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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, December 5, 1967

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Tuesday, December 5th, began early for Lyndon -- a Leadership Breakfast.

He bounced out of bed at 8:20 and was ready to go into the dining room at 8:30. It annoys me a little because he can get showered, bathed, and dressed so fast.

I read the paper. And at 9:00 I got a summon from Paul, "The President says will you please come into the dining room". I said, "He knows how I look?" "Yes mam". And so in my dressing gown, I went in to see the assembled Leadership gathered around the breakfast table. Senators Mansfield and Long, the Speaker, Carl Albert -- a table full. Russell Long rose and brought forward a big box accompanied with a very ~~big~~ big smile. "We wanted to give Lynda Bird something -- the Democratic Leadership did. Will you please take this into her?"

It was "Two Blue Birds of Happiness" by ^{Bohner's} Beam, resting on a branch of magnolias -- a big beautiful, no doubt very expensive, present. It is indeed something to treasure, and especially because they gave it. It also assumes that a young couple will have a plush and roomy house. You don't cart a treasure like this from post to post as a serviceman's wife. And I did have a fleeting thought for the fact that she had only two place-settings of her china, plus her dinner plates. Well, I guess everybody assumes the daughter of the President gets all the practical things and they look for the unusual ones.

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Shortly after I made my departure, Lyn made his entrance, propelled by himself in his walker, completely undaunted by the power structure in front of him.

I worked at my desk all morning -- enumerable autographs. The Christmas stack is mounting. And then about 11:30 I took a break to join Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown, with Mr. West, and took a clinical look at my room. The curtains of yellow ^{moire} ~~more~~ taffeta, with delicate floral design -- a dreamy. And the canopy bed is fit for a queen.

It will take a little getting used to for me. The two benches simply have to be done over. We settled on the materials for the sofa and chair -- matching quilted, green cotton velvet, that we had looked at before. We looked at various soft, green velvets for the backgrounds of the bookcases in the West Hall where I intend to put State gifts like the Chinese Ming horses -- or is it Sung? or Tang? The Iranian horse, and the head of the Roman emperor. And some of my own ~~stuff~~ Lowestoft, and my Steuben bowl from the University of Texas.

And then we looked at new/ rugs for the family dining room. One was perfect, except that it called for attention. And in that room only the wallpaper is entitled to attention. It is so beautiful.

Then we went downstairs and there I met Mary ^{LASKER} ~~Lasker~~ in the hall. She had been here to attend a Bill signing ceremony -- Partnership for Health, it was called. So I scooped her up and we looked at the rug samples they had chosen for the State Dining Room. I felt it was perfect. Perhaps the scale

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ought to be increased a little, or at least the border. And then we went into the tent which is just being erected on the roof above the swimming pool and the flowery room and the ~~gax~~ dog room to house our 650 or so guests.

I thanked Mary for my wonderful Saturday, and said goodbye to Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith. I would look at the samples and decide soon.

And then I went upstairs to see Luci and Lyn and had a plate of lunch in the solarium. It's so cozy up there. Always some bridesmaids or some kinfolks. You notice the warmup and the flavor and the real living of this week that I want to absorb.

Lyn goes from arms to arms and lap to lap with a happy grin, and everybody loves him.

I spent the afternoon recording and working with Ashton.

And then a little past 4:00 I went with Lynda down into the basement of the White House to the gift room. Warrie Lynn had spent hours arranging everything on the shelves. And oh how it helps! Lynda showed me around with the light. There were silver spoons from a Robb relative dated 1802. And a lovely silver bowl -- a cake basket -- from Chuck's 83-year old grandmother. It had been in her family for a long time.

There was a very splendid looking picture -- a copy of a portrait I think -- of a great grandfather of his, Mr. Trennam. I wondered if he was the one who was Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederacy. And a lovely old ruby-red wine decanter with prisms that make it look like a colatiscop from some member of his family.

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They were to me the most treasured ones.

