



AFFAIRS *of* STATE

118 YEARS OF DIPLOMACY AND ENTERTAINING AT ANDERSON HOUSE



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Curated and designed by Glenn A. Hennessey

This catalog accompanies the exhibition *Affairs of State: 118 Years of Diplomacy and Entertaining at Anderson House*, on view February 24 - December 31, 2023, at Anderson House, headquarters of the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, Inc., 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008.



Background: Isabel Anderson on the Great Stair landing, by Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1910. Library of Congress

Above: Larz Anderson in diplomatic uniform, ca. 1911.

“ONE DINES OUT CONTINUALLY. THIS GIVES PEOPLE A CHANCE TO SEE EACH OTHER UNDER THE PLEASANTEST CIRCUMSTANCES, AND AFFAIRS OF STATE AND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE MAY BE TALKED OVER INFORMALLY.”

Isabel Anderson, *Presidents and Pies: Life in Washington, 1897-1919* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920)

Diplomatic uniform

Davies & Son, London, England
1911

Tailcoat and trousers of wool, gold braid and sequin embroidery, silk, and cotton; Chapeau bras (hat) of velvet, silk, and feathers; Sword of steel, gilt brass, and mother-of-pearl with a gold braid sword knot
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Larz Anderson had this diplomatic uniform made in 1911 for his posting as the U.S. envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Belgium. Created by London-based tailor Davies & Son, Larz ordered this opulent ensemble to mimic the court dress that was worn by diplomats presenting at the courts of various countries, especially throughout

Europe. Though conventional suits were de rigueur for U.S. diplomats in the 1910s, it was not unusual for Americans working in the foreign service to acquire such attire when based in countries where such splendor was expected.

Diplomacy and entertaining have always gone hand in hand in the nation's capital. Nowhere have the two sides of social Washington been combined as interchangeably, or for as long, as they have at Anderson House, the headquarters of the Society of the Cincinnati. This building has played a historic role throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—one that has largely gone untold. Since its opening in 1905, the mansion has been the site of hundreds of diplomatic, patriotic, philanthropic, and cultural events—establishing Anderson House as a uniquely sought-after destination for heads of state, government officials, diplomats, and society leaders.

Had you picked up any major newspaper on the East Coast between 1902 and 1905, chances are you would have seen a story about the plans for a palatial new structure being constructed in Washington, D.C., when Larz and Isabel Anderson set about designing a house on Massachusetts Avenue—planned specifically for entertaining heads of state, government leaders, other diplomats, friends, and family in a setting that conveyed the couple's interests and values. When their guests passed under the porte cochère and entered the marble-lined interiors, they were met with the rich symbolism of the couple's travels, education, ancestry, and patriotic service. From the first dinner for six christening the Dining Room in 1905, to eight hundred guests at inaugural receptions thrown for their friend President Taft, to their uncounted philanthropic events, the Andersons used this home to serve their country and its causes.

Larz Anderson's last act of patriotic service was to ask his wife to donate their home to the Society of the Cincinnati after his death. The Society's arc of using the house for the public good began when it was offered to the U.S. Navy during the great building shortage of WWII, and reached a crescendo from 1950 to 1980 when the State Department used it repeatedly as a setting to entertain heads of state. With no other private homes and few public buildings capable of hosting events at this level, Anderson House continues to be a meeting place for embassies, institutions of higher learning, and local residents.



Detail of the oil portrait of Ambassador and Mrs. Larz Anderson by Philip A. de László, 1926.

“AMERICAN OFFICIALS, WHEN THEY FIRST COME TO WASHINGTON, DO NOT SEEM TO KNOW OR TO CARE ABOUT PRECEDENCE, BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE THEM VERY LONG TO BECOME INTERESTED IN THE SUBJECT [AS THEY] LOOK ABOUT THE TABLE TO SEE IF THEY ARE BEING PROPERLY PLACED.”

Isabel Anderson, *Presidents and Pies: Life in Washington, 1897-1919* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920)

Anderson House Dining Room
by Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1910

The dining room was the nexus of diplomacy during the Andersons' time. The servant uniforms in our collections reflect the lavish events that took place in Anderson House, as well as the personal stories of the staff who worked behind the scenes—their names sewn into the linings of their clothing. This uniform bears the name of Ernest Cook.

The brass buttons on this livery jacket, and the center of the silver salver, bear the Society of the Cincinnati insignia—a reminder of the organization's importance to Larz. In the Anderson House Dining Room, one liveried footman stood at attention behind every two dinner guests, a practice that continued well into the Depression.

the DIPLOMAT'S TABLE



The first dinner at Anderson House was held on Isabel's twenty-ninth birthday, March 29, 1905. She recorded the first of many guests, in longhand, in her dinner book: “Mrs. Longworth, Mrs. Anderson, Miss Ethel Anderson, and Miss Frances Anderson” (Larz's mother and three of their cousins). Though the Andersons' primary home in Boston, Weld, boasted a larger estate with formal gardens, Washington was the focus of their official

Salver

American
ca. 1910
Silver plate
The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Anne Wallingford Perin, 1978

Footman's livery

John Patterson & Co., New York, N.Y.
1914
Wool, cotton, brass, gold braid, and velvet coat;
Wool, cotton, and brass vest;
Velvet, gold braid, brass, and leather breeches;
Silk stockings; and Leather shoes
The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938

entertaining. Dinners often began with drinks in the gilt-trimmed second-floor reception rooms (Larz and Isabel were vocal critics of Prohibition), followed by a promenade down the antique-filled Gallery to the formal Dining Room—Isabel determining who escorted whom. Guests at the Andersons' table included William H. Taft, Calvin Coolidge, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Henry A. du Pont, and a host of diplomats, royalty, and other foreign dignitaries.

The Andersons' Dining Room was designed for formal entertaining in the best European style and was decorated with antiques characteristic of aristocratic homes in Europe. Their formal china, made by Mintons in England, bears the entwined initials of the hosts, as did architectural trim throughout the house. Magnificent gilt-bronze, silver, and crystal decorative and serving pieces adorned the room. The five elaborate seventeenth-century Flemish tapestries on the walls are reminders of their year in Belgium where Larz was U.S. minister.



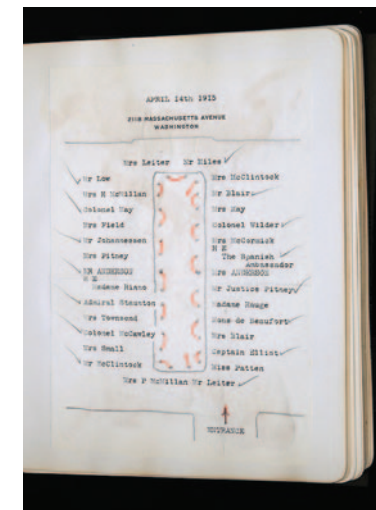


Breakfast table
 Italian
 Late 19th century
 Walnut, gilt, and paint
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Dessert plate
 Chinese
 Mid-19th century
 Porcelain and enamel
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938

“A Book of Dinner lists and Plans ...,” 1915-1929
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson
 1938



Wine glass
 Early 20th century
 Crystal
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



“AT A TYPICAL DINNER, THE ROOM WOULD BE FILLED WITH DIPLOMATS, ARMY AND NAVY OFFICERS, AND POLITICIANS—MEN OF THE GREAT WORLD MIXED WITH THOSE WHO HAD MORE BRAINS THAN SOCIAL EXPERIENCE. THERE WOULD BE MUCH BOWING AND CLICKING OF HEELS.”

Isabel Anderson, *Presidents and Pies: Life in Washington, 1897-1919* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920)

Calling cards
 Early 20th century
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Library purchase, 2022



Table garniture
 Thomire and Co., Paris, France
 ca. 1830
 Gilt bronze and glass
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938

“PRECEDENCE AND ETIQUETTE MAKE FOR THE DIGNITY OF A PERSON AND RESPECT FOR GOVERNMENT, AND ARE THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE SIGN, NOT OF THE MAN, BUT OF HIS OFFICE.”

Isabel Anderson, *Presidents and Pies: Life in Washington, 1897-1919* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920)

Formal china
 Mintons, Staffordshire, England
 ca. 1901-1908
 Porcelain and gold leaf
 The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938





The Andersons pose with their Japanese hosts at the American embassy in Tokyo, during Larz's post as ambassador, 1913. Isabel at left, and Larz, fourth from left.



Order of the Crown of Belgium (2nd class)

De Vigne-Hart, Brussels, Belgium
 Early 20th century
 Silver, gold, and enamel
 The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938

Larz Anderson descended from a prominent family that devoted innumerable members in service to their country. His great grandfather, Richard Clough Anderson, was a lieutenant colonel in the American Revolution who crossed the Delaware with George Washington and served as an aide-de-camp to Lafayette on the campaign to Yorktown, before becoming an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati. After graduating from Harvard University, Larz began his diplomatic career in 1891 in London, serving as second secretary of the American legation. By 1894 he was first secretary and charge d'affaires at the American embassy in

Rome, where he met Isabel Weld Perkins. After an eighteen-month courtship, Larz left Europe to marry Isabel in Boston in 1897. The following year Larz joined the U.S. Volunteers during the Spanish-American War, spending four months as assistant adjutant general at Camp Alger in Virginia. Returning to his diplomatic career in 1911, he and Isabel spent a year in Belgium where Larz was U.S. minister, before being appointed by President Taft in 1912 to his highest and final post with the State Department, ambassador to Japan, which Larz held only a few months due to the change in political administrations.

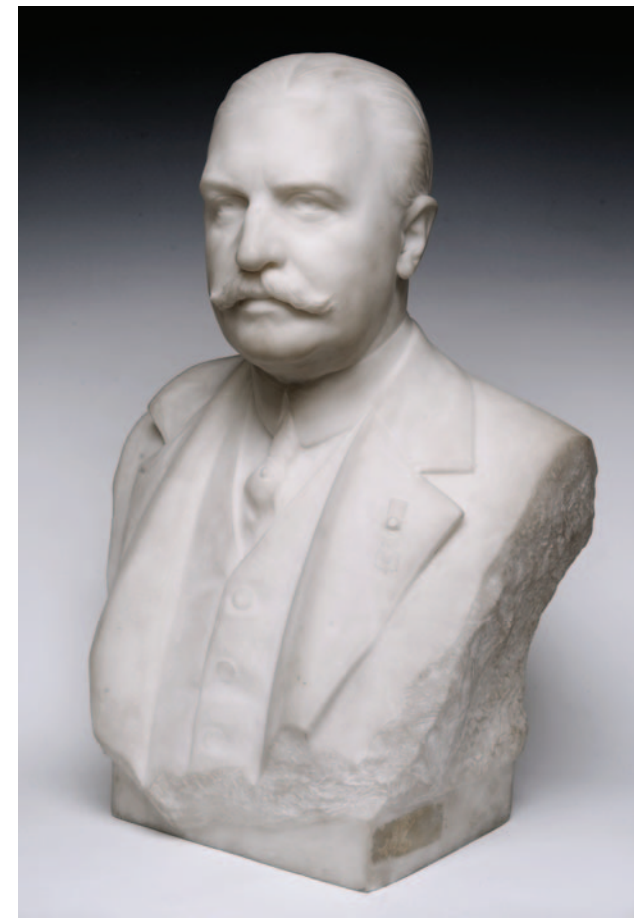
Presidential inauguration badge

American
 1909
 Silk with metallic fringe
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Sake cup presented by Emperor Taisho

Japanese
 ca. 1918
 Gold
 The Society of the Cincinnati,
 Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Larz Anderson Fanfani (Italian)
 Late 19th or Early 20th century
 Marble
 The Society of the Cincinnati, Museum Acquisitions Fund purchase, 2003

BORN to SERVE



Ambassador's writing box

ca. 1900
 Silver plate and glass
 The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Anne Wallingford Perin, 1978



Isabel Weld Perkins was born to a family that traced its history to the Massachusetts Bay colony and included at least eight men who fought in the Revolutionary War. She was educated at home by governesses before attending Miss Winsor's School in Boston. In 1895, at nineteen, Isabel embarked on her first trip abroad—a yearlong grand European tour during which she met Larz in Rome. In addition to being the hostess of Anderson House, Isabel was a prolific writer, a leader of the American Red Cross in Washington, a volunteer nurse in France and Belgium during WWI, and an important philanthropist, donating to churches, hospitals, universities, and museums in Washington and New England. Larz and Isabel never had any children, and these activities—public service, philanthropy, travel, collecting, and entertaining—became their life's work.

