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Tuesday, August 24th

I awoke early and started trying to behave like a General, dispatching Helen and one helper for a much-needed cleanup job at the old Sam Johnson house, before the dirt-daubers and spiders take it as their own. And Gene and a helper to wash windows and screens and hose down or rub off the front porch walls, covered with the dust of the hot summer. There's something about cleaning up that satisfies a deep underlying urge in me, no matter what new fields I move into.

And then, with James, I began to look through the newly created storage area out in the hangar, expecting to find the Augean Stables themselves. But lo, James and Mr. Klein, with an assist from Earl Death; I believe, had moved in on a two or three-day organizational job. Boxes labelled and inventoried, put neatly on shelves, many copies of inventory being prepared by Earl. It almost begins to make sense. I found a box of old things from Dillman, and was hopelessly sidetracked, took them to sit under the oak tree in the front yard, and read letters Lyndon had written me in 1939, 26 years ago. Not in a long time have I felt so rich. Not at a State Dinner. Not at an Inaugural Ball. They were wonderful letters. All of them I will keep, probably in the bottommost locked compartment of the Archives. One or two can be used on display. In part of them he was talking

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about his work as a young Congressman -- he had been in a little over 2 years. He was working on the dams on the Lower Colorado, and he used expressions I hear often today: the satisfaction of being able to do something for people that they couldn't do for themselves.

It was a fascinating morning, complete with old faded pictures of me in the bluebonnets during University days, aged about 19, or high up in the limbs of an old live oak, or sitting on a limestone cliff near to a pool. Some of them I think must have been out at Anderson's Mill. With Charles Ethel Neal and Nell Colgyn and lovely Evelyn Campbell and Emily Crowe and <sup>Gene</sup>~~Jean~~ Lassiter and boys whom I cannot remember except one, a fey, sort of sweet youngster named Wayne Livergood, who later died somewhere on Corregidor.

And then when I was dusty and in shorts, I got word that Liz Odom was bringing some foreign visitors through the ranch with permission of Mr. Kellam, and did I want her to stop by the house? This not from Liz but from the guard. I said, "Bring them by for just a moment." Liz came in, laughing and apologetic, convoying a tiny, fragile Vietnamese lady and her husband, Judge Hue of the Supreme Court at Saigon, and another couple. She is working on the Austin Committee of Let's Show Visitors from Afar America,

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and so she was showing them a working ranch. We had a cup of coffee in the front yard. I thought how extraordinary this must seem to them.

Later Liz said when I went out of the room for a moment Judge Hue said, "Incredible. In our country she is the Empress. Very informal." I expect that was nice language for what a low-caste way for the wife of a Chief of State to behave! But sometimes one has to clean closets.

We had a little polite conversation and then they left. And Mr. Klein and I made one of our tours, hanging pictures, moving things, taking my lovely Mexican chest, expelled from the office by that enormous conference table down to the guest house where, though not so much at home, it does at least add charm and flavor.

And then late in the afternoon Richard Myrick came with his watercolor sketches of the proposed little park in Johnson City, which LIFE Magazine plans to give on the occasion of the President's birthday and because of their interest in the beautification program, which I have helped along a bit by writing the article in LIFE. The plans are quite simple. Ligustrum hedge screening of the deplorable Quonset hut storage area, junk yard, and the backs of stores ornamented by various <sup>High School</sup> classes. "Fish 1961," "Fox 1959," or some such. There are already some rather good live oaks, one with a twin trunk,

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there. A grouping of lacy, yellow-flowered retamas, another of water-melon-red crepe myrtle, and in several places the bright spots of color of the red yucca that bends over gracefully. It will be especially good against the old limestone jail.

Luckily, A. W. joined us at the site. He can do more business faster! I'd talked to him little more than an hour ago in Waco. He'd flown and driven back, and we made plans with Mr. Myrick and A. W. to sit down with the representative of LIFE, if it could be worked out, Thursday morning. All the civic and legal details and the plans for the presentation.

I had asked Dale and Jewel to join us for dinner around the pool, and Pat and Mr. Myrick, and we spent the twilight hours riding around the ranch. So much activity! The TV tower is being moved, and the enormous gangling lines that furnish electric power are being put underground. It's the most fantastic operation, the most wonderful improvement. I feel like it's I who am having a birthday and that's Lyndon's present to me!

The cattle pens, too, are being moved up by Dale's house, and grading and fill has taken place between Mr. Klein's workshop and the guest house, and in front of the guest house toward the river and on down to James Davis's. A special strain of Bermuda

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grass is being sprigged in there -- better, Dale believes, that the native Bermuda -- abundant and drouth resistant. The science of grasses is an alluring thing for anybody who loves the ranch, and Dale told me just as though he were talking about the most beautiful woman in the world, about the 8-foot-tall grass on the right of the runway that is heading up so abundantly and was only planted 6 weeks ago -- an African strain, I believe he said.

We had pork chops and garden vegetables around the swimming pool and then an early bedtime.

Not an aimless day, and yet not one of great accomplishment, but sort of replenishment to the soul.