A practical and very necessary silver chest from Willie Day and Mildred Stegall. And all of her everyday china from Jesse Kellam, God bless him. A few lonely pieces of her crystal, and a dear and touching number of crocheted padded, embroidered handkerchiefs from the general public. And blue garters and pot holders of every description known and unknown. That, to me, is one of the sweetest things about it.

Joe Batgen had had designed a breakfast service with all the characters of Poo romping around the plates and cups and saucers. He had to get the permission of Mr. Shepherd, whose signature delightfully attached to the bottom of one of the plates on which the story of the set was ~~xxx~~ written.

Marny and Clark had given her a ~~big~~ bridge table with chairs. Angie and Robin -- a bright, gay, modern picture of houses climbing a hillside in Spain. And Ben and Mrs. Heath, an elegant piece of silver that will make an ^{her} airloom for her great granddaughter.

It's such fun. We spent a happy hour, and then I went upstairs to the Lincoln Sitting Room.

I had asked Stu Udall to join me for a cup of tea and 30 minutes talk. I thanked him for answering so promptly the invitation of the archivist to deposit his papers in the Lyndon Johnson Library. And then I brought him up to date -- I thought I did -- on just what an active and useful force I thought the Library would be. It happened he knew a great deal about it. He had just been to the University itself to dedicate the Geology Building.

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I remember I had written him reinforcing an invitation to do that.

He was very interested. He did not go beyond his commitment in the letter, that some of his personal papers were committed to the University of Arizona, but that he would see that all of his papers as related to the Johnson Administration -- either the originals or copies -- were given to the Johnson Library.

And then we went on to the other two items.

Meanwhile Liz~~xx~~ came in and joined us. We had tea. We enjoyed the fire. Or at least I did -- in that small and cozy sitting room.

And then I got him to give me a thumb-nail sketch of what this Administration had achieved in the field of conservation, because I want to be somewhat knowledgeable when I try to tell it to people. He's a very articulate man. He speaks well for a cause on which he feels deeply. First, he said, we have raised our sights. We have set our national goals to ~~x~~ have a clean country. And we have passed the basic legislation to prevent air pollution and water pollution, though it may take years to implement it. Second, the Wilderness Bill, We have set aside between 2 and 3 percent of the acreage of this great country to be left in its natural state for all the generations to come to enjoy. For recreation, for breathing room. Third, a new concept of parks -- a necklace of national seashore parks, such as Padre Island and Assateague. Fourth, and here a nice compliment to me, a concept of beautification along the highways of the country and in the hearts of the cities -- the real urban areas.

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Then we launched into what our Committee could do. Our little Committee here for a more beautiful Capital this coming year.

One, he thought it would have to face up to the fact that we couldn't get much more Federal expansion, money-wise. Far from spreading out in what the Park Service was doing, we would do well if we could get maintenance of what they had done. And so we would have to enlist the vigorous interest and activity of the business community for one thing. And Second, to try to activate the young folks -- work with schools -- make them a part of conservation-beautification.

He gave us a summary of the Pennsylvania Avenue project. Its status, its prospects. They do not sound very good, and I thought I sensed a certain apology as though he had not pushed it with his full ability. He has really done very well in getting his programs through Congress. More cheers to him.

Congressman Saylor of Pennsylvania is apparently the bottleneck that we can't budge. And yet he's a good conservationist, and a friend of Stu's. Somewhere it got hung up on personalities, between him and the ~~Executive~~ ^{Pennsylvania} Avenue Commission.

We talked of a possible trip next spring to Padre Island to dedicate it. It might be combined with one to Hemis Fair.

Throughout the rather long and interesting conversation, I enjoyed Stu very much.

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I listened for any atmosphere of detachment, any indication that he might be getting ready to take his leave from the Cabinet. We hear rumors. We are at a low ebb. This is the time for the leaving of the ship for some. I did not hear any indications.

I worked some more with Ashton, and I watched the girls get ready -- those adorable, bouncy little people. Trenny looking like Twiggy, except healthier. Her hair with ribbons rather like an 11-year old. A simple black dress with suspenders, sort of.

