

After 20 Years, Kennedy Band Tends the

Continued From Page 1

tion longer have been forgotten.

First, there is the extended family, which remains the closest thing to royalty the United States has embraced. As Americans are constantly reminded on television and in gossip columns, the family has gone on expanding around the aged mother and the glamorous widow until there are now 29 young adults and teen-agers, the two children of John and Jacqueline and their 27 cousins.

With their parents, aunts and uncles, most act out the Kennedy tradition of public service to the poor as they move around the world in an aura of wealth and privilege, seeking adventure that often borders on the tragic — a near-drowning by three cousins on the wild and uncharted Caroni River in Venezuela, for example.

But the second generation has defied predictions by shying away from entering politics as candidates, and only the surviving torch bearer, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, seems driven to carry out the unfinished agenda of his brother from a high elective position.

As the celebrations of President Kennedy's life were approaching their peak last week, Senator Kennedy set out on a national tour to publicize the extent of hunger and poverty in America at a time when poverty is no longer a popular issue among national politicians.

Televised Masses Tuesday

His appearances began Friday in San Francisco and are to culminate in the mountains of Kentucky on Wednesday, with time off only on Tuesday to attend televised memorial masses in Washington and Hyannis Port, Mass. The tour was meant to be similar to one Senator Robert F. Kennedy made before he was shot and killed in Los Angeles in 1968 while campaigning for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Edward Kennedy, the only surviving brother, also ran for the Presidential nomination, in 1980, but was defeated in the primaries by Jimmy Carter. Several months ago he took himself out of the running for the 1984 nomination, and several Kennedy intimates said privately that they doubted he would try again.

"He carries a great burden, not only in trying to live up to what people remember about John Kennedy," said one. "It is true there are Kennedy lovers, but there are also Kennedy haters, and a Kennedy candidacy brings them out. People like him better when he is not running for President."

Still Confronting Opponents

Still, he never misses a chance to revive and perpetuate the Kennedy legacy. His recent confrontation with the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the "new right" evangelist, on Mr. Falwell's home territory in southern Virginia, for example, drew enormous publicity and was cited by many as perpetuating a tradition of meeting opposition head on. John Kennedy did that with Protestant ministers who were fearful of his Roman Catholicism in 1960, and Robert Kennedy did it in confronting gun-control opponents in 1968.

Perhaps more important, some who worked for John Kennedy say, is the depth of feeling about him that they detect around the world. Tom Mathews, the first public relations director of the Peace Corps, said the Kennedy legacy nevertheless had little to do with government or programs.

"The most powerful thing they did was creating a myth," he said, a myth that inspired millions and bordered on the spiritual.

In this season of remembrance, the subject of John Kennedy has spilled over from the press and broadcasting into schools and churches. In a sermon last Sunday, the Rev. R. Talmadge Haynes Jr., pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Md., said that Kennedy had somehow reminded people of their interdependence and that when he was shot "the whole spider web of human existence was set atrembling."

A national survey of 1,384 people taken by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago one week after the assassination showed that a majority of those interviewed said they wept on hearing the news. For the next four days, 68 percent reported being "very nervous and tense" and 57 percent felt "dazed and numb."

Honored in Western Europe

Across Western Europe, streets, bridges, town halls and other public facilities are named for Kennedy. And the newspaper, television and magazine coverage marking the 20th anniversary of the assassination is as abundant in some countries there as in the United States. The Sunday Times of London published a 10-page magazine piece recently previewing an exhibit of photographs of Kennedy's childhood; the exhibit is to run for three months. "The Kennedy myth," The Sunday Times said, "has been so potent because it is about hope shattered by absurd meaningless death."

Pierre Salinger, Kennedy's press

NOVEMBER 19, 1983

Legacy

secretary, has lived mostly in Europe since the assassination and says never a day passes when he is not asked about John Kennedy. He has written a 20,000-word syndicated series for the German magazine Bunte.

In Belgium, a Kennedy exhibit was opened Nov. 10 by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the eldest child of Robert and Ethel Kennedy, and it shows such memorabilia as John Kennedy's rocking chair, campaign buttons and recordings of his inaugural address and the 1963 Berlin speech in which he identified with resentment against the Berlin wall by declaring, "Ich bin ein Berliner."

In the United States, more than 300 books have been published about Kennedy and hundreds more about other members of his family since his death. At least eight Kennedy books have been published this fall in anticipation that the anniversary would renew interest in the family.

