

White House Diary

'Greater Love Hath No Man Than That He Go to the Episcopal Church with His Wife'

New York—(RNS)—The role of religion in the Johnson family emerges as a major theme in Mrs. Lyndon (Lady Bird) Johnson's White House Diary.

Her feelings about their daughter Luci's conversion to Catholicism and listening to a preacher criticize her husband's Vietnam policy are discussed in the book published here by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

The former First Lady also refers to her own religious commitment, and gives illustrations of President Johnson's multi-faceted religious life.

The 783-page volume consists of excerpts from a diary Mrs. Johnson kept from the time of President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 until President Nixon's inauguration in January 1969.

She found it difficult to understand the religious drive that led the Johnsons' younger daughter Luci, now Mrs. Patrick Nugent, to enter the Catholic Church.

And she says that the Johnsons' older daughter Lynda, now Mrs. Charles Robb, "feels depressed, I think, more than I do about Luci's becoming a Catholic." Both daughters had been reared in their mother's church.

"I feel a sense of separation, almost as though I were saying good-by to her," Mrs. Johnson says in her entry for Nov. 15, 1964. And after the baptism, on Luci's 18th birthday, July 2, 1965, Mrs. Johnson says that Luci remained behind for her confession when the rest of the family left, and comments, "I could not help but think we went in four and came out three."



Mrs. Johnson, a member of the Episcopal Church for more than 30 years, did not try to prevent the conversion, however, recognizing it as no sudden decision, but the culmination of a search that had been going on since early childhood. She also found Luci happier "than she has been in her whole dear little life."

"Maybe her earnest search is at an end," she says, "because it always has been a search, from the time she used to walk across the street in Austin on a Sunday morning as a very little girl, dress not quite buttoned up in the back and hair ribbon in her hand, to ask Mrs. Coleman if she could go to Sunday school with Evelyn at the Good Shepherd."

The feelings were stronger, though of quite a different nature, at the widely-publicized incident when an Episcopal clergyman decided to use the occasion of a presidential visit to express his misgivings about Vietnam.

On a 1967 visit to Williamsburg, Va., President and Mrs. Johnson attended the historic Bruton Parish Church, where George Washington and other founding fathers had worshipped.

"The Reverend Cotesworth Pinckney Lewis gave short shrift to any Biblical text and launched into a general discussion of the state of the union," she reports. "And then I froze in my seat as I heard him say, 'And then there is the question of Vietnam.'"

UNICEF Cards

UNICEF greeting cards will go on sale Nov. 16 at the Community Savings Bank downtown and six banks in the suburbs. Booths will be open during banking hours through Dec. 4.

The cards are designed by prominent artists from various countries, and all profits from their sale go into the work of the United Nations agency that concentrates on the needs of children.

Mrs. Howard H. Dietrich, chairman of the project here, listed these Rochester sale locations: Rochester Savings, at Ridgmont and Irondequoit plazas; Central Trust at Panorama Plaza; Community Savings, Pittsford; Marine Midland, Webster; and First Federal, at Brighton Twelve Corners.

She "turned to stone on the outside and boiled on the inside," while being "almost" amused at her husband's expression—"so unctuous it was."

After the service—"he it said for my husband"—Mr. Johnson shook hands with the minister, while Mrs. Johnson was able to comment that the choir was beautiful.

The comment of Mr. Johnson, a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to her afterward was a wry paraphrase of a biblical quotation (John 15:13): "Greater love hath no man than that he goes to the Episcopal Church—with his wife."

Despite Mr. Johnson's experience at Williamsburg, he remained a dedicated churchgoer, at times more so than Mrs. Johnson.

On Christmas Eve in 1967, for example, "just a few minutes before 7 a.m., Luci and Pat said they were going to Mass and he said, 'I'll go with you.' I was not about to get dressed, so in the reverse order of what seemed fitting, he went out to church with the children and I went back to bed."

The same day there was a lot of conversation about Pope Paul in the Johnson household, leading Mrs. Johnson to say, "It always intrigues me—this unlikely affinity of interest in many successive Popes on the part of this Protestant Texas politician."

Throughout the account of her days in the White House, Mrs. Johnson presents the picture of a First Family that considered religious faith a major element in its life.

"We went in to dinner," she says, after recording the unwrapping of gifts and other activities of a Christmas Eve, "Luci gave a full and beautiful blessing and our Christmas reached its peak."

Fisher Alumni Schedule Dance

The St. John Fisher College alumni will hold their annual dance Nov. 27 in the Holiday Inn downtown. Buddy DeFranco and the Glenn Miller Orchestra will play.

Edmund A. Calvaruso is president of the alumni association. Frank C. Argento, immediate past president, is dance chairman.

Muskie No 'Popover'

By Pat Costa



I am not fond of politicians — at least not when they are engaged in public speaking. They tend to remind me of popovers. Hot for the moment. Empty inside. Cold and tasteless and cardboard-like when they deflate — which is usually as soon as the camera turns away or the auditorium clears.

