinks and discussed the possibilities. Liz of course was there because I look to her to help implement things that are closest to me.

John Ben gave us some background on tourism and the number of museums in Texas, the possibilities of a tea room, of it's becoming a part of the Jefferson pilgrimage. Liz mentioned the fact that Harrison County was on the critical list for libraries, and that there were Federal funds available for libraries where there was a real need. Mr. Hackney gave us the background on the Harrison County historical association, the local interest in it. Now it has a museum in the basement of the old Courthouse. And he was also very quick to point out that in any dealings with Ruth would have to be conducted through somebody other than the bank because her lawyer, William Lane Pope, I believe his name is, has something less than a friendly relationship with the bank.

Cameron and John Ben both had a rather sanguine approach to the possibility of raising by public subscription funds to acquire

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the brick house. For everybody, the obstacle seemed to be how to acquire it and who should be the trader -- the one to institute the deal.

Meanwhile, the full moon came out above the cliffs on the Marble Falls Road, drinks were passed and I told everybody the tale of Pack Saddle Mountain and the ladies stayed below somewhat forsaken I'm afraid.

With sunset, Lyndon joined us and we went back to the Haywood and there were the Valentis; Bill and Judith Moyer-- glad to see their east Texas folks -- and Mariallen to meet A. W., Horace and Doug Cater and Dick Goodwin and Gerri Whittington. I, alert but not nervous at the prospect of having deep east Texas sit down to dinner with the President of the United States and his Negro secretary -- a very credible^{ka} representative, lady-like and efficient. I had been pleased to hear Vivian Hackney say that they had hired in a sort of a secretarial capacity -- at any rate well above the usual domestic -- a Negro college girl and had gone through some difficulties such as restrooms etc., and finally emerged into placid acceptance, a good business relationship. Cameron says they've been voting there since the '30's and without incident. He feels that Harrison County, with some colorful exceptions, is getting beyond the hating stage.

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We had a good barbeque dinner with fresh corn right from the Ranch and homemade bread and plenty of refills out on the patio with a full moon above the live oaks and the lights ^{er} glimmering on the Llano River. And with the coffee I invited the men and Liz to join me and go in the house and pass the pictures of the brick house. We had a screen set up and showed some stills that Winston had brought us, and the charming water color of the brick house that I smilingly made some reference to being grateful to Mr. Hackney for ~~it~~ and ~~whence~~ ^{winged} even as I said it because I thought somehow this isn't right, I've got ^{is this the} two, ~~this is~~ one that somebody else gave me? Could it have been Don Thomas?

Then we all began to exchange ideas -- all of those that had come forth on the boat. At Lyndon's suggestion I had asked A. W. to come in with us to add his horse sense and true trading ability.

From all the talk there finally emerged, and it was no surprise to me nor to any one I expect, that it was Lyndon who finally synthesized it, put an end to the "chasing rabbits", as he would call it, congeal ^{ed} the conversation and laid out a plan of action according to what everybody said was possible.

Don had said, "Give me ten days. I'll try to revive with Ruth and her lawyer. ⁵ An earlier attempt -- a year or so ago -- to try to bring back her separate estate into the whole trust for a certain stipulated

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income for a year, for life. This would bring the brick house and its 175 acres back into the trust. And then the bank would be able to dispose of it according to its best judgment.

Don really has his heart in this. He has from the beginning. It's one of the things I like about him. He's the sort of person who picks up pink granite boulders that he has on the Sharnhorst place and has a nurseryman transplant for him a Texas persimmon because it has a white trunk and picturesque branches in the back yard. So to a certain extent he follows his fancies while being a very substantive lawyer. If his ten days are up and he does not make any progress with Ruth and her lawyer, then perhaps a State agency, like John Ben Sheppard and the Texas Historical Association, might try to negotiate asking him ^(the lawyer) first if they would like to donate it -- that it will be perpetuated to Daddy's memory -- taken care of, any beautiful public use of with some prestige for all the names of those who participated in it and were generous in making it possible. If that failed and nobody thought there was much chance that it would succeed, there might be some sort of a public subscription to raise funds to buy it if they would offer to sell it for any reasonable sum through such a State agency.

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Lyndon stepped in to scotch the idea of any Federal funds participating through any rural library or such scheme. First he thought nobody would come that far out in the country to read. Then he thought it wouldn't be proper for Federal funds to come to any place this close to the First Family's association.

So feeling that we had made some progress we broke up a little before 11:00 and started home. ⁶Oddly enough, saying goodbye to A. W. who was leaving the next day for Washington. And so was Don.

Lyndon was staying until sometime Monday.

I felt the peculiar satisfaction of at least having started rolling the wheels on one of the things that I really wanted to accomplish even at the expense of missing "Gunsmoke" on a Saturday night.