



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

New Digital Library Exhibit “Slavery and Freedom in the White House Collection”

Exhibit Explores 200 Years of Objects, Furnishings, and Artwork

April 24, 2023 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association debuted a new virtual exhibit today, [Slavery and Freedom in the White House Collection](#), that explores slavery’s influence on the ideas, people and movements that shaped the White House through close examination and interpretation of 21 objects in the White House Collection.

The exhibit draws from memoirs, historic newspapers, census data, and other primary source materials from archives, museums, and historic sites including Mount Vernon, the White House Office of the Curator, the Library of Congress, and more. The exhibit includes high-resolution photo galleries of paintings, crafted furnishings, and objects spanning more than two hundred years of history. By utilizing a zoom function, users can examine the images in detail. The exhibit was curated by White House Historical Association historian Sarah Fling who first began conducting research on the connections between fine and decorative arts and slavery as part of the Association’s [Slavery in the President’s Neighborhood](#) research initiative.

“Material culture can help us uncover, understand, and bring to light the stories of enslaved people that have often been overlooked, and I am excited for White House art and furnishings to join this conversation,” said Fling. “I loved looking at objects and artifacts in fresh, creative ways throughout this process, and hope viewers are interested in the new angle explored in this digital exhibit.”

“The exhibit challenges viewers to look beyond the objects themselves and into the past, to develop a better understanding of how these items were created, transported, and interacted with by free and enslaved people who were a key part of White House history,” said Stewart McLaurin, President of the White House Historical Association.

[\[Click here for high-resolution images from this exhibit\]](#)

For more information, 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 \$100 million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

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