Exploring the Portrayals of Modern First Ladies in Children’s Picturebook Biographies

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Kaitlin N. Elmore

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EXPLORING THE PORTRAYALS OF MODERN FIRST LADIES IN CHILDREN’S
PICTUREBOOK BIOGRAPHIES

by

KAITLIN N. ELMORE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Elementary Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. Sherron Roberts
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Abstract

No study to date has been uncovered in regard to the presence of First Ladies in children’s biographies. However, related prior studies, such as a study on the effect of gender in scientific children’s biographies (Owens, 2009) have stated that the portrayal of women in children’s biographies has evolved over time. Therefore, I wondered how First ladies were portrayed in children’s books, specifically biographies, for elementary aged students. Therefore, this study examined a collection of picturebook biographies written for children about First Ladies in order to explore how First Ladies are portrayed. This thesis focused solely on picturebook biographies written about Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Hillary Clinton (1993-2001), and Michelle Obama (2009-2017). For the purpose of this study, I chose to analyze how the roles of the First Lady was represented, both domestic and political. Across the 11 books analyzed, there were 57 mentions of political duties, including mentions of the First Lady being a political partner (15), champion of social causes (13), and a diplomat (7). Across the 11 books analyzed, there were 20 mentions of domestic duties, including wife, mother, and hostess. According to this research, the books, as a sample, have shown a bigger focus on the political achievements of the First Lady over their domestic life, including being a wife and mother while being First Lady.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I’d like to thank my thesis chair Dr. Sherron Killingsworth Roberts for encouraging me to take on an undergraduate thesis and for being there for me through the entire process. Thank you, Dr. Roberts, for your patience, time, and your helpful and always positive attitude.

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Dedication

To my mom and nana, who both taught me how to be a fearless woman.
To Jordan, for all your unconditional support and love.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

From Martha Washington to Melania Trump, every First Lady has played an important role in American history. However, over time, that role has changed and evolved. Since the dawn of the First Lady, there has been a shift in the place of the First Lady and how she fits at the White House. The modern First Lady, beginning with Eleanor Roosevelt, has had more duties and more of a presence in American politics. When I was a young girl, I was always intrigued by Eleanor Roosevelt and her influential role. The information I learned as a child was not from any media outlet, but from children’s books. Even as an adult, exploring children’s literature, I learned more information from a children’s book than I had ever from any book intended for adults.

No study to date has been uncovered in regard to the presence of First Ladies in children’s biographies. However, related prior studies, such as a study on the effect of gender in scientific children’s biographies (Owens, 2009) have stated that the portrayal of women in children’s biographies has evolved over time. Therefore, I wondered how First ladies were portrayed in children’s books, specifically biographies, for elementary aged students. Therefore, this study examined a collection of picturebook biographies written for children about First Ladies in order to explore how First Ladies are portrayed.

My journey to this thesis began in my children’s literature course here at the University of Central Florida. During this course, I was required to read a biography of my choosing. I’ve always admired Eleanor Roosevelt, so I chose to read *Who Was Eleanor Roosevelt?* By Gare Thompson. The book reiterated many of the information I already knew about Eleanor
Roosevelt, but I also learned something new: that Franklin Roosevelt had an affair with a secretary. Having never known this, I was so surprised to learn this from a children’s book! This experience really drove me into looking at children’s literature. While the aforementioned book is a chapter book, I personally love the stories picturebooks can tell by marrying the words and pictures, so I chose to use picturebooks to drive this research.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The following review of related literature is organized into five sections and provides evidence and rationale for the study of the portrayals of First Ladies in children’s literature. This review seeks to explore the related research literature surrounding the topic of how modern (Post-WWII) First Ladies are portrayed in children’s biographies. Due to changing roles of women in power and other social and cultural factors, this study attempted to explore if a shift in how women in influential positions are portrayed may exist across the past nine decades, the past fourteen First ladies, and across the portrayals of First ladies. The following related research is divided into five sections addressing these probes: Why study children’s literature?, Why study picturebook biographies?, and Portrayals of Women in Children’s Literature, and America’s First Ladies.

Why Study Children’s Literature?

Studying children’s literature, while seemingly unimportant, is incredibly necessary. By studying children’s literature, you learn about what it is that children are actually learning through literature. Tunnel and Jacobs (2013) looked at the history of children’s literature, beginning in the 1600s and ending in the early 21st century. The progression of children’s literature shows that as roles in society change, so does children’s literature. This progression is of interest to the current study because trends in children’s literature and the genre of biography specifically seems to have changed over time for a variety of reasons: changes in society, political interest at the time, children’s interests at the time, and more. Because of this progression and change, books from the 1600s will greatly differ from our books today in that
they are about different subject matter, include different styles of writing and illustration, and cater more to student interest.

Early children’s literature was used to indoctrinate children into religious life and basic moral lessons (Tunnel and Jacobs, 2013). However, when Johann Amos Comenius (1658) wrote *Orbis Pictus (The World in Pictures)*, this stance of didactic teaching seemed to change. Authors began to write lessons into stories, such as *Aesop’s Fables* (Tunnel and Jacobs, 2013). From there, it seemed authors started to understand the need to make children’s literature more entertaining. The 1800s brought fairy tales that continue in popularity even today and the first “Coming of Age” novels that describe a child’s journey from being a child to an adult. Then, in the beginning of the 20th century, children’s literature saw the dawn of the modern picturebook with Margaret Wise Brown’s *Goodnight Moon* (1947), and in 1950, the fantasy genre started gaining popularity, which is still very popular today.

According to Giorgis and Johnson (2003), “Literature about people and characters from the past allows readers to experience vicariously another time and place without leaving their comfortable chairs” (p. 582). This supports the idea that children’s literature can feature many influential people: groundbreakers, seekers, heroes, and more. My focus is about children’s literature about leaders, including political leaders. These different world leaders can include presidents, kings/queens, and leaders of a craft. In the case of this study, it can also go on to include First Ladies. While Giorgis and Johnson (2003) make the point that children’s literature can include prominent political leaders, Louie (2008) questions whether or not children’s literature is political. The most important point that Louie makes is how the political leanings of an author can change the message, meaning, or story of a book. Louie (2008) states, “Texts can
allure unwary readers into an unconscious acceptance of the writers’ values’” (p. 9). When looking at political biographies, this can be especially important. When looking at biographies, it is important to note the political leanings or perspective of the author to identify any bias. Additionally, Louie looks at the portrayal of a fictionalized version of a historical story, in this case, *Mulan*, versus a historically accurate version of a story. When conducting her study, Louie found that children would prefer the fictionalized, funny version of Mulan, as portrayed in Disney’s *Mulan*, as opposed to the true story of Mulan. This thinking of seeing biographies as filtered through a cultural lens could be applied to biographies of today. It would make sense that children might prefer humorous, fictionalized versions that stray from the true story. The preference of fictionalized nonfiction stories and biographies is another point that ties greatly into my research, because the fictionalization, or leaving out facts, can affect the popularity of biography or the likelihood that a child will pick up the book.

**Why Biographies?**

According to Darigan and Tunnell (2002), “No matter what genre we’re reading, we want to give our children the best literature available” (p. 376). Darigan and Tunnell (2002) begin by questioning what a biography truly is and how it’s composed. Darigan and Tunnell (2002) states that “the authentic biography, written as true nonfiction, is today’s trends in biographies for young readers. Although crafted in expository form rather than in narrative form (as with novels), authentic biographies can be as vigorous and entertaining as a good fiction” (p. 371). Another factor to consider is the way children’s picturebook biographies are written. Children’s biographies can be a single-subject individual biography, which would focus solely on one person and their achievements. Children’s picturebook biographies can also be collective
biographies, which groups several different people based on something they have in common, such as a collective biography on powerful women in history.

Darigan and Tunnell (2002) take this a step further by covering the five considerations for selecting biographies: authenticity, objectivity, writing style, subject matter, and book design and layout. According to Darigan and Tunnell (2002), in order for a biography to demonstrate authenticity, it must exhibit the five aforementioned considerations. These considerations can vary from the characteristics of a fiction text, though not by much. Nonfiction and fiction texts share the elements of subject matter, book design, and writing style. However, nonfiction books and biographies vary in the areas of authenticity and objectivity. Because a biography is a nonfiction text and is a piece based on actual people or events, authenticity and objectivity are increasingly important.

First and foremost, the authentic biography must be accurate and authentic; because of this, authors often acknowledge their sources, as evidence of the research that went into the biography. Wilson (2006) addresses the accuracy of children’s nonfiction literature and the function of sources, as it relates to the awarding of the Orbis Pictus Award and related gaps in information and the absence of sources in children’s literature. Wilson (2006) states, “Sources give readers insight into the author's perspective and interpretation as well as show her selection of information. At the same time, when authors use information without making anything up, they still account for questions about missing information” (p. 58).

Secondly, biographers must be objective about their subject. Though, it’s almost impossible for authors to be completely objective, the interpretation of events must be rooted in
the facts. Darigan and Tunnell (2002) made a great point with this statement: “… a biographer ought to avoid making blatant personal judgements and should allow the actions and words of subjects to speak for themselves” (p. 374). The point of objectivity in children’s biographies is to ensure that the book is purely factual and accurate.

The third element of selecting a biography is the writing style of the author. Darigan and Tunnell (2002) make the point that voice can get lost in nonfiction writing, but still plays a very important part of storytelling. “That voice is present in nonfiction may be the most important factor about whether or not a child reads or not” (p. 375). In order for the author to be truly engaged with the subject, they must do extensive research and really step into that person’s life.

Additionally, another important part of writing style is the perspective from which the story is written; most biographies are written in third-person. While they are written in third-person, authors enhance the text by engaging the perspective of a distant third party or that of a child. Another part of selecting a biography is considering the subject matter. Subject matter varies, but it should match what the children are trying to learn or their interests. An important piece of subject matter is representation. According to Darigan and Tunnell (2002), “Providing these richly written biographies to children opens up a world and culture they quite possibly realized never existed. On the other hand, a Mexican American child reading about Diego Rivera or an African American child reading about Langston Hughes gets the opportunity to see his or her own culture represented in a book” (p. 377). Morgan (2009) supports this aspect by stating that, “In today’s global age, it is important for young students to develop multiple perspectives…The need to develop cross-cultural understanding becomes greater as demographic shifts occur, which increase ethnic and racial diversity in society (Norton, 2009).
Teachers can begin developing this understanding in children at an early age when using well-written picturebook biographies for children which represent people from diverse backgrounds” (p. 219). Morgan (2009) makes the point that using diverse biographies in the classroom helps students to see the world through different lenses. Not only do students learn to see the world through different lenses, they can also learn about the challenges and successes of people with whom they may identify, based on gender, experience, or race.

