

Joseph F. Crangle Oral History Interview—3/22/1973
Administrative Information

Creator: Joseph F. Crangle
Interviewer: Roberta Green
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Biographical Note

Crangle, Erie County Democratic Party Chairman (1965-1988), New York State Democratic Party Chair (1971-1974), and delegate to the Democratic National Convention (1968-1992), discusses Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 presidential campaign efforts in Michigan, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

Joseph F. Crangle

March 22, 1973
New York City, New York

By Roberta W. Greene

For the Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Program
of the John F. Kennedy Library

GREENE: Why don't you begin by explaining how you came to go to Michigan and the circumstances surrounding your arrival there.

CRANGLE: Well, I went to Michigan for a couple reasons that Senator Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], Senator Robert Kennedy, called me and asked me how soon could I leave the Buffalo area to go and help out, particularly in Michigan and then a week or so later Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] called me and asked me to do the same thing.

GREENE: When would that have been, do you know?

CRANGLE: That was in—if I recall correctly—somewhere around the end of April or rather the end of

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March. And then within a week or ten days after that we got ourselves out in Michigan after we went down to Washington and got briefed by Ted Sorenson [Theodore C. Sorenson] and also Senator Edward Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy], as to what the

personalities were and what the political situation was. There wasn't really a heck of a lot of intelligence on Michigan other than the fact that we knew that Senator Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] seemed to be the third senator of Michigan for a number of years and we were going to probably have some difficulties and the hope was that the best we could really expect in Michigan was to try to hold Michigan back from going overwhelmingly for Hubert Humphrey. Mildred Jeffrey, the national committeewoman of that time, was very interested and very active in trying to get somebody out in Michigan, to Michigan, from the Kennedy operations so there could be some coordination and with the active role that the U.A.W. [United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agriculture Implement Workers of America] was playing. She was somewhat

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in a bind because she worked for Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] and there wasn't any identification as to what Walter really wanted to do. And what we did, when we got out to Michigan, there was really no organization. There was very little work actually being done or any kind of coordination [unclear] what the situation was in the congressional districts. And the first thing was to set up some sort of a central operation out of Detroit and to touch some of the political bases there, like the mayor [Jerome Patrick Cavanagh], the U.A.W., and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization] operation, and we did that and finally got ourselves an office in the Ford Office Building down in downtown Michigan and we actually moved [unclear]. As I said to Bobby, coordinators are for people in political organization in every county, and we just fanned it throughout the state and made contacts with the different political leaders and went to the old basic grassroots of talking to county chairman and town chairman. Michigan has a very

[-3-]

archaic way at that time of....

GREENE: Why don't you talk about some of the people that you were working with out there. I have some names, again from here.

CRANGLE: You mean, are you referring to the Michigan people and people we brought out....

GREENE: Well a combination, you know, and how, who was really important and how well they worked out and where the problems might have been. I can ask you about them or you can just tell me who you consider important. Was that 150 a week, was that \$150 a week people?

CRANGLE: What was that in....

GREENE: Oh, it's one of those, but it was without the dollar sign and I just assumed that these were the salary people as opposed to Erie County in Michigan, is that

correct? I couldn't think of what else 150 a week would mean.

CRANGLE: I don't recall. I only paid Bill Maloney [William Maloney] but we didn't pay Chuck Simmons [Charles Simmons] or Tony LoRusso [Anthony LoRusso].

GREENE: No.

CRANGLE: No, we never paid them.

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GREENE: Well, then it may have been some other code that I didn't understand.

CRANGLE: Yeah.

GREENE: And what about these people from Erie County?

CRANGLE: Right. They were all out there. Switik [Frank Switik]. Switik is S-W-I-T-I-K.

GREENE: This is the....

CRANGLE: Right.

GREENE: These people were really the heart of your organization, is that right? You can never tell, is what I'm trying to say, from these things whether they were really doing anything or not.

CRANGLE: Yeah. The key people that we brought in were Tony LoRusso, who was due in from Buffalo and was doing advance work and when I got out there, I requested he be sent immediately. And then Chuck Simmons, who was a black fellow, and Bill Maloney, [unclear] from New York City, Frank Switik, town counsel from the [unclear], Eddie Mahoney [Edward Mahoney], who was a Buffalonian, Jimmy Lindner [James Lindner], who was

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a young fellow from Buffalo, and Dan Darava, who was a young fellow from Erie County also. And Chuck Love [Charles Love] from Buffalo came out and worked and a Jack, who also worked with us; those two fellows came out later on in the operation.

GREENE: Did they all work out of Detroit or did you have them dispersed?

CRANGLE: Well, no, the operation was centered in Detroit but then I sent these fellows around the state and Jimmy Lindner particularly did a hell of a job of

traveling up the upper [unclear]. That's where we surprised the, a lot of people by the number of delegates we took and they were just going to the county chairman and to various town leaders and delegates that we found out about and they were impressed that Senator Robert Kennedy sent somebody personally to see them. And, in fact, we did very well out of the Detroit area for Senator Kennedy, much better than a lot of people felt we were going to do because of the...

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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Signature *Joseph F. Crangle*

Date 11/18/05

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