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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

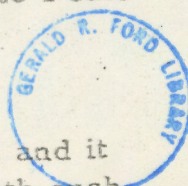
Office of the Curator
November 23, 1974

IMPORTANT OBJECTS IN THE OVAL OFFICE DURING
THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

The objects in the Oval Office will be described in a counter-clockwise direction beginning to the right of the door as one enters the Oval Office from the corridor.

✓ Portrait of Benjamin Franklin by Charles Willson Peale.

Charles Willson Peale's first view of Franklin came in 1767 when he was studying in London under Benjamin West. Peale had come to call on Franklin and through the doorway saw Franklin engaged in one of his favorite pastimes, engaging in an amorous conversation with a young lady on his knee. That started a cordial relationship and correspondence. Franklin wrote to Peale from London on July 4, 1771.



Sir,

I have received your obliging letter of April 21, and it gave me great pleasure to hear that you had met with such Encouragement at Philadelphia, and that you succeed so well in your business in your native country. If I were to advise you, it would be, by great Industry and Frugality to secure a Competency as early in your life as may be: For as your Profession requires good Eyes, cannot so well be followed with Spectacles and therefore will not probably afford Subsistence so long as some other Employments, you have a Right to claim proportionally larger Rewards while you continue able exercise it to general satisfaction. The Arts have always travelled westward, and there is no doubt of their flourishing hereafter on our side of the Atlantic, as the Number of wealthy Inhabitants shall increase, who may be able and willing suitably to reward them, since from several instances it appears that our People are not deficient in Genius.

over faintful
in yellow
by Bierstadt

When Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1785, after a ten year residency in France Peale finally succeeded in getting a life portrait of Franklin for his gallery of portraits of the Nation's founder started in 1782. This portrait stayed in the Peale Museum until its auction in 1854 when it was purchased by Joseph Harrison whose collection went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia in 1913. The painting is on loan to the White House from the Academy.

Bronze Statuette - The bronze statuette on the table depicts a young man with his dog. It is on loan to the White House from the National Collection of Fine Arts, the Smithsonian Institution.

Painting, "Passing the Outpost" by A. Wordsworth Thompson (1840-1896) This historical scene depicts British soldiers stopping at a farmhouse along the New York-Boston Road. They are being delayed here by loyal American wives so that American soldiers may escape. The farm pictured here is believed to be the Nagel Farm which was built in 1736 near the Harlem River. The painting is on loan from The Union League Club, New York, New York.

Bust of Harry S. Truman This bust of President Truman was cast in 1947 by the Roman Bronze Works. It was acquired for the White House in the Eisenhower Administration.

Argand Lamps - This pair of Sheffield silver argand lamps with telescopic columns were made in England about 1800.

Bust of Abraham Lincoln - The small bust of President Lincoln was executed by Leonard Volk about 1880. His son, Douglas Volk painted a portrait of Mr. Lincoln which is in the Lincoln Bedroom of the White House.



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Painting, "The President's House", artist unknown.
This painting is based on a William Bartlett engraving of the White House about 1839 showing Tiber Creek where Constitution Avenue is now located. The painting is believed to have been painted in the mid 19th century. Gift to the White House in 1967.

Sculpture "Broncho Buster" by Frederick Remington (1861-1909)
This important bronze sculpture on a cowboy riding a spirited horse was cast by the Roman Bronze Works about 1901. The original design was copyrighted by Remington in 1895. It was a gift to the White House in 1973 from Miss Virginia Hatfield and Mrs. Louise Hatfield Stickney, Covington, Kentucky.

Federal Card Table made in Salem, Massachusetts about 1810.
It is unusual in that the table top is supported by a large and carved gilded spread wing eagle. This table is the only extant eagle table in this form in America today.

Chinese export porcelain fish bowl. This rare porcelain fish bowl in front of the window was made in China in the late 18th century. In China, these bowls were formerly used to hold goldfish. Today they are used as planters.

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Pedestals - The pedestal along the east wall is one of a pair of mahogany fluted commode pedestals made in America about 1805 in the Sheraton style. It was a gift to the White House in 1969.

✓ Clock - The grandfather clock was a gift to the President. It has formerly been used in his office as Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and in the Office of the Vice President in the Executive Office Building.

