

American Royalty: The Kennedys [B2]

Il fascino di questa potente famiglia irlandese dal sangue blu ha sedotto l'opinione pubblica americana per decenni. L'influenza di questo tragico clan si sente ancora in numerosi aspetti della vita sociale e politica degli Stati Uniti.

For more than half a century the Kennedy family were considered the [closest](#) thing America had to [royalty](#). Its members who elected to [public office](#) — most notably John F. Kennedy, elected as US President in 1961 — all served as Democrats, while others worked for the Democratic Party in an [array](#) of roles. Famed for their [championing](#) of social justice in America, the Kennedys were also [notorious](#) for their infidelities and rebellious [behaviour](#).

[IRISH HERITAGE](#)

The Kennedy [heritage](#) has been [traced back](#) to Ceineidi, 10th-century king of North Munster, southwest Ireland. The [kingdom](#) of Munster was one of the ancient [kingdoms](#) of Gaelic Ireland until it was [broken up](#) in 1118. Over the centuries, the O'Kennedy family lost their royal status, but remained powerful Irish Catholic [landowners](#). That was until the 17th century, when their land was confiscated by the English invaders. With the Irish 'O' ordered to be [dropped](#) from their surname, the Kennedys became [traders](#) in County Wexford. In the 19th century, [widespread](#) poverty in Ireland [drove](#) Patrick Joseph Kennedy to emigrate to the US. In 1849, he found work in Boston as a [barrel maker](#), but then died of cholera. His son Patrick "P. J." Kennedy went into business and served in the Massachusetts [state legislature](#). P. J.'s son Joseph ("Joe") made a fortune in banking. He worked in various positions in government, and was [appointed](#) US ambassador to the UK [in the lead-up to](#) World War Two.

TRAGIC DECADE

Joe and his wife Rose, a prominent socialite, had nine kids, many better known by their [nicknames](#): Joseph Jr., John ("Jack"), Rose Marie ("Rosemary"), Kathleen ("Kick"), Eunice, Patricia, Robert ("Bobby"), Jean, and Edward ("Ted"). The 1940s were difficult years for the family: the [eldest](#), Joseph Jr., died when his warplane exploded; Rosemary had violent [mood swings](#) and was given a pre-frontal lobotomy which left her permanently incapacitated; Kick scandalised the family by [eloping](#) to England with a Protestant aristocrat, and soon afterwards was killed in a plane crash.

THE KENNEDY CURSE

In the 1950s family members began [to climb the political ladder](#). However, the 1960s were a traumatic decade for them: after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, and that of his brother, Senator Robert Kennedy, in 1968, rumours spread of a "Kennedy [curse](#)". Nevertheless, the Kennedys were certainly privileged: when Ted [drove](#) his car into a lake in 1969, killing the young woman who he was travelling with, he still [managed](#) to become a universally-respected US senator, and [remained so](#) for forty-seven years afterwards.

YOUNGER GENERATIONS

In later generations, the power of the Kennedys has declined and there have been many well-publicised tragedies. Bobby's son David died of a drug overdose in 1984, and Michael died in a skiing accident in 1997. Jack's son John Jr. died in yet another plane crash. Ted's daughter Kara and Patricia's son Christopher both died of heart attacks when they were [middle aged](#). More recently, Bobby's granddaughter Saoirse died of a drug overdose, while his granddaughter Maeve [drowned](#). There are, however, younger Kennedys who have followed in the family [footsteps](#) and been successful in US politics: Bobby's grandson Joe III served in Congress, and the late-President's daughter Caroline Kennedy is the current US ambassador to Australia.

Glossary

- **closest** = più vicino, più simile
- **championing** = sostegno
- **remained so** = rimase tale
- **array** = serie, varietà
- **notorious** = sfortunatamente conosciuti per
- **nicknames** = nomignoli
- **middle aged** = di mezza età
- **kingdom** = regno
- **broken up** = dividere, disintegrare
- **barrel maker** = fabbricante di barili
- **eldest** = maggiore
- **drove his car into** = schiantarsi contro, andare a finire dentro
- **public office** = incarico pubblico
- **heritage** = eredità
- **in the lead-up to** = in vista dell'arrivo di
- **curse** = maledizione
- **drowned** = affogare
- **traders** = commercianti
- **widespread** = generalizzata
- **state legislature** = legislatura statale (organo del potere legislativo di ogni stato dell'Unione)
- **managed** = riuscire
- **royalty** = famiglia reale
- **dropped** = togliere, abbandonare, rinunciare
- **eloping** = fuggire per sposarsi
- **footsteps** = seguire le orme
- **behaviour** = comportamento
- **drove** = spingere, portare a
- **appointed** = nominare
- **mood swings** = cambi di umore, alti e bassi emozionali
- **to climb the political ladder** = salire al potere
- **traced back** = far risalire
- **landowners** = proprietari di terre