

**CSPAN/FIRST LADIES RACHEL JACKSON, EMILY DONELSON AND
ANGELICA SINGLETON VAN BUREN**

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(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FEMALE: Rachel was not a fan of anything that took Andrew Jackson away from The Hermitage. Her preferences apparently didn't strongly influence him, but Rachel was always the thing that he would come back to.

MALE: She ran the plantation or the farm and kept everything in order. Everybody loved her who worked there or was enslaved there.

FEMALE: She might not have been like Abigail Adams but she could write a nice letter and she had nice jewelry. She was not as grumpy as she was reputed to be.

MALE: The only problem with it was they got famous. As he rose in politics, that was an ugly sore. She was called names.

FEMALE: The campaign was so bitterly fought but that in faction went all out completely calling her a whore. They just used every piece of garbage they could find, and Rachel was good garbage for them.

MALE: She dreaded going to Washington and made the statement, "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God that live in that palace." Well, she never did. Before he left to go to Washington, she died.

FEMALE: In 1828, Emily Donelson, Rachel's niece was 21 years old and she became the White House hostess.

MALE: Emily was perfect. For all of the negatives Washington had to say about Andrew Jackson, they loved Emily.

FEMALE: She received education in the fine arts of being a lady, how to sew, how to embroider, music, proper table manners, proper etiquette, and it was that kind of education that enabled her when Rachel suddenly died to flag right into the role of White House hostess.

MALE: The women all liked her and as it was to happen, the women's opinions met more than people thought, but she entertained beautifully, she was polished, she know exactly how to be best.

FEMALE: It's Emily that Jackson has a falling out with over the Peggy Eaton affair. Jackson never lost his affection for her. He just couldn't deal with this kind of going against his will right in his own home.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SUSAN SWAIN: For 12 years, 1829 to 1841, no president's wife served as first lady. In this program, we'll learn about two administrations led by widowed presidents and the various women who served as their first ladies. Up first on CSPAN's First Ladies Influence and Image, Andrew Jackson's presidency, a story of personal politics, tragedy, gossip and —, and Washington societal ambition.

Thanks for being with us in our continuing series on the lives of America's first ladies produced in cooperation with the White House Historical Association. Tonight, the interesting Jacksonian Era. Here to tell us more about that time period and the women who served in the White House to support the presidents are two guests. First, Michael Henderson, a Jacksonian America historian and his past, he served as the superintendent of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. Michael, welcome to our series.

MICHAEL HENDERSON: Thank you.

SWAIN: And Pat Brady is back at our table tonight. She is a first ladies' biographer and historian. Her biography of Rachel Jackson is called "A Being So Gentle, The Frontier Love Story of Rachel And Andrew Jackson."

Michael Henderson, help people understand the volume, the amount of change that Andrew Jackson brought to Washington when he went to White House.

HENDERSON: Oh, good heavens, I mean, Jackson is the first westerner. You know, we've had Virginia presidents from the old south before that. Jackson is someone completely different, grew up, you know, in the frontier. And the change is enormous. Socially, the change is enormous. This is not – even though he's a planter, he's not of the old planter class of the south that the previous presidents had been from, and nor was he, you know, like a New Englander either. This is a westerner and he brings very different values and very different ambitions to the White House.

SWAIN: We're going to learn that even though he was a widowed president, the ghost of his former wife it's described hung over the White House throughout his years there. Why is that?

PAT BRADY: Because she was the woman of his life. He loved her. She was his touchstone. And when she died of just a few months before he went to be inaugurated, he was bereft, he really was. He spent all of his time thinking about her and her memory and having her pictures, portraits in his bedroom so he could think of her and it just really changed the way the first administration went.

SWAIN: Well, we need to delve into the campaign of 1828 to really understand the presidency that ensued. So, 1828 was a year of what in campaigning for this presidency, how did it changed?

HENDERSON: So, well, it was the first time that we didn't have a majority of electors. So, by the constitution, the whole election was given over to the House of Representatives. So, you have these multiple, you know, competing factions in the House of Representatives. You have Crawford from Georgia and you have Henry Clay, you have Calhoun, you have Jackson.

Jackson actually won the popular vote, but he didn't win the Electoral College. So, when the politicking was going on in the House of Representatives, there was an opportunity to make deals. And one of the deals that was probably made was that Henry Clay would become the vice president and Adams would win the election. And that was seen as a corrupt bargain. And so, once we come out of that election, the whole buildup to the next election is that was a corrupt bargain.

SWAIN: OK, I need to clarify. You just described 1824, setting the stage for 1828.

HENDERSON: Yes, sorry, yes.

SWAIN: Yes. So, the 1828 campaign was basically old enmities brought together again. So, how did the 1828 play out?

BRADY: Well, in 1824, Jackson wasn't quite sure that he was ready to be president, he wasn't quite sure he was the right man. And, however, when he won the vote and then it was stolen from him, then he knew he was meant to be president, and that election he thought had stolen the people's presidency. When he came out in 1828, he came out fighting.

HENDERSON: Yes.

SWAIN: And what's interesting about the campaign, in so many ways, it was really a presage of modern campaigning and the fact that he and his surrogates were out on the stump as it were. And I read that as many as 800,000 more Americans voted in that election than/ had in the previous.

HENDERSON: Yes.

SWAIN: How did he do that and how did he thought of that idea of campaigning?

HENDERSON: Well, a lot of it was the growing development of an actual national party that Martin Van Buren had been working on in (Albany) and had been working on with people in the south, particularly in Virginia. And this is also a period of great technological change. So, we have railroads and we have newspapers and we have all kinds of sort of new communication methods that are coming to bear as well as a much larger electorate. So, we have basically almost general white male suffrage in all of the states. So, there are more people voting, there's more interest in voting, and there's more opportunity to hear about it.

PATRICIA BRADY: And more western states voting.

HENDERSON: Absolutely.

BRADY: More western states have come in.

SWAIN: And Rachel Jackson became an issue in the 1828 campaign. Is this the first time that in our early country's history that people targeted the wife of the presidential candidate in the campaign?

BRADY: To the extent that it happened. Now, Abigail Adams had taken some hard hits from the press as well, being referred to as madam president, president first. So, that sort of thing, it happened. But this was the first time that someone actually went out attempting to find dirt, found what they thought was dirt and publicized it widely.

SWAIN: Who was that person that went out looking for dirt?

BRADY: Charles Hammond. He was in Cincinnati and he hated Jackson and wanted to see Jackson go down, and he didn't care what it took. And then we found – when he found out that she's been divorced, he really despised her. He was very rigorously fundamentalist.

SWAIN: It was a moral issue for him.

BRADY: It was a moral issue for him. He really thought that she would disgrace the White House.

SWAIN: How did John Quincy Adams play into this campaign against Rachel Jackson?

HENDERSON: Well, Adams didn't, you know, he didn't really – he didn't really – he's been one of.

BRADY: He didn't do it, but he didn't ...

HENDERSON: Yes, exactly ...

BRADY: ... stop it.

HENDERSON: ... exactly.

BRADY: I mean, Hammond was one of his party hacks ...

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: ... in a way, and he didn't come down on it. He just sort of sat back ...

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: ... and said, "Oh my goodness, you know, look at that Charles Hammond, isn't he amazing."

SWAIN: And we saw in the open political cartoons that were all targeted, and was this a new phenomena?

BRADY: Yes. And then to call a lady who'd been married for 36 years a whore, and adulterist, a bigamist, that was unprecedented.

HENDERSON: Yes.

SWAIN: And so, people – later on, we'll get into more detail, but the (crux) of the story is what? What was the criticism against her and we learned that Hammond had a moral reason, but what in fact was she accused of doing?

BRADY: She was accused of being married before she met Jackson.

HENDERSON: She was a bigamist basically.

BRADY: She was, in fact. She was married before very unhappily to a man who treated her and her family very badly. Her whole family hated him. And out west, they didn't believe that you had to stick by your man for 50 years if he was horrible. They believed in dissolving an unhappy marriage. And so, they did.

SWAIN: And also criticism of her and this western frontier, lack of class, lack of ...

BRADY: She smoked a pipe. That sums it up. And she had an Accent. She had a Tennessee Accent She did not have an East Coast accent

SWAIN: Were opponents concerned about what the image for the new country would be, the made it to the White House?

HENDERSON: Yes. I mean, there's a strong class issue that runs through all of this, and it's difficult to talk about it in a country that supposedly doesn't have class. But there's certainly is a strong class issue to it and would this person be virtuous enough to represent the United States and is this person genteel enough to represent the United States.

BRADY: Exactly.

SWAIN: So, the great tragedy is after this really (vociferous) campaign, he went to the White House and she is preparing to go with him and then what happens?

BRADY: She dies. She really at first thought she wouldn't go.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: She just thought the situation was too volatile that people might be rude to her, they might snub her, by people I mean other women. And so, she thought about not going. And then they decided

that that would be admitting that they were wrong which they did not believe they were wrong. And so, she decided to go and then on December 22nd, she died of heart attack.

