



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Harry S Truman
National Historic Site

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Harry S Truman NHS News Release

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TRUMAN HOME MATERIAL CULTURE EXHIBIT AT HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE VISITOR CENTER

A new exhibit entitled *Truman Material Culture* is now featured at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. The exhibit will be on display through November 15, 2008 and features a variety of household artifacts and presidential gifts.

For 115 years, the house at 219 North Delaware was home to members of a well-to-do Independence family. A varied cast of characters lived there, including a rich mill owner, a reclusive widow and her four children, and an ex-farmer who later became president. Through the course of their daily lives—socializing, working and making purchases in the local community—they created a home filled with all the household goods, furnishings, and equipment common in the early 20th century. The Truman family's move to Washington in 1935 expanded the kinds of goods and furnishings they purchased. Furniture bought for their Washington apartments and gifts they received while in office were incorporated into their Independence home after their public service ended.

The things that accumulated over the years inside the Truman Home are considered material culture. Material culture includes all of the objects left behind that were either made or used by the people of a culture. These artifacts reflect the values, beliefs and ideas of a community or larger society. They tell us about a place and time and how life changed over time. The huge variety of artifacts in the Truman Home collection, from kitchen utensils to paintings, gives us a true snapshot of 19th and 20th century Midwestern life and a personal view into the life of a president.

Bess Truman died on October 18, 1982 after living in her home for almost 80 years. She recognized the significance of the home, leaving the structure and contents to the people of the United States. The Harry S Truman National Historic Site collection is important not only for the association with Truman, but because it is an intact household from four generations living under one roof.

The exhibit is located at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site Visitor Center, 223 N. Main St., Independence, Missouri. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. There is no admission fee for the exhibit. Contact 816-254-9929 for more information.

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