



The South Lawn of the White House is filled with visitors, awaiting the appearance of the President who will soon greet a distinguished foreign visitor. Suddenly the murmur of the crowd is broken by the sound of trumpets playing "Ruffles and Flourishes." A hush descends upon the throng . . . and then the familiar—but always exciting—"Hail to the Chief."

The crowd applauds as the President ascends the platform from which he will make welcoming remarks. The distinguished visiting chief of state arrives and national anthems are played . . . statements are made by the President and his guest . . . soon the event is completed and the President and his guest walk a few steps from the South Lawn to the entrance of the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House. The residence of the President of the United States stands in dignity and silence. But somehow the sense of drama and excitement and history remain, for this is no ordinary house—it is a place where past and present events continually mingle.

What is this house like? What is its history? Let us go back to the beginning, to the first moment of the great dream for a house that would be the home of the President . . . and of the people . . .

Early History. The cornerstone of the White House was laid October 13, 1792, on a site selected by President George Washington. Plans for the house were drawn by Irish-born architect James Hoban, who also superintended its construction. (Hoban also supervised the reconstruction of the house after it was burned by the British in 1814, and the erection of the north and south porticos some years later.) The exterior sandstone walls were painted during the course of construction, causing the building to be termed the "White House" from an early date. For many years, however, people generally referred to it as the "President's House" or the "President's Palace."

The White House was first occupied by President and Mrs. John Adams in November 1800. At that time, most

of the building's interior had not yet been completed, and Mrs. Adams used the unfinished East Room to dry the family wash. During Thomas Jefferson's administration, the east and west terraces were constructed. Jefferson also opened the house each morning to all visitors—an extension of the democratic simplicity he favored and practiced in his social life.

When James Madison became President in 1809, his wife, the famous Dolley Madison, introduced some of the brilliance and glitter of Old World courts into the social life of the White House. Then, on August 24, 1814, British forces captured Washington and burned the house in retaliation for the destruction by American troops of some public buildings in Canada. Although only the partially damaged sandstone walls and interior brickwork remained when reconstruction of the building began in 1815, the White House was ready for occupancy by President James Monroe in September 1817. The south portico, the dominant architectural feature of that side of the house, was built in 1824; the large north portico over the entrance and the driveway, in 1829.

Improvements, 1834-1948. Throughout its history, the White House has kept pace with modern improvements. Spring water was piped into the building in 1834, gas lighting was introduced in 1848, and a hot-water heating system was installed in 1853. During Andrew Johnson's administration, the east terrace was removed entirely. In 1881 the first elevator was installed, and in 1891, during Benjamin Harrison's administration, the house was wired for electricity.

When Theodore Roosevelt moved into the White House in 1901, its interior was a conglomeration of styles and periods, and the house itself needed extensive structural repairs. Congress appropriated money to repair and refurbish the house and to construct new offices for the President. Work began in June 1902 and by the end of the year the job was virtually completed.

Several important changes were made between 1903 and 1948. The west wing offices were enlarged in 1909, several guestrooms were made in the attic during Woodrow Wilson's presidency, and the roof and third story were remodeled in 1927. A few years later, a modern electric kitchen was installed, and a basement was dug under the north portico to provide space for maintenance shops and storage. During World War II, the east wing and an air-raid shelter were constructed and a motion-picture theater

was installed in the east terrace. In 1948 a balcony was completed off the second floor behind the columns of the south portico.

Renovation, 1948-52. Over the years, piecemeal alterations had weakened many of the building's old wooden beams and interior walls. But not until a thorough examination of the structure was made in 1948 was the really alarming condition of the house revealed. To allow a survey to be made, President Harry S. Truman moved across the street into historic Blair-Lee House, now known as The President's Guest House. Late in 1948, all furnishings were removed from the White House and placed in storage.

Inspection revealed that beams were inadequately supported, heavy ceilings had dropped several inches, and even the foundations were too weak to support the walls erected on them. Renovation began in December 1949 and by late 1950 the most critical phase of the work had been accomplished. The old sandstone walls were retained and supported by concrete foundations, and the wooden beams and brick supporting walls of the interior were replaced by a modern steel framework. Concrete floors were then laid and partition walls erected. In March 1952, the Presidential family resumed residence in the White House.

During the renovation, efforts were made to retain or restore the original atmosphere, while providing a more livable home for the President and his family. In all, the White House now has 132 rooms, including the 54 rooms and 16 baths in that part of the house used as living quarters.