SWAIN: And was buried in the dress that she'd planned to wear in ...

BRADY: You know, white satin gown that she planned to wear to the inaugural ball.

SWAIN: Well, this is our first video tonight and we'll have videos throughout taking you to places and introducing the people who know more about the life and can show you some of the artifacts of the Jackson's. We're going to take you to The Hermitage, their home in Tennessee, and learn more about the totems that Andrew Jackson carried throughout the rest of his life that honored Rachel.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FEMALE: We don't know what kind of health Rachel was in overall, but it's apparent that throughout the fall of 1828, her health was not very good. But the campaign for president that Jackson was going through had a huge effect on her health.

This is a letter that Jackson wrote on the day that Rachel actually died, December 22nd, 1828, he's writing to his friend, Richard Keith Call. And in the letter, he described the onset of Rachel's illness, her final illness. And he says that she was a few days hence suddenly violently attacked with pains in her left shoulder and breast and such was the contraction of the breast that suffocation was apprehended, I mean, it was clear that she was in very serious condition. But he talks about getting ready to go to Washington like he's just assuming she's going to get better and off we'll go. But unfortunately, she did then passed away later in the day.

In the case we have a cap, according to the stories of her death, Jackson called for her to be bled when she died. Jackson was a big believer in heroic medicine, medicine that, you know, basically if it didn't kill you would cure you. And so, even though she was clearly not alive anymore, he asked the doctor to bleed her and supposedly there's a small stain on this cap that – the little blood that did come out when the doctor tried to bleed her. And we have a lancet as well which is what they would've used to cut open.

Then some things about his mourning, a black calling card that Jackson had printed suggesting that he's in deep mourning, a poem that was published and then later printed on silk talking about the death of Mrs. Jackson, and then a book that was given to him by a friend of his, Mrs. (Rutledge), that has a long inscription in it and it's a book called *The Mourner Comforted*, you know, to help him read things that would help him along. Jackson was completely devastated. And for her to die just as he was actually preparing the plans to get on this steamboat and go to Washington was just more than he could almost deal with.

This pendant was painted while he was in Washington after Rachel's death and he had it with him pretty much all the time, either in his pocket, on a beaded chain or strap that he could wear around his neck, on his bedside table at night so that he could see it in the morning when he awakened. And she was with him pretty much all the time even though she had passed away.

And this is a book that was very important to Jackson. This would have been Rachel's song book and she made this cross-stitch cover for her books so that it would keep the book nice. So after her death, Jackson kept a number of things like this very close at hand so he could refer to them – another way of keeping Rachel close.

Jackson had this habit, after Rachel died, of purchasing or using or keeping things that remind of him of her. This is the central hallway of the Hermitage Mansion. Although the house burned after Rachel's death, Jackson insisted that they repurchase the same wallpaper that Rachel had chosen for this space. She had liked it, it reminded him of her and he wants it here.

This is Jackson's bedroom and after Rachel's death, she was never far away from him. He kept many mementos of her around. And in the early 1830's, he had a portrait that was a special favorite of his, copied so that he can have it hanging over the fireplace for it would be the first thing he saw in the morning and the last thing he saw at night.

According to the traditions, stories that were passed down in the family, he would go out to her tomb every evening about Sundown and just spend some time out there, either thinking about her or thinking about the problems of the day and wanted the feeling of her close by or something.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SWAIN: Well, I want to tell you that this program is interactive and we welcome your participation and there's lots of ways that you can do that.

First of all, you can call us and our phone lines are 202-585-3880, if you live in the Eastern or Central time zones. If you live out West, our numbers are 202-585-3881 that's the Mountain and Pacific time zones. You can send us a tweet, but if you do, use the hash tag First Ladies or you can go to CSPANS' Facebook page and we have a conversation running with viewers about this program. And you can ask questions there.

So here's a tweet from Sheldon Cooper (ph) who writes, even though Rachel never made it to Washington DC, did she have plans for what the Jackson life would or should be like there?

BRADY: she did. And it would have been much like their visits there. She did not like extensive entertaining. What she like do to – she was very religious. And what she like to do was to go and hear the leading preachers of the day. Have family and friends alike around her in the White House.

I think it would have been a very domesticated White House.

SWAIN: And the same person asked another question but it's – a good time to ask. Given her public scrutiny, did any famous dignitaries attend her funeral? Do we know the answer to that?

BRADY: No, no from away – no, she was buried two days after she died. So given the way news traveled and people traveled in those days, no one could have made it, but all the local dignitaries, all the businesses in town, all the church bells tolled, everything closed down and there was a huge attendance at her funeral but not people from away.

SWAIN: Well, it's time to step back and tell a little bit of the love story as you call it, the great love story between Rachel and Andrew Jackson.

First of all, who was Rachel Donelson Jackson?

BRADY: She was the daughter of one of the first families of Tennessee. She and her whole family came to Tennessee via a thousand mile river trip in which many people on the trip died. They were on a flat boat and they survived. And they were some of the earliest white settlers and her family was quite prominent in the area. She was – really, she was part of the gentry of Tennessee.

SWAIN: And we have a question by Twitter of someone wanting to know, how unusual it was for someone at the age of 24 to be on their second husband? Was that considered unusual at that time?

HENDERSON: Well, not particularly. People died all the time. And particularly on the frontier and you really couldn't live alone. I mean, most people remarried because you needed to have the support in order to live.

SWAIN: And so, the difference here was that they divorced.

BRADY: Right.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: Right, she divorced. Well, they had the phrase they are "now husband and now wife" because widows and widowers always remarried. That's – just it was very peculiar for someone not to remarry.

SWAIN: Her first husband was 17 years her senior. And his name was Lewis Robards.

BRADY: Not that – no, no, not that much...

SWAIN: No? Not that much?

BRADY: He was about 10...

SWAIN: 10 years.

BRADY: About 10 year – 10, 11 years her senior. It wasn't...

SWAIN: How did they meet? And why did they make the match?

BRADY: Her family left the area of Nashville because the war between the whites and the Indians was so ferocious and so strong. The whites wanted to stay there, the Indians did not want them there. And so it was a battle for territory and the Donelsons left and went to Kentucky where things were safer and that's where they met Lewis Robards.

SWAIN: How long did the marriage last?

BRADY: Not long. Wait, I can't – I have to do the math on that – just three or four years.

SWAIN: And why didn't it last?

BRADY: He was too mean.

HENDERSON: Yes. He was a nasty, abusive person.

SWAIN: So it took courage for her to leave him?

BRADY: It took courage but it took more than that. It took the support of her family.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: She would never have left him if her family had not supported her because you couldn't live without a family out West. And she adored her family and they adored her. So that's – they pretty much were part of the whole decision to elope.

SWAIN: And who was Andrew Jackson at the time she met him?

BRADY: Nobody.

HENDERSON: Yes, basically. I mean, you know, he had been in local militias and, you know, he had studied the law but that was about it, you know.

SWAIN: How did they meet?

BRADY: He was one of the boarders at her mom's house or moms really her palisade. They have a sort of fort where they lived. And he was in one of the cottages with another bachelor lawyer who was there. And you say why is one of the gentry renting out colleges. Well first of all, it's nice to have some hard money. But second of all, in terms of this being a long going war, to have extra guns on hand is always a good thing.

SWAIN: Well, explain a little bit more about Tennessee in that time period. And what that region of the country was like.

HENDERSON: You know, I mean this is – the far west at this point. And it's, you know, recently settled. Most of the settlers from Tennessee either came by river the long way or they came over the mountains. But, it's still – this was still really rough country that was not even as settled as Kentucky.

BRADY: Right.

SWAIN: Next is a question. This is from Mitchell (ph) in Nashville, Tennessee. Hi, Mitchell (ph), you are on the air.

MITCHELL (ph) Yes. I had noticed earlier in the show where you had put up that Rachel birthday, it was in June and it included an actual month and date. My understanding was that no one actually knew what her exact date of birth other than the year, is this correct?

BRADY: That is correct, the date is not known at all. It's believed it was June because that's part of the tradition but, even that's little up in the air.

SWAIN: Next to question from Martha (ph) in Lompoc, California. Hi Martha (ph).

MARTHA (ph): Hi. I understood if I'm not mistaken that only white property owners, men, voted during that time, is that not correct?

SWAIN: Michael?

HENDERSON: That's correct, that was a growing thing. Certainly, in the early days, it was only white property owners of a certain standing. As we move through this period, franchise expands to generally being white males.

SWAIN: So, Rachel Donelson meets the tall, handsome Andrew Jackson. They are attracted to one another, how did their marriage take place?

BRADY: Well, it's even more than just attracted, it's that all his life, Jackson truly like women, he loved her mother for example. And saw her as a mother figure and he couldn't bear to see women mistreated or really badly treated at any way. So his gallantry was involved with what he saw as abuse of this woman. And then, when they fell in love, they decided to elope to Natchez which was Spanish territory that time.

