

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Thursday, June 23, 1966

WASHINGTON

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I was like a child in a candy store rushing greedily from counter to counter for some of everything good. It was my last full day of my week at the Ranch.

I woke up early. Always now I wake up early. About 7:00. Marvelous as it has been, sleep has not been one of the delights of this week.

I went over to the Danz to my 80 acres and walked the circumference of it to check on how Melvin was harvesting the wild flowers -- as a mixed mulch we call it. He's on his fifth truck load this morning. Last year we got only three truck loads, and it was a smaller truck bed too. They finished the runway and were working on the rocks. I thought perhaps he was harvesting a little bit closely but only another Spring will tell whether nature was prodigal enough to leave a full bounty of seeds.

Melvin is intelligent and seems interested.

We went to the rocks where the great white spires of the yucca are beginning to bend over with age.

Clarence's pedometer showed 1-3/4 miles.

While I lunched at the kitchen table -- ~~xxxxxx~~ scrambled eggs and bacon and grits -- my appetite is ravenous here -- Dale Malechek sat with me and we wound up all my side of the Ranch business. They'll put out the blue bonnet seed now on the east side of the runway and half of the rocks and the burned over spots on the Danz. Now is the way nature does it, in June. In September, when the Highway Department instructs you to plant, we will sow the rest of them -- just a sort of a little experiment for fun.

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Before lunch, I had canoed as far up toward Ernest Hodges as I could. Finally you come to shallow water and rocks, ~~And~~ then back all the way to the dam.

~~White~~ ^{Woody} Taylor and I in the red canoe -- I, at least, enjoying the sunshine and the pull on my muscles and surveying Clarence's duck population -- quite a colony of white ~~pekan~~ ^{Peking} ducks, a most ugly Muscovy, an imperial Chinese with a hearty manner, a Canadian wild goose that flew in to keep them company, several mallards, and a flock of small ducklings that Clarence has just hatched in the incubator.

Up at the fence the tourists and the cameras had been thick a few minutes ago before I started. I did not look that way and tried to imagine that I was invisible.

Weeze Deathe joined me in the afternoon and we went down to the old Sam Johnson farm house while I tried to do a scenario for the hostesses who will come to keep it open for one month this summer probably, using as my guidelines whatever mood I could invoke by sitting in the room remembering, looking at Lucia's* notes on the inventory and trying to edit out what part might really be interesting to the school teacher from Idaho and the family of all ages from New Jersey.

Lyndon called me. Lynda Bird apparently is having a very bad time in Spain with the press -- not so much the Spanish press as the American press. He had told me before, laughingly that they didn't know she knew so much Spanish. He saw her on TV saying, "Bastante! No mas!" Apparently it does no good.

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They predict her every movement. They stick like burrs.

I had called Mr. Pike to come out. He and I and Weeze took the rug samples and fabric samples and drapery samples and worked out several good schemes for Oriole's house. Jesse had forbid^{ed} me ~~to~~ ^{to} take her more than one choice. He says "You will never get it settled". But a woman wants to choose the environment she lives in even if she is old and helpless and has no money. So we took our several choices down and Oriole and Mamie pondered and thought. Meanwhile I had gotten Mr. Klein down to hang up pictures. I had suggested earlier that I would send him down and that Mamie might help her to decide where to put them. She had told me with asperity, "Look here, young Lady, I've got just as good taste as she has, and you too for that matter."

I applaud her spunk. I know of no one who needs sympathy, company, and kindness more than Oriole.

One of the stars in Lyndon's crown is going to be for his relationship with her these last ten years -- generous of heart and money and attention, short-tempered of her childish inability to cope with life. But in the final essence, respectful.

I went back to my job of scenario writing at the old Sam Johnson farm house.

And at long last the big decisions were made -- green rug, green and yellow drapes, and bright colors with red in the chairs. And probably doing over the ~~old~~ old mission oak chairs that she had used for so many years.

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The day was drawing to an end. Oriole and Mamie came up and joined us in the front yard for a drink while we watched the approach of sunset on the river.

Roy White and Mary and Jessie Hunter came. I showed them LOOK magazine with its rather good story called, "Mrs. L.B.J.'s Texas" and pictures of the blue bonnet season at its height.

This is the wind-up of business. I had asked Roy to help me to decide where to put a sign in front of the old Sam Johnson farm house, where to run a driveway from Oriole's house to the Cedar house in order to keep the maximum expanse of green and the fewest crossing roads.

My days of sunshine and walking are over and it was really back to work.

While we chatted away, Oriole said, "I feel like I'm locked up in a cage a thousand miles away. I can't hear a word you 'all say. And I can't help it." It is sad and all we can offer is our presence from time to time.

When she and Mamie wound up to have dinner with Mrs. Martin, I took Jessie and the Whites and we rode around in the Reagan, saw the spotted deer but not the little fawn, and those who have fluffy little white tails that look like abbreviated ballet skirts, and once under a feeder a group of six -- a big English buck with huge antlers, obviously the king. I do believe the big English red have at least two little fawns.

We stayed until there wasn't a ray of light left, and then home to fresh black eyed peas and buttermilk and roast, and coffee out under the stars where the five-day old moon was bright silver in the live oak trees and not a cloud in the sky.

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Except for a good rain, I couldn't have asked more from my 8-day vacation at the Ranch.

(Heard as the tape)
skip ...right person to work with. And in my never-ending big and little steam of building things. First it was Max and now it is Roy. And they fill a very special place in my life.