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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, March 21, 1964

Today has been another rather odd day, of traveling in the footsteps of Mrs. Kennedy, in a way, that is, work on Art matters.

I flew up to New York at 11 and went to the New York Historical Society, where I was met by Dr. Hesslein, the curator, and by James Fos~~berg~~^{burg}, whom I had asked to be on the White House Preservation Committee. He had been head of Mrs. Kennedy's ~~Beauty~~ Committee.

My mission was to look at a Rembrandt-Peale portrait of Thomas Jefferson, one done from life while he was in the White House in 1805. It shows him in a dressing gown, with a fur collar, it must not have been too long after he finished the purchase of vast Louisiana expanse. I liked it immediately and told them that I would be very grateful and happy if their trustees would find it possible to lend it to the White House, to hang in the President's office. Since the Board of Trustees will meet next Wednesday, they'll take it up then, and meanwhile I will get off a letter from our curator, making it an official request for it.

This going to the New York Historical Society was an event. It's been a museum since 1803 or 04, preceeding that venerable institution, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, by some 75 or so years, and I was told later, that they have on view, only about 1/10th of all the treasures that they own!

On the way in, we saw an exhibit of the original plates of Audubon. They have about 50 out to view; there are in all, I think, some 400 and they had purchased them from Audubon's widow for a mere \$4,000. She, poor lady,

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in one of her letters to a friend, had said, "Every bird is my rival."

After the New York Historical Society, I went to the Foss^{Fossberg} home for lunch. His wife^[is] one of the famous Cushing sisters, daughter of one of the great surgeons. One of her sisters is married to Jock Whitney, owner of the Herald Tribune, and former Ambassador to England. And the other to Bill Paley.

The house is a tiny little shoebox, right down in the middle of New York, all the residential section has gone off and left it. It has a rare charm and on every square inch, pictures, pictures, pictures.

In the bathroom, there was a pen and ink, or it could have been charcoal, of Mrs. Fossberg's father, the surgeon, young and handsome then, by no less an artist than John Singer Sargent. And one of her mother, done by somebody who was obviously a lover of Charles Dana Gibson. Mr. Fossberg^{Fossberg} is himself, an artist and has a studio on the top floor, but I didn't see any of his work, except one tiny thing, a bunch of violets.

What I actually came to see, is a Winslow-Homer, that is up for sale, and that he thought might possibly be bought by the White House, since the White House does not have a Winslow Homer and he is one of the outstanding American artists. It is a water color, and it costs \$50,000! I liked it. It's water, as are so many of Winslow Homer's, a lake at twilight, a boat, a man in it fishing, dark mountains, wooded, rising behind, an a red sunset

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sky. I liked it very much but there are two things, that appalling price and then just where, in the White House would we hang it to its best advantage? I have no idea of whether that is the amount one must expect to pay for a painting by one of the most celebrated artists.

We had a delicious lunch and some interesting conversation about the Fine Arts Committee and how it operates. I was glad to hear that Stanley Marcus was one of the most helpful and aggressive members on it. It is because of him that we have the Audubon portrait downstairs and also the Remington Bronze, on the ground floor. I believe it came from the Amon Carter Museum.

And then Vincent Price, whom I've known from the other side of the footlights for so long, has had the unusual job of collecting paintings for Sears and Roebuck, to sell from anywhere from \$50. to \$10,000, works of art that have some merit and that just anybody could go in and buy, with some of the assurance that they were rather good.

Once more I had that feeling of being in another world, with alien people, but most interesting ones, I liked them, I enjoyed, and I learned from them. They gave me a book on Art.

I left and went to Mary Lasker's, quite a different place. There house had been old and dark and very much New York of a by-gone day. Hers is white and pink and red, and bright. (We had tea and Eleanor Lanier met me there and we talked about the possibilities of readying up the solarium for the children's use at minimum cost. And made tentative plans for her to

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come down and see me next Thursday morning.)

Then, I returned quickly to Washington. It's both Lynda and Luci's spring vacation and I begrudge being away from them any time. I'm real satisfied with Luci's progress in school right now and I am uneasy and uncertain about Lynda, both in regard to her own inner happiness and her school work, REDACTED

Charlotte and Jack Brooks came by and we simply abducted them and we took them out to a surprise birthday party for Walter at the Claude W. ^{Walt's} ~~Walt's~~ which was co-hosted by the Jack Hights. Nobody was expecting us, it's just one of those times when we barged in. Everybody loves Walter so much and everybody wanted to show it, particularly in view of the bad times he has been going through these last couple of months, with the investigation on the Hill and his name is being called every other day, as a prospective witness.

It was a fun evening, with Texans, (marred only by the fact that there was bitterness on the face of the Joe Kilgore's, rather plain to see.)

*Walt's
alone
time
?*

Walter's sense of humor is intact. One of the packages, he said, "Oh, Oh! This is too heavy, I'm scared to open it, I'm scared it will be a stereophonic record player."