

It Was In The Cards

By FRANK HENRY

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THE personal drama of Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin rose to a major climax on Wednesday when he was inaugurated Governor of Maryland.

Starring in the role of a mid-Twentieth Century Horatio Alger hero, Mr. McKeldin realized on that day his faith in the triumph of a humble boy through hard work and the practice of homely virtues; and he has justification for his belief in success through inspiration.

The Governor has never suffered from false modesty. He loves to talk, or rather to orate. Sometimes, when riding in the car with no one but the chauffeur he bursts into thunderous, florid political speeches.

And at any gathering he is apt to distribute autographed cards bearing his picture. When Mayor of Baltimore he passed out these cards at the spectacular fire at old Oriole Park in July, 1944. He never autographs them in advance, or with rubber stamp. He signs the cards then and there—to give the personal touch.

Now 50 years old and learned in the clever expedience of politics, he looks back with admiration at the forlorn boy in South Baltimore, born in the neighborhood of Eutaw and Stockholder streets, the tenth child of a policeman who could read but could not write.

A "Miracle" Before His Eyes

For 40 years he has kept fresh the memory of that night in 1910 when he crept into a back pew of the Bennett Memorial Church, then at Fremont and Warner streets; of the child's amazement to see his father walk up the aisle to the preacher and vow never to drink another drop of liquor.

"I saw a miracle right there before my eyes," said Mr. McKeldin a few days ago. "The light of it has burned brightly in my heart ever since. And it has inspired me."

The impact of that scene upon the emotional boy of 10 could have indeed shaped his life. He became imbued with the flamboyant sermons he listened to, and evangelical fervor soon lifted his own shrill boyish voice in prayer and preaching.

Later he thrilled to Edwin Markham's long poem, "The Man With the Hoe," learned it by heart, and his intensity overcame the squeaks and breaks of his adolescent voice as he recited his favorite lines: "The emptiness of ages is in his face, and on his back the burden of the world."

Draws Notables To His Church

The boy orator was in his early 'teens when he adopted one of the fascinating, challenging themes of his life—the rise of the humble to high place. He spoke eloquently of the tailor (Andrew Johnson) and the rail splitter (Lincoln) who became Presidents. He invited the great and the great to attend services at his church. And his youthful enthusiasm drew quite a few.

Among them was Jack Bentley, a great baseball player around 1914-15.

Another, surprisingly, was the first secretary of the Japanese Embassy, who drove over from Washington one Sunday morning in a shiny black limousine, uniformed chauffeur and all. It was a great day for young McKeldin, especially those few moments when he led in prayer, asking for the "preservation and happiness of our distinguished guests."

Young McKeldin's devotion to religion and to inspiring the humble led him straight into an impasse. He wanted at first to be a minister, to electrify the religious world with the fervor of his preaching as did one of his heroes of that time—Billy Sunday. But being one of eleven children in a policeman's family, he couldn't afford the time or money to get through high school, a basic requirement for the ministry. **JAN 14 1951**

To Work And To Night School

So, with the spirit of high oratory surging within him, he took a job as office boy in a bank at \$20 a month—\$240 a year. But as his salary increased he began going to night school—taking English at City College, mathematics and Latin at another night school which prepared young men for careers in pharmacy. As he says now, he pieced together his high school learning "by picking up a crumb here and there."

As he worked on the solid building blocks of his career, he kept striving to satisfy the deep urge for oratory and inspirational thought. He took a course in public speaking under Dale Carnegie, who was then touring the country, teaching Y.M.C.A. classes.

During their Baltimore association teacher and pupil found they had much in common, and they have been friends ever since.

He Meets His Future Wife

Though it was the driving force of his life, the inspiration he derived from great success stories was not strong enough to move all obstacles in his path, and his career came head on into another impasse.

True, his salary at the bank was now \$100 a month, due to post World War I inflation, yet his job was still an inferior one. His ambition to be a teller or assistant cashier was completely frustrated, so it seemed best to go around the obstacle since it couldn't be demolished. But there was another complication, a lovely and charming one.

She was the young bookkeeper, Miss Honolulu Clair Manzer, a recent graduate of Western High, whose forebears had fought in the Revolutionary War. She was destined to become Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin. In those days, of course, young McKeldin was loath to move on to another job where he would not see her every day as he went about his job.