SWAIN: And how long did they stay there and did they come back to Tennessee?

BRADY: They did. They stayed several months close to year I believe. And when they came back, they simply said, "Oh, we're married now." And her whole family including her mother said, "Yes. This is our son-in-law, Andrew Jackson." And who's going to tell them no? Who's going to say, "Oh, no what about that other husband? People just accepted it because the family, neighbors and friends accepted it.

SWAIN: When did the details become apparent that their divorce wasn't really finalized and how?

HENDERSON: Well, that was sort of tricky because the divorce was filed for in Virginia by the husband. But there were stipulations in that settlement and that it had had to be posted a certain amount time and in different places. And he actually didn't go through with posting all of it right away. So I mean, he was really playing games with the whole divorce anyway.

SWAIN: So who's at fault here?

HENDERSON: Well, that was for a jury to decide, that the part of a judge but...

BRADY: He did – he had to take it to court in Kentucky before a jury. And by that time, Rachel and Andrew had been living together as a married couple for two years. And so, when he accused her of adultery, she was in fact living with Andrew Jackson.

And if she had gone back and fought it, then she'd still be married to this person she hated, that made no sense.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: They just ignored it and then, quietly were remarried.

SWAIN: When did the Hermitage become their home?

BRADY: Oh wait, my mind is going blank – early in the 18th century, yes, they started in that area, they started at a bigger place and then he got in to some financial troubles and they moved to the Hermitage which at that time was a log house.

SWAIN: Our next video is a bit of glimpse of Rachel and Andrew Jackson's life at the Hermitage.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FEMALE: They came to this property in 1804. He was just sort of retiring for awhile. So when they first moved here, he spent a lot of time at home. The primary people who would have visited prior to the War of 1812 would have largely been friends and relations from the area. Rachel had a huge family. And they all have lots of kids. So there was a lot of them and they were in and out all the time. And Rachel was very close to her family Jackson being an orphan, he really very close to Rachel's family. Emily Donelson, the house she grew up in is less than two miles away from here.

Then after the War of 1812 when he has become this national hero, there were people here all the time. And Rachel is pretty acknowledged to be a pretty nice hostess, you know, very cordial and very welcoming.

And during Jackson's fame after the battle of New Orleans, pretty much from 1859 on through the rest of Rachel's life, they had lot and lots of company and they had many, many parties or evening dinners or things here at the Hermitage. And you know they were entertaining people who were used to fine things in the city and they appreciated those fine things too. So they acquired a good deal of silver as they went along such as this punch cups here. They would have been used for an evening party where probably some very highly liquored up punch was served.

She had very, very nice things. So this kind of dual image of her as frumpy country lady, she wasn't that exactly. I think it was more about her comfort in the big cities than it was about her actual appearance or clothing.

Rachel was not a fan of anything that took Andrew Jackson away from the Hermitage. During the War of 1812, there are letters from her that say things like yes,— do not let fame and fortune blind you to the fact. You have a wife and I'm home and I need you. And I think he knew pretty well that she would've preferred him just to stay home and be plantation owner Andrew Jackson.

This is the earliest letter we have that Jackson wrote to Rachel. And it was written in 1796 when he was in East Tennessee on business. And it's addressed to her "My Dearest Heart". It says, "It's with greatest pleasure I sit down to write to you. Though I am absent, my heart rest with you and with pleasing hopes, I view the future period when I shall be restored to your arms, there to spend my days in domestic sweetness. With you, the dear companion of my life, never to be separated from you again during this transitory and fluctuating life."

The garden was always considered one of her really special places. Lots of comments from visitors about her gathering flowers to give them when they left. There's one story when a young lady was here on her honeymoon and she and her husband were invited to stay. And she mentioned that the garden was very special to Rachel and that when there are preparing to leave – to move on to the next stage on their honeymoon, she walked through the garden with Rachel and Rachel gathered flowers and gave her a posy before they left.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SWAIN: And we are back talking about the Jacksonian era with our two guests at the table. We're going to take the question about some Face book – I mean excuse me, from Twitter next. (Dave Murdock) asked, "Did Rachel Jackson provide political guidance to Andrew Jackson?" Do we know that?

HENDERSON: I don't know we know that. I mean he was a very shrewd politically but I think he probably took care of the political sphere himself.

BRADY: I would think practically, no for sure. And we have no records of such – we have a lot of their letters and they're always personal or financial but they're really not about politics.

SWAIN: And we were talking before the program began about Jackson's very large personality. And how sure he was of his opinions, will you tell our audience about that.

HENDERSON: Well, he was absolutely sure of his beliefs and wholeheartedly. And when he saw people who disagreed with him, he often took that as sign of enmity. And that was really difficult because he was....

BRADY: Personal enmity.

HENDERSON: ... personal enmity, yes, yes.

SWAIN: So that would be further thinking that he might not have sought guidance from any other person.

BRADY: Well, he seeks guidance from them. He would make his decision. What he really couldn't stand was someone who was a friend or worst yet a relative, to disagree with him because that was really personally dishonest as far as he was concerned.

SWAIN: And we'll learn more about how that unfolds in his presidency as our conversation continues. Next is Loy (ph) in Durham, North Carolina welcome to conversation.

LOY (ph): Hi, how many slaves that the Jackson have in Tennessee, and would those same slaves travel with them to the White House?

SWAIN: Thank you. Either of you know the answer of that.

BRADY: They have some 300 odd slaves, it was a rather large plantation. But no, nobody at the time with travel was large numbers of slaves. They would bring perhaps a couple of personal servants but

things had become iffier about as abolitionist sentiment grew in the North. And it became less and less possible to bring slaves to free territories as the Washington's had for example.

SWAIN: So, Jackson wins election and comes to the Washington. And tell of the story of his inaugural party.

HENDERSON: Well, he leaves the – he has the inauguration, he rides on horseback back to the Presidents House and the public is invited. But there were about 20,000 people who had attended the inauguration. So the House is open to the public and this is the democratic republic – the people of the west and they crash the house and they dance on the tables, they drink all the wine. There was 1,600 pounds cheese that it been sent as a gift to the new president but was completely devoured during this time.

So the White House was really, really bitten up pretty bad. Even Jackson himself had to be escorted out of this because they were afraid for his safety.

BRADY: He left the party early. He went back to his hotel to go to bed.

SWAIN: Over our past several programs, we've been talking about the burgeoning and strong Washington society that was developing in this town. How did it react to this opening of the White House to the masses?

BRADY: With horror. You know, Margaret Smith who was quite a social — and who kept diaries and letters said, "Oh the pity, the pity. You know it's not the way in as with every other party after the inauguration. It was part of the select few who came, not the public.

SWAIN: Once the party, the inauguration party was over, this is a man you described as being in intense mourning. Was the White House social for a few years after that?

BRADY: It wasn't social very much at all for the first year. First of all, they have to refinish it and replace all the drapes in the chair sits where muddy boots have been trampling and put things together. And then even after that to the disappointment of Washington society, they said, "We're in deep mourning, we will not be giving parties."

SWAIN: Let's take a quick glimpse at America in that time period with Census Bureau Statistics. This is what America in 1830, population at this point, 12.9 million and now 24 states. And once again, more than 30 percent growth since the 10 years earlier census. There were two million slaves, about 15 percent of the population, and the largest cities continue to the East Cost, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. What else should people know about the period in this country?

HENDERSON: Well, it's just – it's a period of incredible change. Much like the period that we've gone through in the last – within information revolution. This was a huge period of change. We've gone from an agrarian society, the society that Thomas Jefferson was talking about, to being a society of multiple ethnicities, multiple religions, waves of new immigration, the railroad, the telegraph. All kinds of things were changing the very basis of how life was lived.

SWAIN: And how – what was happening to the North-South unity at this? Were we beginning to see the seeds of what would lead to the Civil War?

HENDERSON: North-South unity was always a difficult one. I mean the founding fathers had never settled that question. And they hadn't settled it because it wasn't easy to settle. By the time we get to 1820, we have an economic crisis in 1819 and then we have the admission of Missouri and the whole Missouri crisis which sort of precipitates a quick fix. We'll just put in one free state and we'll put in one slave state, and we won't talk about slavery anymore.

By the time we're getting into the later 20's, in the early 30's, the specter of slavery is raising its head again. It's casting a shadow across the whole of America.

SWAIN: Next question comes from Mary (ph) in Chatham, Virginia. Hi, Mary (ph).

MARY (ph): Hello. I was calling because I may have missed or I wanted to get in earlier. Chatham is the county state of Pittsylvania County, Virginia. And we have in our court house a portrait of Rachel because she was born here. Supposedly in 1767, which was the year we broke off and organized our county. And her father was a surveyor and she supposedly left here when she was 12. And the gossip was that he had leave town because they were kind of interested in some of his surveys. But anyway, we do have the site marked and we have rocks left from the frame house.

(Crosstalk)

SWAIN: Thanks, Mary (ph). We'll pick it from there. Do you know this part of her biography?

