

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University 8 Mai 1945 – Guelma

Faculty of letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language

جامعة 8 ماي 1945-قائمة

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية



OPTION: CIVILISATION

**The Legacy of the Kennedys' Quest for the American Presidency:
Ambition vs. Tragedy**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language and Culture**

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June 2022

Acknowledgments

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; God's blessings and peace be upon the noblest of prophets and messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his good relatives and companions.

I am appreciative of the interest and support of Prof. ELAGGOUNE Abdelhak whose word processor hosted countless pages, drafts, and edits at all hours of the day and night! I am extremely indebted to him for his humble character and heartfelt support that I will never forget. He offered me invaluable guidance regarding this dissertation, above and beyond the call of professional duty. His unfailing dedication has improved every page of this research; the errors and shortcomings are mine.

As I pursued my project, I was notably encouraged at many steps along the way by my family. Their support kept me motivated and confident. To my parents, I would say, I am the luckiest person to have you in my life. To my sisters, I owe my deepest gratefulness. Genuine thanks to my naughty sweetheart niece, Safana.

Last but not least, I would like to convey special gratitude to the jury members, Prof. TOULGUI Ladi and Dr. BOUDECHICHE Hamid, whom I have never had the chance to meet in person; still I heard several accounts attesting to their significant contributions to our English Department. I owe them my deepest gratefulness for devoting their time to reviewing my work and providing me with further guidance.

Dedication

To everyone who has showed me support, love, and faith since day one of my birth.

Abstract

The present dissertation examines how driven by their ambition, the Kennedys achieved degrees of national and global prominence in their lifetimes. This study assesses both the positive and negative dimensions of the Kennedys legacy associated with their attempt to rise to the presidency. It traces their Irish roots, upbringing and exposure to politics by their ambitious father. The research depicts how Joseph P. Kennedy, who had high expectations for each of his children, was eager to gain enough wealth and influence to protect his family from the uneasy and hostile currents he experienced as a young Irish Catholic in Harvard and Brahmin Boston. This became his life's goal, inspiring him to make his son the country's first Irish-Catholic president. The dissertation then provides an in depth coverage of each Kennedy contribution to American history. It also highlights the traits that they have had since they were young: a desire to serve the public and a drive to succeed; bravery in the face of adversity and a determination to triumph; awareness of the public's pulse and the ability to quicken it. Furthermore, the research outlines the devastating tragedies that haunted the Kennedys, from bootlegging rumors to mental retardation, plane crashes to assassinations. Based on an examination of historic, sociological, psychological studies and scholarly documents, this work investigates why the Kennedys have been subjected to such calamities and tragedies, most importantly, it explores the underlying pattern that governs the Kennedy "curse". Enough has been written, and will be written about the Kennedys, yet the aim is not to repeat a recitation of their history but to trace the evolution of their philosophy, to draw a personal and a national way of life from those lives and deeds that can meaningfully inspire the Algerian youth. It is a legacy for all those, who seek a newer world, a fresh start.

ملخص

تعالج هذه المذكرة كيف حققت عائلة كينيدي ، بدافع من الطموح ، درجات من الشهرة الوطنية والعالمية. تقيم هذه الدراسة كلاً من الأبعاد الإيجابية والسلبية لإرث كينيدي المرتبط بمحاولتهم اعتلاء الرئاسة. إنها تتبع جذورهم الأيرلندية، وتنشئتهم والتطرق للسياسة من قبل والدهم الطموح. يصور البحث كيف أن جوزيف ب. كينيدي ، الذي كان لديه توقعات عالية لكل من أبنائه ، حريصاً على كسب ما يكفي من الثروة والتأثير لحماية أسرته من التيارات المضطربة والعداية التي عاشها كشاب كاثوليكي أيرلندي في هارفارد و بوسطن البرهمية. أصبح هذا هدف حياته ، مما ألهمه لجعل ابنه أول رئيس أيرلندي كاثوليكي في البلاد. بعد هذا تقدم الأطروحة تغطية متعمقة لكل مساهمات آل كينيدي في التاريخ الأمريكي. كما أنها تبرز السمات التي كانوا يتمتعون بها منذ صغرهم: الرغبة في خدمة العامة والدافع إلى النجاح ؛ الشجاعة في مواجهة الشدائد والتصميم على الانتصار ؛ الوعي بنبض الجماهير والقدرة على تسريعه. علاوة على ذلك ، يحدد البحث المآسي المروعة والتي طاردت عائلة كينيدي ، من شائعات تهريب الخمر إلى التخلف العقلي ، وتحطم الطائرات إلى الاغتيالات. استناداً إلى فحص الدراسات التاريخية والاجتماعية والنفسية والوثائق العلمية ، يبحث هذا العمل في سبب تعرض عائلة كينيدي لمثل هذه الكوارث والمآسي ، والأهم من ذلك أنه يستكشف المبدأ الأساسي الذي يحكم "العنة" كينيدي. لقد كتب ما يكفي - وسيُكتب عن آل كينيدي ، ولكن الهدف ليس لتكرار سرد تاريخهم ولكن لتتبع تطور فلسفتهم - لرسم أسلوب حياة شخصي و وطني من تلك الأرواح والأفعال التي يمكن أن تلهم الشباب الجزائري بشكل هادف. إنه إرث لكل أولئك الذين يسعون إلى عالم جديد - بداية جديدة.

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Introduction

The Kennedy family is one of the most famous families in the world. If America had a royal family, the most titled dynasty would certainly be the Kennedys. They looked good on camera with photogenic quality; they looked young at an ambitious time. The power, wealth, mystique, and glamour of the family members, as well as their extensive and continuing commitment to public service, have elevated them to iconic status over the past half-century. These traits, combined with good fortune, propelled John F. Kennedy to the presidency, Robert F. Kennedy to Attorney General, and Edward Kennedy to Senator. Both Robert and Edward were major presidential candidates.

The Kennedys have occupied nearly every political position America has to offer, including the roles of ambassador, senator, congressman, SEC chairman, mayor, state representative, and, of course, President. Every Kennedy who has ever been elected to public office has served as a Democrat. Other members of the family have worked for the Democratic Party or served in Democratic administrations as Cabinet members.

Of course, the Kennedys have made it all appear smooth, but beneath the surface, there is a group of shrewd aspirants who clawed their way to the top, at times imperfectly. What many people also ignore is that before "Camelot," there was Joseph Kennedy, Sr., the grandson of poor Irish immigrants who was determined to overcome preconceptions of his time. This dissertation investigates the sustaining forces behind the Kennedy's outsized ambition towards American presidency

Being a Kennedy had its perks (access to planes, money, and a fatalistic outlook on life), but it also had its drawbacks. The family's story is intriguing, with assassinations, mysterious deaths essentially a story where the reader wants to see the next page. Their history has been haunted by tragedies for decades. This has led many people to suggest that the tragedies in the family can be questioned as conspiracy.

Another factor to consider while discussing the Kennedys misfortune is that the boys were raised with the belief that dangerous behavior was deemed manly. The Kennedy brothers took many risks, some of which resulted in death or serious injury. Others attributed them to commonly known as the “Kennedy Curse”. Are they, however, any more unlucky than any other family of comparable size with far less visibility? This project inspects that fact, most importantly; it explains the mystery surrounding the untimely deaths that plagued the family.

Through the comprehensive exploration of this study on the Kennedys, their ambition and tragedies will be unraveled, emphasized, and scrutinized. Moreover, the analysis that is presented in this study will convey valuable information for future research, not only highlighting their successes but also their personal failings. This study is highly recommended for students interested in delving more deeply into the Kennedy family history and the politics of their times.

The work aims at building a full understanding of the Kennedys' legacy of triumph and tragedy. It highlights why in the world's imagination; they hold a peculiar, contradictory position: they are known and unknowable, charming and cursed. The choice of the topic is generally motivated by a desire to investigate the true reasons behind the fatal accidents, assassinations, and scandals blighted the Kennedys for decades. Furthermore, the purpose of the study is to delve in the Kennedy Curse, a fascinating and enlightening account of America's most famous family.

Joe Kennedy, the most fascinating of the Kennedys and one of the most accomplished and remarkable figures of the twentieth century, had it not been for him, John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States would never make it to the Oval Office. After a failed stint as Ambassador to London, where he advocated appeasement of Hitler and failed, his personal ambitions to become the first Catholic President came to an end. The research study sheds light on how the man largely known for his anti-British sentiment, shifted his political

ambitions to his sons, establishing a political dynasty that still exists today. Furthermore, rumors have swirled for decades that Joseph P. Kennedy was a logistical bootlegger. Therefore, the research project tracks the main source of the family's wealth and their involvement with the Mafia.

Because of the vast number of the terrible tragedies to have hit the ultra-successful Irish Catholic family, considerable speculations were built up over the years. While many trace the Kennedy family's disasters to conspiracies, others attribute them to their reckless behaviour. More importantly, some people assumptions were built on superstitions. They are buying into the medieval notion of a family curse. The Camelot dynasty is thought to have come too close to the sun after becoming more godlike than men, and the gods are now seeking revenge; another theory is that the Kennedys are doomed to endless tragedy because their fortune was founded on bootlegging money, and therefore the father's sins will be inflicted on the sons forever.

After John F. Kennedy Jr., the son of the former US President John F. Kennedy, died in a plane crash, "The curse of the Kennedys strikes again" was the headline in the British Sunday newspaper's front page. In Italy, the headlines were, "The royal and cursed dynasty", "The curse kills another Kennedy" and "The beautiful and the damned". Still, other logical interpretations assume that there are 87 living Kennedys descended from Joseph and Rose, and with a family that large, the chances of tragedy are naturally lower than for the average family.

The present dissertation believes that the circumstances surrounding the Kennedys' deaths are not so mysterious as to need a supernatural explanation. The curse is an old concept that is always attached to a wealthy and powerful family in the popular imagination; the British nobility is plagued with a variety of vivid and deadly curses, which are frequently mentioned

with a deliciously delighted air of awe. The assumption that the laws of nature or man did not apply to them because of their privilege was their biggest shortcoming.

The work addresses a series of inquiries relevant to the family's quest for the American presidency at a fearful cost including: How did the Kennedy's political dynasty begin? Was Joseph Patrick Kennedy a bootlegger and an anti-Semitic? What is the true source of the Kennedy family's wealth? Why did Joseph Patrick Kennedy, the father, want his eldest son to become president? Besides, why were the Kennedys so troubled with bad luck and deaths? Are they really ill-fated, or are they victims of wrong decisions, bad habits, illegal practices, or erroneous lifestyles? Finally, what are the myths surrounding the Kennedys curse?

The subject under investigation has continuously attracted the interest of many researchers and politicians. It has inspired a variety of analyses across literature, art and media. The Kennedys have dominated not only headlines but movies and TV screens for decades. No family, in later times, has captured the heart of the Americans like the Kennedys did. Before undertaking this analysis and clarifying its significance, it is important to highlight some of the major academic works that have tackled the topic.

In his book, *The Kennedys: America's Emerald Kings*, Thomas Maier delves into the deeper currents of the impressive Kennedy story, and the ways in which their immigrant background shaped their values over five generations. Maier depicts how Irish Catholicism informed many of their most well-known attitudes and political decisions. Bringing together extensive research in Ireland and the United States, quite a few exclusive interviews, as well as his own perspective as an Irish-American, Maier's original approach to the Kennedy era vividly illustrates the essential role of the immigrant experience for the country's leading political dynasty.

Patricia M. Ravalgi reviewed *The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster*, a book written by John H. Davis. The article was published in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, a peer-reviewed

political science journal dedicated to the scholarly study of the presidency of the United States. Patricia evaluates John H. Davis's informative and illuminating history of America's most controversial family stretching from the striking business tactics of Joseph P. Kennedy. She claims that though Davis is meticulous and fascinating in his presentation of the facts, he sometimes draws the false conclusions. She supports her claim by indicating Jack Kennedy's true motivation for his Congressional and Presidential race.

Unlike Davis, who asserts that he "campaigns as if he were driven," and attributes this merely to the pathological fear of losing, especially when his father was spending all that money, Patricia believes that Jack Kennedy apparently wanted to succeed as much as his father wanted it for him.

Richard D. Mahoney's intriguing book, *The Kennedy Brothers*, is a masterful account of two men whose legacy continues to hold the American imagination. Richard provides, in a large sense, a living history of the Kennedy Administration; setbacks and triumphs as experienced; and the roles Robert Kennedy played in that history as Attorney General. Mahoney portrays Jack and Bobby in all their hubris and humanity, youthfulness and fatalism. He depicts the Kennedy days and years as they have never seen before. He also evaluates evidence of the Kennedys' dealings with the Mafia, anti-Castro rebels, and other groups lurking in the shadows of American life.

America was never the same after Kennedy's assassination, his suspicious death inspired many authors to produce the most comprehensive and compelling accounts. Since the 1963 tragedy, more than 2,000 books have covered various theories revealing links to the crime of the century and its aftermath. James W. Douglass in his book, *JFK and the Unspeakable*, written in a profoundly spiritual manner that constitutes of a significant amount of research, mainly investigates Lee Harvey Oswald's involvement with American intelligence agencies.

Douglass provides perspective on not just how Kennedy was assassinated, but why, on top of that why the assassination is important to continue to research to this day.

Edward Klein, a bestselling author and journalist personally acquainted with many members of the Kennedy family, in his book *The Kennedy Curse*, uncovers one of the great mysteries of our time and clarifies why the Kennedys have been subjected to such a mind-boggling chain of calamities. Drawing upon of private documents, archives in Ireland and America, scores of interviews with people who have never spoken out before, and private conversations with Jackie, Klein inspects the core pattern that governs the Kennedy Curse.

This research will be conducted through an historical and a qualitative research methodology. Accordingly, it will be essentially based on the selection and explorations of academic research findings on the Kennedy family's rise to power, similarly on how personal relationships within the Kennedy dynasty shaped national and global events from the Wall Street crash to the Cold War. The work will also rely on historical data, documentaries and American TV shows capturing the atmosphere of the time. Furthermore, the progress achieved and the tragedies that haunted the family will be explored in a coherent chronological order.

In order to strengthen the basis of this research work, both primary and secondary sources are required. Reading materials, like archives, government publications, newspaper and journal articles, will serve as primary sources. Other secondary sources, like books, documentaries, conference papers and website articles are also significant materials that provide recent conducted researches which offer wide-ranging overviews over the topic.

This work contains six parts: An introduction, four main chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter of the dissertation, “The Kennedys: The Birth of a Living Legacy”, highlights how driven by their ambition, the Kennedys achieved degrees of national and global

prominence in their lifetimes. It explores the origins of the Kennedys, the real source of their wealth, their impact on American politics, public service, entertainment, and business.

The second chapter under the title of “The Kennedys: A Fatal Ambition” presents a detailed portrayal of the tragic plane crashes, overdoses, and accidents that have claimed the Kennedys at young ages. This chapter examines many of the facts advanced as explanations to these tragic events, and the extent to which these different theories can be true.

The third chapter is entitled “The Kennedys are Blessed” and discusses the different family members rise to fame. Starting with John F. Kennedy, who worked hard to eventually become congressman, senator, and then president, and therefore fulfilled one of his father’s dreams.

Chapter four is entitled “The Torch is Passed but the Curse is There”. It examines the various speculations and rumors built up because of the unfortunate tragedies that hit almost all members of the Kennedy family. It particularly explores the origins of the old concept of a family curse, which is always attached to a wealthy and powerful family in the popular imagination; to see whether the Kennedys were cursed.

Chapter One

The Kennedys: The Birth of a Living Legacy

From Patrick and Bridget Kennedy of County Wexford, who fled from the famine-stricken Ireland among the great wave of immigrants in the 1840s, to John Fitzgerald Kennedy's ground-breaking 1960 election to the American presidency, to Senator Edward Kennedy and US ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith's efforts to bring peace to their ancestral homeland in the 1990s, the Kennedys have served as the perfect example of the Irish Catholic immigrant experience in America. Their sense of being Irish, Catholic, and part of a family that came from an often oppressed immigrant minority, indeed, the very Irish notion of the Kennedy clan, as they were known; was passed down from one generation to the next.

The Kennedys' conception of themselves as Irish Catholics—both as outcasts in their native Ireland and as "outsiders" in Boston's Brahmin community—had a long-lasting effect on their politics. Only by first understanding about what occurred to the Kennedys in Ireland can one comprehend and appreciate so much about the Kennedys in America.

In his book, *The Kennedys: America's Emerald King*, Thomas Maier notes that the popular depiction of JFK as a Harvard-educated Anglophile, and almost perfect creation of America's melting pot, perfectly aligned with demonstrating assimilation notions. None of the usual prejudices about Irish politicians appear to be true in this case. As a result, the underlying factors of ethnicity and religion that so often influenced the Kennedy family's actions and attitude were often overlooked or given merely a fleeting reference in dozens of Kennedy writings (19). Maier concludes that the Kennedy story reminds people of the limits of America's melting pot and those histories that paint people from minority groups in familiar "just like us" tones.

Rather than telling another Camelot story, this chapter re-examines the Kennedy saga by delving deeper into the intricacies of these cultural influences on their life. Therefore, many

new discoveries, unexplored events, and previously unknown yet influential characters would come to life. As a result, this chapter is a new perspective on the Kennedys' sense of Irish immigrant history, their experiences with religious discrimination, and how the complicated dynamics of their family life mirrored the Irish Catholic experience in America.

