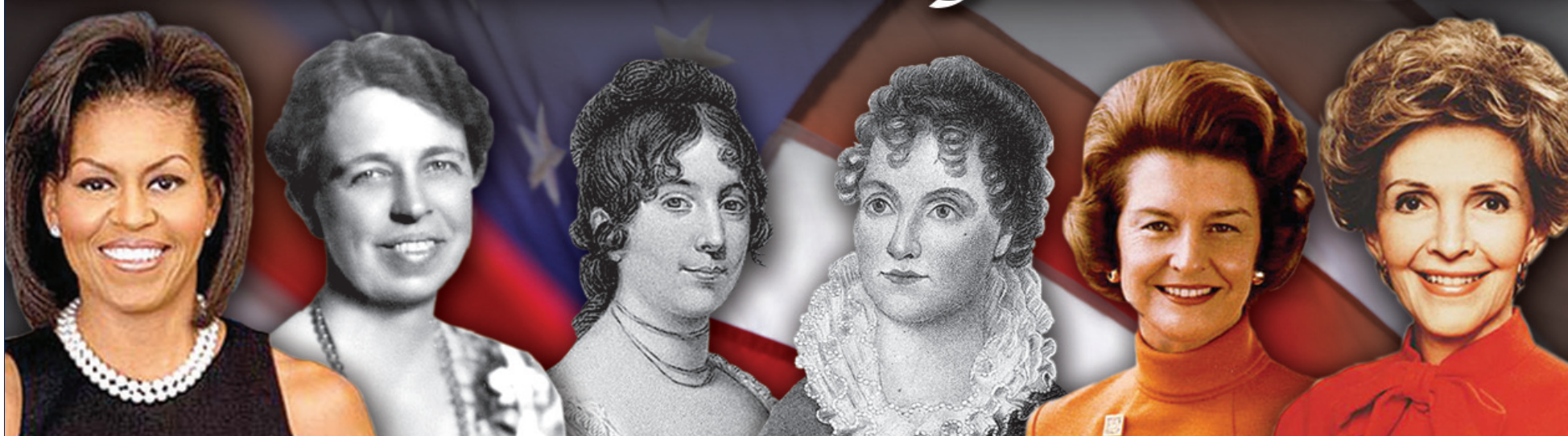




First Ladies of America



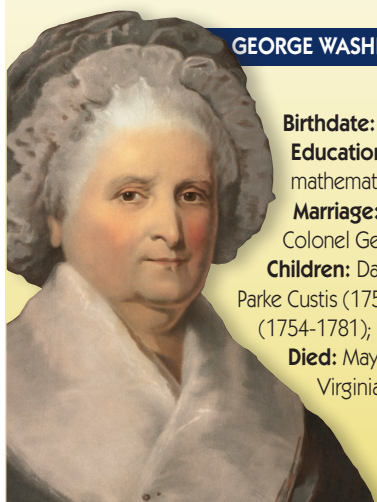
Dolley Madison was the fourth presidential wife to serve alongside a man elected to our country's highest office. When she died in 1849, it is said President Zachary Taylor eulogized her, saying "she will never be forgotten, because she was truly our First Lady for a half-century." His remark was the first time the title "First Lady" was uttered, and it became the title that all future presidents' wives would inherit.

In these pages you will find entertaining stories and facts about the ladies who were in the white house during each of 45 presidential administrations. We hope you enjoy this educational section brought to you by the enclosed advertisers, the Maries County Advocate, the Missouri Press Association and The Joplin Globe.

MARIES COUNTY **Advocate**

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 31, 2018

Martha Dandridge Custis Washington



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1789-1797

Birthdate: June 2, 1731 in New Kent County, Virginia

Education: Tutored in reading, writing, and mathematics

Marriage: 1750 to Daniel Parke Custis; 1759 to Colonel George Washington

Children: Daniel Parke Custis (1751-1754); Frances Parke Custis (1753-1757); John Parke "Jackey" Custis (1754-1781); Martha Parke "Patsy Custis" (1759-1773)

Died: May 22, 1802 at Mount Vernon estate in Virginia

The title "First Lady" referring to the wife of the president was not created until several decades after Martha Washington's death, but Mrs. Washington was in all respects America's original first lady.

Admired by the general public, she was deeply revered by veterans of the Revolutionary War. They called her "Lady Washington." Soldiers remembered how Mrs. Washington served them during the worst days of the conflict. She frequently stayed with her husband at his headquarters and looked after him and his troops. At Valley Forge throughout the terrible winter of 1778, Mrs. Washington cared for the ill, comforted the dying and sewed coats and socks for the freezing men.

Mrs. Washington was warm and gracious, but she didn't enjoy being famous. Her official responsibilities were dictated by the president's

secretary, who established strict rules of protocol. Having her official life so rigidly defined was difficult for Mrs. Washington, but throughout her husband's presidency, she exemplified the unselfish service that would inspire future first ladies.

Barely 5 feet tall, Mrs. Washington was born into a wealthy, socially elite Virginia family and inherited great wealth upon the death of her first husband, Daniel Custis. She was skillfully supervising the nearly 18,000-acre plantation he left her and caring for her children when she met George Washington.

When George Washington became president, Mrs. Washington was aware that the United States, its first president, and the president's wife were being watched closely. The Washingtons agreed she should entertain in a formal style to enhance America's stature in the world. Mrs.

Washington held formal dinners on Thursdays and public receptions on Fridays.

When President Washington refused to run for election a third time, she was relieved and happy to go home to Mount Vernon. Once there, she seldom left. There is no record of her ever crossing the Potomac to visit the newly constructed city named after her husband, Washington, D.C.

After George Washington died of a throat infection in December 1799, Mrs. Washington predicted that "I shall soon follow him." She burned their private letters to protect their memories from prying eyes. She destroyed all but two, which she had placed in a desk drawer when her chore was interrupted. Before she was able to retrieve them, she died on May 22, 1802.

She and the former president are buried together at Mount Vernon.



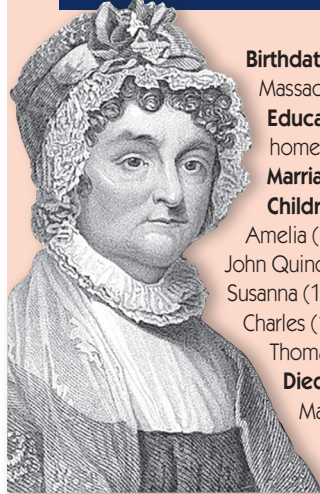
*NOTE: Except for Melania Trump and Michelle Obama all the sponsors inside were made by random drawing.



First Ladies of America

Abigail Quincy Smith Adams

JOHN ADAM'S ADMINISTRATION: 1797-1801



Birthdate: Nov. 11, 1744 in Weymouth, Massachusetts
Education: No formal education; homeschooled
Marriage: 1764 to John Adams
Children: Abigail "Nabby" Amelia (1765-1813); John Quincy (1767-1848); Susanna (1768-1770); Charles (1770-1800); Thomas Boylston (1772-1832)
Died: Oct. 28, 1818 in Quincy, Massachusetts

Abigail Adams greatly influenced the political career of her husband, one of America's Founding Fathers, John Adams. The couple exchanged hundreds of letters while he was serving in Philadelphia as a member of the Continental Congress and later as a diplomat abroad. Today, their letters remain fascinating eyewitness accounts of how the early government operated during a key era of American history.

Mrs. Adams was born in Weymouth, Mass., to Reverend William Smith and Elizabeth Quincy Smith. Her mother taught her and her sisters how to read and write, and under her mother's tutelage, the young Abigail flourished intellectually. She studied philosophy, Latin, literature and history, and by the time she was a young woman, she was as well-read as any college-trained man.

As the American Revolution heated up, Mrs. Adams was too close to the action at times for her husband's comfort. Taking her young boys with her, she climbed to the top of a hill where she saw the Minutemen's defense of Breed's and Bunker Hill in Charlestown. Later, when battle refugees poured down the road from Boston, Mrs. Adams opened her home to them.

At such time, it was difficult being completely responsible for her family, and many of her letters to her husband expressed the deep loneliness she felt. Still, she pressed the argument that the creation of a new form of government was an opportunity to make the legal status of women equal to that of men, and her letters became some of the earliest known writings calling for women's equal rights.

By the time she became first lady, Mrs. Adams was well acquainted with politics, but she found serving as the president's wife difficult and constraining. She worried that with her outspoken temperament she might say the wrong thing, and to some degree, she was right. Knowing full well that Adams consulted his wife on important decisions, some people mockingly referred to her as "Mrs. President." She ignored them, continued to advise her husband and continued to attend meetings of the House of Representatives.

She also saw her role as that of hostess, and she received visitors seated like a royal figure, etiquette she had observed in Buckingham Palace.

After President Adams left office, his wife was relieved to go home and focus her energy on her family, which now included many grandchildren. Mrs. Adams died in 1818 of typhoid fever, and John Adams died eight years later. They are buried beside one another in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1801-1809



Birthdate: Oct. 19, 1748 in Charles City County, Virginia
Education: Unknown
Marriage: 1766 to Bathurst Skelton; 1772 to Thomas Jefferson
Children: John Skelton (1767-1771); Martha "Patsy" (1772-1836); Jane Rudolph (1774-1775); unnamed son (1777); Marla "Polly" (1778-1804); Lucy Elizabeth (1780-1781); Lucy Elizabeth (1782-1785)
Died: Sept. 6, 1782 at Monticello Plantation, Virginia

Portrait of a young Martha "Patsy" Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson's eldest daughter who sometimes served in as White House hostess during her father's presidency

When Martha Jefferson died, Thomas Jefferson recorded his great loss in his account book: "My dear wife died this day at 11:45 a.m." Mrs. Jefferson was 33 years old. Overwhelmed by grief, Jefferson remained secluded in his room at Monticello for three weeks, often pacing the floor until he was exhausted. For many days that followed, he shunned company and spent hours alone riding horseback through the Virginia countryside. The Jeffersons were devoted to each other during their 10-year marriage, and he remained a widower the rest of his life.

When Jefferson courted his future wife, she was Martha Wayles Skelton, a young widow with a 3-year-old boy, living at her father's Virginia plantation. Her son died a few months before she and Jefferson married. With auburn hair and hazel eyes, she was described as beautiful, as well as being accomplished and well educated for her times. She loved to read, sing and play the spinet and harpsichord; she rode well, danced gracefully, and held her own in spirited conversation. After they married, Jefferson took her home to Monticello, where they lived in a one-room cottage until the main house was built. Historical records show that as mistress of Monticello, Mrs. Jefferson managed her household with care and was very capable in her domestic role.

While Virginia's First Lady, Mrs. Jefferson publicly supported the efforts of a women's society in raising funds for General Washington's Continental Army, and she joined prominent women in Virginia in donating necessary supplies for the troops.

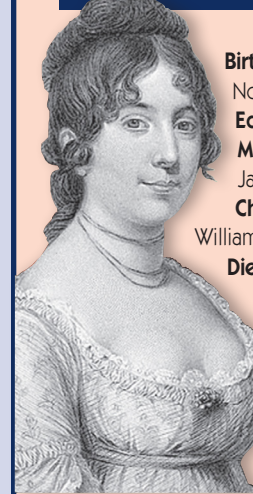
In 1781, Mrs. Jefferson was at Monticello with her children when British forces invaded Virginia. They fled to Bedford County, which was more isolated from the fighting. The Jeffersons' 16-month-old daughter, Lucy Elizabeth, died a few weeks later. Jefferson resigned as governor, came home to Monticello, and promised Mrs. Jefferson he would not leave her again.

The end of the war should have been the beginning of a new life for the Jeffersons, but Mrs. Jefferson's health failed. In May of 1782, she gave birth to her seventh child and never fully recovered, dying four months later.

By the time Jefferson entered the White House as president in 1801, Martha Jefferson had been gone nearly 20 years. Protocol, however, established that wives of White House guests could not attend official functions unless a woman received them, so the duties of White House hostess primarily fell to Dolley Madison, wife of Secretary of State James Madison. Additionally, Jefferson also called on his daughters, Martha ("Patsy") and Maria ("Polly") to fill in when they could.

Dolley Payne Todd Madison

JAMES MADISON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1809-1817



Birthdate: May 20, 1768 in Guilford County, North Carolina
Education: Unknown
Marriage: 1790 to John Todd Jr.; 1794 to James Madison
Children: John Payne Todd (1792-1852); William Temple Todd (1793)
Died: July 12, 1849 in Washington, D.C.

Noted for her charm, warm personality and disarming sense of humor, Dolley Madison's success as first lady was an important factor in her husband winning a second term in office. Additionally, her dazzling years in Washington set the standard by which future first ladies would be judged.

Dolley grew up in a strict Quaker environment. After spending most of her youth in Virginia, she moved to Philadelphia with her family when she was approaching marriageable age. Her family fell on hard times and Dolley ended up a young woman on her own.

In 1790, she married John Todd Jr., a Quaker lawyer in Philadelphia, and they had two sons. Life turned tragic, however, when Philadelphia was struck by an outbreak of yellow fever. Dolley's husband and infant son, Temple, both died, and at the age of 25, she found herself a widow and single mother living inside America's largest city.

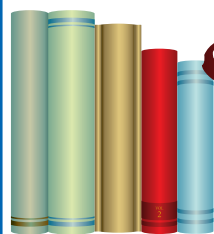
Dolley's fortunes changed again when she met Virginia Congressman James Madison. Madison was 17 years older and a longstanding bachelor. As the father of the Constitution, he was also one of America's most famous and revered individuals. He was enthralled by Dolley, and following courtship, they married.

During President Thomas Jefferson's administration, Dolley often served as hostess because neither the president or vice-president had a wife, and by the time she entered the White House with her own husband, she was well-known and adored.

As first lady, Dolley Madison initiated the first inaugural ball, and she quickly became known for her lively receptions. Her guest lists crossed party lines but her goodwill and charm usually kept people on best behavior. She was the first first lady to adopt a specific public project. She helped establish a Washington, D.C., home for orphaned girls.

Her most memorable moment, perhaps, is the brave example she set when the British set fire to Washington in August 1814. Before making her escape from the White House, Mrs. Madison removed numerous valuable items, including an irreplaceable Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington.

After President Madison left office, his wife returned with him to their Virginia estate, Montpelier, but she returned to Washington after his death and once again stayed busy as a hostess on the social scene. Upon her own death in 1849, President Zachary Taylor eulogized her, saying, "She will never be forgotten, because she was truly our First Lady for a half-century." His remark was the first time the title "First Lady" was uttered, and it became the title that all future presidents' wives would inherit.



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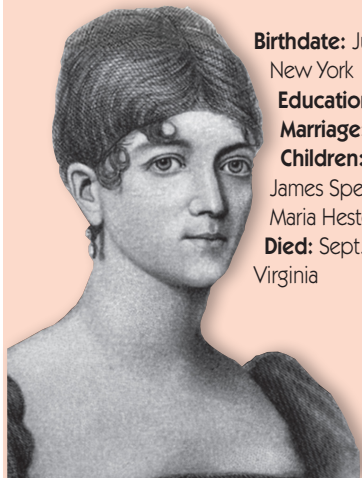




First Ladies of America

Elizabeth Kortright Monroe

JAMES MONROE'S ADMINISTRATION: 1817-1825



Birthdate: June 30, 1768 in New York, New York
Education: Unknown
Marriage: 1786 to James Monroe
Children: Eliza (1786-1840); James Spence (1799-1801); Maria Hester (1803-1850)
Died: Sept. 23, 1830 in Loudon County, Virginia

In her two terms as first lady, Elizabeth Monroe was not a popular figure and she never won the affections of the public. Reclusive and aloof, Mrs. Monroe is believed by today's historians to have suffered from epilepsy, a condition that would have limited her physical capabilities as first lady, but the public also sensed that there was another problem with her: she was a snob.

