

**The Whittemore House and Museum**  
**Home of Woman's National Democratic Club**



1526 New Hampshire Avenue, NW  
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(Dupont Circle Metro)

[www.democraticwoman.org](http://www.democraticwoman.org)

[www.thewhittemorehouse.com](http://www.thewhittemorehouse.com)

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## The Whittemore House and Museum

### History

The Whittemore House, home of the The Woman's National Democratic Club, is an elegant historic mansion located in Washington's Dupont Circle neighborhood. Built between 1892 and 1894 as a private residence, it was designed by Washington architect Harvey L. Page (1859-1934) for opera singer Sarah Adams Whittemore, a descendent of the well-known Adams family of Massachusetts, and William C. Whittemore, her second husband.

Several well-known occupants have lived in the house. In 1903 Senator John F. Dryden (1839-1911), a Republican from New Jersey and one of the founders of Prudential Insurance Company, rented the building. Dryden was a member of Congress from 1902 to 1907. The best-known tenant was banker John W. Weeks (1860-1926), a Republican Congressman from Massachusetts (1905-1913), who leased the Whittemore House from 1907 to 1911. Later he was elected a Senator from Massachusetts (1913 to 1919) and served as Secretary of War under Harding and Coolidge (1921 to 1925). Mrs. Whittemore died in 1907, and left the property to her son and daughter. Her son, Walter D. Wilcox, an explorer, travel author, and photographer, moved his family into the home in 1919, living in the mansion until 1926. The house has been known as the Weeks House and as the Wilcox House in its history.

The Whittemore House has a kinship to both the English Arts and Crafts movement and American "Shingle Style" architecture. It shares with these movements a retreat from the beaux-arts style that dominated the Washington landscape in the late 1800s. The design of the Whittemore House suggests that Page was in tune with the most advanced architectural thinking of his day, which emphasized the elimination of non-essential decorative details in lieu of simplicity of form and an open free flowing interior plan. The house was also one of the first in Washington to be electrified.

The detailing of the Whittemore House is exquisite. A punched-and-tooled copper-covered oriel bay hangs over the New Hampshire Ave. entrance, its dull patina a compliment to the richly mottled Roman Brick. The brick is unique, taken from a small rare clay deposit in New Jersey that can never be produced again. Doors and leaded glass windows are set deeply into brick walls without additional ornamentation. Variety is achieved from subtle variations in the finely crafted brickwork, producing flat rarely interrupted surfaces that are associated with the Shingle Style. The flat walls meet to form angular towers and bays in the asymmetrical facades of the house. The flowing cape-like curves of the high roof covering the polygonal towers, bays, and eyelike dormer windows recall a more organic building form, the thatched roof, but is instead constructed of English slate, outlined by handcrafted copper gutters.

## First Floor

### Entry Foyer



Upon entering the building, you will see the beautiful oak paneled Entry Foyer. A portrait of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945) is hung on the right wall. Mrs. Roosevelt gave several women-only press conferences in the Library above this space during an era when women journalists faced severe discrimination. Underneath the portrait is an American pedestal form flip top gaming table, probably made in New York in the 1820s.

Next to the gaming table is an American, late classical restoration period pier table, made in Baltimore around the 1830s.

### Post Room



On the right of the main entrance is the Post Room. Right by the door under the window bay is an English George III Period neoclassical style inlaid bureau and glazed door bookcase that dates from 1780. Gracing the window bay is an American classical Grecian style sofa on carved decorated dolphin feet. It is of New York origin and dates from the 1820s. It is flanked by two mahogany armchairs with lion head gilt motifs. They are of 19th century Russian craftsmanship. A Biedermeier coffee table completes the

furniture in the bay window area. Next to the sofa is a working English Queen Anne Period “grandfather” clock that dates from 1720-1730. The other furniture of note is a matched pair of late classical style bench-made pier tables (circa 1900), belonging to Bertie Hamlin.

