

JAMES EVETTS HALEY AND THE NEW DEAL: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS
FOR THE MODERN REPUBLICAN PARTY IN TEXAS

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James Evetts Haley, a West Texas rancher and historian, balked at the liberalism promoted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. Haley grew concerned about increased federal control over states and believed Roosevelt was leading the country toward bankruptcy.

In 1936, Haley, a life-long Democrat, led the Jeffersonian Democrats in Texas, who worked to defeat Roosevelt and supported the Republican candidate, Alf Landon. He continued to lead a small faction of anti-New Deal Texans in various movements through the 1960s. Haley espoused and defended certain conservative principles over the course of his life and the development of these ideas created the philosophical base of the modern Republican Party in Texas.

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INTRODUCTION

At its state convention in 2002, the Texas Republican Party adopted the following planks in its platform: restriction of the power of the federal government over the states; encouragement for a “strong and vibrant” private sector “unencumbered by excessive federal regulation”; recognition that the United States reflected the “fundamental Judeo-Christian principles based on the Holy Bible”; reduction of the current welfare system because it “encourages dependency on the government and robs individuals of their motivation and self esteem”; rejection of textbooks that offer “unsubstantiated opinions or seek to undermine our children’s belief in America or our Constitutional Republic”; abolition of the United States Department of Education; repeal of the sixteenth amendment; support for the Texas right-to-work law; demand for a balanced federal budget; and U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations.¹

This platform was not new to conservatives in the state. Beginning in the 1930s with the economic programs of the New Deal, Texas dissidents balked at the liberalism promoted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration. For thirty years, James Evetts Haley, a West Texas rancher, self-proclaimed “student of politics,” and historian, led this small faction of anti-New Deal Texans. At that time he espoused and defended the principles adopted years later by the modern Texas Republican Party and believed they were important to the success of the nation. The Haley papers describe the beliefs

¹ “2002 Texas Republican Party Platform,” [platform online]; accessed 23 July 2003; available from <http://www.txdemocrats/gopplatform2002.htm> 1-43.

and strategy of this conservative as he led various movements against the New Deal, beginning in 1936 with the Jeffersonian Democrats and continuing through the 1960s. One can make a good case that Haley contributed significantly to the development of ideas that created the philosophical base of the modern Republican Party of Texas.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY CONSERVATIVE REACTION TO THE NEW DEAL IN TEXAS

Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed the nation in his first inaugural address on 4 March 1933 with these words:

This is a day of national consecration. . . . In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen, government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone. Most important, a host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence, and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment.¹

Indeed, those were dark moments for the nation. The state of Texas also suffered from the Great Depression and looked to the Roosevelt administration for relief and recovery. In response, New Deal programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), and the Civil Works Administration (CWA) helped the unemployed and starving. Other programs, including the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) sought to bring economic recovery. Although the vast majority of Texans appreciated these programs, a small conservative faction in the state objected to what they saw as increased federal control. These dissidents valued self-reliance and independence from federal regulations and viewed the

¹ Franklin Delano Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1933, 1, in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), 240.

New Deal programs as dangerous to their way of life. Even though many Americans believed the economic conditions demanded action from the president, this group interpreted the change as a threat and fought to keep their lives free of government control.²

When Roosevelt took office in March 1933, the American farmer faced dire circumstances. In response to higher prices caused by the demand for agricultural commodities during World War I, American farmers had increased arable acreage and boosted production by 70 percent. For cash crops such as cotton, wheat, and corn, that percentage reached even greater heights. As a result of these expanding markets, many farmers purchased more land, and, as income rose because of the war, they improved their standard of living, purchased new equipment, and revamped farms and homes, all at the war's inflated prices. Thus, farmers contracted major debts by the end of the hostilities.³

Shortly after the cessation of the war, however, American farmers watched their share of gross income drop from \$16.9 billion in 1919 to \$8.9 billion in 1921. Overproduction caused by technological advances, the increased use of chemical fertilizers, improved seed quality, and the replacement of horses and mules with tractors led to postwar depression for farmers. Export markets for farm goods also declined because of high tariffs, greater agricultural production in European nations, and increased competition with other countries such as Canada, Australia, and Argentina. With respect

² Lionel V. Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal* (New York: Garland, 1983), 161.

³ Van L. Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture: The Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the New Deal, 1933* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 18; Lester V. Chandler, *America's Greatest Depression, 1929-1941* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 53-54.

to cotton, the primary crop of Texas, American consumers increasingly purchased products made with new synthetics such as rayon. In addition, competition from Egypt and India accelerated, thereby reducing foreign markets for the American producer. Foreclosure and tenancy threatened farmers, who could not meet the cost of production and thus found it impossible to service their debt obligations.⁴

The chronic agricultural problem, which grew worse after the depression began, led the Roosevelt administration to establish the AAA soon after taking office. When the president sent the farm bill to Congress on 16 March 1933, he reported that

Deep study and joint counsel of many points of view have produced a measure which offers great promise of good results. I tell you frankly that it is a new and untrod path, but I tell you with equal frankness that an unprecedented condition calls for the trial of new means to rescue agriculture. If a fair administrative trial of it is made and it does not produce the hoped for results I shall be the first to acknowledge it and advise you.⁵

The president's "new and untrod path" referred to a governmental program designed to regulate the agricultural marketplace to ensure that farmers received adequate prices. As historian Van L. Perkins noted, this represented a "radical departure in a society previously committed to the idea that government action should not go beyond the regulation of economic matters to prevent abuses."⁶

Passed as an emergency measure on 12 May 1933, the AAA sought to maintain a balance between production and consumption of farm products and to regulate and control the marketing of those goods. The AAA sent benefit payments to farmers who

⁴ Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 18-20; Chandler, *America's Greatest Depression*, 55-56; Keith J. Volanto, "Burying White Gold: The AAA Cotton Plow-Up Campaign in Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103 (January 2000): 328.

