

Chapter 12 – Little Decision at All: The 1948 Nominations

Labor Day was the unofficial kickoff of election season in the pre-24-hour-news-cycle era. Labor Day in 1948 was September 6. The regular second session of the 80th Congress ended two-and-a-half months earlier and the special session had been over for a month. Reelection campaigns for members of Congress had been gearing up far longer. The election would be on November 2, but renomination was to be won earlier – much earlier for some.

For 105 of the members of the Class of '46 the decision to run again for the House or not appears to have been no decision at all. Only four of the 109 did not try to repeat.

Democrat Bryan Dorn, pursuing his objective to be in the United State Senate before he was 35, publicly announced for the Senate on April 6, though he had been telling friends he was running since at least February. One of his associates in fact declared for Dorn's House seat in February. Incumbent Democratic Sen. Burnet Maybank had already announced for reelection. It would be said that South Carolina's other senator, Olin Johnston, backed Dorn's run against Maybank.¹

Democrat Glen Johnson also took a shot at the Senate, announcing earlier, on December 20, 1947, for a seat being vacated by Republican Edward Moore. He did not face an incumbent but his odds were still chancy. The presumptive frontrunner was former Gov. Robert Kerr, still the Democratic National Committeeman from Oklahoma. Kerr did not announce until March 13, 1948.²

William Lewis, who was nominated by the Republican District Committee in Kentucky to run for the vacancy caused by the death of Rep. John Robsion on condition that he not seek reelection, indeed did not.³

Republican Mitchell Jenkins of Pennsylvania revealed publicly on March 3, 1948, that he would not stand for his seat again, saying his law practice suffered from his five years in the military and two years in Congress. Jenkins may have sought the job after his absence in the War to publicize himself as a way of restarting his legal practice. It was rumored much earlier that he was not "much enamored with Washington life and would like to get on the bench." He barely defeated incumbent Democrat Daniel Flood for the seat in 1946 – by less than 2000 votes – and Flood would be his opponent again. On September 28, 1948, Jenkins spoke at a gathering of Chambers of Commerce in Wilkes-Barre and opined that congressional salaries were too low and House terms too short. He also reported that the floods of issue-specific telegrams and postcards that descended on him as representative went straight into the trash. Clearly Rep. Jenkins was not "enamored" of his job as congressman, and it seems probable that his constituents felt that same way about him.⁴

The primary season was long for Class members in 1948, from April 13 to September 21. Thirty-seven of the Class of '46 would face the voters before the regular session ended on June 20. This would mean days needing to be spent in their districts firming up support and campaigning, hopefully during the

¹ Dorn and Derks, 6. *Florence Morning News*, April 6, 1948. *The Index-Journal*, February 11, 1948; February 10, 1964. Maybank was the political boss of Charleston and was said to have counted out a Johnston run for governor in 1930. See Key (1949), 133-4.

² *Miami Daily News-Record*, December 21, 1947; April 6, 1948.

³ *The Courier-Journal*, April 3, 1948. *Danville Advocate-Messenger*, May 27, 1948.

⁴ *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, January 26, March 4, September 29, 1948. *The Plain Speaker*, June 24, 1947.

weekend adjournments. Sixteen of the weekend adjournments were for three days, giving extra time for district visits. Six were two-day weekends. The last two weekends of the session, however, saw legislative days on all but Sunday.

On the other hand, 23 of the Class had primaries after Labor Day. The five members from Connecticut, which nominated by convention, also faced decisions after Labor Day.

The short special session caught 15 members whose primaries fell during that period and inconvenienced more whose primaries were shortly thereafter. But we should not be coy about this. Being in Washington in 1948, whenever that was and for whatever purpose – votes, debates, hearings, committee meetings – inconvenienced everyone who was trying to continue in that city for those actual purposes. Travel to the district was slower in some ways and faster in others than in the 21st Century. Those from farthest away were dependent on air travel that was slower and less frequent. Those who could rely on the railroads had the advantage relative to later times of much better passenger train service. Those close enough to drive lacked the later network of superhighways, which would, nevertheless, over time become increasingly crowded and slowed.

The Illinois primary on April 13 kicked off the season. Republicans Edward Jenison, Thomas Owens, Robert Twyman, and Richard Vail all chose to run, and all won renomination, three without opposition. Twyman faced two opponents, though ward leaders in Chicago endorsed him in December. One of the two seemed threatening, Robert Black, 31, an attorney, who was endorsed by the Illinois Federation of Labor, Twyman having voted for Taft-Hartley. The Labor vote, however, did not count large in Republican primaries in Cook County. Twyman took 73% of the vote and Black 16%, only a little better than the third candidate's 11%, whose campaign was based on his failure to get an operating loan for a lead and zinc mill from the Roosevelt administration.⁵

