



THE WHITE HOUSE  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## Celebrating America NEW ISSUE *White House History Quarterly* Magazine

February 23, 2026 (Washington, D.C.) – As the nation's semiquincentennial year begins, *White House History Quarterly* devotes its 80th issue to [Celebrating America](#) with a look back at milestone national anniversaries in the context of White House history. "As we travel through time, we make stops in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, at semicentennial, centennial, and bicentennial celebrations, not only of Independence Day but also of the presidency and the White House itself," explains Marcia Anderson, Editor of *White House History Quarterly*.

To request a review copy of *White House History Quarterly* #80 or to interview the contributors, contact [press@whha.org](mailto:press@whha.org).

Articles in this issue include:

- **FOREWORD: *Celebrating the Nation's Birthdays*** – Marcia Anderson
- **THE MEANING AND MAKING OF THE 2026 OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT: *Created in Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial*** – The issue opens in the present day as **Marcia Anderson** explores the meaning and making of the recently launched [Official White House Christmas Ornament](#). The forty-sixth in the series, the 2026 ornament fittingly pictures a facsimile of the original Declaration of Independence now preserved in the National Archives. The ornament, destined to hang on perhaps a million or more Christmas trees in the United States and abroad for years to come, is in keeping with the intention of the Second



Continental Congress, which, immediately following the formal signing of the document, ordered that it be reproduced, read publicly, and distributed widely.

- **A FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN BOSTON THROUGH A STRANGER'S EYES** – **Charlotte Seale** takes us back to the eighteenth century and shares the reaction of a “stranger in America” to one of the earliest Independence Day celebrations. She explains that Charles Janson, an Englishman who happened to arrive in Boston in 1793 on the eve of the nation’s seventeenth anniversary, had hoped to avoid the public festivities but instead witnessed flags flying, guns firing, drums beating, and a military parade. Janson’s 1807 book would ultimately preserve not only this scene but would present the first known published image of the President’s House.
- **AMERICA’S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY** – Historian **Alan Capps** takes us into the nineteenth century to July 4, 1826, the nation’s fiftieth anniversary. The date was consequential not only for marking a half century of independence but also for the deaths of two Signers of the Declaration, second President John Adams and third President Thomas Jefferson—an astonishing coincidence.
- **THE CENTENNIAL OF THE U.S. PRESIDENCY** - **Jennifer Wojcek** reminds us that the nation would never forget the significance of not only July 4, 1776, but also of other milestone dates such as April 30, 1789. She takes us to New York City on the centennial of George Washington’s first Oath of Office, following President Benjamin Harrison as he traces Washington’s steps to Federal Hall in a days-long celebration filled with naval reviews, balls, parades, a worship service, and speeches.
- **MEMORIES OF COVERING PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD’S BICENTENNIAL JOURNEY, JULY 4, 1976: *Weather Threatened But America Was Ready to Celebrate*** – Journalist **Ann Compton** brings the narrative into the twentieth century, sharing her own memories of traveling with President Gerald R. Ford on July 4, 1976, the nation’s two hundredth birthday. It was a day, Compton explains, that America was ready to celebrate its success story. Compton witnessed Ford complete an ambitious seven-page itinerary, which began with prayer at St. John’s Church and continued with events in Valley Forge, Philadelphia, and New York Harbor, before culminating with a viewing of fireworks from the Truman Balcony.
- **A TIME CAPSULE IS BURIED TO CELEBRATE THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE WHITE HOUSE CORNERSTONE**– The first-person accounts continue with memories of two White House bicentennials. Former White House Chief Usher **Gary Walters** details events hosted by President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush in 1992 when the bicentennial of the White House cornerstone was memorialized with the installation of a time capsule on the South Grounds.

- **CAPTURING THE SUNRISE ON THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WHITE HOUSE** – Artist **Jamie Wyeth** shares his experience on the South Grounds in 2000, when he was cleared in at 5:00 a.m. to make preparatory sketches for his painting, *Dawn, The White House, 2000*. Wyeth had been commissioned by the White House Historical Association to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of life in the White House, which began on November 1, 1800, when President John Adams took up residence. With this special account of how he created his painting, Wyeth publishes his preparatory sketches for the first time.
- **CARRIERS OF TRADITION: *The U.S. Navy Celebrates 250 Years as Ships Named for Presidents Observe Holidays and National Events*** – **Joel Kemelhor** takes us out to sea to explore the U.S. Navy's traditions for celebrating national anniversaries and the role played by carriers named for presidents.
- **PRESIDENTIAL SITES FEATURE: Harry Truman's Independence: "The Center of the World** – **James H. Johnston** takes us to his hometown, Independence, Missouri. Founded in 1827 and named for the Declaration of Independence, Independence is described by Johnston as the "quintessential American small town." He remembers growing up there at the time when President Harry S. Truman was a neighbor and sightings of the president were both commonplace and unforgettable.
- **REFLECTIONS: *We Hold These Truths*** – President of the White House Historical Association, **Stewart D. McLaurin** closes the issue observing, "The White House, as 'the people's house,' has served as a profound stage upon which so much of American history has been decided, directed, and determined—from declarations of war and peace to joyous commemorations that unite the nation."

This 96-page issue of *White House History Quarterly* retails for \$12.95. To purchase a single issue, visit [shop.whitehousehistory.org](http://shop.whitehousehistory.org).

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### **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).

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