

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 1

It began my four-day trip into New England -- long looked forward to and a gem out of my years in the White House.

I was up very early -- before 7:00 -- with Jean Louis coming shortly after for a shampoo and set. And while I dried I read John Adams familiar letters to Abigail liking especially one written when he was in France in which he assured Abigail that he would return by summer and she would find him a most domestic husband, and his children whom he feared had been deprived of his presence while he attended to the business of the country. His thoughts had been corroded daily by his concern for them and his lack of being with them. They would then find him a constant companion. So men in public life have not changed in 200 years!

I kissed Lyndon goodbye a little past 9:00 and was off to the airport. Lee and Stew and George Hertzog were there, and we stood beside the plane for the now-familiar picture -- this time entitled "New England Now and Then" with a map of the four states that I would go to -- Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine. And the outline of our trip.

Liz had quite a crew of press. The old familiars -- Fran and Helen -- she distraught, almost tearful from time to time over the Arab-Israeli situation. Isabelle Shelton, Dorothy McCardle, a couple of Boston reporters, somebody from Venture magazine, familiar faces of the camera crew -- some 30 or so I would say. And we were off. Stew came in and sat by me. We had a light breakfast, and reviewed together the first day's happenings.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 2

Then a little before 11:00 we landed in South Weymouth, Massachusetts. And at the foot of the plane, there were Mayor and Mrs. James McIntyre of Quincy and the Republic Governor of the State -- John Volpe with Mrs. Volpe, she presenting a huge bouquet of red roses and the Mayor's 6-year old daughter, Elizabeth Ann, crisp and proper in white gloves gave me another big bunch of red roses so that my arms were loaded. The city's historian gave me a medallion; the fence was lined with children smiling and waving flags. There was one little group from a kindergarten who sang a song called "Lady Bird" to the tune of the calypso "Yellow Bird". A small crowd in all -- probably 300. And then quickly into the cars -- I riding with the Mayor and his wife -- and on the way in Elizabeth Ann carefully recited her prepared speech for me which unfortunately had gotten lost in the confusion of the arrival.

Along the way we passed several schools. They had turned out, and the children were lined up by the street. I rolled the window down and leaned out waving with that fresh, ebullient one has at the beginning of such a trip. And then we rolled down Adams Street -- properly named -- and up <sup>"Old House"</sup> in front of the [old house] where four generations of Adams' had lived, beginning with the second President of the United States who had bought it in 1787. Then the John Quincy Adams, the Charles Francis Adams. And last Brooks Adams, who had moved out in 1927.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 3

It was a long, low, white ~~clapboard~~ house with shutters and a brick wall. And a walk lined with huge lilacs.

I made my way through a crowd of cheering children and their parents -- some like me, tourists. Others probably neighbors from down Adams Street. Later the paper said a crowd of about 500. And then inside on the walk, Mr. Charles Francis Adams met me -- a courtly dignified handsome man with Mrs. Adams. I've heard that he's been head of the Republicans for Johnson in New England in '64.

Mrs. <sup>mine</sup>Wilhelena Harris conducted the tour through the house. She had been social secretary to the last of the Adams to live in it -- the Brooks Adams -- and was that marvelous mixture of someone who loved it, had the feel for it, and was steeped in history and the anecdote -- a real jewel of a tour conductor.

Stew and Lee and George Hartzog and I, with Mr. Charles Francis Adams accompanying us, walked slowly through this 236 year old house absorbing all that we could. What impressed me most? Here without doubt, the sense of ~~history~~ history that the Adams family had. They knew they were living right in the current of ~~history~~ history and they saved the physical evidence. During the Revolutionary War, they gave their <sup>center</sup> ~~spoons~~ spoons to be melted into bullets, and they saved the mold. And John Adams, when he signed the Treaty of Paris ending our war for independence, used a personal seal which is handed down to the eldest son, generation after

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 4

generation. And there it was in a case. Dorothy Territo would have loved them. And what catches the eye of plain John Q tourist -- me? For one thing, John Adams' traveling case which looked like a medium sized chest of drawers and accompanied him, I was told, on his travels between Quincy and Washington and to Paris and London. The top drawer was virtually a desk with an ink bottle and a place for stationery and pens etc. The next divided between a lavatory -- a place for shaving mug and brushes and a medicine chest. You could hear the quotations around the word "medicine", and I wondered if it would translate "wine".

