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DRAFT

November 2, 1981

Dear Mrs. Porter:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address myself to your concerns. Your letter of October 1st has just reached my desk. You specified that you wanted to hear from me personally, so here I am.

You asked how we could balance the budget by robbing the poor and giving to the rich. Well, that isn't what we're doing. We are trying to reduce the cost of government and have already obtained consent of Congress to reduce the budget by more than 35 billion dollars.

We are reducing tax rates across the board. This will give 74% of the relief to those who are presently paying 72% of the total tax, the average middle-class Americans.

We are trying to do what you suggested -- make able bodied welfare recipients work at useful community jobs in return for their welfare grants. As Governor of California, I did this and it works very well. So far, Congress doesn't like the idea.

We have not suggested reducing Social Security. We are trying to do what you suggested -- removing those who are not disabled or deserving of grants they are presently getting.

We are not cutting back on school lunches for the needy. We are trying to quit providing them for those who aren't needy.

Now, as to the White House, we aren't spending a penny of tax money. The government provides \$50,000 for an incoming President to do what he will to the White House. We gave that money back to the government. We found, however, that the White House was badly in need of painting inside. The plumbing was so old there was danger of it giving away. Drapes and much upholstery was in need of recovering and replacing, etc. Friends started a campaign to get donations to have this work done. It has all been completed without spending a single tax dollar.

The dishes were a donation by a trust and the company making them did so at cost. This is the way the White House has always been furnished. Beautiful antiques, etc. have been gifts to the government. The last new china was in Harry Truman's time. There is a certain amount of breakage over the years. We're talking about china for state dinners when heads of government visit the United States and more than 100 people must be served. That is not the china we use for family meals.

Now, for your other concerns; we are not going to increase the risk to miners and, yes, I've been down in a mine. As for Black Lung, we are only trying to eliminate those cases where people are getting benefits who don't have Black Lung.

Selling planes to Saudi Arabia will run no risk of giving secrets away and it will provide thousands of jobs for American workers.

We don't take Air Force 1 to Camp David. The Camp is only twenty minutes from the White House by helicopter. The helicopters have to fly a required number of hours every week to keep crew and machine in shape.

I hope this answers your concerns and I assure you this Captain isn't in his tent when the fight is going on.

Sincerely, RR

Mrs. Bonnie M. Porter
712 Center Street
Central Citym Kentucky 42330

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Office of the Curator
January 20, 1981

THE CABINET ROOM

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt had the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White design and construct an office building to the west of the original White House with a colonnade between. From the Second Floor of the Executive Mansion he then removed his office and Cabinet Room to new quarters in this "West Wing". The Cabinet Room was placed in the northeast corner, where it is located today, and the President's Office, which was then a rectangular rather than an oval room, in the southeast corner.

In 1909, President William Howard Taft expanded the wing to the south, constructing the first "Oval Office" at the center of the south front and moving the Cabinet Room to the southeast corner. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the Oval Office to its present southeast corner location and returned the Cabinet Room to the northeast corner.

Early in the Nixon administration, the Cabinet Room was redecorated. A green wool rug, with a gold and green anthemion border, which had been ordered during the Johnson administration and installed in April 1969, was complemented by green draperies with gold trim and ties fashioned to fit into the arched door and window recesses. At that time, a new table and new chairs and lighting fixtures were acquired; these are itemized below.

Cabinet Table

This large oval mahogany table was made by the Kittinger Company of Buffalo, New York, and purchased for use in the Cabinet Room by President Richard M. Nixon. It measures 22½ feet in length and 7 feet in width at its center. It replaced an oblong octagonal table which had been used since 1941. It was given to the White House Office by President Nixon.

Cabinet Chairs

Traditionally, when Cabinet members conclude their terms of service, they are permitted to take their cabinet chairs which bear brass plaques marked with their offices and dates of service. From 1913 to 1952, replacement chairs were made by a single Washington cabinetmaker in a design continued until 1970 when the present style of chair was selected. Made by the Kittinger Company, these chairs are derived from Queen Anne armchairs in the Council Chamber at Colonial Williamsburg. They are upholstered in a brown leather to complement the brown leather top of the Cabinet table.

Brass Chandeliers and Sconces

The two brass chandeliers and six matching sconces are modern reproductions of late 18th century lighting fixtures. Made by the Lester H. Berry Company of Philadelphia, they feature urn and ball turned shafts with slender, cyma-curved, electrified candle arms.

Mantel

The large white marble mantel has been situated in the Cabinet Room since at least 1909. The simple shelf and apron ornamented with dentil-like blocks are supported by two fluted engaged columns on block plinths.

Urns

Although of undetermined origin, the pair of urns on the mantel have been used on the Cabinet Room mantel since at least the Eisenhower administration. They are made of brown-grey marble with such gilded metal mounts as a fixed acanthus cup lid with pineapple finial, ram's-head and ring handles, an acanthus and berry band at the base of the body, and bead moldings around the square base.

Clock-Barometer

This combined instrument was used on the U.S.S. Williamsburg when it served as the presidential yacht during the Truman administration and was presumably brought to the White House when that ship was decommissioned in 1953. Set into a simple walnut base are the circular brass cases of the clock and barometer.

Traditionally, each new president selects favorite former presidents to be represented by portraits hung in the Cabinet Room. A list of such selections since 1961 is attached. President Reagan's choices - Abraham Lincoln, Calvin Coolidge, and Dwight D. Eisenhower - are depicted by the following portraits:

Portrait of Abraham Lincoln by George H. Story (1835-1922)

This portrait, hanging above the mantel, was one of several executed by Story, circa 1915, after sketches he made of President Lincoln in his White House office (now the Lincoln Bedroom) in June 1861. It is on loan from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Department of State.

Portrait of Calvin Coolidge by Frank O. Salisbury (1874-1962)

This painting, hanging on the window side of the south wall, is a replica by Salisbury of a portrait painted for the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society in 1928. For this likeness, the artist changed the color of clothing and made certain other alterations in agreement with suggestions by Mrs. Coolidge and two intimate friends of President Coolidge. This painting is on loan from the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Portrait of Dwight D. Eisenhower by Thomas E. Stephens (1886-1966)

Painted in 1960, this portrait is one of 21 executed by Stephens of the former president. Stephens, a British-born painter, is recognized as the man who prompted Eisenhower's interest in painting as a hobby. Prior to this administration, this painting hung in the Cabinet Room during both the Nixon and Ford administrations.

PORTRAITS IN THE CABINET ROOM

Kennedy Administration

George Washington by Gilbert Stuart (W.H.) mantel
Thomas Jefferson by Matthew Harris Jouett (W.H.) south wall
Andrew Jackson by Ralph E.W. Earl (NCFEA) south wall

Johnson Administration

Thomas Jefferson by Matthew Harris Jouett (W.H.) mantel
Andrew Jackson by Ralph E.W. Earl (NCFEA) to 1967 south wall
James Buchanan by Jacob Eichholtz (NCFEA) after 1967 south wall
Daniel Webster by Bass Otis (W.H.) south wall
Franklin D. Roosevelt by Frank O. Salisbury
(President Johnson's copy) west wall

Nixon Administration

Dwight D. Eisenhower by Thomas E. Stephens (W.H.) mantel
Theodore Roosevelt by Philip de Laszlo (Am. Museum
of Natural History, N.Y.C.) south wall
Woodrow Wilson by S. Seymour Thomas (W.H.) south wall

Ford Administration

Dwight D. Eisenhower by Thomas E. Stephens (W.H.) mantel
Abraham Lincoln by George P.A. Healy (Corcoran) south wall
Aug. - Oct. 1974
Abraham Lincoln by George Storey after Oct. 1974 south wall
Harry S. Truman by Tade Styka (HST Library)
Aug. - Nov. 1974
Harry S. Truman by John Slavin (HST Library)
after Nov. 1974

Carter Administration

Harry S. Truman by John Slavin (HST Library) mantel
Thomas Jefferson by George P.A. Healy (Corcoran) south wall
Abraham Lincoln by George Story (NCFEA) south wall

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Office of the Curator

November 6, 1981

THE PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE

The President's Office was moved by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902 from the Executive Residence to the newly constructed West Wing Office Building. The first Oval Office in that wing, however, was built by President William Howard Taft in his 1909 expansion of the West Wing. This room was situated at the center of the south front of the wing. When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expanded the building to the east in 1934, the Oval Office was moved to its present location in the southeast corner.

Architectural features of the present Oval Office include: the Presidential Seal in plaster relief in the ceiling; the classically-designed marble mantel which was original to the 1909 Oval Office; the doors to the veranda and study, each with a pediment above a horizontal fascia, the classical symbol of the governing authority; and the window and shelf niches with shell canopies.

In December 1974, this room was redecorated in its present color scheme concentrating on orange-red, gold and white. The draperies, installed in August 1975, are adapted from the 1836 Regency designs of George Smith. They feature gold taffeta undercurtains and a multiple swag valance and side pieces in an iron red cotton and silk fabric. The oval wool rug, specially designed for the Oval Office, was installed in December 1976. It features a Savonnerie-style border and turquoise rosettes throughout its pale gold ground.

In August 1981, this room was freshly painted - an off-white color for the walls with the cornice and woodwork highlighted with a purer white. At the same time, two new sofas and two new Chippendale-style armchairs, all upholstered in white, were installed, and the six armchairs around the room were re-upholstered in a rust-colored leather.

The objects in the Oval Office will be described in a counter-clockwise direction beginning to the right of the door as one enters the room from the corridor.

