**Presidential Trivia**

**Today is February 15, 2021, Presidents' Day in the United States. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act in order to create three-day weekends. Washington's birthday celebration was then moved to the third Monday in February. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

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**INTERVIEWED IN THE RiVER: In the summer months, President John Quincy Adams, an excellent swimmer, would arise early and walk down to the Potomac for some exercise. At the water's edge there was a large rock and a sycamore tree where he liked to undress. One morning in 1828 a woman reporter, Anne Royall, followed him down to the river and said, "I am sitting on your clothes and you don't get them till I get the interview." The president pleaded for her to go behind some bushes so that he could dress first. But the reporter was adamant and Adams gave her the interview from the river. (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 108)**

**THE PRESIDENT IN THE BUFF: In The summer months President John Quincy Adams liked to swim in the Potomac for exercise. On one occasion in June 1825, Adams intended to swim across the Potomac and back. Antoine, his servant, was rowing behind him in a boat when a breeze came up. Antoine lost control of the boat and jumped out. Adams made it to the shore opposite the White House and was left "sitting naked basking in the bank" while Antoine went for a carriage. Adams arrived back at the White House six hours later and found that no one had missed him. (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 258)**

**John Quincy Adams was the first president with a pet reptile. He kept a pet alligator in the East Room of the White House. He enjoyed "the spectacle of guests fleeing from the room in terror." *(Uncle John's Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 163)***

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**Two men who knew each other well -- the second and the third Presidents of the U.S., John Adams and Thomas Jefferson -- died on the very same day in the very same year, the Fourth of July in 1826. Adam's last words were: “Jefferson still lives.” Jefferson had died, however, a few hours earlier. (The fifth President, James Monroe, also died on a Fourth of July -- 1831.) (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 419)**

**Seven presidents never vetoed a bill. They were John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Millard  Fillmore and James Garfield. *(L. M. Boyd)***

 **Ann Royall was the first woman journalist to interview a president. When John Quincy Adams was skinny-dipping one day, she stole his clothes and would not give them back until he gave her an interview. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Companion, p. 95)***

**Who is the only President to have been married in the White House? Grover Cleveland. Grover Cleveland married Francis Folsom in the Blue room. (TriviaChamp.com)**

**Being president is the like running a cemetery: You’ve got a lot of people under you and nobody’s listening. (President Bill Clinton)**

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**Calvin Coolidge loved to fish, but always wore gloves and made sure the Secret Service men handled the worms. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 62)***

**You know President Calvin Coolidge didn't say much, so people thought him quite a formal fellow. He was in fact, a practical joker. At his White House desk, he'd ring for his staff, then hide in the closet. There, too, he'd sit from time to time with his bare feet in a waste basket. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**During one of the last major offensives of World War II, Dwight Eisenhower was walking near the Rhine and came upon a GI who seemed depressed. “How are you feeling, son?” he asked. “General,” the young man replied, “I'm awful nervous.” “Well,” Eisenhower said, “you and I are a good pair then, because I'm nervous too. Maybe if we just walk along together, we'll be good for each other.” No sermon. No special advice. But what words of encouragement! (Mark R. Littleton, in Reader's Digest)**

**Who was the last President who was not affiliated with either the Republicans or the Democrats? Millard Fillmore. Fillmore was a member of the Whig Party. (TriviaChamp.com)**

**Gerald Ford was so nervous on his wedding day that he wore one black shoe and one brown one. (Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Ulysses S. Grant was arrested for exceeding the speed limit while driving a team of spirited horses through the streets of Washington. (Bruce D. Witherspoon, in Astounding Facts, p. 100)**

**Some problems are tougher than others. Sometimes we find that it is not possible to solve one in the way that we originally planned. We have to stop, reevaluate, and come up with a different approach. Lincoln used to tell a story about Ulysses S. Grant to illustrate this point. When Grant was a boy he liked to attend the circus with the other kids of the neighborhood. One circus had a mule so trained that nobody could ride him without being thrown. A dollar was offered – big money in those days – to anyone who could hang on while the mule went around the ring. Several men tried but all were shaken off. Goaded by the other boys to try, Grant stepped forward. He hung on until almost around the ring when he slid off over the animal’s head like the others. Grant thought for a moment, then asked for another try. Once more he mounted the mule, but this time instead of facing forward he turned his back to the mule’s head, coiling his legs around the mule’s stomach and taking a firm grasp of its tail with both hands. The mule tried in vain, with head down, and then by standing on his hind legs, to shake Grant off. Around and around the ring they went until finally the mule gave up. Grant stuck on and won his dollar. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*"Turn out the lights when you leave the room." Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson both made a point of telling that to everybody in the White House. But, why didn't Benjamin Harrison? He presided when electricity was first installed. His family left all the lights burning even after bedtime. They were afraid to touch the switches. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Why was the body of President William Henry Harrison buried in five coffins one inside another? He so willed it, in fear of grave robbers. The body of his son, John Scott Harrison, had been stolen by such thieves. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**Describing the telephone, the President of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes, said, “That's an amazing invention, but who would ever want to use one of them?” (Beverly A. Betaire)**

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**President Andrew Jackson was never convinced that the earth was round and not flat. (E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts , p. 1)**

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**Thomas Jefferson said it would take 40 generations to conquer the American wilderness. Certainly missed on that one, didn't he! Four generations later the frontier was just about gone. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**President Thomas Jefferson despised formal affairs and would often entertain foreign dignitaries while wearing pajamas. (*Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Companion, p. 41)***

**Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Monroe all died on July 4th. Jefferson and Adams died at practically the same minute of the same day. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 134)***

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**It's a matter of historical record that President Andrew Johnson mightily took his gun into bed with him. Yes, into. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Who was the first President to be impeached? Andrew Johnson. The Senate acquitted Andrew Johnson by a single vote. (TriviaChamp.com)**

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**Although strictly coincidental, JFK and Abraham shared some unusual history. Lincoln was elected in 1860, Kennedy in 1960; Lincoln’s secretary was named Kennedy, Kennedy’s was named Lincoln; both men were assassinated; and both men were succeeded by their vice presidents, both of whom were named Johnson. (Charlotte Lowe, in Fact-O-Pedia, p. 141)**

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**Abraham Lincoln had periods of absent-minded abstraction that were very trying to his wife. When they were newly married in Springfield, Illinois, Mary would go to church while Lincoln minded the baby. One day he bundled the baby up and put him in a wagon. He then began to read a book while pulling the wagon back and forth in front of their house. When Mary returned, she found that the baby had fallen out and was squalling on the ground. Lincoln, obliviously absorbed in his reading, was pulling an empty wagon. (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 143)**

**On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln spent the entire morning meeting dignitaries, shaking their hands, and spreading goodwill. Exhausted by his nonstop morning, Lincoln finally returned to his office at noon. With a deep sigh, he settled in his chair, only to be interrupted by William Seward, the secretary of state. Lincoln was presented with the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation for his signature. Twice the president picked up his pen to sign it, but his hand shook so badly that he finally put his pen down. He turned to Seward and said, “I've had an exhausting morning. In fact, I've been shaking hands since nine this morning, and my right arm almost feels paralyzed. I don't want to sign this document until my hand is more steady. If my name ever goes into history, it will be for this act, and I want you to know that my whole soul is in it. So you see, if my hand trembles when I sign the proclamation, all who examine it thereafter will say, ‘He hesitated -- look at his handwriting.’” A short time afterward, the president took up his pen with a strong and steady hand and firmly wrote, “Abraham Lincoln .” That historic act endeared Lincoln to the world as the Great Emancipator. (Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker's Sourcebook , p. 119)**

**Which President was assassinated at the Ford Theater in 1865? Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was shot by James Wilkes Booth on the 14th of April, 1865. (TriviaChamp.com)**

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**Which President is depicted on the U.S. five hundred dollar bill? William McKinley. William McKinley was the 25th President of the United States. (TriviaChamp.com)**

**Sam Waterston, American actor, has played five different presidents, Abraham Lincoln (three times), Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and two fictional presidents. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

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**As playwright Gore Vidal tells it, when his play The Best Man was being cast back in 1959, Ronald Reagan was proposed for the lead role of the distinguished front-running Presidential candidate. He was rejected. It was decided that he lacked the “Presidential look." (Fifty Plus )**

**Shortly after moving into the White House, President Reagan had portraits of Calvin Coolidge and Dwight Eisenhower hung in places of honor. Asked why, he replied that he admired Coolidge because the national debt was reduced under his administration, and “I beat Eisenhower for $10 the first time we played golf.” (Bits & Pieces)**

**When Ronald Reagan was running for President, a woman of about 80 stood up in the audience after one of his speeches and asked a question. “Everything sounds fine, Mr. Reagan,” she said, “but what about us old folks? Haven’t you forgotten us?” “Heavens, how could I forget you?” said Reagan smiling. “I’m one of you.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

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**Which President studied biology and boxed at Harvard College? Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore served as the 26th president of the United States. (TriviaChamp.com)**

**Theodore Roosevelt had 24 pets in the White House, including four guinea pigs, two cats, and a bear. *(Uncle John's Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 120)***

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**President William Howard Taft was the heaviest chief executive, tipping the scales at 325 pounds. After repeatedly getting stuck in the White House bathtub, he had one installed big enough to accommodate four average-sized men. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 102)***

**There is a story that when Harry Truman was speaking at a Grange convention in Kansas City, Mrs. Truman and a friend were in the audience. Truman in his speech said, “I grew up on a farm and one thing I know – farming means manure, manure, manure and more manure. At this, Mrs. Truman’s friend whispered to her, “Bess, why on earth don’t you get Harry to say fertilizer?” “Good lord, Helen,” replied Mrs. Truman, “you have no idea how many years it has taken to me to get him to say manure.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**President Martin Van Buren lost a lot of money betting on outcomes of elections, historical footnotes indicate. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**British ships in the English Channel fired a salute of twenty guns when word reached them that the country’s erstwhile great adversary, President George Washington, had died in the States. The British erected in London’s Trafalgar Square a statue of the U. S. President, George Washington, whose armies overthrew British rule in the colonies. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 138 & 142)***

**George Washington spent about 7 percent of his annual salary on liquor. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 175)***

**How many slaves worked at Mount Vernon when George Washington got it? How many did he add? There were 18 when he took over. He pushed the number to 200. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**George Washington was scared to death that he'd be buried alive. Just before he died, he demanded his body be kept above ground for a few days in the event he might come to. (Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book)**

**Feeling that the hour of his departure out of this world was at hand, George Washington desired that everyone leave the room so that he might have some time alone to commune with his God, as he had all of his life. (Dr. D. James Kennedy)**

**George Washington needed to borrow money to go to his own inauguration.**

***(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Companion, p. 87)***

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