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Ten Fun Things You May Not Know About Our Presidents

Here a few fun and interesting facts about our present and past U.S. Presidents that I thought are worth sharing- to celebrate President's Day Week!



1. **President Barack Obama** (presidential term: 2008-) collects Spiderman and Conan the Barbarian comic books.

2. **Eight presidents have been left-handed: Barack Obama, George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Harry S. Truman, Herbert Hoover, James Garfield and Grover Cleveland.** Because using one's left hand was actively discouraged until recently, there may have been more with a tendency toward left-handedness.

3. **Calvin Coolidge** (1923-29) maintained a personal zoo. He had six dogs, a cat, a bobcat, a goose, a donkey, two lion cubs, an antelope and a wallaby. He was also given a pygmy hippopotamus named Billy by tire mogul Harvey Firestone. Billy was six feet long and weighed upwards of 600 pounds. Eventually, Coolidge donated Billy to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park.

4. As a child, **Theodore Roosevelt** (1901-09) suffered from severe asthma and was too sickly to attend school. As he grew older, he became determined to overcome this impediment and he placed great value on physical exercise. His active interest in hiking and hunting increased his interest in conserving land as national parks.

5. **Dwight D. Eisenhower** (1953-61) was a Texan; he was born in Denison, Texas on October 14, 1890.

6. **William Howard Taft** (1909-13) was the last president to have a presidential cow at the White House to provide milk, cream and butter. Taft was also the first to have an automobile.

7. **Franklin D. Roosevelt** (1933-45), our only four-term president, led the country out of the Depression and into the perilous years of World War II, and his favorite way to relax was working on his stamp collection. One of the privileges of his presidency was he always obtained the first sheet of any commemorative stamps that were issued during his terms of office.

8. Most people now know that the story of young **George Washington** cutting down a cherry tree and confessing his deed to his father is untrue, so where did it come from? Because there was so little material about Washington's boyhood, his first biographer, Parson Weems, created stories to depict the type of man he believed Washington to be.

9. Only one president had his election victory announced via Pony Express and that was **Abraham Lincoln** in 1860. The rider traveled from Fort Kearney, Nebraska to Fort Churchill, Nevada in only six days. It was the fastest ride ever for the Pony Express.

10. **Thomas Jefferson** (1801-09) was the president who conceived of the journey taken by Lewis and Clark to explore the West, and when they returned, Lewis and Clark brought to Jefferson many gifts. A grizzly bear cub brought back by the expedition lived at the White House for a time, and Native American objects and animal skins, horns and bones were eventually displayed in Jefferson's Entrance Hall at Monticello. While the original artifacts disappeared at some point, Monticello worked with Native American groups to recreate the look of the Entrance Hall in honor of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.



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**This article was provided by Kate Kelly, author and historian.*

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