

= Harry S. Truman =

Harry S. Truman (May 8 , 1884 ? December 26 , 1972) was the 33rd President of the United States (1945 ? 53) , an American politician of the Democratic Party . He served as a United States Senator from Missouri (1935 ? 45) and briefly as Vice President (1945) before he succeeded to the presidency on April 12 , 1945 upon the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt . He was president during the final months of World War II , making the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki . Truman was elected in his own right in 1948 . He presided over an uncertain domestic scene as America sought its path after the war and tensions with the Soviet Union increased , marking the start of the Cold War .

Truman was born in Lamar , Missouri and spent most of his youth on his family 's farm near Independence . In the last months of World War I , he served in combat in France as an artillery officer with his National Guard unit . After the war , he briefly owned a haberdashery in Kansas City , Missouri , and joined the Democratic Party and the political machine of Tom Pendergast . Truman was first elected to public office as a county official in 1922 , and then as a U.S. Senator in 1934 . He gained national prominence as chairman of the Truman Committee , formed in March 1941 , which exposed waste , fraud , and corruption in Federal Government wartime contracts .

Nazi Germany surrendered on Truman 's birthday (May 8) just a few weeks after he assumed the presidency , but the war with Imperial Japan raged on and was expected to last at least another year . Truman approved the use of atomic weapons to end the fighting and to spare the thousands of American lives that would inevitably be lost in the planned invasion of Japan and Japanese @-@ held islands in the Pacific . This decision remains controversial to this day . It is thought to be one of the principal factors that forced Japan 's immediate and unconditional surrender .

Truman 's presidency was a turning point in foreign affairs , as the United States engaged in an internationalist foreign policy and renounced isolationism . Truman helped found the United Nations in 1945 , issued the Truman Doctrine in 1947 to contain Communism , and got the \$ 13 billion Marshall Plan enacted to rebuild Western Europe . The Soviet Union , a wartime ally , became a peacetime enemy in the Cold War . Truman oversaw the Berlin Airlift of 1948 and the creation of NATO in 1949 . He was unable to stop Communists from taking over China . When communist North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950 , he sent in U.S. troops and gained UN approval for the Korean War . After initial successes in Korea , however , the UN forces were thrown back by Chinese intervention , and the conflict was stalemated throughout the final years of Truman 's presidency .

On domestic issues , bills endorsed by Truman often faced opposition from a conservative Congress dominated by the Southern legislators , but his administration was able to successfully guide the American economy through the post @-@ war economic challenges . Truman maintained that civil rights were a moral priority , and in 1948 submitted the first comprehensive civil rights legislation and issued Executive Orders to start racial integration in the military and federal agencies . Allegations were raised of corruption in the Truman administration , linked to certain cabinet members and senior White House staff , and this became a central campaign issue in the 1952 presidential election and may have contributed to Adlai Stevenson 's (Truman 's successor as Democratic nominee) loss to Republican nominee Dwight D. Eisenhower . Popular and scholarly assessments of Truman 's presidency initially were unfavorable but became more positive over time following his retirement from politics . Truman 's 1948 election upset to win a full term as president has often been invoked by later ' underdog ' presidential candidates .

= = Early life and career = =

Harry S. Truman was born on May 8 , 1884 , in Lamar , Missouri , the oldest child of John Anderson Truman (1851 ? 1914) and Martha Ellen Young Truman (1852 ? 1947) . His parents chose the name Harry after his mother 's brother , Harrison " Harry " Young (1846 ? 1916) . They chose " S " as his middle initial to please both of his grandfathers , Anderson Shipp Truman and Solomon Young . The " S " did not stand for anything in particular , but was regularly written followed by a

period . A brother , John Vivian (1886 ? 1965) , was born soon after Harry , followed by sister Mary Jane (1889 ? 1978) .

John Truman was a farmer and livestock dealer . The family lived in Lamar until Harry was ten months old , when they moved to a farm near Harrisonville . The family next moved to Belton , and in 1887 to his grandparents ' 600 @-@ acre (240 @-@ ha) farm in Grandview . When Truman was six , his parents moved to Independence , so he could attend the Presbyterian Church Sunday School . Truman did not attend a traditional school until he was eight . While living in Independence , he served as the Shabbos goy for his Jewish neighbors , doing tasks for them on Shabbos which they were prevented from doing because of rules against work .

As a boy , Truman was interested in music , reading , and history , all encouraged by his mother , with whom he was very close . As president , he solicited political as well as personal advice from her . He got up at five every morning to practice the piano , which he studied twice a week until he was fifteen . Truman worked as a page at the 1900 Democratic National Convention at Convention Hall in Kansas City ; his father had many friends who were active in the Democratic Party and helped young Harry to gain his first political position .

After graduating from Independence High School (now William Chrisman High School) in 1901 , Truman enrolled in Spalding 's Commercial College , a Kansas City business school , but left after one semester . He then worked as a timekeeper on the Atchison , Topeka & Santa Fe Railway , sleeping in hobo camps near the rail lines . He worked at a series of clerical jobs , and was employed briefly in the mailroom of the Kansas City Star . Truman and his brother Vivian later worked as clerks at the National Bank of Commerce in Kansas City ; one of their coworkers , who also lived at the same rooming house , was Arthur Eisenhower , the brother of Dwight and Milton . He returned to the Grandview farm in 1906 , where he lived until entering the army in 1917 after the beginning of the Great War . During this period , he courted Bess Wallace ; he proposed in 1911 , but she turned him down . Truman later said that he intended to propose again , but when he did he wanted to be earning more money than a farmer did .

Truman is the most recent president who did not earn a college degree . In addition to having briefly attended business college , from 1923 ? 25 he took night courses toward an LL.B. at the Kansas City Law School (now the University of Missouri ? Kansas City School of Law) , but dropped out after losing reelection as county judge . He was informed by attorneys in the Kansas City area that his education and experience were probably sufficient to receive a license to practice law , but didn 't pursue it because he won election as presiding judge . While serving as president in 1947 , Truman applied for a license to practice law . A friend who was an attorney began working out the arrangements , and informed Truman that his application needed to be notarized . By the time Truman received this information he had changed his mind , so he never followed up . After rediscovery of Truman 's application , in 1996 the Missouri Supreme Court issued Truman a posthumous honorary law license .

= = = World War I = = =

Truman had dreamed of going to the United States Military Academy at West Point , but he was refused an appointment because of poor eyesight . He enlisted in the Missouri Army National Guard in 1905 , serving until 1911 in a Kansas City @-@ based artillery battery and attaining the rank of corporal . At his induction , his eyesight had been an unacceptable 20 / 50 in the right eye and 20 / 400 in the left (past the standard for legal blindness) . The second time he took the test , he passed by secretly memorizing the eye chart .

When the United States entered World War I , Truman rejoined the National Guard ; he helped recruit new soldiers as his unit expanded , and his success led the men of his battery to elect him as their first lieutenant . Before deployment to France , Truman was sent for training to Camp Doniphan , Fort Sill , near Lawton , Oklahoma . He ran the camp canteen with Edward Jacobson , a clothing store clerk he knew from Kansas City . Unlike most canteens funded by unit members , which usually lost money , the canteen operated by Truman and Jacobson turned a profit , returning each soldier 's initial \$ 2 investment and \$ 10 @,@ 000 in dividends in six months . At Fort Sill , Truman

met Lieutenant James M. Pendergast , nephew of Thomas Joseph (Tom) Pendergast , a Kansas City political boss , and this connection had a profound influence on Truman 's later life .

