

Lyndon B. Johnson

Lyndon B. Johnson
National Historical Park
Texas

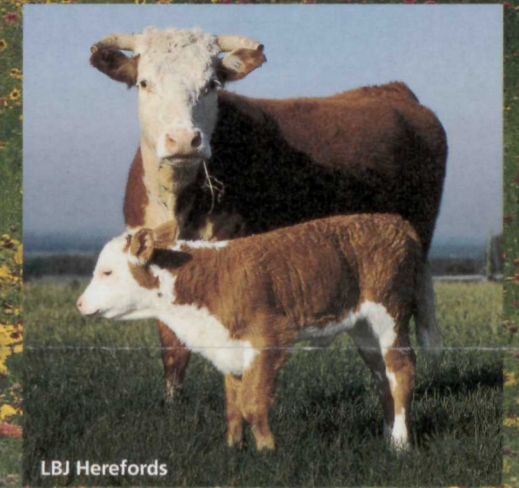
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Hill Country of Texas, home of the Johnson family for over a century, is an in-between place. To the east are softer, well-watered lands. To the west stretch high plains, plateaus, and deserts. The Hill Country bears the traits of both regions.



Texas White House, LBJ Ranch



LBJ Herefords

In season, flowing streams lace terraced hills covered with wildflowers. Small valleys with scattered farms and fat cattle nestle below ragged skylines of rock and cedar. It is a pastoral paradise where nature blends gently with snug houses made from the limestone of the hills, symbolizing a partnership between inhabitants and land.

But there are other seasons and other cycles. Summer storms sweep violently through these hills, battering them with thunder and hail, ripping the valleys with cloudburst floods. Winter winds come down from the plains, whipping the ridges, driving people and animals to shelter. Heat and drought smite this borderland. When dry spells last too long, the ever-green Texas oaks drop their leaves and languish for a while, dormant until the rains come back.

A Landscape Shapes a Leader Out of this place came a man who personified these many, often conflicting moods. A man of great gentleness and violent energy. A man sometimes effusive and joyous, at home in a crowd. A man sometimes withdrawn, in lonely battle with his own blizzards and droughts. He was the 36th President of the United States, 1963–69.

Lyndon Baines Johnson was doubtless the last president whose roots and early experience bridged the gap between the old America of local frontiers, crossroads, and close neighbors, and the new America of world power, big cities, and unknown neighbors. His deepest motive as a public man was to make people neighbors again. His greatest monument is his 40-year record of achievement in serving this goal—as teacher, public official, and elder statesman.

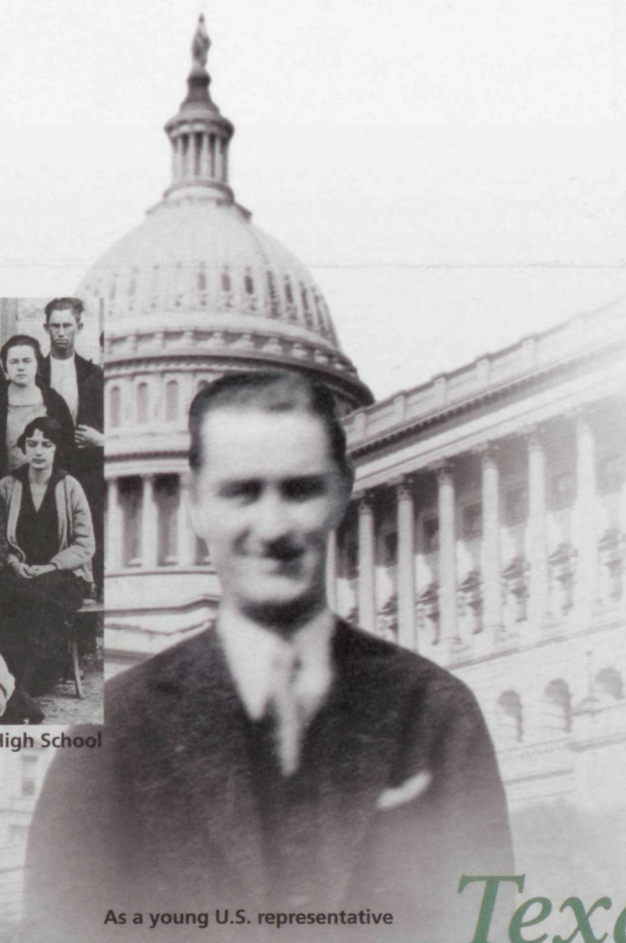
Each of us is transformed over the course of a life, every stage revealing a different person—wide-eyed, idealistic, reflective. These images track Lyndon Johnson's passage as the years and the demands of office leave their traces.