Isabel's prominent role in WWI began when she spear-headed the creation of a Red Cross Refreshment Corps. The photographs in the scrapbook chronicling her service during WWI show Isabel and her fellow volunteers in the garden at Anderson House, all in uniform, wrapping bandages and preparing sandwiches to be served from a first-of-its-kind motorized canteen. The four cauldrons, heated by wood and pulled by truck, could serve coffee or lemonade for one thousand soldiers. For her dedication and skills caring for the sick and wounded on the war front in Europe, she was awarded a medal from the American Red Cross, along with even greater honors from Belgium and France.

Scrapbook photographs
Kept by Isabel Anderson
Early 20th century
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Donated on behalf of the family
of Augustus M. Anderson, life
long employee of Isabel and
Larz Anderson, 2017

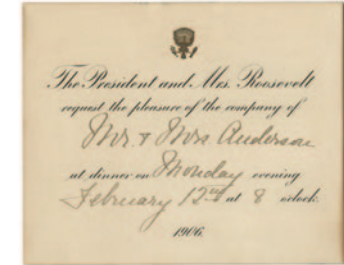


American Red Cross Service medal
Tiffany & Co., New York, N.Y.
ca. 1920
Gilt bronze, enamel, and fabric
The Society of the Cincinnati
Collections



Official government program for the visit of the Majesties of Siam to Washington, D.C.
April 28-May 1, 1931
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938

Dinner menus
April 30, 1931
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Dinner invitation from President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt
[Washington, D.C.],
February 12, 1906
The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of
Alexander Ferguson Anderson, 1966



Order of the Precious Crown, Butterfly (3rd class)
Japanese
Early 20th century
Gold, enamel, and silk medal;
Lacquered wood, silk, and velvet box
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



Larz wrote Society member Gist Blair in 1934, broaching the idea of the gift of Anderson House for the Society's headquarters. He admitted that his "interest goes so far back as the building of the house," but he never dared suggest such a hope. The Society sought a designation from Congress as a tax-exempt non-profit before accepting the gift of Anderson House. President Franklin Roosevelt wrote William Hoffman from the USS *Potomac* in 1937, assuring him that the District of Columbia Commissioners had reconsidered the matter of taxation of the Anderson House property, as it was planned to be used as the headquarters of a national museum in Washington. The very next month the bill was introduced in the House of Representatives, where it eventually passed, allowing the Society of the Cincinnati to proceed with plans for its new museum.

Larz Anderson to Gist Blair (below left)
April 4, 1934
The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Wickham Hoffman (below right)
December 1, 1937
The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

The Society's first formal dinner at Anderson House, April 20, 1940.

GRAND HOTEL KLINGER
MARIENBAD. April 4, 1934

Dear Gist:

Your letter about an house for the "Cincinnati" in Washington has just reached me, and I answer at once although such long-distance consideration of the matter is not as satisfactory as a talk when we may meet - I hope soon, for we plan to be back in Brookline in early June.

I have always been interested in this idea but have never, as far as I can recall, talked of the matter to any one but my lawyer. In fact my interest goes so far back as the building of the house in Massachusetts Avenue, for even then I introduced the Eagle in the pediment in front and had frescoes, allegorical, painted in his day by Siddons Mowbray. But I have never dared to suggest such an hope - for it was an impossible thing

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Aboard the U.S.S. POTOMAC,
December 1, 1937

Dear Bill:

I am sorry I have been so long in replying to your letter of October twenty-second concerning the Larz Anderson property, which has been offered to the Society of the Cincinnati for the purpose of establishing the headquarters of a national museum in Washington. I held your letter, however, hoping to have some definite information for you.

I understand that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, in reporting upon Senate Bill No. 2815 (which is a bill to exempt this property from taxation) opposed the exemption on the theory that some and more property in the District has been withdrawn from taxation by general and special statutes and that there is now in the District approximately \$70,000,000 worth of property tax-exempt.

However, they have reconsidered this matter and have written to the Chairman of the District Senate and House Committee in accordance with the copy of letter enclosed herewith.

With all good wishes,
Very sincerely yours,
Franklin D. Roosevelt

William Wickham Hoffman, Esq.,
Room 1045, 25 Broad Street,
New York, N. Y.

the SOCIETY'S GREATEST GIFT

After Larz's death in 1937, Isabel Anderson donated their Washington home to his beloved Society of the Cincinnati—whose Eagle insignia was incorporated into the house's design. The gift was finalized in May 1938, as the Society marked its 155th anniversary. Anderson House became the first and only headquarters the Society has had, and changed the trajectory of the organization in its modern era. The Society's leaders declared Isabel's gift the most important event in the history of the organization and named her an honorary associate.

Formed in 1783, the Society of the Cincinnati preserves the memory of the American Revolution which ignited the fuse for freedom around the world. That freedom came at a great cost, and though it did not then stretch to include American citizens of all sexes, colors, or social stations, the parameters set by that spark continue to grow and serve as inspiration for all Americans, and others around the world today.

