

Mrs. Jones Entertains For Bertita Harding

Several Members of Society Meet Noted
Writer and Lecturer at Cocktail Time

By Hope Ridings Miller

In town for a brief stay—far too brief to suit most of us—Bertita Harding, lecturer, novelist and Hapsburg biographer, was an attractive center of attention yesterday afternoon when Mrs. Jesse Jones gathered in a few friends to meet her at cocktail time.



BERTITA HARDING

Author of "The Phantom Crown," the book which was a basis for the motion picture, "Juarez," Mrs. Harding discovered back in the days when she was doing research about Maximilian and Carlotta that one story leads to another—if you give it half a chance. That first book paved the way for two others, "Golden Fleece" and "Amazon Throne," and was indirectly responsible for her extended sojourn last year in Brazil—"the glamour country of South America," as she puts it.

Small, bland and dynamic, Mrs. Harding talks in clipped accents, showing a faint trace of her Viennese-Hungarian ancestry. Her wide range of interests and extensive store of information on a variety of subjects point to a cosmopolitan background, and her facility of expression indicates she has had extensive experience in talking before audiences. Born in Nuremberg, Bavaria, she grew up in this country and in Mexico; is an American citizen; now has a home in Mexico City, and has lectured all over the United States. She was on a talking tour several years ago, when she met Mrs. Jones in Houston, and the two have been friends ever since. In that same Texas city she first knew Oveta Culp Hobby (Mrs. Will P. Hobby), wife of the former Governor of Texas, who now has a job in Washington and was among guests at yesterday's tea. Also among

those present was Mme. Martins, wife of the Brazilian Ambassador, who had quite a long chat with Mrs. Harding about their mutual friends in Rio de Janeiro.

Marriage Inspired Change of Career

If Bertita Harding had never married, she might be a famous musician today. She was educated for that field of art, but decided to give it up when she found it threatened to close other interests out of her life. The wife of Jack Ellison de Harding (himself an author), she discovered that writing could be done at odd times; abandoned entirely for lengthy stretches, and then resumed again at top speed when inspiration dictated. Yet she has also found that there is no royal road to success in writing; no short cut, and no magic key to fame.

"Time and again, budding authors have asked me for my 'writing formula,'" she said. "Seems to me that's mainly a matter of having something to say. If you've got that, nothing in the world can keep you from putting it down. Writing becomes an obsession, a magnificent obsession. A formula for authorship, then, is something like the old French recipe for rabbit ragout, which says, at the very beginning: 'First, catch your rabbit!'"

Arriving in Washington a couple of days ago, Mrs. Harding has been staying at the Mayflower. She will be off to New York to join her husband today, and then she will go on to Boston for a lecture. Later, her schedule will take

her Westward and eventually she will wind up in Hollywood. Sometime in the spring she hopes to get back to Washington.

Mrs. Wilson Among Guests

These bits I gathered at yesterday's get-together while one guest after another crowded around Mrs. Harding to chat with her. Receiving informally in her Shoreham apartment, Mrs. Jones wore a floor-length black crepe frock, fashioned with a white yoke of embroidery and lace and matching cuffs. Mrs. Harding's black frock was brightened with an antique Mexican silver neckklace, set with turquoise, and a matching bracelet. Her tall-crowned black hat dipped on one side swept jaintily upward on the other and was circled with a narrow red band to match the feather in the back.



HARDING Bertita

Mrs. Woodrow Wilson and Mrs. Bernard B. Jones were among those dropping in to meet Mrs. Harding. Lady Lewis was in the small company, as were Mrs. Will Clayton, Mrs. J. Donald Halstead and Mrs. Gilbert M. Hitchcock. Mrs. A. S. Monroney, who always looks like a fashion plate, came in, wearing with her black frock and sable scarf one of the trickiest black tasseled turbans I've ever seen. Mrs. Ralph I. Straus, whose husband is with the National Defence Council, was there; also Mrs. J. Goodwin Locke and several others.