

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, April 19, 1966 WND

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It was one of those overwhelming days when waves of people swept over the White House and over us and that is why I call April the month of people.

There was an afternoon tea for 3600 Democratic Women in Washington for a three-day conference and workshop.

Lyndon and I were up early. Back after our little break, ^{to} the routine of Marvin, of Jake and Jack and Bill Moyers or Bob Fleming coming in while Lyndon consumes ~~a~~ ^{innumerable} ~~numerable~~ cups of tea and watches the morning news and gets briefed and gives orders and listens to problems. There are more and more little pin-pricks ^{or} of cannon blasts at the way he is running his job. He remarked rather ^{very} ~~riley~~, "They all want to hit the moon." Frequently he envisions himself, I think, as a sort of a beast of burden, pulling ^{stub} stubbornly along on his heavy load.

In the morning I worked with Ashton and signed mail and got a hair-do, had a quick sandwich in my room.

Then at 1:45 I was ready for the foray. First, I met in the China Room the nine women doers. Three ^{selected for} ~~solicited~~ their work in Head Start; three in Beautification; and three young ones that work in political activity. Was there ever such an award-giving society as ours? They were touching, impressive stories of the fullness of the human heart.

One woman from San Marcos who had four children -- one had died, two were mentally retarded, and she's ~~going to~~ working with project Head Start, especially with bilingual youngsters.

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Another, Mrs. Shafer, had really ^{bearded} ~~bedded~~ the lion in his den by undertaking ~~the~~ the cleanup of junkyards in Memphis. Why had she done it? She had gone to the junkyard owners themselves and they ^{Ch. tape? met her with} ~~stood there~~ Cooperation, Even enthusiasm -- instead of brick bats -- at the resulting improvement.

Another, only a senior in high school, and an area captain in charge of ten precincts in '64 campaign, organizing poll watchers and transportation and baby sitters and recruiting her own high school classmates to work. She came ^{by it} ~~back~~ naturally -- she is a descendant of President Monroe.

We chatted for a few moments and had our pictures made together. Then I, too, received the same little gold award that they had been given. And Margaret Price.

And then it was 2:00 and the first wave of the Democratic delegates came in -- approximately 1200 ladies. ~~But~~ I went through it rather like a chip on the crest of a wave, though maybe the ladies of the Press could describe it more colorfully.

^{Ch. tape} "It was the greatest I saw from the White House since the British burned the Mansion in 1814," said Isabelle Shelton. But I subscribe more to her lines.

"It was all high spirits and good clean fun."

"All the guests were dressed in white gloves and their Sunday best and overflowing with democratic goodwill."

When I got off the elevator the first folks I saw were Nellie Connolly and Adele Lock, I hugged and kissed them and then moved gently into the crowd in the State Dining Room -- and aide on one side and Jerry on another -- shaking hands on my right and on my left and in front of me and behind me, saying to

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those that I couldn't reach, "Welcome, I am so glad you're here. I hope it was an interesting conference."

With the usual greetings of "Hello - how do you do", interspersed with "I'm your neighbor from Lam^{Passes}", "I'm from Alabama," "We love your husband", "God bless you". That is one repeated over and over. It never ceases to be fresh to me.

But then pandemonium broke loose when Lyndon came in~~x~~. Dorothy McCordle said, "Rancher Lyndon B. Johnson got corralled at his Pennsylvania Avenue dig yesterday afternoon. Everyone whooped it up with the excitement of a group of teenagers hailing a Hollywood crooner." And the UPI said, "Giggling like teenagers, the women rushed up to Mr. Johnson, kissing his face, shaking or ~~kissin~~ his hand and trying to tell him where they were from. "

He seemed pleased by the uproar. He stayed about 10 minutes. And then Nellie, Adele Locke and ~~Price~~ Mrs. Price and took them upstairs for a bowl of soup. And by that time I had circumnavigated the State Dining Room, The Red Room, the Blue Room and back into the Hall, and I too was upstairs about a quarter to three -- a short break during which I met in the Treaty Room *Mercedes Eicholz* ~~Versites Zycholtz~~ and Barbara Bolling Hamilton and some friends of theirs, movie people, Mr. and Mrs. Trup and their children. He had contributed his time and talents to the Democratic Party in writing and singing songs.