BRADY: It's where she was born and lived until she was 12 when I decided to go over the mountains and to the new territory. But basically we know nothing about her girlhood, we just extrapolate that it was like the girlhood of other children on the western edges of settled territory.

SWAIN: Next is Joe Ellen (ph) in Columbus, Ohio. You're on the air.

JOE ELLEN (ph): Hello, I was calling to see if Rachel had any children.

BRADY: No. Rachel, despite her deep wish for children, Rachel had no children. She was one of 11 and those of her brothers and sisters who married had very large families as well. But she had no children of for own, she had – they adopted one of twin sons that belonged to her brother and sister-in-law when they were middle aged. So there was an Andrew Jackson Jr. who was actually her nephew.

SWAIN: And will you about the adopted Creek boy.

HENDERSON: No – yes and there was also another son. Jackson had been in battle and found and had slaughtered many people, women and children, found an infant and try to give it back to a Creek woman who was alive. She said you'd best kill him, you've killed all of his family anyway. Jackson takes him home and raises him as a son. It's a very interesting – very interesting, you know, kind of story because here's Jackson, the Indian killer, and yet he's adopted this son and raises him as his own.

BRADY: And the rightful lot of letters to Rachel saying, "There's something special. He's an orphan, I was an orphan, there's some reason I found him and he is not to be in the servant's quarters. He's to be in the house and he's to be educated." He wanted to send him to West Point but John Quincy Adams was president by then, so it was impossible.

SWAIN: Well, they said the first year was a fairly quiet one on the social side of the White House. And social means politics by this time in Washington.

BRADY: It does.

SWAIN: So, at what point did he decide he actually needs some assistance?

BRADY: Well, Emily, his – Rachel's niece and nephew were with him all of this time. That they were so close, all this nieces and nephews, all of them were named the same names. So, it's really difficult sometimes to figure out which Andrew Donelson we mean, but, this particular young man had been one of their wards and became the president's secretary. He had married his first cousin,

Emily Donelson Donelson. And they had planned all along to come with the Jacksons and they went ahead and accompanied him.

SWAIN: And how did she create the role of First Lady in the administration.

BRADY: Well, she had —. She was a very pretty girl, she was young, you know, in her on early 20s. She had very good manners, she'd been trained at a lady's academy in Nashville.

HENDERSON: The Washington society loved her.

BRADY: They loved her. And, you know, one of the main reasons they loved her was because she was young and malleable. And the old grand dames (ph) of Washington could run all over her as they could not someone like Rachel. They always liked the innocent young nieces.

SWAIN: Well, for someone who've — who cast himself as the People's President, he lived fairly large in the White House it seems. Very nice parties and lots of money spent on redecorating, how did that square with his public image?

HENDERSON: Well, no his —he believed in democracy with the small D and he was very concerned about moneyed interests and about, you know, elite's controlling the country. So, that is the core of why he — of the democracy that he was trying to create. He really believed in people being part of this democracy. So...

SWAIN: But it didn't preclude entertaining...

HENDERSON: It didn't preclude him being cultivated and having manners and becoming a lawyer and learning how to interact in society.

BRADY: He always wanted to be a gentleman. That was one of his goals, to prove that he was a gentleman. And if you look at some of his controversies they're because in the early days other men did not treat him as equals.

SWAIN: Next up is Lee (ph) in Durango, Colorado

LEE (ph): Yes, I'd like to know what was the big to do about the Election of 1828. We know what was said about Rachel Jackson but what was the comments on the other side?

HENDERSON: Well, there were several, you know...

BRADY: Well, among other things they judged it John Quincy Adams was a pimp, which is the most ridiculous thing you can possibly imagine. It was — but it was based on a little thing, but it had nothing to do with sexual activities. They said a lot of bad things about Jackson — I mean about Adams and also about his wife. I mean she was, after all, they believed a foreigner. She was born in Great Britain, even though she had American parents, and therefore legally was an American, but they saw her as possibly foreign influence.

HENDERSON: And she wasn't happy in the White House particularly either. She was very cultivated. And Washington was a squat little town really at this time.

SWAIN: Well, we promise that the outset d (ph) scandal intrigue and it wasn't just in the 1828 and Rachel Jackson and the criticism she received. But, also what became known as the Peggy Eaton Affair which colored and framed much of the Jackson presidency. Who was Peggy Eaton and how did this all unfold.

BRADY: Well, Peggy Eaton was the daughter of a Washington D.C. hotel keeper and also tavern owner. Many politicians stayed in his hotel and the family got to know them well. She was beautiful,

she was well-educated, she like to sing and perform, she actually sometimes appeared in public which God forbid any lady should do. And so, she was seen as not quite quiet.

HENDERSON: She was beautiful, she was vivacious, and she didn't really know her place. She really interfered and went into situations that were – was part of the men's realm. And this is a period in American history when domesticity and the rise of domesticity is becoming very, very specific, and there's woman's sphere and there's a men's sphere. And the woman's sphere is to guard the household and to guard the morals of society, while the men go out and fight and then, you know, in this new capitalist world.

Margaret Eaton– and I call her Margaret because that's what she liked to be called. I think Peggy is a bit of an insult because she didn't like to be called that. She really was somebody who was going up against a different class and was going at it in a very difficult way. She was outspoken and bold and that was not a woman's role.

SWAIN: Well, you described her but how did she become an issue for the cabinet?

BRADY: Well, it – her husband killed himself. He was a purser) on a naval vessel, he killed himself. So, then she was a widow...

HENDERSON: —.

BRADY: ... yes, and the person who – one person who had consistently lived at the O'Neill's hotel was John Henry Eaton who was one of Jackson's closest friends, supporter. A close friend and supporter of Rachel throughout all this bad time. And he was worried at Margaret's suggestion that he might have ruined her reputation. There was a lot of talk that they had had an affair and that's why her husband killed himself. And so, he asked Jackson, should I marry her? And Jackson said, "Certainly." He was always for love and romance, helping others to elope.

HENDERSON: Exactly and Jackson was familiar with her, too. Jackson had stayed...

FEMALE: He liked her.

HENDERSON: ... in the same boarding house and knew her when she was a young girl. So, he really – he thought that she was perfectly respectable and that this was a good thing.

SWAIN: So, how did rise to level of a cabinet issue

HENDERSON: Well, she broke another rule.

BRADY: ... married.

HENDERSON: She married too soon.

BRADY: They married too soon.

HENDERSON: She should have been in mourning for at least a year. And she married JohnHenry well before that. And that was a problem.

BRADY: Well, and besides that, once the cabinet was named and it includes Eaton and his wife who's social bona fides are not so good, and then, she presses right ahead and goes and talk – goes in calls on one of the haughtiest of the wives of the other men, Floride Calhoun. And Floride refuses to return her call. Now, nowadays, we don't even know what that means. But in those days, that was again to slapping someone in the face.

HENDERSON: Society was very structured and the protocol of society was very structured. And the first person that you would see when you came into town, you would visit the vice president. And you would leave your card. So, she's started in on these process but she did it incorrectly, and Floride Calhoun was not about to return the call to this women.

SWAIN: But it came to the point where Jackson's cabinet was in an uproar and many resignations because of it. How did it get to that...

BRADY: All the wives except one refused to call on Peggy Eaton or when the president gave a big party, and she was an honored guest often at his side attempting to force these women to recognize her. It was the "hello" and then they would walk on. Everything was so cold and so ugly and Margaret was totally mortified. And the worst of all, among those who gave the cut to Margaret was Emily Donelson, his niece.

SWAIN: We have two quotes from Andrew Jackson at the time period that gives you the sense of the President's involvement and pique over the so called, "Petticoat Affair". Here's one, "Do you suppose that I've been sent here by the people to consult the ladies of Washington as to the proper persons to compose my cabinet?" And here's another, written to Peggy Eaton herself. "I tell you, Margaret I would rather have live vermin on my back, than the tongue of one of these Washington women on my reputation." Did it become a constitutional crisis with this cabinet resigning?.

HENDERSON: Well, it did and then – and unfortunately, it's Jackson's gallant defending of Margaret Eaton, that really turns it from a social crisis into a political crisis. He couldn't leave it alone, he spent enormous amount of time trying to defend her honor, getting affidavits about where she was, finding or, you know, tracking down the people who made these terrible comments. And finally, it becomes in his mind that it has to be an attack against him as well. It's not just Margaret, it's an attack against him.

BRADY: That's when he grows to hate — Calhoun...

HENDERSON: And that's when he sees Calhoun behind all of these.

SWAIN: Now brining this back to niece Donelson because you said earlier that she was malleable at one point. But then you also told us he could not abide by close people, especially family members who disagreed with him. What happened between the two of them?

BRADY: Well, she was so influenced by the ladies that she joined in the – really the ostracism of Margaret Eaton. And he demanded not just – and she did receive her at the White House, but he demanded that she treat her as a friend and she would not. And so he sent her home.

