THE WHITE HOUSE

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A Chapter from the Guidebook

"WASHINGTON: CITY & CAPITAL"

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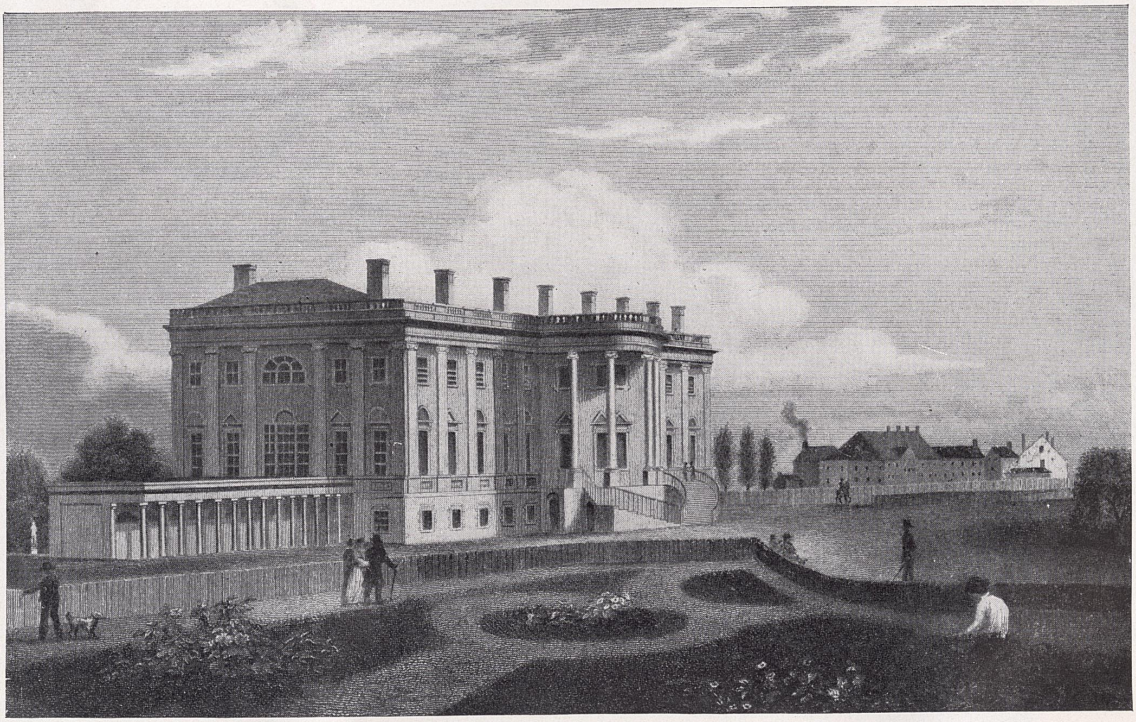

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (ABOUT 1815)

THE WHITE HOUSE

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At 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, in the Executive Grounds, facing Lafayette Square. The grounds are bounded on the north by Pennsylvania Avenue; on the other sides by East, West, and South Executive Avenues.

Most streetcar and bus lines pass nearby. Taxi: First zone; taxis and private automobiles may enter the north grounds, but may not park.

Admittance to the East Terrace and East Room, 10 a. m. to 2 p. m. except Saturdays, when they are closed at 1 p. m. Admittance to State Dining Room, and the Red, Blue, and Green Rooms, by special card from a Representative or Senator; 10:30 a. m. to noon, except Sundays and holidays.

Admittance to grounds all day, except to South Grounds, which are open only on Easter Monday to children, to adults accompanying children, and, late in the day, to all adults.

OF THE world's great residences of state, none surpasses in charm and dignity the White House, Executive Mansion of the United States. In design and setting it deliberately avoids any suggestion of formal display; also, by European standards its annals may lack something of the high lights and shadows with which more lavish expenditure, hoarier age, and bloody tales of court intrigue have endowed such great edifices as London's Windsor Castle, Rome's Quirinal, and Moscow's Kremlin. Instead, its century-old walls echo to the human story of a great Republic's first struggles toward self-expression, and visitors from all nations find delight in its graceful simplicity and purity of line. It is the oldest public structure in the Federal City, and the most beautiful of its period.

The dwelling place of the President and his family, the White House, as a whole, is less freely accessible to the public than the Capitol. This, plus the impressive size of the Capitol, and the opportunity to observe Congress in session there, may account for the fact that to some a visit to the White House offers a less dramatic experience. Nevertheless, the Mansion's beauty, the informal grace of its spacious grounds, and its rich historical associations draw hither about one million visitors every year.

The White House is situated about a mile and a half west-northwest of the Capitol, with Pennsylvania Avenue connecting the two. Facing Lafayette Square on the north, it is flanked by the Treasury on the east and the State, War, and Navy Building on the west. The tip of the Washington Monument is visible to one looking over its roof from Pennsylvania Avenue.

Originally the President's Square contained upward of 80 acres, including Lafayette Square and the Ellipse. It was a rough piece of barren land notable only for its view of the Potomac—a view long since cut off—and the unhealthfulness of the swamps in which it terminated. In 1800 the present grounds were marked off, but were not enclosed until the administration of John Quincy Adams, who saw to it that Congress voted sufficient sums for grading and fencing. Gardens, in which Mr. Adams spent many hours at work, took shape, and seedlings were set out. Although the grounds were said to be in keeping with the plain tastes of a country squire, their unfinished appearance could hardly satisfy the lavish tastes of Martin Van Buren when he became President. With a free hand he provided for stables, fountains, stone walls, and iron railings, the hauling of rich topsoil for flower beds, and the collecting of enough native and exotic plants to do credit to a royal English garden. Rare specimens of medicinal plants, such as enchanter's nightshade and golden madder, still democratically shared space with the humbler York cabbages, peas, and parsnips.

By 1849 the ground south of the President's House had been drained, and 2 years later the Commissioner of Public Buildings "at the suggestion of several prominent gentlemen of this city and by appropriation of President Fillmore" secured the services of Andrew Jackson Downing, well-known landscape designer, to lay out plans for the White House grounds—plans to which the grounds owe most of their beauty.

The White House grounds again profited by an era of prodigal spending when Grant took office. The ugly iron fences along the walks of the north grounds were torn down to allow for a broad sweep of lawn. East Executive Avenue and West Executive Avenue were cut through, and the lowlands at the south were filled in and planted with trees and shrubbery, improvements made under George G. Brown, known as the "father of the Washington park system."

The present White House grounds comprise a fenced and wooded park of 18 acres, which the Mansion itself, with the adjoining

Executive Office, cuts into two areas, known as the north and south grounds, respectively. The grounds are bounded on the north by Pennsylvania Avenue, and on the other three sides by East Executive Avenue, South Executive Avenue, and West Executive Avenue, respectively. There are eight gateways to the grounds, all apposite to the various White House entrances. The main approach is in the north grounds, where a curving driveway makes an arc beginning and ending with gateways on Pennsylvania Avenue, and passing under a porte-cochere to the central portal of the White House. The semicircle so formed encloses a low fountain and flower beds. These gateways are open to the public who wish to see the grounds, but the great north entrance to the White House itself is reserved for the President's family, and for receiving visitors of state.

On visiting days, the public is admitted at the East Executive Avenue entrance gates. Official visitors use the West Executive Avenue entrance, which leads directly to the Executive Office of the President. The two South Executive Avenue entrances are closed to the public except on special occasions; since the south grounds now are considered the private gardens of the President. A beautiful view of the south grounds, however, is obtainable from South Executive Avenue, midway between the east and west gates.

The south facade of the White House rises from a mass of shrubbery and flower gardens, and forms the north end of a long vista over the "Presidential Ellipse" past the Washington Monument and into Potomac Park to the south. To the west of the facade are elaborate flower gardens, tennis courts, and clustered trees and thickets, one of which conceals the "President's walk." On the east are more small groves and gardens, and an oblong pool, bordered by evergreens. Walks thread in and out among the trees and garden plots, and a paved driveway curves across the grounds from the two gateways, up to the south portico.

