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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 9, 1992

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

- - - - -

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The home of our Nation's Presidents is a house that truly belongs to the American people, and as we commemorate the 200th anniversary of the laying of the White House cornerstone, we also celebrate the great system of democratic government that this historic building symbolizes to our Nation and the world.

Although the White House cornerstone was dedicated on October 13, 1792, the story of the famous home at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue actually begins with the framing of our Constitution several years earlier. In Article 1, Section 8, of that great document, our Nation's Founders provided for the establishment of a special district to serve "as the Seat of the Government of the United States." Under the direction of President George Washington, a site was selected for the Federal City in January 1791, and the district eventually began to take shape according to the grand vision of Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who submitted his plans to the Congress in December of that year. In early 1792, the Commissioners for the District of Columbia advertised a nationwide competition for the design of the President's house. They chose the entry of Irish-born architect James Hoban, perhaps mindful of President Washington's recommendation that "for the President's house, I would design a building that should also look forward, but execute no more of it at present than might suit the circumstances of this country, when it shall be first wanted."

President Washington never inhabited the White House, but when it was occupied by President John Adams and his family in 1800, Abigail Adams wrote to her sister that the stately yet unfinished "castle of a house" appeared "built for ages to come." In its beauty and elegance, the White House looked forward with all the exuberance and optimism of our young Republic. At the same time, however, its simple balance of form and function reflected an unpretentious spirit befitting our system of limited government and representative democracy.

The White House underwent a number of changes and additions in succeeding years, with President Thomas Jefferson and architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe designing its terraces and interior, respectively. In 1814, the building was nearly destroyed by fire when British forces invaded the city of Washington, and today Dolley Madison's rescue of Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of George Washington, along with her husband's papers, is a celebrated part of White House history and folklore. Sadly, the exterior sandstone walls and interior brickwork were all that remained of the White House when James Hoban was asked to begin its reconstruction. Not until the Presidency of Andrew Jackson some 40 years after the laying of the cornerstone was the White House truly completed with the building of the north portico.

more

(OVER)

Since that time, the White House has experienced two major renovations -- one in 1902 and another from 1948-1952. During the latter renovation, James Hoban's wood structure was entirely rebuilt, yet within its original sandstone and brick walls, and today the White House continues to appear much as it did during the days of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Engineers and historians have worked hard to honor original schemes for the design and decoration of the White House, and succeeding Administrations have taken an increasing interest in the preservation of this historic home. In recent years the White House Historical Association, which was chartered in 1961, has played a leading role in funding the conservation of the priceless antiques and paintings that furnish the White House, and this year restoration of its exterior features will be complete.

Our Nation's Founders would be proud of the enduring beauty of "the President's house," just as they would be delighted by the continuing success of their great experiment in self-government. Because the White House represents such an important part of our American heritage, it has been included as a unit of our National Park System since 1933. More than 1 million people tour this magnificent home each year, in addition to the countless visitors who pause nearby to view its grounds and to reflect on its storied past. Much of our Nation's history has passed through these walls, and it is here that much of our future will be shaped as well.

On this 200th anniversary of the White House, as we celebrate the past and look forward -- as did our ancestors -- to the ages to come, we do well to repeat the timeless prayer of President John Adams, the first resident of this important home:

I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings
on this house and all that shall hereafter
inhabit it. May none but honest and wise
men ever rule under this roof.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby encourage all Americans to join in celebrating the 200th anniversary of the laying of the White House cornerstone on October 13, 1992.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

GEORGE BUSH

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FACT-CHECK COPY
DUE AT: 3pm

(Ferguson/Aarhus)
April 21, 1992
STAMP
Draft Two

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: WHITE HOUSE COMMEMORATIVE STAMP
ROSE GARDEN
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1992
3:30 PM

[Acknowledgments]

Welcome to Peerce Farm -- or as we call it nowadays, the White House. George Washington selected this site for the President's House more than 200 years ago, amid apple orchards owned by a colonial farmer named Peerce. Being a surveyor by trade, Washington knew what he was doing. Abigail Adams, the first First Lady to live here, wrote: "This is a beautiful spot ... and the more I view it the more I am delighted with it."