And then below amazingly, a <sup>Toilet</sup> ~~toilet~~ seat! John Adams went first-class. And spread out in a long drawer was a brown silk dress beruffled in lace that Abigail Adams had worn to have her portrait painted by Gilbert <sup>Stuart</sup> ~~Stewart~~ and a scent bouquet that she had once clutched at parties in Paris they told us. And most impressive of all a suit that John Quincy Adams had ordered made for his presentation to Queen Victoria -- <sup>so</sup> splendid with gold braid that showed the oak leaf and the acorn pattern that appears in the Adams crest. It had cost some three or four hundred pounds in that day, but he certainly upheld the dignity of the United States.

And what did I really love the most -- what did my heart go out to? The huge lilacs -- almost trees now -- that were bending with fragrant purple blooms that Abigail Adams herself had planted. They go on living. A link with the second First Lady of our land.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 5

The most interesting room was the gentlemen's room with a desk used by four generations of Adams -- the one at which John Adams had conducted his long correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, ended not long before they both died on July 4th in 1826. And there was the wing chair in the corner where John Quincy Adams had posed for a portrait when he was 90 years old. This was the room where I wished the walls could talk. What conversations they must have heard. Many of the country's great had visited here in those days. And many of the events that molded our lives must have been discussed and decided on here. But no First Lady has been back since Mrs. John Quincy Adams returned in 1829.

I like the floor boards throughout the house, cut from virgin timber -- some of them 18 inches wide. They bespoke the richness of the land.

We went down to the Long Room for sherry, and there I met again and sorted out the members of the Adams family who made up the luncheon guests. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Charles Francis Adams, there was their darling daughter, Mrs. Abigail Adams Manny, and an Aunt, Mrs. Mary Ogden Abbitt and John Quincy Adams' cousins and members of the sixth generation. And the star of the show, Mrs. Abigail Adams Homens -- the great-great-granddaughter of the second American President -- who according to Nan Robertson upstaged the wife of the 36th today in a confrontation charged with history. And she was perfectly delightful.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 6

She was as spritely erect -- 88-year old <sup>? boy</sup> [back breed] Boston grand<sup>Dame</sup>son.

She wore a hearing aid, talked in a fog horn voice and ~~brandished~~ brandished a cane alarmingly in a house so filled with historic objects. In ~~fact~~ fact we hadn't been in the Long Room but a minute -- each of us having our sherry, mine in a red glass that had belonged to Abigail, several others in green glasses that had belonged to John Adams -- when suddenly there was a crash and a splatter and Mrs. Homens voice saying "Hell and damnation. I hope it wasn't historic!" I am sure it was. But it made the day for the newspaper women, and somehow it made us all feel lively and at ease. //

We went into the dining room -- 12 of us -- and gathered around a table underneath portraits of both the Adams Presidents for a luncheon of ~~consume~~ <sup>consume</sup> and lobster with tomatos stuffed with chopped peppers and celery. And cranberry ice and ginger waffers -- all recipes that were favorites of the Adams family through the years. We ate at John Adams' dining table on the <sup>Missen</sup> ~~Missen~~ china with the cornflower decoration and the borbin spray border that had belonged to the John Quincy Adams.

Abigail Adams herself had hemmed our 40-inch luncheon napkins, and we drank from wine glasses that Charles Francis Adams had owned. And the coffee cups had belonged to the latest occupant of the house, the Brooks Adams.

I was conscious every minute that this family as they bought and handed down must have been exceedingly aware of and prepared for history.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 7

I don't mean that they seemed pompous or self-important. They just seemed to know how important it all was -- the events that they helped shape.

I remarked something about the taste and care of Abigail Adams in selecting all of the beautiful china and silver. And Mrs. Homens replied that she was a very extravagant woman. She also pointed out the portrait of one of the later Mrs. Adams whom she had said had "brought all of the loot." That is she had brought some money into the family apparently which had enabled them to enlarge the house and purchase elegant things.

One of the most memorable moments was when I came upon two of the chairs, the <sup>incorrect - Bellamy's?</sup> belonges -- the original <sup>ones</sup> ~~ones~~ that Monroe had bought in Paris and that now graced the Blue Room. These had been used at the White House during his day, and until the time of ~~some~~ later President, I think probably Chester Arthur, who had sold them at auction on the White House grounds along with about 26 wagon loads of things. And the current member of the Adams family had very properly gone down to Washington, purchased them at the auction and transported them back to Massachusetts, <sup>So</sup> forethoughted ~~where~~ they and discerning. Mrs. Kennedy I was told quietly had made an <sup>earnest</sup> ~~earnest~~ attempt to get them for the White House. The Adams' had declined. But then Mr. Charles Francis Adams had paid a very generous sum to have them handsomely copied for the White House.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 8

I believe Mrs. <sup>Wilhelmina</sup> Harris will stand guard stoutly over any of the possessions of this house as long as she is here. <sup>So</sup> reverently does she love it.

