

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1966

Monday, November 28, the first day of my Washington interlude without Lyndon, I awoke and the clock said ten minutes of ten. The most joyous feeling in the world is a good night's sleep, the best I've had in months. I breakfasted and spent the morning talking first with Lynda who's going to leave for New York and work and the Capote party, which has quickly become known as The Party and to which I am losing two of my favorite White House characters-- Lynda Bird and Alice Roosevelt Longworth.

During the morning Liz came in and we went downstairs to see the blown up pictures of some of the scenes in the book ^{*the Living White House*} Huge 4x6 pictures which [^]well recorded by press and television, we hope will sell the book. Bess came bringing the ^{guest} list. I went over it carefully, ^{trying} ~~as~~ as usual to think of some particular tie, some recent encounter, some word or conversation for each of the guests I knew or had heard of. My first thought on waking and seeing the gray and dripping sky was that I might lose some favorite guests because of plane trouble and so I did. But there was a marvelous list of acceptances and a party spirit in the house. And besides that, I spent a good morning working. Sometimes I think I function better in a fairly regimented life.

Bess and I went over the scenario for the afternoon. Much time has been spent on this party. It is, I think, carefully planned, to give some intimate moments to me and those who have lived in this House or have ties

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with it, to get good pictures of the group and of each family of descendants with one of the large blown up pictures of their ancestor in the White House, and to give those special guests, the descendants, a chance to stroll quietly in the halls, upstairs, or the third floor and reminisce and recall.

Finished with Liz and Bess, I worked with Ashton on the wedding pictures, checking off on that formidable Christmas list all our friends to whom I wanted to give the balcony scene or the picture around the wedding cake. Five delightful ones for each of Luci's 12 bridesmaids and a great big book for Lynda Bird. And then I lunched on a scrambled egg, bacon and toast. I weighed in at 10 o'clock this morning to find myself, as usual, three pounds heavier from eating with ^{abandon} ~~abundance~~ at the Ranch. So I had black coffee and juice for breakfast and plan on one of my two day diets, and hopefully losing the three pounds.

Jean Louis came for a comb. I practiced my few words that I would say, put on my new mint green ^{Alaskan} ~~Aleut~~ King and went down for the party.

They were all seated in the East Room--the 13 descendants, the National Geographic people who had produced the book, and the old time newspaper reporters who had covered the White House for many Administrations. And I invited a good many staff people, my own folks who really make it "The Living White House" for us. Dr. Grosvenor talked about how the book came into being, the kind words about my part in it, and

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David Finley of the White House Historical Association, which is actually producing the book, spoke. And then it was my turn for the few words about the two million visitors a year who come through the White House and of all those millions who will never come. "Who can better understand this House ^{and its} ~~in a~~ charming, sad funny stories than the families who have lived here?" And ² expressed my gratitude to Dr. Grosvenor and all the National Geographic staff and to Bruce Catton who wrote the foreword. That was my doing. I told the little story about President Coolidge walking one day with a Senator friend from Missouri. In a joking mood, the Senator said, as they approached the White House, "I wonder who lives there?" "Nobody", said the President. "They just come and go". And closed with, "I'm so thrilled that many who have come and gone have returned for this occasion."

Then I asked Mrs. Eisenhower to accompany me and we went into the Green Room for the receiving line of the descendants. Mrs. Eisenhower was just as gay and informal as ever, looking not a day older. And she was the biggest attraction of the afternoon. I did so appreciate her coming. She smiled and said, "I wouldn't have done it for anybody else". She stood with me and they filed slowly by. First, the Princess Cantacuzene, ^{aged 90} who is Julia Grant, the granddaughter of President Grant, ~~aged 90~~. The guests ranged from 10 to 90. And Marthena Harrison Williams, Benjamin Harrison's granddaughter; and Mrs. Van Seagraves who is Sistie Dahl, ^{Anna Roosevelt} ~~Anna's~~ daughter, one of the grandchildren who lived in the House for a while during FDR's time; and a distinguished gentleman named Lawrence Hoes

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who was a descendant of both Madison and Monroe. Mrs. Eisenhower had brought with her her daughter-in-law, Mrs. John Eisenhower and her three charming grandchildren, Mary and Barbara Ann and Susan, all growing up to be beautiful girls, and there were two Roosevelt sons, Elliott and John, with his wife; Mrs. Mary Virginia Devine, a Harrison great granddaughter; and Mrs. Frederick Manning, President Taft's daughter, who was wearing a silver pearl and diamond pendant brooch that President Taft had given his wife on their Silver Anniversary and who later said something that I appreciated very much. Speaking of the late Senator Robert Taft, her brother, "my happiest memory is to think of Robert and Lyndon running the Senate. They did it very well."