Portrait of Andrew Jackson by Thomas Sully (1783-1872)

The extremely handsome portrait of Jackson to the right of the door was painted by Thomas Sully, one of America's foremost portraitists. After studying with John Trumbull and Gilbert Stuart, he opened a Philadelphia studio where he painted many illustrious Americans. He was also highly respected for encouraging young artists. This painting has been on loan to the White House from the National Gallery of Art since 1976.

Cane-Back Armchairs

Five of the six cane-backed armchairs around the room were acquired in 1930 and have been used in the Oval Office since the Herbert Hoover administration. The sixth chair is a more recent reproduction.

Pair of Card Tables

The very beautiful pair of folding-top card tables against the west wall was made in Philadelphia in the late eighteenth century. Crafted in the Hepplewhite style with a graceful serpentine contour and square tapering legs, these tables are unusual in that their delicate shell-motif inlays are accompanied by string inlay used not only for outlining but also to create intricate design. These tables are on loan from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Department of State.

Green "Fitzhugh" Plates

The six green plates in each shelf niche are from a collection of porcelain plates made in China for export to America, circa 1790-1810, in a pattern called "Green Fitzhugh". At the center of each plate is a sepia and gold American eagle holding arrows and the olive branch in his talons and from his beak a banner which reads, "E Pluribus Unum". On the shield on the eagle's breast appears a monogram, presumably of the party who ordered the service. These plates were acquired for the White House Collection in 1971.

Saddle Sculptures by Paul A. Rossi

Atop the card tables and on the bottom shelf of each of the niches behind them are displayed a collection of bronze miniature saddles lent to President Reagan by Ambassador Walter Annenberg. These sculptures of many of the types of saddles used in the American West were executed by Paul A. Rossi, former director of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa Oklahoma, which has one of the foremost collections of Western art.

Spanish War Saddle, 1540
 Mission Vaquero Saddle, 1790
 Cheyenne Indian Saddle, 1820
 California Ranchero Saddle, 1830
 Santa Fe (Mountain Man) Saddle, 1840
 Mother Hubbard Saddle, 1875
 Great Plains Stock Saddle, 1880
 Texas Stock Saddle, 1885
 McClellan Cavalry Saddle, 1885
 California Stock Saddle, 1890
 Woman Side Saddle, 1895
 Stock Saddle, Swell Fork, 1910

Two Small Sculptures by Charles M. Russell (1864-1926)

Two small bronzes in the right niche belong to President Reagan. The bighorn sheep is a casting of one of Russell's many delightful figures of the wild animals of the American mountains and prairie. The sculpture of two boxers is a modern casting, circa 1971, of a work attributed to Russell, one of the finest artists of the American West.

Sculpture - "Smoking Up" by Charles M. Russell (1864-1926)

The bronze cowboy figure in the left niche is a casting of Russell's first bronze statue and belongs to President Reagan. It depicts a drunken cowboy rearing his horse and firing his six-shooter in the air in the act of "smoking up" a cow town. Russell originally made wax or clay models to aid him in his painting, or to amuse his friends. The model of this figure, executed during a stay in New York City, 1903-1904, impressed some visitor enough to suggest that it be cast in bronze. One of the six original castings was later presented to President Theodore Roosevelt.

Chest of Drawers

The handsome mahogany chest of drawers to the right of the windows was made in the Hepplewhite style in Massachusetts, circa 1790. This chest features a serpentine front containing four graduated drawers. Each drawer shows a rectangle of string inlay, the corners of which are filled with inlaid fan quadrants. Previously on loan from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Department of State, it was acquired for the White House Collection in 1977.

Sculpture - "Arizona Cowboy - 1899" by Ray Renfroe

The bronze figure of a mounted cowboy which stands on the chest of drawers was presented to President Reagan by Senator Barry Goldwater on behalf of the People of the State of Arizona. It is the original casting in an edition of 50 copyrighted in 1980 by the artist, Ray Renfroe of Prescott, Arizona. The cowboy's horse stands on a rocky base with a cactus plant at its feet.

Painting - "Passing the Outpost" by A. Wordsworth Thompson (1840-1896)

The historical scene hanging above the chest depicts British soldiers stopping at a farmhouse along the New York-Boston Road outside New York City during the American Revolution. Patriotic American wives are shown delaying them so that American soldiers could retreat to safer positions. The farm pictured is believed to be the Nagel Farm, which was built in 1736 near the Harlem River. This painting is on loan from the Union League Club of New York.

"Resolute" Desk

This desk, often called the "Hayes" or "Resolute" desk, was used continually by every President from its arrival in the White House in 1880 until 1963. It was made from the oak timbers of the British ship H.M.S. Resolute and was a gift to the White House from Her Majesty Queen Victoria of Great Britain during the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes. Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, the desk was located in the President's office and study on the Second Floor of the Executive Mansion. After the President's office was moved to the West Wing in 1902, it remained in the President's private study in the Residence until after the 1952 renovation of the White House during the Truman administration. At that time it was placed in the Broadcast Room on the Ground Floor of the Mansion and was used there by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during his radio and television broadcasts to the nation. It was located in the Broadcast Room until 1961 when it was placed in President John F. Kennedy's West Wing Oval Office where it remained until the end of that administration. It was on loan to the Smithsonian Institution from 1963 to 1977 when it was recalled for use in the Oval Office.

The plaque affixed to the desk reads: "H.M.S. 'Resolute', forming part of the expedition sent in search of Sir John Franklin in 1852, was abandoned in latitude 74° 41' N. Longitude 101° 22' W on 15th May 1854. She was discovered and extricated in September 1855, in latitude 67° N. by Captain Buddington of the United States whaler 'George Henry'. The Ship was purchased, fitted out and sent to England as a gift to her Majesty Queen Victoria by the President and People of the United States, as a token of good will and friendship. This table was made from her timbers when she was broken up, and is presented by the QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, as a memorial of the courtesy and loving kindness which dictated the offer of the gift of the 'Resolute'.

Sofa Table

The sofa table against the windows is of twentieth century manufacture in the late Sheraton style. This table, which has drop leaves and drawers, is supported at each end by a flat pedestal on splayed legs braced by an arching trestle.

Pair of Chinese Fish Bowls

The large circular porcelain bowls presently being used as planters on either side of the sofa table were made in China, circa 1800. Pairs of such bowls are somewhat rare. These bowls are decorated in the "famille rose" style with exotic birds among rocks and flowering trees on a white ground. These bowls were a gift to the White House Collection from Mrs. Lammot duPont Copeland, Greenville, Delaware.

Eagle Card Table

The beautiful mahogany folding-top card table which stands to the left of the windows was made in Salem, Massachusetts, circa 1810. It is unusual in that the table top is supported by a large carved and gilded spread-winged eagle. This table was acquired for the White House Collection in 1972.

Inaugural Eagle Sculpture

On the card table stands a bronze sculpture of an eagle returning to its spouse and young in the nest which was cast for President Reagan's inauguration. It bears the inscription label - "Together for a New Beginning/ Ronald Reagan/ 1/20/81".

Sculpture - "Ole Bill" by B.R. Pettit

This modern bronze figure of William Sherley Williams (? - 1849), a "mountain man" of the American West, was cast in 1979. Williams, better known as "Bill" or "Old Bill", was a trapper and a member of the surveying party which marked the Santa Fe Trail, 1825-26. It was presented to President Reagan on January 20, 1981, by the Bill Williams Mountain Men.

Painting - "The President's House" by an Unknown Artist

The painting of the White House by an unknown artist, which hangs above the eagle card table, is based on an 1839 engraving of a drawing by William Bartlett. This slightly fanciful depiction of the White House on a hill above Tiber Creek, where now runs Constitution Avenue, is believed to have been executed in the mid-nineteenth century. This painting was a gift to the White House Collection in 1967 from Mr. and Mrs. Hawley S. Simpson, Philadelphia.

Sculpture - "The Rattlesnake" by Frederic Remington (1861-1909)

The handsome bronze sculpture of a cowboy's horse rearing before a rattlesnake in the path, which stands in front of the right window in the east wall, was copyrighted by Remington in 1905. It was, according to Harold McCracken, noted Remington scholar, the artist's favorite of his works of sculpture, one in which he caught at the instant of perfect balance the sweeping circular symmetry of horse and rider. Remington's use of the lost wax process of casting at the Roman Bronze Works, Corona, New York, after 1901, permitted small variations in each finished work, such as changing the positioning of the snake. This sculpture was lent to the White House in February 1981 from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Department of State, to which it is on loan from Dr. Harrison Monk, Annapolis, Maryland.

Sculpture - "Bronco Buster" by Frederic Remington (1861-1909)

The important bronze sculpture of a cowboy riding a spirited horse, which stands before the left window in the east wall, was cast by the Roman Bronze Works, Corona, New York, circa 1901. The original design, which was Remington's first work of sculpture, was copyrighted by him in 1895. It was a gift to the White House Collection in 1973 from Miss Virginia Hatfield and Mrs. Louise Hatfield Stickney, Covington, Kentucky.

Tall Case Clock

The case of the magnificent American clock standing against the east wall was made by John and Thomas Seymour, prominent Boston cabinetmakers in the early nineteenth century. Although the dial is not marked, the works are possibly by James Douell of Charlestown, Massachusetts who made the works for a nearly identical Seymour case. This case is fashioned of a richly grained mahogany and features beautiful rope and lunette satinwood inlays associated with the craftsmanship of the Seymours. This clock and many other pieces of Seymour furniture were acquired for the White House Collection in 1972.

