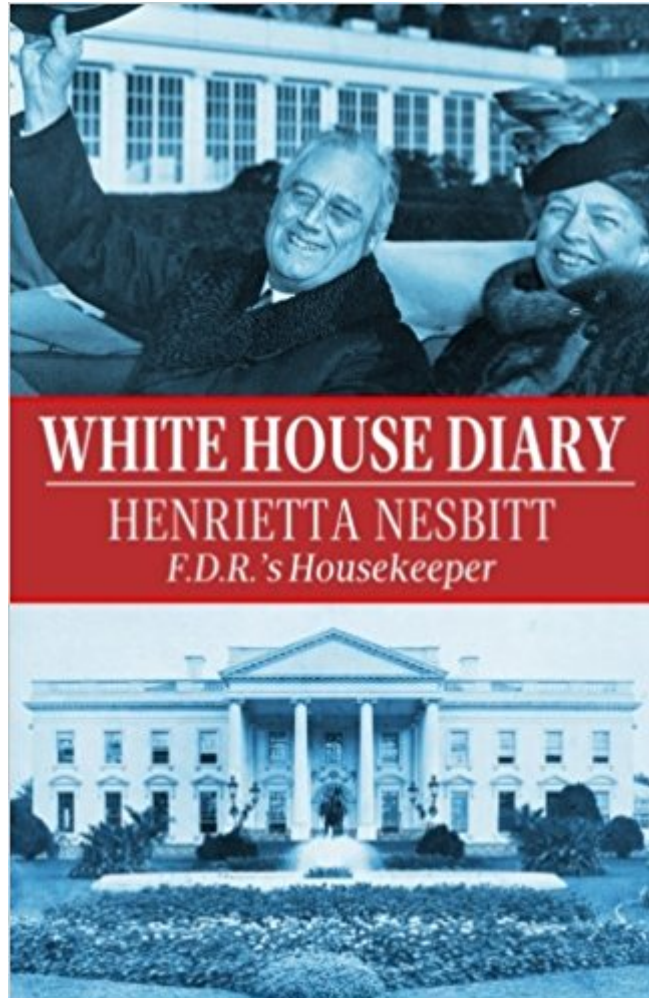


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White House Diary: F.D.R.'s Housekeeper



Synopsis

White House Diary, first published in 1948, is the entertaining account of Henrietta Nesbitt â€” FDR's Housekeeper â€” during the historical times of Franklin Roosevelt's long presidency. Nesbitt, a neighbor of the Roosevelts in Hyde Park, New York, went with the President to the White House and served an important role in the family and social life of the White House for 11 years. Nesbitt was responsible for thousands of meals during her tenure (including her struggles to comply with war-time rationing); at the same time, the President's mansion was in a state of disrepair, and Nesbitt oversaw the installation of a new kitchen, replacement of draperies and rugs, and continual battles against mice, moths, ants, and other pests. Nesbitt also provides insights into the character of the Roosevelts and of some of the many VIPs who visited the White House.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fascinating and entertaining read. Not so much a daily diary as a recollection of her White House years. I've always wondered about the much-maligned "old lady Nesbitt." And here she is...telling her side of the legend. Very much the small-town country baker-turned-housekeeper. Written as though you were in her kitchen, eating a slice of pie, taking a forkful as she describes how to make the ideal crust, and taking a sip of strong black coffee, "made with a pinch of salt." Eleanor Roosevelt had no interest in food, and turned such matters completely over to Mrs. Nesbitt, who used that trust to do things her own way, whether FDR liked it or not. You can feel her sense of panic when she was told "by the way, we're having 3000 today for a reception." I welcomed the

chance to hear her side of story, and I grew to like her. She was a woman completely out of her own element, but acquired the self-confidence to rise to the occasion. In terms of historic White House memoirs, Henrietta Nesbitt's is in the same league with J.B. West's and Ike Hoover's. I only wish it was available in hardback, as my repeating readings of this paperback version will be tough on the binding. If you love behind-the-scenes White House history, you won't be disappointed with this one.

I must say I really enjoyed this book. I love history anyway & this was a good read on one woman's journey to the White House. I enjoyed the menus and food preparation for visitors and I don't understand why some people call these bland meals. To me, they are some of America's best food. Mrs. Nesbitt also gave me a better understanding of the first lady. Seems she was an intelligent caring human being.

I got this book at a used book sale several years ago for about 50 cents, I enjoyed it very much. Mrs. Nesbitt writes about all the little things that happened in the White House when FDR was president. She was the Housekeeper and had charge of menu's also, she did a pretty good job in spite of having to juggle ration stamps. Trying to make delicious meals for important guests in the White House during the war was not an easy job! Also trying to keep FDR happy about what was served was difficult, he really enjoyed a good meal and had his favorites (frog legs for one). Eleanor did not care too much about food and would eat just about anything put in front of her. There are lots of interesting tidbits about the Roosevelt family in this book that were enlightening, a fun book, I loved it.

Not an exciting read, but not too bad. More of a woman's book as it is all about food and kitchen problems. Amazing how guests just dropped in and stayed and stayed and many were very demanding and rude. Why did the pres. and wife put up with it???

It kept my interest, a fun book to read. A good insight into the everyday life of living in the White House. I may even try some of the recipes. I would recommend this to anyone interested in the Roosevelts and their time in the White House.

If you like information about the private life of the Presidents and their families, you will enjoy this book. Some of the recipes Mrs. Nesbitt includes would be difficult to make today because the

ingredients are different from what we use these days. I enjoyed the book, especially because I downloaded it for FREE on the Nook. I don't know why it is not available for free download on the Kindle. The only part I missed reading was why Mrs. Nesbitt left the White House during the Truman years. She kind of glossed over that. Chief Usher J.B. West in his White House memoir describes a number of minor confrontations between the Trumans and Mrs. Nesbitt over the menus with a final culmination over a stick of butter Bess wanted to take to her ladies meeting. Mrs. Nesbitt conveniently leaves that part out of her White House Diary. As J.B. West said, those who can accept a new family on the second floor of the White House will usually work out for many years. Staff who are overly loyal to one family will not. Mrs. Nesbitt was a Roosevelt partisan, but I enjoyed the book nonetheless and reading it for free was even better!

A lot of typos. Poor editing - more than once the author refers to FDR as the 33rd president. Makes the authenticity doubtful. Seems to be written in two voices, one folksy, the other more reortive. Overall a disappointment.

Loved this book. I had always read negative things about Mrs. Nesbitt, but apparently, she was doing her job as Mrs. Roosevelt wanted her to do it while having to deal with the Great Depression and wartime rationing points. Who knew the White House had to abide by them like the average citizen? Great read!

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