



Foundation Document Overview

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park

Texas



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of LYNDON B. JOHNSON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK is to protect the historic structures and Texas Hill Country landscapes linked to the ancestry, life, and legacy of President Johnson and provide opportunities for visitors to compellingly experience these places that shaped the personality, character, and political philosophy of Lyndon Johnson throughout his life and that served as the setting for a remote White House during his presidency.

Significance

Significance statements express why Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Lyndon B. Johnson conducted his official duties as president from his home on the LBJ Ranch for more than one-quarter of his presidency. Johnson used jet aircraft and other technological advancements to become the first American president to work “virtually” from the remote location of his Texas ranch.
- The historic setting of the Boyhood Home and Johnson Settlement areas in Johnson City, Texas, reflects President Lyndon B. Johnson’s humble origins and the importance of community that influenced his policy agenda as president.
- The site of the Texas White House, the LBJ Ranch is a physical manifestation of Lyndon B. Johnson’s personal and political life, the site of his ancestral homeplace as well as a key aspect of his personal and public image.
- Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson’s deep-rooted connection to the rural Texas Hill Country landscape shaped policies directed toward natural and historic conservation, and inspired the establishment of the park.
- Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, as part of a community of presidential sites, provides a setting to interpret the functions of the US presidency, the American political system, and President Johnson’s significant legacy including his Great Society programs and the escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam War.



Fundamental Resources and Values



Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **36th President of the US from the Hill Country of Texas**
- **Texas White House Complex**
- **Connection to the Land**
- **Boyhood Home Area**
- **Settlement Area**
- **Johnson Family Farmhouse Complex**
- **Working Ranch and Historic Herd**
- **Collections and Archives**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park tells one of the most complete stories of any American president, our 36th president, providing important insights into the American political system, the idea of public service, and the roles of politicians, news media, and citizens.
- The places and stories of Lyndon B. Johnson's ancestry, origins, and early life in the Texas Hill Country prompt us to appreciate how people and places in our own lives have shaped, and continue to influence, who we are.
- The most notable aspects of Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency—his enactment of Great Society legislation and programs and his escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam War—continue to shape the national American character and prompt today's citizens to consider and discuss the proper roles of government in both domestic and foreign affairs.
- Advances in technology enabled Lyndon B. Johnson to effectively perform presidential duties away from the White House—similar to how mass-produced advances in mobile technologies today enable us to remain “plugged in” when away from the workplace—providing opportunities to consider the impacts of these changes on our culture, our ability to balance work life and home life, and to balance the pursuit of liberty, prosperity, and happiness.
- Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson's deep-rooted connection to the land in and around their Texas Hill Country ranch influenced their advocacy of natural and historical stewardship, and this park, preserved by the actions of the Johnsons, serves as a place for an increasingly urbanized society to connect to our nation's rural and agricultural heritage.

Description

Consisting of two separate districts, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas, preserves the historic sites and landscapes associated with the life of Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th president of the United States. His early life experiences in this part of the Texas Hill Country, where his own family and his neighbors struggled to carve out a living from the challenging landscape, were a profound influence on his political philosophy. Many of his most important policy accomplishments, from his Great Society programs to expanded environmental conservation, found their inspiration in his Hill Country ties. Even as Johnson reached the pinnacle of political power as president, he retained a profound connection to this place. The park preserves his birthplace, his boyhood home, and the ranch where he spent one-quarter of his presidency and his retirement.

Initially established on December 2, 1969 (Public Law 91-134) as Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site, the park was designated as a national historical park in 1980. The current authorized boundary encompasses 1,570 acres, of which 674 acres are federally managed.

The Johnson City district includes the Boyhood Home area and the Johnson Settlement area. The Johnson family moved into the boyhood home in 1913, and his childhood spent here represents a key formative period when his parents instilled in young Lyndon an appreciation for the value of education and an understanding of politics. The Johnson settlement area preserves the site where Johnson's grandparents first settled, highlighting his multigenerational ties to the Hill Country.

The park's visitor center is located in the repurposed Pedernales Memorial Hospital, one block south of the Boyhood Home area.

The focal point of the LBJ Ranch district is the Texas White House. Guided tours of the Texas White House and grounds allow visitors to experience the house that served as both a seat of power and a family home. The ranch provided Johnson, his wife Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, and his family with a refuge from the stress and frenetic activity of political life in Washington, DC. The LBJ Ranch district also includes Johnson's reconstructed birthplace, the Junction School where he took his first lessons at age four, and the Johnson Family Cemetery, the final resting place of President, Mrs. Johnson, and other family members. The surrounding ranch landscape, complete with outbuildings and a heritage herd of registered Hereford cattle, provides visitors with a sense of the atmosphere at the site during Johnson's presidency as well as an opportunity to learn about ranching operations.

Visitors to Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park have a unique opportunity to experience sites associated with the entire lifespan of a major historical figure. The adjacent LBJ State Park, just across the Pedernales River, interprets the history of the settlement of the Hill Country with the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm and provides numerous recreational activities for visitors.

