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THE JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, THE WEST VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, 1960

The Ohio State University

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THE JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT,
THE WEST VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, 1960

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
William L. Young, A.B., M.A.

* * * *

The Ohio State University
1982

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is based on forty-eight tapes, and their transcriptions, of interviews with persons who were prominent in the 1960 Democratic primary election in West Virginia who worked either for Senator John F. Kennedy or Senator Hubert H. Humphrey or who remained neutral. The interviews were conducted between June, 1964, and February, 1965, and are now part of the collection of the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. Permission was received to use the interviews which had been restricted by their donors.

The purpose of the project was to record the impressions of the campaign from the participants while their memories were still fresh. Since the primary was considered to be of great importance in terms of Catholic-Protestant relationships, every effort was made to get a wide variety of opinions about the primary and its subsequent effect on West Virginia and national politics.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the help and kindness given to him by the Kennedy Library staff in this project. Special acknowledgment goes to Dan H. Fenn, Jr., Director; E. William Johnson, Research Archivist; Joan L. O'Connor, Archivist; and John F. Stewart, Director of Education. For his support and encouragement the writer is indebted to Professor Robert H. Bremmer of The Ohio State University.
CHAPTER I

THE PROJECT

In the spring of 1964 I received a telephone call from Frederick Dutton, a former White House staff member, who was then serving as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. He explained that my name had been given to him as one who might be interested in conducting the oral history project for the proposed John F. Kennedy Library. After I expressed an interest, he explained the general nature of the project and said that when the family of the late President and former staff members met to plan the library, they had included the oral history project which was to be modeled on the other presidential libraries and the long-standing program at Columbia University. At that point, Attorney General Robert Kennedy interrupted to say, "Of course, we must do Wisconsin and West Virginia." Kennedy, according to Dutton, was especially interested in West Virginia because of the concern over religion in that state during the primary.

Dutton said that his secretary, Nanci Hogan, would send me the necessary instructions and information through the mail and that as soon as the spring semester ended I should get in touch with the man who had been the state chairman of the Kennedy forces in West Virginia, Robert P. McDonough of Parkersburg. He would work with me to prepare a list of the persons to be interviewed and supervise my work within the state. It was agreed that my expenses would be covered and that I would be paid an honorarium for my work.
Within a week the instructions arrived and by the time I was ready to start I had digested most of them. Ground rules indicated that I should make a note if any other persons were present at the interview and where it took place. The instructions also advised that it might be useful to relax the subject by serving a drink or two and have one myself. This turned out to be difficult because on many days I interviewed four or five people. In any event, no matter how relaxed the subject was, he or she had a right to correct, edit, change, or exclude from the final edited transcript anything which might have been said unwisely in a too convivial atmosphere. Additions to the taped interview could also be made in writing, and several of the interviewees subsequently added letters or documents which they felt relative to the strong points they had made on tape. The original tapes, unedited and unchanged, were to remain the property of the library and are available to scholars on a restricted basis. Since no one presently knows the shelf life of these recordings, they may have to be rerecorded if they are to be kept permanently.

In early June I reported to McDonough at the office of his printing company in Parkersburg. I soon came to agree with Theodore White's description of him in *The Making of the President* 1960.\(^1\) He was engaging, charming, a great political raconteur and had an encyclopedic knowledge of state politics, section by section, county by county, and in many cases precinct by precinct. Having been active on the edge of state politics for many years he seemed to know everyone in the

Democratic party, everyone of importance in the Republican party, and most of the editors, labor leaders, ethnic leaders, and others who made up the state's political establishment.

He explained that Dutton had told him to select for me a representative list of Kennedy supporters, Humphrey supporters, and others who may not have been active in the 1960 primary but who by their positions were important in political life. This area included labor leaders, editors, reporters, party contributors, ethnic representatives, and party elders not directly involved in the campaign. At my suggestion, at least one minister was added because of the importance of religion as an issue.

The mechanical process by which the library would acquire the final transcript, or manuscript, for the archives was outlined in great detail. The taped interviews were sent to the temporary office of the Oral History Project in the Department of State, where, under Dutton's supervision, they were transcribed and then returned to the interviewee. At this time changes, corrections and additions were made. This transcript was then returned to Dutton and a final copy prepared. Then the persons interviewed were asked to sign a deed or legal release turning over all literary rights to the United States of America. The interviewee could also specify certain restrictions on the document. Most of them chose not to. A few requested that during their lifetime scholars get their permission for use or extensive quotes. One or two released all but selected portions for immediate use but required future permission during their lifetime for restricted sections. About ten neglected this final step and only just recently signed their deeds.
In the case of death with no deed, the library has used its discretion in making the transcripts available and in all cases has permitted this writer access to the documents. In other cases, not affecting the West Virginia project, restrictions specified a number of years after the death of the grantor or limitations in terms of national security.

The interviews were conducted in hotels, motels, private homes, offices and in the case of Senator Jennings Randolph in a community center in Weirton where the senator was speaking that day. They also varied greatly in length from ten to ninety pages. Because of his importance as state chairman, Robert McDonough was interviewed in three separate sessions in his office in Parkersburg. His is the longest, the most thorough, and most incisive of the interviews. Of the original list proposed by McDonough only one, a labor leader, declined to be interviewed. One other, a Humphrey supporter, delayed his interview twice but finally agreed when the full details of the project were explained to him.

Since oral history was an unfamiliar subject to most of those contacted, it was decided that McDonough would write each of them a letter outlining the details of the project and requesting their cooperation. Upon my arrival, I would review the general nature of the project and tell them something of the importance of oral history to the historian. In this connection I generally cited the project of Allan Nevis at Columbia. Once, however, as I was plugging in my equipment and getting ready for the interview, a seasoned court house politician asked, "Now what time" tonight, young man, will this be on the radio?" Since he seemed to be serious, I then repeated McDonough's and Dutton's
description of the project and how it would be used by the proposed memorial library. Most of them seemed flattered by the possibility that their interview might serve as a prime source for future historians. In some cases there was a strong desire to eulogize the late President. I did not discourage this as I felt it was important to preserve a cooperative attitude and that even this was an important part of the record.

All but about five of the interviews were completed during the summer of 1964 in West Virginia. In the fall, just before the election, I interviewed Charles Peters, Jr., at Peace Corps headquarters and Matthew Reese at the Democratic national headquarters in Washington. The few more which remained were completed in January and February, 1965. On February 1, 1965, the project was officially transferred from Dutton's State Department Office to the Archivist of the United States in the National Archives building in Washington. Charles Morrissey, in the office of the Director of Presidential Libraries, supervised my final efforts and received and processed the final tapes. All of these interviews for which the deeds had been signed were then made available to researchers, with the restrictions as noted, when the temporary John F. Kennedy Presidential Library opened at the Federal Records Center in Waltham. With the completion of the library building on Dorchester Road, Columbia Point, Boston, the material found its permanent home.

I later learned that Judge Ralph Pryor had recommended me to McDonough who had in turn recommended me to Dutton. Pryor, a long time personal and political friend, was a Bethany College and Harvard Law
School graduate. He was one of the first politicians in the state to consult with Kennedy before his entrance into the primary was announced. In addition, I was a native, a very important factor at that time as there was a suspicion of outsiders and many felt that the national press had been unfair to the state, especially in its portrayal of poverty during the campaign. I was a Democrat and had made a number of political contacts and knew ahead of time a number of the persons to be interviewed. These contacts had in part been made from an academic base in a private college where there had been a long tradition of bipartisanship involvement in local politics and political education, especially through a recent grant from the Falk Foundation in Practical Politics. In addition, my father had been active in local politics as a school superintendent and, after his retirement, had served as a member of the West Virginia legislature and as a county clerk. All of these factors were helpful to me in this work in gaining the confidence of the persons selected for the interviews. I assured them that everything said would be held in confidence and that the release of their interviews would be controlled completely by the library.

What is proposed here then is an analysis of those interviews two decades after the New Frontier and the taping of the interviews. I have chosen to limit my subject to the interviews and the issues as they appeared at that time, the summer of 1964 through February of 1965. In a few cases I have included informal remarks made to me, before or after the interview, which are not a part of the formal record or transcript. This is done usually to better indicate the role of
the participant or the nature of West Virginia politics at that time and in that part of the state.
CHAPTER II

THE STATE AND THE CAMPAIGNERS

Since the Civil War, West Virginia has been classified as a border state.¹ That description leaves much wanting both to outsiders and natives of the state. When John F. Kennedy and his organization decided to enter the 1960 West Virginia primary, it was because of the overwhelming Protestant nature of the electorate. There were, however, many other sectional and regional, economic, and social issues which surfaced during the campaign. Much was written about the campaign and much was misunderstood. The interviews analyzed here tell much about the campaign but even more about the historic and economic sectionalism within the state. During the campaign the national press uncovered several West Virginians, and these interviews reflect the same internal divisions which exist in almost every state in the union.

With the separation of West Virginia from the Old Dominion in 1863, the political life of the state fell under the control of the state-makers. These were Republicans, pro-Union Democrats, and many former Whigs who were looking for a political home. Slavery was abolished at the insistence of Congress, the state-makers having moved only to gradual emancipation. Other changes reflected the long-standing feud

¹I have consulted the two most recent standard books on state history, Charles H. Ambler and Festus P. Summers, West Virginia the Mountain State (Englewood Cliffs, 1958) and John Alexander Williams, West Virginia - A History (New York, 1976). In addition, I have used my own notes and records from the interviews in 1963 and 1964.
with the tidewater section of the state. The old county court system was replaced by the New England township plan borrowed from neighboring Ohio. The new constitution mandated free public schools, made most public offices elective, and terms of office short. The framers also made plans for the economic development expected to take place since Richmond no longer set economic policy. The state had no official period of Reconstruction, but the Republicans passed test oaths and disenfranchised many Southern supporters who had either fought under the Confederate flag or had given tacit support to disunion while remaining at home. By the decade of the seventies, however, the Democrats were strong enough to demand and write a new constitution and bring this domestic reconstruction to an end. Thus, the new state was dominated during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by those who were unfriendly to or suspicious of the new state and its creators. Too much of the old state of Virginia had been included in the new state to permit the pro-Union state-makers to keep control.

In the late nineteenth century the border state became more Southern than Northern and great internal cleavages developed. At the same time, the new state lacked the investment capital to develop its rich store of coal, sand, gravel, natural gas, oil, timber and other extractive resources. The economic life of the state was dominated not by local investors or even Richmond bankers, but by capitalists from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. Frequently during the late nineteenth century the state's senatorial seats went to outsiders who established residences in the state, bought their membership in the millionaires' club and moved on to Washington.
Thus, political as well as economic life fell under powerful forces from elsewhere.

At the turn of the century, industrialization and gradual urbanization brought the Republican party to power in West Virginia. While Senate seats might no longer be for sale, much of the economic life continued in the tradition of a banana-republic colonial economy. The Progressive movement, before World War I, touched the state only gently in the form of Governor Henry D. Hatfield who tried to make peace in the wars and battles of the coal fields. Like the Hatfield-McCoy feud of an earlier era, these labor struggles often attracted nationwide attention.

With the coming of the stock market crash, the depression, and the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the political life of the state became even more Democratic than it had been Republican. From 1932 to 1960, the year Kennedy entered the state, the Democrats had controlled both houses of the state legislature and only one Republican, Cecil W. Underwood, had been elected governor. It was during Underwood's last few months in office that West Virginia experienced its greatest moment on the national political scene since its birth during the War of the Rebellion.

Because West Virginia was almost a one-party state in the tradition of the South, a brief examination of the state Democratic party is important. A New Deal or liberal faction, led by Matthew M. Neeley, a United States Senator and Governor, continued well into the 1960s. The old Roosevelt coalition was alive and well, drawing its strength principally from the United Mine Workers, the C.I.O., other labor groups
and middle class Democrats. At the same time a state-house group of more conservative Democrats, often speaking with a more southern accent, fought for control of the fifty-five county machines and regarded the one-term governor's office as an inherited right. They were usually successful in "appointing" from within their group the Democratic gubernatorial nominee as an heir apparent. This office they had lost to the Republicans in 1956 at the time of the second Eisenhower victory and as a result of internal scandals in their own party.

To these factors of political and economic colonialism and party factionalism, we must add geographic and economic sectionalism and isolation. Colonial Virginia never solved the problem of transportation to and within its western section and the new state inherited this problem with many others. Neither the rivers nor the railroads and early highways provided a system binding the state together. Travel within the state would remain difficult until the coming of the modern interstate highway system. Within the state, the population related economically, socially, and culturally, not with each other, but to Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati, Roanoke, Richmond and Washington. At least five well defined sections with overlapping borders can be distinguished and are important in understanding the politics of the primary campaign of 1960.

A geographic legacy of colonial boundary disputes for Virginia and then the new state, the Northern Panhandle with Ohio to the west and Pennsylvania to the east was the center of the state-making movement of 1861-1963. These four counties (Hancock, Brooke, Ohio and Marshall) represented the most unionized, most industrial and most Catholic part
of the state. Wheeling, the regional capital, had been an early iron and steel center and had been settled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Virginia pioneers, forty-niners from Germany, the Irish and southern Europeans. Economically, the panhandle relied on steel, coke, glass, pottery, chemicals and electricity. It differed politically from the rest of the state in that it might send an occasional Republican to the House of Representatives, usually in an off-year election. The area was served by two television stations, so important to the campaigning of the 1960s, two colleges, and a symphony orchestra in Wheeling. It related more to Pittsburgh and Cleveland than to the part of the state south of the Mason-Dixon line. It shared Pittsburgh's mixed population and had a considerable ethnic vote. Republicans here, as well as in other sections, were more likely to lean towards the old Taft wing of the party than to Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism.

A quick review of the Kennedy-Humphrey activists, and the forty-eight persons interviewed for this project, illustrates some of these sectional diversities. A few were elder statesmen, others were active members of the party establishment. Some were lesser officials (state, county and municipal officers) while others were novices getting their first taste of politics through the New Frontier. Of this later group, many would continue upward through state and national politics; for others it would be a one-time shot at politics.²

²Those interviewed in the oral history project are described in more detail in the interview of Robert P. McDonough taped on July 3, 1965 in Parkersburg, W. Va.
Many of these political types are represented in the Northern Panhandle campaign. In West Virginia, as in many other states, the sheriff is at the center of the county courthouse faction. Dick Wright, who was later to become sheriff of Hancock County was thus a natural choice for co-chairman of the Hancock's Kennedy forces and was elected as an alternate to the party convention in Los Angeles. His territory included Weirton, the home of Weirton Steel, at that time the state's largest manufacturing plant. From neighboring Wellsburg in Brooke County, Ralph Pryor worked in a state-wide capacity. Pryor, an active Mason married to a Roman Catholic, first became attracted to the Kennedys while a student at Harvard Law School in the late 1940s. John Chernenko, a steel mill security officer and later a federal marshal, worked closely with Pryor at the district and precinct level. McDonough, the state chairman, overcame objections to Chernenko's presumed Catholicism by assuring objectors that Chernenko was not a Catholic but an active Methodist. Mike Gretchen worked closely with these two in the county. Gretchen, a United Mine Workers official whose office was in neighboring Bellaire, Ohio, lived in Windsor Heights, a nearby mining town or "camp" as it is often called in the coal fields.

In the Wheeling-Moundsville area (Ohio and Marshall counties), Edward Culley served as co-chairman of the Citizens for Kennedy organization. He helped manage a plumbing and heating business and was a Roman Catholic. Culley had not been active in politics previously and would continue in the family business after the campaign. Another Catholic, John H. Kamlowsky, served as the other co-chairman with Culley. Kamlowsky, a young attorney, later became the federal bankruptcy judge for that
district. Another young Catholic attorney, Arch W. Riley, represented a family which had long been active in both the law and politics in the county and Panhandle. The other important sectional Democrat in this area, Alfred Chapman, managed the Marx Toy Company in Glendale. Aside from this campaign, he devoted his time to behind-the-scenes activities and took great pride in the number of the party's national conventions which he had attended.

The mid-Ohio Valley area, extending from New Martinsville to Point Pleasant, is more rural, more picturesque, and less industrial than the Panhandle. Parkersburg, with Marietta, Ohio, across the Ohio river, is the major urban area. As in the Northern Panhandle, the Republican party is a strong minority force, but the Democrats usually win. William "Pete" Thaw, was the Democratic mayor of Sistersville, an old river town which had known an oil boom in the late nineteenth century. Parkersburg itself was the home of two of the state-wide Democratic leaders, McDonough already mentioned and William L. Jacobs, a young attorney who served as state co-chairman of the Humphrey forces. Those managing the local Kennedy campaign in Wood and adjacent counties included James F. Haught, a former member of the state legislature and unsuccessful candidate for sheriff in 1960, and William Bruce Hoff, a senior member of the local legal community. William Richardson, a delegate to the 1956 Democratic convention in New York, served as the county chairman. His interest in Kennedy dated to the vice-presidential movement for the senator at that convention. The Reverend Harly Bailey, a Baptist and the only politically active clergyman to be interviewed, also lived in Parkersburg.
Further south, Huntington (Cabell County), named for the California railroad builder, occupies the broad eastern bank of the Ohio where the river makes its sharp turn from south to west. A relatively new city, it was built as a railroad center to serve the coal fields to the east. Its economy also draws on metallurgical manufacturing, glass and the service industries and wholesalers who supply the coal fields. The metropolitan area includes Kenova (named for the three states meeting there) and the adjacent small towns of Southeastern Ohio. The atmosphere is partly middle western and partly southern with close ties to Cincinnati and Louisville. The Kennedy forces here relied on three local political amateurs, Bob Myers, David Fox, and Andy Houvouras. Myers was a Presbyterian, Fox a Jew, and Houvouras a Roman Catholic. Huntington also furnished Matthew W. Reese who served as McDonough's aide with the title of Executive Director of the West Virginians for Kennedy. His portly William-Howard-Taft figure belied a man of abundant energy, an insurance executive who later worked for the Democratic National Committee and then managed his own highly successful political consulting firm in Washington.

Fifty miles to the east of Huntington is Charleston (Kanawha County), the state capital and perhaps the most complex and heterogeneous section of the state. Even if Charleston were not the political center of the state, it would be important as a major chemical, industrial and electrical center. DuPont and Union Carbide draw coal and other natural resources from the immediate south for their plants stretching along the Kanawha to the Ohio River at Point Pleasant. These coal fields, which include Beckley, Bluefield, Welch, Logan and Williamson, provide much of
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the state's noted mineral wealth as well as the popular image of a state filled with contentious coal miners and fundamentalist hillbillies. This area, Republican until 1932 and consistently Democratic since then, was considered to be the most important section of the state by both the Kennedys and the national media in 1960. From Charleston, the Alsops, Restons and others could make a one-day swing through the coal fields and by dinner time return to the hospitality of the Charleston Press Club after having viewed some of the most depressed and depressing industrial landscape of Appalachia. Methodist- and Baptist-inspired restrictions on liquor were ignored in the city's private clubs and thus the Press Club quickly became general headquarters for the press, the campaigners, and the political buffs.

The persons interviewed in Charleston fall into two groups: those who, because of their positions, had a state-wide impact on the campaign and those who were important in the local or regional campaign. The first group includes W. W. Barron, governor during the Kennedy presidency, and Hulett C. Smith, active in the party and governor from 1964 to 1968. Another strong personality was William L. Lonesome, a lawyer and the recognized dean of the black community in the state. Miles Stanley also had extensive contacts as the president of the state C.I.O.-A.F. of L. W. E. (Ned) Chilton exerted considerable influence as the Ivy League (Princeton) owner and publisher of the Charleston Gazette, the most widely-read paper in the state. While Chilton supported Adlai Stevenson, his editor, Harry G. Hoffman, was a staunch Kennedy partisan. The Gazette itself generally assumed a neutral position during the primary. On the other side, John E. Amos, who had held a number of
powerful positions in both houses of the West Virginia legislature, was a Humphrey supporter who hoped that the nomination might go eventually to Senator Lyndon B. Johnson. Finally, Charles M. Love, Jr., a highly respected corporate attorney who had long been active in party politics, gave both age and dignity to a campaign in which many younger people were active at the local level. Mrs. Esther Peters, a woman of political savvy and social savoir faire, helped with the women's campaign by arranging teas and escorting Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy to the various events in the Charleston area. Her son, Charles G. Peters, Jr., carried many of the local campaign responsibilities and later became a Peace Corps administrator and still later editor of the Washington Monthly.

A line drawn from Charleston south to Bluefield and from there northwest to Huntington and then back to Charleston would form a triangle which includes most of the rich coal fields in the land "south of the Kanawha." While rich in resources, this area had recently gone through the bust cycle of the boom-and-bust economy of the coal fields. Earlier Mother Jones had fought here side by side with the miners in some of the most bitter wars in modern industrial history. Since World War II coal production had declined, but because of mechanization the number of employed miners had fallen even more dramatically. Out migration to the Middle West had followed, and partly because of this loss West Virginia in the post-war period would see its congressional delegation reduced from six to four. As the tax base declined, so did the schools and other public services. At the same time, the rugged mountain geography had always made the construction and maintenance of highways
difficult. This was the image of West Virginia which went out to the nation in 1960 as it had in the earlier days of moonshining and feuding. There were fewer Republican and more Democratic voters in this section than in any other part of the state, and here the Kennedys would concentrate much of their campaign.

In the coal triangle, the Kennedy and Humphrey partisans attracted a wide variety of professional and amateur politicians. The recognized leader of the Kennedy forces was Sidney L. Christie, an attorney and banker from Welch (McDowell County) who was later appointed to the much prized federal judgeship for the Southern District. In Bluefield, the southernmost city in the state with its enormous rail facilities, Laurence Tierney directed the Kennedy campaign. Tierney, an affable and affluent "Irishman," derived his wealth from mining and coal-land acquisition. Aided by his socially prominent wife and children, he entertained the Kennedy entourage and added prestige to the Kennedy campaign.

In the more remote areas and closer to the voters in Welch, Samuel Solins managed local affairs for Kennedy. He owned and managed a debt-collecting service, which might seem to be an unlikely base for political influence, but he was famous and appreciated for getting nationally-prominent speakers for patriotic events and sponsoring cocktail parties when they spoke. Solins was assisted by Stuart Calhoun, the black Assistant County Prosecutor and a force within his racial community.

In nearby Logan (Logan County), whose reputation at one time matched "Bloody Harlan" in Kentucky, Claude Ellis, Thomas Godby, and Raymond Chafin managed the Kennedy campaign. All three had been active in
court house politics, vying for such political plums as sheriff, assessor, county clerk, and county commissioner. George Titler of Beckley (Raleigh County), president of District 29 of the United Mine Workers, added a note of objectivity in his interview since his union was officially neutral in the campaign. Raymond DePaulo, another resident of Beckley and a Roman Catholic in an otherwise strongly Protestant area, worked actively for Kennedy and later joined the New Frontier in the Department of Commerce in Washington. Carl Vickers of Fayetteville, an attorney from a large family of attorneys, represented the Kennedy interests in Fayette County. Marshall G. West of Pineville (Wyoming County) was co-chairman with William Jacobs, of the Humphrey forces. He was a member of the lower house of the legislature in 1960 and was active in both the coal and natural gas industries.

Moving north and east from the coal triangle leads to the more regular and more scenic area of the Monongahela National Forest. Here the mountains are not jumbled but resemble the regular ridges and valleys of Central Pennsylvania. The area is rich in timber, coal, gas, and some good farming and grazing land. In Elkins (Randolph County), Robert B. Hedrick, a businessman dealing in cattle and other interests, ran the Kennedy campaign. Elkins is also the home of Senator Jennings Randolph, now the sole survivor of the New Deal in the Senate. He was elected to the House in 1932 and with one or two gaps, "as been in Washington ever since. As both of the candidates were Randolph's senatorial colleagues, he maintained a position of neutrality throughout the campaign.
North of Elkins, the Monongahela River and U.S. Route 19, now replaced by Interstate 79, connect a diverse metropolitan area consisting of Morgantown, Fairmont, and Clarksburg. The economy is that of steel, coal, natural gas, sand, and gravel, with some marginal farming. As in the Northern Panhandle, the population is mixed with Clarksburg having an annual Italian festival. At one time the Baltimore and Ohio railroad attracted immigrant workers and tied the economy of this north-central section of the state with the city and the state for which it was named. Because it is the home of the land grant university, the political life of Morgantown tends to have a special flavor and tilts a bit more in the direction of issues and causes than personalities.

In Morgantown (Monongalia County) Walter Hart, editor of the Dominion News and considered something of an old fashioned curmudgeon newspaperman by his friends, led the Kennedy forces with the support of his paper. Anne Hearst, working out of the family jewelry store, carried much of the Kennedy campaign load at the precinct and county levels. In nearby Fairmont (Marion County) James A. Manchin, who took great pride in the fact that he had been born in a tent when his family had been thrown out of their company house during a strike, worked for Kennedy with the miners and the party faithful. He was later appointed to the Farmers Home Administration and is currently the Secretary of State in West Virginia. Further south in Clarksburg (Harrison County) W. Walter Neely supported both Kennedy and the successful gubernatorial candidate, W. W. Barron. Victor J. Gabriel, another Kennedy aide, was the first man of Italian descent and of the Catholic faith to be elected vice chairman of the Harrison County Democratic Executive Committee.
Benjamin B. Stout, active in the local and National Associations of County Officials, served as the chairman of the executive committee and supported Kennedy.

The Eastern Panhandle, with its two "lost" counties of Berkeley and Jefferson, completes the sectional tour of the state. Residents of these counties had resented being forced to be a part of the new state in 1863. They had been included against their will because of their military and transportation importance. The Yankees, and the Lincoln administration, did not wish the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio tracks to remain in unfriendly hands. Southern, or Virginian in outlook, the counties are at the head of the great Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with an economy based on orchards, grain, and light manufacturing; in more recent years they have become the outer rim of suburban Washington, D.C. Failing in 1866 to win in court a return to the Old Dominion, Berkeley and Jefferson Counties are, reluctantly, West Virginian.