Sheraton Card Table

To the right of the mantel stands a handsome mahogany card table, circa 1800, possibly made in New York. It features a serpentine contour with a central panel on the apron carved with drapery swags. The edge of the cross-banded overleaf and the top are reeded, as are the turned legs which terminate in elongated carrot feet. This table was acquired for the White House Collection in 1973.

Boehm Porcelain Eagle

On the Sheraton card table stands a naturally colored bald eagle figure which was executed for the Bicentennial of the American Revolution by the famous porcelain figure manufacturer, Edward Marshall Boehm, Inc., Trenton, New Jersey. This eagle, shown with wings swept back and standing on a rocky base, belongs to President Reagan.

Painting - "Eastport and Passamaquoddy Bay"

The landscape to the right of the mantel has been attributed to the French artist, Victor de Grailly, who worked in the United States between 1840-1870. This scene in Maine was based on an engraving by Charles Cousen after a drawing of the same subject by William H. Bartlett. Both the painting and a copy of the engraving were acquired for the White House Collection in 1973.

Portrait of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827)

The portrait of General George Washington in dress uniform, above the mantel, is believed to be the only replica of a magnificent portrait of Washington painted by Peale in 1776 for John Hancock. Charles Willson Peale, the father and principal teacher of the Peale family of artists, was the only artist known to have painted George Washington from life seven different times. This portrait is believed to be from the second sitting, in May 1776, before Washington achieved his country's recognition through his efforts at Trenton, Princeton, and Valley Forge. The background shows Boston, the siege of which in 1775 is commemorated as Washington's greatest victory until that time. The original of this portrait hangs in the Brooklyn Museum; there is only this one full-sized replica and one miniature replica. This replica was ordered from Peale for a "French gentleman" soon after the 1776 sitting. Its location remained a mystery from that time until discovered in Ireland in 1965 by Mr. and Mrs. Lansdell Christie, with the assistance of Peale scholar, Dr. Charles Coleman Sellers. On loan to the White House since 1971, this important portrait was given to the White House Collection in 1979 by the Christie Family.

Mantel

The marble mantel was installed in the original Oval Office when that room was constructed in the West Wing in 1909 during the administration of William Howard Taft. When the Oval Office was moved to its present location during the 1934 expansion of the West Wing under Franklin D. Roosevelt, this mantel was installed in the new room. Its classical lines include Ionic columns, a frieze carved with drapery and rosettes, and a row of dentils underneath the cornice.

Pair of Chinese Covered Vases

The tall vases on the mantel were made in China in the K'ang Hsi period (1662-1722). These baluster-shaped vases are decorated in the "kanulle verte" style with a handsome garden motif of flowering trees rising from behind walls. Surmounting the lids are multi-colored "foo-dog" finials, which are a Buddhist guardian symbol. These vases were acquired for the White House Collection in 1973.

American Andirons

The fireplace is equipped with a pair of American Chippendale-style brass andirons made circa 1780. They have urn finials atop tall columns supported by spurred cabriole legs on ball-and-claw feet. These andirons were acquired for the White House Collection in 1973.

Chinese Export Porcelain Bowl

The small circular bowl on the mantel, used for plants, was made in China early in the 19th century. It is decorated in the "famille rose" style with a gold and red cross-hatched border on the exterior and interior of the rim. On the white ground of the exterior is a scroll-framed reserve panel of a peacock. It was a gift to the White House from Mrs. Herbert Pratt, New York, New York in 1929.

Painting - "City of Washington, 1833, From Beyond the Navy Yard" by George Cooke (1793-1849)

This painting, to the left of the mantel, depicts the city of Washington as seen from the east, across the Anacostia River on which was situated the Washington Navy Yard. The White House can be seen at the left center of the canvas and the unfinished Capitol, with the Bulfinch dome, can be seen on the hill at the right center. An engraving based on this painting was a popular nineteenth century depiction of the city. This painting was a gift to the White House Collection in 1972 from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Armchairs

The two upholstered armchairs in front of the fireplace are of contemporary manufacture in the Chippendale style. They feature a serpentine crest to the upholstered back, upholstered arms on recessed concave supports, and cabriole front legs with carved knees and ball-and-claw feet. These chairs were purchased for the Oval Office and installed in August 1981.

Pembroke Tables

The near pair of pembroke tables, adjacent to the sofas, were made in the Hepplewhite style in New York, circa 1785-1800. Each has a single drawer and drop leaves. The characteristic square tapering legs are inlaid with satinwood bellflowers, mock-fluting and cuffs. Satinwood stringing appears throughout. One table was a 1960 gift of the National Society of Interior Designers; the other was acquired to match in 1973.

Pair of Lamps

The pair of lamps, on the pembroke tables, are Chinese vases of the Ch'ien Lung period (1736-1795) mounted as lamps. Their hexagonal bodies are painted with multi-colored Chinese scenes framed in gold. They were acquired for the White House Collection in 1973.

Sofas

The pair of modern upholstered sofas were also purchased for the Oval Office and installed in August 1981 with the pair of armchairs. Of simple rectilinear line with a square back and arms, each is upholstered in white.

Coffee Table

The coffee table between the sofas is a modern reproduction of a butler's tray which was designed for the serving of refreshments. The four arched sections around the rectangular center of the table top are hinged so that they can be raised to provide handholds.

Rug

The oval rug was specially designed for the Oval Office by Edward V. Jones, Consulting Architect to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, and Edward Fields, Inc., who manufactured it. Turquoise rosettes appear throughout its pale gold field. Its Savonnerie-style border shows classical motifs in shades of salmon, gold, green, and blue designed to harmonize with the upholstery and draperies. The rug was acquired for the White House Collection in 1976, with a portion of its cost contributed by the manufacturer.

DENNY-SMITH
2d DISTRICT, OREGON

COMMITTEES:
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON ADDRESS:
LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-5711

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

SALEM ADDRESS:
4035 12TH S.E. #20
P.O. Box 13089
SALEM, OREGON 97309
(503) 399-5756

August 3, 1982

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

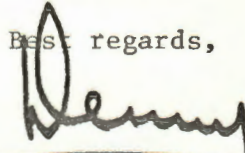
Mr. President:

On behalf of Lee and Yvonne Richer of Bend, Oregon, please accept this gift of a wall hanging which the Richers hope will amuse you. Their address is:

Lee and Yvonne Richer
63400 Boyd Acres Rd.
Bend, OR 97701

Thank you for your attention in this concern. Please contact me if I may be of any assistance in this matter.

Best regards,



Denny Smith
Member of Congress

DAS/sw
enc.

Upstairs, Downstairs

The house runs itself," the outgoing tenant assured Ronald Reagan when the President-elect visited 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue two weeks after Election Day. While presidents come and go, a more or less permanent staff, now numbering 77 men and 20 women, continues to make the beds, wax the wood and marble floors, polish the historic furniture and generally tend the First Household. Some have worked at the White House since the days of Franklin Roosevelt, pledging their domestic allegiance to successive presidents with non-partisan professionalism. Today the roster includes an executive housekeeper, a budget manager, a projectionist for the White House movie theater, a curator and three assistants, thirteen gardeners, seven maids and seven housemen, six butlers, five stewards, four calligraphers, three doormen, two launderers and a "custodial specialist" who daily cleans the 39 chandeliers. And, yes, he also does windows, cleaning some 750 panes every day.

Officially, the staff serves "at the pleasure of the President," but no President has seen fit to replace more than a few. They are simply too valuable to the smooth operation of the 132-room mansion that serves not only as residence for the First Family and Presidential office building but as a museum of Americana that attracts an average of 4,000 tourists daily. "We do everything that needs to be done, regardless of who is President," says chief record keeper Tom Jones, who for 29 years has regulated the paper tide of proclamations, Executive orders, bills, treaties and messages that flows in and out of the Oval Office. Explains one Carter aide, "Nobody else could learn in four years what they do over there."

Clocks: What needs doing to keep the 180-year-old house and grounds in gleaming, leakproof order would stagger a suburban homeowner. Ten engineers regulate the heating and air conditioning. Eight workmen set up chairs and erect the stage for official functions. Three carpenters repair the furniture, two painters do daily touch-ups, two plumbers maintain the fountains and the swimming pool and four electricians manage the lighting for television cameras, drill holes in priceless vases for wiring and fix the antique clocks. For state dinners, maitre d' John Ficklin, who signed on under FDR,

watches over an auxiliary corps of up to 39 butlers and pantry workers. To keep track of the more than 100,000 paintings and historical objects, White House curator Clem Conger had the inventory programmed into the White House computer last year. One entry alone represents the 2,000-piece Tiffany-designed porcelain service, another comprises the 2,023-piece collection of vermeil flatware and ornamental objects, said to be the largest in the world.



Photos by John Ficara—NEWSWEEK

A few of the pros who really run the White House: Florist Young, maitre d' Ficklin, curator Conger, chef Haller

The First Domestic staff undergo their own transition with each new Administration. "We have to adapt to the living style of the incoming family," says chief usher Rex W. Scouten, a Truman-era veteran who oversees much of the household operation and serves as "Hudson" in this Presidential version of "Upstairs, Downstairs." In the past, adapting has meant setting up horseshoe pitching courts for Truman, laying putting greens for Eisenhower, stabling a horse named Macaroni for the Kennedys and building a tree house for Amy Carter.

