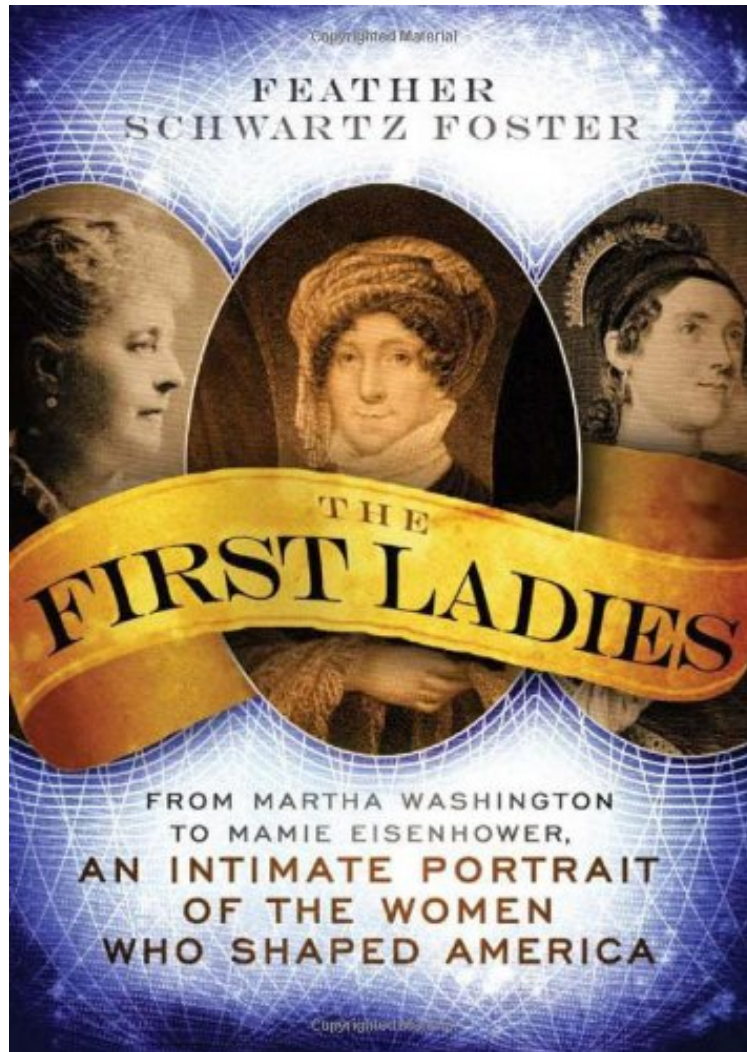


[Get free] The First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower, An Intimate Portrait of the Women Who Shaped America

The First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower, An Intimate Portrait of the Women Who Shaped America

Feather Schwartz Foster

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1647111 in Books 2011-02-01 2011-02-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.90 x .50 x 5.00l, .15 #File Name: 1402242727192 pages | File size: 75.Mb

Feather Schwartz Foster : The First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower, An Intimate Portrait of the Women Who Shaped America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower, An Intimate Portrait of the Women Who Shaped America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Kindle CustomerGood book, but mostly a rehash of Mary Lincoln's Flannel Pajamas. I did enjoy them both!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyed the

biographic information about the First Ladies - so ...By CustomerEnjoyed the biographic information about the First Ladies - so interesting a read. It was fascinating to read what each First Lady did or did not do within her role as President's Wife. There were surprises and unexpected challenges that these women endured as their husbands led the Republic / America through its historical growth and involvement in the world at large. I highly recommend this fascinating and well written book!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. First ladiesBy Kay MerrittEasy a n.a. d interesting book. I would recommend it if you want information on the first ladies without going too much in-depth.

