

The Texas Observer

FEB. 7, 1964

A Journal of Free Voices

A Window to The South

25c

A Letter from Texas

Dallas

I shall try to spin out of this typewriter and this closed hotel room, in Dallas city of the President's death, the subject of what can be said about Texas, the home state of the new President, known to me as the place I live.

Let us be done with the stereotypes, please. Let us be done with them. Writers the magazines ask to go do tooth sucking sniggles on Texas gaucheries ought say no, I will do what I see, but not what you expect me to see. Texans in the East ought have better sense than do the absurd things that are expected of them, and we Texans who will stay here at home, as I will, for I love it here and belong here, an animal that feels best when he knows where he is, we have the duty now to communicate what it is and has been to be here, for the President comes from here and therefore through him the world has come here.

What will it mean for the country and the world that a Texan is President? I can feel it already, here in Dallas, in the long-distance calls into this distressing detective chase after the truth of the assassination. Well, who can interpret Texas? Will they stop it? No one can interpret Texas, or any other place with more people in it than he can keep track of. What do we know and what do we think, those are some questions; not "What is the Dallas syndrome?" or, "What is Texas really?"

John Bainbridge was very shrewd in *The SuperAmericans*, except that he did spend a good while of his life preparing to explain why the stereotypes are not cogent; and then who named his book? Some salesperson who is as nearly a SuperAmerican as any lusty, gusty oil zillionaire.

Consider the stereotypes about Texas against certain facts known to us who live here. For instance, does it strike you odd that a guy named Hank Brown, a plumber from San Antonio, could become the most liberal state labor president on civil rights in the entire South? That there are intellectuals born and bred Texans? That a thin blonde babe in tight black slacks and a waist-length leather jacket may have character that is personally her own and admirable? That a water color artist in Houston may be doing work that is truly valuable and may never be appre-

ciated? That the fiercest defender of underpaid Mexicans in the United States is the Archbishop of the Catholic Church of San Antonio? How can anyone honestly tell you what Texas is? Lyndon Johnson will have to show you, himself, who he is, and Ladybird, she, and Katherine Anne Porter has shown you who she is, and Sam Houston showed, he, and that is all any Texan can do.

Why, swinging his naturally Olympian gaze toward the Southwest, does the New York editor so often ask for a book "about Texas," or an article "about Texas"? Perhaps it's because his enterprise can only get around to Texas once in a while, or perhaps it is not such a simple phenomenon; perhaps it is expressive of a fundamental indisposition in our country to look closely at real subjects and real questions.

The best thing about a book or article "about Texas" is that it is gally colored; it's like a wit's *tour de force* at a cocktail party. It doesn't have to say anything, except that there sure is a lot going on down there. My, my. The focused inquiry, the painful dislocations, the personal statements (dangerous, personal statements)—these are suitable for magazines of intellectual drudgery, but not for the common people who read the great democratic journals. For them, let's give a party, courtesy General Advertisers.

I CAN TELL YOU MARVELS.

Have you ever been startled in a hotel lobby by the face of a cross-eyed cowboy under a Stetson hat? Can you imagine a professor at the University of Texas marching against a S.A.C. base outside of Austin on Easter? Does it vaguely surprise you that Texans get sent to mental hospitals? Have you ever met a Negro intellectual in a country farmhouse? He has been hiding there. What would you make of it if populism awakened again in Texas? Have you ever seen a river that runs over rocks ruined by real estate agents who've divided the banks into lots? Then there are Texans who are pragmatic and insist on finding out for themselves how it works, or does not work, to make love of a night on the coast among the dunes. There are Texans who are dogmatic and don't make love at all. There are children at the beaches as lovely as Gitanjali's, and places in sanctu-

aries where even thorns caress, and forests like islands', and great vacant plains whose whole power is meaning nothing.

I care what you think, out there beyond here, or I would not write to you about this thing so dear. I care what you think because no state or any borderline can keep me from knowing, just as it cannot keep you from knowing, that of the people we could love we meet but very few and they seem to have to do, not with a place, but with themselves.

I can tell you that we breed real people here, because I have met them, and continue to. Some friends and I used to have a floating discussion club. We would gather for weekends at clubhouses on lakes, in a tourist court in Rockport on the Gulf, in a forested place near Houston, and once at the late Walter Webb's Friday Mountain camp in the Hill Country, and we would talk our dreams into tatters, and tell each other what each other ought be doing instead of what each other were. That's all over now, we do not meet any more, we got tired talking to each other about the same things that worried each of us, but in a big place like Texas, you come and go with your friends, meet and stop meeting and still go on being friends across distances that often these days become physically insuperable for any casual purpose. If the stereotypers have done Texans no other favor, they have helped those of us who are friends hold on in an awareness of our common place, even across continents.

It is an eerily visceral thing to love your home place. I first noticed it powerfully in the way I feel about the gravel play-yard and the exit from it though an alleyway at Bonham elementary school in San Antonio. I can pass there, where I went to school and played and came home through the alley, and although all I remember on the schoolgrounds is drinking from the water fountain, being called a sissy, and being afraid of being beaten up, I am overcome with nostalgic wistfulness.

The same thing happens now when I leave Texas a while and return: when I came back from California last, I did not have Texas on my mind, and was not even here—I was in Juarez, the border town across from El Paso, eating *cabrito*—when suddenly I thought, "I'm home," and a

kind of strangeness and displacement left me.