In mid 1918 , about one million soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces were in France . Truman was promoted to captain in July 1918 and became commander of Battery D , 129th Field Artillery , 60th Brigade , 35th Infantry Division . It was known for its discipline problems , and Truman was initially unpopular . Despite initial efforts by the men to intimidate him into quitting , Truman succeeded by making his corporals and sergeants accountable for discipline ; he promised to back them up if they performed capably , and reduce them to private and return them to the ranks if they didn 't . In an event memorialized in battery lore as the " Battle of Who Run " , his soldiers began to flee during a sudden attack by the Germans in the Vosges Mountains ; Truman succeeded at ordering his men to stay and fight , using profanity that he had first heard while working on the Santa Fe railroad . The men were so surprised to hear Truman use such language that they immediately obeyed .

Truman 's unit joined in a massive pre-arranged assault barrage on September 26 , 1918 at the opening of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive . They advanced with difficulty over pitted terrain to follow the infantry , and they set up an observation post west of Cheppy . On September 27 , Truman saw an enemy artillery battery through his binoculars setting up across a river in a position allowing them to fire upon the neighboring 28th Division . Truman 's orders limited him to targets facing the 35th Division , but he ignored this and patiently waited until the Germans had walked their horses well away from their guns , ensuring that they couldn 't retreat . He then ordered his men to open fire , and destroyed the enemy . Truman was given a dressing down by his commander , Colonel Karl D. Klemm , but he was not court-martialed ; his decision probably saved the lives of 28th Division soldiers who otherwise would have come under fire from the Germans Truman 's battery destroyed .

In other action during the Meuse-Argonne fighting , Truman 's battery provided support for George S. Patton 's tank brigade , and his battery fired some of the last shots of the war on November 11 , 1918 . Battery D did not lose a single man while under Truman 's command in France , and his men presented him with a large loving cup upon their return to the United States after the war .

The war was a transformative experience for Truman that brought out his leadership qualities . He had entered the service in 1917 as a family farmer who had worked in clerical jobs that did not require leadership skills , but during the war he gained leadership experience and a record of success that greatly enhanced and supported his post-war political career in Missouri .

Truman was brought up in the Presbyterian and Baptist churches ; he avoided revivals and sometimes ridiculed revivalist preachers . He rarely spoke about religion , which to him primarily meant ethical behavior along traditional Protestant lines . Most of the soldiers that he commanded in the war were Catholics , and he got along well with them , as he did with Christians of other denominations and the unit 's Jewish members .

= = = Continued military service = = =

Truman was discharged from the Army as a major in May 1919 . In 1920 he was appointed a major in the Reserve Officer Corps ; he became a lieutenant colonel in 1925 and a colonel in 1932 . In the 1920s and 1930s Truman commanded 1st Battalion , 379th Field Artillery Regiment , a unit of the 102nd Infantry Division . After promotion to colonel , Truman advanced to command of the regiment .

After his election to the U.S. Senate , Truman was transferred to the General Assignments Group , a holding unit for less active officers ; he had not been consulted or notified in advance . Truman protested his reassignment , which led to his resumption of regimental command . He remained an active reservist until the early 1940s . Truman volunteered for active military service during World War II , but was not accepted , partly because of age , and partly because President Franklin D. Roosevelt desired Senators and Congressman who belonged to the military reserves to support the war effort by remaining in Congress , or by ending their active duty service and resuming their

Congressional seats . He was an inactive reservist from the early 1940s until retiring on January 20 , 1953 .

= = Politics = =

= = = As Jackson County judge = = =

After his wartime service , Truman returned to Independence , where he married Bess Wallace on June 28 , 1919 . The couple had one child , Mary Margaret Truman .

Shortly before the wedding , Truman and Jacobson opened a haberdashery together at 104 West 12th Street in downtown Kansas City . After brief initial success , the store went bankrupt during the recession of 1921 . Truman did not pay off the last of the debts from that venture until 1934 , when he did so with the aid of a political supporter . Jacobson and Truman remained close friends , and Jacobson 's advice to Truman on Zionism later played a role in the U.S. government 's decision to recognize Israel .

With the help of the Kansas City Democratic machine led by Tom Pendergast , Truman was elected in 1922 as County Court judge of Jackson County 's eastern district ? this was an administrative rather than judicial position , somewhat similar to county commissioners elsewhere . (At the time Jackson County elected a judge from the western district (Kansas City) , one from the eastern district (Jackson County outside Kansas City) , and a presiding judge elected countywide .) Truman was not re @-@ elected in 1924 , losing in a Republican wave led by President Calvin Coolidge 's landslide election to a full term . Two years selling automobile club memberships convinced him that a public service career was safer for a family man approaching middle age .

In 1926 , Truman was elected presiding judge with the support of the Pendergast machine , and he was re @-@ elected in 1930 . Truman helped coordinate the " Ten Year Plan " , which transformed Jackson County and the Kansas City skyline with new public works projects , including an extensive series of roads and construction of a new Wight and Wight @-@ designed County Court building . Also in 1926 , he became president of the National Old Trails Road Association (NOTRA) . He oversaw the dedication in the late 1920s of a series of 12 Madonna of the Trail monuments honoring pioneer women , which were installed along the trail .

In 1933 , Truman was named Missouri 's director for the Federal Re @-@ Employment program (part of the Civil Works Administration) at the request of Postmaster General James Farley . This was payback to Pendergast for delivering the Kansas City vote to Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election . The appointment confirmed Pendergast 's control over federal patronage jobs in Missouri and marked the zenith of his power . It also created a relationship between Truman and Roosevelt aide Harry Hopkins and assured Truman 's avid support for the New Deal .

= = = As U.S. Senator from Missouri = = =

After serving as a county judge , Truman wanted to run for Governor or Congress , but Pendergast rejected these ideas . Truman thought that he might serve out his career in some well @-@ paying county sinecure , but circumstances changed when Pendergast reluctantly backed Truman as a Democratic candidate in the 1934 U.S. Senate election after four other potential candidates turned him down . In the Democratic primary , Truman defeated Congressmen John J. Cochran and Jacob L. Milligan , with the solid support of Jackson County , which was crucial to his candidacy , as were the contacts that he had made statewide as a county official . In the general election , Truman defeated incumbent Republican Roscoe C. Patterson by nearly 20 percentage points .

Truman assumed office with a reputation as " the senator from Pendergast . " He turned over patronage decisions to Pendergast , though Truman always maintained that he voted his conscience . He later defended the patronage decisions by saying that " by offering a little to the machine , [he] saved a lot " . In his first term , Truman spoke out against corporate greed and the dangers of Wall Street speculators and other moneyed special interests attaining too much influence

in national affairs . He was largely ignored by Democratic President Roosevelt and had trouble getting calls returned from the White House .

During the US Senate election in 1940 , United States Attorney Maurice Milligan (Jacob Milligan 's brother) and former governor Lloyd Stark both challenged Truman in the Democratic primary . Truman was politically weakened by Pendergast 's imprisonment for income tax evasion the previous year ; the senator had remained loyal , having claimed that Republican judges (not the Roosevelt administration) were responsible for the boss ' downfall . St. Louis party leader Robert E. Hannegan 's support of Truman proved crucial ; he later brokered the deal that put Truman on the national ticket . In the end , Stark and Milligan both split up the anti @-@ Pendergast vote in the Senate Democratic primary and Truman won by a total of 8 @,@ 000 votes . In the November election , Truman defeated Republican Manvel H. Davis by 51 ? 49 percent .

