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Tuesday, May 11th

Began my long-awaited landscape-landmark tour into Virginia. I was up at seven, had breakfast quietly -- I had really hoped to slip out without waking up Lyndon, but Liz with her idea always on the picture, suggested he might come down to say goodbye to us at the South Portico, and so he did as we got into the big Greyhound bus -- me and all the Cabinet wives, except Mrs. Rusk -- and what fun it is to be off with them on a trip that promises some chance for a good time and real talking, as well as work.

The Laurance Rockefellers are with us, and the Roger Stevens, and the Rex Whittens of the Bureau of Public Roads, and Nash Castro from the Park Service. There is also a big handsome State Senator from California, Fred ^{Farr}~~Pharr~~, coming from a jewel of a section in Southern California, is particularly knowledgeable and interested in highway development -- and a pool of reporters -- just behind us a press bus with some 40 or so reporters from all the media, including ABC, NBC, and CBS. Dan Robertson said it was "as relaxed as a family outing in the country," and so it was. We had come without our hats, soon took off our shoes, moved around from person to person, while we drank coffee and munched some delicious home-made cookies that Mrs. Rex Whitten had brought along.

Margy had her camera and I had mine. The first stop was for the dedication of the ⁺Dumphrey's Wayside Shelter. Silver-haired Governor

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Harrison, the very prototype of a Governor, and Mrs. Harrison, on their way to New York, met us there, and we had a ceremony dedicating this very complete facility for the tourist -- picnic tables under an attractive little roof, a barbecue pit, water fountain, and toilet, against the backdrop of almost entirely native trees -- many dogwood, with a few azaleas planted, as Mary would say, "like lipstick on a woman."

There was a little crowd, a few speeches, an unveiling of the stone which said I dedicated it. They hoped to have a tourist facility like this on the major Virginia highways, sprinkled along every twenty or forty miles.

Next down the road we saw a blazing exhibit of azaleas, dogwood, pansies, marigolds, planted by the Associated Clubs of Virginia for Roadside Development. And I spaded in the dirt on a dogwood. This is the Year of the Shovel for me!

The chief lesson of this morning is to see what has been done with Interstate 95, which has a broad right-of-way and complete control of access, by selective cutting, by skillfully maintaining the best native trees and shrubbery, by planting the banks in erosion control, preserving the vistas, this highway is a beautiful drive, even if it is frequently six, or even eight, lanes. It is a model of what can be done, and the median strip a great plus.

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The woods were laced with dogwood, white and fairylike in the brilliant morning. Redbuds, Mr. Whitten told us, had just been gone a week or so.

Briefly we got off of 95 to go down to Highway One, to see what it means when there is a narrow right-of-way with uncontrolled access. What it is is a tunnel of filling stations, billboards, neon, and rather crumby little buildings. And yet these are for people, and this is private enterprise. And where is the answer? Maybe some control by government and some raising of taste.

At noon we arrived at Charlottesville, our luck still holding with lovely weather, and climbed Jefferson's mountain to Monticello. Many times I've been here, but never certainly in this fashion, trailing 40 newspaper people with heavy camera equipment, and met by the Trustees of Monticello, among them the very charming Mr. Hildreth of Charlottesville, whose own bank had sponsored some very handsome planting on the outskirts of Charlottesville, and the extremely conservative columnist and commentator, Mr. Henry J. Taylor of New York, and also the President of the University of Virginia, Dr. and Mrs. Edgar Shannon. And, delightfully enough, the heirs of Thomas Jefferson, several elderly ladies -- Miss Olivia Taylor, Miss Margaret R. Taylor, and Mrs. Edwin Kirk. We went

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through the house with a delightfully knowledgeable guide.

No house speaks so much of the man who built it and loved it. Like everybody else who has been here, I particularly love seeing his inventions -- the revolving chair, the chaise lounge, the duplicating machine -- great, great ancestor of Xerox. His "solitary" I had never seen before, nor had I been up to the topmost floor underneath the dome, with its beautiful views in every direction. You wonder if he had in mind being an artist, it looked so much like a studio. What an exquisite ballroom, if it weren't up those very narrow stairs!

I did find myself looking at it with new eyes, the eyes of someone who some day might leave a simple house, but not anything so great in our history as Monticello, one to which other generations of American tourists might come. So I gave a thought to the future as I drank up the past.

And another thought I had -- I wonder where those 100 slaves it spoke about lived?[?] Everywhere, everywhere, there were evidences of his industry, of his letter-writing. In the more than 80 years he crowded so much.

We had sherry under the great tulip trees, and I took movies and wandered around the grounds and talked with Mr. Henry Taylor, whom I found delightful, although he may no doubt have cut us to pieces many times in the past, because I remember him as an ascorbic critic of FDR

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and of all his followers.

And then we had lunch on the terrace overlooking the University of Virginia. I sat by the President, Dr. Shannon, and by Mr. Hildreth. Close by at the table ^{were} the heirs of Thomas Jefferson. It was a jewel of an occasion in a never-to-be-repeated setting -- although when I say that last, I must remember Mr. Hildreth did invite me to the annual Candlelit Dinner -- they are the trustees of Monticello -- when they meet and have a good social time in Jefferson's own dining room and discuss the business of the house.

The menu was superb. Virginia ham, Sally Lund ^{bread,} an oyster recipe that was supposedly Jefferson's own and delicious -- and creme Rouillade. I threw discretion to the winds and ate everything.

Imagine my surprise to look up and see John from the White House -- or was it Charles? Anyhow, one of them was there presiding -- another of that capable Bess's arrangements.

