



## John F. Kennedy's Rocking Chair

### Date

1961

### Primary Maker

John F. Kennedy

### Medium

Wood; Cloth

### Description

John F. Kennedy's White House rocking chair. Constructed of Carolina Oak with steam-bent bamboo woven to make the seat and back. The original fabric covers are constructed of cream-colored cotton. This original rocker used by Kennedy is one of twelve originals made by

master craftsman Lawrence J. Arata at the request of the President in 1961, and one of three that Kennedy was documented to have used. This chair was later gifted by Kennedy to Averell Harriman in 1961. Kennedy, whose history of back problems is well known, underwent painful spinal surgery prior to taking his Senate seat in 1955. In recovery, he visited the office of Dr. Janet Travell, where he sat in a Carolina rocker - a bulky oak-frame chair with a woven rattan seat and back - she had in her office. Kennedy found it so comfortable that Dr. Travell suggested he buy one. When Kennedy became president in 1961, Dr. Travell became the White House physician, and the President's rocker from the Senate Office Building was installed in the Oval Office. That May, the President aggravated his old back injury at a tree-planting ceremony in Ottawa and acquired more rockers. Eventually he installed several rocking chairs in the White House; the others were sent to Camp David and the Kennedy family homes in Palm Beach and Hyannis Port. He also brought them along to hotels he frequented, and one even found a semi-permanent place aboard Air Force One. Photographs of President Kennedy sitting in a rocker, conferring with Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, as well as foreign heads of state, became world famous. The president once told reporters that the rocker was his favorite piece of furniture, and in the spirit of sharing his favorite form of ergonomic relaxation, he gave rockers as personal gifts to a number of important friends and supporters, among them the President of Mexico. This chair was presented by JFK to long-time Democrat and former New York governor Averell Harriman (1891-1986). He served as Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations (1961-1965) and, as Ambassador-at-large for Johnson, he headed the American delegation during negotiations with North Vietnam in Paris. John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), often referred to by his initials JFK, was the 35th President of the United States from 1961 until his assassination on November 22, 1963. Kennedy was born into a prominent Massachusetts family before enrolling at Harvard University in 1940. He joined the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II, where he commanded patrol torpedo boats in the Pacific theater. While commanding PT-109, his boat was struck by

a Japanese destroyer and Kennedy led a rescue of several of his injured sailors. Kennedy later served in both the United States House of Representatives and Senate, representing Massachusetts. In 1960, Kennedy successfully ran for President, defeating incumbent Vice President Richard Nixon. During his time in office, President Kennedy oversaw Cold War conflicts – including the Cuban Missile Crisis. He championed civil rights reforms, some of which were later included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. On November 22, 1963, Kennedy was in a motorcade procession through Dallas, Texas when he and Texas Governor John Connally were shot. Kennedy succumbed to his wounds while Connally was left gravely injured. Lee Harvey Oswald was apprehended in the assassination, only to be shot and killed two days later by Jack Ruby. Kennedy was the youngest person elected as president at a turning point in American society where politicians’ influence had crossed over into popular culture. Kennedy continues to be widely admired by American society, with his brief presidency remembered as a bright spot in the 20th century.

3D Model <div> <p style="font-size:13px;font-weight:normal;margin:5px;color:#4a4a4a"> <a href="https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/jfk-rocking-chair-67df5607f1e34c03a2a8db9e3a7995bf?utm\_medium=embed&utm\_campaign=share-popup&utm\_content=67df5607f1e34c03a2a8db9e3a7995bf" style="font-weight:bold;color:#1caad9" rel="nofollow"> JFK Rocking Chair </a> by <a href="https://sketchfab.com/znyth?utm\_medium=embed&utm\_campaign=share-popup&utm\_content=67df5607f1e34c03a2a8db9e3a7995bf" style="font-weight:bold;color:#1caad9" rel="nofollow"> Znyth Technologies </a> on <a href="https://sketchfab.com?utm\_medium=embed&utm\_campaign=share-popup&utm\_content=67df5607f1e34c03a2a8db9e3a7995bf" style="font-weight:bold;color:#1caad9" rel="nofollow">Sketchfab</a></p></div>

**Dimensions**

Overall: 44 1/2 x 29 x 32 in. (113 x 73.7 x 81.3 cm)