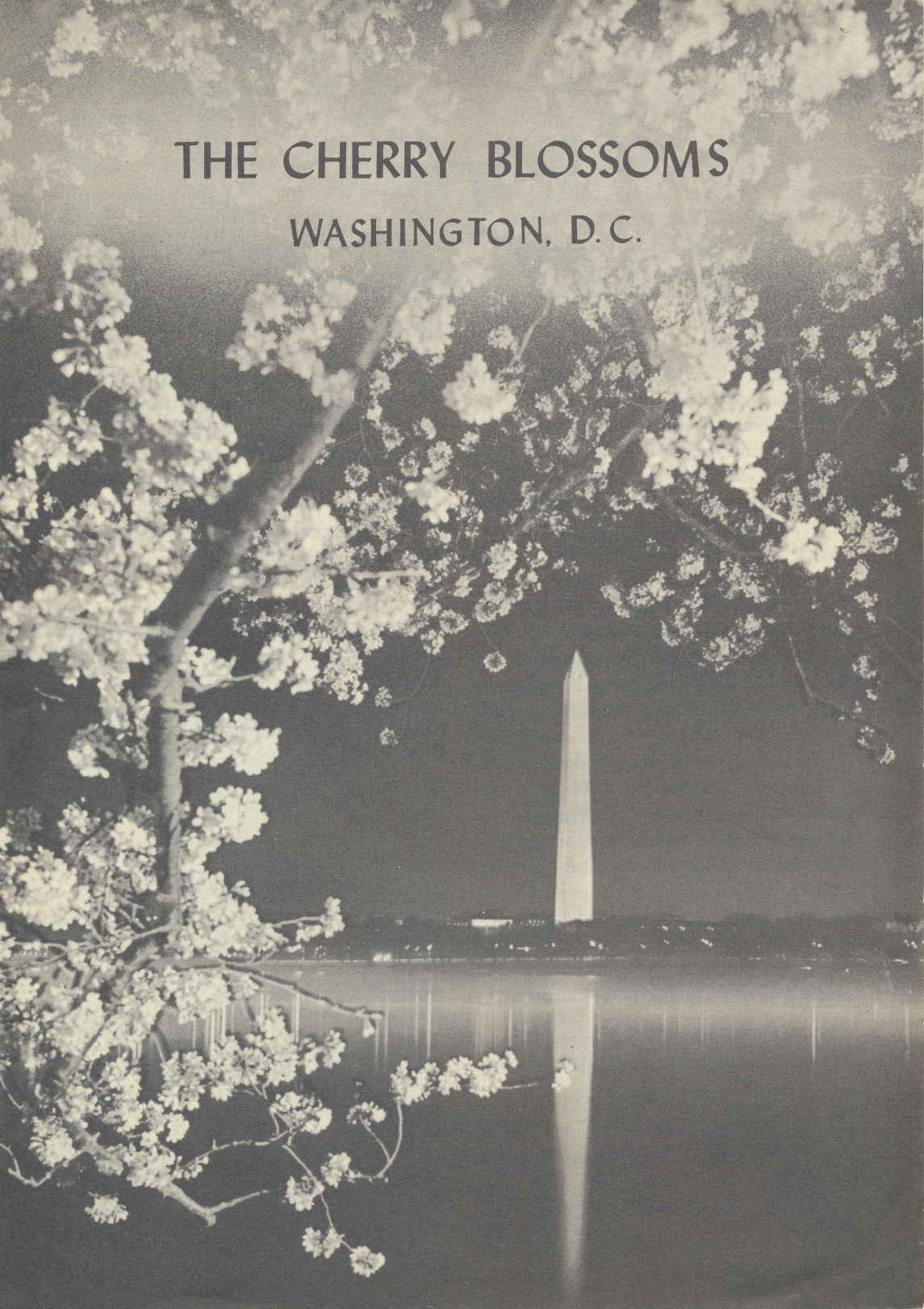


# THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS

WASHINGTON, D.C.



