

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, August 26, 1967

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It was a day of such breadth as I will only know during this White House stay. The dedication of half a million dollar Library, a session with architect decorators and painters at the Ranch, and an arrival at Mt. Vernon at the witching hour of 4:30 a.m.

It began reasonably late with Mary bringing me up coffee to the Gay Room about 8:30. I had spent the night all alone in the house. I like it occasionally. I did a quick walk through the new construction, and then dressed and left for Kerrville for 3-1/2 wonderful hours seeing something great happen to the hill country.

. Mr. and Mrs. Howard Butt and a whole aggregation of Butts and the Mayor met me in front of the Library at the stroke of 11:00. I was so glad I came. John was not there. He was still in Africa. And Lyndon couldn't come. And so I was the only one of the honored guests from afar at the dedication. They are a very small lion, sort of speak. The building was a gem -- round, made of white Texas limestone, great expanses of glass, beautifully sited on the banks of the Guadalupe River with a view of the ancient knarled live oaks and the feathery cypress and the clear waters and the low rolling line of the hills beyond that the Indians left only a hundred years ago. It cost a half a million and it is the gift of the Butt family called very graciously "Butt-Holdsworth Library". Mrs. Butt was the Holdsworth. She's a pink and ivory lady, gentle and fragile looking and I expect very strong. And he, owner of a

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chain of grocery stores across Texas, wanted to return some of his wealth to the hill country from which he had come.

The ceremony took place on the round balcony overlooking the river with quite a few hill country folks gathered below on the terraces and all throughout the Library. The Butt family runs to preachers, and the invocation was by young Charles Butt. I believe he's the one who is a member of Billy Graham's preaching entourage. And the benediction was by very young Howard E. Butt III, while a whole galaxy of Butts and Holdsworths beamed from the platform, and various city and county officials made speeches of gratitude. And Mr. Howard Butt himself introduced me for a speech very short that I could really throw my heart into. I read it, but for once I believe it was almost as good as if I had talked it. And I looked straight into the eyes of first one youngster on the front row and then another, trying to establish that line of communication that makes a speech worth something.

The crowd was full of people I knew -- State Senator Dorsey Handeman and Congressman O. Clark Fisher. Margaret Drasty with whom I used to go to the University. Later I arranged for us to get a picture done together. Mrs. Weinert, who weathers the years like a trooper,

When the ceremony was over Mr. Butt escorted me down the steps toward the river, and there on a terrace below delightfully shaded

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by live oaks and with stone retaining walls that made great places for children to sit and read on a summer afternoon. There was a familiar sight -- the hole in the ground, the tree, and a shovel. I went to work while the cameras clicked. And then Bill Crook who is head of the VISTA program in Washington made the best speech of the day to my thinking, about this Administration's drive to retain the natural beauty of the countryside and to bring it to the hearts of the cities.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Butt took me through the Library, stopping every few minutes to introduce members of their family or officials or folks that had had something to do with the Library -- artists, decorators, stonemasons. And with every step my admiration rose. It didn't take just money to build this Library. It took love and taste and a great deal of creativity. There was decoupage in the children's area that had delightful little scenes from Kiplings story, and the Pied Piper and Jack and the Bean Stalk. And lots of window seats with pillows and a gorgeous view of the river and the hills where a child could curl up with a book and spend happy hours. And outside one of the oak trees had a sign: "The house at Poo Corner". And when you looked down to the wall and the steps below, every now and then you saw a little tile with scenes of one of the Poo characters -- one was Poo doing his stoutness exercises.

