

The 64 famous people in U.S. History

Which person had a bigger influence on U.S. History?

A person's impact, for good or ill, on both that era and the way we live now.

1. Ben Franklin	1743	Enlightenment
2. Eli Whitney	1794	Cotton gin
3. Patrick Henry	1775	Give me liberty
4. Tom Paine	1776	Common Sense
6. John Adams	1770	Boston Massacre.
5. Sam Adams	1773	Boston Tea Party.
7. James Madison	1787	Father of the Constitution
8. John Marshall	1801	Chief Justice
9. George Washington	1789	First President
10. Abraham Lincoln	1861	The Civil War
11. Alexander Hamilton	1789	Secretary of the Treasury
12. Thomas Jefferson	1803	Dec of Independence
13. Lewis & Clark	1803	Explored the West.
14. Sitting Bull	1876	Defeated Custer.
15. Henry Clay	1820	The Great Compromiser.
16. John C. Calhoun	1828	States' Rights.
17. William Lloyd Garrison	1831	Abolitionist
18. Frederick Douglass	1845	Abolitionist
19. Susan B. Anthony	1848	Women's rights.
20. Harriet Tubman	1849	Underground Railroad.
21. Nat Turner	1831	Slave rebellion
22. John Brown	1859	Harper's Ferry.
23. Ulysses S. Grant	1861	Union general
24. Robert E. Lee	1861	Confederate general
25. Alexander Graham Bell	1876	Invented the telephone.
26. Thomas Edison	1878	Invented the light bulb.
27. John D. Rockefeller	1882	Standard Oil

28. Andrew Carnegie	1892	Steel .
29. Eugene V. Debs	1894	Trade union leader
30. César Chávez	1965	Trade union leader
31. Henry Ford	1903	Assembly line.
32. The Wright Brothers	1903	Airplane.
33. Booker T. Washington	1895	Atlanta Compromise.
34. W.E.B. Du Bois	1909	NAACP.
35. Albert Einstein	1921	Nuclear physicist.
36. James D. Watson	1962	Discovered DNA.
37. J.P. Morgan	1901	Banker
38. Andrew Mellon	1921	Secretary of the Treasury
39. Jane Addams	1889	First social worker.
40. Alice Paul	1919	Women's right to vote.
41. Lewis Hine	1907	Photographer; child labor
42. Dorothea Lange	1935	Photographer; Depression
43. Frances Perkins	1933	Social Security.
44. Eleanor Roosevelt	1945	Dec of Human Rights.
45. Theodore Roosevelt	1901	Trustbuster.
46. Franklin Delano Roosevelt	1933	Two crises
47. Harry Truman	1945	Atomic bomb
48. Dwight Eisenhower	1945	D-Day.
49. Joseph McCarthy	1950	McCarthy era.
50. Edward R. Murrow	1954	Journalist
51. Thurgood Marshall	1954	Brown v Board
52. Rosa Parks	1955	Bus boycott.
53. Rachel Carson	1962	Environmental movement.
54. Ralph Nader	1965	Consumer protection
55. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	1963	Civil rights movement.
56. Malcolm X	1963	Black nationalism
57. Jonas Salk	1955	Polio vaccine.
58. Neil Armstrong	1969	On the moon.

59. John F. Kennedy	1961	Cuban Missile Crisis.
60. Lyndon Johnson	1963	Medicare.
61. Richard Nixon	1969	Watergate.
62. Ronald Reagan	1981	Ended Cold War.
63. Sam Walton	1962	Founder, Walmart.
64. Bill Gates	1991	Founder, Microsoft.

PROFILES

1. Ben Franklin was an Enlightenment thinker who lived in America's largest city, Philadelphia. As a printer, in 1733 he launched *Poor Richard's Almanac*, offering common sense advice such as: "A penny saved is a penny earned." As a scientist, he studied electricity, invented the lightning rod, and founded the American Philosophical Society where scientists could discuss their experiments. As a civic leader, he founded the first public library in America. In 1763, he urged the Thirteen Colonies to unite into one nation, drawing a cartoon ("Join, or die") that cut a snake cut into 13 parts. In 1776, he was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. During the Revolutionary War, as Ambassador to France, he convinced the French to become our military ally. As a result, Lafayette and the French army helped George Washington win the final victory at the Battle of Yorktown. In 1787, Ben Franklin organized the Constitutional Convention to write the U.S. Constitution. In 1790, he became President of the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society. He was dedicated to ending slavery.

2. Eli Whitney was an inventor in New England. In 1793, he needed money to pay for his college tuition at Yale. So he traveled to the South and became a private tutor in Georgia. There, he observed a cotton plantation. A planter could raise tons of cotton, but there was a snag – it took forever to remove seeds from the cotton. As a result, he invented the cotton gin. When just one cotton gin could clean up to 50 pounds of cotton a day, it was possible to sell tons of cotton. This invention launched the Industrial Revolution - starting with textile mills in New England. When cotton became incredibly profitable, slavery became incredibly profitable. Before this invention, slavery was dying out. Afterward, slavery was expanding. By 1861, there were 15 slave states.

3. Patrick Henry was a fiery orator from Virginia. In 1765, he was elected to the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg. After only 9 days in office, he protested the Stamp Act because it was "taxation without representation." His protest was radical, "If this be treason, make the most of it!" From 1770 onward, he was watching events in Boston. In 1770, British troops shot civilians during the Boston Massacre. In 1773, the Sons of Liberty conducted the Boston Tea Party. As a result, the British government shut down the port of Boston. In March 1775, Patrick Henry made a famous speech in solidarity with Boston. Rather than submit to British tyranny, he shouted: "Give me liberty or give me death!" In April 1775, outside Boston, the Revolution began at Lexington and Concord. In August 1775, Patrick Henry led the militia and took over the government of Virginia.

4. Tom Paine was a revolutionary writer. Born in England, he arrived in America just in time for the American Revolution. In January 1776, he wrote *Common Sense*, a pamphlet that argued that

America should declare its independence from England. The pamphlet was easy to read and wildly popular. (Within three months, 100,000 copies were sold.) As a result, in July 1776 the Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence. During the Revolutionary War, Tom Paine wrote essays entitled, *The American Crisis*. At Valley Forge, George Washington had one essay read aloud to all of his troops. It began: “These are the times that try men’s souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

5. John Adams was a Harvard-educated lawyer in Boston. In 1765 he opposed the Stamp Act because it was “taxation without representation,” plus the funds were used for the British occupation of Boston. In 1770, after the Boston Massacre, he defended the British troops who shot down American civilians. (Six were acquitted; two were convicted of manslaughter.) In 1775, after Concord & Lexington, he nominated George Washington to be commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. In 1776, he signed the Declaration of Independence. In 1785, he became the first U.S. Ambassador to England. In 1789, he served as George Washington’s Vice President. In 1797 he was elected President. On the upside: As a Federalist, he supported a strong federal government. On the downside: He sponsored the Alien & Sedition Acts, which made it illegal to criticize government officials.

