

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday, October 8, 1967

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It was looked forward to with much hard work and a rising ripple of apprehension right below the surface -- dawn clear and bright. Actually in hours and energy spent it was one of the most civilized days of a trip I've had. But in the sheer batterings of emotions it was pretty wearing.

Liz and I left the White House a little past 10:00. And at National Airport we met the Linens with their son and got into their plane which the Laurence Rockefellers share, and flew to an airport in North Adams, Massachusetts -- one of the ^{most pleasant} rides I can remember.

Mr. Linen told us about his trips with businessmen to many European and Eastern countries. Russia was among them. He was most interesting and so was his wife.

The Mayor greeted us. I was given a key. And we went quickly on into Williamstown -- a picture postcard New England city -- the streets elm lined, a white spired church, the mountains around turning gold and crimson with autumn.

The Sawyer's residence was a lovely white house built in about 1801. And the Sawyers themselves, quietly pleasant, a bit restrained, completely suited to the college and to the environment. They were hosting a luncheon for 60 people -- the degree recipients, the trustees, some of the faculty. They took me around to meet everyone, and then very soon

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we sat down. I was on President Sawyer's right and next to a very interesting man -- Hugh Bullock ^{A Finacker} ~~of Finacker~~ of New York. I gathered he was the chief trustee. He told me about a forum he had conducted for years composed of 100 or so Wall Street men to which they had invited all sorts of foreign Chiefs of State or high officials of this country for a quiet, off-the-record speech and questions and answers. He was quite outspoken in his approval of Lyndon, and that was one of the last words of approval I was to hear that day.

A little past 2:00 I put on my black robe with the white velvet front that the University of Texas had given me and joined Dr. Sawyer on the front steps for pictures. And then out under the trees we waited for the procession to start. They are always thrilling and I feel utterly foreign to them no matter how many I participate in. There were the crimson gowns of Harvard, and the deep blue was Yale I believe. And then the deep gold crushed velvet cap which I think comes from English schools is not my milieu.

We marched in dignified double file -- I by President Sawyer -- down the quiet streets to Chapin Hall. Within a few steps I began to size up the crowd. The pickets were there as promised, but no great number. Printed signs that said, "Confront the war makers in Washington, October 21." And some others I couldn't read. They weigh so much on me because of my eyesight. But there were three big homemade ones that were close by.

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One was held by a small boy, and it said, "I am 7 years old. Would I be fighting to protect these present-day pacifist?" And another, a big one, "May God give LBJ strength to continue his courageous stand on the preservation of peace." Another by a silent, stern, youngish man, "I fought in Viet-Nam and I believe our cause is just".

All of them anti and pro walked with me as we maintained our dignified pace to Chapin Hall. And so of course did all the cameras. But the most of the crowd were towns people -- bright, smiling children and their parents -- eager to get a look -- a wave of excitement going with us as we passed. And apparently completely oblivious the escort of sign carriers walking behind them rather like the furies in the House of Atreus.

We took our seats on the stage -- I once more by Mr. Bullock. And as we sang "America" I looked out into the audience in front of me. The first several dozens of rows were the graduating class in their black robes. And as I saw a white arm band on the first one I was not quite prepared for it, and I felt a quick pulse of emotion in my throat. I counted another and another. The local paper said there were 63 in all.

There were five of us who received honorary degrees. Besides me, Stanley Cain, Assistant Secretary of the Interior. And President Fairfield Oswin of the New York Zoological Society and Roger Revel of the Center for Population Studies at Harvard. And Frasier Darling,

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Vice President of the Conservation Foundation. All very eminent, life-time conservationists, masters in their fields, and I a very new incomer.

When I was introduced, everybody rose, and it was at this point that some of the graduating class walked out. The local Massachusetts paper said 35. This I had been forewarned about. But the college had its own rebuttles too, and the towns people. And it took the form of everybody standing so long and cheering so loudly that their departure was scarcely noticed and they must have felt rather flat.

President Sawyer's citation was deeply thrilling, and I expect it will be moreso as I look back on it in years ahead. He spoke of my quiet leadership and powerful moral support for deeply humane causes ranging from project HeadStart to the quality of the total environment in which we live.

And then the dreaded moment -- a brief introduction by President Sawyer. The citation had been the real introduction. And then the thing I came for -- the salute to the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies. I believe I did well. I certainly spoke with passion. And I tried to look straight into their eyes or the students in front of me and from one to another as the speech progressed.

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It began with a very real praise for the college of Williams' caliber as setting up a Center for Environmental Studies. But the lines I liked best were, "There is no time for annotated studies to gather dust on library shelves. While 11,000 city planning positions must be filled in the next five years, planning schools are producing only 450 graduates a year" -- because what I hope, hope, hope is that they will bridge the gap between the theorizing city planner and the Mayor, between the professor and the budget officer.

I felt I did well. I seldom feel so. I never tried harder. For that in part I can thank the pickets.

It was a very quiet attentive audience. And very loud applause when I sat down. And then how relieved I was because the real address was a rather lengthy one by Stanley Cain -- very arrodite and professorial, but I soon found pleasantly spiced with rye humor. The last moment of the convocation was by Orlodge -- the most touching. Everybody rose and we sang "The Mountains". I did not know it, but I read the words and loved them. And so you felt did all the students there. And then we filed out. The pickets were still there, but louder now. And a funny thing as you turned your back and started on up the hill and they were behind you, the ugly murmur rose in volume. And I heard calls of "shame, shame."

There is something weird and animal about mode psychology, and I wondered what would have happened if I had suddenly broke into a run.

