

2008 White House Christmas commemorative ornament now ready



The 2008 White House Christmas ornament honoring the presidency of Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893), the twenty-third president of the United States was inspired by the Harrison family's Victorian Christmas tree, the first recorded tree to decorate the White House. The ornament, the 28th in a series started by the White

House Historical Association in 1981 presents the White House as a family home.

Christmas stands out in White House memory as a special time for the Harrisons. Accommodations were tight, with six adults and three grandchildren sharing the second floor family quarters. The president doted on his grandchildren and

went to great lengths to amuse them. He said, "We shall have an old-fashioned Christmas tree for the grandchildren upstairs, and I shall be their Santa Claus." To the delight of the children, the tree was laden with decorations and innumerable toys and treats. Mrs. Harrison had made sure each member of her husband's staff was remembered with a personal token and all the domestic employees were called in to receive gifts from under the tree.

Inspired by the Harrison's Victorian Christmas tree, this year's gold finished ornament is an interpretation of the first tree. Beneath the tree are the presents the Harrison grandchildren received: a toy train and a wooden sled await Benjamin, Mary's rosy-cheeked doll sits on a tricycle, and nearby is Marthena's much wished for dollhouse. A three-foot high Santa Claus completes the season's spectacle.

Twenty previous White House ornaments honored presidents, starting with George Washington. The 1989 ornament pays tribute to the bicentennial of the American presidency, and 1992 honors the laying of the White House cornerstone in 1792. The bicentennial of the White House as home of the president was commemorated in 2000. In 2002 the ornament honored the centennial of the restoration of the White House and the building of the West Wing.

The cost of the ornament is \$16.95 plus packing and delivery and can be ordered from the White House Historical Association, P.O. Box 96586, Washington, D.C. 20090-6586, or you can call toll free 1-800-

555-2451, or visit online at www.whitehousehistory.org. Each of the 27 ornaments (from 1981-2007) is also available, along with educational brochures.

The White House Historical Association was established in 1961 as a non-profit organization to enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the White House. All

proceeds from its trusts and sales of ornaments, publications and other association products are used to fund acquisitions of historic furnishings and art works for the permanent White House collection, assist in the preservation of the public rooms, and further its educational mission.

Topic of recent poem is Vernonia

Mildred "Millie" Thacker Graves, formerly of Vernonia, has written a new Vernonia poem and sent it in to us to share with our readers.

My Home Town

Vernonia, Oregon is my kind of place

It is peaceful, and calm, away from the rat race

It's death was predicted but that was not the case

Upon my return, I feel, I've reached Home Base.

In the past the town was known because of the mill

The O-A Lumber Company, up on the hill

And loggers and mill workers with pockets to fill

'Til 1957 when the saws were still.

Vernonia has evolved during all these years

There was a time of only gloom, doom and tears

It has survived, in spite of everyone's fears

It has diversified and now we hear some cheers.

We look to the future but remember the past

How the timber came down and the boom didn't last

We couldn't believe that it happened so fast

Men and women, young and old, were all aghast.

I'm proud of Vernonia, so come take a peek

There's the lake, the rivers – Nehalem and Rock Creek

The fish are just awaiting and they're mild and meek

You'll find the quiet and solitude that many people seek.

Come on over and meet the people and its land

Come and see the families, walking hand in hand

The loggers, the Axmen, and their mighty band

Living in the coastal mountains, oh, so grand.

There are all kinds of trees reaching for the sky

Seeking and searching for sunlight, giving it a try

Of course, you'll see spotted owls, often on the fly

They changed the lives of loggers, even made some cry.

The movie, Ring of Fire, was our claim to fame

We thought that Vernonia would never be the same

It soon became peaceful and quiet and much too tame

But that was a time much before the Axmen came.

It has been a joy to see the town blossom and grow

To put the floods behind us with the rushing waters flow

To return to peaceful waters as the current finally slow

But minds still replay those times when we see rain and snow.

All joined forces when the water swept the land bare

And we showed a toughness of which we were unaware

It brought us all together to find we really care

Now a rainbow has appeared and the weather – it is fair!

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Pet of the Month

*Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 p.m.*

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Tiger needs a home

Hi, I'm Tiger. Don't I look cute and lovable? I may have a few years on me but that just helps me know how to be a great cat! Yep, there's a lot of life left in this fur and I'd love to spend time relaxing with you as my new family. I'm altered, up to date on all my shots, and come with a 2-week local free vet check, so you don't worry about that stuff. Just come get me so we can go home and start enjoying each others company.

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

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