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Eleanor Roosevelt's Role in American Politics

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This essay argues that the marital affair of Franklin D. Roosevelt with Lucy Mercer led to the change in role of Eleanor Roosevelt during his presidency. Although Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt remained married after the discovery of his infidelity in 1918, the union evolved into a political partnership. Disenchanted, Eleanor pursued an open public life and devoted her focus to her social work. To illustrate the evolutionary role of Eleanor Roosevelt, this essay examines her contribution to the four presidential campaigns of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944 using Franklin D. Roosevelt archives. Throughout the elections, Eleanor Roosevelt redefined the role of the first lady and exemplified that the first lady is a significant factor of American history and politics.