# The CHERRY BLOSSOMS

THE BLOOMING of the famous Japanese cherry blossoms marks the beginning of spring in our Nation's Capital. Each year at this time hundreds of thousands of people visit Washington to enjoy the beauty of these blossoms. The most popular display may be seen in the massed planting of cherry trees that encircle the beautiful Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park. In this picturesque setting the blossom-laden trees produce the effect of white and pink clouds, banked around the basin. Another favorite display of cherry blossoms may be seen in the 2-mile roadside planting of cherry trees in East Potomac Park. These plantings were established from a gift of cherry trees presented in 1912 by Yukio Ozaki, Mayor of Tokyo, on behalf of that city to the City of Washington as a gesture of friendship. The blooming of these trees each spring is like a recurring gift, which becomes appreciated more and more each year.

## *History of the Cherry Trees*

About a month after William Howard Taft became President of the United States

on March 4, 1909, Mrs. Taft became interested in planting Japanese cherry trees in the Capital in Potomac Park. Dr. Jokichi Takamine, the Japanese chemist, famous as the discoverer of adrenalin, was visiting in Washington at that time and learned of Mrs. Taft's interest in planting these trees. He was instrumental in having the City of Tokyo make the gift of cherry trees.

The cherry trees were raised at the Okitsu Imperial Horticultural Experiment Station at Shizoukan, Japan, under the supervision of Professor Inokichi Kuwana, Director of the Yokohama Imperial Plant Quarantine Station, assisted by Dr. Manabu Miyoshi, the famous Japanese authority on Japanese cherry trees. The scions for these trees were taken in December 1910 from the famous collection of cherry trees on the bank of the Arakawa River in the Adachi Ward, a suburb of Tokyo, and grafted on wild cherry root stock. These grafted trees were lifted for shipment in December 1911.

The gift of 3,000 cherry trees of 12 varieties was shipped from Yokohama on board the S. S. *Awa Maru* on February 14, 1912.

The National Park System, of which the National Capital Parks are a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

After the cherry trees arrived in Seattle, they were transferred to insulated freight cars and sent across the continent to Washington, arriving on March 25.

### *Planting the Cherry Trees*

On March 27, 1912, in a simple ceremony attended by a small group of spectators, Mrs. Taft planted the first cherry tree from the gift consignment, and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador, planted the second tree. The trees were of the Yoshino kind and were planted on the northern bank of the Tidal Basin, about 125 feet south of what is now known as Independence Avenue. At the conclusion of the tree-planting ceremony, Mrs. Taft presented a bouquet of American beauty roses to Viscountess Chinda. Bronze-inscribed markers were placed at the bases of the two cherry trees planted by our First Lady and the wife of the Japanese Ambassador.

As the official tree-planting party departed, workmen continued the planting of Yoshino trees around the Tidal Basin. The cherry trees of the other 11 varieties and the remaining Yoshino trees were planted in East Potomac Park.

### *Cherry Tree Varieties Received From City of Tokyo, 1912*

<i>Variety</i>	<i>Number of Trees</i>	<i>Description of Blossoms</i>
Ariake . . . . .	100	Single, white
Fugenzo . . . . .	120	Double, light pink
Fuku-rokuju . . . . .	50	Double, deep pink
Gyoiko . . . . .	20	Double, greenish yellow
Ichiyo . . . . .	160	Double, light pink
Jo-nioi . . . . .	80	Single, white
Kwanzan . . . . .	350	Double, deep pink
Mikuruma-gayeshi . . . . .	100	Single to double, light pink
Taki-nioi . . . . .	140	Single, white
Shirayuki . . . . .	130	Single, white
Suragadai-nioi . . . . .	50	Single, white
Yoshino . . . . .	1,800	Single, white

### *Cherry Trees Around the Tidal Basin*

At the present time approximately 600 cherry trees are maintained around the Tidal Basin; 90 percent of these are Yoshino and 10 percent Akebono, which has single, pale-pink blossoms. The Yoshino, one of the favorite cultivated cherry trees of Japan, was developed there about 1870. The beauty of this cherry tree is in its great profusion of white, single blossoms. The Akebono is a