Republicans William Crow, Carroll Kearns, Franklin Lichtenwalter, Franklin Maloney, Frederick Muhlenberg, and George Sarbacher faced no opposition in the Pennsylvania primary on April 27. Of the rest, Republican Robert McGarvey had the easiest time of it, endorsed by all the Philadelphia Second District ward leaders and taking 87% against a minor opponent. Hardie Scott's vote for Taft-Hartley caused far more heartburn for Republican leaders in Philadelphia than it would have in Chicago. Four of the ward leaders of the seventeen in Scott's District supported Oscar Brown, 42-year-old attorney, in the primary, citing Taft-Hartley as the reason. Brown carried those four wards but only 38% of the overall vote, and Scott was renominated.⁶

Paul Dague in the Pennsylvania Ninth District faced Gerald Darlington, 41, a realtor who owned a "magnificent" "historic sandstone mansion." It was said that he had turned in his former employer to the IRS and received 10% of the take, which enabled him to buy the house and land. When Dague emerged from the primary with a win, Darlington complained to the House that his name was omitted from sample ballots distributed by the Republican organization. The House observed that this was customary.⁷

⁵ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1947; February 8, April 11, 1948. Cook County, Illinois, Deaths. *Freeport Journal-Standard*, March 30, 1948. *Illinois Vote*, April 13, 1948.

⁶ *The Courier* (Connellsville), April 24, 1948. *Harrisburg Telegraph*, March 10, 1948. *The Philadelphia Inquirer Public Ledger*, January 24, March 5, April 25 & 18 & 29, 1948. *The Morning Call*, March 12, 1948. *The Progress*, March 10, 1948. 1940 Census schedule, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁷ *Harrisburg Telegraph*, March 8, 1948. S. Gerald Darlington stone, Mount Joy Cemetery, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Real Estate Brokers, 48. Hagey and Hagey, 128. *LancasterOnline.com* (May 7, 2021). *SpeedWellForge.com*. *The Evening News*, May 26, 1948. *Gettysburg Times*, July 2, 1948.

James Scoblick's support for Taft-Hartley also ran afoul of the Labor vote in his District, which was Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. A labor force of 18,000 miners in the County in 1940 would decline to 12,000 in 1950, while manufacturing employment doubled from 13,000 to 26,000. It was reported in January that the Republican organization would drop support of him. Scoblick's congressional voting was not his only problem; in February he was sued over three \$500 checks that bounced in repayment of a loan, and Scoblick Brothers, his fruit business, was sued in two separate filings over a \$1265 worthless check and for \$1156.50 in an assumpsit action. In April the firm was ordered to pay a company \$1368.92 for apples. The County Republican Chair endorsed Nelson Nichols, the Scranton school director, for the nomination. Nichols took 57% of the vote over Scoblick's 24% and a third candidate.⁸

It was a given that Wallace Chadwick in the Delaware County District of Pennsylvania would face a hard fight for reelection, though the central issue in the heavily suburban county was not Taft-Hartley. Chadwick barely won the nomination in 1946 over the regular County Republican organization and was facing a return bout. Chadwick was not alone. In partnership with Weldon Heyburn, who was running for State auditor, they put up a virtually complete slate in the Republican primary against the organization. Chadwick's opponent was Benjamin James, 58, a State Representative and businessman, who was passed over by the organization in 1946 but was now their champion. Muhlenberg and Rep. Hugh Scott of Philadelphia campaigned for Chadwick, it not being particularly unusual to get such support from fellow members. But when Sarbacher went to Media to speak for James against an incumbent, it was a scandal. Sarbacher was reported to have been "placed on ice for a year" by the other Republican members of the State delegation. The net result was that Chadwick was defeated for renomination with 46% of the vote.⁹

The Maryland Democratic primary on May 3 also produced a loser from the Class of '46. Hugh Meade had supported Taft-Hartley and ran for renomination on the issue, but this was said not to be the critical point. The Second District was divided between the independent City of Baltimore and the County of Baltimore. The head of the County Democratic organization endorsed William Bolton, 62, a lawyer and State Senator, for the seat. The new Mayor of Baltimore and recent congressman Thomas d'Alesandro Jr backed Meade of the City, though he was to the political right of the Mayor. There turned out to be six candidates for the nomination with Bolton squeezing past Meade by 1500 votes.¹⁰

The other two Class members from Maryland won their races. Edward Miller was unchallenged in the Republican primary, while Edward Garmatz faced three opponents in the Democratic contest, though one was a perennial candidate who barely scratched. The real contest was with Anthony Didomenico, a Baltimore Councilman backed by slipping Baltimore boss William Curran and running against D'Alesandro as much as Garmatz. D'Alesandro actively backed Garmatz, his successor in the House seat. Garmatz won handily.¹¹

There were four primaries on May 5 involving Class of '46 members. Democrat Robert Jones in Alabama, Republicans Raymond Burke and William McCulloch in Ohio, and Democrat George Smathers in

⁸ *The Pittsburgh Press*, January 4, 1948. *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, *the Evening News*, February 16 & 24, 1948. *Standard-Sentinel*, April 16, 1948. *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, April 28, 1948.

⁹ See Beers, 137-9 for the organization, known as the "War Board." *Chester Times*, March 9 & 11 & 31, April 22 & 23 & 24, May 11, 1948. It was reported that Sarbacher was compelled to speak for James due to pressure put on his father by Sheriff Austin Meehan of Philadelphia.

