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The Kennedy Effect: John F. Kennedy's 1959 Trip to Kansas and Its Relationship to His National Campaign

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THE KENNEDY EFFECT: JOHN F. KENNEDY'S 1959 TRIP TO KANSAS AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP TO HIS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

being

A thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays State University in
Partial Fulfillment of Master of Arts

by

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ABSTRACT

Massachusetts senator and presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy visited Kansas in November 1959 as part of his strategy to win the Democratic Party nomination. Kennedy made stops in five cities in two days, meeting party officials and wooing potential delegates. The candidate first spoke in Kansas City and Wichita on November 19 before flying to Dodge City November 20 after another appearance in Wichita that morning. After a noon luncheon in Dodge City Kennedy made a speech in Salina before his stop in Hays. In Hays, Kennedy gave a television interview, met the press at a news conference, rode in a parade and spoke at a fundraiser.

This thesis examines the “Kennedy effect,” of how Kennedy’s stop in Kansas fit into the electoral picture in Ellis County, the state and nationally. It also highlights how what Kennedy did in his 1959 run for the presidency followed his same strategy in winning his senate seat. Kennedy’s actions repeated what he did in other states; the candidate knew he had to meet voters in person across the country. As was the case in previous campaigns, Kennedy collected contact lists during his Kansas visit to add to the voluminous file kept by his advisors.

This thesis analyzes the events of the Kansas trip, focusing on the Hays appearance. It confirms the work of previous historians who described Kennedy’s path to victory in the 1960 election and adds to the historical narrative by providing in intimate detail the events of one stop on one campaign swing. While other historians discuss the national strategy and events, this thesis describes what a day in the life was like for candidate John F. Kennedy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have guided me through the process of writing this thesis. In the spring of 2017 I mentioned to Dr. Judi Winchester John F. Kennedy's trip to Hays and how local Democratic leader Norbert Dreiling was instrumental in making that appearance happen. Dr. Winchester said the subject was thesis material. I am forever grateful to her for gently nudging me in that direction. Hopefully, this thesis contributes to the rich history of Ellis County.

In addition to Dr. Winchester, who served as my thesis advisor, I would like to thank committee members Dr. David Goodlett and Dr. Paul Nienkamp. Their attention to detail improved this work immeasurably. I also would like to thank the other faculty members of the History Department; their interest in my thesis was heartening. I should mention my fellow graduate assistants, for our lively conversations and musical interludes in the office provided welcome relief. A special thanks to Brian Gribben, Forsyth Library's Coordinator of Government Documents and Special Collections, who exhibited the patience of Job in agreeing to assist me with the final formatting of my thesis. In addition, this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of the Norbert Dreiling family. Finally, I would like to thank friends and family members for their support and encouragement. In particular, one longtime friend sparked an interest in John F. Kennedy for a skinny, 18-year-old college freshman. Years later, a thesis was born.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis provides a description and analysis of the “Kennedy effect” during the visit to Hays, Kansas, in 1959 by presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy, then a senator from Massachusetts. The chapters detail what transpired before Kennedy’s visit to Hays on November 20, 1959 and what led him to visit Kansas, including a detailed description and analysis of his visit to Hays. The thesis addresses how the trip to Kansas fit into the overall strategy of Kennedy’s campaign. This research supports and extends the argument that Kennedy realized his path to victory for the Democratic nomination included visits to states that did not have primaries. It illustrates the power of their outreach into the lower levels of Democratic politics, and provides analysis of a specific example at the district level. This research also supports previous research about Kennedy’s 1960 campaign. Kennedy knew he needed to win delegates. John F. Kennedy visited five cities in Kansas in two days, including Hays, as part of a national strategy to earn support and woo delegates for the Democratic National Convention in July 1960. What separates this thesis from other accounts of Kennedy’s 1960 presidential campaign is the focus on one stop on one day of a campaign that in effect lasted for four years. This thesis will provide minute details of what happened in Hays on the afternoon and evening Kennedy visited the city. In addition, examination of the Kansas trip supports the previous written record concerning the candidate’s campaign strategy.

Kennedy approached his quest for the presidency unlike others before him. Instead of courting party bosses in smoke-filled rooms, he took his candidacy to the people. Kennedy knew he had to earn serious support from party leaders through winning primaries. He also met with local and state officials from other states on fundraising trips

for other Democrats. At the same time, Kennedy built a base of support for his own candidacy.

After falling short of becoming the vice-presidential pick in 1956, Kennedy campaigned for the Democratic ticket that year, and at the same time built his own list of contacts. From 1957 through 1959, Kennedy traveled the country, speaking at fundraisers in every state. Democrats running for president in 2020 also started early. More than a year before the first primary more than a dozen presidential hopefuls had declared their 2020 candidacy. Kennedy held two organizational meetings in 1959 for his presidential campaign, one in April and one in October. In the April 1 meeting at Kennedy's home in Palm Beach, Florida, the discussion centered on individual states and polls. Kennedy laid out campaign strategy at the October 28 meeting. The inner circle agreed with the assessment that winning primaries became essential by showing a broad base of support.

That support needed to come from more than primary states, of which there were only sixteen. Kennedy's introduction to local and state officials, such as the ones he met in Hays and throughout Kansas, provided him with a base of support that other candidates did not enjoy at this early stage of the campaign; his formal announcement did not come until the start of 1960. Kennedy attended fundraising dinners for Democratic state and national candidates in Kansas in 1957 and 1958 in other districts before speaking at fundraisers in 1959 in both Dodge City and Hays.

The Kansas delegation also affected the roll call that determined the Democratic nominee for president at the convention that July. Years later, in November 1963, Kennedy held an initial strategy meeting for his 1964 reelection campaign. Strategists included an assessment on the prospects for success in Kansas.

Historians provide a detailed history of the 1960 race. In *The Making of the President 1960*, Theodore H. White takes an in-depth look at the 1960 campaign, both from the Democrat and Republican side. White's account is noteworthy due to the detail in which he examines the seven major candidates, including five Democrats and two Republicans. White also provides insight into the campaigns of Democrats Hubert H. Humphrey, Stuart Symington, Lyndon B. Johnson and Adlai Stevenson. He includes an examination of the campaigns of Republican candidates Richard M. Nixon and Nelson A. Rockefeller.¹

In the Democratic field, Kennedy's close aide, Ted Sorensen, wrote two books about the 1960 campaign and Kennedy's presidency. Published in 1965, Sorensen's *Kennedy* is a personal memoir while *Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History*, was published in 2008. Sorensen admits *Kennedy* is not a full accounting of the historical record. However, he provides valuable insight into the campaign and the candidate, including small details as why Kennedy refused to be photographed wearing a hat. In *Counselor*, Sorensen describes events not covered in his earlier work, providing new anecdotes and astute observations.²

In *The Road to Camelot: Inside JFK's Five-Year Campaign*, authors Thomas Oliphant and Curtis Wilkie examine extensively the start of Kennedy's path to the presidency. They explain Kennedy's need not just to win primaries, but to court delegates

¹ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York, Atheneum House Inc., 1961).

² Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Ted Sorensen, *Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History*, (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2008). Sorensen, a Nebraska native, served as an aide to Kennedy and wrote many of his speeches.

to the national convention in other states at the state and local party level.³ James MacGregor Burns analyzes Kennedy's campaign strategy outside the primaries. In *John Kennedy: A Political Profile*, Burns writes that Kennedy looked beyond the sixteen states with primaries, making a concerted effort to make deals with state officeholders and party leaders in states where delegates were chosen by party leaders.⁴

Other authors provide salient details about the Kennedy campaign. In *John F. Kennedy: A Biography*, author Michael O'Brien examines the campaign and 1964 reelection plans, and includes detailed information not found elsewhere. In *Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero*, Chris Matthews writes about Kennedy's use of poll data and how that separated him from other candidates. In his later book, *Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit*, Matthews describes the card file system first used in Kennedy's senate campaigns and now used in the 1960 election. It provided voluminous information on supporters.⁵ In *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963*, Robert Dallek discusses Kennedy's preference for a GOP opponent in the 1964 election.⁶

In *No Final Victories: A Life in Politics – From John F. Kennedy to Watergate*, Lawrence F. O'Brien writes about his personal association with Kennedy, starting with his run for the Senate in 1952. O'Brien describes the importance of organization in a

³ Thomas Oliphant and Curtis Wilkie, *The Road to Camelot: Inside JFK's Five-Year Campaign* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

⁴ James MacGregor Burns, *John Kennedy: A Political Profile* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1959).

⁵ Chris Matthews, *Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011); Chris Matthews, *Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

⁶ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2003).

campaign, and how the courting of women in the political process became an advantage for Kennedy.⁷

Kennedy aides Kenneth P. O'Donnell and David F. Powers wrote of their time spent with him in "*Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye*": *Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*. They provided an inside look at the man and the candidate.⁸

This thesis also examines Ellis County and state politics in the first half of the twentieth century. H. Edward Flentje and Joseph A. Aistrup analyze the political climate of Ellis County and north central Kansas in the decades prior to Kennedy's visit to Kansas as part of their book *Kansas Politics and Government: The Clash of Political Cultures*. The machinations of the publicity machine during the campaign is included in the work of Pierre Salinger, Kennedy's press secretary both in the campaign and in the White House.⁹

Two other authors focus on the election and Kennedy's presidency. In *With Kennedy*, Salinger provides an inside look at the publicity machine every campaign features, and how Kennedy's went far beyond his political rivals, especially at the Democratic National Convention. The campaign put out a daily newspaper, converted a room to a dark room and used beepers to contact campaign workers. This attention to detail served as a model for future candidates.¹⁰ In *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, Herbert S. Parmet considers the means necessary to win the Roman Catholic vote in the

⁷ Lawrence F. O'Brien, *No Final Victories: A Life in Politics – From John F. Kennedy to Watergate* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1974).

⁸ Kenneth P. O'Donnell and David F. Powers, with Joe McCarthy, "*Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye*": *Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

⁹ H. Edward Flentje and Joseph A. Aistrup, *Kansas Politics and Government: The Clash of Political Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966).

1960 general election. Parmet writes of the concerns of local and state Catholic politicians about having a Catholic at the top of the ticket.¹¹

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., crafts an in-depth examination of the November 1963 meeting to discuss the 1964 election in his book, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*.¹² In his profile, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, Richard Reeves uses White House documents and interviews to capture his portrait of the thirty-fifth president, including a detailed account of the November 1963 meeting by Kennedy advisors to discuss the reelection and campaign polling numbers.¹³ In *Robert Kennedy in His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections of the Kennedy Years*, Robert Kennedy himself recalls the November 1963 meeting concerning the president's reelection plans, saying those assembled discussed the convention among other topics.¹⁴

Religion played a role in the 1960 election. Albert J. Menendez discusses the election in two books, *The Religious Factor in the 1960 Presidential Election: An Analysis of the Kennedy victory Over Anti-Catholic Prejudice*, and *The Geography of Presidential Elections in the United States, 1868-2004*. In *Religious Factor*, Menendez provides an analysis of the data in the 1960 election, including a look at the Kansas numbers. In *Geography*, he provides data on the 1960 election, including charts that show

¹¹ Herbert S. Parmet, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Dial Press, 1983).

¹² Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002).

¹³ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

¹⁴ Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman, *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections of the Kennedy Years* (London, New York, Toronto: Bantam Press, 1988).

Ellis County results.¹⁵

Local and state newspapers provide an inside view of the Kennedy campaign. Kennedy visited the state for Democratic fundraisers in 1957 and 1958, and *The Topeka Daily Capital* reports on remembrances of Kennedy's visit in Topeka. *The Hays Daily News*, provides extensive news coverage of Kennedy's visit to Hays in 1959. Newspapers also give a detailed accounting of Kennedy's visit to other Kansas cities. The *Kansas City Star* details Kennedy's appearance in Kansas City, and the *Wichita Eagle* covered the Wichita stop. Kennedy's visit to Dodge City receives an accounting from *The Hutchinson News*, while *The Salina Journal* provides information on Kennedy's speech in Salina. Notably, the *Ellis County Farmer* provides two guest editorials by Norbert Dreiling after Kennedy's assassination in 1963. In the first guest editorial, Dreiling reacts to the president's assassination. Dreiling's second editorial offers a personal remembrance of Kennedy with a detailed accounting of his visit to Hays in 1959. In an article in the same newspaper, printed at the same time as the second guest editorial, a retrospective article gives more detail of Kennedy's visit.

Historical documents inform much of this work. The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's online database documents Kennedy's campaign through hundreds of relevant memorandums, letters and other artifacts. Documents include Kennedy's travel schedule in Kansas, memos on strategy, and thank-you letters to

¹⁵ Albert J. Menendez, *The Geography of Presidential Elections in the United States, 1868-2004* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., 2005); Albert J. Menendez, *The Religious Factor in the 1960 Presidential Election: An Analysis of the Kennedy Victory Over Anti-Catholic Prejudice* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., 2011).

supporters. These documents provide the foundation for the research in many critical areas, including a timeline of campaign events.

Norbert Dreiling's family provided a unique perspective of the Democratic leader instrumental in bringing Kennedy to Hays. Norbert Dreiling's daughter, Jan Schuster, and his grandson, Jackson Dreiling, provide insight into Norbert Dreiling's political career with the use of many of his personal papers. The papers include not only the tiniest of details but also a valuable lengthy memo sent to the Kennedy campaign revealing Dreiling's assessment of the delegates from the Sixth District in Kansas. Dreiling notes which delegates were in the Kennedy camp, which delegates were not, which delegates were uncommitted, and which delegates might be persuaded to switch allegiance to Kennedy.

First-person interviews provide detail of what transpired during Kennedy's visit to Hays. This includes dozens of interviews from those who were participants on that November day in 1959, to those who knew people who were there that day, to historians who provide historical context. Oral histories contributed as well, especially interviews of Norbert Dreiling's contemporaries conducted by Jackson Dreiling in 2008.

Chapter One discusses the years between 1956 to the early months of 1959 of Kennedy's political career, and how those events led to his visit to Hays on November 20, 1959. The chapter also describes the other candidates for the presidency in 1960, both Democratic and Republican. A focus on Kennedy's earlier campaigns provides a clearer picture of the motivations and strategy of the candidate. Kennedy came close to winning the vice-presidential nomination in 1956; that setback set the stage for his run for the

presidency in 1960. By nearly winning the vice-presidency at the 1956 national convention, Kennedy learned he could build a national following.

Chapter Two examines the political career of Hays attorney Norbert Dreiling in the years before the 1959 Kennedy visit to Hays. As Sixth District Chairman, Dreiling served an important role in the candidate's visit. This chapter also details Kennedy's previous stops in Kansas, in 1958 and 1959, where he spoke at fundraisers while also gaining support in congressional districts in Topeka, Kansas City and Wichita.

Correspondence between Kennedy and his staff with supporters and potential supporters in Kansas demonstrates the commitment the candidate exhibited in building relationships from the bottom up. In addition, Chapter Two discusses the history of Ellis County and Hays, Kansas, and how the city and county served as a Democratic bastion in a Republican state.

Chapter Three examines Kennedy's two-day trip to Kansas in 1959, focusing primarily on his schedule in Hays. Kennedy campaigned in the Kansas City area before heading for events in Wichita and moving on to speak in Dodge City and Salina. He concluded his whirlwind tour with his visit to Hays.

Chapter Four describes the events following Kennedy's trip to Kansas, in relation to Kansas. The chapter discusses the state convention in Hutchinson, followed by the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. Dreiling analyzes the Kansas delegates and potential delegates from his district. Dreiling discusses both supporters and delegates with whom the campaign should exercise caution.

The conclusion discusses the early reelection efforts led by Kennedy's inner circle. It includes an analysis of Kennedy's prospects in Kansas.

CHAPTER ONE

“Kennedy’s political journey from 1956 to 1959”

Failure led to future success for John F. Kennedy. Kennedy knew he came oh-so-close to winning the nomination for vice-president at the 1956 Democratic National Convention. Losing his bid for a place on the ticket to Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver fueled Kennedy’s unofficial start to his campaign for the presidency in 1960. The senator from Massachusetts knew that by coming close to landing a spot on the ticket he had gained national notoriety, and a slot on an unsuccessful ticket in 1956 would doom any future Catholic candidacy for decades. In later years, Kennedy noted that his older brother, Joe, who died in a bomber mission in World War II, would have been the chosen son to seek the vice-presidency in 1956, but he likely would have been successful – making his brother’s political career “a shambles.” At a Gridiron Dinner two years after the 1956 convention, Kennedy quipped that if he had won the VP slot “my career would now be over.”¹

While historians do point to the 1956 Democratic National Convention as the unofficial start to Kennedy’s run for the presidency four years later, others argue that two events in 1955 provided the spark for a five-year run for the highest office in the land. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson suffered a heart attack on July 2, 1955. Ten weeks later, President Dwight D. Eisenhower also suffered a heart attack. To Joseph Kennedy, the patriarch of the Kennedy clan, these events represented opportunity. With the agreement of his son, John, and with the knowledge of the other family members,

¹ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 91-92.

Joseph Kennedy approached Johnson with an offer. With Eisenhower still hospitalized, Johnson should run for president, and John Kennedy would be his running mate. No evidence exists proving Johnson seriously considered the proposal. Still, JFK was energized from that moment in time; from that point forward, it was full speed ahead in the quest for the presidency.²

Joseph P. Kennedy, the Kennedy patriarch, had plotted the future for all his sons. Successful businessman and former ambassador to the United Kingdom, Joseph P. Kennedy harbored the ambition for one of his sons to become the first Irish Catholic elected president. In the Kennedy clan, only one son would enter politics, and that fell to Joseph Jr.³ After Joseph Jr.'s death in 1944, the father urged his son John to take over his older brother's political role, but John Kennedy did not enter politics until more than a year after his brother's death.

In his biography, Sorensen analyzed John Kennedy's motivation for a life in politics. Kennedy dismissed the widely held idea that he entered politics to prove himself to his father or to replace his late brother Joe. As a youth, John Kennedy assumed he would not enter politics because Joe would take up the mantle. After his brother's death, John Kennedy entered politics because he had his own idealistic vision, and now he had the opportunity to pursue it. Both of Kennedy's grandfathers held elective office. He attended political rallies as a youngster and listened more than he spoke. During World

² Thomas Oliphant and Curtis Wilkie, *The Road to Camelot: Inside JFK's Five-Year Campaign* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 1-3.

