

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, April 1, 1966

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April fools' day, the day of my departure to the Big Bend country. The morning was full of desk work with Liz and Patsy and Ashton, and the difficult chore of telling everyone who worked for me why I felt it was necessary for all of us to buy a Savings Bond each month. It's distasteful to me to ask anything of the private lives of my employees. But all of us have an equal stake in this. I did ask and was successful.

And then into Lyndon's office about 12:30 to say goodbye, finding him busy with General Lyman Lemnitzer, Commander of NATO forces. So I waited my turn and we walked together down his office path to the clicking cameras. ³⁵ There was not by chance that I was holding the schedule of our four-day trip. Like a shield under my arm, I had a map of Texas and the title, "Trails Through Texas" picturesquely done, I am sure, by a combination of Liz and Sandy Fox. And it got a good picture.

I said goodbye to Lyndon at the car, and Luci ~~had~~ rode with me out to the airplane. Stu and Lee Udall and George Hartzog were already there. In fact there were 46 of us, staff reporters and photographers, ^a aboard the plane which had the most delightful sign, a big orange map of Texas entitled, "Trails Through Texas", the outline from San Antonio to Big Bend, to Ft. Davis, back to Johnson City.

The usual routine is I walk up and down the plane after we've leveled off to say "hello" to all the press, and what a contingent it was this time. We were almost the victims of our own success -- too many.

And then settled down to read what I am going to say at the next stop. And this time to talk to Stu and George Hartzog. We lunched aboard and arrived at

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San Antonio a little before 4:00. One sees with new eyes when you've been studying something.

As we taxied into the San Antonio airport I was thrilled by the broad expanses of blue bonnets and buttercups and pointed them out to Stu and Lee as though I owned them. Then as we left the airport, I noticed with pride the long alley of Palm trees, well-tended bright orange flowers -- probably calendulas.

We were at the El Tropicana Hotel by 4:30. We had about an ~~hour~~ hour and a half to rest and change and get ready for a very full evening. I went out on the Terrace of our suite and could see St. Mark's from there, the church where Lyndon and I were married in 1934.

The weather, always that big question mark when you're planning a wardrobe for a trip, was perfect, balmy, ~~the~~ warm and friendly 78 or so.

I wore my white dress and green coat and no hat.

Nellie, looking so young and gay, And Nancy Negley and Mrs. ^{Cochrell} ~~Cochro~~ ? came to get me at six, and we started on the round that lasted six hours.

First, we went to the Hemis Fair headquarters. ^a An artistically restored old German house of stone -- the mellow buff lime-stone of the hill country. ^{was} The porches on the first and second floor, ^{? railed} And radiod galleries full of people, built around a court yard, very artistically planted and obviously just finished the day before.

I saw a model of the Hemis Fair, which will show the diversified cultures of Pan America -- the history, art, religion, and socioeconomic development

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of each of the nations of this Hemis Fair.

Henry Gonzalez was on hand at every turn and all of the officials of the Hemis Fair.

The court yard was a blaze of color -- ^{penatas}~~pinnacles~~ in the trees in the droll shapes of birds and animals -- big bunches of bright Mexican flowers -- a little push-cart selling hot tamales -- a ^{mariachi}~~marachi~~ band, a group of pretty young ~~girls~~ girls in Mexican costumes ~~with~~ flowers in their hair dancing on a platform -- a delight to the eye and to the ear.

After many ^{plays} plays, pictures, hand clapping, thank-yous, ^{we} were off to ^{La Villita}~~Lavieta~~, a little restored village in the shadow of San Antonio skyscrapers.

They had adobe dwellings of the soldiers attached to mission San Antonio De ^{Valera}~~Valera~~ - the Alamo -- a seat of Spanish power from about 1732 on. The present restoration was begun in the late 1930's by Maury ^{Maverick}~~Merritt~~, whose imagination and nerve began it, I believe with a good assist from Lyndon when he was ⁱⁿ~~an~~ NYA and later as a Congressman. Many of the skills and crafts of the early settlement are still pursued in these old adobe houses. And I believe some of the copper that I have at the Ranch is made by NYA boys -- ^{La Villita}~~are~~ crafted right here at ~~Lavieta~~.

There was a reception there at ^{La Villita}~~Lavieta~~ in the courtyard. And who should meet me but Dan ^{Quinn}~~Quinn~~ -- the big Irish smile and a bright red coat, standing at the head of a line of some 30 or 40 gentlemen in bright red coats and ladies in bright red dresses, and between them a red carpet leading any guest of honor into the courtyard!

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I remember the time I saw Dan in a receiving line and he handed me my wedding license -- really and truly. It had reposed ^{for the} with 25 or 26 years in between in the San Antonio Courthouse!

Stu and Lee and I stood in the reception line, along with Mayor McAllister in the charming courtyard that I longed to see more quietly, but I could glimpse a little fountain with stone whites and bougainvillea and retajmas.

Ch
Kaye
And about 500 San Antonians, from City Hall to conservation, filed by -- old friends -- ~~That~~ Lucille Glover ~~Hodges~~, still lovely after 32 years, we were together at the University of Texas. And Maury ^{Maverick} ~~Merritt~~, Jr. and his very attractive wife. ^{Such} ~~Some~~ pleasure he must take ⁱⁿ this place! ^{? Ch tapa} Chris Willey was in the line with us when we could rope her in -- she's not the stand-in-line type. I recognized the names of [?] Foss and Tobins. And then came my old roommate, Cecille Harrison Marshall with her husband. We roomed together back in 1931, 32 at the University. Lee and Stu began to call this a "two-roommate crowd" and to judge all other crowds by it.

It was a delightful time.

Then we did what we really came for. The Mayor escorted me down to the edge of the River for the ceremony of the turning on of the lights. There is a little river that winds right through the town, and back in the thirties through WPA work through Maury ^{Maverick's} ~~Merritt's~~ imagination, it was cleaned and stone retaining walls were built along the sides.

Then in the last few years, with our rising interest in historic restorations and aesthetics, a committee has been formed, called the Paseo del Rio. And

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Charming!
they have built the most delightful walks along the river bank, ^aCharmingly landscaped. Old stone buildings that back up on the river had become restaurants or night clubs, book shops, decorator shops. And tonight it is at the Esta dela Luis Manarios -- the turning on of the lights on the one-mile stretch of the river -- ^{they are}and ~~there~~ esthetically placed to resemble a moonlight and extend the life ~~along~~ along the river from sunset to ~~midnight~~ midnight.

First, with Mayor McAllister's help, right on the banks of the river, I planted a two-foot Elm seedling, descendant of the John Quincy Adams elm that stands on the Jefferson mound on the White House grounds. That magnificent old ~~x~~ tree will soon have children all over the country.

Then to the podium to make my little speech. ^{felt this}I ~~as~~ a sort of a salute to the people who had done this, ~~xxxx~~ it's a very small trumpet call of encouragement to people in other towns all over the country who might do something similar. "As we gaze out over the steadily moving water, it is as though a mirror is revealing the glorious heritage of San Antonio."

Water is life." And so I told of the first Spanish explorers who found an Indian village here in 1691. "They named it San Antonio as it was the feast day of St. Anthony of ^dPadua. And what a glorious history was to follow along these sloping river banks. On ~~one~~ one side of the river, not far from where we stand tonight, the Alamo, which has a hold on the hearts of all men who love freedom, was established in 1718. The Canary Island colonists came in 1731 seeking a new life. Those fifteen families, some of whose descendants are here tonight, established the first civil settlement in Texas.

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From the beginning this river has been the life line of San Antonio. The wave of settlement ~~bring~~ brought colonizers, homesteaders, ~~san~~ash-buckling romanticists from Tennessee and Virginia, frontiersmen -- a great blend of this country.

The roll-call of heroes of the Alamo itself shows a great variety of heritages -- English, Scotch, Danish, German -- including eight Spanish surnames.

But ~~bring~~ tonight our task is not to look back so much as to dedicate what alert, progressive citizens have done for the future. What you have done in using this great, natural asset. This river is a great source of pride not only to your selves and your visitors, but a source of inspiration to cities everywhere now seeking ways to salvage themselves.

Here is a good example of what can ~~be~~ be done. Look around and find the individual charm, the bounty of nature, the heritage of the past with which to rebuild.

And so as the lights go on tonight, I look out over the river with its grassy banks and cottonwoods and cypress and pecans and willow and retayma and all I can say is "This is America the beautiful". Seldom have I felt more intune with what I was doing and ~~am~~ happier about it.

Then I pulled the switch and the lights went on and they were all you could want. Soft, misty, silvery, enchanting.

Incidentally, one of the men who is running the Hemis Fair ^{Marshall Steens} is a fourteenth generation Texas -- direct descendant of the Canary Island colonists I spoke about.