The daughter of a wealthy British officer and merchant, Elizabeth Kortright was born and raised in New York City. Her mother died when she was 9, and she was raised by her paternal grandmother. With raven black hair and violet eyes, she was considered one of the most beautiful and accomplished debutante's of New York society; so beautiful that when she began a romance with U.S. Congressman James Monroe, her friends said she could have done better than the "not particularly attractive Virginia congressman."

Elizabeth Kortright became Mrs. Monroe in February of 1786, beginning a 44-year marriage during which she followed her husband while he built a stellar career. Serving as a lawyer, national politician, diplomat and ultimately president of the United States, James Monroe's two separate appointments as minister to France had a great influence on Mrs. Monroe becoming a Francophile, a trait she was later criticized for in America.

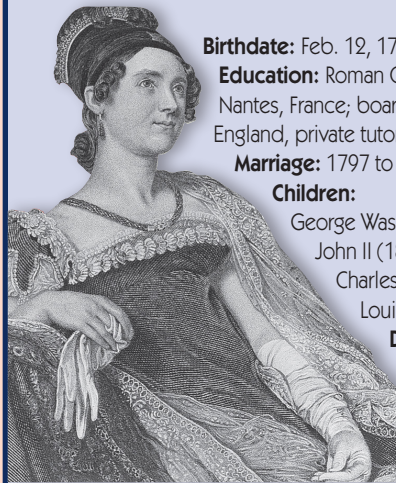
Mrs. Monroe first raised eyebrows by disappearing after President Monroe's inauguration, when guests expected to see her at the official reception following the ceremony. She also announced that she would not continue Mrs. Madison's tradition of making or receiving social calls. This offended foreign dignitaries and congressmen's wives, who looked forward to the visits and considered Mrs. Monroe's lack of interest an insult.

At first, the public speculated that lack of space might be the issue. The White House was still undergoing renovations from the 1814 fire, and the Monroes held formal presidential functions at their own home. However, observers began to suspect it was an attitude issue when Mrs. Monroe withdrew her support from a local orphans' asylum, and refused to invite anyone in the political community to her daughter's wedding, ordering gifts be returned with a no-thank-you note.

Mrs. Monroe was able to overcome some of the public's objections to her by President Monroe's second term, but she was never fully embraced by the public, nor did she embrace her own role as first lady. She died in 1830 at the Monroes' Oak Hill estate in Virginia.

Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams

JOHN QUINCY'S ADMINISTRATION: 1825-1829



Birthdate: Feb. 12, 1775 in London, England
Education: Roman Catholic convent school, Nantes, France; boarding school for girls, England, private tutor, London
Marriage: 1797 to John Quincy Adams
Children: George Washington (1801-1829); John II (1803-1834); Charles Francis (1807-1886); Louisa Catherine (1811-1812)
Died: May 15, 1852 in Washington D.C.

The daughter of an aristocratic American businessman working abroad, Louisa Adams was born in London while the American Revolution was under way. Much of her youth was spent in France, where her family had moved to escape the tensions between the American colonies and England.

When her father, Joshua Johnson, was appointed U.S. Consul in England, the Johnson home became a natural visiting place for Americans abroad. It was here that the young Louisa met John Quincy Adams, the minister resident to the Netherlands and the son of the vice president of the United States. Intelligent, educated, beautiful and talented, Louisa immediately attracted the attention of the bachelor Adams.

John Quincy Adams and Louisa Johnson married July 26, 1797, only to be faced with money problems. Her father revealed he was bankrupt, depriving Adams of the dowry he had anticipated, and leaving him to deal with creditors after his wife's family fled to America.

While the marriage got off to a rocky financial start, the ensuing years were not much easier. As the wife of a diplomat, lawyer and politician, Mrs. Adams followed her husband across Europe, the United States, and even to St. Petersburg when President James Madison named him minister to Russia. Over the years she had three sons, saw her infant daughter die, suffered numerous miscarriages, and was often alone and in ill health. However, Mrs. Adams was a dutiful and committed wife. Despite personal trials, she threw herself into an endless round of socializing and entertaining to help her husband get elected to the presidency.

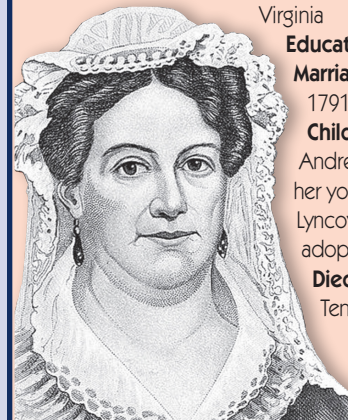
Once the couple attained the White House, however, Mrs. Adams' enthusiasm faded, and she did the minimum required of the executive mansion's hostess. Following in the footsteps of former First Lady Elizabeth Monroe, she limited entertaining. She was often alone and secluded in her room. Her health suffered and she experienced bouts of depression.

The Adams presidency mirrored what the First Lady was experiencing; highly discouraged by the political infighting that plagued his administration, President Adams was often in low spirits as well.

After leaving the White House, Adams served in the U.S. House of Representatives, and his wife worked closely at his side as together they took up the cause of abolition. Mrs. Adams survived her husband by a little more than four years, dying in 1852. She is buried alongside the former president in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Rachel Donelson Robards Jackson

ANDREW JACKSON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1829-1837



Birthdate: June 15, 1787 in Halifax County, Virginia
Education: No formal education
Marriage: 1785 to Lewis Robards; 1791 to Andrew Jackson
Children: Two adopted sons: Andrew Jackson Donelson, son of her younger brother, adopted 1809; Lyncoya, a Creek Indian boy, adopted 1813
Died: Dec. 22, 1828 in Nashville, Tennessee

After Andrew Jackson won the presidency in December 1828, his wife Rachel selected a white gown and white slippers to wear to his inauguration. On Christmas Eve day, she was instead buried in them at the Hermitage, the Jacksons' home in Nashville, Tenn. Seeming to have recovered from a heart attack that fall, Mrs. Jackson died suddenly on Dec. 22.

From the end of her life until the end of his own, a bitter Andrew Jackson blamed his political opponents for his wife's death. Trying to deny Jackson the White House, they had attacked Rachel Jackson relentlessly, accusing her of adultery and savaging her character. A woman from a respected family who had grown deeply religious, Mrs. Jackson had suffered a great deal in the months before her death. After her funeral, attended by 10,000 people from throughout the country—rich and poor, white and black—Andrew Jackson left for Washington alone.

Mrs. Jackson was a woman of the frontier, trekking from Virginia to Tennessee with her family in a party of 600 settlers at the age of 12. The migration was led by her father, John Donelson. A soldier in the Revolutionary War and a member of the Virginia Assembly, Donelson co-founded Nashville, and for generations Donelsons led the city in business and civic affairs and in politics.

At 17, Rachel Donelson married Lewis Robards, a landowner and speculator from Kentucky whom she later discovered to be abusive. They separated after several years, and believing Robards had secured a divorce, Rachel married Andrew Jackson, an attorney beginning his practice.

However, after later learning that Robards had not divorced her until two years after her marriage to Jackson, the couple realized that she was guilty of adultery under the law. They immediately remarried to fix the legalities of their situation, but it was an issue that plagued them for the remainder of their days.

When her husband won the election in 1828, Mrs. Jackson asked her niece, Emily Donelson, to live with them in the White House and assist with the first lady's social responsibilities. After Mrs. Jackson's death, Mrs. Donelson served President Jackson at his request by assuming the role of White House hostess. Only 21 when she moved into the White House, Mrs. Donelson was well educated and familiar with Washington society.

As President Jackson's acting first lady, Mrs. Donelson managed the domestic staff, supervised Jackson's slaves brought to the White House, made out menus and guest lists, and entertained guests. She also looked after the president's health.

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First Ladies of America

Hannah Hoes Van Buren

MARTIN VAN BUREN'S ADMINISTRATION: 1837-1841

Birthdate: March 8, 1783, in Kinderhook, New York
Education: Kinderhook Academy, Kinderhook, New York
Marriage: 1807 to Martin Van Buren
Children: Abraham (1807-1873); John (1810-1866); Martin Jr. (1812-1855); Winfield Scott (1814); Smith Thompson (1817-1876)
Died: Feb. 5, 1819, in Albany, New York



Although she died 18 years before her husband became president, Hannah Hoes Van Buren is considered America's eighth first lady. She is the first First Lady who was born a United States citizen rather than a British subject. The daughter of a farmer, Hannah Hoes grew up in a small community rooted in the Dutch Reformed Church. Her ancestors emigrated from Holland in the 1600s; from them she inherited her blonde hair and blue eyes. Dutch was her first language, and she never lost her accent. She was known for having a shy manner and a gentle, loving disposition, qualities that attracted the attention of Martin Van Buren, also of Kinderhook, when they were children.

Childhood sweethearts, they married in 1807 when Van Buren finished studying law in New York City and established a practice in Kinderhook. They were married only 12 years. Mrs. Van Buren died of tuberculosis at age 35.

During their marriage, as Van Buren pursued a political career and their family grew, Mrs. Van Buren led a busy, happy life. The Van Buren home in Albany, NY, was often filled with visitors, and Mrs. Van Buren joined the Presbyterian Church, as there was no Dutch Reformed congregation. Engaged in hands-on charitable work, she occasionally met resistance when more traditional members of her church worried that she might bring the "wrong kind" of people into their assembly. She was not deterred.

After his wife's death, Martin Van Buren never remarried. As president, he managed social events in the White House for the first 20 months of his administration. In 1838, the Van Buren's son, Abraham, married Angelica Singleton of South Carolina, and the new Mrs. Van Buren became acting first lady.

Angelica grew up on her parents' South Carolina plantation. During a visit to Washington, D.C., she met the president's son at a White House dinner with her mother's cousin, former first lady Dolley Madison.

During their honeymoon, Captain and Mrs. Van Buren had been presented at the royal courts of England and France. In the White House, Angelica Van Buren received and entertained guests in a manner similar to what she had observed in Europe. She was noted for her charm and grace, but the style she adopted in the White House created controversy, especially since the country was experiencing economic depression.

Angelica Van Buren's entertaining, so suggestive of European royalty, was scrutinized and criticized.

Anna Tuthill Symmes Harrison

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1841

Birthdate: July 25, 1775, in Sussex County, New Jersey
Education: Clinton Academy, East Hampton, New York; Isabella Marshal Graham Boarding School, New York
Marriage: 1795 to William Henry Harrison
Children: Elizabeth Bassett (1796-1846); John Cleves (1798-1830); Lucy Singleton (1800-1826); William Henry II (1802-1838); John Scott (1804-1878); Benjamin (1806-1840); Mary (1809-1842); Carter Bassett (1811-1839); Anna Tuthill (1813-1845); James Frindlay (1814-1817)
Died: Feb. 25, 1864, at North Bend, Ohio



Although she never made it to the White House as first lady, Anna Harrison was the type of woman who most likely would have influenced her husband's presidency in a significant way. Well-educated and intelligent, her years on the frontier as an army wife and mother proved that she had the stamina and fortitude to serve in such a role. However, her chance to be first lady was gone before it began.

Mrs. Harrison was born in 1775, a year when the American colonies were being torn apart by war and hardship. After the death of her mother, legend has it that her father, a Continental Army officer, disguised himself as a British redcoat in order to carry his 4-year-old daughter across enemy lines into New York to stay with grandparents.

As a teen, Mrs. Harrison moved with her father and stepmother to the Ohio frontier, settling on a 500,000-acre estate near Cincinnati. While visiting relatives in Kentucky, she met her future husband, a dashing military lieutenant William Henry Harrison. She was instantly smitten. Her father, however, disapproved of the match, primarily because he wasn't sure Harrison could properly support his daughter, but also because he wasn't certain the difficult life of an army wife was in her best interest. Despite his disapproval, the couple secretly married while her father was away on business.

In 1840, when the Whigs approached Harrison to run for president, his wife pleaded with him to decline. He was almost 70 years old and not in the best health, and she had hoped that he would live his last years in quiet retirement. After his victory, however, she found herself contemplating life as first lady.

In an unusual series of events, the Harrisons' tenure in the White House barely got off the ground. Ill and unable to travel, Mrs. Harrison did not attend her husband's inauguration. Mrs. Harrison was preparing to leave Ohio for the capital a few weeks later when she received the news that her husband had died from complications due to pneumonia. It was the shortest term in U.S. presidential history, and out of concern for Mrs. Harrison, President John Tyler signed into law the first widow's pension, a grant of \$25,000.

Mrs. Harrison survived her husband by two decades and outlived all of her children but one. She did not, however, live to see her grandson, Benjamin Harrison, win the presidency. She was buried beside her husband at the site of their home in North Bend, Ohio.

Letitia Christian Tyler

JOHN TYLER'S ADMINISTRATION: 1841-1845

Birthdate: Nov. 1, 1790, in New Kent, Virginia
Education: Unknown
Marriage: 1813 to John Tyler
Children: Mary (1815-1848); Robert (1816-1877); John Jr. (1819-1896); Letitia (1821-1907); Elizabeth (1823-1850); Anne Contesse (1825); Alice (1827-1854); Tazewell (1830-1874)
Died: Sept. 10, 1842, in Washington, D.C.



Poor health made it largely impossible for Letitia Tyler to take an active role in President John Tyler's administration, but when she became the first wife of a president to die while her husband was in office; many mourners who had never seen or met her lamented her loss and heralded her as a good friend.

The daughter of a Virginia tidewater planter, Letitia Christian met her future husband while she was in her late teens. John Tyler was fresh out of college, and studying law under his father, the governor of Virginia. Despite his respectable background, Letitia's family was not enthusiastic about the marriage but eventually gave their approval to the union.

Rising from the Virginia legislature to become a U.S. Congressman, Virginia governor and then U.S. Senator, Tyler built his career and national reputation while Mrs. Tyler raised the couple's children and managed their Virginia plantation. A financially shrewd woman, Mrs. Tyler made the plantation profitable and expanded the couple's land holdings. With her busy domestic life, Mrs. Tyler rarely had time to be a political partner to Tyler. However, after Vice President Tyler assumed the presidency upon the death of William Henry Harrison, it was ill health that prevented her involvement in his career.

Having suffered a paralytic stroke several years earlier, Mrs. Tyler began life as first lady mostly hidden away on the second floor of the mansion, where she read, knitted, and advised her husband and children.

Her daughter-in-law, Priscilla Cooper Tyler, enthusiastically embraced the social duties of White House hostess in her place. Mrs. Tyler did not withdraw from White House activities completely. She received visitors informally, and made one official public appearance when her daughter was married.

In September 1842, however, the nation and her family mourned Mrs. Tyler's death when she suffered a second stroke.



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First Ladies of America

Julia Gardiner Tyler

JOHN TYLER'S ADMINISTRATION: 1841-1845

Birthdate: May 4, 1820, in Long Island, N.Y.
Education: Madame N.D. Chagary's Institute
Marriage: 1844 to John Tyler
Children: David Gardiner (1846-1927);
 John Alexander (1848-1883);
 Julia (1849-1871);
 Lachlan (1851-1802);
 Lyon Gardiner (1852-1935);
 Robert Fitzwalter (1856-1927);
 Pearl (1860-1947)
Died: July 10, 1889, in Richmond,
 Virginia



Less than two years later, President Tyler married a woman 30 years his junior and younger than some of his own daughters. Julia Gardiner was the daughter of a prominent New York state senator. After her formal education, she went on a grand tour of Europe. When she returned to the states, she entered Washington's social scene where she met and received a marriage proposal from the widowed President Tyler. The couple quietly wed on June 26, 1844.

As first lady, the new Mrs. Tyler was beautiful and charming, and she approached her role as if presiding in the European courts she had visited. She rode about town in a carriage pulled by six white Arabian horses and was often accompanied by an Italian greyhound. At White House receptions she was attended by 12 maids, all dressed alike.