In late @-@ 1940 , Truman traveled to various military bases . The waste and profiteering which he saw led him to use his subcommittee chairmanship in the Committee on Military Affairs to begin investigations into abuses while the nation prepared for war . A separate committee was set up under Truman to conduct a formal investigation ; the Roosevelt administration supported this plan rather than weather a more hostile probe by the House of Representatives . Chairmanship of what came to be known as the Truman Committee made him a national figure . Activities of the Truman Committee ranged from criticizing the " dollar @-@ a @-@ year men " hired by the government , many of whom proved ineffective , to investigating a shoddily built New Jersey housing project for war workers . The committee is reported to have saved as much as \$ 15 billion ; its activities put Truman on the cover of Time magazine . According to the Senate 's historical minutes , in leading the committee , " Truman erased his earlier public image as an errand @-@ runner for Kansas City politicians " and " no senator ever gained greater political benefits from chairing a special investigating committee than did Missouri 's Harry S. Truman . "

If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia , and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany , and that way let them kill as many as possible although I don 't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances .

= = Vice presidency = =

Vice President Henry Wallace was popular among Democratic voters , but he was viewed as too far to the left and too friendly to labor for some of Roosevelt 's advisers . The President and several of his confidantes wanted to replace Wallace , knowing that Roosevelt might not live out a fourth term . Outgoing Democratic National Committee chairman Frank C. Walker , incoming chairman Hannegan , party treasurer Edwin W. Pauley , strategist Ed Flynn , Chicago Mayor Edward Joseph Kelly , and lobbyist George E. Allen all wanted to keep Wallace off the ticket . Roosevelt told party leaders that he would accept either Truman or Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas . State and city party leaders strongly preferred Truman , and Roosevelt agreed . Truman did not campaign for the Vice @-@ Presidential spot , though he welcomed the attention as evidence that he had become more than the " Senator from Pendergast " .

Truman 's nomination was dubbed the " Second Missouri Compromise " and was well received . The Roosevelt ? Truman ticket achieved a 432 ? 99 electoral @-@ vote victory in the election , defeating the Republican ticket of Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York and running mate Governor John Bricker of Ohio . Truman was sworn in as vice president on January 20 , 1945 .

Truman 's brief vice @-@ presidency was relatively uneventful . He cast his tie @-@ breaking vote as President of the Senate to confirm former Vice @-@ President Henry Wallace as Secretary of Commerce . Roosevelt rarely contacted him , even to inform him of major decisions ; the President and Vice President met alone together only twice during their time in office . In one of his first acts as vice president , Truman created some controversy when he attended the disgraced Pendergast 's funeral . He brushed aside the criticism , saying simply , " He was always my friend and I have always been his . " He had rarely discussed world affairs or domestic politics with Roosevelt ; he was uninformed about major initiatives relating to the war and the top @-@ secret Manhattan Project , which was about to test the world 's first atomic bomb . He was also photographed with

actress Lauren Bacall sitting atop the piano at the National Press Club as he played for soldiers .

Truman had been vice president for 82 days when President Roosevelt died on April 12 , 1945 . That afternoon , Truman presided over the Senate as usual . He had just adjourned the session for the day and was preparing to have a drink in House Speaker Sam Rayburn 's office when he received an urgent message to go immediately to the White House . Truman assumed that President Roosevelt wanted to meet with him , but Eleanor Roosevelt informed him that her husband had died after suffering a massive cerebral hemorrhage . Truman 's first concern was for Mrs. Roosevelt . He asked if there was anything that he could do for her , to which she replied , " Is there anything we can do for you ? You are the one in trouble now ! "

= = Presidency = =

= = First term (1945 ? 49) = = =

= = = Assuming office and the atomic bomb = = = =

Shortly after taking the oath of office , Truman spoke to reporters : " Boys , if you ever pray , pray for me now . I don 't know if you fellas ever had a load of hay fall on you , but when they told me what happened yesterday , I felt like the moon , the stars , and all the planets had fallen on me . "

Upon assuming the presidency , Truman asked all the members of FDR 's cabinet to remain in place , and told them that he was open to their advice . He emphasized a central principle of his administration : he would be the one making decisions , and they were to support him . Although Truman was told briefly on the afternoon of April 12 that the Allies had a new , highly destructive weapon , it was not until April 25 that Secretary of War Henry Stimson told him the details . Truman benefited from a honeymoon period after Roosevelt 's death , and from the Allies ' success in Europe , wrapping up the war there . Truman was pleased to issue the proclamation of V @-@ E Day on May 8 , 1945 , his 61st birthday .

We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world . It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era , after Noah and his fabulous Ark .

In the wake of Allied victory , Truman journeyed to Europe for the Potsdam Conference . He was there when he learned that the Trinity test of the first atomic bomb on July 16 had been successful . He hinted to Joseph Stalin that the U.S. was about to use a new kind of weapon against the Japanese . Though this was the first time the Soviets had been officially given information about the atomic bomb , Stalin was already aware of the bomb project , having learned about it (through espionage) long before Truman did .

In August , the Japanese government refused surrender demands as specifically outlined in the Potsdam Declaration and with the invasion of mainland Japan imminent , Truman approved the schedule for dropping the two available bombs . Truman always said that attacking Japan with atomic bombs saved many lives on both sides ; military estimates for the invasion of mainland Japan were that it could take a year and result in 250 @,@ 000 to 500 @,@ 000 American casualties . Hiroshima was bombed on August 6 , and Nagasaki three days later leaving 129 @,@ 000 ? 246 @,@ 000 dead . Japan agreed to surrender the following day .

Supporters of Truman 's decision argue that , given the tenacious Japanese defense of the outlying islands , the bombings saved hundreds of thousands of lives that would have been lost invading mainland Japan . Critics have argued that the use of nuclear weapons was inherently immoral . Truman strongly defended himself in his memoirs in 1955 ? 56 , stating that many lives could have been lost had the U.S. invaded mainland Japan . In 1963 he stood by his decision , telling a journalist " it was done to save 125 @,@ 000 youngsters on the American side and 125 @,@ 000 on the Japanese side from getting killed and that is what it did . It probably also saved a half million youngsters on both sides from being maimed for life . "

===== Strikes and economic upheaval =====

The end of World War II was followed by an uneasy transition from war to a peacetime economy . The costs of the war effort were enormous , and Truman was intent on decreasing government expenditures on the military as quickly as possible . Demobilizing the military and reducing the size of the various services was a cost @-@ saving priority . The effect of demobilization on the economy was unknown , but fears existed that the nation would slide back into a depression . A great deal of work had to be done to plan how best to transition to peacetime production of goods while avoiding mass unemployment for returning veterans . Government officials did not have consensus as to what economic course the postwar U.S. should steer . In addition , Roosevelt had not paid attention to Congress in his final years , and Truman faced a body where a combination of Republicans and conservative southern Democrats formed a powerful voting bloc .

The president was faced with the reawakening of labor @-@ management conflicts that had lain dormant during the war years , severe shortages in housing and consumer products , and widespread dissatisfaction with inflation , which at one point hit 6 % in a single month . Added to this polarized environment was a wave of destabilizing strikes in major industries . Truman 's response to them was generally seen as ineffective . A rapid increase in costs was fueled by the release of price controls on most items , and labor sought wage increases . A serious steel strike in January 1946 involving 800 @,@ 000 workers ? the largest in the nation 's history ? was followed by a coal strike in April and a rail strike in May . The public was angry , with a majority in polls favoring a ban on strikes by public service workers and a year 's moratorium on labor actions . Truman proposed legislation to draft striking workers into the Armed Forces , and in a dramatic personal appearance before Congress , was able to announce settlement of the rail strike . His proposal passed the House of Representatives , but failed in the Senate . For commodities where price controls remained , producers were often unwilling to sell at artificially low prices : farmers refused to sell grain for months in 1945 and 1946 until payments were significantly increased , even though grain was desperately needed , not only for domestic use , but to stave off starvation in Europe .