*Japanese cherry blossoms and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial*





### *Cherry Blossom Festival*

seedling sport selection of Yoshino, developed by a nursery in this country in 1920. It has deep-pink buds, which open into delicate pale-pink, single blossoms, whereas the Yoshino has light-pink buds which open into white, single blossoms. The Yoshino and Akebono varieties bloom at the same time and are among the earliest of the cherries to bloom in the spring. The Akebono blossoms provide an attractive tint of pink to the dominant white Yoshino blossoms around the Tidal Basin. These cherry trees provide a beautiful setting for the stately Thomas Jefferson Memorial, located on the south side of the Tidal Basin.

In the past, artists frequently have shown the Yoshino blossoms around the Tidal Basin as pink, while actually they are white. The recent limited interplanting of the Akebono variety among the Yoshino trees in this planting now provides some reality to the pink color often shown for these blossoms.

### *The Cherry Blossom Festival*

The first commemoration of the original planting of Japanese cherry trees on the Tidal Basin took place in 1927, when this event

was reenacted by Washington school children. In 1934, a 3-day celebration centering around the flowering oriental trees was sponsored by the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners. By the next year many civic groups had joined forces to carry on the celebration, now known as the Cherry Blossom Festival.

Interrupted only by the war years, the annual festival has grown steadily in scope and popularity. In 1940 a pageant was introduced. In 1948 Cherry Blossom Princesses were selected from every State in the Union and the Territories, and from these princesses a Queen was chosen by the wheel of fortune to reign during the festival. Now featuring many outstanding attractions, the Cherry Blossom Festival is officially opened by the lighting of a 300-year-old ceremonial Japanese lantern, which the City of Tokyo gave to the City of Washington in 1954, as a token of friendship.

### *Cherry Trees in East Potomac Park*

East Potomac Park is developed on a peninsula that extends 2 miles downstream into the Potomac River, southeast of the Tidal

Basin. It is one of Washington's most beautiful and popular parks. Cherry trees are prominently featured in its landscaping. The varieties now planted here are as follows: Kwanzan, Taki-nioi, Higan, Beni-Higan, Jugatsu-sakura, and Yoshino. Some of the varieties of the original trees received from Japan were destroyed by Potomac River floods.

The Kwanzan is the most popular and extensively planted cherry variety in East Potomac Park. It produces heavy clusters of deep-pink double blossoms, and is among the latest of the Japanese cherry tree varieties to bloom. The deep-pink color of these Kwanzan blossoms creates a very colorful effect in the massed plantings of this variety in East Potomac Park.

*The Japanese lantern*



### *Time of Blooming*

The time of blooming of the cherry trees varies from year to year, depending on weather conditions. It is impossible to make an accurate prediction on the blooming date of the cherry trees, earlier than 10 days prior to their bursting into full bloom. Since 1924, the Yoshino has twice come into full bloom as early as March 20, and once as late as April 17. The average date for the Yoshino to come into full bloom has been April 5. Twice since 1924 the Kwanzan has burst into bloom as early as April 14 and twice as late as May 1. The average date for the Kwanzan to come into full bloom has been April 22.