It was Thomas Jefferson who suggested a national competition to design the President's House. Washington himself chose the design of the winner -- James Hoban, an Irish immigrant then living in Charleston. Hoban's plan won out over grander designs, some of which included vast central courts, rotundas, and -- ((here's an intriguing idea)) -- a draped throne for the President.

Hoban's design was plainer than the others, more befitting the house of a democratic leader, but it was still stately and dignified, as Washington wanted. ((Incidentally, when he won the contest, Hoban began another capital tradition. He promptly "leaked" the news to his hometown papers in Charleston.)) After many revisions to the original design, and after some unfortunate

redecorating by British troops in 1814, the President's House assumed the graceful form we celebrate today.

This year we mark the 200th anniversary of this magnificent building. The cornerstone was laid in October of 1792, just a few yards from here, though the stone itself has never been found. You'll notice we're ~~refurbishing~~ *stone restoration project* the residence's exterior walls, as part of the anniversary -- a celebration that includes commemorative books, museum exhibitions, and symposiums.

The celebration also includes a commemorative postage stamp -- which is what brings us here this afternoon. I thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this stamp possible. [Placeholder for acknowledgments] I hope the stamp serves as a reminder to every American that this place is truly the people's house. One of the great blessings of the presidency is the opportunity to live within its walls, to roam its hallways and absorb its history, to be reminded at every turn of the noble men who have lived here. ((In fact, I like it so much I wouldn't mind staying another four years.)) But a president can never be more than a caretaker or a tenant here; for the White House belongs, as it has for 200 years, to every American.

Rex ✓
x2550

Barbara and I pray that God continues to "bless this house," as he blesses the United States of America. Thank you.

#

Get WH book

The
PRESIDENT'S
HOUSE

A History

by
William Seale

White House Historical Association
with the cooperation of the
National Geographic Society
Washington, D.C.
1986

not run again, and he asked Madison to draft him a valedictory address.

Madison did as requested but convinced the President that the second term was sorely needed to keep peace and continuity. Perhaps this was what Washington wanted to hear. Neither Jefferson nor Hamilton was a likely prospect for the Presidency; John Adams was too "Federalist," and Madison himself was too "Republican." The situation in Europe was precarious, and the American ship of state would need steering through that stormy sea. The President took heed, and once he had made his decision to stay, he seemed to gain a new lease on life. He turned with vigor to his toughest problems, among them the federal city. He did not intend to wait another month for matters there to gain direction.

The President "has hardly time to attend to any details," Jefferson wrote, but he would make certain that others did. This time Washington agreed to a chain of command, with the secretary of state at its head. This is not to say that he ceased meddling, for he loved planning and building. The President's House became a sort of diversion. He knew he would never live there, so he found inspiration in the thought that he was building it for Presidents yet to come.⁸

A Competition

It was Jefferson's opinion that both the President's House and the Capitol should be built according to the best plan submitted in a national competition. He had pushed for a competition even before L'Enfant's removal. The practice was familiar in Europe, and was certainly a practical solution to the problem at hand. He drafted the text of a newspaper advertisement for the two competitions and sent it to the President for approval on March 13, 1792.

Washington returned the draft without corrections, but suggested that it might be wise to remind prospective competitors that the site must be taken into consideration, because "I think particular situation wd. require parlr. kind or shaped buildings."⁹ On the 14th the commissioners mailed final copies for two advertisements, one for the President's House and another for the Capitol, to the major newspapers in the country.¹⁰

A Premium

Washington in the Territory of Columbia of 500 dollars or a medal of that value at the option of the party will be given by the Commissioners of the federal buildings to a person who before the fifteenth day of July next shall produce to them the most approved plan, if adopted by them for a President's house to be erected in this city—The Site of the building, if the artist will attend to it, will

of course influence the aspect and outline of his plan and its destination will point out to him the number, size and distribution of the apartments—It will be a recommendation of any Plan if the Central Part of it may be detached and erected for the present with the appearance of a complete whole and be capable of admitting the additional parts in future, if they shall be wanting—Drawings will be expected of the ground plots, elevations of each front and sections through the building in such directions as may be necessary to explain the internal structure, and an estimate of the Cubic feet of brickwork composing the whole mass of the wall.

