

letters of Mrs. John Adams, wife of the second president, the building was not completed and made ready for occupancy until 1800. Up to that time the building and furnishing of the president's home cost the nation about \$333,000.

Hoban's original plans contemplated extension of Pennsylvania avenue direct through what is now the south park of the executive mansion. What under the restoration of the building is now the front of the White House was originally designed by Hoban as its rear entrance. He supposed that the structure would face to the south, overlooking a broad avenue, and so provided a spacious portico and splendid approach. When Pennsylvania avenue was changed and made to circle around the spot where the treasury building is now located, and pass the White House on the north, it was necessary to put up another fine portico, with great Ionic columns.

Originally it was intended that all the government buildings should be erected south of the White House, between it and the Potomac river. However, much of this ground was lowland, and engineers soon discovered that foundations would be too costly. The plan was, therefore, abandoned.

The British captured Washington in 1814 and applied the torch to many of the public buildings. Mrs. Madison—the "Dolly Madison" of romantic history—did not leave the executive mansion until the enemy had nearly entered the city, and when she departed she hastily filled her carriage with state papers and the famous Stuart portrait of Washington. A few minutes later the Red Coats fired the White House. When the president and Mrs. Madison returned their dwelling was only a blackened mass of ruins.

Congress immediately appropriated \$300,000 for rebuilding of the structure, and James Hoban, the original architect, was commissioned with supervision of the task. On New Year's day, 1818, it was again occupied, a reception being held to the public.

It appears that, having rebuilt the White House, congress almost forgot about it for a long period of years. Very little was appropriated for furnishings. It was not until Van Buren became president that any real expenditure of money was made for proper appointments at the president's home. In Zachary Taylor's occupancy of the White House the spacious east room was completely changed. It was carpeted, redecorated, and the wonderful glass candelabras or gas fixtures, installed. These same fixtures, with their myriads of prisms, were remodeled a few years ago, and now sparkle in the light of electricity. During Fillmore's administration the oval "sitting room"—now the "blue room," where the president receives on the occasion of public functions—was changed into a library. Mrs. Fillmore herself selected the books.