Dr. Frank H. Fischer, an optometrist in Martinsburg (Berkeley County), was drawn into politics by his professional contacts and as state president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. Clarence B. Martin, a Roman Catholic serving in the State Senate, reflected the conservative nature of the Democrats of the area but, from his carefully restored, Williamsburg-style law office, worked actively in the primary for the Kennedy cause.

As the campaign progressed, both candidates were sensitive to the subtle regional interests within the state. At the same time, they talked daily to the state-wide and ultimately the national interests of 1960.
CHAPTER III

THE ISSUES:

RELIGION, THE NORTHERN COUNTIES

Today a visitor to the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston first sees a brief orientation film about the President and his family before moving on to the main exhibit halls. With reference to the Kennedy-Humphrey primary, the visitor is told that West Virginia in 1960 was a "fundamentalist Protestant state." The language is a bit overstated, but it was with this in mind that the state was chosen by the Kennedys to see if the ghost of Alfred E. Smith and the election of 1928 could be put to rest in both the party and the country.

Three and four years after the campaign during these interviews opinions, as might be expected, varied widely about the importance of the church-state issue. Some felt it very important and that Kennedy had triumphed over a considerable amount of prejudice. Others resented the initial implications and inferences that West Virginians were more prejudiced than other citizens of the republic. This attitude was accompanied by the feeling that the political logic had been that of "Have you stopped beating your wife yet?" If you did not vote for Kennedy it was because he was a Catholic and not, perhaps, because you disliked him or his platform for other reasons or simply found Hubert Humphrey a more attractive candidate. Many of those interviewed frequently seemed to contradict themselves by saying that there was little
prejudice in the state and then telling several stories which indicated varying degrees of distaste for Catholics and Catholicism. Senator Robert Byrd's youthful membership in the Ku Klux Klan and his later adult repentance seemed to reflect this conflict and later reconciliation in many minds. There were significant variations on the religious issue between north and south and subtle difference within the subsections: the Panhandle, the Ohio Valley, the Monongahela Valley, and the coal triangle.

Opinion in the Northern Panhandle indicated a sensitivity to both the issue and the large number of Catholics in the area. Here, as in other sections, a conscious effort was made to underplay Kennedy's religion in the campaign. Judge Ralph Pryor, in supervising the Kennedy organizations, reflected that:

We tried to see that the chairman in each county was a Protestant to head up the campaign. We thought this would be particularly effective in our area because the Catholic population in the upper four counties is roughly about 33 percent. We felt that they would have a natural affinity or a natural desire to support the president if his impact on them was acceptable. And we wanted to do everything possible to show that this was not a religious fight but a political fight. We thought if we could have Protestants and Masons in the forefront, that this would contribute greatly to doing that type of a job.1

When asked about the role of the Catholic hierarchy in the campaign, Pryor continued:

The church hierarchy was contacted directly, I think, only in Ohio County as far as our area was concerned. And Bishop (John J.) Swint at that time was rather cold, distant, and hostile to the Kennedy candidacy, mainly because of his staunch Republican beliefs.2

1Interview, Judge Ralph Pryor, July 6, 1964, p. 6.
2Ibid., p. 6.
Wheeling, it should be noted, had been the diocesan seat for the Bishop of Wheeling since the mid-nineteenth century. The area included most of West Virginia and a few adjoining western Maryland and southwestern Virginia counties. The title was later changed to the Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to recognize the growing importance of the church in the capital and the southern counties of the state.

In answering the questions about the Church, Pryor also spoke to the question of whether or not Catholic Republicans had changed their registration to Democratic in order to vote for their co-religionist in the primary.

There was no substantial change in the registration in Brooke or Hancock County. There was a reasonably substantial increase in Democratic registration in Ohio County, which, we believe, in part was a desire of Republicans to switch to support the senator.3

To the north in Weirton, Dick Wright, Kennedy partisan and later Sheriff Wright, dismissed the question of religion as an issue in his county with "Never heard it mentioned here."4 While many of the other interviews contradicted this rather firm opinion, it should be noted that his was a county with a fairly large Catholic population, many of whom were of the newer immigration coming, until the eve of World War I, to work in the town's new steel mill. From his coal camp home in Windsor Heights, the United Mine Workers' Mike Gretchen saw the issue in much the same way:

I don't think that religion affected the campaign one way or the other, but, of course, the majority of the

3Ibid., p. 7.

4Interview, Dick Wright, February 8, 1964, p. 2.
Catholic people in this area were glad to see a man like Kennedy running for the presidency. But there were people in this area who were more or less against Catholics but they were out 100 percent for Kennedy. It seemed like everybody was out for him because Senator Kennedy impressed them that he was a good man and would make a good president, and religion, to my opinion, did not enter into the campaign.\(^5\)

He added that he knew of no case where any priest had taken part in the campaign, and noted: "It seemed to me that in this area they were just all out for Kennedy and it didn't make any difference and religion was never brought out."\(^6\) John Chernenko, later the federal marshall, supported these conclusions in part. While saying that "Religion wasn't an issue in our Brooke County,"\(^7\) he did report a quieter campaign in which "Some of the whispering politicians would say that Senator Kennedy was too young, that we weren't ready for a Catholic in the White House, and he would make a good Vice President."\(^8\)

In Wheeling, with its Bishop and older Catholic population, the story was more varied. Arch W. Riley, member of both an old Catholic and old political family, felt that if Kennedy were nominated his religion would become the central issue in the fall campaign because "the Republicans would be unable to defend their administration successfully, and that it would become a personal attack on Senator Kennedy's religion. This was what made me afraid."\(^9\) His reservations, however strong,

\(^5\) Interview, Michael G. Gretchen, February 23, 1965, p. 5.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 5.
\(^7\) Interview, John Chernenko, September 8, 1964, p. 4.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 4.
tended to disappear as the primary progressed and he told of a conversation with Robert Kennedy later:

He asked me what I thought would happen, and I told him that I thought Senator Kennedy would win hands down. He asked me about the religious issue, and I told him that my grandfather, who was former Attorney General of West Virginia, and Senator John E. Kenna were both Roman Catholics and were both running statewide in 1892. They campaigned on horseback, and were referred to in southern West Virginia and in the mountains as the two "Romanists." And they both won very easily. West Virginians are not that type of person. They judge a man on his individual merit. I think Senator Kennedy knew this. I think he felt that, even though the pros would look at only the existence of the 5 percent Catholic population, he was dealing with people that took a man as he was and not as he went to church, or as he went to school, or things like that.10

Riley added that not only had he been involved in the Kennedy campaign but that he and his father were the legal counselors for the Catholic church in West Virginia and reaffirmed the belief that "Archbishop Swint had a great dislike for politicians but he was an avowed Republican."11 He remembered the activity of the Protestant churches against Kennedy as being almost nonexistent. He did report that one Protestant minister, probably a Lutheran but he could not be sure, preached against Kennedy and his religion:

I forget which church it was. But the reaction by the people in the church was such that the minister almost lost his job over it. The first thing was that almost his entire membership was Republican anyway, but still they resented this. I think the man was just an individual who was carried away on his feelings on the subject.12

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10 Ibid., p. 9-10.
11 Ibid., p. 19.
12 Ibid., p. 20.
The religious issue affected John M. Kamlowsky, later a federal prosecutor and judge, in a much more personal way. As he tells the story:

I was an assistant prosecuting attorney at the time, the prosecuting attorney was up for re-election, and he happened to be Catholic but anti-Kennedy. The reason that he was anti-Kennedy was that he felt that Kennedy would repeat the 1928 election. He thought that Kennedy would take the Democratic ticket down with him. I was advised on more than one occasion that either I was to give up my interest in Senator Kennedy's candidacy or resign from the prosecuting attorney's office. Some of my more influential friends heard of this and advised the prosecuting attorney that if he felt that he had to relieve me of my position as an assistant prosecutor, they felt that they had to work against him as prosecuting attorney and he would not win re-election. Then an amazing thing happened. Approximately two days before the election, the prosecutor advised me that he thought Kennedy had a chance. He thought that Kennedy was definitely an asset, and he was most happy that Kennedy was on the ticket. I think he was typical of the (if you might call him) professional politician in the state of West Virginia.\textsuperscript{13}

Kamlowsky went on to explain the nature of Protestant-Catholic relations in his home town, delicate at times because

We have really no dividing lines in this city, and most friendships are regardless of religion. So no one really was in a position to state anything that would be anti-Catholic because obviously, he would lose many of his friends. I think many of the Catholics were bending over backwards, and there were many Catholics that did not wish Senator Kennedy to be elected because they felt that with a Catholic president in the White House they, in turn, would suffer by any mistakes that he would make, and the mistakes would be blamed on Catholics in general. You had a reaction also which was counter to the other reaction.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}Interview, John H. Kamlowsky, February 9, 1965, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 16.
State and church relations came up in the different context of higher education when Kennedy visited two colleges in the area: Bethany, a private school associated with the Disciples of Christ, and West Liberty State College. As Kamlowsky told the story,

I met the senator at the McClure Hotel. There was an itinerary prepared. We visited various plants in the area. We also visited West Liberty State Teachers College which is approximately ten miles from Wheeling, and also Bethany College which is approximately fifteen miles from Wheeling. As I recall, Bethany had called a special convocation, and the senator was to speak to the students. I think that the people with Kennedy were very much concerned about his visit to Bethany since it is a Protestant college. They were very much interested in the response that he would receive. I recall that the senator made a speech, and it was evident from the reception that he received from the students that they had accepted him and were well impressed. Certainly, it was not an audience that was overly receptive, but at the conclusion of his speech it was obvious that the senator had made some points. I think that if an election had been held right then and there, the senator would have had the majority of the student body with him. There was no question of that.

And then after Bethany College, we went to West Liberty State Teachers College. The president of West Liberty at this time was a Dr. Paul Elbin. Elbin had been approached about possibly having a convocation, but since West Liberty is a state school and receives funds from the state of West Virginia, he did not believe that the school should indulge in partisan politics. So the reception for the students of West Liberty was held in the open, and the entire student body turned out as did Dr. Elbin. He, of course, did shake the senator's hand. As I recall, the senator possibly stood either in an open convertible or platform and gave a short five-minute speech and then spent approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes shaking hands and answering questions with various students. After than, we returned to the hotel for the reception that evening.15

What Kamlowsky did not know at that time was that Kennedy's invitation to Bethany, extended by a young instructor in the History and

15 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
Political Science department, had caused a minor tempest in the academic teapot. The President, Perry Epler Gresham, was upset, not because he was anti-Catholic but because he feared a hostile reaction on the part of one or two of his more theologically conservative trustees. Gresham handled the problem by having the invitation to Kennedy re-extended by former Governor C. William O'Neil of Ohio who, having lost the election of 1958, was delivering a series of political lectures at the college while waiting to run for the Ohio Supreme Court in 1960. Since O'Neil was a Republican and a Protestant, and had been a Governor, it would be difficult for any trustee to object to such a bi-partisan and ecumenical invitation. The religious issue was raised at Bethany during Kennedy's address, not by a student, faculty member, or trustee, but by an outsider. Edward Culley, co-chairman of the Ohio County Citizens for Kennedy, told this version of the incident in his interview.

He was invited to address the college in conjunction with a series on political science that they had inaugurated at the college. However, when Senator Kennedy went up there to give his talk, he had a bus-load of national news media people following him. So everything he said was being plastered in all the newspapers and magazines and also over TV news throughout the country. I don't recall the general text of his speech now, but after his talk was over, he opened the meeting to questions. At that particular time his Catholicity was a very sore point, and it was a sore point in the state of West Virginia. But this was being brought up more and more frequently now, as to whether or not a Catholic should run, what his attitudes were as far as birth control, and several other items, and just how close was he to the Pope.

Well, there was on questioner at Bethany who—we found out after several questions had been asked—was not a student of Bethany, was in no way connected with Bethany College. As a matter of fact, he was following Senator Kennedy around the country, and he had come from the state of Wisconsin. So he attended this meeting at
Bethany and tried to embarrass the senator with the types of questions that he would ask—one being what was the senator's attitude as far as birth control was concerned. The senator answered, I believe at that time, that his moral beliefs were his own personal property and had nothing to do whatsoever, as far as he was concerned, in carrying out the office of the Presidency.16

Culley added that generally in Ohio County he found few formal and public objections to the senator's religion. Then he noted that he thought that there were quite a number of Catholics who "didn't like the idea of the senator running." When questioned about this, he explained:

Well, for the simple reason that the Catholics were, and still are, a minority group. I believe that there were some of them that didn't like the spotlight brought to bear that Kennedy was a Catholic and was running as a Catholic, and so forth—and if they were a Catholic they were automatically for Kennedy. And they just didn't want to be associated with him. I think we received more cooperation from non-Catholics than we did from Catholics.17

Culley supported the general feeling that the Catholic clergy and Bishop Swint stayed completely out of the campaign but he did close his comments on the religious issue by telling of a personal encounter in an all night restaurant which reflects some of the 1928-type thinking which the Kennedys feared.

A group of us were returning from a meeting in Clarksburg during the early part of the primary. There were about eight of us involved, and we stopped in a place north of New Martinsville to get a cup of coffee. It was about 12:30 at night. So as we were sitting around the table ordering, the young waitress brought our coffee over. And one of the men in our group told the

17 Ibid., p. 8.
18 Ibid., p. 9.
waitress, "Well, young lady, when you vote in the primary, I want you to vote for Senator Kennedy." And this girl said, "Oh, I can't vote for him!" And he said, "Why can't you?" And she said, "Because he's a Catholic." And he said, "Why can't you vote for a Catholic?" And she said, "We can't vote for a Catholic to be president of the United States; he's not even a Christian." So we thought that was quite amusing. One of the members of our group said, "Well, I am a Presbyterian myself and I would vote for him, and I don't understand you saying that he isn't even a Christian--because the Catholic religion is based on Christianity, and I don't see where you have any of . . ." "Well," she said, "that's all right," she said, "because if he were elected president of the United States, the Pope would be running everything. We just couldn't vote for him. Nobody in my family could possibly vote for Senator Kennedy. We couldn't vote for any Catholic."¹⁹

Another view of the candidate's religion was noted by the convention candidate, Alfred Chapman of Wheeling. His interest in Kennedy was first kindled at the 1956 convention where he remembered eighty percent of the delegates were Protestant. If Kennedy, he reasoned, came close to getting the vice presidential nomination at that meeting from that many Protestants, his religion would be no problem in West Virginia. As the manager of the Marx toy factory in Glendale, he manufactured twenty-five thousand statues of Senator Kennedy at his own expense and had them distributed throughout the tri-state area of West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. This and his widespread activity for the candidate resulted, he recalled, in some bitter and vindictive personal attacks. His enemies charged that he was a Catholic, "and Catholics didn't have a chance; that I ought to have been ashamed of

¹⁹Ibid., p. 10.
myself for pushing a Catholic for a high office of President. To me
religion didn't designate anything because the Pilgrims came here from
Europe, from England, to get away from religious persecution."20

At the same time, as Chapman notes, Mrs. Chapman received a number
of anonymous telephone calls:

The wife had received telephone calls nearly every day
in the week for the whole entire year of 1959 and 1960.
Even after I came back from the Convention, I was
attacked very brutally. She would receive telephone
calls telling her to look out the window, that two men
in their white coats were coming down to get me with a
strait jacket. She said, "What are you talking about?"
"Well," he says, "he's a nut. He's an idiot. He belongs
in a nut house because he's supporting Jack Kennedy."21

He also described anti-Catholic mail which he received.

On many occasions I have received literature anti-
Catholic. This letter was mailed to me on August 10,
1960, from Moundsville, West Virginia. We have an idea
who sent this, but we couldn't pinpoint it.

One is "Maria Monk" (anti-Catholic). "Abraham Lincoln
Assassination Announced Twelve Hours Before It Took
Place." "Popery, the Devil Masterpiece: It is Anti-
Christ and Paganism, the Catholic Religion."22

In spite of the vituperative calls and literature, Chapman reported
that the members of his own church, the old and fashionable Fourth Street
Methodist, showed him nothing but kindness during the campaign. He
served the church as a steward and board member and later displayed
signs on some of the members' cars which identified themselves as
Methodists for Kennedy.

21 Ibid., p. 15.
22 Interview with William P. Thaw, July 31, 1964, pp. 4-5.
Further south in the more rural Ohio Valley the Democratic Mayor Pete Thaw of Sistersville reported much concern over the religious issue. A Mason himself, Thaw observed that

We had a very bad situation here where, I would say, those people who were strong church people of the Protestant faith were very opposed to the president's candidacy on a religious basis. And I ran into a great deal of religious bigotry.²²

He continued:

The old, old story, you know; the Pope's going to run the White House--this, that, and the other. I am a member of the Masonic Lodge and I am a Shriner. I had a member of the Masonic Lodge come to me and ask me how I could support Kennedy and be a good Mason. Now, that's how bad it got.²³

He did add a qualification:

I think the more fundamental the religion, the more vigorous the opposition. Of course, I still think that after the votes had been counted here in the primary--I really believe, in fact, not only in the primary but in the general--I think in the final analysis those people who were using religion against Kennedy were against him anyway.²⁴

The Mayor noted that in the November election, "I don't think that the Catholics as a group were either for or against him. I think--I bet that the Catholic vote broke pretty close to the party line."²⁵

In the mid Ohio Valley, Parkersburg furnished both the Kennedy state chairman, Robert P. McDonough, and one of the Humphrey co-chairmen,

²²Interview with William P. Thaw, July 31, 1964, pp. 4-5.
²³Ibid., p. 5.
²⁴Ibid., p. 5.
²⁵Ibid., p. 10.
William L. Jacobs. While McDonough's and Jacobs' interviews will be considered in the state-wide framework later, it is important to note here their comments on the local scene. Jacobs felt that while the Kennedys may have overused the church issue, the Catholic question was partly responsible for Richard M. Nixon's victory in Wood County in November. He also felt that locally many Democratic Catholics became active participants in politics and campaigned for the first time in their lives. "I believe that they were motivated by seeing a prospect of a Catholic in the White House for the first time." 26 McDonough summarized his feelings about religion as a local issue when he said, comparing the primary with the general election, "I still don't think the religious issue had much bearing one way or another in the primary, because it was agitated not only locally but nationally." 27

In Wood County, James F. Haught, the successful primary but unsuccessful general election candidate for sheriff, saw it differently. He stated that it was often difficult during the campaign

... to get local political figures to identify themselves or to get on the Kennedy platform. They backed off. Again, it was not the man or the things he believed in, but the being afraid of being identified with the religious question in West Virginia because it was the big thing that I felt and evidently he felt had to be tested here in West Virginia. 28

Haught felt that his own campaign was harmed by his association with Kennedy and he explained that

Wood County has many churches. It is the State headquarters for some of the churches which were identified

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26 Interview with William L. Jacobs, July 6, 1964, p. 3.
27 Interview with Robert P. McDonough, December 5-6, 1964, p. 20.
28 Interview with James F. Haught, July 13, 1964, p. 4.
as being opposed to Senator Kennedy because of his religion. So I knew there would be a reaction in my county to anyone who was willing to step forward and support this man with all this controversy going on.

Locally the anti-Catholic campaigning had

... the elements of a secretive hush-hush campaign which was very well-directed but it was quite open in some respects. I recall frankly, the Elders and the officials in the Church of Christ and that is the State headquarters--they identified themselves in the paper, ran a large ad--a half page ad--on several occasions denouncing Senator Kennedy, and I guess one would say that this was quite openly done.

Haught's final story told of a lady who had been drinking quite a bit and told the candidate for sheriff that she would not vote for him if he were supporting Kennedy. The reason: She feared that the Catholics, if elected, would have all of the women's heads shaved.

William Richardson, the Wood County Chairman of the Kennedy campaign, found that opposition to the candidate's religion often went hand in hand with other objections. "There were some people who thought he had not had enough legislative experience--that he was sort of a playboy and had no experience. But I would say primarily in West Virginia, Wood County, on account of he was a Catholic." This feeling, he felt, "Was whipped up among some of the Baptists in Wood County, Methodists, and members of the Church of Christ."

29 Ibid., p. 6.
30 Ibid., p. 8.
31 Ibid., p. 9.
32 Interview with William Richardson, July 10, 1964, p. 5.
33 Ibid., p. 6.
Richardson, a Baptist and a Mason, said that several prominent people called him and told him to get out of the campaign or "I wouldn't get any law business and they would do everything they could to hurt my law business."\(^{34}\) As with the other campaigners, his group made every attempt to get a Protestant minister to give the invocation at political rallies. Richardson indicated some difficulty in obtaining someone but said that the Episcopalian rector, Reverend Callahan, and Harley Bailey, a Baptist, would always cooperate. He also told of receiving anti-Catholic hate mail letters from all over the country. Usually it contained the old and often ancient attacks on the church and papal doctrines. Even his Elks club provided no sanctuary from these attacks as he would hang up his overcoat at the club to have a meal and return to find the pockets stuffed with anti-Catholic and anti-Kennedy materials. A few people reproached him in person but most sent their objections anonymously. On the other hand he noted that many of the local volunteers were not Catholics. "They came from all walks of life. They were interested in him. They were not Catholics, particularly; they were just local people who came from all economic structures."\(^{35}\)

Perhaps the most virulent attack on any Wood County Kennedy campaigner, or any West Virginian in the campaign, was reported by lawyer William Bruce Hoff. His name was listed prominently among those supporting Kennedy and he gave, at his own expense, an Ox Roast at which Kennedy spoke. This brought a letter from G. M. Feamaster of nearby

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 16.
Alderson, in which the writer revived almost every prejudice and objection about the Roman Church since Martin Luther. The candidate, to begin with, was the scion of a liquor-making Roman Catholic. He had no managerial experience and he asked Richardson, "What precisely is his background? Ask yourself these and hordes of kindred questions and then, I verily believe, you will withdraw your fine old Presbyterian name from this Papish boy's list in this fine state." 36

The attack mounted as Feamaster continued:

What could you, a man of sound judgment,— I had always felt when I voted each time for you for high office—be thinking about to tout the Papal line, especially a liquor-rich one like this inexperienced boy's? I, frankly, would like to know. If you actually believe these Popes bode no ill to the nation, take one long, solemn look at Spain, Italy or Colombia wherein these cultists are already really in the saddle; you will find it a real hazard to practice your good, tried and true old Presbyterianism publicly. If you do not believe this, investigate and ascertain the actual facts for yourself. If you are going to be a Protestant, BE one: not just an imitation of the real thing. 37

He continued to compare the hapless Kennedy with the really talented Al Smith of 1928. Feamaster admitted that he considered supporting Smith but was taken ill at the thought and was not able to get to the polls even to vote for Hoover. Using and misusing history, his vitrol mounted as he prepared to conclude:

All one needs to do is to obtain and read the gory history of this semi-pagan faith for himself. I would cite that excellent book (I have a copy) by the honest old former Priest, Jerimiah J. Crowley, entitled "Twenty

36 Interview with William Bruce Hoff, August 6, 1964, p. 34.
37 Ibid., p. 34.
Years in Hell or From Darkness to Daylight," the same being a day by day recording of his life and experience as a Priest of the said Church. This book is at once most revealing and instructive. I would further suggest you read the materials of the converted priests in Converted Catholic Magazine. See, also, that magnificent picture, "Martin Luther," which gives us a factual picture of the basic rottenness of the church out of which this great soul led his followers and thereby did so much for Presbyterians and all Protestant faiths.38

He finished by comparing the church to the communists in their desire to achieve complete domination. He softened a bit at the end by noting that his college roommate was a Roman Catholic and that they remained friends even today. Then came the postscript: "Indicate, please, who of the other 7 listed persons are Catholics."39

Considering the abusive nature of the letter, Hoff turned the other cheek and answered with sweet reason. He cited the candidate's war record, his experience in both the House and the Senate, Franklin D. Roosevelt's appointment of Joseph P. Kennedy as ambassador to the Court of St. James, the failure of the Hoover administration, and concluded,

I appreciate your manifestation of confidence in me when, on three former occasions, I sought high office, and, at the same time, I know that it may be difficult for you to disabuse your mind of the superstitious fear of the Roman Catholic Church, but I venture to hope that you will accept my assurance—the same assurance which Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave the American people when he nominated Smith for President—that honest men of the Roman Catholic persuasion in religion, who, like Kennedy, seek high public office, will do exactly as all other honest God-fearing men in like situations, that is: "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21.40

38 Ibid., p. 35.
39 Ibid., p. 35.
40 Ibid., p. 38.
Hoff concluded his interview by saying that he thought there was more open hostility to the Catholic Church in Parkersburg in Wood County and Huntington in Cabell County than in any of the other urban centers of the state.

The Reverend Harley Bailey, the Baptist who willingly pronounced invocations during the campaign, was an effective worker and observer in other areas. He took great pride in the fact that the New York Times had quoted one of his prayers which asked that the Holy Spirit aid in seeing that "true democracy may be established in this our land," and to "set us firmly against racial prejudices and against cruel and humiliating discriminations."41 Quite a few of his Baptist minister friends were opposed to Kennedy because of his religion but Bailey noted that their opposition seemed to be of a rather vague and general nature and not very specific. Bailey also noted that those who fought the religious issue in the primary fought even harder on the same ground in the general election. His more tolerant attitude he attributed partly to the fact that he had been a high school American History teacher and was familiar with the Bill of Rights. He had a church during the campaign but as an active minister scrupulously kept politics out of his sermons. In summary, he felt that the Baptists and Methodists showed the most opposition to the Catholic Church and also noted that very few local Republican Catholics changed their registration to vote for Kennedy in the primary. One unnamed Kennedy supporter reported, however, that some of the anti-Catholic agitation was caused by persons from neighboring Marietta and other parts of Ohio.