⁵ Quoted in Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 39-40.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

agreed to participate in controlled production through a reduction of acreage. These payments helped farmers maintain their properties, buy equipment and farm supplies, and finance expenses for consumption. New Dealers hoped to improve the ratio of supply and demand, increase prices, and restore the purchasing power of America's farmers to that of agriculture's "golden age" from August 1909 to July 1914. By increasing farm income, the AAA was to bring about recovery and end the long depression that had plagued the agricultural sector of the economy.⁷

Intellectuals in Washington, known as the "Brain Trust," devised many of the New Deal programs, including the AAA. During Roosevelt's 1932 campaign, he consulted with college professors on legislative policy, and he appointed some of these individuals to positions in the federal government. This well educated body of advisors were well schooled in economic and political history. The Brain Trust focused on learning from the past and instituted programs that regulated agriculture, moved the economy in a central direction, and encouraged government assistance for the elderly and the poor of society. The members of this intellectual body rejected the nineteenth-century belief in natural law and free competition and at the same time valued large corporations. As one member explained, the Brain Trust rejected "the traditional Wilson-Brandeis philosophy that if America could once more become a nation of small proprietors, of

⁷ Edwin G. Nourse, Joseph S. Davis, and John D. Black, *Three Years of the Agricultural Adjustment Act* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company, 1937), 23-27; Chandler, *America's Greatest Depression*, 215; Keith Joseph Volanto, "Ordered Liberty: The AAA Cotton Program in Texas, 1933-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, 1998), 58.

corner grocers and smithies under spreading chestnut trees, we should have solved the problems of America life.”⁸

Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, exercised a wide range of powers under the AAA, most importantly the power to control production in order to raise prices. Several devices were used to increase prices, including production controls, benefit payments, loans, government purchases, and marketing agreements. The secretary had the authority to negotiate voluntary agreements with producers of agricultural commodities, including acreage reduction of marketing limitations, or both, because the government believed that farm problems stemmed from production surpluses. The AAA originally targeted nine basic commodities: wheat, cotton, corn, hogs, cattle, sheep, rice, tobacco, and milk. Congress removed cattle and sheep from the list by amendment and kept the other commodities because they were produced in large quantities and suffered from notably low prices. Most were produced for export, and prices had dropped due to the loss of foreign markets. To create a level of scarcity that would raise prices, Wallace encouraged farmers to participate in the crop reduction program either by destroying a portion of crops already planted or by taking land out of production. Adherents to this plan then received cash subsidies from the AAA.⁹

Cotton was the first commodity partially destroyed by AAA to achieve parity (restore the balance between agricultural prices and industrial prices based on the period 1909 to 1914). In 1933, the domestic cotton surplus amounted to 12.5 billion bales, more

⁸ Quoted in William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), 32-34.

⁹ Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 43; C. Roger Lambert, “Texas Cattlemen and the AAA, 1933-1935,” *Arizona and the West* 14 (Summer 1972): 138; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 72-73; Chandler, *America’s Greatest Depression*, 215.

than the average annual consumption worldwide of this American product during the preceding three years. If cotton farmers made just an average crop in 1933, they faced the possibility of record-low prices. George N. Peek, the AAA's first administrator, commented: "Wherever we turn to deal with an agricultural commodity, we have in prospect a race with the sun." Because Congress passed the bill that formed the AAA several months after cotton had already been planted in the South, the AAA hastened to deal with the cotton problem. County agents working for the AAA promised payments to planters if they plowed up the cotton already in the field. Nationwide, ten million acres of cotton fell under the plow during the crop destruction part of the AAA. In Texas the vast majority of cotton farmers took advantage of the AAA and pledged more than 4 million acres for destruction, 27.1 percent of their total cotton acreage.¹⁰

Overall, the plow-up succeeded. By November 1933, cotton farmers received three to four cents more per pound for their crop than in the previous year, and they collected \$110 million from the federal government for acreage reduction. Texas cotton farmers took in almost \$43 million in cash, and for the first time in years, farmers paid off debts and back taxes and purchased items not bought since the agricultural depression started in the early 1920s.¹¹

Nevertheless, some American cotton producers criticized the crop destruction program carried out by the AAA. In many parts of the South, including Texas, reports circulated that mules refused to trample cotton stalks because they had been conditioned

¹⁰ Quoted in Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 101; Volanto, "Ordered Liberty," 66-67; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 72-73; Volanto, "Burying White Gold," 346.

¹¹ Theodore Saloutos, *The American Farmer and the New Deal* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1982), 70; Volanto, "Ordered Liberty," 94-95.

for years not to destroy them. Conservative newspaper editors in Texas credited the mules with “just showing ordinary horse sense.” A small number of farmers even refused to plow up their crops in protest of the AAA.¹²

Conservatives took note of this “radical departure,” and thus began a rapid decline in their trust for Roosevelt and the New Deal as government increased its control of the farm economy. A U.S. Congressman from Kansas, U. S. Guyer, expressed the conservative sentiment regarding the AAA when he claimed that “this measure puts a policeman on every farm, an inspector at every crossroad, and a Government agent in every back yard. . . . How far from Jefferson’s good old Democratic axiom, ‘That country is governed best that governs least.’”¹³ Congressman George B. Terrell of Alto, Texas, the only representative from the Texas delegation in the House who spoke against the AAA, agreed with Guyer. Terrell objected to the wide range of powers given to the executive branch. “We should stop conferring dictatorial powers upon administrative officers,” he contended, “for when these powers are once conferred they are seldom withdrawn.”¹⁴ This small conservative faction specifically targeted Roosevelt’s advisors known as the Brain Trust, particularly Rexford Guy Tugwell, a former professor at Columbia University who at the time was an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, because he developed most of the national farm program that they detested.¹⁵ They believed in the supposedly individualistic lifestyle of the frontier and distrusted intellectuals. Tugwell, on

¹² Volanto, “Burying White Gold,” 349; Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 110, 113; Volanto, “Ordered Liberty,” 89.

¹³ Quoted in Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 52.

¹⁴ Quoted in Volanto, “Ordered Liberty,” 63.

¹⁵ Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 32-33, 75; Volanto, “Ordered Liberty,” 51.

the other hand, contended that the competitive economy operated ineffectively and focused on raising farm prices to restore the balance between agriculture and industry and to expand markets in the nation.¹⁶ The *Marshall Messenger* published this definition of a Brain Trustee: “A man with a college education who experiments with a rugged individualist’s money.”¹⁷ An editorial in the same paper a year earlier expressed a similar concern of Texas conservatives: “The fact that President Roosevelt called in as counselors and executives a great number of the nation’s leading students of government and economics has caused grave alarm on the basis that these men are wild ‘theorists’ who should confine their lectures to the classroom.”¹⁸

Despite the 1933 plow-up, a large carryover of cotton still existed, and in 1934 Senator John Bankhead of Alabama proposed a bill requiring compulsory crop reduction for non-cooperating farmers, who produced excess cotton and thereby limited the success of the government’s price-raising efforts. Bankhead’s Cotton Control Act replaced voluntary production quotas with federally mandated quotas. The bill targeted two groups, those who refused to sign a quota production contract and those who signed the contracts but ignored the quotas. When Roosevelt signed the Bankhead Cotton Control Act into law, production quotas became a fact of life in all cotton producing states.¹⁹

As time went on, ideas such as destroying crops and compulsory crop reductions angered a small faction of farmers and ranchers in Texas, mostly because they believed

¹⁶ Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 34-35.

