

**Volume 6**

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**First Ladies: Anna Eleanor Roosevelt - II**

**Lead: Beloved by millions and despised by many, in the White House Eleanor Roosevelt evolved into a most unconventional First Lady.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: When she first moved into the Executive Mansion, the wife of Franklin Roosevelt shocked the staff by helping re-arrange furniture in the family quarters and insisting on operating the ancient elevator herself. That was just the beginning. She did the conventional, ceremonial duties,**

**but unlike other First Ladies, she became involved in the administration's policies, had her own very popular newspaper column, and lectured around the country on a wide variety of topics.**

**She became the President's eyes and ears. He once laughed, "my missus goes where she wants to, talks to everybody, and does she learn something!" She inspected coal mines, sharecropper camps, mental hospitals, and many New Deal projects. Her reports were increasingly perceptive and helpful to Franklin in determining course corrections or new policy initiatives. Yet, perhaps it was in the area of race relations that she made her greatest**

**impact. While the President, because of political considerations, had to be silent about race questions, the First Lady began a quiet campaign to win changes for African Americans. She visited black communities and schools, she entertained blacks in the White House, worked to secure anti-lynching laws and the abolition of poll taxes. When the Daughters of the American Revolution refused Marian Anderson, the black singer, use of Constitution Hall, Eleanor resigned her membership. During the war she actually took a federal position as deputy director of the Office of Civilian Defense. Under fire from conservatives she resigned, but continued to play an active role in the war effort visiting installations in the**

**states and over seas. Next time: First Citizen of the World.**

**At the University of Richmond,  
this is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

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