

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday, June 11, 1967

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I was up early and downstairs for breakfast close to 8:00, coming upon Mary Rockefeller in a small room of the Victorian mansion that she had pointed out to me the night before as the Prayer Room where her mother and the family had gathered to read the Bible and pray. And there she was quietly at a table, her Bible in her hand. I felt awkward and intruding and admiring all at the same time. She is a rare woman -- gentle and earnest and so unassuming. Laurence<sup>a</sup> is very lucky to have found her.

We went into breakfast and it was hearty and delicious including blue berry pancakes, and naturally Vermont maple syrup -- hot with melted butter. I thought of Lynda's maxim, "If you're going to be a bear -- be a grizzly", and ate as though I were going to spend the day plowing those rocky hills. // And then we rode to Plymouth to the home of President Coolidge following a swift ~~and~~ rushing stream through a little valley -- a part of the watershed that's going to be cleaned up by the project we are celebrating this afternoon. The city of Woodstock has voted ~~to issue~~ a bond issue which in collaboration with State and Federal funds and planning will result in some 36 miles of clear and unpolluted and scenic waterways in the years to come.

It was so fresh and green and you could understand how the State of Vermont got its name -- naturally "green mountain" Vermont. And I never had thought of it until this trip.

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Part of its charm to me was that not even Johnson City, Texas was more rural, more off the beaten path, than this little green valley. And we were going to the home of the 30th President of the United States.

We arrived about 9:30 in the tiny little hamlet with white clapboard houses and store and post office. It had all jelled in time -- and I am sure it had not grown by five citizens in the last 50 years.

A crowd of possibly 200 -- many children -- were gathered in front of the Calvin Coolidge homestead -- white clapboard with shutters and a front porch with Victorian turned columns that might have come from the same design on Lyndon's house at Johnson City. It was in fact so reminiscent that it went straight to my heart, although I had thought of no ~~parallel~~ <sup>parallel</sup> before between Lyndon and Calvin Coolidge.

John Coolidge, the President's son, dignified, impressive, pleasant, was there to meet us. We went up on the porch -- Phil and Joan Hoff and Stew and Lee Udall, the Rockefellers and I and several of the local people. And there was a brief, pleasant ceremony, John Coolidge presiding and Stew and Phil Hoff making little speeches and then my words -- no notes, just a natural response to this situation on visiting the home of a President -- where the land had made its mark on a man, has molded his devotion to duty, his capacity for hard work, his dislike of ostentation, and his ability to express him self in terse phrases. As I looked at it (Nan Robertson) I said perhaps some of you who have been with us on our trips to Texas may

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find something reminiscent of my own husband's home there. The two men could not be more different. But there is a link in the backgrounds that were singularly appealing and in the homes. And at the end I gave a National Park Service plaque designating the Calvin Coolidge homestead as a registered National Historic Landmark -- Nash and I placing it, and it was quite heavy, on the cement foundation that had been prepared.

Then we went through the house. It is open from April through October, and has about 35,000 visitors each year -- a surprising number *for* its remoteness. They give out a detailed and interesting guidebook. But visitors only look into and do not walk through the rooms, and apparently there is no bevy of hostesses.

I was ~~interested~~ interested in the woodshed indoors; chopping the wood for the kitchen stove had been one of Calvin Coolidge's jobs as a young boy. And indeed there was little progress between the kitchen stove of his day and of Lyndon's. There was a buggy and a sled for winter in the Carriage house. All are attached to the main house because of the heavy Vermont winters. And the sparseness, the frugality of the furnishings impressed me knowing that this was the home of a leading citizen of this little community in that day.

There was a kerosine lamp on the table on which Calvin Coolidge took his oath of office, a stereopticon, a horse hair sofa, a yellowed Boston newspaper of 1924 with the headlines "Keep Down Expenses is

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Coolidge's Exhortation". Stew Udall read one of his campaign promises from the paper -- "Waste no time, words nor public funds". And I was intrigued by the familiarity of a sentence from one of his political pamphlets "a man who practices what he preaches -- a square deal to all."

I told John Coolidge I knew my daughter Lynda would love to hear him tell what it was like in his day in the White House. He said to my surprise that he had the Secret Service with him then too. He had been off in college most of the time and they accompanied him there also. I told him how much I liked; and all the tourists liked, the portrait of his mother. And I gave him a picture of me taken in front of her portrait to leave at the house. And then a little past 10:00 we were driving back over the lovely valley roads to Woodstock, arriving at the first Congregational Church which might have come off a post card -- so pure and white it was, its slim steeple rising against the green hills at the end of the street. Its bell was made by Paul Revere. There were three others <sup>and bells</sup> in this little town. And it was here that Laurence and Mary Rockefeller were married 33 years ago.