6. Sam Adams was a rabble-rouser in Boston. Educated at Harvard, he became an elected official in Boston and a member of the Massachusetts legislature. In 1765 he opposed the Stamp Act because it mean “taxation without representation.” In 1770, he witnessed the Boston Massacre, where British troops shot down civilians. In 1772, he formed the Committees of Correspondence to inform the other colonies what was happening in Boston. In 1773, he and the Sons of Liberty held the Boston Tea Party. As a result, in 1774 the British closed the port of Boston. In 1775, Sam Adams and John Hancock were elected to the Continental Congress. While they were in Concord, the British army marched there to arrest them for treason. Instead, at Concord & Lexington was the first battle of the Revolutionary War.

7. James Madison was the “Father of the Constitution.” As an Enlightenment philosopher, he had read all about constitutional government. In 1787, he attended the Constitutional Convention. There, he wrote the draft of the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. He believed in checks and balances to protect individual rights from the tyranny of the majority. In the *Federalist Papers*, he explained: “If men were angels, there would be no need of government.” In 1809, he was elected President. During his administration the U.S. fought the War of 1812. During that war, his wife Dolley Madison watched as the British burned the White House.

8. John Marshall served as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1801 to 1835. As a Federalist, he believed in a strong federal government – and his landmark cases set that in stone. *Judicial review*: In *Marbury v Madison* (1803), he explained that the Supreme Court has the power to strike down any law that violates the U.S. Constitution. As a result, the Supreme Court can over-rule any law passed by Congress or a state. *Federalism*: In *McCulloch v Maryland* (1819), he ruled that federal laws were always supreme over state laws. *The Elastic Clause*: When it came to power, Congress had a lot more powers than were listed. As a result of his work, the Supreme Court became as powerful as Congress and the President.

9. George Washington was the “Father of Our Country.” From 1775 to 1783, he was the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. On the downside, his army

was run out of the cities (New York, Philadelphia), suffered hunger and frostbite at Valley Forge, and spent much of the war retreating. On the upside, in 1781 he cornered and defeated the British at Yorktown, Virginia. In 1787, he presided over the Constitutional Convention which wrote the U.S. Constitution. In 1789, he was elected (unanimously) as our first President. As president, he set many precedents – the most important: after two terms he stepped down and returned to his home at Mount Vernon.

10. Abraham Lincoln was President during the Civil War (1861-1865), preserved the Union, and ended slavery. In 1860, when he ran for President on the Republican Party ticket, he was the only candidate who opposed the spread of slavery to the West. When he won, the Southern states began to secede – leave the Union. In 1861, when he took office, Confederate troops in South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter and the Civil War began. During the first two years, the South was winning the war. By 1863, the North was winning. That year, he delivered the Gettysburg Address, providing the clearest definition of democracy: “Government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” That year, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery in rebel territory. In 1865, the U.S. Constitution was changed by adding the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery throughout the U.S.

11. Alexander Hamilton was a banker from New York City. During the Revolutionary War, he was General Washington’s right-hand man and led his battalions to victory at Yorktown. In 1787, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. To make sure that the states ratified the U.S. Constitution, he authored most of the *Federalist Papers*. During the debate over the Constitution, the two-party system arose. That is, Alexander Hamilton formed the Federalist Party (for a strong federal government) and Thomas Jefferson formed the Anti-Federalists (a federal government with limited power). During the administration of President Washington, Alexander Hamilton was the first Secretary of the Treasury. He launched free enterprise capitalism, funded the national debt, taxed foreign imports and created the national bank. Ever since, investors who buy U.S. Treasury bills have confidence that the U.S. government will repay its loans.

12. Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence. As an Enlightenment philosopher, he believed that “all men are created equal.” As a Virginia planter, he owned slaves. As the author of the Virginia Statue for Religious Freedom (1779) he believed in the separation of church and state. As an Anti-Federalist, he wanted a federal government with limited power. During the administration of President Washington, he was the first Secretary of State. In his foreign policy, he favored France. (During the French Revolution of 1789, he was Ambassador to France.) In 1800, Thomas Jefferson was elected President. In 1803, from France he made the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States.

13. Lewis & Clark were scientific explorers for the U.S. government. In 1803, when the U.S. acquired the Louisiana Purchase, President Thomas Jefferson hired Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to make the first overland expedition to the Pacific coast. Their mission was to map the geography, study natural resources, observe Indian nations, and discover the Northwest Passage – a waterway across North America. (There is none.) The 33 men began at St. Louis, followed the Missouri River, crossed the Rockies, and floated down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. In North Dakota, they met Sacajawea, a Native American who served as their guide through the Rocky Mountains. They returned to Washington, D.C. in 1806.

14. Sitting Bull was a leader of the Sioux nation which regarded the Black Hills of South Dakota as sacred. In 1868, the U.S. government signed the Fort Laramie Treaty, promising the Black Hills to the Sioux “forever.” In 1876, when gold was discovered in the Black Hills, General George Armstrong Custer was sent to protect the gold miners. During the Sioux War, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse defeated General Custer and the U.S. 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn. Afterward, Crazy Horse was arrested; in the process, he was killed. Sitting Bull fled to Canada. In 1881, he returned to the U.S., surrendered, and was sent to Standing Rock Reservation which straddles North and South Dakota. In 1890, when the Ghost Dance movement swept across the Dakotas, the U.S. government ordered his arrest; in the process, he was killed.

15. Henry Clay was the “Great Compromiser.” From Kentucky, he served in Congress for decades, first in the House and then the Senate. When the U.S. acquired the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the size of the U.S. doubled. As a result of the Mexican War of 1846-48, the U.S. acquired half of Mexico. As each new state was added, there was one crucial question – would it be a free state or a slave state? Although slavery had never existed north of the Mason-Dixon Line, Missouri wanted to be a slave state. In 1820, Henry Clay brokered the *Missouri Compromise*: Missouri would be admitted as a slave state and Maine would be admitted as a free state. Later, he brokered the *Compromise of 1850*: California would be admitted as a free state, but there would be no slave state. (Instead, the South got the Fugitive Slave Act; from then on, Northerners were bound by law to return runaway slaves.) In short, the compromises were intended to prevent a civil war over the issue of slavery.

