

Mark Dalton Oral History Interview – JFK #1, 8/4/1964
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Dalton, a Massachusetts political figure, Kennedy friend, associate, and a member of John F. Kennedy's (JFK) staff (1946-1952), discusses JFK's 1946 congressional campaign, Joseph P. Kennedy Sr.'s role in the 1946 campaign, and JFK's opposition to the Taft-Hartley bill, among other issues.

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Mark Dalton—JFK #1

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First of Two Oral History Interviews

with

Mark Dalton

August 4, 1964
Boston, Massachusetts

By Edwin Martin

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MARTIN: Now, Mark, your first recollection of the late President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] was when? Could you tell us the date and also the circumstances surrounding this first contact?

DALTON: Yes. I got out of the navy early in March of 1946 and I set up my own law office at 114 State Street in Boston. I was sitting there alone with the desk and the books and the phone wondering what I was going to do, and the phone rang. This was in late March or early April, and the call was from John Galvin [John Thomas Glavin] at the John Dowd Advertising Agency. John Galvin and I had gone to Boston College High School together and to Boston College and we had been friends for many years. And John told me he was at the Dowd Agency and that there was a young fellow with him there, John Kennedy, who was running for Congress, and that they were working on a speech which John Kennedy was going to give that night over a radio station here in Boston—his first speech announcing that he was a candidate for Congress. He actually had already made the announcement and was campaigning, but this was his first speech on the radio and he was going to make the announcement on the radio that night. And John Galvin knew that I had done speechwriting and a lot of speaking at BC High and BC and in politics in Cambridge, and he said, “Could you give us a hand on this speech?” And I said I’d be glad to. I’d be right over.

So I took a cab over to the Dowd Agency and that was the first meeting I had in my life with John Kennedy. I was as

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thin as could be at that time, but he was even thinner. He was actually like a skeleton and with him was John Galvin and also Red Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.]. It was the first time I had met Red Fay, and I believe Mr. Parent, Ed Parent of the Dowd organization, was also there at the time. The speech was almost in complete shape at that time. I went over it and they asked my reaction to it, and I told them I thought it was a fine speech. And, as I recollect, very few changes were made in the speech. We went up in a cab to the radio station. John Galvin, Red Fay, John Kennedy, and myself. John Kennedy went on with his speech that night. No one introduced him. He went on alone. That was the first time I met John Kennedy.

MARTIN: Well, do you remember what the subject matter was of the speech?

DALTON: Well, I am not sure of the exact subject matter. Probably that first night he stated something about the programs he hoped to put into force if he were elected.

MARTIN: Well, Mark, now this was a campaign for Congress in the Eleventh Congressional District. Apparently you lived in this district, when you mentioned Cambridge a moment ago.

DALTON: That's right.

MARTIN: Can you tell us a little bit about the climate at that time, and what kind of a district this was? What comprised it?

DALTON: Well, the city of Cambridge was in the district; Charlestown was in the district; East Boston was in the district; a few wards of Somerville were in the district; Brighton was in the district; and part of this area along the river here in the city of Boston was in the district. Now as to the climate of public opinion at the time, of course you had all of the returning young veterans and there was a great interest in the young veteran. That was one of the great appeals of John Kennedy at the time, that he had an excellent war record and was a war hero, and he did get a good deal of support from the young returning veteran who felt a real bond with him. One of the interesting things politically.... I had been in politics in Cambridge

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since my first year at Boston College and had worked a great deal for John Lyons in the Cambridge political campaigns over there. Now John Kennedy was in the congressional fight already when I was called, but I can remember sitting down with him and analyzing whether he would win or not. And we never had any doubt that he would win on the basis that we felt

he would run second; at least second, in each one of these areas of the congressional district, whereas each of the other candidates would run strongly only in his or her own district and would run weakly outside his or her district. For example, the very strong contender of course was Mike Neville [Michael J. Neville] in Cambridge.... I had always known Mike Neville and was very friendly with him and he had done a great deal in Cambridge politics, so it was a hard decision for me to make to go with John Kennedy with Mike being a candidate. But my allegiance again was that bond, a young veteran returning. And I felt I had a close bond with him. When I spoke with him the next day, I told him I would go ahead and support him. But we figured Mike Neville surely would run one in Cambridge, but John Kennedy would run second. In Somerville was figured Catherine Falvey, as a Somerville girl, would run first, but John Kennedy would run second. In East Boston we figured some other candidate might run first, but John would run second. And in Brighton.... I don't think there was a Brighton candidate so he probably would run first there also first in Boston. Once Mike Neville left Cambridge, we felt he wouldn't be too strong through the rest of the district; and the same way with Catherine Falvey. Once she had left Somerville, she wouldn't be too strong in the rest of the district.

