

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, April 18, 1967

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It is very hard to work here at the Ranch when Lyndon is here. There are more interesting, more demanding things to do.

This day I awoke early and recorded and signed mail and telephoned Liz and Walt Rostow.

It was nearly ten when Lyndon delivered me the ultimatum to join him in a few minutes. And so I dressed hurriedly and got in the car with the top down with Don and Jesse and Pat. And we toured the ranches rejoicing in the fresh feeling of the little rain last night. It had not been enough -- it was disappointing. But even .64 inches is cause for rejoicing and there are still clouds in the sky.

Yesterday, I had called Richard Merick, the landscape architect, in Dallas wanting to make an appointment and had found to my delight that he was coming out this morning to Minnie Bell Heaps ranch. He suggested driving on over, so I had an appointment with him at about 11:00 with Roy White coming to lean on and advise. We were still out when he came. We made a brief stop at Cousin Orioles -- she was not there -- we left her a note. And then we got word over the talking machine that the Klebergs were arriving. Mr. Bob Kleberg of the King Ranch had called and wanted an appointment with Lyndon this morning. We were expecting him a little past twelve. But he flew in at 11:30 and we went out to the airport to meet him and his nephew, Peter Larkin, with his Boston wife, crisp and handsome, perfectly turned out even with a hat and our old friend, Gus Wortham. Another nephew, B. K. Johnson, had arrived in a

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separate plane, a few minutes earlier. It was an interesting entourage.

The ^{Ch. 7 Tape} [palace of the] fabulous King Ranch which has branched into so many things: research, tourism, cattle ranches from Cuba to Australia to South America. A romantic phenomena from a Texas landscape which Lyndon

remembers affectionately, nostalgically from the days when he was Mr. Dick's secretary, about 1932 to '35. He was working for Mr. Dick when we married.

I remember so well his car which was ^{upholstered with} ~~of historical~~ ^{old stricken} leather with the running W brand, a gift from his boss, the upholstery that is. And he had taken me to

see Mr. Dick right after he had taken me to see his Mother and Father.

Probably about the second day after we had met. And we had gone out to the King Ranch and I met Mr. Dick's mother, also Mr. Bob's. She's almost a legend now. A woman of great presence and wisdom and as impressive as royalty. And we took them back to the Ranch house and I took Mrs. Larkin in and introduced her to Lucy with an apology that I had to do my landscape work with Mr. Merrick and Roy White.

So Luci, I hope, showed her the house and made her feel at home while Lyndon took Mr. Bob and Peter Larkin and B. K. Johnson and Gus Wortham ^{Mr} and a bronco around the Ranch.

Meanwhile, ~~MRX~~ Roy had shown Mr. Merrick the plans for the additions and so I circled the house with them and told them what I hoped the view from my window would be like some day. We discussed the possibilities where to

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move the carports, I believe for some service area in the back, the imperative of a good trash disposal, preferably an incinerator. We had struggled so long with the most primitive of disposal methods as we've expanded and expanded and become almost a community here rather than a household. And we surveyed Mr. Kline's ^{new} new kingdom and talked about removing his old one. They got James ^{on how} ~~into~~ and asked his advice on ~~everything~~ everything. And I complimented Mr. Merick on the accomplishments of about -- was it 2 years ago? -- the new sidewalk on the west side, of Sisterdale limestone rippled and also paralleling the fence where the cars drive up to park. We've almost broken them of driving in the back. And the stone curbing that curves around in front of the house leaving a clear grass area from the rail fence down to the road, one of the nicest improvements. And then the little apron of stone at the front gate, functional and pleasant. Like all the marks of what we did when we worked together before, they have been proved in use.

And then very quickly it was time for lunch. We went in and had a hurried bloody-mary, and introductions all around. Then sat down at the table -- A.W. had joined us -- about 12 of us with Luci and staff at the other table. And we had a real country lunch -- fried steak. I had Gus Wortham on my right and B. K. Johnson on my left. And Lyndon, Mr. Bob on his right and Mrs. Larkin on his left.

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I talked to B. K. about the self-guided tour that the King Ranch has initiated. The public is admitted to a portion of the Ranch. They have a pamphlet that shows them as they walk, or maybe ride around, pens where the Santa Gertrudis are being fed or doctored, or areas where grass seeds are being experimented with are grown -- maybe that's where the ~~carac~~^{K-R} blue-stem came from. And then the great, ~~main~~^{main} house. He says more than 100,000 people per year come. And ⁱⁿ the great main house itself, all the nephews have a room there, quarters, but nobody really lives there. They use it for the visiting of important people. And then the nephews take turns coming down and playing hosts. I gather it's young Dick Kleberg and the Peter Larkins and B. K. Johnsons. The power is still concentrated in Mr. Bob. Apparently little of it is really funneled to the nephews. It was ~~xx~~ a very interesting thing for me to compare great wealth as exercised by this family and by for instance the Rockefellers.)

It was only Sunday two days ago that ~~General~~^{Genial} ~~Mizzard~~^{Laurence Rockefeller} ~~general~~^d mannered, imaginative, hard-working, most remarkable man, and Mary, had been out for Sunday dinner with five of his conservationists friends: Connie ^{With?} Byrd, the Pendegasts, the Fagan Dixons of Austin.

