

Tragedy Site Future Hazy

Continued From Page 27

chasing the book depository for himself because of an "interest in Kennedy from a collector's standpoint."

Bidding for the 62-year-old building started at \$400,000.

The only other bidder for the Texas School Book Depository was Mr. and Mrs. Albert Dicker of Dallas.

Dicker's top bid was \$600,000. "Let him have it," he said after Mayhew offered \$50,000 more.

Dicker said after the sale he was "disappointed" he didn't get the world known building. His intention was to convert the 80,000 square foot structure into a "Kennedy shrine."

"We knew Jack Kennedy for about 30 years," Dicker said.

Dicker was not the only one disappointed.

When the bidding stuck on the \$650,000 mark, Col. D. Harold Byrd who has owned the book depository for 36 years, went to the microphone to express his feelings:

"I expected better bids. However, I am going to sell this building. The \$650,000 is not what I thought the building was worth," he told the capacity crowd.

As it became apparent Mayhew's bid was the final one, he was mobbed by newsmen from across the nation even before the auctioneer barked, "It's going . . . gone . . . sold for \$650,000."

Mayhew made the required 10 per cent bid deposit by writing a personal check in the amount of \$65,000 on the Third Tenn.

He said he owns the "largest collection of Kennedy items in the world." The 50,000 Kennedy

memorabilia he said he owns are in his "tax exempt, educational" John F. Kennedy Memorial Museum in Nashville.

"I never purchased it as an investment. I am a collector. The building will never be sold; I will never tear it down; I will never build it into a tragedy museum or anything gaudy and I don't think I would ever rent the sixth floor" where Oswald ostensibly hid and fired the shots killing the President.

Mayhew said purchase of the building has no political overtones. He said he never met John Kennedy and "did not support him. I was not interested in politics when he ran for office."

The \$650,000 bid for the book depository—a building he has never been in—is a "good price. After all we are talking about a 62-year-old building," Mayhew said.

Mayhew considers the sale final, but the owner has 24 hours to confirm or reject the bid. Owner Byrd said after the

auction, "I don't know whether I'll sell it or not.

"I thought I'd get a million. The land is worth \$650,000," Byrd said.

G. C. Walters of G. C. Walters & Associates who was in charge of the auction said, "We got exactly what I anticipated."

"The price was what we told Col. Byrd it would bring," Walters said.

The auction of the Texas School Book Depository was also protested.

Dallas attorney S. S. Barbara paraded in the ballroom with a placard protesting the sale. He said he represented a group of Dallas citizens who wanted the building to be preserved.



—Staff Photo by Ray Adler
Aubrey Meyhew, who made the high bid for purchase of the School Book Depository, is surrounded by newsmen.