

**JUST CALL ME FRANK A PARTIAL BIOGRAPHY
OF FRANK GOAD CLEMENT 1920 - 1956**

JUDITH ELLEN HINKLEY SPRADLIN

"JUST CALL ME FRANK"

A PARTIAL BIOGRAPHY OF FRANK GOAD CLEMENT

1920-1956

An Abstract

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Judith Ellen Hinkley Spradlin

August, 1977

ABSTRACT

Frank Goad Clement was born June 2, 1920, in Dickson, Tennessee. The eldest of three children, Frank was the only son of Robert Samuel and Maybelle Goad Clement. Frank attended public schools before entering Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee, from which he graduated in 1939. Clement continued his education at Vanderbilt University and received his LLB Degree in 1942, during which time he married the former Lucille Christianson of Erin, Tennessee, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. There were three sons from this marriage.

Frank Clement was destined to be the youngest Governor of Tennessee as well as the State's first Governor to serve a four year term.

After graduation from Vanderbilt University, Clement became a special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation stationed in Chicago, Illinois. He resigned from this position to enlist in the United States Army during World War II. He emerged from the Army in 1946 as a commissioned officer and returned to active duty during the Korean Conflict.

Frank Goad Clement first came to the public eye in 1946 when Governor-elect James Nance McCord appointed Clement general counsel for the Tennessee Railroad and Public Utilities Commission. With this appointment, Clement became acquainted with the utilities and railroad problems of Tennessee and surrounding states, for which he served as an advisor. This position helped earn Clement the title of "Champion of the People."

Noted for his oratorical ability, Frank Goad Clement often could be found in the pulpit of the Methodist Church where he served as a lay preacher.

Clement reached the highpoint of his political career in 1956 when he was invited to deliver the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Also Clement was a potential candidate for the vice-presidential nomination in 1956.

This thesis will focus on the life and political career of Frank Goad Clement from his birth in 1920 through 1956 when Clement's career reached its height.

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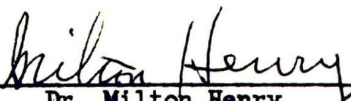
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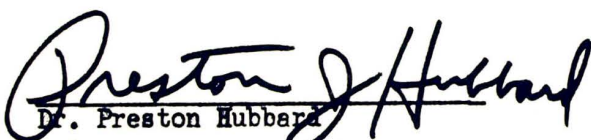
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Judith Ellen Hinkley Spradlin entitled "Just Call Me Frank, A Partial Biography of Frank Goad Clement 1920-1956." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

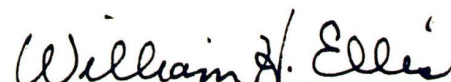

Dr. Milton Henry
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Dean of the Graduate School

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The author wishes to thank her husband, Kenneth Spradlin, who never limited his wife's ambition and was always present. His strength, protection, understanding and tolerance can never be repaid.

Lastly, the author wishes to acknowledge herself because it had not been her original goal to achieve this degree and it is not usually within her nature to undertake such a project. This manuscript, whatever its quality, is totally the work of one person: the author.

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INTRODUCTION

Frank Goad Clement served as Governor of Tennessee from January 15, 1953 through January 19, 1959, and again from January 15, 1963 until January 16, 1967. His first gubernatorial term was for just two years.

After the 1953 State Constitutional Convention, which changed the Governor's term from two years to four years,¹ Clement served two additional terms as Tennessee's Chief Executive. Because Tennessee's newly amended Constitution prohibited the incumbent from succeeding himself, Clement's second and third terms were not consecutive.²

Frank Clement's life and career was dominated by a certain uniqueness in Tennessee political history as well as American politics in general. His career demonstrated many "firsts" in the State and the nation. His brand of oratory captured the attention of the entire nation. Clement was Tennessee's first Governor to be elected to a four year term. As Governor, Frank Clement encountered new social and political elements in the United States that had a direct bearing on his Administration. Clement introduced free textbooks to all public school students and he aided the State in its economic growth.

A confident man possessed with great ambitions, Frank Clement's political career reached its pinnacle in 1956, when he was invited to deliver the Keynote Address before the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and at the same time was a potential candidate for the Democratic Vice-Presidential nomination. After delivering an oratorical

¹1975-1976 Tennessee Blue Book, Office of the Secretary of State, Nashville, Tennessee, pp. 382-385.

²Ibid.

masterpiece but losing his opportunity to be on the 1956 Democratic National Ticket, Clement's career plans of holding a higher office, for all practical purposes, were stagnated.

An understanding of Frank Goad Clement's rapid political ascent can come only from viewing the man as a child, as a young man prior to becoming Governor of Tennessee, as well as the volatile politician in 1956.

Chapter I

"I WANT TO BE GOVERNOR"³

Frank Goad Clement was born on June 2, 1920, to Robert Samuel and Maybelle Goad Clement in Dickson, Tennessee.⁴ Robert Clement was a druggist with his own store at the time his son, Frank, was born.⁵ According to some sources, the elder Clement also had been an itinerant bookkeeper.⁶

When the Great Depression struck the nation, Robert Clement was forced to close his drugstore. With more faith than money, Robert Clement decided to take this opportunity and fulfill a personal ambition. The elder Clement traveled to Lebanon, Tennessee, and enrolled at Cumberland University as a law student. After receiving his law degree, Robert Clement returned to Dickson where he established a law practice that is still in existence today.⁷

Reminiscing, Frank Clement later said, "The Depression did him (Robert S. Clement) a favor."⁸

³Noel E. Parmental, Jr., "Tennessee Spellbinder, Clement Runs On Time," Nation, August 11, 1956, pp. 113-117.

⁴Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, (The N. W. Wilson Co., New York), pp. 129-131.

⁵Parmental, op. cit.

⁶"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," Newsweek, Vol. 48, August 13, 1956, pp. 25-28.

⁷Stated by Robert S. Clement, personal interview, July 14, 1977.

⁸C. Arthur Larson, "Frank Clement: Governor For God," American Mercury, March, 1956, p. 122.

Eventually the Robert Clement family would include two daughters, Annabelle, who has remained politically active and resides in Crossville, Tennessee, and Jean, the mother of four children in Dickson, Tennessee.⁹

The Clement family was considered to be prominent in Dickson and had been for several generations. Members of the Clement clan could be found mainly in the legal profession as well as proprietors of local businesses.

Even though Robert Clement was socially prominent, the family had no opportunity for sound financial security until young Frank became Governor of Tennessee in the 1952 Election.¹⁰

The Young Orator's Education

Frank attended local public schools as a young boy in Dickson and he was considered an average scholar. Even as a school boy, Frank revealed facets of his personality that would remain with him into adulthood and would exemplify his meteoric rise in the political arena.

Frank Clement's self-confidence and ambition was apparent even at the age of ten years. When, in the fourth grade, the teacher asked each student what each wanted to be when he/she had grown up. Frank answered unhesitatingly, "I want to be Governor of Tennessee."¹¹ Obviously, Frank's response was nurtured by the family's keen interest and active participation in local and State politics, which were favorite topics around the family dinner table.

⁹Statement by Robert S. Clement, personal interview, July 14, 1977.

¹⁰Parmental, op. cit.

¹¹Ibid.

Frank's interest in politics was deepened by watching and listening to his grandfather, James A. Clement, who was a State Senator when Frank was a child.¹² It was Grandfather Clement who instilled in Frank the unusual philosophy that religion and politics can and must be compatible. While attending Sunday School with ten year old Frank, Grandfather Clement exemplified this philosophy with the teacher who stated:

Politics is dirty and rotten and no churchgoing citizen should have anything to do with it.¹³

Frank's grandfather quickly responded:

If decent people don't enter politics, then what will happen to our country?

This idea that Christians should abandon politics to the crooks and scoundrels is all wrong. We will have government only when God guides the hearts and minds of public officials. I say that one of the main jobs of Christian men and women is to get into public life. That's the only way we can have an enduring democracy--for if we leave God out of government, then it certainly won't last long.¹⁴

Grandfather Clement emphasized his opinion by firmly gripping young Frank's hand and stalking out of the room.

Perhaps Clement's major political attribute was his dynamic oratorical ability. Frank Clement possessed a talent that could not be learned. This was the power to project his personality, to establish an immediate rapport with his audience, to reach out and touch their inner feelings whether he faced them in person or through the impersonal eye

¹²"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴C. Arthur Larson, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

of the television camera. This is the same talent that a successful stage actor must possess. This talent was detected early in Frank's life and with expert training was refined.¹⁵

A "William Jennings Bryan-type" orator, this particular talent was cultivated during Frank's teenage years. At the age of fourteen years, Aunt Dockie Shipp Weems took her politically inspired nephew under her wing for special tutoring at her Shipp School for Expression in Dickson.¹⁶ It was here that Frank Clement learned the art of speech-making; when to use a soft hushed tone; when to let the voice raise to a crescendo; when to pause for dramatic effect. He also learned how to use the body and hands for emphasis. This intense training was the single most important lesson Frank Clement received for his future days on the campaign trail. "Except for Aunt Dockie," Clement once said, "I'd probably be a jackleg lawyer."¹⁷

Clement's Religious Interest

Religion was as important, if not more so, to the Robert Clement household as was politics. Devout Methodists, the Clements regularly attended all church meetings and functions. At revival meetings Robert and Maybelle Clement often sang duets for the crowds.¹⁸

¹⁵Harold H. Martin, "The Things They Say About the Governor," The Saturday Evening Post, 227:31, January 29, 1955, pp. 22-23+.

¹⁶Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

¹⁷"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

¹⁸Ibid.

Frank Clement learned his Biblical lessons well. While still in his teens, Frank taught Bible School for his church and even seriously considered entering the ministry before finally deciding on a career in the legal profession and politics.¹⁹

Even though Clement chose not to enter the ministry, his religious training was not forgotten or left unheeded. While actively campaigning in later years, Clement freely incorporated prayer and singing of favorite hymns when he stood on the political platform. A Methodist lay preacher as an adult, Clement easily adapted the pulpit as an instrument to further his political aims. A personal friend explained this extraordinary blend of religion and politics in this manner:

Frank is . . . perfectly honest and sincere about bringing the Lord into a political speech.²⁰

Perhaps Frank Clement's knowledge of the scriptures and his expert use of this knowledge in his platform delivery and stumping technique could not be equalled by anyone except the legendary Huey Long.²¹

Early Campaign Training

Governor-to-be Frank Clement began to develop his campaign style while still a young man living in Dickson, Tennessee. Frequently the young teenager would be seen strolling the streets of his hometown patting and kissing every baby he encountered. Like a shrewd, experienced

¹⁹Parmental, op. cit.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

politician, young Clement never neglected the infants' mothers to whom he directed the customary compliments about their appearance.²²

While still in high school, Frank began courting his future wife, Lucille LaVerne Christianson. "Cile," a former schoolmate, resided in neighboring Houston County. Her father, Nelson E. Christianson, was a lumber dealer in Erin, Tennessee. On his frequent visits to Erin, Frank would walk hand-in-hand with Cile along the streets of the small town. Even though Frank's primary reason for being in Erin so often was to be with Lucille, he did not pass up the opportunity to continue cultivating his campaign style. Clement is well remembered by Erin residents because he and Cile would frequently stop strolling for Frank to politely and enthusiastically introduce himself to everyone the couple met along the way.²³

By the time Frank Clement graduated from high school, he had made himself well known and well liked by most of the residents of Dickson and Erin, Tennessee.

Marriage

After high school graduation in 1937, Clement entered Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. While in Lebanon, Clement had to find employment in order to finance his college education.²⁴ As before, Clement received average grades. In 1939, after completing a two year

²²Ibid.

²³The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Current Vol. I, 1953-1959, (James T. White and Co., New York, N. Y.), p. 302.

²⁴"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

program at Cumberland University, Clement enrolled in the Law School of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.²⁵

In the same year he entered Vanderbilt, Clement successfully persuaded Lucille Christianson to marry him immediately. Apparently Frank's persuasive powers were very strong even then because years later when Lucille recalled the moment, she lamented, "I knew then that he would be governor."²⁶

Frank and Cile were both nineteen years of age at the time. Frank and Lucille eloped on January 6, 1940.²⁷ In a borrowed car, the couple drove to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to be married in a quiet, simple ceremony.²⁸

After returning from Hopkinsville, the new Mrs. Frank Goad Clement quietly returned to the home of her parents in Erin, Tennessee, while the bridegroom proceeded on to his law studies in Nashville. The marriage remained a secret for several weeks. However when the newlyweds revealed their marriage, Lucille Christianson Clement moved to Nashville to be with her husband.²⁹

In order for Frank to continue his studies on a full-time basis Mrs. Clement accepted a portion of the couple's financial responsibilities. Lucille Clement was employed as a receptionist for the local radio station,

²⁵Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

²⁶"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

²⁷Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

²⁸Martin, op. cit.

²⁹Wilma Dykeman, "Too Much Talent In Tennessee?" Harper's Magazine, 210-1258, March 1955, pp. 48-53.

WLAC, with a salary of thirty cents an hour until her husband completed his studies.³⁰

Law Degree

Anxious to be employed, Frank Clement decided to take his State Bar Examinations in 1941, one year before receiving his law degree. Clement's instructors did not favor this decision and they bluntly told him he would fail the examinations. Frank Clement was confident in his own ability and did not accept his instructors' advice. Contrary to the fatalistic warnings, Frank Clement not only passed the examinations, he received the highest score on the State Bar Examinations out of 276 participants.³¹

After receiving the results of the examinations, Frank Clement began practicing law and, at the same time, completed his last year at Vanderbilt University. He received his LLB Degree in 1942.³²

With his education complete, Frank Goad Clement was ready to enter into another phase of preparation for his political career.

³⁰Martin, op. cit.

³¹Parmental, op. cit.

³²Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

Chapter II

"CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE"

Employment: 1943-1946

With law degree in hand, Frank Goad Clement began laying his political foundation. Immediately upon graduation, Clement applied for the position of special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Clement was just twenty-two years of age and the Bureau's minimum age requirement for special agents was twenty-three years of age. Engaging his powers of persuasion, Clement convinced the Bureau to lower its minimum age requirement and Frank soon began his law enforcement career as the youngest FBI agent in the nation. Frank Clement's first, and what proved to be his only, assignment was in Chicago, Illinois.³³

While living in Chicago, Lucille Clement supplemented the couple's income. She was employed as a stenographer at Marshall Field, one of Chicago's largest department stores.³⁴

In 1943, Frank Clement resigned from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and enlisted as a private in the United States Army. After completing basic training, Clement attended Officers' Candidate School. Second Lieutenant Frank Clement was assigned to the Military Police and was stationed at various Army posts throughout the United States. Clement was never assigned to overseas duty and he was dis-

³³Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

³⁴Martin, op. cit.

charged in 1946 after being promoted to First Lieutenant and made a company commander.³⁵

Frank Clement volunteered for military service during World War II even though his position with the Federal Bureau of Investigation almost assured Clement that he would not be subjected to the military draft. Clement's decision to enter the United States Army was, perhaps, more pragmatic than patriotic. During World War II many politicians entered the military in order to aid their professional reputations.