³ Kenneth P. O'Donnell and David F. Powers, with Joe McCarthy, "*Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye*": *Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 44-45.

War II, Kennedy debated politics in the South Pacific. All this sharpened Kennedy's interest in public affairs and public service.⁴

By 1952, Kennedy needed to make a decision about his political future. He had won his first Congressional contest in 1946 in Massachusetts, but toward the end of his third term he decided to run for a higher office. The choice rested on the actions of Paul Dever, the state's Democratic governor. Dever considered running for reelection, or as an opponent to Henry Cabot Lodge, the respected Republican senator from Massachusetts.

Many considered Lodge as unbeatable in the 1952 race. Kennedy decided to stake a claim in whichever office Dever chose not to run for. To help with his state-wide campaign for either office, Kennedy enlisted the assistance of Lawrence F. O'Brien in 1951, who had contacts across the state. O'Brien believed a run for governor by Kennedy would be preferable than going up against the popular Lodge. However, Kennedy really wanted to run for the Senate. In his estimation, the governor's office seemed more mundane and the Senate was where the action was for an ambitious politician. Kennedy got his wish: Dever decided to run for governor again. "Here we go, Larry – we've got the race we want," Kennedy exclaimed.⁵

O'Brien considered the 1952 senate race between Kennedy and Lodge a battle between the Yankee establishment and the best that newer Americans could offer.⁶ To win that battle, the Kennedy campaign needed organization, an area in which O'Brien specialized. The senator traveled statewide making a good impression on people but a

⁴ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 14-15.

⁵ Lawrence F. O'Brien, *No Final Victories: A Life in Politics – From John F. Kennedy to Watergate* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1974), 15-26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

follow-up was missing. In the early months of the campaign, O'Brien contacted political leaders who could form the nucleus of the Kennedy organization. The importance of campaign organization displayed in the Lodge race served Kennedy well in his quest for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, which included the trip to Kansas in 1959.

O'Brien used all available avenues to recruit support for Kennedy. A political organizer who became a Kennedy advisor, O'Brien later wrote that the key to organization was the recruitment of three hundred local campaign directors, called Kennedy secretaries. The men selected carried this more modest title so as not to offend county chairmen. Women played a role, too, with the campaign capitalizing on the unmarried candidate's good looks. Kennedy also relied on his sisters and sister-in-law for campaign appearances, called receptions. At these receptions each attendee signed a guest book with contact information. The appropriate secretary followed up, and one day's reception guest might become the next day's volunteer.⁷

O'Brien's organizational efforts produced positive results on election night. Republican candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower carried Massachusetts in a landslide in the presidential race, and Dever narrowly lost his governor's race. However, Kennedy, helped by the secretary organization, defeated Lodge by 70,000 votes. Kennedy ran well in the small towns and villages Lodge needed to win, but Kennedy's organizational strategy made the difference.⁸

After becoming a senator in 1952, Kennedy almost became his party's nominee for vice-president four years later. Delegates at the Democratic National Convention

⁷ Ibid., 30-33.

⁸ Ibid., 36.

came close to choosing him after presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson threw open the VP slot to the delegates. Kennedy knew before the convention he was scheduled to speak, and a week before the gathering he learned he might give Stevenson's nominating speech. However, Kennedy guessed that those speaking assignments would be consolation prizes; he doubted that the man who nominated Stevenson also would be his running mate.⁹ Kennedy's campaign team received inside information before the event that Stevenson might not pick his vice-president and have the delegates make the choice. John Sharon, a former congressional aide who now worked for Stevenson, wrote a memo to Stevenson's advisors with the suggestion, arguing that opening up the VP slot would add excitement to the convention and symbolize democracy, contrasting with the Republican convention, which would follow tradition and have the nominee make the decision.¹⁰

Kennedy faced opposition for a place on the ticket. Contenders for the VP slot included the two senators from Tennessee, Estes Kefauver and Albert Gore, as well as Tennessee Governor Frank Clement. Minnesota senator Hubert H. Humphrey became convinced Stevenson would pick him after a private conversation with the presumptive nominee in July. However, Stevenson received negative reviews on both Humphrey and Kennedy in a meeting of party elders at the convention. The concern regarding Kennedy was his Catholicism.¹¹ Party bosses expressed hesitancy despite Sorensen's memo written in spring 1956 in which he demonstrated how a Catholic could help the ticket. Sorensen's

⁹ Oliphant, *Camelot*, 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

seventeen-page paper included several pages of data and analysis, focusing on the fourteen most pivotal states concerning Catholic voting. Previously Democratic, those fourteen states in the West and North were lost by Stevenson in the 1952 and 1956 elections. Sorensen included a new analysis, writing that Catholic Al Smith would have lost in 1928 anyway, because it was a Republican year, regardless of the Democratic nominee.¹²

At the start of the convention on August 13, Kefauver and Humphrey each thought he would be on the ticket. Buoyed by a raucous reception on the floor after his appearance at the convention, Kennedy also held out hope Stevenson would select him. At about the same time Kennedy was giving his speech to the delegates, Stevenson conducted two private meetings with his closest advisors. Stevenson decided to open up the vice-presidential choice. Kefauver felt betrayed upon hearing the news. Humphrey, who had started writing his acceptance speech, scurried to round up delegates.¹³

The roll-call voting for the VP slot saw Kennedy overtake Kefauver before arm-twisting ensued. After the first roll-call, Kefauver led with 483 ½ votes, followed by Kennedy at 304. Momentum for Kennedy built during the second ballot, and at one point he led 256 ½ to 196. The New York delegation voted overwhelmingly for Kennedy. Texas, which was under unit rule (the candidate with the most votes received all of the delegation's votes), switched to Kennedy, giving him all of the delegation's votes and pushing his lead over Kefauver to 504-395. At the end of the second roll call, Kennedy

¹² Ted Sorensen, *Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History*, (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2008), 158-159.

¹³ Oliphant, *Camelot*, 42-44.

had amassed 613 ½ votes to 551 ½ for Kefauver. Before a third ballot, Kentucky switched its thirty votes from Gore to Kennedy, leaving the Massachusetts senator 43 ½ votes shy of winning.¹⁴ However, Silliman Evans, Jr., publisher of the influential Nashville newspaper the *Tenneesean*, pressured Gore to throw his votes to fellow *Tenneesean* Kefauver. Gore gave his 32 votes to Kefauver, starting a groundswell of support from other southern states to back Kefauver. Kennedy realized Kefauver would win and took to the speaker's platform to ask for unanimous support for Kefauver as vice-president.¹⁵

Even though he had come up short in his bid to hold a place on the ticket, Kennedy dutifully campaigned for the Democratic nominee that fall of 1956. Kennedy used his tour of the country campaigning for the Stevenson ticket to lay the groundwork for his own 1960 bid for the presidency. Kennedy campaigned tirelessly for Stevenson in the fall of 1956, but he did so on his own terms. Disregarding Stevenson's loose campaign structure, Kennedy organized his own national campaign schedule. In six weeks, Kennedy made more than 150 appearances in twenty-four states. Kennedy focused on party differences far more than campaigning on behalf of the candidate. He contrasted the wealth of young leaders in the Democratic Party to a dearth of leadership for the Republicans.¹⁶

Kennedy also put in motion plans for his own future presidential campaign. He asked for a list of all the delegates to the 1956 Democratic National Convention, with

¹⁴ Ibid., 47-50.

¹⁵ Ibid., 50-52. Some states gave delegates half-votes.

¹⁶ Ibid., 55-56.

their contact information.¹⁷ Robert F. “Bobby” Kennedy joined Stevenson’s traveling staff, not only to campaign for the 1956 nominee but also to look ahead. Some Stevenson staffers thought Bobby was there to learn as much as help. Bobby collected all of his notes for a report to document the campaign. Kennedy’s roommate on the campaign trail, Stevenson’s law partner Newton Minow, said, “Bob learned what not to do.” According to Minow, what bothered Bobby was the campaign’s lack of decisiveness in decision-making.¹⁸

Stevenson lost to Eisenhower in the 1956 presidential election by a wide margin. The incumbent Republican from Abilene, Kansas, won fifty-seven percent of the popular vote and carried forty-one states. As the last election with forty-eight states, the outcome was even more decisive. However, Eisenhower faced Democrats in control of both houses of Congress in his second term.

John Kennedy had a situation of his own to consider two years later in his re-election for his Senate seat. The question was not whether Kennedy would win; the Republicans put up a token opponent in political novice Vincent J. Celeste. The challenge that faced Kennedy, and which made him campaign with vigor, was the margin of victory. According to an Associated Press report in the campaign’s final days, Kennedy was running “scared” because his unofficial run for president demanded a convincing victory. Kennedy insiders viewed the GOP’s putting up a candidate against him as a “dirty trick.” Beating a weak opponent would diminish Kennedy’s victory. The AP wire story reported Kennedy’s staff hoped for at least a 300,000-vote margin of victory, or,

¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹⁸ Ibid., 57-58.

better yet, top the Massachusetts record of 531,000-thousand vote margin, set in 1944 by Republican Senator Leverett Saltonstall. Midway through the campaign, Kennedy's camp estimated a 100,000-vote margin of victory. That margin, deemed not wide enough, led Kennedy to campaign as if each vote was crucial.¹⁹

Kennedy defeated Celeste in convincing fashion in that 1958 election, winning by 874,608 votes. A new state record, it represented another step toward 1960. Kennedy could have been nominated in 1960 without his big win in 1958, but the campaign did not want to take that chance. Kennedy had to prove something in every election. O'Brien dutifully wrote thank-you notes after the victory, his mind already focused on another, bigger stage for his candidate.²⁰

John Kennedy's march to the presidency was the product of careful planning over a long period of time. No candidate could afford to forget that only sixteen states used primaries for the delegate process; the bulk of the delegates for the national convention would be determined at the local level and state conventions. In the past, candidates had ignored this voting bloc, instead relying on the support of the party bosses to win the nomination. Kennedy would be the first to attempt to dominate the delegate selection process at the precinct level.²¹

Kennedy's approach to his presidential run followed the same successful blueprint he developed earlier, in winning a seat in Congress and then the Senate: start early.

Kennedy entered his first Congressional race in late 1945, soon after James Michael

¹⁹ Tom Henshaw, "Sen. John Kennedy 'Runs Scared;' Eyes '60 Democratic Nomination," *The Hutchinson News*, October 26, 1958. <https://newspaperarchive.com/hutchinson-news-oct-26-1958-p-15/>

²⁰ O'Brien, *Victories*, 56.

²¹ Oliphant, *Camelot*, 160-161.

Curley resigned his seat in the House upon his election as mayor of Boston. Kennedy started his run for Lodge's Senate seat eighteen months before the election. Democrats learned from that strategy. For example, Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president nineteen months before the 2008 election.

O'Brien took control of 20,000 volunteers during the Senate run; many of those volunteers came as a result of women's events. However, in the race for the Democratic nomination for president, Kennedy needed to introduce himself to the nation. The senator from Massachusetts made more than 140 appearances in 1957 alone, chosen from 2,500 invitations to speak.²² Included among those accepted invitations was a speech in Topeka.

Kennedy spoke at many different venues on the campaign trail. According to Kennedy aide Theodore C. Sorensen, the candidate spoke at locations ranging from airports and fairgrounds to high schools, hotels and convention halls. He learned the tricks of the trade in giving speeches, such as pausing during interruptions from train whistles or airplanes flying overhead. He learned to leave the speaker's platform quickly to engage with supporters.²³

Kennedy had special requirements while on the road. He used a bed board under his mattress in the hotel room to help his back, first injured while playing football in college and worsened during World War II when his PT boat was rammed by a Japanese destroyer. In addition, Kennedy needed a lectern high enough so he did not have to stoop, again a concession to his back. He instructed his aides to provide maximum television and press coverage at each event, as well as to give him an opportunity to meet local

²² Ibid., 69-72.

²³ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 101-102.

political leaders. He wanted to spend time with newspaper editors and students, if possible, and still have time to rest before speaking.²⁴ This pattern held true for Kennedy's stop in Hays in November 1959.

A Kennedy event attracted special attention at each stop, but the candidate did not request motorcycle escorts, although they were usually provided. He asked that sirens be turned off, and thanked the officers and got their names for his file. Sorensen wrote that detectives watched his hotel suite in some cities. Because fundraising dinners typically provided varying quality of food, Kennedy preferred to have a steak and baked potato in his room before speaking. Each morning on the road, Sorensen made sure the candidate had the same breakfast of milk, coffee, fresh (not frozen) orange juice, broiled (not fried) bacon, two soft-boiled (four-minute) eggs, buttered toast and jelly.²⁵

Kennedy's decision to plant his name into the minds of Democrats served more than one purpose. In meeting voters far and wide, in big cities and the smallest of villages, the strategy moved beyond simple name recognition as 1959 approached. He visited both primary states and convention states as part of a two-pronged strategy. Aside from the sixteen primary states, Kennedy made deals with officeholders and party leaders in other states for blocs of delegates, and made appeals to rank-and-file Democrats who might influence delegates.²⁶

At the same time, he considered what strategy to pursue in states that likely would have favorite-son candidates for president. Supervised by Wallace and Sorensen, the

²⁴ Ibid., 104.

²⁵ Ibid., 104.

²⁶ James MacGregor Burns, *John Kennedy: A Political Profile* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1959), 234.

Kennedy campaign organized in Midwestern states while at the same time developed a strong presence in the sixteen primary states.²⁷ For Christmas in 1956, Sorensen gave Kennedy a map showing his areas of strengths and weaknesses reflected in the voting for the vice-presidency at the national convention that year. West of the Mississippi, the map was blank, explaining the candidate's frequent visits to the Midwest.²⁸

Kennedy visited Kansas and other states in the heartland to shore up his political capital before officially announcing his candidacy. Prior to Kennedy's visit to Hays in 1959, other congressional districts in Kansas had previously brought in the Massachusetts senator. Kennedy appeared in Topeka on November 6, 1957, for a First Congressional District fundraiser and spoke in the Kansas City area in October 1958 for a Second Congressional District fundraiser. At the Topeka banquet, a homemade placard reading "Kennedy for President" waved from a table directly in front of the senator.²⁹ Kennedy's speech included remarks on foreign policy. *The Hutchinson News* reported in its November 7, 1957, edition that Kennedy said the United States stood at a critical position in world affairs. He noted that the country was losing ground to the Soviet Union in satellite and missile production due to "complacent miscalculations, penny-pinching, budget cutbacks, incredibly confused mismanagement and wasteful rivalries and jealousies."³⁰

²⁷ Oliphant, *Camelot*, 154.

²⁸ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 102.

²⁹ Burns, *Political Profile*, 210.

³⁰ Jan Biles. "Sen. Kennedy Hurls Challenge to Ike," *The Hutchinson News*, November 7, 1957. <https://newspaperarchive.com/hutchinson-news-nov-07-1957-p-45/>

Topeka residents later recalled Kennedy's visit. In a November 2003 interview with the *Topeka Capital-Journal*, Tom Schwartz, a retired Topeka businessman, remembered how Kennedy spoke before a large crowd at the fairgrounds and shook hands with the Massachusetts senator. Kennedy also gave a speech at a fundraiser at a Topeka hotel during the visit. Muriel Holdefer, who bought Kennedy's book *Profiles in Courage* for her husband the year before, had Kennedy autograph it for her at the banquet. "I could see why Mrs. Kennedy fell for him," Holdefer told the newspaper. "When he took my hand, I think my heart jumped 10 leaps."³¹

In a letter to Kennedy dated December 10, 1957, Kansas Democratic Party Chairman Frank Theis told the candidate that his appearance drew the largest attendance at a fundraiser in Topeka, adding that it would serve as a model for future fundraisers in other districts.³² Kennedy later spoke at a September 15, 1958, fundraiser at Shawnee-Mission High School in northeast Johnson County, just south of Kansas City. Elmer Hoge, chairman of the Second District, made the arrangements.³³

Before Kennedy's 1958 fundraiser in Kansas, Sorensen wrote to Georgia Neese Gray on August 26, 1958, concerning the senator's requirements for the trip. Sorensen advised the Democratic National Committeewoman from Richland, Kansas, that Kennedy would be addressing a noon luncheon in Cheyenne, Wyoming, that day before arriving in Kansas City. Sorensen noted that Kennedy would like to meet former

³¹ "JFK visited Kansas in '50s," *Topeka Daily-Capital*, November 22, 2003. http://cjonline.com/stories/112203/loc_jfk.shtml#.WSW_eDOZNsY

³² Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Presidential Campaign Files, 1960. Campaigns By State: Pre-Convention Political Files, 1960. Kansas: Delegates: R-V. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. (Hereafter cited as JFK Presidential Campaign Files).

³³ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: H-K.

president Harry S. Truman at his library and museum in Independence, Missouri the morning after the fundraiser before leaving for an evening speaking engagement in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Sorensen requested that Gray arrange television interviews, as well as a meeting with Democratic leaders in an informal reception. The following morning, Kennedy wanted to meet with key editors and publishers of state newspapers. Sorensen also requested the hard mattress and board and the elevated lectern.³⁴

Kennedy's forays into Kansas in 1957, 1958 and 1959 represented a venture into strong Republican territory. Robert Dole, the former longtime Republican senator and presidential contender from Russell, Kansas, got his start in national politics in the Sixth Congressional District after World War II. The district's conservative leanings showed in the picking of delegates for the 1952 national convention. The five other districts in the state supported favorite son Dwight D. Eisenhower of Abilene, Kansas, the Allied supreme leader in World War II. The delegates from the twenty-six northwest counties in the Sixth District, however, deemed Eisenhower too moderate and backed Robert Taft.³⁵ Even being a native son was not enough to sway the Sixth District towards Eisenhower.

Despite all the organizing leading up to 1959, Kennedy worried about the list of states that could derail his path to the nomination. States that had at least one Democratic Party figure not entirely behind the Kennedy effort, or that had a "favorite-son" candidate included California, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, Maryland, North Carolina, Colorado, Iowa, and Kansas. Kennedy did his arithmetic and realized he

³⁴ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: G-L.

