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Yesterday's on the Michael Reagan Show -Honest Abe's Ghost Missing from White House

### Yesterday's on the Michael Reagan Show -Honest Abe's Ghost Missing from White House

Mike: Have you noticed that with all these people sleeping in the Lincoln bedroom at the White House in exchange for contributions to the Clinton Re-Election campaign that something is missing?

Since the Clintons have been renting the Lincoln Bedroom, to campaign contributors, no one around the White House has seen the ghost of Honest Abe Lincoln. He's been missing every since program started.

When my Dad was in the White House, Honest Abe's ghost seemed to be around a lot. There were times when Dad was President that at night the little dog they had would wake him up with his barking, and Dad would get up and look down the hall. The dog would be jumping up and down in front of the doorway of the Lincoln bedroom. Dad would go down the hall to see what he was barking at and would open the door and try to get coax him into the room. That little dog would not go across the threshold of the Lincoln bedroom. That happened a lot of times.

But, today the ghost of Honest Abe has left the white house and won't be back until this president is gone. Caller Dick from Virginia Beach, VA: Are (Rep.) McDermott and (Rep.) Rangel being investigated in the taping of Newt Gingrich? Mike: Yes, the FBI and FCC are investigating McDermott and Rangel - and (Rep.) Karen Thurman and the Martins on taping the cellular phone call. Everyone knows that was illegal. (Rangel) Using the IRS to investigate a political enemy is illegal. Will they pay a \$300,000 fine? And, where is David Bonior these days? We haven't heard a word from him in days. Why isn't he filing ethics charges against McDermott and Rangel? (Mike also Talked about: the six areas Sen. Fred Thomson

## A Ghost in the White House??



White House Historical Association Photograph

### *THE LINCOLN BEDROOM*

**THE ONLY ROOM IN THE EXECUTIVE MANSION DEDICATED TO A SINGLE PRESIDENT**

"It was the one room in the White House with a link to the past. It gave me great comfort. I love the Lincoln Room the most, even though it isn't really Lincoln's bedroom. But it has his things in it. When you see that great bed, it looks like a cathedral. To touch something I knew he had touched was a real link with him. The kind of peace I felt in that room was what you feel when going into a church. I used to feel his strength. I'd sort of be talking with him."\*\*

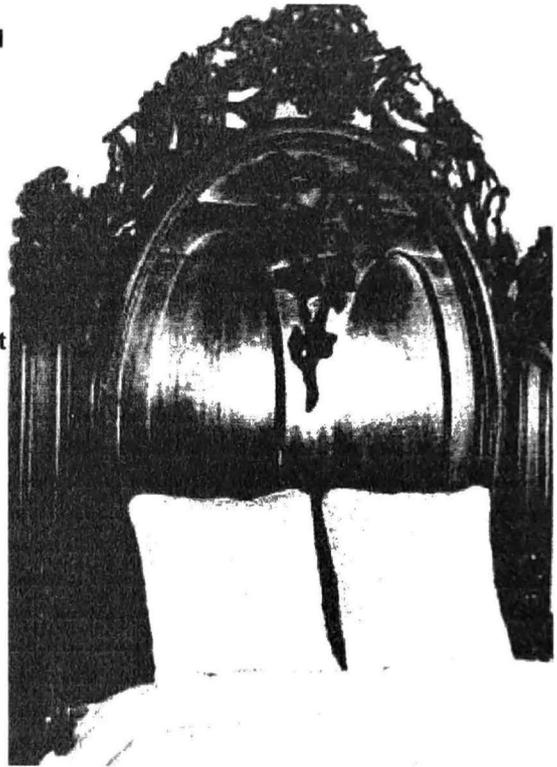
Young Willie Lincoln (age 11) died in the White House in the bed now in the Lincoln Bedroom at about 5:00 P.M. on February 20, 1862. Both Theodore Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower claimed they felt the powerful presence of Abraham Lincoln in this room. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Sometimes when I worked at my desk late at night I'd get a feeling that someone was standing behind me. I'd have to turn around and look." Rumors were that Winston Churchill had a Lincoln sighting in the room. Amy Carter, during sleepovers with her friends, waited up at night for the ghost of Mr. Lincoln to appear. Once the girls tried to get in touch with him with a Ouija board to no avail. Ronald Reagan's dog would bark

*Rex*

outside the room but never enter. Maureen Reagan said she saw mysterious apparitions there. Actor Richard Dreyfuss reported having scary dreams about a portrait of Mr. Lincoln that hangs in the room. "A high percentage of people who work here won't go in the Lincoln Bedroom," said President Clinton's White House social secretary, Capricia Marshall. White House maids and butlers have sworn they had seen Lincoln's ghost.

The Lincoln Bedroom was in the news during Bill Clinton's term because of its use as a bedroom for White House guests. But it wasn't always used as a bedroom. When Abraham Lincoln was President, it was used as his personal office and Cabinet room (it was used in this manner by all Presidents between 1830 and 1902). During the Lincoln presidency, the walls were covered with Civil War maps. It had dark green wallpaper, and the carpeting was also dark green. Newspapers were stacked on the desk and tables along with large amounts of mail and requests from office seekers. Two large wicker wastebaskets were filled with debris. Mr. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in this room on January 1, 1863.

In 1902 the room became a bedroom when all the second floor offices were moved to the West Wing during the Roosevelt renovation. It was named the Lincoln Bedroom in 1945 when President and Mrs. Truman moved in the bed and other furniture. The large bed, measuring 8 feet long by 6 feet wide, was purchased in 1861 by Mary Todd Lincoln as part of her refurbishing of the White House. (The photograph of the bed is from the Meserve-Kunhardt Collection). It was a part of a set of furniture she purchased for the Prince of Wales Room (besides the bed which had purple-and-gold satin curtains, the set included matching draperies, a marble-topped table, and 6 chairs). Several Presidents used the bed including Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Never used by Abraham Lincoln himself, it is made of carved rosewood. The original mattress was made of horsehair. Barbara Bush replaced the mattress, but guests still report it's lumpy.