Cultural events have also been planned to enhance the memory and commemorate the President's interest

in the arts. The Kennedy center in Washington will put on a free concert on Tuesday featuring artists who performed in the Kennedy White House, including Isaac Stern and Grace Bumbry. Miss Bumbry will sing an aria from Verdi's "La Forza del Destino" in keeping with the occasion. As expected, the free tickets have all been claimed.

Conspiracy Theories Continue

Further interest in Kennedy has been stirred by two decades of constant controversy over conspiracy theories about the assassination that two Government investigations failed to put to rest.

Yet as the 20th anniversary approached, the controversy seemed to have gone full circle and was swinging back to the explanation that the Kennedy family and most of the Kennedy aides accepted from the beginning: that Lee Harvey Oswald, an admirer of Fidel Castro of Cuba, acted alone in firing three rifle shots into the Presidential limousine from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

A commission headed by the Earl Warren, then the Chief Justice, reached that conclusion in a voluminous study in 1964 but left so many questions unanswered it invited other theories.

In 1979 a House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that circumstantial evidence pointed to a conspiracy to kill the President, "probably" involving elements of organized crime. It also decided on the basis of disputed evidence that a second gunman had fired a shot from a grassy knoll at the Kennedy motorcade. All the conspiracy theories remained unproved.

The most recent conclusion that there was no conspiracy is reflected in a new book, "Oswald's Game," by Jean Davison, one of thousands of Americans who have explored the evidence looking for conspiracies.

She concluded that Oswald, who had defected to the Soviet Union but later returned to the United States, took it on himself to kill the President because the Central Intelligence Agency had tried on several occasions to assassinate Mr. Castro, as the Cuban leader charged in 1963 and as was substantiated in this country in 1975 in Congressional testimony. And she said Jack L.

Ruby also acted alone in fatally shooting Oswald at the Dallas police station two days after the assassination.

"The assassination of John Kennedy was neither an act of random violence nor a conspiracy," she wrote. "It was carried out as a result of Oswald's character and background interacting with circumstances. It's likely that had there been no plots against Castro, Oswald would have eventually killed someone, but it would not have been President Kennedy. Castro's warning had simply deflected his aim."

Yet, as the novelist Norman Mailer said in a preface to the book, neither he nor other conspiracy theorists can be satisfied by the new reasoning. To him the Kennedy assassination will remain "the great American mystery," thus serving as a frequent reminder of the life and death of Kennedy.

In Dallas, the assassin's widow, Marina Oswald Porter, now 42, says she has found peace but has revised her thinking about her husband's guilt. At first, she accepted the Warren Commission's findings, but now she has doubts.

"It's more confusing now than it was before," she said a few days ago. "I would like for Lee to be innocent, but I honestly don't know whether the man is innocent or guilty. We're all just guessing."

Less than two years after the assassination, the Russian-born widow married Kenneth Porter, a carpenter, and they now live with their 17-year-old son, Mark, in a country home north of Dallas. Her daughters by her first marriage, June, 22, and Rachel, 20, attend the University of Texas at Austin.

Oswald's Mother Died in 1981

Marguerite Oswald, Oswald's mother, consistently insisted that her son was innocent of the assassination. She lived in Fort Worth, died of cancer at the age of 73 in January 1981 and was quietly buried in Rose Hill Memorial Park. That is also the cemetery from which her son's remains were subsequently unearthed and examined to allay suspicions, from one of the conspiracy theories, that someone else's body had been buried in his name. Physical evidence proved it was the body of Oswald.

Meanwhile, a host of people aside from the family of John Kennedy have worked diligently to keep his legacy bright. They include the intense group of Massachusetts supporters who were drawn to Kennedy early in his career and became known later as the Boston Mafia, though they called themselves the Bunker Hill Gang.

They made up the core of the band of people around Kennedy in the White House who were motivated by an intense loyalty to him rather than any action or policy he sought to achieve. David Francis Powers, who spent more time with Kennedy when he was President than any other aide, epitomizes that kind of devotion.

Mr. Powers is now 70 and is curator of the Kennedy Library in Boston. He has had no other occupation but to serve John Kennedy, nearly 18 years in life and 20 in death. He measures time by "before Dallas and after Dallas."

How He Met John Kennedy

Over and over again Mr. Powers tells the story of how he met Kennedy in 1946 when, as the wealthy son of the former Ambassador to Britain, Kennedy was seeking his first term in Congress and needed the support of the Irish poor in Boston's Charleston section.

"It's a great story," he says. "One night I was sitting home baby-sitting the eight children of my widowed sister. There was a knock on the door and I answered. The light must have been 15 watts to save on expenses, and in the semi-darkness I could see this tall, thin handsome fellow, and he reached out his hand and said: 'I am a candidate for Congress. Will you help me?' We were on the third floor. Just think, if he had gotten tired on the second I wouldn't have met him."