So John Kennedy was a candidate who had strength across the whole congressional district, whereas the other candidates had strength only in their own communities. So putting it on a running second basis, John Kennedy would come first through the whole district. So we never had any doubt he would win. But then of course you know the results. He almost defeated Mike in Cambridge. He ran just a few hundred votes behind him there and of course won in the other sections of the district

MARTIN: When you say he had strength across the whole district aside from the fact that he was a personable returning veteran, he must have had many drawbacks, too. I mean, couldn't he be accused of being a carpetbagger?

DALTON: Oh yes. The drawback was that his opponents could say that he had not lived in the congressional district, that he was not known in the congressional district.

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And they did say, you know, that this young fellow really had no right to come in here and try to take this seat when he had no real ties to the district. They made no headway at all because....

MARTIN: How did he counteract it?

DALTON: Well, first of all, the Kennedy family was extremely well known throughout the district. And when anybody tried to say that the Kennedys didn't come from the district or that the Fitzgeralds didn't come from the district that was treated as sheer nonsense. He was looked upon as a local boy. That was actually their reaction. They felt the Kennedys have been here; the Fitzgeralds have been here; this is essentially a local boy. Then, even if they felt he had not spent much time in the district, they

were very proud to have a young man of this stature, a returning war hero, run as a candidate in the district.

MARTIN: Well, did you exploit in that particular campaign his war record, and how did you do it?

DALTON: It was exploited. I don't like the word exploit, but we presented the war record fully in all of the material that we put out. In the advertising material the war record was presented strongly. My recollection now is that we also used John Hersey's article, "Survival," at that time. I know we used it later in the Senate campaign but my recollection is that in the first congressional campaign the John Hersey article on John Kennedy was used. Of course, that alone would have elected a man to Congress. It was a tremendous story on his experience there in the Pacific, and my recollection is that that was given wide distribution throughout the district. That made a tremendous impact on the people.

MARTIN: Mark, was it an expensive campaign?

DALTON: The way congressional campaigns go, I would say it was not an extraordinarily expensive campaign. I would say certainly it was well financed and it was. We had many, many billboards, and we had the advertising material which was presented all through the community. There certainly was no shortage of funds, but on the other hand, I say this with all sincerity, it was not an exorbitant campaign. There was no vast expenditure of money. That's my estimate of that.

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On that point before I forget it, because I would like to mention many of the people who worked in that campaign who may not yet have received the credit which is due them. Tom O'Hearn was in complete charge of billboards. It was his job to see that good locations were gotten and he did, of course, an outstanding job on that. And I believe later in '52 he handled the same assignment. He is one person who did an excellent job for John Kennedy.

MARTIN: Well now, Mark, in that particular campaign the primary date had been moved up. Do you know what it was moved up for?

DALTON: I do not know. I have wondered about that myself. For some strange reason after the war it was in June, sometime in the first or second week of June, and of course, as you know, most elections are held in September, October, or November. So I do not recall now why it was moved up to June, but the primary election was in June of that year. Of course, once he had the Democratic nomination that was it. It was a mere formality in the fall.

MARTIN: You say he announced sometime around April?

DALTON: He had announced earlier than that. When I met him he had already been actively campaigning for over a month, so sometime in February he must have announced his candidacy or maybe even earlier. I met him in late March or early April.

MARTIN: So even had he announced, say, in January, he would have had at the most five or perhaps even six months for a campaign, which is relatively short.

DALTON: That's right, that's right.

MARTIN: Now, Mark, he drew around him a cadre in each of the districts of people that were well known. He didn't depend upon the old, seasoned type of...

DALTON: He had great support from the young people. I'd like to follow up on one thing. After that first radio appearance that night he spoke with me afterwards and asked me if I would be willing to help him in the campaign. So within the next day or two I spoke with him again and told him that I would be willing to give him whatever assistance I could in the campaign. And

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he asked then if I would give him some help on speechwriting, and I said, "Yes, I'd be glad to do that." So I went ahead and drew up drafts of four or five proposed speeches to be used during the congressional campaign. So we went over those—they certainly didn't stay in the original form. As a matter of fact, they may have been tossed out, but we got to know each other better then as a result of this work on the speeches.

