

10<sup>th</sup> Christmas Review

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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December 6, 1993

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY  
CHRISTMAS PREVIEW

MS. CLINTON: -- given a big package of material. Let me just say a few things about what we've done this year and the kind of enthusiasm (inaudible) celebrating Christmas. This tree, which you may remember from last week when it came in, is from North Carolina. The decorations that (inaudible) 8,000 that have been sent in (inaudible) from all over the country.

In addition, we have used some of the traditional ornaments that were in the White House collection, particularly the large balls that were (inaudible) during the Nixon administration. We also have the White House ornaments, the White House Historical Association. Ms. Tyler (inaudible) this year's recent White House ornament which is kind of appropriate for (inaudible).

This new tree skirt which we had made by quilters who quilted the square for each state and occupied territory and possession and will become the permanent Christmas tree skirt while we're here. Every state is represented. Some of the ways that they've chosen to signify their states are kind of interesting. Of course, just by accident, Arkansas is sitting here in front of the three here.

As you can tell, around the room on the tables we have displayed some of the objects that we've received from the craft artists who were asked specifically if they wished to participate and kind of create a permanent crafts collection, American crafts collection for the White House which were especially appropriate in the year of the craft here in the country.

So we are very excited about the outpouring of the enthusiastic response that we got from artists and craft people from all over the country and then these volunteers

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who came to transform the house, who worked tirelessly for days and days under the (inaudible) organization of this whole project (inaudible) head White House florist who has been here for 16 years (inaudible), her professional staff here plus the volunteers, the dozens and dozens of volunteers who were part of this worked (inaudible) wreaths (inaudible).

I think we had over 40 volunteers (inaudible) brought with them the ornaments that are on the tree (inaudible). I hope you had a chance to see (inaudible) there and then (inaudible) volunteer (inaudible). I think for the first time (inaudible).

This has been an ordinary time. We were a little bit taken aback when we started having our first meetings about (inaudible) necessary. I hope to have a chance to visit the East Room, see the (inaudible) treasure and listen to the carollers that come to us from (inaudible) production of the "Christmas Carol."

In the daytime, this year's version of the White House (inaudible) which has at least 20 (inaudible) running around. There may be more. Roland (phonetic) won't tell me. He says I have to find them all. He brought (inaudible) yesterday (inaudible). He found it that attractive. We're just delighted to share this with you. I look forward to seeing all of you at our press conference (inaudible).

Q Do you have any (inaudible) from your own family?

MS. CLINTON: No. Those will be honored (inaudible). I would like to decorate the second floor. There's been some decorations that were put up by our friends (inaudible) really beautiful (inaudible) pull out all of our boxes (inaudible).

Q You truly decorate your own tree?

MS. CLINTON: Yes. That is a ritual in our family. It is something that the president and Chelsea (inaudible). We usually do it closer to Christmas. I haven't exactly figured out which day we're going to do it, but we all have to spend a lot of time doing it. We need a good -- lots of hours. In addition to (inaudible) a lot of little nick-knacks that we've accumulated over the years. Really, we have not (inaudible) possible to move (inaudible). We'll

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probably do it, I would guess, (inaudible).

Q Are you going to be here on Christmas?

MS. CLINTON: Yes. We're going to be here on Christmas.

Q Christmas morning, do you open your presents?

MS. CLINTON: Yes. We open our presents on Christmas morning. We usually (inaudible). We have an upstairs and downstairs so we always have -- we have a little tree upstairs and we have a big tree where we have the presents. This year probably we'll keep the presents upstairs. We're not going to have (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Yes, yes, (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Well, the apple blossom is there and the pine tree, and there is a violet, which we call it, (inaudible) right down here. That's signifies both our culture. There is a diamond which signifies the fact that we're (inaudible) diamond mines in North America. Then on the mantle are the names of our major (inaudible). Then the Tennessee one got right to the point on the small map of the states that says "Home of Vice President Al Gore." It's a matter of great pride (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Yes. We will (inaudible) upstairs.