SWAIN: Next is the question from John (ph) and Annandale, Virginia. Hi John (ph).

JOHN (ph): Hi great, great series as always. I'm wondering how Andrew Jackson's personality or approach was affected by him becoming a widower, if it all. I know most and for example quickly remarry, which wasn't the case you know of was there any noticeable change in him.

HENDERSON: He was devastated.

BRADY: Yes. He was not just devastated though, he was embittered. That's why this whole first term really didn't accomplish anything because he was either in mourning or he was attempting to help Peggy Eaton out. He was fighting with his favorite niece and nephew. He had to actually – he asked his cabinet to resign. It was whole huge thing that involved him because he saw her as a surrogate for Rachel. If they could treat her this way, they might have treated his wife that way and he could not let it go.

SWAIN: Next up is a call from Dorothy (ph) in Westeville Ohio. Hi, Dorothy (ph).

DOROTHY (ph): Hi. Thank you so much for taking my call. The program has been remarkable so far. My question is how did Rachel deal with Andrew Jackson's fiery temper? I'll hang up and listen for your answer.

SWAIN: Thank you.

BRADY: The only person who actually could control Jackson when he was in a rage was Rachel. One particular time, they were going down river and there was a boat ahead of them with the number of happy young bucks who were all drunk, who were zigzagging, zigzagging, zigzagging so that their boat was being held up. And he just had a gun and he said, "I'll just kill a couple of them". And she stopped that whole operation. I don't know if he would have her not, but maybe.

SWAIN: Next is Nancy (ph), Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Hi, Nancy (ph). Nancy (ph) your question for us?

NANCY (ph): ... series is fabulous. I just would like to know if either of your guests has ever seen the old movie depicting the Jackson's with Charlton Heston and Susan Hayward, I thought as the young woman, and it really showed a beautiful love story, was it accurate?

BRADY: No. It wasn't particularly accurate but it had great looking actors in it. It was really romantic, I loved it. And you know that was the book came out in the President's Lady in 51. It was the best seller for years. In fact you can still buy it.

SWAIN: Well, last question for this part of our program is from Gary Robinson (ph) on Twitter. And it set the stage for the next half hour of our conversation. What was Secretary of State Buren's role and the Petticoat Affair and Jackson cabinet?

HENDERSON: Well, the Secretary of State Van Buren had the unfortunate benefit I will say, of being a widower himself. So, he didn't have to have this social political push from from his wife as the other cabinet members did. He was free to go and see Margaret Eaton when he did, he called on her frequently, he treated her well. And he gained tremendous respect from Jackson for that.

There this very interesting 19th century historian who says that the whole political history of the last 30 years – and he's writing this he beginning of the Civil War, can be attributed to the moment when the soft hand of Martin Van Buren touched Mrs. Eaton's knocker. And although there's a double entendre there, it really points out the fact that Martin Van Buren sort of undercuts Calhoun. And steps in and places himself in position to be the next one to run for President where Calhoun had been the natural choice.

SWAIN: And how did it become a successful bid for the presidency?

HENDERSON: Well, it was actually somewhat complicated. He actually got – he resigned, he got the rest of – he got Eaton to resign, he got the rest of the cabinet to resign. Then he got appointed. Jackson said you can't just resign you know, that's not good. So I have something for you so he nominated him to be the minister, basically Ambassador to Great Britain. And Martin Van Buren left for Great Britain very happy to be the new ambassador to the Court of St. James. And Calhoun who was the seated vice president had the deciding vote in the Senate on the appointment of this nomination and he cast a vote against it infuriating Jackson and sort of sealing Van Buren's future.

SWAIN: And Martin Van Buren comes to the Whitehouse. He is the first Northerner – — Northerner, New York State —.

(Crosstalk)

HENDERSON: He was the first one from New York State.

BRADY: He was the first born as an American.

HENDERSON: First born with American citizenship as his birth right.

BRADY: Yes. That's right and another first for him, the Adam's were of English descent and their heritage, he was a Dutch...

HENDERSON: He was a Dutch descent and he grew up speaking Dutch. I mean English was a second language to him. So, he's really from a somewhat different culture.

SWAIN: And as we said, a widower president coming into the White House. His wife had died many years before. And to set the stage for our conversation on his White House and the first lady who served him, we're going to listen now to White House historian, Bill Seale.

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BILL SEALE: He was President Sherman's favorite portrait because she was pretty. She was a southern belle, she was a tall girl, kind of I guess today, you would say she was athletic-looking. She was a little bit that way and she married Abraham Van Buren. She met him at Saratoga Springs. She was from near Columbia South Carolina and she was a belle at the time and had plenty of money – the Singleton's were a big, big family in the Sand Hills as they call it down there. The —.

And, sort in the area of Fort Jackson, around in there. And she have plenty of money, she bought pretty clothes, She was apparently a lot of fun. And so she and Abraham went to Europe on their honeymoon where she was introduced to young Queen Victoria, approximately her age. And she was so excited about the way the Queen receive women that she came back to the White House and had a platform build at the blue room which was called the blue room for the first time in that administration of Van Buren. And she received all her friends and her all in white at the end of the room and they just nodded, they didn't shake hands or anything.

Well it was really not taken very well at all. And – I mean, imagine a country the ambassador or the ministers and ambassadors to wear uniforms. They don't like that at all, so, the platform was removed.

She lived on to the 1870s in New York, married to Abraham and not a lot known about her. Very few letters and she was I guess what you would call a — at that time. She was – didn't worry about things much.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SWAIN: Martin Van Buren came to the White House as bachelor with a number of sons and was at a quiet place in his term here.

BRADY: Yes, it was very quiet. He was facing a tremendous political crisis because of the panic of 1837 which he inherited from Jackson and Jackson's policies.

HENDERSON: But only several weeks after he – after he inaugurated. So, I mean it struck like that.

BRADY: Right, and it went on so that he was the Depression president.

HENDERSON: Yes, he was Depression president. And this was the first huge economic depression that the United States had had. We had a small in 1819 but it wasn't nearly of the scale. But basically we'd already had an interconnected global economy, and there was – there were calls out on banks from London, there were calls out to American Banks, they didn't have the money and they collapsed, and as the banking crisis started to collapse – so if you remember that we don't have a national currency at this point, so, state banks started to collapse and everything rise up, so...

SWAIN: And what was the depth for the depression for most Americans?

HENDERSON: Oh boy, I mean by that – by that May, there were riots over food in New York City. I mean it was really serious.

BRADY: And it was still going on in 42, 43...

(Crosstalk)

HENDERSON: It got little bit better but not nearly for long time. It's really good five years.

SWAIN: And did he have a cabinet or his own personal ability to bring skill set to help resolve the crisis?

HENDERSON: Well, I mean presidents don't – can't – don't held – hold all those levers even now, and this before we have a fed. Although, he did recommend an independent treasury system which is something like that, but unfortunately Martin Van Buren and the democratic party had been arguing against federalism, had been arguing against these kind of federal projects. So, it sort of back themselves into a corner on that.

BRADY: I don't think anyone at that time could have dealt with a major depression, they just had to wait for the economy to heal.

HENDERSON: Yes, they didn't have the tools, they didn't, they'd really didn't know – they didn't know what was causing and they certainly didn't have a structure in place. For example, we have the fed today that will loan money to banks that are having runs, so, that they don't cost and they don't go under. But we really didn't solve this problem until we got to the new deal.

SWAIN: And with this great trial going on in the rest of the country, how interested was the Van Buren administration in having a social side?

HENDERSON: He was a very social person, I mean, but that was one of his great skill sets. Charming little dinner parties, I mean he was very personable, he liked Jackson, always liked women, and lots of women friends, so, there was still a social side to the White House because a lot of his politicking was done socially, so...

BRADY: He would go elsewhere but really in terms of large scale entertaining, the near state party which was traditional, was pretty much his big party...

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: ... until his eldest son married Angelica Singleton.

SWAIN: And here is where we have to bring in Dolley Madison.

BRADY: Dolley Madison.

SWAIN: Dolley Madison, the great character of our program two weeks back. And what role does she have to play in this administration?

BRADY: Well, referred by Carl Anthony brilliantly as the queen mother, I think. She had a beautiful cousin. Angelica Singleton, Martin Van Buren had four single sons including his secretary and chief aid and she introduced them all at a dinner party.

SWAIN: Why was Dolley Madison back in Washington?

HENDERSON: Her husband had died.

BRADY: And that they had to sell off the plantation.

HENDERSON: They had to sell – yes, her son, when you remember wasn't the best manager and so she moved back to Washington. She also loved – she love the Washington scene.

BRADY: She love – she bought a house on Lafayette Square. She was right there, and she immediately jumped into the social swing. It's where she had been happiest and she came back there as a widow.

SWAIN: Back to calls, Terry (ph) in Independence, Missouri as we now talk about the Van Buren administration. Hi, Terry (ph) you're on. Terry (ph) are you there? We've lost Terry (ph), let's go on to Shawn (ph) in Louisville, Kentucky.

