

The Origins and Significance of Impeachment in the Career of Governor Huey P Long

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Abstract

“I never held a public office in my life during which I was not under some kind of threat of removal or impeachment from the day I went into politics until the present day. I have never held one, and I do not expect to hold one.”

Huey P Long, *American Progress*, 8 February 1934

When, in March 1929, just ten months after he was inaugurated as governor of Louisiana, Huey P Long had been impeached by the state’s Legislature, he was one of only a handful of state governors to have been censured in this way in United States history. Despite the rarity of impeachment, the action against Long has been under-examined by academics and historians, with previous work focussing solely on a recitation of events and speculation that the action may have wrought a possible alteration in his personality. However, the impeachment had a more profound and transformational impact on Long and his subsequent career, leading as it did to actions which, without this tipping point, may not have occurred in quite the same way. Therefore to dismiss the impeachment as a simple vignette in the sometimes controversial career of Long, is to under-estimate the importance of the action and its subsequent impact. To redress this omission, it is necessary to examine the genesis of the impeachment in 1929 and to determine whether the action was a predictable event based on a broad view of Long, his character and his techniques, his personal and political belief systems, his position within the state of Louisiana and the South, and the environment in which he emerged to prominence. Through this wider approach, it has been possible to trace the origins of the 1929 impeachment to its roots in Long’s early political career.

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Introduction

Historically, impeachment has always been a potential threat to the career of any US politician, whether it is triggered in response to alleged criminal activity or misdemeanours or as a result of partisan hostility. For Louisiana Governor Huey Pierce Long, investigation and impeachment were recurring threats overhanging his entire political career. As a Public Service Commissioner, he faced removal after accusing the incumbent state governor of being in thrall to Standard Oil and claiming his fellow commissioners had taken bribes from the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company. As governor, he faced impeachment early in his term of office and, as US Senator, he was the target of two US Senate investigations, the first by the Special Committee on Investigation of Presidential and Senatorial Campaign Expenditure into corruption during the 1932 Overton-Broussard US Senate campaign, and the second by the Judiciary committee into a petition by Governor John M Parker that Long was “personally dishonest, corrupt, and immoral, and his continuance in office [was] repulsive to the respectable and law abiding citizens of Louisiana and the nation” and should be incarcerated as a “dangerous paranoiac” as a matter of public safety.¹ Such was the prevalence of impeachment and censure efforts during Long’s career that he became more and more preoccupied with the threat, particularly after his impeachment as governor in March 1929. Increasingly, he began to perceive such investigations as validating of his political programmes and activities.

¹ “Seek Removal Of Huey Long From Senate – Home Citizens File Charge of Graft” *Chicago Tribune* 14 April 1933 p1

The Impeachment of Governor Huey P Long

On 15 March 1929, Long issued a call for the Louisiana Legislature to meet in special session, for no more than six days from 18 March, to pass legislation on six subjects, including an occupational tax on oil refining.² When it became evident to Long that his oil tax would not be approved, he adjourned the session and called for a second special session to commence on 20 March lasting no more than eighteen days, ending on 6 April 1929. The bills for discussion at this session again included an occupational oil tax.³ The opposition was more organised during this second session, causing Long to seek to adjourn this session too. However, the anti-Longs were determined that the governor should accept the defeat of his programme. On Monday, 25 March, John Fournet, the speaker of the house, recognised the motion of J Cleveland Fruge, a Long supporter, over that of Cecil Morgan. Where Fruge's motion called for an adjournment, Morgan's sought an investigation into an accusation made by Harry 'Battling' Bozeman, Long's former bodyguard, that the governor had asked him to murder J Y Sanders Jr. A vote on the adjournment motion was called. However, despite a number of anti-Longs objecting that their vote had been recorded incorrectly, Fournet ruled that the vote had been in favour of the motion. He declared the session adjourned *sine die* and left the chamber. The subsequent scuffle between pro- and anti-Long legislators was brought to an end when Representative Mason Spencer called for calm, took the speaker's chair and, in Fournet's absence, held a voice vote on the adjournment motion. The resulting vote was 71 to 9 against adjournment *sine die*. Spencer then moved that the House adjourn until 11am the following morning.⁴

When the session continued, Fournet apologised for mis-calling the adjournment, blaming the error on a "mechanical difficulty" with the voting machinery which had failed to clear the

² "Special Session Aims Detailed – Official Call For Legislative Gathering Monday Promulgated By Governor" *Crowley Daily Signal (Louisiana)* 16 March 1929 p1

³ *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana at the Fifth Extra Session of the Legislature, Under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921: Begun and Held in the City of Baton Rouge, March 20, 1929* pp3-4

⁴ *Ibid*, pp26-27

results of the previous vote.⁵ Led by Morgan, the anti-Long opposition forces demanded Long's impeachment, citing 19 separate charges.⁶ Testimony on the charges was heard in the House from 3 April, with the first charge put to the vote on 6 April. Listed as article 14 in the impeachment charges, the Manship charge, as it was commonly known, claimed that Long had sought to silence Charles Manship, the publisher of two daily newspapers in Baton Rouge, by threatening to reveal publicly that Manship's brother, Douglas, was a resident of an insane asylum. Since it required the fewest witnesses, the Manship charge was voted on first. In a farcical incident, Representative George Delesdernier attempted to prevent the vote with a speech which compared Long to Jesus of Nazareth,

"Today we have a creature relieving the sick and the blind, aiding the lame and the halt, and trying to drive illiteracy from the State, and he is being shackeled [sic] with paper to a cross."

When Lester Lautenschlaeger suggested that Delesdernier's statement was irrelevant to the case, he responded "Take my life but give me my character," fainted and was carried from the chamber.⁷ Subsequently the House voted by 58 to 40 to impeach Long on this charge, with Delesdernier's vote recorded as nay.⁸ Six members of the House, Charles B Roberts, L Mason Spencer, J Y Sanders Jr, George J Ginsberg, Cecil Morgan, George K Perrault, A P Frymire, Paul A Chasez, Lavinus L Williams, were selected as managers to prosecute the impeachment of the governor, to present to the Senate the adopted article of impeachment (the Manship charge) and the pledge that the House "will in due time exhibit other and particular articles of impeachment against him, the said Huey P. Long, Governor, and make good the same; and that the managers do demand that the said Senate take order and

⁵ Ibid, p28

⁶ See Appendix 1p299

⁷ *Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana*, p292

⁸ Ibid, p294

require the appearance of said Huey P. Long to answer said impeachment.”⁹ The Senate transformed itself into a Court of Impeachment.¹⁰

While the House continued to investigate each of the remaining eighteen articles of impeachment, Long became depressed. He could not see a way out of the crisis; the night the impeachment bill was passed, he had wandered the streets of Baton Rouge trying to antagonise someone into shooting him.¹¹ His brother, Julius, later recalled that their father was concerned Long might commit suicide.¹² However, he rallied and went on the offensive, seeking popular support by issuing circulars blaming Standard Oil for the impeachment, and calling a mass meeting of his supporters, at which he also attributed the crisis to legislators funded by the oil company. Posters advertising the meeting warned Louisianians to

“Watch Out for the Lying Newspapers. They may announce that this Meeting will be called off or they may say that the Governor has resigned. Pay no attention to anything they say - - - Come to Baton Rouge DON'T TAKE TIME TO DRESS UP- - - A MAN'S A MAN.”¹³

Long's defence was funded by a number of supporters, but most significantly by Robert Maestri, a New Orleans businessman, who contributed \$40,000 to the fund.¹⁴ His legal team was led by John H Overton, and included Leander H Perez, who devised strategy for Long's team. Long's brother, Earl, worked on a one-to-one basis persuading individuals to support the governor.¹⁵ In defence of his brother, Earl was as ready to use force as he was to speak. When he saw Maestri speaking with Harney Bogan, one of the anti-Long forces, he

⁹ Ibid, p294

¹⁰ *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana at the Fifth Extra Session of the Legislature, Under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921: Begun and Held in the City of Baton Rouge, March 20, 1929* p101

¹¹ Jerome Beatty “You Can't Laugh Him Off!” *The American Magazine* January 1933 p118, *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-22 Huey Long Series: Magazine

¹² Notes from Julius T Long by T Harry Williams (date and location not recorded) *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 104 p2

¹³ Flyer for “Statewide All Day Meeting” 4 April 1929 *Seymour Weiss Papers*, Mss #4165, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Huey Long Campaign and Political Materials (1927 - 1955, n.d), 30:38 Box 1, Folder 1.1 HPL Circulars 1927 -1929

¹⁴ “Maestri Gift Creates Stir – Many Want All Facts On His Giving \$40,000 to Long Campaign Fund” Clipping dated 26 April 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Manuscripts Collection 312, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118Box 8: Legislative Series Clippings: Long impeachment. Folder April 24 – 28 1929

¹⁵ T Harry Williams, *Huey Long* ((1969 (1981), Vintage Books, New York) p369

challenged Maestri and fought Bogan, biting his face and neck.¹⁶ In the tense atmosphere pervading Baton Rouge after the impeachment bill was passed, and with many on both sides of the impeachment carrying weapons, observers expected violence to break out.¹⁷

The investigatory sessions in the House attracted spectators, including Long's wife, Rose, who, at his instigation, sat in the gallery each day. Her presence and her clothing attracted comment. When she wore a white dress, another woman commented "doesn't Mrs Long have cheek, wearing white when she should have on black."¹⁸ Witness testimony ranged from the dull and technical to the shocking. Some witnesses were reluctant to repeat the profanities used by Long in the presence of the women in the gallery, which led Morgan to apologise,

"I will ask Mr. Huckaby to repeat verbatim what the Governor said, and I make this statement first because there are ladies present and I want to apologize to the ladies and to the gallery for having to ask the question of Mr. Huckaby to have him repeat verbatim what the Governor said, but I think it is the essence of this charge and it should be done."¹⁹

While Mason Spencer later acknowledged he did not believe Bozeman's story, the former bodyguard's claim that Long had asked him to kill Representative J Y Sanders Jr made him a "wonderful witness"²⁰ for the anti-Long case. Not all witnesses produced such sensational testimony, others were of interest simply because they failed to provide the evidence the impeachers were seeking. Seymour Weiss's testimony frustrated legislators when he refused to answer specific questions relating to the entertainment provided for the 1928 Governors' Conference held in New Orleans, particularly with regard to the supply of alcohol. Under the provisions of the Volstead Act, Weiss's refusal to answer questions was not

¹⁶ "Teeth Weapon Of Earl Long, Gnaws Bogan – Caddo Representative Strikes Governor's Brother for Using Vile Epithet" *Shreveport Times* 27 April 1929 p1

¹⁷ Notes from J Y Sanders Jr interview by T Harry Williams on 6 Nov 1959 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 147 p 14

¹⁸ Williams (1969) p371

¹⁹ Cecil Morgan quoted in *Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana* on 5 April 1929 pp218-219

²⁰ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p8

simply an attempt to protect Long and the other governors, it was self-defence in line with Fifth Amendment protections.²¹ Ultimately a further seven articles of impeachment were presented to the Senate by 26 April: that Long bribed or attempted to bribe members of the Legislature;²² that he refused to account for the state funds (\$6000) appropriated for the Governors' Conference held in New Orleans in November 1928;²³ that he illegally removed school officials;²⁴ that he misused funds appropriated for the maintenance and repair of the state house and the governor's mansion to purchase a car;²⁵ that he misused funds appropriated for the maintenance and repair of the state house and the governor's mansion to purchase law books for his personal use;²⁶ and that he paid \$4000 to a highway contractor for defective culverts.²⁷ The final charge, that Long was incompetent and temperamentally unfit for office, was a catch-all article of impeachment which cited a series of offences. These were that the governor had required state officials to sign undated letters of resignation, some of which were later dated by Long and used to announce the resignations of officials; that he had forced the retirement of V L Roy, president of the Louisiana State Normal College; that he had subpoenaed a false witness in a court case; that he had used obscene language to, and about, a telephone operator, whom he later discharged from her job; that he had verbally abused men representing Caddo Parish; that he had appointed a Parole Officer, who had failed to carry out his duties and had been paid expenses which had not been incurred while performing his duty; that he had subsequently

²¹ *Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana* 16 April 1929 pp522-525

²² *Calendar of the Senate of the State of Louisiana - Sitting as a Court of Impeachment for the Trial of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana*. Beginning Saturday, April 6, 1929 – Ending Thursday, May 16, 1929 – By Authority Andrew Bradford Booth, Jr., Secretary of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, Sitting as a Court of Impeachment – House Resolutions and Articles of Impeachment, 12 April 1929 pp57-62

²³ *Ibid*, 25 April 1929, pp62-65

²⁴ *Ibid* pp65-67

²⁵ *Ibid* pp67-71

²⁶ *Ibid* pp71-73

²⁷ *Ibid* pp73-77

refused to dismiss the employee and, in doing so, had forced the resignations of the president and another member of the parole board.²⁸

In an order issued on 27 April, Long was called to present himself for trial before the Senate, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, on Tuesday, 14 May 1929. The recess allowed not only the Senate chamber to be converted into a court room, with a temporary viewing platform erected at the rear, it also allowed both sides to prepare, with a distinct advantage being gained by the defence team. Having declared the governor ready to make his response to the articles of impeachment, the Long team's first action was to file exceptions and demurrers in respect of articles two to eight. The defence argued in exception and demurrer number 1 that by sitting beyond 6 April, the Legislature had exceeded the terms of the special session called by Long, which was scheduled to run no later than 6 April. As such, they claimed, the Legislature had met illegally.²⁹ It was claimed in exception and demurrer number 2 that the first article of impeachment, the Manship charge, was a personal matter undertaken as a private citizen and as such was not subject to the purview of impeachment.³⁰ On 15 May, the Senate voted to overrule exception and demurrer number 1³¹ and to sustain exception and demurrer number 2.³²

On 16 May, Philip Gilbert, a pro-Long senator, presented a Round Robin letter to the Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, which stated that since the impeachment charges preferred after 6 April were "unconstitutional, illegal, null and void," the undersigned fifteen senators would not convict Long on the remaining charges. As such, they stated, to proceed as a court of impeachment was "ineffectual, vain and [would] incur a useless cost and expense to the State"³³ and they, therefore, moved for adjournment *sine die*. In the face of this unexpected action, Senator Delos R Johnson proposed that each of the fifteen senators

²⁸ Ibid, 26 April 1929, pp77-83

²⁹ *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana* pp203-206

³⁰ Ibid p206

³¹ Demurrer 1 to be sustained, yeas 19, nays 20 – overruled; Ibid p243

³² Demurrer 2 to be sustained, yeas 21, nays 18 – sustained; Ibid p264

³³ See Appendix 2 p301

be called upon to confirm that their signature on the letter was, indeed, genuine. Once all signers had confirmed, Senator Donald Labbe called for a short recess. When the Senate reconvened, a written declaration signed by twenty four senators was read out deploring the actions of the fifteen 'robineers' to "vote against conviction on any and all impeachment charges regularly made and filed by the House of Representatives regardless of any evidence that may be introduced and heard."³⁴ Despite this condemnation, the motion to adjourn *sine die* was passed.

Post-impeachment

While the fifteen 'robineers' may have saved Long's governorship and potentially his political career, and as such were rewarded by Long, he made no effort to appease, compensate or otherwise establish better relations with his opponents. Instead, he instigated recall motions against nine of the anti-Long legislators, although eight retained their seats. He also began to utilise patronage as punishment for opposition, especially state jobs. The anti-Long Constitutional League, formed in June 1929, had successfully targeted Long officials for 'double-dipping,' the practice of simultaneously holding more than one state job.³⁵ Long used this tactic to remove from office any opponents or supporters of the anti-Long faction, and, as demonstrated with the removal of Arthur B Hammond from his two posts, as a way of controlling those who sought to work alongside him.³⁶

As a result, when the Legislature met in the biennial regular session in May 1930, the anti-Long opposition was determined to block the governor's bills. In response, the governor vetoed appropriations bills passed by the Legislature, specifically including expenses for the lieutenant governor and the chairman of the Public Service commission, both of whom had sided against him during the impeachment.³⁷ In a move which highlighted Long's frustration

³⁴ *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana* p269

³⁵ "League To Seek Ouster Of Nine Legislators – Proceedings Against Members Holding Other State Jobs Planned – Saint Gives Opinion" *The Weekly Town Talk, Alexandria* 7 September 1929 p10 Hair pp189-190

³⁶ See Steps to power p151

³⁷ See Steps to power p152

with the Legislature, his inability to implement his political programme and also his continued resentment over the impeachment, he made a move which contradicted the self-articulated logic of his preferred career pathway. Five days after the end of the session, he formally announced that he would challenge incumbent US Senator Joseph E Ransdell, in the upcoming US Senate race. A bad tempered Democratic primary campaign resulted in a win for Long by over 38,000 votes. In a special session of the Legislature, called one week after his primary victory, Long's programme was easily passed, including legislation to remove the impeachment charges, which, due to the nature of the adjournment of the session in 1929, remained outstanding. While this move was consistent with Long's goal of progression from the governor's office, via the United States Senate, to the White House, his subsequent actions suggest that the timing of the Senate run was an entirely reactive response to a triggering event – the impeachment combined with the failure of his programmes at the 1930 regular session – rather than the next step on an established career plan.

Despite this victory, which appeared to secure his dominance of the state, Long remained in Louisiana for almost another two years, continuing his term as the state's governor. While this response was in part due to his determination to ensure that his lieutenant governor, Paul Cyr, who had sided with the Long's enemies during the impeachment, would not succeed him in the office, it also demonstrates a determination to reinforce his control over the state by refusing to adhere to conventional expectations of behaviour. A consistent feature of Long's tenure in political office was his determination to challenge the status quo by overtly acting in ways which contradicted established and expected norms of personal and political behaviour. Additionally, rather than appearing relieved or contrite at the outcome of the impeachment, his actions in going on the offensive demonstrated an intent, not only to re-establish and extend his control in the state, but also to actively keep his opponents off-balance and on the defence.

United States Senator

Once Cyr's activities, in attempting to force Long from the governor's office, had effectively eliminated him from the succession,³⁸ and with Alvin King installed as acting governor and Oscar K Allen as governor-elect, Long belatedly travelled to Washington DC to take up his seat on 25 January 1932.³⁹ In actions designed to simultaneously attract public attention and antagonise members of the Louisiana cohort in Congress, Long began his term of office. Having established an iconoclastic strategy when dealing with the political elites of Louisiana, Long did not seek to ameliorate his behaviour in respect of the national political establishment. In a tactic which echoed his previous support and then opposition to senior members of the Louisiana Democratic Party, Long supported and actively campaigned for Franklin D Roosevelt during the 1932 presidential campaign. Although in his autobiography, *Every Man A King*, Long claimed to have become convinced that Roosevelt was "the best chance for a solution of America's difficulties"⁴⁰ following the New York governor's commencement speech at Oglethorpe University in May 1932,⁴¹ his support was based as much upon political expediency as upon any genuine feelings of affiliation. At the 1932 Democratic National Convention, for example, the demand of Roosevelt's campaign team that each delegation vote by the unit rule,⁴² offered the greatest chance for Long's delegation to be seated. In a repeat of events during the 1928 Democratic Party National Convention,⁴³ Long's delegation was opposed by another from Louisiana. Led by three former governors, J Y Sanders Sr, Ruffin G Pleasant and John M Parker, the competing delegation also sought to replace Long as the Democratic national committeeman for Louisiana with John D Ewing, the son of the previous national committeeman, Colonel Robert Ewing. Displaying, what William Ivy Hair called, "unaccustomed dignity," Long's presentation of his delegation's case

³⁸ See Steps to Power p157

³⁹ See Steps to Power p159

⁴⁰ Huey P Long *Every Man A King* (1933, (1964), Quadrangle Books, Chicago) p298

⁴¹ Atlanta, Georgia - Oglethorpe University Commencement Address (speech file 476), May 22, 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Master Speech File, 1898-1945 *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum* Box 9 http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msf00486; Long reproduced a short abstract of Roosevelt's speech in Long (1933) p298

⁴² Williams (1969) p576

⁴³ See Exceptional Southern Governor p79

to the convention was clearly and persuasively argued. As a result, the convention voted by over 100 votes to seat his delegation rather than that led by the former governors.⁴⁴

While Long's support for Roosevelt had more to do with defeating his Louisiana rivals than with any personal loyalty, his influence at the convention in persuading the Arkansas and Mississippi delegations to remain with Roosevelt on the third ballot was crucial in keeping the New York governor in the race.⁴⁵ However, any assumptions that Long held that he would be able to convert his support at the convention and, subsequently, during the election campaign, into influence over the Roosevelt administration rapidly disappeared as it became evident that Roosevelt was a significantly more adept politician than anyone Long had come across in Louisiana.

“Such were my hopes – my dreams – some say my imaginations, and others claim, my hallucinations; but none the less, before and after the nomination of our candidate, before and after his election, I drank of the fountain of a new life as I saw, heard and read of his expounding the principles which had guided my activities throughout my public career. To my heart, such pronouncements were relighting the lamp of ‘America’s dream.’”⁴⁶

Just as Governor Parker's alleged failure to deliver on campaign promises had fuelled Long's opposition and enmity to the governor,⁴⁷ so, in the weeks after Roosevelt's 1933 inauguration, Long claimed that the new president was betraying the people who had elected him by aligning himself with Wall Street.⁴⁸ The subsequent feud saw Long overtly attacking the New Deal, while the Roosevelt administration bypassed Long when allocating federal funds to Louisiana.

Despite the move to Washington DC, Long retained political control of Louisiana, with his successor, Oscar K Allen, effectively a figurehead managed and manipulated by Long, either

⁴⁴ William Ivy Hair *The Kingfish and his realm – the life and times of Huey P. Long* (1991, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge) pp242-244

⁴⁵ Steve Neal *Happy Days Are Here Again: the 1932 Democratic convention, the emergence of FDR – and how America was changed forever* HarperCollins Publishers, New York (2005) pp269-270

⁴⁶ Long (1933) p316

⁴⁷ See *Steps to Power* p124

⁴⁸ “Huey Long Blasts Secretary Woodin – Hints Roosevelt Misled by His Appointment” *The Boston Globe* 27 May 1933 p13

receiving his instructions by telephone or in person. Long spent a greater proportion of his time as US Senator in Louisiana, rather than in Washington DC. As a senator, his actions were designed to create the greatest publicity and to increase his profile at the national level. By antagonising various members of the US Senate, resigning his committee memberships in protest at the lack of support for his wealth redistribution legislation,⁴⁹ and conducting filibusters trying to prevent the passage of the Roosevelt administration's legislation, he created for himself a reputation for fighting against the establishment as a 'champion of the people.' In the meantime, his actions in remaining in control in Louisiana were designed to ensure that there at least the impeachment crisis could not be repeated. However, Long's control of Louisiana was increasingly dependent not just on his control of his forces, but also on his physical presence in the state, a necessity determined by the lack of effectiveness of his people, particularly Governor Allen. In 1934, the anti-Long opposition endeavoured to overthrow his control by planning a series of parliamentary strikes. Buoyed by the election of J Y Sanders Jr as congressman for the sixth district, they first intended to unseat Allen Ellender, speaker of the house, to remove John Fournet as lieutenant governor by 'addressing him out of office,'⁵⁰ and finally to instigate impeachment actions against Governor Allen. The attempted plot failed when it was leaked to Long's supporters and he returned to Baton Rouge to oversee its defeat. Having left Allen with specific instructions on

⁴⁹ Long's proposal to limit personal fortunes failed to find support in Senate when he proposed reforms to a revenue bill so that higher taxes might be imposed on the rich. "Huey Long In Revolt, Forms One-Man Bloc' *The Daily Advertiser, Lafayette Louisiana* 30 April 1932 pp1-2. As this list shows, Long's resignation was a publicity stunt. He was later assigned to other Senate Standing Committees

1st Interoceanic Canals. Congress: 72, 73, 74 Appointment date: Feb 5 1932; May 29 1933; Jan 3 1935

2nd Manufactures. Congress: 72 Appointment date: Feb 5 1932

3rd Naval Affairs. Congress: 72 Appointment date: Feb 5 1932

4th Commerce. Congress: 72 Appointment date: Apr 25 1932

5th Interstate Commerce. Congress 73, 74 Appointment date: Mar 9 1933; Jan 3 1935

6th Judiciary. Congress 73, 74 Appointment date Mar 9 1933; Jan 3 1935

7th Public Buildings and Grounds. Congress:73, 74 Appointment date Mar 9 1933; Jan 3 1935

David T Canon, Garrison Nelson & Charles Stewart III *Committees in the U.S. Congress 1789 – 1946, Volume 3 Member Assignments* (2002) CQ Press, Washington DC p646

⁵⁰ The 1921 Louisiana Constitution allowed any officer, except the Governor, to be removed from office by an address to Legislature which had been approved by two thirds of the members of each house. Constitution of the State of Louisiana, Adopted in Convention at the City of Baton Rouge, June 18, 1921, Article IX, Section 3. p79 <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924030492163>,

the legislation to be passed, Long returned to Washington DC, only to have to return as opposition grew to the legislation and Allen appeared willing to compromise over bills would be passed. Within hours of his return, Long's programme was passed by a cowed Legislature.⁵¹ Increasingly, in a mark of his personal control, Long's presence in Baton Rouge began to signal that there would be a call for another special session.

In 1935, Long began to express his intention to either run in the 1936 presidential race or to support a third party candidate. This could, potentially split the Democratic vote and facilitate a Republican victory, allowing, newspapers speculated, him to run as a Share Our Wealth candidate in 1940.⁵² On 4 September, he returned to Baton Rouge and, through Governor Allen, called a special session to enact a series of twenty one items, including a bill targeting federal interference in the state and one to rearrange judicial districts. The first was aimed as snub to the Roosevelt administration and the second sought to remove the anti-Long judge, Benjamin Pavy, from his office.⁵³

On the evening of 8 September, Long left the floor of the House to join Chick Frampton in the governor's office to discuss an emerging news story. A hurricane in Florida had stranded Civil Conservation Corps workers and Frampton wanted a quote from Long on the incompetence of the administration's relief efforts.⁵⁴ In the corridor outside the governor's office, Long was approached by Dr Carl Austin Weiss and was shot. Since Weiss was killed by Long's bodyguards before he could be interrogated, speculation persists over his motive. Commentators generally agree that he wanted to confront Long over the gerrymandering

⁵¹ Williams (1969) pp712-719

⁵² "Democrats Look On Long As Deadly Menace To Party – Further They Feel He Is Hooked Up With Coughlin In Third Party Scheme – New Attitude Is Adopted" *The Daily Courier (Connellsville, Pennsylvania)* 6 March 1935 p1; C O Gridley "Senator Long is Hard to Muzzle – Apparently Hopes to Bring About Defeat of President in 1936" *The Dispatch (Moline, Illinois)* 14 March 1935 p3

⁵³ See Motivations chapter p201

⁵⁴ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Mss 2489, 2510 Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La., Location 34 Box 19 Folder 68 pp15-16

proposition which would unseat his father-in-law, Judge Pavy. It has also been suggested that Long was accidentally shot by his bodyguards as they gunned down Weiss.

Long was taken to the Our Lady of the Lake hospital, where he was examined by Dr Arthur Vidrine, the superintendent of the Charity Hospital in New Orleans, who had been in Baton Rouge to attend the special session. Long asked for three other doctors, Urban Maes⁵⁵ and Russell Stone from New Orleans and E L Sanderson from Shreveport. In their absence, Vidrine operated and, initially, it appeared that the operation had been successful. When the requested doctors arrived, they questioned Vidrine on the procedure and noted he had omitted to check Long's bladder for blood. On carrying out this test, it was discovered that Long was bleeding internally from a damaged renal duct. The doctors determined that Long was now in too weakened a state to undergo another operation to repair the damage. Despite blood transfusions, Long died in the early hours of Tuesday, 10 September 1935.⁵⁶

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this piece of work is that the impeachment of Huey P Long in March 1929 was of greater significance – both to Long personally and to the unfolding of his political career – than has previously been recognised and discussed. This work will show that Long's impeachment had its basis not just in the events of March 1929, it was instead a response to the cumulative effect of his personal and political actions, behaviours and programmes throughout his career and personal life, before and during his time in politics. As such, it will be argued that, based on his actions throughout his personal and public life, impeachment was, for Long, not just a potential event, it was a predictable one. While hindsight may suggest that impeachment was inevitable for Long, since it occurred in March 1929, the adjective 'inevitable' suggests that impeachment was unavoidable. However, Long's impeachment in 1929 was dependent on the actions and reactions of others, not just

⁵⁵ Dr Maes' journey to Baton Rouge to attend Long was delayed when the car he was travelling in was involved in a road accident – Williams (1969) p875

⁵⁶ Williams (1969) pp874-876

on his actions and behaviours. Without the activities of his political opponents in bringing the impeachment charges, and the support for the action within the Legislature, Long would not have been impeached. Equally, Long could have made adjustments to divert the threat of impeachment such as altering his behaviours or amending his legislative programme into a less controversial format, which may have encouraged a sense of collaborative exercise rather than confrontation. Therefore to suggest that the impeachment was inevitable assigns a sense of pre-destination to these events, which preclude the necessity of human interaction. Instead this thesis will argue that based on his actions, behaviours and political programmes, impeachment was a predictable event in Long's political career. Based on previous events, impeachment can be determined to have been an unsurprising, even expected, outcome for Long at some stage in his political career and that the events of the special sessions of the Louisiana Legislature in March 1929 brought that expectation to fruition.

While T Harry Williams has argued that the impeachment had no impact on Long, that he simply continued on as if it had never occurred,⁵⁷ this work will argue that the impeachment of 1929 had a far greater impact than has been previously examined and understood. Rather than being of limited effect, the impeachment had such a significant influence on Long, his reactions and responses to opposition and to his career pathway, that it can be described as a transformational event in his political career. In the immediate aftermath of the impeachment, Long altered his modes of engagement with the populace of Louisiana. Instead of relying on the state's daily and weekly newspapers to carry his messages, especially when so many of the daily editions had opposed him during the impeachment, he launched his own publication, the *Louisiana Progress*, in March 1930. By initially funding the newspaper through 'voluntary' contributions or 'deducts' from state employees, he also established a regular financial resource which would remain active even after the *Progress* became self-funded. The most distinctive transformation in Long's post-impeachment career

⁵⁷ Williams (1969) p410

was his reactive run for the United States Senate just one year after the impeachment. At the next regular session in May 1930, the Legislature refused to endorse Long's programme. Two weeks later Long announced that he was running for the US Senate seat in opposition to the veteran senator Joseph Ransdell. While Long had planned his political career as progression from a local state office, followed by the Louisiana governor's office, via US Senate to the presidency, he did not specifically identify a timeline for each stage of the progression, but he also did not waiver from this pathway. When, in 1924, Long's run for governor failed, he did not seek to pursue alternative routes and instead worked to achieve the office at the next available election in 1928. This rigid adherence to his prescribed career plan, suggests that Long was more likely to remain faithful to his route to the presidency than change direction when challenges occurred or circumstances changed. As such, his run for the US Senate in 1930, just two years into his term as governor, represents a significant deviation from his planned career pathway. In further confirmation that this run was not a departure from his plan, but a reaction to events, Long remained as Louisiana's governor for almost his full term of office. At this stage in his career, Long had also begun to reframe the context of his defeats, with the impeachment increasingly being formulated as validation and vindication rather than condemnation.

Significance of work

In a time when impeachment is a significant feature in the zeitgeist of United States politics at all levels, this work offers a perspective on the causes and impacts of impeachment on a significant character in US political history. Over a two month period in the spring of 1929, Huey P Long joined the very small group of US governors to be impeached. A rarely used political tool, impeachment is nonetheless a formal and crucial form of censure for US politicians. The serious outcomes of impeachment are not restricted to ending the term of office of a politician, they are potentially career-limiting and possibly risk criminal indictments. As such, the impact of the 1929 impeachment is of greater consequence than the mere anecdotal status it has previously been accorded in the Long historiography.

Previously, work on the history and political impact of Long has largely ignored his impeachment, reporting only the timeline of events and speculating superficially that the impeachment may have had an impact on his subsequent character. This work fills a gap in the historiography by examining the 1929 impeachment in the context of Long's personal and political career, rather than simply as a minor diversion which occurred during the first year of his governorship. To ignore such a significant aspect of Long's career as his impeachment is to underestimate the impact that the crisis had on him, personally and politically, and on his subsequent career. This work examines both the factors which caused the impeachment, and the influence the impeachment had on his subsequent activities and career, and uses archive materials from the papers of Huey P Long, and other contemporary political actors in Louisiana, as well as materials from the collections of Long's son, Russell B Long and Long's principal biographer, T Harry Williams. These materials have either not previously been published or have not previously been used in any detailed examination of Long's impeachment.

Legacy

Long remains a legendary figure in Louisiana political history, of whom stories continue to be told by the taxi drivers of Baton Rouge, as well as by tour guides. A fundamental character in the mythology of the Pelican state, Long continues to cast a shadow over state and national politics into the twenty-first century. A significant aspect of the Long historiography is the mythology that has emerged and surrounded Long since his death. A mythology that encompasses his status as a legendary figure, not just in politics in Louisiana, but also in state and national history. For many, he was a heroic figure who worked for the poor and disadvantaged in the US, but for others, he was a demagogic threat to fundamental political structures in the state, and at the national level. This mythological interpretation also incorporates his death, with the tales that his last words were either "What will my poor boys

at LSU do without me?” or “God, don’t let me die. I have so much to do;”⁵⁸ as well as the mystery of the unknown location of the ‘deduct box.’⁵⁹ Long’s funeral attracted a large crowd of 175,000, and he was buried in “a hermetically sealed casket-within-a-casket” in the garden outside the state capitol building.⁶⁰ His grave is marked by a statue of Long standing over a carved replica of the capitol building, which is inscribed:

“Here lies Louisiana’s great son Huey Pierce Long. An unconquered friend of the poor who dreamed of the day when the wealth of the land would be spread among all the people.”⁶¹

Part of Long’s legacy lies not only in such binary interpretations of him, but also in those American politicians in whose tactics and behaviours are exhibited degrees of commonality with those of Long. Amongst his contemporaries, parallels may be drawn specifically with Governor William ‘Alfalfa Bill’ Murray whose own ideological beliefs were unexpressed in a coherent manner and who also sought to position himself as a champion of the people.⁶² Analogous relationships may also be drawn to two US senators who, while they came to the chamber after Long’s demise, had cultivated aspects of the Louisianian’s techniques, Lyndon B Johnson (D-TX, 1949-1961) and Joseph R McCarthy (R-WI, 1947-1957). However, the analogies have significant limits. While Long sought to change aspects of American life and politics by seeking to break the existing system and, in effect, overthrow an entrenched establishment, Johnson and McCarthy both worked from within the system.

As an aide to Congressman Richard Kleberg during Long’s time in the US Senate, Johnson would watch whenever the Louisiana senator addressed the chamber, bribing a page to alert him when Long was going to speak. T Harry Williams, author of the pro-Long biography *Huey Long*, identified several points of comparison between the two men, most notably their

⁵⁸ Williams (1969) p876

⁵⁹ Over a game of golf on 8 September, Long advised Seymour Weiss that he had moved the deduct box. According to Weiss, even on his death bed, Long did not reveal its new location. To public knowledge, it has never been found, although Williams speculates that a leader in the Long organisation had taken it and its contents. Williams (1969) p876

⁶⁰ Hair p325

⁶¹ See Appendix 3 p310

⁶² See Exceptional Southern Governor from p82

methods of governing. Both men “prided themselves on their knowledge of detail, of everything going on around them, but especially of people, enemies and friends.” It was this knowledge that both used to persuade, coerce or control others.⁶³ Both, as Theodore H White put it, had a style of communication which would “out-shout, out-dramatize, out-campaign, out-smile, and out-entertain” his opposition;⁶⁴ a technique which was supplemented by an eclectically broad vocabulary ranging from the poetic to the crude and obscene. Both were also inveterate breakers of social and behavioural conventions as well as political ones, in order to discomfort or disarm allies and opponents.

While both Long and Johnson aspired to the presidency, their approaches to achieving their goal were significantly different. While Long worked against the establishment, seeking to overturn it, Johnson rose from within the system. He was elected to Congress in 1937. He served five further terms, with the exception of 1941-42, when he volunteered to serve in the US Navy, becoming the first member of Congress to volunteer for active duty when the US entered World War II.⁶⁵ This was in stark contrast to Long who sought a deferment to serving during World War I, citing his marital status and his position as a notary public. In 1948, Johnson was elected to the US Senate, and in 1953, became the youngest person to serve as minority leader at the age of 44.⁶⁶ Johnson was a party man and Senate insider, whose political skills, expertise, hectoring style and ability to work across the aisle made him a powerful leader in the party and in Washington. In 1960, Johnson was invited to run as the vice presidential candidate to John F Kennedy, thereby balancing the ticket, not just with a Southern candidate, but also with experience. Johnson’s relationship with the Kennedys echoed that of Long’s with the elites of Louisiana and Roosevelt. Johnson succeeded to the presidency on the assassination of Kennedy in 1963.

⁶³ T Harry Williams “Huey, Lyndon, and Southern Radicalism” *The Journal of American History* Vol 60, No 2 (Sep 1973) p274

⁶⁴ Theodore H White *Making of the President 1964* (New York, 1965) p357 quoted in Williams (1973) p275

⁶⁵ All serving members of Congress were recalled to Washington in 1942

⁶⁶ www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/lyndon-b-johnson

Johnson and Long's son, Russell, were freshmen senators together, and friends, so when, in January 1965, Russell discovered that his election promise to deliver a post office to Shreveport had been blocked by the White House, he called the president. On speaking to Johnson, he found that the rejection of the project was, in a move reminiscent of Long, in retaliation for the failure of Louisiana to vote for Johnson in the 1964 presidential election. In a taped recording of their conversation Johnson is heard haranguing Russell, "Those are some of the meanest, most vicious people in the United States. Now you help those folks that vote for you and stay with you. Let's don't reward Shreveport . . . I know your daddy'd turn over in his grave and every other Long. He didn't reward people that way."⁶⁷

Later in this conversation Johnson expounded on how he saw himself as following a similar political path to Long, detailing not only his intentions to introduce legislation that would benefit poorer Americans, but also his inclination to emulate both Long's tactics in punishing those who opposed him, and his legacy of a political dynasty,

"I'm a populist just like he was, by God I'm for the poor people, I'm gonna pour the education to 'em, I'm gonna pour the roads to 'em, I'm gonna pour the health to 'em, and that's why that every Long that ever put his name on the ballot has been elected and that's what I'm gonna do for the Johnsons the rest of my life. I'm for the people and he was but I'm sure as hell not for that Shreveport crowd, when they talk about me that way, and you can't be either, you just can't!"⁶⁸

Later that year, when Hurricane Betsy struck New Orleans causing eighty-one deaths and a quarter of a million people to be evacuated, Russell contacted Johnson to convince him to go to Louisiana. On this occasion, Russell positioned his argument as one that would better appeal to the president's ego:

"Just pick one state up like looking at it – you lost it last time . . . Just make it a stopover. . . . You go to Louisiana right now, land at Moisant Airport. [Imagining a news story] 'The President was very much upset about the

⁶⁷ Lyndon B Johnson, "Conversation with Russell Long," January 12, 1965 Citation number 6722 Secret White House Tapes: Lyndon B Johnson Presidency, *The Presidential Recordings Program*, The Miller Center, University of Virginia www.millercenter.org/the-presidency/secret-white-house-tapes/conversation-russell-long-january-12-1965 02:18-02:25 and 04:05-04:10

⁶⁸ Ibid 09:35-10:07

horrible destruction and damage done to this city of New Orleans, lovely town. The town that everybody loves.' If you go there right now, Mr. President, they couldn't beat you if *Eisenhower* ran."⁶⁹

Joseph R McCarthy's senatorial career was largely unremarkable until, like Long, he adopted a single issue which brought him to prominence. While Long's focus on the inequality of the distribution of wealth had led to the Share Our Wealth movement and, with it, popular appeal and a national profile which could, potentially, deliver the presidency, McCarthy's focus on un-American activities, notably the threat of communism and communist sympathisers, created an environment of fear in Washington and throughout the country. In common with Long, McCarthy's focus on a single issue was designed to bring to the attention of the wider public and the press, when, in a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, in February 1950, he claimed to have a list of 205 names of individuals, then working in the State Department, who were known to be members of the Communist Party. Despite ultimately being unable to substantiate his accusations against a single government official,⁷⁰ McCarthy's wide-reaching crusade, characterised by aggressive tactics and rhetoric, expanded to encompass academia, the entertainment industry and any perceived anti-American behaviours or traits. The televised hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities accentuated the paranoia of the era, with those appearing before the committee condemned by public opinion, irrespective of guilt, simply for refusing to incriminate themselves. It is believed that over 2000 government officials lost their positions⁷¹ and around 1500 people working in the entertainment industry were blacklisted⁷² as a result of the investigations. When McCarthy turned his attention to the US Army, public support eroded as he "badgered witnesses while ignoring parliamentary procedures and

⁶⁹ Russell B Long's telephone call of 10 September 1965 to President Johnson David Remnick, "High Water – How Presidents and citizens react to disaster" *The New Yorker* 26 September 2005 www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/10/03/high-water

⁷⁰ www.biography.com/people/joseph-mccarthy-9390801

⁷¹ www.history.com/topics/cold-war/joseph-mccarthy

⁷² David Reynolds, *America – Empire of Liberty* (2010, Penguin Books, London, New York & Toronto) p396

rules of common courtesy.”⁷³ McCarthy was censured by the Senate on 2 December 1954. As with Long, McCarthy was affected by the censure vote. Having dominated the political environment for four years, the vote removed both his power and his status.⁷⁴ An alcoholic, who had engaged in a brawl with journalist Drew Pearson in 1950 in a cloakroom of the Sulgrave Club,⁷⁵ McCarthy died of liver failure in 1957.

The legacy of Long’s impeachment is that it demonstrated what was possible and what could be achieved by working against the expectations and conventions of politics as normal. Conventional wisdom suggested that Long would be cowed by the attempts to chastise him, but on each occasion he emerged invigorated. While the 1929 impeachment represented the closest point at which he came to admitting defeat, his subsequent success in overturning the crisis was not the sole aspect which remained with him. For Long, the lasting impact was his ability, thereafter, to turn each attempt at opposition to his advantage, instead he portrayed efforts by the entrenched establishment to censure him into vindication and validation for his programmes and activities.

Since Long’s death, there have been a number of US politicians who have adopted aspects of his techniques and behaviours, and, increasingly there have been those who have, wittingly or unwittingly, adopted his position that to achieve change it is necessary to work against the traditions of the establishment. Since the beginning of the 2016 presidential campaign, commentators have drawn analogies between both Bernie Sanders⁷⁶ and Donald J Trump,⁷⁷ and Huey P Long. Certainly both Trump and Long espoused political populist messages designed to appeal to the masses at times in United States history when the

⁷³ “The Censure Case of Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin (1954)” www.senate.gov adapted from Anne M Butler and Wendy Wolff *United States Senate Election, Expulsion, and Censure Cases, 1793-1990* S. Doc. 103-33 Washington, GPO, 1995

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* p233

⁷⁶ While Bernie Sanders ran for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 2016, he served as an independent in both the US House of Representatives (1991-2006) and the US Senate (2007-present) <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S000033> accessed 18 April 2019

⁷⁷ While Donald J Trump ran for the Republican Party presidential nomination in 2016, he had established a presidential exploratory committee through the Reform Party in 1999. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Donald-Trump> accessed 18 April 2019

country appeared to be more divided than ever before. In their proclivity to emotive and populist rhetoric, their appropriation of the latest in technological systems of communication and their unbridled ambition to hold the office of the President of the United States of America, Long and Trump appear to have a number of areas of commonalty, including their dysfunctional relationship with the news media, their difficulties in implementing their legislative agenda, and the cloud of investigation and threat of impeachment which permeates their tenures.

Long's ideology

The most significant problem for commentators, historians and biographers has been how to contextualise Long within the spectrum of ideological tropes. This issue has led to him being characterised as anywhere along the spectrum from fascism to communism and socialism, via populism and progressivism. Long, however, was not inclined to adhere to a system of belief which necessarily tied him to the beliefs, structures and programmes of others, claiming instead not to have any ideological affinity. Rather than a specific adherence to one ideology, Long cannibalised aspects of a variety of belief systems as personally suited his agenda. He claimed he was *sui generis*, one of a kind who, by that definition, could not be pigeonholed with others. This explanation, in part, provides the context for his membership of the Democratic Party in Louisiana. As with others in the South, Louisiana was a one-party state in which the only route to political success was through membership of the Democratic Party. However, Long's iconoclastic approach to the traditional, elite-led structures and factions of the party demonstrated a determination to challenge the status quo. He was inclined to challenge the elite leadership, aligning instead with the people of the state who were essentially unrepresented by those in power. This much vaunted sympathy for the masses had its basis in his upbringing in Winn Parish, in the north of the state. While Long never acknowledged that his beliefs were in any way influenced by the political preferences which had been prevalent in Winn Parish, a populist stronghold in the 1890s, his programmes and activities throughout his political career were tied to both populist and

progressive tropes. Instead of an articulation of an ideology, Long's was a practical demonstration of a personal belief system, one which worked for him and for the voters who would deliver him his electoral goals.

Key to understanding Long's belief system, is his lack of tolerance for the restrictions of systemic ideological thought. While there is a strain of populism running through his politics, Long was inclined to a more flexible approach to ideology, adopting only those aspects of doctrinal thought that best suited him and his agenda. Throughout his career, Long had two primary focuses, self-promotion and his appeal to the masses. As such, an adherence to a specific ideology was a disadvantage and restrictive. His appeal to the people of Louisiana was tied to their perception that he would get things done, and not bound to an understanding that his ability to do things was limited by ideological ideals. The freedom to interpret the needs and wants of the people ensured that Long could not only circumvent any limiting restrictions imposed by the Democratic Party in Louisiana or any other organisation, but it also allowed him free rein to translate those needs as best suited him, and offered him the opportunity to utilise his unique skill-set to break through the entrenched establishment to create a real impact.

Although not an anti-capitalist when it came to his personal business activities, Long consistently opposed big business and corporations throughout his career. As the Public Service Commissioner, while his primary goal was the need to create and expand his political image across the state to promote his political career, his work was consistently anti-corporation. The outcomes of these actions did much to raise his profile with the people of the state, who had, to a degree, benefited from his interventions with the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company, the railroad companies and the oil companies. As governor, his infrastructure programme for the state, focussing on highways, bridge building, the erection of a new capitol building, and a replacement governor's mansion as a way to build the state out of the Great Depression, ensured that some jobs were created. His free

school book programme, while controversial, targeted all children in the state irrespective of creed or colour. Such progressive programmes were as much for the development of the state as they were vanity projects for Long. The capitol building was to be the tallest skyscraper in the country, while the new governor's mansion resembled the White House, only larger, and the school book programme became a tool with which to blackmail recalcitrant opponents when he opposed their programmes.⁷⁸

The most constant aspect of Long's political programme was his vocal support and promotion of a wealth redistribution agenda. Throughout his career, from the early suggestion, in a letter to the *Shreveport Times* in January 1919, that the concentration of wealth was the "greatest asset to Bolshevism in America,"⁷⁹ to the call for a "Share Our Wealth" scheme on national radio in February 1934, enforced wealth limitation and redistribution was Long's signature policy. While economically impractical, the lure of a home, car and radio and a guaranteed annual income of \$2000, to be funded by capping personal fortunes at \$5million and annual incomes at \$1million, was enticing to masses in America suffering poverty, homelessness and starvation as a result of the Great Depression. Such was the appeal of the movement that individual Share Our Wealth clubs were set up across the nation, enrolling over 3 million members in its first year.⁸⁰ While these clubs were not politically aligned to Long, the movement was considered to be a sufficiently broad and serious political threat to prompt Roosevelt to nullify it by passing a second raft of New Deal proposals: the Social Security Act, signed in August 1935, guaranteed pensions and introduced a system of unemployment insurance and support to care for dependent children; the Works Progress Administration (WPA) created in April 1935, provided jobs for the

⁷⁸ See Steps to Power p148

⁷⁹ Letter from Huey P Long to Editor Shreveport Times dated 29 January 1919 *Huey P Long Papers*, Mss 2005, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Box 2 Folder 61: General Correspondence January – April 1919

⁸⁰ Williams (1969) p700

unemployed, including on public building projects; and the National Labor Relations Board was created in July 1935 to oversee union elections and ensure fair treatment for workers.⁸¹

In tandem with this individualistic sense of self, whether encapsulated as a personal belief system or as an iconoclastic challenge to the establishment, grew Long's increasingly dominant obsession with personal and political power. He claimed that to achieve anything, he had to be more ruthless than his opposition; a position which was both cyclical and self-perpetuating. However, it was this position that increasingly became the core *modus operandi* of Long's activities. The need to control and dominate others, to acquire and retain political power ultimately superseded any ideological style of commitment that he had previously held.

Thesis Structure

While utilising a chronological structure for this thesis would provide a sequential exploration of Long's life, and politics, up to his impeachment, it would also have replicated the biographies which have previously under-examined the significance of the impeachment. The structure of this thesis uses a thematic model to identify, examine and characterise the factors which combined to create the environment in which Long faced impeachment in 1929.

First, this thesis examines the status of Long studies and impeachment studies, particularly gubernatorial impeachment, to contextualise this work. The following chapters focus on each of the factors which combined to create an environment in which, in March 1929, impeachment became the only option for Long's opponents.

Chapter two addresses Long's self-designation as *sui generis* and the assumption that he was an exceptional politician in a series of case studies, which provide a frame of reference for Long's governorship as a Louisianian and Southern politician. The case studies chosen

⁸¹ https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/new-deal#section_3

as comparators for Long as a Southern governor come from two states which had recently impeached their governors, Texas and Oklahoma. These states also produced governors who exemplify the term 'character,' that is a distinctive and original individual whose life and term in political office may present as unusual for their time period and location. Texas's Miriam 'Ma' and James 'Pa' Ferguson and Oklahoma's Henry S Johnston and William 'Alfalfa Bill' Murray will be used to provide context and comparison to Long. As both a political ally and, then virulent, opponent, Governor John M Parker of Louisiana also provides a notable juxtaposition to Long.

In chapter three, Long's climb to prominence is explored through his self-determined career pathway and through his accumulation of political and personal power. As a young man, Long declared both his intention to become president of the United States and his intended route to the White House. His career was characterised by his adherence to this pathway, the local state office (Public Service Commissioner), governor of Louisiana, United States Senator and, in the year of his death, he appeared to be preparing for a run for the presidency. Until 1930, Long's career progression reflected his pre-determined career ladder. With two years remaining on his term of office as governor, Long announced that he would run in the 1930 US Senate race against the incumbent, Senator Joseph Ransdell. However, Long's determination to remain in Louisiana as governor, adopting the title "Governor and Senator-elect," suggests that this race was statement on the opposition he had faced and a reassertion of domination, rather than an attempt to escape the scene of his embarrassing defeats.

During his lifetime and in subsequent assessments of Long, commentators, biographers and historians have attempted to categorise him as adhering to one single ideological tenet, ranging from fascism, communism, socialism, and populism. Chapter four examines Long's motivations behind his political career and determines that Long's personal sense of individualism led him to develop a personal belief system rather than following the

ideological beliefs systems supported by others. This is not to suggest that he did not incorporate aspects of contemporary ideological tropes in his political programmes; his programmes and actions drew from aspects of different contemporary ideologies, a technique which contributed in no small part to the confusion amongst commentators and academics. His political activities demonstrated a high degree of pragmatism in its approach, most notably through his membership of the Louisiana Democratic Party. Long's code of belief lay primarily in his perception of his own uniqueness and his perspective that he embodied the beliefs of the masses of Louisiana, whose views had not been represented by the political elites who had previously held the power in the state.

Throughout his life and career, Long exhibited a propensity to attract, encourage, and develop enmities and enemies beyond the conventional expectations of politics in Louisiana and on the national scene in the United States. Chapter five examines Long's proclivity to interpret opposition, however constructive or well-intentioned, as enmity. While he did demonstrate the ability to work within the traditional factional norms of Louisiana politics, he disregarded accepted practices and established himself as a challenge to the status quo. This tendency to antagonise others was not limited to the political sphere. Long's relationships with his siblings indicate a long-seated disposition to place himself as separate from any restrictive organisation that may have imposed controls upon him, whether this was as a family member or as a member of the Louisiana Democratic Party.

By structuring this thesis on a thematic basis, each of the factors which coalesced to bring about Long's impeachment in March 1929 are fully examined as individual aspects of Long, his life and his political career. Each recurring characteristic is explored and is demonstrated to be a pattern of behaviour which is repeated throughout Long's life. The biographical perspective of Long's career, while presenting a chronological report of the story of his life, has failed to recognise the repetition of these patterns, and, as such, has mistakenly assigned an insignificance to the 1929 impeachment that its impact belies.

Chapter 1

Historians and the Impeachment of Huey P Long

For a politician who was a single term governor and served fewer than four years as US Senator, Huey P Long had a wider impact than the status of his political offices infers, and he remains a significant factor in Louisiana politics more than eight decades after his death. While the direct effects and ramifications of his time as governor have waned, specifically with one-party factional politics giving way to a two party system in the state, politicians and commentators continue to refer to his legacy as having an influence on the political, economic, structural, and cultural condition of the state through to the twenty-first century.¹ Although a great deal has been written about Long, aspects of his life and career remain under-examined. In general texts on United States history, exceptionally for a Louisianian politician with his level of experience and milieu, Long continues to be mentioned either as a factor, with Father Charles Coughlin and Dr Francis Townsend, in influencing the leftwards swing of the New Deal in 1935 or as a force for an emerging dictatorship in the US.² By contextualising Long in these ways, general historical reports have effectively limited the portrayal of him to a potential threat to President Franklin D Roosevelt's re-election

¹ In an appeal for a new state constitution which would be more conducive to the economic development of the state, Stephen Waguespack, president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, claimed the state had been "handcuffed since 1932 by the 'share the wealth' politics of Huey P Long." Drew Broach "Forget the Legislature; what Louisiana needs is a new Constitution, business activists say" Times-Picayune 28 February 2018

https://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2018/02/louisiana_constitutional_conve_1.html

² Philip Jenkins *A History of the United States* 2nd edition (2003, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke & New York) pp216 - 217

campaign in 1936.³ While, James A Farley would later minimise this specific risk as more likely to have been “a source of annoyance rather than a threat,” he did acknowledge that a third party movement might have been the balance of power in the election.⁴ Despite this generalised assessment, specific episodes in the career of Long, including the impact of his Senatorial filibusters and the influence of his Share Our Wealth movement on the programmes of the Roosevelt administration, and his unprecedented level of control in his home state, have garnered academic attention; however, in order that Long may be fully assessed and understood within his political and historical context, other facets of his life and career still require further examination. One feature of Long’s history which has not previously attracted academic attention, and which will be examined here, is his relationship with impeachment, specifically his impeachment as governor in 1929.

The majority of academic work on Long has underplayed the importance of his impeachment as governor of Louisiana in March 1929. Since the major focus of these studies is within the realm of biography, the impeachment has previously been treated as a minor episode in his gubernatorial career; one which has been discussed purely in the context of whether or not the impeachment had an impact on his character and personality. As such, examinations of the impeachment have previously failed to consider whether it was predicated not just on Long’s actions during the March 1929 special sessions of the Louisiana State Legislature but in combination with the cumulative effect of his actions and behaviours throughout his career. This study will focus on this gap in the Long historiography, using previously unpublished archive materials relating to this under-explored area, to offer an alternative and wider perspective on the causes of the impeachment. It will address the impeachment of Long as an episode which had its origins in Long’s previous actions and behaviours and it will argue that for Long, not only was impeachment a predictable outcome of his political career, but that in March 1929 it had become inescapable, as the confluence of events had

³ Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1948 (1974), Vintage Books, New York) p439

⁴ James A Farley, *Jim Farley’s Story – The Roosevelt Years* (1948, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc, New York & Toronto) p51

provided his opponents in Louisiana with the most opportune moment for a potentially successful outcome. A retrospective assessment could suggest that it was inevitable that Long would be impeached, as that eventuality occurred in 1929. Since 'inevitable' suggests that something is predestined, and an impeachment requires a number of factors to coincide and for individuals to collaborate to bring about the action, there is an implicit degree of uncertainty tied to the potentiality of such proceedings. However, Long's history of facing criticism and censure, prior to and after the 1929 action, combined with his behaviours and actions infer a career in which impeachment, if it was not inevitable, was at the very least a predictable outcome.

While the threat of impeachment has been used as a politically motivated tool of censure throughout United States political history, actual incidents of impeachment have remained relatively rare. When, in a speech to the United States Senate in early 1934, Long said that he had never held a political office without being under the threat of removal or impeachment, and that he did not expect to be, it was not simply, as T Harry Williams stated, a frustrated expression of Long's *modus operandi* and his cyclical pattern of behaviour, that he had to be ruthless because the opposition were ruthless.⁵ It was a statement which articulated the degree to which Long saw the threat to remove him from the US Senate as a continuation of a persistent pattern of opposition which had been present at all stages of his political career, from the threat to remove him as a member of the Public Service Commission in 1921, via his impeachment as governor in March 1929, to the investigations into alleged fraud in the Broussard-Overton Senate campaign in 1932. Long is often described as an experienced political operative and yet throughout his career he made errors of both judgement and policy which suggest either inexperience or a wilful disregard for the accepted norms and traditions of American politics. When he spoke to the US Senate in 1934, he appeared to be railing against the constant challenges and investigations of him by his opponents. However, an alternative interpretation of Long's behaviour, is that by this

⁵ T Harry Williams *Huey Long* (1969 (1981), Vintage Books, New York) p687

point in his career, he had come to expect the threat of impeachment and had come to regard it as a vindication and validation of his actions and programmes. He could, therefore, demonstrate to his constituency across the nation that the persistent and vituperative attacks of his opponents meant that he had been justified in his actions; if his opponents were trying to stop him then he must be doing something right.

When the Legislature of Louisiana impeached Long after only ten months in office, not only did it bring to a crisis point his political and personal career, it also represented the culmination of his career and activities thus far. This thesis examines those factors which had created, in Long, a state executive officer so reviled by his political and personal opponents that, early in his term of office, impeachment had become the only solution. In isolation each of these factors provided potential causes for impeachment in 1929. Together these factors ensured that impeachment was, if not inevitable, it was predictable.

Historiography

While books and articles specifically about Long or about Louisiana emphasise his importance in Louisiana's politics, society and history, he fares poorly in general books on American history. In his review of *Huey Long*, William G Carleton questioned why "a one-term governor and one-term senator of a state not usually conspicuous in national politics" had been accorded what he calls a biography

"exhaustive in its coverage and definitive in its scholarship, and it is of a size usually reserved for famous national statesmen of long standing, including the more notable of the presidents."⁶

In more generalised historical and political texts, Long is often reduced to a caricature, the flamboyant buffoon who concealed, behind a façade, the "shrewd lawyer and consummate politician."⁷ As part of his work on political families, Stephen Hess describes Long as being

⁶ Carleton, William G "Book review: *Huey Long* by T Harry Williams *The Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol 49, No 1 (Jul 1970) p84

⁷ George Brown Tindall & David E Shi, *America – A Narrative History* 4th edition (1996, W W Norton & Company, Inc. New York & London) pp1144-1146

“designed for writers and cartoonists.”⁸ Hess’s work explores Long and his family in greater detail than many of the non-specialist works, and he identifies Long as “the colossus; without him there could have been no dynasty,”⁹ although a less likely example of a dynastic ‘founding father’ than Long it is difficult to imagine.

However, it is in David Reynolds’ *America - Empire of Liberty* (2009) that Long’s impact at the national level of American politics is both simultaneously contextualised and acknowledged. It is only by implication, through the positioning of his two sentences on Long (including the chorus to *Ev’ry man a king*) immediately before his comment

“[so] in 1935 the president shifted leftward to reflect the mounting pressures in Congress and the country”¹⁰

that Reynolds demonstrates a sense of the degree to which Long’s Share Our Wealth campaign had forced Roosevelt’s administration to move to counter the threat of alternative popular financial solutions to the Depression. It is in this aspect of Long that Carleton’s query regarding the size of Williams’ biography is answered. It is Long’s influence and impact at the state and national level, especially as a member of the triumvirate of proponents of economic redistribution and critics of Roosevelt’s New Deal with Father Charles Coughlin and Dr Francis Townsend, albeit in a relatively small way with wide consequences, which justifies the fascination with his life and politics.

The ‘autobiographies’ of Huey P Long

Two key pieces of the Long historiography are his 1933 autobiography, *Every Man A King* and his posthumously published ‘predictive’ *My First Days In The White House* (1935). Both are pieces of political theatre and were written solely as campaign tools. While both texts are credited to Long, there is anecdotal evidence that he used a ghost writer. Chick Frampton claimed that while Long had dictated most of *Every Man A King*, he had also used Eleanor

⁸ Stephen Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties* (Transaction Publishers, 1997) p419

⁹ Ibid p442

¹⁰ David Reynolds, *America – Empire of Liberty* (2010, Penguin Books, London, New York & Toronto) p347

Roosevelt's ghost writer for the book, a connection which he gleefully boasted about, but with the caveat that Frampton was "pledged to secrecy."¹¹ Frampton is also the source that identified Ray Daniel, a journalist with the *New York Times*, as the author of *My First Days In The White House*.¹²

In his conclusion to "The Veto of the Imagination – A Theory of Autobiography," Louis A Renza proposes that autobiography is "an endless prelude: a beginning without middle (the realm of fiction), or without end (the realm of history); a purely fragmentary, incomplete literary project."¹³ When *Every Man a King* was published in 1933, Long was 40 years old and a United States Senator; certainly at that time it would have been reasonable to assume that Long's life, if not necessarily his political career, had some time yet to run. As such, the publication of an autobiography, which would inevitably portray only the start of national political career, must have had a purpose other than a reflective review of a life. A possible key to the publication of an autobiography is in the timing; while Long had now taken up his seat in the US Senate and was simultaneously retaining control of power in Louisiana, he did not yet have the truly national persona that would be necessary to propel him to the White House. In the context of an intended presidential campaign, the purpose of *Every Man a King* was both to widen Long's constituency (something which would be aided by the Share Our Wealth campaign) and also to promote to this new audience a more sympathetic version of his life and career than may have been published previously. In the national media, stories such as his championing of the dunkers' side in the potlikker debate in the *Atlanta Constitution*¹⁴ and his meeting with the commander of the German cruiser, *Emden*, while dressed in green silk pyjamas, had served only to present Long to the wider United States as clown or buffoon. His image was not that of someone with the dignity appropriate to hold

¹¹ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Mss 2489, 2510 Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La., Location 34 Box 19 Folder 68 p5

¹² *Ibid* p5

¹³ Renza, Louis A "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography" *New Literary History* Vol 9, No 1, (Autumn 1977) p22

¹⁴ See *Steps to Power* chapter p114

the office of president of the United States of America. As Renza concludes, autobiography “is neither fictive nor non-fictive, [it is] a unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression;”¹⁵ Long’s autobiographical definition of himself is a political campaign tool which was designed to solicit the sympathy and support of a constituency against their mutual enemies, such as big business. In his assessment of *Every Man a King*, Williams concurs with Renza’s concept of autobiography as prelude,

From the point of view of literary artistry, it had a shortcoming it was incomplete. . . The author was obviously going to write another instalment.¹⁶

That Long intended his autobiography as a piece of campaign material to enhance his reputation across the country is confirmed in part by the way in which the book was released in October 1933: despite being “sold-out in two hours” on a Chicago newsstand, the book was only distributed to “a few friends” in Louisiana and no date was set for when it would be available to his fellow Louisianians.¹⁷

Long’s second book was even more clearly meant to be propaganda. *My First Days in The White House* offers a predictive account of Long’s acclaimed ascension to the presidency in 1936, with the foreword stating,

“This book has been published in good faith, without malice, but with a desire to present to its readers a future America under the guidance of its Author.”¹⁸

Long’s utopian vision of himself reuniting the country with a bipartisan cabinet, including Franklin D Roosevelt (Secretary of the Navy), Herbert Hoover (Secretary of Commerce)¹⁹ and Alfred E Smith (Director of the Budget, which Long would elevate to a Cabinet post),²⁰ was presumably designed to support his proposed strategy to be elected as the Share Our

¹⁵ Renza, p22

¹⁶ Williams (1969) p647

¹⁷ “Few Friends Given Long’s Autobiography – Senator Won’t Say When Book Goes on Sale” *The Monroe News-Star* 18 October 1933 p1

¹⁸ Huey Pierce Long *My First Days In The White House* (1935, The Telegraph Press, Harrisburg PA) p1

¹⁹ *Ibid* p6

²⁰ *Ibid* p14

Wealth candidate.²¹ The book itself, with its illustrations of Long's opponents taking up their new roles, was designed as a challenge the *status quo* of the US. It suggests that through Long's leadership, Depression era problems could be solved by reimagining US politics beyond partisan agendas, with Long, the country's saviour, at the helm of government and those who had preceded him in the office portrayed as reluctant allies who are persuaded to accept the posts in his cabinet because they were no longer in positions of power or influence:

“Why, I am a former President of the United States, and it's a terrible step down for me to be asked to serve in your cabinet,' he replied.

'Now let me put you straight,' I said. 'You say you are being embarrassed because, as a former President of the United States, it would be a step down for you to serve as a cabinet officer under another President. Just what is your position in public life today, Mr. Hoover?'"²²

While the humiliation implicit in his proposals, to make former presidents his subordinates, was balanced by the suggestion that they were being appointed “as men with vision and capacity to administer big jobs,”²³ Long makes it clear in this tale that these men were working for him. “What do I care whether they agree with one another?”²⁴ he wrote, indicating that any animosity that existed between them would be irrelevant since they would be working to his agenda and under his direction.

Biographical assessments

The historiography and academic study of Huey P Long is reflective of the dichotomous relationship that Long had with the people of Louisiana during his terms in political office. Just as there were those who revered him and those who abhorred him, so academic assessments of him also fall into two camps. The orthodox assessment designates Long as a power-hungry corrupt official, whose domination of Louisiana was that of a dictator. The

²¹ William Ivy Hair *The Kingfish and his realm – the life and times of Huey P. Long* (1991, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge) p298

²² Long (1935) p10

²³ *Ibid* p13

²⁴ *Ibid* p15

revisionist view assesses him as an essentially benevolent politician who worked for the good of the people of Louisiana, and whose tactics were justified by his achievements, and by the unique environment of Louisiana politics. An additional factor which exists within the Long literature is the dominance of T Harry Williams' biography *Huey Long* (1969). Based on oral history methodology, *Huey Long* tends to be used as the standard work on Long. The predominant revisionist piece on Long, *Huey Long* has established its approach as the orthodoxy, and is disproportionately influential in the academic discourse. It is the standard work against which all subsequent works are compared and contrasted.²⁵ However, the book's importance lies not only in its detailed contents, but also in the response to it and the influence it continues to hold over studies of Long. The emergence of the neo-orthodox assessments in reaction to Williams' sympathetic thesis, which have dominated the discourse since the 1980s, are testament not only to the persuasiveness of the original assessments of Long but also to the creation of a second historiography within Long literature: the historiography of T Harry Williams' *Huey Long*.

Chronologically, it is the orthodox interpretation of Long which dominates the historiography until the late-1960s and the revisionism introduced by Williams' *Huey Long*. That the anti-Long discourse was so prevalent for over 30 years following Long's death, is not unexpected when one considers the demographics and resources of pro and anti-Long supporters. Long owed much of his electoral popularity to the poor and uneducated. Many of Long's opponents came from the political elite in Louisiana; especially those who had dominated politics in the decades prior to Long's ascendancy.

When it was first published on 1 April 1933,²⁶ six months before Long's own autobiography, Webster Smith's *The Kingfish – A Biography of Huey P. Long* had the subtitle: *The curious tale of the life and adventures of Huey P. Long*, which suggested, to at least one contemporary reviewer, that the author had put "his tongue in his cheek and a *so help me*,

²⁵ Pruitt, Paul M "Longshot: Huey Long and the Historians" *Reviews in American History* Vol 20, No 2 (Jun 1992) p256

²⁶ H Allen Smith "Bound To Be Read" *The Piqua Daily Call*, 14 April 1933 p4

it's true expression on his face”²⁷ in order to tell the story of Long’s life to date. While not the work of one of Long’s admirers, the tone of the book is an almost gossipy recitation of Long’s activities rather than a purely antagonistic one, but Smith does seek to alert his readers to the potential danger that he believed Long appeared to represent. Despite its tone, Smith does dedicate almost one hundred pages of his 286 page work to a report of the events during the 1929 impeachment. However, while Smith recognised that the impeachment and its immediate aftermath had caused a “terrible strain on Huey,” it was his opinion that once elected as US Senator, Long had begun to make “overtures, unexpectedly generous, to his political enemies,” because he now “felt safe, and he wanted peace.”²⁸ Despite this assertion, Smith’s reports on Long’s activities in the period after the Senate election emphasise instead that his intention was to consolidate his control in the state rather than to initiate a reconciliation. In his summary, Smith appears ambivalent about Long’s future, questioning whether he would “continue his meteoric rise.” He counters Long’s success thus far with a catalogue of the “cries from people and press, cries of demagogue and crook and boor and communist,”²⁹ which had been raised against him, thereby suggesting that a continuation of what had gone before was indicative of a possible future. Smith addresses the question of a President Long to his readers, demanding that they consider whether “hundreds of thousands of Louisianians cannot all be wrong.”³⁰

One of the first texts on Long to be published after his death, Harnett T Kane’s *Louisiana Hayride – The American Rehearsal for Dictatorship 1928-1940*, not only reviews Long’s career and time in power but it also attempts to contextualise the impact of and experience of the post-Long era from the viewpoint of 1941. As an academic text it is journalistic in style and frustratingly short on references and sources for quotes, but it offers a clear example of the contemporary status of the Long historiography – virulently negative. Kane also suggests

²⁷ Neil H Swanson “Natural History of A Kingfish” *The Evening Sun, Baltimore* 15 April 1933 p6

²⁸ Webster Smith *The Kingfish – A Biography of Huey P Long* (1933, G P Putnam’s Sons, New York & London) p217

²⁹ *Ibid* p285

³⁰ *Ibid* p286

that Long gained power because of the failures of the Louisianian state system and clearly links Long's political iconoclasm and mass popular appeal to the European fascist dictators of the 1930s.