Statuette of Abraham Lincoln - This statuette of President Lincoln on the pedestal is a study for the statue of Lincoln done for the city of Frankfort, Kentucky. The artist was A. A. Weinman. It is on loan to the White House from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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Installed in the Oval Office prior to August 1974



Painting "View of the Hudson River from West Point", artist unknown. This charming landscape was painted about 1850. It is part of the permanent White House Collection.

Painting "Eastport and Passamaquoddy Bay" - This landscape has been attributed to the French artist, Victor de Grailly who was working in the United States between 1840-1870. This scene in the state of Maine was based on a drawing of the same subject by William H. Bartlett and engraved by Charles Cousen. Both the painting and the engraving were acquired by the White House in 1973.

Pair of Delft Tobacco Jars - The handsome tobacco jars were made in Holland at the end of the 18th century. The jars are decorated in blue and white Delft tradition and depict the American Indian smoking a pipe. These jars were used in the New World to store tobacco.

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Portrait of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale. The portrait of General George Washington in dress uniform is believed to be the only replica of a portrait of Washington painted by Peale in 1776. It is on loan to the White House from the Estate of Lansdell K. Christie.

Peale (1741-1827) was the only painter known to have painted Washington from life seven times. The portrait over the mantel is believed to be from the second sitting in May, 1776 before Washington received his country's recognition through his efforts at Valley Forge, Trenton and Princeton. The background shows Boston, commemorating the siege of Boston, Washington's greatest victory at that time. The original portrait hangs in the Brooklyn Museum; there is only one full-sized replica and one miniature replica.

This full-sized replica was ordered from Peale for a "French gentleman" soon after the 1776 sitting. Its location remained a mystery from that time until Mr. and Mrs. Lansdell Christie, with the assistance of Peale scholar, Dr. Charles Coleman Sellers, discovered it in Ireland in 1965.

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Painting "City of Washington, 1833, From Beyond the Navy Yard"
This painting was done by George Cooke in 1833. It depicts the city of Washington at that time as seen from the area across the Anacostia River. The White House can be seen at the left and the United States Capitol with the Bulfinch dome can be seen high on the hill in the background. This painting was acquired for the White House Collection in 1972. An engraving based on this painting became a popular view of the city.

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Desk - The desk which the President uses in the West Wing Oval Office was built by the United States Senate in 1858 for the Vice Presidential ceremonial room in the Capitol Building. It was used in this room from 1858-1965. President Grant's Vice President, Henry Wilson, fell ill in this room November 22, 1875 and died on the couch next to the desk. In 1965, the room was refurbished for Vice President Humphrey and the desk was taken out of service and placed in storage. It remained in storage until January 20, 1969 when President Nixon requested the desk for use in the Presidential office in the White House. He had used the desk while serving as Vice President. The desk has remained in the Oval Office during the Ford Administration.

Card Table - To the left of the door is a Classical style card table with a half moon top. Made in Baltimore about 1800, this table has bell flower and shell inlay on the legs, typical motifs of cabinetmakers in Baltimore at this time. The table was a gift to the White House in 1961.

Pair of andirons - In the fireplace are a pair of American Chippendale style brass andirons made about 1780. The tops of the columns are urn-shaped.

Fire screen - In front of the fireplace is a brass and wire serpentine shaped fire screen with brass finials made about 1800-1810. Acquired for the White House in 1973.

Chairs - The two wing chairs in front of the mantel and the two arm chairs at the south end of the sofas are reproduction chairs. The upholsteries are temporary and will be changed within the next month. (Dark Gold Velvet)

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Rug - This rug was specially woven for the White House in 1972. It was designed, with its pale yellow ground, for the Yellow Oval Room in the White House. It was used in this room until July, 1974. The rug has been temporarily placed in the Oval Office until a determination is made on a permanent rug. Due to several months storage, the rubber backing of this rug has been warped and damaged. At the earliest opportunity, the rug will be reconditioned.

(Plants
+ Bamboo in Chinese Fishbowl (pg. 3)
+ Sheela
+ On mantle Swedish Ivy on the Chinese
Export Bowl.