Previous to the first Cleveland administration, the south grounds not infrequently were open to the public, but they have always been considered as primarily for use of the Presidential families, and Mrs. Cleveland objected to the fact that too many promenaders were given to kissing the White House baby, Ruth. Once a year the south grounds are still open for the Easter egg rolling, when the Marine Band plays and the President and his lady appear and greet the children. Grown people accompanying children are admitted; adults alone also, but only later in the day. The young guests bring their gaily colored Easter eggs in festive baskets of ornamentally plaited and dyed straw. If encouraged by fine weather, thousands of chil-

dren and elders throng to the grounds. Many of the younger children occupy themselves with the absorbing task of holding down buoyant toy ballons that tug at their retaining strings; multitudes eat luncheon on the grass, toss balls, and run about in juvenile games. Formerly these celebrations included a visit to the East Room, until the increasing numbers of merrymakers made this impossible.

Egg rolling itself nowadays consists mainly of rolling eggs so as to cause them to collide with one another on the lawn, as in marbles or the old game of bowls. The sport is not restricted to the White House grounds; children congregate for the purpose in the Zoological Park as well, where a longer slope permits of old-style egg rolling, a perilous descent for the egg, which when cracked, is eaten forthwith. But as far back as President Johnson's time children rolled their Easter eggs on the White House lawn. Others used the eastern lawn of the Capitol Grounds for this pastime, until officials, solicitous for the grass, forbade the festivity there.

The White House grounds on both north and south fronts are generously wooded, and beautifully landscaped with flower beds, shrubbery, and sparkling fountains in the easy, informal manner which has made English landscaping famous. So cleverly have the landscape architects done this work that the dimensions of the White House seem elusive, its wings half hidden by masses of shade trees which are divided to reveal magnificent prospects from front and rear. The White House trees represent some 80 varieties, many of them exotic, and are the careful selection of generations for beauty and variety. They also express the Presidential interest in trees since the early days of the White House.

Three elms beneath which James and Dolly Madison led open-air cotillions still thrive here. Two of the present oaks were standing when British soldiers set fire to the White House. The towering American elm on a knoll to the east end of the south lawn began life as a sapling at the home of John Quincy Adams in Massachusetts and was replanted here by him. Nearby is a group of magnolias, brought by Jackson from his Tennessee home and replanted here in memory of his wife. Hayes planted an American elm near the western entrance of the north grounds in 1878. Grover Cleveland's bride planted a bloodleaf Japanese maple—apparently attracted by its rather macabre name, for her husband protested that he "could see no sense of planting a tree for the name of the thing."

Near the north front entrance are scarlet oaks planted by Benjamin Harrison's grandchildren. President McKinley also planted a scarlet oak near the present Executive Office. Another oak, from Russia,

has a curious history. Senator Charles Sumner once sent to the Czar of Russia some acorns from an oak near Washington's tomb at Mount Vernon. Many years later an oak on Czarina Island in Russia bore an inscription that it grew from an acorn from Washington's tomb. Hitchcock, the American Ambassador, sent back some of the acorns from this tree for planting on the White House grounds, but the resulting tree proved to be of a Russian species.

President Harding planted a European beech; Mrs. Harding a group of magnolias and an elm. President Coolidge planted no trees, but Mrs. Coolidge assisted at the planting of a weeping birch, donated as a memorial to the mothers of Presidents of the United States. President Hoover assisted in three tree plantings—an American elm in memory of Washington's two hundredth anniversary, a white oak from Lincoln's birthplace, and a cedar from Washington's boyhood home. Mrs. Hoover contributed a California redwood.

White House exterior. After more than a century and a quarter of colorful history, the White House stands today practically as its designer, James Hoban, planned it, on the site designated by Major L'Enfant in his original plans for the Federal City. Hoban's design was not based on one of several contemporary Irish mansions, as some have maintained. It has many of the characteristics of these edifices, however, since it is a perfect type of late eighteenth century renaissance mansion popular in Ireland and England when our Republic was young.

From its north approach the White House creates the impression of being a two-story edifice of simplicity and spaciousness, but not of great size. As a matter of fact the building, exclusive of its terraced galleries at either side, is 170 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 58 feet high. Besides the visible two stories, it has a basement at ground level and an attic concealed by a crowning balustrade. Although called the White House, its walls are of grey sandstone from the Aquia quarries in neighboring Virginia. It derives its dazzling exterior from the painter's brush. Marble was the popular material for constructing public buildings in the early nineteenth century, but the difficulties of prerailroad transportation seem to have compelled this recourse to sandstone and paint. The substitution was unusual but has proved since to have had advantages, for the White House has always preserved its pristine appearance.

In its architecture the principle of symmetry has been observed on all four sides of the White House, giving an impression of quiet and stately balance. In structural detail, however, the northern and southern facades differ in many particulars. The dominant feature

of the north front is a colonial portico which adds to the impressiveness of the main entrance and forms a porch and porte cochère for receiving visitors.

Every American school child knows the north facade, with the four Ionic columns of the portico facing Pennsylvania Avenue. On either side of the portico unadorned walls are relieved only by the stately, symmetrical rows of windows. This simple architectural embellishment imparts to the facade, with its regular form and mass, a character of friendly scale and grace. The larger windows on the main floor are alternately crowned with triangular and segmental pediments, with supporting console brackets and bracketed sills. A simpler treatment subordinates the windows of the second story.

The architectural treatment of the south facade is more generous, because of the additional basement story with its rusticated stone work, the Ionic pilasters that line the walls between the windows. The facade, like that on the north, is broken by a columned portico, but here it is semicircular in shape, forming a gracious transition from the gardens directly in front of the building to the broad, soft lawn. The portico is informally furnished, and makes an outdoor lounging place with access directly from the Red and Green Rooms on the main floor.

The east and west fronts are extended by long, low galleries with terraced roofs so constructed that they afford spacious promenades at the main floor level. The side facades above the galleries are identical in treatment, with Palladian windows opening upon the terraced roofs, surmounted by arched or lunette windows at the second story. Flower boxes and tubbed trees give the roof promenades the effect of miniature formal gardens. These are known as the East and West Terraces.

The two galleries are cleverly constructed to emphasize the difference between the northern and southern fronts of the White House. Seen from Pennsylvania Avenue, they scarcely rise above the crest of the surrounding ground, thus maintaining the rectangular effect of the north facade; from South Executive Avenue, however, they give the impression of low colonnaded wings added to the rectangular facade. Taken together, they appear symmetrical; yet the east gallery extends 215 feet, and the west only 165 feet, from the White House proper. The Executive Office Building, at the end of the west gallery and alined with it, somewhat minimizes this discrepancy in length. Both galleries are 35 feet wide.

The Executive Office Building is approximately 140 feet long and 100 feet wide. It conforms in design and color to the White House

and gives the impression of being an enlarged terminus of the west gallery. It is, however, a separate structure, communicating with the White House through the corridor beneath the western gallery terrace.

Visitors' Entrance (East Front). Unless they have come by invitation, visitors enter the White House from the East Executive Avenue entrance. The entrance is embellished by a fountain and circular pool. Beside the pool an iron gate opens into the porte cochère which is the terminus of the east gallery or terrace. A glass-enclosed arcade leads under the terrace to the White House basement. Along the arcade are stained-glass reproductions of various coats of arms of the Washington family. On the visitor's right are ante-rooms used by guests at great formal gatherings. A foyer next connects this arcade with the basement corridor of the White House. It opens on the south side to a formal rose garden, on the north it shows as an entrance to the drive. On its walls begin the series of White House paintings which extend through practically every room in the edifice.

Paintings in this foyer are: *Signing of the Treaty with Spain*, by Theobald Chartran (showing President William McKinley standing); *James Madison*, by G. P. A. Healy; *John Adams*, by G. P. A. Healy; *Andrew Johnson*, by E. F. Andrews; *Ulysses S. Grant*, by Le Clair.

