

## TALKS BY MRS. ROOSEVELT

April 28, 1937

Description: ER and Malvina Thompson Scheider discuss the daily routine involved in running the White House and ER's daily schedule.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Virginia Barr, Malvina Thompson Scheider

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### BARR:

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, speaking from Washington, D. C., and bringing you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Tonight, in the second of this series of broadcasts, Mrs. Roosevelt is going to describe for us a recent and typical day in the White House.

First, may I take you for a moment across the Atlantic. In England, the Coronation is not the event of a single day. It extends over a long calendar of brilliant social events both before and after the actual Coronation. This very night some of the most distinguished dinners, dances and receptions are taking place. And among the beautiful women who will attend them, there will be many lovely Pond's complexions.

Pond's Cold Cream is used by so many English women that it is actually the largest selling cold cream in England. Coming from that land of beautiful complexions, that is quite a tribute to the Pond's method of skin care. Won't you try it yourself? Every night and every morning give yourself the thorough cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream that invigorates your skin through and through as well as cleanses it. Get a jar of Pond's Cold Cream tomorrow, and see how it will help your skin.

Now, it is my great privilege to present . . . Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

((5] MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT ENDING  
WITH INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA BARR)

### MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening.

In discussing a day in the White House, I'm going to tell you of some of the things that happen there which make up a typical day. Mrs. Malvina Thompson Scheider, who has been my secretary for a great many years, and is always known affectionately in our family as "Tommy" is a very important part of a day in the White House, and she's here with me this evening.

I have tried to choose some of the things that we do, which will interest you ~~most~~. And as Tommy and I go through this typical day, I would like you to imagine that you are in the White House with us.

In the first place, a day in the White House really begins the evening before. And very often at that time, you'll find Mrs. Scheider and myself at the desk in my study.

This room is on the second floor of the White House, and out of its two large windows you can look across the gardens to the Washington Monument.

There is a little bronze plaque on the fireplace which says: "In this room Abraham Lincoln slept during his occupancy of the White House as President of the United States – March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1861 to April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1865."

Perhaps this is why so often when I work in here late at night, I have a feeling that some one is in the room with me, and I often turn around, hoping that I might be given the ability to see Mr. Lincoln himself.

### MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

On this particular evening, there is a movie going on in the large hall for our guests and the young people. When I hear it come to an end, I'm going to go out and say goodnight to all who are there, and ask the house guests what they want for breakfast, what they wish to do the next morning, whether they

would like to have their breakfast in their rooms, and when they have to leave. As many of us as wish to do so, meet in the West Hall, the space at one end of the second floor corridor which the family uses as a sitting room, and where we usually breakfast at 8:30 because it is brighter than the small dining room.

One of the things that I've included in this day which I thought would interest you is a little about the recent visit we had from The Governor General of Canada, Lord Tweedsmuir, and The<sup>1</sup> Lady Tweedsmuir. That visit was one of the most delightful we've had in the White House, ~~and one of the most important State visits Washington has received in many years.~~<sup>3</sup>

Now, just imagine that you are with Mrs. Scheider and myself in the study. We have a mass of letters before us. We've been planning the next day, answering mail, and discussing things for about two hours. Now, Tommy, let's go through a typical procedure.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Well, I would probably say – Mrs. Roosevelt, the movie is over. Shall I call the usher?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, and ask him to bring his pad for the breakfast orders. And, now, Tommy, you'd better go home. You know we'll have to start early again tomorrow morning, and there are a number of things we must do before the daily routine begins.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Are you going to ride in the morning?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, if I'm not scheduled to go with any guests sightseeing, I won't know until tomorrow morning.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Oh, the State Department notified us that you won't be needed in the morning. All the guests are going together for the wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Very well, then. Tell the usher to order my car outside the door at 10:30, and the horses for 11.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Good night, Mrs. Roosevelt. I'll do it on my way out.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Now we'll skip to the next morning. I'm up at quarter to eight, exercises, a shower, into riding clothes, and at 8:30 in the West Hall for breakfast.

When Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir were here, I was joined at breakfast by the gentleman-in-waiting, General O'Connor, and the lady-in-waiting, Mrs. Pape, and the secretary, Mr. Redfern. And at the breakfast table we went over the details of the day very carefully to be sure that everything was properly scheduled and prepared.

