



President John F. Kennedy and the Citizens of Fort Worth, Texas

Introduction

In the fall of 1963, President John F. Kennedy began to prepare for his second presidential campaign. By the end of September, he had traveled to the West, speaking in nine different states in less than a week. In November he planned a tour of Texas, a “must win” state, visiting five cities over two days. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy accompanied the President and Vice President as they spoke in San Antonio and Houston before landing at Carswell Air Force base in Fort Worth on the night of November 21, 1963. The next morning, President Kennedy first spoke to a crowd of approximately two thousand people outside the Hotel Texas before speaking to another two thousand at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast in the ballroom. These speeches given on November 22, 1963 were his last.

Objectives

Students will: define and identify leaders who inspire people
analyze photos of President Kennedy’s visit to Fort Worth, Texas
identify ways that the citizens of Fort Worth, Texas helped the nation

Standards

National Standards in History for Grades k-4: Topic 2 Standard 3E, Topic 3 Standard 4B-C
National Standards for United States Grades 5-12: Era 9 Standard 3B

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

1.12B-C, 2.12A-D, 3.10B, 3.11A, 3.12A-C, 4.17A-B, 5.18A, 5.19B-C

Procedure

Ask students to define the word “leader” and to give examples of people they think are leaders in today’s world. Have students explain why the people they chose are leaders.

Students might define a leader as someone who helps others in time of need, inspires people to see what they are capable of and then helps them achieve their best, or looks at a problem and creates a vision to solve it.

Student examples of a leader might include family members, teachers, sports figures, religious leaders or politicians.

Read the following quote and discuss what citizens can do to help their country:

*. . . And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—
ask what you can do for your country. . . .*

Examples might include: helping families or neighbors in time of need, giving food to the local food bank, leading an after school club, joining the military, voting, or running for public office.



Introduce students to the author of the quote by sharing the attached brief biography of John F. Kennedy. (For a more detailed description of JFK's presidential administration go to the White House Biographies website at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/johnfkennedy>.)

Analyze Photo A

- Why might John Kennedy be a good leader as the President of the United States?
Possible answers include: strong family background, college educated, author, navy veteran who served during a war, former Senator and Congressman.
- Where was the photo taken?
- Why would the President of the United States visit Fort Worth, Texas?

Analyze Photo B

- What evidence is there that it is raining?
- Why are there barriers and a policeman?
- What do the people appear to be doing?
- How would you describe the people who have come?
- Why is the young African-American male taking a photo?

Show Photo C and read the speech given by President Kennedy on November 22, 1963 to the people outside the Hotel Texas.

Students may listen to the speech and see other photos from that morning by viewing a video on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlfN11VizRg&feature=related>.

- Why does he start out by saying, "There are no faint hearts in Fort Worth"?
- What is a synonym for "faint hearts" ?
- Why does President Kennedy call Fort Worth a "great western city"?
- How has Fort Worth helped build a strong military defense?
- Why was the United States in competition with the Soviet Union?
- In what areas, other than military defense, should the United States lead the world?
- What have the citizens of Fort Worth done to heed the President's call of "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country"?

Analyze Photo D and discuss what the children might have been feeling or thinking as they waited to see the President of the United States. Would today's students want to see the President and take his photo? Why?

Conclusion

How would today's students answer President Kennedy's call for citizen involvement? What can students do for their school, city, state, or country today? Identify things that need to be done now. Select one area and write a persuasive paragraph or create a visual that will inspire citizens to get involved.

Extension

Ask the class to choose one of the school projects described in their persuasive paragraphs. With permission and support from the school principal, allow students to organize and "do the project."



A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born on May 29, 1917 to wealthy New England parents descended from Irish Catholic immigrants. “Jack” was the second of nine children. His childhood was one of privilege, centered on his competitive, but tight-knit family.