### Hamlin Room



The Music Room (now known as the Hamlin Room) has an elaborate beaux-arts plaster ceiling with musical motifs. Sliding or pocket doors originally opened the Music Room to the Entrance Hall allowing music to be heard throughout the house. Today the opening has been walled in but the oak-paneled side of the pocket doors with hardware removed has been incorporated into the Entrance Hall north wall. To the right of the entrance is a continental, possibly French, empire style cabinet from late 19th century. In the window

bay is an American colonial neoclassical style sideboard with inlaid decorative stringing from the 1910s. On the wall opposite the side board is a continental rococo revival style gilt mirror that dates from 1865-1870. By the pocket door leading to the ballroom is an American colonial period late classical style ormolu mounted bookcase.



## The Aggie Wolf Ballroom



The Aggie Wolf Ballroom was the Club's original dining room and was paneled at the time in the same English Oak that is featured in the Foyer. It overlooks, on one side, the Lady Bird Johnson Courtyard Garden. The ballroom was expanded and renovated in 1967 to accommodate the larger public events that the Club began to host. For formal events, the ballroom can accommodate 200 people seated and with theater style seating, 240. In the summer of 2012, the Club initiated a major renovation of the ballroom. The ballroom is frequently used as exhibit space for rotating art shows. In the corridor just off the Hamlin Room, please take note of our photo gallery of past speakers, past Eleanor Award Recipients, and past recipients of the Woman of the Year award.

## Second Floor

Ascending the stairs, please note the portrait of Lady Bird Johnson on the south wall above the landing . The interior courtyard garden is named after the First Lady.

## Blair Room



The first room to the right is the Blair Room, also known as the President's Room. The room gained its name from one of the principle founders of the club, Emily Newell Blair. Looking from the left side of the entrance, you will first see an English or Irish George III period neoclassical flip top gaming table with one fly leg, made around 1800.

To the right of the gaming table, is a continental empire style *Secrétaire à Abattant* from the late nineteenth century, with ormolu mounts. (*Abattant* refers to the drop front panel, now closed.) The *Secrétaire* is made of mahogany solids and veneers as the primary woods, with oak and conifer secondary.

Continuing clockwise, the next object is an American Victorian period, rococo revival what-not shelf from 1870-1880. This is manufactured of walnut throughout. The construction allows for assembly and disassembly, so the components are threaded to fit together snugly.

Just below the windows overlooking the courtyard, you will see an early American colonial revival period empire style sofa from 1870-1880. A hidden drawer is located in the arms at each side of the sofa.

To the right of the sofa is an English Victorian period ladies' work or sewing table from 1860-1870. The work table is mahogany with a solid satinwood fitted interior. On the wall is a copy of a portrait of Emily Newell Blair by L. Bruggink. To the right, there is a portrait of President Woodrow Wilson by Samuel Johnson Woolf.

## 1870s Room



This room faces you at the top of the stairs. To the left of the entrance there is an American renaissance revival New York cabinet, dates from 1870-1880.

To the left of the door is a caricature of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton by political cartoonist Kevin “KAL” Kallaugher.

Continuing past the secondary entrance, you will see an American, probably New York, neo-greco style music cabinet that dates from 1870-1880.

The next object is an American aesthetic movement slipper chair, possibly from New York that dates from the 1870s.

On the immediate right of the chair there is a China trade game table of black lacquer that dates from 1840s. Underneath the top cover is an ornate backgammon surface.

By the window is an English 17th century gateleg table with later additions and carvings. This oak table has a frame dating to about 1680 with a later 19th century apron and top additions. The carved wording (“Give us this day our daily bread”) also dates from the late 19th century.

In front of the table there is an American neo-greco sofa, probably New York that dates from the 1870s. The sofa is made of mixed hardwoods with gilt incised decoration.

On the right side of the sofa there is an English James I (17th century) period tavern table with later relief carving. The table is oak throughout. The relief carving on the top was done later, probably in the 19th century.

Exit to the main hallway, and on your right is a Dutch baroque style two piece cabinet that dates from the mid 1800s.

## Eleanor Roosevelt Library Alcove



Continuing to your right, you will enter the Eleanor Roosevelt library alcove. In this area we have created two photo walls with scenes from the life of Mrs. Roosevelt and her family, professional colleagues and friends. Each photo is briefly captioned. This display was created to honor the 80th birthday of the First Lady's oldest granddaughter and WNDU Club member, Eleanor Roosevelt Seagraves. To your immediate right upon entering this space, please note framed memorabilia that relates again to the influence of this First Lady, who served in that capacity from 1932 to 1945. She went on to play an influential role in the creation

of the United Nations, and was deeply involved in many other political and humanitarian causes until her death in 1962.