1.1. The Heirs of Brian Boru

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was proud of his Irish ancestry. During his historic visit to Ireland in June 1963, President John F. Kennedy, as he rose to speak, recalled his family ties to the thousands of Irish who fled the Famines' death and despair. His great-grandfather among them, and journeyed from places like New Ross to find a new home as immigrants in America. He told the crowd of New Ross:

It took one hundred and fifteen years to make this trip, and six thousand miles, and three generations, but I am proud to be here. The president told the crowd when my great-grandfather. When my great grandfather left here to become a cooper in East Boston, he carried nothing with him except two things: a strong religious faith and a strong desire for liberty. I am glad to say that all of his great-grandchildren have valued that inheritance. (qtd. in Maier 7)

1.1.1. Genealogy

The Kennedy Family origins have strong roots in Ireland's past, and the *Library of Congress* collaborated with genealogy sleuths to trace the family's lineage back to the Chieftains of Ormond and, at one time, the ancient Kings of Ireland. According to genealogist Brian Kennedy in his work *JFK's Irish O'Kennedy Ancestors*, the Kennedys, who would go on to play a significant role in the United States of America, originated from the O'Kinneide Fionn (one of the three Irish Gaelic O'Kinneide clans, who ruled the kingdom of Ormond, along with the O'Kinneide Donn and O'Kinneide Ruadh).

1.1.2. Etymology

Gaelic scholars have advanced several theories about the name's etymology. According to *Kennedy Name Study*, a project serves as a collaborative platform for genealogists researching to collect information on the Kennedy name, or have an interest in the Kennedy name, in the native Gaelic tongue, clans name was O' Cinneide, "hard-headed" or "ugly headed," probably more accurate translation historians suggest is "head of the clan." According to these accounts, the O' Cinneide clan played a significant role in early Irish history, with their most celebrated member, Brian Boru, becoming a heroic figure in Irish folklore. Hundreds, if not thousands, of those with Irish blood in their veins may trace their ancestors back to Brian Boru and other long-ago Chieftains.

Stone castle ruins from the O'Kennedy sept can still be found in Tipperary's countryside. The O'Kennedys made their home in Ormond in County Tipperary, about twenty miles west of New Ross, and demonstrated a greater degree of independence than other Irish Clans. For generations, the clans had followed the Druids' pagan rituals, which included worshiping many gods in nature and believing in the immortality of the soul. As Ireland became more Christian, the faith introduced in AD 432 by St. Patrick, who used Tree three-leaf shamrocks to describe the Trinity, the clans decided who would be kings and increasingly became part of Ireland's power structure (Maier 11).

According to the *Ireland Story*, an online site concerned with the Ireland history the Ice Age to present, *Brian Boru and Dynastic Upheaval* essay states that when Brian Boru passed away, his successors' aspirations for national unity were dashed. Over the next few decades, Ireland was split apart by political infighting, leaving it vulnerable to military and economic control from over the sea. Invasion of Wexford by the Norman Barons of England in 1169 would result in centuries of British dominance. Under Norman rule, the Irish lost their own lands and laws were passed that made them social outcasts. During this time, the family's

Gaelic name was Anglicized to O’Kennedy, the “O” eventually dropped. The Kennedys moved into Southeastern Ireland, and were reduced to serfdom and worked as tenants on farms they would never own (Maier).

1.1.3. The Subjugation Grew

“Why did Henry VIII break with Rome?” Concepts that Ireland was a pawn in a greater religious conflict between the British Monarchy and the throne of Saint Peter by the late sixteenth century. When the pope refused to annul Henry VIII's first marriage, the king split from the Roman Catholic Church and founded the Church of England. Henry and his heirs turned England to Protestantism, igniting centuries of conflict. When Irish Catholics attempted uprising in the early 1640s, the British responded with bloodshed and increased their oppression.

To ensure that the Irish remained under its control, the British Parliament passed laws restricting Irish farm ownership and granting enormous tracts of land to loyalists, mostly Protestants. When lands were confiscated from Catholics and given to English squires, the fate of the Kennedys living around New Ross was dictated by these edicts. In 1704, the Irish Parliament, with the Crown’s blessing, passed one of several “penal laws” (Maier 14).

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* relates that these penal laws, intended to break the back of rebellion, subjugated a people's spirit. No Catholic was allowed to own property, vote, or hold public office. Catholics were barred from working in the civil service, from sending their children to school, and from seeking education for themselves. Catholics were banned from serving in the military and from owning anything worth more than five pounds.

In *The Founding Father: The Story of Joseph P. Kennedy: A Study in Power, Wealth and Family Ambition*, Richard J. Whalen states that the English penal laws effectively ended any prospect of the Kennedys in Dunganstown, and all Catholics in Ireland, of reclaiming the territories they had known before Cromwell. Much of new Ross and its environs were given

away to the Tottenham family, descendants of the Normans who became members of Parliament for decades to come (15).

1.1.4. The Starvation

According to *The Kennedy curse: Why tragedy has haunted America's first family for 150 years*, Klein Edward stresses that no records exist of Patrick Kennedy's birth and baptism in 1823 (fig. 1). Priests in Wexford secretly performed sacraments throughout the county while the oppressive penal laws remained in place. However, clergymen could not keep official records without jeopardizing their own lives and the lives of their parishioners. It did not seem to matter that Irish infants like Patrick Kennedy, the third son of a poor tenant farmer, arrived (33).

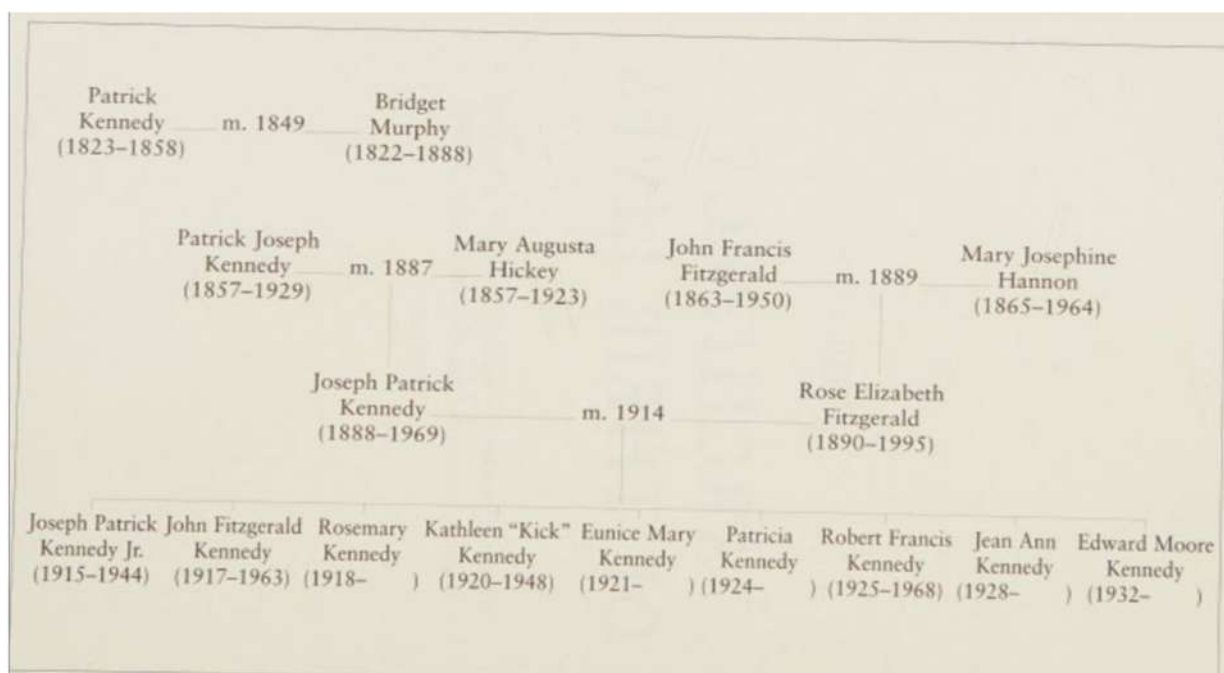


Fig.1.The Kennedy Family Tree

Source: Collier, Peter and David Horowitz. *The Kennedys: An American Drama*. New York, 1984.

Even after the penal laws were repealed, starting in 1829 with Catholic emancipation, the Kennedys' life in Dunganstown barely improved. Oppression had taken its toll over six generations. Nearly all of Wexford's farmland was controlled by non-Irish landowners; the

Catholic Church and clergy were still being targeted by authorities; and the majority of local inhabitants, including the Kennedys' neighbors, were illiterate. By the time he reached adulthood, Patrick's parents were both dead and his older brother was in charge of the family homestead. The little family house in Dunganstown was very tight in these circumstances. Patrick's relatives believe he spent some nights in the loft of their barn with the horses and pigs (Maier 19).

The grandfather, Patrick Kennedy, was a tenant farmer, almost the only occupation in Ireland. Patrick's work as a farmer in Dunganstown mostly consisted of hand-cutting and tying grain bundles and planting and tilling potatoes for his family's consumption. Only when he went into New Ross to get supplies of barley and when the family went to a mile distant for Sunday Mass did this routine change. For tenant farmers, like Patrick, life was often a struggle. Locals came for regular evenings of music and dance when they could, when young people chatted and flirted while the elderly ones told stories by the fire. Life was made bearable by the gregarious nature of the Irish, who found frequent excuses to summon the fiddler and dance merely until daybreak (Whalen 15-16).

The potato had been both the salvation and the curse of the Irish. According to John Keating's book *"Irish Famine Facts,"* around 1586, the potato made its debut in Ireland. There are several hypotheses as to how it came about. The introduction is sometimes credited to Sir Francis Drake, who concealed out for almost two years outside of Crosshaven in "Drakes Pool." Upon his return from South America, Co. Cork. Another popular theory holds that the potato originated from a Spanish Armada ship that sank in 1588 off the coast of Galway. The widely accepted theory, however, claims that Sir Walter Raleigh was responsible for the invention of the potato (42).

In 1845, a mysterious blight crossed the ocean from North America and the potato crop failed. It struck with dismaying swiftness, seeming to turn sound potatoes black and putrid in

a single night (Whalen 16). Ireland was destitute without the potato. Despite the fact that the tenant and his family were starving, the corn and grain that remained standing next to their devastated potato patch had to be sold to pay rent. Failure to pay resulted in merciless eviction and a slow death on the streets in most cases (17).

“Deaths from famine had been numerous . . . caused by the utter want to food” reports the *Wexford Independent* in January 1847. The following month, a board of works inspector for County Wexford writes in his journal that farmers on plots of land other than those handled by the Kennedys were "very badly off," and that some were forced to leave their farms and seek public works projects to avoid famine. More than 20,000 people in Wexford relied on public works for their daily bread by February 1847.

The Patriarch: the Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy, David Nasaw conveys that the Famine struck the Kennedys, as it did many other Irish farmers, and irrevocably changed the composition of their family. All of their offspring would no longer stay on the farm, succeeding one generation after the next. Their prayers for freedom would not be fulfilled any time soon. The Kennedys, some of whom fought alongside the Wexford boys in 1798, once envisioned Irish independence with political and social equality for Catholics. Those days were now gone, effectively starved to death (Nasaw 4-5).

According to some accounts, the Kennedys in Dunganstown were wealthier than other poor tenant farmers, and their portion of Ireland was unaffected by the Famine. “A Rise to Prominence: John F. Kennedy’s Paternal Lineage”, an article edited in National Park Service, states that local newspaper accounts of the Famine's devastation in Wexford, as well as an analysis of Irish records documenting the Kennedy family's poor financial situation, suggest otherwise.

1.1.5. Insufficient Relief

On 26 January 1847, in an article entitled “The Cost of Relief”, the newspaper predicted yet another year of “misery, trouble, animosity, expense, mismanagement, and ingratitude”. The verdict was clear: negligent Irish landlords who were to blame for creating the circumstances that led to the Famine should shoulder the burden of providing relief. According to the popular nostrum of the time: “Irish property should pay for Irish poverty” (O’keeffe).

The British Parliament provided insufficient relief for a distant and despised people, and in June 1847, the Irish Poor Law Extension Act was passed, requiring already impoverished communities to raise their own tax money for poor relief, none of which was to go to heads of households renting a quarter acre or more of land. Starving tenants had to vacate their farms in order to qualify for relief. Those who remained were evicted due to unpaid taxes. The newly landless who could afford to leave the island emigrated. More than a million people perished between 1845 and the early 1850s, and nearly a quarter of the population departed for North America (Nasaw 28).

2.1. Dunganstown to East Boston

Like so many other American families, the Kennedy saga begins with an ancestor’s escape from poverty and oppression in 1848. Joseph Kennedy's grandfather, Patrick fled from Dunganstown, County Wexford, in search of a better life after suffering crop failure, starvation, and the near genocide of British colonialism's effects.

The *Irish Immigration: Beyond the Potato Famine* essay opined that:

During the 1840s, the Irish made approximately half of all immigration to the country. They made up one-third of all immigrants from 1820 until the start of the Civil War. The majority of Irish immigrants in the early twentieth century were single men. Following the 1840s, the trend moved to families, with a few family members arriving first and earning

money in order to bring relatives later in a practice known as chain migration. Women made up the majority of newcomers in later years.

2.1.1. The Outsider

Thomas Maier claims that Patrick Kennedy, at the age of twenty-six, had few options. Whether it was due to poverty, illness, or the knowledge that a third-born son had little chance of controlling his family's tiny business, farm, or any other piece of land, Patrick Kennedy decided to leave. His expectations for the future could no longer be sustained in Ireland. Patrick Barron, Kennedy's close friend at Cherry Bros Brewery in New Ross, who taught him coopering skills, had reached that conclusion a month beforehand and boarded a ship heading for America (7).

The author of *The sins of the Father: Joseph P. Kennedy and The Dynasty He Founded*, Ronald Kessler believes that Patrick Kennedy decided to follow in October 1848, in love with Baron's cousin and planning to marry her. Patrick made his way to Liverpool, England, and booked passage on the *SS Washington Irving*. The forty-day journey was perilous board of cholera, dysentery, yellow fever, smallpox, or measles. Patrick landed on April 21, 1849, on Noddle Island (6).

On their passage to the new world requiring six weeks or longer, the Irish suffered a subhuman existence equaling in horror the dread middle passage of the African slave trade as shown in figure 6 below. Indeed, the Negro, as valuable property, probably fared better than the Irishman, who was looked upon as something that is irrelevant or worthless (Whalen 18).



Fig. 2. “The Departure. Irish Immigrants Escaping the Great Irish Famine”. Original published in *The Illustrated London News*, 6th July 1850.

Source: *Illustrated London News*/Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

The image shows Irish emigrants sailing in 1850 to the United States, in a Coffin ship, a ship in poor condition that was overloaded.

The circumstances surrounding the first mass immigration to America cannot be described in sufficient detail. Unlike the adventurers, traders, religious dissenters, and land-seeking yeomen who migrated before them across the Atlantic, the Irish were mostly an uprooted peasantry, the majority of whom came from the poorest sections of Europe's poorest house. The Famine created a whole new type of immigrant, apart from those seeking religious freedom or economic opportunity, which had previously drawn people to America. The waves of Irish landing in Boston, New York, and other North American ports created a new form of refugee, a generation of "wild geese" pushed to escape their homeland against their will.

Patrick Kennedy had the skills of a farm laborer and was as unprepared for sophisticated society as the lowest troubled or distressed person from the west of Ireland. The strength of

his back was all the typical Irishman brought. Fortunately, it was enough. A young and expanding country, digging canals, building railroads, laying roads and raising cities, needed the brute push of the Irish (Whalen 19). Patrick Kennedy was one of those who stayed on the island and crammed into the cheap boardinghouses near the docks. He found work as a cooper, a thriving trade, for most of the barrels held whiskey, and saloons multiplied with the influx of Irish (Klein 38).

Maier attests that Irish men accepted whatever jobs they could, usually at very low pay, while women served as domestics or in other low-paying jobs. They frequently found themselves competing with African Americans for the most difficult, risky, and low-paying tasks. Employers threatened to replace Irish workers, as well as other newly arriving immigrants and African Americans, if they fought for better working conditions, causing ethnic tensions that occasionally became violent. Maier adds that many immigrants from Irish farms, unaccustomed to America's language and customs were duped by con artists or exploited in backbreaking jobs by American employers who paid one dollar for a fourteen-hour work day (31).

With steady work on the horizon, as Nasawsays, Patrick Kennedy was able to marry Bridget Murphy another recent emigrant from County Wexford, in September 1849 and buy a house, East Boston (6). Kessler reports that on January 14, 1858, Bridget and Patrick have their fifth child, Patrick Joseph Kennedy. Known as P.J., he would be Joe Kennedy's father. On November 22, 1858, the senior Patrick died of cholera leaving Bridget to raise their family (7).

2.1.2. Brahmins Bigotry

The Irish had a reputation for drinking and fighting. Gangs of Irish origin were frequent. Property values dropped when an Irish family came into a neighborhood, and other

inhabitants fled. Employers who were anti-Catholic sought "Protestant" applicants. "No Irish Need Apply," says an add (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. *No Irish Need Apply.* The illustration demonstrates Documenting the sad, discriminatory history of "No Irish Need Apply" signs in Boston

Source: IrishCentral Staff @IrishCentral Jul 25, 2021

<https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/history/no-irish-need-apply-signs-vilified-ancestors>

Their rise out of the Wharf's ghetto was slowed by alcoholism, self-destructive behavior, and a social life centered on drinking. The stereotype of a drunken Irishman grew popular in nineteenth-century America. The Irish appeared to lack the enterprise and fortitude required for success, at least in the eyes of the Puritans. The persecution of England seemed a poor excuse for Irish self-destruction. "Is the landlord's absence the reason why the house is filthy and Biddy lolls on the porch all day?" asks British novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. "People need not be dirty if they are ever so idle, if they are ever so poor, pigs and men need not live together" (11).

