

WHD
April 10, 1964
Friday

The papers can describe it better than I can.
The Associated Press said "It was a fantastic, almost unbelievable day around the White House. President Johnson staged a balcony scene from the Truman Balcony. He and reporters shouted banter and comments back and forth." Doug Kiker of the Herald Tribune said "It was a spring fever day at the White House yesterday. Consider two press conferences sort of a chance for poet Carl Sandburg and his brother-in-law, Edward Stychen, to hear and see union and management officials negotiate the railroad dispute. A White House balcony scene, etc. # Actually, the morning began early for me. It was a long, tedious hard and almost—the last trip to the Elms # That unearth such things as a thirteen year old picture of me, baby pictures of Lynda and Luci; key to an apartment we had in 1941, # When I was too tired to do anymore I went back to the White House and dressed just in time to meet at 2:30 Carl Sandburg, 85, his little wife (dowdy, sweet, with the ~~gentleness~~ ^{gentle} nicest face I nearly ever saw, Edward Stychen, that famous photographer and patron of Ozeemoto and his ^{Okeemoto} amazingly enough, beautiful young wife, who seems to me just about thirty. Secretary of Interior Udall and Lee Udall had been escorting them around Washington and brought them to

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the White House. Before his arrival I had had brought up from the Library, ~~Carl~~ Sandburg's "The War Years" and "The Prairie Years", ~~the~~ life of Lincoln. And had read up a bit from Lynda Bird's anthology, "Chiaago", "Gog", "The people, yes." He was shaggy haired, white it was, almost in a dutch bob. Rugged, completely un-~~framed~~ ~~trambled~~ in his conversation, rather like Lyndon I thought. He hadn't heard about the rules, and also a little hard of hearing. Edward ~~Stichon~~ ~~Stichon~~ ~~Stichon~~ with that marvelous beard was much more urbane and sophisticated ~~sha~~ but just as childishly happy in the delight of being with his sister and his brother-in-law. Mrs. Sandburg is his sister. And he said of her, "That little sister of mine is an angel if anybody ever was." The four of them simply glowed with pleasure of being alive and together. ~~#~~ We went into the Lincoln Room and I got Mr. Sandburg to autograph two of the volumes on Lincoln's life, since he is the great master of Lincolnia. I tried to tell him a bit about the furniture and the hand penned speech of Gettysburg address which Lincoln had given to be auctioned off at a charity fair. But really you couldn't tell him much because he did all the talking. In a minute Lyndon came in and they had a time dividing it up between them. He looked Lyndon up and down and said solemnly, "you look like you could take care of yourself."

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When he had smoked a cigar down to the last quarter inch I offered him an ash tray, hoping to save the floor of the Lincoln Room. But he pulled a little metal gadget out of his pocket, clipped it on to the last end of it and said "oh, no, I'm not through yet" and smoked it until it was barely a whiff of smoke left. Various people came and went and got introduced. Lynda Bird, I'm delighted to say, got in from school with Warrie Lynn, came in, met him, got her poems autographed. Luci rushed in, more full of her own plans and own dates, than interested in Carl Sandburg, and Mr. Ketchum the curator, was introduced in the back of the room, all ears... As was Liz. — You couldn't have separated her from that scene! # We went into the East Room and had some delicious tea and then Lyndon took them all out on the Truman Balcony. There they look down, saw a bunch of reporters in the Rose Garden and Lyndon began shouting back and forth to them. — the first semi-press conference that ever took place from a balcony I think! From the Balcony, we went down into the garden because ~~Stechan~~ ^{Steichen} is a great lover of delphinium. — raises some rare and beautiful strains which he had promised to send me, and I wanted him to see the garden. # Among Sandburg's delightful remarks were he said "my brother in law wanted to raise a big beard and he didn't know what color beard he wanted

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and so he decided he would copy one after the Prophet Isaiah." And another thing he said a couple of times affectionately, "did you ever hear of a photographer who had ~~skous~~ a biographer?" ^{Meaning} himself, ^{for} because he had done a rather extraordinary biography of Edward ^{Steichen} ~~Stycken~~. ~~Our walk~~ ^{Our} walk to the garden was impeded by about ^{well}, a vast ~~phalanx~~ ^{phalanx} of photographers who backed up in front of us like retreating troops and did anything but put me at ease. And on the sidelines a huddle of lady reporters while I was trying to gently point out the budding crab apple trees, the beautiful promise of the tulips, and the glorious purple grape hyacinths.

[#] From there, to my vast amazement, Lyndon ushered us on in to the Cabinet Room! Lyndon said he wanted Edward ~~Stycken~~ ^{Steichen} and Carl Sandburg to see "some tough men operating. ^{Men} who can throw several million people out of work. They were all the leaders of the railroad industry, prepared to ~~stand~~ ^{open} the next fourteen or fifteen days in negotiations to prevent a strike.

[#] Well, it was a most unique White House visit! And after we said goodbye to them ^{and} the last and very important word to me was ~~Stycken's~~ ^{Steichen's} request that we get ~~Omoto~~ ^{Omoto} back to keep a record of day-to-day pictorial history of White House life ^{And} that I would like so much to have ^I I thought what fun and where else would I encounter such color? The nicest

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thing of all was the simple, family devotion that existed between these people of unusual talent.

This evening we were going out and that's getting to be a rare treat in this house. Going to Phyllis and Doug Dillon's house to a dinner in honor of Under Secretary and Mrs. Henry Fowler. He is leaving government for the third time. This is his third hitch in about three decades, serving in many departments. When we got to that beautiful house it was just like entering a door of complete relaxation. ¹ Because anything that happened there was not my doing. I was just there to have fun ² — And I did! Lots of good friends were there from the Hill — Russell Long, the Clinton Andersons, handsome George Smathers and Rosemary, the Hale Boggs, and from our staff, the Larry O'Briens, and Walter Jenkins... Walter - everybody loves him and he gets asked everywhere. And Kay Graham, looking brown and beautiful after weeks in some hot climate vacationing. And Bob and Louise McKinney of New Mexico, ³ our former Ambassador to Switzerland. And from the world of business, the sort of people that must have been long-time friends of the Dillons. ⁴ The Amory Houghtons, the Frederick Eatons, the Duthhinstains of Owings Corning Fibre Glass and several other couples. ⁵ It was a graceful, beautiful evening... Good friends, delightful music and dancing and especially a good toast in praise of

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a man who had given a large slug of his life, with small remuneration, to his government. He told me the saga. He was sitting on my right, Henry Fowler. And he had first come down back in the Roosevelt days. It just was a case of being found capable, trying to escape, and getting called back. Lyndon's toast I loved! He said "go off and get rich and have a good time for about ninety days." When I left, exhilarated by the evening, I thought how perfectly engineered it had all been and how capable Phyllis Dillon is... Everything, even sending me the guest list ahead of time. She manages to be both efficient and light and just the sort of woman Lyndon enjoys being with.