**Jacqueline Kennedy: Beyond Style**

**Updated April 2017**

**Hands-On Cart – Handbook updated April 2017**

Timing: 15-20-minute program repeats within a scheduled 60-90-minute block.

Location: JBK biographical Exhibit near the trompes l’oeil doors

Advertisement: Digital sign, Admission desk sign, museum gallery sign next to Egyptian statue will point people around the corner.

**Set-up Procedures**

1. Get the cart closet key from Locker #1
2. Pull the cart out of the closet.
3. Set up next to the Trompes L’oeil doors in the JBK exhibit.
4. Set the chairs out. Two rows works well.
5. If you pause or mute the video the code is 1917. Pressing PLAY re-starts the video. The whole video segment on that tv is less than 5 minutes long.

**Main Program Takeaway**

Your most important aim is to go “beyond the style.” Engage visitors with a more complete picture of Jacqueline Kennedy, what she did rather than how she looked.

**Pacing**

There are several pieces to work with in the exhibit and on the cart. Don’t try to cram too much in especially when you first start out. With visuals you need to give people time to look and absorb. Visitors can always read more about Mrs. Kennedy on their own and you can suggest they do that if you want to. See appendix for recommended books.

**Sequence Overview**

My Intro. You’ll figure out your own, but feel free to copy mine. Present the pillbox hat as a familiar object but something you are going to move beyond in your program. “No doubt when you hear the name Jacqueline Kennedy you probably think of her style more than anything, -- brightly colored dresses and suits, elegant evening gowns, and of course, the pillbox hat. But there is more to her than fashion. This exhibit aims to tell a more expansive story that looks beneath the pillbox hat to her projects as First Lady. You may be surprised by what you discover!”

Then move to some biographical details using the exhibit and any photographs from the green book as visual aids. It’s a good way to establish rapport with visitors and integrate the surrounding exhibit.

Explain how the White House Restoration project came to be her main focus. Visited as a child, disappointed in lack of historical items or a souvenir guidebook. She told Life Magazine in 1962: “The minute I found out Jack was running for president, I knew the White House would be one of my main projects if he won.” [*Life* magazine is in the drawer.]

Point out some interesting aspects of the process: the treasure hunt for lost items, finding things in odd places, the Antiques Roadshow aspect of people sending in things that unfortunately had little historical value and had to be sent back, how involved Mrs. Kennedy was in the process, not overseeing from afar but really going through boxes and cataloging things. (Use before and after photos, her notes to the curator, photo of her going through boxes.)

Then move to the two ways she shared her project with the American people : the guidebook and the tour. You can make brief mention of these if you’re running out of time. On the cart you have the 1962 copy of the guidebook and telegrams television viewers sent in. People are usually willing to read these telegrams out loud. They are short and some are humorous so that will add some levity to the program.

Oleg Cassini sent in a telegram about the tour. You can use this telegram to transition to the “symbolic clothing” segment.

Use the Nobel clothing piece to transition to the conclusion which highlights her legacy (see more details in the points below.)

**Objects on the Cart – more coming in May 2017**

**Early Life**

Born in 1929 in Southampton, New York.

One sister, Lee.

Parents divorced when she was 11 and her mother remarried two years later which gave her 3 stepsiblings.

Wealthy family (like her future husband) which gave her opportunities to pursue hobbies such as horseback riding, ballet and French lessons.

Liked to ride horses all her life. Accomplished equestrienne even as a child. Photo: **Jacqueline and father (exhibit)**

When she was young she developed a talent for drawing, painting and writing poems. **Scrapbook**  She loved to read and became interested in history at a young age.

 **Scrapbook (the book will be on the cart starting May 2017)**

Jacqueline Bouvier met John F. Kennedy while they were both living in DC. She was working as a photographer for a Washington newspaper and he was a Congressman. They met at a dinner party. **Photo booth photograph while dating (green binder)**

At 11 years old she visited the White House and was disappointed in what she saw.

Not much history, nothing that belonged to previous presidents.

**The White House Restoration**

When Mrs. Kennedy visited the White House as a young girl in 1940, she was disappointed in the lack of historical furnishings or a guidebook to take home. Indeed few original furnishings were left in the White House when Jacqueline visited during the Franklin Roosevelt administration. Over the years to save money, first families often sold or auctioned off furnishings belonging to previous presidents that were outmoded or worn out.