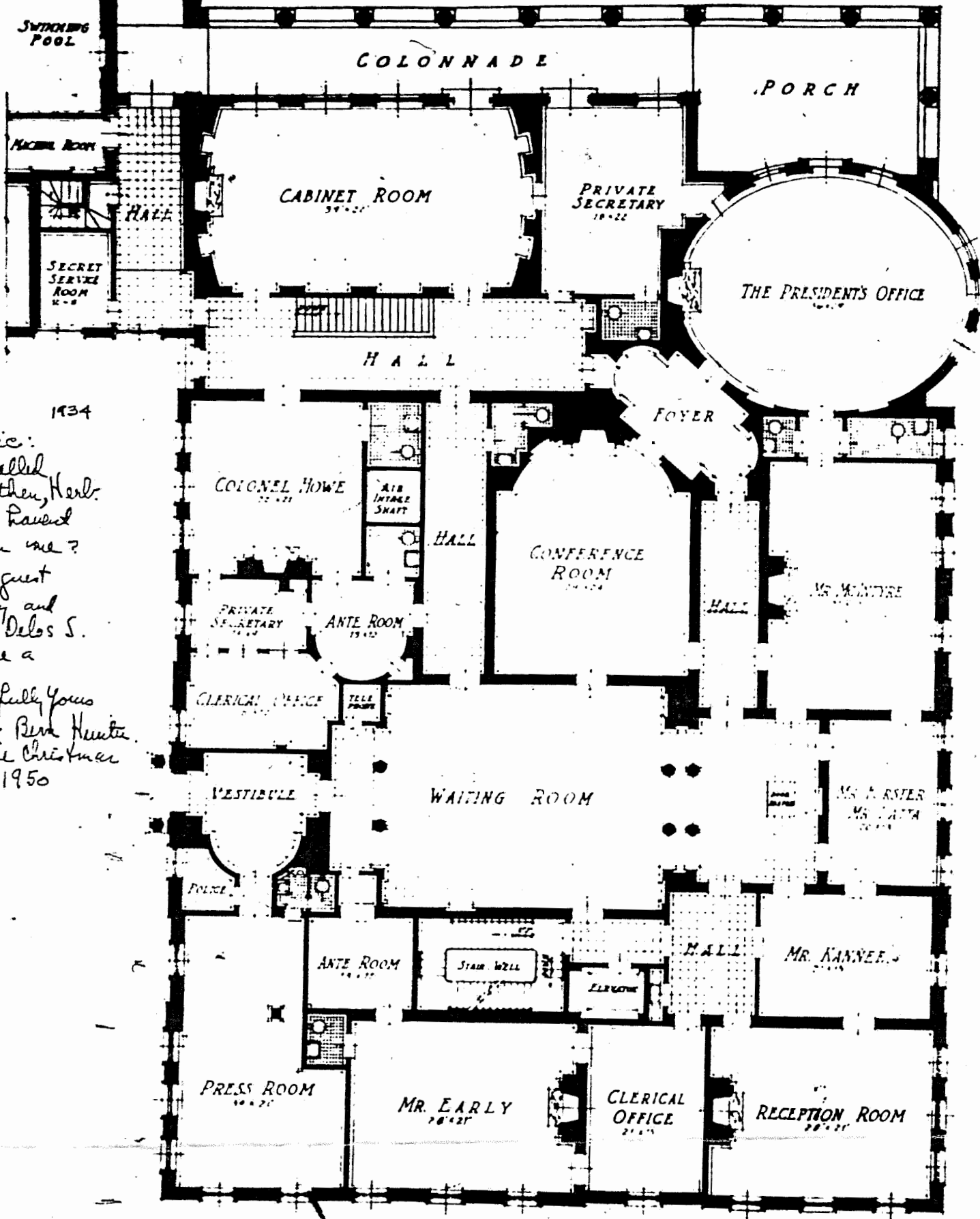
At the First Family dinner table, beef has traditionally been a staple: Johnson preferred sirloin with Yorkshire pudding, Nixon liked chateaubriand and Ike reportedly grilled his own steaks occasionally on the White House roof. Head chef Henry Haller figures it will take "six months in the kitchen" to master the Reagans' culinary preferences, and he is already wondering how often to serve macaroni and cheese, one of Reagan's favorite dishes.

The varying whims and responsibilities of First Ladies must also be accommodated. At Jacqueline Kennedy's request, chief floral designer Elmer (Rusty) Young once made a flower rabbit as an Easter present for Caroline, and he concocted an edible bamboo-and-carrot wreath for Pat Nixon to present to the pandas at the National Zoo. Though much of the historic furniture in the public rooms is protected by law and cannot be moved, First Ladies are free to redecorate the family quarters and usually do. The wallpaper in the family dining room, which features Revolutionary battle scenes, was put up for Mrs. Kennedy, removed on Betty Ford's orders (she didn't like the martial touch at meal-times) and was rehung for Rosalynn Carter. "If the Reagans don't like it, it could come down again," sighs Conger.

Miracles: For the White House regulars, miracles are routine. A fortnight ago, the Carters gave an outdoor skating party on the South Lawn. The Washington weather failed to provide a suitable wintry scene. No problem: chef Haller happened to have a friend who supplies man-made snow to ski resorts, and in an instant a crisp blanket of white was laid down.

When she first arrived at the White House, Jackie Kennedy asked the household staff to sign oaths that they would not write books about their experiences. A few of them did anyway. As a rule, however, members of the permanent staff are extremely loyal and reluctant to discuss the foibles of First Families, past or present. In recent weeks, several have risen to the defense of the Carters, bristling at suggestions that the Reagans would restore an air of class now presumably lacking at the mansion. "There were a lot of very fine parties in this Administration," says one staffer. "But unfortunately, the barbecues seemed to make the headlines."

MELINDA BECK with JANE WHITMORE and ELEANOR CLIFT in Washington



1934

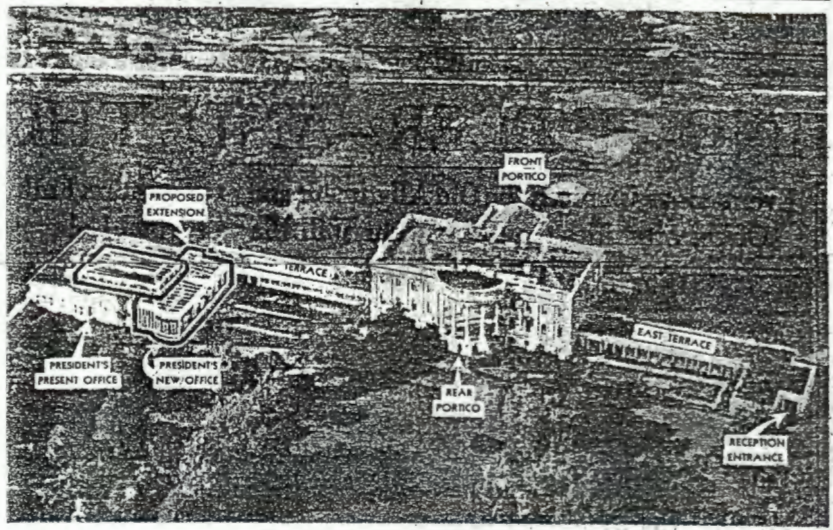
Dear Eric:
 You called
 fine then, Herb.
 Hope you haven't
 forgotten me?
 Be my guest
 some day and
 will see Delos S.
 Write me a
 note.
 Faithfully Yours
 Herb Bern Hunter
 Merry Christmas
 1950

Franklin D. Roosevelt

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE B
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THE WHITE HOUSE AS IT WILL BE AFTER THE OFFICES ARE ENLARGED



The Penthouse and the Additional Rooms Are Indicated on the Photograph by the White Lines.

THE NEW DEAL FOR THE OLD WHITE HOUSE

By JOHN RUSSELL YOUNG, WASHINGTON.

Changes at the Executive Offices Will Modernize but Maintain Present Form

FOR the fourth time since the turn of the century, more office room is to be provided for the President of the United States. While President Roosevelt is away for the Summer renovation as well as enlargement of the White House office building will be started. As the Chief Executive explained in a radio address before sailing for tropical waters, using the repairs as an illustration of his national policy:

"We are going to include in this addition and in this renovation modern electric wiring and modern plumbing and modern means of keeping the offices cool in the hot Washington Summers. But the structural lines of the old Executive Office Building will remain."

"The artistic lines of the White House buildings were the creation of master builders when the Republic was young. . . . But within this magnificent pattern the necessities of modern government business require constant reorganization and remodeling. . . . It is a combination of the old and the new that marks orderly, peaceful progress—not only in building buildings but in building government itself. Our new structures is a part of and a fulfillment of the old."

Previous Changes.

When President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1902, built an Executive Office of Ionic Greek architecture at the extreme end of the west wing of the White House, it was thought by those associated with him that he had provided a workshop of sufficient size to serve the President for many years to come. But in the short space of nine years, William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt's immediate successor, thought differently. His first Summer in office witnessed the building of an extension costing \$33,500, only \$20,000 less than Colonel Roosevelt spent on the original office structure.

This seemed to be sufficient—at least the succeeding President's were apparently content—until Herbert Hoover became the Chief Executive. The depression was beginning to make itself felt, and in other respects the business of the President was growing rapidly, hence Mr. Hoover gave orders for an enlargement to provide additional working space, at a cost of nearly \$100,000. There were further improvements and remodeling after a fire in the Executive Office in 1929, at a cost of more than \$20,000.

But even these changes now proved inadequate. Franklin D. Roosevelt had been in office only a few months when the Executive Office staff was virtually double that of his predecessor. Including all hands, it numbered more than 250,

compared with somewhat over seventy-five under Mr. Hoover, a little more than thirty under Mr. Taft and less than twenty-five under Colonel Roosevelt. Although several rooms in the War-State Building across the street were turned over to the President's use the quarters remained cramped. Mr. Roosevelt finally asked Congress to give him \$125,000, after he had obtained an approximate estimate of cost from the office of Public Buildings and Parks which has supervision over the upkeep of the White House and all that relates to it.