SHAWN (ph): Yes, I was calling – first, it's about Mrs. Jackson, I thought she had a son, Lyncoya who passed away, and also, I would like to comment on Angelica's impression with the press and her visit to the White House in representing the Van Buren administration abroad, and how Dolley Madison influenced her role as first lady.

SWAIN: OK.

SHAWN (ph): Thank you and I enjoy the program immensely, thank you.

SWAIN: Thank you so much.

MALE: Well, Lyncoya was the adopted Indian child that had died also shortly after Rachel before Jackson went to Washington. Angelica Singleton's first year – well, Van Buren spent the first year in the White House without a hostess. She – Angelica and Abraham married in November of the next year, so, she was hostess for the 38, 39 season in which she was wildly successful at.

Everyone thought she was beautiful and glamorous and she did a fabulous job. And then they went on an extended honeymoon through Europe, where she met the Queen of England and she was presented in the court of court of Louis Poulet and she really jumped to it, she really or she had gone to Madame Grelaud' French Academy and she had learned all of these.

So, what – when she came back for the next season is when she sort have had a problem and that's when she tried the tab low at the new year's open house and, you know, this is a country that's interested in democracy, this is just the beginning of the next presidential election season, and here is Angelica acting in a queenly manner.

SWAIN: OK.

HENDERSON: ... So that didn't go over well.

SWAIN: We're going to have part with that because there's a lot to learn. Now here's Presidential Ponderings on Twitter asking and this maybe self-evident from what you just told us. Did Angelica Van Buren want to serve as First Lady or was just expected of her as the only woman in the family.

BRADY: She was dying to...

(Crosstalk)

BRADY: She was excited. It was all glamour and wonder...

HENDERSON: Exactly.

BRADY: And she wanted the bigger stage for herself, too.

SWAIN: And Jeanie Standard Webber (ph) on Facebook, Angelica Van Buren was a new bride when she took on her hostessing duties. What was public opinion of her?

BRADY: At first, it was very positive, you know, she's pretty, she's young, people like to see picture and newspaper cuts of her and all that. It was the trip to Europe that did her in and that did a great deal of harm to the Van Buren administration. She was too naive to realize that she had gone over board and she was shocked when public opinion lashed out at her because we in the depression and here she was posing with ostrich feathers on a dais as she were a queen.

SWAIN: So, how did she present herself at the dais and ...

BRADY: They built it into the blue room.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: You know, I think that when we were here for my advice (ph) that there as no dais in their receiving room, she sat on a sofa that would have been so anti-Republican. Angelica didn't know better, she had seen Victoria, she had seen France and she thought this would be cool and she built the platform, wore the ostrich feathers, everyone in white. And after the newspapers and particularly after the Whig Politicians took talking about born with golden spoons in their mouth and wasting the public money, they actually tore out the platform.

SWAIN: With the flipside of it, how well did the Europeans receive the first couple as it were.

BRADY: They liked them a lot.

HENDERSON: Yes. They were delighted. Really believed that she was incredible. I mean – she – you know. They really took Europe by storm. So...

SWAIN: So that – did that help in the international politics, the image of this still growing country?

HENDERSON: Well, not exactly. And Angelica's mother's brother was actually the Minister to the Court of Saint James at this point. He was a holdover from the Jackson administration but Van Buren kept them on and he had recently picked up a lot of guff because he was called the slave breeder by an Irish militant. And, so, there was growing tension there. And so the publicity of the Angelica, you know, on a positive side didn't really cover up those deeper problems.

SWAIN: Tonight we're telling the story of two widowed presidents who had relatives served for them as the role of First Lady in the White House and Striker (ph) asks a question via Twitter. Pretty basic one, "Why was it so important for unmarried and widowed presidents to have a hostess and would that be true for a single president today?"

(Crosstalk)

HENDERSON: I think there's some importance to it. Not as much today as there was then. But you know, we don't – in a parliamentary system where you have a chief of state, you know, you have the prime minister and you have a president. There's somebody to those ceremonial duties and we sort of pile over that on the president and there's an important function there for – you know, a president's partner. That may sound too modern but there's a social and entertaining piece that is there and I think it was difficult for these bachelor presidents to pull that off without having a female.

BRADY: Right. And entertaining women, entertaining ladies of the time, they had to be a hostess, a man alone couldn't do it. You know, Thomas Jefferson was well known for not being a good entertainer for preferring an evening of men only towards deep talk. And when he did entertain and he asked Dolley Madison or one of his daughters. But basically, to have this large entertainment to greet the ladies, he needed a lady at hand.

HENDERSON: And this a very peculiar incident that we have. But this is a house and it's the woman's here again. And even – and, you know, it's the White House. So it's a highly charged political sphere but it's still the woman's sphere. So there's this tension between politics and society that is sort of heightened here in the White House.

SWAIN: Here is Chubb (ph) watching us on Baltimore. What's your question Chubb (ph)?

CHUBB (ph): My question is when Angelica was presented to the British Court to Queen Victoria, what was Victoria's initial impression of Angelica – same age.

HENDERSON: We were told that she was charmed by Victoria but we don't know of any subsequent correspondents. Yes, they were about the same age.

BRADY: I'll be – I really think that European court were fascinated and really relieved that they turned out to be civilized. That they weren't a backwoods barbarian which was what they expected of Americans.

HENDERSON: And Angelica's family was very wealthy. Richard Singleton was extremely wealthy. And Angelica herself had a great interest in fashion. So she would have come in, you know, in her finest and the best – actually, the dress in the White House portrait is the dress she was presented to the Queen in. So, you know, she polished.

SWAIN: This was such a merger of two seemingly very different family cultures. Angelica Singleton coming from the plantation life, very wealthy in the South, slave -holding family I would presume.

HENDERSON: Oh yes.

BRADY: Yes.

SWAIN: ... with the Van Burens from New York State, very different sort of approach. How did that work between the...

BRADY: Van Buren was not a backward country lad. Van Buren loves the side, he was known as the little magician because he was always pulling off little plants. And a lot of men who disliked him like Calhoun would say, "Oh, he just appeals to the ladies.

That he work through the ladies to the backdoor. Now, we had become very social and so his sons. They were being brought in DC.

SWAIN: This is a little sign bar some people even here didn't know the story but Martin Van Buren is responsible for the universal expression "OK".

HENDERSON: Yes. During the election of 1840, supporters of Van Buren who started to refer into him as "Old Kinderhook". And the phrase OK had sort of just hit the streets in Boston. And it was picked up by the campaign as a way to talk about "Old Kinderhook". And it stuck. OK became, you know, the universal expression that we all used all the time.

SWAIN: Georgia (ph) is in Cedar City, Utah. What's your question Georgia (ph)?

GEORGIA (ph): I would like to know whether Angelica did anything beyond hostessing, whether she did any public policy advising. The LDS or the Mormon people on the Missouri frontier were very disappointed in him not helping them with their causes because they had conflict with the other frontiers man. Did she do any advising in that sort of thing or was she strictly a hostess and dealt with totally the ladies' sphere and nothing in the public sphere that was really the men's world.

SWAIN: Thank you.

HENDERSON: We have no evidence of her delving into politics. Actually, even later in life – even during the Civil War, she's quite quiet about where her sentiments fell in anything political. So she really...

BRADY: So really.

HENDERSON: ...does not express a political view. So I think she wouldn't have had any influence.

SWAIN: But her influence in politics was a negative one by the perception on his administration.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: Well, because of her mistake. Because she was young and she made mistakes.

HENDERSON: Right.

SWAIN: Did she recover?

BRADY: She did actually, yes...

HENDERSON: She did.

BRADY: ... they – as I said, they tore out the dais and she stopped doing the posing. But by then, the administration was almost over anyway. And that was part of what's did it.

HENDERSON: Yes. And this wasn't, you know, this wasn't – Angelica wasn't going to sink the administration there. You know, there were, not to mention this terrible depression, but there was some serious that the United States was just really coming to talk about and slavery being a huge one, Indian removal being a huge one. And these are really big difficult issues.

And the sides, the North and the South are pulling apart from each other, quickly pulling apart from each other. And the room for negotiation is rapidly evaporating. And the center doesn't, you know, isn't going to hold.

SWAIN: Do you know anything and more of are detail of the question from the caller from Utah, about the Mormons and Van Buren's...

HENDERSON: I don't.

SWAIN: OK. Let's take a question now from Bill (ph) in Staten Island, New York. Hi, Bill (ph) you are on the program, welcome.

BILL (ph): Hi, how you doing? Here's another sidebar, in the Gore Vidal book about Aaron Burr, —, he insinuates that Burr is the true father of Martin Van Buren. How serious would that claim be?

HENDERSON: Well, it is actually called Burr, A Novel. So, I will say that – it is a delightful tale. And he did looks sort of something like that that it's almost impossible.

