

SOUVENIR RAIDERS FLOCK TO KENNEDY

Senator, His Wife and Aides
Tackle a Crowd Problem

By MAURICE CARROLL

Senator Robert F. Kennedy was squeezing through a crowd in Omaha the other day when Jeff Greenfield, who usually writes speeches but who this time was part of the wedge of guards, saw a woman reach toward the Senator's throat.

Carefully, she began loosening the Senator's necktie.

"Someone told me once that the way to shame someone like that is simply to grasp their wrist," Mr. Greenfield, still somewhat ruffled from the tussle, said later. "So I did."

Wrist grasped, the woman relinquished her hold on the Senator's tie and the procession resumed.

The Kennedy Presidential campaign route has been studded with such interruptions, not all as priceless for the interrupter.

A Common Occurrence

All candidates encounter souvenir grabbing in crowds, but Mr. Kennedy seems to suffer more of it than most, in part because of his celebrity status, in part because his crowds contain an over proportion of youngsters.

"Mostly it's handkerchiefs," the Senator said as, shirt-sleeved, he relaxed in an airplane between stops. Worrying about souvenir hunters was not, he noted, among his major campaign concerns.

"Mostly it's gloves," said Mrs. Ethel Kennedy, the Senator's wife. Crowds reach out to touch Mr. Kennedy's hand when he passes by; a few try the same thing with her.

"Mostly it's cufflinks," said Frederick G. Dutton, the Senator's top traveling adviser. He keeps detailed track of what, for the people involved, are merely impressions and he says that the Kennedy campaign consumes about 20 pairs of candidate's cufflinks a week.

Other than the bulk purchase of inexpensive cufflinks, the Senator's staff has made no special arrangements for expendable clothing. So far, no such arrangements have been needed. The Senator lost a shoe to a woman who scrambled into his slow-moving convertible in Kalamazoo, Mick, but the mauling and tugging in the crowds that shove close to him has done no other major damage to his clothing.

Col. John H. Glenn, the former astronaut, who has campaigned with Mr. Kennedy, lost a valuable souvenir cufflink with a spacecraft emblem on it during the Indiana campaign.

And William Barry, a tall, amiable former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent who guides the candidate through the crowds, has ripped a suit jacket or two, according to Mr. Dutton.

Give and Take Involved

But Mr. Barry has a role with a heavy potential for damage. Hand raised high as a beacon, he backs through the crowds, threading a path for Mr. Kennedy. Mr. Barry is exceptionally good at this sort of thing. Other campaign workers say that he can find a path through the most active of crowds without bruising anyone's feelings or anyone's shins.

It was Mr. Barry who spotted the campaign's first necktie grabber. That was a woman in Fresno, Calif., and he managed to dissuade her. The Senator was helpless to do anything about it; he was clasping hands in the crowd with both of his hands.

As the Kennedy staff recalls it, the woman in Fresno was glassy-eyed, apparently not conscious of doing anything improper. Nor has there been any evidence of malice among the souvenir hunters, they say. No one, for instance, has reached for a wallet or anything valuable, to their knowledge.

"And it's not all take either," noted Mr. Dutton. "There's a lot of give."

"The first time I remember encountering this was when I campaigned with Adlai Stevenson. Now we're finding the same thing with Senator Kennedy."

"When he emerges from a crowd, his pockets will be stuffed with all kinds of notes—pieces of paper that people have slipped in. They'll say all sorts of things: Could he visit someone's 90-year-old grandmother? Could he attend a grammar school play? Some just say, 'God bless you!'"

Top Negotiator for Steel To Leave Company Post

PITTSBURGH, May 10 (UPI)—R. Conrad Cooper, the chief contract negotiator for the steel industry, will retire from his post at the United States Steel Corporation on June 30, the company announced Friday.

Mr. Cooper, an executive vice president for the nation's top steel producer, will serve, however, as negotiator through the coming steel talks for 11 major companies.

R. Heath Larry, Mr. Cooper's top assistant in the negotiations, will succeed him as executive vice president. Mr. Cooper reaches the mandatory retirement age of 65 on June 15.

New Antioch Grade Plan

YELLOW SPRINGS, Ohio, May 10 (UPI)—Antioch College will abolish its grading system July 1, the school said Thursday. It will be replaced by a "credit-no-credit" rating, under which the faculty would evaluate student performance in a more detailed fashion.