I sat in the pew with them. One of the most delightful things during this whole visit is the way that they move around town and they wave and speak to people, calling them by their first names, "Hello ~~John~~ John there John. Where is Laura?" And people answer back.

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The sign out front had said (of the church), "Gathered - May, 1773 - Building Completed - 1808".

The music was lovely. I recognized one of the dinner guests from the night before in the choir. There were familiar hymns -- "Beneath the Cross of Jesus". It was an altogether charming service, and we were out before 12:00. When I spoke to the Minister, he told me that his 8-year old son had said, "Why don't we invite Mrs. Johnson home for lunch?"

It would have been an easy little town to fall in love with. We walked down the street to the Woodstock Historical Association -- a typical white clapboard house, green shutters, lilac bordered. And the curator took us through, showing us their 200 year accumulation of colonial furniture, and very much a touch of the Rockefellers, though they would be the last to say it. In the basement there was a small theatre given by her mother for community gatherings. And behind the house a beautifully landscaped lawn leading down to the river. And there was the man that had done the planning and the work on the landscaping -- how typical of the Rockefellers to know him well, to have been a part of planning it as well as for paying for it.

It was a little past 12:00 when we went out front for the most picturesque adventure of the day -- the ride in the Stanley Steamer -- vintage 1911, owned by a young boy who was working his way through college by taking tourists for a drive around Woodstock. In fact he had a fleet of about three -- he and his brother and their father. But before

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we walked out of the Woodstock Historical Association we donned our duster bonnets -- mine a dream of a hat with pink roses and a wide brim and a pink chiffon that tied under the chin. This is one of Liz' inspired ideas I think. And each of us had one that was extraordinarily becoming. Mary's so quaint and demure it seemed to have been made for her. And Lee's -- perky and saucy.

The brass was shiny, the running boards high, and the seats higher, and the horn let off a blast just like a train -- no wonder, it was steam.

The Rockefellers and Udalls and Hoff's were in the two backseats, and Curtis Burden the driver and I in the front where I could see the panel. The speedometer said "0 - 60 miles per hour". Yes, he had driven it that fast on the highway. But it didn't register unless you went at least 15.

To get into the spirit of the day there were several horse and buggys around the village green. And I flinched as we approached them at a merry clip the flotilla of three Stanley Steamers. Curtis eased by without blowing his horn. The horses stood still, and we breathed a sigh of relief. Mary Rockefeller was telling us how when her mother first got a car she had asked all the ~~folks~~ folks who worked for her and the neighboring farmers to come up with their horses to her house and then show it to them, driving it quietly around to get them used to it.

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This little village of Woodstock in the foothills of the Green Mountains is built around the village green which is the unique shape of a battle ship, and along the bank of the swift, rushing ~~Green~~ River.

We <sup>went</sup> around the village green past the rambling white clapboard Woodstock Inn with its long veranda. It looks like the grandfather of all summer resort hotels, past the Woodstock Historical Society and the White Cupboard and the DAR house and museum -- both built in 1807 -- and all the little white steeple churches with their Paul Revere bells. And the Town Hall where we had been welcomed the afternoon before. And the little circle where the places of business are bright with pink and red petunias, and along elm-boarded streets where the houses range between pre-revolutionary and pre-Civil War. In fact the population of Woodstock, now 3,000, was also 3,000 at the time of the Civil War. And past the sides of the railroad depot built by Mary Rockefeller's grandfather, Frederick Billings. He had put the whole little railroad up here when he had bought his home here about the time of the Civil War. It was he who built the Northern Pacific Railroad and for whom Billings, Montana is named. The railroad has long ago ceased to run, and the tracks were finally torn out. But you can still see the embankment as it winds ~~it's way~~ its way along the stream. And the depot has become a part of the recreation center.

We stopped at the Woodstock Country Club -- another of the many marks of the Laurence Rockefellers. It has been built by them within the

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last few years and is an attractive modern place, and they know the mangers by their first names.

And then we drove back to Laur<sup>a</sup>nce and Mary's home which is called <sup>the</sup> "Mansion". And all along the way people waved, and Mary and Laur<sup>a</sup>nce called back a familar neighborly greeting. And so ended one of the most colorful rides of my career as First Lady -- "whis<sup>le</sup> stop" <sup>train</sup> rubber raft, the Burleson ski lift, and now a Stanley Steamer.

We freshened up and then walked down for lunch to the home of Mary's sister -- Mrs. Eth<sup>a</sup>n Allen Hitchcock. It was an old farm house that had been attached to the Mansion as the home of the farmer-in-residence. I am sure -- the foreman we would call it. Now Mary's sister and her husband, whose ancestor <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ indeed Eth<sup>a</sup>n Allen of the Green Mountain Boys, have done it over with that bright colored deft touch -- good paintings, a sprinkling of antiques, books. It was a welcoming house. There was a group of about 18 or 20 on the front porch having bloody marys and hors d'oeuvres, looking out across a beautiful meadow to the mountains in the distance.

