



# Mr. President

## HARRY S. TRUMAN

33rd President, 1945-1953

Harry Truman was born in Lamar, Missouri on May 8, 1884. He grew up in the city of Independence and prospered as a Missouri farmer. He loved to read and was taught by his mother. He was also an excellent piano player. Truman was educated at local grade and high schools and in 1923, he attended two years of law school.

During World War I, as a member of the National Guard, he went to France as a Commander of his Field Artillery unit. When he returned he married Elizabeth (Bess) Virginia Wallace and opened a store in Kansas City. They had one child, Margaret.

He was very active in the Democratic Party. He became a senator in 1934. During World War II, he headed the Senate war investigating committee and saved as much as 15 billion dollars checking into waste and corruption.

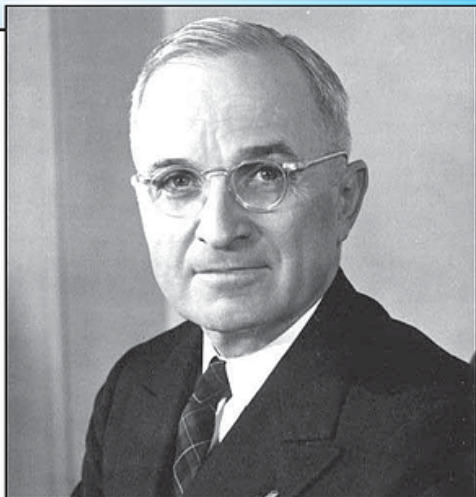
He became Vice President under President Roosevelt and on April 12, 1945, when Roosevelt died, he became president. During his term as vice president, he received no briefing on the development of the atomic bomb or the problems regarding Soviet Russia. These are items he found out about when he became president. When Japan refused to surrender, Truman along with his consultants and advisors, ordered the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japanese cities that were devoted to war work. Two of these cities were Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered quickly after that.

He presented Congress with a 21 point program that proposed expansion of Social Security, a full employment program, a permanent Fair Employment Practices Act, public housing and slum clearance. This program became known as the Fair Deal.

In 1947, when the Soviet Union pressured Turkey and threatened to take over Greece, he asked Congress to aid these two countries. Thus came the Truman Doctrine. President Truman implemented the Marshall Plan, which was named for his Secretary of State, George Marshall. This plan stimulated the economic recovery in western Europe.

Russia blockaded the western part of Berlin in 1948 and the United States created an airlift to supply Berliners with food and other supplies until Russia backed down. President Truman negotiated a military alliance to protect Western nations in 1949, which was called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This was a group of countries that promised to help protect one another.

In 1950, when the Communist government of North Korea attacked South Korea, a struggle



started. Truman ordered troops to South Korea to help stop a communist invasion.

He retired at the age of 88 to Independence, Missouri and died on December 26, 1972.

### Fun Facts:

- One of President Truman's famous sayings was, "if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." He meant you need to take responsibility for what you do.
- Harry Truman and his future wife Bess Wallace were the only President and First Lady to graduate from the same high school.
- President Truman gave many speeches over the radio to the American people. That way everyone could hear important news from him. Most people did not have televisions yet.
- He really liked to read. By the age of 14 he was said to have read all the books in the public library. He also read the family bible 3 times.
- A famous quote from President Truman was: "Within the first few months, I discovered that being a President is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep on riding or be swallowed."



Harry and Bess Truman on their wedding day.