The Lower Floor. The corridor affords access to the four rooms used principally for the display of White House curios and relics. The paintings and sculptures in the corridor are: *Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt*, by Theobald Chartran (gift of the French Republic); *Andrew Jackson*, by E. F. Andrews; *Benjamin Harrison*, by Eastman Johnson; *Mrs. Andrew Jackson* (marble bust); *Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes*, by Daniel Huntington (gift of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union); *Dolly Madison; Mrs. Abraham Van Buren* (daughter-in-law of the President) by Henry Inman; *Martin Van Buren* (marble bust); *Millard Fillmore*, by G. P. A. Healy; *Andrew Jackson* (small reproduction in bronze of the equestrian statue in Lafayette Square); *Rutherford B. Hayes*, by Daniel Huntington; *Mrs. Benjamin Harrison*, by Daniel Huntington (gift of the Daughters of the American Revolution); *Mrs. Calvin Coolidge*, by Howard Chandler Christy (gift of Pi Beta Phi).

Approaching from the foyer, the first room is a library containing books presented to the White House by American book publishers in recent years. Across the corridor is a room holding a display of White House china gathered from successive administrations since Washington's time.

Here, among other curios, is a set of Mount Vernon Cincinnatus plates; a sugar bowl and a coffee saucer of Van Braam china which belonged to Martha Washington. There is a celery glass which belonged to John and Abigail Adams. A fruit bowl with three supporting figures in French bisque comes down from Mrs. Madison, and is supposed by some to have been saved by her when the British burned the White House. Andrew Jackson's great coffee cup is here, with some of his American china decorated with a motif of Southern foliage. Van Buren's table is represented by a water pitcher. The Sheffield candlestick once belonged to President Taylor. There are several pieces of Saxonware which belonged to the John Quincy Adams family. The purple-bordered Limoges-Haviland pieces bearing the arms of the United States are from the table of Abraham Lincoln. The Woodrow Wilson china is from a set of 1,700 pieces made in New Jersey, the first full dinner service of domestic manufacture to grace the Presidential table. All the pieces on exhibition here are labeled.

The third room on the south, once known as the Diplomatic Room, is elliptical in form. This is the room from which the President now speaks to all America over the radio. It has a clock from the San Francisco Exposition of 1906, and on the walls the following portraits: *Ulysses S. Grant*, by Henry Ulke; *Mrs. John Tyler*, by F. Analli; *Zachary Taylor; James A. Garfield*, by E. F. Andrews; *Chester Alan Arthur*, by Daniel Huntington; *Marquis de Lafayette* (marble bust).

A fourth room has access, not from the corridor but from the Diplomatic Room. It contains furniture used in the White House by Presidents Johnson and Arthur. Most of these pieces are preserved as mementos of the past.

At this point a curtain closes the rest of the corridor to the general public. The corridor, however, passes clear through to the West Terrace, past a private staircase, an elevator, and several service rooms. Beneath the west terrace is the swimming tank recently built by public subscription for the President's use.

From the corridor a wide stairway leads up to the main floor. It reaches a small landing which opens upon the reception hall on the left and the East Room on the right. The reception hall door is closed to visitors; only the East Room is publicly accessible.

Main floor. For descriptive purposes, the main floor may be considered in four sections. The great East Room, occupying the entire eastern wing from north to south fronts, is a section by itself. The reception hall, occupying the north front center and opening upon the

great porch is another. West of it the State and private Dining Rooms, with their attendant services, balance the East Room and form a third main division. Lining the south front, behind the reception hall and between the East Room and the State Dining Room, three formal reception rooms, familiarly known as the Red Room, Blue Room, and Green Room comprise the fourth section. These three rooms open on a central corridor which runs behind the reception hall from the East Room to the State Dining Room, thus giving common access to all the rooms on the first floor. The corridor floors are of Joliet limestone. Walls are buff and white, and are decorated with pilasters and a classic cornice. In the north wall is a niche containing a bust whose origin and identity is a mystery. For decades it has been christened "The Unknown Man" though irreverent reporters of the last few years have advanced the theory that it is the evasive "White House Spokesman" of journalistic fame.

Six marble columns on the north side of the corridor separate it from the broad main reception hall that opens upon the great north portico of the White House, and is used only by members of the President's family and their guests, and for receiving visitors of state. Inlaid in the floor is the presidential seal in yellow bronze, and an ellipse of 48 stars enclosing bronze figures, giving the dates of laying the cornerstone (1792), and of the reconstruction of the Mansion (1902). On the walls are portraits of Warren G. Harding by Mara, Calvin Coolidge by Hopkinson, William McKinley by Murphy, William H. Taft by Zorn, and Woodrow Wilson. Over the main portal is a fanlight. On either side are windows hung with red silk draperies. The Hall is lighted by lamps on bronze standards and a central bronze lantern. On the right of the main entrance is the office of the Chief Usher.

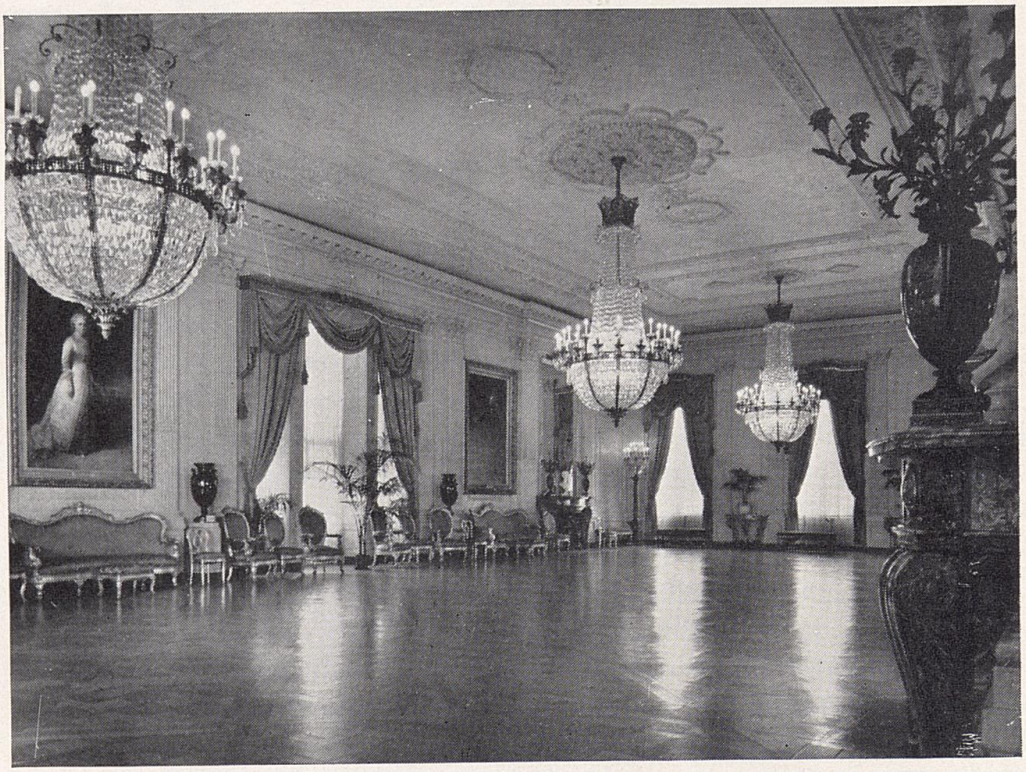
The East Room is the "great hall" of the White House, the scene of major state gatherings. It is magnificently proportioned—87½ feet long and approximately 45 feet broad. Three immense crystal chandeliers with thousands of glittering pendants, hanging from an elaborately decorated plaster ceiling, greatly add to the decorative effect of the room. The color scheme is predominently white and gold. The walls are of paneled wood, enlivened with Corinthian pilasters and bas-relief panels (by the Piccirilli brothers) showing scenes from Aesop's Fables.

