The candidates and the issues an examination of the 1960 presidential election In Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Kurt D. Zwikl
THE CANDIDATES AND THE ISSUES
AN EXAMINATION OF THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IN LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

by
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\underline{Professor in Charge}

Chairman of Department
I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Robert K.
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Abstract

Researching the presidential election of 1960 in Lehigh County has uncovered some unusual findings. The most unusual fact is that the Republican and Democratic candidates for President and Vice President all made personal appearances in this area, the only time this has ever occurred. This prompted me to ask: Why did they come here? What issues did they discuss? What issues in Lehigh County were important to the outcome?

The candidates came into the Lehigh Valley for several reasons. As the fourth largest metropolitan area of the state population was the initial factor. Secondly, the Republicans looking at past success in this area hoped to continue their winning tradition. On the other hand the Democrats were greatly encouraged by the trend of voter registration figures that had given them a numerical advantage. Well known as a county of ticket-splitting both parties viewed Lehigh as a county they could win. A fifth reason was the widespread coverage available to the candidates through the regions largest newspaper, the Call-Chronicle. Finally, jet transportation allowed the candidates to cover more areas of the nation and improvements at the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton Airport permitted their aircraft to use its facilities.

The issues they raised during their appearances here were mainly those echoed throughout the campaign nationwide. But they did convey issues that they thought would be important to this region. Nixon and
Abstract

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The issues they raised during their appearances here were mainly those echoed throughout the campaign nationwide. But they did convey issues that they thought would be important to this region. Nixon and
Lodge stressed foreign affairs and leadership, Kennedy the economy, Johnson the religious question and they all provided great amounts of enthusiasm.

A further examination of local issues was carried out by reviewing newspaper accounts of election activities and by conducting interviews with individuals who played a role in the campaign. Although each issue was important, the interviews, news articles, Lyndon Johnson's address in Allentown, evidence of ticket-splitting and a comparison of registration figures with election day statistics all lead me to conclude that religion was indeed a major factor in Lehigh County.
Introduction

The Presidential election of 1960 pitted against each other two of the more interesting political personalities of the twentieth century - John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. As analysts predicted a close election, the outcome in Pennsylvania became increasingly important. This resulted in intensified personal campaigning on the part of the candidates.

From October 18th to October 28th, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania was the stumping grounds of three future Presidents of the United States. National and international issues were brought into sharp focus in the Lehigh Valley as Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson (October 18th), Republican Presidential candidate, Richard M. Nixon (October 22nd), Republican Vice Presidential candidate, Henry Cabot Lodge (October 26th), and Democratic Presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy (October 18th), made personal speaking appearances. These events collectively served as perhaps the most politically historic occasion in the history of the region. Other candidates had come and gone, but never had this area of Pennsylvania been host to the top four candidates for national office within such a short period and at such an important time in our nation's history.

It is my intention in this paper to identify the issues of this election that were important nationally, statewide and locally. Both those issues that were raised as positions of policy by the candidates
and those additional factors that played a significant role in shaping the thoughts of the electorate will be discussed. More importantly, I will document why the candidates came to this region to campaign, what issues they thought were important to this area and what issues played a role in the outcome of the election in Lehigh County.

The presence of all four candidates indicates that Lehigh County was an important region in a crucial swing state.
In 1960 the American people once again observed the lengthy process that culminates in the election of their chief executive. As the year began a number of contenders for the presidency positioned themselves to obtain their party's nomination.

John F. Kennedy, the Junior Senator from Massachusetts, chose the primary election route to propel himself into the national limelight as he successfully rolled up a series of victories. Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the United States Senate Majority Leader had hoped to win the nomination by using his position of congressional leadership to influence the selection of convention delegates and thus stayed out of the primaries. Other potential nominees included Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, who was relatively unknown outside of his home state and the nation's capitol, and Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey who contested Kennedy in the primaries.

Kennedy, who came from a wealthy family, had a Harvard education, and an outstanding war record as a naval officer in World War II, had one major liability. The liability was tested against Humphrey in the Wisconsin and West Virginia primaries. Kennedy was a Roman Catholic and the nation well remembered the defeat of New York Governor, Al Smith, the first Catholic to be nominated for President by a major party in 1928. The religious factor was to be one of the major issues of the entire campaign. Kennedy won in Wisconsin, which was Humphrey's neighboring state, but it was charged that Republican Catholics crossed over and voted for Kennedy. The victory was not
decisive, however, since West Virginia, a predominantly Protestant
state, might be a different story. Kennedy addressed the religious
issue openly and won by a large margin. The use of television and a
strong, disciplined organization backed up by the personal appearances
of members of his large family aided in Kennedy's victory. As a
result, Humphrey later withdrew from the race.

As the July convention approached, it appeared as though Kennedy
would win the nomination despite a draft movement by the supporters of
Adlai Stevenson, the 1952 and 1956 Democratic nominee. Again, using a
finely tuned organization headed by his brother Robert, Kennedy won
the nomination on the first ballot.

Kennedy surprised the convention by choosing Johnson, who
finished second in the Presidential balloting, as his Vice
Presidential running mate. Although this angered many, particularly
liberals of the Americans for Democratic Action, who said Johnson was
too conservative, the Kennedys believed that Johnson could hold the
South for the Democrats in November.¹ Johnson in turn was condemned
by southern politicians for endorsing the civil rights plank of the
convention and for accepting the Vice-Presidency with a Catholic.

Vice-President Richard Nixon's nomination to head the Republican
ticket was virtually assured when New York Governor, Nelson
Rockefeller indicated late in 1959 that he would not seek the
presidency. He did not endorse Nixon though, and just before the
convention was quite critical of some of the Vice-President's

¹Eugene H. Roseboom, A History of Presidential Elections, 3rd Ed.,
programs. A subsequent meeting helped to ease this tension and certain agreements were reached.

To emphasize the importance of foreign affairs, a key element of the Nixon campaign, he named Henry Cabot Lodge, Ambassador to the United Nations and former Senator to run for Vice-President.

The choice of nominees by the party conventions, perhaps tell us even more than the candidates did, that foreign affairs and national security were of great importance in this election year. The delegates deviated from the norm for only the third time since 1880 by not selecting as one of the two candidates for president, a governor or former governor.2

Nixon's nomination was the first time since 1836, when Martin Van Buren was elected President, that a Vice-President was granted the nomination of a major party without first having become President due to a death.3 Furthermore, Kennedy became only the second U.S. Senator in the twentieth century to receive the presidential nomination.4

As the campaign began, both candidates laid out a central issue that was to become the theme of their respective candidacies. This central issue was perceived in both camps as the Soviet Union's threat to America's security.5 The candidates repeatedly addressed this issue but each in different terms. Republican policy makers believed that "experienced leadership" to keep the Soviets in check was the

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3 Ibid., p. 217.
4 Ibid., p. 220-221.
theme necessary to convey to the public the image they wanted for
their candidate. Nixon having served as an active Vice-President for
the previous eight years certainly could lay legitimate claim to the
theme of experience despite the fact that he and Kennedy began their
careers in the Congress at the same time. Nixon stated,

"When we came into office in 1953 (The Eisenhower Administration)
the United States was at war. We have ended one war; we have
avoided other wars; and today we do have peace and have it
without surrender of principle or territory..."\(^6\)

It was these achievements that Nixon hoped to build upon if he was
elected.

While experience was stressed by the G.O.P., Democratic
strategists wove the word movement into the fabric of Kennedy's
campaign. Kennedy insisted that the nation had been mistreated by our
foreign adversaries and it was time to move again. "I say we can do
better" and "i say we need to move again", were phrases that were used
over and over again in Kennedy's addresses. This reflected his
position that the nation had stood still during the Eisenhower-Nixon
years. It also helped to turn his youthful image into an asset by
pointing out that a new generation of Americans was going to rebuild
the image of the United States.\(^7\)

In August, Newsweek released the results of their nationwide
survey of voters and found that "United States foreign policy...towers
above all others as the number one issue of the coming Presidential
Campaign."\(^8\) At this time the voting public had little awareness of

\(^6\)Ibid.
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 68.
\(^8\)Newsweek, August 1, 1960, p. 26-28.
the competency of Kennedy in dealing with other nations. As far as they were concerned, when viewing foreign affairs, Nixon was for the most part their favorite. This became apparent when the results of a national telephone poll made for Kennedy between August 13th and the 18th revealed "that the three foreign policy issues came out as most important."9 The poll showed that whenever an individual singled out an issue as most important it partly predicted how the person would react on election day and also if they had made up their mind. "Those voters who singled out foreign policy as the most important issue in the campaign were most likely to have already made up their minds and were for Nixon."10 Of those who identified negotiations with the Russians as the most important issue 44% preferred Nixon, while 37% favored Kennedy and 19% were undecided. Those selecting keeping ahead of the Russians as the most important issue favored Nixon over Kennedy 43% to 39% with 18% undecided. The third category of developing missiles favored Kennedy by 39% to 38% for Nixon and 23% were undecided.11

This survey, the knowledge of the Newsweek poll, and other polls done for both candidates further prompted Kennedy and Nixon to make foreign affairs a major issue.

As a result over the course of the campaign, three basic issues dealing with foreign policy emerged. One was the position of prestige

10 Ibid., p. 85.
11 Ibid., p. 86. Note: See Table 2.2 for candidate preference on other issues.
of the United States abroad and the growth of Soviet military, scientific, economic and political strength. Nikita Khrushchev was recognized in this nation and around the world as the symbol of these issues which threatened U.S. security. Kennedy held that our prestige was sliding and the so-called missile gap with the Soviet Union helped to illustrate his complaint that America was second best during the 1950's. Nixon would not reveal the contents of intelligence reports dealing with this subject. Therefore, the Democrats having no first hand evidence, were suspicious of Soviet superiority. The response of the Vice-President was that Kennedy was actually damaging the nation's prestige by implying that we were faltering and repeatedly stated he was "running down" the United States.

The second foreign policy confrontation dealt with Cuba. Kennedy pointed to the Castro communist regime take over of Cuba, which was only 90 miles from the United States, as an example of the decline of our foreign policy under the Republicans. The Democratic candidate then proposed a four point solution to deal with the Cuban issue. In this instance and when speaking of our declining prestige abroad, Kennedy forced Nixon to defend the actions of the Eisenhower Administration. However, the third point of Kennedy's four point program for Cuba reversed the situation. Kennedy stated, "We must attempt to strengthen the non-Batista Democratic anti-Castro forces in exile, and in Cuba itself, who offer eventual hope of overthrowing

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When asked to comment at the fourth televised debate on Kennedy's Cuban position, Nixon offered a strong retort. He noted Kennedy's comments to be "probably the most dangerously irresponsible recommendations that he had made during the course of the campaign." Nixon believed that Kennedy's actions would violate the United Nations' Charter, numerous Latin American treaties and serve as an invitation for the Soviet Union to intervene in Latin America.