As a result, the Executive Office, which is an artistic creation of the famous firm of McKim, Mead & White, principally the latter, is to undergo many changes. The plans as they have been approved by the President call for the construction of an extension along nearly the entire east side of the building and the addition of a second story.

The added story will be in the form of a penthouse, set back from the west and north sides in such fashion as not to be noticeable to passersby. The building of an artistic balustrade around the edge of the roof will help materially in concealing the penthouse from casual view. This was insisted upon by the United States Commission of Fine Arts, which fought bitterly against the addition of another story and any perceptible change in the lines and general architecture of the office building. The commission's fight was to frustrate

anything that would destroy the general lines of the White House and its wings.

The President and his associates first planned to have the addition built across the entire south end of the office building, but the commission objected, saying that this would not conform with the general architectural scheme and would serve to obstruct considerably the view of the rest of the White House from West Executive Avenue. After some little argument the President consented to the present plans.

Mr. Roosevelt's disappointment in the change was soon dissipated when it was shown him that his new private office—in the same oval shape as today, but larger—would be at the extreme southeast corner of the extension, with a curved bay of windows commanding a wide view of the white stone south end of virtually the entire south grounds.

The extension, with architecture in keeping with the original structure, will extend forty feet from the present east building line and will run nearly the entire length of the structure itself. It will, in fact, be built upon what was once the famous mint patch of the earlier President Roosevelt.

That mint patch, which reached the south of its fame and popularity during the days of Theodore Roosevelt's historic "tennis cabinet," occupied for years a piece of ground about three feet in width and about fifteen in length, and the plants were big and strong and

plungent. The patch not only played an important rôle in the beverages served to the "tennis cabinet," but provided seasoning for the White House table until the Hoover régime, when the bed was taken out.

The tennis court, where "T. R." and his intimates foregathered to exercise and to chat, was not far distant from the mint bed, but it disappeared with the building of the extension to the rear of the Executive Offices during the term of President Taft.

Under the new plans, to the immediate north of the President's office will be a washroom and closet. Next to it will be a smaller room to be used by the President's private stenographer, and next to that will be a long room for the use of the Cabinet. This arrangement will make it possible for the President to enter his private working suite from a side entrance without coming through the main office building itself, as is now the case.

A Secretary's Room.

To the immediate west of the President's office will be the room to be used by Secretary Marvin Mc McIntyre, who has charge of the daily appointments. Next to that will be a small room to be used by his secretaries, and to the west of that will be the room to be used by Rudolph Forster, chief executive clerk of the White House, and Maurice Latta, his assistant, and their immediate assistants.

Secretary Stephen T. Early, the President's press and public relations aide, will see his office moved southward from the extreme north-west corner of the building, and a portion of his present room and that of his secretary which enters out on the main lobby near the entrance to the office building, will be turned over to the members of the press.

The quarters of Colonel Louis McHenry Howe, the President's principal secretary, which are now at the northeast corner of the office building, will be little changed. A part of the space will be turned over for the building of the new Cabinet room, but additional space will be afforded by taking over the room now used as the press room.

Extra offices space will be afforded by excavation in the basement, by a rearrangement of the present work rooms, and by the construction of the penthouse. The plans, however, avoid any excavation beneath that part of the structure to be used as the President's office, and any building above it.

It is estimated that at least four months, and possibly four and a half months, will be required to complete all this work. In the meantime the office of the President will be temporarily housed in the White House itself.



The Executive Offices, Which Are to Undergo Extensive Changes.

Taft Approves Plans

White House Office Building To Be Enlarged.

[From The Tribune Bureau]

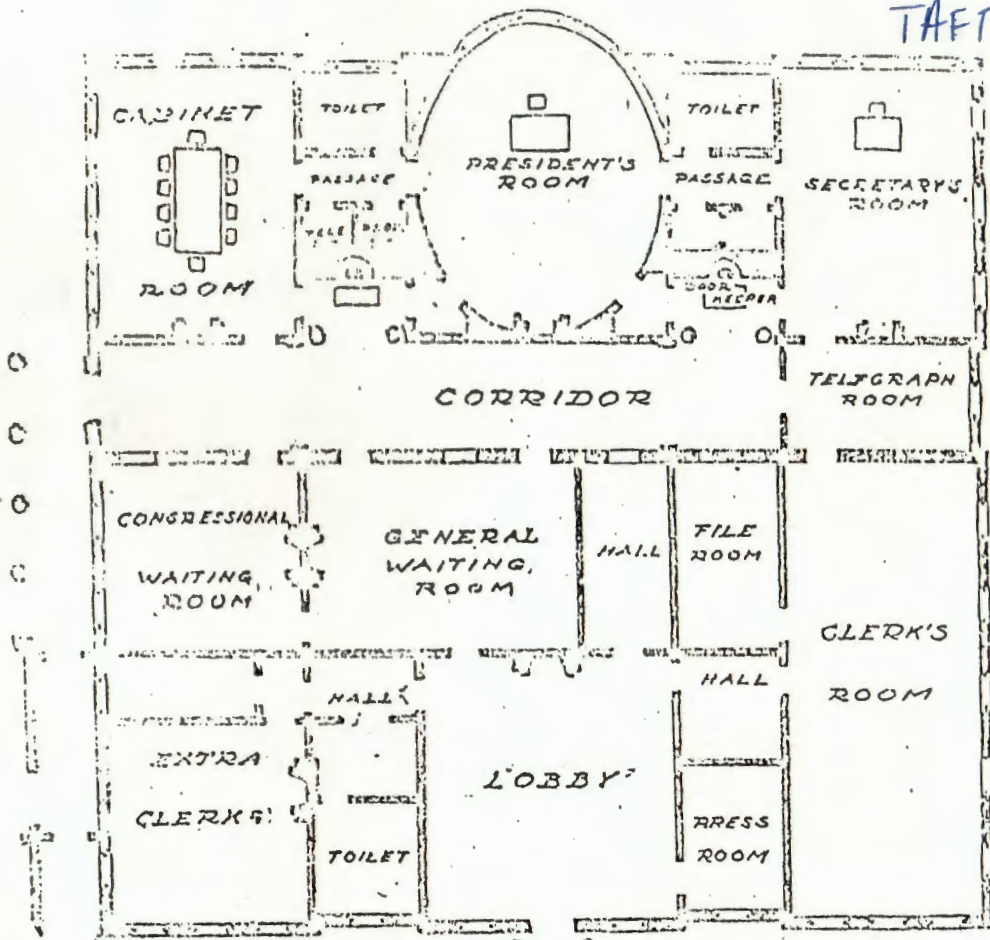
Washington, May 13.—The President has approved the plans for the addition to the executive office building, which will be made as soon as he starts for Beverly. The addition will double the size of the present building, as shown by the ground plan. The additional space will be gained by building over what is now the tennis court, immediately to the south of the present building. The plans have been prepared by N. C. Wyeth, a Washington architect, under the immediate supervision of Colonel Spencer Crosby, U. S. A., Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds.

The President's room will be in the centre of the new addition, will face south and will be of oval shape, similar to the Blue Room in the White House, although not so large. The secretary's office, which now occupies part of the space marked in the plans "general waiting room and hall," will be moved to the southwest corner of the new building, and the Cabinet room, which is now situated in the northeast corner, will be transferred to the southeast part of the building. A general waiting room is a feature of the new arrangements. At present all callers on the President, with the exception of those who have made previous engagements, are accommodated in the lobby, which at times has proved entirely too small for the large number of White House callers. The added room will meet this need. The room for Congressmen is enlarged to twice its former size and extra room for clerks is provided.

As soon as the appropriation made by the last Congress is available the building will be started. This will be about July 1, and the President will find greatly improved accommodations on his return to the capital in the fall.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN OF EXECUTIVE OFFICES.

1909
TAFT



The upper half of the ground plan is the addition. The space to the left of the President's room will be used as a reception room, instead of for telephones, passage, etc., as indicated by the diagram. The "Congressional waiting room" is now the President's room, and the space designated for "extra clerks" is now the Cabinet room. The windows in the President's room face the south, and the four columns on the left of the diagram indicate the beginning of the terrace leading to the White House. (Plan photographed by Harris & Ewing, Washington.)

NO MORE ROOM FOR

Addition to White Building Already

Famous Tennis Court Will Be Destroyed, and Present Added

Not many hours ago leaves for Beverly, on of Massachusetts, where he will begin his summer home. He had already drawn the plans for the new White House office building, which were drawn by architect, of this city, Col. Spencer F. Crosby. Public buildings and general signs will be removed what is now the tennis court, and will double the present offices.

The President's room center of the new addition, and will be of oval shape, similar to the Blue Room in the White House, although not so large. The secretary's office, which now occupies part of the space marked in the plans "general waiting room and hall," will be moved to the southwest corner of the new building, and the Cabinet room, which is now situated in the northeast corner, will be transferred to the southeast part of the building. A general waiting room is a feature of the new arrangements. At present all callers on the President, with the exception of those who have made previous engagements, are accommodated in the lobby, which at times has proved entirely too small for the large number of White House callers. The added room will meet this need. The room for Congressmen is enlarged to twice its former size and extra room for clerks is provided.