¹⁷ *Marshall Messenger*, 13 August 1935.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1934.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Van L. Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 41-43; Seth Shepard McKay, *Texas Politics, 1906-1944* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech Press, 1952), 398-99, 404-5; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt And the New Deal*, 72-75; Volanto, “Ordered Liberty,” 118.

that the federal government had no place in regulating production in a capitalist economy.

J. M. Lynn, a stock farmer from Elkhart, Texas, expressed his disapproval of the Bankhead Act:

I thought (N. R. A., A. A. A., and Bankhead Cotton Act) was the limit until they had the unlimited mittigated [sic] gall to notify me that if I wanted to use a little of my own cotton that I raised to make mattress and comfort I would have to come to Palestine, get a permit and if I humbled myself to them they would be generous enough to allow me to use not over 110 pounds of my cotton. I notified that bunch that if I wanted to use 500 pounds of my cotton that I was not fool enough and crazy enough to ask their permission and if they called that radical stuff democracy I did not want to be called a democrat.²⁰

In Congress, Texas Representative George B. Terrell opposed the Bankhead Act and charged on the House floor that “before we adopt this Soviet system of government and Russianize this country, we should submit an amendment to the Constitution and permit the people to change our Government from a republic to a despotism where no personal liberty or property rights are safe.”²¹ These Texans found it difficult to adjust to what they viewed as the federal government’s intrusion into their lives and property rights.

Texas conservatives also opposed the Bankhead Act because it significantly reduced the amount of the state’s cotton sold in foreign markets. To maintain its place in foreign markets, Texas had to export 90 percent of all the cotton it raised. An editorial in the *Dallas Morning News* shortly after the passage of the Bankhead Cotton Control Act observed that “It is of utmost importance to all of Texas not to lose its cotton supremacy. No good reason has been advanced by defenders of the AAA program and of the

²⁰ J. M. Lynn to James Evetts Haley, 25 September 1936, Jeffersonian Democrat Correspondence Folder I (hereinafter cited JD), James Evetts Haley Papers, Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (hereinafter cited Haley Papers).

²¹ Quoted in Volanto, “Ordered Liberty,” 124.

Bankhead bill and the pegged price why Texas should voluntarily decide to give up what it has taken seventy-five years to establish and upon which much of the past prosperity of the State has been based.”²²

Although depressed foreign markets and overproduction in the agriculture sector had caused severe economic problems for farmers, including cotton farmers, conservatives blamed the 42 percent decrease in Texas cotton export on the Bankhead Cotton Control Act. They claimed that countries like Brazil and Argentina picked up the slack and began to produce cotton at increased rates for overseas sales, and they pointed to the slide in the annual income of Texas cotton farmers from \$400 million in the 1920s, to \$150 million in the 1930s. According to opponents, loss of income because of the Bankhead Act and government requirements for acreage reduction had caused the South to provide only 41 percent of the world’s cotton supply in 1934 when in 1929 it had held 60 percent of the production. This angered Texas anti-New Dealers because, they charged, government regulation interfered with their lives and their pocketbooks.²³

Conservative Texans contended that the Bankhead Act not only accounted for a dramatic reduction in cotton production, but also resulted in the displacement of tenant farmers, many of whom moved to southern towns and cities. The Bankhead Act further exacerbated the problem for tenant farmers originally displaced by the destruction of cotton crops under the AAA in 1933. As a result, more than 102,000 Texas farmers, mostly tenant cotton farmers and their families, abandoned the countryside and were

²² *Dallas Morning News*, 14 August 1935; McKay, *Texas Politics*, 424.

²³ *Marshall Messenger*, 26 July 1935; *Dallas Morning News*, 5 July 1935; McKay, *Texas Politics*, 424; W.L. Clayton, “The South’s Cotton Industry Threatened With Destruction,” *University of Texas Bulletin* 3538 (October 8, 1935): 272.

added to permanent relief rolls. Dissidents argued that taxes would increase and economic recovery would slow because of the increased unemployment of the tenant farmers. Moreover, the act angered conservatives in the state because it appeared to foster dependence on the government, not self-reliance, and it eliminated a source of cheap labor. The tenant farmer system became a prominent feature of the economy in the cotton states following the Civil War and the end of slavery. Under the tenant system, elements of paternalism remained strong in the South as it had been during slavery, and land became concentrated into fewer hands.²⁴

An editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* entitled “Is The Government Making Paupers?” expressed concern over the tenant farmer issue: “Many persons in the South are beginning to have misgivings about the relief work. . . .” The editor linked growing relief rolls to regulation when he opined that “It would appear logical and just if the government by law has legislated these laborers off their means of livelihood and that the same government should see to their needs. There are possibly several hundred thousand such unfortunates stranded in the South. And they will remain stranded so long as this forced regulation of cotton production continues.”²⁵ The editor believed that if the federal government discontinued meddling in the affairs of the state through enforced regulation, there would be enough work to go around and the relief rolls would be reduced. In reality, landlords treated tenants unfairly and instead of sharing the government payments with the small farmer as intended, they used it to expand their holdings and reduce the

²⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, 24 April 1934; *Marshall Messenger*, 12 July 1935; W.L. Clayton, “The South’s Cotton Industry Threatened With Destruction,” 275-76; Pete Daniel, “The Crossroads of Change: Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures in the Twentieth-Century South,” *Journal of Southern History* 50 (August 1984): 431.

²⁵ *Marshall Messenger*, 3 May 1934.

number of tenants on their farms. In fact, the reduction of cotton acreage merely highlighted the social and economic problems of the tenant system in the South. Under the New Deal programs, the government replaced the paternalistic landlord for the tenant families who relied upon federal assistance for their welfare.²⁶

In the Texas cattle industry, more discontent about the New Deal raged over the controversial decision about whether cattle should be placed on the basic commodity list. Range cattlemen nationwide disagreed with the placement of cattle on the list, arguing that processing and distribution, not surplus production, constituted the root of their concern. Attendees at the meeting of the American National Livestock Association in January 1933 adopted the following resolution in opposition to AAA policies: "Whereas Congress is attempting to legislate for agriculture relief. . . .Whereas we believe the so-called domestic allotment plan is economically unsound: therefore be it resolved, that we are unalterably opposed to this plan as a medium of relief." They demanded more control over the movement of supplies and the finished product and objected to relinquishing control to the federal government. Industry representatives believed that maintaining such control would increase the price of cattle.²⁷

Congress had planned to add cattle to the original commodity list in 1933, but because vocal and powerful range cattlemen strongly opposed the AAA, their

²⁶ Daniel, "The Crossroads of Change," 440, 445, 447.

