

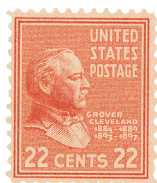
## This Day in History... June 2, 1886

# Only Presidential White House Wedding

On June 2, 1886, President Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom in the White House, making him the only US president to be married in the executive mansion.

Grover Cleveland was the second US president to begin his administration as a bachelor (James Buchanan was the first). However, he would become the only one to begin his term single and end it married. For the first fourteen months of his term, his sister Rose Elizabeth served as the official White House hostess.

Described as a private and somewhat abrasive man, President Grover Cleveland was a 49-year-old bachelor when he entered the White House. Mothers around the nation sought to introduce their daughters to the president. He had other plans though, and would respond to questions about his marriage plans with, "I'm waiting for my wife to grow up."



*Cleveland stamp from the 1938 Prexies*

The young woman he was waiting for was Frances Folsom, the daughter of his former law partner. She was 27 years his junior. When young Frances's father died, Cleveland administered his estate and became her guardian. Cleveland's intentions at that point were entirely innocent and fatherly, but as she reached adulthood, both developed romantic feelings. However, Cleveland was skilled at fooling the press, so for some time, they thought he was planning to marry Frances's mother, Emma.

President Cleveland then shocked the nation on May 28, 1886, when he announced that he would marry Frances at the White House within the week. Reporters soon followed Frances everywhere as she made wedding arrangements, and newspapers were filled with the smallest details about the nuptials.

On June 2, 1886, Grover Cleveland and Frances Folsom were married in the White House Blue Room, becoming the only president and first lady to wed in the Executive Mansion. Family, close friends, Cabinet members, and their wives were seated among an abundance of flowers. Crowds thronged the streets around the White House, John Philip Sousa led the Marine Band, church bells pealed across the nation's capital, and ships blew their horns in celebration. The president and his first lady then honeymooned in a private cabin at Deer Park Lodge, Maryland.



*There have been 18 White House weddings to date.*

At 21 years old, Frances became the youngest wife of a sitting president. Although Cleveland had hoped to shield his young wife from the public, Frances became an overnight celebrity. She decided to use her fame to call attention to causes that she supported. On Saturday mornings, she hosted receptions for women who were unable to visit the White House on weekdays because of their work schedule. Frances also supported young female musicians who struggled for employment in the male-dominated field, helped found the Washington Home for Friendless Colored Girls, and sponsored a young woman studying to become a violinist.

The Clevelands had five children together – including the first baby of a sitting president born in the White House (during Cleveland's second term).

### A Little More About White House Weddings

While Cleveland was the only president married in the White House, to date there have been 18 documented weddings held at the executive mansions. Nine have been the children of presidents, three were the niece or nephew of a president or first lady, as well as two siblings, two staffers, and the daughter of a friend. Some of these occasions, particularly the weddings of presidential children, are called "America's 'royal' weddings." Woodrow Wilson was married while he was president, but the ceremony was held elsewhere.



*From the Series of 1926-31, which are considered some of America's most perfect postage stamps.*



*This stamp was also issued as part of the Prexies series.*



*Wilson was married during his presidency, but the ceremony wasn't held at the White House.*

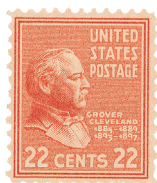
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