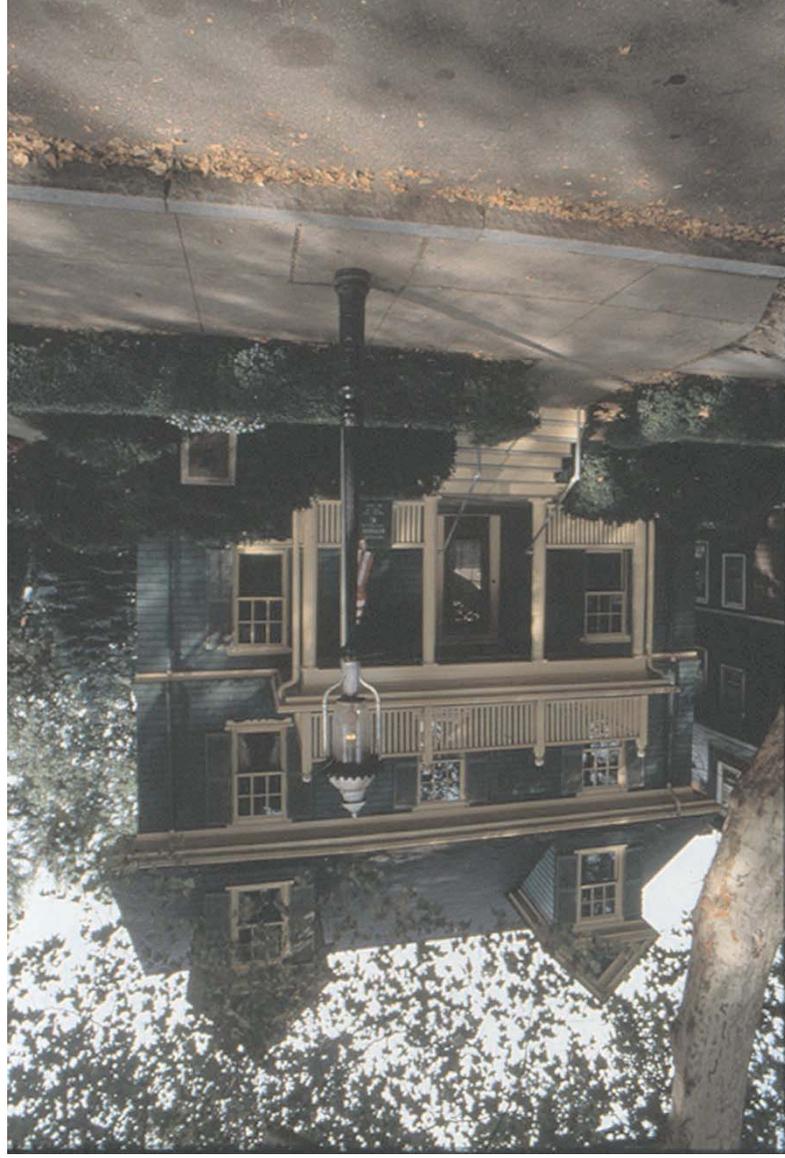


## Birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy

President Kennedy was born and spent his early childhood at 83 Beals Street in Brookline, Massachusetts. His parents, Joe and Rose Kennedy, bought this house just before they were married in 1914. "There was a sense of openness in the neighborhood," Mrs. Kennedy remembers, "with a vacant lot on one side of us and another across the street, and fine big shade trees lining the sidewalks."

Four of the nine Kennedy children were born while the family lived here - Joe Jr., Jack, Rosemary, and Kathleen. Jack was 3 1/2 years old when his parents sold the house at 83 Beals Street and moved to a larger home in the same neighborhood, where they lived until 1927.



