

Tab 2

Movie Theater in East Colonnade



In July 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the White House cloakroom, located in the east colonnade, converted into a movie theater. From that time on, the White House has had no permanent coatroom, but every first family would probably agree that having a personal movie theater is better. In any case, the space still serves as the temporary coatroom.

As early as 1933, Roosevelt was receiving newsreel footage of important presidential activities. The president also was sent copies of films made by government agencies and, once the war began, many of the propaganda films. Family and friends have probably used the theater far more than the president, especially since the White House also has always had access to feature films.

Margaret Truman was delighted to learn that she could ask for a viewing of any Hollywood movie, new or old, at any time she desired. It is reported that she saw her favorite, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, sixteen times. Mamie Eisenhower, like many American women in the 1950s, enjoyed watching a movie on a Saturday afternoon. She was particularly fond of sharing the sixty-five-seat theater with her young grandchildren. Her husband, too, watched many movies there. Presidents Carter and Reagan normally waited until they were resting at Camp David to savor Hollywood's latest offerings. President Clinton's "favorite cultural activity," noted the *New York Times* on March 23, 1994, "seems to be showing movies at the White House."

