



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Miriam "Ma" Ferguson. Then, answer questions about it.

Miriam "Ma" Ferguson 1875–1961

Miriam Amanda Wallace wasn't considering a career in politics when she enrolled at Baylor Female College in the 1890s. In 1899, she married James Ferguson and planned to settle down and raise a family. However, Miriam would make history, becoming the first woman governor of Texas.

Jim Ferguson was elected governor in 1914 and re-elected two years later. During his second term, he was impeached for misapplication of public funds and declared ineligible to hold public office in Texas.

A few years later, in 1924, Miriam stunned Texans when she announced she would run for governor. Promising "two governors for the price of one," Miriam became known as "Ma" Ferguson and urged voters to restore "Pa's" honor by voting for her.

During the campaign, Jim vowed to do the governing if Miriam won. Many women were furious at Jim's plan to govern over his wife's shoulder, but the unusual plan worked. At the age of forty-nine, "Ma" Ferguson became Texas governor.

Charges of corruption plagued Miriam's first term, and she lost a re-election bid. Six years later, Miriam ran again, this time successfully, returning to the Governor's Mansion for a second term.

Miriam "Ma" Ferguson retired from public office in 1935. Her political life was over but her place in Texas history was secure. Sixty years would pass before Texas elected Ann Richards as its second woman governor.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Miriam "Ma" Ferguson. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. How did Miriam Ferguson make history in Texas?
2. What was Ma Ferguson's campaign slogan?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** Why were some women upset at the plan proposed by the Fergusons when Miriam ran for governor in 1924?