³⁵ Elizabeth Kolbert. "A Political Life: Dole's Kansas Years," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1996. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/politics/dole-kansas.html>

could not capture the necessary votes on the first ballot if these states backed their favorite-son candidates. Kennedy believed he needed to win on the first ballot to prevent any back-room deals for the nomination by party bosses.³⁶

As Kennedy began his third full year in his run for the presidency, he knew he had to decrease the number of favorite sons. His campaign stops now included an effort to persuade those potential candidates not to run.

To understand fully Kennedy's quest for the Democratic nomination one must also examine his competition, the other candidates who fought for voters in primaries and state conventions, who offered contrasting visions of America's future. The Democratic field for the 1960 nomination included four hopefuls in addition to Kennedy. During 1959, candidates met with their closest advisors, surveying the political landscape.

Unlike the Democrats' plethora of presidential petitioners for 1960, the Republican field of serious contenders held only two men: Vice-President Richard M. Nixon and successful businessman Nelson A. Rockefeller, the governor of New York since 1958. Although Eisenhower won two terms as president in 1952 and 1956, the Republican Party had lost ground nationally. The party had 49 percent of the electorate in 1950, but saw it decrease to 47 percent in 1954 and drop again to 43 percent in 1958.³⁷

Among the Democratic hopefuls was Hubert H. Humphrey. The Minnesota senator had been a declared candidate for the vice-presidency at the 1956 national convention and had grown in the eyes of the public. He discussed the presidency with close friends in 1958. He probably reached the decision to run in a day-long meeting with

³⁶ Oliphant, *Camelot*, 160.

³⁷ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960*, (New York, Atheneum House Inc., 1961), 75.

his closest advisors in Duluth, Minnesota, on July 11, 1959. The question in the room centered on the Minnesota way of politics: clean and practical, and dependent on volunteer enthusiasm. Could it work in a national campaign? One contingent, led by Governor Orville L. Freeman, insisted they needed to form a committee immediately and start raising money. Humphrey and others exhibited more caution. The evening ended with the group divided on how to proceed. The Minnesota people left believing that they were off to the races, and had the go-ahead to start raising money and organizing. Humphrey's recollection, however, was one of simply agreeing to explore the presidency. It was up to another friend to start the engine for Humphrey's candidacy.

James Rowe, a political strategist from Washington, D.C., knew that Humphrey was largely unknown outside the state, and perceived as a wild-eyed liberal. He needed recognition outside Minnesota. Humphrey's path required stumping in primary states and taking on the popular Kennedy whenever and wherever he could. However, cash considerations forced Humphrey to pick and choose which primary states he could contest. Fundamentally, it came down to the candidate and the emotions he could arouse, rather than a pocketful of cash.³⁸

Missouri Senator Stuart Symington's campaign strategy relied on courting the power brokers in the Democratic Party. Symington won his 1958 senatorial campaign in a landslide, garnering sixty-six percent of the vote. While resting in Puerto Rico after the election, Symington pondered what his margin of victory meant in the national landscape. He wrote fellow Missourian Clark Clifford, a lawyer and political advisor for

³⁸ Ibid., 36-44.

Washington power brokers, for a meeting when he returned to the capital. The first meeting of the Symington campaign included just the candidate and Clifford in early January 1959, where Symington told Clifford he was thinking of running for president. After many conversations, Symington announced his decision to run at a meeting on September 6 that centered on resources, rivalries and decisions. The best resource should have been the candidate himself, but, like Humphrey, Symington was virtually unknown outside his home state. They agreed that the national convention could possibly become deadlocked, with no candidate garnering enough delegates to take the nomination. If that happened, there could be no more perfect candidate to turn to than Symington. To ensure his being the compromise choice at the convention, he stayed out of the fractious primaries. Subsequently, Symington did not announce his candidacy until March 24, 1960. By then, it was too late to stop the Kennedy tide.³⁹

Lyndon B. Johnson counted on the southern vote, as had past southern candidates who did not have enough delegates to make a difference. But Johnson wanted something more. He announced earlier than Humphrey or Symington, from his home base in Texas. On October 17, 1959, in Dallas, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn announced the creation of an “unofficial” campaign committee for Johnson. The Texas senator’s inner circle also foresaw a deadlocked convention. Johnson planned to show his worthiness for the nomination by exhibiting success as Senate Majority Leader. The Texas senator also planned to cash in on political debts.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid., 45-53.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 53-56.

As 1959 came to a close, one more potential presidential candidate emerged. As the Democratic nominee who lost in both 1952 and 1956, Adlai Stevenson loomed as a possible alternative. By the convention, he had become Kennedy's chief rival for the nomination. Later, his closest friend said during the winter months of 1959 and 1960 that Stevenson wanted the nomination, but rather than doing the work of campaigning he wanted the party bosses to approach him to lead the ticket. Organized activity on behalf of Stevenson started in December 1959 with a small group of supporters in Washington, D.C. leading the effort. As December turned into January, Stevenson still declined to seek the nomination. At the end of January, Stevenson left for a two-month tour of South America, leaving the primaries behind.⁴¹

Kennedy expressed optimism about his presidential chances over dinner with Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., in July 1959. Kennedy felt Humphrey could not win the nomination, and that Johnson would edge out Symington but still come up short. However, he regarded Stevenson's sleeping candidacy as the greatest threat.⁴²

Kennedy held two major strategy meetings for his nascent campaign, gearing it up for the days and months ahead. He held the first organizational meeting on April 1, 1959, at his home in Palm Beach, Florida. The candidate, his father Joseph, brother Bobby, brother-in-law Stephen Smith, O'Brien, pollster Louis Harris and aides Kenneth O'Donnell, Bob Wallace and Sorensen discussed polls and prospects in different states.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., 57-60.

⁴² Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 17.

⁴³ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 119.

At the time of the first meeting, Smith had already opened a campaign office a few blocks from the nation's capital. Married to Jean Kennedy, Smith had already started managing the Kennedy family's business interests. The meeting's participants also discussed strengths and weaknesses, which primaries Kennedy might enter, and what kind of organizational structure the campaign would assemble.⁴⁴ Sorensen moved from informal campaign manager to national policy chief, and Bobby assumed the role of campaign manager.⁴⁵

Some historians rank the October 28, 1959 gathering of Kennedy insiders at Bobby's home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, highest in importance. The October conclave served as the springboard for the campaign to follow. Of the sixteen men present, only the candidate and his brother had been involved in presidential politics. Before long, however, nine close advisors proved indispensable. Although the campaign had been underway in some fashion or other since 1956, this meeting was the first time they had all been in the same room.⁴⁶

Those assembled almost universally shared one thing in common: their relatively young age. In addition to John Kennedy, age 42, and his brother, Bobby, 33, there were two men from Massachusetts: O'Donnell, 35, a Harvard football teammate of Bobby's, and O'Brien, 42. O'Donnell served as the tactician; O'Brien was the organizer, as he had first done for Kennedy in his senate campaign in 1952. The 31-year-old Nebraska liberal

⁴⁴ O'Brien, *Victories*, 58-59.

⁴⁵ White, *President 1960*, 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

who had been with the candidate for seven years, Sorensen sat next to the candidate and kept him intellectually focused.

Also in the room was the soft-spoken Smith, 31, who served many roles in the campaign, first as office manager, then logistics manager followed by administrative chief. Louis Harris, 38, was in the room to crunch the numbers. He had first served on Kennedy's 1958 re-election campaign for the senate. Harris would conduct more polls throughout the country than had ever been done before, and the results guided the candidate on many of his major decisions. Newcomer Pierre Salinger, 34, had been a newspaperman in California and a congressional investigator before becoming Kennedy's press secretary for the campaign and later for the White House. Seasoned professional John Bailey, 54, took on the role of dealing with the party bosses from the Northeast in pre-convention planning. Bailey was the Democratic State Chairman of Connecticut for fourteen years and had built an efficient New England political machine. None of the younger men in the room yet possessed the gravitas to deal with the aging party power brokers.⁴⁷

Immediately after the defeat in the vice presidential selection process at the 1956 national convention, the Kennedy organization became primarily a two-man show, consisting of the candidate and Sorensen traveling the country. After winning re-election to the Senate in 1958, the campaign staff began to grow. Others present in the room that Wednesday morning in October besides the candidate included Bobby, younger brother, Edward "Teddy" Kennedy; Hyman Raskin, a Chicago lawyer; Marjorie Lawson, a black

⁴⁷ Ibid., 52.

attorney from the District of Columbia; John Salter, a Washington aide to Washington Senator Henry Jackson; former governor Dennis Roberts of Rhode Island; David Hackett, an old friend of Bobby, and Wallace. The candidate's father also attended the meeting. Afterwards, Smith opened the Washington office; O'Brien made frequent trips from Massachusetts to Washington; Salinger joined the committee; and local committees formed where they could be helpful.⁴⁸

Harris started polling in earnest; it was a breakthrough technique, and one that would change modern campaigning in the years to come. Kennedy used polling data to his advantage in the Wisconsin primary. Harris' data revealed voters' attitudes and concerns, and what helped Kennedy formulate effective arguments.⁴⁹

The October 1959 meeting planned for the final push for the nomination. Bobby resigned from his position as counsel to the Senate Committee on Legislative Oversight to become campaign manager full-time, replacing O'Donnell, who assumed the role of national policy chief. Nobody in the room remembered everything that transpired, but each contributed his own memories. Sorensen seemed to have the best recollection.

Months after the October meeting, Sorensen stated that a meeting of that type rarely produced major decisions, but was good for exchanging information. The difficulties the Kennedy candidacy faced included the fact the country had never elected someone so young; Kennedy would be 43. The country also had never elected a Catholic; only Democrat Al Smith had tried, losing in a landslide in 1928. The country also had elevated only one senator to the presidency in the twentieth century. Voters elected

⁴⁸ Ibid., 52-53.

⁴⁹ Chris Matthews, *Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 258.

Warren Harding, the senator from Ohio, in 1920. Recalling the nomination process, the group realized that if the decision ever went to the back rooms at the convention, Kennedy could not win. Kennedy had to fight it out in the primaries.⁵⁰

The candidate opened the meeting standing by the fireplace, facing the others who were seated. Kennedy proceeded to evaluate the political situation from memory. For three hours, Kennedy surveyed the country, region by region, state by state. O'Brien remembered that he knew the party leaders in each state, not just the elected national officials. By the time the group broke for lunch, a national strategy began to take form: primary victories would prove important. Not until Kennedy showed strength in states outside the Northeast could he deal with the party bosses. In addition, Kennedy knew he also had to pay attention to states without primaries. He needed to make contacts with state leaders and with states that had citizen committees. He had to travel to places like Kansas. Forming an organization that would serve him well in winning the nomination would give him a nationwide machinery ready for the general election.⁵¹

In 1960, sixteen states held presidential primaries. Some of these Kennedy could not contest because he feared offending favorite sons. The campaign leadership eliminated others because they were deemed unimportant. Even so, there were enough primary states remaining to make an impression on party bosses. It was essential that every primary entered had to be won. They made no final decisions on the primaries in

⁵⁰ White., *President 1960*, 54. Kennedy's election in 1960 was the first in which party leaders determined candidates at the nominating convention. There still were back room deals after that. Bill Clinton benefited from the process in 1992, and Democratic leadership preferred Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders in 2016.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

that October meeting, except regarding New Hampshire. The nation's first primary had to be entered. The campaign leaders did put ten of the other states on a list for further consideration and discussed their merits and pitfalls. They considered Wisconsin's primary important because a victory for Kennedy there would hurt Humphrey, who hailed from the neighboring state of Minnesota. However, Wisconsin could be dangerous for the same reason. Maryland was a strong possibility, and later accepted. The campaign considered going into Indiana, to lure Symington into the primary, who realized the trap and declined. Oregon law forced all candidates to be on the ballot. They discussed West Virginia, but its importance would not be recognized until later in the campaign. Finally, the campaign considered entering the Ohio and California primaries. After the discussion concluded, the participants broke for a lunch of roast turkey and pie at Joseph Kennedy's house.⁵²

Bobby helmed the afternoon meeting. While the morning meeting had been analytical and strategic, the afternoon session focused on operations. Bobby handed out assignments and the country was divided up among members of the staff. New England and upstate New York went to Bailey. Raskin took the Western states and his native Iowa. Ted joined Raskin in scouting the Rocky Mountain states. Wallace assumed the task of determining if the campaign should enter the West Virginia primary. Bobby would establish contact with leaders in the South. O'Brien took on drawing up a master plan of organization and procedure for all states, as well as monitoring Maryland, Indiana and Wisconsin. Salinger, O'Donnell and Harris were assigned general staff work. When

⁵² Ibid., 56.

the meeting ended at 4:30 p.m., they broke into small groups, talking about the day's activities while waiting for cars to take them to the airport. Just twenty-three days later, on November 20, 1959, the future president sat facing a plate of chicken fried steak with Norbert Dreiling at the head table of a Democratic fundraiser in Hays, Kansas.

CHAPTER TWO

“Norbert Dreiling and the Kansas Democratic Party ”

On his first date with his future wife, Norbert Dreiling expressed disillusionment with the Democratic Party. Happenstance led to Dreiling even asking Donna Jean Myerly out for a date that evening. He called the women’s dormitory at Fort Hays Kansas State College on a Saturday afternoon in the fall semester of 1944, asking the person who answered the phone what women were still in. Dreiling recognized Myerly’s name, and asked her out to a movie that night. Myerly, a sophomore, knew of Dreiling, then a junior. He had run for student body president the year before, but she did not vote for him because he did not ask for her vote. Dreiling’s interest in politics included involvement in student organizations such as Young Democrats. He also learned about party politics from his father who served as county clerk.

Donna Jean ate a grilled cheese sandwich and drank hot tea at dinner with a friend at the Brunswick Hotel before her date with Norbert. He later arrived at her dorm with a friend to go out on a double date. They walked downtown to catch a movie; Donna Jean recalled it was a Bing Crosby film, possibly *Going My Way*. Norbert and Donna Jean walked back to campus and were late getting back to the dorm before the midnight curfew. They ended up talking by the lily pond behind Picken Hall. “He was thinking of leaving the Democratic Party,” (Myerly) Dreiling commented. “He said afterwards that I convinced him he should remain.” Dreiling, unhappy with national Democratic leaders,

was thinking about switching parties. Myerly, who came from a Democratic family in WaKeeney, Kansas, convinced Dreiling he should remain a Democrat.¹

Historically, Kansans aligned with the Republican Party. However, Ellis County, with Hays as its largest city, became a Democratic enclave in a Republican state largely because of the large number of Volga German immigrants who settled there. Most Volga Germans became Democrats because nearby British immigrants tried to prevent them from voting. Both parties were different in the 1940s than in the twenty-first century.

German immigrants left Russia in 1875 and settled in the Hays area in early 1876, forming communities in Liebenthal and Catherine. Future immigrants established the permanent colonies of Herzog (part of present-day Victoria), Pfeifer, and Munjor. The migration from southern Russia included Catholic colonies, leading to strong Catholic ties in Hays and Ellis County.²

Volga Germans experienced hardships as settlers in their new country. John Bird, a longtime Ellis County Democratic Party official whom Dreiling mentored, noted that the Volga Germans who settled in Ellis County suffered at the hands of the “Anglishers,” establishment Republicans who had been in power for several years. The Volga Germans gained power in the county primarily due to establishment-supported Prohibition. Bootleggers became popular in the county and anti-Prohibition Democrats held sway.³

In a 1982 interview with *The Salina Journal*, Dreiling offered similar reasons for Ellis County’s Democratic leanings in a Republican state, citing German immigrants’

¹ Donna Jean Dreiling, interview by author, September 22, 2017.

² Fr. John B. Terbovich, “The German-Russia Heritage,” in *Indians to Industry*, ed. Maureen Winter (Hays, Kansas: The Ellis County Star, 1967), 20.

³ John Bird, interview by author, July 26, 2017.

opposition to Prohibition and a lack of communication between what he called “two societies,” the English and cowboys versus the German-Russian immigrants who faced a language barrier when they first settled. Dreiling observed that by the turn of the twentieth century, German-Russians started to understand the situation. Sensing they were second-class citizens, they protected themselves by rallying around the Democratic Party. In generations to come, German-Russian immigrants backing the Democratic Party and took control of local offices in the county, in opposition to the establishment Republicans. Dreiling noted he often joked about how he developed a Democratic power base in the county. “We didn’t even attempt to claim we outsmarted anybody,” Dreiling told *The Salina Journal*, “We outpopulated them.”⁴

Dreiling, who came from a Volga German family, became a Democrat. A conservative by today’s standards, Dreiling would have been viewed as moderate to liberal in the mid-twentieth century. As a local leader, Dreiling used the patronage system of rewarding people who were loyal to build county level support.⁵

Ellis County remained a Democratic stronghold during the New Deal era. Many farmers, especially those of German descent, appreciated President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s efforts to assist them during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.⁶

In 1956, Ellis County gave Eisenhower 59.4 percent of the vote in the presidential election; he won the state with 65.4 percent. When Democrat John F. Kennedy won the

⁴ Linda Mowery-Denning. “Dreiling: Advocacy with Humor,” *The Salina Journal*, November 28, 1982. Personal papers of Norbert Dreiling.

⁵ Joe Aistrup, phone interview by author, August 4, 2016.

⁶ H. Edward Flentje and Joseph A. Aistrup, *Kansas Politics and Government: The Clash of Political Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 64.

presidency in 1960 he carried just two counties in Kansas: Ellis, where he received the highest percentage of votes with 65 percent, and Wyandotte County in urban Kansas City. Kansas gave Republican nominee Richard M. Nixon, vice-president under Eisenhower, the second-largest margin of victory with 60.45 percent of the vote, trailing only Nebraska. In the years after the 1960 election, Ellis County shifted from being staunchly Democratic to majority Republican. Democrats' support of civil rights cost the party voters in the 1960s, especially in the South.