March 14, 1792

The Commissioners

Although the commissioners followed Jefferson's lead in some matters, they thwarted him in others. His particular interest was in the design of the Capitol. A week before the competition was announced for the President's House, he sent them a temple-style project for the Capitol, which he said "is agreed upon." They disliked it, calling it a "fancy piece," doubtless meaning something on the level of a garden shelter. No matter his stern directives, they not only refused to accept the plan, but also persisted in showing no special deference to its distinguished architect, Stephen Hallet, a French émigré, who had worked under Jefferson's direction. Wrote the commissioners to Jefferson, "we shall wait for the Plans with Impatience, before they are approved we do not wish to be too deeply officered."¹¹

Perhaps the sudden unwillingness of the commissioners to be led was political. The Jefferson-Hamilton brawling was the major news of the day; Federalists all, the commissioners did not approve of the stand of the secretary of state. His Roman fancy-piece must have seemed as impractical to them as some of his radical ideas.

But if Jefferson's powers of maneuvering declined in this particular, those of Washington, who made no effort to be subtle, remained as strong as ever. The commissioners could not do enough to please him, and they labored to anticipate his wishes. The President had set ideas about the federal city, and one was that the public edifices would be built of stone. Jefferson had attempted to ignore this preference in the advertisement for the President's House competition, in favor of brick. It was agreed that stone would be the material of choice. Already the commissioners were looking about for stonecutters. They had sent a letter to one Collen Williamson, a Scot just arrived in New York. A cousin of the Fountain Inn's John Suter, and said to have good credentials in his native land, he might prove to be a godsend.¹²

That spring of 1792 an inquiry had been sent to Charleston about the "practical architect" Washington had met there on his southern tour. Early in June, James Hoban called on the President in Philadelphia and identified himself. Among his letters of introduction was one from Henry Laurens, Washington's old and close friend. Hoban told the President that he intended to return home by way of the federal city, where he would "view the ground." Thereafter, he would submit projects for both the President's House and the Capitol.

Washington was impressed by Hoban, and although he tried to be objective in his letter to the commissioners, his enthusiasm was not concealed. "I have given him this letter of introduction," he was careful to write, "in order that he might have an opportunity of communicating his views and wishes to you, or obtaining any information necessary for completing the Plans—But as I have no knowledge of the man or his talents . . . you must consider this letter merely as a line of introduction for the purposes mentioned."¹³

James Hoban seems to have gotten along well with the commissioners, assuring them that he was a practical builder who could design as well as execute. While 200 years later the record back in Charleston is obscure, Hoban's references indicate that he had built both public buildings and private houses. The commissioners were soon convinced that he was not another L'Enfant. This builder had spent all his life, from Ireland to America, in positions subservient to gentlemen such as these three. He knew how to handle them.

They took him to the site of the defunct palace. That he already had some drawings he could show is implied in Washington's letter of introduction. He set up his instruments in Georgetown and began designing. Apparently the commissioners stayed close at hand, for they wrote to Thomas Jefferson: "Mr. Hoban applies himself closely to a Draft of the Presidents House he has made very favorable Impressions on us." Hoban, laboring for 20 days over his paper with ink and watercolor in the summer of 1792, did not draw the White House we know today, though what he did draw was the winning design.¹⁴

The Winner

Entries in the competition began arriving before summer, and they were sent by the commissioners to President Washington in Philadelphia. In reaction to the first two he wrote: "if none more elegant than these should appear . . . the exhibition of architecture will be a dull one indeed." The few people in America who could pretend to call

themselves architects seem to have stayed away from the competition for the President's House. From New York there was not a murmur of interest. Philadelphia's builders made no overtures. Of course both cities loathed the idea of the federal city, and the building trades had obvious reasons for wishing it the worst. In Philadelphia, Samuel Blodget, Jr., a youthful New Englander who had designed the first Bank of the United States, tried to convince his friend Charles Bulfinch, back home in Boston, to team up with him. One would submit a project for the Capitol, the other a plan for the President's House. Bulfinch "declined presenting his Plan" for reasons of "modesty," Blodget wrote to Jefferson, and "This has frightened me out of my Intention."¹⁵

In early July the President decided he would go to the federal city to participate in the judging in both competitions. On his orders, his steward dashed off a note explaining this to the commission, which then began holding the submissions as they came in. Jefferson packaged up those he had in Philadelphia and dispatched them to the Potomac by stagecoach. He included drawings by Stephen Hallet which the commissioners apparently had not yet seen.

