

1965

MONDAY, JANUARY 18

The first of the big days. I began it by going upstairs to have my second cup of coffee, after breakfast with Lyndon, with Aunt Jessie and Ava Cox, to see if I couldn't lend a stole or evening purse or maybe some gloves. These stolen nuggets of time with kinfolks are the nicest things about this three day marathon because they are having such a wonderful time. The plane ride up was treat enough to make Aunt Jessie say, "I tell you I may not ever get to Glory Land, but I feel like I have seen part of it!"

Then back downstairs for a long session with Jean Louis, including a facial, the first I have had in a year, I think. Just as I was getting ready to eat a late lunch--about 2:30--Lyndon came over so I had it with him. He is working on getting out three messages to Congress and the business of the day must not be overshadowed by the pageantry of the day. <sup>#</sup> And then, just before three, <sup>wearing</sup> ~~the minute~~ <sup>hat</sup> <sup>P.</sup> my red silk Alaskine, which <sup>Kandi</sup> ~~Gandy~~ made, putting on my fur <sup>hat</sup> added at

the last moment as a concession to Alex Rose, I left for the National Gallery of Art, with Liz, for the Distinguished Ladies' Reception. As we rolled into the driveway, I saw Ida May Cain from Rochester, her daughter Stephanie Cain Belding there from California, <sup>Ch</sup> ~~name~~ and that's the way it was all afternoon. Out of more than five thousand ladies, I kept on seeing dear old friends from the far corners. There were

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four short receiving lines and nobody knew who was going to be in which one, but in the marble elegance of the National Art Gallery, banked with azaleas and fountains, who <sup>would</sup> ought to mind waiting?

Marian Anderson was one of the first to come down the line. She is one of the Americans I admire most, and I am <sup>pleased</sup> ~~delighted~~ to think -- by the way she looks at me--that she likes me too.

Wives of Diplomats had been asked to come in their native dress. A troupe of them came down my receiving line, each with a personal hostess. There were graceful saris from Nepal, a flowing blue and silver boo-boo from Niger, one from Senegal that reminded me of the enormous poofs of nylon imported from Paris that I saw in Senegal when I was there for their Independence celebration. The prettiest costume of all, (and one of the prettiest women--so many of them are--} was a red silk slitted gown with long black trousers from Vietnam. One of the columnists later, rather snidely, remarked, "Madame Herve Alphand, wife of the French Ambassador, came in her native costume too, a black tunic top shift by Pierre Cardin." The same columnist took a dim view of the clothes of the general assemblage. "There were very few distinguished clothes among the distinguished ladies. It was an "anything goes" kind of reception. Occasionally someone looked just right in a Chanel suit or a neat black dress but not often. I had so much fun seeing the folks that I

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didn't notice their clothes.

Sarah Hughes came down the line. Mrs. Donald Russell, of South Carolina, and <sup>she and</sup> I had a big kiss for each other. In fact, by the time the evening was over I looked like I had the measles--there were so many pink <sup>big pink</sup> spots all over me. Minnie Wade Derby, visiting Patsy, came, but Patsy wasn't there because she was <sup>a</sup> the hostess. So many of the young folks, Becky, Susan, Warrie Lynn, <sup>M</sup>ertie Baldwin, the young daughters of many Congressmen, were hostesses all over the gallery. Glamorous Eva Gabor, Becky's friend, drifted by--I noticed, uneasily, in company with columnist Roland's <sup>Eva's</sup> pretty young wife. And who should be on my right helping the line move but dear June Irwin. All of the four Browns came by in a phalanx. Alice, ~~Ma~~sonda, Isabel, and Nancy, all looking darling. After forty five minutes, and I really would have loved to have stayed for hours, Katherine Long came to take my place and I made a slow departure through the throng walking through several galleries so that everybody whose hand I hadn't shaken, we could at least wave at each other and seeing enroute old friends from all the fifty states, including Virginia Durr--one more big kiss.

I later found that there wasn't anything to eat at this reception, but one guest said, 'You can get hors d'oeuvres and a cocktail anywhere, but when do you have a chance to see Rembrandt, Picasso, and Lady Bird all at one time? Having it in that place was an inspiration.

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Half of the five thousand ladies it seemed wore mink turbans, as did Mrs. Johnson... I don't know whether I am setting it or following it.

The great surprise of the day was that Hubert Humphrey, in typical Humphrey fashion, appeared in time to take his wife's place in line and gave all the ladies one of the big thrills of the whole three days.

Back at the White House I did a little more visiting with all my crew of little girls in Luci's room, curled up on the sofa for a few minutes with gentle Warrie Lynn, who talked about Luci and her plans. She wants Warrie Lynn to be one of her sponsors when she is baptized. Warrie Lynn, no proselyter, is urging Luci to wait and wait and to be very sure.

Next on the agenda, in my white peaudesoie dress with the glittering top by Roxanne of Winston's, <sup>3</sup> set out with Lyndon for the pre-gala dinners at the Shoreham and the Sheraton Park, renamed for the occasion, the Sharaton Texas because it was headquarters for all of the Texans that could get in there.

