

Manchester Reopens Old Wounds

By Drew Pearson

The battle over the William Manchester book, "Death of a President" actually goes deeper than the removal of certain emotion-packed paragraphs from the book. It really involves the ill will smoldering between the two top political families of the Nation, an ill will which may influence the course of history; certainly the outcome of the next election.



Pearson

The particular paragraphs which make the book worth \$650,000 to Look magazine, tell how Mrs. Kennedy arrived at the Dallas Airport with the body of her husband to take the plane back to Washington to find that the President's plane, Air Force one, was now under the new President.

She was so informed by Mr. Johnson's staff.

"What are we waiting for?" one of the Kennedy staff is reported as saying. A Johnson staff member replied that they were waiting for the President. "Johnson now is President. When he comes we will take off."

There is no evidence in the book that the new President had anything to do with this or even knew about it; since

details of the President's travel are decided by the Secret Service. But the incident caused bitterness.

Continuing Rift

After returning to Washington, the Johnsons remained in their own home in northwest Washington while Mrs. Kennedy returned to the White House where she remained for two weeks until she moved to the home of Ambassador Averell Harriman in Georgetown. The Johnsons suggested that she remain in the White House as long as convenient. They were the height of consideration but none of this appears in the book.

When the Johnsons finally moved in they found that Jackie had had carved on the mantel in the Lincoln bedroom an inscription that the room had been occupied by John F. Kennedy from 1961-1963. Many other Presidents had occupied that room. But only the name of John F. Kennedy is on the mantel.

Jackie regained her composure after returning from Dallas to Washington.

But the Kennedy family's resentment against the Johnsons continued. It became evident 30 days after the assassination when no member of the family would attend the final memorial service ending the 30-day period of mourning at which President Johnson spoke.

Mrs. Kennedy had per-

sonally arranged every detail of her husband's state funeral at St. Matthews Cathedral which had been attended by presidents and prime ministers from around the world.

But afterwards a group of white and Negro clergymen, Protestant and Jewish, met with Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle to suggest a final memorial service at the Lincoln Memorial in which non-Catholics could participate. The Archbishop cooperated in the true ecumenical spirit. But the Kennedys did not. Repeated requests were made to have at least one member of the family present. Finally Sergeant Shriver said he would come. In the end his seat remained empty. President Johnson spoke eloquently in tribute to the late President, but no member of the Kennedy family was there to hear the praise.

This was the beginning of Jackie's boycott of the White House. Not once, since she departed on Dec. 6, 1963, has she returned, not even when the Johnsons dedicated the Jacqueline Kennedy Rose Garden adjacent to the executive offices in her honor.

Long Smoldering Period

This friction between the two top political families of the Nation had begun long before the tragedy of Dallas, however. It began when stories began to be published by newsmen close to the Kennedy family that Vice President

Johnson was an unwanted fifth wheel on the Kennedy Administration.

He was pictured as a gawky, uncouth Texan who didn't fit into the Kennedys' svelte jet-set scheme of things and that President Kennedy had a hard time conjuring up projects to keep him busy.

This hurt the Vice President. He felt, as did most political observers, that his presence on the ticket and his ability to carry several Southern states tipped the balance in the very close race between Kennedy and Nixon.

President Kennedy himself went out of his way to make sure there was no friction between him and the Vice President. But Johnson deeply resented the derogatory stories which came from some of the White House staff, and — he suspected — from Bobby Kennedy.

As Senate Majority Leader he had been one of the busiest men in Washington. As vice president he had almost nothing to do. He had plenty of time to brood. Undoubtedly this contributed to his determination to push hard, immediately after he became President, to prove his abilities.

Little of this comes out in the Manchester book where he is reported to be portrayed as ineffectual though brusquely grasping for the chance to become President.