

January 17, 1967

Mr. William Graves  
National Geographic Society  
Admiral Semmes Motel  
Mobile, Alabama

My dear Bill:

Well, I thought we had a very rewarding day yesterday at our hunting preserve in Washington County, Alabama. The deer put on a good show for you, but the turkeys didn't show so good. You don't know how much every one of our family enjoyed having you there and letting you see what we have been working on for so long and what could be done just nearly everywhere. I believe we have more game there than they have on any similar-size spot on earth, and I have hunted nearly everywhere. The buffalo came from Casper, Wyoming; the tiger came from India, and the bobcats came from right there on the Tombigbee River; but the Mexican cats came from the King Ranch. They were all very beautiful and very wonderful. I am glad we don't have them here, because they would spoil the game.

The turkeys didn't respond to you so good, although that last group we saw down in the big field that Dick has planted with grass were as fine as you will ever see, but I won't be satisfied until you see the bunch that we have down at the blacktop field, where we counted 108 gobblers the other day. The gobblers and the hens are separated at this time of year, and it is a wonderful sight. I don't think there was a gobbler in there that weighed less than twenty pounds. Of course, we feed them good. That is the only way we can keep them, and that is the reason we have so much game. A good deal of it strays off and gets out from under the fence, and then it is killed at once. A good many also get killed by cars; but even then, we have more left than they have anywhere else, I believe.

A few evenings ago I was driving along, and there where Dick cuts his hay we saw six droves of turkeys. We saw six bucks in one drove, and for fear that somebody would shoot them from the road, Charlie scared them back in the woods. However, the neighbors cooperate with us wonderfully well, and I wish you could have been there when we had what we call our "Community Hunt". The men, the women and the children all come together, and we have lots of coffee (I think it took 20 gallons this time) and about 400 doughnuts and

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sweet rolls that we get from this great Smith's Bakery - and they are very good. Then, we make them a little talk and have a good prayer, and off they go. They killed twelve beautiful bucks and found four more in the woods that got away after they were shot, which made sixteen. It was quite a sight. They started hunting about nine o'clock and quit at three. I doubt if you could do that in any other place on this earth, except there at McIntosh. But we have this glorious get-together meeting with our neighbors there every year - and they are such wonderful people and such sweet people, and they help us take care of this game. If they didn't, we wouldn't have it. Dick has a hard time staying on it, and he stays on it day and night.

The other night, when the weather was bad, he was down there, as he heard some people who threw their dogs over our fence, and they were running after the deer. So, he caught a fellow who had killed a deer and was dragging it down the banks. You can drag things better in water than you can right through the woods. Anyway, he caught him, and I think it is going to do an awful lot of good. At that particular place he has a fence about eight feet high/ nevertheless, they broke in; but there are so few of that kind of folks. He wasn't homefolks; he came all the way from Saraland, Alabama, to McIntosh, and he has done it a great many times. I don't think, though, that he will do it any more. He paid his fine and had to put up his gun to do it, until he could get back to Mobile to get the money.

Anyway, you have that kind of thing going on. It seems they just love to try and do that - and slip in and see if they can get away with it. Some of the younger natives have done that, but Dick always gets them; so, they have stopped it and are helping and cooperating with us now.

Now, what we are going to do when your photographer comes - I am going up there and turn him over to Dick. We will have the cook there, and he can stay right there, because he can't get those pictures in one day. I think it will take him several days, and he can stay right there as long as he wants to and go with Bee Watson, the colored man who has been with us there for 57 long years. It will be 58 in February; and the cook has been there over fifty years. She gets better every year, and I hope you did enjoy your meal with the wild turkey, the stuffed quail and the other things that we had. I wish we had had some venison, and we will try to have some for the photographer when he goes up. Maybe you and I should go with him.

When the weather gets better, I am anxious for you to get in Dick's boat and really and truly see that lake and go around the island. There are three of

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lakes. The geologists say it used to be the Tombigbee River, but about 300 years ago an earthquake threw it over where it is now. When the Tennessee-Tombigbee is finished, it will be the second-largest river in this nation. The two rivers, the Tennessee-Tombigbee and the Alabama-Coosa, meet on our property right below McIntosh. We will drive down and see that and get pictures of it. Between these two rivers there are about a million acres of lowland, and when the rivers get up high, they reach from the Tombigbee to the Alabama. Then the game has to get out, and when it gets over with us, we treat it pretty good. We feed them good, and many of them stay.

