

# Lincoln Lore

The Bulletin of THE LINCOLN MUSEUM



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## Lincoln Lore

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### THE LINCOLN MUSEUM

The mission of The Lincoln Museum is to interpret and preserve the history and legacy of Abraham Lincoln through research, conservation, exhibitry, and education.

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MUSEUM

*The Life and Legacy of Abraham Lincoln*



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(On the cover: The White House reflected in reproductions of items from the china service ordered by Mary Lincoln as part of her renovation of the White House in 1861-1862. TLM photo.)



## Dining and Diplomacy: White House China

The styles of the formal china used by the presidents of the United States have reflected the growth and development of the country. In the early days of the new republic, no presidential residence or furnishings existed. George Washington used his personal china for state occasions. His successors purchased state china that was made in Europe and depicted European designs.

From the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, to the war with Mexico in 1846-47, to the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the United States expanded until it filled the continent from coast to coast. During this period, the First Ladies or White House hostesses who ordered new china showed their pride in the country's emergence as a recognized nation by instructing European suppliers to use American images.

In the 20th century, two world wars brought mass destruction and hunger to much of Europe, and brought the United States to the front rank of world powers. In 1918, the White House bought the first set of state china made in America. From that day forward, contemporary White House china designs have reflected the world position of the United States.

### The French Influence

1789 – 1845

#### George Washington – John Tyler

*From the presidency of George Washington through that of John Tyler, White House china reflected the influence of the French, America's allies in the struggle for independence from England. The young republic looked to France as exemplifying the height of civilized culture.*



Washington: Dinner plate, 1778. Sévres, Vincennes, France.

*Early presidents bought French china, considered the best, from American merchants. George Washington used his personal china during his presidency, augmented by banquet china. John Adams had \$14,000 in a "furniture fund" from which he purchased china. James Monroe, who purchased the first set of distinctive state china, was criticized for ordering directly from France, instead of patronizing American dealers. Only the*

*ordinary china used for less formal Executive Mansion affairs was English, acquired inexpensively in American retail stores.*

### Washington

George Washington oversaw the planning and construction of the White House, but it was not until 1801 that the second president, John Adams, became the first to make it the official executive residence. Washington served his term as president in New York (1789 – 1790) and Philadelphia (1790 – 1797).

In 1790, to entertain at the presidential residence on High Street in Philadelphia, George and Martha Washington purchased a quantity of china from the French minister to the United States, Comte de Moustier. They chose a simple plain white design with a gilded rim. It was made in France by the Sévres Company in 1778.

### Madison

As secretary of state in 1806, James Madison purchased a dinner and dessert service made by Jean Népomucène-Herman Nast in



Madison: Large serving dish, c. 1806. Jean Népomucène-Herman Nast, Paris.

Paris. It was most likely used by the Madisons in the temporary presidential residence after the White House was burned during the War of 1812.



Monroe: Dessert plate, 1817. Dagoty-Honoré, Paris.

### J.Q. Adams

John Quincy Adams purchased large china services in 1825 and 1826. The first was a "Canton China" dinner set purchased from Read and Gray in Philadelphia. The second service was described as "2 Dining setts [sic] of half stone china," ordered from J. & T. H. Perkins & Sons of Boston. Later in 1826, Adams ordered a dinner service of French china from Samuel Grace in New York.



Adams: Dinner plate; manufactured in France, c. 1826.

### Jackson

After his tumultuous inauguration, President Andrew Jackson found it necessary to order new china. One set was purchased in 1831 from the Robinson Tyndale Company, the other in 1833 from L. Veron and Co., both of Philadelphia. The French company Dagoty-Honoré manufactured both of these sets. Note that the eagle on the Jackson ser-



Jackson: Teapot, 1831. Dagoty-Honoré, Paris.

vice is reversed from that on the Monroe service.

