



PRESS RELEASE
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THE WHITE HOUSE: THE HISTORY OF AN AMERICAN IDEA
New Edition of a Classic Work of Architectural History

The White House: The History Of An American Idea, published by the White House Historical Association, will acquaint and delight history enthusiasts, scholars and casual readers alike. Highlighted by little known details about official and domestic life, *The White House* brings together the story of the architecture of the White House and the story of the first families and designers who shaped it. Just as the American presidency is a unique office, so is the residence of the holder of that office. *The White House: The History Of An Idea* weaves together a story of constant change --- architectural, social and political.

“Although built in the experimental years of the new nation and altered over the more than 200-year history, the White House remains the natural symbol of the American presidency and perhaps the best-known residence in the world. The history of the house is a story of survival and growth that parallels that of the nation it has come to symbolize,” writes author William Seale.

Designed by Irish-born architect James Hoban and built by Scottish stonemasons, the house required preservation efforts fewer than 25 years after its construction. Burned to a smoke-blackened shell by the British in 1814, the house was rebuilt, later to be threatened with replacement but retained, condemned to destruction but made new. Many of the presidents hired architects and made changes both large and small.

The White House offers a rare glimpse of long-vanished interiors and the discarded contributions of such giants of American architecture and design as Benjamin H. Latrobe, Thomas U. Walter, Louis Comfort Tiffany, and Charles F. McKim. Illustrations include drawings and photographs from the Historic American Building Survey as well as a large selection of historical plans, prints, and photographs, many never brought together in one volume.

William Seale is a historian, writer, and restorer of historic buildings. He has served as White House historian for the White House Historical Association, the National Park Service and as curator of American Culture at the Smithsonian Institution. He has taught at Columbia University, the University of South Carolina, and Lamar State University. He received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Duke University.

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 the sale of this book and other association products are used to fund acquisitions of historic furnishings and artwork for the permanent White House collection, assist in the preservation of the public rooms and further its educational mission.

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