16. John C. Calhoun was the philosophical leader of the slave-holding South. Born in South Carolina, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1832 where he espoused a set of beliefs. *Limited government*: The federal government should be limited in its power. *States’ rights*: Individual states had the right to govern themselves without interference from the federal government. *Nullification*: A state had the right to ignore a federal law that it regarded as unconstitutional. *Secession*: A state had the right to leave the Union. *Slavery*: Slavery was a “positive good,” not a “necessary evil.” *The Calhoun Doctrine*: Congress had no right to prohibit slavery in the West because a slaveowner had the right to take his property (slaves) anywhere in the U.S. John Calhoun died in 1850, but his ideas lived on. In 1860, South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union.

17. William Lloyd Garrison was a white abolitionist in New England. Before 1831, Southerners argued that slaves were quite content living under slavery. In 1831 in Virginia, Nat Turner led the biggest slave revolt in U.S. history. As a result, Garrison founded the American Anti-Slavery Society and its newspaper, *The Liberator*. While others argued that slavery would be ended gradually, Garrison argued that slavery should be ended immediately. Known for his radical writing and fiery speeches, he argued: “I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; – but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest – I will not equivocate – I will not excuse – I will not retreat a single inch – AND I WILL BE HEARD.”

18. Frederick Douglass was a black abolitionist. In 1818, he was born into slavery in Maryland. As an infant, he was separated from his mother. At 7, he was separated from his grandmother. At 12, he learned to write by watching white children writing with chalk on the sidewalks of Baltimore. At 15, he

was sent to a slavebreaker to break his spirit. In 1838, at 20, he escaped slavery by boarding a train to Philadelphia. (Dressed as a sailor, he had fake papers as a free black.) He moved to Boston and attended meetings of the American Anti-Slavery Society. From then on, he became a speaker at abolitionist meetings. In 1845 he wrote his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. On the upside, it became a best-seller. On the downside, Southern slavecatchers were on his trail. As a result, he moved to London where British admirers bought his freedom. When he returned, he founded the abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*. In 1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation, Frederick Douglass recruited black soldiers to fight in the Civil War.

19. Susan B. Anthony was an advocate for women's rights. In 1848, she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton held the Seneca Falls Convention in New York. As the first women's rights conference in the U.S., they discussed the inferior position of women – girls could not attend public schools, women had no legal rights, and women were barred from most jobs. The convention issued the Declaration of Sentiments, which answered one crucial question: What would happen if the Declaration of Independence (“all men are created equal”) were applied to women? From 1848 onward, Susan B. Anthony fought for women's right to vote. In 1920, the women's suffrage movement won the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

20. Harriet Tubman was a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. In 1820, she was born into slavery in Maryland. At five, she was put to work and beaten by her slavemaster. As an adult, she suffered a traumatic head wound from the same slavemaster. In 1849, at 29, she escaped to Philadelphia. Once there, she turned around, returned to Maryland, and helped others escape. Traveling at night and walking 90 miles on foot, she and her “passengers” stayed in secret hiding places provided by free blacks, white abolitionists, and Quakers. Had she been captured, she would have been put to death. When the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, requiring Northerners to turn over escaped slaves, she led runaways all the way to Canada. Known as the “Moses of Her People,” Harriet Tubman made thirteen trips, leading 70 people to freedom.

21. Nat Turner led the largest slave rebellion in U.S. history. He is one of the most controversial people in U.S. history. In 1800, Nat Turner was born into slavery in Virginia. Being intelligent, literate, and religious, he read the Old Testament and applied it to his own life. In brief, God was angry at the slaveowners and wanted Nat Turner to lead his people out of slavery. His original plan - the slaves would revolt, move into the swamp, and set up their own community – might have succeeded because in his county the slaves vastly outnumbered the slaveowners. In 1831, the revolt began. The rebels traveled from house to house, freeing slaves and killing all the white people they came across. When the revolt was crushed, Nat Turner was put to death. As a result of this slave revolt, the abolitionist movement expanded and exploded. That year, William Lloyd Garrison founded the American Anti-Slavery Society and began demanding the immediate end to slavery.

22. John Brown was a white abolitionist who wanted to end slavery by armed insurrection. He is one of the most controversial people in U.S. history. In 1856, John Brown and his sons moved to Kansas, made war on pro-slavery forces, and slaughtered several men in cold blood. In 1859, John Brown and his sons moved to Virginia to launch an armed revolt. His plan was bold. They would attack the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, seize the weapons, set up an armed camp in the mountains, and recruit runaway slaves from plantations in the South. The plan never got beyond the first step. During

the raid at the arsenal, John Brown was captured, tried for inciting a slave revolt, and hung. In 1859 John Brown's raid in Virginia convinced slaveowners that the South should secede from the Union in 1860.

23. Robert E. Lee was the South's top general during the Civil War. Educated at West Point, he was a career officer in the U.S. Army. When the Civil War began, however, Robert E. Lee had to make a choice. While he did not support slavery, he loved his state of Virginia. As a result, he led the Confederate army against the Union. For the first two years, the South was winning the war. Nearly every battle was fought in Virginia – and Robert E. Lee won them all. By 1863, however, the South was losing. Defeated at Gettysburg, a turning-point of the war, the South was running out of men, weapons, food and horses. In 1865, Robert E. Lee's exhausted army was surrounded and defeated in Virginia. At Appomattox, he surrendered to U.S. Grant. To his everlasting credit, Robert E. Lee told his troops: "Make your sons Americans."

24. Ulysses S. Grant was the North's top general during the Civil War. Educated at West Point, he wanted to be a career officer in the U.S. Army. But in 1854 he resigned after being sent, without his wife and family, to a remote military post on the Western frontier. For the next seven years, he failed at every job he attempted. When the Civil War began in 1861, he re-joined the U.S. Army, and fought along the Mississippi River, the main waterway of the Confederacy. In 1862, he led the first Union victories of the war and repelled a surprise attack at the bloody Battle of Shiloh. In 1863, he won at Vicksburg, a turning-point in the war because the North now controlled the Mississippi River. In 1864, as head of the Union army, he took on Robert E. Lee in Virginia. Over 11 dreadful months, Grant and Lee fought a series of bloody battles surrounding Richmond, capital of the Confederacy. In 1865, at Appomattox, Lee surrendered to Grant.

25. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. Born in Scotland in 1847, Alexander Graham Bell and his family moved to Newfoundland, Canada. Since his mother was deaf, he began research on hearing devices. In 1871 he moved to Boston, became a teacher of the deaf, and one of his students was Helen Keller. Another of his students, also deaf, became his wife. Continuing his research, based on the idea that sounds could be transmitted by an electrical device, he began working with Thomas Watson, an electrical engineer. In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone – and revolutionized communication. As the founder of Bell Telephone, he formed the world's first telephone company.

26. Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Born in 1847 and raised in Michigan, Thomas Edison was home-schooled. As a teenager, he saved a 3-year-old boy from being hit by a railroad train. As a result, the boy's father hired him as a telegrapher for Western Union. In that job, he created many inventions for the telegraph industry. In 1869 he moved to Menlo Park, New Jersey, became a full-time inventor, inventing practical things for the business world. At the world's first industrial research laboratory, he invented the stock market ticker and the phonograph. In 1878, he invented the light bulb – and revolutionized life around the world. To electrify homes, he created General Electric and built the world's first power plant in New York City. Known as the "Wizard of Menlo Park," he was one of the world's most prolific inventors, holding patents on more than 1,000 inventions.

27. John D. Rockefeller was the founder of Standard Oil. Rockefeller began his business career as a greengrocer in Cleveland, Ohio. During the Civil War, he made fabulous profits selling food to the Union Army. When oil was discovered in Ohio and Pennsylvania, Rockefeller had ready cash to invest. But the oil industry was in chaos. On one side, there were hundreds of wildcatters drilling oil; on the

other, there were big cities waiting to buy. Rockefeller “captured the narrows” – that is, all the oil had to pass through a refinery. Rockefeller was able to undercut his competitors by receiving a secret refund (rebate) from the railroads. In 1870, he founded Standard Oil, which held a monopoly of the oil-refining process. By 1900, he was a billionaire and the world’s richest man. As a philanthropist, he set up foundations to do medical research and establish universities like the University of Chicago.

28. Andrew Carnegie founded the steel industry in the U.S. Born in Scotland in 1835, he and his family moved to Pittsburgh. At 15, he went to work for the telegraph at the railroad station. At 18, he became the personal secretary for the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. During the Civil War, he made money supplying the Union Army with iron rails for the railroad. Using the Bessemer process, he began producing steel rails for the railroads. In Pittsburgh, he built the Carnegie Steel mills. In 1892, during the Homestead Steel strike, he crushed the steelworkers’ union. In 1901, his company was bought by J.P. Morgan, the banker, and turned into U.S. Steel Corporation. As a philanthropist, he set up the Carnegie Foundation which financed public libraries, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

29. Eugene V. Debs was a trade union leader. Born in 1855, he grew up in Terre Haute, Indiana. There, his parents were French immigrants who named him after two French authors – Eugene Sue (a socialist) and Victor Hugo (author of *Les Miserables*). In 1893, as a railroad worker, Debs founded the American Railway Union - the first industrial union in the U.S. (Instead of belonging to different craft unions, the railroad workers belonged to one big union.) In 1894, Debs led a nationwide strike and the railroads came to a halt. When the U.S. mail trains stopped running, President Grover Cleveland ordered the U.S. Army to crush the strike. As a result, Eugene V. Debs was sent to prison where he read books by Karl Marx. When he was released six months later, he joined the Socialist Party. Because he ran for President five times (1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920), Eugene V. Debs became the best-known Socialist in the U.S.

30. Cesar Chavez was a trade union leader. Born in 1927, Cesar Chavez and his parents were Mexican American farm workers. In 1952, at 25, he became a community organizer, registering Mexican Americans to vote in California. In 1964, with Dolores Huerta, he founded the United Farm Workers (UFW). In 1965, the United Farm Workers led a strike in California, asking consumers not to buy grapes. After five years, the economic boycott was successful and vineyard owners signed a contract with the union. During the 1970s, the UFW asked consumers to boycott lettuce – and those workers won the right to a union. Above all, Cesar Chavez believed in nonviolence; to win a strike, he often went on a fast. Today, his birthday (March 31) is a state holiday in eight states.

31. Henry Ford invented the assembly line. Born in 1863, he lived on a farm west of Detroit. At 16, he became an apprentice machinist. From then on, he worked on engines – steam engines at Westinghouse and electrical engines at General Electric. In 1903, he founded Ford Motor Company. While he did not invent the automobile, he did invent the assembly line – which allowed the mass production of cars. By cutting the cost of production, he could produce a high-quality car for an affordable price. Since a family could buy a car for only \$360, this revolutionized transportation. From then on, the automobile changed the way we live – introducing highways, motels, and suburbs. While he paid his workers \$5 a day, he was adamantly opposed to unions. During the 1930s, there were many sit-down strikes in the auto industry. Today, the Ford family still controls the company, but much of Henry Ford’s fortune is run by the Ford Foundation.

- 32. The Wright Brothers** invented the airplane. Wilbur and Orville Wright grew up in Dayton, Ohio. In 1885, at 18, Wilbur was ready to go to Yale. Instead, while playing ice hockey his front teeth were knocked out by a hockey stick. He stayed at home, an introvert, with his younger brother Orville, who never graduated from high school. In 1892, they opened a shop to sell and repair bicycles. In 1896, they began manufacturing bicycles. The profits they used to work on inventing an airplane that could fly. In 1903, they made their first flight on the beach at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. From then on, transportation was revolutionized.
- 33. Booker T. Washington** was the leading spokesman for African American in the 1890s. In 1856, he was born into slavery in Virginia. After the Civil War, he worked as a coal miner in West Virginia and attended Hampton Institute, a school for freedmen. In 1881, he founded Tuskegee Institute, a teachers' college for African Americans in Alabama. During Reconstruction (1865-1877), Southern blacks were allowed to vote. When Reconstruction ended in 1877, Southern states prevented blacks from voting. Instead, they passed "Jim Crow" laws for total racial segregation. When people asked what African Americans should do, Booker T. Washington issued the "Atlanta Compromise." In that 1895 speech, he explained: If Southern whites would provide jobs, Southern blacks would not demand the right to vote. In 1901, he published his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*.
- 34. W.E.B. Du Bois** was the founder of the NAACP. Born in 1868 in Massachusetts, he was poor and fatherless, but he was well-liked in his hometown. For starters, he was one of the few who went to college. In 1888, he graduated from Fisk University, an all-black college in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1890, he graduated from Harvard. In 1895, he became the first African American to receive his PhD from Harvard. As a sociologist, he was hired by Atlanta University. In 1903, Du Bois published his most famous book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. There, he asserted that it would be the "Talented Tenth" (college-educated activists) who would lead the struggle for equality. In 1909, he and other activists founded the NAACP to fight for political, economic, social, educational, and legal equality. In 1954, the NAACP was victorious, winning *Brown v Board of Education*, the landmark case that ended segregation.
- 35. Albert Einstein** was a theoretical physicist. Born in 1870 to a Jewish family in Germany, he was not an outstanding student. At 26, Einstein discovered the theory of relativity, which revolutionized scientific thought and laid the basis for releasing energy from the atom. In 1914, Einstein became a professor of physics at the University of Berlin. In 1921, he received the Nobel Prize in Physics. In 1933, the Nazis came to power in Germany. Hitler, who argued that the Jewish people were subhuman, could never admit that Einstein was a genius. Instead, he ordered his Nazi Stormtroopers to burn his books and blacklist any professor who taught "Jewish physics." When Einstein was visiting the U.S., Hitler fired him from his job at the University of Berlin and stripped him of his German citizenship. As a result, Einstein became a U.S. citizen, and was hired as a professor of physics at Princeton University. In 1939, when Hitler launched World War II, Einstein wrote to President Franklin Roosevelt, urging the U.S. government to build an atomic bomb.
- 36. James D. Watson** discovered the structure of DNA. In 1928, he was born in Chicago. At 15, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, majoring in genetics – the study of genes. Genes are what you inherit from your parents; they play a role in determining your height, nutrition, and health. In 1962, he and two others were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology. In 1968 he wrote the bestseller, *The Double Helix*. In 1989 the National Institute of Health appointed Watson as head of the Human Genome