Once I drove down the Rio Grande on the Texas side from El Paso to Brownsville, dipping across the border in a dozen places. I kept notes all along the way, as though there was something formally valuable about such an expedition. Another time I was in the Lower Valley when a political leader of the Mexicans in a little border town offered to take me with him to a wedding across the ferry on the other side, in Mexico. After having been kept waiting a seemingly time, we were invited to join the wedding fete in the community hall, and were honored like visiting royalty; their severe pride was not dispelled by the swarms of flies at the feasting table, nor was my appetite, to my friend's relief, and mine, and maybe theirs.

In passing down that way let me tell you about an old fellow in Harlingen the Mexicans call "El Samaritano." Frank Ferree is the ungainliest and unlikeliest saint you can imagine, but he is the only one in Texas I know of. He has given up everything he had to the needs of the poor he attracts or seeks out in the Valley and on the other side of the river. He has many faults, trying to cure their physical sicknesses with "Curital," for instance, but no one else seems seriously to have been trying to cure them with anything, before he went to work; at least he tries something. Most of all, this is all that he does do, try to help the Mexicans who are starving and sick, and who use even the cardboard he brings them to keep the cold out of their hovels. Many people in the Valley ease their consciences by helping Ferree so he can help the poor for them; they give him old buses, used pieces of soap from motels, damaged cans of food, and day-old bread. They trust him because any day you can go to the shambles he lives in and see him, say, opening a damaged can of cold beans for his evening meal. Ask him why and he will answer, in him rambling inarticulacy, that he is doing what Christ says do, helping the poor. I do not see why it is considered more reasonable for writers "about Texas" to tell you about H. L. Hunt, Glenn McCarthy, Clint Murchison, and other tycoons, than Frank Ferree, but generally, it is.

TO A TEXAN a car is like wings to a seagull. Our places are far apart and we must dip into them driving. For as often traveling man like myself, the junctions in the highways and the towns are like turns in a city well known.

We must drive fast from Austin to El Paso to make it in a day. One time another family and the one I am in set out for there, but ran out of light, so we doubled back to an old railroad car watering place that happened still to be by the side of the road. We built a fire and ate and slept there the night, and woke to the dawn too literally rosy to be a good thing to try to describe. You have to feel a fire by a railroad siding in the West Texas desert to know what we felt together, how casual and friendly it was that night and morning, on that desolate and sunbitten land.

One of the drives I like to take is the ferry out of Galveston up the coast past High Island and into Port Arthur. You drive along the waves almost laving your right tires, you could drive on in if you'd had enough, and then you veer away from the water into Port Arthur through the gothic fantasies of an oil refinery. Workmen in orange helmets walk and chug around amidst the legs of these giant spatial structures, orbs, catwalks, skeletal obelisks, like technological dreams weighing down the men who sleepwork within them.

In Texas City a few weeks ago I was brought, one morning about 4 a.m., to a complete stop in the middle of the highway leading out of town through a chemical plant by the scene behind the picture window of a great rectangular control room: three helmeted workmen in overalls, sitting casually with their backs to the window and me, watching gauges. There was not another person anywhere else in sight. All night, one supposes, the plant goes on making America more abundant and some Americans richer, provided the workers the gauges replaced find some way to buy the things the gauges are making.

TEXAS: back to Texas. (Where is this place? This can't be Texas. No millionaires, no oil derricks, no Stetsons, no government scandals. Lightoller fixtures—piped-in music—pink ceiling—pastel-lemon light bulbs—well, yes, it is named the "Eatwell Cafe." Fit name for a cattle town.) But we don't have any more cattle towns. Try Fort Worth. Or worse, try the restaurants near the stockyards there, one of which is the nearest New York will ever

get to the fragrances of cattle ranching. Well, let's go on about places to eat:

In Austin if you drive far enough out East Seventh you will come to Alba's and El Azteca. These are places a few Mexicans and fewer Anglos go to get thick flour tortillas and fried goat. The Austin Chamber of Commerce has not noticed and the neon sign business has not prospered in consequence of these free enterprises.

In the hills near Austin there's a place Fred Schmidt, a labor boss turned pursuer of truth for its own humane sake, (humane, he hopes,) dug a hole and cooked a deer under coals, and after dinner they all went into the tent to sleep. I slept out, which amused them; in the morning Fred took his boy to find another deer but they did not.

The best place I ever went out to eat was a level space at the base of a hill of rocks above a meadow on a ranch twenty miles west of Austin. The ancient fellow Roy Bedichek, who wrote books and quoted Herodotus and used key books to identify plants and birds, was my host. We spied on birds and swam in a water tank full of leaves. The supper menu was beer and lettuce-and-sardine sandwiches, without any bread; celery and potato soup; strips of dried beef, and hot coffee. It rained thorough supper, and all morning, and for lunch we had leftovers, sitting around the fire and under towels we dried there. The price was the sadness of what we exchanged and the time we passed.

There is a place I always go in Galveston, Giusti's. Long and windowed from one end to the other, it stands on the seawall across the street from the Gulf. You can sit at one of the white tables and eat and read and they never bother you.

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We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of man as the foundation of democracy; we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.

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The Observer solicits articles, essays, and creative work of the shorter forms having to do in various ways with this area. The pay depends; at present it is token. Please enclose return postage. Unsigned articles are the editor's.

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We have only two good seawalls, those in Galveston and Corpus Christi. Galveston's is by far the better. It is alive with night clubs and cafes and hotels and motels and curio shops, which do not intrude on the beach as it extends downland for many more miles than they could occupy. It is fine to get lost in one of those motels, the Jack Tar, say, and the only stranger with a right to you the wind that comes off the Gulf. It is hard to spend much time along the Corpus Christi seawall because it's been zoned for looks instead of use; but it is true that on North Beach, where the water, being protected from the open Gulf, is often muddy and is tepid, there is a salt-worn tourist court whose forelegs stand in the water, so that when you wake up in the morning, you can go fishing off the front porch, if you're a child it makes happy to catch anything.