Kennedy attended private schools and Ivy League colleges. His Harvard thesis was published as *Why England Slept*, which became a best-selling book and was the springboard for his public life. Despite frequent illness as a child and young man, he volunteered for military service in the Pacific during World War II, and his heroism in the aftermath of the 1943 sinking of PT-109 won him further national acclaim.

Kennedy was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946 and to the U.S. Senate in 1952. Shortly after his Senate victory, he married Jacqueline Bouvier, a *Washington Times-Herald* photojournalist. In 1957, his second book *Profiles In Courage* won the Pulitzer Prize for biography.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy became the youngest person and the first Roman Catholic elected President of the United States. His memorable inaugural address, beautiful wife and children – Caroline and John, Jr., youthful appearance, energy and vision ushered a new era of idealism in America.

During his presidency, Kennedy created the Peace Corps, countered the spread of communism, curtailed nuclear proliferation through the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, launched the Apollo space program and spearheaded sweeping civil rights legislation.

President Kennedy’s assassination on November 22, 1963 was mourned around the world. He had asked all nations to join together and fight what he called the “common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.”

To this day, John F. Kennedy’s leadership lives on in the legacy of the opportunities and challenges he set forth for the citizens of our country and for all mankind.



REMARKS BY JOHN F. KENNEDY IN FRONT OF HOTEL TEXAS

NOVEMBER 22, 1963

Mr. Vice President, Jim Wright, Governor, Senator Yarborough, Mr. Buck, ladies and gentlemen:

There are no faint hearts in Fort Worth, and I appreciate your being here this morning. Mrs. Kennedy is organizing herself. It takes longer, but, of course, she looks better than we do when she does it. But we appreciate your welcome.

This city has been a great western city, the defense of the West, cattle, oil, and all the rest. It has believed in strength in this city, and strength in this State, and strength in this country.

What we are trying to do in this country and what we are trying to do around the world, I believe, is quite simple: and that is to build a military structure which will defend the vital interests of the United States. And in that great cause, Fort Worth, as it did in World War II, as it did in developing the best bomber system in the world, the B-58, and as it will now do in developing the best fighter system in the world, the TFX, Fort Worth will play its proper part. And that is why we have placed so much emphasis in the last 3 years in building a defense system second to none, until now the United States is stronger than it has ever been in its history. And secondly, we believe that the new environment, space, the new sea, is also an area where the United States should be second to none.

And this State of Texas and the United States is now engaged in the most concentrated effort in history to provide leadership in this area as it must here on earth. And this is our second great effort. And in December--next month--the United States will fire the largest booster in the history of the world, putting us ahead of the Soviet Union in that area for the first time in our history.