Then, the fishing there is "out of this world". You saw the man there fishing. He catches from 200 to 500 pounds a day and sells it to the hospital at Mt. Vernon, Alabama, where the great Apache Chief, Geronimo, was in captivity for so long. You saw the old church there, and I imagine you will put a picture of it in the story. That is where Aaron Burr was captured. Captain Gaines and his men had 35 soldiers there, who caught Aaron Burr, who was trying to get down to the line that I showed you there yesterday - to the Louisiana Purchase. Well, it might have been a different story if he had gotten there. But when we drove down through the great Olin Mathieson Chemical Company, who use \$2,600,000.00 worth of electricity a year - an enormous amount - to break up the salt, you saw something great and something good. They make about a trainload a day, which means so much to the Southern Railroad. You saw the docks where they were shipping chlorine and caustic soda to wherever water flows.

Then, we saw the fabulous Geigy Chemical Company. They have been building steadily ever since they have been there. Brown & Root have not stopped building there since 1954, and they have right now a 20-million-dollar expansion. That fabulous fellow, Dr. Trickey, said it was 15-million dollars. Of course, he was making it a little less on account of taxes, and I don't blame him. However, our taxes are very fine down there.

We had the great Edward Ball here. He is Mrs. Alfred I. duPont's brother and handles the duPont Estate down in Florida, where he has thirty-some-odd banks, two railroads, two great papermills, a million acres of land and all kinds of hotels and motels and everything else. He says down there the taxes are about to ruin him. Well, in Washington County, Alabama, we are the largest taxpayers. The plants there and we pay over fifty percent of all the taxes paid in that great county. So, they are all very good to us, and we are working hard. Dick Boykin has planted on our lands alone over 50-million pine trees - slash and loblolly. Then, down in the lowlands we have all of the hardwoods, but mostly gum.

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Well, I am glad you got a chance to see the Jesse James guns. I think you should have a picture of them in this book, because nobody believes the story about them, but I am writing this very morning to get the facts on them from Congressman Jasper Bell, who helped me buy them from Senator Harry Hawes from Missouri. I have all of the facts, but they are out in a warehouse with about 45 truckloads of letters and things I had in my office in Washington when we moved them back home.

Anyway, I want you to see all of these wonderful things. I think you ought to go to the Port of Entry, and I think you ought to see more of what we call the cajuns. They are wonderful people and they are doing a good job. They like to farm and like cattle. They like to contract the hauling of logs, piling and pulpwood. They don't like to work by the day and have a boss, but they are good workers. I took you in to see Roosevelt Weaver's family. He wasn't there, but before you leave I think we can find him. I think a picture of Roosevelt and his family (and you will remember, the boy said they had twelve children) should be in the book. They have the most beautiful hair in the world, and they are great friends of the Boykins. The Boykins are great friends of theirs, too, and they have helped us an awful lot. We have helped them all the way, too, and we will keep on doing that.

Of course, the salt dome is fabulous, but I thought that Geigy plant, with all of those new plants going up, was one of the greatest sights I ever saw; and think about the water they use. I think they told us what it was. I don't know whether it was 30-million gallons, or what it was, but it was an awful lot. They don't have to pay anything for it, because the Tombigbee River is right there, and it never goes dry. It is wonderful, and it is navigable the year around. The Alabama-Coosa is not, but it will be when they finish the locks up there right above the mouth. I will be taking you and the photographer up there in the boat, and if anything happens so I can't take you, have Dick to take him, because it is going to be something that everybody should know about, and I believe you are going to enjoy it - just like we enjoyed having you yesterday, along with all of my family and some of our friends. In talking to Mrs. Lulie Maumenee, that wonderful woman who has raised two fine men - that great doctor in Baltimore and her other son, Radcliff Maumenee, of the Alabama Drydock and Shipbuilding Company - she said she certainly enjoyed you and all of the other people she met there. Well, Oclo and I did, too; and so did Dick and Beppie and my son, Jack. So, we hope to see an awful lot of you, and we intend to do just that, if you will let us.

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Mr. William Graves

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Now, there is one man that I want you to meet, and that is Austill Pharr, President of the First National Bank, who happens to be "under the weather" now, but he will be all right soon; and, if he is out of the hospital and well enough, we will take him along with us. He is one of the greatest men we have in this State or any other State.

Well, good luck. I am right across here, and if you have any thoughts or any questions you would like to ask, give me a ring. I am in Room 816 at the Admiral Semmes Hotel; or you can get me at my office or my home any time. I expect to see you pretty soon.

With every good wish from every one of us who were with you yesterday, including the help there at the club. We all enjoyed being with you and expect to see some great pictures and a wonderful writeup of this glorious and great country - the greatest in this world. The only way you will ever see better or bigger pictures and people is to go to Heaven. So, if you are not sure you are going There, you had better get busy on us at once.

God bless you and good luck from all of my family and all the people that you met, I am

Sincerely your friend,

Frank W. Boykin

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