

# Chapter 38 (14th)

## The Stormy Sixties

1. Kennedy's "New Frontier" Spirit
  1. Kennedy was youngest president ever *elected* (though Teddy Roosevelt had taken over at a younger age). JFK personified the glamor & optimism of a younger, robust, vibrant America. Inaugural addresses seldom are memorable, Kennedy's *was* memorable with the line, "...ask not, what your country can do for you: ask what you can do for your country."
    1. JFK also put together a young cabinet, "the best and the brightest", including his brother **Robert Kennedy**, 35 years old, as Attorney General.
      1. "Bobby" Kennedy focused the FBI's efforts on "internal security", not-so-much on organized crime, and none on civil rights.
      2. Longtime FBI head **J. Edgar Hoover** did not like the reforms.
    2. **Robert McNamara** left a business background to become head of the Defense Department.
  2. JFK had high expectations. He'd spoken of a "**New Frontier**", hinting that America was on the brink of something newly great. He was optimistic and idealistic.
    1. Kennedy started the **Peace Corps** where mostly young, idealistic Americans would go to third world nations to help out and teach. Usually the fields were health, agriculture, languages and math.
  3. Kennedy was wealthy, Harvard-educated, witty. He and his cabinet went to the White House very confident.
2. The New Frontier at Home
  1. The New Frontier, his domestic social program, was threatened by both Democrat and Republican conservatives. Some of Kennedy's steps were put made...
    1. The House Rules Committee was expanded—this might help avoid conservative hang-ups.
    2. A noninflationary wage agreement was settled, contingent on companies keeping prices down. When steel companies did not, Kennedy called their leaders to the White House, reprimanded them, and they backed down.
    3. Supporters of free enterprise and *laissez-faire* capitalism were not happy about these actions. They *did* support JFK when he said he would *not* increase spending but would cut taxes to stimulate the economy.
  2. Kennedy initiated the quest to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. The goal was almost unthinkable when he said it, but in July, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin set foot on the moon.
3. Rumblings in Europe
  1. Kennedy & Nikita Khrushchev met, 1961. Khrushchev bullied & young president. JFK was shaken, but stood his ground.
  2. East Berliners were flooding into West Berlin—this was an unacceptable embarrassment to the U.S.S.R. So, the Soviet Union began to build the Berlin Wall that same year to keep folks in.
    1. The Berlin Wall would become the most obvious symbol of the Cold War split and what Winston Churchill had called the "Iron Curtain" between the east and west.
  3. Western Europe had made a great turn-around, thanks in large part to the Marshall Plan's help.
    1. To further help Western Europe, Kennedy got the **Trade Expansion Act** passed. It was to lower tariffs by up to 50% and thus help the new **Common Market** in trade. Lowering the tariffs did increase trade substantially.
  4. France, however, was not as receptive to the U.S. Pres. **Charles de Gaulle** was making a name for himself by sticking up to and sticking out his chest at the Americans. For example, he'd vetoed Britain's request to join the Common Market in fear of a "special relationship" with America. He also pursued nuclear weapons for France, fearing America would not come through in a crisis.
    1. Amazingly, de Gaulle seemed to have forgotten that less than 20 years earlier, Hitler and the Nazis had controlled the streets of Paris until America pushed them out.
4. Foreign Flare-Ups and "Flexible Response"
  1. When the French left Southeast Asia in 1954, Laos was left without a government and a civil war started.
    1. Americans feared a communist government would emerge—Ike had put money into the country and Kennedy looked for a diplomatic way out. The Geneva Conference (1962) set up a peace, though it stood on shaky legs.
  2. Sec. of Defense **Robert McNamara** moved America's policy away from "massive retaliation" to "**flexible response**." He didn't want a small nation with relatively small problems to give America two options: backing down or nuclear holocaust. Rather, he wanted to deal with situations with a variety of options.
    1. The logic was good, the reality came to haunt the U.S.—America could now get in just a little bit, maybe a bit more, but then once in, how to get out without looking bad? This would be the story of Vietnam.
    2. To match the situation with the force necessary, Kennedy upped spending on the Special Forces (Green Berets).
5. Stepping into the Vietnam Quagmire
  1. Vietnam was split at the 17th parallel. The South was led by Ngo Din Diem and back by the U.S. The shaky government wasn't a democracy in the American sense, but it *wasn't* communist. The North was led by Ho Chi Minh and was communist. They threatened to overrun the South.
  2. To defend from the North, Kennedy sent "military advisers" (U.S. troops) to South Vietnam. They were supposedly there to instruct on *how* to fight, but not fight themselves. Kennedy, "in the final analysis", said it was "their war."
    1. By the time of his death, JFK had sent about 15,000 "advisers." It was now becoming difficult to just leave without looking bad.
6. Cuban Confrontations