On the walls are two notable pictures—full-length portraits of George and Martha Washington. The painting of the first President is the one rescued by Dolly Madison when the British burned the White House in 1812 and is attributed to Gilbert Stuart, though some

have contended that it is only a copy. In any case, its connection with the oldest White House traditions seems established. The portrait of Martha Washington is by E. F. Andrews.

The east and west walls are broken by four mantels of French and Belgian colored marble, surmounted by tall, gilded mirrors. On the respective mantels are Sevres busts, gifts of the Government of France, representing George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. In the corners are bronze light standards. Draperies and upholstery are of gold brocade. The most striking article of furniture in a concert grand piano, decorated in gold leaf by Dewing. Floors are of old parquetry.

The East Room is rich in memories of assemblies, festive and tragic. In earlier days many Presidents used it as a reception room for New Year's Day visitors. Here guests were entertained following the marriage of the President's daughter, Maria Hester Monroe, to Samuel Lawrence Gouverneur, and here Monroe received Lafayette in 1824. Several other notable weddings took place in this room, including that of Nellie Grant to Algernon Sartoris in 1874, of "Princess" Alice Roosevelt to Nicholas Longworth in 1906, and of Jessie Woodrow Wilson to Francis B. Sayre in 1913.



WHITE HOUSE, EAST ROOM

Funeral services were held here of Presidents William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor. Here Buchanan received the first embassy from Japan in 1860; also the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. During the Civil War, the East Room saw many famous Union generals at the New Year's receptions. The bodies of Abraham Lincoln, of William McKinley, and of Warren G. Harding lay in state here before being carried to the Capitol.

Theodore Roosevelt used this room for physical exercise. Once, when Secretary of War Taft entered, a Japanese expert was teaching the President jiu jitsu. After watching for a time, the future President ventured the opinion that the Japanese could not throw so heavy a man as himself. On Roosevelt's suggestion, Taft undertook to prove his point; suddenly he was flat on the floor.

A doorway in the east wall opens upon the promenade roof of the east gallery. The west wall has three doors, through one of which visitors enter from the basement stairway. A central door to the central corridor, and one to the formal rooms adjoining, are closed to the public except by special permission, usually obtained by a card from a Senator or Representative. The rest of the main floor, although described here, also is not generally accessible.

Passing down the central corridor from the East Room, one first reaches the Green Room, used for informal receptions. In Monroe's day it was a cardroom. Some 30 feet long and 23 feet wide, it has but one window which, with the glass door, opens upon the porch of the southern portico. Doors of inlaid mahogany lead to the East Room and Blue Room, respectively.

The Green Room has undergone many redecorations, the last being in the Coolidge administration. At present the furniture is mainly Early American. A green Aubusson rug bears the coat of arms of the United States. The crystal chandelier is supplemented by metal wall sconces. The white marble mantel was brought from England in 1792 for later installation. On the mantel is a clock, said to have been brought from France by Benjamin Franklin.

The portraits are of *James K. Polk*, attributed to G. P. A. Healy; *Martin Van Buren*, by G. P. A. Healy; *John Quincy Adams*, by G. P. A. Healy; *Thomas Jefferson*, by E. F. Andrews.

The Blue Room, decorated in the style of the first French Empire, was once widely known as the Elliptical Salon on account of its shape—an ellipse formed by continuing the curve of the room's southern wall. It always has been considered the most beautiful room in the White House.

The walls are finished with white enameled wainscoting and covered with heavy corded blue silk brocatelle. Window draperies are of the same material, with gold fret motifs embroidered at top and bottom, and stars embroidered in the valances. Above the valances are poised American eagles. The room is lighted with a crystal chandelier, supplemented by wall sconces.

A white marble mantel, decorated with sheaves of marble arrows, tipped and feathered in bronze, dates from 1792. The mantel clock, decorated with a seated figure of Minerva, is said to have been given by Lafayette to George Washington. The furniture has white and gold woodwork and blue and gold upholstery.

The Blue Room has usually been used by Presidents for state receptions such as the annual Army and Navy, diplomatic, judiciary, and congressional receptions. Ambassadors paying their first formal visit are received in this room. While the Executive Offices were being renovated in 1934, the President had his office here. Two doors lead east to the Green Room, one west to the Red Room, and one north to the main corridor.

The marriage of Maria Hester, daughter of President Monroe, took place here in 1820; that of John, son of President John Quincy Adams, in 1826; that of Elizabeth, third daughter of President Tyler, in 1842; that of President Cleveland and Frances Folsom in 1886; that of Eleanor Wilson to W. G. McAdoo in 1914. Here were held the brilliant receptions to the Infanta Eulalia, daughter of the Queen Regent of Spain, in 1893, and to Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the German Kaiser, in 1902.

The Red Room, formerly known as the Washington Room, because the famous Washington portrait hung there, is identical with the Green Room in size and shape. The wainscoting is enameled white; the wall covering is of damask with red draperies; the furniture upholstered in red damask. The parquetry floor is covered by a red Aubusson rug. The chandelier is of bronze, and between the windows are metal standards holding lights. The mantel is similar to that in the Green Room. The two west doors lead to the State Dining Room and the southern one to the porch.

Under earlier administrations the Red Room has been used as a reception room preceding state dinners, such as those in honor of the Vice President, the Supreme Court, the diplomatic corps, the Cabinet, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It is now used as a reception room for smaller dinners. President Hayes took the oath of office here late Saturday night, March 3, 1877, because the fourth fell on a Sunday.

The portraits: East wall, of *Theodore Roosevelt*, by John Singer Sargent; west wall, of *Grover Cleveland*, by Eastman Johnson.

The State Dining Room, in which the corridor terminates, seats as many as 107 persons around its great horseshoe table. Presidents Coolidge and Hoover customarily dined here, and all Presidents hold state dinners here. Excepting the East Room, this is the largest room in the White House, occupying almost the entire southern end of the main floor, with windows looking out on the south and west. Paneled English oak, after the late Georgian manner, covers the walls, which are adorned with carved pilasters surmounted by a carved cornice. The ceiling is elaborately decorated in plaster bas-relief. A central silver chandelier is supplemented by silver wall sconces. On the western wall is a great fireplace and chimney piece of cut stone.

The velvet window draperies, upholstery, and rug are all of green. Seventeenth century Flemish tapestries, and trophies of moose and other American game animals, once adorned the walls but were removed during the Taft administration. The portrait of Abraham Lincoln, by W. Cogswell, was set on the northern wall by President Hoover.

A door in the northwest corner concealed by a painted screen leads to the butler's pantry. That in the northeast corner leads to the private dining room. Of the three doors in the east wall, one is the main entrance from the corridor while two lead to the Red Room.

A private dining room adjoins the State Dining Room on the north. Most of the Presidents have taken family meals here. It is a relatively small, square room with a segmental vaulted ceiling, and two windows facing north. Against the east wall is a marble mantelpiece with a gold-framed mirror. Walls are of plaster with a white enamel wainscoting. On the south wall is a portrait of John Tyler by G. P. A. Healy.

The room is furnished in mahogany Chippendale, with red velvet draperies and rugs. On the tables and in several cabinets is displayed some of the state silverware.

THE UPPER FLOORS

The external display of the Presidency characterizes the main floor of the White House; planning, decisions, and work, personal traits, and incidents of intimate life are reflected in the traditions of the rooms upstairs. They are reached from the east end of the central corridor by a wide stone stairway screened by a double wrought-iron gate; also by a small elevator whose oaken

panels are cut from rafters of the Old South Church in Boston. None but the Presidential household and its intimates penetrate here.

This floor has seven bedroom suites, a library, and a study, all joined by a wide hall running the length of the building. The four corner suites include small dressing rooms. President Jackson initiated the use of the southwest rooms as a Presidential suite. When Abraham Lincoln was shot, his 9-year-old son, Tad, was put to bed here by one of the White House guards.

A large *Blue Bedroom* directly above the southern end of the East Room was once Lincoln's study. Here he held many Cabinet meetings, discussing the problems of the Civil War.

