



# THE KEYNOTER



**1952: The Last Real Conventions**

**That Coonskin Cap • Kefauver vs. Kennedy**

**Running for President**

## Editor's Message

This is my favorite issue since taking over as editor of *The Keynoter*. There surely must be something in these pages to interest even the most advanced or specialized collector.

The battles of the 1952 conventions with their wonderful cast of characters – ranging from the terse integrity of Robert Taft to the gregarious boldness of Estes Kefauver – show American politics at its most colorful and complex. To help tell the blow-by-blow battles between the many presidential hopefuls in 1952, I have utilized a wonderful series of cartoons by *Washington Star* cartoonists Gib Crockett and Jim Berryman (son of the *Star's* longtime cartoonist, Clifford Berryman). Unlike their more ideological counterparts, such as the *Washington Post's* Herblock, these cartoons recorded the 1952 campaign in a straight forward, journalistic manner. I've also tossed in a few newsphotos from that time.

The stories on the 1952 conventions feature items from the hopeful collection of Ed Mitchell (photographed by Richard Baer), which includes some of the most uncommon modern era convention items I've ever seen.



David Frent

Even more amazing are the items from the collection of David Frent taken from the new book *Running for President*, edited by Arthur Schlesinger. Its publication is a landmark for those of us interested in understanding and preserving political Americana. The Frent collection featured in these two volumes is truly remarkable, moving beyond the celluloid button into almost unheard of items from the heights of stained glass windows to a modest pair of work gloves. The publication of *Running for President* may well provide the field of political Americana with what Chairman Mao would have called "a great leap forward."

Michael Kelly  
Editor

**APIC OFFICERS - President:** Neal Machander; **Vice Presidents:** Region #1 - Ken Florey, Region #2 - Christopher B. Hearn, Region #3 - John R. Henigan, Region #4 - Ron Moody, Region #5 - Fred Jorgensen, Region #6 - Peggy Dillard; **Secretary/Treasurer:** Joseph D. Hayes; **Board of Directors:** Barry Adler, Carey Demont, Tom French, David Frent, Bonnie Gardner, Jim Kotche, Robert Levine, Ronnie Lapinsky Masella, Julie Powell, Marc Sigoloff, Ed Stahl, Dr. Edmund Sullivan, Boh Westerman, David Wilson, Jack Wilson; **National Chapter Coordinator:** Larry Brokofsky; **Senior Contributing Editor, APIC Keynoter:** Robert Rouse; **Past Presidents:** Norman Loewentern, Robert Fratkin, Larry Krug, U.I. "Chick" Harris, Geary VK

**Membership Information:** applications may be obtained by writing to the Secretary-Treasurer at: P.O. Box 340339, San Antonio, TX 78234, Telephone: (210) 945-2811.

**APIC NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS:** Harvey Goldherg, Editor, P.O. Box 922, Clark, NJ 07066.



All correspondence should be addressed to:

**Editor**

Michael Kelly  
24669 W. Ten Mile Road (#3)  
Southfield, MI 48034

**Managing Editor**

Joe Hayes

**Contributing Editors**

Robert Fratkin  
David Frent  
John Pendergrass  
Robert Rouse

**Museum Associates**

Edith Mayo  
Edmund B. Sullivan

**Contributors**

Harvey Goldberg

# THE APIC KEYNOTER

Published Triannually

Volume 94, Number 2

Fall 1994

## FEATURES

1952: The Last Real Conventions .....Page 4  
 That Coonskin Cap .....Page 19  
 Kefauver vs. Kennedy .....Page 22  
 Running for President .....Page 25

**Illustrations:** The editor wishes to thank the following for providing illustrations for this issue: Richar Baer, David Frent, Harvey Goldberg and Edward Mitchell. The illustrations from the book *Running for President* utilized on pages 25 through 36 are copyrighted by Simon & Schuster publishing and are reprinted with its permission. They may not be reproduced without the expressed permission of Simon & Schuster.

**Covers:** *Front:* 6" celluloid button, black & cream; *Back:* Cotton sailcloth banner, R/W/B and black.

APIC seeks to encourage and support the study and preservation of original materials issuing from and relating to political campaigns of the United States of America and to bring its members fuller appreciation and deeper understanding of the candidates and issues that form our political heritage.

©1994 APIC Texas 78234  
Printed in U.S.A. by  
Lehco Graphics

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The presidential campaign of Missouri's Champ Clark, Indiana's presidential and vice presidential hopefuls, and much more will be featured in the Winter edition of the Keynoter.



# 1952: The Last Real Conventions

By Michael Kelly

There was a time in America when citizens did not know who the Republican or Democratic presidential nominee would be until the delegates to each party's national convention voted on the convention floor. Primaries gave clues and there were always polls but representatives of the party organization from each state used the national convention as their one chance to discuss the candidates and actually decide who would be chosen. The nation eagerly followed the news as delegates waved colorful signs, wore funny hats and bright buttons, huddled in smoke-filled rooms, and decided the fate of the Republic.

Today things are different. In fact, they've been different for over four decades. Improved communications, an astronomical increase in money raised and spent, legal reforms opening the delegate selection process and the decline of the party machine in favor of individual, media-based campaigns, have turned the national political convention into a ritualistic confirmation of a candidate whose victory has been evident for months.

That isn't the way it used to be.

The last time wide open conventions occurred was in 1952. Both the Republican and Democratic contests were marked by drama, conflict, intrigue and betrayal. They were the last real conventions. Thereafter every four years would bring conventions that opened with the nominee already known. It is no coincidence that the last year either convention opened with uncertainty is also the first year the conventions were broadcast live over national television.



Senator Taft watches the convention on TV as Douglas MacArthur delivers the keynote speech.



The New Hampshire primary was trouble for Taft and Truman. Kefauver, Stassen and a snowman in a general's hat watch the supposed front runners.

The TV connection is appropriate for much of the excitement in the 1952 campaign was caused by America's (and probably the world's) first television-created presidential hopeful. Estes Kefauver was a first term U.S. Senator who couldn't even depend on political support from his homestate of Tennessee when he was discovered by the new technology of mass television.

He was named chairman of a select senate committee to study the impact of organized crime in America. The committee began to turn up sensational stories of corruption and racketeering. Like Tom Dewey ("The Gang Buster") a generation before, Kefauver caught the public's imagination as an honest, solitary figure fighting for the common man against entrenched evil. Television networks began live broadcasts of the hearings of the Senate Crime Investigating Committee (quickly shortened by the press to "the Kefauver committee") and the nation was riveted to its TV screens. Within weeks, Kefauver was a national hero and people began to talk of him as a possible president.

Presidential politics were unclear for the Democrats as 1952 approached. Harry Truman was still in the White House and eligible for another term (FDR had, after all, served four). His popularity was low, however, and his administration a bit creaky after nineteen years of



uninterrupted Democratic control in Washington. Reluctant to become a lame duck, Truman delayed any public decision on re-election while other Democratic hopefuls grew restless. Only Kefauver dared challenge the president by entering a slate of delegates against him in the New Hampshire primary.

Observers considered Kefauver's move a matter of strategy. No commentator or newspaper ever seriously considered that a freshman senator from Tennessee had a chance of upsetting the President of the United States in a party primary. Especially when that president was the same man who had triumphed over Dewey and conventional wisdom four years before. Those observers hadn't yet realized the power of television.

Kefauver defeated Truman in New Hampshire with 55% of the vote, winning all delegates. By the end of the month, President Truman had announced he would not be a candidate for re-election. Kefauver was suddenly the front runner for the 1952 Democratic nomination.

On the Republican side, Ohio Senator Robert Taft was the acknowledged intellectual leader of his party and its expected presidential nominee. He came by his Republican pedigree honestly. His grandfather was an ambassador for President Ulysses Grant and his father was President William Taft. Robert Taft had been Ohio's favorite son at the 1936 Republican convention and an active candidate at the 1940 and 1948 conventions. His crisp integrity earned respect even from those who disagreed with him and he was thought to be the obvious Republican nominee for 1952.

Like Truman, Taft would have an unhappy surprise from New Hampshire. A group of progressive Republicans, led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, were determined to keep Taft's

Midwestern conservatives from party control. Their candidate was Dwight Eisenhower. A five star general and the architect of military victory over Hitler, Eisenhower was on active military duty when the political season opened. Unwilling to quit his job as commander-in-chief of NATO, Eisenhower was content to stay out of the campaign while Lodge and others ran him for president.