T Harry Williams' biography created a new academic discourse and debate about Long by offering an alternative assessment of the Louisianian senator, his politics, life and activities to that which had dominated the discourse since his death in 1935. Williams' work echoes Long's personal and political popularity, by having its basis in almost 300 interviews with individuals who had known him. Part of the praise for Williams' book is for his exemplary use of oral history techniques to collect and collate his information, a methodology made necessary due to the unavailability of Long's papers. As an introductory text on Long, Williams' *Huey Long* presents the reader with a puzzle. The text is detailed, extensive and overwhelmingly pro-Long and yet there is a sense that the author is not entirely convinced by his own arguments. The background to the writing of this book may explain this apparent lack of conviction when one takes into account the interactions between Williams and Long's son, Senator Russell B Long, over access to interviewees and funding for the project. A number of critics have suggested, without openly claiming collusion, that this connection does, to some degree, taint the independence of Williams' work. In his preface, Williams addresses the issue, detailing the interactions and agreements he had with Russell prior to the commencement of his work, in an attempt to dispel any accusations of a collaboration. Yet, despite these claims, Williams' statement made it clear that he was indebted to Russell in both monetary terms (contributions to research grants)³¹ and for the encouragement he had given to Long's followers to cooperate with Professor Williams.³² The degree to which Williams was beholden to Russell, however, is made more clearly evident through the letters exchanged between them. The letters, including those discussing the financial arrangements for Williams' work on the biography, form part of the Russell B Long Collection held at

³¹ Williams (1969) px

³² Ibid pviii

Louisiana State University and have not previously been published. In October 1955, Williams clearly articulated the problem and proposed a solution:

“The reason for having an agency disburse the finances is to place an intermediary between you and me for our mutual protection . . . Again, if you were to advance me financial assistance and I should return part of it, the impression would gain credence that you had engaged me to express a particular viewpoint. Neither of [us] can afford to let that happen. I think we are agreed that a biography of your father will have to be objective. We must not give any possible critics the smallest chance to charge otherwise.”³³

This letter is one of a series between Williams and Russell in 1955 and 1956 regarding the arrangements for the financing of Williams’ work. The text suggests that Williams wanted to avoid any suggestion that Russell had, by providing funding of \$10,000, influenced the content, tone and discussion in the work. The solution, which was agreed upon by early 1956, sought to circumvent the allegation of collusion and placed the fund with the American History Research Center, which would “select” T Harry Williams to carry out the work:

First, you would deposit a sum with the Center to have somebody do a life of your father. The Center would then pick me to do it. In this way I would be financed by the Center instead of by you, and nobody could charge that you and I were in cahoots to do a cooked up work.³⁴

Other letters in the collection demonstrate the degree to which Russell actively acted as an intermediary to persuade his father’s associates to work with the biographer. In March 1961, Williams wrote that he wanted to meet with Judge Tom Hood and William Burton and asked if “a letter from [Russell] to them [would] help?”³⁵ In his letter to Hood, Russell urged him “to give Harry Williams your full cooperation because I am satisfied that it will, in all likelihood, result in something of enduring value to the Long name.”³⁶ In this letter, Russell is explicit in his condemnation of previous biographies of his father, which had “failed miserably, primarily

³³ Letter from T Harry Williams to Senator Russell Long dated 21 October 1955, *Long (Russell B) Collection* Mss 3700 Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 3-21

³⁴ Letter from T Harry Williams to Russell Long date 6 March 1956 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 3-21

³⁵ Letter from T Harry Williams to Russell Long dated 15 March 1961 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 3-25

³⁶ Letter from Russell Long to John T Hood, Jr dated 20 March 1961 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 3-25

because their source of material was limited to the biased newspaper accounts of the period.”³⁷ This letter also confirms the degree of influence that Russell had over the process in which the idea of the biography was cultivated. He stated

“I went to considerable effort to encourage the University to permit Professor Williams to have sufficient time that he might undertake this work because I believe it is likely to be the first fair and impartial biography of Huey Long that has been written.”³⁸

When Williams carried out the work for his biography, Russell believed that a substantial body of his father’s papers did not exist. As a result, the oral history methodology was used to collate the memories of almost 300 people. While impressive in the detail extracted, the limitations of this methodology can be found not only in the accuracy of the memories of these interviewees, it was also impacted by their personal biases and their willingness, or lack thereof, to participate in the exercise. Opinions and memories are subjective, in particular those stated at a remove of, at least, 20 years from the events under discussion, when hindsight and retrospective assessments have potentially skewed perspectives.

As Williams was coming to the latter stages of his research, it was revealed that four filing cabinets of Long’s papers did exist and were held in archives at Louisiana State University. Having reviewed the contents of these folders, Williams recommended that they be “classified as Huey P. Long Papers, Public Service Commission File; and Huey P. Long Papers, Private Law Cases File,” and he recorded the existence of these papers in his biography.³⁹ However, in August 1969, with the manuscript of *Huey Long* at the printers, John M Price, a graduate student at Louisiana State University, discovered several more filing cabinets in the basement of the Hill Memorial Library on campus, containing a much larger collection of Long papers. Williams and Price’s assessment of this collection reported on its contents, including the observation that although many of the folders in this collection bore “intriguing titles,” they were empty, the contents having been “removed and probably

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Williams, T Harry and Price, John Milton “The Huey P Long Papers at Louisiana State University” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 36, No 2 (May 1970) p256

destroyed.”⁴⁰ The contents listed included, family correspondence, items relating to both of Long’s gubernatorial campaigns, correspondence about the severance tax plus items and correspondence relating to the impeachment in 1929. Despite acknowledging that their report was based on a preliminary assessment and that the materials required processing and further study, Williams declared that while

“some of the new items [were] of genuine worth. They would not have caused [him] to alter materially any section of the account of Long’s career or to change any of [his] conclusions.”⁴¹

Although it is likely that Williams’ stance was in part constrained by the knowledge that the biography had already been published, in the context of subsequent works on Long, this is a crucial statement, especially since, as discussed earlier, assessments produced after 1969 had been strongly influenced by the tone, direction and content of Williams’ biography.

One of the benefits of Williams’ detailed approach to biography is that his text contextualises his subject matter. In *Huey Long*, not only does Williams provide detail regarding the environment and people surrounding and influencing Long, he supplies assessments of contemporary characters and their activities, albeit in a Long-centric format. While the detail in the biography is a notable and praiseworthy characteristic, it also demonstrates one of its major faults. Tied by the confidentiality agreements to protect his informants, Williams’ reports of conversations and opinions of Long, and the attribution of many of the key details of Long, his behaviours and tactics are limited in the footnotes to the catch-all phrase “confidential communication.” Williams risked devaluing his own work and minimising the credibility both of his informants and his text to protect his sources. This frustration for readers and academics was mitigated by Williams, who placed his transcripts into the archives at Louisiana State University under a “time seal” that they may “eventually . . . be available to other scholars.”⁴² It is perhaps now time for a revised version of *Huey Long* to be

⁴⁰ Ibid p257

⁴¹ Ibid pp257-258

⁴² Williams (1969) p ix

published with all of Williams' sources identified, but that is a project outside of the remit of this study.

Williams' work, though flawed, is such a detailed exploration of the life and death of Long, based on oral history methodology, that Max Beloff was led to argue, "it is doubtful whether anyone will feel that he has much of importance to add to the portrait."⁴³ However, Beloff's argument compounds the assumption that Williams' biography is the recognised standard work on Long, while simultaneously failing to recognise the gaps and misinterpretations inherent in the piece. Due to perceptions such as Beloff's, subsequent biographies were required to be positioned in the context of, and are inevitably judged against, *Huey Long*. To successfully avoid being defined by the *Huey Long* historiography, it is necessary for academics to focus their attention on specific aspects, incidents or trends of the Long experience, rather than on the full length biographical assessments. As David H Bennett and Richard Lowitt observed of Alan Brinkley's *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression*, Brinkley is not telling a new or an original tale.⁴⁴ Instead, by positioning both Long and Coughlin in the social context of the Great Depression and by taking the unusual step of contrasting the movements and aims of the two men rather than simply linking them as a pair of anti-New Deal demagogues, Brinkley has developed a study of "radical politics of the thirties"⁴⁵ which takes Long out of the confines of Louisiana state politics and positions him in the national arena. Since Brinkley's work is not a biography of Long, he was able to move the debate on Long forward.

However, the biography's lens casts a long shadow which influences even those pieces of work focusing on specific incidents. Matthew J Schott identifies Garry Boulard's 1998 study *Huey Long Invades New Orleans: The Siege of a City, 1934-36*, as an example of the

⁴³ Beloff, Max, "Book Review: T Harry Williams, *Huey Long*" *Journal of American Studies* (1971) 4, p265

⁴⁴ Bennett, David H "Book review: *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression* by Alan Brinkley" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 49, No 1 (Feb 1983) p140; Lowitt, Richard "The Odd Couple" *Reviews in American History* Vol 11 No 2 (Jun 1983) p257

⁴⁵ Bennett, p141

persistent influence of Williams' *Huey Long*. Schott argues that the distortion of the Long narrative produced by Williams influences academic judgements, to the extent that the brutality of Long's actions are underplayed. Boulard appears to conclude that "if only the anti-Longs had wisely and with foresight surrendered all power to the Kingfish, he would have been someone other than himself."⁴⁶ Michael L Kurtz is equally critical of Boulard's failure to "convey the atmosphere of fear and terror that the man had generated in many parts of the state by 1935,"⁴⁷ a critique which echoes that of Cecil Morgan's 1970 review of the Williams book, that "the pro-Long slant of the author further minimizes the impression of fear to the point of its practical obliteration,"⁴⁸ a fact which Morgan believed to be a major error in Williams' telling of the Long story. However, despite the influence of Williams' biography on the positioning of his work, Boulard's piece itself, by focussing on this single incident, expands the knowledge of the Long era, of Long's dominance of Louisiana, of his interactions with other players of the era and of the New Orleans machine.

Another work which focusses on a specific aspect of Long, is Richard C Cortner's *The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America*. This work is, primarily, an examination of the relevance of *Grosjean vs American Press Co* (1936)⁴⁹ in the development of constitutional law in respect of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Although one of the few texts dealing specifically with Long's relationship with the newspapers, Cortner's work adds little to the Long canon, repeating much that has been explored elsewhere, in particular in the Williams

⁴⁶ Schott, Matthew J "Review: Huey Long Invades New Orleans: The Siege of a City, 1934 – 1936 by Garry Boulard" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 66, No 2 (May 2000) p443

⁴⁷ Kurtz, Michael L, "Book Review: Huey Long Invades New Orleans: The Siege of a City, 1934 – 1936 by Garry Boulard" *The Journal of American History* Vol 86, No 4 (Mar 2000) p 1842

⁴⁸ Morgan, Cecil "Book Review: Huey Long By T Harry Williams, New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc. 1969 Pp xiv, 884. \$12.50" *Tulane Law Review* 45 1971 p680

⁴⁹ In *Grosjean vs American Press Co* the US Supreme Court "unanimously invalidated a license tax on the business of selling advertising (in the amount of 2 percent of the gross receipts from such sales) imposed by Louisiana in 1934 on all newspapers with a circulation of more than twenty thousand copies per week. The tax was challenged as an abridgment of freedom of the press and as a violation of equal protection. It was noted by counsel that only thirteen of the 163 newspapers in the state had sufficient circulation to be required to pay it, and twelve of those thirteen were actively opposed to the Huey Long administration, at whose instigation the tax was enacted."
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095909172>

text. The strengths of his book, however, lie in Cortner's examination of the specifics of the *Grosjean* case. Cortner has established what Roger Handberg calls a "research niche" by examining in depth landmark cases in constitutional law,⁵⁰ and his argument is that *Grosjean vs American Press Co* (1936) is a landmark case in the development of the freedom of the press and first amendment constitutional law. However, it is instead a case which, while important, built on the precedent setting decisions of *Near vs Minnesota* (1931)⁵¹ and which then forms the basis for the continuing debate about freedom of expression.⁵²

In his examination of the *Grosjean* case, Cortner places it in the context of 1930s Louisiana and specifically the Louisiana ruled by Long.⁵³ In reviews of his book, there is a great deal of praise for Cortner's detailed examination of the Louisiana newspapers (especially every edition of the *Louisiana/American Progress*) and legal records;⁵⁴ an attention to detail which is diminished by Cortner's reliance on secondary sources for his contextual material, especially biographies of Long. Long had attracted the support of some of the state's daily newspapers in his early years in office but when the mutual antipathy with the daily papers grew, he had retained the support of the weekly newspapers.⁵⁵ Cortner fails to explore both Long's popularity and this disparity in his relationship with the daily newspapers and the weekly editions, and the differences between the city publications and those from the country. In an in-depth assessment of the *Grosjean* case, Cortner attempts to place the case

⁵⁰ Handberg, Roger "Book Review: The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America" *Perspectives on Political Science* Spring 97, Vol 26 Issue 2, p101

⁵¹ In *Near vs Minnesota* the US Supreme Court "struck down a state law allowing prior restraint (government censorship in advance) as unconstitutional"
<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/lessons-plans/landmark-supreme-court-cases-elessons/near-v-minnesota-1931/>

⁵² Murphy, Paul L, "Book Review: The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 63, No 2 (May 1997) p 438: Handberg p101

⁵³ Richard C Cortner, *The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America* p1

⁵⁴ Dynia, Philip A, "Book Review: The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America" *American Politics*, June 1997 Vol 91, No 2 p450

⁵⁵ Merriman, Scott A "Book Review: The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America" *Journal of American Culture* Fall 1997, Vol 20 No 3 p83

in the context of the wider relationship between Long and the newspapers of Louisiana. His vignettes of the personalities involved in each stage of the events both add and detract from his overall messages. While it is useful to get a sense of the backgrounds and political motivations of the actors, this technique does give an impression of padding the story as if the main topic lacks sufficient substance. In his preface, Richard Cortner acknowledges that his research for his book had brought him to the conclusion that the orthodox assessment of Long was the correct one, an acknowledgement which is generally backed up by the tone of his book. This perspective detracts from Cortner's work in one of the under-examined areas of Long's political life – his relationship with the Louisianian daily press. While some reviewers recognised the limitation of Cortner's arguments resulting from his negative view of Long, others, such as Timothy S Huebner, accept the analysis and perpetuate the designation of Long as "one of the great despots of American history."⁵⁶

The historiography of T Harry Williams' *Huey Long*

The contemporary reviews of *Huey Long* are indicative not only of the debate which would emerge in the 1980s as a counter to the revisionist assessment presented by Williams; but also of the strong feelings which the work generated in many commentators, especially those who had been political opponents of Long in Louisiana. Cecil Morgan, one of the leaders of the impeachment proceedings against Long in 1929, reviewed the book for the *Tulane Law Review*. Morgan's status as a political opponent of Long is acknowledged on the third page of the article but it is immediately evident from his opening sentence in which he characterises the book as "a story" of Long.⁵⁷ In his exploration of the weaknesses of Williams' work Allan Sindler echoes Morgan's categorisation when he too criticises the work as "the story"⁵⁸ of Long and condemns it as an historical account, which does not analyse

⁵⁶ Hueber, Timothy S "The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America by Richard C. Cortner" *The Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol 75, No 4 (Spring 1997) p493

⁵⁷ Morgan, Cecil "Book review: Huey Long by T Harry Williams" *Tulane Law Review* 45 1970-1971 p676

⁵⁸ Sindler, Allan P "Book review: Huey Long by T. Harry Williams" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, Vol 11, No 4 (Autumn 1970) p372

Long's term in politics or his impact and influence on the politics of Louisiana;⁵⁹ a weakness which can also be applied to other biographical assessments of Long.

Glen Jeansonne is one of the most emphatic of the anti-Williams interpreters of Long. In "The Apotheosis of Huey Long," published in 1989, Jeansonne proposes a retrospective review of *Huey Long* arguing that Williams was looking for a way to rehabilitate Long, and that the political and academic context of the 1960s offered support for that endeavour.⁶⁰ Jeansonne challenges Williams' assertions about Long by basing his arguments in the context of both evidential material, not available to Williams, and on the political and social context of the 1970s, which he argues had made Americans less forgiving of a flamboyant and "unchecked executive."⁶¹ In comparing Long to Richard M Nixon, Jeansonne perhaps takes his analogy too far, although the comparison does serve to demonstrate how unlikely it is that Long would have been able to successfully replicate his hold on Louisiana's power in the national context, especially from within the confines of the presidency.

William Ivy Hair's *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (1991) is perhaps the most easily accessible of the *Huey Long* historiography. Where Williams' book was written against the background of the scholarly climate of the 1960s which assessed historical figures against the 'great men' theory irrespective of the immorality of their activities;⁶² for many Hair's work redressed the balance, re-emphasising the case that Long's obsession with power and control over Louisiana was, in fact, a dictatorship. As Robert E Snyder argues, Williams' benign interpretation of Long "set off colleagues to revise his appraisal."⁶³ As well as using additionally available materials, most notably Long's papers, Hair offers a clear rebuttal of Williams' thesis, assessing many of the same sources as Williams and reaching conclusions about Long which echo the evaluations which had

⁵⁹ Sandler (Autumn 1970) p376

⁶⁰ Jeansonne, Glen "The Apotheosis of Huey Long" *Biography*, Vol 12, No4 (Fall 1989) p297

⁶¹ Jeansonne (Fall 1989) p297

⁶² Schott, Matthew J "Review: The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P Long by William Ivy Hair" *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 71, No 3 (Jan 1993) p379

⁶³ Snyder, Robert E "Review: The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P Long by William Ivy Hair" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 59, No 2 (May 1993) p414

prevailed prior to the publication of *Huey Long* in 1969. Yet, this reversion to the orthodox view did not bring an end to the debate created by Williams. Instead it set the scene for further debates and explorations of Long. A fundamental weakness of the Williams book, which is repeated by the Hair text, and which further emphasises the link between the two, is the lack of assessment of the impact of Long beyond his death. Both books end with the assassination and fail to take a broader view of Long's, and his machine's, influence on Louisiana politics in the decades which followed.

The most recent biography of Long, Richard D White Jr's *Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P. Long* (2006) adds so little to "the colourful and familiar story"⁶⁴ that there are few academic reviews of the text. White's interpretation of Long owes much to the Williams revisionist work and was published to coincide with the release of the re-make of *All The King's Men* (2006).⁶⁵ The film is an adaptation of Robert Penn Warren's 1946 novel of the same name. Warren always denied that Willie Stark was based on Long, although the fictional governor pursues a pathway which echoes that of Long to such a degree that, as Hamilton Basso observed, "he may not be intended to represent Huey Long, but it is hard to see how he could represent anybody else."⁶⁶ As Ladell Payne reports, Warren did acknowledge in 1963 that without Long "the novel would never have been written."⁶⁷ One of the repeated criticisms of the revisionist assessments of Long is that they perpetuate a mythology or fictionalisation of the Long era which has sanitised the reality. The linking of White's book to the film of *All The King's Men* further reinforces the mythology with the inclusion of a special feature on the DVD version entitled *The Legend and Lore of Huey Long*. Commentators on this feature

⁶⁴ Lührssen, David & Jeansonne, Glen "Review – Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P Long" *History Today* Vol 57, Issue 10 (Oct 2007) p65

⁶⁵ The original film version of *All The King's Men* won 3 Academy Awards in 1949, including Best Picture, Best Actor for Broderick Crawford as Willie Stark and Best Supporting Actress for Mercedes McCambridge as Sadie Burke, Stark's political aide

⁶⁶ Hamilton Basso, "The Huey Long Legend" *Life* XXI (Dec 9 1946) quoted in Payne, Ladell "Willie Stark and Huey Long: Atmosphere, Myth or Suggestion?" *American Quarterly* Vol 20, No 3 (Autumn 1968) p 580

⁶⁷ Payne p581

include academics such as White, Alan Brinkley and John C Rodrigue as well as the political commentator and Democratic Party strategist, James Carville.⁶⁸

From Walt Disney in 1937 to *The Simpsons* in 2000, Huey P Long has remained a source of inspiration for animators in the American film and TV industry.⁶⁹ During Long's lifetime there is evidence that his charismatic personality was an attraction for the film industry, as can be seen in letters regarding a film of Long's career and life proposed by Warner Brothers in 1933. Amongst the papers held in the David R McGuire memorial collection in the archives at Tulane University are a series of letters relating to a couple of proposed and competing film projects about Long's life and political career: the proposed collaboration between Lin Bonner, writer of the "Hollywood Call Sheet" column, Clarke Salmon, editor of the *Item-Tribune*, and Long, and another from Warner Brothers. The Warner Brothers project is the focus of these letters, with Bonner and Salmon seeking to encourage Long to prevent the release, if not the actual making, of the film. While Bonner advised Clarke to get "our friend" to stymie the Warner Brothers production by "an attitude of righteous indignation," threatening libel if they "hold an individual up to public scorn etc;"⁷⁰ Salmon appears to have been resigned to the possibility that Long would agree to the Warner Brothers film. Although he did suggest to Long that he insist Warner Brothers change their leading man from Edward G Robinson to James Cagney since "Cagney is Warner's best bet just now," and, Salmon wrote

⁶⁸ "The Legend and Lore of Huey Long" *All The King's Men* (2006) Director & Writer: Steven Zaillian

⁶⁹ In footnotes to his article "Latent Symbolism, Archetypal Patterns and Socio-Philosophical Implications in Donald Duck" *The North American Review*, Vol 251 No 3 (May 1966) p17, Ray Puechner states that the three nephews of Donald Duck, Huey, Dewey and Louie, represent "Huey Long, Thomas E. Dewey, and Louis Duc de Dauphin, an obscure 16th century pretender to the French throne." In a season 11 episode of *The Simpsons* (The Mansion Family) Cornelius Chapman, Springfield's oldest resident is said to have taken "a bullet for Huey Long"
http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view_episode_scripts.php?episode=s11e12

⁷⁰ Letter dated 1 March 1933 from Lin Bonner to Clarke Salmon, *David R McGuire memorial collection* 1745 – 2005 (LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 271) Tulane University, New Orleans Series 4 Jack B McGuire collection of Huey P Long papers Box 4 folder 18

“He is red headed and more the type. Robinson has almost always played racketeer roles, and his selection for the part is, to my mind, an indication that the picture they plan is not in any way complimentary to you.”⁷¹

It is not entirely clear whether this was a sincere, ironic or mischievous suggestion on the part of Salmon, as Robinson and Cagney, both then on contract to Warner Brothers, were known for playing shady characters and crooks at that time. However, Salmon does appear to have been genuine in his advice to Long that the proposed film may be a derogatory treatment of him. While a letter and telegram from Warner Brothers’ screenwriter William Rankin does not clarify the intent or direction of the film, letters from John D Stephon, the editor of *Film Opinion* and William V Gale do seem to infer that the Warner Brothers film was not likely to be entirely favourable to Long;⁷² both Stephon and Gale proposed alternative and separate projects, with Stephon suggesting that this was necessary to make it apparent to the public “throughout the country precisely what you stand for in government and other aspects of political philosophy.”⁷³

In the absence of further correspondence, a draft of a script for *Kingfish* written by Long’s secretary Earle J Christenberry and William Rankin, held in the McGuire collection, suggests that not only did Long go along with the Warner Brothers’ project, but that a degree of control of the project had been negotiated about Hollywood’s representation of Long’s reputation. While this film was not made, a sanitised version of the Long story was utilised in a later Cagney film, *A Lion is in the Streets*, including a reference to the rain on election day in 1924 and a variation of his meeting with Rose McConnell.⁷⁴ This film was based on Addria Locke Langley’s 1945 book of the same name.

⁷¹ Letter dated 3 March 1933 from Clarke Salmon to Senator Long, Jack B McGuire collection of Huey P Long papers Box 4 folder 18

⁷² Letters dated 27 April 1933 from John D Stephon Editor *Film Opinion* and 5 May 1933 from William V Gale to Senator Long, Jack B McGuire collection of Huey P Long papers Box 4 folder 18

⁷³ *Ibid*

⁷⁴ Scott Allen Nollen, *Warners Wiseguys: All 112 Films that Robinson, Cagney and Bogart Made for the Studio* (2008 McFarland & Company Inc Publishers, Jefferson, North Carolina & London) pp335-336

Impeachment

At every level of federal and state politics in the United States, politicians are subject to the constitutional restrictions of their office. Failure to adhere to these conditions puts the office holder at risk of removal through formal constitutional processes, such as recalls or impeachment. While all American politicians are subject to this oversight, for some impeachment may retrospectively be seen as an almost inevitable consequence of the way in which they conducted their political careers. Whether the impeachment charges ultimately focus on perceived dereliction of duty or alleged criminal behaviour, it may be argued that the manner in which a politician interacts with their political environment, the intensity of their rhetoric, the scope of their legislative agenda, their treatment of political opponents and vested interests, and the way in which they create, shape and present a particular self-image will combine to influence their political destiny. The character, behaviour, activities and programmes of Huey P Long ensured that impeachment was always a likely consequence of his life in politics.

Long appeared to acknowledge this reality in his own career when, in response to the 1934 US Senate judiciary committee investigation,⁷⁵ he wrote in the *American Progress*:

“I never held a public office in my life during which I was not under some kind of threat of removal or impeachment from the day I went into politics until the present day. I have never held one, and I do not expect to hold one. I have tried for about sixteen years to have it some other way, and it has never been any other way, so now I have stopped trying to have it any other way.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ That investigation had been instigated in response to demands by John M Parker, a former Louisiana governor and opponent of Long. In his petition to Vice President Garner, Parker had claimed that Long was “personally dishonest, corrupt, and immoral” and should be incarcerated as a “dangerous paranoiac” as a matter of public safety. The judiciary committee dismissed Parker’s petition as it had “little to do with political misconduct” and was unsupported “by any specific evidence.” Williams (1969) p683 & p687

⁷⁶ Huey P Long, *American Progress*, 8 February 1934, Ibid p687

Williams called this “a revealing statement,” a bitter response to the investigation and, he further claimed, that Long “had to be ruthless because his enemies were ruthless.”⁷⁷ It is a statement, however, which when brought into the context of Long’s other references to the impeachment attempts brought against him, emphasises both the degree to which he resented the 1929 impeachment, and the extent to which it was a transformational event in his career. Perhaps, more importantly, it is also a piece of political posturing, a deliberately disingenuous attempt by which he could utilise the apparently overwhelming opposition to him in Louisiana in order to justify his actions and programmes to his supporters.

Long’s impeachment should first be examined within the frame of reference of impeachment in the United States, specifically at gubernatorial level, as well as the history of impeachment in Louisiana.

Definition of impeachment

As has been discussed elsewhere, notably by Raoul Berger, the federally constituted provisions for impeachment are based on the determination of the Framers of the Constitution that the American model would not directly replicate the broad provisions of eighteenth century English law. So, while the process at both federal and state level in the United States of America owes its origins to the English law of impeachment, by separating impeachment from criminal proceedings, the Framers took the decision to restrict both its scope and its reach.⁷⁸ In its broadest definition, impeachment in the United States is a political procedure to remove an elected official from office. Constitutional limitations restrict the process by which this removal is enacted, by whom and for what offences. At the federal level, the phraseology of the impeachment clause may retrospectively suggest that the Framers intended that impeachable offences are limited to those understood contemporarily

⁷⁷ Ibid p687

⁷⁸ Scarborough, Keith A “the Awful discretion’: The Impeachment Experience in the States” *Nebraska Law Review*, Vol 55, No 1 (1975) pp 93-95; Gerhardt, Michael J “Putting the Law of Impeachment in Perspective” (1999) *Faculty Publications Paper 975* <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/facpubs/975> pp908-909; Gerhardt, Michael J “The Lessons of Impeachment History” (1999) *Faculty Publications Paper 978* <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/facpubs/978> pp605-609;

as “treason, bribery or high crimes and misdemeanors,” however, as Berger argues, since Congress has resisted the need to “supply a code of impeachable offenses” it is clear that the intention has since been interpreted to ensure that each incident would be determined on a case-by-case basis.⁷⁹

The constitutions of the United States of America, at both the state and the federal level, detail the broad processes and procedures by which removal may occur, including, to a greater or lesser degree, the offences for which impeachment may be deemed to be appropriate. The severest punishment available is removal from office, with the corollary penalty, disqualification from holding office in future. As such, a political official faces two direct outcomes if the impeachment charges against him are upheld:⁸⁰ removal from office and disqualification from holding office in the future. Ancillary outcomes may include criminal charges with the subsequent possibility of penal sentencing, and the debasement of one’s personal and political reputation and character. If politics is perception,⁸¹ then it is not just the official sanctions which hold the greatest threat to an elected officer, it is the latter outcome which holds possibly the greatest penalty for one who conducts his life in the public and political sphere. In the United States of America, impeachment is a rarely utilised political tool reserved to remove officials from office. Its rarity does not preclude its use, or the threat of it, as a partisan political weapon. At the executive level, there have been two impeachments – Andrew Johnson (1868) and William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton (1998-99), although the threat of impeachment was sufficient to induce President Richard M Nixon to resign in 1974. At the state level, across all 50 states, 238 years and with 2350 holders of the office of governor, there have been 17 gubernatorial impeachments.⁸² Impeachment may be a rarely utilised tool but it is not an archaic tool. These seventeen impeachments took place from the early nineteenth century through to the twenty first century.

⁷⁹ Raoul Berger *Impeachment: The Constitutional Problems* (1973, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts) pp73-79

⁸⁰ As only male governors have been impeached to date, the male pronoun will be used throughout this thesis.

⁸¹ *The American President* (1995) Director: Rob Reiner, Writer: Aaron Sorkin

⁸² Data from National Governors’ Association website (nga.org), 29 August 2013

Gubernatorial Impeachment

While the primary focus of impeachment studies is high profile presidential impeachments, studies of gubernatorial impeachments tend to be limited to either a study of an individual case or of impeachments within a single state. Comparative or collective studies of impeachment at state executive level are few in number. Amongst these few texts, there is a lack of consensus on precisely how many gubernatorial impeachments have occurred. Andrew McNitt, in his 2011 paper, puts the figure at thirteen.⁸³ A research response for the Illinois General Assembly on “Governors’ Impeachments in U.S. History” from July 2008 states “Fourteen governors have been impeached, including two who were impeached twice.”⁸⁴ McNitt, despite asserting a total of 13 gubernatorial impeachments, lists 14 governors, including Rob Blagojevich of Illinois, who was impeached in 2009 after the Illinois report was published, but excludes William Kellogg of Louisiana, who is included in the Illinois report. A cumulative assessment of these two articles suggests that the total of governors impeached to 2009 is 15, including Henry S Johnston (Oklahoma) and Harrison Reed (Florida), both of whom were impeached twice - a total of seventeen gubernatorial impeachments. One possible explanation for the difficulty in determining exactly how many cases of gubernatorial impeachment have occurred in United States history is perhaps due to the way in which cases are reported. A search of the National Governors Association (NGA) website (www.nga.org) for the word “impeach” reveals 43 references on that site.⁸⁵ A review of these references indicates the complications inherent in summarising impeachment cases. It is difficult to determine from the brief profiles of governors on the NGA website whether the references to impeachment mean that the governor was

⁸³ McNitt, Andrew “The Causes and Consequences of Gubernatorial Impeachment” presented at the 2011 Western Political Science Association; San Antonio, Texas, (April, 8, 2011) p1 In a footnote McNitt notes that a “research report compiled by the Connecticut legislative research office (McCarthy 2004), however, reported finding more than twenty cases of gubernatorial impeachment. Unfortunately that publication reported on only four governors who were removed from office in the twentieth century.” p13

⁸⁴ O’Grady, Patrick “Governors’ Impeachments in U.S. History” *Research Response Illinois General Assembly* (July, 8, 2008) p1

⁸⁵ Search carried out on www.nga.org on 28 August 2013

impeached in the strict sense of the state's constitution or if impeachment was only threatened. There is also a recurring misunderstanding about when an official has been impeached, with some observers conflating the impeachment with a guilty verdict. The specific definition of the term means that the state's House of Representatives has brought impeachment charges against the governor. A broader examination of the official journals of each state Legislature would reveal, at a minimum, how many governors have faced impeachment charges and the possibility of a trial by the state senate. Such an examination, while outside the purview of this work, if carried out across all of the fifty state Legislatures may also reveal how often impeachment or the threat of impeachment was utilised as a partisan political tool.⁸⁶

The following table lists the twenty seven incidents of threatened, initiated and actual gubernatorial impeachment recorded on the National Governors Association website as at August 2013. Of these twenty seven incidents, seventeen cases of gubernatorial impeachment are listed, including two each for Johnston and Reed. An overview of the academic study of impeachment reveals that such articles are primarily published within law journals, rather than political science or history publications. One explanation for this trend may be the relative rarity of impeachment cases at all levels of United States government, which necessarily reduces the possibility for the comparative study of events. Another explanation is that arguments regarding the language of impeachment, in particular that of constitutional texts, are limited, by this rarity of cases, to discussions of the original text rather than interpretation via legal precedence. As such, it is the discussion of the legal language which dominates academic study rather than the examinations of the details of specific cases.

⁸⁶ All states except Oregon provide for the impeachment of governors. As in the case of the federal government, the impeachment process starts with the lower body of the legislature and the trial is conducted by the upper body in every state but Alaska—where the process is reversed, and Nebraska, which has a unicameral legislature charged with the full impeachment process. In most cases, impeachment requires a majority of members, while conviction generally requires a two-thirds or other special majority. <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/management-resources/governors-powers-and-authority.html>

Gubernatorial impeachments ⁸⁷				
Name	State	Date	Impeachment status	Outcome of impeachment
Thomas McKean	Pennsylvania	1807	Unsuccessful attempt to impeach	None
William Findlay	Pennsylvania	~1817	Investigation into years as State Treasurer and impeachment sought; failed	None
David Rittenhouse Porter	Pennsylvania	~1844	Unsuccessful attempt to impeach	None
Charles Lawrence Robinson	Kansas	1862	Impeached	Not guilty
James Madison Wells	Louisiana	~1865	Calls for impeachment	None
Harrison Reed	Florida	1868	Impeached	Legislature adjourned before Senate could conduct an impeachment trial; Supreme Court of Florida ruled had not been impeached as Senate not quorate when charges brought.
William Woods Holden	North Carolina	1870	Impeached	Removed from office
Powell Clayton	Arkansas	~1870	Impeached	Charges dropped
David Butler	Nebraska	1871	Impeached	Removed from office
Robert Kingston Scott	South Carolina	1871	Impeachment resolution dropped	None
Harrison Reed	Florida	1872	Impeached	Acquitted
Henry Clay Warmoth	Louisiana	1872	Impeached	Term ended, charges expunged
William Pitt Kellogg	Louisiana	1876	Impeached	Senate dropped charges
Adelbert Ames	Mississippi	1876	Impeached	Made a deal to resign & charges dropped
William Sulzer	New York	1913	Impeached	Removed from office
Lee Cruce	Oklahoma	~1915	Impeachment resolution defeated by one vote	None
James Edward Ferguson	Texas	1917	Impeached	Removed from office
William Lloyd Harding	Iowa	1920	Impeachment proposal initiated but denied, censure motion approved	None
John Callaway (Jack) Walton	Oklahoma	1923	Impeached	Removed from office
Henry Simpson Johnston	Oklahoma	1927	Impeached	Acquitted
Henry Simpson Johnston	Oklahoma	1929	Impeached	Removed from office
Huey Pierce Long	Louisiana	1929	Impeached	Senate adjourned; Charges dismissed by the special session of Louisiana state Legislature in September 1930
Henry Hollis Horton	Tennessee	~1930	Articles of impeachment returned, House voted against impeachment 58:41	None
Evan Mecham	Arizona	1988	Impeached	Removed from office
John G Rowland	Connecticut	2004	Resigned after House of Representatives began investigations into possible impeachment	None
Mark Sanford	South Carolina	2009	Threatened, dropped in favour of censure	None
Rod R Blagojevich	Illinois	2009	Impeached	Removed from office

⁸⁷ www.nga.org

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, there is a parallel between the timing of the academic debate on impeachment and impeachment cases. Raoul Berger concludes, in his 1973 book *Impeachment: the constitutional problems*, “the lion’s share of the debate about impeachment in the last forty years has revolved about . . . bar removal of judges,”⁸⁸ so linking his arguments to the most recent cases. This observation also provides a possible explanation for the gap in gubernatorial impeachments between the 1930s and 1980s: the process had become perceived to be a tool for the removal of the judiciary, that is, it went out of fashion and only regained cognisance amongst the legislative and executive branches during and after the Watergate scandal. Berger necessarily omitted from his book reference to Watergate and the yet-to-develop calls for presidential impeachment, since the book itself was published in February 1973, the same month the United States Senate established the Watergate Committee.⁸⁹ Berger did refer to the Nixon case in the epilogue of the enlarged edition of his book published in January 1999, the publication of which coincided with the then on-going impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

The Louisiana State Constitution and impeachment

Many state constitutions are modelled on the United States Federal Constitution. The framework and division of powers envisaged by the Framers is replicated across the individual constitutions of the fifty states. While the Federal constitution has been further developed by only a limited number of amendments and by its interpretation, the states’ constitutions have developed through revision as well as amendment. The 1921 version of Louisiana’s state constitution was subject to numerous amendments prior to its revision in 1974, but the manner by which the state executive officer may be removed from power is the same as provided by the federal constitution – impeachment. As Berger expounded, the impeachment process, as defined at the federal level, was specifically structured as a political tool rather than a judicial or criminal one, explicitly to remove an offending officer

⁸⁸ Berger p297

⁸⁹ Gerard, Jules B “Review of ‘Impeachment: The Constitutional Problems,’ by Raoul Berger,” *Washington University Law Review* Vol 1974, No 1 (1974) p179

from office, and to allow the possibility of criminal charges if appropriate.⁹⁰ Despite not being a criminal charge the perceived penalty for impeachment seems to reach far beyond the actuality of removal from office. At the presidential level, Richard Nixon resigned from office rather than face an impeachment charge. While his “crimes” were later pardoned by his successor in office,⁹¹ it is questionable whether his resignation alone would have prevented the pursuit of impeachment proceedings, had the House of Representatives been so inclined. The 2017 case of Governor Robert Bentley (Alabama) demonstrates that Nixon’s precedent of resigning one’s office to avoid impeachment is now an entrenched tactic, although Bentley did not avoid criminal investigations and had pleaded guilty to two misdemeanour charges immediately before resigning.⁹² For Long, the impact and effect of the impeachment case in 1929 had a complex set of outcomes, which go beyond the perceived changes to his personality which some contemporary observers had identified.

While not a universal trait, many of the fifty states of the United States have adopted more than one constitution during their history. To date, Louisiana has had eleven state constitutions since the first was adopted in 1812, the highest number of any state in the Union.⁹³ Such has been Louisiana’s propensity for constitutional change that Mark Carleton suggests that

Constitutional revision in Louisiana . . . has been sufficiently continuous to justify including it with Mardi Gras, football, and corruption as one of the premier components of state culture.⁹⁴

The first constitution and declaration of statehood of 1812 consisted of thirty two pages and six articles. By its tenth iteration in 1921, the constitution had been developed into a 131-

⁹⁰ Berger, pp78-80

⁹¹ Gerald R Ford granted a “full, free, and absolute pardon” to Nixon for “all offenses against the United States, which he, Richard Nixon, has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 20, 1969 through August 9, 1974.” <http://watergate.info/1974/09/08/text-of-ford-pardon-proclamation.html>

⁹² https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/10/us/robert-bentley-alabama-governor.html?_r=0

⁹³ Texas Politics, The Constitution, 3.1 State Constitutions; http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7_3_1.html; Texas Politics: © 2009, Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services; University of Texas at Austin 3rd Edition - Revision 46, 26 June 2013

⁹⁴ Carleton, Mark “Elitism Sustained: The Louisiana Constitution of 1974” *54 Tul. L. Rev.* 560 1979-1980 p560

page document of twenty five distinct articles. As reported by Carleton, the historically active tendency of Louisiana to develop its constitution by constitutional convention was due to the powerful political elite who were determined to “construct or maintain a governmental apparatus conforming to their own specifications.”⁹⁵ The unusually long fifty-plus year gap between the tenth and eleventh (1974) constitutions resulted from the relative stability of single party politics which dominated Louisiana in that period. Political contests in the intervening period, he notes,

“usually involved only Democratic factions that often disagreed completely on substantive matters, but united on the usefulness of constitutional revision by amendment . . . all found the amending process equally satisfactory when their particular interests had to be protected.”⁹⁶

However, the 536 amendments to the 1921 constitution made during this period resulted in an unwieldy document, incomprehensible to all but a few legislative experts.

In the original version of the Louisiana constitution, which was modelled on that of the state of Kentucky,⁹⁷ the process of impeachment was covered in the three sections of Article V, a total of sixteen lines. In common with the federal constitution, the power of impeachment was located in “the House of Representatives alone” and it was decreed that “all impeachments shall be tried by the Senate . . . and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present.” Section 3 offers broad and non-specific criteria for impeachment, stating only that the “governor and all the civil officers shall be liable to impeachment for any misdemeanour in office.”⁹⁸ By the 1921 version of the state’s constitution, the impeachment article (Article IX) had been expanded to nine sections and specified impeachable crimes as: “high crimes and misdemeanors in office, incompetency, corruption, favoritism, extortion, or oppression in office, or for gross misconduct, or habitual

⁹⁵ Ibid p560

⁹⁶ Ibid p562

⁹⁷ Bennett H Wall (ed) *Louisiana: A History* (2002 Harlan Davidson, Inc. Wheeling Illinois) p114

⁹⁸ *Constitution or Form of Government of the State of Louisiana*, 1812, Printed by Jo. Bar. Baird, Printer to the Convention p20 *The Louisiana Purchase: A Heritage Explored*, LOUISiana Digital Library, Baton Rouge, La. Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special>) Baton Rouge, La

drunkenness.”⁹⁹ The majority of these criteria were used in the impeachment charges against Governor Long in 1929.

The history of impeachment in Louisiana

Prior to the impeachment of Long in 1929, Louisiana had impeached two governors since its statehood in 1812: Henry Clay Warmoth in 1872 and William Pitt Kellogg in 1876. Both of these impeachments of Republican governors were as a result of partisan politics, and both men survived the impeachment procedures. Warmoth was impeached during the 1872 election campaign, ultimately for supporting the Democratic Party’s candidate; when his term ended in 1872, before a trial had been convened, the charges were expunged. Kellogg was impeached on misappropriation charges by the Democratic controlled House, but the charges were dropped by the Republican controlled Senate.

Henry Clay Warmoth (1868-1872) has been described as a model for Long. Certainly, the terms used by Joseph G Dawson III to describe Warmoth, in his introduction to *Louisiana governors – From Iberville to Edwards*, could be applied to Long as easily as they are to Warmoth: “one of the most detested and, undoubtedly, one of the most controversial men elected to the state’s highest office. Warmoth remains enigmatic to historians.”¹⁰⁰ Williams reports on Long’s admiration and fascination for his predecessor in office and directly compares his accumulation of power to that of Warmoth. However, despite Warmoth’s residency in New Orleans until his death in 1931, Long does not appear to have attempted to meet with him. Williams suggests that this was because he may have considered it “risky politics to fraternize with a man who had been a carpetbagger, who in the Southern mythology of Reconstruction had been a force for evil.”¹⁰¹ It is, perhaps, more likely that

⁹⁹ Constitution of the State of Louisiana, Adopted in Convention at the City of Baton Rouge, June 18, 1921, Article IX, Section 1. p78 <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924030492163>,

¹⁰⁰ Joseph G Dawson III (ed) *The Louisiana governors - From Iberville to Edwards* (1990, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London) p xviii

¹⁰¹ Williams (1969) p184

Long, who perceived himself as *sui generis*,¹⁰² would be equally reluctant to draw attention to the similarities between the tactics used by the two governors. Long utilised many of Warmoth's signature techniques to maintain his hold on power in the state, most notably his requirement that newly appointed office holders should sign undated letters of resignations when appointed to their posts. Entries from Warmoth's diaries demonstrate that he was as aware of Long, as Long was of his predecessor. Warmoth closely followed Long's impeachment and condemned his behaviour and tactics as disgraceful.¹⁰³

Warmoth's impeachment, in the final days of his term of office, has been attributed to a combination of his racial prejudices, the enmity of President Ulysses S Grant and splits in the Republican Party at state and national level. During the 1872 gubernatorial election, Warmoth (a Liberal Republican) had supported the Democrat candidate, John D McEnery, against the Republican candidate, William Pitt Kellogg. With "no fewer than three returning boards" in action, as Joe Gray Taylor has proposed, it is likely that "no one will ever know who won this election, or who would have won if fraud and intimidation had been eliminated." Grant, by recognising the result "reported by a board that had no returns to work with,"¹⁰⁴ determined that Kellogg had won the election. Warmoth was impeached and, in accordance with the 1868 constitution, was suspended from office pending trial by the senate. Warmoth's term ended thirty five days later, before a trial was convened and, as a result, the charges were expunged from the record.¹⁰⁵

The second target of a gubernatorial impeachment in Louisiana was also a Republican and the winner of the disputed 1872 election which had led to Warmoth's impeachment. William Pitt Kellogg's entrance into office was inauspicious. His appointment had been dependent on

¹⁰² Harnett T Kane *Louisiana Hayride - The American Rehearsal for Dictatorship, 1928 – 1940*, (1941 (1998), Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna Louisiana) p140

¹⁰³ See *An Exceptional Southern Governor?* chapter p105

¹⁰⁴ Joe Gray Taylor "Henry Clay Warmoth" in Joseph G. Dawson III (ed) *The Louisiana governors - From Iberville to Edwards* p167

¹⁰⁵ Warmoth's impeachment and suspension from office led to P.B.S Pinchback being sworn in as acting governor "the only black to serve as governor in United States history prior to 1990." Dawson pp xviii - xix & Taylor p167

an executive order issued by President Grant, a circumstance which heralded a troubled term in the seat. Partisanship, racism, violence, a national depression, and an assassination attempt, together with an impeachment, allowed state Democrats to castigate Kellogg's "inability to govern" as "the evils of 'black-Republican' rule."¹⁰⁶ A particularly damning phrase which, C Howard Nichols suggests, had a great deal to do with the subsequent decline of the Republican Party in Louisiana. However, in common with many of the Southern states, Louisiana's Democratic Party dominated state politics and it was over a century before a Republican governor would again be elected in the state, David C Treen (1980-1984).

The 1898 state constitution, which imposed literacy and property restrictions on the voters of Louisiana, had effectively disenfranchised both blacks and poor whites. In 1897, the numbers of whites registered to vote stood at 164,088, the number of black voters at 130,344; in 1904, the numbers stood at 91,716 and 1,342 respectively. In 1922, 598 black voters were reported to be registered, while white voters, buoyed by an influx of women, now permitted to vote by the ratification of the 19th Amendment, numbered 191,789.¹⁰⁷ The disenfranchisement of black voters had effectively nullified the Republican Party in Louisiana. Louisiana was a single party state, with the different factions within the Democratic Party periodically resembling a multi-party political system. The alliance of "upriver cotton planters and courthouse politicians with the Democratic machine in New Orleans"¹⁰⁸ (the Old Regulars); the Good Government League; and the Progressive Democrats, maintained, between them, the elitist rule of Louisiana until Long first ran for the governorship in 1924.¹⁰⁹ Although Long failed at this first attempt, his portion of the vote signalled a change in gubernatorial politics in the state.¹¹⁰ He was successful in 1928 and it

¹⁰⁶ C Howard Nichols "William Pitt Kellogg" in Joseph G. Dawson III (ed) *The Louisiana governors - From Iberville to Edwards* pp172-176

¹⁰⁷ Bennett H Wall and John C Rodrigue, (ed) *Louisiana – A History* (2014, Wiley Blackwell, Malden and Oxford, sixth edition) p269

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p274

¹⁰⁹ Ibid pp274-279

¹¹⁰ See *Steps to Power* p136

was members of this political elite alliance who formed the anti-Long contingent that sought to impeach him in 1929.

Archival material

In order to rectify the under-examination of the 1929 impeachment, it was necessary to approach the subject from a broader perspective than simply a catalogue of the events of the impeachment itself. By focussing on Long's approach to the governorship of Louisiana in comparison to his predecessors and contemporaries; his adherence to his personal career pathway; his personal and political motivations; together with his attitude toward, and perception of, political opposition, a greater understanding of the causes of the 1929 impeachment may be defined. As such, a wider examination of archive material was required than would perhaps have been considered if the focus had been restricted to the impeachment itself. This exploration included the papers of Huey P Long, and of his contemporaries – James B Aswell, Harley B Bozeman, Hermann B Deutsch, Harvey G Fields, Hilda Phelps Hammond, Henry Jastremski, Cecil Morgan, John H Overton and Scott Wilson – together with other archive collections, such as the David R McGuire memorial collection at Tulane University and the Russell B Long collection at Louisiana State University, which have collated materials relating to Long, his personal and political careers, including items of correspondence. Materials in these collections have either previously not been published or have not been used in connection with an examination of Long's relationship with impeachment.

As previously mentioned, Long's papers were not used by Williams. Despite the biographer's assertion that the material discovered late in 1969 did not offer any new insights into his subject, the forty nine linear foot collection of letters, papers and memorabilia, which relates not just to Long's time in elected office but also to family matters and his law practice, this material instead offers the opportunity to pursue a study of Long which does not follow the path forged by Williams and his successors. An examination of his correspondence with

family members and with his family friends allows a perspective on his developing personality and character to be revealed, specifically the creation of the political operative. In particular some of these personal letters more clearly articulated Long's agenda and his political and personal ambitions than was exhibited in later documents. Items, such as correspondence relating to his early political offices, allow the scope to examine from a new perspective, the impeachment and its origins, his personal and political development, and the factors which drove him. The use of materials from collections belonging to Long's contemporaries has also offered the opportunity to contextualise this work, so permitting a broader perspective of events to emerge than would be revealed by an examination of the Long papers alone. In particular, the papers of his political opponents in Louisiana offer a view of events which balances the Long-centric perspective. Cecil Morgan's papers at Tulane University include a catalogue of material related to Long's career as governor of Louisiana. These items have not previously been examined in the context of a study of Long and as such offer a new frame of reference for this new interpretation of the impeachment.

When in 1934 student journalists on Louisiana State University's student newspaper, *Reveille*, published a letter implicitly critical of Long, he arranged for them to be expelled. All seven students were offered places at the University of Missouri which were funded by an anonymous group of New Orleans residents.¹¹¹ The collection of one of these students, David R McGuire, is held at Tulane University and is supplemented by his son's collection of archive materials. Jack B McGuire's expansive archive of Louisiana political materials includes a wide-ranging collection of Huey Long papers including correspondence relating to Long's terms as governor and US senator, as well as contemporary articles, propositions for

¹¹¹ "Reveille 7: Huey's student foes plan reunion" *Times Picayune* 2 December 1984 newspaper clipping Jack B McGuire collection of Huey P Long papers Box 3 folder 8 Huey Long Material – Clippings – Huey Long David McGuire and the "Reveille" Seven

films of his life and campaign materials.¹¹² This archive includes documents which are not held in any other collection and which have not previously been published.

The Russell B Long Collection at Louisiana State University contains a broad spectrum of materials relating not only to Russell's life and political career, it also includes an archive of his father's papers and the records relating to T Harry Williams' work on the *Huey Long* biography. The materials relating to the biography offer a previously unexamined record of the process by which this work was produced, thus allowing a greater insight into the circumstances under which Williams wrote the book than has previously been understood. Russell's collection of Long family papers, in particular those relating to his father, contains a broad range of correspondence, speeches, financial documents, clippings and memorabilia, which have not previously been used in a study of Long. The use of these materials allows for a more nuanced approach to the origins of the 1929 impeachment and its critical impact on the career of Long. By examining new materials, and by reviewing materials previously used, it is possible to examine the 1929 impeachment from a new perspective, which will allow a new understanding of Long and his impeachment experience to emerge.

Conclusion

The 1929 impeachment was a key event in the political career of Huey P Long. The impact of the impeachment has previously garnered only limited attention from academics, with primarily biographical assessments reviewing the incident in the context of a possibly character-altering event. Academics disagree on the degree to which the impeachment had an influence on both the character and the methods of Long. White's suggestion that the impeachment may have represented a turning point in Long's career, a point at which he became obsessed with power and more ruthless in his methods in obtaining power, is couched in equivocal terms which fail to reach a definitive assessment:

¹¹² Jack B McGuire is the author of *Win the Race or Die Trying - Uncle Earl's Last Hurrah* (2016) on the final gubernatorial race of the youngest Long brother.

“Huey promised to do great things for the poor people of Louisiana and for the first few years of his reign he kept his promise. . . . But somewhere along the line, possibly after he came so very close to being impeached, something went wrong. Huey began to take power and then to do more good he seized still more and finally the means and ends became so twisted in his mind that he no longer could tell them apart.”¹¹³

In contrast Hair is emphatic in his renunciation of the concept of the benevolent Long character, noting that he was always ruthless; the impeachment simply made him more so. White has suggested that there were in fact two Huey Longs, the politician who worked for the poor and disenfranchised, using methods appropriate to the time period and location, and the power-obsessed moral degenerate, whose own need to dominate overtook all other causes. He proposed that these two characters existed consecutively with the change possibly being linked to a single defining incident, the 1929 impeachment.¹¹⁴ While Hair argued that Long’s character was always inherently ‘bad,’ implying, although he does not actually state it, “that Caledonia Tison Long must have given birth in 1893 to the world’s most conniving baby,”¹¹⁵ White’s thesis assumes that Long’s obsession with power changed following the impeachment. Hair’s assumption is that Long’s character was fully formed and did not develop in response to any events, especially the impeachment. Despite his overall favourable interpretation of Long, Williams was less convinced that the impeachment had a fundamental impact on Long. Basing his findings on interviews with those who knew Long, he summarised the debate

“For every Long intimate who says that impeachment changed Huey, there are a dozen who say it did not.”¹¹⁶

To suggest, as Williams did, that Long carried on after the impeachment in the same way as he would have done had it not occurred is an untestable hypothesis. The impeachment occurred and by that fact alone, it had both a cause and an impact. As a result, it is not possible to look at the impeachment as a discrete and isolated event within the career of

¹¹³ Richard D White Jr, *Kingfish - The Reign of Huey P. Long* (2006, Random House Trade Paperbacks) pp 244-245

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Pruitt p254

¹¹⁶ Williams (1969) p410

Long. The impeachment must, therefore, be examined within a broader context, of Long, his career and his personality, as well as the milieu of Louisiana and the southern states of the US.

Past academic assessments of the impeachment in March 1929 have been located within the context of broad biographical treatments of Long, with the events reported as simply another entertaining Long vignette and interpreted in terms of its short term impact on Long's personality. Williams' rather throwaway conclusion was that "the experience affected him but did not alter him appreciably."¹¹⁷ However, the impeachment was a much more significant event in his life and career than this assessment suggests. Subsequent to the 1929 action, Long began to express his expectation that his enemies would now embark on a perpetual campaign to remove him from office. As a consequence, after 1929, Long began to frame, not only the impeachment, but all subsequent propositions regarding the necessity of removing him from office as validation for his past *and future* actions and rhetoric. Under these conditions, the standard response of the pragmatic party politician – a scaling back of provocative oratory, attempts at appeasement, or to compromise with his opponents – became impossible, even if it had ever been likely, for Long. Years of antagonistic language aimed at all groups and individuals who had stood in his way, had, in Long's view, effectively closed off all recovery strategies bar one. He was, therefore, forced to escalate the very activities and rhetoric which had brought him to impeachment in the first place. Since after 1929, Long expanded the scope of his activities beyond Louisiana politics to the national stage, his changed perspective, which saw opposition as evidence of corruption and vested interests, also broadened to encompass the national political environment. Therefore, limiting the examination of the impeachment to an assessment of character, significantly underplays the importance of the events of March 1929, which became fundamentally integral to the development of Long's political personality.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the 1929 impeachment of Long in a way in which it has not previously been examined. By focussing on a number of factors, notably Long's behaviour, his actions and his politics, this study looks at the ways in which the impeachment was influenced and affected by Long's career to that date, his interactions with contemporaries, and his methods.

Glen Jeansonne has observed that Louisiana is both an atypical Southern and American state, because of its racial, economic and religious complexity bound to its history as both a French and a Spanish colony.¹¹⁸ It is Jeansonne's contention that Long was personally as complex as the state, that he reflected its intricacies.¹¹⁹ However, just as Louisiana cannot be considered to have developed in isolation – irrespective of its complexities, the state's development was influenced by its interactions with the rest of the nation – so Long cannot be considered without reference to his contemporaries among the governors of the southern states and his predecessors as governor of Louisiana. To determine the degree to which Long was exceptional or if he was, in his words, *sui generis*, it is essential to compare his experience as governor of Louisiana with that of his predecessors in the office, and with his contemporaries amongst the governors of the Southern states. A comparison of Long's term in office with those of his contemporaries and predecessors will offer a perspective on his impeachment and the degree to which it was predictable. By comparing Long with his contemporaries in the two states which had recently impeached governors, Texas and Oklahoma, the similarities and differences between Long and the other governors may be explored, as can his propensity to impeachment. By contrasting Long with his predecessors as Louisiana's governor, it should also be possible to determine whether he represented a continuation of or a break from tradition, and if this perspective had an impact on the likelihood of impeachment.

¹¹⁸ Jeansonne, Glen "Huey P Long: A Political Contradiction" *Louisiana History* Vol 31, No 4 (Winter, 1990) p374

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* p385

Long's obsession with the acquisition of political office appears to have developed, from a childhood *idée fixe*,¹²⁰ into a determination to both acquire and retain the power of these offices. By exploring this apparent change of focus in Long's climb to political power, from the attainment of progressively more influential political offices to a resolution to dominate, subjugate and control, the circumstances which led to his impeachment should be revealed.

Throughout contemporary, and subsequent, reviews and examinations of Long there has been speculation regarding the true nature of his personal political ideology, with suggestions placing it anywhere along a spectrum from Fascism through Populism to Socialism. Since Long stated that he had no ideological affinities¹²¹ and that he believed that the means were justified by the outcome, it will be necessary to determine whether political ideology, an obsession with power, a personal belief system or a combination of some or all of these, was the driving force of Long's political career. The factionalisation of Louisiana and its impact on Long's career trajectory will be examined to determine the degree to which his use of political affiliation was expedient, rather than a personal affinity to shared ideology, designed to allow him to achieve his career goals.

It is evident that Long did not subscribe to Abraham Lincoln's belief that one destroyed one's enemies by making them friends. Indeed, throughout his political career Long appeared to have adhered to the opposite mantra, converting many of his political friends into implacable enemies. In Louisiana, and later at the national level, reaction to Long was never ambivalent. Responses to him were mutually exclusive and polarised; he was either reviled or adored. By examining the enmity and enemies of Long throughout his life and career, it will be possible to use these interactions as a means to underline the extent to which the impeachment in 1929 was foreseeable. If, as Joseph Conrad suggests, one should "judge a

¹²⁰ Aged 15, Long was a member of school debate team attending a state wide contest. At the end of the trip, he thanked their hostess saying "Mrs Harris, you have been mighty good to us, and when I get to be Governor, United States Senator, and President of the United States, I am going to do something for you." T H Harris *The Memoirs of T.H. Harris* (Baton Rouge, 1963) p125

¹²¹ Arthur M Schlesinger Jr *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (1960, Houghton Mifflin Company Boston) pp51-52

man by his foes as well as his friends,"¹²² then Long's accumulation of enemies throughout his career provides a method by which his development as a political operative can be assessed.

This study follows on from those academics whose work had moved the debate on Long from the biographical to examinations of specific incidents from his career. Previous examinations of this topic have been cursory and limited to narrative descriptions for the purpose of biography. Those biographers who have subjected the impeachment to further consideration have limited their discussion to whether it had had any effect on Long's personality or character, as befits biographical examinations. As has been discussed, the penalties for a political official found guilty of impeachment charges could be, not only removal from their current office, but also disqualification from holding any future political office. For a politically ambitious man like Long, an outcome like this would have been devastating. As such, to restrict the interpretation of the effects of the impeachment simply to a discussion of possible changes in Long's personality is to underestimate the event, its causes, and Long himself. By exploring and contextualising the impeachment, this thesis seeks to examine an area of Long's career which has previously been under-explored.

¹²² Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*

Chapter 2

An exceptional Southern Governor?

“Louisiana,” Glen Jeansonne observes “has never been a typical Southern state, or a typically American state. Ethnically, geographically, economically, and religiously, Louisiana is the most complex state in the South.”¹ To Jeansonne, the personality of Huey P Long was as complex as the state itself, “he was Louisiana in microcosm.”² If Jeansonne’s assessment of Long can be extended beyond a simple assessment of his personality, be applied to his tactics and style of politics in office, and also be said to accurately represent his governorship, then a comparative study of contemporary Southern governors may be used to determine whether Long, his governorship, including the impeachment, was as unique as he himself once claimed, “just say I’m *sui generis*, and leave it at that.”³ Alternatively, he may have been simply a member of a cohort of similar state executive officers, typical in character and political personality for his time, his region or both. Long’s *sui generis* claim was all encompassing, suggesting that he certainly believed that he and his activities were unique. He consistently rejected efforts by journalists to define his personality or political philosophy or to credit other, external influences for his rise to power.

In a period when celebrity- or personality-led politics were less prominent in the United States than would later become the norm, individuals whose political careers and experience

¹ Jeansonne, (Winter, 1990) p374

² Ibid p385

³ Kane p140

seemed tied to their often larger-than-life characters may have appeared to be exceptional. From the perspective of the twenty-first century the brash, self-publicising style of politician does not appear as a particularly unusual character in American politics. While not an isolated case in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s, Long was a sufficiently unusual character that to apply the epithet “exceptional” is not wholly inappropriate. Specific case studies of a Louisiana governor, John M Parker, and contemporary Southern governors, Oklahoma’s Henry S Johnston and William ‘Alfalfa Bill’ Murray, and Texas’s Miriam ‘Ma’ and James ‘Pa’ Ferguson, will be used to provide context and points of comparison to Long as a Southern governor and as a governor of Louisiana.

While not common, enough extraordinary characters occupied gubernatorial offices across the South to preclude the application of the term “unique” to Long; Murray and the Fergusons offer examples of other unconventional individuals, or ‘characters,’ in gubernatorial offices. In Louisiana, Long’s predecessors in the governor’s office generally maintained a standard and example of gubernatorial politics which, while in no way free from corruption or graft, certainly proffered an image of what many among the established political elite believed a governor of Louisiana should look like, and imbued the office with a standard of dignity, which they had embodied. This standard was one which essentially reflected their social status in the upper echelons of Louisiana society. Long provided the people of Louisiana with a revised gubernatorial model, which took the precedents of the past and shaped them into a system which had a long lasting effect, and primarily a cumulative detrimental impact, on the political, social and economic state of Louisiana for the decades that followed.⁴

Long’s term as governor included one of the most vulnerable parts of his career, his impeachment. Since the action occurred during his gubernatorial term, it is necessary to

⁴ In 2018 state legislators blamed the state’s ongoing fiscal crisis on the “power dynamic that Huey put in place nine decades ago.” Mark Ballard “Huey Long becomes scapegoat in stalemate at the Louisiana Legislature” *The Advocate* 4 March 2018 www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/mark_ballard/article-35d06ae6-1e41-11e8-8be6-73fda02d8a49.html accessed 14/3/18

consider how Long compared to the other governors of his period and section, his predecessors in Louisiana, and his contemporaries among the Southern governors.

Comparative study: Southern governors

Cortez A M Ewing's 1948 article "Southern Governors" compared the governors of twelve southern states in office during the ten year period 1938 – 1948. For the purpose of clarity, Ewing defined the South as "the eleven secession states and Oklahoma"⁵ and used the following criteria to compare the 46 men who held the governors' offices in that period: constitutional provisions; age when first inaugurated; education; profession; and prior experience in public office. Although old, Ewing's work still offers a useful analytical framework with which to compare those individuals in the governors' offices of the Southern states during Long's time in power in Louisiana. His study provides a valid model for an initial examination of Long's contemporaries as well as a comparative data set from the same political era.

First, it is necessary to determine the length of the time to be used for this comparison, and also to determine the duration of Long's term as governor of Louisiana. Officially, Long held the office of the governor from his inauguration on 21 May 1928 until he took up his United States Senate seat in January 1932, almost the complete four year single term permitted under the 1921 Constitution of Louisiana. However, since he retained control of the office through his puppet successor, Governor Oscar K Allen, his period of direct or indirect executive influence could be said to have spanned the seven years from 1928 to his assassination in September 1935.⁶

⁵ Ewing, Cortez A M "Southern Governors" *The Journal of Politics* Vol 10 No 2 (May 1948) p385 Defined because these "strictly southern states" were consistent in imposing legal limitations on political participation and also none had an effective Republican opposition.

⁶ Indeed, if Long had not sought to retain a stranglehold on power in Louisiana, it is unlikely that he would have been in Baton Rouge on 8 September 1935 to orchestrate the progress of his latest legislative programme through the Louisiana legislature. As such, the opportunity to shoot and kill him may not have occurred. However, Long did hold dominion over the state and he was in Baton Rouge that night.

Of the twelve “strictly southern states,”⁷ eight mandated four year gubernatorial terms⁸ during this period, while the others all had two year terms.⁹ Texas was the only one of the twelve states which did not impose a limit on the number of terms a governor could serve.¹⁰ From 1928 to 1935, 36 individuals held the office of governor in the twelve southern states. Their average age at their first inauguration was 48¾ as compared to an average of 50¼ in Ewing’s study of the period 1938-1948.¹¹ At least twenty four of these individuals held an academic degree; the majority, 63.9% (23), were members of the legal profession and almost all had experience of public office before being elected as governor. Reflecting the traditional dominance of the Democratic Party across the South since the late nineteenth century, every governor during the period 1928-1935 was a member of the Democratic Party. Only one was female, Miriam Amanda ‘Ma’ Wallace Ferguson of Texas (1925-1927; 1933-1935). Broadly speaking these trends are replicated in the cohort of Southern governors used in Ewing’s larger and later study.

At 34, Long was much younger than average when inaugurated; but he was not the youngest to enter the office, as both Richard Russell (Georgia, 1931-1933) and Daniel J Moody (Texas, 1927-1931), were 33. He had not graduated from high school and did not hold an academic degree, although he was later awarded an honorary degree by Loyola University.¹² He was not alone in failing to graduate from high school; both Harvey Parnell (Arkansas, 1928-1933) and Dennis Murphree (Mississippi, 1927-1928; 1943-1944) were only educated to public school level. In common with the majority of his contemporaries, Long was a lawyer. He had previous public office experience through his time as Public Service Commissioner, and he was a member of the Democratic Party.

⁷ Ewing p385

⁸ Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Virginia www.thegreenpapers.com/Hx/LengthOfTermGovernor.phtml accessed 4/3/2018

⁹ Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee and Texas

¹⁰ Texas remains the only one of these states not to impose term limits on its governors. www.ballotpedia.org/states_with_gubernatorial_term_limits accessed 4/3/18

¹¹ Data on former governors and their terms taken from the “Former Governors’ Bios” page on the *National Governors Association* website <http://www.nga.org/cms/FormerGovBios>

¹² Programme for the Honorary Degree Ceremony at Loyola University on 2 February 1931 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Box 2 Folder 37 Memorabilia Honorary Degree – Loyola February 2, 1931

Based on this superficial biographical data, Long does not appear to be unusual. In fact, at first glance, this evidence would suggest that Long fitted within a spectrum of similar individuals, all of whom attained the office of governor in their states. Examinations of the governors' offices and the interactions between the governors are, therefore, needed to determine whether Long was in any way unique as a governor, specifically as a Southern governor and as a governor of Louisiana.

Oklahoma

During the period under examination (1928-1935), Oklahoma was the only state, other than Louisiana, to impeach its governor; Governor Henry Simpson Johnston (1927-1929) was impeached twice, in 1927 and 1928, and on the second occasion he was convicted and removed from office. As the most recent recipient of a gubernatorial impeachment before Long's impeachment, Henry Simpson Johnston, is an appropriate subject for a comparative case study.

William 'Alfalfa Bill' Murray is reported to have described Johnston as "the smoothest and best parliamentarian" amongst the delegates at the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention.¹³ Elected to the first Oklahoma Senate, Johnston had run, unsuccessfully, for the US Congress in 1908 and 1914. Despite this accolade from Murray, Johnston seems to have regularly failed to comprehend political strategy and, unlike Long, to have been an unwitting pawn of other political strategists. For example, as a grand master in the Masons, an active member of the Ku Klux Klan and prohibitionist, Johnston was encouraged by Ed M Semans, the former chair of the Oklahoma Democratic Party, to run for the chair of the state Democratic delegation to the national convention in 1924. It was Semans' intention that he work against Alfred E Smith's presidential nomination, since Smith was both anti-Klan and

¹³ Kenneth L Tracy "Henry Simpson Johnston, Governor of Oklahoma, 1927 – 1929" in LeRoy H Fischer (ed) *Oklahoma Governors, 1907-1929: Turbulent Politics* (1981; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.) (gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc862886/; accessed July 24, 2018), The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org; .) p175

anti-prohibition.¹⁴ Although elected, Johnston stood down in favour of US Senator Robert L Owen. Owen was a supporter of the anti-Klan Governor Martin E Trapp, so Johnston's resignation ceded control of the delegation to Trapp, the outcome that Semans had sought to avoid. In comparison, in 1928 as governor-elect, Long not only disregarded tradition to select his own delegates to the Democratic Party national convention, he also viewed his defeat of the other factions in the state party as infinitely more important than the benefits which may emerge from supporting, potentially, the next president. In an episode which would be echoed by others throughout Long's time in power, two competing delegations proceeded to the 1928 National Democratic Convention in Houston, Long's delegation led by Harvey G Fields and a second delegation led by former governors, J Y Sanders (1908-1912) and Ruffin G Pleasant (1916-1920). Fields, following negotiations with Franklin D Roosevelt, governor of New York and the manager of Alfred E Smith's nomination campaign, recommended to Long that the delegation should pledge its support to Smith. As Williams suggests, Long's response to Fields' suggestion, that it would be politic for Louisiana to support the prospective nominee and the potential new president, epitomised more his desire to send a message to Louisiana's Democrats that he was now in control, not only of the party, but also of the state, rather than a broader aim of cultivating support networks with potentially powerful factions within the national Democratic Party: "Damn a President . . . I don't care about that. I just want the Huey Long delegation seated. You tell 'em to vote for Smith."¹⁵ The episode demonstrates the degree to which Long, unlike Johnston, was determined to remain independent of the influence of established sections of the party.

In the 1926 gubernatorial election, Omer K Benedict, Johnston's Republican opponent, ran on a strongly anti-Klan message. The Democratic platform was very similar to the Republican one, in that it too favoured improvement of public schools, roads and free school books, but it also advocated the enforcement of prohibition and the introduction of a pardon and parole board. Although Johnston and Semans considered the Ku Klux Klan to be a non-

¹⁴ Ibid p177

¹⁵ Williams (1969) p283

issue, it was a major factor of the campaign, with Benedict claiming that Johnston was under the control of the Klan, and with Democrats denigrating the Republican as an active member of the Klan. However, Johnston led a Democratic sweep, with a US senate seat, six congressmen and three other state offices going to the party as well as the governor's office.¹⁶ As such, it was reasonable to assume that Johnston, unlike Long when he was elected as governor of Louisiana, had a mandate to lead the state.¹⁷

However, in another strategic *faux pas*, which also emphasises his differences to the Louisiana governor,¹⁸ Johnston initially took a neutral stand on the question of the leadership of the state senate. Once it became obvious that Mac Q Williamson, an opponent of Semans, would be elected, Semans advised Johnston to support A E Darnell. But since Johnston's preference was publicised too late for legislators to change their allegiance, Williamson was elected president pro tempore and for the first time the state's Legislature was organised against the declared preference of the governor.¹⁹ Johnston had thus demonstrated again that he was an inept political strategist.

