

The Little White House NEWSLETTER



Roosevelt's Little White House - 706-655-5870 - 401 Little White House Rd. - Warm Springs, Ga. 31830

The Women in Roosevelt's Life

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There are many women who will forever be linked to Franklin D. Roosevelt and many were influential in his life.

Most women in FDR's life will long be remembered; Sara Delano Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Lucy Mercer Rutherford, Missy LeHand, Princess Martha of Sweden and Margaret Suckley are just a few. Other women, such as Francis Perkins, Grace Tully, Louise Hackmeister, or Henrietta Nesbitt also played pivotal roles in FDR's life.



But have you ever heard of Alice Lou Plastridge, Elizabeth Pierson, Eleanor Ford, Daisy Bonner, Lizzie McDuffie, Mary Hudson Veeder, or Helena Mahoney? These women, mostly forgotten, were a part of FDR's life and their contributions helped shape the man, the leader, we all now know.

Francis Perkins

The name of Francis Perkins is no longer a household name but she was one of the most influential women of the twentieth century. She worked for New York State as Industrial Commissioner and the federal government as the first woman to hold a cabinet position: Secretary of Labor.



In June 1934 Roosevelt sent a message to congress announcing his support for some form of "social insurance" that would address unemployment and old age. This concept eventually became the Social Security Act. Roosevelt wanted Perkins to insure the Act passed and told her, "You believe in it. Therefore I know you will put your back to it more than anyone else and you will drive it through." And Secretary of Labor Perkins did work tirelessly for its passage.



Daisy Bonner

"The Queen of the Larder."

Daisy Bonner cooked the first meal and the last one in the Little White House. She began cooking at the Meriwether Inn and went on to cook for FDR until his death in 1945. He nicknamed her "Queen of the Larder" for her cooking skills. I imagine that she is the only person to have seen everyone who entered the president's cottage. She died in 1955 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Warm Springs. Sadly, she is the only person who was never interviewed after FDR's death, although I don't think she would have divulged any secrets.

She was famous for her Country Captain and other comfort foods as described by Fred Botts below upon his arrival in Warm Springs in 1925.



"I was wheeled out to the dining, room and placed at the head of a long table. A girl sat a large platter of "something" in front of me which I was smilingly told was "Country Captain." This is a typical southern dish (or is it from India?) and is composed as follows: chicken, rice, raisins, tomatoes, onions, thyme, curry and garlic. An artistic hand had delicately frescoed it over --- fore and aft, so that now it reposed in front of me a truly beautiful study in brown and white. I ate it all up!" Fred Botts 1925

Helena Mahoney

Dr. Leroy Hubbard, MD, considered one of the nation's top polio experts, recruited Helena Mahoney to be the the director of physical therapy at the newly formed Georgia Warm Springs Foundation.



Mahoney laid out the framework to make the Foundation a premier institution in realm of physical therapy.



Alice Lou Plastidge

Alice Lou Plastridge first treated Roosevelt at Horseneck Beach, Mass in 1925 and they took an instant liking to each other. Due to her efforts, walking with crutches became much easier for Roosevelt. He spoke enthusiastically of his Warm Springs plans during their sessions, and in 1927 Alice was hired. She soon became director of physiotherapy.



Where Mahoney established the physical therapy program at the Foundation, Plastridge took it to new levels through occupational therapy, recreational therapy and hydro therapy programs. Soon, under her leadership, the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation became a world class facility for training PT's and OT's.

Lizzie McDuffie

In addition to being FDR's housekeeper, Lizzie campaigned for Roosevelt by going into African American communities to drum up support. She tried out for the part of "Mammy" in *Gone With The Wind*, with the support of Eleanor Roosevelt, but lost to Hattie McDaniel who got the part.



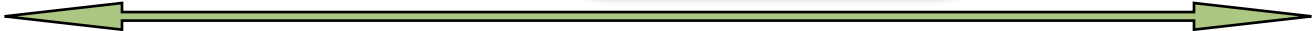
Elizabeth Pierson

Elizabeth Pierson sought out FDR and the Warm Springs in the 1920s. She became a close friend to FDR and chronicled many of her visits, the people and events going on by camera and motion pictures as well. Her dad served as a board member to the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation. They owned a cottage on the Campus and introduced Edsel and Eleanor Ford to Roosevelt. They would be instrumental in the development of the Foundation through their donation of the indoor pool at the springs.



Eleanor Ford

The Ford's visited Warm Springs during the 1920s as guests of the Pierson's and Whiteheads of Detroit. They were so impressed with the work going on here that they donated over twenty thousand dollars to the Foundation in order to build the Winter Pool, known as the Edsel Ford Pavilion.



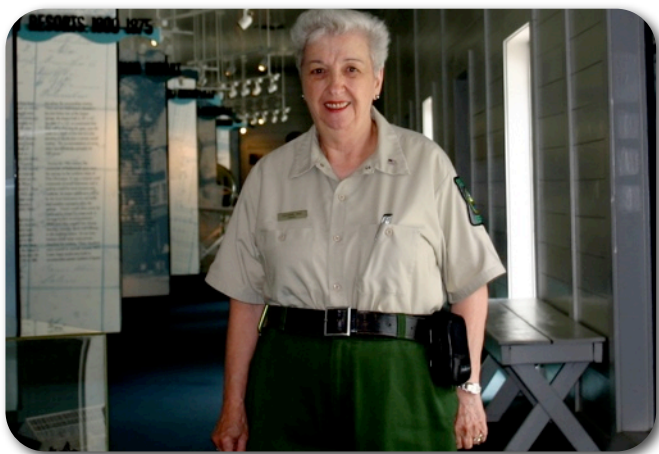
Mary Hudson

Mary came from Peabody College as a physio when FDR put out the call for "pioneers". She helped to make physical therapy what it is today, a science. Through her camera, she also chronicled life around the Foundation during the FDR years. She married patient Charles Veeder and they lived in a cottage on the Campus.



Suzanne Pike

Suzanne was one of the first non polio patients that the Foundation helped. She had club feet and underwent over a dozen surgeries in Atlanta. When FDR found out that she lived in Warm Springs and went to doctors in Atlanta, he insisted that she be taken care of at the Foundation. She attended a Thanksgiving dinner with FDR in 1935 and he gave her the nickname “Suzy”. She married a pushboy, Gene Pike and they live in Warm Springs to this day. Suzanne worked at the Little White House until she retired in 2010. People still ask about her because they love to hear her stories of FDR at the Foundation.



To learn more about FDR, the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation and the Little White House, please visit us as we are open seven days a week from 9:00 a.m. until 4:45 p.m.

For more information about Roosevelt's Little White House, scheduling tours and hours of operation, please visit our website: www.GeorgiaStateParks.org or like us at www.Facebook.com/littlewhitehouse

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