Mrs. Hitchcock took me through her house. There was one especially delightful room called the "Buttery" which was practically octagonal. I don't know what a "Buttery" is in an old fashioned New England farm house, but ~~know~~ it's been done over as a small sitting room with bright yellow walls and gay chintzes and books and it says "come in and linger". Lunch



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was buffet -- lobster casserole. I would have been lonesome without lobster by this time. And in addition, New England baked beans and very delicious they were. Once more I ate without thought of weight.

Mr. Hitchcock told me some reminiscences about his ancestor.

One delightful one was when George Washington appointed him as Regiment head of the Green Mountain Boys, and he wrote in his diary, "I must adopt a strict <sup>regiman</sup> ~~Regiman~~ of diet and exercise to fit myself worthily for this responsibility."

Back at the mansion I had a few minutes rest and then had my hair combed out and was dressed by 3:00 in my yellow Ben Zuckerman -- no thought of the coat today with it because the weather was steaming hot and great thunderheads rolled up across the mountains. And if we had been at home I would have said we would have a rain in 30 minutes. But it held off for the reception.

I walked out under the long gallery that encircles the house and looked down across the expanse of green that descends to the rushing river and is bordered by the high beautiful trees. There were several hundred of the Rockefeller neighbors -- <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ select<sup>e</sup>man of Woodstock and neighboring communities, State officials, conservationists, personal friends. Among them Dan Kiley, the landscape architect who is working on the Mall in Washington, Bill Youngman and his wife, the guests I had met at the luncheon and the night before -- a beautiful setting, the best of what

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conservationists are talking about preserving for their grandchildren.

Mount Tom rising on our right, the ~~Otoquechee~~ <sup>Otoquechee</sup> rushing in front of us between its green bordered banks and under covered bridges.

Laurence<sup>a</sup> presided -- briefly, quickly, delightfully -- with his most remarkable brand of crisp business-like efficiency, something I can only describe as humility, <sup>and</sup> in a sort of a little boy quality of "isn't it wonderful all of this is happening?". A very engaging man.

Phil Hoff made a speech -- Stew Udall did. General Cassidy, the head of the Army Engineers up from Washington who is doing the conservation work in Otoquechee Valley. And then I. My speech was two-fold -- a salute to George Perkins Marsh whose home this was for many years, and who is in fact a sort of a father of conservation in the United States writing a hundred years ago about man and nature -- the effect of man on his environment -- erosion -- so many of things that concern us today. And second, a salute to the present inhabitants of this house. I was very earnest when I described Laurence Rockefeller as America's leading citizen conservationist today -- from the Grand <sup>tetons</sup> ~~Pecans~~ to the Virgin Islands -- and here in your valley -- he has made conservation and recreation his life work.

The real thrust of the speech it seemed to me was to applaud local initiative because here in this watershed that is what it is taking -- the willingness to vote a bond issue, to search out and combine State assistance and Federal assistance and bring them into their own planning and hopefully

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in a couple of decades to come up with 36 miles of clean, beautiful streams -- unpolluted -- that would be an invitation for tourists for recreation -- which in a measure it already is of course. And very importantly for light science oriented industries bringing with them their sizeable payrolls as a bulwark for the State's economy.

I got through it all right. It was a rather good speech. And at the end I put on the house the plaque designating it as a National Landmark. On the chimney high above was the date 1806, and close by was a window in colored tiffany glass of one hand passing a torch to another hand. Laurence had told me that they liked to think that that was the older generation passing on the x torch of learning, ~~culture~~, conservation, whatever wisdom they had, to the younger generation.

Then I went down with Mary preparing to walk across the lawn and shake hands with as many guests as possible. But suddenly we found ourselves in an impromptu receiving line which included Laurence and the Governor and Joan. And everyone filed by us -- all 500 I believe. And just as the last one passed, the rain began to splatter! And so I went upon the porch to sit down with a couple of reporters and described to them at Liz' request my feelings about this trip. So x the reception broke up rather rather quicker than we had planned with a brisk shower which relieved the heat. I never thought of a heat wave in Vermont, but indeed I had been hotter than I had remembered since childhood, <sup>so</sup> completely has air-conditioning

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taken over in the southwest.

