

# the roosevelts intimate history

The Roosevelts' intimate history is a tapestry woven with threads of personal struggle, political ambition, and familial bonds. This family, with its origins in Dutch colonial New York, has produced two of the most influential Presidents in American history: Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Their lives, marked by triumphs and tragedies, reflect not only the evolution of American society but also the complexity of human relationships within the political sphere. This article delves into the intimate history of the Roosevelts, exploring their family dynamics, personal relationships, and the impact of these on their political careers.

## Early Roots of the Roosevelt Family

The Roosevelt family's lineage can be traced back to the 17th century, with the arrival of Claes Martenszoon van Rosenvelt from the Netherlands in 1649. Over the centuries, the family established itself as a prominent force in New York society, accumulating wealth and influence.

## Influence of Dutch Heritage

The Dutch heritage of the Roosevelts played a significant role in shaping their identity. Key aspects include:

1. Family Values: The Dutch placed high importance on education, hard work, and community service, values that resonated throughout the Roosevelt lineage.
2. Political Engagement: Early Roosevelts were involved in local politics, laying the foundation for their future prominence in national affairs.
3. Cultural Influences: The family maintained ties to Dutch customs, which influenced their lifestyle and social interactions.

## Theodore Roosevelt: The Trailblazer

Theodore Roosevelt, born in 1858, was the first Roosevelt to ascend to the presidency. His intimate history is marked by personal resilience, progressive ideals, and a passionate approach to life and politics.

## Childhood and Family Dynamics

Theodore was born into a wealthy family in New York City. His childhood was marked by:

- Health Struggles: Roosevelt suffered from asthma, which made him a frail child. This

struggle instilled in him a desire to prove his strength and a determination to overcome challenges.

- Supportive Family: His parents provided a nurturing environment, encouraging intellectual pursuits and fostering a love for nature and adventure.

## **Marriage to Alice Hathaway Lee**

Roosevelt's first marriage to Alice Hathaway Lee in 1880 was characterized by deep affection. However, their relationship was tragically short-lived:

- Love Story: The couple shared a passionate bond, filled with mutual admiration and intellectual companionship.
- Tragedy: Alice died just days after giving birth to their daughter, Alice, leaving Roosevelt devastated. He famously wrote in his diary, "The light has gone out of my life."

## **Remarriage to Edith Carow**

In 1886, Theodore married his childhood friend, Edith Carow. Their relationship proved to be a stabilizing force in his life:

- Partnership: Edith was not only a supportive spouse but also an astute political partner. She played a significant role in managing the White House during Theodore's presidency.
- Family Life: Together, they had five children: Theodore Jr., Kermit, Ethel, Archibald, and Quentin, creating a dynamic family environment filled with adventure.

## **Franklin Delano Roosevelt: The Visionary**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, born in 1882, was the fifth cousin of Theodore and is often regarded as one of the most significant figures in American history. His intimate history is marked by both personal and political challenges.

## **Childhood Influences**

Growing up in a wealthy family, Franklin was exposed to privilege and the expectations that accompanied it:

- Education and Travel: His parents emphasized education, and he was sent to elite schools, which broadened his worldview.
- Political Heritage: The influence of his distant cousin Theodore instilled in him a sense of public duty and ambition.

## **Marriage to Eleanor Roosevelt**

Franklin married his distant cousin, Eleanor Roosevelt, in 1905. Their relationship evolved significantly over time:

- Strong Partnership: Initially a conventional marriage, Eleanor's evolving independence and activism pushed Franklin to adapt to a more modern partnership.
- Challenges: Franklin's infidelity, particularly with Lucy Mercer, tested their marriage. However, they managed to maintain a working relationship that transcended personal grievances.

## **The Roosevelt Legacy: Political and Personal Intertwined**

The intimate history of the Roosevelts is intertwined with their political legacies, showcasing how personal experiences shaped their public policies.