Kennedy prompted the third issue to surface when in response to a question, he insisted that Quemoy and Matsu, two small islands off the coast of Communist China, were not defensible and therefore, should be vacated by the Nationalist Chinese. Nixon again was highly critical of Kennedy's comments.

"We should not force our Nationalist allies to get off them and give them to the Communists. If we do that we start a chain reaction because the Communists aren't after Quemoy and Matsu. They're after Formosa. In my opinion this is the same kind of wooly thinking that led to disaster for America in Korea."

In time, the issue faded as both candidates agreed to defend Formosa, Nixon stating that the islands should be defended as a means of protecting Formosa, and Kennedy saying they "should not be defended unless that was essential to protect Formosa."

All three of these issues gained a great deal of attention in the nation's media but as Theodore Sorensen points out "the three most

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14 Ibid., p. 194.
15 Ibid., p. 194.
16 Ibid., p. 194.
17 Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, p. 3465.
19 Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, p. 3465-3466.
solidly identifiable foreign policy issues in the campaign turned out
to have very little substantive content."²⁰

An economic slowdown and job layoffs of hundreds of thousands of
people indicating the possibility of a recession were among domestic
issues of national concern. The rise in unemployment brought out the
issue of how the current administration was managing the economy and
both candidates were aware of these implications. The vacillating
unemployment rate for the civilian labor force during the later half
of the Eisenhower Administration is illustrated by figures in Table
1.1.

Table 1.1 National Unemployment Rate 1956-1961²¹

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Rate \\
\hline
1956 & 4.2 \\
1957 & 4.3 \\
1958 & 6.8 \\
1959 & 5.5 \\
1960 & 5.6 \\
1961 & 6.7 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Nixon was forced to defend these statistics and the
administration's policies by talking down the existence of any
recessionary activity, whereas Kennedy spoke out for the development
of jobs and expanded economic growth. Regardless of how unemployment
was measured, the figures demonstrate that "unemployment probably had
a far greater political impact in 1958 - when the Democratic party
made exceptionally wide gains - than in 1960, for unemployment dropped
in 1959 and 1960."²²

²⁰Ibid., p. 3465.
²¹V.O. Key Jr., The Responsible Electorate, (Cambridge, Mass., 1966),
p. 108.
²²Ibid., p. 109.
When dealing with the economy as well as other domestic social issues, both candidates spoke in the traditions of their respective parties. Kennedy pointing to three recessions in six years under the Republicans, called for increased federal spending in the areas of housing, education and medical care for senior citizens, along with farm subsidies and assistance for depressed regions. Nixon countered that Kennedy's programs would mean inflation, more taxes and runaway spending and that the federal government should be interested in only stimulating the private sector of the economy.23

With respect to yet another potentially volatile domestic concern, responding to questions from a black newspaper reporter over concessions to Southern white voters, Senator Kennedy restated Hubert Humphrey's campaign pledge. He said, "if anyone expected him to betray the cause of civil rights for political expediency they could look for another candidate."24 Kennedy addressed the need for legislative action to deal with civil rights by calling for better social and economic programs and at the same time began to attract increasing support from the black and liberal communities. Dissatisfaction with Kennedy's views on this issue prevailed among Southern white voters. However, the selection of Lyndon Johnson as his running mate paid-off in this instance, as Johnson made repeated campaign stops in the South and eased the Southern conservatives, who were wary of Kennedy's stand on civil rights, into the Democratic fold.

23 Roseboom, Presidential Elections, p. 557.
In the meantime, Nixon was having difficulties wooing Southern whites as well, because the Republican Convention had adopted its strongest pro-civil rights plank in history. To further complicate this action, Henry Cabot Lodge, campaigning in Harlem in October, stated that a black would be selected for a cabinet position if the Republicans were victorious. This statement proved to be of great embarrassment to the ticket, as Nixon later repudiated Lodge's comment and further on stated that it "plagued them through the rest of the campaign."²⁵

In the North, particularly in the cities, the black vote had been traditionally Democratic. However, the figures on party preference compiled as a result of 4,050 interviews with Northern blacks revealed a shift to the Republicans during the 1956 and 1958 elections. The percentages listed in table 1.2 illustrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Independents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kennedy, recognizing the importance of the black vote made an extra effort to attract it and was successful.

The incident that perhaps played the greatest role in turning out black votes had to do with the arrest of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. When King was arrested for trespassing during a sit-in in Atlanta and sentenced to jail, Kennedy phoned Mrs. King to express his concern. Robert Kennedy later phoned the local judge and aided in King's release.

²⁵Ibid., p. 42.
²⁶Abelson, Candidates Issues and Strategies, p. 95-96.
Although their calls did not become a major campaign story, the Kennedys' actions received widespread publicity in the black community, a subsequent endorsement from Dr. King's father and strong words of gratitude from King himself. This was aided by the distribution of Kennedy literature about the incident in black communities and outside black churches the Sunday before the election.\textsuperscript{27} In contrast, Nixon remained silent throughout the whole affair choosing not to further offend Southern white voters he was hoping to attract. Aside from the issues of foreign and domestic policy, there are two others which perhaps more than anything else, affected the outcome of the election—Kennedy's Catholicism and the televised debates.

Although many thought the religious questions were answered by Kennedy's defeat of Hubert Humphrey in the West Virginia primary, the issue surfaced again in September when the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale issued a statement on behalf of an organization of prominent Protestant clergyman charging the Catholic Church with meddling in political affairs.\textsuperscript{28} As a result, Kennedy accepted an invitation to speak to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in Texas where he was to discuss his religion and the impact it would have on his decisions if he were elected President. Kennedy spoke in favor of absolute separation of church and state, "where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials" and against unconstitutional aid to non-public schools.\textsuperscript{29} Even though this

\textsuperscript{28}Schlesinger, *Presidential Elections*, p. 3467.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 3559-3561.
response was satisfactory to the upper levels of the Protestant
Church, it did not quell the hatred and the bigotry that continued
throughout the campaign.

While hundreds of clergymen of all faiths from throughout the
nation expressed belief that religious affiliation should not be "a
test of fitness for the Presidency", close to two hundred different
publications were anonymously circulated which attacked Kennedy and
Catholicism in general.\footnote{Kelley, "The Presidential Campaign," p. 78-79.}

Other than this speech, both Kennedy and Nixon felt it was in
their best interest to keep quiet on the issue. The day after
Kennedy's presentation Nixon stated while campaigning in Oregon that
"Senator Kennedy's statement of his views should be accepted without
further question" and announced that "neither he nor his staff would
have anything further to say about Kennedy's religious affiliation."\footnote{Ibid., p. 78.}

Nixon earlier proposed that neither candidate discuss the issue after
a certain date. He now ordered all Republican organizations not to
permit any reference to his opponents religion by way of appeal to
prejudice or rebuttal to prejudiced statements.\footnote{Abelson, Candidates Issues and Strategies, p. 44.} While Kennedy
personally remained silent on his Catholicism after the Houston
appearance the Democratic Committee filmed his speech for future
showings in Protestant areas.

Republicans were fearful that Catholic Republicans and
Independents would be so offended by religious slurs that they would
feel an obligation to vote for Kennedy. The Democrats were hoping
that a Catholic at the head of the ticket would greatly aid them among Catholic voters. Not only with a Republican crossover vote, but with a strong Democratic turnout. Robert Axelrod makes this point in "Where The Votes Come From: An Analysis of Electoral Coalitions 1952-1968."

"The Catholics have formed a large and reliable segment of the Democratic coalition. They have always provided more than a third of the Democratic votes even though they are only a quarter of the population (according to his formula). Part of the reason is their exceptionally high turnout. The other part of the reason is their steadfast loyalty which has always been more than 10 percent greater than that of the population as a whole."\(^{33}\)

Studies of campaign strategy indicate that great attention was focused on the Catholic vote by the Democrats particularly in those states with large Catholic populations. Sorensen states that the one factor that influenced more swing voters than anything else was Kennedy's religion. But that while he successfully attracted large numbers of Catholic Democrats he lost millions of Protestant Democrats to Nixon.\(^{34}\)

Many agree that when the votes were counted, the fact that Kennedy was a Catholic hurt him to a large degree in the popular vote. But on the other hand, those same observers agree that it may have helped him in the Electoral vote. This is demonstrated by Kennedy's slim margins of victory in states outside the South with large numbers of Catholic voters and larger numbers of Electoral votes.\(^{35}\)


\(^{34}\) Schlesinger, Presidential Elections, p. 3469.

Writing about the election in his book *Six Crises*, Nixon indicates that he shared this belief all along. He stated,

"Kennedy's religion was obviously going to be a major factor in the election...From the outset, though, I had no doubts whatever on this score: I believed that Kennedy's religion would hurt him in states he could afford to lose anyway, and that it would help him in states he needed to win."³⁶

A second issue of great consequence arose as a result of the agreement by both candidates and the networks to hold a series of four televised debates. This agreement was reached only after Congress repealed the equal-time provision of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 which stated that the networks had to invite the minor party candidates.³⁷ With a great majority of the population having access to television, both candidates felt they had something to gain by joint appearances and thus, accepted the terms of debate. Nixon recognized that as the candidate of the minority party, he was going to need greater exposure to Independents and Democrats, if he were going to win the election. Kennedy viewed the debates as a means of becoming better known and of demonstrating that he had, despite the Republican charges to the contrary, the necessary experience and qualifications to be President.

The first debate, however, did the greatest damage to Nixon because he appeared pale and in poor health (in part due to a recent hospital stay for a knee infection), and was at times unsure of himself. It was unfortunate for Nixon that he apparently made an

unfavorable impression on the public because he looked "tense, haggard and anxious." Kennedy proved to be just the opposite as he "projected the image of a dynamic, intelligent and articulate leader." Furthermore, his performance rallied the party faithful, increased enthusiasm toward the ticket and brought political endorsements and greater financial support. Although Nixon's appearance and performance improved in subsequent debates, the effects of the first debate stayed with him. Edward W. Chester in his book Radio, Television, and American Politics observes the following shift in public opinion subsequent to the first debate.

