

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 1

It was a very full day. When there is a State Dinner -- especially in the summertime -- I am likely to crowd around it as many appointments as the day will hold because I know I will be in town. And especially this summer when I am trying to save out periods of three or four days back-to-back to be in Texas with Luci or with our house project.

At 9:00 I was in the Treaty Room for a Library meeting with Dr. Grover and Dorothy Territo. I could very well call July "the month of the Library". I had absorbed a lot of my hours and thoughts. This was the first of two at which Dr. Grover will meet with Lyndon's Executive Assistants to cue them in on the status and the philosophy of the Library and how they can help. Harry McPherson and Walt Rostow and John Roche and Bromley Smith and Charles Schultze and Doug Cater and Joe Califano and George Christian and Marvin Watson were all grouped around the Cabinet table. I was surprised that we could get this many of them together at once. Each of these will have a hand in the eventual worth of the Library, and I want to cue them in early and enthusiastically. I excused myself after about 45 minutes -- I'll get a chance at the second part of it tomorrow -- and went to the swimming pool alone for 30 laps and then to Jean Louis for a shampoo ~~xxx~~ and set -- all of it with that spirit of rush, rush, rush because I had to be back at the White House at 12:40 to dress for the State Luncheon for the President of Iceland, Mr. Asgeirsson. I found that Lyndon was having a private talk with him in the Yellow Room. And when I was dressed

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 2

and the rest of the Icelandic party arrived -- Mr. Asgeirsson, a widower, has as his hostesses his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Thorhalla Asgeirsson -- pretty, blond, amiable -- we all went into the Yellow Room and joined Lyndon and the President. Sadly I must say I had done less of my homework than on any State visit. Usually, "homework" consists of looking at my National Geographic world maps, finding the country, fitting it in mentally with all those that surround it, reading the State Department briefings about the country and the little biographies about the visitors themselves, checking to see if they by any chance sent a wedding present to Luci. And most especially going back over my memories of my visit to that country if I've been there. Very important is to go into the Yellow Room ahead of time and see our gifts lined up -- for a few, hopefully smooth and interesting words that describe these gifts. This time I give myself a C- for my preparation. I stumbled through a description of the gifts -- one of them was a hand-painting of the modest home in which the Asgeirssons had lived in Chevy Chase when they worked here for several years with the Embassy. The most unique gift at last and totally undescribed by me was a decoupage lamp by Andre Lindow -- antique prints of fish placed inside a glass globe, handsomely mounted and with a handsome shade -- a really excellent gift for a fisherman from a country that lived by fish.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 3

We went down the Grand Staircase as "Hail to the Chief" sounded, bringing my heart right up into my throat always. Then pictures at the foot of the steps, and then into the line for what was really a very interesting guest list. Dean and Virginia were there and Jane and Orville Freeman from the Cabinet. And from the Senate, two of my New England friends -- the Winston Proutys and the Thomas McIntyres -- and the William Spongs from Virginia. A sizeable group from the House, including our friends the Abe Kazens, And the young and attractive Lee Hamiltons from Indiana.

One sad note was with our own Ambassador -- former Governor Karl Rolvaag. I asked how his wife was. She's been desperately sick ever since they reached Iceland. It was not diagnosed for days and days. It must have been a frightful time for them. But now he feels that she is recovering and in weeks will be herself again.

Betty Furness was there with the man she is going to marry. And General Walt, back from Viet-Nam, his ~~barrow~~<sup>barrow</sup> chest loaded with ribbons -- a very impressive, tough looking man -- but with that certain air of gentleness in dealing with women that often goes with the strongest men.

Frequently you get more acceptances from those in the world of entertainment for luncheons than for dinners, though luncheons do not have the same brilliance and <sup>clarity</sup>~~eclair~~ as dinners. It's simply that they can't miss

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 4

their own performances at night without considerable loss. So we had  
<sup>the</sup> Laudi Linyer, the singer and the Peter Neros, the pianist, and the Rip  
Tornes -- she's actress Geraldine Page. And another actress, Eileen  
<sup>the</sup> Heckart.

From Texas there were the Jake Hamons and the Dee Kellys  
and my good friends the Louis Shanks -- all ~~five~~ of whom had been  
house guests the night before. And our real fun together had been at  
dinner and the long twilight on the Truman Balcony.

The Bob Andersons -- former Secretary of Treasury, former  
practically everything -- and his wife Ollie had been our house guests too.  
Bob was busy today, but Ollie came to the luncheon, and I am sure carefully  
eyeing the White House to see the changes that Mrs. Kennedy had made.  
She had expressed herself pretty forthrightly about them the night before.

Mrs. Jake Hamon likes the screen and stage, supports Dallas  
Theatre and knows a lot of the people. So when I sent in the guest list  
to her I had marked the names of those who were coming today and I had  
suggested to some of the aides that they made sure they met. And the  
young Dee Kellys were having the time of their life. But nobody surpassed  
my friend Louis Shanks in enjoying it I believe. And that made me feel  
warmly happy.