Years later, Clement candidly admitted that when he entered the military he was aware that the lack of an honorable service record would impair his future political career.³⁶

Political Foundation

After his military discharge Frank Clement brought his family back to Tennessee where they settled down to civilian life in Dickson. Frank, just twenty-six years of age, joined his father, Robert Clement, in the practice of law. At the same time, Clement established law offices with Frank Farris, Jr., a World War II veteran, in the Third National Bank Building in Nashville.³⁷

While practicing law in two cities, Clement simultaneously began sowing the seeds for his future gubernatorial career. Clement's plan to become Tennessee's Chief Executive was not original. It had been successful for politicians in the past and it would be successful for Frank

³⁵Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

³⁶"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

³⁷Statement by Robert S. Clement, personal interview, July 16, 1977.

Clement as well. There were many factors that aided Clement, but most importantly was Clement's own ambition and his appearance.

Frank Clement was six feet tall, trim with dark curly hair and intense eyes. His looks were sometimes described as sensuous. Add to this a frequent smile that was handsome, persuasive and often described as a grin with "barefoot boy sincerity,"³⁸ and it becomes obvious that Frank Clement's physical appeal was definitely a political asset.

Clement wasted little time in re-establishing himself in his home town and State after World War II. Young Clement became a Mason and had achieved the thirty-second degree before his death in 1969. Also Clement joined Dickson's Post 115 of the American Legion. It was through this organization, along with the Tennessee Young Democrats Club, that Frank Clement gained statewide recognition that would project him into the political spotlight.³⁹

As a new Legionsire, Clement accepted whatever assignment that he was given and speedily and efficiently executed it. Soon it became apparent to his fellow Legionnaires that Clement had the qualities to be the organization's standard bearer.

In 1947, Dickson Post 115 unanimously nominated Frank Goad Clement for the position of Middle Tennessee Division Commander of the American Legion. Clement and his supporters waged a vigorous campaign complete with posters and bumper stickers urging the election of "Comrade Frank G. Clement."⁴⁰ Clement won the election. During his term as

³⁸Martin, op. cit.

³⁹Statement by Robert S. Clement, personal interview, July 16, 1977.

⁴⁰Personal Papers, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

Division Commander, "Comrade Clement" served as State Chairman of the American Legion's Subversive Activities Committee.⁴¹

Being accessible to all Legion activities throughout Tennessee provided Clement with the opportunity to be nominated and elected State Commander at the Tennessee American Legion Convention in July, 1949.⁴²

As Division Commander, Immediate Past Division Commander and State Commander of the Tennessee American Legion, Frank Clement began formulating a concept that would continue into his political career. This concept was the successful incorporation of religion, political philosophy and youth activities. All of which attracted widespread publicity that invariably included Clement's name and/or picture. For example, while State Commander, Clement created the "Teach Children Religion" program that was implemented by Tennessee's American Legion. Successful in Tennessee, Clement's program was adopted by the National Executive Committee as its official project. American Legion posts in foreign nations also initiated activities based upon Clement's ideas. Pleased with the results, Clement commented, "This program has brought us more favorable publicity than all other programs combined over a period of several years."⁴³

As a direct result of Clement's "Teach Children Religion" program, the Tennessee Division of the American Legion was awarded the Milton J. Foreman Trophy which is presented to the division that "rendered the

⁴¹Ibid

⁴²Ibid

⁴³The Nashville Banner, August 29, 1949, 2:2.

most outstanding service to the boys and girls of America."⁴⁴

The Tennessee Young Democrats Club was another vehicle used by Frank Clement in his pursuit of political victory. Having joined this organization in 1946, Clement was elected President of the statewide club in 1946 and again in 1947. One of his first actions as President was to revive The Tennessee Young Democrat, the Club's defunct semi-monthly newspaper that each member would receive. Clement renovated the newspaper's format and initiated a regular feature, the "President's Column," which appeared on the front page of each issue complete with Clement's picture and by-line.⁴⁵ Such a column was a valuable tool to Frank Clement. The newspaper and its "President's Column" projected Clement, his views and the views of the Tennessee Democrat Party. Such publicity could do nothing but help Clement's political career.

Clement chose to remain within the safe realm of the party's moderate element and expressed the favorite views of the day. For example, in his acceptance speech after being elected President of the Club, Clement attacked the political "left" and struck at communism. He did not assert that there were party members who were communists but Clement warned his audience that if any potential candidate were to represent communist forces, the Democratic Party would not hesitate to withhold its support for the candidate. Furthermore, Clement announced that the Young Democrats Club would not condone or protect the actions of the Ku Klux Klan while he was the Club's President. Thus Clement

⁴⁴Personal Papers, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

⁴⁵Ibid.

eliminated the political "right" and entrenched himself as a political "moderate" for the remainder of his career.⁴⁶

Frank Clement's desire to become Governor never abated and his ambition drove him to accomplish more than what seemed humanly possible. In the year 1947 alone, Frank Clement was practicing law in two cities, participating in the current Governor's Administration, the Middle Tennessee Division Commander of the American Legion, chairman of a state-wide American Legion committee, President of the Tennessee Young Democrats Club, involved in numerous civic organizations, husband and father. Yet, during the year, Clement traveled extensively throughout the State delivering one hundred seven speeches just for the American Legion and the Young Democrats Club.⁴⁷

Somehow Clement found time to devote to additional civic activities. While State Commander of the Tennessee Division of the American Legion, Clement served as State Chairman of the Tennessee Chapter of the Infantile Paralysis, Incorporated, for the second year. Using the American Legion as the spearhead for the State's March of Dimes, Clement engaged all military units within Tennessee to aid in this Drive. Tennessee contributed \$750,000 to the March of Dimes under Clement's chairmanship, the largest amount ever collected at that time.⁴⁸

Frank Clement's numerous activities did not go unnoticed. On March 17, 1948, Clement's name was placed in nomination by the Dickson Junior Chamber of Commerce for the State's "Outstanding Young Man of

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Larson, op. cit., p. 124.

the Year" award for his civic achievements throughout Tennessee since his return from World War II. Frank Clement received the award from the Tennessee State Junior Chamber of Commerce in the summer of the same year.⁴⁹

It was apparent that Frank Clement used his activities in these organizations to their maximum personal benefit. Clement's participation in civic affairs should not be construed as totally politically motivated. However Frank Clement did achieve statewide publicity because of his multiple civic activities and Clement's face and name could be found in major newspapers across the State wherever and whenever he appeared in behalf of any of the organizations mentioned. Also Clement was not so naive as to believe that such activities would not render the public recognition so vital to the success of a political candidate.

McCord Administration

Governor James Nance McCord was seeking re-election in 1946. While on the campaign trail, McCord stopped in Dickson, Tennessee, to deliver the usual campaign speech. There was nothing special about this scheduled stop according to the Governor's agenda. But as McCord was sitting on the platform waiting to deliver the perfunctory speech, he watched and listened to a young Democrat from Dickson introduce McCord. This was not the usual introduction, for there was a special and unique quality about the young man and his speaking ability. This young man was Frank Clement, a twenty-six year old member of the Young Democrats Club. McCord, a former auctioneer and seasoned public speaker, realized

⁴⁹Personal Papers, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

that he had found a man that would be an asset to his campaign and, perhaps, to his Administration. McCord encouraged Clement to join his campaign troupe which Frank readily did. Clement knew that it would be personally advantageous to be aligned with the State's current Administration which, incidentally, had the backing of the State's strongest political machine headed by Edward "Boss" Crump of Memphis.

Frank Clement quickly jumped on the McCord bandwagon and, being a leading figure in the Young Democrats Club, Clement brought with him the Club's official endorsement of McCord.⁵⁰

James McCord, a seasoned politician wise to the accepted patronage policies of the Democrat Party, won the Primary Election in August, 1946, and, in Tennessee, such a victory almost assured the Democrat candidate success in the November General Election. Frank Clement had campaigned hard for McCord and such diligence and devotion did not go unrewarded. Within days after the Primary Election, Governor McCord appointed Frank Clement to the position of General Counsel for the State Railroad and Public Utilities Commission,⁵¹ a prestigious position in Tennessee.

General Counsel For The State Railroad
And Public Utilities Commission

Governor McCord's appointment was a windfall opportunity for Frank Clement of which he took full advantage. Clement served in this position, often referred to as a "hot spot," for four years, from 1946 until 1950. It was through this position that Clement gained the reputation as

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

"champion of the people."⁵²

With an aggressive manner, Chief Counsel Clement attacked the railroads and public utilities in several rate increase fights. In one case in particular, Clement, the youngest General Counsel in the history of the Commission, stole the spotlight with the help of his father and received widespread publicity when he advised the Commission to invoke a law that previously had never been implemented and had been virtually ignored. A rate increase request by Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company had been rejected by the Commission. The Company obtained an injunction against the Commission's decision and the rate increase went into effect. On August 1, 1947, Clement appealed directly to a Justice of the State Supreme Court who overruled the lower court and revoked the injunction. This order saved the State's citizens approximately \$6,500,000.⁵³

Frank Clement's success quickly came to the attention of adjoining states that were having similar rates disputes. In an unprecedented move, Georgia and Alabama retained Clement as legal advisor in these disputes at the same time Clement was on the Tennessee State payroll. Clement was well rewarded for his legal services to the neighboring states. Georgia, for instance, paid Clement \$100 a day for one hundred twenty-six days of legal service. Neither state was dissatisfied with Clement's performance or the disposition of the rates cases, which, incidentally, he won.⁵⁴

⁵²Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

⁵³Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-451, 4-10), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁵⁴Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

In 1950, upon the suggestion of his own political advisors, Frank Clement tendered his resignation as the State Railroad and Public Utilities Commission's General Counsel so that he could return to Dickson and the private law practice with his father during which time Frank Clement could prepare for his own gubernatorial campaign.⁵⁵

The Railroad and Public Utilities Commissioners honored Clement as he prepared to leave his position with the Commission. An important hearing had been scheduled before the Commission, but it was delayed so that the Commissioners could convene in a nearby courtroom to pay tribute to Frank Clement. After four years as General Counsel, Clement had won the respect and admiration of thousands of Tennesseans. During the gathering one Commissioner observed that when he and his associates could not reach a decision that was satisfactory with each of them, ". . . we would all agree that we should talk to Frank about it."⁵⁶ Often Clement's advice in such matters opened the door to the necessary solutions.

Clement For Governor?

It is not surprising that as early as 1949 Frank Clement's name was often mentioned as a possible candidate for the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary in August, 1950. James McCord would be prohibited from running for a fourth term and many Democrats were looking for a candidate that could successfully oppose former Governor Gordon Browning. Perhaps 1950 was too soon for Clement to enter a political race of this caliber and he may have needed more time and grooming before meeting the opposition of a

⁵⁵Parmental, op. cit.

⁵⁶Personal Papers, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

seasoned politician.

Nonetheless, Clement supporters began circulating petitions for Clement's candidacy and it appeared as though a Clement campaign was thoroughly organized. Clement did not make known his well-laid plans for the Governorship at this time. Instead on June 8, 1950, he rejected the offer of his supporters by stating:

It is indeed flattering that so many of my fellow citizens would sign qualifying petitions for me even though they knew that I had no intention of making the race (for Governor).

I accepted the position of State Commander of the American Legion in July, 1949, and at no time has it been my intention to resign (as State Commander) until my term has expired.⁵⁷

Interestingly, the Primary Election was scheduled for August 3, 1950, and Clement's term as State Commander would expire on August 29, 1950. If Clement truly wanted to enter the political race, surely the mere total of twenty-six days would have had little, if any, effect on his position with the American Legion. Perhaps there were other extenuating circumstances that motivated Clement's decision.

The "odds" in 1950 were against Clement. As popular as he may have been at the time Clement definitely would have been the "underdog" in an election without any strong and clear issues. Although ambitious, Frank Clement needed to be patient; to lose the first election he entered would almost certainly have meant the end of his dream to be Governor. The risk was too great in 1950, and it was preferable for Clement to wait until he could reduce the "odds" and minimize the risk.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Chapter III

"GIVE ME YOUR PRAYERS"

Kitchen Cabinet

Through his civic and political activities in the late 1940's, Frank Clement had gained the support and confidence of a small group of prominent Democrats. This group became known as Clement's "kitchen cabinet." This intimate group was made up of Leslie Hart, a columnist for the Nashville Banner, who kept Clement in the headlines; G. Edward Friar, a Knoxville attorney with personal gubernatorial ambitions, who wrote many of Clement's speeches; Mrs. Jeane Bodfish, a political science instructor at Vanderbilt University; and Robert S. Clement, Frank's father. Clement's chief advisor and political manipulator was Buford Ellington, a future Tennessee Governor.⁵⁸

Clement's unofficial cabinet shared with Clement his ambitions, goals and confidences. Nothing exemplifies this more than the time schedule for Clement's political career that was created by Frank and his close friends prior to the election in 1952. This political timetable was as follows:

- 1952: Clement to be elected Governor of Tennessee.
- 1954: Clement to be re-elected Governor of Tennessee.
- 1956: Clement to be named Keynote for the Democratic National Convention and nominated for the Vice Presidency.
- 1958: If Clement was not Vice President at this time, he would be elected to the United States Senate.

⁵⁸

Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

1960: Clement would be nominated and elected President of the United States.⁵⁹

The "kitchen cabinet" helped guide Frank Clement in his pursuit of the Governorship. They helped plan his personal appearances, formulate his political philosophy and helped refine his campaign technique. Frank and his astute political planners were able to convert what initially appeared to be an obstacle to their timetable into an advantageous opportunity for Clement and his career was not sidetracked.

When Clement resigned as General Counsel for the State Railroad and Public Utilities Commission, his advisors originally planned to use the time to solidify Clement's support across the State. However world affairs were oblivious to Frank Clement's timetable for his arrival at the Tennessee Executive Mansion. The Korean Conflict, the first major military clash of the cold war, appeared to be an obstacle since many politicians and would-be politicians across the nation were donning military uniforms.

Could Frank Clement afford to ignore the patriotic call and continue with his original schedule?

The "kitchen cabinet" realized that Frank Clement's political career would be seriously handicapped if Clement did not participate in the Korean Conflict in some manner. Thus with careful planning, Clement and his advisors were able to change a possible obstacle into a profitable investment for Frank Clement.