²⁷ Quoted in D.A. FitzGerald, *Livestock Under the AAA* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company, 1935), 174-75; C. Roger Lambert, "Texas Cattlemen and the AAA, 1933-1935," *Arizona and the West* 14 (Summer 1972): 138. According to FitzGerald, range cattlemen, only one group in the cattle industry, believed that a processing tax, which was "levied, assessed and collected upon the first domestic processing of the commodity," recommended by the government would lessen beef consumption. They also focused on increasing revenue of their industry by prohibiting beef imports and fats and oils that competed with their industry, increasing the tariff on hides, reducing freight rates, lowering interest rates, and increasing advertisements to accelerate the consumption of beef.

representatives in Congress blocked the federal government's initiative to place beef under AAA coverage. Senator John B. Kendrick (D-WY), a cowman himself, and the American National Livestock Association led the fight in Congress as the ranchers prepared to "go it alone," rather than submit to production controls and government supervision of their industry.²⁸ Writing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, West Texas cattleman J. Evetts Haley observed:

We are in the cow business. For a hundred years our people have struggled with the problems of the soil in Texas. On the average, they have been a thrifty breed, and, though not always prospering, they have until this day, lived without benefit of moratoria and Government subsidies. . . . We have preserved something of that independence and love of liberty that have characterized the cow country from its earliest days. In its practical application, liberty, with us, seems to be the right to handle our business in our own way. . . . And it might be observed that, historically, the cow country has been the very rendezvous of individualism, and independence: a fact in which its inhabitants have taken considerable pride. . . . In other words, we believe that those liberties, which our people cherished, are not sacrificed, but we perpetuated, and are perpetuated only by observance of the rights of property and the sanctity of contract.²⁹

Texans who agreed with Haley alleged that the provisions threatened personal liberty. They intended to manage their herds as they saw fit, and they believed that government regulations in agriculture interfered with their fourth-amendment right to private property.

Relentless drought conditions and further price problems, however, quickly changed the opinions of a majority of Texas cattlemen regarding government regulation. Hundreds of Texans sent letters and telegrams to Wallace pleading for federal help, only

²⁸ Lambert, "Texas Cattlemen and the AAA," 138.

²⁹ J. Evetts Haley, "Cow Business and Monkey Business," *Saturday Evening Post* (December 8, 1934): 26.

to be reminded that the industry itself refused placement of cattle on the basic commodity list. By mid-June 1933, Dolph Bricoe Sr., president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers' Association, and other leaders in the state's cattle industry led the way for AAA assistance to ranchers.³⁰

As a result, in August 1933, Secretary Wallace recommended that national leaders of the cattle industry meet in Denver. The attendees unanimously agreed to reconsider the addition of beef to the commodity list on the condition that a marketing agreement between producers and the packing industry be arranged. When the AAA formed, one of its provisions allowed the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into marketing agreements with processors, associations of producers, or those at work dealing with agricultural commodities in interstate or foreign commerce in order to regulate prices, trade practices, supplies and markets. Although the scope of marketing agreements was broad, they relied on achieving control through voluntary consent of all parties involved. Philosophically, the marketing approach benefited the cattle producer because it supported his argument that distribution, not excessive production, caused low cattle prices and therefore negated any need for government control of production. Wallace disagreed with the conclusions of the meeting and refused to support the marketing agreement.³¹

Cattlemen in other states did not agree with the intense desire of Texans to place beef on the commodity list, but as drought conditions worsened and cattle prices continued to decline, these leaders agreed to support a bill adding beef to the list if the government gave \$200 million in relief to beef and dairy interests and if cattlemen were

³⁰ Lambert, "Texas Cattlemen and the AAA," 138-39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 139-40; Perkins, *Crisis in Agriculture*, 45.

not required to bear a processing tax. As a result, Congress passed the Jones-Connally Act in early April 1934. Sponsored by Representative Marvin Jones and Senator Tom Connally, both from Texas, this act amended the original commodity list and placed beef under the AAA. Many cattlemen, including conservative Texans, wanted only immediate financial help, not long-term government supervision. Therefore, the bill stipulated that \$200 million in benefit payments be paid to ranchers who reduced production to support and balance cattle markets, and that this allocation be repaid in the form of a processing tax. The act also set aside \$50 million, which did not have to be repaid, to eliminate diseased cattle and to purchase beef for relief recipients. Disagreement over the relief program ensued immediately after the passage of the bill. AAA officials wanted the cattle industry under a permanent control plan to provide long-term benefits to the cattlemen. At the same time, some cattlemen advocated accepting the cash first and working out a control program later, while others rejected the idea of any government intervention at all.³²

In May 1934, as AAA officials and cattlemen neared completion of a cattle program agreement, the most ruinous drought in America's history struck the cattle ranges. One West Texas cattleman described the drought conditions when he observed "not a spear of green grass tempted a hungry cow; the mesquite leaves hung slant-wise beneath a torrid sun that burned from a cloudless sky, and all day long the whirring of the locusts – the terrible symphony of the drought – beat in our ears with the bawling of starving cattle." As a result of the disaster, water, feed, and grass became scarce, if not

³² Lambert, "Texas Cattlemen and the AAA," 143-44.

non-existent, in the Texas Panhandle. In mid-May the AAA created the Drought Relief Service (DRS) to take charge of all relief work of the AAA and the Department of Agriculture in order to reduce the number of cattle to fit the limited feed supply.³³