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All around the circular interior high on the wall were quotations -- all favorites of Mrs. Butt selected by her I understand. My eyes went straight to the one from Thomas Wolff about "To every man his chance, his shining golden chance..." There was a mural -- the history of the hill country -- and there were mosaics. The place is alive with creative details -- some indigenous -- that speak of the country -- all interesting -- all the work of love. My admiration of the Butts rose with every step. And not the least of these triumphs was to find all of these creative people. And most of them were very local; the hill country or Corpus Christi. The real triumph of the place though to me was the landscaping. Mrs. Butt told me as we walked down toward the river that they had preserved and planted all sort of berry-bearing bushes and things that birds would particularly like. And there was of course a bird feeder. Every step of the way there were children with their programs in their hands or just a dirty scrap of paper wanting an autograph, and I was shaking hands to right and left and smiling and calling out greetings.

Finally, we landed in the little house next door where the ladies had spread out a huge cake and punch and coffee and highly welcome, it was to me -- two hours of trying to give out and express feelings, gratitude, communication with people, is exhausting. It is also wonderful. This gave me the chance to thank Mr. Butt for the cake that was at home on top of the kitchen table for Lyndon's birthday. I told him I wouldn't be

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able to take it home with me, traveling commercial and at midnight. But I sure would see that it came to the hands of some children who enjoyed it, and we're mighty happy to have it. This I did later in the day with the ever-faithful Weeze coming out to pick it up for a children's home in Austin.

It was nearly 1:00 when I left and back at the Ranch by 1:30 for a quick lunch, and then worked until 6:00 with Roy and Herbert Wells. The tile is almost in in Lyndon's bath, and the little birds are delightful perched around at regular intervals.

Mr. Presnell came, bless him, probably leaving hungry people at the ranch house, and mixed up the paint and we finally got the right color for the trim in Lyndon's room. We got delivery dates on drapes and chair materials and I pointed out to Weeze the ones that should be loaded up and sent down to Houston for recovering -- all of those endless details. And I called Mr. Pike about a delivery date on the rugs. I think everything is falling into place for my return in four busy days right after Labor Day. And then maybe by the weekend of September 10th Lyndon's side will be finished.

Sometime before 7:00 we were simply too tired to make any more sensible decisions. So I said goodbye to Roy and Mr. Wells, called Jessie Hunter and drove over to the Lewis Ranch where I met her, and we simply drove around and talked about the boyhood home. The crowds are not quite as big as they were last year. This worries Jessie I can see.

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There are still some 400 or 500 a day on Saturdays and Sundays. I suggested that she use the tapes and try to cut down on the number of hostesses. I want to be able to replace them before they are so tired that they would like to be replaced.

She was all enthusiastic about the formation of a garden club in Johnson City of which I am happy to become a member. And they are full of ideas about cleanup, paintup, fixup in preparation of Texas' influx of visitors for HemisFair next Spring.

We came back to the Ranch when night fell. The country is cruelly dry, and it is no pleasure to see it. But the evening skies are still beautiful. And it takes black night to drive me inside.

We had dinner -- just the two of us -- and at 10:00 I left for Washington, changed planes in Dallas and tried to doze as we flew American, landing at Friendship at the ridiculous hour of 3:20 in the morning. It's Lyndon's birthday. And so of course I had to come back. And then followed the most ghostly, unreal arrival that I can remember.

I drove to Mt. Vernon in the big black car, a waning half moon riding between the shifting clouds. We pulled up at the guard gate, and one lonely guard came out, looked at us carefully, and then unlocked the gate and we drove through. We drove right up past George Washington's house and drove down the hill winding close to the grave and onto the boat landing. Everything was so quiet, hushed, unreal. And I thought of all the hundreds of times I had been to Mt. Vernon with constituents

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making my way among the thousands of people. And I thought of the early, fresh, dewy mornings when I have been out on the lawn in front doing that TV show. What a strange montage. Far out in the river I could see two blinking lights -- the Sequoia -- anchored. We went out and I climbed on and carefully went downstairs, hoping I wouldn't wake up Lyndon -- fruitless hope. Later he described my arrival as "preceded by two Filipinos carrying suitcases and followed by another two." And with a few muffled words of greeting, I sank wearily into bed. It was 4:30 a.m., and it was the morning of Lyndon's 59th birthday.