

Paper Clip Removed from 04/17/1968, pages 1 - 14.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17 WND

Wednesday, April 17, was one of the biggest days I have ever spent in my four years and nearly five months in the White House. But it seems this April that I face every day as a sort of mountain to be climbed, of possible achievements if I can do it, of certain emotions, ~~though I was up at 7:30.~~ The headlines were relatively good-- "Last GIS pull out of City," "Command in Pacific briefs LBJ," and one funny one in the light of the whole thing, "LBJ's popularity rises 13 points."

I spent the next three hours working hard on my tour guide talk, my speech at luncheon, going over the guest list and trying to place each one in my mind. This last of the three beautification luncheons means more to me than nearly any social event. Mr. Per came for a comb-out. I met with Nash, Liz, Sharon, Cynthia and Jane Freeman in the West Hall on our tour guide script and made suggestions, went over the social format with Barbara Keehn. Sometime during the morning I talked to Lyndon in Honolulu. He sounded very tired. It was some atrocious hour out there-- I think nearly six o'clock and he said he had been awake since 2:30. His eyes had been giving him a lot of trouble and he has not slept well. He sounded frustrated over the lack of progress and used the words "Totally unrealistic." He said he would probably return to Texas Thursday night for our weekend. I jumped at the chance to meet him there then.

A little before eleven, I put on my prettiest spring outfit, white Adele Simpson with a deep pink-red coat, and went down into the Rose

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Garden for coffee. It was a glorious, golden day and well we deserve it after having done this twice in the rain. The garden was beautiful and the almost two hundred guests, donors, members of my committee or of the Society for a more Beautiful Capital, or of the little group that go around and make speeches about beautification, or press ladies. I went from group to group, making, of course, a beeline for Lawrence^{U a} and Mary Rockefeller and Brooke Astor and Irwin Miller. And a little past eleven we got in buses. There were five buses this year. Jane Freeman and Katie and Nash and Sharon and me as tour guides. This year, my last, nothing could have stopped me from being one of the tour guides. I wanted to jump in and participate in every facet with everybody! We went out the Southwest gate and I showed them Sherman Plaza and Pershing Square. We are starting the chairs there now, just as we have in Farragut Square, a victory of sorts. We have lost only one chair in two years in Farragut Park and they do give a certain style.

Along Pennsylvania Avenue, Mary Lasker's 30,000 azaleas, now much larger and well maintained, were a bright flag. And then at Twelfth and Pennsylvania we showed them the first building that had been drawn back fifty feet from the sidewalk and I described the triple row of trees that would some day line this great ceremonial Avenue. And then we ^{paused} ~~passed~~ sentimentally at Independence Avenue. ⁶ And ⁷ third, the first triangle that I had planted in February of 1965. I described the great

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reflecting pool that will be the accent at the other end of the mall from the pool like the Lincoln Monument. It will be finished in 1970. And then one of my pride and joys--the 447 Magnolia ^{Soulangeana} ~~salengianae~~ and the great masses of azaleas that we planted in the Fall of 1965 along Pennsylvania Avenue, a major entrance to the city, a big shot in the arm to a decaying business area and a marvelous vista of the capitol dome through blossoms just a few weeks ago. And then because we were close to Buchanan^{School} and it is certainly our major achievement and the most people-oriented and I knew I would lose my audience when they stepped out of the bus, I began to describe it. Rows of broken windows when we begun, the grim dull expanse of cement, but it had been turned into a ["]place for all seasons--a playground for the children on school days and after school hours and on weekends open to the whole community as a sort of a community center. They would find a sunken basketball court that could also serve as an amphitheater and dance area and for roller skating. And in the winter with a portable freezing system that would make possible ice skating and in the summer nozzles that would make a spray for cooling water for the little kids. We also ^{would} find a refreshment stand and rest rooms nearly finished and about that time we drew up at it and everybody piled out of the buses. Sure enough, it is close to being finished. The trees are in and they are tall. I hope I had prepared them for the fact that since it won't be finished for a few weeks yet it is raw and because it is Easter vacation

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the children are not here. A stage is so much more alive with the actors. However, at the foot of the bus steps Mrs. White, the Principal was there to greet us and a sizeable number of neighborhood folks, children and adults. And here the photographers took over. Brooke Aster^c had been on my bus and together and equally excited we walked around while they snapped and snapped--would we stand over by the mound, a sort of igloo--the youngsters climb over and climb through.[?] One of Simon Brynus' favorite devices. How about standing where they could get an overall picture? And now down in the basketball court.[?] Here I could get the feeling that our guests on the bus were really impressed. This is a substantial imaginative innovative addition to the city.