New Hampshire was the first proof of the love affair American voters were to have with Ike. Eisenhower's name wasn't even on the ballot so voters had to write-in his name. They did. Eisenhower won a clear majority in a field that included Taft, Douglas MacArthur and a then-still-formidable Harold Stassen.

Both winners of the New Hampshire primary — Eisenhower and Kefauver — had tough roads ahead of them. Both were outsiders challenging their party organizations. Both were the choice of the people rather than the party bosses. They were to have very different fates.

Estes Kefauver knew his nomination wouldn't please the party bosses. Even in his home state, the party organization was hostile to him. After New Hampshire, the Truman administration was determined to deny the nomination to the man who had humiliated the President. Kefauver's only hope was to go to the primaries and prove himself the people's choice. He did so with a relish.

Lyndon Johnson called Kefauver "the greatest campaigner of them all." He plodded doggedly through each state, personally meeting voters and persuading them individually, campaigning for President as if running for county commissioner. He bypassed the Minnesota primary and advised his supporters to vote for favorite son Hubert Humphrey (who would later endorse



Taft was an active candidate while Eisenhower avoided the political wars by staying in the Army.



Kefauver). Despite Kefauver's support, Humphrey was embarrassed when 15% of Minnesota Democrats wrote in Kefauver's name anyway.

After Minnesota came Wisconsin and Nebraska. In Wisconsin, Kefauver swept the field with over 85% of the vote. In Nebraska he faced an active opponent: Senator Robert Kerr of Oklahoma came in to challenge his colleague from Tennessee. Kefauver won with 60%. In Illinois he faced a favorite son, the much-touted Governor Adlai Stevenson. Many Democrats thought Adlai would be a perfect nominee but the governor did not appear very interested at the time. Kefauver won the Illinois primary with almost 88% of the vote compared to 9% for Stevenson. Kefauver marched across the primary battlefield, winning New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota and California.

Only twice did voters fail to support the man in the coonskin cap. In Florida, he faced Georgia Senator Richard Russell in a classic battle between the "New South" and the "Old South" over civil rights. Die-hard segregationists considered the senator from Tennessee a traitor for his support of civil rights legislation and delivered victory to their stately neighbor from Georgia. On the opposite end of the Democratic Party's ideological spectrum, the District of Columbia held a presidential primary. In D.C., the Truman administration backed an administration insider, Averell Harriman, as the candidate to stop Estes.

Harriman was a tall, thin aristocrat. The millionaire heir to a robber baron fortune, he had served as ambassador to Moscow and London. He was the ultimate bureaucrat and had never before run for public office. Although he would later win the governorship of New York, in 1952 he was the candidate of administration insiders and the left wing of the Democratic Party. Harriman was able to outflank Kefauver on civil rights with the district's large African-American population and (with help from Trumanite federal employees) won its six delegates. Interestingly, Kefauver's only two losses were both related to civil rights. He lost Florida to the right and D.C. to the left.

When the primaries were over, Kefauver had won over 64% of all votes cast. His closest competitor in raw votes



The morning after the New Hampshire primary, Kefauver reads the good news.

was California Attorney General Pat Brown's favorite son slate from that state's primary. But primary victories didn't mean delegates.

Among Republicans, the primaries weren't decisive either. Although Eisenhower repeatedly showed strong public approval, Taft continued to demonstrate substantial support as well. Other hopefuls like Stassen, California's Governor Earl Warren or General Douglas MacArthur never caught fire. There was no compromise candidate to bridge the gap between Taft and Eisenhower. Neither Taft's hope for unchallenged control nor Ike's wish for an unstoppable tide of public approval would be sufficient for the nomination. They were going to have to fight it out delegate-by-delegate on the floor of the convention. The month before the convention, Eisenhower resigned from the Army and came home to formally enter the race.

As Taft had the party apparatus under his control, Eisenhower took the logical tactic of accusing the organization of being unfair. With a righteousness reminiscent of Teddy Roosevelt's battle against William Taft in 1912, Ike's supporters challenged Bob Taft on the seating of challenged delegations. Southern states — then with moribund Republican parties — were the scene of clashes between a party old guard that favored Taft and bands of newcomers excited about Ike.

States like Texas, Louisiana and Georgia sent two delegations to the convention, one favoring Taft and the



Oklahoma Senator Robert Kerr was the last presidential candidate to have actually been born in a log cabin.





NOMINATE



RUSSELL

Clean up Crime and Corruption!  
Clean out the Costellos!

**KEFAUVER**

MEANS  
UNITY and VICTORY

This Kefauver soap symbolized his campaign against corruption.







Georgia's Senator Richard Russell had strong support in the South. In Florida, he gave Kefauver one of his few primary defeats.



Russell campaign card (front and back)



**DICK**  
**RUSSELL**  
 is  
**MY**  
 Candidate for  
 the  
**DEMOCRATIC**  
**PRESIDENTIAL**  
**NOMINATION**  
 "Hustle for Russell"





Averell Harriman had never run for public office before 1952 but knew the corridors of power. He earned the not-quite-affectionate nickname 'The Crocodile' by pretending to be drowsy during meetings and then suddenly snapping into action.







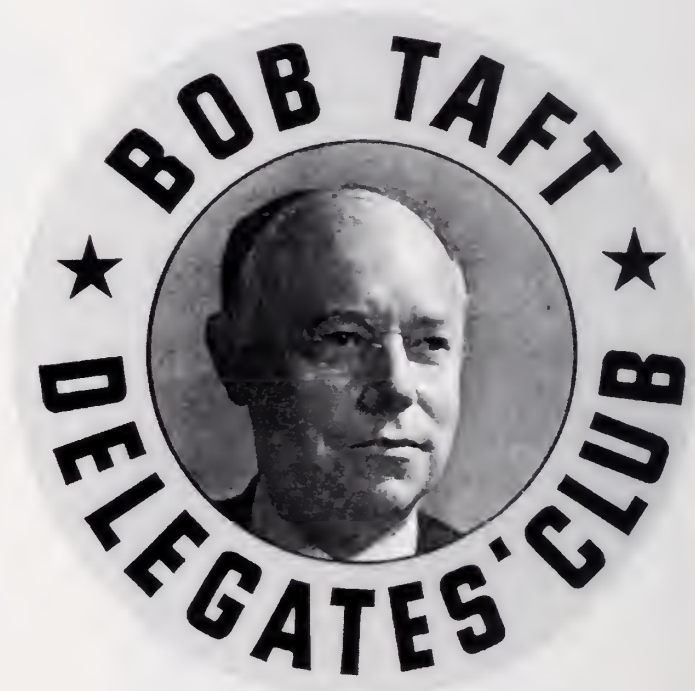
other favoring Ike. When the Taft-controlled credentials committee gave Taft most of the contested delegates, Eisenhower forces provided the classic response: "We wuz robbed!"

Waving signs reading "Thou Shall Not Steal!," Eisenhower fans whipped up emotions and drew most of the delegates backing Earl Warren and Harold Stassen (as well as the large uncommitted Pennsylvania and Michigan delegations) behind their crusade for justice. Eisenhower predominated on the credentials vote 607 to 531, giving him momentum and a critical handful of extra delegates.

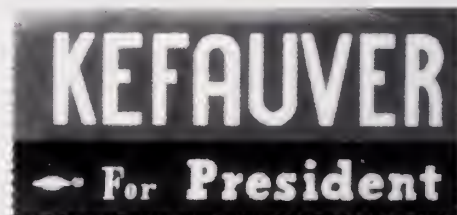
When the first ballot was taken, Ike led Taft 595 to 500. Warren had 81 votes, Stassen had 20 and MacArthur 10. Ike was only 9 votes short of a majority. Minnesota called for the chairman's recognition; its delegates wanted to switch their votes from Stassen to Ike. Within minutes, it was over. The popular favorite had won the day and the Republicans were heading for victory.

Two weeks later, the Democrats gathered in that same building in Chicago with no clear favorite. Their convention would last six days — a post-war record — see eleven candidates placed in nomination and votes cast for no fewer than fourteen. There would be battles over credentials and loyalty oaths, delegations would walk out and then walk back in while others would be ordered out but refuse to leave. It would take three ballots to produce a nominee. When it was all over, the nomination would go to a non-candidate.