Although labor strife was muted after the settlement of the railway strike , it continued through Truman 's presidency . The President 's approval rating dropped from 82 % in the polls in January 1946 to 52 % by June . This dissatisfaction with the Truman administration 's policies led to large Democratic losses in the 1946 midterm elections , when Republicans took control of Congress for the first time since 1930 . The 80th Congress included Republican freshmen who would become prominent in the years to come , including Wisconsin Senator Joe McCarthy and California Congressman Richard Nixon . When Truman dropped to 32 % in the polls , Democratic Arkansas Senator William Fulbright suggested that Truman resign ; the President said that he did not care what Senator " Halfbright " said .

Truman cooperated closely with the Republican leaders on foreign policy , though he fought them bitterly on domestic issues . The power of the labor unions was significantly curtailed by the Taft ? Hartley Act , which was enacted over Truman 's veto . Truman twice vetoed bills to lower income tax rates in 1947 . Although the initial vetoes were sustained , Congress overrode his veto of a tax cut bill in 1948 . The parties did cooperate on some issues ; Congress passed the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 , making the Speaker of the House rather than the Secretary of State next in line to the presidency after the vice president .

As he readied for the 1948 election , Truman made clear his identity as a Democrat in the New Deal tradition , advocating national health insurance , the repeal of the Taft ? Hartley Act . He broke with the New Deal by initiating an aggressive civil rights program , which he termed a moral priority . Taken together , it constituted a broad legislative agenda that came to be called the " Fair Deal . " Truman 's proposals were not well received by Congress , even with renewed Democratic majorities in Congress after 1948 . The Solid South rejected civil rights , as those states still enforced segregation . Only one of the major Fair Deal bills , the Housing Act of 1949 , was ever enacted . On the other hand , the major New Deal programs still in operation were not repealed , and there were minor improvements and extensions in many of them .

=== Creation of United Nations , Marshall Plan , start of Cold War ===

As a Wilsonian internationalist , Truman strongly supported the creation of the United Nations , and included Eleanor Roosevelt on the delegation to the UN 's first General Assembly . With the Soviet Union expanding its sphere of influence through Eastern Europe , Truman and his foreign policy advisors took a hard line against the USSR . In this , he matched American public opinion , which quickly came to view the Soviets as intent upon world domination .

Although he claimed no personal expertise on foreign matters , Truman won bipartisan support for both the Truman Doctrine , which formalized a policy of Soviet containment , and the Marshall Plan , which aimed to help rebuild postwar Europe . To get Congress to spend the vast sums necessary to restart the moribund European economy , Truman used an ideological argument , arguing that Communism flourishes in economically deprived areas . As part of the U.S. Cold War strategy , Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947 and reorganized military forces by merging the Department of War and the Department of the Navy into the National Military Establishment (later the Department of Defense) and creating the U.S. Air Force . The act also created the CIA and the National Security Council . In 1952 , Truman secretly consolidated and empowered the cryptologic elements of the United States by creating the National Security Agency (NSA) .

=== Berlin airlift ===

On June 24 , 1948 , the Soviet Union blocked access to the three Western @-@ held sectors of Berlin . The Allies had never negotiated a deal to guarantee supply of the sectors deep within the Soviet @-@ occupied zone . The commander of the American occupation zone in Germany , General Lucius D. Clay , proposed sending a large armored column across the Soviet zone to West Berlin with instructions to defend itself if it were stopped or attacked . Truman believed this would entail an unacceptable risk of war . He approved Ernest Bevin 's plan to supply the blockaded city by air . On June 25 , the Allies initiated the Berlin Airlift , a campaign that delivered food and other supplies , such as coal , using military aircraft on a massive scale . Nothing like it had ever been attempted before , and no single nation had the capability , either logistically or materially , to have accomplished it . The airlift worked ; ground access was again granted on May 11 , 1949 . Nevertheless , the airlift continued for several months after that . The Berlin Airlift was one of Truman 's great foreign policy successes ; it significantly aided his election campaign in 1948 .

=== Recognition of Israel ===

Truman had long taken an interest in the history of the Middle East , and was sympathetic to Jews who sought a homeland in Mandatory Palestine . As a senator , he announced support for Zionism ; in 1943 he called for a homeland for those Jews who survived the Nazi regime . However , State Department officials were reluctant to offend the Arabs , who were opposed to the establishment of a Jewish state in the large region long populated and dominated culturally by Arabs . Secretary of Defense James Forrestal warned Truman of the importance of Saudi Arabian oil in another war ; Truman replied that he would decide his policy on the basis of justice , not oil . American diplomats with experience in the region were opposed , but Truman told them he had few Arabs among his constituents .

Palestine was secondary to the goal of protecting the " Northern Tier " of Greece , Turkey , and Iran from Communism , as promised by the Truman Doctrine . Weary of both the convoluted politics of the Middle East and pressures by Jewish leaders , Truman was undecided on his policy . He later cited as decisive in his recognition of the Jewish state the advice of his former business partner , Eddie Jacobson , a non @-@ religious Jew whom Truman absolutely trusted . Truman decided to recognize Israel over the objections of Secretary of State George Marshall , who feared it would hurt relations with the populous Arab states . Marshall believed the paramount threat to the U.S. was the Soviet Union and feared that Arab oil would be lost to the United States in the event of war ; he warned Truman that U.S. was " playing with fire with nothing to put it out " . Truman recognized the

State of Israel on May 14 , 1948 , eleven minutes after it declared itself a nation . Of his decision to recognize the Israeli state , Truman wrote in his memoirs : " Hitler had been murdering Jews right and left . I saw it , and I dream about it even to this day . The Jews needed some place where they could go . It is my attitude that the American government couldn 't stand idly by while the victims [of] Hitler 's madness are not allowed to build new lives . "

= = = 1948 election = = =

The 1948 presidential election is remembered for Truman 's stunning come @-@ from @-@ behind victory . In the spring of 1948 , Truman 's public approval rating stood at 36 % , and the president was nearly universally regarded as incapable of winning the general election . The " New Deal " operatives within the party ? including FDR 's son James ? tried to swing the Democratic nomination to General Dwight D. Eisenhower , a highly popular figure whose political views and party affiliation were totally unknown . Eisenhower emphatically refused to accept , and Truman outflanked opponents to his nomination .

At the 1948 Democratic National Convention , Truman attempted to unify the party with a vague civil rights plank in the party platform . His intention was to assuage the internal conflicts between the northern and southern wings of his party . Events overtook his efforts . A sharp address given by Mayor Hubert Humphrey of Minneapolis ? as well as the local political interests of a number of urban bosses ? convinced the Convention to adopt a stronger civil rights plank , which Truman approved wholeheartedly . All of Alabama 's delegates , and a portion of Mississippi 's , walked out of the convention in protest . Unfazed , Truman delivered an aggressive acceptance speech attacking the 80th Congress , which Truman called the " Do Nothing Congress , " and promising to win the election and " make these Republicans like it . "

Within two weeks of the convention , in 1948 Truman issued Executive Order 9981 , racially integrating the U.S. Armed Services and Executive Order 9980 to integrate federal agencies . Truman took a considerable political risk in backing civil rights , and many seasoned Democrats were concerned that the loss of Dixiecrat support might destroy the Democratic Party . South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond , a segregationist , declared his candidacy for the presidency on a Dixiecrat ticket and led a full @-@ scale revolt of Southern " states ' rights " proponents . This rebellion on the right was matched by one on the left , led by Wallace on the Progressive Party ticket . Immediately after its first post @-@ FDR convention , the Democratic Party seemed to be disintegrating . Victory in November seemed unlikely as the party was not simply split but divided three ways . For his running mate , Truman accepted Kentucky Senator Alben W. Barkley , though he really wanted Justice William O. Douglas , who turned down the nomination .