When John F. Kennedy was elected president Jacqueline knew what she wanted to do which was restore the white house to reflect its long history of presidents who lived there.

Congress passed a law making the White House a national museum.

She hired a curator.

She organized a treasure hunt for items that belonged to previous presidents.

She spent the most time and energy on the state rooms – **White House Poster**

Searched through White House storage – **photographs** **opening boxes**

Solicited donations.

Mrs. Kennedy was not a hands-off manager of the project. She dug through boxes, did meticulous research, and made sure she was following museum standards. **Hand-written cataloging notes**

Found some things in odd places!

 Hand out the blue room cardboard pieces. On the back, each piece notes where the furniture or antique was found. *Docent: Would anybody like to tell us what’s on your card and where it was found?*

**2 Ways Mrs. Kennedy shared her work with the American people:**

**Guidebook and Tour**

Show the guidebook first because you will use a telegram about the tour to transition to the next section.

**1962 guidebook**

Text written mostly by Mrs. Kennedy.

Photographs by National Geographic

Cost $1 and proceeds went to the WH Restoration project

**2011 and 2017 guidebooks**, most recent edition (as needed)

**The Tour**

CBS tour with Jacqueline Kennedy and Charles Collingwood. President Kennedy appears at the end. Tour is available on youtube. Includes a lot of White House history.

February 14, 1962

Took 3 days to film

Over 50 million people tuned in.

No cue cards

Meticulous research and corrections for CBS (**optional : hand-written tour notes**)

Very positive response from the public.

**Telegrams**

Hand out a few **telegrams**. [Hand out Oleg Cassini’s last.] Would anyone like to read their telegram? People generally will read the telegrams out loud, but as always go with the group’s dynamic.

Oleg Cassini’s telegram reads: “Your performance last night absolutely first rate. The only logical destination for you is Hollywood. You looked more beautiful than any star. Congratulations. Oleg [Cassini]

**Symbolic Clothing**

Oleg Cassini was the main designer for what Jacqueline Kennedy called her “state clothes.” He and she realized that in public appearances clothing was a symbol that could reference an event in the case of state dinners or the culture of a particular country when she was traveling as First Lady

India

Silk dress recognizes Indian economy – Apricot dress in the box.

Bright, shiny material – easily seen in a crowd. Photograph of New Dehli, India Airport

*Docent: Kids and adults, Where’s Mrs. Kennedy?*

 Pass the fabric piece. [not the color but it is the same fabric as the original apricot dress.]

*Docent:* *Would you like to wear this fabric in hot weather?* She had to wear thicker jacket–like material because it would keep its shape in the summer humidity. Shiny fabrics and bright colors made it easy to spot her in a crowd.

**Nobel Prizewinners of the Western Hemisphere Dinner**

**Photographs in the green binder**

Resembles a Greek caryatid from the Parthenon.

Caryatid statue people can touch starting May 2017.

Chose silk jersey fabric that drapes and hangs in a “column” shape.

Pass the silk jersey fabric piece.

[Nobel is a good transition to the legacy points in the conclusion. The guests at the Nobel dinner included scientists, authors, academics. Mrs. Kennedy turned the White House into a national stage for American culture.

**Suggestion Conclusion Points/Legacy**

The White House restoration project continued after 1963. The historic preservation movement gained more momentum after her efforts to restore Lafayette Square, (18-th century buildings in Washington, DC). In 1966 the Historic Preservation Act was passed.

Later Jacqueline Kennedy joined the campaign to save Grand Central Station in New York. The White House is still a museum with a permanent collection thanks to her efforts. **Next time you hear someone talk about her as a style icon you’ll know there’s more to her than just her style.** Thank you. Happy to answer questions.

**Appendix:**

***You won’t use all this information necessarily.***

***This is just for reference.***

Includes:

Questions and Answers – a few to start. I will add more and share as they come up.

History of the White House

Notes from the original WHR gallery talk

Questions and Answers

Are there any good biographies of Mrs. Kennedy?

Here are a few suggestions that the Education department uses.