¹⁰ *The Pittsburgh Press*, May 7, 1948. *The Daily Mail*, May 4, 1948.

¹¹ *The Baltimore Sun*, April 2, 1948. *Cumberland Evening Times*, March 22 & 27, 1948. *The Daily Mail*, May 4 & 10, 1948.

Florida were renominated without opposition. Laurie Battle in Alabama was not so lucky. Luther Patrick, who lost the seat two years before, tried to recapture the Democratic nomination from Battle. Labor opposed Battle for his Taft-Hartley vote but were reluctant to put resources into Patrick's run, though he was pro-union, assuming he had little chance to win. George Patterson also declared, arguably a New Dealer given his career with the Office of Price Administration. Battle took 55%, avoiding a run-off as Patrick and Patterson split the rest of the vote.¹²

In Indiana on May 5, Ralph Harvey faced two challengers for the Republican nomination but easily won with 81% of the vote. E.A. Mitchell farther south had a different experience. He fell out with Evansville ex-Mayor and Vanderburgh County Republican Chair Manson Reichert after his nomination in 1946, and Reichert was now supporting challenger James Campbell for the House seat. Campbell had run fourth for the congressional nomination in 1946, when Reichert supported Mitchell. Campbell, 51, was an industrial engineer who had served in both World Wars, but his bigger claim to fame was his distribution of anti-Semitic reports of a plot of "rich Red Jews" to seize power in America, which brought him to testimony before HUAC in 1939.¹³

Mitchell prevailed with 59% of the ballots over Campbell's 29% and a third candidate, but the primary day contest was not limited to ballots. Mitchell separated one of his supporters, Ben Bartlett, from Reichert after Bartlett knocked Reichert down. "Reichert claimed Bartlett and another man assaulted him and that one of them reached for a gun. The ex-Mayor admitted he drew his own gun. Bartlett said Reichert called him names and threatened him as Bartlett sat in his automobile. 'He pulled a gun I just whipped him, that's all,' Bartlett said." Also during the primary, deputy sheriffs arrested ten election board members from two precincts, when poll watchers complained the members entered voting booths with voters.¹⁴

Melvin Snyder was unopposed in the West Virginia Republican primary on May 11, while Francis Love had one opponent but won with 83% of the vote.¹⁵

On May 29 in the North Carolina Democratic primary, Monroe Redden escaped opposition, but both Hamilton Jones and Charles Deane each attracted one challenger. The incumbents both won easily with 73% and 78% respectively.¹⁶

California's June 1 primary saw all six Republican incumbents in the Class cross-file for both the Republican and Democratic nominations. All handily won Republican nomination, Ernest Bramblett and Charles Fletcher with 73%, John Allen with 76%, Willis Bradley with 79%, Donald Jackson with 82%, and Richard Nixon with 100%, since his Democratic opponents did not cross-file. Only one of the six, Jackson, had opponents for the Republican nomination who were actually Republicans. All six did credibly in the Democratic primary: Fletcher with 32%, Bradley with 39%, Bramblett with 41%, Allen and Jackson with 42%, and Nixon with 52%. Yes, Nixon was both the Republican and Democratic nominee for the House in

¹² *The Montgomery Advertiser*, November 26, 1947; January 17, 1954. *The Anniston Star*, March 4 1945; August 22, 1946. *Alabama Register* 1951.

¹³ *The Terre Haute Tribune*, May 20, 1948. *Indiana Year Book* 1946. *Indiana Year Book* 1948. *The Indianapolis Star*, December 7, 1946; April 15, 1948. *The Palladium-Item and Sun-Telegram*, April 6, 1948. *Rushville Republican*, May 5, 1948. *The Kokomo Tribune*, the *Kokomo Dispatch*, May 3, 1946. Goodman, 59-60.

¹⁴ *Indiana Year Book* 1948. *Rushville Republican*, May 5, 1948. *The Vidette-Messenger*, May 5, 1948.

¹⁵ *The Raleigh Register*, April 20, 1948. *The Cumberland News*, May 12, 1948. *West Virginia Blue Book* 1949.

¹⁶ *Asheville Citizen*, March 21, 1948. *North Carolina Manual* 1949.

his District in 1948. So also was Bramblett. Such a performance was aided by the fact that the actual party of the candidate was not listed on the primary ballot, but their incumbency was.¹⁷

In Nixon's case the major Democratic contender was Stephen Zetterberg, 32, an attorney and veteran. Zetterberg did not want to run but could not talk Jerry Voorhis into battling Nixon again.¹⁸

Bramblett had a more active Democratic candidate, John McMillan, 50, who was endorsed unanimously by the Democratic Central Committee of the congressional District. McMillan was a rancher, and the American Federation of Labor conference in Santa Barbara objected to his organizational support. The Committee met again and reendorsed McMillan, which split Labor support. Though three other Democrats filed, Labor's preferred candidate, Thor Krogh, stayed out. McMillan took only 38% of the Democratic vote, and Bramblett was the Republican and Democratic nominee.¹⁹

