

# Washington D.C. celebrates spring and friendship with Annual Cherry Blossom Festival

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Copy Editor

A couple of PSH students had a chance to ring in spring by participating in one of the nation's time-honored rites of season change, the Washington, D.C. Cherry Blossom Festival. Students took a bus trip down to the festival and parade on Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.

The annual festival has its roots, quite literally, in a goodwill gesture between First Lady Helen Taft and Viscountess Chinda, the wife of the Japanese ambassador to the United States. Each of them planted a Japanese cherry tree on the bank of the Potomac Tidal Basin in the spring of 1912. From there, well, they blossomed, and have become one of spring's most breathtaking sights.

The festival itself officially came into bloom in 1934, and aside from the years of World War II, has been an American tradition ever since. This year it ran from March 22<sup>nd</sup> through April 7<sup>th</sup>. Events were aimed at appreciation of Japanese culture. These included a showcase of Origami and a walk to honor the sacrifices of Japanese-American citizens during World War II.

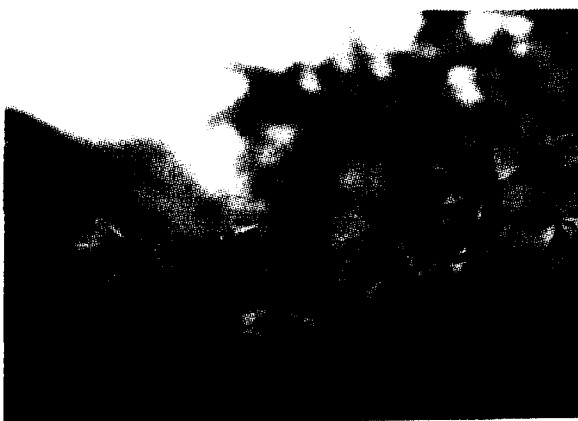
The crowning event of the festival was the parade, which ran right down Constitution Avenue near the Capitol. It featured college and high school bands from around the country, dancers and other multicultural groups, and marching bands and contingents from the U.S. armed services. There were also large balloons of characters such as everyone's favorite war hero, Beetle Bailey.

The parade was a fun-filled, family-friendly, protester-free event. The real stars of the show, the cherry trees, were beautifully dressed for the occasion and provided the perfect backdrop for the event that honors them.



The Washington Monument provides a patriotic backdrop for the Friendly and festive cherry blossoms.

All photos by Stacy De Angelo



Above: An up close and personal look at the delicate blossoms which were a goodwill gesture between First Lady Taft and Viscountess Chinda, the wife of the Japanese ambassador to the United States.

Right: Cherry blossom trees line the streets and walkways of D.C.'s parks and monuments. The cherry blossoms have been a staple in the D.C. landscape and inspired the first Cherry Blossom festival in 1934.

