

## This Day in History... October 13, 1792

# White House Cornerstone Laid

On October 13, 1792, the cornerstone of the White House was laid, though its exact location remains a mystery today.

President George Washington announced in January 1791, that the location of America's capital would be located where the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers met, with land provided by Virginia and Maryland. The capital city, which became known as the District of Columbia, was designed by Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who helped President Washington select the site for the executive mansion.



*John Adams was the first president to occupy the mansion in 1800.*



*The White House has 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, and six levels.*

Though L'Enfant had a vision for the presidential residence, a competition was held to find a design. Among the nine people that submitted a proposal was Thomas Jefferson, who did so anonymously. President Washington was dissatisfied with the designs and wanted another option. That's when James Hoban, an Irish-born architect entered the picture. According to some accounts, while visiting South Carolina, Washington saw the Charleston County Courthouse designed by James Hoban. Washington requested to meet Hoban and invited him to join the competition. Hoban based his design on the Leinster House, a palace in Dublin, Ireland. When the time came to make a decision on July 16, 1792, Washington selected Hoban's design, but asked that the building be enlarged with more ornamentation.

The cornerstone of the building was laid on October 13, 1792. Some accounts claim Washington was present, while others claim he was in Philadelphia at the time. According to tradition, the cornerstone was laid by Hoban and a group of freemasons. The freemasons normally placed their cornerstones



*After the White House was destroyed during the War of 1812, architect James Hoban oversaw its reconstruction.*



*President Monroe originally named it the Executive Mansion, in 1818. Later, it was called the President's Mansion, the President's Home, and the President's Palace. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt gave the current title: the White House.*

in the northeast corner, however a letter was later discovered that claimed the stone had been laid in the southwest corner.

During later renovations of the White House, attempts were made to locate the cornerstone. Since it had a metal plate on it, engineers used a mine detector that provided the strongest readings in the southwest corner. While other attempts at searching within the walls have also pointed at the southwest corner, no one knows for sure. And no president has yet agreed to destroy parts of the wall to find out.

## This Day in History... October 13, 1792

# White House Cornerstone Laid

On October 13, 1792, the cornerstone of the White House was laid, though its exact location remains a mystery today.

President George Washington announced in January 1791, that the location of America's capital would be located where the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers met, with land provided by Virginia and Maryland. The capital city, which became known as the District of Columbia, was designed by Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who helped President Washington select the site for the executive mansion.



*John Adams was the first president to occupy the mansion in 1800.*



*The White House has 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, and six levels.*

Though L'Enfant had a vision for the presidential residence, a competition was held to find a design. Among the nine people that submitted a proposal was Thomas Jefferson, who did so anonymously. President Washington was dissatisfied with the designs and wanted another option. That's when James Hoban, an Irish-born architect entered the picture. According to some accounts, while visiting South Carolina, Washington saw the Charleston County Courthouse designed by James Hoban. Washington requested to meet Hoban and invited him to join the competition. Hoban based his design on the Leinster House, a palace in Dublin, Ireland. When the time came to make a decision on July 16, 1792, Washington selected Hoban's design, but asked that the building be enlarged with more ornamentation.

The cornerstone of the building was laid on October 13, 1792. Some accounts claim Washington was present, while others claim he was in Philadelphia at the time. According to tradition, the cornerstone was laid by Hoban and a group of freemasons. The freemasons normally placed their cornerstones



*After the White House was destroyed during the War of 1812, architect James Hoban oversaw its reconstruction.*



*President Monroe originally named it the Executive Mansion, in 1818. Later, it was called the President's Mansion, the President's Home, and the President's Palace. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt gave the current title: the White House.*

in the northeast corner, however a letter was later discovered that claimed the stone had been laid in the southwest corner.

During later renovations of the White House, attempts were made to locate the cornerstone. Since it had a metal plate on it, engineers used a mine detector that provided the strongest readings in the southwest corner. While other attempts at searching within the walls have also pointed at the southwest corner, no one knows for sure. And no president has yet agreed to destroy parts of the wall to find out.