Johnston's term in office was beset by poor decision-making on the part of the governor and political in-fighting. Aside from his demonstrable weaknesses in dealing with the state Legislature, Johnston's biggest issue was his personal secretary, Mrs O O (Mayme) Hammonds. She was accused of controlling the governor and of blocking access to him by those with whom he had business. She was also the subject of rumours, including of an affair with the governor,²⁰ and that she consulted with the dead. Although a petition to dismiss her was defeated in the senate in 1927,²¹ Mrs Hammond's position was ultimately deemed to be untenable and she resigned from her post in early 1929. In an interview with

¹⁶ With the votes of 1961 of the 3192 precincts reported, Johnston was declared the winner of the gubernatorial race. The vote stood at Johnston (D) 133,783; Benedict (R) 102,092 "Johnston is Elected" *The Perry Journal* 4 November 1926 p1

¹⁷ *Ibid* p180

¹⁸ See *Steps to Power* chapter p142

¹⁹ *Ibid* pp180 – 181

²⁰ "Old 'Triangle' Enters Inquiry by Oklahomans" *Shreveport Times* 20 February 1929 p1

²¹ "Woman Aide to Okla. Governor Upheld By Senate" *Asbury Park Evening Press*, 1 March 1927 p15

Betty Kirk of the *Santa Ana Daily Register*, Hammonds claimed, in the face of accusations that she was “the Mrs. Colonel House of the Johnston administration’ and the ‘governor in fact’ of Oklahoma” that because she had “paid [her] loyalty to Governor Johnston and the state, [so] the corrupt politicians have accused [her] of every political and moral crime.” In refuting the stories of political control she said “If I were as ambitious as they say I am, I would be standing in front of Governor Johnston instead of behind him.”²²

An attempt in December 1927 by legislators to convene a special session, without a call from the governor, was forced to relocate to a hotel when Johnston declared martial law and the National Guard prevented the legislators from entering the chambers of the Legislature.²³ Despite the state supreme court declaring the session to be illegal, the House adopted six articles of impeachment against Johnston, including that he had “violated the peace and dignity of Oklahoma by calling of troops;” was incompetent; had employed “Jose Alvarado, Mexican sharpshooter” who was wanted for a bank robbery; had paid an attorney \$3,500 for work not carried out; and had “Feloniously conspired with one May Kline and one Mamie Hammonds” to extort \$1,412 from C B McCormick “in return for the payment of a claim McCormick held against the highway commission.”²⁴ Despite attempts by the House to convene to try the charges, the senate decreed by 22 votes to 16 “that the house of representatives had no authority to convene itself and vote the impeachment charges.”²⁵ Although Johnston had won this fight, the repercussions continued throughout the following year, culminating in a Republican surge throughout the state in the November 1928 elections. With forty seven Republican members of the House forming a coalition with six anti-Johnston Democrats, the House voted eleven impeachment articles against the governor on 18 January 1929. The governor’s defence acknowledged that with the exception of a charge of incompetency, the charges were true but that his “actions were due to poor

²² Betty Kirk “Political War Over Oklahoma Governor Seen” *Santa Ana Daily Register* 28 October 1927 p19

²³ “Job of Governor Saved By Woman” *The Atlanta Constitution* 13 December 1927 p1 & p4

²⁴ “Dual Government Was Threatening Oklahoma Today” *The Chillicothe Constitution*, Missouri, 14 December 1927 p1

²⁵ “Governor Wins Oklahoma War of Politicians” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 30 December 1927 p3

advice from his associates and other government officials who, unknown to Johnston, had used him for their own interests.”²⁶ Having determined that Johnston had not acted criminally, the senate found, by a vote of 35 to 9, that he was guilty of general incompetency.²⁷ The verdict was front page news in Louisiana, where simultaneously, as reported in the *Shreveport Times*, “the most thoroughly abortive legislative session in Louisiana history” was coming to a close with “Governor Long [escaping] repudiation by so narrow a margin that his teeth must be rattling yet.”²⁸

The framers of Oklahoma’s constitution had, as Jean Shumway Warner reports, “intentionally created a weak state chief executive,”²⁹ so that the governor’s power to legislate was limited to influencing the Legislature via the veto power. Despite the restrictive nature of its constitution, Oklahoma still attracted ‘characters’ to its governor’s office, most notably William “Alfalfa Bill” Murray. In an apposite description of Murray, Sir Ronald Lindsay, British Ambassador to the United States (1930-1939), wrote, “Just as certain obscure vitamins are necessary to make up a balanced diet, so an element of buffoonery is needed in American politics.”³⁰ Murray was governor of Oklahoma from January 1931 to January 1935 so only his first year in office overlapped with Long’s official term of office in Louisiana, and yet there are sufficient similarities between the two men to be suggestive of a type of executive officer: “Governor, congressman, presidential candidate, and author of constitutions,” Keith L Bryant Jr’s summation of the political achievements of Long’s contemporary in the governor’s office of Oklahoma could almost have been applicable to Long himself. Although Murray, unlike Long, was an instrumental figure in the constitutional convention which resulted in statehood for his state, Long was, through legislative tactics, capable of amending the constitution of Louisiana to ensure that the political power in the

²⁶ Tracy p190

²⁷ “Oklahoma Senate Impeaches Johnston – Vote to Oust Chief Carries By Big Margin” *The Shreveport Times* 21 March 1929 p1

²⁸ “Long Escapes Repudiation By Four Votes” *The Shreveport Times* 21 March 1929 p1

²⁹ Warner, Jean Shumway “Oklahoma Governors” *Oklahoma Politics* vol 6 1998 p7 & 11

³⁰ Lindsay’s report to the Foreign Secretary was written in 1939 when Murray had been retired from politics for four years. Thomas E Hachey (ed) “Profiles in Politics: British Embassy Views of Prominent Americans in 1939” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* Volume 58, No 1 (Autumn 1970) p16

state revolved around the governor's office, and therefore became increasingly centralised in his hands.

As part of his case for a thorough historical investigation and assessment to be undertaken by the regents of Oklahoma State University, in response to calls for Murray's name to be removed from buildings at the University's Stillwater campus, Bill Bryans summarises the debate which pitted twenty first century views of Murray as a racist and anti-Semite against the recognised impact that Murray had on the state's development. In phrases which could equally be applied to Long, Bryans summarises Murray as a continuing "enigma" whose legacy is still debated by historians.³¹

However, these superficial similarities between Long and Murray serve instead to emphasise the difference between Long and other Southern governors. In one of his few attempts to adhere to the traditional American political campaign strategy which extols the progression from humble beginnings (the log cabin) to the White House, Long claimed humble origins.³² These claims were dismissed by his sister as an exaggeration. "Every time I hear of that cabin," she once complained, "it gets smaller and smaller."³³ Murray's formative years were spent on the frontier in Texas in a one room wooden cabin. Elected as governor of Oklahoma in 1930, on his third attempt, Murray's political and personal career shows diversity unlike that of the focussed and determined political progression of Long. Born in Texas in 1869, Murray's working life prior to his arrival in the Oklahoma Territory had included work as a farm labourer, newspaper editor, teacher and lawyer. It was while he was working as an attorney for the governor of the Chickasaw Indian Nation, that Murray married the niece of the governor and, on becoming a Chickasaw citizen, he was able to practise law

³¹ Bryans, Bill "A Tale of Two Bills: Racism, Anti-Semitism, and the Sensibilities of a Public Historian" *The Public Historian* Vol 30 No 3 (Summer 2008) p19 A web search on 26 September 2016 reveals that the buildings in question in this debate have retained the names "Murray Hall" and "North Murray" <http://geosys.okstate.edu/bldg-list.aspx?group=osu-stillwater>

³² Hart, James D "They All Were Born In Log Cabins" *American Heritage* Vol 7, Issue 5 (August 1956)

³³ Williams (1969) p20

before the tribal courts.³⁴ He retired from his law practice in 1903. With a degree of apparently uncanny prescience combined with self-confidence worthy of Long, Murray later claimed “he saw that statehood must come and retired in order that he might prepare to play a role in drafting the coming State’s charter.”³⁵ As president of the 1906 Oklahoma Constitutional Convention, he was instrumental in the first state constitution,³⁶ a document which a contemporary journalist, R M McClintock of the *Tulsa Tribune*, called “a strange conglomeration of enlightened progressivism and of a series of checks upon legislative action outworn even then.”³⁷ As Bryans details, Murray’s initial priority as the first Speaker of the state’s House of Representatives was to ensure that those aspects of Jim Crow provisions, removed from the draft version of the constitution at the behest of President Theodore Roosevelt, were enacted as the first piece of legislation by the new state Legislature.³⁸

Following defeats in the gubernatorial races of 1910 and 1918, interspersed with two terms as the US congressman for Oklahoma’s 4th district, Murray left the United States “disillusioned with an urbanizing nation and centralizing government” and spent ten years in South America, including time spent leading an agricultural colony in Bolivia.³⁹ Returning to the United States in the summer of 1929, after the failure of the Bolivian colony, he campaigned once more for the office of governor of Oklahoma in 1930. The circumstances of the stock market crash and the beginnings of a national depression, combined with an opponent who was not only politically inexperienced but also an oil millionaire, ensured that Murray’s programme of lower taxes, road construction, old age pensions, and restrictions on public utility corporations, was attractive to an increasingly poor agrarian population and

³⁴ Spanner, Jack “Alfalfa Bill” *The North American Review* Vol 233, No 4 (Apr 1932) p319

³⁵ Spanner p320

³⁶ Bryant Jr, Keith L (1965) “‘Alfalfa Bill’ Murray: The Formative Years in Texas” *East Texas Historical Journal* Vol 3 Iss 2 Article 6 p103 and Bryans p14

³⁷ Spanner p321

³⁸ Bryans p16

³⁹ Spanner pp322-323 and Bryans p17

resulted in his election by a large majority.⁴⁰ As governor, his fiery rhetoric, frequent resort to executive orders and martial law to overcome the constitutional limitations placed on his office, combined with his idiosyncratic characteristics, attracted the attention of the national press. They, bemused by his antics, publicised the activities of a politician who, while presenting “a challenge to their ability to depict personalities,”⁴¹ also challenged “the implementation of federal relief programs in Oklahoma” by opposing Franklin D Roosevelt’s New Deal as an imposition of federal power over states’ rights.⁴²

In common with Long, Murray was a self-declared protector of the masses. While his rhetoric emphasised his connection with those who believed he was someone who empathised with them, his actions did little to enhance the daily lives of the poor of Oklahoma; but in the face of Murray’s inactivity, their continuing faith in their idol echoed that expressed by Long’s supporters’ valedictions, “Well, anyway Bill *tries* to do something.”⁴³

As a result of the apparent commonality in their approaches, Long and Murray were inextricably linked in the minds of some members of the public. Although at least one correspondent from Mississippi, A C Brister, saw Murray as an inferior prospect to Long for the Democratic nomination in 1932 suggesting, in the popular images of the two men, that potlicker had a greater appeal than alfalfa:

“Don’t let Alfalfa Bill get the run on you. Potlicker is much closer to the hearts of the people than alfalfa hay. . . The south is the strong hold of the Democratic party. The east, and west will do most anything to bring the south back into line. The Louisiana, and Mississippi delagation [sic] is ready to go as a unit for this potlicker Governor of Louisiana. Alfalfa Bill has only one state to date lined up for him.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Spanner p323 and Bryans p17

⁴¹ Spanner p317

⁴² Bryans p18

⁴³ Spanner p325

⁴⁴ Letter from A C Brister to Huey P Long dated 22 January 1932 *Huey P Long Papers*, Mss 2005, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Box 6 Folder 202 Governor’s Campaign for 1932 Letters of Congratulations

Contemporary news reports also relate that Long, recognising Murray's widespread press and popular appeal, had deliberately sought to antagonise him during the 1932 Democratic National Convention:

“Huey called on Alfalfa Bill Murray, in Chicago, routing him out of bed at six o'clock. “You're supposed to be a farmer candidate,” Huey taunted him. “Farmers are supposed to be up before this.” While Huey was talking over the political situation, Alfalfa Bill telephoned down and ordered one breakfast, for himself. When it came up Huey ate most of it while Alfalfa Bill was in the bathroom washing the sleep out of his eyes.”⁴⁵

Although Long was not a candidate for the presidential nomination in 1932, Murray was. It is not specified in this anecdotal account of their meeting whether the discussion related to Murray's bid for the nomination or if Long was acting on behalf of Franklin D Roosevelt, whose candidature he supported. It is, however, clear that the reporter, Jerome Beatty, considered the focus of the story to be yet another example of gauche behaviour on the part of Long. In his autobiography, Long claimed that he was working to reduce the impact of the favourite son bids on Roosevelt's bid, and as such, had met with Murray to discuss his candidature. He describes the meeting as “fencing with a past master” since Murray had avoided discussing the candidatures of Roosevelt or himself, and instead spent the time working to make “a favorite son candidate out of” Long.⁴⁶

In a contemporary article, written prior to Murray's failed attempt to secure the presidential nomination, Jack Spanner suggested that Murray had not

“stated (and probably never enunciated in his own mind) his political views in terms of philosophical doctrine unrelated to the immediate problems with which he has had to deal, the immediate issues he has had to face;”⁴⁷

This infers that Murray's actions tended to be a reactive response to issues rather than in line with specific ideological belief. His beliefs, however, appear to have been limited not just to his personal experience, but also to a fixed point in his experience based on his early

⁴⁵ Beatty, Jerome “You Can't Laugh Him Off” *The American Magazine* January 1933 p119 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-22 Huey Long Series: Magazine “You Can't Laugh Him Off!” by Jerome Beatty

⁴⁶ Huey P Long *Every Man A King* (1933, (1964), Quadrangle Books, Chicago) p305

⁴⁷ Spanner p324

years in Texas and the Oklahoma Territory. Keith L Bryant's study of the newspaper articles written by Murray during his time in Dallas concurs with this assessment, revealing that the opinions and positions he expressed in the 1940s had changed little from those he had taken in 1891.⁴⁸ Long's continuing adherence throughout his career to the principles that would be developed into the Share Our Wealth programme also suggests a man whose political thinking was fixated on an idea acquired at an early stage in his career. However, Long used the Share Our Wealth scheme, launched in 1934, as a weapon to outflank Roosevelt, rather than as a practical economic solution.⁴⁹ While his lack of adherence to philosophical and political doctrines ties Murray to Long, their perspectives were somewhat different. Murray does not appear to have considered his thoughts or programmes in doctrinal context, in contrast Long explicitly rejected conformity to a set of ideals. Instead he selected only those ideas which benefitted him and which would assist the achievement of his ambition; a technique which very effectively increased the confusion of those attempting to label him.⁵⁰

The National Governors Association

Long's communications with his contemporaries among the states' governors were not limited to interactions, such as the one with Murray, at national party conventions. The National Governors Association meets at least once a year with a different state hosting each meeting; the official transcripts from the meetings dating back to its origins in 1908 are available on the association's website.⁵¹ Of the eight meetings held in the period 1928-1935, representatives from Louisiana were present at only three. Of the four meetings that he was eligible to attend, the first in 1928, which was held in New Orleans, was the only one that Long attended. It was the expenditure allocated for the entertainment at this event which formed a part of the impeachment proceedings against him.⁵² Between 1928 and taking up

⁴⁸ Bryant p109

⁴⁹ Hair p307

⁵⁰ See Motivations chapter p202

⁵¹ www.nga.org/cms/meetings

⁵² See Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment chapter p254

his seat in the US Senate, Long was determined not to leave Louisiana because of the irreconcilable break with his Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr.⁵³ The 1932 meeting in French Lick, Indiana, was attended by Governor Alvin King (January – May 1932) after Long had gone to Washington DC. The only meeting during this period to be attended by representatives from all 12 Southern states was the one in 1935, which was held in Biloxi, Mississippi. As these meetings were generally attended by fewer than half of the governors of the Southern states, Long's absences cannot be deemed to be unusual, but since the usual reason proffered for a governor's absence tended to be either that the state legislature was in session or that it was an election year, his reason for absence, to prevent a usurpation of his office and power, was notably unusual.

Despite his absence from these meetings, Long did seek, on occasion, to work with or rather to seek to lead his fellow governors, the most notable example being the proposed "Cotton Holiday Plan" in 1931. The Federal Farm Board's forecast that the third largest cotton crop would be produced in 1931, when, together with associated low prices, anticipated an economic disaster for the cotton growing states. However, the Board's proposed solution of a voluntary third-row-destruction plan was met with universal condemnation amongst producers. In the absence of an acceptable federal plan, Long invited representatives of the fourteen cotton producing states to attend a conference in New Orleans to consider his proposal to "[dissipate] the cotton crisis through a mandatory cotton holiday,"⁵⁴ under which cotton producers would not plant cotton in 1932 and the glut crop from 1931 would be used to manage the demand until the 1933 crop was harvested. Long's plan was endorsed by the conference with one additional proviso, that it would only be legally binding once states producing three quarters of the total crop had passed similar legislation. This proviso ensured that the law could only be enforced if Texas, which produced 35% of the total crop, passed the cotton holiday legislation. Within four days of calling a special session of the

⁵³ Steps to Power chapter p157

⁵⁴ Snyder, Robert E "Huey Long and the Cotton-Holiday Plan of 1931" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 18 No 2 (Spring 1977) p139

Louisiana Legislature on the proposed bill, Long staged a photo shoot in which he was dressed in a cotton nightshirt, and sat “on a bed covered by cotton sheets and blankets” to sign the bill “prohibiting the planting, gathering, and ginning of cotton in Louisiana in 1932.”⁵⁵ This was a piece of political theatre which demonstrated not only a solidarity with the cotton farmers, but also promoted his message that he was determined to work long hours for the people of his state.⁵⁶

Long may have been able to influence the legislators of Louisiana to enact his plan and at speed, but getting the other states to follow his lead was much more difficult. While states such as Arkansas, Georgia and South Carolina were prepared to follow the lead of Louisiana, they would only do so once Texas had committed to the plan. Despite Long’s campaign of cables and personal envoys sent to Ross Sterling, governor of Texas, supplemented by personal radio broadcasts⁵⁷ aimed at persuading the Texas public and through them, their representatives, the Texas Legislature voted against the holiday plan, ensuring its failure across the region.

Irritated by the barrage of Long’s attempts to persuade the people of Texas and its Legislature to enact the legislation, Governor Sterling observed to journalists “[Long] may be able to demand that his legislature vote whatever he wants, but we are a little more democratic in Texas.”⁵⁸ In an even more explicit exchange of accusations, critics within the Texas Legislature called Long “a demagogue ‘drunk with ignorance and power,’” to which Long suggested that the Texas legislators “‘had been paid off like a slot machine.’”⁵⁹ In the face of determined opposition, and without the necessary legislation from Texas to ensure the effectiveness of the plan, Long announced that he was “singing his ‘swan song’ on the

⁵⁵ Ibid p152

⁵⁶ See Appendix 3 p303

⁵⁷ “Austin Mass Meeting Approves Long Plan” *The Constitution, Atlanta, GA.*, 10 September 1931 p6

⁵⁸ Snyder p157

⁵⁹ “Long Is Drunk With Power Is Texas Charge” *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 16 September 1931 p1

Louisiana cotton holiday plan and that he was through with his fight for cotton prohibition.”⁶⁰ The cotton holiday plan demonstrates how the power that Long held as Louisiana’s governor separated him not only from his predecessors in the office but also from his contemporaries in the region. It also demonstrated that there were limits to Long’s power and influence, bounded as it was by state lines, a limitation which he would later work to remove, most notably during the 1932 presidential campaign, when he toured North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas on behalf of Franklin D Roosevelt, and the re-election campaign of Senator Hattie Carraway in Arkansas.⁶¹ While Sterling opposed Long’s power and influence, it was his predecessors as Texas governor, the Fergusons, who offered the closest parallel to Long’s experience of impeachment and level of political influence amongst the southern governors.

Texas

Rather than to Long’s direct contemporaries amongst the membership of the United States Senate or his contemporaries amongst the Southern Governors, it was to another impeached former governor that Norton McGiffin compared Long’s oratorical skills, James E Ferguson (1915-1917) of Texas,

“Like ‘Pa’ Ferguson, Huey can appeal to the intellectual or to the emotional at will . . . and, in general, comports himself like a politician who is all things to all men.”⁶²

Ferguson was impeached for the misappropriation of public funds and removed from office in 1917. In the face of his ineligibility to run for the office again, his wife Miriam ran and won the election for governor in 1924. That Miriam, who was not politically experienced prior to her campaign for office, had publicly supported her husband’s anti-suffrage platform and, it was claimed, was running to vindicate her family’s name, were points which, when combined

⁶⁰ “Long Called ‘Liar’; Drops Cotton Plan – Abandons Fight for Production Holiday After Attack by Texas Senate” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 17 September 1931 p3

⁶¹ George Maines “Long’s Political Power Proven in Mississippi and Arkansas” *Zit’s Theatrical Newspaper – New York Review* 4 August 1934 *Long (Russell B) Collection, Long Family: Huey Long Series Box 4 Folder 4-24 Huey Long Series Newspaper and Magazine Clippings 1934*

⁶² McGiffin, Norton “The Long Way to Atlantis” *The North American Review* Vol 240 No 1 (Jun 1935) pp116-117

with her claim that Texas would gain “two governors for the price of one,” led to accusations that she would be a cipher for her husband.⁶³ The creation of the “Ma” Ferguson character, with the bonnet and the calico skirt, feeding the chickens, not only sought to mitigate the accusations that a female candidate was contrary to the traditional role of women, it also reinforced the accusation that she was a figurehead for her husband’s continued political career.⁶⁴ This suggestion was subsequently borne out by legislation, passed at her instigation, to provide amnesty to anyone previously convicted of impeachment. Although the law was later repealed, James Ferguson did seek to use the amnesty as a means to run for governor again. Ultimately, however, with the amnesty determined to be unconstitutional, Ferguson’s ineligibility for office was confirmed. Miriam Ferguson ran for governor on three more occasions, and was successful on the second occasion in 1932. In an article which demonstrated the perceived threat of James Ferguson’s influence over his wife, the *Dallas Morning News* dismissed Long’s antics in Washington DC as “inconsequential” in contrast to the combined activities of the Fergusons:

“The Hon. Hooie Long, Louisiana’s merry-andrew in the Senate, gave an exhibition the other day quite in character with his talents and taste. Because he was unable to gain support for confiscation of fortunes he attacked Senator Robinson, Democratic leader, and resigned from all his committee appointments. . . . Texas might get pretty sarcastic about the situation but for the painful necessity of disposing once more of the Fergusons. The irresponsibility of the Hon. Hooie is temperamental and inconsequential, whereas the irresponsibility involved in the arrangement again proposed by the Hon. Jim whereby he fetches water and carries wood for the Hon. Miriam is calculated and extremely consequential.”⁶⁵

Following her husband’s death in 1944, Miriam retired from public life. Although Long’s control of the governorship of Louisiana was equally as unabashed as that of the Fergusons in Texas, his dominance was predicated on the illusion that Governor Oscar K Allen (1932-1936) was not only the elected governor, but that he was also autonomous. Long sought to

⁶³ Huddleston, John D *Texas State Historical Association* “Ferguson, Miriam Amanda Wallace (MA)” www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ffe06

⁶⁴ Sallee, Shelley “The Woman of It: Governor Miriam Ferguson’s 1924 Election” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* Vol100 No 1 (Jul 1996)

⁶⁵ *The Dallas Morning News* 2 May 1932 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-18 Huey Long Series: Newspaper Clippings 1932 (2 of 4)

reinforce this illusion by claiming he could not move Allen on an issue he did not himself want to address⁶⁶ and, in September 1935, answering reporters' questions about the possibility of an upcoming legislative session by claiming "Oscar hasn't made up his mind;"⁶⁷ an illusion which, however, he would publicly undermine every time he occupied Allen's office in the Capitol Building in Baton Rouge.⁶⁸

Despite the overt nature of the influence of her husband on her term in office, and controversies regarding pardons, contract awards and bribes, impeachment threats against Miriam were unsuccessful. Nor did these controversies prevent her from being elected for her second term as governor, when Depression-hit Texans responded to her promises of lower taxes and state expenditures, and voted for her as the Democrat nominee in 1932 over the incumbent, Sterling. The Fergusons' terms in office may have been characterised by controversies and impeachment, but while the *Dallas Morning News*' parochial assessment of Long dismissed him as "temperamental and inconsequential" in comparison to the home-grown threats, it failed to recognise the pervasiveness of Long's rule of Louisiana, especially the unprecedented level of control over the state that he had accumulated, unlike his predecessors in the executive office. In comparison to the *Dallas Morning News*, an editorial in the *Chicago Daily News*, recognised both Long's domination of Louisiana, "I am the Democratic party in Louisiana," declared Long magniloquently, in presenting his claims before the national committee," and, what they saw as, his potential threat at the national level:

"In giving Long the victory the majority of the delegates prepared the way for their favorite to revise his claim into 'I am the national Democratic party,' . . . That surrender to expediency in the interest of faction was made in the

⁶⁶ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. Williams Papers, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952-1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p4

⁶⁷ Hair p315

⁶⁸ *Time* 3 October 1932 p10 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-16 Huey Long Series: Magazine – Time National Affairs "Democrats – Incredible Kingfish" Oct 1932

spirit that disrupts parties. The injustice done to the constructive forces of Louisiana's Democracy is an injustice to the people of the nation at large."⁶⁹

Louisiana

The threat, as perceived by the *Chicago Daily News*, had its basis in Long's control of his home state. There was an atmosphere of implied and actual violence in Louisiana under him, with, as the state auditor, L B Baynard Jr, wrote in 1929, his supporters and his opponents exacerbating the situation:

"Things have been in more or less excited state since the Legislature convened, and one crowd that you hear talking are almost ready to lynch the Governor and the other crowd make him a hero."⁷⁰

This atmosphere was generated as an extension of the governor's wish to dominate and control the power of the state. Intimidation and aggressive behaviour had become not just a method by which that power was achieved and controlled, it was also an expression of the power itself. In 1928, the Louisiana Legislature passed legislation to create, in common with other states, a Bureau of Criminal Identification as a "clearing house" [which would have] on file records, photographs, descriptions, fingerprints and all information relating to criminals,⁷¹ and which would report to a board of managers, chaired by the governor. However, the bureau was utilised by Long as a personal police force, with members of the BCI being used in the kidnapping of Samuel Irby and James Terrell during the 1930 US Senate election campaign.⁷²

In 1934, the Legislature passed bills which allowed Long, through Governor Allen, to expand the BCI into a "state police force with full police powers equal to or superior to those of local

⁶⁹ "Daily News Scores Seating of Long Group" *Times-Picayune* 30 June 1932 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Manuscripts Collection 312, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118. Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder Long clippings 1932

⁷⁰ Letter to Dr S L Wharton from L B Baynard Jr, State Auditor dated 10 April 1929 Baynard (LB, JR) Papers Mss 230-577 Box 4, folders 16:c & 16:d

⁷¹ "Peace Officers Request Bureau To Aid Arrests – Louisiana Needs One, is Comment of Chief Apgar" *The Monroe News-Star* 25 May 1928 p19

⁷² See Steps to Power chapter p153

police and deputies and with state-wide jurisdiction.”⁷³ In response to mass meetings opposing these new powers, the bureau and the state police intensified their presence around the state capitol, as a response to “renewed threats by citizens of Louisiana to take matters into their own hands unless given immediate relief from dictatorial tyrannies,” and a photographer, Leon Trice, was “driven off the state house grounds under threat of assault”⁷⁴ when he tried to photograph the assembled troops. In January 1935, James Mchaffey, a leader of the anti-Long Square Deal Association of Louisiana, went to Washington DC to consult with members of Congress from Louisiana and other states, having seen “the possibilities of violent rebellion in Baton Rouge” he was determined “to ‘free Louisiana from the dictatorial yoke’ of Senator Huey P. Long.” He claimed that he and his wife had been threatened and followed by Long’s “‘imperial cossacks’ (plainclothes men)” as they left the state.⁷⁵ Long’s creation, in the Bureau of Criminal Identification, of a militaristic unit which reported to the governor alone, and which had powers to investigate anywhere in the state without the restrictions placed on, for example, the police, was a further tool which he could use to gain, retain and demonstrate power and intimidation.

In other respects, however, Louisiana under Long was neither more nor less violent than it had been prior to his election to the office of governor. For example, with regards to racial violence, while accurate figures are not available for the number of lynchings in the state, calculations based on contemporary newspaper articles have indicated that between 1878 and 1930, the so-called ‘lynching era,’⁷⁶ there were 157 lynchings in South Louisiana, of which the majority, 114, occurred prior to 1900.⁷⁷

⁷³ “Long Has Complete Control Of Legislature – Legislature Gives Senator Powers Greater Than Any Governor In U. S. *The Rayne Acadian-Tribune* 24 August 1934 p4 & p1

⁷⁴ “State Capitol Guard Larger” *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 11 January 1935 p2

⁷⁵ “Louisiana ‘Refugees’ Arrive At Washington” *The Monroe News Star* 30 January 1935 p9

⁷⁶ Bailey, Amy Kate and Snedker, Karen A “Practicing What They Preach? Lynching and Religion in the American South, 1890 – 1929” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 117, No 3 (November 2011) p845

⁷⁷ Pfeifer Michael J “Lynching and Criminal Justice in South Louisiana, 1878 – 1930” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 40, No 2 (Spring 1999) pp155-156, footnotes 2 &3

A map of recorded lynchings between 1900 and 1931, based on data collated by the Tuskegee Institute, ranks Louisiana as the state with the fourth highest number of incidents, 172, behind Georgia (302), Mississippi (285) and Texas (201).⁷⁸ Although developments in the field of lynching scholarship over the past two decades have begun to make progress in a previously under-explored area of United States history, reliable statistics for lynchings remain unavailable.⁷⁹ Estimates suggest that at least five thousand African Americans were killed in the southern states with hundreds more victims from across different racial and ethnic backgrounds across the United States.⁸⁰ Based on recorded incidents, Edward F Haas estimated that between 1882 and 1952, the number of lynching victims from across Louisiana was at least 391, although with the inclusion of unrecorded incidents, the true number is likely to have been over 500.⁸¹ It is commonly accepted that throughout this period, the rate and numbers of reported lynchings declined, especially after the turn of the century. Explanations for the reduction in racial violence include the Great Migration (the migration of blacks from Southern states to other parts of the country, as opportunities for employment emerged in areas where the threat of violence was less pervasive) and, as Stewart E Tolnay and E M Beck have proposed, a subsequent increase in the demand for this cheap labour resource represented an economic need for a reduction in the persecution of southern blacks.⁸² However, the decline in reported numbers of lynchings does not necessarily represent a reduction in the number of racially motivated deaths; it has been proposed that the so called 'legal lynchings,' which provided a façade of legality by

⁷⁸ American Map Company. *Lynchings by states and counties in the United States, 1900 to 1931: data from Research Department, Tuskegee Institute ; cleartype county outline map of the United States*. [New York, NY: American Map Company ?, 1931] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006636636/> (Accessed December 30, 2017.)

⁷⁹ The Equal Justice Initiative's 2016 report *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror* documented "4075 racial terror lynchings of African Americans in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia between 1877 and 1950" (<https://eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america>)

⁸⁰ Pfeifer, Michael J "At the Hands of Parties Unknown? The State of the Field of Lynching Scholarship" *The Journal of American History* (December 2014) p841

⁸¹ Edward F Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p271

⁸² Tolnay, Stewart E and Beck, E M "Black Flight: Lethal Violence and the Great Migration, 1900 – 1930" *Social Science History* Vol 14, No 3 (Autumn 1990) p365

expediting criminal trials resulting in the death penalty, had replaced the lynch mob.⁸³ Long is reported not to have endorsed lynching, but to have accepted it as part of the way of life in Louisiana.⁸⁴ In fact, involvement in such generally accepted displays of violence was not a block to holding political office; certainly Governor John M Parker was unrepentant about his involvement in the lynching of eleven Sicilian immigrants in New Orleans in 1891.⁸⁵ Jeansonne has contended that it is inappropriate to compare Long with other southern governors such as Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi or Eugene Talmadge of Georgia because of their racist reputations, as Long “operated in a different environment. Blacks were not a factor in Louisiana after adoption of the Constitution of 1898.”⁸⁶ When discussing Long’s much vaunted tendency not to play the race card in electoral campaigns, Jeansonne’s comments are appropriate, to a point. Amongst his political contemporaries in Louisiana, Long’s restraint on race was not particularly unusual, as race was no longer a major factor in state politics since blacks had been constitutionally disenfranchised. However, it is more apt to describe Long as being no more or less racist than his contemporaries, rather than to extol him for this restraint, since he was as capable as any other politician of using racist tactics when politically expedient. Long’s attempts at avoiding the issue of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1924 gubernatorial campaign, when he failed to clarify whether he was a member, may have cost him the election,⁸⁷ but his vitriolic attack on Dr Hiram W Evans, imperial wizard of the Klan,⁸⁸ together with his programmes, condemned, as they were, for benefitting black Louisianians, which he excused as being for all poor Louisianians not just blacks, offered a stark contrast to McGiffin’s 1935 claim that Long’s election victories in Louisiana

⁸³ Pfeifer (December 2014) p834

⁸⁴ Hair p99

⁸⁵ The victims were accused of being Mafia members and were allegedly responsible for the murder of police chief David C Hennessy. Hair p12; Edward Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p271

⁸⁶ Jeansonne, (Winter, 1990) p377

⁸⁷ See Steps to Power chapter p135

⁸⁸ Having condemned Long as un-American, Evans announced he would go to Louisiana to campaign against Long. According to Williams, Long’s response was emphatic “He went to the press gallery of the state senate . . . ‘Quote me as saying that that Imperial bastard will never set foot in Louisiana, and that when I call him a sonofabitch I am not using profanity, but am referring to the circumstances of his birth.’” Williams (1969) p 703 Long threatened “to send Dr. Evans out of the State ‘with his toes turned up’ if he should ever set foot on Louisiana soil.” “Ku Klux Is Getting Ready To Fight Huey Long” *The Bonham Daily Favorite* 28 August 1934 p4

were owed to “the massed and machine-like support of the Ku Klux Klan.”⁸⁹ Instead, his actions suggest that Long was ambivalent on the question of race, provided it did not affect him or his campaigns and programmes.

Comparative study: Louisiana’s governors

The gubernatorial terms of the three men who preceded Long as governor of Louisiana have each been designated as the transition point heralding, what Louis Vyhnanek called, the “new era in Louisiana politics”⁹⁰ that was Long’s gubernatorial reign. While Vyhnanek identified Henry L Fuqua (1924-1926) for this accolade, as he was the final governor elected by Mayor Behrman’s New Orleans machine, Haas proposed Parker as the transitional figure “between Louisiana’s reactionary planter-Old Regular oligarchy and the subsequent explosion of neopopulism.”⁹¹ A similar designation is assigned to Oramel H Simpson (1926-1928) by Jerry Purvis Sanson, “Simpson functioned as a transitional figure between the old days of Old Regular dominance and the new era of Huey Long.”⁹² Together these three assessments make it clear that Long’s governorship of Louisiana represented something that was vastly different from that which had gone before. From these definitions, a two-part conclusion may be drawn. Not only, for these historians, did Long represent a substantial change from the governors before him, but also, retrospective analysis has shown that each of his three predecessors, Parker, Fuqua and Simpson, represented a change, to some degree, from that which had gone before them.

Although only four years separate their terms in office, Governors Parker and Long were not only demonstrably different executive officers, characters and men, they were from very different backgrounds and environments. Parker was not a natural politician. He was a man whose family, social, religious and business background instilled a sense of social commitment in him, which led him to participate in the politics and community activities of

⁸⁹ McGiffin pp113 -114

⁹⁰ Louis Vyhnanek “Henry L Fuqua” in Dawson p222

⁹¹ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue pp278-279

⁹² Jerry Purvis Sanson “Oramel H Simpson” in Dawson p226

New Orleans specifically, and Louisiana as a whole, whilst simultaneously despising those professional political operatives as exemplified by the New Orleans machine.⁹³ Haas has described Parker as “the perfect embodiment of a ‘good’ reformer – dignified, systematic, and moderate;”⁹⁴ a set of characteristics which could not be attributed to Long. In his assessment and review of the gubernatorial inaugural addresses of Louisianian governors, Sidney J Romero notes, appropriately, that “[the] addresses are as varied as the governors who gave them,”⁹⁵ and identifies the addresses given by John Miliken Parker (1920-1924) and Long as being two of the shortest. Romero considers Parker and Long to have been “two of [Louisiana’s] most active governors”⁹⁶ and since the political interactions, associations and rivalry of the two men were a dominant characteristic of Long’s political career, a comparison of the two governors and their terms of office is an appropriate case study. Despite their personalities, they initially demonstrated that they could work with one another, however, ultimately the differences between them were too great to maintain anything other than a personal and political enmity. In June 1929, following the overturning of the impeachment, Long’s opponents formed the Constitutional League of Louisiana under Parker’s presidency, which was primarily dedicated to the restoration of the constitution of the state of Louisiana, but also to condemn, what they saw as, the immorality and debauchery, misuse of power and corruption exhibited under Long’s governorship. The League committed itself to restore a “respect for and support of decent and honest honourable public administration.”⁹⁷

⁹³ Matthew J Schott “John M Parker” in Dawson p215

⁹⁴ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p278

⁹⁵ Romero, Sidney J “The Inaugural Addresses of the Governors of the State of Louisiana: Tweedledum-and-Tweedledee: Or Contrariwise?” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 14, No. 3 (Summer 1973) p252

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ *Declaration of Principles of the Constitutional League of Louisiana* adopted by the Executive Committee at New Orleans, June 25, 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers, 1922 -1971* (LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 312) Box 6: Huey P Long Related items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment) folder: Pro & Anti-Long pamphlets Tulane University, New Orleans

John M Parker

Politically Parker aligned himself with the Progressives, influenced in part by his friendship with fellow hunter and fisherman, Theodore Roosevelt. His first gubernatorial attempt in 1916, as a Progressive candidate, garnered 38% of the vote but he lost to the Democrat's candidate, Ruffin G Pleasant.⁹⁸ During his 1920 gubernatorial run, as a Democrat, Parker campaigned on the issues which would later form the basis of Long's legislative programme: roads, natural gas for New Orleans, and the regulation of oil pipelines, including those of the Standard Oil Company.⁹⁹ While Matthew J Schott's assessment of Parker's administration is that "viewed against its promise [it] was not entirely successful,"¹⁰⁰ its legacy, as Charles Pellegrin contends, may be seen in the reforms originated by Governor Sam Houston Jones (1940-1944), including state governmental reform, some twenty years after the end of Parker's administration.¹⁰¹ While Parker's and Long's legislative programmes may have had a great deal in common, without Parker's initiatives, Long's programmes may well have not been possible.

After Long, the alignment of Louisiana's governors was split along pro and anti-Long lines, with as Jeansonne suggests, the Louisianian voters choosing alternatively between those advocating clean government and state benefit cuts (anti-Long), and those championing liberal economic programmes with attendant corruption (Long).¹⁰² But as Pellegrin suggests, it was ultimately the progressive reformers, whose programmes could not entirely be rolled back by governors like Earl K Long (Democrat, 1939-1940, 1948-1952, 1956-1960) and Edwin Edwards (Democrat, 1972-1980, 1984-1988, 1992-1996), who succeeded in the battle between the Long and anti-Long factions; it was in the rejection of "the excesses of the

⁹⁸ Schott in Dawson p216; Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p277

⁹⁹ Schott in Dawson p216

¹⁰⁰ Ibid p217

¹⁰¹ Pellegrin, Charles J "Louisiana Progressivism and the American Reform Experience: Administrative Reorganization in Louisiana, 1940 – 1948" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 37, No. 2 (Spring 1996) p201

¹⁰² Jeansonne, Glen "deLesseps Morrison: Why He Couldn't Become Governor of Louisiana" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 14, No. 3 (Summer 1973) p255

Edwards administration”¹⁰³ and the election of the reformers, David C Treen (Republican, 1980-1984), Buddy Elson Roemer (Republican,1988-1992), and Mike Foster (Republican, 1996-2004) that the legacy of John M Parker’s administration can be seen.

Parker’s attitude to the role of governor contrasted starkly with that of Long. Instead of declaiming that “I am the constitution around here now,”¹⁰⁴ as Long did in the early days of his administration in the face of a legislator’s objection to his interference on the floor of the Louisiana Senate, Parker viewed his role as “executor of laws rather than an initiator of political action,”¹⁰⁵ a facilitator rather than a leader. This was an approach which, in Pellegrin’s assessment, was one of the reasons for Parker’s lack of success in the executive office.¹⁰⁶ However, unlike Long, Parker considered the business of politics to be a social obligation of a man of his class and status.

A businessman and a plantation owner, Parker was socially, temperamentally, philosophically and financially, a very different character to Long. Where Long had actively sought the office of governor as a stepping stone to his ultimate goal, the presidency, and used the office to cleave power for himself, Parker worked behind the scenes, encouraging others, such as Governor Luther Hall (1912-1916), to take the limelight, and only running for office himself when others had failed to meet his expectations of what should be delivered by the governor. In common with Long, Parker seems to have recognised that membership of, and candidature through, the Democratic Party offered the best chance of success in Louisiana’s elections. Like Long, Parker’s allegiance to the Democratic Party appears to have been a matter of political expediency in the absence of a credible alternative. His allegiance to the ideals of the Progressive party and his run for governor as their candidate in 1916 had offered the best chance for a third party success in Louisiana since

¹⁰³ Pellegrin p215

¹⁰⁴ Hair p163 & frontispiece quote from *The Nation* April 10, 1929 in Smith

¹⁰⁵ Pellegrin p206

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

Reconstruction.¹⁰⁷ The national Progressive Party nominated Parker as their vice-presidential candidate in 1916, with Theodore Roosevelt as the presidential candidate. However, Roosevelt declined the nomination and supported the Republican candidate, Charles Evans Hughes, in the election. In the face of Roosevelt's abandonment of the party for the presidential nomination for the Republican Party, it is likely that Parker's allegiance to ideology over party may well have been tested.¹⁰⁸

It is Jeansonne's argument that "Long's predecessors and successors did more than is generally recognized," but that the difference between these men and Long was the latter's personality and charisma.¹⁰⁹ However, limiting the explanation for Long's success to the force of his personality excludes a number of other factors, notably his sharp political intelligence, and his determination to achieve recognition and power. An extraordinary factor of Long's obsession with power is that, while he pursued it for his own ends, his manipulation of political power in Louisiana was such that it benefitted others, especially the poor of the state, as well as himself. As Jeansonne has mentioned, Long's charisma is the prime characteristic by which he tends to be differentiated by historians from his immediate predecessors. In comparison, Parker has been condemned by Haas for lacking both the charisma and the empathy to connect with the average Louisianian voter, especially those outside of his own social class.¹¹⁰

The programmes and activities of Parker's gubernatorial administration formed the basis upon which Long built his programme for Louisiana. As John W Scott has demonstrated, in regards to the state of the roads in Louisiana of the period, such assessments which credit Long with the improvements to the state's highways are "grossly unfair to [his] immediate

¹⁰⁷ Schott, Matthew J "Huey Long: Progressive Backlash?" Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Vol 27 No 2 (Spring, 1986) p136

¹⁰⁸ Schott in Dawson p216

¹⁰⁹ Jeansonne, (Winter, 1990) p379

¹¹⁰ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p278

predecessors, particularly Gov. John M Parker.”¹¹¹ In the eight year period from the start of Parker’s gubernatorial term until the inauguration of Long as governor in 1928, Louisiana’s road structure was faced with a self-propagating challenge: the improvements and developments in automobiles meant that more were being purchased and used in Louisiana. With increased vehicle ownership there was the need for a better and more expansive road network; with the availability of better roads, more cars were purchased.

For Louisiana’s politicians, improvements to the motor industry, with its impact on the state’s oil and gas industries, provided the impetus for a substantive and wide-reaching opportunity to develop the state’s infrastructure, which was led by Governor Parker.¹¹² With new severance taxes legalised under the 1921 constitution, Parker initiated a substantive infrastructure programme in state institutions, including public education and hospitals, and instigated the work carried out by Louisiana’s Highway Commission. Scott’s primary focus is to debunk the mythology which credits Long with “lifting Louisianians from the mud.”¹¹³ Parker’s programme, which created the new campus for Louisiana State University to the south of Baton Rouge at no additional cost to the tax-payer, was funded by the 2% severance tax income. Long’s contributions to these issues during this period were of a purely political nature, thereby creating a role for himself as the defender of the common man of Louisiana in the face of increased taxation.

Parker’s achievements in office can be better defined as a partial success rather than, as Schott proposes, as a lack of success. In comparison with Long, it would be easy to dismiss Parker as ineffectual, but his commitment and determination to improve the state of Louisiana under his governorship along progressive and conservative lines is evident in his infrastructure programme, as well as in his determination to revise and review the state’s constitution. Where Long’s obsession with personal and political power led him to maintain

¹¹¹ Scott, John M “Highway Building in Louisiana Before Huey Long: An Overdue Re-Appraisal” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 44 No 1 (Winter 2003) p5

¹¹² Ibid pp8-9

¹¹³ Ibid p21

control of all areas of state government, ensuring those individuals holding state posts, not only owed allegiance to him and his programmes, but would also be subservient to his plans and ideas, Parker's administration did not seek the same level of control and management. The 1921 constitutional convention serves as a prime example of Parker's management style. Convinced of the premise that the precepts of good business management would improve the administration of the state, Parker lacked both the inclination and the ability to build the necessary coalitions of support for his programmes to be fully enacted. Despite Parker's call for "a short, simple charter," the state's new constitution was to become unwieldy, long and subject to numerous amendments.¹¹⁴ It did, however, expand state taxation and rationalise the state's role in infrastructure, conservation and education. Through the new constitution, Parker was also responsible for expanding the powers of the Railroad Commission (renaming it the Public Service Commission), powers which would directly benefit Commissioner Huey P Long's need for a state-wide profile and recognition, as he prepared for his own race for the executive office.

Prior to his inauguration, Parker had indicated that he intended to expand severance taxation in the state. Concerned how these proposals would impact their businesses, representatives of the big corporations, first lumber and then oil, met with the governor-elect. During these meetings, Parker agreed that the severance tax would not exceed 2% for the duration of his administration. To further assuage concerns that his commitments could be overturned by the Legislature, he offered to let the oil companies' lawyers write the legislation. Subsequent attempts by the constitutional convention to increase the rate of the tax were stymied by Parker, who refused to renege on his agreement. Long, amongst others, criticised the limitations of the legislation introduced by Parker – claiming that the severance tax rate should have been higher at 3% rather than 2%, and his 'gentlemen's agreements' with Standard Oil and other companies were deemed to be more favourable to

¹¹⁴ Schott in Dawson p218

the corporations than the people of Louisiana.¹¹⁵ Yet when Long came into the governor's office, eight years later, his amendments to Parker's legislation in these areas were limited, rather than reversing legislation he had opposed two years previously, he raised the gasoline tax from two to four cents.¹¹⁶

In *Huey Long*, Williams includes a two page assessment of the governorship of Parker, not purely because of the interactions between him and Long, but also as a way of demonstrating how Long's governorship was an improvement on what had gone before. By emphasising the impact of Long and denigrating Parker, Williams positions his own assessment as pro-Long, while failing to acknowledge that without Parker and the work of his administration, Long could not have delivered his programmes. Long's governorship was therefore, in part, a result of what had occurred under Parker. Most noteworthy is Williams' assessment, "Politicians like Parker prepare the way for revolutionary change . . . They sow the seed, but bolder men have to do the harvesting." It is Williams' implicit message that Parker may well have started some of the improvements in Louisiana, but that he had simply paved the way for the bolder man, Long, to deliver revolutionary change.¹¹⁷ The wider implication of the collective assessments of Vyhnanek, Haas, and Sanson, suggests that rather than being the catalyst for change, Parker's administration had, together with the administrations of Governors Fuqua and Simpson, wrought a climate of nascent change in Louisiana on which Long had built his agenda.

Huey P Long, a different style of governor

When Sam H Jones wrote "More bunkum has been written about Huey Long, and his place in history, than any man in this region I know of,"¹¹⁸ he was alluding to the extraordinarily extensive coverage and numbers of works dedicated to the life and career of Long, while offering a degree of criticism of the quality of some of these works. He also identified a clear

¹¹⁵ Schott in Dawson p218

¹¹⁶ Scott p37

¹¹⁷ Williams (1969) p137

¹¹⁸ Sam Houston Jones' foreword dated 15 October 1970 to Harnett T Kane *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride – The American Rehearsal for Dictatorship* pvii

difference between Long and the other Louisianian and Southern governors of the era: the degree to which Long fascinated, not just his contemporary supporters and opponents, but also those who have sought to explain the phenomenon of Long with the hindsight of historical perspective.

In comparison to the governors who had preceded him in office, Long presented a stark contrast. His brashness of manner and apparent lack of social skills may have offered a degree of informality in comparison to his immediate predecessors, but it is his accrual of political power, his ultimate goals, and the measures he took to acquire them, that sets Long's tenure of the executive office apart. Prior to his time in political office, he attended as many of the political meetings that he could both in Louisiana and out of state. At these events, he watched politicians, such as Jeff Davis (Arkansas, Governor 1901-1907, US Senator 1907-1913), James K Vardaman (Mississippi, Governor 1904-1908, US Senator 1913-1919) and Theodore G Bilbo (Mississippi, Governor 1916-1920, 1928-1932, US Senator 1935-1947) ply their trade, focussing on what each man achieved through his speeches and behaviour, and how it was done.¹¹⁹ Additionally, although there appears to be no evidence that Long and former Louisiana governor Henry Clay Warmoth (1868-1872) met during the latter's last years in New Orleans, it is clear that Long had studied Warmoth, since he utilised the former governor's techniques and style in his own quest for political and personal power.¹²⁰ In his diary entries for April and May 1929, Warmoth demonstrated that he was closely following events in Baton Rouge during Long's term of office, although it is not entirely clear from these entries, what his position was on the impeachment.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Williams (1969) p69

¹²⁰ Ibid pp184-185

¹²¹ Extracts from Warmoth's diaries in Letter from Wayne Binning to T Harry Williams dated 15 November 1968. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 8 Folders 8:10 - 8:16 In his entry on 21 April 1929, Henry Clay Warmoth appears to suggest he condemned Long's activities:

April 21, 1929: Gov. Long is making speeches over the state attacking the Legislature for proceeding against him with a view to impeachment. They are disgusting-
Subsequent entries, however, suggest that Warmoth held both Long and his opponents in equal contempt:

While this modelling of himself on others calls into question Long's claim to be *sui generis*, it also exemplifies his political character. Long was able to mould and utilise the successful techniques and stylistic characteristics of others, (such as Warmoth's tactics, Davis' use of language, Vardaman's precise style of dress and Bilbo's attacks on the wealthiest citizen in a town), which they had used to convince their audiences that, not only were they 'one of them,' but also that they were sufficiently superior to them to be capable of representing them.¹²² Long was, as a result of his utilisation of the techniques of other politicians, a composite character rather than a strictly original one. However, the resulting combination created in Long a politician who was able to radically alter the dynamics of politics in Louisiana.

The warning signs were there for Louisiana's political classes to see, that Long would be unlike any previous executive officer. These signs were particularly evident in his impact on turnout in gubernatorial elections in the state. As Barbara Wingo has shown, Long's rhetorical style and state-wide campaigning had a phenomenal effect, with turnout between the 1920 and 1928 campaigns increasing by "almost 100 percent in nearly all areas of the state."¹²³ In 1920, the turnout for the general election was 55,136,¹²⁴ in 1928 it was 96,674.¹²⁵ Despite Wingo's claim, it should be noted that this increased turnout was in part

April 23, 1929: Dreadful doings at the State Capitol. The Governor is going over the State denouncing the representatives of the Legislature as bribe-takers & the Members of the House are denouncing the Governor as a liar & all sorts of things- It is most disgraceful-

May 3, 1929: Gov Long & his political opponents are out in the press Calling Each other Liars. I guess they are all right-

Warmoth's entry on 22 May 1929 does not provide clarity on his view, suggesting instead both ambivalence and a degree of disappointment at the blatancy of Long's actions:

May 22, 1929: Gov Long is giving the Senators & Members of the Legislature good Jobs for their support of him against impeachment-

It might be called Bribery-

¹²² Williams (1969) pp69 - 70

¹²³ Wingo, Barbara C "The 1928 Presidential Election in Louisiana" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 18, No. 4 (Autumn 1977) p428

¹²⁴ The turnout for the general election on 20 April 1920 was Parker: 53,792, Stewart Thompson: 1305, Others: 39; the turnout for the Democratic primary election on 20 January 1920 was Parker: 77,868, Frank P Stubbs: 65,685 www.popflock.com/learn?s=Louisiana_gubernatorial_election_1920

¹²⁵ The 1928 election results were Huey P Long, Dem, 92,941; Etienne J Claire, Rep, 3,733 www.usaelectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?fips=22&f=0&off=99

due to the federal ratification of the 19th Amendment on 18 August 1920,¹²⁶ and not solely due to the Long effect. The previous gubernatorial election results had also indicated an increase of 51.78 percent in the turnout for the second Democratic primary in 1924 as compared to 1920 Democratic primary.¹²⁷ However, there was so little interest in the general election in 1924, that it emphatically demonstrates the irrelevancy of the Republican Party in Louisiana. The *Boston Globe* announced that “a light vote was reported. No tabulation of the vote was being made,”¹²⁸ while *The Daily Review* reported that a total of 132 votes had been cast for the successful candidate, Fuqua.¹²⁹ Long’s ability to “[excite] the interests of people who had become apathetic about politics” may have combined, with the promotion of his own bills, including one for free textbooks, and the “emotion-charged” issues of prohibition and religion, to extend his impact to the increased turnout in the state for the 1928 presidential campaign.¹³⁰

From the early days of his term as governor, including the months before his inauguration, Long made clear his intentions and determination to instigate his political programme with a patent disregard for precedence. An editorial in the *New Orleans Item* warned readers that, despite Long using the “power of patronage” in ways similar to “all his predecessors, including Mr Sanders,” the “unusually liberal” levels of acquiescence amongst members of the legislative assembly towards the governor-elect cannot “in view of his violent and revolutionary employment of his new power in the State Central Committee” offer “the members of Legislature any assurance that he will not exercise the power they have given him unwisely.”¹³¹ In February 1928, shortly after his election as governor, Long, while still governor-elect, as mentioned above, had disregarded tradition in the selection of the state’s

¹²⁶ Louisiana ratified the 19th amendment on 11 July 1920 National Park Service www.nps.gov/articles/louisiana-and-the-19th-amendment.htm

¹²⁷ The turnout for the second primary was Henry L Fuqua: 125,880, Hewitt Bouanchaud: 92,006 “Official Election Returns” *Alexandria Weekly Town Talk* 1 March 1924 p5

¹²⁸ “Henry L. Fuqua Elected Governor of Louisiana! *Boston Globe* 23 April 1924 p8

¹²⁹ “Sure, They Were!” *The Daily Review* 23 April 1924

¹³⁰ Wingo p428

¹³¹ Undated clipping from *The New Orleans Item* Morgan papers, Box 7: Legislative Series clippings: Long, Morgan, Ransdal and misc. folder: 1928 assorted clippings

delegates for the Democratic Party's national convention. Previously, delegations had been selected at a state convention, but with the assistance of Harvey G Fields, Long had determined that a convention was not a constitutional requirement and that selection of delegates could be made by the central committee, the membership of which he, through patronage, controlled.¹³²

Other newspaper articles from the period immediately prior to Long's inauguration on 21 May 1928, also demonstrate a disgruntled and disquieted response to Long's unusual and early domination of the Louisiana Legislature. In a *New Orleans Item* article entitled "Long is Boss; And Playfully Goes About Job – Burlesque Stunts Begin Early; Freak Resolution Is Read," R B Pixley and C E Frampton reported on Long's precedent-smashing activities and the wide-ranging focus of his attention:

"Nothing escapes his notice. He is interested in doorkeepers and porters as well as the jobs on the desks and committee chairmanships. Whatever may happen to Governor Long in the coming weeks he is boss now and no mistake. And there is something jovial about his bossing."¹³³

Long's presence in the legislative chambers, overseeing the work of the day and committee assignments, caused a number of senior members to wonder at his activities, as "No Governor-elect has ever done it before, but this Governor is something different."¹³⁴ Pixley and Frampton's assessment of Long's pre-inauguration activities was a warning to the populace of the state that Long's administration would not be a continuation of gubernatorial politics as usual.

Conclusion

Huey P Long has frequently been described and assessed in isolation as an exceptional political character. The purpose of this chapter has been to determine the degree to which

¹³² Williams (1969) pp281-282

¹³³ R B Pixley's and C E Frampton's report "Long Is Boss: And Playfully Goes About Job" is dated 15 May from Baton Rouge in an undated clipping from *The New Orleans Item* Morgan papers, Box 7: Legislative Series clippings: Long, Morgan, Ransdal and misc. folder: 1928 assorted clippings

¹³⁴ Ibid

Long was indeed exceptional by comparing and contrasting him to his contemporaries amongst the other governors of the southern states, and the degree to which he differed from his predecessors in the office of governor of Louisiana. By using case studies of other southern governors whose terms have either been characterised by impeachment or have been designated as ‘characters,’ Governors Henry Johnston Simpson (OK), William Henry ‘Alfalfa Bill’ Murray (OK), James Ferguson (TX) and Miriam A W Ferguson (TX) it is possible to determine whether Long was as different as he claimed. In Louisiana, Long’s persistent feud with former Governor John M Parker and his use of the tactics used by former Governor Henry Clay Warmoth have made these two men useful case studies by which to examine Long. In determining the degree to which Long differed from his predecessors and his contemporaries, it has been possible to establish the potential that existed for impeachment in his career.

As Jeansonne argues in his article, “Huey P Long: A Political Contradiction,” one cannot fully define an area, city or state based on its voting record in one or two elections, and nor should this record be used to define a place throughout its history. As such one cannot specify a single incident which led Long to become the person that he did. The factors are as wide-ranging and complex as the demographics of Louisiana: “Long was as much shaped by the forces indigenous to the state as he shaped them.”¹³⁵ By comparing Long and his term as governor in Louisiana with his contemporaries amongst the southern governors and his predecessors in the office in Louisiana, it is apparent that he was a sufficiently different political operative that he can be defined as an ‘exceptional’ southern governor. While superficial commonalities in biographical statistics and experience in office are evident, Long’s level of control over political power in Louisiana sets him apart from his peers. It is also evident that, unlike most of his gubernatorial peer group, Long represented a significant change in, and challenge to, the political dynamics of the state of Louisiana. Not only was he a vastly different model of governor to those who had preceded him in office, he was, as

¹³⁵ Jeansonne p374

alluded to in this chapter, a 'tipping point' in the development of Louisiana and its political system. Long's level control over the state was to have an impact which has resonated through the decades since his death. This level of control over the power in the state, not only set Long apart from his peers and predecessors, it was also the fundamental point of contention which drove his political opponents to a degree of animosity which threatened Long's career and, ultimately his life, and which created the circumstances and atmosphere for impeachment.

Chapter 3

Steps to Power

This chapter will demonstrate how Long's career progression developed from a deliberate ascension to the presidency via a specifically prescribed pathway to one dedicated to the acquisition of political and personal power, and that this route ensured that his impeachment would occur in March 1929. There are two distinct but intertwining routes by which the circumstances and motivating forces of Long's rise to prominence may be discerned: the political ladder and the acquisition of power. The political ladder represents the structural and logical steps to Long's prominence in Louisiana and subsequently the nation: election as a member of the 3-person state Railroad Commission (1918-1928); election as governor of Louisiana (1928-1932); and election as United States Senator (he was elected in September 1930 and took up his seat in January 1932). In his acquisition of power in Louisiana throughout his career, Long demonstrated his ruthlessness, desire and determination to dominate, and his reluctance to be subordinate to anyone. Although it is in his retention of the powers of the governor once he had left the office that he demonstrated an obsession with personal power beyond that which he had previously displayed when appropriating powers for the offices he occupied. This chapter will explore Long's rise to political power and his obsession with the acquisition of political and personal power. It will also discuss why, over and above his policies and programmes, this developing obsession was a key factor in and cause of his impeachment in 1929.

Biographers of Long take the view that from an early age he was determined to attain high political office, specifically the presidency of the United States. Some, such as William Ivy Hair, have noted the appropriateness of a political career for one with the “combination of skills, mania for attention, and urge to dominate others,”¹ but these biographers have failed to recognise both the single-mindedness with which he followed his preconceived path to achieve his ambition, and that the determination to achieve high political office pre-dated an interest in politics. A motivating issue for Long’s pathway to power was his perception of his status within Louisiana’s social strata;² as such, the holding of high political office would, in his eyes, equate with power in the state and politics. For Long politics, as with much else, was a means to an end. In a letter, written when he was 25, to his brother George (a.k.a Shan), he bemoaned the attention from the New Orleans newspapers, which had identified him as “an aggressive candidate for governor, despite [his] statement that [he] would not [run].”³ His frustration was more to do with his ineligibility for the governor’s office than the attention of the press. He admitted to Shan that his statement, that he was focussed on his current political office, was a deliberate obfuscation since “the chief underlying reason is that I cannot run on account of my age. This darn thing has been my handicap for fifteen years.”⁴ This letter makes clear not only that to be governor of Louisiana had been a long-held ambition and that his inability to achieve his goal purely because of his age was, for Long, an almost intolerable frustration, but it also confirms that he saw the attainment of each political office as a step towards the next level, rather than as a goal in its own right. The origins of Long’s obsession with power may be detected at an early age, when he annotated his school books with “Hon Huey P Long.”⁵ He was 10 years old during the administration of Governor William Wright Heard (1900-1904). Heard’s administration was overshadowed by those which preceded and succeeded it, with the result that it is largely ignored by

¹ Hair pp35-36

² See Motivations chapter p190

³ Letter to Dr G S Long (Shan) from Huey P Long dated 30 July 1919, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 3: Family Correspondence 1919

⁴ Ibid

⁵ See Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment chapter p218

scholarship.⁶ Mark T Carleton's sketch of Heard highlights his administrative expertise in a period of relative calm for Louisiana, with his gubernatorial successes including the transfer of penal system control to the state, the creation of the State Board of Education and parish school boards, and the creation of the unsuccessful State Crop Pest Commission to handle a boll weevil infestation.⁷ The introduction of the State and parish school boards would have shaped the school life of the young Long. As such his perception of power in Louisiana may have been informed by the Heard administration. That a state governor could directly affect the daily life of a child would certainly have struck Long as an example of the amount of power which was available to the state's politicians, a power he would come to crave. It is therefore power, and the acquisition of power, which was the driving force of Long rather than the practice and administration of politics itself. Political office, most notably that which was held by the state governor, would have seemed to offer the ten year old Long the means by which he could acquire this power.

Long does not appear to have comprehended what exactly it was that he was looking to achieve. Like a child who when asked what he wants to be when he grows up states, a doctor, but who fails to understand the skill set required to achieve such an ambition, and so does not study the sciences. In setting his sights on the presidency, Long mapped out a logical pathway by which it could be achieved. However, he appears to have failed to understand the skill set necessary to make his goal attainable, the behavioural traits and the interpersonal interactions necessary to build the coalitions required to support a presidential campaign. Instead, Long saw political power in the US as a pyramid, which rose from a base of local and state offices to the pinnacle as represented by the presidency. Not only did he specifically identify his route to the presidency, he followed those steps without varying and he did not consider alternative routes which could have achieved his ambition more directly or in a much shorter time frame. Additionally, his focus on his goal ensured that he was

⁶ Mark T Carleton "William Wright Heard" in *The Louisiana Governors – From Iberville to Edwards* (ed) Dawson p198

⁷ Ibid pp197-198

disinclined to follow more traditional pathways to attain his objective. By August 1928, when Long was constitutionally eligible to hold the office of the presidency of the United States, there had been thirty of them. Of these, thirteen had previously been state governors (this includes Grover Cleveland for each of his two non-successive terms as president) and eleven had previously been United States Senators.⁸ No president had previously taken the route identified by Long and had been both a state governor and had held a seat in the United States Senate.⁹

As Railroad Commissioner (subsequently Public Service Commissioner), Long brought cases against corporations which benefitted a diverse group of Louisiana's population, and it was on this record that he campaigned for the governorship, first in 1924, and then successfully in 1928. As a state-wide personality, he would have had a potential opportunity to campaign for the presidency at the end of his gubernatorial term in 1932. However, not only did he lack an appropriate national presence, but Louisiana also did not offer a sufficiently effective platform to raise his national profile. A diverting exchange in the *Atlanta Constitution*, in early 1931, had instead served to emphasise the regional nature of Long's persona. After he had served potlikker (the juice of boiled vegetable greens and saltfat pork) and cornpone to a group of bankers in February 1931, Julian Harris, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* reported on the contrasting styles of Georgians and Alabamians who crumbled their cornpone, while Long dunked his. When Harris questioned Long's etiquette, he began a light-hearted debate which included not just Long but governors from across the South, including Doyle E Carleton (Florida), John Garland Pollard (Virginia), Ross S Sterling (Texas), William H "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (Oklahoma) and Lamartine G Harman (Georgia). But the issue was not limited to a Southern readership, with Governor Franklin D Roosevelt (New York), Mayor of New York City, James "Jimmy" Walker and the author of *Etiquette: In*

⁸ On 2 November 1920, Warren G Harding was the first incumbent senator to be elected president https://www.senate.gov/history/chronology.htm#chronology=y1900_1920 (accessed 29/12/2016)

⁹ <http://governors.rutgers.edu/on-governors/us-governors/governors-and-the-white-house/governors-who-became-president/> (accessed on 08/12/2016) & http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/senators_became_president.htm (accessed on 08/12/2016)

Society, In Business, In Politics and At Home, Emily Post, all being invited to participate in the debate.¹⁰ For Long, this episode was light-hearted but while it served the purpose of further increasing his national profile, it also emphasised the gulf that needed to be bridged, since this interlude could not be said to have highlighted presidential characteristics. However, his determination to follow each step of his planned route to the presidency provided him with, what he may have seen as, the solution to the problem of his lack of profile, a run for the United States Senate. Where Franklin D Roosevelt had begun his campaign for the presidential nomination, several years before his actual run, by establishing himself as a national figure in the Democratic Party, including writing to party leaders across the country in the wake of Alfred E Smith's failed run encouraging them to look to the future of the party and suggesting that "had we kept our national organization going between elections we should have done better and I hope that steps will be taken to have this carried out during the next three years."¹¹ Long, in contrast, had iconoclastically disregarded such traditional routes and behaviours, and as such, did not truly seek to establish an effective national persona until he moved to Washington DC to take up his Senate seat. He did have a presence on the national stage, but his image as an outrageous buffoon, the archetype of a Southern governor, was not a suitably 'presidential' image designed to appeal to the national electorate. It is also unlikely, as things stood, that he could have garnered sufficient support from within the national Democratic Party or across the country for a viable campaign. Additionally, it should also be noted that the historical precedent of previous presidential campaigns does not suggest that Long's strategy for his route to the presidency was an effective one and that a seat in the United States Senate was not a guarantee of a strong national profile. If his proposed career path was a means to an end, the achievement of his ambition: the presidency, then there is a logic to Long's tactic to utilise each elected

¹⁰ Muggleston, William F "Cornpone and Potlikker: A Moment of Relief in the Great Depression" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Association of History* Vol 16, No 3 (Summer 1975) pp282 -285

¹¹ Letter from Franklin D Roosevelt to Huey P Long dated 6 December 1928 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 1 folder 1-2 Huey Long Series: HPL Correspondence (1 of 2) 1923 -1935, n. d.

office to maximise his opportunity to attain the next level of elective power. The contradiction lies, however, once he had been elected to the US Senate, in his determination to retain to his own person the powers of his previous office even though he had moved on to the next one on his route. Rather than a means to an end, the acquisition and, notably, retention of political powers had become the driving force of Long's ambition. The route to the presidency became instead the means to acquire personal and political power rather than simply a progression through the ranks of elected offices.

One of the reasons Long may have been determined to retain the power of the governor's office was because the office of a US Senator lacked the same level of authority to which he had become used to as governor. Power in the US Senate was dependent not just on party and seniority but also on the ability of the individual to manage, to negotiate and to work within coalitions. As others throughout the twentieth century, including Lyndon B Johnson, would later demonstrate, the route to the presidency could be achieved through the traditional structure of the US Senate and within the constructs of the national Democratic Party.¹² In his insular adherence to a defined career pathway, Long failed to appreciate fully the potential power that would have been available to him, had he complied with the traditions of the Senate. Instead of working within a system, his tendency was to attempt to dominate it. His preference for political leadership (executive) rather than *quid pro quo* teamwork (legislative) was emphasised by his career path. Until the US Senate, each of the elected offices on his career path allowed him to lead or dominate rather than have to work with others to achieve his programmes. Long's elected roles did not place him in a position that he believed required him to work with others, therefore coercion rather than cooperation was his preferred tactic. For his first elected office, he had chosen to run for a relatively ineffective body with a membership of three commissioners, instead of yielding to the

¹² The link between Long and Johnson went beyond their origins in the South and their individualistic style. Johnson, while working as clerk to a Texas congressman, would make every effort to be in attendance whenever Long spoke on the Senate floor. As Speaker of the Little Congress Club, an organisation for congressional employees which was modelled on the House of Representative, Johnson arranged for Long to speak to the club at one of its weekly gatherings. <http://history.house.gov/Blog/2013/May/5-8-Little-Congress/>

encouragement of W T Heflin and O K Allen. Heflin and Allen had asked him to “run for state senator in the special election called this morning for this district by Governor Pleasant to fill the vacancy in the state senate and decide the ratification of the prohibition amendment.”¹³ Long had declined to run, claiming that he could “ill afford the time necessary to make a race and act in the senate.”¹⁴ Approximately six weeks later, he announced that he was formally entering the race for the Railroad Commission seat.¹⁵ When it came to the US Senate, the power of leadership was, significantly, unobtainable for him in the short term. So instead of working to gain sufficient seniority to achieve a leadership role, a strategy which would take both time and a conciliatory approach, he set out instead to challenge those individuals in position of power, such as the Democrat’s minority leader in the Senate, Joseph T Robinson (1913-1937, AR).

However, it should be noted that Long’s retention of control of Louisiana preceded his actual move to Washington, so to limit the discussion of his actions to his sense of inadequacy once in the Senate does not reflect the full picture. In Louisiana, he had held not only the constitutionally allocated powers of the governor, but he had also subverted the independence of the judiciary and the Legislature, acquiring influence over the powers of these institutions, as well as control over the police and armed forces. Although the nineteen charges in the impeachment resolution brought on Tuesday, 26 March 1929 addressed each aspect of Long’s accretion of power, the eight charges on which the House finally voted to impeach him, while more specific in nature, failed to address the broader accusations of the originals.

Louisiana Railroad Commission¹⁶

At the instigation of his childhood friend, Harley B Bozeman, Long targeted the state Railroad Commission for his first political office primarily because it afforded him the

¹³ “Long Asked To Run In Union Parish Race” *The Shreveport Times* 25 May 1918 p1

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ “H. P. Long Enters Race” *The Shreveport Times* 9 July 1918 p2

¹⁶ The Railroad Commission was renamed the Public Service Commission by the 1921 Constitution, Article VI Sections 3 - 9

opportunity to enter into political office at an early age.¹⁷ When the Railroad Commission was created by the 1898 state constitution to cover the regulation of the “practices and rates of railroads, steamboats and other vessels, sleeping cars, telephone and telegraph companies and pipelines,”¹⁸ no minimum age restriction was set for its three commissioners, each of whom would represent one third of the state of Louisiana. Bozeman’s identification of this opportunity also helped to avert another clash between Long and his eldest brother, Julius, since Long had announced his intention to challenge Julius for the office of District Attorney. Without the lure of a state level office, such as the Railroad Commission, it is likely that Long would have ignored the advice of Bozeman, that he could not beat Julius, and entered the race for District Attorney. While the post of District Attorney may have more obviously suited Long’s expertise as a lawyer, the Railroad Commission offered him a political office and one in which he only needed to work with two other commissioners. As would become increasingly apparent throughout his career, Long had a demonstrable preference for executive leadership rather than legislative teamwork. While the latter requires a politician to work with others to form coalitions to develop and pass legislation, with a focus on negotiation skills and teamwork; the former offers the opportunity to direct, lead and instruct, with an expectation of obedience. Ultimately Long’s accumulation of power in Louisiana allowed him to direct and coerce rather than to persuade cooperative support; a factor which was highlighted in the US Senate when he found that his previously successful tactics failed to elicit the support and admiration of his peers. In the event that Long had reached the presidency, it is difficult to envision how he could have moulded his techniques to be able to work effectively with Congress.

