



THE KEY WEST -
Harry Truman
FOUNDATION, INC.

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

THE KEY WEST - *Harry Truman* FOUNDATION, INC.

*To help preserve and protect the
Harry S. Truman Little White House Museum
and further its educational outreach.*

Dear Friends:

Following two years of devastating hurricanes, we are back on track with Phase II of the Little White House restoration. This report will examine some of our accomplishments as well as our future endeavors.

The Little White House Museum and State Historic Site in Key West, Florida is unique in a number of ways:

- *It is the state of Florida's only presidential museum. John Kennedy's compound in West Palm Beach is closed to the public and Richard Nixon's Key Biscayne home has recently been demolished for future development. This site has served as the functioning White House of President Harry Truman and has documented use by Presidents William Howard Taft, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and hopefully more will come in the future.*
- *Scientists Thomas A. Edison and Edward Hayden resided in this house for an extended time.*
- *While owned by the State of Florida, it is administered by a private foundation and is self-supporting. Unlike other historic houses frozen in time to a single experience, the location and home-like atmosphere of the Little White House allows it to continue to be used as a Presidential Retreat and for high level diplomatic meetings such as the Key West Peace Accords led by Secretary of State Colin Powell in April 2001.*

In the hearts and minds of our visitors it is a national treasure worthy of determined preservation and accurate restoration. After 12 years of abandonment, nearly a million dollars was spent getting it open to the public in 1990. This Herculean task was plagued with a lack of money, complex technological problems and limited research materials. The internet has opened a number of research avenues previously unavailable. Changing technology has allowed small quantities of wall-paper to be printed, replication of painted surfaces as well as 100% accurate reproduction of the original artwork loaned by the U. S. Naval Academy for the President to enjoy.

As we begin Phase II of our restoration, we are determined to "do it right". Our foundation is committed to 100% accurate re-creation of the house as it appeared in 1949. The large percentage of original furnishings certainly provides the backbone of the collection and new additions are continually being added. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Wolz
Executive Director

THE SITE AND RESTORATION PHASE I

Following nineteen daunting months in office, President Truman was exhausted and his health was suffering. He needed a vacation. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, following an inspection of the Key West Submarine Base, suggested the President consider the use of the 8700 square foot commandant's house as a possible retreat. It was painted gray and blended in with a number of other clapboard buildings on the base and today most would call it rustic. The rambling structure had rooms in the center of the house with wrap around porches on all four sides. The house was unoccupied as the commandant had opted for smaller quarters and while the house was furnished with Navy owned furniture it lacked personal touches. The woodwork was varnished throughout and the color scheme was bland, but it provided rest and relaxation as well as maximum security and privacy for the President and his staff of senior advisors. Sixteen staff plus Secret Service came for a week's vacation in November 1946.

Leaving rested and rejuvenated, the President promised to return whenever he felt the stress of office. Four months later, the President returned for another rest. Thus began the pattern of the President spending two vacations a year in November-December and again in February-March for the remainder of his presidency or 175 days occupancy in the Little White House. Mrs. Truman regarded these vacations "stag affairs" when the President and his staff would let down their hair outside of her watchful eye.

Following the campaign of 1948, Mrs. Truman and daughter Margaret came for their first visit in November. An increasing number of staffers joined the President and the Navy became aware of the limitations of the house. Interior designer Haygood Lassiteur was hired to remodel the house, his contract of \$35,000 allowed the house to become "presidential" with the purchase of new furniture, wall treatments and fabrics throughout. The Public Works Department spent an additional \$60,000 redesigning the house to make it more suitable for use as a retreat. The porches on the east side were eliminated and made part of the bedrooms and bathrooms, closets were built and the downstairs ramped to remove a number of multi-level areas and an additional six feet added to the length of the South Porch to accommodate the growing number of regular staffers and the extended periods of time they were using the site. In March 1952, there were 57 staff members plus Secret service and the vacation lasted almost a month. The exterior had been painted white in 1947 and the press corps dubbed the house the "Little White House" rather than the "winter White House" or the "working White House" or "Quarters A and B" as the Navy had designated it.

Every detail was carefully recorded in an extensive photographic collection. The Little White House has several hundred of these photographs to guide our restoration. We are indebted to RADM Francis McCorkle (1957) and RADM Lewis Kirn (1964) for their foresight in collecting and preserving the original furnishings used by President Truman.