On the surface, it would appear that Frank Clement achieved the realization of his childhood dream without the aid of others. On the

⁵⁹Parmental, op. cit.

contrary, Clement could not have been politically successful without the advice, guidance and devotion of his "kitchen cabinet."

Korean Conflict

As devastating as war may be, the Korean Conflict offered Frank Clement with another opportunity to bolster his popularity.

On September 14, 1950, Clement announced that he had been recalled to active duty in the United States Army. As before, Clement was not assigned to overseas duty. He was stationed at Ft. Gordon, Georgia, where he served in the Military Police teaching law. It would seem to be more than a coincidence that Clement was stationed so close to his home State which provided him with the opportunity to return to Tennessee on a frequent and regular basis. Being in uniform again did not prevent Clement from continuing his political activities in Tennessee. Clement spent as much time as possible in Tennessee while he was in the Army.⁶⁰

When Clement announced that he had been called back to active military duty, he dramatically declared, "I shall return."⁶¹

Clement did return and often. Clement was able to leave his military duties long enough to continue his civic and political activities as though he had no other responsibilities. While in uniform, Clement journeyed to each of Tennessee's ninety-five counties to officiate in the opening of the counties' "Clement For Governor" Headquarters.⁶²

⁶⁰William Davis, "Frank Clement: The First Campaign," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Robert M. McBride, Editor, Vol. XXXV, p. 86.

⁶¹Personal Papers, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

⁶²Davis, op. cit.

Frank Clement, dressed in his Army uniform, looked quite impressive in the frequent political publicity he received.⁶³

Clement was discharged from the Army just before Christmas, 1951, long before the end of the Korean Conflict.⁶⁴

If Frank Clement did not serve the military well during the Korean Conflict, as some observers claimed, the military and the Korean Conflict did serve Frank Clement well.

1952 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary

Campaign and Election

On September 14, 1950, Frank Goad Clement announced that he was definitely a candidate for the Democratic nomination for Governor of Tennessee subject to the August Primary of 1952.⁶⁵

It was highly unusual for a politician to announce his candidacy almost two years before the election. In his nine hundred word statement, Clement gave two reasons for announcing his candidacy so early. First, Clement had received orders to return to active duty with the United States Army "for a period of twenty-one months, unless sooner terminated" thus he might not be available to make the announcement at the expected time. Second, Clement had received:

. . . hundreds of requests from citizens throughout Tennessee offering to manage my campaign, asking for permission to work for me and insisting that I make my announcement before departure for military service. These rank and file citizens . . . insist that

⁶³ Frank Goad Clement, Scrapbook, Frank Goad Clement Foundation, Dickson, Tennessee.

⁶⁴ Davis, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Nashville Banner, September 14, 1950, 1:3.

unless I make an announcement myself while I am still free to do so that confusion and doubt will surround any actions in my behalf.⁶⁶

Clement said that he realized an early announcement would give his potential opponents two years in which to develop campaigns against him. Furthermore, Clement continued,

. . . I in particular will be at a disadvantage since I will be away from Tennessee and unable to protect myself.⁶⁷

However, Clement said that he was "glad to provide nearly two years" for his record to be checked closely. It was Clement's contention that the voters were entitled to be aware of the facts surrounding his candidacy.⁶⁸

Needless to say, Clement did not have to concern himself with an extended absence from Tennessee. Because, as it has been stated, Clement's return to the Army did not hinder his campaign schedule. In fact, Clement began the year of 1952 by ". . . almost walking the State of Tennessee, campaigning, getting ready for the Democratic Primary."⁶⁹ By the end of May, 1952, Clement had established campaign headquarters in each of Tennessee's ninety-five counties and had opened his State Campaign Headquarters in Nashville at the Hermitage Hotel.

Candidate Clement's first appearance. On May 31, 1952, Frank Goad Clement officially opened his campaign for the Democratic nomination

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Frank Goad Clement, Interview held September 9, 1969, for the Department of Oral History, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

for Governor in Gallatin, Tennessee.

Attired in a blue suit and white shirt, Frank Clement entered Gallatin in a motorcade of new cars from Nashville. Clement delivered an hour long speech even though he was facing the sun and the temperature was high. His speech was carried across the State via a fourteen radio station network.⁷⁰

Clement's opening speech resembled a legal brief charging Governor Gordon Browning with ten counts of political wrongdoing. The charges did not give specific facts. Clement promised to prove these charges in the future campaign. The charges given by Clement were as follows:

- Count One: Political 'profiteering' at the taxpayers' expense.
- Count Two: Waste and extravagance with public funds.
- Count Three: Failure to enforce State laws.
- Count Four: Willful violation of State laws.
- Count Five: Neglect of Tennessee's unfortunates.
- Count Six: Use of a dangerous pardons policy.
- Count Seven: Political promises had been broken.
- Count Eight: Domination of the State Government by a political 'profiteer.'
- Count Nine: Disregard for competitive bidding on State projects.
- Count Ten: General corruption, graft and favoritism for a few individuals.⁷¹

Even though Clement leveled each charge against Governor Browning, Clement stated, "At the outset let it be understood that there is no personal animosity on my part toward . . . Browning."⁷² Initially, perhaps, there was no animosity, but as the campaign progressed, harsh feelings and statements would be made by both Clement and Browning.

⁷⁰Nashville Banner, June 1, 1952, 1:3.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

Although there were other candidates for the impending election, the campaign centered around Clement and Browning. A third candidate was Clifford Allen, a Nashville attorney and restaurant owner. Clifford Pierce was another candidate. Pierce was from Memphis where he was a businessman, lawyer and farmer. Interestingly, Frank Clement was the only political novice in the race.

Frank Clement promised Tennessee voters that as Governor he would create an administration of constructive progress for all the people. His program opposed any tax increase, but it favored increased aid for the aged, blind, dependent children, free textbooks for all public school students, and a salary increase for Tennessee's teachers. All of this would be made possible by eliminating unnecessary political appointees and a reduction of administrative overhead. If elected, Clement promised:

I will institute a purchasing system under which every businessman in Tennessee will have a fair and equal opportunity to bid on State purchases and contracts.⁷³

Other planks of Clement's platform were the establishment of a permanent rural road program; the creation of a merit system under which all State employees would work; the employment of only "trained and competent personnel" for the State Department of Finance; and the re-vamping of the highway patrol under "a strict and workable civil service."⁷⁴

Interestingly, Clement included a transportation plank in his platform in which he firmly stated:

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

I am not committed to the raising of truck weight limits nor to the lowering of railroad assessments nor to the elimination of a specific tax on aviation gasoline.⁷⁵

This one plank foreshadowed the end of Clement's "honeymoon" with State Legislators and with some citizens after Clement became Governor.

Political backing. Frank Clement needed financial backing for his gubernatorial campaign. Hart and Friar, from his unofficial cabinet, promised to get Clement such support. Robert Crichton, a Nashville-based coal and interstate truck operator agreed to pick up the tab for Clement's campaign, and, in doing so, Crichton became the newest member of the "kitchen cabinet." Crichton even guaranteed a large campaign chest from the coffers of the trucking industry. According to Crichton, he would supply the finances, though, only after being assured that he would receive a "consideration" from the Clement Administration.⁷⁶

Mrs. Bodfish expressed surprise and was somewhat disillusioned by Clement's alleged agreement with Crichton.⁷⁷ This disillusionment would deepen as the crack appeared in the knight's shining armor and revealed a mortal human being. However this would take a few years and, in the meantime, Clement's staunchest supporters would remain devoted to his campaign.

"Bossism." Initially, it appeared that the 1952 Democratic

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Parmental, op. cit.

⁷⁷Ibid.

Gubernatorial Race had no clear-cut issue and some critics claimed Frank Clement's candidacy was not to be taken seriously because the youthful attorney was hard pressed for "legitimate" issues.⁷⁸

As the campaign progressed, one of the issues to come to light concerned the political machine of "Boss" Crump of Memphis. Supporters of Governor Browning accused Clement of contradictions in his statements. Clement continuously expressed his opposition to political corruption, specially the corruption employed by the Browning faction. However, according to his critics, Clement was corrupting himself by accepting the backing of the infamous Crump machine.⁷⁹ Browning and his forces described Clement as a mere "puppet-boy" being manipulated by "Boss" Crump in an attempt by Crump to gain control of Tennessee's election machinery.⁸⁰ During the campaign, Browning was fond of saying:

Crump placed his hands on this young man's head and said, 'Blessings on thee little man; go out and preach the gospel of election reforms in my name.'⁸¹

According to Gordon Browning, the only issue of the entire campaign was "bossism versus freedom" with the Governor being the stalwart defender of freedom.⁸²

However, history sheds a more objective light on the matter. In 1952, Governor Browning characterized himself as the "champion of

⁷⁸Nashville Tennessean, June 1, 1952, 16:1.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1952, 1:6.

⁸¹Nashville Banner, August 2, 1952, 1:6.

⁸²Ibid.

anti-bossism."⁸³ But in 1938, apparently Browning was not so strongly opposed to the existence of political machines, because Browning sought and received the support of Crump. Through the years, Browning and Crump had become vehement adversaries. As an illustration, in the last days of the 1952 campaign, Browning declared that Crump was "making his last dying wiggle (similar to a snake) to get back into power" by endorsing Frank Clement.⁸⁴ In turn, Crump often stated publicly, "There are thirty-seven pictures of Judas Iscariot. No two look alike, but each one favors Gordon Browning."⁸⁵

Actually, Frank Clement was not a hand-picked Crump candidate in 1952, but Browning was a hand-picked Crump enemy.⁸⁶

Soon after Frank Clement became Governor in 1953, Clement and Crump broke their political ties. Each had been successful in achieving their individual goals; Clement won the election and Crump had aided in Browning's defeat.

Memorial Hotel purchase. Perhaps one of the biggest issues in the 1952 Election centered around the purchase of the Memorial Hotel by the Browning Administration. The State obtained this Nashville building under a cloak of secrecy. The structure was extensively renovated and became an office building that was used by the State Government.

Allegedly, Governor Browning signed an agreement on behalf of

⁸³Davis, op. cit.

⁸⁴Nashville Banner, August 2, 1952, 1:6.

⁸⁵Parmental, op. cit, p. 115.

⁸⁶Davis, op. cit.

the State of Tennessee to lease the Memorial Hotel building from Cumberland Properties, Incorporated. This lease was signed three weeks prior to the purchase of the building by Cumberland Properties, Incorporated. The purchasing corporation was controlled by a small group of entrepreneurs who were also close associates of Browning. Cumberland Properties, Incorporated, purchased the Memorial Hotel for \$625,000. Before the ink was dry on the title deed, the corporation sold the building to the State for \$1,700,000.

Shortly after the sale, the Cumberland Properties corporation supposedly surrendered its charter to the Secretary of State and its chief members disbanded.

When questioned about the impending purchase, Browning would not reveal the details; however he did state that he had obtained a legal opinion from a private law firm concerning the constitutionality of Browning's purchase on behalf of the State. According to the private law firm, Browning's actions could be considered proper.

However during the campaign, Frank Clement obtained and publicly released a letter from State Attorney General Roy H. Beeler that refuted Browning's declaration that the Memorial Hotel purchase was constitutional. Late in the campaign, Beeler revealed that prior to the actual purchase he had rendered two separate opinions advising the Governor that Browning was "wholly without authority to acquire the Memorial Hotel." The Governor rejected the Attorney General's opinions and committed the State to the purchase.⁸⁷

State motor pool. Frank Clement introduced another issue into

⁸⁷Nashville Banner, August 4, 1952, 1:8.

the 1952 Gubernatorial Election to emphasize his charge that Governor Browning was wasteful and extravagant with public funds. Clement claimed Browning's Administration was "well-wheeled" and had purchased 1,250 cars that represented approximately \$3,000,000 of the taxpayers' money. According to Clement, these cars were equipped with "hydromatic drive, radios, white sidewall tires, nylon seat covers and other expensive gadgets designed for beauty and comfort." These luxurious automobiles far exceeded that of the vehicles owned by most Tennesseans, according to Clement.⁸⁸

It is interesting to note that Frank Clement rode in a motorcade consisting of new automobiles similar to the cars described above when he traveled to Gallatin to open officially his campaign.

The young Dickson attorney promised, if elected, he would dispose of these extravagant automobiles and replace them with vehicles that would simply provide transportation and maintain only the minimum number of cars necessary. Clement emphasized the promise when he stated, "In my Administration, no State Commissioner will ride in a car above the level of a Ford, Chevrolet or Plymouth."⁸⁹

After he became Governor, Clement at least partially fulfilled his campaign pledge. A well-advertised auction was held at Nashville's War Memorial Square at which forty-four State owned automobiles were to be sold. Each of the cars had been washed and polished by inmates of the State Penitentiary. Governor Clement began and ended the event by

⁸⁸ Nashville Tennessean, June 1, 1952, 1:3.

⁸⁹ "Action by Auction," Time, Vol. 61, May 11, 1953, p. 27.

auctioning the first and last cars personally. Clement was joined on the platform by former Governor McCord, an experienced auctioneer.

Because the carnival spirit of the auction made for free spending, Clement and his friends sold the cars for bids well above local retail prices for comparable used cars. The average age of the forty-four cars was approximately four years. One seven year old car sold for \$1,065.00.

One used car dealer had traveled to Nashville in hopes of finding a bargain at the auction. Dejected, the dealer bitterly observed, "I didn't make a single bid. Bidding started off at prices I would consider tops."⁹⁰

The auction rid the State of forty-four cars, but Clement had implied previously that the excess number of automobiles was far greater. Had Governor Browning truly been too extravagant with State funds?

Attempted fraud? As the Primary Election date neared, the campaign became more heated. An eleventh hour issue was the possibility of fraudulent election returns. As Governor, Browning was considered the leader of the party's traditional patronage system. Each county's election commission was composed of Browning supporters. Allegedly there were attempts in several counties to assure a Browning victory.

Using what appeared to be genuine documents Frank Clement declared, "Never in the history of Tennessee has there been such an all-out effort to control an election." To give credibility to his charge, Clement released to the news media copies of absentee ballots in Lawrence County that were mailed with attached notes instructing voters

⁹⁰Ibid.

to mark their ballots for Gordon Browning. In Polk County the chairman of the election commission, an opponent of Browning's alleged tactics, was supposedly assassinated because he had repeatedly refused to stuff the ballot boxes in behalf of Browning. Clement produced a handwritten letter from the chairman to his brother which described the pressure he was under as well as the fear he felt. In another county, sample ballots were distributed throughout the area and each indicated a vote for Gordon Browning.⁹¹

Tennessee politics had a tendency to be tough, gaudy and fraudulent. Browning's alleged actions were not without precedent.⁹² However in 1952, Clement's campaign strategy did not resemble the old style. By employing his legal training, Clement's charges were persuasive and Governor Browning, a student of Tennessee's old political school, knew of no way to counterattack effectively.