New Mexico elected its two representatives at-large; thus, Georgia Lusk was running against her fellow incumbent and Democrat Antonio Fernandez as well as any other challengers for the nomination on June 8. Three emerged: Former Gov. John Esten Miles, 63, Floyd Kennedy, 56, and Arthur Seefeldt, a used car dealer in deep financial trouble. Miles was viewed as conservative but emphasized his performance as governor, while Kennedy ran as something of a Henry Wallace Progressive. Both the Wallace campaign and Labor targeted Lusk, and Labor took on Fernandez as well; both had voted for Taft-Hartley. Lusk emphasized her support for veterans and for Pres. Harry Truman's policies, while Fernandez charged, "Wallace has succeeded in isolating Communists and their bed fellows both from organized labor and the body politic." While both New Mexico Senators endorsed Lusk, the Governor and the State Democratic Chair backed Miles. Kennedy accused Gov. Thomas Mabry of operating a slush fund of contributions from State workers and vendors. Miles ran first in the primary, topping Fernandez by 2000 votes and leaving Lusk out, 2500 behind Fernandez. Kennedy trailed Lusk by 11,000 votes.²⁰

Carl Albert, Toby Morris, and Preston Peden all faced opponents in Oklahoma's July 6 Democratic primary, the first one for Class members after Congress adjourned. Albert had the easiest time of it, walking away with 84% of the vote. Morris did not shy away in his campaign from his failure to see an existential threat to the United States from communism. Tom Jelks and D.A. Segrest, both legislators, ran against Morris in large part on this issue. Sixth District primary voters did not appear much more threatened by communism than Morris; he got 64%.²¹

Peden's experience was different. He had beaten incumbent Democrat Victor Wickersham in a runoff in 1946 by six percentage points after trailing him in the first primary by nine points. Wickersham filed for a return bout in 1948 and bested Peden by seven points, the former's real estate business in the District of Columbia being no hazard for the home folks.²²

Johnson's run for the Senate nomination was also unsuccessful. As expected, former Gov. Robert Kerr lead the primary. Johnson barely scratched, finishing fifth in a huge field of ten candidates and getting

¹⁷ *California Statement of Vote, June 1, 1948.*

¹⁸ *The Covina Argus-Citizen, April 2, 1948. The New York Times, February 2, 2009.*

¹⁹ *The San Francisco Examiner, January 12, 1948; October 14, 1983. Santa Maria Times, February 24, March 15, 1948. Santa Cruz Sentinel-News, March 15, 1948.*

²⁰ *El Paso Herald-Post, February 12, 1948. Albuquerque Journal, January 15, February 25, March 10 & 19 & 24, April 7 & 23 & 24 & 25, May 1 & 23 & 25, June 25, December 16, 1948; October 8, 1971. The Gallup Independent, January 6, June 1, 1948. Clovis News-Journal, May 5, June 7, 1948. Las Cruces Sun-News, May 1 & 25 & 27, 1948. Arizona Republic, January 22, 1948. Las Vegas Daily Optic, June 1, 1947. Roybal, 119.*

²¹ *Oklahoma Directory 1949. The Lawton Constitution, June 25 & 27, July 2 & 4, 1948; July 3, 1959.*

²² *Oklahoma Directory 1949.*

only 7% of the vote. Johnson ran on extension of aid to the aged. Oklahoma had a penurious track record in providing benefits to the elderly, and it surely appealed to Johnson as a winning populist position. He did not have the issue to himself though, as Gomer Smith, once national vice-president of the Townsend pension organization, hit hard on the issue as well. Smith also had five previous statewide runs under his belt, making him far better known than Johnson. Smith pushed Kerr into a runoff but came up short. Johnson's easy defeat of an incumbent in 1946 may have gone to his head.²³

In the Texas Democratic primary on July 24, Omar Burleson and Olin Teague had no opposition, nor did they in the general election other than by a Progressive against Teague. On the other hand, Frank Wilson in Dallas had a problem, which replicated the general Southern concern about Truman. Wilson wasted his breath on the floor decrying Truman, and it was noteworthy that he was the only Democrat on the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments to join with all the Republicans to disapprove Truman's plan to put the Federal Employment Service and the Bureau of Employment Security in the Department of Labor, the objection being that this would increase the sympathy of these agencies to the working man. Wilson also used virtually all his floor time in the second session to feud with Wingate Lucas over the latter's support for establishing a new airport between the two cities, therefore supplanting in part (eventually a large part) of the traffic and value of Dallas's existing Love Field.²⁴

Dallas was a more notably conservative district in a notably conservative state, but Wilson's opponent for the Democratic nomination, William Cooper, headed Dallas County's Truman-aligned delegates to the May State Democratic Convention. These delegates were a minority in the Dallas delegation. The May Convention chose Democratic electors who were not pledged to vote for the Democratic nominee, expected to be Truman. Texas would hold a second Democratic State Convention after the primary, as they did in gubernatorial election years. When that later convention replaced the unpledged electors with Truman electors, the Dallas and Fort Worth delegations walked out. Cooper managed only 32% against Wilson.²⁵