## **Impact of Personal Tragedies**

Both Theodore and Franklin faced significant personal tragedies that influenced their political outlook:

- Theodore's Loss: The death of his first wife fueled his commitment to public service, driving him to create reforms that addressed social injustices.
- Franklin's Illness: Stricken with polio in 1921, Franklin developed a profound empathy for the suffering of others, which informed his New Deal policies aimed at economic recovery.

## **Shared Values and Ideals**

The Roosevelts shared a commitment to progressive values, which were deeply rooted in their family dynamics:

- Social Justice: Both Theodore and Franklin championed social reforms, reflecting their upbringing and personal experiences with inequality.
- Environmental Conservation: Theodore's love for nature led to the establishment of national parks, while Franklin continued these efforts through various conservation programs.

## **The Roosevelts in the Public Eye**

The visibility of the Roosevelts in American life was not limited to their political roles; their

personal lives were equally scrutinized.

## **The Media's Role**

The media played a significant role in shaping public perception of the Roosevelts:

- Theodore's Charisma: Theodore's larger-than-life persona captured the public's imagination, and his adventures were widely reported.
- Eleanor's Advocacy: Eleanor became a media figure in her own right, using her platform to address social issues, women's rights, and civil rights.

## **Family Gatherings and Public Events**

Family gatherings and public events showcased the Roosevelts' close-knit relationships:

- Summer Retreats: The Roosevelts cherished their time at Campobello Island, where family bonds were strengthened away from the public eye.
- Political Campaigns: Family members often participated in campaigns, further solidifying their commitment to public service.

## **The Enduring Legacy of the Roosevelts**

The intimate history of the Roosevelts continues to resonate today, influencing contemporary politics and societal values.

## **Lessons in Leadership**

The Roosevelts' lives offer valuable lessons in leadership and resilience:

1. Overcoming Adversity: Both Theodore and Franklin faced personal challenges that shaped their character and leadership styles.
2. Public Service: Their commitment to social justice and public welfare remains a guiding principle for many politicians today.

## **Modern Implications**

The legacy of the Roosevelts is evident in current political discourse:

- Progressive Policies: Many of the values championed by the Roosevelts, such as healthcare, education, and environmental protection, continue to be at the forefront of political debates.

- Inspiration for Future Generations: The Roosevelts serve as a model for future leaders, illustrating the importance of integrity, empathy, and public service.

In conclusion, the Roosevelts' intimate history is a rich narrative that intertwines personal struggles and political ambitions, reflecting the complexities of human relationships and the overarching impact of familial bonds on public life. Their legacy, rooted in resilience and progressive ideals, continues to inspire and inform American society.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are some key themes explored in 'The Roosevelts: An Intimate History'?**

The documentary explores themes such as family dynamics, political ambition, resilience, and the impact of historical events on the Roosevelt family, emphasizing their personal relationships and struggles.

### **How does 'The Roosevelts: An Intimate History' portray the relationship between Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt?**

The series highlights the close bond between Theodore and Franklin, showcasing how Theodore's political legacy and mentorship influenced Franklin's own presidency and policies.

### **What role does Eleanor Roosevelt play in the narrative of the documentary?**

Eleanor Roosevelt is depicted as a transformative figure, both in her advocacy for human rights and her partnership with Franklin, showcasing her evolution from a traditional First Lady to a prominent political figure in her own right.

### **How does the documentary address the challenges faced by the Roosevelt family during their political careers?**

The documentary delves into various challenges, including health issues, personal scandals, and the impact of the Great Depression, illustrating how these challenges shaped their political strategies and family life.

### **What historical context is provided in 'The Roosevelts: An Intimate History'?**

The documentary provides extensive historical context by detailing the socio-political

climate of the early to mid-20th century, including the Progressive Era, the New Deal, and World War II, highlighting how these events influenced the Roosevelts' lives.

## **What is the significance of the title 'An Intimate History' in relation to the Roosevelt family?**

The title emphasizes the personal aspects of the Roosevelts' lives, revealing their vulnerabilities, relationships, and the emotional struggles they faced, thus humanizing historical figures often viewed through a political lens.

### **[The Roosevelts Intimate History](#)**

The Roosevelts Intimate History

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