In this room Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Twice he took up his pen, and twice he laid it down. Turning to Secretary of State Seward, he explained that he had been shaking hands at the New Year's reception since 9 o'clock in the morning, and that his right hand was almost paralyzed. "If my hand trembled when I sign", he added, "all who examine the document hereafter will say, 'He hesitated.'" A third time he grasped the pen and signed, slowly but firmly.

From the time of Andrew Johnson to that of Theodore Roosevelt, the blue bedroom frequently was used as a personal office for the President. Adjoining it is the "Monroe Drawing Room", for generations used as a Cabinet meeting place. A tablet in the wall attests to the signing by President McKinley here, of the treaty with Spain which ended the war in 1898.

It was in the oval room now known as the *President's study*, located over the Blue Room, that was held the first New Year's Day reception in 1801. Abraham Lincoln, seated here in his favorite chair, read a chapter of the Bible every day before breakfast, while the family assembled for the meal.

Franklin D. Roosevelt has here a desk made of timbers from the "Resolute."

Distributed over this floor are portraits of: *Franklin Pierce*, by G. P. A. Healy; *Benjamin Harrison*, by E. F. Andrews; *James Buchanan*, by Chase; *Zachary Taylor*, by E. F. Andrews; *James Monroe*, by E. F. Andrews; *Andrew Jackson*, by E. F. Andrews; *George Washington*, by Luis Cadena.

On the third or attic floor are 14 rooms, including several storerooms, the sewing room, servants' quarters, and the housekeeper's cedar-fitted room. It was on this floor that Jackson's coachman was put to bed ill of smallpox in 1833. When the house servants, panic-

stricken, refused to attend the patient, the President shut himself up with the coachman and nursed him to health.

The kitchens are in the part of the lower floor not accessible to the public. There is no full record of their history but it seems that the original kitchen was in the central part of the basement directly below the main entrance. It had not only a huge fireplace in its western wall, with long-handled skillets and cranes for heavy pots, but a great brick oven for roasting simultaneously a small flock of turkeys or a few suckling pigs; this in addition to Dutch ovens and a small oven for pastry. A visitor during Fillmore's day records that "the fine state dinner for 36 people every Thursday" for years was cooked in the huge old fireplace. But the Fillmores later set up one of the then novel patent cooking ranges, despite the protests of the cook, who had served many years at the White House and could not master the drafts in the new contraption.

Mrs. Lincoln removed the kitchen to the northwestern part of the basement, presumably because the building of the north portico deprived the old kitchen of daylight. Mrs. Benjamin Harrison had the kitchen floors done in cement and tiles.

During the summer of 1935 the kitchen was extensively remodeled by the National Parks Service, Department of the Interior, which has physical supervision of the White House. Funds for the purpose were allocated from the PWA and, at the President's request, relief workers were used as far as possible. The whole culinary department was completely modernized. New underground storerooms were built beneath the west driveway to the Main (north) Portico, but so arranged to give access to the kitchens. The storerooms have refrigerated compartments for meats and for fish, and other compartments for staples. There is a wine vault, and a vault for the White House silver. The immense old kitchen is divided into three rooms, each with its functional part in preparing White House meals, all refitted with walls of Carrara glass, work surfaces of stainless steel and Monel metal. The gas stoves, lineal descendents of the old coal ranges whose forerunners were the Dutch ovens previously described, have given way to commodious electric ranges of the most improved type. The rest of the kitchen equipment also has succumbed to the age of electricity, and now the White House has an electric stock kettle, electric food chopper, electric meat grinder, electric batter mixer and waffle irons, a 30-gallon electric ice-cream storage box, and similar devices.

After the food is prepared, a dumb waiter conveys it to the butler's pantry between the two dining rooms on the main floor. Here the

table service arrives in a dumb waiter from the dish closet on the floor above. After the food is served, the kitchen utensils are returned to the basement, and at the close of the meal the dishes go to an electric dish washer on the third floor; thus food never appears in the kitchen until it is requisitioned, it is completely prepared before it goes to the main floor—the only exception being two 5-gallon electric kettles to furnish hot water for tea—and the table service never goes to the kitchen. The various units are so arranged that a state dinner may be served, or an informal tea, with equal efficiency and lack of confusion. A small but completely equipped kitchen is installed on the third floor for emergencies.

The recent changes also include a steward's room and a carpenter shop as part of the subterranean addition beneath the west driveway; and on the lower floor a new servants' dining room, servants' rest rooms, and a furniture storage room. A small servants' room on this floor has become the housekeeper's office. Across the main corridor from the kitchen the doctor's office has been remodeled and a new dispensary put in.

The Executive Offices are in the semidetached three-story building that terminates the west gallery. They are entered from the basement floor of the White House through a foyer, which gives access to the President's suite of a small anteroom and an oval office. The suite is flanked by the Cabinet Room and the office of the secretary to the President. Offices for the executive retinue extend along the west side. In the northwest corner is the press room and in the southwest corner, a conference room. Along the east side are the offices of the Secret Service men and the filing clerks. Public entrance is from the north. Visitors are received in a large central lobby, the most interesting feature of which is an immense round table, presented by the famous Philippine insurrectionary leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, in 1934. The top is made of two kinds of Philippine hardwood, its center consisting of a cross section of a gigantic Red Narra tree 9 feet 6 inches in diameter; a rim of Camagon wood adds another foot to the table's polished surface. The table probably was made in Bilibid prison, Manila. No doubt designed for Cabinet conference purposes, it was set up with great difficulty in the lobby but could be carried no further on account of its size. From the lobby there is a south exit to a colonnaded veranda adjoining the Rose Garden and the "President's Walk."

The offices are thoroughly modern, with indirect lighting, cork and rubberized floors, and air conditioning. On the upper floor are the telegraph rooms, and a telephone switchboard centralizing the 150

branch lines in the Mansion and the offices. Here, too, is handled the White House mail, which totals between 2,000 and 60,000 items daily. Every item of this immense mail is carefully scrutinized and then turned over to the proper authority for the attention it merits. Not infrequently, in this way, letters from the most obscure sources may come to the personal attention of the President himself. Generally the policy is to avoid burdening him with such details when expedient.

STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

It was in 1792 that Hoban, an Irish-American, won the prize of $500 offered by the Commissioners of the District for the best design for the "President's house", or "President's Palace", according to L'Enfant's designation. (The term "White House" was in popular use even before 1812 but was not given official status until Theodore Roosevelt's time.) The work of construction began immediately but proceeded under so many difficulties of money, labor, and transportation that completion was disappointingly long delayed. An erroneous legend has it that Washington himself laid the cornerstone in 1792, on the three-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing at San Salvador. The cornerstone was laid on that date, but the records show that Washington was in Philadelphia. Another legend is to the effect that, with Martha Washington, he inspected the partly finished structure early in 1799; he died, however, before the structure was ready for occupancy. This was not until 1800, and John and Abigail Adams were the first to take possession. Even then, because of delays and insufficient appropriations, the mansion was still unfinished. When the seat of government was removed here from Philadelphia the Adams family found it a remote, desolate, and scarcely habitable place. Close by stood the rough temporary quarters of workmen employed in construction. An attempt was made to remove the shacks before the President's arrival, but the men, because of a housing shortage, refused to continue work unless permitted to live in the shacks.

Abigail Adams, the President's wife, was the first mistress of the mansion. She was impressed by its grandeur but annoyed by its inconveniences. She complained that there were no bells in the house, "and promises are all you can obtain." There was insufficient furniture for the great bare rooms, she complained, and she was obliged to use the now sumptuous East Room to hang out the family washing. Firewood was expensive and scarce, but was needed in great quantities for drying damp walls. "If the twelve years in which this place

THE WHITE HOUSE AT NIGHT

has been considered as the future seat of government had been improved, as they would have been in New England", she wrote, "very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed."

