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Initials

1965

Wednesday, April 28th

I was up early to greet the 20 men and women who are leaders of the Let's Beautify America campaign, who are here at the invitation of the Readers' Digest for a day of seminar and touring.

The Readers' Digest has printed a condensed version of my U. S. News and World Report interview on beauty, and as a sort of salute to the project is donating 800 floribunda roses for the plaza at Union Station and by inviting these leaders in their own communities to discuss and exchange ideas. I ran into several of my friends through the mail! Mr. and Mrs. James Finnell of Paducah, Kansas, who, of all things, has an auto junkyard! He has gone to work on it planting poplar trees and is starting slat fencing, painted red and white, and also tried to persuade dealers in a five-State association to do likewise. And there was Mrs. Krupp from Greenville, Mississippi, who had staged a one-woman campaign to get unsightly shacks torn down or painted by their owners. It was a 30 minutes well spent.

Then back to work upstairs — ~~To~~ find from Lyndon that my relief over the Dominican Republic was short-lived. He hadn't gone to sleep until four A. M. this morning. There was so much to read, so much to worry about and decide about.

This was the day for my Women Doers luncheon. Mrs. Vincent Astor of New York was one of the first to arrive and bowled me over by saying that she wanted to contribute \$10,000 to the beautification program

1965

Wednesday, April 28th (continued)

in Washington, and let's be thinking up some ideas. I am moving in different circles from any I have known! She is a thoroughly delightful woman.

And at Lela Clark's suggestion I had invited Mrs. Crum; Arlene Francis, the actress and TV figure, was there; and Mrs. Harrison, wife of the Governor of Virginia, to whose State we will be going on a wonderful tour, part beautification, part art, the 11th of May.

One of the most interesting people was Dr. Victoria Shook, head of the political science department at Mount Holyoke College. She is furnishing us with two bright young interns this summer for White House work. They will have 35 interns in all in different Departments this summer.

There were 16 of us in all, ranging from the head of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to the chief of the human factors group of Bell Helicopter in Ft. Worth, who had studied what makes ^{flies?} flies act like they do and all sorts of situations.

But to me the star of the day was, by all odds, small, elderly, birdlike, gentle-faced, Mrs. James Bush-Brown, a most remarkable woman, the Founder and President of the Neighborhood Garden Association of Philadelphia. She talked to us and told us all about the garden block development that she spent 12 or more years doing, what it had meant

1965

Wednesday, April 28th (continued)

to the people who lived there, how it had changed the face of those blocks and the heart of them, I believe. It was best said in the remarks of some of the folks who live there: "When I work in my garden, I just feel close to God somehow." "In the morning before I start cooking breakfast, I walk out on my front porch and I look at my flowers, and it makes the day for me." You had that delighted feeling that here woman and job had met at the height of their potential. She had a remarkable spiritual quality, and seeing her made my day.

It was a good luncheon, good talk, followed by a trip to the Queen's Room and the Lincoln Room and a rather early departure, after which I went down to say hello to Senator Fred Harris and three generations of his family, the eldest his wife's Grandmother -- a full-blooded Indian, wearing her Indian tribal clothes, speaking little English, to me at least -- and her granddaughter, Mrs. Fred Harris, the Senator's wife, young, active, very much at home in her role. The lines of that title "Only in America" sang through my mind.

Later Lynda and I looked at slides of the ranch by Okamoto -- some great bluebonnet ones -- and then back upstairs for a little rest. How I wish it could have been Lyndon instead of me! -- before our dinner for the Johnson appointees.

1965

Wednesday, April 28th (continued)

I got the word that he would be late. I went down at once on time to mix with our 184 or so guests in the East Room. Being late didn't bode well for the news from the Dominican Republic.

There were the Tyler Abells, for once in the role of guests, our longtime friends the Rams^aey Clarks, the Buford Ellingtons, the Lloyd Hands, and the Fred Vinson, Jr.s. Young Eddie and Reyna Weisl. And our staff members of whom I am so proud: the Marvin Watsons and Bill Moyers, the Douglas MacArthurs whom Lyndon had brought back from Belgium to be Assistant Secretary of State, and the Tom Manns (he had elevated him to be Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs), elegant Marietta Tree (the eyes of all the gentlemen in the room following her), and poor dear Vice Admiral William Ra~~ph~~burn, uprooted from a comfortable lucrative life and landing right in the eye of the hurricane his first day.

Some time during the evening Lyndon said, "At least there's one happy man around: John McCone."

We had a long visit before Lyndon arrived at almost 9, and then a clippety-clip picture-taking session with all the couples; then dinner in two rooms -- I had Henry Fowler on my right -- he's always easy to talk to. He's another we brought back at considerable sacrifice to himself.

1965

Wednesday, April 28th (continued)

Lyndon made a toast that made every appointee there, I think, feel closer to him and to that entity we call the Administration, and Joe Fowler responded, with a sweet line to me. He had about an hour's notice, he told me, that he was expected to answer.

The lingering over coffee and liquers in the hall and parlors and upstairs to a reasonably early bedtime, about 11:30.

Luci had come down for a moment in the afternoon and described her room, the solarium, to me.

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them as decorations on the shelves, thereby replacing some of the books. She's a very positive little girl, speaking the strange vernacular of a different generation. The liveliest, loveliest, most lovable little sprite!