

THE WHITE HOUSE  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

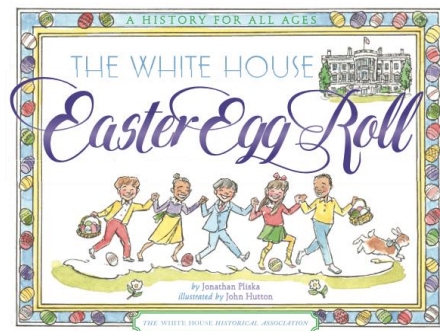
# THE WHITE HOUSE EASTER EGG ROLL

## *A History for all Ages, second edition*

Written by Jonathan Pliska  
Illustrated by John Hutton

On sale March 19, 2026

March 19, 2026 (Washington, D.C.) - The White House Easter Egg Roll is one of the White House's oldest and most popular annual events dating back to 1878 under President Rutherford B. Hayes. A beautifully illustrated new book shares the history of the Easter Egg Roll, how it came to be and how it has evolved over time under various presidents: **THE WHITE HOUSE EASTER EGG ROLL: *A History for all Ages, second edition***, written by Jonathan Pliska and illustrated by John Hutton (White House Historical Association; March 19, 2026).



Within the pages of this book, readers will learn about the historic grounds and gardens in the president's backyard and how and why the South Lawn became the setting for this beloved annual event. Originally, the Easter Egg Roll took place down the street from the White House on the grounds of the United States Capitol. The mess left behind by children and their families became such a problem that Congress outlawed egg-rolling on the Capitol grounds after the 1876 event. Recognizing that this was a treasured tradition for children, President Rutherford B. Hayes invited some 200 youngsters to the White House in 1878, officially establishing the annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

Author Jonathan Pliska reveals many "firsts" and fun facts related to the Easter Egg Roll in the book. In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison decided to add live music to the Easter Egg Roll with the U.S. Marine Band performing all day, something that continues to this day. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson had the annual event moved to the Washington Monument Grounds because of security concerns related to America's entry in World War I. In 1918, the

Easter Egg Roll was cancelled for the first time ever as the nation observed an “eggless Easter” in order to save some 60 million eggs for the war effort. Franklin Delano Roosevelt presided over nine Easter Egg Rolls, more than any other president. Harry S. Truman was the only U.S. president in the twentieth century to never have hosted an Easter Egg Roll. In 2002, George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush closed the Easter Egg Roll to the general public, replacing it with an event for the children of active duty and reserve personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the Obamas, the Easter Egg Roll was used to emphasize the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle, connected to First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move!” campaign. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the Egg Roll in 2020 and 2021, but the time-honored tradition resumed in 2022 under President Joe Biden.

With this book, author Jonathan Pliska’s expertise as a White House landscape historian informs the story of every first family that has hosted a public egg roll in the president’s backyard, brought to life by more than seventy newly commissioned colorful illustrations by artist John Hutton. Over time, new traditions have been added, including games, music, dancing, and story-time, but one thing remains the same: the White House Easter Egg Roll is one of the most beloved annual traditions in our nation’s history.

#### **About the author**

Author Jonathan Pliska has written and edited Cultural Landscapes Inventories for the National Park Service and is the author of *A Garden for the President: A History of the White House Grounds*.

#### **About the illustrator**

John Hutton was educated at Courtauld Institute of Art at the University of London. He is the author and illustrator of *The White House ABC: A Presidential Alphabet* and a regular contributor to *White House History*. He is a professor of Art History at Salem College.

#### **About The White Historical Association**

Founded in 1961 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, the White House Historical Association is the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization entrusted with preserving and sharing the history of the White House. Supported entirely by private philanthropy and the sale of educational books and products, the Association reaches millions of students, teachers, and lifelong learners through research and scholarship initiatives, public programming, and the authoritative titles published by its independent press. Throughout each presidency, the Association works with the Offices of the First Lady and the White House Curator to acquire and preserve historic objects for the White House Fine and Decorative Arts Collection. The Association also operates The People’s House: A White House Experience, a free, immersive, educational museum in Washington, D.C., which welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit [WhiteHouseHistory.org](http://WhiteHouseHistory.org).

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