1952 Democratic National Convention. Gordon Browning was chairman of the Tennessee delegation to the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 1952. Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver was a candidate for the Presidential nomination and had the support of the northern liberals. In an effort to help Kefauver secure the nomination, the liberals and Browning led a move to prevent the Virginia delegation from being formally seated at the Convention. When the question was placed to a vote before the entire Convention Browning convinced the Tennessee delegation to cast its vote against permitting the Virginians to be officially

⁹¹Nashville Banner, August 2, 1952, 3:1.

⁹²Parmental, op. cit.

seated. The delegates from Virginia did not participate in the Convention and Estes Kefauver was unsuccessful in his bid for the Presidential nomination.

Governor Browning's voluntary alignment with the northern liberals against Virginia angered Tennesseans and this became an issue in the 1952 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary. Also Browning's opponents did not have to fan the flames in this issue.⁹³

Tennessee found itself in strange company because of Browning's actions at the Convention. Tennessee's conservative soul found itself surrounded by northern liberals and the leftwing of the Democrat Party and many Tennesseans apparently resented these strange bedfellows. Even though Tennessee was a progressive State with growing industrialization and strong liberal factions, Tennesseans considered themselves Southerners. The State's social and cultural heritage identified with the South.

Tennesseans, in general, were dismayed when Browning had, in effect, insulted their neighbor and fellow southern State. There was strong Browning opposition to the Governor in East Tennessee after the Democratic National Convention. Even Tennessee liberals resented the interference of northern elements.⁹⁴

Gordon Browning and his supporters began to feel the resentment of East Tennesseans immediately after his return from the Convention. Browning's campaign equipment was a target for the resentment. In Manchester, two sound trucks were ticketed for an obscure parking violation and in an adjoining county the trucks were stopped and cited

⁹³Mary Mostert, "Tennessee's Verdict," Nation, August 23, 1952.

⁹⁴Ibid.

for playing "hillbilly music too loud."⁹⁵

Browning rallies were crowdless even though each rally had been well advertised and offered large amounts of free food. East Tennessee's opinion was summed up by an Oak Ridge resident who remarked that Browning "did Mr. Clement the biggest favor he ever could."⁹⁶

Some observers had expressed the view that perhaps this was the issue that actually defeated Gordon Browning. Tennesseans considered Browning a scalawag and they did not want their Governor, whoever he might be, too closely associated with the North. Tennessee "would rather lead the South than follow the North."⁹⁷

Too young? Frank Clement's opponents attempted to make an issue of Clement's youth. He was just thirty-two years of age at the time of the election and many thought Clement was too young and inexperienced to be Governor. To such criticism, Clement responded:

If that is the only fault you can find, you'd better vote for me. I can outgrow that but my opponents can't outgrow their faults.⁹⁸

Mudslinging. The 1952 Gubernatorial campaign was not without the mudslinging, a traditional ingredient in Tennessee politics. As the campaign reached its climax, the two principal candidates hurled statements at one another as though they were participating in a

⁹⁵Nashville Banner, August 1, 1952, 1:4.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Mostert, op. cit.

⁹⁸"The Electrifier," Harper's Magazine, Volume 210:1258, March, 1955, p. 49.

physical brawl.

For example, Governor Browning often was heard describing Clement as a man who ". . . wouldn't know which end of the mule to put a collar on if he was called upon to plow"99 Browning's statement eluded to Clement's youth and inexperience.

A "Let's Think" Forum was held at the Andrew Jackson Hotel May 1, 1952. Representatives of the aspirants were invited to give the qualifications of their respective candidates. An audience of four hundred was permitted to ask questions and they expressed their opinions of answers with cheers and jeers.¹⁰⁰

Edward Friar, Clement's representative, lambasted Browning for accepted support from the Crump Machine in 1936 and 1938. Friar described Clement as a young man whose "standards of ethics are far superior to that of any of his opponents."¹⁰¹ It is rather contradictory that Friar criticized Browning for being a Crump-supported candidate in the past while Clement would receive Crump's aid and endorsement in 1952. Also, the reference to Clement's ethics would seem to be an inference that the other candidates were dishonest and untrustworthy.

Browning frequently attacked Clement's military record declaring, "at his (Clement's) own request (he) stayed right here in the United States. . . . He has not hear a shot fired in anger yet. He was home good and safe." Browning and his supporters tried to use Clement's

⁹⁹Nashville Banner, August 2, 1952, 1:6.

¹⁰⁰Nashville Tennessean, May 2, 1952, 1:4.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

military career against the challenger. However this strategy was not effective. Veterans, such as Bill Morgan of Nashville, who had served overseas in World War II, did not find this as a detriment to Clement's candidacy.¹⁰²

Some staunch Browning supporters, such as publisher James Stahlman, were highly critical of Clement and even distrusted the future Governor because of the way he dressed. Stahlman said that Clement looked like a mountaineer dressed for his first visit to a big city in his dark blue suit and tan shoes and a man that would dress like that could not command the respect and votes needed to be Governor.¹⁰³

Primary election results. Five days before the election, Governor Browning knew his chances of winning were growing slimmer and at the same time, Clement's chances of winning were growing greater. But Browning was still expressing confidence as though he was the only candidate on the ballot. While in troubled East Tennessee, Browning told one reporter, "I've got this thing won hands down. Everything seems to be in good shape."¹⁰⁴

On August 7, 1952, Tennessee voters went to the polls in unprecedented numbers. Early the next morning, it was clear that Gordon Browning would be vacating the Executive's Mansion. In fact, Browning's cohorts were heard to say, "If the campaign had lasted two more weeks, Browning would have voted against himself."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Parmental, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴Nashville Banner, August 1, 1952, 1:4.

¹⁰⁵Martin, op. cit.

The Democratic Gubernatorial Primary Election results were as follows:

Frank Clement	272,482
Gordon Browning	219,775
Clifford Allen	94,229
Clifford Pierce	22,756

The Clement train was right on schedule, bringing to Tennessee a new type of politics filled with vitality and a sense of credibility. Gordon Browning ushered out an era when elections were won with a campaign style dominated by mudslinging and "real" issues were given only token attention.

1952 Gubernatorial Campaign And

General Election

As stated before, in Tennessee, victory in the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary usually is tantamount with winning the General Election three months later. This is not to say that Clement did not have opposition in the General Election.

The Republican Party nominated R. Beecher Witt from Madisonville, Tennessee.

Clement and Witt did participate in what usually is considered a perfunctory campaign, even though the Primary Election results almost assured Clement a victory.

The year of 1952 was also a year in which the nation would elect a President and a Vice President. The national election overshadowed Tennessee's election of a Governor and campaigns throughout the State

concentrated predominantly on the Presidential candidates and their running mates.

However, Frank Clement was not campaigning just to win the Governorship in 1952. He also was campaigning to keep each phase of his timetable on schedule. Thus in sixty days, Clement traveled approximately 50,000 miles in his pursuit of his political goals, taking with him the same characteristics that had helped him win the Primary Election.

Tennesseans were well acquainted with Frank Clement; he had been on the campaign trail for almost two years. Clement was very personable and well liked throughout the State. Clement's wife and two young sons were photogenic and well received on the campaign trail. Clement was very much aware of his family's political value. Often Clement introduced himself, saying, "I want you to meet Cile; once you know her, you'll like me."¹⁰⁷

Campaigning with a theme of honesty, decency and morality in government, Clement stumped the State singing hymns and saying prayers. Several times Clement was asked, if elected, could he resolve within himself any contradiction that might arise between politics and his personal religious beliefs. Clement always answered with conviction, "If a man finds his religion and his politics in conflict, then its time to change his politics."¹⁰⁸

Frank Clement would make as many as six one hour speeches in one day. The candidate would deliver each political speech with equal

¹⁰⁷Time, Volume 68, July 23, 1956, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁸Martin, op. cit.

fervor and end the recitation with a fifteen minute peroration that was purely religious in tone. With conviction, Clement would say:

Once, in this world, a lonely Figure climbed a cross-marked hill--and went from this into an airless tomb. He was the foe of lies, dishonor, theft and treachery. He was the champion of truth, honor, faith and bravery. It is my fervent prayer, for myself, that I can so live as to be worthy of His sacrifice. . . . Even if you cannot find it in your heart to give me your vote, I beg you to give me your prayers.

Clement would conclude with a benediction:

May the good Lord bless you, and keep you, and make his light shine upon you, until we meet again.¹⁰⁹

Then Clement would jump into his car and as his caravan drove off in the distance, strains of popular hymns could be heard from the candidate's sound truck. The effect of Clement's religious oration, benediction and hymns was awesome to the people of Tennessee, a traditional Bible-belt State.

Clement's stumping technique was like no other in Tennessee and it brought success to Clement. In elections in the years to come, Clement would do little to change the style that became synonymous with his name.

1952 Gubernatorial General Election

On November 8, 1952, Tennesseans once again went to the polls in record numbers. They were electing a President, Vice President, United States Senator, United States Representatives as well as a Governor. Also the voters had to decide if there was a need for a Limited Constitutional Convention in order to amend Tennessee's Con-

stitution.

The voters left no doubt about their choice for Tennessee's Chief Executive. Frank Goad Clement received the largest majority of votes ever cast for a gubernatorial candidate in the history of the State. The results were:

Frank Clement	479,628
R. Beecher Witt	136,371 ¹¹⁰

Tennessee had a new Governor and he brought with him a new era in the State.

Chapter IV

"PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD"

The Governor-Elect

Frank Clement was scheduled to be inaugurated as Tennessee's Governor on January 15, 1953. Clement did not totally relax between the General Election and the inauguration. The Governor-elect remained active and available to the public. Also Clement began to acquaint himself with some of the State's institutions. His presence at these facilities made quite an impression on the general public which was informed through the news media, and the institutions' residents were also impressed to see the next Governor.

As an illustration, Clement visited the State Penitentiary before taking office. The occasion was described extensively in the prison newspaper. In part, the newspaper reported:

After being shown through the institution by Warden Swafford, the Governor-elect amazed the inmates by eating on the "mainline" in the messhall. Mr. Clement is not the type who has his picture taken with a heaped-up tray of specially prepared food, and, then, after the photographers have finished pushes the tray aside. The Governor-elect accepted the same cabbage, beans, and cornbread that were (served) to the prisoners and he modestly sat in an inconspicuous corner while eating.

He also spent several hours talking with inmates of the prison.¹¹¹

According to the inmates, Clement's mannerism was characteristic of an essentially humble man.

Governor-elect Clement also toured one of Tennessee's mental

¹¹¹Larson, op. cit., p. 125.

institutions. During his impromptu tour, Clement noted his observations on a piece of scratch paper. He wrote:

It is true that the mentally ill in the Institutions are very badly neglected especially in the (Eastern State Hospital). The attendants are leaving this hospital because of long hours and small pay. They don't have enough attendants (to take) care of the patients. They have to use broken down chairs with springs broken and the patients ruin their clothes.¹¹²

These visits had a profound effect on Frank Clement. The mentally ill and prison inmates would receive a great deal of attention from the Governor.

While Governor-elect in late 1952, Clement also vacationed with his family and prepared for his inauguration as well as his first term as Governor of Tennessee.

Clement's First Administration

On January 15, 1953, Frank Goad Clement officially became Tennessee's youngest Governor. The inauguration followed special services at McKendree Methodist Church in Nashville. During the services, Clement prayed:

. . . I pray not for Frank Clement's personal success or glory . . . I pray instead . . . in the words of Solomon: Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?¹¹³

After the church service which was a Clement innovation, Governor-

¹¹²Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-451, 3-4), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹¹³Emmett Maum, "The Man Who Runs Tennessee," Scripture Press Foundation, (James R. Adair, Editor, Chicago, Illinois), July 18, 1954, p. 2.

elect Frank Clement proceeded to the State Capitol Building to take the Oath of Office.

In his Inaugural Address, Clement stressed six points, each of which were compatible with his campaign theme of honesty, decency and morality.

First, Clement confessed that it was very difficult for him to deny personal requests of many of his supporters and friends. Although it was difficult, Clement did and would continue to say no to all pleas.

Second, the young Governor pledged to help the residents of the State's mental institutions.

To provide help for the underprivileged, the neglected, and the feeble-minded in Tennessee was Clement's third promise.

Clement's fourth pledge was to increase Tennessee's financial aid to the education of the State's children.

Fifth, Frank Clement guaranteed "equal rights for all and special privileges to none. . . ."

Sixth, Clement promised to personally ". . . live by a rigid code of honesty, decency and morality. . . ."114

The State of Tennessee's new Governor could now embark on his official political career.

Truck weight controversy. One of the major campaign issues in 1952 concerned legally raising the maximum weight permitted a truck on Tennessee's highways. Clement opponents charged that his association

114 Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 4-34), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

with Robert Crichton indicated that Clement was indebted to the trucking industry. Obviously, such charges were denied by Clement.

On February 25, 1953, Governor Clement addressed the Tennessee General Assembly during which time he stated, in part:

Both of us, you and I, must consider the proposal (truck weight increase) on a scientific, engineering basis, bearing, in mind the need for whatever transportation progress is possible: As related to and in conjunction with the allied problems of safety on the highways and damage to, and impairment of our present highway system.

Furthermore, the trucking industry deserved equal consideration. According to Clement:

Such an industry, affecting so many people to such a degree must be given a fair, impartial, unenflamed hearing.¹¹⁵

Governor Clement stated in his Address that he was not sponsoring or endorsing any legislation concerning a truck weight increase.

The next day, February 26, 1953, a bill was introduced in the General Assembly to increase the maximum truck load limit from 42,000 pounds to 55,980 pounds. There was strong lobbying for and against this legislation. Opponents to the bill were concerned with the bill's effect on Tennessee's crumbling highways and, subsequently, the safety on the State's roads. More importantly, opponents did not want the bill to be passed until a legislative hearing was conducted. Further opposition came from the railroad companies. Obviously, the trucking industry was lobbying with all its forces in hopes the bill passed the General Assembly.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-5), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹¹⁶"Tennessee Trucks," Newsweek, 41:43, March 16, 1953.

On February 28, 1953, the General Assembly passed the bill and sent the legislation to the Executive Office where the Governor signed the bill into law. Such speed by the General Assembly and the Governor led to speculation that, perhaps, there was something amiss in this matter.

