

Presidential PROFILES

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

UNANIMOUS DECLARATION of the Thirteen united States of America.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of Nature, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing the same object, evinces a design to reduce them to absolute Tyranny, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies, and such has been the unity of their Sentiments in their Declaration of Independence, that a unanimous Declaration upon the Rights and Necessities of the Thirteen united States of America is the result.

In the Name of the People of the United States, We do hereby declare, that the United States of America are, and of Right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown; that all political Connections with Great Britain are hereby totally dissolved; and that as Free, sovereign and independent States, they have full Power to do all those Acts and Things which other States may do, and to enter into all Treaties, Alliances, Confederations, and Union, which may be thought proper.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, the day and date above written.

John Hancock

CALVIN COOLIDGE

President No. 30 | **Born:** 1872 | **Died:** 1933 | **Served:** 1923 to 1929

Calvin Coolidge stepped into the presidency during a time of rapid economic growth and American prosperity in the 1920s. Maybe he foresaw the possibility of the upcoming Great Depression, as his focus was said to have been centered on the preservation of morals and stingy spending.

Coolidge was America's 30th president. His swearing-in ceremony was modest and conveyed what kind of president he hoped to be.

According to the White House Historical Association, Coolidge received word at 2:30 a.m. on Aug. 3, 1923 that he would be the next commander-in-chief. By the light of a kerosene lamp, the association reports, his father, who was a notary public, administered the oath of office as Coolidge placed his hand on the family Bible.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Coolidge was born in Plymouth, Vt., on July 4, 1872. The son of a popular village storekeeper, he graduated from Amherst College with honors and entered law and politics in Northampton, Mass.

His career in politics was methodical and progressive, as he climbed the ladder from councilman in Northampton to governor of Massachusetts as a Republican. During his political ascent, he came to represent a staunchly conservative voice in American politics.

Coolidge married Grace Goodhue Coolidge, who often recounted one of the most telling tales of her husband's dry

personality and status quo presidency. According to the White House Historical Association, Grace recalled a young woman sitting next to Coolidge at a dinner party proclaiming she could get at least three words of conversation from him. "You lose," he quietly replied.

MAJOR POLICY

Coolidge held tight to his conservative values from the oval office. Here are some landmark moments and policies from his presidency:

- He refused to apply federal economic power to check the growing economic boom.
- He often called for isolation in foreign policy and for tax cuts.
- In 1924, as the beneficiary of what was becoming known as "Coolidge prosperity," he polled more than 54 percent of the popular vote.
- On Feb. 22, 1924, Coolidge became the first president to make a public radio address to the American people and later helped create the Federal Radio Commission (now the Federal Communications Commission).

Coolidge died suddenly from coronary thrombosis at his retirement home in 1933 and is buried in Plymouth Notch, Vt.



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

President No. 32 | **Born:** 1882 | **Died:** 1945 | **Served:** 1933 to 1945

Franklin Delano Roosevelt is noted in history as a true representative of the people who helped position the country for success in the heart of one of the most challenging times in American history.

The nation's 32nd president took over the office in the deepest valley of the Great Depression. For three terms, his administration conveyed a message of hope and perseverance to its constituents. His landmark New Deal platform outlined a path to prosperity not quite obvious to pundits in the beginning, but proven as highly effective in helping the United States rebound as a world power.

Roosevelt set the stage for his presidency in his inaugural address. His proclamation that, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," has become one of the most defining messages of any U.S. presidency and is still highly relevant many decades later.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Born in 1882 at Hyde Park, N.Y., Roosevelt attended Harvard University and Columbia Law School and married Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905.

Roosevelt entered politics early in his career, winning a spot in the New York Senate in 1910. He was later appointed assistant secretary of the Navy by President Woodrow Wilson and was the Democratic nominee for vice president by 1920.