### The Nationalistic Era 1845 – 1893

#### James K. Polk – Benjamin Harrison

*As the United States began to flex its muscles on the international scene in the 1840s, the new spirit of nationalism emerged in the imagery on White House china. Designs included such American symbols as the bald eagle, the shield, and the motto of the United States, but the china was still manufactured in France.*

*Examples of this movement include Julia Grant's use of American flowers, Lucy Hayes's selection of American wildlife and Caroline Harrison's incorporation of corn stalks and goldenrod.*

### Polk

President James Polk took office in 1845. By that time, the state dining service purchased by President Jackson had been in use for over 10 years, and additions and replacements became necessary for entertaining in the White House. Alexander Stewart and Co. of New York, the nation's first department store, was commissioned in March 1846 to provide new china for the President's house. The service selected was again manufactured in France.

### Pierce

In 1853 President Franklin Pierce attended the opening of the country's first World's Fair in New York City. One of the exhibits included a pair of porcelain plates designed for use as presidential china by Haughwout and Dailey. Pierce was sufficiently impressed that he promptly ordered a



Jackson: Dinner plate, 1833. Dagoty-Honoré, Paris.



Jackson: Wine rinse (used when changing wines during a formal dinner), c. 1833. Manufacturer unknown.



Polk: Soup plate, c.1846.



Pierce: Fruit basket, c. 1853. Haughwout & Dailey, New York.

dining service. The company imported undecorated porcelain from Europe, and used a factory in New York City to decorate and finish the china.



Under plate (used under serving dishes) 1861. E.V. Haughwout and Company, New York.



Tureen, 1865. Purchased from J.K. Kerr, manufacturer unknown.



Johnson: Coffee pot, c. 1860. Manufacturer unknown.



Grant: Soup plate, c. 1870. Haviland and Co., Limoges, France.

## Lincoln

In May 1861, Mary Lincoln traveled to New York City to shop for items for the Executive Mansion. She selected a china pattern from E.V. Haughwout and Company, one of the two patterns that the firm had exhibited at the World's Fair in 1853 (when it was known as Haughwout and Dailey). Mrs. Lincoln added a personal touch, changing the border from blue to "solferino," a bright, purplish-red color which had become fashionable since its introduction by the French after their victory at the battle of Solferino in 1859. Mrs. Lincoln used this new china at a reception for 500 on February 5, 1862 to celebrate her renovation of the White House.

In 1864 a simpler china pattern with gold trim was ordered that complemented the solferino set. The Lincoln china was popular with succeeding administrations, during which many additional pieces were ordered.

## A. Johnson

There was no new china designed for the Andrew Johnson administration. The coffee pot shown is from the Johnson family china service.

## Grant

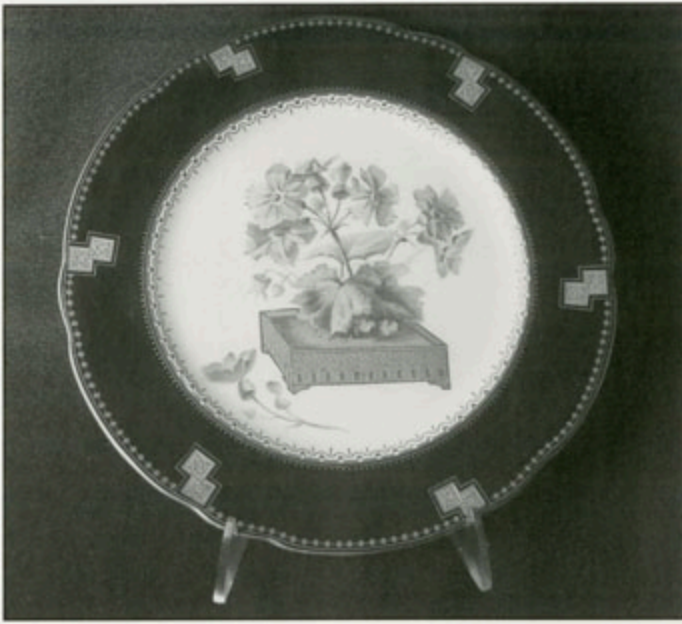
The china selected by First Lady Julia Grant was received at the White House in February 1870. Ordered from J. W. Boteler and Bro. of Washington D.C., it was produced by Haviland and Co. of Limoges, France. The 587-piece set was decidedly nationalistic in design. Each



Luncheon plate and compote, c. 1861. E.V. Haughwout and Company, New York. On loan from the Benjamin Harrison Home, Indianapolis.