"His image as an unbeatable television debater shattered, Nixon saw his 47 to 46 percent lead over Kennedy in a national Gallery poll prior to the first debate give way to a Kennedy lead of 49 to 46 percent following it. Nixon may have narrowed the gap between then and the election but he never completely closed it." Most sources agree that overall, the debates were of great significance to the Kennedy campaign. Initially they put him on an equal recognition basis with Nixon and secondly, they established him as a mature, "quick-witted ready speaker." The following statistics provide evidence of the great interest the public had in the debates and thus, the exposure each candidate received.

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38 Edward W. Chester, Radio, Television and American Politics, New York, 1969, p. 120.
40 Asher, Presidential Elections and American Politics, p. 155.
41 Gilbert, Television and Presidential Politics, p. 170.
42 Chester, Radio, Television and American Politics, p. 120.
1. Nine out of ten television families (89.8%) tuned in the debates.

2. More than one half of all television families (53.1%) watched at least three debates.

3. One out of four television families (26.6%) tuned in all four debates.

Arbitron rating service estimated the audiences for each of the four debates at between 70 to 75 million for the first, 61 million for the second, 65 million for the third and 64 million for the final debate. 45

The debates themselves were not without their critics as they were labeled by some to be more like joint press conferences with millions of viewers, where the format allowed no true debate to take place. 46 V. O. Key referred to them as "affairs" that "hovered at a level somewhere in the neighborhood of bush-league college debates." 47 Nevertheless, a few days after the election, Kennedy was quoted as saying, "It was T.V. more than anything else that turned the tide." 48

While both candidates called for a variety of foreign and domestic programs to achieve their goals, the religious issue and the impression they left with the public, as a result of the televised debates, were to weigh heavily in the outcome.

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47 Key, Responsible Electorate, p. 112.
Chapter Two - Pennsylvania An Overview

After their party conventions each candidate developed an electoral strategy. The Kennedy forces identified nine large states (New York, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey and Massachusetts) as crucial, but would concentrate "the supreme Kennedy effort in the industrial Northeast where seven states of the big nine clustered." It was Lyndon Johnson's responsibility to carry his native state of Texas, while Adlai Stevenson would work California with Kennedy devoting four personal days to campaign there.\(^1\)

Nixon's aides focused on the big seven, California, New York, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Michigan. And while Kennedy was worried about the Protestant and suburban vote Nixon was concerned about the Catholic and farm vote.\(^2\)

With both candidates placing the result of the election on the outcome of the larger electoral states, their public appearances in these states greatly increased during the final month of the campaign. Pennsylvania, with its 32 electoral votes, was among those that received their attention. Traditionally dominated by Republicans, Pennsylvania was considered a swing state in recent years and was shifting from Republican to Democrat. In 1954 George Leader became the second Democrat in this century to be elected Governor. In 1956 despite the Eisenhower sweep of the Commonwealth, Democrat Joseph

\(^1\) White, Making of the President 1960, p. 247.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 266.
Clark was elected to the U.S. Senate. Two years later Catholic David Lawrence, the former Democratic Mayor of Pittsburgh was elected to the Governor's chair. Statewide registration figures provide the best evidence that Pennsylvania Republicans were losing ground to their Democratic rivals. These statistics show a gradual decline of the Republican majority in Pennsylvania throughout the 1950's.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>3,130,078</td>
<td>2,136,511</td>
<td>+993,567 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>2,995,971</td>
<td>2,088,857</td>
<td>+907,114 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2,897,307</td>
<td>2,450,396</td>
<td>+446,911 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2,771,613</td>
<td>2,554,007</td>
<td>+217,606 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,802,237</td>
<td>2,805,202</td>
<td>+ 2,965 D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1960 when the Democrats took the lead by 2,965 votes it was reported that, "For the first time since the Republicans came to life in Pennsylvania by electing Andrew Curtain in 1860 the Democratic Party is ahead in the number of qualified voters."

Registration figures indicated that the Democrats held their lead statewide as a result of large majorities in the urban areas. Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh listed a Democratic majority of 213,553 while in Philadelphia Democrats led by 178,463. These figures prompted Pittsburgh Democrats to say that the city was now safe for Kennedy. On top of the registration lead in Pittsburgh, Kennedy was also supported by one of Pennsylvania's most powerful

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4 Allentown Morning Call, November 3, 1960, p. 8.
local Democratic organizations built largely by Governor David Lawrence when he was Mayor of Pittsburgh. In 1960 the Pittsburgh organization was controlled by Mayor Joseph Barr former chairman of the Democratic State Committee. In addition, Kennedy received the endorsement of David J. McDonald, President of the United Steelworkers, a strong political force in the region. While these factors were working in favor of Kennedy, Nixon was benefiting by large contributions from Pittsburgh businesses.\(^6\) In Philadelphia it was the first time the Democrats held a registration lead in the Commonwealth's largest city for a presidential election.\(^7\)

These figures were bolstered in part because the Kennedy organization placed a great deal of importance on an effective voter registration drive concentrating particularly in the lower middle-class and working class neighborhoods of cities. It was estimated by the Kennedy staff that approximately 40,000,000 of the 107,000,000 eligible voters nationwide had not registered to vote. It was also believed that 70 percent of the 40 million would vote Democratic if they would go to the polls.\(^8\)

The final results of the registration efforts in the urban areas were in their favor by 5-3 margins in Pittsburgh and 2-1 margins in Philadelphia.\(^9\) In Lackawanna County (Scranton), the Democratic majority was 2-1 while strong gains were made in once predominantly Republican Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties.\(^10\) Populous Erie County

\(^6\) *Morning Call*, November 1, 1960, p. 11.
\(^10\) *Newsweek*, October 17, 1960, p. 29.
had taken a Democratic lead for the first time in many years by just over a thousand voters and heavily Democratic Berks had extended its registration to over 34,000. An indepth look at Lehigh County and the City of Allentown will be undertaken in Chapter Three.

Looking at the total results nationwide, the combined effort of both the Kennedy and Nixon registration drives produced 6,800,000 more voters in 1960 than were registered in 1956. In Pennsylvania there were 265,687 more people registered to vote since the last presidential election. Note that this figure includes nonpartisan and other party registrants. Although the Republican drive was not as extensive as that of the Democrats it was not because they did not make the effort. Sometime after the election Nixon stated that a factor contributing to his defeat was the inability of the Republicans to compete with the Democratic efforts to register union members.

Republican strategists were hoping that despite Democratic gains in the urban areas of Pennsylvania they could offset this by a strong voter turnout in the suburban counties especially Delaware which held a 169,512 Republican lead and Montgomery where Republicans outnumbered Democrats by 127,896 voters.

Statewide, the economy and Kennedy's religion were receiving the most attention from Pennsylvania voters. In the steel producing areas in particular, unemployment was beginning to cause great concern. A

White, Making of the President 1960, p. 247.
Kelley, "The Presidential Campaign," p. 64.
look at the following data is useful for a comparison of unemployment trends in some of the more heavily populated areas of the state.

Table 2.2. Pennsylvania Regional Rates of Unemployment 1958-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1959</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, excluding N.J.</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrisburg</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnstown</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excluding N.J.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scranton</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes-Barre-Hazelton</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although unemployment figures were down in 1960 compared to 1958 and 1959, large layoffs were taking place in the coal, steel and railroad industries and many feared a repeat of two years earlier.\(^\text{17}\)

The question of federal aid to some of these areas that were chronically depressed also became a key issue to winning Pennsylvania as both candidates stressed it while campaigning in the state. Nixon stated that the Republican plan for depressed areas would provide greater assistance to the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazelton area than would the Democratic legislation. But Kennedy countered by saying that President Eisenhower had twice vetoed the aid bills that passed the Congress. Because of the significance of this issue in some

\(^{16}\) Pennsylvania Adjusted Resident Labor Force Date 1958, 1959, 1960 provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Harrisburg, PA.

\(^{17}\) Time, October 10, 1960, p. 25.
sections of the state, it was believed it would affect the outcome of certain congressional elections. 18

The question of Kennedy's religion led journalists to speculate on whether or not it would help or hinder the Senator's chances. The Democratic strongholds in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had large Catholic populations whereas the smaller towns and rural areas were overwhelmingly Protestant. 19 In two separate issues of Time Magazine the following points were brought out. Despite Pennsylvania's 31% Catholic population 20 which would assist Kennedy, the Pennsylvania Dutch were concerned about his Catholicism and registered "in large numbers for the first time since 1928." 21

In Berks County, Lehigh's western neighbor, there was great concern among Democratic leaders over the consequence of Kennedy's religion. The Allentown Morning Call quoted a Berks Democrat as saying, Kennedy's Catholicism was "certain to have an effect on the outspoken Protestants of the Berks 'Bible belt'." On this point the Berks County Democratic Chairman, Bruce R. Coleman stated, "The only thing that might hurt our presidential candidate is the religious issue. There is a small group of old people still carrying the torch of 1928." Another party spokesman agreed saying he felt "the religious issue was lying around not being talked about but waiting to

18 Morning Call, October 28, p. 17.
19 Ibid., October 4, 1960, p. 11.
20 Time, November 7, 1960, p. 25.
21 Ibid., October 10, 1960, p. 25.
erupt. If the voters do cross party lines, they will be anti-Kennedy and not pro-Nixon."

Perhaps the best account of this issue is told by James Michener in *Report to the County Chairman* where he reveals his personal experiences in neighboring Bucks County. As Chairman of the Bucks County citizens for Kennedy Committee, Michener received untold numbers of letters that began with "Did you know that the Catholic Church...and ended with a miserable recital of lies, historic fact, sexual indecency and legitimate comment on Church excesses in Spain and Venezuela." Anti-Catholic books and literature, many of which contain great distortion, made their way into all sections of Bucks County. Although I could find no specific instance of its use in Lehigh County, the *Morning Call* of October 28, 1960 reports the appearance of similar literature in Bethlehem, Northampton County. A pamphlet entitled "Here are the Facts" was circulated at a rally for Vice-Presidential candidate, Henry Cabot Lodge, but it was never determined who was responsible for its distribution.

