

MARCH 13, 1976

POOL REPORT #14

TRAVEL POOL FROM GUILFORD COLLEGE TO
HANES MALL AND WILKESBORO HIGH SCHOOL

The President first met at a reception for local business and civic leaders, about 25 to 40 persons were present. Your pool was not allowed inside but observed nothing unusual and the WHCA engineer described the conversation as routine chit chat. After staying no more than 15 minutes, the President walked down a secure corridor autographing a few pictures and then entered the President Ford Committee reception. Between 80 and 125 people were present. He shook hands in the crowd and pool overheard him greeting someone who played with him at the East-West All Star football game in San Francisco many years ago. The President then went to his microphone and delivered his routine campaign pep talk with no new twists. He then bade them farewell and exited the building shaking hands with another 75 persons or so before boarding his helicopter for uneventful flight to Winston-Salem.

After short motorcade to a shopping mall the President worked very large and enthusiastic crowds who at times in their enthusiasm would not let go of his wrist and at least one occasion, pulled him slightly off balance. He then entered a very large, modern interior shopping mall at Winston-Salem at which local officials placed crowd estimates at 15,000 persons and your pool would guess that the 10 to 15 thousand range was accurate. The President made reference to the inspiration he drew from such a large crowd and again delivered his routine stump speech. He then exited shaking more hands inside and outside before entering his limousine to go to his helicopter for the flight to Wilkesboro High School.

Perhaps a 1000 more persons were at the helicopter site where the President waved goodbye but did not mingle in the crowd. Upon landing at Wilkesboro, he was presented with what appeared to be a replica of a Revolutionary War single bore, flintlock rifle. The President asked will it work for a left-hander?, and thanked the donor who was bearded and wearing fake buckskins and a motheaten coonskin cap. The President then uneventfully worked a large and enthusiastic crowd at Wilkesboro high school and the only incident of note there was an old man slipping through the lines to take a picture of the President. An agent got to him in advance of the President's arrival and rushed him off. The President was then taken to the Wilkesboro high school.

NOTE: Governor Holshouser was asked how he thought the Bo Callaway incident would affect the President's chances in the North Carolina primary. He said he thinks that the President handled the matter properly, and because Mr. Ford is very popular in North Carolina the incident should have no effects on the primary election.

Walt Rodgers, AP Radio

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