

February 20, 1976

POOL REPORT #8 - TRAVEL POOL DOVER HIGH SCHOOL TO PFC
STOREFRONT OFFICE TO RAMADA INN

Shortly after 11 o'clock we got over to the Ford Storefront Headquarters where the President worked the crowd for about three minutes. There were several hundred fairly enthusiastic people outside.

He then went inside where the Ford campaign people have one part of a building that is really an insurance, real estate and travel agency enterprise. There he met a 92-year-old woman, Miss Leonora Bates. She has been a Republican all her life, had seen just one of the Presidents of the United States, and that was Grover Cleveland. At 92 Miss Bates lives in her own home, does most of her housework. She follows the political campaigns with verve and is a staunch supporter of President Ford. Given 20 minutes notice that Ford was coming she put on a new hat and coat and came over to the headquarters to get a glimpse of the President, who introduced her to Mrs. Ford saying, "Look, Betty, here is somebody that is 92 years old."

He then went into the telephone center. It is a very small one. I hate to refer to it as a row of telephone banks because there weren't that many phones in the room -- seven. While there one of the Ford workers called Mrs. Katherine Peyser. She lives on Miller Avenue in Portsmouth. She was 90 years old today. She is the widow of, we believe he was a municipal judge -- we know he is not a Federal Judge -- Harry Peyser, and she was told that "the President of the United States would like to speak to you," and Ford got on the phone and said basically that he was glad that she is 90 years old, wishes her many more, and after he talked to her for a while -- and she was pretty talkative herself -- he tried to say, "Okay, well here is Betty." And then she kept talking and then he said, "Am I really Gerald?" and then he said yes, and there was much laughter. He said, "You sound pretty spry to me. Well we are all so happy to know you have had 90 very nice, wonderful years." Then he got off the phone and handed it to Mrs. Ford and the President just kind of turned to us and the people in general and said, "She sounds like a very vigorous, spry lady." Then Mrs. Ford spoke with her.

The President then started talking to his campaign workers, gave his usual pitch on the economy, referred to Hubert Humphrey's remarks yesterday, optimistic remarks about the economy, brought up the new CPI figures and said that "I know that we will not disappoint you. We will do a first class job for you and the country, and that is what it is all about."

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As they were about to leave a woman started complimenting Mrs. Ford for supporting the President so much. This woman's name is Linda Hendricks Fry. She is running for Governor in Maine -- she is running for the Republican nomination -- and when she told Mrs. Ford that Mrs. Ford said, "Right on."

The President then went out and worked the crowd again, this time for about five minutes.

Over at the headquarters as Ford walked out he was talking to an old fellow named Lew Titus, who had several times invited the President to come up to play golf with him to the extent the President finally suggested that Lew must be a hustler. On his way out Lew intercepted Mrs. Ford and told her, "You are keeping your husband dressed real nice. He looks very good today."

From there he went down to the Ramada Inn where this luncheon is being held. Henry Cabot Lodge was outside to meet the President before they went into the room. It is just a standard motel and they went directly into the room and not through a lobby or anything. The people attending the lunch, in addition to the President and Henry Cabot Lodge, were former Governor Walter Peterson, Stu Spencer, Rogers Morton, Representative Jim Cleveland, who is the campaign manager in the State, and John Michels, who is the campaign director -- whatever the distinction is -- and Jack Marsh.

Nessen didn't know if Lodge is supporting Ford but I assume they are bringing him out for a news conference, that he probably is, but we don't know that for a fact. The TV people and radio people should know we have no footage inside the storefront headquarters. None of the stuff -- Ford talking to this woman who had the birthday -- because of space limitations only the writing pool was allowed inside. So all you have is working the crowd shots and motorcade footage.

JOHN COCHRAN, NBC

RUDY ABRAMSON, L.A. TIMES

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