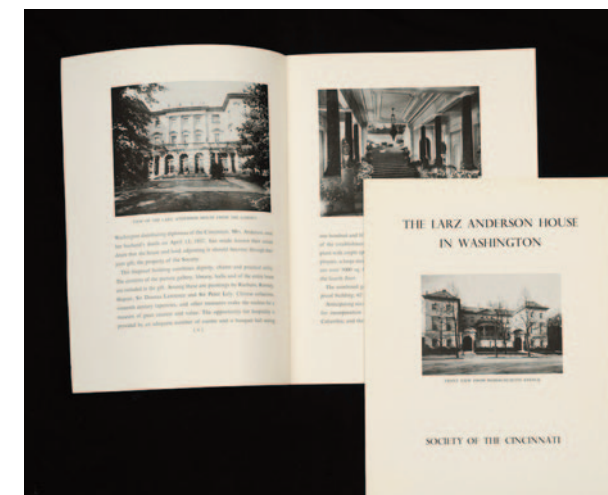
The Society held its first organized dinner at Anderson House in 1940, its members seated at long rows of formal tables, criss-crossing the Ballroom. Following the tradition established by the Andersons, the Society also began offering their new home for multiple philanthropic events. The terms of her gift also established Anderson House as the Society's museum—the first museum in the country dedicated to educating visitors about the world-changing event that was the American Revolution. The already historic house opened to the public in 1939, displaying a growing collection of Revolutionary War paintings, artifacts, and documents amidst the original interiors and furnishings of the Andersons' mansion.

Society of the Cincinnati Eagle insignia owned by Larz Anderson

Tiffany and Co., New York, N.Y.
ca. 1910
Gold, enamel, and silk
The Society of the Cincinnati,
Gift of Isabel Anderson, 1938



"The Larz Anderson House in Washington: Society of the Cincinnati"
Washington, D.C., ca. 1938
The Society of the Cincinnati Collections



**COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT
WITHOUT YOU!**



Full Speed Ahead.....

WE'VE STILL GOT A BIG JOB TO DO!

OFFICIAL NAVY POSTER, INDUSTRIAL INCENTIVE DIVISION, 2-100

When the United States was attacked by the Empire of Japan, December 7, 1941, the Society of the Cincinnati had only taken ownership of Anderson House three years earlier. With no full-time administrative staff, and a board of officers off site, the house had yet to fulfill its potential as Cincinnati headquarters. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on Japan, December 9, the government leapt into action. So did the Society of the Cincinnati. Washington was a sleepy southern town before the conflict. The Pentagon had not yet been built. The population of the city, already straining at 764,000 the summer before Pearl Harbor, rose by 116,000 additional residents in four short years of war. In comparison, the most recent 2020 census records a city population of just 689,500.

Within weeks of the attack the Society made plans to lend their new home in aid of the country. By February 1942 a contract was drawn for the Navy Department to use Anderson House at no cost beyond its upkeep. It included provisions to move the antique furniture out of the mansion to create office space, storing it in the Andersons' carriage house—on part of the original property fronting on P Street. By February 17 a photo was published in the *Washington Times Herald* showing the first head of naval operations at Anderson House, Admiral H.A. Wiley, seated at a desk in the third-floor space that had once been Isabel's dressing room—now his office—overlooking the garden. The headline simply stated the new reality: "Navy Takes Over Larz Anderson House."

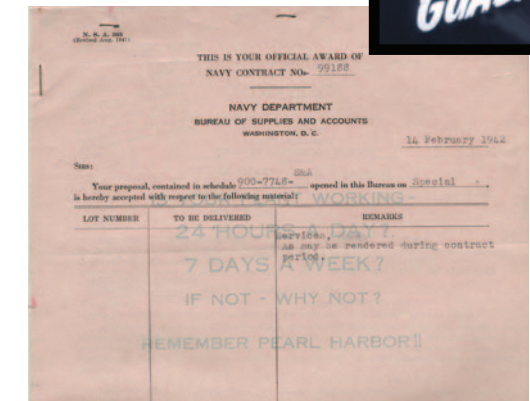


The Art and Poster Section of the Industrial Incentive Division, located at Anderson House, commissioned and distributed posters to boost the spirits of war workers.

The Motion Picture program, in the same building, produced and distributed dozens of films to spur war workers' morale with titles like *This is Guadalcanal*; *Your Mistake, Tokyo!*; *Now It Can be Told*; and *Invasion Nazi Version*.

The pink onion skin on the Navy's contract below, issued two months after the U.S. entered the war, already bears a motto exemplifying the public relations mission of Anderson House's new occupants: "IS YOUR PLANT WORKING—24 HOURS A DAY? 7 DAYS A WEEK? IF NOT—WHY NOT? REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR!"

the NAVY OCCUPATION



Navy Contract Nos.-99188

Navy Department, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts,
Washington, D.C.

February 14, 1942

The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

Couldn't Have Done It Without You! (opposite page)

Poster illustrated by Howard Scott
United States Navy Department, Industrial Incentive Division
Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943
The Society of the Cincinnati, Library purchase, 2023

Thomas and Alleta Sullivan receive five Purple Heart commendations upon the death of their five sons. Rear Admiral C.H. Woodward presented them in the Key Room, January 24, 1944.
Library of Congress



“THOSE SAME PARENTS WHO HAD GIVEN SO MUCH TO THEIR COUNTRY...CAME TO WASHINGTON TO SEEK A WAY IN WHICH THEY MIGHT CARRY ON THE FIGHT.”

