

November 13, 1965  
Saturday

Saturday, November 13, was a complete escapist day. Absolutely <sup>out</sup> out of my life as First Lady. <sup>It</sup> Lynda Bird had come <sup>out</sup> from the University the night before. She climbed on her daddy's bed about 8:00 o'clock Saturday morning and we had a good long talk. They have become more and more congenial and understanding of each other as she has grown up. And she is <sup>one of</sup> the great pluses <sup>and</sup> satisfactions in his life. She and I were going to indulge ourselves in a trip to see Indian pictographs. We had talked about it all fall and suddenly there was a free Saturday and enough daring to break the bonds of appointed duties. <sup>It</sup> And so we were off in the ~~sea~~ Queenaire with Dale Meeks piloting, <sup>ing</sup> arrived at Alpine Texas about ten, <sup>u</sup> where it all came about. Charles Tunnell, one of those who wrote the President's Country, about the life of early Indian tribes in Texas, prehistoric ones, had told me <sup>about</sup> ~~an~~ interesting Indian drawings on caves in the Amistad area of the arid parts of West Texas and then Nancy Negley had said "oh yes, we have some Indian drawings on caves at my mother-in-laws ranch. the Catto ranch." So this day we were off to the Catto ranch to see Indian pictographs. Mr. Catto, a lean spare man with a white mustache, and a very

genial manner, met us at the airport, and his foreman, Travis Roberts. <sup>2</sup>Right up out of the earth of West Texas. Leatherskinned, craggy faced, he looked like ~~as~~ he could never have fitted into anything but western clothes. <sup>9</sup>We drove about an hour to their ranch... A small unpretentious house, <sup>9</sup>lay on the inside with Mexican paintings and rugs and bowls and old artifacts of the country. A little swimming pool on the terrace outside as you look up to a grand view of the mountain. ~~4~~ We picked up Mrs. Catto, <sup>with a</sup> ~~A~~ great basket of picnic lunch. <sup>and</sup> ~~We~~ started out in their car. <sup>a</sup> ~~A~~ sort of station wagon equipped for hunting. A bed makes down and there is a place for guns, two Cattos and Lynda Bird and <sup>me</sup> ~~2~~ and Travis Roberts. And behind us in a jeep, the Roberts two sons and the Secret Service. <sup>4</sup> And then we began the most interesting six hours. Just what I liked most. West Texas was new to me. We drove through a dry valley full of stag-horn cactus <sup>with</sup> ~~was~~ what I thought at first were yellow blossoms. It turned out to be multitudes of seed pods. It was bone dry, vegetation was sparse and it looked like what was left over when the world was made... A few mesquite, desert below and suddenly behind one, a huge black-tailed deer, a buck almost twice as large, <sup>9</sup>as those we have in Blanco County. His ears were so big and that

is why they are called mule deer. This is a country beloved by archeologists, and geologists. And parties from all the universities come in the summer time on field trips. It was on one such field trip here at the Catto Ranch that the party unearthed a dinosaur over a period of several months, carted it off, without <sup>notifying</sup> the obliging Catto's who had given them permission to explore, and then asked the Catto's if they would like to erect a building at the school to house the dinosaur. We were approaching the mountains and it appeared we were going right into them, through a cleft with a delightful name of Doubtful Canyon. The road wound along the floor of the canyon where once and repeatedly year after year there is a stream. On each side the walls tower to the most marvelous formations. One right in front of us. It was just like the entrance to a cathedral.... ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> carved and dramatically standing forth like the masterpiece of some giant race of architects. And then they pointed out "the doughnut hole." A perfect little hole so many feet above us though that it was probably six feet across with a ring of rock around it. And there was some "mushroom" and there was all sort of shapes for your imagination. The most delightful thing of all was the brilliant blue sky, the bright sunshine

and the utter sense of being the only people who had ever found Doubtful Canyon. The stream was quite dry, <sup>but</sup> there was a little more vegetation here... Walnut trees, yellow with the touch of fall and as we rode there began to be some white oak. Then some Mexican <sup>pinon</sup> ~~piñon~~ small, picturesque, perfect Xmas trees, so many of them. The mule deer were plentiful. Travis Roberts said, do you think they would like to see the rock where the Indians used to sharpen their tools? <sup>we did</sup> We walked a ways toward an over-hanging ledge and there was a huge round rock, scarred with many many little wedges, <sup>made</sup> by long dead indians. How long ago, ~~as~~ hundreds or is it thousands of years, had <sup>they</sup> sharpened their spears and axes by drawing them back and forth through ~~the~~ the little slit? On the ground below the rock were enumerable little pieces of flint, broken bits of their tools. It practically spoke to us, this rock. You could see where the big axes went, the small spear points. And Travis Roberts ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> full of stories about this country. One of the happiest things that can befall a man is to love the land he lives in! <sup>He talked to</sup> ~~was telling~~ us all about the geology, <sup>why</sup> why this rock was suitable for that purpose. But we must go on and see some of the writings.