The last consideration in choosing biographies is book design and layout. This breaks down into two different elements: cover and internal design. In terms of the cover, it must pique the reader’s interest. This can be done through photographs or paintings. In terms of internal design, the layout of the book should not reflect that of a textbook even though the writing is informational. The peritext and aesthetics of a children’s book adds much to the effectiveness of children’s book.

To add to these aspects, Kristo, Colman, and Wilson (2008) discuss biographies and the issues that come with utilizing biographical children’s literature with children. Kristo, Colman, and Wilson (2008) explore how important events or issues can be left out of biographies for children. Kristo, Colman, and Wilson (2008) found that “Biographies excluded certain historical events deemed difficult for young readers, such as Lincoln’s assassination, which was not mentioned in the picturebook Abraham Lincoln” (p. 350). Further, Vicinus (1990) found that, “Biographies, unlike fiction or poetry, were presumed to be factual, but they were actually constructed fictions with incorporated selected facts of an individual’s life” (p. 90). Another point that Kristo, Colman, and Wilson (2008) make is about how authors use sources in children’s biographies. According to Kristo, Colman, and Wilson (2008), “one of the trends is
that a growing number of authors include source material both within the text and at the end of the text” (p. 350). Citing sources within the text and having a culminating list of resources at the end of the text is helpful for children because it highlights the need for factual authentication and gets children in the habit of understanding what sources are and their importance. Facts that can be authenticated or traced are increasingly important, so as to ensure that details are not missing from the books.

Darigan and Tunnell (2002) discuss the types of people who are featured in biographies and include politicians from around the world, past and present. Often, the writing of these books is influenced by a few different factors: current elections, coups, or a swing in power. There have been a few relevant studies of the biographies of political leaders written for children, especially U. S. Presidents, such as the study on children’s biographies about Abraham Lincoln by Klatt (1992) and a more recent study on children’s books about Barack Obama by May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010).

Klatt (1992) conducted a study that explored themes and events included in children’s biographies about Abraham Lincoln. Within the time period that was analyzed, Klatt (1992) notes that, “During the nineteenth century, it was fashionable for biographers to write only about the good qualities of their subjects (Bowen, 1969, p. 43)” (p. 120). The study takes an in-depth look at both characteristics of Lincoln and events within his presidency. According to Klatt (1992), biographers of the 19th century wrote about figures, as if they were legends. Defining ‘legends,’ Klatt (1992) states, “Legends, exaggerations of real personality traits, tell about larger-than-life episodes” (p. 120). Of the three biographies analyzed, each capture Lincoln’s essence, beliefs, and events differently. Some didn’t mention the assassination of Lincoln or completely
hailed him as an American hero. Because of this, it is important to note that each of the texts told the story of Abraham Lincoln differently. However, Klatt (1992) states that, “Therefore, as long as legend and fact are differentiated, the biographies by the D'Aulaires, Judson, and Freedman all contribute to our understanding of Lincoln and the Civil War period” (p. 129). If students can differentiate between fact and legend and read historically, the biographies are not considered harmful. Students must be able to read historically; reading historically means that students are able to analyze and think critically about text that references the past. If students lack critical comprehension skills to read historically, it could be detrimental to their education.

More recently, a study by May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) suggests that the authoring of presidential biographies spikes in election years and can often leave important life events out of the book, which supports the claims of Klatt (1992). May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) look at the publication of biographies about President Barack Obama prior to and during his first run for president, and roughly from 2006 to 2009 found that during that time there were 14 biographies written about Barack Obama as he ran for president and entered the office. May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) further looked at neutrality in children’s literature, more specifically children’s biographies. May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) go on to discuss the exponential number of children’s biographies about Barack Obama that were produced and question how the speed of production could affect the information in the books. According to May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010), “When biographers draw on an individual’s self-account of his life, they do not simply restate the subject’s story. Instead, they contribute their own re-storying, undergoing an additional selective process in which some events in the subject’s life are included while others are omitted, some facts highlighted and expanded upon while others
are diminished” (p. 5). This was an interesting thought. Bias can greatly affect the information that is put into the biographies that children are reading. May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) went on to evaluate 14 biographies about Barack Obama, all with different text features and for different ages. May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) evaluated the important and defining aspects of Barack Obama’s life and political career and evaluated whether or not those items and events were in the book. May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) state that, “Although we determined the key events based on their prevalence in Obama’s memoirs and media accounts of his life, we found that not all of them were present in all of the children’s books, and when they were included, they differed greatly in how they were told” (p. 15).

Why Study Picturebook Biographies?

Regardless of subject matter or genre, a picturebook has a very distinct definition. Picturebooks are defined by Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2008) as “the union of text and art that results in something beyond what each form separately contributes” (p. 273). Therefore, throughout this thesis, the single word picturebook is used to reinforce the important notion that picturebooks are an inextricable intertwining of illustrations and text. Barbara Bader (YEAR), in her classic and historical book *American Picture Books from Noah’s Ark to The Beast Within*, offered this definition: “A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page” (p. 548). According to Darigan and Tunnell (2002), the qualifications for a book to be considered a picturebook is that the book is composed of 32 pages and is generally more pictures and
illustrations than text. However, all authors remind us that the sum of the parts is much greater than the individual words or pictures. The importance of the message of the picturebook lies in the fusion of illustrations and text. Taken alone, illustrations or text cannot offer the full meaning of any picturebook.

Ash and Barthelmess (2011) speak on what specifically makes up a good picturebook biography and how to select an appropriate biography. “First and foremost, a picturebook must engage its young readers, talking to and with them, rather than at them” (p. 40). The text begins by speaking on how picturebooks can engage the reader. Most of this engagement is done through the pictures themselves. In picturebooks, storytelling is divided between the text and the pictures or illustrations. Because of this, it is important that the illustrations engage the student. In terms of biography, Ash and Barthelmess (2011) state that, “All biographers must determine what to include and exclude when writing about an individual’s life” (p. 42). Ash and Barthelmess (2011) go on to explore the thought of how short picturebook biographies can be both beneficial and harmful to readers, in terms of factuality, and why it is vital that the story and the illustrations marry together well. According to Chick (2011), “Picture books are a resource that can be used to connect young children with important historical events” (p. 69). Because picturebooks are generally produced for the younger reader, the books present a unique opportunity for young children to learn more about the past and present of the world they live in and how history has progressed.
Portrayals and Representation of Women and Girls in Children’s Literature

When considering the roles of women and female characters in children’s literature, one should consider both their representation (how often they show up in books) and how they are portrayed in these books. Vicinus (1990) makes the point that in biographies of women from the 19th century, there was a “necessity of fulfilling home duties before venturing into new fields” (p. 93). Meaning, that when women were the subjects of biographies, it often dealt with their domestic roles first before ever speaking on their accomplishments. Dorr (2011) makes a point that “She-roes” have changed and developed over time. The idea of the “she-ro” is important to this study, as a “she-ro” is a woman who has made a great impact in the world. In other words, the portrayal of powerful women in children’s literature has shifted from portraying women as solely mothers and wives to talking about their accomplishments and marks on the world. Vallone (2002) supports this claim: “‘Making a distinction between ‘feminist’ and ‘male order’ books, Lissa Paul comments that "feminist texts are about private space, home, and nurturing, while male-order books are about public space, ownership, and winning’” (p. 14). Vallone (2002) is making the point that distinct differences exist between men and women in texts and what their texts revolve around. Long gone are the days of only wives, homemakers, and mothers! Long live the stories of all kinds of women who make our world amazing!

Dorr’s study (2011) examined the way women were written about in children’s literature. While Dorr (2011) primarily discussed biographies that have personally inspired her, she also looked at what makes up these biographies and how young girls can use biographies to inspire themselves. Additionally, Dorr (2011) looked at a variety of biographies that date back to the 1700s to see if there were any shifts in the biographies or the ways the stories are told. The
results of the study showed that, from the 1700s to the 1900s, more factual information was included in the biographies and that more “liberal use of photographs of their subjects at various ages and at critical times” (p. 44) were provided. A second shift happened in the 1990s, according to Dorr. She states, “Primary sources are regularly cited and even photographed and included in the book, far more extensive bibliographies are written, and much more attractive packaging of the books makes them irresistible” (p. 44). While we know about the importance of sources in biography, according to Wilson (2006), we must understand that in children’s literature about women, these sources are even more vital. Over time, biographies have increasingly become more well-written and more factual and accurate. The importance of primary sources and the facts have prevailed with more and more biographies being written that address different parts of these women’s lives.

Another study to consider is research about a collection of Florence Nightingale books that were produced in the 20th century and how the subject was portrayed by Vicinus (1990). In this study, Vicinus (1990) found that there has been a shift in biographies. According to Vicinus (1990), in the 19th century, biographers ensured that they included the heroine fulfilling her homes duties. With this as the case, Vicinus (1990) makes the point that “Heroines proved themselves in the public world, but never lost their femininity” (p. 92). By saying this, it makes it clear that women could be heroes, but only heroes once they have fit into their role in life and society. These heroes proved to the public that they could be a woman and a hero. In terms of biographies about Nightingale, the 20th century brought a shift from her traditional story that stemmed from her habits and nurturing way that she developed as a child. One factor that caused a shift in Nightingale’s biographies was the support she received from the feminist movement.
Vicinus (1990) stated that, “militant feminists, who wished to widen the leadership opportunities for women, disliked the ‘Lady with the Lamp,’ and praised instead ‘a great administrator and sanitarian, a strong-minded, firm-handed genius.’” (p. 99). The ‘Lady with the Lamp’ is how Nightingale was identified in older biographies that focused on her nurturing and motherly ways. This portrayal didn’t fit the feminist agenda, at the time. While these biographies identified these qualities, the feminist wave of the 1900s sought out to present Nightingale as a strong hero, outside of her feminine duties. Women wanted to be presented as strong, powerful, and smart, as a man would be portrayed in a similar biography. This shows the way feminism can affect both society and thus, the way authors may write children’s picturebook biographies.

