

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, April 5, 1966

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Our 5-day trip of "Trails through Texas" came to an end Tuesday afternoon -- ^{on} a low key, home-spun note right on the Courthouse Square in Johnson City.

I had spent the morning at the Ranch and the beauty parlor with Stu Udall and George Hartzog and Simone Poulane for lunch and then drove in to the boyhood home to meet Lynda. To pry Lynda away from her school work, even one afternoon, is no easy thing. She had agreed to meet us there at 2:00.

The dwindled ranks of a newspaper entourage that had gone with us across Texas at the boyhood home were being filled-in by Jessie and Liz on the number of visitors who had come through the almost 11 months since it was opened. It's about 50,000 people. This is actually those who have signed the guest book. There are always some who don't. They represent every State in the Union and some 30 or so foreign countries.

Lynda wore a deep gold linen dress and on her right hand the ring that George had given her.

On the Courthouse Square some five or six hundred Blanco County folks were assembled -- a shirt-sleeve crowd mostly except County Judge Martin Bearer and Judge Tom Ferguson and Mayor George Byers who were dressed up in their Sunday cloths^e for their part in the ceremony.

^{There} It was a very small speakers stand and a cordon of Cub Scouts and Rainbow girls and a quartet of high school girls who ~~sang~~ sang "This is My Land, My Country, and ["]America" -- all dressed alike in blue. We found to our dismay

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that there was no Johnson City band. Jessie Hunter, bless her, had discovered these girls to provide the musical note for the occasion. I was really quite proud of us. ^{She} County Judge said in accepting them ^{that} trees cannot be measured for today alone but for the ~~g~~ future grace and dignity they will bring to our town.

And Tom Ferguson overwhelmed me by his introduction of me ^{by} using a phrase from the song of Solomon that was altogether lovely, "truly in feature, mind, heart and hand, she is altogether lovely."

When something like that happens I feel I have to swallow hard and start all over again.

For once I had very little to do or say. Only that "this is one of the happiest times I had participated in a tree-planting, because everything we do begins at home. It radiates out from there." And how proud I was when visitors came from all over the country to stay with us and I could take them and show them the improvements in Johnson City. I particularly pointed out to Stuart Udall, that great conservationist, "See, we are doing it here too."

But Lynda was the star of the occasion. She always writes or says what she wants to and wants no help. It was simple and brief. "I wanted to have these trees planted here because I've always been a little jealous of them -- trees. I've always wanted to have my feet in the ground -- my roots -- and my head in the stars." And she spoke of her grandmother and how much she had meant ~~x~~ to her and how much she had told her about Johnson City. Then she shoveled a few shovels of dirt in around one of the trees. There are six lovely live oaks with oval curbing and a little sprinkler system, and they stretch along the street

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between the Courthouse and the so-called Opera House, ^{where} ~~And~~ long ago
^{Lynda's} ~~Lynda's~~ grandmother, ^{Rebekah} ~~Rebecca~~ Baines, had met young Representative Sam
^{when} ~~and~~ she brought a troupe from Blanco to put on a little play.

Mr. Carter had traveled hundreds of miles to ~~xxxxx~~ nurseries looking for just the right trees. These he had found close to home on somebody's Ranch and their shape and size are really great. As someone was mentioning that Lynda was a Senior at the University of Texas and that she had given the trees with the money she had made writing ^{up} a magazine article about her trip of "See America" last year and some other reference to the University of Texas, Mr. Carter right behind me piped up, "But it took an old ^{Aggie} ~~Aggie~~ boy" to plant them."

He's really leaving his mark on Johnson City too -- and a good mark it is.

~~Lynda~~ Lynda leaned over and placed the little bronze plaque after she had finished shoveling. It says quite simply, "In memory of Sam and ^{Rebekah} ~~Rebecca~~ Johnson who loved this town," presented by their granddaughter, Lynda Bird Johnson and the date.

I shall drive past every time I come to Johnson City.

I saw Mrs. ^{Glidden} ~~Lyden~~ and of course Mabel Stribbling. I expect she'd helped round up the crowd. Mariallen was there but A. W. was off on more important business. Kitty Clyde had turned school out to swell the crowd. ^{xxxxxx} ~~xxxxxx~~ really here in Johnson City it's no great thing to see the First Lady or a member of the President's Cabinet. So it was local pride in wanting to make it a nice occasion that had brought them there around the square.

