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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

WHD
Thursday, May 23, 1968

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It was a busy, significant day for me. Work breeds work as does I am sure inertia breeds inertia. I was up at 7:00 and as soon as the operators told me that our house guests were awake I went upstairs and took some pictures to autograph for them, some books on the White House and some little glass birds. And they, bless them, had already bought some books which I autographed to friends back home to whom they were taking them. We had an hour's good visit, and then back downstairs I saw Ernie Goldstein and talked about the Library, the oral history program. And on the telephone to Roy White and Busby and Dr. Grover and George Reedy and Doug Cater. Ernie is going into the hospital. The oral history program is just about to get kicked off. Joe Frantz has some nominees -- young Ph. D.'s -- as possible ones to head it up. Doug will interview them since Ernie will be in the hospital. We hope we can get it underway early this summer. George Reedy had prepared some splendid memos on how to divide Lyndon's Senate years, what events were significant -- one of the best contributions so far. I talked with Dr. Voss about Sam Houston. He believes he is in good shape mentally and physically. And then to Mr. Per's for a comb-out, and pictures of me and Emily and Cecille and Helen -- all four together and two of us separately in the Yellow Room. And then it was time to go downstairs for the last of the dearest events of my days here -- the annual luncheon for the Senate Ladies.

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Mrs. Eisenhower was coming again. I had called her myself a week or so ago to tell her how much it would mean if she could come, but not really expecting her too since the General was in the Hospital. And so it was a good sign about him that she came.

We had pictures in the Green Room -- Mrs. Eisenhower and Muriel and me. Muriel looking quite wan and weary. This is really her first time out from the hospital. And then Mrs. Eisenhower and I stood in line to greet the 101 guests -- all the Cabinet wives, except for Virginia Rusk, and the great majority of the sitting Senator's wives. Old timers -- Henrietta Anderson and Ivo Sparkman and Norma McClellan and one of my always favorites Mary Ellen Monroney. And Betty Fulbright with whom I never really associate -- I dislike for her husband. And an old name, Mrs. Harry Byrd, Jr. The young and beautiful -- Marvella Bayh and Mrs. Scoop Jackson. And a very special pair, Mrs. Fred Harris and Mrs. Walter Mondale whose husbands are chairmen of the Vice President's campaign. Neither Joan Kennedy nor Ethel Kennedy were there. They were both out campaigning. And so was Abigail McCarthy. And a very special person to me -- Loraine McGee. She and Gale are two of the staunchest. Greatly missed was Louella Dirksen. But I knew only a very real commitment kept her away. And Grace Dodd whose absence gave me a pang. I should have called her and urged her to come. And dear Betty

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Talmadge and Evie Symington whom I always associate with happier days of the past and not with Stu's slicing of the present. And Mrs. Ernest Gruening, walking laboriously on her two canes. And Mrs. Charles Percy looking about Lynda Bird's age in a very short, very pretty white dress.

There was so much hugging nearly every guest that I soon lost my pearls. And nearly everybody was first names. And then came the wives of the former members -- now so faithful in the Red Cross. Mrs. Charles Tobey, the Dean of us all. And glamorous ^{Baroness} ~~Bareny~~ Silvercross⁶² who was married to Senator Bryan McMann. And Mrs. Harold Burton whose husband had been both Senator and member of the Supreme Court -- and is my nominee for having attended more Washington parties than anybody, always with both her earrings on one ear and always very friendly and nice. And Mrs. Frances Parkinson Kyes in a wheelchair. She is celebrating this week the publishing of her latest book. This must make the 30 some odd. And Mrs. Tom Connolly whom time does not daunt. And Lou Engle and Esther Freer. And Elizabeth Hennings and Katie Malone. And in my mind's eye I kept on seeing me coming back some time in the future. And relishing it all as much as I wanted them to. And as I did being with them.

Mrs. J. Hamilton Lewis did not make the receiving line -- no surprise. She did slip into her seat sometime in the middle of the first

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course. And I was pleased with myself that I had remembered to do some nice little things -- send a car for her, try to send one for Mrs. Burk, that Senate Red Cross faithful. And for Bess' mother -- but both of them were too ill to come.