His rapid climb up the political ladder was impressive to onlookers and the public, but it did not come without challenges. In the summer of 1921, Roosevelt was stricken with poliomyelitis. The condition required a long, hard fight to regain

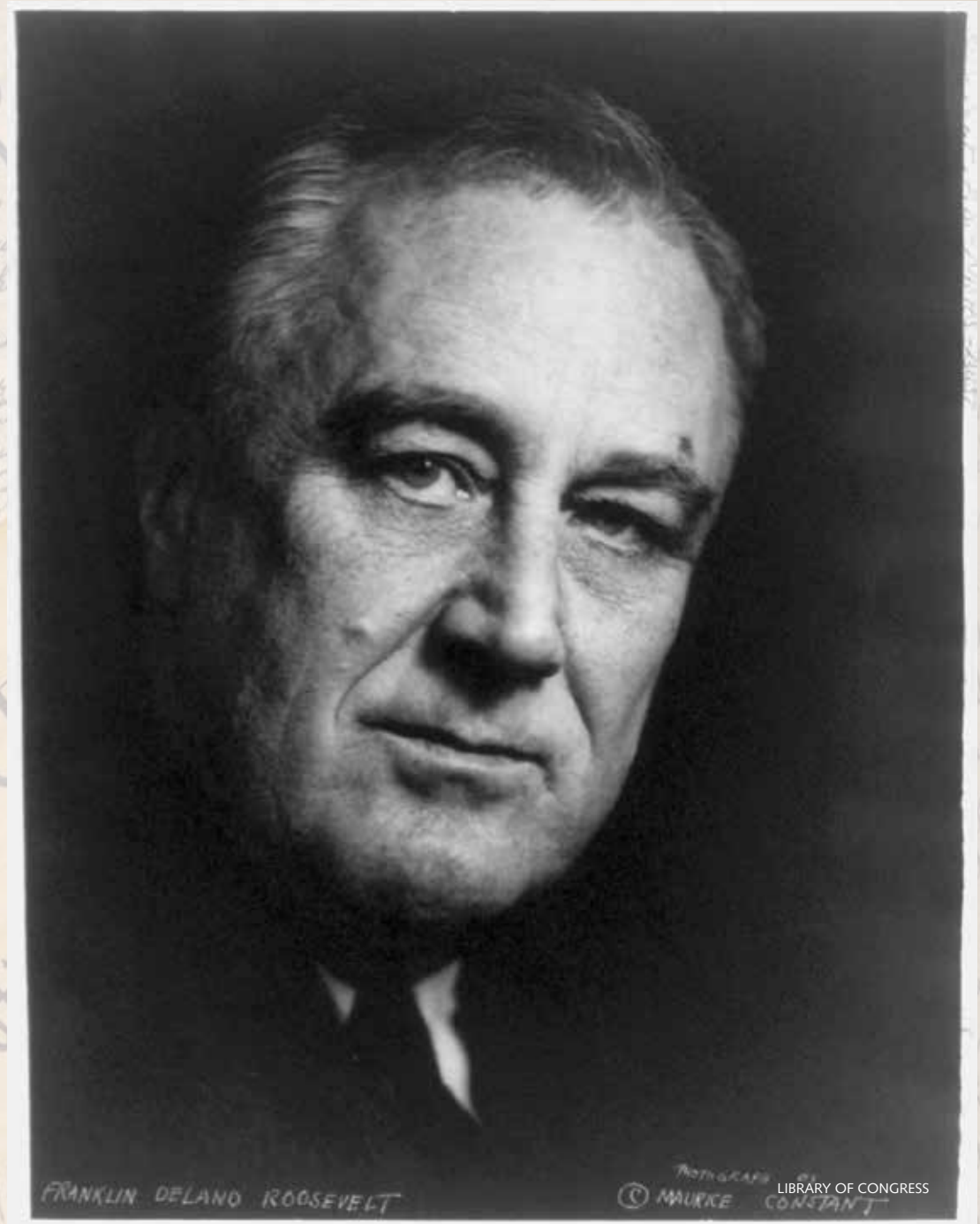
the use of his legs. Seven years later, Roosevelt became governor of New York.

MAJOR POLICY

When Roosevelt entered the presidency, there were 13 million unemployed Americans and banks were closing at an alarming rate. His New Deal proposition was enacted by Congress as a sweeping program to bring recovery to business and agriculture. Here are some of the most resounding moments from the Roosevelt presidency:

- On the heels of New Deal successes, Roosevelt was re-elected by a large margin for his second term.
- The end of his second term was punctuated when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. He quickly spearheaded the organization of the nation's resources for a global war.
- Roosevelt also laid the groundwork for the planning of the United Nations. He coined the organization's name, which was first used in the Declaration by United Nations on Jan. 1, 1942, during the Second World War.