Lincoln: Cordial set & case resting on silk embroidered doily, n.d. Used by the Lincolns in the White House. From the collection of The Lincoln Museum.



Arthur: Dinner plate, c. 1882. Brownfield & Son, England.

plate featured a different American flower encircled by a buff-colored band with the Great Seal of the United States. The total cost was \$3,000.

## Hayes

The design for President Hayes's china (see back cover) resulted from a conversation between Mrs. Lucy Hayes and Theodore R. Davis that took place in the White House conservatory. Davis, an artist and reporter for *Harper's Weekly*, suggested an American design theme featuring native flora and fauna as decoration. Working with Haviland & Co. of New York and France (already contracted for a new presidential china service), Davis developed the unique china pattern. The 562-piece service was delivered to the White House on June 30, 1880.

## Arthur

President Chester Arthur continued to use the Hayes china service, and ordered supplemental pieces. He also ordered several small services, mainly for breakfast use, through Tiffany and Company in New York, who contracted with several manufacturers in England.

## B. Harrison

Mrs. Benjamin Harrison enjoyed painting china, and wanted her service to feature characteristically American decoration. The design she developed in 1892 was professionally executed by Paul Putzki, Mrs. Harrison's china-painting teacher from Indiana. The order was placed through M. W. Beveridge, Washington, D. C., and manufactured by Tressemanes & Vogt in Limoges, France.



Harrison: Luncheon plate, 1892. Tressemanes & Vogt, Limoges, France. On loan from the Benjamin Harrison Home, Indianapolis.



Cleveland: Dessert plate, c. 1894. Minton Co., Stoke, England.

## Cleveland

No formal dinner service was ordered during the second Cleveland administration, but sets for less formal occasions were purchased through the company of J. W. Boteler & Son of Washington D.C. Orders were placed in 1893, 1894 and 1895, which were manufactured by several companies in England, including Wedgwood, Minton, and Coalport Porcelain Works. Mrs. Cleveland also ordered a porcelain breakfast set of more than 800 pieces made by the Theodore Haviland Company, Limoges, France.

## The Contemporary Period

1893 – Present

William McKinley – George W. Bush

*Toward the end of the 19th century, the best European designs were characterized by restrained elegance and sophistication. The quality of the china became more important than the quantity of decoration. Simplicity was the trend in presidential china as well, until the mid-1960s when Lady Bird Johnson chose a theme of American wildflowers.*

*Prior to 1900, no American factory had developed the capability of manufacturing fine china to match that available from France. Rising taxes on imports in the late 19th century encouraged some presidents to try to buy American-made china, but no firm was willing to commit to such a daunting project until the administration of Woodrow Wilson, when the Lenox China Company of Trenton, New Jersey agreed to produce the first American-made presidential china.*

*In 1926, Congress restricted presidents to purchasing American products "as far as practicable." Since that time, American companies have manufactured all new presidential china.*

### McKinley

The McKinley administration, like the previous Cleveland administration, did not order a major china service. Mrs. McKinley reordered some of the Harrison china pattern in 1898, and several orders for "open stock" china were made with local suppliers M.W. Beveridge Company and the Dulin and Martin Company.

In November 1898, the East Liverpool, Ohio, firm Knowles, Taylor & Knowles manufactured three dozen plates for the White



McKinley: Luncheon plate – Dropped Rose, c.1899. Haviland & Co., New York and Limoges, France.

House. The firm was not satisfied that the quality of the china was up to White House standards and would not accept payment. The plate shown (dark blue with gold tracery border and center eagle) is one of only two of the Knowles plates known to exist today.



McKinley: Dessert plate, 1898. Knowles, Taylor & Knowles, E. Liverpool, Ohio.

### T. Roosevelt

In 1901, Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt commissioned the Van Heusen Charles Company of Albany, New York, an importer of china, glass and furnishings, to help select a new formal dining service for the White House. The President had wanted the service to be made in the United States, but the "Ulunda" pattern selected was manufactured by the English firm Josiah Wedgwood and Son, Ltd. They produced a 1,296-piece service.