* Jacqueline Kennedy The White House Years by Mary Rensselaer Thayer. Written while she was alive. Mrs. Kennedy reviewed drafts of this book and made comments.
* As We Remember Her by Carlos Sferrazza Anthony.
* Jacqueline Kennedy: Historic Conversations on Life with John F. Kennedy, a taped oral history from 1964 published in 2012 as a book and cds.
* Jfklibrary.org has information as well.

How many dresses do you have?

133 items in JFK Library storage - this includes hats, coats, dresses, day suits.

Where is the pink dress Mrs. Kennedy wore in Dallas on November 22, 1963?

It is in storage in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Where did she go to school?

Holton-Arms School (1942-1944); Miss Porter's School (1944-1947); Vassar College (1947-1949); University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne (Smith College Study Abroad Program, 1949-1950); George Washington University (1950-1951), B.A. in French literature.

When did these events happen?

Janet and Jack Bouvier divorced: 1940 (11 years old)

Janet married Hugh Auchincloss: 1942 (13 years old)

Met John F. Kennedy : 1952 (Age 23. He was 35. They were 12 years apart.)

Married John F. Kennedy: 1953

Caroline was born: 1957

John, Jr. was born: 1961

Patrick was born: 1963

Married Aristotle Onassis: 1968

Started working in publishing: Viking, 1975-1978; Doubleday-Random House, 1975-1994.

Died in 1994 at the age of 64 in New York City. Buried in Arlington Cemetery beside John F. Kennedy.

Where did Mrs. Kennedy live after 1963?

An apartment in New York City with her children.

Which publisher did she work for?

Viking, 1975-1978; Doubleday-Random House, 1975-1994.

How tall was she?

5’7”

What was her dress size?

Vintage size 6.

Didn’t Mrs. Kennedy wear French clothes?

She did not, with one exception. She wore a Givenchy dress to a state dinner while on a state visit to Paris with President Kennedy in 1961. Oleg Cassini was her primary designer. He was born in France but became an American citizen long before he met Jacqueline Kennedy. He would often alter a French design in effect making it an American design.

Why was her father’s nickname “Black Jack Bouvier”?

Because he had black hair.

Are the first families allowed to change the rooms?

Yes, each family can change the rooms. Many have added pieces that belonged to previous presidents in accordance with Mrs. Kennedy’s goals. What stays in place is the White House museum collection. Thus if items are not out in the public or private rooms, they are in storage, catalogued, loaned at times, and preserved just like a museum collection.

Do presidents get to keep state gifts?

No, state gifts can be enjoyed by the president and his family while in office, and then they become part of the presidential library collection. Sometimes presidents borrow from their own collections. For example, Mrs. Kennedy kept a Buddha head in her apartment in New York, but she borrowed it on an extended loan from the Library.

Was Mrs. Kennedy nervous during the televised tour? Her voice sounds strange.

Our curator explains that Mrs. Kennedy was nervous whenever she had to go in front of a camera. The hour-long tour took three days to film and she was trying to remember many small details. Thus she may sound nervous in the video.

Did she use a script?

According to the film’s director, she and Charles Collingwood, the interviewer, planned out what they were going to say and how they would move around the rooms. She did not use cue cards. She had done meticulous research on the White House and the items she acquired, and was able to share her knowledge without prompts.

Did other first ladies attempt to restore the White House?

Yes, though several other first ladies had plans to restore the White House and bring back some furnishings, money was always an issue. Mrs. Kennedy made more progress because she formed a committee to seek out donors of furnishings and money to purchase prized items.

Connections to Our Exhibits (docent reference)

• One of the first finds was the Resolute Desk

* Found in the old broadcast room. She had it refurbished and put in the Oval Office.

• Monroe Pitcher (White House restoration exhibit) was in the Blue Room. It is on loan from the White House.

• President Van Buren’s grandson’s chest is in the WHR exhibit.

• The guidebook researched and written by Mrs. Kennedy

• White House tour video in museum, in the store and on youtube.

**A Short History of the White House – Docent background only**

The White House has been through several changes over the years.

1792-- George Washington approved the original design of the White House by architect James Hoban. Construction was slow and Washington didn’t live to see its completion. John and Abigail Adams were the first occupants.

