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February 4, 1966
Friday

Friday, February 4th, was a day to be remembered in the White House. It lived up to all its promise! And I for once was pleased with my part in it. In the morning I practiced my little talk with Mrs. Prov⁸inson. There is no substitute for work— Unless it's a soaring rocket of talent, and that's beside the point. And then to the beauty parlor and then to work with ^{Kandi} Candy in transforming some of my eastern fabrics into handsome "at home" clothes for small dinners that we have. He brought his mother, fresh over from Japan. And I met her in the library and arranged a trour and tea. And found a boat of beautiful white brocade which I thought might be good for Luci's trousseau. How difficult those words come to my tongue! So I arranged to get her ^(Luci) and ^{Kandi} Candy together to plan something lovely with it. And then awhile of signing letters and reviewing my speech— Flat of my back, for I find suddenly the last few weeks I am quite weary, ^{FR} depleted. — A day of sheer ~~sear~~ turmoil for Lyndon. — Getting ready to go tomorrow to Hawaii, for about three days now I have been hearing possibilities about it and being deaf and mute for fear I

would say something about it I shouldn't. ^{# In me} All the day really led up to presentation of the Eleanor Roosevelt portrait. ^{at} Five o'clock in the East Room! I wore my white satin and looked forward to it as eagerly, ^{any} any party that ever happened in the White House. — Warm, nostalgic. — A gathering of many of us who worked together in the 30's and 40's. When I entered the East Room a moment or two after five, there were seated in the front row three of the Roosevelt children. Anna Halsted and her husband, John and his wife, and Franklin, Jr., and his wife. I shook hands with them all and then went straight to the podium. My little talk noted the presence of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, friends; those who knew her as First Lady, employer, and "conscience of her country." And I spoke about Douglas ^CShandor's use of Mrs. Roosevelt's hands.

"For Eleanor Roosevelt was a woman who had hands for the whole world. Fine, strong, ~~ss~~ sensitive hands that enobled everything they touched." And what, I hoped, was a ^{humorous} ~~humorous~~ bit, about the Constitution of the United States, outlining the responsibilities and duties of the President, but not even mentioning the First Lady. "None, except her husband, chooses her, none, except her husband and herself, defines her role, ^{given} this vague mandate, a long line of

American First Ladies have brought any number of admirable qualities to their times. The part I liked best, we all know there is only one phrase for Eleanor Roosevelt. That phrase is human goodness, sheer, ^{un}alloyed, undivertible, human goodness. "If only all the little talks I have to make could be put together, express my own feelings as comfortably and as well as this one, I could remember that day very personally. In '38, or was it '39? ^{when} Mrs. Roosevelt was our guest of honor at the 75th Congressional Club luncheon. It was a benefit to buy a wheel chair for a crippled boy. That was the day I got some movies of her. The closing was I believe, with some last lines from her last book — "Life was meant to be lived we must grasp every opportunity to live and experience life as deeply as fully and as widely as possible. This is such a big, muddled world and there is so much to be done. So very much that can be done. And then when I finished a real pro took over. Mary Fickett who had created the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in Sunrise at Campobello, read from some of Mrs. Roosevelt's auto-biographical works... Well chosen selections... Voiced by no means a mimic or a parody. A very subtle slipping into the character of Mrs. Roosevelt, so charmingly done that I was caught up in the web

on
tape?

of enchantment. There was something to laugh at, something to be proud of, to be sentimentally reminiscent about, and they to be charged with determination to do your own part ~~sa~~ from the selections she read. ^{PP} I then invited everyone to come into the Blue Room where we could visit. We had pictures with all the children and grandchildren. Lyndon slipped into the lines beside, ^{me} looking so tired my heart ached. And then they came. ~~The~~ family and fellow workers, the White House employees, All the people from the 60's and 40's! The Stewart Alsops were there, and Susan Mary Alsop - Joe is in Hong Kong, I believe. And Marian Anderson and the Thurmond Arnolds, looking old but still gingery. Mable ^{is} Batchelder and ~~Joe~~ ^{for} Batchelder. And Mrs. Jim Barnes. Her husband's stag parties were ~~always~~ ^{always} the event of the year for a decade or more in our early days. And Roberta Barrows, one of FDR's appointment Secretaries, ^{to} whom Lyndon blew a kiss and said "I hope my folks make everybody feel as good as you used to make me." Later when a newspaper woman spoke to Miss Barrows she described what a handsome young naval officer Lyndon was. And H. R. ^{Bankley} ~~Balkage~~, what a familiar name - the commentator in those days. And Diane Hopkins, now Mrs. Allen Baxter. She spent three years of her childhood here with her daddy,

Harry Hopkins. Old times from his Administration. — the Francis Biddles, the Oscar Chapmans, And Tom Corcoran and Ben Cohen. — How incomplete the party would have been without them! By this time I was kissing all those who came down the line who were my own special friends. Oscar Cox's ^{widow} ~~improvement~~ to time, very handsome. And among the old timers for the press, May Craig and Bess Furman. Mrs. Douglas Shandor, the widow of the artist, had flown up from Weatherford and was enjoying the party as much as anyone present. One of those I was happiest to see was Helen Gahagan Douglas, still lecturing, still very vital. Melvin is starting a new play in May. Later on I gathered her up and Tex Goldsmith, who is leaving for Asia next week, to sit down for a quiet drink in front of the fire, and Dr. Elizabeth ^{Drewry} ~~Drusy~~, Director of the FDR Library, who has been so helpful to us. And our very staunch old time friend, India Edwards and her husband. The house was alive with grandchildren. Later on someone told me they had quite a reunion, and some of them saw each other for the first time in 20 years! There was two of James Roosevelt's daughters, Anthony D. ^{Boneventore} ~~Boneventore~~, and the William Hadads, lovely Chandler Roosevelt, she is Mrs. Henry D. Lindsley, Elliott Roosevelt's daughter, from Brownsville, Texas. — I am very fond of her. And the Douglas Lukes. — She's Joh

Roosevelt's daughter. ~~The~~ Christopher Roosevelt's — Franklin's son. David Roosevelt, who is Elliott's son, and ^{Jr.} Franklin D. Roosevelt, III, and charming Tony Roosevelt who is really Elliott Roosevelt, Jr. who worked with us in the campaign of 1960 and even before that I believe. Joan Roosevelt, she is John's daughter. And the Van Seagraves. She is ^{Sistie} "Gistie," Anna's daughter. The team of ^{Sistie} Gistie and Buzzie were the best known grandchildren in the days when FDR lived here. And it was she who had the only great grandchild. ~~Her~~ little daughter of about ten years present. ^A I yearned for everybody to gather up the ^{ir} favorite old friends and get in corners with a drink and reminisce. And I believe to a considerable extent that is how the party went. There were the ^{Armen} Armen Hammers, my friends from Campobello, and the Victor Hammers, and Dr. Wayne Grover who is guiding us through the labyrinth of how to put together the Presidential Library. I was so delighted to see Averill Harriman with his hand cupped behind his ear listening with interest to William Hopkins, who said to me, something like this as he went down the line. "There are only four of us left who were working here in those days." I was so glad to see Jane Ickes, and searched for her later, but unsuccessfully. Among press people of

that day the Robert Kintners and Doris Fleeson. This is one party I was particularly glad Doris came to. [#] And although the party was for the hanging of Mrs. Roosevelt's portrait, Mrs. Nicholas Longworth was also a star at the party, as inevitably she would be. In her black hat, very vivacious, putting a note in Lyndon's pocket as she went down the line, she explained that it was a fan letter... But I could have hugged her right there if she weren't so formidable. Many old friends of ours, the Jim ^{Rosen} ~~Ross~~, Anna Rosenberg Hoffman, and a whole flock of Kermit Roosevelts, and from the real old timers Mrs. Nellie Tayloe Ross who had been Director of the Mint in FDR's Administration. John Sullivan who was former Secretary of the Navy. And Gladys Tillitt, who is still going strong. It's hard to beat Southern women!... Elegant and charming Marietta Tree... The Robert Wagners, looking bronzed and rested and happy and it does my heart good to see him this way... And Roberta Vinson. She, too, was one of the ones I particularly wanted to come. And there was Mrs. Roosevelt's maid of 30 years, Mabel Webster, for whom we had sent the car. And the party could not have been complete, we could not even have had it, without Grace Tully. — One of our closest links to that day. [#] One newswoman wrote

"The pageant of races was like pages out of a history book come to life." And so it was. Many nice things happened. Among the nicest, Marian Anderson coming back to me after she had been through the line and saying, "I want you to know I love you both, very much."

I know that all the newspaper girls at least were looking at the table. And it was beautiful! This was the new chef's debut. Though I missed my always most favorite thing. The sturdy steamship round of beef was elaborate and very decorative. Fires were burning merrily in all the rooms. Even the state dining room, and guests were casually at home in every corner. It was about seven-thirty when I went upstairs. I had a house guest, Roy White. He came down and we talked about work on enlarging the two bedrooms at the ranch. I decided not to do it this year. Luci's wedding and all the decorating that needs to be done here in the White House and my intense interest in the Library and the park, all superimposed upon my real job of being Lyndon's wife and the First Lady, there is no time left, no strength, no me left to transform those two small rooms into the spacious elegant quarters where I want to spend the rest of my life. I want to enjoy doing that. — Not endure it, not make a "tour de force"

a crash job out of it. And so I told Roy that let's
shelve it, but let's keep our eyes open for lovely
details. — A ^{mantel} ~~mantle~~, some paneling, and I will
search for an interior decorator. # A little past
eight I went over to Lyndon's office and was
successful, praise the Lord, in getting him to come
home with me. He ^{even} left off his Dr. Peppers, had
several scotch and sodas and then a quiet dinner with
Roy and me and for the first time in a long time we
were in bed by ten o'clock. His weight is creeping
up a bit. About 195. And the lines in his face
are deepening. But I am grateful for a moment of
laughter from Corey and ^{My} ~~Gotto~~ and for a 10:00
o'clock bedtime. # The leadership in the Senate
especially is in a parlous situation. Mansfield's
report on Vietnam has been hurtful. And Fulbright
is, to say the least, ^{an} undermining force. — Though
small comfort he got, his open hearing on Vietnam
with David Bell as witness. Bell is so dignified
but quick with the answer, so courteous and able.
Lyndon and I both talked to him after his six hours
of testimony was finished. Lyndon is always quick
to congratulate and thank anyone ~~was~~ of his troops
who have been on television and ~~has~~ handled it well.
There is a deep strain of appreciation in him, for
his fellow workers in this job and I hope it is, in
turn, appreciated.