Washington arrived in Georgetown on July 16, 1792, the day after the deadline for the entries. The drawings were spread out for study all that day. While no award was made for the Capitol, the prize for the President's House went to James Hoban the next morning. His drawings showed a house of stone, a three-story rectangular building with a slightly projecting frontispiece of engaged columns riding a heavy base, probably rusticated. Summoned by the President and the commissioners to hear the news, Hoban made his choice of the medal over prize money. This achievement would change his life. The proud winner lost no time in informing the newspapers back home in Charleston.¹⁶

leaked the news to the newspapers, thus beginning another era in DC trend

The proposed mansion was inescapably to be a symbol of the Presidency. None of the competitors devised ordinary houses; they stretched their imaginations to achieve grandeur, obviously with the heroic Washington in mind. Their drawings illustrate a range of ideas as to how a President should live, but also show the limitations and eccentricities of American architecture at the time. Nine entries were submitted, if a "Villa Rotunda" scheme said for some years to be by Jefferson is counted. Not all of them are available for analysis. Only six, including a drawing by Hoban and the Jefferson Villa Rotunda, have been considered to survive. Contained in a scrapbook, they were presented more than a century ago

The site of the President's House was much changed from its pastoral days as the Peerce Farm. Back in the autumn of 1791 the commissioners had authorized L'Enfant to hire 150 laborers to "throw up Clay" at the sites of the President's House and the Capitol. How many he hired is not known, for the records of payments are lost. The only earth thrown up was from the cellars of the palace—and in early January winter cold halted the work there. L'Enfant's laborers were Negro slaves hired by the month from their masters. In the spring the commission resolved to employ thereafter "good laboring negroes by the year." The money was good, £21 per year; the commission agreed to provide food, while the master was to furnish clothing and a blanket for each man.³

Activity began again near the site early in April. Because there was as yet no design for the house, the hired slaves were put to work clearing trees and stumps from the streets L'Enfant and Ellicott had laid out. The area before the site was cleared of fences and fence-row trees, and from there the work progressed as the stakes directed, along the diagonal avenues. Again it is not known how many workers were involved, so haphazard was the bookkeeping. Since much was accomplished very quickly, there must have been many; the conditions of their labor from daybreak to dark under the command of tough, hard-drinking James Dermott can only be imagined.⁴

Meanwhile the commissioners set about preparing for an influx of skilled workmen. Since they were accustomed to providing for slaves, they approached the task as if they were charged with building slave quarters for a new plantation. Earlier, when L'Enfant had been authorized to hire workmen, he was also ordered to build "a sufficient number of huts" for them to occupy. This the Frenchman accomplished in part. After he was gone the commissioners contracted with George Brent, owner of the Aquia stone quarry, to build additional huts, which were completed by the end of May 1792. These small, unpainted wooden cottages, a score of them, were lined up 20 feet apart, as in a slave quarter, apparently facing present Lafayette Park. Additional huts, if necessary, were to be put in the spaces between the existing ones.⁵

The first of many workshops to come was built in the late spring of 1792. Later references suggest that the shop stood in about the center of the square, where Andrew Jackson's equestrian statue is now situated. Wooden and unpainted, like the huts, the "temporary building" measured 50 feet long and 24 wide. It was raised off the ground on piers, and had a plank roof, wood floor, and big double doors at one end. The commissioners intended it for a carpenter shop, or "carpenters' hall."⁶

Through the summer, as the competition was held and decided, the

heights rang with the crash of axes. Trees fell to make way for avenues. The commissioners ordered wheelbarrows, wedges, axes, sledgehammers, and mattocks from a blacksmith, a German living in Georgetown. They specified that the tools be delivered to Dermott's camp as "fast as any of them are made." Leonard Harbaugh was summoned from his bridge-building at Rock Creek to locate for the quarry "four Screw Jacks and Blocks, sheaves Ropes and irons for two cranes for the use of the Federal buildings." Both the President and the secretary of state were delighted with the apparent progress.⁷

Everything was nearing readiness for the builders. Most of them had not yet appeared by the summer of 1792. When they did come, more of them than not would do what they were hired to do, then disappear largely unnoticed. Workingmen, as a rule, do not write memoirs, nor do architects and master builders. They may have told their children stories that lasted a generation or two or three, but more generations than that separate those who built the White House from us. Still, while most are forgotten, all are not lost.