41Interview with Harley Bailey, December 5, 1964, pp. 3-4.
The other northern industrial area of the state, largely along the banks of the Monongahela River, Morgantown, Fairmont and Clarksburg, as described in Chapter Two, reflected many of these same attitudes. In Morgantown, the testy newspaper editor Walter L. Hart's interests ran more to developing the local airport and economic growth than to religion. In his wry way he did tell Kennedy, during a visit to the editor's office as early as 1958, that he thought he should enter the 1960 primary and that religion would not be a major threat to his candidacy. Or as Hart remembered the subject of prejudice:

Having had considerable experience with helping Senator Robert C. Byrd overcome, in reverse, the charges that he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, and being a Catholic, I knew something about the facets of religious bigotry. We had successfully shown Byrd, we think, how to repent and be forgiven for his membership in the Klan in earlier days. And I pointed all this out to Senator Kennedy as one of the reasons that I believed that the people of West Virginia would not either encourage or discourage anybody for public office because of their religion or even their lack of religion. That we were sort of a resolute, independent people; our chief liability was that we were quite willing to give a great deal--particularly of our natural resources--and so easily satisfied with so little. This seemed to appeal to Senator Kennedy; he said he wanted to come back.42

To reinforce his point about tolerance, Hart frequently made the point that integration of the public schools in West Virginia had proceeded quickly and with little or no violence after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling--the only state south of the Mason-Dixon line to do so. Hart also felt that the volunteers in the Kennedy camp were not generally

Catholics, because "people from all classes of life were working for him free." He observed that a number of them stayed to remain active in politics later. On the other side he did state that Kennedy had several handicaps: his wealth, his accent, and his religion.

Anne Hearst of Morgantown, a Kennedy worker and experienced participant in local politics, viewed Catholic participation in the primary differently. While she felt that the University students were captivated more by Kennedy's personality than his issues, she saw more Catholics in the ranks of the volunteers than Hart did. She also gave some credence to the belief that prejudice could have a positive side.

The thing they hit on was the religious issue, and we appealed that they should vote for him because if they didn't they would be bigots in not voting for a Catholic. We did use the issue; I have to be truthful there. I can't say that... You couldn't ignore it, especially in West Virginia, since everybody knew that it was a Protestant state and had very few Catholics. So we did use it. We went around to people that were the average voter, and we told them, "Are you going to vote against this man because he's a Catholic?" That was our appeal and it was quite effective. They wanted to prove to themselves and to the rest of the country that the people of West Virginia are not bigots. But I have to emphasize again that we used this to the extreme.

In nearby Fairmont, A. James Manchin ran the Marion County campaign, organized several adjoining counties, and carried much of the responsibility for shepherding Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., through the area in his efforts to aid Kennedy. Manchin remembered the religious issue as being mixed. While he had no trouble organizing his home county, he had

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43 Ibid., p. 18.

44 Interview with Anne Hearst, July 28, 1964, p. 10.
to make several trips to Lincoln County to find an adequate chairman and had no success at all as it was one of the few to vote for Humphrey in the primary. He explained why.

The big problem would be that people would not want to get involved in a presidential race. The local politicians were concerned with one thing, and that's control of the county courthouse. The White House was too far-removed, so a lot of them didn't want to get involved. Now that was one point. Another point would be that they were afraid of this religious issue and what it might do to the local candidate.\footnote{Interview with A. James Manchin, July 29, 1964, p. 2.}

For a brief time Manchin did have a Kennedy worker in Lincoln County, but when he returned to see him, the man (not named) locked his door and hid behind the furniture in the living room.

The religious issue, Manchin believed, was not fought out in the open but was there. Some of it resembled the events of the 1928 Al Smith campaign when opponents resorted to open hostility and even some bodily harm. He could remember only one personal attack in 1960.

A man says, "Manchin, how come all you Catholic boys are running around with John F. Kennedy? Are you Catholics trying to take over not only the state of West Virginia but the United States, and are you going to try to bring the Pope here?" Now, that was the only open incident in my three or four months that I campaigned with John F. Kennedy, that I noticed the religion issue. It was present, but I'd say it was present as an undercurrent.\footnote{Ibid., p. 7.}

Manchin did report hearing of a case in Vienna, near Parkersburg, where members of the Church of Christ congregation spread the alarm that with a Catholic president the priests would tell the people what to do, how to vote, and how to run the government as they were in Puerto Rico. As
for the occupations and denominations of the volunteers, he reported,

You had school teachers, you had Catholics, you had Baptists, you had Negroes, you had some people who professed the Jewish belief, you had rich, you had poor, you had university professors, you had coal miners—so it was just a cross section of the people of West Virginia that were really interested in John F. Kennedy.47

Victor J. Gabriel of Clarksburg, the Italian-Catholic county committee co-chairman, saw the religious issue from a somewhat different perspective:

The religious thing, in the county here, was not a factor, not an issue. The only religious thing we heard was national on TV or on radio, but as far as the person on the street is concerned or the individual, it was never a question with them. I would say that the religious issue was something that was brought out and kept before the public and they kept hammering at it, and I don't mind saying this. I blame the religious issue on press, nationally, in this country, because I think I heard him use the phrase one time—if it's where I go to church that's going to keep you from voting for me for President of the United States, then I advise you not to vote for me, which was very clear in the people's mind.48

Gabriel himself was much more interested in matters affecting organized labor and in the economy than in religion as an issue in the campaign.

W. Walter Neeley, an Episcopalian, while not blaming the press, supported Gabriel's opinion that religion was not a major issue in the Harrison County campaign. Neeley was personally more interested in Kennedy's attitude about communism, an issue which turned up only in his interview and was not really a major concern of most West Virginians in the somewhat depressed economy of the period. As Neeley put it, "Some of

47 Ibid., p. 16.
us wanted to know some positive answers regarding religion and communism." As he continued:

The first question, of course, asked by myself, was what would be Mr. Kennedy's attitude toward communism? Would he be soft? Would he permit the communists to continue to absorb other small countries without some proper resistance? The answers which Mr. Sorensen gave to us at this meeting were very satisfactory and reassured us that if Mr. Kennedy were elected, he would certainly be most firm in facing up to any problems of property appropriation by the communist regimes.49

He did feel that his section of the state would be an excellent testing ground for these issues as the population included Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, many people of "foreign extraction," along with a large number of Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

The county chairman, Benjamin B. Stout, supported many of Neeley's and Gabriel's views on religion. None of the local ministers preached about the danger of a Catholic president and he remembered the volunteers as not representing any special religious group. He was aware, however, of the damage that too much enthusiasm on the part of the local Catholics could cause. They were a minority and could not elect Kennedy on their own.

Therefore, what I tried to do was to de-emphasize this. And they had terrific enthusiasm, the Catholics did, for Jack. I was afraid they might have too much enthusiasm. So while I wanted them all to be for him, I did not want to take over or to put themselves too much in the front. Therefore, what I tried to do was de-emphasize religion and build up some enthusiasm among the Protestants. We had no religious issues to begin with, and there was no use to get one started by just a group taking over, you know, and running things. Therefore I de-emphasized it and gave them—they all had their jobs to do and they did a tremendous job.

Catholics did, but also we had the Protestants mixed up in this thing too, and they did a good job. Therefore, we had no trouble at all.\(^5\)

With respect to the more affluent Catholics, he observed,

You know, the real rich Catholics I don't believe, in this state or any place else, supported Kennedy particularly because it was his religion. They had their pocketbooks, and so forth, that they thought were being jeopardized. That's what I understand.\(^5\)

In Elkins, the southern tip of this industrial area where north and south may be said to meet, Robert E. Hedrick managed Randolph and several adjoining counties. Known as "Judge Hedrick" because, as he put it, he was considered a "judge of cattle and good-looking women and other things";\(^5\) a political personality in the southern style of Alben W. Barkley. The "Judge" saw Davis and Elkins College as a hot bed of Republican opposition to Kennedy largely because of its association with the Presbyterian Church and the ministers in the county. They were strong Republicans and abhorred Democrats and only with great difficulty did Hedrick get a Democratic student club established on the campus. Somewhat ruefully he said of the college, "The best thing we could do was to keep them quiet."\(^5\)

Hedrick also had unkind words for the Preston Lumber Company which, he reported, fired a woman employee and her husband, a sawyer, because they were associated with the Kennedy campaign. On the other hand, one local Baptist minister mentioned Kennedy favorably from his pulpit which

\(^5\) Interview with Benjamin B. Stout, July 30, 1964, p. 13.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 14.


\(^5\) Ibid., p. 11.
was praise indeed in this more rural and more conservative section of the state. One local candidate for the House of Delegates, who "went all over cussing and using the Catholic issue all over—the religious issue—every place he could," tailed the ticket in the primary. In summary, Hedrick felt that Kennedy's religion caused much nervousness among the party's other candidates through the general election.

Thus the northern counties reflected a mixture of attitudes about religion. In Brooke and Hancock the observers reported little or no hostility over the issue. At the same time, the campaigners were careful to avoid making Kennedy a "Catholic" candidate, a policy which was followed throughout the state. In Wheeling and Parkersburg there were incidents which indicated that the Protestant-Catholic hostility was still alive, but it was difficult to judge the real strength of the issue. This meant that the Kennedy organization should be on guard and work even harder to show that if their candidate made it to the White House he would not be a "Catholic" President.

Almost all of those interviewed in the northern counties assumed that the real test of the issue would come not in their section but in the southern part of the state. There the Klan found more members in the '20s and there the Catholic population was much smaller. One county reported in a religious census had no Catholics at all.

55Ibid., p. 13.
CHAPTER IV

THE ISSUES:

RELIGION, THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES

In the southern Ohio Valley city of Huntington, with ties to both the Middle West and the coal fields to its east, the Kennedy workers reported enough religious conflict to give support to Bruce Hoff's description of it as one of the two most prejudiced urban areas of the state. David Fox, a Jew who attended the Presbyterian Church with his wife and children and yet had the respect of the Jewish community, was of the opinion that "the religious issue was, of course, one of the main issues. And also, his war record came up. But I would say that the religious issue was probably the main issue that was brought up in this county."¹ He continued to describe the nature of at least part of the battle:

There was a tremendous amount of literature put out by the churches. I have a whole file of literature from many, many churches here in town. In their weekly bulletins they would ask their members not to vote for Senator Kennedy because he was Catholic and then give various things that might happen. I remember that one of the pastors of a leading church here gave a sermon one Sunday and said that it wasn't that he objected to Senator Kennedy because he was a Catholic; he wasn't afraid of what Senator Kennedy might do as president, but it would be breaking the barrier and he wasn't sure about some other Catholic who might become president. He was afraid of what might happen.²

¹Interview with David Fox, July 10, 1964, p. 4.
²Ibid., p. 5.
Fox remembered the chief issues as being parochial schools and "birth control was a big issue. They would say that Senator Kennedy, if he became president, would not approve of federal aid to any birth control clinics."³ Fox singled out one local minister as a notable exception to this strong feeling.

We had a minister of an Episcopal Church, who was very helpful in several things. He never actively came out and said he supported Senator Kennedy, but he did so many things for us we knew he was for Senator Kennedy. He was one preacher in town who certainly didn't say anything in the pulpit or wouldn't allow anything in his bulletins.⁴

In the fall during the general election, Fox explained, the Cabell County Kennedy Committee rented the television broadcast of Kennedy's meeting with the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston and sponsored extra reruns on the local television station. Fox remembered no significant differences in the religious backgrounds of the volunteers, just that "we really had more volunteers than we needed,"⁵ and "we had members of all religions."⁶

Bob Myers, the second of the three principal Kennedy workers in Cabell County saw the religious issue in much the same way. He approached religion as an issue through status and economics by first noting:

I see Cabell County as a moderate county where social status enters into almost every aspect of political life.

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³Ibid., p. 5.
⁴Ibid., p. 7.
⁵Ibid., p. 2.
⁶Ibid., p. 7.
Here we have a . . . I call it a status quo county. Our economic condition is never too bad and never too terribly good here. We don't follow the normal economic trends of the state of West Virginia. As a result, we've got a situation where our people in the county never get real emotional over any issue. I would sum up the religious issue here as one that was certainly a factor, and I'm confident that Senator Kennedy would have won this county—which he didn't, incidentally—I'm confident he would have won the county and would have won it substantially if it hadn't been for his religion. I thought there was an undercurrent of concern towards Catholicism in this area, primarily not necessarily because of Catholicism but because it was a change from the accepted procedure in the election of presidents—although I'm certain that Catholicism entered into it.

We had our extremists and our lunatic fringe of Protestantism. More specifically, it distributed a certain amount of hate literature that continually tried to stir up the Protestant population against the senator just because he was a Catholic. But I never thought they were terribly successful. Of course, the Catholics that were working with us in the effort quite naturally responded against this type of thing and were very resentful of it—literature similar to the Knights of Columbus oath where supposedly, according to the lunatic fringe, the Catholics were taught to disembowel Protestants and poison them and go to any extreme to do away with Protestantism.

Myers, too, referred to the Houston film and thought that the local Catholics contributed heavily to the fund to pay for its rebroadcasts. Concerning volunteers, he took a different tack from Fox:

There is no question about it, our Catholic population here contributed substantially to the total Kennedy effort. In fact, without the Catholic assistance and volunteers and financial arrangements, we probably wouldn't have had much of a Kennedy campaign in Cabell County. I suspect that this is perhaps true in the state of West Virginia. But I'd say 80 to 90 percent

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8 Interview with Bob Myers, July 11, 1964, p. 3.
of our active volunteer effort was provided by members of the Catholic faith.9

Myers agreed with many other Kennedy partisans when he noted how gun-shy, or Kennedy-shy, many of the regular Democrats were in the primary. Speaking of the liaison between the two groups, he said, "This was strained many, many times because, of course, the normal Democrats were scared to death of having a Catholic president leading their ticket possibly in November."10 He noted that volunteers in Huntington, as in many other sections of the state, helped distribute about twenty thousand Sunday supplement type publications about the senator and his family. In the November election, Myers noticed a diminution of anti-Catholic feeling because, as he put it:

I'm confident that the people of West Virginia took a great amount of pride in the fact that they were, number one, being allowed to participate forcibly in a national election; and number two, the fact that they had killed this issue of bigotry. They had proven to the nation that West Virginia was not a state of bigots. So, I think, they took a great amount of pride in it. I agree with you [Young] that the state Democratic organization did not perhaps accept Senator Kennedy as an asset in the general election.11

Andrew Houvouras, the Roman Catholic member of the Cabell trio and state chairman of the Businessmen for Kennedy Committee in West Virginia, had a good bit to say about religion, the nature of some of the "independent" Protestant churches, and a conversation between the candidate and himself. With some irony he pointed out that Kennedy carried nearby

9 Ibid., p. 4.
10 Ibid., p. 4.
11 Ibid., p. 12
Wayne County, where there were no more than twenty-five Catholic families and not even a Catholic Church, but lost Cabell County with its Catholic churches and voters. The attacks on the church were full of "bogus information," and they hit hard.

It was really a very low grade attack upon the Catholic Church itself, not on Kennedy so much as a Catholic but what a Catholic President might do. The bogus oath of the Knights of Columbus was circulated, put in peoples' mail boxes. There was literature that said that if a Catholic was President that they would split open the bellies of Protestant pregnant women and dash their babies' heads upon the stones. Now, this wasn't just hearsay. This literature was passed around. It was picked up and given to the Prosecuting Attorney. They had Maria Monk literature— I don't know whether you are familiar with this or not—passed out in great detail.\(^\text{12}\)

While the local papers refused to publish the bogus oath, they also refused to publish the genuine one. When a Kennedy delegation visited one of the more hostile ministers and tried to "straighten him out," the following reaction took place:

Well, whenever we knew--wherever we found the literature being circulated--it was in some churches--we visited the minister of that church and tried to straighten it out. We tried to show him where the fallacy was. Most of them told us --well, it's in the Congressional Record--this is the old excuse. And, of course, we told them that even cake recipes could be in the Congressional Record. And we offered to give them the real oath. In some cases we got some cooperation and apologies and in some cases we had to threaten prosecution. And we would have done it had they not withdrawn.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\) Interview with Andrew J. Houvouras, July 10, 1964, p. 7.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 7.
Although no one took legal action, the Knights of Columbus considered instituting a case on the grounds of false information about the Order.

Houvouras made a point well worth noting in any discussion of hostility towards the Catholic Church and its origin. Many of the attacks came from denominational churches which had normal national sounding names but were, in fact, really quite independent of national churches.

You see, West Virginia is unique in that it has all of the religions that I call non-affiliated religions. You have, for example, the South Side Baptists, the High Lawn Methodists--they have ordained ministers. But the Westmoreland Holiness, the Fifth Street Church of Christ and all these different Christian denominations do not really have, in most cases, ordained ministers.14

While the store-front church and such independent groups are not limited to the Appalachian area, they do exist there in great numbers. Thus, a church identified as Methodist or Baptist may have only a very tenuous or no contact with a national denomination.

In the crunch of the primary election, however, Houvouras felt West Virginians voted for Kennedy not because they were being genuinely broad-minded, "but I think West Virginians instead of voting their religion voted their pocketbooks."15 He did remember and paraphrase the words of the Episcopal Bishop of West Virginia who said that he thought it would be criminal if a man were denied the presidency because of his religion.

14 Ibid., p. 8.
15 Ibid., p. 9.
The fear of religion remained to be dealt with in the general election and Houvouras was certain that

In Cabell County they were afraid—as was the State. I can tell you that Governor Barron was scared; Jennings Randolph—Senator Randolph—actually quaked at the fact that the religious issue would take the Democratic Party as a whole down to defeat. He even said so in Washington. As a matter of fact, some of Senator Randolph's cohorts, including Senator Randolph, thought that Catholics should not play prominent parts in the campaign headquarters.16

He had one opportunity to discuss the matter with the candidate himself. On a trip from the airport Kennedy asked,

"Andy, is there anything new here on the religious issue?"
I said, "Yes, I think I've got one that you probably haven't heard." He said, "What's that?" And I said, "The local minister here in Huntington has told a member of his congregation that he doesn't fear you as President because of the fact that you are a Catholic or the influence the Catholic religion itself would bear upon you, but he was worried of the fact that you would popularize the Catholic faith as Eisenhower had popularized golf." And he turned around and said, "That man is a first class ass."17

Matthew A Reese of Huntington, then and later a skilled political organizer and administrator, important both at the local level and state-wide as the Executive Director of West Virginians for Kennedy, summarized his feelings about religion succinctly:

I think that a lot of people thought that since our level of education in West Virginia wasn't as high as in other areas, and since we are a border state with a great many southern mountain sort of people in the state, that the religious issue would cause Kennedy to lose the election. But I think that they forgot the independence of these West Virginians. I know I sound a little romantic, but I think that they are great

16Ibid., p. 19.
17Ibid., p. 20.
They showed the world that the fact that this man was a Catholic was of very little importance. If he had only been a Catholic, he would have been defeated, but he was much more than a Catholic. As a consequence, this was not an important element in the election. Actually, it may have helped us in some areas.18

Concerning volunteers, he felt that the religions were very mixed.

I'm sure that in no county were there more Catholics than non-Catholics volunteering for Kennedy. A great deal of the dedicated leadership was Catholic. They had something to fight for, and when you have something to fight for you usually are pretty effective. Especially later in the campaign there was a great outpouring. 19

In this connection Reese was careful to explain the relationship between the Kennedy organization and the state leadership of the Democratic party.

You must understand that the top state-wide leadership in West Virginia was not involved in this primary very deeply. This was the reason they had to come to a county politician with some state-wide contacts like me. Had the top state leadership been available, they wouldn't have gotten Matt Reese to help them on this campaign. But the top leadership was very skittish and didn't want to settle down and never did settle down until after the primary, as a matter of fact, until after the Convention.20

Reese made the point that this skittish attitude continued into the fall campaign.

They were scared of the religious issue. I was in a conference with one of our top candidates after the Convention. We got into the religious problem. I finally had to say, "But, sir, we cannot change the candidate's (meaning the Senator's) religion." You know, they were still scared of it even after it was demonstrated that the people supported him in spite of his religion. Many of the elected candidates and top

18 Interview with Matthew A. Reese, October 24, 1964, p. 11
19 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
20 Ibid., p. 17.
leadership were for Humphrey, maybe not because of Humphrey but because it was a Stop-Kennedy thing. I think they were very sincere about it. They thought that this young man, because of his youth and his religion, couldn't win the presidency and wouldn't help the local ticket. This is what the state or local candidate wants. He wants somebody at the top of the ticket that is going to get him votes. They were truly convinced that this wouldn't happen, and, as a consequence, they stayed clear of it. I don't think that they gave Humphrey much help; I think they would rather have seen Humphrey win than Kennedy. Now, of course, the President is revered, and he has earned the respect of West Virginia politicians and leadership. At that time he certainly wasn't.  

As a final observation on the religious scene, Reese told of a conversation with the candidate's wife:

She (Mrs. Kennedy) asked about the campaign and seemed to be very interested and very knowledgeable about it. I told her the story of the first appearance of the Senator after the campaign was officially inaugurated in Parkersburg. It was a breakfast meeting, and we had an Episcopalian minister give the invocation. It was funny because the Episcopalian wore a clerical collar. When Ken O'Donnell saw this, he said, "Why the hell did you get a Catholic for the invocation? We're trying to duck this Catholic issue as much as we can." They weren't really satisfied with the story that he was Episcopalian and not Catholic. I told Mrs. Kennedy this and she said, "Yes, I find we always run like hell when see a priest or a nun these days."  

To the east and south of Huntington the geography and political culture changes rapidly and at Logan, the county seat of Logan County, the 1960 campaigners were in the heart of the coal triangle. The irregular mountains, the creeks (pronounced cricks) and hollows (pronounced hollers) are the chief features of the section which came to

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21 Ibid., pp. 17-18.

22 Ibid., p. 23.
represent the state to the rest of the country. Earlier guarded company towns, coal camps, armed deputy sheriffs acting as armies, and isolation marked this as a world apart from Huntington, Bluefield and Charleston. If the county seats seem isolated, then the coal camps, squeezed on what little flat or moderately sloping land that might be handy, are even more remote. Here, too, the overwhelming Democratic registration, which critics charged often included the cemeteries, was expected to provide the key to the religious issue in the state and ultimately for the nation.

Raymond Chafin, the county Democratic chairman in 1960, repeated a story in his interview which illustrated both the isolation and identity of the area and, many thought, the state in general.

I heard Senator Byrd make a speech one time—Senator Robert Byrd. He said he talked to President Eisenhower about West Virginia and he said, "Oh, yes, one of these days we might do something for that part of Virginia."23

Chafin added that the attention focused on the state by the Kennedy-Humphrey primary had at least one positive outcome:

So that's one thing: If he [Kennedy] hadn't done anything else, he let the people of the United States and the federal government know that there was a West Virginia.24

In taking note of this, Chafin repeated a point made by others who were interviewed about the primary and a point which other West Virginians would have made if they had had the chance. Residents of the mountain state had long resented the fact that the rest of the country

23 Interview with Raymond Chafin, September 9, 1964, p. 7.
24 Ibid., p. 7.
was almost unaware of their separate statehood and somewhat defensively would identify themselves as being from "West, by God, Virginia," with the deity invoked to modify "West." Almost everyone from the state who traveled had stories of meeting provincial New Yorkers, Kansans or Californians who assumed that all natives of the state lived near Richmond, were southerners, and had supported the Confederacy. To add to the confusion, the state capital had the same name as that of an old colonial seaport in South Carolina.

Chafin, who first supported Humphrey in the primary and then moved into the Kennedy camp, also reported that the ghost of 1928 and Al Smith worked as a hardship in enlisting volunteers for Kennedy early in the campaign. A more positive attitude about the Catholic candidate developed, however, once Kennedy and other members of his family came to the county to campaign. It became easier to get volunteers and to get local politicians to share the platform with him, or as he put it, while he was still with Humphrey,

But then when the campaign did get under way, and I'd say the last two weeks of it, why, Senator Humphrey had been in here. He'd made two or three stops and speeches and had a breakfast here which we had several people attend. But in my traveling around over the county, I could see that the Kennedy forces were gaining strength, and they had more young people, and they had a good organization. I saw that our candidates were going to lose all of the Kennedy support. We were in and other people were out. They had more to talk about what they could do, and I saw we were right up against it; if we didn't change the way, why, we were going to lose our candidates.25

Chafin noted that in Logan, at the time of the general election, religion seemed to disappear as an issue and be replaced by the economic

25Ibid., p. 2.
appeal of the Democrats as opposed to the Republicans.

J. Thomas Godby had represented Logan in the state legislature and was at that time the successful candidate for assessor. His contacts with a wide variety of voters came through his social life and his salesmanship.

I worked the miners' payroll for thirteen years in Logan County, selling made-to-measure suits over the payroll. And there's not a miner in Logan County—and I can say this without reservation—that I'd either know his face, or I could say I knew 90 percent of them by name.26

In his campaign for assessor, Godby teamed up with Daniel Cahill, a state senatorial candidate and a Roman Catholic, to work together and attempt to unseat two long-time incumbents. They both supported Kennedy and both won. He felt that it had been a tough, uphill fight, but proved that religion had been overstated at the beginning of the campaign. Godby was a member of the Church of Christ which he identified as "President Johnson's Church," and reported that his minister took no part in the campaign. Some of Godby's campaigning was done while acting as a chauffeur for Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and Governor Michael V. DiSalle of Ohio during the primary and Eleanor Roosevelt in the general election. In summary, Godby felt that religion took a back seat to economic issues in this, one of the most depressed coal areas of the state.

Claude Ellis, the Logan County Chairman for Kennedy, felt that he had become the chairman more by default than selection because of the

reluctance of anyone else to be identified with the Catholic candidate. As the campaign progressed, he reported, as had Godby, others joined the bandwagon as the expectation of victory mounted. He also noted that the Catholic Cahill, senatorial candidate, joined the Kennedy forces as did a prominent local former Klansman. He felt that most of the religious opposition remained undercover although there were a few Protestant sermons against the ticket and a story was circulated that, if elected, Kennedy would replace Washington's likeness on the one-dollar bill with that of the Pope. At the same time Ellis reported that even long time residents seemed unaware that their senatorial candidate Cahill, born and raised in Logan, was a Catholic. Again the magic of the Roosevelt name, through Franklin, Jr., seemed to blunt some of the religious prejudice, and economic conditions seemed to outweigh theological considerations.

