

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. list	Adults Accompanying Norwood School First Graders [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	00/00/0000	b(6)
002. list	Norwood School First Grade [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	02/10/2000	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 21401

FOLDER TITLE:

Children's Tour Information

2015-0275-S
rc2040

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 10, 2000

Mr. Eric Woodard
WH Office of the First Lady
OEOB 100
*** Inside Mail ***

Dear Mr. Woodard:

This letter confirms a reserved tour of the White House for 66 people from the Norwood Elem. School group (ID# 00-94371) on Tuesday, February 15, 2000.

The number of people in the group may **not** be increased. If there is a reduction in the number scheduled, or if for some reason the tour is cancelled, please notify the Group Tour department as soon as possible at 202-456-2202. Our TDD (telephone device for the deaf) is 202-456-2121.

The members of the group should arrive at **12:00 p.m** at the **Visitor Entrance** on East Executive Avenue. The person in charge of the group *should show this letter* to the officer on duty. Please arrive promptly, as tours are not guaranteed if you arrive late.

Tour hours are occasionally affected at the last minute by unforeseen events. Please call the Visitors Office **24-hour info line recording at 202-456-7041** to confirm that tours will be conducted.

On behalf of The President and Mrs. Clinton, we hope that members of this group enjoy their visit to the White House.

Sincerely,

Melinda N. Bates

Melinda N. Bates
Special Assistant to the President and
Director, Visitors Office

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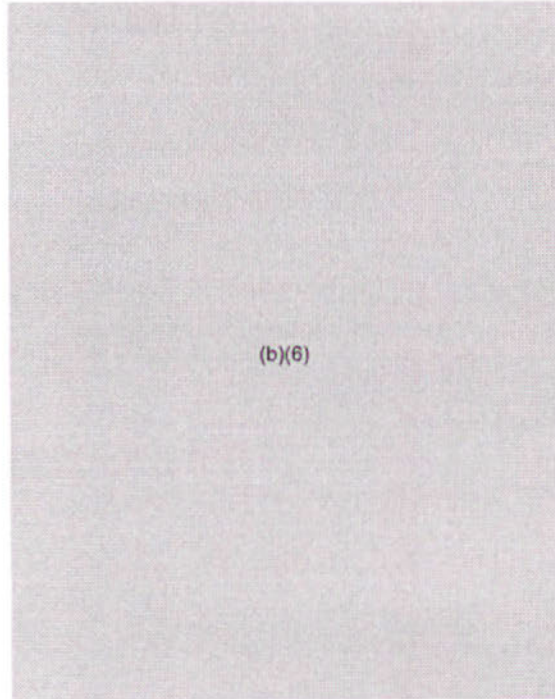
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Adults Accompanying Norwood School First Graders
Tuesday, February 15, 2000

Name	Birthdate	S. S. Number
Boylan, Rebecca Lynn		
Gibert, Margaret Jean		
Heartfield, Linda C.		
Kaslow, Amy		
McGuire, Nancy M.		
Norvell, Melissa		
Schumacher, Connie		
Sievers, Maureen		



[001]