Quickly pictures were made and then it was down stairs for the second group of ladies. How the staff and the Cabinet wives and all of the hostesses moved that many people in and out is a triumphal of logistics. I only hope it was

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done as gracefully and kindly as possible. But everybody I could see had a big smile, no matter how squashed they were. And I tried to have the biggest one of all and to thank everybody for coming and hoped the workshops had been useful.

I was especially delighted that there were 24 women from Alabama. And there were also about 25 or 26 from South Dakota and North Dakota. The biggest delegation was Illinois with 300. Texas with 100 -- I was proud of. Headed by the wife of the Governor and full of old friends -- Nancy Negley and Liz Odom -- a quick kiss from them as I started up the stairs.

But it all melts into a sort of a montage. I remember seeing a woman with a small baby, apparently three or four months old. Anyway I heard that she had deposited her on the dining room buffet table while she helped herself to a glass of punch and cookies. And then later, according to Dorothy McCardle, she took the infant out into the corridor near the spot where the Marine band was playing and personally saw that the little one did not go hungry either.

During some interlude Bess had said to me in her calm voice that she thought it would be better if I didn't go into the Red Room, the Green Room, but concentrate on the East Room and the Hall and the Dining Room. It was later I heard that as we were both converging in the Red Room, the crowd surged forward, and what the Press had been eagerly waiting for did happen. Some damage. Ash trays swept to the floor in splinters, presidential standard staggered outside the Blue Room, an antique lamp crashed to the floor in the Red Room. Someone bravely rescued the musical score of Lafayette's march as it slipped from a

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nineteenth century music stand beside the harp. A bust of Henry Clay toppled over but was not damaged. And Isabelle Shelton wrote, "Possibly it's just as well that Jacqueline Kennedy's vacationing across the ocean in ~~Spain~~ Spain -- the sound waves might have reached her." [In New York it's ~~sounded~~ as if 1100 gathered treasures were jostled ~~at the~~ Minon.] The House is for people too -- and today it was used and enjoyed by them.

I think it was at ~~when~~ the end of the second group that Lyndon ~~deafly~~ ^{deafly} ~~back~~ led the ladies through the Blue Room and out onto the great railed porch and down the steps toward the buses in order that we could all have a picture made including as many faces as possible.

But that was a goodbye to this group, and with a few minutes interlude I was back down stairs for a third wave. This time I did concentrate on the Dining Room, the Hall, the East Room. I find in a crowd like this that it is wise to move as calmly and quietly, even leisurely, as I can with an intimate smile and a direct look into their eyes as much as possible as I shake hands with three or four ladies on the right, three or four on the left, and perhaps turn around to the back, no one directly in front. There were memorable contacts with old friends -- Dr. O'Tenasek of Maryland, Mrs. Rosenthal of Connecticut, Onyia Salesa from Puerto Rico, of course.

This was my last group and I tried to give it my best. I was delighted to see such large contingents from Maine and Vermont. It's rather sweet and interesting how everybody gives special deference to delegates from Puerto Rico, Guam or the Canal Zone.

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Isabelle Shelton said, "The energetic President and the infatigable First Lady exhibited some of the finest broken field running off the professional football field as they skillfully maneuvered through the ~~now~~ jammed packed Red, Green and Blue Rooms, shaking hands fore, aft and in between." She had a~~n~~ hilarious exchange between hats. Often hats and heads are all you can see in this crowd. You can't tell what hands belong to what heads. "I caught him, I kissed him," an orange-^{hatted}~~headed~~ woman shouted triumphantly about the President. "I'm losing my hand!" squealed a green hat, as the crowd veered. "Watch out for that mack truck," a blue tur^ab~~in~~ warned a yellow cloche. "Poor little thing, she's almost smothered", a pink straw bola said compassionately of the First Lady. "She must be a wonderful person to go through all this", said a navy blue cartwheel. "Why doesn't she get out of here -- they'll kill her", said a halo of white flowers.

And one of the funniest things of a story, true or not, of a lady who hadn't been close enough to the President to kiss him, so she settled for kissing the Presidential beagles on her way out. They are most kissable, those dogs, and Luci kisses them every day.

But when this was over I nodded goodbye to Margaret Price. It was really what I felt about it. ☒ I loved it -- I really have. I'd like to see them all. I'd fly back from anywhere to get here for it.

In retrospect, I was a little annoyed. The papers had made such a mad-house of it and ^{I was} sympathetic toward President Andrew Jackson.

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There was a little damage, but a lot of fun and a lot to remember.

