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Tuesday, April 27th

An intensely busy day began with a meeting with Nash Castro, Jim Ketchum, and Liz and Bess to discuss what extra service the White House could give the thousands of tourists that file in in the Springtime and Summer. On a record weekday this Spring there had been over 17,000 in two hours.

We talked about possibly one or two water fountains somewhere on the periphery -- the line is sometimes several blocks long. I told Nash how happy I was about the solid mass of pink hyacinths in the little triangle that greeted them as they approached the iron fence of the White House. We discussed a kiosk to sell film, give information and so forth in a park close by, a gracefully designed sign saying "The President's Park," mentioning the 12 or so trees that have been planted, beginning in 1826, by various Presidents. This would be as they walk along the fence.

And mostly we talked about the pros and cons of a tape recording about the history and the State Rooms at the White House that people could listen to in the long East Corridor by the theater, where they sometimes back up six abreast. A tape recording would be unseemly on the stately First Floor, but useful in that area on the Ground Floor. And probably narrow display cases, to hold selected china, silver, mementoes such as Dolly Madison's earrings and locket enclosing some of her own hair, Mary Todd Lincoln's note to a friend inviting her to tea that Governor Goddard had given me.

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No irrevocable decisions, but lots of things in the mill for the people who come to see us.

And then to the theater to see a very rough version of the USIA's "The President's Country," done by Roger Stevens -- much of it, alas, shot in dreary November. I wish I'd seen it earlier -- I'm glad I saw it when I did -- I have firm feelings that we want to get across the message of REA and cheap power, farm-to-market roads, agricultural know-how, what they have funneled to the folks through the County Agents and the Soil Conservation people and what it has meant to that country. And we want to catch the ~~phenomenon~~^{charm} of Spring.

We left, saying we would try to meet in Texas and I would be the Personal Tour Guide to catch more of the flavor of the Hill Country.

In the afternoon, I had invited the Independent Agency wives for tea, and at the same time Lyndon had arranged a press conference in the East Room, so the house was really bursting! My hundred-and-odd ladies came at three o'clock -- such old friends as Dorothy Vredenburg Bush, Libby Rowe, and Katie Louchheim, and proud new additions. There was Dr. Mary Bunting of the Atomic Energy Commission and pretty Virginia May Brown of the ICC, these last two government appointees themselves and not wives. Wives with whom I'd shared trips abroad and at home: Mrs. Carl Rowan (her husband was the Ambassador when we

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were in Finland) and Mrs. James Webb (Patsy went with us on our Space trip to Alabama). Mrs. ^{Rosel}~~Rosel~~ Hyde of the FCC, with whose husband I had worked hard years ago, and Mrs. Lawson Knott of the GSA, whose husband I am getting to know well, working with the Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

This was for many their first trip to the White House, so I urged them to be at home and linger with whatever was their own special love -- the portraits, the China Room, or the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden.

And then at four, amazingly we turned on the TV -- we moved sets into the State Dining Room, into the Lincoln Room, into the Yellow Room upstairs, for I had invited all the guests to see the upstairs -- and we all stood around having tea and watching a live press conference in the White House being conducted right down the hall.

Lyndon did well, and the profile shots of him were very strong and very handsome. Once more he took Vietnam for his text, and he hammered, hammered, hammered, telling the story. Also he announced eight appointments, some being the husbands of at least two or three of the ladies present, to other and higher posts, and -- a little bit to my discomfort, the appointment of a replacement for Najeeb Halaby, who had, I am told, resigned. His wife was there.

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What had started out as a snafu, having two affairs going on at the same time in the White House, turned out as a lark. The ladies said they would have something to tell their children and grandchildren about -- being almost at a White House press conference!

But the day was not over yet. At six Ann Hand came, bringing the wives of two of our Ambassadors: Mrs. Matthews, whose husband is already Ambassador to Nigeria, and Mrs. Dwight Porter, whose husband is going to Lebanon as our Ambassador. We had tea before a lovely fire in the Yellow Room -- the 27th of April, and quite cold -- it will never be Spring this year -- the longest, rainiest that I remember.

And then ^{we} joined their husbands and mine in the office and the West Garden for pictures.

A little later we had a small, gay, rather special farewell party for John and Theiline McCone. He is leaving the CIA, and Admiral Raabarn is, of course, replacing him. It too was in the Yellow Room, a small group -- some 50 or so special friends of the McCones from the CIA, the State Department, and their personal life. Purely spur-of-the-moment, but a warm happy sendoff and a delightful speech by Lyndon, a play on James Bond. Some Members of the Cabinet were present -- the Rusks, the McNamaras, the Fowlers and the Connors. The durable, still handsome Averell Harriman -- and I was so glad because it gave me a chance to tell

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him quietly my appreciation for something he is doing for the White House. Together with other Ambassadors who have served at the Court of St. James, he is buying the Epstein bust of Winston Churchill to give to the White House, with just the inscription, "From a wartime friend of Winston Churchill."

And just as one of 190 million, I am thrilled and grateful for the small, simple monument to President Roosevelt -- just a block of white marble on Pennsylvania Avenue with a simple inscription, "From his closest friends." It is what in his lifetime he had said he wanted if there were any monument to him.

Some of the State Department people -- I believe it was George Ball -- told me that things were looking better in the Dominican Republic. Yesterday it had looked like another ugly cloud on the horizon.

I was so glad that Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss was there. She hasn't been here before in my time, and it gave me a chance to say that I wanted very much to come out to Dumbarton Oaks and see the garden, the pre-Columbian collection, especially Philip Johnson's building.

This was an hour gracefully spent, and just before it was over Governor and Mrs. Allan Shivers arrived in evening clothes -- Lyndon had asked them to have dinner with us and for once we had a reasonably

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early dinner, at 8:30, followed by the briefest dinner appearance -- only 45 minutes portal to portal -- at the annual dinner of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, who were honoring Bob McNamara. We picked up the Shivers, drove out, walked in just in time to listen to the honor bestowed on him, to hear his brief rejoinder and for Lyndon to say his few words -- how he does admire and depend on Bob -- and back at the White House before ten. The evening had that peculiar quality for me, and I believe for the other three, of pleasure, release, gratification that two who have been torn asunder by politics are once again quite naturally good friends. Lyndon and Allan Shivers had begun as friends, had gone through a knockdown, dragout -- I believe it was in 1956, in which our very divided Democratic Party in Texas had rejoiced and tried to bloody up the schism. But here they were, talking in a relaxed and comfortable manner.

Looking back on it, Lyndon's life has been extraordinarily free of losing friends in all the 30 or more years that he has been in politics, having firmly held the reins and having to make choices, but somehow has managed to keep or to return to most of our friends.

Today has been one of those full Spring days. April and May for years now have been the peak of activity. But I ^{love} ~~like~~ it.