1. Kennedy improved relations with Latin America with the **Alliance for Progress** (called the "Marshall Plan for Latin America"). His goal was to curb the threat of rising communism by narrowing the rich-poor gap.
  1. Progress, however, was minimal. Some American "gimmies" weren't going to suddenly solve huge problems.
2. JFK got a major embarrassment with the **Bay of Pigs Invasion** (1961).
  1. The CIA secretly trained Cuban exiles with the goal of invading Cuba, rallying all the people, and overthrowing Castro. Castro's troops met and halted the attack at the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy would not help the attackers, there was no ground-swelling of support from within Cuba, and the attack was crushed.
  2. Added to secret American attempts to assassinate Castro, Bay of Pigs pushed Castro more toward communism.
  3. JFK took full responsibility for the attack, and in doing so, his popularity actually went up.
3. Cuba was again on the world stage with the **Cuban Missile Crisis** that took place in October of 1961.
  1. Aerial photos showed that the U.S.S.R. was putting nuclear missiles in Cuba. For America, Russian nukes 90 miles from Florida could not stand.
  2. Kennedy listened to options. At his brother Bobby's suggestion, JFK chose to impose a naval blockade since it was middle-ground between an invasion and an embargo. It put the ball back into Khrushchev's court.
    1. Khrushchev promised to run the blockade and continue assembling the missile sites.
  3. For 13 days, the world was as close to nuclear war as it'd ever been. Thankfully, Khrushchev backed down and the Soviet ships turned back.
  4. In return for removing the missile sites, Kennedy agreed to remove missiles from Turkey (these were outdated anyway). A "hot line" was installed between Washington & Moscow to avoid lacking communication in a crisis.
4. Kennedy also encouraged Americans to stop thinking of the Russians as monsters, but rather as people just like them. This was the beginnings of "détente" or relaxed tensions.
7. The Struggle for Civil Rights
  1. Kennedy had campaigned toward and received black support. He was slow to grab onto the civil rights movement, however. Still, things were happening fast in the movement...
  2. **Freedom Riders**, generally young white northerners, rode buses through the South to draw attention to segregation. Some Southerners turned violent against the buses—this drew *more* attention to the Freedom Riders.
  3. Kennedy slowly stepped into the civil rights movement.
    1. He was concerned that if he linked with **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, it might be revealed that King had friends who had communist connections. Robert Kennedy had J. Edgar Hoover investigate and keep a file on MLK to that end, even tap MLK's phone line.
    2. John Kennedy did help SNCC get started with funds. They started the **Voter Education Project** to register southern black voters.
  4. Despite *Brown v. Board* 6+ years prior, integration was slow.
    1. At the Univ. of Mississippi, **James Meredith** was blocked from enrolling by white students. Kennedy sent in federal marshals and troops so Meredith could go to class.
    2. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized a peaceful protest of segregation in Birmingham, AL in early 1963.
      1. The protesters were attacked by police dogs, electric cattle prods, and high pressure water hoses.
      2. America watched these vicious scenes on TV. These types of instances helped to *slowly* start changing public opinion in favor of the protesters.
    3. Kennedy went on TV in June of 1963 and called the race situation a "moral issue" for America. He publicly aligned himself with the civil rights movement and called for new civil rights legislation.
  5. In August, 1963, MLK led 200,000 demonstrators in the famous "March on Washington." There he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech, then met with Kennedy for talks.
  6. Violence kept on, however. **Medgar Evers**, a black civil rights worker, was shot and killed the very night Kennedy came on TV. In September, a bomb exploded in a black church killing four black girls.
8. The Killing of Kennedy
  1. In November of 1963 JFK made a campaign trip down South (his weakest area). Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963 by **Lee Harvey Oswald**.
    1. Oswald was shot and killed on TV a couple of days later by Jack Ruby.
  2. **Lyndon B. Johnson** was sworn in as president on Air Force One heading back to Washington.
  3. America was stunned. Her young, charismatic and idealistic president was gone.
    1. Sadly, his reputation would later be hurt when his womanizing and connections to organized crime came to light.
9. The LBJ Brand on the Presidency
  1. Lyndon Baines Johnson was a former senator and held FDR as his hero. LBJ was a master at getting Congress to go his way by giving the "Johnson treatment"—getting up-in-the-face and jabbing a finger-in-the-chest.
    1. LBJ was a true cuss from Texas. He was vain, super egotistical, and crude.
  2. LBJ went liberal as president. Congress passed the **Civil Rights Act** that JFK had called for and LBJ signed it.
    1. The law banned discrimination in public facilities and sought to end segregation.
    2. It set up the **Equal Employment Opportunity Comm. (EEOC)** to serve as watchdog for fair hiring practices.
  3. Johnson spoke of his vision which he called the "**Great Society**". It was a continuation of New Deal types of programs. The idealistic thinking was that America was so prosperous; there was no reason to accept anything less than prosperity for all. He launched a "War on Poverty".
    1. He got support when Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America* (1962) which said that despite the affluence, 20% of Americans lived in poverty (40% of blacks).
10. Johnson Battles Goldwater in 1964

