



SMU | CENTER FOR
PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY



Essential History Expeditions and the SMU Center for Presidential History will adhere to all Covid-19 recommended precautions in place in May 2021. Please see the Additional Information section for details. This trip is predicated on the successful opening of all included sites by May 2021.



Texas Presidential History A Travel Course for Alumni & Friends of SMU

May 17-22, 2021

Presidential history runs deep in Texas, from the birthplaces of Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Baines Johnson to the foundational stories of LBJ, George HW Bush and George W Bush. From the Presidents of the Republic of Texas era to the last moments of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Presidential history in the Lone Star State is, indeed, Texas-sized, with three Presidential Libraries and Museums residing here. The SMU Center for Presidential History and Essential History Expeditions have teamed to offer an in-depth examination of Texas presidents.

Issues of national and international importance will be in the fore, from Vietnam to Iraq, from the Great Society to the Great Recession, and the Cold War and its ending with the fall of the Berlin Wall. And much more.

Our journey will begin in the rolling Hill Country and the famed LBJ Ranch and Texas White House. In Austin, we will visit the LBJ Library & Museum and State Capitol Building. A couple of hours east lies Washington-on-the-Brazos and the beginnings of the Republic. We will discuss presidents Houston, Lamar, Jones and acting-president Burnet here. Anson Jones' plantation house, "Barrington", is on the historic site grounds. Huntsville has Sam Houston's museum and gravesite. Then it's over to College Station where we will visit the GHW Bush Library & Museum. Dallas is our final destination, with visits to Dealey Plaza and the 6th Floor Museum to discuss JFK, followed by a visit to the GW Bush Library & Museum.

Each day we will begin with opening lectures from Professors Jeff Engel, Director of the Center for Presidential History, Brian Franklin, Deputy Director of the Center, and Brian DeToy of Essential History Expeditions. Visits to the museums and libraries will fill the central parts of the days, followed by a group Q&A session to delve deeper into the issues we confronted in the visit. Where possible, we will have members of the presidential administrations join our group to share lessons and stories at the elbow of world leadership.

The First Ladies – Lady Bird, Barbara and Laura – will receive their due, as well, in both our discussions and museum exhibits.

Texas will also come to life for us, from large cities to small towns, from Hill Country wineries and ranches to the prairies and lakes of the east. Microbreweries and barbecue.

Quality lodging and meals, with time for camaraderie and continued discussion, will make for an unforgettable experience with both old friends and those newly made.

Day 1, Monday, May 17th: Lyndon Baines Johnson at Home

Arrive LBJ Ranch National Historic Site in Stonewall, Texas, no later than 1 pm.

Visit the Ranch and Texas White House. The focal piece is the LBJ Ranch House, the home of President Johnson and a center of political activity for more than 20 years. Leaders from around the world visited the Johnsons here, and during the Johnson Administration it became known as the Texas White House. President Johnson was the first President to create a functioning White House away from Washington. He spent 20 percent of his Presidency here. Both he and Lady Bird are buried here.

Drive to lodgings in central Austin OR remain overnight at a Hill Country Winery resort & spa.



Day 2, Tuesday, May 18th: LBJ in Austin

Visit LBJ Library & Museum on the campus of the University of Texas.

Lyndon Baines Johnson (1907-73) was a bigger-than-life personality, a Texas-sized politician. In over thirty years in Washington DC—as Representative, Senator (including Majority Leader), Vice President and President—he shaped our national discussion as much as any man. Passionate, demanding, intense. The causes he pushed as President—healthcare, civil and voting rights, the Great Society and more—along with the Vietnam War, make his administration one of the most consequential of the century.

Visit the Texas State Capitol Building and grounds. The largest state capitol and modeled on the US Capitol design, the building was completed in 1888 and contains a tremendous amount of artwork inside as well as statuary on the grounds.

Other sites may include the French Legation (Embassy to the Republic of Texas), and the Harry Ransom Center on the UT campus—home to numerous world-renowned artifacts, books and other treasures as well as the Woodward and Bernstein Watergate Papers for another look at presidential history.

Lodging night in Austin: The Omni, InterContinental or Driskal or comparable.



Day 3, Wednesday, May 19th: Texas Independence

Drive to Washington-on-the-Brazos and visit the State Historic Site where Texas Independence was proclaimed in March 1836 while the siege of the Alamo raged in San Antonio de Bexar. Delegates from across the Mexican province descended on the tiny hamlet and wrangled out a proclamation and a constitution. Immediately afterwards, the Alamo fell and the approach of the Mexican Army under general Santa Anna, caused the delegates to flee eastward towards the bayous around Galveston.

Here, in this cradle of Texas history, we will discuss leadership in the Republic of Texas era, including the relations between three men who were presidents that year—David Burnet, Santa Anna and Sam Houston.

Drive to Huntsville and visit the Sam Houston Memorial Museum on the campus of Sam Houston State University.