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February 10, 2000

Norwood School First Grade —

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Na</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>
Michael		Alexander	
Katharine	A.	Baird	
Elizabeth		Boyce	
Eamon	R.A.	Boylan	
Patrick		Burr	
Natalie		Chaney	
Fariha		Choudhury	
Caroline	L.	Collins	
Annelise		Corriveau	
Alexander	E.	Downie	
Andrew		Duffy	
Sarah		Frear	
Haley	S.K.	Gibert	
Cole	M.	Graham	
Wynne		Graham	
Robert	McGill	Heartfield	
Leah	Beth	Holiander	
Stephanie	E.	Jones	
Kojo	A.	Kamya	
Thomas	P.	Klebanoff	
Jonathan		Korns	
Priya		Krishnan	
Jamie	Sprei	Lazarus	
Michelle		Marriott	
Wiley	B.	Marsteller	
J. Redford		Martin	
Scott	E.	Melby	
Elizabeth	Marlene	Mendelson	
Benjamin	Ford	Mitchell	
James	C.	Moore	
Bridget	R.	Morrison	
Margaret	T.	Morrison	
Thomas	Petrick	Mullins	
Sunil		Rao	
Taylor	M.	Reis	
Gregory	R.	Rodgers	
Nicholas	K.	Roman	
Wesley	D.	Roman	
Harris	S.	Rosenblum	
Sophie	M.	Rosetti	
Justin	J.	Rouillier	
Erik	C.	Schluntz	
Rebecca	I.	Shesser	
Astrea	D.	Somarriba	
Charles	W.	Sparks	
Robert	A.	Spencer	
Robin		Temple	
Jessica	D.	Thompson	
Caroline	J.	Toch	
Alicia	Wrenn	Vieth	
Kate		Wetstone	
Taylor		Wilson	
Nikkoi	M.	Wiltshire	
Caroline	D.	Worthy	
Michael	A.	Zachau-Walker	
Abraham		Zhao	

(b)(6)

[002]



The House



Did you Know? The White House receives approximately **6,000** visitors a day and has 6 floors (2 are basements), 132 rooms, 32 bathrooms, 147 windows, 412 doors, 12 chimneys, 3 elevators, and 7 staircases. It takes 570 gallons of white paint to cover the outside.

Did you Know? Throughout its history, the White House has been known as the "President's Palace," the "President's House," and the "Executive Mansion."

President Theodore Roosevelt officially gave the White House its current name in 1901.

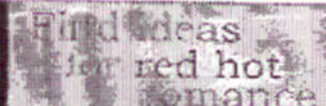
The White House has six floors--two basements, two public floors, and two floors for the First Family. Visitors who tour the White House are able to see the most beautiful and historic rooms in the house including the East Room, the Green Room, the Blue Room, the Red Room, and the State Dining Room. These rooms are used by the President and First Lady to entertain guests and to receive leaders of other countries.



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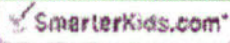
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White House, official residence of the president of the United States, located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. Known by different titles through its history, it has been most popularly known as the White House. This designation became official in 1901, when President Theodore Roosevelt had the name engraved on his stationery.

Constructed of Virginia sandstone, the main building is built in the classical style associated with the 16th-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio. The formal rooms of state are on the first floor, including the East Room, used for state receptions and balls; the oval Blue Room, where the president receives guests at state dinners; the Red Room, in which the president's wife receives guests; the Green Room, used for informal receptions; and the State Dining Room, used for formal dinners. The president's private residence occupies the second floor, and the third floor consists of guest rooms and staff quarters. A china room, the kitchen, and the library are on the ground floor.

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The cornerstone for the White House was laid in 1792, and construction was complete when President [John Adams](#) and his family moved there in 1800. During the [War of 1812](#) (1812-1815), the interior was destroyed.

Reconstruction was completed in 1817, and the south portico was added. Between 1948 and 1952 the building's exterior was renovated. A decade later the interior was refurnished and a permanent art collection was assembled. In 1964 the Committee for the Preservation of the White House was established.

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A White House History

Welcome to our electronic tour of the First Family's home. The White House is one of our nation's historical treasures. You will discover that within each room you will have the opportunity to go back in time in that room and see how the room has changed.

A Glimpse into the Past

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WHITE HOUSE HISTORY

from webpage

-The First Families-

In spite of all the aids, comforts, and privileges that come to a President and his family, homemaking in a house that is also a national monument has its drawbacks. When President Coolidge arrived at the White House in 1923, he tried to continue his pleasant after-dinner habit of sitting on his front porch--the great North Portico--and watching the people go by on Pennsylvania Avenue. So many pedestrians stopped to stare at him, however, that he gave up his modest form of relaxation. President Coolidge, too, once invited a Missouri Senator friend to accompany him on an evening walk outside the grounds. As they returned to the mansion, the Senator remarked facetiously, "I wonder who lives there." "Nobody," replied the President. "They just come and go."

