

Harry following ten years, Truman was a successful

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Harry S.

Truman was the 33rd President of the United States. Born on May 8, 1884, in Lamar, Missouri, he was the oldest of three children. Truman had no middle name. His parents apparently gave him the middle initial " S" to appease two family relatives. At age six, his family moved to Independence, Missouri, where he attended Sunday school. There he met five year-old Elizabeth Wallace, with whom he later fell in love with.

Beginning school at age eight, Truman modeled thick glasses to correct his poor eyesight. Fortunately, his eyesight did not seriously interfere with his two favorite pastimes, music and reading. He woke up early everyday to practice the piano and visited a music teacher twice a week, until he was fifteen. He read about four or five books a week, developing his knowledge of world leaders and famous battles. In 1901, Truman graduated from high school, uncertain of his future.

College wasn't an option due to his family's financial situation, and an appointment to West Point was ruled out by his poor eyesight. Without much choice, he began work. He started on the Santa Fe railroad at thirty-five dollars a month. He later moved to Kansas City where he worked for the Kansas City Star, then onto the National Bank of Commerce, and finally to the Union National Bank. In 1906, he was called back home to help his family with their farms. For the following ten years, Truman was a successful farmer. Throughout this time, his political affiliation was revealed.

He joined the local Democratic Party organization, known as the Kansas City Ward Democratic Club. In 1915, he invested in lead mines, losing his money. He then turned to oil fields in Oklahoma.

With the outcry of World War I, he gave up his oil shares and enlisted in the U. S. Army. He began his training at Fort Sill, in Oklahoma, but then returned to Missouri to help recruit others. He was then elected first lieutenant by Missouri's Second Field Artillery. World War I began in 1914 creating friction amongst the European people, along with hostility and violence.

Even though the United States wanted to remain neutral, they were drawn in during April of 1917. Truman left for France as a captain in the U. S. Army. He was given command of Battery D, a rowdy and out of control group, otherwise known as Dizzy D. Truman succeeded in taming his unit, and the Dizzy D distinguished themselves through the battles of Argonne and Saint-Mihiel. In April of 1919, Truman returned home, now as a major.

On June 28th of the same year, he married Elizabeth Wallace, his Sunday school love. Truman decided to spark his political career. So he started by entering a four way Democratic primary for a judgeship, which was essentially a job supervising roads and buildings. His popularity was expected to increase if he got the support of the Ku Klux Klan, but Truman turned down this idea. Even so, by campaigning his wartime record and his past history, Truman won the primary of the election. In January of 1923, he was sworn into his first public office. One year later his only daughter, Mary Margaret, was born. During his time as a judge, he improved roads and reduced the inherited debt.

By staying interested in the National Guard, he was promoted to colonel. Next, Truman tested his luck in the Senate. After a long and hard battle, Truman defeated a Republican opponent with the help of the New Deal. In January of 1935, he was sworn in as a Senator from Missouri.

His arrival in Washington was met with disdain. Colleagues didn't think he was working for himself, and he was reviewed by White House authorities. Fortunately, by using his knowledge in history and government, he was finally recognized and appointed to two important committees. Finally, the government finished their investigations, revealing no signs of wrongdoing. Following this, Truman was re-elected again after another hard fought battle. The " Truman committee" was put together in order to regulate defense programs. This group visited defense installations to locate any signs of waste or fraud. Through this committee, Truman was recognized nationally and he gained support to become the next vice-presidential candidate.

Roosevelt selected Truman as Vice-President of the United States over three other very qualified candidates. He took the oath of office on January 20, 1945. Truman cast the deciding Senate vote ensuring that the U. S. would continue to send supplies to allies after the war was over. Truman saw very little of Roosevelt and he knew that his health was deteriorating. Roosevelt left for Warm Springs, Georgia prior to informing Truman about the conduct of war or the plans of peace.

A few weeks later, Truman was summoned to the White House where Eleanor Roosevelt told him, " Harry, the president is dead." On April 12, 1945, Truman was sworn in as president after being vice-president for only

eighty-two days. The first few months of his presidency was filled with briefings by Roosevelt's aides, attempting to educate him about current issues. Truman tried his best to stay informed about the war. On his sixty-first birthday, V-E Day, Germany surrendered. Next, he issued the Potsdam Declaration to Japan, looking for their surrender in exchange. When Japan refused, Truman authorized the drop of the bomb on Hiroshima, then Nagasaki.

Japan's casualties were immense and they had no choice but to surrender. During his second term, Truman stated four points of action in his inaugural address. The first was to continue the support of the United Nations and the second was to continue the Marshall Plan, a system of providing funds to essentially rebuild parts of Europe. The third was collective defense against Communist aggression and the final point of action was to aid underdeveloped countries. Truman worked hard over his final years in office to carry out these four points to the best of his ability. Truman retired to his home in Independence, Missouri, at the age of sixty-seven. He stayed active in politics for awhile but finally decided that he was no longer dominant in his party's affairs. Even so, he supported his beliefs and other Democrats in their campaigns.

In July of 1957, Truman dedicated a library in Independence, Missouri, along with books on his presidency. In 1965 he was the recipient of the Freedom Award. On December 26, 1972, Truman passed away. He was buried at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.