Finally we saw an overhanging ledge in the distance.  
*we* Made our way over the rough canyone floor, full of  
boulders and here it ~~is~~ was I saw my first  
madronna tree. <sup>a</sup> beautiful specimen. Ashy white,  
crooked trunk and very picturesque, <sup>l</sup> Loaded with  
bright, red berries. Against that brilliant blue sky  
of West Texas it was a breathtaking sight! Just  
beyond on the ledge we found the Indian pictographs,  
which were after all <sup>the work of</sup> a rather primitive, unsophisticated  
tribe. Their colors, red, black, sort of mustard  
yellow, their drawings geometric simple designs. The  
floor of the ledge black with smoke. <sup>Charles</sup> ~~The~~ tunnel,  
our interpreter, our archeologist, said they had  
probably used this as a shelter. This was the  
result of years and years of cooking fires. <sup>¶</sup> By now we  
were getting hungry so we found a place on the valley  
floor, covered with ~~a~~ white pebbles, smoothed by  
many years of water, and shaded by walnut trees, and  
set out our picnic table. Never have I enjoyed a  
meal more! Mrs. Catto had brought along a feast.  
Ham and cheeses and delicious bread, and a big iced  
pail of Mexican Bohemian beer. It was after lunch  
that we found our most interesting Indian pictograph.  
Quite a way, possibly a mile over very rough terrain  
from the cars and Travis Roberts wasn't sure we wanted  
to do it. ~~so~~ <sup>we</sup> did. So we walked

almost straight up, so it seemed when you look back. We saw <sup>in</sup>numerable madrona trees. ~~Clambered~~ around

*Clambered*

huge boulders and finally up so steep <sup>an</sup> ascent that I knew I would be <sup>1</sup>frightened if I looked back. And then we were on a ledge, long, narrow, hugging the cliff with a big overhang that protected it from the weather. <sup>It</sup> Here, for a length of about two city

blocks, there were drawings on the wall. One of the most interesting may have been a calendar. It was

possibly thirty feet long with little cross marks <sup>rather</sup>

at/regular intervals. These may have been the

seasons of the year, Mr. Tunnell said, or possibly

each <sup>one</sup> ~~more~~ a year. Once more the colors were red,

~~ochre~~ <sup>ochre</sup> yellow and black. And they were somewhat more

sophisticated. With a little imagination you could

make out stick men. There were dozens-hundreds of

them. We took pictures, we felt like discoverers!

We were having a marvelous day. <sup>time</sup> All the ~~day~~ we had

been climbing and the \_\_\_\_\_, the staghorn cactus, the

valley below were giving away steadily to <sup>pinon</sup> ~~pinion~~ and

the madrona trees, particularly along the beds of

little streams with <sup>trunks</sup> ~~trunks~~ so crooked and picturesque

gray to ashy white before the bark flakes off a sort

of a dull red. <sup>4</sup> Berries the most brilliant red. Dozens

hundreds of them. Finally a stand of maple, <sup>3</sup> Their

foliage still brilliant. Crimson and scarlet ~~with~~

but a little past their prime. It excites me to think why they should be there, so far from the ordinary habitats of maples. It's peculiar to the small area of the Big Bend country. By now we are about 5800 feet/<sup>and in this</sup>~~in the~~ high altitude grass was abundant. The grauma~~?~~ and the blue Melee? thick and knee high. I wondered why the cattle didn't come up here. The view was magnificent. We were within sight of the Big Bend country. The ~~Chaco~~<sup>Chisos</sup> Mountains spread out across the skyline. But by all odds the most delightful part of it feeling that it was all ours.

We were the only people who had ever been there.

*It* Many had of course. The Apaches and Comanches, <sup>Ac</sup> scattering of ranchers. And, interesting enough, it was close to here, about the time of the Civil War, <sup>that</sup> a lieutenant had led a camel expedition as he went across Texas, trying to see if camels would make good draft animals for the Army in this part of the world. We descended into Chalk Valley. The mule deer were abundant. And some of my old friends, the white tailed deer. We saw a covey of blue-headed quail. ~~Dozens~~ of them... <sup>Large</sup> birds with bright blue heads, running along the ground before they flush. They are said to be very hard hunting. Then for the first time I saw a coyote in the wild! He was really a rather bedraggled looking animal. <sup>a</sup> small, lean brown dog with a bad disposition running swiftly away from us. And then

one of the biggest delights of the day we saw a herd of antelope! They too were far away and very swift, their snow white rumps bounding away across the floor of the valley. <sup>¶</sup> By now we were tired and happy and it was nearly five o'clock. ~~And~~ <sup>We</sup> said goodbye to Mr. and Mrs. Catto. What a wonderful day they had given us! And Travis Roberts... <sup>you</sup> No happenstance that his first name is Travis! His family has been a part of Texas since the days of William B. Travis, <sup>he has</sup> and ~~his~~ two sons. And back to the airport and return to the ranch, with Charles Tunnell explaining to us all the way, something about the Indians whose primitive art work we had seen. <sup>^</sup> About 2,000 years ago, he thought, forerunners of the Comanches, and <sup>quite</sup> ~~white~~ primitives. <sup>¶</sup> Back at the ranch we found Jesse and Don Thomas, Jane and Roy Butler and the staff, <sup>G</sup>innie and Vicky, Jake and Marvin. We all had a good dinner and told tales of our adventures and then I had my nine o'clock "appointment" — Gunsmoke. And to bed with that delicious ~~scene~~ <sup>idea</sup> having shared a day with my daughter. It was very peculiarly our own sort of day. <sup>^</sup> Archeology, exploring, being together. <sup>#</sup>