

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Tuesday, April 25, 1967 *WHD* WASHINGTON

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It was a full, busy day in the White House. With my coffee, I watched part of Chancellor Adenauer's funeral on TV via satellite hoping I would get a glimpse of Lyndon in the great, old cathedral. But I only saw the grandeur and the chanting.

And then I scurried about getting ready for our annual meeting of the Committee of the Preservation of the White House, one of the most important things that I am associated with here in this House. We went together at 10:00 in the Yellow Oval room. Alice Brown had spent the night with me. I went over my notes and the agenda, briefing myself on what I wanted to report on, and made a quick trip to the Queens Room. And we got the carpenter to climb up on a step ladder, hoisting above him the pasteboard markup of the chandelier of waterford glass that *Queta Culp Hobby* ~~Queta Culp Hobby~~ is thinking of giving to the White House. She has been our guest in the Queens' Room, and I would particularly like it to be here -- that is, and only, if it's a real beautiful addition to the room and passes the test of Mr. duPont ~~the~~ and the discerning eye of our critical visitors.

I do not want to accept gifts for the White House and then store them in that vast, musty ~~room~~ *building* out at the airport along with *President* ~~Lucy Rutherford Hays~~ *Lucy Rutherford Hays*' huge portrait and somebody's wheelchair. It may have been Wilson's, and many, many dressers and beds.

We gathered at 10:00. George Hartzog, Chairman and John Walker and Bill Walton and Mr. West and Jim Ketchum and Jim Fosberg *and* down from New York. He and his wife had spent a couple of hours the afternoon before going through the house, as had Mr. Henry duPont, who to me is the *final* ~~finer~~

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authority on our furnishings. And Alice Brown. And Liz, to gather our story for the press.

We spent about two hours. We only do this once a year, and it is most serious and dedicated business.

I welcomed them over coffee and hot rolls, and then George Hartzog took over, reporting on the visitors services -- our trial of the visitor orientation tape along the fence where sometimes in the Spring big crowds wait for two hours to get in. And the summer personnel, the new fence on the west side, the sprinklers on the lawn. And Mr. Ketchum talked about the new exhibit cases. He's working on one of Christmases in the White House, and another of White House dinners with menus through the years. And I reported on the new Dining Room curtains and the chair upholstery. The fabric for the curtains is being especially woven for us from a design that had been used in 18th Century Georgian houses in England. And there will be new ones in the Great Hall and up the stairway. All together they will cost about \$37,000, and we hope to have them ready in the early summer. And Mr. West reported on other household matters -- the Blue Room rug reproduction, and the big problem of the East Room mantels and baseboards. They are marble, but dull-red, ugly. So we painted them, a sort of an off-white camouflage. It comes off and has to be repainted so often -- almost every two weeks it seems -- that it is a real household chore. Could we get the marble industry to give us four new ones? Or could we buy them? Well, we could try. ~~Everytime~~ Everytime that thing came up

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Mr. Hartzog would ask if anyone would like to put it in the form of a motion, and he got things moving. I really felt we were accomplishing something.

And then John Walker gave us a cheerful report from the White House Historical Association. Last year, they had allotted \$50,000 for the White House and now expected ^{37,000} expenditure would not entirely deplete that, and they would have another \$50,000 for us for the coming year. So we can breathe easy. We can even afford to look for some new art objects. Best of all he told us that the living White House had sold over 100,000 copies since November 28th. And the White House Guide Book is in its seventh edition. Bill Benton, who is absent today in Europe, had arranged to get direct mail advertising on the White House Historical Association publications, sent out to all the list who take the Encyclopedia Britannica. I believe it's some 800,000 people. So that should result in some more sales.

Jim Ketchum passed out a list of all our important acquisitions since our last meeting a year ago. Most prominently the ^{Eakins} Aikens, and a tea service given to the Tafts on their 25th wedding anniversary in the White House. And the FDR portrait by Madame Shoumatoff. And he told us about the publication of the White House Library catalogue -- those 300 that I had autographed. And then a list of the books and articles and films concerning the White House which have been released in the past year. The loveliest of which I think was on the White House grounds, especially the commemorative trees, with the most exquisite photography and ^{Ch. Taylor} vogue.

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And then I talked about the desired acquisitions. Most prominent on the list, a portrait of Adams and of Madison. And I told them that we were nearer to acquiring one of Madison -- though nothing was promised -- and I proudly showed them the ^{provenance (!)} ~~providence~~ on it, which John Walker had gotten together for me.

And then Jim Fosburgh discussed the other paintings we might want to acquire. It all depends on what direction we want to go in. I felt -- and the others agreed -- that it should be top American artists, and that we could relax the criteria of having been dead for fifty years and bring it down a little closer. We agreed that if the artists were dead or had stopped painting for twenty years, that would be enough settling into the past. I put forward John Singleton Copley and George Caleb Bingham as two we most wanted. Perhaps Eastman Johnson.

