



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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Latest White House Historical Association Podcast Tells Stories, Answers Myths About Construction of the White House

New 1600 Sessions tells of faces and places that helped build the White House

June 7, 2017 (Washington, D.C.)— The White House Historical Association today released its fifth episode, [“A White House of Stone”](#) in *The 1600 Sessions* podcast series, which reaches back in time to the initial design and construction of the White House, detailing the people and places involved in building the President’s House from the ground up. This episode discusses how many enslaved people helped build the White House, tells the story of the stone used in construction, and answers the myth of how the White House received its name.

Association President Stewart McLaurin interviews acclaimed American historian Dr. William Seale, author of a new book by the White House Historical Association, *A White House of Stone: Building America’s First Ideal in Architecture*. Together, they discuss working conditions at the building site, how the White House became white, and what happened to the Executive Mansion next, including the burning of the building in 1814 and the Truman renovation. It is widely believed that the White House was only painted white after the burning by the British, but as Seale explains, whitewashing was a technique familiar to the Scots builders, whom Seale calls “the greatest stonemasons in the world.”

Seale explains the reasoning behind the White House’s design: “The presidency as created in the constitution for George Washington and still, is an extremely powerful executive position. Elective, of course, but it's very, very powerful. Washington wanted that power expressed to the world...Washington insisted that the house be of stone and that it be ornamented.” Using historical records, Seale provides rich context and describes in detail the process of building the White House to Washington’s specifications.

In this fascinating 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.

About the book

A White House of Stone: Building America's First Ideal in Architecture by historian William Seale. Drawn from documents public and private, governmental and institutional, American and Scottish, this book is about the stonemasons and stones of George Washington's White House. Featuring new work by award-winning photographers Martin Radigan and Bruce M. White, the book includes dozens of specially commissioned photographs of the Aquia quarry on Government Island in Stafford, Virginia, from which the stone for the White House and Capitol was harvested in the 1790s to build the first buildings of the Federal City. The remaining outcroppings of rock still stand on the island, witnesses to White House history.

To order the book, please visit Shop.WhiteHouseHistory.org

The 1600 Sessions is available on iTunes, GooglePlay, SoundCloud, and Stitcher. To hear the full episode, visit The1600Sessions.org and learn more about White House history at WhiteHouseHistory.org.

For more information, please contact press@whha.org.

For Media: B-roll footage of interview available for use upon request. Additional resources are available on the Association's press room WhiteHouseHistory.org/press.

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. She sought to inspire Americans, especially children, to explore and engage with American history and its presidents. 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 Association has given more than \$45 million to the White House in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit WhiteHouseHistory.org.

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