

Discover
America
Women Joe's
luncheon

(Also Frank
Sinatra vignette
which no one
could find when
we needed it!)

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, May 2, 1968

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For Pat, three weeks down and forty-nine to go. For me a busy day ahead.

I have the sense of riding two horses like Ben Hur, a foot on each, and they are galloping, and I'm trying to hold my balance, and I'm just barely staying ahead of each day's activities.

For instance, today, the Women Do-er's Luncheon, with the "Discover America" theme; and here it is the very day of it and instead of being calmly prepared, I have this morning to do it in. So I took the proposed remarks, and the guest list, and went to Mr. Per's for a shampoo and set. Liz rode out with me, I digested the remarks; there were some good ideas, some good statistics, but I felt I could do better just talking, turning to the script from time to time, as an outline.

It was a good guest list and I tried to remember, the warm little points of contact, toward each guest, so that when each one came down the line, where we would reestablish our friendship begun, or I would learn more about/her particular facet of travel was.

I was back at the White House by 11:30, changed into my white Adele Simpson suit, and then I got an SOS from Bess. Frank Sinatra was in her office. She had understood that he was to see the President. The President was not going to be able to - Could I see him? - Yes, of course, let's meet in the Library, for a good glass of sherry in five minutes.

And so, I went downstairs and spent nearly a half hour, highly interestingly,

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he was, as so often happens, not the flamboyant character you expect.

Quiet, well spoken - I liked his use of words. We talked about Jack Valenti and Lynda Bird's little adventure into Hollywood. He liked her, and I said, "She felt that she had some real friends their."

And of his new picture, called I believe, The Detectives - about Las Vegas, but made in Paris - he said that he would see that a copy was made available for White House viewing room.

And we talked about how the film industry could compete; that is, the Hollywood industry, with the lower prices abroad. I did my best to fill in the gap. I will list that as one of the job qualifications for a President's wife, to substitute.

Back upstairs, I continued studying the guest list, and a tenure of my remarks.

And at one o'clock, went to the Green Room, to receive (what a pompous word) the guests for the "Discover America" luncheon. At first there were pictures of our three speakers, Mrs. Ed Edmondson, whose husband is a Congressman from Oklahoma; and Robin Duke; and Frances Colton, of Mademoiselle Magazine.

The guests were all, in one way or another, specialists in travel, in attracting it to their own home community, by restorations of old homes, or museums, or pageants or pilgrimages.

There was pretty Mrs. Horatio Buntin, of the Ladies Hermitage Association, which had restored Andrew Jackson's old home in Nashville.

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She's one of the Lyndon's distant relatives. Also from my own trips, dear Minnie Coyle of Monterey, California; and Mrs. Plez Harper, founder of the Paladura Canyon Festival; and Mrs. Lawrence Miller of Shaker Village in Hancock, Massachusetts. And one of the ladies that had restored Society Hill, Carol Scanlon, in Philadelphia.

And real close to home, Lucille Terry of the Jefferson Pilgrimage; and Miss Dorothy Vaughn of Strawberry Bank in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

And there was a sizeable contingent of travel press there. Naturally, the National Geographic was represented by Mrs. Duncan Aikman; and there was a Mrs. James Blackwell of Mademoiselle; Miss Cynthia Kellog of Venture Magazine; and Mary Leatherbee, the travel editor of Life; and one I've never heard of, Better Camping Magazine was represented by Miss Katie McMullen.

All parties move better if there's some good friends who are asked to be hostesses, to see that every body at the tables get to know each other and to try to mix people up. So I had asked Bess, to ask Trudy Fowler and Phylis Moss, the wife of the Senator of Utah; and Mrs. Roger Stevens, to be hostesses; and Robin who can do double duty on anything.

Government, both national and local, is working to encourage travel and Louise McKinney of Santa Fe, whose husband Lyndon has recently appointed to co-ordinate the efforts of a lot of government agencies, was one of the guests; and also a lady from Dallas, who is chairman of the

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committee for Foreign visitors (How like Dallas to be that energetic).

And several airlines were represented, with their directors of women's divisions.

There was a group with which I was very sympathetic, and loved for the line to go slow. I could tell Mrs. Irving Matthews, that to go through the Historic Garden Week of Virginia, was one of my dreams, and I yearned to do it in the future. And Mrs. Carlyle Hummelstein, of Williamsburg, ~~wh~~ how much I had loved our weekend there, the Preacher notwithstanding.

We went into the Blue Room and had sherry, dubonnet and orange juice, and then Bess, always hovering around, signaled me and I led the ladies into the Family Dining Room.

Two very prestigious centers of travel were represented at my table, Mrs. Lowe, who trains guides at Colonial Williamsburg; Mrs. Dorothy Greer, the head of the Office of Public Relations at Winter Tour. I told her I could never thank ~~her~~ enough, Mr. Harry duPont, for all he had done for us here in the White House.

And there was Mrs. Milton Underwood, who had bought and restored Rosedown Plantation, St Francisville, Louisiana, and I was charmed to hear the story of the restoration. It seemed she had been going antique hunting with some friends, and her husband had said, "Well, didn't you buy anything." "No, but I almost bought a plantation." "Why don't you?" And so she did, and it became a sort of life's work.

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And there was Mrs. Balfor Miller, who started the Natches Pilgrimage in Natches, Mississippi.

My travels here in the White House years, have not led me to Mississippi, but I'm going to make up for that, with pleasure.

There is a sort of a snide attitude among the self-styled intellectuals of reading Mississippi out of the Union, which I find disagreeable.

