Background: White House Weddings

Weddings bring sentimental joy to families, and the same is true for weddings of first families at the White House. White House weddings have long fascinated the public, and many Americans have closely followed along with the festivities.

- In the past, White House weddings have been thrown for first family members, relatives, close friends, and White House staff.
- There have been nineteen documented weddings hosted by the President and/or First Lady of the United States.
  - **March 29, 1812:** Lucy Payne Washington (the sister of First Lady Dolley Madison) married Supreme Court Associate Justice Thomas Todd.
  - **March 9, 1820:** Maria Hester Monroe (daughter of President James Monroe and First Lady Elizabeth Monroe) married Samuel L. Gouverneur (Mrs. Monroe’s nephew and private secretary to President Monroe).
  - **February 25, 1828:** John Adams II (son of President John Quincy Adams and First Lady Louisa Catherine Adams) married Mary Catherine Hellen (Mrs. Adams’s niece).
  - **April 10, 1832:** Mary Ann Eastin (grandniece of Rachel Donelson Jackson) married Lucius J. Polk.
  - **November 29, 1832:** Mary Anne Lewis (daughter of a close friend of President Andrew Jackson) married Alphonse Pageot.
  - **January 31, 1842:** Elizabeth Tyler (daughter of President John Tyler and First Lady Letitia Tyler) married William Waller in the East Room.
  - **May 21, 1874:** Nellie Grant (daughter of President Ulysses S. Grant and First Lady Julia Grant) married Algernon Sartoris in the East Room.
  - **June 19, 1878:** Emily Platt (niece of President Rutherford B. Hayes) married General Russell Hastings in the Blue Room.
  - **June 2, 1886:** President Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom in the Blue Room. Cleveland is the only president to marry inside the White House.
- February 17, 1906: Alice Lee Roosevelt (daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt) married Ohio Representative Nicholas Longworth in the East Room.
- August 7, 1918: Alice Wilson (niece of President Woodrow Wilson) married Reverend Isaac Stuart McElroy, Jr. in the Blue Room.
- July 30, 1942: Harry Hopkins (administrator and advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt) married Louise Gill Macy in the Second Floor Oval Room (then Roosevelt’s private study).
- June 12, 1971: Tricia Nixon (daughter of President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon) married Edward Finch Cox in the Rose Garden.
- November 19, 2022: Naomi Biden (granddaughter of President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden) married Peter Neal on the South Lawn.

- There have been four documented weddings that took place elsewhere, but the wedding receptions afterwards were hosted by the President and/or First Lady of the United States at the White House.
  - December 1, 1831: Andrew Jackson Jr. and Sarah Yorke were married in Philadelphia on November 24, 1831. While President Jackson did not attend the ceremony, he did host the newlyweds for a reception at the White House a week later.
  - June 29, 1844: President John Tyler and First Lady Julia Gardiner Tyler were married in New York on June 26, 1844. The wedding party traveled back to Washington, D.C., and according to newspapers hosted a reception celebrating their marriage that Saturday.
  - August 6, 1966: Luci Johnson (daughter of President Lyndon Johnson and First Lady Lady Bird Johnson) married Patrick Nugent at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and the couple held their wedding reception at the White House that evening.
  - June 21, 2008: Jenna Bush (daughter of President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush) married Henry Hager on May 10, 2008, in Crawford,
Texas. The president and first lady hosted a White House reception to celebrate the marriage the following month.

- Many first daughters have married at the White House.
  - The first daughter of a president to marry at the White House was Maria Hester Monroe (daughter of President James Monroe and First Lady Elizabeth Monroe) on March 9, 1820.
  - President Ulysses S. Grant’s only daughter, Nellie Grant, married Algernon Sartoris in a lavish, palm-and-orchid-lined East Room ceremony on May 21, 1874.
  - President Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter, Alice Lee Roosevelt, married on February 17, 1906, with nearly a thousand guests filling the East Room to an extent not seen since President Abraham Lincoln’s funeral.
  - President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon’s daughter Tricia’s wedding was the first White House wedding held in the Rose Garden on June 12, 1971.
  - President Lyndon B. Johnson and First Lady Lady Bird Johnson’s daughter Luci and President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush’s daughter Jenna married elsewhere, then came to the White House for a reception.

- As technology and communications advanced in the nineteenth century, the first family's activities, whereabouts, and milestones became more newsworthy to citizens.
  - The ceremony for Nellie Grant, President Ulysses S. Grant and Julia Grant’s daughter, in 1874 spurred a new level of style and visibility of first families.
  - President Grover Cleveland’s Blue Room wedding triggered great national interest with hundreds of uninvited guests flooding the White House North Lawn. Newspapers reported intricate details including long pieces on the wedding cake, and journalists following the newlyweds on their honeymoon.
  - The marriage of Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter Alice in 1906 to Congressman Nicholas Longworth brought increased national attention.
    - The bride’s trousseau shopping stopped traffic in New York, where crowds had to be dispersed by the police.
    - Americans sent the couple various gifts, including hand-embroidered linens, homemade feather dusters, a Boston terrier, and even oversized turnips and a barrel of popcorn.
  - President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon’s daughter Tricia’s wedding was the first White House wedding held in the Rose Garden.
    - A steady stream of press releases preceded the big day, and 700 reporters received credentials to cover it.
• The Rose Garden was outfitted with nine types of roses and fifteen other kinds of flowers.
• The vows were exchanged beneath a 12-foot gazebo covered in white roses.
• About 110 million Americans watched television coverage of the wedding.

For all media inquiries, 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. She sought to inspire Americans, especially children, to explore and engage with American history and its presidents. In 1961, the nonprofit, nonpartisan 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 $50 million to the White House in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

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