

Washington Notes . . .

—By Lillian Porter Say

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 20. Crocuses are blooming on the White House lawns and tulip trees are turning pink at the entrance to the old State Treasury building where Andrew Jackson put down his cane and said: "This is where it will be."

But the real herald of spring is the Cherry Blossom festival which is scheduled from April 2 to April 7. Oregon's princess is dark-eyed Madeline Farah, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Farah of Portland. Twenty-two-year-old Madeline is currently a government secretary. Her background reads like that of a real princess. At the age of two Madeline and her family visited Europe. Her father, a department store owner in Portland, returned to his business, but Mrs. Farah, Madeline and her three brothers were caught up in the path of World War Two. They were detained in Beirut, Lebanon for 10 years. During this time Madeline attended a private American school where she learned French and some Arabic.

After the family returned to Portland, she was graduated from Franklin high school with top honors. Named "Girl of the Month" for highest average grades over a period of three years in a group of 1,100 girls, she received two French medals and was offered scholarships from the Universities of Oregon and Missouri. She attended the University of Oregon, and Portland State College where she was on the honor roll. After a year in the Portland business world, Madeline came to Washington to accept her present government secretaryship.

When we talked to her she said: "I'm so excited to be Oregon's Cherry Blossom princess that I can't think straight."

Further complicating her thinking was a waiting date!

Special Diadem Worn

When the wheel of fortune stops before one of the 52 princesses this year, the chosen one will be crowned queen with a \$10,000 diadem donated by Yoshitaka Mikimoto, the "Pearl King of Japan." A circlet of pearl-centered gold flowers with petal-shaped points formed by wired pearls will be fitted on her pretty head. True, after the festival is over she will return her crown to the Cherry Blossom committee as a permanent headpiece for future queens. But to compensate her for her loss, the Pearl King is sending along a pearl necklace for her very own.

Since the cherry blossom trees were a gift of Japan sent to the United States, Ambassador Masuyoshi Tamai is going to present Her Highness, the Cherry Blossom Queen, with a Japanese doll. About a foot tall the doll will be a beautifully dressed Japanese maiden replete with embroidered kimono, obi (sash) and sandals.

Mrs. Amos Fries, a former Medford lady living in Washington, has her own special memory of the cherry blossoms that rim the Tidal Basin at the foot of the Jefferson Memorial. The wife of Major General (ret.) Fries and her distinguished husband have been White House visitors over a long period of time. Mrs. Fries recalls Mrs. William Howard Taft and her disappointment when the first shipment of cherry trees from Japan were discovered to be covered with blight.

"At a reception at the executive mansion," said Mrs. Fries, "I

thought only of comforting the lady who is credited with having the idea of planting Japanese cherry blossoms in Washington." (At this time Mrs. Taft was not recovered from a paralytic stroke that had made speech almost impossible for her.)

"As I went down the receiving line in the White House," recalled Mrs. Fries, "I remarked to the First Lady that I was so sorry her plan was delayed by the condition of the trees. There was an almost eerie silence. . . then a voice that seemed to come from behind a velvet drape said: 'They will bloom again!'"

At that moment Mrs. Fries realized that Mrs. Taft, a proud woman, had a stand-in who spoke for her.

On St. Patrick's Day

General Fries, the distinguished chemical officer for the American Expeditionary Force under General Pershing, celebrated his 83rd birthday on St. Patrick's Day.

Celebration of the natal day of the Irish saint was unique in Washington this year. For the first time shamrocks were laid on the grave of one of Ireland's national heroes who is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He is the American, George Washington Parke Curtis, adopted son of the first President and father-in-law of General Robert E. Lee. In 1828, Curtis led the fight against the mounting persecution of Irish immigrants as Catholics and foreigners.

He and other leading citizens were outraged by the wave of bigotry that was particularly strong in and around Washington in the early 19th century. Curtis formed the Washington Benevolent Society to "express sympathy for the people of Ireland and an earnest desire and hope of a speedy amelioration of their condition." Until his death in 1857, he presided over St. Patrick's Day banquets. Not long before he died he wrote that he hoped that "years after my mortal body shall have been laid in the bosom of our common mother, some honest Irish heart may come, and, dropping a shamrock on my grave, cry 'God bless him!'"

A century has passed and the Virginia Irish just got around to the shamrocks this March 17th. Nobody knows why they delayed so long—any more than we know why the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis were so long neglected in the National Cemetery. When we visited them at the start of World War Two, they were in an unloved square a few steps from the Lee Mansion. Only during recent years have the graves been cared for and honored. In fact, many visitors to the Lee mansion are unaware that the Curtis' built it—that after the marriage of their daughter they moved into a smaller part of the mansion, leaving its more luxurious area to the Lees. In fact, so considerable were these in-laws that it is said that their quarters, consisting of a bedroom and sitting room, were actually sound-proofed by double walls the better to ensure the privacy of the celebrated Confederate and his family.

WILLAMINA (Special) — Mrs. Emma Kochis was hostess to the Pinechle Club at her home, when Mrs. Harriet Davis won high, Mrs. Lorraine Ashwell, consolation, and Mrs. Lila Ashwell and Mrs. Dorothy Houston, pinochle.

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