

1965

Thursday, May 13th

Was another back-to-back with appointments day. ~~The~~ The height of the Spring. ~~But~~ It began early, with 20 laps in the pool about 8 o'clock, [✓] And then to the beauty parlor,

Stopping by the Diplomatic Reception Room to greet the Daughters of the Cincinnati, who were taking a White House tour, shaking hands with all of them and reminiscing a bit about the lovely old house they own on Massachusetts ^{Ave} -- Anderson House, where Mayor Tom Miller used to stay and where I went to the Tom Clarks' party for President Truman, his birthday party in the Spring after his great victory. And the Whistle Stop was the motif of the table decorations, and I sat next to ^{the} great General George Marshall.

Well, today's a big day, for two reasons. My luncheon for the Senate Ladies -- 106 of them will be here at one o'clock, and the opening of Lyndon's boyhood home in Johnson City. When Liz brings me the clippings from some trip I've taken or some speech I've made, I let them accumulate on the desk and seldom read them. How funny it is -- here I am on tiptoe -- I can't wait for the stories about the opening of Lyndon's boyhood home. I am eager, scared, hopeful.

Bess and Mr. Ketchum had collaborated to design a very

1965

Thursday, May 13th (continued)

delightful little extra thing for the Senate Ladies -- the memorabilia which we hope to start showing in cases in the East Wing for the tourists ^{who} ~~that~~ are backed up, often six-wide on busy summer days. They will be ready for them to see in early Summer -- perhaps July 4th. We gave the Senate Ladies a preview of it -- spread it out on the blue velvet tables in the Blue Room, where, after I had received them in the Green Room they could stop in and have a sherry and look at it leisurely. There was ^{an} invitation from George Washington for dinner, a miniature water color of Dolly Madison that she had given as a bread-and-butter present to some friends she had spent a fortnight with, and an invitation to President Wilson's marriage to Edith Galt. And there was also President Lincoln's appointment book, the first record book that he kept in the White House, found in a New York antique shop and given to the White House by the Lyndon Johnsons back in August of '63!

It was a good day for me, because I can call nearly every ^{Senate Lady} one of them by first name. And they were there in full force -- 106, eight of the Cabinet Wives, Muriel of course, and such old-timers as Mrs. Jay Hamilton Lewis, Frances Parkinson Keyes of New Hampshire (and I always wonder if she will write something about it), Lovely Baroness Silvercrys, Sarah Clements, Bess' Mother,

1965

Thursday, May 13th (continued)

looking old and failing, and it makes me sad to see her so -- she is so patrician and sweet; Esther Frear, one of the most capable Senate wives I've known, ^{And} Mrs. Tom Connally, with something of the quality of the phoenix, looking just as young and gay as a school girl, a pretty young one... Mrs. Ross Bass, Marvella Bayh, Mrs. Brewster of Maryland, and my special friends, Betty Talmadge, Rosemary Smathers -- we always hope to get that afternoon of bridge -- Mary Ellen Monroney, Grace Dodd and Bethine Church -- I really yearn for our days of studying Spanish again. Nuala Pell, one of those I do not know particularly well and would most of all like to know better. Lovely Virginia Russell, the first time she's been here in her new role.

They lingered over the Presidential memorabilia and approved the idea. And then, while we all ^{moved to} ~~did leave~~ the Dining Room -- at least I did, I encouraged everybody to have a look at the other tables before they sat down. Mine had a Thomas Jefferson centerpiece, a Chinese export, and the Theodore Roosevelt place settings. Each table made use of a different Administration, sometimes ^{Combining} ~~combining~~ two, as mine did. The Lincoln table being amongst the most handsome, and the Rutherford Hayes certainly the most unique, with its extraordinary

1965

Thursday, May 13th (continued)

flora and fauna glaring up at you.

There were no speeches. We had coffee in the parlor, a pleasant but very warm time, I thought, and the guests were gone ten minutes before three, so that I had about an hour and a half for desk work and rest before I went down to meet, of all things, the Whirly Girls, a group of lady helicopter pilots with Mrs. Phil Hart their honorary President, who had asked to bring them to the White House on a tour. This they had done and I went down to meet them for a cup of tea and a moment of conversation. One of them, Dora Daugherty, had been my guest at a Women Doers' luncheon. Another had made an emergency landing at the ranch when she encountered weather on a flight across Texas!

Late in the afternoon I went over to Lyndon's office to see if I could find out without asking anything about the results of his call late the night before from Puerto Rico. I didn't, but I found that he was about to go in to see the National Review Board for the East-West Center, among them Jack Burns the Governor and Mary Lasker. So I asked Mary to call me later, and when she did we had a delightful hour and a half talking about how to put together packages for prospective givers to the beautification program, and about

1965

Thursday, May 13th (continued)

Lynda's party, the dance for the Princess of Sweden, and what children of friends we might suggest that she invite.

And then we went down Pennsylvania Avenue, getting out to walk at the Mellon Fountain, looking at the FDR Memorial -- Mary says it needs some planting -- it does. Drove on down to the Capitol, we walked up the long broad walk and the great steps on the West Front to see the terrace where I hope some day there might be tables for outdoor dining, even if just sandwiches and cold drinks brought down by carts. It is the most prestigious, magnificent view. But we were sad about the old building. The sandstone or whatever it is is chipping off so badly it looks down-at-heels. There is more planting being done -- a few trees around with stockings on, and the tulips have just passed their zenith. They are going to put cannas in the great stone receptacles along the terrace. All of which adds up to a plus, but is it the best that could be done.

When I got back I went upstairs to work, and suddenly the phone rang and Lyndon asked me to come over. I sat quietly in his office while he phoned for about an hour and a half, reading NEWSWEEK, getting in a word when I could. His small office looks very handsome -- green velvet, traditional furniture, elegant but cold. I look at the ticker and the three wide TV sets in the

1965

Thursday, May 13th (continued)

big office, and I thought it looked like we'd gone into the White Goods business -- the cold meat counter itself. Oh, well, maybe we can get it changed.

Dear Him was there, acting slow and dull and sleepy -- not like his bouncy self. It worried me. There is still a pang when I think of Beagle and of dear little Her.

We had dinner at 10:30, just the two of us. Then I got back to my exercises, neglected of late, perhaps only three times a week. Lyndon gave his up^u September of last year and we haven't been able to get him started since. I haven't the heart to really keep after him. His days are so full of troubles.

Lynda is going to New York tomorrow, staying at the Carlyle, suitably chaperoned by friends and having dates with Dave. She has been excited, and how glad I am about taking a trip in the United States this summer and writing for McCalls and National Geographic.