1814 -- The British burned the White House in 1814 during the War of 1812. Dolley Madison saved the portrait of Washington by Gilbert Stuart which has hung in the East Room since 1800. During the fire much of the interior architecture and furnishings were destroyed.

1817-- After the fire, President James Monroe took on the task of refurnishing the White House. The Empire style was popular at the time and he ordered several items from France in this style for the White House.

1902 -- Theodore Roosevelt hired the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White to restore the mansion to the federal style. (Boston connection: the same firm designed the Boston Public Library.)

1949 -- After adding a controversial balcony (because it broke up the architectural unity between the first and second floor) Harry Truman noticed the floor in his study was shaking. Engineers discovered the White House interior structure was unsound and gutted the interior. The exterior walls were largely untouched and were held up with steel beams. It would have been much easier to raze the whole house! It was said the White House was still standing only from force of habit. With funds for other improvements running low, the Trumans filled the White House with department store furniture.

1961 – The Kennedys moved in and were disappointed by the lack of original furnishings and belongings. Mrs. Kennedy began to restore the White House.

When Jacqueline Kennedy moved into the White House it was full of department store furniture and contained very little belonging to past presidents. She made it her goal to restore the White House, not to redecorate it, but to collect furnishings and antiques that belonged to previous presidents or were representative of their time periods. The documents show that Mrs. Kennedy was organized and methodical in her approach to acquisitions and their placement in the rooms. She balanced historical research, interior design ideas, and the styles of the different periods to make the White House what she believed it should be -- a place where everyone from tourists to foreign dignitaries could see the best of America. Thanks to Mrs. Kennedy’s efforts, the White House collection remains a national monument with a permanent museum collection.

When Mrs. Kennedy visited the White House as a young girl, she was disappointed in the lack of historical furnishings or a guidebook to take home. Indeed few original furnishings were left in the White House when Mrs. Kennedy visited as a girl in 1940 during the Franklin Roosevelt administration. Over the years to save money, first families often sold or auctioned off furnishings belonging to previous presidents that were outmoded or worn out.

Twenty years later she knew her work was cut out for her: “The minute I found out Jack was running for president, I knew the White House would be one of my main projects if he won.” *Life* magazine, 1962.

**Goals**

* The goal was not merely to “re-decorate.” Mrs. Kennedy disapproved of that word. “The White House must be restored, and that has nothing to do with decoration. That is a question of scholarship,” *Life* interview, 1962.

* She felt the restoration should reflect the whole history of the presidency as represented by furnishings both historically appropriate and of museum quality.
* Everyone from tourists to foreign dignitaries should be able to visit the White House and see the best examples of American history and culture.

**Process**

* 1961 – Mrs. Kennedy lobbied for and Congress passed a law declaring the White House a national monument. This bill preserved the White House collection and secured its status as a museum. This law still exists today.
* Mrs. Kennedy formed a Fine Arts Committee to help her run the project and asked leading expert in American decorative arts, Henry DuPont, to lead it.
* Mrs. Kennedy and the Committee sent out letters requesting donations for items she had her eye on.
* Unsolicited donations came from everywhere as well. Chairs, old washstands, rugs, quilts, a spittoon that supposedly belonged to Andrew Jackson, which it did. Three basement storerooms were designated to process all the donations.
* Photograph: Curator’s office
* Over 95% of these items had to be politely declined because they were “inappropriate” for the White House or duplicates of already accepted things.
* Furnishings, wallpaper, fabrics, and objects were:
  + Sometimes found in the White House collection and brought out of storage – Mrs. Kennedy and her staff dug through the storage and the archives to match names and dates.
  + Often donated
  + Sometimes reproduced as copies of the original
* Funding for the project came from private donors and later from the sale of the White House guidebook.
* Map of where donated items came from the first year of the project.

**Blue Room: One Story**

We can examine the before and after photographs of the Blue Room to understand the treasure hunt involved in restoring the White House. **FOR YOUNG VISITORS OR ANYBODY**: After identifying the before and after pictures, “What differences do you see between the before and after photographs?”

Mrs. Kennedy studied old engravings of the Blue Room and restored it to the arrangement under President James Monroe, including several pieces of his original belongings.

