

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

WHD
Tuesday, October 15, 1968

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It was a grim day for Lyndon. But a satisfying, even fun day for me. So unfair is the division of labor here in this house. I woke up about 6:30 by no choice of my own. But tension does have a way of spreading by osmosis. And all day yesterday I knew something was building up, was about to happen -- I didn't know exactly when or how. A bombing halt was in the making. And of the steps that led up to it, I did not want to ask any questions.

I had breakfast early -- about 7:30. I read the paper hoping to get in a word with Lyndon, but he was too busy on the phone. So after enumerable cups of coffee I went to my room and called George Hartzog and later Stew Udall about the possibility of Mar Lago coming into the National Park system. Then I worked with Sharon on our luncheon and going over the final speech draft, practicing it several times. And with Bess on the seating -- asking Mr. Biddle and Laurence Rockefeller and Mr. DuPont and Mrs. Longworth to be hosts at the other four tables -- going down to view the dining room where the very tables themselves were a show of history -- the Lincoln china on one, an incredible Hayes china with the hand painted floral and fauna on another -- its centerpiece from Grants' Administration. The Harrison china, one of my favorites at mine. The Thomas Jefferson tureen in the middle. And the Theodore Roosevelt china at the table where Alice Roosevelt Longworth will sit. And the LBJ china at another. And on each table a little card identifying the china on

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through the desert service so that my preservationist friends could savor it in full. We used the FDR crystal -- very elegant and seldom used now.

And then upstairs into my new pink wool and one last boning-up on the guest list, and then back downstairs to the Green Room for pictures with the three speakers -- Mr. Leopold Adler of Savannah, John Ben Shepperd from Texas, and Carlisle Hummelsein from Williamsburg.

This luncheon was one I had planned for my own special pleasure. Quite true the preservation of historic homes and sites is becoming increasingly an important part of our national life and culture and therefore something to be fostered and worked at by the First Lady. But for this particular First Lady it's no duty -- it's a pleasure. And so a lot of fun had gone into choosing the guest list, and it was quite impossible to get on everyone I wanted because I did want it to be small enough so that I could talk to everybody which means about 50 -- what the family dining room would hold.

Besides our speakers and the other four whom I had asked to be hosts, there were the Stanley Horns from the Hermitage and the Josh Horns from North Carolina where I had seen the Polk home. And Mrs. George Maurice Morris whose home the "Lindons" I love here. The intimate architect who had restored much of Society Hill, Mr. Charles Peterson. Liz' Aunt from Salado, Mrs. Sterling Robertson, who herself almost

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alone has founded the Central Texas Museum there. A contingent from the Presidential libraries besides Dr. Grover -- Dr. Elizabeth Drury from the FDR Library who has been my host on a wonderful trip through. And Mr. Jacobs from the Hoover Library. And Dr. Brooks from Truman's. And Mrs. Robert Robinson, almost a dean among preservationists, who is fighting to keep the ^{Cajon} Vieure Cadre in New Orleans from being destroyed by a freeway. And the Curator of Mt. Vernon, Mr. Wall, who fed me fresh strawberries on an early dewy morning when I was doing that TV show out there. Mrs. Wright whose handiwork is the restorations of Annapolis. And Mrs. Helen Bullock, the Editor of the "Preservation Quarterly". And a contingent who have work with me in one way or another -- Mildred Portner who somewhere back in the middle 50's turned Lyndon's office in the direction of keeping papers that were useful for Archives. And Dorothy Territo and my own Sharon Francis.

The list was indeed heavy with Texans -- Henderson Shuffler, creator of the Texas Hall of Cultures for HemisFair, heading the list. But I had asked all of them back for a drink at 6:00 so I would get a real good visit.

And at my table I had only one Texan -- Wayne Bell, who is the architectural restoration consultant recently transferred from the University to the State. Others at my table spelled out my wonderful trips during these years. Mrs. Francis Anderson from the dusty, crowded,

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so colorful little Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal, Missouri. James Bear, the Curator of Monticello, where I had taken all the Cabinet wives and we had a delicious luncheon in the romantic setting of Thomas Jefferson's own lawn overlooking the University of Virginia. On my right was Gordon Gray who is Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. And I talked to him about our opening of the Woodrow Wilson home and about my trip just this last Sunday out to see Oatlands which is now in the keeping of the National Trust. And on the other side was Walter Bienecke of the Nantucket Historic Trust who told me the fascinating story of that little Island that had reached its prime in the days of the whaling ships and was now coming back as a very small, select tourist resort. Marny has asked me there. I hope some time I can go. He is a member of the Bienecke family that gave the great library at Yale. We talked of it and Gordon Bunshaft and the Lyndon Johnson Library.

I did enjoy it, but I look forward to the time when I shall be guest and not hostess. Being carefree is a condition much to be sought, and I think probably adds to one's interest as a dinner partner.