The Architect

Among the builders, Hoban is the principal figure. He returned to the federal city in late August or early September 1792, and would spend the remaining 39 years of his life there. James Hoban would build the White House once, and live to build it again.

Surprisingly little is known about the man. Even had he been inclined to leave us word of himself, he was always too busy making money to take up his pen. We know that he started construction of the foundation of the White House immediately after his return, and that he made new drawings for the building, on the "large scale" ordered by Washington. The substantial number of vouchers, work orders, reports, and notes that survive tell us Hoban was conscientious and knew how to get a job done. But they tell us almost nothing else. His personal traits and the influences that played upon him we must surmise from diverse fragments. From these we can draw at least a partial portrait.

Hoban was probably born about 1758, making him perhaps 34 when he moved to the federal district. He had been resident in the United States only about seven years, appearing first in Philadelphia, where he advertised himself as an architect in 1785, then in Charleston by 1787. In Charleston he was styled a "house carpenter," in partnership with Pierce Purcell, another carpenter with whom he shared a house. The U.S. Census of 1790 suggests that Hoban may have had a wife while in

Laying of the White House Cornerstone

The Commissioners accompanied by a numerous collection of Free Masons, architects and of the Inhabitants of the City of Washington and Georgetown went in procession and laid the first corner stone of the president's house.

Proceedings of the Commissioners, October 13, 1792

The laying of the cornerstone of the President's House was timed to coincide with the second sale of lots in the new capital city. The three Commissioners of the Federal City hoped that the laying of the cornerstone would assure the nation, and especially those investing in the city, that indeed it would be the new capital.

George Washington was in Philadelphia on October 13, 1792 when the Commissioners, James Hoban, master stonemason Collen Williamson, and others marched to the site of the President's House. A brass plate was laid on top of a foundation stone in the southwest corner, on which the cornerstone was then placed. Several attempts to locate the brass plate have been unsuccessful.

The only known detailed report of this event was recorded in a Charleston, S.C. newspaper:

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Philadelphia, to his friend in Charleston, dated October 20, 1792. "On Saturday the 13th inst. the first stone was laid in the south-west corner of the president's house, in the city of Washington, by the Free Masons of Georgetown and its vicinity, who assembled on the occasion. The procession was formed at the Fountain Inn, George-town, in the following order, viz.

1. The Free Masons, in masonic order.
2. The commissioners of the fed. building.
3. Gentlemen of the town & neighborhood.
4. The different artificers, &c.

They proceeded in procession to the president's square. The ceremony was performed by brother Casaneva [sic Casanave, Peter], master of the lodge, who delivered an oration well adapted to the occasion. Under the stone was laid a plate of polished brass, with the following inscription:

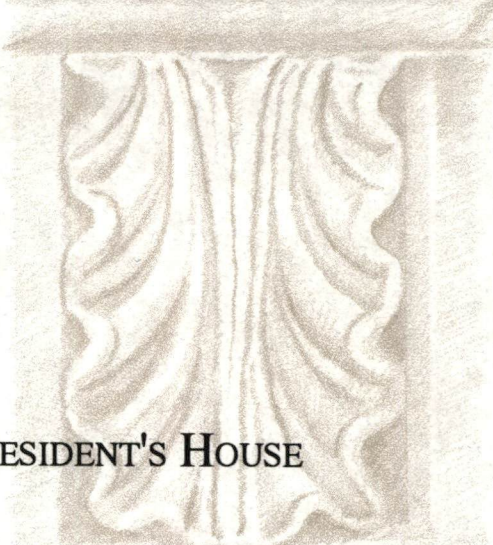
'This first Stone of the President's House was laid the 13th Day of October, 1792, and in the 17th Year of Independence of the United States of America.

George Washington, President.
Thomas Johnson, Doctor Stewart,
Daniel Carroll, Commissioners.
James Hoban, Architect.
Collen Williamson, Master-Mason.
Vivat Republica.'

