

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Tuesday, July 19, 1966

WASHINGTON

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What a blessed luxury is a free morning! After breakfast with Lyndon I went in and curled up with Luci in her bed to do some last checking on the guest list and plans for the staff party. I spent the rest of the morning clearing my desk.

And then to a party I looked forward to with eager warmth. The Cabinet ladies were joining to give a party for Luci at Margy McNamara's home. When I arrived at 1:00 -- Luci had preceded me -- the front door was flanked with a battery of cameras and pen-and-pencil girls. Margy and Luci and I paused in the doorway for a picture with Lynda and Kathy in the background. And then I went inside with this group of women ^{for} with whom I feel so much warmth and admiration -- good friends, good to work with. And they were nearly all there. Many with their daughters or daughter-in-laws.

Trudy Fowler, fresh from a speech on beautification for which she had received a standing ovation -- the best encouragement for going on -- with her two daughters. I had been to the wedding of one. Virginia Rusk with her Argentine daughter-in-law and her own teenage daughter. Jane Freeman -- so much fun and always good help. Aida Gardner -- exotic, elegant, with that accent I can't place. I always feel she's looking at us from a distance, but I'd love to know her better. Mrs. Weaver -- how quickly one forgets how unimportant it is that she's a Negro. And Muriel -- who had come back all the way from Waverly just for this party and was telling us about her new daughter-in-law-to-be, Donna. Her illness of virus pneumonia has been rather like mononucleosis, only more serious. It has been a rough summer for Muriel.

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Elva O'Brien -- Irish, pixie, gay. Mary Connor, who had plunged into making speeches about beautification much to my admiration because I do not think it came easy for her. And her daughter-in-law, Susan. And her 16-year old daughter, Lisa, a friend of Christy Carpenter who is working with one of the poverty programs -- a volunteer job with disadvantaged youngsters a little younger than herself. I tremendously admired her going ahead with something I talk about but do not really spend six hours a day working on. And she seems both easy and earnest about it.

And Jane Wirtz -- one of my favorite members of the whole Cabinet, with a very attractive young girl who is to be her daughter-in-law in October. Only Lee Udall and Lydia Katzenbach were absent -- both vacationing in New England.

Lynda talked with Kathy about her coming year of study in Egypt. How Lynda would love something like that! But the reins of what is appropriate for her to do lie rather heavily upon her.

We lunched at round tables on the patio close to the tinkling fountain underneath the dogwood trees. And it was a good, happy, easy time. I feel close to and shall want to keep in my circle of friends all these women when we depart from this town.

After lunch, Margy gave Luci a small silver serving tray with the signatures in script of all of the Cabinet wives. Just the right size. Just the sort of thing she loved most. ~~Not knowing how~~ Knowing how I shall treasure ^{for} of having it reminds me of the times we've done it for departing Cabinet members and reassures me of the value of doing it in the future for those that are close to us. We left a little after three and had just a little rest before the next

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I had invited Alice Roosevelt Longworth to come to tea with Luci and me this afternoon at 4:00. Lynda will be with us, but I had planned it as a meeting of the bride of 52^{62?} -- is it? -- years ago with the bride of 1966.

I hurried to the Diplomatic Reception Room about 5 minutes of four to meet her. She was wearing the big brimmed hat that is her signature, in brown. I wonder where she gets them. All the same, decade after decade, and just right for her. And in a brown print dress. And she was an explosion of vitality and interest for more than an hour and half.

Lyndon was taking a nap, so we had tea in the West Hall on a table rather charmingly laid I thought with the little sandwiches and nuts and mints and cookies. And she talked while I sat in almost silent admiration of the gallant ways she has battled the years. She talked of home life in the White House. She said her step-mother had permitted her father to bring a limited number of guests to dinner unexpectedly -- up to eight at the table -- and they ranged from big game hunters to Cardinals.

It was interesting how talk was sprinkled with references to her father and how few really with references to her husband.

She spoke of how they had driven out to Friendship for their honeymoon. It was in the country then, and as they left the White House grounds headed for their honeymoon destination they saw one of the White House aides -- Douglas MacArthur.

Her life has been peopled with many of the most interesting figures of three quarters of a century.

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Mrs. McL^{an}'s was out in the country then -- a rural retreat for a honeymoon. She was still reigning when Lyndon and I arrived in Congress in 1937, and once we went to a party. She met us at the door of the fabulous place wearing the black Hope diamond. How astonished I was to find that it was black, and my eyes were out on stems meeting all the big names in Washington. The only other Texa^s I remember was Martin D^{ye} of the un-American activities committee.

The house itself was a fabled place. There was one room filled entirely with shelves containing China ^{figurines} ~~dolls~~.

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Sage* Mrs. Longworth said she wore an absolutely awful going-away dress, and she said also that nobody bothered them on their honeymoon. They were not followed by a tumultuous press. She said that in those days all the details of a wedding were not given out ^{to} the press. Therefore they had to make up things, and they had some of the most ridiculous stories about her wedding. Her manner was with all brittle, bright, ^{cynical} ~~syndical~~. She was going to Joe's -- that's Joe Alsop's -- to have dinner this evening. I would be interested to hear what she would say about her afternoon. She would probably cut us up in a highly amusing way.

Lyndon came in and kissed her and had a word or two. He likes her and she him I believe. I expect because they both recognize in each other a strong untamed spirit.

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When I had phoned her about having tea, Mrs. Longworth had asked about Lynda. I said she was growing into a beauty. She had such fine bones and she does. As I watched her on the sofa, listening to Mrs. Longworth, looking a bit like a caged ~~tiger~~ tigress, I thought she is the sort of person who would like to do some of the things Mrs. Longworth has done so freely. Interesting, beloved girl.

Mrs. Longworth talked of how her little half brothers had walked quite freely to school. One of them had ridden a pony with a White House policeman following at a discreet distance because he was quite small. Then quite shockingly she told us about the assassination attempt on McKinley. At first it looked as though he were going to die. Then he began to get better, and for a whole week he fought for his life which hung by a thread. She said she had opened a journal, stuck in her finger, she pointed to a certain date, and she said that's the day he's going to die. And it happened to be. I think she enjoys shocking people even yet at her age. And looking at me she laughed and said, "You see, I was quite savage, really, very young and Daddy wanted to be President. And so I wanted Daddy to be President."

It was 5:40 when she left. The times I have ~~xxx~~ spent with her -- I think there are four in number with just two or three people present -- have always been highly exciting.

Next came a session on the Truman Balcony -- Bob Knudsen, Okamoto and Mr. Atkins and Liz and Simone. I wanted to explain to them what I hoped

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to get -- the picture story of the wedding and of the days between now and the wedding, for ^{The} family album and Luci's and very especially for the Johnson Library and a limited amount for the White House Library.

I have already taken the guest list and marked in red ^{the} names of people for whom I feel special closeness. I selected about six guests whom I think will be willing to give 30 minutes or so of their time to stand by Atkins' elbow, or Knudsen, and point out Doris Powell or Cousin Elaine from Alabama or Dr. John Washington who took care of Luci from the day she was born until she was 12 or so.

I spent a couple of hours on this, discussing vantage points, lights, the philosophy of the whole thing. And then, weary, I went bowling. Always physical exercise is a release for me. But I bowled badly and then came back and had dinner with Lyndon about 10:00 and to bed.