As a student (back row, fifth from left) at Johnson City High School



At age five



As a young U.S. representative

His presidency came during an era of national stress bred by the Vietnam War and the social upheavals of the sixties. No man exercising power during any strife-filled period has run the gauntlet of such forces unscathed. President Johnson's origins and temperament put him in direct confrontation with these powerful currents. He was a man who denied the notion that problems cannot be solved. In the spirit of his frontier heritage, he joined the battle with optimistic faith that solutions and controls would follow from his efforts. History as tragedy was foreign to his nature.

From these different arenas of an action-filled life—arenas he could control and those he could not—emerged a man who strove mightily, who won great successes, and yet, despite his powerful will, sustained great disappointments. Here, in the land of his birth and youth—the place he kept coming back to—are some reminders of this man, the places and things and people he loved, the home to which he returned.

The myths and realities of Johnson's frontier heritage helped shape both his life and what was written about him. History was a present force in the Johnson family. The forebears who had made that heritage tutored the child. He sat in the lap of a cattle-drover grandfather who had "pointed them north" on the Chisholm Trail. He peered under the log cabin where his own grandmother and infant aunt had hidden from raiding Comanches. Heroes who had wrested homes from the wilderness reminisced on his front porch.

A Hill Country Boyhood His boyhood home in Johnson City and the settlement of his ancestors a short walk away embody a part of this older America that nourished the child and molded a large part of the man. Here are the places and the images that helped structure President Johnson's view of how the world ought to be.

Lyndon was five when his father moved the family into the comfortable house on Elm Street in 1913. Growing up in Johnson City was a mixture of hard reality and childhood adventure. Besides the never-ending chores, he found time to do the things most kids did: breaking his arm falling out of the barn, playing first base and pitcher on sandlot and school teams, riding a borrowed donkey to the Pedernales River, and occasionally getting into trouble.

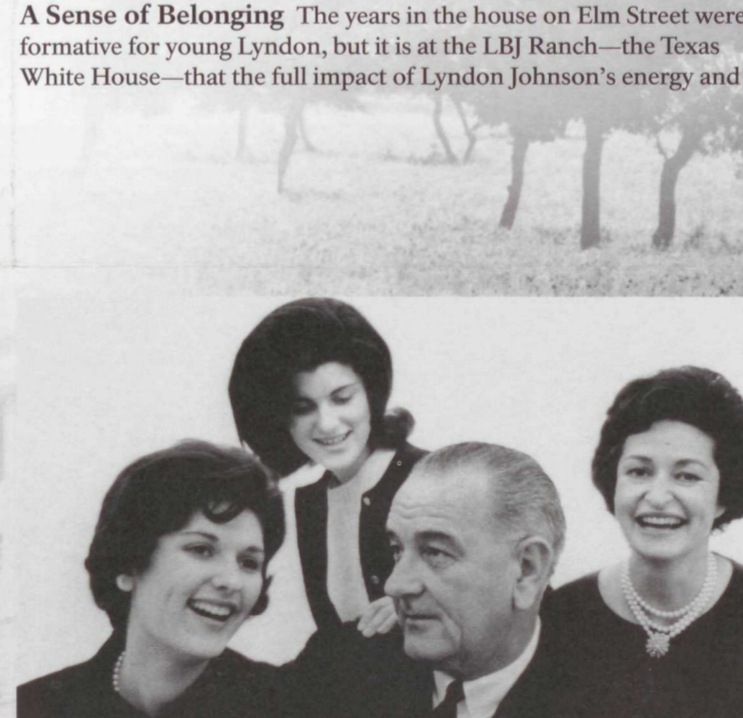
Lyndon's mother and father each had a profound influence on the lanky youngster. Rebekah was one of few college-educated women and took her family and civic responsibilities seriously. She imparted to Lyndon, his brother, and his three sisters a belief in the necessity of education and a compassion for human needs. His father, Sam Johnson, was a state legislator who taught his sons the facts of political life in the tradition of agrarian liberalism. When Lyndon left for college in 1927, he had already begun to shape his ideas and values about the world around him. They were the foundations that sustained his later beliefs and purposes as he wrestled with the incredible complexities of modern America and the world as president.