1. In the 1964 presidential election, Johnson sought to win on his own for the Democrats as a New Dealish liberal. The Republicans chose Sen. **Barry Goldwater**, a conservative.
  2. Goldwater criticized income taxes, Social Security, the TVA, civil rights laws, nuclear test bans, and the Great Society.
  3. LBJ countered as being a more poised statesman.
    1. In August 1964, there was the **Gulf of Tonkin Incident**. There, two U.S. warships had been attacked by the North Vietnamese. In response, the **Tonkin Gulf Resolution** was passed by Congress essentially giving the president a blank check for return action.
    2. Barry Goldwater talked a tough game versus the communists. He hinted that he might even use nuclear weapons if needed. LBJ seized this in an attack ad on TV. It showed a little girl picking daisies, then exploding in a nuclear mushroom cloud. The message: elect Goldwater and Ka-Boom!
  4. LBJ won the election 486 to 52.
11. The Great Society Congress
1. Democrats also won large victories in the Congress. This opened the door for the Great Society programs.
  2. The **War on Poverty** was stepped up. The **Office of Economic Opportunity** had its budget doubled to \$2 billion. Another billion was to be spent on Appalachia, a region of America that had been little touched by modern prosperity.
  3. At LBJ's pushing two new cabinet offices were created: the **Dept. of Transportation (DOT)** and the **Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**. America's first black cabinet member, **Robert C. Weaver**, was named to head HUD.
  4. Johnson's Great Society sought to improve the Big Four areas:
    1. Education - Money was given to *students* and not *schools* to thus get around the separation of church and state issue. **Project Head Start** was preschool for kids who otherwise couldn't afford it.
    2. Medical care - **Medicare** for the elderly and **Medicaid** for the poor were passed in 1965. These programs would become staple rights in America's minds; they'd also become a major cause of national debt.
    3. Immigration reform - The **Immigration and Nationality Act** got rid of the old quota system around since 1921. The law doubled the number of immigrants allowed in (to 290,000), allowed family members in, and for the first time limited the number of Western Hemisphere immigrants (to 120,000). Immigration was changing from Europe to Latin American and Asia.
    4. Voting rights - LBJ wanted to get more blacks voting (see the section below).
12. Battling for Black Rights
1. Voting among blacks in the south was rare (only 5% in Mississippi) as whites used tricks to prevent black votes.
    1. The **Voting Rights Act (1965)** sought to end the racial discrimination that accompanied voting. It banned literacy tests and it sent registrars to the polls to watch out for dirty dealings.
    2. The **Twenty-fourth Amendment** forbade poll taxes where you had to pay to vote.
  2. The Civil Rights Movement marched on.
    1. In "Freedom Summer" (1964), blacks and whites joined hands and sang "We shall overcome" to protest racism.
    2. In June of that year, three civil rights workers were found beaten to death in Mississippi (one black, two white). 21 whites were arrested, including the sheriff. The white jury did not convict anyone.
    3. Martin Luther King, Jr. set up a voter registration drive in **Selma, Alabama**. The plan was to march from Selma to the capital of Montgomery.
      1. State police used tear gas, whips. Two people died in the chaos.
      2. Lyndon Johnson joined the Civil Rights Movement by calling for an end to "bigotry and injustice." This is when the Voting Rights Act gained steam and passed.
13. Black Power
1. Martin Luther King's approach was nonviolent. By 1965, he was making progress, though it was slow. To many young blacks, it was *too* slow—they wanted to take matters into their own hands.
  2. A riot broke out in the Watts area of Los Angeles. The ghetto burned for a week, 34 people died.
  3. New black leaders dismissed nonviolent protest. Some made fun of MLK calling him "de Lawd."
    1. Malcolm Little changed his name to **Malcolm X**. He'd been influenced by black militants in the Nation of Islam. The Nation of Islam had been founded by Elijah Poole (who changed his name to Elijah Muhammad).
      1. Malcolm X was a fantastic speaker. But ironically, he was likely as racist *against* whites as he criticized whites as being racist against blacks.
      2. Malcolm X later turned away from Elijah Muhammad, toward mainstream Islam. He was shot and killed in 1965 by Nation of Islam gunmen.
    2. The **Black Panthers** roamed the streets of Oakland armed with powerful weapons "for protection."
    3. **Stokely Carmichael** (from Trinidad) led the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**. SNCC had begun with the peaceful sit-ins of the 50's. Now, it'd taken a rather "non-Nonviolent" stance.
      1. Carmichael spoke of **Black Power**, a catch-all phrase calling for blacks to carry out their political and economic power.
      2. Many blacks interpreted "Black Power" as a separatist movement. There was a movement to emphasize uniqueness such as "Afro" hair, clothes, names for children, and African studies in colleges.
  4. More riots broke out in black ghettos, such as in Detroit (which left 43 dead) and Newark, NJ (25 dead).
  5. To whites, these actions were troubling—it seemed chaos was becoming the rule. Northern whites were shocked when riots came to their hometown. They'd figured the "negro problem" was a southern problem.
  6. Unfortunately, the voice of *nonviolence* ended when **Martin Luther King, Jr.** was assassinated in April of 1968.
    1. Riots followed and over 40 died. But, things changed as voter registration skyrocketed and within four years, about half of black children were in integrated schools.

