

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, September 13, 1968

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Friday, September 13th, will be a day to always remember in our White House days.

We had pondered for about two months having a party for old friends from Texas covering the broad range of Lyndon's days as Secretary and Member of the House and Senate and on. And principally those old friends had not heretofore visited us in the White House. There were many reasons why not. We couldn't possibly invite everybody and we would most likely wind up hurting more feelings than we made people happy. Besides, no matter how carefully you estimate ahead of time, the bills are always staggering.

We finally decided on the basis of we simply didn't want to leave this place until we had invited Mayor Will Rogers of Bastrop and Reese Lockett of Brenham and Mrs. Ed Cape of San Marcos and many, many more. Hit or miss, lose or win, we would at least try.

And so with dire forebodings we had decided on Friday the 13th of all days. [REDACTED] It had to be while warm weather was still with us because with about 300 people the only way we could eat inside the house would be standing up and holding our plates.

And so, boldly we planned it, putting together the lists with long hours by Mary Rather and Cliff Carter and Marvin Watson, and much earnest work by me.

And so the big day came.

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In the morning I had 30 laps in the pool, worked with Bess and Ashton and planned about visitors with Lynda, lunched alone in my room on a hamburger, spent nearly two hours with Dorothy Territo and Liz and Simone planning the ABC show and digging up some early diaries which Dorothy brought me -- some choice little morsels. In Mrs. Johnson's about our first White House reception in January of '38. And our first White House dinner in my diary -- I believe it February of '41.

And then exhausted going-over of Howard K. Smith's questions -- trying to organize my thinking on them, hopefully cloth them in good phrases.

And then in the middle of the afternoon, to Mr. Per's. It was not one of my best days. I was tense for many reasons. Among them, thinking of all the people we hadn't asked, and ridiculously because it was Friday the 13th. I have a childhood hangover of superstition. And then I was hurt and mad at Lyndon who had expressed himself in choice fashion about some of my handling of my office work.

And so close to seven, I put on my avocado green dress and coat and fared forth to meet ~~the~~ old friends extending over a range of three decades. And from then on the evening was sheer delight.

They assembled at first in the Jacqueline Kennedy garden. And because Lyndon was late and I didn't want to miss a moment with them, I stood just inside the pretty pink-lined tent in the Rose Garden and started greeting them.

One of the writer's said it was almost like a "This is Your Life" program, with the nostalgic and sentimental party President and Mrs. Johnson gave.

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And they were exactly right. It was practically a reunion of Lyndon's college friends from San Marcos. The Wilton Woods and the Will Deasons, the Fenner Roths and the Raymond Dwigans. And there were District men and County men from 1937 onward. The Will Bonds and J. Ed Connallys, Ben Bocks, and Conrad Dunagans. And Homer Deans of that underlined little town of Alice. The Drew Gillens and W. A. Griffis -- she used to handle Lyndon's women campaigns. The Jack Kultgens. And Chilton O'Briens. There were Congressmen Wright Patman and George Mahon, both here when Lyndon came in '37.

And the most delightful news of the evening was that Wright -- about 78 years old -- was going to be remarried soon.

And there were former Congressmen: Frank Ikard and Gene Worley.

And Cabinet members C. R. Smith and Marvin Watson.

And from our NYA days, the Tony Zieglers and Albert Brisbins and C. P. Littles.

And there were disappointments too. Mrs. Ed Cape whom we had asked to come and be a house guest went to the hospital the day before. And that Cliff Carter who knew every sol~~ph~~ere had to be out of town. And neither Tom or Ramsey Clark could come.

And there were the Phillip Baldwins -- his grandfather had delivered me. And Dan Quill who had bought our wedding ring. And a host of Texas editors who had played an important role in our lives. All the way from the

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Ray Lees and and Buck Hoods and Gordon Fulchers back in '37 to the Harry Provences and Wendell Mayes and Frank Mayborns and and Sam Woods and Conway Craigs and Fred Conns.

And two especially from my own east Texas. The Russell Laschingers and J. Q. Mahaffeys. And the Harlon Fentresses whose father had probably made the difference in one of Lyndon's first and toughest races.

There have been so many times when our life and future -- Lyndon's career -- hung by a thread, when so many of the people here had spun those threads. There was a good story with every guest, and my only trouble was that I couldn't sit at every table and talk to every individual.

And there were other political stories of the past and future. Former Governor Price Daniel, Governor -aspirant Eugene Locke, and possible future Governor, Ben Barnes.

So it would<sup>d</sup> up that we actually stood in line twice because when I was about 1/3 of the way through and it was 7:30 or so; Lyndon came and we moved to the proper place close to his office. And as the line filed by there were pictures, pictures, pictures. And a hug and a kiss for practically every person.

And then we went into the tent and had drinks all around. And loaded up our plates in the striped tent out on the lawn. We had four lines and it went rather smoothly and I saluted Bess for the 99th time. Delicious, huge steam-board rounds of beef and sea food casserole and salad. And everybody went back for sweets.

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Tables were set under the trees down below President Eisenhower's putting green.

I had called a good number of staff and a sprinkling of those with rank and asked them to act as hosts -- to just gather together at their tables -- anybody they knew and would enjoy and to make everybody feel at home. I had really worked on this party. And only Lyndon's table and mine had any ~~a~~ planned seating. I had chosen the Bob Thorntons of San Marcos at whose summer home -- the Ed Capes on the San Marcos River -- Lyndon and I had had our first happy vacations. And the Gordon Fulchers and Rose and Delmar Groos and L. E. Jones and his wife and Fred Korth.

The evening was perfect. The Japanese latterns in the trees were beautiful, and the back-drop of the Monuments superb. Everybody that I saw was in high good humor and it would be hard to find an evening that I enjoyed more in our five years here.

When dinner was over, Lyndon made a talk -- you cannot call it a toast. I hope earnestly that it was recorded because this was the Lyndon that is not known to the whole United States. And a very warm funny, salty common sense -- dear man he was. And there couldn't have been a better audience for it.

It was rather long. When he finished he called on me. And my main words besides the best welcome I could express was to ask them all -- especially the ladies -- to come back the next morning at 2:30 for coffee and open house to see the second floor where we lived. And then he called on Lynda. Lynda was a gem. Poised, full of substance, remembering all her father's daughter

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should remember of what these people meant to us. I was so proud of her.

And then Lyndon called everybody up to the platform among our Staff. The future. Tom Johnson, Bob Hardesty and Harry Middleton. And the past ranging all the way from L. E. Jones. And one of the disappointments of the evening was that Gene Latimer couldn't be there -- to Dorothy Nichols and Mary Rather to that Dean of all staff members, Arthur Perry, who goes back to Lyndon's days at the Dodge. And Mildred Stegall and Willie Day Taylor and of course Juanita Roberts.

And one of the stars of the evening/ was Mrs. H. H. Weinert, in her 80's -- chipper as anybody there. She was our only house guest in the group.

Well, it was a superb evening.

When Lyndon had finally finished talking, we had some songs from a pretty little girl -- tuneful favorites. And then we all went inside to the State rooms. Bars had been set up and there was coffee. And everybody visited and walked and looked and remembered and rejoiced. And it was all that I had hoped it would be. Lyndon even took some of the guests up to the second floor.

And it was after 1:00 when we bid goodnight and went upstairs.

And if that <sup>DAY</sup>bijoued/had one best quarter hour it was the one when Lyndon was talking. I completely melted at his introduction of me, forgetting all about being mad at him. ~~IT~~ <sup>IT</sup> was entirely too dear, too sweet, and about 99 percent undeserved.