



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEW Episode: *The White House 1600 Sessions* Podcast “Remembering President Lincoln: 160th Anniversary”

White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin Remembers President Abraham Lincoln’s Legacy with Ford’s Theatre Director Paul Tetreault and Elizabeth MacMillan Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History Anthea Hartig

April 23, 2025 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association released a special episode of *The White House 1600 Sessions* podcast today recognizing the 160th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination. In the episode, Stewart McLaurin, president of the Association, is joined by Paul R. Tetreault, director of the historic Ford’s Theatre, for a tour of the building and an exploration of the events surrounding the assassination on April 14, 1865. McLaurin is then joined by Anthea M. Hartig, Ph.D., Elizabeth MacMillan Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, to explore historically significant objects in the museum’s archives preserved from that fateful night.

Ford’s Theatre operates as both a National Historic Site and a working theater with a mission of exploring President Lincoln’s legacy and celebrating the American experience through arts and education.

“It’s amazing to stand on this stage and visualize the performance taking place that evening...the president relaxed, enjoying a show nearing its end,” said McLaurin. “And then you hear that pop of the gun, and it had to stun this audience. Then you hear Mrs. Lincoln shout—I feel the emotion of it just standing here.”

Tetreault, who has served as the Director of Ford’s Theatre since 2004, shares a detailed retelling of the events of the evening and President Lincoln’s final moments, putting into context a country that had just endured a long, divisive Civil War.

“Lincoln walks over to the box, he tips his hat and sits down. And think about it, he was lambasted for four years during the war. Here he is tonight, standing ovation, raucous crowd cheering him. He saved the Union, he brought the country together, and here he is, enjoying an evening in the theater,” said Tetreault. “And that’s what he remembers. He remembers that elation. And I like to take that and not think about sort of the horror that happened later that evening.”

McLaurin then visits with Anthea M. Hartig who leads the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. They discuss the importance of preserving historical items, including one of their popular artifacts on display: the top hat President Lincoln wore to Ford's Theatre that April night.

"Lincoln memorabilia, especially around the assassination, was incredibly powerful," said Hartig. "This is the history of how we remember what happened and how we pass that down throughout generations. It's a true, humbling honor to take care and steward these materials for everyone."

McLaurin and Hartig also look at a few unique objects in the museum's archives from that night which are not on public display. Those items include the china cup the president last drank from at the White House before leaving for the theater, as well as the bloodied cuff of the young doctor who was the first to attend to President Lincoln on the scene.

The full video of this podcast episode is also available on the White House Historical Association's YouTube channel [here](#).

The White House 1600 Sessions podcast is available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

For more information, please contact press@whha.org.

The White House 1600 Sessions

The White House Historical Association's President Stewart McLaurin is the host of *The White House 1600 Sessions*, the Association's official audio and video podcast devoted to exploring the history, cultural impact, untold stories, and personal accounts of America's most iconic residence and highest office.

About the White House Historical Association

The White House Historical Association was founded in 1961 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to support her vision to restore and preserve the Executive Mansion and its legacy for generations to come. Mrs. Kennedy sought to inspire Americans, especially children, to explore and engage with American history and its presidents. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has contributed 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.

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