The present arrangement of furniture in the Executive Mansion is of a very recent origin. From Monroe's day forward successive White House regimes have had their own ideas of decoration, so that the furniture was subject to continuous additions and changes. Then, when it became hopelessly scrambled, the whole decorative scheme would be changed to accord with the standards of the period. Thus Monroe began the period of "French Furnishings" that lasted until the Civil War. Congress tried in vain to stop this vogue in 1822 with a law that "All furniture used in the President's House purchased for use in the President's House shall be as far as possible of American or domestic manufacture", but both Jackson and Van Buren drew upon themselves a heavy fire of congressional criticism by their lavish purchases of "elegant French Furniture." From 1860 forward, however, the White House families went in for heavy ornate mid-Victorian furniture, with a superabundance of marble tops, huge mirrors, black walnut, horsehair, and plush. Lincoln and Johnson favored black walnut. Grant added enormous wardrobes with mirrors in the doors, and lambrequins over the marble mantelpieces. Hayes contributes massive sideboards of the prevalent imposing type. Then Arthur began all over. He sent away 24 cartloads of this miscellany, some of which dated back to Jackson's time, to make place for his own ideas of Presidential grandeur, which included gold wallpaper in the dining room, Tiffany glass screens and imitation marble columns in the main reception room, pomegranate plush draperies over windows and mantel, with furniture to match. Harrison went him one better with stained-glass windows in the Blue Room and jigsaw scrollwork over the dining-room door.

In 1902 came the complete structural renovation of the White House, and the Roosevelts seized this opportunity to urge upon the Nation a complete systematic and dignified scheme of furnishing. Congress allowed $100,000 of its appropriation for renovation to be earmarked for furniture and decorations; some years later it authorized the acceptance of gifts of colonial furniture for this purpose. This started a controversy which lasted through the Coolidge administration, between the lovers of colonial furniture and those, including the American Institute of Architects, who wished to see the furniture harmonized with the style of the White House, which is not colonial but European Renaissance. Briefly put, the arguments for the colonial style were that regardless of its origin the

White House is a colonial structure merely reflecting the Renaissance influence in America; that it symbolizes the Nation's founders in American eyes, and that therefore it is the logical place for assembling the best of beautiful American craftsmanship in furniture. The opposing arguments were that early American furniture varied too much in different regions to make a uniform system of decoration anything but sectional—for New England, Central and Southern craftmanship, though all beautiful, varied widely while the architectural style of the White House offered a basis for a uniform decoration of accepted value that would not be inconsistent with our history. They pointed to the widespread use of French Renaissance furniture in early days to support this claim.

The result has been a compromise in which both schools are represented with amazing harmony and success, though there are still many grotesque inconsistencies to be overcome. The east room still retains the imperial atmosphere of its design. Mrs. Hoover contributed 50 gilt chairs of its style and period, to be used when the occasion demanded. In several other rooms the colonial influence predominates. Lincoln's four-poster 9-foot walnut bed still remains in the Lincoln bedroom on the second floor, and Mrs. Coolidge covered it with a crocheted bedspread which she spent 2 years in making. An enthusiast for colonial furniture, she also secured many interesting pieces for the several colonial rooms.

Mrs. Hoover's sitting room, on the second floor, was once the private parlor of Mrs. James Monroe, so she made a permanent restoration of this room by having the original furniture in the Monroe Museum at Fredericksburg, Va., duplicated. The Smithsonian donated an Astor piano to complete its fittings.

It was not the furniture so much as the habitability of the White House itself that perplexed its earlier mistresses. The Adams family had a trying 4 years of it, and conditions were only slightly better by the time Jefferson succeeded Adams. The east walls of the house were still unplastered and the grounds unimproved when he took possession, but he made the mansion fully habitable, besides carrying through some unrealized features of the Hoban plan. These included terraces in the form of wings adjoining the east and west facades along lines very similar to those which Hoban later rebuilt. But Jefferson marred their appearance with long rows of one-story "offices" in front of them, which served also as "meat house, wine cellar, coal and wood sheds and privies."

Jefferson was a widower. For official entertainments he called to his aid as mistress of the White House the inimitable Dolly Madison,

whose husband was then Secretary of State, and the annals of White House hospitality began forthwith. The two gave frequent dinners to numerous guests, and entertained them lavishly. Jefferson had his own very positive "observations on soup", and his own recipe for sponge cake to be served with wine. He spent $10,000 on fine wines during his 8 years in the White House. He did away with the formal daily receptions or dances which Washington had instituted in Philadelphia and which the Adamses had striven to maintain. Instead he received persons of all stations at any seasonable hour, often receiving callers in a dressing gown and slippers. He abolished precedence rules, ignored titles, and instituted an etiquette that discouraged aristocratic practices. One result was that the British Minister was offended when his wife was once left unattended to find herself a place at dinner. Jefferson's informality was widely popular, but John Adams, who was being criticized by implication, remarked that he really did not think that he was less of a democrat or more of a monarchist because he preferred to curl his hair, whereas Jefferson wore his straight.

Then James Madison became President, and Dolly Madison, now mistress of the White House in her own right, became the most brilliant hostess the Capital ever knew. For 8 years thereafter she exercised her tact and charm to mollify political opponents, and win the confidence of provincial and hesitant guests. At the weekly state dinners she generally took the head of the long table while the President, preoccupied with his administrative problems, sat silent at a place halfway down. Her entertainments were expensive, for her table was lavishly supplied. Dinners and balls were brilliant reproductions of pre-Revolutionary soirees in Paris. At dinner, a servant stood behind each guest. Levees were held every week, and grand receptions on New Year's and Independence Days. So far as social functions were concerned the President seemed content to play a secondary part. On a visit to the Capital in 1811 Washington Irving wrote: "Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame, who has a smile and a pleasant word for everybody. . . . But as to Jemmy Madison—Ah! poor Jemmy!—he is but a withered little apple-John."

Many of Dolly Madison's coreligionists in the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and many democratically minded citizens as well, were offended by the luxury of the Madison household; for its mistress drove about in a chariot costing $1,500, and clothed herself in gowns, jewels, shoes, and turbans from New York and Paris. She used rouge, dipped snuff, and played at "One Hundred", a contem-

porary card game. Mrs. Seaton, the wife of a South Carolina editor, complained of the use of rouge and paint by the wives of the President and Cabinet members, and sarcastically remarked that at receptions it is customary to "pay your obeisance to Mrs. Madison, curtsy to his Highness, then take a seat."

These festivities came to an abrupt hiatus August 24, 1814, when the British burned most of the public buildings, including the White House. The French Ambassador of the day, seeking out General Robert Ross, the British commander, found him in the White House, piling furniture in one of the rooms preparatory to burning the building. The fire left little but the stone outer walls, and even these had in great part to be taken down and rebuilt. The interior had virtually to be constructed anew. Hoban, the original architect, was charged with this task in 1815, and faithfully reproduced the original building. Today the visitor sees not the interior of the mansion of Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, but an accurate structural reproduction of it.

After the fire, the *City Gazette* remarked: "The destruction of the President's House cannot be said to be a great loss in one point of view, as we hope it will put an end to drawing rooms and levees; the resort of the idle, and the encouragers of spies and traitors." Yet Dolly Madison herself prevented the loss from being greater than it was. Gathering together a trunkful of Cabinet papers, silver plate, valuable china, and the great portrait of Washington, she fled the city, bringing them back unharmed after the invaders had left.

While the damage by the fire was being repaired, the Madisons lived in the *Octagon House*, and later in the *Gerry House*, where the grand levee in honor of Jackson's victory at New Orleans was held.

President James Monroe occupied the rebuilt Mansion in the fall of 1817, refurnishing the interior with articles especially imported from France, and with his own possessions. On New Year's Day of 1818 he gave a great reception in the reconstructed White House, and followed it with weekly receptions known as "drawing rooms." A contemporary records that every Wednesday evening the White House received a great crowd of guests, "some in shoes, most in boots, and many in spurs, some snuffing, others chewing and many longing for their cigars . . . Some with powdered heads, others frizzled and oiled, some with heads a comb has never touched, half-hid by dirty collars, reaching far above their ears . . ." Other observers have recorded, however, that while the social life of the Monroe administration was less brilliant than when Dolly Madison ruled, it

was more stately. Gentlemen in silk breeches and stockings, ladies in imported frocks, dined on the creations of a French chef and danced in the East Room, to illuminate which for an evening required $100 worth of candles. One evidence of the stiff formality of White House life in those rather pompous times is the fact that the President's wife could never return calls. No such restriction exists today.