When breakfast is about over, the head usher, Mr. Muir, appears with a list of engagements and that is sometimes such a long list! It also includes all the appointments of our guests and those of the President which take place anywhere outside of the Executive Offices.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (CONTINUED)

Then I telephone for Mrs. Nesbitt, the housekeeper, and she shows me the menus for the day. Mrs. Nesbitt knows our likes and dislikes pretty well by now and only rarely do I have to suggest that we have something special. Perhaps I may say: "Let's have artichokes. You know, Miss Hickok is very fond of them, and she will only be here today." Or, if we are having gentlemen guests for luncheon I will suggest that she add a salad to the menu as well as a dessert. Or, incidentally, "I didn't like the tea we had yesterday, are we out of our own Chinese tea?" This tea is given us by my husband's aunt, Mrs. Forbes, who has been getting it for many years from the same tea plantation in China which belonged to Mr. Hakow, a Chinese merchant and a friend of my husband's grandfather.

Our conversation isn't, of course, only about food. We may discuss the new curtains for the upstairs rooms and for the East Room, or the material for recovering the furniture in the Blue Room. Then I telephone for Mrs. Helm, the social secretary. On this particular day we were to have a state dinner in honor of Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir. Mrs. Helm brought me the big diagram on which the names of

the guests are stuck into little slits in the place that represents the one they are to occupy at the table. With the State Department, Mrs. Helm has already arranged most of the people who have to be seated according to rank. But we have to seat the ends of the table and plan how they will prefer to sit. Mrs. Helm has also a number of letters with her about social things, but in the midst of her questioning, Mrs. Scheider is back again on her job with my personal mail.

Good morning, Tommy. What's bothering you so early this morning?

MRS. SCHEIDER:

The newspaper girls want to know what you're going to wear tonight.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Oh, of course, but I haven't given any serious thought to that! I imagine my white brocade is my newest and best dress, so I'd better put that one on for this occasion.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Can you see any more people today?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Wait a minute and I'll look at my engagement book.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

I have a number of requests for appointments.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Let me look at my little black book. If this book were ever lost, I should be lost too. Now Tommy, if we can work in any more 15 minute appointments, I'll try to grant the most urgent of these requests.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Here is a woman who left her card and said she felt that you would see her. She is from Virginia and knew your father very well years ago.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Oh, I wish she had written me that she was coming. Then I could surely have seen her. I hate to have people come just on a chance, but I don't see how I can do it. Every minute seems to be filled for the next three days.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

How about tomorrow between 11:30 and 1? The lady said she can stay over.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

No, I have to go to the Folger Library at 12, so that cuts out the morning appointment time. Please explain to her how sorry I am. Now, Tommy, dear, I'll finish with Mrs. Helm and go through her letters and then you and I can sit down to our mail. After we get through I'm off for a ride but I'll be back at 12:30. We will have lunch promptly at one o'clock and then I have to receive that group from the New York school and then we'll have to write the column.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

And you have with the President ....

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, at 3:40, isn't it?

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Yes, the rest of the party goes to Mt. Vernon by boat.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

The President and I get there about 4:30. Then back for tea, dress for dinner and be sure that Mabel has my white brocade ready or I shall be late for the State dinner.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

This is ~~even~~ a busier day than usual.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, and the whole week is very full. Before we take up the letters which I have to dictate answers to, I must run in and ask the President a question.

(INSERT MIDDLE COMMERCIAL)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR:

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

At the Coronation – one of the most beautiful of the peeresses who will witness the ceremony in Westminster Abbey is the Marchioness of Cambridge. She is slim – chic – vivacious – one of the most vivid personalities in London’s social life. Her family connections are of the highest. She is frequently a guest in the Royal box at the opera. And of course, her invitations are immensely prized.

Although she has a small daughter of her own, Lady Cambridge has a skin that is the envy of every debutante. She is one of the many distinguished English women who choose Pond’s Cold Cream over all other beauty preparations to care for their skin. And this is what she herself says: “I have found that no other cream can equal Pond’s Cold Cream for keeping my skin clear, and smooth and free from faults.”

Wouldn’t you like to follow the exact method Lady Cambridge uses? Every night smooth on Pond’s Cold Cream to loosen and remove dirt and powder. Wipe it all off. Then pat on more Pond’s Cold Cream – to invigorate your skin through and through. Then wipe it all off once more. Do the same thing in the morning. And anytime you are making up during the day.....

Simple enough, isn’t it? But you’ll find it really does invigorate skin tissues. Your pores become finer. Your skin clearer and smoother. Start in tomorrow with a jar of Pond’s Cold Cream.

Now again we have the honor of hearing Mrs. Roosevelt.

