

Works Cited

“Anna Eleanor Roosevelt.” The White House. 9 May 2006 <<http://http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/ar32.html>>.

This brief White House biography of Eleanor Roosevelt concisely covers the highlights of her life and work, including her unhappy childhood, her engagement to Franklin Roosevelt, and her service as first lady. Because of its brevity, however, students may not get a complete understanding of the controversy that surrounded her or the impact she made during her twelve years in the White House. The page offers a link to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, where students can find more information on the first lady, making it a good starting point for students just beginning their research on Eleanor Roosevelt.

Cavendish, Richard. “Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt’s Wedding.” History Today Mar. 2005: 58-59. MasterFILE Premier. EBSCO. 9 May 2006 <<http://search.epnet.com/>>.

This brief article offers a behind-the-scenes look at the 1905 wedding of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. It also includes biographical details about the childhoods of the couple. The accompanying photo of Eleanor Roosevelt in her wedding dress is a “must-see” for students interested in primary source documentation on this topic.

Colbert, N. A. Lou Henry Hoover: The Duty to Serve. NC: Morgan Reynolds, 1988.

Based on the remarkable accomplishments listed in this no-frills biography, Lou Henry Hoover deserves to be more well-known. Unlike many biographies of first ladies, Colbert's profile portrays Hoover as a woman whose accomplishments stand on their own, regardless of her husband's political power. Fearless and independent from childhood, Mrs. Hoover was the first woman in the United States to receive a college degree in geology. Her unquenchable thirst for adventure took her around the world during the early years of the 20th century. She witnessed China's Boxer Rebellion and the ravages of World War I. And her dedication to serving others compelled her to organize relief efforts for starving Belgians, arrange nursing care for victims of the 1918 flu epidemic, and become a leader in the fledging Girl Scout movement. Colbert describes these events in a somewhat flat writing style with few flourishes. But her subject's life and plucky, can-do attitude inject the spark and vitality that the writing lacks. The book also contains 35 black-and-white photos from Mrs. Hoover's life and travels, a timeline, and a bibliography of the author's sources, making this biography a good choice for readers interested in researching an often-overlooked first lady.

Davis, K. Abigail Adams. Farmington Hills, MI: Blackbirch, 2002.

This biography of the second first lady also serves as an overview of the American Revolution. Author Kate Davis describes the tax laws that angered colonists and the skirmishes around Boston that led to war. Many quotes from Mrs. Adams' numerous letters reveal her opinions about these events, her political influence, and her struggles to raise her family while her husband John was frequently away at the Continental Congress. Through Mrs. Adams' hardships, readers can understand how the war affected ordinary citizens. Period illustrations and maps of colonial Boston and the thirteen colonies help readers visualize the scenes. The book also contains a brief glossary, an index, and sidebar articles about the Battle of Bunker Hill and other notable women of the revolution. Because the book focuses so heavily on the war years, Mrs. Adams' service as first lady and her later life are confined to only nine pages. Students interested in learning more about Mrs. Adams may wish to use the sources that Davis includes in her "For more information" section, the collective biographies listed here, or the Abigail Adams title in Enslow's readable and well-researched Historical American Biographies series.

Diller, D. C., and S. L. Robertson. The Presidents, First Ladies, and Vice Presidents.

Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1997.

Capsule biographies by experienced political writers Diller and Robertson are masterfully concise and well-written, although at a level that might be more appropriate for 8th graders than for 6th graders. With an average length of only 5-6 paragraphs, each profile conveys highlights of the first lady's childhood, marriage and family life, White House years, and death. Portraits of each woman from Martha Washington through Hillary Rodham Clinton accompany her profile. Separate sections describe presidential wives who were not first ladies and official hostesses who served as surrogate first ladies. None of the biographies cite sources or offer suggestions for further reading. And because the book was published in 1997, the profile of Hillary Rodham Clinton is incomplete, making no mention of President Clinton's impeachment or Mrs. Clinton's subsequent senate career. Their brevity limits these biographies' usefulness to summary or introductory purposes as a student prepares to do more thorough research. However, Diller and Robertson also include an outstanding introduction (complete with end notes and a selected bibliography), which describes the first lady's responsibilities and the evolution of the role. The essay places the first ladies in a wider historical context and draws interesting comparisons and conclusions that may be helpful to all students studying the women who held this position.

Gormley, B. First Ladies: Women Who Called the White House Home. New York: Scholastic, 1997.

In list-like paragraphs of rapid-fire sentences, author Beatrice Gormley briefly profiles U.S. presidents' wives from Martha Washington through Hillary Rodham Clinton. With little or no explanation within the essays, Gormley also includes women, such as Martha Jefferson, who were never first ladies and never lived in the White House because they died before their husband's term began. As a result, the book's title is misleading.

Gormley's selection of facts is also inconsistent. She notes John Kennedy's relationships with other women, for example, but ignores FDR's affair. And her description of the 1992 presidential campaign reports complaints about Mrs. Clinton's assertiveness, but overlooks the allegations of marital infidelity that plagued Bill Clinton on the stump.

Portraits or photographs enhance each essay, and the candid shots that accompany most of the modern first ladies' essays help convey the women's personalities. But the book's scholarship is diminished by the absence of a bibliography or text references. Students may find this bare-bones book's 2-4-page profiles to be useful introductions as they begin their research, but they should supplement it with more comprehensive sources, especially for information on Hillary Rodham Clinton, whose profile is incomplete due to the book's publication date. A 2004 update of the book, which includes Laura Bush, may bridge this gap.

McPherson, S. S. Martha Washington: First Lady. Springfield, NJ: Enslow, 1998.

An entry in the Historical American Biographies series, this well-designed book breathes life into an icon of American history. In the introduction, author McPherson notes the challenge Mrs. Washington posed to her biographers when she burned her papers shortly before her death. Despite this difficulty, McPherson has compiled vivid details of Mrs. Washington's childhood, travels during the Revolutionary War, daily plantation life at Mount Vernon, and the challenges the *first* first lady faced in defining the role. The book includes quotes from Mrs. Washington's letters to friends, complete with her characteristic spelling and grammatical errors. McPherson cites her sources in comprehensive end notes that are an outstanding example of scholarship and research. She also carefully separates fact from speculation by using introductory clauses such as "it is believed" or "according to one legend." Period illustrations and portraits, along with sidebars about significant people and events, enhance the text. Additional reference aids include a chronology of Mrs. Washington's life, a glossary, a list of titles for further reading, and an index. Other titles in this worthwhile series describe the lives of first ladies Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, and Mary Todd Lincoln.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, II. With Love, Aunt Eleanor. Petaluma, CA: Scrapbook, 2004.

Author Eleanor Roosevelt Wotkyns, the first lady's niece, has dedicated herself "to bringing the personal side of her aunt to the world" (217). In this intimate scrapbook of memories, family photos, and handwritten notes she achieves her goal. Laid out like an old-fashioned photo album, with hard, black cardboard covers and sepia-toned pages, it's full of intimate photos and behind-the-scenes stories, such as Mrs. Roosevelt's learning how to dive as a senior citizen simply to prove to Yugoslavia's Marshall Tito that "Americans ... are not afraid to dive into the unknown" (110). With more than 180 large, striking photos (plus the author's charming line drawings) and short anecdotes that can stand alone rather than being read in sequence, this book is an ideal choice for browsers and visual learners. In addition, the book highlights many of Mrs. Roosevelt's inspirational quotes, such as "Your life is your own. You mold it. You make it" (97). Students studying Eleanor Roosevelt's life as first lady should consult additional sources for a more comprehensive and objective view, but this book will supply many colorful details to give reports energy and interest.