Many of the Victorian pieces in the bedroom were placed there by the Trumans when the Brussels carpet and the Lincoln bed were installed in 1945. The chandelier, which was acquired in 1972, resembles the one hanging there when Lincoln was President. The sofa and matching chairs, a gift to the White House in 1954, are believed to have been there during Lincoln's presidency. One of the chairs in the room, upholstered in antique yellow-and-green Morris velvet, was sold after Lincoln's assassination but was returned to the White House as a gift in 1961. The rocking chair near the window is similar to the one Lincoln was sitting in when he was shot by John Wilkes Booth.

Along the west wall are four chairs used by Lincoln's Cabinet members. They are believed to have been purchased for the White House when James Polk was President. To the left of the fireplace is a desk that Lincoln used at the Soldiers' Home (where he often stayed to escape the heat of Washington's summers).



The Anderson Cottage at the Soldiers' Home (where the Lincolns often stayed)

On this desk is a copy of the Gettysburg Address that is signed, dated, and titled by Abraham Lincoln. This copy was originally given by Lincoln to Colonel Alexander Bliss.

To the left of the bed is a portrait of Andrew Jackson that was a favorite of Lincoln's. The portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln, hanging to the right of the bed, was given to the White House by Mrs. Robert Todd Lincoln. It was painted from photographs by Katherine Helm, daughter of Mary Todd's half-sister, Emily Todd Helm. To the right of the mantel is an engraving of Francis B. Carpenter's 1864 painting titled "First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before Lincoln's Cabinet."

Hanging above the desk is an 1865 lithograph titled "Abraham Lincoln's Last Reception." It depicts Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln greeting guests, including Cabinet members, in the East Room. On the north wall hangs a portrait of Lincoln by Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk based on a bust his father (Leonard Volk) had done from real life. Other objects associated with Lincoln, including books he read, have also been placed about the room.

\*\* Mrs. John F. Kennedy



Thank you to Sarah Norton for creating the idea for this page. Sources used: "The White House: An Historic Guide" by the White House Historical Association in cooperation with The National Geographic Society; "How the White House Works" by George Sullivan; "Lincoln in American Memory" by Merrill D. Peterson; "The White House: Cornerstone of a Nation" by Judith St. George; "The White House" by Patricia Ryon Quiri; March 17th, 1997, issue of *People Weekly*. Although the bed was not actually used by President Lincoln, author Merrill D. Peterson reports on p. 324 of *Lincoln in American Memory*: "When President Truman told his aged mother, an unreconstructed Confederate, that she would sleep in Lincoln's bed when visiting him in the capital, she told him in no uncertain terms that she would sleep on the floor instead."

Abraham Lincoln's Research Site      Mary Todd Lincoln Research Site

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## Are There Ghosts Haunting The White House?

WASHINGTON

(AllPolitics, Oct. 31) -- Tales of White House ghosts have been around for almost as long as the White House itself.



Who is sleeping in the Lincoln Bedroom?

The ghost of a British soldier from the War of 1812 is said to walk the grounds at night. Another ghoulish tale has a long-deceased White House usher still turning off lights in the building while a former White House doorman is reported to still be on the job.

The spirit of Abigail Adams, the wife of America's second president John Adams, has been spotted hanging laundry in the East Wing of the White House.

And for all the people who have stayed in the Lincoln Bedroom of late, there is one who would not. Britain's Winston Churchill refused to sleep there after sighting President Abraham Lincoln's ghost lurking about.



Churchill refused to sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry says he is a believer. "There are, from time to time, reports that the White House is haunted ... from time to time, mysterious appearances of figures from history," McCurry said. "I believe."

McCurry couldn't say if either of the Clintons have had any midnight encounters of the supernatural kind. "There have been serious people who have serious tales to tell about these encounters. Now, I haven't heard the president or the first lady tell any of these tales, but there are people who seriously believe that there is a haunting



quality to the White House," he said.

President Harry Truman may have, because he said the place was haunted "sure as shooting."

At the least, first lady Hillary Clinton called the place creepy at times. "There is something about the house at night that you just feel like you are summoning up the spirits of all the people who have lived there and worked there and walked through the halls there," Mrs.

Clinton said last year on The Rosie O'Donnell Show.

"It's neat. It can be a little creepy. You know, they think there's a ghost there," she continued.

CNN's Eileen O'Connor contributed to this report.



Courtesy Rosie O'Donnell Show

Hillary Rodham Clinton says that while the White House is neat, it can be a little "creepy" too.

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56 of her morals. Secretary of State Martin Van Buren liked her, though. His attention to the "beautiful Mrs. Eaton was obvious"—to quote one ancient article. The scandal was too much. Jackson accepted Eaton's "resignation" and then sent Peggy and her husband to Spain in an attempt to quiet the gossips.

Liz Carpenter, who was closely associated with the White House during the Johnson Administration, referred to the old story of invisible laughter coming from Jackson's bed, and said with a twinkle in her eye, "He was such a salty old character, I've often wondered if it was his laugh."

