

A large American flag with red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars, waving across the top half of the image.

THE WHITE HOUSE



BY EMILY SCHLESINGER





Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1

Secrets and Surprises 4

CHAPTER 2

Building the House..... 8

CHAPTER 3

Early Troubles..... 14

CHAPTER 4

Changes and Traditions 20

CHAPTER 5

Famous Spaces..... 28

CHAPTER 6

Leaving a Mark..... 34

CHAPTER 7

Behind the Scenes..... 38

CHAPTER 8

Safe and Secure 42

CHAPTER 9

Living in the White House..... 46

CHAPTER 10

Like No Place Else 54

Glossary 58

Secrets and Surprises

One house in the U.S. is far from ordinary. Famous leaders stop by for dinner. Tourists gather outside its gates. The house has a helicopter pad and a bowling alley. Missiles guard it day and night.



FAST FACT: The president is the head of the executive branch of the U.S. government. This is the branch responsible for carrying out laws.

This is the White House. It has been home to every U.S. president since George Washington. History is created inside its walls. **Treaties** are negotiated. Bills get signed. Orders are given. The president's work happens here.



The White House is a home and a workplace. It is also a national park. Up to 6,000 people visit each day. The building has six levels. They contain over 100 rooms. People come and go through 412 doors. There are 35 bathrooms and 28 fireplaces.

It is called the White House for a reason. Outside, the walls are covered in 570 gallons of white paint. Beneath are many layers of history.

The house has seen good times and bad. It has burned down and been taken apart. Tigers and bears have run down its halls. Soldiers once camped on its wide green lawn.

Secrets hide behind these walls. Strange stories fill its spaces. This may be the most famous home in the country. But there is a lot people do not know about the White House.

Building the House

The address 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., is famous. George Washington picked out the spot himself. It was 1791. This area was still wild. Washington climbed up a dirt path. He found the highest point. Then he drew a line where the house should go. That is where the White House stands today.

NAMING THE HOUSE

The early house had many names. One was the President's House. Another was the Executive Mansion. But only one name stuck. In 1901, the White House became the official name.



Early Designs

Picture the White House. What do you see? Many think of its tall white **columns** and green lawn. But a very different house was almost built here. It would have looked like a giant French palace. The first architect was from France. His name was Pierre L'Enfant. He designed a home to make kings and queens jealous. This was five times bigger than the final plan. L'Enfant called it the "President's Palace."

However, this palace was never built. L'Enfant was fired. He could not get along with his team. A new architect was needed. Thomas Jefferson placed an ad. It was for a contest. The ad promised \$500 for "a President's house." Drawings had to be in "before the 20th day of July." This was in 1792.

George Washington chose the winner. He picked an Irish immigrant named James Hoban. His design was simple and elegant. It had strong columns and clean lines. Washington thought this was a better look for a **democracy**.

Washington offered Hoban some tips. He told him to design a house that could grow. The country would expand, so the house should too. Hoban left space to add on.



FAST FACT: L'Enfant also designed the street plan for Washington, D.C. He created grand boulevards surrounding a large open space, which is now the National Mall.

Construction

Construction began on October 13, 1792. Many people helped build the house. Some were local workers. Others were immigrants from Europe. Slaves played a big role as well. They dug sandstone out of a **quarry**. This stone was shipped up the river. It was used to build the house.

LOCKS

Stone used in building the house needed to be moved from the river to the top of the hill. This was done by digging canals. These were divided into sections called locks. Water could be added to each lock. Building materials were then moved up, one section at a time.



Craftsmen carved beautiful designs in the stones. Simple cranes lifted them into place. Then the outside was covered in **whitewash**. This protected it. Sandstone is **porous**. Water could get in. It might freeze and crack. Paint kept water out. The house has been white ever since.



FAST FACT: The White House cost \$232,372 to build. At the time, it was the largest home in the country.

THE WHITE HOUSE

It is the most famous house in the United States. Major moments in world history have taken place within its walls. World leaders, children, and even animals have roamed the halls. War once destroyed it. But now the house stands as a symbol of freedom and democracy in the U.S. This is the story of the White House.



 **SADDLEBACK**
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING
www.sdlback.com

LEXILE HL330L

ISBN: 978-1-68021-912-8



90000

9 781680 219128