The Legacies and Personalities that built the White House As a young nation grew into its own, it was not just the presidents who led the way. The remarkable women of the White House, often neglected by history, had a heavy hand in the shaping of America. The earliest First Ladies of the United States left countless untold legacies behind after their role at the White House was over. Decidedly different from their modern day counterparts, the nation's first presidential wives made their impact not in terms of political policy or broad social and civic service, but instead with unique, personal, and often long-lasting accomplishments. Read the unforgettable stories of how: Martha Washington set the tone for First Ladies and walked the fine line between royal pretention and republican accessibility. Sarah Polk worked diligently, constantly giving the high office her utmost attention. Julia Grant not only adapted to the ups and downs of her husband's political career, but flourished wherever she landed. And it was Nellie Taft's ambition that ultimately led her husband to the presidency.

"A delightful, valuable book, which I would recommend to anyone who enjoys a good read and wishes to learn about important relatively neglected contributors to American history." - Midwest Book "The First Ladies" is the kind of book that will satisfy historians, women's history scholars and trivia buffs alike. If that's you, then see that you get this book." - Bookworm Sez"An independent presidential historian presents profiles of the 26 First Ladies who occupied the US White House from 1789-1961, from Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower. The book features cameo photos, and comments about their legacies for more recent First Ladies. Lesser-known ones are given credit for their contributions; e.g., Julia Tyler is compared to Jackie Kennedy as a style-setter." - Book News"By highlighting personality traits and the activities of these women leading up to, during, and post their White House days, Foster gives a perspective of the first ladies not often seen in the press or history books. Her audiences like her because she has a light style of writing that is full of information and you learn what the First Ladies are like as people and not just a series of facts." - Charlotte Area News Stories" An Intimate Portrait of the Women Who Shaped America has written a delightful, valuable book, which I would recommend to anyone who enjoys a good read and wishes to learn about important relatively neglected contributors to American history." - Midwest Book "Feather Schwartz Foster's guide to the Founding Mothers isn't just a list of people and their details, but a chance to delve into the little-known lives of the presidents' wives: their personalities, their passions, their accomplishments, and their legacies...Recommended for everyone who wants a peak into the lives of the White House's first wives. " - The Paperback PursuerAbout the AuthorResearching the subject for more than 40 years, Feather Schwartz Foster has given more than 200 lectures about the women whose marriages are included in the book, including the Christopher Wren Society in Williamsburg, Virginia. She also is a "Resident Guest" at the President's Park in Williamsburg.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Martha Washington 17311802 First Lady: 178997 The Domestic Lady W. It has been said that the best political decision George Washington ever made was to marry the Widow Custis. He was a Virginia militia colonel seeking a career change. Efforts for a commission in the regular British army had been consistently thwarted. Washington determined to focus his attentions on the estate he had inherited from his half brother, but in order to make his Mount Vernon plantation the envy of Fairfax County, he needed an appropriate consort. And it was time. He was twenty-six. Martha Dandridge Custis was the daughter of well-to-do Virginia gentry on a social and economic par with the Washingtons. Her academic education was modest. She could read, write, and do sufficient arithmetic to manage the household accounts. At seventeen, she married into the wealthy Custis family and was widowed at twenty-six, left with two small children (four and two years old), and one huge estate (more than twenty thousand fertile acres, two hundred slaves, and the scarcest commodity among land-poor planters: a substantial amount of cash). Remarriage was her best option, and Martha required a mate with sufficient property of his own, since she was understandably wary of fortune hunters. She also required someone who would be a kind stepfather and honest manager for her children's sizable inheritance. Both of them made fortunate choices for a happy and successful marriage. Martha was the consummate colonial mistress and hostess, reasonably cultured, and superbly skilled at household management. It would fall to her to supervise the numerous slaves and cottage industries that accounted for a successful plantation. She sewed beautifully, danced the minuet gracefully, was said to set the finest table in northern Virginia. Her kitchen and recipe collection was the envy of her neighbors. She boasted a medical box with all the proper herbs and remedies the eighteenth century could provide, and she took pride and pleasure in caring for others. The Custis wealth helped to assure Washington a seat in the House of Burgesses, a responsibility he accepted with the usual eighteenth-century noblesse oblige. Within ten years of their marriage, Washington had increased his own holdings to include acreage as

