

White House journal features alumna's research

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(Photo from Washington.org)

Research from Tulane University alumna Lee Farrow's book, [*Alexis in America: A Russian Grand Duke's Tour, 1871-1872*](#), is featured in the latest issue of a quarterly journal distributed by the White House Historical Association.

The publication, [*White House History*](#), features articles on the history, architecture, fine and decorative arts, and gardens and grounds of the presidential dwelling, as well as the stories of those who have lived and worked in the White House. In Vol. 46 of the journal, a slew of interesting people who have visited the White House "from the perspectives of a tourist, scholar, invited guest, royal caller, and head of state" are highlighted.

Farrow's chapter explores a White House visit by the Grand Duke Alexis Romanov of Russia.

Romanov also has an enigmatic connection to Mardi Gras, explained Farrow. Legend says that Romanov came to Louisiana to follow a burlesque performer and that the founders of the local Mardi Gras threw a celebration in 1872 in his honor.

Farrow said she became interested in Romanov while in graduate school at Tulane University, where she earned a master's degree and a doctorate in history and Russian history.

"[His visit] features the last hurrah of good relations between Russia and the U.S. before things started going sour," said Farrow, who is a professor of history at Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama. "It's a fantastic story that never had been written."

Because Romanov's trip was so unexplored, Farrow said the research felt a bit like detective work. She used newspapers, train tickets, family papers and ball invitations from his time in America as clues to uncover information about his trip.

Farrow is traveling to Russia to speak in multiple venues including the Kunstammer, one of the oldest museums in Russia, about *Alexis in America* and other works.

"I visited that museum my first time in Russia, and now I'm going to be speaking there," Farrow said.

Russia is not the only destination in Farrow's traveling plans. She also has been invited to a Smithsonian museum in Washington, D.C., to discuss another of her books, *Seward's Folly: A New Look at the Alaska Purchase*. This year is the 150th anniversary of the Alaska purchase by the United States.