As the war drew to a close, Roosevelt's health declined. On April 12, 1945, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage, leaving behind a long history of service to his country and a reputation for highly meaningful actions that helped rescue the United States from multiple threats – both domestic and abroad.



JAMES MADISON

President No. 4 | **Born:** 1751 **Died:** 1836 | **Served:** 1809 to 1817

As the fourth president, James Madison made a major contribution to the ratification of the constitution. He partnered with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay to write *The Federalist Papers*, earning him the nickname “Father of the Constitution.”

A popular president with a knack for leadership in the face of great challenge, Madison’s straightforward personality was said to be balanced by his wife Dolley’s warm and regal charm. In fact, Dolley was recognized as one of the most influential first ladies of her generation.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Born in 1751, Madison was raised in Orange County, Va., and attended Princeton (then called the College of New Jersey). An expert in law, history and government, Madison was instrumental in the development of the Virginia Constitution in 1776 and was a key leader in the Virginia Assembly.

As a member of Congress, Madison helped frame the Bill of Rights. He also served a key role in President Thomas Jefferson’s cabinet at Secretary of State, playing an integral role in helping shape the Republican party — then known as the Jeffersonian party.

MAJOR POLICY

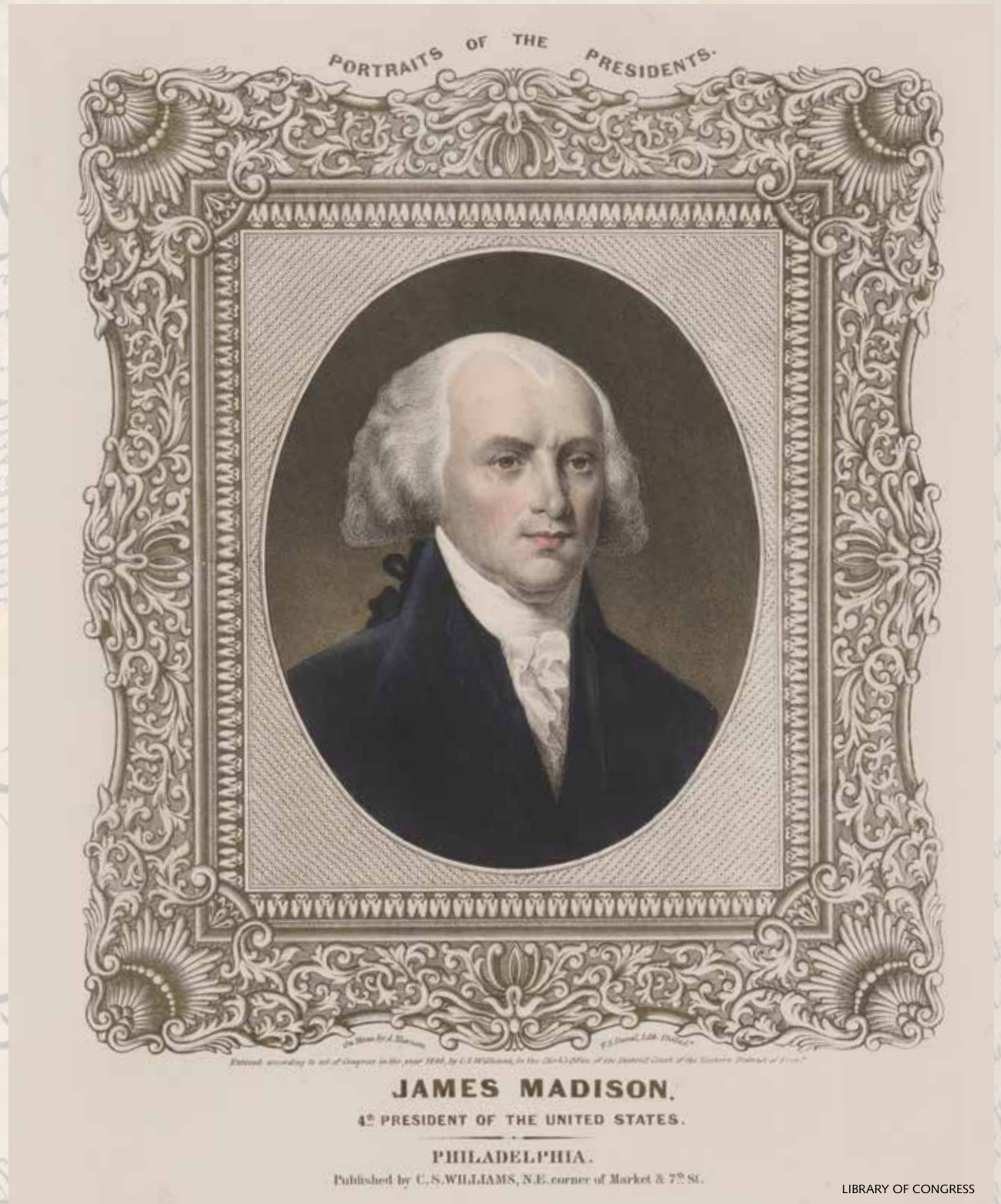
Madison brought major change to America during the first year of his adminis-