When the luncheon was over -- and it was an excellent one -- a small contingent of press ladies filed in. Betty Beale had been a guest. And Tommy Adkins came to cover. And I rose for my fate. I talked briefly about what restorations meant to me. And then introduced the speakers. Mr. Adler of Savannah told the exciting and daring story of

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how they hope to preserve the 1100 historic buildings they have identified from the bulldozer and get them into the hands of private owners who will return them to their glory. Then John Ben Shepperd, alone with all of us, talking practically without notes and having been warned by at least three people to be funny -- was funny indeed -- almost too funny. But nevertheless he conveyed the flavor of all the yeasty things that are going on in Texas now. Then Carlisle Hummelsein, whom Lyndon had recently appointed as Chairman of the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, gave a thumb-nail sketch of what we hope communities with historic sites everywhere will set as their targets for our country's 200th birthday in 1976.

And then I invited everybody who would be interested to join our own ~~new~~ Curator, Jim Ketchum, in going up to see the Lincoln Room and the Queens' Room and hurried past and stood by the door and shook hands as everyone went out. Of course the two people I wanted most to have a good time the people whose approbation I wanted to earn were Mr. DuPont and Alice Roosevelt Longworth. And I forgot the main thing I meant to tell her. Had she done that tape? I shall still ask her. I loved getting a glimpse of Laurence Rockefeller and Mary, and thanked them for their part in obtaining the Madison. I asked them to stop in front of the one that was there now so that they could rejoice properly when we saw the new one.

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I was back upstairs close to 3:30 with a sort of satisfied feeling of having accomplished one of the things I had long wanted to do. I got into a robe and laid down in the bed, but not to rest -- autographing Christmas presents, books, pictures -- an interminable list. I called John Walker to ask him to come by and look at Wayne Ingram's painting of the President. And Liz in the hospital. And while I was lying up there in that posture of queenly ease, Lyndon stuck his head in the door with Harry McPherson. His looks rejoiced me -- in a brown suit, looking rested, confident. My spirits soared. He joked with Harry about me leading a life of such ease, and then went back to the office to begin the next chapter in whatever was unfolding. He has such remarkable powers of recuperation. Yesterday morning and last night he had looked as near the end of his resources as I have ever seen him. And so sustained by just looking at him I went in with my 6:00 meeting with the Texans, reading for a good time. I had asked them to come back because we had had only a chance for a few words at lunch. And I hope in the years ahead to be working with several of them on the project across from the house -- the little Park, and whatever else may unfold.

I had asked Douglas Hubbard of the National Park Service to join us. They are working with Roy White to produce an overall plan for that Park. And because of Liz' thoughtfulness at the last minute, I had asked Helene Lindow to be with us. There were the Henderson Shufflers and the

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John Ben Shepperds, Mrs. Sterling Robinson, and Mrs. Charles Bybee and Hazel Ledbetter from my wonderful trip to "Round Top". And Dr. Chester Kielman who had done the research on the stone barns at Johnson City. And Wayne Bell.

We all sat down in the Yellow Room, had drinks and everybody talked and had a delightful hour and a half. Douglas Hubbard had brought a list of suggested exhibits at the little Park, and he and I and Henderson and Mrs. Bybee huddled together and talked about the possibility of discovering duplicates among the artifacts belonging to the Texas Hall of Cultures -- an old saddle, a branding iron, a cowboy hat from some cattle drive of the 1870's. Delicious hor d'oeuvres and drinks came by and a mellow feeling of fellowship enveloped us all. And Mrs. Bybee said, "We are so glad you are coming back now and not like Albert Thomas or Mr. Sam -- in a Box". I hadn't thought of it quite that clearly, bluntly, before. But everybody, over and over, all the Texans, expressed pleasure that we are coming back.

The guests left about 7:30. And then I had a good visit with Lynda in her room. She was going out to a play I think. We have been very companionable for some time now. I think it was Luci who made me realize that Lynda Bird needed me -- that I had been spending too much time on trips and work and hadn't put my first duties first.

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When she left, I went to the bowling lanes and played three rather awful games -- a low of 77. Incredible contrast with my 202 of Sunday night -- two fairly good games. And back upstairs, I made some calls, had a brief rub. And then at 10:00 getting word from Mary that Lyndon would be over any minute, I called our house guests, Father Schneider and Reverend and Mrs. Truesdell down to have a drink with me. This is another of the many remarkable things Lyndon has done -- inviting these three up here, bringing them back with him from Texas, opening the excitement and the expanding horizons of this house to his neighbors of Stonewall. How often he has done this. And what a range his friends cover.

I could tell at once when Lyndon came in bring^g Mary Rather with him that whatever had happened, it had not been good. He looked dead beat and very low. He put^o his arms around me and hugged me, and then he put an arm around each of our house guests in a sort of strange and sweet gesture of companionship. And their response was so easy and natural. There was something oddly touching about it. He sank into his chair and said to me quietly, "I almost hit a home run, but I struck out."

We had a drink and then went into dinner about 10:40. It was a rather solemn meal and yet in every sentence his talk turned to youth and what he hoped this parish priest and what this young and enthusiastic

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Lutheran pastor would do to get the young people of our community, our County, into an orbit of constructive activity -- sports, and study, and fun, and trips.

There had been a strange aura hanging over this day -- a very divided one. Congress adjourned without a quorum ignominiously and Apollo performs gloriously. And what is happening over there in the West side, I do not know, but it is very grinding to judge from the face of this one who has participated in it.