Mrs. Tyler had a serious, political side, however, and she was known to exert great influence on President Tyler. She was instrumental in drumming up political support for the annexation of Texas, and when Tyler signed the Texas Annexation Bill, he presented his wife with the gold signature pen, which she wore on a necklace.

Mrs. Tyler was only 25 years old when she left the White House, and she and the former president went on to have seven children of their own. She died in 1889 and is buried beside Tyler at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia.



Sarah Childress Polk

JAMES K. POLK'S ADMINISTRATION: 1845-1849



Birthdate: Sept. 4, 1803, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Education: Abercrombie's Boarding School, Nashville, Tennessee; Moravian Female Academy, Salem, North Carolina
Marriage: January 1, 1824, to James K. Polk
Children: None
Died: August 14, 1891, in Nashville, Tennessee

Perhaps nothing determined the course of Sarah Polk's adult life as much as remaining childless throughout her marriage to James K. Polk. Living at a time when a woman, especially a Southern woman, was defined by her role as wife and mother and mistress of her house, Mrs. Polk forged a different identity. She became her husband's political partner. Mrs. Polk devoted all her energy to his career and became an indispensable and influential presence in his political life, both before and after he won the presidency.

When Polk was elected to Congress, they moved to Washington and lived in a boardinghouse. Unlike other political wives, Mrs. Polk had time to befriend his Congressional associates, form alliances in the government, and help her husband.

Intelligent and knowledgeable, Mrs. Polk became well liked and respected in the Capitol. Her family's personal friendship with Andrew Jackson bolstered Polk's own relationship with the president and further advanced his career.

In 1835, Polk became Speaker of the House of Representatives for two terms. Ten years later, he would be elected president, and Mrs. Polk would live in the White House as first lady.

Mrs. Polk's personal history had prepared her well for the role she played in her husband's life. Her father was a wealthy planter, merchant and slave holder in Tennessee, and his daughter was accustomed to living among members of the upper class.

While a teenager, Mrs. Polk attended one of the few college-level schools in the country for young women.

The role she played in her husband's career, and in his presidency, was extensive. She managed his political campaigns, always served as his personal secretary, and sent him detailed political reports and advice when he was away.

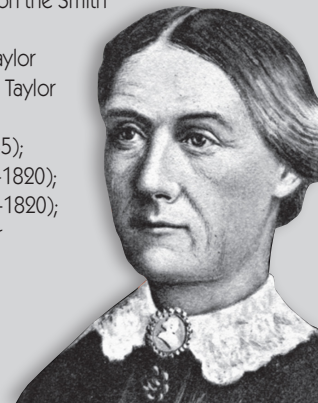
A devout Presbyterian, Mrs. Polk had no moral objection to slavery, but she did have a strong objection to working on Sunday; no official guests were received in the White House on Sunday and no official work was done. Music, dancing, liquor, and beer were also banned. White House guests were offered wine at dinner, but the president and the first lady did not imbibe. The first lady did allow one exception in regard to music; the Marine Band was allowed to play a new tune that came to be known as "Hail to the Chief."

In 1849, the Polks returned to Tennessee, looking forward to living at "Polk Place," their new home in Nashville. Three months later, however, President Polk died of cholera. Sarah Polk wore black the remainder of her life and rarely left home, except to attend church. She died in Nashville, still a widow, in 1891.

Margaret "Peggy" Mackall Smith Taylor

ZACHARY TAYLOR'S ADMINISTRATION: 1849-1850

Birthdate: Sept. 21, 1788, in Calvert County, Maryland
Education: Educated at home on the Smith plantation
Marriage: 1810 to Lt. Zachary Taylor
Children: Ann Margaret Mackall Taylor (1811-1875);
 Sarah Knox Taylor (1813-1835);
 Octavia Pannel Taylor (1816-1820);
 Margaret Smith Taylor (1819-1820);
 Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Taylor (1824-1909);
 Richard Taylor (1826-1879)
Died: August 14, 1852, in East Pascagoula, Mississippi



Peggy Smith, the daughter of a wealthy Maryland tobacco planter, married Lt. Zachary Taylor when she was 21 years old. For the next 40 years, as he rose from the rank of lieutenant to major general, she would follow him from one military post to another on the frontier, living in forts, log cabins and tents from the Florida Everglades to the Mississippi River. Only once did they have a real home.

The Taylors were both from the South, and both had fathers who fought in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Peggy Smith had grown up on her father's plantation.

As the country's most famous general and hero of the Mexican War, "Old Rough and Ready" Zachary Taylor was nominated for president in 1848. His wife, however, prayed that he would lose the election. After years of personal deprivation and service to the country, she had looked forward to his retiring from the military and their spending the remainder of their life together in peace and comfort. When he won, she attended his inauguration but she did not attend the two Inaugural Balls.

During her brief time as first lady, Mrs. Taylor occupied herself primarily with domestic duties. She supervised the servants and slaves, ordered the food for the White House kitchen and managed the garden and the dairy. Each morning she attended service at St. John's Episcopal Church across Lafayette Square.

From time to time, she appeared in the public rooms of the mansion in her official role as first lady. Other times she was present at various White House gatherings, but was unrecognized.

On March 4, 1850, wearing a formal gown, Mrs. Taylor attended the public White House reception to celebrate the one-year anniversary of President Taylor's inauguration. Four months later, the President attended a Fourth of July celebration, where it is believed he contracted cholera or typhoid fever. Five days later, he died.

After he died, she asked three times to see his face one more time. Mrs. Taylor was too bereft to attend his funeral. She remained upstairs in the White House, sobbing as she heard the funeral drums and dirges. Mrs. Taylor made no public appearances or remarks as a former first lady, and her private activities, except for her presence at her son's wedding in 1851, are lost to history. The Taylor family's personal correspondence was destroyed when Union troops burned Mrs. Taylor's house during the Civil War.

Mrs. Taylor did not survive her husband for long. She died in 1852 after a long life of sacrifice and hard work.

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First Ladies of America

Abigail Powers Fillmore

MILLARD FILLMORE'S ADMINISTRATION: 1850-1853

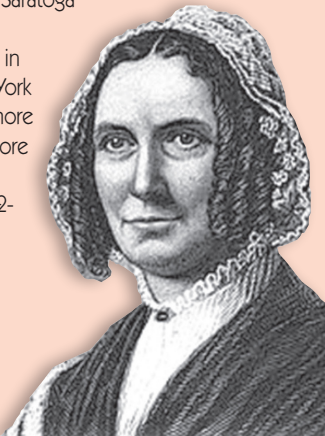
Birthdate: March 13, 1798, in Saratoga County, New York

Education: One-room school in Sempronius County, New York

Marriage: 1826 to Millard Fillmore

Children: Millard Powers Fillmore (1828-1889);
Mary Abigail Fillmore (1832-1854)

Died: March 30, 1853, in Washington, D.C.



Abigail Fillmore grew up in poverty, but she was more than prepared to be First Lady when President Zachary Taylor died and her husband, Vice President Millard Fillmore, took the Oath of Office.

The daughter of a minister and the youngest of seven children, Abigail Powers was 2 years old when her father died, leaving her mother almost destitute.

At the age of 16, Mrs. Fillmore began teaching part time at the village school; three years later, she was the full-time teacher and also taught classes at New Hope Academy nearby.

In 1819, she met Millard Fillmore when he enrolled as a young adult at New Hope to further his education. Fillmore was an avid student who essentially had educated himself by reading. They corresponded for three years while Fillmore studied law and was admitted to the New York Bar.

They married in 1826, and Mrs. Fillmore continued to teach until motherhood intervened. She was the first First Lady to have earned a salary as a married woman, and she encouraged her daughter, Abbie, to pursue a profession.

While her husband practiced law in Buffalo, New York., and pursued his political career, Mrs. Fillmore continued her education, learning to play the piano and studying French and horticulture. She also began collecting books for a family library.

Mrs. Fillmore developed an interest in politics when her husband was elected to the House of Representatives, and they moved to Washington. She attended sessions of Congress, followed the progress of bills before the House, and enjoyed political debate. When her husband became president, she was his counselor and adviser. Fillmore once said he never took an important step without discussing it with her.

As first lady, Mrs. Fillmore invited to the White House celebrated singer Jenny Lind and writers Washington Irving and Charles Dickens, who were her favorite guests.

She received official visitors on Tuesday, hosted formal dinners on Thursday, welcomed the public at Friday night receptions, and entertained privately on Saturday night. She also attended official public ceremonies with the President. An unofficial duty Mrs. Fillmore gladly embraced was helping those in need who wrote to her. Among her papers are many personal notes of gratitude.

Mrs. Fillmore is often credited with originating the White House library. She helped establish libraries in Sempronius and Buffalo before becoming first lady and the Fillmore's personal library grew to over 4,000 volumes.

Jane Means Appleton Pierce

FRANKLIN PIERCE ADMINISTRATION: 1853-1857

Born: March 12, 1806, in Hampton, N.H.

Education: Tutored at home

Marriage: 1834 to Franklin Pierce

Children: Franklin Pierce, Jr. (1836);
Frank Robert (1839-43);
Benjamin (1841-53)

Died: December 2, 1868, in Andover, Mass.

Jane Pierce never sought or desired to be first lady. The observation by one attendant at a reception that Mrs. Pierce looked "the very picture of melancholy" was an apt description for her entire tenure in the executive mansion.



Mrs. Pierce was the daughter of a New England Congregationalist minister. Born in Hampton, N.H., in 1806, she relocated with her mother and siblings to Amherst, Mass., to live among relatives after her father died.

Mrs. Pierce did not receive a formal education, but she was tutored at home and showed a talent for playing the piano, leading one instructor to believe she should pursue a musical career. Instead, she married Franklin Pierce, a graduate of the Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, where her father had once served as president.

From the beginning of their relationship, Mrs. Pierce despised politics and hated the Democratic Party, an unfortunate situation that remained a thorny issue throughout the couple's marriage. Pierce was a Democrat, but his wife thought that she could reform him. She was unsuccessful, and as her husband climbed the ladder of American politics, Mrs. Pierce resigned herself to being a political wife.

Like many women of the 19th century, Mrs. Pierce lived through the tragic experience of losing a child. She lost all three of her sons in less than 20 years and never fully recovered from the blows.

Her first child died as an infant, and her second child died when he was 4. Mrs. Pierce doted on her third son, Benjamin, but he was killed two months before Pierce was inaugurated in a train accident.

In shock and deeply grieving, Mrs. Pierce did not attend her husband's inauguration and the Inaugural Ball was canceled. After draping the public rooms in black and donning her own mourning attire, Mrs. Pierce retreated to her room in the family quarters, where she could grieve in private and write long letters to Benjamin.

With the exception of a few strained attempts to appear at formal dinners early on, Mrs. Pierce secluded herself for the first half of her husband's administration. In the second half, she became interested in the cause of abolition, occasionally emerging from her self-imposed exile to watch congressional debates and even offer political advice to her husband.

But while Mrs. Pierce had finally found an issue that she was passionate about, she and the president found themselves at odds. Over her clearly expressed opinion and in an attempt to avoid a national civil war, President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act giving new territories the authority to determine whether or not they would allow slavery.

Sinking under the weight of their personal and professional trials, the Pierces left Washington in 1857 shortly after the president's term ended. Mrs. Pierce's health was failing, and she died in 1863 after a battle with tuberculosis. Her husband followed her to the grave in 1869. They are buried side by side in Concord, N.H. in the Old North Cemetery.

Harriet Rebecca Lane Johnston

JAMES BUCHANAN ADMINISTRATION: 1857-1861

Born: May 9, 1830, in Mercersburg, Pa.

Education: Visitation Convent School, Georgetown

Marriage: 1866 to Henry Elliot Johnston

Children: James Buchanan Johnston (1866-81);
Henry Elliot Johnston (1869-82)

Died: July 3, 1903, in Andover, Mass.

Harriet Rebecca Lane played a unique role in the history of America's first ladies because of her youth and the circumstances under which she came to the White House.



Born in 1830 in Mercersburg, Pa., Harriet Lane was the daughter of Jane Buchanan Lane and Elliot Tole Lane, a successful Pennsylvania businessman. As a child, she was lively and energetic, and was described as a tomboy who enjoyed reading, "but only if she could climb a tree to do it."

Education was important in the Lane home, and Miss Lane and her brothers and sisters had the best education available in Pennsylvania.

After the death of her mother, she went to live with her uncle, future president James Buchanan, in Pennsylvania. His rise through the ranks of state and national politics provided the background in which she acquired the necessary attributes to serve as a first lady.

She finished her education at the Visitation Convent School in Georgetown, graduating in 1848.

Under her uncle's guidance, Miss Lane had the advantage of informal training in the world of politics. When Buchanan was appointed envoy to Great Britain in 1853, she traveled abroad with him. In London, she was received by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who were impressed by the gracious young woman.

By the time Buchanan, a lifelong bachelor, was elected to the presidency in 1856, his 27-year-old niece was fully prepared to take on the duties of hostess at the executive mansion. Miss Lane presided over formal receptions that gave the White House an almost royal feel. Her elegant fashion made her a role model for women across the country. After the gloomy White House during the Pierce administration, Miss Lane's vivacity swept through the White House — and America — like a spring breeze.

Although her girlish innocence and frivolity occasionally caused the president some awkward moments, Miss Lane was so popular that the press and public tended to overlook any missteps. But she had a serious side and worked hard to be a credit to her uncle's administration.

A passionate collector of art, Miss Lane transformed the White House social scene by inviting accomplished artists to visit.

Although she fulfilled her social obligations with pleasure and ease, perhaps the greatest achievement of her tenure as first lady was her humanitarian work. Miss Lane was especially moved by the plight of Native Americans. She abhorred America's treatment of them, believing it unjust and inhumane, and she became an outspoken advocate for their welfare during a time when few people considered it a worthy cause. Grateful Native Americans responded with the heartfelt gesture of naming many of their daughters Harriet.

After leaving the White House, Miss Lane married banker Henry Johnston and had two sons. Tragically, they all died, and she never remarried, instead devoting the rest of her life to charitable work.

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First Ladies of America

Mary Todd Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION: 1861-1865

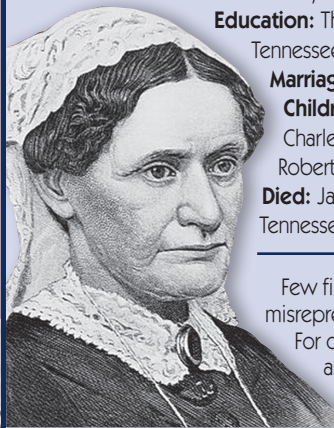
Born: December 13, 1818, in Lexington, Kentucky
Education: Shelby Female Academy and Mentelle's Academy, Lexington, Kentucky
Marriage: 1842 to Abraham Lincoln
Children: Robert Todd (1843-1926); Edward Baker (1846-50); William Wallace (1850-62); Thomas "Tad" (1853-71)
Died: July 16, 1882, in Springfield, Ill.



Eliza McCordle Johnson

ANDREW JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION: 1865-1869

Born: October 4, 1810, in Leesburg, Tennessee
Education: Thea Academy, Greeneville, Tennessee
Marriage: 1827 to Andrew Johnson
Children: Martha (1828-1901); Charles (1830-63); Mary (1832-83); Robert (1834-69); Andrew, Jr. (1852-69)
Died: January 15, 1876, in Greenville, Tennessee



Few first ladies have been as misrepresented in history as Eliza Johnson. For over a century, she was dismissed as a sickly woman who lived as a recluse in the White House.

Julia Boggs Dent Grant

ULYSSES S. GRANT ADMINISTRATION: 1869-1877

Born: January 26, 1826, at St. Louis County, Missouri
Education: Miss Mauro's Boarding School, St. Louis
Marriage: 1848 to Ulysses S. Grant
Children: Frederick Dent Grant (1850-1929); Ellen "Nellie" Wrenshall Grant (1855-1922); Jesse Root Grant, (1858-1934)
Died: December 14, 1902, in Washington, D.C.



Historians say that no first lady enjoyed her time in the White House more than Julia Grant.