By winning the election for the third (northern) district, Long was placed to represent twenty eight parishes for a six year term, an opportunity he used to build his personal state-wide reputation. As Harnett T Kane, a contemporary journalist from New Orleans reported, Long had an immediate impact on the increased activism of the commission. The other two

¹⁷ Kane, p46

¹⁸ Williams (1969) p120

members of the commission had held their seats for a number of years, John T Michel was elected in 1912 and was a ward leader for the Old Regulars in New Orleans; Shelby Taylor was the chairman of the commission. A Baton Rouge lawyer, Taylor had held his seat since 1908.¹⁹ The Railroad Commission had been an ineffective sinecure prior to Long's election as commissioner. The structure of the three member commission offered him the opportunity to exercise a leadership role without the need for extensive teamwork, since a simple majority carried decisions. With Long's election, the profile of the commission was raised across the state, "[people] who had barely known it existed now heard of it every day. Huey, it seemed to the public, was the commission."²⁰

Within months of his election to the commission in November 1918, Long had begun an action which had a dual purpose. Not only would it raise his profile across the state, but it was also designed to protect his own financial investments. His initiative on behalf of the independent oil companies regarding the Pine Island oil situation was as much a personal matter, since he owned stock in three of the companies, as it was a political attack on the big oil companies, including Standard Oil.²¹ At the end of the First World War, demand for crude, low gravity grade diesel, including Pine Island's, had diminished and the United States government had cancelled its orders. The major oil companies, notably Standard Oil, announced they would no longer buy Pine Island oil or carry it in their pipelines, leaving the independent producers with stock piles of oil in wells which were leaking and polluting the surrounding land. In his discussion of the development of the Pine Island situation, from an "isolated conservation problem in a northwest Louisiana oil field"²² to a controversy which had a "lasting economic and political impact on Louisiana,"²³ Brady M Banta highlights how the personal economic and political machinations of Long had influenced the development of

¹⁹ Williams (1969) p125

²⁰ Kane p48

²¹ Hair summarises Long's attitude to his personal wealth as "although anti-big business in rhetoric, he was never anticapitalist when it came to small enterprises." Hair p89

²² Banta, Brady M "The Pine Island Situation: Petroleum, Politics, and Research Opportunities in Southern History" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 52, No 4 (Nov 1986) p590

²³ *Ibid* p610

the situation. In comparison to a period of cooperation between federal government and the petroleum industry on regulation, Banta suggests that the “enmity between Huey Long and Standard Oil produced an atmosphere of mutual distrust that retarded any predilection for cooperative enterprise.”²⁴

Instigated in reaction to an embargo on the purchase of independent producers’ oil by Standard Oil and other pipeline companies in the immediate aftermath of the armistice in November 1918, which had resulted in the reduction of Long’s investment in the Banks Oil Company of \$1050 down to 10 cents on the dollar, Long’s enmity with Standard Oil not only had detrimental effects on economy of the state, but tainted his political relationships with two of the state’s governors, Ruffin G Pleasant and John M Parker, both of whom Long had supported at an early stage of his political career. Long persuaded his fellow commissioners to sign a report, in a closed session, which condemned Standard Oil for importing crude oil from Mexico while Louisiana oil was wasted, and called on the state Legislature to enact a law giving the commission greater control over the oil companies by declaring them utilities. The report called for Pleasant to summon the Legislature into special session to enact the law, and was further endorsed by a newspaper advertisement, in which Long called on readers to “Write the Governor to Call The Special Session.”²⁵ Pleasant refused to act upon the commission’s recommendation or to call the Legislature into special session. In a personal letter to the governor, which reinforced his accusations while simultaneously projecting an illusion of allegiance, Long sought to warn Pleasant of the “many expressions from various friends” in his section of the state, who were “expressing themselves quickly and in the open as believing [he] had been improperly influenced for [his] failure to take action against the Standard Oil Company.”²⁶ Despite his assurances that he knew Pleasant was “not unduly influenced,” Long questioned the governor’s lack of public comment on the matter, suggesting that if he had “any good reason for not calling the special session, [he]

²⁴ Ibid pp609-610.

²⁵ “An Answer to The Standard Oil Company” *The Shreveport Times* 10 May 1919 p11

²⁶ Letter to R G Pleasant from Huey P Long date 12 June 1919 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 62 General Correspondence June – August 1919

should let it be made public and quickly.”²⁷ Both Williams and Hair have concluded that Long was most likely pleased with the failure of the action, since the upcoming gubernatorial election of 1920 offered him a wider stage for his complaints²⁸ as well as giving him the opportunity to expand his image as a state-wide political operative. In a self-congratulatory letter to his brother, Shan, in September 1919, he clearly demonstrated the duality of purpose he had hoped to achieve by pursuing Standard Oil over the Pine Island situation. He wrote that he had “made some few thousands of dollars out of [the oil business], including good law fees which I have charged for certain work I have done”²⁹ but he claimed that he did not know what advice he could give to Shan, Julius and their friends so that they too might reap the rewards of oil, because he was “always afraid to invest the other man’s money . . . It is so easy to lose.”³⁰ This apparent reluctance to allow others to benefit, as he had done, appears at odds with his boasts of his profits. However, it can be seen as another example of his determination to disassociate himself from the wider populace, friends and relatives included.³¹ In a key statement, Long emphasised just how profitable he was finding the oil business since it would

“not hurt my political future to make whatever investments I wish to in the oil business. I understand the situation down here better than any man in the state, and have a perfect right to do it.”³²

This statement shows that Long believed the benefits he could get from the oil industry were not just limited to financial gain; he could also use them to accrue political credit, specifically by pursuing the big oil companies. Certainly Charles L Orr, a friend of Long’s from his time at

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Williams (1969) pp126 – 128, Hair pp89-93; Under the new state constitution, instigated by Governor John M Parker in 1921, the commission was renamed the Public Service Commission and its remit was widened. Oil pipelines were defined as public utilities, permitting the Public Service Commission greater control of them.

²⁹ Letter to Dr G S Long (Shan) from Huey P Long dated 19 September 1919, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 3: Family Correspondence 1919

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p216

³² Letter to Dr G S Long (Shan) from Huey P Long dated 19 September 1919, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 3: Family Correspondence 1919

the University of Oklahoma,³³ recognised as early as January 1917 that Long's "merciless attack on the soulless corporations of Louisiana" was by way of "laying the foundation for a stellar political career."³⁴ However, Long refused to concur with Orr's assessment, and in his reply, chose instead to suggest that his purpose in running for political office had a more altruistic motive, to target the corporations:

"Last summer I decided to try my hand against the state ringsters and corporation bosses that have dominated this state for many years. I ran for railroad commissioner, a position similar to that of corporation commissioner in your state, or public utility commissioner in some other states."³⁵

In a 1939 retrospective series of articles, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish," Hermann B Deutsch described how at the first rally of the 1920 gubernatorial campaign, held in Hot Wells, Louisiana, "[not] yet even a kingminnow, Huey P. Long appeared unannounced . . . and stole the show by his vitriolic attack on Governor Pleasant."³⁶ Accompanying this article is a copy of Trist Wood's cartoon from the *New Orleans Item* which had "marked Huey Long's first entry into state-wide politics" portraying a vigorous Long "in eruption" as he spoke to the crowds.³⁷

As Deutsch noted, not one of the prospective gubernatorial candidates, who had spoken in Hot Wells, actually remained in the election race after being eclipsed by Long at the event.³⁸ Having pushed himself into the political consciousness of the state by attacking the governor's stance on the pipelines, Long sought to further develop his political connections

³³ The University of Oklahoma transcript from 1911 - 1912 incorrectly lists both Long's name (Hugh Pierce Long, Jr) and his date of birth (30 Aug 1891). He audited four law courses during the first semester and attended five law courses and one physical training course during the second semester *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 2 Long Family: Huey Long Series Folder 2-39 Huey Long Series: Memorabilia Transcript, Circular & Poem 1912, 1935, nd

³⁴ Letter from Chas L Orr to Huey P Long dated 15 January 1917, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 55 General Correspondence January – December 1917

³⁵ Letter to Chas L Orr from Huey P Long dated 13 March 1919, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 55 General Correspondence January – December 1917

³⁶ Hermann B Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish II" *New Orleans Item* 20 July 1939 clipping, Miscellany 8-18, *Hermann B Deutsch Collection* (Mss 8), Earl K Long Library University of New Orleans

³⁷ See Appendix 3 p304

³⁸ Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish II" *New Orleans Item* 20 July 1939,

by aligning himself with Parker's gubernatorial campaign. Although Williams considers him to have been the most "incongruous member"³⁹ of the coalition supporting Parker, Long was explicit that his support rested upon the need to eliminate the New Orleans machine's control of the state,

"So long as the ring continues, the state is without law, without order and constantly taking backward steps from civilisation. . . . I consider it the most execrable thing with which this state has ever been cursed – surely the country should make it possible for the citizens of New Orleans to free themselves from this octopus."⁴⁰

However, his allegiance was predicated on two points alone, both of which would assist in advancing Long's career strategy. First, Parker's platform had indicated that he favoured a measure on pipeline regulation; the second, that with Long's assistance, Parker's success with the voters in the northern parishes could be improved. During his previous run for governor in 1916 as the Progressive Party's candidate, Parker had proved successful in the southern parishes, but had very little support in the north. If he was elected, especially with Long's support in the north of the state, Long would be able to claim he had delivered the governor's office for Parker. For Long, the benefits of supporting Parker for the 1920 gubernatorial election were two-fold: he could claim that he had the power to influence the electorate and also that he had a role in creating the governor's programme.

However, Long's anticipated influence over the new governor was short lived. On the matter of the pipeline bill, he had drafted a proposal which designated all pipelines to be common carriers or transportation,⁴¹ although, as a letter to D H Finley demonstrates, he claimed he did not expect his proposal to be accepted given the state of his relationship with Standard Oil:

³⁹ Williams (1969) p133

⁴⁰ "Huey Long Announces His Support Of John Parker For Governor" *The Natchitoches Times* 31 October 1919

⁴¹ Long's proposal would have benefitted irrespective of which course was taken. If the pipelines were designated common carriers, then oil from all producers would have to be carried, including that from the smaller producers such as those in which Long held shares. If instead, the pipelines were deemed to be transportation, they would fall under the remit of the Railroad Commission, and by extension, Long.

“The Standard Oil Company and myself and friends will enter a conference together, though I have been requested to lay aside my bitterness toward them and adopt a conciliatory attitude, which I will attempt to do, but I do not think they will allow me to retain very long. You know they like me about as well as I do them.”⁴²

The final bill passed by the Legislature, a compromise drawn up to satisfy the major oil companies and the independent producers rather than Long, determined that the courts could judge a pipeline to be a common carrier if it carried oil from other producers on a regular basis, not simply if it carried oil from other producers on an occasional basis. This bill resulted in an irreparable break between Long and Parker. In an early demonstration of his inability to accept the stipulations of another politician, Long allowed his personal fury, that, in his view, Parker had gone back on his pledge for pipeline regulation, to determine his actions. That the primary beneficiary of this bill would be Standard Oil simply aggravated the offence. Although Williams portrays Long as having recognised that this outcome would give him a valid political issue, which he could reasonably utilise to his benefit, it is more appropriate to apply a less positive assessment of his reactions. Long’s petulance at being bested in a political argument certainly allowed him to create for himself a *bête noire*, in the Standard Oil Company, one that he would indeed seek to manipulate to the maximum. But to suggest, that he acted in a way other than to react with personal enmity and churlishness attributes a level of political adroitness and prescience, which is dependent solely on Williams’ retrospective analysis of Long’s career-long pursuit of Standard Oil rather than an assessment of his actions at that time.⁴³ Long published a statement which accused Parker of having reneged on his campaign promises:

Huey Long, railroad commissioner, is out with a statement bristling with charges hurled at the “Standard Oil lobby, now gathered in Baton Rouge.” He charges administration leaders have become susceptible to this powerful influence and that the Butler resolution of the Senate to investigate, is but a play for delay and ultimate defeat of the Douglas bill making all pipe lines common carriers. Mr. Long issues a warning to Governor Parker, declaring he had promised this bill from every stump in the state and that it is now up to him to see that it passes the Senate, he

⁴² Letter to Mr D H Finley from Huey P Long dated 14 February 1920, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 69 General Correspondence February 1920

⁴³ Williams (1969) pp138 - 140

warns the governor against “certain friends,” who are only interested in their own success. He declared he had supported Parker ardently during the campaign and added: “Whose program for the good of the state I am yet supporting.”⁴⁴

This was a clumsy move which signalled the break between the two men very early in Parker’s new term of office. Long was not acting as a pragmatic politician, when he broke with Parker and became a persistent opponent of his administration, rather than accept the compromise deal. In a letter to his lawyer, Judge Robert R Reid, he expressed his “contempt for certain parties who secured my support under false pretenses [sic] and went back on every promise made to me.”⁴⁵ While Long’s action on this occasion presaged future breaks, the break with Parker was specifically linked to their disagreement over the oil pipelines and, therefore, Standard Oil. The corporation had, in part, been responsible for the financial losses that Long had sustained over the Pine Island situation, and now he had been unable to persuade the new governor to enact legislation which would impose penalties on the corporation. In retaliation, after his failed attempt to influence the governor, he did not limit himself to accusations that Standard Oil was controlling Parker and his administration: “The attitude of the Governor at the present time,” he told Thomas J Greer

“is such as to indicate that he has about thrown himself and all his marbles into the bag, toward the inevitably consuming flames of the special interests. He is against any little man securing rights in the legislature, if opposed by the Standard Oil Company.”⁴⁶

He also claimed that members of the Legislature were under the company’s control, a tactic which he would continue to use throughout his career, most notably during the impeachment. For Long, accusations that his political opponents were subject to inappropriate influences were a staple of his political career, including the allegations that Parker was in thrall to Standard Oil. It was the use of claims of corruption such as these which precipitated the first attempt to impeach Long.

⁴⁴ “Huey Long Makes A Startling Charge – Against ‘Standard Oil Lobby Now Gathered at Capital’” *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 1 July 1920

⁴⁵ Letter to Judge Robert R Reid from Huey P Long dated 28 October 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 80 State vs Huey P Long Long-Parker Matter 2 of 5

⁴⁶ Letter to Thomas J Greer from Huey P Long dated 8 September 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 80 State vs Huey P Long Long-Parker Matter 2 of 5

In a statement published in the newspapers, Long accused his two fellow commission members of taking bribes from the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company, over rate increases, while claiming that he alone had rejected these advances.⁴⁷ The resulting outrage in the Legislature at his claims would have resulted in impeachment charges being brought against him, had not the members recognised that such an investigation would necessarily have had to first prove the innocence of Commissioners Taylor and Michel, since they had been implicated. Long could not be impeached for impugning his fellow commissioners unless they could be shown to be innocent of his claims. A formal investigation into the commission's activities was initiated, while concurrently in a personal action, Governor Parker swore out affidavits charging Long with libel regarding the accusations that his administration was being run by Standard Oil.⁴⁸ The official outcome of the Legislature's investigation was to recommend that all three members of the Public Service Commission face impeachment charges, although the Legislature lacked the will to act on its own resolution since no testimony was brought to impeach Long and the administration did not wish to risk the posts of the other two commissioners.⁴⁹ A second proposal that all three commissioners stand for re-election was deemed inadvisable, since Long's increased popularity as the person exposing the influence of the corporations meant that he alone was likely to be re-elected. Long was left to inform Judge Harney F Brunot at his libel trial, "all the legislature did . . . was to allow me to be called a liar all over the statehouse."⁵⁰ He was found guilty of libel, but the sentence was a suspended 30 day jail sentence for one charge and a one dollar fine for the other, because, Brunot stated, he considered Long to have "an impulsive nature, and that the lesson of guilt, rather than the

⁴⁷ See Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment chapter p262; "Quiz Of Phone Rate Raise Is Asked In Bill" *The Shreveport Times* 9 September 1921 p1

⁴⁸ In a letter to state Representative W. J Hammon, Long claimed that he had "the 'dope' that will come very near running the governor out of the state house if doesn't before the thing comes off." Letter to Hon W. J. Hammon from Huey P Long dated 25 October 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 80 State vs Huey P Long Long-Parker Matter 2 of 5

⁴⁹ Williams (1969) p149

⁵⁰ Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 31 July 1939

severity of punishment will be sufficient.”⁵¹ This decision offered both parties the opportunity to claim victory, since for Long, the sentence was a “sweeping victory . . . inasmuch as he had been found guilty on strictly technical grounds, and then a moment later practically released by the court”⁵² while Parker could be said to be vindicated by the guilty verdict. However, Deutsch’s later report that Long responded bitterly to reporters’ questions about which of the two sentences he would accept: “I wouldn’t tell you my name was Huey Long,”⁵³ suggests that Long was not entirely satisfied with the verdict, possibly since the guilty verdict represented another defeat at the hands of Parker. Certainly his supporters in Mansfield, Louisiana, were not impressed with the outcome of the trial, although their objection lay with the penalty rather than the verdict:

We hold no brief to defend Mr. Long, and Gov. Parker needs none, and there is no fault to be found with the verdict of the court, but we resent the penalty imposed, as the court by implication, at least, leaves it to be inferred, that we the people, of the First R. R. Commission District had elected a fellow to the most exalted office within our gift, whose word amounted to so little that he could not libel a man for more than four-bits worth at a pop . . . No! for whatever may be said about Huey, he is not so all-fired cheap as that. . . The trouble with Gov Parker and the Baton Rouge Judge is that they take our Huey too seriously. His home folks know better than to do that, but when he is trouble, we must stick to him like a fever tick does to a Sabine parish cow.⁵⁴

As governor, Long exacted his revenge on Brunot for the decision, as he began to fill the Louisiana Supreme Court with men who owed their allegiance to him. Having previously managed the election of John R Land to the court from the northern district,⁵⁵ he made it clear that he supported his libel trial lawyer, Robert R Reid, over Brunot for the seat in the

⁵¹ Ibid; “State Officer Convicted” *The Los Angeles Times* 9 November 1921 p37

⁵² “Long is Guilty Pays a Dollar” *The Monroe News-Star* 9 November 1921 p3

⁵³ Deutsch, “The Kingdom of the Kingfish” *New Orleans Item* 31 July 1939

⁵⁴ “Huey P. Long Convicted – Gov. Parker Vindicator” *The Mansfield Enterprise* 10 November 1921 p2

⁵⁵ Long provided a retrospective record of the circumstances in which he had supported Judge John Land’s election to the state Supreme Court. During the Railroad Commission election in 1918 “Judge Land was at the Court House, so the incident ran, fixing to cast his vote. He marked it for me. Some one saw it, called his hand with the demand that he support the regular candidate, Mr. Bridges. Judge Land turned to him and said: ‘You vote for who you damn please, I’m for Huey Long.’ A large crowd present heard the colloquy. When I was told of this I hastily said: ‘That’ll send Land to the Supreme Court yet.’ I have managed to make good that promise.” Letter from HPL to Henry Jastremski dated 28 August 1921, Jastremski (Leon, and Family) Papers 1836 -1974 Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Folder W:23

southern district. Reid won the election. Brunot would later take a seat on the court, but only after he had switched his allegiance to Long.⁵⁶

In 1922, in the election called as a result of the death of Commissioner Michel, Francis Williams was elected as commissioner for the southern district. A swift reorganisation of the commission installed Long as chairman.⁵⁷ The first case to come before the reorganised commission involved the telephone rates increases which had resulted in threatened impeachment. Under Long's chairmanship, the hearing was loud, argumentative and dictatorial in nature. Since Williams had pledged to reduce phone rates during his recent campaign, the telephone company's representative, Blanc Monroe, attempted to propose that Williams recuse himself from the case. The motion was shouted down by Long, who threatened Monroe with contempt and jail should he persist in promoting it. After evidence was heard, Deutsch reports that the commission "took the case under advisement, meaning that Mr Long went back to Shreveport" to write the decision rejecting the increase and restoring rates to their previous level. While ultimately the company appealed the decision and a compromise rate increase was agreed,⁵⁸ the subsequent refunds totalling \$440,000⁵⁹ to people across the state not only provided a tangible demonstration of Long's effectiveness on behalf of the people as well as his determination to take on the corporations on their behalf, but it also provided him with publicity material to utilise in future campaigns.⁶⁰

The work of the commission, especially after its remit was widened and it was renamed the Public Service Commission, had a broad impact not just via state-wide cases but also through local municipal cases. It is T Harry Williams' opinion that while the outcome of the diversity of cases dealt with by the commission did result in increased name recognition

⁵⁶ Williams (1969) pp151 -152

⁵⁷ Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 1 August 1939

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ "\$440,000 Will Be Paid Back, Long Is Told" *Shreveport Times* 16 January 1923 p1

⁶⁰ "Long could – and ever afterwards did! – claim that he had forced the telephone company to restore to the people some of the money the old commission had allowed them." Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 1 August 1939

across the state for Long, it was for him a combination of “self-interest and idealism.”⁶¹ However, since Long lacked a philosophical or ideological framework, ultimately his actions were self-serving.⁶² Following the outcome of the phone rate case, Long returned to court to request the company pay not only the costs of the case, but also his fees.⁶³ Just as he introduced the concept that those cases which were to succeed before the commission should benefit the general community and not simply local interests,⁶⁴ so he also insisted on full three person panel hearings where previously cases would have been heard by a single commissioner, whose decision would be confirmed by the other two members. This is not to suggest that Long adhered to a strictly professional and politically appropriate style of chairmanship. He was less inclined to adhere to the concept of full panel hearings when the hearings were held in private which therefore offered fewer opportunities for publicity, later deeming Francis Williams’ executive sessions to be a waste of public money, demanding that the sessions

“all be in the open and full view of the public, with the transactions duly and publicly recorded for inspection, when I go into session with the two colleagues who are now on the Commission. Whenever there is anything done in one of those private meetings, let them write it out and send it up here for my action.”⁶⁵

His vindictiveness was as likely to rule his decision-making and behaviour as were his scruples. Certainly, the level to which Long controlled the commission as chairman suggests that the use of the three member panel was an example of domination rather than of collegiality. A series of letters between Long and Francis Williams demonstrates how he sought to control the activities of the commission and the other members, and that he was adamant that Henry Jastremski, the commission’s secretary, was there to support him and his work, not that of the other commissioners. In his letter, Long refused to give permission

⁶¹ Williams (1969) p155

⁶² See Motivations chapter

⁶³ “Long and Barrows Ask Lawyers’ Fees” *Shreveport Times* 26 January 1923 p11

⁶⁴ Williams (1969) p157

⁶⁵ Letter to Henry Jastremski, Secretary, Louisiana Public Service Commission from Huey P Long dated 13 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 33 Folder 1225 Louisiana Public Service Commission – General Correspondence January 1927

for Jastremski to accompany Williams to Washington DC on commission business, claiming that funding for both men to travel was unlikely to be forthcoming, but also that he needed Jastremski to work on two cases due to go to trial within the next ten to twelve days. He claimed he would be

“completely at a loss without Henry there during these trials. In fact he is going to have to get up most of this data for me because I can’t spend much time there making preparations.”⁶⁶

To highlight how Long’s profile was raised by his time and activities with the commission, T Harry Williams recounts several tales in which individuals from across the state appealed to Long for his assistance against the corporations and businesses, including a story, related by William J Dodd, of a logger who, along with other small producers, had been unable to get the Kansas City Southern Railroad to transport his stock. Having spoken with Long, the man was told to have his stock ready for transport that night. Although not entirely certain that Long would be able to persuade the railroad to do the pickup he made certain the stock was ready. The logs were collected. The man’s wife was shocked, saying that someone who could do such a thing must be a dictator, and in what would become a recurring refrain in Louisiana the logger replied “What’s the difference? He gets things done.”⁶⁷ Williams uses this story to demonstrate how Long was actively supporting the people of the state and how he “liked the feeling of power that came to him when he could help such a person,”⁶⁸ but he fails to examine further Long’s changing attitude to power as demonstrated not just in the wife’s response but also in Williams’ own assessment of Long at this time. Both of these points indicate a development in Long’s perception of power; he recognised that not only did he have the means and ability to bring about small changes in the lives of people, but that his reputation and profile could benefit from these small actions, actions which could be converted into electoral support. An example of the small actions that Long would undertake,

⁶⁶ Letter to Francis Williams from Huey P Long dated 28 February 1925, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 33 Folder 1233 Francis Williams – Huey P Long Correspondence 1924 – 1925

⁶⁷ Williams (1969) p161

⁶⁸ *Ibid* p160

which had the potential to improve his reputation, is the loan of \$8 to C J Dunbar in December 1928:

“Dear Governor:

Enclosed you will find draft covering the amount you loaned me about December 15th, while riding enroute to New Orleans. I thought you would be interested to know that I made very satisfactory arrangements today with my Patent. Thanking you for your favour, and wishing you every success,

I am,

Very truly yours,”⁶⁹

Long’s response to Dunbar’s letter and repayment of the loan, while a self-eulogising piece, also speaks to a degree of cynicism regarding the reliability of others. A cynicism which was built on, or caused, his experiences with other politicians:

“Dear Sir:

I thank you very much for the check for \$8.00 which you sent me in return for that amount of money which I handed to you. You reinspire my confidence in human beings. I was glad to give you the \$8.00 so that you might know you had what money I had in order that I could do you a favor in safety. The chances were 99 out of 100 that I had a fine man with me, but I did not care to take the 100th chance, and after I carried you to New Orleans, I knew you needed the \$8.00 worse that I did so I had you keep it. I am certainly wishing you the very best luck in the world and hope that I have made a true friend out of the incident.

Yours truly,

Governor”⁷⁰

Although Long did actively work in opposition to those whom he had previously supported and to those who had at one time supported him, he did not always renege on friendships and obligations. During the First World War, state Senator S J Harper was indicted “as a traitorous character” an offence which in Long’s view could have “sent him to the penitentiary

⁶⁹ Undated letter to Long from C J Dunbar, Long (Huey P.) Papers, Box 5 Folder 157 – General correspondence Jan – Mar 1929

⁷⁰ Letter to C J Dunbar of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from Long dated 21 January 1929 Long (Huey P.) Papers, Box 5 Folder 157 – General correspondence Jan – Mar 1929

for thirty years and have called for a fine of \$30,000.”⁷¹ Long, who had been supported financially by Harper during his early days as a lawyer and whose first successful attempt at drafting state legislation had come under the auspices of the senator,⁷² defended Harper against the charges despite acknowledging it had been “considered very improper.” Long claimed he had done so because “[Harper] had been such a constant friend” but that while his defence had been condemned during the race for the Railroad Commission, his “explanation to the people as to why I did it, brought me considerably votes [sic] than my opponent was able to take away.”⁷³

For his supporters, Long’s appeal was that he was actively attempting to do something rather than conform to the *status quo*. As a Railroad commissioner, one of his supporters praised him for attempting to “[combat] a corporation that has trained the people of our city to think every request they make must be granted” and for being “so able and fearless to present the truth at a time when we are being deceived by erroneous [sic] statements, that will not enlighten but blind-fold the public.”⁷⁴ Long’s work on behalf of his supporters garnered promises of support for his proposed gubernatorial run in 1924, even if his work had not achieved the required outcome; in March 1923, Mr W B Sivley Jr, manager of Klondyke Seed Farms, Collinston La, wrote to assure Long of his support in return for the assistance he had received regarding the provision of new depot facilities by the Missouri Pacific Railroad, despite the facilities promised not having been delivered yet.⁷⁵ Even a letter to decline the invitation to speak to a high school graduation was turned by Long into a demonstration of the work he was doing “fighting for the people,” since any free time he had

⁷¹ Letter to Mr R O Jackson from Huey P Long date 14 August 1919 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 62 General Correspondence June – August 1919 p2

⁷² The Harper Amendments reformed Louisiana’s compensation law for injuries or loss of life sustained by labourers. Second primary advertisement for the Railroad Commission election campaign in *Shreveport Times* 18 September 1918 p9; Long (1933) p25;

⁷³ Letter to Mr R O Jackson from Huey P Long date 14 August 1919 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 62 General Correspondence June – August 1919 p2

⁷⁴ Letter to Huey P Long from Geo W Stone dated 10 May 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 71 General Correspondence May 1920

⁷⁵ Letter from W B Sivley Jr to Huey P Long dated 26 Mar 1923 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923

was spent “to try to do a little practicing on the side so [he] may make the money with which [he could] carry on this kind of fight.”⁷⁶

It was a larger target which provided Long with a greater opportunity to expand his profile. Standard Oil had provided his legal practice with a persistent target through a case which had begun in 1921 and dragged on, at the behest of both sides, until 1927. Long represented Consolidated Progressive Oil Corporation when it sued Standard Oil for nine million dollars in damages in respect of a lease of land fraudulently sold by a former Consolidated president to another party, which was then sold on to Standard.⁷⁷ Long’s pursuit of the corporation was obsessive and personal. Having, in his view, suffered at the hands of Standard Oil over the Pine Island oil situation and then having faced a protracted law case against them while acting for Consolidated, he sought to utilise to maximum effect his position on the Public Service Commission by acting against Standard Oil and to try to undermine what he perceived to be its domination of the state. As Public Service Commissioner, Long’s case against Standard Oil may not have offered the drama, the blustering and the shouted threats of contempt and imprisonment that had been exhibited in the phone rate case, or any real degree of success for Long, but it represented a significant step in his continued pursuit of the corporation. As the commission initiated its proceedings in late 1922 on the question of pipelines, Standard Oil was undertaking procedures to separate its pipeline operations from the rest of its business, creating the Standard Pipe Line Company in January 1923. The commission’s attempts to control the oil corporations by designating them public utilities and thereby imposing restrictions on practices and rates of the pipeline companies were blocked by the state supreme court in summer 1923. Although the court’s judgement determined that the commission had overstepped its powers in treating Standard Oil as a whole as a public utility, it also allowed the commission to examine the accounts of Standard Oil as these related to the pipeline business. It is

⁷⁶ Letter to R P Parker from Huey P Long dated 10 April 1923 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923

⁷⁷ Williams (1969) p100

Williams' opinion that Long was satisfied with undertaking this continued harassment of the company since, even if it did not achieve tangible success in his personal fight against Standard Oil, it further underlined his reputation as the man who would go up against the big corporations on behalf of the people.⁷⁸ This was a currency that Long could use in his next political race, for the governor's office, and from that office he could act against Standard Oil.

The 1924 gubernatorial race

It was Long's intention to garner the reputation and support that he had developed during his time on the Public Service Commission, especially through those cases which had affirmed his reputation as a man of the people, into support for his campaign for the governor's office. Lacking the finances as well as the political and organised support of his opponents, Henry L Fuqua and Hewitt Bouanchaud, his campaign repeated the tactics previously used during the election for the Railroad Commission. His brother-in-law, Dave McConnell, drove him across the state to give speeches, pin up posters and hand out circulars. In an era of increasing radio ownership, Long used radio broadcasts as a way of getting his speeches to a wider audience, and was one of the first politicians in Louisiana to use radio as a campaign tool. His speeches were personal attacks on his opponents, their supporters and Standard Oil. In a statement sent to the newspapers, he condemned his former associate and a prospective opponent, Judge James G Palmer as working for Standard Oil rather than for the people of Louisiana.⁷⁹ The result of the 1924 election demonstrated, however, that despite his efforts on the commission, Long lacked a sufficiently state-wide personality and following, and an adequate support structure that could compete with the New Orleans machine. Clearly, he was not yet in a position to be able to manipulate and manage the focus of a major political campaign.

⁷⁸ Ibid pp174-180

⁷⁹ Statement sent by Long to A W Newlin of *The Daily States* New Orleans; the accompanying letter from Long suggests a biased press, stating "I wish you would tell Mr. Ewing that if he is not backing Mr. Palmer and wants to be fair about this matter that he make this bunch publish this statement that I am sending you herewith in the Shreveport Times, with a good heading" Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923; See Motivations chapter p205

The central question for all candidates in the 1924 gubernatorial campaign was the increased activities of the Ku Klux Klan. The distribution and diversity of the state's populace complicated the issue of the Klan for Long. If he had been a Catholic and from the south of the state, his campaign strategy would have been a simple choice between a strong anti-Klan stance, picking up the majority of Catholic voters but few votes from the northern parishes, or a moderate anti-Klan platform, which might dilute the Catholic vote but would improve his chances of support in the north. However, as a Protestant candidate from the northern parishes, where Klan membership was at its strongest, an anti-Klan stand by Long would alienate those areas of his strongest support.⁸⁰ In personal correspondence, he denied that he was a member of the Klan and sought to distance himself,⁸¹ but publicly, in a poor strategic choice, Long sought to avoid the question. He tried instead to deflect the discussion to one on Standard Oil, claiming that it was they, not the Klan, who were the political power in the state. Such was the perceived toxicity of the issue that his fellow commissioner, Francis Williams, sued the *Times Picayune* for libel over a cartoon which portrayed him as being "actually and consciously engaged in a conspiracy with the Ku Klux Klan to elect a [Klan] candidate [Huey P Long] as governor."⁸² Williams claimed that if anyone could prove that Long "is a klansman, or the klan candidate, [he and his brother would] withdraw" their support.⁸³

⁸⁰ Subsequent anti-Klan legislation, notably an anti-masking law, together with an increase in internal divisions resulting from increase Klan political activities, rendered the Klan an ineffective body and a non-issue in the 1928 gubernatorial campaign. Allan P Sandler *Huey Long's Louisiana - State Politics, 1920 – 1952* (1956, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore) p51

⁸¹ "I have thought from time to time that I would write you a letter with regard to having seen in a newspaper sometime ago that you were an organizer of the Klu Klux Klan [sic] and that you were handling certain affairs for them up in Louisville Kentucky during the time when there was so much talk about the affair. Write me confidentially just what your connection was, and is with the Klan, if you can, and tell me some-thing about it. There are about two thousand members of that Klan down here in Shreveport, and the membership includes some of the most prominent men we have. I am not a member, and while I have never taken a hand either way, I requested some of my good friends whom I know to be members, that I not be asked to join." Letter to G S Long from Huey P Long dated 22 December 1923 Huey P Long dated 5 August 1923 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8 Family Correspondence 1921

⁸² "Damage Suit, Charges, Denials in State Race – Williams Hints Klan Supporting Fuqua – Fuqua Denies Seeking Backing of Klan" *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 10 September 1923 p1

⁸³ *Ibid* p8

The primary election was won by Bouanchaud, with Fuqua second and Long third. Although the result meant Long did not participate in the run-off, which Fuqua won, it did present a degree of concern for the supporters of his opponents. While Bouanchaud had a majority of the votes across the south of the state and Fuqua's strength had come from the urban areas, Long had done much better than expected, and his support had come from the rural small-farmer poor parishes from across the state. This was support which could be expected to be further expanded in the future, especially if, as Long suggested, the rain did not again prevent them from voting.⁸⁴

Whilst his position on the Public Service Commission was essential for his future plans for the governor's office, and in spite of the outcome of the 1924 gubernatorial election, Long appeared to be so confident of his re-election to his seat on the commission later the same year, that he focussed as much time on supporting the United States Senate re-election campaign of Joseph E Ransdell, as he did on his own campaign. Although Ransdell was a diametrically opposite character to Long, both parties benefitted from the unusual affiliation – Ransdell needed Long's support to overcome the challenge of his opponent, Lee E Thomas, whose campaign had the support of Governor Fuqua and former Governor J Y Sanders; while Long anticipated that his support of Ransdell would be reciprocated by the senator and his supporters in the southern parishes and amongst Catholic voters in the gubernatorial contest of 1928. Long's self-confidence in his own support was justified as he took all of the twenty eight parishes in his district, representing 83.9% of the vote.⁸⁵

Following his re-election, the Public Service Commission was largely inactive under Long's chairmanship, except on cases which would improve his gubernatorial chances; political activity as represented by public service was no longer his focus, the Commission had

⁸⁴ The origin for Long's claim is a letter from Henry Jastremski sent after the results were in which read: "The total for the country shows how handsomely you led, and if the weather hadn't been against you there is no question on earth but what you would have been in the fight today." Letter from Henry Jastremski to Huey P Long dated 18 January 1924 February 1925, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 94 General Correspondence 1924

⁸⁵ Long: 45,043; Walter L Bagwell: 8537 Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 3 August 1939

served its purpose in raising Long's profile and now it served to keep Long in the public eye as he prepared to move up the next step on his career ladder. With the election, in 1926, of Dudley J LeBlanc to the commission's second district seat, the dynamics of the three person commission altered; Francis Williams was nominated (by LeBlanc) to the chair and, in Long's absence, the majority vote passed. Once ousted from the chairmanship, Long's interest and participation in the Commission's activities waned considerably. In a statement after being ousted, he said:

"I can afford to lose the chairmanship of the Commission at this time, and in the best of grace. It will give me a much needed opportunity to actively devote my attention to my campaign for governor, and to take care of some of the private law practice which I have had to neglect for the legal work of the Commission."⁸⁶

By positioning his law practice as having been neglected by his work as chair of the commission, Long sought to emphasise his commitment to the state, and its people, as something which had been at the cost of personal sacrifice. The commission had served its purpose in promoting Long across the state, and he now focussed his time on building a network of support outside his stronghold of the northern parishes. The period between 1924 and the beginning of campaign activities in 1927 was, for Long, an extended session spent in building support collaborations with, amongst others, Paul Maloney in New Orleans; Colonel Robert Ewing, the owner of New Orleans *States* and the Shreveport *Times*, whose "unswerving loyalty and clear exposition of the facts and issues were" Long claimed, "without doubt, one of the most outstanding factors in the whole campaign;"⁸⁷ and Senator Edwin Broussard. 'Coozan Ed' would help deliver the southern, French speaking parishes in return for Long's support in the 1926 US Senate race against J Y Sanders.⁸⁸ However, this connection was sufficiently nebulous that Harvey E Ellis found it necessary to write to

⁸⁶ Statement of Huey P Long on the Chairmanship of the Commission, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 104 Conclusion Public Service Chairmanship 1926

⁸⁷ Letter to Colonel Robert E Ewing from Huey P Long dated 24 January 1928 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 8 Folder 237 Colonel Robert Ewing

⁸⁸ "While Long weakened himself in his support of Senator Broussard in some sections, he immeasurably strengthened himself in other." Letter from Harvey E Ellis to Louis A Wood dated 20 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 110 2nd Gubernatorial Campaign Correspondence with H E Ellis December 1926 – January 1927

Broussard in January 1927 to encourage him to reciprocate Long's support in the face of attempts by "the same influences that attempted to keep Long from supporting [him] in the recent senatorial campaign" to conduct an "insidious campaign of slander against Long."⁸⁹ While Ellis declined to act as manager for Long's state campaign, stating that he had insufficient time available to carry out the "exacting requirements of such a position," he did offer specific advice on how Long should conduct his campaign to overcome his image as "a radical and a Bolshevik" which may have appealed to "a certain class of our voters, [but] the vast majority of our citizens are unwilling to trust the future of our State in the hands of such a man, and you are going to be judged by your speeches and your actions, and the men with whom you surround yourself in conducting your campaign."⁹⁰ In a statement which echoed Ellis's concerns, Mayor Lee E Thomas, of Shreveport, issued an announcement in June 1927, indicating that he would join the gubernatorial race "unless some available candidate from north Louisiana enters the race" because "a great many citizens [he knew were] opposed to a man of the destructive and bolshevistic type for governor of this state."⁹¹ In his response, Long obliquely referred to Thomas' previous failed run for the US Senate during which the mayor had attempted to play to racial sympathies, and claimed that he was not "familiar with the bolshevik activities unless it be that they have some reference to the combination that Mr. Thomas made with his friend, the negro republican leader, Walter L. Cohen."⁹² During the 1924 US Senate race, Thomas had, in campaign materials, condemned his opponent Joseph Ransdell for addressing a letter to the republican leader using the phrase 'Mr Cohen.'⁹³ This accusation rebounded on Thomas, when many in the state questioned the apparent collusion between him and Cohen, and expressed resentment

⁸⁹ Letter to Sen Edwin S Broussard from Harvey E Ellis dated 10 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 110 2nd Gubernatorial Campaign Correspondence with H E Ellis December 1926 – January 1927

⁹⁰ Letter to Huey P Long from Harvey E Ellis dated 14 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 110 2nd Gubernatorial Campaign Correspondence with H E Ellis December 1926 – January 1927 p1

⁹¹ "Mayor Thomas Announces He May Get Into Governor's Race And Issues Statement" *The Shreveport Times* 11 June 1927 p1

⁹² "Long Answers Statement of Mayor Thomas" *The Shreveport Times* 15 June 1927 p1

⁹³ "Senator Ransdell and the Negro in Louisiana Politics" *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 6 September 1924 p3

at the involvement of a black Republican leader in “a white primary of a party with which he [had] no affiliation.”⁹⁴ Having mocked Thomas for his failed tactic, Long used the same one in his own Senate race against Ransdell, and even cited the same letter that Thomas had quoted.⁹⁵

Notwithstanding his advice that Long conduct his campaign along conservative lines and not to rely on his personal supporters to win the race, Ellis wrote that he believed if Long were elected, he would “clean out the Aegean [sic] stables at Baton Rouge and will give this State an honest, fearless, progressive administration, and that you will surround yourself by conservative friends to whom you will appeal for counsel and advice.”⁹⁶ Ellis reiterated this opinion in a subsequent letter to Louis A Wood, further suggesting that the “only man who can defeat Long is Long himself” and that if he relied on “safe, sane conservative men, to whom he will appeal for counsel and advice” he would win the election.⁹⁷

Governor of Louisiana

In December 1926, Long faced the 1928 gubernatorial election confidently. In a letter to R F Robinson, he estimated that he could take the “country part of the state . . . with from 70,000 to 75,000 votes in the lead of my opposition.”⁹⁸ He also expected to carry New Orleans, but had made “plans so that, regardless of what may happen there, my majority in the country will be so large that nothing that is done in New Orleans can affect my chances of being governor.”⁹⁹

⁹⁴ “‘Cohen Letter’ Boomerang To Thomas – Democrats Aroused; Mayor Given Rebuke By Ransdell – Many Wonder Why Cohen Is Aiding Thomas” *The Shreveport Times* 7 September 1924 p1

⁹⁵ “Ransdell’s Political Love Letter to the Negro Walter Cohen” *Louisiana Progress* 4 September 1930 quoted in Hair p202

⁹⁶ Letter to Huey P Long from Harvey E Ellis dated 14 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 110 2nd Gubernatorial Campaign Correspondence with H E Ellis December 1926 – January 1927 p2

⁹⁷ Letter to Louis A Wood from Harvey E Ellis dated 20 January 1927 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 110 2nd Gubernatorial Campaign Correspondence with H E Ellis December 1926 – January 1927

⁹⁸ Letter to Hon R F Robinson from Huey P Long dated 1 December 1926 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 4 Folder 103 General Correspondence July – December 1926

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

In the years since his failed run in 1924, he had created an organisation and attracted funds for a campaign war chest, including a \$40,000 donation from New Orleans business man, Robert S Maestri.¹⁰⁰ Unlike the political machines of New Orleans (the 'Old Regulars' and the 'New Regulars') which operated up to and including the state level, and which could be brought to bear in support of any candidate identified by the machines' leaders, Long's organisation had a single purpose, to bring about his election to the office of governor. His organisation also differed from the New Orleans machines in affiliation. Unlike the others, whose membership was based in essence on a degree of ideological consistency, the upper levels of Long's organisation were made of men whose allegiance was to him personally in varying degrees. While there were those whose allegiance was dependent not only on the size of the favour they owed to Long, but also the degree to which they could allow themselves to submit to Long's sense of superiority and how far they could align themselves with his programmes, there were those whose allegiance was to Long himself, including Seymour Weiss and Maestri. The main strength behind Long's organisation, however, lay with the rural vote, which had supported him in 1924 and which formed the solid backbone of the Long machine. Rural leaders were either influenced to support Long by the people in their parishes or they were inclined to support him by his programmes, which promised to deliver future improvements for them; while their support may have been in some way ideologically linked to Long, it is most likely that they were drawn to support him solely for the benefits his programmes would bring to their communities.

The efficiency of campaign activities for 1928 was vastly improved for Long by both the existence of his organisation and by the influx of financial support. Instead of having to deliver and pin up his circulars himself, he could now rely on his organisation to do the more mundane aspects of the campaign, while he focussed on speaking in as many parts of the

¹⁰⁰ "Maestri Gift Creates Stir – Many Want All Facts On His Giving \$40,000 to Long Campaign Fund" Clipping dated 26 April 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 8: Legislative Series Clippings: Long impeachment. Folder April 24 – 28 1929

state and to as many people as possible.¹⁰¹ Long followed his established campaign strategies, plastering the state with circulars, stump speeches, radio broadcasts¹⁰² and personal attacks on his opponents, and he emphasised his programmes, especially the free school books initiative. The result of the first Democratic Party primary demonstrated the growth of Long's support across the state. Although he led, he did not gain a sufficient majority of the vote to avoid a second, run-off, ballot: Long, 126,842, Riley J Wilson, 81,747, Governor Oramel H Simpson, 80,326.¹⁰³ Long's lead was such that he was unlikely to lose the run off, unless Simpson's supporters could be delivered as a block to Wilson. However, with the defeat, Simpson's organisation collapsed and one of his leaders, Paul Maloney, defected to Long.¹⁰⁴ Subsequently, the Old Regulars "decided to advise Mr Wilson not to enter a second primary."¹⁰⁵ Long therefore became governor of Louisiana, without needing the second primary.¹⁰⁶ In return for Maloney's action, Simpson was given a minor office in the Long administration.¹⁰⁷ Long's electoral success, however, was not accompanied by electoral gains by his supporters in the Legislature's elections. His organisation had been solely focused on his election, it was only in later elections that Long tickets would be promoted and elected in their entirety. In theory, therefore, his influence over the Legislature was limited at best. With only eighteen of the one hundred members of the House of Representatives aligned to Long, and only nine of the thirty nine senators,¹⁰⁸ received wisdom would suggest that it was likely that the new governor would struggle to form strong enough coalitions to implement his programmes. However, Long's actions immediately after

¹⁰¹ Williams (1969) pp259-261

¹⁰² Long's opened his gubernatorial campaign at Bolton High School in Alexandria on the evening of 3 August 1927. His speech was heard by 3000 people in the auditorium, with a crowd, estimated to be around 5000, listening outside to the speech through loudspeakers. The speech was also broadcast by radio station KWKH in Shreveport "Cheers As He Tells Issues" *The Shreveport Times* 2 August 1927 p1 & p13

¹⁰³ "Final Results Announced" *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 24 January 1928 p1

¹⁰⁴ "Concede Post to Huey P Long" *The Shreveport Times* 23 January 1928 p12

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ The general election results were Long: 92,941; Etienne J Claire, Republican: 3733
uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php.fips=22&year=1928&f=O&off=5

¹⁰⁷ Notes from Paul Maloney interview by T Harry Williams on 26 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers* Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews, Box 19 p2

¹⁰⁸ Williams (1969) p279

the elections were such that observers of Louisiana politics were soon made aware that conventional wisdom rarely applied to Long.

Between the election in January and his inauguration on 21 May 1928, Long set about disabusing those among his supporters who believed, like Colonel Robert Ewing, that they would be the power behind the throne of the new administration. One of his first actions was to bypass the traditionally-accepted process for nominating delegates to the Democratic National Convention. In some ways, Long was in essence no different from any other Louisiana politician of the era, he understood that to enact his programmes, deals would need to be made. Where he differed from other contemporary politicians was in the speed, ruthlessness and effectiveness of his strategies in getting such deals enforced. He sent long-time supporters from Winn Parish, Harley B Bozeman and Oscar K Allen, to persuade undecided and undeclared legislators to come over to his side, so that by the time the Legislature sat in session in May 1928, one week before the inauguration, Long was confident of promised support from a majority of legislators in both houses.¹⁰⁹

Traditionally the governor's wishes were a strong but not necessarily decisive factor in the election of the presiding officers in the two houses of the Louisiana Legislature. In the senate, Long's forces supported the re-election of Philip H Gilbert as president pro tem, an election the popular Frenchman easily won. In the House, with none of the newly elected Long members sufficiently experienced or imbued with his absolute trust to be an obvious candidate for speaker, he settled on the newly elected John B Fournet as his preferred candidate. Fournet was elected to the office by 72 to 27 votes. Long's initial relationship with the state Legislature was a mixture of adherence to those traditions which would offer support for his dominion and a dismissal of any which would prevent him achieving his goals. The Legislature's rules dictated that the president of the senate and the speaker of

¹⁰⁹ Clipping from *The New Orleans Item* undated (probably 16 May 1928) entitled "Long Is Boss; And Playfully Goes About Job – Burlesque Stunts Begin Early; Freak Resolution is Read" from *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder 1928 assorted

the House determined the committee memberships within each house; in practice, factional decision-making had previously determined committee structures. But adherence to this process would have inhibited Long's ability to control the legislative practices, so in another break from conventional practice, he dictated to both Gilbert and Fournet the full make-up of each committee within each house. As the *New Orleans Item* reported, the new governor's rule of the state had begun.¹¹⁰

Long's determination to control all aspects of state government was enforced through formal powers, persuasion and even strict adherence to constitutional restrictions. When he was inaugurated as governor, the office held one constitutionally mandated power which he could and did utilise with immediate effect, that of patronage through the appointment of state jobs. Even officials who were already appointed to state boards and agencies, and whose terms were not yet due to expire, were not exempt from his determination to control. While constitutional restrictions may have prevented Long from exercising his authority over all agencies immediately, adherence to the same constitutionally sanctioned authorisations allowed him to place his own people in to positions he wished to control. Where gubernatorial authority did not allow for rapid changes, then the Legislature was persuaded to pass laws allowing Long's personnel changes to be instituted.¹¹¹ In the case of the New Orleans Charity Hospital, when attempts to push a bill through the Legislature to instigate changes failed, it was through a precise attention to detail that he got his way. He noted that the terms of two members of the board had expired and they were serving without

¹¹⁰ Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping, possibly from the *New Orleans Item* circa 17 May 1928 entitled "'Long's rule' New worry on employes – Wants to say Who Goes on Payrolls" from *Cecil Morgan papers*, 1922 -1971 (LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 312) Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder 1928 assorted, Tulane University, New Orleans

¹¹¹ Williams describes how Long was able to immediately change the personnel of the Highway Commission as these were constitutionally gubernatorial appointees; and how, when the nine member Orleans parish Levee Board appeared untouchable by the governor, a law was passed by the legislature making the board into a five person body Williams (1969) pp290 -291

authorisation. With their removal and the installation of his own appointees, he achieved control of the board.¹¹²

In the case of Dr Valentine K Irion, head of the Conservation Commission, Long claimed that while Governor Fuqua had “sent Irion’s name to the senate for confirmation and he was confirmed [that] the governor [had] failed to issue a commission.”¹¹³ It was therefore Long’s contention that Irion had no right to the office, to which he had appointed Robert S Maestri. In a story picked up by newspapers across the country, Long secretly mobilised the state militia, in a blatant demonstration of force and intimidation, to remove Irion from office. The state supreme court determined that Maestri was entitled to the office but Irion resisted until advised that his request to appeal to the US Supreme Court had been denied by Chief Justice Charles A O’Niell, he then resigned. The militia was stood down and its members were advised that “it was a ‘test mobilization.’”¹¹⁴

In a tactic previously used by Governor Henry Clay Warmoth, Long required each of his appointees to sign undated resignation letters at the beginning of their terms in office as insurance against a future break.¹¹⁵ Williams sought to minimise the significance of this tactic by suggesting that not all letters were retained, stating that in some instances letters were demanded of a whole board if Long distrusted a single member and that the remainder were secretly returned to those trusted appointees.¹¹⁶ However, as Abe L Shushan testified during the impeachment, letters which were believed to have been destroyed were in fact retained

¹¹² Ibid pp292-293

¹¹³ “Long Argues Against Irion Office Claim” *The Shreveport Times* 2 March 1929 p1

¹¹⁴ “Calls Militia To Oust Office Holder – Louisiana Governor Finds Action Unnecessary – Irion Gives Up Post to Maestri – Staff ‘Fired on the Spot’” *The Boston Globe* 3 December 1929 p2; “Troops Called By Gov. Huey P. Long To Oust Official” *The Asheville Citizen, North Carolina*, 3 December 1929 p1

¹¹⁵ Long’s practice of demanding undated resignation letters from his appointees, including whole boards, was disclosed during the impeachment proceedings by several witness, including Abe L Shushan on Friday, 12 April 1929, *Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana* pp415 - 416

¹¹⁶ In defence of Long’s tactics, Williams quotes Earl Long as stating “Huey was right, you have to have that control.” The source of this quote remained anonymous Williams (1969) p294

by Long.¹¹⁷ Long's disposition to control those around him, combined with his inability to brook dissent from political or personal allies, meant that he was unlikely to have trusted anyone so implicitly that he would have given up any degree of control that he may have had over that individual by returning or destroying such leverage as an undated resignation letter. For Long, control was a fundamental factor in his ability to deliver his programmes. As such, Williams' assessment is not just contrary to Long's exhibited behaviour, it also demonstrates an attempt to position him within the accepted behaviours of Louisiana rather than as an aberration. Williams estimated that in the first two years of his administration only a third of state employees were Long people.¹¹⁸ While he argues that Long was acting similarly to the governors who had preceded him by using jobs to exercise political influence, he fails to recognise the crucial point of difference, that Long had developed the conventional system of one-off patronage repayment into an apparatus to maintain recurring points of manipulation.¹¹⁹ The combination of state jobs and control of the Legislature, when used together with ruthless persuasion methods including blackmail, amounted to a degree of political power never previously exercised by a Louisiana governor. One of the skills Long had developed as a travelling salesman, which also made him a skilful campaigner, was his ability to remember everyone he had met. As governor, he utilised this skill to control the state. He knew who held which post and, most critically, who was connected to whom. These relationships were targets which could be, and were, manipulated.

With these strategies in place, Long could reasonably expect a great degree of success in achieving his legislative programmes in the early years of his administration. However, the legislative opposition contained experienced political operatives, whose skill and knowledge of parliamentary procedure exceeded that of Long, and who could be expected to be

¹¹⁷ Abe L Shushan's testimony on Friday, 12 April 1929, Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana p416

¹¹⁸ Williams (1969) p295

¹¹⁹ Ibid p290

brought to bear to block or hold up legislation.¹²⁰ Moreover, their determination to oppose Long's legislation was as fixed and unreasonable as was his determination to pass his programmes. As Cecil Morgan later acknowledged, the pursuit of rational and pragmatic politics was damaged by the destructive atmosphere, such that even had Long proposed legislation to which they were philosophically and ideologically inclined, they would have opposed it, simply because it came from Long.¹²¹ As such, opposition to Long, and the need to ensure that cooperation or compromise did not mean legitimising his agenda, blocked any potential for bipartisan agreements.

Long's first legislative session included all of the strategies which would mark out his term in office as a highly unusual one. In a tactic that was not only against tradition and custom, but which also called in to question the separation of the branches of government in Louisiana, Long acted as his own floor leader in both houses of the Legislature. Storming the floor, shouting instructions to legislators, and answering voice votes on behalf of his supporters, his behaviour was as much about being at the centre of events as it was about being in control of those events. When in embarrassment at his actions, his supporters asked him to desist, he refused. But as newspapers reported, the situation had come to a head during the first of the 1929 special sessions, when, on 19 March 1929, representatives, including "L. L. Williams and A. P. Frymire of New Orleans and J. Y. Sanders of East Baton Rouge" objected to his presence on the floor, and "the stinging rebukes to which [he] was compelled to listen during the moments he flitted from member to member in the rear of the House of Representatives, forced him to leave, and he did not return."¹²²

His first regular legislative session had seen his bills for natural gas in New Orleans and free school books passed and an amendment to the existing severance tax law passed to pay for

¹²⁰ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. T. Harry Williams Papers, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 19 Folder 152 p6

¹²¹ Cecil Morgan interviewed on *Huey Long* produced by Ken Burns and Richard Kilberg PBS 1985

¹²² "Long Defeated Once Will Ask Another Trial" *The Daily Clarion-Ledger, Jackson Mississippi*, 20 March 1929 p1; Newspaper clipping dated 20 March 1929 "Governor must stay off floor" *Long (Huey P) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. F-3 #2600-73

the books. Amendments for a road bond and gasoline tax, which would fund Long's programme of highway construction across the state, were scheduled for ratification by the electorate in November 1928. The amendments were approved by overwhelming majorities.¹²³ Despite this apparent initial success, Long faced legal challenges to both the free school books legislation and the severance tax. In a response to the Caddo Parish School Board's opposition, he declared that its action would harm school children:

"I do not find where any reason was advanced as to why school children of Shreveport and Caddo parish should be prevented from having free school books. The action of the school board proposes to penalize our thousands of children throughout the city and parish because someone else is going to get the same free school books. The state has the books on hand and they are ready to send out. They would not cost anyone a single cent, but the Caddo school board has yielded to keep the children from having the free school books at all."¹²⁴

In both cases, when the judgement of the state supreme court found the laws to be constitutional, the complainants appealed the decisions in the United States Supreme Court, but in the meantime the books were allowed to be distributed to the children of the state and the severance tax collected. In April 1930, the court decided in favour of both of Long's laws. The books were being given to the children, not the schools, so did not violate state / religion constitutional restrictions. The state was deemed to be exercising reasonable latitude in the imposition of the severance tax.¹²⁵

The degree to which Long could be vindictive towards his opponents and at the same time manipulate them into adhering to his wishes is best demonstrated in an incident early in his administration which was related to the free school books case and which helped sow the seeds for his impeachment. The opposition to the school book legislation was primarily located in Caddo parish; the school board and citizens of the parish objected to what they viewed as state sponsored welfare – the issuing of free school books – and to the unconstitutional involvement of the state in religious schools – the issuing of books to pupils

¹²³ Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 13 August 1939

¹²⁴ "Long Declares Action of Board Hurts Children" *The Shreveport Times* 7 September 1928 p16

¹²⁵ Cochran v Louisiana State Board of Education 281 US 370 (1930)

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/281/370/>

attending church run schools. At the regular legislative session in May 1928, legislation had been passed to enable the city of Shreveport, located in Caddo parish, to acquire land in neighbouring Bossier parish for the purpose of donating it to the federal government to build an army air base on the site. The proposed base would have positive economic impacts for the city and its environs. After the session had adjourned, it was discovered that the crucial phrase "or without" had been omitted from the legislation in error, thereby nullifying the proposed plan to offer the land from outside of Caddo parish.

Long had called a special session of the Legislature to start on 10 December 1928 specifically to enact legislation to collect the gasoline tax and to start road construction. For the people of Shreveport and Caddo parish, the special session was a reprieve, if the governor could be persuaded to extend his call to include a discussion of the proposed air base and thereby issue the corrective legislation. Long refused. The episode demonstrates his desire to punish those who opposed him, as well as his ability to manipulate them to achieve his goals in full. Long presented an ultimatum to the Shreveport committee which was designed to enrage his opponents: an apology was to be published in the newspaper for the way the city had treated him; the city and Colonel Robert Ewing's newspapers would show him more respect; the Caddo school board would withdraw its legal case against the school books and their distribution; and the Caddo delegation would announce its full support for the governor's programme in the special session. Shortly after the committee refused to accede to Long's demands, the notification that the air base had been awarded to Shreveport was received. In the days that followed, petitions to the governor failed to alter his decision and on 8 December he published the call for the special session, without reference to the air base. It was Long who then proposed a compromise solution; that the twenty eight opposition senators should sign a petition calling on the Caddo school board to distribute the school books without compromising its legal challenge. Twenty five of the twenty eight senators signed and the Caddo school board pledged to distribute the books. Long then included the air base on the legislative call:

“The Caddo parish school board Wednesday afternoon formally accepted the proposition of Gov. Huey P. Long that it take over the distribution of free school books in this parish until its suit against the text book act be finally passed upon, in return for the governor’s inclusion in his call for a special session of the legislature of the necessary legislation for the establishment of the army attack wing here.”¹²⁶

Williams, in his determination to show that Long was a pragmatic politician, whose compromise proposal allowed his opponents to save face, misses a crucial point in his interpretation of this incident.¹²⁷ Rather than exhibiting pragmatism, Long had demonstrated that he would get what he wanted, in this case the distribution of free school books in Caddo parish, while at the same time demonstrating to his opponents that failure to adhere to his programmes would have substantial political, economic and financial penalties.

Having ended 1928 with successes in his major programmes, Long started 1929 with demonstrations of his disdain not just for his legislative opponents, but also for those who had supported his gubernatorial campaign, without being aligned to his organisation, beginning with tearing down the governor’s mansion in Baton Rouge; by upholding the death sentences of Thomas Dreher and Ada LeBoeuf¹²⁸ and so alienating his Lieutenant Governor, Paul Cyr; and instigating breaks with Colonel Robert Ewing and John Sullivan over the raids on gambling establishments.¹²⁹ But it was a decision by the US Supreme Court in the severance tax case that would specifically lead Long to actions that would end in his impeachment. The Court determined that, in light of a Louisiana law that prevented anyone who had overpaid taxes from recovering the funds without the permission of the

¹²⁶ “Parish Board Smooths Way On Book Plan” *The Shreveport Times* 13 December 1928 p1

¹²⁷ Williams (1969) pp328-331

¹²⁸ In August 1927, Dr Thomas J Dreher and Mrs Ada Bonner LeBoeuf, together with James Beadle, were found guilty of the murder of LeBoeuf’s husband, James. Both Dreher and LeBoeuf had admitted to their involvement in the murder during questioning, although both implicated Beadle as firing the fatal shots. Beadle denied all knowledge of the murder when questioned. Dreher and LeBoeuf were both sentenced to be hanged, while Beadle was given a life sentence. Under the provisions of the 1921 state constitution (Article V Section 10) the governor had the power to grant pardons or commute sentences on the recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General and the presiding judge of the court, or any two of them. Long refused to follow the two-to-one recommendation for clemency from the state pardon board, led by Lt Gov Paul Cyr, stating “if any stain was put on the descendants of these two, it was done by their crime, and not by its punishment.” Deutsch, “The Kingdom of the Kingfish” *New Orleans Item* 15 August 1939, on 1 February 1929, Ada Bonner LeBoeuf was the first white woman to be hanged in Louisiana.

¹²⁹ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p272

state, payments of the severance tax would go into abeyance pending a decision on the case. Demonstrating the highly interconnectedness of Louisiana politics and Long's programmes, this decision severely affected the funding of the free school books programme.¹³⁰

The lowest point of Long's gubernatorial career came with his call for the Legislature to meet in special session in March 1929 to legislate on six items, including a controversial occupational tax on oil. Long's determination to direct a recalcitrant Legislature to pass his bills led, first to the adjournment of the session, and in the face of another adjournment during the second session, a brawl and the instigation of impeachment charges against him. The specific details of the impeachment will be explored in the Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment chapter.¹³¹

Long had spent late 1929 and early 1930 in negotiations with a group of businessmen led by Harvey Couch, a former Winnfield resident, who had seen the political battles in the state as counterproductive to their interests. The negotiated truce proposed by this group guaranteed both an end to the impeachment process, which despite the collapse of the trial remained active on the Legislature's books, and support for the governor's 1930 legislative programme. In exchange, Long guaranteed that no occupational tax¹³² would be enacted while he was governor, although, as Deutsch observed, while Long kept this pledge, he did later enact the tax under O K Allen's administration.¹³³ The immediate outcome of this truce was that a chemical company announced it would locate its plant in Louisiana, and Standard Oil revealed that it would no longer oppose the severance tax in court, thereby releasing

¹³⁰ Clipping dated 12 March 1929 "Long Tax on Oil halted; Parker's is to stand" *Long (Huey P) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*

¹³¹ From page 210

¹³² Definitions: A severance tax was made on companies or individuals who engaged in severing natural resources from the soil or water. The tax is based on either the quantity or the resource extracted or the value of the extraction; an occupational licence tax or manufacturers tax was imposed (in respect of oil) per barrel on the refining of oil.

¹³³ Deutsch, "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 21 August 1939 clipping

funds for the free school books programme.¹³⁴ However, in negotiating the truce, the businessmen did not fully understand the full scope of Long's ambitions for Louisiana. His focus had turned to major infrastructure projects across the state. The new governor's mansion was already being built, in the style of the White House in Washington DC, and would, Long hoped, be complete by the time the Legislature met for the regular session in May 1930, and his plans included a new capitol building in Baton Rouge, a bridge across the Mississippi, improvements to the port in New Orleans and a widening of his road construction programme. The state Highway Commission estimated that the state would spend \$28,000,000 on bridge and highway construction in 1930, with the governor anticipating that "more than 3000 miles of highway" would be completed by the end of 1932.¹³⁵

It was Long's view that the effects on Louisiana of the recent stock market crash could be mitigated by the jobs provided by his infrastructure programmes.¹³⁶ It was therefore inevitable that disagreements would emerge between the business leaders and Long, when they attempted to restrict the level of his control over the expenditure that would be raised through a bond issue for his construction programmes. Long considered the business men convenient allies, but was unwilling to bend to their will. In a crude demonstration of his power, Long targeted a brother-in-law of Esmond Phelps, one of the men leading the call to impose restrictions on his control of the bond monies. Arthur B Hammond, a part-time lawyer for both the Dock Board and the Levee Board was, in Long's opinion, drawing two official salaries, a circumstance which was officially illegal under state law. This made Hammond a useful target for Long's retribution and he was dismissed from both of his jobs.¹³⁷ The long term damage caused by this single demonstration of his power, was the unrelenting pursuit of him by Hammond's wife, Hilda Phelps Hammond in particular through her activities

¹³⁴ Williams (1969) p424

¹³⁵ "Louisiana Highway Program Is To Cost Sum of \$28,000,000" *The Ruston Leader* 29 January 1930 p2

¹³⁶ Williams (1969) p425

¹³⁷ "Gov. Long Denies N. O. Friday Caucus" *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 2 April 1930 p3

campaigning for investigations into both Long and Overton's actions during the Overton-Broussard US Senate election campaign. Mrs Hammond's determination to have Long removed from office did not, however, allow her to engage in tactics which had already been exhausted. A letter exchange with John M Caffery, who proposed focussing on Long's avoidance of war service, elicited a response that the most effective plan was to work in the US Senate to expel him for fraudulently electing John H Overton.¹³⁸

Despite his work in preparation for the May 1930 legislative session, Long was unable to overcome the opposition's concerted efforts to block his bills, notably the funding for his road construction project. In a tit-for-tat session, Long vetoed those appropriations bills passed by the Legislature, including funding for two of his political enemies, Francis Williams (the chairman of the Public Service Commission) and Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr.¹³⁹ The outcome of the session was, what Sindler calls, the 'inadvertent encouragement' of Long to by-pass the elected members of the Legislature and put his programme to the test of the popular vote.¹⁴⁰ On 15 July, five days after the end of the regular session, and with two years of his term as governor remaining, Long formally announced he was running for the United States Senate in the upcoming election against the incumbent, Joseph E Ransdell.¹⁴¹ The election would in effect be a referendum on the programmes that the Legislature had recently blocked. Defeat in the race would enhance his political opponents' cause, but victory would present him with the legitimate mandate to enact his policies, and would demonstrate to all the level of control he held over the state.

¹³⁸ Letter from Hilda Phelps Hammond to John M Caffrey dated 3 June 1933 *Hilda Phelps Hammond papers*, 1908 -1951 LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 705 Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118. Folder 705-1-3 Hilda Phelps Hammond Collection Correspondence

¹³⁹ Sindler p69; Williams (1969) pp446-453

¹⁴⁰ Sindler p70

¹⁴¹ *State-Times* 16 July 1930 Long (Huey P.) Scrapbooks Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Range 132 #1666

In a vitriolic campaign, during which both sides indulged in the tactic of name calling, as demonstrated by Long's campaign materials,¹⁴² and also engaged in intimidation. Osmond Maher, a Long supporter, wrote of the

“insults and abuses [he] went through during the latter part of the campaign . . . people are awful sore here and myself and everyone else who supported you are classed as a traitor and I am going to have rough sailing until I get rid of my holdings here and get in some other place.”¹⁴³

On 1 September 1930, just over a week before the Democratic primary for the Senate race, Samuel Irby approached the Ransdell campaign with evidence of graft in the Highway Commission. As a result, Irby travelled to Baton Rouge to give evidence which would, according to newspaper reports, form the basis of a “secret investigation of the highway commission.”¹⁴⁴ The following day, Irby announced that he would sue Long and O K Allen for slander for “statements made by them to Irby’s wife . . . that [he] had gotten drunk at the Hiedelberg hotel at Baton Rouge and had beaten up two women and shot up a room;” Irby denied the allegations.¹⁴⁵ On 3 September, Irby and James Terrell were taken from the Gardiner Hotel in Shreveport by men of the state’s Bureau of Criminal Identification, including Dave McConnell, Long’s brother-in-law and one of his cousins, Wade Long. Newspaper reports of Irby and Terrell’s disappearance apportioned the blame to “Long Henchmen” who had taken the men from the hotel at “about 2 o’clock Thursday morning” and “spirited [them] out of Shreveport.”¹⁴⁶ With increasing pressure being brought by both Terrell’s brother and front page headlines in the press, including accusations that telegrams purported to have been sent by the two men, to prevent *habeas corpus* proceedings, were in

¹⁴² Long for US Senator campaign card *Long (Russell B) Collection* Box 3 Long Family: Huey Long Series Memorabilia & Literary Productions n.d. Folder 3-2 Huey Long Series: Memorabilia Campaign Cards 1923-24, 1930. See Appendix 3 p305

¹⁴³ Letter from Osmond Maher to Huey P Long dated 12 September 1930 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 6 Folder 173 Senatorial Campaign General Correspondence

¹⁴⁴ Undated newspaper clipping “Ransdell to win in Fourth” *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Folder no title

¹⁴⁵ Undated newspaper clipping “Irby Arrives Here But Delays Filing of Slander Action” *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Folder no title

¹⁴⁶ “Irby, Terrell Taken From Hotel By Long Henchmen, Report Of Local Police – Former Employe of State Highway Department, Here to File Slander Suit Against Governor, Taken Into Custody by State Fingerprint Bureau Men, Officers Tell Bazer” *The Shreveport Times* 5 September 1930 p1

fact fraudulent,¹⁴⁷ Long arranged for Irby to broadcast a statement on Sunday, 7 September. He claimed that his actions earlier in the week had been to expose and compromise the enemies of Long, not Long himself.¹⁴⁸

The significance of this incident lies not in that graft existed or that Irby had been appointed to his position on the commission by Long and had recently been sacked, but in that Irby was married to the aunt of Alice Lee Grosjean, Long's secretary, and was a close friend of Grosjean's ex-husband, James Terrell. Mason Spencer, a state representative, later claimed that Terrell had told him that "Huey had bought Alice Lee from him for \$2500 and a Buick coupe [and that] Irby [had claimed that] Alice had taken \$75,000 Huey had given her to hold"¹⁴⁹ As such, both Irby and Terrell presented a threat to Long and his election hopes. By removing the two men, Long demonstrated to the state the lengths to which he would go to protect himself and to ensure that he would be elected to the US Senate; his manipulation of Irby into making a pro-Long radio broadcast two days before the election confirmed his power in the state.