Though Chief Executives have moved in and out with regularity, the White House has always been a place of extremely personal living. Indeed, the attention commanded by the Presidency intensifies and exaggerates the normal joys and sorrows of everyday family experience, the high moments of birth and death that are part of life here as in any other home. One of the most endearing aspects of life at the Executive Mansion can be glimpsed from the hundreds of stories that have come down through the years about the many children who have lived there.

The very young ones were usually grandchildren, since few men have reached the top rung of the political ladder in their early years. And the first of all children whose shouts and laughter echoed through the mansion was 4-year-old granddaughter of John and Abigail Adams. Jefferson's eight years in the presidency were cheered and brightened by the many visits of his married daughters, Martha Randolph and Maria Eppes. On one of the visits, in the winter of 1805, Mrs. Randolph gave birth to her eighth child--James Madison Randolph--the first baby born in the Executive Mansion.

The most photographed Presidential grandchild of the 19th century must have been "Baby McKee," who lived in the White House with grandfather Benjamin Harrison and his four-generation family during the early 1890's. Little Benjamin was often photographed as he drove his own goat cart about the grounds.

The goat once ran away with Baby McKee. As the goat darted off with the boy and raced down the White House driveway onto Pennsylvania Avenue, the portly President himself, dressed in top hat and frock coat, followed in hot pursuit.

President Lincoln and Mary Lincoln were loving and indulgent parents who often said, "Let the children have a good time." This the children did, and the President's friends and colleagues quite probably felt at times he was too permissive when he failed to punish Tad for bombarding the door with his toy cannon during a Cabinet meeting, or when the boy stopped his father's callers to sell refreshments and wheedle money for war charities at stands he set up at the mansion. The only President's child born in the White House was Esther Cleveland, the second daughter of Grover and

Frances Cleveland. Esther's sister Ruth, who had arrived during the interlude between Cleveland's two terms, was almost 2 years old at the time of Esther's birth in 1873. Before the President's second term ended, another girl, Marion, was born at the Cleveland's summer home in Massachusetts. Four and a half years after the departure of the demure little Cleveland girls, the uninhibited children of Theodore Roosevelt came on with the force of a hurricane. The five younger children--ages 3 to 14 when the Roosevelts arrived--slid down the stairways on trays stolen from the pantry, stalked the halls on stilts, and bicycled and skated on newly polished floors. The Roosevelt children also kept a small zoo of pets that included a badger, a bear, raccoons, cats, dogs, rats, guinea pigs, snakes, and a calico pony named Alogonquin. When Archie had the measles, his brothers entertained him by leading the pony into his second-floor bedroom, after riding up the President's elevator.

Ten more administrations would follow that of Grover Cleveland before the cry of a President's infant was again heard inside the Executive Mansion. Then, early in 1961, came President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy with their 2-month-old baby, John Jr., and his engaging sister, Caroline, 3 years old. Newspaper and magazine editors were soon publishing stories and pictures of the youngsters' third-floor playroom where the Eisenhower grandchildren had romped not long before; of the new tree house, swings, and other playground equipment behind the south lawn; of Caroline's pet canary Robin, her pony Macaroni, and her dog Pushinka, the gift of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Multiplying anecdotes told how "John-John" had refused to greet the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg because he had not been given his usual cookie and ginger ale; how Caroline had presented India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with a rose for his buttonhole; and what she said when reporters asked what her father was doing. "Oh, he's upstairs with his shoes and socks off," she said, "not doing anything."

By restricting photographs and limiting access to her children, Mrs. Kennedy sought to protect them from the effects of so much concentrated attention. She established a kindergarten at home, as had Mrs. Cleveland, so that Caroline and little John could play with children of their own age, away from the public eye. From the beginning, each President and his family have created a highly individual home within the Executive Mansion by furnishing and embellishing it in their own taste. Dolley Madison expressed her warm and vibrant personality in decorating the Presidential quarters with bright yellow draperies and upholstery. Sedate and proper Lucy Hayes had her bedroom walls tinted pale blue, with panels of light gray and pink.