Intelligent, witty, attractive and educated, Mary Todd Lincoln had all of the attributes to be a successful first lady in the eyes of history.

Unfortunately, her mercurial temperament, combined with personal tragedy and the national crisis of the Civil War, made her White House years some of the most difficult of her life.

Born in 1818 in Lexington, Ky., to Robert Smith Todd and Eliza Parker Todd, Mary Lincoln grew up in well-to-do but chaotic circumstances. She was the fourth of seven children, and after her mother died, her father remarried and had nine more children by his new wife.

Mrs. Lincoln received a quality education for a woman of her time, attending the Shelby Female Academy and later Mentelle's Academy, a local finishing school. By the time she met and married Abraham Lincoln in 1842, she was comfortable with politics and would later play a role in his political career.

In the early years of her marriage, Mrs. Lincoln raised her family while her husband built an Illinois law practice and served as a U.S. Congressman. When he received the Republican nomination for president, Mrs. Lincoln took a leading role in his campaign, accompanying him on the road and giving her own interviews.

She worried about her family's image as "Westerners," fearing that Washington society would not find them sophisticated enough.

As a result, Mrs. Lincoln overcompensated. She dressed expensively and redecorated the White House. Additionally, she was accused of being a Southern sympathizer because several of her brothers were fighting for the Confederacy.

Nothing could have been further from the truth, however. A firm supporter of the Union and an ardent abolitionist, Mrs. Lincoln's work to end slavery was her great unrecognized achievement as first lady.

She raised funds for abolitionist causes, and she was the first president's wife to invite African Americans to the White House as guests.

Personal tragedy did not help her tenuous emotional state. When the Lincoln's son, Willie, died from typhoid fever, Mrs. Lincoln was overcome with grief to the point she was accused of wallowing in her pain.

Throughout it all, her husband, though often exasperated, remained loyal and continued to seek his wife's input on important matters.

There was to be no happy ending for the Lincolns, though. After the president's assassination on April 14, 1865, Mrs. Lincoln's life continued in a downward spiral. In 1871, the death of her son, Tad, crushed her. In 1875, convinced that his mother was mentally unstable, her oldest son, Robert, had her committed to a mental institution. Mrs. Lincoln eventually secured her own release, but she lived the remainder of her life in poor health. When she died on July 16, 1882, in Springfield, Ill., she became one of the most tragic figures of a first lady that the country had known.

Contemporary research, however, shows that Mrs. Johnson, who suffered from tuberculosis, played an active if limited social role in the White House and steadfastly assisted President Johnson during the difficult days of his impeachment.

Mrs. Johnson was the first of the very few first ladies born into poverty. Her father was a cobbler and an innkeeper in Greeneville, Tenn. Her mother insisted she go to school.

The love of learning remained with her throughout her life, and she made certain her daughters, just as her sons, were well educated.

Andrew Johnson had also grown up in poverty. He had no formal education, having been apprenticed to a tailor at age 10. The Johnsons met when he came to Greeneville looking for work. Six months later, when Johnson opened a tailor shop, they married. He was 18, and she was 16, the youngest-married of all the first ladies.

In some accounts, Mrs. Johnson reportedly taught her young husband to read, write, and speak well in public; in others, she is credited with building upon his education, refining his rhetorical skills.

Whatever her role, Johnson credited his wife with making him a well-educated man. Throughout his career, she clipped newspaper articles she thought he should read.

President Lincoln's assassination the following month filled her with great fear for her husband's life. She arrived at the White House four months after President Johnson took the Oath of Office.

Because of her precarious health, Mrs. Johnson asked her daughters to assist with her duties as first lady. Mrs. Johnson supervised, entertained at formal White House dinners, and received heads of state, but she did not make public appearances.

During her tenure as first lady, Mrs. Johnson ordered that African-American servants in the White House receive financial aid and medical care, and she publicly raised funds in a campaign to build a large orphanage in South Carolina for children left without parents during the Civil War.

Several members of the Johnsons' immediate family, including five grandchildren, lived with them in the White House. Mrs. Johnson's sitting room became the center of family life.

She exerted some influence on Johnson's decisions, followed the impeachment proceedings carefully, and felt great relief when he was not convicted.

Mrs. Johnson occupied the White House during the tumultuous time when the country was recovering from years of civil war and bloodshed. She met her obligations graciously, in spite of debilitating illness. To Mrs. Johnson, returning to her home in Greeneville at the conclusion of her tenure as first lady was a blessing.

Climbing into the carriage when it was time to leave, she wept. Her days in the White House with her husband and children, following the trauma of the Civil War, had been the happiest of her life.

Julia Dent grew up on her father's plantation with all the comforts of wealth. At 18, she fell in love with Ulysses S. Grant, a young army lieutenant of no financial means. Grant's military postings delayed their wedding, but when he returned from the Mexican War, they married.

Mrs. Grant accompanied her husband whenever his military assignments changed, but after the couple endured a two-year separation, he came home and resigned his commission.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Grant returned to the military, first taking command of a regiment of rowdy volunteers. Four years later, he commanded President Abraham Lincoln's Army of the Potomac and served as General-in-Chief of all Union forces. In four more years, Grant was elected president, and Julia Grant was preparing to assume her duties as first lady.

Moving into the White House in 1869, Mrs. Grant's first priority was to make it a comfortable home for her family. The mansion was cleaned thoroughly, new furniture ordered, and smoking forbidden, except for the President's cigars. She then addressed her social duties as first lady and made the White House the center of Washington society.

Dinners became splendid affairs noted for their beauty and Mrs. Grant's gracious hospitality. In addition to entertaining formally, Mrs. Grant held Tuesday afternoon receptions that were open to "any and all" in Washington. When asked if "colored people" were to be admitted during her receptions, the first lady made her position clear to the White House staff: "Admit all."

The most glamorous social event orchestrated by the first lady was the 1874 wedding of the Grants' daughter, Nellie. The wedding was covered extensively in the newspapers, with one paper featuring a 12-page wedding insert that sold out as fast as copies could be printed.

While Julia Grant thrived in her role as the White House hostess, she played much less of a political role in her husband's administration. President Grant did not discuss politics with her, and he did not consult her when he decided not to seek a third term, knowing his decision would upset his wife.

After leaving the White House, Mrs. Grant wrote her memoirs, a first for a former first lady. The combination of her vivacious personality and a new journalistic phase in which reporters focused more on Washington marked a turning point for future first ladies; from then on, they were increasingly recognized and criticized, and the role would evolve until they eventually emerged as national leaders.

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First Ladies of America

Lucy Ware Webb Hayes

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES ADMINISTRATION: 1877-1881



Born: August 28, 1831, in Chillicothe, Ohio
Education: Ohio Wesleyan, Delaware, Ohio; Wesleyan Female College, Cincinnati, Ohio
Marriage: 1852 to Rutherford Birchard Hayes
Children: Birchard Austin, (1853-1926); Webb Cook, (1856-1934); Rutherford (1858-1927); Joseph Thompson (1861-63); George Cook (1864-66); Frances "Fanny" (1867-1950); Scott Russell (1871-1923); Manning Force Hayes (1873-74)
Died: June 25, 1889, in Fremont, Ohio

Before she became a first lady, Lucy Webb had formed strong opinions about certain aspects of American life. She loathed slavery and disliked alcohol, and her education and intelligence led many Americans to believe that she would become an activist first lady.

In the White House, Lucy Hayes exhibited her belief that the role of first lady was a private one in a public setting rather than a public role to be carried out before the watchful eyes of the nation.

Born in Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1831, Mrs. Hayes grew up in a religious and reform-minded family that shaped her views from early on in life. Two of her aunts participated in the emerging feminist movement, her grandfather supported temperance, and her parents were abolitionists.

When Mrs. Hayes was a child, her father, Dr. James Webb, promptly returned to Kentucky to free slaves he had inherited; when he died there of cholera, her mother still freed the slaves despite advice from family and friends that she sell them for money to raise her three children. Mrs. Webb refused, but she did spend the rest of her life ensuring her daughter and two sons received the best education.

At 16, Mrs. Hayes entered Wesleyan Female College, where she was described as a "diligent" student. Writing essays and taking part in debates as part of her studies, she confronted the question of whether women were the intellectual equals of men. She concluded: "Woman's mind is as strong as man's - equal in all things and superior in some."

Mrs. Hayes earned her college degree, and in 1852, she married lawyer Rutherford B. Hayes. As Hayes rose through the political ranks, Mrs. Hayes devoted her energies to causes she believed important.

While he was governor of Ohio, she lent her support to reforming the state's mental institutions, improving public education, and helping care for the many children who had been orphaned by the war.

With her record of activism, many were surprised when, upon entering the White House as first lady, she settled into the more traditional role of hostess and mother to her children. With the support of her husband, she banned alcohol at all receptions, a move that resulted by her being mocked in the press as "Lemonade Lucy."

Mrs. Hayes did not shun public duties. She was the first president's wife to deliver prepared speeches - something now considered a requirement for first ladies - and she was active in the Methodist church and served as president of the Women's Missionary Society.

Although she was subject to some criticism as a first lady, Mrs. Hayes, in general, was exceedingly popular with the people.

In 1881, Mrs. Hayes retired with her husband to Fremont, Ohio. When she died on June 25, 1889, flags nationwide were lowered to half-staff in honor of the "most idolized woman in America."

Lucretia Rudolph Garfield

JAMES A. GARFIELD ADMINISTRATION: 1881



Born: April 19, 1832, in Hiram, Ohio
Education: Eclectic Institute, Hiram, Ohio
Marriage: 1858 to James Bram Garfield
Children: Eliza Arabella (1860-63); Henry Augustus (1863-1942); James Rudolph, (1865-1950); Mary "Mollie" (1867-1947); Irvine McDowell (1870-1951); Abram, (1872-1958); Edward "Neddie" (1874-76)
Died: March 14, 1918, in Pasadena, Calif.
 Born in the tiny hamlet of Hiram in northern Ohio, Lucretia Rudolph was a bright and happy child who was given an excellent education.

She attended grammar school and later Geauga Seminary, where she was schooled in Greek and Latin, as well as algebra, science, geography and music.

At Hiram Eclectic Institute, she exhibited a growing sense of independence and confidence by helping organize a literary society, which staged debate and oratorical presentations. As a member of this society, she often appeared onstage herself, defending the rights of women during a time when it was considered improper by most men.

At the Eclectic Institute, Mrs. Garfield met her future husband, who admired her sharp wit and knowledge. He courted her for several years, although they were separated for a time when he transferred to the more prestigious Williams College in Massachusetts and "Crete" - her nickname - pursued a career as a school teacher.

Lucretia Rudolph and James Garfield were married in 1858. When he became a U.S. Representative in Washington D.C.

As a political wife and an independent woman by nature, Mrs. Garfield openly supported her husband's career. She was one of the first presidential candidate's wives to appear on a campaign poster.

In the White House, she continued to work closely by her husband's side, giving interviews to the press and discussing politics with his contemporaries. For these activities, she earned a reputation for being a woman of substance, and Garfield affectionately referred to her as "unstampedable," due to her strong convictions and grace in public.

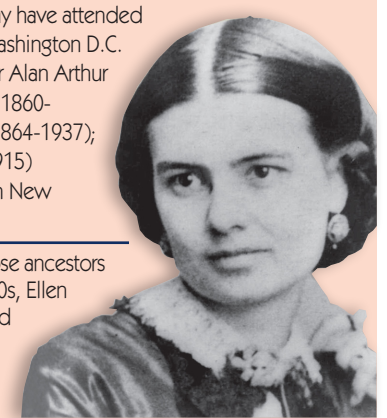
She enjoyed wine, and despite pressure to do otherwise, she lifted the ban on alcohol in the White House that had been initiated in the Hayes administration. A firm believer in equality, Mrs. Garfield stopped short of publicly supporting women's suffrage, but privately saw "no reason why women should not be entitled to all the privileges that men enjoy."

Mrs. Garfield was in New Jersey when President Garfield was shot July 2, 1881, inside a Washington D.C. railway station. Looking "frail, fatigued, desperate," as one eyewitness described her, Mrs. Garfield rushed back to the nation's capital. At her husband's side as he fought for his life, her stoicism won the admiration of Americans coast to coast, with one newspaper reporting "The wife of the President is the bravest woman in the universe." Mrs. Garfield's devotion, however, could not save President Garfield. Lingered for almost three months, he died on

Sept. 19, 1881, just 200 days after taking office. At his funeral, Mrs. Garfield became the first presidential widow to publicly participate in her husband's services. Mrs. Garfield survived her husband by 36 years, during which time she lived a private but comfortable life, devoting herself to the preservation of her husband's papers. She died in 1918 and is buried next to her husband in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ellen Lewis Herndon Arthur

CHESTER A. ARTHUR ADMINISTRATION: 1881-1885



Born: August 30, 1837, in Culpepper County, Virginia
Education: Unknown; may have attended school as a child in Washington D.C.
Marriage: 1859 to Chester Alan Arthur
Children: William Lewis, (1860-1863); Chester Alan (1864-1937); Ellen "Nellie" (1871-1915)
Died: January 12, 1880, in New York, New York

A child of the South whose ancestors arrived in Virginia in the 1600s, Ellen Lewis Herndon was destined to become a national figure, first as the daughter of a decorated naval hero who

went down with his ship and then as a first lady who did not live to see her husband assume the presidency.

Only 42, Mrs. Arthur died of pneumonia in 1880 before her husband became president in 1881 upon the assassination of President James Garfield.

Although she never lived in the White House, Ellen Arthur was a definite presence during her husband's administration. He hung her portrait in his private quarters, and fresh flowers were placed below it each day.

In her memory, he commissioned a stained glass window at St. John's Church on Lafayette Square opposite the White House. Illuminated at night by lights inside the church, the window could be seen from the mansion; the presidential suite was moved so that President Arthur could see the church window from his bedroom.

Despite mounting pressure to name someone to fulfill the social duties of a first lady, President Arthur resisted. After 16 months, he finally asked his sister, Mary "Molly" McElroy, to serve in the position.

As a widower questions were raised as to when he might remarry and give the country a first lady, but he remained unmarried for the remainder of his life.

Ellen Herndon and Chester Alan Arthur met in 1857 while she was vacationing with her wealthy, socially prominent mother in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. He proposed the following year.

A noted singer with a beautiful contralto voice, Mrs. Arthur pursued her musical interests after they married, while her husband managed his mother-in-law's sizable investments and built a career in law and New York state politics.

The Arthurs seemed an unlikely match, a Southern woman born to privilege and the Yankee son of an Irish immigrant. When the Civil War began, Mrs. Arthur was careful not to voice sympathy for the South in public, knowing it would harm her husband's career, but privately she was deeply distressed, especially about family members fighting.

In the years following the Civil War, Mrs. Arthur supported her husband's political ambitions, and her social connections among the elite families of New York helped to further his career. Arthur was in Albany on political business when he received word early on a Sunday morning that his wife was gravely ill. He returned home before she died. Six months after Mrs. Arthur's death, her husband became the Republican candidate for Vice President. Of his nomination, he said simply, "Honors to me now are not what they once were."

During his presidency, Chester Arthur's devotion to his wife and her memory remained unshaken. He died less than six years after she did, and both are buried at the Arthur family plot in Albany, N.Y.