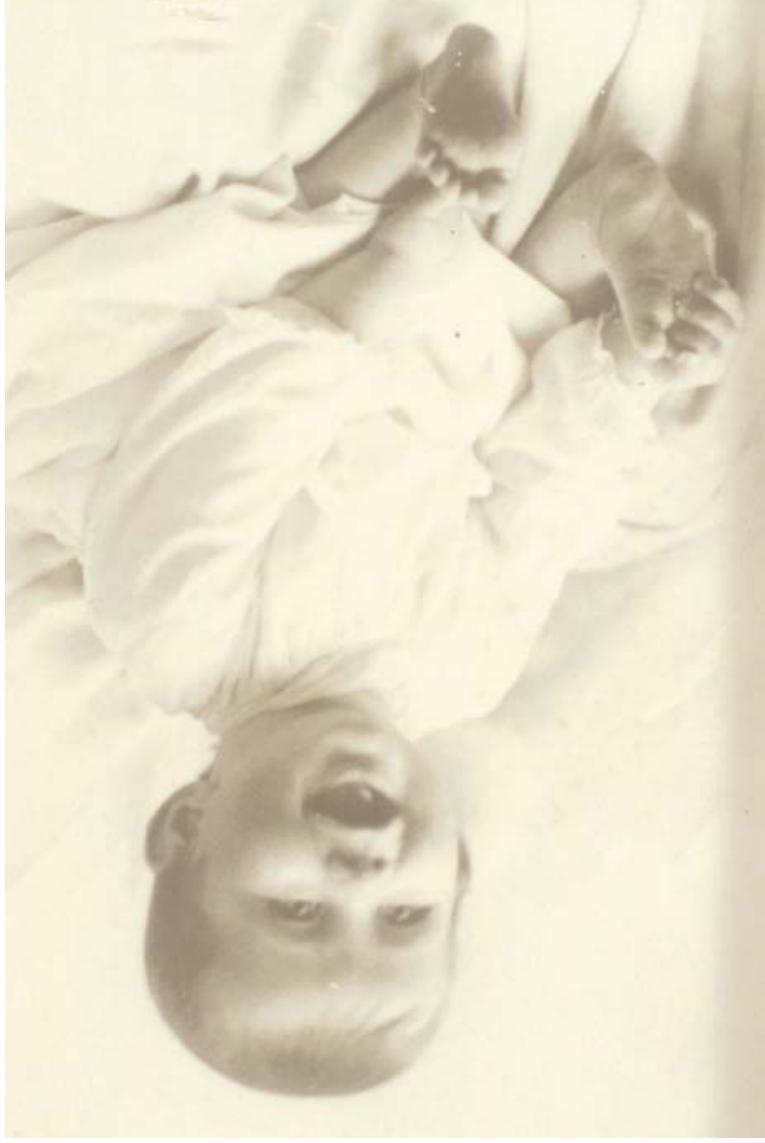
83 Beals Street, Brookline, Massachusetts  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**John F. Kennedy**  
b. May 29, 1917 - 3:00 p.m.

*“When you hold your baby in your arms the first time and you think of all the things you can say and do to influence him it’s a tremendous responsibility. What you do with him and for him can influence not only him, but everyone he meets and not for a day or a month or a year but for time and eternity.*

*Years later, when Jack was elected president, I thought how fortunate I was out of all the millions of mothers in the United States to be the one to have her son inaugurated president..”*

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1969  
From audio tour of birthplace

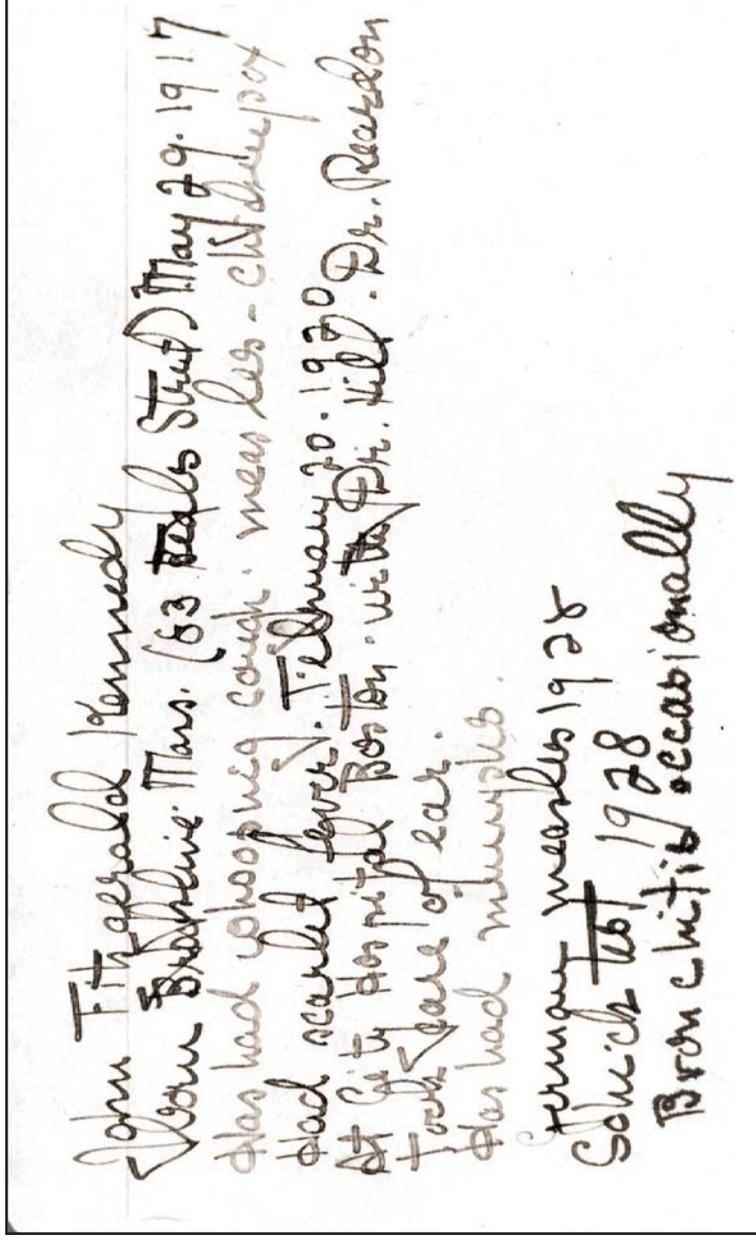


John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Six month baby photo  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## Health Cards