Abigail Fillmore, a one-time schoolteacher who had met her husband-to-be when they attended school together, obtained Congressional funds for the first official library in the Executive Mansion. With a dictionary, histories, sets of Dickens,

Thackeray, and other works, she filled the bookshelves installed in the upstairs sitting room. There, she and President Fillmore spent many quiet evenings reading and chatting, while their daughter, Mary Abigail, played the piano or harp.

Equally revealing possessions have moved in and out of the White House with each successive family. With the Tafts, for instance, came the President's many lawbooks, recalling his long and distinguished legal career capped eventually by his appointment as Chief Justice of the United States.

The erudite Hoovers brought many mementos from their world travels. South American rugs, Oriental art, caged songbirds--and books in various languages, including their own translations from Latin of an important 16th-century volume on mining. All of which helped Lou Hoover transform the broad, bare hall on the second floor into an inviting reception area for guests.

To the White House from Hyde Park, New York, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt shipped some of their sturdy handcrafted furniture and a wheelchair that would carry the President along the family corridor.

During the Trumans' time, the second floor held three pianos--appropriate symbols of the close harmony that characterized the family from Independence, Missouri. One piano stood in the oval room that was then the President's study; Margaret practiced on another in her sitting room, where she also kept her record collection, while a third--a spinet in the hall--was often used for duets.

A few years later, when friends of President Eisenhower visited him in the upstairs oval room, which he, too, used as a study, they found displayed there a fascinating array of military and civilian awards, decorations, swords, and other gifts presented by world leaders. In his book *The White House Years*, the President wrote that he received visitors in the study "informally in the evening, whenever a somewhat homier atmosphere than could be obtained in my office was desirable."

After the Eisenhowers and the President's prized souvenirs went their separate ways, the changing scenes on the family floor continued to mirror, in colors and furnishings, tastes and activities of each new group of White House occupants.

Mrs. Eisenhower's feminine and frilly decor, with its "Mamie pink" accents in flowered slipcovers and draperies, gave way to Mrs. Kennedy's light-blue curtains and blue-and-white furnishings that showed to advantage against plain off-white walls in the private bedroom and sitting-room areas. American period pieces, French antiques, and valuable art objects began to appear in various places: the sitting halls that

share the wide corridor; the Queens' and Lincoln Bedrooms, where visiting royalty had slept; and what was called the Treaty Room, then decorated in Victorian style. They gave visible evidence of Jacqueline Kennedy's program to restore the White House furnishings that awaken a feeling of the historical past.

The Yellow Oval Room on the second floor has had the same color and Louis XVI furnishings, and has served the same functions, for the last seven administrations. Mrs. Kennedy turned this room into a formal drawing room, and it has proved to be the most suitable place in the house to entertain state guests before dinners or luncheons given in their honor. With the arrival of the Johnson family, Mrs. Johnson put her own signature on the look and use of the second-floor apartments. In her mainly green-and yellow-bedroom she set up a cozy working space, in which she dictated letters and speeches, and planned and directed her many activities. Down the hall—in rooms that had lately known the toys of the Kennedy children—the Johnson's teenage girls, Luci and Lynda, had their bedrooms until marriage took them both to homes of their own. And when President Nixon brought his family to the White House in 1969, his daughter Tricia moved into the suite that had been Lynda and Luci's. The following year, Tricia took television viewers on the first public showing of many of the rooms in the family quarters.

After the Carters moved in, ten-year-old Amy occupied the bedroom that had been Caroline Kennedy's, then Luci Johnson's, then Tricia Nixon's. Her tree house in the gnarled old cedar on the south lawn, her delight in reading, her violin lessons, pets, and school friends became part of the continuing White House small-fry chronicles that began with Susanna, granddaughter of John and Abigail Adams.