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First Ladies of America

Frances Folsom Cleveland Preston

GROVER CLEVELAND ADMINISTRATION: 1855-89 & 1893-97

Born: July 21, 1864, in Buffalo, New York

Education: Central (High) School, Buffalo, N.Y.; Wells College, Aurora, New York

Marriage: 1886 to Stephen Grover Cleveland

Children: Ruth (1891-1904); Esther (1893-1980); Marion (1895-1977); Richard (1897-1974); Francis (1903-1995)

Died: October 29, 1947, in Baltimore, Maryland



When Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom in 1886, he was 27 years her senior. A friend of her family and partner in her father's law

Caroline Lavinia Scott Harrison

BENJAMIN HARRISON ADMINISTRATION: 1889-1893

Born: October 1, 1832 in Oxford, Ohio

Education: Oxford Female Institute, Oxford, Ohio

Marriage: 1853 to Benjamin Harrison

Children: Russell Benjamin Harrison (1854-1936); Mary Scott Harrison (1858-1930)

Died: October 25, 1892, in the White House



Showing a dignified, even solemn countenance, the portraits of Caroline "Carrie" Harrison belie her spirit and personality. Warm, sentimental and artistic by

Ida Saxton McKinley

WILLIAM MCKINLEY ADMINISTRATION: 1897-1901

Born: June 8, 1847 in Canton, Ohio

Education: Miss Sanford's School, Cleveland, Ohio; Brooke Academy, Media, Pennsylvania

Marriage: 1871 to William McKinley, Jr.

Children: Katherine (1871-1875); Ida (1873)

Died: May 26, 1907 in Canton, Ohio



The loving relationship between President William McKinley and his wife, Ida Saxton McKinley, is in some ways comparable to a Shakespearean

firm, Cleveland had known Frances since the day she was born. He was a presence in her life as she grew up; upon her father's death, when she was 11-years-old, Cleveland took over the administration of her father's estate and become her unofficial guardian.

Affectionately known as "Frankie" during her childhood, Mrs. Cleveland was born in Buffalo, N.Y., as the Civil War was drawing to a close. She received a well-rounded education, topping off her grammar and high school years with enrollment at Wells College, one of the first liberal arts schools for women in the country. While there, she studied astronomy, botany, and political science, and enjoyed activities including debate and theater.

It was during her college years that future president Grover Cleveland developed romantic feelings for her. The couple became engaged in August of 1885, but didn't disclose their plans until a week before their June 1886 wedding.

The couple's marriage inside the Blue Room of the executive mansion was a much-anticipated event, with Mrs. Cleveland the only first lady to be married in the White House.

Actively involved in local charities for African-American children, Mrs. Cleveland was also a firm supporter of education for women. She served on the board of trustees for her alma mater, Wells College, and was instrumental in a campaign that led to the establishment of the New Jersey College for Women.

At the White House, she was a gracious hostess who planned regular receptions on Saturdays so that working-class women could attend. Wherever she went, her youth, charm and charisma drew crowds of enthusiastic and devoted admirers. So popular was Mrs. Cleveland, in fact, that the unauthorized use of her image to sell products became the target of legislation aimed at preventing such unscrupulous business practices. The measure never passed, but it did foreshadow problems future first ladies would experience from an overly enthusiastic public.

Frances Cleveland's tenure as first lady ended when President Cleveland lost the next election to Benjamin Harrison, but she was undaunted, vowing the couple would return to the White House again. Her prediction came true, and in another historic moment in 1893, she became the only first lady to preside at two nonconsecutive administrations. During her second tenure, Mrs. Cleveland was still beloved by the public, but this time, she was a mature woman more focused on raising a family.

After Cleveland's death in 1908, Mrs. Cleveland remarried Thomas J. Preston, but upon her own death in 1947, she was laid to rest beside the former president. Today, she is remembered for being one of the most popular first ladies of all time.

nature, she was fun loving, easily amused and quick to forgive.

The daughter of parents who were both educators, she taught school in Kentucky for a year before returning home at age 21 to marry Benjamin Harrison, the grandson of President William Henry Harrison.

As her husband's law career advanced and he became increasingly more focused on politics, Mrs. Harrison cared for their children, often alone, and missed his presence. Tension developed in the marriage.

Ironically perhaps, it was Harrison's extended absence during the Civil War that brought them back together. When Harrison returned home safely after commanding Union forces in some of the worst fighting of the war, their relationship deepened. During his presidential campaign of 1888, her warm personality made her a popular figure; she often spoke personally with members of the press covering the campaign.

Becoming First Lady in 1889, Mrs. Harrison was shocked and disheartened by the condition of the White House and set about to change it. Finding it filthy and filled with clutter, she cleaned all the rooms, refinished the floors, and decorated with new wallpaper. Making additional improvements, she modernized the kitchen, installed electric lights, and added a bathroom.

Continuing to put her house in order, she also cataloged the White House china, designed a cabinet to hold the historical collection, and added to it by designing her own china for the White House.

Mrs. Harrison also changed the atmosphere inside the mansion. She put up the first White House Christmas tree, and for the first time since 1845, a first lady's guests were invited to dance.

Mrs. Harrison's interests were not all domestic. The first President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she kept the organization intact during its founding, and she worked to advance the rights of American women. When asked to support the construction of a new wing at Johns Hopkins Hospital, she agreed — but not until hospital officials agreed to admit women to their medical school.

She encouraged consumers to buy American goods, christened the U.S.S. Philadelphia, and gave the first speech by a first lady ever to be recorded.

Mrs. Harrison did not live to complete her tenure as first lady. Ill with tuberculosis, she spent the summer of 1892 in the Adirondack Mountains to regain her health, but her condition worsened. Realizing she would not improve, she went home to be with her husband and family and died in the White House. As the wife of a one-term president who was often ignored in American history, Caroline Harrison is often overlooked, as well. Still, she was a remarkably talented and innovative woman who brought warmth, grace, vision and character to her role as America's 23rd first lady.

tragedy. Pierced in the abdomen by an assassin's bullet, President McKinley's dying thoughts were only of his wife when he muttered: "My wife — be careful how you tell her! Oh, be careful!" Upon his death, Mrs. McKinley could only whisper: "He is gone, and life to me is dark now."

By all accounts Ida Saxton had once been a vigorous and spirited young woman, but deteriorating health in the early years of her marriage and personal tragedy robbed her of the happy life she had once looked forward to. Born in Canton, Ohio, on June 8, 1847, Mrs. McKinley grew up in wealth and privilege. One of her grandfathers had founded the town's major newspaper and her father was a banker.

After college and an eight-month tour of Europe with her sister, she returned home and worked in her father's bank, a move he arranged due to his belief that women should control their own personal finances.

By the time she met and married William McKinley on Jan. 25, 1871, Mrs. McKinley was a confident, refined and independent 23-year-old. In time, however, everything changed.

Over the course of four years, Mrs. McKinley lost her mother and two infant daughters in quick succession. She grew deeply depressed, and her health took a turn for the worse when she began experiencing seizures, a condition most historians believe to have been epilepsy. By the time the McKinleys entered the White House in 1897, Mrs. McKinley's activities were so severely restricted that she depended on her husband for nearly everything.

As president, McKinley worked hard to meet both the needs of the nation and his wife, who never officially relinquished her duties despite her precarious health. She insisted on greeting White House visitors and she often sat in on meetings and private political discussions.

During state dinners, in a departure from protocol, she sat next to him so that he could attend her if a seizure struck. When this happened, the president covered his wife's face with a handkerchief, and when it was over, the couple resumed conversation as if nothing had happened.

While some in Washington political circles criticized President McKinley for the constant attention he gave his wife, others admired his patient devotion.

Surprisingly, Mrs. McKinley demonstrated the most strength and stamina after her husband was shot in Buffalo, N.Y., at the Pan-American Exposition. She had not been with him as he stood in the receiving line greeting admirers, and she was at his bedside after the shooting and composed herself in order to accompany his body to Canton for burial. She also managed to oversee the construction of his mausoleum and planned for the dedication of his monument.

Still, Mrs. McKinley's health never significantly improved. She died less than six years after her husband, and is buried next to him in Canton.

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First Ladies of America

Edith Kermit Carow Roosevelt

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION: 1901-1909

Born: Aug. 6, 1861, in Norwich, Connecticut
Education: Miss Comstock's School
Marriage: 1886 to Theodore Roosevelt
Children: Theodore Jr. (1887-1944); Kermit, (1889-1943); Ethel Carow, (1891-1977); Archibald Bulloch, (1894-1979); Quentin, (1897-1918); stepdaughter Alice Lee Roosevelt Longworth (1884-1980)
Died: Sept. 30, 1948, in Oyster Bay, New York

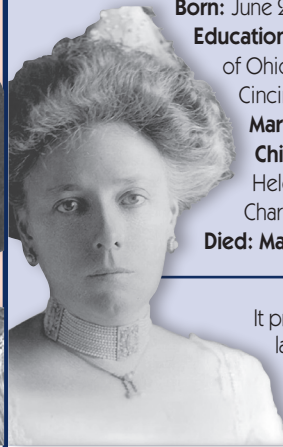


Edith Kermit Carow was President Theodore Roosevelt's second wife but his only first lady. In a time when the role

Helen Louise "Nellie" Herron Taft

WILLIAM H. TAFT ADMINISTRATION: 1909-1913

Born: June 2, 1861, in Cincinnati, Ohio
Education: Miss Nourse School, Cincinnati; Miami of Ohio University; Cincinnati College of Music
Marriage: 1886 to William Howard Taft
Children: Robert Taft (1889-1953); Helen Taft (1891-1987); Charles Taft (1897-1983)
Died: May 22, 1943, in Washington, D.C.



It probably never occurred to many first ladies that they might one day live in the White House, but Nellie Taft was not among them. She experienced one of the most exciting moments of her life

Ellen Axson Wilson

WOODROW WILSON ADMINISTRATION: 1913-1921

Born: May 15, 1860, in Savannah Ga.
Education: Home tutored; local women's college (Rome, Georgia); Art Students League, New York City
Marriage: 1885 to Thomas Woodrow Wilson
Children: Margaret Woodrow, (1886-1944); Jessie Woodrow, (1887-1933); Eleanor (Nell) Randolph, (1889-1967)
Died: Aug. 6, 1914, in Washington, D.C.



of the president and his wife had become more challenging and visible, Mrs. Roosevelt successfully balanced the public demands of her job with the private duties of being a wife and mother.

Mrs. Roosevelt and her husband had grown up together, sharing a love for books, nature and athletics. Known affectionately as "Eddie" by Roosevelt's mother, she received her earliest schooling inside the Roosevelt home, often studying next to "Teedie," who was three years older. She later attended finishing school, receiving the proper education for a young lady of that era.

As young adults, Mrs. Roosevelt and her future husband were attracted to each other, but when he eventually left for Harvard and married, their romance ended. After the sudden death of Roosevelt's wife, however, they rekindled their affection and married in 1886. Mrs. Roosevelt became a stepmother to Roosevelt's daughter, Alice – a spirited and irrepressible child who eventually became a national celebrity – and over the next 10 years, the couple had five children of their own.

With President William McKinley's assassination in 1901, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt assumed the role of president, and his family moved into the White House. Mrs. Roosevelt's first order of business was to make the executive mansion their home. Although she was no stranger to politics – having supported her husband during the long years of his political climb to the nation's highest office – Mrs. Roosevelt considered herself a mother first, and she wanted her children to enjoy as normal an upbringing as possible. The press' interest in her young, energetic brood meant that it would be a challenge to do so.

To that end, her most significant achievement was to renovate the White House by separating the public and family quarters. Congress supported her plans, and in 1902 it authorized funding for a long-overdue restoration; the construction of the West Wing offices provided the president and his staff a place to work, and his former office space on the second floor was devoted strictly to the family quarters.

As Mrs. Roosevelt worked to raise her large family at the center of government, she also recognized the emerging importance of the first lady's role, which was becoming more official. She hosted an increasing number of formal dinners, invited artists, musicians and authors to the White House, and held weekly meetings with cabinet wives. She also hired a social secretary, officially creating the Office of the First Lady. Also, she established the First Ladies portraits gallery in the White House, today considered one of the most distinguished collections in Washington.

After eight years, Mrs. Roosevelt was glad to return home to New York when her husband's presidency ended. She died in 1948, and is remembered as being a model of dignity and grace during a time when the role of first lady was undergoing significant expansion and change.

when she was invited to stay at the White House as a guest of the first family. After this experience, Mrs. Taft vowed that she would one day return to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue as first lady. When she did, she left her mark as a socially progressive, independent and influential president's wife.

Born into a privileged family in Cincinnati, Ohio, Mrs. Taft was one of 11 children. Her father's work in law and politics provided a comfortable life for the family, and most of the Herron children graduated from college. Mrs. Taft loved art and music, and she loved to write and to teach. After marrying William Howard Taft in 1886, she taught kindergarten. Establishing free kindergartens throughout America was a cause she would later champion as first lady.

In the view of many historians, Mrs. Taft was a more talented politician than her husband. Her understanding of the social and political forces of the day as well as her skill in political strategy and public relations played an indispensable role in his being nominated and elected president.

During her early years as first lady, Mrs. Taft retained a high public profile. She was the first wife of a president to ride in an inaugural parade after the swearing-in ceremony, insisting on accompanying Taft when she learned President Roosevelt intended to break with tradition by not riding with his successor back to the White House.

Once in the executive mansion, Mrs. Taft continued to make headlines. A foe of racial discrimination, she replaced the mansion's ushers, all of whom were white, and chose African Americans to fill the positions. Since being a White House usher was a prestigious job from which African Americans had been barred, her action made a strong statement about racial equality and fairness in the workplace.

Continuing to challenge traditions she found unfair or outmoded, she opened the doors of the executive mansion to groups that previously had been excluded from social events. She also made automobiles the White House mode of transportation. The Women's Christian Temperance Union lobbied against alcohol in the White House, but Mrs. Taft refused to give up her champagne punch bowl.

In 1909, Mrs. Taft suffered a stroke that forced her to relearn how to speak. The Tafts' daughter, Helen, moved into the White House in 1910 and acted as her mother's social aide until the end of the Taft presidency. Independent, politically savvy and socially progressive, Mrs. Taft sometimes created controversy in traditional, early 20th century America, but her tenure as first lady reflects an open heart and concern for others that has not been forgotten by history. She is especially remembered each spring when the thousands of Japanese cherry trees she helped establish along Washington's Tidal Basin are in bloom.

As a first lady who occupied the White House for a very short time, Ellen Wilson is not as easily remembered as history's other first ladies. Still, she made important contributions to the country in her own right, and proved that even a shy and reserved woman could take the initiative to improve the world.

Born in Savannah, Ga., Mrs. Wilson was a sensitive and refined woman with an interest in music, literature and the arts. She met young lawyer Woodrow Wilson at a church service in Rome, Ga., where her father was pastor.

Initially putting off Wilson's ardent declarations of affection, Ellen Wilson eventually agreed to marry him. Their marriage ceremony in 1885 was solemnized by her grandfather and the groom's father, both Presbyterian ministers, and the couple had three daughters, two of whom were married in the White House.

As first lady, Mrs. Wilson believed that her role was a privileged one that came with responsibility, rather than power. A professional painter, she donated her work to be auctioned for charity, but her most memorable achievement was initiating legislation to eliminate Washington, D.C.'s slums. "Ellen Wilson's bill," as it became known, was the first piece of legislation passed with such direct involvement from a first lady. Sadly, Mrs. Wilson died from a kidney disorder after less than a year and a half in the White House.

The day before her death, she made her physician promise to tell Wilson "later" that she hoped he would marry again; she murmured at the end, "take good care of my husband."



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First Ladies of America

Edith Bolling Galt Wilson

WOODROW WILSON ADMINISTRATION: 1913-1921

Born: Oct. 15, 1872 in Wytheville, Virginia
Education: Martha Washington College, Abingdon, Virginia; The Richmond Female Seminary, Richmond, Virginia
Marriage: 1896 to Norman Galt; 1915 to Thomas Woodrow Wilson
Children: None
Died: Dec. 28, 1961, in Washington, D.C.



Following Mrs. Wilson's death, a grieving President Wilson was introduced to Edith Bolling Galt, an educated and financially independent widow who had been born in Wytheville, Va. Her friendship eased the president's grief, but the public greatly disapproved of the relationship and their subsequent marriage just a year after his wife's death.

Nevertheless, the new Mrs. Wilson proved her devotion to both her husband and country during the crisis of World War I, and her efforts earned her gradual acceptance from the people.