An Associated Press Poll taken five weeks before the election rated Pennsylvania as a "toss-up". Three weeks before election day another Associated Press survey indicated that Kennedy had pulled even and "might be gaining an advantage in some of the big doubtful states

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22 Morning Call, November 1, 1960, p. 5. Note all quotes about Berks County taken from this article.
24 Morning Call, October 28, 1960, p. 7.
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---

22 *Morning Call*, November 1, 1960, p. 5. Note all quotes about Berks County taken from this article.
like New York, California, Michigan and Pennsylvania." On November 4th, Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report viewed the outcome in Pennsylvania like this:

"Both Kennedy and Nixon supporters are adamant in assertions that their man will carry the state and win its 32 electoral votes. Principal factors aiding Nixon appear to be the state's traditional Republicanism, deep-seated anti-Catholic sentiment (especially through the rural areas of the state), President Eisenhower's recent warm endorsement for Nixon in a Philadelphia speech, and some private polls giving Nixon a Pennsylvania lead. Kennedy supporters are encouraged by record Democratic registration (especially in Philadelphia), the anticipated election day benefits of state political patronage, an expected heavy Catholic bloc vote for Kennedy, and weak spots in the state's economy. Steel production, which is centered in Pennsylvania, is running at a very low level and statewide unemployment is estimated at 7.7 percent."

With both sides claiming victory and recognizing Pennsylvania as a vital state that appeared certain to be close the candidates made repeated personal appearances in the Commonwealth.

Chapter three will identify the reasons why Lehigh County and the greater Lehigh Valley became one of the focal points of the campaign in Pennsylvania.

\[\text{26} \text{Ibid., October 18, 1960, p. 1.}\]
\[\text{27} \text{Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, November 4, 1960, p. 1826.}\]
Chapter Three - The Attraction of Lehigh County

For this study Lehigh County needs to be evaluated in two ways. First politically as part of the 8th Congressional District comprising all of Lehigh County including the City of Allentown and to its south all of Bucks County. And secondly geographically as part of the Lehigh Valley which is generally viewed as all of Lehigh County and to its east all of Northampton County including most of the City of Bethlehem and the City of Easton. This region of Pennsylvania outside of the greater Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton-Wilkes-Barre areas was an attraction to the candidates for national office not only because of its population which was a factor but as I will demonstrate for other reasons as well.¹

The 8th Congressional District was represented in Congress by two term incumbent Republican Representative Willard S. Curtain of Bucks County. It was believed that Curtain would win reelection because of a low Catholic population and also because of "good Republican County organizations."² His opponent was a well-known orator and former Mayor of Allentown, Attorney Donald Hock. With the growth of industry in lower Bucks County and the challenge of a recognizable Democrat the Republicans could not be guaranteed a victory. Late in the campaign Lehigh County Democratic Chairman Roy Reabuck stated that because of tremendous enthusiasm among Democrats for the Kennedy-Johnson ticket they had "a good chance of winning the Congressional seat."³ However,

³ Morning Call, November 2, 1960, p. 5.
in an interview I conducted with Attorney Hock he confirmed just the opposite stating that he felt he didn't have a good chance for Congress "because Democratic Candidates for Congress in Bucks-Lehigh just weren't winning." \(^4\)

The voter registration figures in Bucks although still heavily Republican in 1960 had shown a steady decline of the percentage of difference between the two parties and a tremendous growth in population. (See Table 3.1 for the registration figures.) Population figures for Bucks indicate a 113.36% increase from 1950 to 1960, the highest rate of growth for any county in Pennsylvania. \(^5\)

Table 3.1. Bucks County Voter Registration Figures for Congressional Elections 1952-1960 \(^6\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>51,539</td>
<td>19,687</td>
<td>+31,852 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>57,583</td>
<td>25,753</td>
<td>+31,830 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>66,503</td>
<td>41,898</td>
<td>+24,605 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>69,341</td>
<td>50,509</td>
<td>+18,832 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>76,354</td>
<td>59,559</td>
<td>+16,795 R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northampton County, part of the 15th Congressional District represented by veteran Congressman Francis Walters was traditionally a strong Democratic County. The home of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, the county had a large number of steelworker union members and other trade unionists who worked hand in hand with the Democratic party. Voter registration figures since 1952 showed a gradual increase in favor of the Democrats and by 1960 they enjoyed an edge of 24,105.

\(^4\) Donald Hock taped interview, August 6, 1982.  
Table 3.2. Northampton County Voter Registration Figures
For Congressional Elections 1952-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>35,643</td>
<td>52,509</td>
<td>+16,866 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>35,492</td>
<td>52,746</td>
<td>+17,254 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>35,296</td>
<td>56,300</td>
<td>+21,004 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>33,966</td>
<td>56,455</td>
<td>+22,489 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>34,067</td>
<td>58,172</td>
<td>+24,105 D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3.3. Bucks County Vote Totals for President and Governor 1952-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Eisenhower-40,753</td>
<td>Stevenson-24,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Wood-32,339</td>
<td>Leader-31,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Eisenhower-59,862</td>
<td>Stevenson-38,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>McGonigle-46,742</td>
<td>Lawrence-41,199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4. Northampton County Vote Totals for President and Governor 1952-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Eisenhower-39,131</td>
<td>Stevenson-36,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Wood-23,343</td>
<td>Leader-37,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Eisenhower-43,375</td>
<td>Stevenson-33,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>McGonigle-29,204</td>
<td>Lawrence-34,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures and those of Lehigh County are, as I will demonstrate, a contributing factor to the candidates decision to campaign in this region of Pennsylvania.

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7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
In 1960 Lehigh County Democrats took the lead in voter registration by a very slight 319 voters for the first time since 1944. The count also showed the highest number of potential voters ever totaling 105,150. Republicans continued to lead in the City of Allentown and the townships but even the Allentown figures evidenced an erosion of Republican strength.

Table 3.5. Lehigh County Voter Registration Figures for Congressional Elections 1952-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>45,574</td>
<td>41,483</td>
<td>+4,091 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>45,836</td>
<td>41,702</td>
<td>+4,134 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>47,695</td>
<td>44,902</td>
<td>+2,793 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>47,439</td>
<td>46,867</td>
<td>+572 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>51,760</td>
<td>52,079</td>
<td>+319 D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6. City of Allentown Voter Registration Figures for Congressional Elections 1952-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>24,306</td>
<td>21,640</td>
<td>+2,666 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>23,898</td>
<td>21,215</td>
<td>+2,683 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>24,130</td>
<td>22,177</td>
<td>+1,953 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>23,420</td>
<td>22,303</td>
<td>+1,117 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>25,109</td>
<td>24,498</td>
<td>+611 R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures indicate that despite the formerly strong G.O.P. following in this area their base of support was slipping and now vulnerable to the Democrats. By examining voting statistics from 1952 thru 1958 for president and governor in both Lehigh County and Allentown, with the exception of 1954 when the county went Democratic and the city voted Republican, the returns followed the pattern of the registration figures.

---

10 Morning Call, October 12, 1960, p. 5.
11 See Footnote 6.
12 Figures courtesy of Lehigh County Voter Registration Office.
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</thead>
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<td>41,483</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>45,836</td>
<td>41,702</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>47,695</td>
<td>44,902</td>
<td>+2,793 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>47,439</td>
<td>46,867</td>
<td>+ 572 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>51,760</td>
<td>52,079</td>
<td>+ 319 D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3.6. City of Allentown Voter Registration Figures for Congressional Elections 1952-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Democrats</th>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>24,306</td>
<td>21,640</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>23,898</td>
<td>21,215</td>
<td>+2,683 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>24,130</td>
<td>22,177</td>
<td>+1,953 R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>23,420</td>
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<td>+1,117 R</td>
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10 Morning Call, October 12, 1960, p. 5.
11 See Footnote 6.
12 Figures courtesy of Lehigh County Voter Registration Office.
Table 3.7. Lehigh County Vote Totals for President and Governor 1952-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Eisenhower-45,143</td>
<td>Stevenson-33,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Wood-28,766</td>
<td>Leader-31,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Eisenhower-50,564</td>
<td>Stevenson-29,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>McGonigle-35,635</td>
<td>Lawrence-34,199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8. City of Allentown Vote Totals for President and Governor 1952-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Eisenhower-23,430</td>
<td>Stevenson-17,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Wood-16,229</td>
<td>Leader-14,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Eisenhower-24,707</td>
<td>Stevenson-15,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>McGonigle-16,995</td>
<td>Lawrence-16,915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Sunday, September 25, 1960 a study by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center entitled "The American Voter" received some publicity in the Sunday Call-Chronicle. The article applied Lehigh County to the study and asked,

"How steadfast is the average voter in Lehigh County in his allegiance to a particular party? Can the local vote for president in the forthcoming election be forecast on the basis of past performance?"

The survey revealed that individuals selected their party early in life usually by age thirty and that identification remained stable after it was established. As a result "practically no change in the relative size or age composition of the parties has occurred in the last decade." The article proceeded to list the 1948, 1952 and 1956 votes for president in Lehigh County. By totalling the result from each election it was concluded that for those three elections 59% of the people voting in Lehigh County voted Republican while 41% voted...

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13 See Footnote 8.
14 Figures courtesy of Lehigh County Voter Registration Office.
16 Ibid., p. 13.
Democrat. The reader was then left to draw the conclusion based on this analysis that the Lehigh County voter was not likely to desert this Republican tradition and cross over to the Democratic candidate in 1960. This conclusion was substantiated, at least as far as the Call-Chronicle was concerned, in a November 4, 1960 Morning Call article entitled "Individualism & Tradition in Ticket-Splitting Lehigh County." This article stated that Lehigh County went for Republican Thomas Dewey for president in 1944 when the Democrats held a registration lead. It stated:

"The county's choice has differed from the Nations in two of five presidential elections over the past twenty years. Lehigh voters not only have their own favorites for presidents they also have a tendency to split their tickets."\(^{17}\)

Having reviewed all of these figures from the three county area, I have reached a number of conclusions as to why Lehigh County and Allentown became the focus of both parties and why both candidates for president and vice-president made personal appearances in this area. The first reason was stated previously and that was the population of this region. As the fourth largest metropolitan area of Pennsylvania it was too large for either party to ignore. Secondly, the Republicans were confident that personal visits by their candidates would help produce a victory simply because past voting patterns have established this trend. Thirdly, the Democrats were encouraged by the registration statistics which indicated an increasing number of Democrats and thus a distinct possibility that the area would support their candidates. The tradition of ticket-splitting was the fourth

\(^{17}\) Morning Call, November 10, 1960, p. 4.
reason which served as an attraction for both parties. It added a further element of uncertainty to the area suggesting that Lehigh County was capable of swinging to either party. A fifth factor in choosing Allentown as a location to make a public appearance (only Lodge who spoke in Bethlehem and Easton did not deliver a major speech in Allentown) was that it was the home of the region's major newspaper, the Allentown Call-Chronicle. Circulation was widespread throughout Eastern Pennsylvania and by visiting Allentown, the candidates could make the most of the media and at the same time visit the most populated city in the area. Consequently, both parties believed there was a great deal to be gained by concentrating on this section of Pennsylvania. If Kennedy would carry Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and Nixon would run strong in the suburbs and rural areas of the state, it was reasoned that the Lehigh Valley region might well decide who was going to carry Pennsylvania.

There is, however, one additional factor that needs to be mentioned as to why all the candidates appeared here. The age of the jet had arrived and although the candidates still used propeller type aircraft the use of jets provided increased mobility. Stanley Kelley, Jr. provides evidence of this mobility with the following schedules.

"On the two days of September 2 and 3, Senator Kennedy spoke in Manchester, New Hampshire; Presque Isle, Bangor and Portland Maine; San Francisco, California; and Anchorage and Palmer, Alaska. As Nixon began his formal campaign in a jet aircraft, he spoke one morning in Baltimore, that noon in Indianapolis, that afternoon in Dallas and that evening in San Francisco."

19 Ibid.
It is because of this increased mobility that many of the lesser populated areas of different states, the Lehigh Valley among them, hosted the candidates.

Improvements to the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton Airport aided in the candidates appearances as well. Because the runways at the airport had recently been extended, the candidates aircraft were able to utilize the facility during the campaign. John Henry Leh, Chairman of the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority, commenting on the arrival and departure of the candidates in the Lehigh Valley said,

"It was difficult in 1956 for major candidates to visit the area because runways were not long enough. There was a time when candidates could tour by train making whistle stops in communities throughout the nation. That method of campaigning is fast coming to an end. Expansion of the ABE Airport which is a continuing process made this section a major stop for the presidential and vice presidential candidates."

Having identified why the candidates came to the Lehigh Valley, I will now examine the speeches that they delivered during their respective visits to determine what issues were raised and why they thought these issues were important.

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20 Morning Call, November 1, 1960, p. 7.
Chapter Four - The Candidates Speak

During nearly all election campaigns individuals of recognizable political stature make speeches to promote their parties candidates. The 1960 election was no exception. What was unusual, however, was the number of party spokesman that appeared in the Lehigh Valley. In addition to the candidates themselves, the Republicans heard Pennsylvania Senator Hugh Scott, Senator Everret Dirksen of Illinois and long time Pittsburgh Congressman James Fulton. The Democrats entertained Mrs. Joseph Kennedy, the candidate's mother, former Postmaster General James Farley, Connecticut Governor Abraham Ribicoff, New Jersey Senator Harrison Williams, former Pennsylvania Governor George Leader and Philadelphia Mayor Richardson Dilworth. This type of activity helped to generate great voter interest in both parties and aided in enlisting volunteers. It was noted that "more doorbells than ever before are being rung" and party headquarters are opening throughout the Lehigh Valley including Allentown, Bethlehem, West Bethlehem, Easton and Slatington.¹

The Morning Call commenting on all the political personalities in this region stated,

"Never in the history of this area have so many top-ranking spokesmen of both the Republican and Democratic parties sought out the Lehigh Valley to woo favor. It is doubtful that the Lehigh Valley ever before entertained—even at "whistle stops"—the top four candidates for national office."²

¹Sunday Call-Chronicle, October 9, 1960, p. 14.
²Morning Call, October 21, 1960, p. 5.
As the dates of the candidates visits approached both parties, hoping for massive turnouts by the public, ran large advertisements in area newspapers and circulated flyers noting the date, time and location of their appearances as well as the route of their motorcades.

Lyndon B. Johnson - October 18, 1960

Scheduled to deliver his address at 7:00 P.M. at the Frolics Ballroom in Allentown, Lyndon Johnson, delayed repeatedly by throngs of onlookers in Williamsport, Shamokin and other Pennsylvania towns along his motorcade route, finally arrived two and one-half hours late. An exuberant overflow crowd greeted him with banners, cheers and applause in what was described as the kind of rally "youngsters hear their grandparents talk about." Accompanied by Richardson Dilworth, the Mayor of Philadelphia and Chairman of Pennsylvania Citizens for Kennedy and Johnson, the Vice-Presidential candidate was introduced by Donald Hock the Democratic candidate for Congress.

His message revolved around the religious issue, a stronger America under the Democratic Party, and attacks on Vice-President Nixon. The religious issue, although not mentioned in the final draft of Johnson's speech (no exact text is available), received the greatest attention in the Allentown press. The boldfaced headline of

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3 Ibid., October 19, 1960, p. 6.
4 Ibid.
The Allentown Morning Call appearing the morning after Johnson's talk, declared, "Johnson Blasts Religious Issue in Campaign Before Cheering Crowd of 4,500 in Allentown, Voices Pleas to End Hate, Prejudices." Johnson reminded his audience that no one asked what church Joe Kennedy Jr. belonged to when he volunteered for a secret mission in WWII and was killed. He noted that as the great-grandson of a Baptist Minister and the grandson of two Confederate veterans, he opened his campaign in Boston and the reception he received proved that "the hatred and the bigotry of the 1860's had not carried over there in the 1960's." Furthermore, when Kennedy went to Texas "the crowds which greeted him were the greatest in its history surpassing those of both Roosevelt and Truman. Johnson said,

"I pray that on November 8th the crowds will again turn out for the Catholic grandson of a poor Irish immigrant. I pray that we have forgotten the prejudices and hates that have hurt this country in many ways down through the years."

At one point a "thunderous" two minute standing ovation erupted when Johnson asked that religion be eliminated as a campaign issue.

Using Pennsylvania's depressed anthracite region as an example, Johnson spoke of unemployment, and the economic recession. He also called for better educational programs, medical care for senior citizens, redevelopment in the cities and the elimination of farm surpluses. All of these programs were at the heart of the Democratic Party's desire for the future. Johnson stated,

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6 Morning Call, October 19, 1960, p. 1.  
7 Ibid.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Ibid.  
10 Ibid., p. 6.
"If you want to work—if you want to produce—if you want to build a better and stronger America, then come along with us. That is the great mission of the Democratic Party and of John F. Kennedy and myself."\(^{11}\)

Johnson was very critical of Vice-President Nixon's efforts to focus the attention of the campaign on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu which were 9,000 miles away while Communism crept into Cuba some ninety miles from the United States. "Like a drowning man, grasping at straws, he has reached for Quemoy and Matsu. I have heard of candidates running away from issues but never quite that far," he stated.\(^{12}\) He pledged that the next administration must adopt new foreign policies.

Although Johnson was extremely well received by the crowd in attendance and by those with whom he spoke along his motorcade route, the October 20, 1960 editorial of the *Morning Call* entitled "Misusing Religious Issue" took the opposite view. Kennedy and Nixon were both commended for trying to keep religion out of the campaign as much as possible. However, Johnson's "soundness of judgement" was questioned because he raised this issue in an emotional manner by "resorting to the cheapest sort of political demagoguery." The editorial went on to say that the Vice-Presidential candidate was "just as guilty as those he criticizes for bigotry," because of the way he used the issue to drum up votes. "His was a crude play to the gallery and a not-so-clever evasion of many important issues he could have touched upon," the editorial stated. Perhaps its strongest statements were:

\(^{11}\)See "Speech For Senator Johnson Allentown, October 18, 1960, p. 3. \(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 5.
"The more Lyndon Johnson speaks across the land the more he proves he is not in the same league as John Kennedy...Democrats can be thankful indeed that he did not win the presidential nomination."

Why did Johnson select these issues, particularly the religious question, when he must have certainly known it would open him to criticism? A review of the Allentown background material supplied to Johnson's staff previous to his appearance reveals that the candidate's talk was built around comments by local political sources. A document entitled "Comments on Allentown, Pennsylvania From Local Political Sources" suggests that Johnson be aware of the religious issue, Cuba versus Quemoy and Matsu, and our future prosperity among other issues. The document stated, "This is 'Dutch Country' and the religious problem is strong. Senator Johnson should answer it by saying that he, as a Southern non-Catholic, has no problems and, in fact is proud to run on the ticket with John F. Kennedy." It further stated that: "Foreign policy is a good issue in Allentown. Senator Johnson should stress that there needs to be more concern with Communism in Cuba than with Communism in Quemoy and Matsu." As stated earlier, it was these very issues that Johnson addressed.

Johnson raised the religious question in most of his speeches particularly in the South. Aside from a film of Kennedy addressing the problem before the Houston ministers which was used in Protestant areas, Kennedy remained silent and let his running mate speak for him.

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13 See "Comments on Allentown, PA From Local Political Sources," Lyndon B. Johnson Library.
14 Ibid. Johnson addressed.
during the remainder of the campaign. It is therefore the conclusion of this writer that Johnson was fulfilling two obligations during his appearance in Allentown when he raised the religious issue. One he was responding to the local indication that it was of deep concern in the Lehigh Valley and secondly, he was addressing this issue so that Kennedy would be free to concentrate on the more serious policy questions. Johnson was indeed successful for the printed media highlighted his comments on religion in their coverage of his speech.

Richard M. Nixon - October 22, 1960

Vice-President Richard Nixon arrived in Allentown late on the Saturday afternoon of October 22 to complete a day of campaigning in Southeastern Pennsylvania. His schedule called for brief comments upon arrival at ABE Airport, a motorcade to the Americus Hotel for dinner followed by what was labeled a major address at Muhlenberg Colleges' Memorial Hall and then back to the airport for a flight to Washington. According to a Republican party official the requests for tickets were overwhelming and "never in the memory of the county committee has there been such tremendous interest in a candidate." Nixon's appearance in Allentown followed on the heels of the fourth televised debate the previous night where he hit hard on Senator Kennedy's Cuban position. The Muhlenberg address was much the same with Nixon listing three major issues which in his opinion raised doubts whether "the candidate of the other party can keep the peace

17 Morning Call, October 20, 1960, p. 5.
without surrender" and "extend freedom throughout the world." Drawing on his familiar foreign policy theme, the Vice-President drew distinct lines of difference between himself and Senator Kennedy on Quemoy and Matsu, President Eisenhower's refusal to apologize to Khrushchev for U-2 flights over Soviet territory, and their respective positions on Cuba.

