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Our Eleanor: A Scrapbook Look At Eleanor Roosevelt's Remarkable Life



Synopsis

No matter how the question is answered, one thing is clear: There has hardly been a life in the last century that Eleanor Roosevelt has not affected, in one way or another. From securing safe, low-cost housing for Kentucky's poor, to helping her grandchildren hang a tire swing on the White House's south lawn, to representing America as the first female delegate to the United Nations, Eleanor rarely kept a second of her life for herself -- and she wouldn't have had it any other way. In this stunning "scrapbook" biography, Candace Fleming, author of the acclaimed Ben Franklin's Almanac, turns her keen eye to our nation's premier First Lady. Filled with photographs of everything from Eleanor's speech at the 1940 Democratic National Convention to her high school report card, as well as fascinating stories about life in and out of the White House, *Our Eleanor* gives us a remarkable perspective on a remarkable woman, and presents to a new generation an Eleanor to call its own.

Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers; First Edition edition (October 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689865449

ISBN-13: 978-0689865442

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.7 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #838,697 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Biographies > Political](#) #166 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > 20th Century](#)

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 4-8
This presentation does for the longest-serving First Lady what Russell Freedman's *Lincoln: A Photobiography* (Clarion, 1987) did for an earlier inhabitant of the White House. While the arrangement is chronological from Roosevelt's parents' marriage to her own death, the narrative is not linear per se. Rather, each of the seven chapters leads readers through the subject's busy life with short sections of text filled with well-documented first-person accounts and direct quotes. Much of the story is told within the meaty sidebars covering supporting perspectives, enlightening details, and amusing anecdotes. Fleming is honest, respectful, and

astute throughout, addressing both successes and controversies with balance (not to mention with candor, as when she approaches the issue of Eleanor's sexuality with the statement Was She or Wasn't She?). Not a spread goes by without incredible archival photographs or reproductions, newspaper and magazine clippings, handwritten letters, and diary entries. Many of them have never been published in a book for young people, and they all provide relevant and fascinating insight. The title suggests an intimacy between reader and subject, which is strengthened by a design suggesting a family album. Pages are jam-packed with information in varying fonts and formats, yet still manage to remain clearly and logically laid out. Basic research tools include a time line, family tree, and extensive source notes. Enjoyably educational, *Our Eleanor* will be a core title in all collections for years to come. — Andrew Medlar, Chicago Public Library, IL Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 6-9. As in Fleming's *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life* (2003), which was a 2004 Booklist Top 10 Biography, this takes a pastiche approach to humanizing a legendary life. Through anecdotes and archival photos drawn from an assortment of sources, Fleming invites readers into a camaraderie with the timid, neglected little girl who grew up to become the woman many nicknamed "copresident," and whose flouting of accepted gender roles earned her admiration and ridicule in equal measure. The details of Roosevelt's life are certainly riveting; however, Fleming's jigsaw-puzzle approach is probably best suited for use in conjunction with more traditional narratives, such as Russell Freedman's Newbery Honor Book *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery* (1993). In terms of Roosevelt's sexuality, for instance, the frank details about Roosevelt's bonds with known lesbians appear 15 pages before a segment that asks "Was She Or Wasn't She?" (Answer: who knows?)—a structural choice that seems to encourage assumptions rather than heading them off. That said, a broad audience, including many adults, will be intrigued by the volume's photo-album immediacy. Those eager to gain perspectives from other biographers may be frustrated by a list of related books primarily geared to younger children, although multimedia resources and exhaustive source notes offer plenty of opportunities to extend this intimate, unvarnished, and ultimately deeply moving portrait. Jennifer Mattson Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Nothing wrong with it but it is LONG and DETAILED (including details about adult topics such as infidelity) so marketing it as a kid's book is a stretch.

Large size, wonderful photos, and easily read.

A perfectly written biography. Anyone interested in politics, women, American history, civil rights, human rights, and making a difference in the world MUST read this book. You will feel like you not only know her, but after reading, you'll feel that Eleanor is somewhere cheering you on in your life's endeavors as educators, librarians, sanitation workers, peacemakers, leaders, voters, human beings...An incredible piece of writing about an awe-inspiring person.

Our Retirement Book Club thought this was the best book we've read yet. Our discussions were insightful and the clarity that the group had of remembering the actual time that Eleanor was in office, her voice and the White House years was intriguing for me who did not live that period. The achievements that she did that many were not aware of brought her to even a high level of respect. I am sending our copies to another retirement home to enjoy in their book club.

This complete biography of Eleanor Roosevelt chronicles her early childhood to her years alone after Franklin's death in 1945. Her transition from an upper class woman to one fought for and espoused several social causes is well depicted. She actively canvassed for woman's rights and labour rights - particularly during the depression years. She supported African Americans in their struggle for racial equality. She participated in the making of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. This is a remarkable woman who made change a constant part of her life. This book is well made with several illustrations. It is not just a coffee table book with pretty pictures. Several important people in Eleanor's life are well portrayed like Louis Howe, Lorena Hickock and Joseph Lash. However Harry Hopkins is overlooked. The author does speculate on Eleanor's sexual orientation and a possible affair with another man. She fortunately presents this in a non-judgemental manner. These are events of long ago and her husband was not known as the most attentive of human beings. Also mentioned is the immense file that the F.B.I. kept on Eleanor. Also, regrettably, Franklin's mother, Sara, gets another poor portrayal as an overbearing and intrusive "mother-in-law". It is not pointed out that she provided extensive care for her grand-children over the years. Both Franklin and Eleanor were not particularly effective parents - they were young and naïve when they married and not well prepared for parenthood. Sara looked after her grand-children while both Franklin and Eleanor were pursuing their careers or vacationing. She was always available as a substitute parent. Candace Fleming and other authors have not given her credit for this. See "Sara and Eleanor" by Jan Pottker for a completely different point of view. And

congratulations to 10-14 year olds who read this book (this is the age group cited on the dust jacket)
- I am way beyond that age and the book appealed to me!

This is the book that inspired to read every biography that I could lay my hands on. A well-received birthday present, I read this through on one four-hour plane ride to Vail, Colorado. I was immediately enthralled by the beautiful pictures and beautifully written informative pieces. Fleming creates a perfect balance between intriguing photographs and information. She makes Eleanor into a real person, not some political angel that was sent to Earth to rescue the world from all evil. Eleanor was by no means perfect; she was, self-admittedly, a poor mother, and spent the early years of life disliking Jews. However, she grew into a kind, proactive, accepting woman that did all she could to help the people around her when her universe was falling apart. Despite a tumultuous early life with an alcoholic father and a disappointing personal life with an adulterous husband, Eleanor made the best of what she had, and the world has her to thank for surviving some of its most difficult years. Fleming invokes much emotion in her readers, and skipping this book will surely be something you regret later on.

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