



## PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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### WHITE HOUSE HISTORY THE JOURNAL OF THE WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

#### **The Speech of Mr. Ogle on the Regal Splendor of the President's Palace**

Devoted entirely to the once-famous "Gold Spoon Oration," issue number 10 of *White House History* reprints for the first time since 1840 Congressman Charles Ogle's lengthy oration to Congress. In the midst of a national depression and a heated presidential campaign Mr. Ogle felt compelled to respond to lavish expenditures for White House furnishings. Gilded silver tableware, silver services and glassware figured prominently in Ogle's extensive lists of "costly articles of luxury" in the President's House. The gilded silver dessert spoons (c.1809-19), used at the White House during the Van Buren administration, remain in the White House collection.

William Seale, editor of *White House History*, points out that "Scholars familiar with the 'Gold Spoon Oration' puzzle why, although often quoted, it has not made its way into anthologies of American humor." He notes that 'The Gold Spoon Oration' can be read point by point for fun and flavor, for it is rich in the spirit of the time, and it can be dissected at the National Archives, almost point by point, for Ogle made use of archival material still available to us today."

Accompanying the transcription of the speech are several richly illustrated contextual articles. William Seale begins by providing a glimpse into the place and times Ogle lived in and describes the political climate in which the speech was given. Historian Clifford Krainik brings to life the characters and places from the presidential campaign of 1840 -- the race between William Henry Harrison and Martin Van Buren -- the “defining election that introduced theatrical drama and established political procedure for generations to follow.” William G. Allman, assistant curator of the White House, catalogs “brilliant and princely” objects in the house that Ogle may have seen himself and worked into his oration. Wendy Kail, archivist at Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, transcribes a letter written by Martha Custis Peter in February 1841 that describes President-elect William Henry Harrison’s triumphant arrival in the City of Washington.

*White House History* is published twice each year by the White House Historical Association and features articles on White House history, architecture, fine and decorative arts, and gardens, as well as stories about the occupants of the White House and their experiences while living there.

Two year subscriptions (\$24) or single issue #10 (\$4.95) to *White House History* may be placed by contacting White House Historical Association, (202) 737-8292 or on the web site [www.whitehousehistory.org](http://www.whitehousehistory.org). *White House History* is also available for \$4.95 per copy (plus shipping and handling).

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