

LBJ'S AMERICA

In innumerable ways, we still live in LBJ's America. More than half a century after his death, Lyndon Baines Johnson continues to exert profound influence on American life. This collection deftly explores his seminal accomplishments – protecting civil rights, fighting poverty, expanding access to medical care, lowering barriers to immigration – as well as his struggles in Vietnam and his difficulty responding to other challenges in an era of declining US influence on the global stage. Sweeping and deeply researched *LBJ's America* probes the ways in which the accomplishments, setbacks, controversies and crises of 1963 to 1969 laid the foundations of contemporary America and set the stage for our own era of policy debates, political contention, distrust of government, and hyper-partisanship.

Mark Atwood Lawrence is an award-winning historian who has taught for two decades at the University of Texas at Austin. His books include, most recently, *The End of Ambition: The United States and the Third World in the Vietnam Era*. He has been director of the LBJ Presidential Library since 2020.

Mark K. Updegrove is a presidential historian for ABC News and author of five books on the presidency, including, most recently, *Incomparable Grace: JFK in the Presidency*. He is a former director of the LBJ Presidential Library and now serves as President and CEO of the LBJ Foundation.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-009-17253-0 — LBJ's America: The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson

Edited by Mark Atwood Lawrence , Mark K. Updegrove

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

LBJ'S AMERICA

The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson

Edited by

Mark Atwood Lawrence

Mark K. Updegrove



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-009-17253-0 — LBJ's America: The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson

Edited by Mark Atwood Lawrence, Mark K. Updegrove

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009172530

DOI: 10.1017/9781009172547

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2024

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2024

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-1-009-17253-0 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
Introduction	1
<i>Mark Atwood Lawrence</i>	
1 Power and Purpose: LBJ in the Presidency	15
<i>Marc J. Selverstone</i>	
2 LBJ and the Contours of American Liberalism	44
<i>Julian E. Zelizer</i>	
3 Lyndon Johnson and the Transformation of Cold War Conservatism	70
<i>Nicole Hemmer</i>	
4 The Great Society and the Beloved Community: Lyndon Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Partnership That Transformed a Nation	94
<i>Peniel E. Joseph</i>	
5 Lyndon Johnson, Mexican Americans, and the Border	120
<i>Geraldo Cadava</i>	
6 The War on Poverty: How Qualitative Liberalism Prevailed . .	146
<i>Joshua Zeitz</i>	
7 LBJ's Supreme Court	171
<i>Laura Kalman</i>	
8 "If I Cannot Get a Whole Loaf, I Will Get What Bread I Can": LBJ and the Hart–Celler Immigration Act of 1965	200
<i>Madeline Y. Hsu</i>	

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-17253-0 — LBJ's America: The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson
Edited by Mark Atwood Lawrence , Mark K. Updegrove
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CONTENTS

9 “It’s Always Hard to Cut Losses”: The Politics of Escalation
in Vietnam 229
Fredrik Logevall

10 Lyndon Johnson and the Shifting Global Order 254
Francis J. Gavin

11 “Through a Narrow Glass”: Compassion, Power, and Lyndon
Johnson’s Struggle to Make Sense of the Third World 281
Sheyda Jahanbani

Afterword: LBJ’s America 303
Melody C. Barnes

Acknowledgments 321

Notes 323

Index 358

Illustrations

1.1. Debate coach Lyndon Johnson poses with his team.	<i>page</i> 17
1.2. Senate candidate Lyndon Johnson addresses a crowd gathered near his helicopter in 1948.	19
1.3. Aides give President Johnson an early-morning briefing in 1966.	25
2.1. Lyndon Johnson poses with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Texas Governor James Allred in 1937.	46
2.2. The stage at the 1964 Democratic National Convention highlights continuity among recent presidents.	56
3.1. President Johnson encounters supporters of Republican nominee Barry Goldwater during the 1964 campaign.	77
3.2. Four iconic figures of the modern right gather in 1975. . . .	88
4.1. Police arrest a young man on August 13, 1965, during unrest in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.	106
4.2. President Johnson confers with civil rights leaders in the Cabinet Room of the White House on March 18, 1966.	107
5.1. Lyndon Johnson poses with some of the poor students he taught in Cotulla, Texas, in 1928 and 1929.	123
5.2. “Viva Johnson” clubs distributed pins, posters, and other paraphernalia during the 1964 campaign.	128
6.1. President Johnson poses with the family of a tenant farmer during his 1964 tour of impoverished areas of Appalachia.	148
7.1. President Johnson looms over attorney Abe Fortas after nominating him for a seat on the US Supreme Court.	179
7.2. Solicitor General Thurgood Marshall calls his wife from the Oval Office on June 13, 1967.	181