There were about three thousand guests at the Sheraton Texas, where John introduced us. Another eighteen hundred at the Shoreham, all members of the President's Club. At this time both the dinner and the gala were free by invitation of the Democratic National Committee in recognition of past help and in hope for future help. They were the briefest stops of all. We quickly ~~w~~anded our way

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through the tables smiling and waving at all sides. Lyndon made brief humorous remarks, ending up on a serious note, "Now is the time for hope and rededication." Hubert had gone to the two other pre-Inaugural dinners. Leonard Marks, who has handled it all so competently, drove with us. We were back at the White House in a short time for dinner of our own.

The White House house guests were eating in three places tonight, Lynda and her special friends, Carolyn, Warrie Lynn and, I believe, Susan were in the family dining room on the second floor. Anybody that wanted to, such as Sam Houston and Aunt Jessie, on trays in their rooms, and the rest of us in the family dining room on the first floor, the Tony Taylors, the Bobbitts, the Alexanders, Sarah. Seeing Becky and Sarah reminded me of <sup>Pearl's</sup> ~~Pearl's~~ party last night given for many of our special friends and practically blanketing the papers this morning. I had told her we would be arriving too late to come and, of course, our planeload of guests included many who had been invited to the party. Lynda and Dave had been there, Becky and Bobbitt very much in their element, Sarah, and practically the entire law firm of Clark, Thomas, and Winters, and a sizeable covey of Texas publishers. I guess I should say the hand of Liz Carpenter at work) and, of course, the Homer Thornberrys.

Lyndon and I arrived at the gala on time, which is more than about half of the audience did, so they convoyed us into a waiting room

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where the walls were hung with our predecessors--Kennedys, Eisenhowers, Trumans in galas of other days and then when the crowd was mostly at hand we went in to "Hail to the Chief" and an impressive, although not wild, welcome into an Armory made gay with millions of bright blue streamers from the ceiling, enormous bouquets of red, white and blue balloons, ~~and~~ belligerent gilded eagles, and American flags rippled in a man-made breeze. There was a triumph of decorations. Richard Adler was the Director of the whole thing and he had accumulated a galaxy of stars so great that it caused two Broadway shows to close down. Carol Channing came down from Hello Dolly to be one of the MC's, and Barbara Streisand from Funny Girl to sing. Dame Margot Fonteyn from England's Royal Ballet flew over from London with her partner who looks like one of the Beetles. At least one or two TV shows changed their plans. Alfred Hitchcock came to be MC and turned out to be practically the lion of the evening. And Woody Allen, that forlorn, undernourished little comedian, stopped shooting a movie--I think it was in Paris-- and came over for about five minutes of jokes that I found hilarious, and I am no lover of comedy on the stage. He looks like you want to give him a blood transfusion, but his monologue about the man who shot the moose, strapped him to his car and the moose came to in the Holland Tunnel so the man decided to take him to where he knew there

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was a costume ball going on and introduced the moose with that muttered gesture I have used so often--"know the Solomonsons, don't you " because he didn't want to say, "this is a moose. "

Julie Andrews and Carol Burnett sang a wonderful medley of show songs ranging from all the way back to Naughty Marietta and up to My Fair Lady, and Harry Belafonte won everybody with "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore", <sup>out</sup> that sad nostalgic song about September. As exquisite and perfect as Margot Fonteyn was, there was a foil at the opposite end of the dancing spectrum that was just as good as she was--a member of the Mexican Folklorico, a dancer with a deer head complete with antlers strapped to his own head portrayed a deer that had been shot and his dying struggle. It was so fierce, so animal, so true to nature--to me the most startling performance of the evening. And Bobby Darin sang a song which, he said the Army Reserve dedicated to the Secretary of Defense, "Mack the Knife" one of the few illusions to the contemporary political scene. Another was Hitchcock's message ostensibly addressed to the GOP on last November 4. "Good evening friends, do you have that morning after feeling? Did you feel your group had all the cavities? "

It was a magnificent evening. I have never seen a better. One thing was lacking and that was audience response. It was a rather cold audience. Maybe it was the huge Armory, but I was sensitive and on edge for Richard Adler and all of the performers

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and it was a bit long. There wasn't a thing we could have done without and as soon as it was over, we went to the same room that we had started in and I was still carrying my bouquet of lovely white orchids that Sally Anne Howe, Mrs. Richard Adler, had welcomed me with and in came all of the performers which gave us a chance to thank them. And what a lot it was to thank them for--cancelling performances for which they got thousands, flying across the ocean! I was as thrilled as Lynda and Luci to meet them and to tell Julie Andrews, the song from Mary Poppins was a favorite "just between us" conversation <sup>bit</sup> between Lynda and me now. Harry Belafonte was just as agreeable in person as on the stage--a man of joy.

Lynda stayed to go to Mrs. Cafritz's party and Lyndon and I reached home early, about twelve thirty, grateful that at least one day had gotten by without snow, although on Sunday when the thermometer dropped to ten, the lowest temperature of the year and the city had three or four inches of snow, everybody had braced themselves for a repeat of the 1961 snow storm, each telling the other that the Farmers' Almanac usually turned out right and it said thirty inches of snow during January.