Kefauver led in delegates and the polls but his delegate count of over 300 was still at least that many votes away from the needed majority. Russell had the Southern states firmly in his camp and a rock hard 250 delegates but the segregationist views he symbolized were clearly unacceptable to the rest of the country. The Southerners were equally determined that neither the turncoat from

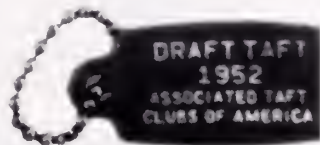
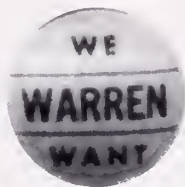
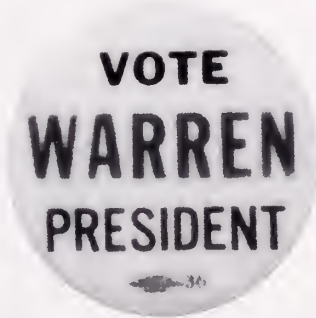
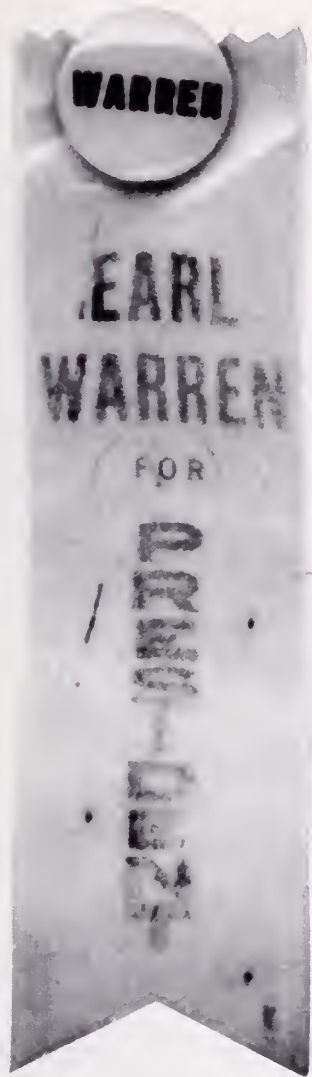


4" button



Kefauver sticker





Republican Convention items.





California  
wants  
**KEFAUVER**  
for  
President



OHIO  
**KEFAUVER**  
WANTS

(Center, right) Kefauver and Russell at a radio debate during the campaign for the Florida primary. (Bottom, left) The day before the convention, all active candidates appeared on TV's "Meet the Press" including (L to R) Harriman, Kerr, Kefauver, Russell and Barkley. Non-candidate Stevenson was not on the program.





**M  
A  
C  
A  
R  
T  
H  
U  
R**

Was

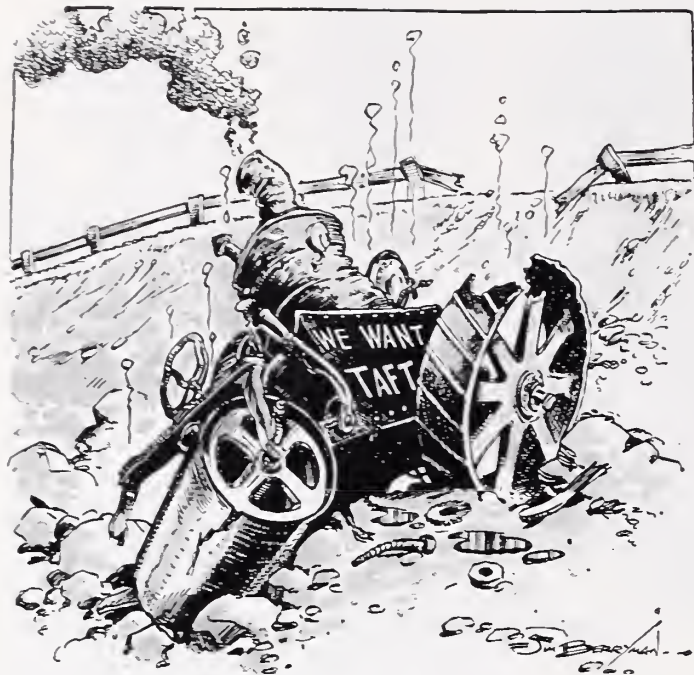
**RIGHT**

**GOP**

**National Convention**

**1952**

  
**REMEMBER  
1912  
WIN WITH IKE  
OR  
LOSE WITH TAFT**



Tennessee. Kefauver, or the further-left Harriman would be nominated. The organization vetoed Kefauver, the South vetoed Harriman and the North vetoed Russell. Democratic delegates desperately needed a "none of the above" candidate.

There were several contenders.

Truman had tried to get Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson into the race for months and promised his open support. Stevenson repeatedly turned the President down, insisting he wouldn't be a candidate. Oklahoma's Senator Robert Kerr still saw himself as a promising option but his close ties to the oil industry left him with a slightly unsavory image. Connecticut Senator Brian McMahon was willing to make the sacrifice for the good of the party and liberal newcomers like Minnesota's Hubert Humphrey, Illinois' Paul Douglas and Michigan's G. Mennen Williams were talked about by a few. Massachusetts Governor Paul Dever and Florida Senator Claude Pepper were pretty much non-starters.

The aging Vice President, Alben Barkley of Kentucky, tossed his hat into the ring and, for an exciting few days, seemed to offer his party an answer to its dilemma. In the polls, he was second only to Kefauver (far behind, but second was better than anyone else could manage). Aside from being "The Veep," Barkley had become well-known to voters as host of his own television show. It is worth noting that the only Democrat to give Kefauver a contest with the public was also a television personality.

Barkley arrived in Chicago the Sunday before the convention with rumors that President Truman was on the verge of endorsing him. To counter fears that his health would not stand the rigors of the presidential campaign, Barkley launched an intensive blitz to demonstrate his vigor. He turned a visit to church into a political rally, spent a total of sixteen hours that day alone



Items reflecting the battle over seating Southern delegates





# NOMINATE



# RUSSELL



on radio and TV shows, and visited delegate meetings all over the city. Cheering crowds gathered around him as he moved from meeting to meeting. There was electricity in the air and his supporters wore buttons showing lightening striking.

But Barkley was also 74 years old. The ultimate power in the modern Democratic Party — leaders of the AFL, CIO, UAW and other trade unions — decided that he couldn't win and spread the word that Barkley was unacceptable to them. Less than 48 hours after he swept into Chicago, the Barkley campaign was over.

Stevenson was still the one name acceptable to everyone. Despite his objections that he only wanted to run for governor again, Illinois delegates publicly reserved the right to place his name in nomination. Kefauver campaign manager Gael Sullivan had stated the scenario on Chicago television several weeks before the convention: "The backers of Governor Stevenson and Senator Russell have been in conference...They will have Governor Stevenson throw his support to Harriman at the outset. They will have Senator Russell stay in the race with his delegates. The bosses expect that this will result in a standoff for the three candidates, each with a block of delegates - Senator Kefauver, Mr. Harriman and Senator Russell...Then Stevenson will magnanimously allow himself to be drafted."

Sullivan's prediction was dead on target. After fierce convention battles between Southern delegates and Kefauver/Harriman liberals on various procedural issues, the first ballot showed a sharply divided convention. Kefauver led with 340 votes. Second place was held by non-candidate Stevenson with 273 while Russell was right behind at 268. Harriman came fourth with 123 while ten others drew votes. Those included Barkley, Kerr, Dever, Humphrey, Arkansas Senator William Fulbright (whose state was hiding behind Fulbright to save a few Russell votes for a second ballot boost), Montana's James Murray, Paul Douglas of Illinois, New York's Oscar Ewing, Supreme Court Justice William Douglas and even six sentimental votes for Harry Truman.

On the second ballot, Kefauver and Russell rose slightly to 362 and 294, respectively (both using votes held back for effect) but the big gainer was the governor of Illinois. Adlai had jumped to 324, distancing himself from Russell and starting to close in on the front runner from Tennessee.

Convention managers pointed out that a larger TV audience would be watching if the third ballot came during the evening, so the convention adjourned for dinner after the second ballot.

Truman flew into Chicago that afternoon and advised Harriman to release his delegates to Stevenson. Seeing the momentum moving irretrievably to Adlai Stevenson, northern party leaders didn't want the South to get credit for putting him over the top. The big industrial states began to break for the Illinois governor.