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And among the old folks, I dare say it was really a memory of Sam
and ^{Rebekah} ~~Rebecca~~ Johnson.

Then as the crowd broke up I gathered up Stu and George Hartzog and Liz with James Pitt and we set out to look at the little Park that LIFE magazine is donating to Johnson City. It's beginning to take shape. Mr. ^{Wierick} ~~Wysock~~ was right there at work on the sidewalks and the delightful little low stone wall that surrounds the Park. As soon as they get the sprinkler system in and the black dirt hauled in and leveled then Mr. Carter can put in the shrubs -- ^{Crape} ~~great~~ myrtle, ret^aoma, red yucca -- and we'll have something to be proud of. I was delighted to get the picture of Mr. ^{Wierick} ~~Wysock~~ with James Pitt and Stuart Udall. And then began to look around for Mr. Carter but couldn't find him and he'd melted away. And him more responsible than anybody for whatever charm it may have!

I said goodbyes up and down the street to the remaining faithful few of our newspaper brigade and then goodbye to Stu and George and back up to the boyhood home to have a little visit with Lynda before she went back in to study. The newspaper girls had been more speculated ^{me} and more interested about the ring that she was wearing and also about her trips for the summer -- Spain, would George Hamilton be going? Warrie Lynn? What school friend? Lynda is getting quite accomplished at laughing and saying nothing, although sometimes she is a little bitter and ^{asacribic} ~~asacribic~~ with them and I wish she wouldn't be.

And then I said goodbye to everybody along about 4:00 and went back to the Ranch and drove all over the Ranch -- quite alone -- taking in great ^{draughts} ~~drafts~~ of view and silence. And finally drove to the Sharnhorst to look more

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closely at a sight that hurt my heart. Dale, meaning to do something that all good ranchers do, ^{ride} ~~read~~ the land of Juniper, (Cedar,) had turned in some cedar cutters into the Sharnhorst but had not had time to follow them with the repeated instructions. They had left stumps, ^{ugly scars}, three feet high all over the landscape. In the great meadow there were a few large cedars with trunks as big as a man's body. They had cut those too, leaving large stumps. I contended a few wouldn't hurt -- big ones, -- ^{Dale's} ~~Bill~~ said, "But they would have seeds. They would start more."

When I climbed the great granite out-^{Cropping} ~~propping~~ I found that they had scaled that too and cut the few cedars that had sustained life in a teacup full of soil on the very top of this huge granite uplift. A cow couldn't have gotten a mouth full of grass from the soil that that cedar used up! In fact a cow couldn't have climbed up the granite rock at all. It's only good for scenery, for picnics, for me to show to folks like ~~Stewart~~ Stuart Udall and ^U ~~Lay~~ ^{rence} Rockefeller. Sometimes it seems like with every step you take forward you drop back two. And yet I know it's because Dale has enough work to do for three men and because sometimes he doesn't always understand my own objectives about the Ranch. And sometimes my objective necessarily clash with those of a good rancher.

It had been a great 5 days, but I was weary and quite content to sink into solitude and silence. And I found that my 2-day bout with a sore throat and a little ~~fever~~ fever had left me more tired than I would have expected. My vigorous four days and this rather quiet today left me knowing I owed my body something --

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just rest.

I talked to Lyndon. What had he been doing? Cost Reduction Awards -- Agriculture employees -- a little ceremony in the Department of Agriculture patio. Freeman sure works at his job and he sure ^{is} a cooperating man.

Then an award to the Teacher of the Year, and then the usual~~y~~ weekly lunch with Rusk, McNamara, Walt Rostow and Bill Moyers. This time Admiral David McDonald had been with them. The story of these luncheons it seems to me to an outsider to be one long, determined search to find the best path through the dark forest that lies in front of us. Well, there are good men trying.

Lyndon was pleased with my little tale of what had gone on in Johnson City. He'll be ~~xxxxx~~ coming down for Easter, I think -- I hope. That's what he needs.