Mrs. Homens asked me if I was a college woman. And when I told her I was she said it was the loss of her life that she hadn't been able to go off to college. She had in fact been educated by her two Uncles. She had just written a book entitled, "Educated by Uncles". Henry Adams, the writer, was one of them. Could she send me her book? I was delighted and looked forward to it.

As lunch ended I rose and proposed a toast to the memory of the second and sixth Presidents of the United States -- our gratitude that in their roots of strength and character, heaven bestowed the best of blessings on this country -- a play on words of John Adams' inscription that is above the mantel piece in the State Dining Room.

Charles Francis Adams replied with a toast to the President of the United States. And then we went out into the garden ~~for the~~ where the bridal wreath and the day lillies and the purple iris and the ~~lilac~~ were everywhere. And the <sup>peonies</sup> ~~planies~~ were coming along later -- great bunches of them. And there were lots of pictures on the gravel paths beneath the boxwood. They presented me with a cutting from the Yorke~~est~~ rose which Abigail herself had planted and which had come across the ocean in a three-month voyage. And I gave them a seedling from the John Quincy Adams Elm that grows on the White House lawn. He had planted it in 1826.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 9

I had also left inside a picture of me standing in front of the portrait of Abigail Adams in the Verm~~ail~~ Room in the White House.

We then went into the Library for coffee, and this was truly the first Presidential Library -- an imposing room lined to its high ceilings with the books in 11 languages that John Adams had owned and read and all succeeding members of the family. Most of them had beautiful leather bindings and tool work -- quite a few made in this country, in Nashville.

In describing this family I thought that one must truly use that over-worked and ill-fated word "intellectuals".

I said goodbye to all the Adams on the front porch and walk of the old house -- children with cameras at the ready were still leaning over the wall and grouped around the gate and into the car and off to the airport we were, still riding with the Mayor. He told me the delightful bit that a cleanup effort had preceded my visit to even this dignified and tidy community. Yesterday was trash day and the public works departments had been asked to pick everything up early.

We were back at South Weymouth by 2:30 and into the plane for Burlington. Always when we get into planes on these trips, there are light refreshments, coffee, frequently drinks, sandwiches, fruit. But this unlike others seems like a trip where we will eat -- really have time to eat.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 10

We arrived at the Burlington Airport. It was in the middle 80's. And my brown cotton suit -- the new one by Adele Simpson with the white blouse and black and white lining scarf -- was holding up beautifully. And there at the foot of the ramp were Phil and Joan Hoff and along the fence the smiling cheering flag-waving children. I shook hands along it for a few minutes before getting into the car for the motorcade to Mt. Mansfield. It was an hour's trip across as beautiful a country as ever I will see, along a highway that should have an award for design, for esthetic consideration of the countryside through which it winds. And winds is the word. It is no straight slash of concrete. There was a median strip most of the way, often with outcroppings of rock making it more picturesque. And we wound our way through the most verdant countryside -- ~~simple~~ gentle mountains rising on each side, open meadows with cows grazing, swift rushing streams with white birches and ferns carpeting the grounds below them, lilacs in the farm yards. And the most beautiful barns. I had the feeling that the men who built those barns must have loved them, <sup>2</sup>And they were good craftsmen. And they were delightfully varied. <sup>2</sup>And settled into the hillsides most companionably -- a very artistic relation with the land.

Governor Hoff was an interesting and articulate spokesman for his State -- it's economy, history and geography.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 11

Close to 4:30 we arrived at the ski lift at the foot of Mt. Mansfield, and there Governor and Mrs. King of New Hampshire whom I had seen recently in New York at the dinner, and Governor and Mrs. Curtis of Maine -- a very young, attractive couple, met me, along with Bill Youngman and Tom Corcoran. And of course the two bus loads of press. Jerry Kevett got into the ski lift with me, and I docilely took the blanket they handed me. I must learn to say "no". And we slowly began our ascent to the 4,000 foot top. It's like riding an open basket through the sky! But with a brace in front of me I felt quite safe. I had heard that from the top you could see three States and maybe even into Canada. But a haze hung over the mountains in spite of the warm sunshine, and they assured me it was not at its most spectacular best, <sup>but</sup> ~~was~~ lush, green, beautiful. Off on one ~~hill~~ was the house that Tom Watson owned. On top was a ski lodge from which skiers began their descent. It's a virtual skiers' heaven. I had a pang when I saw Tom Corcoran. I thought of two things. A first, sad -- that this was where he had brought Peggy for their honeymoon. They were at Speaker Rayburn's apartment many years ago when he came in all aglow -- his particular Irish ebullience embracing us all, and told us about it. And the other memory, sweet -- many years later when he had sent three of his children up here for a skiing holiday and he had invited Luci, aged about 10, to go along with them.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 12