In a letter to Richard Nixon I asked him why foreign policy was the theme of his Allentown address and whether or not he felt this particular region of Pennsylvania would support him because of his foreign policy positions. He responded by stating:

"As you will note from the text, I referred to the televised debate we had had the night before. The major issues of that debate were in the area of foreign policy. I tried in the speech to elaborate on some of those issues which I had been able to discuss only briefly in the debate because of time limitations. In a word I was addressing my remarks primarily to the national rather than the local audiences. However, I would not have spoken on such complex issues unless I had felt that the Muhlenberg audience was sophisticated enough to want to hear something more than the usual campaign stamp speech. From having campaigned in that area in previous elections, I had learned that people there were above average in intelligence and that they had as much interest in international issues as they did in the more mundane domestic issues." 

In his talk, pointing to Senator Kennedy's position not to defend Quemoy and Matsu in case of an attack by the Communist Chinese, Nixon stated that it was President Eisenhower's decision to defend them in 1955 that has prevented Formosa from being attacked and thus, we have been spared from war. Kennedy's position, Nixon stated, "raises a

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very grave question in the minds of the American people as to whether he understands what peace demands in dealing with the Communists."  

The candidate's next item recalled Soviet Premier Khrushchev's demand at the Paris Peace Conference that President Eisenhower apologize for the U-2 flights over Russia. Stating that these were necessary to determine if the Soviets were planning an offensive against the United States, Nixon criticized Kennedy for saying that the United States could have expressed regrets. His point was that to apologize was to back down to Khrushchev and as a result we could expect to have him "stomp on us again." His implication here was that Kennedy was soft on Communism and did not know how to stand up to the Soviet leader as Nixon had already done.

The issue of Cuba, however, was where Nixon came down the hardest on his Democratic opponent. Kennedy proposed United States government intervention to support a revolution against Castro's Cuba. Nixon told the Muhlenberg audience "that this is the most shockingly reckless proposal ever made in our history by a presidential candidate during a campaign." In Nixon's opinion this was unthinkable because in the first place we would be violating "five treaties with the Organization of American States including the Treaty of Bogota of

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21 Ibid., p. 709.
22 Ibid., p. 710.
1946" and secondly, we would be operating contrary to the United Nations Charter. 

Over and above these two considerations though, Nixon feared that Kennedy's call for United States intervention was "a direct invitation for the Soviet Union to intervene militarily on the side of Castro." 

Nixon went on to say that if they do intervene,

"It can only mean a civil war in Cuba which the United States would not avoid entering and this result could easily be spread into a conflict, into a world war that every American of both parties wants to avoid; and I say that Senator Kennedy owes it to the Nation to put the cause of peace and freedom before political consideration and to retract this immature, rash and dangerous suggestion that he has made." 

Nixon's solution to the problem was a diplomatic and economic quarantine which was already underway and which he would continue as president. In any case, he did not say how this would work, nor what effect it may have on our long term relationship with Cuba and the Soviet Union.

The Republican nominee closed the major segment of his speech by saying that when looking at these three issues of foreign policy, many Americans should be convinced "that they could not rest well at night with a man with such total lack of judgement as Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces in this critical period."

Turning briefly to the importance of the experience that Henry Cabot Lodge lent to the Republican ticket, he said that together they will strengthen the United Nations and develop "new instruments of

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23 Ibid., p. 711.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 712.
27 Ibid.
peace." They knew the Communist leaders of the world and only they would be able to deal with them without surrender, was his implication.

Using a college education as an example of one way to move the nation's economy forward, Nixon called for federal scholarships to be given "on the basis of both need and ability." and the expansion of the existing loan program as well as tax deductions and audits for those who pay college expenses.  

Finally, appealing to the audiences' patriotism he said that we as Americans have something more to offer.

"We stand for ideals, for moral and spiritual strength...for faith that caught the imagination of the world a hundred and eighty years ago."  

Nixon's Muhlenberg address was consistent with the nationwide issues outlined earlier. His emphasis on foreign affairs to keep America strong abroad, his defense of, and support for the positions of President Eisenhower, and the experience factor of both he and Lodge were emphasized. An examination of Nixon's speeches in the final weeks of the campaign reveals that he became increasingly critical of Kennedy, and the Allentown speech was no exception.  

The mention of expanded scholarship and loan programs was logically well chosen because of his appearance on a college campus and the concentration of other colleges in the Lehigh Valley.

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28 Ibd., p. 713.
29 Ibd.
30 Ibd., p. 714.
The Cuban issue was one that Nixon seized upon in the fourth debate and was hopeful of using to his full advantage by demonstrating to the public that John Kennedy's position was poorly chosen and in fact, quite dangerous. It was this issue that he stressed the most and clearly the issue the Allentown newspapers gave the most coverage. He later won editorial endorsement from the *Call-Chronicle* Newspapers.

With respect to carrying Pennsylvania, Nixon stated afterward:

"Pennsylvania is one of seven vital states in the campaign. We plan to carry Pennsylvania. It's a real battleground. We are going to carry the Keystone State and that means we are going to carry the nation."  

During his five hour stay in Allentown, police estimated that 100,000 people turned out to see the Vice-President and Mrs. Nixon. Newsmen traveling with the Nixons labeled the Allentown reception as "one of the most enthusiastic of the campaign" and were particularly surprised by the large number of people that lined the city streets.  

Henry Cabot Lodge - October 26, 1960

The Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Henry Cabot Lodge arrived at the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton Airport at 2:00 A.M. on October 26th and was greeted by what he considered an "astonishing turnout." Described as very tired, Lodge spent the remainder of the night at the Hotel Bethlehem and prepared for his two mid-day rallies. The first was held in Easton's Center Square and the second on 3rd

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32 *Morning Call*, October 24, 1960, p. 5.
33 Ibid., p. 6.
Street in Bethlehem across from what was formerly the main office of
the Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

The theme of Lodge's talks centered on experience, leadership and
the inability of the opposition to deal with Cuba. He told both
audiences that the Republican party is "the party of experience in
world affairs and that it is the one to provide economic security and
growth on the domestic scene."\(^35\) Calling attention to Nixon's years
as Vice-President, Lodge noted that because of Nixon's visits to all
parts of the globe he understood the Communist World and the tactics
of its leadership. He stated, "Nixon knows communism knows Khrushchev
and knows how to deal with them."\(^36\)

"Under the United Nations," the former Ambassador said, "we want
a man to lead the world to new highs, away from being under the shadow
of the cold war." The new administration, Lodge noted,

"must be able to work in harmony with Adenauer, DeGaulle, and
MacMillan and cope with Khrushchev and the Communist World.
Choose leadership that will stand up to the Communists. I have
stood up to the Russians myself and I'm proud of it."\(^37\)

Citing the inexperience of the opposition, Lodge illustrated with
the Cuban issue. He stated that Kennedy's call for the strengthening
of anti-Castro forces would violate United States treaties with Latin
American countries. He commented, "if Kennedy did not know this he
was alarmingly ill-informed; and if he did know, he was
extraordinarily rash and irresponsible."\(^38\) Lodge then pointed out

\(^{35}\) *Morning Call*, October 27, 1960, p. 1.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 1 and 11.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 11.
that as Ambassador to the United Nations he was responsible for
referring the Cuban problem from the United Nations to the
Organization of American States.

Asked about the G.O.P. prospects for the election, Lodge
commented,

"Things are looking very good in Pennsylvania. The people are
taking this (election) seriously. They're concerned,
particularly about America's foreign relations, and when the
people are concerned they look for leadership that is talented
and experienced. Ours is the party that offers this kind of
leadership." 39

Emphasizing the tickets leadership and experience particularly in
foreign affairs, Lodge reiterated the pitch of the national campaign
in the Lehigh Valley and followed-up on the points raised by Nixon in
his address in Allentown. Although Lodge did not appear in Lehigh
County he received front page newspaper coverage throughout the Valley
and achieved his objective of stressing the Republican campaign theme.
At the same time he personally appeared in the cities of Bethlehem and
Easton where Nixon did not campaign.

John F. Kennedy - October 28, 1960

In the closing weeks of the campaign, John F. Kennedy began to
once again repeat his earlier statements that the United States had
lost it's prestige among other nations. 40 It was this very point that
Kennedy put across in three hard hitting speeches in Bethlehem and
Allentown. Appearing first at a Democratic breakfast in the Hotel

39 Ibid., p. 5.
Bethlehem, Kennedy spoke next at the Moravian College field house and completed his talks at an outdoor rally in Center Square Allentown, all in the space of about three hours. 41

Repeating much of the same speech at each location, Senator Kennedy hurled a mass of facts and figures at his exuberant crowds totaling close to 85,000. 42 His theme, however, was very clear, let's "get America moving again."

"There are sharp issues which separate Mr. Nixon and myself, as to how this country should move forward, what our obligations are in this country, how we can build strength that will make us secure in the world, and will advance the cause of freedom," 43 he declared at Moravian.

Only a "powerful, committed, dedicated and moving America" could in his words, meet these challenges and carry our nation into the new decade. Kennedy pointed to three basic differences between himself and Nixon, including U.S. position in the world, the American economy, and steps necessary to strengthen the nation.

Citing surveys by the State Department and other sources, Kennedy stated they all indicated that our prestige abroad had fallen. To reverse this decline Kennedy implored we must build the "kind of society here in the United States that strengthens the cause of freedom," 44 and that this in turn will serve to move our nation ahead with a sense of purpose and thus, enhance our strength and position around the world.