PLANS FOR HOSPITAL

Directors of the New to Have Institution of With \$200,000 appropriation for the construction of a hospital, on the present New York Avenue, south and right-entrance of the two years Washington of the finest institutions to be built at a cost of \$200,000. Plans for the hospital, drawn by Dr. William C. Wyeth of Washington, and a committee of the other \$200,000 necessary for the construction of the hospital, will be considered by the committee in compliance with a resolution passed by the board of directors of the Metropolitan Board of Health, in New York Avenue, between and right-entrance of the two years Washington of the finest institutions to be built at a cost of \$200,000.

building modernization



THIS SUNKEN GARDEN COURT IS EXPECTED TO BE ONE OF THE BEAUTY SPOTS OF THE MODERNIZED WHITE HOUSE

The Only Journal Exclusively Devoted to All Phases of Building Improvement and Reconstruction

in this issue

Cover Design:

This is an exquisite view of the South grounds of The White House. The President's home is wrapped in a snow blanket, transforming it into new glories in pure white



Curtis F. Columbia, Editor
Edward Gavin, Western Editor
George K. Gauff, General Manager

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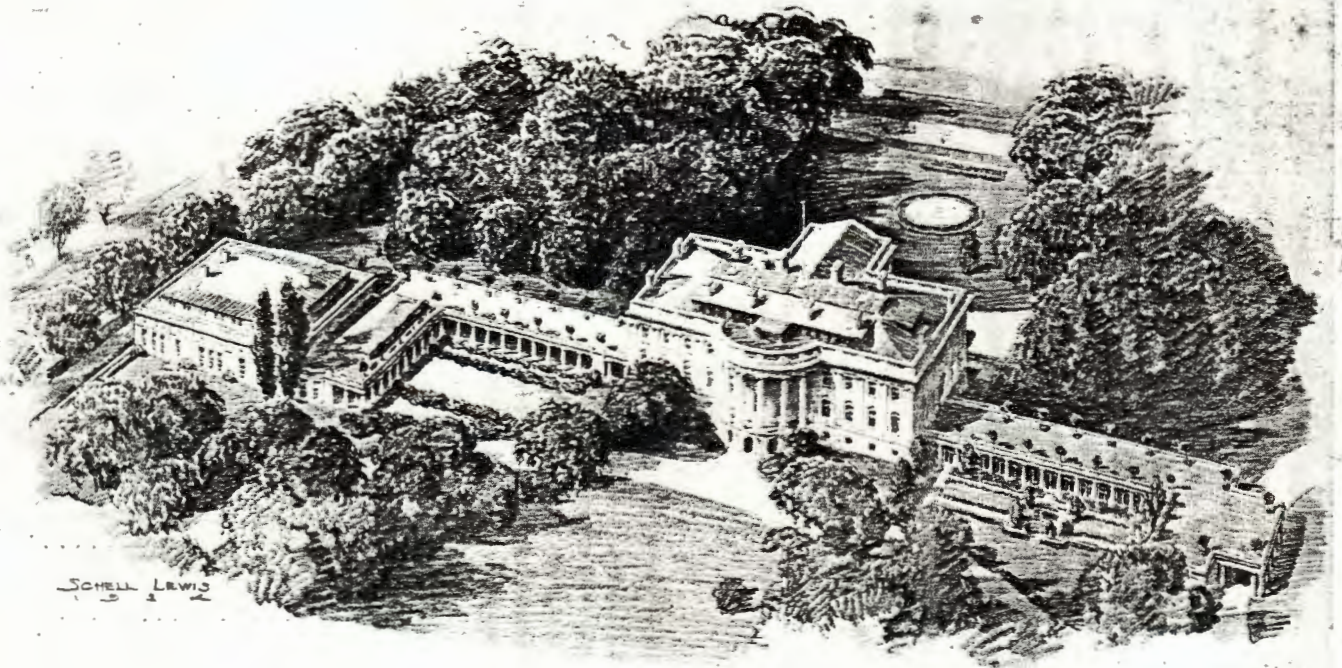
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WHITE HOUSE

Executive Office Modernized



THIS BEAUTIFUL RENDERING PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ERIC GUGLER, CONSULTING ARCHITECT, SHOWS HOW THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE FACILITIES HAVE BEEN INCREASED WITHOUT OBVIOUS ALTERATIONS TO THE OLDER STRUCTURE. TO THE LEFT IS THE MODERNIZED OFFICE BUILDING WITH ITS "PENT HOUSE"

By Curtis F. Columbia

TAKING a dose of his own medicine, the President some months ago issued executive orders to proceed with the modernization plans for an improved and more efficient layout for his executive offices. Mr. Roosevelt had called upon the nation to cooperate in the modernize and renovate campaign to aid in the war on unemployment. Like a huge machine, the nation-wide property repair and modernization work was speeding forward during the midsummer months at steadily increasing momentum, transforming homes and business properties from liabilities to assets and shifting workers from relief rolls to payrolls. Knowing that the best example to encourage others was for the government to act on its own accord, the President

hurriedly secured the approval of the Fine Arts Commission who are the official guardians of maintaining the beauty of the White House, and had plans and specifications prepared by consulting architect, Mr. Eric Gugler of New York City. It was arranged that the work be supervised by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. The contracting work was done by N. T. Severin Company of Chicago.

The site of the original White House was selected by President Washington and Major Peter Charles L'Enfant in 1791 and was designed by the noted architect, James Hoban, who took his idea for the mansion from the house of the Irish Duke of Leinster, in Dublin. The whole scheme of The White House is in the style of Doric Greek architecture. Its cost up to the present exceeds \$1,500,000 and it was originally

built some time between the periods of 1792 and 1801.

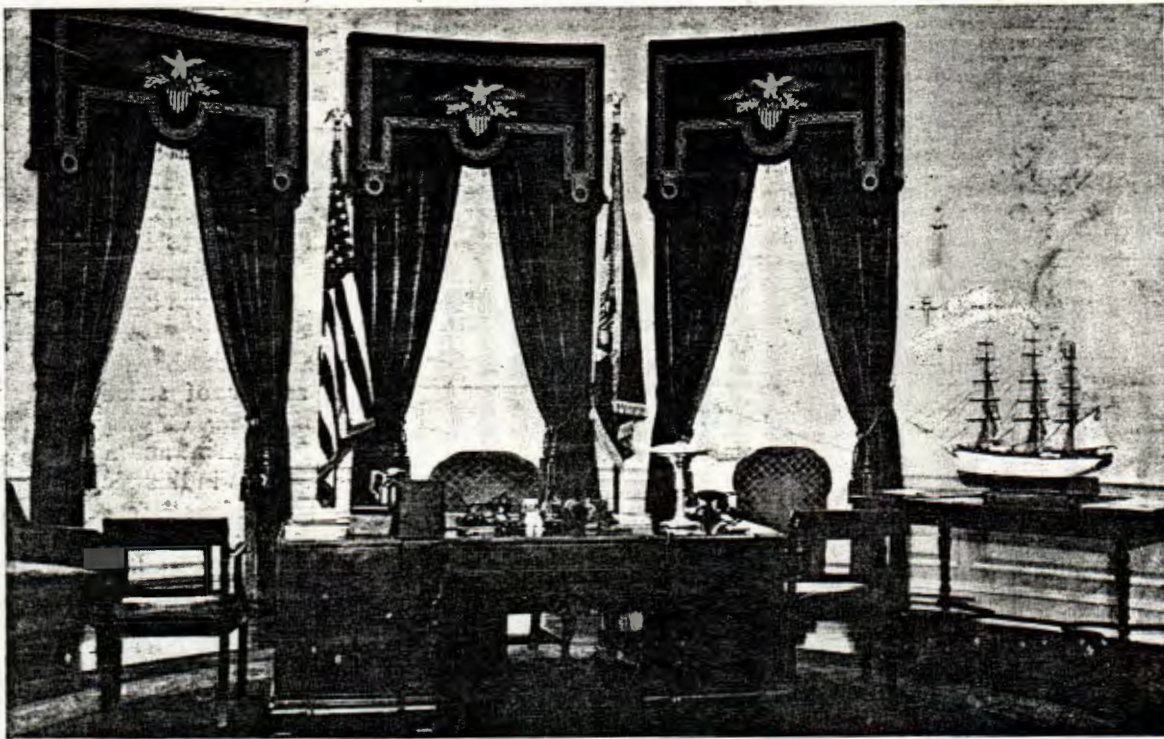
A work of architecture, however, may be enlarged almost indefinitely without damage to its elemental integrity, providing only that those who are responsible for the work are mindful of the structure's basic character. In many respects the White House is untouchable. It belongs to the people. They love it. Any changes that are made must be done with great restraint. The great cathedrals of England and France were in process of construction and reconstruction for centuries, and therefore, it is not unusual for historic shrines to be revamped in accordance with the needs of the time.

In 1823 the south portico was erected and in 1829 the north portico was added. Gas lighting was installed in 1848, a better heating system in 1853. The

ent administration, however, have doubled the office staff over the former administration, and the low square wing tacked on to the end of the west terrace was found to be totally inadequate to house comfortably the added personnel.

Thus the work was started on the remodeling and enlargement of the offices, giving employment to three shifts of men. It has established a record for speed of construction for the complete job was finished in approximately 100 days.

This newest of modernization plans, after having established a record for speed of construction was practically roofed over and walled in by the first week of November of last year. For two weeks painters swarmed over scaffoldings and workmen hurried about for that seemingly everlasting cleanup work. The past



THE PRESIDENT'S OWN OFFICE IN A LARGE OVAL ROOM WHICH WAS BUILT WHERE THE OLD "DRYING YARD" USED TO BE

first west terrace was laid out about 1857 and in 1902 the east front and west were remodeled.

