

NEWSLETTER

Spring 1998

NEW INTERNET WEB SITE IS IMPORTANT RESEARCH TOOL ON AMERICAN FIRST LADIES

Researchers, scholars, students and armchair history buffs have an important new resource for the study of American history: the National First Ladies' Library Internet Web site, now available at <http://www.firstladies.org>. The Web site's scholarly centerpiece is a unique, on-line, comprehensive, annotated bibliographic database consisting of nearly 40,000 entries, including books, manuscripts, journals, articles and audio-visual materials dealing with the American first ladies.

The on-line bibliography was designed as a primary research source for anyone interested in learning more about the first ladies. It is a central repository that lists all available resources and their locations in the nation's libraries, presidential libraries, college and university collections, and the National First Ladies' Library in Canton, Ohio.

Traditionally, a researcher interested in studying the first ladies would have to search the collections of several libraries. Now, one can access the National First Ladies' Library Web site and, in one virtual trip to the Library, complete a sizable degree of preliminary research and compile a list of other library collections to explore further.

The Web site is organized with a home page for each first lady. Hot buttons lead a browser to annotated listings of the resources dealing with that first lady available in libraries across America. By hitting live links to the White House Web site, a browser can access information on the president associated with the first lady, and through further live links, ultimately visit the Web site of the corresponding presidential library. Visitors also can access Library news and founding sponsor information.

"The National First Ladies' Library bibliography is the only one of its kind in existence," said Mary Regula, National First Ladies' Library Founding Chairman. "In fact, there's no comparable bibliography for information about our U.S. presidents."

The annotated bibliography was developed by noted author and historian Carl Sferrazza Anthony. Anthony has written a number of books on the first ladies, including *First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power (Volumes I and II)*, and *As We Remember Her*, a collection of reminiscences by friends and family of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Anthony will update the bibliography annually.

The National First Ladies' Library Web site was developed and will be maintained by Stark State College of Technology in Canton, Ohio.

"We have designed the library of the future, a collection of information accessible to people throughout the world," Regula said. "It's not just about books; it's about the information in books and how to research that information and access it. The virtual

library puts at one's fingertips a vast electronic bibliography of materials on the women who influenced the social, political and economic history of the United States."

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON INAUGURATES NEW WEB SITE AT WHITE HOUSE

School children, members of the media, National First Ladies' Library board members, numerous spouses of state governors and sponsors joined First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on February 23, 1998 as she inaugurated the Library's Internet Web site during a multi-site, high-tech press conference hosted at the White House. Students at several sites around the world also accessed the Web site and watched the proceedings via computer videoconferencing technology.

"As we approach the millennium, it is only fitting that we should reflect upon our predecessors who cleared the paths we now walk upon," said Mrs. Clinton, who along with all living first ladies, serves as an Honorary Chairperson for the new archive.

"The National First Ladies' Library has harnessed today's technology to make accessible for the first time a significant body of works previously unavailable to people worldwide. This new virtual 'Library of the Future' celebrates the lives and achievements of our nation's first ladies and more fully documents their contributions for future generations," Mrs. Clinton said.

Joining Mrs. Clinton at the White House event were first grandchildren Marshall Bush and Walker Bush who accessed their grandmother's bibliography; Mary Regula, Founding Chair and President, National First Ladies' Library; Carl Sferrazza Anthony, noted author and historian and developer of the Library's on-line bibliography; and Edith P. Mayo, Director of the National First Ladies' Library and Curator Emeritus at the National Museum of American History.

Students and teachers from four satellite sites around the world joined Mrs. Clinton in the Web site inaugural. Among those participating were students from Stark State College of Technology, the developer of the Web site, in Canton, Ohio; children of U.S. servicemen living abroad in R.A.F Lakenheath, England; future teachers from Baylor University in Waco, Texas; and students from the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, DC.

Videoconferencing for the Library's Web site inaugural was provided by founding sponsor Nortel (Northern Telecom). Nortel also is donating videoconference technology to the Library for ongoing videoconferencing capabilities.

NATIONAL FIRST LADIES' LIBRARY ANNOUNCED AT RENWICK GALLERY IN WASHINGTON, DC

The National First Ladies' Library was officially launched in January at a luncheon at the historic Renwick Gallery, adjacent to the White House. Library Founding Chair and

President Mary Regula made the announcement before a capacity audience that included numerous descendants of first families and members of the media.

"The National First Ladies' Library will increase awareness of the important contributions that America's first ladies and other great women have made to our nation's history," Regula said. "The Library will inspire a more in-depth look at the roles these women have played in our nation's history, roles that reach far beyond china and ball gowns."

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who along with all living first ladies, serves as an honorary chairperson for the new archive, praised the Library in a letter to Regula: "The Library, which will preserve for history and make available to the public the work of America's First Ladies, constitutes an important asset for our country."

The Library will house a growing collection of books, letters, photographs, newspaper and journal articles, and audio and video tapes on the first ladies. It will also collect materials related not only to the lives of the first ladies, but also the social movements they advocated and the political policies they influenced.