Between Protestants, whose strong independence was partly derived from their power and success in America, and Irish Catholics, a lowly flock that looked to the priest for guidance, there existed a fundamentally different worldview. Their main distinctions stemmed from their religious background and cultural traditions. Between Irish Catholics, a lowly flock that deferred to the priest for guidance, and Protestants, whose fiercely independent perspective was largely derived from their power and success in America, there existed a fundamentally distinct worldview. Religious education and cultural traditions were the source of their fundamental differences. As historian, Kerby Miller observes:

The Catholic Irish were more communal than individualistic, more independent than independent, more fatalistic than optimistic, more prone to accept conditions passively than to take initiatives for change, and more sensitive to the weight of tradition than to innovative possibilities for the future. (qtd. in Maier 37)

The Kennedys lived and worked in Boston, hoping to profit from America's economic opportunities. First, they had to overcome the terrible, pervasive discrimination that existed at the time against Irish Catholic immigrants. With thousands of new immigrants descending on its streets, the Yankee Boston of old became defensive, scorning these newcomers as if they were a plague of water rats (Maier 38).

After nearly a half-century in Boston, the Irish filthy and unwelcome had not assimilated into the greater society. The *Atlantic* expresses with utter contempt in 1896: "The Irishman fails to fit into the complex of our civilization, apparently for the reason that his talents are too little interwoven with the capacities which go to make up the modern successful man." The Irish were met with skepticism and suspicion from the start in Boston. Workers serving as maids, such as Bridget Kennedy, were suspected. "Though Bostonians could not do without the Irish servant girl, distrust of her mounted steadily," observes Handlin. "Natives begin to regard her as a spy of the Pope who revealed their secrets regularly to priest in confession."

Mayor Theodore Lyman describes the Irish as “a race that will never be infused with our own, but on the contrary, will always remain distinct and hostile.”

1.3. The Know-Nothing Party

When the Kennedys arrived to America, intense anti-Catholicism sparked the formation of the so-called Know-Nothing party, a nationwide political movement of hate wrapped in the American flag, as shown in the following figure 4. *The Boston Globe* observes that a secret patriotic group known as the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner grew into an open "American party" starting in 1850. They pledged to vote only for native-born Americans and called for a twenty-one-year naturalization period to limit the flow of immigrants into the country. *Smithsonian Magazine* adds that when questioned about their plans, members were advised to respond, "I know nothing about it."



Fig. 4. Flag of the Know Nothing or American party, circa 1850

Source: <https://www.cowanauctions.com/lot/know-nothing-party-flag-67265>

Know-Nothing Party Flag. Glazed muslin, 29" x 50". Printed in red, blue, and black with canton bearing a spread-winged American eagle surmounted by a ribbon banner

bearing *Native American*, the eagle holding a patriotic shield in its beak and flanked by stands of American flags, at its feet, a ballot box bearing the slogan *Twenty-One Years*. This device is surrounded by a medallion of 22 stars, with four additional stars in the corners. The fly has thirteen alternating red and white stripes with blue block-lettered text on second through fourth white stripes, which reads *Native. Americans./Beware Of/Foreign Influence*, all the *Ns* are reversed, except the first *N* in *Native*. Hoist is hand-sewn homespun cotton of various colors.

The "Know-Nothings" expressed many Americans' deepest fears, particularly concerns about Catholics' out-of-control breeding. In *Getting to Know the Know-Nothings*, the editor states that In many ways, the Know Nothings were a nationalist and xenophobic movement even though they were once a secret club of men who fought Roman Catholicism, Irish immigration, and other Roman Catholic immigration. The party took a progressive stance on "labor rights problems and the need for more government investment." They did not want papists to overwhelm the majority and distort their hard-won culture. Six state governors and seventy-five congressmen were elected by the Know-Nothings in 1850. In the state legislature, they introduced laws to make reading the Protestant version of the Bible compulsory in schools. Some intended to introduce legislation barring anyone who declared allegiance to the pope from holding public office. They also promoted anti-immigration measures that almost succeeded, such as a state literacy test for voters.

Maier in reference to Abraham Lincoln's view about the Know-Nothing party claims that:

Upset by the Know-Nothing Party's swift political rise, Abraham Lincoln in 1855 confided to a friend "our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid." Basic freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights, he warned, might be endangered.

“When the Know-Nothings get Control, Lincoln cracked; it will read ‘All men are created equal, except Negroes and foreigners, and Catholics.’” (40)

The Know-Nothing Party was eventually overwhelmed by mounting passions surrounding slavery and the impending Civil War in the 1860s, though fiery rhetoric and bigotry toward Irish Catholics persisted.

1.3.1. The Brahmins

The more liberal citizens of Boston were outraged by the Know-Nothings' harsh conduct, but they took a different path. This high-minded appeal held the idea that the intrinsic wisdom of Anglo-Saxon culture will enlighten and displace Irish Catholics' provincial dogmas. Many of the proponents were affluent and prominent members of Boston society, bankers, educators, churchmen, and property owners, who Oliver Wendell Holmes, an American jurist and legal scholar who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1902 to 1932 named "the Brahmins," a reference to India's preeminent priestly elite. In today's caste system, these Brahmin elites hoped to keep their positions of power. The implication is that the Irish should go along for the sake of their own welfare. The desire to remodel and redefine others in one's own image would become a distinctive feature of American democracy. The Boston Brahmins were among the first American practitioners of the "melting pot" assimilation ideal, and despite their good intentions, the difficulties quickly became apparent (Maier 41).

For Brahmins, "America was reserved for them and they were now having to defend themselves against the foreign papists, the Catholic hordes as they called them, coming from Europe," said Peter F. Stevens, journalist and author of "Hidden History of the Boston Irish," as articulated in *Turning Boston Irish Was A Fight—Literally* by By Edgar B. Herwick III.

Maier opines that some ignoble fears lurked beneath the Brahmin rhetoric of good schools and good government. He goes on saying that Irish Catholics flooded into the city,

progressively gaining influence through the ballot box, the Brahmins seemed to be caught in a spiritual malaise, fearful that Boston would no longer be theirs alone. By the 1860s, to escape the people they wanted to see assimilated into their way of life, many Brahmins moved out to Milton and Brookline. He adds that they sent their children to their own private schools and created their own insular worlds in affluent gentlemen's clubs. Inside these restricted communities, Brahmin society became more tightly organized and more impenetrable, and the Irish were kept safely at a distance well into the twentieth century (42).

1.3.2. The Long Climb to Acceptance

Irish Catholics faced hostility from the more established Protestants, who believed that the swelling numbers of Irish would translate into political power. That is exactly what happened. *Ethnic Political Transition in Boston, 1884-1933* affirms that in the second half of the twentieth century, the Cabots, Lowells, and Lodges still dominated Boston's financial institutions, but the Irish had already taken control politically. The Irish now made up more than a third of the population of Boston. The blatant prejudice typified by "No Irish Need Apply" notices in classified job advertisements had all but disappeared (Eisinger217).

At the turn of the century, the tide of political power in Boston was shifting. Ward bosses from Ireland, like John F. Fitzgerald and Patrick Joseph Kennedy, were grabbing authority from the upper crust. According to *A Look Back at the Lays of Bostons*, Quincy and O'Brien were the names of former mayors of Boston. Collins and Fitzgerald, both Irish names, were among the victors. These newcomers formed a Boston power base, eloquent, persuasive, and practical political brokers acting in local networks of churches, pubs, and clubs, that would maintain Irish control of city government for over a century; and launch an American political dynasty.

1.3.3. The Liberator

In the first part of the nineteenth century, *The Irish Cultural Society* refers to Daniel O'Connell, as The Liberator, the acknowledged political leader of Ireland's Roman Catholic majority. With the subtle timing of an Irish ward boss, O'Connell wielded his considerable power in local politics. He opposed not just the state lottery but also birth control, which was condemned by the diocesan newspaper as "a practice which God Almighty has forbidden." He advocated prohibition, and deemed public debates about scientific theories concerning relativity "a hideous progression of atheism." According to Maier:

His Gospel to Boston's Irish demanded that they stand up for themselves and no longer view themselves as victims. "The child of the immigrant is called to fulfill the place which the Puritan has left," referring to the declining number of Brahmins in Boston. He cast a withering eye on American melting pot theories of assimilation and instead urged Catholics to establish their own culture in Boston.

(62)

Part of O'Connell's definition of self-assertiveness would entail identifying prominent figures or institutions that would discriminate against Irish Catholics. Harvard University was at the top of his list.

1.3.4. Discrimination at Harvard

Anti-Catholicism flourished behind the ivy walls of Cambridge. The 39 Cambridge alumni who were martyred for the Faith attest to an enduring hostility towards Catholicism, and Catholics were not allowed to attend the university until 1895, reports *Catholic Herald*. According to *Harvard, Celtic Skulls and Eugenics in De Valera's Ireland* journal proves that in many ways, Harvard's views on the Irish were simply an extension of British attitudes against them, part of a long-standing bias that would be embedded in American intellectual life for many years as this thesis would attest.

Maiernotes that Harvard's president, Charles Eliot, established a law school entrance policy that many Catholics saw as discriminatory, meant to keep them out of the city's leading law firms. Although some students from prominent colleges were admitted without taking a test to Harvard Law School, graduates from Catholic colleges were needed to pass a "special test," a requirement based on Eliot's belief that their education was somehow inferior. Harvard's actions confirmed in O'Connell's mind that Catholics should go it alone (63).

1.3.5. The Prevention of Undesirable Aliens

Professors argued that the Irish are unworthy heirs of the American Revolution and incapable of fulfilling the leadership responsibilities that they desire. Concerned about the conflicts between Irish laborers and Anglo-Saxon business owners, Harvard and other prestigious universities published strongly worded anti-immigration treatises or pseudoscientific studies suggesting mental inferiority among the immigrants.

Immigration History notes that many Brahmins joined the Immigration Restriction League in 1894, an anti-immigration organization founded by three Harvard University alumni, lawyer Charles Warren, climatologist Robert DeCourcy Ward, and attorney Prescott F. Hall, , and serving as the Back Bay's counterpart to the more crude and populous American Protective Association, during Fitzgerald's term at City Hall. The league's goal was to restrict the country's immigration movement without getting its hands dirty or calling anyone names.

1.3.6. Inferior Lineage

Members of the league Influenced by the rise of eugenics, a scientific movement for genetic improvement of the human race through selective breeding, they advocated against immigration because it would mingle "inferior" lineages with Anglo-Saxons. In his book *National Eugenics in Relation to Immigration*, Robert De C. Ward, an American climatologist, author, educator and leading eugenics and immigration reform advocate,

defines eugenics as “the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally” (56).

Journalist Daniel Okrent says that the eugenics movement, a junk science that stemmed from the belief that certain races and ethnicities were morally and genetically superior to others, informed the Immigration Act of 1924, which restricted entrance to the US. "Eugenics was used as a primary weapon in the effort to keep Southern and Eastern Europeans out of the country," Okrent says. "[The eugenics movement] made it a palatable act, because it was based on science or presumed science."

Eugenics Laws Restricting Immigration, edited by Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia argues that Prescott Hall, President of the Immigration Restriction League, approached Charles Davenport of the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) for assistance in influencing Congressional discussion on immigration in 1911. Davenport suggested conducting a survey to find out where "hereditary defectives" in American prisons, mental hospitals, and other charitable institutions came from. The research effort will be managed by Davenport's ERO colleague Harry Laughlin.

"The Irish, not the Jews, offer the actual problem in Harvard," The *Boston Telegram* notes in a 1920 piece regarding Brahmin worries at Harvard. The new class selection plan will reduce the number of Irish and Jews." After being adopted by the Nazis under Adolf Hitler, these racist views were widely condemned. However, in the early twentieth century, Boston and Cambridge were hotbeds of eugenics and immigration restriction support.

1.4. Political Grandfather

Left fatherless shortly after his birth, P.J.'s upbringing was left solely to his mother. He grew up as the family's only surviving male and dropped out of school at fourteen to work as a stevedore on the Boston docks. "*How the Kennedy dynasty began in East Boston*," recounts that:

Bridget worked hard to obtain a little stationary business so she could provide her kid a better life than she had. She eventually extended her business into a grocery, which was a huge success and gave the Kennedy family more financial security. When P.J. bought a failing tavern in the 1880s, he began his social rise. He expanded his firm by investing in many other businesses and then entering the liquor distribution business. Alcohol drinking was widespread among Boston's Irish, and saloons were the center of social life.

Gathered a lot of support in thanks to his mostly empathetic and often giving character, he was elected to the Massachusetts General Court's House of Representatives in 1885. P.J. would serve five one-year terms in a row. By the time Joe was born, he was the Democratic ward boss for East Boston, one of the most powerful political figures in the city. He went on to become a state senator and remained in Massachusetts politics until 1895. P.J. was the first of his family to rise to prominence in American society. "It was a position of considerable prestige and influence. With it, Kennedy became the main dispenser of political favors and patronage on Noodle Island," says Steven D. Strauss (17).

In his book, *The Kennedy Men: 1901-1963*, Laurance Leamer points out that "with his husky figure and handlebar mustache, P.J appeared the perfect rendering of an Irish-American politician" (10). P.J. amassed a considerable fortune in East Boston by taking full advantage of the opportunities that came his way. His political connections helped him secure state liquor licenses for his two retail liquor stores, Kennedy and Quigley at 81 Border Street in Washington, and later, the company of which he was a founding incorporator, board member, stockholder, and president, and the Sumner Savings Bank, of which he was a director (Nasaw 10).

"Pat Kennedy [P.J.] was an old-time politician," says Kane Simonian, a former executive director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. "He was a Robin Hood Type. Take care of the poor, give them Christmas baskets, take care of everybody, while at the same time he

robbed everybody blind for their influence.” Moreover, P. J. was there to offer condolences when a husband died, but he was also there to buy the widow's house at a good price. He and his business associates bought extensive real estate and other businesses in East Boston, usually keeping their interest quiet (Leamer 11).

Assimilation evoked contradictory emotions and mixed loyalties for many Irish Americans, including P.J. Kennedy. Despite his considerable success in Boston, he, who was born a "foreigner" in his own country, continues to encounter bigotry and societal restrictions. Like so many other Irish Catholics in the United States, P.J. Kennedy claimed a spiritual foothold in both worlds, Ireland and America, aware of the many similarities that bound them together and the vast differences between the two lands (Maier 49).

The Kennedys of Dunganstown never forgot their debt to America, just as their American cousin could not stop thinking about his family's homeland. Later in life, P.J. Kennedy journeyed to Ireland and spent hours conversing with his Irish cousins about their lives and what they might expect in the future.

When he died, P.J.'s assets were valued at \$57,000. According to Joe's associate James M. Landis, the real sum was more than \$100,000 or \$845,000 today. Kessler analyses Patrick Joseph's temperament as follows:

P.J. symbolized the Irish character described by George E. Reedy. That character, he wrote in his book *From the Ward to the White House: The Irish in American Politics* was forged from decades of living on the edge of extinction. Those who survived were lean and mean. They were quick of wit and masters of dissembling. They understood political leverage and knew when to attack, when to retreat, and when to hide. (11)

Chapter Two

The Kennedys: A Fatal Ambition

Born into the prosperity that East Boston provided for Irish-Catholics in the nineteenth century, which was far below the social acceptance given to "proper Bostonians", as Kennedy referred to his Protestant peers, Joseph Patrick Kennedy was determined to dismantle the wall that separated him from the Brahmin. He was blessed with charm and intelligence. This became his life's goal, inspiring him to make his son the country's first Irish-Catholic president.

According to historian David Nasaw's remarkable biography, Kennedy was molded and personified the forces Hollywood and Wall Street, the New Deal, crises of war and peace, politics and religion in twentieth-century America. During the New Deal, Kennedy, a conservative banker, ended up police Wall Street. During World War II, as Franklin D. Roosevelt's ambassador to England, Kennedy hindered the president's objectives by taking an antiwar stance.

2.1. The Founding Father

Joseph Patrick Kennedy established one of the most powerful political dynasties in American history. This chapter covers objectively the light as well as the dark corners of Joseph P. Kennedy's complicated persona. It examines in depth Joseph Kennedy's bootlegging, virulent anti-Semitism and his role as US Ambassador to the Court of St. James when he sided with Arthur Neville Chamberlain, a conservative British political leader who acted as UK's Prime Minister from May 1937 to May 1940, to appease Hitler. Moreover, it indicates how his isolationist views compelled him to resign as ambassador and made him unpopular with the majority of Americans, but he never apologized.

2.1.1. A Child is Born

Joseph P. Kennedy had neither the accent of Irish people nor any other stereotypical characteristic of Irish-American life of old. Even his name reflected these changes. His ambitious mother, Mary Augusta was so concerned about Joe's public image that when he was born on September 6, 1888, she insisted that he be named Joseph Patrick, not Patrick, after his father and grandfather. Patrick was the most prevalent Irish name. She was not keen on the boy's following in his father's footsteps (Collier 16). She felt the Yankee bigots could identify "Patrick" too easily. She wanted a "less Irish" name so that her middle-class son could meld more quickly into Yankee society (Maier 72).

Unlike other Irish women, bounded by the moral conscription of the church, Mary showed a fair degree of Independence, and according to one obituary, was "always interested in women suffrage" along with her other protocol concerns in East Boston (Maier 72). Her son went to a nearby parish, the Assumption School, and then the Christian Brothers' Xaverian School before transferring to Boston Latin, one of the best public schools in the country. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Cotton Mather, and John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and Thomas Paine, all signers of the Declaration of Independence, were among its graduates (73).

All writings tend to agree that Mary Augusta, in particular, did not want her son's ambitions to be stifled by the confines of a Catholic Parish school. Joe Kennedy thrived at Boston Latin because of his fast thinking and athletic abilities. He was named captain of the baseball club and was named hitting champion of the city. Mayor Fitzgerald honored him with a trophy for his efforts.