Although, during the campaign 1840, that was certainly raised, Van Buren had been a close associate Aaron Burr, Jackson had actually been a close associate of Aaron Burr's as well. Both of them charmed by him. But the likelihood that, you know, that Martin Van Buren's mother living in this tavern in Kinderhook, New York after having all of these kids already, she'd already been married once before, was having affair with Aaron Burr's is really highly unlikely.

SWAIN: Bethany Johnson (ph) on Twitter would like to know – I would like to know if Angelica had any kids?

BRADY: Yes, she did. And, you know, that's one thing about this young women in the White House. They're pregnant much of the time . They're either pregnant or they've given birth and they're nursing or the child dies and they're mourning and that was Angelica's situation.

HENDERSON: Yes, Angelica was pregnant twice in the White House. The first child she lost, Rebecca. And had shortly after that — — she retreated from public life because she was already pregnant and women were kept in private after that so...

BRADY: And yes, and she had three boys.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: After?

HENDERSON: After that, right.

BRADY: After the presidency, she had three boys.

HENDERSON: Yes. Singleton, Travis and Martin the third.

SWAIN: Terry (ph) in Independence, Missouri.

TERRY (ph): Hello.

SWAIN: Hi, you're on Terry (ph).

TERRY (ph): Hi. I was wondering why Martin Van Buren didn't marry after his wife died?

HENDERSON: Interesting question. Martin Van Buren talks very little about Hannah Hoes. They were first cousins, they knew each other growing up.

SWAIN: Hannah what's his wife?

HENDERSON: Hannah was his wife. They had, you know, they had all of these children together. He has he reentered (ph) actually in Kinderhook later his life. But we don't have too many stories of him having romantic dalliances with, you know, with other women or even possibly proposing. He has friendships with women, but he never seen have another romantic connection.

BRADY: And of Hannah his wife, Rachel Davidson Schmuyer (ph) asks why didn't Martin Van Buren even mentioned Hannah in his autobiography, is that true?

HENDERSON: Well, it's true. He did not mention her. And it says, you know, it's a rumbling bit of an autobiography but it's 800 pages long and you would think that he might of – actually his son, John when he had – his first child wanted to name the girl after his mother. And he wrote to his father was her name Hannah or Anna. So, he probably didn't even talk to his sons very much about his wife. He always kept a locket with the painting of her with him. And – well, that's all we know.

SWAIN: We're going to take people by a video to a place you know well next, which is the historic home – now historic home that the Van Buren's occupied, can you tell us about it before we see it?

HENDERSON: Sure. Lindewald is the house that Van Buren bought while he was president. He bought it as, you know, in case the White House didn't work out. And we know that it didn't. It was also the ancestral home of one his nemesis in Kinderhook. So, he was very pleased to acquire that property. And Lindenwald is the name of the house.

SWAIN: Well, we're going to visit in Kinderhook, New York.

HENDERSON: In Kinderhook, New York.

SWAIN: And you'll see that next.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MALE: Angelica and her husband, Abraham would spend the summers here. There were occasions where they spent parts of the winter months here. But they would spend the summer months here for most of the time that President Van Buren lives here.

Here in the dining room, Angelica Van Buren would have served as hostess. Van Buren had many social events. He had an equal number of political events here. And during those times, Angelica, if she was in residence at the house, would be the hostess for those occasions just as she was at the White House.

She was quite refined being that she was so wealthy and she had all the appropriate social graces at the time. So much though that even the ambassador from France who was typically critical of American manners and social graces complimented Angelica Van Buren.

Martin Van Buren purchased this home in 1839 during the second year of his presidency, along with the 130 acres. Later, he added another 100 acres and had the successful farm here for the balance of his life.

Here in the green room, one of the two parlors of the first floor at Lindenwald typically the women of the house would engage in a variety that activities, polite conversation, they would read or recite for memory to one another. They would oftentimes play power games in here. Angelica Van Buren was trained in Philadelphia on a harp. We have a harp here. There were occasions where she would have played the harp for the other female guests here in the green room.

This is the breakfast room here at Lindenwald. It's a much more intimate room compared to the main hall that you saw earlier. It's a place where the family had their daily meals. The China that you saw here, monogrammed with VB (ph) is the daily China that they used in household here. Angelica Van Buren would have ate off this plates. It's easy to imagine Angelica serving somebody tea from the picture or passing the gravy bowl.

In July in 1843, while Angelica and Abraham where visiting her father-in-law here at Lindenwald, she suffered a miscarriage and we know from letters that she wrote that during that time, she convalesced on this couch here in the main hall. Earlier while she was serving as the hostess at the White House, she had another baby girl die as an infant while she was there. Angelica and Abraham did have three sons that lived to adulthood.

Here on the second floor of Lindenwald, Abraham and Angelica Van Buren would have spent a great little time while they were visiting her father-in-law, President Van Buren. We have several dresses that were owned and worn by Angelica Van Buren and it's easy to imagine her wearing them at one of the events here at Lindenwald or even perhaps at the White House that she hosted for President Van Buren.

The parasol here Angelica like we would have used during the summer months when they were visiting while she was out strolling on the grounds of Lindenwald. It was a large farm of 240 acres. I believed that Martin Van Buren and his daughter-in-law, Angelica, had a very close relationship. He was a very amiable man that is why he was very successful in politics. And she was trained in the social graces of the 19th century. I think they generally cared for one another.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SWAIN: We were looking at some of the really beautiful clothes. You said that there are a quite of number of them preserved at different places ...

HENDERSON: Yes, the Smithsonian Museum of American History has some Lindenwald has some.

SWAIN: And we've been talking throughout the series about these early first ladies and whether or not they influenced fashion trends in the country. Looking at these cloths, was Angelica Van Buren a fashion trendsetter for the country?

BRADY: Well she certainly was for that proportion of the society that could have afford kind of dresses. She was definitely like Jackie Kennedy someone to be emulated.

SWAIN: Well let's talk about Kinderhook and how the Van Buren family used that after they lost the White House?

HENDERSON: OK. Well this is a period in the American history when farming was actually something you could make money at. And Van Buren actually did put a lot of effort into running Lindenwald as a working productive farm and made money doing it. So, you know, that was an important component of life at Lindenwald.

But he also had his family there, you know, he had cousins and nieces and nephews from his wife's brothers and sisters come. He had the Singleton family stayed there and John Van Buren has his wife Elizabeth Vanderpoel stayed there, so it was a house full of family.

SWAIN: But he also had continuing political ambitions.

HENDERSON: So absolutely, absolutely. He left the White House and although he never claimed to run again. He certainly made it clear that if the country called for him, he would do his duty and step forward.

In 1844, he really thought he was going to get the Democratic nomination in Baltimore and he didn't – and it was a big deal. And it was yet again another major crack in this national Party between North and South.

SWAIN: And what about his bid for the – with the free soilers?

HENDERSON: So the and sort of like another and Dutch President Theodore Roosevelt who bucked (ph) the party that he had represented when in the Bull Moose Election. Martin Van Buren comes up to 1848 and makes a pretty substantial decision but he is actually going to go against what he spend his life working for a United – Unified National Democratic Party. And he will run a third party campaign with his son, John.

And he runs on this free soil free liberty ticket which is a very interesting third party, really a forerunner of the Republican Party. And they basically believed in free soil, free labor and free men and no slavery.

SWAIN: And is there any evidence that Angelica and or her husband and various other brothers were involved in the President's future – former President's future ambitions?

BRADY: No, not really.

HENDERSON: John was involved because John stayed political but certainly the others weren't. I mean Abraham Van Buren went to West Point with Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, I mean – so I mean he had friends on other sides of this issue.

BRADY: I think what's interesting though is that after she's widowed or actually even before, that she spends the last part of her life in New York City.

HENDERSON: Yes in New York City.

BRADY: It's again that that cosmopolitan yearning.

SWAIN: Let's take a call from Courtney (ph) in Naples, Florida. Hi, Courtney (ph).

COURTNEY (ph): Hi, good evening. I grew up in Kinderhook in the 1930's and 1940's. My recollection of Lindenwald was the following. That number one, it was an abandoned home, there was total disrepair. The grounds were totally wild. And any evidence of farm was totally absent. And I guess my question is at what point did this property get improved. My recollection is a man with some wealth bought the property and started repairing it and the government took it over. Could you fill that part of story?

HENDERSON: Sure, your memory is quite accurate. Van Buren and Van Buren's family lost – left Lindenwald after Van Buren. It went out of the family almost immediately. It became basically a very large and ornate farmhouse. And by the 1930's had been sort of run down. It had gone through several iterations. They tried to make a Teahouse out of it, a couple of other things. But it basically had never been owned again by anybody who had enough money to do anything — but also never had any money to ruin it either.

So the gentlemen you mentioned, Ken Campbell purchased the house, tried to restore it somewhat. And actually did at least save it from, you know, being a complete ruin. And then, a legislation was passed to make it part of the National Parks Services. And it was the National Parks Services that restored the house in the 1980's

SWAIN: Next is a call from Marilyn (ph) in Sarasota, Florida. Hi, Marilyn (ph).