Truman 's political advisors described the political scene as " one unholy , confusing cacophony . " They told Truman to speak directly to the people , in a personal way . Campaign manager William J. Bray said Truman took this advice , and spoke personally and passionately , sometimes even setting aside his notes to talk to Americans " of everything that is in my heart and soul . "

The campaign was a 21 @,@ 928 @-@ mile (35 @,@ 290 km) presidential odyssey . In a personal appeal to the nation , Truman crisscrossed the U.S. by train ; his " whistle stop " speeches from the rear platform of the observation car , Ferdinand Magellan , came to represent his campaign . His combative appearances , such as those at the town square of Harrisburg , Illinois , captured the popular imagination and drew huge crowds . Six stops in Michigan drew a combined half @-@ million people ; a full million turned out for a New York City ticker @-@ tape parade .

The large , mostly spontaneous gatherings at Truman 's whistle @-@ stop events were an important sign of a change in momentum in the campaign , but this shift went virtually unnoticed by the national press corps . It continued reporting Republican Thomas Dewey 's apparent impending victory as a certainty . One reason for the press ' inaccurate projection was that polls were conducted primarily by telephone , but many people , including much of Truman 's populist base , did not yet own a telephone . This skewed the data to indicate a stronger support base for Dewey than existed . An unintended and undetected projection error may have contributed to the perception of Truman 's bleak chances . The three major polling organizations stopped polling well

before the November 2 election date ? Roper in September , and Crossley and Gallup in October ? thus failing to measure the period when Truman appears to have surged past Dewey .

In the end , Truman held his progressive Midwestern base , won most of the Southern states despite the civil rights plank , and squeaked through with narrow victories in a few critical states , notably Ohio , California , and Illinois . The final tally showed that the president had secured 303 electoral votes , Dewey 189 , and Thurmond only 39 . Henry Wallace got none . The defining image of the campaign came after Election Day , when an ecstatic Truman held aloft the erroneous front page of the Chicago Tribune with a huge headline proclaiming " Dewey Defeats Truman . "

= = = Second term (1949 ? 53) = = =

Truman 's second inauguration was the first ever televised nationally . His second term was grueling , as his opponents controlled Congress and his policy of rollback in Korea failed . The Soviet Union 's atomic bomb project progressed much faster than had been expected , and they detonated their first bomb on August 29 , 1949 . In response , on January 7 , 1953 , Truman announced the detonation of the first U.S. hydrogen bomb , which was much more powerful than what the Soviets had .

= = = = Korean War = = = =

On June 25 , 1950 , Kim Il @-@ sung 's Korean People 's Army invaded South Korea , starting the Korean War . In the early weeks of the war , the North Koreans easily pushed back their southern counterparts . Truman called for a naval blockade of Korea , only to learn that due to budget cutbacks , the U.S. Navy could not enforce such a measure . Truman promptly urged the United Nations to intervene ; it did , authorizing troops under the UN flag led by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur .

Truman decided that he did not need formal authorization from Congress , believing that most legislators supported his position ; this would come back to haunt him later , when the stalemated conflict was dubbed " Mr. Truman 's War " by legislators . However , on July 3 , 1950 , Truman did give Senate Majority Leader Scott W. Lucas a draft resolution titled " Joint Resolution Expressing Approval of the Action Taken in Korea " . Lucas said Congress supported the use of force , that the formal resolution would pass but was unnecessary , and that the consensus in Congress was to acquiesce . Truman responded that he did not want " to appear to be trying to get around Congress and use extra @-@ Constitutional powers , " and added that it was " up to Congress whether such a resolution should be introduced . "

By August 1950 , U.S. troops pouring into South Korea under UN auspices were able to stabilize the situation . Responding to criticism over readiness , Truman fired his Secretary of Defense , Louis A. Johnson , replacing him with the retired General Marshall . With UN approval , Truman decided on a " rollback " policy ? conquest of North Korea . UN forces led by General Douglas MacArthur led the counterattack , scoring a stunning surprise victory with an amphibious landing at the Battle of Inchon that nearly trapped the invaders . UN forces marched north , toward the Yalu River boundary with China , with the goal of reuniting Korea under UN auspices .

However , China surprised the UN forces with a large @-@ scale invasion in November . The UN forces were forced back to below the 38th parallel , then recovered . By early 1951 the war became a fierce stalemate at about the 38th parallel where it had begun . Truman rejected MacArthur 's request to attack Chinese supply bases north of the Yalu , but MacArthur promoted his plan to Republican House leader Joseph Martin , who leaked it to the press . Truman was gravely concerned that further escalation of the war might lead to open conflict with the Soviet Union , which was already supplying weapons and providing warplanes (with Korean markings and Soviet aircrew) . Therefore , on April 11 , 1951 , Truman fired MacArthur from his commands .

The dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur was among the least politically popular decisions in presidential history . Truman 's approval ratings plummeted , and he faced calls for his impeachment from , among others , Senator Robert A. Taft . Fierce criticism from virtually all quarters accused

Truman of refusing to shoulder the blame for a war gone sour and blaming his generals instead . Others , including Eleanor Roosevelt , supported and applauded Truman 's decision . MacArthur meanwhile returned to the U.S. to a hero 's welcome , and addressed a joint session of Congress , a speech which the President called " a bunch of damn bullshit . "

The war remained a frustrating stalemate for two years , with over 30 @, @ 000 Americans killed , until an armistice ended the fighting in 1953 . In February 1952 , Truman 's approval mark stood at 22 % according to Gallup polls , which was , until George W. Bush in 2008 , the all @-@ time lowest approval mark for an active American president .

= = = = Worldwide defense = = = =

The escalation of the Cold War was highlighted by Truman 's approval of NSC @-@ 68 , a secret statement of foreign policy . It called for tripling the defense budget , and the globalization and militarization of containment policy whereby the U.S. and its NATO allies would respond militarily to actual Soviet expansion . The document was drafted by Paul Nitze , who consulted State and Defense officials ; it was formally approved by President Truman as official national strategy after the war began in Korea . It called for partial mobilization of the U.S. economy to build armaments faster than the Soviets . The plan called for strengthening Europe , weakening the Soviet Union , and for building up the U.S. both militarily and economically .

Early in Truman 's second term , his former Secretary of Defense Forrestal died soon after his retirement . Forrestal had become exhausted through years of hard labor during and after the war , and began to suffer depression . He retired in March 1949 ; soon after , he was hospitalized but he committed suicide in May .

Truman was a strong supporter of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) , which established a formal peacetime military alliance with Canada and democratic European nations that had not fallen under Soviet control following World War II . The treaty establishing it was widely popular and easily passed the Senate in 1949 ; Truman appointed General Eisenhower as commander . NATO 's goals were to contain Soviet expansion in Europe and to send a clear message to communist leaders that the world 's democracies were willing and able to build new security structures in support of democratic ideals . The U.S. , Britain , France , Italy , the Netherlands , Belgium , Luxembourg , Norway , Denmark , Portugal , Iceland , and Canada were the original treaty signatories . The alliance resulted in the Soviets establishing a similar alliance , called the Warsaw Pact .

