

The Kennedy Kids -

HYANNISPORT (Mass.) — (UPI) — “The Kennedy Kids” is a phrase heard these days almost as often as “Kennedy Clan” used to roll off people’s tongues. They’re quite a brood and, in this presidential election year, of more than passing interest.

The Kennedy children — and the headcount varies depending on whose children are included — enter the political picture because of their impact on the life of Sen. Edward Kennedy. They played their part in the “overriding considerations” which led him to turn away from the strong urgings that he seek the Democratic presidential nomination this year, or accept a tapping for the vice presidential post.

Several Sets

Today’s Kennedy children come in several sets: the three — two sons and a daughter — of Ted himself and his wife, Joan; the seven boys and four girls of Ethel and the late Robert Kennedy, and the son and daughter of the late John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline. These are the youngsters for whom the senator feels primary responsibility.

Others who might be lumped into the general “Kennedy Kids” category are the four children of Peter Lawford and the former Patricia Kennedy (they are now divorced), the five of Eunice Kennedy and Sargent Shriver, the Democratic vice presidential candidate, and the three children of Steve Smith and the former Jean Kennedy.

Since his two brothers were assassinated, Sen. Ted Kennedy has taken over as father figure for Ethel’s 11 children, while tending to his own youngsters and, to a much lesser degree, even Caroline and John Jr., the slain President’s children.

Father’s Role

He has romped with the younger kids and lugged Ethel’s two oldest — Kathleen and Joe — onto the campaign trail with him. He also has tried to help Bobby Jr., 18, as has Lemoyne Billings, onetime roommate of JFK at Choate School and a longtime family friend.

Kennedy apparently has willingly accepted the need for his father’s role with Ethel’s brigade while not shirking his own threesome — Kara, 12, Ted Jr., 10, and red-haired Patrick, who just turned 5.

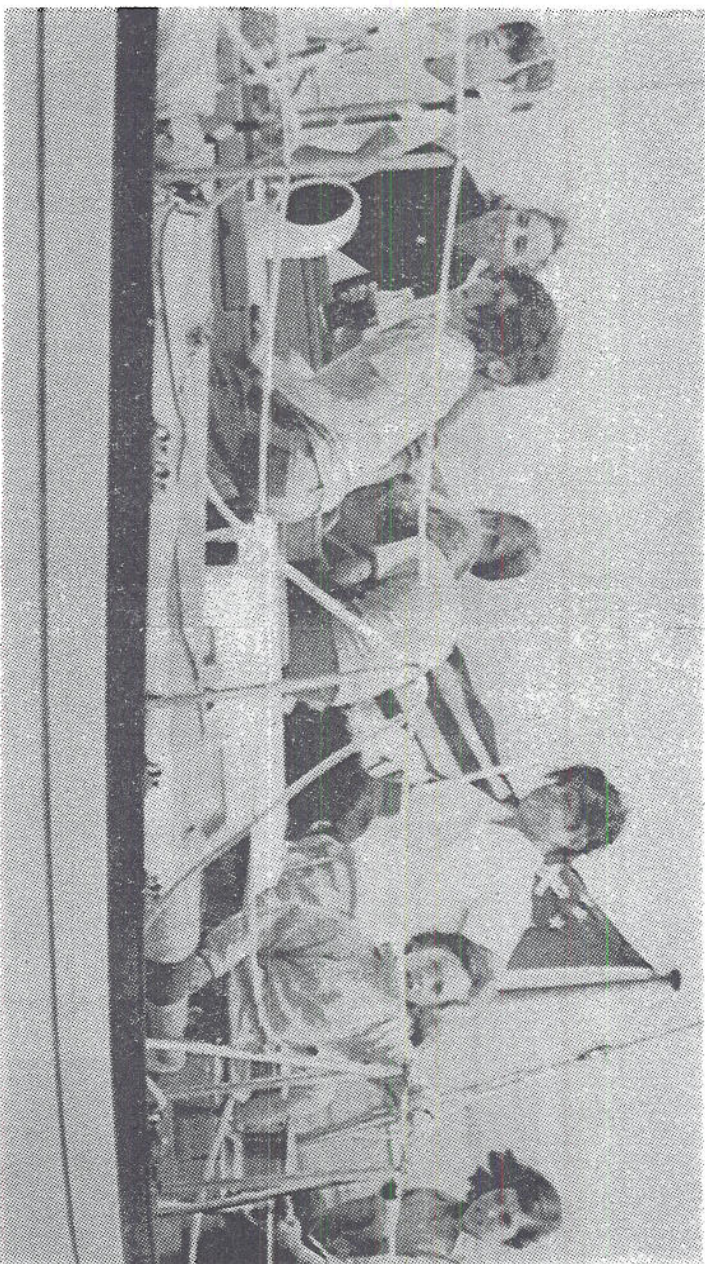
The senator’s children sometimes stay with their mother, swimming off the family cottage on Squaw Island, and also play with the rest of the clan’s youngsters within the famed Kennedy compound, a cluster of white homes overlooking Nantucket Sound off Cape Cod.