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: There was, but we have used it all during Chelsea's childhood. I'm so glad that finally somebody invented those perfect stocking holders. Have you seen them, counting (inaudible), splitting the wood and whatever you were trying to pound them in. We now have a set of those (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

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MS. CLINTON: No, (inaudible) something we have (inaudible) kind of shop during the year (inaudible), but we are both (inaudible) last minute shoppers. In fact, he has traditionally to really avoid going out every Christmas Eve (inaudible) and they just get into a van or a station wagon and spend about six hours doing all the Christmas shopping.

So he said to me (inaudible) 40 minutes walking about the (inaudible) looking at everything (inaudible) in California (inaudible). At one point (inaudible) how am I going to Christmas shop (inaudible) Christmas shop. So we're going to go do it. I don't know quite how yet, but we're (inaudible). That's a big part of our Christmas.

Q What does he want for Christmas?

MS. CLINTON: I don't know yet. Every time I ask him he says oh, I don't need anything. I always come up with something that is a surprise. I will this year as well (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Well, I (inaudible). He is so lucky to be here (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible.) He always gets little toys and things that he can knock around. You know, of all of the things (inaudible) White House, (inaudible) because (inaudible). I don't know if you've seen it, but, you know, he's on a very long (inaudible), and in order to compensate for that he (inaudible) everything. He goes (inaudible) all the time (inaudible) spends the afternoon there. You know, he gets around, but it's not quite the same.

So we try to figure out what we can give him that will remind him of home (inaudible). There's a wonderful group of volunteers that help us answer his mail, about 90 women out there that do (inaudible). It's military retirees and (inaudible). I'm not sure.

Q Ms. Clinton, who (inaudible)?

MS. CLINTON: Well, it was all of our (inaudible). It came from conversations that we (inaudible) in trying to

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look at past Christmases there's always (inaudible). I remember seeing pictures of the "Nutcracker" christmas a few years ago. I knew it was the year (inaudible) honorary chairwoman of the American crafts year long celebration. So I thought if we could figure out a way to do it that would work, that's what I would like to do. (Inaudible) went into a lot of details trying to figure out how we could reach out and include as many people as possible. Actually, the letters asking people (inaudible) went out back in June. So this was something (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible) some of the pieces, and there are some exquisite pieces in the red ones and green ones, as well as the plastic. You can't see on the other side, but (inaudible) go look at some of the individual pieces. They are used in all kinds of ways. They are used as centerpieces, as (inaudible) talking about next year's (inaudible) celebrated (inaudible) and trying to figure out how to use (inaudible) really some of them out on display, (inaudible) some of them up to the second floor and use there on display.

Eventually, we hope to be able to have a traveling expedition of the American White House crafts collection. (Inaudible) through the Smithsonian (inaudible) rotating basis and maybe even send them around the country. (Inaudible.)

AN ASSISTANT: Thank you all.

(An interruption in the tape.)

MS. CLINTON: Well, good morning, everybody. We're delighted to officially kick off this holiday season here at the White House this morning. It's a very special time for us because we really love the holidays. A lot of times preparing for it, thinking about it, and the preparations for the White House holiday celebration began at noon when we decided that we wanted as our theme for this year to be the year of the American crafts. So 1993 has been designated as that.

So what we did was to identify about 70 leading craft artists in our country. We'd like them to make a contribution to what will become the permanent White House

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crafts collection in time to be displayed for Christmas. Around this room and into the halls there will be examples of crafts from every media, just exquisite. In addition to that, we've invited about 8,000 people to identify leading (inaudible) and crafts artists around the country to make a contribution of an ornament.

That's what you see (inaudible) which those of you who were here last week, this is the official White House Christmas tree. It is 18-and-a-half feet high. It is from North Carolina. Is anybody here from North Carolina? It's from (inaudible) Tennessee border. The ornaments are principally those that were made in response to our request, but there are some ornaments, like the large (inaudible) ball that says Arkansas.

There's a ball representing each of the states that were done in the Nixon administration. President and Mrs. Nixon asked that ornaments be made representing states. So we've added those to the tree plus the White House Historical Association ornaments for this year which is a small picture of Ms. Tyler whose husband is on that wall watching the tree throughout the year.

