

TYPOVISION

By ELIZABETH GALBREATH

To be received at the White House, I'm sure is the life-long ambition of every normal woman. My girl friends and I used to talk of a White House reception wherein we would be among the guests. And somehow, I always knew it would happen to me, but, of course, I did not know that it would be Friday, Oct. 25, 1940. I can truthfully say that last Friday



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was the most extra-ordinary day of my life. With apologies to Eleanor Roosevelt, I think I should always like to refer to it as "My Day."

My day began just a little before dawn (that is, if you don't count the time I used ironing and packing) when a huge limousine carried me to the airport. There I boarded a plane and we had soon slipped above a layer of clouds and the roar of the motor kept reassuring me that Washington, D. C., was only a few minutes ahead. Remembering how often I had admired the rising sun, and how varied the conditions under which I had witnessed the colorful breaking of its rays, I felt a strange pleasure in believing that I was at last viewing the dawn at a closer range.

"No, dear stewardess, I don't want to read. This is my first flight, and I want to look long at the sun break; I want to watch those automobiles down on the highways, like ants speeding along a tight-rope; I want to see those little 'doll' houses scattered about, and revel in the riot of color that is spread beneath us.—Those red, rust, yellow and brown trees, those green stretches of land, those barely decipherable mountains. I want to—really would like to—dip my fingers into that cottony stuff that is beneath us when he can't see the land. 'Twould feel quite nice if I could wriggle my toes in these snowy waves—and still be safe."

Two songs kept running through my mind.—"I'm Sitting on Top of the World" and "High, High Over the Hills," are the phrases which for the first time, I could fully appreciate. I landed in Virginia, where the manager was confronted with the unprecedented necessity of a brown-skin patron having terminal facilities.

"That is a problem," he said. But it amused me to watch him solve it. For I was happy. Soon I was to shake hands for the first time with the First Lady of the Land—the most democratic of all our leaders. It was a day of so many first things. It was a perfect day.

Crossing the Potomac, I knew immediately that I would like the nation's capital. It seemed so quiet—different from Chicago. I was glad that my first trip to Washington should have so many pleasant things in store.

I arrived at the United States Department of Labor building where the convention of the National Council of Negro Women was being held, in time to register and listen in on the committee findings which followed the morning sessions. I was glad to see the women so interested in crystallizing this mammoth undertaking, and in forming plans for more effective work. Although, frankly I came down especially to witness the meeting with Mrs. Roosevelt, I am very much interested in the council's program—there is so much work to be done.

And, if it is humanly possible, Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of the council, will see to it that much goodwill come of the efforts that the women are putting forth. Mrs. Bethune directed the women, in a strong, clear voice, after we had stood for pictures on the steps of the labor building. "We will now proceed to the White House; it's two blocks this way, and one block that way."—And so presently we were beyond the big pool where the goldfish swim, beyond the huge iron gate, beyond the steps that sprouted guards in every direction.—Uniformed, they were, and plain-clothed and multitudinous.

The enclosed walk was walled with glass on one side. Through it the garden could be seen. The king of this White House garden at this time of the year seems to be the dahlia. Tremendously large lavender and yellow blooms hung proudly to tall stately stalks. I have seen the size many a time at the county fairs. The fact of the matter is there is a garden near Fifty-eighth and Cottage Grove here in Chicago, that has similar blooms to those chosen for the White House garden.

We were received in the East room, after passing through a hall where were hung the portraits of personages who helped to make the nation's history. These one could appreciate. And every lover of antiques could appreciate that mahogany table, held over from a bygone day, and the twin settees.

In the East room, as also in the green room, the rose room and the state dining room, the decorations seemed wholly in keeping with the magnificent structure, yet simple and soothing. Perhaps Mrs. Roosevelt had nothing to do with the decorating of those rooms, yet the simplicity that makes her so lovable seemed to abound in the White House surroundings. Everything seems so dignified in its beauty that one just doesn't think of the word elaborate the entire time she is there.

In the East room, where red drapes hung about the windows, were placed vases of large yellow chrysanthemums. The center of the floor was empty and the window benches were upholstered in red. Mrs. Roosevelt greeted her guests in a soft brown wool. There was a faint flair to the skirt. The shoulders were broadened by the puffs at the tops of her long sleeves. A darker brown braiding trimmed the front of the waist in a rectangular design. The neckline was high and she wore a gold twisted chain on her neck. Everything about her attire was so strikingly simple that the huge diamonds worn on the first two fingers of her left hand did not lend the flashy note one would expect them to.

Red roses decorated the long table in the dining room. And, the tea and coffee services were exquisitely designed. During introductions at the White House, Miss Frances Harriet Williams acquainted Mrs. Roosevelt with the work of the organization in a brief summary; Sue Bailey Thurmond told of the work of the "Woman's Magazine," mouthpiece of the organization, and Mary Church Terrell, mother of clubs, was presented. She made a brief talk and presented her book to Mrs. Roosevelt.