Ted Jr. and Chris, Ethel’s 9 year old, are learning to sail under the guidance of Jerry Thomas at the Hyannisport Yacht Club while Kara, who skipped the July competition, is due to return to racing this month. Thomas described Kara as “very serious . . . a perfectionist” while Teddy “finally got the bug” this summer and is developing into a fine sailor, in the Kennedy tradition.

-They Make

Quite a

Brood



Kennedy kids sail in "Patrician" with Ethel (dark shirt) and Ted

—UPI Photo

The senator has a 54-foot sloop, which is being renamed from Patrician to Cutta, reportedly in honor of a saint who sailed. Ethel has a Wianno Senior, the Resolute, a wide-beamed yacht in which she sails daily with most of her youngsters, and the family's black and white spaniel, Freckles.

Joan goes waterskiing daily at the back of their powerboat and she also has a small sailboat. Ted Jr. also is learning to waterski these days.

Sandy Ellier, a former Olympic swimmer who is connected with a Kennedy Foundation school for the retarded, is a jack-of-all trades during the summer with the kids. He usually leads them in a variety of games on one of the spacious lawns and also teaches them swimming and waterskiing. In addition, he runs the boat daily while Joan steps into the waterskis.

Kathleen, who turned 21 on July 4, used to ride horses but has given up the sport after several accidents and Ethel has not brought horses to the Cape since Bobby was

slain in 1968. Courtney, 15, and Mary Kerry, 12, were promising riders but bypass the sport, at least in the summer.

Caroline and John Jr. have spent the summer with their mother, but reportedly will come home for a few weeks before Caroline enters Concord Academy outside of Boston in the fall.

Bobby Jr., who has had scrapes with local police in each of the last two summers, spent some time touring South America this year and has avoided the area, for the most part. He still reportedly dates Kim Kelly, a local bartender's daughter, and his 14 year old brother, Michael, reportedly has taken out her sister, Candy.

Joe has been away for much of the summer, working with Chicanos in the West while brother David, 17, is with Cesar Chavez and his migrant workers in Southern California. Before he was murdered, their father was a great champion of the migrant worker cause and Chavez was a trusted friend.

What are the children like? The family has turned down a large number of requests for talks and interviews with them but in the judgment of neighbors, playmates and other acquaintances, the Kennedy youngsters are well-mannered and normally unaffected by their prominence.

Pretty Good

"When the senator is around," one acquaintance at the yacht club said, "Ethel's kids are a lot better behaved. They're pretty good anyway, but when he's around it's 'Yes Sir' and 'No Sir' all the time."

One policeman who patrols the compound area and directs motorists or tourists on foot says the Kennedy children "are as well behaved as any other kids. They're smart, too. I have to give directions to drivers on how to get back to Hyannis from here and one of them — I think it was Chris — decided he should mimeograph the instructions and pass them out."

One neighbor notes that Bobby Jr. and David took their father's assassination very hard. "They were — what? — 13 and 14 or so when he died and the manner of it all, of course, was such a shock. Bobby Jr. especially is a very sensitive boy, a lot more than people give him credit for, and Bobby's death was very traumatic for him."

Young Bobby watched the recent Democratic National Convention at a neighbor's home but has had little to do with the family, for the most part, except when his mother is away.

Little Stuff

"Sometimes Chris can be snobbish or bratty," one neighborhood youngster said. "He'll cut across his yard and when you start to follow he'll say, 'This is private property and you're trespassing — get off.' Little stuff like that, but he does it a lot. Michael is the funny one, Max (Matthew Maxwell Taylor, 7, named for the ex-general and ambassador) is nice, too."

Kathleen, who campaigned this spring for Sen. George McGovern, will return to Radcliffe this fall while 19 year old Joe plans to go to the University of California at Berkeley and Bobby Jr. will enter Harvard, his father's alma mater.

David's plans are still up in the air and he may return for his senior year at Potomac School in the Washington area or go to another private school, while Courtney will go to Milton Academy near Boston.

The rest of Ethel's youngsters — Michael, Mary Kerry, Chris, Max and 5 year old Douglas Harriman (named for the onetime New York governor and ambassador) — go to Potomac, except for Rory, a beautiful 3 year old who was born after Bobby's death and who will go to Montesseri School in Washington.