Within the same alcove, there is an American manufactured Elizabethan style blanket chest, from around 1880. Flanking the blanket chest there are two Hitchcock style chairs from the 19th century.

## **Eleanor Roosevelt Library**



Beyond the alcove and facing New Hampshire Avenue, you will enter the Eleanor Roosevelt Library. To the immediate left of the doorway and behind it, there is a bronze bust of the First Lady by Victor Lamkay that dates from the 1960s.

On the left side on the mantle, there is a working pendulum clock. It has an architectural ormolu case, enamel face, and remains unsigned. It is from France and dates from the late 19th century. Above the mantle is a portrait entitled “Mrs. Roosevelt Entertains at Tea”. The First Lady honored members of the WNDC and the delegates to the WNDC Conference of Affiliated Clubs at a White House tea on April 10, 1935.

Walking forward and to your left is an Italian-made directoire style pietra dura (hard stone) ebonized game table, from about 1880.

Please take note of the carpet. It is made of wool on cotton, with red background of a typical Sarouk design. It is from Sarouk, Iran, from the 1930’s.

In the window bay is a round mahogany dining table, with gilt paw feet and central ribbed tapering white marble supports of four columns. It dates from the mid-19th century.

On the right side of the window bay is a print of a portrait of our 32nd president, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Painted by Frank O. Salisbury, the portrait was commissioned by the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and was unveiled March 26, 1935, by the President’s mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt, an honorary member of the Society. The original portrait hangs in the White House.

Below the portrait, you will find a commemorative fan from the 1940 campaign. This vintage fan from FDR’s third presidential campaign was designed for the Democratic National convention in Chicago. The reverse side is blue and reads, “Chicago’s Best is Yours, Edward J. Kelly, Mayor”. Before air conditioning, delegates sweltered in convention halls, and campaign fans were a welcome and practical souvenir.

To the right of the door, you will see an American manufactured neoclassical style three drawer desk, used by Secretary Frances Perkins. On the desk and on the wall above it you will find portraits and photographs of her. She was the first woman to serve in a cabinet position, and was appointed by FDR in 1932 as the Secretary of Labor. She served for twelve years. On the wall there is also an autographed charcoal drawing of FDR. The drawing is by Samuel Johnson Woolf and dates from November 1944.

## **Daisy Harriman Room**



Turning around and walking down the hallway, you will see on the right the Daisy Harriman Room, also called the Bride's Room.

Looking from the left side of the entrance, the first object is a Dutch cabinet which dates from the 1880s. It has a black lacquered case, gilt chinoiserie decoration, two nine pane mullion glazed doors, side panels, and bun feet. Within the cabinet is a collection of eleven Sevres Chateau de Tuilleries

dinner plates from the mid-1800s.

Walking forward, there is an Italian 20th century directoire style demi lune console table. Resting on the table is a terracotta bust of a woman. Its provenance is French, and dates from the late 18th to early 19th century.

Above the demi lune table is an English mirror. The mirror has carved gilt wood, gessoed frame, punch decoration, and squirrel motifs. It dates from the early 18th century. To the right of the demi lune table is an American late classical period pedestal form "occasional table". It was probably made in Baltimore in the 1820s.

To the right of the sofa in the window bay, please notice the bronze bust of General "Blackjack" Pershing, a US Army officer who led the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. The sculptor was Jo Davidson (1883-1952).

Continuing clockwise, the next object is a Louis XVI style paint decorated upholstered close arm chair.

To the left of the blue-striped sofa is a French Louis VX period work table. It has a Kingwood marquetry top and case, front drawer with ratchet easel and side drawer compartment. It dates from the 3rd quarter of the 18th century.

On the immediate left of the work table is an American early Federal or English George III period neoclassical upholstered six-leg box sofa that dates from around 1790.

In the corner behind is a Napoleon III or Phillip IV Marquetry Bonheur du Jour (a type of lady's writing desk) that dates from 1860-1880. The carpet in this room is a fine example of a Chinese export rug from the 19th century.



## Past President's Room



Down the corridor towards the rear of house is the Past President's Room. To the left of the door as you face the window, please note portraits of our founding members, Florence "Daisy" Harriman, Emily Newell Blair, and Huybertie "Bertie" Hamlin.