And he asked me then if I would manage the whole campaign. He had not named a campaign manager up until that time, and John asked me if I would manage the whole campaign. I said I didn't feel up to that. The speechwriting I'd be glad to do and any support I could give him in Cambridge, which had been my home and the home of my family for years. We were well known there and I had been in politics and I would be glad to ask the support of the people I knew in Cambridge, and work on the speechwriting, but the campaign manager business I couldn't see.

So it went along on that basis. I was seeing him every day, and then he asked me if I would manage the Cambridge office. Since I was already working twenty-four hours a day on the campaign I said, "Yes." So I started out in the Cambridge office working there and then he asked me if I would manage the whole thing—could I be designated manager of the whole thing—and I said, "Yes." Since I was doing the Cambridge thing I might as well do the whole business. That doesn't mean that I was the strategist or the brain, but he had to designate somebody as campaign manager and he asked me if I would do it, and I gave him whatever help I could. Certainly Mr. Kennedy's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] advice through the whole campaign was extremely valuable. I'd like to pay some tribute to him because I think the essential campaign manager through all of these things was probably Mr. Kennedy. At least his advice was always available and he kept in close touch with the situation. I served as campaign manager and I did a lot of work for him on strategy. John and I used to discuss it at

great length. But this was a large congressional campaign and there were, you know, many, many people working in it.

MARTIN: Now, Mark, can you recall some of the people there in the various districts?

DALTON: Yes. I'd like to speak of the Cambridge office first because I did a fair amount of work there. Now in all the books that I have seen written on this, I've never seen the name of Jacob Andelman mentioned. Jake Andelman worked day and night in that Cambridge office doing the tough work of getting out the letters and preparing the mailing lists. And I did a lot of that

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myself; also did May Mahoney, Jim Mahoney's daughter. Jim Mahoney had been a former representative. May Mahoney did a tremendous amount of work; George Taylor [George H. Taylor] was there all day working; and there's a colored lady, whose name I don't recall at the moment, and Joe Fleming. Joe Fleming drove John Kennedy some and did a lot of work at the Cambridge office. In going through this I'll probably omit some names, but Joe Fleming, May Mahoney, George Taylor, Jake Andelman actually managed and did the work in that office. Another thing I'd like to point out, on going from small beginnings to the presidency, we would call ward meetings in Cambridge because we had almost the whole city in it, I believe. We called a meeting for Ward Nine one night in Cambridge, and this is the absolute truth, we sent out hundreds of cards and invited hundreds of people, and not one person showed up to that Ward Nine meeting that night. We were very disappointed, but John Kennedy was not discouraged. He continued and went on from there. So everything we did wasn't successful. In Somerville, of course, Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.] handled the Somerville assignment. And over in Charlestown, of course, Dave Powers [David F. Powers] did a lot of work there. And, of course, you had Frank Dobie and Bill Sutton [William J. Sutton] also did tremendous work through the campaign. Remind me to speak of men whom I think were the advisers to John apart from the organization in the districts. Bill Sutton was certainly one of those, over in East Boston Bill Kelly [William F. Kelly]. There's a man whom I don't think has been given credit for the work he did. He absolutely was the man who did tremendous work in East Boston. Tom Broderick [Thomas Broderick] did tremendous work in Brighton. Now there were many, many others whom I didn't see. There are only twenty-four hours in a day, and I am sure people like Ed McLaughlin [Edward F. McLaughlin, Jr.] and Frank Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] and other people were working in other areas at the time. But these are people whom I happened to have met at the time and to know that they were working very, very hard.

MARTIN: But Mark, did he have a headquarters as such?

DALTON: There was a main congressional headquarters here in the Tremont building in Boston, I believe. At least it was on Tremont Street here. And then there was a Cambridge headquarters; you had the Brighton headquarters. There were headquarters opened up in each section of the district.

MARTIN: Did he go from one headquarters to another as he moved around the district?

DALTON: That's right. As he went through it, he would try to visit the headquarters fairly frequently to keep the workers enthusiastic. They were working; they wanted to see the candidate, and to keep the workers enthusiastic he would try to get there as much as he could. I can also remember once or twice when Mr. Kennedy made the rounds of the headquarters, and, of course, that was a real thrill for the workers to meet

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Mr. Kennedy and to know he was interested in the campaign. Actually, of course, he was a world famous figure. He had been the ambassador to England and everybody was very eager to meet him, and they were very pleased that he had come around to see the work which they were doing.

MARTIN: Now Mark, all these people that you mentioned working in that first campaign there are perhaps only one or two, or perhaps a half dozen, who had any political experience. I'd like to find out why these people were picked. Did this represent a new departure in politics in the Boston area to go get people who were relatively inexperienced to work in a political fight?