Lucas in Fort Worth did only a little worse than Wilson, though he had three opponents. One was a college student, one had the nickname "Hot Shot," and one was repeat candidate Ernest Gillam, a soap manufacturer who had been a leader of Texas New Dealers, and who accused Lucas of voting like a Republican. Lucas campaigned against equal rights but attributed its support to Republicans and took 61% to Gillam's 31%.²⁶

Ken Regan's opponent in west Texas, Woodrow Wilson Bean, had come in second to the Representative in the special election the year before. It was an El Paso versus Midland contest then and was to be again. Bean ran to the left as before, which despite Regan's spending 31 days of the campaigning season in hospital did not prove a winning proposition. Regan entered the hospital with influenza and a touch of jaundice, it was reported. His wife Roberta filled in for him in campaigning, and he took 60%.²⁷

²³ *Oklahoma Directory 1949. The Lawton Constitution*, January 25, June 20, 1948. *Miami Daily News-Record*, February 5 & 8, 1948.

²⁴ *CQ Almanac 1948*, on line.

²⁵ Bass and DeVries, 318. Hardeman and Bacon, 415. *Abilene Reporter-News*, May 18, 1948. Caro (1991), 332-3, 349. Key (1949), 258, 339. Heard, 257. *Texas Almanac 1949-1950*.

²⁶ *Brownsville Herald*, July 9, 1948. *Hood County News-Tablet*, May 27, 1948. *Valley Morning Star*, February 22, 1936. *Lubbock Evening Journal*, June 23, 1948. *The Waco News-Tribune*, June 16, 1948. *Texas Almanac 1949-1950*.

²⁷ *El Paso Herald-Post*, June 15, July 6, 1948. *Brownsville Herald*, July 9, 1948. *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, July 29, 1948. *The Odessa American*, July 18, 1948. *Corsicana Daily Sun*, February 28, 1952. *Texas Almanac 1949-1950*.

Virginia, Missouri, and Kansas primaries on August 3 were the first for a Class member after the convening of the special session. The nominally Democratic Byrd organization in Virginia delivered for Watkins Abbitt, Burr Harrison, and Thomas Stanley and accommodated Porter Hardy. All were unopposed.²⁸

Republicans Albert Reeves and Parke Banta were also unopposed in Missouri, but Claude Bakewell faced two opponents in his primary. His rather moderate record in the House did not keep him from winning 65% over a ward heeler and a stock broker, the latter running to his left. In his Democratic primary, Frank Karsten did even better against a magistrate who did not differentiate himself in policy from the incumbent. Karsten took 78%.²⁹

The situation was warmer in Kansas where both Herbert Meyer and Wint Smith had significant opposition. Factional battles at the State level within this one-party Republican State may have contributed to the congressional contests. Alfred Landon, the dominant leader since his tenure as Governor and nomination as the Republican presidential candidate in 1936, was facing something of an uprising. A battle was going on over Republican delegates for the National Convention, with Landon out of sync with the activists within his party. Landon favored Gen. Dwight Eisenhower (who would not run), Speaker Joseph Martin of Massachusetts (who would not admit he was running), and Sen. Robert Taft of Ohio (whom Landon feared could not win) in that order, while the State's delegation swung to Gov. Thomas Dewey of New York (who had already lost once and, moreover, ignored Landon in his 1944 run for the presidency). Furthermore, Kansans were facing a referendum in November 1948 on amending the State constitution to allow the sale of distilled spirits. Landon supported the referendum but dissented from its question, though not a teetotaler himself. He opposed former Gov. Andrew Schoeppel's campaign for the nomination for Republican Sen. Arthur Capper's seat in large part because he felt that Schoeppel had not enforced the liquor laws. Capper, who would turn 83 before the primary, finally gave up the seat in spite of Landon's urging him to run again. The State's National Committeeman Harry Darby backed Schoeppel and was credited with "wresting control" from Landon to line up delegates for Dewey.³⁰

Both Smith and Meyer had connections to Landon, but it is unclear if their challengers for the nomination in 1948 were part of the State's Republican factionalism. Landon was responsible for Smith's tenure as first head of the Kansas Highway Patrol and supported him in his campaign for nomination in 1946. Harold Chase, 36, "a rather diminutive and very mild mannered, almost timid Salina lawyer" took 40% against Smith. Meyer had a return bout with Thomas Winter, whom he unseated in 1946, and held on with 54% of the vote. Meyer and Landon were both residents of Independence, Kansas. Meyer was the managing director of the Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association before his congressional career. Landon had organized and remained active with the Independent Petroleum Association of America, of which the Kansas Association was an affiliate.³¹

In Tennessee on August 5, Joe Evins escaped competition for his Democratic nomination, but Dayton Phillips barely prevailed in the Republican primary. Phillips' opponent was William Miller, 40, an attorney

²⁸ historical.elections.virginia.gov.

²⁹ *Missouri Manual 1949 1950*. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 18, July 21, 1948. *The St. Louis Star and Times*, July 23, 1948.

³⁰ *The Iola Register*, January 26, 1952. McCoy, 530-40.

