

Lucy Webb Hayes

Wife, Mother, and Advocate



Lucy Webb Hayes was born in Chillicothe, Ohio, to Dr. James Webb and Maria Cook on August 28, 1831. Two years later, Dr. Webb died during a cholera epidemic in Kentucky, where he had gone to free slaves he had inherited. In 1844, the Webb family moved to Delaware, Ohio. Lucy's

brothers enrolled at Ohio Wesleyan University there, and although women were not allowed to study at Wesleyan, Lucy was permitted to enroll with her brothers. Several months later Lucy transferred to Cincinnati Wesleyan Female College and graduated from there in 1850.

Lucy first met Rutherford B. Hayes on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware. Two years later Lucy and Rutherford were married in Cincinnati in a simple ceremony on December 30, 1852. Eight children were born to the couple: Birchard Austin (1853-1926), Webb Cook (1856-1934), Rutherford Platt (1858-1927), Joseph Thompson (1861-1863), George Crook (1864-1866), Fanny (1867-1950), Scott Russell (1871-1923), and Manning Force (1873-1874).

Lucy and Rutherford respected each other's ideals and goals. When he practiced law in Cincinnati, Rutherford, influenced by Lucy's anti-slavery sentiments, defended runaway slaves who had crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky. Lucy supported Rutherford's decision to volunteer for military service during the Civil War. As often as she could, Lucy – sometimes with her mother and children – visited Rutherford in the field. She often assisted her brother, Dr. Joe Webb, in caring for the sick.

Lucy took an active interest in her husband's political career. When Rutherford served in the United States Congress, Lucy worked for the

welfare of children and veterans. During his tenure as governor of Ohio, she secured funding for an orphanage for the children of Civil War veterans.

Lucy was a helpmate during Rutherford's term as President. She did not serve alcohol at the White House, but in reality, it was Rutherford's decision to forego alcohol. He realized the importance of temperance advocates to the Republican Party and the need for public officials to maintain a dignified demeanor in public.

Lucy's compassion and sincerity endeared her to Washingtonians. She regularly visited the National Deaf Mute College and the Hampton Institute where she sponsored a scholarship for an African American student. She continued to show concern for the poor by contributing generously to Washington charities. Fond of children, Lucy opened the White House to her children's friends. She also started what has become a tradition: when the children of Washington were banned from rolling their Easter eggs on the Capitol grounds, they were invited to use the White House lawn on the Monday following Easter. At one time, while Hayes was president, the White House was home to a mockingbird, two dogs, a goat, and the nation's first Siamese cat, Lucy's young adult nieces and cousins were also guests at the White House, often assisting in the hosting of White House social functions. By the end of Rutherford's term in office, Lucy was acclaimed the "most widely known and popular President's wife the country has known."

The Hayes family returned to its Fremont, Ohio, home, Spiegel Grove, in 1881. They were surrounded by family, friends, flowers, and fauna. Lucy spent her last eight years at Spiegel Grove. A few days after suffering a stroke, Lucy passed away at home on June 25, 1889. She was 57 years old.

Interesting Facts

- ★ Lucy was the first First Lady to receive a college education.
- ★ Lucy owned the nation's first Siamese cat.
- ★ Lucy was the first wife of a president to be formally referred to as "First Lady."
- ★ Lucy's favorite past time was fishing
- ★ Beloved by the Civil War soldiers of President Hayes' regiment for her care and kindness, Lucy was known as the "Mother of the 23rd."
- ★ Lucy loved to play the guitar as she sang patriotic songs and hymns
- ★ Lucy's White House china was the first to feature pieces entirely of American flora and fauna.
- ★ Lucy invited the first African-American professional musician to appear at the White House.
- ★ Many years after her death, historians christened Lucy "Lemonade Lucy" due to her staunch support of the Temperance Movement. While Lucy's grandfather, Isaac Cook, did impress upon Lucy at a young age the importance of Temperance and she signed an abstinence pledge, it was actually her husband who banned alcohol from the White House so that he could keep the Temperance faction within the Republican Party.

Biography in Brief

Lucy Webb Hayes

BIRTH: August 28, 1831, Chillicothe, OH

DEATH: June 25, 1889, Spiegel Grove,
Fremont, OH

EDUCATION:

Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH
Wesleyan Female College, Cincinnati, OH

ANCESTRY: English

OCCUPATION: Wife, Mother, Advocate

OFFICES HELD:

President of the Women's Home
Missionary Society until 1889

RELIGION: Attended Methodist Episcopal
(precursor of today's Methodist Church)

HUSBAND: Rutherford B. Hayes

MARRIAGE: December 30, 1852

LUCY'S FAMILY

FATHER: Dr. James Webb

Birth: March 17, 1795

Death: July 1, 1833

MOTHER: Maria Cook

Birth: March 9, 1801

Death: September 14, 1866

HUSBAND: Rutherford Birchard Hayes

Birth: October 4, 1822, Delaware, OH

Death: January 17, 1893, Spiegel Grove,
Fremont, OH

Parents: Rutherford Hayes, Jr. & Sophia
Birchard Hayes

Education:

Norwalk Seminary, Norwalk, OH
Maple Grove Academy, Middletown, CT
Kenyon College, Gambier, OH
Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA

CHILDREN:

Birchard Austin (1853-1926)

Webb Cook (1856-1934)

Rutherford Platt (1858-1927)

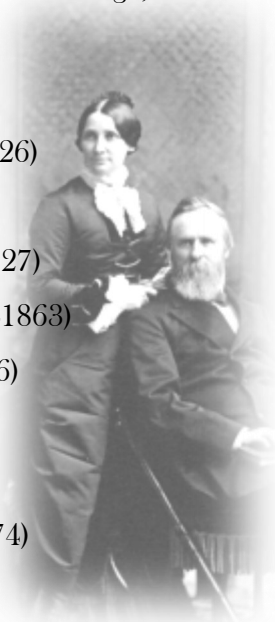
Joseph Thompson (1861-1863)

George Crook (1864-1866)

Fanny (1867-1950)

Scott Russell (1871-1923)

Manning Force (1873-1874)



Rutherford B. Hayes
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