

THE WHITE HOUSE  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

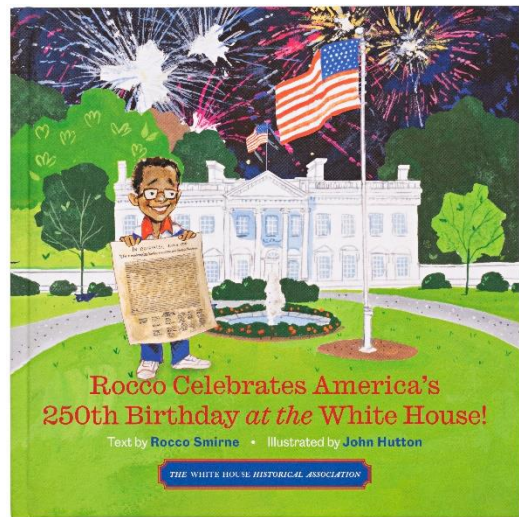
## NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK

### *Rocco Celebrates America's 250th Birthday at the White House*

Young Author Rocco Smirne's Newest Book Explores  
American History through the White House

February 17, 2026 (Washington, D.C.)- Fifth grade student Rocco Smirne, the award-winning author of a popular series of children's books, releases today his latest title: *Rocco Celebrates America's 250th Birthday at the White House*.

"Like the birthdays we celebrate for ourselves, some birthdays are extra special," writes Stewart D. McLaurin, President of the White House Historical Association, in the introduction, "and with this book Rocco Smirne celebrates America's extra special 250th birthday by leading us on a visit to the White House and to The People's House: A White House Experience, just down the street."



Festively dressed in red, white, and blue to wish a happy birthday to the United States of America, Rocco reveals that 250 years of the nation's history can be found in the halls and collections of the White House. Rocco begins the journey in 1776 and he explains how the Declaration of Independence ultimately led to the building of the White House. He joins President George Washington on the site of the new house and then takes readers inside, pointing out American eagles and flags along the way. "Fun fact!" says Rocco, "Each color has a special meaning—red for bravery, white for purity, and blue for justice."

Rocco continues the tour with stops in the State Dining Room, Lincoln Bedroom, White House Library, China Room, and Oval Office, where each document, object, book, and painting reveals a chapter in American history and presidential life.

Remembering earlier celebrations of national milestones, he recalls that John Quincy Adams was President when the nation celebrated its fiftieth birthday in 1826, and President Ulysses S. Grant led celebrations of the 100th birthday in 1876. Rocco also visits the South Lawn to see President George H. W. Bush bury a time capsule in 1992 on the two-hundredth anniversary of the White House cornerstone. "Today the White House itself is like a time capsule of American history," he writes, adding that it is his "favorite place to celebrate the nation's birthdays. There is so much to learn about the nation's history here!"

Rocco concludes the tour with a walk down the block to [The People's House: A White House Experience](#). "I like how you can touch the screens and see images move and talk around you," he writes. "The videos make me feel like I am walking through the past."

*Rocco Celebrates America's 250th Birthday at the White House* features colorful paintings by John Hutton, illustrator of the complete series of Rocco's children's books.

### **Author Biography**

Rocco Smirne attends elementary school in Fairfax County, Virginia. He enjoys attending festivals, parades, and activities in the Nation's Capital. When not out exploring, Rocco enjoys reading, drawing, and video games. He came a published author at just five years old with [A White House Alphabet](#) (2020), which was soon followed by [Rocco Travels with the Presidents!](#) (2021), [Rocco at the White House Easter Egg Roll!](#) (2023), and [Rocco Keeps the Beat! Music in the White House](#) (2024).

### **Illustrator Biography**

John Hutton, PhD, was educated at Princeton, Harvard, and the Courtauld Institute of Art. For nearly ten years, Dr. Hutton has been a featured artist at the White House Easter Egg Roll where he gives drawing lessons to children. He is the author of two books on how to draw presidential portraits and the illustrator of a series of children's books published by the White House Historical Association.

For more information or to request an interview with the author or illustrator, please contact [press@whha.org](mailto:press@whha.org).

*Rocco Celebrates America's 250th Birthday at the White House* is one of a series of titles slated for release in 2026 by the Association's scholarly press to celebrate America's Semiquincentennial. For more information on books in print contact [books@whha.org](mailto:books@whha.org). Other Semiquincentennial products include [the Official Commemorative Ornament of America's 250th Anniversary](#).

### **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](http://WhiteHouseHistory.org).