Astronauts Joe Engle and Alfred Werdin who had recently returned  
from Iceland where they had been exploring the terrain because it was

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 5

similar to what they might land on in the moon were guests, and also Professor and Mrs. Paul Bower who was the recipient of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon. In fact there were several businessmen with relations to Iceland -- the airlines especially.

Horace and Mary Vee were there. And Hester Beall Provinsen who has done so much for me in trying to make my speaking voice more acceptable, more winning, in all things you profit from work. And she is one of the many folks who has worked with me to improve me in this job I'm in.

I always try to include in these affairs some of my own personal people that I'm obligated to. Dillon Ripley was present. And the Director of the Guggenheim Museum, Mr. Harvard Arnison of Icelandic descent. And the usual quota of educators. This time one from Talladega College, Alabama. I always have a fellow feeling for the Mississippians or Alabamans I see here -- white or black. Mrs. Thor Thors whose husband had been Iceland's Ambassador here for so long that he was right next to the Dean until his death. And a sizeable contingent of newsmen, including the Jack Horners and the David Lawrences and the Bob Spivacs.

A pleasant lunch of 136. I found it slow going talking with the President. And alas, my chief memory of my visit to his country was not the sort you can discuss. It was of the suit of the walrus hide

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 6

~~think~~ that had been a present for Lynda Bird. She had been supposed to put it on for picture-taking purposes. Alas, a 5-foot, 10-inch girl must have been simply beyond the thinking of Icelanders because although they were supposed to have had her dimensions, they had made it for a girl who must have been about 5 feet, 4". And the picture of Lynda getting into it is still hilarious in my mind. It was stiff as a board, she struggled manfully. We all talked about greasing her with butter. And finally we all just collapsed and leaned against the walls of the room holding our sides with laughter while she struggled and twisted and wrestled, and finally looking somewhat like the "Hunchback of Notre Dame", managed to zip it up and present a gallantly smiling face for the photographers while the rest of us stood around composing our faces and our manners as best we could. Actually, I always enjoy State Dinners and State Luncheons. And as for the luncheons I particularly regret that there is so little time to really visit with the guests since there is no entertainment afterward.

Bess works hard, and I help her, at seating people with those that they will be congenial with, sparked by, interested in. And we try to divide up the celebrities to give everyone something to talk about when they go home. But it was over a little before 3:00. And back up on the second floor I was at work on the telephone and at the desk, going over the reception list for Thursday afternoon -- the Historic Preservation Committee -- adding some of my own personal preservationists. It is

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 7

getting to be one of my major interests these days. And then at 4:00 in the Yellow Oval Room I had some of our Ambassadors' Wives for tea. Mrs. Hernandez who is going to Paraguay. And I had Punta del Este to talk about and how well Lyndon and President Stroessner had gotten along. And since she was from New Mexico, we hit a congenial note on Santa Fe and the mountains and the "Golden Aspen". And then there was Donna Hayes -- Mrs. John Hayes -- on her way back to Switzerland after a trip to the States for the graduation of her daughters. But by all means the most talkative one, who really kept us all intrigued, was Mrs. Howard Cattam whose husband was our Ambassador to Kuwait. She talked very easily of that little country -- so unique, the country of sand and poverty until a few decades ago when oil was discovered. And now it is exorbitantly rich, and apparently having chosen the course of devoting most of the money to education and hospitals and roads and people-oriented services. The philosophy, the leadership, the "how do they do it", interests me very much. And we talked of Selma <sup>Sheikh</sup> ~~Shake~~ whom Mrs. Cattam had known quite well.

// Later in the afternoon I went out in the grape arbor -- the clusters are growing -- still green -- and in August they will be ripe. And Warrie Lynn came and sat with me, And I signed reams of Library letters. And Ashton came out and we worked on mail. And then I went up to the Truman Balcony -- my other favorite summer spot -- and Dorothy Territo

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, July 18, 1967

Page 8

and I had an hour's session on additional Library letters. Then to the bowling lanes alone for two games -- not much fun, but I must, must have exercise. I revel in feeling fit, and rebel against the encroach~~es~~ of weariness or old age.

Later I thought about the interview tomorrow with Henry Branden and tried to organize my own thinking. What did I do with my spare time? What did I love? How did Lyndon's being in the presidency change me? How did I look at my participation in the whole beautification-conservation work? You can pretty well predict the questions that they will ask. You can also try to insert others that they do not ask if you want to explain yourself better or to come across as a more whole person. <sup>#</sup> It was one of those late nights for Lyndon, and our house guests had gone. I had not been able to say goodbye to them. But we had had such a good visit last night and a moment at lunch. One of the amenities of this house I shall always remember with pleasure is having overnight guests -- the opportunity perhaps to give them something to remember and to share some hours of real conversation with them. And a very varied lot they have been. //