New Podcast Episode
“Slavery in the President’s Neighborhood”
A Conversation with Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch III and David Rubenstein

February 26, 2020 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association honors Black History Month and marks the launch of its new ongoing research initiative to tell the stories of the enslaved and free African Americans who built, lived and worked at the White House and in surrounding homes on Lafayette Park, with its new podcast episode, “White House History with David Rubenstein: Slavery in the President’s Neighborhood.”

This episode is a recording of the Association’s live program which took place at St. John’s Episcopal Church on February 5th and was a conversation with Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch III who was interviewed by philanthropist David Rubenstein. The two spoke about the history and legacy of slavery in the nation’s capital.

“Over 200 enslaved people worked to construct the White House,” said Dr. Bunch. “While there were crafts people from Ireland, England, and parts of the United States that did a lot of the work, enslaved people did a lot of the quarrying of the stone from Virginia. They did a lot of the work on getting the lumber. So there is no doubt that you do not have a White House without the enslaved labor.”

Bunch elaborated, “Nine of the first 12 presidents brought enslaved people. So you begin to have enslaved people from almost the inception, into the 1850s, working in the White House itself. I think it’s important to realize that the enslaved people often didn’t have a voice but when they had the opportunity to write or to have their stories told, they shared them in a very candid way. So that’s why this kind of conversation is so important, because this is not an ancillary story. This is the central story to helping us understand who we once were and shaped us who we are to this very day.”

To learn more about Slavery in the President’s Neighborhood, visit whitehousehistory.org. See the full video of this live program which was recorded by C-SPAN.
The 1600 Sessions
In this podcast series, White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin interviews luminaries, historians, and eyewitnesses to history about America's most famous residence and office—the White House. Each episode includes a prominent guest or guests to discuss varying facets of White House history, including insights from former staff and many other topical issues.

The 1600 Sessions is available on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, and Stitcher. To hear the full episode, visit The1600Sessions.org.

For media inquiries, please contact press@whha.org.

About The White House Historical Association
First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion’s legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association’s mission is to assist in the preservation of the state and public rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the White House Historical Association has contributed more than $50 million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

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