



### Presidential Visits to Fort Worth, Texas

Read the following newspaper article about presidential visits to Fort Worth and the excerpt from the John Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum about President Kennedy's visits to Fort Worth.

Compare the presidential visits by completing a chart like the one below. Discuss the chart.

President	When Visit?	Where Visit?	# Of People Who Saw Him?	Why Visit?	Importance or Lasting Impact
Theodore Roosevelt					
Franklin Roosevelt					
Harry Truman					
John Kennedy					

In a paragraph answer the question: Of the four presidential visits, which to you think was the most important? Why?

Extend the activity by asking: Would the current President of the United States visit Fort Worth? Why?



*Kennedy to Be Fourth President to Visit Here* - By Ed Johnson  
Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, Sunday, Nov. 17, 1963 Section 4, p. 1

George Washington never slept here. Fort Worth wasn't on the map. It wasn't until 1905 that the city played host to a man in the White House.

The chief executive then was Teddy Roosevelt, a symbol of he-man vigor. Nearly 60 years later vigor now a Bostonian "vigah"--- is again a favorite White House word.

PRESIDENT Kennedy's Fort Worth visit Thursday and Friday--part of a whirlwind Texas tour which will proceed with "vigah"—marks the eighth time a commander in chief has been welcomed to Fort Worth.

Gregarious Teddy came twice, the second time as an ex-President. The magnetic FDR was a five-time visitor. Fiery Harry Truman roared in on his 1948 campaign special train. Others have visited here—Taft, Wilson, Harding and Eisenhower—but not during their presidential terms.

Six rollicking decades between Theodore Roosevelt and John Fitzgerald Kennedy have changed the world many times over. But every man who takes up temporary quarters at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. lives in the shadows of his predecessors, and the visit of JFK, the 35<sup>th</sup> has touches from TR, the 26<sup>th</sup>.

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A REMINISCING headline in the *Star-Telegram* several years ago recalled the first Roosevelt's visit: "Made Effort to 'Convert' Texas Democrats to Republican Standard." Republican Teddy in 1906 was in an Old Confederacy Democratic bastion where few Republicans did little but wait for federal patronage plums.

Kennedy's Texas tour is partly planned to shore up the Democratic dike, chinked severely enough in recent years by the GOP to have made TR roar, "Bully! Bully!" Roosevelt came here fresh with acclaim from having brought about the peace treaty which ended the Sino-Japanese War. His symbol was "the big stick." It was only a few years before that TR caught the national spotlight when he led his Rough Riders up San Juan Hill. The place: Cuba.

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SIXTY YEARS later that island is still in the news and Cuba most likely will be an issue in 1964 when JFK makes his bid for a second term.

Roosevelt the outdoorsman—though he didn't popularize the 50 mile hike—came to Fort Worth to go on a wolf hunt with two cattlemen, Capt. S. Burk Burnett and Tom Waggoner here.

Fort Worth had 50,000 people then. About 20,000 persons were amassed in the old T&P station when the top-hatted frock-coated President arrived. His visit lasted two hours—a gala parade, a speech in the Al Hayne triangle, an elm tree planting on the Carnegie Library lawn. (The tree later died and was replaced.) TR went on to the hunt at Burk Burnett's Oklahoma ranch.



His second visit was March 14, 1912 during the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show. Teddy made a speech and led a chorus in his favorite tune, “Ain’t Got No Style,” at a Westbrook Hotel breakfast.

TR’s Democratic cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt first came June 12, 1936. His New Deal was in style then, here and most everywhere else.

Six months later, the moose-jawed President, famed for jauntily airing a cigarette clenched in silver holder between his teeth, swept on to a second term with all but Maine and Vermont in the fold.

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AN ESTIMATED 200,000 lined Fort Worth streets to cheer him and the first lady.

The Roosevelts spent the night at Dutch Branch, the farm near Benbrook where their son, Elliott, an official of a Fort Worth radio station, lived. FDR’s second visit was part of a fishing expedition, coming here from Port Aransas May 11, 1937. He drove directly to Dutch Branch. He landed a three-pound bass in a pond at Shady Oak Farm.

The third Fort Worth stay was July 9, 1938. Huge crowds again gathered to hail him.

He made one of his famed radio talks while here, which was broadcast over 31 Texas stations. FDR predicted Texas would get new industries—a topic still a favorite with Texas politicians.

The United States was at war with Japan, Germany, and Italy and the clouds were uncertain when Roosevelt came September 27, 1942, for a brief visit with his son’s family. Elliott was then serving with the Army Air Corps overseas.

THE PRESIDENT toured the new Consolidated plant and watched B-24 Liberator bombers roll off the assembly line. The plant has now become General Dynamics, Texas’ biggest industry—one of many that have come to the state as FDR predicted.

FDR’s fifth and final visit was quiet, with the chief executive traveling with wartime’s lack of fanfare. It was April 18, 1943, and FDR was on his way to Mexico for a meeting with President Avila Camacho. The presidential train, the shades drawn, stayed 30 minutes in the station. Only Elliott and his family were permitted aboard.

Every military policeman in the Fort Worth area had been assigned to the station to maintain security.

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THE YEAR was a postwar bright one, though the cold war was quickly shaping up, when the next president came. He was Harry S. Truman, who loved campaign trains, for the rear car platform was his forum for “giving ‘em hell.”

Truman estimated 15 acres of people were out in Fort Worth that Sept. 27, 1948. He belabored that “Republican outfit” and “the do-nothing 80th Republican Congress.” The crowd was delighted.

Harry was the only one on that campaign train special who believed he would beat Thomas E. Dewey in what became the nation’s greatest political upset.



Many of the newspaper correspondents aboard remembered the Fort Worth crowd later. They were rueful they didn't see the signs of enthusiasm—the man from Missouri on the move.

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. . . The President's [Kennedy] appearance here is billed as “nonpolitical and nonpartisan.”

The size of the crowds who come out to catch a glimpse of him, the warmth of his reception at the Hotel Texas breakfast, and every move he makes will be watched by politician and newspapermen.

Everything the President says and does is noted and judged because he is politician and free world leader.

*Excerpt from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*

On November 21, the president and first lady departed on Air Force One for the two-day, five-city tour of Texas.

President Kennedy was aware that a feud among party leaders in Texas could jeopardize his chances of carrying the state in 1964, and one of his aims for the trip was to bring Democrats together. He also knew that a relatively small but vocal group of extremists was contributing to the political tensions in Texas and would likely make its presence felt—particularly in Dallas, where U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson had been physically attacked a month earlier after making a speech there. Nonetheless, JFK seemed to relish the prospect of leaving Washington, getting out among the people and into the political fray.

The first stop was San Antonio. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governor John B. Connally, and Senator Ralph W. Yarborough led the welcoming party. They accompanied the president to Brooks Air Force Base for the dedication of the Aerospace Medical Health Center. Continuing on to Houston, he addressed a Latin American citizens' organization and spoke at a testimonial dinner for Congressman Albert Thomas before ending the day in Fort Worth.

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/November-22-1963-Death%20of%20the%20President>