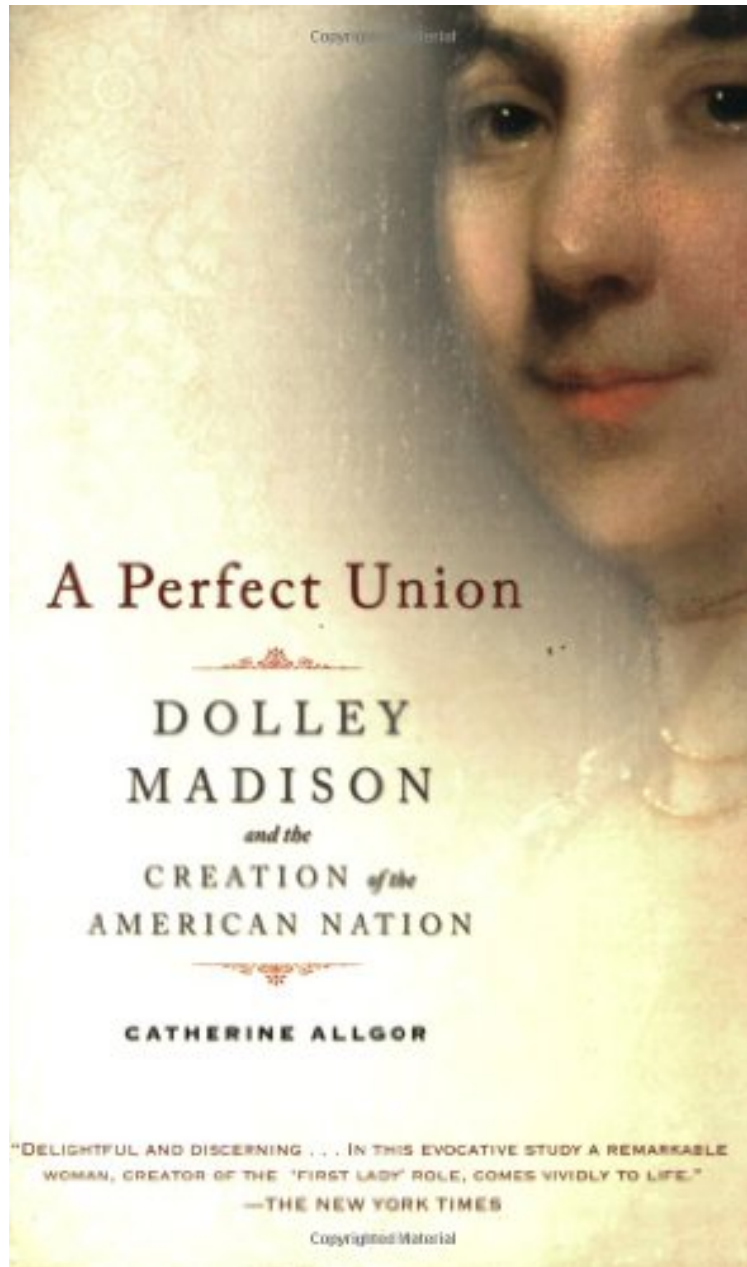


(Mobile book) A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation

A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation

Catherine Allgor

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Catherine Allgor : A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Perfect Union: Dolley

Madison and the Creation of the American Nation:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A PERFECT UNION: DOLLEY MADISON AND THE CREATION OF THE AMERICAN NATION By Marlene Homer I applaud Catherine Allgor's efforts for creating a fascinating life-and-times of book. It is a cultural history filled with details for example, about Washington City which, in 1801, included 8 boarding houses, 109 brick houses and 263 wooden houses. Its population consisted of only 2,064 whites, 623 slaves and 123 free blacks. There were 106 representatives in congress and 32 senators, and it seemed most of them adored Dolley Madison, who travelled the streets of Washington City in a dark green chariot with silver monograms on its doors, venetian blinds and candles. It cost James Madison \$594 second-hand. I found this tid-bit amusing: James Madison's proposal of marriage to a congressman's daughter was rejected by a letter sealed with rye dough to show that the young woman's feelings had soured. The young woman was only 15 and Madison was 42. But, in fact, he was 17 years older than Dolley. Did you know that the White House became known as the White House during the Madison years? Did you know that until 1807 women in New Jersey had the right to vote? One of the most interesting factors is the similarity between the Madison and Obama problems with congress. According to Allgor: "Congress was riddled with hostile factions, mainly Federalists and renegade Republicans {the Invisibles} who hated James so much that they were willing to sacrifice the general welfare in their zeal to destroy him. So concerned with their personal agenda were these disloyal members of congress, they not only failed to perform the day-to-day business of governing, but their openly quarrelsome behavior embarrassed the government in the eyes of the world and its own citizenry. The result was an erosion of the peoples' confidence in their government as well as their president since he seemed powerless to rein in his congress." As often as possible, I purchase my books on audio discs. Now I must add Anne Twomey to my list of favorite narrators. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great history book that's interesting to read. By Nancy I had no idea how very important Dolley Madison was in American national history. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I looked for this book for years and found ... By Dyana J. Mullican I looked for this book for years and found it for me. She is the lady that saved lots of our heritage in a wagon out the back of the Whitehouse when the English came to burn down the house in the 1812 war.