When the convention convened that night, a message



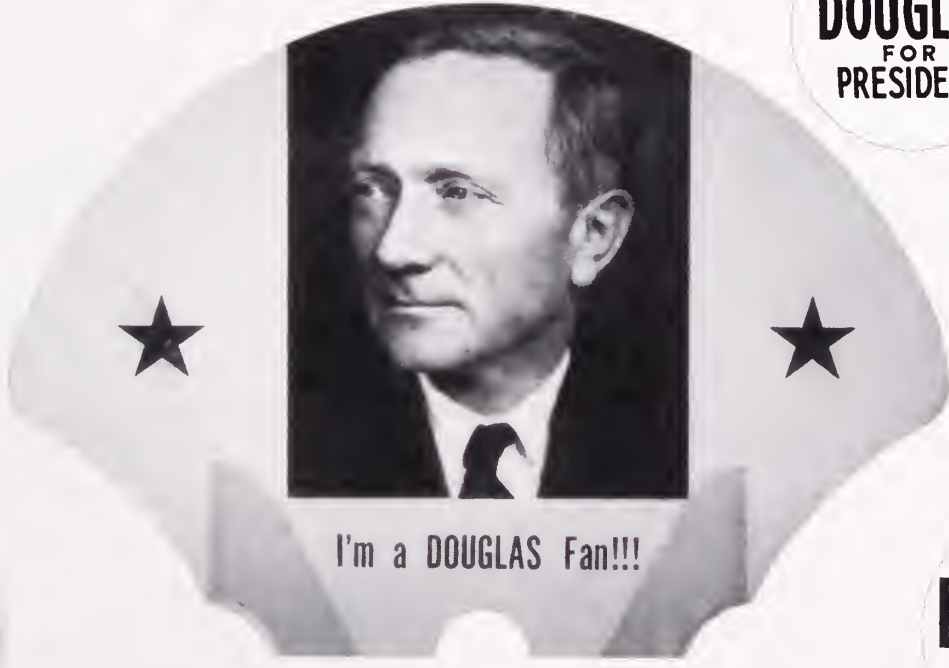
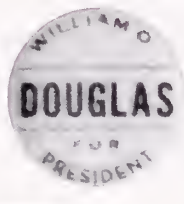
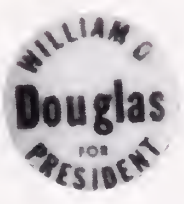
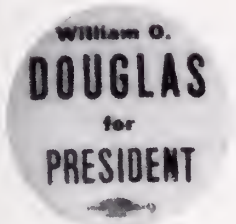


of withdrawal from Harriman was read. New York immediately announced it was switching to Stevenson and was quickly followed by Pennsylvania, Michigan and Massachusetts. Resistance collapsed and the final tally on the third ballot gave 617 votes and the nomination to Stevenson. Two hundred and seventy-five angry Kefauver delegates stuck to the end with the man who had won almost every primary.

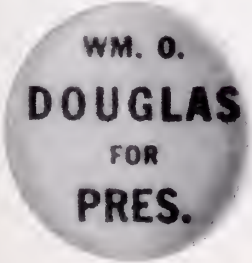
In November, the people had their say. The GOP had picked the people's choice while the Democrats had ignored it. Despite remarkable wit and intelligence, Stevenson couldn't shake the aura of being the candidate of the smoke filled room and a continuation of the Truman administration. Yet, while Stevenson lost to Eisenhower in a landslide, he did succeed in holding the divided Democratic Party together. In the process, he added much of value to American politics.

America had watched the conventions over television with fascination. Four years later, both Eisenhower and Stevenson would again emerge from their conventions with the nomination. By then, however, the results were known long before the delegates cast a single vote.

1956 saw one more brief flurry of genuine activity when Stevenson allowed the delegates a free hand in



I'm a DOUGLAS Fan!!!



Minor Democratic hopefuls; Paul Dever of Massachusetts, Claude Pepper of Florida, Oscar Ewing of New York, Brian McMahon of Connecticut and Supreme Court Justice William Douglas.



A great vendor set with snappy slogans for many hopefuls (and even an Eisenhower piece for those Democrats unhappy with their choice.)

picking the vice presidential nomination (see related article in this issue). But even then, the motivation for doing so was creating enough excitement to justify network television coverage of the convention's last day.

Never again would conventions see the sort of confusion and drama that had marked political conventions since the days of Andrew Jackson. Now conventions would become carefully scripted stage shows aimed at the television audience. Television had arrived on the floor of the national conventions and those hallowed political institutions would never be the same again. ★

Michael Kelly is the editor of *The Keynoter*. He served on the staff of the 1968 Republican National Convention and attended the 1992 Republican National Convention as an at-large delegate from Michigan.





# That Coonskin Cap

By Michael Kelly

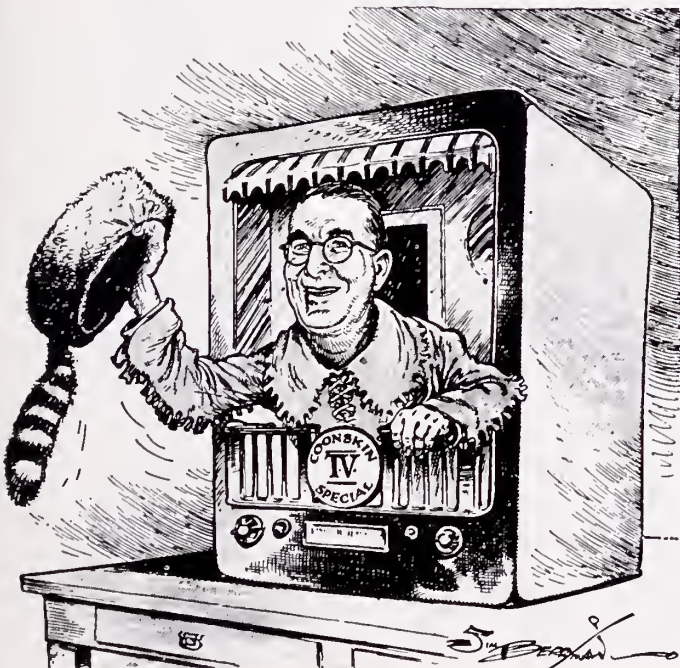
Hats are one of the more unusual items to become symbols in American political campaigns. In 1888 Benjamin Harrison's supporters wore pins and badges shaped like top hats to boast that Harrison could wear the "same old hat" as his presidential grandfather, William Henry Harrison. Teddy Roosevelt's "rough rider" hat became famous and appears on scores of buttons and other items. When Roosevelt — supposedly unwilling to accept the 1900 Republican nomination for vice president — walked on the floor of the national convention carrying a hat looking suspiciously like his rough rider hat, one delegate whispered to his neighbor, "That's an acceptance hat."

LBJ's cowboy hat appears on many items from 1964 (a conscious effort by Johnson's team to portray the Texan as a Westerner rather than a Southerner) and convention delegates are famous for coming up with silly hats certain to draw the TV cameras.

No hat, however, was quite as strange and so completely able to symbolize a presidential campaign as the coonskin cap in the races of Estes Kefauver. Kefauver had first used the coonskin hat as a symbol in his 1948 senate race. When Tennessee's top party boss dismissed Kefauver's senate hopes by comparing him to a "pet coon," Estes responded by wearing a Davy Crockett-style coonskin cap. Audiences roared at the joke and Kefauver won the senate seat. It became a hit during the 1952 campaign but really took off in 1956 when the most popular television show in America was "Davy Crockett." As any reader with grey hair can attest, Davy Crockett was



Nancy Kefauver was a strong asset to her husband's campaign.





“born on a mountaintop in Tennessee” and children throughout the country begged parents to buy them a copy of the round hat made from a raccoon’s hide just like Davy Crockett wore.

With the Kefauver committee hearings making him a popular television figure, it didn’t take a spin doctor to make the connection between the heroic frontiersman from Tennessee and the bold young senator from the same state. Right from the start, political cartoonists loved the coonskin cap. Kefauver’s long face and thick-rimmed glasses already made him easy to caricature, but the addition of the cap made recognition instantaneous. Added to his television popularity, it helped to make him famous and propel him to victory in almost every primary. After his 1952 New Hampshire victory, the cap became such a fad that Kefauver warned his supporters not to track the poor raccoons to extinction. The raccoons weren’t in real danger, however, as the popular press soon reported that excited Kefauver fans were rescuing old raccoon coats from the attic (raccoon coats had been the rage during the Twenties) to turn them into coonskin caps.