Sam Houston served as Commanding General of the Texas Army in 1836 and then twice as President of the Republic of Texas. Later, he also served as Governor of the new US state of Texas. He was also a US representative from Tennessee and a US Senator from Texas. He is buried on the grounds of this memorial.

Lodging night in College Station: The George (or comparable).



Day 4, Thursday, May 20th: George HW Bush

Visit the George HW Bush Library & Museum on the campus of Texas A&M University. If possible, we will have members of the administration join us to share lessons and stories.

The elder Bush was a decorated naval aviator in WWII and, after a career in the West Texas oilfields, spent a lifetime in public service. He was a US representative, Ambassador to the United Nations and to China, head of the Republican National Committee, Director of the CIA, Vice President for eight years and President. Under his watch, the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended; US troops invaded Panama, liberated Kuwait and brought relief to Somalia.

Tiananmen Square also occurred during his administration. Bush also signed the NAFTA Agreement.

Visit the TAMU campus for discussions of university presidents James Earl Rudder (WWII Ranger commander at the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc) and Sul Ross (Civil War general and later Texas Governor).

Lunch at the University Club restaurant in Rudder Tower.

Lodging night in College Station: The George (or comparable).



Day 5, Friday, May 21st: John F. Kennedy

Drive to Dallas.

Visit Dealey Plaza and the 6th Floor Museum and discuss JFK.

This area of downtown is known as “the birthplace of Dallas” with a number of structures contributing to the early days of the city. For our purposes, we will examine sites associated with JFK’s assassination at 12:30 pm on November 22, 1963. These include the plaza, grassy knoll, Sixth Floor Museum in the Old Texas Schoolbook Depository, and JFK Memorial. This area is a National Historic Landmark. JFK was accompanied that day by Jaqueline Kennedy and Texas Governor John Connally.

Visit the nearby site of the 1910 lynching of Allen Brooks for discussion on race and the presidency.

Dinner on your own.

Lodging night in Dallas (home for some, The Beeman or comparable for others).



Day 6, Saturday, May 22nd: George W. Bush

Visit the George W. Bush Library and Museum on the campus of Southern Methodist University. If possible, we will have members of the administration join us to share lessons and stories.

The younger Bush served in the US Air National Guard during the Vietnam War. He worked in the oil industry, was president of the Texas Rangers baseball club and served as Governor of Texas before becoming President in 2001. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began under his watch. The No Child Left Behind education bill, approval of Medicare Part D, Hurricane Katrina response, and the Great Recession were also part of his term. He and his wife, Laura, still make their home in the Dallas area.

Visit Oak Lawn Park (formerly, Lee Park) for discussion on presidency, race, Texas and Civil War. Final group dinner and talk, and end of the expedition.



Important Information for Your Upcoming Texas Presidential Trip

Initial Contact Information

- Sheryl Shafer: phone 303.517.9676; email sheryl@historyexp.com
- Dr. Brian DeToy: phone 253.468.7374; email brian@historyexp.com

Covid-19 Related Precautions: Essential History Expeditions and the Center for Presidential History will ensure adherence to all Covid-19 recommended precautions in place in May 2021. Guests will be responsible for their own transportation throughout the trip. Breakfasts will be included at the hotels, lunches will be on your own at onsite cafes where available, and group dinners will be at restaurants with excellent outdoor dining space within walking distance from the hotels. Essential History Expeditions will provide hand sanitizer after each stop. This trip is predicated on the successful opening of all included sites by May 2021.

Accommodations: Please let us know if you have any medical, dietary or mobility limitations or issues so we can make every effort to accommodate you and provide the best experience possible. If you have dietary restrictions, I can help ensure restaurants can accommodate you if I know in advance. Please also let me know if you require a walk-in shower rather than a tub/shower.

Recommended Movies:

- The Alamo (2004 version)
- The Searchers (1956)
- Lonesome Dove
- All the Way
- Vice
- Recount

Recommended Reading:

Texas (Especially Sam Houston and the Republic)

- Haley, *Sam Houston*
- Campbell, *Sam Houston and the American Southwest*
- Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon*
- Silbey, *Storm Over Texas: The Annexation Controversy and the Road to Civil War*
- Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850*
- Harrigan, *Big Wonderful Thing: A History of Texas* (one volume, all of Texas)
- Michener, *Texas*
- Fehrenbach, *Lone Star*

LBJ Era:

- Caro, 4-Volume LBJ biography series (especially volume 1, *The Path to Power*)
- Dallek, *Lyndon B. Johnson Portrait of a President*
- Krochmal, *Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era*

JFK and Dallas:

- Minutaglio and Davis, *Dallas 1963*
- Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy*

George Bush, Sr.:

- Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*
- Meacham, *Destiny and Power; The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*

George W. Bush

- Baker, *Days of Fire*
- Bush, *Decision Points*
- Smith, *Bush*