

Wednesday, December 1, 1965 - 229 ✓ 1

I spent all morning autographing pictures for Christmas, making phone calls about the business at hand. The high point of the day was lunch with the man who may be the architect for the Lyndon Johnson Library -- Gordon Bunshaft (?). Max Brooks and Roy Heath brought him out about one o'clock, accompanied by Bill Heath who has faithfully followed this through from the first flicker of a thought, and if it becomes a reality, much of it will be thanks to him.

We lunched rather well with Lyndon, and then he said "Let's ride around." Never quite knowing whether a ride will be ten minutes or four hours we all piled in the jeep and went to survey the Danz and the Martin -- clearing, seeding, the building and of course to see the new pre-fab house. ^{There were evidences of} ~~Evidence of~~ building everywhere we looked. The painting and rock work. For the pre-fab house, Lyndon ordered two more windows put in on the west side of the two bedrooms. I was glad, although it may pose some problem for the beds. And then there was a brief stop back at the ranch, and once more he set out with us. This time we went to the old Fort in Johnson City and talked about restoring them and stopped in front of the log house. I felt I could see Bunshaft getting interested and also more amazed by the moment. We talked of making a park of it and how the street would enter from the boyhood home. Then we went to the bank and upstairs. By now it was dark. We went from room to room by flashlight with Lyndon asking Roy, Max and Bunshaft for solutions

Wednesday, Ddcember 1, 1968 - page 2

to problems, advice, suggestions, and sending word meanwhile
to ~~Wynick~~ ^{Wynick} that it had to be done in the next couple of weeks.

All in all it was an hilarious afternoon. The President of the United States spending such a long time on detailed inspection of projects -- some of such utter triviality, some of real import for the future, and asking the advice of this renowned architect on all of them with complete unself-consciousness, and equal interest. As we left, I said to Bunshaft and Roy and Max "Some people bet on race horses, and some people buy jewelry. We build."

Then we went to the boyhood home. Jesse welcomed us into the little parlor and brought us coffee and Scotch, the latter more popular, and we spent a jewel of an hour with Lyndon reminiscing about his life ~~there~~ there, about what he hoped for the library and the school of public service at the University. It was apparent that he was more interested in the school of public service than in the library. He has a rare ability to inspire enthusiasm, to draw forth from the people he is dealing with a desire to put their shoulder to the wheel, and make it just as good as he thinks it can be. I remember how he said "I am a complete accident. Most of the boys and girls that grow up here have to struggle for an education and a scarcity of the opportunities means that their lives are restricted and dulled. If there are any of them here who have the brains to go

Wednesday, December 1, 1965 -- page ²

far, that's what I want this school of public service to do -- to give them that opportunity, to put young people from this part of the world into the bloodstream of American thought and real doing. ^{when} I need to appoint somebody to a board or a big administrative job, or a Cabinet job. Where ~~do I find~~ do I find the man that's qualified? He's very likely to come from some Eastern seaboard school like Harvard or Yale; maybe from Michigan; maybe from California; but that means that whole vast sections of our country don't furnish what they ought to in brains, and character into the public life."

This was essentially what he said, though much better, more pungently. I wished, as I often had, that we had a tape recorder going. Bill Heath, Max and Roy and I ^{and} I think Bunshaft felt an injection of determination to help make that school of public affairs all that it could be. And then after a while he said "Come on, let's go home and eat dinner. You won't drive back to Austin until too later ^{for} ~~after~~ dinnertime." So back we went to the ranch -- a warm fire and dinner, and then Mr. Bunshaft left, I think impressed, inspired, and probably "wanting out."

Not everything has come to a halt in our absence from the White House. The recorded message we had worked on giving a short Executive history of the ~~Texas~~ Mansion and a bit of description of each room is completed and visitors on tour heard it for the first time. Small things indeed. The information Kiosk, the water fountain,

Wednesday, December 1, 1968 5 --- pg. 4

a few benches to rest on , now this recorded message, and soon I hope the bronze plaque describing the President's park -- all the memorial trees planted by Presidents. The first one of record is John Quincy Adams. He ~~planted the~~ planted the majestic American elm in 1826 on one of Thomas Jefferson's mounds in the South Lawn. Small things all, but I think they will add up to more enjoyment for all the tourists coming to the White House.

And praise the Lord, Luci has been giving away hamsters.

Our hamster population is greatly reduced, and quite a few children and schools across the land are happier. The funny thing is everything that little girl does turns to print -- even hamsters. Far more, oddly enough, ^{than} Lynda Bird's going to Acapulco, to have dates with a handsome movie actor.