Welch, southeast of Logan, is the almost identical county seat of McDowell County with much the same geography, typography, and population mix. Stuart A. Calhoun, the black assistant prosecuting attorney, worked for Kennedy through the McDowell County Democratic Voters League which was a mixed organization of blacks and whites and which cooperated closely with the regularly elected Democratic county committee. Concerning the religious issue, he reported:

I was apprehensive of that issue myself at first. But as I traveled through the county it was definitely determined that that was no issue of any magnitude. I think it had very little to do with the outcome of the election because they were impressed with the man. 27

27 Interview with Stuart A. Calhoun, February 20, 1965, pp. 5-6.
He felt that the people with whom he talked "would rather not discuss the religious views of the President who had the nomination, but rather the issues as affecting the livelihood and future of the country." He noted that there seemed to be so little anti-Catholic feeling in the county that it was hard to determine whether it increased or decreased during the course of the primary through the general election or even during Kennedy's years in the White House.

Samuel Solins of Welch, a Jewish dinner-planner and party-giver, met Kennedy as a result of an abortive attempt to get Harry S. Truman to come to Welch to help celebrate the former President's birthday at a Democratic party dinner. Truman replied that he could not possibly attend all of the birthday dinners being given by loyal Democrats in the country, so the Democratic National Committee had arranged for a closed circuit television network throughout the country. Since the fee, $4,500,000, was felt to be too high, Solins, with the help of Sidney Christie, prevailed upon Kennedy to come for Truman's birthday dinner. As for Kennedy's chances politically, Solins thought that a Jew would have problems in an area where there were so few Jewish voters, but thought that a Catholic would have a less difficult time. "Sidney wasn't too sanguine about the chance of a Catholic either," he added. During another visit to Welch later in the primary, Kennedy took Solins aside and said, "Sam, those Baptists are giving me hell." By that time

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28 Ibid., p. 6.

29 Interview with Samuel Solins, February 20, 1965, p. 4.

30 Ibid., p. 7.
Solins, with a finger in the political wind, was convinced that Kennedy would win, told him so, and extracted a promise that Kennedy would return as an Armistice Day speaker. Solins explained his optimism about the election in an interesting description of the county's population.

In our county we have everything from the dregs of the Slavonic race clear to the Virginia gentlemen, and it is on that basis that the people feel free of religious prejudice and race prejudice, for we have had justices of the peace, deputy sheriffs, and constables of the colored race elected by white people.31

Solins's description of the county's black voters continued in the same vein and confirmed Calhoun's view.

We have one-third of our population colored, and for the most part they are now in the Democratic Party and I just don't believe that they gave one serious thought against Kennedy because of his religion. It didn't develop that way in the primary.32

Sidney L. Christie, later the Federal Judge of the Eighth Circuit Court of Keystone, near Welch, was at the time of the primary a banker and a lawyer whose influence reached far beyond the local community and through the entire southern coal fields. He recalled first discussing the question of religion with Kennedy when questioned by the future candidate as early as October 11, 1959, following a meeting of the Young Democratic Club of Kanawha County in Charleston.

He inquired on that occasion if I felt that his religion would be a bar to his running in the West Virginia Primary, and I recall distinctly telling him this: I said, "Senator, I can best answer your question with this example. A few months ago my

31Ibid., p. 11.
32Ibid., p. 12.
daughter approached me to obtain my consent to her marrying a Catholic boy. They met while they both were in West Virginia University. I am a Protestant, and my daughter was a Protestant. The young man that she proposed to marry was from Hinton, West Virginia, and was a devout Catholic. I told my daughter, Dixie, that I would give my consent to her marrying a Catholic boy provided she would embrace his religion, that from my experience over many years in practicing law and dealing with domestic problems, I had found that the matter of division of religion, in a household, was not good. She was willing to do this, and in due course they were married in the Catholic Church. Now, if the same proposition had been put by me to my father and mother 30 years previous, I was convinced that their answer would not have been the same as my answer was to my daughter, and that the period of 30 years since the campaign of Al Smith, when Bishop Cannon injected religion into the campaign against Governor Smith—this period of 30 years—had wrought a tremendous change in the thinking and tolerance of the American people, and I felt that if he did not try to evade the issue—if he brought the matter out in the open in the very beginning so that a whispering campaign would not be started against him—I saw no substantial bar in his religion toward his making a successful campaign in West Virginia.33

With the help of Christie and many others, the advice given to Kennedy proved to be quite accurate for McDowell County. Christie took great pride in pointing out in his interview that Kennedy got 13,896 votes to Humphrey's 2,720, the largest majority for the victor in any county in the state. The overwhelming nature of the victory attracted many of the national correspondents who had covered the primary back to Welch for a review of the results. Christie, a most verbal and literate lawyer, faced so many reporters that he finally prepared a statement to be distributed to the press in which he recalled the tolerance of the local population with respect to school integration after 1954, and

added:

This integration is stated simply to show the high degree of tolerance that prevails among the people of all races, nationalities and religions in this county; and it is for this reason that the religious issue in the campaign had little or no effect on the voting here.  

As President Kennedy acknowledges his gratitude to Christie during a meeting between the two at the White House, as described by the Judge in a letter to his grandchildren attached to his interview:

Returning to his private office, I attempted to apologize for encroaching upon his time and to tell him how very greatly I appreciated his kindness in seeing me, when he broke in: "Judge, you need not feel that way, because you own a chunk of this place."

While Christie expected to win, he said that there was enough doubt ahead of time that Peter Lisagor, a native of Welch and at that time Washington correspondent for the Chicago Daily Mail, hesitated to predict a Kennedy victory in spite of his journalistic hunch that it would occur. According to Christie, Lisagore was in Welch for a Kennedy rally in May, just a few weeks before the primary, and

He prepared a story for his paper predicting that Senator Kennedy would win the West Virginia primary, but later on he got cold feet and was afraid to send it in. He explained that it was the biggest blunder he had made since he had been a newspaper reporter--that he had a scoop there and didn't recognize it.

Laurence E. Tierney, Jr., in Bluefield, the southernmost city in the state, represented a unique combination of characteristics among the

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34 Ibid., Attachment, press release, submitted with interview by Christie, p. 3.
36 Ibid., p. 5.
Kennedy supporters. Proud of his Maryland and Irish-Catholic background, he was a wealthy coal entrepreneur in the full meaning of that word. He bought and sold coal properties, or "land companies" as they are called, managed his coal investments, and with his wife and family was considered to be one of the most socially and economically prominent persons of the coal triangle. He had been active in Democratic politics for years and talked of the Kennedy campaign in fond terms. He described his first meeting with and impressions of the young candidate.

He was kind enough to come to my house for luncheon, where this plan was formalized [to enter the primary] and finalized, and I expressed my opinion that the religious issue meant nothing. We were looking for a positive person, a person of real sorts, and he exemplified that in every fashion. And so I urged him to do it and he agreed. So then I went on in any way that I could, with my many friends in every religion, to further this matter.37

The Kennedy entourage made Tierney's spacious house their home in Bluefield and the friendship continued through the White House years. The president sent the southern West Virginian to a United Nations meeting in Geneva to represent energy matters where, as he remembered, "I was chairman of the United States delegation, sitting with thirty-seven nations that I recall, including all the bloody Communists."38

Moving to the other candidate, Senator Humphrey, with Marshall G. West of Pineville, Wyoming County (still in the coal triangle), some Kennedy partisan opinions are confirmed and some refuted. West carried the title of co-chairman of the state Humphrey campaign and was

38 Ibid., p. 6.
responsible for the southern counties. He first became interested in Humphrey when the Minnesota senator addressed a joint session of the West Virginia legislature in early 1960. West thought Humphrey could win at that time, but said that later he began to think the Senator might be "too liberal" for some of the more conservative elements of the Democratic party in the state. Just before the election he realized, as did many of the other members of his organization, that Humphrey was going to lose. "We recognized it and we knew that Senator Kennedy was going to win. We just didn't know by how big." 39

With his law practice and his campaigning, West came into contact with hundreds of voters and said about religion as an issue:

Religion was definitely not an issue in my county. In fact, Senator Kennedy carried the county pretty large and that was as I thought it would be and I had informed Senator Humphrey that that would be the case. It was primarily because of organization and the aid of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. The Roosevelt name is very popular in Wyoming County and people were simply voting for Senator Kennedy because Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., was for him and was campaigning for him. 40

The co-chairman felt much the same way about the volunteers and went on to discuss the psychology of the religious issue.

I don't think that Kennedy's religion had anything to do with drawing volunteers. Some of them may have felt compelled to go out and work for Senator Kennedy because the atmosphere had been created that anyone voting against Senator Kennedy was almost indicted as a bigot. That was the type of psychology that was created—that was effective and, I think, influenced a lot of them to do that. Basically, I question


40 Ibid., p. 3.
whether the people that went out and worked for Senator Kennedy realized the differences in the two men from a religious standpoint. ⁴¹

West continued to make his point even more forcibly later on in the interview when discussing his section of the state.

I don't know of any person in southern West Virginia that's a member of the Democratic party, nor did I hear of any person who's a member of the Democratic party voting against Senator Kennedy because of his religion. ⁴²

Religion, he concluded, if it had been an issue in the primary at all, had definitely died out by the time of the general election in the fall. With this assumption, West goes on to discuss the chief reasons which he felt were responsible for the Kennedy victory: superior organization, the impact of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and Kennedy's appeal to youth and the younger voters. On the hotly debated subject of the Kennedy family fortune in the campaign, he commented:

In some of the counties in southern West Virginia, of course, money can't help you too much, particularly in two of the counties that I know of. Money can get you started, but the people of those counties are pretty much independent and just good coverage of what you stand for in politics usually gets you the votes. ⁴³

To the hypothetical question of the outcome of the primary if the candidates had been evenly matched in terms of organization and financing, he replied:

I think that Senator Kennedy would have won, but I don't think that he would have won by the majority that

⁴¹Ibid., p. 5.
⁴²Ibid., p. 8.
⁴³Ibid., p. 10.
he did. I think the election would have been much closer, assuming all those things to be true.44

George J. Titler, President of District 29 of the United Mine Workers and a member of the International Board, of Beckley, Raleigh County, was officially neutral during the primary, as ordered by the union leadership. Titler, who got his feet wet in politics by voting for Eugene V. Debs in 1920, "and he was in the penitentiary at the time," and for LaFollette in 1924, sympathized with Kennedy and supported him in the general election because he liked him and because he greatly disliked Richard M. Nixon.45 From Beckley, a small city with working coal mines and also a service and wholesale center for the industry, he observed both religion and the other issues of the campaign through his network of lesser union officials and his many friends in the union.

About religion he stated:

I feel that Kennedy's vote did not reflect his popularity in this state and, of course, he should have gotten a much bigger vote in West Virginia than he did. However, while the West Virginians are not as religious—prejudiced—as many other states, there was still a great amount of religious prejudice in the mountains.46

Titler seemed to enjoy using his own family as an example of the evolution of prejudice which he sensed in the state during the campaign. Taking note that his family was of Scotch ancestry and he and his brothers and sisters had grown up in an anti-Catholic atmosphere, he went on to tell how he and most of his brothers and sisters had

44Ibid., p. 11.
46Ibid., p. 1.
become much more broad-minded. His own enlightenment came during his early years; as he related the story:

I would fight as hard for a man if he was a Catholic or a Hindu if he was the right kind of fellow. Religious prejudice never entered into my . . . I overcame that when I was a child. First, by working on a farm for a Catholic for two years, I found out at that time. I had a feeling when I went to work for him that I couldn't work for a Catholic, and after I had worked for him for a while, I found that they were just the same as any other human being. All of my life I've fought this bigotry.47

He concluded by observing that Kennedy "did more to overcome religious prejudice in this country than any other one thing I know of."48

Titler moved on to the general decline of prejudice he had witnessed and, unlike many others, felt that it was not until after the general election and the victory was sealed that tolerance increased.

I think that he overcame, with his personality and his record and his deportment during the campaign, an almost insurmountable obstacle. I said before the election that if this man is defeated, it will be because he is a Catholic, because of the religious prejudice. He did overcome it, and I say again that had he been a Protestant, in my opinion, he would have won by twenty million votes. And that's how much he had to overcome with his personality.49

Some of the factors which helped Kennedy overcome the religious handicap, Titler noted, were his personality with its glow or charm, the legend of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the fact that he heard countless women say, "My, he was a wonderful fellow. He just reminded me of my boy." Titler observed wryly that "he seemed to remind more women of their sons than

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47 Ibid., p. 4.
48 Ibid., p. 4.
49 Ibid., p. 5.
any other one man I ever saw in my life."

With respect to the United Mine Workers' votes in the primary, he concluded:

He carried the majority of the mine workers. He carried McDowell County which is one of the biggest coal-producing counties in the world. He carried that by a fabulous majority. Of course, all through this country here he did the same thing. I'll say this again, the mine workers did nothing for him in the West Virginia primary. He was on his own as far as we were concerned. There was nothing done for or against him here that would persuade the mine workers any way. They voted their own sentiments, and they liked the looks of the man; they liked the way he carried himself.

Union neutrality was thus maintained because of Humphrey's long friendship with the labor movement but Kennedy got the votes.

J. Raymond DePaulo described the Beckley of 1960 as a very politically conscious town. During that period it had furnished the governor of the state, one of the United States Senators, and a Congressman, all at the same time. DePaulo, working for a bakery at that time, had talked with Harry G. Hoffman of the Charleston Gazette and made the comment, "This election or campaign would make 1928 look like an ice cream social," which he said appeared later in Newsweek. While he said in the interview that he could not remember uttering those exact words, the comment reflected his attitude about Protestant or non-Catholic opinion in the area.

50 Ibid., p. 2

51 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

52 Interview with J. Raymond DePaulo, February 19, 1965, p. 3.
It was the main-line Protestant ministers, he heard by hearsay, who preached the anti-Catholic sermons: the Baptists and the hard-shelled Methodists. He said that he and his fellow Catholics more or less expected this, but really became alarmed when the "Presbyterians, and others who represented the finest people, took up the cause." DePaulo noted that the primitive churches, presumably not the finest people, "revived the captive nun stories . . . the inquisition and the stories of the machine guns in the steeples." In short, "they didn't want the country run from Rome." This because

They were absolutely convinced that priests' homes were dens of iniquity, and the nuns were largely fallen women, and that none of them were there of their own free will, and they were held captive by the hierarchy, and they believed this absolutely, just as they believed the practices of their churches.

He did add that the primitive religions did not include any of the rattlesnake cults of the southern mountains which frequently attract the attention of the press.

DePaulo noticed a chill developing with his formerly close non-Catholic friends and said that they seemed to equate Kennedy with the immigrant Irish whom they disliked and the labor movement which had few friends among his middle class associates. Political and social pressure, however, could work the other way. It was after DePaulo decided to be active in the campaign that he noted this principle in action. McDonough

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53 Ibid., p. 6.
54 Ibid., p. 7.
55 Ibid., p. 9.
had written to him insisting that a Protestant be found to head the local Kennedy campaign. This was difficult because of the reluctance on the part of many politicians to be identified with the Catholic candidate. DePaulo was able, however, to use his influence with a local law firm which then ordered one of its junior members, Donald D. Hodson, to head the Citizens for Kennedy committee. DePaulo observed, "We would not have had a chairman if we hadn't had the economic strangle hold on him."56

With respect to the black voters in Beckley, DePaulo seemed to contradict the analysis of both Stuart Calhoun and Sidney Christie who had seen little anti-Catholic prejudice among that minority group. In a story which is typical of the genre of the coal country and of the southern political raconteur, he related:

The anti-Catholics had sold the Negro population. Outside of a few professional politicians among the Negro community, we weren't doing a bit of good with the Negroes. As a matter of fact, they were in the midst of a big rally one night, and a well known Negro preacher of some stature was making quite an anti-Catholic harangue. We heard about it and didn't know how to stop it. Grant Stockdale, a Florida real estate broker who was up in West Virginia, in Beckley specifically, helping Kennedy, was with us. He finally decided that he might have an idea of how to stop it. So he grabbed a camera that was in the car and got in the building and started to fight his way through this mob of people, and it was real hard to get through. We had been plagued with all the national magazines and all the national news media—we were getting nationwide publicity all over, and quite a few of the people were succumbing to the lure of the press. So he held his camera over his head and began to shout, "Life Magazine, Life Magazine, let me through."

56 Ibid., p. 20.
Stockdale then told the preacher that he had a deadline to meet and would like to interview him off-pulpit for a few minutes if he could, after taking a number of pictures. The minister agreed and they went into a back room where, DePaulo continues, "He finally got around to asking the preacher if he didn't think that it was a little bit out of character for a minister of the gospel to attack another American and another religion in the way and in the tone that he was." He then told the minister that he represented both a firm and a foundation which made contributions to worthy causes, but no contribution could be made if the preaching was against another American. DePaulo continues the story: "He said now, of course, if you saw fit to quit talking about another American like that, never referring to Kennedy by name, he said that he could get the minister a nice contribution. As a matter of fact, he happened to have two hundred dollars right then that he could make available to him." For this, DePaulo reported, the minister felt that he could stop attacking Kennedy.

Stockdale, according to DePaulo "never one to stop short of complete victory," began to point out some of the virtues that John Kennedy had.

He said it just so happened that he had another fund available, and that some people were interested in this young American who was trying to erase the inequities between groups in this country. He said he felt sure that he could justify making a contribution to a minister who would help in that work. The way to do that would be for him to start speaking in favor of Kennedy. He said he just happened to have two hundred and fifty dollars that he could contribute to somebody who would espouse that cause. After due deliberation, why, the preacher felt sure that for two hundred and fifty dollars he could begin to point out the virtues of John Kennedy and did. And we
didn't have any more trouble with him the rest of the campaign. But it cost four hundred and fifty dollars.57

DePaulo seemed to think that some of the black anti-Catholicism might have come from the fact that the blacks in the mines resented Catholics as they were usually given preferential treatment and seemed to get the better jobs. Eventually, he felt, they supported Kennedy because of the national black leadership endorsement of Kennedy.

He, too, felt that while the labor organizations may have remained neutral, the laboring men voted for Kennedy. At the same time he noticed a great many new faces among the volunteers, political amateurs getting into politics for the first time. DePaulo thought that he noticed a turning point in the Kennedy direction after the candidate learned the state's motto, Montani Semper Liberi,58 began to use it in his speeches, and started appealing to state pride, a commodity in somewhat short supply during the depressed nineteen-fifties.59

Carl B. Vickers from the legal and political family of Fayetteville, Fayette County, further north and east in the coal fields, thought at the beginning of the campaign that religion might be an issue. Therefore, a strategy was developed which followed the old rule that a best


58Translated as "Mountaineers are always free." Collectors of irony have long noted that it is inscribed in stone above the entrance to the state penitentiary.

59In the honored tradition of ethnic jokes, stories of a similar nature were being told in the Ohio cities which West Virginians had favored in their out-migration. Question (usually asked in Akron): "What is the best thing ever to come out of West Virginia?" Answer: "An empty bus."
defense is a good offense. As he explained:

Of course you had the religious angle. Fayette County is predominantly Protestant; Kennedy knows that, his leaders know that, and this is one reason they were hoping very much in West Virginia and in this area to test out their strength. It never became really a problem. We approached it on a positive basis rather than negative. That is, we didn't start out campaigning trying to explain to people that Kennedy would make a good President even though he were a Catholic or a Protestant or whatever he may have been. We approached it on the theory that here is a man who will make a good president.60

Of the candidate himself, Vickers observed,

People knew he was from Harvard; people knew he came from money; people knew he had probably never seen a coal field and very few coal miners. But he was able to sell himself as being one who could stand above all that and still be quite a human being. I think that is the reason he was elected president.61

With respect to the volunteers, Vickers also noticed many new faces in politics but said that if many were Catholics it was also true that many were from the other faiths. At the same time, he noted:

I think the religious angle tended to backfire a little bit in our area. Not purposely, but the American people have a way of favoring the underdog. In view of the way he handled the situation, an awful lot of people who normally would have been somewhat prejudiced, leaned over the other way, feeling that if he could handle it that way, then more power to him. 62

With respect to the ministers of the area, he probably made one of the best stated understatements in all of the interviews when he described some of the local clergy carefully: "We had some very

61 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
prominent members of the clergy in some of our very prominent churches who made open maneuvers to impress their people that they ought to proceed with caution.\textsuperscript{63} The reasons for caution which the clergy gave were the usual ones, the church would dictate his policies and even though he was a very fine man he couldn't be trusted because of his religion. Vickers saw the whispering campaign as a product of both the churches and the lodges. The lodges were socially very important in West Virginia at that time because they could serve illegal alcohol in their bars and club rooms with a minimum of interference from the local constabulary who were, more often than not, members themselves if not exalted rulers. The whispering campaigns backfired, Vickers felt, and Humphrey, who was the better known of the two candidates at the beginning of the primary, fell behind for various reasons. Vickers also believed that organized labor worked quietly for Humphrey in spite of its official neutrality, but noted that labor had seen its "golden era" when it could command and marshal votes for its candidates. This he attributed to more independent thinking on the part of the workers, a trend which had been developing in recent years.

As in the other counties, Vickers said the Kennedy state organization wanted a politically active Protestant to head the local campaign and selected him with that in mind. "Although I am a Protestant, the [Catholicism] is not the kind of thing that bothers me. It didn't before, and it didn't during the campaign. We evaluated on the strength of character of the man and decided to go ahead with it." Kennedy carried

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 26.
Fayette County and, concluded Vickers, "We were happy with the result."64

While the map of West Virginia shows that the Eastern Panhandle, with its lost counties, to be just a few miles south of the Mason-Dixon line and therefore not really very far south, it is important to repeat that "south" is partly a state of mind and that the area is almost as southern in outlook as Bluefield and the coal triangle. In 1960 it did not share the poverty of the southern counties, but it did share many of the traditional attitudes and values associated with the great Valley of Virginia.

The most active of the Kennedy partisans in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, was Dr. Frank H. Fischer, an optometrist whose interest in politics grew out of his civic work and from his presidency of the West Virginia Junior Chamber of Commerce. Early in the campaign he had an opportunity to advise candidate Kennedy, through his brother Robert, concerning the issue which he thought the candidate should stress in the Eastern Panhandle and through the state at large. Dr. Fischer's advice, most of it probably valid for any section of the Republic, is interesting in its insight into the politics of the state. He advised Robert Kennedy:

My suggestion was we would talk about the "Four F's" and only the "Four F's." He asked what I had in mind in the "Four F's," and I said, "First of all, we will talk about the flag—the flag of the great state of West Virginia, the flag of our country. Second, we will talk about food throughout the state of West Virginia." Not as much now, but in '58 and '59 we had

64Ibid., pp. 37-38.
quite a few of the underprivileged, undernourished, underpaid. This took care of two of the F's. The third was the family. As we all know, and as we have heard many, many times, the families of West Virginia have given more of their sons' time and bodies and lives to the service of their country than any other state. Fourth, and I believe the most logical of all for West Virginia, Franklin. Everyone looked in amazement, but I felt that Senator Kennedy could talk about Franklin Delano Roosevelt anywhere in our state and win many, many, many, many friends and votes. So, my contribution to the first meeting of this type that I attended was food, Franklin, family and the flag.

Fischer's second suggestion, which Kennedy accepted, was that the candidate have a meeting with the much respected Episcopal Bishop Robert E. Lee Strider of the Diocese of the state, who had retired and was living nearby. A meeting was arranged and Fischer reported:

We knew not what the Bishop's reaction would be to an interview with Senator Kennedy, but we thought we would gamble on it and hope the Senator could impress him very favorably. To watch two men of intelligence and wisdom, a retired Episcopal Bishop and a Senator from Massachusetts something like forty-five years younger than the Bishop, to watch the interview of these two great men I believe was the highlight of my activities in the '60 campaign. At the meeting we received an extremely favorable statement from the Bishop. This was immediately reproduced and, if you remember, your press nationwide took a more favorable view on the religious issue.

Bishop Strider was then widely quoted as saying that he saw no reason why a Catholic should not be elected to the highest office in the land. Fischer concluded his story of the visit with Strider by saying, "Had the Senator received an unfavorable statement from the Bishop, I believe he would have been defeated in the West Virginia primary."

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65 Interview with Dr. Frank H. Fischer, February 27, 1965, p. 3.
66 Ibid., p. 4.
67 Ibid., p. 5.
As noted in Chapter II, Bishop Swint of the candidate's own church remained unconsulted and unquoted in Wheeling. About the only specific question concerning Catholicism that Fischer could remember being raised locally was concerned with Kennedy's future plans for public education as opposed to the parochial schools. In the end, Kennedy failed to carry Berkeley County by a slim margin and Fischer felt that the single most important reason was "the predominant Protestant majority." 68

This Protestant prejudice, Fischer thought, carried into the fall campaign.

The county committee became really active, but we had the feeling they were working for the lesser names on the ballot rather than the top. This was an unusual general election in which there was a terrific amount of ticket splitting, which is rather unusual in this county. 69

Clarence E. Martin, also of Martinsburg as well as a Roman Catholic and a state senator, supported Kennedy and generally approved his White House years, but felt that the New Frontier at times moved too fast. This was so especially in the area of civil rights and welfare programs which were "producing a great many loafers [and] chiselers." 70 Martin supported Kennedy originally because he thought he "had a plan for the United States . . . and could bring a new fresh wind into what I considered then to be a stale situation in the United States and get the country moving forward." 71

68 Ibid., p. 11.
69 Ibid., p. 13.
70 Interview with Clarence E. Martin, Feb. 27, 1966, p. 22. Martinsburg was named for Col. Thomas Bryan Martin, a nephew of Lord Fairfax, but not one of the Senator's forebears.
71 Ibid., p. 3.
Martin, from an old valley family himself, described something of the area by way of political background.

This part of West Virginia is very old and historical. It lies at the northern end of the great Shenandoah Valley. Many of the families and people who live here are of substantial Anglo-Saxon stock, and the families have been here for many, many generations. They look upon things in a far different manner than people in other parts of West Virginia because we are separated geographically by a mountain range from the balance of the state of West Virginia. The people in this area are a conservative, sound, stable kind of people. There has not been any great infusion of blood from outside.\(^72\)

As a Catholic himself, Martin estimated the local Catholic population at about one percent and agreed with his fellow campaigner, Dr. Fischer, that religion probably did defeat Kennedy in his county. While his Catholicism had never been a factor in his many election victories, it worked differently for the Irish Catholic from Massachusetts who was a candidate, not for the West Virginia Senate, but for the highest office in the land. He noted that there were some sermons from the local pulpits against the Senator and a great deal of discussion of the problem, and he felt, for most voters, the emotional reasons against the candidate were just too strong. He also thought that some of those who voted along religious lines may have done so with the feeling that a Catholic wouldn't be able to beat a Protestant Republican so why should they vote for a man who did not carry the party to victory in the fall. Some of the prejudice, he added, was "actually brought about by people who had come into the area, such as preachers and ministers, who were not native."\(^73\) In any event, he concluded, Kennedy's personality was

\(^{72}\)Ibid., pp. 4-5. \\
\(^{73}\)Ibid., p. 12.
far more attractive than Humphrey's, and "Humphrey spoke more like a politician, a politician who would promise you anything and then doesn't produce." 74

When the interviews in the southern section are compared with those of the northern, they show a significant increase in the religious issue. At the same time, such notable exceptions as Judge Christie's remarkable victory in McDowell County indicate that other issues may have outweighed that of the church. In considering the religious issue in every section of the state, most of the Kennedy, Humphrey and neutral observers mentioned other matters within the context of religion. Economic problems, the legend of the New Deal and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and many other concerns of the end of one decade and the beginning of another were apparent.

74 Ibid., p. 14.
CHAPTER V
THE ISSUES:
RELIGION, CHARLESTON

Kanawha County itself presents an interesting study in both the most and the least sophisticated aspects of life in West Virginia. While it is part of a metropolitan area of more than a quarter of a million, there are remote coal camps nearby which have much more in common with the clergy and politicians of Welch or Logan than they do with the corporate lawyer members of the Charleston Symphony board, the art gallery at Sunrise, or one of the several country clubs of the area. The Charleston suburb of St. Albans boasts that it has more Ph.D.'s per capita than any other town in the country. This, if so, is because of the high concentration of chemists, physicists, mathematicians and others serving the highly technical industries of the Kanawha Valley. On the other hand, the rattlesnake religions which Mario DePaulo of Beckley held in such contempt may be conducting their sometimes deadly rituals nearby. DePaulo's primitive or hard-shelled religions exist side by side with the more liberal minded Protestants, northern and southern. Dating back to the early period of the automobile the local saying was that these people lived beyond the "hard roads."

Since World War II, and at least until the advent of the flower children and the back-to-nature movement, population experts frequently reported that the United States was generally urban with two thirds of
all Americans living in urban areas with the other one third in rural areas. For West Virginia, however, quite the opposite was true; two thirds were considered rural, one third urban. Thus the multiplicity of post offices in the state with such names as War, Man, Pinch, Jane Lew, Pughtown, Hundred, etc., signified a fragmentation of communities and communication in a state already noted for its many sectional differences. For this reason there was generally no strong press in the state and the typical newspaper was not the small town daily with its local William Allen White as editor, but a county weekly presided over by its printer-owner who kept his paper alive with the required legal advertising and by job printing on the side. While the major cities all had one or two quite respectable dailies, the state press, for those who cared to keep informed about state politics and affairs, was dominated by the Charleston Daily Mail, Republican, and the Charleston Gazette, Democratic. Most public figures, judges, educators, members of the legislature, and political buffs felt compelled to read one or the other at least irregularly.

Because the Democrats outnumber the Republicans in such large numbers in most sections of the state, it is difficult to speak of the elder statesman of the party. It is possible, however, to say that W. E. Chilton, III, owner and publisher of the Charleston Gazette, is the chief publicist or nuncio for at least the liberal wing of the party. Running his paper somewhat in the image of an ivy league fraternity house, he allows his editors and writers a great deal of freedom, appointing "hindsight" editors, and frequently permits and encourages different Gazette writers to take opposing positions or even speak out
against the paper's editorial policy with which they may take umbrage. Thus, in the 1960 primary, the Protestant W. E. Chilton, III, a name shortened to Ned or "Ned the Red" by local conservatives who distrusted his mild liberalism, was a strong supporter of Adlai Stevenson. However, his political editor, Harry G. Hoffman, a Roman Catholic, was very much in the Kennedy camp.

As a delegate-at-large to the Democratic convention in Los Angeles, Chilton voted for Stevenson even though he had voted for Kennedy in the primary as Stevenson's name was not on the "popularity contest" ballot. He revealed that he personally had always had some reservations about the Catholic Church and felt that it was a factor in the primary, but that he expected Kennedy to win. He was so sure of the Kennedy victory in the fall election that he made a bet with an acquaintance that Kennedy would carry the nation, the state, and Kanawha County.

I lost on my home county. I had to pay off. In other words, it was a sucker bet. It was a 3 to 1 in essence, but I lost in Kanawha County and I think to a certain extent, perhaps, I'm prejudiced myself, but I think that an analysis of those results would show that I lost in those areas where I think there is a certain amount of Catholic bias.¹

In discussing the problem of reverse prejudice, or that a voter might prefer Humphrey but feel compelled to support Kennedy to show that he was free of prejudice, Chilton noted,

I think that certain people in the Kennedy camp used the religious issue shabbily. I think Joe Alsop, who was obviously for Kennedy, used it miserably and in some columns that he wrote and

polls that he took. I think the outside press blew up the business of Catholicism, whereas our paper, I think, and a number of state papers were fairer. There was the famous instance of the "Hillbilly," which ran the joking headline which went something like this: "My grandpappy ain't going to vote for no Catholic," which the Herald Tribune put up as an example of West Virginia bias and bigotry, when actually the whole story was a spoof and an ironic commentary on the campaign and had absolutely nothing to do with prejudice at all. It was written by a Republican who wasn't going to vote for either one of them under any circumstances and was attempting to use the situation as a humorous incident, and the Herald Tribune misinterpreted it—so did the Washington Post. The Washington Post later had the decency to apologize, but the Herald Tribune never bothered to.2

Chilton then discussed the nature of politics in the social life of West Virginians during the campaign which he thought might differ a bit from elsewhere in the country.

I think in many instances the outside press completely misinterpreted bigotry, whereas the press in West Virginia didn't feel that this bigotry existed. For instance, our own city editor on our paper took Ed Morgan, the ABC commentator, when he came to our city, to a small community not too far outside of Charleston and they interviewed about 8 or 10 people on the street. West Virginians, I think, in many ways, as Mr. White pointed out in his book, are friendly people and this is a pretty free state. We take our politics seriously. We'll argue at the drop of a hat, and I think that elsewhere in ordinary polite living room conversation, if a group of Catholics were present and a group of Protestants, they probably wouldn't get into a religious argument. Well, in West Virginia a religious argument might very well develop. Ed and Andy were in this small community, interviewing various people, asking them whether or not they would vote for Kennedy, and the overwhelming consensus was that Kennedy won their poll hands down without any question, and Anderson, incidentally, all along said Kennedy would win, and win pretty big. Kennedy won this poll hands down, and in the community some of them did make this comment—they said they were getting awfully sick of the reports coming out about

2Ibid., p. 5.
Catholic bias, but they didn't think that would influence them to vote for Humphrey. They intended to vote for Kennedy, but if the bias kept up, they just might vote against Kennedy. They gave as an example that in their community, although they were not Catholic, the Protestants of this particular community had helped the Catholics build a local church and had all gotten together to build a local church. I wish I could give you the name of the community, but I've forgotten.3

The primary results, as summarized by Chilton, included a story similar to the missed opportunity of Peter Lisagore's lost scoop from Welch. William Lawrence of the New York Times had predicted a close race and if not that, a Humphrey victory. Election night, at the Charleston Press Club, with a Kennedy victory in the wind, Chilton related:

The first precinct came in. It's traditional in West Virginia that a precinct in Hardy County is always the first precinct in. It's similar to the New Hampshire precinct that counts the votes—votes at 11:00 and then counts the votes at 12:00, so that they can come in before the general 7:20. The polls close—what, at 7:30? Kennedy led this precinct by a substantial majority. It's a small precinct. We'll say it was 48 to 24—something like that, but it wasn't quite two to one, but it sure was a sizable majority, and from then on he led all through the night. About an hour and a half after the results had been in, Bill Lawrence came over to me. I think I had been kidding him, because that morning he had a story in the Times which had been on the front page to the effect that the race was a horse race, but it looked as if, unless Kennedy could close the gap—then it would be an upset—Humphrey was going to win. But of course, by this time, in the results of the election, it was a runaway. It was a landslide for Kennedy, and I was joshing Bill about it. Bill ordinarily doesn't take joking too friendly, but he was in a fairly good mood that evening, and he came over and told me confidentially: "Son of a bitch, if we had only gone with the Times team." And I said, "What in the world do you mean?" And he said, "Well, we had a Times team in here of poll takers and they took a

3 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
poll and they predicted this landslide, but we didn't have enough guts to use it."

The Gazette's political editor, Harry G. Hoffman, had moved to Charleston from a Wheeling paper in the more Catholic Panhandle and, as noted previously, was a Catholic himself. During the primary he covered both candidates extensively and related that his first contact with the religious issue came in the spring of 1959 when Theodore Sorenson and others traveled to the state to assess the religious issue. Hoffman noted that the Catholic population was about five percent of the state's total and said that the political visitors left West Virginia with mixed feelings that "a Catholic would never be able to win," or that "this very definitely would be good territory for him to test the issue." The issue did develop, and after the filing date, Hoffman thought that Kennedy may have been the recipient of a favorable backlash; some voters who had serious doubts about him "may have voted for Senator Kennedy just to make sure that people did not think they were prejudiced." Thus, he reaffirmed a conclusion arrived at earlier by other observers of the election. It did work the other way, however, as he noted from something which happened early in the campaign. Hoffman was at Morris Harvey College, nominally a Methodist institution, to cover a Kennedy speech and overheard a boy ask a girl if she were going to attend the rally. She replied no and gave as her reason, "Well, I'm not a Catholic; does that answer your question?" The editor reported that at

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4Ibid., pp. 7-8.
6Ibid., p. 2.
7Ibid., p. 3.
the rally, however, Kennedy got his biggest hand when he gave a
straight-forward answer to a long and involved question having to do
with the religious issue.

Later in the fall, Hoffman reported that a local Baptist minister
launched a series of bitter attacks on the Catholic Church and Senator
Kennedy in passing. This had a two-fold effect, according to the editor;
Catholics worked even harder for a victory and attendance at the minis­
ter's Bible class at the church fell off until only a handful were
showing up each Sunday. A parishioner of the abrasive clergyman told
Hoffman that he was convinced that many of the members were so incensed
by what the minister had to say that they just quit attending. The
minister's reason for opposing Kennedy was the familiar one, that a
Catholic in the White House would be under the control of the Pope and
that this would be a violation of the Constitution. Charitable himself,
Hoffman was reluctant to call this bigotry, but thought that some of
these opponents had honest and sincere doubts which they were unable to
resolve. At the same time, Hoffman seemed certain that a number of
Catholic Republicans, who might have otherwise supported their party's
nominee, voted for Kennedy in the fall because of religion. Even with
this switch, Hoffman felt that Kennedy's church cost him votes in the
general election and that prejudice had not disappeared after the spring
election. He explained his reasoning:

I don't think it was buried in the primary. And I
think the West Virginia election returns for November,
1960, bear this out. In that campaign there were two
very attractive candidates running for United States
senator. Cecil H. Underwood, who at the time was
governor of West Virginia, was the Republican nominee,
and the Democratic nominee was Jennings Randolph, who
had long been a favorite among West Virginia voters. Both of these men were able vote getters, attractive candidates, the kind who would bring out a maximum number of voters. And yet, there were four thousand more votes cast for president in that general election than for United States Senator. And Senator Jennings Randolph, the Democratic nominee, won by a majority of about eight-nine thousand, whereas Senator Kennedy's margin of victory was only forty-five thousand. And incidentally, there were about six thousand fewer votes cast for governor than for president.®

Concerning the mixture of money with religion in the primary, a charge not widely heard in the general as the state had so few electoral votes, Hoffman quoted from the former Attorney General and former Judge Ira Judson Partlow of McDowell County who said that the "bought votes" were inconsequential. This was true, the Judge explained, "because both sides were buying them, and when you get right down to it, the election was decided by the honest unbought vote." Hoffman added on his own, "And I'm inclined to that viewpoint."9

Hoffman summarized his view of the religious issue by saying that while some Catholics may have volunteered at the lower levels, he knew few if any Catholics who were really active or carried the burden of the campaign at the state-wide level. Finally, the editor noted,

There's no doubt in my mind that the West Virginia primary, by blunting the religious issue, so to speak, was a big factor in Senator Kennedy's nomination for the presidency. I know that he was convinced of that. I heard him say on more than one occasion that West Virginia won him the nomination, and Senator Kennedy maintained this interest in West Virginia after his election to the presidency.10

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®Ibid., p. 4.
9Ibid., pp. 8-9.
10Ibid., p. 10.
Charles M. Love, Jr., a courtly and faintly southern corporation lawyer, represented the more conservative wing of the Democratic party in the state and in the Kennedy campaign. A realist about his own role, he took pride in having lived on the family farm which had been a Revolutionary War grant and he was very much aware of the burden which he carried as a wealthy, somewhat aristocratic lawyer representing some of the country's top corporations. When he attempted to enlist some of his friends in the Kennedy campaign, he reported,

> I could not interest all of them in Senator Kennedy, but I could and did interest many of them, and they gave him a standing when he entered West Virginia, which he could not have gotten if he had not had those people endorsing his candidacy.¹¹

The campaigners from other states seemed to appreciate his participation because, he related, one of the Rhode Island visitors came to him after a luncheon he had given for some of his corporate friends and the visitor said to him,

> "You know, Mr. Love, this has been a delightful day. I'm sorry that we have to leave. It is different from the political gatherings in my state." I said, "Oh, in what manner?" He said, "Well, there we don't have this type of people interested in politics." And I think he was absolutely sincere. I don't think he was trying to flatter me."¹²

One can only speculate that in Rhode Island, Love's friends would probably have been Republicans.

Love's first advice to Kennedy had been quite negative. He explained to Kennedy, before he filed in the state, that while Kennedy

¹²Ibid., p. 9.
might win at the top of the ticket in the popularity contest, he might wind up with delegates who were unpledged and unbound to vote for him at the convention. This might do more harm than good to the senator's future prospects. Of his own advice, Love said, "Of course, he [Kennedy] was right about it--I'm sorry I gave him the wrong advice." As an establishment Protestant, Love decided to support Kennedy himself because he thought that he had the best chance of any Democrat at beating Nixon. He had given up Stevenson as a two-time loser with great reluctance.

Of Nixon he said,

I believe, that while I was tremendously attracted to Senator Kennedy, the thing I believe that actually sold me and sold many others somewhat similarly situated was the impending threat of the election of Richard Nixon as President, which scared us, not only as Democrats but as citizens, and I think we could have been—in order to avoid that—induced to support almost anybody because we had some experience with Mr. Nixon here, as you may remember. It was in Wheeling, West Virginia, that General Eisenhower took him in his arms and said, "My son, my son," and forgave him and so forth, which I think is a perfectly splendid thing, but I don't want that kind of people handling my money or my government. As for the debate over Kennedy's religion, it was of no importance to Love. He described his own career as a Sunday School Superintendent and his services as an Elder and a Trustee to the largest Presbyterian Church in the state, the First Presbyterian of Charleston. Concerning Catholics, he quoted his mother as having said that the only difference

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13 Ibid., p. 7.

14 Ibid., p. 3.
she could see between Catholics and Protestants was "that the Catholics were more faithful in attending church." This she knew for certain because she lived just a half a block from the Catholic Church in Charleston. Love said at the time he knew that Kennedy's religion would "cost us a few votes" but thought that his background, education and personality would more than compensate for this liability. Love reported that he had received some anti-Catholic hate mail, as had Bruce Hoff of Parkersburg, but felt that it was relatively unimportant in the campaign.

Love went on to explain that he and some of his friends thought Senator Humphrey to be too liberal or even "socialistic." Even if Humphrey had had twice the money that Kennedy spent, Love remarked, he could not have beaten Kennedy and, in one word, he thought the victory went to Kennedy because of his personality. To Love and his friends the real issue was preventing a Nixon victory in the fall, and the Democratic candidate's religion was not an issue for him or any of his friends. He might be able to restrain his enthusiasm for the more liberal features of the New Frontier, but even that was preferable when the alternative, a Republican victory, was considered.

If Love represented the respectable right of the state's Democrats, then Miles Stanley, President of the A.F. of L.-C.I.O., represented the respectable left wing of the party. Stanley's interests were largely economic and labor-oriented, a subject to be discussed in the next chapter, but he did have some comments on the religious issue as he

15Ibid., p. 5.
saw it. Stanley reaffirmed the point made by others earlier that his organization's attitude was one of strict neutrality vis-a-vis both candidates. The national leadership of the union had taken this position and although the members of the state organization were not required to follow such a policy, they decided that they would. Stanley and his officers cooperated with both candidates, he explained:

In extending cooperation to each of the candidates, this involved the transmission of lists of leading labor people in the state, leaders of our organization, to each of them, which we did—an exact duplicate—working closely with their West Virginia people—in the late President's case, Mr. Ralph Dungan, and in the case of Senator Humphrey, Rein Vanderzee. 16

As early as mid-1959, Stanley had received a message from Kennedy, relayed through the national office, that the Senator wished to talk to him the next time he was in Washington. During the meeting, Kennedy asked Stanley "very candidly" what effect he thought religion might have on his anticipated campaign in West Virginia. Stanley replied, "I equally as candidly answered him that I thought it would have an adverse effect. I'm happy to say in retrospect that I was proved wrong." 17 Later Stanley felt that he had been proved wrong because of the manner in which Kennedy handled the question.

I think he was able, by meeting the issue head-on as he did and discussing it very openly and very frankly, to overcome the sentiment. I feel that my advice to him in 1959 was essentially correct. Had the religious issue been kept in the background and not discussed openly and frankly as he chose to do, I believe it would have had a very adverse effect on the campaign. 18

16 Interview with Miles Stanley, July 13, 1964, p. 4.
17 Ibid., p. 1.
18 Ibid., p. 10.
Concerning religion and the volunteers, Stanley more or less summarized his attitude by saying,

Many people, young people that I knew were associated with the Kennedy campaign, were devout Protestants. But many were, of course, of the Catholic faith, and I think that it aroused somewhat of the state patriotism of these young people—you know, to defend the state and do what they could to see that people didn't go out and vote against Senator Kennedy just because he was of the Catholic faith. They wanted to defend their own—not only their state but perhaps their faith to some extent.\(^{19}\)

While it may have been difficult to pick the leading figure in the Democratic Party in West Virginia, there seemed to be no doubt that the black attorney, William L. Lonesome, was considered to be the dean of the black community.\(^{20}\) While his office was in a downtown Charleston office building housing other professionals, he and his family lived at nearby Institute, the home of one of the state's former all-black colleges with its fairly large black middle class population.\(^{21}\)

Although Lonesome and his fellow blacks were concerned chiefly with civil rights, the subject of religion did enter into their thinking. Taking note of the fact that about sixty-five percent of the blacks in the state were Democrats and that there were about twenty-one counties in the state where there was an appreciable number of black voters, Lonesome supplied Marjorie Lawson of the Kennedy staff with a list of

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 12.

\(^{20}\)At that time (1964, 1965) both the word Negro and colored were quite acceptable to blacks and were used by them, as by many of the whites, in the interviews.

\(^{21}\)After 1954 the black colleges had gone through a reverse integration, during which they attracted many white students from the area.
names of influential blacks in the state. He went on to suggest that she use his name when contacting them about the campaign and the primary. Lonesome had moved to support Kennedy after sensing that he was "one who would do what he said or could place into action the things that he had expressed." Some of his fellow blacks as well as whites did not share his point of view. "There was some skepticism on the part of some on Kennedy's religious faith, but this skepticism purely came from those whom I considered the conservative thinkers of the Democratic party." Lonesome explained at least one anti-Kennedy episode involving a black minister in a black church in the following terms:

The reaction among the Negroes was a bit different from the total population. The Negroes were looking at Senator Kennedy for what he stood for and for the attitude and philosophy that he displayed, rather than his religion. They did not take this religious issue in the same manner as the conservatives took it. However, the Negro Republicans were rather vocal in their denunciation of Senator Kennedy. I remember attending a meeting down in Huntington at which a Negro minister got up in the pulpit and virtually preached his sermon against Senator Kennedy, stating that if he was elected President of the United States the Pope would rule the United States, which is something that I did not agree with then. History proves that it was incorrect. And the majority of the Negroes in the Democratic Party did not accept this expression on the part of those who denounced him because of his religious affiliation.

The black attorney went on to note that the difference between the two senators was a matter of style rather than a wide difference of viewpoint:

22 Interview with William L. Lonesome, July 14, 1964, p. 3.
23 Ibid., p. 4.
24 Ibid., p. 5.
There wasn't any basic difference in their thinking. In some instances, perhaps, Senator Humphrey may have been a bit more outspoken than Senator Kennedy. But the thing that more or less attracted Senator Kennedy to the Negro people, aside from his outspoken attitudes and philosophy, was the fact that here was a youngster, a vibrant individual, who mixed well with the people, who was not afraid of them, who shook hands with them, who put his arms around them and walked in groups with them, and talked with them sometimes in groups of twos and threes. This closeness that Senator Kennedy demonstrated and exhibited, in my opinion, had a more pronounced effect on the Negro people than the outspoken attitude of Senator Humphrey.25

Lonesome reaffirmed this later by stating that he thought the difference between the two candidates not one of ideologies but one of personality and personal relationships. Here he felt Kennedy had the edge on his rival. In addition, many black Democrats felt, as he did, that Humphrey could be a stalking-horse and that a vote for him might ultimately be a vote for Lyndon Johnson or some other Democrat. With respect to religion in the fall campaign, Lonesome in turn agreed with many other observers that there was a reluctance on the part of the other Democratic candidates to become too closely identified with the head of the ticket. "Most of those were afraid; they shied away from the religious issue. They ran more or less as a gang of individuals rather than running as a team on a ticket."26

John E. Amos, corporate attorney and former legislative leader and a man whose record would entitle him to be considered a member of the Democratic establishment along with Charles Love, took quite a different

25Ibid., p. 6.
26Ibid., p. 16.
view of Kennedy than had his fellow Democrat. Amos, in fact, seemed to belong to that class of fellow professionals with whom Love had no influence in selling the Kennedy cause. From the beginning, Amos had felt indebted to Lyndon Johnson because he had come into the state during the important 1958 senatorial race and campaigned for both Byrd and Randolph who were running for the two senate seats both up for election at the same time. The Democrats were successful and Amos continued to keep in close touch with the Senate majority leader.

While testing the political waters in the state early in 1960, some of the Kennedy people, possibly Lawrence F. O'Brien, called on Amos and sought his advice, and he advised:

I told him at that time that I didn't think it was a good idea because it couldn't help but present to the nation the very worst picture of West Virginia, that it would accomplish no purpose as far as delegates were concerned since the winning or losing of a presidential primary in West Virginia wouldn't control how delegates would vote in the Convention. In other words, the result of the primary did not bind our Convention delegates. I told them that I felt obligated to support Senator Johnson at the Convention because of the great help he had loaned us in the elections and because of the great aid he had been to West Virginia.

Amos prefaced his support of Johnson with a review of his disenchantment with the current Republican governor, Cecil Underwood, the state's two incumbent Republican senators, and President Eisenhower.

27 Something of Amos's political and corporate importance in the state may be discerned from the fact that a two million kilowatt power plant near Charleston, owned jointly by American Electric Power and Ohio Power has been named for him.

28 Interview with John E. Amos, August 6, 1965, p. 9.
because:

There was a feeling all of these people had forgotten that West Virginia even existed. It was impossible to get President Eisenhower to recognize that the economy of West Virginia was going downhill very rapidly and that we needed help badly. It was very difficult to get any aid from the federal government in West Virginia. Plants were being located in all other states, but none in West Virginia. We had no military installations, no governmental offices located here that were of any importance in the matter of employment.29

As the campaign for the nomination developed, Amos took no part and sat on the sideline. He was, however, an interested observer, noting that he sympathized with Humphrey because he was the underdog and because Kennedy's resources were so much greater, including as Humphrey complained, such a much larger family. Had their resources been evenly matched, Amos felt Humphrey would have had a much better chance, or as he put it, "It certainly would have made a difference in the majority. A little more resources and some people who knew how to use them, [and] an organization that knew what to do with them."30

In considering the much discussed subject of religion, Amos offered a rather complete analysis:

I don't think it [religion] was a great issue in this state, and I don't think that there was ever any indication that it would be a great issue in this state. I don't think it had any great effect on the election. While West Virginia may be a state which has often been described as poor, we do not have a great deal of religious bigotry here. We never have had any great difficulty between the Protestant and Catholic groups. In a way it was helpful to him because a great many people of the Catholic faith, who had never participated to my knowledge in elections, became greatly

29 Ibid., p. 4.
30 Ibid., p. 16.
in Senator Kennedy's election and were very helpful to him among the independent groups who hadn't been involved much in organized politics up to this time. Of course, by and large, Catholics in West Virginia are predominantly Democratic. While they weren't segregated as to religion in our organizations, there were quite a few Catholics who held office in West Virginia. I never noticed any resentment toward political candidates in the state because of their religion. We had Catholics on our Supreme Court and nothing was ever said about it. We had Catholics in other offices in the state and nothing was ever said about it, until this election. I mean nothing of any real moment. There was never any controversy or any public contest on account of religion.31

Because of the wide national discussion of religion in West Virginia, Amos went on to observe that "it made our people here angry when the press carried stories about sections being anti-Kennedy because of his religion."32 Because he saw little or no real religious conflict in the state during the primary, the attorney maintained that this was also true in the general election. A few voters may have been influenced by the church-state issue, but certainly not in proportion to the public discussion and the press reports.

