**Johnson’s War on Poverty**

* LBJ started his career as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Texas in the 1930s
  + Mostly Mexican-Americans
  + Similar status to blacks in the South
    - Segregation: schools, facilities, neighborhoods
    - Worked for whites in low-paying jobs
* Inspired by FDR and New Deal
  + Worked in NYA (National Youth Administration)
* LBJ remembered his first-hand experience of poverty and racism
  + Saw his role in uplifting the poor as the real goal of his presidency

**LBJ’s Dual Legacy**

* 1) Escalation of Vietnam: tore apart Vietnam and the US (literally and figuratively)
* 2) Programs to battle poverty and racism: brought the US together

**Social and Political Background of the Great Society**

* Rebirth of the New Deal
* No other president since FDR has done so much for the poor and underprivileged
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_bills pushed through Congress dealing with these problems
* The Great Society would make good on its promises to every American regardless of color, sex, or background
* GS picked up where New Deal left off: even greater extension of role of Federal government
* ND took place during crisis; GS during period of relative affluence and abundance
  + American believed government could afford to divert funds to the needy
* Like ND, the GS not revolutionary: no significant structural changes in society
  + Fine-tuned economy and diverted resources
* “Managerial liberalism”: government works in favor of liberal reforms
* Like the ND, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a tax and spend program
  + Gov. spending 1933-39 only about 9% of GDP (1946 30%); FDR tried to balance the budget in 1937🡪 recession
  + LBJ signed dramatic tax cuts for individuals and corporations early on
* LBJ able to do so much because:
  + 1) “Landslide Lyndon”: 1964 election swept Democrats into majority in both houses, enormous mandate for LBJ (61% pop. vote)
  + 2) Kennedy legacy and assassination

**Poverty and the “Culture of Poverty”**

* 1962: 1/4 Americans lived in poverty even though economic growth rate was phenomenal
* Proved America’s economic system did not provide for equity
  + 12.1% in 2002= 34.6 million
  + Poverty= family of four earning $18,244/year
* Michael Harrington The Other America (1962): large #s of Americans obviously not prospering
* Children of the poor often never rise above poverty in adulthood: poverty a fixed condition (caste not class)
* “Culture of poverty”: lost hope in ever rising; fatalism; to be poor is to be an “internal alien”
  + Controversial and long term harmful
* Ideological foundation of GS

**The Great Society**

* GS to provide for: health care, affordable housing, decent standard of living, education
* Not stereotypical welfare: provide public goods and services so that the poor could break free and become self-reliant

**The Economic Opportunity Act (1964)**

* Community-based programs and agencies: wide range of services
  + Legal, health, adult education
* Jobs Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Head Start, and Upward Bound

**Head Start**

* Based on data showing that poor entered school at a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Child development for preschool + kindergarten to teach basic skills for 1st grade
* Designed to build self-confidence for success🡪 social and psychological skills
* Same reasoning behind Sesame Street and Blues Clues
* 3rd grade literacy
* Harlem Children’s Zone

**Job Corps**

* Provide educational and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ training: recruit unemployed men
  + (later expanded to women)
* Physically remove from neighborhood to job training camps: blue collar occupational training

**Medicare and Medicaid (1965)**

* Truman attempted similar health care reforms in 40s, but shot down by AMA (American Medical Association)
  + Claimed 1st step toward socialism: Stalin in the backyard
    - Ronald Reagan got his conservative credentials (former New Deal Democrat) railing against Medicare as creation of totalitarian dictatorship
* LBJ overcame objections
  + - Plus “States’ Rights”: Medicare would require white hospitals to serve blacks
* Medicare: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Medicaid: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Housing and Urban Development**

* HUD: provided low interest loans to private companies that provided housing
* Rent subsidies to make up difference between rent and what people could pay

**Immigration**

* 1965: Reformed 1920s quota system (explicitly racist and nativist (trying to keep the US for “Americans”: WASPs))
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ up immigration from Asia and Latin America
* Demographic revolution: Hispanics (12.5%) now the largest minority, exceeding blacks (12.3%)
  + Asian (3.6%); White (75.1%)

**The End of the Great Society**

* GS marked high tide of New Deal liberalism
* Some argued that it expanded the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”
* Some saw GS as abuse of federal power
* Argued that GS created new culture of poverty: “welfare queens” who abuse system instead of working (anecdotal)
  + Tinged with race, despite most poor people are white
  + Many politicians elected since (Reagan, Gingrich) w/promise of doing away with these programs
  + “Contract with America”
* Most important short term cause of death: escalation of Vietnam
  + 1966: $22 billion on war, $1.2 billion on poverty
* Impulse behind GS died away, esp. with coming of inflation of late 1960s and 1970s (caused by oil crisis and Fed Reserve)
* MLK, 1967: "the promises of the Great Society have been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam, making the poor white and Negro bear the heaviest burden both at the front and at the home."

**The End of the Great Society**

* M. Harrington: “What was supposed to be a social war turned out to be a skirmish and, in any case, poverty won.”
* Long term: a program for the poor becomes a poor program