Others who followed different pursuits since 1963 are less intense as guardians of the Kennedy image, but the sense of loyalty still persists after 20 years. They remember Kennedy for what he was rather than what he did.

O'Brien Remembers Leadership

Lawrence F. O'Brien, chief White House lobbyist and Postmaster General under Kennedy, stayed and served President Johnson and was Democratic National Chairman. Now, at age 66, he is preparing to retire next year as Commissioner of the National Basketball Association.

"His legacy was in the art of leadership," Mr. O'Brien said. "I think it released a certain value in people's minds. He epitomized to people all over the world the qualities they desire in a leader."

Some acknowledge that he was a master at controlling the kind of leadership image he wished to portray, through his use of television and print. And it is a kind of control the Kennedy family still exercises in preserving the image, despite a constant flow of negative publicity that has pursued them

through the years.

There were so many requests for interviews with members of the family for the 20th anniversary, they said, that they granted none. But they cooperated with production of a mass of publicity that followed their standards: an article in Parade magazine by Senator Kennedy, for example, recalling his warm relationship with his brother; or a picture book, "Kennedy: The New Generation," with a preface by Senator Kennedy and an introduction by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend.

'Values of Public Service'

After 20 years, the expanding family still manages to project a strong sense of unity and purpose. Discussing the 29 cousins, Senator Kennedy wrote: "The next generation of the Kennedy family has been instilled with the same values of public service and the same commitments to public life that my parents, Joseph and Rose Kennedy, sought to impart to their children. They know that in many respects they have been

fortunate, and all of them, each in their own way, feel a commitment to give something back to this country in return for all it has given to them."

And he ended the preface with these words:

"On November 25, 1963, the day John Kennedy was buried, my brother Bob wrote a note from the White House to his son and Jack's godson, Joe. That note ended: 'Remember all the things that Jack started, be kind to others that are less fortunate than we and love our country.' That hope is the heritage of this generation of Kennedys, down to the youngest great-grandchildren, Meaghan and Maeve, Joseph and Matthew, and Michael Jr."

All five are grandchildren of Robert Kennedy, who would be 58 had he lived.

John Jr. Studying in India

Jacqueline Kennedy, who impressed the world with her brave demeanor after the assassination, was married to Aristotle Onassis, a Greek shipping magnate, in 1968. He died in 1975, and Mrs. Onassis now lives quietly in New York, where she works as an editor for Doubleday.

John F. Kennedy Jr., the 3-year-old who saluted his father's coffin, is now 23 and recently left for India to begin graduate work on problems of third world countries. His older sister, Caroline, now 25, holds a degree from Harvard and works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Rose Kennedy is 93 and, from all reports, remains undaunted by the untimely deaths of four of her nine children — Joseph in World War II, Kathleen in a plane crash and John and Robert by assassination. She has also withstood a series of other misfortunes, including the affliction of her oldest daughter, Rosemary, now 75, who has been institutionalized for mental retardation since 1941; and Senator Kennedy's experience at Chappaquiddick, where a young woman died in a car he had accidentally driven into the water.

But despite all the troubles, the Kennedy family and former aides project optimism about the future of the legacy. They subscribe to Mr. Schlesinger's theory that American history runs in cycles. After a period of Americans' turning inward, they feel, the time may soon be ripe again for the kind of qualities John Kennedy brought to government.



Associated Press

John Fitzgerald Kennedy surrounded himself, as any President does, with a large number of relatives, advisers and confidants. Some of the group, although disbanded by his death, recall his life.



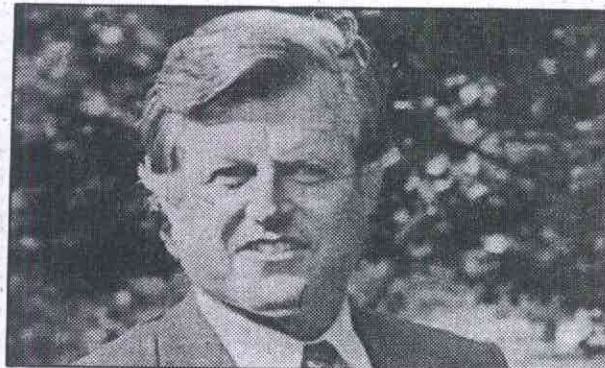
Associated Press

David F. Powers



The New York Times

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.



United Press International

Senator Edward M. Kennedy



Pierre Salinger



Associated Press

Lawrence F. O'Brien