Governor Clement received a great deal of criticism for signing the bill and not vetoing it. Citizens across the State wrote the Governor and voice their disapproval. Some letters expressed dismay because of highway safety. However most of the criticism centered around Clement and his pledge for honesty in government.

Frank Clement's mail contained many letters that expressed such disapproval. Examples of the correspondence were:

. . . you are about as good a politician as your predecessor. . . .

. . . (I) lost faith in your Administration. . . .

One letter was addressed to "Frank (Trucker-boy) Clement" and the writer said,

Now that you have paid off your debt to the trucking interests you will really have something to pray for You can pray . . . to the devil, for you seem to be in his power.¹¹⁷

It would seem only natural for some individuals to assume that Frank Clement was repaying campaign debts in lights of the fact that former Governor Browning had repeatedly expressed opposition to an increased truck weight. Also, Clement's campaign received large financial contributions from the trucking industry and one of the in-

¹¹⁷ Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-5), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

dustry's leaders, Robert Crichton, was a political friend of the Governor.

However, many Tennesseans failed to remember Clement's many statements referring to political favoritism. On several occasions throughout the campaign, Clement firmly stated:

The Chief Executive of this State cannot assume the Office with honor . . . if he is obligated to any individual, group or class of people to the exclusion or detriment of any other.¹¹⁸

Clement reaffirmed this concept in his Inaugural Address and his speech before the General Assembly. But the Governor felt compelled to explain his action concerning the truck weight legislation once again. Using the news media, Clement reiterated that he did not sponsor the bill nor did he interject himself into the matter while the bill was before the General Assembly. Clement's only recommendation was for the Legislature to hold public hearings before voting. Clement concluded:

We will enforce the law, and the limits will be higher on the books but lower on the roads . . . and that is what counts.¹¹⁹

However it would seem that Clement's arguments would have been more persuasive if he had not signed the legislation into law with such speed.

It is interesting to note that Gordon Browning used the truck weight increase as an issue in 1952 and would use it again in 1954. Browning professed that his opposition to the measure was because of its detrimental effect on Tennessee's highways. However, as Governor, Browning did little to improve the crumbling condition of the roads,

¹¹⁸ Nashville Tennessean, June 1, 1952, 1:3.

¹¹⁹ Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-5), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

whereas, under the Clement Administration, Tennessee's roads improved considerably. Thus, it would seem, the arguments against the truck weight legislation had little credibility.

Break with Crump Machine. It was only a matter of time before Frank Clement and "Boss" Crump would end their brief political affiliation. The union of Clement and Crump in 1952 had been made for the sole purpose of defeating Gordon Browning.

The controversy over the truck weight increase provided the opportunity for the dissolution. "Boss" Crump issued the statement:

I can't understand why all the rush (over trucking issue) denying open hearings. . . . There was too much talk of too much money concerning the trucking bill. . . .

I am against a man holding office, no matter who he is, that is not handling the public affairs open and aboveboard and carefully considering the interests of all the people. Clement has yet a chance to do good but he will have to change his line of thinking.

After consulting with his political aides, Clement cryptically responded:

The unfair, untruthful, and bitter blast is not of recent origin but is the result of an accumulation of incidents during which I have maintained my independence and refused to be intimidated.¹²⁰

Formally, the Clement-Crump alliance had ended in the traditional political "double-talk."

Economic program. In his Address before the Tennessee General Assembly on February 25, 1953, Governor Clement revealed the economic program that he desired. This plan was compatible with Clement's campaign promises. The Governor did not request any new taxes, but Clement

¹²⁰"Tennessee Trucks," op. cit.

did ask approval for a bond issue, approximately \$30,000,000, for projects that would improve the State's educational and mental health programs.¹²¹

During the last week of the General Assembly's term, it was agreed, after a stormy session, to approve the Governor's request for the bond issue with liquidation to begin in ten years.¹²²

Immediately upon taking Office, Frank Clement initiated investigations in the State's departments and agencies for the purpose of eliminating waste and establishing more efficient operating methods.

State purchasing. In keeping with one of his campaign promises, Governor Clement initiated a purchasing system under which all State purchases were made through competitive bidding open to all citizens who wished to participate. Thus Clement helped eliminate a great deal of political graft and profiteering.

Textbook program. During his campaign, Frank Clement promised that all public school children, grades one through twelve, would be furnished with free textbooks. The textbooks would be made available through economizing, efficiency and a bond issue with no new taxes.

Tennessee's students received free textbooks for the first time in the State's history in 1953. This single program greatly improved the educational standards within the State. The bond issue, originally projected to take more than ten years to liquidate, was retired in less than two years.

It was not Clement's intention for the State to bear the total

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

expense for this program, but the State would accept the major responsibility. Each school system was expected and, ultimately, required by law to share the financial burden of the textbooks.

Frank Clement was concerned about the education of Tennessee's children and he had pledged his Administration would provide a better education for each student. The Textbook program was a large step in this direction. Of all of Clement's successful projects, the free textbook program was the one that caught the attention of the nation.¹²³

Mental health program. Frank Clement introduced many innovative projects to Tennessee. But none was more important or gave Clement a greater sense of achievement than the mental health program initiated during his Administration.

When Clement became Governor, Tennessee's mental institutions were administered by the Department of Corrections which was under the direction of an electrician.¹²⁴

It was Clement's goal to establish a Department of Mental Health whose purpose would be to provide therapeutic care for Tennessee's mentally ill.

Ignoring citizens with this illness only permitted the disease to continue to grow and spread throughout society. Governor Clement once stated:

The very existence of our society, itself, dictates that we attack this deadly mental cancer, rather than merely

¹²³Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 3-12), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹²⁴Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 5, 1977.

(maintaining) a policy of containment through custodial care.¹²⁵

Victims of mental illness must not be punished and treated as inmates of prisons. Instead, according to Clement, this illness must be treated and cured by professionally trained and qualified personnel. Furthermore it was the responsibility of society in general to provide such treatment through State supported facilities.

Governor Clement realized constructive progress could be made in mental health if all the States pooled their resources. Clement introduced this concept at the Southern Governors' Conference on Mental Health in 1954. Tennessee's Governor proposed that the sixteen Southern States

. . . should establish a southern regional council on mental health training and research with a highly qualified staff to assist states to strengthen our training and research in mental health by consultation and advice. . . .¹²⁶

This proposal was adopted and implemented. Frank Clement was appointed Chairman of the Southern Regional Council. Each state contributed equal funds to finance the program.

The success of Clement's proposal can be gauged by the fact that other regions in the nation adopted the program for use outside the South. Often, Clement was called on to assist and advise other regional councils.

At the various mental health conferences and conventions Clement attended, much was said concerning building new facilities. This was not the solution to the problem as Clement noted:

¹²⁵Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 1-19), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹²⁶Ibid.

We must realize that instead of constructing more buildings to keep people "in"--we must find ways of keeping them "out" of our mental hospitals.¹²⁷

Under Governor Clement's guidance, Tennessee's citizens who suffered from mental illness were able to seek the professional care and treatment they deserved and, perhaps, for the first time, there was hope for the mentally ill to return to society as cured and functioning citizens. Mental illness had come out of the closet and was viewed in the same manner as any illness without undue embarrassment.

1953 Constitutional Convention

In the August, 1952, Election, the voters of Tennessee gave their consent to amend the State's Constitution. Thus delegates from across the State met in Nashville during the Spring of 1953.

It was the responsibility of this Convention to decide if the Governor's term should be lengthened. Tennessee's Constitution was amended to change the Governor's term from two years to four years. However, the newly amended Constitution specified that a Governor could not succeed himself, but there was no limit placed on the number of terms a Governor could serve.

Frank Clement, Governor at the time of the Constitutional Convention, favored the change. In his Inaugural Address on January 18, 1955, Clement stated the four year term would permit the Governor to be "assured of the opportunity of long range planning and uninterrupted service."¹²⁸

¹²⁷Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 4-12), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹²⁸Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 4-35), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

It would seem that a two year term would be a handicap for any Governor. Time would not permit the Chief Executive to carry through his campaign promises. For example, Clement was elected Governor in November, 1952; he was inaugurated in January, 1953; he officially opened his campaign for re-election in June, 1954; he was campaigning from June, 1954 until November, 1954. An incumbent cannot devote his entire attention on the duties of the Executive Office and expect to be re-elected. He would need time on the campaign trail. Thus, it would not be wrong to state that under the Constitution prior to 1953, a Governor only spent eighteen months off the campaign trail.

Therefore the amended Constitution was favored by not only Clement, but most Tennesseans as well.

Disbandment of the "Kitchen Cabinet"

Soon after Frank Clement became Governor in 1953, there was strife within Clement's inner circle. Edward Friar became the second most important person in the Administration and Clement supported Friar in the legislative election for the position of Secretary of State. Mrs. Jeanne Bodfish served as State Comptroller. Robert Crichton held no official position but he was elected treasurer of the Tennessee Democrat Party upon Clement's recommendation and he was still considered a political and personal friend of Frank Clement. Robert S. Clement worked closely with his son and frequently conferred with the Governor.

On the surface, there appeared to be no conflict within this group. As the year progressed the rift between the Governor and his friends grew beyond the point of reconciliation. As in any conflict of this nature, two versions of the story have evolved.

Edward Friar's version. Friar had aspired to be Governor and he expected to succeed Frank Clement with the Governor's help. Friar assumed that he would be Clement's closest advisor in the Executive Office. However the Governor chose to rely upon his father for close advice.

Robert Crichton viewed his association with the Governor as an opportunity to gain financial profit for himself and his friends. Robert S. Clement's presence prevented Crichton from giving the Governor financial advice.

Friar and Crichton disapproved of the senior Clement's activities on Capitol Hill. Disturbed with these activities, Crichton went before the Governor with specific, document charges against Robert Clement. Allegedly the specified charges were:

One: Robert S. Clement marched in and out of the Legislature at will, without regard to proper procedures.

Two.: Robert S. Clement would arbitrarily buttonhole State Senators and Representatives as well as lobbyists.

Three: Robert S. Clement would give his opinion on almost every bill before the General Assembly. These opinions were usually expressed to the news media.

Four: Robert S. Clement's actions were becoming more and more embarrassing to the Governor as each day passed.

According to Crichton, Governor Clement's response was "cynical for a man of God." The Governor allegedly stated that this was Robert S. Clement's first chance to make "real money" and Frank Clement was not going to stand in his father's way. Furthermore, the Governor strongly implied Crichton and the trucking interests were hardly in a position to

cast the first stone.

Friar, who labeled the elder Clement a "Rasputin," was the next to act. Alarmed by Robert Clement's lack of subtlety and enraged by being replaced as chief advisor, Edward Friar took his grievances to the Governor. Supposedly, Frank Clement reminded Friar of his own indiscretion: The Secretary of State had been seen on the Capitol steps holding hands with his receptionist. Clement demanded that Friar fire the woman. Enraged, Friar left the Governor's Office without a reply.

Then, according to Friar, the Governor ordered Ms Bodfish to fire the receptionist. At this point, Edward Friar broke "irrevocably" with Frank Clement and, shortly thereafter, Ms. Bodfish joined Friar.¹²⁹

Frank Clement's version. Frank Clement and Edward Friar had been very close friends for several years. Clement trusted Friar as he would trust a brother.¹³⁰

Communications between Clement and Friar prior to the conflict exemplify this unique friendship. For example, Clement sent a telegram to Friar on November 6, 1952, before the election votes were counted. The telegram read:

No man ever had a friend who was his right arm almost literally to the extent that you have been mine.

Friar sent Clement a telegram on the same day which read:

This cause is the dedication of my life.¹³¹

¹²⁹Parmental, op. cit.

¹³⁰Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

¹³¹Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-451, 3-3), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

As time passed, Frank Clement repeatedly received warnings from supporters across the State to not place so much trust in Edward Friar. These warnings described Friar as a man who actually was using Frank Clement as a means for securing the Governorship for himself. Apparently Friar made campaign promises that were contradictory with Clement's campaign theme and platform. Eventually, Clement realized that he was receiving almost identical stories about Friar from all sections of the State.¹³²

In December, 1953, circumstances had become quite serious. The Governor expressed his disapproval of "Friar's interference in operations of the Purchasing Department" and Clement questioned the "propriety of some business transactions in the Secretary of State's Office."¹³³

The next month, January, 1954, conflict appeared between Robert Crichton and the Governor with Mrs. Bodfish siding with Crichton. Cabinet meetings were tense and on one occasion the Governor lectured the Cabinet that he expected complete fidelity from each Cabinet member.¹³⁴

On January 28, 1954, Governor Clement concluded that any future relationship with Friar and Crichton would be against his personal principles and detrimental to his political career.¹³⁵

¹³²Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

¹³³Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-466, 4-11), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid.

Clement informed Friar and Crichton of his decision by letter. The Governor's letter to Edward Friar dated January 28, 1954, read as follows:

This letter is perhaps the most difficult I have ever been called upon to write because I am forced to act in accord with my duty as a public official in a manner which conflicts with the love I have held for you as an individual. You and I have been through a great deal together and although it had always been my hope and my desire that we travel the road of success together, I feel that my personal and official acts have always been such as to clearly indicate that this road must be in the public interest and that at no time would I be a party to any acts or deeds which were not open and above board.

Since your election as Secretary of State, you have in every (sic) increasing ways become a party to a code of conduct which I cannot and will not indorse or tolerate.

When you had your offices redecorated in luxurious ways and without competitive bidding, I questioned your actions and censored your conduct, but your only attitude seemed to be that you were being unfairly criticized.

When you fixed up a back office with such luxurious trimmings as a record player and began to lock yourself in your office without permitting people on official business to see you, I found it necessary to again ask you to change your conduct and to eliminate at least one person from your office staff as well as such items as the record player.

When you and one other person outside the official realm of State Government sought to influence the conduct of the Highway Department and favoring particular contracts, I found it necessary to again censor your conduct and to inform the Commissioner of Highways that I had confidence in his methods of operating the department and that under no conditions would your voice carry any influence from this office.

It has also come to my attention that when a friend of mine discovered that a new company had been formed in Nashville for the purpose of doing business with the State in a manner contrary to the public interest and was prepared to give me this warning so that the citizens would not be imposed upon nor this Administration tainted, that you called this friend and begged him not to tell me the truth about this company and that you would work things out.

Within the last twenty-four hours--after my return from the

West Coast--it has come to my attention that you have been conspiring with some people who are disappointed at their inability to obtain favored contracts and to make unconscionable amounts of money in their dealings with the State--and that you have agreed secretly to use your influence to the detriment of good government and for the benefit of this favored few. I am informed reliable that you have even gone so far as to threaten to use what you called "political blackmail" against me and that you have assured these financially interested profiteers that I would not dare refuse to permit you to have your way and to exercise your influence because of fear that you would turn upon me. I am further informed that you boasted of great personal political influence and that you insisted that you could be the difference between victory and defeat.