far west as the Ohio Valley. Mount Vernon had been renovated and enlarged. Most important, he had established and engaged more than a dozen tenant farmers and craftsmen to provide mills, shipbuilding facilities, a fishing fleet, spinners, and weavers for his ever-growing conglomerate of industries. The Washingtons had become extremely wealthy, thanks to his shrewd business instincts, but they seldom dined alone. Their home was a mecca for friends and neighbors, relations on both sides, and weary travelers. No one was turned away. Their hospitality was known throughout the colony. At the onset of the American Revolution, both George and Martha were forty-three, which was considered well into middle age. War in the eighteenth century was primarily a seasonal affair: spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, armies usually went into winter quarters, and Martha Washington would travel from Mount Vernon with her medicine box and knitting needles to meet her husband wherever he was encamped. She had never before ventured beyond Virginia's borders. The exacting general, who was always hard-pressed to maintain his ragtag army, heartily welcomed Mrs. W. and whatever supplies she could bring, which were a godsend. She immediately took charge of seeing to the general's personal comfort, supervising the officers' kitchens, and organizing other officers' wives to sew, knit, scrape lint for bandages, and make themselves useful. Above all, she had her medicine box for tending the sick and wounded. Come spring, she went home and the war continued. It would be seven years before Private Citizen and Mrs. Washington could be together again in their beloved Virginia home. Their idyll would not last long. Politics would take center stage in the new nation, and Washington was considered the indispensable man with a new title: president of the United States. There had never been anything like it before. How would he and Lady Washington behave in this new office? It was virgin territory. Every known political paradigm was based on royalty or quasi royalty, and this had been so for nearly two thousand years. There was no precedent for a republic on the scale of the tiny United States on the vast continent of America. How would they chart the course for generations to come? Lady W. (some honorific was needed, and aristocratic titles were verboten) was nearly sixty and not about to change her ways—certainly not willingly. She continued to dress in the same simple fashions she had worn for decades and determined to remain refined and dignified. But she had a serious predicament. Her elevation in social stature as the premier woman in the country precluded her traditional Virginia hospitality. She could not appear aloof and remote, since it would smack of monarchical tendencies. But neither could she be warm and welcoming, as was her nature. It would suggest an unbecoming familiarity for a head of state. After a lifetime of full houses and of exchanging frequent visits with friends and family, the new protocol made her feel isolated. Some middle ground had to be met. But how? She was happy, of course, to open the presidential home in New York and later in Philadelphia (rented in both cases) for entertaining. Political dinners for President Washington were usually stag affairs. Martha would plan and supervise, but she did not attend. Instead, she instituted regular drawing room levees, inviting carefully selected guests for carefully prepared entertainments, trying to tiptoe that fine line required for a republican court. People were contemptuous of royal trappings, but they definitely wanted some glitz. Martha was decorous but not glitzy. Obviously she could not please everyone. The criticism in society, in the political world, and in the press annoyed her. Having tirelessly devoted themselves to the welfare of their country, valuing honorable conduct above all else, both Washingtons were notably thin-skinned and sensitive to public reproach for their behavior, which they believed to be estimable at all times. Martha resented being watched by the colonial paparazzi and criticized at every turn. Where did she go? What did she wear? Whom did she speak to? Which carriage did she use? Why did she sit on a slightly raised platform at her receptions? What did all this mean? It rankled her to no end, so she chose to go out as seldom as possible, pining for the time she could return to Mount Vernon and their own vine and fig tree. It was a difficult line to walk, and both Washingtons were more than happy to finally relinquish the power, the glory, and the comments. For the first time in twenty years, they could sit down to dinner by themselves.