As first lady, Mrs. Wilson was a national model for Americans as she observed rationing and other wartime restrictions. With workers in short supply, she replaced part of the White House grounds crew with grazing sheep, saving manpower and providing wool to auction for charity.

Her greatest contribution to the country, though, was her care of President Wilson after he suffered a paralytic stroke in 1919.

During that time, she took charge of the president's work, screening his visitors, calls and correspondence, and making sure that his authority was not usurped.

Despite criticism that she practically assumed the role of president — including a charge by one senator who declared the country was under the control of a "petticoat government" — Mrs. Wilson always insisted that she only enabled her husband to continue his job during his recovery.

When Mrs. Wilson died in 1961, she was among the earliest first ladies to have expanded the role by making significant contributions of her own.



Florence Kling DeWolfe Harding

WARREN G. HARDING ADMINISTRATION: 1921-1923

Born: Aug. 15, 1860, in Marion, Ohio
Education: The Union School, Marion, Ohio; Cincinnati Conservatory of Music
Marriage: 1880 to Henry DeWolfe, 1891 to Warren G. Harding
Children: Marshall Eugene DeWolfe, (1880-1915)
Died: Nov. 21, 1924, in Marion, Ohio



Growing up as the daughter of the wealthiest man in a small town, Florence Kling Harding was born in Marion, Ohio, in 1860. Unlike many refined women of wealth, she developed an

independence that was rather rare for young ladies of her era.

When she was 19, Mrs. Harding eloped with 21-year-old Henry DeWolfe, an alcoholic who soon abandoned her and their son. Granted a divorce in 1886, Mrs. Harding refused to return home to live with her wealthy parents. Instead, she rented a one-bedroom apartment and raised her son with money she earned from teaching piano lessons.

Florence Kling was a 30-year-old divorcee when she met and fell in love with Warren Harding, a Marion-based newspaper owner five years her junior. The couple married in 1891, but it was an unhappy marriage from the start. Harding often neglected his wife and sought refuge from her forceful personality in the camaraderie of his friends and other women.

Mrs. Harding was a determined and intelligent woman who was not content to serve in the capacity of accessory to her husband. She took over the management of his newspaper, the Marion Star, and in doing so, helped the newspaper thrive while simultaneously helping her husband evolve into an influential public figure.

Campaigning tirelessly for his election to the presidency, her deep involvement in the political process was unprecedented up until that time for a woman. Shrewd and politically astute, Mrs. Harding urged her husband to pay special attention to the female voters, who, for the first time were voting in a presidential election.

When Mrs. Harding entered the White House at the age of 60, it was the fulfillment of a long-sought dream, and she transitioned into her new role with abundant energy and willpower. She opened both the mansion and White House grounds to the public, both of which had been closed during former President Woodrow Wilson's illness. She remained visible and vocal, giving public speeches, conducting press interviews and actively supporting feminist causes.

She was also devoted to the wounded soldiers of World War I and made a regular practice of visiting them at a local hospital. During her visits, she read to them, brought food and gifts, wrote letters for the disabled veterans, and intervened with the government on their behalf.

Despite her legitimate and worthy contributions as first lady, Mrs. Harding never achieved national popularity in the manner of some first ladies. She was criticized for being overly ambitious and coarse, and her husband's failure as a president did nothing to improve her image.

Following President Harding's unexpected death in San Francisco in 1923, Mrs. Harding demonstrated remarkable strength as she accompanied his body on the long train back to the nation's capital, enduring both the state funeral and his eventual burial in Marion. She died a little over a year after her husband and is buried near him at The Harding Memorial in Marion, Ohio.

Grace Ann Goodhue Coolidge

CALVIN COOLIDGE ADMINISTRATION: 1923-1929

Born: Jan. 3, 1879, in Burlington, Vermont
Education: Burlington High School, Burlington, Vermont; University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont
Marriage: 1905 to John Calvin Coolidge
Children: John Coolidge, (1906-2000); Calvin Coolidge, Jr., (1908-1924)
Died: July 8, 1957, in Northampton, Mass.



Grace Coolidge became first lady in 1923 when her husband assumed the presidency after the death of President Warren Harding.

Intelligent, warm and witty, Mrs. Coolidge loved people and was gracious and tactful. As first lady, she became an admired national figure. She received a gold medal from the National Institute of Social Sciences for the "fine personal influence she exerted as first lady," and in 1931, she was voted one of the 12 greatest American women still living.

Growing up, Mrs. Coolidge showed no inclination that she longed to achieve fame or distinction. An only child, she had a sunny nature and was not driven by personal ambition. She did well in school, eventually graduating from the University of Vermont, but was not interested in academics. What did engage her heart and mind was teaching children who could not hear. With college degree in hand, she accepted a teaching position at the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Mass. Her commitment to the school and to the hearing impaired continued for the rest of her life.

In Northampton, she met Calvin Coolidge, a young lawyer with political ambitions. They met in the spring and married in the fall, despite strenuous objections from Mrs. Coolidge's mother, who did not like Calvin Coolidge, then or ever.

Even though she and her husband loved each other, it was a difficult marriage for Mrs. Coolidge in some respects. While she was warm and gregarious, her husband was reserved and controlling.

During her tenure as first lady, she enlisted the President's support, and together they raised \$2 million for the Clarke School where she had taught. When the Coolidges left the White House, the first lady made her only radio address to the American public, in which she simply said "Goodbye."

What most endeared Mrs. Coolidge to Americans was her personality and character. She was a fashionable first lady, but she was also an American girl who loved baseball, followed the Red Sox, and could throw a pitch better than many men. She knew how to ride horses and ice skate. She favored bright colors, especially red, and loved animals, including Rob Roy, her white collie, and Rebecca, her pet raccoon.

The mother of teenagers, she always learned the latest dance craze. She opened the White House and invited the American people into her home. The public's affection and respect for Mrs. Coolidge deepened in 1924 with the death of the Coolidge's son, Calvin Jr., who died of blood poisoning. Beyond comfort but finding strength in her religious faith, she continued to carry out her duties as first lady with grace, determined that her personal loss would not prevent her from fulfilling them.

After leaving the White House, Mrs. Coolidge enjoyed retirement with her husband until his death in 1933 and eventually returned to public life on her own. She wrote magazine articles, expressed her views on issues, and served as a trustee of Clarke School.

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First Ladies of America

Louise Henry Hoover

HERBERT HOOVER ADMINISTRATION: 1929-1933

Born: March 29, 1874, in Waterloo, Iowa
Education: San Jose Normal School, Stanford University
Marriage: 1899 to Herbert Clark Hoover
Children: Herbert Charles, (1903-1969); Allan Henry, (1907-1993)
Died: Jan. 7, 1944, in New York



When Louise Henry Hoover came to the nation's capital as first lady, she had perhaps more education and leadership experience than any first lady before her.
 Mrs. Hoover was poised to become

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION: 1933-1945

Born: Oct. 11, 1884, in New York City
Education: Allenswood Girls Academy, London, England
Marriage: 1905 to Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Children: Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1906-1975); James Roosevelt (1907-1991); Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. (1909); Elliot Roosevelt (1910-1990); Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. (1914-1988); John Roosevelt (1916-1981).
Died: Nov. 7, 1962, in New York City

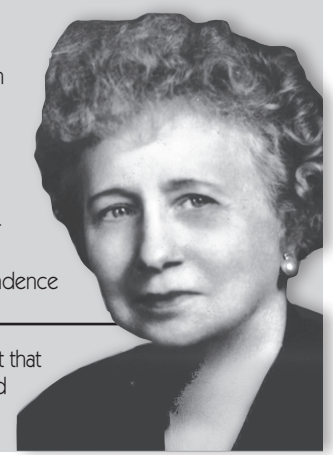


Being born into a life of privilege and bearing an illustrious family name did not

Elizabeth Wallace "Bess" Truman

HARRY S. TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION: 1945-1953

Born: Feb. 13, 1885, in Independence, Missouri
Education: Independence High School, Miss Barslow's Finishing School, Kansas City
Marriage: 1919 to Harry S. Truman
Children: Mary Margaret, (1924-2008)
Died: Oct. 12, 1982, in Independence



Bess Truman knew from the start that First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt would be a tough act to follow. After 12

an inspirational and memorable first lady when the bottom dropped out of the country's economy. With the stock market crash of October 1929, the Great Depression began and, in a few short months, the Hoovers' approval rating reached dismal lows.

Born in Waterloo, Iowa, Mrs. Hoover grew up something of a tomboy. Her father often took her camping in the woods, where she learned to ride a horse, hunt and discovered a deep love for rocks and minerals.

Mrs. Hoover earned a teaching certificate with plans of entering the education profession. However, she continued her education at Stanford University, where she majored in geology and met fellow geology major Herbert Hoover. Mrs. Hoover became the first woman in America to earn a college degree in geology. She and Hoover married and then followed his job as a mining engineer to China.

The Hoovers spent three decades in China and numerous other European countries as her husband pursued his career. During this extensive foreign sojourn, Mrs. Hoover mastered the Chinese language, and is the only first lady to have fluently spoken an Asian language.

After their return to the United States, Mrs. Hoover became active in the women's rights movement and helping women lead healthier, more productive lives. She believed strongly in exercise and founded the National Women's Athletic Association. After serving as a troop leader in 1917, she was elected national president of the Girl Scouts. Additionally, she was involved in the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and the National Geographic Society.

Mrs. Hoover also demonstrated her patriotism during times of national crisis. During World War I, the Hoovers became internationally known for their work coordinating relief efforts for Belgium refugees.

Additionally, with her husband's appointment as chief of the U.S. Food Administration, she headed the Administration's Women's Committee, where she promoted the conservation of food needed to feed American forces and war refugees abroad. In a practice that became known as "Hoovering," many Americans reduced their wheat, meat and sugar consumption.

Although she enjoyed her duties as White House hostess and even set the precedent of delivering public addresses over the radio, Mrs. Hoover gradually retreated from public view as the Great Depression worsened. When the couple left the White House in 1933, public opinion was firmly rallied against them.

The Hoovers retired to their Palo Alto, Calif., home, where Mrs. Hoover became publicly active on a local level. She died of a sudden heart attack in 1944 and was originally buried in Palo Alto. In 1964, she was re-interred next to her husband at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa.

shield Eleanor Roosevelt from a difficult childhood. Orphaned at age 9, Mrs. Roosevelt grew up in the home of her maternal grandmother. Her childhood was marked by a lack of affection, and she became shy and self-conscious about her appearance and lack of social graces.

At 14, she was sent to boarding school for three years in London. At her grandmother's insistence, she returned to the United States and reluctantly made her debut in New York society.

Alone and uncommitted socially, she committed herself instead to civic duty. Volunteering first at a settlement house on New York City's lower East Side and then as an investigator for the Consumer's League, Mrs. Roosevelt spent her days with the poor, mostly immigrants. She wrote open letters and press releases to raise public awareness.

Through her work, she saw life, often shocking, as it existed beyond her privileged social class. As a result, Mrs. Roosevelt developed the dedication to social justice and improvement that would one day define her as First Lady of the United States.

When she was 17, Mrs. Roosevelt encountered Franklin D. Roosevelt on a train trip while he was a student at Harvard. Fifth cousins, they were acquainted but had played no significant role in each other's lives. The couple endured 40 years of intense public controversy, private anguish, personal happiness and national crisis.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's election to the New York State Senate in 1910 marked the beginning of his career in politics and the beginning of Mrs. Roosevelt's political education. Mrs. Roosevelt assumed the responsibilities expected of a first lady, but she became politically active in her own right, especially after the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote.

Mrs. Roosevelt worked independently as a speaker, writer, lobbyist and guest lecturer. She was a radio show commentator and served on numerous boards and national committees to engage women, women's organizations and the general public in social reform.

She founded a school to educate girls, and built a furniture factory to create jobs for the unemployed. Traveling the country to promote her husband's New Deal policies and rebuild the public confidence lost during hard times, Mrs. Roosevelt averaged 40,000 miles a year.

When her husband's mobility was severely limited after he contracted polio in 1921, Mrs. Roosevelt became known as the eyes and ears that helped him accomplish work he could not do alone.

Following her husband's death in 1945, Mrs. Roosevelt stayed politically active, serving in the United Nations as chairman of the Commission on Human Rights upon appointment by President Harry S. Truman. When Mrs. Roosevelt died in 1962, she was easily the most active, visible and influential first lady America had ever known.

years of bonding with Americans in a role that she literally redefined for future first ladies, Mrs. Roosevelt was still very much in the hearts and minds of the public when she left the White House after her husband's death.

Born Elizabeth Virginia Wallace, Mrs. Truman grew up in Independence, where she was the oldest of four children. She attended the local grammar and high school, becoming a classmate of future president Harry Truman in the fifth grade. A talented athlete, Mrs. Truman competed at shot-put and excelled at tennis. When she was 18, however, life took a tragic turn. Her father committed suicide.

Rather than leave home for college after her father's death, Mrs. Truman commuted to Barstow Finishing School in Kansas City. She married Harry Truman in 1919 and worked for a time as a manager, accountant and sales clerk at the Kansas City haberdashery that her husband owned a half-interest in. However, Harry Truman's political star was rising and his service as a district county judge was prelude to a career as a U.S. senator, vice president and then president.

Assuming the role of first lady when she was 60 years old, Mrs. Truman resisted attention and kept a low profile. She canceled her very first press conference (scheduled for her by outgoing first lady Eleanor Roosevelt), and she never scheduled another.

Mrs. Truman stuck to the traditional duties of White House hostess, sponsoring causes and charities, including continuing Mrs. Roosevelt's fundraising efforts for the March of Dimes. Privately, however, Mrs. Truman had more political influence than most Americans realized. Years after his presidency ended, Truman admitted he never made an important decision without first seeking feedback from his wife, whom he affectionately referred to as "the Boss."

Despite her reluctance as a political wife, Mrs. Truman loved her country and believed in her duty as an American. When World War II concluded, she implemented food rationing in the White House, setting an example for the country to reduce consumption in order to send desperately needed food to Europe's devastated communities.

She also helped save the White House from destruction when severe structural problems forced her family to relocate to the Lee-Blair House. Some suggested the executive mansion be torn down and rebuilt, but Mrs. Truman pushed for the building's original walls to be retained for historical purposes.

After President Truman left office, his wife was relieved to return to her roots in Independence. As first lady, Mrs. Truman was always somewhat of a mystery to the public, but by the time she died in 1982, those who knew her personally had started to open up about her. It was only then that the American public came to know her real strength, sensitivity and sense of humor.

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First Ladies of America

Mamie Geneva Doud Eisenhower

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION: 1953-1961

Born: Nov. 14, 1896, in Boone, Iowa
Education: East Denver High School
Marriage: 1916 to Dwight David Eisenhower
Children: Doud Dwight "Icky" Eisenhower, (1917-1921); John Sheldon Doud Eisenhower, (1922-1979)
Died: Nov. 1, 1979



When Mamie Doud married 2nd Lt. Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower, the 19-year-old bride was prepared to be an Army wife, and a devoted one she was.

During her husband's 37-year military career, she set up housekeeping in 33 different places, determined to make a home wherever his assignments led them. When their young son died, she returned to her parents for a time seeking comfort but soon reunited with her husband.

While Eisenhower served as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II, she lived in a Washington, D.C. hotel and volunteered at an army canteen, once serving coffee to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who didn't recognize her waitress. Seven years after the war ended, Mamie Eisenhower was preparing to move into the White House herself.

As first lady, Mrs. Eisenhower ran her house with care, managing the accounts, reading grocery ads to find bargains, and once famously telling the White House kitchen staff to use cake mixes and Jell-O to save money. Mrs. Eisenhower's bangs, her personal trademark, became more popular with her arrival in the White House.

While Mrs. Eisenhower gave wonderful dinner parties and received visitors in the White House, she stayed out of politics. The president's advisers demanded she limit her activities to the social realm of the White House, and while Mrs. Eisenhower resented having her role defined for her, she accepted the restrictions. What she would not accept, however, was anyone getting in her way when it came to taking care of her husband.