Warrie Lynn, flamboyant -- in pink, red, black and white -- a lounging costume that looked rather like a clown's suit.

Lynda Bird, elegant and alluring, in black velvet with white collar and cuffs. Her hair piled very high by Ivand.

And Luci, looking rather like a bargain basement addition of the same. A velvet costume from last year with a fringy white blouse, and in her eyes I could see the yearning, the awareness, of the difference between her looks and Lynda. I am not sorry. I think it is good for her. She has so much that is wonderful -- rich and valuable.

I put on my white satin with the brilliantes and the red velvet coat, and sat with folded hands in Lyndon's office while he read the ticker and signed a big stack of mail.

And then about 8:30 we left for the Boggs with a nice resume along the way of everything I had done that day and that he'd done. He did seem quite tired. McNamara's departure is taking its toll along with everything else.

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And then he's sticking pretty toughly upon his diet -- no deserts, no bread. One breakover Saturday night. And in about eight days he's lost about 10 pounds. I am so proud. And exercise every day on that bicycle thing in his bedroom.

How many times we walked through that ~~maze~~ maze of boxwoods at the Boggs house. We've seen it grow from ankle high to knee high, and now it's waist high on me. It's a warm and loving, family-type house -- always crowded to the limit with the Boggs children and their friends, members of Congress, Louisianians. An easy, casual, happy place. Some of my best times in this town have been there.

Tonight, it was the wedding party.

First, the Boggs children, Tommy and his wife, Barbara and her husband, Coki and her husband, and Hale's brother Archy and his wife. Probably between 30 and 40 people.

Hale and ~~Mindy~~ Mindy met us out front. We posed for pictures. And then we were inside and no more press. Drinks, fun, snatches of conversation with Joe Batzen, just arrived. Archy, who had been Lynda's host at Mardi Gras in New Orleans with George Hamilton. Chuck's brother, Robert Wycliff.

In the dining room, there were four tables. One for Texas, one for Wisconsin, one for Louisiana, and one for the District of Columbia. And in the center pieces, there was a State bird -- ceramic -- surrounded by the Blue Bonnet of Texas, the butterfly violet of Wisconsin, the magnolia of Louisiana, and the American beauty rose for the District.

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We were just as crowded and just as happy as ~~we~~ we could be.

I sat between Hale and Mr. Robb and divided my time between genealogy and inquiring about the wedding gifts from their side of the family, and ~~hearing~~ from ~~my~~ my right ear the progress of legislation, the state of affairs on the Hill, while Lynda and Mrs. Robb -- in the manner typical of Southerners -- dug up some mutual kinfolks from South Carolina.

It began with New Orleans shrimp ^{roumelade} ~~rimelade~~ -- Lyndon couldn't wait. And then Louisiana wild roast duck with artichokes, Texas rice casserole, District of Columbia green beans, and all-American apple pie with Wisconsin cheese.

The toasts were the highpoint of the evening.

Hale led off nostalgically, graciously. And Lindy, in a very rich, smooth manner, increased my conviction that there is something very special about southern women.

Amusingly, Lyndon and Chuck tried to rise at the same time. Chuck's was very manly, poised. ~~XX~~ You felt, this is somebody.

And Lyndon's brought tears to my eyes. It was all the sweetness of a real father.

Mr. Robb made a toast that ended in a delightful rhyme, a ~~party~~ ¹ party to Lynda.

And I reminisced a moment about the fun we've had with the Boggs, for too many years to count -- in the warm, neighborly, easy manner that goes beyond politics and the transient life of Washington.

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Then we went downstairs to have coffee, and there was a funny exchange of gifts.

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Lyndon was really tired. We left with the last joke. The young folks still prepared to have fun for an indefinite time -- hugging and kissing and thanking our way out the door and in the car. On the way home, Lyndon went sound asleep. He promised not to do his night reading. We climbed into bed. We just looked at the headlines (I did) while he read one or two important things. And then to sleep before midnight -- a rare occurrence for him.