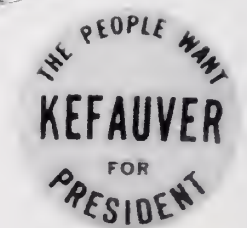
Buttons carried a picture of the hat instead of a picture of the candidate along with the message “Kefauver for President” while tabs were issued that did not even mention his name, merely pictured a coonskin cap. A particularly handsome button reads “Kefauver for

President” with a cartoon of a smiling Democratic donkey wearing the cap and a lapel stud was issued in the shape of a coonskin cap. Wherever Estes Kefauver campaigned, supporters showed up with versions of the cap, many of which he had to put on his head for photographers.

Eventually he grew uncomfortable with the cap, fearing its repeated use might pass from being good-natured to being foolish. When he stopped using the cap, it proved to be a turning point in his 1956 campaign. As one of his biographers, Joseph Bruce Gorman, wrote: “The passing of the coonskin cap symbolized Kefauver’s switch from an all-out campaign against the bosses to a balanced campaign seeking key primary victories and also soliciting support from professionals.”

Kefauver never made it to the White House. Although widely expected to run again in 1960, he chose instead to focus on a tough – but successful – re-election campaign in Tennessee. His 1956 convention rival, Jack Kennedy, won back the White House for the Democrats that year and found Kefauver a key supporter on many issues. On August 10, 1963, Estes Kefauver died, exhausted by a schedule that hadn’t slowed down since 1951.

He was the first presidential hopeful of the television age. It is fitting that he was eclipsed by Jack Kennedy, who used the medium of television more successfully than any American politician before him. ★



Kefauver pins a button on a convention volunteer. Many buttons reflected his role as “the peoples’ choice.”





Stamp



Nancy encourages Estes in the snowy New Hampshire campaign.

# The Last Open Convention Floor Fight: 1956

By Harvey Goldberg

When you look back, the 1952 Democratic National Convention was perhaps the last truly open convention to date. There have been no donnybrooks over the presidential nomination in either party since. Virtually all of the nominees in the last four decades have been all but determined during the primary campaigns across the country. The vice presidential nominations have been reduced to choices by the presidential standard-bearers. These running mates were chosen for any of a number of reasons: to garner support or votes in a specific geographic area, to "balance the ticket" socially, religiously, or economically, to achieve compromise on the platform, or as a lever in the normal workings of politics. Only once since World War II has this choice of a running mate been left to the decision of the convention: 1956.

Even with his defeat four years earlier, Adlai Stevenson had a virtual lock on the Democratic top spot for 1956. Most of the wrangling and behind-the-scenes politics centered around who would share the ticket with Stevenson in the fall. There were a number of choices, but Stevenson was committed to Estes Kefauver, who had withdrawn from the presidential race in return for a promise of the second spot on the ticket. Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey was another consideration, but did not have enough leverage to pry the nomination loose for himself. There was also Kefauver's fellow Tennessean and chief rival, Senator Albert Gore (the father of current Vice President Al Gore, Jr.). The other possibility was Massachusetts' young Senator John F. Kennedy.

Kennedy had gone from a political unknown to national political prominence in a very short time. He had been chosen to narrate a documentary film on the history of the Democratic Party, the convention's opening event. Kennedy's charisma showed well in this: he was a natural



for television. The documentary was a smash hit, as was Kennedy himself. Said the *New York Times*, "Kennedy came before the convention tonight as a movie star". The image he projected to the millions of Americans watching a convention for the first time was very different from that old "smoke-filled room" stereotype.

The young senator was immediately being proclaimed as a Vice Presidential possibility by northern bosses like Chicago Mayor Richard Daley who disliked Kefauver and by Southerners who felt both Kefauver and Humphrey were too liberal. When Adlai Stevenson called Kennedy to his convention room, some thought it was to offer the second spot on the ticket. It was not. John F. Kennedy was asked to place Stevenson in nomination before the convention. This was an immediate disappointment for Kennedy because the person giving the presidential nominating speech was traditionally not selected for the second spot on the ticket.

But Kennedy decided to make the most of his speech. It was a chance to further impress the delegates and a national television audience. Disposing of the prepared script that Stevenson's people had given him, Kennedy and speechwriter Ted Sorensen put together a new presentation. It made a big hit and started a Kennedy-for-Vice-President boom all over again.

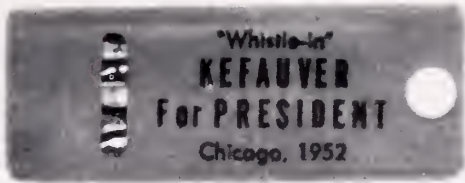
What was Estes Kefauver doing while all of this was going on? He was sitting with the knowledge that Stevenson wanted him on the ticket, and felt confident

A  
WINNING TEAM  
STEVENSON  
KENNEDY

WINNING TEAM  
★ ★ ★  
STEVENSON  
KENNEDY

Stevenson/Kennedy buttons from JFK's bid for the 1956 vice presidential nomination. The narrow loss to Kefauver laid the groundwork for his eventual presidential nomination in 1960. The round button on the left was available at the 1960 convention for use by Stevenson staff in the event that Stevenson won the presidential nomination.

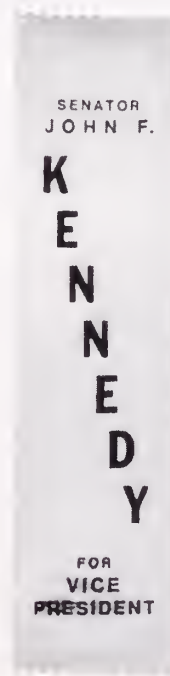




Kefauver delegates "blew the whistle" on party bosses' attempts to stop the peoples' choice.



(Above) Estes Kefauver and John Kennedy were rivals for leadership of the Democratic Party. (Below) Six different ribbons from JFK's bid for the vice presidential nomination.



that he would be named by Stevenson. He had been assured that Kennedy was not prepared for a floor fight. But the pressure for a Stevenson-Kennedy ticket was growing. Stevenson was in a predicament after allowing the young Senator so much exposure on television. He was firmly committed to Kefauver, but feared he would be accused of being anti-Catholic if he turned down Kennedy.

Throughout his career, Adlai Stevenson was accused of being indecisive. Here was yet another incident to support that accusation. Instead of announcing his choice to the convention, the nominee once again evaded a direct decision. Trying to conceal his uncertainty behind "true Democratic principles", he announced to the convention that "The choice will be yours. The profit will be the nation's". So began a floor fight for the 1956 Democratic Vice Presidential nomination.

On the first ballot, Kennedy had 304 votes against Kefauver's 483-1/2, while Gore ran third with 178 votes and New York Mayor Bob Wagner with 162-1/4. Wagner was a 'favorite son' nominee who had promised his votes to Kennedy on the second ballot. Far behind and well out of it was Hubert Humphrey with 134 votes.

On the second ballot the Gore and Wagner voters started switching to Kennedy. He was suddenly within 33-1/2 votes of Estes Kefauver and it appeared that this young upstart had enough delegates to win the nomination. But this was not to happen. Much maneuvering within delegations prevented further changes in balloting. The final tally saw Estes Kefauver nominated for Vice President by an eyelash.

The impact of Kennedy's performance at the 1956 Democratic National Convention went far beyond the impression he had made on the delegates. During the campaign that followed, John F. Kennedy was in much more demand all over the country as a speaker than was vice-presidential nominee Kefauver.

Losing this nomination may have been instrumental in Kennedy's being elected President four years later. 1956 was the last open convention floor fight to date, and it appears that the losing candidate in this convention fight was to become the victor in the long run. ★

Harvey Goldberg is editor of the *APIC Newsletter* and active in the Kennedy Political Items Collectors, a special chapter of the APIC.



### Winthrop Transcript

Published Every Thursday by the Winthrop Transcript, Inc.  
218 Winthrop St., Winthrop, Mass.  
(Area 3-3700)

ANDREW P. QUIGLEY, Publisher

#### "Kennedy for Vice President"

As the democrats of the State prepare to nominate their delegates for the National Convention we hope they will give serious consideration to the nomination of our own United States Senator John F. Kennedy as a Vice Presidential nominee. As a member of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Senator has shown an unique ability to grasp national and international problems. As a member of Congress, when over 200 congressmen toured Europe in the late 1940's Senator Kennedy, realizing the real trouble spot in the world was the first member of Congress to visit the Far East. His report to his fellow members of the Congress prepared the nation for the bold step it took in stopping aggression in Korea.

As a successful author of two books "While England Slept" and the recent "Profile in Courage" he has displayed the true depth of his intellect, and has added a lasting footnote to the history of our nation.

As a United States Senator he has proven that moral courage is NOT something about which he writes, but rather which he practices. Moral courage in the extreme was exhibited by Senator Kennedy when he debated and voted on the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Senator Kennedy would bring to the Democratic party the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut. In addition he would be a refreshing and pulsating personality with great appeal, not only to his fellow veterans, but to the millions of Americans who look to and want from their public officials sincerity of purpose, and intellectual honesty.

With undiluted pride the grand old Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who has given such outstanding sons to the service of this nation, from the days of John Adams, and Daniel Webster, offers that noblest son of all, that living "Profile in Courage", the next Vice-President of these United States—John F. Kennedy.

January 20, 1956



A 1956 Kennedy button distributed with a newspaper editorial boosting the Massachusetts senator for vice president.



# Running for President; The Candidates and Their Images

Reviewed by Michael Kelly

When I first opened the box containing *Running for President*, I felt something akin to the excitement of my early days as a collector. It brought to mind the thrill of receiving one of those padded post office mailers that could contain a new item ordered from a list, the winning lot from an auction, the arriving part of a trade or even an unsolicited offer (not an unusual thing among political collectors back in the mid-Sixties). I feel safe in saying that most readers of this magazine will find it a wonderful two volume set to see and own.

First compliments go to photographer Jim Dorn. I have no reason to think Dorn is interested in political Americana. I assume that he is a professional photographer for whom this was an assignment. Nonetheless, the full color photography is magnificent. Items are illustrated with such clarity that one sees familiar items in a new way. Then there are the items one has never seen before, but more about those later.

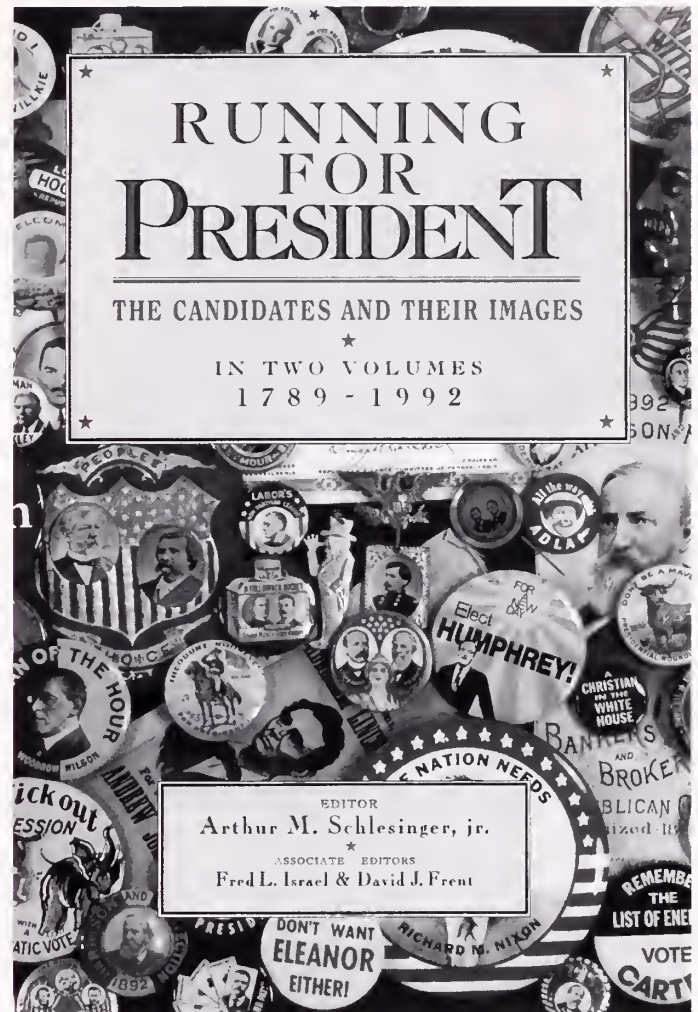
The full title of this book is *Running for President; The Candidates and Their Images*. It is published by Simon & Schuster and contains the stories of every American presidential campaign from 1789 to 1992. Each campaign is told in a readable, knowledgeable essay written by one of a host of accomplished writers (including former *Keynoter* editor Robert Fratkin). The entire manuscript was edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., a pre-eminent historian whose work has won Pulitzer prizes in both history and biography, with assistance from history professor Fred Israel.

The illustrated items come almost exclusively from the collection of David J. Frent, longtime APIC member.

Picking up the first volume of *Running for President*, I flipped it open at random to page 161. On the page (among several other things) was an enlargement of an 1840 campaign medallion for William Harrison. Not only could I read every letter of the inscription ("Maj. Gen. W. H. Harrison - 9th President of the United States"), I could count the buttons on Harrison's uniform. I could note the vegetation under his horse's feet and count the windows in the unfinished Capitol building. I had never seen an illustration with such clarity and force. It took me several minutes to move my glance to the three ribbons also on page 161. One of them was an amazing John Tyler presidential item.

This was a page to which I had flipped at random! It was no exception to what is to be found throughout this book.

*Running for President: The Candidates and Their Images* is not a compilation attempting to list every item, like the valuable work done by Ted Hake, nor does it make more than occasional passing references to the value of items. Unlike *The Keynoter*, which uses illustrations either in their original size or with an explanation as to enlargements or



reductions. *Running for President* focuses on the physical imagery used in campaigns and presents them with as much clarity as possible. Small items are often presented greatly enlarged so that every detail is apparent, from the sharp look in Henry Clay's eyes in the lithographed portrait within a pewter-rimmed medallion to the hairs in Horace Greeley's beard on a brass-encased photo badge. The photos are all in full color and the entire book is printed on fine quality enamel paper.

There are hundreds of buttons used in the book but the Frent collection is not merely a button collection. It is a broadly based political collection that provides a stunning array of images to grace these pages; items like a Woodrow Wilson campaign poster printed in Italian to appeal to ethnic voters, a 1940 Communist Party contribution certificate with jugate photos of running mates Earl Browder and James Ford, a stained glass window picturing James Garfield in a saintly pose above the Latin inscription "Strangulatus pro Republica" (Killed for the





Examples of the rarities to be found in Running for President; a James Monroe ribbon and a DeWitt Clinton badge. Clinton was the 1812 Federalist candidate for president. How many DeWitt Clinton items have you ever seen?



Republic?) and a carved shell cameo of Zachary Taylor. The procession of material is nothing short of astonishing.

The essays on each campaign are also first rate. Choosing one of the more obscure races as an example, I read the essay on the election of 1888. It is by J.F. Watts, a professor of history at City College of New York. As with the other essays, it pays attention to the material culture of the campaign.

“From the mundane precincts of machine shops, potteries, lithographers, drill presses, textile mills, foundries, and all the garment trades came an avalanche of political gimmicks emblazoned with caricatures of Cleveland and Harrison. Children's toys, trading cards, embroideries, hat torches, clay pipes, lapel pins, plates, bandannas, bowls, belt buckles. Homes, shops, meeting halls, and people were proudly decorated. The robust response to such emotional appeal reflected the importance of the event. While later generations would find little to distinguish between these parties of a century ago, contemporaries had no such problem. ‘We’ were the true Americans. ‘They’ were crooks and cowards, and worse.”

Watts' essay even explores in detail the Democratic Party's love of the red bandanna associated with vice presidential nominee Allen Thurman.