President and Mrs. Reagan put their stamp on the second-floor family quarters, as well as on the expanded living space that was added to the third floor during the Truman reconstruction of 1948-52. Most of this floor was then divided into bedroom, bath, and sitting room apartments, which are available today for family members and personal guests. The remaining area serves as space for storage and housekeeping, with one room reserved for recreation. Mrs. Reagan's work on these floors completed the refurbishing project begun by Mrs. Kennedy in 1961.

The Reagan redecoration focused chiefly on the second and third floors. But one elegant wanderer purchased by Monroe in 1817—a French Empire sofa—was returned to the Blue Room on the state floor. Sold at an auction just before the Civil War, this gilded sofa, curved to fit the room, came home in 1978, only to be stored again. Finally reclaimed and re-covered with blue silk, it joined seven of the original matching chairs. Behind the scenes and events, the men and women who have lived in the Executive Mansion have known the same happiness and frustration, pride and misery that come to all of us.

Every night, the gruff and lonely warrior, Andrew Jackson, performed a tender ritual. After removing the treasured miniature of his dead wife, Rachel, which he carried next to his heart, he would place it on the bedside table near her worn and faded Bible, so that he might see her face first on awakening in the morning.

In another of the family rooms, frail Eliza Johnson, devoted wife of Andrew for 41 years, rocked and sewed as she awaited word of the Senate vote at her husband's impeachment trial. "I knew he'd be acquitted," she said firmly, but with tears in her eyes, to the official who brought the good news. "I knew it."

Fashionable President Arthur, who lived luxuriously in the mansion during his one term in the 1880's, showed another side of his nature when he was alone. Like Jackson, he too was a recent widower and, like the earlier President, Arthur carried on a ritual of remembrance by ordering fresh flowers to be placed daily next to the photograph of his lovely Ellen.

One of the most touching scenes in the history of the great change-overs that have come to this house occurred in Eleanor Roosevelt's study on the second floor, after the death of her husband. Vice President Truman, summoned to the White House, arrived without knowing of the massive stroke that had ended the President's life at Warm Springs, Georgia. He heard the news from Mrs. Roosevelt.



More About the House



The Oval Office

The Oval Office is where the President does the business of the country--signing bills and Executive Orders and meeting with staff, visitors, and guests. The Oval Office changes with each Administration, as each President brings personal mementos and favorite furniture or artwork, and each makes selections from the White House art collection.

President Clinton chose to use the Resolute Desk, made from the timbers of the British ship, the HMS *Resolute*. Abandoned north of the Arctic Circle in 1854, the HMS *Resolute* was later found by the crew of an American whaling ship, refitted, and sent to Queen Victoria as a token of goodwill. When the ship was later dismantled, the desk was made from timbers of the ship, and Queen Victoria gave it to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Every President from President Hayes through President Dwight D. Eisenhower used the desk; it was first placed in the Oval Office in 1961 at the request of President John F. Kennedy.

After being on exhibit for ten years at the Smithsonian Institution, the Resolute was put back into use by President Jimmy Carter. The Resolute was also used in the Oval Office by President Ronald Reagan and for a few months by President George Bush. On January 20, 1993, this historic desk was returned to the Oval Office once again, at the request of President Clinton.



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A Tour of the House



The Blue Room

James Hoban designed this room as an oval at the request of President Washington. Today, it is used as a reception room for foreign dignitaries. During the holiday season, the chandelier is removed, and the White House Christmas tree stands in the middle of the room.



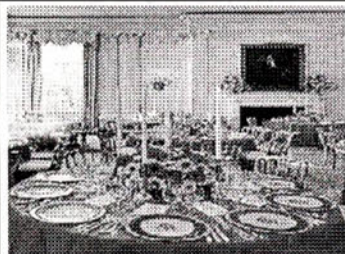
The Green Room

Over the years, the Green Room has served as a card room, as a sitting room, and, recently, as a parlor for small teas, receptions, and meetings. The walls were covered with green silk during Thomas Jefferson's presidency.