At the same time he saw the aid of both of the Roosevelts, mother and son, as being most helpful to Kennedy because of the legend of the New Deal. Also, he continued, it was thought that Senator Humphrey had Senator Johnson's support but "it certainly didn't help him very much."33 Concerning the Kennedy victory, he felt that "the greatest help he got at that time was through the acceptance by the Democratic county

31Ibid., pp. 16-18.
32Ibid., p. 19.
33Ibid., p. 20.
organizations in West Virginia, and particularly in southern West Virginia.\textsuperscript{34} In addition to this organization support, Amos said of the winner, "As the campaign went on, there's no denying that he presented a picture of reality, vim, vigor, health, honesty, and integrity that was different for any candidate to match."\textsuperscript{35} This was praise indeed from a man whose sympathies were with his opponent.

Two governors of the state, W. W. Barron, in office during the Kennedy years, and Hulett C. Smith, in office from 1965 to 1971, were also interviewed in Charleston during the summer of 1965. Barron, "Wally" in the tradition of nicknames in the state's politics, was a candidate in the primary and general election of the Kennedy campaign. He was recognized as an able administrator by both his friends and opponents and as the state's chief executive was responsible for organizing, with the aid of McDonough, the political rewards which flowed into the state as a result of Kennedy's November victory. A Presbyterian minister's son from Elkins, his principal problem turned out to be a slight flaw in his character. After leaving office he was indicted and convicted for jury tampering and served some time in one of the more comfortable federal penitentiaries which would later house some members of the Nixon administration.

During the primary, Barron reported that he remained neutral in the presidential struggle as he was understandably fighting for his own campaign. This fact has been noted by others and is a traditional posture which any candidate may be expected to assume. Barron noted,

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 21.  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 22.
contrary to the views of some other natives of his state, that West Virginia was considered to be in the heart of the "Bible Belt" and the primary was felt to be an accurate test of Senator Kennedy's acceptability. If he could win or even do well in West Virginia, he could do so much to put the lie to the traditional American notion that a Catholic could not be elected President of the United States.\(^{36}\)

This contest, he continued, through massive press coverage, "demonstrated to all the nation that the people in West Virginia and Appalachia were not backward, narrow-minded types that some detractors had portrayed." This coverage also, he felt, "had a very healthy and stimulating effect on our people."\(^{37}\)

Much of the Barron interview relates to the federal-state relationship, but the Governor did comment on the Kennedy organization, the religious issue, and the Humphrey campaign.

During the course of the campaign, many times I ran across the working team of Senator Kennedy which was actually remarkable. In fact, I think a major reason Senator Kennedy won in West Virginia was because he had such a wonderful team. They were very persuasive. The question of whether the President was a Catholic or not a Catholic actually did not become a major issue in the minds of our people. For instance, in campaigning down in the southern part of the state where the Shrine is very strong, I saw a great number of people who had the Shrine pin on who also carried a Kennedy button. I think that Senator Humphrey, while he made a wonderful campaign, just didn't have the money; I don't think he had the team. I think he did everything possible but Senator Kennedy simply just had too much going for him here in West Virginia. When Senator Humphrey first entered the West Virginia primary, I was favorable toward him because the Senator was a liberal and he had an organization, supposedly, going for him in all the unions in West Virginia, which represented a pretty powerful force

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\(^{36}\) Interview with William Wallace Barron, August 10, 1965, pp. 2-3.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 3.
to have behind him. But, again, when Senator Kennedy came in, the support which Senator Humphrey had as a liberal and having the unions behind him seemed to disappear, and I still say that it was mostly teamwork, organization, and the personal charm of President Kennedy which overcame that. There wasn't much Senator Humphrey could do about it.  

The Governor valued his contacts with the President, as did all of the others who had had them. In describing these meetings he used many of the same words which others had to describe the President as a man of great charm and warmth.

Hulett Smith, Barron's Commissioner of Commerce and successor in the office, remained untouched by the scandals of his predecessor's administration and went on to reap many of the rewards of the regional development programs and the Appalachian program for the state. Smith's first contact with Kennedy was at the 1956 Democratic Convention and the next one at a Democratic dinner in 1958 in Parkersburg during the senatorial election in which John Amos was so active. Later, Smith and others attended a school or workshop at Bethel, Maine, sponsored by the Democratic National Committee, which attracted many of those who would be active in the 1960 election. At that time, West Virginia had its first Republican governor since 1932 and the Democrats were understandably anxious to win back the state house. With this in mind, Smith commented on Kennedy's proposed candidacy.

There was still a feeling of not knowing who this young man was, what his ideas were, what he was attempting to do. Was he really trying to use West Virginia? Just what was involved? Some of the political leaders at the time, including the

38 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
late Arthur Koontz, who was then National Committeeman, felt that as far as the political situation in West Virginia was concerned—with our own gubernatorial election and senatorial election—it might have been in the best interest of West Virginia politics if we had neither Senator Humphrey nor Senator Kennedy in the presidential preference primary.\(^3^9\)

Smith went on to observe that those opposed to Kennedy were not necessarily for Humphrey, but may have wanted to support Johnson or Senator Stuart Symington. Kennedy went on to victory, however, because he "had developed much stronger alliances with the basic strength of the Democratic party at the time in the major Democratic counties" and "he was able to win on his own personality."\(^4^0\)

Smith also said that just before the election the polls had shown that the religious issue was not going to be the main one and he had no collection of stories with respect to tolerance and intolerance during the primary. He did note that the religious issue did pop up again in the fall election and in some cases came from Ohio where many West Virginians had moved but at the same time still maintained their residences in their former state for voting purposes. He then described some of the bitter attacks on religion in the areas which bordered West Virginia and felt that these had a specific effect on Cabell (Huntington) and Wood (Parkersburg) Counties. The Governor pointed out that there was an interstate labor market along the river that reached as far east as Kanawha (Charleston) County and this may have had something to do with the Kennedy problems there.

\(^{3^9}\)Interview with Hulett C. Smith, June 17, 1965.

\(^{4^0}\)Ibid., p. 9.
In 1960 Senator Jennings Randolph had not yet become the patriarch of both the Democratic party in the state and of the United States Senate. He had entered national politics as a congressman in 1932 and five decades later was the sole survivor of the first one hundred days of the New Deal in either the House or the Senate. His role in 1960 was to be that of a friend of both of his senatorial colleagues, refusing to identify himself too closely with either candidate. His West Virginia colleague, Senator Robert Byrd, not interviewed in the Kennedy Library project, identified more closely with Lyndon Johnson and carried the Johnson cause to the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles.

Randolph told of Kennedy coming to him at his seat on the Senate floor and asking him "rather seriously and yet rather lightly, 'Jennings, do you think I would have any chance if I entered the West Virginia primary?" Randolph replied:

"Senator Kennedy, I feel you should enter the West Virginia primary. I believe that there is a significant issue at stake in the United States. We've heard the rumblings throughout the country that there is opposition to a man not because of the man, but because of the religion that he holds. I told him that I was proud of my West Virginia heritage, that I believed here was a testing ground where he could prove something that would be helpful not only to him but to the people of the United States as a whole—helpful, in fact, to our image throughout the world. He said that this was a rather new thought to him about using West Virginia as a typical state from the standpoint of this factor which I was stressing, namely, refuting religious prejudice."

Randolph went on to advise his fellow senator that he could not predict either defeat or victory at that time, but thought that Kennedy owed it to himself and to his country to test this problem "that I know

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41 Interview with Senator Jennings Randolph, July 5, 1965, pp. 3-4.
exists among some of the people of West Virginia." Later, just before the election, Randolph remembered with some pride that he predicted a Kennedy victory. The senator had one story about a conversation with a constituent which illustrated a point made earlier by the publisher, Ned Chilton, and by some of the Humphrey supporters. He said that a week before the primary, in his home town of Elkins,

I passed the Presbyterian Church and a gentleman and his wife came out and I shook hands with them. I talked with them and I didn’t initiate the subject. "Jennings, we are voting for Senator Kennedy on Tuesday." I asked, "Why?" They replied, "Well, people say that Protestants won’t vote for Senator Kennedy because he is a Catholic. We want to prove that’s not true." I stressed, "Then really you are leaning backwards to prove yourselves." The husband said, "That is exactly right." And he continued: "I know many people in the First Presbyterian Church here in Elkins who are doing just what we are doing." I had sensed and I had heard that this was true in other areas of West Virginia.

Esther Peters and her son, Charles G. Peters, Jr., of Charleston, were important in the Charleston campaign in their more immediate area. Mrs. Peters had a wide circle of friends as a society leader and as a former president of the League of Women Voters in the county. She served during the campaign as the Chairman of the Women for Kennedy of the Sixth Congressional District. In this role she felt that the young women would love Kennedy from the romantic standpoint and that the older women would love him out of their motherly instinct. She did feel, however, that his youth and religion might be a hindrance to him. She observed that among the volunteers she met she felt that Catholic

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42bid., p. 4.
43bid., p. 8.
men probably outnumbered the Catholic women at the beginning of the campaign but that eventually it became a very mixed group representing a wide variety of religions.

Concerning prejudice itself, Mrs. Peters recounted an interesting conversion to her Kennedy cause. With the help of Congresswoman Edith Green, in Charleston to work for Kennedy, she entertained small groups at her home to promote the Senator's cause. One clergyman came, but gave no hint of his feelings as he left. The next day he phoned with this message: "Mrs. Peters, I've been thinking about our meeting last night. I've prayed for guidance and I believe there are enough of us Protestants to keep an eye on that Catholic. I'm happy to support Senator Kennedy."\(^{44}\) At the same time, she received some bitter and anonymous letters attacking her support of the Senator. She also felt that she thought Humphrey picked up some votes that were not for him, but just anti-Catholic votes. Even though some of this bitterness lasted into the general election, she reported a growing open-mindedness from a great many people who told her that although they had voted against Kennedy in the primary because of his religion, they planned to support him in the fall. Some went on to tell her that they were ashamed that they had voted against Kennedy because of his religion.

Charles Peters, Jr., active in Kanawha County, was himself a successful candidate for the state legislature in 1960 and later became the Peace Corps administrator. Although he had followed Kennedy's earlier career, it was the attorney Charles Love who contacted him and

\(^{44}\) Interview with Esther Peters, July 14, 1965, p. 5.
his mother and urged them to get involved in the local campaign. At the beginning of the discussion about the primary in the state, Peters had doubts about a Kennedy victory; this, because after he and Theodore Sorensen had met with a number of local religious leaders to discuss the issue, he reported that they "found that only two Jewish rabbis and one of six Protestant ministers present had any sympathy for the idea of a Catholic running for president. The other ministers were quite vigorously against it." Peters went on to add that while it was clear that they were less hostile at the end of the meeting than at the beginning, "they were not going to use their influence to help keep the religious issue out of the campaign."\(^4^5\) He said of himself that it had always been quite hard for him to understand anti-Catholicism and that he had little sympathy for such attitudes. When he asked some of the Protestant ministers why they felt that way, "they would cite specific examples of some priest who had interfered in a marriage of one of their parishioners to a Catholic or something like that."\(^4^6\) Peters added that "lunatic" anti-Catholicism was seldom a part of the battle in Kanawha County and repeated that the observation made by the ministers was also given to him by Protestant laymen, that such conflict usually involved some particular experience which they had experienced with a Catholic clergyman.

Peters credits two factors as important in helping overcome these attitudes about the candidate's church. The first was Kennedy's war record and the second was the campaigning of Roosevelt, Jr.

In a certain sense, FDR, Jr., to many people in West Virginia, was almost God's son coming down and saying

\(^4^5\) Interview with Charles G. Peters, Jr., October 4, 1964, p. 7.
\(^4^6\) Ibid., pp. 8-9.
that it was all right to vote for this Catholic, that it was permissible, that it wasn't something terrible to do. To me, FDR, Jr., made it possible for many people to vote for Kennedy that couldn't have conceived of it as a possibility before.  

At the same time, Peters sensed that some voters who had reservations about religion may have voted for Kennedy because he might have a greater chance than Humphrey at beating Nixon in the fall contest. Contrary to many others, Peters felt that Kennedy was considered an asset by those running for state and local offices in the fall and that a high degree of harmony existed in the general election. On the subject of the religious affiliations of the volunteers, he felt that the dominant members of the group in Kanawha County were middle class Catholics and that they carried most of the burden in the campaign.

47Ibid., p. 12.
CHAPTER VI

THE ISSUES: ECONOMIC AND OTHERS

Economic and other issues began to emerge unexpectedly while the West Virginians and the rest of the nation had their attention riveted to the subject of religious toleration. Poverty in the coal counties, the southern triangle, became a nightly feature of the major networks' news programs because of the area's political importance. Gradually Kennedy and Humphrey realized that this might indeed be the central issue in the campaign as far as most voting Democrats were concerned, and gradually many of those interviewed came to that same conclusion themselves. Such diverse campaigners as Robert McDonough, in prosperous Parkersburg, and Andrew Houvouras, downstate in relatively prosperous Huntington, came to that opinion. So did Thomas Godby and Raymond Chafin in poverty-stricken Logan in the heart of the coal fields.

The nation learned more, perhaps, than it wanted to know about the economy of West Virginia and Appalachia, but the subject was not considered to be of the same importance as the argument over religion which might determine the party's nominee at the upcoming convention. Not all of the interviews for the Kennedy Library contained extensive material on the business, economic and labor conditions in the state as seen by the participants; thus the subject can be reviewed much more quickly than that of religion.

Generally, West Virginia had not shared the middle-class glow of Professor Galbraith's affluent society of the post-war years. With
much of the rest of the South, the state lagged behind in the Eisenhower prosperity of the 1950s. The state had received much from the public works projects of the New Deal, and Eleanor Roosevelt herself had a model coal town named in her honor and aided in the design of Arthurdale, a coal housing project near Morgantown. Coal boomed during World War II, but no large or permanent military bases were placed in the rough terrain or in a climate unsuited for air force trainees. In the years after the war the state's economy, with a few notable exceptions, followed the quarterly and yearly reports of the coal and steel companies. Regional economic differences in the late 1950s were every bit as important as the other sectional differences, and the most depressed area was undoubtedly the country south of the Kanawha. For that reason it received the most attention, out of proportion to the rest of the state, and would figure most prominently in the economic image which the media reported to the country and which both Kennedy and Humphrey fixed in their own minds as being West Virginia.

Judge Christie, a strong believer in the economic issues in the election, put it best by summarizing conditions in the 1930s, comparing them with the 1950s and explaining why unemployment, poverty, and the migration to other states increased while coal production either remained constant or actually increased.

All through the '30s the economic situation was bad, there's no doubt about that, but there was hope. While the mines only operated a day or two a week and there was great distress in the coal fields in that period, nevertheless everyone felt that eventually things would be better. The men were still there and the coal mines were still there, the only thing lacking was sufficient work. Comparing the situation now with the situation then, the difference is this--
now, but reason of mechanization, there is no hope in the minds of the unemployed that they will ever become reemployed in the coal mines regardless of how good the coal business is. The production of coal in McDowell County, and the coal fields in general at this time, is perhaps as much or more than it ever has been, but it is being produced by machinery rather than manpower, so it doesn't make any difference now if production stepped up 50%, it wouldn't employ any appreciably larger number of men.¹

Christie had previously touched on this topic in the press release which he had distributed to the visiting reporters who had returned to Welch after the primary victory. In writing about economic conditions, he went on to consider which of the two candidates he thought the voters believed would be better able to improve local conditions.

The most effective theme used by Kennedy in this campaign here was his pledge to take up where Roosevelt left off. This simply tied in with the search of the people for a leader who will do something for them. In this county, where the population has declined almost a third in the past ten years, due to unemployment brought about by automation in the coal mines, one can well understand why the people here chose to vote for one who has "some chance" of being president, rather than for one with no chance at all.

Kennedy was able to convince them of his sincere desire to help them; of his pledge to help them if he should become president. While Humphrey promised more, his words were not accepted, simply because the people knew that he would never be in position to help them. They knew that Humphrey, while a great liberal and a sincere man, would never get to the White House, whereas they felt that Kennedy had at least a 50-50 chance of getting there.²

Raymond Chafin of Logan grew aware of the importance of the economic appeal as noted earlier and thought that it grew in importance

¹Christie interview, p. 4.
as the campaign progressed. His co-worker in Logan, Thomas Godby, described the same trend with a bit more verve. "They came out of the hollows with their bibbed overalls and said, 'I'm going to vote for John Kennedy for president. He's going to do something for us.'"  

Claude Ellis, the third member of the Logan County trio, spoke even more to the economic point when he described a trip he made with Kennedy to one of the more remote coal camps where automation had produced more coal with fewer miners. In a black humour phrase reminiscent of the Hoovervilles of the Great Depression, he referred to the "Eisenhower window blinds" of the area. These were the boarded-up covers of the windows on the deserted company houses. Ellis went on to note that Kennedy and his staff were already proposing the economic rehabilitation of the area through retraining of the miners and, where possible, new industries for the area. Later the New Frontier was able to lure a garment factory to the county, build a new court house, and construct a new parking garage in downtown Logan.

In nearby Welch, Stuart Calhoon, the black attorney, felt that although either candidate could be trusted equally on the sensitive issue of civil rights, it was Kennedy whose economic problem offered the most hope for McDowell County.

In Fayetteville, still in the coal fields, the Humphrey chairman, Marshall West, observed that his candidate may have been distrusted in some circles for his "liberalism" but it was Kennedy who promised, if elected, to use the vast powers of the federal government to do

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^3 Godby interview, p. 6.
something about the coal industry. This promise was made in Wyoming County, which had escaped the worst ravages of automation, as well as in the more depressed counties. Humphrey seemed to offer little of a specific nature to the southern West Virginians when compared with the more detailed Kennedy promises. In general, the attitude of the observers closest to the coal camps and county seats seemed to be that Kennedy was much more sensitive to the economic problems and offered more specific solutions. While not ignoring the issue, Humphrey was less specific and seemed to be running on his long and well-earned reputation as a liberal. While the local residents were happy with the Kennedy promises and the attention which their economic problems attracted, they did express a slight resentment at times of appearing to the rest of the nation as a region full of people who were living in one very large poorhouse.

In Huntington, with its mixed industrial base and large middle class, Bob Myers approached the economic issue by noting that he thought the voters were not much concerned with ideology, saw little difference between the two candidates, but that

The economic condition in West Virginia was perhaps the prime issue. Kennedy's campaigning technique where he hit every hollow, every creekbed, every area of the state, and then continually reminded the people that he had been there, by producing our odd names like "Hurricane," and so forth, on TV and such, showed a real closeness to the people. The Kennedy Organization, the steamroller technique where it was Kennedy everywhere, everywhere--I recall one week in Cabell County alone we had eighteen hundred dollars in petty cash bills in our headquarters, which is pretty fabulous for sound trucks and busses and such. So that it was a theatrical production in a sense, tuned to the serious side of people's welfare
from the standpoint of politics. I don't think that ideology even entered into it. I don't believe, unfortunately, that people were concerned with ideology. Again, perhaps I'm cynical but people quite often are merely concerned with "What's this politician going to do for me?" And Kennedy told them and, of course, he did do it after he was elected.  

Myers' belief in the importance of economic issues was supported by his co-worker Andrew Houvouras, chairman of the Businessmen for Kennedy campaign. He described in some detail his first mission which was to try to get the support of the state's economic leaders if possible, the assumption being that many were Republicans anyhow. He described the problem and told how he went about attempting to solve it.

We had to generate businessmen's interest again, because the Republican party had put out the word that Kennedy was anti-business and pro-labor. So we immediately put out a mailing to all businessmen in West Virginia with the article from the New York Times--I think it was written by Mr. Koch. He explained why Senator Kennedy was not anti-business and why it was good business to follow his policy. We mailed these out throughout the state in about four or five thousand mailings, got volunteers set up in all the major counties, and began to function. Outside, I would say, of personal contact with the business people explaining the Kennedy program, mailing literature and brochures, that was about all that was done as the Businessmen for Kennedy.  

Faced with the problem that serving the twin masters of business and labor might be difficult, Houvouras added that the problem was handled strategically:

I think that the main line of attack was that what was good for business was good for labor and what was good for labor was good for business. I believe that the slogan that was used more thoroughly than

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4 Myers interview, p. 17.
5 Houvouras interview, p. 2.
any other was the fact that the country had to get moving again.\textsuperscript{6}

This was indeed a difficult row to hoe in a state where the bitter mine wars, one of which had involved the first use of a bomb dropped by an airplane, had left an atmosphere of mistrust and hatred which had spilled over into other industries.

Kennedy faced a similar conflict with his business constituency when he addressed a group of Huntington businessmen brought together by Houvouras for an early breakfast meeting. Before the candidate could arrive from the airport, his brother Robert had been told by one of the guests that West Virginia ranked fiftieth, or last, in defense contracts and asked Robert where Massachusetts stood. The answer given was fourth and Robert gave as the reason his brother's excellent work in Washington for his home state's industries. At that point candidate Kennedy made a delayed entrance. Houvouras continued:

He made a short talk of about five or six minutes and then threw it open to questions. Tom Campbell of Huntington, president of the J. C. Penney Company, asked him about the minimum wage law for clerks in his store and similar stores. In answering that question, he was trying to give him every detail so he finally said, "Tell me, if you don't mind, do you do over a million dollars worth of business, Mr. Campbell?" Mr. Campbell said, "Yes." He said, "Well, then, you're just not going to like it." And after the meeting, Tom Campbell came to me--because I had invited him--and he said, "I wasn't going to vote for him, but any man who would give me such a direct answer has got to be dead honest. And I'm going to be for him."\textsuperscript{7}

Houvouras concluded his economic analysis of the local situation by observing that organized labor seemed to be divided even though

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., pp. 9-10.
the leadership had leaned towards Humphrey at first. The voting records of both candidates on labor matters had been published and widely circulated and felt to be about equal. Others in the state noted that the labor leadership may probably have felt slightly more comfortable with Humphrey because of Kennedy's service in the Senate on the McClellan committee which had investigated corruption and mismanagement within the unions and among their officials.

The view of the state's economy as seen from Charleston was two-fold. Much of that city's industry and some of its retail business was dependent on the coal fields. Thus, the fact that coal production stayed the same or increased had little impact on the capital city. But the area was painfully aware of the out migration from the state, the decline in tax revenues which accompanied a declining population, and the distress on its streets when many of the unemployed flooded the city seeking jobs which did not exist. When Charleston, on the other hand, looked any direction but south, it saw the state's economy generally reflecting the national business cycle and some few areas doing better than the nation as a whole.

William Lonesome, the black attorney, spoke for many in Charleston and for many in the coal fields when he said,

The thing that West Virginians were primarily interested in was the economy of the state. Senator Kennedy, in his many trips into West Virginia, always took cognizance of the fact that we were a depressed area and his avowed pledge was that "If I'm elected, I am going to do something to eliminate some of the depression here and some of the distress."

He would go in the coal mining areas that once used to be thriving communities, and you would see the houses boarded up, you might find some life in the community,
but the economy was down because the coal mines in those areas or communities had apparently been worked out. So that he could see these conditions, and he promised these people some relief from the poverty and distress.

Lonesome felt that Kennedy, as President, had made every effort to keep his promises and help improve conditions in the state.

Miles Stanley, the A. F. of L.-C.I.O. president, with his statewide view, mixed labor matters with economic topics and confirmed many of the opinions which came from the coal triangle and other sections. He noted labor's neutrality and the impact of the McClellan hearings and the Landrum-Griffin bill which at first had a tendency to make some union members suspicious of Kennedy. Stanley explained:

The Senator was primarily interested at that time in explaining his role in the passage of the Landrum-Griffin bill which had, you may recall, just passed the session of Congress, and he was very much in the forefront in that legislative battle and he felt that the labor movement—or at least some segments of it which did not understand his involvement—might feel that he had not protected the Union's interests. At the end of his explanation, I was completely satisfied that he had acted in what he considered to be the best interests of the labor movement and of the country.

Stanley believed the Building Trades Union had leaned in Kennedy's direction from the beginning largely because of the personal preference of the president of that organization. Stanley also understood through his union contacts that although officially neutral, the leadership of the Teamsters and the United Mine Workers favored Humphrey. Stanley reiterated his position, noted earlier, that officially his organization

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8 Lonesome interview, pp. 9-10.

9 Stanley interview, p. 2.
cooperated with both candidates at a state-wide level. With respect to the depressed economy of the state, Kennedy made a broader economic appeal to the union members which could very well be taken as a part of his national campaign beyond the primary of any particular state.

Stanley recalled,

One of his most famous statements that I recall hearing in this regard was with respect to the overall economy; that if you plant a tree and it grows two feet and yet it should have grown five feet in a given period of time, it hasn't grown enough. He kept trying to tell all the people, and I assume this was aimed primarily at those who were gainfully employed, that although their own situation might be good, it could be better. And another facet of this that I thought he communicated quite well was trying to reawaken within all of the people this feeling of concern for those who were less fortunate than themselves—that they had a moral and social responsibility to help the unemployed—those who were out of a job because of mechanization, technological change, or because the economy was not growing fast enough to absorb the increased manpower, or for whatever reason. I think that among trade unions especially he tried to impress on them the traditional moral and social responsibility of the trade-union movement and that is to help the economy move ahead and move fast enough to take up the changes that were occurring and thus give employment to all those who were willing and able to work; this is the trend that I seemed to note in most of his speeches and public statements.¹⁰

Both of the governors and the newspapermen in Charleston spoke about the impact of the economic issues of the primary. Governor Barron said that the campaign had the effect of

... focusing of attention on the economic plight of West Virginia and the entire Appalachian region. This national awareness was later to be developed into a national concern that laid the groundwork for the public acceptance of the great and creative

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17.
programs for Appalachia of not only President Kennedy’s administration but also that of President Johnson.\textsuperscript{11}

Governor Smith, who followed Barron in office, recalled Kennedy’s promise for providing new jobs and new opportunities within the state--these both during the primary and later when he returned to campaign before the general election. These programs, to be considered in the next chapter, he then described in some detail as of great benefit to the people of his state and the Appalachian region.