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Then, the gay side of the evening began. A barge came floating down the river to where we stood, King Antonio himself in a blue and scarlet uniform glittering with gold braid and metals, ~~xxxx~~ escorted me onto the barge which was decorated with huge Mexican flowers, orange, red, blue -- all made, I understand, by the school children and put on that very afternoon for me.

The Mayor joined me, all the party, Nellie close by and the Udalls. And we cruised down the river seeing chattering, waving groups ^{proceeding} ~~preceding~~ to open ^{air} ~~their~~ restaurants, and serenaded by a series of entertainers at the ^{? Ch top} ~~Onasin~~ River Theatre ^{where} ~~that~~ the stream separates the audience from the stage.

^{Arneson} Alice Rosita, my old friend who has entertained for us at the visit of Lopaz Matas to the Ranch, ^G And I believe other famous visitors ^A ~~A~~ beautiful Spanish woman who looks about 16 and is actually a grandmother in a glorious Mexican costume, flowered-embroidered, brilliant, her hair piled high on her head, sang songs of Mexico. Above her was a sign that said, Vien vineta premiere madama.

On down the river was a German band. Germany is a sizeable part of the heritage of San Antonio. Rather loud and brassy and full of um-phas!

And then leaning over a bridge that arched above us, a ^{Mariaichi} ~~madiarchy~~ serenading in plaintive ^{we} Spanish.

And then there was a genuine Dixie land jazz band. It could have been fresh out of New Orleans.

Once the barge stopped and I disembarked at the headquarters of the San Antonio Historical Association to meet Mrs. Tobin and receive some yellow roses from the pretty little girl, sign a guest book and receive a

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scroll for my interest in historical restoration.

At another spot on the river banks there was a sort of a barber shop chorus of men -- fifty voices singing old favorites on the water's edge. All of them, I later found out, were San Antonio businessmen. Doctors, contractors, teachers -- every walk of life. They just like to get together and sing. That was the spirit of the whole evening. Very gay. Everybody in the act. There were Italian Minstrels in the open-air garden of an Italian restaurant, some excellent flamingo dancers, a little boy not more than ten who was just a flame. And then the wackiest of all called "Poco Loco", serenading us from a stairway above the river, wearing huge Mexican hats and zany costumes.

It was a 90-minute cruise and we were getting famished by the time we arrived at ~~Lapa Loma~~ ^{Paloma} del Rio where the Chamber of Commerce was our host for a real Mexican dinner with beer. It must have been 10:00 or afterwards.

The restaurant was an old warehouse, a ~~still~~ ^{stone} building ~~of some sort~~, made festive with bright Mexican flowers, candle lights and a chorus group that sang "If the Lord be Willing and The Creek Don't Rise" dedicated to me, ~~to~~ ^{the} a brief toast, my thanks to the people of San Antonio, and my warm admiration to them.

And then at 10:30, pretty weary, I left with Liz to drive out to Nancy Negley's house to a private party. The first time that I had ever seen Nancy's house. It is as warm and as interesting as she is. An old house that flows on and on. She has done it over to her outstanding personality.

There is one room that is a sort of an old-fashioned conservatory -- Mexican

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tiled floors and plants everywhere. But my favorite room, I remember only as a montage of coral and white in colors and in fabrics. And the walls covered almost solid every inch with pictures and drawings -- a mixture of every culture, period of time, of monetary value. I would never have dared to it. But I loved it. The rooms ^{invites you to} ~~had~~ linger.

I sat down and people joined me. The ^{Cattos!} ~~Katos~~, to whose ranch I had been last fall and the young ^{Cattos} ~~Katos~~, Jessica -- her hair in sort of a pig-tail, her conversation as charming as her mother's, Ovzeta Culphobys.

They were a gay mixture of young and middle-aged San Antonios ^{and} ~~conservation~~ cutting across political groups and artistic groups, ~~conservation~~ conservation groups. I wish I weren't so tired. In an hour I was ready to go home and call it a great day and lay my head on the pillow.

What an amusing story I had read in the paper that day -- totally unrelated to San Antonio and my trip -- was that ^{for} ~~an~~ autograph-hounds: 1 Luci was worth 2 Huberts. So is 1 Bobby. Well, I don't like it for Hubert, but I think it's rather amusing that Luci and Bobby are running neck and neck.

And another ~~little~~ thought about the crooked little river that winds through San Antonio and used to be called by the Indians "Drunken ol man going home at night". Now I see some of the news stories are calling it the "Venice of America".