

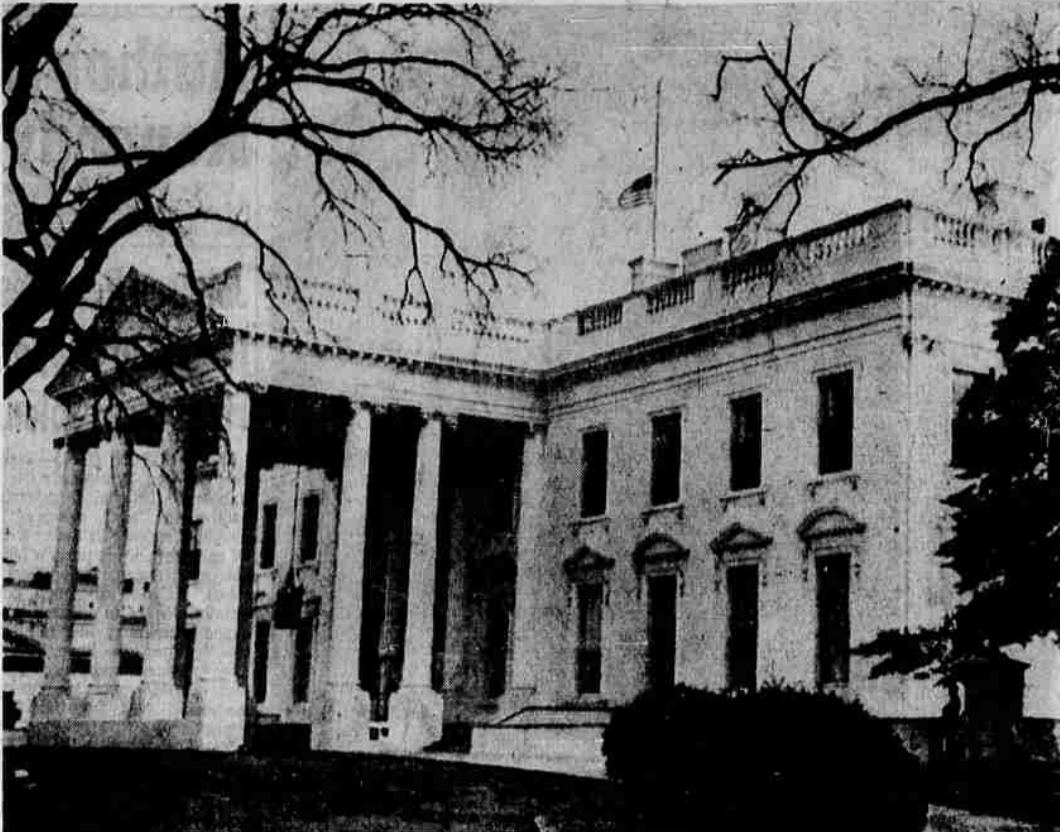
Merriman Smith Describes Events in Dallas and Washington D. C.



Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson flanked by his wife, Lady Bird (left) and the widow of assassinated President John F. Kennedy (right) is sworn in as President of the United States by Federal District Judge Sarah T. Hughes of Dallas aboard the Presidential plane prior to returning to Washington. (UPI)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Merriman Smith, UPI White House reporter since 1941, was on the scene in Dallas Friday when President Kennedy was assassinated. Smith was in the motorcade not far from Kennedy when the shooting took place. He followed the President's car to the hospital and the death. He was there for the swearing-in of President Johnson in an Air Force jet and came on back to Washington aboard the aircraft bearing the new President and the body of the slain Kennedy. He was the only news agency reporter on the aircraft.

By MERRIMAN SMITH
UPI White House Reporter
WASHINGTON (UPI)—It was a balmy, sunny noon as we motored through downtown Dallas behind President Kennedy. The procession cleared the center of the business district and turned into a handsome highway that wound through what appeared to be a park.



