

American First Ladies

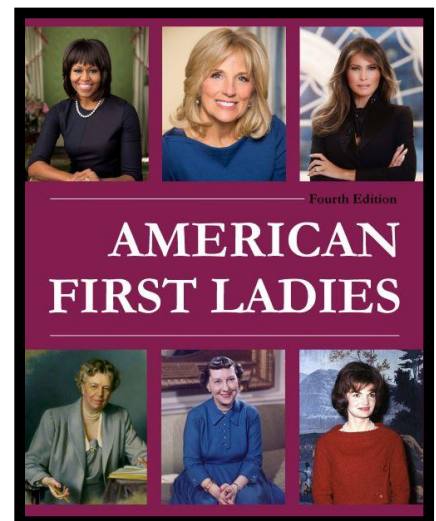
Reviews

“This reference volume, now in its fourth edition, serves as a companion publication to *American Presidents* (CH, Sep'23, 61-0005). **Both series deserve to occupy space in high school and college libraries.** This book includes essays of each of the women privileged to hold the unique, powerful position of First Lady. The consensus among the contributors is that the growth of mass media had much to do with the rise in the status of and interest in First Ladies. In his introduction, consulting editor Robert P. Watson observes, “While it benefits our understanding of the presidency and of the United States to consider them, they are fascinating individuals in their own right.” **In addition to biographical essays, the book includes nine topical essays that delve deeper into the roles of First Ladies as political spouses, their roles as advocates of special/pet policies and social causes, family life in the White House, and the roles of other White House hostesses.** All sorts of ad hoc arrangements were struck with usually willing relatives—e.g., before remarrying in 1838, Martin Van Buren enlisted the help of former First Lady Dolly Madison.”

-CHOICE, 2023

“In this third edition, Watson offers an updated series of biographical sketches **placing each first lady in her historical context.** Since the first and second editions, some photographs were added, and a new cover freshens the book’s visual appeal. The most visible changes are a new essay featuring Michelle Obama and expanded ones on Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton, and Laura Bush. Updated bibliographies include more recent works. The comprehensive bibliography and well-rounded index make this update a **worthwhile investment for libraries.** **Summing Up: Highly recommended. All libraries. All levels.**”

-CHOICE, 2016



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"The third edition of a look at the First Ladies, updated from 2006, is a companion to the publisher's series on the presidents. The chronologically arranged essays, by academic contributors, follow the same format: pre-White House life, marriage and family, years in the White House, unique contributions as First Lady, and legacy. A few of the women profiled were not wives, but they all had similar roles. Each chapter includes boxed sidebars of the challenges or accomplishments during the term. Writing is objective, accurate, sympathetic, and current through 2015. Nine overview essays cover such topics as social causes promoted and campaigns. Extensive bibliographies, an index, and photos enhance the value of this work, which is suitable for high-school and college students."

- *Booklist*, 2016

"A companion to *American Presidents*, fourth edition, published by Salem in 2015, this well-conceived volume provides concise biographies of the 47 First Ladies who have served the nation from Martha Washington to Michelle Obama. Black-and-white portraits or photographs enhance these biographical offerings. This third edition is the first to include an entry on Mrs. Obama, and has also updated and revised entries for several recent first ladies, as well as the bibliography and appendixes.

Each essay presents **clearly formatted and engaging information** regarding the First Ladies' "Early Life," "Marriage and Family," "Presidency and First Ladyship," and "Legacy." Shaded textboxes offer biographical summaries of the president, along with interesting anecdotes from the subject's time as First Lady. For example, we learn of Nellie Taft's unprecedented accompaniment of her husband between his inaugural ceremony and the executive mansion.

Special to this volume is a series of topical essays adding further depth to readers' understanding of the role of the First Lady. Subjects include "First Ladies and Social Causes," "Family Life in the White House," and more. The book also includes supplemental information for further reference, including chronological lists of First Ladies and Presidents; a selection of appropriate libraries, museums, historic sites and websites; an annotated bibliography; and an index."

-ARBA