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

8.1. President Johnson signs the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.	204
9.1. President Johnson meets with Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara in the Oval Office on August 7, 1967.	243
9.2. Protesters offer stinging critiques of both President Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey in the fall of 1968. . .	248
10.1. President Johnson and French President Charles de Gaulle shake hands on April 26, 1967.	264
11.1. Vice President Johnson gives away a ballpoint pen during a visit to India in May 1961.	286
11.2. US troops search a suspect in the Dominican Republic during the military intervention on the island in 1965.	296

Contributors

Melody C. Barnes is executive director of the University of Virginia's Karsh Institute of Democracy and the W. L. Lyons Brown Family Director for Policy and Public Engagement for the Democracy Initiative in the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. She is the J. Wilson Newman Professor of Governance at the Miller Center and an affiliated faculty member at the School of Law, where she is also a senior fellow at the Karsh Center for Law & Democracy. She was Assistant to the President and director of the White House Domestic Policy Council during the administration of President Barack Obama and chief counsel to the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy on the Senate Judiciary Committee. She is narrator and host of the podcast "LBJ and the Great Society" and co-editor of *Community Wealth Building & the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020).

Geraldo Cadava is Professor of History at Northwestern University, where his courses focus on Latino, borderlands, and immigration history. He is writing an overview of Latino history over the past 500 years, to be published by Crown in 2026. He is the author of two books – *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013) and *The Hispanic Republican: The Shaping of an American Political Identity from Nixon to Trump* (Ecco, 2020). His essays have appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, and *The Atlantic*.

Francis J. Gavin is the Giovanni Agnelli Distinguished Professor and the inaugural director of the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Previously, he was the first Frank Stanton Chair in Nuclear Security Policy Studies at MIT and the Tom Slick Professor

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

of International Affairs and the director of the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin. Gavin's writings include *Gold, Dollars, and Power: The Politics of International Monetary Relations, 1958–1971* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004); *Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America's Atomic Age* (Cornell University Press, 2012); and *Nuclear Weapons and American Grand Strategy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2020), which was named a 2020 *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title.

Nicole Hemmer is Associate Professor of History and director of the Carolyn T. and Robert M. Rogers Center for the American Presidency at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) and *Partisans: The Conservative Revolutionaries Who Remade American Politics in the 1990s* (Basic Books, 2022). She is co-founder of the American Political History Conference and “Made by History,” the historical analysis section of the *Washington Post*, and hosts the podcasts “Past Present,” “This Day in Esoteric Political History,” and “A12: The Story of Charlottesville.”

Madeline Y. Hsu is Professor of History and Asian American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her books include *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882–1943* (Stanford University Press, 2000); *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton University Press, 2015); and *Asian American History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2016). With Maddalena Marinari and Maria Cristina Garcia, she co-edited *A Nation of Immigrants Reconsidered: U.S. Society in an Age of Restriction, 1924–1965* (University of Illinois Press, 2019). She is one of five co-editors for the two-volume *Cambridge History of Global Migrations* (2023).

Sheyda Jahanbani is Associate Professor at the University of Kansas focusing on the history of the United States and the world in the twentieth century. An expert on US relations with the “Third World,” the history of development, and the emergence of distinctly global social

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

problems in the post–World War II period, Jahanbani is author of *“The Poverty of the World”: Discovering the Poor at Home and Abroad, 1940–1970*, forthcoming in September 2023 from Oxford University Press, and is working on a book tracing the history of “global citizenship” during the Cold War.

