

## **This Month in Texas History**

### **November 21, 1963: President John F. Kennedy Visits San Antonio**

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There are certain days in history that become a part of a collective national history. In the United States, 9/11, Pearl Harbor and the Kennedy Assassination are probably the three examples of this phenomenon that most readily spring to mind. People who were alive on September 11, 2001, December 7, 1941 and November 22, 1963 generally can tell you almost minute-by-minute what that day was like. But how often do we stop to remember what happened on the day before these days that changed the world as we knew it?

For many people in San Antonio, November 21, 1963 was almost as memorable as the day that followed, because President Kennedy paid a visit to the city. When San Antonio residents heard the news that the President had been shot while riding through the streets of



*President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy arrive at San Antonio International Airport, San Antonio, Texas. Cecil Stoughton, White House. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston*

Dallas, they remembered watching the President take a similar ride through the streets of San Antonio only the day before. As in Dallas, Texas citizens lined the streets in San Antonio to watch the presidential motorcade travel from San Antonio International Airport, through downtown and out to Brooks AFB where President Kennedy dedicated a new Aerospace Medical Center.

The speech President Kennedy gave at the dedication is credited as being his final public remarks.



*Sen. Yarborough, Kennedy and Johnson in the Alamo. General Images, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library Collection, Alamo Research Center, San Antonio, TX.*

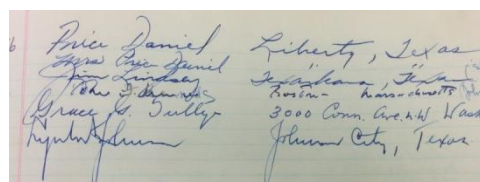
The 1963 trip to Texas was not John F. Kennedy's first visit to the lone star state, or to San Antonio. He had also campaigned across the state in 1960. In fact on September 12, 1960 he gave a speech just in front of the Alamo in which he referenced Massachusetts born Alamo defender, William Lynn, when expressing his "pride and satisfaction" at being able to speak in front of the "distinguished American memorial."

Kennedy made an earlier trip to Texas in October of 1956

while still a member of the

US Senate and accompanied

by Lyndon B. Johnson (US Senator), Price Daniel (US Senator and soon to be Governor of Texas), and Jim Lindsey (Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives), visited the Alamo.



*Photo of the Alamo VIP Guest Book, October 1956*

The 1963 trip to the Alamo City was fairly short. Following the stop at Brooks AFB President Kennedy and his entourage, which included Jacqueline Kennedy, Vice President and Mrs. Johnson, and Governor and Mrs. Connally, departed for Houston where they attended a fundraising dinner and then on to Fort Worth where they spent the night. The images from the Texas trip seem to blend into one another and the stops are almost indistinguishable, if not for the differences in the skylines and the color of roses presented to the First Lady.

November 22nd began almost the same as the day before, with early morning campaign stops in one Texas town before moving on to a second. Had the events in Dealey Plaza not occurred November 22nd would have continued to mirror November 21st as the group was to travel to a third Texas city - Austin - before spending the night at Vice President Johnson's ranch

in Johnson City, Texas. Of course, that was not to be and instead of being just another day, November 22nd became a day that changed a nation's history. The image of San Antonio school children waving to President Kennedy as he travelled through San Antonio in the open air motorcade provide a powerful juxtaposition to the images of that same open air motorcade travelling through the streets of Dallas.

Those San Antonio school children are adults now, but like most Americans old enough to remember 1963, they could probably tell you everything they did on November 22nd. Unlike the rest of the country, however, they could also probably tell you exactly what they did on November 21st.



*President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy arrive at Love Field, Dallas, Texas. Cecil Stoughton, White House. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston*

## LEARN MORE

- A slideshow of photographs from President Kennedy's 1963 visit is available through the [San Antonio Express News](#)
- Watch the short film "[The Last Two Days, November 1963: 21-22](#)" via the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.
- Read President Kennedy's [Remarks in San Antonio at the Dedication of the Aerospace Medical Health Center](#) and his [Remarks at the Alamo on September 12, 1960](#) via The American Presidency Project.