





# HOMES AND LIBRARIES OF THE PRESIDENTS







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OF THE  
PRESIDENTS



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AN INTERPRETIVE GUIDE  
(THIRD EDITION, REVISED)

by

William G. Clotworthy

The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company  
Granville, Ohio



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**HOMES AND LIBRARIES OF THE PRESIDENTS: AN INTERPRETIVE GUIDE  
(THIRD EDITION, REVISED)**

A McDonald & Woodward Guide to the American Landscape

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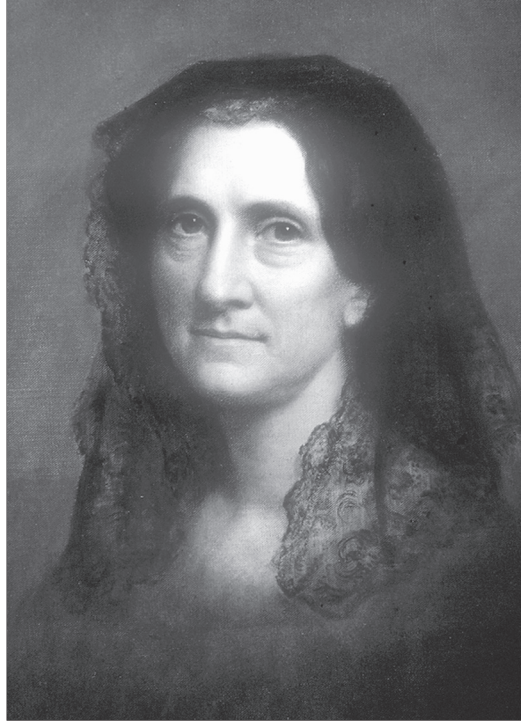
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Ann Pamela Cunningham  
(Photograph courtesy Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham (1816–1875), founder and first Regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. Her vision, tireless effort, and personal dedication inspired thousands of private citizens to organize and contribute to the purchase, restoration, renovation, and maintenance of homes and other places associated with America's great leaders, thereby preserving forever an important part of our national heritage.



## Preface

In 1991, I retired from NBC-TV after an exciting forty-two-year career in broadcasting and advertising, but I was unprepared for inactivity. I tried freelance writing and almost immediately sold two magazine articles based on my experiences in the television industry. At about the same time, mudslinging between two political candidates piqued my interest to the extent that I prepared an article on presidential campaign insults. That article did not sell, but while doing the research for it, I became interested in a slightly higher level of presidential history and compiled a little directory of presidents and sites that commemorate them. I proposed this piece of work to a number of history and travel publishers. The single positive reply came from McDonald & Woodward — but they were not interested in the directory. They wanted a real book! *That* was a daunting prospect. In high school and college, I'd had a passing interest in American history (that is to say, I was interested in *passing* American history), but I was hardly a serious student. I'd had trouble writing the second page of a book report and was now faced with the prospect of writing a volume of nearly four hundred pages.

But I began, not without trepidation, a venture that has since taken over much of my life. Early on, I found myself spending great amounts of time not only in the library, but also on the road — visiting the nearly one hundred sites that I described in the first edition of *Homes and Libraries of the Presidents*. That book, which emphasized the residences of presidents, museums devoted to specific presidents, and libraries that housed their official papers — the *crème de la crème* of presidential sites — was published in 1995. The list of presidential sites, however, kept expanding, and so did ideas about what to do with this list. Forging ahead with my newfound calling, I produced a second edition of *Homes and Libraries of the Presidents* (2003) and two other books on the subject.



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*Homes and Libraries of the Presidents*

*Presidential Sites: A Directory of Places associated with Presidents of the United States* (1998) is an annotated compilation of more than one thousand extant places that are related to our presidents. *In the Footsteps of George Washington: A Guide to Sites Commemorating Our First President* (2002) identifies and describes more than three hundred sites associated with that unique Virginian who figured so prominently in our transition from a collection of British colonies to a sovereign state.

Almost twenty years have passed since I started my quest to locate and experience the places that shaped, and that commemorate, our American presidents. We have elected two new presidents since then; additional homes, libraries, and museums of presidents have been opened to the public and significant changes have occurred at many of the older sites. In this third edition of *Homes and Libraries of the Presidents*, I have added several sites that have opened to the public since the second edition was published, including President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, DC; Theodore Roosevelt's cabin retreat, called Pine Knot, in Keene, Virginia; the Ronald Reagan Museum at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois; the Clinton House Museum in Fayetteville, Arkansas; and the George W. Bush Childhood Home in Midland, Texas. Of particular importance, however, are the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, and The Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas — both of which have opened to great acclaim during the past few years. Looking ahead, we note that the George W. Bush Presidential Library located at SMU in Dallas, Texas, is scheduled to open in 2013.

Additional changes have been made, or are being made, at other sites. In 2006, Mount Vernon dedicated the Ford Orientation Center and the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center that promise to add a new dimension to that already important historic facility by utilizing new technology to provide insight into the personal life of George Washington. James Madison's Montpelier undertook a dramatic historic restoration project by stripping away the additions and modifications made to Montpelier over several decades in order to present the mansion as it actually appeared during the Madison residency. President Wilson's Boyhood Home in Columbia, South Carolina, began, in 2006, a three-year restoration and improvement program. The Saxton McKinley House in Canton, Ohio, has been converted to the headquarters and showcase



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of the National First Ladies' Library which has opened a nearby Education Center featuring an online library of the first ladies who, in addition to their own histories, often have been particularly important if sometimes overlooked collaborators in American presidential history. Other facilities continue to upgrade their physical plants, add to their museum collections, and otherwise improve their ability to entertain and edify the visiting public.