Project. He resigned when the project began to patent the results of its research, arguing: "The nations of the world must see that the human genome belongs to the world's people, as opposed to its nations." The structure of DNA will allow researchers to discover the causes of and cures for cancer, neurological diseases, and other forms of human suffering.

37. J.P. Morgan was the leading banker in the U.S. Born in 1837 in Connecticut, he was trained in foreign languages at a private school in Switzerland. At 20, he began working at his father's bank in London and New York City. During the Civil War he avoided military service by hiring a substitute. In the 1890s, he formed J.P. Morgan, then and now the most powerful banking house in the world. Thanks to finance capital, he dominated U.S. industry from the Civil War to World War I. Beginning in 1869, he ruled the railroad industry. In 1878 he financed Thomas Edison and in 1892, he formed the merger that resulted in General Electric. In 1901, he formed the merger that resulted in U.S. Steel. Twice, he came to the rescue of the U.S. economy; in 1895 and 1907, he loaned gold to the U.S. government. Upon his death in 1913, he bequeathed his art collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

38. Andrew Mellon was Secretary of the Treasury during the Roaring Twenties. Born in Pittsburgh in 1855, he was the son of a banker. In 1873, he graduated from the University of Pittsburgh. In 1889, he formed Mellon Bank. As a banker, he financed Alcoa and the rise of the aluminum industry. As Secretary of the Treasury from 1921 to 1932, he served under three presidents - Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. As a conservative Republican, he cut taxes for the wealthy from 73% to 24%. In 1929, when the stock market on Wall Street crashed, Secretary Mellon did exactly the wrong thing. First, he refused to bail out the banks, which caused the collapse of the banking industry. Second, the Federal Reserve contracted the money supply, which caused the collapse of manufacturing and massive layoffs. Third, he cut government spending in order to balance the budget. All three decisions led to a deepening of the Great Depression. In 1937, his art collection became the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

39. Jane Addams was the first social worker in the U.S. In 1860, she was born and raised in Illinois where her father was a founding member of the Republican Party and a supporter of Abraham Lincoln. In 1889, Jane Addams founded Hull House in Chicago. Each week, she provided 2000 immigrants with jobs, social services, and classes to learn English. By doing so, she launched the settlement house movement in the U.S. Jane Addams supported all of the progressive issues of the day. For the poor, she campaigned for government regulation of tenement houses and special law courts for juveniles. For workers, she advocated the eight-hour day, factory inspections, and workers' compensation. For women, she supported women's suffrage. In 1919, during the Red Scare, she became a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). As a pacifist, she opposed World War I and founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). As a result, she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

40. Alice Paul was a leader of the women's suffrage movement. Born in New Jersey, her parents were Quakers who believed in the equality of the sexes. In 1912, she received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Pennsylvania. After college, she moved to London where she became active in the British women's suffrage movement. Led by the Sylvia Pankhurst, British women took action, got arrested, went to prison and went on hunger strikes. In 1912, Alice Paul moved to Washington, D.C. Together with young women suffragists, she asked Congressmen to pass an amendment to the Constitution. When that did not work, she held mass meetings, demonstrations, and

spectacular parades. Dressed in white and carrying banners, the suffragists marched down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House and Capitol. Sometimes the leading woman rode a white stallion; sometimes she was dressed as the Statue of Liberty. In January 1917, the women began picketing the White House and by July they were arrested. When sent to prison, they began a hunger strike and were force-fed. In January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson surrendered and urged Congress to pass the suffrage amendment. In 1920, the 19th Amendment was passed, allowing women to vote. In 2004, the HBO film, "Iron Jawed Angels," starring Hilary Swank, told the story of Alice Paul.

41. Lewis Hine was a photographer during the Progressive Era. Born in 1874 in Wisconsin, he studied sociology at the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and NYU. Living in New York City, he was shocked by child labor. Living during the Progressive era, he became a *muckraker* – that is, he used his camera to reform society. As a photojournalist, he wrote magazine stories with photos of child labor. In 1907 he was hired by the National Child Labor Committee and for the next ten years, he photographed children at work. In cities, the newsies and shoe shine boys worked till midnight. In the countryside, children worked as fruit pickers from dawn to dusk. In the textile mills children lost their fingers, hands, and lives on the big machines. In the coal mines children breathed coal dust and never saw the sunshine. In 1938, during the Great Depression, the federal government ended child labor.

42. Dorothea Lange was a photographer during the Great Depression. Born in 1895, she grew up on the Lower East Side of New York City. At 7, she contracted polio; as a result, she was lame and limped, the other children made fun of her. At 20, she took a photography class and became an apprentice to a photographer from San Francisco. At 23, she moved to San Francisco and opened her own studio. During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt and the New Deal were creating jobs for starving artists, including photographers. As a result, the Farm Security Administration (FSA) hired her to photograph rural poverty. She began photographing victims of the Dust Bowl, documenting the plight of migrant laborers. (They had once owned farms in Oklahoma, but a drought covered their farms with blowing soil. So they fled to California and were paid pennies picking fruits and vegetables.) Her most famous photograph was "Migrant Mother." As a result of her photos, Dorothea Lange shaped the development of documentary photography. Even more important, Americans became aware of the Dust Bowl disaster.

43. Frances Perkins was Secretary of Labor during the Great Depression. In 1902, she graduated from Mount Holyoke College, the first women's college in the U.S. At first, she volunteered as a social worker at Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago. In 1910, she graduated in sociology from Columbia University in New York City. In 1911, she witnessed the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. (Since the factory manager had locked the exit doors, the girls could not escape, and 100 were burned alive. Desperate, some girls died jumping from the ninth floor window.) By 1926, she was the head of the New York State Industrial Commission which investigated workplace hazards, enforced factory laws, and established unemployment insurance. In 1933, President Roosevelt appointed Frances Perkins as the first woman in the Cabinet. As Secretary of Labor (1933-1945), it was she who ended child labor, established the first minimum wage (25 cents an hour), and the 8-hour day. Most of all, Frances Perkins was the main architect of Social Security, which provides pensions to senior citizens.

44. Eleanor Roosevelt was the most active First Lady in U.S. history. Although born into one of the richest families in New York City, her childhood was full of tragedy. At 8, her mother died of diphtheria; at 10, her father died of alcoholism. As an orphan, she lived with her grandmother, a dreadful

and domineering woman. Eleanor was painfully unhappy and starved for affection; insecure, she regarded herself as ugly. Because her grandmother refused to send her to college, Eleanor became a social worker. At 18, she met and married Franklin Roosevelt. In 1921, he was struck by polio, but in 1932 he was elected President. Since FDR depended on his wife to be his “eyes and ears,” she crisscrossed America, visiting everyone from farmers to coal miners. While on her inspection tours, the First Lady filed daily reports to her husband, wrote a daily newspaper column and held her own press conferences. The press nicknamed her “Public Energy No. 1.” Eleanor was also the “conscience” of the New Deal. She truly cared about the average factory worker - and was particularly sensitive to the issue of race. At every turn, she pushed FDR to do more for the common man, especially African Americans. When her husband died in 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt served as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations where she chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

45. Theodore Roosevelt was President during the Progressive Era. Born into New York City’s “high society,” Teddy graduated from Harvard. Since he suffered from asthma, he moved out West, bought a ranch and lived the life of a cowboy. In 1898, he formed the “Rough Riders” and fought in the Spanish-American War. As a war hero, he was elected Governor of New York and, later, Vice President. When President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Teddy became President. As a Progressive reformer, he became a Trustbuster – that is, he broke up 40 monopolies like Standard Oil. His administration was known as the “Square Deal” – that is, he tried to protect the public interest. For the first time, the federal government regulated Big Business. For farmers, he set fair railroad rates. For consumers, the brand-new FDA regulated the food and drug industry. For future generations, he became a conservationist and set up national parks; as a result, his face is on Mount Rushmore. In 1904, he built the Panama Canal, intervened in Latin American affairs, and announced that his foreign policy was: “Walk softly and carry a big stick.” Strangely enough, in 1906 he became the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

46. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was President during the Great Depression and World War II. Born into New York City’s “high society,” Franklin graduated from Harvard. Since his distant relative was President Teddy Roosevelt, he went into politics. But all of this came to a screeching halt in 1921, at 39, when he contracted polio. Paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair, he fought back. In 1929, just before the stock market crash on Wall Street, he became Governor of New York. In 1932, during the depths of the Depression, he was elected President. FDR inspired confidence in the American people; after all, he had conquered his own personal fears. Once in office, he launched the New Deal – a series of government programs to put people to work. The alphabet programs provided jobs for the unemployed (WPA, CCC), aid to farmers (AAA), electricity for the South (TVA), basic rights for workers (NLRB, plus the minimum wage), reform of Wall Street (SEC), reform of the banking system (FDIC), and pensions for the elderly (Social Security). The Great Depression ended when FDR created his greatest jobs program – combat soldiers in World War II. In 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR led the U.S. to victory against Nazi Germany. Unlike any other president, FDR was elected to four terms (1933-1945).

47. Harry Truman launched the Nuclear Age. Born in Missouri, Harry Truman was a regular guy. He never got the chance to go college, served as a foot soldier in World War I, and took full responsibility for any crisis. As he put it: “The buck stops here.” 1945 was a big year for Harry. In January, he became Vice President. In April, Franklin Roosevelt died – and Truman suddenly became President. In May, Nazi Germany surrendered. In August, President Truman dropped the atomic bomb

on Hiroshima, Japan. That was one of the most difficult decisions a president has ever had to make. At the time, he told reporters: “Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now.” In 1948, every newspaper predicted his defeat; but the crowds shouted: “Give ‘em hell, Harry!” and he was elected. As the first President during the Cold War, he tried to stop the spread of communism by the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, NATO, and the Korean War. The finest thing he ever did was desegregate the U.S. armed forces. On the upside, the military symbolized equality for African Americans. On the downside, Southerners stopped voting for the Democratic Party.

48. Dwight Eisenhower was Allied Supreme Commander on D-Day. Growing up in Kansas, he was nicknamed “Ike.” As a teenager, he went to work on a dairy farm to send his older brother to college. When his turn came, there was no money to go to college, so he won a spot at West Point (which is free). During World War II, he was in charge of all Allied forces in Europe. On June 6, 1944 he launched D-Day. From England, ships sailed to France and 130,000 troops landed on the beaches to take France (and Europe) back from the Nazis. Eventually, in 1945, the Allies defeated Nazi Germany. In 1952, Eisenhower was elected President. Immediately, he ended the Korean War, arguing that there should be “no land war in Asia.” During the Cold War, he tried to cut the military budget, but had to spend millions on an arms race with the Soviet Union. In 1961, President Eisenhower warned the American people about the military-industrial complex – that is, defense contractors had an interest in spawning and perpetuating warfare.

49. Joseph McCarthy was a U.S. Senator during the Cold War. Born on a farm in Wisconsin, he joined the Marines during World War II. After the war, he was elected to the U.S. Senate. In 1949, two dreadful things happened – the Soviet Union got the atomic bomb and China went communist. When Americans wondered how this could happen, Senator Joe McCarthy provided an answer. In 1950, he made a famous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, arguing that 125 communists had infiltrated the U.S. State Department. From then on, Congress held hearings on communist subversion – Joe McCarthy in the Senate and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in the House of Representatives. Together, the Republicans in Congress investigated communists in the trade unions, universities, and Hollywood. The Republican Party picked up the issue during the 1952 presidential election. While some argued that the Democrats were “soft on communism,” others argued that the Democrats (in power from 1932 to 1952) had committed “Twenty Years of Treason.” When Senator McCarthy accused the U.S. Army of harboring communists, his career was over. Today, McCarthyism stands for anyone who makes reckless, unsubstantiated accusations against his political opponents.

50. Edward R. Murrow was a pioneer in broadcast journalism. Born to a family of Quakers, he grew up on a farm in Washington State. After majoring in speech and graduating from the local college, he headed for New York City determined to be on the radio. In 1935, he was hired by CBS radio. In 1937, broadcasting from London, he and a team of reporters described the rise of Hitler in Europe. In 1939, he described Hitler’s invasion of Poland, which launched World War II. In 1940, he described “the Blitz” – Hitler’s nightly bombing of London. After Pearl Harbor, he gave nightly radio broadcasts of how the U.S. troops were doing in the fight against Nazi Germany. In 1951, he became a television news commentator for CBS. In 1954, he did the unthinkable and challenged Senator Joe McCarthy. Today, Edward R. Murrow is regarded as one of the greatest figures in journalism. In 2005, actor-director George Clooney made a film about Murrow entitled, “Good Night and Good Luck.”

51. Thurgood Marshall was the NAACP lawyer who won the landmark case, *Brown v Board of Education*. Born in Baltimore in 1908, he was the great-grandson of slaves. In 1930, he graduated from Lincoln University near Philadelphia. That year, he applied to law school at the University of Maryland. (He was turned down because of his race.) Instead, he graduated from law school at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Hired by the NAACP, he sued the University of Maryland's law school – and won. In 1940, at 32, he became chief counsel for the NAACP. From then on, his goal was to overturn *Plessy v Ferguson*, the 1898 landmark case in which the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was legal. In 1954, he did just that. Linda Brown, an elementary school student in Kansas, filed a lawsuit so she could attend the regular public school. In *Brown v Board of Education*, the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was illegal. In 1967, Thurgood Marshall became the first African American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

52. Rosa Parks launched the Montgomery bus boycott. Ever since the 1880s, Southern states had passed laws to enforce racial segregation. African Americans had to use separate drinking fountains, separate restrooms, separate hospitals, and separate cemeteries. In 1955, Rosa Parks was a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama. One day, after work, she rode the bus home. Tired, she refused to give up her seat to a white man and move to the back of the bus. As a result, the white bus driver had her arrested. Furious, the NAACP launched the Montgomery bus boycott. For one year, the black citizens conducted an economic boycott against the city transit system – instead of riding the bus, they walked to work. Eventually, the people won – and the city buses were desegregated. This event shows what one individual can do. It sparked the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

53. Rachel Carson launched the environmentalist movement. Born near Pittsburgh, she grew up on farm where her mother taught her about nature. In 1929, she graduated from college in biology. That summer, she studied ecology at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole on Cape Cod. In 1932, at 25, she received her Master's degree in zoology from Johns Hopkins University. During the Great Depression, she got a job writing scripts for a radio show run by the U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife. By 1949, she was chief editor of all its publications. In 1952, she quit her job, moved to Maine, and worked full-time as a nature writer. In 1962, she published her masterpiece, *Silent Spring*. The title is a warning: unless we stop using pesticides, birds will become extinct. Pesticides, she explained, seeped into the soil, water, and food supply – causing cancer in humans. On the upside, Rachel Carson's book was a bestseller that launched the environmental movement in the U.S. In 1970, Congress created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and it banned DDT and other pesticides in 1972. On the downside, Rachel Carson died of cancer.

54. Ralph Nader launched the consumer protection movement. Born in Connecticut, his parents were Arab American. During the 1950s, he graduated from Princeton and received his law degree from Harvard. In 1965, he wrote the bestselling book, *Unsafe at Any Speed*. In it, he described how American cars were unsafe. For starters, he revealed that there were 100 lawsuits against the Corvair, produced by General Motors. Consumers began demanding government regulation of the auto industry. On the downside, General Motors began spying on Nader – tapping his phones, investigating his past, and trying to entrap him in crime. On the upside, in 1966 Congress began to regulate the auto industry. Ever since, young college students, known as “Nader's Raiders,” have joined the movement to protect the consumer.

55. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the leader of the Civil Rights movement. Born in Atlanta, he became a Baptist minister and received his PhD in theology from Boston University. In 1953, he returned to the South and became pastor of a church in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1955, at 26, he led the Montgomery bus boycott, the event that launched the Civil Rights movement. In 1957, he was a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which organized black churches. Dr. King used civil disobedience as his main tactic. In the South, African Americans would break the law. They would do so peacefully, using marches and sit-ins. They would accept the consequences - getting their heads beaten by the police and going to jail. In the process, they would shame (and redeem) the white authorities. In the North, white families would watch all of this on television and demand change. Congress to pass laws so that African Americans could become first-class citizens under the U.S. Constitution. In 1963, Dr. King led the March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. His plan succeeded. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize, but was assassinated in 1968. Today his birthday is a national holiday.

56. Malcolm X was a black nationalist. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, his birth name was Malcolm Little; later he changed it to Malcolm X. From the start, the local Ku Klux Klan targeted the family. While his father was black, his mother appeared to be white. What is more, his father was an avid supporter of Marcus Garvey who preached black pride. In 1929 their home was burned down and in 1931 his father died under mysterious circumstances. His mother had a nervous breakdown and was put in an institution for the next 26 years. The children were split up and sent to foster homes. At 14, Malcolm dropped out of school. (He wanted to become a lawyer, but his 9th grade teacher told him that was unrealistic). At 15, he moved to Boston to live with his older sister and soon became a petty criminal. At 18, he moved to New York City, lived in Harlem, and became involved in drug dealing, gambling, racketeering, and robbery. At 21, he was sent to prison. While there, he joined the Nation of Islam. At 27, Malcolm X was released from prison. At 29, he became the leading spokesperson of the Black Muslims in Harlem in New York City. In 1964, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca, witnessed racial harmony, and resigned from the Black Muslims. From then on, he preached black nationalism - that is, African Americans should form their own businesses and elect their own people to political office. While Martin Luther King was wildly popular in the South, Malcolm X was wildly popular in Northern cities. In 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated.

