

1965

Friday, August 13th

My ambition is to sleep until ten o'clock, and the hardest way to achieve it is to go to bed at 2. I was wide awake before 7, and so was Lyndon. We despaired of going back to sleep, so put on our bathing suits and went out by the pool. The mimosa is blooming again and the lawn is lush and green. We have had over an inch of rain since we were here last.

I felt dull and weary, unable to go back to sleep and not full enough of spark to go to work, so I lounged in the sun and "goofed off," as Luci would say, reading a book called The Group, by Margaret McGrory. There are better uses for my time than it.

James came home from his vacation to take charge while we were there, and, to my delight, Lyndon met him immediately with the word, "What are you doing here, James -- you get on back where you were -- you're supposed to be having a good time, taking a vacation." I would have argued to achieve that, but I didn't have to open my mouth. I could have hugged Lyndon. I wonder when I shall see him so weary that he will want to lie around -- not in a long time.

A. W. is in Washington and Mariallen in Europe, of all places! So Lyndon goes around with Jesse Kellam and with the staff, and I spent the afternoon in bed.

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About 5 I came to and drove around with Pat to see how the lawns were coming, the cemetery, the old Sam Johnson house. We made decisions about Fall flowers to be ordered, a pecan tree to be cut down, more yucca to be put out. The one we presumed dead is once more green on top.

And then I drove on in alone to the boyhood home. It was past closing time, and I had phoned Jessie that I would pick her up and take her to join Lyndon at the Haywood. We walked over every step of the yard. It is so beautifully kept that it is a mockery for the short hours and curtailed work that we are able to give the ranchhouse grounds or the guest house or the old Sam Johnson place. Jessie was full of anecdotes that the hostesses tell about Lyndon's youth, his growing-up times, and how their husbands or brothers did this and that with him. These they tell to the guests.

We forecasted the future of the house. We know that this wonderful, generous outpouring of time free cannot go on forever. We must express our appreciation some time this Fall with a tea and maybe a placque or some presentation for those who have given the most hours. And then, some time in the future -- perhaps it will be as long from now as next April -- we must manage to hire

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another person or two to lighten the load.

And then, just as twilight was setting in, Jessie and I drove over to the Haywood. For me to drive, especially on lonely Texas roads, is restful balm. On the talking machine we found that Lyndon and his group were, of all places, in the Urschell house on the bluff! Would we come join them -- of course we would. A Secret Service boat picked us up and we flew down the Llano to the confluence of the Lower Colorado, and in about 15 minutes were at the dock of the house we had seen and talked about so many times. As if it grows out of the cliff, a perfect marriage with the terrain, the most lordly view anywhere on the river. Our host, who met us at the dock, <sup>was</sup> Charles Urschell, son of a very wealthy man who was kidnapped some years ago and held for ransom, bound and blindfolded, in a lonely desert hut. It was quite a newspaper story. He was rescued after the ransom was paid, and he helped locate the place where he was held by some <sup>he had made</sup> notations of the exact times ~~that he had made~~ that he had heard an airplane going over above. His son, Charles Urschell, was a charming man -- I would bet a quite conservative Republican -- a bit retiring, but an interesting conversationalist, and a man of many facets.

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He showed me around over the house, not so large as it appears from the lake. Superb vistas, a small swimming pool, and a funicular that descends the straight-down cliff like a fly crawling up or down the wall. A strong rein on any guest who started to take that second drink, I should think!

Lyndon had invited Mr. Urschell and his business partner to return with us to the Haywood for fried fish, and we went back in the dark with a full red moon and Lyndon at the wheel.

Because I had enjoyed Mr. Urschell, listening to his war experiences and his business experiences as we had a drink out on the patio before dinner, I seated him at Lyndon's table when we loaded our first plates with fried fish, and I asked his business partner and Jack Valenti and Jesse to sit with me. What ensued was an evening I shall long remember. It made me wonder how Lyndon has survived in Texas politics! What a tightrope he has walked, and it is a miracle that he has been able to achieve National leadership in a State where a very articulate part of the constituency is as rigidly conservative, as ~~bitterly~~ opinionated, as Mr. Urschell's business partner. *delete*

[We talked about Cuba. He wanted to know where Che Guevara was and why didn't we send somebody over from the Lavendar Gang

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in Chicago or Detroit -- a gunman, I suppose -- to "take care of him, to "take care of all of those guys."

He talked about where it was all going to lead to -- the help we were giving to this part of the world and that part, Vietnam, Thailand, All Those Latin-American Countries. "Are we going to be the milk-cow for the world?"

He seemed to have a particular dislike for the Catholic countries, especially the Latin American countries, who go on and on breeding more children. Here we got off on Planned Parenthood. His wife is very interested in it. And there, at least, I could interject a word of approval.

[ Jack had just returned from Brazil and had been telling such interesting stories of the fabulous new capital, Brazilia, some of the leadership, which he thinks is top-notch, and of the unbelievable contrast of poverty in the barrios, the stench and squalor and hopelessness. Our dinner partner took a dim view of all aid to such people. And at the same time I kept noting uneasily that he always referred to Lyndon as "The Big Man" or "The Boss." Jack -- suave, gentle, sophisticated Jack -- finally took umbrage, the first time I have ever noticed him do so, at the repeated references to the Catholic Church, and the conversation shed more heat than light.

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At my side, Jesse sat in dour silence. And the next morning, as we recapped the evening, he said: "If I had had to work as hard to make my money <sup>in</sup> ~~that~~ he did, I'd want to hold onto it too." Our dinner partner had married the daughter of a very wealthy man. ]

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you.

We choppered home soon after dinner and were in bed by 11:30. An unusually quiet and restful day in my life. But I am finding that after one like Thursday it takes me a day or so to catch up. Physical exercise is actually a restorative. I excused myself from our vigorous dinner conversation, tripped off down to the river bank, quickly changed and jumped in, and the black night and in the velvet water I swam across to the dock on the other side, touched it and returned, floating, looking up at the stars and the dark outline of Pack Saddle Mountain, and feeling more at one with life than at any part of the day. A long swim reminds me that I am still physically strong, at home with my environment, and fairly good at something.