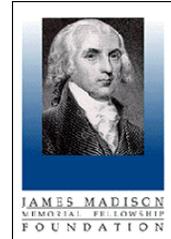


Constitutional Conversations Study Guide

Dolley Madison and Politics (7:01)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezWJ3aVhkrM&t=22s>



Summary

This short video analyzes both the practical and the psychological contributions made by Dolley Madison to the young republic. Practically, Dolley's weekly receptions in the drawing room of the White House became the only public gathering place in

Washington, DC for doing the real business of politics. Psychologically, Dolley became, in the words of Professor Catherine Allgor, a "Republican Queen", whose charm and charisma made her a symbol of America during the War of 1812.

Courses appropriate for this segment: American Studies, US History, Women in History

Grade level: 8-12

RECALL QUESTIONS

1. What is the "unofficial sphere of influence" that Dolley created?
2. Why is a "republican queen" a paradox?
3. What is a charismatic figure?

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the role that Martha Custis Washington played as First Lady with the role that Dolley Payne Todd Madison played.
2. Why were women thought to be above politics?
3. How has the role of the First Lady changed since Dolley Madison's time?

ASSESSMENT OR ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Students may use this google form quiz <https://goo.gl/forms/czfRIOdgi3VL5SPn2> or create their own.
2. There are many products that students can create to show their understanding. Students may write a script including different dialogues from Dolley's drawing room sessions. What were the important issues of the time that might be discussed?

ANSWERS FOR RECALL QUESTIONS

1. Dolley created a physical space in the White House where the social realm of Washington DC could participate in the regular ceremonies of the Wednesday afternoon drawing room gatherings.
2. Dolley provided the ritual of ceremonies for the new republic, which wanted to keep a distance from the monarchy and aristocracy that had been rejected in the separation from Great Britain. Because she was a woman, she was seen as rising above politics.
3. A charismatic figure is someone who can bring different people together based on the attraction of their personality. Dolley was a charismatic figure because she was able to bring people from both sides of the aisle together for her drawing room sessions where the discussion could include different ideas that might not otherwise be discussed.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS FOR CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Although both were widows with children when they married Virginian planters, they lived different lives as the wife of the President. George Washington was President in New York and Philadelphia since Washington DC had not been built. Martha set the role as the first First lady and hosted Friday gatherings for the families of government officials and society. She also had to balance out the new American Republicanism with the desire for pomp and ceremony. <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/martha-washington/the-first-first-lady/>
2. Women in the 19th century were not allowed to vote, hold office or in most instances own property. They could discuss politics, but since there were not many schools of higher learning open to women, their political education was self taught.
3. First Ladies still serve as hostesses, but they may also choose a social issue to champion. Dolley was known for adopting a girls' orphanage in Washington DC to support.

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

1. The 7 minute video can be assigned as homework viewing for a flipped class to allow small group discussion during class. Students can watch the longer video for more information <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=604xBcvODcQ>
2. This video also goes very well with ["Women and Early American Constitutionalism" by Professor Rosemarie Zagari](#)

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