I want to inform you that I have no fear of anything you might be able to say which is truthful and I have such confidence in the people that I do not believe any untruthful attack will be tolerated by the voters of Tennessee.

I swore that I would uphold honest, decent and moral government in Tennessee, and I have tried in every way possible to fulfill this pledge.

I have decided after my conversation with you of today at which time you could not look me in the eye and deny the above specified charges and after prayerful thought that it is impossible for me to continue a political friendship with you and at the same time furnish honest, decent and moral government to the people of Tennessee.

Realizing full well that I do not have the power to fire you since you have a four-year term, which was granted to you by the Legislature, but with the feeling that I should do all possible to protect the people's interest, I am, therefore, respectfully requesting your immediate resignation as Secretary of State.

If you do not see fit to honor this request, then please be advised that your personal and political influence with this Administration is not further desired and that you will not be permitted to attend any further Cabinet Meetings during the time I am Governor of Tennessee.

May I wish you and your family all of the happiness possible and again state that the only thing in the world which could have caused me to take this unpleasant action against you is my belief that public office is a public trust and that you have forfeited your privilege of continued public service.¹³⁷

¹³⁷Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-466, 4-11),
Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

Edward Friar chose not to resign as Secretary of State as Governor Clement requested.

Robert Crichton received the following letter on the same date from the Governor:

Next to the letter I have just finished writing Eddie Friar, this is the most difficult I have ever undertaken.

When I accepted your political friendship, I assumed and stated to many people that it was on an honest basis that you expected no undue favors.

When the truck weight bill was rushed through the Legislature without the public hearings I had requested and which you had assured me were going to be held, I was shocked and hurt. When I asked different people why my wishes were not followed, I found that you have used your personal friendship with me to countermand my orders and to mislead certain key officials into believing that it was my desire that the course you followed be adopted. You were able to get away with this because I was not personally injecting myself into the truck weight fight and you brought a great deal of unfavorable comment upon me and this Administration by your unfair and ill-advised notions.

Although we had some harsh words about it, I did not terminate our friendship and I counted it as a mistake made by you for which I accepted the apologies you offered, and I went ahead and took the course of action I deemed in the public interest since the substance of the bill was not questionable in my mind, merely the speed with which it was rushed through the Legislature.

Thereafter, you and I had many unpleasant conferences as a result of such things as your effort to channel all the tire business through a concern owned by you, namely, Universal Tire Company; you attempted out of influence to gain favors at the public expense for your friends and your constant efforts to control the Department of Highways, Finance and Taxation Department, and the Department of Safety.

Through all of this I hoped that you would accept my refusal to tolerate such action and finally revert the position of a personal and political friend interested only in good government as you had stated during the campaign.

Since you did not do this and since within the last few days you have in concert with Mr. Friar attempted to force me to accept either your dictation of the method in

which the Purchasing Department and the Highway Department will be run or else face what you called "Political and personal ruin." I am accepting your challenge and I suggest to you that you do anything you desire to impose personal or political ruin upon me because I refuse absolutely to tolerate the kind of reprehensible conduct you have attempted to inflict upon the people of Tennessee through your friendship with me.

I am thankful that I have been able to halt your efforts and I only hope that you have not obtained any unfair advantages of anyone of which I am not aware. I am still grateful for your friendship of the past several years and for the help you gave me during the campaign, and it is not my desire to hurt you in any way but only to protect the people of Tennessee from your standard of political conduct which is certainly far below the standards of the hundreds of thousands who voted for me for Governor.

As an individual citizen, you are welcome to express any views you may have to me at any time either personal or otherwise, but please be advised that I no longer have confidence in you and I do not want or need the kind of support you have to offer.

Since it was at my suggestion that you were first named the Treasurer of the Democratic Party in Tennessee, I can only suggest that this was a mistake upon my part, that in my opinion the party and the State will be better off if you see fit to resign.

With every good wish for your continued good health and happiness for you and your family, I can only leave you with one parting thought, Bob. You have several million dollars to leave to your children and you would not permit me or anyone else to rob them of this wealth. I have only a good name to leave to my children, and it is worth far more than your millions and neither you nor anyone else in or out of politics, regardless of how rich and powerful you may be, will be permitted to take away from my family the only thing I have to leave.

It is my hope and my prayer that you will recognize the depth to which you have permitted your political conduct to sink, that you will again resume a good and useful life as a person interested in politics because you are indeed a man of great personal charm who could have a great deal of influence for good.¹³⁸

Interestingly, there does not appear to be any great contradictions between the two versions. Perhaps it was fortunate for the Governor that he saw fit to offer his version in writing and retained copies of the letters.

It should be noted that Governor Clement made no comment concerning the disbandment of his "kitchen cabinet" until his opponent introduced it as a campaign issue during the Summer of 1954. However, news items were reported frequently during the early months of 1954, concerning this conflict. The items came from a "reliable source" who was later revealed as Edward Friar.¹³⁹

Summary of Clement's First Administration

At the age of thirty-four years, Frank Goad Clement had completed his first term as Tennessee's Governor.

In two short years, Frank Clement had experienced success and achievement in the Department of Mental Health, the State-funded textbook program for all public school children and a more efficient system of purchasing for the State. Clement faced conflict, severe criticism and disappointment. He was reprimanded by many Tennesseans because of the truck weight issue. He had to deal with unpleasant struggles within his Cabinet. Surely he felt a strong sense of disappointment in his friends who had professed loyalty to Clement and then proved the opposite. Breaking with his closest friends and associates was not a pleasant task for Clement, and the decision to make the break surely was not one that came easily. But he proved strong enough to make the decision and carry it through.

Apparently Frank Clement had a great deal of faith in his religion and this, perhaps, helped him make the difficult decisions that he faced. Once he remarked, ". . . everytime I have taken God into partnership, I make (a) successful decision."¹⁴⁰

Clement's first term was hectic, but he always attempted to make himself available to the people. The door of the Governor's Office was always open to anyone who wished to speak with him. An appointment was not necessary. Personable and friendly, whether he was on the campaign trail or in the Executive Office, Clement always introduced himself to strangers, saying, "Just call me Frank."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-1), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁴¹Martin, op. cit.

Chapter V

"PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND"

1954 Gubernatorial Primary Campaign and Election

In June, 1954, Governor Frank Clement traveled to Lebanon, Tennessee, to announce officially his candidacy for re-election as Governor subject to the August Democratic Gubernatorial Primary.

As in 1952, Clement's 1954 campaign was based on the theme of honesty, decency and morality. However, as the incumbent in this election, Clement was duty bound to defend his record of the past two years. Overall, Clement's record as Tennessee's Governor was good. Under Clement's leadership, Tennessee was attracting new industries; the State's credit had improved; the public school children had free textbooks; Tennesseans suffering from mental illness were given hope for recuperation; the newly created Department of Purchasing apparently assured Tennesseans of no political graft.

Governor Clement's first Administration was not without its dark spots: the truck weight controversy and the break with his close political associates. These, plus more, would be used by his opposition in the 1954 campaign.

For his second term, Clement proposed to continue improvements in the areas of mental health, education, benefits for State employees, and teachers' salaries, among others.

Opposition. The 1954 campaign made the 1952 race look like a picnic. Eager for revenge for the beating received in 1952, former

Governor Gordon Browning announced his candidacy for the Democratic Gubernatorial Nomination in January, 1954.

The campaign was "dirty and rotten," according to Clement.¹⁴² Most observers agreed with Clement's assessment. Debate of clear-cut issues was not frequent and most of the rhetoric was nothing more than mudslinging by both Clement and Browning.

Browning's camp had three new supporters in 1954. Edward Friar, Mrs. Jeanne Bodfish and Robert Crichton campaigned for Browning. Through these individuals Browning gained valuable material for his campaign. While campaigning for Browning, Friar and Bodfish maintained their positions with the State Government.¹⁴³

The "real" Frank Clement. There were frequent derogatory remarks about Frank Clement made by the opposition. The majority of these statements came from Edward Friar who had not lost his credibility in some sections of the State. Friar painted an unattractive picture of Frank Clement during the campaign. Friar often remarked, "There are two Frank Clements, the one he wants you to think he is, and the one he really is."¹⁴⁴

Gordon Browning made good use of the Friar defection and the information Friar gave to the former Governor. Reports circulated throughout the State that handsome profits were being made from State

¹⁴²Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-444, 1-13), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁴³Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-466, 4-11), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁴⁴Martin, op. cit.

contracts by Clement's father. Through Friar, Clement's opposition accused the Governor of salting away campaign funds in a safety deposit box and of immoral behavior. There were claims that Frank Clement should be classed with Huey Long and Adolf Hitler. Friar was fond of saying, "Clement is the most dangerous man in America today."¹⁴⁵

These devastating statements affected the Governor and his campaign. Remarks of this nature impressed some voters and the statements could not be totally proved or disproved. Unfortunately, the accused always suffers from such attacks.

Robert S. Clement. Robert S. Clement was the target for much of the accusations and, of course, through him, his son shared the attacks. Clement spent a great deal of time during the campaign defending his father and the relationship he shared with his parent. The Governor constantly cited the Fifth Commandment and declared,

The Bible tells us to honor and respect our parents. I went back to the knees of my mother and father where I learned to love the Bible and how to tell the truth. I will counsel with my Dad and get advice from him so long as God spares him for me and no demagogic politician will be able to stop me.¹⁴⁶

Frank and Robert S. Clement shared a rare relationship. They were very close to each other. Less than twenty years separated father and son; the two men were not only related, they were friends with a respect for each other's opinions and advice.¹⁴⁷

When criticism reached its peak during the campaign, Frank

¹⁴⁵"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

Clement stood on a platform, raised his arms in the shape of a cross and shouted, "They crucified Christ too. . . ."148

The radio and television media were used by Browning to project Clement's former supporters blasting the Governor. Browning stumped the State with a hillbilly band that continuously played "On, My Papa," an obvious reference to Frank's father.

Gordon Browning's strategy in 1954 stressed that the main issue of the campaign was Robert S. Clement's activities. Browning was fond of saying about the Governor's father, "The shadow of Robert Clement hovers like a harpy over our State Capitol."149

Goldfish bowl. During the 1952 campaign, Frank Clement had promised that his Administration would exist in a goldfish bowl, a pledge that State Government would be open for scrutiny by all Tennesseans. Generally, Clement kept this pledge.

Gordon Browning had not forgotten Clement's pledge, though. In 1954, Browning charged that Clement had never brought a goldfish bowl into the Executive Office. The former Governor demanded,

Was he conducting business in a goldfish bowl when he refused to make public the distribution of the State's insurance business?

This was the transaction from which Robert S. Clement allegedly profited.

Browning continued,

Was the hidden, booby-trapped recording machine concealed beneath his official desk in a goldfish bowl?150

148 "The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

149 Parmental, op. cit.

150 Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 2-102), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

Supposedly Clement had a tape recorder in his desk that operated with a foot pedal. Therefore the machine could be used without the knowledge of others present.

In an attempt to understand Clement's use of such a machine without rationalization, it should be stated that during the 1950's and 1960's, using a tape recorder in this fashion was not unusual. Many interviews and conversations were conducted with a tape recorder present and it was not considered unethical.

Trucking issue. "The only promise Frank Clement kept was to the trucking interest," charged Browning.

Gordon Browning had opposed a truck weight increase in 1952, and in 1954, Browning declared that Frank Clement had destroyed the State's highways and was responsible for an increase in traffic fatalities because of irresponsible use of the highway patrol. According to Browning,

Traffic fatalities during 1953 were the highest in the history (of the State). Patrolmen are assigned to chauffeur the Governor's relatives to Florida, to hunt through trash for trumped up investigations and to be guards at the penitentiary.¹⁵¹

Cadillac. During the campaign, Browning charged Clement with accepting gifts from private sources while Governor even though Clement continuously denied that he would participate in such activity. Browning eluded that Mrs. Clement's Cadillac was purchased from campaign contributions. Browning further stated that he had three Cadillacs given to him and since 1934 every governor had a Cadillac given to him.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Ibid.

It would seem that Browning was declaring that like himself, Clement also received a Cadillac as the customary gift.

With the proper documents, Clement proved the charges were false.

It is rather humorous that in his attempt to discredit Governor Clement, Browning actually incriminated himself.

Teacher pay raise. One plank of Clement's platform was a salary increase for Tennessee's teachers. According to Clement the cost of living had increased but teachers' salaries were well below that standard and such a situation was detrimental to Tennessee's education program.

Gordon Browning responded that teachers' pay would be raised only if the funds were available.

Considering that Gordon Browning left the Governor's Office with a \$12,000,000 deficit and had spent the State surplus of \$32,000,000, it would be unlikely that teachers would receive a salary increase under Browning.¹⁵³.

Desegregation. During the mid-1950's the United States encountered a movement to eliminate racial discrimination. This crusade became a part of the 1954 campaign.

Governor Clement did not take a firm, clear-cut stand on this issue. Clement stated that the ultimate decision of school desegregation rested with the Federal Courts and under his Administration, Tennessee would abide by the Courts' decision.

However, Gordon Browning took a more clear-cut stand on the

¹⁵³
Ibid.

issue of school desegregation. Browning emphatically declared, "There will be no mixing of the races in the public schools while I am Governor."¹⁵⁴

Clement's theme song. Throughout the 1954 campaign Frank Clement used the same technique of including religion in his speeches as he did in 1952. There were some people who were still cynical about this approach. It was their contention that Clement's interest in the things of the spirit did not develop until he discovered that a mixture of piety and politics was successful in Tennessee.¹⁵⁵

These cynics along with Clement's opposition continued to ridicule the Governor about his stumping techniques. On one occasion Frank Clement happened to end a campaign speech with the hymn, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." The next day a newspaper article and cartoon were published ridiculing Clement and the hymn. Frank's mother told him, "Don't you let them back you off from your religion. Don't you be the least bit upset about this."¹⁵⁶

With his mother's stern advice, Frank became more determined to ignore the ridicule. Thereafter, Clement ended each campaign stop with "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." Ultimately, the hymn became Frank Clement's theme song.

Support for Browning. Tennessee's Senator Estes Kefauver and Senator Albert Gore saw Frank Clement as a potential threat to their

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Martin, op. cit.

¹⁵⁶Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-1), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

own political careers. Therefore, Senator Kefauver and Senator Gore gave their tacit approval to Gordon Browning.¹⁵⁷

Election results. On Thursday, August 5, 1954, Tennessee's voters returned to the polls to choose a Democratic nominee for Governor. In addition to Browning and Clement, there was a third candidate on the ballot. The results were:

Clement.436,994
Browning177,480
Schoolfield.	26,918 ¹⁵⁸

The results proved that Frank Clement was the overwhelming choice for Governor of Tennessee.

Gordon Browning felt that he had prepared well for the Primary Election and it appeared that he had more ammunition for his campaign guns than in 1952. However, the Election results proved that Browning's arsenal was not strong enough. The people of Tennessee preferred the campaign style and the State Government provided by Frank Clement.

1954 Gubernatorial General Election

In the 1954 General Election, there was no Republican candidate for Governor. Nonetheless, Frank Clement was not the only name on the ballot. An Independent, James R. Neal of Knoxville, offered Clement opposition. Neal was a former law school dean and was opposed to integration.

The General Election was held on Tuesday, November 2, 1954.

¹⁵⁷Parmental, op. cit.

¹⁵⁸Nashville Tennessean, August 7, 1954, 3:4.

The gubernatorial results were:

Clement.	263,746
Neal	38,472 ¹⁵⁹

At thirty-four years of age, Frank Goad Clement had been re-elected to his second term as Governor of Tennessee with the largest majority of votes in the history of the State. He carried ninety-four of Tennessee's ninety-five counties. Furthermore, Clement was the youngest Governor in the nation.

Chapter VI

"THE PARTICULAR PLACE GOD CALLED ME"

Clement's Second Administration

On January 18, 1955, Frank Goad Clement traveled once again to the steps of the State Capitol Building to take the Oath of Office as the duly elected Governor of Tennessee. The Inauguration followed special church services.

Governor Clement delivered an Inaugural Address that was essentially the same as two years before, but in 1955, Clement was embarking on a four year term. With twice the length of time, the Governor could look forward to twice as much improvement of his proposed programs. Frank Clement was Tennessee's first Governor in history to be elected to a four year term.

Sales tax increase. Governor Clement had pledged additional improvements in the State's education program and a salary increase for Tennessee's teachers. Also Clement had committed his Administration to an improved retirement system for State employees and teachers. Clement had not abandoned his old programs, especially in health services and mental health, for which he requested additional funds.¹⁶⁰

All of this would require a larger budget for the State than in years past. To increase the budget and implement additional programs, an increase in State revenue was needed.

On February 9, 1955, Governor Clement went before the Seventy-

¹⁶⁰The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, op. cit.

ninth General Assembly to request a raise in the State's sales tax from two percent to three percent. The major portion of the new revenue would be earmarked for teachers' salaries. Frank Clement was well aware that his request, if passed by the General Assembly, would be unpopular with many Tennesseans. Clement explained the need for the tax increase by stating:

At the present time the State of Tennessee is spending more than \$80,000,000 each year on education from State sources, and yet the entire sales tax brings in just slightly more than \$52,000,000.

I did not want to request a sales tax (increase) but after consultation with the best tax experts in the land I came to the conclusion that there was no other way to maintain an adequate education program for our children.¹⁶¹

The Governor's Office was inundated with mail concerning this issue.

Teachers' organizations, school systems and Parent Teacher Associations expressed their approval of the tax increase.

However, most of the correspondence voiced strong objection. Organized groups such as the retail hardware dealers and the laundry and dry cleaners lobbied against the concept. In addition, many private citizens expressed their disapproval through the mails. These citizens enunciated their opinions in the following manner:

. . . the good you have done for the average person will all be wiped out by having him pay more than his share of the State expense. . . .

Another example was:

. . . leaders in other States as well as the voters

¹⁶¹Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-444, 5-14), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

(will not) have much good to say about a Governor from a State that had a 3% sales tax, its doesn't take a smart man to pass a tax law but it takes a smart man to make the people like it.

One Citizen wrote:

I realized that the teachers need a decent living but it's pitiful to take a piece of candy or an apple from the student and give it to the teacher.

Letters even struck Clement through his religion, to wit:

God would (not) look with favor on any Government that would tax people to hunger. . . .¹⁶²

Nonetheless, the General Assembly agreed with Governor Clement and raised Tennessee's State sales tax from two percent to three percent, thus the State's teachers were assured of a substantial salary increase. With the additional revenue the Clement Administration could fulfill the Governor's pledge for an improved retirement system for teachers and State employees. Also improvements could continue in the Department of Mental Health.

In addition to the sales tax increase, the General Assembly and the Governor expanded the excise and franchise taxes to be extended to out of State corporations.¹⁶³

Education. In 1955 Governor Clement supported and encouraged the passage of legislation that would vastly increase State aid to the public school systems. There was a great deal of opposition to the bill. Some State Legislators were reluctant to extend the State's budget any more that it already had been. Furthermore, additional aid to the school

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, op. cit.

systems also meant additional State controls and restrictions on the local school systems. Nonetheless, without State financial aid and controls, Tennessee students would not receive an education compatible with other areas of the nation nor would the educational standards be uniform across the State.

There was a long and hard struggle in the General Assembly concerning this education bill. Frank Clement pulled every string possible and he used his most persuasive arguments in his attempt to get the bill through the State Legislature. Even with all this effort, Clement thought he would lose the struggle.

On the day the education bill was to be voted on, the Governor summoned his official cabinet to his office at seven o'clock in the morning. Clement had invited three ministers to join the group. An hour long prayer meeting was held. Clement addressed the gathering.

I have wrestled with this bill, argued and done everything. Now I am just going to turn the whole matter over to the Lord.¹⁶⁴

Later that day the General Assembly held its final vote on the education bill. It passed. With the Governor's signature, Tennessee had an innovative and progressive education law.

Desegregation. One of the most controversial issues Frank Clement had to face in his career as Governor was desegregation.

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court declared that "separate but equal facilities" were unconstitutional in Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. Throughout the nation, this decision had

¹⁶⁴"The Keynote-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

a profound effect.

In Tennessee, as in other States, there was strong opposition to integrating public schools. Furthermore, Tennessee's Constitution had a provision that prohibited integration.¹⁶⁵

Now, Clement had to follow through with his campaign promise to abide by the Court's decision. Also, Clement must have realized that the hierarchy of the National Democrat Party would be closely watching him and the manner in which he handled this situation. Clement's future political plans could be destroyed if he did not deal with desegregation in Tennessee properly.¹⁶⁶

Governor Clement took a stance of moderation in this matter. He urged Blacks and Whites to adopt a "Christian attitude" in dealing with racial problems. At the West Tennessee Strawberry Festival Clement remarked,

I promised myself to continue to do what is right. I am going to live up to that promise--unless I am convinced that there is some reason for making a change.¹⁶⁷

What was Frank Clement really saying? Was the Governor supporting segregation or integration?

The one definite interpretation of Clement's statement was that he had no intention of "rocking the boat," and take a firm stand on the issue, which would surely alienate a large number of Tennesseans. Also, if large scale racial disturbances occurred in Tennessee as a result of

¹⁶⁵Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

¹⁶⁶Hugh Davis Graham, "Desegregation In Nashville: The Dynamics of Compliance," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Summer, 1966, p. 147.

¹⁶⁷"Keynoter Clement," New Republic, 134:6, May 28, 1956.

the Governor's remarks, Clement's national appeal would probably vanish.

However, late in 1954, the Stainback Bill was introduced in the State's Senate. The purpose of this bill was an attempt to nullify the Supreme Court's decision in Tennessee. The Stainback Bill was passed by both Houses of the General Assembly.¹⁶⁸

On February 28, 1955, Governor Clement vetoed the Stainback Bill.¹⁶⁹ In doing so, Clement stated he was rejecting the bill because it was an attempt

. . . to circumvent the efficacy of the recent opinion handed down by the Supreme Court of the United States banning segregation in public schools.¹⁷⁰

In January, 1956, Governor Clement faced a very tense situation. Approximately one thousand members of the White Citizen Council and the Ku Klux Klan marched on the State Capitol and demanded the Governor nullify the United States Supreme Court decision in the case of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas or abolish Tennessee's public school systems.

Clement dashed the hopes of the demonstrators and averted a large scale disturbance by the manner in which he handled the situation. The Governor invited the demonstration's leaders to his office where a rabbi, a priest and two protestant ministers were already present. As soon as the leaders arrived prayer services were conducted. Then Clement patiently listened to the marchers' demands to which the Governor responded:

¹⁶⁸Graham, op. cit.

¹⁶⁹Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-449, 2-9), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁷⁰Graham, op. cit.

A Governor who submits to pressure rather than follow reason would not be worthy of the Office. Strife breeds more strife, violence produces more violence, and agitation causes trouble where none would otherwise exist. I cannot please you today because I do not think the course of action you suggest is in the interest of Tennessee.

The leaders returned to the remaining demonstrators, informed them of the Governor's decision and instructed the crowd to disperse peacefully, which it did.¹⁷¹

In effect Clement was not necessarily in favor of desegregation. In his Address to the General Assembly on January 9, 1957, Clement stated,

. . . in our recognition of the existence of different grounds for White and Negro, we must not overlook the fact that the Negro is equal in the eyes of the law and in the sight of God.¹⁷²

However Clement interpreted the Supreme Court's decision differently.

In the same Address, Clement declared,

The Court held that statutes compelling segregation in the public schools on the basis of race were unconstitutional. It held that no State could, in the operation of its schools, discriminate . . . on account of race. The Court did not purport to take over the administration of the public schools. It . . . left the administration . . . in the hands of the local school officials. It did not purport to require the State to mix arbitrarily persons of different races in the schools. It did not deprive individual parents and children of their rights of voluntarily choosing the schools they wish to attend.¹⁷³

Consequently, Governor Clement proposed new legislation that would permit the local school systems to decide for themselves if the schools in their individual districts should be integrated.

Clement's rejection of the Stainback Bill and his obvious dis-

¹⁷¹"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

¹⁷²"Clement: Let The People Choose Their Schools," U. S. News and World Report, January 25, 1957, pp. 110-114.

¹⁷³Ibid.

agreement with the popular interpretation of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision does not necessarily represent a contradiction by the Governor. The Stainback Bill proposed nullification. If challenged, such a law would have been struck down. It was never Clement's idea to defy the United States Supreme Court. To do so would have meant a quick end to any future political career for Clement. The Stainback Bill was vetoed and Clement's interpretation of the United States Supreme Court desegregation decision was, in Clement's eyes, in compliance with the nation's highest judicial body.

It is interesting, though, that Clement did not reveal his plan for Tennessee to cope with desegregation until after the 1956 Democratic National Convention.

Dixon-Yates controversy. During the Eisenhower Administration there was an attempt to disband the Tennessee Valley Authority. It was Eisenhower's idea to end total Federal development of water resources and the Federal Government should limit itself to "non-reimbursable" aspects of the valley's development, such as navigation, flood control, and irrigation. Furthermore, according to Eisenhower's policy, the production of hydroelectric power should be the responsibility of private utilities or local authorities. Eisenhower opposed TVA.¹⁷⁴

TVA was about to construct a new steam plant in Fulton, Tennessee, in order to meet the growing demands of Memphis. Eisenhower rejected this plan and insisted that TVA contract with other power suppliers for the additional power.

¹⁷⁴Kenworthy, ". . . The Riddle of a Self-Inflicted Wound," The Reporter, January 26, 1956, pp. 19-25.

Furthermore, the Budget Bureau in 1953 proposed:

One: All municipalities and co-operatives would build their own power plants in the future.

Two: Private wholesale steam power companies would be organized to sell power to TVA.

Three: Private companies would serve cities on the TVA periphery.

Four: A phase out of government involvement in the Tennessee Valley would be implemented and this would permit private corporations to replace the Federal Government.¹⁷⁵

This proposal and others like it invited opportunists to siphon financial windfalls for themselves from the Federal Government at the expense of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The Atomic Energy Commission had new installations in the South. This created a demand for additional power from TVA which was obligated to provide the power at an established rate well below cost. In turn, TVA had to purchase power from outside sources in order to meet demands. The purchases were expensive and the outside source was none other than the Atomic Energy Commission.

Edgar Dixon of Middle Southern Utilities, Incorporated, and Eugene Yates of The Southern Utilities Company joined together in an effort to gain personal financial profits at the expense of TVA. Dixon and Yates offered to build an energy producing plant across the Mississippi River from Memphis. Energy from this plant would be sold to the Atomic Energy Commission who would then sell it to TVA. Dixon and Yates would receive subsidies from the Federal Government while constructing the plant.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

All of this would eventually cost the Federal Government much more than the TVA proposed plant at Fulton. On June 16, 1954, President Eisenhower approved the Dixon-Yates Plan without giving consideration to other prospective contractors or even considering the TVA proposal. It would seem that Eisenhower had not been properly briefed.¹⁷⁶

The prospect of the Dixon-Yates Plan greatly concerned people in the Tennessee Valley region. There was an immediate movement within the area to counterattack Dixon and Yates. Governor Frank Clement was one of the leaders of the local drive.

Clement traveled extensively throughout the region, especially in West Tennessee and Alabama, informing the people of the effect the Dixon-Yates Plan would have on their lives and their States.

Governor Clement wrote and published several articles that explained that without the Tennessee Valley Authority the region would be devastated. Clement wrote that TVA was not a monopoly nor was the Federal Government involved in private enterprise. Instead, TVA was a partnership between the people in the valley and the Government. Furthermore, The Tennessee Valley Authority's conservation and development of the resources in the region benefited the entire nation; for example, navigation along the waterways benefited the Midwest and its industries. According to Clement, those that wanted to destroy TVA did not really oppose Federal involvement or the concept that TVA might be a monopoly. These people really wanted to have the monopoly for themselves.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶"The ABC's of Dixon-Yates, Or, How To Get Less For More," The Reporter, October 21, 1954, pp. 13-16.

¹⁷⁷Frank Goad Clement, "A Report To President Eisenhower On TVA," Tennessee Market Bulletin, November, 1953, pp. 1-10.

Frank Clement traveled to Washington, D. C. to testify at Congressional Hearings in the Summer of 1955, concerning this issue. The Governor prepared well for his testimony. He created a committee of technical experts who thoroughly briefed him on the hazards of losing the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹⁷⁸

Tennessee's Governor spearheaded an organized movement within the State to save the Tennessee Valley Authority and, consequently, received widespread publicity for his actions.

Summary

Throughout Clement's first two years of his second term, he had increased his activities to achieve the next step on his timetable. However, the Governor did not ignore his responsibilities to the State. On the contrary, if the Governor had been lax in his State duties, he would have been less desirable to the National Democrat Party.

¹⁷⁸Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 4-50 and 4-65), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

Chapter VII

"HOW LONG AMERICA; O HOW LONG!"

Democratic Choice as Keynoter

It was 1956, two years after Frank Clement was elected to his second term as Governor. It was also the year designated by Clement for him to be the choice to deliver the Keynote Address at the Democratic National Convention, and possibly win the Democratic Vice Presidential nomination.