Flag at the White House flies at half staff Friday after news that President Kennedy has been assassinated in Dallas, Tex. (UPI)

Highlights of L. B. Johnson's Life

AUSTIN, Tex. (UPI)—Highlights in the life of President Lyndon B. Johnson:
1908—Born Aug. 27, near Johnson City, Tex., eldest son of Samuel Ealy Johnson Jr., a school teacher, and member of the Texas Legislature, and Rebekah Baines Johnson.
1913—Entered public school at Johnson City, was graduated in spring of 1924.
1924—Began work at \$1 per day on a road-building gang. Had urge to travel and wanted to see the West. Worked his way to California where he worked in Imperial Valley. Later returned to Texas and resumed work on roadbuilding gang.
1927—Decided to go to college. Enrolled in Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Tex., in February. Worked as janitor, door-to-door salesman and other odd jobs to pay for education.
1928—Had to leave college when money ran out. Took a job teaching school at Tulla, Tex. Used first pay check to buy athletic equipment for underprivileged Latin American children.
1929—Returned to college.
1930—Graduated from Southwest Texas State in August. Took job teaching school in Houston, Tex.
1932—Went to Washington, D.C., as secretary to Rep. Richard Kleberg, D-Tex., remaining in that post until 1935.

Kennedy Highlights

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Highlights of President Kennedy's career:
May 29, 1917—Born in Brookline, Mass., the second of nine children of former Ambassador to Great Britain Joseph P. Kennedy and his wife, Rose P. Kennedy and his wife, Joseph P. Kennedy.
1940—Graduated from Harvard cum laude with a bachelor of science degree.
1940—Published best selling book, "Why England Slept."
1941-45—Served in the U.S. Navy. Rose to rank of lieutenant in command of a PT boat. In 1943 was badly injured when his boat was rammed by a Japanese destroyer off the Solomon Islands.
1947-1953—Served as a U.S. congressman from Massachusetts.
1952—Elected to the Senate, defeating Republican Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge.
1953—Married Jacqueline Bouvier in Newport, Rhode Island.
1954-1955—Spent six months in hospital undergoing and convalescing from major surgery on a back injury aggravated by the sinking of his PT boat.
1956—Won a Pulitzer Prize for his book "Profiles in Courage."
1956—Narrowly missed winning the Democratic vice presidential nomination, losing in a close contest to the late Sen. Estes Kefauver, D-Tenn.
1957—Became the father of his first child, Caroline.
1958—Won reelection to the Senate by an overwhelming vote.
1960—On July 14, he won the Democratic presidential nomination on the first ballot.
1960—In November he defeated Vice President Richard M. Nixon for the presidency in a close-fought battle that gave Kennedy a final edge of scarcely 100,000 ballots.
1961—Became the father of a son, John Jr.
1961—In April took full responsibility for the ill-fated Cuban invasion staged by dissident exile groups.
1962—In October forced Russia to withdraw missiles it had secreted in Cuba.
1963—Assassinated Nov. 22.

Oregon Reacts With Shock, Sorrow at JFK Assassination

By United Press International
From the governor to the man on the street, Oregon reacted with shock and then sorrow to the assassination of President Kennedy.
"Deep shock that such a thing could happen in the United States," was expressed by Portland Mayor Terry Schunk. Other political leaders of both parties echoed his sentiments.
"This dastardly act has brought severe shock, great grief and deep sorrow," said Gov. Mark Hatfield in proclaiming Monday a day of mourning. All state and public offices will be closed that day.
All classes in Oregon public schools and state institutions of higher education also will be cancelled Monday.
The manager of the Portland Retail Trade Bureau, Harrison King, said a number of major department stores and other retailers will observe the closure.
"In deference to the funeral of President Kennedy," churches and synagogues began to fill rapidly as news of the President's slaying spread Friday. A special mass at the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception in Portland was televised locally.
Classes at Portland State and Reed Colleges were cancelled when the news was received.
"Political science profs can't teach you anything at a time like this; there's nothing to say," said one student.
There were periods of prayer in many private colleges.
The Portland waterfront suddenly went quiet at 1 p. m. About 700 longshoremen stopped work after covering hatches to prevent rain damage.
Expressions of sorrow came from political groups ranging from the conservative Young Americans for Freedom to the liberal Portland Students for Peace.
"Shooting 'Shocking'"
"I think this was a stupid and shocking thing, one that any intelligent and patriotic citizen would deplore," said George Burgess, new assistant western regional chairman of the YAF.
The Portland Students for Peace issued a statement mourning the slaying. It said the President had "shown himself to be an undaunted supporter of the cause of world peace."
News of the assassination brought most civic, governmental and sports activities to a halt.
The state legislature recessed indefinitely after prayers for President Johnson.