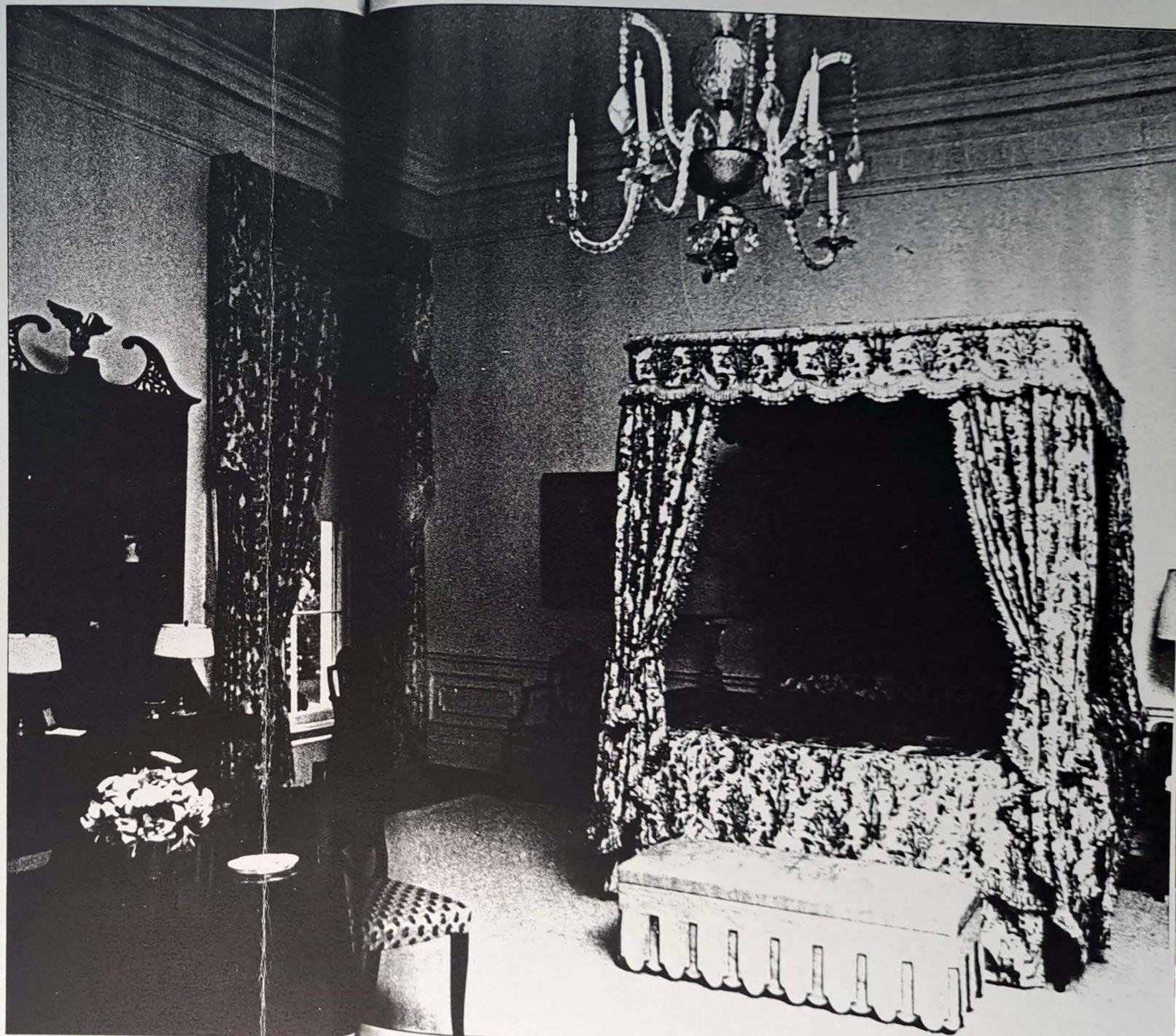
Death had come to Old Hickory in 1845 at his Nashville estate, The Hermitage. Within twenty years, however, his spirit was first reported revisiting the White House by none other than Mary Todd Lincoln. The mystical Mrs. Lincoln told friends that she often heard Jackson stomping and swearing.

A White House staff member, Lillian Rogers Parks, in a 1961 book, *My 30 Years Backstairs at the White House*, tells of experiencing what she believed was an actual encounter with Jackson in the Rose Room. She was busily hemming a bedspread in preparation for a visit from Queen Elizabeth II when she felt a presence in the room.

The air directly behind her seemed cold as she sensed someone looking over her shoulder. She could feel a hand on the back of her chair. Her scalp tightened, but fear would not let her look around. Leaving behind her sewing basket and needle and thread, the seamstress quickly left, and it was weeks before anyone could talk her into going back in there. When she did have to return to the room, she said that she made certain she never went alone.

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*The bed in the Rose Room is supposed to be the one used by Andrew Jackson. Ribald laughter attributed to his ghost is sometimes heard coming from it. It was also in the Rose Room that the ghost of Abraham Lincoln appeared before Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands several decades ago.*





## DEPARTED VISITORS OF THE YELLOW OVAL ROOM

The Yellow Oval Room has one of the most magnificent views in all of Washington. Looking out toward the Mall, one can see the tall spire of the Washington Monument, the majestic Lincoln Memorial, and across the Tidal Basin and through the Japanese cherry trees, the dome of the Jefferson Memorial.

Thomas Jefferson used the room as a drawing room, and often relaxed by playing his violin there. "My, my," Mary

Todd Lincoln once said to a friend, "how that Mr. Jefferson does play the violin." Jefferson had been dead a number of years before Mary Lincoln and her husband moved into the White House. I read in the *Washington Daily News* that she also told some of her closest friends just after John Tyler died in 1862 that she sometimes heard his spirit returning to the Oval Room to woo his twenty-year-old wife.

It is also in that room that Woodrow Wilson proposed to the second Mrs. Wilson; and that Franklin Roosevelt re-

ceived the leaders of Congress the day after Pearl Harbor. Noted Lincoln scholar Carl Sandburg spent quite some time meditating in the room a few years ago, then emerged convinced that it was the room in which Lincoln had reached most of his great decisions.

