

DRAFT FOR MRS. FORD'S INTRODUCTION TO THE  
SMITHSONIAN PRESIDENTIAL CHINA COLLECTION

The collection of Presidential porcelain in the China Room is one of the most fascinating historical collections in the White House. The different examples of Presidential porcelain dating from the pieces used by Martha and George Washington at Mount Vernon to the state service ordered by the White House during the Lyndon Johnson Administration in 1968 take us through almost 200 years of the history of this country demonstrating the changing artistic tastes of the times as well as our development as an independent nation.

I take great interest in the services used in the White House when the President and I entertain. We frequently choose porcelain which will not only complement the occasion but also give our guests an opportunity to see the historical collection of which we are so proud.

For large formal dinners, we use the Lyndon Johnson service which is the largest available service at the present time. For smaller dinners the service ordered for the White House during the Harry S. Truman Administration is one of our favorites. The elegant cobalt blues of the Benjamin Harrison, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt services also make them most appropriate for small formal occasions in the State Dining Room.



For our family dinners, we enjoy using different Presidential porcelain services. Our family favorite is the Rutherford B. Hayes service with all the realistic plant and animal designs. For separate courses and various occasions, we also like to use the Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Harrison and the Franklin D. Roosevelt services and the various dinner plates chosen by Mrs. Grover Cleveland at the end of the 19th century.

To live in the White House is to live surrounded by history. The collections of Presidential porcelain in the White House, the Smithsonian Institution and in other museums in the United States stand as a symbol and a reminder of the continuing history of the White House as well as of the lives of the Presidents and their families who have played such an important personal role in this Nation's history. I hope that this wonderful exhibition will not only encourage collectors to continue this important work but also that all Americans will enjoy this unique *view* of American and White House history during our Nation's Bicentennial *celebration* celebration.

Signed,

BETTY FORD