The earliest available statistics show that in 1976, registered voters in Ellis County were 78 percent Democrat and 22 percent Republican. Voter registration in 2012 showed Ellis County with 45 percent registered as Republicans, 27 percent Democrats and 28 percent unaffiliated or with another party. Republicans promoted a pro-life platform to their advantage in Catholic counties. Over time, newcomers with different views moved into the county.⁷

Dreiling discussed his professional ambitions with his wife. He remembered his father telling him that Volga Germans did not become lawyers or run for office. Later, Dreiling's wife recalled that Norbert stated: "I will be the first."⁸

In addition to Dreiling, Robert F. Glassman was the other leading figure in the Democratic Party in Ellis County at the time of Kennedy's 1959 visit to Hays. Bird noted there were two camps of the local party in the late 1940s and 1950s. A medical issue prevented Dreiling from serving in the military. However, Glassman, a 1941 St. Joseph's

⁷ Randy Gonzales, "Political Changes: Through the Years, Ellis County has seen a GOP Shift," *The Hays Daily News*, October 21, 2012. Personal Papers of Randy Gonzales.

⁸ Donna Jean Dreiling, interview with author, September 22, 2017.

Military Academy graduate, served as an officer in the Army, seeing combat in the Pacific. Shot by a sniper on Okinawa, Glassman was judged to have died from his wound. While being transported to graves registration the driver noticed Glassman's lips were moving and detoured to the field hospital. After the war, Glassman, a life-long Hays native, earned his law degree at Topeka's Washburn University and returned to Hays. He served as probate judge and county attorney before entering private practice.⁹ "They were competitors," Bird said of Glassman and Dreiling. "There was a wing of the party in Ellis County that was supporting Norbert and there was a wing that supported Bob."

As chairman of the Sixth Congressional District, Dreiling organized two previous Democratic banquets before Kennedy's trip to Hays in 1959. He held a district reception in 1957 at which the Democratic United States senator from Oklahoma, Almer Stillwell "Mike" Monroney, served as the guest speaker. On October 8, 1958, National Democratic Party Chairman Paul M. Butler attended a Sixth District fundraiser at Jefferson West grade school in Hays. The district distributed 356 tickets for the 1958 dinner: 148 men's tickets at \$10 each, 105 women's tickets at \$5 each, and 103 complimentary tickets.¹⁰ Glassman gave the introduction at the banquet. Democratic state chairman Frank Theis also made remarks before they heard a vocal selection from Ethel Leiker of St. Anthony's Nursing School in Hays. Sixth District Congressional candidate Elmo J. Mahoney introduced Governor George Docking and Lieutenant Governor Joseph W. Henkle, Sr., before making his speech. Next, Chairman Butler offered his remarks

⁹ Robert F. Glassman biography, Glassman Bird Powell website. <http://gbbplaw.com/founder/> accessed January 10, 2019.

¹⁰ Dreiling Papers.

before dinner. Under the direction of music instructor Charles Bahl, Victoria High School students provided dinner music. The Young Democrats club from Fort Hays Kansas State College provided ushers, and students from Girls Catholic High School served the meal.¹¹

By the time of the Democratic banquets in the district, Dreiling already was a recognized leader in the county. Dreiling had risen to the leadership level of the Democratic Party through the values instilled by his Volga German roots. The oldest of nine children, he was born April 7, 1925, in Gorham, Kansas, to Richard and Mollie Dreiling. He graduated from St. Joseph's Military Academy in 1942, Fort Hays in 1946, and Washburn Law School in Topeka in 1949. While in law school, Dreiling served as president of the Kansas Collegiate Young Democrats. A successful attorney who opened his own practice in Hays in 1949, Dreiling served two terms as Ellis County Attorney from 1951 to 1955. Dreiling married Donna Jean Myerly on August 18, 1948; they had four children.¹²

Dreiling's family gave long service to the county. Dreiling's father served as county clerk from 1941 to 1945. He also served as Hays City Commissioner from 1948 to 1951, and was mayor in 1949. Norbert would visit the clerk's office after school, and his brother, Gene Dreiling, believed that helped fuel his brother's interest in politics.¹³ In his 1982 interview with *The Salina Journal*, Norbert Dreiling recalled visiting his father at work. "I can remember him having me come down to the office after school – he taught

¹¹ Ibid., A program from the 1958 fundraiser provided details from that evening's banquet.

¹² *At Home in Ellis County, Kansas 1867-1992 Vol. I.* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1991), 13-14.

¹³ Gene Dreiling, phone interview by author, January 29, 2018. Donna Jean Dreiling made the same observation in an interview September 27, 2017. She said Dreiling would stop by the clerk's office after class at Fort Hays.

me the tax system and that's why I feel comfortable with it," he said. "He used to have political meetings in his back office. I learned a lot of things about the realities of politics, some good and some things I didn't like and wished I could change."¹⁴

The lessons Norbert learned from his father he applied in his leadership role in the Democratic Party. Dreiling made his contribution as an Ellis County precinct committeeman for 25 years. He also served as Sixth Congressional District Chairman for the district that covered 26 counties in northwest Kansas, starting in 1950. As Sixth District chairman, he was instrumental in organizing Kennedy's visit to Hays. Dreiling served as co-chair for the state's Kennedy for President organization in 1960 and for Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential campaign in 1964. He served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1960, 1964, 1968 and 1972. While campaigning for Fredonia "Fritz" Wasinger to represent the Sixth District in Congress, Dreiling determined that the district and the state Democratic Party needed better organization. He led the reorganization of the state Democratic Party in the 1960s while serving as campaign manager and chairman under Governor Robert Docking, who won an unprecedented four two-year terms for the state's highest office.¹⁵

Ellis County Democrats were among the first in the state to look at the 1960 election, and members met with Kennedy in 1958 to discuss his presidential chances.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mowery-Denning, "Dreiling," *The Salina Journal*. Dreiling Papers.

¹⁵ *At Home*, 13-14. Additional biographical information on Norbert Dreiling provided by personal papers of Glenn Staab, who made opening remarks at a ceremony honoring Dreiling. The Ellis County Bar Association website contributed additional information on Dreiling's background, as did a filing in Ellis County District Court on June 5, 2006, memorializing Dreiling after his death in 2005.

¹⁶ "Kennedy Challenged the Complacent, Articulated Clearly the National Vision," *The Hays Daily News*, November 22, 1963. Norbert Dreiling wrote a guest editorial in the local newspaper on the twentieth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. He discussed Kennedy's trip to Hays and his political values.

Dreiling noted that a friend of Kennedy's approached local leaders in 1958. Shortly afterward, Ellis County Democrats met the Massachusetts senator and a year later, Kennedy made his trip to Kansas, including his stop in Hays.¹⁷ Donna Jean Dreiling recalled that her husband expressed enthusiasm about the young senator from Massachusetts, noting how articulate he was, remarking on his intellect and sense of fairness. Ellis County Democrats invited Kennedy to speak, she said, so "people could meet him and he could get an idea what they were like, too."¹⁸

As chairman of the Kansas Democratic Party, Theis wrote to Kennedy on May 25, 1959, to confirm the dates of November 19 and 20 for the senator's trip to the state. In the letter, Theis also confirmed fundraisers scheduled for Wichita and Hays.¹⁹ Kennedy replied to Theis in a letter on June 8, 1959, confirming the trips.²⁰ In its May 21, 1959, edition, *The Hays Daily News* announced Kennedy's upcoming appearance in Ellis County, reporting district and state officials received final confirmation of the trip.²¹ John F. Kennedy had made it official: he was coming to Hays.

¹⁷ "Memories," *The Ellis County Star*, December 5, 1963. Shortly after the president's assassination, Norbert Dreiling wrote a guest editorial recalling Ellis County's relationship with Kennedy.

¹⁸ Randy Gonzales, "Lasting Impression," *The Hays Daily News*, November 21, 2013. (Hays Public Library Kansas Room Collection, microfilm, February 7, 2019).

¹⁹ Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Presidential Campaign Files, 1960. Campaigns by State: Pre-Convention Political Files, 1960. Kansas: Political: R-V. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. (Hereafter cited as JFK presidential campaign files).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "U.S. Sen. John Kennedy Slated To Talk In Hays," *The Hays Daily News*, May 21, 1959.

CHAPTER THREE

“John F. Kennedy’s campaign trip to Kansas”

Norbert Dreiling consulted his personal to-do list for John F. Kennedy’s appearance in Hays, Kansas, on November 20, 1959. Haircut. Check. Shined shoes. Check. Collected studs for cuff links. Check. Get Tuxedo. Still needed to do. As chairman of the Sixth Congressional District, Dreiling also put together a check list for the Democratic Party banquet that night where Kennedy would speak. Items checked off on that list included a meeting at 8 a.m.; pick up table signs and programs; meeting about workers at 10 a.m.; deliver programs, cards and signs; look into making “Kennedy for President” signs; deliver tickets to Father Anselm Martin, who would give the invocation; and make place cards for tables.¹ Norbert Dreiling was nothing if not efficient.

Dreiling prepared extensively for Kennedy’s visit. In an October 16, 1959 letter to county chairmen regarding ticket sales in the district for Kennedy’s appearance, Dreiling noted the importance of the visit by the presidential hopeful. He wrote that Kennedy’s appearance continued the practice of bringing in national government and party leaders to speak, on the heels of the appearances from Oklahoma Senator Mike Monroney in 1957 and Democratic National Chairman Paul M. Butler in 1958. He noted that Kennedy received thousands of invitations to speak across the country. Also in that letter, Dreiling stated that through cooperation between state party officials and district officials a plan was formed to have Kennedy speak at more than one venue. Dreiling informed the

¹ Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. Norbert Dreiling memo. Dreiling made his personal to-do list on the back side of a sheet of memo paper from his law office. The front side contained the to-do list for the banquet.

county chairmen that after a Fourth District appearance in Wichita the Massachusetts senator would come to Hays.

Dreiling also informed the county chairmen of ticket sales procedure in that October 16 letter, writing that each county in the Sixth District would handle its own ticket sales. Half of the proceeds from the fundraiser would go to national headquarters for use by the congressional campaign committee, and the other half would remain in the district for subsequent congressional campaigns. In addition, state party leaders and officials would receive invitations, and Dreiling said he anticipated a “crowd of celebrities.” In the letter to the county chairmen, Dreiling declared that it was his belief that this would be the first time the district had entertained a presidential candidate. He enclosed a news release for the county chairmen to hand out to the media. Dated for release the week of October 19, it gave details about Kennedy’s appearance and added that tickets should be ready for distribution in the next few days. The news release noted that a presidential contender rarely appeared in such a sparsely populated area of the country. Dreiling pointed out that it appeared that several weekly newspapers in the district had not published information about Kennedy’s scheduled appearance.²

In an undated letter to county chairmen written after the October 16 letter, Dreiling enclosed tickets for sale, orange tickets for men at \$10 and white tickets for women and students at \$5. Dreiling advised doling out tickets to precinct chairmen. He also enclosed a chart to use for listing the county’s organization. Dreiling anticipated a huge turnout and, if there was a shortage of space, those who obtained tickets through the

²Dreiling to county chairmen, October 16, 1959. Dreiling Papers.

district office would receive priority. Dreiling wanted the first report from counties by October 31.³

In a press release dated November 2, Dreiling outlined Kennedy's scheduled appearance in Hays on November 20, noting that by all indications it would "give occasion for one of the biggest and liveliest political rallies the district has seen in many years." Dreiling listed the many top state officials slated to attend, and announced that Nell Blangers of Salina, Sixth District Vice-Chair, was in charge of women's ticket sales and publicity for Kennedy's appearance.⁴ Separately, Dreiling made a list of media in the district. He divided the newspapers by county, and separately listed television and radio outlets. He made notations by some of the newspapers, likely indicating whether they requested tickets.⁵

Kennedy's travel schedule illustrates the candidate's campaign strategy, which included the stop in Kansas. Kennedy flew to the state after a busy schedule on the East Coast. On Monday of that week he spoke to the National Milk Producers in Washington, D.C. The next day, Kennedy traveled to Wilmington, Delaware, for two appearances and a news conference. After no campaign events on Wednesday, he flew to Kansas on Thursday to start his two-day tour of the state.

Kennedy started his campaign swing through Kansas with polls showing a tight race. Results from the Gallup Poll released on November 22, two days after Kennedy's visit to Hays, showed the presumptive Republican nominee, Vice-President Richard M.

³ Norbert Dreiling to county chairmen, undated. Dreiling Papers.

⁴ Norbert Dreiling to county chairmen, November 2, 1959. News release for the media promoting Kennedy's appearance. Dreiling Papers.

⁵ Dreiling to county chairmen, undated. List of media outlets in the district. Dreiling Papers.

Nixon, pulling a little ahead of the Massachusetts senator. Respondents preferred Nixon by 53 percent to 47 percent for Kennedy, with about one in eleven undecided. The *Des Moines Register* noted that Nixon received an upswing in popularity after his trip to the Soviet Union at the end of the summer. Prior to that trip, Nixon trailed Kennedy in polling. By December 1958, Voters preferred Kennedy over Nixon by 59 percent to 41 percent, but Nixon steadily gained ground until overtaking him. Gallup reported that independent voters provided Nixon with the edge; he had trailed Kennedy in that group before the Russia trip.⁶

One Kansas supporter also gave Kennedy poll data. Olathe attorney Rice Lardner wrote to Gene Sullivan, secretary for Kansas Governor George Docking. He enclosed recent polls of presidential contenders. Of the several polls Lardner included, he listed data from the California Poll, conducted by Marvin D. Field; the Gallup Poll; an Associated Press poll; and a poll from *The Des Moines Register*. Polls generally reflected voters' preference toward Kennedy. The California Poll, released March 8, gave Kennedy a 48 percent to 39 percent lead over Nixon and a 45 percent to 38 percent advantage over Nelson Rockefeller, the other Republican contender. Potential favorite son California Governor Pat Brown trailed Nixon 46 percent to 44 percent and Rockefeller 45 percent to 39 percent. The January 25 Gallup Poll noted that independents favored Kennedy for the Democratic nomination. Only two-time party standard bearer Adlai Stevenson, who lost in 1952 and 1956, rivaled Kennedy in popularity, maintaining a solid preference among rank-and-file Democrats. The poll numbers looked favorable toward Kennedy's

⁶ George Gallup, "Nixon Boosts Lead Over Kennedy: Now 53% to 47%", *The Des Moines Register*, November 22, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/128200669/>

candidacy, providing insight as to where Kennedy stood in the Democratic field at the time of his trip.⁷

Native son Dwight D. Eisenhower took Kansas with 54 percent of the vote in 1952 and again in 1956, receiving 69 percent of the vote. Undated 1959 internal Kennedy memos broke down the state's vote. Three counties represented the largest Democratic turnout in number of voters: Sedgwick County claimed 15.4 percent of the total Democrat vote, followed by Wyandotte County at 12.7 percent and Shawnee County with 5.5 percent. The memo identified the state's population as a key factor. The state's population grew from 1,905,299 in 1950 to 2,103,000 by 1956. Wichita, as the largest city, boasted a population of 78,791. Catholics represented 12.7 percent of the population in the state. The memo also broke down the Democratic leaders in each county. Norbert Dreiling served as chairman of Ellis County, with Josephine Rupp as vice-chairman and Michael Billinger as treasurer. The campaign's Kansas organization file included Dreiling's early assessment of likely Sixth District delegates to the national convention.⁸

Another Democratic presidential hopeful toured Kansas at about the same time that Kennedy did. On November 18, *The Salina Journal* reported that Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey and Kennedy each planned political meetings in the state. Humphrey scheduled a Third District event in Parsons on November 18, followed by an address to students at the University of Kansas the following day, including a morning reception with party officials in Lawrence. He planned a noon luncheon in Emporia to

⁷ Rice Lardner to Gene Sullivan, April 4, 1959. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Presidential Campaign Files, 1960. Campaigns by State: Pre-Convention Political Files, 1960. Kansas: Political: S. (Hereafter cited as JFK Presidential Campaign Files).

⁸ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: Organization, Undated (1 of 2 folders).

meet with Democratic leaders from Lyon County and adjacent counties. After the luncheon, Humphrey scheduled a speech at the Kansas Farmers Union convention at Kansas State University in Manhattan. He planned to meet with labor leaders in Topeka on Thursday evening, and on Friday he scheduled a speech at Pittsburg State College in Pittsburg. The *Journal* noted about 350 reservations for Humphrey's fundraiser in Parsons.⁹ Most presidential candidates stumped in the more populous part of the state, including Kansas City, Wichita, Lawrence and Manhattan.

Kennedy, meanwhile, previously campaigned in Kansas. He familiarized himself with state leaders before his 1959 trip to Kansas. He either corresponded with or met many of the state's top officials before the trip, and scheduled appearances in five cities in two days. Aide Robert Wallace's itinerary for the Kansas trip started with Kennedy flying into Kansas City, Missouri, on November 19, where he would be met by Congressman Newell George and have a 9 a.m. press conference at the airport. The schedule called for a 10 a.m. meeting with former president Harry S. Truman at his library in Independence, Missouri. The itinerary included an 11 a.m. reception for Kennedy and George at the National Guard armory in Kansas City, Kansas. Kennedy's schedule included speaking in a noon luncheon at the armory, as well as a meeting with labor leaders scheduled for 2 p.m., with the candidate departing for Wichita an hour later.¹⁰

⁹ "Demo Hopefuls Open Tours Of Kansas; Kennedy Here," *The Salina Journal*, November 18, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767150/>

¹⁰ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Travel schedules, 1959-1960 (folder 1 of 2). A transcript of a telegram sent by Kennedy to Congressman Newell noted the meeting with Truman was scheduled for 9:30 a.m., and not 10 a.m.

Wallace wrote Don Hewitt, Governor Docking's close advisor, on November 13 that he was flying into Kansas City a day earlier than Kennedy, and asked for a dinner meeting to discuss the political situation in Kansas.¹¹ Kennedy aides Ted Sorensen and Dave Powers joined Wallace for the Kansas trip.¹²

After his appearances in the Kansas City area on November 19, Kennedy flew to Wichita later that day. He made appearances there on November 19 and November 20 before flying to Dodge City. There, he was scheduled to speak at a noon luncheon before flying to Salina for a speech at Marymount College before moving on to Hays. After a television appearance, a news conference at Fort Hays Kansas State College and a parade down Main Street, Kennedy planned a speech at a banquet. After his appearance in Hays, Kennedy flew back to Salina and embarked on three appearances in Iowa the next day.¹³

Kennedy hit many of the same themes in his Kansas speeches, discussing issues regarding the military, education and scientific research, economic power, agriculture, and aid and trade abroad.¹⁴ In a speech delivered on November 19 in Kansas City, Kansas, the Associated Press reported Kennedy as saying the Republicans' time in the White House included a "period of indecision and doubt."