#### 14. Combating Communism in Two Hemispheres

1. When a revolt broke out in the Dominican Republic, Johnson saw it as communism trying to crop up. He sent 25,000 troops to quell the revolt. He was criticized for making a knee-jerk reaction.
2. In Vietnam, things were stepping up in a big way.
  1. Johnson ordered "Operation Rolling Thunder"—full-out bombing on North Vietnam.
  2. LBJ used the Tonkin Gulf Resolution to follow a policy of "**escalation**." In 1965, he sent some 400,000 soldiers to Vietnam. This is usually marked as the starting-point for the Vietnam War.
  3. America's was "all in" in Vietnam at this point, win or lose. It was costing up to \$30 billion per year too.

#### 15. Vietnam Vexations

1. The war in Vietnam was dragging on in an ugly manner, and the U.S. was criticized internationally. Charles de Gaulle of France (who always looked for an instance to poke at America) ordered NATO out of France.
2. In the **Six-Day War** (June 1967), Israel shocked and beat U.S.S.R.-supported Egypt. Israel gained land in the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank of the Jordan River (including Jerusalem).
  1. These lands brought 100,000 Palestinians under Israeli control. This situation still breeds problems.
3. Back in the U.S., protests against the Vietnam War increased. Students held "teach-ins", burnt draft cards and fled to Canada to avoid being drafted.
  1. America was being split into "doves" against the war and "hawks" who supported the war.
4. There was opposition in the government too, led by Sen. **William Fulbright**, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, held televised hearings where people spoke against the war.
5. The CIA investigated people at *home*, a no-no. In **Cointelpro**, the FBI investigated "dove" leaders at home. This seemed more like a totalitarian state, but LBJ had it done anyway.
6. By 1968, war had become the longest and most unpopular in U.S. history. LBJ said the war's end was near, but it was not.

#### 16. Vietnam Topples Johnson

1. Jan. 1968 was break point of the war. At that time, North Vietnam launched a massive "**Tet Offensive**" against southern cities. The U.S. stopped the attack, but it showed the enemy was *not* all-but-done and that there were years of fighting left.
  1. The war was taking a toll on Johnson too, emotionally and physically.
2. American brass asked for more troops, but Johnson would not send them.
3. The war also split the Democratic party (1968 was another election year).
  1. **Eugene McCarthy** was the voice of the doves. He was supported by peace-loving college students. He scored a high 42% of the New Hampshire primary vote.
  2. Days later, **Robert Kennedy** entered the race, also as a dove. He brought the Kennedy name and charisma.
  3. A bigger shock came when LBJ announced that (a) he was freezing troop levels in Vietnam and (b) he would *not* run for reelection. The Democratic Party was wide open.

