

# Ties That Bound Founding First Ladies And Slaves

The relationship between Founding First Ladies and slaves was complex and multifaceted. Some First Ladies owned slaves, while others were outspoken abolitionists. Still others tried to find a middle ground, treating their slaves with kindness and respect but not freeing them.



## Ties That Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves

by Marie Jenkins Schwartz

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Martha Washington, the wife of George Washington, owned over 500 slaves. She inherited some of these slaves from her first husband, Daniel Parke Custis, and she purchased others herself. Washington's slaves worked on her plantation, Mount Vernon, and they performed a variety of tasks, including farming, cooking, and cleaning.

Abigail Adams, the wife of John Adams, was an outspoken abolitionist. She wrote letters to her husband and other political leaders, urging them to end

slavery. Adams also helped to found the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

Dolley Madison, the wife of James Madison, tried to find a middle ground between slavery and abolition. She owned slaves, but she also treated them with kindness and respect. Madison allowed her slaves to learn to read and write, and she gave them their freedom after her husband's death.

The relationship between Founding First Ladies and slaves is a complex and controversial topic. Some historians argue that First Ladies who owned slaves were complicit in the institution of slavery. Others argue that these First Ladies were products of their time and that they did the best they could to improve the lives of their slaves.

Ultimately, the relationship between Founding First Ladies and slaves is a reminder of the complex and often contradictory nature of American history. Slavery was a deeply ingrained part of American society for centuries, and it took many years and a great deal of effort to abolish it.

### **The Impact of Slavery on Founding First Ladies**

Slavery had a profound impact on the lives of Founding First Ladies. For those who owned slaves, it was a constant source of stress and anxiety. They worried about the safety of their slaves, they feared slave revolts, and they knew that slavery was a moral wrong.

For those who were abolitionists, slavery was a source of great pain and frustration. They saw the evils of slavery firsthand, and they knew that it

was destroying the country. They worked tirelessly to end slavery, but they often faced opposition from their husbands and other political leaders.

For those who tried to find a middle ground, slavery was a constant source of conflict. They knew that slavery was wrong, but they also knew that it was a part of the society in which they lived. They tried to treat their slaves with kindness and respect, but they also knew that they were ultimately responsible for their slaves' well-being.

### **The Legacy of Slavery for Founding First Ladies**

The legacy of slavery for Founding First Ladies is complex and multifaceted. Some First Ladies, such as Martha Washington, are remembered for their ownership of slaves. Others, such as Abigail Adams, are remembered for their abolitionist activism. Still others, such as Dolley Madison, are remembered for their attempts to find a middle ground between slavery and abolition.

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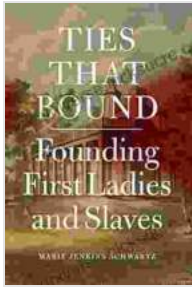
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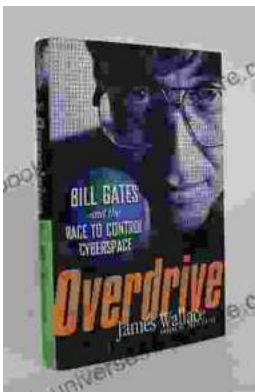
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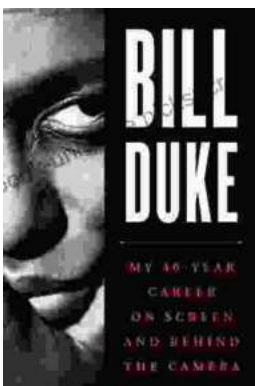


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