

## The Kennedy Years

### John F. Kennedy

- 43 years old - Democrat from Massachusetts
- elected President in 1960
- defeated Republican Richard Nixon
- supported the following issues:
  - the Space program - promised a man would land on moon
  - determined to defend democratic nations
  - Pro containment policy (stop the spread of communism)

### Bay of Pigs - April 1961

- Fidel Castro became dictator of Cuba in 1959
  - Led a socialist revolution and threatened to spread communism in Latin America.
- U. S. wanted Castro out of power since Cuba only 90 miles from U. S.
- In May 1960 President Eisenhower orders the CIA (Central Intelligence agency) to train Cuban exiles
- He appropriates 13 million dollars to finance the operation
- Kennedy becomes President in January, 1961 and was told about the plan
- Kennedy approves the plan on April 4
- On April 17 the exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs
- The invasion force failed and surrendered in 72 hours
- The invasion embarrassed the U.S. and made Castro more popular

### Cuban Missile Crisis

- The closest the world ever came to nuclear war
- On October 15, 1962 reconnaissance photographs revealed the Soviet Union had secretly installed nuclear missile bases in Cuba.
- President Kennedy insists Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev remove the missiles
- October 22 Kennedy addresses the American public and announces his plan to implement a naval blockade
- The U.S. navy has orders to stop any Soviet ship bringing missiles to Cuba.
- The Soviet ships reach the blockade and hold their positions.
- The U.S. Armed Forces were put on alert DEFCON 2 (the highest ever in U.S. history).

- On October 28 an agreement is finally reached between the 2 leaders.
- The Soviets agreed to remove missiles from Cuba
- The U.S. agrees not to invade Cuba.
- A month after the crisis Khrushchev withdraws missiles from Cuba
- In a secret agreement the U.S. removed missiles from Turkey that were aimed at the Soviet Union.

#### Kennedy Assassination

- On November 22, 1963 President Kennedy was in Dallas to bolster Democratic support for his reelection in the South
- Kennedy and the First Lady were riding in a motorcade with Texas Governor John Connally
- As the car turned into Dealey Plaza gunshots rang out
- Kennedy was shot in the head and neck
- He was rushed to the hospital and a short time later pronounced dead
- Vice President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as President
- The police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald in a movie theater
- The shots came from the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald worked.
- Two days after his arrest, Jack Ruby shot and killed Oswald as he was being transported to jail.
- President Johnson appointed Chief Justice Earl Warren to investigate the assassination.
- The Warren Commission concluded that Oswald, working alone, was guilty of the act.

#### Lyndon Johnson

- Johnson finished Kennedy's term and ran for election in 1964 and won
- His program was known as "Great Society".
- The goal was to improve the standard of living for every American
- It included financial aid for education, attack on disease, a plan to redevelop decaying cities, crime prevention and control, and to continue to remove voting requirements.

## Policy in Vietnam

- Johnson inherited the Vietnam War
- By 1968 500,000 troops were engaged with the enemy
- Johnson escalated the war from Advising to South Vietnamese to actually Fighting the war with them
- Many American felt the U.S. had no right to intervene in Vietnam and the war was pointless for Americans
- Forms of protest included marches, draft card burnings, sit-ins, and violence with police