During the Truman years, a White House guard related to a reporter that he had heard a voice calling out to him—seemingly from the attic above the Yellow Oval Room. In a whisper, the voice said: "I'm Mr. Burns. I'm Mr. Burns."

Thinking Secretary of State James

The Yellow Oval Room has had its share of spectral visitors including Thomas Jefferson and John Tyler.

Byrnes was upstairs playing a trick on him, the guard rushed to the attic stairs, but found the entrance sealed. The guard told the reporter that he later learned the Secretary had not even been in the White House that day.

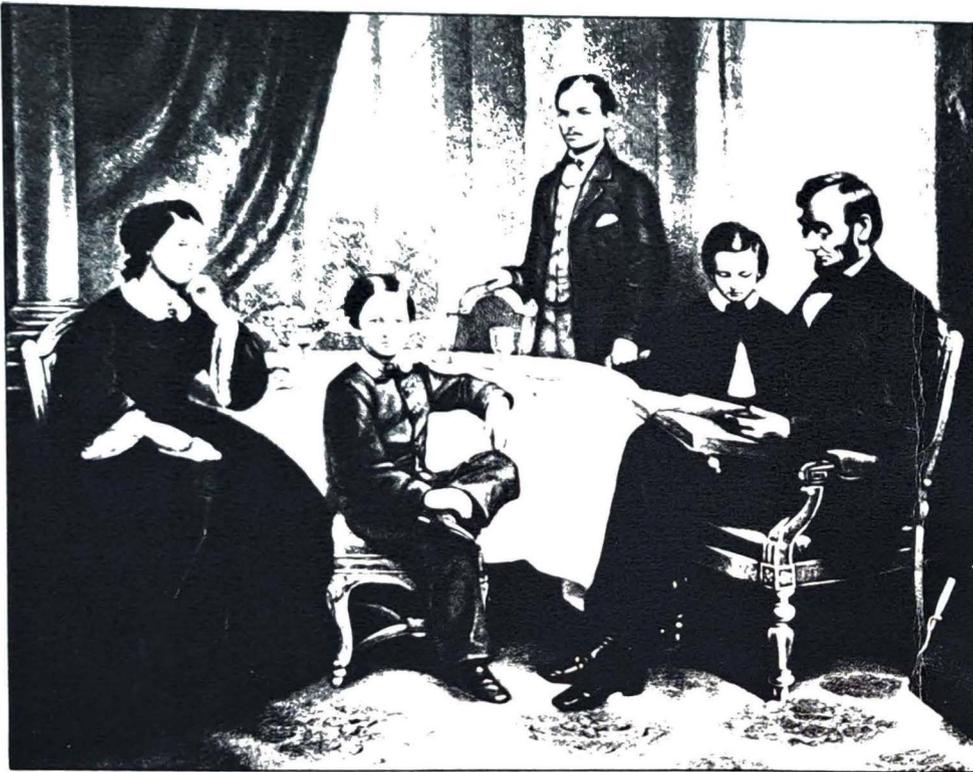
The reporter nodded understandingly, shrugged his shoulders, and left. He marked it off as idle conversation until a week or so later when the reporter read something that caused him to change that assessment. It was an article about White House land acquisition. The hairs on the back of his neck bristled and his flesh tingled as he recalled the guard's story. He stared at the name of the man who had owned the land in 1790. His name was David Burns, dubbed "Obstinate Davy" by President Washington because he had not wanted to sell the land.

## THE EVER-PRESENT MR. LINCOLN

Lincoln was fifty-two when he came into the White House, and there were almost as many Presidents before him as have followed him. None has left the mark on the executive mansion that he has. Indeed, many swear that his spirit still walks the halls. More than a few have testified to having seen his form standing at the center window of the Oval Room. During the Civil War he is said to have often stood there—looking out at Virginia with silent concern about the fate of the Union and the miseries of war.

Lincoln undoubtedly possessed some psychic gifts. Scholars have described him as "introspective," and some said that his periods of silence were trance-like. As a child and a teen-ager, Lincoln was said to have been somewhat moody, yet he always attracted friends.

His personal life was often touched by tragedy. He lost his deeply religious mother when he was four. When his first love, Ann Rutledge, died of typhoid, the



Mary and Abraham Lincoln with their sons (from left to right) Willie, who died during his father's presidency, Tad, and Robert.

trauma thrust him into a profound melancholy, which apparently led to an emotional breakdown several years later.

In 1842 Lincoln married Mary Todd. They had an indisputably rocky marriage. Some have said that it was held together only by their common love for their children. Of those children, only Robert became an adult. Edward died at age four, Willie died of fever in the middle of his father's first term as President, and Tad outlived his father by only six years.

Willie possibly was his father's favorite, and the little boy's unexpected death had a profound impact not only on the President, but on Mary Lincoln as well. The family had no gravesite in Washington, but Supreme Court Clerk William Thomas Carroll offered Lincoln a tomb for his son in the Carroll family tomb in Oak Hill Cemetery.

Lincoln used to spend long hours at that crypt, which is on a narrow path on a hillside overlooking Rock Creek. There

are two wrought iron chairs behind the locked iron gates of the crypt, giving credence to the old newspaper reports that on at least two occasions Lincoln had the crypt opened so that he could look at his son. Legend has it that he would sit and stare at the dead youth for hours and weep. Lincoln could not bear to leave Willie alone in that cold, dank, dark tomb.

Members of President Ulysses S. Grant's household believed in the ability to communicate with the dead, and one of them is reported to have conversed with Willie's spirit. More recently, Lynda Johnson Robb, who occupied the room in which Willie died, was "very much" aware of the fact that "it was in her room the little Lincoln boy breathed his last breath," Liz Carpenter told me, but declined to elaborate.