2.1.2. A Young Entrepreneur

Though Joe grew up in luxury, the Kennedys had maids and cooks and owned a thirty-five-foot yacht; he had a ruthless ambition to make money even as a youngster. His many jobs

included selling candy on a tourist boat, delivering hats for a milliner, a person who makes or sells women's hats, and hawking newspapers on city streets. Joe did not need the extra cash. He simply enjoyed competing whether in business or athletics, and he always needed to finish first. In addition to his moneymaking ventures, Joe accompanied his father to political events, learning the practical aspects of electing candidates and dealing with government officials. His father taught him that in politics, as well as business, winning was the most important thing (Uschan 13).

Author Thomas Maier, *The Kennedys: America's Emerald Kings*, states that “although they were good Catholics, the Kennedys did not agree with Cardinal O’Connell’s view that a Harvard education ‘does more harm than good.’ “If Harvard promised the same reward and recognition for achievement as Boston Latin, Kennedy had nothing to fear. Joe took no math or science, but four years of economics and government; three years of German, English, and history; and half-year courses in education, social ethics and public speaking (72).

Evoking Joe’s years at Harvard, Nasaw articulates:

Joe Kennedy did not disguise the fact that he was an Irish Catholic and a Democrat (a risibly small minority at Harvard), but neither did he emphasize it. He intended to make his mark as he had at Boston Latin, not as a Catholic or an Irish descendant or the son of a democratic Ward leader, but as an athlete who played that most American of games, baseball. (22-23)

2.2. The First Steps to Wealth

Joe was also running into rejection by some Harvard classmates, who refused to let him join the most elite student groups because he was Irish. In his book, *the Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster*, Johnny H. Davis explains that college scarred Joe for life: “The result was a series of snubs from which he never fully recovered, and which gave him a complex he never lost. So painful were they, that for the rest of his life . . . he was never comfortable in the

company of people not of his own kind. He would be wary of them, and if he got a chance, he would get the best of them (34). It was an approach that would mark Kennedy's life. For Joe, it was not how you play the game but whether you win or lose. "Joe was bright, aggressive, and aware of the uses of influence", said his classmate Ralph Lowell. "Joe would do anything to get what he wanted," as quoted in *The Sins of the Father: Joseph P. Kennedy and the Dynasty he Founded*, Ronald Kessler (24).

When Kennedy graduated in 1912, his father got him a job as a state bank examiner so Joe could learn the banking business. Ronald Kessler went so far describing Joe's duties, he claims that as a bank examiner Joe learned about the confidential affairs of companies and individuals who had credit lines with major Boston banks. He adds that one of his later strategies was to obtain inside information about troubled companies from Banks, then drive their stock down so he could buy them more cheaply (24).

Although he earned only \$1500 a year (less than \$35,000 in purchasing power today) and worked long hours, Kennedy gained valuable insight and training. In 1914, he used those same skills to rescue a small local bank, the Columbia Trust Company, where his father was a board member. To reward Kennedy, the bank shareholders appointed him president (fig. 5). At the age of 25, Joseph Kennedy became one of the youngest bank presidents in the country, establishing his reputation as a man with a great future. These early banking experiences would become the bedrock for his future financial success (Nasaw 33).

2.2.1. A Match Made in Boston

In the view of an Irish matron, the Fitzgeralds, with their acquired taste for culture, travel and study abroad, were "high Irish," well ahead of their own kind, but following the long-established Yankee custom (Whalen 41). Author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Kennedys*, Steven D. Strauss considers the modern Kennedy saga really began when two of the most prominent political families in Boston became related through Marriage. Rose

Fitzgerald first met Joe when they were small children. Later, when he was at Harvard, they met again and fell in love (5).

Kessler claims that Joe cemented the bond with his benefactor by becoming engaged to Rose on June 1, 1914. He justifies his view by the Irish proverb: “Mary a mountain girl and you marry the whole mountain”. Joe had tied his destiny to the most powerful man in Boston. “Who needed the Brahmins when he had the mayor behind him?” (27-28).

Almost exactly nine months after their honeymoon, on July 25, 1915, Rose fulfilled the “sacred role” for which the nuns had prepared her. Their first child, Joseph Patrick Kennedy Jr., was born in a cottage they had rented along Nantasket Beach. Regularly after that, Rose performed the mission spelled out for her in the Catechism, a summary or exposition of doctrine and serves as a learning introduction to the Sacraments traditionally used in catechesis, or Christian religious teaching of children and adult converts, bearing eight more children. For Rose believed marriage was for procreation only, while Joe saw it as a way of asserting control in establishing his own self-worth (Kessler 28-29).

While Joe went about creating one of the greatest fortunes of our times, Rose was content to stay at home and raise their children. With four sons, Joseph Patrick, Jr., John Fitzgerald., Robert Francis (Bobby), and Edward Moore (Ted), and five daughters; Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice, Patricia, and Jean, the Kennedy family was complete.

Although Joe would graduate in 1912 from prestigious Harvard University, make hundreds of millions of dollars, and become a powerful National figure in the Democratic Party, Boston's upper class continues to consider him an upstart Irishman, inferior despite his accomplishments. In 1922, for example, he was refused admission to the Cohasset (Massachusetts) Country Club. In the 1930s, when a Boston newspaper referred to him as “an Irishman,” Kennedy exploded in anger: “I was born in this country; my children were born in this country. What the hell does someone have to do to become an American?”

His burning desire for acceptance and bitter resentment over discrimination due to his Irish heritage became twin goads that incited him to excel in business and to push his sons to achieve even more (Uschan 13). Lawyer and political historian Koskoff, in his book: *Joseph P. Kennedy: A Life and Times*, believes that in 1917, all of Kennedy's efforts to cultivate the right connections finally began to pay off. However, only twenty-eight years old, he was elected a trustee of the Massachusetts Electric Company, the most powerful utility in New England (23).

2.3. The War to End All Wars

Strauss adds that the year of 1917 was very important for the Kennedys. The government began to draft young men in preparation for entrance into World War 1, and that included Joe. In addition, in 1917, a well-connected Brahmin lawyer by the name of Guy Currier (34). Most of Joe's friends from Harvard had already volunteered to serve befriended Joe, but Joe had no intention of fighting. Joe had already been placed in Class 1, subject to immediate call up. Currier came to the rescue, for he was a lobbyist for the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation at Fore River in Quincy, Massachusetts (Kessler 29).

Despite Joe's lack of experience in shipbuilding, Currier persuaded some of his Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company friends to hire the mayor's son-in-law. Joe resigned from the Columbia Trust and was hired as the shipbuilding company's assistant general manager (Strauss 34). Ronald Kessler claims, "Joe became general assistant manager at \$15,000 a year." He noted the lack of dining facilities for the employees almost immediately and had a large cafeteria installed when the workers' lunches were sold. Bethlehem profited greatly from it (30).

As the second man at Fore River, Kennedy encountered another second man also destined for fame. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt and Kennedy had occasional dealings that were not too amiable. One story is told of how Roosevelt demanded that

Bethlehem deliver unpaid-for ships to the Argentine government, whose credit was none too solid. Kennedy persistently refused to deliver the ships, and finally Roosevelt threatened that if Bethlehem did not deliver the ships they would be towed away by United States government vessels. They were (Koskoff 24).

2.4. The Operator

Seven months after the First World War ended, Joe left the Bethlehem shipyard and took a position with established stock brokerage House of Hayden, Stone and Company. Joe Kennedy learnt the ins and outs of the stock market, as well as how to manipulate it, from Hayden, Stone, at the start of the 1920s. Trading on "inside information," or buying and selling in such a way as to insecure profit, may make a fortune in legalized swindling in the days before market regulation (Strauss 35).

An operator might purchase an option on an actively traded stock, then buy and sell the shares on the open market in such a way that the stock appears to have a great deal of interest. "You simply advertised the stock by trading it," Kennedy later explained. When the public began to invest in the company, the operator would raise the stock price and cash in his options. The stock would return to its usual, lower position on the market after the artificially increased interest went down. The operator would have made a pile, and "the suckers" would be the only ones to lose (Koskoff 25).

Joseph Haydn's friend Stone was on the board of directors of the Pond Coal Company at one point, and Stone told Kennedy that Henry Ford was about to buy the company. Joe had purchased 15,000 shares of Pond Coal at \$16 per share before anyone else had heard the news. Nine months later, after the news hit the streets and the stock shot up, Joe sold for \$45 a share, making a very good profit of \$675,000 (Strauss 35).

2.5. Risky Deals Instead of Bootlegging

Many people have assumed for decades that the Kennedys' enormous riches sprang from bootlegging. In *The Kennedy Men*, the first volume of a multi-generational narrative and a triumphant new work, Laurence Leamer tells the story of the Kennedy men and their struggle to become America's most powerful family. He argues that:

Joe's father had for decades been the major wholesaler and importer of liquor, and it was probably through Joe had contacts in Canada and England. Testimony suggests that Joe had the best of it, for the most part delivering the merchandise offshore to bootleggers who brought the liquor into the United States. In 1926, the Canadian Customs commission looked into liquor export taxes that were not being paid and found the name "Joseph Kennedy" on many documents. Although the commission never definitely linked the name to the young Boston businessperson, there is no other Joseph Kennedy whose name has been prominently linked to bootlegging. (85-86)

2.5.1. Prohibition Sets the Stage

Years of anti-drinking efforts seemed to pay off on January 29, 1919. The United States Constitution's 18th Amendment has been ratified. "The manufacturing, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within... the United States" was prohibited by the amendment. When Congress passed the Volstead Act in 1919, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, the amendment was further enforced and codified.

2.5.2. Father's Alcohol Stock

Importers like Patrick Joseph Kennedy were allowed to keep the liquor outlets that they had already purchased when Prohibition became law in 1920. In truth, it was not illegal to drink alcohol in the 1920s because Prohibition merely prohibited the "production, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors." When Nasaw sought to find accounts accusing Joseph

Kennedy of bootlegging, the only record he could find was when he offered his Harvard class reunion free Scotch. It was not bootlegging, though, because it was his father's Scotch, which he did not sell.

2.5.3. Mafia

Ellen NicKenzie Lawson, a retired professional historian and author of *Smugglers, Bootleggers, and Scofflaws: Prohibition and New York City*, reveals Joseph Bananas “Bonanno”, the Sicilian-born mafioso active in New York, also claimed to know Kennedy during Prohibition. “Frank Costello, another famous Mafioso leader and Prohibition-era New York gangster, got in on the act, too,” she alerts. Costello bribed federal and local officials in order for the whiskey to be securely landed.

Lawson concludes that as he lay dying in a New York hospital in 1973, the *New York Times* published a front-page story claiming that he made Kennedy wealthy during Prohibition. Costello died a few weeks later without providing any additional information, but he had already told Peter Maas, the author who was intending to write his biography, that he assisted Kennedy in bringing liquor into the country. This claim carried more weight because the Costello-Reinfeld syndicate handled the greatest ship-smuggling business on the East Coast during Prohibition.

2.5.4. Risky Trades

In his book *Last Call*, Daniel Okrent points out that while Al Capone was the most well-known figure associated with Prohibition, Joseph Kennedy came in second. However, a more recent study reveals that this is not the case. The Kennedys' fortune appears to have been created on a series of risky trades and a lot of luck. The evidence of bootlegging, according to David Nasaw, author of *The Patriarch: The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph Patrick Kennedy*, who was given unprecedented access to the Kennedy family archives to

write this book, reveals to the History Channel isn't there. "As his biographer, I would have loved to have discovered that he was a bootlegger," Nasaw comments.

The rumors, according to Nasaw, date back to the 1960s, when conspiracy theorists were attempting to make sense of John F. Kennedy's assassination. One theory was that during his time as a bootlegger, Joseph P. Kennedy made enemies, particularly in the Mafia. Nasaw is suspicious of these claims, owing to the fact that when Richard Nixon ran against JFK in 1960, he engaged a team of opposition researchers to investigate the Kennedy clan. "They uncovered a lot of dirt on Joe Kennedy, but not that he was a bootlegger," he explains.

Dave Roos, a freelance journalist and a regular contributor to History.Com, acknowledges that Kennedy's real money from alcohol came far later. When it became evident that Prohibition would be repealed in the fall of 1933, Kennedy utilized his considerable money and political influence to get exclusive contracts to import high-end Scotch whisky and gin from the United Kingdom. Nasaw confides to Roos that when Prohibition was repealed in December 1933, thirsty Americans purchased cases of Scotch and gin. Kennedy made \$8.2 million when he sold his liquor franchise a decade later, which is more than \$100 million in today's money.

At the start of the Franklin Roosevelt administration in March 1933, Joe Kennedy and future Congressman James Roosevelt II founded Somerset Importers, an entity that acted as the exclusive American agent for Haig & Haig Scotch, Gordon's Dry Gin and Dewar's Scotch. Kennedy kept his Somerset Company for years (Nasaw 611). Kennedy himself drank little alcohol. He so disapproved of what he considered a stereotypical Irish vice that he offered his sons \$1,000 not to drink until they turned 21 (Leamer 308).

2.6. Hollywood Banker

In September 1927, the Kennedy chauffeur drove the family from Brooklyn to South Station to take a train to their new home in New York. Joe had a gift for mythic self-creation

that was as American as the curveball. He could not admit that he was moving to New York largely because it was a more convenient place for him. He had to create a moral drama. He was fond of saying later that he had left so that his children would not have to suffer from the anti-catholic, anti-Irish ambience of Boston (Leamer 115).

Apart from the lack of prejudice against Irish-Americans, New York had a lot to offer. "If you want to make money, go where the money is," Kennedy used to say. It was overflowing with the glamor and grandeur of the Roaring Twenties. It offered the flashy fast life that staid Boston lacked, such as sophisticated, fashionable restaurants and nightclubs. New York was the place to be in 1925, and Joe Kennedy would be there (Koskoff 27).

2.7. Hollywood

Joe's time in Hollywood was like the rest of his career: a little bit of this, a little bit of that. He was never one to take small steps, therefore the first thing he did was buy a studio. He bought the Film Booking Office (FBO) studio with his friend Guy Courrier and a handful of other Boston businessmen, whose primary asset was cowboys star Tom Mix. FBO began making cheap, quick, and profitable movies under Joe's direction. Joe would spend three and a half years out west, going back east to see the family only occasionally. He would eventually produce more than 75 films, make more than \$6 million, fall in love with probably the most famous actress of the day, break up, and then finally come back to the nest (Strauss 39).

When Joe went to Hollywood, he told friends he expected to get rid of the Jewish "pants pressers" who ruled Hollywood (Kessler). Rose recalls Joe being the only Christian operating in the movie industry. In Hollywood, he learned one of the most important lessons of his life. He had always considered his family to be a manifestation of his will. He saw how the Jews were able to keep control of this crucial new industry in Hollywood. They banded together against the Gentile world as much as they competed with and scolded each other. It was their

most powerful weapon. Joe would build his family to stand together too, against all who might (Leamer 11).

Kessler claims that Joe established the first trust fund for his family on January 27, 1926, emulating the moneyed Brahmins he despised. "Joe, you wouldn't want to do that," Ford responded when Joe initially told one of his trusted lieutenants about the concept. They're far too proud to accept it." Joe claimed to Bernard Baruch that the goal was to make these children financially independent so they could "spit in my eye." This, however, was self-serving nonsense. Joe's trustees had complete control over how the funds were spent, thus it was a way of binding the children to him. The children didn't understand how the trusts worked. All they knew was that their father's office provided their income. "At a deeper level of Consciousness," Doris Kearns Goodwin wrote, "the trust was a mechanism for permanently tying his children to his own aspirations for the Kennedy family" (45-46).

2.8. Gloria

Rose Kennedy conveyed the church's view on sexuality because of her steadfast confidence in all of the church's teachings. Her education at the Sacred Heart convent prepared Catholic women for a future as mothers, but it emphasized that husbands' lust was a task that needed to be managed as cleanly as diaper change or garbage disposal. After the birth of her last child, Rose demanded separate bedrooms and refused any more sex, according to historian Doris Kearns Goodwin (Maier 87).

For Kennedy, another star, far brighter than Fred Thompson's, was gravitating in his direction. On November 7, 1927, he got a cable from Robert King, a Hollywood acquaintance, asking whether he would see Gloria Swanson, who was on her way to New York City. "Gloria needs handling," Kane wrote, "needs being properly financed and having her organization placed in proper hands and I have taken the liberty of asking her to see you." They met at Barclay's, the hotel where Swanson was staying (Nasaw 107).

Maier emphasizes the beauty of Gloria in his novel: “The fabulously attractive Swanson, a sophisticated independent woman already married to her third husband, carried an allure that Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy could not match.” He notes that Rose chose to follow the pattern set by her mother long ago, to suffer in silence rather than take the enormous risk of shattering the entire family and bringing public disgrace upon herself and her husband:

Joe’s intense sexual relationship with Swanson became an open secret in Hollywood, acknowledged by virtually everyone but Rose herself. Mrs. Kennedy carried on an acting tour de force worthy of an Oscar, ignoring both hints and clear evidence of her husband's infidelity with the movie actress, whom she treated as a treasured family friend. In an extraordinary visit, Kennedy invited Swanson to his summer home so that she could meet Rose and all the kids. “If she suspected me of having relations not quite proper with her husband, or resented me for it, she never once gave any indication of it,” Swanson wrote years later. “Was she a fool, I asked myself as I listened with disbelief, or a saint? Or just a better actress than I was? (88)

Swanson later stated in her autobiography that when she sought a divorce from her husband, Joe requested special permission from Cardinal William O'Connell to split from Rose and form a household with Gloria. Swanson claimed the Cardinal himself, who knocked on her door, soon greeted her. “You are not a Catholic, my child, therefore I fear that you do not grasp the gravity of Mr. Kennedy's predicament as regards his faith,” explained the churchman (Maier 88).