Long utilised his usual electioneering tactics, but he also introduced new technological developments to maximise his reach. For this campaign, he used sound trucks to magnify his voice at speeches, so he could reach more people without straining his voice.¹⁵⁰ The result of the Democratic primary on 9 September 1930 was Long: 149,640, Ransdell: 111,451. The turnout had increased by over 69,000 votes cast as compared to Ransdell's previous US Senate race (in 1924 Ransdell had defeated his opponent, L E Thomas by

¹⁴⁷ Jack Terrell pursued a *habeas corpus* claim because the telegram purportedly sent by his brother to their mother had been addressed to Mrs J C Norman, but that she had re-married six months earlier and was now Mrs H C Hasselroth, a fact that Terrell was aware of since he had been living with her during the same period. "Irby And Terrell In Gretna Jail – Long Makes Announcement At Speech In New Orleans; Says Held For 'Questioning'" *The Shreveport Times* 6 September 1930 p1

¹⁴⁸ Williams (1969) p475

¹⁴⁹ Notes from interview Mason Spencer with T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. Williams Papers, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 19 Folder 152 p6

¹⁵⁰ "H. P. Williams to Enter Race for Governor – Millionaire Candidate May Canvas State In Plane Long Refuses Aid" *The Ruston Leader* 22 October 1930 p3

104,412 votes to 87,547).¹⁵¹ The results in New Orleans (Long: 38,682; Ransdell: 43,373) demonstrated that Long's popularity in the city was increasing (a doubling of his 1928 portion of the vote)¹⁵² and that the control of the Old Regular machine over the lower ranks was weakening.¹⁵³ In the absence of even a token Republican candidate in the general election, the primary result was final, Governor Long was US Senator-elect. In a special session of the Legislature, called just one week after the primary, the governor's programme was easily passed, including, notably, the withdrawal of the 1929 impeachment charges. In terms of political power, Long was at this point at his most powerful and influential. He controlled the majority of political power in the state, the governor's office, the Legislature and aspects of the judiciary; his opponents were dramatically weakened and cowed by both his success in the senatorial race and his increased percentage of the vote in urban areas, places in which he had previously struggled. His level of influence now meant that he could reasonably expect to manage the transfer of the governor's office to his hand-picked successor and, potentially, choreograph the election of his own candidate against Louisiana's other Democratic US Senator, Edwin Broussard, in 1932.¹⁵⁴

Not all of Long's demonstrations of his need to dominate others were as overt as his dealings with the Legislature. In an episode that caught the attention of the national press, the commander of a German warship on a good will visit to the United States was met by the governor who was wearing green silk pyjamas. While the incident offered both the Louisiana and national press a degree of amusement and was portrayed as the gauche behaviour of a young governor, it was by no means an unusual tactic for Long to use. He would often hold meetings in his bedroom, in his pyjamas, his underwear and occasionally naked. Williams describes these incidents as "a symbol of his power . . . [so] people would know how great

¹⁵¹ "Ransdell's Majority 18,865; Carried Country by 123" *The Alexandria Weekly Town Talk* 20 September 1924 p5

¹⁵² Sindler p 71

¹⁵³ Williams (1969) p 481

¹⁵⁴ Neither Broussard nor Ransdell had supported Long during the impeachment crisis. Their defeats at his hands would have been an appropriate revenge for Long. Williams (1969) p462

he was"¹⁵⁵ but his analysis is only part of the story. In blithely and confidently disregarding matters of dress, formal or otherwise, Long deliberately set his visitors at a disadvantage, both socially and politically. With his visitors embarrassed or affronted by his lack of manners or distracted by his clothing, or lack thereof, Long was able to take control of the meeting, dominating his visitors to his advantage.

It is true that at each stage of his political career, Long endeavoured to increase the powers of the office that he held, even to the point of acquiring power over bodies which would constitutionally have been expected to restrain him, thereby prompting the accusations of dictatorship. It was, however, at this point, the zenith of his political power, that the obsession with his personal control truly became monomaniacal and compulsive. The technical issues that lay with Long's election to the US Senate were not based only in the constitutional provision which prevented a person holding a federal and state office simultaneously, but also in his unwillingness to hand over control of the state to a political enemy, and thereby concede his hold on the power he had acquired.

Governor and Senator-Elect¹⁵⁶

Although Long's Senatorial career is not within the remit of this thesis, the period from the collapse of the impeachment trial until Long was sworn in as Senator provides further evidence of patterns of behaviour. Specifically a continuation of the behaviour which had created the circumstances in Louisiana that led to the impeachment. As such, his actions in the period, 1930-31 offer corroboratory evidence of the likelihood of impeachment.

Traditionally, a newly-elected senator would go to Washington DC in the March after his election to take the oath of office; Long would have been expected to take the oath at the end of Ransdell's term, in March 1931. However, since his term as governor was not due to

¹⁵⁵ Williams (1969) p433

¹⁵⁶ In period between the US Senate election and the date he took the oath of office in Washington, Long used the title "Governor and Senator-Elect of Louisiana" Circular "Our Calling Hours – Please Help Us To Make Good!" 12/1/30 Long (Huey P.) Scrapbooks

expire until May 1932, this left a fourteen month period during which, in normal circumstances, a lieutenant governor would be expected to serve out the unexpired term of the governor. Normal circumstances, however, do not take in to account Long's ambition, together with his propensity to bear a grudge. Having broken with Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr over the Dreher and LeBoeuf murder case, their mutual animosity had solidified during the impeachment, when Cyr supported the anti-Longs' endeavour. The nature of the battle for the governor's office demonstrated the desperation of Cyr, the vindictiveness and obsession of Long and the willingness of Louisianians to engage in political spectacle. Cyr's legal battle for the governor's office was based on the argument that having been elected to the US Senate, Long was in contravention of the state's constitution by holding a federal and a state office simultaneously.¹⁵⁷ Long's counter-argument was that he was Senator-elect until he took the oath of office. His determination to prevent Cyr from taking the governor's office for "one split second" led him to extreme behaviours, including refusing to leave the state, since in his absence, Cyr would become acting governor.¹⁵⁸ In the aftermath of the impeachment, Long wrote to his fellow governors to explain the references to the 1928 Governors' Conference during his trial, and to offer his apologies for his absence at the upcoming conference on the basis that he could not leave Cyr in charge of the state:

"I regret that I cannot come to the Governors' Conference in New London. On the contrary, I will have to stay in Louisiana because should I leave here the Lieutenant Governor, whom I caused to be elected on my ticket, would become the Acting Governor and I would have some time undoing what he would do during my absence."¹⁵⁹

Such was their aversion that one newspaper suggested that Long's appointment of Alice Lee Grosjean as Secretary of State for Louisiana meant that in the event that an "act of

¹⁵⁷ "No person shall be eligible to the office of Governor . . . who holds office under the United States at the time of the election" *Constitution of the State of Louisiana 1921* Article V Section 3

¹⁵⁸ M W Childs of the *Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine* Staff "Governor, Senator-Elect and a 'Prisoner' in His Own State" undated clipping *Long (Huey P.) Scrapbooks*

¹⁵⁹ Letter to governors from Huey P Long dated 22 June 1929 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 8 Folder 238 Governor's Conferences References

Providence should remove Paul Cyr from the chair of Lieutenant Governor” she would become acting governor and Long would “take his seat in the Senate at once.”¹⁶⁰

In October 1931, during the campaign for the next governor of Louisiana, Cyr’s frustration led him to file a law suit in Shreveport to have Long declared a US Senator and to have it determined that in being elected to that office, he had vacated the governor’s office. However, instead of waiting for a verdict in the case, Cyr had himself sworn in as governor and issued a statement to that effect. On hearing of Cyr’s actions, Long, fearful that he would seek to seize governor’s mansion, placed a guard on the building and then drove at breakneck speed from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Additionally, in response to a rumour that Cyr was forming a private army to seize the state government, he mobilised the state police to defend the capitol and the mansion.¹⁶¹ In a farcical turn of events, W L Aldrich took the oath of office, reasoning that with two governors in the state already, a third was not *de trop*.¹⁶² In an action which echoed both Cyr’s claim against him and Aldrich’s farcical move, Long charged that in taking the oath for the governor’s office, Cyr had vacated his office as lieutenant governor. Long had Alvin O King, president of the senate, sworn in as lieutenant governor.¹⁶³ The court determined, in agreement with Long’s arguments, that only the US Senate could determine the qualifications of senator. A decision in Cyr’s subsequent appeal was delayed until after the January 1932 election,¹⁶⁴ and ultimately Cyr’s case was dismissed.

Long’s run, for the US Senate, was solely designed to confirm his and his administration’s power in Louisiana, by establishing a popular mandate. His unwillingness to leave the office suggests that his run for the US Senate seat in 1930 was a reactive response, which happened to coincide with his overarching personal career plan, rather than his next,

¹⁶⁰ “Political Dictatorship of Long Challenged” *The Enquirer, Cincinnati* 2 November 1930 p19

¹⁶¹ “Huey Long Defeats Coup D’Etat by Cyr” *New York Times* 14 October 1931

¹⁶² “Unknown Man Takes Oath As Louisiana’s Governor – W. L. Aldrich Apparently Inspired by Rumor There Is ‘Open Season on Governors”” *The Caspar Tribune-Herald, Wyoming*, 15 October 1931 p5; Ewing p400

¹⁶³ “Huey Long Defeats Coup D’Etat by Cyr” *New York Times* 14 October 1931

¹⁶⁴ Oscar K Allen was elected governor with 56.51% of the vote

planned, step. However, Long was able to ensure that he finished his term as governor by controlling the outcome of the succession to fit his own schedule, and as campaign manager for Oscar K Allen, as a letter to Harvey G Fields demonstrates, he left little to chance in the days before the gubernatorial election,

“I am sending you a package of election literature and buttons that I want you to have well scattered throughout your Parish during these closing days of the election. This package contains all the old literature and some new that we have, but I want you to have it neatly and properly handed around all over the Parrish. If you have to hire some one, then if our friends haven’t any money, I will pay for it, for I want this to be done. Let the literature get out. It puts the facts before the people to off-set eleventh hour lies.”¹⁶⁵

With King in the lieutenant governor’s office, and his choice of successor, Allen, now elected to governor’s office and scheduled to be inaugurated in May, Long decided that he could now safely leave the state to take his seat in the US Senate in January 1932. However, he does not appear to have been entirely confident that both his position and succession were completely secure. In a paranoid move, designed to prevent further action by Cyr, Long left the state quietly on 23 January and on 25 January was sworn in as the junior US Senator for Louisiana. With a pre-arranged relay, it was only a minute after the news was passed to Baton Rouge that King was sworn in as acting governor.¹⁶⁶

Descriptions of Oscar K Allen suggest, that in selecting him as his successor to the governor’s office, Long had already decided that he would not be relinquishing control of Louisiana when he went to Washington. Allen is described as a dignified and affable man, whose biggest weakness was his tendency to be influenced by those around him with more forceful personalities, most notably his wife, Florence¹⁶⁷ and Long. Long’s control over his

¹⁶⁵ Letter to H G Fields from Huey P Long dated 6 January 1932 on letter head: Campaign Headquarters of O. K. Allen Candidate for Governor. *Fields (Harvey G) Papers*, Mss 5006, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Series I – IV, 1909 – 1961, U:293, Box 1 Folder 1.2

¹⁶⁶ Notes from Seymour Weiss interview by T Harry Williams on 3 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 19 Folder 161 p4

¹⁶⁷ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 19 Folder 152 p7

puppet governor was such that he did not even need to be in Louisiana to dominate him, as demonstrated by this exchange with US Congressman John J O'Connor:

“[I]n the course of our chat he said to me, ‘You so-and-so, you know a long time ago you said something to me about Jimmy O’Connor. Are you really interested in him?’ I said, ‘Yes, I am; he is a great fellow and you did him a dirty trick.’ Whereupon the Senator picked up the telephone and asked to be connected with Governor’s mansion, in Baton Rouge . . . ‘O.K., you’ve got a vacancy for Deputy Attorney General, haven’t you? How much does it pay? Ten thousand? Well, appoint Jimmy O’Connor to it in the morning. So long.’ He then turned to me and said, ‘Now are you satisfied, you so-and-so?’ And I said, ‘You’re a great guy!’ He was!”¹⁶⁸

Once in Washington DC, Long must have realised that the position of junior senator from Louisiana was relatively insignificant. The power in Louisiana had, as a result of the governorship of Long, rested with the governor, or the man who controlled the office of the governor (providing that man was Huey P Long). In contrast, the power of the United States Congress, and specifically in relation to this particular discussion, the Senate, does not lie with a single individual. From the informal establishment of the post of majority leader by 1913, the entrepreneurial, individualistic senators whose independence is described by Davidson & Oleszek,¹⁶⁹ and their cumulative power, had coalesced around the party holding the majority of seats in the chamber, the leaders from that party, seniority and committee assignments, as a result the power in the Senate lay with the majority party and, through the system of hierarchy, its most senior and long-serving senator. When Long finally took up his seat in January 1932, the Senate was evenly split (Democrats 47 seats; Republicans 48 seats; Others 1 seat); the election later that year would bring about a period of Democrat dominance of both houses of Congress which would last almost unbroken until the Reagan administration.¹⁷⁰ For a newly elected senator, establishing contacts, learning the traditions of the institution, building coalitions and support networks were the accepted way to start his senatorial career; however, such a low profile, conciliatory approach was certainly not the

¹⁶⁸ Letter from John J O’Connor (US Congressman from New York 1923 – 1939) to T Harry Williams dated 18 October 1956, *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 21 p4

¹⁶⁹ Roger H Davidson & Walter J Oleszek *Congress and Its Members* 4th edition (1994 Congressional Quarterly Inc, Washington DC) p177

¹⁷⁰ The Republican Party gained control of both houses of Congress during the terms: 1947 -1949; 1953 -1955. *Ibid* pp456-457

way Long did things. In contradiction to his low-key departure from Louisiana and determined to maximise the publicity around his swearing in, Long instigated a row with the senior senator from Louisiana, Edwin S Broussard. Although Broussard was a political enemy, tradition dictated that the state's other senator would escort the new senator to take the oath; by forcing a quarrel, which resulted in both men refusing to follow the tradition, Long ensured he would gain media attention.¹⁷¹ In the absence of Broussard, Democrat minority leader, Joseph T Robinson escorted Long to take his oath. In a further breach of Senate rules, Long smoked a cigar during his first session, laying the lighted cigar on Robinson's desk while he took the oath, and when the other senators failed to come to congratulate him, he deliberately approached those, from both sides of the aisle, who were known to attract the greatest level of media attention.¹⁷²

During his first session in the US Senate, Long attended for 56 days and was absent for 81 days, with the majority of his absence days spent in Louisiana. It is the consensus of his biographers that Long's activities on his arrival in Washington DC were designed to develop his national profile and to alleviate his sense of being "a minnow in the Washington pool."¹⁷³ This resonates with a pattern exhibited in Long's behaviour throughout his career, his determination to be at the centre of attention, irrespective of whether that attention was positive or negative. Long's recognition of the lack of status in his new position additionally offers an explanation, unexplored by these biographers, for his retention of the political power in Louisiana, a combination of his need to be in control of everything which came within his grasp, whether it remained in his remit or not, and a recognition that his new office offered little by way of actual political power.¹⁷⁴ As Williams, a usually sympathetic

¹⁷¹ Undated Clipping "Huey P Long is seated as U. S. Senator; Alvin O. King takes Governor's oath; Paul N. Cyr threatens to take office" Long (Huey P.) Scrapbooks

¹⁷² The Senate rule prohibiting smoking and 'the carrying into the chamber of "lighted cigars, cigarettes, or pipes.'" www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Smoking_Ban.htm (accessed 29/12/2016). Undated Clipping "Huey P Long is seated as U. S. Senator; Alvin O. King takes Governor's oath; Paul N. Cyr threatens to take office" Long (Huey P.) Scrapbooks

¹⁷³ Hair p234

¹⁷⁴ Alan Brinkley *Voices of Protest – Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression* (1983, Vintage Books, New York)pp42-45

biographer, explained, Long's attitude to anything he created or funded, was one of ownership. Long saw such people and institutions as "his personal possession and that the people in it owed their position to him."¹⁷⁵ In the event that someone associated with such an organisation acted in opposition to Long or his wishes, he would interpret it as a personal affront and take revenge.

His possessiveness towards the office of governor of Louisiana appears to have been further corroborated when, in a statement in early 1935, he declared that he would be a candidate for governor again in 1936:

"Long made the statement as the house of representatives, in special session, was rushing toward final passage of a new batch of bills he dumped in the legislative hopper Tuesday night. 'It'd be fine to be governor of a state like this,' he said, smiling broadly. 'I think I'll be a candidate in 1936. Why, this state's got \$1,500,000 in the bank. I'm going to run for governor.' 'What about the presidency?' he was asked. 'Aren't you going to run for that?' 'That comes later,' Long said, smiling broadly."¹⁷⁶

However, this statement appears to have been designed to tease and antagonise his political enemies at both the state and national levels, including the newspapers, by emphasising his control over the state and demonstrating an intention to use its resources. It is clear from this statement that Long's ambition to be president remained intact, as did his determination to continue to control the power in the state. His colleagues in the US Senate were less convinced than the newspapers that Long really did intend to return to Louisiana, with Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi, stating that "he had never heard Long say anything about running for Governor," although a number of senators did state "privately they wished he would."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Williams (1969) p515

¹⁷⁶ "Huey Will Run For Governor Again in 1936 – Presidency Comes Later, Kingfish Asserts, Announcing Candidacy" *Miami Daily News*, Florida 28 February 1935 p1

¹⁷⁷ "Long Shifts – On Presidential Aim. – Louisiana Senator Announces Plan To Seek Governor's Office In 1936 Campaign." *The Enquirer, Cincinnati* 1 March 1935 p9

Conclusion

Long's determined progression to personal and political power contained and created the aspects which formed the basis for impeachment throughout his political career. By identifying and pursuing, without variance, a specific route to the US presidency, his focus on achieving his goal precluded the use of more traditional and acceptable behaviours to work towards his objective.

Long had a perception of political power, which had generated his ambition, and which had driven his behaviour in each of his political offices. It had also led him to mould those offices to fulfil his perception of what the power of each office should have looked like, rather than its constitutionally determined reality. Long's career progression, his steps to power were exemplified not just by his climbing of the ladder of political offices with the aim of becoming President of the United States, but also by the methods he used while in each office to manipulate his way to the next stage and to accumulate power to the office he was in while he occupied it. The exception to this behaviour occurred when he retained for himself the power of the governor's office when he left the office for the US Senate. The consistent use of these methods throughout Long's career created the environment where impeachment was possible at any stage, and with his success in subverting constitutional checks and balances meaning that, not long into his governorship, impeachment was apparently the only recourse for those who opposed him.

Long determined at an early age that his route to the presidency would be through competitive elections, consecutively to a minor state office, the governorship of Louisiana, the US Senate and then to the White House. Having excluded from his pathway a more conciliatory route, such as working within the state and national Democratic parties and developing support networks, Long's career was necessarily an antagonistic one which required him to challenge traditional expectations within the party and the state. Having chosen to work against, rather than within, the established structures of both Louisiana and

national politics, Long necessarily ensured that he would challenge the *status quo*, most noticeably by his accumulation of power. As such, he created an environment of confrontation rather than a placatory one; one which heightened the sense of provocation. As someone who was determined to pursue his own individualistic path, Long saw no need to follow the routes to progression determined and followed by others. By setting himself at odds with the accepted norms of politics within the state, Long challenged his environment and created the background against which his impeachment became a predictable outcome.

Chapter 4

Motivations

From the post-Reconstruction period through to the 1970s, the state of Louisiana formed part of “the most transparently undemocratic region of the nation,”¹ not only because of legislative disenfranchisement of black voters but also as a one party state, with factionalism within the dominant Democratic Party occasionally offering the state’s voters the illusion of a two party system. As a political operative in Louisiana during the early twentieth century, Huey P Long’s political alignment was therefore necessarily limited to membership of the Democratic Party, should he wish to achieve success in political office. From an early age, Long had made it clear that he planned to have a political career which would take him from local state office, via the governorship and the United States Senate, to the Presidency of the United States.² The degree to which Long’s political calculations and ideological allegiances were superseded by his desire for power, as a means to control others, was evident by the execution of the latter parts of his intended career pathway. This chapter will discuss the extent to which Long’s partisanship can be considered as pure political

¹ Black, Merle “The Transformation of the Southern Democratic Party” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 66, No 4, 2004 p1007

² Williams (1969) p107

expediency designed to achieve his personal goals and the degree to which this focus on power accumulation over political ideology itself made impeachment almost inevitable.

However, it is first necessary to determine what motivated him. One of the earliest commentators on Long, the journalist Harnett T Kane, wrote that he was a smart politician who had “not given much thought to abstract theories of government.”³ Although Russell B Long later categorised him as one of his father’s detractors,⁴ Kane had identified one of the major problems which faced contemporary commentators, how to explain Long within the context of current politics when his programmes, activities and tactics defied simple classification by political ideology. With Long variously designated, according to the prevailing political ideologies of the time, as a communist, fascist, socialist, progressive or populist, commentators failed to produce a convincing or consistent assessment. It is therefore necessary to consider whether Long’s motivations lay within one or more ideological trope; if as a pragmatic political operative, his actions were driven by expediency; if he was obsessed with the accumulation of personal and political power; or if, indeed, he adhered to an individualistic set of principles which could be categorised as a personal belief system, that is a personal ideology rather than a politically identifiable one.

The reasons any politician may have for entering politics are rarely straightforward. Some may discuss their ideological beliefs, their need to ‘give something back,’ to support a specific cause or to solve a problem for the benefit of the wider community. Some may even speak of their ambitions to achieve a certain level of political office, citing this goal as the way in which other achievements will be reached. Andrea Mattozzi and Antonio Merlo suggest there are two types of career path available to those entering into politics: the career politicians and the individuals with political careers. The career politicians “enter the political sector because of the non-pecuniary rewards they derive from being in office. Individuals

³ Kane p138

⁴ Letter from Russell B Long to T Harry Williams dated 27 March 1963, *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series, Box 3, Folder 3- 25: Williams, T Harry, Corr Re to Huey Long Biography 1961 -1965

with political careers . . . enter the political sector in order to increase their market wages,”⁵ while it is the non-pecuniary rewards associated with seniority in office, such as committee appointments or legislative achievements that attract career politicians.⁶ Although he did not articulate it in such terms, for Long the key factor in his reason for entering politics was the power he could personally gain in office; the achievement of benefits for the wider community may be interpreted as having been secondary to this goal and certainly, despite the accusations of contemporary critics, political ideology was not a driving factor. However, his determination to deliver on his campaign promises and his retention of control over the governor’s office suggests a more profound goal than simply the acquisition of power.

Robert A Dahl proposed that for many people “politics is a remote, alien, and unrewarding activity”⁷ suggesting that

“politics, then, need not compete with one’s primary activities . . . Since the primary activities are voracious in their demands for time, political activity enters into competition with them. For most people it is evidently a weak competitor.”⁸

It is evident that Long was not ‘most people,’ in this context politics was his primary activity, rather than a subsidiary activity. He claimed to be born to politics⁹ and in Long’s life political activity subsumed those occupations Dahl defines as primary activities for most people: “food, sex, love, family, work, play, shelter, comfort, friendship, social esteem and the like.”¹⁰ Long’s relationships and interactions with these activities demonstrated a disregard for normal social conventions except when he perceived, or was made to see, that his activities were ultimately being viewed in a negative way by the electorate and were therefore deemed to be detrimental to his political life. As a 1935 *New York Times Magazine* article explored, once the detrimental effects of his behaviour were revealed to him, Long attempted to

⁵ Mattozzi, Andrea and Merlo, Antonio “Political careers or career politicians?” *Journal of Public Economics* 92 (2008) p599

⁶ Ibid p598

⁷ Dahl, Robert A “Who participates in local politics and why” *Science* Vol 134 No. 3487 (Oct 27 1961) p1342

⁸ Ibid p1343

⁹ Hair p36

¹⁰ Dahl p1342

reform, although he would not acknowledge that this need to improve his public persona was his motive for his actions.

“Having reached a point where what he does is of importance to his following, and keeping tabs as he does on the foibles of his fellow-Senators, he is aware of the need of an immaculate moral exterior. So Long has stopped drinking – he says he is “on the wagon” – and he does not smoke any more, Mrs. Long is with him more in Washington than ever before, and the picture Long is presenting to the world is that of a plain man with a plain way of life. He ascribes the need for abstemiousness not to political expediency but to physical well-being and clear thinking.”¹¹

This dramatic change occurred after Long had taken up his seat in the US Senate and as he began to focus on the attainment of his next goal, the presidency. He had begun to recognise that idiosyncratic behaviours, such as drunken fights, taking food off of the plates of strangers and greeting VIPs while dressed in pyjamas, which may have found amused approval amongst his followers in Louisiana, were unlikely to be perceived in a favourable fashion by the national electorate.

Rufus Browning’s hypothesis that the most influential politicians are able to manage their political careers and lives by disassociating themselves from actual relationships is borne out by the life and career of Long.¹² His relationship with the Louisiana electorate has been widely reported as distinctly partisan, a divide between those for whom he was an anathema and those who felt an affinity with the man who seemed to both understand and represent them, but as Browning suggests, the reality was that this persona masked a self-involved and self-promoting political operative: “[beneath] an outside layer of warmth, the politician . . . is and must be somewhat cool and perhaps even downright cold.”¹³ Certainly Long’s relationships with his father, his siblings and his family suggest an individual who had little or

¹¹ Russell Owen “Huey Long gives his view of Dictators” *The New York Times Magazine* 10 February 1935, *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder Long clippings 1932

¹² R Browning “Businessmen in politics,” thesis Yale University (1960) quoted in Dahl p1348

¹³ Ibid

no empathy for others.¹⁴ It is ironic then that Long would, unintentionally, found a dynasty of political operatives both in Louisiana and at the national level.¹⁵

Pragmatism & Expediency

The Democratic Party and the Solid South

At the time Long was elected to his first political office in 1918, as commissioner for north Louisiana on the three-person state Railroad Commission, the Democratic Party had dominated state politics since 1877. The party had also achieved a rare domination of politics at the national level, holding the presidency (Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1921), the US House of Representatives (since 1910) and the US Senate (since 1912),¹⁶ before all three reverted to Republican control after World War I. Barbara Deckard Sinclair's study of roll calls in the US House of Representatives in the 1920s provides evidence of the regional nature of the Democrats at the national level, with approximately two thirds of Democrat House members coming from Southern states.¹⁷ It was only with the Democratic victories in other parts of the nation during the New Deal Congresses (1933-1938) that the strength and influence of the southern section was reduced as their dominance of the party's House membership decreased to about 40 per cent.¹⁸ With these changes, the influence of the South in the national party marginally began to be reduced, although the seniority system of committee chairing within Congress ensured that change was limited.

Conventional wisdom amongst historians and political scientists holds that in the period from Reconstruction through to the post Second World War era of civil rights, the American South

¹⁴ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p216

¹⁵ Hess p442

¹⁶ Heitshusen, Valerie *Party Leaders in the United States Congress, 1789-2015* Congressional Research Service <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30567.pdf>

¹⁷ Sinclair, Barbara Deckard "Party Realignment and the Transformation of the Political Agenda: The House of Representatives, 1925-1938" *The American Political Science Review* Vol 71, No 3 (Sept 1977) p941

¹⁸ *Ibid* pp941-942

was a stronghold for the Democratic Party.¹⁹ While the exact definition of the American South does vary between authors, (from the seventeen states which mandated racial segregation to V O Key's 1949 definition: the eleven states which seceded from the Union), a consensus has developed around Key's definition.²⁰ Gary Miller and Norman Schofield propose that the restrictions of the two party political system inevitably forces the two main parties to be formed from coalitions between individuals and groups with differing, and possibly opposing, ideologies. These "unnatural coalitions of enemies"²¹ come together to achieve electoral success and, therefore, executive and legislative power at both the state and national level, and as Miller and Schofield demonstrate, these coalitions tend to disintegrate when the circumstances binding them together come under strain or no longer exist. Using the definition proposed by Miller and Schofield, the relationship of the Democratic Party in the Southern states can be defined as an unnatural coalition of enemies. The party's hold on the South in the early twentieth century was so embedded as to have created a distinct area of the United States in which democracy was essentially absent for a large portion of the population.²² The bloc influence of the section was effectively exploited to maintain and preserve the southern way of life. Key suggested that the Southern states' loyalty to the Democratic Party was bound by the single issue of white supremacy, observing,

"[we] ought to be both specific and candid about the regional interest that the Democratic party of the South has represented in national affairs. It must be conceded that there is one, and only one, real basis for southern unity, the Negro."²³

¹⁹ See Abramson, Paul R. "Measuring the Southern Contribution to the Democratic Coalition" *American Political Science Review* Vol 81, No2 June 1987 p567; Whitford, Andrew B "Dynamics of partisan representation, the American South 1898 – 2010" *Quality & Quantity* 47(3)p1533; V O Key's 1949 *Southern Politics in State and Nation* quoted by Katznelson, Ira & Mulroy, Quinn "Was the South Pivotal? Situated Partisanship and Policy Coalitions during the New Deal and Fair Deal" *The Journal of Politics* Vol 74, No 2 (Mar. 30, 2012) p607;

²⁰ Katznelson & Mulroy pp606-607; Irish, Marian D "Recent Political Thought in the South" *The American Political Science Review* Vol 46, No 1 (Mar 1952) p121

²¹ Miller, Gary & Schofield, Norman "The Transformation of the Republican and Democratic Party Coalitions in the U.S." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol 6, No 3 (Sep 2008) p437

²² Black p1007

²³ V O Key *Southern Politics in State and Nation* quoted in Katznelson & Mulroy p607

While this simplification of the priority of the Democratic Party in the South as a purely racial issue ignores the power of the elite economic interests, whose domination of both the party and the section had effectively disenfranchised the poor and illiterate of all races; both aspects combined to create an environment in Louisiana which Long was able to exploit successfully.

The Democratic Party in Louisiana: factionalism

The functionality of the two party system of American politics at national and state levels ensures that to be effective a politician must align him or herself to whichever of the two parties most closely matches his/her personal, political and ideological mind-set. As such, most American politicians owe their political allegiance to the party which serves as a collective of the tenets, standards and mores its membership hold in common. The primary function of the Democratic Party in Louisiana, however, was to maintain the standards of white supremacy in the state having effectively eliminated political opposition by side-lining the Republican Party. Thus, rather than acting as a coalition for likeminded political adherents, this single function ultimately reduced the party to a coalition of factions. The factionalisation of the Democratic Party in the South and specifically in Louisiana suggests that not only would members' political ideology differ from others within the state party, but that it could also differ, perhaps substantially, from that embodied in the national party. Although, such differences would be dependent on how many Southern Democrats were in positions of control or influence at the national level. Equally, the factionalism of the state party suggests that ideological beliefs were also not only diverse but also divisive.

By the time of Long's birth, in August 1893, Louisiana had, as Haas puts it, long been "redeemed' from the alleged misrule of Reconstruction."²⁴ With the northern states and the federal government less interested in the actuality of the racial constructs of the South now

²⁴ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p236

that slavery was legally at an end,²⁵ the structural *status quo* had very effectively been restored through constitutionally legalised black disenfranchisement, 'Jim Crow' laws and the dominance of Louisiana's politics by the Democratic Party, a primarily white male institution. As Key, Allan Sindler and others have discussed, the dominance of the Democratic Party in the South did not result in a consistent one-party system across the section. Instead, as Sindler suggests, Democratic politics in the South ran "the gamut from multifactional chaos to a structured and disciplined bifactionalism."²⁶ Although as Joel Friedman demonstrates in his article on Judge John Wisdom's determination to re-create a two-party system in Louisiana, the Republican Party had not completely disappeared from the state. Its inability to broaden its appeal, diversify its membership, field viable electoral candidates and therefore give the voters of Louisiana "a healthy democratic system . . . of two vital, rival political parties"²⁷ had ensured that "the Democratic primary was tantamount to a general election."²⁸ As Sindler points out, the structural factionalisation of Louisiana's politics, which resulted in the Democratic Party's dominance, was not solely linked to Long's period in power, since organised factionalisation had successfully existed prior to his ascent to power. In the pre-Long era, the factions consisted of varying and competing coalitions amongst the urban business, rural planters and upper class interests, as well as the Democratic machine in New Orleans.²⁹ As Rudolf Heberle and Alvin L Bertrand stated, factions were "either the followings of certain outstanding politicians or they were built around political clubs and informal cliques."³⁰ By the time Long was elected to his first political office, the factionalisation of the Democratic Party in Louisiana was embedded and had replaced two party politics in the state for over forty years. For a twenty year period, until the election of

²⁵ Reynolds p230

²⁶ Sindler, Allan P "Bifactional rivalry as an alternative to two-party competition in Louisiana" *The American Political Science Review* Vol 49, No 3 (Sep 1955) p641

²⁷ Friedman, Joel Wm "John Minor Wisdom's battle against the political bosses to create a two-party system in Louisiana" *Tulane Law Review* Vol 69, (1995) p1439

²⁸ Friedman p1458

²⁹ Sindler (Sep 1955) p642

³⁰ Heberle, Rudolf and Bertrand, Alvin L "Factors Motivating Voting Behavior in a One-Party State: A Case Study of the 1948 Louisiana Gubernatorial Primaries" *Social Forces* Vol 27, No 4 (May 1949) p343

John M Parker as governor on an anti-machine ticket in 1920, the Choctaw Club of New Orleans (also known as the 'Regulars' and the 'Old Regulars') had dominated state politics. The machine's primary aim was to run the city without state interference. An objective it sought to maintain by building alliances with cotton plantation owners and rural courthouse politicians across Louisiana.³¹

Long's political affiliation to the Democratic Party, therefore, necessarily derived from his recognition of its domination of Louisiana politics, rather than from any deep-seated ideological affinity. Long embraced the party's factional divisions. Rather than owing allegiance to a specific Democratic ideology at national, regional or state level, he ultimately created his own faction without adherence to political ideology, especially party-sponsored ideology. Under Long, Louisiana's specific brand of bifactionalism ensured the state, unlike the other Southern states, was not plagued by a series of disconnected transitory factions with no consistent leadership or continuity in political programmes. Instead, as Louisiana's pre-existing factions became redefined as 'pro' and 'anti' Long, Louisiana acquired a "structured and organized politics, a politics that made sense."³²

To suggest that Long had the prescient intention to create a political system that would offer the people of Louisiana benefits characteristic of a two-party structure is similar to the view that Long represented the idealised image of the paternalistic progenitor of an American political dynasty. A fantastical image, and yet the individualistic, selfish, self-promotionist, whose loyalty to family and profession was always subordinate to his personal "pursuit of politics" and power³³ did, by default, provide the basis for such a system and the foundation of a political dynasty in Louisiana. Long's legacy lies, in part, in formalising the bifactional political structure in Louisiana in the absence of a viable opposition party, providing what

³¹ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p274

³² Sindler (Sep 1955) p659

³³ Hair p107

Sindler calls a “close approximation to the two-party system,”³⁴ a system which would outlive Long by decades.

The ideological influences on Huey P Long

To paraphrase the English poet John Donne, no person can exist in the world without being influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the environment around them.³⁵ For politicians, the environment informs and influences their political opinions and ideologies. When, in response to a journalist, Long characterised himself, “just say I’m *sui generis*, and leave it at that,”³⁶ he sought to emphasise not only his originality of character, of thought, and of personality, but he was also looking to present himself as an independent political entity, separate not only from the two main political parties but also different to the factional politicians who had not only ruled Louisiana before him, but who represented the forces of opposition to him in the state. In his report of this conversation, Harnett Kane stated that Long yawned before interrupting the discussion of his attributes with the *sui generis* comment; Kane’s superficial suggestion is that Long was merely bored with the speculation and the discussion on how

“the same forces that had produced the other Southern hillbilly governors and senators had produced Huey Long. What qualities enabled him to reach a status on the American scene achieved by none before him?”³⁷

Long’s self-appraisal appeared to focus upon his exceptionalism which, by definition, rendered moot any attempt to classify his personality or achievements within ‘conventional’ psychological or political frameworks. Kane concurred with Long’s assessment, characterising him as fitting “no mold” and suggesting that he was

“a mixture of type: the original hill-country rebel, the egotist demanding constant satisfaction, the evangelist who backslid, the overlord of a city gang.”³⁸

³⁴ Sindler (Sep 1955) p643

³⁵ John Donne (1624) *Meditation 17*

³⁶ Kane p140

³⁷ Ibid

The multifaceted personality of the 'Kingfish'³⁹ has presented the greatest challenge for both contemporary assessors and subsequent historians assessing Long's record, personality, character and the dichotomous extremes in the responses of the people of Louisiana, those who worshipped him as compared to those who abhorred him. Among those who clearly adored Long one correspondent, Cheston Folkes, identified this division among voters when he wrote, after the US Senate election in 1930, that while Long was not a universally popular choice, he was

“the necessity of the situation - - the one man whose personal magnetism and personal popularity founded on irreproachable honesty and unswervable patriotism could be depended upon to rally a sufficient support to save the party that the opposition tried so hard to wreck.”⁴⁰

Folkes, a Long supporter, also eulogised Long and suggested that Ransdell should recognise that he had the privilege of being defeated by

“a true and tried Democrat, who in every emergency since he entered public life has been true to his people, true to his party, true to his State, and true to his own convictions of right.”⁴¹

Louisiana of the 1920s and 1930s is consistently portrayed as being distinct from the other forty seven states by tradition, by demography, by history and by political experience. If, as Carleton Beals claimed, Louisiana was outside of the American tradition,⁴² it is legitimate to ask whether one can therefore judge Long's actions and activities in the context of American politics. Arthur M Schlesinger Jr suggested that Long represented less the image of a

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ While the origin of Long's nickname “The Kingfish” is usually attributed to a character on the contemporary radio series “Amos ‘n’ Andy,” George ‘Kingfish’ Stevens who, as leader of their lodge, would regularly dupe the eponymous characters into participating in schemes that would lead them into trouble. Long claimed that the nickname was first used as an insult for various leading political enemies but that when it emerged that Long had mistakenly placed the power to sell highway bonds with the Highway Commission rather than himself (the Governor); Long claimed leadership of the commission “I am participating here anyway, gentlemen. For the present you can just call me the Kingfish.” Long (1933) p277; Hermann B Deutsch, in his 1939 serial retrospective states that the name was first used by Long at a Louisiana Democratic Association caucus meeting in 1930, Deutsch “The Kingdom of the Kingfish,” *New Orleans Item* 23 August 1939

⁴⁰ Letter from Cheston Folkes dated 12 September 1930 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 5 Folder 164 General correspondence Jun – Sept 1930 letters relating to senate election p2

⁴¹ Ibid p1

⁴² Moreau, John Adam “Huey Long and His Chroniclers” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol 6 No2 (Spring 1965) p133

European dictator than a Latin American despot,⁴³ that his was less a dictatorship based on a pre-existing ideological construct and subsumed by a personality cult (as in the case of Mussolini or Stalin), and more a makeshift, though powerful, regime dominated by a single individual, his ideas, motivations and needs. Contemporary commentators emphasised Long's loud-mouthed and loud-clothed buffoonery, focussing on the risks Long represented by comparing him with European dictators, specifically Germany's Adolf Hitler but also Italy's Benito Mussolini. While some journalists, such as Walter Duranty, also questioned whether Long's experiment in Louisiana would inevitably become a precedent for the country as a whole,⁴⁴ others including, Norton McGiffin, offered critical assessments of Long's tactics and priorities, paying only cursory acknowledgement to Long's expertise and skills, while deriding the use to which Long put his talents,

“[he] can promise the proletariat the moon with a fence around it, and such is the power of his personality that millions of addled Americans will rise up to call him blessed.”⁴⁵

However, contemporary assessments suggest that the comparison between Long and the European dictators was deemed to be an apposite one. The progression of the *New Orleans Item's* condemnation of Long's level of control in the state developed from, in the days before his inauguration as governor, a strong suggestion of excessive control of the Legislature, organised, as it was, “on lines dictated directly by Mr. Long [which had placed] the Governor-elect in full control,”⁴⁶ to the explicit use of the term ‘dictator’ by 3 July 1928, is indicative of how Long's style was increasingly being viewed with concern by some sections of the state's political elite. The latter editorial sought to expose Long's duplicity in having campaigned to stop the misuse of public funds, only for him to work to stop a bill which would have controlled the expenditure of state officials:

⁴³ Schlesinger p68

⁴⁴ Duranty, Walter “The Bogey of Moscow” *The North American Review* Vol 241, No 2 (Jun 1936) p233

⁴⁵ McGiffin p112

⁴⁶ Undated Newspaper clipping *The New Orleans Item Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder 1928 assorted clippings

“This is the kind of legislation which the little dictator has been pretending all his life that he would give the people. He is not giving it to them. When somebody else undertakes to do so, he gives the people the boot.”⁴⁷

Not only does this piece demonstrate the *Item*'s increasing condemnation of the governor and his failure to deliver on his campaign promises, it also demonstrates the degree to which Long was seeking to control both the Legislature, and the legislation it would pass. A year later, in May 1929, the *Baton Rouge State Times* explicitly linked Long to Mussolini, when it suggested Long had exceeded the Italian by rewarding the signatories of the Round Robin letter just five days after the impeachment had failed:⁴⁸

“There is one thing Mr. Long's friends can truthfully say of him. He is as bold as a burglar in his operations. Mussolini in his more daring moments was never more brazen in his defiance of the public.”⁴⁹

However, it is in the multifaceted character of Long that his influences, both political and personal, may be identified. By resisting the desire to label Long as a specific type of person or a brand of politician, and by treating each aspect individually, one may seek to identify the origins of Long's political personality.

Since it is unlikely than any individual could emerge from within a community without experiencing a degree of interaction with, and through, that community, it is reasonable to deduce that Long's political ideas were developed in the context of contemporary thought rather than in isolation. As Haas put it, “the place and time of one's upbringing, and especially the beliefs and values present in one's childhood, are crucial in determining the course of a person's life.”⁵⁰ In the case of Long, it is the place of his birth and childhood, Winnfield in Winn Parish, Louisiana, a stronghold of Populism in the 1890s, which offers the connection between the possible influences that surrounded Long's childhood and the policies he advocated while in office.

⁴⁷ Newspaper clipping *The New Orleans Item* Monday, July 3 1928 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder 1928 assorted clippings

⁴⁸ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p259

⁴⁹ Newspaper clipping *Baton Rouge State-Times* May 22 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder Morgan

⁵⁰ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p281

Populist Party in Louisiana

In June 1918, the same year that Long first began to articulate his proposals for the redistribution of wealth⁵¹ and the year he won his first elected office, Melvin J White published an article on populism in Louisiana noting that

“populism everywhere was a product of hard times, the principal cause for which, so far as Louisiana was concerned, was the depression in the cotton industry.”⁵²

In the article, White describes the origins of the Populist Party in Winn parish in 1890. The tenets and aims of the Louisiana party are listed by White, in addition to some “if not all of the principles of the national organization,” as “the reform of the convention system for nominating candidates for state offices,” the reform of the “appointive power of the governor” and anti-lottery renewal.⁵³ The tenets and aims of the national Populist Party were primarily linked to the reasons for its creation, populism having emerged in times of economic, social and environmental difficulties.⁵⁴ Post-war inflationary prices for cotton had led to over-production and a lack of crop diversification had created the depression in the cotton industry. When combined with a series of natural disasters, both floods and droughts had affected the state during the 1890s, these circumstances had led a number of the hill farmers, particularly in north Louisiana, to join the Farmers’ Alliance. Originating in Texas, the union of dirt farmers claimed to have three million members in the South and was affiliated to the million strong Colored Farmers’ Alliance. While not as powerful in Louisiana as it was in other Southern states, the Alliance movement posed a threat to the Democratic establishment there. By attracting poor white farmers to its interracial association, the Alliance threatened both the Louisiana Democratic Party’s key electoral constituency and its *prima facie* tenet, the retention of white supremacy in the state.⁵⁵ The People’s (Populist) party had been formed in Winn Parish in 1890 to represent the poor whites and blacks of

⁵¹ Williams (1969) p116

⁵² White, Melvin Johnson “Populism in Louisiana During the Nineties” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* Vol5, No 1 (June, 1918) p3

⁵³ Ibid p6 -8

⁵⁴ Ibid p3

⁵⁵ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p253

Louisiana and from 1892 it had replaced the Alliance movement in the state. Hardy L Brian, the youthful leader of the Populist Party in Louisiana, was a “man of energy and unusual ability” for as well as being the editor of the party’s newspapers (*Comrade* and *The Natchitoches Populist*) at the age of 26, he also acted as the secretary and then the chairman of its state central committee.⁵⁶ The founding members of the Louisiana People’s Party sought to build a labourers’ movement of black and white workers, both agricultural and industrial.⁵⁷ These were “radicalized union men who . . . shared with Hardy Brian a missionary zeal . . . as makers of a nonviolent revolution” that sought reform of the country’s transportation system, monetary supply, (notably free coinage of silver – an inflationary economic tactic, which by replacing the gold standard, would “increase the country’s money supply, raise the prices received by farmers for their goods, and relieve the crushing burden of farm debt,”)⁵⁸ and agricultural finance.⁵⁹ For the 1896 elections, a ‘fusion’ agreement between the People’s and Republican parties ensured that one party’s voters would support the other’s candidates. In the silver issue, Brian had identified the single issue which would distinguish the Populist-Republican fusion ticket from that of the Democratic Party, thereby attracting disaffected Democrats to the Populists, with the result that in Louisiana’s April 1896 elections, the fusion ticket gained “43 percent of the vote, as officially tallied. A free vote and a fair count would have elected the fusionists.”⁶⁰ There is consensus that the openly fraudulent misuse of black votes had ensured the Democrats’ hold on the state, especially with egregious results such as those recorded for four plantation parishes, East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, and West Feliciana, where the black voters were inclined to support the Populist-Republican candidate, John N Pharr over the governor, Murphy J

⁵⁶ White p6

⁵⁷ Sipress, Joel “A Narrowing of Vision: Hardy L Brian and the Fate of Louisiana Populism” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* Vol 7, No 1 (Jan 2008) p52

⁵⁸ *Ibid* p57

⁵⁹ *Ibid* p52

⁶⁰ *Ibid* p59

Foster. Despite the inclination of voters, the reported result for these parishes was Foster, 9499; Pharr, 1.⁶¹

By replicating Brian's technique at the national level, the Populist leaders had "in just two short years taken a fledgling third party and brought it to the brink of a national political break-through."⁶² As Haas states "the Populist party and its Republican allies"⁶³ was the only truly serious challenge to the dominance of the Democratic Party in Louisiana in the fifty year period from the end of Reconstruction to Long's election as governor. However, both the local and national leaders of the Populist Party failed to anticipate the response of the Democratic Party to this challenge. As John D Hicks proposed, the electoral success of a third party demonstrated that there was a desire and a need for its ideals and programmes. As a result of the success, one of the two major parties would subsequently subsume those ideas, making the continued existence of the third party irrelevant.⁶⁴ In the face of a realistic electoral challenge and the loss of its supporters over a single issue, the Democratic Party utilised political strategies of its own to ensure it would retain its hold on power; the Democrats abandoned their support for the gold standard in favour of the free silver issue, and nominated William Jennings Bryan, a free-silver supporter, as its nominee for the 1896 presidential election. Although Bryan was not a Populist Party member, the combination of his personal links to the members of the Populist Party in Nebraska, together with his support for some of the Populist platform (specifically direct elections for US Senators and income tax reforms), as well as his support for the free-silver issue, his nomination effectively ended the Populist Party's challenge in national politics. The adoption by the Democrats of the free-silver issue removed from the Populists their single distinctive issue, the issue which had greatly increased both their popular support and membership. The Populist leadership felt it had no choice but to endorse Bryan as its nominee or face the

⁶¹ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p267

⁶² Sipress p60

⁶³ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p264

⁶⁴ Hicks, John D "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* Vol 20, No 1 (June 1933) p26

accusation of hypocrisy if it appeared to backtrack on the free-silver issue by failing to support the candidate committed to that issue. The subsequent recriminations and internal disputes ensured that when Hardy Brian ran for Congress in 1898, at the age of 33, he was unable to revive the Populist Party in Louisiana to its heyday of only two years earlier.⁶⁵

Although, as Sipress reports, Brian “returned to Winn Parish, where he remained active in church and civic affairs . . . there is no indication that he ever again took a prominent role in party politics.”⁶⁶ But as the editor of the *Winnfield Times*, a weekly newspaper and successor to the *Comrade*, during the period from 1914 to 1922⁶⁷ it is feasible that he would have been known to the young Long. At the age of thirteen, Long had worked as a typesetter at the offices of the *Southern Sentinel*, one of Winnfield’s weekly newspapers, and he acted as newspaper correspondent for the *Times-Picayune* and the *Shreveport Times* in 1915 and 1916.⁶⁸ Since Winnfield was no more than a village, with a population of 2900 people at that time,⁶⁹ Long and Brian may have crossed paths. It is also conceivable that Long may well have heard about Brian’s career if, as T Harry Williams speculates, he grew up hearing “plenty of Populist talk, some of it from his father, more from other elders in Winnfield.”⁷⁰ One could further speculate how the tale of the Winnfield man who had been the youthful leader of a political party, who had represented the state at a national party convention and who had run for a Congressional seat, may well have caught the imagination of a politically ambitious young man and inspired him to plan his own political career.

A number of commentators have attributed Long’s political activities, most notably the national Share Our Wealth scheme, to a populist ideology, since the tenets of the scheme

⁶⁵ Sipress pp61 - 65

⁶⁶ Ibid p65

⁶⁷ A search of the Library of Congress’ Chronicling America webpages indicates that the *Winnfield Times* was a weekly newspaper published from approximately 1914 – 1922 and that it was the successor to the *Comrade*, the Populist newspaper previously edited by Hardy L Brian <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89059030/> 2 January 2016

⁶⁸ Letters between Huey P Long and the Times-Picayune and the Shreveport Times relating to Long’s work as a news correspondent for these newspapers. *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 48b General Correspondence 1915 August 14 – November 27

⁶⁹ Williams (1969) p29

⁷⁰ Ibid p24

were based on a redistribution of wealth via amendments to the country's taxation system. Schlesinger ascribed the ideological basis for Share Our Wealth to populism in Winn Parish, specifically "poor white Populism,"⁷¹ while Long's son, US Senator Russell B Long, stated his belief that Long was "a Populist . . . [who] wanted no one to be too rich and no one to be too poor."⁷² However, it is apparent from his interview for Ken Burns' documentary, *Huey Long*, that Russell Long was determined to interpret the phrase "Every Man A King" as meaning equality for all, an attribution of benevolence predicated on Russell Long's adoration of his father.⁷³ In his self-aggrandising autobiography, *Every Man A King*, Long claimed not only to have foreseen the stock market crash of 1929, but he also attributed his position on wealth distribution to something akin to a biblical edict, since "God Almighty . . . Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan and every religious teacher known to this earth had declaimed against"⁷⁴ the disproportionate allocation of wealth to the few. By using such statements, Long sought to position his programme, not only within a religious context, but also within the tenets of American political tradition, and within the mores of the progressive and populist movements. Thus, Long provided both himself and the programme with a sense of validation and a specifically American context. In an earlier articulation of the Share Our Wealth credo, Long had adapted the statistics reported in *The Saturday Evening Post*, that sixty five per cent of the country's wealth was owned by fewer than two percent of its people. In his letter to the *Shreveport Times*, Long suggested that the "greatest asset to Bolshevism in America" was its unequal distribution of wealth and that "if the inheritance laws of France were enacted in this country it would

⁷¹ Schlesinger p62

⁷² Russell Long interviewed on Ken Burns' *Huey Long*

⁷³ Letter to Wiley Thorton from Russell B Long dated 3 June 1970 *Long (Russell B) Collection*, Long Family: Huey Long Series, Box 2, Folder 2-6: Huey Long Series Corr Re to *Huey Long* (1 of 4) 1970

⁷⁴ Long (1933) p290

prevent the concentration of wealth to a great degree” and so avoid the “spread of this anarchy.”⁷⁵

Progressivism in Louisiana

In the introduction to his 2005 presidential address to the Louisiana Historical Association meeting, “In Pursuit of Louisiana Progressives,” Samuel C Shepherd Jr deplored the tendency of historians, specifically those writing on the South and on Louisiana, to dismiss the existence and impact of progressives and progressivism in Louisiana, suggesting not only that they preferred instead “far spicier topics than the progressives . . . Acadiana, Creoles, the Vieux Carré, and jazz – not to mention the Bourbons, the Louisiana Lottery, Storyville, and Uncle Earl Long . . . [and the] towering figure of Huey Long,” but also suggesting that some people “just are not comfortable combining the words ‘progress’ and ‘Louisiana.’”⁷⁶ Accepting that he had himself followed this trend, Shepherd took the opportunity of his address to provide a summary of the scattered findings on Louisiana progressivism, emphasising those progressive developments which had occurred in the areas of education, agriculture, child labour laws, public health, women’s suffrage, anti-machine campaigns, and penal reform; and proposing that further research was required to “validate the proposition that Louisiana progressives deserve a more prominent place in our state’s historical narrative.”⁷⁷

Despite Shepherd’s negative assessment of the state of historical research on the progressives of Louisiana, there is clear evidence of progressivism even at the gubernatorial level in the early years of the twentieth century, for example, Newton C Blanchard is described, by Haas, as the “first Louisiana Democratic governor to display a hint of

⁷⁵ Letter from Huey P Long to Editor Shreveport Times dated 29 January 1919 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 61: General Correspondence January – April 1919; French inheritance laws restrict the portion of an estate which may be bequeathed away from a testator’s surviving children, parents or other relatives. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/inheritance-law>

⁷⁶ Shepherd, Jr, Samuel C “In Pursuit of Louisiana Progressives” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* Vol46, No 4 (Autumn 2005) pp389 -390

⁷⁷ *Ibid* p406

progressivism in his administration,”⁷⁸ for criticising lynching and calling for improvements to schools and services for the black community in Louisiana.⁷⁹ However, it was John M Parker who was the pre-eminent progressive governor of Louisiana. Having failed to take the office of governor as the Progressive Party’s nominee in 1916, in what Schott calls “the only serious challenge to Democratic party rule from 1896 to 1963,”⁸⁰ Parker re-joined the ubiquitous Democratic Party and from within its auspices won the governorship in 1920, clearly demonstrating the unassailable hold the party retained on political power in Louisiana.

Parker’s contributions to the state during his time in office were of a distinctly progressive bent, and included the revision of the state constitution in 1921, the first severance tax on oil, publicly funded improvements to the campus of Louisiana State University and the beginnings of a modern highway system.⁸¹ His long-standing campaign against the power of the New Orleans machine had effectively achieved success when Mayor Martin Behrman was defeated in the 1920 New Orleans mayoral election, but since Behrman was returned to power in 1925, this can only be seen as a partial success. Despite their opposition to each other, Parker and Behrman can, as Schott discusses, be said to have represented urban progressivism on the issue of state support for public services, with only the moralistic aspects of the Parkerite anti-machine brand of progressivism separating them.⁸²

A friend and hunting companion of Theodore Roosevelt, Parker was, according to Hair, the antithesis of Huey P Long:

“Parker was dignified, honor-bound, and taciturn; Huey was indecorous, devious, and loquacious. Parker thought first of principles, Huey of results. .

⁷⁸ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p273

⁷⁹ See An Exceptional Southern Governor? chapter for the record of Louisiana, and its governors, on lynching p94

⁸⁰ Schott (Spring, 1986) p136

⁸¹ Haas in Wall and Rodrigue p278

⁸² Schott (Spring, 1986) p136

. Parker thought leadership meant pointing the right way and setting a good example; Huey believed a leader should compel.”⁸³

However, Long was one of Parker’s most active and vocal supporters and active campaigners for the 1920 gubernatorial election, and he was invited to give the address at the 1919 Labor Day Picnic by the Central Trades and Labor Council of Shreveport. Long’s speech followed speeches by a number of the declared candidates in the governor’s race.⁸⁴

In addition to giving speeches and writing letters on behalf of Parker’s campaign, Long also demonstrated his confidence in his candidate’s abilities by betting on the outcome of the election. His winnings included one hundred dollars and a suit of clothes costing \$95.50.⁸⁵ However, shortly after the election, Long broke irrevocably with Parker over the governor’s ‘gentleman’s agreement’ with the oil companies on the severance tax. Parker, in exchange for the oil companies’ agreement that they would not challenge a two per cent taxation rate, had agreed not to raise the rate during his administration; this act was not only contrary to Long’s advice, but it also confirmed to Long that the governor was in thrall to the corporations and was “against any little man securing rights in the legislature, if opposed by the Standard Oil Company.”⁸⁶ Schott argues that Long offered such a distinctly different type of politician to the Parkerites’ paternalistic style, offering instead the appearance of “rustic arrogance, crudity, lack of moral probity, obsession with the exercise of political power, and the brashness of an upstart red neck.”⁸⁷ A fact on which he was able to capitalise, utilising his skills to speak and connect with different sections of the Louisiana populace as though he were one of them, especially those whom Parker disdained – the poor and the working classes. While Schott seeks to argue that the “rise of Long represented something of a

⁸³ Hair p93

⁸⁴ Letter of invitation from J A Hammond, Chairman Labor Day Celebration Committee, Central Trades and Labor Council, Shreveport to E M Stafford, Percy Saint, Hewitt Bouchaud, Fernand Mouton, Frank P Stubbs & Phanor Breazeale dated 27 July 1919, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 62 General Correspondence June – August 1919 See Appendix 3 p305

⁸⁵ Letter from John R Hunter to Huey P Long dated 22 January 1920, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 68 General Correspondence 1920; Letter to H A Avery from Huey P Long dated 12 February 1920, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 69 General Correspondence February 1920

⁸⁶ Letter to Thomas J Greer from Huey P Long dated 8 September 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 76 General Correspondence January 3 – December 27 1921

⁸⁷ Schott (Spring, 1986) p145

backlash against the [Progressive] movement,”⁸⁸ he acknowledges that Long could be “viewed as pushing ahead along certain lines pursued by reformers who preceded him, while undoing some reforms which were dearest to the hearts of the Parkerite progressives”⁸⁹ including, by creating his own machine, Parker’s attempts to dismantle the New Orleans machine. The tactic of pro-actively dismantling the reforms and programmes enacted by a predecessor in office may simply represent the delivery on election promises. Equally, however, a determined attempt to undermine, destroy or even to appropriate reforms may represent a concentrated effort to eradicate the legacy of a predecessor whose personality, politics, and belief structures were diametrically in opposition to his own. Long certainly extended Parker’s road building schemes, the development of Louisiana State University and the severance tax on oil far beyond that envisioned by Parker, thereby enabling him to claim these initiatives, and their success, for himself.

Since Long’s childhood home of Winnfield was at the centre of the populist and progressive movements in Louisiana, in an area populated by independent farmers not plantation owners or industrialists, the obvious conclusion to be drawn was that Long’s journey in politics was a continuation of the tradition of his home environment. Williams suggests two possible reasons why, as he puts it “with the usual Long realism, he avoided association with [the populist] movement,” the first suggests an unusual degree of prescience on the part of Long – that he realised that the movement would “ultimately have to fail.”⁹⁰ The second resonates more closely with Long’s character and personality; he did not wish to be associated with a party which did not have sufficient perception to ask him to be one of its leaders. Williams also theorised that while Long did not actively support the Populist movement, he did sympathise with the movement’s aims and ideas. Certainly there is evidence that Long was committed to some of the Populist tenets, such as opposition to big corporations and monopolies, and the inclusion of those members of the state’s population whose voices were

⁸⁸ Schott (Spring, 1986) p134

⁸⁹ *Ibid* p138

⁹⁰ Williams (1969) p24

effectively excluded and ignored by the Louisiana Democratic Party, the poor and the black population,⁹¹ may be seen in his programmes in Louisiana and in the concepts behind the Share Our Wealth movement, although as Hair writes, Long never acknowledged the existence of the links between his programmes and those advocated by the Populists. Hair suggests that while the racial liberalism of populism may have been a factor in Long's decision to deny the link, as it was likely that Long, the

“astute politician . . . saw no advantage in being associated with something that would remind whites of a troubled time when blacks still played a role in state politics and thousands of ordinary white people were momentarily allied with them.”⁹²

In this assessment of Long's political expediency, Hair concurs with Williams, who noted that Long “had no strong prejudices of any kind himself,”⁹³ suggesting instead that such a shrewd political operative would seek to avoid alienating any potential voter by keeping philosophies and ideologies to himself. As such, Long can be said to have pitched his programmes as benefits to the Louisiana electorate rather than as ideological tropes. For example, when in August 1929, Long catalogued the improvements he claimed to have made so far, he did so by positioning his successes against the failures of previous administrations rather than as achievements within the scope of an ideology, “the State's finances and its institutions were never in so good condition as they are now, but that doesn't tell the whole story, because I found them so terribly bad.”⁹⁴ In this letter to Judge Fred M Odom in August 1929, Long summarised his successes so far, including increasing the capacity of the state's hospitals and reducing the death rate; educating children and adults; building paved roads and

⁹¹ Using Populism in Texas as a case study, James Turner proposed that not only was Populism a “frontier movement” which had its origins in economic hardship as John D Hicks had argued, its supporters were psychologically and physically isolated from the politics of the two main parties. Turner, James “Understanding the Populists” *The Journal of American History* Vol 67, No 2 (Sep 1980) pp354-355 & 365

⁹² Hair p30

⁹³ Williams (1969) p113

⁹⁴ Letter to Judge Fred M Odom from Huey P Long dated 29 August 1929, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 5 Folder 160 General Correspondence July – December 1929

bridges, concluding “so you can see that my pride is a little high at this time.”⁹⁵ This list articulates a number of Long’s primary tenets, especially the need to improve the lot of the people of Louisiana in terms of health, education and infrastructure. However, this letter is more suggestive of a reiteration of his campaign pledges than an accurate record of achievements, an attempt, perhaps, in the months following the impeachment to re-assert his position and power.⁹⁶

As mentioned, Louisiana is a diverse state, politically, socially, racially, ethnically and religiously. Despite his propensity to cite the Bible as the source material for his Share Our Wealth programme and to regularly use religiously inspired tales in his speeches, Long was not active religiously. Although brought up as a Baptist in the Protestant north of Louisiana, Long did not demonstrate, beyond his oratory, that his childhood religion had influenced his actions. Instead it could be argued that in demonstrating his antipathy by making Baptists the butt of his many jokes about religion⁹⁷ Long saw religion and religious expression as a political tool rather than a personal belief system. Both contemporary critics and subsequent assessors of Long sought to define him by apportioning labels to him, his political programmes and to his tactics. These labels represented the full scope of the political spectrum from communist and socialist to fascist, with additional criminal attributes also discussed. A newspaper report of his speech at meeting in Winnfield in June 1918 implied Long’s allegiance to socialism because

“The speech was made at Hebron, near the junction point of Winnfield, Caldwell and Jackson parishes, and it is said there are registered Socialist voters there than in the balance of North Louisiana. The attorney has defended several Socialist in law suits against syndicates.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Letter to Fred M Odom from Huey P Long dated 29 August 1929 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 5 Folder 160 General Correspondence 1929

⁹⁶ For Long’s campaign promises see Appendix 3 p306

⁹⁷ Notes from interview of Frank Odom by T Harry Williams on 21 May 1958 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews Box 19 Folder 124 p5

⁹⁸ “Hit Socialists’ Hive In W.S.S. Sale Speech – Winnfield Meet Scored and Big Stamp Taking Won” *The Shreveport Times* 29 June 1918 p2

President Franklin D Roosevelt called Long one of the two most dangerous men in America, the other being Douglas MacArthur. Roosevelt saw that while Long might present a comic, often buffoonish, persona, his popularity and ambition were a potential threat to Roosevelt's, and to the Democratic Party's, hold on power.⁹⁹

John T Jost, Christopher M Federico and Jaime L Napier suggest that political ideologies are shared frameworks which "result from a combination of top-down socialization processes and bottom-up psychological predispositions."¹⁰⁰ If applied to Long, this theory provides a potential explanation why Long did not publicly adhere to any philosophical or political ideological framework. It is clear that Long did not consider himself to be subordinate to anyone, and as such he was unlikely to have permitted himself to submit to the political beliefs of another. However, as shown above, Long did exhibit a predisposition to adhere to the tenets of populism and progressivism as demonstrated by his programmes in Louisiana and the national Share Our Wealth programme, to a degree, which supports Russell Long's assessment of his father as not being entirely derived from hero-worship, and suggests therefore that the politics that surrounded him in childhood did have a degree of influence on him at a later stage. Even if he rejected an overt allegiance to these causes, in favour of a more politically expedient route to power, Long had an affinity to at least some of their principles and ideas.

Long and power

In his biography of Long, William Ivy Hair suggests that while he may have "feared assassination" there was for him "a potential fate as bad as or worse than being killed [which] was the loss of center stage, and with it control of all around him. That would be a living death."¹⁰¹ Such was Long's alleged obsession with the attainment and retention of

⁹⁹ Snyder, Robert E "Huey Long and the Presidential Election of 1936" *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, Vol 16 No 2 (Spring, 1975) p117

¹⁰⁰ Jost, John T, Federico, Christopher M and Napier, Jaime L "Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities" *The Annual Review of Psychology* Vol 60 (2009) p308 -309

¹⁰¹ Hair p319

personal and political power that it was Hair's view that Long would have been bereft without it.

It is not uncommon for Long to be portrayed as a one dimensional character: the dictator, the demagogue, the saviour of the poor, or the man of the people. In reality, as with the majority of politicians, Long was a more nuanced individual whose political activities covered the full spectrum of all of the one dimensional caricatures laid at his door. However, it should be noted that in one respect Long was a one dimensional individual, despite the multi-faceted activities and styles, he had a single goal in mind. Ultimately everything Long did was focused on the attempt to achieve his personal and political goal: the presidency. Although, this specific target had been modified as he climbed the ladder of political office, and with it Louisiana's society, to include the acquisition of power, which in this context, was the ability to direct others and influence events through the exercise of a political office.

In his discussion of the place held in Louisiana society by Winn parish, his family and Long himself, Williams suggests that Long had recognised that "patrician Louisianians would regard him as a hillbilly or a hick, as somebody who did not quite belong. In the caste society of the South, he and everybody else in Winn stood outside, perhaps not very far, but still outside the select circle."¹⁰² Williams is unequivocal in his suggestion that this was a fundamental influencing factor in Long's development as a person and as a politician, that when he seemed to target the rich and also proposed programmes which attacked their interests it was because of his position in the state's class system. However, Williams also argues, contradictorily, that "it is impossible to say what effect the knowledge had on his inner self,"¹⁰³ as if Williams was attempting to nullify his own conclusion that Long's predilection with political power had its basis in a sense of inferiority predicated upon his position in the societal make-up of Louisiana and his relative poverty in comparison to those he saw as running the state.

¹⁰² Williams (1969) p24

¹⁰³ Ibid

In their work on the differing approaches to revenge, Peter Strelan, Mario Weick and Milica Vasiljevic have proposed that individuals may be categorised as “chronically powerless” to the “chronically powerful.”¹⁰⁴ By this theory, those who perceive themselves to be essentially without power are more likely than the powerful to respond vengefully. It should be noted that in this study “members of low socioeconomic status groups”¹⁰⁵ are included as being amongst the chronically powerless. Echoing the aphorism ‘power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely,’ Strelan et al argue that “the extent to which incidental power corrupts is dependent on *who* is using the power.”¹⁰⁶ They suggest that “when individuals perceive themselves to be chronically powerless, the experience of high incidental power encourages negative, vengeful responding.”¹⁰⁷ In the context of Williams’ claim above and Strelan et al’s work, it may be proposed that as a member of a socially powerless grouping, Long’s subsequent activities may be interpreted as an attempt at acquiring political power to change the dynamic and to reverse the structure of politics in the state. Irrespective of any sense of inadequacy he may have been driven by, Long utilised his position as a campaign tool to connect to a wider Louisiana, and subsequently national, electorate than was represented by the political elite in the state. As a member of the US Senate, he used his upbringing as a rallying cry for his Share Our Wealth campaign. In a speech in March 1935, he lauded his social standing, exaggerated the paucity of his education as an explanation for his behaviour, and claimed that he was

“an ignorant man. I have had no college education. I have not even had a high school education. But the thing that takes me far in politics is that I do not have to color what comes into my mind and into my heart. I say it

¹⁰⁴ Strelan, Weick and Vailjevic define “institutional power” as situational. “[P]ower can also be construed as a personal attribute. People differ in the extent to which they experience high or low power in their everyday relationships” Strelan, Peter, Weick, Mario and Vailjevic, Milica “Power and revenge” *British Journal of Social Psychology* Vol 43 (2014) p522

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Ibid p536

¹⁰⁷ Ibid p537

unvarnished. I say it without veneer. I have not the learning to do otherwise, and therefore my ignorance is often not detected.”¹⁰⁸

It was this ignorance, he said that allowed him to speak for the people, since he knew “the hearts of the people because I have not colored my own. I know when I am right in my own conscience.”¹⁰⁹ This affinity with the masses, he declared, had not, and would not, be altered until “the lives of these people [had been made] decent and respectable,” after which, he promised, “No one will ever hear political opposition out of me.”¹¹⁰ This statement was declaration of intent to his opponents that he would not desist from his action until his goal had been achieved, whether that goal was wealth redistribution or the White House.

The factionalisation of Louisiana’s politics not only pre-dated the rise of Long, it also formed the basis for his rise through, what Sindler calls, its “tradition of latent class conflict.”¹¹¹ Sindler argues that factionalism, combined with a “customary majority support for the incumbent administration,” had ensured that the governors of Louisiana had “a control over legislation not equalled in most other Southern states.”¹¹² It is therefore not unreasonable that in Long’s world view he would understand that to be governor of Louisiana was to hold all of the power in the state. A perception which may have led Long to not only seek the office but also then, when in office, to seek to ensure that the office of governor reflected his interpretation of its prestige, by controlling all aspects of Louisiana life beyond the constitutional remit of his own political office: political (executive and legislative), judicial, business, media (as represented by newspapers and radio), and the security forces (the police and the national guard). It should also be noted that such was Long’s overwhelming conviction that the real power in the state lay with the governor, that he never sought any career path other than politics. His earlier working experiences, including as a travelling

¹⁰⁸ Address by Long to the United States Senate, 5 March 1935, quoted in Leaflet from Caddo Parish Share Our Wealth Campaign Committee, 1 January 1936 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Re. to Huey Long Speeches, Financial Documents and Memorabilia 1966 -1985 Box 2 Folder 2-31 Huey Long Series: Share Our Wealth Circulars 1935-1936

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Sindler, (Sept 1955) p642

¹¹² Ibid pp643-644

salesman and as a newspaper correspondent, for both the *Times-Picayune* and the *Shreveport Times*, as well as his training and work as a lawyer, all appear to have been life experiences on which he could build as a politician, utilising each one with great effect. Although, given his later conflicts with the state's newspapers, Long's time as a newspaper correspondent cannot be said to have given him a perspective on what individual newspapers consider to be newsworthy. As an exchange of letters between the Southern States Editor of the *Times Picayune* and Long in August 1916 demonstrates, he disagreed with the editors on what events he should report, suggesting that he was more qualified than they were to make that judgement:

“When there is news I will give it. I am a big booster for this section of the country, but not such a booster as to send inflated reports of matters when it amounted to nothing. . . . You have failed to publish things of more importance. When a crowd meets, not an office force, I will act.”¹¹³

This disregard for the expertise and, notably, the authority of the editors is an early example of Long's refusal to act as a subordinate to anyone. This was a trait which would recur throughout his career and would impact on his successes. However, he was more effective as a lawyer, with his legal skills and ability to argue a case reportedly drawing praise from William Howard Taft, then Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. In his autobiography, Long commented “If all the good could but be true!” on *Vanity Fair Magazine's* report that Taft had “told Congressman Aswell that Huey Long was the most brilliant lawyer who ever practiced before the United States Supreme Court,” which suggests that he gave little credence to the report.¹¹⁴ Despite this assessment, the report that was repeated by Russell Long to Williams¹¹⁵ which led him to suggest that had Long chosen to focus on law instead of politics he may have become “one of the great lawyers of his

¹¹³ Letter to *Times Picayune* from Huey P Long dated 14 August 1916 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 48b General Correspondence 1915 August 14 – November 27

¹¹⁴ Long (1933) p235

¹¹⁵ Letter to T Harry Williams from Russell Long dated 12 August 1957 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series, Box 3, Folder 3- 22: Williams, T Harry, Corr Re to Huey Long Biography 1955 -1958

time.”¹¹⁶ It is questionable whether, given his demonstrable disregard for the expertise of others and for traditions and principles, he could have acted within the formal structure as a career lawyer.