"Delightful and discerning . . . In this evocative study a remarkable woman, creator of the first lady' role, comes vividly to life." The New York Times When the roar of the Revolution had finally died down, a new generation of politicians was summoned to the Potomac to assemble the nation's capital. Into that unsteady atmosphere which would soon enough erupt into another conflict with Britain Dolley Madison arrived, alongside her husband, James. Within a few years, she had mastered both the social and political intricacies of the city, and by her death in 1849 was the most celebrated person in Washington. And yet, to most Americans, she's best known for saving a portrait from the burning White House. Why did her contemporaries so admire a lady so little known today? In *A Perfect Union*, acclaimed historian Catherine Allgor reveals how Dolley manipulated the constraints of her gender to construct an American democratic ruling style and to achieve her husband's political goals. By emphasizing cooperation over coercion building bridges instead of bunkers she left us with not only an important story about our past but a model for a modern form of politics.

From Publishers Weekly In this elegant biography, award-winning historian Allgor (*Parlor Politics*) makes the case that not only was Dolley Madison incredibly popular with the American people "Everybody loves Mrs. Madison" Henry Clay once said the wife of America's fourth president was also a "master politician." Dolley was a skilled hostess, and everyone in Washington coveted an invitation to her table. She knew the etiquette of polite society and used it to political advantage. She worked as a de facto campaign manager when her husband sought the presidency, inventing fictive kin and feigning family connections to potential allies. Even her interior decorating was politically savvy: though she favored French decor at home in Virginia, she chose American-made furniture for the White House. There's no anachronism here: Allgor doesn't turn Dolley into a proto-feminist, nor the marriage which was respectful and deeply affectionate into a bastion of egalitarianism. Yet when Allgor describes the Madisons as "political partner[s]," one can't help thinking of the Clintons. The erudition and charm of this biography are rivaled only by that of its subject, which makes it disappointing that the decades after Madison's presidency are dispatched in a skimpy two chapters and epilogue. 10-city author tour. (Apr. 10) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* Once she married the much older James Madison, in 1794, Dolley Madison became a celebrity of the founding generation popular but polarizing. Her enemies circulated rumors that Thomas Jefferson had sold her sexual services, and they attacked her as "Queen Dolley" for her aristocratic pretensions. But Allgor's sympathetic biography argues that, as the architect of Washington's social scene, Dolley gave the new republic the forum it needed for the development of an indigenous political culture. If Allgor occasionally overreaches Dolley's drawing room, she says, "changed the course of the republican experiment" she captures Dolley's charisma and her essential role in the politics of her time. Charles Pinckney, the loser in the 1808 election, was, he wrote, "beaten by Mr. and Mrs. Madison." He added, "I might have had a better chance had I faced Mr. Madison

alone." Copyright 2006 The New Yorker From Booklist*Starred * During the administration of President James Madison, his wife was the "most famous and loved" individual in the country; upon her death in old age, having achieved the status of icon, she was accorded a state funeral in the nation's capital. When her husband served as secretary of state under Thomas Jefferson, and then especially while she occupied the White House during Madison's two presidential terms, Dolley put her beauty, charm, and intelligence to good use: as a practitioner of salon politics, she played a beneficial role as a bridge between the political and social arenas at a time when "Washington City" was still an unformed and unfinished capital carved from the wilderness and its social atmosphere was in its infancy. History professor Allgor's serious biography of a woman who was "never one to fade into the background in any situation"--this at a time when it was commonly believed that a woman should do just that--stresses the importance of Dolley's making the office of First Lady her own, setting a pattern for future strong and individualistic First Ladies, a list that came to include Eleanor Roosevelt, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Hillary Clinton. A sensitively perceived and historiographically important biography. Brad Hooper Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved