

The original documents are located in Box 36, folder “Christmas, 1976 - Decorations” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

The love that is the spirit of Christmas is the inspiration behind this year's Christmas decorations at the White House. Mrs. Ford chose decorations to create the feeling and mood that Christmas is love.

The emphasis in the decorations is on the natural beauty of evergreens and berries. Throughout the Mansion, the mantles and tables are decorated with natural arrangements of holly, juniper, cedar, boxwood, bayberry, woods fern, spruce and pyracantha. Trees garlanded with greens, pine cones and red velvet braid also are used throughout the White House. Large wreaths of Noble fir adorned with red velvet ribbons hang in all the windows on the State Floor. The fragrance of the greens contributes to the Christmas atmosphere.

The White House Christmas tree in the Blue Room is a 20-foot Balsam Fir. (The tree was selected by Kenneth Guenther of Black River Falls, Wisconsin. He is this year's National Champion of the National Christmas Tree Growers Association.)

The tree is decorated with over 2500 handmade flowers, including the state flowers of all 50 states. Materials used include silk, felt, dried cornhusks, bamboo, seeds, beads, shells, ribbon, metal, porcelain and glass. Small baskets of assorted dried flowers also are hung on the tree, which is topped by a nosegay of flowers. Tiny white lights and baby's breath complete the trimmings.

The flowers were made by garden clubs, art classes, senior citizens groups and schools in all the states and the District of Columbia.

Under the tree, a few of the many gifts from the American people to the White House commemorate this Bicentennial year. Included are dolls, stuffed animals, quilts and carved birds. Wrapped packages in shades of blue and red complete the under-the-tree decorations.

Two porcelain doves in a cage are also in the Blue Room.

An 18th century Italian creche, banked by greenery, is on display in the East Room. The nativity scene has 30 hand-carved Baroque figures of the Holy Family, the Wise Men and attendants, the shepherds, angels and animals. The creche was donated in 1967 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard Jr. of Far Hills, New Jersey.

More than 50 volunteers, primarily from the floral industry, helped put up the decorations. Jack Bangs, chief designer of the Gazebo of New York donated his services to coordinate the decorations. Joan Peck, designer from New York City, supervised decoration of the Christmas tree.

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December 9, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

The following items from the Bicentennial Gift Display at Union Station have been included in the Christmas decorations. They are representative of the handmade gifts sent to the White House by people around the country during the Bicentennial year.

1. A white wooden hand-carved dove with an olive leaf in its beak.
Donor: Rev. Mel Drake, Starke, Florida
2. Two hand-made and dressed Bicentennial dolls, one is Betsy Ross and the other is Paul Revere.
Donor: Mrs. Esther Doherty, Nashville, Tennessee
3. A Bicentennial wreath, made by donor.
Donor: Mr. Nicholas Constand, Fairfield, Connecticut
4. A Smile pillow made by students.
Donors: Laurie Scherle and Jeanne Connelly, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
5. A hand-sewn quilt.
Donors: Members of Girl Scout Troop #315, Orangeburg, South Carolina
6. Hand-made and dressed Doll.
Donor: Ms. Ethel Boyd, Phoenix, Arizona
7. Stuffed elephant.
Donors: D.C. League of Women Voters, Republican National Committee
8. Framed crocheted lace doilie
Donor: Mr. Donald Stralem, New York City, New York
9. Hand-made and hand-drawn Quilt. Made by students of:
Donor: 8th Grade, Ottawa Glandorf Elementary School, Ottawa, Ohio
10. American Bicentennial Revolution Administration emblem stuffed pillow.
Donors: Residents of St. James Plaza, Health Care Facility, St. James, Long Island, New York
11. Stuffed horse.
Donor: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Cox, Folsom, Louisiana
12. Plaque.
Donor: Mrs. Evelyn Berry, Nicholson, Pennsylvania
13. Two yarn dolls. Hand made.
Donor: Mrs. Dorothy M. Kreuzer, Mountain Top, Pennsylvania
14. Set of 7 stained glass ornaments.
Donor: Mr. Paul DeFrieze, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

General

Natural arrangements of holly, juniper, cedar, boxwood, bayberry, woods fern, spruce and pyracantha adorn the mantles and tables throughout the State Floor.

Red candles replace white candles in the chandeliers on the State Floor, except in the Red Room.

Wreaths unless noted otherwise are Noble fir accented with large red velvet bows.

Garlands unless noted otherwise are Princess pine with red velvet braid.

All the windows on the State Floor have wreaths.

North Portico

Two large Douglas Fir with tiny white lights flank the outside of the main entrance.

On the door is a large wreath of Noble Fir with a single candle in the center.

Grand Foyer

Two Douglas Fir trimmed with a garland stand on either side of the main entrance.

The Grand Staircase is draped with a garland.

A painted wood antique Santa Claus stands on the landing overlooking the Cross Hall.

A small boxwood tree sits on the pine table on the lower landing of the Staircase.

The urns on the pier table on the west side of the foyer will be filled with the natural arrangement of greens and berries.

A garland will be draped across the arch between the foyer and the cross hall.

Cross Hall

Two Yew trees with garlands stand in the niches of the South wall.

A wreath of Noble Fir, Silver Fir, incense cedar and pine surrounds the Presidential Seal over the door to the Blue Room.

State Dining Room

The sconces and chandliers are garlanded.

On the table along the North Wall is an edible gingerbread house made by Hans Raffert.

On the dining table, the centerpiece and matching eipurns also will be filled with greens and berries.



Red Room

A cranberry tree is on the console table.

Blue Room

The Christmas tree decorated with hand-made flowers and lights stands in the center of the room surrounded by Bicentennial gifts to the White House from the American people.

The East Room

A wreath of Noble Fir, Douglas Fir, incense pine and cedar surrounds the Eagle plaque over the main door.

A garland of white pine leads from the wreath all around the crown moulding of the room.

Greenery, including blue spruce, Douglas Fir, holly, Scotch pine, and Yew, bank the creche. A juniper hedge is in front of the creche.

Diplomatic Floor

The rooms of the Diplomatic Floor also are decorated with wreaths and natural arrangements.

In the China Room, a pair of holly trees flank the fireplace.

In the Diplomatic Reception Room, two small yew trees stand in the small foyer.

In the Lower Hall, two yew trees with garlands stand on either side of the door to the Curator's Office.

Also in the Lower Hall, all four tables will have arrangements of red poinsettias and ivy.

Large natural arrangements decorate the tables flanking the door to the West Wing.

Two large Douglas Fir stand on either side of the main entrance. These trees have tiny white lights.

Balconies

The Truman Balcony has a wreath of Douglas Fir and a garland of White pine with fruit.

A similar garland adorns the railing leading to the State Floor balcony.