I have long had a romantic idea of the shrimp boats and the bait sellers, all that having to do with the people who live at the edges of the sea off the fish and the fishing. They seem to have found a way to be of the world, and out of it, too; they can dream off into the Gulf as they stand in the blinding sun by their bait stands, or if they're shrimpers, they can go out a couple weeks, come in, sell their catch, live it up until they're broke, and then go out again. Once I was going to leave journalism and go to work on a shrimp boat, where people are close-quarters and the work is lively and hard. I must have 500 clippings now on things that have happened to Texas shrimpers—boat wrecks, storms, Mexican gunboats firing on them, fleet blessings, washed-overboards, brawls at waterfronts. You do not have to be far away from a thing to fail to experience it.

The beach, the long Padre Island, now a national park, all that sand and whiffy grass and those gentling dunes, blurs together in a man's comprehension and is just there. Somewhere on the island a place must still be there although the sand has moved that I remember.

When Jack Skaggs, a lawyer in Harlingen, first went to the Lower Valley, there was no causeway to Padre, and he and his wife used to cross over to Padre in a skiff by themselves or with a friend. Over every dune they had a silly and undeniable hope of finding a half-exposed chest bulging with Spanish doubloons, the white-washed driftwood looked sometimes like skeletons, and there were shipwrecks to be found and mused over.

Now, of course, the beach is still there, but there also are the crowds, the beer cans and the strewn bodies; the sand in your teeth and ears irritates more because it's no longer a private hardship. In Texas, too, we are going now toward too-crowdedness. What will we do? Our leaders do not understand yet that the beauties must be made sanctuary for all of us in collectivity. Soon it will be too late. At least most of Padre was saved, thanks mostly to Sen. Ralph Yarborough.

I WILL TELL YOU a little about our senior senator. He is a kind of a butt of the cocktail circuit in Washington and he is a better man than nearly all of

them. He has a fineness of character that is utterly personal to him.

And about Senator John Tower, also, a few words. To a liberal he is worse than Goldwater and he seems like a throwback to a right-wing Utopia on an island out of Daddy Warbucks, but he had the courage to run against Lyndon Johnson, and he has the courage yet to stand where he does, even if it's upside down; which it is.

I do not mean to be truculent, we have plenty of cowards, and it's a good thing, but there is something in the history of the state, Indians, Alamo, grand old Sam Houston refusing to secede from the Union, Jim Hogg ramming the railroads with his own personal bulk, that makes all of us, even us cowards, understand that courage really is the question.

Speaking very personally, I think of State Rep. Bob Eckhardt of Houston in company with Sam Houston. From much knowing his mind and his responses I am sure he is a statesman and a wise man. In the urbane clarities of his thinking, the calm way he is honest, and the plain nobility of his frame and his unkempt mane, he is the Texan I think of when I look through a book of the photographs that were made of Lincoln.

The most celebrated Texan these days is J. Frank Dobie, the writer of tales of the Southwest. He looks like a Texan ought and talks like a Texan does. His shock of white hair is appropriately unmanageable and he laughs a hot loud laugh that smokes on the crisp fall air and steams with the fragrance of good Jack Daniel sour mash. Because he is such a Texan Texan he is be-seiged, but he doesn't mind. He goes to his ranch, "Paisano," to work, and holds off reporters, celebrity-seekers, and innocent voyeurs on the lawn by the creek that runs behind his house in town. The University of Texas fired him for being too Texan—he did what he damn pleased in politics—but you will not find anybody who has any sense who would argue that Dobie lost that one. The University has bought all his papers, for instance. The institution collects the artifacts of a man's work it could have had living inside it.

Both Eckhardt and Dobie are horsemen, but common Texans like me are not. However, my boy, corrupted by his wholesome environment, wrung from me when he was five a promise I'd get him a horse when he was ten. Well, that was never, and I said all right, and now he is eleven and has the horse, whose name is "Flame," and is a very horsey horse. It might throw my son and break his leg or worse, I know; but he is game on it, and if he is hurt, it will be better for him to be hurt riding with his friends in the country where there is room than hurt on a bike or by a car or in a fight on crowded downtown streets at night, where boys walk frowning.

And they do, in our cities, too. I was passing through El Paso one night on the way to San Francisco (that palace on the hill so splendid and unreal) and came upon some young Mexicans hanging around on the sidewalk and suddenly remembered my own growing up in San Antonio, lurking around the streets thereof. These boys were, too, and had nothing in them but sexual energy and nothing on them I

guessed but knives. How little we know in Texas about this, our urban subculture; it does not fit into the glowing new "Texas Image," a montage of a cowboy with a Stetson and cufflinks astride a horse that is proceeding to the dedication ceremonies for a new manufactory that will specialize in barbed wire and automated chambers of commerce.

A man need only drive down to the Valley and see the little Mexican children, their bellies sticking out under their cotton shirts, playing on packed dirt in front of hovels, or into East Texas and see the slums of the Negroes, to know what the image-makers and others such as they do not choose to face: the facts that are very objectively omitted.

