

# Lyndon Baines Johnson Museum Of San Marcos

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*A School Program for Visiting the LBJ Museum of San Marcos*

## LBJ's Local Legacy

In 2006, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Museum opened to showcase President Johnson's formative years as a college student in San Marcos and his experiences as an elementary school teacher in South Texas. These experiences shaped his leadership role in passing important legislation during his presidency in the 1960s, especially civil rights, education and the War on Poverty.

From 1927 to 1930, President Johnson attended Southwest Texas State Teachers College -- now Texas State University -- in San Marcos, Texas, and graduated with a BS in Education. During his college years, LBJ honed his political skills as an active member of the debate team and as an editorial writer for the College Star. LBJ became an assistant to College President Cecil Eugene Evans and was influenced by other teachers and mentors associated with politics. He helped form the White Stars, an organization that worked behind the scenes to elect students to top positions in student government.

He taught school during the 1928-29 term in a small town called Cotulla in South Texas, at the Welhausen School, where a 20-year-old LBJ was exposed to the hardships and discrimination facing Mexican-American schoolchildren. He did as much as he could to improve their condition and offer them better opportunities to receive a well- rounded education, such as athletics, spelling bees, debates, and classroom discipline.

Almost 40 years later, as President of the United States, Johnson signed into law some of the most influential and enduring legislation of our times, including legislation that guaranteed to all Americans civil rights, voting rights, and various educational opportunities.

Our Museum exhibit includes photographs, newspaper clippings, rare documents, books, artifacts, and text descriptions of LBJ's accomplishments. We have some interesting artifacts on display, such as the desk where he signed the Higher Education Act I 1965, an authentic LBJ hat, a sample voting machine, a campaign poster from 1941, a spittoon from the 1920s, copies of the Pedagog, a yearbook published by the college, and campaign memorabilia.

## Quiz

Here are some questions that might be asked of the students after taking the tour of the LBJ Museum of San Marcos:

1. What years did Johnson attend college?
2. What was it called then?
3. Where did LBJ teach elementary school?
4. What was school like for his students before and after LBJ arrived?
5. What U.S. president served as an inspiration for LBJ during the 1930s?
6. What political offices did LBJ serve throughout his career?
7. Who was LBJ's wife? How did she help her husband win the 1964 election?
8. What kinds of mementos were given to supporters of LBJ during his election campaigns?
9. How did LBJ help Americans during the 1960s? What kinds of laws did he sign as President?
10. Why did LBJ frequently visit San Marcos throughout his life?

## **Answer Key**

### **1. What years did Johnson attend college?**

From 1927 to 1930.

### **2. What was it called?**

Back then, Texas State University was called Southwest Texas State Teachers College because its goal was to educate and train teachers.

### **3. Where did LBJ teach elementary school?**

The Welhausen School in Cotulla, Texas.

### **4. What was school like for his students before and after LBJ arrived?**

The Welhausen School was established for Mexican-American children, but they were not given adequate facilities or attention by teachers and members of the community. These children were poor and were not expected to learn English or attend high school. LBJ enforced English to be spoken in the classroom, introduced extracurricular activities such as sports, spelling bees, and debate contests, and encouraged his students by saying that anyone can someday become a Congressman or even a President!

### **5. What U.S. president served as an inspiration for LBJ during the 1930s?**

Franklin D. Roosevelt. He created many federal departments and agencies to give aid to many Americans who were unemployed or financially impoverished as the result of the Great Depression. LBJ also believed that the federal government should take an active role in improving the lives of Americans.

### **6. What political offices did LBJ serve throughout his career?**

- U.S. Representative, Texas 10<sup>th</sup> District, 1937-1948.
- U.S. Senator, Texas, 1948-1961.
- Vice President (to John F. Kennedy), 1961-1963.
- President, 1963-1969.

### **7. Who was LBJ's wife? How did she help her husband win the 1964 election?**

Claudia Taylor (Lady Bird) Johnson. In the fall of 1964 she toured many states in the South, just a few months after President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, on a train called the *Lady Bird Special* to campaign for her husband.

**8. What kinds of mementos were given to supporters of LBJ during his election campaigns?**

Bumper stickers, ballpoint pens, pencils, campaign buttons, toys, ribbons, cigarette lighters, silverware, and ash trays.

**9. How did LBJ help Americans during the 1960s? What kinds of laws did he sign as President?**

He introduced into law Civil Rights, Voting Rights, the Higher Education Act, the Clean Air Act, the Department of Transportation Act, and the Public Broadcasting Act. He made it possible for many students from lower income families to go to college, provided better housing for urban families, and removed barriers for all people to vote and participate in the democratic process.

**10. Why did LBJ frequently visit San Marcos throughout his life?**

During his Presidency, President Johnson made major announcements, such as the creation of the national Job Corps Program (and Gary Job Corps) and the Higher Education Act in San Marcos. LBJ always appreciated the education he received from his alma mater and later returned to San Marcos to attend graduation ceremonies, where he gave speeches to inspire the graduating students.