2.9. The Crash

Joe Kennedy began pulling out of Hollywood as early as 1928. By 1929, his only executive duties were at Pathé and with Gloria Productions. . . . He began to spend more time on Wall Street (Koskoff 40). In an article entitled, “Ecommerce: Who wants to be a millionaire,” published by Computer Business Review, a leading research company, asserts

that Kennedy later claimed he knew the rampant stock speculation of the late 1920s would lead to a crash. It is said that he knew it was time to get out of the market when he received stock tips from a shoeshine boy. "Only a fool holds out for the top dollar," Joseph P. Kennedy once said (Koskoff 40). However, author Kessler considers that the shoeshine boy's story was baloney. He reveals that Currier warned Joe to get out of the market (76).

The Time of Speculation's essay by agrees that Kennedy survived the crash "because he possessed a passion for facts, a complete lack of sentiment and a marvelous sense of timing." During the 1929 stock market crisis, most investors saw their fortunes evaporate, while Kennedy emerged wealthier than ever. Kennedy considerably enhanced his financial fortune during the Great Depression by investing the majority of it in real estate. Kennedy's net worth was estimated to be \$4 million in 1929 (equal to \$ today). His fortune had grown to \$180 million (equal to \$ today) by 1935.

The crash triggered a worldwide financial panic and depression that lasted three years. By 1932, up to 12 million Americans were jobless. Governments responded by imposing tight tariffs, which stifled international trade. The slump aided Adolf Hitler's rise in Germany, when 5.6 million people were out of employment. Because of the panic, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established, which Joe would chair (Kessler 76).

2.10. I am for Roosevelt

Joe Kennedy had always thought about money, possessions, and great wealth, and now he had them all. But Joe Kennedy also wanted fame and power. Money was an end in itself, but it was also a means to these other ends. He wanted to be something more than simply a wealthy man; to be famous for more than just executive abilities. The way to get that fame is through politics (Koskoff 42). Joe came to realize that Washington was where the real power was.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I, Joseph Kennedy Sr. met him for the first time. Despite the fact that he and FDR did not work closely together during World War One, circumstances during the Great Depression brought them back together. Both men were well-known at the time for their wealth and the aura of affluence that surrounded them. FDR, an active athlete during World War I, was paralyzed by polio and forced to use a wheelchair. Throughout the 1920s, Kennedy was known for his affairs with Hollywood starlets, his real estate empire, and his extraordinary ability to make large sums of money in the stock market. Roosevelt required his services, and Kennedy required political support. Neither of them got what they desired.

2.10.1. On the Roosevelt Train

According to Nasaw, in 1932, Kennedy backed Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential campaign. This was his first significant involvement in a national political campaign, and he contributed, borrowed, and raised a significant amount of money for it. In the "friendly intimacy of the campaign train," (fig. 7) as Raymond Moley described it, Kennedy rapidly "became one of the inner circle." I permitted him to read the speeches before their delivery and welcomed his shrewd suggestions. His political inheritance from his father and his understanding of very practical economic affairs were valuable." The presence of Eddie Moore, Kennedy's sidekick, secretary, and companion, boosted his standing as a member of the campaign team (180).

2.10.2. Setting a Wolf to Guard a Flock of Sheep

During the 1932 campaign, Kennedy worked tirelessly for Roosevelt, genuinely contributing \$25,000 and soliciting over \$100,000 in anonymous donations. He was appointed chairperson of the new US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which oversees Wall Street, rather than his first wish, the Treasury Department. When some people privately expressed their disapproval with the choice, Roosevelt summarized his strategy with a quip:

"Set a thief to catch a thief." Kennedy saw his election to the presidency in far grander terms: it was part of a dynastic plan, which Roosevelt clearly understood (Maier 100).

The SEC began creating guidelines and procedures that everyone was required to follow. False statements by brokers, sellers, and buyers were made a crime. Kennedy's SEC had stopped more than 50 incidents of alleged joint stock manipulation by the end of his first year. Kennedy decided to step down as SEC chairman fifteen months after taking office, with the reforms well underway and the public on his side. Instead of criticizing him again, the *New Republic* stated that it was "fair to say that he disappointed his critics." He was the most valuable member of the commission" (Strauss 49-50).

By the time J. P. Kennedy stepped down, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was running for re-election. Kennedy hired *New York Times* reporter Arthur Krock to ghostwrite *I'm for Roosevelt*, a book in which Kennedy praised Roosevelt for saving the nation's economy. Kennedy's influence helped Roosevelt win a second term (Uschan 21).

2.10.3. An Irishman in the Court of ST. James

Collier and Horowitz noted that Joe Kennedy worked harder for FD Roosevelt in 1936 than he did in 1932, and he expected more in return. His preference remained Secretary of the Treasury, and Krock dutifully recommended him for the position. Nevertheless, with his recovery plans at a crossroads, FDR was more hesitant than ever to put Kennedy in this delicate position. "Joe would want to run the treasury in his own way, contrary to my plans and views," he told Postmaster General Jim Farley. In the spring of 1937, the president appointed Kennedy to the chairmanship of the Maritime Commission, a position he resigned from after several fractious months of dealing with radical unions and reactionary ship-owners (79).

Lesser than a year later the president named Kennedy to the type of position he has always desired, ambassador to Great Britain. In *The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster*, John H.

Davis's declares that the appointment gave Kennedy the social standing he so disparately wanted:

When the president finally, through his son Jimmy, told Kennedy that he could have the ambassadorship to the court of St. James's, Joe was overwhelmed. From now on he would be called "Ambassador." The social stigma under which he had lived all his life would be lifted, and the high status he so ardently desired for his children and grandchildren would be virtually assured. (92)

The American Ambassador and his wife rose to the pinnacle of British society in London. The couple luxuriated in the warmth of English hospitality in the spring of 1938, just before war cast its shadow across Europe, hobnobbing with aristocrats and royalty at the season's many balls, dinners, regattas, and derbies. The highlight had to be their April weekend at Windsor Castle as guests of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Rose Kennedy meticulously documented those unforgettable days in her diary.

2.10.4. Sympathy for the Devil

Kennedy arrived in London in March 1938, overjoyed to be the first Irish-American ambassador to the country that had brutally ruled his ancestral homeland for centuries. His joy was short-lived, however, due to a series of diplomatic problems created in Europe by German dictator Adolf Hitler. Hitler would enter World War II a little more than a year later, on September 1, 1939, by invading Poland. It was 4 a.m. when Kennedy called Roosevelt almost in hysterics, saying repeatedly, "It's the end of the world, the end of everything!"

The majority of people in the Democratic West saw the rise of hostile, militaristic, and fascist dictatorships as a threat to their way of life. However, Joe Kennedy had no issues with Hitler. Although Roosevelt was unaware of this at the time he opted Kennedy, the latter saw no need to fight Hitler. In Joe's opinion, the German dictator was someone with whom America could do business and thus should be appeased (Strauss 53).

2.10.5. Democracy is Finished

In *The Dark Side of Camelot*, Seymour M. Hersh notes that Kennedy supported Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. Throughout 1938, while the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany intensified, Kennedy attempted to arrange a meeting with Adolf Hitler (63). Kennedy's views became inconsistent and increasingly isolationist. British MP, Josiah Wedgwood IV, who had himself opposed the British government's earlier appeasement policy, said of Kennedy: "we have a rich man, untrained in diplomacy, unlearned in history and politics, who is a great publicity seeker and who apparently is ambitious to be the first Catholic president of the US" (Davis 94).

Kennedy, like many Americans, opposed US intervention in the war. When he returned home in June 1940 for his oldest son's Harvard graduation, he said several times: "This is not our fight." His comments enraged both the British and Franklin Roosevelt, who wanted to help England survive. When German planes began bombing London nightly in the summer of 1940, Kennedy told his aide, "I'll bet you five to one that Hitler will be at Buckingham Palace in two weeks." British officials considered him as a coward defeatist for spending nights in his country estate outside London to avoid the Blitz's air raids (Uschan 23).

"Democracy is finished in England. It could be here ", he states in the November 10, 1940 issue of the *Boston Sunday Globe*. Kennedy publicly declared that the war would bring about the "collapse of capitalism," causing many to think he was concerned more about money than liberty (Strauss 55). With German troops having overrun Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and France, and daily bombings of the United Kingdom, Kennedy consistently stated that the war was not about saving democracy from National Socialism (Nazism) or Fascism.

2.10.6. The Jewish Question

According to Harvey Klemmer, who served as one of Kennedy's embassy aides, Joe Kennedy habitually referred to Jews as “kikes or sheenies.” He allegedly told Klemmer that “[some] individual Jews are all right, Harvey, but as a race they stink. They spoil everything they touch” (Hersh 63). When Klemmer returned from a trip to Germany and reported the pattern of vandalism and assaults on Jews by Nazis, Kennedy responded: “Well, they brought it on themselves” (Leamer 115).

By August 1940, Joe Kennedy worried that a third term for President Roosevelt would mean war. Laurence Leamer reports: “Joe believed that Roosevelt, Churchill, the Jews, and their allies would manipulate America into approaching Armageddon” (134). Joe Kennedy told the reporter Joe Dinneen:

It is true that I have a low opinion of some Jews in public office and in private life. That does not mean that I . . . believe they should be wiped off the face of the Earth. . . . Jews who take an unfair advantage of the fact that theirs is a persecuted race do not help much. . . . Publicizing unjust attacks upon the Jews may help to cure the injustice, but continually publicizing the whole problem only serves to keep it alive in the public mind.

It is debatable whether Joe Kennedy worked hard enough to save Jews from Hitler's genocide. Thomas Maier acknowledges Joe's plan of action that called for the mass migration of thousands of Jews out of Germany to relocation in unpopulated areas of Africa and South and North America. American Jews did not like the plan because it conflicted with the ideal of a proposed homeland in Palestine (131).

2.10.7. Dumped Unceremoniously

When the White House read his quotes, it became clear that Joe Kennedy was completely out of step with Roosevelt's policies. FDR would no longer rely on him for information and

help. First, Roosevelt sent Col. Bill Donovan to England to examine and analyze the situation. Next, Roosevelt opened a secret back door to Churchill that completely bypassed his own ambassador (Strauss 56).

Joe Kennedy was recalled from his diplomatic duties in late 1940 and returned to the United States. Roosevelt urgently needed his support to hold the Catholic vote and invited him to spend the night at the White House. Joe Kennedy agreed to make a nationwide radio speech to advocate Roosevelt's reelection. Franklin Roosevelt was pleased with the speech because, Nasaw says, it successfully "rallied reluctant Irish Catholic voters to his side, buttressed his claims that he was not going to take the nation into war, and emphasized that he alone had the experience to lead the nation in these difficult times" (492-96). After Roosevelt was reelected, Kennedy submitted his resignation as ambassador.

Throughout the rest of the Second World War, relations between Joe Kennedy and the Roosevelt Administration remained tense, especially when Joe Jr. vocally opposed President Roosevelt's unprecedented nomination for a third term, which began in 1941. He may have wanted to run for president himself in 1940 or later. Having effectively removed himself from the national stage, Joe Sr. sat out World War II on the sidelines. Kennedy stayed active in the smaller venues of rallying Irish-American and Roman Catholic Democrats to vote for Roosevelt's re-election for a fourth term in 1944. Former Ambassador Joe Kennedy claimed to be eager to help the war effort, but because of his previous gaffes, he was neither trusted nor invited to do so (Leamer 152-53). When Kennedy's popularity faded during World War II, Uschan writes that he decided that he would do everything he could to elect one of his sons to the nation's highest office (23).

Chapter Three

The Kennedys are Blessed

This chapter entertains the concept that though the Kennedys are perceived as American royalty, mainly for their glamour and political contributions, their legacy is marked by untimely deaths and tragedies. Accidents, assassinations, and other calamities involving members of the Kennedy family led many to deem them “cursed”. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section covers the predominant Kennedy family value of competition. It denotes the high expectations set by their father. It also depicts a clear image of the rivalry between two potential young catholic presidents.

The second section highlights the Kennedys contributions to the public service and the government offices held. It reveals the dearest ambitions of the Kennedys and help to explain their remarkable grip on the American culture, providing a rational explanation of the Kennedys' ambitions, successes, and failures. Furthermore, it outlines the misfortunes that struck the Kennedy family. It rounds up a timeline of the most notable examples of the Kennedy tragedies. It answers these questions: why the Kennedys are viewed as a royal dynasty? How did Joe Kennedy work hard to get his son nominated the first Catholic Irish-American president? Why JFK' presidency was linked to the “Camelot” myth?

It seems that the "curse" is passed down through the generations. Many of the unfortunate incidents, according to some, are quite common, and accidents and misfortune frequently affect members of large extended families. Others contend that the number of tragic accidents is excessive and excludes the possibility of coincidence with the mysterious accidents. Therefore, the last section inspects the varied interpretations for their bad luck, notably aligns the most significant speculations about the Kennedys curse and its origin. It contemplates one of the most hidden secrets: is the Kennedy cure legit, or are the tragedies merely coincidence?

3.1. The Need to Compete and Win

Ronald Kessler writes, “Joe started entering his children in races when they were just six years old” (39). In his Kennedy’s biography, Michael Uschan also notes, “The football game mentioned in this happy, energetic family scene highlights another key Kennedy characteristic—competitiveness” (18).

The Kennedy kids were taught to play hard and play to win. Eunice once said about her father, “The thing he always kept telling us was that coming in second was just no good. The important thing was to win, win, win.” While their family football games are now legendary, the games were intended to teach the kids that it isn’t how you play the game that matters, it’s whether you win or lose (Strauss 37). Later, Joe would tell a New York Herald- Tribune reporter that he never reproached the children if they came in second. “No,” he said, “there is no point in finding fault” (39).

In *The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster*, John H Davis claims that at seven o’clock in the morning all the children had to report promptly on the lawn for calisthenics under the tutelage of their own physical education instructor. Tennis, swimming, and sailing lessons followed by competitions in all three sports were held after breakfast. Eunice Kennedy recalls: “Even when we were six and seven years old Daddy always entered us in public swimming races, in the different age categories, so we didn’t have to compete against each other. And he did the same thing with us in the sailing races. And if we won, he got terribly enthusiastic” (84).

Both Joe Jr. and Jack had a fierce, anxious desire for every detail of a boy's existence; they treated touch football games as epic competitions and fiercely fought for even the smallest of things, like a bus seat, as if the struggle were for life itself. Their friends loved spending time at the Kennedy residence because there, everything was amplified (Leamer 104).

According to *John F. Kennedy: the Promise and the Performance*, a book written by Lew Paper, the ambition Joseph Kennedy tried to instill in his sons was epitomized by his remark

to New York Times columnist Arthur Krock: “For the Kennedys, it’s the [outhouse] or the castle—nothing in between.” In a word, Joseph Kennedy conveyed an aura of ambition and high-mindedness in his family, an aura not without effect on all the children and particularly on the sons (33).

The editor of the *Kennedys: Stories of Life and Death from an American Family*, a collection of twenty-one of the best stories about the Kennedys, Clint Willis disagrees with Joe’s notion of “win; win,” he writes, “he taught them to regard life as a game of Monopoly”. The author believes that some of the failure of his son's administration can be ascribed to the family philosophy. He even claims that by All his life Jack Kennedy was driven by his father and then by himself to be first in politics, which meant to be the President. But once that goal had been achieved, he had no future, no place else to go (188).

Davis questions: what gave Joe Kennedy this nearly maniacal urge to win and have his children win? He thinks that the urge had its origins in a profound insecurity that had its roots in Dunganstown, county Wexford. He adds that after being brutalized by the British, the Irish immigrants to America were taken advantage of and ignored by the Protestant ruling class. Joe Kennedy spent his entire life suffering from a painful sense of social inferiority. At Harvard, Cohasset, and many other places, he had to take rejection on the chin. He was also determined that his children would not endure the same treatment. The highest political positions would be sought after by his sons; they would run for governorships, senate seats, and possibly even the presidency. The Kennedys would finally be above all perceived injustices and discrimination only then (87).

In the same collection, one writer considers JFK’s taking the enormous risk—while seeking and occupying the presidency—of being so publicly married and so privately a womanizer, stemmed from his experiences as a child:

A boy who was sick frequently, who was frail, in a family where there was a tremendous premium on aggressive, competitive, succeeding, energizing activity. In the class that John Kennedy came from, there's a tremendous emphasis on appearance and how does it look? Well, it's not supposed to look like it's painful. It's not supposed to look like you feel like you don't know something or that you don't understand what's going on in your family or in the world. There's a tremendous premium on being smooth and in charge and in control—you aren't sweaty and nervous. You just sail effortlessly through the trials and tribulations that bring down other people, but not you. (78)

In *The Fitzgerald and the Kennedys: an American Saga*, Doris Kearns Goodwin states that when Kennedy was at home, he interrogated his children during dinner about their daily activities and discussed current affairs, particularly politics; while traveling for business, Kennedy frequently called or wrote letters. Additionally, his children benefited indirectly from his work in the film industry, as evidenced by the time the two oldest Kennedy boys received a pair of chaps—the protective leggings worn by cowboys—from cowboy hero Tom Mix. All the neighborhood boys were very envious of Joe and Jack as they ran around wearing those chaps, Rose remarked (351)

Lew Paper argues that Joe Kennedy, despite being a conservative himself, did not want his children's thinking to be rigidly bound to the confines of conservatism or any other philosophy. Instead, he wanted them to understand another person's perspective and beliefs. This mindset prompted him to arrange for Professor Harold Laski of the London School of Economics, one of the leading socialist philosophers of the day, to tutor his two eldest sons Joe, Jr. and Jack (123).

