

## How Do You Get to be President?

How many times, when growing up, did you tell your parents: "I'm going to be President one day!" It's the American Dream complete. But the odds are stacked against you.

The two presumptive candidates in this year's election, Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton, certainly had their paths paved to some degree. Trump inherited his father's real estate ventures and super-sized them, while Clinton made the most of her First Lady status by being elected senator in New York and later becoming Secretary of State.

Did you ever wonder what our former presidents did professionally before reaching this country's highest office?

The "Father of Our Country," George Washington, was a tobacco farmer and was once a lieutenant colonel in the British Army. Thomas Jefferson, principal author of the Declaration of Independence, was a lawyer.

After Washington, 11 military generals made their mark on their ascent to be president (in order): Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Benjamin Harrison and the only 20th century general, Dwight Eisenhower.

Theodore Roosevelt, mourning the deaths of his mother and his wife, went out West to be a cattle rancher before re-inventing himself and his political career.

Abraham Lincoln was a mill manager and a postmaster. Harry Truman was a haberdashery shopkeeper. Lyndon Johnson was a schoolteacher. Jimmy Carter was a peanut farmer. And, of course, Ronald Reagan, was a Hollywood actor and movie star. ■

## Presidential Folklore

Much of the myth that became George Washington was invented by his biographer, Mason Locke Weems. In Weems' History of the Life, Death, Virtues and Exploits of George Washington, he created the "I cannot tell a lie" story of young George and the chopping down of the cherry tree and the military George, kneeling in the snow at Valley Forge.

In one of the great upsets in presidential election history, Democrat Harry Truman defeated Republican Thomas Dewey in 1948. Truman railed against his opponent time and again so much so that his campaign slogan became: "Give 'em hell, Harry."

Truman later observed, "I didn't give them hell. I just told the truth, and they thought it was hell."

Alice Roosevelt Longworth almost lived to be 100. The daughter of Teddy Roosevelt, she became a Washington socialite with Teddy's gift for barbs. One of her most famous quotes came at the expense of President Calvin Coolidge, whom she said, "He looks as if he was weaned on a pickle."

She was called "Princess Alice," when Roosevelt occupied the White House for her charm and her tempestuous behavior such that the media questioned the President on her open-mouthed attacks on Washington society. He replied, "I can be president of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both."

Alice continued her attacks on anyone she didn't like, which included Woodrow Wilson, William Harding and Eleanor Roosevelt. An embroidered pillow at her Washington residence read: "If you can't say anything nice about somebody...sit right here by me."

John F. Kennedy's foreign policy against Russia and Communist dominance was heated, direct and pointed. He failed in his attempt to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, and was close to launching rockets against Nikita Khrushchev to keep Soviet arms out of the Caribbean. But one of his greatest triumphs was when he went to Berlin and declared: "Ich bin ein Berliner."

To tremendous applause, the German people understood that Kennedy had meant to say "I am a citizen of Berlin," an obvious put-down to the Communist strategy of a divided city and country. However, in literal translation, he used the word "ein" incorrectly.

What Kennedy should have said was: "Ich bin Berliner." Thus, what he really said was: "I am a jelly doughnut."

There were very few men bigger than Lyndon Johnson when he inherited the White House after the Kennedy assassination. He was elected to the House of Representatives from his home state of Texas, and later became Senator and Senate Majority Leader.

He cajoled and harangued his colleagues endlessly. Legend had it that he would hold bipartisan dinner receptions that wouldn't end until his legislation was agreed upon.

A man of his size and ego held little back. It was only the Vietnam War that brought humility back into his soul. One time he played host to German chancellor Ludwig Erhard at his LBJ ranch. Erhard playfully remarked casually to LBJ, "I understand that you were born in a log cabin," underscoring the Lincoln myth. Johnson retorted quickly: "No sir, I was born in a manger." ■



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## BABY NAMES AREN'T PRESIDENTIAL

While baby names are picked from the rich and famous, don't include presidents among them. In the latest poll of the most popular names for 2015, Emma remains at the top of the list among girls, and Noah, for boys.

The Social Security Administration recently released its top 1,000 names, and Noah was followed by: Liam, Mason, Jacob and William. Emma beat out Olivia, Sophia, Ava and Isabella.

Laura Wattenberg, founder of Babynames-Wizard.com, notices that the news rarely effects the ranking of baby names. "It's actually quite rare for a name to be eliminated by issues in the news," citing Adolph, at a popular No. 555 at the end of World War II when Adolph Hitler was the scourge of the Allied nations.

Hillary, a fairly popular name in the past, dropped off the top 1000 in 2009, the year after Hillary Clinton lost to Barack Obama in the Democratic primary. In spite of the wave of popularity that ushered in the first African-American president, Barack still is not in the top 1000.

Donald, another popular name, lost ground in 2015, from No. 418 to 441.

On the other hand, Kennedy is a very appealing name for a girl to new parents, and appears No. 57 in the newest list. "We want our presidents out of office or preferably dead before we name our babies after them," Wattenberg said. ■

## WORRIED ABOUT WATER?

The reports of unsafe drinking water in Flint, Michigan and other major cities raise the question: "Is my drinking water safe?" Consumer Reports suggests several ways to make certain yours is above EPA standards.

For municipal water safety, check out [epa.gov/safewater](http://epa.gov/safewater) for your municipality. If your home was built before 1986 or have well water, your local health department can direct you on how to get a free test kit. Reputable plumbers can install water softener systems that include ultraviolet disinfection systems.

You can also investigate water filters that install on faucets or sit on top of carafes.

Of course, bottled water is another alternative, though it costs money. ■