Publisher Ned Chilton felt that Humphrey, as well as Kennedy, was sensitive to economic problems. He recalled:

What they were talking about--each in his own fashion, in his own way, in campaigning--was "vote for me to be your nominee--I won't forget West Virginia." And also the further thing, that this was a stinking crime that a state had been left out of the mainstream of American life. I think, to a great extent, West Virginia was an eye-opener to both men, coming from quite prosperous areas. Obviously they have slums in Boston; obviously they have them in Minneapolis. But I think both men, coming from relatively prosperous regions of the United States, were considerably taken back by the deplorable conditions in the coal counties. I don't think there was any question about this, and I think both men were sincere in their reaction to the poverty and the people that existed.\textsuperscript{12}

Harry Hoffman, the Gazette's political editor, reinforced the publisher's point of view and saw some slight regional difference in the candidates' appeals.

When he [Kennedy] was in the southern coal fields he was talking more about the human misery that existed there, the fact that so many people were

\textsuperscript{11}Barron interview, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{12}Chilton interview, p. 3.
out of work because of mechanization in the coal mines, and about doing something to help those people. The same was true with Senator Humphrey. But they didn't speak in McDowell County in the center of the coal fields—neither one of the candidates—in one vein, and in a different vein in the Kanawha Valley—Charleston—which, with its chemical plants and good employment, had relative prosperity. I would say generally that both candidates carried the same theme in all sections of the state.13

Later, in describing the national attention given to the state's economic problems by the press, Hoffman said that some good may have come from this because

It drew attention to the fact that West Virginia did have a problem. And it was not the fault of the people of West Virginia, it was a condition of the times in which we were living. West Virginia was one of the first states to feel the impact of so-called automation. The mechanization of the coal mines was a matter of necessity. Either the coal mines mechanized in order to keep competitive with other fuels, or the coal industry closed completely. 14

Hoffman continued to detail some of the difficulties and problems his paper faced from its advertisers as a result of its vivid descriptions of economic conditions.

In the course of this, a lot of people were put out of work. The coal mine employment dropped from a hundred and twenty-five thousand in 1948, down to the sixties or upper fifties by 1960, and by now into the low forties or upper thirties. The fact that the outside press gave so much attention to West Virginia difficulties distressed a lot of business people, feeling that West Virginia was being pictured as a poverty-stricken state, and therefore, existing business would be hurt. However, the other side of it was that it drew attention to real distress among people who were really powerless to help themselves. I know

13 Hoffman interview, p. 7.
14 Ibid., p. 16.
our own newspaper pointed this up even before the Kennedy campaign, and when we did so we were roundly criticized by many of our advertisers. I remember an automobile dealer calling me one morning and saying, "How do you expect me to sell cars with my ad on the last page when you've got the front page filled with stories about how poverty-stricken West Virginia is?"15

The future Peacecorpsman, Charles Peters, Jr., reinforced the attitude about organized labor and felt that Humphrey benefited from labor's so-called neutrality.

We had great difficulty getting labor support. Most of my contacts with labor leaders were quite discouraging during the primary. As labor co-chairman in Kanawha County we had Dan Moroney, who was a bus driver for Greyhound and an AFL-CIO member. Dan worked very hard and was able to—in addition to our other efforts—get a significant amount of rank and file labor support. But as far as the organizations go, I think we might have won Kanawha County by even more if it had not been for some strong election day activity against us by parts of the organized labor movement.15

Peters felt that labor's attitude came from the distrust of Kennedy as a "rich boy," from some anti-Catholic feeling on the part of a few labor leaders, and from the fact that Humphrey was simply in a position to collect any political chits which labor owed him for his long liberal-labor record.

Not all of the capital city observers viewed the economic issue or Kennedy's discussion of it as a blessing. From his corporate law practice the Kennedy partisan Charles Love indicated some resentment and disapproval of the subject. He dissented by saying that the one

15Ibid., pp. 16-17.
16Peters interview, p. 18.
thing which was not good for West Virginia

... was the constant reference and painting of West Virginia as a depressed area in which people were not able to take care of themselves. In my opinion, this is not a true picture of West Virginia. I don't know anybody in West Virginia who cannot get along if he wants to—he may have to change his home, he may have to go to a different county, he may have to change his occupation, but all of us have to do those things and that is true in other States as well. And I think that the fact—not the fact but the constant repetition and reference to West Virginia as being depressed and unable to care for itself has hurt it, not only its image in the public mind generally, but it also hurt some of our people who seem to think that it is easier to make a living be wearing a poor mouth than it is by working. West Virginians are often poor, but they are mostly proud people and the image of a miner in the 30's and 40's, with respect to age, who will not change his occupation but would rather live on a government subsidy is not to be commended nor condoned, in my opinion. Senator Kennedy did not condone these things, but he did keep talking about what he was going to do and what help West Virginia needed and to this extent—to some extent—this was bad. 17

John Amos, who supported Humphrey by way of supporting Johnson, came to the conclusion that Johnson could not have beaten Nixon, but also believed that Kennedy could not have won without Johnson. "It was difficult for the Republicans to combat a ticket made up of a New England Catholic and a southern Protestant." 18 Amos agreed with Love that the publicity given to the economic issues in West Virginia was unfortunate.

I think that the publicity West Virginia got out of the presidential primary campaign was one that I would rather the state had not had. Our areas of unemployment are not unlike those in Pennsylvania, east Kentucky, east Tennessee and western Virginia. They have areas that are just as depressed as any areas that we have. Yet our areas were blown up out

17 Love interview, p. 20.
18 Amos interview, p. 38.
of all proportion. We were given a bad public image nationally, whereas the other places equally as bad were hardly talked of at all. I don't think it helped us at all in this area. I think it made industry more reluctant to come into West Virginia than they had been. Industries don't move in through sympathy; at least this is my opinion. I don't think it helped our public image at all; I think it hurt it.19

In that other "southern" section of the state, the Eastern Panhandle, economic issues were of little importance and that, coupled with the overwhelming size of the Protestant population, led to a Humphrey victory. The "lost" counties faced none of the problems of the coal producing areas as light consumer industries were moving into the upper Potomac Valley and the large scale orchards acted as a stabilizing factor. In addition, the suburbs of Washington were creeping further west and turning into the exurbs of northern Virginia and eastern West Virginia.

The economic and laboring conditions of the upper Ohio Valley and the Monongahela Valley were much closer to the national norm during the 1950s and, therefore, economic issues were of less importance to the voters than in the southern sections of the state. In the Ohio Valley, from the Pennsylvania border to Point Pleasant, there were a few islands of poverty but also areas which resembled the growth of the Sunbelt a decade later. Glass and pottery were slipping backwards because of antiquated plants and growing foreign competition. Steel and the associated fabricating industries were stable, reflecting only the ups and downs of the national business cycle, and Weirton Steel

19 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
(National Steel) was building its much heralded automated "mill of the future."

Between Moundsville and Point Pleasant the phrase Miracle Valley came into use to describe such new industries as the mine-to-mouth power plant of the Hanna Coal Company and the associated electric utilities. Pittsburgh Plate Glass, Mobay Chemicals, and Kaiser Aluminum had new plants in West Virginia, and Ormet Aluminum had located at Hannibal, Ohio, providing additional new jobs for many West Virginians in the interstate labor market noted earlier. While the coal mines here had also automated, many older workers retired or found less demanding jobs in the new industries. The younger miners could find work close by without the traditional migration to the farther-away industrial centers of northern Ohio. When those interviewed in this section of the state for the library project talked about hard times, it was a very relative term or they were speaking of the dreadful conditions of the coal triangle, many of whose unemployed came to this part of the Ohio Valley to seek employment rather than go to Akron, Cleveland or Columbus.

Judge Ralph Pryor of Wellsburg remembered that when Kennedy came into the state he talked about the problems of the southern coal fields, "but those issues were not issues, as I recall now, in the Panhandle. And his speeches and our approach to the public were not along those lines in this panhandle area." Pryor later indicated that other than religion, the concerns in his section of the Panhandle were the personalities of the two candidates, the legend of the New Deal and the presence of Roosevelt, Jr., and Kennedy's personal qualities. Mike

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20 Pryor interview, p. 11.
Gretchen, the U.M.W. official who worked for Kennedy, noted the concern over the national unemployment rate and the conviction that Kennedy inspired confidence among labor for an improving economy.

Arch Riley of Wheeling seemed to feel that there was little difference between an economic program of the two candidates and added that while he felt that organized labor could not elect a candidate on its own in his area, it could muster enough votes to defeat one. He added a somewhat different viewpoint of the labor vote by noting:

The laboring man in Wheeling is pretty well educated; he's very up-to-date on his politics and on government, and he'll be for whom he desires to be for. Of course, Kennedy won their wives over, and their wives won their husbands over if there was any doubt, because the women were all for Kennedy.21

Edward Culley of Wheeling agreed with his co-workers Riley and Pryor, and said that he remembered "no special pitch as far as I could see, other than the fact that he wanted to increase employment in this area. He thought it was time that some interest was taken in Washington as far as the state of West Virginia was concerned."22 Pete Thaw of Sistersville did note that glass workers in his area were interested in higher tariffs but as far as he could remember, Kennedy never spoke to the subject in any detail.

William Richardson of prosperous Parkersburg, at that time considered a fast-growing area of the state, more or less summarized the economic feeling of the Upper Ohio Valley:

Wood County has never been hit too hard. We used to have some unemployment, but we don't have the mass

21Riley interview, p. 18.
22Culley interview, p. 7.
unemployment like they do in the southern part of the state and other counties where the coal business is. But people were very interested in these issues, and you could tell, when he mentioned these, people really believed he was going to help West Virginia. 23

Robert McDonough, who as state chairman of the Kennedy campaign contributed the longest and most complete interview for the library project, summarized the role of labor in the economy in Parkersburg and the state by saying that what it came down to was that while the labor leaders were more for Humphrey, the rank and file members of the labor unions voted for Kennedy.

Bill Jacobs, the Humphrey co-chairman of Parkersburg, saw it only slightly differently.

We here in Wood County, fortunately then as now, are a little bit better fixed financially than in a good part of the state of West Virginia because we're in what some people call "the Ruhr Valley of America." The Ohio Valley is dotted with industry and the people of Wood County are, comparatively speaking—that is, compared to the southern coal section of West Virginia—better off financially. So I don't think that the financial or economic question, at least as between Senator Humphrey and Senator Kennedy, was a major factor. I would say that, if anything, the economic aspect of the thing served to keep the race here in Wood County in the primary between Senator Humphrey and Senator Kennedy a fairly close race because we capitalized as much as we were able to on Senator Humphrey's labor record in the Congress of the United States. I know I repeatedly, in my talks, referred to him as "organized labor's best friend on Capitol Hill." I believed it at that time and I believe it today. He's still organized labor's best friend on Capitol Hill! But organized labor did not come to the forefront in support of Senator Humphrey at that time as I felt they should have. 24

23Richardson interview, p. 17.

24Jacobs interview, pp. 16-17.
The Monongahela Valley, while not booming quite as much as some sections of the Ohio Valley, shared many of its economic and organized labor viewpoints. With Morgantown, the depression-resistant university city, at the north and Clarksburg and Elkins with natural resources, light manufacturing and good farming at the south, economic concerns were not the paramount issue. Walter Hart, from his post at the Morgantown Dominion News, spoke for the area when he commented on the economic issues of the campaign.

Our poverty was over-emphasized, but so are the slums of the big cities. I don't think we got too bad or unfair treatment. Some of my more touchy colleagues were irritated and annoyed and some of them were downright angry about that, but we do have some poverty areas. I've never made any attempt to conceal it. But we also, by and large, do have now a very good—as a matter of fact, a very excellent—economy, the best we've ever had. It's got a broader base, at least.25

Hart coupled this economic comment with an opinion of the working habits of the outside newspapermen who came in to use his office while writing about the economic conditions in his area.

I think they were given very good treatment, those who deserved it. Those who came among us and treated us like peons or second-class citizens or nincompoops, or attempted to use our facilities in my office without first asking, without showing us courtesy, were usually thrown the hell out of the office. But we newspaper people have bums same as all other working people have. By and large, I didn't hear any complaints from any members of the press.26

Victor Gabriel of Clarksburg, later and perhaps appropriately of the United States Department of Commerce, had more to say about economic

25Hart interview, p. 16.
26Ibid., p. 16.
matters than anyone else in the Monongahela Valley industrial area. Gabriel met Kennedy at the local airport and took the travel-weary senator almost immediately to an impromptu meeting with about twenty-five local labor leaders. There he haltingly answered questions about the effect of a pending reciprocal trade bill which would affect the glass industry. Dissatisfied with his own answers, he requested more time to contact his office and gave a more precise answer to the question the next morning. Kennedy also answered questions concerning his attitude about the Taft-Hartley Law, social security, federal aid to education and medicare. Gabriel observed that if Kennedy felt the questions were a little too difficult, "he would give you a humorous answer with it, which was always very effective with the public." Gabriel confirmed the opinions of others in the Clarksburg area that his county (Harrison) "was in pretty fair shape," with employment in the mines and the glass industry the only soft spots. Coal production was actually up at that time but automation had thrown miners out of work here as in other parts of the state. With respect to the unemployed miners, Kennedy proposed that he would look for new uses for coal and explore the possibility of increasing the market for coal abroad.

While religion and West Virginia's and the nation's economy were at the heart of the primary as far as issues were concerned, there were some unexpected developments during the campaign. Although not issues,

27 Gabriel interview, pp. 7-8.
at least in the traditional sense, several controversies appeared which played a role in the election and were reflected in the interviews which were conducted for the oral history project.

Kennedy's cause profited because of perceptions which developed about the true nature of Humphrey's candidacy. On the face of it he had paid the one-thousand-dollar filing fee, in West Virginia ten percent of the annual salary of any position being sought, had his name on the ballot, and was a candidate in both the popularity contest and in the race for pledged delegates. Quickly, at least among the Kennedy partisans, a feeling developed that he was, as Judge Christie put it, a "synthetic candidate." He could, of course, take any delegates he won to the national convention or he could simply be the representative of a cabal whose only aim was to stop Kennedy in West Virginia and he was the quixotic candidate chosen for this dubious role. If this were true, then any delegate he earned might be voted or traded in the traditional, or favorite-sons manner in Los Angeles. It was Christie, in his press release appended to his library interview, who best stated the feeling that Humphrey was not a genuine candidate. Section 2 of the release carried the caption, "Humphrey never considered a bona fide candidate:" and it read,

No one with any intelligence ever considered Humphrey anything more than a "synthetic" candidate for president. The people knew that he was simply running "interference" for Johnson and Symington, and Senator Byrd interjecting himself in the race in behalf of Johnson had a great deal to do with the crystallization of this belief. Such belief thus prevailing, the people had to make a choice between voting for a real or genuine candidate for president, on the one hand, or a fictitious one on the other
hand. The average voter is more perceptive than he is usually given credit for, and in this race, he clearly saw through the smoke screen and chose to place his vote for the real rather than the synthetic candidate.28

While Christie's contention of "synthetic" may have had substance, it may have been stated so positively by the judge because of an incident which had taken place before the primary at a dinner in Pineville, Wyoming County. Christie, in his letter to his grandchildren appended to his interview, recounted that at the dinner honoring a local judge both Humphrey and Robert Kennedy had been present and asked to speak. Humphrey spoke first, he recalled, saying, "I learned today that there are 51 states, the 51st being 'The Free State of McDowell,' and that its Governor is the Honorable Sidney L. Christie." Robert Kennedy then responded by saying that they were conducting a more intelligent campaign than Humphrey because their organization had learned about McDowell's independent and unique status and Christie's governorship not just that day but much earlier, "only a few hours after [we] entered the state."29 Christie was recognized, if not as the Governor, then as the boss of "Free McDowell County" in Democratic political circles.30 In his letter to them, Christie went on to tell his grandchildren that

30 Free state has been a popular county title in West Virginia. The Free County of Ohio (Wheeling) had existed since at least the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment because of its cavalier non-enforcement of that section of the federal constitution as well as the state's laws concerning gambling, written originally to curb the excesses of riverboat gamblers.
he found Senator Humphrey very able and his wife very charming, and pointed out that the two candidates remained the best of friends when one went on to the White House and the other returned to the Senate.

Christie's belief that Humphrey was a stalking horse, as noted in the earlier discussion of the religious issue, was believed by all of the Kennedy partisans who remembered to include it in their recorded memoirs. Even the Humphrey co-chairmen Bill Jacobs and Marshall West made no case against it, and John Amos, the Johnson partisan, implied approval of the notion in his indirect support of his favorite through the Wisconsin senator.

Co-chairman Bill Jacobs began to develop reservations about the possibility of a Humphrey victory fairly early in the campaign. He told of being interviewed by Ben Bradlee, then a Newsweek reporter, and assuring him of a Humphrey victory. Later, after much prodding by Bradlee for an "off the record" opinion, Jacobs told Bradlee that

Of the two men, Senator Humphrey seems a little bit harder to sell. For some reason I get the impression that people don't take to him quite as readily and as easily and quickly as they do to Senator Kennedy. And the campaign is not progressing as well as I had hoped. We are extremely handicapped by a lack of finances, and the Kennedy campaign is so well organized and well-oiled that it's going to be close! I'd earlier in the course of the interview told him that I thought we were going to win by a substantial majority.  

Jacobs said that he forgot about the incident until several days later when his phone began to ring.

I picked up the phone and the voice at the other end said, "This is the--" (I think it was) "the Wall Street Journal." I think that was the first one

31 Jacobs interview, p. 7.
to call me, although two or three called me. The man on the other end of the line said, "Do you have any comment to make with respect to the explosive paragraph in the Newsweek article?" And he proceeded to read the thing to me. I hadn't even seen it. It wasn't even out on the news stands yet in West Virginia. And the paragraph quoted things which I had said in this strictly off-the-cuff, strictly off-the-record discussion with Mr. Bradlee!

Well, it was probably, maybe, a year after that, at least six months to a year after that, and I was sitting in a hotel room in Charleston, West Virginia, and I picked up, just by sheer chance, a copy of a Washington newspaper. And I saw in there a Washington society column which, again, I just read by chance because I never read society columns, but I saw the name "Kennedy" mentioned and the lady reporter was telling the story that since John F. Kennedy had been elected President, he and Jacqueline had attended very few private social functions, but possibly a half dozen or so couples, that they were sworn to secrecy, that no one was to reveal that the President and the First Lady had been there and so forth.32

One such party, Jacobs observed, was at the home of Ben Bradlee.

Two other issues which emerged from the primary were Kennedy's war record, or Humphrey's lack of one, and the effectiveness of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., as a campaigner. Here again the redoubtable Christie provides the argument, this time a strong minority dissent from the popular conception of Roosevelt's valuable role in the campaign. In his press release, Christie states that "the most effective theme used by Kennedy in this campaign here was his pledge to take up where Roosevelt left off."33 In section 5, titled simply FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, JR., he gave his opinion of the President's son and his value to the campaign.

The appearance of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., in this area, per se, had little or nothing to do with

32 Jacobs interview, pp. 8-9.
33 Christie press release, p. 2.
Kennedy's victory. Indirectly, however, it did tend to show a similarity between the need for leadership in the Depression days of the early '30s and the need for leadership now; and since Kennedy's theme was that he would take up where F.D.R. Sr. left off, F.D.R. Jr.'s presence may have helped to dramatize it.

When young Roosevelt and Kennedy toured a section of the county together, the people were out to see Kennedy not Roosevelt. Roosevelt appeared to have a cool and distant personality and did not attempt to ingratiate himself with the people as Kennedy did. It was definitely Kennedy's "show" when they were here. 34

In this vein Robert McDonough observed that it was often difficult to get Roosevelt to show much enthusiasm for the early morning rising so necessary to greet the midnight shift, coming to work, at the mill gates at seven in the morning. 35 At the other end of the state, Judge Pryor of Wellsburg remembered the president's son in somewhat fonder terms than Christie.

When Mr. Roosevelt came in, we very quickly learned that he did not like standing in front of a mill. But he agreed to do it after we had all urged him that we had arranged for the television cameras from the Steubenville television station, WSTV, to be there. But this was not the type of campaigning that he enjoyed. But when he went to the mill gates, the reaction of the shifts leaving and entering was almost electrical. As soon as word spread that he was standing at what is known as No. 1 gate, a tremendous crowd of steel workers leaving the mill immediately formed, each eager to shake his hand, many of them men who showed the wrinkles of extreme age and years of work in the mill, all telling him how they had felt about his father.

And of course he looks and has the same image of his father, talks like his father, and handles himself with considerable talent in that type of a group. And the impression was the exact type that

34 Ibid., p. 3.

35 The really astute politician, in an industrial area in the state, is at the gates at eleven at night and again at seven in the morning. Thus he meets in two visits all three shifts and greets the night shift twice.
you would be looking for if you were seeking the
perfect type of campaign image on behalf of someone
else. His speech at Wellsburg later that evening
was just as electrifying. The audience was totally
responsive; they tried to keep him there after the
affair was over. And when he left that evening,
which was very late, we resolved to call Bob McDonough
the next day and tell him that this is a man who
should not be permitted to leave the state of West
Virginia because the magic of the Roosevelt name was
still alive.36

Roosevelt’s reception may have been unusually friendly in Wellsburg
because President Roosevelt himself had spoken there during the 1932
campaign just a few blocks from the court house used by his son. Other
reports from around the state indicate that he was received just as
warmly there as in Wellsburg. In this difference of viewpoints vis-a-
vis Roosevelt’s role, Pryor would seem to have the edge over Christie.
As reported earlier in the discussion of the religious issue, the
blessing by the Protestant Roosevelt of Kennedy appeared to absolve
other Protestants of any possible sin for voting for a Catholic.

One faux pas committed by Roosevelt which had to be hastily
retracted by Kennedy, and with an apology to Humphrey, was Roosevelt’s
attack on Humphrey’s civilian status during World War II. Whether out
of patriotism or out of desperate economic necessity and dire poverty,
West Virginians held a remarkable record for enlisting in the armed
forces and the state was considered a recruiting sergeant’s happy
hunting ground. In West Virginia, as in the nation, much was made of
Kennedy’s wartime service, the PT boat incident, and his rescue of a

36Pryor interview, pp. 5-6.
wounded comrade. In a state where the various veterans organizations, along with the lodges, often dominate the social life of the small towns, this legend was important and may have helped any Protestant veteran overcome his qualms about voting for a "mick," a regrettable but frequently heard epithet in the state.

As an important footnote to the Roosevelt, Jr., contribution to the Kennedy campaign it is necessary to take note of Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to the state before the general election. She was remembered by many of the older voters, who may have seen her husband in the state in 1932, as a Depression visitor and was welcomed back in the fall of 1960. John Amos, in spite of his support of Johnson, spoke of her effectiveness.

Mrs. Roosevelt had been very active in West Virginia during the Depression. She has a village in Putnam County named for her, Eleanor, West Virginia. She had tried a thing in Randolph County, just outside of Elkins, which helped our situation there to a great extent—the building of a community to house homeless folk. She had been many times to Charleston and to southern West Virginia and was greatly loved by our people. Her support of Kennedy certainly had a marked effect.

Amos concluded, "The Roosevelt name is a good name in West Virginia."

Two final issues or controversies emerged from the primary which attracted the attention of the participants and the press: "slating,"

[37] Miniature PT boats, reminiscent of Adlai Stevenson's worn shoe, were popular in the state as elsewhere.

[38] Amos interview, p. 20.

[39] Ibid., p. 21.
and "How much did the Kennedy's spend?"

The mechanics of slating, while not unique to West Virginia, are most important if a candidate expects to win an office at almost any level in the state, the Congress or the Senate. The tradition derives from the long Jacksonian ballot and from the fact that in so many of the counties, particularly in the southern coal fields but not limited to that area, the Democratic party often overwhelms the Republicans in registration and voter participation. If the state were further south, it would most certainly have the provision which exists in the solid south for a run-off election among the two or three leading candidates for any office. Since West Virginia has no such law, the plurality victor in the primary is usually the winner in the general election. Thus, the slate has evolved as a primary within a primary. It became an efficient and expedient way for a group of like-minded candidates to share the costs of paying for poll checkers and cars to bring the voters to the polls, especially from the remote areas where no public transportation has ever existed. The names on the various slates are circulated by word of mouth, by printed sheets, or in some cases.

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40 Brooke County Clerk Anthony Filberto, in charge of voter registration, estimated that in his county fifteen to twenty percent of the registered Democrats may be "closet" Republicans. They register with the enemy to have a say in the primary where victory is practically a guarantee of victory in the general election.

41 Poll checkers are unofficial workers paid by the slates to stay just outside the legal poll area and check off the names of those who have voted. Late and recalcitrant voters are called, or called for, and urged to do their civic duty.
Both Matt Reese and Miles Stanley described the process of slating and commented on its use in the 1960 presidential campaign. Reese, in words reminiscent of Edwin O'Connor's description of politics in Frank Skeffington's Boston, described the social role of politics in the coal counties.

West Virginians, particularly in the southern and central areas of the state, enjoy politics greatly. They have a good record of getting out to vote. It's a joy. They treat it as a game, a contest. People are vitally interested, not only in the issues but just in the election. It's an exciting thing in their life. And some people have pretty drab lives in those areas; some of these towns are pretty drab and unexciting. So, I think this is a characteristic of West Virginia that is unique.

