

1965

Tuesday, August 10th

Was not a day of shooting stars. What a dull, lethargic day for me, partly because I did not sleep much the night before. Sleep is an increasingly ^{elusive} ~~elusive~~ lover. Thank God it is not so for Lyndon!

I talked to Jessie and Roy White about the landscaping at the birthplace house and the street trees in Johnson City and the work around the bank. Ate a monastic sort of lunch -- scrambled egg, half a piece of toast, in my room with Lynda. I am not as stern as I was yesterday with only a hard-boiled egg. Went to the dentist and had the doleful news that there would probably be 12 such trips of an hour and a half each.

And then, close to 3, went downstairs to the Diplomatic Reception Room to meet Altavene Spann, bringing her little step-grandson, John Reed, to Washington for the grand tour. In the days in the Senate when we tried to get a better organization set up Statewide in Texas, with a woman leader in each county, Altavene had been our chief woman organizer and had spent untold hours working with Cliff Carter finding a good Johnson woman, covering at last, I think, a good deal more than half of the 254 counties in Texas.

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I was anxious to add a bit of spark to her trip, so we had tea in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, talked about old friends. I made sure that she had had a real good tour with the best guide, and then finally I called a White House car to take her and John to their destination. She looks happily married, comfortable, still devoted to Lyndon, but in the milieu in which she moves is sensitive, I could tell, about his Civil Rights policies and worried lest he go too far. Here it is August 10th and the first time we have had tea in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, the purpose for which it was made: for the First Lady, her friends, and her children. John had had no lunch, so I made it a large tea.

And then I spent the rest of the afternoon rather dolefully trying to take a nap and failing, dictating, working with Luci and Barbara Howar on her clothes. Sweet blonde Barbara, spending so many hours with Luci. But one thing about it -- Luci appreciates every moment and lets everybody know it when they help her, including her Mother.

And then I got a call from Lyndon. "How would you like to go out on the boat with a bunch of Texas folks?" Dull, sleepy, in a bad humor, I started to say, "No, I want to go to bed," and then I thought of his program today: Senate Leadership Meeting; House briefing -- an hour and a half of the hardest thinking and exchange. This has been a week in which he has tried to tell the whole Congress, the House

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and Senate -- he and General Taylor and McNamara and, I believe, Secretary Rusk -- bring them up to date on Vietnam. And then a young Methodist Fellowship group from Texas -- for "dessert," I guess -- signing a Bill. And then a House briefing in the afternoon once more. It takes a lot of meetings to get through with both bodies. And I thought, "If a trip on the boat after a day like that would rest him, let's have it."

He had invited all the guests. There was my own Congressman, Wright Patman. I couldn't have been more pleased. Merle, unfortunately, was in Texas. The Walter Rogerses, both of them, and Bob Poage -- Frances was in Texas. It delighted me to have Bob, as it did Ray Roberts, but I only wished their wives could have been along. Ray has slipped away from us somewhat since the days that we were so close in NYA. Year by year he has become more conservative. He has voted against a great deal of the legislation that Lyndon is committed to. He does not have a warm, optimistic, outgoing feeling toward the world in general. And yet I cannot forget the years we were so close. And now redistricting has put him him and Lindley Beckworth in the same cockpit.

The young Dick Whites from El Paso were there. She is a distant relative of Lyndon's. And the Jake Pickles. The gay young de la Garzas. Graham Purcell without Betty. And from the staff,

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Marvin and Cliff Carter. I am always glad when Cliff is included -- one of the hardest-working ones, and we see him less than the rest. And Jake Jacobs^{on}. And Beagle in charge of everything. -- feet planted firmly on the deck, tail wagging, never far from Lyndon.

Bob and I talked about the bald cypress on the Guadalupe River. It is threatened by a dam that is being built. He told me about a stand of hickory on the north flank of Enchanted Rock -- the only hickories in Texas within hundreds of miles. ^uWhich excites Bob, a most unusual man, just as it does me. Where did they come from? And then about the maples that grow in the canyons of the Frio and Sabinal. He has more odd information.

And Helen Mahon told me about Lera Thomas and Albert, who is cheek by jowl with death and has been for months, with cancer, and is now undergoing a fearful operation in Houston. It may, however, give him great relief. I want to call Lera, but I will be tongue-tied if I do.

Pretty little Mrs. de la Garza is happily settled in, they have made their place in the ^{De}legation. It is no longer the strong, cohesive ^{De}legation that it was in the days of Lyndon and Sam Rayburn -- or is that the fond imagining of one who is now an outsider and looking back? At any rate, it was a happy, pleasant, useful evening, and we were home and in bed by midnight.