

NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2001

The establishment of the First Ladies National Historic Site was officially recognized by National Park Service Director Robert G. Stanton at a ceremony on January 16, 2001. This ceremony was held at the Saxton McKinley House at 331 Market Avenue South in Canton, Ohio at 2:00 p.m.

On October 11, 2000, a law enacted by the 106th Congress was signed, establishing the First Ladies National Historic Site as the 380th unit of America's National Park System. It is the third national historic site in Ohio and seventh National Park Service unit in Ohio.

The establishment of the First Ladies National Historic Site will provide unique opportunities for education and study into the impact of First Ladies on our history. The First Ladies National Historic Site will continue to pursue the goals developed by the National First Ladies' Library. These goals include:

Preserve and interpret the role and history of First Ladies for the benefit, inspiration, and education of the people of the United States.

Interpret the impact of First Ladies on the history of the United States.

Provide school children and scholars access to information about the contributions of First Ladies through both a physical educational facility and an electronic virtual library.

Currently the First Ladies National Historic Site consists of the Saxton McKinley House. The City National Bank Building, which is being renovated for use as the National First Ladies' Library Education and Research Center, will also become part of the historic site upon its completion.

The National First Ladies' Library, in a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, will manage and operate the site. Under this agreement, the National Park Service will provide to the National First Ladies' Library with technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures of the site, the maintenance of the cultural landscape of the site and local preservation planning for the site.

National historic sites are established in recognition of their significant historic impact on our nation's history. Because of their significance, these sites are placed under the National Park Service to assure their prominence and permanence.

The First Ladies National Historic Site joins only a few national historic sites devoted to the important role of women in our nation. These include the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York; sites dedicated to the contributions of Clara Barton in Glen Echo, Maryland; Eleanor Roosevelt in Hyde Park, New York; Maggie L. Walker in Richmond, Virginia and Mary McLeod Bethune in Washington, DC; and a site

in Richmond, California authorized last fall to tell the story of Rosie the Riveter, which enshrines a global change in the status of women that occurred during World War II.

During this ceremony, Canton Mayor Richard Watkins welcomed guests to Canton. Mary Regula, President and Founding Chair of the National First Ladies' Library, served as Mistress of Ceremonies. Dr. Sheila Fisher, Vice President of the National First Ladies' Library, read a letter of congratulations from First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Other distinguished speakers included The Honorable Ralph Regula, Congressman, 16th District, Ohio, who was instrumental in developing the legislation creating the site; William W. Schenk, Regional Director, National Park Service Midwest Region; and John P. Debo, Jr., Superintendent of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

DRAKE CONSTRUCTION SELECTED FOR RENOVATION PROJECT

The Library has selected Drake Construction Company of Cleveland as the general contractor for the historical renovation and adaptive reuse of the City National Bank Building, which will become our Education and Research Center. Drake was awarded the contract based on their bid of \$3.1 million, which was the lowest bid, for the project. The work is expected to begin within the next few weeks and will be completed by March 2002. Installation of furniture and equipment is expected to take an additional 2 months at a cost of \$2.4 million, for a total project cost of \$5.5 million. The library plans to move its offices into the building in late May or early June 2002 and open the library to the public by late June 2002. The Saxton House will continue to operate as the Library's museum, open to the public for guided tours.

Drake Construction Company has been in operation since 1954. They specialize in commercial construction and historic renovation. They have received two awards from the Cleveland Restoration Society: for Multi-Family Housing Preservation for their Notre Dame Academy Project in 1999, and for Rehabilitation of Older Structures for their Greyhound Bus Terminal Project in 2000.

The National First Ladies' Library was given the City National Bank Building located on Market Avenue just a block north of our home at the Ida Saxton McKinley house by the Marsh Belden, Sr. family. The building was constructed in 1895 and has seven floors with approximately 20,000 square feet of usable space.

This building will become the National First Ladies' Library's Educational and Research Center. The center will have extensive research facilities, including a collection of current and out-of-print books, photographs, audio and video tapes, and copies of letters dealing with the contributions of first ladies. The research facilities will be equipped with the most current computer technology. The Education and Research Center will also offer state-of-the-art conference/seminar facilities, a 100-seat theatre with videoconferencing capability, and exhibit rooms, as well as lease opportunities including offices, classrooms, and conference rooms for non-profit organizations on the upper floors of the building.