In 1814 the British set fire to the building. Upon completion of repairs it was painted white, to cover the ravages of fire on the stone walls. This color has been kept ever since, and is likely to remain as long as the executive mansion remains. The offices which are now being modernized were built in 1903 from plans drawn by McKim, Mead and White, who were the consulting architects during Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Mr. Roosevelt had the building erected at a cost of \$53,500. President Hoover had it enlarged at a cost of nearly \$100,000.

Changes also came in response to the demand for room to accommodate increased business under Woodrow Wilson's administration incident to the participation of the United States in the World War. The pres-

month has been given to the final moving in and finishing the last touches of interior painting, putting the final polish to beautiful woodwork and hanging the new lighting fixtures.

The undertaking was started by demolishing the entire rear wall of the old building, scrapping the old roof until there was nothing left of the splendor of former administrations but a shell of three walls which were left standing. Practically all of the interior was cleared away.

There were three general phases to the modernization work which was planned to increase the floor space from fifteen thousand feet to forty thousand feet. First, it was accomplished by filling in the old "drying yard"—a lattice-inclosed square adjacent to the old laundry once used for drying presidential wash. In its place along the side portico, opening on a rose

garden, is the office of the President and his personal staff. The second phase was the erection of a set-back "pent house" on the roof. In order to preserve the original beauty of the design, it was necessary to build this addition in such a manner as to be hidden by the balustrade so that it would not be noticeable from the street. The third was to give additional office space by doing away with the old back door and erecting a

center of this court is a beautiful circular fountain giving a very pleasing tinkle of falling water.

In order to preserve the proportions and scale of the main building and yet provide for enlargement of office space to house the great increase of personnel since the beginning of the "New Deal" the architect very cleverly designed an additional story as a set-back. Thus the apparent height of the one story addition is minimized and the architectural designing has been so carefully done that the construction of this new addition appears no higher than the original roof lines.

The President's new office is located in the semi-circular space, as seen in the illustration just behind the tall tree. It is in this room that the President will transact his official business. It is oval in shape and besides the fact that it is almost always flooded with southern sun, its chief feature is its large bay made up of a series of steel sash windows of immense proportion.

As one enters the modernized building, he is immediately ushered into the reception room. This room is spacious and beautifully decorated. The leather upholstered chairs and the large checkered floor pattern give it an air of strictly business, and business not of petty matters, but of large moment and nation-wide interest. It is in this reception room that the president is expected to receive

ambassadors and special guests when they pay their formal calls to the head of our nation.

Doors in the rear alcove open into numerous rooms which will be occupied by the President's increased

(Continued on page 41)



A VIEW OF THE NEW DEAL'S INNER SANCTUM SHOWING THE SETBACK ROOF ADDITION AND THE SUNKEN COURT

one story building which would not in any way interfere with the historic view of the south portico of the White House as seen from the State, War and Navy Buildings across the street to the west. This was accomplished by the erection of a low building on the roof of which there is three feet of top soil for lawn.

The lawns in the rear of the old building were dug up and shrubbery transplanted. When the steam shovels had completed their work, the large low rear wing was added. An open court was designed to supply ample light and fresh air, located in the center of the "Sunken Gardens" and is considered by many to be one of the beauty spots of the modernization plan. This "sunken garden" is located south of the space previously occupied by the President's office. It will have a court which can be seen from and access can be made from the surrounding offices. This office space will largely be occupied by the Social Bureau which attends to the personal correspondence of the President and has jurisdiction over the issuing of all invitations for social functions given by the President or members of his official family. In the



A VIEW OF THE MAIN LOBBY IN WHICH VISITORS WILL WAIT TO SEE THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR MEMBERS OF HIS OFFICIAL FAMILY

WHITE HOUSE

Executive Office Modernized

(Continued from page 10)

staff of secretaries. Here will be found the offices of Secretaries Louis Howe, Marvin McIntyre and Stephen Early, and of Rudolph Forster, dean of the White House employees.

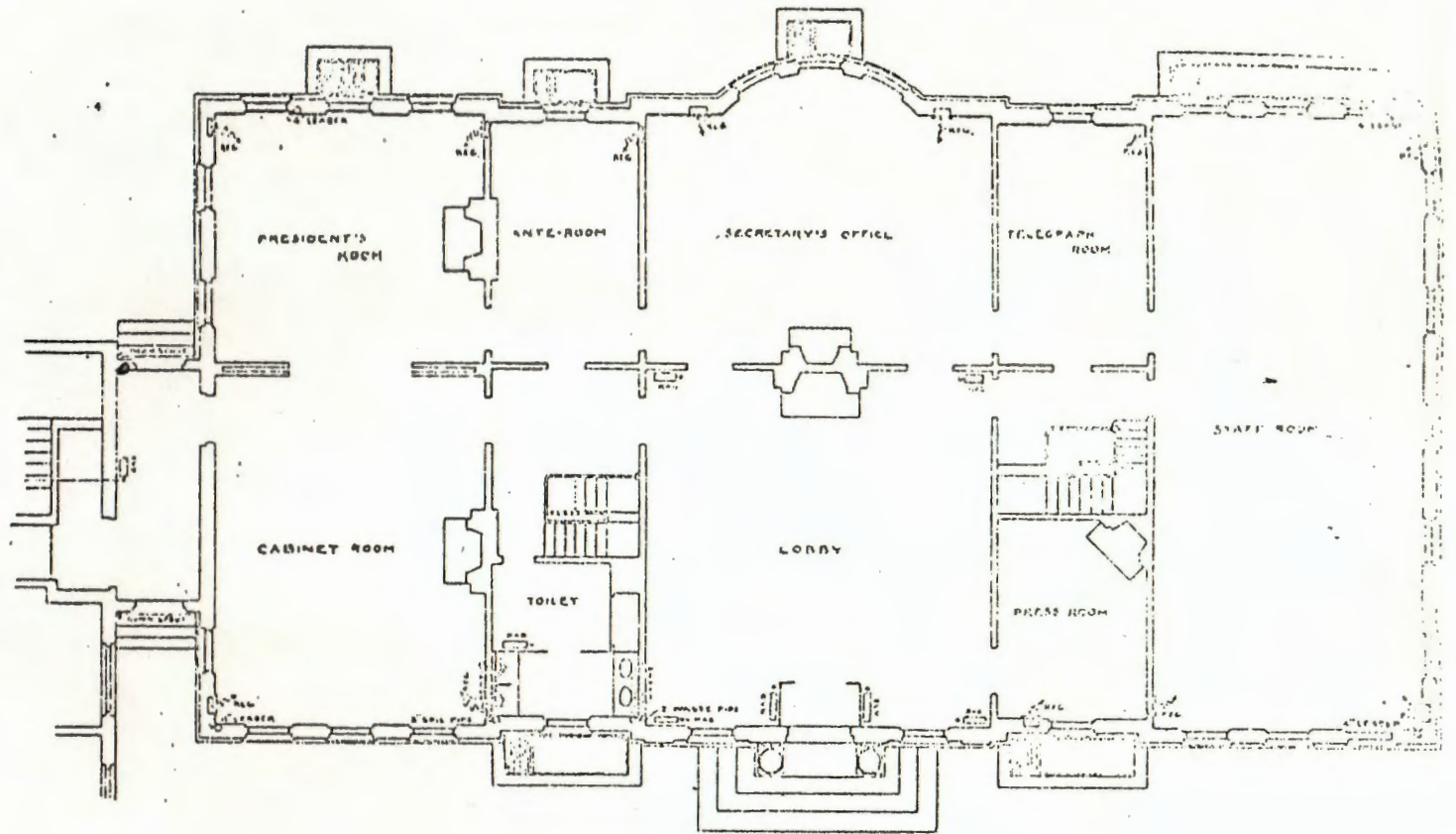
As you glance to the right you will find a new commodious press room to be occupied by the gentlemen who represent the nation's press who in the past have had free telephone service but under the "New Deal" they are required to pay five cents a call. Thus an estimated saving of thousands of dollars will be made.

The modernized building will have all the latest improvements in efficiency and comfort including a complete air-conditioning equipment.

The offices are built of brick, concrete and steel. The outside walls are brick, the interior framework is of steel, and the floors are reinforced concrete. Some of the interior partitions are of hollow tile, others are movable hollow metal and glass. The President's office has indirect cone lighting. The other offices have indirect fixtures hung from the ceiling. Floors of all rooms, except the lobby, are covered with cork. The lobby is covered with rubber tile.

As one gazes upon the splendor of this \$303,087 remodeling undertaking, one can visualize a stately procession of dignified men from John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—on to Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt—and thrifty Coolidge down to our more recent presidents, in all their various costumes—walking through these stately and beautiful rooms and gaze with wonder upon the changes that time has wrought.

If your congressman has given you a card of introduction, or you secure permission from Captain E. P. Lock, whose title is—Officer in charge of White House Buildings, with offices in the Navy Building, you will be permitted to make a tour of inspection and should you be fortunate in doing so, the journey will not lack in interest for the success of the modernization is attested by its aspect of real beauty and its atmosphere of refinement.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 TEMPORARY EXECUTIVE OFFICES
 SHOWING NEW ARRANGEMENT OF HEATING AND PLUMBING.
 SCALE 1/8 IN. = 1 FT.

THE ARCHITECTS OF THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

1902

S. Dec. 15/57 2

T. Roosevelt

The Old Executive Office Building

A BRIEF HISTORY

Just stop and look around you. If you're in the Old Executive Office Building, you're in "Mr. Mullett's architectural infant asylum," "The finest office building in Washington—magnificent," "Washington's worst eyesore—the ugliest heritage of the nineteenth century in America," "An epoch in American architecture," "A horrible example of . . . 'American ironic,'" or, originally, the State, War and Navy Building. One of her engineers stood back with pride after her completion in 1888 and said, "She's plumb and she's square and, boys, she's purty."