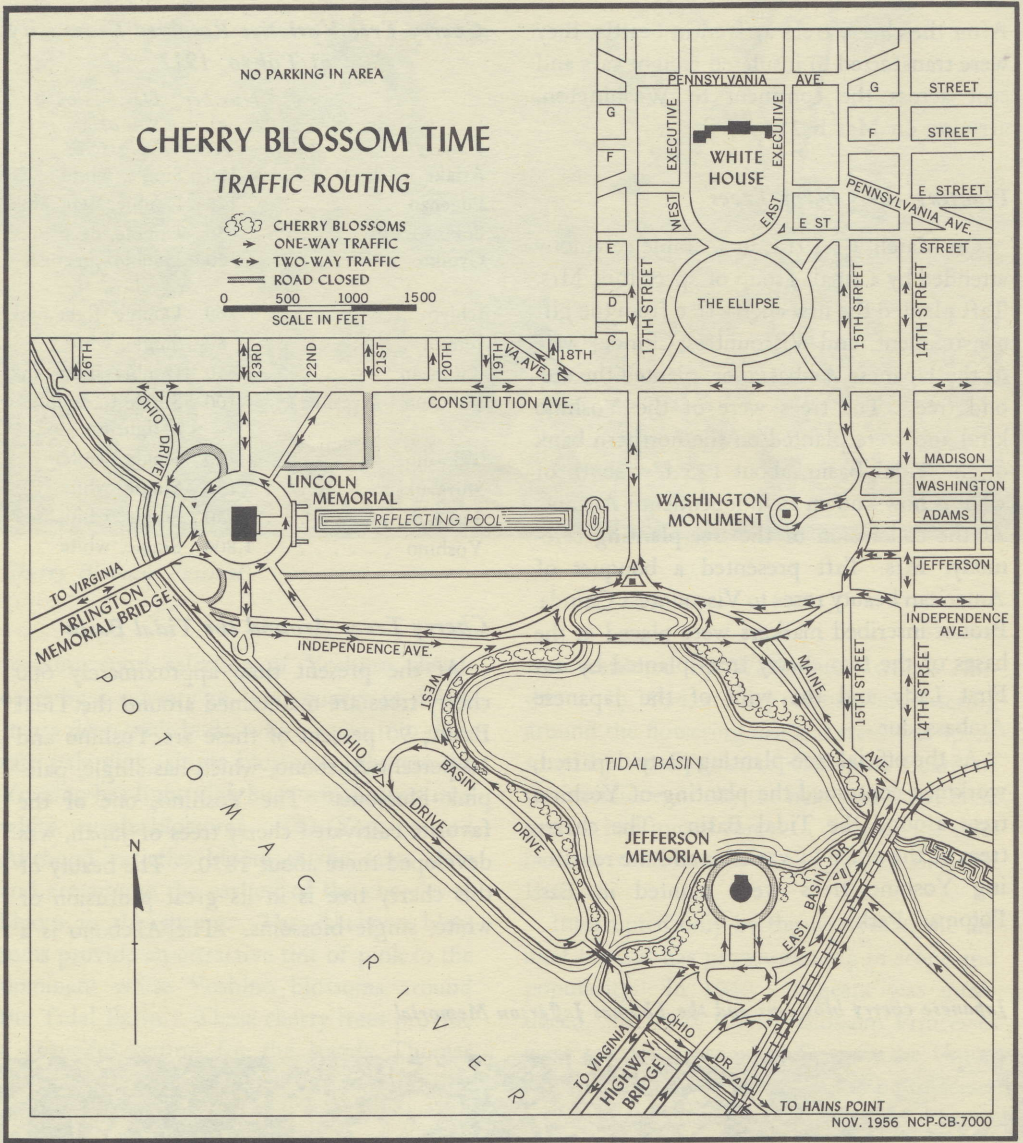
The cherry blossoms are short-lived, the petals beginning to fall at the end of the first week. By the end of the second week they have mostly fallen.

### *Cherry Tree Cuttings Sent to Japan*

In the 1940's Japan's noted plantings of cherry trees on the bank of the Arakawa River deteriorated greatly from lack of care during the war. Trees in this collection provided the parent stock of the cherry trees which the City of Tokyo generously presented to the City of Washington in 1912. In 1952, the Japanese Government requested cuttings from their gift of cherry trees. The cuttings were needed to restore the cherry tree plantings of the Adachi Ward. The National Capital Parks gladly sent these cuttings to Japan as a token of appreciation for the generous gift of cherry trees which the City of Washington received from the City of Tokyo in 1912.

### *Administration*

The National Capital Parks, which has the cherry trees under its care, is administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. Inquiries concerning these trees should be directed to the Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Interior Building, Washington 25, D. C.



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NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS

