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Presidential Trivia Quiz

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*What President predicted that
the world would in time be-
come one nation?*

That was President Ulysses Grant, who, in his Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1873, made this astounding prophecy: "I believe that our Great Maker is preparing the world, in His own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language, and when armies and navies will no longer be required." It would seem as if President Grant was prophesizing the creation of the United Nations, our first step in the creation of a warless one world.

What President was buried, wrapped in the Stars and Stripes, with a copy of the Constitution under his head?

Andrew Johnson, 17th President of the United States. Johnson died July 31, 1875. His last request was "Pillow my head on the Constitution of my country. Let the flag of the nation be my winding sheet." In accord with this patriot's request his body was wrapped in a new silken flag with 37 stars. Under his head was placed his worn and much-thumbed copy of the Constitution which he had owned for 50 years. On the stone above Andrew Johnson's grave at Greenville, Tennessee, are carved these words: "His faith in the people never wavered."

Who was our smallest President?

James Madison, who was five feet four and weighed less than 100 pounds. They called him the Great Little Madison. It was Aaron Burr, by the way, who introduced Madison to the charming widow, Dolly Todd. She was 20 years his junior. But Madison was never much of a lady's man. As a young man he was jilted by a sixteen-year-old girl who sent his engagement ring back sealed in a lump of dough. In 1811 after a visit to the White House Washington Irving wrote his famous description of the Madisons: "Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame, who has a smile and a pleasant word for everybody. But as to Jimmy . . . ah! Poor Jimmy! He is but a withered little apple-John."

What President was the greatest student of the Bible?

John Quincy Adams—who read five chapters of the Bible every day. Some of John Quincy Adams' finest observations on the Bible were made while he was American Minister to Russia and residing in that country. From St. Petersburg, he wrote eleven remarkable letters to his son explaining the Bible.

These letters are considered even today, to be among our finest commentaries on divine scriptures. It is said, also, that every night of his life, to the very end of his days, John Quincy Adams knelt and repeated the little prayer his mother had taught him as a child—"Now I lay me down to sleep."

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What President kissed 34 little girls at his Inauguration Parade?

President Abraham Lincoln, on March 4, 1861. After making his Inaugural Address, President Lincoln drove back to the White House to review the parade, in which there was an enormous float carrying 34 little girls, each dressed to represent a State of the Union. When the float reached the White House the little girls scrambled down and swarmed around President Lincoln, who proceeded to plant a kiss on the lips of each of these 34 young ladies.

What was the unusual announcement made by President Zachary Taylor when he reached the White House in 1848?

President Taylor announced the goal of his administration in these wonderful words, "I have no private purposes to accomplish, no party projects to build up, no enemies to punish, nothing to serve but my country."

What President pronounced the famous blessing on the White House?

That was John Adams, who arrived officially in November, 1800, *without* the First Lady. In a letter to his wife the day he arrived, John Adams wrote these historic words, "I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and on all that shall hereafter inhabit it! May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof." Glancing down the line of our Presidents, from George Washington to Harry S. Truman, it would seem as if John Adams' prayer had been answered.

Has anyone ever seen a ghost in the White House?

The White House is filled with magnificent memories, but no ghosts: However, Mrs. Abraham Lincoln insisted that often at night she had heard Andrew Jackson swearing, Thomas Jefferson fiddling and even John Tyler making love to his 20-year old second wife. President Theodore Roosevelt never said he saw a ghost in the White House, but he once wrote a friend, "I think of Lincoln, shambling, homely, with a strong, sad, deeply-furrowed face, all the time. I see him in the different rooms and in the halls. For some reason or other he is to me the most infinitely real of all the dead Presidents."

What remarkable piece of advice did John Tyler give his children when he became President of the United States?

When he received news of President Harrison's death, John Tyler called his sons and daughters to him and said: "My children, by a deplored event, I am unexpectedly elevated to the Presidency of the United States. You, as my children, of course, rise with me. I beg you ever to bear in mind that this promotion is only temporary. I must return to plain John Tyler—and may you never, as the President's children, either in thought, word or deed, do aught which you will regret to be told of afterwards, when you shall be nothing higher than plain John Tyler's children."

What was the most famous food gift ever sent to the White House?

The mammoth 1,600-pound cheese which was sent

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to President Jefferson by a group of Massachusetts admirers. It arrived at the White House one day in 1802 on a wagon decorated with these words, "The greatest cheese in America for the greatest man in America." It was given to Jefferson by a group of foreign-born citizens of Massachusetts in appreciation of the cordial welcome he had expressed in his annual message to newly naturalized citizens. When the cheese arrived at the White House, President Jefferson came out and accepted it with a few graceful words, but with the provision that the givers permit him to pay for it at 50 per cent more than its market price.

What President once had gold wallpaper put on his dining room in the White House?

President Chester A. Arthur, sometimes called Prince Arthur. He was a sumptuous entertainer, whose midnight suppers were works of culinary art. He had 75 suits of clothes and 100 pairs of shoes. He had his own ideas of Presidential grandeur, which included gold wallpaper on his dining room. He also held the first rummage sale in the White House history. He sold 24 cartloads of furnishings, some of which dated back to Jackson's time.

Is it true that President Jefferson absented himself from Washington for 796 days during his eight years in the White House?

Yes. Thomas Jefferson with 796 days away from Washington was our greatest offender in this matter of Presidential absenteeism. James Monroe ranks next to Jefferson. He vanished from Washington for a total of 708 days during his two terms in the White House. The Father of our Country set the precedent for these absentees by leaving the seat of government for a total of 181 days during his first term as President. President Lincoln holds the record for remaining on the job. No President has ever clung as closely to the confines of the White House.

What President once went shopping for a Bible for the White House?

President William Henry Harrison, who one day went into a little book store on Pennsylvania Avenue and said to the proprietor: "The Bible ought to be a part of the furniture of the White House. I am going to buy out of the Congressional appropriation the best copy of the Bible I can find and write in it, 'The President of the United States from the People of the United States'."

What President, on the night of Inauguration Day, was left alone in the White House, without servants, without light?

President Franklin Pierce, who spent his first night in the White House amid muddy carpets, empty dishes and silence. The servants went to bed without even showing the new President where he could sleep. President Pierce and his secretary, Sidney Webster, roamed upstairs, but found only disorder and confusion. Lighting a candle Pierce stopped at a door and said, "You'd better turn in here, Sidney. I'll try to find a bed somewhere across the hall."

What President used to read passages from the Bible and from Shakespeare late at night to his private secretary?

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Abraham Lincoln, who often at night aroused young John Hay from slumber, sat on the bed beside him and read to him. In these words John Hay once depicted the scene: "Mr. Lincoln would say, 'Lie still, Hay; don't get up.' Then he would read a passage from Shakespeare or a portion of the Bible. After perhaps half an hour's reading his mind would become calm. Then he would rise, pick up the candlestick and start for the door. The candle, carried high, lighted Lincoln's tumbled hair, as the President, his nightshirt flapping around his ankles, passed down the corridor and disappeared into the darkness."

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