"The study of the lives of first ladies provides a unique window on the realities and experiences of American women at any given period in our nation's past," Regula said. "In celebrating and honoring first ladies, we also celebrate the rich heritage of other great American women. The First Ladies' Library will play a crucial role in restoring that heritage to mainstream American culture."

In carrying out this goal, the Library will offer a variety of programmed events, year-round educational activities, guest lectures at public libraries and community centers, and virtual research by linking presidential sites and presidential libraries via the Internet to maximize the potential for research. The Library will sponsor scholarly seminars and symposia on first ladies and their unique role in American history. Plans also include in-depth rotating exhibits, and the establishment of a media center/theater where patrons can view documentary videos, films and home movies about the lives and issues important to the first ladies.

Founding sponsors of the Library include: Consolidated Natural Gas Company, General Motors Corporation, Marbel Energy Company, Microsoft Corporation, Northern Telecom, The Coca-Cola Company, The Longaberger Company, The Procter & Gamble Company, and The Timken Company.

George Davidson, chairman and chief executive officer of Consolidated Natural Gas Company, Library National Advisory Board member and chairman of the Founding Sponsors Committee, said, "The contributions of America's first ladies and many other important women to our country's political and social history are largely unknown or unappreciated. We hope our involvement with the National First Ladies' Library will help make this information available for future generations."

HISTORIC OPENING CELEBRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 6-8

Canton, Ohio, and the rest of the nation will welcome the National First Ladies' Library to America's register of scholarly institutions in early June with formal dedication ceremonies and the opening of the Library to the public.

Festivities begin on June 6 and 7, when the Ida Saxton McKinley House will be officially opened to the public for tours on a timed entrance basis. Volunteer docents, dressed in period costumes as American first ladies, will escort visitors through the house, which has been painstakingly restored to its original Victorian grandeur.

A special photographic exhibit on first ladies will be on display throughout the National First Ladies' Library. Selected from the extensive photographic collection of historian Craig Schermer, the historic exhibit comprises two photos of each first lady.

Formal ribbon-cutting ceremonies on June 8 will be followed by a reception in the Victorian rose garden adjacent to the Ida Saxton McKinley House. The festivities will culminate with a Grand Victorian Ball that evening. Several hundred guests dressed in black tie or formal Victorian attire will celebrate the opening of the National First Ladies' Library in a tent on the grounds of the Ida Saxton McKinley House.

All living former and current first ladies and presidents have been invited to join the anticipated 350 guests for the June 8 ribbon-cutting and Grand Victorian Ball. Other guests will include dignitaries, corporate sponsors and Library board and committee members.

Tickets for the June 8 ribbon-cutting reception and Grand Victorian Ball should be purchased in advance. Tickets are \$1,500 per couple, which includes a charter membership in the National First Ladies' Library. Corporate sponsors may reserve a half-table (5 seats) for \$5,000 or a full table (10 seats) for \$10,000. For corporate reservations, call Christine Price at (703) 556-9402; for individual tickets, call Theresa Lattanzi at (330) 452-0876.

FIRST LADIES OF THE STATES COMMITTEE ORGANIZED

A new First Ladies of the States Committee has been organized to pursue the education and historic preservation goals of the National First Ladies' Library on a state level across the country. Library principals met recently with several governors' spouses who were in Washington, D.C. to attend the winter National Governors' Association meeting.

Co-chaired by Frances Hughes Glendening, First Lady of Maryland and Library Vice President, and Janet Voinovich, First Lady of Ohio and National Advisory Board member, this committee will help to raise awareness about the contributions of great American women. Future plans could include development of state-specific pages on the National First Ladies' Library Web site which would recognize that state's current first lady and list organizations that highlight women's achievements. The committee will also explore collaborative opportunities through which the Library and a state organization

could co-sponsor events, such as celebrations or book signings, that salute women of achievement.

FIRST LADIES OF THE STATES COMMITTEE

The National First Ladies' Library announces the formation of the First Ladies of the States Committee and thanks its members for their interest and support.

Co-Chairs:

Frances Hughes Glendening of Maryland Janet Voinovich of Ohio

Members:

Susan Knowles of Alaska	Susan Carlson of Minnesota
Janet Huckabee of Arkansas	Jean Carnahan of Missouri
Gayle Wilson of California	Carolyn Hunt of North Carolina
Patricia Rowland of Connecticut	Diane Nelson of Nebraska
Martha Ann Carper of Delaware	Sandy Miller of Nevada
Rhea Chiles of Florida	Cathy Keating of Oklahoma
Vicky Cayetano of Hawaii	Michele Ridge of Pennsylvania
Brenda Edgar of Illinois	Marilyn Almond of Rhode Island
Judy O'Bannon of Indiana	Laura Bush of Texas
Linda Graves of Kansas	Roxane Gatling Gilmore of Virginia
Judi Patton of Kentucky	Mona Lee Locke of Washington
Michelle Engler of Michigan	Sue Ann Thompson of Wisconsin
	Sherri Geringer of Wyoming

LIBRARY TELEPHONES INSTALLED

The National First Ladies' Library recently installed its telephone lines in preparation for the historic opening in June. The new number is 330-452-0876. Until June 8, the Library will keep limited business hours, so callers should feel free to leave a message. All calls will be returned in a timely fashion.

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