I beg your indulgence to tell you what worries me most about Texas. I fear that the concentration of wealth in the control of a few people may constipate and befoul our democracy. I fear that our democratic politics is being corrupted, and legally, by the high costs of running for office and the high costs of getting re-elected. I describe Texas, but sense the same in the country. Why are we not hearing a great debate about it? Perhaps the question contains its answer and democracy is in trouble.

The public schools in Texas are also under assault. Private business organizations are promoting and helping finance the planning for public schools' "Americanism education," part of which is economic conservatism palmed off as patriotism. The program is spreading and spreading, and attacks on "left-wing" textbooks continue to cause publicity and alarm in the state.

There is a hard kind of conservative in Dallas who seems to me opportunistic and unscrupulous, willing to use cruel methods as long as the results are right. Perhaps because of this, I don't come to Dallas much; it reminds me of a prison, its skyscrapers full of cells, and forming below between them the windy courtyards of honking and desolation.

I do not like to drive in Houston, which sprawls like a neon jungle except that it has some sections of spectacular mansions with lawns so large and foliage so elaborate, full time gardeners are required. Walking in River Oaks I wonder how this would appear to a poor man from Peru, or an African intellectual, and sense in such affluence a coming trouble for our country. Yet inside some of the homes there I have met people with no harm in them, and warmth and courtesy toward everyone of whatever bearing.

We have our unctuous climbers, of course, guys who turn it on and off as an insomniac does a lamp. We are sensitive to phonies here, though, and do not pay enough attention to them to give them a hard time, except in politics. Generally, Texans also could have suggested Camus' quiet observation that nearly all the people he has known live in good faith.

All these things one finds suggested chromatically, and probably in more representative perspective, at the University of Texas. The students spend as much time going insane over football as they did when

I was a student there, and they spend much more time in bed with each other than then; but they seem, most of them, overimpressed and overburdened with things that have been given to them. As always, some of them think a lot and want to make love to the future, too, even though it's more difficult than the customary engagement.

I WOULD NOT have you think I claim there is anything discrete or unique in things and people worth seeing and knowing in Texas. We do not need that or any kind of specialness in my state any more. We are become strong enough as a culture to know that we will most of the time fall as individuals, against our highest

goals, and to be able to accept this, and honor the more those who do not fail, against our highest standards. We are not so uninformed about the razz-ma-tazz nightclub life and the frenetic business pace in Arizona and New York, Chicago and California, that we feel any generically Texas shame about our own gaucheries and vapidities. There seems to be enough of these to go around without our making special stock of ours.

But you know, the race will be in a hell of a shape if we lose our sentiment. If the sneer ever overpowers the hope that someone will get the message—well, do you know what Lee Oswald told a Dallas Republican about his visit to Russia? He said Russia is "incredibly boring." Texas is not.

It's credibly real and it's full of willingness for sentiment. People love here as though we've just discovered love and there's a future for it. We haven't learned to believe yet that everybody, down deep, is a son of a bitch, or the prospective mother of one. I think we're right, and I fear we're wrong. I hope you who do not live here will let us who do join you as ordinary equals in the attempt to keep life, and to keep it from being incredibly boring. Say whatever you like about any one of us, we will, too; but say not "about Texas," for as it is not anything in particular, so, to we who love it and are here, it is everything that surrounds us, and the places our intelligence lives, and hears, and grows.

R.D.

A Marker, Kennedy Prizes, A Razing . . .

The Memorial in Dallas

Dallas, Austin

A two-by-three foot, one-inch-thick plaque mounted on a post—the same kind of historical marker that is used along highways in Texas as a tourist marker—will be placed at the assassination scene in Dallas, and there will be no monument at the scene, if present plans and tendencies become fact. It is contemplated, also, that the book depository building from which President Kennedy was shot may be bought and torn down.

Mayor Earle Cabell and Dallas City Judge Lew Sterrett appointed a committee to consider what to do about the many suggestions for memorials to Kennedy. Many Dallas citizens wanted to do something. Mayor Cabell said very early that he is opposed to a monument at the scene of the assassination—that he favored sending money to Washington for the erection of a proper monument there, where all Americans could see it.

Then, however, some Dallas people began to insist on a memorial at the scene. They included Maurice Carlson, former county Republican chairman, and Mike McKool, a Democratic leader in Dallas, both of whom testified on the subject at a city council meeting. Cabell announced the committee, and it has been deliberating since.

Not waiting on the committee, Mrs. Barefoot Sanders, wife of the U.S. district attorney in Dallas, has formed a committee to establish a Kennedy Book Memorial Fund, which will place books about the late President in the public school libraries of Dallas.

The Cabell-Sterrett committee proceeded deliberately at first and sought not to take haste, according to Rev. Luther Holcomb, executive of the Dallas Council of Churches and the committee secretary, but now the members have decided they must hurry to a conclusion. They were to meet Feb. 6

and for the first time discuss specifically what each member favors.

THE CHAIRMAN of the committee on the memorial is Dawson Sterling, who is also president of Southwestern Life Insurance Co. and president of the Dallas Assembly. The Dallas Assembly is an organization of business executives aged between 25 and 50; in effect, therefore, it is a lower-echelon Dallas Citizens Council. (The Council is composed of the top business figures in Dallas.)

The committee had received 540 suggestions as of last week. They fall into two broad categories, a memorial or fountain, or a living memorial, Sterling said. Sterling mentioned that the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, a state agency, "has said it would like to put a marker there," at the scene of the assassination.

The tendency in the Cabell-Sterrett committee, Sterling said, is "more in the direction of a living memorial, rather than a monument at the site." The state marker would not be considered a monument, as it is simply a small highway marker.