The children crowded around us and we were a sort of pied piper — or more realistically those TV cameras were. Then we piled back in the buses and drove past Capital Plaza and I tried to create some sense of the potential there--~~the cannon~~^{Capper} as a dream come true, ~~cappa~~^{Buchanan} as the raw material and ~~its~~ models of both when we returned to the White House. And as we drove up the ramp to the Southwest Freeway I pointed out some of the Mexican playground equipment. I told them how it had all come about because I had taken a trip to a park in Mexico City and had been so complimentary to Mrs. Diaz Ordaz of the gay amusing playground figures there. And when she said she wanted to send us some I had envisioned two or three or half a dozen pieces and it arrived in forty-six

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flatcar loads--two hundred and fifty-six pieces^{!!!} which we had distributed across the school playgrounds in Washington. Along the Freeway we showed them some of the big plantings the D. C. Department of Traffic and Highways have done. And then we came to the other of the two jewels--[?] a cannon, one and Columbia Island the other. Here Mary Lasker had planted out 800,000 daffodil bulbs of many varieties, expected to last over a span of six weeks. Nature had been capricious! They had started blooming early and all at once. There were probably not more than 20 percent of them left. Even so, there was a drift of gold under the trees over toward the marina and gold and white down toward the Potomac. A total of thirty beds covering ten acres and I described ~~as~~ how this is the first glimpse of our Nation's Capitol that many people see. It is the entrance from the airport and also from the west, and 166,000 people cross Columbia Island each day. My eyes searched for Mary Lasker or her sister as I described the delight and humor of that Saturday when I had taken some photographers and newspaper girls. It was the absolute height of the blooming season all over Columbia Island and we had ended by having our own picnic in the grass with a great mass of daffodils in front of us and behind us the glorious backdrop of the Lincoln Memorial and the arches of the bridge. I mentioned that it was Saturday, March 30th and hoped they got the idea that it was a rather special day for me. Adam Roshansky, when I described how the petroleum industry made a gift of many bulbs.

(end of tape but April 17th not complete).

what
or
later?
sister
to tape

Roshansky?

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As we passed the circle at Memorial Bridge, part of the 265 trees, most of them dogwood, were already in, and work being done on the rest, and I pointed out that this project was a gift of the 1965 inaugural committee - an appropriate stamp to leave on this town. It spoke of this Administration and I think my very personal gratitude and empathy came through in tone although I didn't say it in words.

And here, I looked for the Dale Millers, but did not find them on my bus. And then, just as we were approaching the White House, we came to the last big challenge on this bus trip, the perfect "Before and After" - Rollins Park with its lush magnolia Soulangeanas, mellowed in ^{for} with some 30 or so years. Pools and benches, and statues, ^A and then the raw, barren, scraggly Walt Whitman Park. At least, on my bus, they got the idea of what it could become.

I waved at ^hLiz's ^{//}Strip as we drove into the White House gate, and I, at least, had enjoyed myself thoroughly and I think our passengers did.

I went upstairs quickly, for just a few minutes, and then was back in the State Dining Room, going from group to group, trying to draw attention to the wonderful blown-up pictures that Cynthia and Nash had put together as displays, of the parks in use, many of them from my Saturday the 30th trip.

I searched for the David Lloyd Kreegers, to describe to them the delightful little vignette of how I stopped to see the site of their fountain,

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and found the six bicyclers from foreign countries there.

Sherry, and Dubonnet, and Orange juice were passed, and then at one, we went into the East Room for the luncheon.

There was never any receiving line. We'd been together all morning so many of them I know well. And I, rigid holder out ~~front~~ for receiving lines, for once felt it was gayer and more natural this way.

The tables were a triumph. Bess is an artist and today is perfection. We had, once more, the menus that had Uncle Sam's ^{hat} full of jonquils this time. The lunch was light and delicious - consomme April, crepes Cheseapeake, and ended with the repeat favorite, ^{dessert} the flower pot ^{piece} - and in it a daffodil - what else?