In particular, new themes and new technologies are emerging in the interpretive programs at both older and newer sites as presidential history, and the presidency itself, assumes a more prominent role in popular culture. Contributing to this growing popular interest has been the increasing accessibility of recent presidents, especially Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush, and the increasing presence of presidential history and historians in the popular media. C-Span produced a marvelous series on presidential homes in which their cameras visited the sites and interviews were conducted with knowledgeable park rangers, curators, and others. The History Channel televised a number of biographical programs on the presidents and the public hunger for presidential history has resulted in the publication and success of major books by eminent historians. David McCullough's *Truman*, *John Adams*, and *1776* have become best sellers, as did *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Ulysses S. Grant, Lyndon B. Johnson, Ronald Reagan, Thomas Jefferson, and others continue to be fertile subjects for the biographer.

In my view, the most important change in the social fabric of our nation which partly piqued our interest in presidents is the internet. Abundant bits of useful, and sometimes not so useful, information are easily available online and this has led to increased interest in our nation's history and, thus, its presidents. There are many web sites devoted to presidents and each of the homes in this book has information available through a web site. Many sites also provide virtual tours online, enabling web site visitors to explore the interior of the home without leaving their own. Reading and absorbing the information on the web sites and in books enhances and deepens one's understanding of, and appreciation for, the forty-three men who have led our nation to its preeminence in the world — yet the experience of actually visiting one or more of the sites that commemorate these men cannot be equaled by the use of

internet resources and readers are urged to visit these sites in person. I know that I get a thrill each time I visit a presidential site and realize, for example, that I am in a log cabin birthplace of a man who became President of the United States; that I am standing where George Washington lived or fought or governed; that I am where Abraham Lincoln studied or where he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation; that I am admiring the place where Franklin Roosevelt grew to manhood or where he traveled to seek relief from the agony of polio. These are emotional feelings not available on the internet or television or found in a book. They are to be experienced and enjoyed only on the spot.

Another striking change over the past decade is the improvement in on-site and often hands-on educational programs for all age groups, programs that range from biographical displays to archeological and environmental studies. All of the National Park Service sites and most of the other major presidential facilities increasingly cooperate with local and regional schools and colleges to provide such programs.

Unchanged through all of this, however, is my respect for, and appreciation of, the forty-three distinguished Americans that this book honors and whose haunts and legacies I have been privileged to search out and explore. Likewise, I hope that this book may assist many of you to find and experience places that celebrate our American presidents.

During the period of time that I have studied presidential sites, I have had many wonderful experiences while visiting these locations. The host personnel, whether park rangers, museum curators, teenaged volunteers, or senior-citizen docents, are friendly, knowledgeable, and anxious to enhance every visitor's enjoyment of their facilities. Dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of presidential homes and related sites, these sometimes unrecognized and unappreciated legions are, in effect, protecting and perpetuating the legacies associated with the properties they maintain, study, and interpret. It has been my privilege to meet and benefit from these fine stewards of our history, and I thank and salute them.

My thanks also goes to those who have been of direct assistance in the preparation of this book — the publisher Jerry McDonald, whose vision and gentle (and sometimes not-so-gentle) prodding made the experience pleasurable and whose continued friendship is so important to me; Kathie Dickenson, editor of the first edition, and Judy Moore, editor

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of the second edition (the foundation upon which this third edition is based), whose valiant attempts to turn an organizer into a writer have almost succeeded; Karl Decker, the king of punctuation; and Tina Stoll, gallant interpreter of scribbles and scrawls, secretary *par excellence*.

Several individuals and organizations generously provided photographs for use in this book. The photograph of the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum on the front cover was provided by The Carter Center. The color plates, identified by plate number and location on the page, are used through the courtesy of, and are credited to, the following: 1 top: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association; 1 bottom: National Park Service; 2: Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Les Schofer, photographer; 3 top: Montpelier Foundation; 3 middle: Philip Beaurline, Ash Lawn-Highland; 3 bottom: Ladies' Hermitage Association; 4 top: New York State Department of Economic Development; 4 middle: Berkeley Plantation; 4 bottom: Bradley Olmar, Sherwood Forest; 5 top: James K. Polk Ancestral Home; 5 middle: Rix Jennings, Fillmore House Museum; 5 bottom: William G. Clotworthy; 6 top: James Buchanan Foundation; 6 middle: William G. Clotworthy; 6 bottom: Mordecai Historic Park; 7 top: National Park Service; 7 middle: Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center; 7 bottom: Ted Podolak, James A. Garfield National Historic Site; 8 top: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation; 8 middle: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; 8 bottom: President Benjamin Harrison House; 9 top: McKinley Memorial Library; 9 middle: National Park Service; 9 bottom: William Howard Taft National Historic Site; 10 top: Woodrow Wilson House Museum, National Trust for Historic Preservation; 10 middle: President Harding's Home; 10 bottom: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site; 11 top: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum; 11 bottom: Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission; 12 top: National Park Service; 12 bottom: Richard Frear, National Park Service; 13 top: National Park Service; 13 middle: Jerry N. McDonald; 13 bottom: Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum; 14 top: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum; 14 bottom: The Carter Center; 15 top: William G. Clotworthy; 15 bottom: Brian Blake, George Bush Presidential Library and Museum; 16 top: William J. Clinton Foundation; 16 bottom: George W. Bush Childhood Home. Credits for black-and-white images are given as parts of the captions for those images.