So what we've tried to do is to use these all over the house. You'll find them on the trees in the foyers. The tree down in the east entrance is filled with ornaments made by children from blue ribbon schools which are identified with the Department of Education. Some of those are wonderful and have little messages written on them. I hope you'll see the tree that's over in the west sitting hall which is a magnificent tree that was decorated in ornaments belonging to the (inaudible) brought up to actually be put on the tree by (inaudible).

This will become the permanent Christmas tree skirt. It consists of individual quilting squares made by quilters who are identified in each state. So there's a different take on how each state is represented. I think you've already heard (inaudible). But everything (inaudible) is included. I believe that for the first time (inaudible) magnificent (inaudible) in the entryway of the west sitting (inaudible) over in the area there which is on one of the tables. I hope you have a chance to see that beautiful piece of art (inaudible).

So we are really looking forward to the holidays

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here. All during these next weeks there will be an enormous amount of activity, lots of tours, including the one starting today with the senior citizens group. We have about seven or eight thousand people coming to the house. We are going to have entertainment for every event, the carollers (inaudible) from the (inaudible). I hope to go in and enjoy them.

Also, in the state dining room, we have a traditional White House (inaudible) made by the (inaudible) chefs here. This year is (inaudible). If you will notice, there are at least 20. I'm not sure exactly how many little (inaudible) toured all through the house. He hasn't had a chance to see anything because he's been in California (inaudible).

This is an exciting time for us. We're looking forward to entertaining all of you next week at the press party that we will have (inaudible) invitation (inaudible) sending out I don't know how many (inaudible) about 150,000 visitors (inaudible). We are delighted (inaudible).

Q What kind of personal family traditions have you had to sacrifice this year for the White House traditions, the things you're giving up that you used to do at Christmas and the things you can do despite the official --

MS. CLINTON: Well, we hope we can do everything. We always have our own tree which we will have which we decorate with our own personal mementos on it. We intend to do that (inaudible). We have several boxes of other things that we will put out (inaudible). We will have our family (inaudible) on Christmas Day here at our house. We also made Christmas cookies. We had the first batch last Saturday (inaudible). I helped by sprinkling on the Christmas tree cakes. We made Christmas tree cake cookies and (inaudible). My job is to only sprinkle the little things onto the Christmas tree (inaudible).

We have tried to do everything we've always done. The big question mark for us is probably Christmas shopping. That we haven't figured out. (Inaudible) really love to go Christmas shopping. As a tradition back home of kind of getting into the car (inaudible) sail off into the Christmas shopping hours of Christmas Eve. We never go on Christmas Eve. They spent a couple hours having a great time going from place to place seeing their friends and buying Christmas presents.

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(Inaudible) when we were touring around together -- it was late when we got back -- how am I going to go Christmas shopping? So that's my big challenge, to figure out how I can go Christmas shopping this year, have a chance to go and enjoy that. But otherwise, we're going to do everything (inaudible).

Q Is he hard to buy for?

MS. CLINTON: Well, he's hard in the sense that he always says he doesn't (inaudible). You know, whenever I say well, what would you like for Christmas this year, he'll say I don't need anything. I don't want anything. But I think (inaudible). Therefore, we have to be pretty (inaudible).

Q Ms. Clinton, while you are concentrating on Christmas (inaudible) talking about some of the (inaudible) that's been going on with the health care plan (inaudible)?

MS. CLINTON: No, (inaudible).

Q What is your hope for the country and the people in the country, (inaudible)?

MS. CLINTON: Oh, I sure do. I hope that (inaudible) this season, which often helps us to think about other people and to count our own blessings, will be sustained throughout the year. What I see as a growing sense of caring, compassion will take hold and really mark 1994 starting during this holiday season.

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Well, I think that there is a real recognition among many people that time to focus only on your own personal self interest and ignoring what goes around you and disclaiming responsibilities not only runs (inaudible) through any religious division that any of us can point to, but it also, over time, undermines the quality of life in society.

