November 20, 2023 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association today released the 71st issue of its award-winning magazine, *White House History Quarterly*, “The White House and the Sea.” With this issue of the Quarterly we follow America’s presidents to sea, where so many chapters of White House history have been written. The presidents have sought peace at sea, relaxed, dined, and celebrated at sea, and mourned tragedies at sea.

Marcia Anderson, editor of the Quarterly observes, "As this issue goes to press, November 22, 2023, the sixty-fifth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, approaches. Reflections on his lifelong connections to the sea are threaded through the issue, and it is his words—"we are tied to the ocean"—quoted on our cover that set the stage for the issue itself."

Stories included in this issue of *White House History Quarterly* include:

- “Time on the Water: The Floating White House and the President at Sea” — From George Washington’s crossing of the Delaware to Joe Biden’s sojourns to Rehoboth, Kenneth T. Walsh’s opening survey reveals the significance of “time on the water” for the presidents. Walsh explains, “There is something about the vast expanse of water and its many moods, from tranquil to furious, that gives them solace and encourages contemplation.”

- “George Washington: Father of the United States Navy” — Historian Matthew Goetz reminds us that it was at the urging of future president George Washington that the Continental Congress established the navy. By the twentieth century, the small force of “civilian fishing vessels” that Washington commissioned had grown into the world’s greatest navy.

- “The Resolute Desk: A British Naval Ship Become and Oval Office Treasure” — Many presidents have included nautical references in the decor of their workspace, and in recent decades the Oval Office has been furnished with the famous Resolute Desk. Patrick Burr
examines this desk, which was ornately carved from the timbers of the British exploring vessel HMS Resolute and was given by Queen Victoria to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880.

- “A Titanic Loss: Remembering Archibald Butt and Francis Millet” — Although the sea can bring true comfort to the presidents, it has at times also bought great sorrow. Matthew Costello takes us back to the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, which took the life of President William Howard Taft’s trusted adviser Major Archibald Butt. A hero in death, Butt, poignantly eulogized by Taft himself, is remembered today by a monument just south of the White House in the President’s Park.

- “President Calvin Coolidge, Lee Ping Quan, and the Pleasures of a Floating Table” — Culinary historian Alex Prud’homme shares the story of Calvin Coolidge’s love for dining at sea, often eating an early version of “Asian fusion,” prepared by his navy steward and chef Lee Ping Quan.

- “Franklin D. Roosevelt: The President at Sea” — “You have to go a long way off to see things in their true perspective,” observed President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who spent more time at sea than any other president. Author James J. Fortuna explains that, whether for diplomacy, statecraft, or recreation, FDR, who filled his Private Quarters in the White House with nautical paintings and model ships, considered sailing an “absolute necessity.”

- “William M. Rigdon’s Adventures at Sea with President Franklin D. Roosevelt” — On many nautical excursions, FDR was joined by his military aide William Rigdon, who described the role as “the best duty I ever had.” Author Mary Jo Binker traces Rigdon’s adventures with the president.

- “The Sea in the White House Fine Arts Collection” — Former White House curator Lydia Tederick presents a selection of the coastal paintings in the White House Collection that can quickly transport the president back to the water through the eyes of the nation’s most accomplished artists.

- “Dinner on the Sequoia: President Kennedy’s Last Birthday” — Culinary historian Alex Prud’homme shares the story of John F. Kennedy’s last birthday, when he enjoyed a meal and a champagne toast on the Sequoia with friends and family.

- “Ships, Real and Fictional Named for U.S. Presidents” — With a focus on five chief executives—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Ronald Reagan—author Joel Kemelhor provides the first of what will be an ongoing review of ships named for the presidents. Beginning with a merchant vessel renamed Washington in 1775 and ending with the USS George Washington, Kemelhor documents their places in both nautical history and popular culture.

- “Presidential Sites Quarterly Feature: Cape May: A Presidential Retreat by the Sea” — In this issue’s Presidential Sites feature, Margaret Strolle explores the presidential connections to Cape May, an early seaside resort in New Jersey.
“Reflections: Fair Winds and Following Seas” — Among the U.S. Navy’s mid-century sailors committed to defending democracy and safeguarding freedom were six future presidents whose service is recounted by White House Historical Association President, Stewart D. McLaurin, in his Quarterly Reflections.

This 120-page issue of White House History Quarterly retails for $12.95. To purchase a single issue, visit shop.whitehoushistory.org.

To subscribe to White House History Quarterly, visit whitehoushistoryjournal.org.

To request a review copy of White House History Quarterly #71, or interview the contributors, contact press@whha.org.

About White House History Quarterly
White House History Quarterly, published by the White House Historical Association since 1983, strives to present the broadest view of this personal American subject—the White House—featuring memoir, biography, history, and cultural context as it opens the doors of “America’s House” to America. Issues are thematic, shaped to tell a story from a particular angle, and the themes—from music, theater, fashion, art, entertaining, flowers and gardens, kitchens and cooking, presidential journeys and travel, memoir, and presidential kin and presidential sites—suggest the broad scope of the content. With editorial offices in Washington, D.C., at the Association’s row house facing Lafayette Park across from the White House, White House History Quarterly is published four times each year. One, two, or three-year subscriptions, single copies, and bound collections of back issues are available.

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 $115 million to the White House in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit WhiteHouseHistory.org.

###