And then I told them about the offer to start a collection of Presidential letters and First Lady letters. We all decided that the criteria would be whether the letters shed a special light on their years here in the White House or on their characters, and that in a limited way this would be a very nice collection to use in our display cases or perhaps framed in the walls of certain rooms. And I told them about the offer of the ^{Whitledge (?)} ~~Whitledge~~ -- it's from C.R. Smith -- and it shows a scene on the River Plate, and I'm all for showing this great United States west of the Mississippi. And then very quietly I told Mr. duPont that I would like for him to stay a minute longer and look at a picture of a chandelier and the place I propose to hang it in, if he thought it was good.

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We asked Jim Fosburgh to get together a list of American painters that he would like to see us acquire. We will work toward only a very good example of each. And if he could get the list together in a few weeks, maybe we would have a meeting, or at least a few of us would meet, some time this fall, and start on trying to pursue an acquisition or two.

The meeting proceeded with lively interest, I thought, and some accomplishment. I feel good about it. I love it! And my respect for this great old House grows every day, and I want to leave it a little richer than I found it.

It was nearly 12:00 when we finished, and I said goodbye all around and then took Mr. duPont to the Queens' Room. It took him only a few minutes of study of the picture of the chandelier and the proportions of the room and the markup itself, though we didn't call the carpenter back -- teetered from the top of the step ladder.

Then I had a little time to say goodbye to Alice. What a good visit we had had, especially the night before. And dressed for the Senate ^{loft} ladies and ~~leaved~~ from the White House to be met at the entrance of the old Senate Office Building by Mrs. Pell and Mrs. Case, the Chairman and the Co-Chairman of the luncheon this year, and Muriel.

I wore my yellow ^{Ben Zuckerman} "benzuckerman". The day was chilled though the flowers were beautiful. The lilac at the gate welcomes me everytime I come in these days, and the circle around the fountain is a great blaze of color -- yellow ^{and} ~~emperors~~, red ^{theilger} ~~emperors~~ -- some I don't know -- they are a mixture of orange

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and yellow, white trumpeters and a border of white pansies, with the spray flying in between it as the wind whips it. All over town the tulips are glorious, and every visitor I have tells me about it.

The luncheon was in the Senate caucus room where the first one I attended in '49 was, I believe, decorated with palms with round tables on which there were green and yellow floral table clothes -- I think a salute to beauty -- and white flowers.

It was a familiar, happy scene to me. All of the Cabinet wives lined up, with Muriel and me at the head. And the Senate Leaders in their red-cross uniforms filed past with many an embrace and laughter and memories of the things we had done in the past. And then we went to our tables.

I sat between Muriel and ^{Muriel} ~~Whole~~ Pell and Mrs. Case, the Co-chairman, and Mrs. Mark Hatfield and Maureen Mansfield were at our table and Louella Dirksen. It's the first time that there has ever been a mother-daughter combination -- she and her daughter, Mrs. Baker, from Tennessee. And Mrs. Eleanor Tydings, who is now Mrs. Dixon, and looks very young and happy.

It was an absolutely ^{delicious} luncheon, beginning with crab ^{au gratin} ~~blond~~ ^{gratin}, courtesy of the Maryland Senators. I talked to Mrs. Percy about the wedding and Ethel Kennedy about the new baby -- he's beautiful. But much of my thoughts were on the old timers, darling Mrs. Toby, who is still the boss of the working ladies, Henrietta Hill, very feeble now with, I think it must be, Parkinson's

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disease. And quite the contrary, Lucille Connolly, who at a very advanced age, is still beautiful and very feminine.

But there is a dropping off in the old timers. And for the first I remember Mrs. Henry Wallace did not come.

At the end of the luncheon there were the reports on the work, the number of bandages rolled, the sewing, the knitting, and a warm, sweet speech by Muriel for the presentation to me, ^a ^{el} ~~verm~~ picture frame to be used some time in June. For once, I was satisfied with my response. It's much easier to say something if you have something to say. And to these ladies -- so many of them I have known for 18 or more years -- I do have something. Shared memories, a common role in our husband's lives, and I feel they really like me.

I left a little before 3:00 -- I had made a date with Bob Knudsen to go on a picture-taking expedition, searching around Haines Point for the prettiest blooming cherry trees. We got some rather good shots. I want to send some pictures to those generous people who made gifts and inscribe them, "This is your tree". And by ^{My Mellen} ~~a Helen~~ fountain, which is white with Marylaskas' azaleas.

There a colored woman came up to me, ~~and~~ suprised, and said, "Lady Bird Johnson?" And we shook hands and exclaimed and she said her children always came home from school with some news about the beautification program and how they were putting out flowers around their school -- always with a package of flower seeds.

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In the late afternoon, I returned to the White House for a little rest before time to dress for the reception for Mr. Justice Black, celebrating his 30th anniversary of his appointment to the Court.

As soon as Lyndon had decided to go to Adenauer's funeral, I had called the Justice and said much as Lyndon would miss it I thought we had better go on with the reception, because many of the guests were coming from Alabama, and far and near. So I asked the Chief Justice to stand in as my host.