A Sense of Belonging The years in the house on Elm Street were formative for young Lyndon, but it is at the LBJ Ranch—the Texas White House—that the full impact of Lyndon Johnson's energy and

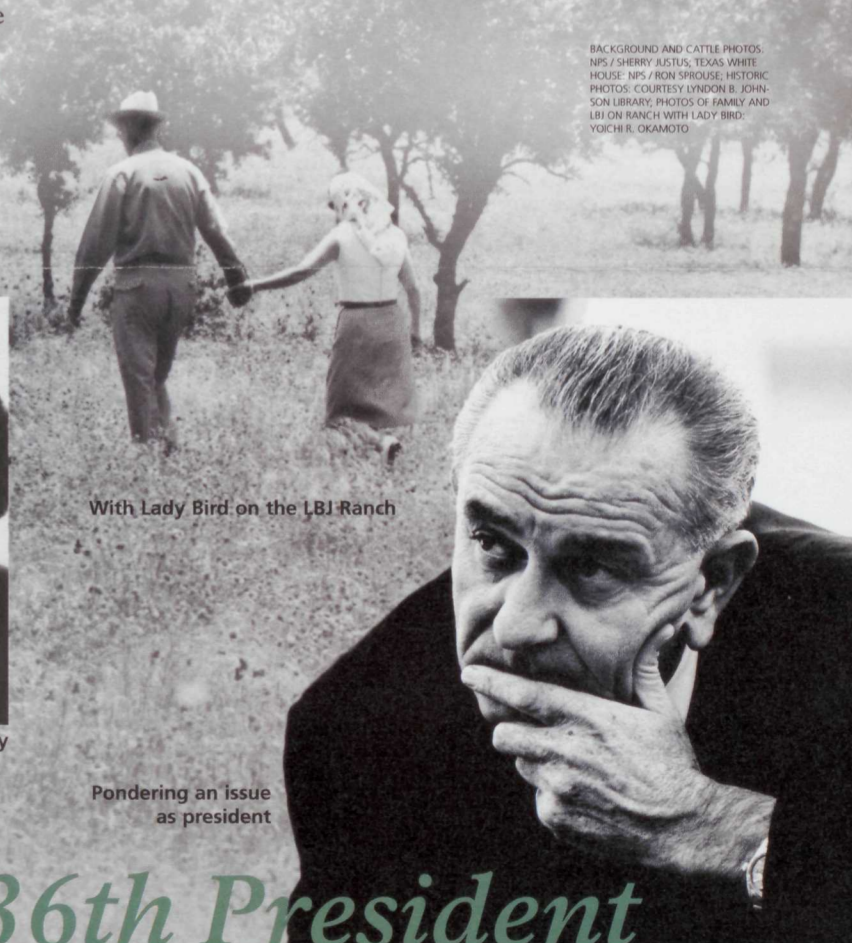
power can be felt. Here as president, as entrepreneur, as lord-of-the-manor rancher, he surrounded himself with family and friends. Within this inner circle, he used yarns and anecdotes to proudly proclaim the virtues of good upbringing and hard work, the virtues that helped him create this grand spread in the center of his ancestral homeland. He regaled visitors with his own sense of place, made real by green pastures, prize cattle, and an imposing ranch house.

Some guests, perhaps because of their host's unstinting joy and hospitality, went away a bit envious of this man who so obviously belonged. But this homestead was much more than a showplace for power and pride. It was an operating ranch, where events could be controlled. Here a man who loved action could set a task, get it going, and get it done. It was a healing place far removed from the turbulence of Washington. Here, too, was the ancestral cemetery, the place where Lyndon was born, the house where he visited his revered grandfather, the one-room school where he started the long trek from Texas Hill Country boy to world leader.

