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MONDAY, APRIL 8 WHD

Monday, April 8 began early. I talked to Ashton. She told me very quietly that Patrick might be leaving Thursday. His mother and father were there in the house visiting. It sounded like goodbye. We discussed house guests for Wednesday night, our dinner for Klaus of Austria. Of course, when I return the day will be right upon us. Mrs. Berg came for a comb-out at eight and then Dale took me in our little plane to San Antonio. I joined the press and the big plane at the airport for the flight to Corpus Christi. We fought the weather the whole way every day of this trip and we won the whole round, but by the skin of our teeth. This Monday morning there was fog. There was uncertainty as to whether we could even land in Corpus Christi and the Captain unsettled me by saying it was below landing levels there now, but they expected it would surely lift by the time we reached there. We discussed going by bus, decided against it and set out. We had lost John Young over the weekend. Sometime he had called me and in a rasped voice apologized saying there had been a vote Saturday, I believe it was, on bringing out some of the necessary bills on poverty. He was on the Committee. There might be another one on Monday. He must get back. I had reassured him that indeed he must and also that I thought that everybody else who thought their posts was in Washington ought to get back, including Stewart Udall. I had told Liz all this. Only John had returned and Jane Young kept through

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with us the whole time.

Enroute to Corpus, Liz brought Isabel<sup>ly</sup> Shelton up and I had a long, and I think rather successful, interview with her and we arrived at Corpus Christi Naval Base at 9:30 to a brief greeting and then immediately into three chartered buses for the drive to Padre Island. There was a naturalist from the Park Service on each bus and he told us that this was one of the great fly-overs and hundreds of varieties of birds settled at the close-by bird refuge, Anahuac, Arkansas. They<sup>?! must be wrong - Aransas?</sup> told us of the whooping cranes and the rosette<sup>ate</sup> spoonbills, <sup>all</sup> flamingos by the natives, the blue geese, the white geese, the other wild life, sand dunes and the vegetation that grows on them and passed over the long causeway and at last reached Padre Island--113 mile: long finger of sand that parallels the shores of Texas, 80 miles of which now belongs to the Park Service as a national seashore, but first we went along stretches of county park. <sup>#</sup> To me, there was a lesson here. <sup>beaches</sup> They were fully used and that was great with people surfing and swimming, but the structures of man were rather tawdry to say the least. There were bath houses and places where you could get cold drinks. Everybody, and I more than any I am sure, <sup>as</sup> ~~were~~ casting an eye at the weather. It was gray and overcast--not ideal, but so much better than <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ downpour that had been predicted.

About eleven o'clock we reached the site we had been headed for and what met my eyes I shall always remember with warmth! It was a

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sort of "Last Hurrah" of a crowd of some 7,500--Stewart Udall estimated it--and the Corpus Christi paper at vastly more, 10,000 plus. Our three chartered buses rolled up and disgorged the now 80 U.S. and foreign journalists as six high school bands boomed out "The Eyes of Texas" and the crowd cheered excitedly and I walked up onto one of the most picturesque platforms I have ever stood on. It was made of driftwood, bleached and worn and knurled and festooned instead of with bunting by ropes the size of a man's arm that had obviously seen service--perhaps on some fishing boat. I raised a silent little salute to whoever had put it together and so many things all during the day.

Senator Yarborough came up to greet me. He had cancelled out after the assassination of Martin Luther King and I did not expect to see him. I managed to be more cordial than I had been at our last meeting for after all, Padre Island is his love. He has worked hard and long and enthusiastically and finally successfully to make it the property of the people. He told me he would have to leave immediately afterward, even before the fish fry. So there we stood on the platform facing the sand dunes that were fringed with grasses that bent in the light breeze and behind us the waves rolling in, the day still overcast but the sun breaking out just as the proceedings went on. The Bishop of Corpus Christi, His Excellency Thomas Drury made a poetic invocation and then Stu Udall introduced the guests--George Hartzog, the Director of the National Park Service, who spoke briefly; Kika de la Garza, who spoke at more

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length in Latin fervor. It's just become his District--Padre Island has. Turning to me he said, "I ask your permission to say we love you, Lady Bird". He reminded the crowd that while one man in this country suffers the anguish, pain, and agony of the most demanding office of the most demanding office in the world, he says to his lovely wife, "Go to Padre Island. The people of South Texas in the Fifteenth Congressional District will forever remember one great lady." ~~And~~ there is something in me that will forever have a special place for the Latinos I know!