I had really worked on the seating - all of us had - I had the Ambassador of the Netherlands, who has contributed bulbs to at least one school, more I think, ^{on} my right, Walter Washington, on my left. And Mary's sister, Mrs. Fordyce. And then one of my favorites, Mr. Joseph Vandansky of ^{Ch} ~~name~~ Giant Food Store, and was thrilled to hear from him, ^{his} own story of how, with all the burning and looting, ^{and} window breaking, the turbulence on 14th Street, ^{on} both sides of him, his store, the first landscaped one, remained unharmed. It was not only that surely. He's made every effort to make good community relations. The area's almost totally negroes and he has had a negro manager, and right after the riots, with most of the

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stores closed, Walter had appointed him, as one of the dispensers of food for emergency, for people who had been burned out. He's full of zest and faith and a delightful man to be around.

And then there was Mrs. Louis Eilers, whose husband is President of Eastman Kodak, and I talked to her about the young folks program this summer, Diana's, and what a wonderful tool those Kodaks they had generously given, had been in the hands of the young folks, who wanted to see their environment, and each other, and wanted to see the results of their handiwork, in those little neighborhood parks. I think the cameras played a very useful part.

And then Mr. J. Erwin Miller, one of the most interesting and vital men that I have met in my four and a half years here. Intense, practical, I'm mad about him.

And Mrs. Duncan Phillips of the Gallery; and then Mr. L. P. Gilvin of the Associated General Contractors of America. I hope his organization will landscape Walt Whitman's Park - their building is right across from it, and I had prepared some wonderful "Before and After" pictures of beautiful Rollins Park, and naked Walt Whitman right next to it, for his use, and I wanted to get to know him better. We have a mutual interest in the Paladine Canyon, and in Joe Batson.

And then, Mrs. deWitt Wallace of Readers Digest - this has been a very helpful channel in telling the country about beautification. For once, I was satisfied with my speech. It was almost like that old Texas Governor's

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story, "get full of your subject and let her fly." And I have three years of this subject, in my heart and head, and a life time of interest behind that, and I was keenly aware that this was the last time that I would see many of these people, and I wanted them to know very much, how grateful I was.

Over the past three years, the people in this room have produced nearly two and a half million dollars to take steps toward making this nation's capitol more liveable, and more beautiful. Not only is your handiwork enjoyed by the three million people who live and work in this city, it can be seen also by seventeen million visitors, who come here each year. And our work here, has inspired other cities across the country.

This has been one of the most lovely springs I can remember in Washington's history! It has also been one of the most poignant and grave. That fact underscores the urgency of improving our environment for all people.

And then I launched into Buchanan Playground; a resume of the schools, Anthony Bowens, Syphax, Bryan, Kingsman. But what I enjoyed most was trying to recreate for them, the picture of that day on Hains Point, Saturday March 30th. All of ~~that~~ ^{these} 1846 cherry trees were in bloom and what looked like all the people in Washington were out enjoying them. Picnicing on the grass, bicycling, fishing, jogging, courting, playing on the excellent playground equipment. I ran into folks from three different countries, within hardly more minutes, and when I stopped to speak to one family, sitting around their blanket loaded with snacks and sandwiches, they looked up and

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said, "Mrs. Johnson, we were just talking about you." And I thought to myself, "It is not I but you that they should be able to meet and thank for the sheer joy of that blossoming Saturday afternoon." The place that drew them, was a place of beauty.

And then, as always, I tried to get in my philosophy. My criteria of a project, are that it receive the fullest use, that it can be easily maintained, and that the desire for it emanate from the neighborhood and its people. And then I described the possible new developments that could mean a lot for the recreational opportunities to the amenities of this capital city. The development of an Anacostia Park, eleven hundred acres; and of Kingman Lake, a huge, fresh water, swimming lake, the equivalent of a hundred swimming pools in size. These will take years and money to achieve.

But this in a small way, could be the kicking off point. And then the line that meant the most - ^{//} ~~one~~ of the happiest experiences of these past three and a half years, ^{//} has been working with you.

And then an introduction of Walter Washington, the main speaker.

