

1967

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

I was up at seven o'clock before it was really quite day and dressed in my ranch pants and boots and downstairs in the kitchen having coffee before 7:30. Mr. Swanson and Mr. Myrick joined me. We drove around over the Martin ranch in search of liveoak trees. We struck out on some of the best ones we had selected. When they tried to dig them, they found they were growing in soil about eighteen inches deep and then it deteriorated into shale and caliche. This could not be successfully balled so we went to the little valley on the Northwest side of the Martin and surveyed several groups of trees walking around and around looking at the height and the structure of the limbs and trying to visualize its relation to the house and to the total grounds. I liked doing this. It will be more my tree because of it.

Back at the ranch by 8:30, we picked up the Melvin Warrens and their camera and drove over to the West Ranch. They had wanted to see some stone fences. Nowhere in this countryside are there better stone fences than on the West Ranch where they wander over the hills and down into the valleys for endless miles and you marvel at the manhours, the lifetimes of labor that took to build them- somewhere back between the 1850's and the 1880's when barbed wire came to this country. We stopped several times to take pictures and for them to sort of make a mental note of where they

Wednesday, December 13 (Continued)

were because they would certainly come back later for sketching or painting when the sun was out. Alas, our beautiful golden days were gone. There was mist that was almost rain. Then we came to one of my favorite spots, the stone corral. I will always wonder why they built it there. It is almost five feet high and still very solid and will still hold cattle if not goats and the floor or ground is almost solid rock. It was built on an outcropping along the ledge of a creek where tall cypress grow. It is bare now. Some of the most majestic and intriguing trees I know are left over, scientists tell me, from the days of the dinosaur. Outlines of an old settler's cabin close by, the smoke-stained chimney, a big round meat block made from a cut through some huge cypress tree. I just wonder what the history of this place is. There is a basis there for a good painting and the Warrens were delighted.

I told them what it was like in April with a sea of bluebonnets in the pasture and hundreds of mountain laurel, of the great stone escarpment along the creek where I once walked and met a rattlesnake. We toured the whole ranch and then we came home by the Schornhorst and went through the river pasture seeing long sweeps of the rocky Pedernales and many deer. On the way back we talked about them doing pictures of the President during the next year or two and perhaps coming out to stay at the Lewis or the Cedar House for a week at a time whenever they wanted to, especially in the Spring and made a sort of loose agreement that they

Wednesday, December 13 (Continued)

would and then at eleven o'clock, with the feeling that it had already been quite a day, I was back at the main house, changed to city clothes, got into the little plane with some misgivings, was off on a very bouncy trip to San Antonio praising the Lord when I touched ground and drove into the Whitney Museum and Nancy Negley and Mrs. Charles Ershel met me. I had wanted to see the Diorama of the Edwards Plateau. A couple of years before someone from the Whitney had written me they would like to go to the Schornhorst and collect rocks and make pictures of the grasses and flowers and animals and scenery for a diorama. This was the result.

I had a tour of the museum with a very delightful curator and saw a half dozen dioramas beginning with a wonderfully dramatic one of the plains country with a herd of buffalo, one enormous one standing in deep grass, and a great one of the Big Bend country, and a panther that Liz promised us but never showed, crouched over his kill, a deer on one of the crags of the Chisos Mountains. It turned out that our diorama was just really the Shornhorst itself. The background over big granite rock extrusion painted by Proferias Salinas and in the foreground a knee deep sea of coreopsis and bluebonnets. It was really quite pretty and I was proud. The curator described the Whitney as a regional museum, extraordinarily diverse, Indian artifacts, a gallery of modern day rooms done by designers, collections of jades and porcelains and furniture from all over the world and paintings. What it lacked and made me sad was that it wasn't full- it

Wednesday, December 13 (Continued)

wasn't bustling. I would have loved to see it just teeming with life, school children, tourists, San Antonians who came to see the latest exhibits and yet so much of it was worth seeing, I wondered how to bridge the gap.

Next we went to Janet Shock's gallery and looked at her wonderful needlework and upstairs where she has quite a collection of paintings. There was a delightful one in the manner of a French impressionist, a girl in a yellow hat, and some Bill Hoey landscape--the blue sky across which white clouds are scuttling and you almost feel the April breeze and some funny watercolors by Bill Hogan, adobe shacks with Mexicans lounging in front, Pepsi Cola and Berry Cream signs and filling stations, but somehow managed to be whimsical and sad and yet linger in your memory, and bright bristol landscapes, and little miniatures by a retired General.

A delicious lunch was spread out, sandwiches and cookies and drinks and we ate and talked and had a wonderful off-beat time. We then went on to the McNay Art Institute and there I saw whole walls of paintings that were for rent or purchase, some Art Newbald purchases that I wondered about getting for Lynda Bird, a head that looked so much about Renoir although by an almost unknown artist. If I were bolder and richer, I could have had a wonderful time. This, too, alas was too quiet a place to suit me. I would have liked to have found it bustling with many good things--an El Greco in the entrance and Diego Rivera, a whole room of small Renoirs.

6

Wednesday, December 13 (Continued)

We drove on by Bill Bristow's house, but he was not at home and then hurried to the airport. Bad weather was overtaking us. I hugged Nancy goodbye and flew home through a front which was no fun at all. Back at the house before four thirty, I surveyed with much satisfaction the liveoak that we had selected in the northwest corner of my garden. It was perfect. Rarely do you get such a thrill. Our work had turned out well, the way the branches spread, its relation to the house, the way it looks from my baywindow, just a joy. I shall count this one of Mary's gifts for my Christmas. Through Nash she had gotten in touch with Mr. Myrick and arranged to buy some of the trees. A red oak was also in the ground. I am not wholly in favor of it, but Mr. Myrick assures me I must have height and a graceful tree in that place and will spread later. Mr. Myrick was going to have to leave to catch a seven o'clock plane into Austin, so we had one last drive around the place to assess the proper planting of any screening in front of the incinerator and the placement of trees in front of Mr. Cline's workshop. We looked at the whole place through large Rockefeller binoculars from the ranch road. It is all shaping up very well. I said goodbye to Mr. Myrick about five thirty, found the Melvin Warrens sitting in the living room patiently waiting to make their goodbyes and lo and behold, they had spent the afternoon in the almost misting rain making a sketch of the old stone fort in Johnson City-- two sketches in fact, one of them I was charmed by. It's the one with the arch doorway, so I could

6

6
Wednesday, December 13 (Continued)

think I had really done a good day's work. They are interesting people. I love to hear them talk about research they had done on making the drawings for the old forts of Texas-- a string of some six or eight old forts that had protected the settlers and the travelers of Texas from the Indians from the 1840's to the 1890's and now they are doing a series of paintings on the old trails of Texas-- the Chisholm Trail, the Goodnight Trail. By six thirty they were gone. I had a shampoo and set with Mrs. Frederick Byrd, reading under the dryer, and dinner downstairs with just Dorothy Territo telling me about her day's adventures in Austin with Mrs. Hudspeth hearing all of the preparations that the University is making, the Lyndon Johnson Library, the bibliography, its acquisition, going over the site and then to bed early, one of the luxuries of this little interim-- making phone calls and planning for the morrow and reading myself to sleep.

6