DALTON: I don't know whether this was done consciously or not or merely happened naturally. I think some of the older men in politics, who had been in politics for years, thought perhaps that it was wrong for John to try to take this congressional seat when he had had no political experience in this area and had not really done much in the district. So, one they may have thought it was wrong; two, another thing is their loyalties were to the older candidates. Mike Neville was a very attractive and well liked person and a very able candidate so many of the older men would have known him well and would have decided to stay with him rather than go with a new young fellow. And I think through the district that probably was the feeling of the older politicians that they would rather go along with an older candidate. Some of them might have felt that Kennedy might not win, but I think perhaps it was loyalty to the older people in the district. Now one of the older fellows who helped John tremendously was Bill Kelly. Bill Kelly in East Boston was one of the older figures in Boston politics and he played a leading role there.

But the rest of us were fairly young, and I think a good deal of it happened naturally. There was a tremendous ferment after the war. The whole feeling of taking over—that it's a new era. The young veteran wanted to do something, and he was naturally attracted to John Kennedy. The older fellows through loyalty would remain with the older candidates; and the younger fellows didn't know the older people and wanted to go with a new, young fellow. And it was exciting. There is no question about that.

MARTIN: Now, what type of a campaigner would you say Jack was? Was he shy? Was he introverted when he started out?

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DALTON: Yes, he was. There's no doubt about that. He did not seem—this is true—to be built for politics in the sense of being the easy-going affable person. He was extremely drawn and thin. You know, there's no question about that from a physical standpoint. Yet, deep down, he was an aggressive person, but he was always shy. He drove himself into this. And as a worker and as a campaigner, he went day and night and forced himself to meet people. It must have been a tremendous effort of will. This same quality came out later all through his career. He was a great campaigner in the sense that he worked day and night to win and went out to meet the people. He was not the ordinary type of campaigner in the sense that he was not affable and easygoing, and certainly he was not a speaker. You know he later developed into a fair speaker. He was an excellent debater but not an excellent orator. I have not seen this distinction made by anybody else. John Kennedy was, even then, and remained through the presidential term, an excellent debater. He was not a great orator in the sense of a Patrick Henry or a Daniel Webster, one who could arouse your emotions. I don't think I ever heard him give an emotional address even then or later, but as a debater he was excellent.

MARTIN: Mark, can you give us an illustration of his ability as a debater?

DALTON: Yes, I think the most striking example of his ability as a debater came out in his debate with Norman Thomas at the Harvard Law School Forum. This came maybe three or four years after he had been elected to Congress. It was while he was a congressman and before he was a senator and before he became widely known through the state as he later became. When John was in Congress I would receive a call from him every now and then. He'd have some problem or some project that he said he would like to speak to me about. And one of these I remember distinctly. I got a call. He was up at Bowdoin Street, and he said he was going to debate Norman Thomas and he wanted to speak to me for a few minutes about it. Well I went up to Bowdoin Street. And this was the kind of thing John Kennedy always did which was most remarkable about him. He was all alone, as I recall it, there that day. Maybe one or two people came in and out. But I sat there talking with him. He was surrounded by the books of Norman Thomas and everything that the man had written John Kennedy had gotten and he had apparently read everything that he had written, so that he was thoroughly prepared for the debate. And I spoke with him only briefly. There were one or two questions he had and he wanted to get my reaction to them. But he knew this thing backwards and forwards, and there were two

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or three things in Thomas' books that he didn't think stood up, and he was prepared to attack them. So as I said, I discussed it with him briefly, but he was thoroughly prepared, absolutely on his own. I don't know whether other people had worked with him, but he had read everything on it.

Now I thought, now here he is going into the lion's den, because I had known of Norman Thomas' reputation as a debater. Several years before that, when I was at Harvard

Law School, Thomas debated Barton Leach [W. Barton Leach], who was one of the ablest members of the Harvard faculty and a very great teacher and a very great debater. I didn't go to that debate or the one that John Kennedy was in, but the next day after Leach and Thomas, the students came in and they told me Thomas had creamed Leach. So I figured how in God's name can John Kennedy take on a debater of the stature of Norman Thomas? And as I said, I didn't go to the debate that night, but the next day I got reports from several people, and everyone was agreed that John Kennedy had won the debate with Thomas. Now he was not an orator, but as a debater he could make debating points, and of course this all came out later. People speak to me today over and over again about how successful he was in the presidential press conferences, and that was the same thing. He was a debater. He could handle the questions; he could parry them and handle them well; and that came out in the early days and of course it improved with the years. I always like to make that distinction. He was a good debater, but as an orator I always thought he was only fair.