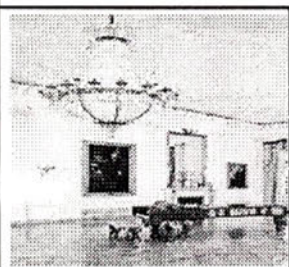
The Red Room

The walls of the Red Room are covered in red satin. During James Madison's presidency, his wife, Dolley, held musical gatherings in this room on Sunday evenings.



The State Dining Room

The State Dining Room can accommodate up to 140 guests. Originally, it was much smaller and served as a drawing room, an office, and a Cabinet room. President Theodore Roosevelt once hung a large moose head above the fireplace.



The East Room

The East Room is the largest room in the White House. It has been used for dances, receptions, concerts, weddings, funerals, church services, press conferences, bill-signing ceremonies, and many other events. President Theodore Roosevelt even held wrestling and boxing matches here.





Children in the White House



Many Presidents have had children or grandchildren who lived with them or visited often at the White House. Chelsea Victoria, daughter of Bill and Hillary Clinton, enjoys spending time with her father. Chelsea is the first child to live in the White House since Amy Carter. An avid soccer player and ballet enthusiast, Chelsea's favorite subjects in school are math and foreign languages.



Amy Carter, President Jimmy Carter's daughter, moved into the White House at the age of nine. She has three older brothers, named Jack, Jeff, and Chip. Amy's mother, Rosalynn, once remarked, "Her brothers are so much older that it is almost as though she has four fathers, and we have had to stand in line to spoil her."



President Richard Nixon's children, Tricia and Julie, along with Julie's husband, David Eisenhower, enjoyed family dinners in the White House.

Lynda Johnson, President Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter, was married to Charles Robb in 1967 in the East Room of the White House. It was the first wedding to take place in the White House since 1914, when President Woodrow Wilson's daughter, Eleanor, married William Gibbs McAdoo.



President John F. Kennedy's children, John Jr. and Caroline, would often come to visit their father in the Oval Office. The President enjoyed their company and loved to watch them play. Caroline had a pony named Macaroni who roamed freely around the White House gardens.



Thomas (Tad) Lincoln was the youngest son of President Abraham Lincoln. Known for his antics around the White House Tad once discovered how to make all of the White House bells ring at the same time -- much to the surprise of the entire staff and residents of the building!



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Pets in the White House

Presidents and their families have had many pets who lived with them in the White House.



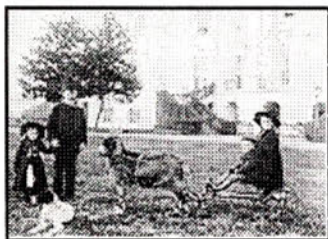
This is a picture of me, Buddy. I arrived at the White House in December 1997. I am a chocolate Labrador retriever.



Hi, I'm Socks. This is a picture of me on the South Lawn where I like to take naps. I moved to the White House with the Clintons in 1993. I am the first cat to live in the White House since Amy Carter's cat, Misty Malarky Ying Yang.



President Lyndon Johnson and his beloved Yuki liked to perform in the Oval Office. Yuki was found at a Texas gas station by Johnson's daughter Luci. He was one of the President's favorite dogs. President Johnson also had two beagles which he named Him and Her!



President Benjamin Harrison's son Russell Harrison had a pet goat named Old Whiskers. This goat was so ornery that one day the President was forced to chase him down Pennsylvania Avenue when he decided to run away with the Harrison grandchildren.

Fala, the best loved and most famous of all First Pets, belonged to President Franklin Roosevelt. Born on April 7, 1940, Fala was a gift to the President from his cousin Margaret Stuckley. The President loved Fala so much that he rarely went anywhere without him.

