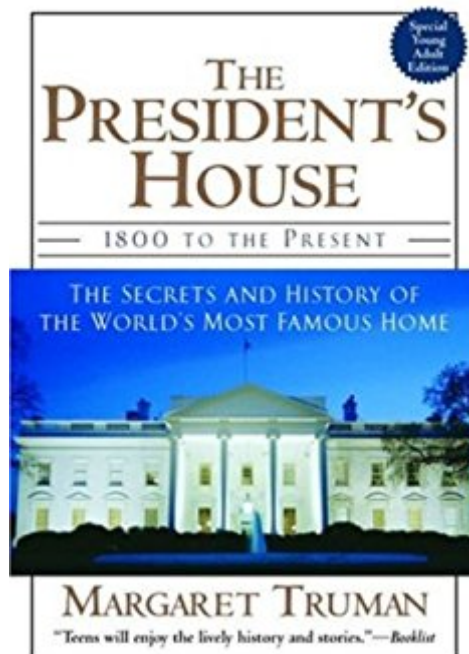




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# The President's House: 1800 To The Present The Secrets And History Of The World's Most Famous Home



## Synopsis

As Margaret Truman knows from firsthand experience, living in the White House can be exhilarating and maddening, alarming and exhausting—but it is certainly never dull. Part private residence, part goldfish bowl, and part national shrine, the White House is both the most important address in America and the most intensely scrutinized. In this splendid blend of the personal and historic, Margaret Truman offers an unforgettable tour of “the president’s house” across the span of two centuries. Opened (though not finished) in 1800 and originally dubbed a “palace,” the White House has been fascinating from day one. In Thomas Jefferson’s day, it was a reeking construction site where congressmen complained of the hazards of open rubbish pits. Andrew Jackson’s supporters, descending twenty thousand strong from the backwoods of Kentucky and Tennessee, nearly destroyed the place during his first inaugural. Teddy Roosevelt expanded it, Jackie Kennedy and Pat Nixon redecorated it. Through all the vicissitudes of its history, the White House has transformed the characters, and often the fates, of its powerful occupants. In *The President’s House*, Margaret Truman takes us behind the scenes, into the deepest recesses and onto the airiest balconies, as she reveals what it feels like to live in the White House. Here are hilarious stories of Teddy Roosevelt’s rambunctious children tossing spitballs at presidential portraits as well as a heartbreaking account of the tragedy that befell President Coolidge’s young son, Calvin, Jr. Here, too, is the real story of the Lincoln Bedroom and the thrilling narrative of how first lady Dolley Madison rescued a priceless portrait of George Washington and a copy of the Declaration of Independence before British soldiers torched the White House in 1814. Today the 132-room White House operates as an exotic combination of first-class hotel and fortress, with 1,600 dedicated workers, an annual budget over \$1 billion, and a kitchen that can handle anything from an intimate dinner for four to a reception for 2,400. But ghosts of the past still walk its august corridors—including a phantom whose visit President Harry S Truman described to his daughter in eerie detail. From the basement swarming with reporters to the Situation Room crammed with sophisticated technology to the Oval Office where the president receives the world’s leaders, the White House is a beehive of relentless activity, deal-making, intrigue, gossip, and of course history in the making. In this evocative and insightful book, Margaret Truman combines high-stakes drama with the unique perspective of an insider. The ultimate guided tour of the nation’s most famous dwelling, *The President’s House* is truly a national treasure. From the Hardcover edition.

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## Customer Reviews

I ordered this book because I had read in an Eleanor Roosevelt biography how shocked and dismayed Margaret and Bess were when they arrived in the living quarters and found it so shabby. I wanted to know more about how shabby, what was left, what did they have to do, what's it like moving in, moving out, living on the second floor. This is not that book. This was a hard book to get to the end. I had to force myself. She does not tell her stories in chronological order. She'll leap from a 20th century president back to a 19th century one, then back again. You get no sense of how the house grew or changed over the years because the timeline is so out of wack. She has chosen to tell her stories bundled in topics -- the grounds, the office areas, the servants, the gardens, the pets, the reporters, the brides, the children, etc. And within each chapter, even then she does not tell the stories chronologically. She skips back and forth. I guess the advantage of that is she can insert a story about her father into each chapter, because if she had told it chronologically, she'd have to deal with his stories in one chapter. She tells her stories in a folksy, casual way, as if she were telling the story over dinner to friends around the table, and it just doesn't work in this context. And all the

stories, bumping through history out of order like the Doctor in a runaway Tardis, run together in each chapter. And for someone who was literally inside, this is no insider's tale. Many of these stories you have heard elsewhere, in other books. That's probably where they came from. Here she had a first hand opportunity to write about what it's really like to live in the White House, and she wrote a book that anyone could have pieced together sitting in a research library. I don't get it.

Margaret Truman is, of course, the daughter of President Harry Truman and his wife Bess. She is the most prolific writing child of any American Chief Executive. Margaret Truman has written several mysteries and histories about life in Washington which are written in a popular style easy to understand and enjoy. As Ms. Truman opens the door to our White House she lets us discover the fascinating men and women who have lived at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. She discusses such various topics as: 1. White House Weddings. 2. Relations between the Presidents and the Media 3. The Children of Presidents who have lived in the White House 4. White House Presidential Pets 5. The kooks and crazies who have tried (and in some cases been successful) in assassinating our chief executive. 6. She describes the growth of the White House from its first occupancy by John and Abigail Adams in 1800. The history of the White House building, grounds, gardens and additions are discussed. 7. How the routine of a White House day changed with every administration-when they awoke to what they liked for dinner! Ms. Truman has written in a charmingly simple style which is nevertheless based on her well done historical research. This is a book anyone regardless of age or party affiliation could enjoy. I recommend it highly!

A very interesting topic, written by someone who knew the topic from a unique first hand experience.

The President's House: 1800 to the Present The Secrets and History of the World's Most Famous Home This is a fascinating story about the history of the White House. When I was in High School (way back), I hated history. The past didn't interest me because one of the biggest events in history had just ended, World War 2. This book goes back to the beginning and relates the complete history of the White House. I hate to think that there will be no more books by Margaret Truman who, to me, is one of the greatest murder mystery writers of all time. Although this is not a murder mystery, she has written many other equally fascinating books. Claude Bedell

I am a history lover, particularly American History. My favorite category is presidents. They are all

fascinating people. The Author of this book lived in this house during a very bad war & knows about it as other authors might not. It takes a special person, to lead a country & these men have all felt they are capable of doing that. Some have been wrong, & failed badly. Some have been fair & we survived, without too many problems & some have been poorly advised, unknowledgeable & have caused some of the worst conditions our country has faced. This is about the house they have lived in for four or more years & a lot about their personal lives, stories about their families, etc. I find it fascinating & very interesting. I bought it for a grandchild, but he will have to wait till I have read it all.

A great book for any time, including our time now. All the idiosyncrasies, both good and bad, of the various presidents, their families and staff are explored in a very good natured way.

Interesting facts about the White House.

Very informative book

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