

35 years after JFK's death,

DALLAS (AP) — At one time, every American could describe the moment he or she heard President Kennedy was dead, cut down by an assassin in Dallas.

That shocking moment was followed by days of nationwide mourning punctuated by orations under the Capitol dome, by the widow and daughter appearing at the flag-draped casket, by a solemn funeral cortege that was paced by hollow drumbeats and followed by a riderless horse, and by a little boy's salute.

A quarter of a century later, the anniversary was observed by the opening of the Sixth Floor Museum in the former School Book Depository, the building where the shots were fired. And on the 30th anniversary, the site of the assassination was commemorated as a national historical landmark.

Today, 35 years after shots rang out over Dealey Plaza, little fanfare is expected for the anniversary of the event that convulsed the nation.

Other than the usual handful of curious people milling about Dealey Plaza, the day is expected to be uneventful, said Bob Porter, director of public programs at the Sixth Floor Museum.

Porter said that's understandable, considering that of the more than 265 million people in the United States, about half were not even born at the time of the assassination.

They missed the shock of the assassination, the national mourning and those sharp images of the funeral.

And they missed an uncertain period when Americans were trying to find

their place against the backdrop of the Cold War, Cuba and later the Vietnam War.

So can it be said that fewer people care about Kennedy's assassination?

It may be that fewer people respect Kennedy, said David Farber, who has written several books on American political history and has taught history at Columbia University.

"I wonder if all the disclosures about Kennedy's tawdry nature in the

White House — about his affairs — has something to do with it," Farber said. "I think that the comparisons being drawn between Clinton and Kennedy do not look favorable on either of them, and I think people may have lost some of their respect for Kennedy."

He noted that Kennedy, who won the White House by a fraction of the vote in 1960, was not as popular as people remember. He said the legend that grew up around Kennedy built

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America's shock is

upon the unimaginable event, the killing of the president of the United States.

The 35th anniversary also is missing someone important — Jackie Kennedy, whose presence helped keep her slain husband in the public consciousness, said Farber, who wrote *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* and *The Sixties: From Memory to History*. The president's widow died in 1994.

Even if the commemorations have dissipated over the years, the passions of those present at the event have not.

Jean Hill, who was 32 then, remembers the exact spot where she was standing when the fatal bullet struck.

"That day is so vivid and it played in my head so many nights and I've spent so many nights turning it over in my head like a tape and the tape

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never changes," said Hill, who served as a technical adviser for Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*.

Porter, a reporter for the now-defunct *Dallas Times Herald* in 1963, said that for years Dallas residents were ashamed and angry that Kennedy had been killed there.

"You would hesitate to say you were from Dallas. You were afraid people would say 'Oh that's where you kill presidents,'" Porter said.