

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, March 18, 1967

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Saturday, March 18th, began early and was one of the busiest days of my White House years. Breakfast at 7:30 and <sup>hair</sup> comb and planning the days' scenario with Liz.

And then at 10:00, into the Yellow Oval Room to meet a student group from Texas, brought here by the Texas State Society -- Horace Busby, the entrepreneur and planner -- for their annual brunch. Its purpose being to honor the campus generation in Texas.

First, I would do it for Buzz. Second, for Texas, and especially the University. And third, most importantly, for young people, because this was a chance to show another face of young people, and another face of Texas. They have so much to be proud of.

The honored guest was the University of Texas College Bowl Team which has just won the championship on TV against teams from other major colleges in a contest of academic knowledge that was really a cliff-hanging thriller -- as good as any football game. Dr. Ransom had the lights on the tower turned orange when they won!

Then there was Betty Ann Buckley who did musical-comedy type songs. Pretty -- she had been Miss Fort Worth. And Mary Louise Summers of Baylor with a good opera voice. She had twice won regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera tryouts. And Larry Faror, from Lyndon's own <sup>Sand</sup> friend, Marcos -- a handsome operatic baritone. And last, and most exciting to the young folks, the North Texas Lab. Band, with experiments in jazz

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and contemporary music -- winners of jazz festivals -- very popular with the "mod" <sup>g</sup> young folks -- a unique, way-out, sort of a group. Some with beards and that alien look and therefore less sympathetic <sup>ical</sup> to me.

I greeted them at the door of the Yellow Room -- Buzz proudly introducing them -- coffee and sweet rolls and conversation. And I told them how this for me was only the second best thing I would like most -- to be at their performance on Sunday -- except I had that "once in a life time" chance to get away for the vacation to the isles of paradise at Caneel Bay.

And then Lyndon came in, breaking away from the Governors for a few minutes and talked quietly and earnestly with them. I do not think the most super <sup>about</sup> ~~sedate~~ could have called him patronizing. I was grateful and proud. Much of the time he uses his minutes so skillfully -- not always. He was in and out here in a flick of time. Leaving them, I believe, impressed, more understanding, things to remember about it -- a tale of how the jazz band had made the thirty-day tour of Mexico, going especially into the back countrys' small towns and their warmly, enthusiastic greetings everywhere.

Getting a verification from Betty Ann Bfuckley that it was her mother -- <sup>White</sup> ~~Beta~~ Sigma Phi -- who had persuaded me to come down to their celebrity banquet in Fort Worth in April of 1960 -- practically my "jumping-off point" for the campaign and for many speeches since. I gave them some <sup>Viguettes</sup> of the Yellow Room and then with a guide started them into the Lincoln Room,

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and the Queens' Room and said goodbye and went down to see the Governors' wives, who were congregating on the ground floor for coffee and rolls and greetings.

And then our bus trip. My staff was busy putting on that very civilized aid of today's social gathering -- a name tag.

Of course there was that flurry of excitement about meeting certain ones. What would Mrs. Lester Maddox be like? She was very nice. And pleasure as always in seeing Happy Rockefeller who is one of the warmest and friendliest of all of the Governors' wives. She told me she was anxious to come to the coffee and would surely be at the luncheon, but that the doctor just wouldn't let her go on the long bus ride. Her baby is still very young. To be able to say "no" graciously and make people think you wanted to say "yes" is a prime social asset. And laughing, exuberant Betty Hughes. And I have the keenest interest in meeting Mrs. Winthrop Rockefeller -- she and her husband are the only Rockefellers I don't know.

We walked out together and boarded the buses which were decorated with the pink paper flowers that were left over from Luci's wedding and also used at Lynda Bird's party. Princess Irene. I told the governors' wives this laughingly, saying I hoped they realized they had a thrifty Administration.

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Our destination was Gravelly Point -- an empty stretch of land along the Potomac on the Virginia side on the way in from National Airport where we had 54 white flowering dogwoods ready for the last spadeful of dirt -- one for each state and territory. We planned for all of the Governors' wives to throw in their dirt simultaneously, followed by a fanfare from the navy band while a monstrous number of cameras clicked away with the State <sup>Flags</sup> flying, with the smiling ladies planting against the blue sky and the Potomac beyond and the capitol dome. Good picture, good setting, for <sup>but</sup> ~~the last of~~ <sup>also for</sup> the best laid plans! The trees were as much as two blocks apart, and we walked through mud to the shoe tops and the temperature at a freezing 29° with <sup>whipping</sup> ~~inviting~~ winds and white caps on the Potomac.

With chattering teeth and varying good humor, the ladies planted their trees -- anything but simultaneously, and not many cameras clicking. Besides, the wide lens couldn't have gotten us all at once. And of course for the press the big news was that there was no one to plant Alabama's tree since Mrs. Wallace naturally was in with the other Governors. The protocol business of Lurleen and George Wallace was a field day for the press naturally.

Trudie Fowler had been the tour guide on the bus that I had been riding on. I changed to the other where Jane Freeman told us what we were passing. Cherry trees and willows around Haines Point, the double <sup>alley</sup> ~~ala~~ of <sup>sou</sup> ~~malangian~~as on Pennsylvania headed toward Anacostia. Freeway planting, the sophisticated brick paving, the <sup>Crepe</sup> myrtle of New York Avenue, one of the schools, more

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of the small triangles and circles where the streets meet. It was supposed to be a capsule story of the work of our beautification committee in the two years of its life. Actually we did not make an "A" on this wonderful opportunity. And I felt frustrated at the loss.