Other observers of this same area would agree with Reese and even go beyond him to say that political life of southern West Virginia bordered on the bizarre.

Reese moved next to describe how the Kennedy organization made use of the slates at the county level.

In every county, of course, there are factions within the party. Sometimes these factions aren't pure and don't stay together all the time. But one group gets together for a particular group of candidates and tries to build the slate (in the '60 campaign from the President on down to the Justice of the Peace). The slate lists the candidates the group is for. Sometimes the group is the county committee, sometimes it is the people who wish they were the county committee—the "ins", the "outs", and sometimes it's intermixed. But historically West Virginians have gotten used to aligning themselves with certain groups and supporting the slated candidates of these groups. The workers that are recruited through volunteer means or that are paid will support this slate. I think that the President won so handily in West Virginia because we very carefully aligned ourselves with the successful slates.42

42 Reed interview, p. 10.
Reese went on to explain that the Humphrey-Kennedy slates were not lined up with either liberal or conservative factions within the counties. In most cases no such distinctions existed at the local level so such an alignment would have been difficult if not impossible.

Stanley, speaking from his background in labor politics, explained both the methods and the costs of slating.

On a county level, invariably the main interest of the county political group is concentrated on the county offices like the County Commissioner and County Sheriff and what-have-you, and these candidates build up their own respective organizations in a primary, and in order to put on a good campaign they must have money. So national candidates and state candidates who win elections in West Virginia go into the counties and endeavor to, what we call, "buy in" to the strongest organization. That is, they put so much money on the line in exchange for the support of that organization which has already been built up, and from the reports which I have read and reports which I have received, the Kennedy campaign people had more money to work with, more resources—they could "buy in" to more organizations and perhaps stronger organizations than could the Humphrey people.43

The labor leader then outlined the manner in which the money is spent within the county.

It's spent for organization on election day—to set up outside poll workers and cars—this kind of thing. Of course, there are always a few gratuities I'm sure that are spread around among the voters. I haven't been involved personally in this kind of thing. I am again going on reports that have been given to me—that you go into the precinct and the leader in that particular precinct is given a certain amount of money to work with, whether it's a hundred, two hundred, three hundred or five hundred dollars, and for that amount of money he sets up the organization and gives you all the assurances that are necessary that he will
deliver the majority of that precinct vote for a candidate. I'm sure that the bulk of it goes to hire workers, and of course it always helps if you can hire a worker that happens to have 15 or 20 votes in the family, or more, and to this extent perhaps it could be called vote-buying. I haven't, as I said, been personally involved, but I know all these techniques that are used and apparently in some instances they pay off quite handsomely.  

About the only definite conclusion which can be drawn from the interviews is that everyone agreed that the Kennedy forces had much more to spend than Humphrey. The total amount for either candidate would be difficult to determine. In the celebrity-starved state of West Virginia many people at all levels of political life contributed much on their own to both campaigns, directly and indirectly. In discussing the issue of money, Judge Pryor of Wellsburg described the local situation and added some local color about Kennedy the campaigner.

There was some talk about elections being bought in the state of West Virginia. Of course, I can only speak from the local area limits, but we in our area operated without funds from the Kennedy people. We received no money and asked for none for the campaigns in Hancock and Brooke County. The only monies we received for the campaign in Ohio County were to pay for the letters actually sent out inviting people to the McLure Hotel when he last spoke in Wheeling. It might be of interest to note that after he finished a speech at the McLure Hotel, which was overrun with people, he was taken by Al Chapman, Joe Noll, and George Fahey and myself to a private club in South Wheeling known as the Kane Club. The building was overflowing when he arrived there at about eleven in a state of almost sheer exhaustion. A way had to be pushed through the crowd for him, which was not common at that time, as it later became.

We all got a tremendous boot out of the fact that as he looked around, he seemed to revive at

the friendly faces and the accolades and cheers he was receiving. And without assistance or direction, he climbed up on top of the bar, said if someone would give him a glass of beer he would make a speech. And he made what we believe to be the only campaign speech he ever made on the top of the bar at the Kane Club with a glass of beer in his hand. That glass is still enshrined in Wheeling by the person who handed it to him, who considers that a memento that will never leave that family’s possession even though she has now entered a religious order.45

Judge Christie in Welch maintained much the same position, stressing the great support for Kennedy which came from the area of Welch and McDowell County. Perhaps the final word about finances, at least as far as the interviews were concerned, came from Robert McDonough who explained its role state-wide.

There has been a lot of talk about money elections in West Virginia. It's my contention that money at the best is just one factor in an election in West Virginia. In some counties little if any money is spent election day. In other counties modest amounts are spent. In other counties great amounts are spent. What goes on in a particular county on election day is a matter of tradition. In some counties you have to pay the organization, in others you don't. Although, for example, Bill, all labor organizations on election day are all paid. That is, a worker gets a day's pay and he gets rental for his automobile. This is the same type of activity that's heavy in the southern counties. The election day operation is conducted traditionally by paid workers: the fellow who drives the automobile gets paid, the fellow who does the poll checking gets paid, the fellow who goes out and routs out the voter gets paid. And it varies; I have seen the time when you could hire them for five dollars a day, but inflation has put it up.

You can't buy elections because you can't buy votes, but every political organization in every county in the state has to have money to operate on. They've got to pay rent for their headquarters.

45Pryor interview, pp. 10-11.
They've got to pay telephone bills. In some places they have to pay workers to X extent, Y extent, or Z extent. The tradition in the southern counties is that . . . I'm sure it stems from old days when the mines used to control all the politics and the banks used to control it around this county. They'd put up the money to hire workers election day to get out the vote. They were getting out their party vote on the strength that if you get your party vote out in sufficient numbers, you are going to win the election.46

McDonough also made the point that many West Virginians themselves contributed to the campaign. They were not reimbursed and they did not expect to be. He cited the ox roast in Parkersburg, paid for by Bruce Hoff. Laurence Tierney of Bluefield reported that for one month of the campaign his personal telephone bill was in excess of fifteen hundred dollars, and there were many other examples of this sort of political hospitality on the part of the natives. McDonough's final word on the subject was that he felt all of the estimates of the amount spent by the Kennedys and their friends were greatly exaggerated, at least to the best of his knowledge. In his own case, he reported out of pocket expenses of about six thousand dollars.

Time after time in the interviews the personalities of the two candidates were compared with Kennedy the winner, even among those who could restrain their enthusiasm for the New Frontier and his other policies. No one bad-mouthed Humphrey who was seen as a sincere, able, dedicated liberal, and an outstanding senator. In short, he was one of the deserving statesmen of the party, but not as a candidate for the expected contest with Richard M. Nixon.

46 McDonough interview, p. 16.
Most of the words and phrases used to describe Kennedy would, after the assassination and before the revisionists, turn up as part of the Camelot mystique. Time after time his West Virginia friends, and some not so friendly, would grant him his grace, charm, sense of humor, and tireless energy as a campaigner. McDonough spoke for many when he said,

Sometimes the days would go from four-thirty in the morning until one-thirty at night. Sure, there would be short periodic breaks or rests, but they were very short and they were very seldom, and the candidate had more stamina than any two people associated with him. And despite this fact, in days and days and days of campaigning, I only saw him once get even exasperated. He did one time in Logan, West Virginia, when at ten-thirty we handed him a schedule for more meetings or activities and he asked the question if we couldn't do a little better job on some of this and shorten it up. But five minutes later he apologized to all concerned, and said, "Whatever you set up is all right." These were long, hard days.\(^{47}\)

\(^{47}\)Ibid., p. 13.
CHAPTER VII
THE AFTERMATH: PATRONAGE AND POLITICS

For John F. Kennedy and Robert McDonough and all of the others who had endured the long hard days, the rewards were sweet. Kennedy won the primary, and the election. Governor Barron appointed McDonough to be West Virginia's unofficial ambassador to the White House where he had frequent and almost immediate access to the President by way of his secretary, Evelyn Lincoln. Most of the other campaigners benefited directly or indirectly. Some received federal appointments and favors while others were happy to receive personally autographed pictures for themselves, their children, or their grandchildren. Some were contented just to retain golden memories of a brief period in their state when history seemed to touch them directly and very personally.

Kennedy's total vote in the popularity contest totaled 236,510 to Humphrey's 152,187, but because the vote was not binding on the delegates, the state's vote at the convention gave Kennedy only a majority over Johnson, Humphrey, and Stevenson. The Kennedy delegates tried in vain in Los Angeles to convert the others, so the state did not have the honor of casting the vote which gave the candidate the needed majority for victory. West Virginia, however, had served Kennedy well. The primary victory served to tell the doubting party professionals and the general public that a Catholic could be elected in a predominantly Protestant state. The public remembered that, and not the details of a delegation vote from a small state on a noisy convention floor.
In the popularity contest, the Kennedy votes totaled 60.84 to Humphrey’s 39.16 percent, a figure which seems to have remained almost constant during the campaign when compared with a poll taken about the time of the filing date. Humphrey carried five counties: Cabell, Hampshire, Lincoln, Morgan, and Putnam, all rural except for Cabell which contained the Huntington metropolitan area.

 Shortly after the primary, William R. Ross, of the Bureau of Government Research at West Virginia University, published a complex and sophisticated analysis of the returns and came to the conclusion that "if Senator Kennedy chose to enter the West Virginia primary to prove that non-Catholic voters will support a Catholic for President, he apparently proved his point."1 Ross compared the Catholic population of each county with its election returns and noted that Kennedy won even in Pocahontas County with no known Catholics by 68.34 percent. The Kennedy vote was somewhat higher in Ohio County, with a Catholic population of 29.9 percent, where he won by 78.37 percent, or about 18 percent higher than the statewide average of 60.84. In Judge Christie's McDowell County, with a Catholic population of 2.4 percent, Kennedy got 84.11 percent of the vote, the highest percentage of any county. Thus with these results, Ross concluded, "there appears to be little evidence, if indeed any at all, that the religion issue played any part in the preference primary."2 He did qualify these conclusions only slightly by writing, "Speculation runs high as to the probable outcome had other

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2Ibid., p. 57.
pre-convention favorites been entered in the race."

Following the victory in November, many of those interviewed said that many of the state's natives had taken pride in saying that at last a West Virginian was in the White House. Following the inauguration in January, both the Kennedy supporters and the state of West Virginia began to taste the sweet fruits of victory and patronage. Over the next few months and during the course of the Kennedy administration, the following appointments were made and remembered by those interviewed. The list is probably not complete. John Chernenko of Wellsburg became a federal marshal and Sidney Christie of Welch a federal judge. Charles Peters, Jr., joined the Peace Corps as an administrator and his mother was rewarded with an appointment to the American Battle Monuments Commission. Elvis Stahr later became Secretary of the Army, an appointment which miffed some of the Kennedy regulars because Stahr's role in the primary had been one of strict neutrality since he had been the president of West Virginia University. James Manchin of Fairmont was appointed to the Farmers Home Administration to administer rural water systems. He promptly bought a broad-brimmed cowboy hat and Texas boots and started his career as one of the state's most colorful political eccentrics, dispensing pipes and reservoirs to the many water companies which dotted the sparsely settled sections of the state.

\[3\] Ibid., p. 56. Others, he wrote, might have been Stevenson, Johnson, and Symington.

\[4\] The only real one to ever win the nomination was the Morgan partner, John W. Davis, of Clarksburg. He attempted to unite the party after the infamous 1924 convention fiasco in Madison Square Garden in which prohibition, religion and the Klan seemed to be the central issues for the Democrats and the Republic.
Mario DePaulo eventually worked for the Department of Commerce. Matt Reese, the Huntington insurance man, went to Washington to work for the Democratic National Committee where he remained through the election of 1964. Later, he formed his own political consulting and campaign organization out of his earlier experience in the West Virginia primary. Many others neither received nor wanted anything more than the happy memories of the campaign or a greeting from the President when he returned to the state on at least two trips from the White House. One such visit was a trip to Charleston in June 1963 to help celebrate the state's one hundredth birthday, the "child of the storm" of the War of the Rebellion. Another time, a cold rainy fall night in 1962, he returned to the Wheeling Island stadium on behalf of Congressman Cleveland Bailey, an octogenarian campaigning to keep his seat in Congress. From a few of the stronger primary partisans there were some indications and expressions of disappointment that no West Virginian, excluding Stahr, received a cabinet post, ambassadorship, or something with similar prestige.

For the state of West Virginia the rewards were magnificent. Some of the Kennedy programs—food stamps, the eventual Appalachian Regional Commission, the Peace Corps—affected whole regions or the nation and were not specifically designed with the state in mind. Even so,

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5 Or as an anonymous and disapproving cynic put it, "The bastard child of an incestuous union."

6 The most recent to so serve was Truman's secretary of defense, Louis D. Johnson. John W. Davis, before his campaign in 1924, had been ambassador to the Court of St. James in the Wilson Administration.
those interviewed felt that their state had helped educate the President to their problems. Eleven states made up the Appalachian area as defined by Congress, but West Virginia was the only state to be entirely included in the area, rather than just some counties. Other programs and favors from the White House, while available to all states in theory, seemed to flow with more ease into the state which by its broad-minded primary vote had eased the path for its occupant. McDonough, the state chairman, received a loan from the Small Business Administration to expand his printing operation. He purchased an additional plant in Huntington and prepared to become one of the chief printers for the Democratic National Committee. In the meantime, Governor Barron had additional plans for him.

Barron, after taking his oath of office two weeks before Kennedy, seized the opportunity to establish a direct working relationship with a new president—an opportunity unique in the history of West Virginia and unusual for any state. Barron told the story as he remembered it.

One of the first things I did in office was to ask the legislature to give me the money and to create the office for a liaison man in Washington. At that time I named Paul Crabtree to work with the congressional delegation and, of course, to work directly with the President and his staff. In the meantime, I had another liaison man in Washington, Bob McDonough. I paid his expenses directly out of my contingent fund. He went to Washington every week and sometimes spent two or three days a week there. These arrangements, for the first time in my knowledge, brought a close contact between President Kennedy, as President of the United States, and the Governor of West Virginia. Previously the Governor had worked, I think, mainly through the congressional delegation and then through the President. In these meetings, Mr. McDonough and Mr. Crabtree and myself would go to Washington and meet with the congressional delegation. I think this created excellent teamwork so that we at the state level knew
what policies the congressional delegation were following and they certainly knew what our policies in West Virginia were and what future policies we would have in mind. And this teamwork and a close relationship with the President paid big dividends. Starting in 1961, we were at a low ebb but the next year was the greatest economic year that we had had in West Virginia; 1963 was greater than 1962, and 1964 was greater than 1963. So, during that period of time West Virginia achieved the greatest prosperity it had ever had. I credit much of this to the direct contact between myself as governor, and the liaison and President Kennedy.7

Barron concluded this part of his story by saying, with some pride, that at his request the President had the West Virginia state flag flown over the White House for a day.

Among the federal benefits which Barron and McDonough were able to accelerate from Washington, Barron cited federal assistance for a massive state park system to take up the employment slack caused by automation in the mines; the Area Redevelopment Act; moving from fiftieth to twenty-third in terms of state ranking for defense contracts; expansion of the food stamp program; and, with the aid of Abraham A. Ribicoff, the ADC-UP program which provided assistance for families with unemployed fathers. West Virginia became the first state to qualify for ADC-UP and acted as a testing ground for the experiment.

Hulett Smith, one of Barron's rivals in the primary, later joined his administration as Commissioner of Commerce and worked closely with his superior and McDonough in the pleasant task of cultivating Washington while the opportunity lasted. Smith remembered White House aid in speeding up the sale of an abandoned Naval Ordnance plant to a private

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7Barron interview, p. 7.
corporation in order to provide more jobs in the Charleston area. With other dignitaries, Smith was present at the White House to mark the beginning of the Appalachian regional program in April, 1963. The future governor spoke with some pride about the fact that Kennedy's first executive order as President had been to increase the food allotment and surplus commodities which were being distributed in West Virginia and other depressed areas of the country.

These close working relationships established between Barron, McDonough, Smith and others marked an end to the suspicions which had existed between the Kennedy organization in the state and the regular Democratic organization. Smith noted, as had the editor Harry Hoffman, that Kennedy had run behind the state ticket in the general election and had blamed his religion. The Kennedy primary organization had taken the unusual step of keeping its organization alive through the fall election because of fear that the state organization might not be too helpful in the campaign for the head of the ticket. Victory in November ended this rivalry and the Kennedy workers dissolved into an informal semi-official alumni organization. They kept in touch with each other through an informal network partly out of sentiment and partly because of the convenience of knowing someone who knew the President and had access to the White House. There was a brief revival in 1968 when Robert Kennedy considered entering the primary and following in his older brother's footsteps through the mountain state. Since the religious issue had been settled in 1960, Robert decided against it and sought delegates elsewhere in the states with larger electoral votes. Several of those interviewed indicated some resentment that the
key to the oval office had been given to McDonough and not to them. The President, however, did have the rest of the union to administer and it made good administrative sense, if not unruffled feathers, to work with the man who had managed his campaign and who knew almost every faction in every county in the entire state.

The relationship which the printer and the President worked out was at times a two-way street, as McDonough indicated in a story of how the governor of West Virginia could sometimes do favors for the White House. Barron, he related, was occasionally asked to send up trial balloons by the President on matters of national policy. One such issue involved energy and indicated how a favor might be done for Kennedy from Charleston, rather than the other way around.

I remember one thing in particular, although rather vaguely, because there were a great number of these or similar things that went on. But there was one question on a national view for the restrictions on residual oil imports. Of course, the President was a number of times in the position of feeling that restrictions should be relaxed, as I recall. And, if my memory serves me right, one time Governor Barron ran up a trial balloon that in effect identified him as being a supporter of the President's policy on liberalization of residual oil imports. Now, this was a hell of a big favor coming from a governor of a coal state, to give an expression on a subject like this, which is touchy as the dickens in West Virginia. But what Barron indicated was a willingness to go along with a policy of the President if it were more in the national interest at that particular time than was West Virginia's viewpoint on coal a matter of national interest. In other words, he would accede to the President's judgment that the view at the moment on residual oil was of overriding importance to the domestic view on coal.

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8McDonough interview, p. 48.
McDonough enjoyed his own role as liaison immensely and until Kennedy's death managed to keep his printing plants in both Parkersburg and Huntington going while making the frequent trips to Washington. He estimated that through his efforts, and with the help of others, more federal aid came to West Virginia during the New Frontier than in the previous sixteen to twenty years. He expressed his own philosophy of patronage and favors quite clearly.

Early in the game I adopted this viewpoint: That there were certain major prospects open to the state of West Virginia; that we had a certain amount of consideration or goodwill to draw on; and that I, for one, was going to push for the bigger projects, because as far as I have ever been able to determine there is very little difference in a politician's mind if he gives you a thousand-dollar favor or a hundred-million-dollar favor—each equals a favor. I determined to go for the million-dollar favors rather than the five-dollar favors.\(^9\)

With this rather pragmatic approach in mind, McDonough and Barron decided to go for the one request which McDonough regarded as the greatest achievement of his Washington years—the extension of Interstate Highway 79 from Pittsburgh to Charleston, a distance of almost 200 miles. The road had originally been planned to connect Erie with Pittsburgh. By continuing to Charleston it would open up much of the remote center of the state via Washington (Pennsylvania), Morgantown, Clarksburg and Weston, to Charleston. While it would roughly parallel the existing twisting and narrow U.S. 19, it would shorten the driving time many hours to the metropolitan north and provide convenient access to new industrial sites, for summer cottages, and aid the boom in the

\(^9\text{Ibid., p. 26.}\)
tourist industry, expected to come with the new state park system which was already under construction. According to McDonough, Kennedy himself had to put continuous pressure on the federal highway office to get the road approved. Luckily there was some mileage allotment remaining from the original interstate highway act so enough was found to complete the highway. The road had the expected effect on the center of the state. Motels and McDonald's came with the road, and Charleston, where 79 from Erie meets 77 from Cleveland to join the West Virginia Turnpike (later designated an extension of 77 to Bluefield), developed an almost insatiable appetite for hotels and motels. So dear to his heart was this project that when McDonough died, it was revealed that he had requested that after cremation his ashes be scattered over the highway which he regarded as his greatest achievement for his state. His request was honored by several of his close friends.

Within the Kennedy camp there was almost unanimous agreement that the President and his administration had been good for the state. A few, with some of the Humphrey and neutral observers, felt that the outside press had painted a somewhat unfair picture of the state to the nation, but this could not be blamed on the President. Usually this criticism involved the feeling that the media had failed to find any middle class residents or virtues in the state. Even here, however, many felt the national mirror, unfair as it might have been, forced the mountaineers to take a good look at themselves and to correct some of their faults. Senator Jennings Randolph's experience with that most middle class of magazines illustrated a point made by many:
I remember that in February, 1960, The Saturday Evening Post carried an article, "The Strange Case of West Virginia." By and large it was an article containing some sensationalism here and there and some untruths here and there. I thought that there should be another article or letter in response or rebuttal. I sent a telegram to the editor of the Saturday Evening Post and asked him if he would consider the publication of an article that I would prepare on the subject, "What's Right With West Virginia." Back came a telegram of refusal and disinterest. There are people, of course, who are interested in knowing the truth about West Virginia. The truth, I think, came to the fore in the Democratic presidential primary campaign of 1960.

Walter Hart, the Morgantown editor, expressed something of the same kind of disappointment with the "palace guard" at the White House, but not Kennedy personally. Hart had wanted to interest Kennedy in an "aerial street car" to tie the state together in connection with his interest in developing the local airport. He got little encouragement and blamed his problems on McDonough, but never the President. Hart, as did some others, resented the fact that "apparently the only guy who had a key to the White House was Bob McDonough, who most of us thought did darn little about it."

The views of the Humphrey co-chairmen William Jacobs and Marshall West indicate that the primary battle left no lasting hard feelings on either of them or most of their followers. Jacobs, speaking of the benefits which came to the state, said,

The people of West Virginia felt that John F. Kennedy was living up to his promises to the people of the state; he injected new hope, in my opinion, into the people of West Virginia, into the life stream of West

11. Ibid., p. 7.
Virginia. I believe that he was helping to revitalize the depressed area of the state, he was showing genuine concern for the people of the state; he came back here not long after he was elected President to thank the people of West Virginia.\textsuperscript{12}

Marshall West from the south echoed his co-chairman from the north.

Speaking of the Kennedy years, he said,

\begin{quote}
I was very well pleased with Senator Kennedy's--or President Kennedy's--treatment of West Virginia after his election. I felt that President Kennedy would keep his word. I think the political leaders of West Virginia were confident that he would keep his word; and I think very definitely he did do just that as long as he was President.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

The only criticism West could remember came from a not unexpected source concerning the health proposals of the New Frontier.

The rank and file of the Democratic party in West Virginia, as far as I could determine, were very definitely in favor of the medical program of President Kennedy. We did have some doctors and the rather conservative element of the Democratic party in southern West Virginia that were opposed to it. I can't quote this. I think probably Dr. Ward Riley, who was, incidentally, one of the campaign managers for Senator Kennedy, was probably opposed to Senator Kennedy's Medicare plan.\textsuperscript{14}

West concluded his appraisal by observing that in spite of this negative attitude about Medicare, praise came for the President from some unexpected sources:

\begin{quote}
I know some Republicans that were strongly in favor of Kennedy's--some of Kennedy's programs. They definitely felt that Senator Kennedy was making a surprisingly good president.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Jacobs interview, pp. 21-22.

\textsuperscript{13} West interview, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 9.
Perhaps the final word on the subject of the political rewards for the state should come from John Amos, the conservative Johnson supporter from Charleston.

President Kennedy tried his very best to keep all of his commitments to West Virginia; and, I think, insofar as the Congress supported him, he did keep those commitments. His heart was in trying to help West Virginia, and I think that he did help West Virginia, as he had promised to do.16

Thus West Virginia played a crucial role in the nomination of the Democratic candidate in 1960, and its image of depression, as presented to the nation, led to major changes in the life of the state and of an entire region. John F. Kennedy had entered the presidential preferential primary in the state because of the existing myth, seemingly codified by the defeat of Alfred E. Smith in 1928, that no man of his faith could ever be elected to the presidency. Kennedy decided to test the myth in a Protestant border state, where the Ku Klux Klan had found modest support in the 1920s, and won.

He won for a variety of reasons which presented a kaleidoscopic view of West Virginia and American politics in 1960. Ned Chilton thought that Kennedy used the religious issue somewhat unfairly but Ralph Pryor made certain that he had a Mason to introduce the future president and Jacqueline Kennedy reported avoiding priests and nuns. George Titler thought that mothers flocked to him as their son. Esther Peters felt he was a sex symbol for both mothers and daughters. Sidney Christie and many others thought that the legend of the New Deal helped with the voters. Ralph Pryor and others added Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., to

16Amos interview, p. 29.
the list of reasons. Jennings Randolph believed that a few may have voted for him to show their tolerance rather than their intolerance. Andy Houvouras felt that some businessmen were attracted by his candor. Many believed that Kennedy's fellow Catholics made an extra effort to get to the polls. Bob McDonough and Thomas Godby stressed the pocketbook issues, the economy and the boarded up windows of the coal camps. Almost all of Kennedy's supporters believed that he would help West Virginia if elected. Charles Love, with his eye on November, reminded all that he was the most qualified of the candidates to beat Richard M. Nixon. Sidney Christie again spoke for many when he said that the state and the nation were more tolerant than they had been in the nativist '20s.

Hubert Humphrey earned almost forty percent of the votes because of his long liberal labor record in the Senate. Miles Stanley noted his support from labor officials and union members who worked in his behalf. He was undoubtedly supported by both some anti-Catholic voters and by those who were not responsive to the Kennedy charm or the vast family's vast resources. John Amos and others voted for Humphrey in the belief that their votes might eventually go to Lyndon Johnson. Kennedy's victory in West Virginia, however, permitted the party elders and power brokers to support him and perhaps sleep a little easier, feeling that their candidate might not suffer the same fate handed to the Happy Warrior thirty-two years earlier.
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### WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES

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