

NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOG

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Renovating the White House



Removing Debris from the Renovation of the White House, 2/27/1950

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6982091>

Shortly after moving into the White House, President Harry S. Truman noticed the telltale signs of a building under serious physical stress. He frequently complained of drafts and unusual popping and creaking noises in the old house. Early in 1948, in response to the President's concerns, engineering reports confirmed that the White House was in a serious state. Burned to the exterior walls in 1814, further compromised by the successive additions of indoor plumbing, gas lighting, electric

wiring, heating ducts, and major modifications in 1902 and 1927, some said the White House was standing only from the force of habit. The decision was made to move the Trumans across the street into the Blair House for three years while the White House underwent a complete reconstruction within its original exterior walls.



[Browse photos](#) of during and after the renovation in the Catalog.

Interested in learning more about this White House renovation? If you are nearby Independence, Missouri, visit the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library's current temporary exhibit: "Saving the White House: Truman's Extreme Makeover."

Prefer a virtual experience? Learn more about the history of the White House, key people involved in the renovation, and find learning activities for students on the [exhibit website](#).

Citizen Archivist Mission: President Truman's White House Renovation



Abbie Rowe, a photographer for the National Park Service assigned to document the activities of the President, became the Official Photographer for the renovation of the White House during the Truman administration. We invite you to tag Rowe's photographs in the National Archives Catalog documenting the condition of the White House before, during, and after the renovation. A new series of documents related to the renovation have also recently been added to the Catalog. Help transcribe these records that include correspondence with and minutes of the Commission on Renovation of the Executive Mansion of the White House dealing with the removal of a cracked beam and mantels, and the sale of surplus materials from the renovation as souvenirs.

Start tagging and transcribing on our [Citizen Archivist Dashboard](#).

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White House Renovation, 1947-1952: The Blue Room



Tour

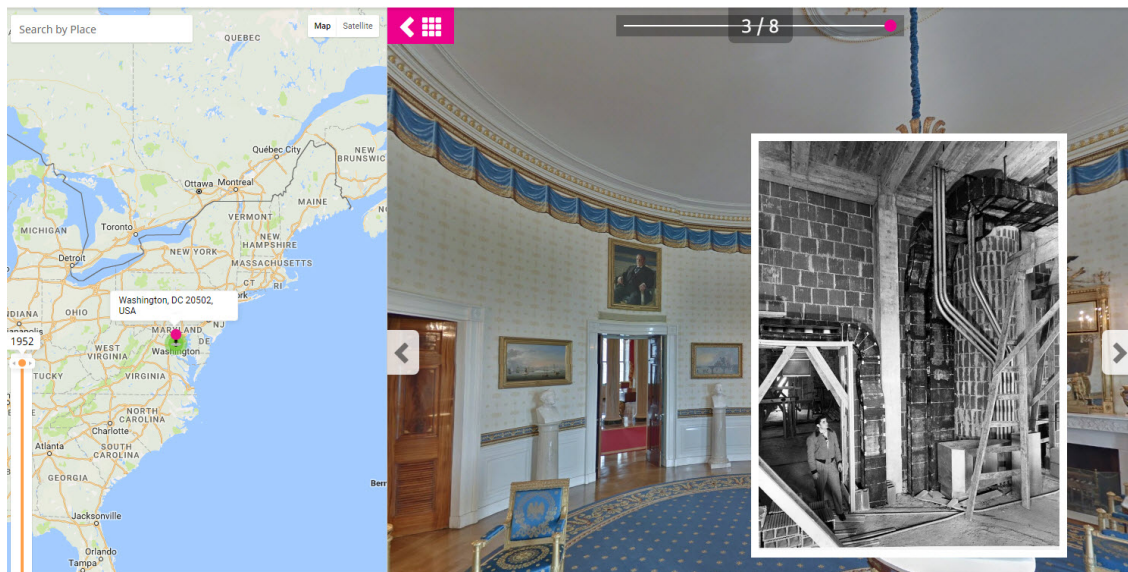
White House Renovation, 1947-1952: The Blue Room

You can also view interior White House Renovation tours of the Red and Blue Rooms on Historypin! With Historypin tours, you can view historical photos of

the renovation alongside modern interior views of the White House.