3.2. Rose is a Rose

Steven D. Strauss, amazed at Rose's devotion to raise nine children, thinks Rose was content to stay at home, give birth to his children, and do the best she could to raise them while Joe was out invading the world. She was a devoted mother who loved being a mother, by all accounts. He also points out that since her husband was frequently gone for months at a time, devout Catholic Rose was the disciplinarian in the home and taught the children the catechism. Rose recalls: "saying, "I look upon child rearing not only as a work of love and duty, but as a profession that was fully as interesting and challenging as any honorable profession in the world, and one that demanded the best I could bring to it" (37).

Rose Kennedy, in particular, was quite helpful. According to Joseph P. Kennedy biographer Richard Whalen, she would present her card index dossier on her nine children to the family-minded Italian women of the North End, dressing very simply for her appearance before them. The next day, on her way to speak to the sophisticated ladies of Chestnut Hill, she would alter her jewelry, drape a mink stole around her shoulders, and tell them about the latest designs she had seen in Paris. Who was the real Rose Kennedy, the North End housewife, or the millionaire's wife able to buy at the Paris fashion shows? It wasn't a big deal. It was all about appearance. To most people, you appear to be everything. What mattered was the impression you gave to that specific group. (Davis 128).

Will Swift writes in *The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm* that Ted Kennedy summarized the roles he saw Rose and Joe Kennedy playing in their children's life in the privately published family memoir *Her Grace above Gold* about their mother:

He was our biggest supporter, and she was our best teacher. Our father's drive and our mother's grace, our father's love of action and our mother's love of history and research, our father's athletic ability and our mother's political ability have all been passed down to us. Dad was our biggest cheerleader, and he expected a lot

from us in return. Mother provided the tenderness, support, and encouragement that enabled Dad to meet his goals. (25)

3.2.1. The Prodigal Son: Raised to be the Perfect Kennedy

Steven D. Strauss believes that Joe was an extrovert, in contrast to Jack's introversion. It therefore comes as no surprise that Joe Jr. had always been the family's center of attention. For his star child, Joe Sr. had always had plans. "I find myself much more interested in what young Joe is going to do than what I am going to do with the rest of my life," he said to a friend as his term as an ambassador was coming to an end. The Kennedys did not rule out the possibility that Joe Jr. could one day hold the office of President (60).

Ted Sorensen, a chief legislative aide to Senator Kennedy and a Special Counsel, adviser and speechwriter to President Kennedy, recounts in *The Kennedys* that Joe Junior, his eldest child and namesake, was his favorite. Young Joe, as he was known, shared many characteristics with his father, including good looks, athletic abilities, aggressiveness, daring, worldliness, short temper, and the ability to switch between a magical smile and a steely glare at will. His loving parents raised him to be the perfect Kennedy (Sorensen 2016-217).

Author Uschan points out that Joe and John, the two oldest sons, engaged in the most intense conflict. Joseph Patrick Kennedy Jr., who was born on July 28, 1915, expanded on his position of dominance by taking on the role of a surrogate father and the big brother who even taught his siblings how to swim. But Joe, who gave his family the nickname "the Kennedy clan," was mentally and physically superior to his siblings (26).

Joe Junior had a significant influence on family matters as a child because he was the oldest and his parents were frequently absent. . . . He would play for hours with the little kids. He paid his siblings hospital and educational visits. He frequently upheld the family's rules. A friend commented, "Joe Junior was the one they were afraid of, not the father. They avoided

sneaking cigarettes because they were afraid he would find out and beat the crap out of them” (Sorensen 311).

3.3. Triumphs and Tragedy

Walter R. Mears and Hal Buell outline in *The Kennedy Brothers: Joe, Jack, Bobby and Ted A Legacy in Photographs* the misfortunes that plagued Joe’s family. He stresses that it was a cruel fortune: His son and namesake killed in World War II action; JFK assassinated in Dallas; Bobby shot as he celebrated a primary election victory that might have made him the Democratic presidential nominee; Ted the survivor, beset by politically debilitating troubles of his own making, overcame them to become the premier liberal senator of his times, still serving when he was stricken by brain cancer at seventy-six. One daughter, Rosemary, was institutionalized till her death due to mental disability. In an airplane crash in France in 1948, Kathleen died with her fiancé Peter Wentworth-Fitzwilliam. Sisters Eunice, Patricia, and Jean were left to lament their loss of two additional brothers as they had done with one (8).

3.3.1. The Kennedy Brothers

The Kennedy brothers' saga is a continuing element of modern American history, from Joe Jr.'s set course to Jack's improbable success and from Robert's reluctant but quick rise to Ted's arduous journey to becoming a lion in the Senate. Highlights from their upbringings in New York, Hyannis Port, and London are, as well as their time at Harvard, in the Senate, and the Oval Office, as well as their responsibilities as dedicated Kennedy family members.

To privilege and pressure, they were born. The lesson taught to Joseph P. Kennedy's four kids placed a twist on the adage of the day that any American boy could grow up to be president. Could was insufficient. One of them must grow into the nation's first Roman Catholic president (Mears and Buell 7).

3.3.1.1. A Deadly Plan

On June 24, 1941, Kennedy quit Harvard Law School before finishing his third year to join the US Naval Reserve. *Naval History*, a volunteer-run site devoted to preserving naval history, in large part through a comprehensive collection of photos, states that on May 5, 1942, he started his flight training to become a naval aviator, earned his wings, and was commissioned an ensign. He was first assigned to Bombing Squadron 110 and then Patrol Squadron 203. He was sent to Britain in September 1943, and in 1944 he joined Bomber Squadron 110, Special Air Unit One.

According to Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy was appointed a lieutenant on July 1, 1944. He had completed 25 combat missions and was eligible to return home. He instead volunteered for an Operation Aphrodite mission, a risky mission to destroy German V-1 rocket launch facilities off the coast of Belgium (37).

Robert Dallek's *Camelot Court* notes that in August 1944, Joe's hopes for his oldest son, who in his twenties already seemed destined for extraordinary accomplishments due to his ambition, family connections, and well-known charm similar to that of Honey Fitz, fell flat. Joe, who was stationed in England, before crossing the English Channel, Joe and his copilot were to make a quick exit, and the plane would be remotely controlled to its destination. However while they were still inside, the plane exploded for previously unexplained reasons, killing both of them (18). Now that family order would pass to Jack, the second of the brothers.

The wiring on the aircraft was indeed defective, according to an inquiry into the cause of the incident. Sadly, it was found that the alleged bunkers had been abandoned before the top-secret plot had even started when the Allies eventually took control of them near the end of the war (Strauss 66).

3.3.1.2. Congressman Kennedy

In *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963*, Robert Dallek comments: “Joe's death during the war in 1944 changed that course and the assignment fell to JFK as the second eldest of the Kennedy siblings” (118). Jack was the leading contender in the 1946 contest for Boston's 11th Congressional District due to his fame as a war hero and the influence of his last name, which was still popular in the Kennedys' hometown. Kennedy's father, who promised, "We're going to sell Jack like soap flakes," was also a supporter. Tens of thousands of dollars were supplied by Joe, who also employed political consultants to oversee the campaign and handed out thousands of copies of a magazine story on his son's military heroics (Uschan31).

According to the *Election Statistics*, Kennedy won the Democratic primary with 42 percent of the vote, defeating ten other candidates. Alan Brinkley, an American political historian, claims that Kennedy defeated his Republican opponent in the main election, winning with 73 percent of the vote, despite the fact that Republicans took control of the House in the 1946 elections. Kennedy was one of numerous World War II veterans elected to Congress that year, along with Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy (24-26).

During his six years in the House, Kennedy joined the powerful Education and Labor and Veterans Affairs Committees. He concentrated on world politics, arguing that the Truman Doctrine was the best way to deal with the growing Cold War. Additionally, he was against the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, which limited labor unions' authority, while supporting public housing. Kennedy backed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which compelled communists to register with the government, although not being as outspoken an opponent of communism as McCarthy (Brinkley 26-27).

3.3.1.3. The First Senator Kennedy

Jack was successfully re-elected in 1948 and 1950, but he was simply too bored, wealthy, ambitious, and intelligent to continue serving in the House of Representatives. He decided to run for the Senate against Republican three-term incumbent Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. He now had the United States Senate in his grasp (Strauss 84).

Kennedy's campaign included telecasts starring the entire family, a first in those early days of television, and had an official budget of \$349,646. However, it is thought that his father secretly contributed several million dollars to the campaign. Years later, it came to light that Joe had lent John Fox, owner of the Boston Post, \$500,000 in exchange for his newspaper's endorsement of his son. Given that Lodge's grandfather had lost to "Honey Fitz" for the same seat in 1916, Jack's triumph over Lodge, by a margin of more than 70,000 votes, was all the sweeter (Uschan 35).

In *The Founding Father: the Story of Joseph P. Kennedy*, Richard J. Whalen observes that in 1952, the competent, experienced incumbent was in the voters' favor according to conventional political standards. The irony is that Jack Kennedy was a well-liked contender. According to Governor Dever, he was "the first Irish Brahmin." The Irish of Massachusetts, a long-time psychologically oppressed majority, were finally able to let go of lingering feelings of inferiority by backing a guy who was identical to his aristocratic Yankee opponent—apart from his Irish origin (408).

JFK said of his 1952 election to the Senate, "People say 'Kennedy bought the election. Kennedy could never have been elected if his father hadn't been a millionaire.' Well, it wasn't the Kennedy name and the Kennedy money that won that election. I beat Lodge because I hustled for three years." (Willis 180).

The following year, he married Jacqueline Bouvier. In 1954, his back began to deteriorate, forcing him to use crutches, yet he insisted on surgery despite the danger. He spent months

recovering after it nearly killed him. During those months, he wrote the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Profiles in Courage*, about US senators who risked their careers for their personal convictions (Mears 30).

Encyclopedia Britannica on John F. Kennedy confirms that he won re-election to the Senate in 1958 by the biggest majority in Massachusetts political history, defeating his Republican opponent, Boston attorney Vincent J. Celeste, by a margin of 874,608 votes. Kennedy's press secretary at the time, Robert E. Thompson, produced a movie *The U.S. Senator John F. Kennedy Story* during his re-election campaign that showed a day in the senator's life, his personal life, and how his office operated to address problems relevant to Massachusetts. It was the most thorough film about Kennedy that had been made up to that point. Following his re-election, Kennedy started preparing to run for president by touring the country in an effort to solidify his candidacy for 1960.

3.4. Let the Battle Begin

The Kennedy Presidency: an Oral History of the Era by Deborah H. Strober states that on January 2, 1960, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who had been defeated by Tennessee senator Estes Kefauver for the vice presidential nomination in 1956, declared his decision to run for president in front of a delighted crowd gathered in the Senate Caucus Room. Striking the predominant theme of his congressional years, he stated: "I have developed an image of America as fulfilling a noble and historic role as defender of freedom in a time of peril, and of the American people as confident, courageous and persevering. I start my campaign with this representation (20).

Jack had serious competition for the Democratic nomination. JFK often told the following joke: "Several nights ago, I dreamed that the good Lord touched me on the shoulder and said, 'Don't worry, you'll be the Democratic presidential nominee in 1960. What's more, you'll be elected.' I told Stu Symington about my dream. 'Funny thing,' said Stu, 'I had the same

dream myself.' We both told our dreams to Lyndon Johnson, and Johnson said, 'That's funny. For the life of me, I can't remember tapping either of you two boys for the job'"

(Strauss112)

He defeated Humphrey in West Virginia and went on to win the Democratic Nomination (Uschan 36). The hardest thing for Kennedy to do was to get past religious prejudice; some people worried that a Catholic president may be unfairly influenced by church officials. "I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute . . . This is the kind of America I believe in and this is the kind I fought for in the South Pacific, and the kind my brother died for in Europe," he stated in a September address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association (Mears 30).

Jack Kennedy's strategy required him to win the major cities in the populated Northeastern states, which had a significant Electoral College vote. However, Jews, who were primarily liberal and Democrats, struggled with whether to support their party or oppose Joe Kennedy. The *Times* reported that, "Many Jewish voters feel a personal revulsion against Joe Kennedy. They find it difficult not to transfer that dislike to the son. They agree that the sins of the father they should not be visited upon the son, but they are worried because this particular father has had a great influence on his children".

On Election Day in 1960, events in New York City's mainly Jewish neighborhoods earned a prominent position among the most memorable ironies in American politics. Because of an even greater sense of nostalgia, the deep mistrust of Joe Kennedy was subdued. As he lounged on a park bench in East Flat Bush, a furrier gave the *Times* reporter a preview of what was to come. Kennedy is another Franklin D. Roosevelt, the furrier remarked. Thus, although Roosevelt's name was not praised in his father's house, Jack Kennedy campaigned as his political heir. So captivating was his Rooseveltian image that Jewish voter in New York, incredibly enough, supported him more heavily than did Irish Catholics (Whalen 448).

"The Kennedy–Nixon Presidential Debates, 1960" reports that Kennedy and Nixon confronted off in the first televised presidential debates in American history between September and October. Nixon appeared nervous and uneasy during these presentations due to his damaged leg, "five o'clock shadow," and perspiration. Kennedy, on the other hand, looked relaxed and wore makeup, which contributed to the enormous television audience's perception of him as the victor. Radio listeners often believed that Nixon had won or that the debates were a tie (Allen).

Dudley L. Robert and Eric Shiraev in *Counting Every Vote: The Most Contentious Elections in American History*, notes that in one of the closest presidential contests of the 20th century, Kennedy defeated Nixon on election day. According to most estimates, Kennedy defeated Nixon by just two-tenths of one percent (49.7 to 49.5%) in the national popular vote, but Nixon received 219 votes to Kennedy's 303 in the Electoral College (83). For Richard Reeves, in his book *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, John F. Kennedy became the youngest person (43) ever elected to the presidency, though Theodore Roosevelt was a year younger at 42 when he automatically assumed the office after the assassination of William McKinley in 1901, says (21).

3.5. President-elect

On January 20, 1961, at noon, John F. Kennedy took the oath of office as the 35th president. In his inaugural address, he spoke of the need for all Americans to be active citizens, famously saying, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country," states the *Inaugural Address* archived in *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library*. Kennedy's confidence that his administration would steer a historically significant course in both domestic and international affairs was evident in the speech. One of the major tensions running through the early years of his administration would be the contrast between

this upbeat vision and the pressures of managing daily political realities at home and abroad (Kempe 2011).

The Patriarch pushed the incoming president to nominate his brother and campaign manager, Robert, for attorney general after achieving the seemingly impossible, in spite of fierce opposition from Democratic Party politicians (Strober 511). In 1960, when Americans elected John Fitzgerald Kennedy president, it seemed they had voted an entire family into office when John named one brother, Robert Francis Kennedy, his attorney general, and a year later helped elect a second, Edward “Ted” Moore Kennedy, to the Senate seat he vacated to become president (Uschan 8).

Uschan adds that Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy brought a new sense of grace and activism to the job of First Lady, transforming the ceremonial position into one in which she took on important tasks, such as supervising a much-needed White House restoration. And the Kennedy children, John and Caroline, became symbols of the hopes and dreams all Americans had for their own sons and daughters (8).

3.5.1. The Bay of Pigs

Marc J. Selverstone, associate professor in presidential studies at the *Miller Center* of the University of Virginia, debates John F. Kennedy’s foreign policy regarding Cuba and the Bay of Pigs Invasion. Marc states that a strategy to overthrow Fidel Castro's government in Cuba was planned by the Eisenhower administration. The plan was for a counter-revolutionary uprising commanded by CIA paramilitary personnel, comprised of U.S.-trained, anti-Castro Cuban exiles, to invade Cuba with assistance from the U.S. military. Assured by military advisers and the CIA that its prospects for success were good, Kennedy gave the green light.

Silverstone warns that at Bahia de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs), on Cuba's southern coast, in the early hours of April 17, 1961, some 1,500 anti-Castro Cuban refugees landed safely. Castro's army swiftly routed the refugee force when a number of important presumptions in the strategy turned out to be incorrect. The Kennedy administration's cover story also collapsed right away. Although the president denied US involvement in the attempted coup, it was soon obvious that Washington was in fact behind it. Kennedy paid a high price for the mistake. The CIA-backed Operation Mongoose was launched in November 1961 to harass and undermine the Cuban government, but his administration persisted in calling for Castro's overthrow.

According to Kennedy's biographer Richard Reeves, he was more concerned with the political effects of the proposal than with its military implications. He was certain that the idea was a set up to make him appear terrible once it failed (Reeves 95-97). He took responsibility for the failure, saying, "We got a big kick in the leg and we deserved it. But maybe we'll learn something from it," writes the American historian, Arthur M. Meier Schlesinger (290-295).

In the early stages of the Cold War, proxy battles between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated Kennedy's foreign policy. In *Berlin 1961*, Frederick Kempe claims that JFK eagerly anticipated a meeting with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1961. He got off to a bad start in early 1961 when he reacted angrily to a regular Khrushchev address on the conflict in the Cold War. JFK threatened to use all available methods, including nuclear weapons. Kennedy saw the speech as a personal challenge even if it was intended for Soviet internal audiences (76-78).

His error contributed to escalating tensions leading up to the Berlin Wall. Andreas Daum's *Kennedy in Berlin* recalls that in a dramatic move, only two months later, in the middle of August 1961, the Soviet Union and East Germany built a wall dividing East from West Berlin, giving the Cold War its most concrete representation of the Iron Curtain.