1934—Married Claudia (Lady Bird) Taylor on Nov. 17. Attended night school at Georgetown, Tex., law school.
1935—Named Texas administrator of the National Youth Administration by President Roosevelt.
1937—Successfully sought 10th congressional seat without opposition and remained there until elected to U.S. Senate in 1948.
1940—Masterminded congressional campaign and instrumental in retaining Democratic leadership in House.
1941—Sought seat in U.S. Senate vacated by death of Sen. Morris Sheppard. Lost to Gov. W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel by 1,311 votes.
1941—Within hours after casting vote to declare war on Japan and Germany, was in uniform. He was first member of Congress to enter active duty. Received Silver Star for gallantry in action on a flight over New Guinea.
1942—Returned to Congress when FDR ordered all members of the Congress in the armed forces to return to their offices.
1948—Made second try for Senate. Defeated former Gov. Coke Stevenson in an unusually tight election. Out of about one million votes cast, Johnson won by a majority of 87 votes.
1950—Became chairman of the armed services preparedness subcommittee.
1951—Unanimously elected party whip. Won praise of colleagues for his work and ability as a "can-do" man.
1953—Named minority leader when Democrats lost control of Senate by a single vote.
1954—Re-elected to U.S. Senate for second term.
1955—Elected majority leader of Senate, the youngest (46) majority leader in history. Steered Senate to impressive record. Suffered heart attack July 2. After hospitalization in Washington, recuperated on his Texas ranch and returned to Senate Dec. 12.
1956—Southern Democrats launched a drive to win presidential nomination for Johnson at national convention.
1957—Steered through passage of first civil rights bill in 75 years.
1958—President Eisenhower invited Johnson to go before United Nations to throw his support behind the U.S. resolution calling for peaceful exploration of outer space.
1959—Texas Legislature passes so-called "Johnson for President" bill, a statute permitting him to have name on 1960 Texas ballot for re-election to Senate and for president at the same time.
1960—Lost out in bid for presidency to Kennedy. Accepted vice presidential nomination and won re-election as senator from Texas and the vice presidential post.
1961—Resigned from U.S. Senate and took oath as vice president of the United States.
1963—Became 36th President of United States when Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.



Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy holds Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy's hand as they sorrowfully watch the body of the assassinated President being removed from the plane following arrival in Washington, D.C. (UPI)

They vanished around a curve. When we cleared the same curve we could see where we were heading — Parkland Hospital, a large brick structure to the left of the arterial highway. We skidded around a sharp left turn and spilled out of the pool car as it entered the hospital driveway.
I ran to the side of the bubble-top.
The President was face down on the back seat. Mrs. Kennedy made a cradle of her arms around the President's head and bent over him as if she were whispering to him.
Gov. Connally was on his back on the floor of the car, his head and shoulders resting in the arms of his wife, Nellie, who kept shaking her head and shaking with dry sobs. Blood oozed from the front of the governor's suit. I could not see the President's wound. But I could see blood spattered around the interior of the rear seat and a dark stain spreading down the right side of the President's dark gray suit.
Radioed First Report
From the telephone car, I had radioed the Dallas bureau of UPI that three shots had been fired at the Kennedy motorcade. Seeing the bloody scene in the rear of the car at the hospital entrance, I knew I had to get to a telephone immediately.
Clint Hill, the Secret Service agent in charge of the detail assigned to Mrs. Kennedy, was leaning over into the rear of the car.
"How badly was he hit, Clint?" I asked.
"He's dead," Hill replied curtly.
I have no further clear memory of the scene in the driveway. I recall a babble of anxious voices, tense voices — "Where in hell are the stretchers? Get a doctor out here... he's on the way... come on anywhere, nervous sobbing."
I raced down a short stretch of sidewalk into a hospital corridor. The first thing I spotted was a small clerical office, more of a booth than an office. Inside, a bespectacled man stood shuffling what appeared to be hospital forms. At a wicket much like a bank teller's cage, I spotted a telephone on the shelf.
"How do you get outside?" I gasped. "The President has been hurt and this is an emergency call."
"Dial nine," he said, shoving the phone toward me.
Dictated Fast Bulletin
It took two tries before I successfully dialed the Dallas UPI number. Quickly I dictated a bulletin saying the President had been seriously, perhaps fatally, injured by an assassin's bullets while driving through the streets of Dallas.
Litters bearing the President and the governor rolled by me as I dictated, but my back was to the hallway and I didn't see them until they were at the entrance of the emergency room about 75 or 100 feet away.
I knew they had passed, however, from the horrified expression that suddenly spread over the face of the man behind the wicket.
Outside the door of the emergency room, I watched a swift and confused panorama sweep before me.
Kilduff of the White House press staff raced up and down the hall. Police captains barked at each other, "clear this area."
Two priests hurried in behind a Secret Service agent, their narrow purple stoles rolled up tightly in their hands. A police lieutenant ran down the hall with a large carton of blood for the transfusions. A doctor came in and said he was responding