³¹ KansasHighwayPatrol.gov. *Garden City Telegram*, April 28, 1976. *Elk County News*, May 27, 1948. *Kansas Report 1947-1948*. McCoy, 68, 207.

from Johnson City. The AP reported that the election of Miller was “perhaps the No. 1 objective of the Reece organization.” Carroll Reece had given up what became Phillips’ seat to become National Republican Chair and in 1948 was running for the US Senate. Miller took issue with Phillips’ opposition to both Taft-Hartley and the Marshall Plan. The two House candidates made a show of fisticuffs, but were restrained, over designation of the membership of county boards to conduct the primary. The head of the Carter County board claimed he was assaulted by a half-brother of Phillips and took out a warrant. Phillips held on to the nomination with 51%, with both parties then charging voting fraud.³²

On August 7 in Kentucky, Thruston Morton and John Whitaker took their Republican and Democratic primaries, respectively, without opposition, in the latter’s case less than four months after taking his seat in a special election. On the other hand, Howes Meade faced an opponent for his Republican nomination, one Herbert Roland, 32, a civil engineer and long active in the Party. The United Mine Workers backed Meade in 1946 but called for his defeat in 1948 due to his vote for Taft-Hartley. How much effort they expended for Roland is questionable, as Labor was coming out for a Democratic candidate. Roland barely threatened with only 31%.³³

South Carolina and Idaho held primaries on August 10. In the latter case, neither Abe Goff nor John Sanborn faced an opponent in the Republican primary. In South Carolina, the only member of the Class from that State, Dorn, gave up his House seat for a try for the Senate. It was not a success. Incumbent Sen. Maybank attracted four opponents, perhaps because he had endorsed the appointment of fellow Charlestonian Federal Judge Waties Waring in 1942, and Waring found South Carolina’s Democratic primary unconstitutional in its exclusion of black voters. Waring and Maybank’s connection to him was a recurring theme in the campaign. Gov. Strom Thurmond’s run for the presidency as a renegade Democrat was not an issue. There were no racial liberals among the primary contestants. It was a mark of some success that Dorn managed to come in second to Maybank, although the Senator took 52% of the vote and avoided a runoff. Dorn would attribute this to the black vote enfranchised by Waring, a claim he would still make much later after he made a limited peace with integration.³⁴

Delaware was one of the two states with Class members that invariably nominated by party convention rather than primary. Caleb Boggs was unopposed when the Republican convention met on August 11.³⁵

New York’s large Class contingent of ten Republicans, one Democrat, and one American Laborite were unopposed in the State’s primaries on August 24 with one exception. Katherine St. George, the one woman in the delegation, and the only woman possibly returning to the House from the Class, now that Lusk lost her primary, had two opponents. The significant challenger was Walter Brown, 61, a former dairyman and court clerk since 1920, who had been a Mayor and County Republican Chair. Brown’s run seemed to be fueled by the continuing feud between Gov. Thomas Dewey and former Rep. Hamilton Fish,

³² *Tennessee Blue Book 1949-1950*. *Kingsport News*, April 11, July 10, August 5, 1948. On the Reece organization, see Heard, 108-9, and Key (1949), 78-80. *Kingsport Times*, May 30, June 8, August 10, 1948. *Nashville Tennessean*, January 29, 1950.

³³ *The Courier-Journal*, June 19, August 1, October 23, 1948; May 24, 1959. OurCampaigns.com.

³⁴ *Soda Springs Sun*, July 22 & 29, 1948. *The Index-Journal*, June 22 & July 28, 1948. *Florence Morning News*, July 22 & 25, 1948. *The Gaffney Ledger*, August 24, 1948. Dorn and Derks, 107.

³⁵ *Wilmington Morning News*, August 12, 1948.

given St. George's closeness to Fish, though she professed support for Dewey. Perhaps her gender made her seem vulnerable to a primary challenge. At any rate, she prevailed with 66% of the ballots.³⁶

John Bell Williams had a minor contest in the Mississippi primary on August 24, primarily notable for the patented Mississippi campaign strategy of out-niggering one's opponent. Williams proudly recounted his break with the national Democratic Party over the rights of his black constituents, while his 28-year-old opponent with the Margaret Mitchellesque name of Decatur Butler charged that Williams was four years late. Williams made the telling observation during the campaign that "we never heard of racial minorities until Russia came into power." But the campaign is also evidence that when two candidates agree on an issue, even when they say they do not, then other issues must come to the fore as well for there to be any hope of differentiation. In this case it was William's alleged lack of legislative accomplishment, or, as Butler put it, Williams "has left a record of absolute zeros during his term in congress." In spite of Williams' possible trail of naughts, Butler's active campaigning and more significant War record (he fought while Williams ferried planes), and the political accomplishments of the challenger's father (a State Senator), Williams had no problem, taking 81% of the vote.³⁷

Otto Passman had far more trouble in Louisiana's August 31 Democratic primary. He faced two opponents, Charles McKenzie, whom he took the seat from in 1946, and Newt Mills, whom McKenzie displaced in 1942. Name recognition, not to mention prior personal and factional political associations, necessarily played a large part in the contest. Despite Pres. Truman's civil rights initiative, racial politics had little public role in the campaign, perhaps because McKenzie's effort to outnigger Passman in 1946 failed. Labor endorsed Mills, who said his first objective as representative would be to repeal Taft-Hartley. McKenzie largely ran against Gov. Earl Long, who had a close association with Passman. Long ran strongly in Passman's District; McKenzie's strategy appears to have been flawed. Mills ran third with 16%, possibly not helped by his cure for inflation: "I'm going to have the government print only \$20 bills. Instead of just \$1 bills you will have your pockets filled with 20's." McKenzie took 33%, and Passman escaped a runoff with 51%.³⁸

Republicans William Dawson in Utah and Charles Russell in Nevada had no opposition in their September 7 primaries.

In Georgia's Democratic primary on September 8, both Henderson Lanham and Prince Preston also avoided contests, while James Davis and Don Wheeler, like Passman, faced their predecessors. In Davis' case, Helen Mankin had held the seat for only five months before meeting him in the regular primary, where she won the popular vote and lost the county-unit vote. Her return in 1948 was not a replay; she took only 38% of the popular vote. A third candidate got 7%, and Davis won going away with 55%. It is noteworthy that Davis rejected support of the Southern secessionists from the Democratic Party. There were probably enough African American voters in the Atlanta area to dampen any such nullification.³⁹

³⁶ *The New York Times*, August 26, 1948. *Fairport Herald-Mail*, August 26, 1948. *The Long Island Traveler, Mattituck Watchman*, August 19, 1948. Riehlman had a challenger, but enough of the signers of his nominating petition were ruled invalid to keep him off the ballot. *The Post-Standard*, July 22 & 28, 1948. *The Reporter Dispatch*, January 16, March 16, May 14, August 26, 1948. *Democrat and Chronicle*, November 13, 1947.

³⁷ *McComb Enterprise-Journal*, July 26, August 12 & 23, 1948. *Enterprise-Journal*, February 21, 1966. *Clarion-Ledger*, January 7 & 22, August 21 & 22, 1948. *Mississippi Blue Book 1945-1949*.

³⁸ *Weekly Town Talk*, July 20, 1948. *Daily World*, September 2, 1948. *Cumberland Evening Times*, August 6, 1948. OurCampaigns.Com.

³⁹ *Georgia Register 1945-1950*. *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 21, 1948.

No such moderation was evident in southeastern Georgia. Wheeler's predecessor was John Gibson, but he would take only 24% of the vote. The more important challenger was one Henry "Country" Johnston, 28, a former secretary to Gibson, who ran a white supremacist campaign. A fifteen-foot-high cross was burned at Valdosta, and black families received telephone calls warning them not to vote. Johnston got 33% of the ballots, and Wheeler was held to 43%. The Democratic Congressional District Committee decided not to use county-unit votes (which Wheeler would have won anyway), and there was no provision for a run off. Wheeler, having no November opponent, returned to the 81st Congress.⁴⁰

The state other than Delaware that nominated only by party convention was Connecticut. All five Republicans – Ellsworth Foote, John Davis Lodge, James Patterson, Antoni Sadlak, and Horace Seely-Brown were renominated unanimously.⁴¹

Thirteen members of the Class of '46 were seeking renomination in five states on September 14. Democrat John Blatnik and Republicans Edward Devitt and George MacKinnon in Minnesota, Republican Charles Potter in Michigan, Democrats Harold Donohue and John Kennedy in Massachusetts, and Republicans Russell Mack and Thor Tollefson in Washington had no opposition. The other five men were less fortunate.

Norris Cotton in New Hampshire had the easiest time. The Republican presidential nomination played a role in this campaign. The State had held a presidential primary since 1916, and in 1948 began to list the names of candidates whom the convention delegates supported. Only 6 of the 25 delegates did so. It was not until 1952 that the State's primary would become a major test for would-be presidential nominees. Cotton assiduously avoided committing to any would be nominee until after the National Convention, while one of his opponents "tired herself out for Taft" and the other was futilely a candidate for delegate for Eisenhower. Cotton took 85% of the primary vote.⁴²

The only complicating factor in Republican Homer Jones' renomination in Washington was the State's blanket primary in which candidates of all parties are on the same ballot. Jones took the Republican nomination with 78% against two opponents.⁴³

Republican Donald Nicholson in Massachusetts had no great difficulty. Two opponents split 38% of the vote.⁴⁴

The two Detroit members of the Class had far more trouble with the nomination. Howard Coffin again had three primary opponents, two of them repeats from 1946. The important one was former Rep. Clarence McLeod, who ran only four percentage points behind Coffin in 1946. He was thirteen points behind in 1948 and Coffin improved his vote share from 48% to 50%. Harold Youngblood faced four others for the nomination in 1946 and now found himself with seven opponents, none repeaters. No individual seriously threatened the Representative, who received 55% of the vote. Both Coffin and Youngblood were the recipients of endorsement from the Michigan Republican organization before the primary, which was under the control of Ford and General Motors.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Mansfield News-Journal*, September 9, 1948. *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, September 9, 1948; May 31, 1950. *Georgia Register* 1945-1950.

⁴¹ *The Bridgeport Post*, September 11 & 12, 1948. *The Bridgeport Telegram*, September 14, 1948.

