

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, October 9, 1967

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The second day of my journey into academia -- Monday, October 9 -- began crisp and bright. The Williams freshman from Houston -- the son of Judge Knowl -- came over to me, looking very young and friendly and a bit homesick and gave me a Williams school seal with a sweet note.

There were pictures on the front step with the staff of the house -- beaming, nice colored people. And then about 10:00 we left with a big basket of lunch which Mrs. Sawyers had had packed for us. Liz and Mrs. Donald Miller and I riding together. She's head of a group that's restoring the Shaker village and she's the wife of the Pittsfield newspaper editor.

And then began the ride through the back roads of New England which had been a part of the personal self-indulgence of the reason I had made this trip. We went from Williamstown to Pittsfield and Stockbridge and New Canaan and Litchfield and Goshen. And it was an enchanting journey -- maples turning crimson and gold against the backdrop of green pines, white trunk birches, graceful and shimmering. And asters and goldenrod all along the roadside and sumac -- its foliage especially closer to the ground turning those wonderful variegated shades of orange and red. There were outcroppings of gray granite all along the highways. And really the most delightful rest stops along the road -- clean, civilized, inviting.

One thing intrigued me -- the firm looking sign that said, "Minimum

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\$50 Fine For Trash Disposal". Nowhere else have I seen that word minimum.

There were pumpkins and apples and cornstalks at roadside stands. And in Great Barrington -- a pleasant little village -- there were crab apple trees lining the streets, apparently set out within the last few years as an answer to the dying elms. In many of the villages on much of the landscapes the elms are still king, and there is nothing really that quite comes up to them for grace and majesty. But I know that little town of Great Barrington must be glorious in the Spring.

Once we passed a gray stone castle with a high forbidding wall around it. It's now a golf course. And you wonder what baron of commerce it used to belong to.

It was a clean swept, beautiful, blessed by God countryside -- easy to fall in love with.

But then every now and then we would come to a brand new shopping center, as stark concrete as anywhere else.

We arrived at the Shaker village, and Mrs. Miller took us through with a sizeable crowd of press and members of her restoration committees.

In this unique settlement members of the little religious cult had lived and worked and worshipped for about 170 years -- the last of them, a very few elderly women, had sold the acreage and the building

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about 1960 to this restoration group, and now it is open to the public.

The Shakers lived quite apart from the world, would get up before daylight working very hard as farmers and as makers of early American furniture and living a life of celibacy. One pleasure they did have and that was eating well.

We stopped in the "goodies" room and had some delicious tartlets and coffee served by the restoration ladies. And she gave me a little maple child's chair for Patrick Lyndon, made here on the place from an early Shaker design.

At one time this religious sect had been the first gatherers and packagers and sellers of seeds -- vegetables and flowers. The latter they used alas only for medicinal purposes. And they have sold them as far afield as every State in the Union, and London, and even Australia.

To me it was an interesting little picture of the diversity of this land built from so many strains. And also of our enthusiasm -- the individual enthusiasm of historically-minded women here and there who want to restore such places.

I found that someone from Washington on the Brazos had been here to see their restoration work. And I told them about Round Top. Mentally I made a note that I hoped Mrs. Miller would come to one of our restoration-type parties in the White House sometime.

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After much picture taking and sight-seeing, we left about noon and continued our lovely drive, stopping at a roadside park -- by now in Connecticut -- to have our lunch which the Sawyers had packed -- hot bouillon and ham sandwiches and fresh, crisp apples. We stopped in Litchfield, Connecticut to read the historical markers -- one of them about Harriet Beecher Stowe.

And about 3:00 we arrived at New Haven at the residence of the Brewsters. I had been to the Brewster's once before. I think it was the Fall of '65 when I came with Bill Heathe and Max Brooks on one of our architectural tours searching for a designer of the Lyndon Johnson Library.

This time it was a very different arrival. There was a sizeable crowd of picketers in front of the house. The paper described it as more than 100 -- carrying signs which were wasted on me because my eyesight couldn't read them. Later I read in the papers that they said, "Stop beautifying North Viet-Nam", "Tell LBJ Withdraw Now", and displayed pictures of people supposedly burned by napalm.

I got out of the car with a measured slowness and walked to meet Dr. Brewster who was waiting for me at the gate with what I believe was a calm and natural expression. We exchanged a few words and I went on inside.

We sat down on their back porch, and I asked him quite simply what we might expect of the evening. Quite soon the feeling got across

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to me that my presence here was really an imposition on him. His manner was absolutely correct, but if I have any antenna at all I sense that he wished he had no part of it.

We discussed the ways I might enter the hall where I was going to speak, and he was outspokenly in favor of walking across Beinecke Plaza. I too would normally be. That is a natural route by which to enter. But more and more it began to appear that this was just offering myself as camera bait for the students' demonstration. I could see Liz getting more and more nervous. She said she was going down and look at the various routes, and I went upstairs and stretched out on the bed in a robe and read and rested for a couple of hours. That is one of the strange things about this trip. It is at once the most restful and the most emotionally demanding trip.

Close to 6:00 I put on my bright chartreuse green dress -- becoming and feminine -- and went down to join the Brewsters and John J. O'Leary, President of the Student Political Union who had invited me. And we drove to Freshman Commons -- also aptly named War Memorial Hall.

We emerged from the house into a larger and more vigorous groups of pickets. And as we drove the several blocks to the Hall, I could glimpse as we passed street intersections these youngsters

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running pell-mell like on the football field with their signs up high and their hair flying. It was very interesting. And to me it seemed a curiously facist sort of an atmosphere -- very conformist. And I wondered how anyone would dare speak out on the other side for fear of ostracism by his fellows. I wondered a little bit about my friend John J. O'Leary and how he would fare the next day.