MARTIN: Mark, you mentioned the campaign workers. Now there's another category of advisers in that first congressional fight. Can you tell us who were his advisers, in addition to yourself, and you've also mentioned his father?

DALTON: Yes. John would always be asking you questions. Should he do this, should he do that, should he do the other? And he'd ask everybody questions, and get their views and mull them over, and finally make a decision. But I think some of the people on whose judgment he relied greatly—this was my impression, there may have been others, but I think he relied greatly on the judgment of Billy Sutton, greatly on the judgment of Patsy Mulkern [Patrick J. Mulkern], greatly on the judgment of John Galvin and greatly on the judgment of myself. That was my recollection of it. He was very interested in what our views were. Now he might get all the

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views and get a consensus. I don't know.

An interesting point on that; I don't know how many people he consulted on the Curley [James Michael Curley] pardon petition, but I do remember this was another call I received from him when I was over at 114 State Street. He asked if he could drop down, he wanted to talk to me about something. He came in, and it was on the Curley pardon petition. He had been asked to sign the petition. We went over it for about an hour or two, and my reaction at the time was that I was furious that he had been asked to sign the petition, not that I didn't feel sorry for Mr. Curley or that some help should be given to him. My strong reaction was here was a young man starting his political career, just on the threshold of it, and I thought that the older people who were putting the pressure on him to sign this petition had a terrible nerve. That's what I thought. I was indignant because I thought they had a nerve to jeopardize John's career. I didn't think they had the right at the very start of his career to put him on this spot. And I told John that. I don't know whether he consulted with other people but he went along with my views. The older advisers included John's father, Joe Kane [Joseph Kane], and Bart Brickley [Bart A. Brickley].

MARTIN: His father, Mark, I get the impression that he was sort of in the background as the adviser, that he didn't in that campaign or perhaps in other subsequent campaigns project himself physically into the picture. Is this a true assessment? In other words, he didn't go out and speak for his son; he didn't go out and make any kind of appearances for his son in that first fight?

DALTON: No, Mr. Kennedy in that congressional campaign and later while he was working in the senatorial campaign, and of course I've observed all the campaigns through the years, he never projected himself into the public picture. He never went around giving speeches for John, and his appearances were always very fine—like the brief appearances at headquarters just to let the workers know that he was interested and also meet with him. I got to know Mr. Kennedy well in the first congressional campaign and through the years after that and for a few months in '51 and '52. I've read over and over again, "Mr. Kennedy really had nothing to do with the campaigns at all." And I just want to say this that he was one of the ablest men I ever met and he was deeply interested in every campaign, at least those that I had anything to do with. He was deeply interested in that congressional campaign, and if there were an essential campaign manager, I would say that it was Mr. Kennedy. And I think for history, that that should be clear.

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Well, I'll tell you this, that Mr. Kennedy called me many, many times, to know exactly what was happening. He was very, very interested, and he would talk at great length and wanted to know about every facet of the campaign in the first congressional one and later at the start of the Senate one. As a matter of fact that was one of my problems. He'd keep you on the phone for an hour and a half, two hours. I can remember one Sunday morning he called me and kept me on the phone for about three hours. Well, it probably wasn't three hours, but it was easily an hour. He was very, very interested in what was going on, although he did not project himself into the picture publicly. He was a very, very able man.

There are perhaps one or two things I should say about his appearances. After John was elected to Congress, he spoke to the Kennedy post [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Post] one night and that was an excellent speech which he gave that night. I recall one other appearance that was very impressive. John had been scheduled to be the principal speaker at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Knights of Columbus in Cambridge, and the Knights had prepared for this for about a year. This was going to be one of the big meetings of all time. It was their fiftieth anniversary. They are one of the oldest councils around. And they had been successful in having scheduled as their principal speaker this young congressman, John Kennedy. Of course the Kennedy name was magic, and he was the drawing card. Well, they had sold all the tickets for the event, and of course it had been widely billed that John Kennedy would be the speaker. And John became sick in England, very seriously ill. During those six years there were two or three times when John became very seriously ill. I believe he was in England at the time and it was impossible for him to make this appearance, so the Knights were quite distraught. The people who had arranged the program didn't know what to do. And they said, "There can be only one substitute for him. It would have to be Mr. Kennedy." So that was, I thought, quite a problem.

They came to me and asked me if I would see if Mr. Kennedy would be the speaker, taking John's place. Well, I decided I'd go ahead, and I called Mr. Kennedy, in New York I believe it was, and told him that the plans had been made for this, that it was a deep blow to them that John couldn't appear, and while I realized that he was an extremely busy man, would it be possible for him to make the appearance in John's place? And he said that he would come and give the speech in John's place. I bring it up for this reason: the deep sentiment of the Kennedy family.

