THE NEW FRONTIER AND THE GREAT SOCIETY
KENNEDY AND JOHNSON LEAD AMERICA IN THE 1960S

"ASK NOT . . ."
In his inaugural address, JFK uttered this famous challenge: "Ask not what your country can do for you --- ask what you can do for your country"
Delivered Friday, January 20, 1961

THE CAMELOT YEARS
- During his term in office, JFK and his beautiful young wife, Jacqueline, invited many artists and celebrities to the White House
- The press loved the Kennedy charm and JFK appeared frequently on T.V.
- The Kennedys were considered American "Royalty" (hence "Camelot" reference)

THE KENNEDY MYSTIQUE
- The first family fascinated the American public
- For example, after learning that JFK could read 1,600 words a minute, thousands enrolled in speed-reading courses
- Jackie, too, captivated the nation with her eye for fashion and culture

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST
- JFK surrounded himself with what one journalist described as the "best and the brightest" available talent
- Of all of his elite advisors who filled Kennedy’s inner circle, he relied most on his 35-year-old brother Robert, whom he appointed attorney general

SECTION 2: THE NEW FRONTIER
- Kennedy initiated his vision in a program he called "The New Frontier"
- The economy, education, medical care for the elderly and the poor, and space exploration were all part of his vision
KENNEDY ADDRESSES INNER CITY BLIGHT AND RACISM

- In 1963, Kennedy called for “a national assault on the causes of poverty”
- He also ordered his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy to investigate racial injustice in the South
- Finally, he presented Congress with a sweeping civil rights bill and a sweeping tax cut bill to spur the economy

TRAGEDY IN DALLAS

- On a sunny day on November 22, 1963, Air Force One landed in Dallas with JFK and Jackie
- JFK received warm applause from the crowd that lined the downtown streets of Dallas as he rode in the back seat of an open-air limousine

JFK SHOT TO DEATH

- As the motorcade approached the Texas Book Depository, shots rang out
- JFK was shot in the neck and then the head
- His car was rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors frantically tried to revive him
- President Kennedy was dead (11/22/63)

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON BECOMES PRESIDENT

- The Vice-President, Lyndon Baines Johnson, became President after JFK was assassinated
- The nation mourned the death of the young president while Jackie Kennedy remained calm and poised

JFK LAID TO REST

- All work stopped for Kennedy’s funeral as America mourned its fallen leader
- The assassination and the televised funeral became historic events
- Like 9-11, Americans can recall where they were when they heard the news of the President’s death

LEE HARVEY OSWALD CHARGED; SHOT TO DEATH

- A 24-year-old Marine with a suspicious past left a palm print on the rifle used to kill JFK
- He was charged and as a national television audience watched his transfer from one jail to another, nightclub owner Jack Ruby broke through the crowd and shot Oswald to death

Three-year old John Kennedy Jr. salutes his father’s coffin during the funeral

A somber LBJ takes the oath of office aboard Air Force One with the Jackie next to him

Jack Ruby, right, shoots Oswald, center, to death 11/24/63
UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- The bizarre chain of events led many to believe that Oswald was part of a conspiracy
- The Warren Commission investigated the assassination and determined that Oswald had indeed acted alone
- Recent filmmaker Oliver Stone isn’t so sure – his film, “JFK,” is filled with conspiracy theories

SECTION 3: THE GREAT SOCIETY

- A fourth-generation Texan, Lyndon Johnson (LBJ) entered politics in 1937 as a congressman
- Johnson admired Franklin Roosevelt who took the young congressman under his wing
- Johnson became a senator in 1948 and by 1955 he was Senate majority leader

JOHNSON’S DOMESTIC AGENDA

- As soon as Johnson took office, he urged Congress to pass the tax-cut bill that Kennedy had sent to Capital Hill
- The tax cut passed and $10 billion in cuts took effect

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

- In July of 1964, LBJ pushed the Civil Rights Act through Congress
- The Act prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin, and granted the federal government new powers to enforce the law

VOTING RIGHTS ACT 1964

- Part of the Civil Rights Act was to insure voting rights for all Americans
- The act prohibited literacy tests or other discriminatory practices for voting
- The act insured consistent election practices

THE WAR ON POVERTY

- Following his tax cut and Civil Rights Act successes, LBJ launched his War on Poverty
- In August of 1964 he pushed through Congress a series of measures known as the Economic Opportunity Act
- The Act provided $1 billion in aid to the inner city
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

THE EOA legislation created:
• The Job Corps
• VISTA (Volunteers in service to America)
• Project Head Start for underprivileged preschoolers
• The Community Action Program which encouraged the poor to participate in public works program

Project Head Start is still going strong

THE 1964 ELECTION

• In 1964, the Republicans nominated conservative senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona to oppose Democrat Lyndon Johnson
• Goldwater opposed LBJ’s social legislation
• Goldwater alienated voters by suggesting the use of nuclear weapons in Cuba and North Vietnam

LBJ WINS BY A LANDSLIDE

• LBJ won the 1964 election by a landslide
• For many it was an anti-Goldwater vote
• Many Americans saw Goldwater as a War Hawk
• The Democrats also increased their majority in Congress
• Now Johnson launched his reform program in earnest

ELECTION OF 1964

LBJ easily defeats Goldwater in ’64

BUILDING THE GREAT SOCIETY

• In May of 1964, LBJ summed up his vision for America in a phrase: “The Great Society”
• By the time he left the White House in 1969, Congress had passed 206 of LBJ’s Great Society legislative initiatives

EDUCATION

• Johnson considered education “the key which can unlock the door to the Great Society”
• The Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided $1 billion to help public schools buy textbooks and library materials
HEALTHCARE

- LBJ and Congress enhanced Social Security by establishing Medicare and Medicaid
- Medicare provided hospital insurance and low-cost medical care to the elderly
- Medicaid provided health benefits to the poor

HOUSING

- LBJ and Congress appropriated money to build 240,000 units of low-rent public housing; established the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and appointed the first black cabinet member, Robert Weaver, as HUD’s first leader

IMMIGRATION REFORM

- The Great Society also brought reform to immigration laws
- The Natural Origins Acts of the 1920s strongly discriminated against immigration by those outside of Western Europe
- The Immigration Act of 1965 opened the door for many non-European immigrants to settle in the U.S.

THE ENVIRONMENT

- LBJ also actively sought to improve the environment
- The Water Quality Act of 1965 required states to clean up their rivers and lakes
- LBJ also ordered the government to clean up corporate polluters of the environment

SUPREME COURT REFORMS SOCIETY, TOO

- Reform and change were not limited to the Executive and Legislative branches
- The Judicial Branch led by the Supreme Court and Chief Justice Earl Warren did much to protect individual rights

WARREN COURT AND SUSPECT’S RIGHTS

- In Mapp v. Ohio (1961) the Supreme Court ruled that illegally seized evidence could not be used in court
- In Escobedo v. Illinois the court ruled that the accused has the right to have an attorney present when questioned by police
- In Miranda v. Arizona the court ruled that all suspects must be read their rights before questioning
IMPACT OF GREAT SOCIETY

• The Great Society and the Warren Court changed the United States
• No president in Post-WWII era extended the power and reach of the federal government more than LBJ
• The War on Poverty helped, the Civil Rights initiative made a difference and the massive tax cuts spurred the economy