Harry Truman was a modest farmer and a
commanding officer. A struggling business owner
and a conscientious citizen. A devoted
husband and an attentive father. He was an
unlikely President, whose journey to the White
House was circuitous and unplanned.

But this everyday man changed the course
of American history. And his decisions as the
33rd President of the United States have
made an enduring impact on our world.
The Enemy is in the open, at a medium range.
Use a reduced powder charge.
“You've just never seen such a radiant, happy look on a man's face.”

- Ethel Holland, Harry Truman's Cousin

A VERY BIG DAY
“My Dear Wife:
I hesitated somewhat on that word.
I wanted to say honey, sweetheart, Miss Bessie. But the one I used is in the last analysis the finest and loveliest word in the world. When a man has a perfect one as I have, what in life is better?”

- HARRY TRUMAN, IN A LETTER TO BESS TRUMAN, JULY 16, 1923

“Dear Old Sweetness,
My! but I was glad to get that letter this morning. And it sure was a nice one - about the nicest I ever had.”

- BESS TRUMAN, IN A LETTER TO HARRY TRUMAN, JULY 17, 1923

Lot of love,
Bess
A NEW OPPORTUNITY

Jim Pendergast grew up in Kansas City from gangster beginnings. When he was 16, he ran errands for the mob at the Tropicana Club. When the owner was killed, he took over. He was later indicted for racketeering and perjury, but was acquitted. After being killed in a car accident, his son Wolfie and his nephews Mike, John, and Tom started the Pendergast political machine. They controlled Kansas City politics from the 1920s to the 1950s. The machine handled everything from crime and corruption to politics and elections. Wolfie and his nephews had a reputation for being tough and unyielding. They were known as the "Three Musketeers."
"... am I just a crook to compromise in order to get the job done? You judge it, I can't."

-Judith Reilly Thompson in an updated Longman's note.
May 14, 1948
6:11 pm

The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel.

- PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN
PRESS RELEASE
MAY 14, 1948
“Every individual has a right to expect from our government a fair deal.”

Harry S. Truman, 33rd U.S. President, January 2, 1949

FAIR DEAL

MINIMUM WAGE

CIVIL RIGHTS

TAX REFORM

LABOR RELATIONS

SOCIAL SECURITY

ANTI-TRUST LAWS

Lockout THE RACETEERS

NAVIGATION INFECTION
“Read your history through Jefferson's administration... Hysteria finally died down... and the country didn't go to hell, and it isn't going to now.”
“I’ve worked for peace for five years and six months and it looks like World War III is here.”

— Harry Truman, in a Command Post, December 6, 1947
"This great white jail is a hell of a place in which to be alone."

Harry Truman, in a letter written
August 27, 1948.
SAVING THE WHITE HOUSE
The legislative branch, also known as Congress, drafts, revises, and passes laws. It is composed of two chambers - the Senate and the House of Representatives - both of which can introduce legislation. Bills, as proposed laws, often face a long and challenging road to passage. Members of Congress go through a rigorous process of research, writing, debate, editing, and, finally, voting. After this process, some bills end up being more than 1,000 pages long.

**Here is what needs to happen for a bill to become a law:**

1. **Introduce the Bill**
   - A member of the Congress proposes the bill.

2. **Committee**
   - If the bill is introduced, it goes to a committee of experts on the relevant subject. The committee may hold public hearings.

3. **Debate and Vote**
   - If the bill is approved by committee, it goes to the full House or Senate. If passed by both chambers, it goes to the President for approval.

4. **Reconcile Differences**
   - If the House and Senate pass different versions of the bill, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the differences.

5. **Presidential Action**
   - After passing both houses, the bill goes to the President, who may sign it into law, veto it, or let it become law without a signature.
The Constitution gives the judiciary the authority to interpret laws. The Supreme Court reviews the actions of lower courts. In a system of distinct powers and departments of limited size, justice and policy are separated for life but can be reviewed through an impeachment process. In theory, the separate Federal courts have authority or political influence.

Harry Truman appointed four justices to the United States Supreme Court: Harold Burton (1945), Fred Vinson (Chief Justice, 1946), Tom Clark (1949), and Sherman Minton (1948). Truman had a mixed relationship with the Supreme Court. In 1948, in the opinion of the Court, Truman had done this despite the Supreme Court's decision in the case. The Court then closed down much of the nation's mail service for nearly two months.
The Constitution gives the judiciary the authority to interpret laws. The Supreme Court remains the ultimate authority, but a system of district courts and courts of appeal has evolved over time. Judges and justices are appointed for life but can be removed through the impeachment process. In theory, this insulates the courts from partisan or political influence.

Harry Truman appointed four justices to the United States Supreme Court: Harold Burton (1945), Fred Vinson (Chief Justice, 1946), Tom Clark (1949), and Sherman Minton (1949).

Truman had a mixed relationship with the Supreme Court. In 1952, in a six to three opinion, the Court struck down his attempt to seize the nation’s steel mills. Truman had done this to prevent strikes from delaying production of war materials needed for the conflict in Korea. Having lost the case, Truman relented. But strikes closed down much of the nation’s steel production for nearly two months.
Signed in 1787, the Constitution, one of the founding documents of the United States, defined the government’s structure and the fundamental laws of the land. Although it is one of the cornerstones of American democracy, it remains a work in progress, intended to be updated to suit the changing times.

The Constitution’s first set of amendments addressed a major concern held by the original Congress: balancing governmental power with the personal liberty of citizens. Collectively known as the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments provide every American with powerful tools to challenge their government to protect their individual freedoms. These include freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to assemble, and the right to a trial. Truman was particularly concerned with educating young people about their rights and responsibilities.

“...our great Government was obtained by ‘blood, sweat and tears’...Why, we even had to spend four bloody years whipping ourselves to make the Constitution work. And we are still at it – trying to make it work!”

HARRY TRUMAN, in a LETTER TO STANLEY E. WHITEHURST, JANUARY 24, 1949
"The President is the greatest executive officer in the history of the world. I say that not because I hold it because I believe ithttp://example.com"

Consisting of the President, the President's advisors, and cabinet representatives, agencies, boards, commissions, and committees, the President's primary role is to formulate and execute the laws passed by Congress. But the President also oversees many of the different branches, from overseeing the military to managing the economy to conducting diplomacy with other nations.

In a 1961 speech at Columbia University, Henry Kissinger declared that he called the "big job of the President." A look at his appointment calendar from April 4, 1968, reveals that consistently he performed all six roles in a single day.
“Nobody can make a final judgment as to whether a program of an administration has been right or wrong until the results of those decisions have been worked out, and that takes fifty years...”

- Lyndon B. Johnson
“Mrs. Truman and I . . . hope and believe we have contributed to the welfare of this nation and to the peace of the world.”

- HARRY TRUMAN
Questions? Mark.adams@nara.gov

TrumanLibrary.gov