I'll always remember the speech that night at the Hotel Commander in Cambridge. He got up as the principal speaker and he opened by saying that he was very happy to come to Cambridge to give

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this speech to the people who lived in Cambridge and he said, "Cambridge has always been good to the Kennedy family." And he spoke about his own days at Harvard and then he said, "My sons went to Harvard here in Cambridge," and he started to speak about young Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.] and he almost broke down. He had the most terrible time trying to control himself—the tears welled up in his eyes as he spoke of Joe and it took him about two minutes to get the grip. Then he went off that tack and went on in a lighter vein. But he did come and make the appearance, and he was quite impressive at that time. And that was one quality that I noted in the Kennedys. I think John, as he went ahead with his political career, made every effort to drive that sentiment out of himself, but as it has been pointed out, the bonds were strong within the family and there's a good deal of sentiment.

MARTIN: How about the grandfather, John F. Fitzgerald [John Francis Fitzgerald]? Of course, he was in the twilight of his career. Was he associated at all in the first fight?

DALTON: Yes. There was a good bit of activity at the Bellevue. John was there, and the grandfather lived there, and he was associated with the campaign. And I met him a few times there and one of the funniest incidents of the campaign did take place there. John was going on the radio—it was not T.V. then.... John was going on the radio. He made five, six or seven radio speeches during the course of the campaign. He had been on maybe three or four days before that. Of course Mr. Fitzgerald listened to every broadcast of the campaign. And we were working on his speech up there at the Bellevue, and again, it was one of those rush, rush, rush things. It was during the day. He was going on something like noontime, and we maybe started to work on the speech around 10:00 o'clock, and this was the way John always was. It was 11:00 o'clock, 11:30, and we were changing, changing, changing. And it gets to be around twenty minutes to twelve and him saying, "How are we going to finish this thing off, and how's he going to get up to the station?" You know, I wanted to call a halt here, take what we had and get up and deliver it, but he wanted to keep changing the speech. So it got to be about ten minutes of twelve and this is the absolute truth, he said, "I'll take what we have here of the speech, you finish it off in three or four minutes and you come up in another car." [Laughter] The time schedule was impossible

to meet. We got a cab and got up there but he was already on the air when we got up there. John F. Fitzgerald was a witness to this whole

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thing. He was right there through the whole thing at the Bellevue during the writing and everything else and we got up there and John was on the air and it was too late. And what he had done was he took out the speech which he had given two or three days before and used that speech all over again. It was the same speech he had given two or three days before and the speech we had been working on was not used at the time.

What was amusing about it was when we got back to the hotel, John Fitzgerald said that it was magnificent, and while John Fitzgerald had listened to all the speeches he didn't realize this was a repeat of the one which had been given two or three days before that. I don't think that he took an active part in the campaign. I think he was very interested in what was going on but I don't think he was an adviser. I could be wrong on that. They must have talked with him but I don't recall him too much giving advice as to how the campaign should be run. [Interruption]

MARTIN: Mark, in that first congressional campaign the famous Kennedy teas or coffee hours, were they put into effect as early as that?

DALTON: There was one big reception for the women held at the Hotel Commander in Cambridge which was very, very successful and it was the first time I ever heard of any thing like this in a political campaign. We sent out formal, almost engraved, invitations to the women of Cambridge to come to this reception or tea at the Hotel Commander for John Kennedy. And that day at the Commander, Mrs. Rose Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] appeared with John and it was a highly successful reception. Now I have ready recently that Joe De Guglielmo [Joseph De Guglielmo] was the man who had the idea for the reception. I remember we held it; it was extremely successful; and it was unquestionably the forerunner of the tea idea which became so successful. So Mrs. Kennedy appeared that day, and also Eunice Kennedy [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] spent some time here in the campaign. I can remember one evening I accompanied her to various rallies through the district and she was a very effective campaigner. I believe Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] also campaigned. Bobby was very young at the time but I believe he did some work, particularly in East Cambridge at that time. Of course, Ted [Edward M. Kennedy] was very young then.

MARTIN: Mark, did you know Joe, Jr.?

DALTON: No, I didn't. I saw Joe, Jr. only once. When I was a freshman at the Harvard Law School, I believe he was a

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third year man. But at any rate I remember sitting opposite him in the library, and I recognized him and also someone pointed out that he was young Joe Kennedy. I just saw him but I didn't speak with him. The first time I met the Kennedys was when I met John and then later, through John, I met the other members of the family.

