

Transcript

NARRATOR:

The most famous home in America has housed presidents and first families since its completion in 1800 when John and Abigail Adams moved in before the paint was even dry. Many have visited this place. Some have seen the inside on public tours. A few have attended an official gala with all its beauty and glitter. And even fewer get into the private quarters of the President and First Lady.

On that second floor is the most famous of White House rooms, the Lincoln Bedroom. Lincoln never slept in this room. On the contrary this room bustled with cabinet members and generals as Lincoln used it as his office.

And it was here in January, 1863, that Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Subsequent presidents continued to use the room as their office until 1902 when the West Wing was completed. But it would be decades later until Harry Truman had the idea of a bedroom dedicated to Lincoln.

LAURA BUSH:

When Truman re-did the house in the late 40s and 50s, he set up that room--the room we now call the Lincoln bedroom--to commemorate the fact that it was Lincoln's office, and that it was the room that he signed the Emancipation Proclamation in. So the room itself is really a shrine, I think, to American history.

NARRATOR:

The Lincoln Bedroom has undergone a variety of changes through the years. Different administrations presented it in different ways. But the first major renovation of the room was under the guidance of First Lady Laura Bush.

LAURA BUSH:

The carpet was over 50 years old. So I worked with the White House Historical Association, the preservation board, who are furniture curators, art historians, wallpaper specialists. We looked back at the wallpaper Lincoln had in his office, at the carpet he had in his office, and we did reproductions of those.

NARRATOR:

This historic room is also home to the Gettysburg Address. This is the only existing copy that is signed, dated, and titled by Lincoln. A historic document in a historic room in a historic house, The White House.

Video courtesy of C-SPAN.