Mayor Cabell says a member of the committee who knows John Ben Shepperd of Odessa, the chairman of the Historical Survey Committee, got in touch with Shepperd and proposed the marker at the site. The state agency voted to erect "one of these standard markers at the place of the assassination," Cabell said.

As for the Cabell-Sterrett committee considering suggestions in Dallas, Cabell said, "I gather that they're leaning toward something of a living memorial, rather than an obelisk or a point for curiosity seekers."

Concern for "the Dallas image" is very much a part of the indisposition among Dallas civic leaders to have a monument at the assassination scene. Cabell says, on this point: "Well, they don't want it to

become a mark of shame, shall we say, and one that would attract the morbid curiosity-seekers and your hawkers standing on the spot, selling pictures. It's not a matter of playing it down."

Rev. Holcomb says the Dallas committee has not yet contacted Mrs. John Kennedy to ascertain the wishes of the family, but wants to do this. It is not contemplated, he said, that the historical marker would preclude the possibility of a monument at the site, but "there's a strong feeling for a living memorial."

Specifically, the committee might be inclined favorably toward something of value or assistance to culture or to health, (such as something to fight mental retardation,) or in an alternative might opt for the creation of something of beauty.

Stanley Marcus returned to Dallas from New York City with an idea for a living memorial given him by a New York advertising man. This plan would be to create a Nobel-like fund to honor distinguished achievement in fields that are not covered by the Nobel Prizes. The Kennedy Prizes would be awarded in Dallas. Three or four million dollars could endow three \$50,000 awards. Marcus, (the proprietor, of course, of the famous Neiman-Marcus store in Dallas,) stresses that the validity of such a program would depend wholly on the integrity built into the judging process.

IN AUSTIN, George Hill, executive secretary of the 18-member Texas State Historical Survey Committee, confirmed that, contingent only upon approval of the Dallas County local historical survey committee, which he expects to be forthcoming, the state agency has agreed to erect an historical marker on a post at the assassination scene.

This decision is associated with proposals to erect similar markers at the birthplaces of Eisenhower (in Denison) and Johnson (on the Pedernales River) and at Love

Field in commemoration of the fact that Johnson was sworn in as President there, Hill indicated.

There are about 25 or 30 of the markers in use now, and many more are going up, he said. They are now used to mark the Battle of Palmito Hill, at Brownsville; Comanche War Trails; and Roberts Hill, the first county seat of Shelby County, Hill said. They will be used along highways near Goliad and San Jacinto Battlefield, he added.

There are basically two sizes for the historical markers, Hill said: 18 by 28 inches, and 27 by 37 inches. They are both

plaques, about one inch thick. They are made of cast aluminum; normally they are erected on posts.

The Observer understands from Mayor Cabell that the inscription is to record the fact that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were shot at that place. Hill indicated the wording has not been agreed upon and would originate in Dallas, but would have to be approved by the state agency.

The smaller of the two markers costs about \$165, the larger, \$300, Hill said. He thought the Dallas marker would be paid for in Dallas, not by the state, as is custom-

ary when a marker goes up at the instance of a local area.

THE IDEA of tearing down the book depository has some support among members of the Cabell-Sterrett committee. It is advanced in association with an argument that there is more need for parking space around there, especially with so many visitors coming to see where Kennedy was killed. The fact that the notion has not been publicized is explained on grounds that the price of the building might increase if it became known it might be bought and razed. □

Political Patterns in Dallas

Dallas

Until the assassination, Dallas seemed on the way to becoming a totally Republican area. Since Nov. 22, however, the Democrats have revived and mean to take over; the Republicans feel embattled and are working with a new intensity.

Bruce Alger, the city's congressman, has long been accepted as typical of Dallas political thinking. He could vote against social security and the school lunch program, all but call Democrats pro-communist, denounce the United Nations, it did not matter: every election since 1954 he has been returned with a solid majority. The conclusion could not be, and generally has not been, resisted, that he spoke for Dallas.

In fact, there has been a continuing hostility toward him within the city's power structure. That structure, originally all conservative Democrat, has metamorphosed some since the Republicans began winning most of the offices here. The Dallas Citizens Council includes many who were formerly tory Democrats and now call themselves Republicans. But generally speaking, the men of business power in Dallas have wished for a congressman who would stand guard where Alger stands, without insisting on sleeping guard there, too.

Specifically, businessmen in Dallas have become more and more concerned as Dallas has lost favor in Washington. Between 1959 and the assassination, Dallas had lost eight federal agencies. The middle of last month it was learned that a ninth, the four-state regional office of the General Services Administration, will be moved to Fort Worth, which is getting a new federal center, as Dallas is not. The Dallas chamber of commerce computes that Dallas has lost \$6.5 million in federal payrolls.

It is one of those obvious facts everyone knows and no one can prove that Dallas has been punished by the Democrats because of Alger, and also perhaps because Dallas gave Nixon a larger majority in 1960 than any other city of more than 200,000 population in the United States. All logical considerations to one side, it is now just as obvious that the killing of the

President in Dallas has made it even less likely that Democrats will feel kindly soon toward this city. Yet Lyndon Johnson is a Texan, and Dallas people think of him as more conservative than Kennedy was. This is one of the two situations which have caused the Democratic revival here.

THE OTHER was grief that Kennedy was killed here. Almost immediately, a few Democrats telephoned Mrs. Murray Chud in North Dallas, saying they wanted to do something. (There must have been many such communications that did not have any issue.) Mrs. Chud said all right, come over, and bring your friends. Eighty-five people showed up at her home Wednesday night, Dec. 4, and the North Dallas Democrats came into being.

"People were very emotional, but trying very hard to control it," Anne Gibson, an English teacher, says of that meeting. Robert Stoltz, a professor in the psychology department at Southern Methodist University, spoke on Dallas doing the right things for the wrong reasons, and the climate in the city. They broke into groups: there were six people there from Richardson, Miss Gibson says, and those six had a subsequent meeting 20 came to, and they began canvassing their neighborhood. It was agreed that everyone would start out by saying they were canvassing for the national Democratic Party; no more of this Democrat-in-May, Republican-in-November stuff for them. They found Democrats they hadn't known were there.

Mrs. Chud's call to a Dec. 12 meeting asked, "Have you had enough? Are you willing to act?" She appealed to "those who are dedicated to the proposition that John F. Kennedy shall not have died in vain and that Lyndon Johnson shall not have served in vain." Meeting at the auditorium of Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Assn., the 400 who came were standing in the aisles. "We gave 'em their marching orders," Mrs. Chud said. Around 600 came when they met again Jan. 12. Mrs. Chud says they have about 800 members and welcome any Dallas Democrat north of the Rio Grande River. They will not endorse

any Democrat who does not pledge to support the party's November nominees, but this is the only criterion for distinguishing among primary candidates "at the present time," Mrs. Chud says.

"It's fantastic," says Hattie Bell Hoffman, a long-standing national Democrat. "And what's more, they're people who never worked in politics before. Doctors, attorneys, professors—you name it, they're there. Not only have they joined—they're working. It's jolted them out of their apathy. They couldn't get over it. They wanted to do something."

Mrs. David Richards, another liberal Democrat who's worked in many political drives, uses similar adjectives—"remarkable," "unreal." She thinks the North Dallas Democrats will not last long if they endorse candidates in the primary, but she's engrossed in the phenomenon of its sudden emergence. "It's just fantastic," she says. "Somebody even called us and said, 'I understand you're Democrats, and we'd like you to help us organize.'"

In the overall county picture, the nephew of Tom Clark, the U.S. Supreme Court justice, has accepted the county Democratic chairmanship. A long-time worker for John Connally, William Clark III is a personable young lawyer who says he does not know why, but the assassination made him change his mind about politics and get into it.

Republicans have been using IBM equipment to process political data in Dallas for some time; for the first time this year, the Democrats are, too. The Democrats' serious door-to-door canvassing is the first they have done here in ten years. "We're playing catch-up," Clark says.

"Right now the theme of it is 'Democrats for Dallas,'" he says. He is appealing to "people who are civic minded who want to do something for Dallas. . . . We feel that it's important that our representatives in Washington and Austin should be people of ability, character, so that when they speak they'll be listened to, and with respect."

What has really changed for Dallas liberals? Oscar Mauzy, the liberal attorney who led the liberals into the unity agreement that resulted in Clark being chairman, laughs and says, "There ain't nothin' changed. There've been a few ground rules agreed to where people won't openly have knife fights on Main Street. Some channels of communication have been opened. There's been some recognition of the principle of the idea of party loyalty, and that's all. But that's a lot for Dallas County."

Mauzy believes the liberal Democrats will control the county Democratic committee, however, and this could lead to a further strengthening in the liberal position in the city.

EXULTING in the Republican's discomfort, Clark says, "Goldwater's cuttin' 'em up. They've gone so far with the guy, and he's not gonna be the nominee. It's gonna leave them out on a limb." If so, John Leedom, the county Republican chairman, likes it there.

Boss of a thriving wholesale electronics business, Leedom emphasizes that Alger won in 1954 and hasn't lost since, though the Democrats keep trying. He notes that Charles Meyer, vice president of Sears Roebuck (and a big man in the power structure); Travis Wallace, recent president of the Citizens Charter Assn., the political arm of the Citizens Council; and Rufus (Buddy) Porter, president of the Dallas Real Estate Board, appeared on TV with Alger very recently. Democrats rejoice that there was more than a withdrawal to the nonpartisanship traditional in Dallas city politics when J. Erik Jonsson, the Citizens Council choice as the next mayor and the president of the Citizens Council in 1963, backed out of appearing on that same TV show, but Leedom says that Jonsson, a Republican, is in Alger's corner.

Leedom pokes good natured fun at "the country club set"—oops, that would include too many Republicans, he says; well, then, at "the other cocktail circle sitting around saying, 'Well, how great it would be if we had a federal center.'" At the first executive committee meeting of the Dallas GOP, he says, on Jan. 7, 800 showed up—300 of them had to be turned away. "We have a vast number of dedicated people in this county," he says. In 1962, 10,000 Republicans "did something," put up posters, made calls, or some other political work, and there are more than that eager to work now, Leedom says.

What explains this? Well, in the first place, Leedom says, they see this Democratic unity, and they're sure it must be some deal "that gives the liberals something." Second, they are aware that there is "a slight underdogness to our efforts," and know, therefore, that "every man, jack, and child is needed." Dallas Republicans are committed to the principles Alger and Sens. Goldwater and John Tower represent, Leedom says. The power structure just does not understand, Leedom says with happiness, that the practical basis of Republican strength in Dallas is not a few rich people meeting to decide what's best

for Dallas, but those 10,000 Republican workers.