to a call for "all neurosurgeons."
Given Last Sacrament
The priests came out and said the President had received the Last Sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church. They said he was still alive, but not conscious.
Kilduff and Wayne Hawks of the White House staff ran by me, shouting that Kilduff would make a statement shortly in the so-called nurses room a floor above and at the far end of the hospital.
I threw down the phone and sped after them. We reached the door of the conference room and there were loud cries of "quiet!" Fighting to keep his emotions under control, Kilduff said "President John Fitzgerald Kennedy died at approximately one o'clock."
I raced into a nearby office. The telephone switchboard at the hospital was hopelessly jammed. I spotted Virginia Payette, wife of UPI's Southwestern Division manager and a veteran reporter in her own right. I told her to try getting through on pay telephones on the floor above.
Frustrated by the inability to get through the hospital switchboard, I appealed to a nurse. She led me through a maze of corridors and back stairways to another floor and a lone pay booth. I got the Dallas office. Virginia had gotten through before me.
Selected for Pool
I ran back through the hospital to the conference room where Jiggs Fauver of the White House transportation staff grabbed me and said Kilduff wanted a pool of three men immediately to fly back to Washington on Air Force One, the presidential aircraft.
"He wants you downstairs, and he wants you right now," Fauver said.
Charles Roberts of Newsweek magazine, Sid Davis of Westinghouse broadcasting and I implored a police officer to take us to the airport in his squad car.
As we piled out of the car about 200 yards from the presidential aircraft, Kilduff spotted us and motioned for us to hurry. We trotted to him and he said the plane could take two pool men to Washington; that Johnson was about to take the oath of office aboard the plane and would take off immediately thereafter.
I saw a bank of telephone booths beside the runway and asked if I had time to advise my news service. He said, "but for God's sake, hurry."
Then began another telephone nightmare. The Dallas office rang busy. I tried calling Washington. All circuits were busy. Then I called the New York bureau of UPI and told them about the impending installation of a new president aboard the airplane.
Aboard Air Force One on which I had made so many trips as a press association reporter covering President Kennedy, all of the shades of the larger main cabin were drawn and the interior was hot and dimly lighted.
Kilduff propelled us to the President's suite.
Room Was Crowded
I wedged inside the door and began counting. There were 27 people in this compartment. Johnson stood in the center with his wife, Lady Bird. U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, 67, a kindly faced woman stood with a small black Bible in her hands, waiting to give the oath.
Mrs. Kennedy, who was composing herself in a small bedroom in the rear of the plane, appeared alone, dressed in the same pink wool suit she had worn in the morning when she appeared so happy shaking hands with airport crowds at the side of her husband.
She was white-faced but dry-eyed. Friendly hands stretched toward her as she stumbled slightly. Johnson took both of her hands in his and motioned her to his left side. Lady Bird stood on his right, a fixed half-smile showing the tension.
Johnson nodded to Judge Hughes, an old friend of his family and a Kennedy appointee.
"Hold up your right hand and repeat after me," the woman jurist said to Johnson.
Outside a jet could be heard droning into a landing.
Takes Solemn Oath
Judge Hughes held out the Bible and Johnson covered it with his large left hand. His right arm went slowly into the tone the constitutional oath. "I do solemnly swear I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States..."
The brief ceremony ended when Johnson in a deep, firm voice, repeated after the judge, "...and so help me God."
Johnson turned first to his wife, hugged her about the shoulders and kissed her on the cheek. Then he turned to Kennedy's widow, put his left arm around her and kissed her cheek.
As others in the group—some Texas Democratic House members, members of the Johnson and Kennedy staffs—moved to ward the new President, he seemed to back away from any expression of felicitation.
The two-minute ceremony concluded at 3:38 p.m. EST and seconds later, the President said firmly, "Now, let's get airborne."
Col. James Swindal, pilot of the plane, a big gleaming silver blue and tan jet, cut on the starboard engines immediately. Several persons, including Sid Davis of Westinghouse, left the plane at that time. The White House had room for only two pool reporters on the return flight and these posts were filled by Roberts and me, although at the moment we could find no empty seats.
Took High Altitude
At 3:47 p.m., EST, the wheels of Air Force One cleared the runway. Swindal roared the big ship up to an unusually high cruising altitude of 41,000 feet where at 625 miles an hour, ground speed, the jet hurtled toward Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington.
When the President's plane reached operating altitude, Mrs. Kennedy left her bedchamber and walked to the rear compartment of the plane. This was the so-called family living room a private area where she and Kennedy, family and friends had spent many happy airborne hours chatting and dining together.
Kennedy's casket had been placed in this compartment, carried aboard by a group of Secret Service agents.
Mrs. Kennedy went into the rear lounge and took a chair beside the coffin. There she remained throughout the flight.
Her vigil was shared at times by four staff members close to the slain Chief Executive—David Powers, his buddy and personal assistant; Kenneth P. O'Donnell, appointments secretary and key political adviser; Lawrence O'Brien, chief Kennedy liaison man with Congress and Brig. Gen. Godfrey McHugh, Kennedy's Air Force aide.
Makes First Statement
As the flight progressed, Johnson came up to the table where Roberts and I were trying to re-