#### 17. The Presidential Sweepstakes of 1968

1. LBJ out of the race, V.P. **Hubert H. Humphrey** seemed the next logical choice. It was now McCarthy, Kennedy, and Humphrey for the Democrats.
  1. Robert Kennedy would become the Democratic nominee, he was shot and killed. Humphrey is nominated.
2. **Richard Nixon** would run as the Republican. He was a "hawk" and spoke of getting law-and-order in the cities at home.
3. Another candidate, **George C. Wallace**, ran for the American Independent party. He ran almost exclusively on a pro-segregation ticket saying "Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"
4. Nixon would win the election, 301 to Humphrey's 191. Wallace got 46 southern electoral votes.

#### 18. The Obituary of Lyndon Johnson

1. Lyndon Johnson and his Great Society was drug down by Vietnam.
2. He was in a position where no matter what he did in Vietnam, either the hawks or doves would *not* be happy.
3. He went home to his Texas ranch and died in 1973.

#### 19. The Cultural Upheaval of the 1960s

1. The 1960's were a boom of cultural changes and challenges. Young people propelled the cultural changes—the slogan was, "Trust no one over 30."
2. The roots of the counterculture went back to the "beatniks" of the 1950's. Poet Allen Ginsburg and writer Jack Kerouac's book *On the Road* were the prelude for the hippie generation.
  1. Movies hinted frustrated youth - *The Wild One* with Marlon Brando & *Rebel without a Cause* with James Dean.
3. A protest took place at Univ. of California at Berkeley, 1964 called the "Free Speech Movement." This protest was rather clean-cut, later ones would be "far out" with psychedelic drugs, "acid rock", and call to "tune in and drop out" of school.
4. A "sexual revolution" took place in the 1960's.
  1. The birth-control pill reduced pregnancies and made sex seem more casual. Feminists like the pill for freeing women from being pregnant all the time.
  2. Gays called for acceptance. When some gay men in New York were attacked, the movement had some fuel. Later, in the 1980's AIDS popped up, mostly within the gay male community. This set back the gay movement.
5. Students for a Democratic Society stood against poverty & war. By this time, they'd started a secret group called the "Weathermen" which essentially an underground terrorist group, started riots in the name of fighting poverty and war.
6. Smoking "grass" turned into dropping LSD. The dirty underworld of drug dealers and drug addicts emerged.
7. The older and more traditional generations were appalled at these goings-on. They'd grown up through the Great Depression and WWII, were thankful for what they had, and understood sacrifice.
  1. To traditionalists, the counterculture generation was little more than spoiled baby boomers. They had too much time in college to study mush-mush ideas and too much money in their pockets to fool around with.