Two weeks after the plan's approval, the drought emergency program began with 121 counties listed for drought relief. By October 1934, the last date of certification, the number of U.S. counties listed in the emergency category reached 1,187. Although it varied from state to state, the purchase procedure usually followed a certain routine. The government purchased cattle based on the age and condition of the animals, and it divided reimbursement into benefit and purchase payments. The purchase payment went jointly to the owner and lien holder (if any) and was used to pay the mortgage holder. The producer received the benefit payment, and the lien holder waived any claim to it. AAA officials visited individual farms and appraised the animals, while at the same time the Bureau of Animal Industry representatives inspected the cattle and condemned animals not fit for human consumption. In return for payment, the seller signed the Emergency Cattle Agreement (ECA) and pledged to cooperate in a control program to be worked out by the government in the future, since the original agreement had not been completely decided before the onset of the drought. The cattleman received a purchase payment as well as a benefit payment for his cattle, and the AAA donated the edible animals to the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FSRC) for distribution to the needy. The number of cattle purchased in Texas totaled 2,015,621, with 34 percent of them declared unfit and

³³ Quoted in Haley, "Cow Business and Monkey Business," 94; Lambert, "Texas Cattlemen and the AAA," 138, 143-44; FitzGerald, *Livestock Under the AAA*, 192, 196; C. Roger Lambert, "The Drought Cattle Purchase, 1934-1935; Problems and Complaints," *Agricultural History* 45 (April 1971): 85.

destroyed.³⁴ Most Texas ranchers welcomed the relief program and realized that without federal cash they would not have survived the drought. The purchases also reduced overstocked cattle and allowed ranchers to thin out their herds. Briscoe observed that the program was the “greatest thing for cattlemen this country has ever known.”³⁵

However, a small faction of Texas cattlemen detested the drought emergency program because they had to submit to government control in order to stave off bankruptcy, and they blamed the government for taking part in their financial plight. J. Evetts Haley, who led the group, charged:

Until this year we had never surrendered to any man the management of our range, we have always decided how we would work, grade and handle our cattle. . . . The inside of each man’s range was inviolate, and before the days of the Brain Trust, no one would have had the temerity to suggest how a cowman should manage his personal affairs.³⁶

Haley and those who agreed with him denounced government interference in the agricultural sector. Haley contended that if the government had not tried its “monkey business on agriculture,” the cattle industry would not have been so adversely affected. He argued that because of the destruction of corn surpluses by the AAA, demand for range cattle decreased. Feeders in the Corn Belt, who had previously bought range cattle, fed them grain and then sold them to market as prime beef, no longer had the excess corn to do so. Haley also complained that the government had damaged the cattle industry when it reduced cotton acreage because that increased the price of cottonseed cake, the primary feed for West Texas cattle, three-fold. Because of this government intervention

³⁴ FitzGerald, *Livestock Under the AAA*, 197, 200-201; Lambert, “Texas Cattlemen and the AAA,” 145-46; Lambert, “The Drought Cattle Purchase,” 86-88.

³⁵ Quoted in Lambert, “Texas Cattlemen and the AAA,” 148-49.

³⁶ Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 26.

in other aspects of agriculture, Haley and his fellow cattlemen were then forced to sell their cows in the drought emergency program to prevent the starvation of the cattle and to avoid bankruptcy.³⁷

These Texas cattlemen also criticized government control via the DRS in regard to the ECA, the destruction of food, and the higher taxes resulting from increased prices paid for some cattle. Once the government purchased his cattle, the owner had to sign the ECA to receive benefit payments. The agreement bound the cattle owner to participate in future adjustment and reduction programs. One dissident Texan viewed the agreement as a “national tragedy” and declared:

Until we saw the contract itself, we refused to believe any American Government would or could exact such a deplorable and inexcusable requirement in return for aid extended to those in dire distress. It is as though a man saw another drowning and demanded that, to be saved, the drowning man must first agree to turn over to him full control of all his property and future acts. Even those who consider production control desirable can scarcely approve a method such as this.³⁸

The AAA defended the ECA because funds from the Jones-Connally Act were used for the emergency drought program instead of waiting for drought funds to be allocated by Congress. Once cattle owners signed the ECA, the AAA disbursed benefit payments, claiming that “benefit payments under the . . . Agricultural Adjustment Act can only be made legally on consideration of an agreement to adjust production.” The primary reason for the ECA, however, hinged on the uncertainty of the drought and cattle-buying program. If rain in early June had ended the emergency program and cattle

³⁷ Ibid., 28-29.

³⁸ Ibid., 96.

purchases discontinued, producers would have had little financial incentive to cooperate in control programs because they would have already received their benefit payments.³⁹

These Texas ranchers found it repulsive that the cattle purchase program destroyed food when many went hungry. They disagreed with the government classification of certain livestock as “unfit for food,” and they questioned the ability of government inspectors—usually not from the cattle industry—to judge the fit from the unfit. Haley charged that “Several thousand pounds of good veal were left to rot, because we could not give the meat away and could use but a small part ourselves.”⁴⁰ The federal government allowed the condemned animal to be used by the family, but refused to allow it to be used as relief for others. In a letter to the *Dallas Morning News*, a San Angelo man suggested the following remedy in response to the shortage of food caused by the 1934 drought and the destruction of crops, pigs, and cows: “Why not have the ‘Brain Trust’ make another rule, and have so many of the people killed each month to equalize the supply with the demand.”⁴¹

These same cattlemen also claimed that the federal government paid too much for canner cows, cows not used for beef because of weight and health condition. In previous years, meat packers had bought canner cows for six dollars a head, but the federal government paid twelve dollars a head, too high a price for these frugal-minded Texans,

³⁹ FitzGerald, *Livestock Under the AAA*, 211-13.

⁴⁰ Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 94.

⁴¹ *Dallas Morning News*, 18 July 1934.

who predicted that taxpayers would end up footing the bill for this excessive government spending.⁴²

This small faction of farmers and ranchers in Texas opposed the growing commodity list and increased regulation by the federal government and warned that “Today, instead of one Southern crop, a half-dozen are ‘under control.’ It is a dangerous progression pointing the short way to complete regimentation of the agricultural field, and a corresponding change in the American way of life.”⁴³ Although the AAA never forced the cattle owners to sell their cattle, dissident Texans saw themselves as being coerced into signing the ECA because of the urgent financial help needed due to the dire drought conditions. They believed that the government’s actions would lead to the takeover of the cattle industry and that the government had acted in a “dictatorial fashion” by taking advantage of the emergency to force the cattle producer under government control.⁴⁴ They further charged, according to historian C. Roger Lambert, that it was an “un-American government take-over and even Fascism.” These conservatives believed that they were being bribed by the government to give up their “independence and self-reliance in exchange for government security.”⁴⁵ The consistent theme of government takeover of the cattle industry continued among some ranchers as they voiced their disapproval of the buying program. The controversy over the ECA

⁴² Lambert, “The Drought Cattle Purchase,” 90; Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 94.

