

US History

The Kennedy & Johnson Years

Learning Target:

I can describe how Americans responded to the death of JFK and analyze different theories as to what really happen.

2. The Assassination of John F. Kennedy

Basic Facts about the Assassination –

- When – Friday, November 22, 1963 at 12:30 pm
- Where – Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas
- How – Multiple fatal gunshots while riding in a presidential motorcade
- Who – Lee Harvey Oswald, a Texas School Book Depository employee

Background of the Dallas Trip –

- Kennedy choose to go to Dallas for several reasons –
 - To raise money for Democrats in the upcoming 1964 elections
 - To begin his campaign for reelection
 - Kennedy and Johnson had barely won Texas in 1960
- Kennedy traveled in a 1961 Lincoln Continental, open-top, modified limousine
- The motorcade route was published in both Dallas newspapers on Nov. 19

The Assassination –

- Kennedy and his wife were riding with Texas Governor John Connally and his wife
- Three shots were fired as Kennedy's limo went past the Depository
- First Shot –
 - Hardly any crowd reaction to the first shot
 - Kennedy and Connally reacted abruptly looking from left to right
- Second Shot –
 - Entered Kennedy's upper back, penetrated his neck, and exited his throat
 - Kennedy raised his hands to his neck in reaction
 - Same shot entered Connally's back, chest, right wrist, and left thigh
- Third Shot –
 - Hit Kennedy directly in the right side of his head
 - Declared dead upon arrival at the hospital

The Arrest –

- Lee Harvey Oswald was reported missing to Dallas police by his boss
- Oswald killed a Dallas police officer, J.D. Tippit after killing the president
- Arrested in a movie theater an hour and 20 minutes after the assassination
- Oswald denied shooting either man but never faced trial
- Oswald was killed in transport from police headquarters to jail by Jack Ruby

Evidence –

The Rifle –

- A rifle was found on the 6th floor of the Texas Book Depository by the window
- The rifle was identified in pictures taken of Oswald in his backyard
- A partial palm print of Oswald was also found on the rifle

The Bullet –

- A bullet was recovered on Governor Connally's hospital stretcher
- The bullet was ballistically matched to Oswald's rifle

Recordings of the Assassination –

- No radio or television broadcast the assassination live
- Most media were not with the motorcade but waiting for it at the Dallas Trade Mart in anticipation for Kennedy's arrival

The Zapruder Film –

- The most famous and complete footage of the assassination
- Filmed by Abraham Zapruder, a garment manufacturer
- Taken on 8 mm film and is silent

The Warren Commission –

- First official investigation of the assassination
- Established by President Johnson on November 29, 1963
- The commission was headed by Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren

Conclusions from the Commission –

- Founded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and that Jack Ruby acted alone in the murder of Oswald (Lone Gunman Theory)
- Concluded that there were three bullets fired by Oswald with the second one injuring both the president and the governor (Magic Bullet Theory)
- Critics have argued both are not possible
- Historians have come to accept the report