For Long, political power was ostensibly gained as one progressed up the hierarchical ladder of political office. As he reached each successive office, he additionally sought to expand his personal power by augmenting those powers implicitly held by each office itself. In a demonstration, not just of his growing power, but also his own perception of his growing influence in his home town, and ostensibly in reciprocity for support on his campaign for Railroad Commissioner, he assured Walter W Allen of Winnfield that “every Long by name” would vote for him and that Allen was therefore “the same as elected Assessor today.” Long’s letter also included a message to other Winnfield inhabitants, especially Talmadge Caldwell, which was an explicit instruction to vote for Allen:

“I have done a great deal for Talmadge. I have stood by him, helped him and have been a friend to him when he needed a friend, and am his friend yet, whatever he has needed he has always received from me, and if he and his father want to do a favor to Huey Long in return for what I have done for them they could not do it more appropriately than by voting for you. Trusting that I may hear of your election, and assuring you that you may show this letter to my close friends without making it so conspicuous as to do myself and yourself harm”¹¹⁷

Before Long was elected to the three man Louisiana Railroad Commission it was relatively inactive with a limited remit. Following Long’s election, the profile of the commission and, especially that of Commissioner Long, rose significantly across the state. In a similar vein, as governor, Long used legislative tactics to extend the power of his office beyond anything previously envisioned. This included the creation in 1928 of the Bureau of Criminal Identification, which reported directly to the governor and was empowered to make arrests, without warrants, anywhere in Louisiana for any and all violations of the law.¹¹⁸ Long used

¹¹⁶ Williams (1969) p105

¹¹⁷ Letter from H P Long to W W Allen dated 12 January 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 68 General Correspondence 1920

¹¹⁸ See *An Exceptional Southern governor?* chapter p93

political patronage and threats to gain legal control of the Board of Health, the Department of Conservation, the Highway Commission and in New Orleans, the Charity Hospital and the Levee Board.¹¹⁹ Key to Long's control of these bodies was his power of appointment, which when combined with his tactic of requiring each appointee to sign undated letters of resignations, ensured he maintained complete control of the office holders and through them, the offices.

Once elected to an office, the quest for power became for Long an exercise not just in retention and expansion but also in control. Once elected as governor, this need for control extended to all levels of the state. Long created in Louisiana a political machine which would counter the power of any of the factions existing within the state's Democratic Party. Following the 1929 impeachment, Long sought to bypass one of the more intransigent strands of his opposition, the anti-Long newspapers, by publishing his own journal, the *Louisiana Progress*. Publication of the *Progress* gave Long a degree of commonality with other "mass leaders" of the era. In common with *LaFollette's Progressive* in Wisconsin, the *Free Lance* in Mississippi, the *Ferguson Forum* in Texas and the *Blue Valley Farmer* in Oklahoma, the *Progress* gave Long a mouthpiece to speak directly to the electorate. Initially funded by 'voluntary' subscriptions (deducts) from state employees, the *Progress* later become self-sufficient through the sale of advertising space.¹²⁰ Although the *Progress* was self-funding, the system of 'deducts' remained in place. Having, by legislative tactics, brought under his authority thousands of state jobs, Long further extended the imposed allegiance of these employees by requiring each one pay a deduction from their salaries to the Long organisation.¹²¹

Long did not seek only to exercise his power and impose control on his political supporters and followers, but also on his enemies and political opponents. In an interview with Betty

¹¹⁹ Hair p166

¹²⁰ Williams (1969) pp455-458

¹²¹ Hair p199

Carter,¹²² Cecil Morgan, an anti-Long member of the Legislature, described incidents which demonstrated how Long viewed his position as governor as authoritarian and how he dealt with those political opponents who would not submit to his rule. In the early days of his governorship, Long had sent instructions to the Legislature to elect his candidate as speaker, John B Fournet, and as Morgan explained, “he was now elected, and expected everyone, no matter whether they supported him up to that time or not, to follow his leadership, since he was elected.”¹²³ At that early stage in the governor’s term, Morgan reports, he and others were beginning to be concerned that Long was “building up too strong a machine and dictating who should be elected,” so they chose to disregard this instruction, voting instead for the candidate from their own area.¹²⁴ Fournet was elected by 72 votes to 27. A second incident demonstrates that Long would not restrict his political activities, tactics and acts of revenge to the individual opposing him; he would consider any opportunity for manipulation or coercion as a valid tactic in bending an opponent to his will. Just as in the Manship blackmail incident which triggered the impeachment proceedings,¹²⁵ Long targeted Morgan’s father when he had refused to follow the governor’s request to vote in favour of one of his bills during the first session of the Legislature.¹²⁶ Additionally, having identified a pressure point which he could use to punish non-compliance, Long, via his floor leaders, was not averse to using it again as bribery to ensure continued conformity.

It was not only his political opponents that Long sought to have under his total control. He retained his own political allegiance solely to himself. While an informal system of reciprocity exists within American politics, the specific system which operates in Louisiana has baffled political operatives from across the nation and led US Senator Tom Connally (Texas, Democrat, 1929-1953) to advise anyone who wanted a postgraduate course in politics to

¹²² Betty Carter was the wife of Hodding Carter the anti-Long newspaper editor of the Hammond *Daily Courier*

¹²³ Cecil Morgan, Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter Under the auspices of the Historic New Orleans Collection – Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge p39

¹²⁴ Ibid p40

¹²⁵ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p241

¹²⁶ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p251

head to Louisiana.¹²⁷ Most puzzling to outsiders was the lack of consistency of support between the many factions within the Democratic Party. With short term coalitions dissolving into enmity, alliances could be limited to single issues. Long's attitude to this fluctuating support system was two-fold.

Throughout his career Long was prepared to campaign on behalf of other politicians, because of the benefit he would derive from this type of activity, whether through their rallies, which provided him with opportunities to showcase his talents as a public orator and to promote his programmes, often more so than the candidate themselves, or through their subsequent support. For example, he undertook a whirlwind tour of Arkansas on behalf of US Senator Hattie Carraway's re-election campaign, not only because she had voted in support of his income limitation resolution, but because her re-election in the face of overwhelming opposition would demonstrate to the Democratic Senate Minority leader, Joseph T Robinson, also from Arkansas, and the Democratic Party leadership, that Long's influence and power base now extended beyond the borders of Louisiana. Long's activities on Carraway's behalf drew substantial attention and support for the candidate and ultimately won her the election, since without Long's intervention she did not have a viable campaign; but his speeches barely mentioned the candidate, focussing instead on Share Our Wealth. In a flyer issued in support of Carraway, Long's focus is clearly on his own agenda, although Carraway's re-election is the vehicle used to promote it:

"Whoever takes the side of the people against the combined power of finance is marked for destruction by them. Uncle Trusty will not stand for it. That's all.

Senator Hattie W. Carraway is one of those marked persons . . . She voted for the government to take as high as 65% of all any one man made in one year over \$1,000,000, and to thereby take taxes off of the little fellow."¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Hair p257

¹²⁸ Huey P Long's flyer entitled "A Letter from Uncle Trusty" *Scott Wilson Papers*, Manuscripts Collection 233, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118. Box 233 Folder 2

Evidence also demonstrates that during the early stages of his political career, Long campaigned on behalf of senior members of the state party, including for John M Parker during his 1920 gubernatorial campaign,¹²⁹ Joseph E Ransdell in his US Senate re-election campaign in 1924, and Edwin Broussard during his US Senate re-election campaign in 1926. However, as earlier letters indicate, Long was actively engaged in the factional aspect of Louisiana's politics and was working to support candidates against Ransdell's re-election in 1918. He believed, at that time, that his section of the state would "go for whoever runs against Ransdell. We are going to support whoever runs against him unless it be one of those obnoxious characters who are less likable than he."¹³⁰ Among the potential candidates, Long sought, as early as May 1917, to persuade Judge Charles A O'Niell to run for Ransdell's US Senate seat, claiming that O'Niell's candidature "would meet with a great deal of approval from the people of this state."¹³¹ Long later worked to create a coalition of the factions behind Harry P Gamble, confidently stating that "it would appear that we have already driven the field of Ransdell opposition to you alone."¹³² Ultimately, however, Ransdell was re-elected to the US Senate in 1918. These actions suggest that Long's participation in electoral politics on behalf of others in the state were political expedient moves, as was his later support for Ransdell in 1924, for which he anticipated reciprocal support for his second gubernatorial race in 1928.

¹²⁹ Letter exchange with Elzie H White in January 1920 in which Mr White states "I see by the press that you are actively supporting Mr. Parker and I am doing all I can for him at this place, and if you have any dope that will help the cause any sent it on to me." Letter from E H White to Huey P Long dated 4 January 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 68 General Correspondence January 1920

¹³⁰ Letter to Leon R Smith dated 12 January 1918 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 58 General Correspondence January – February 1918

¹³¹ Letter to Hon Chas A O'Niell from Huey P Long dated 2 May 1917 *Huey P Long Papers* Box 2 Folder 55 General Correspondence January – December 1917

¹³² Letter to Hon Harry Gamble from Huey P Long dated 23 April 1918 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 59 General Correspondence March – October 1918

During the 1920 gubernatorial campaign, Long stated that he had paid his own expenses to work for Parker because he wanted “to see the man elected in order that the common citizenship of this State can have some chance.”¹³³ He claimed that a

“reform movement never has any money, they are not in with the gambling and hellish element that usually contribute sums of money to degenerate the human race. Of course the New Orleans ring has a flush pot and naturally can always raise money for anything when we cannot.”¹³⁴

However, subsequent to the split with Parker over the severance tax issue, Long articulated his frustration with the *status quo* in Louisiana politics in a letter to Leland Moss, a Parker supporter: “I am not worrying about my own political future. I am disgusted with public life and with many of the public men. I do not need a sinecure to live.”¹³⁵ For Long, the provision of support was an exercise in control and influence. He expected to benefit from his support for other politicians and he often had specific goals for this reciprocal exchange, such as an agreement on severance tax with Parker prior to the 1920 gubernatorial election or support for Share Our Wealth programme from Roosevelt, since, as he claimed, the main reason on “which President-elect Roosevelt was nominated for the office of President of the United States, was the decentralization of wealth.”¹³⁶ However, what becomes evident from these deals is that only one party seemed to be fully cognisant of the details of the arrangement: Long. His subsequent disappointment at his failure to receive that which he deemed to be owed to him laid the groundwork for disintegration in his relationships with these politicians and, ultimately, created a state of hostility between them.

In comparison to the lack of allegiance that he would give to others, Long did, however, expect unconditional loyalty and obedience from his followers. In a letter sent just over a month before the impeachment in March 1929, Long articulated his strategy in response to

¹³³ Letter to H A Ashby from Huey P Long dated 20 January 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 68 General Correspondence 1920

¹³⁴ *Ibid*

¹³⁵ Letter to Leland H Moss from Huey P Long dated 11 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 74 General Correspondence November – December 1920 p2

¹³⁶ “People’s Right to Fulfillment” Speech of Hon. Huey P Long of Louisiana in the Senate of the United States, Tuesday, December 6, 1932, *Congressional Record* Seventy-Second Congress, Second Session

opposition. Writing in reference to a “joke resolution that was sent to the House by Mr Arras” during the attempt to impeach him during his term as Public Service Commissioner, he said

“the resolution came at a time when it could only have been reasonably anticipated to effect me as though it were for no good motive so far as concerned me. Anyone introducing a resolution of the kind can never expect any favourable consideration under an administration which I am heading. I can’t go that far. I am very sorry, but that is the situation which makes it absolutely impossible for me to subside in the views which I have taken.”¹³⁷

Any disagreement with or opposition to Long’s opinions, programmes or techniques was perceived by Long as a disloyal attack. Even personal friends such as Harley B Bozeman, a childhood friend and loyal Long supporter, were deemed traitorous if they contradicted him.¹³⁸

When Long wrote to Harvey Fields in 1933 that the “lying newspapers and the low brow politicians” had seen an opportunity to join the “big interests, who have also to pay good taxes in Louisiana, have the money to spread against me wherever it will do their cause good,”¹³⁹ he was articulating his increasing sense that such opposition, especially among those he had previously supported, validated both his programmes and his actions, claiming:

“When you see a new traitor, one of these men I have helped in the past, you can know what has happened. The Nation wide fight against Huey Long by the super rich who want to injure me before we can succeed in spreading some of their wealth among the people, looms as a mighty good chance for some political elements to grab off a few very big stakes to continue their lying propoganda. One charge there is not made, however. No one says I have failed to vote and do as I said I would if sent to the United States Senate.”¹⁴⁰

When Senator Huey P. Long died aged 42 on 10 September 1935, as a result of a shooting two days earlier, he was at the zenith of his political career and preparing to run for the Presidency of the United States. Despite no longer being the legal executive officer of

¹³⁷ Letter from Huey P Long to W D Robinson dated 14 February 1929, Handwritten note on transcript: “Psychology during Impeachment 1929” *T Harry Williams Papers* Box 8 folders 8:10 – 8:16 Correspondence Huey P Long

¹³⁸ See *Enemies, Enmity and Impeachment* chapter p270

¹³⁹ Form letter to Fields from Long dated August 3 1933 *Fields (Harvey G) Papers*, Series I – IV, 1909 – 1961, U:293, Box 1 Folder 1.3

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

Louisiana, he was in the State Capitol building in Baton Rouge to ensure that the Legislature passed the latest aspects of his political agenda, including legislation to “preserve and protect the powers reserved to Louisiana by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution”¹⁴¹ and a specific item to restructure the judicial districts. Both of these bills had caused consternation amongst members of the Legislature and were clear examples of the lengths to which he would go to retain, maintain and exercise the full extent of his personal and political power in Louisiana. The first, was to prevent attempts by the Roosevelt administration to bypass Long and his machine in distributing federal patronage in the state;¹⁴² although aspects of the legislation were deemed to be unconstitutional by George Wallace, his legal assistant, Long insisted the measure be proposed since any challenges to it would take an inordinately long time to proceed through the courts, and in the meantime he would have achieved his goal: a snub to the Roosevelt administration.¹⁴³ The second was specifically aimed at removing the anti-Long judge, Benjamin Pavy, from the office he had held for twenty-eight years.¹⁴⁴ It has been speculated that the redistricting proposal was one of the reasons why Dr Carl Austin Weiss shot Long on the evening of 8 September 1935; Isom J Guillory, Sr, State Representative for Saint Landry Parish and a patient of Dr Weiss,

¹⁴¹ Williams (1969) p860

¹⁴² Long’s bill to impose jail terms on federal employees exercising unconstitutional powers in the state was passed by the Louisiana House of Representatives on 9 September 1935 by 68 votes to 19 *Shreveport Journal*, 9 September 1935 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6: Huey P Long Related items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment) Folder clippings

¹⁴³ The *Shreveport Journal* described the bill as “Long’s latest slap at President Roosevelt’s administration” *Shreveport Journal*, 9 September 1935 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6: Huey P Long Related items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment) Folder clippings

¹⁴⁴ Williams (1969) pp860 -862

indicated that he was “very much upset at the prospect of his father-in-law losing his job as a result of the so-called gerrymandering.”¹⁴⁵

A personal belief system

However, to categorise Long solely as a tyrant, whose only interest was in the accumulation of personal and political power with the aim of promoting his own political career, would be to ignore a number of factors which belie this assessment. The most obvious contradictions are his determination to challenge the political *status quo* in Louisiana and to work against the big corporations in the state, most notably Standard Oil.

A logical step for someone determined to achieve the highest possible political office, at state and national level, would be to work within the existing system, first with the Louisiana Democratic Party and then through the national party, rather than in opposition to it. If his only ambition was the acquisition of political and personal power, his tactic of going against the corporations, which would have been able to assist him in acquiring his target, through financial and political support, appears to be counterintuitive. It is this aspect of Long which clarifies why academics and contemporary commentators have been unable to easily categorise him. There were a set of beliefs and principles to which Long held throughout his life and career, and while these did not constitute a conventionally identified ideology, they did form the backbone of Long’s political life.

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Russell B Long to T Harry Williams dated 27 March 1963 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series, Box 3, Folder 3- 25: Williams, T Harry, Corr Re to Huey Long Biography 1961 -1965 The other alleged motives that Weiss may have had for shooting Long included a rumour that Long was planning to use a racial slur against the Pavy family or that he was a member of the anti-Long forces which had planned to assassinate the Senator. In the same letter to Williams, Russell Long also attempted to dismiss the accusation that “Huey Long might impute some degree of Negro ancestry to the Pavy family. . . . I can find no evidence whatever that Huey Long ever had the idea that there had been so much as a hint or rumor to the effect that the Pavy family was not pure Caucasian, nor have I been able to determine that any one in the Long forces entertained that opinion. The first I ever saw of this suggestion was in an article by a man named Hamilton Basso. . . . Like Harnett Kane and Hermann Deutsch, he was something of a Huey Long detractor.” Further conspiracy theories have emerged in the decades since Long’s death which suggest that rather than being the gunman, Weiss was unarmed when he went to meet with Long, and that Long was shot by one of his own bodyguards who had opened fire on Weiss. Weiss’ body was reported to have over 50 bullet holes in it.

It has been said, most notably by Long himself, that he did not adhere to any specific political philosophy except that which he created for himself to achieve his personal and political ambitions. Although he did declare himself to be “a democrat” who had “always contributed democratic campaign funds”¹⁴⁶ in a telegram to U S Senator Hiram Johnson in April 1918, attempts to distil a deeper philosophical meaning from Long’s politics were dismissed by him: “I haven’t any program or any philosophy. I just take things as they come.”¹⁴⁷ While this reflects Long’s view of his own political affiliations, his programmes and techniques owed much more than he acknowledged to the influences which surrounded him as he grew up, as he worked towards the achievement of his ambitions, and throughout his political career.

Long’s early letters provide an insight into his views on state and national politics. Throughout Long’s career there is a consistent theme against the corporations, a letter to Skipwith W Adams, a member of the Arkansas Legislature, in January 1917, called for him to stand “for the cause of reform and against the corporate control of your state”¹⁴⁸ since Long himself was convinced, by 1920, that the fight against the corporations was “firmly established in Northern Louisiana. They are being whipped and routed by larger and larger majorities.”¹⁴⁹ In this letter to his former college friend, Charles Orr in Oklahoma, Long anticipated that with “a little attention given there for another year [the corporations would] be in bad shape in” the south of the state also. He was convinced that “a fight for the real right, for the people and against a capitalistic outlaw can never recede if actively waged. I happen to be the beginner and began only two years ago. The State is coming out fast.”¹⁵⁰ This letter to Orr also provides an insight into Long’s appraisal of the state of national politics at that

¹⁴⁶ Telegram to Hiram Johnson from Huey P Long dated 6 April 1918, *Huey P Long Papers*, Mss 2005, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Box 2 Folder 58 General Correspondence January – February 1918

¹⁴⁷ Arthur M Schlesinger Jr *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 1960) pp51-52

¹⁴⁸ Letter to Hon Skipwith W Adams from Huey P Long dated 8 January 1917 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 55 General Correspondence January – December 1917

¹⁴⁹ Letter to Chas. L Orr from Huey P Long date 24 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 55 General Correspondence January – December 1917 p1

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

time, based on his experiences during time spent in Louisiana, Oklahoma and New York. He gives his opinion that based on the rise in Republican votes in Louisiana in the latest election that “within the next decade, we may not have a dear-dear old ‘Solid South,’” since there were “so many autocratic things to explain that we could not keep them all lined up as they usually vote.”¹⁵¹ However, Long anticipated that an increase in taxation under a Republican government which would necessarily be borne by the “common people” and as such would lead to a resurgence by the Democratic Party within a few years.¹⁵² Yet, while Long looked to the national scene, his perspective on these issues was naturally parochial. He tended to link broader themes to specific circumstances in Louisiana, such as the prevalence of an elite leadership within the state’s Democratic Party and the Ring’s control of politics in the state. This aspect of Long’s political focus is clear in the text of a speech in which, while linking the benefits of widening suffrage, specifically women’s suffrage, to the progress of the country and the overthrow of corruption in politics, he dwelt on the need to overcome corruption in politics, suggesting that “wherever the ballot has been granted to woman, the polluted politicians have been thrown out of office and shorn of power.” He claimed that it was the “opponent of moral reform, democracy and civilisation” who would cast “his vote against humanity” and that while the

“political ringster is only too glad to grant the ballot to the illiterate foreigner, who knows and has but little interest in the country’s progress, for it is by the use of such vote that they destroy moral progress. They oppose Woman Suffrage, because they realize that the ballot of women can only be cast in favor of human principle.”¹⁵³

In a statement issued to the *Daily States*, the *Times-Picayune*, the *Item* and the *Shreveport Times*, in early August 1923, Long explicitly stated his determination to adhere to his principles which, while including doing any man who had supported him any favour, he would not extend this to “impose him on the people, for to do so would require me to sacrifice every principle for which I have stood, even the suit now pending in the courts

¹⁵¹ Ibid p2

¹⁵² Ibid p2

¹⁵³ Transcript of Long’s speech in support of the vote on Women’s suffrage 1916 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 2 Folder 65 Speech Support of Woman Suffrage

against the Standard Oil Company.”¹⁵⁴ In this instance, the subject for his condemnation was Judge James G Palmer, Long’s attorney during the Parker libel case,¹⁵⁵ who, as a lawyer for the Sinclair oil trust, needed to “choose between his masters, either the people or the Sinclair oil trust, which we all know to be a Standard Oil enterprise.”¹⁵⁶ In his 1924 gubernatorial campaign message, Long clearly demonstrated that, despite his previously apparently conciliatory support, he was determined to work against the established elites of the party:

“Long is against the Parker administration.

Long is oposed [sic] to religious strife and discontent and unrest.

Long is forever and always opposed to the return of the open saloon.

Long is opposed to J.Y.Sanders and the kind of government he stands for.

Long will be the Governor of Louisiana in fact as well as in name.

Good Roads. Get Louisiana out of the mud.”¹⁵⁷

The phrase ‘in fact as well as in name’ was a clear demonstration and warning that he would not allow others to determine the path of his term of office. Long planned to control the governor’s office, and with it, the state. In a letter to Col Robert E Ewing, following his election as governor, Long clearly summarised his primary principles for his term of office, “we may prosecute our whole work of human uplift, a better administration of justice, and an expansion and constructive advancement of our industry, commerce and agriculture.”¹⁵⁸ His determination to deliver on his promises, most notably the free school books which were to be funded by a severance tax, however created divisions of opinion across the state. While

¹⁵⁴ Letter to Mr A W Newlin of the *Daily States* and enclosed statement from Huey P Long dated 5 August 1923 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923

¹⁵⁵ See Steps to Power chapter p126

¹⁵⁶ Letter to Mr A W Newlin of the *Daily States* and enclosed statement from Huey P Long dated 5 August 1923 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923

¹⁵⁷ 1924 campaign message *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 87 General Correspondence and Miscellaneous Document 1st Gubernatorial Campaign 1923

¹⁵⁸ Letter to Robert E Ewing from Huey P Long dated 24 January 1928 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 8 Folder 237 Colonel Robert Ewing

in a circular to all Parish School Board members, Parish superintendents and high school principals, T H Harris, the state superintendent of education, urged them to support Long's severance tax legislation when it came before the state Legislature, since the monies raised through this tax would bring promised benefits to education in the state, especially to "finance a plan of free textbooks and at the same time provide as much money for the Current School Fund" as had been raised by "the Tobacco Tax, perhaps more,"¹⁵⁹ others were vehemently opposed to it. C W Lane called the severance tax a "class legislation that would put a burden on" the people.¹⁶⁰ Long's plan to use increased taxation, especially that targeted primarily at corporations such as the oil tax proposal in March 1929, to fund programmes, guaranteed his opponents would fight his programmes. Meanwhile his image as a politician for the people of Louisiana grew, with A F Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, writing that it was due to Long's reputation "as a progressive and a faithful public servant" that their members had been urged to support Long in the September primary and also to "exert any and all influence in behalf of his candidacy among their friends and relatives."¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Rather than being assessed as conforming to one of the established or clearly defined ideological movement of his time, Huey P Long's political and personal activities may be more accurately appraised as being part of a personal, individualistic, belief system; a personal political ideology. Contemporary commentators attempted to classify Long according to the prevailing political ideologies of the time. However, these attempts failed to produce a convincing or consistent assessment; with Long variously designated as a communist, fascist, socialist, progressive or populist. One of the primary reasons for this

¹⁵⁹ Circular no. 2456 dated 19 May 1928 from T H Harris, State Superintendent of Education, to Parish School Board Members, Parish Superintendents and High School Principals *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 5 Folder 147a Gas Tax Matter (part 1)

¹⁶⁰ Letter from C W Lane to Huey P Long dated 1 June 1928 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 5 Folder 147a Gas Tax Matter (part 1)

¹⁶¹ Letter to Mr E J Hannahan, Louisiana State Legislative Board, from A J Whitney, Grand Lodge Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, dated 19 August 1930 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 6 Folder 173 Senatorial Campaign General Correspondence

inability to assess Long's political inclination was that his activities and programmes appeared to have been inspired by differing aspects from within each of the prevailing ideologies. Another reason was that Long himself was determined not to be labelled as anything which would allow him to be considered as being part of a wider group or faction; hence his claim to be *sui generis*. Long saw himself as separate from others and as such any attempt to classify him within the context of the ideological tropes created or adhered to by other politicians was contradictory to this self-image. By acting outside of the existing system, in particular the political norms in Louisiana, he reinforced, for himself, his own identity while undermining the *status quo*.

As would become evident during his planning for his run for the presidency, Long had no loyalty to party. In an interview with Forrest Davis, Long had apparently claimed he would "rule . . . as president for sixteen years, and in the process destroy both the Democratic and Republican parties."¹⁶² As had been previously demonstrated by Parker in 1916 and then 1920, allegiance to the Louisiana Democratic Party could be the difference between an unsuccessful and successful gubernatorial campaign, but Long's affiliation to the Democratic Party in Louisiana rests solely on the precept that no other party was electorally viable in the state during the 1920s and 1930s. Having created, in the Long machine, a body which could rival the autonomy of the Democratic Party in the state, and having acquired significant control over the state's political power, Long represented a potential threat to the *status quo* in the national Democratic Party for 1936. Whether Long did actually believe his claim that "Of course I have no chance being President – what will be the next thing they will want to throw me out of?"¹⁶³ is probably unlikely, although it is a claim which not only speaks to his growing fixation with impeachment as a validation tool, but it also emphasises his determination to fulfil his long held presidential ambition, irrespective of opposition. An

¹⁶² Hair p298

¹⁶³ Huey P Long "I am in the Dog House" *Liberty* 10 Nov 1934 pp30-31 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-24 Huey Long Series: Newspaper and Magazine Clippings 1934

ambition which others within the party were also beginning to suggest might become a reality, when as a secret Democratic National Committee's poll taken in 1935 suggested, his growing influence meant that Long, a Long candidate or a Republican candidate with Long's support, might poll sufficient votes to prevent Roosevelt from winning another term in the White House in 1936.¹⁶⁴

The multifaceted aspects of Huey Long suggest that there was a dichotomy in the forces which drove him throughout his career. While the discussion in this chapter has revealed that he incorporated some of the ideological tenets of populism and progressivism into his programmes, and had been inspired by the class conflict engendered in him by the political classes in Louisiana during his rise to power, ultimately it was Long's obsession with personal and political power, its acquisition, retention and expansion that motivated him.

One of the key factors in the impeachment was Long's behaviour and attitude towards his fellow politicians, traits which were influenced by his obsession with personal and political power. For Long, Louisiana politics, rather than being a manifestation of a specific belief system, was the means which provided him with an outlet and a challenge for his intellect, and the opportunities to achieve the power and positions he desired. The acquisition of power was represented by his achievement of elected office. His perception was that the power and influence attached to these offices would allow him to impose his will and programmes on the people and state of Louisiana. When the reality of the authority of these offices did not fulfil his expectations, Long actively sought to alter the paradigm, so that reality became more aligned with his perceptions and expectations. Perceived failures, such as legislative opposition to his programmes, perpetuated the need to increase his levels of control over other actors in the state, especially politicians. Evident amongst the articles of

¹⁶⁴ Snyder (Spring, 1975) pp131-134

impeachment brought against Long on 26 March 1929 was his opponents' objection to the disproportionate control and power which Long was wielding in Louisiana.¹⁶⁵

The inability of his contemporaries to identify with Long on an ideological basis and to comprehend the causes and sources of his politics ensured that they were also unable to identify the political drivers for his programmes. The apparent lack of an identifiable and consistent base upon which his programmes were built called into question the underlying doctrine which motivated Long. Without a common basis for allegiance such as a shared doctrinal adherence, Long's motivations were incomprehensible and therefore deemed to be questionable by those around him. Later Long may have outwardly deplored the necessity of the methods by which he imposed his will, authority and programmes on Louisiana, claiming that "you sometimes have to fight fire with fire . . . I would do it some other way if there was time or if it wasn't necessary to do it this way,"¹⁶⁶ but the methods which he would use to retain gubernatorial control of Louisiana while in Washington DC as the state's senator were already evident by 1929, as he sought to control the state's judiciary and Legislature as well as the executive office. By specifically designating himself and his programmes as something apart from the norms of political intercourse, Long created the foundation for opposition and subsequently, impeachment.

¹⁶⁵ For the 19 articles of impeachment see Appendix1 p299

¹⁶⁶ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Box 19 Folder 68 p12

Chapter 5

Enemies, enmity and impeachment

One of Long's consistent traits throughout his life and political career was his ability, not simply to provoke political opposition, but to incite hatred and aggression amongst those who disagreed with him. Harry S Truman, who was elected to the United States Senate in 1934, considered Long to have had "one of the keenest minds" in the US Senate but that he was "crooked as a ram's horn [and] had no moral code."¹ Once in the Senate, Long did not appear to be willing to curtail his verbosity to that which was appropriate for his audience and venue. Having attacked other members of the Senate with such vindictiveness that many senators would leave the chamber when he began to speak, he would approach his victims afterwards to say it was not personal, just politics. After one such incident, Carter Glass (D-VA 1920-1946) responded, "Huey, you're the worst SOB in the Senate, and if I can get my knife out I'm going to cut your heart out."² As demonstrated earlier, Long was not motivated by an established ideology but by a more personal belief system, the fulfilment of

¹ Notes from Harry S Truman interview by T Harry Williams on 24 November 1959 in Independence Mo. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folders 1 -167

² Ibid

which had resulted in his actions becoming increasingly predicated upon a desire for the acquisition of political and personal power, and one from which he would not turn, irrespective of opposition against him, as he clearly stated in the United States Senate in March 1935:

“Nonetheless my voice will be the same as it has been. Patronage will not change it. Fear will not change it. Persecution will not change it.”³

For him, opposition equated to enmity. For Long, an enemy was anyone who offered any degree of opposition to him, someone who refused to adhere to his will, or someone who did not accord him the respect to which he believed he was entitled. Although he utilised opposition to big business and corporations, most notably the Standard Oil Company, in tandem with his Share Our Wealth programme as a means to attract popular support, the primary force of his enmity, and therefore his enemies, was of a much more personal nature. While Standard Oil may have supported some of the individuals whom Long designated as his enemies, and it provided Long with a convenient target, understandable to his supporters, it was in his relationships with, and behaviour towards, individuals rather than with the monolith corporations, that the circumstances were created that would lead to his impeachment in March 1929.

This chapter will explore through a series of case studies, the evolution of Long’s personal and political relationships with those individuals whom he would characterise as his enemies. It examines how this trait manifested itself throughout Long’s life and career, how his political opponents developed into implacable enemies who advocated his assassination, and the progression of his enmity towards others. The case studies will explore his relationships with family members as well as his political opponents, and also his propensity to impulsiveness, revenge and violence, and how this led to impeachment.

³ Address by Long to the United States Senate, 5 March 1935, quoted in Leaflet from Caddo Parish Share Our Wealth Campaign Committee, 1 January 1936 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Re. to Huey Long Speeches, Financial Documents and Memorabilia 1966 -1985 Box 2 Folder 2-31 Huey Long Series: Share Our Wealth Circulars 1935-1936

In summarising the impact of the 1929 impeachment on Long, in his 1973 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians, "Huey, Lyndon, and Southern Radicalism," T Harry Williams stated his opinion that the question, that the impeachment had either no effect on Long's personality or that he had become harder and more vindictive as a result, "cannot be settled but there is probably truth in both views."⁴ Williams' assessment, both in this address and in the 1969 biography, is problematic because of its open ended nature and because it limited the discussion of the impeachment to its effect on Long's emotional personality, eschewing any deeper examination of its impact on his political behaviour. Williams' conclusion that "those who think the impeachment did not change Huey are probably right. But their opinion needs some modification: the experience affected him but did not alter him appreciably"⁵ is too broad, therefore to advance our understanding significantly, since he offers few explanatory insights into how this experience affected his political outlook and behaviour or, indeed how Long contextualised the impeachment crisis within his own mind. As a result, the entire impeachment episode is somewhat underplayed by Williams, in stark contrast to Long's own frequent references to it. While Williams' discussion was in the context of a biography and therefore an appropriate format for a debate on the impact of events on the personality and character of the subject, his work largely ignores Long's references to impeachment in *Every Man A King*, and the assessment is further restricted by being reliant on the opinions and observations of those contemporaries of Long willing to be drawn on the subject. It is not surprising that supporters of Long would suggest that his impeachment had a profound effect on the man, while it is equally unsurprising that his political enemies would claim that little had changed. Williams' conclusion is therefore restricted by the scope of his discussion. By focussing on whether the impeachment had triggered changes to Long's inner character, and by failing to fully contextualise the process with regards to Long's past behaviour and political self-image,

⁴ Williams, T Harry "Huey, Lyndon, and Southern Radicalism" *The Journal of American History* Vol 60 No 2 (Sep 1973) p277

⁵ Williams (1969) p410

Williams minimises the impeachment crisis as a whole. As a result, in this portrayal Long emerges as a politician who has simply overcome a challenge to his leadership by the use of superior political tactics, but not as one whose career was under threat.

The Standard Oil Company

First it is necessary to address Long's animosity to corporations, which he claimed stood to gain financially at the expense of the people and the state. The corporations were a significant part of his legal work and formed part of his political agenda for his campaign for the Railroad Commission. As a newspaper article, advertising Long's campaign, highlighted, his efforts on behalf of "the masses" had he claimed "brought down upon him powerful opposition, [but he remained] the friend of the common people, and is yet making the same fight."⁶ A consistent factor throughout Long's political career was his opposition to the Standard Oil Company. While the origins of this enmity lay in the Pine Island incident,⁷ which had resulted in financial losses for Long at the hands of the big oil corporations, including Standard Oil, the continued enmity was a politically expedient one for Long. Although there were the perquisites available to a lawyer or a politician who would work with a large corporation, such as Standard Oil, Long took a contrary approach, probably because he viewed Standard Oil as being specifically connected with the political elite of the state, as exemplified by John M Parker. For Long, there were immeasurable benefits to having a big corporation as a target, especially one which could be portrayed as having profited at the expense of the population of Louisiana, and which could be blamed as the power behind the actions of any political enemies, so providing him with a potent stick with which to beat all of his opponents. When asked by Chick Frampton why, after he had introduced legislation to bring all of the power in New Orleans under the auspices of the governor's office, he had allowed Mayor T Semmes Walmsley to remain in post, Long justified his technique of not

⁶ "Long Is Pledged Stornng [sic] Support – Constant Fight in Behalf of the Masses Is a Big Factor" The Shreveport Times 26 August 1918 p3

⁷ See Steps to Power chapter p119

destroying a weakened political opponent, since it provided his own people with a “perfect target,” while also distracting them from fighting amongst themselves.⁸ In a similar vein, Long’s pursuit of Standard Oil stood not only as an effective reinforcement of his image as a champion of the people in the face of corrupt corporations, it also provided him with a target to blame for the ills of the state, essentially a distraction for the population of Louisiana.

In his analysis of a letter from Long to Leland H Moss, dated 11 November 1920, William Ivy Hair placed the focus of the letter on Long’s claim that Standard Oil was now controlling a weak governor, John M Parker.⁹ However, if one reads Long’s letter in its chronological context, there is an alternative interpretation to that proposed by Hair. The letter examined by Hair was a response to the one Long had received from Moss, dated 9 November 1920, which addressed the defeat of Long’s movement against the call for a Constitutional Convention. In his letter, Moss admonished Long for his “personal resentment toward Governor Parker [which] should not have been allowed to drive you into a position inimical to the best interests of the State.”¹⁰ Although Moss appears to have attempted to soften his tone of reprimand and instruction, by stating that the letter was “written in the friendliest spirit,” his view was that Long should not have taken the stand that he did. The proposal that Long would in time “probably regret the line”¹¹ he had taken, was unlikely to have been favourably received by Long, who always demonstrated a reluctance to submit to the advice of others. With this in mind, the opening of Long’s response reads as one of barely disguised contempt, couched as a reciprocal response to an equal. It does not read as the defensive response to someone who has just administered a reprimand to a novice:

⁸ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 68 p11

⁹ Hair pp102-103

¹⁰ Letter from Leland H Moss to Huey P Long dated 9 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 74: General Correspondence November – December 1920

¹¹ *Ibid*

“Your kind letter of November 9th is gratefully received. I have expected such a document from you for the past several days. I note that you say that you could not allow the opportunity to pass without pointing out certain things. In this respect you are very much like myself. I could not let the opportunity for spreading knowledge to the public pass”¹²

The closely typed two page letter does, as Hair suggested, link Governor Parker’s actions to the influence of Standard Oil, specifically condemning Parker for going back on his campaign pledges to make all pipe lines into common carriers and a specific agreement to support Long’s plan to “[divorce] pipe lines from producing companies,” by accepting the imposition of terms and conditions “as the Standard Oil Company’s Attorneys saw fit.”¹³ However, in his personal accusations about the character of the governor, Long portrayed Parker not just as “an egotistical weakling,”¹⁴ but also a delusional one, who would readily believe that he was capable of changing the “course of the Northern Star,” if his advisers told him so, and who would only have kept to his campaign promises if paid a “cash security.”¹⁵ Possibly the most emphatic insult hurled by Long at Parker, is his claim that the voters of the congressional districts within the territory he represented were the “true, tried and consistent advocates of reform government,” not the “great reform Governor.”¹⁶ The accusation that Standard Oil was controlling the Parker administration was a distraction from the personal antipathy that Long had felt towards the governor since he had failed to follow Long’s plan. The main focus of this letter to Moss is Long’s condemnation of Parker for reneging on campaign promises, although he did attribute this to the influence of Standard Oil. Long specifically focused on Parker’s failure to honour his promise to “support the plan which [Long] outlined to him, divorcing pipe lines from producing companies,”¹⁷ and, in a comment designed to cause mischief, his failure to use Moss and Robert H Marr to determine the

¹² Letter from Huey P Long to Leland H Moss dated 11 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 74: General Correspondence November – December 1920 p1

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Hair p103

¹⁵ Letter from Huey P Long to Leland H Moss dated 11 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 74: General Correspondence November – December 1920 p2

¹⁶ See *An Exceptional Southern Governor?* chapter for Parker’s qualifications as a reform governor. p99

¹⁷ Letter from Huey P Long to Leland H Moss dated 11 November 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 74: General Correspondence November – December 1920 p1

constitutionality of the proposed legislation. Long took the opportunity of this letter, not only to condemn Parker, but to emphasise that the governor had used lawyers, including one from the “Railroad Company owned by Kuhn, Loeb & Co., a Standard Oil ally, if there is one in the world,”¹⁸ rather than his own friend, Moss, thus seeking to imply that Parker had acted dishonourably in all aspects of the matter. For Long, Standard Oil was a symbolic, as well as a real enemy. One which could embody what was wrong with the *status quo* of politics in Louisiana and which could be blamed for the actions of members of the political elite, who Long saw as the opponents to his own progress in state politics.

Family¹⁹

The starting point for a discussion on Long’s tendency to create fractious personal relationships, and to maintain and foster grudges throughout his career, is his relationship with the members of his family, especially with his siblings.

Except as a tool for the purposes of election campaigns, Long was not concerned with maintaining or presenting the image of a ‘family man’ to the world. For example, a newspaper article from October 1932, in which the folksy quality of the family’s relationship is emphasised, describes Rose ‘smiling and twinkling’ at her husband while he “listened to her with an occasional grin and wink,” and their children eat their “generous and successive helpings” of breakfast.²⁰ The primary function of the article was to review Rose’s involvement in Long’s recent campaign across North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas on behalf of presidential candidate, Franklin D Roosevelt, although it also underscores her limited involvement in his previous campaigns. This campaign came at a crucial point in Long’s

¹⁸ Ibid pp 1-2

¹⁹ Although this correspondence amongst the Huey P Long papers in the Louisiana State University Special Collections archives is in a file labelled as “Family correspondence” the contents are limited to letters exchanged with or about Long’s siblings, with the occasional references to his wife’s siblings. Most notably absent from these files are any letters to or from his wife, Rose McConnell Long, and their children.

²⁰ Newspaper clipping dated 30 October 1932 “Mrs Long Calls Tour Strenuous, But Likes It” Unidentified newspaper *Long (Russell B) Collection*. Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 4 Folder 20 Huey Long Series: Newspaper Clippings 1932 (4 of 4)

career, when he was beginning to move his focus from politics in Louisiana to the national arena, in preparation for his own run for the presidency. The campaign itself allowed him to demonstrate his effectiveness to both Roosevelt and the Democratic National Party, but it coincided with the point at which he evidently recognised the need to present a specific image to the American electorate, that of the successful, traditional family man. The article seems to fulfil its remit, by positioning Long as the family man and focussing on the conventional nature of the family unit, with Long expressing his pride at son Russell's musical skill, "that boy won't be a politician. He'll be a band master."²¹ However, it is in the article's final paragraph, in a passing observation on the lack of shared hobbies between husband and wife, something that Rose states she hopes will be rectified when they both go to Washington, that it instead highlights, and, therefore, questions, the lack of cohesion between them, the time spent apart and the dysfunctional relationship Long had with members of his family. As previously mentioned, once in the Senate, Long began to perceive the necessity of presenting a specific image to voters, however, with newspaper coverage of his previous behaviour on record, it was perhaps an inescapable fact that his attempts at change would attract further unwanted media attention.

Throughout his life, Huey Pierce Long Jr never willingly used the suffix 'junior' as part of his name, as demonstrated in a letter to *The Associated Trades' Law List* in response to their enquiry, regarding a vacancy on their list to advertise his commercial practice:

"Nevertheless my official position does not interfere with my practice of law. . . . In publishing my name please be certain that it is published: "Huey P. Long." Quite often heretofore my name has been published in various misspelled fashions and is no satisfaction to always be annoyed with making explanations regarding your correct name."²²

²¹ Ibid

²² Letter from Huey P Long to The Associated Trades' Law List dated 26 July 1920 in response to an enquiry from them regarding a vacancy on their list to advertise his commercial practice. *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 3 Folder 72 General Correspondence June – August 1920

While William Ivy Hair believed that this was simply another demonstration of Long's inability to be second to anyone, least of all the "loser who embarrassed him by running last in elections,"²³ Long's rejection of the naming convention pre-dates his father's emphatic defeat in the Winnfield alderman elections in 1910. Long had already replaced the suffix with a prefix in his grade school books, preferring the term "Hon Huey P Long" as a demonstration not simply, as Hair believed, of his innate sense of superiority,²⁴ but also as a way of disassociating himself from the large Long family. His later appropriation of the sobriquet "Kingfish" and his self-identification as *sui generis*, as well as being a way of characterising himself as separate and unique, both demonstrate a need to detach himself from the restrictions of familial responsibilities and obligations, and a need to sever the restraints that he felt these placed upon him. Long's rejection of the connection and obligation made implicit by the suffix was further demonstrated in the naming of his eldest son. Russell Long was, at his birth and in the absence of his father, named by his mother, 'Huey P Long III.'²⁵ On his first visit to see his son, Long objected to the name, changing it to Russell Billui Long. This action is further evidence of his unusual lack of affinity for family. Long is unusual in a patriarchal society in that he did not seek to perpetuate his, or his family's, name through the repetition of an inherited name. Such was the impact of his father's decision that it was only when Russell enlisted in the Navy during World War II that he became aware of his officially registered name. In contrast to his father, Russell chose to honour his father's decision by continuing to use the name Long had given to him rather than his official one, especially when he went to the United States Senate. For Russell, this move also offered the added

²³ Hair pp41-42

²⁴ Ibid p31

²⁵ Birth announcement "Mr. Huey P Long, Jr., and Mrs. Rose McConnell Long are the parents of a 10-pound boy, Huey P. Long III, who arrived in the home of his maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. P. M. McConnell, of Madison avenue. The paternal grandparent, H. P. Long, of Winnfield welcomes him as his first grandson." *The Shreveport Times* 17 November 1918 p18

benefit of allowing him to avoid any claims that he was seeking to profit politically from the use his father's name.²⁶

A study of Dutch politicians has confirmed that first born children are overrepresented in political office, but it is unable to fully determine whether the child's relationship interactions with its siblings, or its relationship with its parents, is the reason for this phenomenon. An additional observation from this study, is that a high number of politicians are only children, which suggests that the parental relationship may be the key factor.²⁷ The study also recognises that with an increasing tendency towards smaller families, a greater number of children are proportionally more likely to be a first born or only child.²⁸ Long was born the seventh of Huey Pierce Long Sr and Caledonia Tison Long's ten children, and was the third of their four sons.²⁹ The relationships between Long and each of his surviving siblings is best described as challenging, although with the exception of Caledonia (Callie), his relationships with his sisters appear to have been ones of mutual tolerance and ambivalence; while Long's relationships with his brothers, Julius, George (known as Shan) and Earl can be characterised as being fraught with varying degrees of personal, financial and legal conflict interspersed with periods of personal, political and financial support. Key to Long's relationships with his siblings is Julius' assessment that Long would not tolerate being in second place to anyone.³⁰ Long's letters to, from, and about Callie, demonstrate a relationship with his sister, which was based on the extremely reluctant financial support to

²⁶ Letters in *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence

²⁷ Andeweg, Rudy B and Van Den Berg, Steef B "Linking Birth Order to Political Leadership: The Impact of Parents or Sibling Interaction?" *Political Psychology* Vol 24, No 3 (Sep 2003) p618

²⁸ Ibid pp609-610

²⁹ The Long siblings were, in birth order: Charlotte, Julius, Helen (died in infancy), George (known as Shan), Olive, Clara, Huey, Earl, Caledonia and Lucille, Williams (1969) pp19-20

³⁰ Notes from Julius T Long interview by T Harry Williams (no date or location) *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 104; Frank Odom confirms this assessment of Long in reference to Franklin D Roosevelt. Following a meeting with Roosevelt at the 1932 Democratic Party convention, Long said "I found a man as smart as I am. I don't know if I can travel with him." Odom concludes that Long could not be second to anyone Notes from Frank Odom interview by T Harry Williams 21 May 1958, Baton Rouge La *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 124 p1

aid her recovery from tuberculosis in Arizona.³¹ The majority of letters from Callie are handwritten, undated and addressed to “Dearest Huey” and invariably include requests for her brother to send money, for example:

Dearest Huey –

Will you please send your May and June checks to me right away? For I need them very much - I know you sent \$75 twice - but I need the extra \$30.00 for the months Earl did not send any checks. He said you would send for him one month - Please do this right away as my board will soon be due -

As ever

Callie³²

The above letter elicited a response from Long, in which he enclosed the requested \$30, and stated, “I think I will possibly sue Earl in the next few days.”³³ In another family, one would assume this comment to be a joke, but amongst the Long siblings, given their often fractious interactions, it is more likely to have been a realistic threat. Interwoven with the handwritten notes from Callie are typewritten letters from Long to her, their brothers, Julius and Shan, and older sister Lottie. In these letters, Long expressed his frustration at the demands from members of the family on his purse, suggesting that his contributions were disproportionate to those being made by other members of the family,

“It seems that every member of my family thinks if I get 15c I should send it to some member of it; they all want to borrow; want gifts. In fact they want every darn thing I make, and they offer on top of this to write me any kind of ridiculous and insulting letter . . . It seems . . . that I am a source from which any one can draw all that I have and upon my failure to yield 100 per cent of what I have I must stand any kind of talk.”³⁴

³¹ Julius T Long confirms Long’s reluctance to support Callie’s treatment in Julius T Long “What I Know About My Brother, Senator Huey P Long” *Real America* September 1933 p34 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6, Folder: Huey P Long Related Items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment)

³² Letter from Callie Long (nd) *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 7: Family correspondence July – December 1920

³³ Letter to Callie Long dated August 27, 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 7: Family correspondence July – December 1920

³⁴ Letter to Mrs R. W. Davis (Lottie) dated March 18, 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 5: Family correspondence January - March 1920

Disputes about money are a prominent and repetitive feature of Long's exchanges of letters with his siblings, most particularly those with Julius and Shan. For example, an exchange of letters between the three brothers in April 1920 is a catalogue of accusations about who gave or loaned what, how much, to whom and whether it was repaid. Part of this bitter exchange is Shan's response, dated 17 April 1920, beginning "Dear Brother: Your very hostile letter written by your stenographer, dictated in the presence of all your friends [sic] to a brother, received."³⁵ In this letter, Shan highlights a consistent feature evident throughout Long's correspondence, an idiosyncrasy which clearly antagonised family members. The archived collection of Long's papers contains copies of both sides of his correspondence, most often the original of the letter from his correspondent and a carbon copy of Long's letter. His letters in the archive are almost exclusively typewritten carbon copies, most of which were dictated to and then typed by a secretary. Each letter ends with the initials HPL, together with the initials of the secretary.

There are a number of possible reasons why Long would have chosen this method for handling his personal correspondence: a simple explanation may have been the questionable clarity of his own handwriting, although a sample from 1923 appears to be reasonably comprehensible;³⁶ or that he may have wished to maintain a record of all his correspondence against a future need, such as a potential legal claim, especially when many of the letters to his siblings included details of financial transactions; or as a record for posterity. A more plausible reason for Long's use of a secretary when communicating with his family and the retention of both sides of his correspondence, may have been his inability to distinguish between the personal and the professional, combined with his need to be in control, and to be subservient to no one. His partial explanation for the formal tone of his

³⁵ Letter from George S Long dated April 17, 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Mss 2005, Box 1 Folder 6: Family correspondence April – June 1920

³⁶ Handwritten letter from Huey P Long dated 26 October 1923 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 1 Folder 1-2: Huey Long Series: HPL Correspondence (1 of 2) 1923 – 1935, n.d. See Appendix 3 p307

personal letters was that he often dictated a number of letters, but rarely instructed the secretary which forms of address should be used.³⁷ However, this response only explains the formal tone of his letters, not the reasons for his use of this tactic. In the light of Shan's objections, it is clear that Long's family was not privy to the reasons for using a secretary for his personal correspondence and, importantly, that they did not understand or condone it. Since he died intestate, there is no indication what his intentions were regarding the disposal of his papers after his death. The lack of a will is somewhat anomalous in view of both Long's conviction that he would be assassinated³⁸ and his profession as a lawyer, but although a search was made for a will, it proved to be unsuccessful.³⁹ The absence of a will, while perhaps appearing to contradict Long's determination to set out his political legacy in *Every Man A King* (1933) and *My First Days in the White House* (1935), and through the Share Our Wealth scheme, it is not entirely incomprehensible for a Louisiana lawyer. With the civil law of forced heirship enshrined in Louisiana law by the 1921 state constitution, Long would have been confident that in the event of his death, his legal heirs would have inherited his estate,⁴⁰ although this does leave unexplained his intentions regarding his papers.

A fourteen year age gap,⁴¹ between Long and his brother Julius, had led the latter to develop an almost fatherly interest in his younger brother, and he maintained a special interest in his development, with the intention of creating not just a great man, but one whom he, Julius,

³⁷ Letter to Julius Long dated 1 April 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 6: Family correspondence April – June 1920

³⁸ Long told Senator Harry Byrd "Those people are determined to kill me, and I'm not going to live through it." Williams (1969) p791; Hair p320

³⁹ Court petitions to search a will and affidavits demonstrating that a will had not been recovered. *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 2 Folder 2-36 Huey P Long Series: Financial Documents Estate Settlement of Huey Long 1936 NB: the value of Long's community property with his wife was \$100,045.56; the value of the minors' property (Russell B, Rose L and Palmer R Long) was \$92,042.75

⁴⁰ Dainow, Joseph "The Early Sources of Forced Heirship; Its History in Texas and Louisiana" *Louisiana Law Review* Vol IV 1941 p42

⁴¹ Letter from Julius T Long to Huey P Long Jr dated 7 September 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

could control.⁴² It is clear from the letters exchanged between the two, that while Julius clearly expected Long to adhere to his advice and to respect his seniority, Long never considered himself to be the junior one in their relationship, whether as brothers or partners in their law firm. In an unusual letter to Julius, dated 24 January 1920, Long explicitly demonstrated that he did not consider his older brother to be a source for political or personal advice. On the surface the letter appears to be one in which Long is expressing his frustration with politics, "I think that I [am] now in political retirement for the balance of my lifetime."⁴³ However, it is instead a letter in which he offered advice to Julius from a position of superiority. He suggested that Julius was a fool to continue to seek political office at the age of forty and advised that he would be better placed to focus on improving his legal skills:

"By this time I have learned what I am sure you have long since learned, that politics is the sorriest of all sorry games. There is nothing to it and a lawyer is a fool who accepts a position which places him in retirement for usually he must emerge from that position broke, defeated, without a law practice and the best years of his life spent. . . If you would devote one-half the time, energy and thought in the study of broader principles of law that either you or myself have devoted to politics, for just a period of two years, your knowledge of the law and procedure in general would be wonderful. . . It is useless for you and I to ever talk about practising law together of course, that is something we cannot do."⁴⁴

On a number of occasions throughout his career, Long expressed his disillusionment with politics, however, at no point did he actually plan to turn his back on his chosen career. These expressions were in reality his way of conveying his disappointment at not achieving a specific goal or that he had been thwarted by a political opponent. By claiming to be finished with politics, he sought instead to emphasise the machinations or corruption of his opponents.

Despite the brothers' failed attempt at a joint law practice in 1915, Long proposed a new partnership with Julius in 1920. Julius had failed to be elected as district judge earlier that

⁴² Williams (1969) p71

⁴³ Letter to Julius T Long from Huey P Long dated 24 January 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 5: Family Correspondence January - March 1920

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

year and Long was now clear in establishing that he would have the “leading say in any firm to which I might be a party,” although he did promise that when it came to politics, the brothers could go their own ways.⁴⁵ The partnership survived less than a year. While Julius’ letter to Long on 7 September 1921 is a catalogue of complaints, its primary focus is his brother’s “animosity” in the face of everything that Julius claimed to have done for him. The letter is an unrestrained outpouring of resentment at Long’s lack of appreciation for the financial and political support Julius had given to him, from the selection of his law courses to paying his grocery bills. Julius had been humiliated by his younger brother, who had “publically [sic] announced that my influence with the firm was negative” when, as Julius claimed, the law practice had been built and expanded on his work and talent, and that it was Long’s “head [which had] expanded far faster than the practice.” Julius also goes on to refute Long’s superiority in legal actions, “I have had reasonable success as an attorney in all the courts, and particularly in the supreme court, where you have never won an important case.” On the subject of politics, Long’s promise that they would maintain their independence had not been honoured, for he had actively sought to prevent Julius from supporting his candidate of choice in an election to the state supreme court. Julius claimed that in an attempt to dictate his brother’s political allegiance, Long had “almost broke my door to my private office down in order to prevent me from writing letters in the interest of the candidacy of Judge Porter,” and suggested that without his advice, his brother would have voted for the telephone rate increase and faced his “destruction.”⁴⁶

Long’s response to Julius is a vitriolic one, but he claimed he considered it a necessary one, “in order that you may not truthfully be able to say that you wrote me things which I never denied.” He refuted Julius’ claims as “a damnable lie,” “false,” and “a malicious, personally forced, derogatory and slanderous falsehood, throughout, and you know it,” and

⁴⁵ Letter to Julius Long dated 19 June 1920 *Huey P Long Papers* Box 1 Folder 6: Family correspondence April – June 1920

⁴⁶ Letter from Julius T Long to Huey P Long Jr dated 7 September 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

characterised Julius as “a broken-down, impoverished and past-handed politician” to whom he had “given an opportunity by which you have materially profited.” He, dramatically, expressed his wish that the brothers not see or communicate with each other and maliciously added,

“There is a peculiar fondness which one may create for you when you are at a satisfactory distance, of some hundred miles, or any, at least, the fourth floor away.”⁴⁷

Despite an apparently conciliatory letter two months later, in November 1921, in which Long expressed his wish to pass cases to Julius in response to support recently received, and in which he acknowledged that their “mutual faults and temperaments” prevented them from supporting each other,⁴⁸ their personal relationship did not recover despite, or perhaps because of, continued contact between the two of them. In October 1922, Long wrote in response to letters from Julius,

“this, of course, is about the thirtieth letter of its kind that I have received in the past few years. It is the only one that I have read lately, others have been consigned to the wastebasket. . . . I, however, request that you write me no further. I don’t care to receive any letter from you. You have promised to abstain from this letter writing to me several times in the past. You would oblige me if you would keep your word in this particular.”⁴⁹

In spite of poor relations with his siblings, Long did exchange letters with one member of his extended family without the relationship descending into a series of financial demands or accusations and counter-accusations, his sister-in-law, Aline McConnell. Although Hair suggests that Aline was the sole member of Long’s family who did not demand spending money from him and was the one family member who brought out his “latent sense of chivalry,”⁵⁰ Aline did ask Long for funds. Certainly, her requests were couched more

⁴⁷ Letter from Huey P Long to Julius T Long dated 8 September 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁴⁸ Letter from Huey P Long to Julius T Long dated 12 November 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁴⁹ Letter from Huey P Long to Julius T Long dated 2 October 1922 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 9: Family Correspondence 1922

⁵⁰ Hair p106

pleasantly than those of Callie, whose requests were generally worded as demands: 'please send your check right away.' Aline's requests, while less forceful, were more manipulative in tone:

"I have paid Mrs Black \$20 so far. When convenient for you, hope you can send me another installment. Will be all right not to pay until end of month, but I believe it is better, if possible, to pay a little in advance."⁵¹

Instead of mirroring his relationships with his own sisters, this relationship most resembled the one which Julius intended to have with his younger brother, that of mentor and student. In his letters, Long sought to provide guidance to Aline on subjects as varied as her reading material, recommending she continue with *Les Misérables* and that she begin Ridpath's *History of the World*, and her marital prospects. Long suggested that her convalescence was not the best time for her to look for a prospective husband, as her

"sphere is too confined, and your minglings, too limited. Victims of the divorce courts, ex-rounders, would-be greasers and old age bachelors are among the last group in which a person might be expected to find a desirable husband. After you have again entered the ordinary sphere of human activity, you will see the wisdom of my calculations."⁵²

Long's letters to Aline are extraordinarily candid. In one, which Hair calls "one of the most revealing he ever wrote"⁵³ Long gloried not just in his independence from Julius, "only the name of 'Huey P. Long' adorns the windows and doors of these offices. I am Governor, Mayor, King and Clerk," but he also revels in his ability to get his preferred candidate elected without assistance or collaborations. He acknowledged that "there is some resentment over the fact that I do not need any help or combination to allow my man to be elected in this district," but dismissed as jealousy Julius' concerns that Long was now a "more or less dangerous power," since his brother and his associates were unable to "change the honors

⁵¹ Letter from Aline McConnell October 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁵² Letter to Aline McConnell dated 13 September 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁵³ Hair p107

of the 'Almighty',⁵⁴ suggesting that his success was in some way divinely inspired. Although, the references in Hair's biography indicate that this letter was written on 21 September 1921,⁵⁵ it was in fact written on 1 September, and while it is a revealing declaration of independence by Long, reflecting his determination to act alone, it is a subsequent letter to Aline which offers an even greater insight into Long's psyche. Written two weeks later, Long's letter of 13 September 1921 is a clear expression of his intended *modus operandi* for his future legal, and especially, political offices,

"I have concluded that so long as I am able, any office which I occupy will be solely and exclusively under my jurisdiction, and there will be no associate to be considered, or opinion to be regarded in any maneuver. No successful activities in which I have ever been engaged have ever been sanctioned, or countenanced by the ones who, ordinarily, would be purported advisers. I think I would rather take my own deliberate counsel for a few more years."⁵⁶

It is through these two letters together, that Long articulated not just his plan for a solo law practice, but he also confided his inability to trust or to work with, or for, others. His later self-identification as *sui generis* was not simply a deflection tool for journalists seeking to categorise him, it was a fundamental part of his personality, as was exhibited in his behaviour, from his dysfunctional relationships with family members through to his identification as the Kingfish, the leader of the lodge,⁵⁷ the person who ruled over everyone else. Following the breakdown of their law practice, Long's relationship with his eldest brother had descended into disintegration. Harry Gamble's⁵⁸ description of the indefatigable energy exhibited by the members of the Long family, when working for their own interests, "it

⁵⁴ Letter to Aline McConnell dated 1 September 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁵⁵ Hair p347

⁵⁶ Letter to Aline McConnell dated 13 September 1921, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

⁵⁷ See Motivations chapter p175

⁵⁸ Harry Pollard Gamble Sr was the state's inheritance tax collector until replaced, after Long's inauguration, by Earl K Long. Gamble was a consistent opponent of Long.

is a day and night proposition,”⁵⁹ is a key insight in understanding the relationship of the brothers. Each one saw his own interests and activities as of the prime consideration. Although members of the family publicly gave the appearance of constituting an effective familial support network, none of them resented the commitment required, and rejected their involvement in the family, more than Long. For him, his family was the original basis for what would become his political machine, a structure which was created to support his career and his accumulation of power. It is evident that he expected the family network to act in the manner he would later demand of the Long machine. He expected his siblings to support his political career irrespective of any altercations, no matter how serious, which may have occurred in their personal interactions. From his viewpoint, his interests were paramount and should take priority in their relationships, as such, any attempt by the network to act outside of this remit represented a challenge to the development of Long’s career, his independence and power.

In contrast, Julius felt that Long owed him both respect and gratitude for the support that he had provided him during his early legal career and, especially, during the impeachment period. Their father had visited Long in Baton Rouge during the early days of the impeachment, and asked Julius to visit his brother, as he feared Long might commit suicide.⁶⁰ Julius later claimed that it was he who had suggested the Round Robin letter as the solution to the impeachment, and that Long had failed to acknowledge this crucial piece

⁵⁹ Notes from Harry Gamble interview by T Harry Williams on 12 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 72 p23

⁶⁰ Notes from Julius T Long by T Harry Williams (date and location not recorded) *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 104 p2; In his interview, Harry Gamble says that Julius describes Long as lying on his bed “tearing up his pajamas (or clothes) crying I’m a lost man” Notes from Harry Gamble interview by T Harry Williams on 12 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 72 p18

of advice.⁶¹ Despite the deterioration of the brothers' personal and political relationship, Julius provided support for his brother's campaign in the US Senate race, reinforcing the assumption that the family was perceived by Long to be part of his political machine. During this race, Julius continued to offer advice on the matter of the Irby and Terrell kidnapping accusations⁶² and on the content of his brother's speeches, suggesting that Long should focus on his achievements and "make reference to some of these major slanders in casual way."⁶³

The toxicity of the relationship with Julius was made evident in his article in *Real America*, "What I Know About My Brother, Senator Huey P. Long." The article was primarily a response to statements made by Long on the floor of the US Senate when, protected by the privilege of the chamber, he had denounced both Julius and their younger brother, Earl, for acting as witnesses during the Senate's investigation into the Overton-Broussard Senate election campaign.⁶⁴ But the article was also a means by which Julius could publicly unburden himself of all of his frustrations, grievances, and resentments against Long. Many of the accusations raised by Julius in this article were expanded discussions of the same assertions he had made in his letter to Long in September 1921.

Julius claimed that Long's career had only been successful because he had benefitted from the activities and support of Julius and Earl, which, he said, were not only unacknowledged by Long, but their support had been repaid with his opposition to their own bids for office.

⁶¹ Notes from Harry Gamble interview by T Harry Williams on 12 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 72 p18; it should be noted that a number of other Long supporters have claimed to have come up with the idea of the Round Robin letter, Paul Maloney, campaign manager for Oramel H Simpson in the 1928 gubernatorial election, claimed that Simpson had created the document Notes from Paul Maloney interview by T Harry Williams on 26 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 pp3-4

⁶² See *Steps to Power* chapter p153

⁶³ Cable from Julius T Long to Gov Huey P Long dated 7 September 1930, *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 10: Family Correspondence 1927 - 1931

⁶⁴ Julius T Long "What I Know About My Brother, Senator Huey P Long" *Real America* September 1933 p30 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6, Folder: Huey P Long Related Items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment)

Julius specifically highlighted Earl's financial and campaign support of Long during the races for Railroad Commissioner and Governor. When, subsequently, Earl announced that he would run for lieutenant governor in 1932, he did so without Long's knowledge. In a phone call to Julius, Long threatened to destroy Earl, if Julius did not persuade him to withdraw; Julius claimed that he responded with a "few appropriate remarks," before hanging up and campaigning across the state for Earl and other opponents of the Long ticket.⁶⁵ In his autobiography, Long portrays this episode as one in which his family's actions, by their unreasonable demand that he add a brother to his ticket to succeed him, had provided his "alert opponents," especially those amongst the press, with an opportunity to target him for having provided a number of family members with state jobs.⁶⁶ While Long claimed that it was only reasonable that he would reward those among his "political supporters of longest and most arduous service . . . under the fair rules of politics as practiced everywhere,"⁶⁷ it was Julius' assertion that the jobs promised to his supporters were instead allocated to political opponents to guarantee their future support.⁶⁸ As governor, Long appointed many of his supporters to state jobs as rewards, but rarely was an appointment made without conditions or restrictions. Many were obliged to sign undated letters of resignation, thereby ensuring their posts were entirely subject to Long's control. Others were required to agree to specific terms in exchange for their posts, including Earl Long, who was appointed as the attorney for the inheritance tax collector. In return for the post, Earl was required to assume

⁶⁵ Ibid p36; E P Roy reported that he had heard Long state that "Earl could never be elected to an office in La as long as he was Gov." Notes from E P Roy interview by T Harry Williams on 20 March 1961 *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 145 p6

⁶⁶ Long (1933) pp260-262

⁶⁷ Ibid p261

⁶⁸ Julius T Long "What I Know About My Brother, Senator Huey P Long" *Real America* September 1933 p34 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6, Folder: Huey P Long Related Items (Circulars, broadsides, impeachment)

financial responsibility for Callie and their father, so releasing Long from what he perceived to be an unreasonable burden.⁶⁹

Long's disregard for the concept of family was not limited to his relationships with his siblings or even to his own family. When he was interviewed by T Harry Williams, it is clear that Seymour Weiss' primary focus for their discussion was to promote the image of Long as an exceptional politician. However, in his anecdotes, he not only demonstrated that Long's abilities were inconsistently applied, but he also emphasised his own role in the Long organisation, by enumerating a number of occasions in which he claimed he had influenced or attempted to influence the actions of Long. In one instance, Weiss claimed he had persuaded Long not to use the contents of a potentially damaging letter sent by T Semmes Walmsley's mother during the New Orleans mayoral election campaign in 1934, in which Walmsley was a candidate. The story is consistent with Long's practice of utilising anyone and any means to attack his opponents, and it also emphasises his lack of, and empathy for, familial feeling. It was necessary for Weiss to explain to Long that, just as targeting the brother of Charles Manship prior to the impeachment had been a breach of accepted societal and behavioural norms, so to target the mother of an opponent was not an appropriate campaign tactic.⁷⁰ Long's belief that it was acceptable to target and threaten the family members of his opponents in the pursuit of his own political power and success, is most likely to have both been derived from his dysfunctional relationships with his own family.

⁶⁹ Julius Long confirmed that Earl bore the majority of the expense of supporting their father. Ibid pp 36-37

⁷⁰ Long had an affidavit and a copy of the letter sent by T Semmes Walmsley's mother to a printer promising him all of the printing work associated with Mayor's office in exchange for a commission. Long threatened to expose Douglas Manship's residency in an insane asylum if his brother's (Charles) newspapers did not stop publishing anti-Long commentary. These threats resulted in the only impeachment charge to be passed by the House to the Senate before the scheduled end of the Legislative Special Session on 6 April 1929. Notes from Seymour Weiss interview by T Harry Williams on 3 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 161 p18

Long's relationship with his secretary Alice Lee Grosjean, whom he later appointed, at the age of 24, as secretary of state, was the subject of rumour and innuendo.⁷¹ As with stories of other extra-marital affairs, those in closest contact with Long were divided as to the validity of these rumours. Some of those interviewed by Williams claimed that Long did not have sufficient time to engage in affairs and even that he was disinterested in sex, whilst others assured Williams that the affair did occur.⁷² Mason Spencer claimed that James Terrell, Grosjean's former husband, had sold her to Long for \$2500 and a Buick coupe.⁷³ Rose Long is reported to have taken the children and returned to Shreveport after the inauguration, and to have threatened Long with divorce because Grosjean was living in the governor's mansion.⁷⁴ Shortly after, Grosjean moved out of the mansion and into a hotel, at which Long also had rooms.⁷⁵ Irrespective of whether it was an affair with Grosjean or if it was, as Williams suggests, Long's lifestyle that drove Rose away, the outcome was that the Longs did not regularly occupy a common residency during his time as governor.⁷⁶ It was this situation which Long sought to address, and change, when he began his drive towards creating an effective national profile in 1932.