The National First Ladies' Library Education and Research Center will be the foremost central repository on First Ladies' history and women's history. It will attract researchers and historians, as well as school children, from around the world. Conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures on the contributions of First Ladies will be held at the facilities. Through videoconferencing, programs from historic sites dealing in women's history will be offered at the center. Links to the White House, the Library of Congress, National Historic Sites dealing with women's history, presidential sites and women's history sites will be available through the website, located at www.firstladies.org.

On July 23, 1999, this project was designated as an Official Project of Save America's Treasures, a Millennium Council initiative created by President and Mrs. Clinton.

A matching grant of \$2.5 million has been designated for this project as part of the Save America's Treasures Millennium Council initiative. Additionally, an anonymous donor has given \$250,000 in matching grant funds for the renovation, and the City of Canton has pledged \$250,000 from its Community Block Development Grant funds. Local foundations have pledged \$1 million, and the State of Ohio has allotted a \$500,000 grant to the project.

Edith Kermit Carow Roosevelt
(August 6, 1861-September 30, 1948)
First Lady 1901 - 1909

A Private Woman, A Passionate Wife, A Modern First Lady

The National First Ladies' Library is pleased to present its Edith Kermit Carow Roosevelt Exhibit, which will run from March 1, 2001 through August 31, 2001. Shirley Wolf of Stitches in Time, a vintage clothing shop, and Craig Schermer, First Ladies' Historian, has graciously loaned us a number of extraordinary items from their Edith Roosevelt collections, including a handwritten letter, numerous photographs and a walking suit worn by Mrs. Roosevelt.

With the departure of Ida Saxton McKinley and the arrival of Edith Roosevelt and her large active family, the sedate 19th Century gave way to the hustle and bustle of the 20th. It was odd that the intensely private, rigidly controlled and strictly moral Edith Kermit Roosevelt ushered in the modern age. There was a sense that her strengths and virtues were more reflective of the age just passed than that coming. She was fiercely private, very reserved and always in control of both her emotions and the world around her. All it took was a look from her and a tap of a finger on the table to curb her husband's over zealous nature and often over-talkative monologue. A shrewd judge of character, Edith Roosevelt's judgment of both family and friends was unnerving in its accuracy and depth.

Edith Kermit Carow's early life had been a troubled one and one on which she did not like to reflect. Her father's drinking and loss of business and her mother's retreat into

depression often left the young girl alone, with only books (Shakespeare and poetry, in particular) for comfort. Never able to build a close relationship with either her mother or sister, Emily, Edith turned to the Roosevelt family for strength. Young Theodore Roosevelt and Edie Carow met early (when Edith was four) and love blossomed, only to be blighted by a quarrel when they were in their teens. Theodore's marriage to Alice Lee nearly broke Edith's heart, but Alice's death in 1884 brought the young couple back together, leading to marriage in London, December 2, 1886.

Marriage to the brilliant, exciting, boisterous Theodore Roosevelt was anything but calm. Edith, who not only bore him five children but also raised his first child, Alice, was once heard to say that she really "had six children and the oldest and perhaps most difficult one was her husband."

Edith and Teddy Roosevelt formalized the White House, the presidency, and the first ladyship, as well. Edith helped begin to establish the notion of the First Lady role as a public, semiofficial government entity.

Public notice of her private life was Edith's greatest fear, but with seemingly untroubled grace, at every turn, she tried to deflect interest in her family by willingly performing as a full-fledged public figure, thereby increasing the citizenry's awareness of the entity of First Lady. That prominence had been unquestionably furthered by her hiring of Belle Hagner. Obviously, the federal government itself gave recognition to the ladyship by allocating fourteen hundred dollars for Hagner's annual salary.

Edith also formalized the position of chief usher by hiring Thomas E. Stone. All house help answered to this manager, who answered to the First Lady.

Theodore and Edith spent hours alone together in conference most nights, and during the day he often consulted her between his appointments. Edith read through newspapers, magazines and journals, then shuttled them to the president, marked with "any item which she thought he should know about. "

Just after the election, Edith played a crucial role as diplomat. The First Lady maintained independent friendships with those in international affairs, the president finding her one day casually lunching with both the war secretary and the Mexican ambassador. Though TR once called her "intensely anti-anglomaniac" her alliance with English diplomat Cecil Spring-Rice proved historic. When Russo-Japanese tensions broke out openly in 1905, Roosevelt needed expert information on the situation. The president, who did not get along with the British ambassador, suggested Spring-Rice replace him, an appointment denied by England. Therefore, TR made a secret plan to have "Springy" report from Russia with firsthand accounts. There could be serious repercussions, however, if word leaked of T.R.'s arrangement. The First Lady became their mediator.