3.5.2. The Cuban Missile Crisis

Khrushchev does not seem to have been impressed by Kennedy's demonstration of resolve because he approved Fidel Castro's calls for military aid in a spectacular way. Peter Neville, author of *J.F. Kennedy*, posits that by late July 1962, Castro received mid-range ballistic missiles from Khrushchev. To service the missiles, 5,000 Soviet technicians and experts were also dispatched to the island. One source claims that Khrushchev believed the missile delivery operation could be kept a secret from US intelligence for around two months. However, President Kennedy was informed that the US spy plane U-2 had given convincing photographic evidence that SAM installations were being constructed. The US would act in accordance with its own security interests if Cuba ever turned into "an offensive military base of major capacity for the Soviet Union," the President warned Khrushchev (35-37).

Editors Robert P. Watson and Tom Lansford considers that Kennedy was intelligent enough not to announce to the American people that there was a missile sitting in Cuba, just ninety miles from the cost of Florida. That piece of intelligence analysis was a very important turning point in the whole crisis. The EXCOMM (Executive Committee of the National Security Council) came up with three response options after rejecting a diplomatic solution to the crisis: 1) military invasion of the island, 2) airstrikes to take out the missile silos, or 3) a naval blockade (26).

Kennedy decided to blockade. The incident was the closest the world ever came to nuclear war during the Cold War, yet Kennedy was able to avoid war through skillful brinksmanship. In exchange for the United States' promise not to invade Cuba, Khrushchev ultimately consented to withdraw the missiles. After the crisis, a "hot line" was established between Washington and Moscow so that future direct negotiations between the heads of the superpowers might take place before things got out of hand (Watson and Lansford 27). The

crisis enhanced public perception of American resolve and the president's authority.

Immediately after that, Kennedy's approval rating rose from 66 to 77 percent (Reeves 425).

3.5.3. To the Moon

The youthful American President was utterly stunned by the Soviet space accomplishment. It was now abundantly evident that the Soviet Union had far more advanced space exploration capabilities than the United States. Author John H. Davis acknowledges that although John F. Kennedy did not have a space program and had little interest in or expertise of astronomy and rocketry, he decided on the spur of the moment that the United States should send a man to the moon by the year 1970. This was going to cost more than \$30 billion and became Project Apollo (356). "Kennedy would not live to see the landing of a man on the moon in July 1969," says Selverstone. JFK deserves praise for initiating a \$30 billion effort that led to a significant technological achievement for the United States and laid the basis for further space exploration (Davis 514).

3.5.4. Foreign Aid Programs

In 1961, *John F.* Kennedy saw the possibility for using the country's agricultural surplus as a force in American foreign policy. He instructed his administration to create plans to exploit the surplus agricultural harvests of the United States as the basis for food aid during his first days as president. JFK set out the logic for the program saying, "Food is strength, and food is peace, and food is freedom, and food is a helping to people around the world whose good will and friendship we want," states Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley in Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD, an article published by The American Presidency Project.

The History channel argues that President John F. Kennedy releases Executive Order #10924 on March 1st, 1961, creating the Peace Corps as a new organization under the Department of State. It was the aid program that meant the most to Kennedy. According to

Encyclopedia Britannica, the mission of the Peace Corps is to provide skilled employees in the areas of education, agriculture, health (with a focus on battling HIV/AIDS), trade, technology, environmental protection, women's economic empowerment, and community development to aid other nations in their development efforts. Depending on their qualifications, training, and experience, Peace Corps volunteers are assigned to particular projects. Once abroad, the volunteer is required to function for two years as a responsible citizen, know the local language, and maintain a standard of living equivalent to that of their hosts.

Aside from Cuba, another significant foreign policy issue was passed over by the Eisenhower administration to John F. Kennedy. This was the Vietnam War, which was beginning to pose a major threat by the time the President passed away in 1963 (Nevill 47). According to Miller Center, since the early 1950s, America has sent military advisors to Saigon to aid France in its struggle with Vietnamese communists for national dominance. Kennedy doubled this budget in 1961 and instructed the elite army unit known as the Special Forces to teach the South Vietnamese in counterinsurgency tactics. However, the war persisted, and by Kennedy's term as president, 16,000 American military advisors were stationed in Vietnam.

Following that 1951 trip, Representative Kennedy had testified in Congress about the \$50 million per year that the US was then providing France in support of its Vietnam operation: "We have joined forces with a French regime's frantic attempt to hold onto the ruins of an empire. Since the enemy is everywhere and nowhere at the same time, I firmly believe that no amount of American military help in Indochina can succeed. The geopolitical landscape of the world is being altered by nationalist forces" (Willis 59).

Even to this day, there is debate about whether Kennedy would have fully involved America in the Vietnam War, which was disastrous for the country. Even though Kennedy

deployed thousands of soldiers to fight in Vietnam, there were signs that he thought the conflict could not be won and planned to bring the majority of them home if he were elected again. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, who succeeded him, was the one who increased American involvement in Vietnam (Uschan 40).

Additionally, it may be argued that Kennedy's primacy in foreign policy would have prevented him from becoming the successful home reformer that Johnson, with his idea of a "Great Society," was. In terms of the actual war, Kennedy was unable to stop the ARVN(Army of the Republic of Vietnam) and their US advisers from waging the wrong kind of conflict in 1963 despite evidence to the contrary (Neville 54).

3.5.5. Domestic Policy

John F. Kennedy called his domestic program the "New Frontier". It made bold promises of federal support for elderly healthcare, education financing, economic assistance for rural areas, and government action to stop the recession. Additionally, he pledged to eradicate discrimination. Kennedy had more limitations in his domestic than in his foreign policy. According to President and their Decisions, Conservative Democrats blocked many of his legislative proposals even though the Democratic Party controlled both houses of Congress. It would take Johnson's administration to implement Kennedy's significant domestic proposals (28).

A looming recession was one of the first home issues Kennedy dealt. For Strauss, although the country had unheard-of economic boom during the Eisenhower years, the economy is cyclical. It was moving south when Kennedy arrived. Kennedy made the decision to implement a tax cut to stimulate the economy after consulting with his advisers and his father, much like Ronald Reagan would 20 years later (127). Furthermore, in April 1962, an editorial in *The New York Times* praised John Kennedy for his remarkable bravery in the steel crisis.

Compelled the steel companies to halt their price rises, he helped to stop the inflationary wage-price spiral by standing his ground on this subject.

Although his brother Robert deserves the most of the praise for that initiative, Kennedy also waged a fierce battle against organized crime. Davis reassures that for the first time in American history, the Kennedy administration took decisive action to address the CosaNostra's operations and the grave threat they posed to American institutions. It does not lessen the accomplishment of Kennedy or his brother that his battle against "the enemy inside" may have ultimately cost him his life and that his anti-crime campaign failed after his passing (514).

In the *How We Got Here: the 70's*, David Frum articulates that Kennedy put an end to an era of strict fiscal measures by easing monetary policy in order to keep interest rates low and promote economic growth. His first budget, in 1961, produced the country's first non-war, non-recession deficit. He presided over the first government budget to surpass the \$100 billion mark in 1962 (324).

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum concedes that Peterson, who had been named Assistant Secretary of Labor, worked to get the Equal Pay Act of 1963, was one of the first federal anti-discrimination laws, enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Kennedy on June 10, 1963. "It is a first step. It affirms our determination that when women enter the labor force they will find equality in their pay envelopes," says the president on signing the law.

Black people faced widespread discrimination in the Southern states, and even after migrating to the North, they continued to experience racial prejudice if not a legal discrimination. Kennedy's campaign placed a strong emphasis on civil rights, and after his election, the new president and his closest advisors worked to create plans to both enforce already-existing civil rights laws and implement new ones.

The Life and Death of the Solid South: a Political History comments that "Jim Crow" segregation was the established law in the Deep South (156). Though racial segregation in public schools was deemed illegal by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, Robert Dallek, author of *An Unfinished Life*, affirms that many schools, particularly in the southern states, violated the Supreme Court's decision. Segregation was also outlawed by the court in other public places (such buses, restaurants, theaters, courts, bathrooms, and beaches), yet it persisted (292-293).

The Kennedys and the Civil Rights Movement, an article published by National Park service, indicates that President Kennedy defined civil rights as not just a constitutional issue, but also a "moral issue." He also advocated for the Civil Rights Act of 1963, which would guarantee protection for each American's right to vote under the US Constitution, put an end to segregation in public places, and mandate integration in public schools. Despite many attempts to reach a compromise, southern Democrats and conservatives in the Senate were once again able to block the bill's passage.

Tragically, on November 22, 1963, at 2:30 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. *Life in Legacy* states that he traveled to Texas on a political mission to ease tensions between liberal John Connally and conservative Ralph Yarborough in the Democratic Party. He was shot twice, once in the head and once in the back while riding in a presidential motorcade through downtown Dallas. The head shot caused the bullet to exit his throat. He had been in office for 1,036 days and was 46 years old.

Chapter Four

The Torch is Passed but the Curse is there

John F. Kennedy, who was the first president born in the twentieth century, brought grace and wit to the White House. To many Americans, especially young Americans, his election in 1960 seemed to signal a new era in American politics. He brought charm and eloquence to the White House. Kennedy's greatness lay in his ability to inspire political commitment to other family members.

4.1. Robert Kennedy

According to *Bobby Kennedy: the making of a liberal icon*, New York, Robert Francis Kennedy (November 20, 1925 – June 6, 1968), also known by his initials RFK or by the nickname Bobby, was an American lawyer and politician who held the offices of U.S. Senator from New York from January 1965 until his assassination in June 1968. He served as John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign's diligent and successful manager in 1960. He was named Attorney General in President Kennedy's cabinet following the election. He gained recognition throughout his tenure as Attorney General for his careful, efficient, and impartial management of the Department of Justice. Some historians now see him as an emblem of contemporary American liberalism since, like his brothers John and Edward, he was a prominent member of the Democratic Party.

Attorney General Kennedy led a successful campaign against organized crime, which resulted in an 800% increase in convictions of members of that group. Additionally, he was more dedicated to assisting African Americans in obtaining the right to vote, attend integrated schools, and use public facilities. In a 1961 lecture at the University of Georgia Law School, he demonstrated his dedication to civil rights: "We won't watch or act distantly. We'll proceed. In my opinion, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on school desegregation was correct. But it doesn't matter what I believe. The rule applies. Some of you might think the choice was

poor. That is unimportant. The rule applies," writes *John F Kennedy Presidential Library*. Robert Kennedy left his position as attorney general soon after President Kennedy passed away and ran successfully for the US Senate in 1964 from New York.

According to the *History* channel, after winning the California presidential primary on June 5, 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy is shot at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles shortly after midnight. Palestinian Sirhan Sirhan murdered Kennedy multiple times, just moments after he told his cheering fans that the nation was prepared to put an end to its contentious divides. A day later, on June 6, 1968, he was declared dead.

4.2. Ted Kennedy

Encyclopedia Britannica identifies that Ted Kennedy, full name Edward Moore Kennedy, also known by the moniker Lion of the Senate, was a prominent figure in the Democratic Party and liberal politics beginning in the 1960s. During his lengthy tenure in office, he rose to become one of the Senate's most respected and influential members. Ted Kennedy was born on February 22, 1932, in Boston, Massachusetts, and passed away on August 25, 2009, in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. He was the final surviving sibling of President John F. Kennedy and the youngest child of Rose and Joseph Kennedy.

The *Associated Press* in an article, "Ted Escapes Car Plunge; Woman Dies," reports that on the night of July 18 and 19, 1969, a single-vehicle car accident called the Chappaquiddick incident took place on Massachusetts' Chappaquiddick Island. Senator Edward M. "Ted" Kennedy's carelessness led to the collision, which killed his 28-year-old passenger Mary Jo Kopechne who was pinned inside the car. It was said that the Chappaquiddick event, which made national headlines and affected Kennedy's choice to not run for president in 1972 and 1976, had a negative impact on his chances of ever winning the office. Kennedy ultimately made the choice to run in the 1980 Democratic Party presidential primaries, but after

receiving only 37.6% of the vote, he was defeated by incumbent President Jimmy Carter for the nomination.

4.3. The Kennedy Sisters

The five daughters of Joe and Rose Kennedy shared the same competitive nature and aspirations as the rest of the family. They did not serve as the conduits for their father's ambitions, unlike their brothers, but they still showed the family's interest in public service through the decisions they made in life.

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff reports in *The Missing Kennedy: Rosemary Kennedy and the Secret Bonds of Four Women* that on September 13, 1918, Rose Marie (also known as Rosemary and Rosie) Kennedy was born. Her mother soon realized that she was different. The newborn hardly cried at all in the weeks after the birth of her first daughter. Little Rosemary was generally quiet, in contrast to her boisterous and animated older brothers. Had the newborn been deprived of oxygen at a crucial time because Dr. Good was late? There is no reliable way to know (2-3).

According to an article published in the *New York Times*, Kate Clifford Larson posits that Rosemary struggled to learn, to read, and write despite the support of tutors. She was enrolled in an intellectually disabled boarding school in Pennsylvania when she was eleven years old. At age fifteen, Rosemary was sent to the Sacred Heart Convent in Elmhurst, Providence, Rhode Island, where she was educated separately from the other students. She spent the entire day working with two nuns, Miss Newton, a special education teacher. For their efforts, the Kennedys donated a brand-new tennis court to the school. Her reading, writing, spelling, and counting skills were reported to be at a fourth-grade level (Leamer 203-204).

In an essay entitled "The Untold Story of JFK's Sister, Rosemary Kennedy, and Her Disastrous Lobotomy," Liz McNeil describes her as affectionate, obedient, and always eager to please her father, but she was unable to speak. At age twenty-three, to calm her mood

swings and stop her occasional violent outbursts disabled eldest daughter lost everything when her father scheduled a catastrophic lobotomy that left her with the mental capacity of a toddler. This event would become a long-running secret and a source of deep shame for the most famous family in American history. Rosemary's lobotomy was hidden from the family for 20 years; none of her siblings knew of her whereabouts (Larson).

Dr. Watts told Kessler that in his opinion, Rosemary did not have "mental retardation" but rather had a form of depression. A review of all of the papers written by the two doctors confirmed Dr. Watts' declaration. All of the patients the two doctors lobotomized were diagnosed as having some form of mental disorder (244).

The Guardian reports that it quickly became apparent that the procedure had not been successful. Kennedy's mental capacity diminished to that of a two-year-old child. She could not walk or speak intelligibly. Rose Kennedy did not visit her for twenty years. Both of Collier and Horowitz claim that Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. did not visit his daughter at the institution (116).

The Kennedys did not reveal that she was institutionalized because of a failed lobotomy, but instead said that she was deemed "mentally retarded (Kessler 223). In 1961, after Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. had a stroke that left him unable to speak and walk, Rosemary's siblings were made aware of her location (McNeil).

In *The Exiled Kennedy*, it was stated that in response to her condition, Rosemary's parents separated her from her family. Following her father's death in 1969, the Kennedys gradually involved Rosemary in family life again. Rosemary Kennedy died from natural causes on January 7, 2005, aged eighty-six.

4.4. Legacy in Intellectual Disability

Harold Jackson, an editor of *The Guardian*, identifies Eunice Mary Kennedy Shriver DSG (July 10, 1921 – August 11, 2009) as an American philanthropist and a member of

the Kennedy family. For her efforts on behalf of the disabled, Ronald Reagan awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984, making her the first living American woman to be portrayed on one of her nation's medals. She was married to Sargent Shriver, the Democratic candidate for vice president of the United States in 1972 and the American ambassador to France.

David Braddock acknowledges in the journal of *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* that a long-time advocate for children's health and disability issues, Shriver championed the creation of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation in 1961. The panel was significant in the movement from institutionalization to community integration in the US and throughout the world. As a sister of the President of the United States, she was able to draw the attention of the nation's most influential figures to the dire circumstances faced by families of people with mental retardation. In order to inspire people with mental retardation to develop their skills and experience the joy of achievement, she and her husband, R. Sargent Shriver, established the Special Olympics as an annual, international competition.

In *The Kennedy Family and the Story of Mental Retardation*, Edward Shorter writes:

By the fall of 1958, it was clear that the Kennedy Foundation had embarked upon an entirely new course: funding science rather than service. In September, Joe Kennedy told Mother Stella Maris of the Mount Saint Agnes College in Baltimore, "I am sure that you have a rough idea of the work we have been doing—confining our interest almost exclusively to mentally retarded children. We are now changing our policy and are going into the scientific research on the question of mental retardation to see if something can't be done for these children." (50)

The Quarterly Magazine of Feminists for Life of America observes that although Shriver was a Democrat, she was a vocal supporter of the anti-abortion movement, and of several

anti-abortion organizations: Feminists for Life of America, the Susan B. Anthony List, and Democrats for Life of America (18).

4.4.1. Rebellious Kick

Kathleen Agnes Kennedy was born on February 20, 1920, in Brookline, Massachusetts, to Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. and Rose Fitzgerald. She was their fourth child and second daughter. Kathleen rose to prominence in the family as a result of Rosemary's issues, thereby making her the first daughter, despite the fact that her innate abilities would have given her this position in any case. Kathleen was the most active and vivacious of all the Kennedy girls, while she wasn't as pretty as Pat or as brilliant as Eunice (who, according to Kennedy friends and associates, was the family's most natural politician). The nickname her father gave her—"Kick"—fit her perfectly, summarizing her naturalness and lack of affectation (Collier and Horowitz 51).

In Roehampton, England, Kathleen a poised young lady of eighteen had completed her studies and now assisted her mother as hostess at the embassy (Whalen 207). Kathleen's time spent in Britain while her father served as ambassador had a significant impact on the rest of her life. She received her education while staying in England at Queen's College in London, where she swiftly acquired a large circle of male and female friends in British high society. "After her dazzling debut in London in 1938, where her father was American ambassador, Kathleen "Kick" Kennedy became the darling of World-War-II English society — just as she was the darling of the Kennedys," says Lynne McTaggart, author of 1983's *Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times* (65).

After her experience at the *Times-Herald*, Kathleen Kennedy decided to rejoin the war effort. Joe's sister Kathleen was working for the Red Cross in England when the buzz bombs began to fall in 1944. "People are very terrified," she wrote in her diary, "and one thinks that

they are always listening first for [the bombs] to arrive and then for the awful motors to cease" (Strauss 65).

At the Hans Crescent Club in Knightsbridge, "Kick" supplied coffee and doughnuts, as well as morale-boosting conversations. She ran upon William John Robert Cavendish, the Marquess of Hartington, the gorgeous "Billy" Hartington, who had been one of her favorite escorts in the years leading up to the war. He was now dressed in the uniform of a Coldstream Guards officer. They swiftly became engaged after a blossoming romance. "It was a star-crossed match, made in the face of strong disapproval from both families." One of England's oldest titled families, the Cavendishes, were staunchly Protestant. The Kennedys were also devout Catholics," says Whalen (360).

Kathleen worried incessantly whether she dared to reject a Catholic religion that would expel her from its safe haven of certainty if she married this decent man. The Pittsburgh Press states that despite objections from her mother, Kathleen persisted in marrying Hartington in a civil ceremony at the Caxton Hall Register Office on May 6, 1944.

In the *Black Diamonds: the Rise and Fall of a Great English Dynasty*, Catherine Bailey concludes that four months later, Hartington was killed by a sniper during a battle with the Germans in Belgium four months. Popular on the London social circuit and admired by many for her high spirits and wit, Lady Hartington eventually became romantically involved with the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam (406-419).

Lord Fitzwilliam rented a tiny jet on May 13, 1948, to fly himself and Kathleen to Cannes for a short vacation. The weather that day was unsuitable for flying due to strong winds. Kathleen and Fitzwilliam, against all odds, chose to endure the storms raging throughout the continent and travel to Cannes. The small, light plane was thrown into the Crevennes Mountains in the Ardeche near Privas a few hours after departure, whipped around by fierce winds. Kathleen and her partner were both slain in the blink of an eye (Davis 108). Rose

Kennedy had refused to attend her daughter's funeral, instead entering a hospital for medical reasons, adds James Hilty in *Robert Kennedy* (52).

4.4.2. A Sophisticated Daughter

According to John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Patricia Kennedy was born on May 6, 1924, in Brookline, Massachusetts, to Rose and Joseph Kennedy. She was their sixth child and fourth daughter. Patricia went to Rosemont College in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, where she directed and acted in a number of plays and theatrical productions. Rosemont awarded her a B.A. in 1945. She opted to pursue her interest in theatrical activities after graduation. She started as an assistant in the NBC production department in New York. She subsequently relocated to Los Angeles to work as a radio assistant for Kate Smith. Later on, Patricia was the producer of *I Love to Eat* on NBC-TV when she was 22 years old; it was the first cookery show on network television.

She married Peter Lawford, an English actor, on April 23, 1954. *The Mystery of Marilyn Monroe: the Unheard Tapes* mentions that during the 1950s and early 1960s, Patricia and Peter (a member of Frank Sinatra's "Rat Pack") hosted lavish parties at their Malibu estate, with visitors including Marilyn Monroe. The Kennedy brothers frequently met with Monroe at the Lawford's estate.

The New York Times points out that Mrs. Lawford became the first Kennedy to divorce her husband after 11 years of marriage in 1966. It was a well-publicized incident. Mrs. Lawford and her four children then relocated to New York, where she established a busy social calendar, befriended artists and authors, and earned a reputation as a wealthy arts benefactor. Mrs. Lawford established the National Committee for the Literary Arts, which hosts author talks and awards scholarships. She also collaborated on museum exhibitions with the National Center on Addiction and the Kennedy Library. Patricia Kennedy Lawford died on September 17, 2006 at the age of eighty-two.

4.5. The First Kennedy Female Ambassador

The *Irish America Magazine* portrays Jean Ann Kennedy Smith (February 20, 1928 – June 17, 2020) as an American diplomat, activist, humanitarian, and novelist. President Bill Clinton appointed Kennedy Smith as the US Ambassador to Ireland in 1993. For many reasons, it was a great honor and achievement, especially because it gave her a direct, active participation in politics and made her and her father, Joseph Sr., the first father and daughter to serve as US ambassadors. “Next to President of the United States, Ambassador to Ireland is definitely one of the best posts an Irish American can hold,” she said in a prior interview with *Irish America*.

Todd Plitt writes in *USA TODAY* that Kennedy (after her 1956 marriage to Stephen Edward Smith, she was known as Jean Kennedy Smith) was deeply active in her older brother John's political career. She worked in his congressional representative campaigns in 1946 and 1952, as well as his Senate campaign in 1952 and, finally, his presidential campaign in 1960, citing her parents' family legacy of “working together for something.”

Smith formed very Special Arts, nowadays known as the Department of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in 1974. According to *The Washington Post*, VSA offers arts and education programs for disabled children and adults. According to VSA, its programs served "approximately 276,000 students in 43 states and 52 countries" as of 2011. Jean Kennedy Smith, JFK's sister and an architect of peace in Northern Ireland, dies at 92. She was the last of the nine Kennedy children to live and the one who survived the longest.

4.6. Kennedy Curse

"*Kennedy Family Tragedies*", *The Washington Post* notes that The Kennedy curse is a string of unfortunate events afflicting members of the American Kennedy family, including early deaths, mishaps, assassinations, and other tragedies. The *National Post* report in "Ted

Kennedy Spoke of a Family Curse after Deadly Chappaquiddick Crash. Maybe he was right" that the claimed curse has mostly harmed the offspring and heirs of businessman Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., but it has also reportedly affected other family members, friends, and allies. The "curse" has most frequently manifested itself through political killings and aircraft accidents. Following the Chappaquiddick incident in 1969, Ted Kennedy is quoted saying he questioned if "some awful curse did actually hang over all the Kennedys.

4.6.1. The Most Unfortunate

Camelot gradually changed into a gloomy tale about an unfortunate family's sad fate being repeated due to a purported curse. Instead of inappropriate sex, sudden death and tragedy came to dominate the media's narrative and attention. Even though their faith forbade such ideas, "the Kennedy curse" quickly gained popularity and was brought up so frequently that even some family members appeared to buy into it. Early family narratives typically presented the deaths of Joseph Kennedy Jr. and Kathleen Kennedy as sad accidents brought on by war or bad weather, while the assassinations of Jack and Bobby were characterized as the acts of maniacs rather than as divine retribution. Nevertheless, in 1964, when a plane carrying Ted crashed, leaving him seriously injured and killing others, including the pilot, there was already a sense of tragedy brewing and the looming presence of a Kennedy curse. Bobby said, "I believe the only reason we've survived is because there are more of us than there are problems. They did not appear to be the luckiest family in Boston; instead, they appeared to be the most unfortunate, as if they were being punished. a great deal of funerals. The Kennedy family, according to Cardinal Gushing, "has experienced more terrible deaths and more family issues than any family I know (Nasaw 532).

4.6.2. The Myth of the Curse

According to Clinch's book *The Kennedy Neurosis*, many people have viewed the Kennedys as the victims of an enigmatic curse due to their successes on the one hand and

their frequent misfortunes on the other. Another, more sophisticated legend holds that the Kennedys are punished for having too high of aspirations, as do all mortals. This is how the Greeks defined hubris—excessive pride and arrogance that displeases the gods. The opposing humanistic perspective, which holds that a person's destiny depends more on his own attitudes and deeds than on those of spirits or gods, has a similarly illustrious history (12).

Though their emphasis varied frequently, visionaries like Socrates, Jesus, Confucius, Gautama, Tolstoy, Mill, and Kierkegaard all shared this essential outlook. This is also the default viewpoint of the fundamental tenet of post-Freudian psychoanalysis, psychology, psychohistory, and psychohumanism is likewise similar to this. In essence, each individual determines how his or her life will unfold and how he or she will die. It is understood that we are affected by external factors. However, the fundamental quality of humanity is our ability to choose how to respond to internal and external influences that are both under our immediate control and those that are not (Clinch 13).

However, it needed a third major Kennedy tragedy for the nation to suddenly realize that something was seriously wrong. Not only was the Kennedy luck off, but there was also a major problem with the Kennedys. On the night of July 18–19, 1969, Mary Jo Kopechne was not the only person who perished when U.S. Senator Edward Moore Kennedy, the fourth and last son, reportedly drove his car off the Chappaquiddick Island Bridge into Poucha Pond. His own presidential aspirations were also shortly submerged. After Chappaquiddick, it appeared to the public that the unfortunate clan was actually under some unexplained curse. Senator Edward Kennedy himself, who pondered following the accident “if some dreadful curse did indeed hover over all the Kennedys”, also expressed this superstitious apprehension (Clinch 324).

The proponents of Camelot made a point of dispelling any similar opposing myth. Ted Sorensen stated immediately following the 1968 killing of RFK that "the Kennedys are not

cursed." They had more guts and conviction than was necessary to dare, try, and tempt fate, therefore they received more than their fair share of bad luck (Nasaw 532).

Clinsh also explores the essential nature of the "curse": that the Kennedys' repeated misfortunes are traceable in many ways to deep-rooted emotional conflicts, or neuroses, which affected all the children in different degrees. To be sure, neither Jack's nor Bobby's murder was caused by a Kennedy neurosis. But each showed in his life and career strong symptoms of the similar unconscious attitudes and anxieties that may actually have helped bring about the wartime death of Joe Kennedy, Junior, and the accidents that have plagued the only surviving son, Teddy (324).

4.6.3. Arrogant and Narcissist

In *The Kennedy Curse: Why Tragedy Has Haunted America's First Family for 150 Years*, Edward Klein, a well-known Kennedy biographer and best-selling author and journalist who has a close personal relationship with several Kennedy family members, solves one of the world's greatest riddles and explains why the Kennedys have had such an unbelievable string of tragedies. According to author Edward Klein, the "Kennedy curse" results from their haughtiness and narcissism. Also involved are hubris and tempting fate. He says:

Like many others, I had always found it difficult to embrace the notion that the Kennedys lived at the receiving end of a supernatural curse. Perhaps because I am a journalist, I prefer to focus on definable facts—things that can be explained by the known forces or laws of nature. By definition, the supernatural does not fall into that category; it can be neither proved nor disproved. (12)

Many Greeks still hold the belief that when Jackie Kennedy wed Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, she brought the Kennedy Curse with her. They point out that Onassis and his only son, Alexander, were both healthy and flush with cash when the young American widow first met him. However, according to Nicholas Gage "in the

year after his marriage to Jackie, four of his vessels had significant disasters.” The people who knew Onassis best, including his close friends and high-ranking officials, "whispered among themselves that the old man was losing his touch, and many of them were eager to blame it on the 'Jackie jinx'." Seven years later, Onassis and Alexander both passed away, and the family business had been severely damaged (14).

4.6.4. Unfortunate Founding Father

For all of the Kennedys, it is unfortunate that the founding father’s big plan for his sons and family had an inherent, unavoidable flaw: no human being can, psychologically or historically, impose his or her way of life on another human being in the way that they intend. Each individual must discover and live his or her own life. The true meaning of human freedom is this. Any other outcome would only be a false identity made at great personal expense to both the artificer and the artifact.

Kennedy experienced a double tragedy. His castle was constructed on illusion, despite the fact that he attained the pinnacles of worldly and social achievement. He did not do much with his enormous wealth other than glorify himself and his family. Joe Kennedy is now recognized as the extremely wealthy father of a US President rather than for any social contributions. Even his political genius has been mostly forgotten due to Jack's success.

Conclusion

The Kennedy account is in every way, as legendary and theatrical as the American dream itself. From the great immigrant stock of the nation, they rose to seize opportunity after opportunity. After one generation overcame its own poverty and raised the family to a higher social class, the following generation turned to the suffering, the poor, and the less fortunate they had left behind and used their newly acquired advantages as a pivot point to turn the wheels of social justice.

There are many flaws and failures in the in the meantime: foibles and failures aplenty. The Kennedys' story is one that is as messy as it is glamorous, as strained and scarred by immorality, excess and fault as it is elevated by valor, righteousness and selflessness. The Kennedy family's history is both complicated and glamorous, as stretched and marred by vice, excess, and mistakes as it is exalted by bravery, righteousness, and altruism.

Ted was a Kennedy completely and through, which is to say that he was all of the aforementioned things as well as having flaws, but Eunice was an ideal Kennedy—giving, involved, brilliant, and active. He had a personal setback that had an impact on his professional performance, which was unfortunate since as a U.S. senator, he was quite successful and productive. Who knows how he would have done in a position of even more responsibility?

None of the most famous Kennedys' biographies are plain or linear. The patriarch of those who rose in politics, Joseph Kennedy Sr., was infamously immoral in his pursuit of power. After his death, Jack—the dazzling King Arthur of America's Camelot—was shown to be a vain, egotistical, and adulterous spouse to Jackie, the lady his countrymen had come to revere. Ted had his own troubles, as was mentioned and will be seen, and Bobby had the potential to be cold-blooded and cunning.

They all cared so much, worked so hard, and accomplished so much for their country. Imagine a single family rising from the lowest class of immigrants in America, the immigrant slums, and overcoming abject poverty to reach, in less than a century, a position where it would affect, and potentially improve, the daily lives of all its fellow Americans. No other family in our nation's history did what the Kennedys did. They succeeded in this. And it is an impressive accomplishment.

The Kennedy tale has developed at a rate that contrasts with the far slower successes and tragedies of the Adams family of New England and the two connected Roosevelt clans, the other great American political dynasties, making it the Greek tragedy of the twentieth century. In terms of philosophy, fashion, as well as the speed at which they rose to power and fell from it, the Kennedys truly typified their century. They experienced a richness of life that is only available to a small number of people when they are at the height of their prosperity and power. The nation's first president not only amassed a massive fortune—estimated at half a billion dollars—but also generously endowed all of his offspring with early access to the multimillion dollar club throughout his lifetime.

The extraordinary Kennedy talent for politics was developed thanks to the father's and boys' opulent fortune. The Kennedys have always been smart, attractive, and very hard workers in addition to possessing money and talent. The Kennedys were able to accomplish their goal—political victory and power—because each was driven above all by strong ambition and commitment to family.

Over the years, there have been a staggering amount of little tragedies that have affected one family. The deceased daughter's spouse was assassinated before his wife. A Kennedy daughter-in-law also perished in a plane crash, along with both of her parents. The brother's widow later passed away from choking at a dinner honoring a Kennedy political triumph. Multiple miscarriages have occurred in the two Kennedy wives. Although not a

comparable tragedy, the divorce of one daughter's marriage was considered significant enough by devout Roman Catholics.

The Kennedy narrative is interesting because it is a tale of extremes. Yes, three of the four brothers went on to become senators of the United States, but five members of the extended family have perished in four different plane crashes. Yes, one was elected president, but another had lobotomy under her father's approval.

There have been other political dynasties in America—John Quincy Adams and his father, John Adams, were both elected president, and George Bush, father and son, also won the presidency—but none have been as successful or influential. However, the Kennedys are fascinating not only because of the lessons we may learn from them but also because they are a spectacular family that is unmatched. Even the most basic information can challenge one's creativity. This family gave birth to a president of the United States, three senators, the attorney general of the United States, and two more potential presidential candidates in less than ten years. If tragedy had not intervened, one of these candidates might have won, and the second one might still have a chance. Furthermore, the youth of all of these national leaders was nearly unheard of.

Since Jack was in the White House that year and if you add his own Senate service back to when he was elected President in 1960, there have been Kennedys in high office in the nation for more than fifty years. With his departure, there are no Kennedys in the Senate for the first time since 1962. They had an impact on Boston and Massachusetts even earlier, as we have discovered. It would be impossible to add up all of their contributions; any attempt would be futile, just as any list of their sins would be.

Thankfully, John Kennedy also boosted the US "unarmed forces," including the Peace Corps, Food for Peace, the new Disarmament Agency, and several initiatives in aid, trade, space, international information, and the UN. All of these actions had the impact of

persuading other people that the United States wanted to fulfill its obligations in the international community and, if possible, to do it peacefully. In contrast to John Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis, these developments for a peaceful world were all quite little.

Young people were inspired by John Kennedy to get involved in the Peace Corps, the civil rights struggle, summer internships in Washington, politics generally and domestic social issues as well. Robert Kennedy supported their involvement in VISTA, volunteer work, and, together with Gene McCarthy, political efforts on a scale never previously attempted. We must now give them more opportunities for public and quasi-public service, particularly on behalf of peace, racial democracy, and national reconciliation, rather than excluding them from political decision-making or denying them the channels of communication through which they can tell us how to alter or end the injustices they perceive in our system.

To conclude, The Kennedys are the top political family in America and, in many ways, have come to represent the American century: successful immigrants. Made and wasted fortunes, children perished in conflict, political killings, ambition, greed, sex, passion, rage, envy, fame, and devastating loss. They have attained the highest levels of success and experienced the utmost desperation. They've risen to the pinnacles of power and tasted the lowest depths of despair. By no means are the Kennedys done; it goes only as far as the offspring of Ted, Jack, and Bobby. There are many more young Kennedys alive today who can all be traced back to the four famine refugees: Thomas and Rose Anna Fitzgerald and Patrick and Bridget Kennedy. Each of the newest Kennedys is aware that they are carrying a flame and bearing responsibilities. Nobody knows how they might ascend.

Few of us can truly imagine what being a Kennedy must be like. Their story is certainly larger than life, but despite the magnitude of their family's success and misfortune, it never

ceases to captivate. The Kennedy narrative is impressive, too real, and fascinating; if it weren't real, it would be unbelievable.

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