



THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM
AT DEALEY PLAZA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

Q: What is The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza?

A: It is an educational examination of the life, death and legacy of President John F. Kennedy within the context of American history. The Museum's permanent exhibition, *John F. Kennedy and the Memory of a Nation*, uses historic films, photographs, artifacts and interpretive displays to document the events of the assassination, the findings of the official investigations that followed, and the historical legacy of that national tragedy.

Q: What is the Museum's Mission Statement?

A: The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza chronicles the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy; interprets the Dealey Plaza National Historic Landmark District and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza; and presents contemporary culture within the context of presidential history.

Q: What is the Museum's Vision Statement?

A: To be an impartial, multi-generational destination and forum for exploring the memory and effects of the events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy, through sharing his legacy and its impact on an ever-changing global society.

Q: Who owns the Museum?

A: The Museum is owned and operated by the Dallas County Historical Foundation, a private non-profit organization.

Q: Where is The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza?

A: The Museum is located on the sixth and seventh floors of the Dallas County Administration Building (known in 1963 as the Texas School Book Depository), 411 Elm Street at Houston in downtown Dallas. Twin elevators in the Visitors Center take visitors directly to the Museum galleries.

Q: Why is it called The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza?

A: A sniper's nest and rifle were found on the sixth floor of this building after the assassination of President Kennedy. The Museum's permanent exhibition is housed on the sixth floor.

Q: What is the Reading Room?

A: Opened in 2010, the Reading Room is a reflective environment providing researchers, educators and students access to more than 6,000 books, magazines, newspapers and other items from the Museum's library collection. It also offers access to one of the world's largest repositories of original photographs, film and video footage, documents and artifacts related to the Kennedy assassination. Open Monday–Friday, by advance appointment only.

Q: What is the Museum Store + Café:

A: Also opened in 2010, the Museum Store + Café is located in the historic 501 Elm building across the street from the Museum. Guests can savor snacks, seasonable beverages and lunch items in the wi-fi enabled café. Special gift items include newly published books, jewelry, accessories, children's items and pop culture products inspired by the 1960s.

Q: Does the Museum attempt to answer some of the lingering questions surrounding the assassination?

A: The goal of the Museum is to recount, as accurately as possible, the history of the assassination and to identify the major areas of controversy as well as recent developments.

Q: Has the content of the exhibition changed as new information on the assassination is disclosed?

A: The exhibitions are regularly reviewed and updated, and new information and artifacts are added.

Q: Was the Kennedy family involved with the creation of the Museum?

A: No. However, much care has been given to creating a museum that is respectful of the subject matter.

Q: What is the Museum's annual attendance?

A: More than 320,000 people visit the Museum on average every year.

Q: Why are photography and cell phone use prohibited?

A: Photography and cell phone use are not permitted because it can be distracting to other visitors. Photography is prohibited because most of the images on exhibit are copyrighted. Visitors are welcome to take photographs outside, from the seventh floor window, and in the Visitors Center.

Q: Why does the Museum charge admission?

A: The Museum is a nonprofit organization and operates almost entirely on revenue received through admission sales.

Q: Does the Museum show the Abraham Zapruder film?

A: Brief, non-violent portions of the Abraham Zapruder film are included in a video presentation as part of the permanent sixth floor exhibition. The Zapruder film is available for viewing in its entirety on the Collections page of the Museum's website.

The Site

Q: How old is the former Texas School Book Depository?

A: The original building on the site was built in 1898. It was completely rebuilt in 1901 after a fire destroyed the original.

Q: Are any of the windows on the sixth and seventh floors original?

A: It is unclear if any of the windows date from 1901, but some of them may have been in place in 1963.

Q: What is on the other floors?

A: Dallas County owns the building and occupies the first five floors. The Museum operates on the sixth and seventh floors through a lease with Dallas County.

Q: What does the Dealey Plaza National Historic Landmark District designation mean?