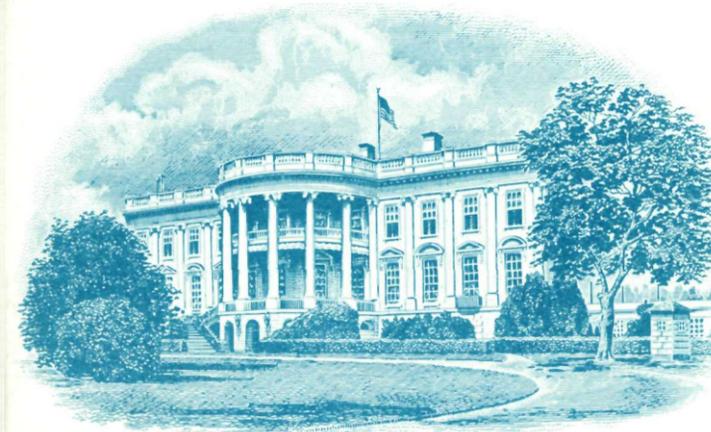
This, then, is the White House. It has seen many historic events and personages. President Nixon and his family invite you to see this great home and experience at first hand its unique warmth and dignity.

About Your Visit. The White House is open to visitors from 10 a.m. to noon, Tuesday through Saturday; in summer, the Saturday hours are extended to 2 p.m. The house is closed Sunday and Monday, and some holidays.

More detailed information about the White House may be found in "The White House, An Historic Guide," "The Living White House," and "The Presidents," published by the White House Historical Association, 5026 Federal Office Building No. 7, Washington, DC 20506.

Office of White House Visitors in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service

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The White House

History can tell us very much about this residence that has seen so many great and memorable moments. Yet the White House is more than an object of historical interest. It is the residence of the President of the United States. Here the President and his family entertain guests; here great meetings that decide national and international policy are held; and here the President's staff works to help him perform his many duties. It is, above all, the home of the President . . . a place to live in and enjoy . . . and work. It is a house of many scenes today . . .

The President and Mrs. Nixon descend the Grand Staircase . . . with them are a head of state and his wife . . . they enter the splendor of the State Dining Room . . . and greet the guests who are attending this state dinner.

On another occasion, visitors file into the Blue Room, and the President and Mrs. Nixon greet each one, shaking hands, welcoming each guest to this wonderful home . . .

Mrs. Nixon and her guests have tea in the simple and dignified atmosphere of the White House Library . . .