There are grounds for wondering whether the national fall-away from the Arizona senator has not also been happening in Dallas. It is reported that Peter O'Donnell, chairman of the national Draft Goldwater Committee, is distinctly unhappy at having been left out of the leadership of the national Goldwater for President Committee, which is being run by Arizonans. Secondly, Maurice Carlson, Republican county chairman here in 1958 and 1959 and an outspoken man, has erected a Nixon billboard on the Central Expressway, facing inbound traffic from Richardson. He says it'll "really shake up those Birchburgers." Carlson has also announced the formation of a Nixon movement in Dallas and may take part in a national movement for Nixon, too.

However this may be, the Alger-Leedom Republicans are solidly for Goldwater; if he does not get the nomination, they'll have to pick up as best they can and go on from there.

THE TENSIONS of the city's politics now are aptly embodied in the coming congressional contest. Alger, of course, is the man to be taken on; he has not had a great deal to say recently, but anyone who has followed his career knows that he will be militantly conservative.

In fact, the kinds of things he said just before the assassination have contributed to his present political difficulty, if he is in one. On Nov. 5, apropos the Adlai Stevenson incident in Dallas Oct. 24 in which the UN ambassador was spat upon and struck with a sign, Alger said Dallas was a city "proud, courageous, truly the home of the brave"; that "Dallas is not disgraced by the action of an individual, nor even a group of people"; that saying it was "all fits in with the Communist objectives"; and therefore, "Is it any wonder some citizens verge on intemperance with pent-up concern? . . . Can we refuse to forgive the actions of a young man (not a Dallasite, by the way) who lost his head because of his resentment against the United Nations . . . and yet forgive the actions of the United Nations?"

A Nov. 10 AP story from Los Angeles quoted Alger as saying there that he could cite 100 ways the Kennedy administration has helped the communists, and that the Democrats' policy of appeasement "can lead us into World War III just as sure as if Kennedy fired the first shot."

In such pronouncements, Alger was representing the GOP view in Dallas. Last April, Allen Duckworth reported in the Dallas News that material he obtained from county GOP headquarters contended the Kennedy administration had helped the communists in 55 ways.

On Jan. 25, Alger outlined, in a statement, his opposition to the Johnson administration on various issues. Asking ". . . should we finance aid to communism?", he said that the Russian wheat sale, aid to Poland and Yugoslavia, and aid to neutrals who help the communists is a "blueprint for national suicide." He opposed the tax cut without budget cutting, public accom-

modations legislation as discrimination "against whites to give special privilege to Negroes," and medicare. Announcing for re-election last weekend, he said he felt he had represented a majority of the people of Dallas. He was proud, he said, that during his ten years representing them, Dallas made "its greatest record of growth and progress . . . not through federal handouts, but through the initiative and the efforts of our own people in the best American tradition."

A conservative and a liberal Democrat are contending for the right to oppose Alger this year.

The tory, Mayor Earle Cabell, a dairy owner, himself challenged the city's power structure in 1961, braving the disapproval of the Citizens' Charter Assn. and winning the mayor's position on his own. His administration has been distinguished by a fairly complex approach to problems, one not noticeably conservative in ideology.

For instance, he led a fight for public housing to relieve Dallas' serious slum problem (20,000 substandard dwelling units), but Dallas voters rejected his plan, about five to three. When it became apparent that the city's privately owned bus system was breaking down, and the city's traffic flow was suffering, Cabell joined with the power structure, and the buses were socialized by their mutual agreement. By 1963, the power structure declined to oppose Cabell; in fact, they tacitly supported him, and he defeated a challenger whose reputed Republicanism played just below the surface of the contest for the traditionally nonpartisan job.

Cabell defends the Citizens Council against the charge that it dominates city politics: "I can say this very definitely: that in my three years in office, I have never had the slightest indication that the Citizens Council wanted this or that done."

Cabell, who has resigned as mayor to run for Congress, says, "I think I have the complete confidence of the business community." Leaders in the power structure, interviewed last week, tended to agree that a majority of the leading businessmen are for Cabell. Leedom does not concede this; he says that in any event, there are more employees in the companies whose leaders support Alger than there are in those whose leaders support Cabell.

Cabell's stress is Alger's failure to deliver for Dallas. Businessmen support him, he believes, in the belief "I will have the ability to do things for Dallas and be able to pull some of these functions together. . . . It's not gonna be a matter of issues and such, because nobody can fight motherhood and [be for] sin, but rather of showing that these expressions of loyalty to principle [by Alger] have been empty. It's been a breast-beating sort of thing that's accomplished nothing."

"His effectiveness in holding down federal expenditures has never been indicated anywhere except in Dallas," Cabell says.

In what way did the assassination enter into Cabell's reflections as to running for Congress? Discussing this subject, Cabell says, "Very competent polls indicate that President Johnson will carry far, far more

weight here in Dallas County than President Kennedy would have."

BAXTON BRYANT, who has announced he will seek the Democratic nomination for Congress, which he very narrowly lost in 1962 to tory Democrat Bill Jones, (who then lost to Alger in November,) is basing his expectations of winning against Cabell on three main considerations. First, voters will not have to have paid their poll taxes to qualify to vote in the congressional contest because of the repeal of the poll tax for federal offices; second, Bryant hopes, just as Don Yarborough does as to his contest against Gov. John Connally, that the Republicans will have a knock-down, drag-out primary that will attract many conservatives out of the Democratic primary the same day; and third, there is the impact of the assassination.

Announcing, Bryant said Cabell is the candidate of "the decision-makers." This, of course, was a reference to the Dallas Citizens Council group, described in Carol Thometz' 1963 S.M.U. Press book, *The Decision-Makers*. Bryant called for a clear-cut test of political ideologies. "The surest way to lose is try and out-Alger Alger. He's got a patent on it," Bryant said.

