

# DOLLEY PAYNE TODD MADISON

Where was she born and where did she die?

Dolly Payne Madison was born May 20, 1768 on a farm in New Garden, North Carolina to John Payne, Jr. and Mary Coles Payne, who were aristocratic, Quaker Virginians. She grew up in Virginia on the Payne Plantation called Scotchtown. Madison claimed both states as her home and later in life would refer to herself as being a native of North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Death: Her home, Washington, D.C. 1849, July 12, 81 years old.

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# Dolley's early life

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- Dolley Payne was born in the Quaker settlement of New Garden in Guilford County, North Carolina, and moved to a plantation in Virginia's Hanover County at 10 months old. The eldest daughter of Mary Coles and John Payne, she learned such domestic skills as needlework, food storage and managing household help, receiving little formal education outside the home. After Payne emancipated his slaves in 1783 and brought the family to Philadelphia, Dolley was exposed to a cosmopolitan existence markedly different from her early years. However, she also experienced misfortune when her father's business failures rendered him unable to pay his debts, leading to his expulsion from the Quakers and the onset of the emotional distress that contributed to his death in 1792.

# Who did Dolley marry?

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- Dolley married John Todd, Jr., a lawyer, in 1790. Three years later he died in a yellow-fever epidemic, leaving her with a small son.
- Although James Madison was 17 years her senior, and Episcopalian, they were married in September 1794. The marriage, though childless, was notably happy. Madison was even patient with Dolley's son, Payne, who mishandled his own affairs - and, eventually, mismanaged their estate.

# Dolleys first marriage

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- In August 1793, a yellow fever epidemic broke out in Philadelphia. More than 4,000 people died over the spring and summer months. By mid-September, thousands had fled the city. Dolley's husband John and son William died of yellow fever on the same day. She was a widow at the age of 25, with her young son Payne to support.

# Dolleys 2nd marriage

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- While in Philadelphia for sessions of Congress, Virginia Representative James Madison came to notice the attractive young widow who lived near his boardinghouse. A shy man known more for his intellect than his charm, he asked New York Senator Aaron Burr to arrange an introduction. Dolley was initially taken aback by the interest of the “great little Madison,” but she came to appreciate his affection and the potential for security, and they were married on September 15, 1794. Subsequently expelled from the Quakers for marrying outside the sect, she discarded her plain clothing and began wearing the fashionable outfits that became an indelible part of her public image.

# What are some of the things dolly is known for?

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- One of Washington, D.C.'s most successful hostesses, Dolley Madison used her social skills, charm and personal popularity to win over her husband's political opponents and help advance his career. Dolley helped to define the role of first lady and established many of the precedents that her successors would follow, including working with local charities and organizations on social issues important to her and overseeing the decoration of the executive mansion to reflect the importance of the presidency. She is probably best remembered for saving the White House's historic Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington from certain destruction by advancing British troops during the War of 1812.

# Dollys political life

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- Madison's appointment to secretary of state in 1801 marked the start of Dolley's transformation into celebrated political wife and public servant. She served as the female co-host for the widower President Thomas Jefferson's receptions, helping to mend any breaches in decorum that arose when dealing with foreign dignitaries. She also undertook the responsibility of leading fundraising efforts for Lewis and Clark's exploration of the western wilderness. Although a woman's involvement in political affairs was frowned upon, Dolley rallied support for her husband in the 1808 presidential race through her extensive networking. Her success prompted the opposition candidate Charles Pinckney to grumble, "I might have had a better chance had I faced Mr. Madison alone."

# Dolley during the war.

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- The year 1812 brought about a Declaration of War and James Madison's re-election. America was soon at war with the British, and in the beginning, much of the battling was done at sea, with many American victories until about 1814. During this time, the British would take the offensive in the land war. Madison's actions on August 24, 1814 would cause her to be remembered forever in American history. On that date, as the British troops advanced upon the city and Madison had been advised to flee, she first took the time to decide what precious possessions would be stowed away in wagons and what would be sacrificed to the enemy forces. Madison made certain that her husband's important and secret papers were saved, along with the silver and a few small portable treasures and a portrait of George Washington, yet she left all of her own frivolities behind. Once Madison left the city, the British were there within two hours of her departure. The destruction that was caused included the burning of the Capitol Building and the torching of the President's House. All the contents remaining in the home had been destroyed forever. With Madison's foresight and quick actions, future generations would be able to view the Washington portrait which had hung over the fireplace.

# The death of her husband

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- When finances started to dwindle, an increasingly frail Madison began preparing his presidential papers with the hope that their sale could provide Dolley with a reliable income. However, she was ill-prepared for the hardships that followed his death in 1836, a situation exacerbated by the misdeeds of her son. Having failed to find a suitable career, Payne borrowed extensively to fund his frivolous lifestyle, forcing Dolley to sell off the family properties to pay his debts. She was finally rescued from financial despair when Congress purchased part of Madison's papers, setting the money in a trust to keep it out of Payne's hands

# Dolley's first lady

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- Dolley moved back to the capital permanently in 1844, marking the start of her golden years as the grand dame of Washington. Hailed as a living connection to the country's founding fathers, she was awarded an honorary seat in Congress and invited to become the first private citizen to transmit a message via telegraph. She also remained closely connected to the public role she popularized by providing guidance to presidential wives Julia Tyler and Sarah Polk. When she passed away at age 81, she was eulogized by President Zachary Taylor as the country's "first lady," believed to be the first known public reference to the term. Dolley Madison's greatest legacy is establishing the idea that a First Lady should serve as the mother of a nation. She served as hostess of the White House by hosting social functions and establishing the chief role of the First Lady.

# Dolley's retirement

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- At their plantation Montpelier in Virginia, the Madisons lived in pleasant retirement until he died in 1836. She returned to the capital in the autumn of 1837, She remained in Washington until her death in 1849, honored and loved by all. The delightful personality of this unusual woman is a cherished part of her country's history.

# Dolleys impact on America.

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- Dolleys life had a very positive impact on America, she was very smart and kind.
- She was very helpful to her husband, and she helped with his political life.
- She was very different from people today, she risked her life to save important things like George Washington's paintings.
- Dolleys greatest accomplishment was showing what a true first lady should be.
- Everyone loved Dolley, to which she replied that she loved everyone.

# Cite

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