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Doubleday Gets Rose Kennedy's Book

By HENRY RAYMONT

Doubleday & Co. has acquired the rights to the autobiography of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, President Kennedy's mother, for \$1,525,000.

The sale, which drew one of the highest sums paid by a single publisher for a memoir, was confirmed yesterday by both Doubleday and persons close to the Kennedy family.

The income to be realized from the book will be donated to the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the Mentally Retarded, a charitable institution in which Mrs. Kennedy has been extremely active.

Doubleday's acquisition was negotiated for the last four weeks by Stewart Richardson, executive editor of the concern's publishing division, and Theodore C. Sorensen, attorney for Mrs. Kennedy.

The deal, which was decided over the telephone last week, will bring the journals of one of the nation's most celebrated women to the publishing house that issued the memoirs of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower.

For years publishers have



United Press International

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

been hoping for a first-hand account of Mrs. Kennedy's life as a doughty matriarch, daughter of a prominent Boston politician, wife of a multimillionaire and former diplomat and mother of one President and two Presidential hopefuls.

Mrs. Kennedy, now 81 years old, was said to have started to write her autobiography a year ago. She is

expected to complete a 150,000-word manuscript next year with the help of Robert Coughlin, formerly a writer for Life.

It was a "gentleman's agreement," a mere handshake over the telephone, that made Doubleday the successful bidder for world rights to the book, Mr. Richardson said.

Although Mr. Sorensen was not available for comment, it was learned that Doubleday's offer led to the collapse of an effort by another publishing house, W. W. Norton, to acquire the rights to Mrs. Kennedy's book.

Ironically, the contest involved two editors with close past associations with the Kennedy family.

Evan W. Thomas, editor and vice president of W. W. Norton, had edited John F. Kennedy's "Profiles in Courage" and William Manchester's "Death of a President"—a task that culminated in serious differences with the Kennedy family—when he was editor at Harper & Row.

Mr. Richardson was the editor of Senator Edward M. Kennedy's "Decisions for a Decade," which Doubleday published in 1968.

Mr. Thomas indicated last night he thought that his rival had gotten the upper hand by dealing directly with Senator Kennedy while he had acted only through Mr. Sorensen.

"It's a situation where one publisher hoped to achieve something by dealing with the authorized representative," he said, "while the other publisher was smart enough to deal directly with the Kennedy family."

One unusual feature in the acquisition was that it was concluded without the prospective publishers' having seen anything of the manuscript.

Mr. Richardson said he was acquainted with Mrs. Kennedy's writing and went on to emphasize that "to publish her autobiography is the realization of an editor's dream."

"I can't think of another person I would rather work with," the Doubleday editor said. "There is her magnificence in the face of adversity, her religious faith, the training and education of her children . . . she's just a tremendously admirable woman, and I know most people feel that way."