⁴³ *San Antonio Express*, 13 October 1935, clipping in JD Folder XXV, Haley Papers.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Lambert, “Texas Cattlemen and AAA,” 147; Lambert, “The Drought Cattle Purchase,” 86-87; Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 96.

⁴⁵ Lambert, *Texas Cattlemen and the AAA*, 147 (both quotations).

created great distrust among Texas ranchers toward the federal government and the New Deal.⁴⁶

Conservatives feared that Roosevelt's New Deal programs pointed toward a planned economy of the type that prevailed in the Soviet Union. A resident of Gainesville, Texas, expressed this fear when he observed that "The regimentation of the farmer, stock raiser, the ginner, miller, and packer as contemplated in AAA may be possible in despotic Russia but not in free America."⁴⁷ An editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* went further: "If we were to read that Russia had such regulation, we would all condemn it as interfering with fundamental rights, but we have become used to regulation we think it is all right."⁴⁸

A poem that appeared in the *Marshall Messenger*, entitled "One Day On The Farm," evoked the sentiment of conservatives tired of government intervention into their lives and fearful it would lead to a change in the American way of life as they knew it.

Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn,
There's a government agent counting your corn.
Another one is lecturing the old red sow
On the number of pigs she can have and how.
Pa's gone to town to find out what
He can do next month with the old meadow lot.
Ma's at the radio, hearing them tell
How, under the New Deal, their ain't no hell.
Aunt Mame's in Washington, dragging down pay
From the PDQ or the AAA.
The hired man quit when the work didn't please.
And got a job trimming government trees.
They'll be telling you soon, if you don't care,
Where you can live and what you can wear.

94. ⁴⁶ Lambert, "The Drought Cattle Purchase," 90-91; Haley, "Cow Business and Monkey Business,"

⁴⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, 23 July 1935.

⁴⁸ *Marshall Messenger*, 12 September 1935.

How much you must pay for your pants and shoes,
So this is no time to be taking your snooze.
Little Boy Blue may be buried deep,
Under red tape, but he's not asleep.⁴⁹

Texas anti-New Dealers believed that government regulations infringed upon their independence and self-reliant lifestyle, and they feared that communism would replace America's private enterprise system. Many Texans reacted negatively to other New Deal programs as well. During the First Hundred Days of the Roosevelt administration, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in an attempt to stimulate the flagging manufacturing sector. Section 7(a) of that act guaranteed labor the right to organize and bargain collectively with employers, thereby granting labor unions a legitimacy they had long sought.⁵⁰ Texas businessmen found Section 7 (a) threatening because it encouraged workers to join unions "for full participation in the new social order." Most laborers in Texas, however, did not rush to organize because frontier concepts still prevailed, and "unionism was regarded by many with a jaundiced eye."⁵¹ One Texan reminded the state that "Texas was once an independent Republic and whipped the whole Mexican Empire without either the Code 7-A or any pork-barrel appropriation."⁵² Touting strong beliefs in independence and self-reliance, conservatives asserted that Texans wanted no governmental interference with their state of affairs or non-union labor. In reality, they opposed the NRA setting minimum wages because they

⁴⁹ Ibid., 11 August 1935.

⁵⁰ Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 57-58.

⁵¹ Lionel V. Patenaude, "The New Deal: Its Effects on the Social Fabric of Texas Society, 1933-1938," *The Social Science Journal* 14 (October 1977): 55, (both quotations).

⁵² *Dallas Morning News*, 8 August 1935.

wanted to preserve the competitive advantage of cheap southern labor and resented the government imposing a standard to which they had to adhere.⁵³

Texas conservatives also criticized New Deal efforts at direct relief conducted by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and work relief provided through the Civil Works Administration (CWA). In May 1933, Congress authorized a half-billion dollars in direct relief money to be funneled through state and local agencies for those in need. The FERA, led by Harry Hopkins, administered this assistance program to the unemployed in the nation. Additionally, as the winter of 1933 approached, Hopkins realized that unless the government increased its assistance quickly, millions faced extreme hardship. He recommended that Roosevelt establish the CWA, a federal work relief program that paid workers from federal funds. While short-lived (November 1933-Spring 1934), CWA employed more than four million individuals, half of whom came from relief rolls and half from the ranks of the unemployed.⁵⁴

A leading spokesman for this small faction of Texas dissidents, J. Evetts Haley, complained about FERA and CWA. He equated the FERA with the “dole,” and in his opinion the “shiftless” and “indigent unemployed” reaped the benefits of those self-reliant, frugal Texans who worked and paid their taxes. To Haley and others like him, it appeared that the unemployed ate better and received better medical care than Texans who worked, saved, and paid their taxes. Historian Donald Whisenhunt pointed out that the Texas press opposed the dole as well. The *El Paso Times* explained, “The dole,

⁵³ Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 26; W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 299.

⁵⁴ Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 120-21.

though well intended, works out to be a government concession to laziness and an acknowledgement by the government that it is unable to cope with adverse economic conditions.” An editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* warned its readers: “We must quit looking to the government and rely on our own efforts. We must do this or become a nation of paupers.”⁵⁵

Angry Texas conservatives also alleged that these New Deal programs reduced the supply of cheap labor. As early as 1934, a CWA field agent reported that relief recipients turned down jobs that paid less than the government wages, and he noted that “every Negro on relief is ruined.” Even one of the New Dealers, Lorena Hickok, an experienced newspaperwoman and friend of Eleanor Roosevelt who toured severely afflicted areas of the nation and reported the conditions to Hopkins, observed in her investigation in Texas that

An awful lot of trouble here in Texas seems to be that Mexican and Negro farm labor won't work for the prevailing wages if they can get on relief. And they come to town to get relief. . . . Why in the name of common sense, SHOULD they work – chopping cotton and so on – if we make it possible for them to live without working.⁵⁶

Haley, for example, complained that the CWA took workers that he needed to gather and brand cattle on his ranch. For a workweek that consisted of seven days from 5:00AM-8:00 PM, he paid the “traditional cowboy wage” of \$30 to \$40 per month. He claimed that “it was almost impossible to get cow hands, although help had previously

⁵⁵ Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 28; Donald Whisenhunt, *The Depression in Texas, The Hoover Years* (New York: Garland, 1983), 150, (first quotation); *Marshall Messenger*, 6 May 1934, (second quotation).