Unfortunately this popover syndrome is nonpartisan. Name a party, any party and you will find popovers from the top to the lowest wardheeler.

There are exceptions, of course, throughout politics. Possibly one of the most shining exceptions came to television on the eve of election.

Maine's Sen. Edmund S. Muskie held this viewer fast to the chair with his quiet, controlled passion.

As one who becomes so embarrassed watching Muskie's 1968 running mate, Hubert Humphrey, speak that I turn off the TV to sidestep the excesses, I do not think mine is a case of blind partisan worship.

Either Muskie is one of the

best actors I've ever been privileged to hear and see or a man unique in present-day politics in his ability to come through the tube as an intelligent man unsullied by some image maker's advice of glamorous posturing and false ingratiation.

If only such simplicity would start a trend!

Apparently the situation series have gotten the drug stories out of their systems.

In the first full week of new programming by all three networks I counted five or six episodes centering on drug abuse in the first four nights of the week.

This past week I checked the story lines and nary a drug plot. What were the week's burning issues? They varied from a drinking problem on "Medical Center" through antiquated adoption laws on "Mod Squad" to murder on "Ironside", "The Name of the Game", "Men From Shiloh" and "Dan August."

At Home with the Movies

THIS PROPERTY IS CONDEMNED (1966)

Thursday, Nov. 12 (CBS)

"Suggested" by a Tennessee Williams one-act play (only the prologue and epilogue are from it, however), this picture records the moral and physical disintegration of a Mississippi girl during the 1930s.

Natalie Wood plays the girl, victimized by a vicious mother who runs a boarding house and who is intent upon ruining her daughter's life if she can't control it. Robert Redford plays a virtuous man she runs off with after marrying, while drunk, her mother's lover.

It got rather good reviews, especially for Miss Wood's acting and James Wong Howe's photography, but it's not for children.

The Catholic film office rated it B, objectionable in part for all, stating: "This story about the degradation of the human spirit in the face of environmental odds loses much of its real significance because, in its treatment, the director has highlighted indecency in costuming and situations."

THE GUNS OF NAVARONE (1961)

Friday, Nov. 13 (CBS)

A crew of six Allied sabotage experts set out to destroy a pair of massive Nazi guns on an island in the Aegean Sea before an Allied convoy is scheduled to pass by.

Gregory Peck, David Niven and Anthony Quinn are cast in one of the best fingernail-biting dramas in years, a film that keeps building suspense and tension. There is some philoso-

This is a summary and evaluation of prime-time films offered by the network to its affiliate stations. Check your local listings to ascertain if your channel is scheduling the network offering.

phizing about war ethics and the irony that war brings out the best in men, but the film is mostly action. It got fine reviews.

NCOMP rated it A-1, unobjectionable for all, even though some illicit sex is indulged in by Peck and a Greek resistance fighter (Gia Scala).

TORN CURTAIN (1966)

Saturday, Nov. 14 (NBC)

Alfred Hitchcock's 50th movie is about espionage, with Paul Newman playing a U.S. nuclear scientist who fakes a defection to East Germany in order to steal an anti-missile formula. His fiancée (Julie Andrews) doesn't know the defection is a fake, follows him, and the pair have some trouble getting back.

The film was roundly disliked by the critics, because of a lack of the usual Hitchcock suspense, a cliché plot and cliché characters, and the miscasting of the two stars. There's also a rather gruesome killing and disposal of a Communist detective.

NCOMP gave the film a rating of B, objectionable in part for all, because of the killing sequence and because of "the gratuitous introduction of premarital sex between its sympathetic protagonists," especially in light of Julie Andrews' "image" among parents and children.

THE BROTHERHOOD (1969)

Sunday, Nov. 15 (ABC)

The Mafia is the subject of this picture, with Kirk Douglas playing the older brother of Alex Cord: two Mafiosi with a generation gap, Kirk preferring the "old way" the Mafia operated, Alex preferring the infiltration of legitimate businesses in place of open crime.

When Kirk executes, by slow strangling, a Mafioso who earlier had killed Kirk's father, Alex is ordered by the Syndicate to retaliate by killing his own brother, which he does — with the blessing, and cooperation, of the victim.

The film got mixed reviews, some finding Douglas' performance one of his best and the story an intelligent one, others criticizing the casting of Cord and calling the story pop-sociology.

NCOMP rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults, and gave it a warm review.

THE OVER-THE-HILL GANG RIDES AGAIN

Tuesday, Nov. 17 (ABC)

This is a new "made for TV" movie, a sequel to a Western comedy made last season, about a band of retired Texas Rangers (Walter Brennan, Edgar Buchanan, Chill Wills) who decide they're not too old to saddle up one more time.

Many a "made for TV" movie has wound up as a series (because many of these films are glorified "pilots" for a series), but this is the first such movie to have a sequel. Maybe someone at the network wants another look, just to be sure.

(Catholic Press Features)

Wednesday, November 11, 1970