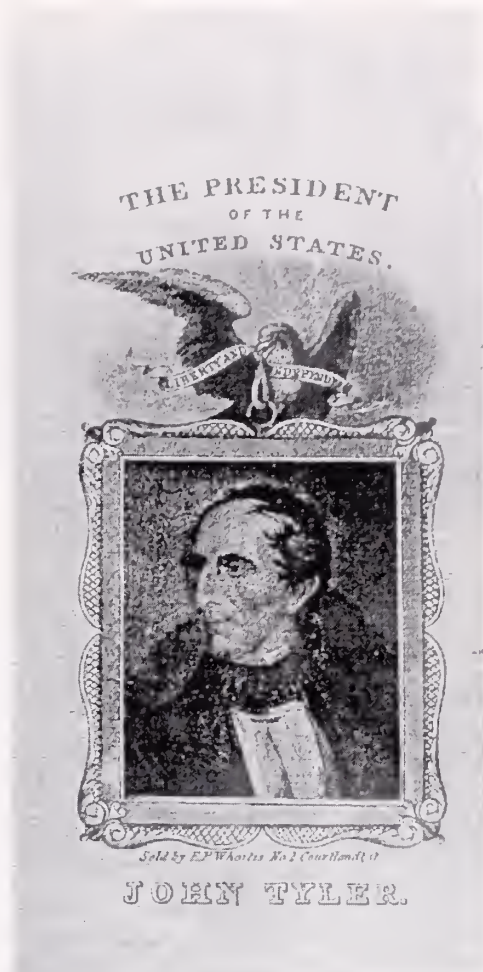
“Uncountable red bandannas poured out of textile mills. Most were about 22" square and bore likenesses of the Democratic candidates, or such slogans as ‘Tariff Reform,’ ‘Red Hot Democrat’ or ‘Rights of Workingmen.’ One retailer catalogued a hundred different styles, on linen (at \$1) or cotton (at 10 cents). The party faithful waved them by hand, attached them to sticks, flew them from buggy whips, or, in ‘The Old Roman's’ [Thurman] own grand tradition, used one to manage snuff. A popular musical accompaniment, ‘for sale at all music stores,’ embellished the legend:





**THE RED BANDANNA**

Yes, let the Red Bandanna wave on high!  
 They will have to wash their blood red shirt:  
 'Tis their banner that is all befouled!  
 'Tis an object of disgust and dirt!  
 We have got a little uncrowned Queen,  
 She's a woman who is fit to reign;  
 With the help of solid men,  
 We will put her there again,  
 At the finish of the big campaign.  
 Wave the Red Bandanna, boys!"



The essay covers the personalities and the issues of the 1888 campaign and relates many telling anecdotes, from the effectiveness of Harrison's front porch campaign talks (relayed to the nation by the Associated Press) to the furor over the British ambassador's advice to someone he thought was an English immigrant that a vote for Cleveland would be in England's best interests.

Every campaign has a similar essay and each campaign is illustrated by ten pages of full color photographs of campaign items. This book may well prove to be a landmark in the history of political Americana. Never before has a project of such magnitude been attempted. The book reflects the highest values of scholarship and production. It lifts political Americana onto a new stage of public recognition and I have no doubt that it will draw many new collectors into the field. In the past, only a few scholars (notably Professor Roger Fischer and Dr. Edmund Sullivan) have tried to carry the ephemera of political campaigns into serious academic consideration. What has been done in *Running for President* by Schlesinger, Frent and the many other contributors, is to give political Americana its proper place in history.

*Running for President; The Candidates and Their Images* is an expensive book to buy. It costs almost as much as a good Teddy Roosevelt picture button. It is worth every penny. ★



Examples of the enlargements used as illustrations; (upper left) Andrew Jackson and (lower right) John Quincy Adams. (Upper right) a John Tyler presidential ribbon.





**POLK & DALLAS**

**ELECTORS.**

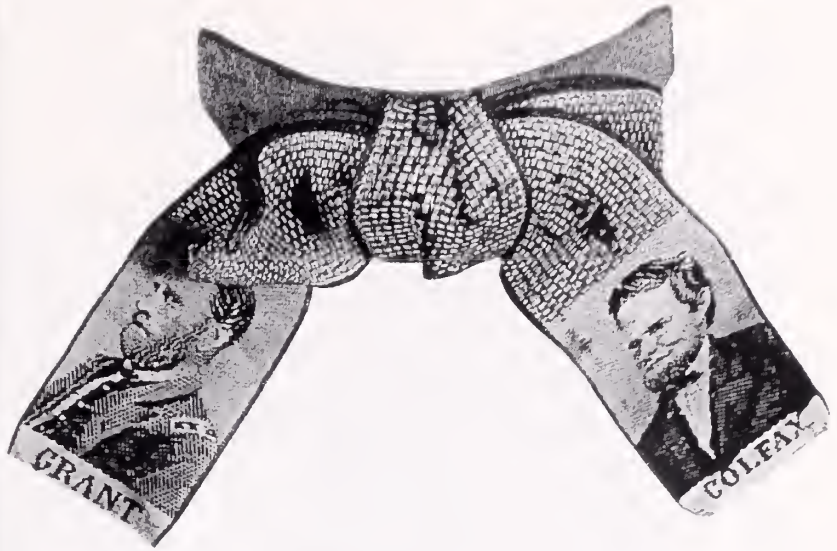
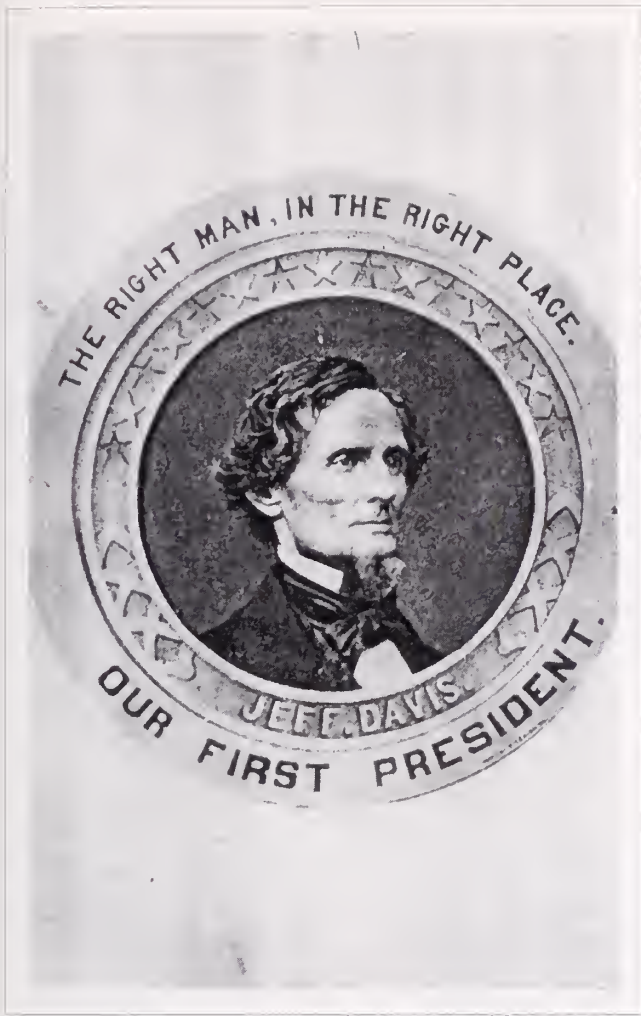
Wilson M. Canless,	Jonah Brewster,
Ami Dimock,	George Schnabel,
George F. Levens,	Nathaniel B. Eldred,
Christian Kears,	William N. Irvine,
William H. Smith,	James Woodburn,
John Hill,	Hugh Montgomery,
Samuel E. Leach,	Isaac Ashby,
Samuel Camp,	John Mathews,
Jesse Sharp,	William Patterson,
Nathaniel W. Sample,	Andrew Burk,
William Heidenreich,	John Merrill,
Coarad Shiner,	Christian Myers,
Stephen Bakaj,	Robert Orr,

The names in a square list are those of the Democrats. Those in a circle are those of James K. Polk. Printed and sold by G. W. N. S. at No. 122 for First Edition of the United States. LITH. G. W. N. S. and Co. New York.