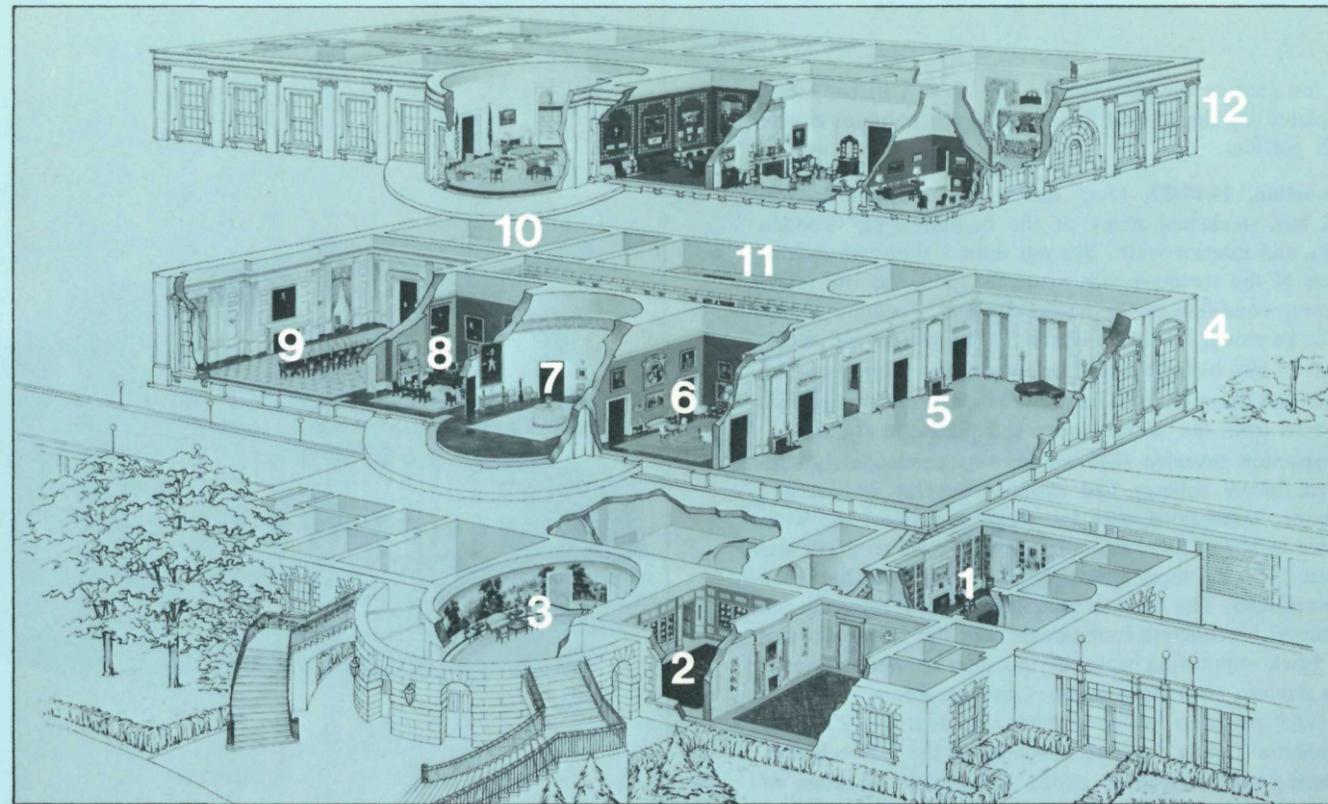
In the East Room, the largest room of the White House, President Nixon answers questions during a Presidential news conference . . . three hundred reporters and photographers from around the world are here; the hot lights used for the television cameras illuminate the great room . . . and, as a question is asked and answered, one is reminded that history is being made . . . for in back of the 37th President of the United States hangs a full-length portrait of George Washington who never lived here, but whose example and whose memory form such a part of the spirit of the house.

Here, then, are the rooms of the White House—rooms of history. Beginning on the ground floor there are:

1 The Library. More than 2,700 volumes are on shelves on every wall, from floor to ceiling, dealing with important aspects of American life: biography, history, fiction, literary criticism, presidential papers, and books on the sciences and the humanities.

The Library was recently decorated and refurnished in the classical style. In the center of the room above a large, three-legged octagonal table is a wood and crystal chandelier—one of the two wood chandeliers in the White House. This chandelier was once owned by the family of James Fenimore Cooper.

2 The China Room. This room was first used for the display of china in 1917 by Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, and at that time was called the "Presidential Collection Room." The room is lined with shelves on every side from floor to ceiling. Behind glass on these shelves are pieces from the



china settings used by all our past Presidents. The only piece of furniture in the China Room is a large red velvet ottoman in the center of the room.

The walls of the China Room, like those in the Library, are paneled in wood from the White House's original wood timbers which were replaced with steel girders during the 1948-52 renovation.

3 The Diplomatic Reception Room. This oval-shaped room is furnished as a stately parlor of the late 18th or early 19th century. Its oval rug contains the seals of the 50 States. The door at the end of the room opens on to the South Lawn. It was from this room that President Franklin Roosevelt made his historic fireside chats. The room is now used as an entrance to the residence by the President, his family, and his guests.

The wallpaper in this room is very unusual. It portrays several views of American natural wonders and historic places: Niagara Falls, Boston Harbor, West Point, and New York Bay. It was printed in Europe in 1834. In recent years it was removed from an old house in Maryland and placed here, piece by piece, as if it were a giant jigsaw puzzle.

4 The First Floor. Furnishings and decorations are predominantly of late 18th- and early 19th-century style. Furnishings of historic interest can be seen as well as many historically appropriate new additions donated by public-spirited citizens. Portraits of several Presidents hang from the walls of the lobby, main corridor, and first-floor rooms.

5 The East Room. This room is used for state receptions and balls; it is the largest room in the White House. It has been the scene of several famous weddings, including those of Nellie Grant, Alice Roosevelt, and Lynda Bird Johnson. Funeral services were held here for Presidents William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Abraham Lincoln, Warren G. Harding, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The bodies of Presidents William McKinley and John F. Kennedy lay in repose here.

