



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Women's History Month Background and Expert Available: Women Who Shaped the White House

March 9, 2020 (Washington, D.C.) — In 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued a presidential proclamation, declaring the week of March 8, 1980 to be Women's History Week. Eight years later in 1988, Congress passed Public Law 100-9, which proclaimed March as Women's History Month.

In light of Women's History Month, the White House Historical Association has created a White House Women [digital collection](#) of stories highlighting women who shaped White House history as First Ladies, activists, pioneers, enslaved women, picketers and more.

Interview Availability

Lindsay Chervinsky, historian with the White House Historical Association, is available for interviews to talk about women who shaped White House history.

Highlights from the digital collection include:

Picketing the White House: The Suffragist Movement During the Great War

The national struggle for women's suffrage mobilized on March 3, 1913, the day before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration in Washington, D.C. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), in collaboration with activists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, organized a suffrage parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. Suffragists met with President Wilson two weeks after he was sworn into office. Five women—Alice Paul, Anna Wiley, Edith Hooker, Ida Harper, and Genevieve Stone—gave the president a variety of reasons to back their cause. Throughout Wilson's presidency, suffragists organized pickets and protests, and eventually Wilson began to soften his anti-suffrage stance. [Read more.](#)

Gracy Bradley's White House

Gracy Bradley was purchased by Andrew Jackson in 1832. Bradley worked in the White House, managing much of the domestic household on behalf of Sarah Yorke, Jackson's daughter-in-law. Because enslaved people had little access to education and rarely left any written account, we have no definitive record of how Gracy felt about her White House experiences. We do know is that she was separated from her family during the eight years Jackson was president, spent long hours laboring for free, and had few holidays or breaks. [Read more.](#)

Betty Ford: Activist First Lady

Betty Ford was not a politician and never expected to be in the political limelight. Within a few weeks of President Ford's swearing-in ceremony in the East Room, the First Lady hosted her own press conference in the White House State Dining Room on September 4, 1974. During the press conference, she spoke about her support of the Equal Rights Amendment and her goals as First Lady. Thus began her journey as an active and outspoken First Lady. [Read more.](#)

A Powerful Voice: Marian Anderson and White House History

Marian Anderson was a successful American contralto singer known for her enchanting performances in the United States and throughout the world. Anderson first performed at the White House in 1936. It was her 1939 Easter concert at the Lincoln Memorial that brought her national attention and fame, after she faced opposition from local concert venues that were segregated. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt cultivated a relationship between the White House and Marian that would last for the rest of her musical career. [Read more.](#)

Other content in the White House Women digital collection:

- [The Origins of the American "First Lady"](#)
- [First Ladies and Cherry Blossoms: A Blooming Legacy](#)
- [An American Icon: The Many Roles of Dolley Madison](#)
- [Lucy Hayes, Temperance, and the Politics of the White House Dinner Table](#)
- [Grace Coolidge and Great War Veterans](#)
- [Pioneering Women of the Woodrow Wilson White House, 1913-1921](#)
- [The 1600 Sessions: The Legacy of First Lady Patricia Nixon](#)
- [The 1600 Sessions: First Lady Barbara Bush](#)
- ["A Unique Privilege": Margaret Truman in the White House](#)
- [Alice Roosevelt Longworth: Presidential Daughter and American Celebrity](#)
- [Martha Johnson Patterson: Hostess of the Andrew Johnson White House](#)
- [A Widower's Hostess: Angelica Van Buren in the White House](#)
- [Patricia Nixon's Visitor Friendly White House](#)
- [Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day" Collection](#)
- [The First Fan: Mrs. Coolidge's Passion for the Game](#)
- [Nellie Arthur in the White House](#)
- [Lou Hoover: Charity in the White House](#)

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For media inquiries, please contact press@whha.org.

About The White House Historical Association

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion's legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association's mission is to assist in the preservation of the state and public rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the White House Historical Association has contributed more than \$50

million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

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