MARTIN: Well, now your association with the new congressman, so to speak, didn't end after this election. Did it continue on when he went to Washington?

DALTON: Yes, it did continue on when he went to Washington. As a matter of fact I'd meet with him every now and then during the six years he was in Congress. But I remember the first time he called was on the Taft-Hartley Law and this was just two or three months after he was elected to Congress, maybe within the first month that he was in Washington. It came up fairly quickly after his election. He was on the committee on labor and industry [House Committee on Education and Labor] and there was this proposal in the Congress to regulate labor. It was not a law at this time. It was the Taft bill in the Senate; it was the Hartley bill in the House; and only later after conference committees and everything else, it became the Taft-Hartley bill and ultimately the Taft-Hartley law. And John was on the committee on labor and industries. There had been hearings on the Hartley bill, and a majority report was being filed by the Republican members of the committee on the Hartley bill, and a minority report by the Democratic members of the committee on the Hartley bill.

This is one of the things that I wanted to mention. Right from the start everything that John Kennedy did, everything that we did was on a very high intellectual and national or international plane. I can remember once when a French general in Indochina died. John had met him on his trip to Indochina and had spent a few days with him. Well at that time John issued a statement on the death of the general. You would think from our statement that John was president of the United States or de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle]. Its tone was on that high and here he was only a congressman. But everything that was done from the very start was done on that plane. There was no question: everything we did bore the earmarks of destiny. You had a foreshadowing of it right away on this Hartley bill. The hearings were held and the reports were coming in. Now the Republican members of the committee were for the Hartley bill and the Democratic members were against it. In addition in the picture there were committee counsel, men and congressmen who had been in Washington for years and knew the problem backwards and forwards,

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and the lawyers and the congressional staff, had they were preparing either the Republican report or the Democratic report,

Well, as I said, we received a call from John and I went down to Washington; Joe Healey [Joseph P. Healey] went down with me. When I was in Washington, we called to have John Donelan come over and speak with us; and of course at the time Billy Sutton was down there on John's staff. John Kennedy wanted to know what we thought of this Hartley proposal and what he should do about it. It was pretty quickly decided. John said he would file a separate dissenting report. So you can imagine the reaction of the congressmen who

had been there for years and had worked on this problem to be told that the new congressman from Massachusetts was filing a separate report. We worked on that for two or three days with John, and he filed a separate dissenting report. The historians, if they want to get his early views on the labor problem, should look to that report. As a matter of fact, the day after it was published the *New York Herald Tribune* called it "one of the great state documents" of all time. I believe we discussed nationwide strikes and all of the other problems of labor, and Kennedy presented his own views. And, as I say, the rest of the congressmen were furious, but it was done. And of course that was the kind of way he acted throughout his entire career.

There was one interesting episode during the two or three days that I was down there. The debate was going to come up in the Congress on the Hartley law. And this is the first time I ever knew this about Congress, that the Rules Committee determines how much time is going to be allotted to a debate. They say, "Well, the Hartley law is very important. We'll allow ten hours of debate on it, and it will be five hours for the majority and five hours for the minority." And then the majority leader determines who is going to speak on the bill and how much time will be given to each speaker. The minority leader determines how much time will be given to each minority speaker. So that the Rules Committee makes that decision. One morning John said he had to appear before the Rules Committee on this Hartley law, and he asked me to go with him.

I went down to this congressional room and the Rules Committee was sitting there. Sitting at the other end of the table was Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter], who was either the chairman or the vice-chairman of the Rules Committee. The discussion that morning was on how much time should be allotted to the debate on the Hartley bill, as it was called in the House. When we came into the room, we sat down in the front row, John Kennedy and I. There was a young fellow

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talking, speaking to the committee on this proposed law, and John said to me, "Listen to this fellow. He's going places." So about two minutes later this fellow concluded and he turned around to take his seat next to us. John stood up, and I stood up. And John said, "I'd like you to meet Richard Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] of California." So he did say right there and then, "Listen to this fellow. He's going places." So I always thought it was interesting that later these two men clashed for the presidency.

MARTIN: Well, Mark, John Kennedy's stand on the Taft-Hartley bill, what was the reaction not only in his district but across Massachusetts at the time?