Peniel E. Joseph is the Barbara Jordan Chair in Ethics and Political Values; founding director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy; Associate Dean for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the LBJ School of Public Affairs; Professor of History; and Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author or editor of seven books, most recently *The Third Reconstruction: America’s Struggle for Racial Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (Basic Books, 2022). Professor Joseph is a fellow of the Society of American Historians, a contributor to CNN.com, and a frequent national commentator on issues of civil rights, race, and democracy.

Laura Kalman is Distinguished Research Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the author of *Legal Realism at Yale, 1927–1960* (Lawbook Exchange, 1986); *Abe Fortas: A Biography* (1990); *The Strange Career of Legal Liberalism* (1996); *Yale Law School and the Sixties: Revolt and Reverberations* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005); *Right Star Rising: A New Politics, 1974–1980* (Norton, 2010); *The Long Reach of the Sixties: LBJ, Nixon, and the Making of the Contemporary Supreme Court* (Oxford University Press, 2017); and *FDR’s Gambit: The Court-Packing Fight and the Rise of Legal Liberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2022). Professor Kalman received her BA from Pomona College, JD from UCLA, and PhD from Yale. She is a member of the California Bar Association and is a past president of the American Society for Legal History.

Mark Atwood Lawrence is Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin. He is author of *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (University of California Press, 2005); *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (Oxford University Press, 2008); and *The End of Ambition: The United States and the Third World in*

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

the Vietnam Era (Princeton University Press, 2021), which won the Robert H. Ferrell Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, in addition to numerous articles, essays, and reviews. He has also edited or co-edited several books on aspects of US foreign policy. He has served as director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum since 2020.

Fredrik Logevall is the Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs and Professor of History at Harvard University. He is the author or editor of eleven books, including most recently *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917–1956* (Random House, 2020), which won the Elizabeth Longford Prize and was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. His book *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, 2012) won the Pulitzer Prize and the Parkman Prize, among other awards.

Marc J. Selverstone is Associate Professor in Presidential Studies and chair of the Presidential Recordings Program at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs. He is the author of *Constructing the Monolith: The United States, Great Britain, and International Communism, 1945–1950* (Harvard University Press, 2009), which won the Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, and *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam* (Harvard University Press, 2022). He is also the editor of *A Companion to John F. Kennedy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014) and general editor of *The Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* (University of Virginia Press, 2014–).

Mark K. Updegrove is a presidential historian and the author of five books on the presidency, including *Indomitable Will: LBJ in the Presidency* (Skyhorse, 2014); *The Last Republicans: Inside the Extraordinary Relationship between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush* (Harper, 2017); and, most recently, *Incomparable Grace: JFK in the Presidency* (Dutton, 2022). He is the president and CEO of the LBJ Foundation. Earlier in his career, he was the director of the LBJ Presidential Library and publisher of *Newsweek*.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Joshua Zeitz is a contributing editor at *Politico Magazine* and author of *Building the Great Society: Inside Lyndon Johnson's White House* (Viking, 2018). He earned his BA at Swarthmore College and his PhD in American History from Brown University and has held faculty positions at Harvard University and Cambridge University.

Julian E. Zelizer is the Malcolm Stevenson Forbes, Class of 1941 Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University, as well as a CNN Political Analyst and a regular guest on NPR's "Here and Now." He is the author, co-author, or editor of twenty-five books, including *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society* (Penguin, 2015), which won the D. B. Hardeman Prize for the Best Book on Congress; *Fault Lines: A History of the United States since 1974* (Norton, 2019); *Abraham Joshua Heschel: A Life of Radical Amazement* (Yale University Press, 2021); and *Burning down the House: Newt Gingrich, the Fall of a Speaker, and the Rise of the New Republican Party* (Penguin Press, 2020). He is co-editor of *Myth America: Historians Take on the Biggest Legends and Lies about Our Past* (Basic Books, 2023). Zelizer has published more than 1,200 op-eds and has received fellowships from the Brookings Institution, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the New York Historical Society, and New America.