From the Green Room the White House families and I went into the Blue Room for a group picture. Then they all dispersed—Mrs. Eisenhower into the pantry to see the butlers and emerging later to say, "I just wanted to see all the boys." That further endeared her to me. She looked fondly around the place and said, "You know I lived here longer than anywhere else." And her warmest memories were, "she said, "of the christening of their youngest grandchild, Mary Jean, in the Blue Room and of the family celebration at Christmas after the General's heart attack." How well I understand that last, the feeling of well being and renewal.

Liz and Bess and Simone gathered up various descendants to ask them to have their picture made by a scene from the book. And I

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stood in line in the Blue Room to receive all the rest of the guests. There were two other descendants, Mrs. John Harlan Amen, who had been Marion Cleveland, the daughter of Grover Cleveland. She was born here during their second Administration and had lived here for a year and a half; and Mrs. Richard Folsom Cleveland, the daughter-in-law of President Cleveland; and Diane Hopkins, now Mrs. Allan Baxter, who had lived here with her widowed father, Harry Hopkins, in the hectic days of FDR's time; and Bob Allen, and Gould Lincoln, and Bill White, veterans of the press; and Wolf Von Eckardt whose writings on beautification and preservation I admire enormously; Our friends, the Governor of Samoa and his wife, the Rex Lees, just because they happened to be in town; and special members of our staff whom I just wanted to share a good party, Sandy Fox and Mary Kaltman and Betty Hogue, Barbara Keehn, and Jim Ketchum and those two who do so much to record "The Living White House" of this day--Bob Knudsen and Okamoto; and Simone and Juanita with her mother, and Dorothy Territo who will record our day here, and Christine Stugard. Others from the press, Howard K Smith and Marie Smith, and the dean of them all, Merriman Smith, and surprisingly, Dr. Frank Stanton, who's presence always means a lot to me, and Henry Dupont from the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

The receiving line over, I went to the State Dining Room where it was very evident it was a good party. Nearly everybody had a story to tell and everybody wanted to listen. Each of the honor guests had a little

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circle around them. I moved from group to group gathering amusing vignettes. Princess Cantacuzene said, "I was born here and I was christened in the East Room and I received in the Blue Room, in the arms of my nurse standing by my mother. And then I returned to be the house guest of the Coolidges". Sistie Dan Seagraves said that she didn't remember much. "Young children don't pay much attention to where they live." She did remember putting Post Toasties in the beds of some of the guests and being roundly scolded by her grandmother, Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Marthena Harrison Williams, the granddaughter of Benjamin Harrison had a memory from yet another Administration, that of Lincoln. "We have the last signature of Lincoln. Our grandfather was appointed Territorial Governor of the Northwest Territory by Lincoln. He was in town to see him on business and had to return to Nebraska," I believe she said. "His reappointment was found signed on the top of Lincoln's desk, the morning after his assassination, the last document signed. Benjamin Harrison heard about it on the train going West." I had a very interesting moment with Mr. Hoes, the descendant of the Madisons and the Monroes, who said that he was going to give the White House a Madison portrait which he had. I had known of its existence through Jim Ketchum. I took his arm and walked him over to look at the present one, painted some forty years after the President's death, a poor excuse of a portrait. I think he knows how enthusiastic I am about the possibility of getting ^{the portrait} it. The refreshments were delicious and everybody

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ate and stayed and the honor guests went upstairs to the second floor and even to the third with Mr. West ^{and} Jim Ketchum ^{all} by themselves — looking and lingering and telling each other what it was like in their day. I'd had a chance to chat with just about everyone of the descendants and when it was over at 6 o'clock, I had that enormously satisfied feeling ^{that} women will understand so well ^{that} I'd given a good party.

I went upstairs and worked with Ashton on the wedding pictures and finished the bridesmaids selections and Mrs. Lindow's album. And then to the bowling lanes where I had two games, making 122 on one. And then back upstairs to have dinner alone--a steak and black coffee--and more work and so to bed.