



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Newly Digitized Collection from
The First White House Curator
Released for the First Time**

The White House Historical Association Shares the Collection That Shaped First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's White House Restoration and Education Initiatives



*Lorraine Waxman Pearce sitting at her desk in the Map Room
Courtesy of the Family of Lorraine Waxman Pearce*

March 5, 2026 (Washington, D.C.) — The White House Historical Association's [White House History Digital Archives](#) today released newly digitized images, documents, and audio recording from the [private collection of Lorraine Waxman Pearce](#), the first White House Curator. The materials—including memos, early drafts of the *White House: An Historic Guide*, photographs, and Pearce's master's thesis—are now accessible through the Association's White House History Digital Archive for the first time. These assets offer valuable insight into First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's landmark White House restoration project.

Pearce's collection plays a significant role in the preservation of her career as well as the impact her work had on the White House Collection as we know it today.

This is the third personal collection that has been digitized by the Association. Previous collections include assets from former White House Executive Chef Henry Haller and former White House Executive Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier. With each new asset, the Association advances its nonpartisan mission to make White House history more accessible to all. The Association continues to actively digitize collections to grow its archival records.

Pearce was hired in 1961 on the recommendation of Henry Francis duPont, chair of the Fine Arts Committee for the White House. Her role evolved from cataloging items and screening them for the White House Collection to authenticating historic pieces, developing the proper museum standard environment for the antiquities, directing staff, and ensuring information was shared publicly. Her later work shifted to writing the White House guidebook.

"While millions of people around the world were enthralled by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's televised White House tour in 1962, behind the scenes Lorraine Waxman Pearce played a critical role in the first lady's restoration project," said Dr. Matthew Costello, Chief Education Officer, Gerard B. Lambert Foundation Chair in White House History and Director of the David M. Rubenstein National Center for White House History. "As the first White House Curator, Pearce shaped the role and helped establish the foundations of the Office of the Curator. We are extremely grateful to the Pearce family for giving us the opportunity to make Lorraine's story more accessible through our Digital Archives, and we are excited to tell her story with them."

This new collection coincides with the 10th anniversary of the [White House History Digital Archives](#). The program launched in 2016, digitizing 3,000 images from the White House collection. Today, the Digital Archives has surpassed 31,000 assets, continuing the Association's mission to make these moments of White House history accessible to all.

The full Lorraine Waxman Pearce Collection can be viewed [here](#).

To learn more about the White House Historical Association, visit whitehousehistory.org.

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

About the White House 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.

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