In his remarks at a noon luncheon for Second District Democrats, Kennedy argued that the Soviet Union led the United States in the space race, and had passed

¹¹ Robert Wallace to Don Hewitt, November 13, 1959. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: G-L.

¹² "Major Talk By Kennedy," *The Hutchinson News*, November 19, 1959, <https://newspaperarchive.com/hutchinson-news-nov-19-1959-p-1/>

¹³ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Travel schedules, 1959-1960 (folder 1 of 2). Kansas: Delegates: R-V. Robert Wallace, Kennedy's assistant, printed out a travel schedule for the Kansas trip, with notations written in pencil regarding changes.

¹⁴ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Speeches and the Press. Speeches, Statements, and Sections, 1958-1960. General, 1959: 9 April-11 December.

America in military spending. Kennedy said that with appropriate funding the United States could catch up, but it would take a Democratic administration to see the fruits of such programs. Before his noon remarks, Kennedy visited Truman at his library and museum. Asked if he would offer his support for Kennedy, Truman replied: "I'm not supporting anybody yet. When it gets close enough to the convention you fellows will know."¹⁵ Though Kennedy did not expect Truman's endorsement, he wanted to gauge the former president's commitment to Missouri Senator Stuart Symington.¹⁶ In his Kansas City speech, Kennedy noted that Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev wanted to "bury" the United States. Kennedy remarked that the Soviets could achieve this not necessarily by war but by amassing the more powerful military and boasting the most impressive scientific achievements. The *Kansas City Kansan* reported more than 600 men and women attended the \$5 per plate lunch of ham, roast beef, barbecued ribs, potato salad and baked beans at the National Guard Armory. The newspaper further noted that Kennedy still appeared suntanned from a recent trip to California, and had a cold. The senator's wife, Jacqueline Kennedy, did not make the trip to Kansas; she remained at home to celebrate the recent birthday of the couple's young daughter, Caroline.¹⁷

Kennedy repeated many of the same themes from his Kansas City speech in his Wichita remarks. On the evening of November 19, he spoke to a crowd of about 1,000 at a fundraising dinner in Wichita that included Governor Docking, at that time the only

¹⁵ "Kennedy Opens Kansas Tour," *The Salina Journal*, November 19, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767312/>; Eisenhower warned of the vast military industrial complex in his farewell address.

¹⁶ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960*, (New York, Atheneum House Inc., 1961), 39.

¹⁷ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Speeches and the Press. Press Secretary's State Files, 1958-1960. Kansas. This file included a newspaper clipping from the *Kansas City Kansan*, which reported on Kennedy's trip to Kansas.

Democrat ever re-elected to the position. Someone there asked Kennedy if he would like Docking as a running mate, and he replied: "It's presumptuous to pick a slate before you're nominated." Kennedy warned of the country falling behind the USSR and the growing challenges in population, education, housing, jobs and race relations.

The Associated Press reported that before his speech in Wichita, the Massachusetts senator experienced a tense moment with about seventy-five union members who expressed unhappiness with a new labor law Kennedy had voted for. Kennedy told them he would sponsor a bill to raise the minimum wage from \$1 to \$1.25, and have it cover seven million additional workers. After Kennedy's meeting with labor leaders they gave him a standing ovation and waited in line to shake his hand.¹⁸ Kennedy discussed the importance of labor unions as the party's standard-bearer.

The Emporia Gazette reported that a delegation of more than twenty-five Emporia and Lyon County Democrats attended the Kennedy rally in Wichita. The newspaper noted that the Teamsters Union boycotted the reception. At the rally, Kennedy predicted a recession in 1961 if a Republican administration remained in the White House.¹⁹ While in Wichita, a member of the audience asked Kennedy if he had a favorite Democratic candidate. Kennedy replied: "I do have a favorite candidate. But until he has the guts to declare he's a candidate, I'm not going to announce my support of him."²⁰ One could

¹⁸ "Kennedy Stumps Across Kansas," *The Salina Journal*, November 20, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767545/>

¹⁹ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Clippings. This file contains a newspaper clipping from the November 20, 1959, issue of *The Emporia Gazette*, in which it provides details on Kennedy's campaign stop in Wichita.

²⁰ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 99.

surmise that Kennedy was referring to himself since Kennedy unofficially ran for president since the 1956 Democratic National Convention.

Fifty-four years later, Wichitans recalled in great detail meeting the candidate. Whether talking with the candidate late at night in his hotel room or relaxing at a diner, Kennedy left a lasting impression. According to one story, Kennedy greeted two women in his room at the Allis Hotel in downtown Wichita after his 1959 speech. Fran Lee and her mother-in-law expected to find their husbands when they knocked on the door, but they had not yet arrived. Kennedy told the women it was important that every state support him. Later, Kennedy showed up after midnight at the Fairland Café, an all-night restaurant that served Chinese food on South Broadway, where he ate breakfast. Jack Graves, a state legislator at the time, accompanied Kennedy and said the candidate enjoyed playing pinball.²¹

Kennedy continued campaigning in Wichita the next morning, before flying to his next stop. Dodge City, part of the Fifth District, leaned toward Lyndon Johnson's candidacy. At the noon luncheon at the Civic Center, Kennedy spoke about federal farm policy, criticizing Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture's farm program and offering his own alternative.²² He stated that a Democratic farm program should have the fundamental principles of farm abundance and that family farms needed preservation.

²¹ Fred Mann, "Wichitans remember Kennedy's 1959, 1960 campaign stops in Air Capital," *The Wichita Eagle*, November 17, 2013. <https://www.kansas.com/news/article1127824.html>

²² Kathie Bell, "John F. Kennedy's visit to Dodge City," *Dodge City Daily Globe*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.dodgeglobe.com/news/20180625/john-f-kennedys-visit-to-dodge-city>

Kennedy added that any future farm programs must concentrate on cutting the farmer's costs and should assure them of a fair share of the national net income.²³

The candidate received an honor at his stop in Ford County. The Dodge City Jaycees recognized Kennedy by making him a member of the Honorary Marshal program. The certificate and badge could be presented only after the Boot Hill Board of Directors approved a nomination by majority vote.²⁴ Marshal Ramon House of the Dodge City Posse, mainly composed of local businessmen, presented Kennedy with a cowboy hat on behalf of the "Cowboy Capital."²⁵ Kennedy appeared in a photo with the Dodge City marshals while wearing the hat. The candidate, always aware of his appearance, generally preferred his picture not be taken with a hat.²⁶ Years later, Ron Long, a member of the Dodge City Posse, gave an account of that day. In preparing for Kennedy's visit, the group determined Kennedy's hat size and Posse member Floyd Kirby contributed a Reistol felt cowboy hat as a gift. As for the photo, Long said, "If you look at the picture you can see he didn't know how to wear it. It wasn't sitting right." A few weeks later he received a note of appreciation from Kennedy.²⁷

Before he left town, Kennedy made a request of the Dodge City Posse. While talking with Democrats aboard his private plane before he got out of Dodge, Kennedy asked the members if they would ride their horses in his inauguration parade if he won. After he won the general election, Kennedy sent a telegram again asking them to appear

²³ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Senate Files, 1960. Speeches and the Press. Speech Files, 1953-1960. Democratic reception, Dodge City, Kansas, 20 November 1959.

²⁴ Boot Hill Museum, "Honorary Marshals," <http://www.boothill.org/honorary-marshals/>

²⁵ Bell, "John F. Kennedy's visit to Dodge City," *The Dodge City Daily Globe*.

²⁶ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 29.

²⁷ Kathy Hanks, "Ex-lawmen recall pivotal Dodge City visit," *The Hutchinson News*, November 22, 2013, <http://www.hutchnews.com/article/20131122/News/311229847>

in the parade. The inauguration committee suggested the Posse rent horses, but they wanted to ride their own, and paid their own way to travel with their horses by train, accompanied by Dodge City Mayor Nate Reese. Members wore western gear and their wives dressed in costumes borrowed from the historical museum in Dodge City. The committee would not allow the mayor to walk in the parade, so the Posse rented a buggy for Reese and his wife. Ron Long remembered that as they passed the reviewing stand Kennedy tipped his top hat and the mayor stood in his buggy, tipped his hat and bowed.²⁸ The Posse, apolitical in nature, simply felt honored to receive an invitation to ride in the parade.

Kennedy made an impression on both young and old in Dodge City. Fifteen-year-old Margaret Weigel kept a scrapbook on Kennedy but did not have his signature. During his Dodge City visit, Kennedy wrote in her scrapbook, “with thanks for a fine job and warm regards,” before signing it. “I think he’s darling,” Weigel said.²⁹

The Kennedy campaign received an assessment of the candidate’s Dodge City appearance shortly afterward. Lawrence E. Brennan, the campaign manager for Congressman J. Floyd Breeding of the Fifth District, wrote to Wallace on November 21, 1959. As had become customary in previous Kennedy appearances, the candidate requested a list of contacts. Brennan provided the Kennedy campaign with a list of county chairmen and vice-chairmen in attendance at the rally the day before. He wrote that the hat given to Kennedy came from Warshaw’s Men’s Store in Dodge City. He

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “He’s The Neatest,” *The Salina Journal*, November 26, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/733296/>

further noted that a local radio station had taped Kennedy's remarks and that the complete broadcast aired the evening of November 20.³⁰ G.W. Egbert, Fifth District Chairman, wrote to Kennedy on November 23, 1959, informing the candidate that about 900 people attended the campaign event, not counting the 125 people who left early to return to work.³¹

Kennedy made a particular impression on two women during this portion of his Kansas tour. Mrs. Jack Janssen and Mrs. Frank Reynolds, both of Lyons, made the trip to Dodge City with their husbands and friends to see Kennedy. According to a story in the November 21, 1959, issue of the *Lyons Daily News*, Kennedy asked the two women if they would like to fly with him to his next stop in his campaign plane. After Kennedy's speech, the two women talked with the candidate on the auditorium stage when Kennedy asked if anybody in the group if they would like to fly with him to his next event. The women accepted, even though the out-of-their-way flight to Salina changed their travel plans. According to Janssen, a man in the group also accepted the invitation, but Kennedy said jokingly he only took ladies. The two women flew with Kennedy on his 40-minute flight to Salina, where he spoke at Marymount College before heading to Hays. Their husbands drove to Salina that night to pick up their wives.³²

³⁰ Lawrence Brennan to Robert Wallace, November 21, 1959, JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: D-G.

³¹ G.W. Egbert to John F. Kennedy, November 23, 1959, JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: D-G.

³² JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: G-L. This file contained a newspaper clipping from the November 21, 1959, issue of the *Lyons Daily News*, in which the article "Local Ladies Take Kennedy's Offer To Fly Back With Him To Salina," detailed the invitation to fly on his plane. The file includes the newspaper clipping "Kennedy Sews Up 2 More Votes" from the November 27, 1959, issue of *The Hutchinson News*, which described the women's plane ride with Kennedy to Salina. The file contains a letter from Janssen to Kennedy thanking him for the plane ride. Per usual, newspaper accounts identified a married woman by her husband's first name.

Kennedy's plane arrived nearly an hour late for his scheduled 3 p.m. speech at Marymount College. A crowd greeted him at the municipal airport, and *The Salina Journal* reported that the senator apologized for his late arrival. A large crowd greeted his arrival with loud applause when he finally arrived at Marymount's Fine Arts Building auditorium.³³ The newspaper noted Kennedy's New England accent.³⁴

Blangers headed the group meeting Kennedy at the Salina airport. She also introduced Kennedy before his speech at Marymount. In his remarks, Kennedy recalled the words of President Abraham Lincoln, who said the nation could not exist half-free and half-slave. Kennedy added that the world could not exist half-free and half-slave.³⁵ Blangers, who organized the Salina event, wrote Dreiling on November 18 to inform him a local radio station planned to tape Kennedy's speech.³⁶

The brief stop in Salina paled in comparison to what lay ahead for the candidate. Dreiling planned an ambitious schedule for Kennedy's appearance in Hays. The only other known time a presidential candidate visited Ellis County was in 1903, when Theodore Roosevelt made train stops in Victoria and Hays.³⁷ After his arrival at the Hays airport, within a span of four or five hours Kennedy would have a television interview, news conference, parade and banquet.

³³ Patricia E. Ackerman, *Marymount College of Kansas: A History* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2014), 89.

³⁴ A.I. Van Cleave, "He Was Late But Welcome," *The Salina Journal*, November 22, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767713/>

³⁵ "World Cannot Exist Half Slave, Half Free, He Says," *The Salina Journal*, November 22, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767713/>

³⁶ Nell Blangers to Norbert Dreiling, November 18, 1959. Dreiling Papers.

³⁷ "It's Been A Long Time," *The Salina Journal*, November 20, 1959. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767625/> The reporter failed to note that William Jennings Bryan visited in 1903.

The November 20, 1959, issue of *The Hays Daily News* provided a detailed timeline of Kennedy's proposed activities while in Hays. Kennedy would arrive between 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. The candidate first planned a live appearance at the local television station, KAYS-TV Channel 7, at 5:30 p.m., followed by a news conference at the Memorial Union on the campus of Fort Hays Kansas State College. The schedule included a parade in Kennedy's honor, starting at 6:50 p.m. starting under the streetlights at Seventh and Main Street and ending at 14th street before turning toward Jefferson West Grade School. The parade would include bands from Jefferson West, Victoria High School and St. Joseph's Military Academy, now known as Thomas More Prep-Marian, with the military school's Color Guard also slated to march. The itinerary then called for Kennedy to finish with the banquet at Jefferson West. The newspaper reported a sellout of 600 tickets for the fundraiser. Officials said doors would open immediately after the dinner to permit high school and college students plus other interested persons to hear Kennedy's speech. Originally planned for the school cafeteria, the dinner moved to the auditorium due to the large turnout.³⁸

The Hays Daily News reported plans for the local radio station to carry Kennedy's speech live and provided detailed information about the banquet. According to the newspaper, Dreiling would preside over the fundraiser. Father Anselm Martin, school president at St. Joseph's, would give the invocation followed by the welcoming address from dinner chairman Robert F. Glassman. Frank Theis, state Democratic Party

³⁸ "All Tickets Sold For Demo Dinner To Hear Kennedy," *The Hays Daily News*, November 20, 1959 (Hays Public Library Kansas Collection microfilm, accessed October 1, 2018). Jefferson West became Kennedy Middle School in 1969, renamed in Kennedy's honor.

chairman, was to make the response and give the party greeting. Following the remarks from Theis, the schedule called for a piano selection played by Karen Ramsey. After the introduction of distinguished guests, the Fort Hays Male Quartet, under the direction of John Norman, would supply entertainment. Victoria High School music director Charles Bahl furnished musical background at the dinner, with ushers courtesy of the Fort Hays Young Democrats. The schedule called for Kennedy to speak last. *The Hays Daily News* reported that Fort Hays debate coach and speech teacher Harold Stones would assist at Kennedy's news conference. Stones had completed a master's thesis on Kennedy's foreign policy views.³⁹

Kennedy wanted to meet influencers on the campaign trail, and someone who worked with Bobby Kennedy assisted in that endeavor at the Hays stop. Leo C. Nulty, who had played football in college at St. Benedict's with Hays District Court Judge Benedict P. Cruise, wrote to the judge two days before Kennedy's appearance in Hays, advising him that he should make an effort to hear Kennedy speak. An agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Nulty had been part of the Senate Permanent Investigating Subcommittee for the five previous years. Bobby Kennedy served as chief counsel for the committee, which targeted labor racketeering. Nulty also wrote to his good friend Pierre Salinger, Kennedy's press secretary, that same day, enclosing a copy of his letter to Cruise. Nulty added in the Salinger letter that Kennedy could possibly meet John O'Loughlin, the nephew of Kathryn O'Laughlin McCarthy, while in Hays.

³⁹ "Large Crowd Due To Greet Kennedy At District Rally," *The Hays Daily News*, November 19, 1959 (Hays Public Library Kansas Collection microfilm, accessed October 1, 2018).

She had served as the only Democratic member of Congress from the Sixth District in the 1930s.⁴⁰

The first concern, however, involved getting the candidate to Hays. Kennedy used a twin-engine Convair 240 belonging to the Kennedy family as the campaign plane. The plane could carry eighteen passengers, with a desk, galley and bedroom, after its redesign. The Kennedy family's Ken-Air Corporation leased the plane to the candidate at a rate of \$1.75 per mile. The aircraft logged 110,000 miles in 1959 and 1960. The plane, named "Caroline" after Kennedy's young daughter, included a staff of three and the pilot, Howard Baer.⁴¹ However, the Kennedy plane could not land on the small grass airstrip east of Hays. Wallace noted in his schedule for the Kansas trip that Dreiling would have cars available to drive the press from Salina to Hays. He also penciled into the margin the name and phone numbers of Dreiling and Don Pratt.⁴² Airport manager Ralph Bemis flew Don Pratt's 1958 Piper Apache to pick up Kennedy and return him to Salina after the banquet.

Michael Bird and his friend Steve Pratt, Don Pratt's teenage son, recalled seeing Kennedy's arrival at Hays Municipal Airport. Steve's father had put them to work at an airport hangar, and they saw Kennedy arrive. Students from Girls Catholic High School sang a song and cheerleaders greeted Kennedy at the airport.⁴³ Kennedy shook hands at a

⁴⁰ Nulty to Cruise, November 18, 1959. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Speeches and the Press. Press Secretary's State Files, 1958-1960. Kansas. Also in this file is the letter from Nulty to Salinger, also written on November 18, 1959.

⁴¹ Michael O'Brien, *John F. Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2005), 437. Sorensen, in *Kennedy*, gave a similar account of the plane, including the name of the pilot.

⁴² JFK Presidential Campaign Papers. Robert A. Wallace Personal Papers.