At the LBJ Ranch one senses the contrasts that lived on in the man: the child who chewed a blade of grass and wondered if it would rain and if the river would rise, the man who strode forth on the world stage, came back to work his ranch, and finally joined his ancestors.



With (left to right) Lynda, Luci, and Lady Bird during his presidency



Pondering an issue as president

With Lady Bird on the LBJ Ranch

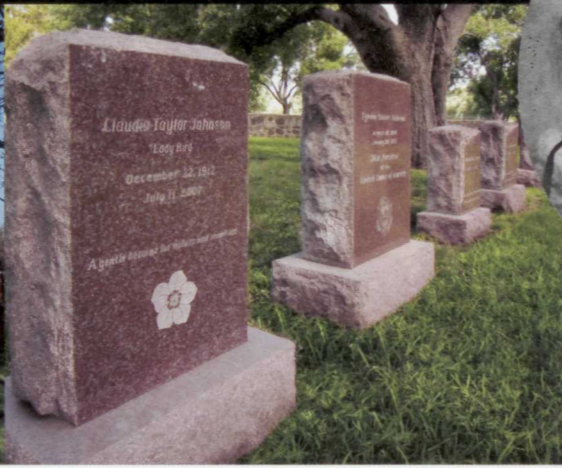
BACKGROUND AND CATTLE PHOTOS: NPS / SHERRY JUSTUS, TEXAS WHITE HOUSE: NPS / IRON SWIGGERS, HISTORIC PHOTOS: COURTESY LYNDON B. JOHNSON LIBRARY, PHOTOS OF FAMILY AND LBJ ON RANCH WITH LADY BIRD: VOICER, OKANOTO

Texas youngster to 36th President

Visiting Lyndon Johnson's Texas



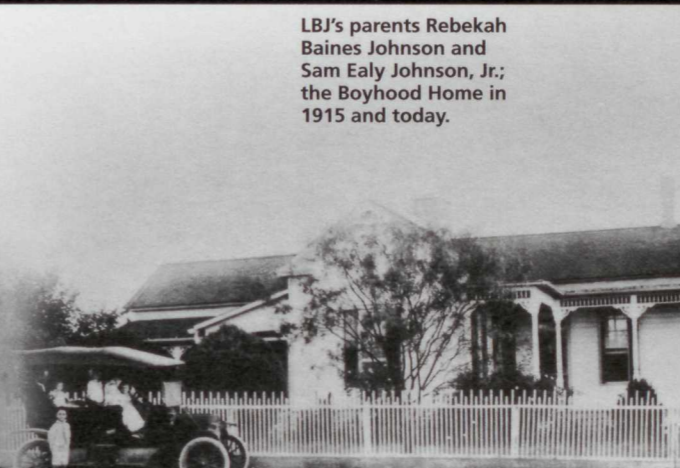
Sam Johnson, Sr.'s log cabin at the Johnson Settlement.



President and Mrs. Johnson's gravesites. CABIN AND GRAVESITE PHOTOS: NPS



LBJ's parents Rebekah Baines Johnson and Sam Ealy Johnson, Jr.; the Boyhood Home in 1915 and today.



BOYHOOD HOME PHOTO COURTESY LBJ STATE PARK / EARL NOTTINGHAM; HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

"All the World is Welcome Here"

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park includes historically significant properties associated with the life of President Johnson. The Johnson family's hope was that these properties would be preserved for local communities and visitors from around the world.

The park includes two districts, one in Johnson City and another at the LBJ Ranch near Stonewall. Together these districts document the origins, ancestry, and life of the 36th President of the United States.

Johnson City

In the Johnson City district first visit the park visitor center, where you can obtain information about the park and enjoy exhibits and two films: *LBJ the President* and *Lady Bird Johnson*. A sales area offers educational materials. From the visitor center you can walk to Lyndon Johnson's **Boyhood Home**, where lessons learned by the young Lyndon would influence his presidency.