tration. A few of his landmark policies and achievements include:

- The United States prohibited trade with both Britain and France during year one of Madison’s presidency; and
- Madison declared war in 1812 on the British for a host of reasons, most prominently the British impressment of American seamen and the seizure of cargoes.

As commander-in-chief, Madison claimed a few notable victories during the war that convinced many Americans and scholars to appoint the United States as the war’s victor. According to the White House Historical Association, this newfound level of nationalism led to the eradication of the war-opposed Federalism party that had once proposed secession prior to the war’s conclusion.

Madison died on June 28, 1836, at his Montpelier estate. In a note titled, “Message to My Country,” that was opened after his death in 1836, Madison stated, “The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated.”



BENJAMIN HARRISON

President No. 23 | **Born:** 1833 **Died:** 1901 | **Served:** 1889 to 1893

As the 23rd president of the United States, Benjamin Harrison was known as a leader of the people with strong conviction for enhancing the country's foreign policies. Politics ran in his family, as his grandfather William Henry Harrison was the country's ninth president.

Harrison's campaign for president resonated with the American voters, who connected with his front-porch speeches delivered to delegations that visited him in Indianapolis.

At only 5-foot-6, Harrison made up for his short height with an oversized commitment to strengthening the United States' standing in global economics and power.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Born in 1833 on a farm near Cincinnati, Harrison attended Miami University in Ohio and studied law in Cincinnati. He later moved to Indianapolis and campaigned for the Republican party as an influential lawyer.

He married Caroline Lavinia Scott in 1853 and served as a colonel in the Civil War before earning a seat on the United States Senate in the 1880s.

MAJOR POLICY

Harrison lost the popular vote in the presidential election but carried the electoral college by a 233-168 count. One of his main focuses during his four-year term was shoring up the

United States' foreign policy.

Here are a few key strategies and policies from Harrison's tenure:

- Harrison was a key leader of the first Pan American Congress, which met in Washington in 1889.

- At the end of his administration, Harrison submitted to the Senate a treaty to annex Hawaii. The incoming president, Grover Cleveland, later withdrew the treaty.

- Harrison signed substantial appropriations bills for internal improvements, naval expansion and subsidies for steamship lines.

- Under Harrison, Congress appropriated a billion dollars for the first time except when in war.

- Harrison also signed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act "to protect trade and commerce against unlawful restraints and monopolies." This was the first federal act attempting to regulate trusts.

After he left office, Harrison returned to Indianapolis and married the widowed Mrs. Mary Dimmick. He died five years later in 1901, leaving behind a reputation as a champion for American business and trade.



RONALD REAGAN

President No. 40 | **Born:** 1911 **Died:** 2004 | **Served:** 1981 to 1989

With many of his core political tenets reverberating today, Ronald Reagan is regarded as one of the most highly respected presidents in American history.

This was in part due to his tough stance on American prosperity and security but also due to his unique background prior to taking over the White House. Reagan earned great fame and fortune in Hollywood before translating his talents into Washington success. The legacy he built during his two terms ending in 1989 lives on today, as he serves as a model of influence for many Republicans and Democrats alike.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Upon graduating from Eureka College, Reagan became a radio sports announcer and later earned an acting contract in Hollywood. He appeared in 53 films during the next two decades.

Reagan eventually served as president of the Screen Actors Guild and toured the United States as a television host. While taking advantage of his Hollywood platform, Reagan was able to take several important political stances that helped shape the country's thinking on key topics, most notably Communism.

Reagan was elected governor of California in 1966 by a margin of 1 million votes and was re-elected in 1970. His unique background and image as a popular celebrity helped pave his path into the White House.

MAJOR POLICY

Reagan's core principle was

defined as a pledge to restore “the great, confident roar of American progress and growth and optimism.”

Reagan was seen as an across-the-aisle ally of the American people focused on negotiating with Congress to get bills passed. He kept a public focus on national defense, stimulating economic growth, curbing inflation and increasing employment — all major points of emphasis for American voters, as well.

Among his major policies, Reagan:

- Led an overhaul of the income tax code, which eliminated many deductions and exempted millions of people with low incomes.
- Increased defense spending by 35 percent.
- Spearheaded dramatic meetings with Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev to negotiate a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles.
- Sent American bombers to Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a nightclub.

These efforts were in line with the Reagan Doctrine, containing what some hail as the most influential policies in American history. The beloved president died in 2004 after having suffered from Alzheimer's disease for nearly 10 years.



JOHN F. KENNEDY

President No. 35 | **Born:** 1917 **Died:** 1963 | **Served:** 1961 to 1963

Do you remember Nov. 22, 1963? If you were alive, you likely recall exactly where you stood and who was around you on that fateful fall day.

That was the date that John Fitzgerald Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullets as his motorcade wound through Dallas. The assassination occurred hardly 1,000 days into his presidency. Kennedy was the youngest man elected President. He also was the youngest to die.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Kennedy was born in Brookline, Mass., on May 29, 1917. Upon graduating from Harvard in 1940, Kennedy served in the Navy before earning a reputation as a charismatic Democratic congressman and senator.

In 1956, Kennedy almost gained the Democratic nomination for vice president and four years later was a first-ballot nominee for president. He beat out Republican candidate Richard Nixon to win the popular vote by a narrow margin, becoming the first Roman Catholic President in United States history.

MAJOR POLICY

Kennedy's policies, although short-lived compared to the type of impact other presidents were able to have during full terms, were influential and high-profile. They included:

- Ordering a band of Cuban exiles to invade their homeland in an attempt to overthrow the regime of Fidel Castro. The plan failed and worsened the already fractured relations between the U.S. and Cuba.
- Increased the United States' military strength and sharpened its focus on another communist power, the Soviet Union.
- Imposed a quarantine on all offensive weapons in Cuba, eventually resulting in Russia agreeing to take the missiles away.
- Played a major role in the passage of the test ban treaty of 1963.

Kennedy's assassination came during a planned two-day, five-city tour of Texas. Designed as a trip to bring Democrats together, the events of that rainy November day would, in effect, tear the collective country apart.

Bullets struck the president's neck and head shortly after noon as his car turned off Main Street at Delaney Plaza and passed the Texas School Book Depository. Kennedy was pronounced dead at 1 p.m. at Parkland Memorial Hospital.



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

President No. 36 | **Born:** 1908 **Died:** 1973 | **Served:** 1963 to 1969

Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency got off to a precarious start as he took over in 1963 upon President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

While challenged with replacing a true global icon, Johnson made a positive impression on the American people, as well as his partners in Congress – enough to eventually earn a second term.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Johnson grew up in Stonewall, Texas, and graduated from what is now Texas State University in 1930. His political career immediately took off as he won an appointment as legislative secretary to a Texas Democratic congressman.

Upon his relocation to Washington, D.C., Johnson quickly became a trusted advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Johnson later won a commission in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander and was elected as a Texas senator in 1948.

Named the youngest minority leader in Senate history in 1953, Johnson was eventually elected majority leader.

MAJOR POLICY

Johnson's White House achievements spanned both his role as vice president and president.

- As VP to Kennedy, Johnson headed the space program, oversaw negotiations on the nuclear test ban treaty and pushed through equal opportunity legislation for minorities.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

- During his administration, Johnson initiated the “Great Society” social service programs and signed the Civil Rights Act into law. These were major wins for a

nation in a period of great transition, and Johnson was lauded for his efforts.

- He also took much criticism for his role in vastly expanding

America's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Johnson died of an apparent heart attack at his ranch in Johnson City, Texas in 1973.