Yarborough spoke of the history of Padre Island. He is deeply versed in history, this man, and folklore, and speaks of it well. Personal references were far less fervent, but vastly more than I deserve. He called me the greatest beautification leader in America. And then the High School bands played "America the Beautiful" and it was something to remember! It had a vast symphonic effect. Three of them must have been on one side of us and three on the other and they were speaking to each other. It was a moment to put a lump in your throat. Then on this high note, I rose to speak. I looked down into a sea of faces eager, smiling, expectant, the sort of scene that would always have a special allure to someone <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ has lived the life I have. A bunch of girl scouts seated cross-legged on the sand, brownies and campfire girls and boy scouts, each with a job to do to help in this crowd., Kinfolks--I saw Tommy and Chris and their two little girls, and friends of thirty years. There was Carroll <sup>Keech</sup> ~~Keats~~ down below me, clicking away with his camera. To my dismay he didn't come up

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afterward, but Bob Jackson was at my hand the whole stay... I told them how delighted I was to be here on this important day in the life of Padre Island. "Its dedication into the National Park system means it will forever belong to the people, the generations of campers, scout troops, fishermen, birdwatchers and sunbathers, the travelers from near and far. I am particularly glad that I could bring some forty journalists from Europe who are here on a "Discover America" trip." And then I talked <sup>g</sup>to the National Park Service and its 133,000,000 visitors each year to these national treasures.

"What does it take to make a national park? There are many here on this stand who could answer that. It takes a dream, and I spoke of Judge Oscar Dancy whose dream it was for more than thirty years, and years of hard work by the believers--newspapers like the Corpus Christi Caller Times and then surveys and legislation and here a bouquet for Senator Ralph Yarborough and the Congressman John Young and Kika de la Garza. And, if I may be forgiven for pointing it out, it also takes the President who recognizes the value of this kind of project. In his years in the White House, the President has secured thirty-five new additions to the National Park System, one million acres--the equivalent of Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Teton combined. There are now 163 linear miles of shoreline newly preserved, at Cape Lookout, Assateague, Fire Island, Pictured Rocks and Indiana Dunes. The President calls them a necklace of national seashores because he knows well the thirst that is still

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growing for wild places and outdoor recreation. A few days ago he ~~lost~~ <sup>launched</sup> a program to identify and save other wild islands along the coast.

Then I went on to describe a family vacation we had had some twenty years ago along one of these ribbons of sand in the Texas Gulf Coast. It had been John and Nellie and KK and Johnny and a plump Lynda and about a four year old Luci who looked like a little fairy. "My mind turns back to it today. We walked the beach and felt that sense of timelessness that envelops one like the rolling waves."

"There is always an ineffable tranquility when you are face to face with sea and sky, forces which put one's own problems into perspective. I remember the delicious sense of discovery of coming upon a treasure in the sand--an old blue glass ball that came to these shores by what path and currents I know not from some far-away country. Perhaps from some Portuguese fisherman's net. It has been my talisman ever since. Each time I see it on the shelf it invites me back to the wild seashore."

Then I said what I hope they will remember, if anything. "It takes not only the dreamers, the believers, the legislators--it will take also the keepers, the watchful stewards for national belonging such as Padre Island. So I would urge those who are charged with the facilities which will doubtless be built, not only in the seashore areas, but on its commercial fringes to make man's structures in harmony with nature, a plea that the roads, building, parking lot signs, and markers should be tasteful, an assertion that if they were they would reap dividends over the decades. Then some history of,

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Padre Island. "Colonel Diego Ortiz Perillo<sup>sp?</sup> and his soldiers were patrolling the trackless white sands of Padre at the same time George Washington and his men were enduring a forbidding winter at Valley Forge. The Padre for which this Island was named was a Portuguese priest, Nicholas Baye<sup>sp?</sup> who raised horses and cattle. He was here long before the celebrated wagons of Tennessee pioneers came rolling across the Brazos to form the foundations of the Republic of Texas." It ended with a quote that Liz had found, she said, from Colonel Perillo's<sup>sp?</sup> own survey party speaking of Padre Island. "Her treasure is the gold of her sun, the silver of her moonlight and the sapphire of her pearl-crested waves. This treasure requires no iron strong box. It is safe from the greedy hands of man for it belongs to God." A quote as poetic as the whole day itself I thought.<sup>#</sup> George Hartzog and I stepped down from the speaker's stand. There was a huge stump of driftwood, dedication plaque bolted to it, its veiling what else but a fish net.<sup>?</sup> As I lifted it back with a flourish I thought I had never enjoyed an unveiling more! The band struck up "America the Beautiful" again and the crowd all began to sing along. Most of the old folks knew the words and tune. And then, another Minister gave the benediction and I stood on the platform for ages while everybody swarmed around me and I shook hands. Many of the people stopped to tell me how they had supported Lyndon for years and years, had known him when he worked for Mr. Kleberg. Some of them--and these generally were the old ones and that in itself is sad--looked up at me and said, "Mrs. Johnson, what are we going to do?" I was swamped and people



