The President's Desk article from Parade Magazine



PHOTOS BY JACKIE MARTIN

At desk used by predecessors Teddy Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, President Truman discusses world policy with Secretary Acheson.

The President's Desk

The world's most important worktable reflects an average American man

AMERICAN EXECUTIVES, the most desk-minded in the world, have never been able to agree what, if anything, belongs on top of their worktables. Sturdily devoted to the belief that the desk reflects the man, they have either kept them self-consciously business-like, or littered them in extrovert frenzy with gadgets, gimmicks, souvenirs and mottoes.

Most important desk in the nation, and in one way or another influencing desk-owners everywhere, is a time-worn, fire-scarred, repainted seven-footer that has served every President with the exception of F.D.R. since the days of Teddy Roosevelt.

If the desk reflects the man, President Truman is a sentimentalist, family man, patriot, joiner, clock-watcher, and automaton with enough frugal practicality to make him cherish the give-away calendars handed out by business firms.

Placed in orderly rows around his desk blotter are such disparate items as a totem pole, telephone, four clocks (out of six in the room), two American flags, a picture of his wife, a gold Shriners' membership plaque, an autographed photo by Mark Twain ("Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest"), a piece of granite from Mt. McKinley, a vase of flowers, a toy donkey, five calendars (one for last year), an appointment pad, scissors, letter opener, two barometers, a thermometer, lamp, three fountain pen sets, two ink bottles (one with white ink), a date stamp, a battered ice-water bottle, an engagement schedule, and two books labeled "Staff" and "Cabinet." A bench at his back holds a radio, and a table holds the overflow from his desk, mostly family photographs.

Of all the most interesting is the battered old ice-water vacuum pitcher, which belonged to F.D.R. The new President sentimentally asked to keep when all other F.D.R. personal effects were sent to Hyde Park for safekeeping. It's a tie with the pas

"Neat, cluttered, but not gaudy" seems guiding principle of Truman's desk. F.D.R. had more personal items, including stamp album.

Opposite desk is Washington portrait. Globe was used by Gen. Eisenhower in war.

Table behind President's desk bears pictures of his mother, Mrs. Truman and daughter Margaret; also water bottle and Army radio.

8 PARADE MAY 22, 1949

Description
A photo of a page from a Parade Magazine article about the President's desk. In the top picture, President Harry S. Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson are talking at his desk. From left to right on the bottom portion of the page, there is a back view of the desk, George Washington's portrait and the Eisenhower globe, and the credenza behind the desk with photos of Mrs. Truman, Margaret Truman, and Truman's mother Mrs. Martha Truman.

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People Pictured Acheson, Dean, 1893-1971 Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972

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