There were some speeches and for once I was pleased with my own -- I guess because it WAS mine, having come out of my own feelings and my own words largely.

"To walk around this house and grounds is to recall the architect Jefferson, the inventor Jefferson, and the landscape lover Jefferson. It is also to remember him as a man of letters, a gracious host, a man for

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~~a man~~ for whom beauty and symmetry were synonymous." And then I spoke of my great liking for his putting the phrase "pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence, and of the four Thomas Jeffersons in my own family. And then I gave a seedling of a flowering horse chestnut tree -- a white one -- that grows in one of the mounds on the South Lawn -- a mound which Thomas Jefferson had designed for what he called "The President's park."

For me it was a great success. Then we went on down to the University of Virginia for a brief tour around the campus with Dr. Shannon, seeing the handiwork of Thomas Jefferson at every turn, into two of the homes of the professors and into the garden, just dedicated as a gift from the Virginia Garden Clubs, which had been recreated along the lines laid out by Thomas Jefferson. Trailed by the contingent of press and by a varying host of curious young students, it was a little less than a serene view of the grounds.

We got on Laurance Rockefeller's large and comfortable private plane and flew to the Bristol Tri-Cities Airport, and from there by car to Abington, riding with handsome young Congressman Pat Jennings, great friend of our Administration, and Bob Porterfield, whom I found to be charming -- almost professionally so, and full of good stories. Not many people create something in their lives, and he has indeed created a quite

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unique, quite delightful cosmos of culture in the Barter Theatre. The local people are all proud of it, it is a part of the things to see in Virginia for the tourist, and it has a place in the world of the theater -- quite a warm and special place, I think.

As usual on such trips, the three hours of rest time that we were supposed to have vanished into one hour. Rain was falling as we drove up the streets of Abington^d, but nevertheless we were preceded by two high school bands and there was a sizeable crowd of local people along the sidewalks, and then as we approached the old Martha Washington Inn, the yard was full. We went up on the porch and had a little welcoming ceremony -- roses for Muriel, yellow roses for me, welcoming words by the Acting Mayor, a nice little talk by Bob Porterfield. I just took a bow and introduced the Cabinet Ladies and the Stevens and the Rockefellers.

Then we went upstairs to my room, furnished with antiques -- this old and charming building has many antiques -- it used to be a school at one time, where Edith Galt Wilson attended school, and Eleanor Roosevelt's father had lived here in this town. I had a canopied bed and a funny little picture of Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson, circa 1937, on my bedside table, and the most exquisite bouquet from the local garden club. I did have about an hour's rest, and then a nice little girl performed a miracle

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on my hair, and I dressed up in my peach theater suit, clutching my magnolia seedling from the Andrew Jackson magnolia, which had originally come from The Hermitage, and led the nine Cabinet Ladies across the street to the Barter Theater, each with her jug of sorghum, a bucket of tomatoes and squash -- to go into soup, not to be thrown, or whatever her barter was.

Roger Stevens, Bob Porterfield and I went backstage, and when the curtain rose there we were, lined up in front of Caesar, Cassius, Brutus, Calp^uurnia, and the lot, and we gave the award to Roger Stevens.

The award

~~It~~ has indeed gone to a star-studded group since 1939, beginning with Laurette Taylor and including Ethel Barrymore and Helen Hayes, Tallulah Bankhead, Frederick March, Cornelia Otis Skinner, and Mary Martin.

But this is the first time it has been awarded in the Barter Theater itself although not the first time, I believe, by a First Lady, because Bob Porterfield was a friend of Mrs. Roosevelt's and she'd been to the Barter, and I believe had made the award once. I borrowed a line from the play and said, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. We come to praise Roger Stevens." For once I got a laugh. The small quaint theater was full, the award itself a Virginia ham, a platter to eat it off of, a scholarship for two young actors, to be chosen by the man receiving the award, and an acre of land on the mountain close by, delightfully

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chosen. I asked Bob Porterfield about that acre of land, thinking his patrimony was decreasing with the years -- this has been going on about 15 now -- but no, he says it's straight up on a mountain and one of the awardees, when asked what he was going to do with his acre, said he was thinking of renting it to an eagle.

There is no other play I can think of with as many oft-quoted lines. I enjoyed it, although by that time weariness was beginning to tell. Cassius was a thorough rascal, Mark Antony had sex appeal, as he always does, I think, and poor Brutus worried through all the acts in an intellectual, philosophical sort of way about whether what he was doing was right.

When it was over we went across the street to the Ballroom of the Martha Washington Inn, ^ccandle-lit, flower-bedecked, festive, and had an after-theater supper party, by which time I was ravenous. If they hadn't had Virginia ham I would have practically gone out to the kitchen to hunt some. And fried chicken and spoon bread. What can there be about such a day to make one hungry? Maybe trying to learn about everything that is put before you and projecting your appreciation of it and your interest in it does take muscle and effort, although it doesn't look like it does.

I met an attractive little girl at the party named Langhorne, who is a great, great niece of Lady Astor, and another beautiful young girl who

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is the daughter of Tony Akers, who had taken me around all over New York in the campaign of 1960, from a Times Square place where a record player recited campaign speeches in about six languages to a very motley audience, to an elegant tea at his Park Avenue apartment. I met and chatted with all the actors and with the townspeople, and it was so interesting my fatigue didn't blunt my feeling for it all till after one. It was a great day!

I had had a call from Lyndon immediately after the show, but then, since it was a quarter of twelve in Washington, I thought I had better not answer it. He might, happily, be on his way to sleep.