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Thursday, August 26th

Was the big day of the week. There was a party for the hostesses at the boyhood home. One of the reasons I had stayed down this week.

In the morning I talked to Lynda and Luci about their plans. Yes, Lynda was coming with her Daddy and carefully organized plans for moving into the Theta house, hopefully with Helen's help for a day. And suitcases full of winter clothes. My dear, reliable, planning-ahead daughter.

Luci the lark, meeting each day on tiptoe. I warned against bringing a whole army of friends, but told her I would love to have Pat and any one of her girl friends, perhaps Helene, who is just about my favorite.

I talked to Lyndon several times. He sounded hurried, distraught, concerned about the steel strike, not sure he was coming, which I completely discounted. Concerned also about the children's using Camp David. Lynda had asked to use it Labor Day weekend. ^{He}~~She~~ is divided between two attitudes on our life in the White House, the luxuries thereof, the use of the boat, of Camp David, the planes and helicopters, for me, for the children, in some ways for himself. He swings between the poles of severe austerity -- leave the boats in dry dock, don't go to Camp David, thinking of economy, thinking

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especially of the criticism of the use by the children of such luxuries if Cabinet or staff are restrained. The other pole of the happiness it gives him to give us something, to make us happy. I am caught in between, with understanding and compassion for both sides, but with the conviction that we ought to give the job all we've got, all four of us, and happily accept the luxuries that come with it. I'd adore to spend the night on the boat with some good bridgeplaying friends!

Meanwhile, plans are going ahead on a crash basis for the presentation of the park to Johnson City on the occasion of Lyndon's birthday. ^{Linnen? (Ch. name)} A Mr. Lennen of LIFE-TIME. I had asked ^{Jimmy}~~Jimmy~~ Pitt to fly down and meet with A. W. and Richard Myrick this morning to discuss the legal and financial arrangements and the physical matter of the presentation.

And then, close to 11, Mr. Myrick and ^{Jimmy}~~Jimmy~~ Pitt came out and sat in the front yard with me, showed me the new revised sketch, and the estimate -- it now runs close to \$13,000.00, six for the land and more than six for all the rest.

^{Jimmy}~~Jimmy~~ used to go to school with Liz, and now I see the trail from Liz to ^{Jimmy}~~Jimmy~~ to LIFE! Liz is always doing something that produces action and results.

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In the middle of the day I went to the beauty parlor and rested, and thought about the words I would say at the party, took a look at Bess's preparations -- they are always so good. She was arranging the flowers herself in our containers, making the house as lovely as we could.

These more than a hundred ladies who have given hundreds of hours to share their interest in Lyndon's boyhood home, with the 17,790 visitors who have come through since May 13th.

And then at four o'clock it was time for the party, and I in my blue linen Charles Moore dress, stood on the front porch with Ava to help introduce them to me. While Weezie, our always reliable, was out by the front gate at her card table with name tags, and Jewel to tell them to please pause for a moment so we could get a picture of each lady while we were shaking hands and chatting. We were bucking the biggest social event of the year in Johnson City, the very day of the annual Fair. Rodeo, parade, crowning of the Queen, all of the booths. We had invited 140 people and I was real flattered that 119 came.

My second or third call from Lyndon had said that he planned to leave in time to reach the ranch by 4 or 4:30 or 5 so he would get to see the ladies. The biggest thrill I could give them! Also, the

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most confusion. But as the hours passed, the chances dwindled, Secret Service said later and later. Ever so many of the old familiar names were there -- Casparis and Crider, a trio of them; Mrs. Fritz ^{Overington} ~~Ehrington~~; of course Mariallen Moursund and Nita Winters; pretty Cynthia Crofts, just now a grandmother; Mrs. Truman Fawcett, just up from a heart attack; Medora Crist Posey from Blanco, dear Charlie Christ's daughter; the Sultemeirs, a whole platoon of them; Clarence ^{Knetzel} ~~Knetzel's~~ wife; and, of course, Mrs. Bill Stribling, the stalwart of any civic or political work in Johnson City.

Some I was particularly sorry not to see: Nanell Moore, the County Agent; Mrs. Glidden, the editor of the paper and the Post-mistress ^{but} (and she's in Europe on vacation!).

After the ladies had had refreshments -- delicious coffee ice cream, petit fours made in the White House kitchen, and nuts and mints brought down, with the sandwiches and the cookies straight out of the LBJ kitchen (and these were the ones that disappeared first), and when everyone had had tours of the house that wanted to, in groups of about 15, Weezie or Jewel taking them through, then came the chief event of the day.

I went to the microphone and made a little speech of thanks,

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and gave a citation, hand-lettered on parchmentlike paper with graceful words of appreciation, to the five who had given the most hours to the boyhood home: Kitty Clyde Leonard (there's nobody we have closer ties with in Johnson City); three attractive youngsters -- they made me feel good about the future of this part of the country, they were pretty, intelligent and bright; Christy Posey from Blanco; Beverly Stewart, a distant cousin of Lyndon's; and Susanne Stephenson, daughter of Agnes Stephenson, who has the beauty parlor in Johnson City. And then Mrs. Lena Johnson, the most hours of all -- 38.

It was a good two hours but I worried a little because they didn't chatter like Washington parties. Could it be because we were drinking coffee instead of liquor? Or because they are not quite as used to going to parties?

Kitty Clyde made a little rejoinder -- words about the house, representing all the ladies. Two other delicious comments I picked up -- one from a lady who said, "I love to go. It gives me a chance to get dressed up and stop herding goats." And another who said a little boy had been looking wide-eyed at the pictures of early-day Johnson City, the men in big cowboy hats, sitting on the plank sidewalk, horses hitched to the racks, and he said, "Look, Mom --

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just like Gunsmoke!"

A final call from Lyndon said that there was stormy weather, they couldn't take off, he would finish his desk in the morning and then think about coming. Something in his voice disturbed me. There was more to it than that.

So all the ladies drifted away by 6 o'clock, with a small gift of a pen with the Presidential Seal from Lyndon and another from me with my name. A lot of happy chatter, and I hope a really memorable time for them. I did try hard—^WWith strolling musicians and all the warmth and glow I could manage.

We had heard in the middle of the party that the fire had broken out again on the Lewis, and all the able-bodied men on the place had left to fight it. Words on the talking machine did not sound good.

About 6:30 Dale came in, sooty, sweaty, actually smelling like barbecue. I found he'd been up all night until 6:30. Then a brief nap, then back. He said it was about under control. The day had actually been saved by one of the Early boys on a maintainer cutting a road surrounding the fire. At one point two of the workers had been fighting it and suddenly realized that they had been encircled by fire, waved a distress signal, and Mr. Early lumbered up on his

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maintainer through the burning grass and rescued them. Who could have thought living in the country was dull!

We had drinks by the pool, Dale and Jewel and Pat and Weezie and Bess and I. And then we drove up through the Coastal. Dale's happy with it, though concerned by the fact that we haven't had a real rain in two months, after our first glorious six months of the year. The clouds are black and threatening and there are showers in the vicinity, but none for us.

And then we dropped off Dale at his house, because it's Jewel's birthday and he's going to dress up and take her to a party. How wonderful to be young enough to work all night and all day and then go to a party!

Weezie and Bess and I had dinner around the pool, and there finally descended one of those quiet moments of reminiscence. Weezie talked about the last day of Harold Teague, reminiscences about Louise -- I still miss her -- all the folks at the station, and fairly early to bed.