

1964

Wednesday, September 9th

This was a day of getting clothes, of getting ready for the busy Fall. A campaign is rather like an iceberg -- there is so much below the surface that doesn't show. And part of the work is getting clothes assembled.

Lynda and Bess and I went to New York early this morning and stayed at the Carlyle. Adele Simpson, her daughter, Miss Trezz of Nieman-Marcus, arrived with a long rack of clothes. I looked and tried, we planned and got advice, and Robin Duke gave me some help, and finally I chose one or two. And then I went down to Robin's suite and there were others to see from the Bill Blass collection, then later more from Norman Norell, with Robin as my chief guide and mentor. Some time during the day Robin took Lynda Bird out on the difficult mission of finding the right thing to wear to a royal wedding -- a long dress, elaborate and formal, with long sleeves.

Here at the Carlyle I always feel like I have ventured into the bed-chamber of ^{the} fairy princess. It is pastel and delicate, rather like a Marie Laurencin painting, and it belongs much more to Mrs. Kennedy than to me.

The announcement about the East Garden came out in the paper today. "White House garden Mrs. Kennedy helped to plan

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while she lived in the Executive Mansion, will be completed in mid-October and will be dedicated and named in her honor, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson announced yesterday. Called the East Garden, it complements the famous flower garden on the West side of the Mansion. The late President Kennedy took a personal hand in planning the landscaping of the East Garden, as he did for the flower garden." It went on to say that Mrs. Kennedy worked on the plans for the East Garden with her friend Mrs. Paul Mellon, that it would follow the traditions of Washington and Jefferson, being useful as well as decorative. Since there had been no garden at the White House for the First Lady and her children and friends, this would be its main purpose, at the same time furnishing herbs for the kitchen, flowers for cutting, and the center lawn was spacious enough for children's games and croquet. With a small arbor at the west end that is going to be covered with grape vines, and a shallow garden pool opposite. There will be hollies and magnolias and crabapples, similar to the topiary of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg. This is a project I have loved and one I want to see wrapped up and completed before I leave here, because it might not get done under some other occupant.

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Along about 6:30 Charlotte Ford joined us. She's so friendly and natural and easy -- I'm glad Lynda Bird has been thrown with her. I had just finished a very interesting 30 minutes with Ann Leinsdorf, in which she had more plans for me than I could accomplish if I was a combination of Eleanor Roosevelt and Joe Lewis, together with some big brainpower.

I had asked Robin's suggestion for a place to go to eat -- I was the hostess -- with Lynda, Charlotte, Bess, Robin -- and we went to one of those tiny restaurants, about five tables ~~and a very~~ ^{Ch} ~~unclean ceiling,~~ ^{Kay} where the bill was astronomical -- \$81.00 plus tip. The proprietors asked me to make it complimentary. How can one accept a gift like that from somebody you don't know? So I didn't.

Dick Adler joined us at 8:30. We gave him insistent directions not to let them hold the curtain, and then we rushed for the theater, a few minutes late only, to see What Makes Sammy Run, in which his wife, Sally Ann Howes, who has entertained us at the Elms and later at the White House, has a prominent part. I had read the book possibly three years ago, by Budd Shulberg, who was a young rising author in the latter days of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the book practically left a scar on me. Excellent writing of the most bitter, incisive kind.

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Translated into a musical, which seemed an unlikely thing to do, it was an excellent evening's entertainment. With a young man who had never before played on Broadway, Steve Lawrence, who was so much Sammy it ought to frighten any of his family for fear the character stuck to him.

Sally Ann was beautiful and wholesome. It's rather interesting that two of the best successes on Broadway right now are just parallel in theme. What Makes Sammy Run and How to Succeed in Business Without Trying. This one is deeper, with an ugly element of tragedy, a lot more satire on our current mores.

When it ended we went backstage and met everybody, including Budd Shulberg. An evening at the theater is my very favorite self-indulgence. So this is Lynda Bird's and my special treat before she's back to school and I'm back to work with the campaign.

And then to the elegant Carlyle to spend the night.