MARILYN (ph): Hi there. Good evening. I'm really enjoying your program. I'm wondering what Angelica's husband Abraham did while she was acting as hostess in the Whitehouse. And where they – where they lived off she was there?

SWAIN: Thank you.

HENDERSON: They lived in the Whitehouse.

FEMALE: They lived in the Whitehouse. That's the – the President's staff always lived in the Whitehouse in the 19th century. That's why they usually have relatives because they wanted people that they got along with if there was an available son or a nephew. So they lived the Whitehouse in the family quarters. And Abraham was the secretary and the principal aide to his father.

SWAIN: Yes, Abraham had been to West Point and he had fought in the Seminole War. And then during the Mexican War, he went back and became a petty master.

SWAIN: Eva Coting (ph) is on Twitter. Did anyone during Van Buren's time in the Whitehouse ever mentioned Hannah? She didn't seem to be a very moving figure in his life? You said you wanted to talk more about that.

BRADY: The only – what I really wanted to say was that Van Buren was not so odd in not mentioning his wife. Many 19th century leaders of political or scientific leaders would talk about their lives without mentioning wives or children. That was just so personal. It had nothing to do with their success.

SWAIN: Well we have about seven minutes left and what I'd like to do is wrap all this up and talk about the time period 1829 to 1841, two administrations, Jackson followed by the Van Buren, very much intertwined with the scandal politics. So let's talk in a broad sense about the changing country and the changing political parties that brought all this.

HENDERSON: Well I think one of the major things that we forget because were so comfortable with the United States being a two party system and that's being what democracy is or this is here. We forget that during the early Republic, there wasn't a two party system that the Founding Fathers hated parties and thought that they would be terrible for democracy.

And it really is this generation, particularly Martin Van Buren who says wait a minute we need – we need to have an ordered, structured system of – of making political things happen and that's the party. We have to have a philosophy. We have to show together on vote on the same thing. And we have to hang together or these sections of the country needs differences in this democracy will spin out of control and actually they did.

SWAIN: And how did Washington, D.C. changed over these 12 years?

BRADY: It grew like crazy. You know it – at the beginning of course was basically just kind of a big swamp with a lot of trees and dirt. And there'd be a house here and then you go through four blocks and they'd be a building there. But it finally became actually a city.

HENDERSON: Yes.

BRADY: And it became a place to take account of. It was a big place — 40,000 odd. But I think what's so important about this period is that it's the time when steamboats have changed the whole situation about selling from the South that the slave power is growing. It's the most profitable part of the country. And abolition sentiment is growing like crazy in the north. And that's why we somebody like Van Buren running on the free soil ticket which is in fact an Abolitionist Party.

HENDERSON: Yes, I mean there's, you know, this great elephant in the middle of the room which is slavery really comes into focus. And we have set the stage for the coming of – of the most horrific test of democracy that we had, the Civil War.

SWAIN: And interestingly during this time period we had two A, political First Ladies serving these very tumultuous times.

HENDERSON: Very tumultuous times.

SWAIN: Jennifer Sherman (ph) writes that she's loving these old renderings of the Whitehouse that were showing. How did the Whitehouse change during these years?

HENDERSON: Well during the Jackson administration, the North Portico was added which is – which that major piece that you all we see sticking out from the house. I mean that was a major addition to the Whitehouse. Van Buren redecorated the Whitehouse, put in plumbing and central heating, raked a lot of guff for it. The Blue Room was first called the Blue Room.

BRADY: Exactly.

HENDERSON: During – during the Van Buren administration. So the Whitehouse changed a lot too.

BRADY: Well Jackson had spent a lot of money on it as well. That was on basic repair. You know one theme if you're following the history of that building is that it starts out a certain way and then it gets all rundown and things break just as it does with your own house. And they keep putting off repairs – putting off repairs. When they do them their pretty much needed and badly needed.

SWAIN: Especially if your Andrew Jackson and bring 20,000 people inside ...

BRADY: There's that too.

SWAIN: Isabella (ph) in Davenport, Iowa, you're on the air. Welcome.

ISABELLA (ph): I was wondering why did they usually marry their relatives?

SWAIN: OK. Isabella (ph) can I also ask you hold old you are?

ISABELLA (ph): 12.

SWAIN: 12 and are you learning a lot watching this program?

ISABELLA (ph): Yes.

SWAIN: Well we're glad to have you in the audience. Thanks for your question.

BRADY: Good. Well particularly in Frontier settlements where there were limited number of people, oftentimes your cousins would be the only one who were really available to you. And so it was not uncommon at all. It really wasn't even uncommon for double first cousins to marry which sometimes happen too. People didn't have any stance that there was anything odd about it. It seemed like a good thing because you know what that person was like. You knew all about them. And there wouldn't be any bad surprises in your marriage.

HENDERSON: In Van Buren's case, you know, he was a Dutch speaker and so he married into the Dutch community in the Hudson River Valley, you know, that they were Dutch speakers. It was – this was their own people.

SWAIN: I want to show you Pat Brady's book. She had written one about – about Martha Washington. We showed you earlier. This one is her story about Rachel and Andrew Jackson, A Being So Gentle. And it's available for those of you who want to learn more.

HENDERSON: It's a great book.

SWAIN: Only skin-surfaced during these 90 minutes here.

BRADY: Thank you.

SWAIN: But let me have Isabella (ph) and also your book have you talk a little about a theme Michael has brought us back several times and that is the changing role of women in politics. What was happening for women and their ability to influence politics during this period?

BRADY: Well, with gaining that – with the Abolitionists Movement, there were many women reformers who were part of that great movement who were also feminist. And so it wasn't so peculiar to see women having opinions. Earlier when you say, "Oh did these young girls actually have any

political influence?" Not at all and people thought that was the right thing. Good thing too, they didn't think anything about politics. But that was changing drastically.

SWAIN: Well, Becky Robinson (ph) specifically asks and we touched on this, how did the ladies during the administration's deal with the Panic of 1837? You would say not so well.

HENDERSON: Well I mean they like everybody else had no idea what was going on. And I mean it really was a panic I mean...

BRADY: Or how long it would last.

HENDERSON: Or how long it would last.

SWAIN: And we have one last call which is John (ph) in Oklahoma City. John (ph), you last and quick question please.

JOHN (ph): Yes, my quick question was I've always heard that the Van Buren's spoke Dutch in the Whitehouse. You may have already answered this but it's kind of -- story. Did -- what President's family spoke a foreign language in the Whitehouse.

SWAIN: Thank you.

JOHN (ph): And the only answer that thought been given is the family of Martin Buren.

HENDERSON: Van Buren spoke Dutch. I don't believe that his children did. And so I doubt that he spoke Dutch in the Whitehouse. He certainly spoke Dutch in Kinderhook. But by the time you get to his retirement he talks about riding out to the countryside to talk to the people who speak Dutch. So in that period between his birth and his retirement that the Dutch speaking in the Hudson Valley began to die out even though it had been a 150 years after the English had conquered it.

SWAIN: Well very quickly set the stage. He lost the election and what happens next in this country?

HENDERSON: what happens next in this country you mean when Van Buren goes home?

SWAIN: Well who comes into the Whitehouse?

HENDERSON: Well, the hero. The war hero, William Henry Harrison. Harrison comes in and unfortunately catches pneumonia during his inauguration and dies 31 days later so...

BRADY: And leaves John Tyler, who's the terrible party list President.

HENDERSON: Yes.

SWAIN: We've set the stage for a very interesting conversation on our next program, First Ladies Influence and Image. Thanks to both of you for being here tonight to talk us through 12 years of interesting early American history, a very changing country and the Presidents that lead and the First Ladies that helped them. We appreciate your time.

HENDERSON: Thank you so much.

BRADY: Thank you.

SWAIN: Next week, Sudden Death and Secret Marriages mark the tenure of the First Ladies who served in the role between 1841 and 1845. And a Harrison's husband, William Henry Harrison dies because of complications from a cold he catches during his inaugural speech. And First Lady Harrison never steps inside the Whitehouse.

Then for the first time in our country's history, a Vice President and his wife assumed the Office of President and the role of First Lady. But again 17 months later, death comes to the Whitehouse as First Lady Leticia Tyler beset by health problems passes away. Now, entering into the picture Julia Gardner Tyler of New York. We'll tell the story of the May-December romance that leads the 54 year President and his 24 year old bride to get secretly married in New York to avoid the objection of his children. Next Monday night, First Ladies Influence and Image live on CSPAN and also on CSPAN 3 and cspan.org.

And our website has more about the First Ladies, including a special section Welcome to the Whitehouse produced by our partner the Whitehouse Historical Association which chronicles Life in the Executive Mansion during the tenure of each of the first ladies, and with the association, we're offering a special edition of the book "First Ladies of the United States of America", presenting a biography and portrait of each First Lady and thoughts from Michelle Obama on the role of First Ladies throughout history now available at a discounted price at \$12.95 plus shipping at cspan.org/products.