(MRS. ROOSEVELT RESUMES)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Now, Tommy, let’s get at the letters. There were two especially I remember amongst those you left me last night.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

If you read all those letters, you didn’t get to bed very early.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

It was late, but I read them all after you went home. I marked on all the others how I wanted them answered, but these I want to dictate myself.

Now, this first one is an example of what damage hearsay can do.

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Oh, that one! It still amazes me, Mrs. Roosevelt, the strange letters you get.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

They are odd -- now this is what a lady has written me. She says:

“I am writing you regarding a statement that was made at a public meeting recently. It was stated that you are paid one hundred thousand dollars annually by the brewers to advocate that young people drink beer, and that women serve wine at their Sunday evening suppers.

“I feel that this statement is false, and would like a letter to read to the organization.”

MRS. SCHEIDER:

I can see how you would want to answer that one.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Oh, yes. Now, Tommy, you have the name and address there, and here’s the letter, All ready,

MRS. SCHEIDER:

Yes.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

“I can assure you that the statement you quote is entirely and wholly unfounded. No one has ever been able to find out where such stories originate, and when you’re in public life, you have to learn to accept such mis-statements philosophically. I have never urged anyone to drink, and have always preached temperance in all things.

“I appreciate very much your wanting to defend me, and while I can deny this story emphatically, I really feel there is little use in doing so. People who spread such stories are not inclined to listen to a denial or any defense. Very sincerely yours.”

MRS. SCHEIDER:

All right, now, have you that other letter?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, right here. Oh, I love this one. Did you read it?

MRS. SCHEIDER:

~~I couldn't believe my eyes.~~ Yes,<sup>6</sup> Since you've been in the White House you've received some great "~~nut~~" queer<sup>7</sup> letters, but I think this is the ~~nuttiest~~ queerest.<sup>8</sup>

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (LAUGHS)

We have had some funny ones, haven't we? Mary says she doubts this one's authenticity. But she says it was read at her club as a bona fide letter from me. Now here's the letter.

(OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

"Dear, dear \_\_\_\_\_:

"I do hope you can come to the Coronation in January."

Really, this is a remarkable letter!

"I can't tell you," it goes on, "how relieved I was when Frank landed on American soil. My crimson velvet with the ermine is all set for the big day.

"As you girls are all blondes, I am going to have beds put in the Blue Room for you, and of course, you'll have to help with the dishes. It will save getting extra help. And do stay for the egg rolling. Easter comes quite early this year, and it will not discommode me at all. Bring your purple velvet for the Coronation, and your white satin for the evening affairs.

"Frank will be delighted to see you, and will expect you to play all the old songs for him on the gold piano, as he has so much idle time, and needs to be amused!

"Cheerio, and I'll be seeing you. Ellie."

MRS. SCHEIDER:

I think I'd remember it if you ever dictated that letter to me.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think I'd remember it myself. Now, I want to send this letter to Mary to assure her that I haven't quite lost my mind.

"Dear Mary:

"I'm afraid the letter you sent me is made up entirely out of whole cloth. In the first place, I don't know the lady to whom it is alleged to have been written, and I never call my husband Frank, and in any case, my life from the early part of December until after the Inauguration was far too crowded for me to do any such chummy letter writing. (OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

"You can deny it if you wish, although I was very much amused.

Affectionately –  
E.R."

MRS. SCHEIDER:

I have a number of requests from people to see the kitchens.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I'm afraid you'll have to explain that it interrupts the work there to have visitors, and I thought everyone in the world had seen them!

MRS. SCHEIDER:

I thought so, too.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Now, I have several personal letters to dictate, but they can wait until later in the day.

(PAUSE)

As I said last week, I should like to tell all of you who are listening, how happy I would be to receive any suggestions or questions you may want to send me. However, I want to warn you all again that I cannot acknowledge your letters, and we honestly cannot assure you that all questions will be

answered in the ensuing broadcasts, but if you want to write, address your letters care of the station to which you're listening, and we will certainly try to do our best.

Next Wednesday evening, I am going to talk about "Educating A Daughter For the Twentieth Century." And now, Mrs. Scheider and I have to hurry home and arrange for another day in the White House. Good night.

(CLOSING)

CLOSING

BARR:

We will bring you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt again next Wednesday night at this same time. In her double role of mother and grandmother, Mrs. Roosevelt will tell us what she has come to believe about the education of a girl.

I hope you will join us next Wednesday, and that you will start right away to give your skin the benefit of the easy Pond's method. Remember to get a jar of Pond's Cold Cream tomorrow. This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company. Good night!

ANNOUNCER:

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

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Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>3</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>6</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>7</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.

<sup>8</sup> This is a handwritten interlineation.