cord the history we had just witnessed.
"I'm going to make a short statement in a few minutes and give you copies of it," he said. "Then when I get on the ground I'll do it over again."
It was the first public utterance of the new Chief Executive, brief and moving:
"This is a sad time for all people. We have suffered a loss that cannot be weighed. For me it is a deep personal tragedy. I know the world shares the sorrow that Mrs. Kennedy and her family bear. I will do my best. That is all I can do. I ask for your help—and God's."
When the plane was about 45 minutes from Washington, the new President got on a special radio-telephone and placed a call to Mrs. Rose Kennedy, the late President's mother.
"I wish to God there was something I could do," he told her. "I just wanted you to know that."
Then Mrs. Johnson wanted to talk to the elder Mrs. Kennedy.
Gives Love And Prayers
"We feel like the heart has been cut out of us," Mrs. Johnson said. She broke down for a moment and began to sob. Recovering in a few seconds, she added, "our love and our prayers are with you."
Thirty minutes out of Washington, Johnson put in a call for Nellie Connally, wife of the seriously wounded Texas governor.
The new President said to the governor's wife:
"We are praying for you, darling, and I know that everything is going to be all right, isn't it? Give him a hug and a kiss for me."
It was dark when Air Force One began to skim over the lights of the Washington area. The plane touched down at 5:59 p.m. EST.
Roberts and I stood under a wing and watched the casket being lowered from the rear of the plane and borne by a complement of Armed Forces body bearers into a waiting hearse. We watched Mrs. Kennedy and the President's brother, Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, climb into the hearse beside the coffin.
Roberts and I were given seats on another 'copter bound for the White House lawn. In the compartment next to ours in one of the large chairs beside a window sat Theodore C. Sorensen, one of Kennedy's closest associates with the title of special counsel to the President. He had not gone to Texas with his chief but had come to the air base for his return.
Sorensen sat wilted in the large chair, crying softly. The dignity of his deep grief seemed to sum up all of the tragedy and sadness of the previous six hours.
As our helicopter circled in the balmy darkness for a landing on the White House south lawn, it seemed incredible that only six hours before, John Fitzgerald Kennedy had been a vibrant, smiling, waving and active man.

OPENS HOSPITAL OFFICE
DALLAS (UPI)—Gov. John Connally's staff has opened a temporary governor's office on the first floor of Parkland Hospital, where Connally is recovering from grievous wounds.
A spokesman for Connally said the temporary office will be in operation indefinitely or until the governor recovers enough to return to Austin.