To add to the discussion of the progression of the role of women in children’s literature, Owens (2009) explores the effects of gender on children’s biographies about scientists Marie Curie and Albert Einstein. In order to conduct his research, Owens (2009) first found that among scientists, the most commonly biographed are Marie Curie and Albert Einstein. The point of the study was to explore how biographies about Marie Curie and Albert Einstein have changed over time. More specifically, the change in biographies about Marie Curie and the change in biographies about women are related to my research. Owens (2009) chose to compare children’s biographies to those written for adults. The rationale for this decision is as follows, “To understand these books in their historical context, it is necessary to compare them to more authoritative works written for adults—from here on referred to as authoritative biographies…. Comparing facets from Curie and Einstein’s lives in children’s books to the more detailed and authoritative biographies published for an adult audience highlights the subtle way these stories are altered for children and offer a means to evaluate the significance of particular authorial
choices” (p. 931). According to Owens (2009), the ideal results would be to find that the scientist’s gender is central to the story, and that it changes how the story is told. For example, Owens (2009) makes a point that gender plays a prevalent part in the biographing of Curie and that, for example, the biographers would note achievements, but not place significance on the achievement. As time has gone on, Curie’s gender had become the main point and shape of the story. Owens (2009) notes that, “The first page of Laura Waxman’s 2003 biography of Curie notes, ‘Women in the early 1900’s could be wives and mothers. They could be teachers or tutors. But they were not supposed to be scientists or professors’” (p. 934).

An equally interesting point that Owens (2009) discusses is how Einstein’s wife, Mileva Maric, was mentioned more and more in biographies about Einstein. Over time, the view of Mileva, her science career, and the couple’s divorce has changed greatly. Originally, books didn’t mention the science career of Maric; however, the mention of Maric followed a similar trend to that of Curie’s biographies, where the authors went from mentioning her in a light that did not focus on her achievements to presenting her scientific career positively. While this part of Owen’s study is about the wife of a scientist, the observations and findings could easily be applied to the wife of the President of the United States and the related shifts in the roles and portrayals of the First Lady. This research could show a correlation in how biographies are written about First Ladies, depending on when the biography was published and the information the author chooses to include about the First Lady.

While the portrayals of women in children’s literature are important, the representation of women in children’s literature is equally, if not more, important. Harvey-Slager (1992) did a study, in which she analyzed the contents of biographies in four elementary school libraries. The
study looked at the racial and gender makeup of the schools and the racial and gender makeup of the biography section at the elementary school’s library. The results found that roughly 75 to 80% of biographies within the school library were about men. The study also showed that most of the time, the biographies that were about women were mostly about white women. A study by Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006) discusses representation further. The study deals with both the portrayals and the representation of women. Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006) “explored sexism in top selling books from 2001 and a seven-year sample of Caldecott award-winning books, for a total of 200 books” (p. 758). The results showed “there were nearly twice as many male as female title and main characters. Male characters appeared 53% more times in illustrations” (p. 758). In recent years, we, as a population, have learned the increasing importance of representation, or being able to see yourself, in media. According to Chick (2011), “Picturebooks with strong female protagonists are an excellent tool to help young children become aware of the contributions of women in history” (p. 70). This is the reason that my research is so vital to the body of knowledge we already possess about representation in children’s literature.

**The First Ladies of the United States**

To further support my research, it’s imperative to note the role and the changing role of the American First Lady. To support the importance of this research, Watson (2000), states “The First Lady is deserving of study simply because the institution has been a part of the presidency since the founding of our nation” (p. 26). While this is the case, Watson (2003) also notes that “Historically, the First Lady has largely been omitted from consideration by presidential
scholars” (p. 423). However, this perception appears to be changing. Historians and scholars are beginning to see the value in the study of our First Ladies.

The role of First Lady began with Martha Washington, the spouse of the first President of the United States, George Washington. According to many sources, including Watson (2000) and Anthony (1992), Martha Washington really had no plan to follow and simply performed duties that were necessary to the position at that time. However, our second First Lady, Abigail Adams was a confidant to her husband, our second President of the United States. Anthony (1992) expressed this difference; “Martha Washington, had no campaign to contend with, but the second, Abigail Adams, was long an adviser to her husband, John. Over their decades of public service, she wrote him hundreds of letters filled with sagacious insights. With her advice about the political climate when he ran for President in 1796 and 1800, and her intense, often sharp assessments of his rivals, Abigail worked as a virtual one-woman advisory committee” (para. 6).

From this point forward, First Ladies took and still take on their own personas. Some are involved and politically influential and some see their position as purely the wife of the President of the United States.

Watson (2000) gives a brief history on each historical period of First Ladyship. For the purpose of this research, it’s important to discuss how the role of First Lady came to be with the influence of Martha Washington, the turn of the role under the service of Eleanor Roosevelt and progress through to the present-day First Lady, Melania Trump. This progression will be essential in showing the changing role of the First Lady of the United States. Watson (2000) has characterized each period by a number of First Ladies, the period of years they served as First Lady, and the common characteristic of each First Lady.
According to Watson (2000), the wives of the four Presidents of the United States had a great hand in influencing the roles and duties of the First Lady. These First Ladies include Martha Washington (1789-1797), Abigail Adams (1797-1801), Martha Jefferson (wife, deceased) and Martha Jefferson (daughter) (1801-1809), and Dolley Madison (1809-1817). Watson (2000) states that during this time, “the institution [of First lady] became highly visible, and the president’s wife emerged as a public figure.” (p. 49). These First ladies became highly influential and regaled as queens in this time period (1789-1817). These First Ladies began the tradition in what it meant to be the First lady, in being a public figure. These First Ladies set the path for history.

Briefly, the second and third periods that Watson (2000) references are of little note to the study at hand. The role of the First Lady from 1817-1869, beginning with Elizabeth Monroe and ending with Eliza Johnson, was predominantly absent due to the consistent illnesses and deaths surrounding the First Ladies of this period. However, I feel that it is important to note that during this time period, there were many unconventional First Ladies. This means that as a president’s wife would die, the position of First Lady would be replaced by another female family member, such as a daughter or niece. Watson (2000) does note that of this second time period, Sarah Polk, wife of President James Polk, was highly influential and “functioned as the predecessor of the activist partners of the modern period like Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosalynn Carter, and Hillary Rodham Clinton” (p. 52). The third period of First Ladies is described as a “transitional” period. The time period for these transitional First Ladies is from 1869-1901, beginning with Julia Grant, the wife of President Ulysses S. Grant, and ending with Ida McKinley, the wife of President William McKinley. Watson (2000) states that the First Ladies of
this period were influential, but not nearly as influential as they could have been. “The First Ladies of this period fell short of their potential; they did not make lasting impressions on the role of first ladyship or the status of women in U.S. society” (p. 53). While these women were much less influential, they were much more educated than the First Ladies preceding them.

This leads us to the period of First Ladies that my research will deal with specifically. The next three periods feature First Ladies from Eleanor Roosevelt to Hillary Rodham Clinton. The third period is the period of Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), but begins with Edith Roosevelt (1901-1909) and includes Helen Taft (1909-1913), Ellen Wilson, Margaret Wilson, Edith Wilson (1913-1921), Florence Harding (1921-1923), Grace Coolidge (1923-1929), and Lou Hoover (1929-1933). These were the First Ladies who truly began changing what the role of the First Lady is in our country. “The foundation of the modern First lady as an active presidential partner was firmly established during this period” (p. 54). However, Watson (2000) notes that of all of these First Ladies, Eleanor Roosevelt had the biggest influence in changing the role of the First Lady. She is “...still the standard by which all First Ladies are measured,” and that she “did more to change the institution of First Lady than perhaps any other single person, event, or historical period” (p. 54). Anthony (1992) supports this influence. “...The most openly active First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, who was acutely uncomfortable walking the tightrope. Nevertheless, for the 12 years of FDR's Presidency, she delivered speeches, met with policy advisers and offered controversial opinions on a wide variety of subjects” (para. 26).

The following period is categorized as First Ladies who were “model spouses” to their husbands in office. These First Ladies include Elizabeth Truman (1945-1953), Mamie Eisenhower (1953-1961), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson
(1963-1969), and Patricia Nixon (1969-1974). “The spouses of this period are defined largely by tradition and convention” (p. 55). These First Ladies were some of the first to be heavily publicized and to have a broader presence. However, they were not very politically active or influential towards the presidency.

The final period Watson (2000) discusses is the modern First Ladies era wherein First Ladies are portrayed as partners, confidantes, and politically active counterparts during their husbands’ presidencies. These First Ladies include Elizabeth Ford (1974-1976), Rosalynn Carter (1976-1981), Nancy Reagan (1981-1989), Barbara Bush (1989-1993), and Hillary Clinton (1993-2001). Watson (2000) notes that “the modern First Lady has emerged as an active, political partner of the president. Her influence is felt not only in the president’s personal and social life but in his public life and political career as well” (p. 56). This final period changed the expectations of the First Lady from a traditional model wife position into a politically trailblazing individual. Though the research ends with Hillary Clinton, this time period could be extended to most likely fit both Laura Bush (2001-2009) and Michelle Obama (2009-2017). Both of these women in the modern era were connected to causes, politically aware, and active.

According to historians in Watson’s (2000) work, Eleanor Roosevelt’s time as First Lady was the juncture wherein the role and image of the First Lady began to change. Due to this, my research will reflect the group of First Ladies since Eleanor Roosevelt. The role has changed from that of homemaker, socialite, and gracious hostess to being a politically active campaigner and advocate. In short, Watson (2003) sums it up; “Getting right to the point, [these] First Ladies have done it all.” (p. 423).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

After analyzing the methodology of May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010), I was able to gain insight on how I wanted to present my current research and determined what I wanted to look for in the books in which I explored the portrayals of First Ladies.

Using the evolving roles of First Ladies and the roles of women in children’s literature as a rationale, the current study presented here seeks to provide further insights on how modern First Ladies are portrayed in children’s biographies. I will use the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database to identify at least three top biographies related to each of the modern First Ladies. To do this, I plan on evaluating a set of at least three current, award-winning children’s biographies focusing upon First Ladies according to the following criteria:

1. The time period of the First Lady’s time as First Lady.
2. The year the biography was written.
3. The gender of the author.
4. The language the book uses to describe the First Lady (mentions of political involvement vs. mentions of domestic duties).

