



Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government (Jeffersonian America)

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Before she had even set foot in the White House, Hillary Clinton had already been both applauded and reviled for taking an active role in her husband's policy decisions. But for those -- either fans or detractors -- who believe that Mrs. Clinton was the first such political wife to wield power and influence in the Nation's Capital, Catherine Allgor has a surprising story to tell.

Parlor Politics goes back to the early days of the American republic, a time when politics had its own, somewhat different code than it has today -- in fact, the image of the disinterested statesman to which the founding generation aspired was so pure that it made it very hard to accomplish the actual business of governing.

Enter women like Dolley Madison and Louisa Catherine Adams. By establishing a social circle in which the political men in their lives could discuss pressing issues informally, these women built the framework on which the young republic could grow. Delving into an extensive archive of letters, diaries, and reports of battles over matters of etiquette, Catherine Allgor recreates, in the manner of a nineteenth-century novel, the social events at which the rules of "petticoat politicking" were set down and broken to the glory and ruin of denizens of the new federal city.

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