⁴³ Steve Pratt, telephone interview by author, October 31, 2018.

rope line and met local politicians, including Joe Rome, Ellis County Democratic Chairman. Bird estimated a crowd size of about fifty to one hundred people.⁴⁴

Kennedy rode into town in a 1957 Oldsmobile 98 owned and driven by Ellis County Undersheriff Robert Maxwell.⁴⁵ When Dreiling asked Harold Stones to ride with him to pick Kennedy up and take him to the Lamer Hotel, the Fort Hays debate coach was thrilled at the opportunity. Stones said Dreiling, who knew about Stones' thesis on Kennedy, had asked him if would like to meet the candidate.⁴⁶ Once at the hotel, Kennedy asked Stones if he would enjoy coming up to his room to talk. Stones spoke with Kennedy privately twice with the candidate, discussing foreign policy and Kennedy's World War II experiences.

Kennedy met media obligations before the banquet. The candidate made a live appearance on KAYS-TV at about 5:30 p.m. before his news conference at the college. The bills Dreiling paid for Kennedy's visit included one for \$30 from the television station.⁴⁷

Hays residents remembered different aspects of Kennedy's visit to the TV station. A group of Democrats escorted Kennedy at KAYS, including Henry Schwaller II and Jeff Jacobs. Edmund "Ed" Moore estimated seven or eight people traveled with Kennedy in

⁴⁴ Michael Bird, telephone interview by author, November 1, 2018.

⁴⁵ Steve Wissman, telephone interview by author, January 26, 2019. Wissman, from Albert, Kansas, bought the car used to transport Kennedy from the Hays airport, and had it for sale on eBay.

⁴⁶ Harold Stones, telephone interview with the author, June 5, 2017. Included in Norbert Dreiling's personal papers is an account of Stones and Kennedy. A handwritten note from Dreiling included information on Stones and his thesis and the making of arrangements for them to meet.

⁴⁷ Dreiling Papers. Dreiling received several bills for Kennedy's appearance in Hays; included among them: The Lamer Hotels, \$29.52 for rooms; Pink Pony Flower Shop, \$11.28 for table decorations; Larry's Studio, \$14.35 for photos; *The Ellis County Farmer*, \$406.62 for advertising; two bills from Printcraft, Inc., \$30.19 for dinner tickets and \$13.74 for signs.

as many as three cars.⁴⁸ Kay Melia, station manager at KAYS Radio at the time of Kennedy's visit, did not know the candidate planned an appearance at the TV station. He shook hands with the senator before Kennedy went on the air. Melia estimated about four or five people accompanied Kennedy.⁴⁹ Dennis Hertel, then a 21-year-old college student, recalled his meeting the candidate in a November 1983 interview with *The Hays Daily News*. Hertel, who hoped to get a photo of Kennedy, posed for a picture with him in the hallway at the station.⁵⁰

Ed Moore and his wife Georgia, close friends of Norbert Dreiling but staunch Republicans, did not plan to attend the Democratic fundraiser but wanted to meet Kennedy. They lived close to KAYS and heard police sirens, confirming Stones' recollection that the candidate had a police escort from the airport and to the television station. The Moores brought their 12-year-old son, Edmund, Jr., and daughter, Renee, 4, with them to KAYS in hopes of meeting the senator. With them were the children of neighbors Bob and Marian Layher. Ed Moore said they were in the hallway during Kennedy's interview. Afterward, Dreiling introduced the Moores to Kennedy, and jokingly said they would be the only two Republicans the candidate would meet that night. Ed Moore recalled that his son would not shake hands with Kennedy because the younger Moore already had Republican leanings. He said that Kennedy laughed at

⁴⁸ Ed Moore, telephone interview with author, August 7, 2017.

⁴⁹ Kay Melia, telephone interview with author, August 3, 2017.

⁵⁰ Dreiling Papers. Included in Dreiling's personal papers was a copy of the November 22, 1983, issue of *The Hays Daily News*, which included Hertel's anecdote.

Dreiling's remark about Republicans. In the end, Ed voted for Kennedy, but Georgia did not.⁵¹

After the television appearance, Kennedy headed to Fort Hays. Organizers asked members of the Fort Hays Young Democrats to serve as hosts at the press conference.⁵² Stones remembered that a platform was built for the event in the lounge near the spiral staircase on the first floor of the Memorial Union, where the candidate answered questions from the media. Harold Stones came away impressed by Kennedy's handling of the question-and-answer session. "He just controlled that press conference from stem to stern. He had great poise, quick answers, quick wit. He really did a wonderful job at the press conference."⁵³

Dreiling included a role for one Fort Hays student at Kennedy's news conference. Dreiling asked John Ivan, president of Collegiate Young Democrats at Fort Hays, to introduce Kennedy. However, Dreiling forgot to introduce Ivan. Kennedy gave his remarks and answered questions before Dreiling called upon Ivan to give a speech thanking Kennedy for his appearance. The Russell junior said talking in front of an excited, packed crowd helped him overcome his stage fright.

After his nervous speech, Ivan shook hands with Kennedy. As he recalled, "John Kennedy kept watching my leg shake. After I got done he came over. He was the most

⁵¹ Ed and Georgia Moore, interview with the author, August 10, 2017.

⁵² "Sen. John Kennedy At FHS Tomorrow," *State College Leader*, November 19, 1959 (FHSU Special Collections and Archives, microfilm, accessed July 15, 2017).

⁵³ Stones, telephone interview.

wonderful person. He was unbelievable. He didn't talk about himself; he just talked about what we were doing, and the politics of the situation in Kansas.”⁵⁴

One area newspaper gave a somewhat dismissive account of the question-and-answer session. *The Salina Journal* reported on the “so-called” press conference, noting that about 400 students, many of them “coeds,” surrounded the press. The newspaper’s account, which could be viewed as thinly disguised misogyny to denigrate the candidate, remains significant because Kennedy used women as part of his campaign team as far back as his senate races, and women generally looked favorably upon Kennedy as evidenced by their statements during his trip to Kansas. In his remarks, Kennedy declared that the United States must spend money in other countries and provide foreign aid. He said the abundance from the country’s farms would aid the “needy of other nations and ... our needy here at home.” The senator favored aid to education through college loans, and discussed relations with the Soviet Union.⁵⁵

Other newspapers viewed Kennedy in a positive light. *The Ellis County Farmer*, which supported Kennedy, noted that the candidate gave an impressive performance at the press conference despite hostile questioning. In his December 10, 1959 editorial, for the *Farmer*, Pat Taylor wrote that the senator did not dodge questions or speak in generalities. For example, he cited Kennedy’s answer to a question from a girl who represented the Hays High School newspaper, *The Guidon*. She asked if the government should impose compulsory arbitration to settle strikes, and Kennedy replied that

⁵⁴ John Ivan, telephone interview with author, July 24, 2017.

⁵⁵ John Schmiedeler, “Kennedy’s Boyish Looks Hide A Shrewd Politician,” *The Salina Journal*, November 22, 1959. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40767713/>

government should not rule on settlements in every strike. He said government should step in only if it saw no alternative to end a strike.⁵⁶

Wallace's original schedule for the Hays portion of the trip called for Kennedy to work on his speech at 6 p.m. at the Lamer Hotel. He penciled in a parade for Kennedy starting at 6:30 p.m. Later, Norbert's daughter Jan recalled a neighbor taking her to the parade. "We were psyched," to attend the parade, she said, adding that her father kept the children up on current events.⁵⁷ Brian Windholz, an eighth-grader at Jefferson West who played saxophone in the school band, recalled that members of the Jefferson East band joined their band, which had about thirty to forty members, in the parade. Windholz also recalled he did not need to wear a coat.⁵⁸ The temperature that day rose into the upper 50s, and years later *The Ellis County Farmer* described it as a "beautiful fall evening." The newspaper reported that as the Kennedy caravan approached Jefferson West the crowd "went wild" and a huge throng of well-wishers gathered at the school, carrying signs and posters calling for Kennedy to be president.⁵⁹ In its November 22, 1959 issue, *The Hays Daily News* commented that although the parade lacked quantity, it was high on quality. The newspaper reported that dignitaries traveled the route in slick limousines, with the blue-and-white clad members of the Jefferson West band as a highlight.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Pat Taylor, "Kansas Kennedy For President Club Launched," *The Ellis County Farmer*, November 26, 1959. Kansas: Clippings.

⁵⁷ Jan (Dreiling) Schuster, interview with author, December 31, 2017.

⁵⁸ Brian Windholz, interview with author, August 26, 2018.

⁵⁹ "President Kennedy and Happier Days," *The Ellis County Farmer*, December 5, 1963. (Hays Public Library Kansas Room Collection, microfilm, accessed November 1, 2018).

⁶⁰ "Parade," *The Hays Daily News*, November 22, 1959 (Hays Public Library Kansas Room Collection, microfilm, accessed November 1, 2018).

Dreiling wrote a guest editorial for *The Ellis County Farmer* thirteen days after President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas in 1963. He recounted Kennedy's visit to Ellis County four years earlier, remembering that he had to halt ticket sales two days before the banquet due to the large turnout. Kennedy gave brief remarks, he wrote, but the senator's talk contained intelligent criticism and a positive approach to the nation's problems.⁶¹

Kennedy's remarks came at a sold-out banquet on a Friday evening. Friday nights in a Catholic community normally meant a fish supper. The banquet program noted that the Rt. Rev. F.W. Freking, Bishop of the Salina Diocese, had granted a dispensation to those attending the banquet, allowing diners to eat meat.⁶² On memo paper, Dreiling recorded the menu for that night prepared by the St. Joseph's Altar Society: chicken fried steak; mashed potatoes and gravy; peas; lime fruit salad; spiced pears; butter rolls; relishes; tomato juice; coffee; and apple pie "a la Democrats." At this time, apple pie included cheddar cheese on top for dessert. For this occasion, the cheese resembled a donkey. Catherine Brull, who helped cook the meal, asked her son, Charles, to make a mold in the shape of a donkey. Charles, who worked on the family farm, was a good welder and made a mold like a cookie cutter in the metal shop. His wife Marlene served at the dinner.⁶³

Elaine (Phelps) Pfannenstiel, a freshman at Girls Catholic High School, served at the dinner, and posed for a group photo taken with Kennedy. "He said, 'I want a picture

⁶¹ Dreiling Papers. Among Dreiling's papers was a transcript of this editorial.

⁶² Ibid., Banquet program from 1959.

⁶³ Charles Brull, telephone interview with the author, January 18, 2019. Marlene Brull also contributed details in a telephone interview November 20, 2018.

with all these girls.’ So we all came and stood by him. He talked, was so nice.” After serving, Pfannenstiel and some of her classmates took the stairs to the second floor of the school, where a window overlooked the auditorium. They could see, but not hear, the proceedings. Years later, school principal Al Riedel found a framed picture of the photo of Pfannenstiel with Kennedy and gave it to her.⁶⁴

Donna Jean Dreiling, whose parents drove over from WaKeeney to attend, recalled the mood the night of the banquet. Dreiling said her husband seemed in good spirits afterward: “I think he was well-pleased with the attendance, thought everything had gone smoothly. Norb didn’t show his emotions.”⁶⁵

The organizers planned to serve 600 meals that night at Jefferson West. Already, the banquet location had been shifted from the school cafeteria to the auditorium. Organizers arranged tables length-wise on the basketball floor, with a head table in front of the stage. The banquet sold 645 tickets, with gross ticket sales at \$3,840. Total expenses were \$2,049.13 and net profit was \$1,790.87. Half of the net profit, \$895.43, went to the Democrat national committee and the other half remained with the Sixth District in its congressional fund.⁶⁶ As his aides had done in previous races, Kennedy’s people generated a list of contact information at the banquets in Hays and also Dodge City. The Hays list included the names and addresses of the servers, as well as the police escort, including Ellis County Sheriff Clarence Werth, Police Chief Lawrence Younger, Sr., and Police Officer Lawrence Younger, Jr. The list also noted Joe Rome as driver for

⁶⁴ Elaine (Phelps) Pfannenstiel, telephone interview with author, August 20, 2018.

⁶⁵ Donna Jean Dreiling, interview with author, September 22, 2017.

⁶⁶ Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling.

Kennedy. Maxwell could have driven Kennedy from the airport and Rome taking over behind the wheel in town.

As happened in Salina and for the parade in Hays, Kennedy arrived more than an hour late for the 7 p.m. banquet.⁶⁷ A host of speakers delivered remarks at the fundraiser before Kennedy's speech. The local newspaper's account of Kennedy's keynote speech seemed unenthusiastic and had expected more details from the candidate. *The Hays Daily News* editorial staff offered an opinion of the fundraiser in its November 22 issue. The editorial concluded that Kennedy spoke mainly in generalities and lacked specifics: "It was a pleasant, albeit tame affair. The fire of the crusader was missing." Local political observers of both parties agreed the Democratic Party's nominee was still an open question.⁶⁸

In its November 22 issue *The Hays Daily News* reported that in his remarks, Kennedy told those assembled that from 1960 on at least "six revolutionary challenges will confront our nation and our world."⁶⁹ A transcript of Kennedy's speech shows the details of those challenges. The candidate spoke about the challenge in population; the challenge on the farm; the challenge of technology and energy, specifically automation and atomic energy; the challenge of the nation's standard of living; the challenge of the underdeveloped nations in the world; and the challenge of nationalism.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ "Kennedy's Boyish Looks," *Salina Journal*.

⁶⁸ "Opinion," *The Hays Daily News*, November 22, 1959 (Hays Public Library Kansas Room Collection, microfilm, accessed November 1, 2018).

⁶⁹ "Kennedy Tells Democratic Rally Here U.S. Faces Six Challenges," *The Hays Daily News*, November 22, 1959 (Hays Public Library Kansas Room Collection, microfilm, accessed November 1, 2018).

⁷⁰ Dreiling Papers.

The Ellis County Farmer reported in its November 26 issue that Kennedy's remarks included a call for the country to exhibit a new determination in the battle against the Soviet Union for world leadership. "This is not a time for softness. We must face the hard facts of life. . . . We are engaged in a deadly struggle between freedom on the one hand of which we are the world leader and Godless Communism on the other. What we do in the next few years will determine whether freedom or Communism will rule the world," he emphasized.⁷¹

A speaker before Kennedy left an impression on at least two members of the audience, although uncertainty remains about who delivered the remarks. Henry Schwaller IV, who thought it fascinating that Kennedy spoke in Hays, asked his grandmother, Juliette, years later about the speech. Schwaller said his grandfather, Henry Schwaller II, could not attend the banquet, but his wife and their two sons went. Juliette Schwaller told her grandson that Kennedy only had time for brief remarks. Juliette related to Henry years later that an intoxicated postmaster from Great Bend gave a lengthy introduction, about forty minutes. "By the time the drunken postmaster stopped speaking, the senator had to leave to take the plane to his next destination. She said it was a real disappointment," Schwaller recalled.⁷²

Steve Pratt was 15 years old at the time of the banquet, and attended with his parents, Don and Ida. He also remembered a long introductory speech that night. According to him, Lieutenant Governor Joseph W. Henkle, Sr., from Great Bend, gave

⁷¹ JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: T-Z. This file contains newspaper clippings sent to Kennedy by Pat Taylor, editor and publisher of *The Ellis County Farmer*. Included was the November 26 issue.

⁷² Henry Schwaller IV, telephone interview with author, August 8, 2017.

the lengthy remarks. According to Pratt, “Everybody got tired of him, wanted to hear Kennedy talk. It was kind of funny; he was a windbag. (Kennedy) had a very nice speech, and everybody cheered, yelled, hollered.” Pratt said Kennedy stayed for about thirty minutes to greet supporters, and the candidate shook hands with him.⁷³

Interestingly, the banquet program did not list Henkle as a speaker; it listed Robert Glassman and Frank Theis as the only speakers other than Kennedy. However, the program from the 1958 Sixth District dinner did list Henkle as a speaker.⁷⁴ *The Salina Journal* reported in its November 22, 1959, issue that Henkle attended the Hays fundraiser.⁷⁵

After the banquet, Donna Jean Dreiling saw Kennedy standing alone at the Lamer Hotel, waiting for his ride to the airport. She walked over to Kennedy and spoke briefly with him before he left, telling him she wished his wife could have made the trip. Unlike her husband, Dreiling would never see Kennedy again.⁷⁶

Kennedy did remain in touch with Norbert Dreiling after the fundraiser. On December 8, 1959, Kennedy wrote to Dreiling thanking the Sixth District chairman for the candidate’s support. He praised the turnout at the banquet. Kennedy and his staff had become familiar enough with Dreiling to call him “Norv.”⁷⁷

Governor George Docking’s pardon attorney, Dale A. Spiegel, and Ellsworth attorney Paul L. Aylward later wrote to Dreiling congratulating him on a successful

⁷³ Steve Pratt, phone interview.

⁷⁴ Dreiling Papers. Included in Dreiling’s papers were lists of attendees, tickets and programs from the banquet.

⁷⁵ “Kennedy’s Boyish Looks,” *Salina Journal*.

⁷⁶ Donna Jean Dreiling, interview.

⁷⁷ Kennedy to Dreiling, December 8, 1959. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: A-D.

fundraiser. After his congratulations, Aylward wrote that he had been unsuccessful in his efforts to discuss the “presidential situation” with Dreiling. A potential delegate to the national convention, Aylward told Dreiling that he thought Symington needed to lead the ticket, telling him that he had agreed to form a Symington for President club in Kansas. Aylward asked Dreiling to let him know of any potential Symington supporters in the Sixth District.⁷⁸

After an outpouring of support during his brief time in Hays, Kennedy concluded the Kansas portion of his campaign swing. He returned to Salina, where he boarded his campaign plane that night bound for Iowa and campaign events there the next day. After Iowa, Kennedy flew home to Hyannis Port, Massachusetts.⁷⁹

Kennedy had barely completed his whirlwind trip through Kansas before Democrats started staking out their own positions on why they should be selected to represent the Sixth District at the Democratic National Convention. One of the requests came from Blangers, the Sixth District Vice-Chairman, who wrote to Dreiling on December 9, 1959. After reporting her banquet expenses for reimbursement, Blangers listed her extensive participation in district activities. She asked for Dreiling’s support in representing the district at the national convention.⁸⁰

In 1960, district meetings in Kansas selected delegates in meetings held that February, and in March, the state convention ratified those delegates. The Kennedy

⁷⁸ Paul L. Aylward to Norbert Dreiling, November 21, 1959. Dreiling Papers.