To analyze these books, I found the four aforementioned pieces of information to be vital. First, it’s important to compare the time period of the First Lady’s time in the position versus the year the biography was written. If we were looking at biographies of Eleanor Roosevelt, who was First Lady in the 1930s-40s, the biographies written in the 1950s could be different from a biography written in 2018. I’ve also chosen to consider the gender of the author. The gender of the author could greatly affect the way the biography is told and how the First Lady is presented.
to the reader. Finally, I chose to analyze the language the book uses to describe the First Lady, whether that language be political or domestic. By looking at the language the book uses, I’ll be able to determine what aspect of the position of First Lady the author has chosen to focus on in their picturebook biography. The following chart will be used to track this information as I read the picturebook biographies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Book, Author, and Year of Publication</th>
<th>First Lady and Years of Service</th>
<th>Gender of Author</th>
<th>Mention of Political Duties and Evidence</th>
<th>Mention of Domestic Duties and Evidence</th>
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Looking at the year of publication, in comparison to the years of the First Lady’s term can determine a spike in popularity or if the writing was obligatory in the excitement of a new First Lady. In support of this point, May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) state, “American publishers produced more than 20 children’s books about Barack Obama between 2006 and the first months of 2009. As the calendar months pass, this number increases; at the time this article was written, the number had risen to more than 50” (p. 274). This statement reinforces a thought that the popularity of political figures in children’s literature a predominantly highlighted during their candidacy and leading into their first term. This study was interested to see if this principle affects the picturebooks about First Ladies.
Pertaining to how bias can frame events in a biography, May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) state, “The decision to include, exclude, or provide only cursory attention to events was not the only way texts differed; how authors framed the events was also informative.” (p. 283). This thought has informed my methodology and has encouraged the evaluation of any gender bias between author and subject (First Lady). According to Morgan (2009), “To avoid biased books a teacher ‘can read about the author and illustrator in the book or on the jacket, read author notes that may appear toward the end of the book, and look up critiques that may have been posted on the internet or published in journals’ (Yokota & Kolar, 2008, p. 22).” If bias is suspected, the steps of doing research about the author and illustrator, as suggested by Morgan (2009) would be a good jumping point to identify any bias that may be present in the book.

A Look at the Roles of a First Lady, According to Watson (2000)

While the study of May, Holbrook, and Meyers (2010) did not include a specification of the language, or the ways the subject was portrayed through language, used in the children’s books, the researchers looked at the portrayal of specific events. For the purpose of my study, it is important to look at how the authors discuss the First Lady, her life (before and after their term as First Lady, her duties, and her role in the United States during her time as First Lady. It is important to note that the research of many, including Anthony (1992) and Watson (2000) has shown that the roles of the First Lady is often changed “from one First Lady to another, and between each presidential administration” (p. 71). Watson (2000) also provides a list of what the “official” duties of the First Lady include. I have chosen to include this list in my research to inform the language to analyze and what duties include. Watson’s (2000) list of First Lady duties is as follows:
1. Wife and Mother

2. Public figure and celebrity

3. Nation’s social hostess

4. Symbol of American Woman

5. White House manager and preservationist

6. Campaigner

7. Social advocate and champion of social causes

8. Presidential spokesperson

9. Presidential and Political Party Booster

10. Diplomat

11. Political and presidential partner (p. 72).

Watson (2000) states “this list includes roles that the public expects first ladies to perform and responsibilities commonly undertaken by twentieth century first ladies, especially those serving since Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945)” (p. 72). This statement reinforces the thought that Eleanor Roosevelt was responsible for a shift in the defining roles of a First Lady and, thus, supports her First ladyship as a starting point for this research. For each of the listed roles, Watson (2000) has described the role itself, defended the importance of the role, provided an example of a former First Lady fulfilling the role, and has explained how it is relevant to the position of First Lady.
In considering the role of a “Wife and Mother,” Watson (2000) states “the First lady must also stay married, live her own life, and, at times, even raise children” (p. 73). The position of the First lady, seems to be, first and foremost, to be a wife to the president and a mother to their children. As “the embodiment of a traditional wife,” First Ladies must ensure that they “stand by their man” (p. 73). Given this statement, it quite possibly is the top priority of the First Lady to keep her family and home in order, in order to give an appearance of the “traditional” American family. A fantastic example which Watson (2000) provides of this role is Hillary Clinton, wife to President Bill Clinton. During his presidency, multiple allegations of her husband’s infidelity were made, but Clinton chose to literally “stand by her man” during many press conferences, all while raising their daughter Chelsea.

In considering the role of a “Public Figure and Celebrity,” Watson (2000) states that First Ladies “... have emerged as public figures in their own right, recognized beyond their role as the wife of the president” (p. 75). In recent years and recent administrations, the nation has saw the emergence of the First Lady as a public figure and celebrity. Watson (2000) makes the point that First Ladies often make appearances at large public gatherings and are the face of the White House, at times. This thought truly enforces their role as a public figure. Watson (2000) offers Jackie Kennedy, wife of President John F. Kennedy. Watson (2000) states, “When Mrs. Kennedy appeared in public, fashion designers and clothing stores took notice; sales follow” (p. 75). This example of the First Lady position develops from more than a political position.

When discussing the role of the “Nation’s Social Hostess,” Watson (2000) explains that “the First Lady presides over numerous social events, managing the menu, guest list, entertainment, seating arrangements, and so on” (p. 76). However, these social gatherings are
politically important for the administration and the related political careers. It also allows the First Lady to showcase our nation’s art, history, music, and more. By being the “Nation’s Social Hostess,” the First Lady has the opportunity to help her country by making connections to other public figures and world leaders. Watson (2000) mentions many First Ladies, such as Dolley Madison, Mamie Eisenhower, and Nancy Reagan that used hostessing as an opportunity “...to build political support for their husbands by inviting important guests, strategically timing the events to coincide with important political decisions, and impressing key political allies” (p. 76).

Watson (2000) considers one of the roles of the position to be that of the “Symbol of the American Woman.” When discussing this role, Watson (2000) states that “the office parallels the country’s notions about womanhood and has a definite feminine component” (p. 78). First Ladies have embodied this role since the first First Lady, Martha Washington, wife to President George Washington. However, a prime example of this role is found in Abigail Adams, wife to President John Adams. According to Watson (2000), “Abigail Adams remains the prototype of the modern woman. Abigail was well-read, intelligent, and functioned as an equal partner to her husband…” (p. 79), The First Lady sets the picture of what a woman is during that current time in the United States.

In considering the role of a “White House Manager and Preservationist,” a role by which Watson (2000) ties to the role of “National Social Hostess” by reiterating that the First Lady is responsible for “the social events held at the White House” (p. 80). Additionally, this role includes renovating or restoring the White House and managing the White House domestic staff. Watson (2000) delves into how Jackie Kennedy worked to renovate and restore the White House. During her time as First Lady, Jackie Kennedy worked to restore history to the White
House. “Mrs. Kennedy went on to hire the first White House curator, establish a commission to oversee the White House, lobbied for legislation to protect the integrity of the building and its furnishings, and produced a White House guidebook…” (p. 82). This role is especially vital to the position because the First Lady is responsible for the history of one of our nation’s most prominent landmarks and how history is portrayed within the landmark.

In considering the role of a “Campaigner,” Watson (2000) alludes to the idea that campaigning itself is a new process, and the inclusion of the First lady is even more recent. Watson (2000) also doesn’t define campaigning as the First lady strictly campaigning for her husband. “The role in campaigning by spouses has not been limited to their husbands’ initial quest for the presidency. First Ladies often campaign for issues, policy, and public support” (p. 86). Watson (2000) highlights Eleanor Roosevelt’s contributions to her husband President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s campaign. “As early as the 1930s, the First Lady began traveling and campaigning for her husband on her own.” (p. 85). This role solidifies the partnership that the First Lady and President possess as both a husband and wife team that support each other and political partners who support each other.

When discussing the role of the First lady as a “Social Advocate and Champion of Social Causes,” Watson (2000) states, “First Ladies in the modern era have been expected to champion social causes to the extent that most have become identified with their particular social issue” (p. 86). In recent years, many First Ladies have taken on projects and social causes. For example, under the Trump administration, First Lady Melania Trump has decided to tackle bullying. This role has become fairly commonplace among recent First Ladies. While the First Lady is also taking on social causes, Watson (2000) also describes this role as being “seen as the nation’s
first volunteer” (p. 87). The First Lady is the face of the typical American volunteer and uses that power to inspire others to volunteer.

Directly, Watson (2000) describes the role of the First Lady as a “Presidential Spokesperson” as “the symbol of the president and the presidency” (p. 88). The First Lady is representative of the president and his administration. The First Lady exhibits this role through speaking engagements, actions, and deeds. Some of the ways a First Lady can serve as a “Presidential Spokesperson” is by visiting troops abroad, serving as presidential speechwriters, or holding press conferences.

When discussing the role of the First Lady as a “Presidential and Political Party Booster,” Watson (2000) describes it as loyalty to the president and loyalty to the political party as a whole. “Often boosterism takes the form of political party loyalty” (p. 90). Additionally, boosterism and presidential support is thought to “come in the form of a First Lady’s personality” (p. 90). Generally, the First Lady’s personality either adds to or offsets the personality of the serving president. For example, “Lady Bird [Johnson]’s actions inadvertently boosted her husband’s popularity and his party’s presidential hopes during the 1960 campaign” (p. 90). Watson (2000) goes on to explain that during a rally, protestors became violent towards Lady Bird Johnson; however, the threat of physical harm did not deter her from helping her husband’s campaign.

The role of the First Lady as a “Diplomat” is fairly straightforward. Watson (2000) states that “As a diplomat, her role is multifaceted” (p. 91). This means there are several ways that a First Lady is also a diplomat, whether it be by hosting guests at the White House or traveling
abroad to meet with foreign dignitaries. Many First Ladies have served in this capacity. A notable diplomat among First Ladies is Nancy Reagan, wife of President Ronald Reagan. From 1981-1985, Nancy Reagan made 16 international trips. By doing so, she served her duty as a diplomat for the United States.

Lastly, Watson (2000) defines the role of the First Lady as a “Political and Presidential Partner” as engaging “in a wide array of political activities” (p. 92). “Being a political partner implies a significant level of influence and importance” (p. 92). This role has two specific parts. The first of these parts covering the “political and presidential…The First Lady functions as the president’s most trusted confidante and senior political advisor” (p. 92). However, being a “partner” deals more with the “social obligations of the White House, supporting the president, and continuing to be his wife” (p. 93.). Out of all of the roles, this one seems to be the most multifaceted and this role meets with both domestic and political roles of the First Lady.