The south wing was started in 1871 and completed in time for the State Department to move in July 1, 1875. The east wing was commenced in 1872 and completed seven years later, so that on April 16, 1879, the War and Navy Departments moved into that wing. The west and center wings were the last to be erected, work on them commencing March 31, 1883 and being completed January 31, 1888. When other buildings were provided for the War and Navy Departments, the building was occupied by the State Department. Congress at that time changed its name to the Department of State Building. The building presently houses functions of the White House Office, Office of the Vice President, Office of Management and Budget, and other agencies which are part of the Executive Office of the President. It is now called the "Old Executive Office Building."

This gray "birthday cake" has celebrated more than one hundred years as one of Washington's most controversial structures. The first criticism came as early as 1874 soon after the south wing began to display the intricate detail of its French Renaissance style. In the official opinion of the Justice Department, "The building stands today as the grandest among many other grand monuments of the artistic taste and skill of its official



designer." Its architect, A.D. Mullett, used French Renaissance as a basis and created (in one committee's opinion) a building that lends credit to the Government, an ornament to the city of Washington, and second in architectural importance and beauty to no building in the United States. Mr. Mullett, who was never paid for his services, committed suicide and is said to still haunt the halls of Congress demanding his money.

Construction required 17 years (1871-1888) and originally cost \$10 million, doled out in grudging amounts by Congress during the course of building. Curiously enough, Congress took a paternal interest in its construction and for one of the very few times in Executive-Legislative relationship crossed that line between executive and legislative to a greater degree of closeness than was ever attempted or permitted by either branch before or since. The Executive seemed to welcome this solicitude as it aided in the completion of the largest solid granite building in the world.

This immense granite structure epitomizes in many ways an epoch in American architecture. The transitory

taste for French neo-classicism, fostered by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, has few more striking expressions. Its obvious lack of stylistic harmony with other administrative buildings in Washington has given rise to proposals for remodeling which, fortunately, have been postponed indefinitely.

In this masonry building, the heavy supporting walls have a use that is lacking in the later Federal buildings which are erected around steel cage construction. The lower floors of the exterior exemplify structural solutions characteristic of the dawn of modern building construction. A view of the building from any angle presents a confused impressionistic picture of broken lines and planes, of baroque gone frantic. This complex effect is produced by the broken lines of its central and corner pavilions, extended porches, towering chimneys, and dormer windows. At the center of each facade is a six-story pavilion, approached by a broad flight of colonnades. The four corner pavilions, also designed with superimposed colonnades, are adorned with small one-story porches or loggias. The numerous windows lining the walls

of the three principal floors are crowned with hooded pediments.

As is the case with nearly all of the Federal buildings in Washington, this monumental facade was secured by means of a scheme of interior courts entailing, in this case, a total of two miles of corridors.

The interior of the building is in the taste of the period, the marble halls, granite stairways with balusters of bronze, and antiquated fixtures recalling the grandeur of the 1870's. The immense and complex interior required the services of a large force of scrubwomen to clean it nightly. In this connection it is interesting to note that during the Hayes Administration the cleaning force conducted the first strike of Federal employees. The occasion was an attempt to introduce machine-scrubbing equipment which worked something like a bicycle. With the machines, a dozen women could do the work 80 had been doing. The strike was successful.

All doors, window frames, trimming and baseboards are cast iron, cast in a foundry set up on the premises for that purpose. Also, all marble was cut on site. The only woodwork is in the elevator (present partitions excepted), window sashes, doors, and floors. Walls are granite, 4' thick for outside walls, 18" thick for inside walls. The garden vases outside were designed by a Captain Douglas MacArthur, sixth superintendent of the building.

There are 1,134 inside doors. GSA says these doors are not solid mahogany, but instead they have an oak core with a 1/4 to 1/2 inch mahogany veneer. The brass door knobs were cast on the premises and represent the three original services of the initial occupants; State, War, and Navy. Knobs cost \$25 each originally and would cost \$250 or more today to replace. Hinges are also brass and engraved, even on the inside. Staircase balustrades are of intricately designed oxidized bronze topped by a mahogany handrail. (These hundreds of bronze

posts caused the mutiny of the charwomen as well.) A heavy brass guardrail has been fastened as a precaution against accidents.

Glass domes on the north and south are designed like hugh stars. The two center domes are large and elaborate. On the east side, the dome covers two stairwells and is of stained glass with dark blue and red stars and blue stripes on a field of white. There are 23 border designs encircling this dome.

The marble for the black and white floor tiles was brought from Maine and Richmond, Virginia. Dennis Johnson of GSA points out that you can see the fossils in the black tiles. He notes that the white tiles have been scalloped out from foot traffic, but the black tiles didn't begin to show wear until they cracked under the spiked high-heels women began wearing in the 30's and 40's. Mosaic tiles in the Old Library and Indian Treaty Room were brought from Italy and put in by Italian laborers who came from Italy specifically for that purpose. GSA craftsmen have duplicated some of the tiles that have needed to be replaced so that the floors are in mint condition and some of the most beautiful to be seen anywhere.

The eight stairways of the building swing gracefully from floor to floor unsupported by beams or arches. Each step is made of solid granite and the stone is notched so that it fits over the upper edge of the step beneath it. The end of each step is tightly wedged 18 inches into the thick wall and forms a cantilever construction. Should one step give way, the whole staircase would fall.

Presidential press conferences, under Truman and Eisenhower, were held in the Indian Treaty Room on the fourth floor—ornate with marble and bronze and two stories high. No Indian treaties were signed in the Indian Treaty Room that have been documented. It is sometimes referred to as the "cupid room" because of the winged bronze angels which support light fixtures in each of the four

corners. Slabs of blackish marble are embedded in the walls and framed like pictures. Many legends abound about the stones; "One of the stones is from Solomon's Temple," "If you look at a certain stone (not identified) at a given point, light will radiate from it"; "Pictures of Lincoln, Roosevelt and scenes of American history are depicted in the marble slabs." None of these legends has been authenticated. There is one slab of marble with an authenticated past of historical significance. The serpentine marble over the entry came from the ruins of Pompey which were excavated in 1848.

The story (probably apocryphal) is told of President Coolidge's reaction to the building. He was reportedly given a full tour of the office and made no comment until he again reached the front entrance. Then he asked one question: "Is the building insured against fire or earthquake?" When the superintendent answered, "Of course, Mr. President," his only comment was, "What a pity." According to Mr. Santos, exsuperintendent, no government building is insured, on the assumption that guards and safety precautions are adequate and taxpayers would pay for reconstruction anyway. President Truman's ironic but trenchant opinion illustrates the next turning in the evolution of the public's attitude. The Washington Star of April 4, 1958 quoted him as saying, "They've been trying to tear this down for 20 years, but I don't want it torn down (with a chuckle). I think it's the greatest monstrosity in America."

A newer trend is illustrated by a commentary from an unidentified source: "The proposal to replace the Executive Office Building with another functional building is a bit like suggesting that the Egyptians tear down their unsightly pyramids and replace them with modern efficient tombstones." I'm certain the comparison is of structure not of use (tombs).

(Some excerpts taken from GSA publications)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 24, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: WHITE HOUSE AND EOB STAFF

FROM: JOHN F. W. ROGERS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: THE PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE LOBBY,
OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING

I hope that you will enjoy the new look of the Old Executive Office Building lobby area and I believe the improvements will significantly increase the attractiveness of our building for the many persons who enter there.

The improvements have been designed in keeping with the particular history of the OEOB. The building was constructed from 1871 - 1888 for the State, War and Navy departments. The antique furniture in the lobby dates from the era of the building's construction, and has been loaned to us by the Treasury Department. The four portraits hanging in the lobby are of the department secretaries who had offices in the OEOB.

Elihu Root (portrait by Ellen Emmet) - occupied room 231 as Secretary of War and occupied room 208 as Secretary of State

- A native of Clinton, New York, served as a Senator from New York 1909 - 1915
- Secretary of War 1899-1904
- Secretary of State 1905 - 1909
- Served in Cabinet of President McKinley and T. Roosevelt
- Headed Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1910
- Won Nobel Peace Prize in 1912

Josephus Daniels (portrait by R.S. Meryman) - occupied room 274 as Secretary of the Navy

- Born in Washington, North Carolina
- Secretary of the Navy 1913-1921
- Carried on the "Good Neighbor Policy" as Ambassador to Mexico 1933 - 1942
- Served in Cabinet of President Wilson
- Admitted women to armed services for the first time
- Directed activities of American Naval forces during World War I, from his offices in the OEOB
- Selected as his Assistant Secretary, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, (office also located in the OEOB, later President of the U.S.)

Cordell Hull (portrait by Stapko and Edward Murry) - occupied room 208
as Secretary of State

- Born in Overton (now Pickett), Tennessee
- Secretary of State 1933 - 1944
- Served in Cabinet of President Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1945
- Received emissaries from the Japanese Government in Room 208 OEOB on December 7, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day)

James Francis Byrnes (portrait by Alfred Jonniaux) - occupied room 208 OEOB
as Secretary of State

- Born in Charleston, South Carolina 1879
- Served as Representative (1911 - 1925) and Senator (1931 - 1941) from South Carolina
- Served as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court 1941 - 1942
- Attended Yalta (1945) and Potsdam Conference (1945)
- Secretary of State (1944 - 1947) in President Truman's Cabinet
- Represented the United States at the Paris Peace Conference 1946

I will continue to keep you informed as we complete other projects in the OEOB.