A: Dealey Plaza's National Historic Landmark designation by the federal government recognizes that the site has outstanding significance to the history of the United States of America. The site was designated because President John F. Kennedy was assassinated there on November 22, 1963, a tragic event that changed the course of American history. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt signed the official designation of the site on October 12, 1993. Formal dedication ceremonies were held in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1993. The Texas School Book Depository Building was recognized in 1980 by the Texas Historical Commission as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

Q: What are the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark district?

A: The 3.07-acre Dealey Plaza Park is only part of the district, which includes all surrounding buildings facing the park, the triple underpass and its bridge, and a part of the rail yards north of Elm Street, including the historic railroad-switching tower.

Q: How is the National Historic Landmark designation marked?

A: The designation is marked by a bronze plaque provided by the National Park Service. The plaque is mounted on a slab of Texas pink granite set flat in the ground on the north side of Elm Street, east of the garden steps and near the sidewalk. The plaque says:

*Dealey Plaza Has Been Designated a National Historic Landmark
This Site Possesses National Significance in Commemorating the History of
the United States of America
1993 National Park Service United States Department of the Interior*

Q: Where is Dallas' John F. Kennedy Memorial, and how long has it been there?

A: The John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza is located on Market Street between Main and Commerce, two blocks east of the Museum. It was dedicated in 1970.

Assassination

Q: What was the motorcade route?

A: The presidential motorcade started north of the city at Dallas Love Field airport and proceeded southeast on major thoroughfares. Passing through downtown Dallas, the parade turned north off of Main Street onto Houston Street (which was two-way at the time) for one block. The motorcade then turned left onto Elm Street and headed toward the triple underpass and freeway en route to Kennedy's luncheon speech at the Dallas Trade Mart. Shots were fired on Elm Street beginning as the president's limousine was near the large live oak tree on the north side and ending just before the limousine reached the steps leading up the hill.

Q: How many shots were fired?

A: Most witnesses thought there were three, but some thought there were two or four or more.

Q: What is the grassy knoll?

A: Many eyewitnesses to the assassination thought at least one of the shots came from the right front of President Kennedy in an area now known as the grassy knoll. This area is a hill on the north side of Elm Street near some concrete steps and topped by a five-foot wooden stockade fence. The term originated with United Press International reporter Merriman Smith, who rode in the motorcade five cars behind Kennedy.

Q: Where is President Kennedy buried?

A: President Kennedy is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Q: What happened to Kennedy's presidential limousine?

A: The car was stripped to the frame, refurbished and returned to service through the Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter presidencies in backup or secondary capacities. The car is now on exhibit at The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.

Q: Who was Officer J.D. Tippit?

A: J.D. Tippit was the Dallas police officer killed by Lee Harvey Oswald about 45 minutes after the Kennedy assassination.

Q: How was Lee Harvey Oswald shot?

A: Lee Harvey Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby during a routine prisoner transfer from the basement of the Dallas police station to the county jail on the morning of Sunday, November 24, 1963.

Q: Where is Oswald buried?

A: Oswald was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery (now Shannon Rose Hill Funeral Chapel and Cemetery in east Fort Worth, about 25 miles west of the Museum). Oswald's mother was buried next to him in 1981 and, while the gravesite marker has the Oswald name, cemetery officials do not advise visitors where to find it.

Q: What happened to Jack Ruby?

A: Despite a defense argument that Jack Ruby was mentally ill when he shot Lee Harvey Oswald, a Dallas jury convicted Ruby of murder with malice on March 14, 1964, assigning him the death penalty. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals reversed that verdict, agreeing with the appeal made by Ruby's attorneys that he could not have received a fair trial in Dallas. A new trial was scheduled to begin in February 1967 in Wichita Falls, Texas, but Ruby, having been admitted to Parkland Memorial Hospital in December 1966, died on January 3, 1967, of a pulmonary embolism brought on by his advanced lung cancer.