I had Mrs. Eisenhower on my right of course. And next, Henrietta Hill. And it's a triumph of medicine and in part Mary Lasker's triumph, that Henrietta is here and not shaking. The Parkinson's disease from which she suffers is partly controlled by a drug, very recently discovered. And she has a reprieve in this world. She looked very well in fact. And next Maureen Mansfield. And then Gladys ~~Johnson~~^{Johnston}, Mrs. Olin Johnson. Here I had used my prerogative which I so seldom do in this house of adding to the established list someone of my own choice. It is a custom to invite those Senate wives who still have a Washington address or a close -- within an hour or so -- drive address. But this time I had asked Mrs. Ernest McFarland and Mrs. Olin Johnston and two or three from a long ways away. And Gladys had come and enjoyed it ~~very~~ very much I think. I certainly did enjoy her presence. And then ~~the~~ LaDonna Harris and Mrs. Hugh Scott and Mrs. Tobbey for whom my admiration is very great. And Mrs. Aiken who had been the chairman of the luncheon for me this year, and then Muriel.

The conversation was far better than the lunch which was not particularly distinguished. Mrs. Eisenhower and I talked about Palm Springs --

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how much Lyndon had liked it, how much I hoped we might come out. And about the General of course. She had been telling everybody that he was g doing well. And of course her very presence here attested to that. She said, "When our beaus", -- she always uses this expression about husbands -- "get to be a certain age, they are all we have." She was explaining how she stayed with him all the time, and felt that she could come away for just a few hours now because he was doing better. She had even missed Anne's debut -- her granddaughter -- in New York because he had not been well this Spring. And of course in the conversation she said, "You know^{I never}/knew who was Democrat and who was Republican." Actually that is the way in the Senate Ladies Red Cross we have all felt. It's been a very special relationship -- one of the strongest and the most cherished of my years here.

Gladys Johnston asked, "How is Mrs. Nixon?" And I was glad she did. She was a good presiding officer in her years with the Senate Ladies Red Cross, and it's my lack that I haven't made a special effort to get her to come for some of these luncheons in my days here. But everywhere one looks, there is a lack, a failure, an omission. We can only try to fill the days as full as you can and not worry about the rest.

One of the big features of the day was using the new White House china -- ours. And of course there were many compliments, or the remarks may have been said going out the door. And then Lyndon dropped

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in on us, greeted Mrs. Eisenhower most solicitously, and Muriel. And then stopped by my chair and said a few words to the ladies -- warm affectionate words, I thought them. And a special one to Mrs. Eisenhower. No one has been kinder or more helpful to me than President and Mrs. Eisenhower, or more generous with their good wishes and their prayers.

And presently the last of my White House luncheons for the Senate Ladies was over, and I said goodbye to Mrs. Eisenhower who was going to slip out. And I went to stand at the door to bid farewell to each of the guests. And that was a moment of wrenching. If this Spring I have gone through a great deal of emotion, of saying goodbyes, of awareness of a change in our lives, my feelings I think have always been very well under control. But this was a moment wrenching. I felt it deeply and came close to showing it. There were so many nice things said as the ladies left the room. And there were tears in a good many eyes. One esteemed compliment, "I would sure hate to follow in your shoes." I relished the last moment of it, and went upstairs after the last guest, worked with Ashton, recorded, went to the West Hall for a drink and a last visit with Emily and Helen and Cecille. Helen is going out to spend the night with some other friends here in Washington. And Emily and Cecille are spending the night here and will leave ~~me~~ early tomorrow morning.

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We went to the bowling lanes and had another hilarious game. Jim Cain came over and joined us. Finally we went back upstairs and had dinner without waiting for Lyndon -- Emily and Cecille and Dr. Cain and I.

And it was after 10:00 when Lyndon came and had his dinner, and then we both had a rub and I was in bed by midnight.