In all, Joe and Rose Kennedy had nine children. With each new member of the Kennedy family, an additional section was inserted into the small brown box that held the health records of all the children. Rose recorded important information about each of the children on note cards - symptoms of illness, weight, diet, and vaccines.

According to Mrs. Kennedy, "each card evokes a biography." The cards on Joe Jr. show that he was a healthy infant and child. And while Jack was a healthy baby, later entries reveal that his childhood was filled with many sicknesses. Scarlet fever, a very dangerous disease, nearly took Jack's life when he was not quite three years old. Fortunately, Jack recovered, but most of his life he continued to battle numerous health complications.



John Fitzgerald Kennedy  
New Rochelle, N.Y. (83 Teals Street) May 29, 1917  
Has had whooping cough. measles - childhood  
had scarlet fever. February 20, 1920  
At City Hospital Boston with Dr. Will. Dr. Reardon  
Took care of ear.  
Has had mumps.  
Stomach troubles 1928  
Schick test 1928  
Bronchitis occasionally

File card for John Fitzgerald Kennedy  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## Reading Adventure Books

Jack Kennedy was often sick when he was a boy. Television was not available to keep him occupied while he recovered. Instead, he read books. Stories of adventure were his favorite. Using his imagination, he would explore the world with story book characters. Some of his favorite adventure books were *King Arthur and the Round Table*, *Treasure Island*, *Billy Whiskers*, *Peter Pan*, *Black Beauty*, *The Jungle Book*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Ivanhoe*. Jack's mother, Rose Kennedy, considered him to be a "natural reader." "*He gobbled books*," she said. This love of reading stayed with him throughout his life.



Nursery, 88 Beals Street, Brookline, Massachusetts  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## Joe Jr. and Jack Kennedy

Joe and Rose Kennedy held high expectations for all their children, but especially for the two oldest siblings. Mrs. Kennedy believed, "In a family, all the children are different. The oldest boys usually take more responsibility than the others. Bring up the oldest ones the way you want them all to go." Joe Jr. and Jack were expected to set good examples for the younger Kennedy children.

The eldest son, Joe Jr., was a natural leader both physically and intellectually. Described as "strong and glowingly handsome with dark blue eyes and a sturdy frame," Joe was the favored child and full of promise. Jack, on the other hand, was sickly and small for his age. His family joked that a mosquito took a big risk in biting him! Jack's size didn't prevent him from competing with his older, stronger brother. Aside from their competitiveness with one another, Joe Jr. and Jack were incredibly loyal brothers.



Joe Jr. and Jack Kennedy, 83 Beals Street, c. 1919  
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

## Young Jack Kennedy

Jack Kennedy began kindergarten at the Edward Devotion School, a public elementary school down the street from his house. Edward Devotion School had a reputation for academic excellence, but Jack Kennedy often preferred daydreams to lessons. When he was six years old, Jack ran home from school to warn his mother that his teacher was coming to talk to her about his idleness. "You know, I'm getting on all right," he said, "and if you study too much, you're liable to go crazy!"

In 1924, Jack left the Devotion School to begin classes at Dexter School, a private institution designed to prepare young boys for a future Ivy League education. At Dexter, Jack Kennedy studied history, geography, math, science, English, reading, and penmanship. He did well in history and English, but not so well in math and science, and was terrible at spelling. In addition to academics, part of every school day was devoted to organized sports - field and ice hockey, tennis, soccer, baseball, and football. At age nine, Jack was chosen as captain and quarterback of Dexter's football team.



Jack Kennedy, Dexter Academy football team, 1926  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

The Kennedy family sold their first home at 83 Beals Street in 1920. The house passed to various owners over the next few decades. In 1961, the year of President Kennedy's inauguration, the Town of Brookline marked the site with a commemorative plaque. Five years later, the Kennedys purchased 83 Beals Street and restored it as a memorial to President Kennedy following his death. In making the donation of the house to the National Park Service, Rose Kennedy wrote, *"It is our intention and hope to make a gift of this home to the American people so that future generations will be able to visit it and...get a better appreciation of the history of this wonderful country."* John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site was established in 1969.



Rose Kennedy presenting 83 Beals Street deed to the American people, 1969  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE