

Peter J. Dugal Oral History Interview – 1/14/1966
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Biographical Note

Dugal, Campaign worker, John F. Kennedy's (JFK) presidential campaign, Wisconsin (1960), discusses campaigning with JFK in Wisconsin during the 1960 presidential campaign, the difficulties of the Wisconsin 1960 presidential campaign, and the 1960 Democratic National Convention, among other issues.

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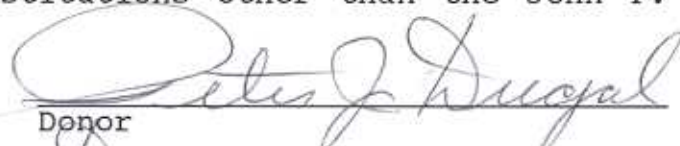
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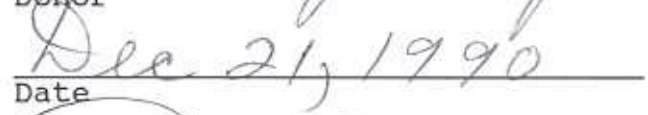
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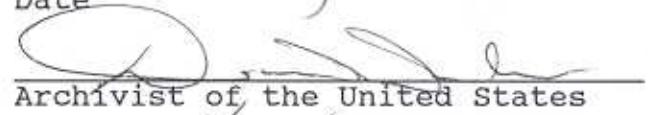
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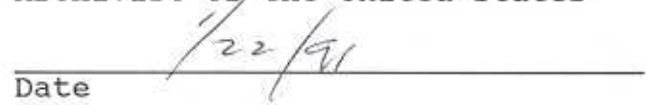
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Peter Dugal

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Involvement in the 1960 Wisconsin democratic primary
2, 10	1960 Wisconsin presidential campaigning with John F. Kennedy (JFK)
8	Issue of JFK's wealth
9, 25	JFK's Wisconsin 1960 presidential campaign volunteers
11	JFK, Edward M. Kennedy, and Robert F. Kennedy's impromptu Wisconsin meeting
12	Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's Wisconsin 1960 campaign appearances
13	1960 Wisconsin presidential campaign difficulties
17	1960 Democratic National Convention and Wisconsin delegates
19	Richard M. Nixon's 1960 Wisconsin win
20	Wisconsin press during the 1960 presidential primary
22	JFK's overexposure in Wisconsin during 1960 presidential campaign
23	JFK's 1960 presidential campaign effects on Wisconsin politics
24	Wisconsin's 1960 presidential primary returns
26	JFK's campaign tea parties
27	JFK's Jefferson-Jackson dinner speech: May 12, 1962
28	Dugal's father's death and JFK's assassination

Oral History Interview

With

Peter Dugal

January 14, 1966
Madison, Wisconsin

By Charles T. Morrissey

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MORRISSEY: Why don't we start by my asking you how you got involved in this primary?

DUGAL: I was the county chairman of Chippewa County, which is in the northern part of the state. My mother was quite a fan of Jack Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and so was my dad. He had his book, *Profiles in Courage*, and I followed his career quite closely. I hadn't personally known him, though, prior to his coming up into our area in the fall of '59. Our congressman, Lester Johnson [Lester Roland Johnson], was quite a Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] supporter, which was only natural. Hubert gave Lester a lot of help whenever he needed it.

MORRISSEY: Was that the Tenth Congressional District?

DUGAL: Yes, that was the Tenth. No, that was the Ninth District. You see, we've had a redistricting change here in our state since...

MORRISSEY: At that time it was the Ninth District?

[-1-]

DUGAL: It was the Ninth District. Well, I didn't think I could help Jack very much by

just being the Chippewa County chairman. Lester was a pretty good friend of mine and, although he actually wanted me to back Hubert Humphrey, when I showed an interest in becoming the district chairman up there he didn't buck me.

Well, Jack was over in River Falls. It was two days prior to our state convention. At that time, at the state convention the district chairmen were elected. I went over there and met him and drove back towards Eau Claire with him. Of course, he was happy to hear that I had a chance of being district chairman because the three districts in the northwestern part of Wisconsin were Hubert Humphrey's home bailiwick so to speak and to have the chance to have a district chairman being on his side.... I hoped it would be a little helpful.

The weather wasn't too good, as I recall. I didn't drive down to Milwaukee with Jack. He had to go to some other cities and I was going to be held up a day. I had quite a time arriving down here, as I recall. They were late because of bad weather. In fact, I believe they even got stuck. We had this convention in a hotel that wasn't quite adequate to hold it. I remember we had a courtesy room there and we had the badges that would stick on your shirt. Of course, we were trying to put out about as many of them as we can, but the darn things won't stick on your shirt very long. They fall off and they fall on the rug and you just can't get them off the rug. Well, our section of the hotel was pretty lived in by the time Jack arrived. Hubert was also well represented there at the convention.

The next day at our district caucus I was elected district chairman. I told Jack that I'd certainly give him all the help I could. Now, I was in the oil business with my father. He was in pretty good health and my mother was alive at the time so I started putting in a little more time than what the average volunteer in on it. In fact, it finally got to the point where I was working for him fulltime and had a room in the different cities where we were working. We didn't have too much representation in either of the three districts up there so I traveled quite a bit with all the Kennedys up in that area. The campaign naturally started off rather slowly and then began to work up into quite an active campaign.

[-2-]

MORRISSEY: What were you trying to do when you were traveling?