^{//} Together, he and I have been frequent visitors at schools, housing projects, and in the neighborhood of Washington.

In the most recent anxious hours for this city, he proved to all what many of us already knew - that he is a wise, compassionate, understanding leader. He epitomizes what I think makes a great public servant, for him no task is too big, or too small. Threaded through everything he undertakes

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are zest and enthusiasm, and a belief that you can ^{wrest} ~~rest~~ from troubles. *e*

*C*onstructive, forward action. I take great pride in introducing Mayor
Walter Washington. //

*Ch. tape
doesn't
sound
right*

The Mayor looked so tired when he began, that my heart ached for him. He spoke well, almost in a poetic strain. He spoke with the attitude, almost joking attitude, that our work here in the city was of a cosmetic nature. His answer was that we, on our committee, make open spaces and recreation facilities a part of the daily living and the daily environment of people." And then he said so many kind, warm, generous things about me that I began to shrivel and look at my plate, but it was a great climax and everybody liked it.

The luncheon was over close to three. I went to the door and said goodbye as everybody filed out. And I had that mixed feeling of relaxation and job well done, with an undertone of sadness, because this was, in a way, an end.

It was an interesting montage of the people I've worked with, from government, Marvella Bayh, Flavio¹ Boyd, Fred Farr, Carol Fortas, and Trudy^e Fowler, the John Hechingers; and both *G*ale and Lorraine McGhee, *X* two gentlemen from my splurge at Palm Beach, Henry Dudley and Fred Korth,

X the two other Ambassadors, the Margains of Mexico, and the Shamotas of Japan, both benefactors of beautification. And two very interesting

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gentlemen in their own fields, Larry Halperin and Philip Johnson.

Donors, big and little - Gwen Cafritz, Enid Haupt, the Dale Millers for the Inaugural Committee; and a special warmth for the handclasp of the Robert Inches of E. S. Kline and Company, who always come to our aid when we are stuck on a school.

There were lots of press, including Wolf Von Eckard and Betty Beale; and nearly all of my committee.

And so I went upstairs about three, exhausted, but the day still stretched before me. In just moments, I was back down in the Library, for the YWCA film presentation, and tea.

There was Mary Rockefeller, with officers and committee members of the YWCA, and two attractive young women who had been participants in the YWCA work camp.

They gave me a film called - Aim, Action, Achievement - made during their summer at the camp. Its subject - conservation; its actors, the young folks at camp; and its achievement - a trail in the Teton National Forest. They had worked with the U. S. Forest Service and they hoped the film would inspire other groups of young ~~U.S.~~ folks, to do conservation in their own home area.

The good works of the Rockefellers is in this and so is my admiration for them. It grew just even one more notch when Walter Washington told me at lunch that Laurence had invited ^{him} ~~he~~ and his wife sometime, to come out

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to Caneel Bay, and get a rest.

It's fast becoming an R and R center, for the exhausted of this administration!

We had tea and talk and I was back upstairs in half an hour, but soon down again, to watch the Head Start films. They were really quite good. The children delightful, completely spontaneous. The blond volunteer a star herself, and I coming in at the end of the line.

And then back upstairs, at five o'clock, Mary and Nash came in.

We collapsed on the green sofa, and talked about the future of our committee, for nearly an hour - the fountains, getting them firmed up. Probable result of the days lunch - how we could carry on our work.

I worked a little with Ashton, and then about 7:20 went over to the bowling alley, stretched my muscles in two fast games, because today had been all thinking and giving out of emotions, which needs for me to be balanced with exercise.

Back upstairs I recorded. I let the servants go and then I did something I considered a real luxury. I went to the icebox and got a good, cold dinner that had been left wrapped up on a plate by Zephyr. Took it to bed and ate while I watched television.

Chief King gave me a rub and I was ready for sleep by 11:30.

One of the prettiest sights of the day had been Lynda Bird, who had come in, her hair piled high, wearing a dress, all lace and tucks, and tiny

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pink ribbon, on her way to the Women's National Press Club Dinner, as
Wauhillau La Haye

the guest of ~~Chile~~ ~~La Haye~~. I was pleased that she was going, and pleased

that she recognized the fact that Wauhillau had been a good friend to us.

And it is too easy to act hostile toward the whole press. I count, in fact,

so many of them my friends.

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