⁵⁶ Quoted in Patenaude, “The New Deal: Its Effects on the Social Fabric of Texas Society,” 53; Richard Lowitt and Maurine Beasley, *One Third of a Nation: Lorena Hickok Reports on the Great Depression* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), xxiii.

been abundant. All were working for the CWA, receiving twelve dollars a week for forty hours of labor.” Haley also expressed frustration because another traditional means of compensation fell by the wayside once the DRS began operations. Workers who once accepted the hides of slain cattle as payment for common labor now worked for the CWA and real wages. Ranchers not only lost a valuable source of cheap labor, but also a method of disposing of excess hides.⁵⁷

Increasingly, the economic programs of the New Deal emerged as a “raw deal” to Haley and his fellow conservatives as they saw their traditional way of life becoming increasingly threatened. Out of the controversy over the Drought Relief Service, Haley emerged as a spokesman for a small but vocal minority of Texans opposed to the New Deal. He charged that the government had “monkeyed” around in the affairs of agriculture and had adversely affected the cattle industry, which included his family business. Haley and his family complied with the AAA program in order to avoid bankruptcy but chafed under its restrictions. He wanted to run the family ranch according to his desires, but times were different from when cattlemen could go it alone. The depression had devastated the agricultural sector, and the worst drought in America’s history brought cattlemen to their knees. The government was their only way out, and Haley and his family succumbed to the relief program. Instead of emerging from the situation with a grateful attitude, Haley raged against the New Deal. He blamed Roosevelt and his economic programs for the downfall of the way of life that he loved. In reality, agriculture itself had evolved, and the small-town frontier existence he cherished

⁵⁷ Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” 26, 28. 94.

changed as well. Rather than adapt, he looked for a scapegoat to carry the blame; that scapegoat became Roosevelt and the New Deal. Thus began his rear-guard battle against a rapidly changing nation and state, and against a very popular presidential administration and its economic programs. The *Saturday Evening Post* article that he authored in late 1934 placed Haley in the forefront as the spokesman for dissident Texans against the New Deal, and they looked to him for opinions and leadership. Their alarm grew, as did their hatred and disapproval of Roosevelt's New Deal, as 1935 brought a continued commitment from the administration to these socio-economic programs.

CHAPTER 2

JAMES EVETTS HALEY: THE MAKING OF A DISSIDENT

During the 1930s, James Evetts Haley emerged as the primary spokesman for a small but vocal faction of conservative Texans who opposed the socio-economic policies of the New Deal, and he spearheaded dissident movements against those policies for the next thirty years. Haley fought to stave off what he perceived as the liberalism of the New Deal and what he saw as direct challenges to his way of life and the institutions he revered. A student of politics and a believer in political participation as an obligation and duty to better one's country, Haley initially supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Democratic Party platform in 1932. But Haley believed that, once in office, Roosevelt ignored that platform and adopted programs that, in Haley's opinion, threatened to lead the nation into economic and political turmoil, leaving the United States bankrupt. Haley espoused the political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson: strict construction of the Constitution, limited federal government, and states rights. Haley's complaints about the New Deal grew. He proclaimed, "Cantankerous by nature, I found myself more and more in the political forum, writing, talking, speaking, and 'popping off' about what I felt should be done."¹

As followers of Thomas Jefferson, conservatives like Haley adhered to a strict interpretation of the Constitution. Roosevelt, on the other hand, believed in a loose

¹ William Curry Holden, "J. Evetts Haley," *Great Plains Journal* 18 (1979): 100-101.

construction of that document. He stated in his first inaugural address that “Our constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form. That is why the constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced.” He continued, “I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. . . . I shall ask the Congress for one remaining instrument to meet the crisis – broad executive power to wage war against the emergency as great as the power that would be given me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.”²

Roosevelt faced the depression as a war and proposed New Deal programs to help the nation prosper once again. To do so required expansion of presidential power and growth of the federal government. Haley, however, disagreed with Roosevelt’s position and saw him as a potential dictator.

Two primary forces shaped J. Evetts Haley and his beliefs: his family and the land. Both nurtured such characteristics as self-reliance, pride, independence, and perseverance and instilled in him an absolute desire to be master of his own fate. When the encroaching shadow of the New Deal appeared to diminish his ability to do so, Haley fought back with the tenacity bred into him by both ancestry and experience.

Born on 5 July 1901, on a small ranch in Central Texas near Belton, Texas, Haley lived there until the age of five when his father moved the family to Midland in West Texas. Haley descended from a long line of southern ancestors, including his maternal

² Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1933, 1, in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), 242.

great-grandfather, James Evetts, who came to Texas from Tennessee before the Texas Revolution and, according to the Evetts family history, fought with Sam Houston at San Jacinto. His son, William C. Evetts, known as “Brazos Bill” among cattlemen, participated in the famed Texas trail drives. Both of Haley’s grandfathers served in the Confederate Army, and after the war his paternal grandfather, a planter from Mississippi, Dr. James Haley, settled in Central Texas.³

Haley’s parents, John Haley and Julia Evetts, worked hard but struggled financially. Neither tried to extract pity or help from others, and they instilled these values and beliefs in their children. The Haleys actively participated in the development of West Texas. John served as mayor of Midland, and Julia acted as short-term president of Texas Technological College.⁴ Friends later commented about the influence Haley’s parents exerted on their son. One observed, “Haley is a partisan, and like his parents, he has no road for middle-of-the-road.” Another claimed, “Both parents were loyal to their families, their clan, their friends, their church, and their causes. They felt profoundly about what they believed, and cherished their family obligations.”⁵

As a woman with great compassion and a strong will, Haley’s mother left an important impression on her son. He learned from her not to compromise on principles he

³ *The New Handbook of Texas* (6 vols., Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 3: 410-11; B. Byron Price, “J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian,” *Continuity* 9 (1984): 188-89.

⁴ Research does not reveal Julia Evetts Haley’s educational background.

⁵ Dave Shanks, “A Salty Texas Rebel” in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 62, (first quotation); Holden, “J. Evetts Haley,” 99, (second quotation); J. Evetts Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber: A Fragmentary Family Chronicle* (Canyon, TX: Palo Duro Press, 1976), 111; Chandler A. Robinson, “The Passing of the Old West” in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 25.

held dear. He remembered his mother as a woman who “held self-important, pious main-street progressives in contempt, and paid no court or deference to the public officials she helped elect to office. The manner in which she would un-starch a stuffy official who got in her way was an object lesson in the fundamentals of freedom, and she never quit fighting one in office she did not like until retirement or death and the devil took him.”⁶ Haley learned this lesson well and exhibited these qualities in his fight against Roosevelt and the New Deal. He charged energetically into battle and refused to back down although the odds were against him since the President and his policies were popular in Texas.

