

The Almost Great Society: The 1960s

Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973)

1. President of the United States from 1963-1969
2. In TX, Johnson was the state director of the National Youth Administration, a New Deal agency
3. US Representative in 1937
4. U.S. senator in 1949
5. Senate majority leader in
6. served as Kennedy's vice president
7. JFK assassinated in 1963
8. LBJ President in 1963
9. he was large, boisterous, arrogant, and driven
10. had legislative skill and experience
11. able to pass many of the bills that had proved unsuccessful for earlier Democrats
12. turned much of the modern liberal agenda into law

The "War on Poverty"

1. President Johnson called for an unconditional war on poverty
2. He expanded and revised the proposals given to Kennedy
3. developed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
4. The Economic Opportunity Act included:
 - a. Head Start
 - b. Job Corps
 - c. Work-Study program for university students
 - d. VISTA (a domestic Peace Corps)
 - e. Neighborhood Youth Corps
 - f. Basic education and adult job training
 - g. CAPS (Community Action Programs)
 - i. most controversial part of the package
 - ii. proposed the "maximum feasible participation" by poor people themselves to determine what would help them the most
5. This was bold legislation
6. critically underfunded
7. received only about \$1 billion to divide among the various programs
8. By 1966, Congress appropriated \$4 billion for the programs.

Tax Cuts

1. Kennedy plan was seen through by LBJ in February 1964
2. a \$10 billion tax cut
3. turned out to be a brilliant success
4. Over the next 6-8 quarters:
 - a. consumer spending rose \$45 billion
 - b. the GNP soared

- c. the federal government actually increased its revenue
5. Keynesian economics had been fully accepted by top policy makers

The Great Society

1. LBJ announced his "Great Society" during the presidential campaign of 1964
2. Described the Great Society as
 - "A place where men are more concerned with the quality of their lives than the quantity of their goods."
3. It rested on three legs:
 - a. Abundance and liberty for all
 - b. End to poverty
 - c. End to racial injustice
4. demands seemed radical
5. but not radical when compared to LBJ's Republican opponent, Barry Goldwater
6. Goldwater called for:
 - a. the abolition of the progressive income tax
 - b. an end to public works
 - c. an end to Social Security
7. Goldwater wanted to pare down the federal government to its size in the last century.
8. Goldwater was crushed in the election
9. LBJ received 61% of the popular vote
10. On his coattails, LBJ swept in many liberal members of congress
11. This Congress, the eighty-ninth, became known as the "Fabulous Eighty-Ninth" for its great number of legislative successes
12. The "Fabulous Eighty-Ninth" accomplished the following:
 - a. Achieved goals of Fair Deal
 - b. Achieved goals of New Frontier
 - c. Medicare programs
 - d. Elementary and Secondary Education Act
 - e. Housing and Urban Development program
 - f. Highway beautification act, a pet project of Lady Bird Johnson
 - g. Clean air and water regulations
 - h. Immigration legislation to end the quota system of the 1920s
 - i. City planning programs
13. Fabulous Eighty-Ninth Congress passed so much progressive legislation between 1965 and 1967, it recalled the glory days of the early New Deal.
14. If only it hadn't been for Vietnam

President Johnson could have been remembered for his advocacy of social reform, for his leadership in passing civil rights legislation and declaring a "War on Poverty", if only it hadn't been for Vietnam. The Vietnam War was the longest war in United States history and the only one it lost. It proved to be Johnson's political downfall and the reason he did not stand for reelection in 1968.