**Florence "Daisy" Harriman** was an American socialite, suffragist, social reformer, organizer, and diplomat.

According to the New York Times, "she led one of the suffrage parades down Fifth Avenue, worked on campaigns on child labor and safe milk and, as minister to Norway in World War II, organized evacuation efforts while hiding in a forest from the Nazi invasion." When she was ninety-two, President Kennedy honored her by awarding her the first "Citation of Merit for Distinguished Service."

**Emily Newell Blair** was an American writer, suffragist, feminist, national Democratic Party political leader, and a founder of the League of Women Voters. She was the first woman to attain a prominent position in Democratic Party politics, and served as the national Vice Chair man of the Democratic Party from 1922 to 1928.

**Huybertie "Bertie" Hamlin** was the wife of the governor of the Federal Reserve Board, Charles Hamlin, and a close friend of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Other notable past presidents include the Honorable Lindy Boggs, the first woman elected to Congress from Louisiana and the first female to preside over a major party convention. Another prominent past president was Esther Peterson, a lifelong consumer and women's rights advocate. She first served as Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs under President Lyndon Johnson, and later as the Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs under President Jimmy Carter.

Furniture of note in this room include: a William and Mary period English Baroque chest of drawers from the late 17th century, a set of six English George III rococo shield back chairs, circa 1770-1780, and a mahogany banquet table of American design, circa 1880s.

Continuing clockwise, at the end of the room in front of the window is a transitional William and Mary, Queen Anne period style dressing table that dates from 1710-1750.



## The Q Street Pub



Continuing to the rear of the house, you'll find the Q Street Pub. On the left along the long side of the room is a colonial period classical style bronze mounted marble top pier table. The wood is primarily mahogany and secondarily cherry. The table was made in New York in the 1880s.

Above the table is an Elizabethan style gilt over mantle mirror.

On the opposite long wall of the room is a colonial period classical style marble top parcel gilt ebonized pier table. It dates from the 1880s.

Above the table is a colonial period neoclassical style gilt over mantle mirror.



WOMAN'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB  
1526 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE, NW · WASHINGTON, DC 20036

## History

*From the Right to Vote, the Power to Lead*

In 1922, the Woman's National Democratic Club was founded in Washington, D.C. two years after the Nineteenth Amendment granted voting rights to women. As the first organization for Democratic women in the Nation's Capital, the Club provided a social setting for political dialogue between visiting Democrats and residents of the District of Columbia who were excluded from national suffrage. Men were granted full voting membership in 1988.

The Club's twice-weekly programs, a hallmark since 1924, provide a lively forum for speakers such as Madeleine Albright, Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Tom Daschle, Jim Lehrer, Vernon Jordan, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Loretta and Linda Sanchez, Mark Kennedy Shriver, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

The historic Clubhouse is also a museum with beautifully appointed rooms for meetings, receptions, weddings, and other private events. Located in a neighborhood of Nineteenth Century and Beaux Arts mansions, the building is a unique transition between Victorian and Arts and Crafts architecture. In 1973 it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The WNDC Educational Foundation (EF) opens Club facilities, programs, and activities to the public. The EF oversees the Club's scholarly collections, sponsors an oral history and publication program, and conducts community outreach projects. Supported by donations, the foundation maintains an historic preservation fund to help conserve the landmark Clubhouse. EF meets IRS requirements for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Emily Newell Blair, Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in charge of women's affairs, was the principal founder. As a DNC official, Blair oversaw the organization of more than a thousand clubs for Democratic women throughout the country. She also established political schools, hoping to revitalize the party through a well-informed women's electorate.

Florence Jaffray "Daisy" Harriman, a Washington and New York socialite, recruited prominent political and social figures for WNDC membership and financial support. Harriman had entered national politics in 1912 to campaign for her friend, Woodrow Wilson, in his first bid for the U.S. presidency.

Wilson endorsed the Club, and former First Lady Edith Bolling Wilson was elected honorary president. Harriman also launched a series of bipartisan Sunday night suppers that raised the Democratic Party profile and quickly became a Washington institution.