DUGAL: Give him as much exposure as possible of course. Most of my work was trying to set up advance schedules for the Kennedys up there, and then when one would arrive in, if I couldn't go along with them, at least I'd have somebody that would. All the Kennedys, of course, except Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] campaigned up in northwestern Wisconsin. The original plan, of course, wasn't to really—almost to write that area off. It looked as if Jack would be able to take Milwaukee and the southern part of the state without.... You never know, of course, in an election, but we had a pretty good idea that we could take the southern part of Wisconsin. It looked like we might be able even to take the northern part. So they started to put quite a bit of emphasis on there. In other words, they didn't have anything to.... Anything they could gain up there they figured all well and good so practically all the Kennedys at one time or another worked in those....

We worked out of Eau Claire. We had a headquarters in a hotel in Eau Claire. Sometimes we had as many as a dozen people that were attached to the Kennedy group

staying at this hotel. We'd branch out and go to different places for speeches that we set up. Chuck Spalding [Charles F. Spalding] was eventually sent in to Eau Claire, although Chuck had never been active in politics. We learned a few lessons and got along quite well together, didn't try to step on each other's toes.

We used the television medium up there quite extensively. The state of Wisconsin is a hard state, especially in the north. There're a lot of trees up there. Many times we'd be on the road and we were lucky if we got a dozen people. You hit one of these towns during the day and they were either working or.... They aren't interested in politics so to speak. They aren't going to extend themselves any to go and listen to a political figure. Of course, at that time Jack Kennedy wasn't that well known to a lot of these people.

MORRISSEY: Did this bother him?

[-3-]

DUGAL: It didn't seem to. You never really knew what he was expecting because whether it was a big group or a small group he seemed to be more interested in the enthusiasm that the particular group that he was talking to showed. It's hard, though, to spend part of a day—maybe even half a day—and then total up the exposure you got and find out that you maybe only talked to a hundred or two hundred people.

We worked high schools. Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] worked high schools quite hard. There you had a ready-made crowd. Although these high school children weren't able to vote, they had mothers and fathers and we had hopes that a little of it would get through to them. And, of course, the high schools had a group of teachers. We had crowds at these high schools in the early part of the day. In the evening, of course, we'd always try to have a banquet or something of that nature.

We had these receptions and they went over quite well. It involved a lot of work setting one up because we were afraid if we ever had one that people didn't show up to it would.... The press, of course, was following everything quite closely and they were using the crowds as a sort of a gauge on the popularity, and we never wanted it known that maybe we weren't doing too well at any particular time.

I traveled with Jack around our district. One time, I remember, just shortly before the actual election we went up into the northern Tenth District. We got a rather late start that morning. The weather was just fiercely cold. Even though we were late—I always thought it was kind of nice—we stopped once in my hometown, the little town of Cadott, and Jack took time out to go in and talk to my mom and dad. Of course, they were quite thrilled. It was the first time that they had met him.

We stopped at a little cafe up at Cornell. Being about two hours late the crowd wasn't very much. Jack was riding with me and to make up time we were traveling quite fast. I remember there was a reporter from the *Minneapolis Tribune* who was along with us. Everybody came out of the cafe and we took off. I'm driving about eighty, ninety miles an hour to try to pick up time. (The traffic wasn't heavy). We forgot the poor reporter. It took him quite a while to finally catch us.

[-4-]

We got up to Ladysmith and there were about four or five nuns standing alongside of the road. There's a small convent up there. Jack said, "Stop the car." We stopped the car. So we pulled over and he went back and he talked to the nuns. They wanted him to come over to the.... What do you call it? A nunnery or....

MORRISSEY: Convent.

DUGAL: Yes, convent. That's it. So we did. We were behind schedule and we had people waiting up ahead of us but he did take the time to go over there.

When he walked into the convent for a minute, Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] came up to me and he said, "Why the hell did you stop?" [Laughter] "Gee," I said, "he told me to, and I couldn't very well go against him." He said, "That'll be the only press we're going to get out of this trip. They'll sure as heck have pictures of it."

MORRISSEY: Did they?

DUGAL: They did, yes. They had pictures of these nuns all along the road. There were a couple of reporters from *Life* magazine with us and they didn't seem to be giving us too good a break in the press. Anyway, that night we'd made arrangements for accommodations for the other reporters up at Ashland and Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] didn't make any reservations for these two people. [Laughter] Maybe that's the reason they put the picture of the nuns in *Life*. But it seemed that all through the day those were the only pictures they took and yet there were other things that we thought they should have been taking.

The biggest crowd we had was a town called Hurley. Well, Hurley has a rather bad reputation as being a red-light district town. It's a mining town. There's a little town called Montreal right alongside of it, and they do a lot of iron mining there. We stopped at one of the mines and the shift was just breaking up. When they come out of the pits they're put in a closed van and they're taken over

[-5-]

to a place where they hang up their clothes. Their clothes are wet and rusty, just like if you went out and rolled in mud practically. Then they go into a shower room, clean up and then their street clothes are in another room. Our whole caravan maybe amounted to.... We had about seven or eight cars, half of them reporters and the rest of them staff members. We were trying to pin buttons on these people and half of them were running around there naked so that was a kind of a problem. [Laughter] Anyhow, we got into Hurley and it was the biggest crowd we had all day. I had given Jack a brief explanation of these different places—what they did and so forth. We had some of these little pins that we were panning on these people and the sack must have been on the seat. Here all through the day we were talking to just very token crowds, and here are maybe five hundred to eight hundred out there in the streets waiting for us. His eyes just lit up and in his hurry to get out he slipped and he sat down on

one of these damn pins that was open in the car. He let out a few cuss words, got up and gave a good speech. He seemed to be well received; you'd call it an enthusiastic crowd. On the way out of town, he said, "Are there really a lot of whores in this town?" I said, "That's what they say."

A chap by the name of White [Theodore H. White]—he wrote *The Making of the President*, you know....

MORRISSEY: Theodore White.

DUGAL: Yes. Theodore White rode along with us from Hurley to Ashland. This was getting late in the afternoon. I don't believe they knew each other too well prior to that because, for instance, the fact that the Kennedys had this Convair, the *Caroline*, received quite a bit of press and so forth. There were quite a few other things that Jack and Mr. White discussed during this period, on this trip. I rather think that....

MORRISSEY: Do you remember any of them specifically?

[-6-]

DUGAL: I can remember talking of how the aircraft was purchased, how the family had all contributed to it. We naturally discussed the politics of the day and the chances and so forth. It's a little hard now to recall.

MORRISSEY: It's almost six years ago.

DUGAL: Quite a while.

MORRISSEY: I was wondering if Senator Kennedy had, at that time, talked about the religious issue.

DUGAL: That would come up practically every day. It was something that we were trying to avoid but there wasn't much avoiding it. Reporters especially were pressing that.

When we arrived in Ashland we had reservations at some of the motels there. Ashland was a very depressed town; iron ore is going out of northern Wisconsin. It was a pretty sloppy day when we finally got up there. The question was where was everybody going to stay. So we went over to this one motel and Jack made some phone calls and groups of us stood there talking. We had a banquet scheduled that evening at the college and then a talk in the city hall, I believe it was. One of the funny things that happened.... First of all, after this banquet at the college we went out to a supper club and had our dinner. We went over to this hall. There were a lot of people there, a pretty big crowd that night for Ashland. The boys there locally must have worked quite hard to get it together. Ben Smith [Benjamin A. Smith II] and I realized that we hadn't checked into a motel yet and although we had reservations, it was.... We thought we had better get them so Kenny took Jack back to his motel and Ben Smith and

I went down to this other motel to see if we still had a room there. So Ben went into register for us and I said, "Well, I'll get the grips out of the trunk." About two minutes later Ben came out and he was sort of giggling. He said, "We're not going to be staying in this motel, Pete. You might as well put the damn bags back in." Well, the lady

[-7-]

who was managing the hotel apparently had thought Jack Kennedy was going to stay in that hotel. In fact, she'd heard that he had a bad back and she had a board for Jack to sleep on. Well, when she found out that he was staying up the street a ways and that Ben and I were staying there she was.... "No room for you." Nobody else used the room either, but we weren't going to use it. So we had to go up to the other end of the town and get a motel

The next day we cut off a couple of—one of the towns, anyhow, the town of Washburn, that we normally would have gone through because it was winter and it was just.... They could almost just roll up the streets in those little towns up there. We traveled on down through Hayward—quite a few people in Hayward. He talked at a hotel there, Jack did. Then there was a luncheon at Rice Lake. Of course, we stopped in many of these towns along the way. Sometimes there'd be ten people; sometimes there'd be thirty. Spooner had a good turnout for us that day. I remember Jack stood on the hood of my car and talked to the crowd.

I left them that evening up at, I believe, the little village of Gordon. The rest of them were going out to Superior for a reception. The Kennedy sisters were coming in that evening and I was supposed to see that they had transportation and work their schedule out with them. I went out with Pat Lawford [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] the next day on some of these teas. I don't really know how effective they were. I don't think they hurt us any but for as hard as the girls worked it might not have really been politically a gain proposition. But it was giving them exposure; that's something that they needed. Of course, some of the press indicated that all the Kennedys were coming in here and Hubert made his own—"I don't have to fight one; I have to fight a family of them."

MORRISSEY: I was wondering if this was an issue in that part of the state. You mentioned the Convair, which was family-owned by the Kennedys. Did his opponents emphasize his wealth or resources?

[-8-]

DUGAL: Oh, yes. That would be too good an opportunity to miss that.

MORRISSEY: How effective was the emphasis they put on this?

DUGAL: Oh, I think it would depend on the crowd that Hubert was talking to and what his people were out pushing. Of course, you hear an awful lot of figures on the amount of money that we spent, but it wasn't nearly what a lot of.... We had a lot of volunteers that worked without pay. Of course, we did spend more money than what the state of Wisconsin was normally used to seeing in a campaign of any type.

MORRISSEY: Was there any pattern to the type of volunteers you were attracting?

DUGAL: Some because they were Catholic; some because they were impressed with Jack Kennedy. They seemed to be from all different.... They weren't all wealthy. Myself, I'm not very wealthy.

MORRISSEY: More young people than old people?

DUGAL: Yes. I'd say yes definitely.

MORRISSEY: More females than males?

DUGAL: Not really. Well, in a way yes because a lot of girls hadn't taken part in any of the campaigns too much prior to that so I'll have to say maybe there were a few more, but Hubert had women that were working for him, too.

I'm trying to get these trips.... I should have tried to get the dates on the trips that Jack made into the state. That was one of the later ones. I remember one day that things didn't go too well with us. I went over to Twin Cities the night before. Jack was going to fly in

[-9-]

there the next morning. Kenny O'Donnell, Chuck Roche [Charles D. Roche], Ivan Nestingen [Ivan A. Nestingen], and I stayed down at a hotel downtown. The next morning we got a little lost going over there. There was some difficulty on where the press conference was going to be held. I forget if Pierre was there or not that time. But anyhow when we finally found Jack's plane out at the airport it wasn't where we thought it was going to be. Then the press conference, instead of being at the Minneapolis airport, it was at the downtown St. Paul airport. So he flew over there and I took my car and drove over. There were maybe a half a dozen of us who had vehicles. Jack woke up that morning with a sore throat. In fact, he had a strep throat, He looked pretty ragged and he was a little slow getting going that morning. By the time his press conference was over, it was getting pretty late. I was trying to do everything to speed it up so we could get out of there because there were people waiting down the line. That's one of the problems of a political campaign. You've got things scheduled in this town; you've got something scheduled in the next town. If you start falling behind the schedule, you never do catch up with it and you lose some of the crowd. I was wearing a car coat. We walked out in there and so there would be a little more room in there I opened the trunk and I threw the car coat in. I no sooner slammed the lid and I knew I put the key in the car coat. But I got in the car and Jack was already in there and I reached above the visor just hoping that maybe I'd stuck it up there. Jack said, "Well, let's go." I said, "Jack, I hate to tell you this. You know where that key is? It's in the trunk." "Oh," he said, "you're kidding." "No. The damn thing's in the trunk." He said, "Well, you know, some mornings it just doesn't pay to get up does it?" We had to go over to New Richmond. There was another car behind. There was an automobile salesman that was giving us a little help and he took his car. Jack rode in his car. This car that I had was a car that was loaned to us by an auto dealer

down there in Eau Claire. I had to call down there and get the number for the key and have a key made. I caught up with the group in New Richmond.

[-10-]

We ended up in Eau Claire. There was a plant gate that we wanted to make in Eau Claire. It's the United States Railroad. It's the largest industry in the city of Eau Claire. This throat was giving Jack quite a bit of trouble. When we got off at the plant gate it was beginning to rain. He needed a shot of penicillin or something to get him through so we took him over to Luther Hospital. That's another thing where religion came in. We wouldn't want to take him to a Catholic hospital so we took him to a.... Well, then we didn't really want it known that his health was impaired at all. You know, one of these strep throats can sometimes stay with you for a few weeks. He seemed to bounce back pretty good though.

One time, Chuck Spalding and I rode down to La Crosse. They had a reception down there. We arrived there after the reception was over. We walked Jack over to the hotel and Jacqueline [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] was there. Jack had to go back to Washington, D.C., to attend Foreign Relations.... The Foreign Aid Bill, I believe, was up so Jacqueline was going to take his schedule for him. That evening Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] and Jack and myself went out to the airport. I believe Teddy was coming in. But Bobby and Jack and Ted stood there for.... Oh, it was cold as the dickens. They never went on the plane. They must have talked about twenty minutes. They'd all been campaigning together but really they hadn't, the three of them, been in the same place at the same time for quite some time. They were on the telephone a lot to talk to each other but it was almost as if they sort of hated to leave each other's company. Jack went on to Washington and we went back to the hotel.

The next morning Jacqueline and Ted and I took off. We went over towards the Marshfield area in to the Seventh District. There was a chap working in that district by the name of Corbin, Paul Corbin, for the Kennedys.

MORRISSEY: Let me go back to that twenty-minute conversation at the airport. Were you in on that conversation?

[-11-]

DUGAL: Yes, I talked there for a while. It wasn't really anything important that they were talking about. It was more like a bunch of college boys getting together.

MORRISSEY: I was just wondering if there was any consensus of opinion about the assessment of the situation.

DUGAL: Yes, they chatted about, "Well, how's it going there? How did you make out over there?" and so forth. They were quite optimistic. In the Third District, which wasn't a very good district for us, they had that big arena there half filled. They had a whole lot of people. There must have been a thousand, two thousand, people there and that's bigger than anything I think Hubert had down in the district.

The next day was the first time Jacqueline ever went out on her own, and she was quite enthusiastic about it. I rather think she enjoyed that day more.... In fact, she said she enjoyed that day more than most of the days. She was not what you would call a real campaigner where you get up at the crack of dawn and go all day. Usually, of course, she was just pretty much sitting there other than the introduction that Jack would give her. She wasn't really.... It's not the kind of a game for a woman. But that day she was the one giving the speeches, and I think she was maybe a little more interested. In fact, I have a picture that they gave me and they signed the picture. Jack has, "Best wishes and appreciation, your friend, John Kennedy." And Jacqueline put alongside of it, "It's a treat to ride with Pete." [Laughter]

[-12-]

I left Jacqueline and Ted over in Marshfield Paul Corbin took them over to.... We were sort of kidding. Apparently, they were going out to look at a farm and the question was whether we were going to get Jacqueline to milk the darn cow or not. I said, "You've got to watch this Corbin. He might have you sitting on a milk stool before the afternoon is out." [Laughter] Paul was a very able political man. He's not very well liked possibly in a lot of political circles but he knows the mechanics of setting up a district, what has to be done and he was quite valuable. I think that's one of the reasons the Seventh District possibly went for Jack by a small margin.

One of the problems we'd run into in the three northern districts—the basic Democratic organization there were Hubert Humphrey people. In other words, the people that I normally would have been working with were on the other side of the fence, which made it a little difficult in setting up schedules and so forth. A lot of people took an active part in that campaign—by that I mean they'd go out and set up a dinner possibly—that had never been involved in politics before and haven't since and they weren't all liberal Democrats. In fact, we had a few Republicans. In fact, our governor's chief aide right now was a newspaperman over in Menomonie and quite a staunch Republican. I just didn't have anybody that I knew that I could get to go over there and schedule a dinner, so I called Paul [Paul Hassett]. I've forgotten who gave me his name but anyhow Paul went to the local hotel and made part of the arrangements. It was a luncheon. He said, "I might not be at the luncheon myself. I'm actually on the other side of the fence but I'd rather see Jack Kennedy get than Hubert Humphrey get it."

MORRISSEY: What was his last name?

DUGAL: Paul Hassett.

[-13-]

MORRISSEY: Was there a deliberate effort on the part of the Kennedys to appeal to Wisconsin Republicans since this was a state with an open primary?

DUGAL: We wanted anybody, anybody that would give us any help at all. Politically

this state isn't anything like some of the Eastern states. Sure, we've had campaigns. It used to be a one party state. A campaign in Wisconsin was entirely different than one in, let's say, the East where you really go out and set these schedules up. This campaign that was run in the spring there was something that nobody in politics had ever been exposed to in Wisconsin. It involved a lot of people, a lot of telephone calls, a lot of traveling. It's a hard state to campaign in, in the winter. The roads aren't too good; it's cold. Not that I'd say campaign in the summer—just getting people to come out.

If you wanted to set something up, you had to have a building first of all. Sometimes we had to rent it; sometimes we could get it free. But to, say, set up a day's schedule took quite a bit of time. I imagine, all told, Jack rode with me maybe a thousand, two thousand miles up and down the upper part of the state because he did spend a lot of time there. It was mainly because he thought he had a chance of winning, where he was fairly sure of having the south. It didn't really turn out that way but we gave Hubert a pretty good run in his home bailiwick.

MORRISSEY: It surprises me that the Kennedys thought that not only because those sections are geographically close to Minnesota but agriculturally they were more akin to Humphrey than Kennedy, and religiously also, I would imagine.

[-14-]

DUGAL: Yes. I remember one time we spoke at Chippewa Falls and Jack started speaking on a veterinary disease. Who made out the short speech, I can't remember. It was a breakfast. When we got in the car he said, "That's enough of that. I'd have been just in a little trouble if there'd been some veterinary in there and he'd really put me on the spot on some of these.... Let's talk about something I know. I do know the economics of farming. Let's not get down to the technical things, like diseases and so forth." Jacqueline was along that day. She's an interesting person to listen to. We discussed everything from abortion in cows to "What's the next town like?" [Laughter]

Speaking of religion, the next town was a town called Bloomer. It's a predominantly Catholic community. We were a little late as usual. A chap by the name of Rock, who was the funeral director there and who had helped us set up a coffee break in the morning, asked me if Jack would come over to the Catholic school. They had a new flagpole there and he wanted Jack to dedicate it. "Gee," I said, "we're way behind schedule." But Jack said, "Yes, let's go over. It won't take long." Well, we went over there and here are about a hundred and fifty grade school children. It took us twenty minutes to get out of there. That was the only press release of the day. It showed Jack Kennedy raising a flag at a Catholic school. I believe Kenny O'Donnell was along. Or was he? I remember Jack and Jacqueline were there. But whoever it was said, "Well, that will take care of the press release." Jack said, "If they aren't going to vote for me.... If I can't go into a school here in this country and raise an American flag, even if it is a Catholic one, it's pretty.... They aren't going to vote for me anyhow," so to speak.

[-15-]

MORRISSEY: I'm surprised, however, on the two instances of this that you've mentioned that Senator Kennedy did go ahead and, in the first case, speak to the nuns and here, in the second case, dedicate the flagpole at a Catholic school, particularly when members of the staff were very dubious about this.

DUGAL: Yes, we tried to avoid any connection, of course, with Catholicism in our wires.

MORRISSEY: I find it odd that his political instincts would conflict with the good political judgment of a lot of his assistants.

DUGAL: You know, a lot of Catholics didn't vote for Jack Kennedy. Many people think that that was the reason he won. This particular church there.... That priest, about a week or two before the actual election, got up before his parishioners and told them not to vote for Jack Kennedy, which I thought was a hell of a thing.

MORRISSEY: On what basis?

DUGAL: Of course, Catholic priests are predominantly Republican. He ran into a little trouble, I guess, on it. I guess some of his parishioners didn't think the same way he did and didn't particularly care to have him tell them how to vote. But to think that here we go over there and raise a flag there in his school.... I don't recall whether he was even there at all, but he knew we were there, and you don't have a United States Senator come into your school every day in a small community. Maybe he didn't like Jack, but he didn't have to go up there and say that. That was my feeling. I almost gave him a telephone call but I thought, "Well, he's already done it so what the heck." [Laughter]

[-16-]

Gee, there're quite a few different things that I'm... It was quite a while ago and a lot of things sort of escape you. You know, when you're talking to somebody that was along, you can bring these things up and you mention something and that leads me into something.

I worked for Jack out in Los Angeles at the Convention there. I wasn't elected a delegate. You see, we lost the Ninth District and I was a—as a district delegate. But I went out anyhow and did whatever I could to help him.

MORRISSEY: What did you do?