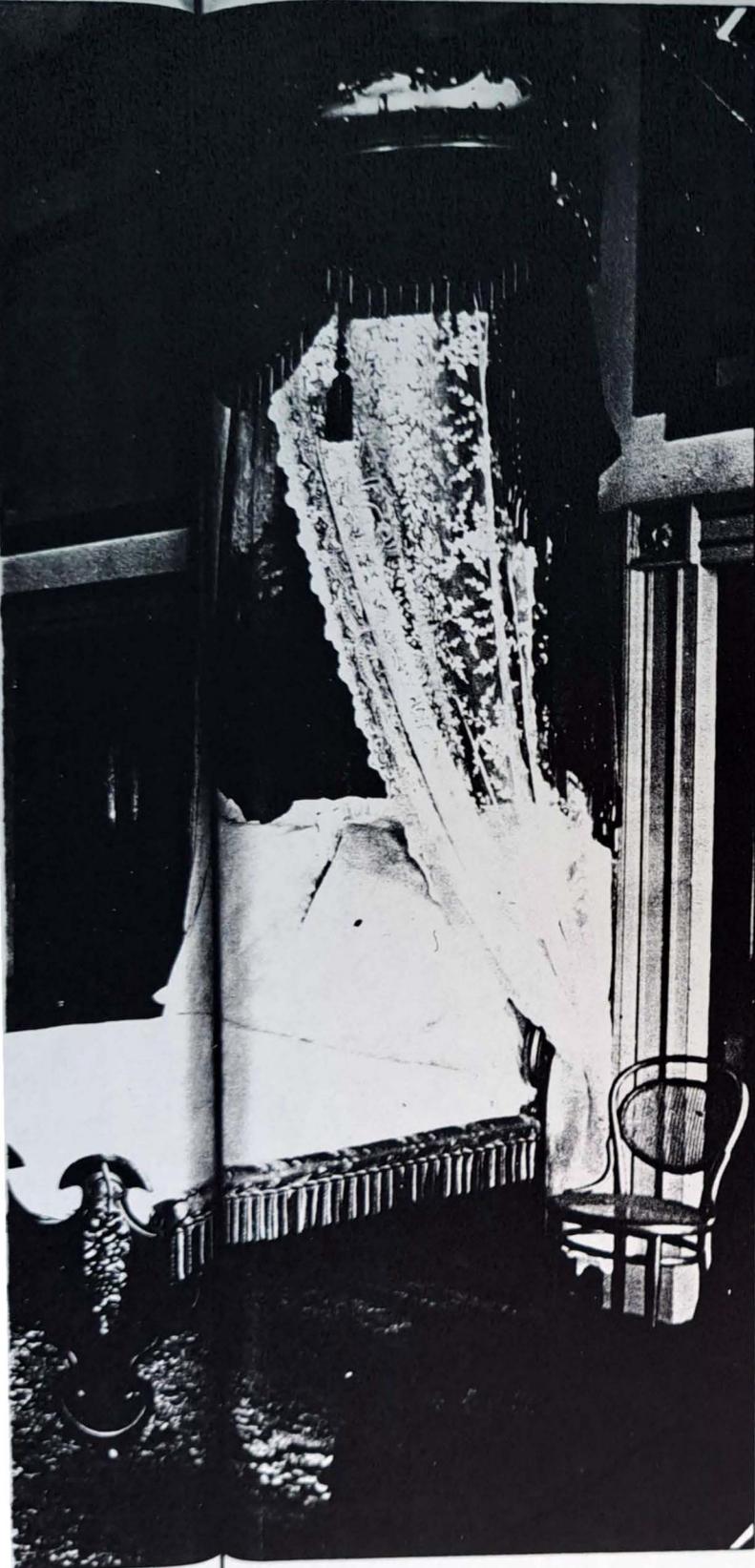
Willie Lincoln died at the age of 12 during his father's presidency and was buried in the Carroll family tomb in Oak Hill Cemetery. Lincoln is supposed to have sat in this chair looking at the crypt and weeping. Willie's ghost has been seen around the White House on several occasions.

She also said that Lady Bird Johnson encountered what she believed was Lincoln's presence one April evening as she watched a television special on Lincoln's death. "Suddenly, she was aware, conscious of the fact, that the room she was in was special." Someone was compelling her to direct her eyes toward the mantel. "It wasn't the mantel that her eyes focused on, however, but a small plaque she had never noticed before. Liz Carpenter said that it told of the room's importance to Lincoln, and that as Lady Bird Johnson read it, she felt "a chill. A draft." Mrs. Carpenter recalled that Mrs. Johnson told her later that she felt very ill at ease. "Perhaps she felt his presence."

Lincoln was not much for organized religion, though on occasion he would attend Presbyterian services. As a politician his views on religion had been questioned, and once when he was running for Congress he distributed a handbill denying that he had ever spoken "with

intentional disrespect of religion." Lincoln did seem to be at least curious about spiritualism. His wife's pursuit of the supernatural was more overt, especially after Willie's death. She frequently consulted spiritualists and mediums, and there is even a photograph of Mary Todd Lincoln seated at a table with a ghostlike Abraham superimposed behind her. It is thought to be the work of a spiritualist photographer in the 1870's.

Séances were held at the White House, and there are newspaper records to indicate that Abraham Lincoln attended a couple of these. The *Chicago Tribune* reported in 1863 that medium Charles Shockle visited the White House. The levitation and rapping that the President witnessed seemed to impress him. In 1967, Suzy Smith wrote in *Prominent American Ghosts* that she had learned of another time when a medium visited the President. A skeptical Lincoln is said to have ordered a congressman from Maine to sit on top of a piano that a medium



63

was successfully levitating. The congressman's weight made no difference. President and congressman and others watching could hardly believe their eyes as the piano and the congressman rose and fell at the medium's command.