Rear Admiral C.H. Woodward, at the launching of the USS *The Sullivans*, April 4, 1943

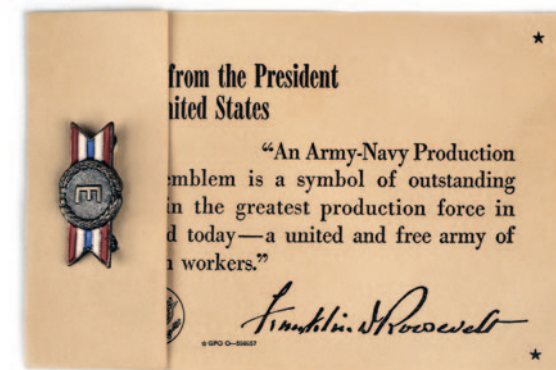
An event of the highest honor took place at Anderson House when Rear Admiral Clark H. Woodward received Alleta and Thomas Sullivan of Waterloo, Iowa. The Sullivans' five sons perished when the USS *Juneau* was destroyed by a Japanese submarine in 1942. Paramount News cameras captured the poignant moment in the Key Room when Woodward handed five individual Purple Heart medals to Mrs. Sullivan, who then handed each one to her husband, binding this building to U.S. naval history. The family's story was further publicized by the release of *The Fighting Sullivans* (originally released as *The Sullivans*), a major studio film by 20th Century Fox, which received an Academy Award nomination for Best Story in 1944. Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan toured the country, funneling their grief into the war effort, visiting manufacturing plants and shipyards on behalf of the Industrial Incentive Division. They met with Woodward twice at Anderson House, and again when the destroyer the USS *The Sullivans* was launched in 1943. Woodward had chosen the second-floor Key Room of Anderson House for his office. From his desk he looked directly at the mural Larz commissioned of the Spanish-American War, where Woodward had begun his naval career. The patriotic murals created the perfect setting for honoring dignitaries. Woodward also met with British industrialists touring the U.S., and with one group of American women representing various branches of the labor movement, including Maida Springer Kemp, a Black labor organizer who worked in the garment industry. Her biography tells the story of her return from England where she was the first African American woman representing the industry.

Purple Heart medals for Albert L. Sullivan and Joseph E. Sullivan

ca. 1944
Metal, plastic, enamel, and fabric
On loan from Kelly Sullivan



The bulk of Anderson House, from the basement to the fourth floor, was occupied by the U.S. Navy—the Society keeping minimal service rooms on three floors for their own administrative functions. The main tenant was the newly created Industrial Incentive Division, an arm of the Public Relations branch of the service. Formed at the outset of the war, this division encouraged improved production at privately owned industrial plants that manufactured materials used in the war effort. The Navy Board for Production Awards recognized businesses that increased their contributions of war material by issuing a variety of awards, including lapel pins and flags with the letter “E” for Excellence, to be worn or displayed as a matter of national pride. Another department, the Art and Poster Section, promoted the benefits of American businesses contributing their part to the war effort, using richly illustrated propaganda posters that lent an emotional wallop. Other Navy offices located here included the Magazine Section, Public Relations Division, Analysis Section, Navy Relief Society, Joint Radio Board, and the Motion Picture program.



U.S. Army-Navy E Award pin and presentation card

ca. 1942-1945
Metal and enamel pin; Paper and ink card
The Society of the Cincinnati, Museum purchase, 2022



Admiral Woodward met with various business leaders in his Key Room office throughout the war years.

Library of Congress



U.S. Army-Navy E Award pennant

American
ca. 1942-1945
Wool and ink
The Society of the Cincinnati Collections

“BENEATH ALL THE FANFARE, LIKE A STEEL WIRE INSIDE A SILKEN THREAD, RUNS A KIND OF LIFE-OR-DEATH AWARENESS THAT FOREIGN POLICY IS MADE BY HUMAN BEINGS, WITH FEELINGS THAT CAN BE SOOTHED OR FLATTERED, BRUISED OR LACERATED.”

Wiley T. Buchanan, Jr., U.S. Chief of Protocol, *Red Carpet at the White House* (Dutton, 1964)

Clockwise from top left: Queen Juliana of the Netherlands and Prince Bernhard arrive at the front door, 1951. Harry S. Truman Library & Museum

Shirley Temple Black, ambassador to Ghana, and Billy Graham in the Ballroom, 1976. Library of Congress

The arrival of Nikita Khrushchev, 1959. Library of Congress

Liberia's first lady, Victoria Tolbert, poses with President and Mrs. Ford in the foyer, 1976. Library of Congress

Wiley Buchanan greets President and Mrs. Frondizi of Argentina and other guests in the English Drawing Room, 1959. Courtesy of Bonnie Matheson

A motorcycle escort for the 1959 luncheon for Soviet Premier Khrushchev lines Massachusetts Avenue. Library of Congress

King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece under the porte cochère, 1953. Library of Congress

President Charles de Gaulle of France, with his wife and Mrs. Christian Herter in the garden, 1960. Library of Congress



from PRINCES to PRIME MINISTERS

A top hat worn on state occasions by U.S. Chief of Protocol Wiley T. Buchanan, and opera gloves worn by his wife, Ruth, who acted as hostess at numerous state dinners held at Anderson House.

Top hat

Herbert Johnson, London, England
Mid-20th century
Silk, cotton, and leather

Both items on loan from Mrs. Bonnie B. Matheson

Opera gloves

Paris, France
Mid-20th century
Leather and pearls

At war's end in 1945, the Society once again took over its house, offering it for official government entertaining. Parties held at Anderson House always made the newspapers, and often included the presence of a sitting president, vice president, cabinet member, or congressman. The U.S. Department of State had begun borrowing Anderson House for official state visits before the war, including that of the king and queen of Siam in 1931 and the Argentine minister of foreign affairs in 1941. From the late 1940s into the 1970s, State Department events took place regularly, attended by heads of state, foreign ministers, and other government officials. The State Department Reception Rooms had yet to be built, and when they were completed in the late 1950s, their modern design didn't suit the needs of most diplomats. The *New York Times* reported that curator Clement Conger referred to the new rooms in the glass and chrome

tower as “motel modern” before he led the renovation transforming them into the beautiful spaces filled with eighteenth-century antiques that we know today.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the greatest use of Anderson House by the State Department, usually for formal dinners hosted for, and by, heads of state. Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower's administrations were the most active, hosting an official state event on the average of once a month. For social and personal occasions, Truman alone visited at least eight times, including his sixty-fifth birthday party in 1949, covered by *Time* magazine under the headline: “Pink Frosting and Champagne.” They reported “the President of the United States sat beaming before a heap of ten-cent-store toys and a big pink and gold cake topped by three candles.” After toasts, he

“strolled to the piano himself, rendered a competent Paderewski *Minuet in G* and a work of Chopin.” Richard Nixon was photographed here even more often over the years, attending weddings and receptions, including during his years as president. He was one of nine U.S. presidents who have been entertained at Anderson House.