The Division of Roles of the First Lady

By using the aforementioned list of duties and their respective definition, I have chosen to create an original list of duties that is more aligned to my own research. These duties will be divided into the domestic realm and political realm to evaluate how the First Lady is being portrayed in the biography. Additionally, I will look at the language used throughout the biography to characterize the subject in their role as First Lady. The language to describe political duties will be vastly different from language that describes the domestic duties of the First Lady. The following bulleted list delineates the duties that this study explores, identifies, and analyzed as I read the biographies. The list has been divided into two categories: the
domestic roles of the First Lady and the political roles of the First Lady, per the academic research and work of Watson (2000).

The Domestic roles of the First Lady

- Wife
- Mother
- Celebrity
- Symbol of American Woman
- Hostess
- White House manager
- Homemaker
- Fashion Icon

The Political roles of the First Lady

- Campaigner
- Public and Political Figure
- Social Advocate
- Presidential Spokeswoman
- White House Preservationist
- Diplomat
- Policy-Making
- Political and Presidential Partner
- Champion for Causes
While my list is based on Watson’s work (2000), I broke apart some of the roles and characteristics that he grouped together, such as “Celebrity and Public Figure,” based on my pilot reading of Lady Bird Johnson. I also added some roles that books revealed be relevant to the current position of First Lady. For example, Watson (2000) grouped together the roles of wife and mother. In my research and subsequent opinion, and based on the current First Lady Melania Trump’s division of these roles, one can see that the distinctiveness of each of these different roles and affect the way a First Lady could be portrayed within children’s literature. I consider this division of roles to be significant to my research because it will help me better align the viewpoints to more appropriate roles, instead of an all-consuming role.

Furthermore, this study chose to examine children’s biographies written for the last 14 First Ladies, beginning with Eleanor Roosevelt and ending with current First Lady, Melania Trump. Many historians, such as Robert P. Watson (2000) and Carl Sferrazza Anthony (1992), feel that the role of the First Lady began to truly evolve during Eleanor Roosevelt’s time as First Lady, so this study is interested in how this shift may mirror a similar shift in children’s literature. The following First Ladies will be included: Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), Elizabeth Truman (1945-1953), Mamie Doud Eisenhower (1953-1961), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson (1963-1969), Thelma “Pat” Nixon (1969-1974), Elizabeth Ford (1974-1977), Rosalynn Carter (1977-1981), Nancy Reagan (1981-1989), Barbara Bush (1989-1993), Hillary Clinton (1993-2001), Laura Bush (2001-2009), Michelle Obama (2009-2017), and Melania Trump (2017-Present). Watson (2003) makes the point that, “...the accomplishments and political activities of First Ladies-at least those serving from Eleanor Roosevelt to the present time-have been fairly well documented in recent years” (p. 423). This helped inform my
decision further, due to the more available access to information about their life and time as First Lady of the United States.

**Books about First Ladies, From Eleanor Roosevelt to Melania Trump**

The Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database through the UCF Library system (as well as Amazon) will aid the study in compiling data. Preliminarily data for each of the First Ladies about a selection of the books available on the fourteen First ladies since, and including Eleanor Roosevelt was neccesary to proceed with the study. This chart lists the 14 First Ladies, between Eleanor Roosevelt and Melania Trump, the number of picturebooks and chapter books about them, the number of award-winning books, and examples of the titles of the books and the year published. The purpose of this chart served as a starting point of how this study could progress, thinking about which First Ladies this research could include and noting any award winning books. The following chart looks at the following items:

1. The First Lady and Years of Service
2. Sample Number of Picturebooks
3. Sample Number of Chapter Books
4. Number of Award-Winning Books
5. Examples of Titles and Year Published

First, it is important in the research process to examine the years that the First Lady served in the position. As mentioned, it is necessary to compare the years served to the year the biography was published. I have included a sample number of both picturebooks and chapter books to show the maximum sample size for the subject. Additionally, I included the number of award-winning
books to show books that may have more merit, based on the awards the books have won or for which they have been nominated. I chose to include sample titles to give me a starting point with books to choose, based on awards or year written. This chart, however, is not representative of the complete total of books. The chart is located in Appendix A.

The aforementioned chart provided several important pieces of data for the purpose of this study. The most important piece of data was the number of picturebooks available about each First Lady. This data helped to inform which First Ladies this study included. After reflecting on this preliminary data and to keep the scope of this undergraduate thesis manageable, this thesis focused solely on picturebook biographies written about Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Hillary Clinton (1993-2001), and Michelle Obama (2009-2017). These First Ladies appear worthy of additional study. After looking at the data provided, I noticed that these First Ladies had the most number of biographies written about them overall, as well as, and any award-winning books that were available on these fascinating subjects. Because of this, I chose that these subjects should be the focus of this study. Across these four First Ladies and nine decades, this study will examine available picturebook biographies. According to Darigan and Tunnell (2002), picturebook biographies “provide an overview, focusing on the highlights of a subject’s life” (p. 376). The purpose of the study is to look at how the women were portrayed during their term as First Lady and, therefore, focuses on a small part and highlight of that woman’s life.

Additionally, by examining picturebook biographies about each of these influential women, this study will employ the five considerations for selecting biographies, as described by Darigan and Tunnell (2002): authenticity, objectivity, writing style, subject matter, and book
design and layout, and explore the roles of women across time as revealed in representative, quality children’s picturebooks on First Ladies.

**Pilot Study**

Before conducting my full research, I used a sample book as a pilot to test the coding system that had been determined. For this book, I chose to look outside of the four chosen First Ladies to use *Miss Ladybird’s Wildflowers* by Kathi Appelet (2005). The following table showcases my findings from my pilot analysis of this book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Book, Author, and Year of Publication</th>
<th>First Lady and Years of Service</th>
<th>Breakdown of Pages</th>
<th>Gender of Author</th>
<th>Mention of Political Duties and Evidence</th>
<th>Mention of Domestic Duties and Evidence</th>
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The purpose of this pilot study on this book was to test the content analysis methodology of the biographies by looking at the gender of the author and the language used by the author to discuss the First Lady. The pilot study also helped to determine if this coding sheet provided an accurate portrait of the biography and the roles exhibited by the featured subject. By using *Miss Lady Bird’s Flowers: How a First Lady Changed America* (2005), I was able to test my methodology and coding system for the content analysis.

The pilot study of Lady Bird Johnson’s biography offered some modifications which are explained in the coming paragraph. I’ve chosen to look at a breakdown of pages and the gender of the author, in addition to the analysis of the duties described in the book. To give a more overall picture of the biography, I’ve chosen to count the mentions of both political and domestic duties. By doing this, I will be able to properly judge the books by looking at what is mentioned most and how it affects the way the biography is written.

As stated, after examining *Miss Lady Bird’s Flowers: How a First Lady Changed America*, I made changes to my original methodology. Because of the experience of analyzing this book, I have chosen to roughly segment the books into parts of the subject’s life. Many of the books are about one part of the First lady’s life and some of the books span the entirety of their life, from childhood to present-day or death. These books can be divided into four parts: childhood, adulthood/pre-First Lady, First Lady, and post-First Lady. To chunk the biography properly, I looked for different language or illustrations that describe or exhibit that part of their life. For example, childhood pages would talk about the First Lady as a “young girl” or “when she was a child”, or show in illustrations of clothing or a tricycle. The adulthood segmentation is more difficult to identify. I decided, for clarity, to choose a mention of a career or college to
begin the segment of adulthood. This segment ends when the position of First Lady is mentioned or with the mention of her husband winning the presidency. The selection of post-First Lady varies. For example, Jackie Kennedy’s post-First Lady segment would begin with the death of her husband, President John F. Kennedy. However, Hillary Clinton’s post-First lady segment would begin with her husband leaving office. By segmenting the book, I was able to focus my attention to how the subject is portrayed as a First Lady specifically. In each of these biographies, I analyzed how they were portrayed as a First Lady during the subject’s time in the position. However, I chose to examine both their era as First Lady, as well as their life past their formal holding of the position of First Lady. Many First Ladies go on to make giant impacts or to implement amazing accomplishments after their husband’s presidency, such as Jackie Kennedy’s work to save Grand Central Station in the late 1960s, after her husband’s death. Additionally, this choice would allow me to analyze Hillary Clinton, not only as a First Lady, but also as a presidential candidate. Because of their present and former positions as First Ladies, each woman was able to have the notoriety and power to make changes and have an impactful voice succeeding their time as an active First Lady.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FIRST LADIES’ BIOGRAPHICAL PICTUREBOOKS

This research seeks to identify the way First Ladies have been portrayed in children’s biographical picturebooks. In conducting my research, I identified 11 books, published between the years of 1995 and 2018, that span across four former First Ladies: Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, and Michelle Obama. These four subjects had the most biographies about them and were easily obtained (public library, Amazon, UCF). Of these books, one book, *Hot Dog! Eleanor Roosevelt Throws a Picnic!* by Leslie Kimmelman, is an award-winning book. Of the authors, 9 out of 11 have won awards for other works. See Appendix B for a chart cataloguing the eleven books used for this study.

**Results of this Study: How First Ladies were Represented in Children’s Picturebooks**

For the purpose of this study, I chose to analyze how the roles of the First Lady was represented, both domestic and political. Across the 11 books analyzed, there were 57 mentions of political duties, including mentions of the First Lady being a political partner (15), champion of social causes (13), and a diplomat (7). Across the 11 books analyzed, there were 20 mentions of domestic duties, including wife, mother, and hostess. According to this research, the books, as a sample, have shown a bigger focus on the political achievements of the First Lady over their domestic life, including being a wife and mother while being First Lady. However, there were books that had a larger focus on political achievement, including *Hillary* by Jonah Winter (2016) and *Jackie Saved Grand Central: The True Story of Jacqueline Kennedy’s Fight for an American Icon* by Natasha Wing (2017), both having ten mentions of political activism. However, *Michelle
Obama: First Mom by Carol Weatherford (2013) focused on Michelle Obama’s life as a mother to daughters Malia and Sasha Obama.

An unexpected factor that affected the way the First Ladies were represented in these picturebooks was the books’ representation of the lifespan or portion of the lifespan of the First Lady. Many of the books catalogued the whole life of the First Lady, from childhood to present day. For example, two out of three books about Hillary Clinton covered her life from childhood to her presidential race in 2016, cataloging the bulk of her political career. However, each of these two books accomplished this very differently. Hillary by Jonah Winter (2016) cataloged all of Hillary Clinton’s life, but had a deep focus on her life after her position as First Lady. The majority of the book (about 16 out of 40 pages) focused on her position as a senator and her presidential campaign in 2016. On the other hand, Hillary Rodham Clinton: Some Girls are Born to Lead by Michelle Markel (2016) presented the parts of Hillary Clinton’s life equally, with each part (childhood, adulthood, First Lady, life after First Lady) having roughly the same amount of pages and information. Similarly, Just Being Jackie by Margaret Cardillo (2018) has an equal split, with extra pages used to describe Jackie Kennedy’s time as First Lady of the United States.

