

White House brides marry in opulence

Although the miracle of modern communication made it possible for a recent White House wedding to have the honour of the presence of the general public, the Cox-Nixon ceremony in the Rose Garden was not otherwise a first.

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue boasts an extensive record of nuptial ceremonies held there starting with John Adams and Mary Catherine Hellen.

John was the second son of President and Mrs. John Quincy Adams. Mary Catherine lived with the Adams family and managed to become romantically entangled with the bridegroom's two brothers, George and Charles, before she settled on John. He was the first and only president's son, so far, to be married in the White House.

Neither rejected suitor attended the nuptials which took place Feb. 25, 1828, in what is now the Oval Office. At that time the room was furnished in imported French furnishings.

In December of the year she was married, Mary Catherine gave birth to a daughter, who was the first female child born in the White House and the first to be christened there.

John Tyler was the first incumbent president to celebrate his own wedding in the White House. The actual ceremony took place in New York two years after the death of Tyler's first wife.

The second Mrs Tyler (Julia Gardner) was 23 at the time, considerably younger than the bridegroom. Her father was a former



When Nellie Grant married Algernon Sartoris in the White House she wore a gown which had \$4,000 worth of Brussels point lace sewn into it

New York state senator, who was killed in an explosion on the Presidential yacht.

Julia Tyler and the President gave their wedding reception in a flower-filled White House two days after the wedding and the bride began a career of being First Lady to rival Dolley Madison's. Mrs. Tyler was inclined to ostentation, wearing purple velvet gowns and tiaras at official functions while sitting on raised throne-like chairs with 12 maids of honor in attendance by her side.

It was she who made "Hail to the Chief" the official theme music for American presidents.

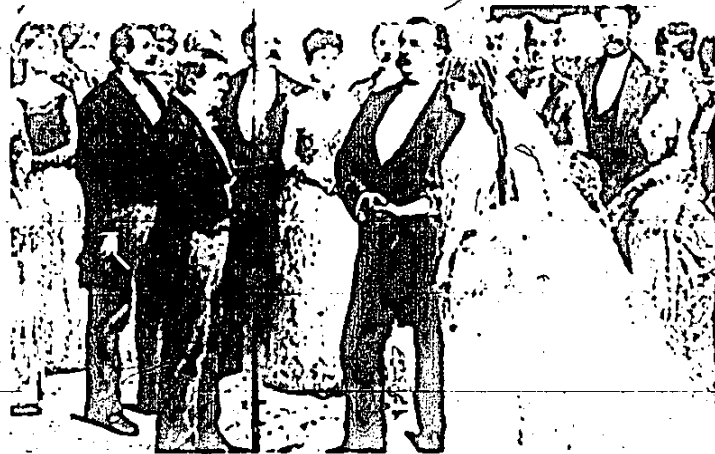
"Entertaining at the White House" published in 1967, reveals that a favorite dish at the Tyler's was wild duck. Their wedding breakfast consisted of roast canvasback garnished with currant jelly and fried hominy.

Forty years after the Tylers' left the Executive Mansion, bachelor Grover Cleveland took office there.

About a year later close friends and official families received handwritten notes from him which read in part:

"I am to be married on Wednesday evening—at seven o'clock in the White House to Miss Folsom...and I will be extremely gratified at your attendance."

It was four days before the wedding.



Grover Cleveland married his ward, Frances Folsom, June 2, 1885

Miss Frances Folsom was 21 and Mr. Cleveland's ward.

The bridegroom gave the occasion his complete and undivided supervision. He even planned the decorations—a profuse array of flowers, palms—and tropical grasses—and selected the music for the Marine Band to play.

In the Blue Room, floor-to-ceiling greenery hid the windows on the south side and below were tiers of plants accented by red geraniums and white lilies. One report of the event says: "The fireplace was filled with cefias and small pink flowers and on the mantel was a bed of red roses with the initials 'C-F' picked out in white. Above the door from the

main corridor were the words 'E Pluribus Unum' worked in blue immortelles on a deep red background."

The bridal couple came down the main stairway together, the bride wearing a Paris gown of ivory corded satin trimmed with orange blossoms.

After the ceremony the bridal supper was served and its menu was elegant but not extensive. The bride sipped mineral water while everyone else consumed champagne.

A far more elaborate wedding menu was served by the extravagant President, U.S. Grant, at the 1874 wedding of his and Mrs. Grant's only daughter Nellie. She

Continued on page 40, 41



The Marine Band played at Alice Roosevelt's wedding to Nicholas Longworth in 1906