57. Jonas Salk invented polio vaccine. Born in New York City, his parents were Jewish immigrants from Russia. In 1947, after graduating from medical school at New York University, he became a medical researcher at the University of Pittsburgh. His mission was to find a cure for polio. At that time, polio was claiming the lives of 50,000 children each year. Once children contracted polio, they became paralyzed and lived the rest of their lives in a wheelchair. In 1938, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was a victim of polio, founded the National foundation for Infantile paralysis. In 1947 Dr. Jonas Salk went to work for the foundation; by 1955 he had created a vaccine. Rather than wait for a patent (and make a profit), he immediately set up field tests involving 20,000 doctors, 64,000 school officials, and 220,000 volunteers. Meanwhile, one hundred million Americans contributed to the March of Dimes. As a result, polio is no longer an epidemic that destroys the lives of children.

58. Neil Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon. Born in Ohio, as a teenager he became an Eagle Scout. In 1947, he began studying aerospace engineering at Purdue University. In 1949, he entered the U.S. Navy, became a jet pilot and served in the Korean War. In 1955, after

graduating from Purdue, he became a test pilot at Edwards Air Force Base in California. In 1962, he applied to be an astronaut in the Apollo program – and its mission was to go to the moon. On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 landed on the moon and Neil Armstrong announced: “The Eagle has landed.” As mission commander, he became the first person to walk on the moon. In doing so, he said: “One small step for man, and one giant step for mankind.”

59. John F. Kennedy was President during the early 1960s. Born in Boston, he graduated from Harvard in 1940. His father, once a major player on Wall Street, was Ambassador to England. During World War II, JFK served in the U.S. Navy, becoming a hero after saving his crew in the Pacific. After the war, he was elected to Congress; first the House and then the Senate. In 1956, he published the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Profiles in Courage*, describing eight Senators who stood by their convictions even though they risked their political careers. In 1960, at 43, he ran against Richard Nixon for President. JFK was elected – the first Catholic to assume the office. During his first year in office, the Soviet Union built the Berlin Wall, which became the symbol of the Cold War. In 1961, at the Bay of Pigs, the Kennedy administration attempted, and failed, to overthrow Fidel Castro’s communist government in Cuba. As a result, the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles in Cuba, aimed at the U.S. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 was the closest the U.S. and Soviet Union ever came to nuclear war. As a result of that crisis, President Kennedy was determined that Vietnam would not fall to communism. By sending military advisors to South Vietnam, he escalated the conflict. JFK served as president for only a thousand days from 1961 to 1963. When he was assassinated in Dallas, the nation fell into a long period of mourning.

60. Lyndon B. Johnson was President during the Vietnam War. Born in Texas to a poor family, LBJ became a school teacher who taught Hispanic students. From 1937 to 1961, he served in Congress; first in the House and then as the most powerful man in the Senate. In 1960, he ran as Vice President; when President Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson became President. On the upside, LBJ created the “Great Society” – pushing through Congress civil rights laws, Medicaid (health care for the poor), Medicare (health care for senior citizens), and the War on Poverty. No president did more for civil rights than LBJ – through Congress he pushed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. On the downside, LBJ escalated the War in Vietnam. In 1964, during the Tonkin Gulf incident, he asked Congress for a blank check to make war on communist North Vietnam. At the peak of the war in 1967, there were 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam and 1,000 a month were dying. Whenever people expressed doubts about the war, LBJ responded: “There is light at the end of the tunnel.” However, in January 1968, the communist Vietcong launched the Tet Offensive, capturing many of the cities in South Vietnam. As a result, President Johnson announced that he would seek peace negotiations and would not run against as President.

61. Richard Nixon was President during the Watergate scandal. Born in California to a poor family, Richard Nixon pulled himself up by the bootstraps. In 1937, he graduated from law school at Duke University. As a lawyer in California, he ran for political office. From 1946 to 1952, he served in Congress, first the House and then the Senate. In 1952, he served as Vice President under President Eisenhower. In 1960, he ran for president and was defeated by John F. Kennedy. In 1968, he ran for president and won. On the upside, President Nixon was brilliant at foreign policy. He ended U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War by playing two communist countries against each other – the Soviet Union and China. He visited China, opening that communist country (eventually) to trade with the U.S. On the downside, President Nixon was involved in the Watergate scandal. In 1972, he hired former CIA

men to plug leaks from the White House. Known as “the Plumbers,” they broke into the Democratic headquarters to spy on their strategy for the 1972 presidential election. It may never be known whether President Nixon ordered the break-in, but he was deeply involved in the cover-up. Thanks to Woodward and Bernstein, investigative reporters at the *Washington Post*, details of the cover-up spread across newspapers nationwide. As a result, Congress began impeachment proceedings against the President. In 1974, Richard Nixon resigned in disgrace.

62. Ronald Reagan brought an end to the Cold War. Born in Illinois, he and his family lived over a store. In 1937, he moved to Hollywood and became an actor. In 1947, he became head of the Screen Actors Guild during the McCarthy era. In the 1950s he served as the spokesperson for General Electric. In 1967, he was elected Governor of California. As a Republican he was opposed to welfare and anti-war protesters. In 1980, he was elected President. From the White House, he launched the “Reagan Revolution.” In general, he opposed Big Government. (“Government is not the solution to our problems; government is the problem.”) In particular, he ended government regulation of Big Business. On the downside, he launched *Reaganomics* – by cutting taxes and increasing the military budget, he caused the national debt to soar into the stratosphere. On the upside, his massive military buildup in an arms race with Soviet Union caused that country to go bankrupt. As a result, in 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War ended.

63. Sam Walton was the founder of Wal-mart. Born on a farm, he grew up during the Great Depression. During World War II, he joined the U.S. Army. In 1950, he opened a store (Walton’s Five & Dime) in Bentonville, Arkansas. By 1962, he owned a chain of Ben Franklin variety stores. That year, he opened the first Wal-mart. Sam Walton’s secret to success was providing products at the lowest possible price. During the 1990s, he began buying products from Mexico and Central America. Since 2000, the majority of products are manufactured in China. On the upside, American consumers can buy more for less money. On the downside, products are no longer manufactured in the U.S. Those factories – and jobs – have been shipped overseas. Today, Wal-mart is the world’s largest corporation.

64. Bill Gates is the founder of Microsoft. Born in 1955 to an upper-middle class family in Seattle, Washington, he wrote his first computer program when he was in 8th grade. In 1973, he enrolled at Harvard where he met Steve Ballmer. In 1975, the two young men left college and formed Microsoft, a computer software company. In 1985, Microsoft launched its operating system, Windows. On the upside, as a philanthropist he has donated much of his wealth to charitable organizations and scientific research. On the downside, he has crushed competition in the computer software industry. In 1998, in *United States v Microsoft*, the judge ruled that the company had blocked competition, used monopolistic practices, and violated the Sherman Anti-trust Act. As of 2009, Bill Gates is the wealthiest person in the world.