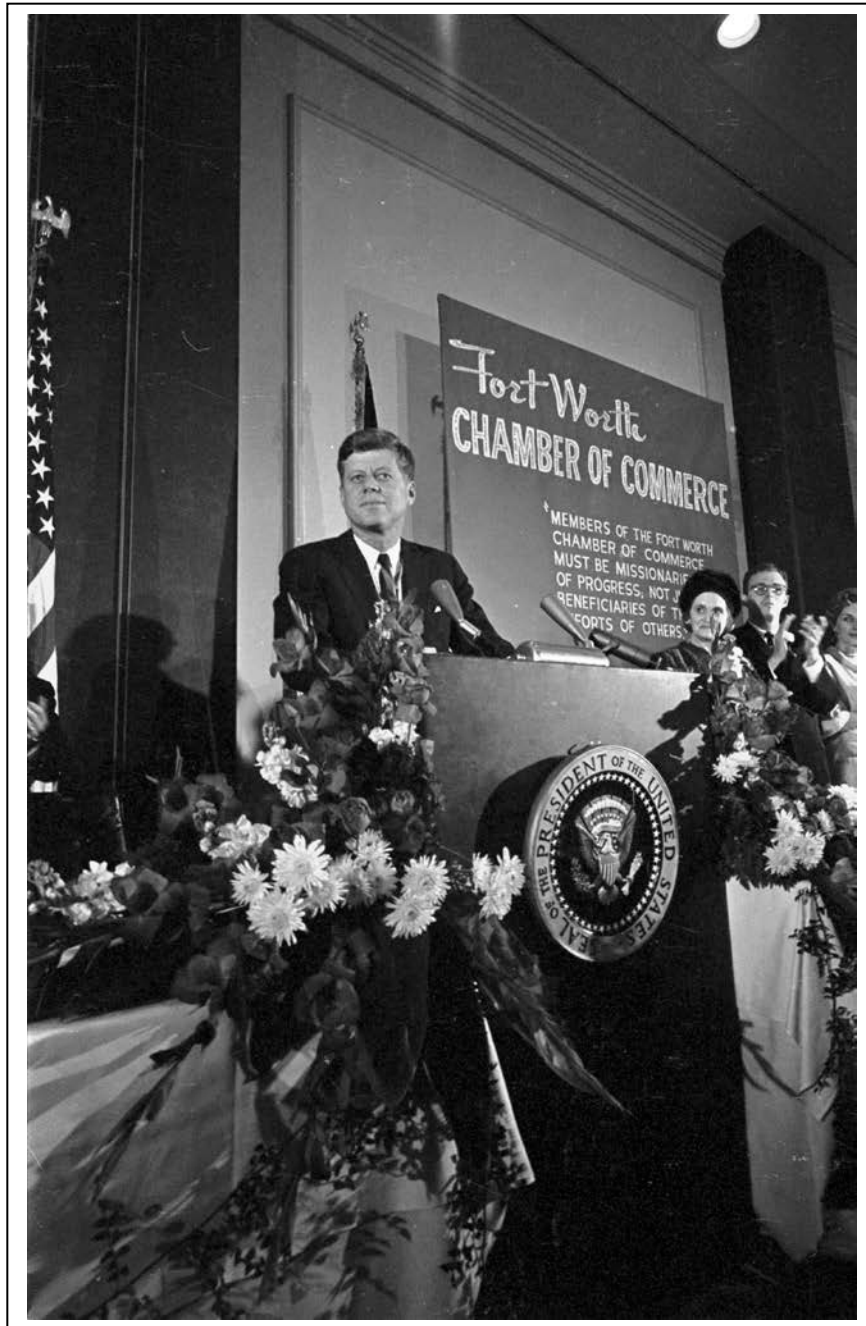
And thirdly, for the United States to fulfill its obligations around the world requires that the United States move forward economically, that the people of this country participate in rising prosperity. And it is a fact in 1962, and the first 6 months of 1963, the economy of the United States grew not only faster than nearly every Western country, which had not been true in the fifties, but also grew faster than the Soviet Union itself. That is the kind of strength the United States needs, economically, in space, militarily.

And in the final analysis, that strength depends upon the willingness of the citizens of the United States to assume the burdens of leadership.

I know one place where they are, here in this rain, in Fort Worth, in Texas, in the United States. We are going forward.

Thank you

Photo A



John F. Kennedy speaking at podium in Hotel Texas, Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce breakfast, 11/22/1963 Courtesy of *Fort Worth Star – Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas (AR406-6 #4816 Env. 4, frame 15)

Photo B



Crowd with umbrellas behind barriers guarded by police, gathered to hear John F. Kennedy speak outside Hotel Texas, 11/22/1963. Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star – Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas. (AR406-6 11/22/1963 4816 Env. 6, frame 41)

Photo C



John F. Kennedy speaking to crowd in front of Hotel Texas, Fort Worth – V.P. Lyndon B. Johnson to JFK’s left, Texas Governor John Connally over JFK’s left shoulder and State Senator Don Kennard over JFK’s right shoulder, on morning of November 22, 1963. Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star – Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas (AR406-6 #4816 Env. 3, frame 28)

Photo D



John F. Kennedy motorcade on way to Carswell Air Force Base, school children lining streets
Courtesy *Fort Worth Star – Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at
Arlington, Arlington, Texas (AR406-6 #4816 Env. 7 frame 27)