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The History of the White House



Did you know? The White House was the biggest house in the United States until the Civil War.

Did you know? William Henry Harrison served the shortest term of any President. He served thirty-two days, from March 4 to April 4, 1841. He fell ill with pneumonia shortly after his Inauguration and never recovered.



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A Tour of the House



The Blue Room

James Hoban designed this room as an oval at the request of President Washington. Today, it is used as a reception room for foreign dignitaries. During the holiday season, the chandelier is removed, and the White House Christmas tree stands in the middle of the room.



The Green Room

Over the years, the Green Room has served as a card room, as a sitting room, and, recently, as a parlor for small teas, receptions, and meetings. The walls were covered with green silk during Thomas Jefferson's presidency.



The Red Room

The walls of the Red Room are covered in red satin. During James Madison's presidency, his wife, Dolley, held musical gatherings in this room on Sunday evenings.



The State Dining Room

The State Dining Room can accommodate up to 140 guests. Originally, it was much smaller and served as a drawing room, an office, and a Cabinet room. President Theodore Roosevelt once hung a large moose head above the fireplace.



The East Room

The East Room is the largest room in the White House. It has been used for dances, receptions, concerts, weddings, funerals, church services, press conferences, bill-signing ceremonies, and many other events. President Theodore Roosevelt even held wrestling and boxing matches here.





More About the House



The Oval Office

The Oval Office is where the President does the business of the country--signing bills and Executive Orders and meeting with staff, visitors, and guests. The Oval Office changes with each Administration, as each President brings personal mementos and favorite furniture or artwork, and each makes selections from the White House art collection.

President Clinton chose to use the Resolute Desk, made from the timbers of the British ship, the HMS *Resolute*. Abandoned north of the Arctic Circle in 1854, the HMS *Resolute* was later found by the crew of an American whaling ship, refitted, and sent to Queen Victoria as a token of goodwill. When the ship was later dismantled, the desk was made from timbers of the ship, and Queen Victoria gave it to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Every President from President Hayes through President Dwight D. Eisenhower used the desk; it was first placed in the Oval Office in 1961 at the request of President John F. Kennedy.

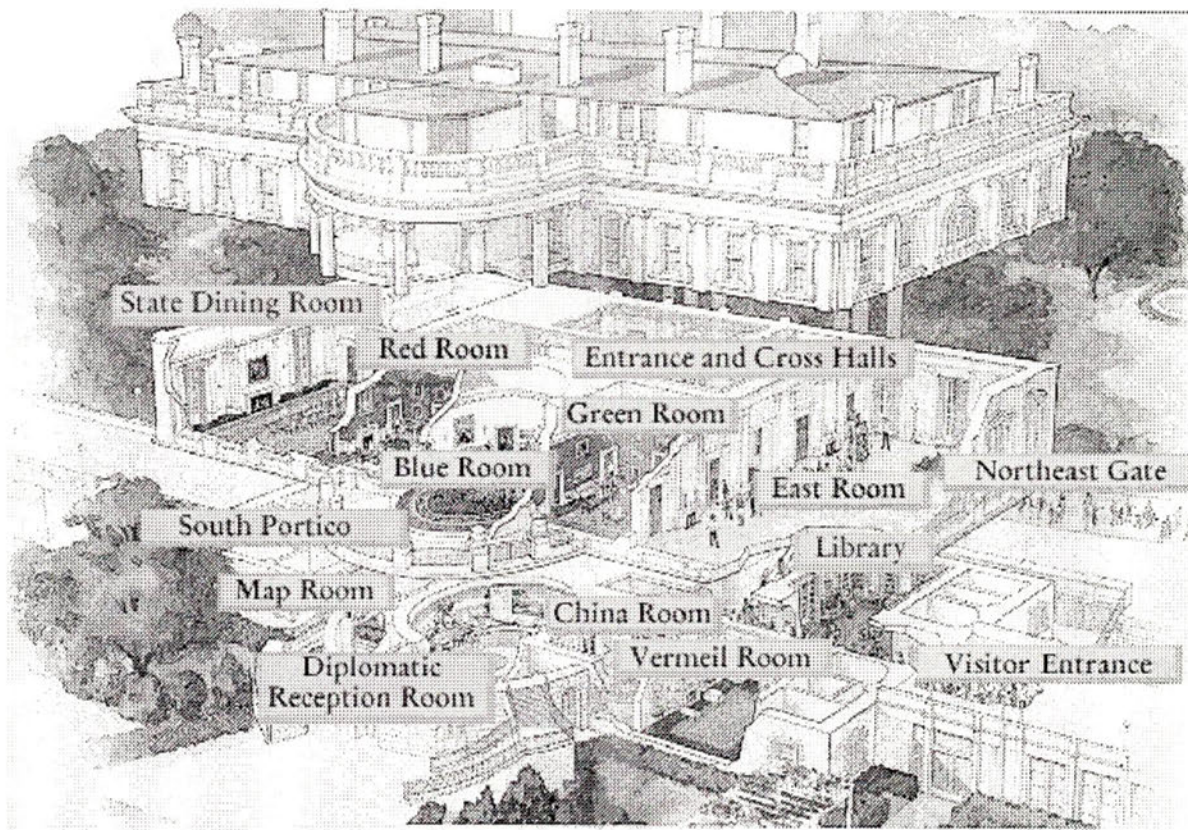
After being on exhibit for ten years at the Smithsonian Institution, the Resolute was put back into use by President Jimmy Carter. The Resolute was also used in the Oval Office by President Ronald Reagan and for a few months by President George Bush. On January 20, 1993, this historic desk was returned to the Oval Office once again, at the request of President Clinton.



