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Eleanor Roosevelt paid several visits to Utah

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Anna Eleanor Roosevelt visited Utah only once before the death of her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt. That was in 1936, during FDR's second election campaign when the country was deep into the Great Depression and world war was looming in Europe. After her husband's death in 1945, she returned to a cottage at the family's Hyde Park estate and told reporters, "the story is over." But she returned to the state several times in the 1950s and at least three times in 1960, as an American spokeswoman in the United Nations, where her indefatigable spirit and outspoken defense of human rights earned her the title of "the first lady of the world." Deseret News photographers covered many of these visits. Photo researcher Ron Fox has searched the newspaper's photo archives for many of these pictures, which can be viewed at www.deseretnews.com. An uncredited story in the Nov.

9, 1953, Deseret News recounts a typical visit: "The former first lady arrived in Salt Lake City early Monday morning and by noon was well into a day of five whirlwind appearances." After being greeted at the Denver & Rio Grande Western Depot at 8 a.m., she spoke to a breakfast group and then attended a workshop at the Hotel Utah. In the morning she spoke to a group of students and in the evening she addressed the general public. Her message was consistent: "The energetic Mrs. Roosevelt, honorary chairman for the Association for the United Nations, made a fervent plea for support of the world organization in the morning address to the student body of the University of Utah in Kingsbury Hall." "The gray-haired lady, who turned 69 last Oct. 11, when asked how she managed to keep up with her fast pace of speaking engagements smiled and said, 'You just go ahead and do what you have to do. By the end of the day you are tired, but you sleep better.'?" In the March 30, 1960, Deseret News, another Roosevelt visit prompted another reference to "a whirlwind schedule." "However, this is nothing new to the nation's former first lady who, despite her 75 years, keeps up an exhausting pace," the article read. During that visit she was greeted by a delegation of University of Utah students. From there she was whisked to the Hotel Utah. Later she held a brief press conference, was guest at a small dinner and gave a public lecture. The following night she spoke at Ogden High School. Roosevelt was not always accommodating to the press. A brief item in the March 2, 1959, Deseret News noted she had spent the night in Salt Lake City on her way to Idaho Falls, Idaho, "but declined an interview with a Deseret News reporter early Monday morning." During her April 1956 visit, a story by education editor Laver K. Chaffin reported on a press conference the former first lady held for high school journalists, during which she stressed the need for understanding all peoples. One student journalist asked her "what was her and other U.N. leaders' opinion of Gov. J. Bracken Lee's continued disregard for the United Nations. "'Fortunately,' she answered, 'I don't think all members of the U.N. are conscious of individual governors' attitudes. ? Somehow, gradually, I hope your governor, like a few others, will learn that the world is so closely drawn together that it is impossible to stand alone.'?" Roosevelt's final visit to Utah came in December 1960 when she gave a lecture at the George Nelson Fieldhouse at **Utah State University**. She was scheduled to fly into the Logan-Cache Airport for the event but had to cancel an afternoon meeting with students when weather forced her airplane to land in Salt Lake City. She ended up driving to Logan. She continued a vigorous schedule until her strength began to wane in 1962. She died in New York City that November. E-mail: mhaddock@desnews.com

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