

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1966 - page 1

Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 24th, was rightly named for me. It began with one of the things I love best - walking the river. This morning it was with Lynda. The day was blue and gold. We went to the bridge that crossed the Pedernales on Farm to Market Road 1320 and walked west toward the ranch. In late November the day began chill but warmed to about 80 in midday. As always I had a heightened sense of awareness of the world around me when I walk the river. An ~~arm~~ armadillo lumbered close by, and I saw that he had nine distinct rings around him. Clarence said that was a species most distinctive of our hill country.

Once we crossed the river dry shod on a fault, a perfect slanted bridge of rock pushed up long ago by some diastrophic movement. Once we walked on a ~~clay~~ cushion of soft fern-like grass -- a completely new growth for me, deep and springy underfoot.

A cliff rose precipitously on the ~~north~~ north side of the river, and out of it in the sparse cup-full of soil struggled a live oak tree, tough, hardy, conquering. Its tenaciousness of life waves its flag at you. Once shots rang out close by -- deer hunters, which *probably didn't add* to Jerry's relaxed mood. We passed cedar trees with blue berries bright as Christmas ornaments. Clarence said they would turn after frost.

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All my senses are more alert -- eyes and ears and nose -- on ~~these~~ these walks. Two hours passed and the sun was hot, and Lynda needed to get in to the ball game, and the going was rougher underfoot, so we were glad when we reached the pick-up truck at the end of five miles. We bounced over the pasture and emerged at the Myers Ranch house, and there ^{how} typical of the holiday -- we met the city family come to spend Thanksgiving with Grandma! There was father with a camera, his pretty little blond daughter in a red hood and a grinning little boy. We took pictures and then rode home, Lynda and Luci and Pat got off to the game. I worked awhile and then came a call from Lyndon "Would you like to meet me at the end of the runway?" I dropped everything and was there in 5 minutes. He had ^{file} ~~Mate~~ and Arthur and her father and Daphane and the Bob Benjamins and their two children. Six of us piled into the Thunderbird with him driving, two in a bucket seat in front, and we rode over the Danz and Martin to the wide-eyed enjoyment of the Benjamins.

And then home for ~~for~~ a hamburger lunch.

It was 3:30 by the time I left with Chris and Tommy Taylor and Sally and ^Nancy. The Krim's party had gone and Lyndon was at work and I was going to do something I had longed wanted to do -- see those dinosaur trackson Melvin Winters' ranch. Melvin and Nita met us at the Diamond X, and ^{we} piled into their ranch ~~xxx~~ wagons and bounded

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over the caliche hills to the ^{site} ~~sight~~ of the tracks. It was a stream bed where for perhaps a block there was a flat level expanse of rock that rippled slightly to show that it used to be the bottom of an inland sea, and crossing it were perhaps a dozen tracks ^{about} ~~from~~ three feet across, or were they pot holes? I could not say. At any rate, a geologist from the University of Texas had identified them as dinosaur tracks.)

It was a marvelous sunny afternoon's adventure to imagine those great beasts ^{gts} lumbering through the swamp of millions of years ago munching the tops of fern trees, and leaving their foot prints for us today!

Along the stream bank there was a cliff some 15 or 20 feet high which was a cross-section of sedimentary rock laid down over ~~and~~ many centuries, and in it quite visible were fossils. It was just like going to a store and looking on a shelf and picking out the can you wanted, only you had to take a pick and loosen them and dig them out. Shells ^{and} ~~in~~ marine life of all sorts! How impatient I was that I did not know the names or how many hundreds or thousands ~~of~~ millions of years ago these creatures might have populated this area. Only certainly I know it has been an inland sea once or ~~twice~~ twice or more before it rose for the last time.

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I talked to Melvin about watering the northwest side of the 30 acres at the Fort in Johnson City so that the bluebonnet seeds would come up. He said he would. That was a big plus for me, and only made more of a stab in the headline that I saw when I got back that there would be a cut of many millions of dollars in ~~ghex~~ the highway building program. That is one of the hardest things a President has to do -- a reduction of any job, any funds, always personally hurt ^{to} many people that he is close to and has reason to be grateful to.

We rode

~~The /dad~~ back to the ranch in the setting sun and stopped at Oriole's to pick up Aunt Jesse and Oriole and Mamie, and take them for a little ride up to the Reagan to see the deer before it became quite dark. Back at the house Jesse Hunter and Lelia were waiting for us.

We celebrated the day with some old fashioned while Mary brought in one of the wild turkeys ~~fraxxans~~ on a platter looking brown and juicy, and then at an early hour went in to Thanksgiving Dinner, with both our children and Pat and a long table full of kin folks. Rodeny White had joined us at the last moment.

The traditional dinner, this time 3 wild turkeys, Mary's delicious dressing, cranberry salad, sweet potatoes with marshmallows, other vegetables and hot rolls finished off with ambrosia and angel food cake. I ate with complete recklessness and enjoyment.

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But the real spice of the occasion were the reminiscences.

^{Wish} His rare quality of wringing from every fleeting moment all it can give, Lyndon addressed himself to various ones around the board. He talked about the year of his life he had spent in Houston teaching school, living with the Brights and Uncle George and Aunt Jesse. Mamie Allison had lived there too. There were 9 of them using the same bathroom, but they had no thought of being underprivileged. He talked about Uncle George's thriftiness and all his advise to him when he Lyndon used to "blow a nickel every day for a dairy cream" on his way home from school. Finally when Uncle George was taking his long awaited trip to Europe after having spent a lifetime saving every dime to take care of his brothers and sisters ~~ma~~ and nieces, Lyndon came in and said "Aunt Jesse, is Uncle George really in Europe?" "Yes," she just had a message from him. ~~He~~ He had arrived. "All right," said Lyndon, "I am going down and spend all I want to on dairy cream."

And then to Lela, he reminisced about her father-in-law, Uncle Clarence. He said from the time he was nine years old until he went off to college he was a great influence in his life, and it was a big event ^W when he used to come to this house. In the summers he could spend a lot of time here. He used to ride with Uncle Clarence through every foot of these hills and pastures.

Then we went in and saw some movies. ^g One of them on his trip to Vietnam. In the course of this he said in a very different,

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tough and forceful tone, speaking of the Negro soldiers, that 11 per cent of the population of this country are Negroes, and that 22 per cent of the fighting men in Vietnam are Negroes. Remember that whenever you say Damn Negroes. He gave everybody gifts - Asian medals, pins, pictures.

To Tommy he was especially nice, and I think because he knew it would mean something to me. He congratulated him on his advancement, his move to Corpus, and he said you ought to be over there with us helping run that business.

So, all in all, it ~~was~~ was a great Thanksgiving Day. So much to be thankful for. Luci is happy. Lynda is growing in beauty and the rich feeling of aliveness. And Lyndon has survived ^a the rugged year. His accomplishments I will be glad to measure against history, And also two operations with all the good results you could hope for.

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