Then I went upstairs, stretched out, had a rub by Betty <sup>Chapowski</sup> ~~Chapel~~  
~~Wicky~~. What a luxury it is to take her along on this trip! And then  
dressed in flat-heel shoes, and ~~walked~~ walked with Mary and Laurence<sup>a</sup>  
up the pine bordered path and across a meadow to a little rustic cottage  
which had been built by Mary's mother as a sort of a retreat she said  
and which now is a guest house and occupied this weekend by their  
daughter and son-in-law and <sup>four</sup> month old baby who had driven several  
hundred miles from the school in Connecticut where he is working on a  
Ph. D. in a Volkswagon -- just the three of them -- the baby in a little  
basket like a <sup>paper</sup> ~~paper~~. The young mother -- daughter of all this wealth --  
<sup>padding</sup> ~~padding~~ patting around in a casual shift and a big smile just like any other young  
mother. I don't know why it should be so continually surprising to me.  
Perhaps other people look at Luci and think the same things. And in a way  
we have something quite in common.

Luci has with grace and honesty I think and delightful humor gotten  
over the obstacle of being the President's daughter. She and Pat are just  
another young married couple, absorbed into Austin life now. And I am  
sure the Rockefellers have for many more years -- even for generations --  
had the same sort of problem. And they have lived with it with flying colors.  
This particular daughter has in a way turned away from material things  
Laurence told me. She seriously considered giving her life to some kind

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of church work. I think he and Mary must have been relieved when she married the gentle, studious looking young man who is incidentally a Catholic who is pursuing his ~~xxx~~ studies at Wesleyan College.

Mary held the baby who at four months has quite a personality. Really a pretty baby. We sipped iced tea and looked at the Japanese art works of Laurence's father, John D. Rockefeller, that adorned the walls of this cottage. They had been brought there when the old house that the Rockefellers owned somewhere else was dismantled. Then we walked back through the thick pines and across the meadow to the Mansion to dress for dinner. There were about 16 of us, including Walt Rostow who is now <sup>a</sup> house guest, and the Rockefellers had very thoughtfully asked Nash. And of course the Hoffs and the Udalls and Ethen Allen Hitchcock and the Bill Youngmans.

We had caviar -- never do I remember a trip where I ate so many good things. While I huddled in a corner with Walt and two other guests joined us and I listened to a resumé of the last few days in Washington -- what's happening in the Middle East from which I had been so peculiarly, so happily segregated since Friday morning. I am so grateful that he is with Lyndon, so grateful for his life's blood that he is pouring into this job. But of course it is for the country and not for Lyndon particularly that he is doing it which makes it all the more worthy. But I can't get over a sense that he has a personal feeling toward us. Elspeth couldn't

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come with him. She has a strep throat.

At dinner, Mary gave a very natural, simple, endearing little grace. My admiration for her grows. And at the end there was wine and toasts and more ~~toasts~~ toasts -- funny, serious. Finally even I gave one for Laurence and Mary.

And then having discovered that they have a bowling alley which is in a little house called the <sup>Belvedere</sup> "Bellvader" which had been press headquarters and looks like a Hanzel and Grettel house in the woods with gingerbread cutouts, I asked if we might have a bowling game. Stew Udall had been disappearing at odd hours to get a tennis game, and when Walt came he had done the same thing. And I wanted to add my bit that this Administration through and through was all for physical fitness. Besides on a trip like this, I hunger for exercise. I eat and think and try to give out with response and conversation, and I am drenched -- saturated -- with emotions, scenery, feelings. But I do not get much physical exercise. Yes indeed. They would be glad to. Mary found me some of her tennis shoes and 8 or 10 of us walked up to the <sup>Belvedere</sup> "Bellvader". We took sides -- four and four -- and I played a very bad game with a ball far too heavy for me. But I enjoyed it immensely.

There was an ice cream bar in the place -- even some beer began to flow later. Walt Rostow turned out to be a whiz, just as he is excellent at tennis. And it was for me the perfect ending for a marvelous day.

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But it was not in fact the end. When we returned to the Mansion and I began to say goodnight and the other guests to leave Laurence<sup>c</sup> said, "Come with me a minute", in that tone of voice that this is something special I want to show you. And I found myself going downstairs with Laurence and Nash and Liz, down through the kitchen, down, down, into what I thought was going to be the wine cellar. It turned out to be the most unique sight of my life -- a fallout shelter for 100 people! It appeared to me to be better equipped than the one under the White House. There were stacked bunks -- either two or three in a stack, depending on the height of the ceiling -- stores of canned goods, a few games and Bible and writing material -- very compact toilet facilities, a generator, water storage, even an escape hatch -- with Laurence rather <sup>wright</sup> ~~riley~~ explaining that if for any reason you want to try it outside you can turn these screws and go up. They began it he said when they received a letter from President Kennedy -- one sent out I gather to many, many citizens urging their consideration for protective measures in case of fallout. And Laurence explained that he believed that if a war did come that not everybody would be killed. There would be somebody who would survive. And it would be those who had tried, who had made an effort, who had planned.

Walt Rostow said, "If the world is going to start over, it couldn't do better than to start with the Rockefellers."

And on that note, the day ended.