DALTON: We pointed out [and this was the kind of independent and daring thing which John Kennedy always did] that there were certain excesses of labor, which had to be curbed. We took essentially the labor position as Democrats; we were for the various right of the working man, for the right to organize, for collective bargaining. On the other hand, we felt there were certain excesses that had to be curbed and that action should be taken, and that was where we differed from the Democratic congressmen. They wouldn't go as far as John Kennedy would in actually speaking out clearly against management and labor. Our report said management should do this, labor

should do that. Well, there were very few Democrats who would speak as strongly as he did to labor and the reaction was, "Kennedy is courageous." Of course he always acted like that and often spoke out strongly against the leadership of the American Legion. Of course this was what made him an outstanding political figure. The reaction—well, the reaction was something like in the first campaign, "Well, who does he think he is? Who does he think he is, this young fellow saying this?" But there was also the reaction the other way, that we needed someone to speak out as clearly as he did, and it was good to have an intellectual, independent thinker. The things that made him, that brought him along, were his fearlessness, his courage and his ability to think and his willingness to go ahead with an idea. He did it there.

During the six-year period he was in Congress, maybe after he had been there three or four years, he had been invited to be a speaker at the New England Printers and Publishers final dinner here in the city of Boston. As you know, each year they have a printers and publishers week which is a very impressive week, and it's quite a gathering of all the leading publishers of New England and all the printers of New England. Books, the whole printing craft are represented there, and the final dinner is really

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something. Now the principal speaker that night was a Major General Osborn [Frederick Osborn], who was a very distinguished figure, well known at the end of the war. He was to be the principal speaker and John Kennedy was to be the second speaker of the night. Now this fellow Osborn had not only a distinguished career in the army, but when the war was over, on his leadership he was the man selected by the United States government to represent the United States in negotiating with Russia on atomic energy. John called me as he often did to work with him on the speech to be given that night at that dinner, and there was always the problem as to what you would talk about. Well, some time before that the Finletter committee, Thomas K. Finletter, his committee on national defense composed of very great men, filed a report that within the next five years we would have to spend five billion for survival, not five million, but five billion on defense for survival.

You'll also recall that at that time there was bipartisan support for a tax cut. Both the Republicans and the Democrats and President Truman [Harry S. Truman] were all for a tax cut in that year. So when John and I were talking it over, I said, "Well if the Finletter report makes sense, and certainly the committee is supposed to be distinguished, and we have to spend five billion for survival in the next five years, how can any responsible government talk about a tax cut?" I said, "It just doesn't make sense."

So this is where John was a very distinguished thinker. He'd take an idea and mull it over and debate it back and forth, and if he was convinced that the position was tenable and defensible, he would go on it. That is, I think, the thing that distinguished him from most people in public life. Most people will not take an unpopular issue or a problem that is difficult and deal with it. If he thought the position could be defended he'd go on it. So after talking it over for some time he said, "Fine. Okay." And that was to be the tenor of the speech. The Finletter Report said five billion for survival, consequently, there could be no tax cut now. And I can remember the speech that night. As I say, he was only a fair speaker at the time. He delivered the speech. I can always remember the sentence in there, "There

should be no tax cut at this time. And that means no tax cut for anybody,” and he got that out fairly clearly. When he got through the applause was quite mild, because everyone in that audience thought that a tax cut would be a good idea, and as I say, the applause was mild. Then Major General Osborn was introduced and Osborn said, “I was born here in Massachusetts. I am a native of this state. I am happy to return here tonight to learn that the virtue of courage has not died here.” “I have

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had a long career in the military. I have spent the last two years negotiating with the Russians on atomic energy. I don't imagine you like what this young man had to say, but I want to tell you the first piece of sense I've heard in about the last ten years I just heard from this young man.” And he put his hand on Kennedy's head, and Kennedy got a standing ovation from the group then. Now there is the kind of thing that John would do. If the whole country were for a tax cut, most men in public life wouldn't deal with the problem, but John would jump right into it, and he did that over and over again, on housing, on the Hartley law, on this whole problem of the tax cut, and that did characterize his thinking.

MARTIN: Do you have any knowledge or association with the stand he took that brought about criticism of the American Legion, Mark?

DALTON: There was some difficulty with both the Legion and the V.F.W. [Veterans of Foreign Wars]. We were deeply in veterans affairs at that time. We had the Kennedy post here of the V.F.W. He was the first chairman of the V.F.W. convention which was held here in the city of Boston. Two or three problems came up on housing with the V.F.W. and somehow or other we got into quite a hassle with the V.F.W. on that. I know later he made that famous statement that the Legion had not had a constructive thought in eighteen years. I don't recall what precipitated that. Each time he would take one of these stands many people would get quite indignant, but more people would rally to his support on the ground that here was an independent thinker who would be a good person to have lead us in public life.

[END OF INTERVIEW #1]

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