It is also clear from the interviews Williams undertook for the biography, that Long did engage in inappropriate behaviour towards women. He was, as Williams claimed, prone to "sudden, violent sexual impulses" which he would act upon "even if he was in a public

⁷¹ A newspaper report on Grosjean's appointment as Louisiana's Secretary of State in October 1930 states that "During the recent senatorial campaign which resulted in Long's nomination, [James] Terrell threatened to sue the Governor for alienation of Miss Grosjean's affections, but the suit was never filed." "Louisiana Governor Appoints Girl Aide to Cabinet as Secretary of State" *Oakland Tribune* 9 October 1930 p1

⁷² Williams (1969) pp316-319

⁷³ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p6

⁷⁴ Williams (1969) p317

⁷⁵ Hair p168

⁷⁶ Williams (1969) p318

place.”⁷⁷ Richard W Leche, a member of Long’s organisation, and later governor of Louisiana (1936-1939), spoke of Long’s affairs stating that he “had relations and affairs with all kinds of women,” as well as Alice Lee Grosjean, including a woman in New York who became pregnant and had been paid \$10,000 by Seymour Weiss. Leche also described an occasion when Long was travelling with his associates by train. He was invited to join a man in his carriage and “assaulted [the man’s] daughter.”⁷⁸ On being reproached by his companions, he said “You gotta try, don’t you.”⁷⁹ Whilst not explicit, Leche’s context for this particular story, ‘Huey and women,’ suggests that Long’s assault was of a sexual nature. It also highlights Long’s propensity for aggressive behaviour, as well as a belief, given his unabashed response at being called to task over his actions, that the rules of normal societal behaviour did not apply to him. His proclivity for acting on his instincts, however inappropriate the behaviour, applied not just to incidents such as this, and to social interactions, such as eating food from other people’s plates, drinking alcohol despite a limited tolerance,⁸⁰ but also his legal and political activities. Despite any intentions he may have had of reforming his behaviour, Long tended to revert to type. An incident at the Sands Point Bath and Country Club in Long Island, New York, in 1933, not only exposed him to national ridicule and condemnation, but it also illustrates how his behaviour triggered aggressive responses. Following an altercation at the club, during which Long sustained a cut and a black eye, newspaper coverage reported on both, Long’s claims, that he had been

⁷⁷ Williams accorded a number of his interviewees’ anonymity in exchange for their reminiscences of Long. In these cases he referred to the information source as “confidential communication.” Exceptionally in the case of the story of the assault on the train, Williams’ footnote states “The above is based on the testimony of four witnesses, who naturally insisted on remaining anonymous.” Williams (1969) p318

⁷⁸ Notes from Richard W Leche interview by T Harry Williams on 30 January 1960 in Baton Rouge, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 103

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 68 p1

accosted by three or four men and that one of them had struck him with a knife,⁸¹ and the various alternative explanations of the event proposed by other witnesses. These included that he “was subjected to a good punching for an indignity he put upon a man who was peacefully minding his own business when the senator insulted him;”⁸² and that the injury had occurred as a result of “an argument in the washroom with a gentleman,”⁸³ which had been triggered when “the senator became so hilarious and playful, jostling people on the dance floor, that some of the guests objected to his conduct.”⁸⁴ Long himself claimed, through the *American Progress*, that the assault had been instigated by “the House of Morgan” in response to his Share Our Wealth campaign, as “a warning” for those “Senators who have persisted in voting to place taxes on the big man at the top so as to relieve and help the little man at the bottom.”⁸⁵ The New York *Daily News* compiled a list of members of the “I. D. S. H. (I Didn’t Sock Huey) Society”⁸⁶ including Alford J Williams, Clarence Chamberlin, J Nelson Kelly, Steve Webber (Chief of Police of Port Washington) and Kenneth M Murchison, all of whom denied actually throwing the punch, despite having been present in the washroom at the time of the incident. Despite their denials, many of the men applauded the action of the so-called mystery man, and as Murchison put it “I’d like to shake the hand of the man who did.”⁸⁷ In actions designed to further humiliate Long, a press agent offered him \$1000 a day to appear in a Coney Island sideshow,⁸⁸ and *Colliers Weekly*, a publication owned by J P Morgan, announced that it would issue a medal to commemorate

⁸¹ “Gangsters Stabbed Him Is Way Huey Explains Wound” *The Burlington N. C. Daily Times-News* 29 August 1933 p8

⁸² “Long Beaten By ‘Mystery Man’” *The Alexandria Town Talk* 29 August 1933 p5

⁸³ “New York Club Prepares ‘Keep Out’ Sign For Huey” *Los Angeles Times* 30 August 1933 p3

⁸⁴ “Veterans Offer Apologies For Speech By Long – Disclaim the Senator’s Attack on Press” *Chicago Tribune* 30 August 1933 p3

⁸⁵ “J.P. Morgan & Company Points Way for Capone’s Release” *American Progress Bulletin No. 1* (Harvey G) Papers Series I – IV, 1909 – 1961, U:293, Box 1 Folder 1.27 Political flyers

⁸⁶ “Who Hit Huey Club Charter Members” *Daily News* 31 August 1933 p4

⁸⁷ *Ibid*

⁸⁸ “Wants Long In His Sideshow – Senator Offered \$1,000 a Night As Coney Island Freak” *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 30 August 1933 p1

the incident, a gold version of which would be presented to the man who had struck the blow, should his identity be revealed.⁸⁹

Officially the man's identity was never revealed, however, in what appears to be an eye-witness account, R H Bruce wrote to Harvey Fields confirming that Alford Williams was Long's assailant. Bruce's version of the incident begins with Long, who had been "going from table to table abusing your President," and bragging "about his power in Louisiana," before tipping

"a high ball glass into Mrs Alford Williams lap – then up stepped Williams and gave him the beating of his life - Crook Long blubbered, cried and bellowed. . . Not a soul up in this county took his part but all were glad to see an uncivil rough neck get what was coming to him."⁹⁰

Bruce is equally dismissive of Long's claim that "the House of Morgan' set thugs upon him," stating that, "Thugs can't enter that exclusive club," and in an assessment which castigated his behaviour, sought to disparage him and emphasised the gulf of the social divide which existed between Long and his opponents, both in Louisiana and in New York, claimed that,

"It is a place for gentlemen, hence Hooey was out of his sphere. Such characters as he come up for a little while and are then silenced for God don't permit them to succeed."⁹¹

Bruce ends his letter with a determined attempt to persuade Fields, who was both a supporter of Long and had been his law partner in Shreveport from 1928, to recant his allegiance, warning: "You know they are not clean so you can't do better than get away from them. Be Governor – Don't be a puppet"⁹²

It was this determined disregard for socially acceptable behaviours and conventions which had attracted many of his supporters to him and which formed the basis of the animosity

⁸⁹ "Medals to Be Sold Commemorating Black Eye Acquired by Huey Long" *The Salt Lake Tribune* 1 September 1933, p14

⁹⁰ Letter to Harvey Fields from RH Bruce dated 9 September 1933 re Sands Point *Fields (Harvey G) Papers* Series I – IV, 1909 – 1961, U:293, Box 1 Folder 1.4 pp1-2

⁹¹ *Ibid* p2

⁹² *Ibid* p3

which Long's opponents felt towards him. Evidence from his associates and political contemporaries suggests that in some instances, his disregard for societal norms of behaviours was due to a lack of understanding of what was acceptable; however, many were deliberate challenges to the *status quo*. While the infamous incident in which he greeted the commander of the German cruiser, *Emden*, and the German consul, dressed in green pyjamas, may have been an accident due to a lack of knowledge of protocol and poor timing, the subsequent publicity and public support for his actions created a caricature of Long which could be used to push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and which could be capitalised on for further media attention. He was later interviewed by reporters in Washington DC wearing lavender pyjamas⁹³ and subsequently naked.⁹⁴ During his first meeting with Roosevelt in the White House, his straw hat remained on his head, except when he used it to tap the president's leg to emphasise a point. These breaches in protocol demonstrate an escalation in Long's behaviour, and were calculated attempts by him to set others at a disadvantage. The result was to antagonise and revolt his opponents. This revulsion at Long's behaviour and the subsequent judgements that were made based on his actions are demonstrated by the strong antipathy felt by legislators.

Legislative opposition

As Railroad Commissioner (1918-1928), Long accumulated the experience, programmes and support that would ultimately gain him the governor's office. At the same time, he cultivated his taste for power and fostered his enemies. In a letter in June 1920, Long condemned Julius' support of James B Aswell, accusing him of "fealty to the Ring . . . in the

⁹³ "Long Stirs Senate After Taking Oath" *New York Times* 24 January 1932 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 4 Folder 17 Huey Long Series: Newspaper Clippings 1932 (1 of 4)

⁹⁴ "Huey Outstrips Self – Famous Louisianan, Who Met Admiral in Pajamas, Greets Reporters in Less Than That" Cleveland, Ohio 23 April 1932 clipping *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long Family: Huey Long Series Correspondence Box 4 Folder 17 Huey Long Series: Newspaper Clippings 1932 (1 of 4)

face of every personal harm he has done to me and yourself.”⁹⁵ Long reminded Julius that it was Aswell who, in the winter of 1916-1917, had prevented his appointment as Assistant US Attorney, a circumstance which Long would continue to brood upon in his 1933 autobiography *Every Man A King*, stating “Once disappointed over a political undertaking, I could never cast it from my mind.”⁹⁶ This animosity towards Aswell was later extended to his son, when Long refused to appoint James Jr to the unexpired term of his father’s US Congress seat:

The governor has decided to call no election, saying he would not do so unless it should be necessary to have your father’s successor present for the organization of the House when Congress next meets. I infer from that statement that the governor is waiting to find out whom he wishes to support and who, of course, will be loyal to him. Then, when he gets that information, some reason will be given for calling an election and his candidate will be elected.⁹⁷

John H Overton, Long’s lawyer during the impeachment, was subsequently elected to the seat with his support.

The absence of what might be termed a conventional moral code, as noted by Truman, was one of the most significant behavioural traits demonstrated by Long throughout his political career. It led him to act, deliberately, in ways which did not conform to accepted societal mores: in the United States Senate, it caused him to behave in ways which contravened the traditions of the chamber, most notably verbally abusing fellow senators from the immunity of the floor of the chamber; and in Louisiana it allowed Long to utilise any method, anything or anyone to ensure that his programme was enacted. To influence Donald Labbe, the state senator from Lafayette (1928-1932), the security of his father-in-law’s job was threatened, unless Labbe voted with Long. Long’s collection of information, about both his opponents and his supporters, enabled him to identify which weaknesses could be manipulated to

⁹⁵ Letter to Julius Long dated 2 June 1920 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 6: Family correspondence April – June 1920

⁹⁶ Long (1933) p31

⁹⁷ Letter from W J Avery to J B Aswell Jr dated 23 Mar 1931 *Aswell (James B & family) Papers*, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Box 3, Folder 21

guarantee compliance. Under the circumstances of this persistent threat, Labbe chose not to contest his seat in the 1932 election, as he believed Long would have ensured his defeat.⁹⁸

The Dynamite Squad

The Dynamite Squad was formed in 1928, as an informal caucus during Long's first regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, to plan strategy and to exchange information and ideas.⁹⁹ Cecil Morgan and the other leaders of the Dynamite Squad were members of the state's political elite, which was bound to the political machine that had previously ruled Louisiana and, Williams claimed, they had an "excessive devotion to principle," which was tied to the societal norms of their class. It was this latter trait that Williams believed drove all of their interactions with Long.¹⁰⁰ Formed initially to obstruct Long's plans to finance his road building legislation by a bond issue, which they believed included a significant amount of graft, the primary function of the group became to meet each evening during the session to determine how they would obstruct or "dynamite the next day's legislation."¹⁰¹ The group's membership was a loose affiliation of between ten and fifteen anti-Long members of the Louisiana House of Representatives, with a further ten to fifteen representatives acting as an additional ad-hoc cohort.¹⁰² Although Morgan insisted throughout his interview with Betty Carter in 1985, that the Dynamite Squad was by nature an informal group, he identified J Y Sanders Jr as the political strategy "brains" and Mason Spencer as the chair of the group, roles which suggest that the group had a functional structure and formality.¹⁰³ Other members of the group included Pike Hall and Harney Bogan of Caddo, George J Ginsberg

⁹⁸ Notes from Donald Labbe interview by T Harry Williams on May 4 nd in Lafayette, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 98 p2

⁹⁹ Cecil Morgan, "Vignette: the Dynamite Squad" Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter Under the auspices of the Historic New Orleans Collection copyright 1985 p114

¹⁰⁰ Williams (1969), pp298-299

¹⁰¹ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter pp54-55

¹⁰² Ibid p56

¹⁰³ Ibid p55

of Alexandria, George Perrault of St Landry, Norman Bauer of St Mary, and in the New Orleans contingent Paul Chasez, Lavinius Williams, A P Frymire¹⁰⁴

J Y Sanders Jr, the son of the former Louisiana governor J Y Sanders (1908-1912), had been elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1928 for East Baton Rouge, despite the active opposition of Long, who “didn’t want a Sanders in the legislature” which, Sanders stated, “was the opening of warfare between” the two men.¹⁰⁵ In comparison to Morgan, Sanders asserted his belief that the impeachment had been building for months prior to the special sessions in March 1929, and that Long’s behaviour since he had become governor had been intolerable: he “got the swell head.” He “was horrible” and had been using his office to vent “his personal spleen.” However, despite this assessment of a broader cause for the impeachment, Sanders specifically believed that Long’s driving force, “his particular spleen was his feud with the Standard Oil Co.”¹⁰⁶ Speaking with Williams in 1959, Sanders said that he was “one that believed that [Long] meant what he said. I didn’t approve of what he was doing. I thought he was a very adroit politician and a very dangerous factor from the beginning.”¹⁰⁷ Morgan Spencer confirmed Sanders’ assertion that the opposition had met and decided to impeach Long before the incident with the jammed voting machine.¹⁰⁸

A summary of the 1929 impeachment of Huey P Long

In his biography, Williams precludes the impeachment chapter with a short paragraph, which seems to summarise Long’s reaction to the impeachment. While somewhat dramatic, it may

¹⁰⁴ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p3; Cecil Morgan, “Vignette: the Dynamite Squad” *Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter* pp116-117

¹⁰⁵ Notes from J Y Sanders interview by T Harry Williams on 6 November 1959 in Baton Rouge, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 147 p10

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid* p18

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid* p7

¹⁰⁸ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p3

also be said to be a not unreasonable summary of any politicians' reaction to the threat of impeachment:

The Kingfish had been going from one triumph to another, treading the peaks. Now in the session that was about to meet he would encounter sudden and frightening defeat. He would enter a dark valley that seemed to lead to political oblivion.¹⁰⁹

Less than ten months after his inauguration on 21 May 1928, Governor Long issued a call for a special session of the Louisiana Legislature to meet for six days from 18 March 1929, with the express purpose of legislating on six subjects:

1. Severance tax, revising the act of 1928
2. Severance tax, providing for the return of taxes paid in error, without nullifying the effect of the law.
3. Occupational tax on oil refining.
4. Revision of the inheritance tax act of the state, so that 80 per cent allowed by the federal government will come to the state.

Two City Subjects

5. Amending the drunken drivers act, in conformity with the suggestions of District Attorney Eugene Stanley.
6. To empower the commission council of New Orleans to expropriate and pay for rights of way for highways.¹¹⁰

It was the proposed introduction of the occupational tax, Williams claimed, that "shattered overnight the amity that had recently prevailed in state politics."¹¹¹ While 'amity' is perhaps too strong a word to describe the state of relationships between the political factions, it is clear that the introduction of the occupational licence tax or 'oil tax' brought about a fundamental fracture beyond which neither side could agree nor be brought to a compromise.¹¹² Faced with the prospect of defeat on this item, Long adjourned the special session and immediately called a second session, to convene on 20 March for a period of no

¹⁰⁹ Williams (1969) p346

¹¹⁰ Clipping dated 16 March 1929 "New Oil Tax Is Long Proposal: It Will Be Occupational Impost: Six Subjects In Call" *Long (Huey P.) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*,

¹¹¹ Williams (1969) p347

¹¹² Clipping dated 19 March 1929, T O Harris Staff Correspondent, New Orleans States "Long Extra Session is Blown Up In Houses: All His Measures Die; May Call New 15-Day Session" *Long (Huey P.) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*

more than eighteen days (to end on 6 April) for the “consideration of and action upon . . . specifically enumerated objects,” including, notably, the oil tax bill, which was introduced on the first day of the session.¹¹³ In addition to facing strong opposition within the Legislature, resistance to Long’s programme was simultaneously growing in the local newspapers, with, in particular, the Baton Rouge *State-Times* and the *Morning Advocate* publishing editorials against the oil tax. Long’s attempt to get Charles Manship, owner of these two publications, to support the bill by first threatening to expose, and then actually revealing during a radio broadcast on KWKH in Shreveport, that Manship’s brother, Douglas, was residing in a mental institution, rebounded on Long. Manship’s editorial on the front page of the *State-Times* entitled “This, Gentlemen, Is the Way Your Governor Fights” not only revealed Long’s attempt at blackmail but also helped to create support for those “more determined than ever to defeat the destructive policies of the governor.”¹¹⁴ The attempt to blackmail Manship ultimately formed the basis of the impeachment charges in the upcoming trial.

During the special sessions of the Legislature in March 1929, the Dynamite Squad had met each night and, as Morgan claimed, it was in these meetings that the impeachment “proceeding was born.”¹¹⁵ The timeline, as presented by Morgan, indicates that the Dynamite Squad believed that “as Huey had lost his bid for the oil tax”¹¹⁶ during the second session, he was determined to save face by adjourning the Legislature. They were equally intent on preventing the adjournment, thereby forcing Long to face the legislative defeat of his measure. A concurrent revelation that Harry ‘Battling’ Bozeman, Long’s former bodyguard and until recently a member of the Louisiana Highway Commission, had sworn out an affidavit stating that Long had attempted to hire him to kill J Y Sanders Jr, further encouraged them to work to prevent the adjournment. Bozeman’s affidavit focussed on the

¹¹³ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, p3-4

¹¹⁴ “Manship Stings Long For His Low Attack” Clipping dated 21 March 1929 *Long (Huey P.) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*,

¹¹⁵ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p118

¹¹⁶ *Ibid* p123

corruption of Long's administration, specifically that which occurred under the auspices of the Highway Commission and the complicity in that graft by the head of the commission, O K Allen, including overpayments to employees, the resale of materials and payments for non-existent work.¹¹⁷ Bozeman's motivation for making his accusations can be called into question. He had been sacked from his post on the Highway Commission only days earlier,¹¹⁸ indeed Mason Spencer later claimed that he had not believed the accusations made in the affidavit, but acknowledged Bozeman was "a wonderful witness"¹¹⁹ for the opposition's case. The accusation that Long had attempted to hire him to murder Sanders was a small part of the claim, however, it represented a fundamental aspect of Long's character, his propensity to incite violence. Retrospectively, the affidavit and the subsequent testimony during the impeachment hearings provide contemporaneous evidence of Long's propensity for intemperate outbursts in the face of uncontrollable events and opponents. This aspect of his character resulted in a pervasive atmosphere of intimidation in Baton Rouge throughout the impeachment proceedings. In a turn of events which would have been farcical, had not a brawl ensued on the floor of the House, the session on Monday, 25 March began with Morgan determined to present his call for an investigation into Bozeman's accusations, while J Cleveland Fruge, a Long supporter, was equally determined to call for an adjournment *sine die*. Speaker John Fournet's decision to hear Fruge's proposal rather than Morgan's, and to call for the adjournment based on a vote of the members, was the cause of the brawl. A failure of the voting machinery to clear the record of the previous vote was later determined to be a technical error and not a deliberate falsification of the vote, as claimed by some anti-Long members. The injury to Representative Clinton Sayes, who was cut on the forehead during the ensuing scuffle, has variously been ascribed to a ceiling fan above the desk on which he had stood and, in the opinion of Morgan, the knuckledusters

¹¹⁷ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, pp29-32

¹¹⁸ "Governor Fires His Battling Bozeman" Clipping dated 23 March 1929 *Long (Huey P.) Newspaper Clipping Scrapbook 1929*,

¹¹⁹ Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p8

wielded by Lorris Wimberly.¹²⁰ It was fortunate that no one had been shot that evening since, as both Sanders and Morgan recounted, the majority of the members of the House were carrying firearms. It was Sanders' opinion, that such was the atmosphere in Baton Rouge at the time, it would have taken little for the situation to have escalated into greater violence.¹²¹ The events of Monday, 25 March prompted the Dynamite Squad to actively start drafting the impeachment resolution to be introduced the following day.

On 26 March, in House Resolution number 8, the House of Representatives resolved that Long had "been guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors in office, incompetency, corruption, favoritism, oppression in office, gross misconduct," and that he was "impeached for said offenses."¹²² The resolution detailed nineteen articles of impeachment, including accusations that he used his appointive power to influence and control the judiciary; bribed legislators; required undated resignation letters; misused state funds; contracted illegal state loans; removed school officials for political purposes and intimidated teachers; illegally used state militia to pillage private property; persuaded parish-governing bodies to follow his dictates to get the legislation they wanted; carried concealed weapons; used abusive language to citizens and officials; engaged in immoral behaviour at a night club; usurped the powers of the Legislature and its committees; forced the state penitentiary to build a refrigeration plant without tendering for bids; attempted to intimidate Charles Manship; destroyed the executive mansion; destroyed and disposed of property and furniture in the mansion, the capitol and state offices; illegally paroled a convict; intruded and interfered with the Legislature and its business; and tried to solicit the murder of Representative J Y Sanders Jr.¹²³

¹²⁰ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p81

¹²¹ Notes from J Y Sanders Jr interview by T Harry Williams on 6 Nov 1959 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 147 p 14

¹²² Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, p33

¹²³ For the original articles of impeachment see Appendix 1 p299.

With a gap of over half a century since the last gubernatorial impeachment in Louisiana and a relatively new constitution in place, both sides of the proceeding looked outside of the state for the terms of reference for the case, rather than rely on precedents from Louisiana's political history. Additionally, since both previous Louisiana cases of gubernatorial impeachment had ultimately proved unsuccessful, it would also have been unlikely that the anti-Long faction would look to those examples, if they wished to guarantee the removal of the governor from office. Long's team would be equally unlikely to rely on these examples, since both had relied on the Republican / Democrat political divide to establish the outcome, a divide which no longer existed as a functional entity in Louisiana politics. As a result, both sides focused on the recent impeachments of Oklahoma governor, Henry Simpson Johnston (Democrat).

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma cases each held an attraction for the two parties. Both sides perceived advantages to referencing, as precedent, one of the two most recent incidents of impeachment. Not only did Oklahoma represent the most recent case of gubernatorial impeachment in the country, Johnston had been found guilty of incompetency only weeks previously, but it was also the second attempt by the Oklahoma Legislature to convict their governor within a year. The earlier impeachment was of the greater interest to the Long defence team, since Johnston had been acquitted on that occasion.

The impeachment of Johnston presents an example alongside which the impeachment of Long may be contextualised and compared. As Cortez A M Ewing notes, Oklahoma had a proclivity for gubernatorial impeachment. The House of Representatives of Oklahoma had sent eleven messages of impeachment to the state Senate in the twenty three years since statehood in 1907. Ewing further demonstrates the Oklahoman preference for impeachment as a partisan political tool thus:

“Governor Williams (1914-18) has been the only one of six elected governors against whom House investigations were not ordered, and he may have been spared by the unusual House rule which declared any members guilty of perjury who swore to charges that were not substantiated in an investigation.”¹²⁴

Of the eleven attempts, three governors had faced impeachment trials, with only two being successfully convicted. The discrepancy between the number of impeachment messages and trials indicates not just the prevalence of impeachment as a partisan tool, it further emphasises the problem in identifying impeachment cases.¹²⁵ The propensity for impeachment in Oklahoma, for such a young state, speaks to a peculiarly antagonistic political culture in which competitive and vitriolic election campaigns set the precedent for the subsequent behaviour of the Legislature. While there is a clear pattern of behaviour within the politics of Oklahoma, which perpetuates throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, it is clear from the Louisiana daily press that the reporting of the Johnston impeachment in particular had reached a much wider geographical audience than state of Oklahoma. The Johnston impeachment and trial had formed part of the political and cultural atmosphere of the period and, as such, had an influence on the consciousness of the political personalities of Louisiana. Reports throughout March 1929, of both the trial and the final guilty verdict, in the Louisiana newspapers, formed a precursor to the special sessions of the Legislature called by Long for March 1929.¹²⁶

The Louisiana daily newspapers’ coverage of the impeachment of Governor Johnston, in the weeks prior to and during the March 1929 special sessions of the Louisiana Legislature, alone suggests an atmosphere in which the idea of a Louisiana governor’s impeachment could be suggested, considered, cultivated and may have appeared to be inevitable. Trist Wood’s cartoon in the *New Orleans Item* emphasised the link between the two governors

¹²⁴ Ewing, Cortez M “Impeachment of Oklahoma Governors” *The American Political Science Review* Vol 24, No 3, Aug 1930 p648

¹²⁵ See *Historians and the Impeachment of Huey P Long* chapter p57

¹²⁶ “Impeachment Trial Nears End” *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 16 March 1929 p1; “Defense Rests In Johnston’s Trial for Job” *The Shreveport Times* 19 March 1929 p1; “Oklahoma Senate Impeaches Johnston” *The Shreveport Times* 21 March 1929 p1

and suggested that Long had even more to fear from an impeachment trial than Johnston.¹²⁷ The timeline of the Johnston impeachment and the progression of the events of the Louisiana special sessions interweave. The first special session assembled on 18 March, the day before the Johnston defence team had rested its case; the second special session assembled on 20 March. On 21 March, the same day that Charles Manship published his open letter in the *State-Times*, Johnston was found guilty of a charge of general incompetency.¹²⁸ The following day, the *Shreveport Journal* called for the impeachment of Governor Long. Morgan's account of these events suggests that the Dynamite Squad did not meet to discuss impeachment until days later, after the events of what he called "the 'Night of the Hullabaloo' and which others referred to as "Bloody Monday" (25 March 1929),¹²⁹ although others, including Mason Spencer and J Y Sanders Jr, asserted that the plan to impeach Long was already underway. Certainly, the newspapers' coverage of the Johnston trial and guilty verdict suggests that impeachment was sufficiently embedded in the zeitgeist as to ensure that it formed a palpable backdrop to the run up to the special sessions, and the meeting of the Legislature itself. While Morgan's recollection emphatically states that the Long impeachment resolution was based on "the format from the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson,"¹³⁰ he also refers obliquely to "hurriedly summoned help."¹³¹ This is probably a reference to Representative Charles Moon of Oklahoma, who was retained by the anti-Long forces to offer advice on impeachment as a result of his involvement in successfully prosecuting the case against Governor Johnston.

¹²⁷ See Appendix 3 p309

¹²⁸ "Report on impeachment of Gov Henry S. Johnston, Oklahoma" *Times-Picayune* 8 March 1929; "Johnston defence rests its case" *Times-Picayune* 19 March 1929; "Johnston guilty of charge of incompetency" *Times-Picayune* 21 March 1929

¹²⁹ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter pp124-125 & 128

¹³⁰ Ibid p128

¹³¹ Ibid

As a result of this experience, Moon was invited to Louisiana to advise those interested impeaching Long only weeks later.¹³² The records of the Official Journals of both chambers of the Louisiana Legislature indicate that enquiries related to Moon's involvement, particularly as a paid adviser, were registered in the Louisiana daily press in March 1929.¹³³ An enquiry into the issue by a five-person committee, made up of three members from the House and two from the Senate, elicited a response from Moon in which he claimed that, since his employment was in a private capacity, the Legislature's enquiry was outside of its jurisdiction.¹³⁴ The committee was disbanded subsequent to this response and it appears that Representative Moon also discontinued his involvement in the Long impeachment at this time, since, having provided the "citizens' investigation committee" with advice on "what procedure should be taken, [he] had collected his fee and expenses" and returned to Oklahoma.¹³⁵

While Moon's presence demonstrates that the impeachers were looking to Oklahoma's example, John Holmes Overton's letter to Long in April 1929 also provides clear evidence that events in Oklahoma had an influence on the defence's case in the Louisiana impeachment. In his role as Long's legal counsel for the impeachment, Overton uses his letter to recommend the use of not only "the Articles of the Constitution of Louisiana pertinent to the question,"¹³⁶ but also comparative cases from outside of Louisiana and references to Louisiana's historical legal statutes as part of Long's case for the defence. Overton proposes to include the texts of these items as part of the defence's brief to ensure

¹³² Undated clipping *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder – no title – clippings from a number of years: 1928, 1929, 1932

¹³³ "Prosecutor of Johnston Is on Way to Capital" *Shreveport Journal* 29 March 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 8: legislative Series Clippings : Long Impeachment Folder: March 1929; "No Outsiders Wanted" Undated clipping *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Legislative Series Clippings: Long, Morgan Ransdal and misc. Folder – no title – clippings from a number of years: 1928, 1929, 1932

¹³⁴ Telegram to Speaker House of Representatives and Committee dated 6 April 1929, *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana* at the Fifth Extra Session of the Legislature, Under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921: Begun and Held in the City of Baton Rouge, March 20, 1929 p97

¹³⁵ "Moon Declares He Was Called by Citizen Group" *The Shreveport Times*, 3 April 1929, p15

¹³⁶ Letter from John H. Overton to Governor Huey P. Long dated April 27, 1929, Long (Huey P.) Papers, Box 37 Folder 1350

that those judging the case are “in a better position to decide promptly and intelligently”¹³⁷ on the issues. While Overton suggests appending impeachment cases from New York, Texas and Oklahoma, he is emphatic in his view that it is the Oklahoma case which most clearly demonstrated the precedent which would be most useful to the Long case:

In the brief the Texas and New York cases can be very easily differentiated, and the reasoning in the Oklahoma case, which is the only decision really applicable, is so strongly convincing that any fairminded person must regard it as convincing.¹³⁸

The first impeachment case against Johnston had been dismissed when the state supreme court ruled that the Legislature had no authority to convene and instigate impeachment proceedings. Long’s case rested on the defence that since impeachment was not specified in the governor’s call for the special session, the Legislature was unable to initiate the action. Amongst the Long papers held at the Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University is a copy of the defence brief, which includes copies of the aforementioned contemporary impeachment cases, further indicating that Overton’s advice and proposals were accepted by Long.

Cecil Morgan¹³⁹

In 1985, Cecil Morgan was asked what he believed had been Long’s greatest failing. Morgan stated that Long had lacked good judgement; that while he understood people, their weaknesses and how he could use them, he went about achieving what he wanted “bluntly, crudely, and without any diplomacy or smoothness.”¹⁴⁰ It was this trait of Long’s that Morgan

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ When Cecil Morgan died in 1999, at the age of 100, the obituaries described him as the leader of the group which impeached Long. This was primarily because he was responsible for introducing several of the impeachment charges brought against Long, but also because at his death, seventy years after the impeachment, he was the sole remaining link to the events of 1929. Morgan’s obituaries: William H Honan “Cecil Morgan, 100, Leader of Louisiana Group That Impeached Huey Long” *New York Times*, 19 June 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/19/us/cecil-morgan-100-leader-of-louisiana-group-that-impeached-huey-long.html>; “Cecil Morgan; led group that impeached Huey Long” *Los Angeles Times* 20 June 1999, <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/jun/20/local/me-48502>

¹⁴⁰ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p109

believed “strengthened his enemies,”¹⁴¹ suggesting that Long’s behaviour and activities not only antagonised, it also reinforced the determination of his opponents to act against him and his programmes.

Williams does not explore the enmity that existed between Long and Morgan or its origins. The animosity between them pre-dates Morgan’s entry into political office, and was not, as Williams implies, restricted to the events of the regular session of the Legislature in 1928 or to the special sessions of March 1929. Although Morgan was Long’s junior by five years, they were contemporaries, and in the early 1920s, both men practiced law from the same floor of the Merchants’ Building in Shreveport. It is likely, therefore, that their antipathy had its roots during this period in Shreveport rather than, as Williams suggests, as part of the battle between the “adept conservative faction” and Long’s “inexperienced leaders.”¹⁴²

In his descriptions of Long’s legal practice in Shreveport in the early 1920s, Morgan testifies to the intertwined nature and relationship of the courthouse and political culture in Shreveport. Morgan’s opinions were based on his own observations of Long’s performances in the court room, as well as on the comments of other members of the bar and the community. He had a reputation for engaging in unethical practices and demonstrated “rambunctious” behaviour in court.¹⁴³ Morgan reports that he was “frowned upon as most undignified and a show-off in court by the judges because of his conduct. He was often reprimanded.”¹⁴⁴ In view of this behaviour, when in 1921 Long asked Morgan to come to work with him, he declined, telling Long that he would make other plans; Morgan later explicitly stated that he had refused because he did not wish to be associated with someone with a reputation as “an unethical lawyer.”¹⁴⁵ At the time, Long claimed that his reason for seeking an associate was the volume of work then coming into him, but as the letters

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Williams (1969) p298

¹⁴³ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p25

¹⁴⁴ Ibid pp25-26

¹⁴⁵ Ibid p27

between him and his brother Julius have shown, it was the acrimonious dissolution of their law partnership in September 1921 that was a primary factor in both Long's increased workload and his need for a new partner.¹⁴⁶

Despite Morgan's refusal to go into partnership with him, and most likely too distracted in May 1923 by his campaign for the 1924 gubernatorial election to focus on his law practice, Long's relationship with Morgan appears to have remained sufficiently cordial to allow him to pass cases to him.¹⁴⁷ Long's motivation for doing so was most likely his feud with his brother Julius, rather than a concerted attempt to persuade Morgan to work with him. These exchanges benefited Long in two ways, it offered him an opportunity to appear magnanimous, but it also represented a less humiliating option than passing work to Julius, who would probably have interpreted the action as an admission by Long that he could not cope with his workload.

Morgan's own run for state representative for Caddo parish was, he claimed, at the instigation of others rather than at his own volition. According to Morgan, a change in demographics due to an influx of oil workers meant the "old staid politicians" in the northern section of the state were increasingly having to interact more with "the 'hoi-polloi' than they had with the farmers, planters, and the merchants in the city, as they had in the past."¹⁴⁸ This change in the make-up of the population, combined with the rise of Long, whose legal practice had attracted business from the new workers, led a group of young political operatives, Harney Bogan, Joe Hamiter and Morgan, to plan to join an established

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Julius T Long to Huey P Long Jr dated 7 September 1921 & letter from Huey P Long to Julius T Long dated 8 September 1921 *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 1 Folder 8: Family Correspondence 1921

¹⁴⁷ In a two sentence letter Long states he is handing over to Morgan a request to act from a Mr W. J. Cox of Houston Texas. Letter from Huey P Long to Cecil Morgan dated 30 May 1923 enclosing a three page letter from W J Cox dated 27 May 1923. Cox was seeking representation to recover either a diamond ring or its value (\$75) which had been pawned for a loan of \$25, since repaid. *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence 1922 -1927

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p24

representative, Reuben Douglas from the north of Caddo parish, with the explicit intention of going

“to that Legislature with some youth and vigor and new ideas and not let this wild man take over and run this state to suit himself, because Huey might get elected governor.”¹⁴⁹

They sought to take advantage of a “pervasive sense” in north Louisiana that it was time “for some changes to take place,”¹⁵⁰ a sense that was most probably inspired by Long’s youth as it contrasted to the existing political representation for the parish, who had all been in office for several years. Their strategy was a pre-emptive action in response to Long’s run for governor, a decisive attempt to ensure that if Long were to be elected, he would face an effective opposition in the Legislature. Morgan was elected to the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana in February 1928 and, despite his overt intention that he would be there to offer opposition to Long, he later claimed that he planned to act in best interests of his constituents by remaining strategically independent of the Long and anti-Long factions, and by voting on legislative bills on their merits. However, his first action was to vote in opposition to Long’s choice for speaker of the House, John B Fournet, supporting instead Clark Hughes, a representative from a neighbouring parish and who was personally known to Morgan.¹⁵¹

During the 1928 regular session of the Legislature, despite a personal request from the governor, Morgan refused to support one of Long’s bills, because he believed it would centralise power in Baton Rouge. As a result, his father was removed from his job as a state bank examiner. The State Bank Commissioner, J S Brock, was ordered to dismiss Morgan’s father by Long. Technically, Brock was not subject to Long’s authority, since he had been appointed by the previous governor to a post which overlapped the governor’s term of office,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid p33

¹⁵⁰ Ibid pp37-38

¹⁵¹ Undated clipping “Fournet Wins Over Hughes In House Test” *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7, Folder: 1928 assorted clippings

however, he had been put under pressure by Long, and had submitted to his edict. Throughout his legislative career, Morgan claimed, the restoration of his father's job was held over him, as an enticement, if he would cooperate with the governor. His law practice also suffered as result of his refusal, because clients took their business to other firms, ones which would agree to work with Long.¹⁵² Letters from his constituents during the summer of 1928, less than two months after Long's inauguration as governor, indicate that Morgan's refusal to bend to the will of the governor was an acceptable stance to the electorate of Caddo parish. These letters also demonstrate that there were concerns about Long's acquisition of power, even at this early stage in his term, as well as his proposed tax on oil. On 6 June 1928, two weeks after Long's inauguration, J M Foster, a lawyer from Shreveport, wrote to Morgan of his concerns that a bill providing the governor with the power to appoint judges on short term basis would "restore more power . . . to the governor." Foster also noted the irony that this attempt to accumulate power had come from

"a man who has gone about the State crying, if not from the housetops, from the fields and bushes, that power must be restored to the people and government must be restored unto them, even though the heavens fall."¹⁵³

Foster believed that someone appointed to fill a short-term appointment would be elected to a full term, with the result that the courts would be filled with Long's men. However, he also expressed his doubts as to the inevitability of this scenario, since Long had failed to get the men who had also run on his ticket elected. His support, Foster believed, would therefore, most likely be a "liability instead of an asset."¹⁵⁴ Foster remained reassured that his concerns regarding Long's quest for power would be ameliorated by his belief, one held by many among Long's opposition, that even with Long as governor, politics in Louisiana would

¹⁵² Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter pp46-48

¹⁵³ Letter from J M Foster of Foster, Hall & Smith Law Offices, Slattery Building, Shreveport, Louisiana dated June 6, 1928 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 1, Folder 10: Correspondence June 6 -7 1928

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

continue “as usual.”¹⁵⁵ In contrast, the president of the Robinson-Slagle Lumber Company, Inc of Shreveport, W A Robinson, was in no doubt that Long was supporting a number of “demagogic measures,” by which he seemed to be “H--- bent on wrecking this state.”¹⁵⁶ Robinson’s specific complaint related to the introduction of a bill, which he believed would profit the “ambulance chasers” rather than compensate workmen. As a lumber merchant, and therefore at risk of having to pay out compensation to injured employees, Robinson’s complaint was self-serving, but his accusation that the bill would be more profitable for the lawyers than the injured is a realistic assessment, especially when viewed alongside Long’s own record of representing injured workers in the oil fields. His law practice in Shreveport had, according to Morgan, dealt with a number of such compensation cases, and local rumours suggested that Long had used unethical practices to bring in the business of injured workmen.¹⁵⁷ Long’s own campaign materials had emphasised his involvement in writing the Harper amendments to the Jordan Bill,¹⁵⁸ which was intended to “[protect] the lives of Louisiana workingmen against defective machinery.”¹⁵⁹

For Cecil Morgan, opposition to Long had resulted in both of his parents losing their jobs, in him becoming the sole provider for his parents and younger sibling, in damage to his law practice, and it had impacted on his ability to carry out his duties as legislator.¹⁶⁰ Morgan also felt that subsequently any proposed legislation sponsored by him stood little chance of being approved by Long; as a result, his constituents and his colleagues either by-passed

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p40

¹⁵⁶ Letter from W A Robinson, Robinson-Slagle Lumber Company, Shreveport, Louisiana dated June 25, 1928 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 1, Folder 14: Correspondence June 24 - 30 1928

¹⁵⁷ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p25

¹⁵⁸ See *Steps to Power* chapter p132

¹⁵⁹ “Long Is Pledged Stormg [sic] Support – Constant Fight in Behalf of the Masses Is a Big Factor” *The Shreveport Times* 26 August 1918 p3

¹⁶⁰ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter pp47-48

him when it came to proposing new bills or required that he relinquish any personal credit associated with instigating or promoting legislation.¹⁶¹

Given the outcome of his opposition to Long during the 1928 regular session, it is not unsurprising that, rather than remaining strategically independent, Morgan aligned himself with those who were actively seeking to discredit Long by exposing “some of the shenanigans that were going on.”¹⁶² Utilising his contacts in the offices of the State Auditor and the State Treasurer,¹⁶³ Morgan focussed his investigations on Long’s misuse of state funds, most notably the funds appropriated for the entertainment at the National Governors’ conference in New Orleans in November 1928 (\$6000), and those funds appropriated for repairs to the State House and the governor’s mansion in late 1928 (\$11015.09), since full accounts had not been received in respect of these sums.¹⁶⁴ Ahead of the special session in March 1929, Morgan had drafted the results of his investigations into resolutions, which requested that the House investigate Long for the misappropriation of state funds. As a member of the Dynamite Squad, Morgan’s statement to Betty Carter, that he “had no idea [the investigation] would be for impeachment. This was all done prior to the impeachment”¹⁶⁵ was at best disingenuous. Throughout the Carter interview, Morgan downplayed the importance of his role in the impeachment of Long. He acknowledged that he was the floor leader in the House during the impeachment, but denied being involved in the planning for the day-to-day activities, which was “all being done by my very able colleagues.”¹⁶⁶

Cecil Morgan’s recollections of, and reactions, to the Huey Long era in Louisiana differed in intensity over the years since these events. His 1970 review, in the *Tulane Law Review*, of T

¹⁶¹ Ibid p51

¹⁶² Ibid p89

¹⁶³ Cecil Morgan “Vignette: The Dynamite Squad” Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p119

¹⁶⁴ Cecil Morgan’s investigation notebook lists cheque number 5015 issued for cash in respect of the Governors’ Conference and two cheques (numbers 8792 - \$4895.09 & 1989 - \$6120.00 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 6, Folder: Long impeachment See Appendix 3 p308

¹⁶⁵ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p89

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

Harry Williams' biography, though moderate in tone, clearly demonstrated his anger at what he saw as the whitewashing of the impact of Long and of the tensions in the state at that time. In comparison, his interviews with Betty Carter and Ken Burns, both in 1985, are restrained, measured and diplomatic.¹⁶⁷ In his review of the biography, Morgan condemned Williams' pro-Long stance, which he believed had minimised "the impression of fear [in the state] to the point of its practical obliteration."¹⁶⁸ During the impeachment, not only did members of the anti-Long faction avoid going out alone in Baton Rouge, because of a group of "thugs" that Long's bodyguard, Jim Moran, had brought into the city, but Morgan claimed, they were also at risk of tactics intended to discredit them as individuals and the faction as a whole. On one occasion, Morgan was invited to a meeting at a hotel room in the Heidelberg Hotel, but he was dissuaded from going until a friend had checked out the room. The friend reported that it was a set-up, "there are cameras and women."¹⁶⁹ Although Morgan was not married at that time, the suggestion was that someone, presumably Long or one of his supporters, was intent on compromising him and through him, the anti-Long faction.¹⁷⁰

Morgan's interview with Carter suggested a more nuanced side of Long's relationships with his political opponents, which is sometimes missed in the black and white assessments of his administration. Morgan's recollections revealed a Long who categorised his opponents: there were those whom he could bribe or force to support him; those, such as Cecil Morgan, who would never adhere to Long's will and were therefore punished; and finally, there were those, such as Mason Spencer, whose independence, opposition and, perhaps crucially,

¹⁶⁷ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter & Huey Long produced by Ken Burns and Richard Kilberg

¹⁶⁸ Cecil Morgan, "Book Review: *Huey Long* By T Harry Williams, New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc. 1969 Pp xiv, 884. \$12.50" *Tulane Law Review* 45 1971 p680

¹⁶⁹ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter p110

¹⁷⁰ Cecil Morgan continued as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives until 1932, when he was elected as state senator for Caddo Parish. He resigned his seat in the Senate in 1934 to join the District Court Bench. From 1936 he worked as a lawyer for Standard Oil, Long's most regular corporate opponent, retiring in 1963 from the office of counsellor of Standard Oil Company, New Jersey to become Dean of Tulane Law School. Frank W Summers "Judge Cecil Morgan: A Tribute" *Tulane Law Review* Vol 42 1968 p719

lack of fear appeared to draw Long's respect.¹⁷¹ With this third category, Long appears to have maintained a mutually respectful relationship throughout his career; he was seen exchanging a joke with Spencer as he left the House chamber on 8 September 1935, shortly before he was shot.¹⁷² If, however, as Morgan suggests, Long's behaviour was predicated on his ability to identify the weaknesses of his opposition, it is possible that unlike Morgan, Spencer did not demonstrate an exploitable weakness. Although he had been threatened by Long if he did not vote with him, Spencer continued to oppose him and was, as a result, only assigned to one committee (Federal Relations) together with a number of other anti-Long legislators. This however, Spencer perceived to be a tactical error on the part of Long, since placing his legislative enemies on a single committee allowed them to manipulate the legislation that was steered through the committee so that amendments could be made during second readings.¹⁷³ An ineffective tactic, which calls into question the assertion that Long was an expert political operative.

Irrespective of whether his actions were accidental or deliberate, Long was not inclined to act within acceptable norms, his behaviour was such that he consistently wrong-footed his opponents. When dealing with Long, his opponents had failed to recognise that all that they had abhorred when he was flouting societal norms before he won the governor's race had indicated that once in office he would not deal in "politics as usual." Their failure to recognise this inevitable change in the *status quo* of Louisiana politics, meant that they were not prepared, sufficiently united or organised, to effectively oppose or restrain Long.

Political opposition to Long was fraught. Not only were opponents subjected to intimidation and threats, their political careers were also limited by their resistance to Long. Labbe's

¹⁷¹ Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter pp62-65

¹⁷² Notes from Mason Spencer interview by T Harry Williams on 20 January 1960 in Tallulah, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 152 p1

¹⁷³ *Ibid* p3

involvement in the impeachment process, which included signing a declaration deploring the signatories to the Round Robin letter,¹⁷⁴ had resulted, not just in threats against members of his family, but also in a demand by Long that the voters of Lafayette recall him for allegedly receiving a car from Standard Oil in exchange for his actions.¹⁷⁵ Since he had chosen not to run for re-election as a direct result of Long's vindictive response to his opposition over the impeachment, it can be argued that Labbe was ultimately driven from political office by Long.

Contrary to Morgan's assertion, Long's behaviour in respect of political opposition suggests that, rather than a calculated assessment of his opponents, on occasions he lacked the ability to discriminate between an enemy and an opponent, with individuals who had opposed him on a political issue invariably categorised and treated as implacable enemies. Legislators like Lester Lautenschlaeger (1928-1932), who owed allegiance to neither Long or to his opponents, found themselves under pressure from both sides, to commit their support during the impeachment. During a 4am visit on the morning of the trial, Long promised he would give Lautenschlaeger anything he wanted throughout the rest of his political life in return for his support, provided Long survived the impeachment; but if Lautenschlaeger did not come over to his side, he would never receive anything from Long. Lautenschlaeger declined to commit himself to either side, stating he needed to hear the testimony first; at which point Long offered him his hand and said they were "finished politically."¹⁷⁶ Such bargaining and intimidation tactics were not, however, limited to Long and his supporters. Using tactics which they condemned in Long, Lautenschlaeger, who was at that time the backfield coach at Tulane University, was fired from his job for offering the anti-Long forces the same answer he had given Long.¹⁷⁷ This demonstration of a lack of discrimination appears to contradict the widely held perception that Long was a highly skilled and

¹⁷⁴ *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana* pp 268 - 269

¹⁷⁵ Williams (1969) p395

¹⁷⁶ Notes from Lester Lautenschlaeger interview by T Harry Williams on 9 July 1957 *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 102 p1

¹⁷⁷ The team's coach and line coach threatened to resign if Lautenschlaeger was not reinstated. He was rehired that night. *Ibid* pp1-2

experienced political operative. However, there is sufficient apparent inconsistency in Long's treatment of political opponents to suggest that while he had the ability to discern the difference between contrary opinions and active opposition, not just in the field of politics but in all general interactions, he often deliberately chose to act as though there were no shades of grey; that there was either opposition or support, with nothing in between, a tactic which confused his opposition by its inherent unpredictability.

Testimony in the impeachment hearings was heard before the committee of the whole house from Wednesday, 3 April. Simply because it required the fewest witnesses and least debate, the House voted on article 14 (the Manship charge) first;¹⁷⁸ the resulting vote (yeas: 58, nays: 40, absent: 1),¹⁷⁹ ensured that the charge was passed to the Senate on 6 April 1929. On receipt of this charge, the Senate was ordered to "resolve itself into a Court of Impeachment for the trial of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana."¹⁸⁰ Ultimately, only seven additional charges were passed to the Senate over the following weeks, with the final charge sent across on 26 April.¹⁸¹ In his interview with Williams, John Nuckolls, the clerk to the secretary of the Louisiana Senate, reported that Long carried a letter of resignation in a pocket during the impeachment.¹⁸² This is indicative that he had so little confidence in his ability to overcome the action against him that he was willing to resign rather than face the humiliation of a guilty verdict. A tactic which has since become one of the staple responses in impeachment cases, although, as previously discussed, it has yet to be seen whether a resignation would deter a Legislature determined to pursue a politician to the fullest extent of its power. Ultimately, however, the delays in passing the resolutions to the Senate, as a result of the procedural debates over the charges, favoured Long and his defence team,

¹⁷⁸ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana pp292 - 294

¹⁷⁹ Ibid p294

¹⁸⁰ Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, p101

¹⁸¹ Calendar of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana – Sitting for the Purpose of Investigating Impeachment Charges Against Huey P Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana; Duly Authorized by Sec. 2 of Art. IX of the Constitution of Louisiana, of 1921. J. Martin Hamley, Clerk of the House & Emile J. Tallieu, Ass't Clerk of the House pp9 - 54

¹⁸² Notes from John Nuckolls interview by T Harry Williams on Dec 31 1956 *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 19:121

rather than his opponents.¹⁸³ Although Long's objection that the impeachment proceedings were outside of the terms of the call for the special session had been dismissed by the speaker, John M Fournet, as being contrary to Section 14 of Article V of the state's constitution,¹⁸⁴ ultimately it was this argument which formed the basis of the action that stopped the impeachment process.

From a position of utter despair,¹⁸⁵ Long, with his supporters (notably Robert S Maestri, a New Orleans business man, who provided the funding for much of the defence's response and publicity materials)¹⁸⁶ and his legal team, established a robust defence to the charges which culminated in persuading fifteen senators to signing a Round Robin letter in which they refused to try the Governor on any charges due to the illegality of the proceedings, irrespective of the evidence presented.¹⁸⁷ The signatures were placed in a circular pattern to ensure that the order in which it had been signed could not be inferred.

In a tactic which echoed that used in Oklahoma in 1927, the defence claimed that in resolving itself into a court of impeachment and sitting beyond 6 April, the Legislature had exceeded the terms of its session, as determined in the Governor's summons of 20 March 1929. The only charge which met this deadline was the Manship charge, which was tried by the Senate and defeated by 21 votes to 18; the defence having claimed that the incident was a personal rather than political offence, and therefore outside the remit of an

¹⁸³ Williams (1969) p380

¹⁸⁴ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana p55

¹⁸⁵ Notes from Earl Long & Julius Long interviews by T Harry Williams No date or location is given for the interview with Julius Long on 6 Nov 1959 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 104

¹⁸⁶ Long (1933) pp146-147; Robert S Maestri, was Mayor of New Orleans 1936 - 1946, was reported to have contributed \$40,000 to Long's gubernatorial campaign "Maestri Gift Creates Stir – Many Want All Facts On His Giving \$40,000 to Long Campaign Fund" Clipping dated 26 April 1929 *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 8, Folder April 24-28 1929

¹⁸⁷ "Senate Acquits Gov Long – Backers of Louisiana Executive Force Adjournment Before Testimony Can be Given" *Los Angeles Times* 17 May 1929. For the transcript of the Round Robin letter see Appendix 2 p301

impeachment.¹⁸⁸ The Louisiana constitution required a two thirds majority vote on impeachment charges, i.e. 26 votes from 39 senators. While the remaining twenty four senators condemned the action of the Robineers, because they believed it was “in the interest of the Governor, as well as all of the people of Louisiana, that these charges should be heard and tried to conclusion;”¹⁸⁹ in the face of the seemingly insurmountable opposition, as represented by the Round Robin letter, the Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, was adjourned on 16 May 1929.

The political opposition to Long was so disparate, diverse and competitive however, that coordinated opposition to Long was ineffective and ultimately impossible. While each legislator had their own reasons for their opposition to Long, their differences and factional allegiances did not necessarily allow for a cohesive opposing force. When the Round Robin letter gave Long a way out of the impeachment, the opposition collapsed and failed to follow political procedure to defeat Long’s strategy. The impeachment can be seen as a transformational event for Long, after which he may be seen as acting more ruthlessly than previously, but it was also a turning point for his opponents. It was the point at which, with a better strategy and a cohesive approach, they might have won. After 1929, the anti-Long cause became more desperate, less effective and more vitriolic. That there was never, thereafter, a coming together of anti-Longs at which the wish for his death was not articulated, is strongly indicative of the powerlessness of their cause.¹⁹⁰ Errol Laborde’s assessment that the number of Long opponents “diminished once the governor squelched [the] impeachment attempt”¹⁹¹ is flawed since it suggests that it was the numbers of opponents rather than their effectiveness which declined after 1929. In 1929, Long’s opponents failed to capitalise on their best chance to defeat him. Afterwards their attempts

¹⁸⁸ Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, p264

¹⁸⁹ Ibid p269

¹⁹⁰ Interviews Ken Burns’ *Huey Long*

¹⁹¹ Laborde, Errol “Louisiana Politics” *PS* Vol 18, No 3, (Summer 1985) p594

were persistent but less effective, allowing Long to depict their opposition as validation rather than vilification.

Although many of the impeachment charges were linked to Long's exercise of power over the state, the special sessions of March 1929 and the fact that the impeachment was possible actually demonstrated that Long's organisation and his hold on power in the state were still weak in places, and that, at that time, he still underestimated the will of his opposition and their determination to act against him. However, the Round Robin tactic demonstrated the ability of Long, and specifically his defence team, to improvise, and to manipulate both individuals and the political process to the end that the impeachment trial collapsed. In *Every Man A King* Long articulates, in a way that echoed his determination to be perceived as separate and not bound in any way to others, not just his thanks to Robineers, but also his resentment that he must be grateful to them: "You fifteen bullies are always reminding me of what you did for me."¹⁹²

Long's interpretation of the impeachment

When relating his disappointment at not being appointed as Assistant US Attorney early in his career, Long claimed in his autobiography, "probably that was my evil day. Once disappointed in a political undertaking, I could never cast it from my mind."¹⁹³ This statement is perhaps the most honest and revealing point of his autobiography. It provides evidence of the extent to which Long could, and would, maintain and cultivate a sense of grievance, and how he would use grudges as motivation and justification for future actions. Since the impeachment of 1929 is a running theme throughout *Every Man a King*, this statement about an earlier "disappointment" in politics should be seen not just as his credo in respect of the impeachment, its impact upon him and his justification for his subsequent actions, but also as a clear indicator of his guiding tenets.

¹⁹² Long (1933) p172

¹⁹³ Ibid p31

Every Man a King was Long's 1933 self-aggrandizing autobiography and, specifically, a political campaign tool to raise his national profile in preparation for his run for the presidency. Burton L Hotaling's assessment of the distribution of the 100,000 copies that had been printed, supports the argument that the autobiography was a political campaign tool. In excess of 20,000 copies were sold for the price of \$1 a copy (a price set by Long to ensure that his natural constituents could afford to buy it) and "nearly 70,000 copies were given away on Long's request" primarily to the Share Our Wealth societies.¹⁹⁴

Long's language throughout *Every Man a King* is consistent with the use of autobiography as a political promotion tool. Specifically, Long's references to impeachment, which seek to suggest that he was the blameless victim rather than the provocative offender, established a viewpoint calculated to resonate with a target audience inclined to sympathise with an individual subjected to the threats of big business, the oil companies and the newspapers. His references to both of the cases in which he was faced with impeachment are such that the reader is left with an impression of a talented but beleaguered individual under attack from an undemocratic and vastly superior force, but also one whose enemies are ultimately brought to see the justice in his cause. This interpretation is notably evident in his recitation of the events in 1921 when, as a member of the newly renamed Public Service Commission, he faced another call for impeachment.

Long wrote of his tactics in response to that earlier threatened impeachment which, he claimed, had "kept the caucus in confusion."¹⁹⁵ He had claimed in a mimeographed circular to both houses of the Legislature that Standard Oil was in control of Governor Parker's administration and in the press that his fellow commissioners had been bribed by the Cumberland Telephone Company. Despite expressions of outrage at the accusations, the Legislature struggled to determine how they could legally act against Long, finally

¹⁹⁴ Hotaling, Burton L "Huey Pierce Long As Journalist and Propagandist" *Journalism Quarterly* Vol 20, No 1, (March 1943) p27

¹⁹⁵ Long (1933) p59

determining to examine the Commission's actions in the phone rate case, with the intention of finding sufficient cause to bring impeachment charges against Long. Having previously created doubt about the honesty of the other two commissioners, by implying that both were in the pay of the telephone company, Long proposed that all members of the commission should resign their offices and submit for re-election, thereby allowing the public to determine whether or not they were all fit to continue in office. As such, no effective action could be taken against Long; he had implicated both Shelby Taylor and John T Michel, and if the Legislature wanted to act against him, it would first have to determine that both of the other commissioners were innocent of his charges.¹⁹⁶ Long's interpretation of the subsequent events not only suggests that his enemies had recognised that the will of the people would overcome any alleged wrong-doing, but emphatically states that even his opponents were cognisant of the inequity of the attempt to charge him:

I immediately had it stated from the floor that I was there and then personally ready to tender my resignation and make my appearance before the people for reelection. One member shouted:

"Sure he will, but he is the only one that can be re-elected!"

The opposition forces began to react.

We got a break. The floor leader of the House for the Parker administration arose.

"I am no Huey Long man, but apparently you are not willing for anything to be done here that is fair. I am taking my hat and walking out of this damned session."

Near pandemonium reigned. Any kind of a yell would result in a general confusion. Someone gave the yell.

That ended the impeachment effort in my career for eight years.¹⁹⁷

In fact, as William Ivy Hair reports, the Legislature did investigate the claims and recommend that all three commissioners be impeached, but this recommendation was not acted upon.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Williams (1969) pp146-147

¹⁹⁷ Long (1933) p60

As Williams highlights, and in contradiction to Long's version, it was Long's manipulation of events which prevented his impeachment on this occasion, rather than any recognition or perception of misconduct by his opponents or of actual innocence on Long's part.¹⁹⁹ The benefit to be derived from a trial which may convict Long, and so remove him from office, could not be outweighed by the risks associated with an investigation into his accusations against his fellow commissioners.

In his references to his impeachment experiences and by his use of language in describing these incidents in *Every Man a King*, Long sought to portray each incident in ways which emphasised his position as a victim targeted unfairly and unreasonably by his political opponents. By the same methods, he also sought to minimise the perception that the impeachment had had an effect on him, either personally or politically. However, his initial references to the 1929 impeachment contradict this objective. In his introduction to the 1964 paperback edition of Long's autobiography, Williams explained that "to conserve space Long cut out a proposed index,"²⁰⁰ instead of which each section of Long's tale was given a page header as an identifying mark. Under the section, "The Clogged Machine" Long refers to the call for adjournment, made on 25 March 1929, in chaotic terms, dehumanising his opponents with references to

"highly intelligent animals temporarily bereft of reason and milling wildly about. Blood and fire shone from every pair of eyes and the most trivial untoward incident might have caused them to run amuck."²⁰¹

In his interview with Betty Carter, Cecil Morgan used much less emotive language, referring to the same scenes as the "Hullabaloo." Given this dramatic tone, it is surprising that it was Morgan, rather than Long, who explicitly referred to the single incident of bloodshed which provided the sensational headlines of "Bloody Monday." Long omits this aspect of the tale

¹⁹⁸ Hair p116

¹⁹⁹ Williams (1969) pp148-149

²⁰⁰ Long (1933) pxxvi

²⁰¹ Ibid p134

completely, although as it was a member of the opposition who suffered the cut to the head, it is probable that he would have struggled to maintain his moral high ground as the 'victim' to justify the incident.²⁰²

In the pages prior to his section on the 1929 impeachment, the headers include the description "Hell Breaks Loose," while the text itself takes on an ominous tone with Long referring to "the hand of Fate"²⁰³ and the gathering forces of impeachment.²⁰⁴ In his use of language in this section of the autobiography, Long appears to be seeking to build up the inevitability of the opposition to himself, comparing it to the force of a flooding Mississippi, an apposite comparison since the river had flooded with devastating effect in 1927.²⁰⁵ As Long reports on his recognition of the size and make-up of the force which was combining to act against him, notably those individuals he had previously supported, the text takes on the quality of a lull in the action, with Long speaking of the "peace of quiet and solitude for which I had so often longed,"²⁰⁶ a description in stark contrast to that given by his brother, Julius, who would later report that, at this point, the family had feared that Long was at risk of taking his own life.²⁰⁷ This change in tone is momentary. As the charges begin to emerge, first at a mass meeting, then in the press, Long energetically apports the blame for the crisis to the Standard Oil Company. In an itemised rebuttal of the 1929 impeachment charges, Long not only denies the charges, but ridicules them and the impeachment process itself: "the law of

²⁰² As it became apparent to Long that his programme was again going to fail, he primed his political leaders to propose adjournment of the session. The anti-Long contingent attempted to pre-empt the Longites proposal to adjourn but Speaker John B. Fournet ordered a vote on the proposal. The antique voting machinery did not respond immediately to the voting of the members, displaying the outcome of a previous vote by the members, which Fournet declared as a yes vote for adjournment and left the chamber. In the uproar that followed this apparently blatant attempt to falsify a vote, Clinton Sayes (an anti-Long legislator) sustained a cut to his head, either as a result of being struck by Lorris Wimberly who was wearing a diamond ring or brass knuckles, or as result of standing on a desk and being hit by the ceiling fan. Williams (1969) pp356-357

²⁰³ Long (1933) p135

²⁰⁴ Ibid p136

²⁰⁵ Ibid p138; For the flood see John M Barry *The Rising Tide – The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 1998)

²⁰⁶ Long (1933) p138

²⁰⁷ ²⁰⁷ Notes from Earl Long & Julius Long interviews by T Harry Williams No date or location is given for the interview with Julius Long on 6 Nov 1959 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 104

impeachment is such that if the legislative body impeaches a man for walking the streets and the Senate will vote guilty on the charge, it is an impeachment nonetheless.”²⁰⁸ In a discussion of the illegality of the impeachment proceedings, Long refers to the involvement of Oklahoma State Representative Charles Moon with the opposition. Based on Oklahoma’s experience of impeaching three governors, Long describes Moon as an “impeachment expert whom my enemies paid and brought from Oklahoma.”²⁰⁹

In his autobiography, Long also revealed his continuing sense of injustice and persecution at the anti-Long contingent’s on-going efforts to pursue the impeachment, despite the adjournment of the special session. In the section entitled “The Never Relenting Impeachers,” he suggested that an effort to further pursue the impeachment was backed by business opponents, the newspapers and specifically the Rockefeller Foundation. These efforts, he claimed, were spearheaded by a professor from Tulane University who had declared “that charges were still pending.”²¹⁰ The article in question was published in the *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly* in March 1930 by Newman F Baker, a year after the impeachment proceedings had begun, and in advance of that year’s regular session of the Legislature in May. Baker’s article is a detailed discussion of the impeachment events in Louisiana and a refutation of the defence’s case that the impeachment proceedings were unconstitutional. Baker’s arguments that the charges remained outstanding rest on the unusual events which he said had brought the impeachment trial to a stop without a resolution. It was, Baker asserted, “something unheard of in legal annals” for senators to acquit “regardless of the evidence” and for the court to be adjourned “leaving the

²⁰⁸ Long (1933) p145

²⁰⁹ Ibid p154

²¹⁰ Ibid pp180-181 It is consistent with Long’s style not to name this professor; indeed his references to his brothers in *Every Man a King* also omitted their names: Julius was referred to as “My eldest brother, the District Attorney;” (p50) while Earl Long is referred to only as “my youngest brother” throughout a four page section describing Huey Long’s refusal to support any but his own selected candidates for election (pp259-262).

defendant at the bar ready for trial, and an indictment still outstanding.”²¹¹ It is Baker’s contention that “in Louisiana, it seems that the *machinery of justice* has broken down and that the constitutional right to try public officers in power has not been effective in this instance.”²¹² Despite his introductory assertion that

“It is not our purpose to discuss the confusion in Louisiana politics. This article would be more interesting, perhaps, if the disorders in the House of Representatives were discussed and partisan quotations taken from the speeches of politicians and from editorials were injected here and there to give touches of ‘local color.’”²¹³

The language of the article is strongly anti-Long and was specifically targeted at reminding legislators that they still had the opportunity to try Long on the impeachment charges, an opportunity which Baker believed they were duty bound to act upon. Irrespective of his claims regarding the iniquity of Baker’s claims, Long took steps to ensure that the impeachment charges were officially quashed during the special session of the Legislature in September 1930.

Long was being deliberately disingenuous in his assertion towards the end of the autobiography, when he describes the impeachment as “my near impeachment in 1929.”²¹⁴ As previously mentioned, Long had also used *Every Man a King* to ridicule the concept of impeachment, claiming that the Legislature could impeach the governor for even the most ridiculous reason, such as “walking the streets.”²¹⁵ He also deliberately confuses process with outcome, in order to downplay the significance of the impeachment as a blot on his record. Constitutional language makes it clear that impeachment is the *process* by which an alleged corrupt or inept official may be removed from office. As such, once charges are brought, impeachment becomes an established fact. It is clear from the constitution of

²¹¹ Baker, Newman F “Some Legal Aspects of Impeachment in Louisiana” *The Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly* Vol 10, No 4 (March 1930) p387

²¹² Ibid

²¹³ Ibid p359

²¹⁴ Long (1933) p299

²¹⁵ Ibid p145

Louisiana that it was the responsibility of the Louisiana House of Representatives to bring the charges to impeach a governor. The Senate was responsible for trying the governor on the impeachment charges and to determine, in its role as a court of impeachment, whether he was guilty or innocent.²¹⁶ Therefore, once charges were brought by the House against a governor, he was formally impeached. Despite his attempt to twist these definitions for his own purposes, Governor Huey P Long was impeached by the Louisiana State Legislature on 6 April 1929. The autobiography also refers to the “impeachment assault,”²¹⁷ by utilising a term synonymous with a physical attack, Long was seeking to emphasise the perception that the impeachment was an unlawful, possibly even a criminal, attack upon him. Indeed, part of Long’s defence, and ultimately the justification for the wording on the Round Robin letter, was that since the Legislature had been called to a special session to address specific legislative programmes it was ineligible to discuss, propose and act on impeachment charges against the governor. As such, the action against him was not the constitutionally mandated culmination of a political crisis, but a random opportunistic act of political ‘violence’ against the elected representative of the people of Louisiana.

Long’s portrayal of the impeachment in his autobiography is contrary to another of his descriptions of his reactions. In an interview with Jerome Beatty in January 1933, he said the

“night the House passed the impeachment bill . . . I wanted to die. I thought the end had come. I walked around Baton Rouge calling everybody all the names I could think of, hoping somebody would shoot me. Nobody even answered back. They would just look at me and walk away.”²¹⁸

This version of events not only adds a degree of credibility to Julius Long’s story, one which could otherwise easily be dismissed as spite in view of the antagonistic relationship between the brothers, but it also confirms the reason that Long published his autobiography, as a

²¹⁶ The executive office of Louisiana was male dominated until the election of Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (2004-2008).

²¹⁷ Long (1933) p299

²¹⁸ Beatty p118, *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 4 folder 4-22 Huey Long Series: Magazine

political campaign tool, with which he could tell his story, in his way. *Every Man A King* was published in October 1933, nine months after the interview with Beatty was published.

The impeachment clearly frightened Long and he would not forgive, not just those who had impeached him, but also those who had advised him to submit to the charges. It took until mid-May 1929 to overcome the impeachment process and during that time Long's organisation was on the defensive. Retrospective evidence, primarily from Long opponents, including Julius Long, whose relationship with his brother had broken down irrevocably, indicates that he was stunned by the impeachment, that he suffered a physical depression in response to the attack, but in contemporary newspaper reports Long is said to have laughed on hearing of the impeachment, stating that he expected it and that also there were attempts by his supporters to ameliorate the action and to have him rebuked instead.²¹⁹ His actions afterwards demonstrate a determination not to be put at risk of being under someone else's power in future. Long's revenge was personal not simply political, beginning with the instigation of recall actions against those legislators who had sought to impeach him, and replacing those members of state boards who had either not supported him or were a potential future risk.²²⁰

Impulse, revenge and aggression

A dichotomy existed in Long's political character, he was simultaneously both a reasonable and relatively able politician, and a dictatorial bully. He was capable of acting both rationally and impulsively, with compassion and also with implacable vindictiveness. He would also react to hearsay or conjecture, rather than wait for explanations, facts or the confirmation of stories. An ultimately benign example of this type of hasty response, was described by E P Roy, the head of the state police. Based on an assumption that William Green, the president

²¹⁹ *Item-Tribune* 7 April 1929, *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 8: legislative Series Clippings : Long Impeachment Folder April 7 1929

²²⁰ Williams (1969) pp420-421

of the American Federation of Labor, would not want Brigadier General Louis F Guerre to be the head of the Bureau of Criminal Identification, Long was prepared to fire Guerre; he was persuaded by Roy to speak with Green first. Green stated that he did not object to Guerre if Long wished to appoint him; as a result Guerre retained his position.²²¹ In comparison, his break with Harley B Bozeman was anything but benign. A key figure throughout Long's life, Bozeman is described by Williams as Long's boyhood friend and by Hair as his "most helpful friend."²²² It was Bozeman who was credited with finding Long his first jobs as a travelling salesman, with identifying the Railroad Commission as his first opportunity for political office, and for providing him with campaign support.²²³ Elected to the state Legislature in his own right in 1928, as the representative for Winn Parish, he was also appointed as the chairman of Louisiana's Tax Commission by Long. Bozeman was a consistent presence in the Long entourage. Convinced that the impeachment would succeed, Bozeman advised Long to resign.

Having survived the impeachment, Long was unable to forgive this advice, which he interpreted as a betrayal. He forced Bozeman to resign from the Tax Commission and later, when Bozeman ran for a seat on the Public Service Commission, Long supported another candidate, Harvey G Fields.²²⁴ The extent to which their previously close relationship had broken down was dramatically demonstrated during the US Senate's Special Committee on Investigation of Presidential and Senatorial Campaign Expenditure's investigation into corruption in the 1932 US Senate race between incumbent Edwin Broussard and John H Overton. Although the investigation centred on the Overton campaign, it focussed on the campaign activities of Long and his machine. In a reversal of their roles during the impeachment proceedings, when Overton had acted as legal counsel for Long, Long now

²²¹ Notes from E P Roy interview by T Harry Williams on 20 March 1961 *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 145 p3

²²² Williams (1969) p371, Hair p188

²²³ See Steps to Power chapter p117

²²⁴ "Long Supporting Harvey G Fields, Henderson Asserts" *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 1 September 1930 p3

acted as Overton's lawyer. This role allowed Long to interview the witnesses testifying to the committee, including two of his brothers, Julius and Earl, and Bozeman. The transcript of the Bozeman cross-examination demonstrates Long's antipathy towards his former friend:

(Long to HB Bozeman) "You testified that when you were asked to resign after the impeachment proceedings you didn't know why. Didn't you come to my bedroom in the early hours of the morning when I was just out of the bathroom and while I was putting on my clothes, and if you didn't sit down in a chair and say to me 'You ought to be willing to save your friends, and if you will resign now you can save us.'"

