

December 20, 1965  
Monday

Monday, December 20th was one of those near perfect days when I would rather be right where I was doing what I did than anywhere else imaginable. (Aves) Bay or the Grecian Isles. The White House was beautiful with evergreens and the great Christmas tree in the Blue Room decorated with gingerbread men and drums and toy soliders. The gingerbread was real as high as one could reach. And up farther it was ceramics. And pop corn strings and miracles of lights. The Most beautiful work of art. We had invited the children of all our friends, the staff of course, ~~A~~ dentist, and doctors families, all of the Clark Clifford grandchildren, ~~some of them~~ to see it. And then in the East Room there was the Creche. Mrs. Howell has been several nights putting it together. Marvelous collection of Neopolitan figures of the 18th Century, some earlier, that she had spent her lifetime collecting. She had given her other collections to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This one she does for us each year. She had begun it for Mrs. Kennedy in 1961. My favorite Christmas picture had been made by it. I had some mistletoe from Texas hanging over the doorways, from the Diplomatic entrance with its lighted trees flanking the door, to the great hall with its tall evergreens. The whole house had Xmas at every step and I felt like skipping and saying "Deck the

Halls with Boughs of Holly<sup>11</sup> as I walked through it. <sup>#</sup> In  
the morning I <sup>went</sup> ~~walked~~ to the beauty parlor and then  
welcomed our house guests, the Harding Lawrences.  
A very attractive young Texas couple, comes in the  
business world; ~~the~~ Johnny Meacoms of Houston. Our  
day with them at the ranch in the fall had been one  
of the most memorable I'll ever have. [ We had a late  
lunch with Lyndon, the six of us. And then I worked  
at my desk on all the Christmas details. No matter  
how much planning ahead we do, about five or six days  
before Xmas, Lyndon gets frantic, thinking about all  
the things he wants to do for all the people he loves,  
heaping the work on all those around him. Think up  
names, plan gifts, get it done! I ~~asss~~ know it must  
result in many midnight hours for secretaries and  
picture framers and merchants and parcel post deliverers  
But after more than 30 years I, at least, should know  
to expect it. <sup>12</sup> Then came the big event of the day.—  
<sup>Gen</sup> My dinner in honor of Chancellor Erhard. We opened  
up all the stops and rang forth the Christmas carols.  
We met Chancellor Erhard at the door of the Diplomatic  
entrance, <sup>ed</sup> With a 60 member chorus from the American  
Light Opera Company stretched along the stpes up to  
the balcony above. These great graceful steps are  
part of the mansion that <sup>have</sup> ~~has~~ seldom been used for  
their full drama. There was never a better stage

setting than tonight! And then for pictures we mounted the steps with the Chancellor and stood on the balcony, Lyndon and the Chancellor flanked by me and Luci. Lynda managed to be in the background. The lighted tree down front and the carol singers giving forth with an infectuous joy ~~that~~ got the evening off to the gayest of starts, <sup>y</sup> while I tried my best to look into the eyes of each one up and down the stairs to telegraph the message "Thank you".

We went upstairs to the Yellow Room for a cocktail and the exchange of gifts. <sup>There</sup> It was marvelous hunting rifle for Lyndon. An engraving of George Washington and clocks for the girls. Then downstairs to the East Room for the receiving line. I'm getting very much at home with the German government. Dr. Carl Karsten, State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Ambassador Knapstein; <sup>Hans Kropf</sup> ~~Thomas Kropf~~, Hilda's husband. ~~He~~ She's my friend from the Capitol Speakers Club. At the ranch he had brought me the beautiful Xmas angel. Heinz ? the interpreter. And of course Dr. Gerhard Schrader, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Hubert and Muriel were there and from the Cabinet, the Rusks, the <sup>Briens</sup> ~~O'Rens~~ and the Udalls... A rather small contingent from the House and Senate because they are out of session. And the papers, of course, made much of the fact that John Sparkman, no. 2 on foreign affairs was there instead of Fulbright. <sup>Fulbright</sup> He had actually been in-