After the ceremony was performed they returned, in regular order, to Mr. Suter's Fountain Inn, where an elegant dinner was provided [and 15 enumerated toasts were given]."

The City Gazette and Daily Advertiser
Charleston, S.C., November 15, 1792

THE WHITE HOUSE
THE FIRST 200 YEARS



DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

In March 1792, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson drafted a newspaper advertisement for a national architectural competition for the new federal city, calling for designs for the President's House and the Capitol. Jefferson had pushed for such a competition to provide the best possible plans for the city's two principal public buildings. With President George Washington's approval, separate advertisements for the buildings were mailed to newspapers around the country.

WASHINGTON, in the Territory of Columbia.

A PREMIUM OF FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS, or a MEDAL of that value, at the option of the party, will be given by the Commissioners of the Federal Buildings, to a person who, before the fifteenth day of July next, shall produce to them the most approved PLAN, if adopted by them, for a PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, to be erected in this City...

March 14, 1792

The Commissioners

Gazette of the United States (Philadelphia), June 13, 1792

On July 16, 1792, Washington arrived in Georgetown to examine the submitted designs assembled by the Commissioners. The following morning James Hoban of Charleston was chosen and notified of his success. Hoban selected a gold medal and took the remainder of the \$500 prize in cash. Although his original elevation drawing has been lost, Hoban's floor plan has survived. The extant elevation of the White House by Hoban which dates to 1793 shows the building reduced in size by one story, giving the building the more rectangular shape we know today.

Most of the other entries in the competition were tall, nearly square structures resembling colonial state houses and town halls. Signed drawings exist from two Maryland builders: James Diamond and Jacob Small, the latter submitting four designs. The signed drawing by Hudson Valley, New York poet/scholar Andrew Carshore also survives. Several unsigned drawings are credited to Philip Hart of Baltimore. A drawing suggestive of the Villa Rotondo in Italy and signed only with the anonymous initials "AZ" has been attributed to Thomas Jefferson himself. John Collins of Richmond, Virginia was awarded an unannounced \$150 second prize for his entry.



JAMES HOBAN

James Hoban was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, c.1758. By 1779, he was studying at the architectural drafting division of the drawing school at the Royal Dublin Society, where he won a silver medal in a 1780 competition.

In 1785, Hoban was in Philadelphia, advertising himself as an architect. By 1787, he had moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where he worked in a partnership as a "house carpenter." He was presented to George Washington during the President's visit to Charleston in May 1791. A few days later, Washington was entertained at a dinner in the South Carolina state house in Columbia, a building which Hoban had designed.

After the announcement in 1792 of a design competition for the President's House and Capitol in the new federal city, a Charlestonian provided Hoban with a letter of introduction to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia: "He is a man of Genius and considerable talents in his profession both for design and execution...and came well recommended to America" (May 17, 1792). In June, Hoban was received by Washington in Philadelphia, after which he visited the President's House site and spent several weeks drawing up plans to submit in the design competition. On July 17th, President Washington and the Commissioners selected Hoban's design, for which he received a gold medal and the balance of the \$500 prize in cash. Although the competition announcement called for a brick building, Hoban chose stone to reflect Washington's desires. At that time, Washington also asked for a one-fifth increase in size and greater ornamentation.

On October 13, 1792, masonic ceremonies were held to lay the cornerstone of the President's House. Although President Washington did not attend, Hoban and others placed an inscribed polished brass plate atop a foundation stone in the southwest corner which was then covered by another stone.

In 1793, Hoban was one of the principals in charge of taking the first census of the Federal City. He also helped organize the Federal Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons, and as Master of the lodge, assisted President Washington in laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol on September 13, 1793. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed superintendent of Capitol construction, a post he held until October 15, 1795 and again from May 26, 1798 until 1802.

By October 22, 1793, President Washington had approved the reduction of the height of the President's House by one story, necessitating some redesigning. At that time, the Commissioners opted to continue the walls in brick with stone facings, and construction continued with the services of seven additional masons brought from Scotland in 1794. When Washington left office in 1797, he stopped to see the President's House during his return to Mount Vernon, an event at which Hoban, as Captain of the Washington Artillery, fired a 16-gun salute for the former President.

