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Secret Lives Of The First Ladies: What Your Teachers Never Told You About The Women Of The White House



Synopsis

Scandals, Seduction, Addiction, Adultery, Horrific Fashions...And the White House?! Your high school history teachers never gave you a book like this one! Secret Lives of the First Ladies features outrageous and uncensored profiles of the women of the White House - complete with hundreds of little-known, politically incorrect, and downright wacko facts. You'll discover that: Dolley Madison loved to chew tobacco Mary Todd Lincoln conducted séances on a regular basis Eleanor Roosevelt and Ellen Wilson both carried guns. Jacqueline Kennedy spent \$121,000 on her wardrobe in a single year Betty Ford liked to chat on CB radios - her handle was "First Mama" Hillary Clinton dreamed of being an astronaut . With chapters on every woman who's ever made it to the White House, Secret Lives of the First Ladies tackles all of the tough questions that other history books are afraid to ask: How many of these women owned slaves? Which ones were cheating on their husbands? And why was Eleanor Roosevelt serving hot dogs to the King and Queen of England? American history was never this much fun in school!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I hadn't expected a whole lot when I started this book. That's pretty much what I got. To be honest, the stories of the wives of the presidents of the 18th and 19th Centuries were fairly well informative. Probably because I really didn't have a great deal of knowledge of most of them prior to reading this book. On the other hand, I was greatly disappointed with O'Brien's short stories of the First Ladies of the 20th and 21st Centuries. I was aware of most of their histories, and he added little

information. Many of his comments seemed snarky. And, he chose to go with awful drawings of the First Ladies, rather than photographs. Now, I understand that prior to the mid-19th century photos were not available, or were only rare (and often of the First Lady well after her husband was out of office). However, the drawings he used were abysmal. For example, the drawing of Rosalynn Carter showed her next to John Wayne Gacy, a serial pedophile and child killer. This was based on a single picture taken at a fundraising event, where Mrs. Carter had her picture taken with dozens of strangers, as many people in the public do. She never knew Mr. Gacy, or had any dealings with him. The drawing ignored Mrs. Carter's tremendous humanitarian works during and after President Carter's term, as noted by Mr. O'Brien. I'm sorry, but I cannot recommend this book to anyone interested in better understanding the wives of our presidents.

I got a real kick out of reading this series of short bios of first ladies; I was amused with some of the stories and particularly impressed when I realized that trouble with the media is nothing new--especially for the poor women in the white house almost none of wished wanted to be there. I was also a little troubled with the use of slaves early on, and can really feel proud that a black woman made it to the executive bedroom suite as first lady. I loved the story about the bustle--but won't include the spoiler. I kept thinking that a whole industry was shut down because of a slow news day.

This book is only for the reader with little or no knowledge of the women featured in this book. The caricatures of the First Ladies are poorly rendered, and the overviews of their lives include snarky comments. I was disappointed with the author's cavalier attitude about some of the heartrending situations that some of the women endured. It seemed very incomplete.

A great introduction to the personalities, and their interaction with the historical settings and ways that woman's lives were circumscribed. It highlights their courage and fortitude, especially with some of their grumpy husbands. They varied according to temperament, from bookish introverts to those who could throw entertaining parties (not that they are necessarily mutually exclusive). They also varied in their KQ (Kindness Quotient), and their attitude to their staff. Some were brilliant, and should have been President. And so many, had many births. It's a great introduction, and it would be interesting to hear from someone who knew the history better than me. I'm an Australian, married to an American (based in Brisbane), so I could engage hubby in lots of interesting discussions. I think it would be a great one for a

year. I actually ended up listening to the AUDIO version on my iPhone/headphones whilst walking, so having the book was a great backup.

I enjoyed the information but not the writing style. Attributing "sound bites" to each first lady seemed an inappropriate term and there were many updated references which, for me, detracted from the subject i.e., Mary Lincoln lived in a "pad" as a widow. Each time the word "heck" was used I didn't enjoy what I am sure was meant as lighthearted and charming; it simply failed to charm me.

The format of this book lists in order, the Presidents and their wives or Presidential Hostesses, and the years they arrived on the scene in Washington, D.C. It gives the years of birth, death, religion and the number of children in their family for each First Lady. It is an easy read, and most interesting. I ordered it to read and review for a presentation to an organization I belong to, and it is well written and indexed, so one can find the exact First Lady to talk about, if one did not want to read through the entire book, or wanted to select just a few outstanding ladies. I did other research, in my preparation, but used this book a lot. We tend to think of the First Ladies as being the wives of Presidents, but several wives either had passed away prior to the husband being elected to the White House, (ex. Thomas Jefferson), so he chose his daughter to act as his Hostess, and therefore the number of women who served our country as First Hostess, numbers in the hundreds. One of the Presidents was unmarried, and he chose his niece to act as the official White House hostess during his term--James Buchanan. I would recommend this book to someone who enjoys history or for the student to gain information about people who were prominent in Washington in the beginning of our country, and who gave structure to it..

This book was well-organized and well-written; it was also an entertaining, yet informative read. I learned a few things about some of the former First Ladies that I hadn't read about in the past. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a light read.

Gives a new perspective to politics. Very engaging and thought provoking. Can see relevance for today's political world. Enjoyed each biography.

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