However, there are books that only catalogued the childhood of the First Lady or only talked about one moment in the First Lady’s time as First Lady. As an example, Eleanor by Barbara Cooney focuses solely on the childhood of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. This book focuses on how Eleanor Roosevelt’s childhood led to her political activism both as First Lady and after her position as First Lady. Another example of this is Hot Dog! Eleanor Roosevelt Throws a Picnic by Leslie Kimmelman (2014), which only highlights a picnic Eleanor Roosevelt
threw during her time as First Lady when inviting royals from England to the United States for the first time in 150 years. One book discussed an event after the First Lady’s time in the position. *When Jackie Saved Grand Central: The True Story of Jacqueline Kennedy's Fight for an American Icon* by Natasha Wing (2017) focused solely on Jackie Kennedy’s work to save Grand Central Station in New York City, an event that came after her time as First Lady. Because there are book like this, it shows the prominent impact a First Lady can make before, during, or after her time in the position.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS
This chapter provides insights and discussion related to the findings provided in the prior chapter. The discussion that follows highlights findings related to First Ladies’ overlapping duties, possible effects of authors’ gender on First Lady’s representation, portrayals, and the underrepresentation of First Ladies in literature as related to the popularity and reception of First Ladies.

First Lady’s Overlap of Duties
Out of all of my findings, the overlapping of duties was an occurrence noticed most often throughout the reading of the 11 children’s books. As stated, I chose to separate the roles that Watson (2000) used to describe the duties of a First Lady. Recall that Watson’s work (2000) coupled many roles that this study separated for the sake of clear reporting.

For example, Watson (2000) couples Public Figure and Celebrity into one category. However, I chose to break up these two roles because a difference exists between being a Celebrity--glamour, praise, and fame-- and a Public Figure-- a representative of the administration and could lead to political activism. However, these roles, along with the role of Fashion Icon, a role I determined to be a crucial role to certain First Ladies truly overlap. While the First Lady serves as a Public Figure as someone who is watched in the public eye for their actions, they are also watched as a celebrity would be, in terms of actions they take, places they go, and their fashion choices. This came to light with Jackie Kennedy. Both books about Jackie Kennedy, President John F. Kennedy’s wife, had a major focus about Jackie’s fashion choices and her sense of style. While combining these roles, the role as the Symbol of the American Woman mixes these roles, as well. When discussing her fashion sense, the book Just Being
Jackie by Margaret Cardillo (2018) says, “From Fifth Avenue in New York City to main streets in small towns across America, shops put up signs that said, ‘How to Be Your Town’s Jackie Kennedy.’ People everywhere wanted to be just like Jackie. They copied her signature look: large sunglasses, a simple string of pearls, and of course, the hats” (~p. 21). On the page with this text, the illustrations show Jackie Kennedy in a multitude of different outfits, including her more famous looks. The roles of Public Figure, Celebrity, Fashion Icon, and Symbol of American Woman overlap in this way.

Another overlap I noticed during my research is that of the roles of Hostess and Diplomat. For example, in Hot Dog! Eleanor Roosevelt Throws a Picnic by Leslie Kimmelman highlights an event that Eleanor Roosevelt hosted in honor of the first visit of royals from England since America gained their independence. This picnic opened up diplomatic relations and alliance during World War II. While Eleanor Roosevelt was hosting this picnic, she was improving relations between the United States and England.

The Possible Effect of Author’s Gender on First Lady Representations and Portrayals

Out of the 11 picturebook biographies, I found only two books that were not authored by women. At the beginning of my research, I was interested in how gender of author could affect the information presented in the book. While these two picturebook biographies are written by male authors, these two books contained balanced, appropriate, and accurate content.

The first of these picturebook biographies is Hillary by Jonah Winter (2016). Hillary, written in 2016, highlights all parts of Hillary Clinton’s life, from childhood to her announcement that she was running for president in 2016. Of all 11 picturebook biographies, this
biography had the most mention of political duties. When starting this study, I chose to evaluate the gender of the author secondarily. From this exploration, I have found that in the case of *Hillary* by Jonah Winter, this is the book with the most information about the political duties of a First Lady.

The second book written by a man is *A Picture Book of Eleanor Roosevelt* by David A. Adler (1995). *A Picture Book of Eleanor Roosevelt* was the oldest book in my selection and was written in 1995. This book highlights all parts of Eleanor Roosevelt’s life and discusses her political achievements both during her time as First Lady and after her time as First Lady. The number of mentions dealing with both political and domestic duties is comparable to that of the other books examined as part of this study.

At the beginning of my research, I thought that the possibility of male authors writing books about First Ladies would skew information or the view of the First Lady, but I have found that to not be the case with the texts I analyzed. The picturebook biographies written by both Jonah Winter and David A. Adler have represented their respective First Ladies and their careers with great dignity.

**The Underrepresentation of First Ladies in Literature**

A hindering factor in my research is the lack of picturebook biographies about First Ladies, in general. From this research, one thing that is apparent is that First Ladies are largely underrepresented in children’s literature and history, as a whole. According to Watson (2000), “Nor has adequate attention been directed toward the significant contributions First Ladies have made to individual presidents, the U.S. presidency, or the institution of the First Lady itself” (p.
This statement by Watson (2000) is proven true in my search for children’s literature written about First Ladies. Because of this lack, I was restricted to analyzing books about Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, and Michelle Obama.

**Possible Contributing Factor: Political Affiliation**

Another contributing factor to the underrepresentation of First Ladies in children’s literature could be political affiliation. In my research, I have found that the wives of Democratic presidents have more books written about them than the wives of Republican presidents. The pool of First Ladies I have chosen to analyze begins with Eleanor Roosevelt and ends with current First Lady Melania Trump. In the span of over 80 years, there have been seven Democratic administrations, consisting of the following First Ladies: Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), Elizabeth Truman (1945-1953), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson (1963-1969), Rosalynn Carter (1977-1981), Hillary Clinton (1993-2001), and Michelle Obama (2009-2017). According to my own research, between these seven first ladies, there have been at least 67 books written about these First Ladies. However, this count does not provide any insight on the quality of book. In the span of over 80 years, there have been seven Republican administrations, consisting of the following First Ladies: Mamie Doud Eisenhower (1953-1961), Thelma “Pat” Nixon (1969-1974), Elizabeth Ford (1974-1977), Nancy Reagan (1981-1989), Laura Bush (2001-2009), and Melania Trump (2017-Present). Combined, these First Ladies have had 16 books written about them, with zero picturebooks to date about Melania Trump. However, this does not take quality of book into consideration. I chose the First Ladies with the most books about them to examine for patterns and to allow for better accessibility of books about First Ladies.
**Possible Contributing Factor: Popularity and Reception of First Lady**

A factor that contributes to the underrepresentation of First Ladies in children’s literature is the overall perception of the First Ladies during their time as First Lady, or if they had any remaining influence they fulfilled as a result of their position.

A great example of this influence is Hillary Clinton. All of the picturebooks examined in this study that were written about Hillary Clinton were written in or after 2008, when she made her initial run in the Democratic primary for the presidency. Of the picturebooks, two picturebooks were written in 2016, as Hillary Clinton ran for president against current President Donald Trump. During this campaign, many people backed Clinton, which may have led to more picturebooks being written about her. While Hillary Clinton worked tirelessly as First Lady to President Bill Clinton, children’s literature was not utilized as an outlet to showcase her contributions as First Lady until she became more politically active on a national scale, by herself.

The opposite, however, is showing for current First Lady Melania Trump. While the Trump administration and the current First Family has been deeply controversial since entering politics and the presidency, Melania Trump, to date, has not had a children’s biography picturebook published about her. In comparison, former First Lady Michelle Obama had several picturebooks published about her, even prior to her husband, President Barack Obama’s, election to the Office of President. There could be several contributing factors to this. As of right now, Melania Trump has not been as involved in the presidency or in her position as First Lady, according to what is known to the American people. First Lady Melania Trump has relegated herself to the sideline moreso than past First Ladies, leaving President Trump’s daughter Ivanka
Trump to play some roles in this spotlight. The other contributing factor could be the political affiliation of her husband, President Donald Trump. As mentioned, in my research, a pattern detected was that many of the wives of Democrat presidents have children’s books written about them, while the wives of Republican presidents are not the subject of as many children’s books.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Summary of this Study

No study to date has been uncovered in regard to the presence of First Ladies in children’s biographies. However, related prior studies, such as a study on the effect of gender in scientific children’s biographies (Owens, 2009) have stated that the portrayal of women in children’s biographies has evolved over time. Therefore, I wondered how First ladies were portrayed in children’s books, specifically biographies, for elementary aged students. Therefore, this study examined a collection of picturebook biographies written for children about First Ladies in order to explore how First Ladies are portrayed. For the purpose of this study, I chose to analyze how the roles of the First Lady was represented, both domestic and political. This thesis focused solely on picturebook biographies written about Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945), Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963), Hillary Clinton (1993-2001), and Michelle Obama (2009-2017). Across the 11 books analyzed with Roosevelt, Kennedy, Clinton or Obama, there were 57 mentions of political duties, including mentions of the First Lady being a political partner (15), champion of social causes (13), and a diplomat (7). Across the 11 books analyzed, there were 20 mentions of domestic duties, including wife, mother, and hostess. According to this research, the books, as a sample, have shown a bigger focus on the political achievements of the First Lady over their domestic life, including being a wife and mother while being First Lady.
Educational Implications of this Study

Because of this study, the researcher has had a revelation about the world of children’s literature and the place of books written about powerful women, such as First Ladies. The largest takeaway is the absolutely the lack of children’s literature, not only about First Ladies, but about women in power, in general. Many of the studies I read in my research showcased the lack of representation of powerful female role models in children’s literature. While this may be on the rise, I cannot wait to see more children’s literature about strong, powerful women overtime. This reminds me of a news article and photo I saw while researching that expressed to me how important representation truly is to our children. This picture depicted a young, black girl admiring the newest portrait of former First Lady, Michelle Obama. This photo has been in my mind throughout my research, because the image was truly powerful. In the image, you can see the admiration and excitement that the young child had about seeing someone in power who is a woman and shares her skin color. This study has reinforced the importance of representation in children’s literature, because children need role model who look like them to show them that they can always succeed.