In 1798, the exterior of the President's House was whitewashed to seal the Aquia sandstone walls,

(Over)

THE WHITE HOUSE
THE FIRST 200 YEARS

and the roof was installed. Appointed superintendent for the building of the "Executive Offices," Hoban then turned some of his attention to those buildings which had been sited adjacent to the White House by President Washington in 1796. Although interior finishing progressed, the President's House was still unfinished when President John Adams occupied the building on November 1, 1800.

Early in 1799, Hoban married Susannah Sewell with whom he would have ten children. From 1800 until his death, he and his family occupied a house on F Street. He became an active member of the community. In 1801, he participated in a meeting at nearby Rhodes Tavern to petition Congress for home rule and representation in Congress. From 1802 until his death, he was a member of the City Council.

In 1815, Hoban returned to federal service when he was appointed to rebuild the President's House and the two adjacent executive offices which had been burned by British troops in 1814. In 1816, he discovered greater than expected deterioration of the exterior walls of the House and was given permission to rebuild that which needed removal. Like his predecessor President Adams, President James Monroe moved into an uncompleted building in September 1817.

The following year, Hoban's reconstruction of the wings was completed and the original executive office buildings had been rehabilitated. Two additional office buildings were constructed to the north of the original structures. Although foundations for two porticoes had been built in 1817, shortage of funds delayed their erection. The South Portico of the President's House was ultimately completed in 1824, the North in 1829. The construction of both was supervised by Hoban.

James Hoban died on December 8, 1831 at the age of 73 and is now buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery in the District of Columbia.

Rex Scouten - put this on
Schedule

Staffed

(Ferguson/Aarhus)
April 21, 1992
STAMP
Draft One

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: WHITE HOUSE COMMEMORATIVE STAMP
ROSE GARDEN
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1992
3:30 PM

[Acknowledgments]

Welcome to Peerce Farm -- or as we call it nowadays, the White House. This spot was selected by George Washington more than 200 years ago, and carved from apple orchards owned by a colonial farmer named Peerce. Being a surveyor by trade, Washington knew what he was doing. Abigail Adams, the first First Lady to live here, wrote: "This is a beautiful spot ... and the more I view it the more I am delighted with it."

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Hoban's design was plainer than the others, more fitting the residence of a democratic leader, but it was still stately and dignified, to Washington's taste. ((Incidentally, after he won the contest, Hoban began another capital tradition. He promptly "leaked" the news to his hometown papers in Charleston.)) After many revisions to the original design, and after some unfortunate redecorating at the hands of British troops in 1814, the President's House assumed the graceful form we celebrate today.

This year we mark the 200th anniversary of this magnificent building. The cornerstone was laid in October of 1792, just a few yards from here, though the stone itself has never been found. You'll notice we're refurbishing the residence's exterior walls, as part of the anniversary -- a celebration that includes commemorative books, museum exhibitions, and symposiums.

The celebration also includes a commemorative postage stamp -- which is what brings us here this afternoon. I thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this stamp available.

[Placeholder for acknowledgments] I hope the stamp serves as a reminder to every American that this place is truly the people's house. One of the great blessings of the presidency is the opportunity to live within its walls, to roam its hallways and absorb its history, to be reminded at every turn of the noble men who have lived here. ((In fact, I like it so much I ^{think I'll} ~~may~~ just stay here another four years.)) But a president can never be more than a caretaker or a tenant here; for the White House belongs, as it has for 200 years, to every American.

Barbara and I pray that God continues to "bless this house," as he blesses the United States of America. Thank you.

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April 23, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR DAVID DEMAREST
SPEECHWRITERS
RESEARCHERS are cool

FROM: CAROL AARHUS

SUBJECT: STAMP COMMEMORATION EVENT

For a stamp and an event that no one on planet Earth as we know it (except Rex Scouten) knew about, this event was a hit! Andy did an awesome job with the remarks -- the President had a good time giving the speech, plus all the jokes worked. The text was mostly historical in nature, and went over well with the crowd. POTUS even ad-libbed an anecdote.

Just a thought: as temperatures soar in the approaching summer months, we may want to keep Rose Garden remarks as short as possible.

In case you are wondering, no new Deputy Secretary of Energy was appointed at this event.