

MAY 15, 1976

POOL REPORT #14

Marine One touched down at 5:15 p.m. at Tulip City Airport in Holland, a city of 29,000, heavily populated by Dutch where a Tulip Festival Parade is held each year at this time. The weather was warm, windy and wet.

The President and Mrs. Ford stood in the Presidential limo waving at clusters of people at the airport and along a portion of the road to the airport. During the three mile long parade, the President sat most of the time on the roof of the car waving at the crowds. Mrs. Ford stood up waving and near the end of the route she joined the President sitting on the roof. Susan Ford also joined her parents on the roof for the last segment. Susan carried a big bundle of tulips with her. Throughout the entire parade route Rep. Guy Vanderjagt was with the Fords.

A crowd estimated at 250,000 by Roger Stroh, Tulip Festival Parade Coordinator, cheered the Fords. The parade route was extended from the original 2.3 miles to 3 miles to accommodate the crowds, according to Stroh.

Unusual about the crowd was the way people were permitted to line roof tops and watch the President from windows. Spectators were literally hanging out the windows in a seven story hotel, Warm Friend Motor Inn.

It had been raining most of the day and the crowd was soaked by the time the President got there. About the time the President arrived for the Parade the rain stopped. Just about the time the Parade ended and he headed back to the airport the rain began again.

Along the Parade route several children held up signs that were obviously hand-painted by themselves. One said for example "I Love You President Ford." Another "Welcome Home Mr. President."

Marine One left Tulip City Airport 6:45 p.m. en route for Grand Rapids.

Richard Ryan/Detroit News
Remer Tyson/Detroit Free Press

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