Classroom Implications of this Study

As a future classroom teacher, this helped me further understand ways to diversify the literature I present to my students. Over the past few years, I have collected books to add to my future classroom library and often worked to find books that represent people of color. However, due to this study, I want to strive to add more books about powerful women, women who make up our government, women who are involved in different causes, or who are politically active in other ways. It is important, as a classroom teacher, to ensure that a print-rich environment is
provided for students. However, in this day and age, it is even more important to ensure that the print-rich environment you are creating is rich in diverse children’s literature that includes women and people of color.

**Limitations of this Study**

A limitation I found within my study is the lack of children’s picturebook biographies about First Ladies. My research would have benefitted and been improved by the ability to use a larger pool of picturebook biographies to analyze. If I were able to conduct this study again, it is very possible that I would widen my search to include other women involved in United States politics, such as Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Over the past three years, more and more picturebook biographies have been written about Ruth Bader Ginsburg, so including those books in this research could have made the results look different and may have benefitted my research.

**Future Research**

*Recent Election News*

Given this most recent midterm election cycle in 2018, wherein more than 100 women were elected to political office in the United States, this research may become even more important. This midterm election set an historic and national record; this was a major win for women across the nation. This upcoming class of women representatives is made up of women of color, different sexual orientations, and life backgrounds. This is exciting for research like my own. This phenomenon could create new children’s picturebooks for future generations, about influential, new, female politicians in our nation.
Michelle Obama Memoir

On the very week of this thesis defense, on November 6, former First Lady Michelle Obama released her memoir *Becoming* (2018). While this book is for adults, it is anticipated that this book for adults will be re-formatted and made for children. Given the influence that Michelle Obama still has, even after her term as First Lady, it would make sense that this book could translate to a possibly impactful children’s picturebook biography.

Removal of Historical Figures from Texas Curriculum

Also, during the course of my research, news came out of Texas regarding their history and social studies curriculum. While the removal of historical figures, generally, would not be relevant to my research, the fact that the Texas Education Agency removed Hillary Clinton from the social studies curriculum is relevant to the study. The Texas Education Agency developed a system to determine the historical impact and the contributions of different historical figures and events already included in the curriculum and used the system to judge whether they served any importance in their social studies curriculum. Hillary Clinton did not pass through their system and, thus, will be removed from their curriculum in the coming years. This news is very important to my research. While I have already discussed the underrepresentation of First Ladies in children’s literature, this furthers that underrepresentation. This will require Texas teachers to ensure that they are providing the diverse classroom library, that includes informational books about picturebook biographies about historical figures that the curriculum does not include.

With these recent, notable events, one can generate many interesting research questions that relate to future First Ladies. From roles, to gender of authors, to controversial coverage, to
censorship issues, the roles and portrayals of First Ladies remains intriguing and stimulating. Future research could include chapter books for young children with a focus on First Ladies as well.

**Concluding remarks**

By analyzing the roles of the First Lady, both domestic and political, across the 11 books about Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, and Michelle Obama, the most predominant roles highlighted were those related to political duties, including mentions of the First Lady being a political partner, champion of social causes, and a diplomat. Furthermore, 20 mentions of domestic duties, including wife, mother, and hostess were revealed. According to this research, the books, as a sample, have shown a bigger focus on the political achievements of the First Lady over their domestic life, including being a wife and mother while being First Lady. Yet, examining the lives of some of the most influential and powerful women and their First Lady portrayals in biographical picturebooks for children is a topic with much fodder for future research.
Appendix A: Sample of Children’s Books about First Ladies

Table 1 shows the sample number of children’s books about First Ladies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Lady and Years of Service</th>
<th>Sample Number of Picturebooks</th>
<th>Sample Number of Chapter Books</th>
<th>Number of Award-Winning Books</th>
<th>Examples of Titles and Year Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Truman (1945-1953)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Lady</td>
<td>Number of Books</td>
<td>Number of Biographies</td>
<td>Number of Oral Histories</td>
<td>Books</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Ford (1974-1977)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalynn Carter (1977-1981)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><em>Rosalynn Carter: Steel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Lady</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Total Posts</td>
<td>300s</td>
<td>500s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Reagan</td>
<td>1981-1989</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Bush</td>
<td>1989-1993</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>1993-2001</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Bush</td>
<td>2001-2009</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lady (2003)</td>
<td>Beatrice Gormley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melania Trump (2017-Present)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Results of the Study

Table 2 showcases the results of the study, including all book titles and related findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Book, Author, &amp; Year of Publication</th>
<th>First Lady &amp; Years of Service</th>
<th>Breakdown of Pages</th>
<th>Gender of Author</th>
<th>Mention of Political Duties and Evidence</th>
<th>Mention of Domestic Duties and Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Just Being Jackie Kennedy (2018)</em></td>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Total Pages:</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>“With Jackie representing America, diplomatic relations only improved.” (~p.18) [Diplomat]</td>
<td>“They copied her signature look: large sunglasses, a simple string of pearls, and, of course, the hats.” (~p. 21) [Fashion Icon]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Margaret Cardillo (1961-1963)</td>
<td>Childhood: ~ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>“She worked room by room to restore the White House.” (~p. 16) [White]</td>
<td>“Jackie, nine months pregnant with their second child, stood right next to him on”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Causes]</td>
<td>Total Mention of Political Duties: 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Hillary Rodham Clinton:** *(1992-2000)*  
*Some Girls are Born to Lead* *(2016)*  
Michelle Markel | Hillary Clinton  
Total Pages: 40  
Childhood: ~8  
Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~7  
First Lady: ~7  
Post-FL: ~7  
Timeline: ~2  
Notes: ~4  
Bibliography: 1 | “After Bill became president, Hillary led a taskforce on health care so all Americans could afford to see a doctor.”  
~p. 17  
[Social Advocate]  
“At a United Nations [Symbol of American Woman]” | “They said her headbands were to casual and her attitude was too feisty. An ex-president said a First Lady shouldn’t be too smart or strong.”  
~p. 17  
[Symbol of American Woman] |
conference in China, Hillary dared to say what no world leader was saying: Women’s rights are human rights, once and for all.” ~p. 19

| Hillary Clinton (1992-2000) | Total Pages: 40 Childhood: ~2 Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~6 First Lady: ~2 | Male | “She became the first First Lady to have her own office in the important | “So just like her mother, she became a wife, marrying this man who would
<p>| Post-FL: ~16 | West Wing of the White House.” ~p.11 [Presidential Partner] | go on to great heights.” ~p. 7 [Wife] |
| Notes: ~1 | “She was the first First Lady to head up her own government task force (with a staff of over five hundred) devoted to making health care available to all Americans- a mission at which many men before her Total Mention of Domestic Duties: 2 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Total Pages: 48</th>
<th>Childhood: ~10</th>
<th>Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~10</th>
<th>First Lady: 4</th>
<th>Post-FL: ~4</th>
<th>Facts: ~5</th>
<th>Sources: ~1</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>“Her husband ran for United States president. He said voters would get “two for the price of one”.”</th>
<th>“She gave birth to her own daughter and began whispering encouragement.”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Krull</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“She flew into advancing the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total Mention of Domestic Duties: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleanor (1996)</td>
<td>Total Pages: 40</td>
<td>Total Mention of Political Duties: 0</td>
<td>Total Mention of Domestic Duties: 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Cooney (1933-1945)</td>
<td>Childhood: 40</td>
<td>Female 0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Picture Book of Eleanor Roosevelt (1995)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Pages: 32</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>“She had a radio program and wrote a daily newspaper column. She traveled to cities, towns, farms, and into coal mines. She brought hope to millions of people.” [Public and Political Figure] ~p. 18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>David A. Adler</strong></td>
<td>Childhood: ~8</td>
<td>Post-FL: ~8</td>
<td>Total Mention of Domestic Duties: 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eleanor Roosevelt</strong></td>
<td>Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~8</td>
<td>First Lady: ~8</td>
<td>“Eleanor and Franklin had six children--one daughter and five sons.” [Mother] ~p. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hot Dog!</strong> Eleanor Roosevelt Throws a Picnic (2014) Leslie Kimmelman</td>
<td>Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945)</td>
<td>Total Pages: 40</td>
<td>Childhood: 0</td>
<td>Adulthood/Pre-FL: 0</td>
<td>First Lady: ~34</td>
<td>Post-FL: ~6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>“Since he couldn’t walk or move easily, he counted on Eleanor to travel around the country for him.” ~p. 4 [Diplomat]</td>
<td>“Being first lady meant your house - the White House - was always full of people.” ~p. 12 [Hostess]</td>
<td>Total Mention of Domestic Duties: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Michelle Obama:</strong> First Mom (2008-2016)</td>
<td>Michelle Obama (2008-2016)</td>
<td>Total Pages: 34</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total Mention of Political Duties: 0</td>
<td>“What Michelle vows is that she’s a mother first and a First Lady second.” ~p. 32 [Mother]</td>
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<td>Childhood: ~25</td>
<td>Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~6</td>
<td>First Lady: ~1</td>
<td>Post-FL: 0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Michelle Obama (2009)</strong></td>
<td>Michelle Obama (2008-2016)</td>
<td>Total Pages: 40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>“So Michelle worked to help Barack run for the United</td>
<td>“Michelle had another dream too—to be a mother.” ~p. 23</td>
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<td>Childhood: ~8</td>
<td>Adulthood/Pre-FL: ~15</td>
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<td>States Senate.</td>
<td>~p. 26</td>
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<td>[Presidential and Political Partner]</td>
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<td>“And so it was that on January 20, 2009 inauguration nights, all eyes turned to her--tall and graceful, bold and beautiful, Michelle Obama, First Lady of America.” ~p. 37</td>
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<td>[Symbol of American Woman]</td>
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Appendix C: Annotated Bibliography of Children’s Literature Cited


Summary from Amazon: Eleanor Roosevelt went from being a sad, shy child to becoming an adult who reached out to people everywhere. She married Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1904. She became America's first lady while he served as president from 1932 - 1945. During the years of the Great Depression, she visited towns, cities, and farms all over the country and brought hope to millions of people. She made many speeches, had a radio program, and wrote a newspaper column. Eleanor Roosevelt called on American soldiers during World War II and served as chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights at the United Nations after her husband's death. She was an important, beloved figure of her time and is remembered as one of America's greatest women.