DUGAL: I worked the transportation part a while and I worked up at Bobby's suite quite a bit of the time, answering telephones. We had a switchboard there but a lot of calls would come through anyhow, and it was just impossible to catch them all at the switchboard. The boys were pretty busy. I could tell them he was busy

where if they actually would answer the phone, he might talk to them for an hour, and maybe neither of the fellows that were really active there in the suite would maybe want to talk to whoever it was on the other end.

MORRISSEY: Did you spend much time with the Wisconsin delegation?

DUGAL: Not too much. They stayed down in a hotel down the street called.... I can't recall what it was now.

MORRISSEY: As I recall, some of the members of the Wisconsin delegation stuck with Hubert Humphrey even though Humphrey had, after the West Virginia primary, stated that he was no longer a candidate. I was wondering if the Kennedy people made intensive efforts to get some of these Humphrey people to....

[-17-]

DUGAL: Yes, we did. Frank Nikolay [Frank L. Nikolay], we tried very hard for Frank. In fact, I called Bobby the day after the West Virginia primary and he was staying at a resort. Do you know the name of any of the resorts there in West Virginia?

MORRISSEY: Maybe Greenbrier.

DUGAL: Yes, Greenbrier. I said, "What do you think? Should we start working on him now?" He said, "Gosh, yes. Do you want to go up and do it?" I said, "I have a friend that's head of a finance corporation, Thorpe Finance." (They have maybe a hundred, a hundred and fifty, different offices and Francis Conway is one of the most respected businessmen up in there. I thought, "If I get Francis (and Francis was on our side) and we go over and talk to Frank, maybe we can jar him a little bit." But Frank, he wasn't coming to our side. He didn't lament; he just didn't.... I'd heard out in Los Angeles that, just prior to the vote, Hubert himself seriously thought about giving his votes to Kennedy but they say that his wife, Mabel, was against it—Muriel [Muriel Fay Buck Humphrey], rather. She in effect said to him, "You campaigned against Jack Kennedy for all these months. You're not going to just give your votes away." You hear a lot of things around a convention but I've often wondered if that were the truth or not, though.

MORRISSEY: Do you recall the reaction in the Wisconsin delegation when it was announced that Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] was the vice presidential choice?

DUGAL: No, I wasn't.... That was about the busiest day that we had up in the Kennedy suite. In fact, I remember Larry O'Brien's [Lawrence F. O'Brien] girl, Phyllis [Phyllis Maddock], left the office in the morning for a few, maybe two to three hours. When you walked into the suite there were two desks there. Angie [Angela M. Novello] had one and Phyllis had the other. Of course, these rooms were on both

sides and there were possibly a dozen telephones in there. So I sat on Phyllis' desk and tried to take care of the traffic that was coming in, and there was a fantastic amount of it that day. People are always happy to get on the winning side.

[-18-]

MORRISSEY: Was the atmosphere one of great confusion?

DUGAL: I suppose you could say that. Even though you're there in the suite, you know, you don't have your finger on everything either. The question was whether Lyndon would go with Jack, too. A lot of us thought, of course, that it might help get the South. Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] from Washington was seriously considered, of course. Most of that, though, is history. I was just one of a dozen fellows working in all that.

MORRISSEY: Let me go on to the Kennedy-Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] contest. Nixon carried the state by more than a hundred thousand votes, as I recall, Did you expect Kennedy to carry the state?

DUGAL: I thought he would. But, you know, "familiarity breeds contempt," and I've often wondered if that didn't.... Now, for every person that Nixon met or shook hands with, I would say Kennedy shook hands with twenty-five, maybe even more than that. But his exposure was so much greater than.... That's the only thing I can really put my.... Of course, now Wisconsin is usually a predominantly Republican state. I don't know what the reason might have been.

MORRISSEY: In your part of the state did you see much evidence of the Catholic issue reappearing?

DUGAL: It was almost like old wash by the time the real election was.... Of course, it's always there; it's sad but true, you know. I'm just trying to think of some of the other things. It was hard work but a lot of it was fun. In my case, I wasn't looking for a job.

MORRISSEY: Were you ever approached about one?

DUGAL: I could have worked for the Kennedys, yes. I have a little boy and I don't know what I would have done with him in Washington. He certainly

[-19-]

needed me; his mother's dead. And my dad's health was beginning to fail, too. Both he and my mother have passed away since and as it turned out I'd have been much better off staying with my boy. I've remarried since.

MORRISSEY: When you were accompanying John Kennedy during the primary, to what extent was he campaigning more for the benefit of the press representatives than for the actual crowds he was addressing?

DUGAL: Well, of course, if you're talking to a dozen people you're not making much political hay. If you can't get a little good press somewhere along the line the day is pretty much a flop. We always wanted to have at least one big deal a day, and it was usually a reception at night—usually a luncheon at noon and a reception at night that was attended predominantly by adults. So the press was always with us, I mean traveling with us. We knew we were getting a fair shake in some and some we didn't figure we were:

MORRISSEY: Were there many Democratic newspapers up in your part of the state?

DUGAL: Very few. Almost all the weeklies are Republican but a few of the daily presses are.... Oh, I'd say they gave us possibly a fair shake. Republican or Democrats, both these men were Democrats, so I rather think that a conservative Republican wanted to see Jack Kennedy win rather than Hubert.

MORRISSEY: Did this translate itself into votes during that primary?