So it's gratifying to me to see the beginning of a real conversation about love and discipline, about responsibility and liberty. For too long in America we kind of have an idea that we separate what are really complimentary values, one from the other, and this integration where you take any issue that we're debating or

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the accomplishments of this past year, whether it be national service, passing the Brady bill. We can begin to see the intergrade of values. I think that's right in keeping with what (inaudible) conditional should mean and I hope will mean from now (inaudible).

Q Ms. Clinton, can you tell us (inaudible) what you're thinking about (inaudible) composition is?

MS. CLINTON: Well, (inaudible) a number of years one of many decorations I wear (inaudible) you will see a variety of them because I (inaudible) and put them on. Some are more noticeable than the others. Early this morning I showed Lisa my favorite ring and necklace. It's rather big. She suggested I save that for another time. But I have all kinds of Christmas symbols that I like to wear.

Q Was that a gift from your husband?

MS. CLINTON: Oh, yes. This goes back many (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: Here in the White House.

Q Ms. Clinton, how did the idea of American crafts come about?

MS. CLINTON: Well, this is the year of the craft, 1993. My friend, Phyllis George, is the ivory chairwoman for the year of the craft. I was very aware of that because I've seen a lot of publications about celebrating the American crafts. As we looked at the way Christmas was celebrated in years past in the White House, I noticed that there were often themes, like I was struck when I looked at the pictures about the nutcracker theme a few years ago.

So in looking for a theme that would tie together what we cared about and the kind of fun we wanted to have at Christmas, it seemed to us that highlighting American crafts would be a way to really show what's best about America and also have a beautiful Christmas filled with a lot of the symbols of the season.

Q The angel (inaudible). Could you tell us about that?

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MS. CLINTON: Well, I wanted some kind of unifying theme that would talk about the season. We discussed a variety, bells, (inaudible), snowmen, something (inaudible) Santa Claus, but it was hard to think about how you could have a broad variety. One of the people who works with Ann (inaudible) in the social office suggested angels. I thought that was a great idea.

As you can tell, we (inaudible). These are (inaudible). You can see all different types of media used to create these. A number are quite elegant and rather magnificent, and some are (inaudible) and down to earth. It ran the whole gamut.

Q In your opinion, (inaudible)?

MS. CLINTON: I think this has been a very good year. I think that our national stockings this Christmas are bills, our family of medical needs, motor (inaudible) and responsible budgets, working (inaudible), creating good positive results, (inaudible) and the Brady bill. So I think we have a lot to be thankful for. I hope by this time next year we'll have even more to be thankful for as we try to put the country on a right course that will enable it to take care of its needs and to continue to be the leader of American (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible)?

MS. CLINTON: Yes.

AN ASSISTANT: Thank you all, thanks.

(An interruption in the tape.)

MS. CLINTON: When I think about 13, I think about how hard it was. I wouldn't go back to being 13 (inaudible) anything, but there was a lot of fun. It was just a period of transition for all of us as we grow older. She's had a great time.

AN ASSISTANT: Thank you all. Got to go.

MS. CLINTON: Thank you. See you next week at the press party.

(An interruption in the tape.)

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MS. CLINTON: Thank you for joining us for the kickoff, the official kickoff of our holiday celebration. I know that (inaudible) what we've done and hope you (inaudible). As you can tell, the tree, the official tree is behind me, 18-and-a-half feet high, from North Carolina, a place called Rolling Mountain. It's right on the border of Tennessee.

It is decorated (inaudible) 8,000 ornaments that were sent in by people from all over the country. It is also decorated with the large balls you might see. Here's the Arkansas ball (inaudible) that were first used by the Nixon administration. They've been brought out because they were also from the crafts people (inaudible) disabled Americans. We've added those plus all that came in this year. Then the White House Historical Association ornament, which this year is a small cameo picture of Ms. Tyler whose husband is there on the wall.