T. Roosevelt: Dinner plate – Ulunda pattern, 1901. Wedgwood & Son, Ltd., England

### Taft

In 1910, during the William Howard Taft administration, First Lady Helen Taft ordered additional pieces of the 1901 Roosevelt china. A plate from the Taft family home is pictured.



Dinner plate from the Taft family china service, c. 1909. Minton Co., Stoke, England.



Soup plate, Hoover family china, c. 1927.

### Wilson

In 1917, fifteen years after the last formal dining service pattern had been chosen for the White House, First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson began the process of selecting a new china service with Tiffany's of New York. After more than six months of discussing designs and samples, nothing had been decided. Unsolicited, Dulin & Martin Co. sent a sample of American-made Lenox china to the White House. Both the First Lady and President Wilson enthusiastically approved, resulting in the first set of White House formal china to be made in the United States. The Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations all ordered additional pieces.



Wilson: Service plate and cup with saucer, 1917. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.

### Harding

The Harding administration also ordered additional pieces of the 1901 Roosevelt china for the White House. The plate shown is from the china service used in the Harding family home.

### Hoover

First Lady Lou Hoover, like Florence Harding and Grace Coolidge before her, reordered the Wilson pattern to augment the White House collection. Shown here is an example of the Hoover family china.

### F. Roosevelt

In 1934, the second year of Franklin Roosevelt's administration, Eleanor Roosevelt placed an order for 1,722 pieces of formal china costing \$9,301.20. Contemporary in design — small gold stars within a blue border and small Great Seal at the top — it was first used in January 1935 at an event for the heads of foreign missions. This affair was the largest of its kind in the history of the White House, and the first at which all guests were served using the same china pattern. The W.H. Plummer and Company of New York, which was commissioned to provide the



Dinner plate, Harding family china, c. 1920. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.





F. Roosevelt: Service plate, cup with saucer, 1934. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.

Truman: Service plate, cup with saucer, 1952. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.

service, contracted with Lenox China of Trenton, New Jersey to manufacture the service.

### Truman

The Truman administration undertook a major renovation and redecoration of the White House from 1948 to 1952. B. Altman & Co., the firm responsible for the project, also received a contract to provide a new formal dining service. Manufactured by Lenox, the order consisted of 1,572 pieces, and cost \$26,944.10. The design, featuring a wide green with gold border and center gold eagle, has been much admired and used by later administrations.

### Eisenhower

Mamie Eisenhower continued to use the new Truman china when the Eisenhowers entered the White House in 1953. She decided in 1955 to make her own contribution to the White House china collection by adding gold service plates to match the gold flatware used at the state dinners. She ordered 120 11 1/2"-diameter service plates at a cost of \$3,606.40. The entire rim of the porcelain service



Eisenhower: Service plate, 1955. Castleton China Company, New Castle, Pennsylvania.



Kennedy: Sample dessert plate, c. 1962.



Johnson: Dessert plate with scarlet carnation (Ohio state flower), 1968. Castleton China, New Castle, Pennsylvania.



Kennedy: Teacup used as a color sample, c. 1962.

arate firings to achieve the desired finish. This design was intended to complement the existing china from earlier administrations.

### Kennedy

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's interests included the history and preservation of the White House and its collections. Mrs. Kennedy often used the Lincoln, Harrison and Hayes china for White House dinners and events to show appreciation of the past. In 1963, Mrs. Kennedy was actively collecting samples of china for pattern and color for the design of what would have been the Kennedy china service, but had not completed the process when the Kennedy term ended with the president's death in November 1963.



Dinner plate, Nixon family china, c. 1968. Syracuse China, Syracuse, New York.

### L. Johnson

The White House received its next full service of formal china in 1968, the last full year of Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Working with designers at Tiffany and Company of New York, Ladybird Johnson created a new pattern based on her love of wildflowers. Each dessert plate was painted with the state flower of one of the 50 states. The reverse markings on each dessert plate included the name of the state and the popular and scientific names of the flower.



Plate, Ford family china. c. 1971. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.