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## Fact Sheet

- Founded:** 1922 by Emily Newell Blair and Daisy Harriman
- Membership:** Our membership roster includes a distinguished group of women and men with leadership experience in government, Democratic Party activities, labor, corporate, civic and professional organizations.
- Mission:** To provide a forum where Democrats meet to study, discuss and act upon current issues, to further the participation of women in the political process, and to help build an effective and compassionate political party.
- History:** Two years after the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote, Emily Newell Blair and Daisy Harriman rallied a group of influential Washingtonians to organize the Woman's National Democratic Club. This was the first socially acceptable meeting place for Democratic women in our Nation's Capital. From its humble beginnings in Daisy Harriman's parlor, the WNDC has grown to become an influential player in state and local Democratic parties.
- Clubhouse:** The WNDC is located in an elegant historic mansion, the Whittemore House, located near Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. Built between 1892 and 1894 as a private residence, the house was purchased by the WNDC in 1927. It is furnished with antiques, art and political memorabilia and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The WNDC Museum and Archives are open to the general public by appointment.
- Governance:** The WNDC is a nonprofit membership organization. A volunteer Governing Board, elected annually by voting members, sets policies and provides guidance regarding all programs and staff functions. A professional staff implements Board policies and maintains operations.
- Programs:** The WNDC is a prestigious forum for local, national, and international speakers. Through its twice-weekly schedule of speaker programs, panel discussions, special events, task forces, and seminars, members have an opportunity to become informed on current issues. Prominent speakers have included: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Rosalynn Carter, Madeleine Albright, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Mikulski, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Donna Edwards, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Joining us for our annual *Women in Congress* reception were Cheri Bustos, Tammy Duckworth, Lois Frankel, Linda Sanchez, and Jan Schakowsky.
- Political Action:** Participation in political activity is through the Public Policy Committee and its task forces. The task forces make recommendations on legislative matters to the Governing Board, which votes upon them and communicates these positions to all Club members. The Club also makes its views known to the White House, Congress, and the media. In addition, the Public Policy Committee publishes a monthly *Political Dispatch*, accessible through our website [www.democraticwoman.org](http://www.democraticwoman.org).
- Educational Foundation:** The WNDC Educational Foundation is a separate legal entity operated exclusively for charitable, literary, and educational purposes, and historic preservation. Its activities include: a formal relationship with an established tutoring and academic enrichment program, For Love of Children (FLOC), the Young Women's Leadership Project for promising high school juniors interested in public service, an ongoing oral history project and sponsorship of symposia and luncheon speakers. Contributions to the WNDC-EF are tax-deductible.

## ***Rental Information***

With private meeting and dining rooms and a spacious ballroom, Whittemore House is able to serve members and guests' special events needs.

Nine enchanting rooms of varying size make it an ideal setting for private parties, weddings, theatre productions, meetings and other special events. A charming courtyard also provides a comfortable outdoor setting for guests to enjoy.

For business functions we offer top-quality audio-visual capabilities and high-speed wireless Internet service. We can offer a full day meeting package including A/V services, breakfast, breaks, and hot lunch at an affordable price.

### ***Rental Rules and Procedures***

Whittemore House aims to tailor each rental to the needs of the client. Please call for a specific quote. Site visits are by appointment only. Proper dress code applies for all events. All vendors must be approved by the Whittemore House. We do not have exclusive contracts with any caterers or vendors, but can make recommendations on vendors who have worked well in the space. If desired, we have a full-service event planner onsite to help you with all your details.

All beverage service must be ordered through Whittemore House. Under no circumstances may alcohol be taken out of the building. Bartenders are provided by the club.

For more information on private events please call: **Lyn Stout, Marketing Manager**  
Lyn@thewhittemorehouse.com  
(202) 232-7363 Ext. 3007  
(202) 257-0872 mobile



## ***Private Events***

The club accommodates up to 250 guests on the first floor and 300 at a standing reception using both first and second floors. The club can hold 120 seated guests for a wedding ceremony with standing room for additional guests. The ballroom comfortably seats 180 with room for musicians and dance floor. Rental equipment is available through the club. Please contact to discuss your specific event.

### **Upstairs Rooms Include:**

Blair Room	10 seated
1870's Room	26 seated
Library	22 seated
	26 theatre style
Harriman Room	10 seated
President's Dining	14 seated
Q Street Pub	60 seated
	100 theatre style