Ruth Buchanan, wife of U.S. Chief of Protocol Wiley T. Buchanan, reads the dinner table for Argentina's President Arturo Frondizi in the Ballroom at Anderson House, 1959. Courtesy of Bonnie Matheson



Every State Department event held at Anderson House was covered by local and often national press who would mail photographic prints to newspapers around the country. The details of the event were typed in the margins of the photo or on the back of the print, should any paper want to run them. If it's a slow news day in Minneapolis, the vice president toasting the king of Morocco at Anderson House just might make the morning *Tribune*.



Left: The typical State Department dinners at Anderson House began with a staged photo opportunity in the second-floor English Drawing Room—ferns, flags, and lights brought in to add atmosphere. Left to right: President Arturo Frondizi of Argentina, Mrs. Dulles, and Mrs. Frondizi wait as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles consults with Chief of Protocol Wiley T. Buchanan.

Below, the U-shaped table in the Ballroom called for placement of the highest ranking guests and their hosts in front of the fireplace, under the portrait of Larz Anderson in diplomatic uniform. The size of the candelabra and the importance of one's role each decreased the further away they were positioned from the guests of honor. Both images were photographed by *LIFE* magazine, January 1959. Both images courtesy of Bonnie Matheson



Library image at right: Even the Society's own events included ambassadors—both the social and official kind. The Thanksgiving Eve Ball of 1959 was a milestone in fundraising for the museum acquisitions fund. Mrs. Herbert May (Marjorie Merriweather Post) served as chair, and famed "Hostess with the Mostest" Perle Mesta was among the guests. Mrs. Mesta served as U.S. minister to Luxembourg from 1949 to 1953, succeeded in her post by Wiley Buchanan. Guests came from dinners held around the city, a lucky few having been invited to the Dining Room at Anderson House. The receiving line opened at 10:30 pm, and a buffet breakfast was served from midnight to 1:00 am. Mrs. May at left, Mrs. Mesta at right. Getty Images

Even renowned ambassadors weren't always known for getting along. The Thanksgiving ball planning caused one Society member to write: "Wouldn't it be better to substitute for Mrs. Mesta some other distinguished American who is based outside of Washington? This would give Mrs. May complete domination of the local scene. I am fearful there might be some conflict between these two noted hostesses." About Mrs. May's 1961 post-ballet reception at Anderson House for Jacqueline Kennedy, the *Washington Post* reported, "After the performance the First Lady's party went to an elegant buffet reception [at Anderson House] given by Mrs. Merriweather Post May. The party was also attended by Perle Mesta, who supported Richard M. Nixon for President, but the two did not exchange greetings."



State dinners at Anderson House were usually held the night before foreign dignitaries were entertained at the White House. The president would typically not be in attendance, and the secretary of state, or sometimes the vice president, would host. Guests of honor would be brought to the front door by a driver, who would then exit the gated drive until their charge was ready to be picked up at the end of the evening. Just as in the Andersons' time, guests were taken upstairs for cocktails in the gilded reception rooms, as well as sitting for formal posed photographs, usually in the English Drawing Room. Bowers of live palm trees were brought in to frame the photos.

Dinner service was usually run by Washington's longest catering presence, Ridgewells. The Ballroom saw formal U-shaped table arrangements with the head of state seated next to the U.S. secretary of state or vice president in front of the large stone fireplace, with heaps of flowers in front of their table. The Andersons' antique candelabra was sometimes used atop the state table. Guests were seated in order of importance, leading away from the fireplace where the host and guest of honor were located. The less important your station, the closer to the kitchen you sat.

Many state dinners during the Eisenhower administration were overseen by the department's chief of protocol, Wiley T. Buchanan, Jr., and his wife, Ruth. *LIFE* magazine followed them in 1959, publishing images from their event for President Frondizi of Argentina—ranging from the official portraits being shot in the English Drawing Room to Mrs. Buchanan arranging flowers on her state tables. An ambassador himself both before and after his protocol post, Mr. Buchanan represented

the U.S. in Luxembourg and Austria. Forty years later, his grandson, Trevor Traina, a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, also served as ambassador to Austria.

On rare occasions, the event held was a midday luncheon, with one 1959 visit in particular causing consternation among Society of the Cincinnati members. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was the first Soviet head of state to visit the U.S. He was greeted under the porte cochère of Anderson House by newly appointed Secretary of State Christian Herter. Police motorcycles lined Massachusetts Avenue. The lunch was reported in all the papers, causing one Society member to write to his colleagues: "I realize full well that our Headquarters is tax exempt and we must be careful to maintain this status, permitting our Government the use of this property from time to time for affairs of state. And yet, ... I feel that it is blasphemy to entertain in this house, the headquarters of an organization devoted to the support of the principles of constitutional government, such a character, ... as that murdering atheist Nikita Khrushchev."

"I VALUE THIS HONOR AND LET IT BE A HELP TO ALL OF THOSE FORCES—THEY ARE, IN MY OPINION, IRRESISTIBLE FORCES—WHICH DRAW OUR TWO NATIONS TOGETHER...IN ORDER THAT WE MAY DEFEND THE FREEDOM OF THE WORLD."

Winston Churchill at his induction as a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, January 16, 1952



Prime Minister Winston Churchill joined the Society of the Cincinnati as a member in his own right, through the line of his American-born mother. He was presented with the Eagle insignia of Society membership in the Anderson House Ballroom, January 16, 1952. The next evening he attended a reception in the English Drawing Room, accompanied by his daughter, Sarah, and President Truman's daughter, Margaret.

