



# Strength And Honor: The Life Of Dolley Madison

*Richard N. Cote*

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## **Strength And Honor: The Life Of Dolley Madison** Richard N. Cote

Born a sprightly Quaker farm girl in the North Carolina wilderness, Dolley Payne became a wife, a mother, and soon a grieving young widow as yellow fever decimated her family. Then fate led her to James Madison, father of the Constitution, a future president, and the dearest love of her life. "Our hearts understand each other," she wrote to him in 1805. Four years later, Madison was elected president and Dolley became the nation's "Presidentress," for the term "First Lady" had yet to be invented.

Her enthusiasm was infectious. When eminent statesman Henry Clay exclaimed, "Everybody loves Mrs. Madison," she responded, "That's because Mrs. Madison loves everybody!" Dolley's immense warmth, effervescence, tact, and popularity were acknowledged even by her husband's political opponents. In 1808, Federalist presidential candidate Charles C. Pinckney lamented, "I was beaten by Mr. and Mrs. Madison. I might have had a better chance had I faced Mr. Madison alone."

The personal heroism she displayed when the British attacked Washington during the War of 1812, and the courage and integrity that characterized her entire life, made her an extraordinary role model. By the time of her death at the age of eighty-one in 1849, she was one of the most-acclaimed, most-loved women in nineteenth-century America. Based on more than 2,000 of Dolley Payne Todd Madison's letters, this intimate portrait explores the mind, heart, and brave journey of a vivacious, dedicated woman, who triumphed over adversity, poverty, and tragedy to help build the new American republic and define the role of First Lady of the land.

The 6" x 9" book is based chiefly on primary source documents, notably Dolley's own correspondence. It features 464 pages; acid-free, eye-ease paper; 91 illustrations and maps; James Madison and Dolley Payne family trees; a bibliography; extensive source notes; and a full name and subject index.

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