In the brief ride when I was with Mr. Bob and their party and we had passed the cemetery, I had started to tell them about it, how many members of the family were buried there, etc. and he had stopped me in mid-sentence ^{sentence} ~~silence~~.

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to tell me a very interesting and poignant thing, that when he had lost Helen, his wife, he had buried her in the pasture. I had gathered that it was one that they knew and loved together. That he had built a lake for her and that he had an architect from Mexico come out and design a Chapel, which would soon be built. This adds to the legend.

Right after lunch I said goodbye to Luci -- the last time until I return to help her move -- hopefully around the first of May. And then Lyndon left to take Mr. Bob and his party to the plane. And I continued my working trip with Mr. Marick and Roy White.

We went to the cemetery and the birth place and discussed the good and the bads of what had been done and then made plans for the use of ~~x~~ some of the rugs that had been taken up and preparing for the addition. We had James and Mr. ^{Klein} ~~Hine~~ with us to help work on some of the service problems and the parking problems.

And then I left Mr. Marick to do his measuring and confer with Roy who plans to meet again sometime probably around the first of May.

Lyndon was off riding with B.K. and ~~W.W.~~ A.W. and there was one of those little islands of time when I could do whatever I chose. I made some calls -- Cynthia Crider ^{Sta} ~~Cross~~, whose husband George is in the hospital at Johnson City, seriously ill. She and all her brothers are the Crider family, a full ten of them, friends of Lyndon's since he was about six or eight years old. And Jesse Hunter -- she's just about to finish her cancer treatments in Houston and will

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be returning in two or three days, hopefully out from under the shadow. We talked about opening up the birth place house for one - possibly two months in the summer. And I told her Betty and I had discussed it. I think we'll begin right after the July 4th weekend and probably stop short of the Labor Day weekend. That way maybe we'll be ~~home~~ there only once, necessitating the closing of the house, and that is ^{or} Lyndon's birthday.

And I called Winnie Smith about the Mexican who is now working at the boyhood home. I must find someone to help James who does a good job with so much.

And then, most delightfully, I took a long walk in the grove of trees in front of the house beside the river, down ~~to~~ to the dam, carrying a book, stopped at the little knoll where we've had a table and chairs hopefully for a picnic. It was an inviting spot. But there was one that beckoned even more. A rock with a tree right behind it where I could lean back and sit and look at the river and do nothing except watch for a duck or a nutria and read my book, ^{Victoria} "The Secret of Santa Vertoria". It's one of the most pleasant things to shift the gears into neutral and do nothing, just sit.

After a while, I went back to the main house and this time went up to a favorite spot I had been waiting to sit in for ages -- that is the front porch, second floor, a wonderful view of the river and across to the road. Just the spot for that second cup of coffee in the morning, our bridge game in the afternoon, but somehow never used. And James came up and we talked

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about all the things that ought to be done in the yard sometime. He is absolutely irreplaceable.

And then I jarred Lyndon and A. W. and we rode around the ranches as sun down approached. There was the freshness and the hope after the rain and the little lambs fairly danced in the roads. And it was a time of fire-flies and the ~~tail~~^{tail} fly catcher, doing their ballets. And several times we saw the little quails crossing the road. Watched a skunk and I was motionless and I did not mention him, ^{be} cause ~~and~~ skunk and ringtails and raccoons are in peril these days for eating turkey eggs. There was that delicious feeling of brevity and goodbye because as soon as dark ~~x~~ had really fallen, we knew we would be heading home for the ranch for dinner and then the plane for Washington.

Dale joined us. We looked at the tanks to see how they were holding water. The tank at the north end of our original line joining ^{Lela's} ~~earlers~~ is ~~also~~ almost a success story. For the first time in its existence the tank ^{they} in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~peagan~~ is marvbusly full but whether it will hold or not we do not know.

The Martin is ~~glor~~ gloriously full of deer. They are still a little ragged. It is time for them to shed their coats, but the horns are beginning to grow in velvet and they look fatter than a month ago. Soon there will be some fawns. That will be fun to watch.

Dark drove us back to the Ranch house. We sat down to a Mexican dinner. I thought of Lynda Bird saying, "If you are going to be a bear you might as well

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be a grizzley." So we all ate heartily. And a little after 8:00 we left in the Jet Star, our last words to Dale and James to get us some rain before we came back, were joined at the Randolph with Lynda, and flew into Washington. I thought we would get up a bridge game. But I did not have the vitality. How dull at 9:00! So I lay down and had a rub and drifted half between sleep and waking. We got to Andrews a little past 12:00, Washington time, and then helicoptered into the White House lawn where the dogs were waiting for us. All except Blanco, who is not at home in this world, a poor high-strung aristocrat, had bitten one of the little beagles rather badly. But they all seemed happy and none the worse for it -- only Mr. Bryant was mad about it.

And then we came in and there was a huge stack of night reading on the bed for Lyndon. And I, quite awake now, read the papers and the Time and my accumulated mail and finally after 2:00 turned over and said goodbye to the day. But next morning Lyndon told me it was after 3:00 when he turned the light off.