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But of course we maintained our dignified gait and our smiles and walked under the elms up to the front of the house where the procession broke up and I said goodbye to several of the faculty members and to the High Sheriff -- one of the most colorful figures of the day who dressed in swallowtail coat and high silk hat and carrying a huge staff and who had led the procession. He was a tall, impressive man. And to begin it he had banged on the floor and said, "In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, pray have silence." The presence of the Sheriff is a custom begun early in Williams' day. It was founded in 1783.

I changed into flat heel shoes and my brown tweed coat, and Professor James McGregor Burns joined me and we drove out to Mt. Hope Farm which will be the site for the Environmental Planning Center -- a sort of a "think tank" for city planning experts, students, professors. There couldn't have been a more complete change of mood -- of atmosphere. It was the most peaceful, quiet, beautiful New England landscape you could imagine -- open meadows rolling away, woods turning scarlet and gold, a ring of blue mountains in the distance -- a very heaven of a place to walk. And we did for about an hour and a half.

I had been invited to Williams by James McGregor Burns, and it was actually because of him I had decided to come. I liked him and I applauded what they were doing -- the Environmental Center.

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I wanted to bring whatever little garland of publicity I could.

We walked down the country roads between the maples and the pines. And Mr. Burns told me about his race for Congress years ago, the books he was writing. He finished one on FDR -- it had taken him four years. And he was writing another.

I told him I was reading the one on President Kennedy, and found this period which I had shared from a very different vantage point most interestingly described. And then I asked him if he planned to write another on the years of Kennedy as President, knowing even as the words came out of my mouth that it was the wrong thing to say. No, the family had been very upset -- several of them had come to see him about it. No, he wasn't planning another. He did not think he would get much cooperation.

Always in the back of my mind, there is the hope that someone who is an historian with a name and who writes well will do a book on Lyndon. None of them so far with the exception of "The Professional" by Bill White have the depth and the quality I hope to see some day.

He talked to me about Mt. Hope Farm itself. It had been owned by Colonel and Mrs. Printiss. She was a Rockefeller, and I gather probably Laurence's Aunt who must have been a generation ahead of him. It had been an experimental farm. Some of the first chickens with extra big breasts had been raised here. About 100 people had worked on it. And the Printisses themselves had lived in a great red brick

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house with white pillars and formal Italian gardens that look strange in this New England setting.

We stopped at a look-out and surveyed the valley below and the blue hills in the distance. This country is so beautiful. It has an absolutely caressing quality to me.

Then we went back to the house, and it was like stepping into another world -- stepping backward in time -- how many decades? -- to something that no longer exists -- dark paneled walls, statues and tapestries, that fitted well the tales of the sedate Sunday musicals the family used to give.

It was only on the subject of agriculture that Colonel Prentiss got enthusiastic. It was like looking into a page of the past, jelled for all time. And I was greatly intrigued.

Back at the Sawyer's house, we walked in with the warm welcome of a fire. And the crisp chill of the outside heightened our pleasure in it. We sat down and had a drink. And this was another charming side of New England. I loved it. But I did not feel the least kinship to it. It was indeed "far from the madding crowd".

I changed again into another quiet understated outfit, and we went to the Clark Art Institute -- a museum of white marble which to me seemed quite European and out of keeping in this New England setting. And saw the most marvelous collection of French impressionist paintings

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which had been left by a wealthy collector -- Mr. Clark -- to this little New England town of 7,000. They told me he had thought perhaps big centers like New York would be in danger of bombing some day, and his would be safe here and very much enjoyed and appreciated by the intellectuals of this venerable old college. It was fabulous. 32 Renoirs. Sad, amusing, Toulouse-Lautrec's "Mary Cassatt" that I would never have recognized. And many Degas and statues also. Matisse and Winslow Homer. And much old silver -- English silver.

The Curator, a knowledgeable gentleman with the name of George Hurd Hamilton (the only thing about this wonderful museum that the press took note of -- interesting commentary on their evaluation of what's important) escorted me through while most of the other guests lingered around the cocktail table in the main room. And finally we joined them there. It had been sheer pleasure for me, and I was rather pleased that clear across the room a picture would speak to me and I could say to Mr. Hamilton, "There's another Dumier, or that must be a Cezanne." All except Monet -- I never recognize him.

It was nearly 8:00 when we went back to the Sawyer's residence. Once more the fires were bright and welcoming. Then we sat down to dinner with the attractive daughter Kit -- home for the weekend from her teaching job (she is fresh out of college). And Mr. Frasier Darling, one of the degree recipients. The Scheffey's. And Under Secretary Cain

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and Mrs. Cain. Liz and Cynthia and the Sawyers and I.

The rooms were furnished rather sparsely with great, good taste, beautiful moldings around the ceilings. And you could tell where the original house built in 1801 melted into an addition. Some of the school's own paintings hung on the walls. And in my bedroom there were rather austere twin iron beds. Nothing plush here, but quality and grace in the big living rooms and dining room.

I like the Sawyers very much. And how would I evaluate a day spent like this? Probably a mistake on balance, because what I had really done was give a vehicle for the dissenters who were a minority to mount a platform, to get inches in the paper, and minutes on the television screen that they would not without me have gotten. So I was their bait -- their creature -- for the day. And what I had set out to do was to praise Williams for establishing its center for Environmental Planning. And this I think I had done. I earnestly feel the speech was good and there was a rapport between me and those in the room. But the louder voice of hate and anger shouted it down. How did I personally feel as I walked among the picketers? Cool and firm and tough and determined to maintain dignity. But through every pore you sense a sort of an animal passion right below the surface.

All in all, I guess I lost this round. But there are pluses. I am glad that I came to know better such interesting people as the James

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Linens and James McGregor Burns. And to listen to Mr. Hugh Bullock, And to see the whole atmosphere of this little town, the Sawyer's home, the brilliant New England foliage, and the processional so rich with tradition led off by its High Sheriff and his tall silk hat.