

THE FIRST WHITE HOUSE LIBRARY

A History and Annotated Catalogue

EDITED BY CATHERINE M. PARISIAN

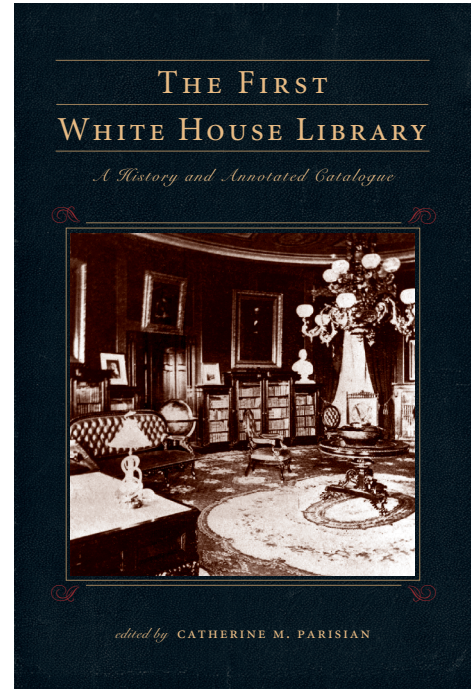
“Do not be misled by the modest title of this book or by the fact that one of our least-known presidents was behind the first White House library. This book brings together wonderful essays, starting with that by historian Sean Wilentz, and going on to others on the role of Mrs. Fillmore, the library room, the process of forming the library, and, of course, the library’s contents. The catalogue proper of this library that represented the ‘collective mind of the age’ contains mini-essays explaining how each book fit in. This is library history at its best; in other words, it’s cultural history. This splendid contribution to American history deserves to be widely available.” —Kenneth E. Carpenter, former Assistant Director for Research Resources in the Harvard University Library and the Harvard College Library

Although many early U.S. presidents were avid readers and book collectors—George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, to name a few—they usually brought their own books to the White House and removed them at the end of their terms. It was not until 1850 that Millard and

Abigail Fillmore established the first official White House collection. This catalogue of the library that they assembled not only reveals much about their own preoccupations and interests and those of the age they lived in, but also provides insight into American library history, reading history, and book trade and distribution networks.

Aside from the editor, the contributors are William Allman, Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada, and Sean Wilentz.

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