A *National Geographic News Bulletin* from August 1973 heralding a Library of Congress exhibit on spiritualism, recalled that the medium J. B. Conklin supposedly received a telepathic message from Edward D. Baker for President Lincoln, who was a close friend of Baker's. Conklin received his message for the President two months after Baker had been killed leading Union forces into action at Ball's Bluff, Virginia. Conklin told him Baker's message was "gone elsewhere" and that "elsewhere is everywhere."

Many of the occupants of the White House seem to have been visited by Lincoln. "I think of Lincoln, shambling, homely, with his sad, strong, deeply furrowed face, all the time," said President Theodore Roosevelt. "I see him in the different rooms and in the halls," he admitted some forty years after Lincoln's occupancy.

Grace Coolidge is said to have seen the specter of the President, too. In a newspaper account I read, she said that he was dressed "in black, with a stole draped across his shoulders to ward off the drafts and chills of Washington's night air."

President Dwight Eisenhower's press secretary, James Haggerty, once said on an ABC-TV news program that the President had told him he often felt Lincoln's presence. President Harry Truman recalled that in the early morning hours a little over a year after he became President, he was awakened by two distinct knocks on the door of his bedroom. He got up and went to the door, opened it, but found no one in the hall. Just a cold spot that went away as footsteps trailed off down the corridor. Truman wrote in

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*The Lincoln Bedroom as it looked around the turn of the century. Lincoln has been seen most often in this room, although his spirit is said to wander through most of the White House.*

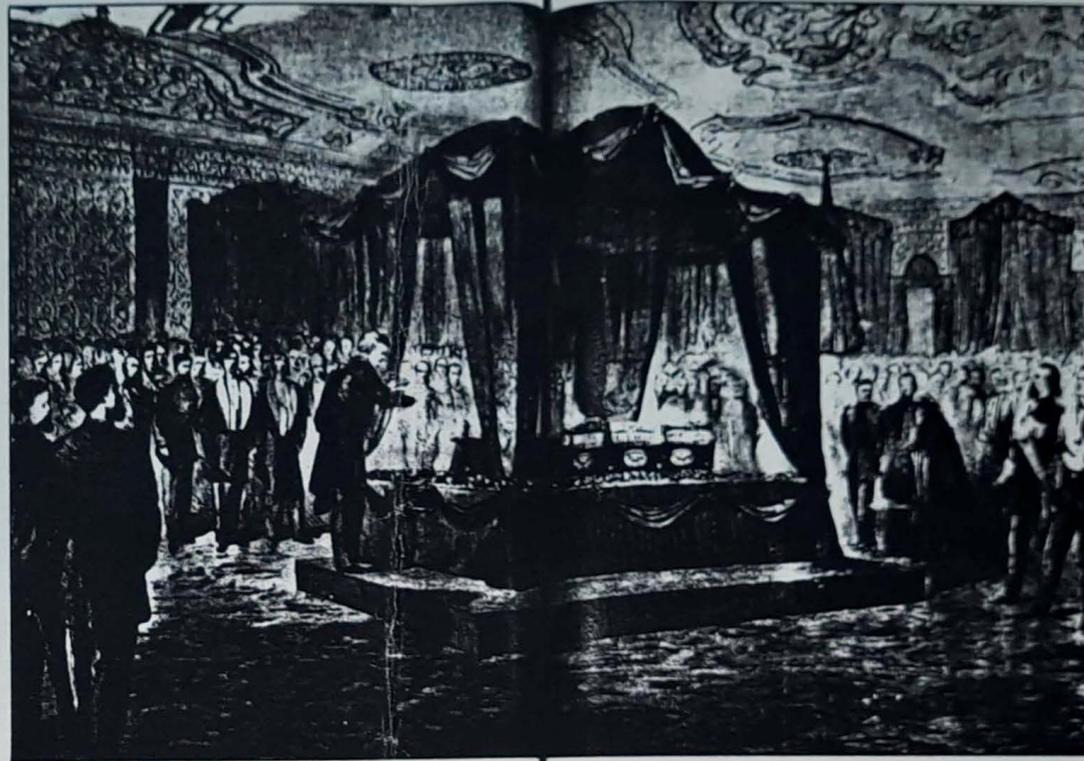
his diary that he wished he had the brava to summon forth the Lincoln ghost to scare his daughter and a friend who were spending a night in the Lincoln bedroom.

Eleanor Roosevelt denied to reporters that she personally had seen Lincoln's apparition, but she did admit to feeling his presence. She also related a story involving one of her staffers who had an encounter. Her secretary had passed Lincoln's bedroom one day and saw a lanky figure sitting on the bed pulling on his boots. Since Lincoln had been dead more than three-quarters of a century, the girl felt justified in her reaction: she screamed and ran as fast as her legs would carry her from the second floor. An article in the *Washington Star* said on another occasion that FDR's valet ran screaming from the White House and into the arms of a guard, shouting that he had just seen Lincoln.

Visitors also have encountered Lincoln's ghost. When Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands was visiting the White House quite a few years ago, she is supposed to have heard a knock on the door of the Rose Room, where she was staying. The hour was late, but thinking it could be important, she opened the door. Standing before the Queen, his large frame taking up most of the doorway, was Abraham Lincoln. A White House staffer said that the Queen shocked the President and other guests when she related the incident at cocktails the next evening. She told them that when she saw the chilling apparition everything went black, and when she came to, she was lying on the floor.