Kennedy family china, c. 1830. Wedgwood.

plate is covered with pure coin gold in an embossed medallion pattern. The process of affixing the gold to the rims required eight sep-



Commemorative Carter service plate, 1986. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.

### Nixon and Ford

The Nixon and Ford administrations chose to use existing china rather than designing new patterns for use in the White House. Shown here is one of the gold-rimmed Nixon family dinner plates and a Lenox leaf and flower pattern plate that was used by the Ford family.

### Carter

The Carters frequently used the Truman china service for White House entertaining, and like several previous administrations, did not order a new china design. In 1986, the Carters were given a set of Lenox china with a gold presidential seal and green border, similar to the Truman pattern. The mark on the reverse in gold is "President Jimmy Carter/1980," but it was never used in the White House.



Silk scarf with Reagan china design, presented to Nancy Reagan by Mr. & Mrs. Set Charles Momjian, n.d.

### Reagan

In 1981, First Lady Nancy Reagan ordered a new set of formal china consisting of 4,370 pieces and costing \$210,399. Like the Johnson china, the Reagan china was paid for by private donations made through the White House Historical Association. Manufactured by Lenox, the process required forty separate steps and several firings to complete the intricate design.

### Clinton

The Clinton administration commissioned the latest addition to the White House china collection, the Millennium china. Designed and manufactured by Lenox, the service plate (like the Eisenhower



Clinton: Millennium pattern service plate, 2000. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey. On loan from the Lenox Brands Archives.

plate of 1955) can be used with many of the other White House china patterns.

### For further reading:

*Official White House China: 1789 to the Present*, 2d ed., by Margaret Brown Klaphor, with additions and revisions by Betty C. Monkman, William G. Allman, and Susan Gray Detweiler (New York, 1999).

*The White House: Its Historic Furnishings and First Families*, by Betty C. Monkman (Washington, D.C., 2000).

*All items on exhibit in "Dining and Diplomacy: White House China" not otherwise credited are on loan from the collection of White House china collector Set Momjian.*



Commemorative bowl, 2000. Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey.

Momjian commissioned this bowl to commemorate the history of the White House china collection. "Celebrating 80 years of Lenox at the White House, Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Set Momjian, The White House, 2000" is inscribed on the bottom. The ribbons in the design represent the Lenox china patterns designed for the White House.

# At The Lincoln Museum

## Temporary Exhibits

*Dining and Diplomacy: White House China*  
A special exhibit at The Lincoln Museum

April 13 to July 7, 2002

**Thanks to the following for their generous sponsorship, which has made this exhibit possible:**

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Hayes: Oyster plate, ice cream plate (Snowshoe), after dinner cup & saucer (Bamboo), dinner plate (Mule Deer), and dinner plate (Southward Flight); all 1880. Haviland & Co., New York and Limoges, France.

## Special Events

**The 23rd Annual R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture**

Saturday, September 21, 2002 7:30 p.m.

Michael Beschloss has been described by *Newsweek* magazine as "the nation's leading presidential historian." He is the author of the *American Heritage Illustrated History of the Presidents*, two volumes (with a third projected) on the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, and books about Eisenhower and Kennedy. As a regular commentator on television news shows, he has brought historical perspective on current events to millions of Americans. Mr. Beschloss is currently working on a history of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.



Admission to the lecture and reception that follows is \$15 (\$25 for non-members); please call (260) 455-1832 for reservations.

### Barry H. Taper 1930-2001

Sadly, the Lincoln Community has lost a strong supporter, Barry H. Taper. Mr. Taper's contributions to the field include his long-time service as Trustee on the Lincoln College Board and many activities undertaken in conjunction with his wife, Louise. Among these activities are: assembling one of the most extensive private collections of Lincolniana in the world; donating to the Lincoln Legal Papers Project; sharing many of their significant collection items with the Huntington Library and the Chicago Historical Society in the traveling exhibit, *The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America*; and supporting The Lincoln Museum's recent national exhibition, *Now He Belongs to the Ages: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*. We appreciate the leadership the Tapers have shown; our thoughts are with Louise and her family.