* Her favorite of all the restored rooms. Often presided at state dinners in this room while President Kennedy sat in the State Dining Room.
* Found in the house :
  + Monroe’s Pier Table. A table with “pier glass” (essentially a mirror) beneath it. Women would adjust their petticoats in the mirror. Mrs. Kennedy found it in White House storage.
  + Monroe’s George Washington bust: found in the men’s restroom downstairs. Mrs. Kennedy put it on the pier table where Monroe had it. She knew this from old engravings she studied.
  + Monroe’s original clock and several candelabras
* Acquired: 1 Monroe chair. Original chair from Monroe’s set was donated by Catherine Bohlen of Villanova, PA. (featured in the White House tour video.) She saw a story in the paper about the pier table and realized her chair went with it. To date, 7 pieces from the original 53 Monroe pieces have been acquired.
* Request denied: 1 armchair was on display in at the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington D.C. The museum refused to donate or loan the chair to the White House because the museum wanted the historical piece for their own collection.
* Reproductions donated: With the museum’s refusal, the Fine Arts Committee decided to reproduce the remaining chairs in President Monroe’s set. Charles Francis Adams, Fine Arts Committee member and descendant of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, underwrote the seven reproduction chairs. With his contribution, the furniture matched what Monroe had.
* A portrait gallery of the first seven presidents was added with portraits from life and copies of portraits from life: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, and Andrew Jackson.

**Green Room** **Option**

OR you can hand out the green room pieces. You probably don’t have time for all the rooms unless it’s a slow day or people are really clamoring for more. On the back, each piece lists the historical connection.



***Kids like to find their item in the photograph.***

Green Room:

Benjamin Franklin: only painting of him which he posed for.

Angelica van Buren (~~niece~~ daughter-in-law of Martin van Buren and hostess because he was a widower.)

John James Audubon, American naturalist and painter

Niagra Falls

**Red Room Option**

The Red Room is an Empire style parlor or living room.

The furniture was all donated by the Fine Arts Committee***.***

Napoleonic Empire style that dominates much of the White House. The Empire style was popular during Napoleon’s reign in the early 19th century and was adopted by the European courts. Empire is characterized by geometric shapes based in Greek, Roman and Egyptian forms. Typical motifs include acanthus foliage, imperial eagles, wreaths, urns, stars and classical figures. President Monroe chose this style for many of the rooms when he restored the White House after the 1814 burning by the British. ***Kids can look for Empire symbols in the furniture.***

**Mantel in the State Dining Room Option**

During the 1902 renovation, President Theodore Roosevelt greatly enlarged the State Dining Room. He mounted a large moose head above the fireplace, and placed other game trophies on the natural oak panels. In 1909, Roosevelt ordered the carvings on the main stone mantel to be changed from lions to North American bison heads.

In 1945 President Franklin Roosevelt ordered an inscription for the mantel. President John Adams wrote these lines having just moved into the White House while Abigail Adams prepared for the family to move from Quincy, MA. November 2, 1800, Adams wrote, “I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House, and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.”

In 1962, the Kennedys had a replica of the 1902 mantel, complete with bison heads and the Adams' quote, installed in the State Dining Room and painted the walls ivory white. [Locals will appreciate that the architecture firm that designed the Boston Public Library, McKim, Mead and White, created the replica.] The day of the installation, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, President Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter, was present (see photograph in binder).

**Some references used in putting together the program**

West, J.B. *Upstairs at the White House* (author was the WH usher for many years). Coming to the docent library.

JB West, Oral history. Search by his name.

William Voss Elder III, White House Registrar 1961-1963, Curator 1962, Oral History in JFK Library. Search by his name.

Thayer, Mary van Rensselaer Thayer. *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years*, 1967. (Jacqueline Kennedy gave notes for and read drafts of the book.)

-*Designing Camelot*, Abbot and Rice.

-*The White House: An Historic Guide*. White House Historical Association.

-February 2012 Forum with William Allman, WH Curator, streaming on youtube.

-White House Historical Association website has tours of all the rooms through history, and lots of other helpful essays. <http://www.whha.org/whha_tours/whitehouse_tour/00.html>

Follow WH Historical Association on facebook.

Celebrating 50 years of the White House Historical Association, http://www.whha.org/whha\_anniversary/timeline.html