General Marshall was Truman 's principal adviser on foreign policy matters , influencing such decisions as the U.S. choice against offering direct military aid to Chiang Kai @-@ shek and his Nationalist Chinese forces in the Chinese Civil War with their communist opponents . Marshall 's opinion was contrary to the counsel of almost all of Truman 's other advisers ? he thought that even propping up Chiang 's forces would drain U.S. resources in Europe needed to deter the Soviets . When the communists took control of the mainland , driving the Nationalists to Taiwan and establishing the People 's Republic of China , Truman would have been willing to maintain some relationship between the U.S. and the new government , but Mao was unwilling . On June 27 , 1950 , after the outbreak of fighting in Korea , Truman ordered the U.S. Navy 's Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait to prevent further conflict between the communist government on the China mainland and the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan .

= = = = Soviet espionage and McCarthyism = = = =

In August 1948 , Whittaker Chambers , a former spy for the Soviets and a senior editor at Time magazine , testified before the House Un @-@ American Activities Committee (HUAC) . He said that an underground communist network had been working within the U.S. government since the 1930s , of which Chambers had been a member , along with Alger Hiss , until recently a senior State Department official . Although Hiss denied the allegations , he was convicted in January 1950 for perjury for his denials under oath . The Soviet Union 's success in exploding an atomic weapon in

1949 and the fall of the nationalist Chinese the same year led many Americans to conclude that subversion by Soviet spies was responsible , and to demand that communists be rooted out from the government and other places of influence . However , Truman did not fully share such opinions . He famously called the Hiss trial a " red herring , " and the Justice Department was moving to indict Chambers instead of Hiss for perjury .

Following Hiss ' conviction , Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that he stood by him . This and other events , such as the revelation that British atomic bomb scientist Klaus Fuchs was a spy , led current and former members of HUAC , including Congressman Nixon of California and Karl Mundt of South Dakota , to decry Truman and his administration , especially the State Department , as soft on communism . Wisconsin Senator McCarthy used a Lincoln Day speech in Wheeling , West Virginia to accuse the State Department of harboring communists , and rode the controversy to political fame . In the following years , Republicans used Hiss ' conviction to castigate the Democrats for harboring communists in government ; Congressman Nixon gained election to the Senate in 1950 on an anti @-@ communist platform , defeating the liberal Helen Gahagan Douglas , whom he called " the Pink Lady . "

Charges that Soviet agents had infiltrated the government were believed by 78 % of the people in 1946 , and became a major campaign issue for Eisenhower in 1952 . Truman was reluctant to take a more radical stance because he feared that the full disclosure of the extent of the communist infiltration would reflect badly on the Democratic Party . It was a time of the Red Scare . In a 1956 interview , Truman denied that Alger Hiss had ever been a communist , a full six years after Hiss ' conviction for perjury on this topic . In 1949 Truman described American communist leaders , whom his administration was prosecuting , as " traitors , " but in 1950 he vetoed the McCarran Internal Security Act . It was passed over his veto . Truman would later state in private conversations with friends that his creation of a loyalty program had been a " terrible " mistake .

= = = White House renovations ; assassination attempt = = =

In 1948 , Truman ordered an addition to the exterior of the White House : a second @-@ floor balcony in the south portico , which came to be known as the " Truman Balcony . " The addition was unpopular ; some said it spoiled the appearance of the south facade , but it gave the First Family more living space . The work uncovered structural faults which led engineering experts to conclude that the building , much of it over 130 years old , was in a dangerously dilapidated condition . That August , a section of floor collapsed , and Truman 's bedroom and bathroom were closed as unsafe . No public announcement about the serious structural problems of the White House was made until after the 1948 election had been won . By then Truman had been informed that his new balcony was the only part of the building that was sound .

The Truman family moved into nearby Blair House during the renovations . As the newer West Wing , including the Oval Office , remained open , Truman walked to and from his work across the street each morning and afternoon . In due course , the decision was made to demolish and rebuild the whole interior of the main White House , as well as excavate new basement levels and underpin the foundations . The famous exterior of the structure was buttressed and retained while the extensive renovations proceeded inside . The work lasted from December 1949 until March 1952 .

On November 1 , 1950 , Puerto Rican nationalists Griselio Torresola and Oscar Collazo attempted to assassinate Truman at Blair House . The attack drew new attention to security concerns surrounding Truman 's residence at Blair House . He had jumped up from a nap , and was watching the gunfight from his open bedroom window until Secret Service agents shouted at him to take cover . On the street outside the residence , Torresola mortally wounded a White House policeman , Leslie Coffelt . Before he died , the officer shot and killed Torresola . Collazo was wounded , stopped before he entered the house . He was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death in 1952 . Truman commuted his sentence to life in prison . To try to settle the question of Puerto Rican independence , Truman allowed a plebiscite in Puerto Rico in 1952 to determine the status of its relationship to the U.S. Nearly 82 % of the people voted in favor of a new constitution for the Estado Libre Asociado , a continued ' associated free state.'

=== Steel and coal strikes ===

In response to a labor / management impasse arising from bitter disagreements over wage and price controls , Truman instructed his Secretary of Commerce , Charles W. Sawyer , to take control of a number of the nation 's steel mills in April 1952 . Truman cited his authority as Commander in Chief and the need to maintain an uninterrupted supply of steel for munitions to be used in the war in Korea . The Supreme Court found Truman 's actions unconstitutional , however , and reversed the order in a major separation of powers decision , *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952) . The 6 ? 3 decision , which held that Truman 's assertion of authority was too vague and was not rooted in any legislative action by Congress , was delivered by a Court composed entirely of Justices appointed by either Truman or Roosevelt . The high court 's reversal of Truman 's order was one of the notable defeats of his presidency .

=== Scandals and controversies ===

In 1950 , the Senate , led by Estes Kefauver , investigated numerous charges of corruption among senior administration officials , some of whom received fur coats and deep freezers in exchange for favors . A large number of employees of the Internal Revenue Bureau (today the IRS) were accepting bribes ; 166 employees either resigned or were fired in 1950 , with many soon facing indictment . When Attorney General J. Howard McGrath fired the special prosecutor in early 1952 for being too zealous , Truman fired McGrath . Truman submitted a reorganization plan to reform the IRB ; Congress passed it , but the corruption was a major issue in the 1952 presidential election .

On December 6 , 1950 , Washington Post music critic Paul Hume wrote a critical review of a concert by the president 's daughter Margaret Truman :

Miss Truman is a unique American phenomenon with a pleasant voice of little size and fair quality ... [she] cannot sing very well ... is flat a good deal of the time ? more last night than at any time we have heard her in past years ... has not improved in the years we have heard her ... [and] still cannot sing with anything approaching professional finish .

Harry Truman wrote a scathing response :

I 've just read your lousy review of Margaret 's concert . I 've come to the conclusion that you are an ' eight ulcer man on four ulcer pay . ' It seems to me that you are a frustrated old man who wishes he could have been successful . When you write such poppy @-@ cock as was in the back section of the paper you work for it shows conclusively that you 're off the beam and at least four of your ulcers are at work . Some day I hope to meet you . When that happens you 'll need a new nose , a lot of beefsteak for black eyes , and perhaps a supporter below ! Pegler , a gutter snipe , is a gentleman alongside you . I hope you 'll accept that statement as a worse insult than a reflection on your ancestry .

Truman was criticized by many for the letter . However , he pointed out that he wrote it as a loving father and not as the president .

In 1951 , William M. Boyle , Truman 's long @-@ time friend and chairman of the Democratic National Committee , was forced to resign after being charged with financial corruption .