Then, around the tree is the official skirt that we will certainly use during our time here which has a quilting square made by a quilter of each state and occupied territory and possession. It isn't an accident that Arkansas and Tennessee are right in front here. But what's fun is how different of the quilting artists chose to represent the states. So there's a lot of variety in the themes they chose to highlight.

Then, as we proceed, on the tables here and the tables in (inaudible) are some of what will become part of the permanent White House crafts collection. We, starting in June, identified around 70 of Americas leading artists and discussed with them whether they would want to contribute to the permanent White House collection.

It will be displayed for the first time during the holiday season, but which could be used in other places throughout the years to come. We had overwhelming response. Nearly every (inaudible) is represented. We will be having a reception for those artists on Thursday so they can actually see where their pieces are being displayed. We've just been thrilled by that as we were with the outpouring of interest and support from those who created the ornaments.

The little tree that you saw coming in, (inaudible), is displaying ornaments made by children from (inaudible) Department of Education (inaudible). Some of

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them are very clever. They've got a little message (inaudible).

Then over in the west sitting hall there is a tree that has ornaments that were made by some of my friends and neighbors in Arkansas that are magnificent, as well, and I think for the first time, the (inaudible) is displayed. Right as you come in the west lobby, there is a table there with (inaudible) on it (inaudible).

All during the weeks we have the tours that I have been told we will probably entertain about 150,000 people. We will be having entertainment from all over the country. There are carollers (inaudible). There will be people from all over the country coming to sing, and play, and dance, and entertain those who are coming here to visit, including all you press, for example. Then, in the state dining room we have the traditional White House (inaudible). This year (inaudible) bunch of little (inaudible) running around the White House.

(End of side one of tape.)

MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible.) So we're very excited about (inaudible).

Q How did you settle on the angel theme?

MS. CLINTON: Well, when we knew we wanted to use the American crafts year long celebration, the year culminated here in the White House, we wanted to find some new defining theme that (inaudible) could get to people that they send in their ornaments. We have some schematic (inaudible) presented all this. We (inaudible) around a lot of different things. It was very difficult (inaudible) stars, bells, Santa Clauses, snowmen. It was hard to think about how, if you were an artist, to be really creative with that.

So somebody in the social office who works with Ann (inaudible) give us a chance to -- you've got everything from a sock angel, here are two sock angels, to magnificent kinds of presentations to really funky sorts of presentations. It really let loose a lot of creativeness.

Q (Inaudible.)

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MS. CLINTON: Oh, I like all of them. I haven't had a chance -- my biggest concern right now is when I'm going to get actually to see all of them. When I was a little girl, my favorite thing would be to lie on the couch or even lie on the floor and look at the tree at night and look at all the ornaments and kind of move around so you could see all of them, even though they were from year to year the same ornaments. Still, it was wonderful to see where they were and how they were placed.

So I told my husband last night I may have to get a sleeping bag and sleep around this tree in order to be able to see every one of these ornaments, especially at night with the way that they're lit. But I'm excited. I think the American response to this has been just (inaudible).

Q Have you taken some of your ornaments up to your upstairs tree?

MS. CLINTON: No. Our upstairs tree will be strictly our personal tree. We are going to clean that up ourselves and we will haul out of storage all the boxes we moved hoping with our fingers crossed that things made it without being broken or (inaudible). Then the president, Chelsea and I will spend several hours putting them up, talking about them.

You know what kind of worries me to death? (Inaudible) people. I think every year Chelsea says no more (inaudible). There's pots and pans and little (inaudible) oh, look at this. So we do all of that. (Inaudible) from my growing up years and some from Bill's that we always look at and talk about. My family will be here for Christmas. So that will be our tree (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: We had a (inaudible) angel that (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

MS. CLINTON: I think most of our family will be here (inaudible).

Q (Inaudible.)

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MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible.) The people who have worked (inaudible), and I'm sure some of you know has been the head florist here at the White House for a number of years and really (inaudible) over 40 volunteers coming in and working 12, 15 hours a day for the last (inaudible). It's beautiful.

AN ASSISTANT: Thank you all. Do you want to join us for --

MS. CLINTON: Yes, please.

(End of tape.)

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