In the weeks following Eisenhower's heart attack in 1955, Mrs. Eisenhower took charge of her husband's daily schedule and limited his visitors and meetings based on his doctors' medical advice. She also answered his mail, corresponding with citizens and heads of state.

After the president recovered, Mrs. Eisenhower drew the line when she believed his health was being jeopardized. On one occasion, she refused to allow him to attend a state dinner, insisting that Vice President Richard Nixon take his place.

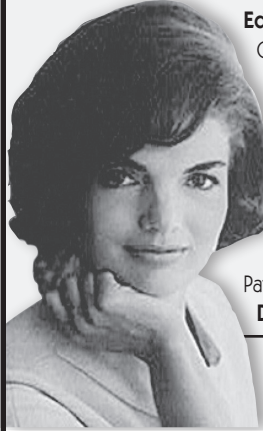
Although Mrs. Eisenhower did not play a public political role as First Lady and visited the Oval Office only four times, she didn't hesitate to voice her views privately to the president and even argue with him about his policies. On one occasion, he told members of a conference, "Let me try this out on Mamie. She's a pretty darn good judge of things."

Mrs. Eisenhower's work with the American Heart Association speaks of her sense of civic duty. During her years as the local and national chair of the organization's fundraising drive, contributions increased by 70 percent, and the number of AHA volunteers reached 750,000. She also was instrumental in establishing a retirement home for military widows.

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis

JOHN F. KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION: 1961-1963

Born: July 28, 1929, in Southampton, New York
Education: Miss Porter's School, Farmington, Connecticut; Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York; University of Grenoble and Sorbonne, Paris; George Washington University, Washington D.C.
Marriage: 1953 to John Fitzgerald "Jack" Kennedy
Children: Caroline Bouvier, born in 1957; John Fitzgerald, Jr., (1960-1999); Patrick Bouvier, (1963-1963)
Died: May 19, 1994



Jacqueline Kennedy fascinated the world on so many levels that the public's

appetite for information about her seemed insatiable.

Married to the charismatic son of one of America's most prominent families, Mrs. Kennedy was a 31-year-old, devoted mother of two young children when she entered the White House.

Throughout her tenure in the executive mansion, she waged constant battles with the press to maintain privacy for herself and her family.

Born to wealth and privilege in New York high society, Jacqueline Bouvier was 10 when her stockbroker father and socialite mother divorced. Her mother's remarriage to Standard Oil heir Hugh D. Auchincloss provided stability and financial security for the young girl, who studied at some of the top schools in the country and abroad before completing her education.

Initially interested in a journalism career, Mrs. Kennedy secured her first job in 1952 as an "Inquiring Photographer" for the Washington Times Herald. However, her developing relationship with Senator John F. Kennedy and their marriage the following year changed her life.

With her intense love for history and art, Mrs. Kennedy was saddened by the gradual loss of important White House artifacts and furnishings that had occurred before she became first lady. Up until her tenure, the White House occupants had enjoyed considerable freedom to keep what they liked and discard what they didn't, with the result being that many valuable pieces had vanished.

Mrs. Kennedy set out to restore the White House, establishing a Fine Arts Committee responsible for soliciting contributions of important pieces as well as locating missing items languishing in government warehouses. Americans saw the results of her efforts when she took them on a nationally televised tour of the White House in 1962.

To make certain her efforts at historic preservation could not be canceled by successors, she secured legislation protecting White House furnishings under the category of "inalienable property."

With President Kennedy's public assassination in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, Mrs. Kennedy fell into a deep depression.

The painful memories of her married life in Washington prompted her eventual relocation to New York, and she married Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis, one that drew criticism from some of her supporters.

Mrs. Kennedy continued to crusade for causes important to her, leading widely-publicized campaigns to preserve Grand Central Station and other historic architecture that was threatened.

When Mrs. Kennedy died of cancer in 1994, the public mourned a woman who had fascinated them for more than four decades. She was buried next to President Kennedy in Arlington National Cemetery, where the eternal flame she had requested for his grave 30 years earlier still burned brightly.

Claudia "Lady Bird" Taylor Johnson

LYNDON B. JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION: 1963-1969

Born: Dec. 22, 1912, in Karnack, Texas
Education: Marshall Public High School, Marshall, Texas; St. Mary's College for Girls, Dallas; University of Texas at Austin
Marriage: 1934 to Lyndon Baines "LBJ" Johnson
Children: Lynda Bird, born in 1944; and Luci Baines, born in 1947
Died: July 11, 2007, in Austin, Texas



Claudia Taylor Johnson, known as Lady Bird, became first lady following a national tragedy.

The stunning public assassination of President John F. Kennedy, along with the nation's outpouring of sympathy and support for his popular wife, meant that Mrs. Johnson's transition would not be any easy one. However, Lady Bird Johnson had great strength of character.

Mrs. Johnson received her famous nickname during infancy from a nurse who had commented that she was "pretty as a ladybird." After the death of her mother in 1917, she was raised by her father and an aunt.

She was a successful student, graduating early from high school and receiving degrees in liberal arts and journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. Her introduction to Lyndon Johnson in 1934 while he was a congressional secretary marked the start of a whirlwind romance culminating with his marriage proposal a few months later.

Long before Lyndon Johnson became president in 1963, Mrs. Johnson was a homemaker in Washington, Houston and the LBJ ranch in Texas. She raised the couple's two daughters and used her considerable business acumen to turn a radio station investment into a substantial fortune.

As a political wife, Mrs. Johnson actively campaigned for her husband, who served in the House and the Senate before becoming vice president in 1961.

When her husband was abruptly thrust into the role of president in 1963, Mrs. Johnson found herself with some important choices to make. Mrs. Johnson delayed assuming a fully public first lady role until some of the grief and shock of the Kennedy assassination had subsided.

She did, however, establish her own White House preservation committee to continue Mrs. Kennedy's work in that area, and she sought advice from the former first lady on other matters involving life in the executive mansion.

Gradually, she became more politically active and traveled the country extensively in support of President Johnson's Great Society programs.

Mrs. Johnson's own special interest, however, was the environment, and she worked tirelessly to promote the beautification and preservation of America's landscape, especially in areas that were disintegrating due to misuse or neglect. Legislation restricting the placement of billboards along public roadways, known as the Highway Beautification Act, was the crowning achievement of her efforts to bring attention to environmental issues.

After leaving the White House, Mrs. Johnson retired with her husband to the LBJ Ranch, but she continued her environmental work, founding the National Wildflower Research Center in the early 1980s. For this achievement, she was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal. Long before her death in 2007 at the age of 94, she had won many admirers and much respect for the courage, determination and strength she displayed during a long life devoted to service.

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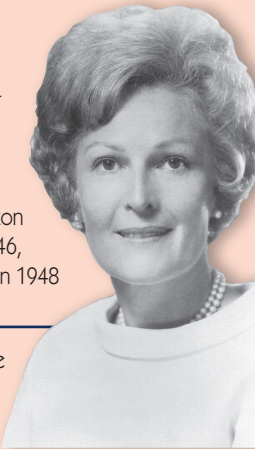


First Ladies of America

Thelma Catherine "Pat" Ryan Nixon

RICHARD NIXON ADMINISTRATION: 1969-1974

Born: March 16, 1912, in Ely, Nevada
Education: Excelsior High School, Norwalk, Calif.; Woodbury College, Orange County, Calif.; Fuller Junior College, Fullerton, Calif.; Columbia University, New York; University of Southern Calif.
Marriage: 1940 to Richard Milhous Nixon
Children: Tricia Nixon Cox, born in 1946, and Julie Nixon Eisenhower, born in 1948
Died: June 22, 1993

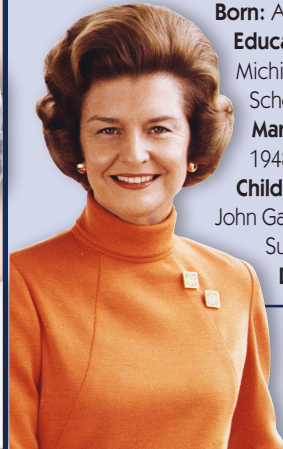


Pat Nixon became first lady during a time when the identity and role of women in society was undergoing dramatic change.

Elizabeth Ann "Betty" Bloomer Warren Ford

GERALD R. FORD ADMINISTRATION: 1974-1977

Born: April 8, 1918, in Chicago
Education: Central High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Bennington College; School of Dance, Bennington, Vermont
Marriage: 1942 to William Gustavus Warren; 1948 to Gerald Rudolph "Jerry" Ford
Children: Michael Gerald (1950); John Gardner (1952); Steven Meigs (1956); Susan Elizabeth (1957)
Died: July 8, 2011, at Rancho Mirage



The daughter of an independent, socially connected mother and a father who often traveled in his sales job, Betty Ford grew up the youngest of three

Rosalynn Smith Carter

JIMMY CARTER ADMINISTRATION: 1977-1981

Born: Aug. 18, 1927 in Plains Georgia
Education: Plains High School, Plains, Georgia; Georgia Southwestern College, Americus, Georgia
Marriage: 1946 to James Earl Carter (1947); James Earl "Chip" Carter (1950); Donnel Jeffrey "Jeff" Carter (1952); Amy Lynn Carter (1967)



Rosalynn Carter could be described in many ways, but the best way might be as a woman of faith. As a girl growing up in Plains, Ga., it was faith in

While seeing herself as just an average American woman, she couldn't ignore the changes taking place around the country. To that end, she became the first incumbent first lady to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment, the first to disclose publicly her pro-choice view on abortion while lobbying her husband, President Richard M. Nixon, to name a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the first to appear publicly in slacks, a look at the time that was derided as being masculine.

Still, Mrs. Nixon valued the traditionally feminine role of homemaker, wife and mother, and she was frequently regarded as the epitome of tradition when compared to the emerging popularity of the "liberated woman." Throughout the 1950s, she was named Outstanding Homemaker of the Year, Mother of the Year and Nation's Ideal Housewife. On one occasion, she admitted that she had pressed all of her husband's suits one evening simply because she'd felt like doing so.

Mrs. Nixon lost both of her parents while in her early teens. She worked her way through college and accepted a high school teaching position. On June 21, 1940, she married Richard Nixon, a fellow thespian she had met while both performed in a production.

When her husband was elected to the vice-presidency in the Eisenhower administration, Mrs. Nixon undertook many missions of goodwill with him and gained favorable media coverage. Later, she assisted her husband in his failed 1960 presidential bid and then his successful presidential campaign of 1968.

As first lady, Mrs. Nixon assumed a low profile inside the executive mansion. She was one of the only first ladies to personally greet tourists visiting the White House, once hugging a nervous elderly couple.

Additionally, her renovations made 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue more accessible to disadvantaged Americans, including those who were blind, disabled or deaf.

Until Hillary Clinton, Mrs. Nixon was the most world-traveled first lady, receiving the unusual diplomatic status of "Personal Representative of the President." In addition to her trips to both China and the Soviet Union with her husband, Mrs. Nixon traveled alone to Africa as a goodwill ambassador, meeting with officials in Liberia, Ghana and the Ivory Coast. In June 1970, Mrs. Nixon flew to Peru to deliver desperately needed food, clothing and medical supplies following a devastating earthquake.

Mrs. Nixon had many admirable qualities and worked beyond the first lady's role as White House hostess with much dedication and devotion. But her hard work was eventually overshadowed by the turmoil of the Vietnam War and, a few years later, the Watergate crisis.

After leaving the White House, Mrs. Nixon made only three public appearances as a former first lady. She died in 1993 and is buried beside her husband at the Richard Nixon Library, birthplace in Yorba Linda, Calif.

children in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Strong and energetic, Mrs. Ford took dance lessons and dreamed of becoming a professional dancer. She modeled at a local department store, and at home she could hold her own playing football and ice hockey with her two brothers.

Before meeting and marrying Gerald Ford, she lived in New York City. She studied dance with the famous Martha Graham, danced in Graham's troupe, and modeled professionally for the John Roberts Powers Agency.

Returning to Grand Rapids, she married and then divorced when the marriage became abusive. Friends introduced her to Ford, and their wedding and honeymoon gave her a preview of the future she would share with him. Busy campaigning for Congress, Ford was late for the wedding. On their honeymoon, he took his wife to a campaign rally, a University of Michigan football game, and a speech by Thomas Dewey.

When President Nixon resigned during the Watergate scandal, elevating her husband to the Oval Office, she became First Lady with no time to prepare for her new role. She made remarkable achievements in the White House, primarily in working for the rights of women. However, her strong vocal support of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision made her a controversial figure.

The controversy became a firestorm in 1975 when she appeared on the television program 60 Minutes, speaking candidly about her views on marijuana and premarital sex. She was Betty Ford speaking honestly, just as she had spoken openly months earlier about being diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoing a mastectomy, suffering bouts of depression, and receiving psychiatric care. When the news circulated that she was being so severely criticized, however, mail in her support poured in.

Many Americans wrote that they disagreed with her views but admired her for being direct. At one time, her popularity rating as first lady reached 75 percent, and during the presidential election campaign of 1976, "Vote for Betty's Husband" became a favorite campaign slogan. Mrs. Ford continued to lobby for the Equal Rights Amendment, even after her husband lost the presidential election to Jimmy Carter. In her last speech as First Lady, she spoke about the importance of passing the ERA.

After leaving the White House, Mrs. Ford confronted the addiction to pain medications and alcohol that she had developed over the years. Just as she had shared with the public the facts about her breast cancer, she now spoke candidly about her alcoholism to raise public awareness and encourage treatment. Once in recovery, she co-founded the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif., a non-profit hospital dedicated to helping patients overcome addiction and reclaim their lives.

When she died, her funeral was attended by other former first ladies, in keeping with a tradition that started with Eleanor Roosevelt's funeral.

God and in her family that shaped her life and defined her values.

As a first lady, she was guided by the belief that the lives of those struggling with special needs could be made better. Compassionate and committed to service, Mrs. Carter worked diligently in the White House on behalf of women, children, the elderly, the developmentally disabled, and those who suffered from mental illness.

Rosalynn Carter learned as a child that life can be difficult. Her father died when she was 13, and as the oldest of four children, she helped her mother hold the family together. While her mother worked long hours as a seamstress, Rosalynn assisted with the sewing, took on household chores, and worked in a beauty shop to earn spending money. Later in life she said her strong work ethic came from watching her mother.

Despite these challenges, she graduated from high school as class valedictorian and enrolled in college. After completing her freshman year, she accepted a date with the brother of her friend Ruth Carter, and life took an unexpected turn. Home for a visit while attending the U.S. Naval Academy, Jimmy Carter took Rosalynn out, a year later she became a Navy wife, following her husband as his military career took them across the country.

Mrs. Carter learned the family business back in Plains after her husband left the Navy and campaigned for him, sometimes on her own, when he entered politics. Elected governor of Georgia and then president, Jimmy Carter considered Rosalynn his closest advisor.

Mrs. Carter was present at briefings and Cabinet meetings and met with the president weekly in the Oval Office to discuss policy and legislation related to her interests as the first lady.

She served as the President's spokesperson on various issues, particularly those relating to health and education. She was the first first lady to maintain an office in the East Wing of the White House, and during her tenure, Congress appropriated funds for the first time to support the work of a first lady. She played an important role in creating and passing the Mental Health Systems Act of 1980 and lobbied Congress to pass the Age Discrimination Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Rural Clinics Act. She encouraged Americans to volunteer in their communities, setting an example by working as a volunteer in local Washington, D.C. programs to assist at-risk youth and the developmentally disabled.

