

Achievements

- 1898 Graduated from Stanford University. She was the first woman in America to earn a degree in Geology
- 1899 Married Herbert Hoover
- 1899 While in Tientsin, China, Lou learned to read and write Chinese
- 1912 Translated and published the Latin Treatise on mining, *Agricola de re Metallica*, to English with her husband, Herbert Hoover
- 1914 While living in London Lou helped establish and chair The American Woman's War Relief Fund
- 1919 Presented the Cross of Chevalier Order of King Leopold, from King Albert of Belgium, for her involvement with the Belgian Relief in WWI
- 1922 Vice President of the National Amateur Athletic Association
- 1923 President of the Woman's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation
- 1924 National President of the Girl Scouts through 1925
- 1928 Received honorary Doctorate of Literature from Whittier College.
- 1929 First Lady for four years
- 1930 The first First Lady to make regular nationwide radio broadcasts. Additionally the first First Lady to fully catalog the contents of the White House
- 1934 Trustee of Whittier College until her death
- 1935 Again National President of the Girl Scouts through 1937. She also started the sales of "Girl Scout Cookies"
- 1938 Lou Henry Hoover Elementary School was built
- 1948 Lou Henry Memorial Hall was founded at Whittier College



Lou Henry was National President of the Girl Scouts



Lou Henry Hoover Elementary School, Founded 1933
6302 South Alta, Whittier



First Lady Lou Henry with her husband President Hubert Hoover at his Inauguration in 1929



Whittier Historical Society

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LOU HENRY HOOVER

Whittier Historical Society

Whittier's "Grand First Lady"



March 29, 1876—January 7, 1944

Lou Henry Hoover



Lou Henry Hoover was the wife of President Herbert Hoover, the 31st President of the United States. Although she is primarily known as the former First Lady, she had many accomplishments of her own. She was an independent, strong-willed, and cosmopolitan woman, interested in public issues. Although born in Iowa she was deeply influenced by her time in Whittier and considered herself a westerner.

Louise Henry was born on March 29, 1874, in Waterloo Iowa to Charles Delano Henry and Florence Weed Henry. In 1884 when Lou was ten and her sister Jean was just two, her father moved the family to Whittier. He had an opportunity to open the city's first bank and hoped the warmer weather would be good for his ailing wife. The family quickly settled in to a home at 349 S. Painter Avenue, the present site of the Whittier Civic Center.



Lou Henry during a camping trip to Mt. Gleason in 1891

As a young girl, Lou Henry was a tomboy, spending much of her time in the hills and mountains surrounding Whittier. She and her father would go horseback riding exploring these areas. Her father bought her a hunting suit, and with 22-caliber rifles they would ride in search of squirrels and gophers pestering the local farmers' crops. By the age of thirteen she was said to be as good of a shot as her father.

Due to her father's respected status as the town's banker, Lou felt a sense of pride being "The Banker's Daughter." With merely a large iron safe and a set of books, her father ran a one-man-institution. As a result, Lou could often be found helping her father with the books after school, then departing on long walks through the hills around Whittier.

While in Whittier, Lou Henry attended Evergreen School and then Bailey Street School where she graduated head



Lou Henry at 16, far left in the bottom row, captain of the fan drill team at Bailey Street School

of her class in 1890. She was self motivated, involving herself in all types of activities at the school and the community. She founded a fan drill team for the girls at the Bailey Street School,

which performed during several graduation ceremonies at the Whittier Academy. In addition, she was president of a school girl library club that met once a week to discuss literature and poetry; it was here that she was first introduced to the poems of John Greenleaf Whittier. Lou was often described as a tomboy who loved school sports. Due to a lack of sports fields at school Lou organized the clearing of a vacant lot for a baseball diamond.

During the economic slump of the 1890's her father's bank failed and the family moved to Monterey. In 1881 Lou attended Los Angeles Normal School (UCLA), transferring to San Jose Normal School (San Jose State University) where she graduated receiving her teaching degree in 1893. After attending a lecture by Stanford University geology Professor J.C. Branner, she became fascinated with geology. With the support of her professor she was the first woman to study geology at Stanford and she was the first woman in America to receive a degree in Geology.



Lou and Herbert on Wedding

Chinese mines. He and Lou settled in Tientsin, China. Lou learned to speak and write Chinese, in fact during her life she learned to five languages, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Italian, French and Latin. In June of 1900 all foreigners, including the Hoovers, were forced to leave the city. A political uprising called The Boxer Rebellion wanted to rid China of all foreigners.



Lou Henry with her two sons, Herbert Jr and Alan, 1908

Lou and Hubert moved to London, England in August of 1900, and over the next fourteen years traveled to many European counties while Hubert worked for mining companies. While in London Lou gave birth to two sons, Herbert Hoover Jr. (1903-1969) and Alan Hoover (1907-1993). During her time in Europe Lou translated *De Re Metallica* from Latin to English. It was a manual on mining and metallurgy that was written in 1565. Herbert added some notes and they published their work in 1912. While in London, during the beginnings of war, the Hoover's provided relief for Belgian refugees and was decorated in 1919 by King Albert of Belgium. Additionally during this time she helped es-

tablish the American Woman's War Relief Fund and The American Woman Hospital. When World War I began in 1917, Lou and her husband were back in the United States. Lou spent time recruiting the American citizens in the food conservation program supporting the war efforts.

Lou was very interested in the Girl Scouts. She wanted other girls to experience camping, fishing and hunting



Lou Henry with her Girl Scout troop in Washington D.C.

like she had done with her father. She devoted many hours to the Girl Scouts, beginning as a troop leader in Washington D.C. Her troop was opened to all young girls regardless of their religion, race or physical abilities. Integration was rare during this time. She later become its National President in 1923, 1924 and 1935 - 1937. It was during her time as National President that she started the famous sales of Girl Scout

Cookies. The girls baked and sold cookies to support scouting. It was important to Lou to help these young girls realize their abilities and that they could be whatever they wanted to be.

On March 4, 1929 Lou Henry Hoover became First Lady when her husband Herbert Hoover was elected President of the United States. Although she was sincerely dedicated in supporting her husband, many believe that she was a modern woman who revolutionized the office of First Lady. She was the "first" First Lady to deliver regular nationwide radio broadcasts, to drive her own car and to fully catalog the contents of the White House. Lou was also the first First Lady to desegregate a White House function. She endorsed political involvement for women. She is believed to have influenced her husbands executive order permitting job selection without



President and First Lady Herbert Hoover

the need to consider whether male or female. Additionally during one of her radio broadcast she referenced the 4-H Club stating that boys just as girls were capable of housecleaning.

After the White House Lou continued with her political and charitable causes. She was active in the League of Woman Voters, and was one of the founders of the Friends of Music at Stanford University. She served on the Whittier College Board of Trustees and in 1928 received and honorary Doctor of Literature degree. In 1938 Lou Henry Hoover Elementary School was opened and in 1948 the Lou Henry Memorial Hall at Whittier College was founded in her honor. It was not until after her death, January 7, 1944, that her husband, Herbert Hoover, realized her complete dedication to charities, most notably donating to the education of many children and well-being of many children.