vited to the White House some eleven or so times to dinners or luncheons for foreign ~~ex~~ dignitaries in this year more than any member of the Senate. The Muskies, Mrs. Kelly and the <sup>relinghausen</sup> ~~Fellinghausen's~~ completed the Congressional Delegation. And Dean Acheson. Shall I classify him as old friend? A foreign affairs expert! From the staff, the George Reedy's and the Jack Valenti's and the Lee Whites. The Douglas MacArthurs from the State Department. My last real visit with them when he was Ambassador to Belgium on our fall trip in '63. From the world of educators ~~and~~ Dr. and Mrs. Frank Rose. He is President of the University of Alabama, and Dr. Margaret Clapp, President of Wellesly. And for entertainment Gene Autry, whom we have known since ~~we have known~~ ~~from~~ the campaign of 1946. And Van <sup>L</sup>Clayburn, Luci's special friend. Roberta Peters, the lovely singer who had been so helpful in the June Arts Festival. And Dr. and Mrs. James Conant who was the former Ambassador to Germany, as well as former head of Harvard. Among old friends, Anna Rosenberg Hoffman and her husband, Paul Hoffman, the Oscar Chapmans and the Frank Ikards, and the Bill Kerrs, Senator Kerr's son from Oklahoma. And the Lester Lindos who are so dear to Luci. And the Bill Deasons and at the last moment, Dr. Willis Hurst. <sup>n</sup> Nobody there was I <sup>now</sup> gladder to

to have! <sup>#</sup> The press was represented by the Price Days, Editor and Publisher of the Baltimore Sun. Norman Cousins, Editor of Saturday Review... I should reclass him under intellectuals. And the young couples who covered us all fall in Texas, the Sid Davises of Westhouse Broadcasting, the Max Friedmans and the Jack Goulds who had written a marvelous review of my ABC show. The John Pomfret<sup>s</sup> of the New York Times; the John Steeles of Time and Life and the Lucien Warrens of Buffalo Courier-Express. Quite a contingent here tonight. And Frances <sup>Lewine</sup> ~~Laen~~? who covers me more than anybody. Possibly to the surprise of a lot of people was former Governor and Mrs. Tom Dewey of New York and one moment in the line he and I laughed together over the last time he had been at the White House. Probably nobody ever spent a more hectic day and night! <sup>#</sup> ~~And~~ Among White House benefactors was Richard Detrick who had given us the Thomas Sully of Fanny Kimble. And Mrs. Edward Hutton who had given us the lovely rug that we used in the <sup>vermilion</sup> ~~Verney~~ Room. From Arts and Letters there were the Ralph Ellisons, The negro author, Dr. John Hope Franklin and his wife, professor and author. Lynda Bird had Paul Dresser as her escort. Besides the <sup>Meems</sup> ~~Meems~~ and the Lawrences

the ~~Edward Rose~~<sup>Homer</sup> of Austin were our house guests.  
And Gordon Bandschapt, who had just been chosen to do  
the Lyndon Bains Johnson Library, We had added for  
that very good reason. <sup>#</sup> We were all in one room since  
the Chancellor had no spouse with him and when we  
went in to dinner he was on my right and Gearhard  
Schraeder the Minister of Foreign Affairs on my  
left. Lyndon had Mrs. Knapstein and Mrs. Humphrey.  
The dinner was delicious lobster and roast duckling  
and at the end a beautifully decorated yule log.  
This was Rene's last dinner for us and he did the  
lobster, <sup>^</sup>superb, it was. And Nick did the duck and  
Ferdinand the dessert, the yule log, as usual. I  
found the Chancellor good company with better English  
than I expected. I remarked about the fact that I  
read that the population of Germany - his Germany,  
consisted of 20% or 25% of people who had come from  
the other side of the Iron Curtain. He said yes and  
that was at a time when there was hardly enough jobs,  
enough houses, enough to eat, for those who normally  
live there. It was quite a job of absorption into  
the social and economic life and since he is the  
architect of their post-war revival, reconstruction,  
success, whatever name you give it, it was a good sub-  
ject for us to talk about. And also it was always a  
reliable subject with every Chief of State, <sup>^</sup>how I would  
like to visit your country. And indeed I would.