Winston Churchill never discussed it, but he did not like to sleep in the Lincoln bedroom. It is the room that all visiting male heads of state are quartered in, but the British Prime Minister was quite uncomfortable there. Often Churchill would be found across the hall the next morning. Susan Ford, daughter of President Gerald Ford, shares the uneasiness Churchill felt. She declared in *Seventeen Magazine* in the summer of 1975 that she believes in ghosts and has no intention of ever sleeping in the Lincoln bedroom.

Lincoln spent many restless nights in



*President Lincoln's body lay in state in the East Room after his assassination, just as he had dreamed it would.*

that massive old room, and no doubt suffered through more nightmares than pleasant dreams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that Lincoln believed in dreams and "other enigmatic signs and portents" throughout his life. Several of his dreams have been reported, but none is more memorable than Lincoln's vision of his own death. The President recalled one of his dreams in which he had heard weeping, sobbing, and wailing. Walking down a White House corridor to investigate, the President said that he saw a coffin lying in state. Inquiring from a mourner, "Who is dead?" Lincoln was told, "The assassinated President." Lincoln said that in his dream, he walked over to the coffin and looking inside, saw himself.

April 14, 1865, had begun rather routinely for President Lincoln. During the morning, and for part of the afternoon, he met with Cabinet officials to map Re-



*The phantom of Mary Surratt's daughter, Anna, has been seen knocking at the White House door, still pleading for the release of her mother.*

construction plans. Later that day, he and Mrs. Lincoln went for a carriage ride. They returned home late in the afternoon to dress for the theater. Often,

going to the theater or opera took the President's mind off his troubles. General and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant had been unable to accompany the President and Mrs. Lincoln to Ford's that night, but Major Henry Rathbone and Clara Harris had accepted the President's invitation. The rest of the story has been retold many times. By the next morning Lincoln was dead, the victim of an assassin's bullet.

The prosecution of the conspirators was vigorously pursued, and feeling ran high about exacting retribution. There is some question even today, however, about the guilt of at least one of those convicted of conspiring to assassinate the President. Some believe that Mary Surratt was unjustly punished. On the eve of her execution, her daughter Anna forced her way inside the White House grounds and made it to the front door, where she pleaded for her mother's release. On the anniversary of that night, some have claimed to have seen Anna's spirit banging on the front door of the White House, pleading once more for her mother's release.

It has been well over one hundred years since Lincoln's death, but based on the stories of scores of responsible White House employees, members of presidential families, and Presidents themselves, the spirit of that great American still roams the hallways, still cares about the nation he fought so mightily to preserve. Although there have been several who have run screaming from the Lincoln ghost, there are others, particularly those whose turn it is to make decisions of state, who do not fear it. His presence seems to offer comfort and strength to them.

"Why would they want to come back here I could never understand," Harry Truman is quoted as having said about the White House ghosts. In her book *Harry S. Truman*, daughter Margaret says that her father was sure ghosts were in the White House, and at one time he wrote "... so I won't lock my doors or bar them either. . . ."

Truman himself had no ambition to haunt the White House, he wrote in a letter to daughter Margaret: "No man in his right mind would want to come here of his own accord."

Shoshoni of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Colorado believe that whirlwinds are apparitions of dead people and that they can be dangerous. According to legend, a company of Shoshoni women went out walking one day, and a whirlwind arose. One of the women cursed it. The whirlwind attacked her and broke her leg, and destroyed her tent. The Gros Ventre also believe whirlwinds are spirits of the dead, and observe that whirlwinds often are seen in cemeteries when there is no wind anywhere else. In the myths and folktales of the Mandan-Hidatsa, whirlwinds are the vehicles by which the spirits of the dead travel about. The winds swirl up out of the graves.

Among tribes in California and other parts of the West, whirlwinds are said to be evil spirits; a dead shaman's dust; or a shaman's "pain." The latter refers to animated objects, such as crystals and stones, which are believed to be both the source of a shaman's power and the cause of illness. Various beliefs hold that whirlwinds can poison, will cause miscarriages or will carry off children.

FURTHER READING:

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Hultkrantz, Ake. *Native Religions of North America*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.

**Whisht hounds** (also **Wish hounds**, **Wisht hounds**, **Wist hounds**) Spectral hellhounds that haunt Wistman's Wood and vicinity in Dartmoor in Devon, England. *Whisht* is an old West-country term for "spooky" and is derived from *Wisc*, a name for the Norse god of wisdom and war, Odin (Woden). The hounds are also called Yell-hounds and Yeth-hounds in some parts of Devon.

The Whisht hounds are headless and glowing black. They roam the moors with their master, Odin, who carries a hunting horn or hunting pole. Sometimes their master is said to be the Devil or SIR FRANCIS DRAKE; he is either astride a horse or on foot. The hounds are said to chase the souls of unbaptized children. Another story holds that the hounds themselves are the souls of unbaptized children who return to hunt down their parents.

Persons unfortunate enough to meet the hounds supposedly die within a year, if they do not perish that very night. It is particularly dangerous to meet them head-on. Anyone who sees the hounds must immediately lie face down with arms and legs crossed and repeat the Lord's Prayer until they have passed. Dogs who hear the Whisht hounds baying are certain to die.

The Whisht hounds most frequently are about late on Sunday nights. Baying and breathing fire and smoke, they sweep across the moors and end their run by vanishing over a crag. According to lore, anyone who pursues them goes over the cliff to his death.

Writing in the *Quarterly Review* in July 1873, R.J. King gave this description of the Whisht hounds:

The cry of the wish or wished hounds is heard occasionally in the loneliest recesses of the hills whilst nei-

ther dogs nor huntsmen are anywhere visible. At other times (generally on Sundays) they show themselves—jetblack, breathing flames and followed by a swarthy figure who carries a hunting pole. Wise or Wish, according to Kemble, was the name of Woden, the lord of "wish" who is probably represented by the master of these dogs of darkness.