"No. That's either a dream or a hallucination."

"Do you deny coming to my room later and telling me there was no chance, that they were going to take senators like Boone and send them to the Pacific coast?"

"I never did any such thing. "

"Do you deny having come to my room and while I was putting on my clothes having said to me 'By resigning today, you can save some of your friends,' and did I not ask you if you were one of them and you said yes, and didn't I say, 'You dirty traitorous thief;' and say when this was over you would have to resign?"

"You know there is not a scintilla of truth in that!"

"You are a lying scoundrel! You lying thief – "

General Ansell jumped to his feet and asserted that Senator Long was out of order and was in contempt of the investigating committee.

Senator Long: I apologize to the committee but not to the witness. I am only human and remembering facts. It is very hard for me to refrain from spontaneous exclamations, especially when he leans over and shouts at me. Please tell him to keep his seat in his chair. I will ask you if you didn't make a deal in case of my impeachment you would be retained as chairman of the tax commission.

Mr. Bozeman: I positively did not.

"Didn't you tell me that it had been told to you by the big interests of the state that you didn't need to worry, that in case of my impeachment you would be retained as chairman?"

“No.”²²⁵

A number of Long’s contemporaries were reluctant to be interviewed by Williams for his autobiography, including Bozeman. However, the two men did speak on two separate occasions in 1959 and 1961.²²⁶ During the second interview, Bozeman was unwilling to discuss the impeachment, but he did claim that he had not known “how low humanity could sink”²²⁷ until the impeachment. Given the circumstances, this is probably a direct reference to the disintegration of his friendship with Long.

A further example of Long’s use of targeted measures against his former associates resulted in one of the initial impeachment charges, his inappropriate use of the National Guard to conduct raids of illegal gambling establishments on 11 August 1928 (St Bernard parish) and 12 November 1928 (Jefferson parish) on the outskirts of New Orleans. The perceived illegality of the raids lay in Long’s innovative methods rather than the action itself. He had not approached a judge for a search warrant or used police personnel, instead he provided written instructions to General Raymond H Fleming of the National Guard instructing him

“to raid all places in said parish where gambling may be in process, and to gather all gambling material, appliances, and paraphernalia, including the money and safes and send said money to the Treasury of the State of Louisiana for deposit in the State Treasury and destroy all other such gambling equipment found.”²²⁸

While members of civic organisations, who had appealed for something to be done about the gambling, praised the action; gamblers and patrons, including most notably a number of political enemies of Long, condemned the raids as illegal and criticised the crude methods

²²⁵ Transcript of Long’s cross-examination of Harley B Bozeman *John Overton – Edward Broussard Senate primary hearings scrapbook 1933 aka “Long (Huey P.) Impeachment Scrapbook*. Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La., Location (S:123) Folder 4 16/2/33: Delay in Senate Action on increasing fund for inquiry sought by Long p3

²²⁶ *Bozeman (H B) Papers* Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Correspondence 1840 -1941, 1952 -1969 #2431 Box 1 Folders 1-13

²²⁷ Notes from Harley B Bozeman interview by T Harry Williams on 9-10 Feb 1961 in Winnfield La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 18 p4

²²⁸ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana p546

used to carry them out. What had incensed these critics most was that the military forces had been used to search patrons, including women, during the raids. The levels of bitterness experienced, by both sides, as a result of the impeachment is demonstrated in contemporary newspaper editorials regarding this episode. Among the archived papers of Cecil Morgan is an undated newspaper clipping of a critical contemporary editorial. In the piece, which emphasised the degree of opposition to Long throughout the state, and its frustration at the failure of the impeachment, the editor condemned the failure of the Legislature to impeach Long on “the charge of illegal use of the state militia” in the raids on gambling joints, suggesting that, by its failure, there were no lengths that the Legislature would not go to “give Mr Long the benefit of every doubt” including having “women stripped – women [who] were doing nothing more than eating an evening meal.”²²⁹ The editor concludes that Long’s strategy in the raid was “the act of a tyrant” and suggests that the Legislature had failed to do its duty in a “perfect” case. The vitriol expressed in the editorial at the Legislature’s failure to impeach Long on this specific charge was symptomatic of the anger of Long’s opponents at the Legislature’s decision.

In his autobiography, Long linked Colonel Robert Ewing, publisher of the *New Orleans States* and *The Shreveport Times*, with a New Orleans ‘New Regular’ leader who had interests in gambling clubs, John P Sullivan, stating that he had to have Sullivan on his campaign to get Ewing’s support, but that the promised support had not been forthcoming in the city.²³⁰ Long characterised his break with Ewing, as being due to the publisher’s support for Sullivan’s determination to merge with other aspects with the city’s machine. Long claimed to have “publicly denounced [the merger] and declared I would not accept its support or give it support,”²³¹ and so, Long stated, the break with Ewing was made public.

²²⁹ Undated newspaper clipping “Mr Long and Military Raids” *Cecil Morgan papers*, Box 7: Folder Morgan

²³⁰ Long (1933) p120

²³¹ *Ibid* p122

He also referred to a 'gloating' cartoon titled "Dropping the Pilot" in the *New Orleans Item*, which marked the break.²³²

As shown earlier, Ewing had mistakenly believed that he would be the power behind Long's throne.²³³ In the context of the association between Ewing and Sullivan, and Sullivan's gambling interests, Long's raids on the gambling houses in St Bernard and Jefferson parishes, may be seen to signal to both men the break, and to Ewing, specifically, that no one controlled Huey Long's political career. Long had revealed himself to be both a better political manipulator than Ewing himself and a more independent one than he had expected. Ewing had failed to comprehend that Long would not serve as a subordinate to anyone, that he would use any tactic to eliminate a political opponent, even if that person was a *de facto* supporter, and that he would impose his will and power at a time and place that suited him, without warning or consultation. Ultimately, the charge that Long illegally used the state militia was not included in final eight articles of impeachment.

In 1932, Anne Ector Pleasant, wife of former governor, Ruffin G Pleasant sued Long for damages, alleging that he had referred to her as a "drunken, cursing woman and that R. L. Whitman, superintendent of the State Bureau of Criminal Identification, grabbed her by the arm and held her for a time."²³⁴ In a subsequent petition, she charged that Long's use of the BCI was designed to "strike terror [in her] as a tax opponent, through the use of the hostile presence of several of his henchmen, the physical force of one of them and the threatened violence of all."²³⁵ A vocal opponent of Long since he had removed her husband from a state post in 1928, Pleasant was also involved in the campaign to oust both Long and John Overton from the US Senate in 1934. Cross-examining her testimony to the Senate, Long focussed on her previous mental health issues, a tactic she claimed would not deter her,

²³² See Appendix 3 p309

²³³ See Steps to Power chapter p142

²³⁴ "Mrs. Pleasant Sues Long for \$250,000 More" *The Alexandria Daily Town Talk* 10 June 1933 p1

²³⁵ Ibid

“If Senator Long thinks he can break down my morale by subjecting me to mortification through insinuating questions and remarks, he has reckoned without his host. Death alone can stop me in the determined course that I shall continue to pursue against him and his methods.”²³⁶

The investigation into Long and Overton dismissed the charges. At the time of her death in September 1934, the damages suit against Long was still pending.²³⁷

From the anecdotes of Seymour Weiss, it is clear that some members of Long’s organisation did attempt to restrain some of Long’s aggressive and reactive instincts. Weiss, in particular, acted not just as one of Long’s managers, but he also tried to manage Long himself. He portrays himself as having acted as a buffer to some of Long’s more extreme and excessive impulses, making attempts to manage the results of Long’s rages. When the discussions of a confidential conference on the banking crisis were leaked, and immediately published by the *Times-Picayune*, Long demanded, in a drunken fury, that Fleming, commander of the National Guard, destroy the newspaper’s presses. Aware of both the imprudence of the order and the potentially serious results if the order was carried out, not just in terms of law and order, but also in terms of a state-wide financial crisis, Weiss did not use the telephone in Long’s suite to summon Fleming, but left the room to make the call. Fleming took an hour to reach Long’s hotel from the barracks, which had allowed time for Long to sober up, but he still demanded that his instructions were to be carried out. Fleming did not act, claiming later that he would only have declared martial law at the newspaper office and that by reviewing the content of the paper, he would have ensured that the resulting publication was not damaging.²³⁸

²³⁶ “Long Scorned in Senate, Mrs. Pleasant Declares” *The Shreveport Times* 12 June 1934 p2

²³⁷ Anne Pleasant died as a result of poisoning. The coroner ruled that she had accidentally taken antiseptic instead of medicine at home and had died later in hospital. “Mrs. Pleasant, Enemy Of Long, Dies Of Poison” *Crowley Daily Signal* 14 September 1934 p1

²³⁸ Notes from Chick Frampton interview by T Harry Williams on 24 June 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 68 pp 1-2

Tales from Long's childhood offer an insight into a youth who was willing to engage in verbal disputes but who would leave his younger brother, Earl, to engage in physical altercations on his behalf. In later life, the stories of Long's reluctance to personally physically engage with opponents was reinforced by the tale of a fight in adulthood; with his opponent, J Y Sanders Snr, the former governor, some twenty five years his senior, it can be inferred that Long had seen him as an easy target. Long had made defamatory accusations about Sanders during the 1928 gubernatorial campaign. When Sanders came across Long in the lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel, he was determined to confront him.²³⁹ Long ran away and they ended up in "a clinch" in the elevator. Sanders later told his son, that he was out of breath from the chase and had to hold on to something, and Long was the only available support. During this incident, Long "got hold of his sleeve and tore off a cufflink,"²⁴⁰ which he would later brandish as a trophy. Both men emerged from the scuffle dishevelled, but given the age of his opponent, Long could hardly have been described as the victor. Personally, Long generally avoided physical violence, but he inspired it in others, both on his behalf and in active opposition to him. A physical attack on him in September 1926 was, the assailant claimed, in response to comments made by Long during the US Senate campaign:

"Mr. Proffit stepped forth swinging a heavy walking stick and hitting Mr. Long a heavy blow on the head. Mr. Long retreated and Mr. Proffit following him, struck him again. The blow was so severe that the stick was broken. . . . Later a warrant was issued for the arrest of Mr. Proffit on a charge of lying in wait with a dangerous weapon with intent to kill. Mr. Proffit declared his action was due to remarks made by Mr. Long in speeches during the senatorial campaign."²⁴¹

A number of contemporary observers of Long have noted the sense of urgency which appeared to pervade his activities. Some have described him as worried that he would not

²³⁹ "Huey Long and J. Y. Sanders in Fist Fight – They Clash in New Orleans Hotel Lobby. Separated With Little Damage Done." *Alexandria Weekly Town Talk* 19 November 1927 p9

²⁴⁰ Notes from J Y Sanders Jr interview by T Harry Williams on 6 November 1959 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 147 pp24 - 25

²⁴¹ "Proffit Hits Long; To Face Grave Charge – Attack at Columbia Stirs Citizens; Broussard and Commissioner Speak" *The Shreveport Times* 10 September 1926 p1 &p16

have sufficient time to achieve all of his goals, whilst others talk of his frustration, at different stages of his life, that he was not yet old enough for certain political offices, most notably that of Governor of Louisiana. Common to the anecdotes of Long, are the tales of his fear of physical violence and his conviction that he would be assassinated. While Harry Gamble²⁴² believed that Long did not really fear assassination and that he used bodyguards to protect himself from being beaten up,²⁴³ his habit of walking ahead of the bodyguards nullified any chance they may have had to effectively protect him. However, there is evidence from a number of sources, which speaks to Long's preoccupation with his own mortality, including stories such as that told by John J O'Connor:

“He was highly suspicious of strangers. When he sat in a group in my apartment, and a new person, male or female, came in, he immediately became suspicious that that person was spying on him in some way. One Sunday afternoon, while we were driving out in my open car to play golf at the Columbia Country Club, two young ladies passed us in a car and seemed very interested in looking at him, whereupon the Senator was convinced that they were people who had been sent up from Louisiana to follow him and “get something” on him. He may have had some premonition of what finally happened to him.”²⁴⁴

While observations like O'Connor's suggest that Long was paranoid, in particular regarding his personal safety, his actions tend to preclude this as a definitive assessment. Long was clearly aware that his activities and his behaviour antagonised some of his opponents to such a degree that they may wish to seek to physically harm him. However, his response indicates that either he was not entirely convinced that such an attempt would occur to him or he believed he was impregnable to the consequences of such attacks. His use of bodyguards, therefore, served as a defensive strategy. The phalanx of men which surrounded him, whether it consisted of bodyguards, state police, the Bureau of Criminal Identification or the National Guard, provided not just the illusion of protection, it also

²⁴² Gamble was Francis Williams' campaign manager during his mayoral races in New Orleans

²⁴³ Notes from Harry Gamble interview by T Harry Williams on 12 July 1957 in New Orleans La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 72 p24

²⁴⁴ Letter from John J O'Connor to T Harry Williams dated 18 October 1956 *Long (Russell B) Collection* Long family Huey Long series box 3 folder 21 p3

projected an image of intimidation and aggression.²⁴⁵ Additionally, they also served as a barrier between the governor and the people he purported to serve. Long had begun to surround himself with a troop of guards during the 1928 gubernatorial campaign.²⁴⁶ This action alone is demonstrative of Long's detachment from the mass of Louisianians who had believed, and elected him for, his promises to improve their existence.

While Long frequently demonstrated a lack of a sense of proportionate response, his actions could, and were on many occasions, driven by conventional political tactics including debates, negotiations, persuasion and graft. A degree of corruption was deemed to be an acceptable norm in Louisiana politics before, during and after the period in which Long ran the state. Long himself, predicted that his subordinates were too greedy to continue to run the state without his guiding hand and skilful balancing of corruption and graft with programme delivery; he accurately suggested their greed would send them to the penitentiary.²⁴⁷ Of Long's closest associates, few eluded criminal charges and prison terms after his death.

Conclusion

Long's behaviour ensured that responses to him were polarised in nature; one either liked him or abhorred him. His character ensured that his relationships, at a personal and political level, were restrained by his need for others to be subservient to him and his determination that he would never be subordinate to another. Throughout his career, Long's style of politics and his personal interactions tended to antagonise and repel those whose allegiance he was unable to attract and to secure. He chose to see these relationships in absolute terms, individuals were either for him or against him.

²⁴⁵ See Appendix 3 p310

²⁴⁶ Williams (1969) p321; William Ivy Hair p165

²⁴⁷ Notes from Fred Blanche by T Harry Williams on 19 May 1961 in Baton Rouge La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 14 p5

Irrespective of the constitutional restrictions on impeachment, some degree of opposition to the activities, actions and behaviours of the officer under review is necessary for there to be the will in the House of Representatives to initiate an impeachment process. Although not exclusively a partisan tool, impeachments do tend to be initiated by members of the opposition party. While political opposition is a necessary factor for impeachment, Long's opposition may be described in the stronger terms of enmity and enemies.

Long did not anticipate the impeachment action in 1929, possibly because he either did not believe that his methods and programmes were wrong, or he believed that his position was unassailable. The degree to which the reality of the impeachment shocked him is evidence that he did not comprehend the depth of the prevailing atmosphere in Baton Rouge at that time, in particular the mood amongst his opponents and those politicians who had not aligned themselves with either faction. He was also not confident in his ability to survive the action and had turned first to self-destructive actions, including, as previously noted, attempting to instigate fights in the street, before writing a resignation letter. For Long, the impeachment action and its potential to succeed should have provided not only the need for a robust defence, but also an opportunity for reflection, with a degree of self-recognition, an acknowledgement that others might see him and his actions as egregious. His initial reaction to the impeachment process suggests that he lacked the confidence that he would be able to defeat the action, and that he was being forced to acknowledge that the view of him held by others may be correct. However, this potential opportunity for self-reflection was only a fleeting one; the rallying resources of those around him provided instead the solution to the crisis and the opportunity to not only defeat the action, but also to chronically damage the fragile nature of the cohesion of the opposition forces.

Throughout his career, Long's inward looking focus on his politics and career at the expense of all other relationships, whether with members of his family, his friends, associates or political adversaries, ensured that when he treated reasonable opposition as enmity, the

resulting conflict would escalate exponentially. This chapter has explored, through a series of case studies, the development of Long's personal enemies, and concludes that the origins of impeachment in 1929 lie primarily in Long's propensity to convert political opponents into personal and political enemies.

In Williams' opinion the impeachment produced a more focussed political operative; it had

hardened him only in the sense that it gave him a greater awareness of the dangers he faced. He would try to see to it that his enemies could never again place him in danger.²⁴⁸

The outcome of Williams' minimisation of the impeachment's impacts can be seen in its subsequent treatment in the historiography of Long. In contrast, in *Every Man a King*, Long emphasises the impeachment and seeks to present the crisis of 1929 in the best possible light for him, his personal and political image, and to his constituency, and as such it is a running theme throughout the book. The impeachment builds on and supports Long's battles with his political, business and media enemies. It also appears to have developed into a validation of his programmes and activities, with Long, in essence claiming that since his opponents had tried so hard to prevent him from fulfilling his agenda, he must have been doing something right.

The overarching trajectory of the Long career plan did not radically change as a result of the impeachment; his proposed run for the presidency was on schedule for 1936. Although, it is Williams' conclusion that

"had there been no impeachment [Long] would have followed much the same course that he did. He had chosen his way long before 1929, the way of the artist in the use of power – the way of the great politician."²⁴⁹

The ordeal was more significant than Williams allows. It was a response to a cumulative impact of Long's behaviour, actions, and policies, and became a consistent factor and threat

²⁴⁸ Williams (1969) p410

²⁴⁹ Ibid

throughout his career. For Long, the attempt to remove him from office was neither a moment of weakness nor a temporary, if worrying predicament from which he struggled to extricate himself. Rather, it was a crucial moment of validation for the political worldview he went on to construct for himself. Williams' claim that Long would have continued along much the same lines is, of course, speculative, but it overlooks several factors. Even if, as previously discussed, Long was not the expert political operative he has been previously credited as being, he would have realised that impeachment, successful or not, would have an impact on his image and status, both in Louisiana and nationally. It was this aspect of political baggage that, in part, he was rhetorically seeking to manage through his references to the impeachment in *Every Man A King*, hence the reinterpretation of events positioning himself as the victim of a concerted effort to remove him by the corrupt elites and vested interests in Louisiana. However, in his persistent references to attempts to remove him from office throughout his career, Long clearly indicated that the 1929 impeachment had a profound and lasting impact on him. Without the impeachment, it is possible that Long's term as governor may have become less confrontational and antagonistic, perhaps even resulting in a more acquiescent accommodation of interests in the state. However implausible this option may be, the jolt of impeachment, and Long's response to it, ensured that such alternative avenues were closed. The political atmosphere in Louisiana in March 1929, influenced as it was by Johnston's impeachment in Oklahoma and by the menacing atmosphere cultivated by Long's determination to impose his programmes, ensured that the impeachment in Baton Rouge in 1929 was both predictable and ultimately a transformational moment in the career of Huey P Long.

Conclusions

A wide variety of academic, journalistic and other works have been written on the career and life of Huey P Long, however the focus of these works has tended to be biographical in nature or focussed on the later stages of his career in Louisiana and at the national level. Ten months after his inauguration as governor of Louisiana in May 1928, Long was impeached. Previously this impeachment has been examined only within the context of a biographical assessment of Long, treatments which have been restricted to a recitation of the event and an attempt to ascertain whether Long was significantly affected by the effort to remove him from office. The outcomes of these enquiries have not conclusively identified impacts beyond that of an apparent possible change in the nature of his character; with there being as many observers suggesting that Long did not change in the wake of the impeachment, as there were those who were convinced that he became harder and more ruthless as a result. To suggest, as T Harry Williams did, that Long continued in the same vein after the impeachment as he would have had it not occurred is an untestable hypothesis, since the impeachment did occur. As a result, it is not possible to look at the impeachment as a discrete and isolated event within the career of Long. This thesis has examined the impeachment within a broader context of Long, his career and his personality, as well as the political environment of Louisiana and the southern states of the United States.

By omitting to examine the impeachment as a separate issue, biographers and historians have not considered whether the impeachment was caused by a broader spectrum of events and factors than simply the political contests and environment in Baton Rouge in March 1929. In addition, these writers have failed to determine the degree to which the impeachment had a wider impact on Long, his behaviours and activities than simply an unsubstantiated change in his character. This study has taken a broader view of Long, his character and his techniques, his personal and political belief systems, his position within the state of Louisiana and the South, and the environment in which he came to prominence. By taking this broader approach it has been possible to trace the origins of the impeachment to a set of factors which have their genesis at earlier stages of his political career. It has also been possible to identify Long's emerging viewpoint that the attempts to remove him from office, including via impeachment, validated his programmes, and therefore, his political *modus operandi*.

When Long was impeached in March 1929, it was as a result of a convergence of factors. Long considered himself to be incomparable and an exceptional political operative. In this context, "Just say I'm *sui generis* and leave it at that"¹ was not simply a throwaway line in answer to an oft-repeated journalistic question, it was a characterisation of how Long saw himself as well as a calculated attempt to manage the way in which he was viewed by the national electorate. Since even his political and personal enemies agreed that Long was a charismatic and intelligent politician, it was perhaps not entirely unreasonable that he would seek to position himself outside of the conventional norms of political behaviour. However, it was a factor of this characterisation of uniqueness that also empowered Long to act in a manner that generated repugnance, disapproval and revolt amongst a significant proportion of the general populace, politicians and press of Louisiana. These reactions fuelled the movement to impeach. While the action itself was primarily triggered by Long's attempts to impose an oil tax, the movement to impeach had its origins in the behaviour, activities and

¹ Kane p140

programmes which had been the foundation of Long's personal and political career. The factors which formed the basis for Long's political career and which created the circumstances for impeachment have been examined in detail in the chapters of this thesis: his governorship in comparison to other Louisiana and southern governors (chapter two); an identification of Long's motivations, at an ideological or pragmatic level or within a personal belief system, which combined with an obsession with power and his determination to accrue and retain power (chapters three and four); and his propensity for making enemies or creating enmity (chapter five).

Long's self-applied designation of *sui generis*, an apparently off-the-cuff response to reporters who had sought to define him within the context of current national politics, was an attempt designed not only to evade definition, but also to emphasise and claim for himself a characterisation as unique. However, as a member of a cohort of governors from the twelve southern states, Long's experience in office demonstrated his similarities as well as his differences to his contemporaries. From a biographical point of view, Long had a great deal in common with the majority of his contemporaries. As a lawyer with experience in political office, who was a member of the Democratic Party, there was very little to differentiate Long from the other Southern governors. In common with William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma, he was known for his advocacy of programmes which appeared to promote benefits for the poorer members of the state's population. As with other governors in the South, Long's oratory was a key element of his attraction for his constituents. Even the impeachment did not separate him from all of his contemporaries. Of the five gubernatorial impeachments which had taken place between 1900 and Long's impeachment in 1929, four were from southern states, three from Oklahoma – Henry Simpson Johnston (1927 & 1929) and John Callaway (Jack) Walton (1923), and one from Texas – James Edward Ferguson (1917).² The fundamental difference between Long and the other southern governors was the degree of power he had over his state. None of his contemporaries in office had the

² The other impeachment was of William Sulzer (New York) in 1913

degree of control over their states that Long had acquired in Louisiana. However, as was demonstrated during his campaign for a legalised “cotton holiday” amongst the cotton producing states, Long’s power in Louisiana did not equate to influence beyond the state boundaries.

In Louisiana, Long’s level of and acquisition of power was also the fundamental difference which distinguished him from his predecessors as governor. However, while he had a number of commonalities with his contemporaries amongst the southern governors, he was an entirely different person, politician and governor when compared with the other recent governors of Louisiana, with his style and his background being the most prominent differences. Long introduced a style of politics which, although it appeared to diverge from that which had come before, did in many ways echo that which had preceded it – the domination of a political hierarchy, but now the ruling class consisted of loyal Long supporters. However, it should be noted that while he perpetuated it, he did not introduce corruption and graft to Louisiana. These had been a long established part of political life in the state for decades, and many of Long’s predecessors had participated in both. Long was not a member of the ruling elite in Louisiana, and his behavioural traits highlighted this difference. Any sense of inferiority that Long may have experienced as a result of his upbringing served to imbue him with a self-identification as both unique and separate. He simply did not believe it necessary to involve himself in the existing political structures in the state, since, as *sui generis*, he saw himself as not only equal, but also superior to those who had come before. It was Long’s departure from, together with his refusal to adhere to, the expected and recognised norms of behaviour for a Louisiana governor which ultimately provided the foundation for his impeachment. Previous governors, especially in the years immediately prior to Long’s term of office, had come from among the established leadership of the political and business communities. With few exceptions, such as John M Parker, most governors had been elected at the behest of, or with the support of, the New Orleans machine. Long had set-up his own machine, in opposition to the established bodies, to gain

the governorship in 1928. Although it lacked sufficient power to prevent the impeachment in 1929, the growth and dominance of the Long machine after, and as a result of, the impeachment, ensured that it would be an influential force in state politics for decades and thus a threat to the political *status quo*.

It would be easy to dismiss as apocryphal, the stories of the teenager announcing his intention to be president of the United States and of the young man telling his wife which political offices he would take to achieve his ambition of the presidency. While these tales added to the mythology of Long, they also demonstrate both his fixation with, and his determination to follow a specific, prescribed path, to his goal. The stories add legitimacy to the arguments of some pro-Long commentators that he was on track to become president when he was assassinated, because they provide an evidentiary basis to his successful completion of his goals thus far. By the time of his death, Long had indeed held a minor state office, had been governor of Louisiana, was a United States senator, and was talking to the press about a possible run for president, even though he had not yet confirmed his timeline for this campaign.³ There was no tradition of presidential success from Louisiana on which Long could base his ambition, to date a president has not been born in Louisiana or considered it to be his home state.⁴ As such, Long's ambition to be president was an unprecedented dream, but it was one for which he had identified a pathway which, he believed, could make it a reality.

Despite his determination, Long's ambition was put at risk by the development of his obsession with power. While it may be argued that his determination to retain control of Louisiana after his move to Washington DC demonstrated an altruistic resolution to complete his programme of works in the state, there was an alternative solution to this dilemma, if

³ News footage of Huey P Long on Ken Burns' *Huey Long*

⁴ Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal (2008 – 2016) dropped out of the 2016 Republican presidential nomination race on 17 November 2015; the other Louisiana governors who considered a presidential run were Charles "Buddy" Roemer in 2012 and Edwin Edwards for the 1980 race.
<https://www.bayoubuzz.com/bb/item/1062371-louisiana-governor-edwards-a-long-shot-for-presidential-candidacy>

indeed it existed. Long could have declared his support for a competent candidate for governor, one who was politically, strategically and ideologically aligned to him, and who was committed to continue his work. However, while his personal career ambition was intact, it had become subordinate to his need to dominate politics in the state. By responding to legislative opposition to his programmes during the regular session of May 1930 by making the contest for the US Senate effectively a referendum on his administration, Long prioritised his control over the state over his career. That he was prepared to stake his administration and use the Senate race as a popularity contest to prove that he controlled the state demonstrates that Long had begun to prioritise his power acquisition. While it is possible to interpret this race as an opportunistic move to further his political career pathway, Long's delay in taking up the seat contradicts this assumption. As does his determination to guarantee that he would be replaced by a handpicked subservient figurehead, Oscar K Allen, while control of the state would remain with Long. Any implied altruism, that Long simply wanted to continue his work in Louisiana, is refuted by this determined and continued accrual of power. Long's distinctive style of personalised leadership was a factor in his inability to pursue a more normal succession pathway out of the governor's office. Having created an executive office which was bound to him alone, he was unable to identify a suitable candidate as a successor, since any politician sufficiently qualified to continue his legacy would necessarily be someone whose abilities were equal to those of Long. Such a person would, in Long's view, be suspect since he would invariably seek to remake the governorship into his own image. Unlike Long, a more traditional governor, who had worked within the state party would have found potentially a number of suitably qualified and aligned politicians ready to continue the work.

It also contradicts his adherence to his planned pathway to the presidency. His specified plan implied that he was determined to move up each step of the political ladder by accumulating support and gaining experience. It was also a plan which required him to move on from each office as soon as the next opportunity was available, even if the move was not

a logical one or an achievable one. Long's actions were paradoxical, since they both confirm his intention, and simultaneously contradict his determination, to pursue and achieve the presidency. Long's ambition to become president was not intrinsically unique, however the methods by which he sought to achieve this ambition were. As governor, he ensured that he controlled not just those powers constitutionally delegated to him, but also, by the use of appointments, bound to him by unsigned resignation letters or by coercion, he held authority over a greater portion of the state governmental apparatus than any previous governor. His attempts from his earliest days as governor to wield leverage and control over legislators, the judiciary and other aspects of state government, as well as the state's newspapers, caused such concern for many of his opponents that it formed a basis for the impeachment charges.

Despite attempts by contemporary commentators to define Long by categorising him within a spectrum of prevailing political ideologies, he never fully articulated the political, ideological or philosophical belief system upon which he had based his political career and which had informed his programmes, preferring instead to position himself as a unique political operative. The contention proposed by Miller and Norman, that the American two-party system inevitably creates coalitions of political enemies, is one which is compounded in the post-Reconstruction single party southern states.⁵ Since any nascent progress by the populist, progressive and Republican parties in the state had been ultimately stifled by the Democratic Party's adoption of their policies or by legislative disenfranchisement of their supporters, for a politician to be successful in Louisiana, membership of the state Democratic Party was essential. As mentioned in chapter four, Long did declare himself to be a Democrat. However, since Louisiana was a single party state, his party allegiance was unlikely to have been driven by ideological impulse; it was a pragmatic calculation.

⁵ Miller & Schofield p437

Although not explicitly populist or progressive in nature, Long's political programmes and speeches owed, in part, an unacknowledged foundation to both movements. Certainly, many of his programmes had their origins in works proposed and begun by one of his predecessors as governor, John M Parker, whose progressive disposition was evident in his road building project and the introduction of a severance tax on oil. As governor, Long had adopted both of these programmes as his own. Such was his promotion of his road building project that Parker's involvement was substantially overshadowed. Long's appropriation of oil taxation as a means to fund his programmes was the factor which triggered the impeachment process.

Fundamental to Long's obsession with the acquisition of personal and political power was his distorted perception of what political power was and what it could do. Throughout his political career, he sought to climb a ladder to what he viewed as the most powerful political office in the country, the presidency. However, there is a sense that at each stage of his ascent, the reality of each office did not meet his expectations. He sought, therefore, to remodel the levels of influence of each office until it fitted his perceptions. As Railroad / Public Service Commissioner, he took what was essentially a sinecure position and developed the role, as well as the commission, into an effective body, and ultimately into a publicity machine for himself. By challenging high profile corporations in the name of the poor of Louisiana, Long not only raised his own name-recognition across the state, he also developed an image of influence. It was his perception that the governor controlled the state. If viewed from this perspective, Long's frustration with Parker's deal-making over the severance tax, becomes more than a personal or class clash. He was unable to see why Parker made deals which compromised the effectiveness of his legislative agenda. Despite being called a superior political operative by commentators, Long was in many ways a poor

political practitioner. For him, the 'sport of kings,'⁶ politics, had become about the acquisition of power and the destruction of opponents, and was not necessarily about working with legislators to produce the best legislation for the state, and the people of Louisiana.

Power also offered Long the means and opportunity by which he could exact his revenge for slights and opposition, whether perceived or real. Although he disrupted the *status quo* in Louisiana politics, ultimately at all levels, it was at the executive level that his differences to his predecessors were most notable. The politics of Louisiana had previously been run by an elite made up of plantation owners and business men; two groups who saw Long as an uncouth, flamboyant interloper, but one who could be incorporated into the existing political structure and restrained and managed by a more experienced mentor. As Colonel Robert Ewing discovered, these groups had failed to anticipate or appreciate Long's antagonism towards them as a class. They also underestimated his shrewd acumen in apparently working with them, adhering to their guidance, and accepting their support and assistance, only to discard them as soon as they were no longer of immediate use to him.

Although not articulated within the eight articles of impeachment, Long's obsession with power was a contributory factor to the instigation of the impeachment process, as was clearly demonstrated by the original nineteen impeachment charges. While Long himself stated that, he had no allegiance to a political ideology, ultimately his fixation with the accumulation and retention of political power replaced any political or ideological allegiances he may have held prior to taking office, and any personal belief systems to which he had adhered before and during his time in office. Power had become the force which motivated him and the disruption of the *status quo* was the method by which it could be attained. A corollary to Long's iconoclasm is that having established himself as a separate entity to the existing factions within the Louisiana Democratic Party, he was isolated from established

⁶ Notes from Richard W Leche interview by T Harry Williams on 30 January 1960 in Baton Rouge, La. *T Harry Williams Papers*, Research Material HPL: Oral History Interviews (1952 - 1966, n.d.) Box 19 Folder 103

support networks, networks which would, in the case of other more traditional actors, have been available to support such politicians in the face of an impeachment attempt.

Throughout his career, Long apportioned the blame for the impeachment attempts and investigations to his political and personal opponents, those individuals and entities that he described as his enemies. However, since political and personal opposition does not emerge in a vacuum, and enemies and enmities do not manifest without cause, a large degree of responsibility for these hostile relationships must be apportioned to Long himself. It is evident from reactions of the people of Louisiana that Long's personality engendered a binary response, people either loved him or loathed him. However, these reactions were not limited to the Long who inhabited the political environment. Long's relationships with members of his family, especially his brothers, Julius, George (Shan) and Earl, demonstrate a disregard for family and a determination to distance himself from any expectations they may have of him, while simultaneously demanding their support for him and his activities. As mentioned above, Long sought to distinguish himself from other politicians by claiming originality. The letters exchanged with his brothers demonstrate that he was equally determined to divest himself of the ties of family, except for when they were working for or supporting him.

Long was intensely egocentric, most especially in his reactions to events that occurred around him. Impacts of events were perceived only as they pertained to him, not in a broader context. For example, when Harley Bozeman advised Long to resign during the impeachment, his recommendations were deemed to be a betrayal and resulted in his removal from his post on the Tax Commission. Bozeman had been a key supporter and long-term friend of Long's since their school days, and he had offered the advice because he could not see a solution to the crisis which would allow Long to overcome the impeachment charges and remain governor. The subsequent dramatic and extreme disintegration of their relationship, included Long actively supporting Bozeman's opponent in the 1930 race for the

Public Service Commission, and ultimately resulted in an angry confrontation during the US Senate's investigation into the Overton-Broussard Senate campaign. Such was the impact on Bozeman of the breakdown of the relationship, that he was reluctant to be interviewed by T Harry Williams on the subject. Key to Long's relationships with others was his ability to disassociate. It is important to note that it was only after a solution to the impeachment had been found and implemented, that Long had set aside years of support and friendship, and saw Bozeman's advice to resign as disloyalty. Bozeman's failure was that instead of providing a palatable solution to Long's problem, as he had successfully on many occasions in the past, he had recommended an option which would remove Long from politics, a suggestion which was in Long's eyes a treacherous action.

At that time, for the majority of politicians in Louisiana, factional politics meant that today's opponent could, and would, be tomorrow's ally. Long disregarded this aspect of state politics and perceived political opposition as definitive, rather than as gradation of ambiguity. His strategies converted opponents into enemies. Rather than accepting that within politics, others might adhere to different ideological or political ideas, which would mean that they were unable or unwilling to support his actions, ideas or programmes, Long treated opposition as confrontational and with implacable hostility. Such was his apparent inability to distinguish between normal political activities and deliberate antagonism, the slightest resistance was often met with relentless determination to force compliance or destruction. Long's combative and reactionary responses to opposition or challenges to his supremacy escalated situations, which in the hands of another politician would not have developed into anything more than an exchange of opinions, although perhaps somewhat heated. For example, in the face of criticism in the Baton Rouge *State-Times* and the *Morning Advocate* of his proposed oil tax, Long intensified a political controversy and created a personal attack by targeting the brother of the newspapers' publisher, Charles Manship. His attempt to blackmail Manship into curtailing his newspapers' campaign against the tax was unnecessary and ill-judged. Long's combative response to the challenge of the newspapers'

criticism was one of the triggers that prompted his opponents to act, at that particular time, on their intention to impeach him.

In general, during his first ten months as governor, Long's term can be described overall as a success. He had organised the Legislature's committee structure along his preferred lines, and been able to persuade the Legislature to approve his initial programme during the regular session in May and at the special session in November 1928. These experiences had led him to believe that he could not fail to get his subsequent programme passed. However, in 1929, with the probability of failure on the oil tax bill, came the realisation of fallibility, that he was unable to control the outcome of his legislative programme because he could not command the opinions and the support of the Legislature. In the face of an attempt to force the adjournment of the session *sine die* and the resulting skirmish, the opposition was provoked into responding, in what they deemed as the most appropriate response; dictatorial attempts to control the actions of the Legislature had inspired them to proceed with the impeachment action.

For Long's opponents, both in politics and in businesses in Louisiana, the specific objective of the impeachment was to remove from office a governor whose personality, tactics and legislative agenda were a complete anathema to them. As many of the original nineteen articles of impeachment proposed in House Resolution 8 indicated, Long's behaviour and tactics, which had characterised his career to date, were as much a factor in the impeachment as were the events of the previous day. In comparison to the eight charges passed to the Louisiana Senate, the original nineteen articles of impeachment reveal the level to which his opponents believed that Long diverged from the accepted norms of politics in Louisiana. In addition to representing a fuller and broader catalogue of the offences allegedly committed by Long, the original charges also highlight the differences between Long and his opponents in terms of his crude behaviour, his morals and his determination to control and dominate those around him.

For an impeachment attempt to be successful, it does not only need to be justifiable within the restrictions of the constitution's articles of impeachment and sufficiently persuasive to legislative members, the elected officials bringing the case must also have the will and the resources to follow the process to its end. The charges may be politically motivated and biased rather than evidentially supported, but the will of the impeachers is the fundamental key to the success of the action. Long's impeachment failed not just because of the Round Robin letter, which may have been overcome through an application of parliamentary procedures and a cohesive coalition of impeachers, but also because they lacked a sufficient solidarity of purpose to succeed.

Impeachment is a political tool, not a legal one. The consequences of a successful impeachment are both limited and profound; from the political perspective, the outcome of impeachment is limited by the terms of the constitution governing the office and the official in question. For Long, a successful impeachment as governor would have resulted in his removal from office and his being barred from holding any other state office.⁷ Beyond the political environment, the further impacts of a successful impeachment could have been widespread, and included the possibility of criminal charges being brought relating to items raised during the impeachment. A successful impeachment could have been a career-limiting event for Long, not just for his political ambitions but also from a legal and personal perspective, criminal charges could potentially have resulted in a prison sentence, but would at the very least have harmed his law practice. With such possible ramifications, it is not surprising that the threat of impeachment had such a potent impact but since it is a political tool, it is also, within the context of American politics, a partisan political weapon, which can be fought with politics. It is this aspect that blunts the effectiveness of impeachment as a tool to restrain politicians and has ensured that the incidents of impeachment, especially at the gubernatorial level, have remained low. In many cases, a successful impeachment would only be possible as a consequence of a bipartisan effort. With Long's propensity to create

⁷ Constitution of the State of Louisiana, 1921, Article IX, Section 2 page 78

and collect political and personal enemies throughout his career, a cross-Legislature endeavour to impeach him was not an unreasonable expectation in 1929; it was a predictable outcome of his actions to date. Having defeated the impeachers, Long's response was in line with his previous behaviour patterns and his propensity to convert opponents into enemies. His opponents were subjected to recall attempts, while those of his supporters who had, in his eyes, failed in their allegiance during the crisis were ostracised. Even his saviours, the fifteen state senators who had signed the Round Robin letter would become a burden to Long with their reciprocity claims; in *Every Man A King*, although Long suggested that the continued favours shown to them had developed a joking repartee between them, his quip "If ever again you fifteen round-robiners find me drowning, for Heaven's sake, let me drown!"⁸ is more resonant of his frustration at being beholden to them. Just as Long resented the ties that linked him to the members of his family, so he also resented those individuals who had helped to save his governorship from impeachment.

Summary

As shown at the start of this work, the impeachment of Huey P Long in 1929 has been under-explored by academics and commentators. Those who have examined it have limited their investigations to a narrative of the events and a discussion of the binary effects that the impeachment was perceived to have had on Long's character, with this latter appraisal dependent on the appraisers' view of Long himself. For many Long supporters, the impeachment was a point in his career which had a negative impact on him. As a result of his opponents' actions, he had to become harder and more ruthless from that point on if he wanted to achieve his goals. For Long's opponents, the impeachment had little impact on him since he had always conducted his politics in a ruthless manner.

By examining the 1929 impeachment of Long in broader context than it has previously been explored, this thesis has moved the historiography of Long on from the non-committal

⁸ Long (1933) p179

assessment proposed by T Harry Williams, and concurred with by subsequent biographers and historians. The impeachment action in 1929 did not simply result in a potential alteration in Long's character. It was an incident which since it was presaged by a series of behaviours, actions and activities throughout his personal and political career was, in combination with the events of both special sessions of the Louisiana Legislature in March 1929, predictable. One outcome of the impeachment was that it overshadowed Long's perception of his political career for the rest of his career.

Without the impeachment, it is unlikely that Long would have taken the unusual step of running for the US Senate seat with two years remaining of his gubernatorial term; his relationship with Lieutenant Governor Paul Cyr may not have been irrevocably damaged by Cyr's support of the impeachment action, and as such, Long would not have felt the need to remain in Louisiana after his Senate victory. Without the tipping point of the impeachment, Long's propensity to view political opponents as enemies may have been blunted, and as such his determination to work outside of the state Democratic party may have been somewhat curtailed. Additionally, without this impeachment, and an apparent pattern of attempts at removing him from office, it is possible that Long would have been less inclined to seek to validate his ambition and his programmes in the context of opposition. Therefore, without the transformational impact of the 1929 impeachment, it is possible that Long's career could have followed a different path to that which actually occurred.

The examination of the papers of Huey P Long, those of family members and of his contemporaries in Louisiana which are held in the archives at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, at the University of New Orleans and at Tulane University in New Orleans, many of which have not been examined in the context of Long's impeachment and those which are previously unpublished, has brought a new and different understanding of the circumstances that created the impeachment in 1929. This thesis has developed, expanded

and challenged the assessments made by Long's biographers on the origins of the 1929 impeachment to further the study of Long and to fill a gap in the historiography.

It has been shown that the impeachment was based on a broader set of factors than has previously been considered. The circumstances of the special sessions in March 1929 was the tipping point for Long's legislative opposition, provoking a response not just to the current events but also to the collective impact of previous events, actions and behaviours. This thesis has focused on the specific events, factors and behaviours which combined to create the circumstances which were instrumental in the impeachment itself, and by exploring this gap in the historiography, it has contributed to the further understanding of Long, his subsequent motivations and the role of impeachment in American gubernatorial politics. In re-evaluating his impeachment, this work has contextualised it as a critically important event in the early career of Long. This thesis has widened the knowledge base and the assessment of Huey P Long's gubernatorial career by focussing on a specific incident, which has previously been under-examined, and which, therefore, presents the possibility to gain a wider understanding of Long's political career and life.

Future work

While exploring this area of Long's career it became evident that the impeachment had come to have a greater impact on Long and his subsequent career than has been previously understood. As evidenced by his autobiography, *Every Man A King*, Long had subsequently become fixated by the possibility of impeachment and the threat of removal from office. While academics have limited their discussion of the 1929 impeachment, for Long himself the threat was an all-consuming obsession and ultimately he came to see it as a possible sign of validation. An exploration of Long's relationship to impeachment throughout the remaining years of his life would be a valid future research project. As would further studies of gubernatorial impeachment across the United States.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Articles of Impeachment against Huey P Long as specified in House Resolution 8 on 26 March 1929

Articles of Impeachment against Huey P Long as specified in House Resolution 8 on 26 March 1929 ¹	
No.	Article of Impeachment
1	That he has used the appointive power of the Governor with the hope of influencing and in the attempt to influence the judiciary of the State; and has publicly boasted that he controls said judiciary.
2	That he, the said Huey P. Long, while Governor of the State of Louisiana, has bribed or attempted to bribe a member or members of the State Legislature, contrary to the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, and especially Article XI, Section 20, of the Constitution of 1921.
3	That in violation of the Constitution of Louisiana, he has habitually required as a condition to appointment to public office, signatures of appointees to undated resignations, so as to give him, the said Long, the power of removal of public officers whose terms are fixed by the Constitution or statutes of the State of Louisiana.
4	That he has, through himself and through boards controlled by him, wasted, misused, misapplied and misappropriated funds and property of the State of Louisiana.
5	That he has, through himself and through boards controlled by him, contracted illegal loans for the State of Louisiana, in violation of the Constitution of the State.
6	That, through himself and through boards controlled by him, he has removed school officials of the State for purely political purposes: and that he has been and is using said powers for the purpose of intimidating teachers and pupils in the schools and educational institutions of the State, to the end of suppressing free thought and free expression of opinion and of politicalizing the educational institutions of the State.
7	That he has, in time of peace, and not in aid of or at the request of civil authorities, and while Governor of the State of Louisiana, subordinated the civil authorities to the military, contrary to the provisions of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana, and as Commander-in-Chief of the State Militia, has attempted to impose his own will through the said Militia to loot and pillage private property and to take from the person of certain individuals their private property, and destroy private property without due process of law, all without legal authority, and contrary to Article I, Sections 2, 7 and 14, of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana of 1921.
8	That he has, as Governor of Louisiana, attempted to force official bodies in the parishes of the State to follow his dictation in regard to public litigation as the price of permitting the passage of legislation affecting such parishes.
9	That he habitually carries concealed weapons upon his person, both in his office and on the public streets and highways of the State of Louisiana, in violation of the laws of the State of Louisiana.
10	That he has repeatedly been guilty of violent abuse of officials of the State of Louisiana, member of public boards of the State, and private citizens visiting him upon public business.
11	That he, the said Huey P. Long, while Governor of Louisiana has been guilty of gross misconduct in public places in the various parishes of this State, and particularly in that he did, on or about February 12, 1929, in the City of New Orleans, Parish of Orleans, La., participate in an entertainment where intoxicating liquor was served to him and to other guests, contrary to the Constitution of the State of Louisiana and the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, at which entertainment the said Huey P. Long, Governor of Louisiana, did deport himself in a scandalous and indecorous manner, thus holding up the State of Louisiana to ridicule and shame.
12	That the said Huey P. Long has publicly flouted the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Louisiana, and has usurped to himself the powers of the Legislature of the State and of the committees thereof and has on occasions commanded the breaking of the quorums of said committees with the purpose in view of preventing the consideration of proposed legislation by said committees.
13	That he has been guilty of favoritism, in that after plans and specifications for a refrigerating plant had been submitted and approved by the officials of the Louisiana State Penitentiary, involving an expenditure of \$20,000.00, and upon the condition that bids therefor should be advertised, he, the said Huey P. Long, ordered the Penitentiary officials to divide the order for said plant into numerous orders for separate and inoperative units, the purchase price of which units fell below the sum of \$1,000.00, rendering public bids unnecessary therefor, and gave the orders therefor to one W. K. Henderson, a personal and political friend of the said Long, as is shown and contained in the affidavit of one Bernard L. Kiernan, published in the daily press of the State of Louisiana of Monday, March 25, 1929, all in violation of the law and in contravention of the requirements of the law with reference to the advertisement by public boards of this State for bids on all material and equipment in an amount in excess of \$1,000.00.
14	That the said Huey P. Long did while Governor of the State of Louisiana and in the City of Baton Rouge and in a public place on or about the 20 th day of March 1929, intrude himself upon, threaten, and attempt to intimidate Charles P. Manship, owner and publisher of the Daily State-Times, a newspaper published in the City of Baton Rouge, and did threaten to make known and to cause to make publicly known the infirmities of a member of said Manship's family as a punishment and intimidation of the said Manship in the exercise of his rights as a citizen of the State of Louisiana, and in an attempt to suppress the freedom of the press [sic] in lawfully opposing and criticising certain legislation proposed or pending in the Legislature of Louisiana of the Special Session of 1929, all of which being in contempt of the laws of the State of Louisiana, and particularly denounced as a crime by Act Number 110 of the Legislature of 1908.
15	That the said Huey P. Long did, while Governor of the State of Louisiana, and in the city of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, during the months of February and March, 1929, demolish and destroy the Executive Mansion, being the property of the State of Louisiana, and did raze the property to the ground without legal authority and in violation of his oath of office.
16	That the said Huey P. Long, while Governor of the State of Louisiana, and in the city of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, did destroy or dispose of property belonging to the State of Louisiana, being the furniture and fixtures then located in the Executive Mansion, Executive Offices, and in the offices of the State Highway Commission, the State Tax Commission, and the Supervisor of Public Accounts, and he, the said Huey P. Long, Governor, has made no accounting for said property thus destroyed or disposed of in violation of law and his oath of office.

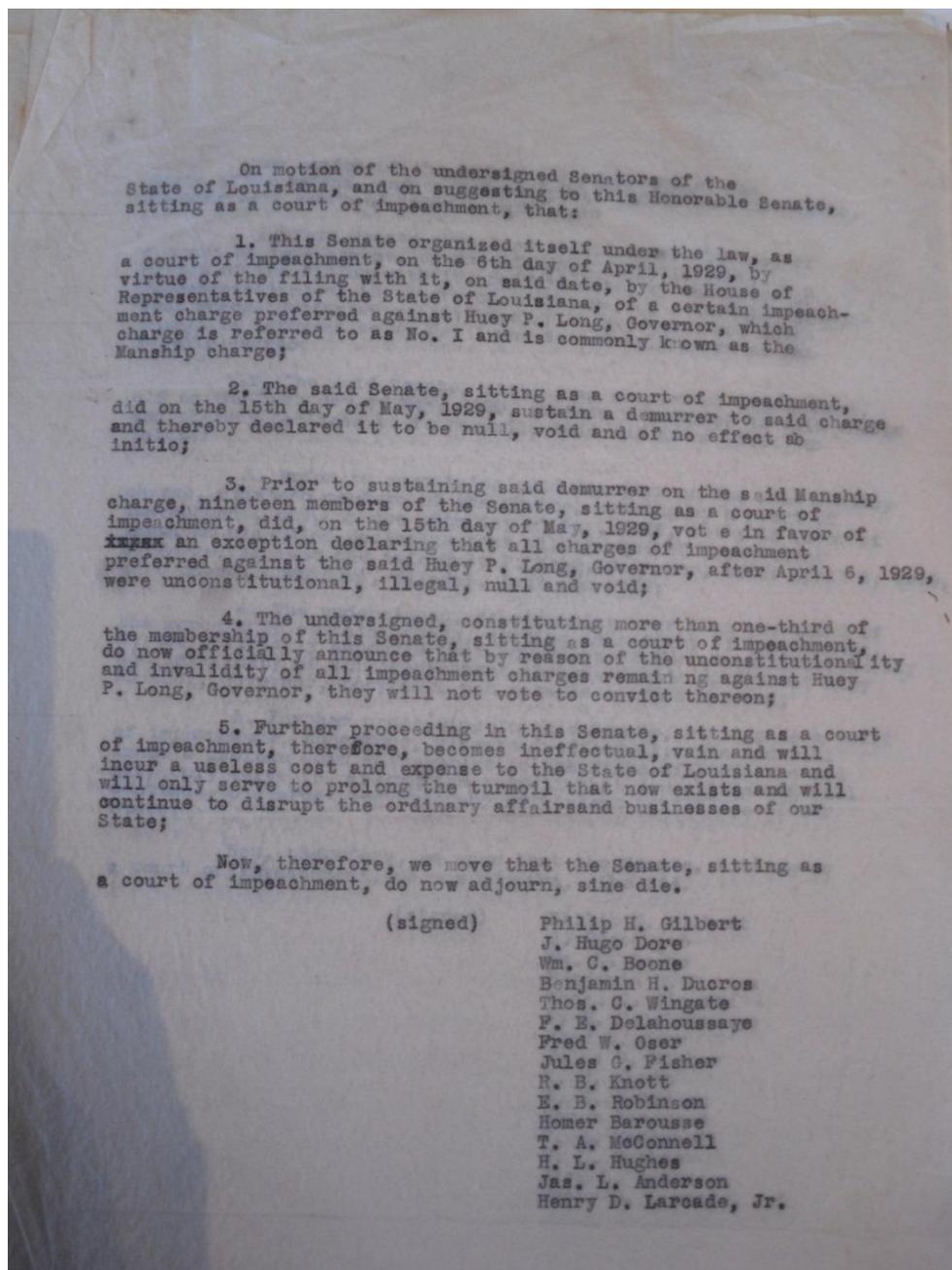
¹ Official Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, Fifth Extra Session of the Legislature Under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921 pp33 - 35

Appendix 1- Articles of Impeachment against Huey P Long as specified in House Resolution 8 on 26 March 1929

No.	Article of Impeachment
17	That the said Huey P. Long, while Governor of the State of Louisiana and in Baton Rouge in the Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in violation of the law and of his oath of office as Governor of the State, and over the objection and protest of the Board of Parole of the State of Louisiana, the only lawful body authorized to grant paroles to prisoners confined in the State Penitentiary, did, on or about the twelfth day of November, 1928, parole and discharge from the State Penitentiary of Louisiana, a convict by the name of Elmer Dunnington convicted of the crime of embezzlement in the Parish [sic] of Tangipahoa, Louisiana, on the sixteenth day of March, 1929, the said Dunnington being ineligible for parole at the time.
18	That the said Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana, has repeatedly while both branches of the Legislature were in open session, appeared within the bar of the House and the Senate and intruded upon the deliberations of each of said bodies by personally attempting to impose his own views on the members of the House and Senate as to the merits of pending legislation, all in violation of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana, which provides for three separate and distinct branches of the government, and which prohibits the members of each of those branches from usurping or exercising the duties that belong to another, thus using the executive power of the State to interfere with the duties of the legislative branch of the government, all in violation of the oath taken by the Governor of the State.
19	That he, the said Huey P. Long, while Governor of the State of Louisiana, in the City of Baton Rouge, and in the Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, did attempt to hire and induce one H. A. Bozeman to kill and murder one J. Y. Sanders, Jr., a member of the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana, as shown and set forth in the sworn statement of H. A. Bozeman of date March 25, 1929.

Appendix 2 – the Round Robin letter

A copy of the transcript of the Round Robin letter from the Huey P Long Papers held in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections at Louisiana State University Libraries in Baton Rouge, La.¹



¹ Transcript of the Round Robin Letter *Huey P Long Papers*, Box 37 Folder 1351 Huey P Long – Special Impeachment – Legality of Process (round robin). In the original letter the signatures were arranged in a circle so the order in which the senators had signed could not be identified.

Appendix 2 – the Round Robin letter

The original letter is believed to have been lost. A document in *The Legacy of Huey Long* exhibition at the Old State Capitol Building in Baton Rouge in 2013 was displayed under the title “Impeachment Rules of Procedure” and the description stated “Huey’s opponents fought hard to impeach him from the Senate, but no one knew how to bend the rules better than Huey. The signatures in this ‘Round Robin’ document stopped the proceedings.” However, the names on this document are not those of the fifteen senators who signed the Round Robin letter. Instead this document appeared to be a list of the senators who had deplored the action of the Robineers.²

² Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Louisiana at the Fifth Extra Session of the Legislature, Under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921: Begun and Held in the City of Baton Rouge, March 20, 1929 p269

Appendix 3 – Images



Huey P. Long sitting in bed and signing the No Crop Bill forbidding cotton planting in the new year.

Huey P. Long Photograph Album (Mss. 4495), Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA.

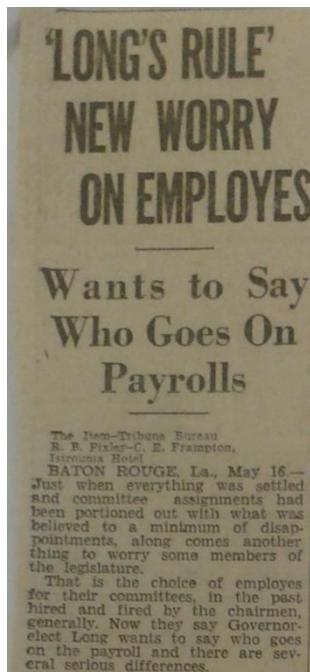


Cartoon from Hermann B Deutsch's article "The Kingdom of the Kingfish" *New Orleans Item* 29 August 1939, Miscellany 8-18, *Hermann B. Deutsch Collection* (Mss 8), Earl K Long Library University of New Orleans

Appendix 3 – Images



Trist Wood's cartoon, published in the *New Orleans Item* on 20 July 1939 alongside Hermann B Deutsch's article series



New Orleans Item circa 17 May 1928

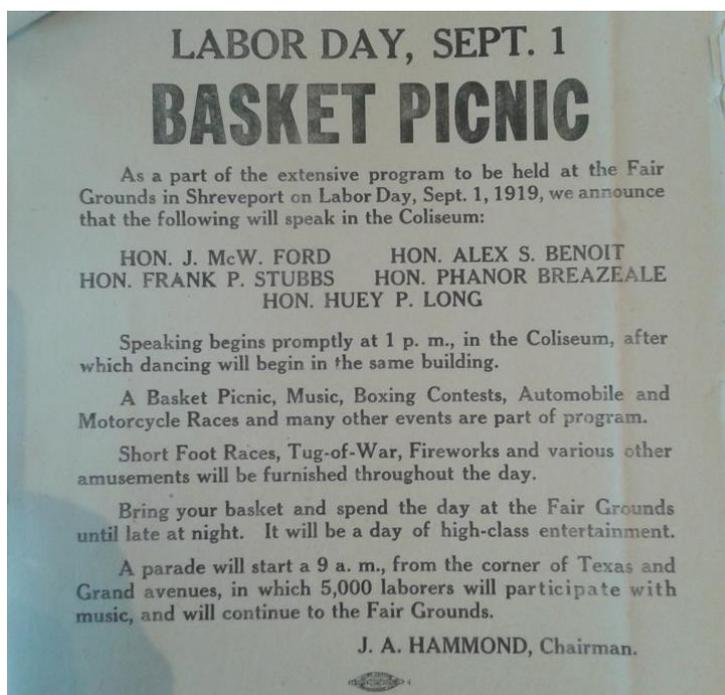
Appendix 3 – Images



Long for US Senator campaign card demonstrating Long's use of the epithet "Feather Duster" to mock his opponent Joseph E Ransdell

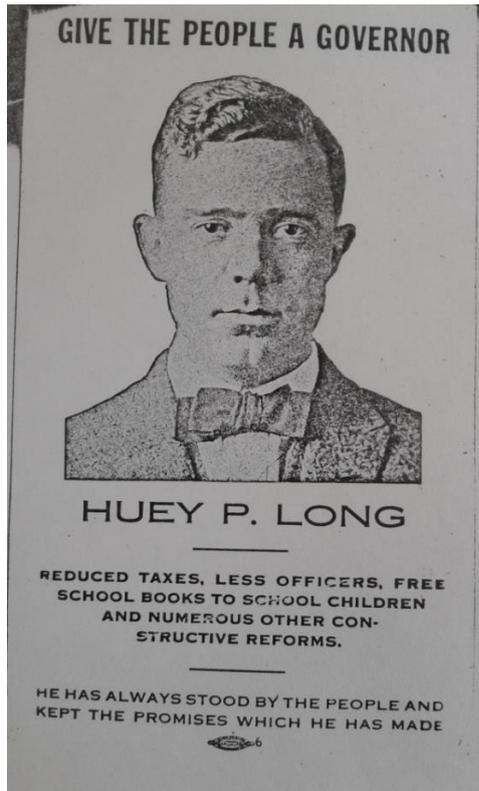


Cartoon accompanying Hermann B Deutsch's "The Kingdom of the Kingfish," *The New Orleans Item* 23 August 1939

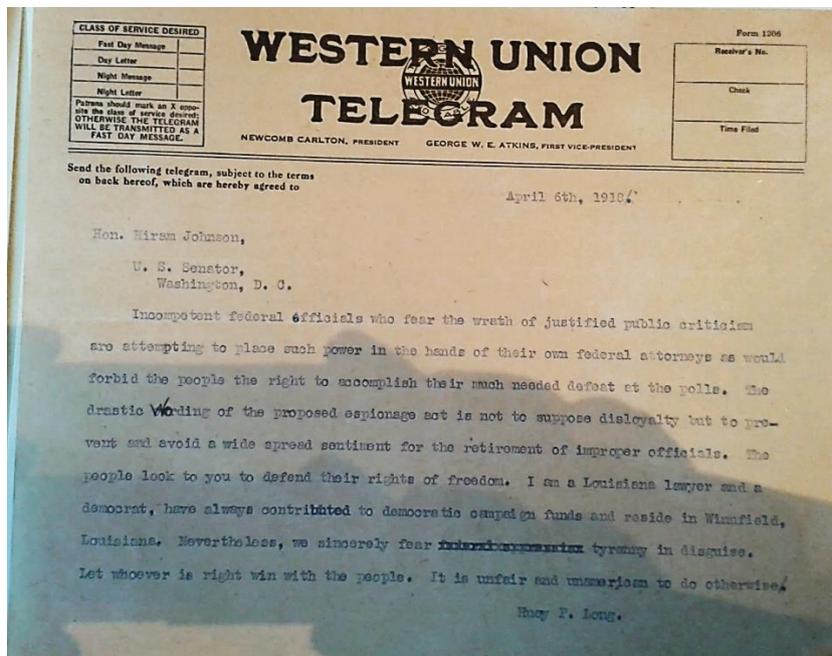


Flyer for Labor Day Picnic, September 1919.

Appendix 3 – Images

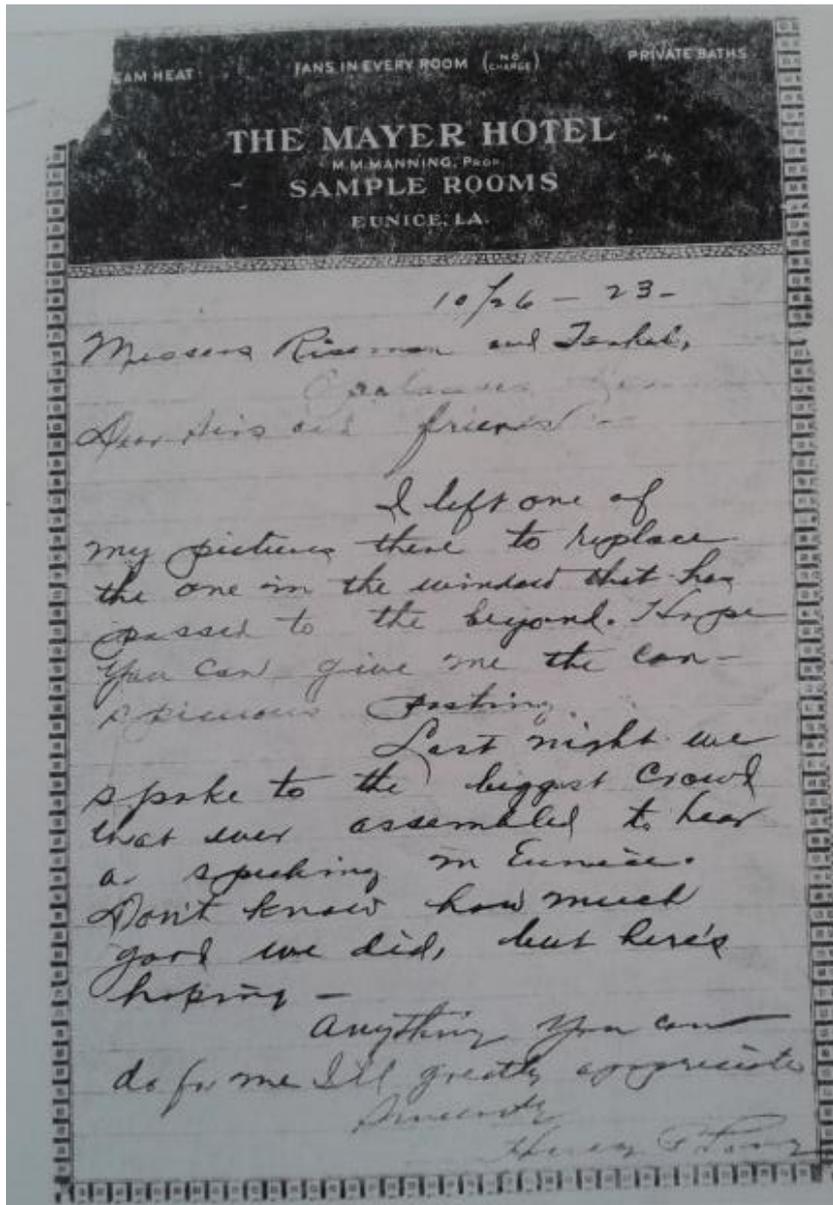


Campaign flyer for Long for Governor



Telegram to US Senator Hiram Johnson dated 6 April 1918 in which Long states "I am . . . a democrat"

Appendix 3 – Images



Handwritten letter from Huey
P Long dated 26 October
1923

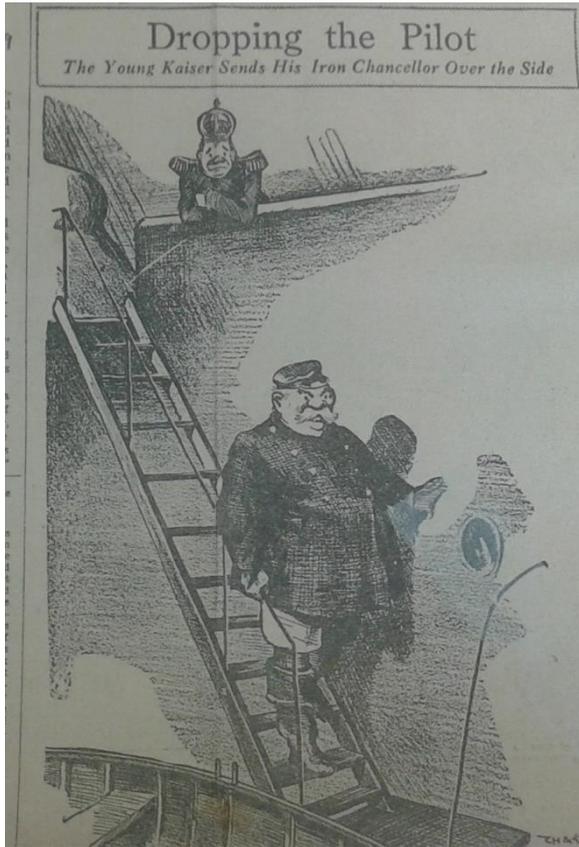
Appendix 3 – Images

Note:
This was my
original investigation
of the use of the \$6000⁰⁰
by H. P. Long, Gov. leading
to my charging him with
misappropriation of the
sum - the first public
accusation of dishonesty
No.
C.M.

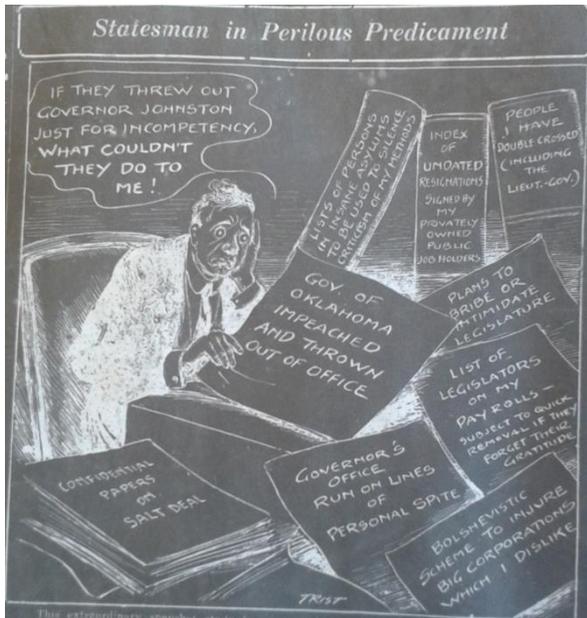
Cecil Morgan's investigation notebook
regarding Long's expenditure of \$6000 on the
Governors' Conference

Nov. 28, 1928
draft of Huey P. Long
Gov. on state Treas.
for \$6000⁰⁰ for
Entertainment of
Governors in N. O.
Pd. Nov. 26/28.
Check pursuant
thereto by asst state
Treas dated Nov. 26,
1928 to order of
Huey P. Long, Governor
on Louisiana National Bk
B. R. La - for \$6000⁰⁰
for Entertainment of Governors.

Appendix 3 – Images



“Dropping the Pilot” cartoon reprinted from *The Item-Tribune* published on 3 February 1929 showing Long's break with Colonel Robert Ewing. Hermann B Deutsch, “The Kingdom of the Kingfish” *New Orleans Item* 15 August 1939 clipping, Miscellany 8-18, *Hermann B. Deutsch Collection* (Mss 8), Earl K Long Library University of New Orleans



Trist cartoon from the *Huey P Long Scrapbooks*, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La

Appendix 3 – Images

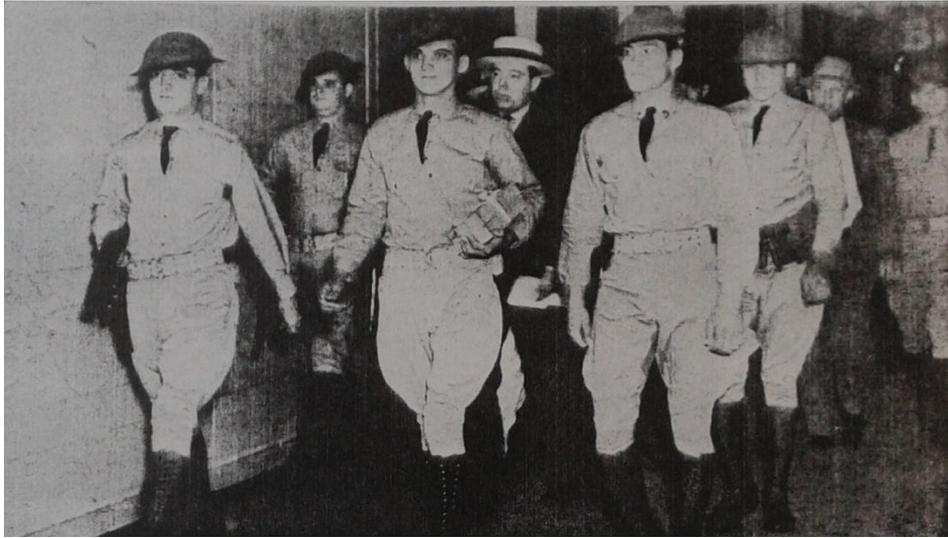


Photo entitled "Huey Masses His Troops for Action" in Craddock Gain's "The Drunken Tyranny – A Close-Up View of Louisiana's Blunderbuss" *Real America* December 1934 p10



Images of the monument at the grave of Huey P Long in the grounds of the State Capitol, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
Photos © Diane Smith 23 March 2013

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Interviews with Cecil Morgan regarding the Huey P. Long era conducted by Betty W Carter Under the auspices of the Historic New Orleans Collection copyright 1985, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La., F376.3

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Hilda Phelps Hammond papers, 1908 -1951 LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 705 Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118.

David R McGuire memorial collection 1745 – 2005 (LaRC / Manuscripts Collection 271) Series 4 Jack B McGuire collection of Huey P. Long papers Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118

Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118

Scott Wilson Papers, Manuscripts Collection 233, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118

Special Collections Department, Earl K Long Library, University of New Orleans

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