

During the War of 1812, when James Madison was President, the British stormed Washington and burned the White House. They arrived so unexpectedly that they found dinner for 40 all cooked and smoking on the kitchen spits, but not soon enough to stop Dolley Madison from saving the silver plate, a wagonload of official papers, the famous Stuart portrait of Washington, and her pet parrot.

It took Hoban three years to restore the building before President James Monroe could move in. The Virginia sandstone walls were then painted white to cover the scars left by the fire, and this is the most widely accepted story of how the White House got its name. The name didn't become official however, until Theodore Roosevelt asked Congress to adopt it.

History probably never will record all the dramatic decisions that have been made in the White House. Most of the

Grover Cleveland was a bachelor who married in the White House. Other White House marriages were those of Nellie, President Grant's daughter, and Alice, Teddy Roosevelt's oldest daughter.

Teddy Roosevelt made major changes in the White House structure, partly because of the exuberant needs of his six children, but also because by 1902 the White House had become inadequate for the growing volume of executive business. New offices were added in the form of wings extending east and west. These were architecturally harmonious, and at a depressed level, so as not to detract from the beauty of the main building.

The White House originally was, and still appears to be, a two-story building, but excavation of the basement and improvement of the attic in 1934 made it actually four stories high. The swimming pool also was added at that time.

Here is a glimpse behind the doors of the most famous building in the United States.



State dinners and receptions are held in beautiful Blue Room (left), while the Red Room is reserved for smaller affairs.



The State Dining Room (left) holds more than 100 guests. East Room (center), largest and most famous, has the renowned Stuart portrait. Lincoln Room is kept as he used it.

Presidents made their own decisions, but even the most independent had friends and advisers who were often more influential than the official cabinets. Some of them even lived at the White House.

Probably the best known of these advisers were the members of Andrew Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet," which included such influential men as Francis P. Blair and Martin Van Buren. Teddy Roosevelt often confided in the close friends with whom he played handball; Franklin D. Roosevelt had his early New Dealers; and Woodrow Wilson had his Col. House. Van Buren's political enemies criticized him for having too many White House cronies, while John Quincy Adams spent a dedicated, almost austere, term in the executive mansion with few friends or advisers.

Beneath the great events, the Presidents lived much as other people do. The first baby born in the White House was James Madison Randolph, grandson of Thomas Jefferson. Wilson was widowed and remarried while he was President, and

The dignity and beauty of the White House are such that it is one of few Washington buildings to escape architectural criticism. It's neither simple nor pretentious. It's not large enough to suggest imitation of royal palaces, yet it's not so small as to dwarf its importance as the residence of the head of a great nation.

Democratically, the average citizen may visit the home of the President. During certain hours, he may see the historic Green Room, the Blue Room where diplomatic functions are held, the State Dining Room, as well as the famous 80x40-foot East Room, which is used for large public receptions.

A popular event that takes place at the White House is the annual egg roll, held on the broad south lawn on Easter Monday. This year, President and Mrs. Eisenhower extended Easter greetings to 12,960 children and adults, even though it rained intermittently. And that's a bigger crowd than the baseball fans the Senators draw on a sunny Sunday!



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