The hounds' haunt is suitably spooky: the moors are quiet, save for a nearly constant, low, moaning wind. Wistman's Wood is filled with eerie-looking, moss-covered oak trees, half-buried boulders, and an occasional pile of sheep bones, the remains of some predator's attack. Nearby are the ruins of a haunted prehistoric village. The hounds are said to emerge from the wood every St. John's Eve (Midsummer Eve).

The Whisht hounds have been seen since 1677 in the area of Buckfastleigh. In that year, legend has it, an evil man named Sir Richard Cabell was swept off to hell on the night he died. His body was interred in a pagoda in the local churchyard. Whoever pokes a finger through the keyhole of the structure will have the end of it chewed by a ghost.

The hounds also have been seen at Buckfastleigh Abbey near Yelverton, along Abbot's Way, led by the ghost of Sir Francis Drake.

Reports of the hounds dwindled in the late 20th century, perhaps because of a decline in belief in folklore and the supernatural.

Both the Whisht hounds and BLACK SHUCK, a spectral black dog, have been credited with inspiring Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE in his writing of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

See DEATH OMENS; JAN TREGEAGLE; WILD HUNT.

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**White House** The living and working quarters of the president of the United States in Washington, D.C., has numerous ghosts in residence.

*History*

Following the end of the Revolutionary War in 1776, there was much discussion about where the new United States should have its capital. George Washington, the first president, selected a swampy site on the Potomac River that was to become the District of Columbia. An entire city was designed by French architect Pierre Charles L'Enfant.

Work on the White House was begun in 1792. The house was designed by architect James Hoban. Washington supervised construction but never lived in it. The second president, John Adams (1797–1801), moved in while



*The White House. Photo by Rosemary Ellen Guiley.*

the house was still incomplete. It was not finished during his term.

During the War of 1812, the British burned it. James Madison and his wife, Dolley, were living there; Dolley is credited with saving government documents and a portrait of George Washington from the fire. Rain fell and extinguished the fire, saving enough of the house for rebuilding. The reconstruction took three years. Renovations and additions were made in subsequent years.

The residence was called the President's Palace, President's House and Executive Mansion until 1901, when President Theodore Roosevelt officially christened it the White House.

Today the White House has six floors, 132 rooms and 32 bathrooms. Two floors are open to public view. Some of the famous historical rooms are haunted.

### *Hauntings*

Abigail Adams, wife of President John Adams, used the East Room for hanging laundry, as it was the driest room in the house. The East Room is the largest room in the White House and has been used for dances, receptions and various events. Teddy Roosevelt even held wrestling and boxing matches in the room. Abigail's ghost is seen passing through the East Room doors, her arms outstretched as though she is carrying yet another load of presidential laundry. Sometimes she leaves behind faint smells of soap and damp clothing.

The ghost of a British soldier from the War of 1812 has appeared, carrying a torch. Legend has it that he was killed on the White House grounds while trying to set the house afire. In 1954, a distraught couple visiting the White House told a valet that a ghost had tried to set their bed on fire all night long.

President Andrew Jackson (1829–37) haunts the Rose Room, also known as the Queen's Bedroom, with his raucous laughter. The source of the haunting seems to be the bed, which probably belonged to Jackson. He died in 1845 at his home, the Hermitage, in Nashville, Tennessee, but his ghost seemed fond of returning to the White

House. Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, said she could hear him stomping about and swearing. In modern times, a cold presence attributed to Jackson has been felt in the Rose Room.

Mary Lincoln also sensed other ghostly presences during her husband's tenure from 1861 to 1865. In the Yellow Oval Room, she heard a phantom violin playing and told others that it was the ghost of President Thomas Jefferson (1801–9), who liked to play his violin in that room.

During the Harry Truman presidency (1945–52), a guard heard a voice whisper, "I'm Mr. Burns, I'm Mr. Burns." The voice seemed to come from the attic over the Yellow Oval Room, though no one was up there. The voice was attributed to the ghost of David Burns, the man who had owned the land on which the White House stands—but who did not want to sell it to the government in 1790.

The lanky ghost of Abraham Lincoln has the strongest presence in the White House. Perhaps it is due to the tragedy of his assassination, which sent shock waves through the war-torn country, and to the moody president's own psychic nature. Lincoln haunts the Oval Office, where presidents conduct their official business, and his former bedroom, now known as the Lincoln Room. The ghost of his son Willie, who died at age four in the White House, also has been experienced. During Lincoln's presidency, seances were conducted at the White House, opening the door to a host of spirits.

Mary Surratt was executed as a conspirator in Lincoln's assassination. The night before her sentence was carried out, her daughter, Anna, forced her way to the front door of the White House, where she pleaded for her mother's life. Her ghost appears on the anniversary night to reenact the scene.

### FURTHER READING:

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**Wickland, Dr. Carl A. (1861–1945)** Dr. Carl A. Wickland, a physician, and his wife, Anna, a medium, were practitioners of persuasive EXORCISM of discarnate entities. Using mild electronic current, Wickland said he could force a possessing spirit to leave its victim, enter Anna's body, and then finally depart forever.

A native of Sweden, Wickland immigrated to the United States in 1881. He married Anna in 1896 and moved to Chicago to study medicine at Durham Medical College. Following his graduation in 1900, he worked in private practice before turning to psychiatry. He soon came to believe that spirits played an unrecognized role in psychiatric problems and illness, and began research into this uncharted area.

According to Wickland, the offending spirit often did not realize that its earthly form was dead. Wickland