Since leaving 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Mrs. Carter's efforts to make a difference in the lives of others have not diminished. Through her work with the Carter Center in Atlanta, she continues to raise awareness about mental health issues, and she has published two books to assist family, friends and caregivers of the mentally ill. Her current work has focused on meeting the mental health needs of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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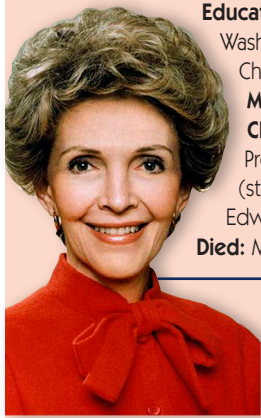


First Ladies of America

Nancy Davis Reagan

RONALD REAGAN ADMINISTRATION: 1981-1989

Born: July 6, 1921, in New York
Education: Sidwell Friends School, Washington, D.C.; Girl's Latin School, Chicago; Smith College
Marriage: 1952 to Ronald Reagan
Children: Patricia Ann (1952); Ronald Prescott (1958); Maureen Elizabeth (stepdaughter) (1941-2001); and Michael Edward (stepson) (1945)
Died: March 6, 2016, Los Angeles, Calif.



Nancy Reagan may be remembered for many things, but at the top of the list is the glamour and elegance she brought to the White House as a first lady.

Mrs. Reagan was a former professional movie actress who was determined to bring "the best of everything" to the executive mansion. She did that, but by her husband's second term, she was involved in much more – taking on important causes of her own while working so closely with her husband that she became the target of criticism.

Born Anne Frances Robbins, she was a child when her father abandoned the family. She lived in the care of relatives for a time while her mother, a movie actress, left to pursue her career.

When her mother remarried Chicago neurosurgeon Loyal Davis, Mrs. Reagan was legally adopted by her stepfather and took the name of Nancy Davis, which she became known for in her movies.

Despite her own accomplishments prior to her marriage, Mrs. Reagan was at heart old-fashioned and the first to admit that "life began when I met my husband." On March 4, 1952, she gave up a promising Hollywood career to marry fellow actor Ronald Reagan, whom she had met while he served as president of the Screen Actors Guild.

In the White House, Mrs. Reagan's activities were both admired and criticized. Her decision to bring back Letitia Baldrige, social secretary during the Kennedy administration, was perhaps symbolic of her desire to reinstate a royal feel to the White House. She also accomplished this with an expensive refurbishment of the family quarters, turning to private donors to raise funds. These activities, along with her habit of accepting lavish designer gowns as gifts, were not lost on members of the press, who sarcastically referred to her as "Queen Nancy."

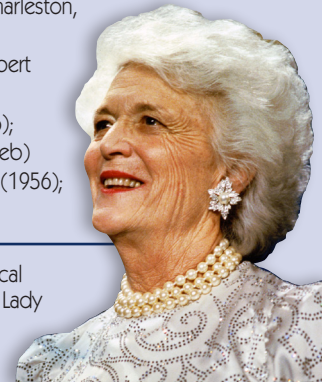
Her most memorable legacy is her involvement in the fight to prevent youth from abusing drugs and alcohol, and her "Just Say No" slogan made its way permanently into the American lexicon. She was also her husband's staunchest defender and supporter. While President Reagan recuperated from surgery for cancer, it was Mrs. Reagan who received foreign dignitaries at the White House. During comments on her husband's radio address following the surgery, President Reagan extolled the contributions of first ladies dating to America's earliest days, stating that they "aren't elected and they don't receive a salary," but "they've all been heroes." Then he added: "Nancy is my everything. When I look back on these days, Nancy, I'll remember your radiance and your strength, your support and for taking part in the business of the nation. I say to myself, but also on behalf of the nation, 'Thank you, partner. Thanks for everything.'"

Her care of him following the March 1981 attempt on his life – a painful event that she could later only refer to as "that thing that happened" – demonstrated her courage and resilience. And, after President Reagan left office and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, Mrs. Reagan's continued her devoted care of him until his death in 2004.

Barbara Pierce Bush

GEORGE H.W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION: 1989-1993

Born: June 8, 1925, in New York
Education: Rye Country Day School, Rye, New York; Ashley Hall Prep School; Charleston, S.C.; Smith College
Marriage: 1945 to George Herbert Walker Bush
Children: George Walker (1946); Robin (1949-1953); John (Jeb) (1953); Neil (1955); Marvin (1956); Dorothy (1959)



When the topic of casual political conversations turns to former First Lady Barbara Bush, the image that immediately comes to mind

is that of a kindly, white-haired woman that anyone from the youngest children to the oldest of adults could like.

In fact, Barbara Bush herself once stated that her public image was that of "everybody's grandmother," which is one reason she had such broad appeal with the American public during her husband's presidency. A devoted wife and mother, Barbara Bush had no overly ambitious plans during her tenure as first lady, but she did fulfill the traditional roles of hostess and worked on behalf of issues she considered most important.

During her junior year of high school at Ashley Hall Boarding School, Barbara Pierce returned home for Christmas vacation and met her future husband, George H.W. Bush, at a dance. They became engaged following her high school graduation in 1943, and although she attended Smith College for little more than a year, she left school and married.

While her husband pursued an Ivy League education at Yale and traveled the country working different jobs, Mrs. Bush stayed home to raise the couple's children. The loss of the couple's 3-year-old daughter, Robin, to leukemia was admittedly one of the most difficult periods of her life, and it was during this stressful time that her hair began to turn prematurely white.

Mrs. Bush's exposure to national politics began with her husband's election to Congress, and continued during his service as vice president under Republican President Ronald Reagan. When her husband was elected president and began his administration in 1989, Mrs. Bush became the only first lady to move from eight years as wife of a vice president to living in the executive mansion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

As first lady, Barbara Bush worked on behalf of the nation's children, and she was a supporter of education programs such as Head Start and literacy initiatives. Believing that illiteracy was the cause of many social ills, including crime, drug abuse and homelessness, Mrs. Bush's interest also stemmed from the struggles of her son Neil, who had dyslexia. In 1989, she helped establish the Barbara Bush Foundation of Family Literacy, to which she donated the entire post-tax proceeds from a memoir she wrote for the White House dog, titled "Millie's Book." Mrs. Bush also used her position to promote AIDS education and awareness, and a widely-publicized picture of her cradling a baby with AIDS eased national anxieties about how the disease spread.

After Mrs. Bush's husband lost his bid for a second term, the woman who had been named to Good Housekeeping's "Most Admired Women" list for four consecutive years did not seem too disappointed. Instead, she looked forward to future years in which there would be more time for life's simple pleasures, including her gardening and her grandchildren.

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton

BILL CLINTON'S ADMINISTRATION: 1993-2001

Birthdate: Oct. 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois
Education: Marie East High School (1961-1964); South High School (1964-1965); Wellesley College (1965-1969); Yale Law School (1969-1973)
Marriage: 1975 to Bill Clinton
Children: Chelsea Victoria Clinton (1980)



Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton is an American politician who was the First Lady of the United States from 1993 to

2001, U.S. Senator from New York from 2001 to 2009, 67th United States Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013, and the Democratic Party's nominee for President of the United States in the 2016 election.

Born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge, Clinton graduated from Wellesley College in 1969 and earned a J.D. from Yale Law School in 1973. After serving as a congressional legal counsel, she moved to Arkansas and married Bill Clinton in 1975. In 1977, she co-founded Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. She was appointed the first female chair of the Legal Services Corporation in 1978 and became the first female partner at Rose Law Firm the following year. As First Lady of Arkansas, she led a task force whose recommendations helped reform Arkansas's public schools.

As First Lady of the United States, Clinton was an advocate for gender equality and healthcare reform. Her relationship came under public scrutiny during the Lewinsky scandal, which led her to issue a statement that reaffirmed her commitment to the marriage. In 2000, she was elected as the first female Senator from New York. She was re-elected to the Senate in 2006. Running for president in 2008, she won more delegates than any previous female candidate, but lost the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama.

During her tenure as Secretary of State in the Obama administration from 2009 to 2013, Clinton responded to the Arab Spring by advocating U.S. military intervention in Libya. She helped to organize a diplomatic isolation and international sanctions regime against Iran in an effort to force curtailment of that country's nuclear program; this would eventually lead to the multinational Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement in 2015. Upon leaving her Cabinet position after Obama's first term, she wrote her fifth book and undertook speaking engagements.

Clinton made a second presidential run in 2016. She received the most votes and primary delegates in the 2016 Democratic primaries and formally accepted her party's nomination for President of the United States on July 28, 2016 with vice presidential running mate Senator Tim Kaine. She became the first female candidate to be nominated for president by a major U.S. political party. Clinton lost the presidential election to Republican opponent Donald Trump. Following her loss, she wrote her sixth book and started Onward Together, a political action organization dedicated to fundraising for progressive political groups.

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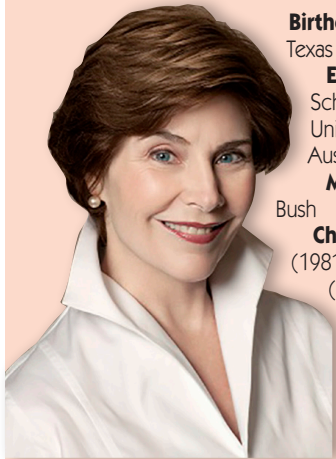




First Ladies of America

Laura Lane Welch Bush

GEORGE W. BUSH'S ADMINISTRATION: 2001-2009



Birthdate: Nov. 4, 1946 in Midland, Texas

Education: Robert E. Lee High School; Southern Methodist University; University of Texas at Austin

Marriage: 1977 to George W. Bush

Children: Barbara Pierce Bush (1981-); Jenna Welch Bush Hagar (1981-)

Born the only child of Harold Welch and Jenna Louise Hawkins Welch, Laura Lane Welch Bush is of English, French and Swiss ancestry. Her father was a home builder and later successful real estate developer, while her mother worked as the bookkeeper for her father's business early on, her parents encouraged her to read, leading to what would become her love of reading. Bush has also credited her second grade teacher, Charlene Gnagy, for inspiring her interest in education.

Bush graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in education, and took a job as a second grade teacher. After attaining her master's degree in library science at the University of Texas at Austin, she was employed as a librarian.

She met George W. Bush in July 1977 when mutual friends Joe and Jan O'Neill invited her and Bush to a backyard barbecue at their home. He proposed to her at the end of September and they were married on Nov. 5 of that year at the First United Methodist Church in Midland, the same church in which she had been baptized. Laura bought a tan, two-toned dress off the rack for the wedding. The couple honeymooned in Cozumel, Mexico. George W. Bush detailed his choice to marry Laura as the "best decision of [his] life".

The couple had twin daughters in 1981. Bush's political involvement began during her marriage. She campaigned with her husband during his unsuccessful 1978 run for the United States Congress, and later for his successful Texas campaign.

As First Lady of Texas, Bush implemented many initiatives focused on health, education, and literacy. In 1999-2000, she aided her husband in campaigning for the presidency in a number of ways, most notably delivering a keynote address at the 2000 Republican National Convention, which gained her national attention. She became First Lady after her husband was inaugurated as president on January 20, 2001.

Polled by The Gallup Organization as one of the most popular First Ladies, Bush was involved in national and global concerns during her tenure. She continued to advance her trademark interests of education and literacy by establishing the semi-annual National Book Festival in 2001, and encouraged education on a worldwide scale. She also advanced women's causes through The Heart Truth and Susan G. Komen for the Cure organizations. She represented the United States during her foreign trips, which tended to focus on HIV/AIDS and malaria awareness.

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama

BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION: 2009-2017



Birthdate: Jan. 17, 1964, in Chicago, Ill.

Education: Whitney M. Young Magnet High School (1981); Princeton University (1981-1985); Harvard Law School (1985-1988)

Marriage: 1992 to Barack Obama

Children: Children: Malia Ann Obama (1998-); Natasha Obama (2001-)

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama was born to Fraser Robinson III, a city water plant employee and Democratic precinct captain, and Marian Shields Robinson, a secretary at Spiegel's catalog store. Her mother was a full-time homemaker until Michelle entered high school.

The Robinson and Shields families trace their roots to pre-Civil War African Americans in the American South. On her father's side, she is descended from the Gullah people of South Carolina's Low Country region.

All four of her grandparents had multiracial ancestors, reflecting the complex history of the U.S., but her extended family has said that people did not talk about the era of slavery when they were growing up.

Obama grew up in a two-story bungalow in Chicago's South Shore community area. Her father suffered from multiple sclerosis which had a profound emotional effect on her as she was growing up. She was determined to stay out of trouble and be a good student, which was what her father wanted for her. She was inspired to follow her brother to Princeton University. She majored in sociology and minored in African American studies, graduating cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in 1985. Robinson went on to earn her Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from Harvard Law School in 1988. She spent her early legal career working at the law firm Sidley Austin where she met her husband, Barack Obama.

Barack and Michelle married in 1992 and have two daughters. She is the third First Lady with a postgraduate degree, after her two immediate predecessors, Hillary Clinton and Laura Bush.

Obama served as a salaried board member of TreeHouse Foods Inc., a major Wal-Mart supplier with which she cut ties immediately after her husband made comments critical of Wal-Mart at an AFL-CIO forum in Trenton, New Jersey.

Obama campaigned for her husband's presidential bid throughout 2007 and 2008, delivering a keynote address at the 2008 Democratic National Convention. She returned to speak at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, and again during the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, where she delivered a speech in support of the Democratic presidential nominee, and fellow First Lady, Hillary Clinton.

As First Lady, Obama became a role model for women, an advocate for poverty awareness, education, nutrition, physical activity and healthy eating, and a fashion icon.

Melania Knaus (Knauss) Trump

DONALD J. TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION: 2017-



Birthdate: April 26, 1970, in Novo Mesto, Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia)

Education: Attended Secondary School of Design and Photography, Ljubljana, for one year.

Marriage: 2005 to Donald J. Trump

Children: Baron Trump (2006-)

Melanija Knavs Trump's mother Amalija worked for the children's clothing manufacturer "Jutranjka" in Sevnica. Trump began modeling at age five. In 1992, she was named runner-up in the Jana Magazine "Look of the Year" contest which promised its top three contestants an international modeling contract.

Her father, Viktor Knavs, was in the League of Communists of Slovenia, which prohibited its members from openly practicing religion. He had his daughters baptized secretly.

She attended the Secondary School of Design and Photography in Ljubljana for one year before dropping out. She modeled for fashion houses in Paris and Milan, where she met Metropolitan Models co-owner Paolo Zampolli, a friend of Donald Trump. Zampolli urged her to travel to the United States, where he said he would like to represent her. In 1996, she moved to New York City.

In September 1998, she met real estate mogul Donald Trump at a party thrown by Zampolli. Trump approached Knavs and asked for her number. She took his number instead and they later began a relationship. In 1999, the couple gained attention after an interview on The Howard Stern Show, and, when asked by The New York Times what her role would be if Donald Trump were to become President, she replied: "I would be very traditional, like Betty Ford or Jackie Kennedy." In 2001, she became a permanent resident of the United States. She married Donald Trump in 2005 and obtained U.S. citizenship in 2006.

She is the second foreign-born woman to hold the First Lady title (after Louisa Adams). She is the first First Lady to be a naturalized citizen. She is also one of the tallest First Ladies to hold the office, tied with Michelle Obama and Eleanor Roosevelt.

In November 2015, when asked about her husband's presidential campaign, she said: "I encouraged him because I know what he will do and what he can do for America. He loves the American people and he wants to help them." She played a relatively small role in her husband's campaign. In 2016, she told CNN her focus as First Lady would be to help women and children. She also said she would combat cyberbullying, especially among children.

She is involved with a number of charities, including the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Boys Club of New York, the American Red Cross, and the Police Athletic League.

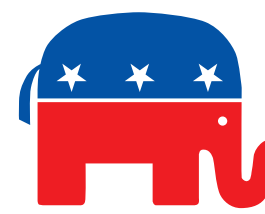
During her and her husband's visit to Vatican City in May 2017, she revealed that she is a Catholic, the first Catholic to live in the White House since First Lady Jackie Kennedy.

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