⁷⁹ JFK Presidential Campaign Files, Wallace Papers. In Iowa, Kennedy attended the first half the Iowa-Notre Dame football game before traveling to a campaign event in Carroll. Like Hays, the Carroll airport could not accommodate Kennedy’s plane and a substitute plane transported the candidate.

⁸⁰ Nell Blangers to Norbert Dreiling, December 9, 1959. Dreiling Papers.

campaign wanted to know which delegates the candidate could count on, which ones might be swayed, and those who planned to support other candidates at July's national convention in Los Angeles. Kennedy raced to add delegates. Supporters raced to also go to Los Angeles themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Choosing a candidate”

John F. Kennedy declared his intention to run for the Democratic nomination for president on January 2, 1960, in the Senate Caucus Room. The candidate privately informed his major supporters of his decision prior to the announcement.¹ Kennedy spent much of 1960 campaigning across the country, winning primaries and visiting voters in states without primaries in his quest to amass delegates for the national convention. Chairmen from congressional districts all over Kansas sent the Kennedy campaign a list of their elected delegates, but none provided an analysis as insightful and unsparing as Norbert Dreiling, chairman of the Sixth Congressional District, which covered twenty-six counties in the northwest part of the state in two letters. Dreiling provided Kennedy’s staff a detailed analysis of his district’s delegate picture. In the first letter, dated January 15, 1960, Dreiling appraises potential delegates for the district convention the next month. In a March 1 letter, Dreiling similarly examined delegates selected at the February 28 district convention in Hill City, also discussing possible alternates and other key figures in the district.

In his first letter, sent to Kennedy aide Robert Wallace on January 15, Dreiling wrote that in addition to himself serving as a delegate, probable delegates to the national convention included: Nell Blangers, Salina; George M. Breiner, Norton; Arthur J.

¹ Hoge to Kennedy, January 2, 1960. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Presidential Campaign Files, 1960. Campaigns by State: Pre-Convention Political Files, 1960. Kansas: Political: H-K. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Elmer Hoge, Democratic Chairman of the Kansas Second Congressional District, replied to a letter sent by Kennedy to Hoge on December 28, 1959, in which Kennedy enclosed a copy of his announcement for president on January 2, 1960. (Hereafter cited as JFK Presidential Campaign Files).

Dowling, Decatur County; Paul L. Aylward, Ellsworth County; A.C. Thompson, Graham County; Max Jones, Sherman County; Ross Swenson, Republic County; Richard Driscoll, Russell County; Edith Beckman, Sheridan County; and C.F. Rupp, Rooks County.² The Sixth District would send six delegates to the national convention, and Dreiling wrote that it would be “exceptional” to place four Kennedy supporters in the delegation. Robert F. Glassman of Hays, a Kennedy man, also wanted to be a delegate, but Dreiling said that he would be lucky to serve as an alternate due to his limited activity in the district.³ Glassman’s omission as a delegate proved to be consequential at the national convention.

Dreiling issued a warning about one potential supporter. He urged caution regarding Richard Driscoll of Russell, writing that “Driscoll takes care of Driscoll first, last and always. In the past he and Aylward have always slept in the same bed and I suspect any rumor about his support for Kennedy might be intended primarily to get him selected as a delegate.” Dreiling also cast Driscoll’s cousin, Jerry E. Driscoll, in the same light. Dreiling observed that most of the county chairmen opposed Driscoll and an association could hurt Kennedy.⁴ Dreiling closed the letter with information on other key Democrats in the district.

On the same day, Dreiling wrote to apprise Kennedy of the letter he sent to Wallace, which listed party officials in each district county, and also to provide a report to the candidate on the situation in Kansas. Dreiling noted that Kennedy was making a

² Dreiling to Wallace, January 15, 1960. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: Delegates: A-D.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

better showing than he would have anticipated six months before. Dreiling stated the importance of the Fourth District, which contained Wichita, and he believed that Humphrey could cut into Symington's support in the state. Dreiling reported that he had received information that another candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson, did not receive an expected good reception in a Fifth District gathering in Hutchinson. Dreiling told Kennedy that he hoped to land four of the six delegates in the Kennedy camp at the district delegate meeting. He reminded the candidate that each delegate received a half-vote.⁵ Dreiling notified Kennedy assistant Ted Sorensen on January 15 about the delegate letter to Wallace. Dreiling received letters of thanks from Wallace, Kennedy and Sorensen for his information.⁶

In his March 1 letter to Wallace, written two days after the selection of the district's delegates, Dreiling again provided a comprehensive examination of the five delegates other than himself, and also included a thorough analysis of the three alternates. Delegates chosen included Blangers, Aylward, Breining, Jones and Thompson, with the alternates C.F. Rupp of Stockton, Glassman of Hays and Driscoll of Russell.⁷

As before, Dreiling provided personal information on each delegate and alternate. He also included biographical backgrounds for the three alternates. Dreiling described Glassman as "quite liberal" and a strong proponent of civil rights. He also noted that the Volga German settlers looked down on by old-time Kansas families included the

⁵ Dreiling to Kennedy, January 15, 1960. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: Delegates: A-D.

⁶ Kennedy to Dreiling, January 27, 1960. JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Delegates: Delegates: A-D. Kennedy aides Robert Wallace and Ted Sorensen also wrote to Dreiling, thanking him for his correspondence.

⁷ Dreiling to Wallace, March 1, 1960. Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. The district chairman sent a five-page letter to Wallace with information on the district's delegates and a list of county chairmen.

Glassmans. Glassman supported Kennedy one hundred percent, Dreiling said. Although Dreiling admitted having differences with Glassman, it did not affect his support for the candidate.⁸

Dreiling displayed his political acumen in his uncompromising account of one alternate, Richard Driscoll. Much as he wrote in his earlier letter to Wallace, Dreiling expressed his misgivings about Driscoll and his uncle, Jerry E. Driscoll:

Richard M. Driscoll – Russell, Kansas lawyer, practices law in Russell with an uncle, Jerry E. Driscoll, who has been a power in Western Kansas Democratic politics for years. However that is now on the wane and Jerry is nearing 75 and becoming quite inactive. The Driscolls are intelligent and capable, but ruthless. They are the prototype of the old-fashioned criminal lawyers – they always take care of themselves first. Luckily, we drew them into our camp in selection of delegates. They are not friendly to me, Breiner, Nell Blangers or most of the present district party organization. However, circumstances dictated they either go along with my slate of delegates or end up out in the cold. I have tried to patch difficulties between them and some of the other Democrats but doubt the success thereof. Richard Driscoll was 6th District Chairman until I was elected about 2 years ago. He was in for 2 years and was not re-elected because most of the county chairmen felt he had double-crossed Elmo Mahoney, the Congressional candidate who nearly defeated Wint Smith. Mahoney has photo copies of letters written by Uncle Jerry in the campaign to selected people telling them to vote against Mahoney, the Democratic candidate. The consensus is he would have been elected had they helped. Driscoll is finishing his term as Highway Commissioner for this district, having been appointed 4 years ago by the Governor. I give this background so you know the depth of his feelings toward some of us who felt that regardless of personal affection or disaffection he should support the party candidate, Mahoney, in the General Election. Driscoll and family are Roman Catholic and they have quite a bit of oil and farm income, mainly through the help of Uncle Jerry. “Dick” is around 40, possibly a little more, is married and has two sons. He is quite proud and a pat on the back at the right time can probably keep him in line more than anything else, as long as he thinks Driscoll is being taken care of first. He and his uncle have given me the impression they belong to the type of politics known as the “ward healer” – they like power and control of patronage and aren’t too concerned if the party candidates aren’t elected as long as they can maintain control of the party machinery.⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Dreiling noted that the alternates would serve Kennedy well if needed for the national convention. Dreiling told Wallace that Sixth District Democrats knew their chairman solidly backed Kennedy. Dreiling concluded the letter with a list of county chairmen in his district he deemed “receptive to Senator Kennedy and would probably work with greater zeal if they were on your mailing list and given a little attention.”¹⁰

Prior to the district meetings to choose delegates, Wallace twice wrote to Robert Kennedy in December 1959 updating him on the Kansas statewide picture. In a December 1 memorandum Wallace noted the Kansas delegation would increase from sixteen to twenty-one votes at the national convention. At-large candidates previously selected included Governor George Docking; National Committeeman Frank Theis; National Committeewoman Georgie Neese Gray; Democratic Vice-Chairman Ruby Harris; Democratic Secretary Myrl Kliesen; and Democratic Treasurer Tom Corcoran. Of the six delegates from each of the six districts, the district convention would choose five after county meetings, and the state convention would pick the sixth delegate from each district. According to Wallace, Theis believed Kansas would come down to a battle between Kennedy and Symington. In his analysis of the Sixth District, Wallace noted that Dreiling supported Kennedy but not Docking. He warned that the Driscoll family from Russell, while important, also received controversial appraisals within the district. Wallace estimated that Kennedy would receive twenty-five of forty-two delegate votes

¹⁰Ibid.

and thus receive all of them under unit rule. Nevertheless, the campaign decided to have a presence in Kansas to help deliver the state.¹¹

In his second memo to Robert Kennedy, Wallace reported that finalization of plans for a Kansas organization included the group led by Congressman Newell George and Tom Corcoran. Wallace observed that by choosing Corcoran the campaign departed from the general policy by picking a Catholic to lead the group. Wallace noted George's Protestant faith, and he believed the campaign needed Corcoran's varied skills. Finally, Dreiling would head the campaign effort in the Sixth District.¹²

Kansas Democrats held their state convention March 4 and March 5 in Hutchinson, at the Hutchinson Sports Arena. Districts' chosen delegates needed ratification, but the convention did not need to select additional delegates. A February 19 letter from the Kansas Democratic Committee to county chairmen said that since Kansas would meet first to elect delegates to the national convention, the state party issued invitations to presidential candidates for the March 4 fundraising dinner. Organizers expected Kennedy, Humphrey, Governor G. Mennen Williams of Michigan and Governor Robert Meyner of New Jersey to attend. Johnson and Symington would either attend or send a representative.¹³ The state convention ratified district delegates; six at-large delegates had already been selected. Each of the forty-two delegates from Kansas received a half-vote in the nominating process, for twenty-one votes at the national

¹¹ Wallace to Robert Kennedy, December 1, 1959, JFK Presidential Campaign Files, Kansas: Organization, 1960: 10 September 1958-23 December 1959.

¹² Wallace to Robert Kennedy, December 15, 1959, JFK Presidential Campaign Files, Kansas: Organization, 1960: 10 September 1958-23 December 1959.

¹³ Kansas Democrat Committee to county chairmen, February 19, 1960, JFK Presidential Campaign Files, Kansas: Delegates: R-V.

convention. As a unit rule state, all Kansas votes would go to the candidate who received the majority in the caucus before the convention's roll call vote. In a March 1 memorandum, Wallace determined that Kennedy supporters included Governor Docking, Corcoran and Myrl Kliesen, while at-large delegates Harris and Gray supported Symington for the party's nomination. They remained uncommitted.¹⁴ Candidates could speak directly to the delegates at the state convention. In his speech before the Kansas delegation, Kennedy's remarks mirrored those he made in his visit to Hays just over four months earlier.¹⁵

A letter from Leo C. Nulty, an FBI agent who worked for the Senate committee where Robert Kennedy was chief counsel, showed the fractious nature of the Kansas Democratic Party heading into the 1960 convention. Support did not center on any one candidate, as the roll call of states confirmed. Some delegates considered Docking an option as a "favorite son" candidate. Even the Sixth District, despite its chairman's being solidly for Kennedy, had Symington supporters as delegates.

Nulty wrote to John Kennedy on April 28 with news of the Kansas state convention. After a conversation with Gene Sullivan, Governor George Docking's administrative assistant, Nulty passed on to the candidate that Symington's people at the convention unsuccessfully attempted to "dump" Docking as chairman of the Kansas delegation. According to Sullivan, Johnson had a little support in the Fifth District, with "inept" Humphrey people and Stevenson receiving a scattering of support. Nulty wrote

¹⁴ Wallace to Kennedy, March 1, 1960, JFK Presidential Campaign Files, Kansas: Organization, 1960: 1 March-28 April.

¹⁵ Ibid.

that Sullivan believed that the Kansas delegation could nominate Docking as a favorite son candidate on the first ballot and then change to Kennedy.¹⁶

The Kansas delegation added to the drama of the Democratic National Convention, held July 11 to 15 in Los Angeles. Kennedy believed he needed to win the nomination on the first ballot in the roll call of states on July 13; otherwise he would lose grassroots support. As the roll call proceeded, Kansas passed when its turn came up. The state, which operated under unit rule, in which the candidate who receives the most delegate votes receives them all, could not reach a consensus.¹⁷

The Kennedy camp knew the status of the delegation from each state by tracking delegates with a master card file. Each file noted whether a person was a delegate or an alternate. The file included information on whether the person supported Kennedy, and if so, their commitment. Each card had the person's occupation, religion, party offices held, and whether they preferred to be called by first name, last name or nickname.¹⁸

Bobby, who had learned his lesson from the VP process at the 1956 national convention, assigned Dave Hackett the critical task of putting together as much information as possible on the delegates before the convention. Hackett said they went state-by-state, determining delegates and who selected them. In the end, the campaign had a working file of 50,000 three-by-five cards on potential delegates. Bobby also insisted on a "loyalty index" where each person in the file was determined on a scale of

¹⁶ Nulty to Kennedy, April 28, 1960, JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: L-P.

¹⁷ Ted Sorensen, phone interview by Jackson Dreiling, March 2008, Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. Jackson Dreiling, grandson of Norbert Dreiling, interviewed Sorensen in March 2008 and took notes as part of research for a possible book about his grandfather.

¹⁸ Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 36.

1-to-10 of the delegate's commitment to Kennedy. Hackett said to get a ten, two people had to designate that number; never on just one person's judgement.¹⁹

The Kansas delegation, still in caucus, passed when the roll call of states began at 10:07 p.m. It has long been thought that Kansas leaders sought glory by leading a trend to Kennedy by voting near the end of the first ballot.²⁰ Years later, John Bird, a prominent Ellis County Democrat and a protégé of Dreiling, provided another view. Both Dreiling and Robert Kennedy told Bird that the state's delegates could not reach a consensus. They could not get the half-vote Kennedy needed for a majority that would give him all of the votes. Kennedy and Symington split the delegation, Bird remembered, adding that the religious issue divided some in the caucus.²¹ The delegation attempted to make peace with an anti-Catholic bloc of Symington supporters. According to Bird, Glassman had stepped aside in the choosing of delegates for the convention, allowing Aylward, an Ellsworth County attorney and Symington supporter, to become a delegate. According to Glassman, Dreiling made Aylward a delegate in hopes of luring him into the Kennedy camp. Aylward would not "play ball," and ended up cornered in a hotel bathroom at the national convention by Robert Kennedy, Robert Docking and Dreiling, who lobbied him to switch his vote to Kennedy. Despite the pressure, Aylward declined to do so, and thus Kansas had to pass when its turn came during the roll call vote.²²

After the national convention, Kennedy received a letter from Kansas delegate Ruby Harris, the state's Democratic Vice-Chairman. Harris apologized for the "Kansas-

¹⁹ Chris Matthews, *Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 163-164.

²⁰ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 159-161.

²¹ John Bird, phone interview by author, January 16, 2019.

²² John Bird, interview by author, July 26, 2017.

hassle” and expressed relief that it did not affect the outcome.²³ Despite his political clout in his district and in the state, Dreiling could not convince one of his delegates to switch his vote. In Bird’s account of the events received from people at the convention, Glassman’s not being a delegate led to an evenly divided delegation. If Glassman, and not Aylward, had been part of the Kansas voting bloc, Kennedy would have been able to overcome the anti-Catholic bias from some in the delegation and would have received a majority of votes at the time of the first roll call.

Some members of the Kansas delegation expressed disappointment with the roll call kerfuffle. Jan (Dreiling) Schuster, Norbert Dreiling’s daughter, remembered that her father expressed disappointment that Kansas could not deliver its votes for Kennedy when first called. “He felt it made the state look weak, not unified. He tried, really tried,” Schuster said.²⁴

The Kansas delegation revolted against its leadership by placing Docking into nomination as a favorite son against his wishes. After seeing demonstrations on the convention floor for Stevenson, the Democratic nominee in 1952 and 1956, a bloc of Kansas delegates decided to put Docking on the ballot and see what would happen.²⁵ Docking, a Kennedy supporter, withdrew before balloting began. Florida Governor LeRoy Collins, the convention permanent chairman, permitted the orderly withdrawal of favorite son candidates. Collins allowed states to change their votes between the completion of the first roll call of states and before tabulation of the final tally on any

²³ Ruby Harris to John Kennedy, August 15, 1960, JFK Presidential Campaign Files. Kansas: Political: A-W.

²⁴ Jan (Dreiling) Schuster, interview with author, December 31, 2017.

²⁵ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Antheum House Inc., 1961), 162.

ballot.²⁶ Collins' decision allowed Kansas to nominate Docking then switch to another candidate before the roll call ended. If Kennedy reached a majority in the caucus, the state's votes would go to him.

According to his son Robert Docking, George Docking believed his favorite son candidacy for president became a strategy by some delegates to hold off on committing toward a candidate, waiting to see which way the nomination would go. According to Robert Docking, Kennedy received twenty-one votes and the other twenty-one votes came from delegates backing a favorite son movement for his father. National Committeewoman Georgia Neese Gray, committed to Symington, and Alyward, Symington's man in Kansas, led the charge for the Kansas governor's favorite son candidacy. Docking noted that Kennedy's religion became an issue; two or three delegates said they could not vote for a Catholic for president.²⁷

At the end of the first roll call, Wyoming's turn came up. The state did not have enough votes for Kennedy to give him the nomination. After Edward Kennedy alerted the Wyoming delegation that if it gave all fifteen of its votes to Kennedy, they would put him over the top, the delegation switched its vote total to fifteen. With Wyoming's votes, Kennedy's total was at 765, four more than needed for the nomination.²⁸

²⁶ W.H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Nominated on the First Ballot; Overwhelms Johnson by 806 Votes to 409" *The New York Times*, July 14, 1960 <https://partners.nytimes.com/library/politics/camp/600714convention-dem-ra.html>

²⁷ Robert B. Docking, recorded interview by Larry J. Hackman, July 5, 1967, John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKOH/Docking%2C%20Robert%20B/JFKOH-RBD-01/JFKOH-RBD-01> (accessed November 9, 2018).