[White House Renovation, 1947-1952: The Red Room](#)

[White House Renovation, 1947-1952: The Blue Room](#)



View all of the [National Archives Tours on Historypin](#).

New in the Catalog

["Aircapes" of American and Foreign Areas, 1917 - 1964](#)

8,403 new descriptions were added to this series of aerial oblique, perpendicular, and some ground level photographs made or collected by the Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps, the Air Service, the Air Corps, the Army Air Forces, and/or the USAF, showing prominent geographic and terrain features, cities, buildings, national shrines, historic areas, parades, earthquakes and flood disaster areas, airfields, and ports in the U.S. and abroad.



We found this photograph of [Washington, DC](#) from April 23, 1931. In the lower left is the site of the demolished Center Market and the future home of the National Archives. Look closely on the far left, just below the airplanes to see the White House.

Would you like to look for photographs of your hometown or favorite place? From the [series description](#) we clicked on *Search Within this Series* button

Record Hierarchy

Record Group 18:
Records of the Army Air Forces,
ca. 1902 - 1964

Series:
"Airscares" of American and
Foreign Areas, 1917 - 1964

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"Airscares" of American and Foreign Areas, 1917 - 1964

▲ This Series contains records, some of which may not be available online.
To obtain a copy or view the records, please contact or visit the National Archives and Records Administration location(s) listed in the Contact information below.

Additional Information About this Series

National Archives Identifier:	512641
Local Identifier:	18-AA
Creator(s):	War Department, Army Air Forces, 6/20/1941-9/26/1947 (Most Recent)
From:	Record Group 18: Records of the Army Air Forces, ca. 1902 - 1964

Details

Level of Description:	Series
Type(s) of Archival Materials:	Photographs and other Graphic Materials
The creator compiled or maintained the series between:	1917 - 1964
Includes:	1633 file unit(s) described in the catalog 16 item(s) described in the catalog
Numbering Note:	For those photographs with which a corresponding negative was accessioned- Record Group, Series, Item Number in this case, the correct designation is 18-AN-item number. The negative number can usually be found in the lower right corner of the photograph, followed by the letters "AC" or "AS." EXAMPLE- 18-AN-17405. For those photographs for which no corresponding negative was accessioned- Record Group, series, notebook number, page number (and for pages with more than one photograph, letter designation). In this case, the correct designation is 18-AA-notebook number-page number. EXAMPLE- 18-AA-204-17. Use White Number On Spine for notebook number.

Then put the location in the search box on the top left.

The screenshot shows the National Archives Catalog search results for 'Washington D.C.'. The search bar at the top left contains 'Washington D.C.' with a red arrow pointing to it. The search results show 1-20 of 14,707 results in 0.59 seconds. A 'search within' popup is displayed, showing a series titled '"Airscares" of American and Foreign Areas, 1917 - 1964'. The popup includes a thumbnail of a document and text: 'Record Group: Records of the Army Air Forces', 'From RG: 18', 'Aerial oblique, perpendicular, and some ground level photographs made or collected by the Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps, the Air Service, the Air Corps, the Army Air Forces, and/or the USAF, showing prominent geographic and terra...', 'National Archives Identifier: 512841', 'Local Identifier: 18-AA', and 'Creator: War Department. Army Air Forces. 6/20/1941-9/26/1947'. The main search results list includes 'Downtown Cleveland, Ohio, in winter, from the air', 'Aerial view of San Antonio, Texas, and the surrounding plains', and 'Photograph of Keystone Bombardment Airplanes of the 2nd Bombardment Group Flying Over Washington, DC'.

Here's a [shortcut](#) to jump right into the "search within" page. Email us at catalog@nara.gov and let us know what you discover!

Questions or comments? Email us at catalog@nara.gov.



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