=== Civil rights ===

A 1947 report by the Truman administration titled *To Secure These Rights* presented a detailed ten @-@ point agenda of civil rights reforms . In February 1948 , the president submitted a civil rights agenda to Congress that proposed creating several federal offices devoted to issues such as voting rights and fair employment practices . This provoked a storm of criticism from Southern Democrats in the runup to the national nominating convention , but Truman refused to compromise , saying : " My forebears were Confederates ... but my very stomach turned over when I had learned that Negro soldiers , just back from overseas , were being dumped out of Army trucks in Mississippi and beaten . " Tales of the abuse , violence , and persecution suffered by many African American veterans upon

their return from World War II infuriated Truman , and were a major factor in his decision to issue Executive Order 981 , in July 1948 , desegregating and requiring equal opportunity in the Armed Forces . After several years of planning , recommendations and revisions between Truman , the Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity and the various branches of the military , Army units became racially integrated .

Another executive order , also in 1948 , made it illegal to discriminate against persons applying for civil service positions based on race . A third , in 1951 , established the Committee on Government Contract Compliance (CGCC) . This committee ensured that defense contractors did not discriminate because of race .

= = = Administration and cabinet = = =

All of the cabinet members when Truman became president in 1945 had been appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt .

= = = Judicial appointments = = =

= = = = Supreme Court = = = =

Truman appointed the following Justices to the Supreme Court :

Harold Hitz Burton ? 1945

Fred M. Vinson (Chief Justice) ? 1946

Tom C. Clark ? 1949

Sherman Minton ? 1949

Truman 's judicial appointments have been called by critics " inexcusable . " A former Truman aide confided that it was the weakest aspect of Truman 's presidency . The New York Times condemned the appointments of Tom C. Clark and Sherman Minton in particular as examples of cronyism and favoritism for unqualified candidates .

The four justices appointed by Truman joined with Justices Felix Frankfurter , Robert H. Jackson , and Stanley Reed to create a substantial seven @-@ member conservative bloc on the Supreme Court . This returned the court for a time to the conservatism of the 1920s .

= = = = Other courts = = = =

In addition to his four Supreme Court appointments , Truman appointed 27 judges to the courts of appeals , and 101 judges to federal district courts .

= = = International trips = = =

Truman made five international trips during his presidency :

Three months after ascending to the presidency , he made his only trans @-@ Atlantic trip as president to participate in the Potsdam Conference with British Prime Ministers Churchill and Attlee and Soviet Premier Stalin to discuss how to administer the defeated Nazi Germany .

In August 1946 he travelled to Hamilton , Bermuda , where he met with Governor General Ralph Leatham and inspected U.S. military facilities on the island .

In March 1947 he made a state visit to Mexico City , Mexico , where he met with President Miguel Alemán Valdés .

In June 1947 he travelled to Ottawa , Ontario , Canada for an official Visit with Governor General Harold Alexander and Prime Minister Mackenzie King .

In September 1947 he made a state visit to Rio de Janeiro , Brazil , where he addressed Inter @-@ American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security and the Brazilian Congress .

He only left the continental United States on two other occasions (to Puerto Rico , the Virgin Islands , Guantanamo Bay Naval Base , Cuba , February 20 ? March 5 , 1948 ; and to Wake Island , October 11 ? 18 , 1950) during his nearly eight years in office .

= = = 1952 election = = =

In 1951 , the U.S. ratified the 22nd Amendment , making a president ineligible for election to a third term or for election to a second full term after serving more than two remaining years of a term of a previously elected president . The latter clause would have applied to Truman 's situation in 1952 except that a grandfather clause in the amendment explicitly excluded the amendment from applying to the incumbent president .

At the time of the 1952 New Hampshire primary , no candidate had won Truman 's backing . His first choice , Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson , had declined to run ; Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson had also turned Truman down , Vice President Barkley was considered too old , and Truman distrusted and disliked Senator Kefauver , who had made a name for himself by his investigations of the Truman administration scandals . Truman had hoped to recruit General Eisenhower as a Democratic candidate , but found him more interested in seeking the Republican nomination . Accordingly , Truman let his name be entered in the New Hampshire primary by supporters . The highly unpopular Truman was handily defeated by Kefauver ; 18 days later the president announced he would not seek a second full term . Truman was eventually able to persuade Stevenson to run , and the governor gained the nomination at the 1952 Democratic National Convention .

Eisenhower gained the Republican nomination , with Senator Nixon as his running mate , and campaigned against what he denounced as Truman 's failures : " Korea , Communism and Corruption " . He pledged to clean up the " mess in Washington , " and promised to " go to Korea . " Eisenhower defeated Stevenson decisively in the general election , ending 20 years of Democratic presidents . While Truman and Eisenhower had previously been good friends , Truman felt betrayed that Eisenhower did not denounce Joseph McCarthy during the campaign . Similarly , Eisenhower was outraged when Truman , who made a whistlestop tour in support of Stevenson , accused the former general of disregarding " sinister forces ... Anti @-@ Semitism , anti @-@ Catholicism , and anti @-@ foreignism " within the Republican Party . Eisenhower was so outraged he threatened not to make the customary ride down Pennsylvania Avenue with the departing president before the inauguration , but to meet Truman at the steps to the Capitol , where the swearing @-@ in takes place .

= = Post @-@ presidency = =

Upon leaving the presidency , Truman returned to Independence , Missouri , to live at the Wallace home he and Bess had shared for years with her mother . Once out of office , Truman quickly decided that he did not wish to be on any corporate payroll , believing that taking advantage of such financial opportunities would diminish the integrity of the nation 's highest office . He also turned down numerous offers for commercial endorsements . Since his earlier business ventures had proved unsuccessful , he had no personal savings . As a result , he faced financial challenges . Once Truman left the White House , his only income was his old army pension : \$ 112 @. @ 56 per month . Former members of Congress and the federal courts received a federal retirement package ; President Truman himself ensured that former servants of the executive branch of government received similar support . In 1953 , however , there was no such benefit package for former presidents , and he received no pension for his Senate service .

Truman took out a personal loan from a Missouri bank shortly after leaving office , and then set about establishing another precedent for future former chief executives : a book deal for his memoirs of his time in office . Ulysses S. Grant had overcome similar financial issues with his own memoirs , but the book had been published posthumously , and he had declined to write about life in the White House in any detail . For the memoirs , Truman received only a flat payment of \$ 670 @, @ 000 , and had to pay two @-@ thirds of that in tax ; he calculated he got \$ 37 @, @ 000 after he paid his

assistants . However , the memoirs were a commercial and critical success ; they were published in two volumes in 1955 and 1956 by Doubleday (Garden City , N.Y) and Hodder & Stoughton (London) : Memoirs by Harry S. Truman : Year of Decisions and Memoirs by Harry S. Truman : Years of Trial and Hope .

The former president was quoted in 1957 as saying to then @-@ House Majority Leader John McCormack , " Had it not been for the fact that I was able to sell some property that my brother , sister , and I inherited from our mother , I would practically be on relief , but with the sale of that property I am not financially embarrassed . " The following year , Congress passed the Former Presidents Act , offering a \$ 25 @,@ 000 yearly pension to each former president , and it is likely that Truman 's financial status played a role in the law 's enactment . The one other living former president at the time , Herbert Hoover , also took the pension , even though he did not need the money ; reportedly , he did so to avoid embarrassing Truman .