In 1962, Bryant came to terms with the power structure, as he freely admits. The way Bryant handles this compromise this year, when he is running all out of the Kennedy-Johnson program, is most interesting.

Speaking last week at the Dallas press club to a meeting of journalists, Bryant said he'll run "a completely different kind of race" this year than he did in 1962, when, he volunteered, "We got together some wonderful conservative businessmen that wanted to do something for Dallas," and some liberal-loyal Democrats, and tried for the nomination. In 1962, he says, there was a meeting at which issues were gone over, one by one. "There were some things I believed in that were eliminated that I would have liked to talk about more than some of the things that were included," he said.

He stands by everything he endorsed then, Bryant says; but this year he is running all-out on the program of the national Democrats. He is for federal programs when the local and state governments do not act to meet a valid need; he is for foreign aid, although some nations ought to be eliminated from the program, and it ought to be worked over generally, he said.

Running hard against downtown business, he said, "Somebody has to go downtown and teach some kingmakers that we'll return the government to the people." He speaks, too, of "a group of king-makers in a smoke-filled room that's got all the money cornered in Dallas." He talked to no one but his own family about running, and won't have much money to run, he says.

Cabell, he believes, is not liked in Dallas. Cabell opposed pay raises for garbage collectors, contending they were feather-

bedding, Bryant says, and asks: "Can you imagine a garbage collector featherbedding?"

Furthermore, Bryant says, "Cabell and his group haven't figured in Nov. 22. The people know something is wrong when the wrath of the world came down on Dallas. . . . They know that Dallas has been governed by a benevolent dictatorship. . . . I think the grass roots is fixin' to rebel."

PROFESSOR STOLTZ has a final thought on Dallas politics since the assassination. (He himself wants Alger

beaten, but he has cooled toward Bryant since 1962.) He says:

"They're looking for a goat. I think they've got one ready-made. They're looking for a goat outside the group. . . . It's more sophisticated than a lynching, but it's not much more. I think it's Alger that's becoming the real target. I don't think it's downtown power.

"It's an interesting thing to the social scientists. It's almost a reversal of what we had before. It's just the other side of the street. But, of course, people being what they are . . ." R.D.

The Scandal Ramifies

Austin

The Bobby Baker case now dangerously involves the political prospects of the Democratic Party and President Johnson. The four live, dangling wires whipping in the storm of scandal now enveloping Washington are these:

1. President Johnson's acceptance, when majority leader, of the gift of a \$584 stereophonic phonograph from Don Reynolds, Baker's partner who sold Johnson high-premium life insurance. Johnson said this was thought to be a gift from Baker. Reynolds said the gift was Baker's idea, but the invoice sent to the Johnsons showed Reynolds paid for it. Sen. Goldwater says Johnson should have looked "behind" the gift, and Sen. Williams says it was the same as a vicuna coat.

2. Reynolds' testimony that Walter Jenkins, Johnson's No. 1 administrative aide who was also a director and small stockholder in KTBC-TV, the Johnson family's enterprise, induced him to buy \$1208 worth of advertising he had no use for on KTBC, in association with Johnson's buying his insurance from Reynolds.

3. Jenkins' sworn denial that he had "any knowledge of any arrangement by which Reynolds purchased advertising time on the TV station," followed by the production of letters on the subject by Albert Young, the president of a stainless steel company which bought the \$1208 advertising from Reynolds for \$160—letters that first reports said support Reynolds' story. Young said he also talked on the phone to a Mr. Jenkins about the advertising. This apparent conflict of testimony has led to open talk about "perjury" from GOP congressmen.

4. The President's initial discussion of the stereo gift, but not the advertising, with the press, which he cut off before questions could be asked—"He left the room where he was speaking before they [the reporters] could question him," Tom Wicker wrote in the New York Times—and the President's subsequent refusal to discuss it further, other than, in the main, to speak of Goldwater's Christmas gift from his office staff, a \$160 miniature TV.

A Republican congressman and then Goldwater called for a full investigation of KTBC. "We may find more instances of forced advertising," Goldwater told the Christian Science-Monitor. Obviously if there were any, they might be dynamite in the Democrats' mid-section. The Observer's call to Jesse Kellam, station manager of KTBC, was not returned.

The gravity of the matter was deepened by ancillary, sometimes simultaneous disclosures in Washington having to do, for instance, with a \$4,000 payment to Baker in association with Reynolds' benefiting financially from construction authorized by a bill the Congress passed; Baker's acquisition, without any cash investment, of stock that became worth \$157,000 in a deal with Robert F. Thompson of Dallas, an executive of a construction firm that is mainly (84%) owned by Clint Murchison, Jr., of Dallas; and a \$100,000 "loan" Baker made, without the right to draw any of the money out of the bank, and used to convince a federal agency to approve a federal disaster loan on his luxury motel.

The Washington Post first revealed that letters from Young claimed he was in communication with Johnson about the advertising. Sen. Jordan, D.-N.C., said that Young's testimony backed up Jenkins' account of the transaction, that Young admitted that his claims of communication with Johnson were big talk, based on hearsay from Reynolds.

The Baker case might just die down, or go away, but Republicans indicate they intend to make it a major campaign issue. Sen. Thruston Morton, R.-Ky., said in Houston that after the New and Fair Deals, we're in for the Fast Deal; GOP national chairman Miller said it would be the Wheeler Deal. Republicans are digging into Johnson's record in Texas.

With just one month of this political year elapsed, the Baker scandals have become a major new variable in the Democrats' 1964 prospectus—and the Republicans', as well. □

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