One of the most attractive guests was from my own hometown of Austin, Mrs. Margaret Scarborough Wilson, very pretty, she must have been under 30. She's the President of Scarborough's, and my particular interest in her, is that it is the first store on Congress Avenue, to plant trees and thereby be vastly more attractive. I discovered that she belonged to something called the Young President's Club, and had just returned from their convention. I like to expand my knowledge of Austin, and the people I want to know their, in the future.

And another guest, was my cousin, Mrs. William Sandifer, who has a lodge in Evergreen, Colorado. I'd asked her to be a houseguest and so the very pleasant luncheon went along.

And with coffee, I rose with a few words of greeting, pointing out that this house itself, is very much a part of the Discover America program, with about a million eight hundred thousand visitors a year. Spoke glowingly, I hope, about 263 areas within the National Park System, from the Grand Tetons

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to the peaks of Attu, and of the out of the way places like Jefferson, and Fredericksburg, Texas. Of the increase in travel from overseas countries, 208% since 1961, but still not nearly enough for the balance of payments.

And then an introduction of guests, who were in their differing ways, experts on travel. But at some moment, I don't quite remember when, Lyndon came in with a flurry of excitement that always accompanies the President, whoever, walked up to the podium, and made a joking remark about one way of getting to see me, was to catch me at one of these functions, and I felt a little sad about it. And then a simple statement, that it would be helpful if all of us would look at this country, see all of the interesting things here, and forego, for the moment, any substantial literature that adversely affects our country. And he was gone in five minutes, and I expected, added to the memory of a good many of the 50 guests there.

First, there was Mrs. Edmondson. She began low key. I did not realize until she was about a third of the way through, that she was really making a great speech. What an asset she must be to her husband.

I had suggested her as a speaker because I remember and Ed and about five children, piling out of a station wagon at the ranch, one fall afternoon. They had just been on a long cross-country trip, and sure enough, the tenure of her talk was the many times they had travelled as a family, the seven of them, the children, now ranging from 8 to 23, from Oklahoma to Washington, always the stops to see, all the sites along the way, the many

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of the greatest historic places around the United States, to Mexico. And of the enormous personal rewards that they had all gotten, especially the children, including the sense of responsibility, the knowledge of how to get along with other people. You can get funny about seven people traveling together in a station wagon. And the deep sense of appreciation of the history of this country. For me, she was the star of the day - not in looks, but in that intangible thing you might call it empathy, that reaches out from heart to heart.

And then there was Robin, dear, brisk, humorous, charming Robin who talked briefly and to the point, about inexpensive package tours, that would introduce visitors to famous museums in several cities, they never new existed. And the five day swing through National Parks; of a need to work harder in making visitors welcome, as she said European countries do. With hotels and travel agents and airlines, all having somebody on their staff who can talk to non-English speaking visitors. And of little books of simple English phrases. Thoroughly female, thoroughly business woman; I do like her so much.

And then, the last speaker was Frances Colton, of Mademoiselle, who talked about the new, invisible giant of an industry, without smokestacks. Travel. And ^{that} of the U. S. Census Bureau has estimated that in an American day, one out of every six ~~ex~~ jobs can be attributed to the economic activity created by travel. And that it's women's work to decide where travel for pleasure is going to take place. And so it is. That tourism is made up of

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folklore, and natural wonders, and local festivals, as its raw materials. It was an excellent speech, but too long.

Afterwards, I asked briefly, for comments or observations, and didn't encourage them for more than ten minutes. And then suggested that all the guests, that if anyone cared for an upstairs tour of this house, guides would be waiting outside. And I particularly told Mrs. Button to look for all the memorabilia of President Jackson in the Queen's Room - his bed, the portrait of Emily Donaldson Jackson.

Had arranged for Hazel Sandifer to take my car and go sightseeing; and had offered a car to Lucille Terry.

And so I hurried to the door and shook hands with all the departing guests, feeling that it had really been a very pleasant, and reasonably useful occasion.

I promised to see Louise McKinney and the two other guests from Santa Fe, so important is that little town in travel, at the opera in July.

And then I went upstairs and spent the rest of the afternoon, industriously recording.

Close to seven, dressed up in my yellow gabardine coat dress, I drove with Lyndon out to the Georgetown Club, where there was a reception in honor of the Speaker, the first and only party I can remember in their honor. And this is strange for someone, so long a part of the ~~stream of~~ ~~strange~~ Washington life.

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He looked very pale and stood alone, without Mrs. McCormack. We made a brief stop.

And then went on to the Hale Boggs' garden party, where everybody and his cousin had gathered on the front lawn. And typically Boggs, and delightfully, the first guests we encountered, were three of their grandchildren.

I was delighted to run into Mrs. Edmondson, and introduced her to Lyndon as the star of the Luncheon.

The Boggs have a little garden - the corn was coming up, and I told Hale to save us a mess.

We circled the lawn - I lost Lyndon most of the way. The crowd was oldtimers from the Hill, Louisianians, a great many people I didn't know, and I decided big parties were really not for me, after a thorough investigation for 30 years.

And so, we were back at the White House by 8:30. Lyndon phoned and I read, and we sat down to a quiet dinner.

And then I had a rub, and I was in bed beside him, and sometime, I don't know when, between 11 and 12, three guests walked in, returning from the Big Brothers Dinner.

The Vice President, who had been the chief speaker the 12; and Drew Pearson, the sort of Patron Saint of the organization; and Frank Sinatra who had sang, I think he had said, 17 songs - very generous for a star, I thought. It was one of the amusing late night tableaux I will remember

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from my days here.

The Vice President, in especially high spirits. Muriel's doing fine he said. Laughter and banter - and then they were gone, and so to sleep.

One of the hazards of living here, is who I'll meet after I take off my makeup.

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