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were holding up babies to me and reaching out hand over hand over hand and I was shaking with both hands, frankly enjoying every moment and once more hoping the Foreign correspondents were looking. Finally the National Park Service Rangers guided me to a car. We drove a ways down the beach to the site of the fish fry. It was a perfect stage setting. Shrimpers were sailing out in the gulf, surfers with their boards were lined up on the sand and some riding a long wave in, a huge tent hung with red, white, and blue pennants. Tables laid with blue cloths and crossed with red streamers. Sea shells and bottles formed the centerpieces, and there were sand dollars as souvenirs. The tent sides of netting were decorated with seafronds and shells and at one end there was a great big block of ice centered with a huge red snapper with crabs all around him. It was absolutely delightful!

I went to a little cabaña and changed from my royal blue dress with the red, white, and blue bow to a flared white denim skirt, a blue and white blouse, and keds and made good use of the straw hat all the ladies had been given as they arrived. It was scattered with sea shells, an absolutely perfect souvenir for the day. Somebody asked me solicitously if they could bring me a plate. No, I said. I wouldn't miss for the world seeing what the buffet table looked like and I stood in line with everybody and the menu was an incredible array mostly of good things that come out of the sea--crab claws, shrimp, barbecued, boiled and fried, stuffed crab, fried filet of red snapper, fried oysters, vegetable tray and relishes, shrimp tacos,--I

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had never seen them before, french fried potatoes, cold slaw, and the hit of the day outside of the fish-hush puppies. This took some explaining to the foreign press. Our plates were heaped and I could hear Aunt Effie's words in my mind--"your eyes are bigger than your stomach."

I sat at the table with Chris and Tommy and the Hartes and relative silence fell while we all devoured the delicious meal. There was band music and the guitarist, Carlos Dunahoe, who sang songs of the southwest and also of Mexico. We were the guests of the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce and they announced the particular people who had been our hosts. I recognized the familiar names of Edgar Linkenhoger and Bevo Garnett. Then I was presented a charming little painting of Padre Island by Wesley Walburg and all the other guests were given prints of it. One of the foreign press, Ernest Marsh of the London Daily Telegraph rose quite spontaneously, as far as I know, and expressed the thanks of the visiting press for the party in a very warm manner. Actually they had loosened up greatly in the days we had been together. Chris tells me that by the time they got to Jessica Cato's in San Antonio, they were all sitting on the floor signing songs of their own home countries. A very cute little German, blonde and pixy looking had gone out and bought himself a cowboy hat and wouldn't be parted from it the rest of the trip.

When we finished I couldn't wait to get out on the beach. Alas, it was loaded with blue jelly fish and Portuguese men of war, but nevertheless

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I walked and walked. It was the softest sand I ever felt and there are eighty miles of it, all free, and that is what I kept on pointing out over and over to the foreign newspapermen when I was with one or two or three at a time. I found a few perfect sea shells. Most of them come in after storms. I went upon the sand dunes and there were several ladies painting. They told me they worked as commercial artists in Corpus Christi and on their off time or weekends came out here and that each time the island, the light, the sea grasses looked different. They gave me several of their sketches and I was delighted to have them. A few bold folks went in swimming, naturally Stewart Udall among them. I did not. When I waded in the surf it was quite chilly. The strolling guitarist soon had a group around him singing the folk songs of various parts of this country and when I heard "Dixie" strike up, I went right over to add my voice.