[-20-]

DUGAL: It's hard to say. You just sometimes wonder. You know, you don't like to receive bad press. Of course, our country had predominantly Republican newspapers and we elected Democratic presidents. So it's really hard to put your finger on it. Jack never seemed to dislike Hubert Humphrey at any stage. Some of the people that worked for him, he didn't have too much use for them. He thought a lot of Hubert's ability to speak, granted that Hubert would sometimes talk too long. But I remember one time Jack saying that he was the best orator in the Senate, head and shoulders. Jack's speeches were very effective. They weren't long; people never went to sleep listening to him.

MORRISSEY: Did that Boston accent and Eastern manner antagonize some people?

DUGAL: No, I rather think it might have helped him.

MORRISSEY: Why?

DUGAL: Oh, it was a little different. I don't care whether you liked him or not, you couldn't listen to Jack Kennedy at all without having some respect for him, and the issues that he spoke, he was the one that picked them, so he was usually appealing to them.

MORRISSEY: From your vantage point, did you think that the Humphrey people were well

organized or not very well organized?

[-21-]

DUGAL: I think he basically had the Democratic organization as it was. Our whole political structure in this state has changed since Jack Kennedy campaigned here. The counties were almost independent little units that worked on their own. Even our district level left a lot to be desired. We only held maybe one or two district meetings a year prior to that. So they were all campaigning alone where today it's.... And the money being spent. Why, fifty thousand dollars was the whole state budget back in those years. Our lieutenant governor here was running for governor. He was not an announced candidate yet, held a dinner and he raised that himself. Why, if we could have held a dinner and raised fifty thousand dollars in 1949 we'd have thought we were on top of the heap. [Laughter] But it's a sad commentary that you have to have money to win elections today. The media is so expensive, time.

I think possibly we overdid the television up in that area. Had that election been held a week earlier, I think it might have been a little different. I rather think we peaked a week earlier. I managed to get a lot of free T.V. time from the local television station there at Eau Claire. They beam over quite a large area there.

MORRISSEY: How did you manage to get that free?

DUGAL: I don't know whether Leo [Howard] had an ax he wanted to grind or what. The second in command was a man by the name of McNulty, and he was a fan of Jack Kennedy's. It was really a personal thing with him. But when it looked like we had a chance.... The advertising, I think the Agency was handling. They put a lot of money into television and radio up there. I think we possibly overdid it. That happened one time to a congressman of ours up there, or a fellow that was running for Congress. He had too much exposure on T.V. These people were just tired of having their programs interrupted and seeing this fellow's face. I don't think they were really tired of, say, seeing Jack Kennedy's face but I think we possibly got a little too much of that type of exposure. It's hard to schedule something and make it come out exact, not too many and at least have enough programs.

[-22-]

MORRISSEY: You said a minute ago that the political nature of the state has been different since John Kennedy campaigned here. Could you elaborate on that?

DUGAL: I don't think we worked politics enough, the Democratic organization, prior to that. In other words, people actually going out and knocking on doors and working precinct level, all the way up. Even Republicans didn't do it. They didn't have to. If you ran on a Republican ticket, you were automatically in in the northern counties before that. So there it is. And the state organization is much more active. We have a headquarters down here right on Washington Avenue, where we used to work out of a

shoebox. We've got a chairman that works full time at it. He's got a staff there now of anywhere from three to five people that are being paid fairly good wages. Well, our whole state organization was run pretty much like you'd find a county, organization in an active political state.

MORRISSEY: Did the Kennedy campaign elevate a new set of Democratic party leaders?

DUGAL: Well, there's a constant turnover, of course, in politics. I was on the administrative committee after I gave up the district chairmanship for quite a few years but I've dropped out of it now. For a while there naturally, there were a lot of new faces that were really interested.

MORRISSEY: Did a lot of the volunteers stay with it or did they tend to fade out as quickly as they had faded in?

DUGAL: Quite a few faded out.

[-23-]

MORRISSEY: So they were attracted almost entirely by a personal attraction to John Kennedy.

DUGAL: I would say a lot of them, not all of course.

MORRISSEY: After the primary was over did the Humphrey people and the Kennedy people within the Democratic organization get back together?

DUGAL: The wounds were still there. They still are. There's still a cleavage in our party that dates back to that time. Of course, they had to be with us when Jack was nominated and elected. Some of them didn't work too hard for Jack, just because he was nominated. Of course, you have to be pretty broadminded. When you go out and work for a candidate pretty hard—you spend months actually knocking the other guy; so to speak—it's pretty hard to switch over your full allegiance, putting the same amount of effort in, human nature being what it is. Now, I don't mean that they wanted Dick Nixon to be the President, but they weren't ready to go out and break their backs for John Kennedy either.

MORRISSEY: Were you with the Kennedy people in Milwaukee the night the primary returns were coming in?

DUGAL: No, we had headquarters there in Eau Claire. We tried to get people to the polls that day. We had quite a bit of work. Now, the Humphrey people didn't even work that day. As far as I know their headquarters was closed in Eau Claire.

MORRISSEY: They didn't even have drivers out taking people to the polls?

DUGAL: No.

[-24-]

MORRISSEY: How did the outcome in your congressional district measure against your expectations before the votes were counted?

DUGAL: I was hopeful we'd win, optimistic enough to think we'd win.

MORRISSEY: How much did you lose by, do you recall offhand?

DUGAL: Gosh, I can't recall offhand.

MORRISSEY: I should know but I don't.

DUGAL: But I can't help but think we'd have done better a week earlier. You know, in a campaign you can peak a little early or you can peak late and if you do that you're in trouble.

MORRISSEY: Was there any bad feeling between the Wisconsin people that worked for Kennedy and the people that came into Wisconsin from outside the state and worked for him?