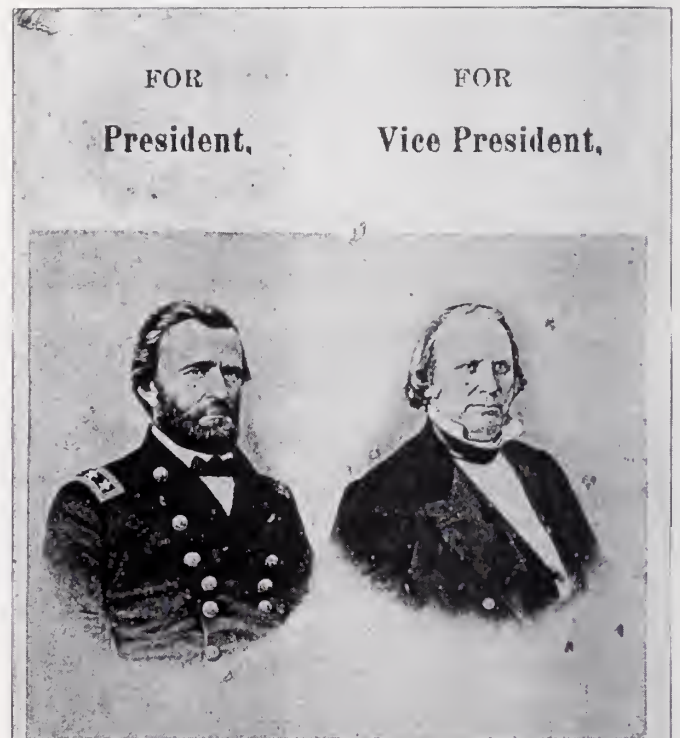


The clarity and quality of illustrations in the Frent book are amazing. The examples on this page include crystal clear Clay and Polk badges, a Polk & Dallas broadside, brass hardware from a dresser picturing Thomas Jefferson and a handsome group of Henry Clay pins. The next page shows a Confederate C.D.V. for Jefferson Davis, a Grant-Colfax necktie, a set of badges from the short-lived 1864 Radical Democracy ticket of Fremont and Cochrane, a Lincoln lantern and a Grant poster.









U. S. GRANT.      HENRY WILSON.

“Despite the annual large reductions of the rates of taxation, the public debt has been reduced during General Grant’s Presidency, at the rate of one hundred million dollars a year.”



BOOK IS HARD TO FIND

Since *Running for President* was published by Simon & Schuster's Academic Reference Division, which markets books to schools, colleges and libraries, it may be hard to obtain a copy through your local bookstore. The most effective way to order a copy is directly through the publisher. The two volume sets costs \$165 and checks for that amount should be made out to Simon & Schuster (there is no shipping and handling charge for prepaid orders). The check with a note containing your mailing address and the fact that you want a copy of *Running for President* edited by Arthur Schlesinger should be sent to:

Academic Reference Division  
 Simon & Schuster  
 15 Columbus Circle, 26th Floor  
 New York, NY 10023

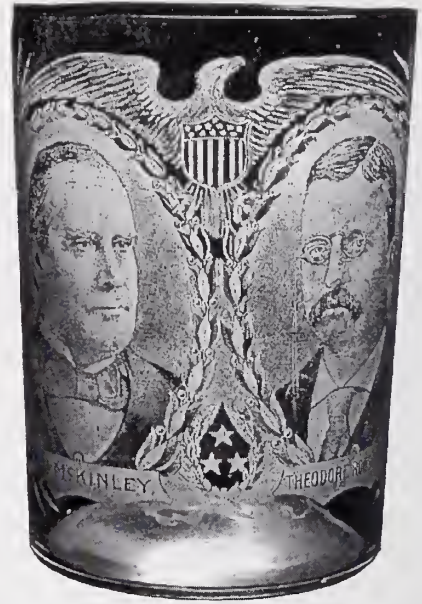
Residents of California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Washington need to include the appropriate state sales tax. If you have any questions, call Simon & Schuster at (212) 373-7353.

Neither the APIC nor *The Keynoter* receives any portion of the proceeds from sale of *Running for President* but it is such an excellent publication and of such direct interest to our readers that we make this information available.



(Top) A Cleveland-Hendricks fan with pictures of their cabinet. (Bottom) A complete set of cigarette trading cards from the 1880 election for the Garfield-Arthur and Hancock-English tickets.





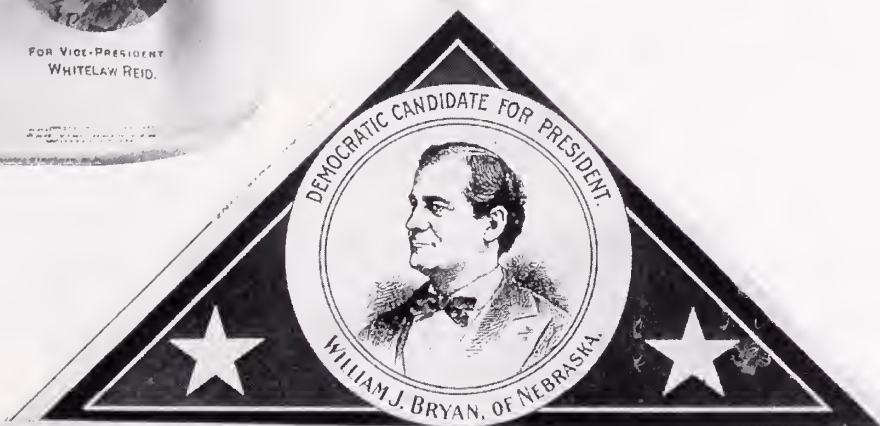
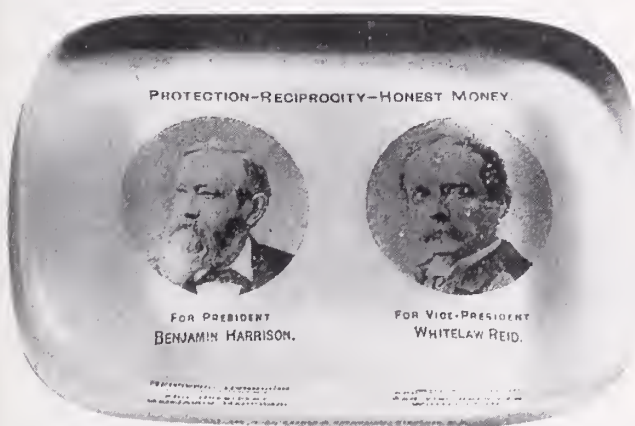
The Frent collection is filled with unusual and diverse items. The 1876 campaign is highlighted with stereopticon cards showing a Hayes-Wheeler banner and a Tilden-Hendricks banner. 1900 produced a lovely McKinley-Roosevelt jugate glass while the contest between Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland gave us this pair of matchesafes.







The Cleveland-Thurman jugate is featured on a songbook and a fan while the Harrison-Reid jugate graces a paperweight. William Jennings Bryan is pictured on a paper hat made from folding a newspaper.







TR and Alton Parker featured on an advertisement for telephones.

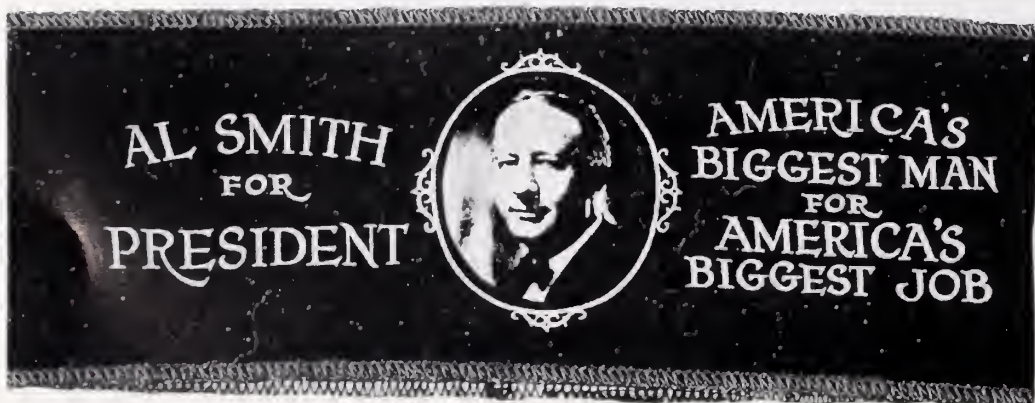


Roosevelt-Fairbanks top.



Copyright 1916 by The Modern Print Shop, Trenton, N. J.

1916 Charles Evans Hughes blotter.



1928 Al Smith armband





"The Sidewalks of New York" are featured on this Al Smith hanger.



1932 produced these matching jugate tire covers



Third party items also appear in Running for President



These 1960 Nixon-Lodge gloves are a modern rarity.



**FORWARD WITH**



**FOR PRESIDENT**



**FOR VICE-PRESIDENT**

**ROOSEVELT AND GARNER**

