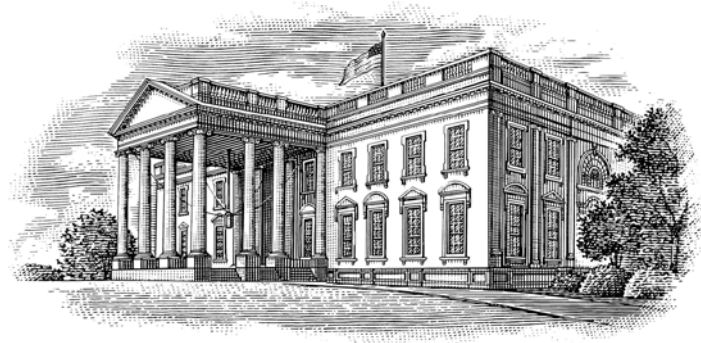


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2009 White House Christmas Ornament New Technology Lights Up Grover Cleveland's Tree

Brighten a tree with the gift of history

Every year since 1981 the White House Historical Association has created a Christmas ornament honoring past presidents of the United States, beginning with George Washington, and reflecting on the history and events that have taken place in the President's House.

The tradition continues with the 2009 White House Christmas ornament celebrating the second administration of President Grover Cleveland (1893-1897) when the first electric lights to illuminate the White House Christmas tree were used. The ornament illustrates the special place of the Christmas tree in the holiday celebration of President Cleveland's young family. Christmas at the Cleveland White House, as an Illinois reporter described it in 1896, was a "children's festival."

"People worldwide collect the White House ornament, give them as gifts to family and friends, and decorate their Christmas tree with them," said Neil W. Horstman, president of the White House Historical Association. "The public support of the ornament series contributes significantly to the acquisition of historic furnishings and artwork for the White House collection and furthers our educational mission."

Grover Cleveland was the only chief executive to leave the White House and return for a second term four years later. The 49 year old bachelor was also the only president to be married in the White House when he and Frances Folsom exchanged vows in the Blue Room on June 2, 1886. In 1893, shortly after returning to the White House, the Clevelands welcomed the arrival of a second daughter, the first child of a president to be born in the White House.

Grover Cleveland's Second Term (1893-1897)

"The spring of 1893, when Cleveland returned to the White House on a wave of revived popularity, was a happy season. State receptions were crowded and more than 20,000 people attended the Easter Monday Egg Roll. On May 1, Cleveland opened the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago commemorating Columbus's discovery of the New World. Lighted by electricity, the spectacular "White City," made of plaster and wood, created a make-believe monumental neoclassical urban center and put on display America's celebration of consumption and technology. The fair symbolized Cleveland's hope of progress for the nation but outside forces soon shattered his dream. The Panic of 1893 and the collapse of the stock market left four million jobless and the nation entered the worst depression it had yet experienced. Hard times continued for four more years and the domestic ambitions of his second presidential term were ultimately unsuccessful. However negative public opinion may have been when he left office in 1897, Grover Cleveland had sown the seed of the powerful modern presidency." — *2009 White House Christmas ornament brochure*

The Cleveland Family Observes Christmas

Grover Cleveland's presidency was personally gratifying for him due to the support and love of his family. Christmas at the Cleveland White House naturally focused on the president's daughters Ruth, Esther and Marion. Mrs. Cleveland

made the Christmas tree, stylishly laden with toys, the center of White House holiday decorations. An 1896 newspaper account describes the family tree as “a tremendous pine, fully twenty feet tall” laden with presents and decorated with “tinsel and twinkling with red, white and blue electric lights.” The president insisted on the old fashioned tradition of hanging stockings on the fireplace mantel and stuffing them with bon bons, figs, and toys. The Clevelands hosted an annual Christmas Eve children’s party for their tots and for the children of Cabinet members. On Christmas morning the girls opened their gifts and the president and first lady joined the excited children making merry with their new toys. As for the president, he enjoyed nothing more than a Christmas duck hunt and gave each of his cabinet members a duck for Christmas dinner, the spoils of his hunting vacation in South Carolina. But he reserved Christmas day only for the pleasure of his daughters.

Of the previous White House ornaments, 21 honored presidents starting with George Washington. The 1989 ornament pays tribute to the bicentennial of the American presidency, and 1992 honors the laying of the White House cornerstone in 1792. The bicentennial of the White House as home of the president was commemorated in 2000. In 2002, the ornament honored the centennial of the restoration of the White House and the building of the West Wing.

The cost of the ornament is \$16.95 plus packing and delivery and can be ordered from the White House Historical Association, P.O. Box 96586, Washington, D.C. 20090-6586, or you can call toll free 1-800-555-2451, or visit online at www.whitehousehistory.org. Each of the 28 ornaments (from 1981-2008) is also available, along with educational brochures.

The White House Historical Association was established in 1961 as a non-profit organization to enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the White House. All proceeds from its trusts and sales of ornaments, publications and other association products are used to fund acquisitions of historic furnishings and art works for the permanent White House collection, assist in the preservation of the public rooms, and further its educational mission.

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