Appelt, K. (2005). *Miss Lady Bird’s Wildflowers: How a First Lady Changed America*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. Summary from Kirkus Review: This warmly attractive volume tells a graceful braid of stories: the life of Lady Bird Johnson, the wife of a president; the tale of a lonely child who found solace in the landscape and flora of east Texas; and the work of a First Lady who sought to bring beauty of the wilder sort into the highways of America. Lady Bird grew up in a rich and privileged household, but she lost her mother before she
was six. She went to college—unusual for a woman in 1930—and there met and married Lyndon, following him on a political trajectory that led to Congress, the vice-presidency and then to president after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. She filled Washington with more cherry trees and with the daffodils she had loved as a child and urged the passing of the Highway Beautification Act. Now, more than 30 years later, interstate highways are free of junkyards and an endless procession of signs; instead, the native wildflowers Lady Bird loves are growing everywhere. Hein’s delicate pictures are in bright, clear colors and her flowers instantly recognizable in broad vistas and intimate close-ups. (author's notes, endnotes, bibliography including Web sites) (Picture book/biography. 6-9)

Cooney, B. (1996). *Eleanor*. New York, NY: Viking. Summary from *Kirkus Review*: "From the beginning the baby was a disappointment to her mother," Cooney (*The Story of Christmas*, 1995, etc.) begins in this biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. She is a plain child, timid and serious; it is clear that only a few people loved her. After her parents die, she is cared for in the luxurious homes of wealthy relatives, but does not find acceptance until she arrives in a British boarding school, where she thrives on the attention of the headmistress, who guides, teaches, and inspires her. Cooney does not gloss over the girl's misery and disappointments; she also shows the rare happy times and sows the seeds of Eleanor's future work. The illustrations of house interiors often depict Eleanor as an isolated, lonely figure, her indistinct face and hollow eyes watching from a distance the human interactions she does not yet enjoy. Paintings reveal the action of a steamship collision;
the hectic activity of a park full of children and their governesses; a night full of stars portending the girl's luminous future. The image of plain Eleanor being fitted with her first beautiful dress is an indelible one. Readers will be moved by the unfairness of her early life and rejoice when she finds her place in the world. An author's note supplies other relevant information. *(Picture book/biography. 5-9)*


Summary from *Kirkus Review*: One of America’s most elegant first ladies is introduced to a new generation of readers in this charming picture book. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis was many things: style icon, journalist, book editor, art lover, historian, and shrewd politician. Cardillo pays homage to all of the enigmatic first lady’s many facets by depicting her for young audiences as the Everygirl who happened to become a legend. The story opens with an image of Jackie not as a poised debutante but as a scrappy young equestrienne who is undaunted by the occasional spill from her horse. The courageous wind-swept girl with the dirt-smudged cheeks is eminently approachable, and as she matures into a beautiful woman, readers see that inner fortitude carry Jackie through the White House, unbelievable grief, and an inspiring journey of self-discovery. The author’s message is expertly aided by Denos’ stunning illustrations, which were created with pen, ink, pencil, and
Photoshop and appear as if they came straight out of a sketchbook for Vogue. Whether Jackie is standing in front of the Eiffel Tower dazzled by the scenery or bowed in stately grief in her widow’s weeds, the story told in this book is that of a woman in love: with her husband, with the City of Light, with books, and with life. What an inspiring tale indeed.

A lovely literary tribute that will inspire readers to want to know more. (author’s note, illustrator’s note, timeline, bibliography) (Picture book/biography. 4-8)


Summary from School Library Journal: A glowing portrait of Michelle Obama, delivered in quiet, straightforward prose. Beginning and ending on Inauguration Day 2009, the story of Obama's life, from her childhood growing up on the south side of Chicago to her years working at the law firm where she met her future husband, is laid out. The focus here is not so much on the details, but more her strength of character and the important role that family has always played in her life. Ford's colorful paintings are uncannily accurate portrayals and have the feel of near-snapshots from various stages of Obama's life. While the style of painting pairs well with the text, there is a static quality that somehow pervades the book and sets a more formal tone.

picnic. Fancy White House dinners for heads of state usually are too formal to allow for hot dogs on the menu, but for the first lady, the iconic American sausage is a favorite. She chooses the Roosevelt estate at Hyde Park as the perfect venue, planning it to the last detail with picnic staples of baked beans and, of course, hot dogs. Undeterred by the scathing commentary from across the country, Eleanor persists, creating a memorable afternoon that launches a long-lasting relationship between the once-warring nations—especially important during this period of impending war and economic upheaval. Caricature drawings capture the essence of the personalities and behaviors of the four main participants, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, while adding a sense of reality and amusement to the historically little-known episode. Kimmelman’s straightforward storytelling incorporates some basic explanatory facts and deftly brings this bit of Americana to life. An author’s note provides further context along with a statement that quoted correspondence can be found at Hyde Park; it is silent, however, on the authenticity of the Roosevelts’ dialogue.

A captivating introductory piece for budding history buffs. (*Picture book. 7-12*)

Krull, K. (2008) *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Dreams Taking Flight*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. Summary from *Kirkus Review*: When young Hillary Rodham’s hopes of joining NASA as an astronaut were dashed because she was a girl, she didn’t stop dreaming or doing, all the way (almost) to the top. Following Clinton from girlhood to the presidential campaign trail, the
narrative hits on many of the high points and as few of the low points as possible along the way (as First Lady, “she tried to cover a lot of ground, and not everything she did was a success”). As seen in Bates’s watercolor, gouache and pencil illustrations, she goes from a perky, ponytailed girl to the somewhat careworn but determined figure readers will recognize, each spread complemented by a bromide (e.g., “Find heroes to lift you up”)—not, apparently, Clinton’s own. Timed for release with the Democratic National Convention, this picture-book hagiography nevertheless has a dated feel to it already, although the conclusion hedges its historical bets: “Not afraid to fly, daring to compete, she decided to run for the highest office in the land. Was the land ready? No matter—she was propelling her way into history.”

(author’s notes, sources) (Picture book/biography. 4-8)


Summary from *Kirkus Review*: The strong roots of a presidential hopeful. Growing up in the 1950s meant coming of age in a “man’s world,” but not for Hillary Rodham. She was active in school, motivated, and never a fashionista. Outspoken in college and interested in social causes, she became a lawyer and married Bill Clinton. As first lady she espoused a political and social welfare agenda and went on to become one of New York’s senators and—two times now—a candidate for President of the United States. Markel, clearly an admirer, presents Clinton’s life as
part and parcel of the women’s movement for empowerment, writing throughout in a very lively voice. Pham’s artwork is the real vote-getter. With a colorful palette, she presents Clinton’s personal and professional sides. Scenes of campus activism, facing unfriendly crowds, taking to the podium, and meeting with world figures fill the busy pages. Both for fun and education are two double-page tableaux. The first features men of achievement in muted tones of gray and brown while a young Hillary in Scout uniform stands arms akimbo. The second showcases great women with Clinton dressed in a trademark red pantsuit. Those who need help identifying faces in either will find keys in the back of the book.

Go-girl power and a good read. (timeline, artist’s note, selected bibliography) (Picture books/biography. 7-10)


Summary from Kirkus Review: An account of the former first lady’s impassioned campaign to save one of New York’s iconic buildings. Wing and Boiger rightly acknowledge that it wasn’t just Jackie Onassis’ campaign, but here she stands at its center in both narrative and art—particularly in the latter, where she positively shines in a stylish red coat, whether fronting a protest march or striking a gracefully defiant pose before the U.S. Supreme Court. The author begins with her subject’s renovation of the Kennedy-era White House and then, following quick looks at Grand Central’s history and use, describes how the prospect of that magnificent, if
somewhat seedy, landmark’s demolition motivated
Onassis to enlist the mayor, the city, and the nation in a
protracted, ultimately successful battle. Next up: the
building’s $200 million restoration, which she helped to
start but did not live to see completed in 1998. The
author’s repeated use of “cerulean” to describe Grand
Central’s ceiling, along with the footless, pipestem legs of
Jackie and other figures in the diverse if generalized
crowd scenes, does strike a twee note. Nonetheless, it’s an inspiring historical episode that also
makes a strong case for the general value of preserving our country’s architectural treasures.

Grand, in several ways. (author’s & illustrator’s notes, sources) (Informational picture book. 7-
10)


Summary from *School Library Journal*: This companion
book to Obama: Only in America (Marshall Cavendish,
2010) focuses on Michelle Obama’s childhood and
schooling as she grew up in Chicago, got an ivy-league
education, and married Barack Obama. Readers will learn
more about her home life and parents than about her role
as a mom, despite the subtitle of this book. Barrett’s oil
paintings have a soft-focus, sepia cast, placing them in the past to capture Chicago, everyday
events, and milestones from the First Lady’s history. Each spread features text opposite a full-page or page-and-a-quarter image of her reading, playing piano, studying a chessboard opposite her brother, going to school, or having dinner with her family. Only the last three pictures include her daughters. “Why we look up to her is not because she is stunning and stylish at nearly six feet tall, but because she is a walking, talking American success story” concludes Weatherford. The broad focus and laudatory quality of this picture-book biography create an overview greatly enhanced by the illustrations, but young readers seeking information about the First Mom will find more in Deborah Hopkinson’s First Family (HarperCollins, 2010).


Summary from *Kirkus Review*: She is a powerful force in current American politics and immediately identifiable by her first name. Veteran picture-book biographer Winter pulls out all the stops in his very laudatory overview of the life of a fighter for women’s rights and health care. Placing her directly in line with Elizabeth I, Joan of Arc, and Rosie the Riveter, he flies through her childhood, college years, and marriage, followed by her time as first lady, New York senator, secretary of state, and presidential hopeful. Colón’s signature, textured artwork—made with watercolor, colored pencils, and lithograph crayons—
features Clinton in action on the podium, writing, and speaking. A final double-page spread borders on the hagiographic, with a silhouetted face in the foreground and golden rays of sun radiating across the pages. All in all, this is presented as an inspirational title about a woman who “may soon change the world—into a place where a girl can dream of growing up to be president, a place where men and women are equal.” Hillary Rodham Clinton’s serious and stylish face fills the jacket cover, the Capitol Dome in the background, inevitably prompting readers to imagine the White House in the forefront.

This book’s audience will select itself; red staters will avoid it, but Clinton’s fans will love it. (author’s note) *(Picture book/biography. 7-10)*
References