²⁸Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 159-161.

The Kansas delegation continued in its caucus when Wyoming voted. Kennedy finished with 806 votes to 409 for runner-up Johnson. He won by acclamation once he exceeded the needed vote total. Kennedy made a brief appearance at the convention after he won the nomination, entering the stage to the tune, "Happy Days Are Here Again."²⁹

In the final weeks before the general election, Dreiling expressed concern about the Kennedy effort in Kansas. In a letter written on October 27 to Harold C. Miller, the Kennedy-Johnson coordinator for Kansas, Dreiling noted that the state Democratic headquarters needed to work harder for the candidate. However, Dreiling expressed confidence that Ellis County would strongly support the Democratic nominee.³⁰

Democratic registration in the county exemplified the "Kennedy effect." Ellis County stood at 4,862 registered Democrats, an increase over the August primary by 1,000 votes. Dreiling wanted 1,200 to 1,300 new voters by the time registration closed, an increase of twenty-one percent with the goal of twenty-five percent.³¹ For a Democratic county to increase voter registration by such a wide margin one could reasonably believe that Kennedy's visit and candidacy influenced voter registration.

Dreiling wrote two letters to the Kennedy campaign on October 27. To aide Ted Sorensen, Dreiling reported on the political situation in Kansas. Noting that a previously defeatist atmosphere in the state had given way to optimism, a confident Dreiling believed Kennedy would carry Ellis County by at least a two-to-one margin. According to Dreiling's analysis, Nixon would not rack up the usual huge margins for Republicans

²⁹ Walter Trohan, "Democrats Select Kennedy as Presidential Candidate on First Ballot," *Chicago Tribune*, July 14, 1960. <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1960/07/14/page/45/article/kennedy-wins-nomination>.

³⁰ Dreiling to Miller, October 27, 1960, Dreiling Papers.

³¹ Ibid.

in the rural areas, and if urban areas such as Wichita and Kansas City came through, Kennedy could take the state.³² In his letter to Joe Dolan at Citizens for Kennedy headquarters, Dreiling expressed the same optimism as he had in the Sorensen letter. Again, he predicted Ellis County would go for Kennedy by a two-to-one margin. Dreiling added that he and others had been trying to convince the state headquarters to give the candidate more assistance.³³

The 1960 election drew an emotional reaction from the electorate. The excitement of the Kennedy-Nixon race brought nearly seven million new voters to the polls, an increase of eleven percent.³⁴ A University of Michigan Survey Research Center study showed that Kennedy lost 1.5 million more votes than he gained because of anti-Catholic voting among Protestants, especially Protestant Democrats in the South and rural North.³⁵ Religion factored more into determining the outcome of the election than previously thought by historians, political scientists and election scientists. The depth of anti-Catholic and anti-Kennedy voting increased more than previously thought, particularly in rural America.³⁶

In November 1959, the Texas Baptist Convention adopted a resolution cautioning members against voting for a Roman Catholic candidate. Alabama Baptists went on record protesting any Roman Catholic president. The National Association of Evangelicals adopted a statement warning of Roman Catholic domination and the future

³² Dreiling to Sorensen, October 27, 1960, Dreiling Papers.

³³ Dreiling to Nolan, October 27, 1960, Dreiling Papers.

³⁴ Albert J. Menendez, *The Geography of Presidential Elections in the United States, 1868-2004* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., 2005), 87.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁶ Albert J. Menendez, *The Religious Factor in the 1960 Presidential Election: An Analysis of the Kennedy Victory Over Anti-Catholic Prejudice* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., 2011), 46.

suppression of rights of Evangelicals.³⁷ Kansas reflected these national trends, but not in Ellis County.

The split in the Kansas delegation at the Democratic National Convention portended the troubles that lay ahead in the general election. A handful of Kansas delegates at the convention refused to support Kennedy due to his Catholicism. In addition, during the election Dreiling received anti-Kennedy literature referring to the candidate's religion. The literature came in many forms but carried the same theme of a Catholic president threatening other religions and the Pope exercising influence on Americans.³⁸

On November 8, 1960, Kennedy defeated Nixon to become the thirty-fifth President of the United States. At forty-three, he became the youngest person elected president and the first president born in the twentieth century. Kennedy won with 304 Electoral votes to 219 for Nixon, who took more states. He won the popular vote 49.7 percent to 49.5 percent; he finished with 34,220,984 votes compared to 34,108,157 for Nixon. Although Dreiling's optimism about Kennedy winning the state fell far short of what happened, his prediction of a two-to-one margin in Ellis County came true. Kennedy received sixty-five percent of the vote, winning 5,782 votes of 8,889 cast in the county. The turnout in Ellis County increased by 11 percent, compared to 1956.³⁹

Nixon won Kansas with 61 percent of the vote; only Nebraska had a higher percentage for the Republican candidate. Even though he lost in Kansas, Kennedy gained

³⁷ Ibid., 22-23.

³⁸ Dreiling Papers.

³⁹ "Three County Offices Won By Republicans," *The Hays Daily News*, November 9, 1960, <https://newspaperarchive.com/hays-daily-news-nov-09-1960-p-1/>

five percentage points over Stevenson from 1956. He carried one other county in addition to Ellis County, taking urban Wyandotte County, which included Kansas City. All of the major population centers went for Nixon, but again Kennedy gained five to six points in urban areas compared to 1956.⁴⁰

The new president used the same “start early” strategy he employed during his Senate races to win the election. Barely two years into his term, Kennedy began to look ahead. It was time to “start early” once again.

⁴⁰ Menendez, *Religious*, 37.

CONCLUSION

John F. Kennedy focused on his duties as president after winning the 1960 election, but loyalists also looked to the next campaign. After the 1962 midterm elections a small group of Kennedy people planned for the 1964 election. Robert Kennedy, Lawrence O'Brien, Kenneth O'Donnell, John Bailey, Steve Smith, and Ted Sorensen plotted the re-election strategy.¹ As Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Bailey issued a statement after the 1963 elections, declaring that Democratic successes in 1962 and 1963 would continue in 1964.² Kennedy believed that the 1964 campaign would center on his record. He expressed confidence he would win, especially if he ran against Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater.³

A staff memo analyzed Kennedy's state-by-state strength. An undated inter-office memorandum from Charles Roche to Bailey, probably written in the fall of 1963, discussed Democratic Party activities planned from November 1963 to November 1964. Roche argued that they needed to agree on the best path toward the 270 electoral votes necessary to re-elect Kennedy. The group determined favorable six states and the District of Columbia, with twenty-five states constituting battleground states.

Jerry Bruno, an advance man for the president, received twelve states to oversee. The memo noted little optimism with respect toward carrying nineteen specific states, Kansas being among them. The memo included a breakdown of the Kansas picture for

¹ Michael O'Brien, *John F. Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 899.

² John Bailey statement, November 6, 1963. Democratic National Committee: Weekly reports, November 1963: 12-15. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

³ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2003), 639.

1964, providing information on national office-holders and state officials, along with vote totals from the 1960 general election. The memo noted state leaders' willingness to host fundraising dinners.⁴ The national collegiate organization Young Democrats wrote a memorandum to Bailey on November 12, 1963, to discuss plans for the 1964 election. The memo noted the importance of keeping young voters aligned with Kennedy and the Democratic Party.⁵

On November 13, 1963, Kennedy held a preliminary meeting with his political team in the Cabinet Room at the White House to discuss the 1964 convention and campaign. The three-and-a-half hour meeting included Robert Kennedy, Richard Maguire, Dave Powers, Bailey, Smith, O'Brien, Sorensen and a new member, Richard Scammon, director of the Census Bureau and an expert on population trends. They decided that Robert Kennedy could not manage the campaign while serving as Attorney General, so Bailey and Smith would organize it, with Maguire the treasurer. The meeting ended due to a previous dinner engagement for the president, who said they needed to meet again in two or three weeks.⁶

At the meeting, Kennedy said he favored a reapportionment of delegates to reflect areas of actual Democratic strength. They reviewed plans for convention films, loyalty pledges, and state campaign organizations. Kennedy hoped and indeed predicted that the

⁴ Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Special Events through the Years. Memoranda regarding state organizations for campaign 1964, 1963. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Undated memo from Charles Roche to John Bailey.

⁵ Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Subjects. Democratic National Committee: Weekly reports, November 1963: 12-15. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

⁶ Kenneth P. O'Donnell and David F. Powers, *"Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye": Memories of John Fitzgerald Kennedy* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 386-387.

GOP would choose Goldwater as its nominee.⁷ A 1963 Gallup poll revealed that Kennedy was losing support, dropping from a seventy-six percent approval rating to fifty-nine. The president used those numbers to dampen overconfidence at the November 13 meeting. Scammon's statistics showed the civil rights issue behind the decline. Kennedy lost support from southerners who thought he should slow down on the matter. Ironically, Kennedy simultaneously lost support from some northern liberals who thought he should move faster on civil rights. The most recent polling at the time showed Kennedy leading Goldwater, fifty-five percent to thirty-nine percent. Kennedy liked Goldwater, but considered him too conservative for most voters.

During the meeting, Kennedy declared that "Peace and Prosperity" was the 1964 campaign theme. He wanted photo opportunities with black people in poor city neighborhoods and white miners in the mountains. Scammon remarked that this would not get the president more votes; poor people already voted for him. Instead, Scammon wanted the candidate to pose for photos next to policemen, and go to malls in the suburbs. For two hours in the meeting, Kennedy concentrated on the 1960 census and demographics for the 1964 election provided by Scammon.⁸

Robert Kennedy remembered the November 13 meeting differently. He said that they resolved a leadership conflict at the Democratic National Committee. Bobby put the campaign theme of peace and prosperity in personal terms for the president. John Kennedy thought he had not portrayed himself as a person of compassion. The group discussed voter registration and convention issues. Bobby said the group discussed

⁷ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 753-754.

⁸ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 655-657.

delegate strength and welcoming new members to the committee for most of the meeting.⁹

For his part, Norbert Dreiling continued his political career after the 1960 election. He maintained his relationship with Kennedy and also played a leading role in Democratic politics in Kansas in the decades to follow. Dreiling served as Robert Docking's campaign chairman and close advisor in the 1966 run for governor, when Docking made history by defeating an incumbent Republican. Named Chairman of the Kansas Democratic Party, Dreiling ran three successful re-election campaigns for Docking, who served an unprecedented four, two-year terms. According to Mark Bannister, who interviewed Dreiling in 1995, Dreiling "saw his role as the state Democratic Chair as going to roll in the dirt with the campaign opponent."¹⁰ That allowed Docking to take the high road on the campaign trail.

Docking surprised Dreiling with a testimonial dinner at a Hays private club after the successful 1966 governor's race. He characterized his friend as the "architect of victory." Dreiling also continued his interest in national politics, serving as a delegate to three more national conventions and serving as state co-chair for the Johnson presidential campaign in 1964 after serving in that same capacity for Kennedy in 1960.¹¹

Through the years, Dreiling continued to feel a strong connection with Kennedy, both personal and professional. The assassin's bullet that killed Kennedy on November

⁹ Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman, *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections of the Kennedy Years* (London, New York, Toronto: Bantam Press, 1988), 390-393.

¹⁰ Mark Bannister, phone interview with author, May 23, 2017.

¹¹ Gene F. Anderson, "Docking Describes Dreiling As An 'Architect of Victory,'" *The Hays Daily News*, November 22, 1966 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/553834/>

22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, moved Dreiling emotionally. Just days later Dreiling wrote four lengthy guest columns in *The Ellis County Farmer*. Kennedy, president for 1,037 days, died four years and two days after his visit to Hays.¹² Dreiling's wife learned of the president's death when her mother-in-law called her with the news after Donna Jean Dreiling had returned home with her four children from a Christmas bazaar that Friday afternoon. Thanksgiving was less than a week away. "That was the saddest Thanksgiving, after the assassination. What do they say? We lost our innocence," Donna Jean said.¹³

Local and state politicians looked to and revered Dreiling in his later years. They continued to call upon Dreiling for advice. Among them was Hays Democrat Glenn Staab, who said he reveled sitting in Dreiling's law office, listening to campaign stories.¹⁴ Jerry Moran, then a United States Congressman from the First District, honored Dreiling's career with a speech on the House floor on July 19, 2004. Moran, a Plainville Republican, called Dreiling the "father of Democratic politics in the state of Kansas."¹⁵ Dreiling, who continued to work at his law office despite being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, died August 1, 2005, at 80. Bird, who benefited from Dreiling's advice and friendship, remembered: "By the force of his personality and intelligence, he brought the Democratic Party to be a force in Kansas."¹⁶ Chapman Rackaway, former

¹² Herbert S. Parmet, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Dial Press, 1983), 346.

¹³ Randy Gonzales, "Lasting Impression," *The Hays Daily News*, November 21, 2013, Personal Papers of Randy Gonzales.

¹⁴ Glenn Staab, interview with author, June 7, 2017.

¹⁵ Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. Included in the papers was a transcript of Moran's speech.

¹⁶ Phyllis J. Zorn, "Disease Claims life of Democrat," *The Hays Daily News*, August 2, 2005. Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling.

professor of political science at Fort Hays State University, considered Dreiling an icon in Kansas politics: “He was one of the last great retail politicians.”¹⁷

Hays and Ellis County felt the “Kennedy effect.” Kennedy’s visit to Hays as part of his two-day tour of Kansas in 1959 made a meaningful contribution to both local and national politics. Locally, no other successful presidential candidate campaigned in Ellis County since Kennedy. Kennedy energized the Democratic Party in Ellis County and in the state. Nationally, the “Kennedy effect” changed campaign strategy. Kennedy started early, much to the chagrin of his opponents, and a lesson learned. Kennedy did not rely on party leadership to determine the nominee. Instead, Kennedy traveled across the country to compete in primaries and woo delegates in states without primaries. Kennedy’s stop in Hays became part of a national mosaic that, when put together, resulted in his becoming the thirty-fifth president of the United States.

¹⁷ Chapman Rackaway, interview with author, June 1, 2017.

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APPENDIX A
KENNEDY AND DREILING¹



¹ Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. Ellis County Sixth District Chairman Norbert Dreiling with John F. Kennedy at a Democratic fundraiser in Hays, Kansas on November 20, 1959.

APPENDIX B

KENNEDY AND STONES²



² Courtesy of Forsyth Library University Archives – Fort Hays State University. Fort Hays Kansas State College debate coach Harold Stones shakes hands with John F. Kennedy after the Massachusetts senator's news conference at the Memorial Union on November 20, 1959. Stones had written his master's thesis on Kennedy's foreign policy.

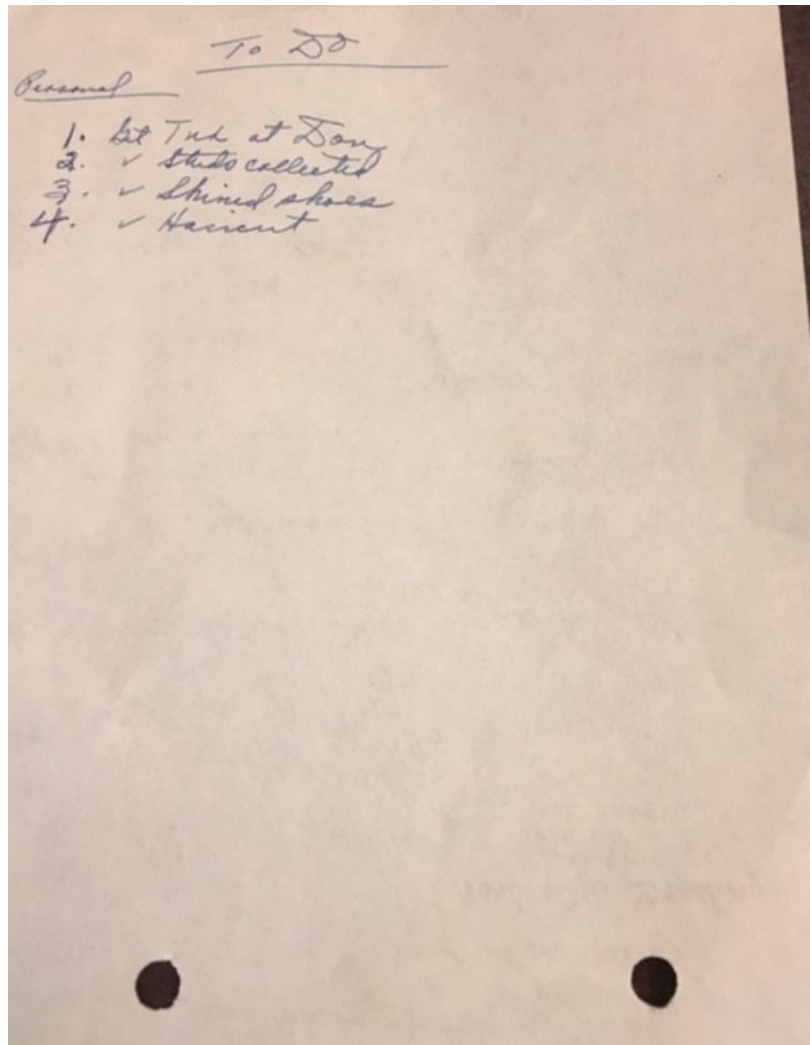
APPENDIX C
KENNEDY AND IVAN³



³ Courtesy of Forsyth Library University Archives – Fort Hays State University. John Ivan, president of Collegiate Young Democrats at Fort Hays Kansas State College, shakes hands with John F. Kennedy at the Memorial Union on November 20, 1959.

APPENDIX D

DREILING'S TO-DO LIST⁴



⁴ Personal Papers of Norbert Dreiling. This is a personal to-do list for Norbert Dreiling for the Democratic fundraiser on November 20, 1959. Presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy was the keynote speaker.

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