Springy's reports were sent as "letters" to Edith, which she read, conveying the information to the president. Filled with frank, often horrifying accounts of life in Russia, and news of diplomatic circles, it was all highly classified. The clandestine

correspondence continued for a year, and Springy teased Edith, "But you are quite a politician now, aren't you . . ." Along the same lines, she maintained a voluminous correspondence with the ambassador to England, Whitelaw Reid, who lengthily reported to her on "political intrigues, and the course of events on the European continent."

Her almost eight year tenure in the White House saw many changes: the change officially from Executive Mansion to White House; the creation of the East and West Wings, the Oval Office, and office of the First Lady; the hiring of a secretary for the First Lady; and perhaps most importantly, it was Edith Roosevelt who insisted on returning the décor of the White House to its original Federal era appearance.

Both the President and his wife insisted on a strict moral tone to their time in the White House, and Edith saw to it that no one of questionable morals would be received. Hers was an iron hand but one always covered with velvet. She also saw to it that her children had a good time, didn't destroy public property and, by controlling photographs taken by the press, Edith Roosevelt kept the media at a distance.

For so private a person, Edith Roosevelt created a real public image. Her portrait, added to those she hung on the ground level of previous First Ladies, revealed a very modern First Lady, one who, though looking back to the virtues of the past, kept her eyes on the immense possibilities of the future.

THE CARL SFERRAZZA ANTHONY PAPERS

Carl Sferrazza Anthony, noted first ladies author and historian has donated the research papers and documentation used in several of his books, including: "First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power, 1789-1990" (2 volumes), "America's Most Influential First Ladies", "As We Remember Her: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis In The Words of Her Friends and Family", "Florence Harding: The First Lady, The Jazz Age and the Death of America's Most Scandalous President", "America's First Families: An Inside View of 200 Years of Private Life in the White House", and the forthcoming book, "The Kennedy White House: A Family Story in Pictures".

The Carl Sferrazza Anthony Papers consist of photocopied materials drawn from presidential libraries and other institutions, videotapes of first ladies appearances and other programs, audiotapes from interviews, and newspaper and magazine articles.

These papers, which represent many years of detailed effort, will be an invaluable resource for researchers. We are extremely grateful for and appreciative of Carl's generous gift.

Second Pilot for Curriculum Project Planned

Work has begun on first lady study units for our second pilot for our first ladies curriculum project. This second pilot will be tested at the middle school level in 7th, 8th and 9th grade classes in the fall. Dr. Averil McClelland and Mrs. Bette Brooks, both of

Kent State University, are again designing the units, with the research assistance of Craig Schermer, the Library's historian. Lucinda Frailly, recently retired from the Fairless School District with 30 years of experience in education, has been hired as our Curriculum Coordinator.

We decided to use a different approach for this pilot because of the wide range of topics that the eighth grade classes can choose from for their history classes. Rather than concentrating on a study unit for one first lady, the curriculum group will produce units on three first ladies that are developed to fit into a theme. In this way, the classes participating in the pilot will have the option of using as many of the units as fits into their current studies.

The theme that was chosen is American Transitions. Units of study will be developed for Dolley Madison, Mary Todd Lincoln, and Caroline Harrison for this middle school pilot.

Although the goal is to produce a curriculum for all ages – young children to college and graduate students – a start has been made by looking at the lives of four first ladies: Lucy Hayes (for our elementary school pilot, which was tested in 4th grade classes last spring) and Dolley Madison, Mary Lincoln and Caroline Harrison (for our upcoming middle school pilot). Their lives span the period from 1768 to 1892, thus encompassing the founding of the nation and developments in many areas throughout the 19th century. Biographical and other documents, a multiple-tiered timeline, digital and other resources keyed to the timeline, and a set of lesson plans and suggestions for other learning activities keyed to historical events in the lives of the First Ladies will be available for upper elementary and middle school students. In time, all of our First Ladies will be included, and resources will be available for all ages, including those in higher education.