Truman 's predecessor , Franklin D. Roosevelt , had organized his own presidential library , but legislation to enable future presidents to do something similar had not been enacted . Truman worked to garner private donations to build a presidential library , which he donated to the federal government to maintain and operate ? a practice adopted by his successors . He testified before Congress to have money appropriated to have presidential papers copied and organized , and was proud of the bill 's passage in 1957 . Max Skidmore , in his book on the life of former presidents , noted that Truman was a well @-@ read man , especially in history . Skidmore added that the presidential papers legislation and the founding of his library " was the culmination of his interest in history . Together they constitute an enormous contribution to the United States ? one of the greatest of any former president . "

Truman supported Adlai Stevenson 's second bid for the White House in 1956 , although he had initially favored Democratic Governor W. Averell Harriman of New York . He continued to campaign for Democratic senatorial candidates for many years . Upon turning 80 in 1964 , Truman was feted in Washington , and addressed the Senate , availing himself of a new rule that allowed former presidents to be granted privilege of the floor . After a fall in his home in late 1964 , his physical condition declined . In 1965 , President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Medicare bill at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum and gave the first two Medicare cards to Truman and his wife Bess to honor the former president 's fight for government health care while in office .

= = Death = =

On December 5 , 1972 , Truman was admitted to Kansas City 's Research Hospital and Medical Center with lung congestion from pneumonia . He developed multiple organ failure and died at 7 : 50 am on December 26 at the age of 88 . Bess Truman opted for a simple private service at the library for her husband rather than a state funeral in Washington . A week after the funeral , foreign dignitaries and Washington officials attended a memorial service at Washington National Cathedral . Bess died in 1982 ; they both are buried at the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum in Independence .

= = Tributes and legacy = =

= = = Legacy = = =

Citing continuing divisions within the Democratic Party , the ongoing Cold War , and the boom and bust cycle , an American Political Science Association prize @-@ winning 1952 book stated that " after seven years of Truman 's hectic , even furious , activity the nation seemed to be about on the same general spot as when he first came to office ... Nowhere in the whole Truman record can one point to a single , decisive break @-@ through ... All his skills and energies ? and he was among our hardest @-@ working Presidents ? were directed to standing still " . When he left office in 1953 , Truman was one of the most unpopular chief executives in history . His job approval rating of 22 %

in the Gallup Poll of February 1952 was lower than Richard Nixon 's 24 % in August 1974 , the month that Nixon resigned .

American public feeling towards Truman grew steadily warmer with the passing years ; as early as 1962 , a poll of 75 historians conducted by Arthur M. Schlesinger , Sr. ranked Truman among the " near great " presidents . The period following his death consolidated a partial rehabilitation of his legacy among both historians and members of the public . Truman died when the nation was consumed with crises in Vietnam and Watergate , and his death brought a new wave of attention to his political career . In the early and mid @-@ 1970s , Truman captured the popular imagination much as he had in 1948 , this time emerging as a kind of political folk hero , a president who was thought to exemplify an integrity and accountability many observers felt was lacking in the Nixon White House . This public reassessment of Truman was aided by the popularity of a book of reminiscences which Truman had told to journalist Merle Miller beginning in 1961 , with the agreement that they would not be published until after Truman 's death .

Truman had his latter @-@ day critics as well . After a review of information available to Truman about the presence of espionage activities in the U.S. government , Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan concluded that Truman was " almost willfully obtuse " concerning the danger of American communism . In 2010 , historian Alonzo Hamby concluded that " Harry Truman remains a controversial president . " However , since leaving office , Truman has fared well in polls ranking the presidents . He has never been listed lower than ninth , and was ranked fifth in a C @-@ SPAN poll in 2009 .

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused Truman advocates to claim vindication for Truman 's decisions in the postwar period . According to Truman biographer Robert Dallek , " His contribution to victory in the cold war without a devastating nuclear conflict elevated him to the stature of a great or near @-@ great president . " The 1992 publication of David McCullough 's favorable biography of Truman further cemented the view of Truman as a highly regarded Chief Executive . According to historian Daniel R. McCoy in his book on the Truman presidency ,

Harry Truman himself gave a strong and far @-@ from @-@ incorrect impression of being a tough , concerned and direct leader . He was occasionally vulgar , often partisan , and usually nationalistic ... On his own terms , Truman can be seen as having prevented the coming of a third world war and having preserved from Communist oppression much of what he called the free world . Yet clearly he largely failed to achieve his Wilsonian aim of securing perpetual peace , making the world safe for democracy , and advancing opportunities for individual development internationally .

= = = Sites and honors = = =

In 1956 , Truman traveled to Europe with his wife . In England , he met with Churchill and received an honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree from Oxford University . Across Britain he was hailed ; London 's Daily Telegraph characterized Truman as the " Living and kicking symbol of everything that everybody likes best about the United States . " In 1959 , he was given a 50 @-@ year award by the Masons , recognizing his longstanding involvement : he was initiated on February 9 , 1909 into the Belton Masonic Lodge in Missouri . In 1911 , he helped establish the Grandview Lodge , and he served as its first Worshipful Master . In September 1940 , during his Senate re @-@ election campaign , Truman was elected Grand Master of the Missouri Grand Lodge of Freemasonry ; Truman said later that the Masonic election assured his victory in the general election . In 1945 , he was made a 33 ° Sovereign Grand Inspector General and an Honorary Member of the supreme council at the Supreme Council A.A.S.R. Southern Jurisdiction Headquarters in Washington D.C. Truman was also a member of Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and a card @-@ carrying member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans . Two of his relatives were Confederate soldiers .

In 1975 , the Truman Scholarship was created as a federal program to honor U.S. college students who exemplified dedication to public service and leadership in public policy . In 2004 , the President Harry S. Truman Fellowship in National Security Science and Engineering was created as a distinguished postdoctoral three @-@ year appointment at Sandia National Laboratories . In 2001 ,

the University of Missouri established the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs to advance the study and practice of governance . The University of Missouri 's Missouri Tigers athletic programs have an official mascot named Truman the Tiger . On July 1 , 1996 , Northeast Missouri State University became Truman State University ? to mark its transformation from a teachers ' college to a highly selective liberal arts university and to honor the only Missourian to become president . A member institution of the City Colleges of Chicago , Harry S Truman College in Chicago , Illinois , is named in his honor for his dedication to public colleges and universities . In 2000 , the headquarters for the State Department , built in the 1930s but never officially named , was dedicated as the Harry S Truman Building .

Despite Truman 's attempt to curtail the naval carrier arm , which led to the 1949 Revolt of the Admirals , an aircraft carrier is named after him . The USS Harry S. Truman (CVN @-@ 75) was christened on September 7 , 1996 . The 129th Field Artillery Regiment is designated " Truman 's Own " in recognition of Truman 's service as commander of its D Battery during World War I.

In 1984 , Truman was posthumously awarded the United States Congressional Gold Medal . In 1991 , he was inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians , and a bronze bust depicting him is on permanent display in the rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol . In 2006 , Thomas Daniel , grandson of the Trumans , accepted a star on the Missouri Walk of Fame to honor his late grandfather . In 2007 , John Truman , a nephew , accepted a star for Bess Truman . The Walk of Fame is in Marshfield , Missouri , a city Truman visited in 1948 . Other sites associated with Truman include :

Harry S. Truman National Historic Site includes the Wallace House at 219 N. Delaware in Independence and the family farmhouse at Grandview , Missouri (Truman sold most of the farm for Kansas City suburban development including the Truman Corners Shopping Center) .

Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site is the house where Truman was born and spent 11 months in Lamar , Missouri .

Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum ? The Presidential library in Independence

Harry S. Truman Little White House ? Truman 's winter getaway at Key West , Florida

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