Especially a boat trip on the Rhine. <sup>#</sup> During dessert we had an innovation. Instead of the singing violins, we had the University of Maryland Madrigal Singers dressed in colorful <sup>Renaissance</sup> ~~renaissance~~ costumes. — Ruby reds and moss greens and dull gold. They strolled around the tables and sang 16th and 17th Century Christmas carols. It was enchanting! We were all caught up in story-book atmosphere. And then there were the toasts. Lyndon <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ Chancellor Erhard and the other 140 or so guests that he would shortly send to Europe a Commission to discuss joint explorations in space, leading to probes of the sun and Jupiter. And in a much lighter vein, he said, <sup>"</sup>there is no truth to the rumor that your reputation as an economist prompted us to invite you to visit us at budget time. <sup>"</sup> Erhard gave his toast in German and then it was translated so that made it much longer. He gave the United States credit for having extended the hand of friendship to enable them to get back on their feet after World War II. Coming from him this had a special ring because he was himself so much responsible for that getting back on the feet. And then he said in an unusual vein of candor, the U.S. is making great sacrifices to defend the security of the people in Vietnam. <sup>"</sup> I feel ashamed because of what we can contribute is very modest in comparison to what the U.S. is contributing. <sup>"</sup> I am sure before he gets out

out of town Lyndon will ask him in as forceful a manner as possible how much more can they contribute.<sup>1</sup>

# Lyndon used his toast as he does everything these days, to talk about peace.<sup>v</sup> There will be peace in Vietnam the moment others are ready to stop their attacks.<sup>//</sup> Reaffirmed that we are going to keep this country moving forward with the Great Society. After dinner he took the Chancellor upstairs, along with Hubert and Dean Rusk and Bob McNamara and George Ball and McGeorge and Jack Valenti and of course ~~Napstein~~<sup>Knapstein</sup> and George McGee<sup>2</sup>. They were gone for a good half hour while we had coffee and brandy in the Green Room and in the Red Room and everybody strolled around the Xmas tree admiring it. # And then <sup>for</sup> the entertainment of the evening. — Into the Gold Room where I introduced Robert Merrill, who, bless him, performing for us for the third time, ~~first~~<sup>first</sup> of Italy, and then ~~to~~ the Salute to Congress. I'll never forget him in that buckskin jacket and then tonight with the Madrigal Singers, singing Silent Night in German and in English, asking all of us to join him. I was so assured of the evenings success and so relaxed that I could actually giggle when I finished my introduction and wished our guests a ZAR THERICI VENOTEN! -- a most Merry Christmas, It was one of the best programs we had ever had in the White House, I thought. Only



about twenty minutes. Perfect for the time and mood and then pictures and out into the hall with champagne being passed. Almost on the stroke of midnight the Chancellor left. We accompanied him out to the front door with a light fall of snow. The last perfect touch for the evening. It was really Xmas! And then back for dancing. Lyndon danced with me and Mrs. <sup>Knapp</sup> ~~Napstein~~ and then several times with Roberta Peters. Sometime during the night it had occurred to me in spite of our precautions we wound up by having Roberta Peters here the same night as her ex-husband, Bob Merrill! I had worn my favorite dress, the red St. <sup>Maur</sup> ~~Maur~~ but although it had a little train I danced and danced and ever so many of the guests said "Happy Birthday" it was only two days away. I had a quiet moment with Dr. Hurst in the Blue Room by the Xmas tree watching the snow fall as we looked out toward the monument, caught up in ten years of memories and a very real friendship in the magic of the evening. <sup>Luci</sup> ~~Hxxxxxxx~~ has been able to have Bill Hitchcock, both Binner and <sup>and she</sup> dancing at the last minute, ~~was~~ was making sure Van <sup>Clyburn</sup> had a good time. She looked lovely in white. It was well after one before I went up and Lyndon stayed after me. It was two o'clock before the music died away and we had said goodnight to our house

guests. It will be hard to ever have a party in the  
White House that I shall enjoy more.