In 1987, following 12 years of abandonment, the site was in such disrepair that nearly \$1 million was spent to enable the museum to open. Some license was allowed in the interpretation as technology would not allow for the reprinting of wallpaper and discontinued fabrics could not be located sans internet. Budgetary considerations prevented a professional paint analysis and appeals for the return of some missing furniture went unheeded.

Now we are in the middle of Phase II of our restoration to up-date, up-grade and complete what was begun in 1987.

WHAT COLOR WAS IT?



Historic paint consultant Matthew Mosca of Baltimore, Maryland spent a week here and gathered over 150 paint samples. These mounted samples will be examined in stereoscopic and polarized-light microscopy to determine the appearance of the house after the 1949 Lasseter remodeling.

The process is involved and included examination of vintage black and white photographs that give tonal distinctions, newspaper and magazine interviews that give details about design choices, the actual specifications from the interior designer to contractors and the U.S. Navy and the physical examination of the samples.

We now know from 1890, until 1949, the woodwork was varnished and only painted after the 1949 remodeling. He has determined a large amount of the plaster walls are original to the 1890 construction of the house. Some colors currently used are very close to the 1949 selections. Some rooms will be dramatically changed to the historic coloration of President Truman's time.

Mr. Mosca's previous consulting has been for the U.S. Capitol, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, George Washington's Mount Vernon

and most recently, the Gen. George Marshall home, Dodona Manor.

REPLICATION OF THE HISTORIC WALLPAPER

In a *Miami Herald* interview in February 1949, Haygood Lasseter described the foyer wallpaper as: "The paper is a scenic in tones of gray on off-white ground with lots of perspective. Fine lacquer red lines accented with cameo medallions at each cross point and the scene are old fashioned covered bridges, colonial homes and churches sketched in tones of gray."

Cooper Hewett Museum and numerous other design sources were approached and no one has been able to identify the pattern or manufacturer. Scalandre of Long Island, N.Y has been selected to replicate the wallpaper. They spent over a year in copyright search to determine if any manufacturer still owned the design. It has been determined it is uniquely ours.

Scalandre has been involved with every presidential administration since President Truman's re-decoration of the Washington, D.C. White House in 1950. They supply fabrics and wallcoverings and custom made rugs for the White House. They also helped re-create the Oval Office for the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

In 1988, a French toil wallpaper was installed. We will replace it with copies of the American toile installed in 1949.



1949



2006

IMMEDIATE GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

The following projects are available as a gifting opportunity:

Painting

Now that the historic paint analysis is being completed each of the rooms will need painted in their documentary color:

First Floor: Living Room \$2000
Dining Room \$1000
South Poker Porch \$1500
Foyer \$750
Staff Bedroom \$500

Second Floor: Foyer \$750
Clark Clifford/ Charlie Ross Bedroom \$500
Mrs. Truman and Margaret's Bedroom \$750
President Truman's bedroom \$500
Vice President Alban Barkley Suite \$750
Wrap Around porches \$1000

Carpeting

We need approximately 700 square yards of gray wool carpet to accurately portray the Little White House as it appeared in President Truman's usage. This gift would be approximately \$35,000.

Framing

While we have obtained copies of the original artwork loaned by the U.S. Naval Academy to the Little White House we need a sponsor for approximately \$1500 in custom framing for these prints and oils.

Upholstery

A generous contributor donated almost 100 yards of the original Schumacher fabric used for the upholstery and draperies in the living room and dining room chairs. We need a sponsor to pay for the actual upholstery of these pieces of furniture. Approximately \$3000 is needed.

Furniture Conservation

It has been almost 60 years ago since President Truman was presented with his beloved poker table. The passing of time and the improper storage conditions of the last 60 years requires re-gluing and conservation of this important presidential artifact. Could you give \$1000 for this worthwhile project ?

