

Mourists than ever are

THE WHITE HOUSE



Author Fred Blumenthal chats with visitor from C

by FRED BLUMENTHAL

WASHINGTON, D.C.

"JUST THINK," exclaimed the handsome, gray-haired matron, "it's all free!"

The White House policeman smiled. "Of course it's free, madam. After all, it belongs to all of us."

The ecstatic woman had just completed her first tour of the stately white mansion that stands at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue here in Washington and holds a special place in the hearts of all Americans.

Her reaction summed up the feelings of the more than one million persons who visit the White House each year.

Native Washingtonians on their way to work have long been accustomed to seeing the lines of camera-laden tourists queuing up before the White House East Wing as much as two hours before the 10 o'clock opening. But today, even veteran White House police officers are astonished at the huge, patient lines of men, women and children that form daily along the rim of the mansion's beautifully-landscaped lawn. Police date the upsurge of interest to Mrs. Kennedy's personal TV tour of the White House last spring.

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The President's family calls it home...



East Room is the largest in the White House, is used for receptions and gala evenings. Most visitors wait 20 minutes in line, then tour the rooms open to the public. Even with 11,000 sightseers on peak days in summer, no damage is done by visitors.

Caroline's ponies, Macaroni and Tex, are sometimes seen by tourists. The lucky ones may also get glimpses of Caroline and her friends playing on the South Lawn or of John, Jr., who puts in an occasional appearance. Then cameras blossom.

North Portico, on Pennsylvania Avenue, marks end of tour. Cameras, banned inside the Executive Mansion, come out again. Guides report that the visitors are "completely awed" by the White House, and are a patient and friendly lot of people.

but it really belongs to all of us