With John Quincy Adams the spirit of New England returned. He records in his diary that he rose regularly at 5 a. m., took a 4-mile walk before breakfast, worked all day, and retired at 11 p. m. The social obligations of his office troubled him. He wrote in 1828, "This evening was the sixth drawing room. Very much crowded; 16 Senators, perhaps 60 members of the House of Representatives, and multitudes of strangers . . . these parties are becoming more and more insupportable to me."

At the state gatherings, such lions as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John Calhoun appeared in blue coats and breeches, with gilt buttons, buff waistcoats, white ties, and high chokers, silk stockings, and pumps.

When Andrew Jackson, a widower, came to the White House, etiquette changed. The great democrat threw his home open to everyone. On March 4, 1829, thousands who had come to Washington to attend the inauguration crowded into the mansion. "High and low, old and young, black and white, poured in one solid column into this spacious mansion. Here was the corpulent epicure grunting and sweating for breath—the dandy wishing he had no toes—and the office seeker." They brawled, broke glassware in attacking the liquid refreshments, stood on the damask-covered chairs and sofas, treated officials with scant ceremony and pressed about the President until he fled by a back door.

At Jackson's last public reception there was an even more disorderly scene. Some New York friends, anxious to outshine the Massachusetts farmers who once presented President Jefferson with a 750-pound cheese, had sent Jackson a 1,400-pound cheese, which ripened for a year in the cellar of the White House. On Washington's birthday anniversary in 1837, the local citizenry was invited to sample the Pride of New York, and was joined by a host of visitors from Alexandria, Baltimore, and the surrounding country. The Senate adjourned in honor of the occasion, and Martin Van Buren, then President-elect, was present. George Bancroft wrote of seeing in the White House on this occasion "apprentices, boys of all ages, men not civilized enough to walk about the room with their hats

off—starvelings, and fellows with dirty faces and dirty manners." When the day closed, the White House was smeared over with the sticky cheese.

During the Van Buren administration the weekly drawing rooms were abandoned, but the display of earlier days was restored—even exceeded. Captain Marryat, the British novelist, praised the President for having "prevented the mobocracy from intruding themselves at his levees. The police are now stationed at the doors." Van Buren drove about in a magnificent coach, dined off silver plate, gave many small dinners prepared by an English chef—though no food was served at general receptions—and lived in conspicuously luxurious fashion. His daughter-in-law, who acted as hostess of the White House, had acquired aristocratic tastes in Europe. Her guests were formally announced. She received them seated on a raised platform, wearing a long-train purple velvet gown, with a headdress of three feathers. All this was regarded as a flagrant betrayal of the Jackson tradition. Accordingly, Representative Ogle, of Pennsylvania, assailed Van Buren on the floor of Congress, complaining that the White House was "a palace as splendid as that of Caesar and as richly adorned as the proudest Asiatic mansion."

William Henry Harrison, "Old Tippecanoe", and his successor, John Tyler, strove to restore a simpler atmosphere to the White House social life. Harrison had no opportunity to bring his wife to Washington, for he survived his inauguration only 1 month. President Tyler's wife died in the White House in 1842, and 2 years later he married Julia, daughter of David Gardiner, of New York. David Gardiner soon afterward was killed before the President's eyes in the explosion on the steam warship *Princeton.*

By the time James Knox Polk was in residence the atmosphere again was one of "grave respectability." At Polk's evening receptions there were no cards, dancing, or refreshments. Guests were received informally by the long-haired President and his wife and thereafter spent the evening "solemnly promenading around the East Room in pairs . . . while a group of young men in the center survey their motions." A guest at the White House during Taylor's administration records that a military band played tunes on the lawn while everybody walked "in and out and about without restriction; the President perhaps strolling over the lawn amidst the company, ready to shake hands with anyone."

President Fillmore introduced the novelty of morning receptions. During his administration a great state dinner was given to Louis Kossuth, the exiled Hungarian revolutionist.

President Buchanan, who was a bachelor, had spent some years as American Minister at the Court of St. James and at the Court of the Russian Czar. A polished diplomat, he was regarded as an unusually brilliant host in the White House. Two important social events occurred during his occupancy. One was the reception to the first embassy from Japan. A great crowd attended, and some stood on chairs the better to see the strange newcomers from the Orient and the elaborate ritual in their honor. The second was a dinner to the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.

At Abraham Lincoln's first levee, a great crowd attended. A new party was in power, and again a new element appeared in the White House. Northern antislavery and western agrarian sentiment dominated, and many southerners pointedly stayed away from state receptions. Guests appeared in negligee shirts, slouch hats, and cowhide boots; Indian agents in their beaded buckskins. When Civil War came, state dinners were abandoned. In the midst of the President's anxieties one of the Lincoln children died; at once the White House went into mourning, and receptions were discontinued. A cloud settled over the Mansion, which deepened with the death of the President, and was only gradually dispelled during Andrew Johnson's tumultuous administration.

Grant's administration saw another revival of social glitter in the White House, as wealthy manufacturing and banking groups began to dominate in Presidential circles. Many noble and royal foreign guests were entertained by Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur—among them two Russian grand dukes, the Italian Duke of Abruzzi, and a Swedish crown prince. So great was the company at some state dinners, that they overflowed into the corridor of the main floor.

During Grover Cleveland's second administration White House etiquette again had to be revised, for Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany raised their envoys here from the rank of Minister to that of Ambassador.

Various alterations and additions to the White House continued during these regimes. Hoban built the semicircular south portico in 1824, and the colonnaded north portico in 1829. During Andrew Jackson's term the East Room was finished and furnished. About 1833, water, piped from a spring in what is now Franklin Park, replaced the pumps which supplied the White House until then. Gas lighting was installed in 1848. Water from the city system was introduced in 1853, in which year provision was also made for central heating. In Benjamin Harrison's administration appeared the

novel convenience of electric-light buttons, supposed by many to threaten instant and fatal shock. Bathrooms were installed during President Rutherford B. Hayes' term, 1877–81. During Hayes' term also one telephone line was brought in, and in 1902 the first telephone switchboard was introduced.

External changes kept pace with these improvements. Jefferson's "offices" were destroyed during the British invasion; instead, the beautiful east and west terraces were erected in 1815. The original eastern terrace was somewhat out of scale with the western one, and it was replaced in 1869 with a more suitably proportioned structure. Early pictures show that from the south the two terraces loomed up as formidable-looking white walls that by comparison minimized the whole south facade. This defect was overcome by banks which raised the ground level along the fronts of both terraces, and thus reduced their proportions to a correct harmony.

More recently the set flower pots and oiled paths of the Victorian era have given way to a less formal arrangement of the grounds. The Executive Offices took the space occupied for decades by the greenhouses, and Colonial gardens were laid out south of the terraces. The west garden was later set out with roses by Mrs. Taft. President Wilson planned a straight-line arrangement of the bushes, and put high hedges and walks along the base of the south portico on the west side, for the "President's Walk" and the "President's Rest."

By 1902 the White House began to show the effects of generations of wear and tear. Moreover, the Executive Offices filled so much of the second story that little remained in the way of comfortable dwelling quarters for the President and his family. Since the east gallery was given over to living quarters for the domestic staff, the only space available for entertainment was on the main floor, which was utterly inadequate for large crowds. On major occasions guests had to enter through the stately main entrance, but leave through a window in the East Room by a temporary wooden stairway. There was no cloakroom; wraps had to be piled in the lobby or in the dining rooms. For large dinners the State Dining Room had to be supplemented with tables set up in the main reception hall. At the instance of President Theodore Roosevelt, Congress therefore provided for alterations and extensions, and redecorations; also for the restoration of furniture described above. The firm of McKim, Mead, and White, architects, effected the changes at a cost of about $500,000. The east gallery was rebuilt in its present form. By the removal of a private stairway at the west end of the central cor-

ridor, room was made for the enlargement of the State Dining Room. The public reception rooms were made structurally sound. On the second floor, offices made vacant by removal to the new Executive Office Building were remodeled for domestic use. The latter building was completed in 1902, but was rearranged in 1910.