MASTER LANDSCAPE & HISTORIC FENCE REPAIR

Surrounding nearly an acre of botanical gardens is the original 1890's iron fence shown in this historic 1900 postcard. A 50 foot+ cat's claw tree had encased a corner of the fence, service vehicles had backed into the fence probably during the years of abandonment, falling branches hit the fence causing additional damage. Then came the four direct hits in the 2005 hurricane season, extensive damage to the Cat's Claw tree allowed us to remove it without paying a \$10,000 impact fee to the city. Your Foundation has taken this opportunity with approval from the Department of State to collect photographs of the grounds to create a master landscaping plan to replicate the grounds to their 1949 appearance. We are also replicating sections of iron fence and the main gate that was stolen in 1994.



NEW WINDOWS & HURRICANE PROTECTION FILM

The wrap around porches of the Little White House have always been open to the sea breezes from its 1890 construction until the 1988 remodeling. At that time tempered safety glass was installed in most of the wrap around porch windows to allow the interior to be air conditioned. This allowed the house to be protected from water intrusion and allowed temperature and humidity control for the protection of our collections and the comfort of our guests.

The porches around the Alban Barkley- Fred Vinson Suite on the south side of the house were left unprotected as they ran out of money during Phase I in 1988. The first two hurricanes in 2005 had wind driven rain forced through the louvers and caused extensive damage to the walls, ceiling and carpet in the poker porch beneath this area. Your foundation and a grant from the Florida Department of State allowed us to spend \$40,160.00 to manufacture custom built mahogany framed windows to seal this area and to install 3M Scotch Safetyshield® high impact film on all the exterior glass surfaces to add hurricane protection against flying debris. The Federal Emergency Management Administration awarded us a \$7500 grant to allow for wool carpet replacement in the South Porch that had been destroyed by Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina.



Shown above: Employees of MorseBuilders installing custom fabricated windows sealing the last section of the wrap-around porches. We are indebted for the in-kind donation exceeding \$1000 from the contractors.

EXTERIOR PAINTING

Keeping the Little White House looking “presidential” has always been a challenge. Our paint analysis has confirmed the Navy often painted it with lead based Navy gray paint when the building was used as the base commandant’s home. Further research in period newspaper articles state it was painted white for President Truman during the summer of 1947. Thus it became “the Little White House”

We also know from photographs that in December 1956, the paint was peeling badly during President Eisenhower’s visit. Due to his heart attack and quick decision to recuperate in Key West, the Navy lacked time to repaint the house.

In 1988, the house was painted for Phase I of our restoration. In 1996, the paint was peeling badly again and received a Florida Department of State Grant to repaint. In June 2006, following the effects of hits by hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma in 2005, the paint was peeling and water intrusion was becoming a problem.



The Preferred Painting of the Florida Keys scraped, sanded, caulked, primed and applied two coats of the best grade white latex paint. While this was largely paid for by your foundation we are very grateful for the in-kind donation, by Preferred Painting, that represented nearly one fourth the cost.

The undersides of the porch roofs were color matched to historic samples and painted green. Throughout the south, the undersides of porches are painted either blue or green to discourage insects from building their nests.

The crisp white finish not only protects the building from water intrusion, but maintains our presidential appearance.



Gardens

With the encouragement of the Bureau of Historical Resources of the Florida Department of State, a master site plan for the re-creation of the grounds and gardens of President Truman's Little White House are being undertaken. Many mature trees were saved from the ravages of recent hurricanes, but the salt intrusion killed a number of hedges and shrubs thus allowing us to examine and plan for a historically accurate replication of the grounds. Would your garden club like to contribute to this worthwhile project ?

Naming Opportunity / Visitor Center Expansion

The historic 1902 red brick building located to our north would make an ideal visitor center / museum with greatly expanded display galleries, theater for our introductory presentation and multi-purpose meeting rooms. Like many areas of America, development pressures in Key West to convert this commercial office space into condominiums are ever increasing. Our Foundation would like to receive a challenge grant up to five million dollars so that we can purchase this building before it is lost forever. Major contributors would have the opportunity to have the visitor center named after a person they wish to honor. Likewise, there are naming opportunities for the exhibition galleries, etc. This structure would add approximately 7000 square feet to our complex and allow the Little White House to be 100% accurate in its 1949 interpretation, allow a greatly expanded museum to feature the military history of the US Naval Station – Key West and its role in the emergence of the United States as a super power, the changing role of the United States Presidency and the use of the Little White House by multiple U.S. Presidents. The total cost of this project will be approximately \$15,000,000 with an additional \$15,000,000 endowment for long term sustainability.