It was in 1956 that Frank Goad Clement would achieve the greatest success of his career and at the time, he was only thirty-six years of age.

Frank Clement was possessed with a personal drive that was far greater than ambition. He was constantly moving, plotting, planning for a more prestigious victory. In order to clinch the invitation to be the Keynoter, Clement spent many weeks traveling throughout the nation. As early as 1950, the Governor realized that the nation must become familiar with Frank Clement.

The Governor accepted invitations to address civic organizations and charities outside Tennessee. Through his interest in mental health, Clement was available for speeches in this area. Frank was always sowing "seeds . . . as the day may come when it may be necessary to rely upon those seeds for the fruits of victory."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-445, 3-10), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

An indication of Clement's success was in 1955 when he was named one of the ten "Most Outstanding Young Men of America" by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce.¹⁸⁰

Personal appeal. Needless to say, Frank Clement had charisma. His appeal was noticeable and appreciated across the nation. A powerful "common-folk" aura, an easy familiarity, intense mannerisms, and a boyish enthusiasm helped establish Frank Clement as an easily identifiable political figure throughout the United States.

The personal magnetism that was uniquely Frank Clement was strong and persuasive. Once Clement spoke at a statewide farmers meeting. Emerging from the meeting after Clement's speech, one delegate said to his friend, "I knew I shouldn't have come here. I was against him all summer and now he's resold me."¹⁸¹

Clement never met a stranger and treated everyone as a friend. Within a few minutes, Frank could charm the avowed skeptic. Possessed with a remarkable memory, Clement could tuck small tidbits of information in the recesses of his mind, ready to be recalled when needed. Often while speaking, Clement did not refer to notes and he was never reluctant to accept the challenge of delivering an impromptu speech.

Lifestyle. Frank Clement led a hectic life even off the campaign trail. He could never sleep more than six hours and often he would sleep only four or five hours. Regularly, Clement arose at five o'clock in

¹⁸⁰Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged C-445, 4-57), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁸¹Larson, op. cit.

the morning.¹⁸² After a hurried breakfast, Clement would leave for the Executive Office without a tie or a daily shave. He would immerse himself in the necessary paper work and by eight o'clock this obligation would be completed. After shaving and dressing, the Governor would settle down to meeting people, those with or without appointments.

Frank Clement would return to the Governor's Mansion in time to dine with his family, after which he would retire to the den for solitude. He would relax by listening to music, unusual for a man that often appeared as a most urbane gentleman. Frank would play records of hymns, gospel and hillbilly music. An enthusiastic fan of the Grand Ole Opry, the Governor often requested its members to perform at the Mansion. However, the performers' music was not all in which Clement was interested. Clement would scrutinize the mannerisms and gestures of the entertainers. Through these observations Clement adapted some of these characteristics into his own performances.¹⁸³

Religious belief. By 1956, Frank Clement had convinced most Tennesseans that he was sincere in his religious beliefs and he was totally unashamed to incorporate these beliefs into politics. Religion was not used as a stepping stone by Clement to achieve political success. His religious devotion did not diminish throughout his political career. Mrs. Maybelle Clement was concerned that her son might neglect his religion when he first became Governor. Frank's mother sternly warned him, "Son, don't you slight your God just because you happen to be the

¹⁸²Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

¹⁸³Parmental, op. cit.

In 1956, though, Clement's religious sincerity was questioned in areas outside the Bible belt. If Clement did not thoroughly convince the nation, it was not vitally important to the National Democrat Party. His rabble rousing, evangelistic speaking technique was more than enough to fit the bill as Keynoter. A Clement friend appraised his technique in this manner:

Frank has been called a rabble rouser. And that, in a way is so. But he uses his power to arouse in the breasts of the rabble emotions they seldom feel: gentleness, loyalty, patriotism, honesty, loving-kindness and religion. Is that bad?¹⁸⁵

An event concerning Clement's religious convictions, as recalled by the Governor, seems to erase any skepticism. Clement's grandfather was opposed to capital punishment and as a State Senator he was able to have such punishment abolished. However, after James Clement left the Senate, the law was re-established. Although Frank Clement may have had reservations about capital punishment, as Governor, it was Clement's responsibility to execute the laws of the State. Clement explained, "a law's a law and I have no right--I may have the power--but I have no right to step in and abolish it."¹⁸⁶ It is the Legislature's responsibility to make or abolish laws.

Clement had to deal with capital punishment in a very personal manner. A convict on death row was visited by the Governor who counseled

¹⁸⁴Martin, op. cit.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Frank Goad Clement Papers, (not cataloged, C-458, 5-1), Research Department, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

with all death row inmates. The convict had requested the Governor to set aside the death penalty in his case. In their conversation on the day before the convict was to die in the electric chair, Clement asked the inmate what he would do if the situation were reversed. The convicted man replied that he would apply the Golden Rule. Unfortunately this was not the answer Clement was seeking. The Golden Rule had no direct bearing on the crime.

That night three friends met with Clement at the Governor's Mansion at which time they discussed the matter without reaching a solution and ended the visit with prayer. One of the visitors, a doctor, offered Clement a sleeping pill. The Governor refused the medication as well as a glass of warm milk. Clement told his friends as they were leaving, "It is in God's hands now. If I cannot sleep, the man will live. If I sleep, the sentence will be carried out." Clement, an insomniac, retired for the night and the Governor slept soundly. Abruptly, Clement awoke at 5:01 a. m., thirty seconds after the sentence was carried out,¹⁸⁷ but at Clement's usual waking hour. Clement fervently believed that God had given him the answer. This event seems to illustrate the faith Clement had in his religion.¹⁸⁸

Clement was so closely identified with religion that newspaper headlines in the Summer of 1953 read, "Governor Clement May Quit Politics To Join Billy Graham's Evangelistic Team."¹⁸⁹ Clement denied the rumor

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

¹⁸⁹Dykeman, op. cit.

by stating that being Governor is "the particular place the Lord has called me."¹⁹⁰

Stumping the nation. Frank Clement intensified his drive to achieve national political success during his second term as Governor.

Clement traveled extensively in 1954 to help Democrat hopefuls in other states in their campaigns. In New Orleans Clement conferred with Paul Butler, National Democrat Party Chairman. Throughout his travels Clement expressed his support for Adlai Stevenson for the Presidential nomination in 1956.¹⁹¹

Frank Clement attended a Governors' Commission on the Distribution of the Antipolio Vaccine in May, 1955, in Washington, D. C. Clement arranged for a photograph to be taken with Orville L. Freeman of Minnesota, George M. Leader of Pennsylvania, and John F. Simms from New Mexico. These men were the four youngest governors in the nation. Governor W. Averill Harriman of New York asked Clement what was the reason for such a picture. Clement responded, "This is the 'I-Went-To-Be-President Club' and I'm the manager."¹⁹²

Clement emerged from the Washington Conference with his political stock boosted. While there, he had impressed the other governors with his articulate, outspoken manner.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰Davis, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁹¹"Dark Horses For '56--Who and How Fast . . . Six Governors To Watch In the Major Parties," Newsweek, 46:35, October 17, 1955.

¹⁹²Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

¹⁹³Ibid.

During his travels, Clement became acquainted with Harry S. Truman. The former President was impressed with Tennessee's young Governor and had come to the Volunteer State to participate in Clement's 1954 campaign when Truman told Tennesseans, "I am particularly glad to have your Governor call me his friend. I am his."¹⁹⁴

Frank Clement also sought and received advice from Sam Rayburn and Lyndon B. Johnson Congressional leaders from Texas; John L. McCormack, House Majority Leader and future Speaker of the House; as well as Senators Walter F. George and Richard Russell, foreign policy experts.¹⁹⁵

On his many trips, Clement not only conferred with political leaders, but he also spoke at conventions, conferences, fairs, wherever a crowd gathered. During the first half of 1956, fortune smiled on Frank Clement.

For example, Clement spoke at the National Plowing Matches at Olney, Illinois. An audience of 35,000 had gathered from Illinois and neighboring states. This particular section had been hit hard by a drought. Clement opened his speech with a prayer for rain. Five minutes later, the area was deluged by a cloudburst.¹⁹⁶ Could Clement do anything wrong?

Named Keynoter. According to Harry Truman, "Tennessee has had many great governors in its history, but they have one now that can measure up to any of them."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

¹⁹⁶Parmental, op. cit.

¹⁹⁷Current Biography Yearbook: 1955, op. cit.

With support from the Party's last Presidential victor, it was most likely that Clement would play a significant role in the 1956 Democratic National Convention. In September, 1955, the Democrat National Executive Committee summoned Frank Clement to Indianapolis, Indiana. Essentially, the Party hierarchy wanted to observe the young Governor closely. Clement joined Albert Gore, Adlai Stevenson, Sam Rayburn, and Edmund Muskie on the roster of speechmakers. These gentlemen would address a political rally. When it was time for Clement to speak, he asked Governor "Big" Jim Folsom of Alabama how should he address the crowd. "Big" Jim told him to go out there, "Cuttin', guttin', and struttin'!"¹⁹⁸ Clement did just that, and even though his speech was only twelve minutes long, Clement was interrupted twenty times by applause; much more applause than that given to Stevenson.¹⁹⁹

Frank Goad Clement was named the Keynote Speaker for the upcoming National Convention in July, 1956. When notified, Clement said, "We've had more telegrams and telephone messages on this than when we were re-elected Governor."²⁰⁰ Clement was jubilant.

The Democrat National Committee chose Frank Clement to be the Keynoter for several reasons:

One: Clement was a warm supporter of Adlai Stevenson, the most likely choice for the Presidential nomination.

Two: Frank Clement was well thought of by other potential Presidential nominees, with the possible exception of Tennessee Senator

¹⁹⁸Parmental, op. cit.

¹⁹⁹Dykeman, op. cit.

²⁰⁰Time, Vol. 68, July 23, 1956, pp. 13-14.

Estes Kefauver who was an aspirant for the top spot on the ticket, but would settle for the second spot.

Three: Needless to say, Frank Clement was the most effective platform speaker in the Democrat Party.

Four: Clement's spellbinding brand of oratory would mostly likely arouse the Convention delegates and the nationwide television audience to a fever pitch.

Five: Clement possessed superior skills as an executive.

Six: Within Clement was the coldblooded ruthlessness of a born political boss. He was viewed as a future leader of the Democrat Party.

Seven: Coming from a border State and being a moderate liberal, Clement was not likely to be offensive to any faction of the Party.²⁰¹

Preparing for the address. Frank Clement did not just write a speech then, at the appropriate time, stand up before the delegates and deliver it.

An accomplished actor as well as a brilliant speaker, Clement left absolutely nothing to chance for the delivery of the most important speech of his career.

The Governor arranged to borrow news reels of previous keynote addresses. The films were extensively studied; every minute detail was noted including the points in the speeches that touched off applause.

Two of the Governor's aides were dispatched to Chicago to check on the route Clement would take to reach the podium as well as the proper protocol for the Keynoter's entrance. Clement obtained and repeatedly

²⁰¹Parmental, op. cit.

examined blueprints of the podium for the position of microphones and television cameras. The aides were instructed to ascertain the type of lighting that was to be used, because, originally, Clement planned to wear a white suit. Unfortunately, the lighting system would not permit Clement to be clad in white.

The Keynote Address was extremely important to Frank Clement. He could afford no mistakes, no matter how small. Because Clement planned to use the Keynote Address as a stepping stone to the Vice Presidential nomination, and, ultimately, the Presidential nomination in 1960.²⁰²

Vice Presidential nomination. Frank Clement had strong hopes of becoming the Vice Presidential nominee in 1956, but he realized his chances were no greater than that of a dark-horse candidate.

Clement had considerable opposition for the nomination; most notably were John F. Kennedy, New York Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Senator Albert Gore, and Senator Estes Kefauver.²⁰³

Frank Clement possessed several attributes that would have helped the 1956 Democratic ticket. Clement could give the ticket a good balance to the intellectual Stevenson. Clement was young, witty, "countrified," but eloquent. He could be highly serious when necessary. Clement was familiar with the nation's farm problems and the leadership ability he possessed would be beneficial. Clement's personality, family, and good looks could be an asset to the ticket.²⁰⁴

²⁰²"The Keynoter-What Makes Him Run," op. cit.

²⁰³Parmental, op. cit.

²⁰⁴Ibid.

However, it did not matter how many attributes Clement had. Clement needed support from the Party leadership and the Presidential nominee. Estes Kefauver was a constant thorn in Frank Clement's political side. The Senator and Governor led different Party factions in Tennessee and the Senator had gained nationwide fame with the Special Congressional Hearings on Organized Crime.²⁰⁵

Clement's strategy was to have the Tennessee delegation vote for Adlai Stevenson instead of Estes Kefauver, Tennessee's favorite son. After Stevenson was successful in achieving the Presidential nomination, Clement hoped Stevenson would repay the favor and support him for the Vice Presidential nomination.

However, after Stevenson won the Presidential nomination, he made no announcement concerning his preference for a running mate. Instead he permitted the convention to choose the Vice Presidential nominee. At this point, Clement's hopes for the nomination were dashed.²⁰⁶ Ultimately, Estes Kefauver received the Vice Presidential nomination.

The Keynote Address

Governor Frank Goad Clement of Tennessee delivered the most moving and profound Keynote Address. It was an oratorical masterpiece. He aroused the entire convention as well as many Americans watching on national television.

In his Address, Clement attacked the sins of the Republican Party

²⁰⁵ Statement by Robert N. Clement, personal interview, August 4, 1977.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

and the Eisenhower Administration. Clement touched upon the sins of the Republican farm program, foreign policy, high cost of living, and Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Clement left no phase of the Eisenhower Administration untouched.

Frank Clement cried out,

Young and old of America--laboring men and women, business men both big and small, farmers of America--come on home before it's too late. Your lands are studded with the white skulls and crossbones of broken Republican promises. How long, oh America, shall these things endure--how long will people of America will you (sic) permit the welfare of this democracy to be pounced on in the home land and gambled on abroad. . . .

How long, America; O how long! 207

Conclusion

Frank Goad Clement had reached the pinnacle of his career and it was a moment of glory not to be forgotten.

To achieve the height of his career at the young age of thirty-six, Clement must have possessed more than ambition. He was obsessed by an overwhelming power to accomplish political victories until he had reached the White House.

Clement was envied by many for his achievements at such an early age. But where does an obsessed man go; what does he do when he reaches the pinnacle at such a young age? How long will it take him to reach even higher than the pinnacle?

How long, O how long?

²⁰⁷ Frank Goad Clement, "The Democratic National Convention Key-note Address," Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. XXII, September 1, 1956, p. 677.

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