Walk to the nearby **Johnson Settlement**, featuring restored 1800s structures that provide a glimpse into Texas Hill Country history and the frontier heritage of President Johnson. An unstaffed exhibit center tells these stories with pictures and artifacts. Also within walking distance is the **Withers & Spauldings General Store**, where exhibits showcase the influence Johnson City had on the budding politician.

LBJ Ranch

The famous **LBJ Ranch** is about 14 miles west of Johnson City. Visits to the ranch are by self-guiding driving tour. Obtain a driving permit and narrative CD at the LBJ State Park and Historic Site Visitor Center on Highway 290 east of Stonewall. On your drive through the ranch you will see sites that help tell Lyndon Johnson's life story.

First is the one-room **Junction School** that Lyndon attended at age four. A quarter of a mile away is the reconstructed **LBJ Birthplace** where he was born in 1908. Across the road lies the **Johnson Family Cemetery**, where generations of Johnsons are buried, including President Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson. Other structures on the tour include the **Sam Ealy Johnson, Sr.**

Home. Ealy was LBJ's grandfather. At the **Show Barn** visit with ranching staff, who manage day-to-day operations and care for the herd of registered Hereford cattle, descendants of LBJ's original herd.

A visit to the ranch isn't complete without visiting the **Texas White House**, where the doormat at the front door reads: "All the World is Welcome Here." Access to the house is by ranger-guided tour only; a fee is charged. Tour tickets are sold in the airfield **Hangar** that now serves as the National Historical Park visitor center.

For reservations and information, call 830-868-7128, ext. 231, or visit www.nps.gov/lyjo.



Related Sites

LBJ State Park and Historic Site

The park is the gateway to the LBJ Ranch and is located on the south side of the Pedernales River across from the LBJ Ranch. It includes the Sauer-Beckmann living history farm, museum, amphitheater, walking trails, wildlife viewing, swimming pool (seasonal), tennis courts, a baseball diamond, and other recreational opportunities like fishing and kayaking. The park is located on U.S. Highway 290 between Johnson City and Fredericksburg. For reservations and information call 830-644-2252 or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum

The LBJ Library, on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin, is operated by the National Archives and Records Administration. It is both a center of scholarly research and a historical museum. There are three floors of exhibits highlighting President Johnson's long public career. www.lbjlibrary.org

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Lady Bird Johnson and actress Helen Hayes founded an organization in 1982 to protect and preserve North America's native plants and natural landscapes. This special place exists to introduce people to the beauty and diversity of wildflowers and other native plants. The Wildflower Center brings Mrs. Johnson's vision to life with its public gardens, woodlands, and sweeping meadows and through internationally influential research. Located in southeast Austin. www.wildflower.org

Nearby Attractions

Pedernales River Nature Park, managed by the Lower Colorado River Authority, is in Johnson City just off Hwy 281 North. The park provides a serene picnicking spot for visitors. Other recreational activities include walking, jogging, fishing, and kayaking. www.lcra.org/parks

Pedernales State Park, Blanco State Park, and Enchanted Rock State Natural Area provide various recreational opportunities and camping. www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Fredericksburg, Texas, west of the park, reflects the rich cultural legacy of the German immigrants who arrived in central Texas in the 1840s. Here is the National Museum of the Pacific War, whose exhibits commemorate the hard-fought Pacific campaigns of World War II and honor the achievements of Fredericksburg native and wartime Pacific Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

Luckenbach, Texas is a short drive from the LBJ Ranch. An eclectic blend of bikers, cowboys, and tourists enjoy live music events at this popular Hill Country attraction.

About Your Visit

Safety

We want your visit to be pleasant and rewarding. Please observe a few safety precautions:

- Enjoy looking at the animals but do not pet or feed them. Stay off the corral fences and keep a safe distance from the animals.
- Children under 14 must be accompanied by a responsible adult in all buildings.
- Texas summers are hot; drink plenty of fluids.
- Fire ant stings are painful; stay on marked trails.

Accessibility

For the hearing impaired, scripts are available for all Johnson City locations and for the LBJ Ranch driving tours. All facilities in the park are accessible to persons in wheelchairs. Service animals are welcome.

More Information

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

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