Courtesy of Bonnie Matheson



The Thanksgiving Eve Ball

Photograph by Paul Schutzer for *LIFE*
Washington, D.C., 1959

The Society of the Cincinnati, Library purchase, 2018

"Program for the Evening"

Washington, D.C., November 25, 1959
The Society of the Cincinnati Collections

The Thanksgiving Eve Ball of 1959 was the first fundraising event held by the Society, specifically raising money for museum acquisitions. A portrait of Major General Alexander Hamilton, the second president general of the Society of the Cincinnati, was presented as part of the evening's entertainment. The Honorable Hamilton Fish received guests along with Mrs. Post, and French Ambassador and Madame Alphand were honored guests. Attendees smoked throughout the house—Society of the Cincinnati matchbooks with their Eagle insignia available for their use.





Society of the Cincinnati member place cards

John R. M. Taylor (1865-1949)
 ca. 1945
 Watercolor on paper
 The Society of the Cincinnati Collections

events **SHAPING HISTORY**

For more than eighty years, the Society of the Cincinnati has used its headquarters building as a member meeting place, and a public museum offering daily tours and hosting lectures and educational events. Today these functions are run by its educational arm, the American Revolution Institute. The lower-level research library, largely built in the 1990s, is one of the largest repositories on the art of war in the American Revolution, with fifty thousand items that can be used by authors, scholars, and other researchers. The museum and library see thousands of visitors each year, and diplomatic events are still held with regularity in between the many Society dinners, public weddings, and other rental events. The embassies of the United Kingdom and France are regular hosts, and philanthropic affairs continue to hold importance.

Three occasions held during the COVID-19 pandemic closure celebrated event industry leaders and partners. In December 2020 we hosted free family holiday portrait sessions for event workers who had been months without any source of income. Later that summer, Beyond the Blackout I and II showcased African American event planners, florists, caterers, photographers, and other professionals while celebrating their contributions to the industry. And Art in Bloom DC is in its third year showcasing the art, architecture, and mission of the Society of the Cincinnati headquarters, while demonstrating the talents of the local florist industry. Anderson House continues its role in diplomacy and entertaining today, welcoming all people and their celebrations.



Place card holder

American
 ca. 1950
 Steel, silver, and gold
 The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Edgar Erskine Hume,
 Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia, 1951



President Ronald Reagan speaking in the Anderson House Ballroom

1983
 The Society of the Cincinnati





a HISTORY of DIPLOMACY

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1783, MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI HAVE SERVED THEIR COUNTRIES IN SENIOR DIPLOMATIC ROLES, AS HEADS OF STATE, SECRETARIES OF STATE OR FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND AMBASSADORS.

U.S. Presidents

George H.W. Bush, 1989-93
Ronald Reagan, 1981-89
Harry S. Truman, 1945-53
Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-45
Herbert Hoover, 1929-33
Warren G. Harding, 1921-23
Woodrow Wilson, 1913-21
William H. Taft, 1909-13
Theodore Roosevelt, 1901-09
William McKinley, 1897-1901
Benjamin Harrison, 1889-93
Grover Cleveland, 1885-89, 1893-97
Ulysses S. Grant, 1869-77
James Buchanan, 1857-61
Franklin Pierce, 1853-57
Zachary Taylor, 1849-50
Andrew Jackson, 1829-37
James Monroe, 1817-25
George Washington, 1789-97

Heads of State

Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, 2007-12
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of France, 1974-81
Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, 1940-45, 1951-55

Secretaries of State and Foreign Ministers

Gabriel Hanotaux, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1894-98
Hamilton Fish, U.S. Secretary of State, 1869-77
James Buchanan, U.S. Secretary of State, 1845-49
Louis McLane, U.S. Secretary of State, 1833-34

Edward Livingston, U.S. Secretary of State, 1831-33
James Monroe, U.S. Secretary of State, 1811-17
Timothy Pickering, U.S. Secretary of State, 1795-1800
Charles Gravier de Vergennes, French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1774-87

Ambassadors

Nicolas de La Grandville, E.U. Ambassador to Norway, 2021-Present
Philippe Etienne, French Ambassador to the U.S., 2019-23
Trevor Dow Traina, U.S. Ambassador to Austria, 2018-21
Hadelin de la Tour-du-Pin, French Ambassador to Monaco, 2014-16
Charles Hammerman Rivkin, U.S. Ambassador to France and Monaco, 2009-13
François Delattre, French Ambassador to Canada, 2008-11, and the U.S., 2011-14
Jean de Ponton d'Amécourt, French Ambassador to Afghanistan, 2008-11
Robert Joseph, U.S. Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation, 2005-07
Jean-David Levitte, French Ambassador to the U.S., 2002-07
Howard Harden Leach, U.S. Ambassador to France, 2001-05
Rust Macpherson Deming, U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, 2000-03
Pierre Vimont, French Ambassador to the E.U., 1999-2002, and the U.S., 2007-10
Michel Lunven, French Ambassador to Gabon, 1995-98
Benoît d'Aboville, French Ambassador to the Czech Republic, 1994-97, and Poland, 1997-2001