Mrs. Terrell was among the persons I was meeting for the first time, although I had admired her achievements for years. Imagine my surprise when she told me she had admired my writing too, and that she read my articles regularly.

Chicagoans were numerous among the delegates. Mame Mason Higgins boarded the plane with me at Pittsburgh, although we did not meet until we reached Washington. Henrene Ward, who stoutly claims she is from Florida, ought to be mentioned with Chicagoans. It was good to see her. She looks so well, and says her mother likes it down Bethune-Cookman college way as well as she does. Zonita Owens and Henrene, incidentally, were life-savers, sort of, in

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taking me to the station. I had just enough time to make the train I wanted, and the cabs all seemed to be going in the opposite direction or were occupied.

Mrs. Marjorie Stewart Joyner, of the Mme. C. J. Walker company, accompanied me to the train. And we also did some sight-seeing together before the last conference meeting for the day began. The District of Columbia is like an overstuffed date, but we tried to see it all, the capitol and Howard university campus being the special points. The Howard university campus is beautiful, but not at all as I had imagined it.

The Howard theatre, is one place where I feel almost certain, one could "get away with murder." Fats Waller and his stage revue were featured. Everything they did was hot. I suppose capitalists have to come to Chicago to see something tame. The woman-vocalist is beautiful with a voice that is superb.

Mrs. Joyner, a member of the finance committee, was among those who spoke at the morning sessions. Bessie Bearden of New York is also a member of that committee and treasurer. She, Mame Higgins, and myself were at the same table for luncheon. Near enough for conversation, however, were a number of other Chicagoans and office holders in the council. Rebecca Stiles Taylor, publicity chairman for the council, columnist and copyreader for the Chicago Defender, and candidate for the national presidency of Federation of Colored Women, was among them.

Mrs. Robert S. Abbott, winning so many friends with her gracious smile, attended the conference. I also met Mrs. Miller, Miss Pope of Dr. Ambrose Caliver's office, the department of education of Negroes in the district; Mrs. Finley Wilson, wife of the grand exalted ruler of the Elks, Washington, D. C.; Bueanna V. Kelley, grand secretary of Elks, Norfolk, Va.; Mrs. Gordon, grand daughter ruler of the Elks, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. John B Hall, of Boston, member of the executive committee and mother of Chicago's Dr. Hall.

Mrs. Lethia Fleming, whom I had not seen for two years, was there. She is from Cleveland, and still remembered the last evening we had enjoyed together here in Chicago. Talked for a moment to Eunice Hunton Carter, of New York; met Sara Pelham Speaks, Carita V. Roane, department of labor of New York; Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Palmer Institute. Sari Price Patton, of New York, who stopped for a brief stay in Chicago not very long ago attended as the conference registrar.

Mrs. Esther Peyton, Miss Linnie Smith—Miss Smith recently received a degree from the University of Chicago—Dora K. Norman, New York; Sara Spencer Washington, of the Apex School of Beauty Culture, Atlantic City; Julia West Hamilton, Y.W.C.A. head in D.C., and one of the hostesses of the council; Mrs. Armand W. Scott, wife of Judge Scott; and Mrs. Scott, mother of the Atlantic Daily World head; Elsie Austin, Ohio; Mrs. John R. Hope, Atlanta, Ga.—her son attends the University of Chicago; Mrs. Alma Illery, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Mrs. M. D. Butler, D.C.; Mrs. L. T. Alexander, Mable Alston, charming Afro-American scribe; Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee, were others greeted.

I did not get to greet Irma Allen, but I enjoyed hearing her sing. She has many friends among the music lovers of Chicago, and the audience at the conference's evening session Friday seemed very enthusiastic. The address of the evening was made by Atty. Hubert T. Delany of New York City, and the Howard University Women's Glee club was also featured.

Chicagoans will be glad to know that I saw Hollis Woods, who is now teaching at the Cortez Peters Business school. Hollis is growing a moustache—quite nice. I wish all men wore them. I also met Mr. and Mrs. Peters. Mr. Peters plans to come to Chicago on business soon. Had an amusing time trying to meet another friend. He would call me, and I would be out; I would call him and he would be out; so never got to see him. But then, I had such a short while to stay. I had to rush back for the Artists and Models ball here in Chicago. It was well worth rushing back for, too. I'll have to elaborate upon that statement elsewhere, as I have not room here. But, perhaps, a word about the train trip back home could be squeezed in. It seemed pitifully slow after such rapid transportation that morning, but it was quite thrilling. When it was daylight, I found that it had been so long since I had had an opportunity to see the things that rural life affords, that I kept my eyes glued upon the passing scenery.

I can never feel quite calm about how beautiful our nation is, and how enormous.

My return trip added Mr. and Mrs. James Denny and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Alexander, 219 West 144th street, New York City, and C. Hood of this city to my list of acquaintances. Mr. Hood, a graduate of Virginia Union, had been visiting his mother in Richmond, Va., and the New Yorkers were to visit Mr. Denny's mother, Mrs. Pearl Denny, 2303 West Lake street.

My day, Friday, October 25, was perfect.