Recent years have seen many restorations and improvements to keep the aging structure abreast of the demands upon it. In 1926 reconstruction of the roof and the attic story was undertaken. The frames for the new attic floor and roof are of steel trusses and beams. The new roof is of hollow tile with a covering of slate. A year later the Executive Office Building was enlarged by converting its attic into a third story. It had already been enlarged to twice its original size under President Taft in 1909–10.

A fire on Christmas Eve, 1929, did great damage to the office building and seemed likely for a time to spread to the White House proper. The office building was restored in 1930. Machinery for cooling the offices was introduced in the spring of 1932. In 1934 the increasing burdens of the Presidency required another overhauling of the Executive Office Building. With the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts the President developed a plan which tripled the available office space, without any increase apparent in the mass of the building. This was done by excavating the basement and extending it underground beyond the Office to the south, making a new story of the former attic and extending the first story to the east in the form of a terrace.

Outside, the western entranceway to the ground floor was changed to conform once more to the original plans. The roadway to the north entrance of the West Terrace was so curved as to conceal this entrance from the Executive Office yard.

The most recent renovation was more important than spectacular. In the summer of 1936 the archaic electric wiring system was found not only to be inadequate but dangerous. Accordingly the White House was closed for several weeks while the old wiring was torn out and a complete modern system installed, including the lead wires from the State, War, and Navy Building into the White House. A complete automatic fire alarm system was installed throughout the building. Provision was made for substituting alternating for direct current, and increased voltage was provided for to take care of the many modernizations of the electric service, both in power facilities and for communication. Much antiquated, worn-out plumbing was reconditioned at the same time.

THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF

Despite the earlier formalities, life in the White House was much simpler a century ago. The First Lady was likely to keep a close eye on domestic affairs, and more than once exchanged recipes with her predecessor or successor. William Henry Harrison, as late as 1841, was given to going to market with a basket on his arm. Whereas Jefferson had about a dozen servants, in 1890 the staff was nearly twice as large. Under President Taft it totaled about 100 persons. Mrs. Taft eliminated the office of steward and abandoned having caterers to serve large dinners. She appointed a housekeeper, and all meals were thereafter prepared in the White House.

The size of the White House staff gradually increased as the scope of entertainment grew. Today it includes the Chief Usher and his assistants, the housekeeper, ladies' maids, the President's valet, doorman, engineers and maintenance men, telegraph and telephone operators, butlers, cooks, chambermaids, secretaries, garden help, chauffeurs for the White House automobiles, police, Secret Service men, and personal, military, and naval aides to the President; all these in addition to the Executive Office staff. Extra waiters and kitchen help are hired for large dinners. Some 3,000 guests are entertained at meals each year. The total number of visitors annually is about 1,000,000.

WHITE HOUSE ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS

The recent social annals of the White House reveal some innovations. It was President Harding who introduced the custom of inviting guests to breakfast. Under Harding and under President Coolidge many Senators, Representatives, newspapermen, and foreign visitors dined early in the morning on hot cakes and sausage and other dishes which showed no influence of imported chefs.

During the Hoover administration there was held the most elaborate ceremony in recent White House annals to honor the visiting King of Siam in 1931, one of the few times when a reigning monarch has been in the White House. The King visited the President and the President immediately returned the call. The same night the President entertained the King at a great banquet in the White House.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt established two social precedents at one stroke in 1934 when, on the occasion of the Gridiron Club dinner at the New Willard Hotel, she gave the first costume ball in the White House. It was a feminine gathering exclusively. To it were invited the wives of the Gridiron Club's guests that evening, as well

as other social leaders. The First Lady appeared as a Rumanian peasant.

Through the years there has developed a system of White House etiquette which has now taken a settled form, although details are changed from time to time in accordance with the wishes of the President and the First Lady.

The President receives calls but returns none except to royal visitors. Acceptance of invitations to formal dinners at the White House is considered obligatory, unless absence from the city, or illness, prevents. Dinner guests are always expected to arrive at the hour stated in the invitation. The President is always attended at state gatherings by his military and naval aides. The order of precedence is based partly on official standing and partly on the ranking age of the officers involved—rather than on personal titles, as in Europe. It frequently changes with the succeeding administrations. The President, naturally, always comes first; then the Vice President; ex-Presidents; foreign ambassadors; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The order beyond this point is left to the discretion of the State Department, which revises it from time to time.

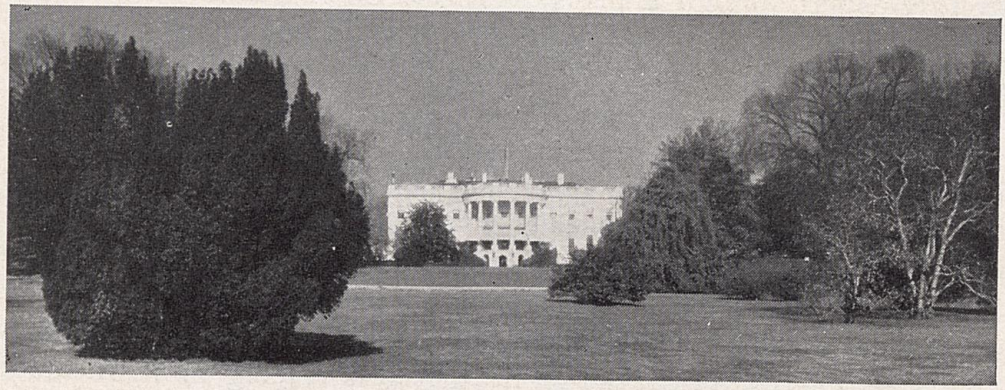
Dinner guests enter by the east entrance, where they are shown a plan of the dinner seating arrangements. A junior aide then escorts them to the East Room and introduces them to their dinner partners. The guests then take their places in line according to rank.

At state dinners today the table is set with china purchased by the Franklin D. Roosevelts. Ivory tinted, with a gold edging and an inner band of blue containing 48 gold stars, it bears both the Presidential seal and a formal design in light gold tracing which includes the rose and triple feathers of the Roosevelt coat of arms. The table is decorated with flowers. The Monroe gold service, or a silver set which includes a decorative centerpiece consisting of a great silver boat on a plate-glass sea, often supplies service plates, although some First Ladies have preferred service plates which match the dinner set. The small silver is marked "The President's House." There is one butler to each four guests.

State dinners generally consist of six rather than eight courses as formerly, and no longer include such elaborate dishes as caviar and terrapin, popular in the White House some years ago. Dinner ended, the ladies usually retire to the Green or Red Room where they are later joined by the gentlemen, after coffee and cigars. A musicale may follow in the East Room, in which case, by 11:30, the host and hostess rise to indicate the end of the evening's entertainment. Less formal dinners are sometimes followed by dancing.

At the Diplomatic reception, which heads the list of annual functions traditionally held in the White House, the guests assemble in the East Room, wearing their uniforms. They place themselves in order of precedence, each Chief of Mission being immediately followed by his staff and their ladies. The Secretary of State enters with the aides of the President. They escort the dean of the Diplomatic Corps—the oldest ambassador in the point of service—to the Blue Room, where the President awaits with his wife. The President's senior military aide presents the dean to the President, and then to his wife. The rest of the Diplomatic Corps follow the dean, and are presented individually. Then the entire company goes to the state dining room for refreshments.

Indiscriminate public receptions now are part of the past. Even the traditional New Year's Day and inaugural receptions were abandoned a few years ago, because of the great strain put upon the President by the number of persons who came to shake his hand.



WHITE HOUSE, SOUTH LAWN