CONTRIBUTIONS

As with most historic sites, gate admissions and museum store purchases generate the bulk of our operating funds. The loss of over 10,000 visitors in 2005 due to the hurricanes resulted in a \$100,000 shortfall in operating funds and no extra money for our many projects or goals. In a year with many other compelling demands for philanthropic dollars, we would like to say thank you for your very generous contributions that have allowed us to continue our restoration/ preservation efforts, our educational outreach and the Truman Legacy Symposiums. We could not have continued these fine programs without your help and steadfast commitment. Contributions may reflect more than one year as no report was issued last winter. On behalf our all our visitors, school groups and generations yet unborn who directly benefit from your generosity, thank you again for your friendship and support.

\$200,000-\$500,000

Florida Department of State
Historic Tours of America, Inc.
Monroe County (Florida) Tourist Development Council

\$100,000 to \$199,999

Time Warner Cable System

\$25,000 to \$99,999

John D. Evans Foundation
Larkin Family Charitable Trust
Truman Library Institute

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Federal Emergency Management Administration
Florida Atlantic University Foundation
Mike & Leslie Syring d/b/a Carpet Lady Floor Guy of Key West
Preferred Painting of the Fl. Keys

\$5000 to \$9,999

Lady Suzanne Tweed & Charlton Tweed Foundation, Inc.
Betty Zinman Foundation, Inc.

\$1000 to \$4999

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Warren Abbey
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Life Long Learning Society of Florida Atlantic University
Thomas & Linda Mallan
Roger Morse Builders
William & Barbara Nelson
Old Town Trolley Tours® of Key West
Radisson Resorts of Key West
Roseanne Spendley

\$500 to \$9999

Bankers Trust
Mike & Maija Devine
Robb & Elizabeth Maass
Florida Keys Masonic Lodges
Spottswood Companies

\$200 to \$499

Ronald & Patti Beck
David & Carol Clark
Wanda & Louis Coury
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Marathon Shrine Club
William & Terese Memmer
Kathryn Walker
Davidson White
Bert Whitt
Roland & Carolyn Wilder
John Yoder

\$100 to \$199

Anchor Lodge 16, F&AM

Anonymous

Anonymous

James & Caroline Bryan

Paul Hilson

Robert & Anita Hoffman

Milton & Dorothy Kayle

Audrey & Van Keebler

National Youth Leadership

Thomas & Alma Walsh

Henry Woods, Jr.

\$1 to \$100

Anonymous

Renee & Alma La Pierre

Jay & Kitty Glover

Edith Gordon

Bob Green

Norman Higgion

Arthur & Vivian Kallen

Claire Kosher

Deanne Lloyd

Bernie & Harriett Lurye

Sheldon & Deborah Mermelstein

Jonathan Pride

David Whitney

Lee Anne Ward

Xi Alpha Theta Sorority

We also acknowledge the gift of presidential photogrpahs, Litte White House furnishings, presidential trip logs, etc. by Dennis Beaver, Maggie Freeman, Joseph Tabarrini, Clifton Truman Daniel, Kathy Ovide, P.K. Fabian, Susan Bailey, Eugene Roberts, Steven Foss, John Clayton, Arlo Shay, I.B. Dent and Nadya Miles.

THE HISTORY OF THE LITTLE WHITE HOUSE IS PRICELESS!



OUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Each and every day, international visitors and Americans of all ages and come to learn the stories of great men and the world events that were shaped at the Little White House.

This humble clapboard house at the end of US 1 served a command headquarters during the Spanish American war when the entire Atlantic fleet was in Key West. It was the center of Gulf stream shipping activities during World War I & II. It served as the functioning White House under President Truman where he claimed to sign 200 to 600 documents per day. It was the site of the Key West Accords that created the Department of Defense in 1947. It was used for meetings during President Eisenhower's recovery from a heart attack. It became a summit location just 23 days before the Bay of Pigs with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and President John Kennedy. It has served as a retreat allowing Presidents Taft (1912) Carter (1996) and Clinton (2005) to rest and relax and still offers its hospitality today to NATO, Department of Defense and Department of State functions such as the 2001 Key West Peace Accords between Armenia and Azerbaijan led by Secretary Colin Powell. And even temporary residence for scientists Thomas Edison and Edward Hayden.