The curriculum is organized first in terms of major transitions in the development of the United States: from colony to nation, from local to national, from national to international, from rural to urban, from small to large, from agricultural to industrial, from industrial to information-based, from Anglo/Native to multicultural, from slave to free, and from exclusive to inclusive. Within these major transitional areas, a number of basic categories occur: family life, education, inventions and technological development, geographical, class, religious, racial and other forms of diversity, science and medicine, democracy and its political and legal debates, the arts and the life of the mind.

All elements of the curriculum are either background material for or activities designed to meet accountability and proficiency standards for social studies. At present, the curriculum is keyed, by P/K-12 age level, to the Ohio Model Competency-Based Curriculum for Social Studies (specific competencies are indicated with each learning activity). That Model, however, also meets criteria endorsed by the National Council of Social Studies, and can be seen to converge with social studies' models in other states. Relevant standards are indicated on all lesson plans and learning activities.

Welcome First Lady, Laura Bush!

The National First Ladies' Library would like to extend a warm welcome to our new First Lady, Laura Bush. We feel that, because Laura is a librarian and is particularly interested in education, she will have a special kinship with our organization.

Mrs. Bush has accepted our request to become a honorary chairperson of the National First Ladies' Library. She will join all of the living former first ladies as honorary chair.

The First Lady plans to focus her attentions on educational issues. Her goal is to get people to choose teaching and to firm up preschoolers' reading readiness. "Actually, one of the blessings of being first lady is you have the chance to focus on one or two major interests," Mrs. Bush says. "And in the end it makes such an impact that some presidents can't make because their legacy is so much more mixed.

When asked about what people expect of her and her position, she says "I think [people] expect and want the White House to be elegant, and to be respected, and for entertaining here to be lovely. I also think that the people want the first lady to use whatever expertise they have to help America. I mean, it's a huge platform. The fact is, first ladies have always had an intellectual part of the White House, not just the social part. I think we don't give earlier first ladies as much credit as they deserve."

We are proud to have First Lady Laura Bush join our organization.

Individual Memberships & Contributors

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Merit Bank
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Retirement Community
White House Historical
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Rhea Cattleberry /
Wilmot
Women's Study Club
Doris Yonally
Judith Ziegler Phillips
Angela A. Zumbar

Paul & Barbara Barnhart (in memory of Benford M. & Alice Barnhart and Vernon L. & Ora Lea Estes Parker)

Shirley Jones (in memory of Martha L. Wallace)

Gift Shop Additions

New Gift Shop items include books, china, prints and wood replicas. The following items are now available.

Books:

First Ladies Women Who Called The White House Home by Beatrice Gormley

The Look-It-Up Book of First Ladies by S.A. Kramer

Scamper The Bunny Who Went to the White House by Anna Roosevelt

Eleanor by Barbara Cooney (a book for children ages 5 and up)

America's First Ladies Coloring Book

New China and Miscellaneous selections:
New Flowers of the First Ladies Dessert Plates a

Pansies for Frances Cleveland

Yellow Rose for Eleanor Roosevelt

Flowers of the First Ladies Tea Cup and Saucer Sets

New China Trinket Box decorated with Red Carnations on the lid for Ida McKinley.

Beautiful Wood Replicas of the NFLL / Saxton McKinley House and of the White House.

Victorian styled Pins with photo of Ida Saxton McKinley in boot or fan designs.

Limited Edition Prints of the Saxton McKinley House. These pencil drawing prints have been Numbered and Hand Signed by the artist, Kelli Swan of Sagamore Hills, Ohio.

Bookmarks with or without gold plated book charms featuring:

Saxton McKinley House

Eleanor Roosevelt

Abigail Adams

Dolley Madison

Martha Washington

Upcoming Items:

China Boxes that match our plates with Bluebonnets, signed by First Lady Laura Bush
New Dessert Plates:

Forget-Me-Not - Abigail Adams

Daisy - Florence Harding

Dinner Plates, Bowls, and Serving Platter (Flowers of the First Ladies Designs)

Post Cards featuring the Saxton House/National First Ladies' Library

2001 Ornament featuring Mary Todd Lincoln.

NOTICE:

Once our inventory of Flowers of the First Ladies Dessert Plates with the former first ladies signatures are depleted, we will no longer carry the signature plates. The only signature on the plates will be the First Lady that is represented by that plate.

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