

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Saturday, September 7, 1968 WASHINGTON

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It was a beautiful day. And after an early morning spent in desultory, unproductive work at the desk and arranging for a trip for the Baileys and the Thomas' down into Virginia to Monticello in Charlottesville, ~~The~~ lure of escaping was just too much and I decided to leave it all and go with them.

I said goodbye to Marietta Brooks -- she and Max and Robert are leaving for New York later this afternoon. It had been just what I wanted for them I think, and the emotion and warmth in Marietta's voice filled me with that satisfied sense of having done something for a friend, something that would be cherished.

We got a sack of apples and bananas and a box of cookies and I set out about 11:00 with Lucile and her cute little son and Billy and Mary Love for Wakefield -- George Washington's birthplace, supposedly about 70 miles down into Virginia. It was a glorious golden day and the dogwood was just beginning to turn rust and scarlet and its berries bright -- the touch of autumn in the air.

We stopped at a roadside restaurant, ~~went~~<sup>went</sup> in and insisted on having Virginia ham naturally which oddly seemed to startle them. But finally it came forth salty, sweet, and tasty -- one of my life-long favorite delicacies.

There was a ripple of interest around the room. We sensed people looking at us. As we left, a few children came up and asked for autographs. It was only a mild interest and pleasant enough.

In the bright early afternoon we arrived at Wakefield where George Washington was born, and were met by a Park Service man -- Bob Walker, who introduced himself as having seen me last in the Big Bend country.

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We spent over an hour walking over the grounds that slope down to a broad estuary of the Potomac. A mile or so out you can see the river itself. It's a great fly-over in the winter they say ~~lot~~<sup>lots</sup> of geese and swans. The house was made of old brick and sits mellow and substantial on the landscape. It was constructed in the 1932's in the ~~depths~~<sup>depths</sup> of the Depression by a bunch of very spirited and bold ladies who wanted to do this as a memorial to George Washington. There were no pictures, engravings, and of course no memories. But there was an inventory of the furniture left in the Courthouse in some will. And with that numerous pictures of houses of that time and area they had constructed this ~~with~~ eight-room, simple Georgian structure.

There was only one piece of furniture that had definitely been there in young George's time.

An interesting thing we heard was that there ~~were~~<sup>were</sup> still a great many families named Washington on the adjoining land.

As we walked, everybody looked at us and the cameras were busy. And one lady said, "Mrs. Johnson, we are from Oakland, California. We are great fans of your husband. We are sorry he didn't run again."

Like so many great old places this ~~has~~<sup>has</sup> fallen into the hands of the National Park Service, and just last Spring they had introduced a colonial farm growing the crops and raising the stock that would have been there between 1730 and 1779 when the house burned. And this proved to be one of the ~~most~~<sup>most</sup> interesting bits of the day. There was a team of oxen yoked together and pulling an old two-wheel cart. A Negro driver clad in the costume of the middle 18th Century

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directed the oxen around in what was an unknown tone to me.

There was tobacco and corn and pumpkins. But when you get to the animals, they had proved to be quite a project because so great are the advances <sup>in</sup> ~~and~~ animal husbandry that you can hardly find any stock, any chickens, like there were in the middle 18th Century.

Mr. Walker explained to us that the chicken yard there, indeed, when they began to do research, about all that was left of the same breed were cornish chickens, game chickens, guineas. That all the big fat large-breasted ~~heavy~~ heavy egg-producing chickens of today are the product of man's scientific breeding -- his success stories of the last few decades. So the condition of man, at least materially, in what he raises and what goes on his table has ~~■~~ visibly improved.

By now it was after 3:00 and entirely too late for them to go on to Charlottesville we decided. So we just spent the rest of the day together and went by Robert E. Lee's home at Stratford. We got lost and were forever finding it. But it was such a pleasant ride across the back roads of Virginia in the bright early autumn that nobody minded.

I was particularly enjoying being with Lucile. We hadn't been together this much since we were children and waded in the cool streams at <sup>Billingley</sup> ~~Bingley~~ and climbed Hog Mountain and went on hay rides and to watermelon cuttings. She is slim, her eyes sparkle, she is animated and seems happy enough. The painful divorce is behind her.

A delightful woman took us through Stratford which is 200 years old, having housed the Lees for 100 years. And after them the Lee kinfolk, the

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Stuarts, for another hundred. Only in the 1930's it had been purchased by another brave group of women. This time a Chapter of the UDC located amusingly enough in Yankee land -- in Greenwich, Connecticut.

I had not been to Stratford since we used to go with the Speaker. It must have been 20 years ago or more. More of the rooms are furnished. The great solid fortress-like architecture is just as I remembered it. The cross-ventilation -- such practical, pleasant engineering.

The most memorable object to me -- a cradle beautifully draped, which had been used by Robert E. Lee we were told and had returned to this house from Natchez, Mississippi.

We reached the White House a little past 6:00, and I found Lyndon at the lunch table. He had put in a long, busy day, almost cleared his desk and was having soup and desert. Then he laid down for a little rest and I went to the bowling lanes with the Baileys -- had three games. Lucile turned out to be an expert and Julian too. And sweet Mary Love -- a comic relief.

The Pickles and Deasons and Jack Brooks alone came in for dinner. The McHughs joined us for desert at the table. Everybody had been to the Texas picnic which had been in honor of Marvin and we felt a pang of regret actually that we hadn't gone. But it is not possible really to have a personal relaxed, natural time in a crowd. It turns out to be a show, a front, a sort of giving. It was a pleasant, happy day. And yet there was a sense of sadness, of stagnation, of no progress for me.

Yesterday we had received a letter from Gardner Ackley declining with many thanks the opportunity to head the School of Public Service.

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I had called Chancellor Ransom to remind him of two names that had appeared earlier on the list: Walt Rostow and Gale McGee. He had been strong for either of them, but he himself is not on the faculty committee. He would look into it. He would be in touch with me by the middle of next week.

And so in the days of this Fall, many things are winding up and it is a time that calls for strength and determined fighting for anything that can be achieved for good cheer in the face of everything.