41 Morning Call, October 29, 1960, p. 1.
42 Ibid. Note because of the similarity of Senator Kennedy's remarks in Allentown and Bethlehem both speeches were used for the analysis.
44 Ibid.
Chastising Nixon for his campaign slogan "We've never had it so good," Kennedy noted that the Vice-President did not make use of it to any great degree in Pennsylvania. He did not, in Kennedy's opinion, because in an eight year period, the nation has endured two recessions and in 1960 an economic slowdown which resulted in the steel mills of Pennsylvania and the United States operating at one-half of their capacity, resulting in a layoff of 100,000 steelworkers.\(^{45}\)

The Massachusetts Senator stated that when it comes to housing, medical care for senior citizens, employment, education or development of our natural resources, the present administration has not "set our goals high enough" nor has it provided "the means and the mechanism" to conquer our problems.\(^{46}\) Stating that many Latin American, African and Asian nations are on the brink of making a decision whether or not they will choose Communism or free government, Kennedy concluded, we cannot compete with Khrushchev or Communism if our facilities are under-used and our people are out of work. In a further reference to the Soviet Union he said that they are putting twice as high a percentage of their national income into education as the United States.\(^{47}\)

Having the attention of a large college audience at Moravian, Kennedy quoted some significant figures relevant to higher education. "Thirty percent of our brightest boys and girls who graduate from high

\(^{45}\text{Ibid., p. 788.}\)
\(^{46}\text{Ibid., p. 787.}\)
\(^{47}\text{Ibid., p. 786.}\)
school never see the inside of college," he said. He went on to say that by 1970 twice the number of young people will be trying to go to college then did in 1960, necessitating the construction of more college buildings over the next ten years than we have built in the entire history of our nation. 48

This paved the way for additional criticism of the incumbent Republican Administration, noting that a bill the Congress passed in 1959 to provide low interest loans for college classroom and dormitory construction was vetoed by the President and not yet enacted. Kennedy was applauded when he stated,

"I don't think this state, this country or this society of ours will move ahead until every child who has the talent to develop a superior intelligence, capability, or skill, is given a chance to do it regardless of his race or his color."49

In Allentown, Kennedy made a specific reference to Nixon's speech at Muhlenberg College a week earlier, stating that if he were a Republican one topic he would be reluctant to discuss would be Cuba. What he really should have discussed, Kennedy asserted, is "how we are going to build a strong society here in the United States."50 Kennedy closed his brief Allentown speech by comparing Nixon to the likes of McKinley, Coolidge, Harding, Hoover, Landon, and Dewey whereas his party produced Wilson, Roosevelt and Truman and he pledged to carry on in their traditions of moving this nation forward.51

Apparently Kennedy tailored his remarks in Allentown and Bethlehem to influence two constituencies. His references to

48 Ibid., p. 786-787.
49 Ibid., p. 787.
50 Ibid., p. 789.
51 Ibid.
recession, economic slowdown and unemployment were obviously geared to
the large local membership in the United Steelworkers of America, and
the United Auto Workers as well as other Lehigh Valley union members.
In addition to his comments about the steel industry, Kennedy noted
that by mid-November of 1960, the United States will have an inventory
of nearly a million automobiles which is the highest in our history.52
This, of course, was extremely important to both the steel and the
auto industries. Furthermore, Kennedy enjoyed a 91.6% voting record
on labor issues as established by the AFL-CIO whereas Nixon was rated
a poor 13%.53 He was therefore, able to speak openly on issues
affecting the working men and women of the Lehigh Valley and could
expect to gain their support for his positions.

The second group he attempted to attract were the educators,
students and families of college-age students throughout the area.
His remarks on college education and the administration's veto of
legislation were certainly well received by those who heard his
comments or read them in the newspapers.

An observation appearing in Time concerning Kennedy's method of
delivery, I believe, is appropriate to the Senator's Allentown
address.

"His speeches are breathlessly brief: never more than five
minutes in daytime appearances, with an outside limit of 20 in an
evening speech...Kennedy seems almost apologetic about keeping
his audiences too long; he plunges directly to the issue at hand
with only the barest amenities for the local celebrities and
races quickly through to the end..."54

52Ibid., p. 786.
53AFL-CIO Pamphlet, "A Look at the Record," circulated during the 1960
Presidential Election.
54Time, October 3, 1960, p. 17.
By late morning, Senator Kennedy was on his way out of Allentown for further engagements in Pottsville, Hazelton, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. He later expressed satisfaction with his showing to aide Dave Powers, indicating he felt certain he would win Pennsylvania.  

Chapter Five - A Local Look at the Issue

A review of the comments of the candidates and the newspaper accounts of their visits clearly indicate issues that they believed important to this area. However, the question remains, were these the same issues that were on the minds of the people in Lehigh County?

In an attempt to answer this question a series of interviews were conducted with individuals who were integral parts of the 1960 election in Lehigh County. The individuals selected for the interviews were former Republican Congressman Willard Curtain and his Democratic opponent Attorney Donald Hock; two candidates for the State Legislature from the Allentown District, Republican Attorney John Backenstoe and Democratic Attorney David Mellenberg; and the two party chairmen from Lehigh County, Republican Moulton C. L. Frantz and Democratic Attorney Roy Reabuck.

All six individuals were contacted in an effort to secure their cooperation and then were sent a list of the following questions in order to prepare for their response.

1. What issues were on the people's minds locally?
2. What was going to influence them to vote?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate for President?
4. Why do you believe they took the time to visit Allentown?
5. Did their visit have an influence on Allentown voters?
6. What was your reaction to the outcome?

Hock, Backenstoe and Mellenberg all participated in a personal taped interview where these questions were posed. Reabuck responded
over the telephone and Curtain, because he now lives in Florida, answered in writing. Frantz, after reviewing the questions, apologetically declined to answer because of poor health. A review of the five who did respond provides an interesting insight into the election from their perspective as local participants.

Willard Curtain recalled that the issues stressed in his district were "the usual liberal versus conservative positions." Two Call-Chronicle editorials reinforce Curtains statements. The September 28, 1960 editorial in the Morning Call stated,

"Basically their goals are common. Additionally their contrasting means for reaching them are the principal reason for the current debate...Mr. Kennedy would strive toward them by expanding the powers of federal government in the areas of both legislation and taxation...Mr. Nixon would reach them by using the powers of the federal government to strengthen government at all levels to encourage and stimulate individual enterprise."

The Sunday Call-Chronicle of October 2, 1960 noted the following,

"The Nixon approach was unmistakably that of the Republican party - to undertake whatever social and welfare programs are necessary over and above what individuals and local communities can do for themselves; to protect personal incomes against inflation; to manage government affairs in a prudent and business like manner; to encourage private enterprise in creating new employment opportunities; to keep the federal government out of business and the affairs of the voters as far as possible...Kennedy's position was in keeping with the traditional program of the Democratic party and platform: Unlimited social experimentation; encouraging inflation as a means to stimulating the economy; massive government intervention in the economy; a much more liberal and expensive approach to practically all welfare programs."

By publishing these comments the newspaper consciously made this liberal versus conservative distinction between the candidates.

¹ Letter from Willard Curtain to author, July 21, 1982. Unless otherwise noted all Curtain comments and quotations are taken from this letter.
² Morning Call, September 28, 1960, p. 16.
³ Sunday Call-Chronicle, October 2, 1960, p. 22.
Looking at the leadership question in a local campaign address, Curtain criticized the Democrats call for leadership by stating,

"The top heavy Democratic majority in the House has displayed an ineptness and a surprising lack of capability for leadership and yet in this campaign the party is stressing its need to lead the country."\(^4\)

In the same speech he also rapped the Democratic policy of "unrestricted spending."

Curtain believed that "both candidates were forceful and mixed well with the people and spoke largely to partisan crowds." He also stated very emphatically, "I do not believe that their respective appearances changed many votes. The percentage of people voting were pretty much in line with the usual presidential vote." Disappointed with the outcome of the presidential race, Curtain expressed great personal satisfaction with his reelection as a member of Congress.

Donald Hock\(^5\) pointed out that because no incumbent President was running and two new candidates were in the race, people took a greater interest in the election than they might have otherwise. Kennedy's focus on a need for a change was an important issue, but at the same time in the 8th Congressional, Hock stated, "many people felt the Republicans had been in and things aren't that bad, so lets keep them in. There was alot or sentiment to that effect." According to Hock there were two issues that took on great importance. The first was religion. "It didn't flare-up the way it did during Al Smith's campaign for President," Hock stated, "but it was there and I heard

\(^4\)Morning Call, October 4, 1960, p. 12.
\(^5\)Interview, Donald Hock, Allentown, PA, August 8, 1982. Unless otherwise noted, all Hock comments and quotations are taken from this interview.
people talking about it; not viciously, but they talked about it." He conceded, however, that "while religion was so much a part of the picture by the same token it was part of Kennedy's strength in some areas."

The second issue was the importance of Lyndon Johnson, because he was an experienced leader of the Senate. Kennedy was smart to have Johnson run with him, Hock said, "because of the southern states that he needed and which he never would have won without Johnson." If Johnson was a geographic factor he also helped to balance the ticket as far as age was concerned because some voters thought Kennedy was too young. Yet Kennedy's youth also worked to his advantage. When comparing him to Eisenhower, as a young, energetic man, he was just the opposite of the President. Because of this and because he possessed "tremendous personal charisma," Hock stated, Kennedy gained an advantage.

As a Democrat, Hock spoke mostly about Kennedy, but he did note that Nixon did just not have the "strong personal appeal" that Kennedy had. He also felt that Nixon's ill-at-ease manner on the first television debate cost him many votes.

Hock contended that both Kennedy and Nixon "came to Pennsylvania because it was a state they needed. Coming to the Lehigh Valley was pretty much like going into Philadelphia or Pittsburgh because the Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton area was the fourth largest metropolitan area in Pennsylvania," he added. Although their appearances sparked enthusiasm, brought out crowds, and generated a good vote on election day, Hock generally agreed with Curtain that most of the voters had
made up their minds by the time the candidates came here.

Reflecting on his defeat for Congress, Hock stated, in the 8th District where "Democrats just weren't winning", so having Kennedy as the head of the ticket was not an asset to him. He did not "ride on the coattails" of Kennedy because the "voters had already made up their minds."

State House candidate John Backenstoe,⁶ identified three major issues that were on the minds of the public locally. They included the economy, the leadership ability of the presidential candidates and Kennedy's religion. Attorney Backenstoe stated the unions raised the economic issue, but he felt it was more important a few years earlier when unemployment was higher. "I do not believe it had any great impact on the outcome," he said, "because at that time unemployment was not that bad in the Lehigh Valley."

The second issue was who was best fit to be president because of their leadership ability. Many people believed, Backenstoe stated, "Nixon was best suited because he served as Vice-President for eight years under Eisenhower." He also noted that the "charisma" of Kennedy was strong but in some eyes he was too young to hold the nation's highest office. Backenstoe commented that one of the best things Kennedy did was to name Johnson as his running mate for he added the total "balance of age, geography and philosophy."

⁶Interview, John Backenstoe, Allentown, PA, August 8, 1982. Unless otherwise noted, all Backenstoe comments and quotations are taken from this interview.
He listed Kennedy's religion as the third issue of importance and mentioned that it worked as both an asset and a liability although it was not formally discussed.

When asked to comment on why the candidates took the time to visit Allentown, Backenstoe said he believed that Pennsylvania was a key state to both campaigns because of the number of electoral votes. Furthermore, he noted this region was traditionally a swing area as "Lehigh County and Allentown elected Democrats to the Legislature and to the City Council despite the Republican registration lead." As a result, the conclusion of both campaign committees was that this area was one that they could win.