DUGAL: Not much. In fact, it was surprising that there wasn't more friction. You know, you're going at a high pace. Tensions are high. I heard very little static in the organization. I think once in a while possibly Kenny O'Donnell and Pierre would get on each other's nerves. You know, it was rather a strange thing. Everybody was working but none of us had any titles or anything. They'd ask, "Well, what do you do?" And we'd all say, "We're campaign coordinators." That covers a lot of ground but there was no man.... You know, something that was surprising about that campaign. Jack might not be here, and Bobby worked awfully hard for him, but you always knew that Jack Kennedy was the man that was running the thing. Bobby worked awfully hard in northern Wisconsin. Up at the crack of dawn and we rarely got to bed before 2 o'clock in the morning. Some of those trips weren't too productive; some were. Bobby talked to maybe ten to fifteen groups in a day.

[-25-]

MORRISSEY: Why do you feel that the tea parties weren't more successful?

DUGAL: I shouldn't say they weren't successful. I've often wondered how much good they really did. I'm sure they didn't hurt us any because a lot of those

women were Republicans that attended these tea parties and it did give the Kennedy name some exposure. They were given some press on it. Possibly the press didn't help us any on it. Let me say it that way. But of course, any time that you can get a group—I don't care if they're women or men—if you can get them in the middle of the day up there, you're accomplishing something.

MORRISSEY: This is a hard question, but of all those days that you spent with candidate Kennedy and all those miles that you drove with him, if you could pick out any more isolated recollections of incidents, things that were said, humorous things, frustrating things.

DUGAL: Yes, there were some frustrations, all right. [Laughter]

MORRISSEY: That might be worth putting on the record.

DUGAL: Offhand I can't. There are. The time.... It was so long ago.

MORRISSEY: Well, we can always add any if they come to mind afterwards.

DUGAL: All right I'll try to think of a few of them.

[-26-]

MORRISSEY: Do you have any final comments that you'd like to say? Do you think I've missed anything in my questions?

DUGAL: That's pretty much of it. If there was some group of us here that had actually worked together, one would mention something and I could think something else and somebody else would think of something but maybe that isn't possibly what you want either.

MORRISSEY: Well, we do that occasionally. It produces some things but it also buries some isolated things, which just don't get out in the flow of the conversation.

DUGAL: I was always sorry I didn't go up to Superior to see Jack when he was up there. I planned to go to Washington about a month later and I thought I'd see him then.

MORRISSEY: Did you ever see him when he was president?

DUGAL: Yes, he was our speaker here at our J-J [Jefferson-Jackson] Dinner here at Milwaukee. It was the largest crowd we ever had. I had a short chat with him then. Lem Billings [Kirk LeMoyne Billings] was along.

MORRISSEY: Anything consequential in that short chat?

DUGAL: No, just “How’s everything?” And he said, “Say, your buddy Lem is down at the end of the table, down there.”

MORRISSEY: Had Lem Billings worked with you up in the north, too?

DUGAL: Yes. He moved around quite a bit. All these people, you’d see them today and they’re over here and I’m up there and you’re crossing paths quite a bit. All of them spent quite a bit of time in Eau Claire. That was sort of the central hotel to work out of.

[-27-]

Rarely we would be occupying anywhere from one to a dozen rooms there.

MORRISSEY: Well, I guess that about covers it.

DUGAL: My father was assassinated a week before....

MORRISSEY: Really?

DUGAL: I mean my father died a week before Jack was assassinated, died of a heart attack, so I didn’t go to the funeral. You know, I’ve always thought of the Kennedys, both Bobby, Jack and Ted, as pretty good friends. About a month after my father passed away, Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] and Bobby had enrolled him in a perpetual prayer thing and they sent me a scroll, which I thought was pretty nice. You know, he was having a lot of heartbreak and to think that he’d think enough of me to send that for my father. I think that’s the reason maybe that I worked for them. You could see that, all the time, it was a friendly.... Looking back on it, it was an experience of a lifetime. I don’t imagine I’ll ever have an opportunity like that again. It’s too bad the ending was so sad.

MORRISSEY: Shall we stop there? Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-28-]

Peter Dugal Oral History Transcript
Name List

B

Billings, Kirk LeMoyne, 27

C

Conway, Francis, 18
Corbin, Paul, 11, 13

H

Hassett, Paul, 13
Howard, Leo, 22
Humphrey, Hubert H., 1, 2, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18,
20, 21, 24
Humphrey, Muriel Fay Buck, 18

J

Jackson, Henry M., 19
Johnson, Lester Roland, 1, 2
Johnson, Lyndon B., 18, 19

K

Kennedy, Edward M., 11, 28
Kennedy, Ethel Skakel, 28
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 11, 12, 13, 15
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,
24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 3
Kennedy, Robert F., 4, 17, 18, 25, 28

L

Lawford, Patricia Kennedy, 8

M

Maddock, Phyllis, 18
McNulty, 22

N

Nestingen, Ivan A., 10
Nikolay, Frank L., 18
Nixon, Richard M., 19, 24
Novella, Angela M., 18

O

O'Brien, Lawrence F., 18
O'Donnell, Kenneth P., 5, 7, 10, 15, 25

R

Roche, Charles D., 10
Rock, 15

S

Salinger, Pierre E.G., 5, 10, 25
Smith, Benjamin A., II, 7, 8
Spalding Charles F., 3, 11

W

White, Theodore H., 6