He was then about 20 and had a long way to go if he would emulate the example of the meek who became mighty. He tried another bank job—for six months, quitting when he saw no chance for advancement.

Finally A Title Of Sorts

Then to his third bank job, where at last he had a title and a fair salary. He was an assistant to the treasurer. In telling the story Mr. McKeldin always stresses the article to emphasize that he was not the assistant treasurer.

This job seemed to open the way to a career in banking. He kept records on about \$15,000,000 in securities—followed their fluctuating value, rates of yield, dates of maturity and so on. It was an important and extremely factual job for a young man who delighted in great fights of fancy. But he discharged his duties faithfully and won the respect of his employers.

During his time at this bank he took the entrance examination for the University of Maryland's night law school. His "crumbs"

of high-school education served him well. Young McKeldin, then 22, was one of the six, out of a total of 24 candidates, who passed.

Looking back on that time, Mr. McKeldin vividly recalled the picture of himself as a hard-working bank employe and law student: "After banking hours I'd pick up my books and start walking to law class. On the way I'd stop at a little restaurant in Liberty street and get a hot dog with all the fixings—onions, relish, everything—and a cup of coffee."

Burning The Midnight Oil

"That was my dinner. After class I'd always come back to the bank, where they had a fine, big law library. Usually my friend Joseph L. Carter, a fellow student, would come along with me. The watchman knew us and would let us in, and we burned much midnight oil poring over the books. It was a grind."

In 1924, the year before he was graduated from law school, young McKeldin and the charming young bookkeeper were married. They went on a honeymoon of about a week to Florida, on a Merchants and Miners steamer at a total cost of \$75 each.

"One thing about that trip stays vividly in my memory," said the Governor the other day as he lounged and fidgeted in his swivel chair. "We went on a tour in one of those rubber-neck wagons. The bus broke down in front of the Ponce de Leon Hotel and the driver blared at us through his microphone: 'Listen, when you get back home you can truthfully tell the folks that you stopped at the Ponce de Leon Hotel.' That was a big laugh."

Takes High Honors At Law School

When Mr. McKeldin was graduated in 1925, he took high honors, receiving the Gold Honor Case for his expert handling of a hypothetical law suit. Graduation brought another great turning point in his life and this time there was no obstruction.

Leaving banking behind, he made a modest entry into politics as secretary to the then Mayor Broening at a salary of \$3,500 a year—the most he had ever earned, and he was on his way to miss—by a very wide margin—becoming the William Jennings Bryan of the Maryland Republican party.

"I learned much about politics from Mayor Broening," he said. "But I remember one thing above all. It is this basic tenet: 'Speak evil of no man.' No one can question the morality of it. It has its practical side, too. Tomorrow you might need the support and help of the very man you abused today."

His Wife Proves Good Prophet

After his service as mayor's secretary, Mr. McKeldin began practicing law. And he soon became famous in many cities for the fervid and stirring speeches which he delivered before religious and civic bodies. Dallas and Harrisburg are two of the cities that have made him an honorary citizen.

He ran for Governor against the dictates of the party bigwigs. Some were against McKeldin because, as they said, "he has no social standing." When the aspirant heard this he burst forth in oratory:

"True, I do not have social standing. I am of humble origin. I came from the wrong side of the tracks. But I do have an understanding of the problems of those who do not have social standing."

But he did feel the traditional trepidation of a Republican running for office in Maryland, for whom, ordinarily, defeat is more likely than victory. So, in his doubt, he asked Mrs. McKeldin what she thought.

"I think you'll win this time," she said quietly.

"That decided me," said Mr. McKeldin.

Elephants Trumpet, Donkeys Droop

Since he won by the thumping majority of 93,338, Mr. McKeldin's friends and supporters are looking toward still greater things for him. They think he would be a fine candidate for Vice President of the United States on a ticket with Governor Warren of California. But Mr. McKeldin takes a lead from the New Testament for his answer:

"When I was elected Mayor they had bigger things in mind for me, and now that I am Governor they have still bigger ideas. My answer is this: 'Whatever thou findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' In short, I want to make a success of the governorship before I rush off to something else."

SUN

Mr. McKeldin's way of life, his ideas, are reflected in his speech, his appearance and in the mementos that decorate his office on the eighteenth floor of the Mathieson Building. On top of his bookcase there is a wooden cross, by it in white plastic the words, "Follow Me." On the same shelf and elsewhere in the room are statuettes of trumpeting GOP elephants. Among these are two figurines of distressed and dejected Democratic donkeys.