⁴² *New Hampshire Manual* 1949. *Nashua Telegraph*, February 28, May 21, September 1, 1948.

⁴³ OurCampaigns.com.

⁴⁴ *Massachusetts Election Statistics* 1948.

⁴⁵ *Michigan Manual* (1949). Sarasohn and Sarasohn, 35-6. *Port Huron Times-Herald*, August 22, 1948.

Democrat John Carroll had no competition in the Colorado primary on September 15.⁴⁶

Wisconsin wrapped up the primary season on September 21, only six weeks before the general election. Glenn Davis, winner of a special election in 1947, faced no opposition for the Republican renomination. Fellow Republicans Charles Kersten and John Brophy were less lucky. Kersten, who had seven opponents in 1946, faced only two in 1948, but they were both repeats: Lawrence Timmerman and Arthur Schroeder. The former, a power in Milwaukee politics for 20 years, was again the major opponent. The 46-year-old Kersten defeated the 70-year-old Timmerman by 18 points, a small improvement over his 15-point victory in 1946, but Kersten's 55% of the vote was a major enhancement of his 34% two years before.⁴⁷

Brophy, the former Progressive who barely earned the 1946 Republican nomination with 24% of the vote against seven candidates, had an easier time getting renominated. Labor saw hope in him, as he had opposed Taft-Hartley. His closest competitor was a political nonentity while the distant third place runner got all the press. That was Mrs. Ruth Foster Froemming, now 50, who was a Ziegfeld Follies girl in younger days. She had already mounted an active campaign for Milwaukee mayor in the spring and should have performed better than her 18% showing against Brophy but for a penchant for eye-catching press. She was quoted as saying that she decided to run as a Republican because she gave a picnic and her Republican guests outnumbered her Democratic ones. In one policy statement she advocated a \$5000 per year pension for everyone after five years of paying taxes. Even the more mathematically challenged voters might have questioned that practicality, but the statement hid a more realistic complaint about the fact that members of Congress qualified for a pension after five years of service. The coverage of her campaign, and its wide dissemination around the country, was a closing confirmation to a primary season that saw one of the two female members of the Class of '46 defeated and the other pressed hard. Brophy won with 59% of the vote.⁴⁸

As the 1948 general election approached, the 109 members of the Class of '49 were reduced to 99. Two chose to run for the Senate and failed to get those nominations. Two retired. The Class of '46 took seats in the House by defeating 19 incumbents for nomination, but only five of the Class were beaten for renomination in 1948. It seems that 1946 was a year of throwing the rascals out within the party as well as across parties; not so 1948 perhaps.

Most, 60 of 105, had no competition in getting renominated.⁴⁹ Another 11 had minimal competition, which we will here define as the winner losing less than a quarter of the vote. Twelve had a fight in the 1948 primaries, getting less than 55% of the vote, five losing.⁵⁰

Congressional districts, or maybe states, with strong party systems could both reward incumbents with easy nominations or reject them, as was the case for Chadwick and Scoblick. All five of the Northern Democrats had no primary competition, as did 62% of the Northern Republicans. But then the weak party systems of the South still renominated incumbents without competition 50% of the time. From another

⁴⁶ *The Independent-Record*, September 15, 1948.

⁴⁷ *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, September 21, 1948. *The La Cross Tribune*, October 6, 1959. *Wisconsin Blue Book* 1950.

⁴⁸ *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 7, 1948. *The Sandusky Register-Star-News*, January 8, 1948. *The Camden News*, January 2, 1948. *Lead Daily Call*, March 16, 1948. *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, July 15, 1948. *Marshfield News-Herald*, August 19, 1948. *Wisconsin Blue Book* 1950.

⁴⁹ One caveat: Sometimes there are declared competitors; sometimes they drop out at the last moment and thus don't show up on the ballot or, most commonly, in the nomination vote at convention.

⁵⁰ The share of the vote received by the winning Dague could not be determined. He did have competition.

perspective, those weak party systems show up in that 14% had a run for their money, compared to none of the Northern Democrats and 9% of the Republicans. All three of the Democratic losers were from the Border.

Renomination was not a given. Even those who proved to have no competitor in the end were usually unsure until filing deadlines were past or even until primary night. The winning politician runs scared.

If the reader has been keeping count, they will have noticed 109 minus 2 minus 2 minus 5 does not equal 99. One of the Class, Owens, having easily been renominated, died less than two months later. On May 23 he had an apparent heart attack, diagnosed after two days when he finally went to the Capitol physician. In the Naval hospital at Bethesda, Maryland, he died on June 7. He was 50. Services were held in St. Hilary's Roman Catholic Church in Chicago and he was buried in Des Plaines, Illinois. He left a wife, Emma Ekberg Owens, 44, and three children: Charles, 18, Colleen, 13, and Carol, 5.⁵¹

⁵¹ *Congressional Record*, June 7, 1948, 7257. *The Edwardsville Intelligencer*, May 26, 1948. *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, June 9, 1948. Cook County Illinois Birth Registers index and Cook County Birth Certificates index. MyLife.com.