There was a car that raced along in front of us with two bare-headed girls in it. Later I heard that they too were sporting a placard -- this one in favor of the President's stand. So I guess even in this atmosphere there are dissenters.

We went into a very impressive Hall -- high ceilinged, cathedral-like, dark paneled, the walls lined with portraits of long dead Presidents of Yale, covering the nearly 200 years -- ^{or} of whatever it is -- of its existence.

Out in front of me at round tables sat the 800 or so members of the Yale Political Union, a few dates that stayed over from their weekend activities, a few members of the faculty, and Jack Valenti, who, amazingly, was there to make a speech to a lawyers group. We laughed over getting our bookings on the same night, and he said, "Just to clear my schedule with you, I am going to be in Topeka next week." Van Cliburn was also in town. So, for whatever impression it makes, New Haven is hearing from Texans this week.

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I sat between President Brewster and John J. O'Leary whom I enjoyed talking to. And Mrs. Richard Lee was also at the table filling in for her husband, the Mayor, who was sick with laryngitis -- an event that I noticed with some skepticism.

The number of ~~of~~ picketers outside, according to one paper about 800 which was the same as those inside, held a silent vigil, and then they broke into chants of "Peace Now" and "Hell no, we won't go", which came through as a sort of a murmur inside the hall. And if anything it only added to the sense of adrenalin in my blood and the determination to make the best speech I was capable of.

There had been the usual full-page add in the "Yale Dailey News" signed by some 600 students and faculty, including the novelist John Hershey, and the Chaplain of the school.

I ate lightly, looked around me with intense interest, trying to pick up the mood of the people. And then when President Brewster rose to introduce me I came with ajar to a more complete understanding of the situation.

His introduction was generous, even eloquent. He compared me to Mrs. Roosevelt, which I did not deserve. But he was careful to say that in his own young days he had been opposed to another war when Woodrow Wilson was President. And then some such phrase that

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as he had grown older he had come to understand more about the difficulties of those conducting.

I wished I had a copy of the speech. At any rate, the impression to me was that he was disassociating himself from President Johnson, this Administration, letting his own constituency -- that is, the students and faculty -- know that he was with them in heart but at the same time maintaining a gentlemanly and correct stance of hospitality to the First Lady.

I must say I received a standing ovation when I rose to speak, and I never tried harder in my life -- not even at Williams the day before. I think I did rather well.

In all the days of working on this speech -- and we really battled it out -- everyone had insisted I must have some humor. It is not my forte, but I tried. I got a sort of a smile with "apprehensive too about speaking to you across the generation gap, for I belong to the generation which thinks that when you take a trip, you go on a barge down the Mississippi River." Only the reference to the coming of Vassar brought a real laugh. But they were a very quiet, very attentive audience.

I spoke as directly as I could looking into the eyes of one young man and then the next and the next as I said to them, "If you are in the sciences, I hope you will apply their order to the environment. If you

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are in Business or Economics, I hope you will include beauty as part of the cost of doing business. If you are in the Arts, I hope you express the insight in the environment around you, for the environment after all is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest. It is one thing that all of us share. It is not only a mirror of ourselves, but a focusing lense on what we can become."

I liked the ending better than nearly any speech I have had. "Can a great Democratic society generate the energy to plan and build projects of order and beauty? Or does democracy after all mean the lowest common denominator? Most of the great cities in history -- most of the great works of beauty -- are the creation of autocratic societies. The Caesars built Rome. Paris was shaped by the kings of France and the Empire. Vienna was the handiwork of the Hapsburgs. And Florence of the Medicees. Our wealth surpasses theirs combined. Will our taste and intelligence and foresight be as great? The answer we give will reveal our quality as a civilization. A better answer will unfold I think in the next two decades, and they are yours."

I got a standing ovation again -- long and loud and clear -- and I hope they heard it outside. And I was never so glad to be finished with a speech in my life.

On our way out I shook hands with everybody I could reach, and not even ^{the} Secret Service was gladder I am sure that an evening was

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nearly over.

Then we went upstairs to the President's room, and I stood in line with President Brewster and met a few faculty members -- I noticed they were all from the School of Forestry -- probably one of the safest parts of Yale. And the officers and a number of the leaders in the Yale Political Union. And then came the dessert of the day -- the Whiffenpooper chorus came in and sang for us enchantingly -- ending of course with their most nostalgic song about the bar room down at Louie's and the poor little lamb.

I met everyone of them and was genuinely delighted at this part of the evening.

It ended rather quickly, and we left about 8:40 for the Brewster's residence where they had a small gathering of close friends and professors. And a drink was very welcome and I settled on a sofa with some good talk. But not for long because I remembered that President Brewster had to get up at 5:00 to leave for Paris. He had most courteously postponed his going for one day because of my presence. And I was more and more aware of the difficulty this has cost him.

So I said goodnight about 10:00 and went upstairs for one of the earliest nights on a trip.

If I had to capsule these two days in academia, how would I?

For one thing, both campuses seemed quite set apart from the world --

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insulated, encased in gelatin with the window on only one issue -- Viet-Nam. There was also that feeling of a facist society where everybody that thinks the same thing and does the same thing and everybody who dares not has to be pretty brave -- a sort of McCarthyism in reverse.

There was also a lesson to me. I must not live in the White House insulated myself. I want to know what's going on -- even if to know is to suffer.

On balance I would say it's not been a good trip -- not because of my speeches or my audiences or any of those that I came in direct contact with. But because of the press coverage.

Later as I examined some of the stories I would find 16 inches describing the protesters and everything they did and said, and one inch quoting my speech and perhaps a rising ovation.