Here among the Governor's favorite books are: "Make Life Worth Living," by Joseph R. Sizoo; "Why Not Try God?" by Mary Pickford; "Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons; "Your Kids and Mine," by Joe E. Brown; "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living," by Dale Carnegie, and "The Supreme Court of the United States," by Charles Evans Hughes.

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"Proletarian" Look Not Transmitted

On the wall beside Mr. McKeldin's desk is a framed photograph of his wife and their two children, Clara Whitney and T. R., Jr. When this reporter remarked upon them, he wheeled in his chair and looked at the picture, smiling broadly.

"They both look like their mother," he said. "They have fine faces. They do not look like me. You see, I'm a proletarian and I look like it. On my way to work every morning I take Clara to the Roland Park Country School and Teddy to Gilman."

He rubbed his chin and grinned, showing pearly white teeth, and a space on the lower gum where the middle front one was missing. "I have a few whiskers today," he observed, "but believe me, I shave every morning, that is, except one day a week. On that day I go to my old downtown barber. He gives me the works, cold cream, vibrator, hot towels—everything. I need it to keep my face in shape and to catch all the little spots of whiskers I miss shaving at home."

Teetotaler And Non-Smoker

"But, you see, today I got a ride with a friend who wanted to bring me downtown, so we put the kids off at school and came on down. I didn't get a chance to get shaved. But I'll shave here today. See here (pulling open a desk drawer), I have a complete kit—I've had to shave many times in the office."

Mr. McKeldin's eyes are dark gray and his hair is very dark, almost black.

The Governor has never smoked and he does not know the taste of alcoholic beverages. He is a very light eater.

"For breakfast," he said, "I have an egg, a piece of buttered toast, orange or prune juice and a glass of milk. For lunch, a bowl of crab soup or clam chowder and a cup of coffee. For dinner, some meat, green vegetables and maybe a little dessert."

"I eat no potatoes, and bread and butter just once a day; that's the buttered toast for breakfast. I'm not as young as I was and I have to watch my figure. I must say that I love cake, but I don't dare eat too much of it."

"I suppose you'd call me a simple fellow when it comes to personal habits. I like to go to bed around 11 or 11.30. Mostly I read myself to sleep. I get up about 7.30."

Collector Of China And Books

"I have always been a collector of things. I have a collection of fine Meissen figurines, very lovely little things. I suppose I paid much less for them than they are worth, maybe \$10 to \$14 each. And I collect old books. One of my prizes was a gift from Joe Pew, the Republican leader of Philadelphia—a first edition of 'The Federalist,' worth about \$1,200. When I was a boy I collected stamps."

But the acquisition of rare books and fine china in his maturity has not dulled the inspirational drive of his youth. His political speeches—and the orations for which he is paid—deal largely with the achievements of the humble. Through the years he has added to his list of exemplars Benjamin Fairless, president of United States Steel, whose father was a coal miner; Gen. Walter Krueger, who rose from private—and "the gob who became an admiral."

No Abstruse Question

Mr. McKeldin says he never stresses economic and other abstruse questions in his political speeches. Rather he dwells chiefly on the success and triumph of those of humble origin.

"Everybody wants to succeed," he said. "Everybody wants to be somebody. It is the sort of thing people want to hear."

"As Governor," this reporter interposed, "you will have some very serious business and economic decisions to make."

"Well, you see," Mr. McKeldin answered, "I will have some of the finest and most trustworthy minds in the State to work out those matters. That is the best way to do it."

Mr. McKeldin has always prided himself on hearing the name of one of the country's most distinguished Presidents—Theodore Roosevelt. But he never knew until a few years ago just why he was given the name.

A Promise To T. R. Made Good

"An old-time policeman called me up," he said, "and told me how it happened. In November, 1900, Teddy Roosevelt was here at the Music Hall—now the Lyric—making a political speech while running as Vice President with McKinley."

"After the talk, when T. R. was on his way out of the hall, he noticed my father among other policemen standing guard at the door. My father had red hair. T. R. slapped him on the back and asked, 'How are you, Red?'"

"My father is said to have answered, 'Fine, Mr. Roosevelt. Along about the middle of this month I expect an addition to my family. If it is a boy I'll name him Theodore Roosevelt.'" I came along on the twentieth of the month and got the name."