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A White House History

Welcome to our electronic tour of the First Family's home. The White House is one of our nation's historical treasures. You will discover that within each room you will have the opportunity to go back in time in that room and see how the room has changed.

A Glimpse into the Past

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Choosing a City



In the late 1700s, it was decided that our country needed a capital city. Many people felt that it should be located in New York; others thought it should be in Philadelphia. Our first President, George Washington, finally picked a site on the Potomac River, midway between the northern and southern states. This spot would come to be called Washington, District of Columbia.

Pierre L'Enfant, a city planner from France, designed the new city. He decided to place the Capitol Building on one hill and the "President's House" on another hill. L'Enfant had many plans for building the city, but he lost his job after too many disagreements with landowners. The streets and parks that exist in Washington, D.C., today are the result of the work of two surveyors, Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, who made maps and plans based on L'Enfant's original designs.

The original District of Columbia was like a wilderness, and the Potomac River caused the area to be marshy. Pigs roamed the streets, and mosquitoes made people sick from malaria. Conditions improved, however, when the marshes, creeks, and canals were drained.



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Constructing a Home for the President

While the city of Washington, D.C. was being developed, the President's House was also getting under way. A contest was held to select a designer for the house. While it is said that our third President, Thomas Jefferson, submitted designs for the house, architect James Hoban won the contest. Work on the house began in 1792. Stonemasons were hired from Scotland. Bricks were made on the north lawn. Sandstone was brought from Stafford County, Virginia, and lumber from North Carolina and Virginia.



President George Washington oversaw construction of the White House, but he never lived there! It was our second President, John Adams, elected in 1796, who first lived in the White House. His term was almost over by the time he moved in, and only six rooms had been finished.

While James Madison was President, from 1809-1817, the United States went to war with England. On August 24, 1814, British soldiers sailed up the Potomac River and set fire to the White House. Before doing so, however, they marched right into the President's dining room and helped themselves to food that had been left on the table!

Dolley Madison, the President's wife, stayed behind until the very last minute. She saved important government papers and the portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart that now hangs in the East Room. A summer thunderstorm put out the fire, but only the outside, charred walls and the interior brick walls remained. It took three years to rebuild the White House.



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