



The Petticoat Affair: Manners, Mutiny, and Sex in Andrew Jackson's White House

John F. Marszalek

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The Eaton Affair was the tabloid story of its time -- and perhaps of all time. Peggy O'Neale Eaton, the brash and unconventional wife of President Andrew Jackson's secretary of war, was branded a "loose woman" and snubbed by Washington society. The president's defense of her honor fueled intense speculation and gossip, and the scandal began.

Before it was over, the entire Cabinet resigned, duels were threatened, assassinations were attempted, and John Calhoun's hopes for the White House were dashed, and Andrew Jackson's first term was nearly a failure. Washington's hostesses were the only bloody victors.

Award-winning author John Marszalek systematically tracks the escalation of events in a story that teems with conspiracy, slander, and paranoia. Reaching deep into the social context of the Jacksonian Age, he shows how even the most powerful politicians ceded to an honor code that could not be broken.

Both a riveting read and a fascinating window into our present-day politics of scandal, The Petticoat Affair is a deft exploration of the mores of another era brought to life by the timeless forces of ambition, conspiracy, and political intrigue.



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