We tasted sugar and snow which was hot maple syrup poured over a trough full of snow <sup>saved</sup> I was told from the winter. It hardens into little chewy rivulets which you pick up like spaghetti. It was delicious.

Then I elected to ride down in the chair lift -- about a 20 minute trip, again with Jerry -- a gorgeous view of the panorama. But not in the least enticing me to learn to ski.

Down at the foot of the mountain we went straight to our lodge -- an attractive private cottage. And as soon as I opened the door I came face to face with a Grandma Moses original -- a charming thing to live with. It was really a good long rest.

<sup>Chapowick</sup>  
Betty ~~Chapel~~ Wicky came in and gave me a rub while I reviewed the guest list for the evening. And then I dressed in my flower print with the lime ~~Alaskan~~ coat and left with Phil and Joan Hoff for the Crafts Show, which I felt was more planned for the occasion than actually indigenous <sup>to</sup> of these mountains -- a blacksmith, a glass blower, a pottery wheel, a batik maker, a cabinet maker -- interesting, varied, and very likely enriching to the lives of those who created the things <sup>but</sup> that the product of the 1960's, I thought, rather than the remembered skills practiced in these hills for generations and generations.

It was as hot as the blacksmiths' forge -- the weather. The camera lights were bright and the crowds thick. And here I was in

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 13

New England suffering from the heat! I finally got into a room quiet enough to have a drink, and who should I see but Erich and Ann Leinsdorf. He was just back from conducting a symphony in Tel Aviv. He told me he had asked our Embassy there just to get to him and notify him when it was time for him to leave. He could not ~~figure~~ <sup>gauge</sup> the situation. He simply wanted to be told. And they had telephoned him in the middle of one night that it was time to go. He left almost immediately -- just hours before the shooting began.

Senator and Mrs. Thomas McIntyre had come from New Hampshire. The three Governors and their wives were my hosts -- the Hoffs, the Kings, the Curtis, along with the Mt. Mansfield Lodge itself which is a part I believe of Bill Youngman's business interest. And among the guests were Dr. and Mrs. Paul Dudley White -- he quite spry and charming in spite of his years. And I was never so flattered in my life as when later he asked me for my autograph. And ~~Babe~~ <sup>Babe</sup> von Trap of "The Sound of Music" was there. And a small group of guests -- possibly a hundred or so -- from New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont who were interested in arts and crafts or conservation.

We had dinner at Spruce House -- I sitting between Governor Hoff and Governor King who proved a most amusing dinner companion. Watching Liz bustling around tending to the press, he said, "There goes Liz like an Israeli General leading her troops."

The menu was pure New England -- Maine lobster cocktail. Except for breakfast, I don't think there was a meal without lobster during these

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, June 9, 1967

Page 14

four days. But I could never get enough. And then New England clam chowder and roast Vermont turkey. And ending with something I've never had -- New Hampshire Indian pudding, as primitive as it sounds but good.

During dinner Governor King told me that he was a solid Administration man in favor of Lyndon's policies -- that he thought the much publicized wave of unpopularity was more smoke than fire. He has a rather bland exterior, but surprising humor and freshness as you get to talking to him. In fact I expect he is something of a Maverick.

After dinner I met the craftsmen and gave certificates to each of them. And then there was a program -- unavoidably too long since there were three Governors present and each made a speech. And also our actual host, Bill Youngman. And then there was Skitch Henderson and some chamber music -- a medley of revolutionary songs down through the Civil War to today.

So it was nearly 12:00 when I returned to the Lodge -- weary and soaked full of the emotions and scenes of the day, and remembering two little incidents that showed how in all this peace and beauty we are still so close to the world's troubles. Erich Leinsdorf leaving Tel Aviv a few hours before the shooting, and Bill Youngman in Hong Kong in the streets alone seeing an angry mob coming and actually running as fast as he could until around a corner he was out of their range and into his car and gone.