But at 5:00 the day was far from over. I had an hours rest and changed cloths. And then Mrs. Borton, the wife of the Prime Minister of Norway arrived with her young daughter, Terri Borton, who is the Queen of the Azalea Festival, and her best friend, lady in waiting, brought by Sylvia Symington with an interpreter from the Embassy, for they speak almost no English. She was quite beautiful and very blond with her long silky hair tumbling from under a square, black, embroidered cap, wearing a charming native costume that's kept for festive holidays, bright bows and bright colored gayly embroidered [?]eskiten skirt that looked liked some old grandmother had spent hours of hand-work on them and they must have been ~~passed~~ handed down through generations.

This girl had a big purse suspended from her waist.

Next we had our pictures made in the Rose Garden in front of the most marvelous display -- gray [?]parsins and tulips, rainbow shades, and crab apples in full blossom. There is no azalea in sight! And then upstairs for tea and conversation. And it was a very pleasant 30 minutes.

Luci came in and told them how sweet everybody was in the community and how they feel like they were just a part of Norfolk and passed around pictures of all the events -- she was azalea queen last year.

Virginia Rusk lent the prestige of her presence. She is always so gentle and everything she should be. It was a gay, pleasant exchange. And then with congratulations I said goodbye to them about 6:45.

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But that was not the end of the day. Because of my own choosing, realizing what a day it would be, ^{when} ~~and~~ I heard that Dick Dietrick was going to bring a John Singleton Copley on loan, "The ~~Little~~ ^{Boy} with a Squirrel" and just deposit it in the Usher's Office, I suggested that he bring along his fiancée, her mother and father, the Livingston ^{Biddle's} ~~Biddle's~~ and we would have a drink in the Yellow Room.

And this was the time of the day to curl up and relax.

First, we looked at the Copley. It is delightful. A little boy in colonial costume of the day. ~~It was~~ slightly stuffy but a very cute expression on his face. You wonder just what he's thinking about that squirrel -- what they've been up to.

We settled down to a drink and a good conversation with Angie and Robin, the Livingston ~~Biddle's~~ ^{Biddle's} are their cousins ^{about} their approaching wedding at St. Johns where she has gone all her life -- right across Lafayette Square. Cordelia is her name. She looked very sweet and young and tender and Dick Dietrich was very much in love. He said ["]She reminds me of Emily Dickinson and she writes poetry too. ["] We talked about how he happened to become a collector. It started with collecting letters about founding fathers and of other famous people. I was especially pleased to show him my two Jefferson letters and my two Washington letters. And then I said, ["]But do you know that won't happen anymore. Who ever sits down ~~x~~ and writes a long ~~let~~ hand letter really expressing our thoughts these days? ["] We rattle something off to a stenographer & just say, "tell Mr. Jones so and so". Dick smiled and said, "you do." "I have a wonderful letter from you." And then I realized I had written him in

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long hand when he had given us the Sully. And I vowed to do it more often in the future.

What a pleasant life. I don't know whether he does any work for a living. I gather that it is not necessary. They'll go to Europe for a long honey moon -- an ocean voyage and then return to live in an old stone house they are doing over out in the country from Philadelphia.

It was nearly 8:00 when they left. Then I had time for a massage and some reading and signing of mail before Lyndon came home for dinner about 9:45. And what he did at the dinner table is so typical of him. He picked up the phone -- only one second elapses between the thought and the action on many of the kind little things he does -- and called Margaret Price and told her what a wonderful job he thought she had done. And I talked to her also. That is one of the bonds that tie people to him.

Maxine Chesher had written a very annoying first paragraph in her column, "Will rains in Spain shower down on an engaged Lynda Bird Johnson". "There have been ^hwispers here for days about a big graduation party being planned for Lynda Bird Johnson in Texas in June. And some Washington insiders consider the timing perfect for an announcement of her engagement to Actor George Hamilton." "The White House officially denied the reports yesterday, but the rumors persist. The party to be hosted by Warren Woodward." And in another ~~parag~~ paragraph, "Lynda and Hamilton are scheduled to take off this weekend of June 4 for a chaperoned vacation in Europe, which has been timed to get her back in time for her sister's wedding in August."

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This is the sort of thing that sets me to counting the months until I
celebrate my glad release -- the ^{tense} ~~tense~~ of silence ^{and} ~~in~~ the camp of peace.