

1967

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

On Friday, January 27, the morning was full of those necessary but unremarkable things. An hour with the dentist, a trip to the theater with Gale Lenke to begin transforming that drab and colorless area into a more attractive setting for entertaining. And then, twenty laps in the pool, after which I stuffed all of my hair under my Roman striped hat before I went down to the Green Room to meet with Russell Long and Congressman Waggoner and the group from Shreveport to receive their invitation to Holiday in Dixie.

I was a little surprised too that they would ask me. Sentimentally I feel very close to the area because I was born only thirty five miles away, and I always went to the Shreveport Fair with great excitement in my childhood.

That was the main center to "trade," as country folks said in those days, talking about shopping, but integration and the Great Society are emphatically not their cup of tea and seldom is heard a congratulatory word about Lyndon Johnson. But it is easy to be hospitable to Southerners. We sat around the fire in the Green Room and had coffee and sandwiches and talked about the events of Holiday in Dixie, the parade, a ball, air show--very little likelihood that I can come, but I tried to make them feel that I was grateful and would like to.

Then back for the big event of the day,

Friday, January 27 (Continued)

the signing of the Space Treaty in the East Room. ⁴ It was a spine-tingling affair when you think you hear the drums of history beating in these corridors! We walked into the East Room, Lyndon and I, a little past five and there was an unusually large battery of TV and cameramen and lights. The table from the Treaty Room, Andrew Johnson's Cabinet Table, had been brought down. At it sat Dean Rusk and Ambassador Goldberg for the United States and Patrick Dean for the United Kingdom and Ambassador Dobrynin for the USSR, with Disarmament Chief Foster standing behind them, and lined up on each side in chairs, the Ambassadors of sixty nations and a broad spectrum of those who had worked with Space, from the Hill, in Defense, in NASA itself. From the leadership, Mike Mansfield and Carl Albert and the Vice President and that old space hand, Clint Anderson. From NASA, Jim Webb and Seamans and Dr. Welsh, Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Scott Carpenter and Gordon Cooper and Richard Gordon, a new one to me, and James Lovell and General McConnell, the Air Force Chief of Staff, Donald Hornig, Lyndon's Special Adviser on Science, a goodly representation from State besides Rusk-- Katzenbach, Harriman and Foy Kohler, and from the National Security Council and the National Academy of Science and quite a few from the UN.

Lyndon went to the podium and said: "This is an inspiring moment in the history of the human race. This means that our moon and sister

3,

Friday, January 27 (Continued)

planets would serve only the purposes of peace and astronauts and cosmonauts will meet someday on the surface of the moon as brothers and not as warriors."

It was less than a year ago when Lyndon proposed this treaty, and it was written at the United Nations in spite of all of the antagonisms that had been stirred up and exacerbated by the Vietnam war. So this is proof that man can and I was feeling that rich glow of exaltation ^{because} we had taken a step forward. Sir Patrick Dean spoke and Arthur and Dobrynin, in very clear English and very clear words and with good theater. He was the last speaker and then the four at the table signed. Lyndon and I continued on to the Blue Room where we stood in line to meet the sixty Ambassadors as they filed past. It was slow coming ^{each} because one of them had to sign first. We had a picture of each, several Iron Curtain countries - Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria.

For me, as for the press, there was an inordinate interest in them. When we finished with the receiving line I went into the State Dining Room and Lynda did. It was a pleasant time of mixing and really congratulating each other. I talked to the Dobrynins quite a while. She asked me how it was when we returned home to Texas. Could we really be just at ease with our neighbors, did they look on us as different? She said when they were at home in Russia, their old time neighbors kept on giving

Friday, January 27 (Continued)

him advice as Ambassador just as though he was still the boy next door. She was very vivacious and her English was perfect. She has mastered it in ten years here she told me. A very attractive couple really.

The wife of the Luxembourg Ambassador told me how she watched her husband signing the Treaty and suddenly realized that he was using a pen she had given him twenty years ago. That inanimate little object is twice as old as the space age and today it had played a role, maybe an important one, in the history of this age. She said she was going to keep it always.

I had a little chat with Peter Flawn, a geologist from the University, who participated in writing of The President's Country. When we have a reception we usually include, in a wide net, friends from home who have no relation to the occasion, but who I hope regard it as a brush with history. I introduced him to the Ambassador from Israel and we talked about archeology and geology and about how the Bible is still a guide of where to search for digs.

A little before seven I left to go upstairs to the farewell party for Secretary Connor. All of the Cabinet was present--a few staff members, the Rostows and Kintners and Watsons and lots and lots of the Connors kinfolks, principally Mary's, their teenage daughter Lisa, who has really grown up in these two years, and their son Jeffrey up

Friday, January 27 (Continued)

from Williams College, and their son John and his wife. They are still at school in Cambridge, and Mary's relatives kept on coming in. There had been snow -- Chicago had more than a foot, planes were not flying, somebody would phone in a bulletin that cousin so-and-so had been stalled in an airport five hours and still hoped to make it. It was made a gay warm evening because of so much family, and because Mary herself is a warm, gay, dear person.

I can look at this Cabinet as being a very superior one. I am so proud of it. I also regard them as our good friends. With many of them I feel that singular bond that comes from knowing we've fought together.

During John Connor's toasts, someone handed Lyndon a folded note and I watched his expression as he read it and his face sagged and my heart leapt. I knew it was something bad and something close. When the clapping had died down, he said "I have to make a sad announcement. We have lost three Astronauts -- White and Grissom and Chaffee at Cape Kennedy. There was a fire in the space ship." He said a brief farewell to the Connors and left right away to go, I think to the Situation Room. I thought of those young Astronauts I had seen only an hour ago and of Jim Webb's happy face. Somehow it was especially Jim Webb that I felt that rush of sympathy for. The evening continued a while simply because the young people and the visitors from far off were here for a very special

Friday, January 27 (Continued)

occasion. I took them around on the second floor and they were openly excited about it all, the White House, meeting all of the Cabinet, but a lot of us I am sure went around like zombies for the rest of the evening and the party soon ended. Lyndon did not come home for a long time. I read and worked. Today has run the gamut from exaltation to grief, from a first success to a first tragedy in the space story.