A little before six I went down to the Green Room to greet Mr. Justice Black and Elizabeth and the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren and their immediate family. And then in the Blue Room we stepped in line. The Chief Justice in the spot that would have been Lyndon's and then me and Justice Black and the other ladies.

And by they came -- a roster of those who loved Hugo Black. His family, his son, Hugo Black, Jr. from Miami with his wife and little Hugo III, his other son, Sterling, now a State Senator from Los Alamos, New Mexico, and granddaughter Ann, a charmer. The Horace Blacks, a nephew from Los Angeles, The Fawcetts, a niece from Alabama, Jo Jo, his daughter from New Jersey, the ^{Aubrey} ~~Aubrey~~ Taylors, another niece from Sylacauga, Alabama and all of his fellow-Justices on the Supreme Court and 40 of his law clerks, beginning with 1937. One of them, the Dean of the ~~University~~ Law School at the University of Alabama now.

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Each of them he greeted by name in a very personal manner, and usually kissed their wives explaining to me that they were his family. There were former Justices of the Supreme Court, including Arthur Goldberg, the widows of Justices and one son, Fred ^{Vinson} ~~Benson~~, Jr., and a sprinkling of eminent jurists for his special friends from around the country. Both Alabama Senators, ^{Lester} ~~John~~ Hill and John Sparkman. And then that ~~very special~~ delightful, perfect Hugo Black touch, his messenger and his cook! I have never been to dinner at the Justices home, but what when dinner was over, ^{with a delightful touch of} ~~the dinner and the~~ ceremony, he would escort us back to the kitchen and we would tell Elizabeth how good the corn bread or the turnip greens or the ^{dessert} ~~desert~~ was, and I would be saying to myself "only with a Southerner".

I asked one of the staff to have a photographer standing by. And when the receiving line was over, we gathered, all the ^{Black clan,} ~~black clan~~ together for numerous pictures. The immediate family, and then all the cousins, and then just the grandchildren, and everybody.

It was a warm, holiday spirit that this is a once-in-a-life-time event -- a spirit of celebrating of completion. I loved it! It was one of my happiest parties at the White House.

And then we went into the State Dining Room where everybody else was drinking and eating and talking all at once. What decades of things they had to talk about! It must have been a reunion for so many of them. Tom ^{Cochran} ~~Cochran~~ and Ben Cohen were there, and Tom's daughter Margaret Josephine, who is the Justice's last law clerk. I reminded Tom that it was at his own house to which

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I had gone for a celebration of a 25th anniversary of the Justice's arrival in Washington. And that was a very long time ago, indeed.

And then the toast began. The Vice President, so much in tune with the philosophy of this southern Senator and Justice, so warm of heart and quick of wit, tonight he was outdistanced because there was so much to say by those who had shared these years.

One of the Justice's law clerks announced a gift of a chair of law at his alma mater, the University of Alabama. I felt I saw Tom ^{Circumfer} ~~Cochran's~~ hand in this. And then another one, now the Dean of the University at ^{Law School} ~~Law School~~, accepted it for the School. And then the Justice himself got up to respond. Never did I wish more that we'd had a tape recording!

It was one of those times when you get caught up in a stream of listening and feeling and you think you are just living your life over and remembering events and people. He reminisced about the years he had spent here -- and they go back far beyond thirty, when he was a Senator, for something like 12 years, I believe. He talked about his feeling for his fellow Senators and Justices on the Court, and the changes of the Roosevelt years. And the time when President Roosevelt called him down to the White House to announce that he was going to put him on the Court. And all the changes since. There was a web of silence in the State Dining Room and a communion between all of the guests.

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~~I think~~ It was probably a long speech ^{last} ~~which~~ we would ^{have} ~~of~~ all liked more.

And when it was over, Elizabeth invited the entire crowd out to her house to continue the party. I dare say a lot of them went ^{with} the happy feeling of a hostess who thinks she is giving a good and a memorable evening to her guests and who had most emphatically enjoyed it herself ^I said good night to them all.

Never had there been so many Alabamians joined under the roof since I've been here. And about 8:15 I went up stairs where Jake and ^{Beryl} ~~Vera~~ Pickle were waiting for us. Lynda Bird had come in. She had been present for the first half of the party -- had met everybody -- and then ^{scintillating} ~~centalating~~, beautiful, left a stream of compliments behind her. And then she had gone on to a reception at the Colombian Embassy, I believe -- a part of her preparation of going down to see the Ship, "HOPE". I had asked the kitchen to take up a big platter of sandwiches and cookies and coffee to the solarium, and the Pickles and Lynda and I went up there and ^{christened} ~~christianed~~ the new bridge table, eating the sandwiches with one hand while we played bridge.

It was just the right, relaxing end for a day that had been busy and that I had tried to do my best in. Because now I could really take off my shoes, not mind what I said and relax in a good game.

The Pickles left about 11:30, and I went to bed feeling that I couldn't have ^{filled} ~~feared~~ more full my days while Lyndon was gone with those things that I don't do when he is here.