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**WHITE HOUSE HISTORY**  
**THE JOURNAL OF THE WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**  
*IN JAMES BUCHANAN'S TIME*

The White House Historical Association announces the publication of issue number 12 of *White House History*, its semiannual journal devoted to the history of the White House and its occupants. The new issue focuses on the era of James Buchanan (1857-1861), a senior statesman and diplomat who seemed the perfect man to lead the nation in the difficult times preceding the Civil War. Rather than solve the problems, his eventual stance was simply to try to keep the Union together so he could turn it over to his successor.

The administration of the fifteenth president is remembered as the last days of antebellum America and the prelude to the Civil War. Buchanan's White House was often compared to a royal court and was the location of the last gatherings of political luminaries of the 1850s before the war split them apart.

William Seale, editor of *White House History*, notes in his foreword that "Special events of President James Buchanan's administration gave a brilliant cover to a book that had four years of dark pages. Only a few days after he took office, the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision toppled the system of laws that had kept sectional interests at bay." In the year of his inauguration, a national panic brought financial hard times and depression. Washington was a stage for the worst of political tensions.

In spite of the tension, the Buchanan White House retained a strong public presence. The “court” over which James Buchanan presided as president was directed by his niece, Harriet Lane, a determined young woman in her late 20s. High life and great ceremonial events were a bright contrast to the political storms. Pamela Kilian writes about “James Buchanan’s White House Hostess: The Celebrated Harriet Lane.” In “Guests of the Nation: The Japanese Delegation to the Buchanan White House,” Dallas Finn explores the splendid entourage of the first political ambassadors and their wondrous gifts including a tiny dog that fit into a tea cup. Claire A. Faulkner talks about the first British royal to visit the United States in “President Buchanan Greeted a Guest of State: The Prince of Wales at the White House.” In “The USRMCS Harriet Lane,” Robert L. Anderson tells the story of the Coast Guard cutter *Harriet Lane* and its distinguished and dramatic career before and after the Buchanan years.” White House curator William G. Allman describes remaining artifacts in “The White House Collection: From James Buchanan’s Time.” These subjects comprise issue 12 of *White House History*

*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. Upcoming issues number 13 and 14 will focus on the preservation and restoration efforts of the John F. Kennedy administration.

Two year subscriptions (\$30) to *White House History* may be placed by contacting the White House Historical Association at 202.737.8292 or on the web site [www.whitehousehistory.org](http://www.whitehousehistory.org). *White House History* is also available for \$6.95 per copy (plus shipping and handling).

The White House Historical Association, established in 1961, is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the White House. All proceeds from the association’s trusts, publications and other items are used to fund acquisitions of historic furnishings and artwork for the permanent White House collection, assist in the preservation of the public rooms, and further its educational mission.

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