Bernard de Montferrand, French Ambassador to Singapore, 1989-93; the Netherlands, 1995-2000; India, 2000-02; Japan, 2003-05; and Germany, 2007-11
Immo Friedrich Helmut Stabreit, West German and German Ambassador to South Africa, 1987-92; the U.S., 1992-95; and France, 1995-98
François Bujon de l'Estang, French Ambassador to Mexico, 1986; Canada, 1989-91; and the U.S., 1995-2002
Jacques Gaultier de La Ferrière, French Ambassador to the Netherlands, 1984-88
Peter Scott Bridges, U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, 1984-86
Lionel de Warren, French Ambassador to Nepal, 1984-85
Edmund T. DeJarnette, Jr., U.S. Ambassador to Central African Republic, 1983-86; Tanzania, 1989-92; and Angola, 1994-95
Jacques Andréani, French Ambassador to Egypt, 1979-81; Italy, 1984-88; and the U.S., 1989-95
Thomas Reeve Pickering, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, 1974-78; Nigeria, 1981-83; El Salvador, 1983-85; Israel, 1985-88; India, 1992-93; and Russia, 1993-96; Representative of the U.S. to the U.N., 1989-92
Gérard Le Saige de La Villesbrunne, French Ambassador to Afghanistan, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zambia, 1972-76
George H.W. Bush, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., 1971-73; Chief Liaison to China, 1974-75
René de Saint-Légier de la Saussaye, French Ambassador to Chile, 1969-72
John William Middendorf II, U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, 1969-73; Representative of the U.S. to the E.U., 1985-87

Jean de la Chevardière de la Grandville, French Ambassador to Argentina, 1968-72
Wilhem Wachtmeister, Swedish Ambassador to Algeria, 1966-67, and the U.S., 1974-89
Gontran de Juniac, French Ambassador to Ethiopia, 1960-65; Turkey, 1965-70; and Belgium, 1970-73
Jean Daridan, French Ambassador to Japan, 1959-61, and India, 1963-70
Amory Houghton, U.S. Ambassador to France, 1957-61
Hervé Alphand, French Ambassador to the U.S., 1956-65
Pierre de Leusse, French Ambassador to Poland, 1954-56
Clarence Douglas Dillon, U.S. Ambassador to France, 1953-57
Henri Bonnet, French Ambassador to the U.S., 1944-54
Alexander Wilbourne Weddell, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina, 1933-38, and Spain, 1939-42
Robert Worth Bingham, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1933-37
John Motley Morehead, U.S. Minister to Sweden, 1930-33
Charles de Chambrun, French Ambassador to Turkey, 1928-33, and Italy, 1933-35
Paul Claudel, French Ambassador to Japan, 1921-26, and the U.S., 1926-33
Émile Daeschner, French Ambassador to the U.S., 1924-25, and Turkey, 1926-28
Joseph de Fontenay, French Ambassador to Spain, 1923-24, and the Vatican, 1928-32
Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Minister to El Salvador, 1920-21, and Romania, 1921-25; U.S. Ambassador to Argentina, 1925-26
Auguste-Félix-Charles de Beaupoil Saint-Aulaire, French Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1921-24

Henry van Dyke, U.S. Minister to Luxembourg and the Netherlands, 1913-17
Larz Anderson, U.S. Minister to Belgium, 1911-12; U.S. Ambassador to Japan, 1913
John Ridgely Carter, U.S. Minister to Romania and Serbia, 1909-11
Jean-Jules Jusserand, French Minister to Denmark, 1898-1902; French Ambassador to the U.S., 1902-24
Charles Page Bryan, U.S. Minister to Brazil, 1898-1902; Portugal, 1903-10; and Belgium, 1909-11; U.S. Ambassador to Japan, 1911-12
Horace Porter, U.S. Ambassador to France, 1897-1905
Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S. Minister to Russia, 1897-98; U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1898-99
Theodore Runyon, U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1893-96
William Potter, U.S. Minister to Italy, 1892-94
Edward Burd Grubb, U.S. Minister to Spain, 1890-92
Perry Belmont, U.S. Minister to Spain, 1888-89
George Hunt Pendleton, U.S. Minister to Germany, 1885-89
Wickham Hoffman, U.S. Minister to Denmark, 1883-85
Nicholas Fish, U.S. Minister to Belgium, 1882-85
James Watson Webb, U.S. Minister to Brazil, 1861-69
Robert M. McLane, U.S. Minister to Mexico, 1859-60, and France, 1885-89
John Potter Stockton, U.S. Minister to the Papal States, 1858-61
Henry Bedinger, U.S. Minister to Denmark, 1854-58
Peter Dumont Vroom, U.S. Minister to Prussia, 1853-57

Edward Livingston, U.S. Minister to France, 1833-35
James Buchanan, U.S. Minister to Russia, 1832-33, and the United Kingdom, 1853-56
Louis McLane, U.S. Minister to the United Kingdom, 1829-31, 1845-49
William Pitt Preble, U.S. Minister to the Netherlands, 1829-31
Henry Dearborn, U.S. Minister to Portugal, 1822-24
William Eustis, U.S. Minister to the Netherlands, 1814-18
Joel Barlow, U.S. Minister to France, 1811-12
John Armstrong, U.S. Minister to France, 1804-10
Robert R. Livingston, U.S. Minister to France, 1801-04
Rufus King, U.S. Minister to the United Kingdom, 1796-1803, 1825-26
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, U.S. Minister to France, 1796-97
James Monroe, U.S. Minister to France, 1794-96, and the United Kingdom, 1803-07
Thomas Pinckney, U.S. Minister to Great Britain, 1792-96
David Humphreys, U.S. Minister to Portugal, 1791-97, and Spain, 1796-1801
Jean Ternant, French Minister to the U.S., 1791-93
Curt Bogislaus Ludvig Christopher von Stedingk, Swedish Ambassador to Russia, 1790-1811
Louis-Philippe de Ségur, French Ambassador to Russia, 1784-89
Anne-César de La Luzerne, French Minister to the U.S., 1779-84, and Great Britain, 1788-91
Benjamin Franklin, U.S. Minister to France, 1778-85
Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, French Minister to the U.S., 1778-79

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Front cover: The Belgian Mission arrives for a three-week stay at the home of Larz and Isabel Anderson, 1917. The highest-ranking officers slept inside, while tents were erected in the garden for the lower-ranking men. Many countries involved in the Great War sent representatives to the U.S. to encourage their participation. [Library of Congress](#)

Back cover: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's motorcade arrives at Anderson House for a luncheon with Secretary of State Christian Herter, 1959. [Library of Congress](#)

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