The seashore naturalist and ranger, Mr. Derrick Hambley, walked along with me on the beach. He told me of the history of Padre Island, the cattle industry. I don't see how they survive <sup>—</sup> the fish <sup>—</sup> how it looked when "Beulah" came in. And the reporters stretched out on the sand and dozed in the sun, or swam. I gathered together under the dune with Brownie McNeil and Joe Frantz and listened to tales of Padre Island. I finally joined this group and was enchanted with the story of the ghost ship of Port Isabel, a full rigged 17th Century galleon which is seen about every ten years. It suddenly looms up along some real ship, its sails at the full

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and there is fierce fighting going on and blood running on the gunwales and you can hear shrieks and then suddenly when you are almost beside it, it disappears. He and Joe told stories of lost treasures and the camel corps that once belonged to the Army in Jefferson Davis' time. And it was nearly four o'clock when we finally got in our cars and headed for Corpus Christi. I was riding with Helen and Marilyn at which point I did not have to think or look but just lie back. It was then that I began to believe the estimates that said there had been as many as forty thousand people on Padre Island that day and that a total of ten thousand cars were counted going across the John F. Kennedy Memorial Causeway. It seemed all ten thousand were lined up in front of us. After five we reached the Robert Driscoll Hotel and I lay down gratefully for a few minutes of rest, a rub and then a shampoo and set.

Bess called. Obviously she was very much upset. She did not think we should go on with the dinner on Wednesday night. The curfew was still on. It might continue on Wednesday night. She described the incessant barrage of TV coverage of looting and fires, of seeing policemen stand by while people knocked the windows out of stores, ~~grapped~~<sup>flashed</sup> TV sets and loaded them with difficulty into their cars, and a little child walked off with a teddy bear, and a woman grabbing everything she could take and the policeman standing there. She was incensed. She believed the looters should be shot in the foot or over their head, but not left alone. It was as though I was talking to an inhabitant of another planet. I told her I would

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talk to Lyndon about the dinner and at some point I did. I am not sure just when. He felt that we should go on. He did, I believe, get the advice of Secretary Rusk himself. For the first time on the trip I was late. I had twenty-five minutes when I left the hotel with Liz and took a patrol boat out to the showboat where the Ed Hartes and Bob Jacksons and about twenty couples of Corpus Christi businessmen were entertaining all of the foreign journalists and Washington journalists and me tonight. The party was already very much in progress and I was grateful for a drink. It was a big three-decker showboat and journalists and hosts were spread out all over in small intimate groups. I found Marilyn by the rail talking French to one of the French editors. I had asked her particularly to search them out. Later I was delighted when he told me her French was excellent.

The boat was moving slowly down a man-made channel to the Gulf <sup>through</sup> in what seemed some of the muscle of our country--refineries, petrochemical plants, huge brown silos of grain looming skyward looking like giant pipe organs--and I took considerable pleasure in pointing these out to the Frenchmen and that this channel itself was man built and it turned Corpus Christi into the twelfth largest port in the United States.

I went from group to group and when I met Ed Harte I suggested that he or whoever knew the story of Corpus Christi best might want to get on the public address system after dinner and tell them a few facts

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about it. This trip is indeed parks and restorations and wild flowers and the great show at Hemisfair, but I also want them to see some of the strength of this country. We had the most fantastic buffet--quail, venison, buffalo. Once more, I loaded my plate. There is something about being with big crowds of people and trying to "give out," to react with enthusiasm to every sight and experience in contact with people that is offered to you. It finally leaves me very hungry. I sat at the table with Bob and Helen. Bob was almost emotional during the evening. He loves Lyndon and I love to hear him express it.

When dinner was over, Ed Harte took the microphone and told us a bit about Corpus, and then ~~in~~ <sup>some started</sup> groups around the room, playing the guitar and suddenly in front of me one of the Italians was singing grand opera. For me, that was one of the most delightful vignettes of the whole trip. He sang an aria from "The Barber of Seville." He had a marvelous voice--good enough to be professional. I said so and he smiled and said, "Caruso, Agili and me". "When we meet again next time please sing Pagliacci and he promised to. All during the evening Stu Udall had a far-away look. I can imagine how he feels these days, pummeled by conflicting loyalties, his brother having long ago come out against the war in Vietnam, and I do not know to what extent his heart belongs to Bobby Kennedy. His son, on Spring vacation <sup>from</sup> ~~who~~ school, somewhere in the West is making the trip with him and Lee is in the hospital back home.

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We docked by eleven and went back to the Robert Driscoll Hotel. Betty came in and gave me a rub and Liz to give me bulletins from Washington and to go over every step of the way tomorrow. Our big hazard tomorrow is still rain. We just lucked it out today. Everywhere the rain is right in front of us and when we get there the clouds lift. If it will only hold one more day.