It was Backenstoe's belief that the greatest influence of the candidate's visits was felt "among the party faithful" for they did most of the work leading up to election day. As far as the outcome he said, "We really didn't know down to the end. Everybody thought it would be close."

Attorney David Mellenberg\(^7\) one of Backenstoe's opponents believed that the underlying issue of the election in Allentown and Lehigh County was Kennedy's Catholicism. At a meeting for legislative candidates in Harrisburg, he was told that "if local candidates come to the conclusion that Kennedy's religion was going to be an issue in your own county, you should, in some delicate fashion, run independent of Kennedy and not on his coattails." But to do that Mellenberg explained, "you had to be a potent local figure." As an unknown, he

\(^7\)Interview David Mellenberg, Allentown, PA, July 26, 1982. Unless otherwise noted, all Mellenberg comments and quotations are taken from this interview.
was at a disadvantage, but the message was clear that the religious issue was going to be a factor. According to Mellenberg, this became quite apparent after the election because as an unknown he got more votes in Allentown than Kennedy did. Without question he concludes that religion brought people out to vote. "Whether they were Democrats or Republicans the results show that Kennedy lost substantially in Lehigh County despite the Democratic registration edge.

If religion was a liability, Kennedy's greatest strength was his "youthfulness and vitality," Mellenberg stated. "Johnson too was much more personable than on television. When you walked away from those rallies, it was just a question of how big they were going to win by because of the enthusiasm they generated. He was quick to point out though that you can easily be misled by the enthusiasm factor because Kennedy and Johnson did not win in Lehigh County.

Mellenberg's perception of Nixon was that he appeared "rather arrogant" and "not well liked by the press." He stated that had Nixon "developed a better relationship with the media" the results might have been different.

In response to why the candidates visited this area, Mellenberg stated the Lehigh Valley was considered a keystone to the state just as Pennsylvania was to the nation. The candidates came here because Kennedy wanted to turn the religious concerns around while Nixon, although it was never raised publically, wanted to attract those votes. Both believed Pennsylvania was a swing state.
When offering his personal assessment of the campaign and its outcome, Mellenberg came back to the issue of religion once again and said it spelled defeat for both he and Kennedy in Lehigh County. He concluded with this statement.

"The electorate is not always that well informed. They usually vote on something that strikes them as what they may consider very paramount - in this case, religion. People have a tendency to isolate on an issue that really hits them. The rest rise or fall on this. It takes a strong local political figure to overcome a big tide against the head of the ticket."

Former Democratic Chairman Roy Reabuck\(^8\) listed two issues as the overriding factors in Kennedy's defeat. Number one was religion, and the second was the Call-Chronicle editorial endorsement for Nixon. Reabuck stated that many Democrats personally told him they would not vote for Kennedy because he was Catholic. Looking at the final results in Berks, Lehigh and Northampton, all of which had Democratic registration edges, it is evident that religion played a role. Berks and Northampton had large Democratic margins and Lehigh only a slight lead, yet Nixon won big in Berks and Lehigh and lost narrowly in Northampton.

With respect to the Call-Chronicle editorial endorsement, Reabuck was adamant that it played a role. Because it was the only newspaper that many people in the area were exposed to, they had a tendency to be influenced by the papers comments. Many Call-Chronicle editorials spoke highly of Nixon and questioned Kennedy. On October 30th, the Sunday Call-Chronicle made an outright endorsement of Nixon and the

\(^8\) Interview, Roy Reabuck, Allentown, PA, August 2, 1982. Unless otherwise noted, all Reabuck comments and quotations are taken from this interview.
Morning Call editorial of November 4th, did the same. After praising the Eisenhower-Nixon administration for ending the Korean War and keeping the peace, seeing more Americans employed at higher annual incomes, having spent more on national defense, investing more in the nation's growth and reducing individual income taxes they state:

"This record constitutes the specific detailed foundations on which Vice-President Nixon has pledged to build a stronger, happier, greater America. It is in marked contrast to the vague generalities of John Kennedy's elaborate promises." 

The day after this statement appeared, Reabuck publicly criticized the Morning Call for its position. His plea was not accepted, however, for on Monday, November 7th, the day before the election, the endorsement of Nixon and Lodge was repeated.

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9 Morning Call, November 4, 1960, p. 18.
Conclusion

The editorial in the Morning Call on October 29th stated that the candidates "cast little additional light on their respective positions during their visits to these parts. But they did generate a tremendous amount of enthusiasm." A leading Republican from the area concurred, "I think this appearance of the big candidates in the Lehigh Valley created a hell of a big interest..." Indeed the importance of the visits are found in the enthusiasm that they built among campaign volunteers and party workers and the added regional publicity that such events generate. A local visit serves as a stimulus to the county organization to work harder in the closing days of the campaign to insure that every possible voter is reached. County Chairman Frantz noted, "I have never seen so many volunteers in all my time in politics."2

Just after John Kennedy's visit, the Call-Chronicle Newspapers asked leading individuals of both parties what expectations they had for election day. The following quotes reflect a portion of their rather interesting observations. Spokesman for both parties agreed,

"that in spite of practically equal party registration in Lehigh County, the Republican Party will take the county in the November election."

A well known Democrat stated,

"Democrats in the Lehigh Valley are more conservative than in many sections. They are more like southern Democrats. They do not go along with some of the Democratic government giveaways."

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2. Morning Call, November 8, 1960, p. 5.
For that reason they often do not vote or else vote for Republicans and that accounts for why we expect a Republican majority in Lehigh County even though the registration is slightly on the Democratic side.\textsuperscript{4}

Both of these statements proved to be accurate as Lehigh County voters decided overwhelmingly in favor of Richard Nixon by giving him 1583 votes more than the Republican Party had registered for the election, indicating Democrats crossed over and or stayed home.\textsuperscript{5}

The \textit{Morning Call} of November 8, 1960, stated that many observers agreed that because of Khrushchev and Castro foreign policy had taken on wide interest but the outcome of the election "is largely moot because of the religious factor."\textsuperscript{6} Religion may well have been a factor in Allentown and Lehigh County because despite the 17.9% Catholic population,\textsuperscript{7} the county also lies within the Protestant Pennsylvania Dutch region of the state which was referred to earlier as the "Bible belt."

In addition, religion was mentioned as a significant issue by four of the five individuals interviewed and Lyndon Johnson made it the theme of this speech in Allentown.

Apparently, religion did play a role in Lehigh County as the following figures show a big win for Nixon despite the Democratic registration edge. The same can be said for neighboring Berks (14.6% Catholic) and Northampton (26.1% Catholic) Counties.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 17 and 40.
\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Morning Call}, November 9, 1960, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., November 8, 1960, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.
Table C.1. The 1960 Vote for President by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Kennedy</th>
<th>Nixon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lehigh</td>
<td>39,640</td>
<td>54,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>41,552</td>
<td>40,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks</td>
<td>50,572</td>
<td>61,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burks</td>
<td>57,177</td>
<td>67,501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kennedy was trounced in Berks despite the very large registration lead in favor of the Democrats, but won narrowly in Northampton probably because of the larger percentage of Catholic voters. In Bucks County, the Republican registration was too large for the 18.9% Catholic population to make much difference.

The *Morning Call* listed three reasons why Nixon carried Lehigh County. Initially they stated that just about every registered Republican made it to the polls. Secondly, they believed many Democrats voted straight Republican. Finally, because of the heavy registration drive, many people registered Democratic because they were asked to. They did not believe religion was an issue because not a single Democrat running on the countywide ticket came within 10,000 votes of their Republican opponent. What they failed to say was that if many Democrats voted straight Republican so might have many Republicans. Secondly, the races for the state legislature show that ticket splitting did occur as three of the four Democratic legislative candidates ran ahead of Kennedy while Nixon ran ahead of all four of

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12. Ibid.
Regardless of the importance of foreign affairs, the economy or the leadership issue, Kennedy's religion was a factor in Lehigh County.

Despite Nixon's convincing showing in Lehigh County, it proved fruitless as Senator Kennedy rolled up large margins in Philadelphia (331,544) and Allegheny County and Pittsburgh (107,485) and was able to overcome Nixon's strength throughout most of the rest of the state. Democrats stated that "Lehigh was one of 53 Pennsylvania counties to give Nixon a majority, but noted that votes compiled in these counties enabled Kennedy to win the states after polling large pluralities in Philadelphia, Allegheny and Luzerne" three of the 14 which favored Kennedy.

Nixon stated, "I was not surprised when we carried the area (Lehigh County) by a substantial margin although disappointed, naturally, by our narrow defeat nationwide. In his book Six Crises, Nixon records his disappointment with the outcome in Pennsylvania.

"There was also bad news from Pennsylvania: Kennedy's margin was now 115,000. Before giving up completely on that key state, however, we called Hugh Scott to get his appraisal. He had been confident that we would carry Pennsylvania, though by a close margin, because he believed we would come to the Philadelphia line with a lead of 200,000 votes. We had in fact reached that goal - but Kennedy landslide in Philadelphia of over 300,000 votes, exceeding even the huge margins that Roosevelt had rolled up in the depths of the depression, had wiped out our outstate lead."

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13 Evening Chronicle, November 9, 1960, p. 38. of foreign affairs, the economy or the leadership issue, Kennedy's religion was a factor in Lehigh County.
15 Morning Call, November 10, 1960, p. 7.
17 Nixon, Six Crises, p. 411.
On the surface it appears that the record number of people who turned out to see the candidates in Allentown is matched by the high 89%\textsuperscript{18} voter turn out county wide on election day, thus demonstrating extreme interest on the part of the electorate. Overall, it is evident that the candidates addressed those issues locally that they hoped would generate that all important campaign ingredient of enthusiasm, which in a close election would give them the edge they needed to win. Though in the end, other factors played a significant role in the outcome.

\textsuperscript{18}Morning Call, November 9, 1960, p. 5.
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Kurt D. Zwikl, the son of Mr. and Mrs. William R. Zwikl, was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania on June 28, 1949. A graduate of William Allen High School, Mr. Zwikl attended Muhlenberg College before graduating from East Stroudsburg State College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education, majoring in history and political science. In 1973, Mr. Zwikl was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from the 132nd Legislative District and is currently completing his fifth term. As a member of the House, he has authored legislation to permit increases in county appropriations to county historical societies and a bill to provide greater penalties for library, archive and museum theft. Both measures have been signed into law. Mr. Zwikl serves as a legislative member of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Lehigh County Historical Society.