The East Room is decorated in white and gold. Window draperies are gold and white silk damask. White enameled wood paneling covers the walls, in which are set six low-relief panels. The large crystal chandeliers, dating from 1902, hang from an elaborately decorated ceiling. The floor is oak parquetry. On the mantels, painted to resemble

white marble, are gilt candelabras of the Monroe period. The Steinway concert piano, decorated with folk dancing scenes and eagle supports, was placed in the room in 1938.

On the east wall is the most notable portrait in the White House—the Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington. It is the one Dolley Madison saved when the British burned the house in 1814. A portrait of Martha Washington also hangs on the east wall.

6 The Green Room. This room, used for formal receptions, has been restored as a Federal parlor of the 1800 period. The furniture is of American design, based on English styles fashionable at the time. The walls are covered with watered moss-green silk, with curtains of the same material edged with silver and green tassels. Paintings by American artists adorn the walls. On the darkly stained oak floor is a late 18th-century Axminster rug. The white marble mantel was imported from Italy in 1819. The Hannibal clock and gilt vases on the mantel were purchased in France during President Monroe's administration. The crystal chandelier was acquired during the Hoover administration.

7 The Blue Room. Famous for its elliptical shape, the Blue Room is usually considered the most beautiful room in the White House, and is often used by the President to receive guests at state dinners and receptions. The walls are covered with striped silk in two shades of cream. Below the cornice, a draped valance of blue trimmed with a tasseled border of purple encircles the room. The curtain and window valances are of the same material and design. Portraits of the first seven Presidents hang on the walls.

The Blue Room is furnished to represent the period of President Monroe. On the white marble mantel, which dates from 1902, are a Minerva clock and gilt candlesticks purchased in France in 1817. The Monroe pier table was restored and placed in its original position in the room. On it is a bust of George Washington acquired by Monroe. Four of Monroe's gilt sidechairs and 10 reproductions stand along the walls. Material similar to the valances covers the chairs. The chair backs are embroidered with American eagles. Four bronze griffin-headed wall sconces, two large torches, and a chandelier of the Empire period were acquired for the room.

The only wedding of a President to take place in the White House occurred in this room on June 2, 1886, when Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom.

8 The Red Room. Used for small receptions, this room has long been a favorite of First Ladies. It is decorated as an American Empire parlor. The walls are covered by magenta-red silk with a gold scroll border. Draperies and upholstery are in matching fabric. On the marble mantel, a duplicate of the Green Room mantel, is a musical clock,

presented in 1952 by the President of France.

Rutherford B. Hayes took his oath of office here on March 3, 1877.

9 The State Dining Room. Exceeded in size only by the East Room, the State Dining Room can comfortably accommodate 140 guests at large dinners or luncheons. English oak paneling extends from floor to ceiling. Originally installed in 1902, the paneling was painted off-white in 1961 to provide an effective background for the gold silk damask window draperies. A gilded chandelier, dating from 1902, hangs from the elaborately decorated stucco ceiling. A portrait of President Abraham Lincoln, by G. P. A. Healy, is on the wall above the mantel. The mantel itself is a copy of the one originally installed during Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Inscribed on the mantel are the words of John Adams: "I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

10 The Family Dining Room (not visible on plan). This room, with its vaulted ceiling, white-enameled wainscoting and walls paneled in plaster, was refurnished in 1961 as an early 19th-century American dining room. The pantry is connected with the ground-floor kitchen by a servant's elevator, dumbwaiters, and a staircase.

11 Lobby and Main Corridor (not visible on plan). Six classic columns separate the lobby from the main corridor. The columns and the pilasters, spaced along the walls, are of varicolored Vermont marble; floors are of gray and pink Tennessee marble. The entrance to the main stairway was formerly from the corridor. It was changed in 1952 to the east side of the lobby. Seals of the Thirteen Original States are carved on the marble-faced opening of the stairway.

12 The Second and Third Floors (third floor not shown on plan). These floors are reserved for the Presidential family and guests. The Lincoln Bedroom, with its massive 8-foot bed purchased during the Civil War period, is restored in Victorian style. Adjoining this room is the Treaty Room, which served as the Cabinet room from about 1865 to 1902. The cabinet table, settee, and clock, purchased by President Grant in 1869, are in this room. The Queen's Bedroom (Rose Guest Room) is furnished as an elegant, early 19th-century lady's bedchamber.

Grounds (not shown on plan). The simple dignity of the White House is enhanced by the natural beauty of its informal, carefully landscaped grounds, which include flower gardens, well-kept lawns, and many trees of historic interest, such as the magnolias planted by President Andrew Jackson.