Nash Castro, who does almost everything superbly, somehow had gotten too much in this script, too many details about <sup>"</sup>this is the Executive Office Building or the Department of Justice, to this sophisticated audience who had been here many times. And also too much just plain talk, because largely they wanted to look at each other, size each other up.

But Jane and Trudie rallied with great presence of mind, shortening and putting in plugs for the achievements of the committee.

We arrived at the State Department muddy and hungry at 1:00, and all of us made a beeline for the bathroom and stacks of paper towels -- the real picture of the day would have been in the ladies' room with 12 lavatories in a row and 12 Governors' wives washing their shoes.

The State Department was a superb setting. The furniture, the dining room -- beautiful. But once more I was aware of the excellencies of the White House. The flowers did not have the delicate, imaginative grace of ours.

The lunch was fair. The <sup>seating</sup> had been very sensibly arranged by drawing numbers out of the hat. And I found myself put in with Mrs. Paul Johnson of Mississippi. <sup>W</sup>We talked of their lovely Governors Mansion, Mrs. Paiewonsky. <sup>W</sup>We reminisced about Caneel Bay and my joy in going



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there again tomorrow. <sup>And</sup> Mrs. Robert McNair of South Carolina who made a warmly favorable impression on me by speaking admiringly, devotedly of her predecessor.

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Mrs. McNair had the most forthright hearty appreciation and approval of their predecessors, the Russells. <sup>L. H.</sup> She had done such wonderful things with the grounds and the house was done in beautiful taste. <sup>H.</sup> I was amazed and and bowled over, and warmly pleased. <sup>a for!</sup> But this is the first of me! Usually the incoming wife's description of the condition in which the Mansion, or Government House, was left by her predecessor has such a subtle cruelty that it's fearsome. <sup>H.</sup> After lunch, we saw the Head-Start movie, "Poncho". The wives were mildly interested. And then I bid them goodbye and headed for the White House. The rest were dressing for dinner. I had the rather frustrated feeling that we lost a chance. We had a unique, powerful, captive audience and we hadn't really made a sale. What's worse, we hadn't done our best. <sup>H.</sup> All day long, Lyndon and all of the Cabinet labored with the Governors in briefings <sup>and</sup> for the give and take questions. And at 7:00 we met again for dinner. As they went down the line I felt a little sad. So few of them were really bold, strong friends. John Connally of course, the handsomest man there -- without Nellie (she was having a mother-daughter tea for Sharon). And staunch Buford Ellington and Catherine. And Jack Burns who looks like a poet. Mrs. Burns had insisted on going out in a wheelchair across the mud today to plant her tree, which was one of the farthest ones out on the point. And not such veterans but I feel <sup>they're</sup> of their freindly to us -- Philip and Joan Hart of Vermont. And Hewlett and Mary Alice Smith of

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West Virginia. The room was full of new faces and of course the object of all eyes were the Romneys of Michigan -- she makes me vaguely uneasy, a sort of an excess of virtue. And the Reagans of California -- both sleekly handsome. And the George Wallaces of Alabama. Our conversation leaned rather heavily on my Alabama heritage. One of the nicest couples, quite regardless of party, the warm and the attractive and ~~the~~ outgoing, Nelson and Happy Rockefeller had been down all day but couldn't stay for dinner. On the other hand I got to meet the final member of the five Rockefeller brothers that I didn't know -- Winthrop was on my left, quite different from all the rest. Not quite so used to success as his brothers it seemed to me, and appealing. He likes his job -- and I like that. I was fascinated with his story of his war years and how he came to Arkansas.

On my right was Governor Guy of North Dakota. Young, handsome, thoroughly likeable. It was a funny thing about the Kirks of Florida. It seems she had accepted and regretted two or three times in rather rapid succession, accepting, I think, at the last for the luncheon and then did not show. The Governor was there for the men's luncheon and the briefings, but then left in the afternoon, Bess told me, saying that he had to go and get his wife who was in Florida and made it back for dinner, very much the object of all our eyes.

A Republican Governor, Rhoades of Ohio I believe it was, gave an arousing ~~and~~ endorsement of Lyndon at the end of the evening. And then after coffee and liqueur we went in for one of the gayest entertainment I can remember



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"Guys and Dolls" by Jean Darlymple of the New York City Center Light Opera Company, Hugh O'Brien singing "Sky Masterson". He looks like a born gambler without any makeup. Pert Anita Gillette, a very improbable Salvation Army lassie. Such gay numbers: "Take Back Your Mink", and "Marry the Man Today". Everybody was in a good humor. And I felt it was a gay ending to a hard working day. A nice balance. Thanks to Bess's good planning.

And then as soon as the entertainment was over, the helicopter whirled in on the lawn. Lyndon said goodbye to all of the guests. And all of the guests crowded to windows and out on the porch to watch the departure. I kissed Lyndon goodbye for his long trip to Guam. And he was off. The end of a ~~valiant~~ <sup>long</sup> days work. And then an 18-hour flight, to begin again on another field of problems. He gathered up the Burns and the Guerreros of Guam to go with him. I circled the floor saying goodnight and was up stairs before 12.

And then I did the most enormously self-indulgent thing. I crawled into bed with a ~~duchess~~ <sup>Debonnet</sup> and watched a re-run of "Gun Smoke" that the signal Corps had recorded for me at 10:00. Tomorrow I was leaving for the Virgin Islands. I felt somehow that special relief that you feel at the beginning of a vacation. ✓ And it was delicious, in spite of a guilty feeling to know that my husband was instead engaged in an endurance contest.