Haley also emulated his mother’s great drive and energy. She believed in hard work for honest compensation, and she passed this belief on to her son. He later described her as “feminine in tastes, emotions, and lovely form – drouth [sic], dust, danger or death – there was nothing that really fazed her, nothing that she feared. Of unflagging spirit, vast ingenuity and indefatigable energy, she turned her ready hand, quick mind and eager heart to anything that had to be done and did it zestfully and well.” His mother valued learning and taught herself mathematics, history, and the arts and instilled in him and his siblings an appreciation for knowledge.⁷

Haley inherited similar traits from his father, John Haley, as well as a quick temper.⁸ The younger Haley described his father as a man who

. . . enjoyed people, loved life. . . High spirited and congenial with friends, he ruled his household and disciplined his children with inflexible

⁶ Quoted in Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber*, 108-9; Holden, “J. Evetts Haley,” 99-100.

⁷ Holden, “J. Evetts Haley,” 99-100.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

will and at times with what seemed to them a heavy hand. Sadly, as I see it now, and unjustly, they sometimes stood in awe of him and at times in fear. Respect and rectitude sometimes seem to exact too dear a price; the gratitude due in compensation coming too late to do a stern and lonely soul any good.⁹

Haley's father also encouraged a love of history and, while not a religious man, appeared devoted to the principles of the Methodist Church. Haley wrote, "I never heard him take the Lord's name in vain or utter an oath in anger. But I have seen him calmly hunting a man who had threatened his life with his double-barreled Parker shotgun in the crook of his arm, and again intent upon killing a man who had called him a liar, when his passion was an awful thing to behold." Like his father, Haley prided himself on being a man who never backed down from a fight. At the age of sixty, in a disagreement with a history instructor over the controversial film "Operation Abolition," Haley threw the first punch to make his point. He disagreed with the young instructor, who accused the film of misrepresenting people as Communist if anyone disagreed with the House Un-American Activities Committee.¹⁰

Although his family attended the Methodist Church, Haley developed his own view of religion. He believed in the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, and the philosophy of Jesus Christ and therefore considered himself a Christian. Haley defined his religious views when he said, "I believe that religion is an individual matter, and that it does not need to be institutionalized. I also believe in the principle of confession, not necessarily to a padre, but to the person involved or to my wife and friends. Religion

⁹ Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber*, 106-7.

¹⁰ Quoted in Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber*, 107; Holden, "J. Evetts Haley," 100; George Norris Green, "The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics, 1930's - 1960's" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1966), 238.

should give you a feeling of tranquility and grace to the individual.” Haley credited his parents for instilling in him these strong values, and he spent his life attempting to extend them to future generations.¹¹

In addition to his parents’ influence, the land of West Texas, known as a region of climatic extremes, claimed a central role in Haley’s life. Plagued with extremes of heat and cold, drought and floods, the region offered a harsh environment: sparse, flat, arid terrain covered with mesquite shrubs and native grasses.¹² Those who chose to make their home in the Southwest faced a land that was “awesome and majestic yet harsh and unyielding.”¹³ In a chronicle of his family, Haley described the land:

At its best it is hard and severe country. At its worst, it is devastating; ruthless in the certain and terrible exactions of its elemental forces! It is angry and violent in its generous resort to desiccating [sic] wind and sun, to the depressing effects of drouth and dust, and to the flailing scourges of scarifying sand and choking snow that ride hard upon its reckless winds! It is devastating to such tender growth as hopefully springs in response to its occasional gentler moods, but most devastating of all to the hopes and ambitions of those weather-beaten men and sensitive women who have pitted their restless lives against its vast and celestial force.¹⁴

To Haley and others like him, the struggle to subdue this hostile territory required constant sacrifice and a hopeful, resolute spirit. Haley esteemed the men who subdued West Texas and found peace with its hostile conditions because they exhibited a rugged individualism that he related to and admired. As an adult, Haley commented on growing

¹¹ Holden, “J. Evetts Haley,” 100-101.

¹² George Norris Green, “Some Aspects of the Far Right Wing in Texas Politics,” in *Essays on Recent Southern Politics* ed. Harold M. Hollingsworth (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1970), 85.

¹³ Price, “J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian,” 204.

¹⁴ Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber*, 4.

up in West Texas: “Self-reliance was something of a necessity in this empty country, for neighbors were few and water was short.”¹⁵

Not only did West Texas contribute to the frontier mentality that Haley believed in, but the South also perpetuated this staunch individualism. W. J. Cash noted in *The Mind of the South* that the southerner of the 1830s viewed the world in the same way as the southerner of the 1900s – “ultimately and completely responsible for himself.” The individualism of the plantation system, which consisted of braggadocios, boastful, egotistical attitudes, translated in essence to the southerner who would “knock hell out of whoever dared to cross him.”¹⁶ Frederick Jackson Turner, a history professor at the University of Wisconsin, defined frontier individualism in 1893, when he proclaimed in Chicago that Americans in their quest for Manifest Destiny had shaped a democracy out of the American frontier that was “strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bounds. It produced antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control.” Turner’s thesis attempted to describe the traits of those living on the American frontier. Haley and other conservatives exemplified this rugged individualism and attached the frontier mentality to their worldview. In the West Texas of Haley’s youth, ranchers lived and valued the rugged, resourceful lifestyle of the frontier.¹⁷

¹⁵ Quoted in Shanks, “A Salty Texas Rebel,” 55; Price, “J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian,” 204.

¹⁶ W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 120-21.

¹⁷ Quoted in Mody Boatright, “The Myth of Frontier Individualism,” *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 22 (June 1941): 14; T.R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and Texans* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 652.

Stamped with the imprint of his family and the land, Haley spent his childhood outside Midland helping on the family ranch, punching cows, and competing in rodeos. Although he loved and excelled in the study of history in school, he longed for the life of a cowboy. When he graduated from Midland High School, he recalled, “I got my purple suede diploma that morning and had my saddle ready. I went home and told Mama to put the diploma away because that is the last evidence of an education I want to get.” Despite this intention, however, and with the encouragement and influence of his mother, Haley entered Midland College in 1920.¹⁸

After the school closed for financial reasons, he transferred to West Texas State Normal College in Canyon, Texas, where he took an interest in the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society. He joined the Society in 1923 and at the annual banquet dressed in cowpuncher attire and recited range poems, drawing great applause from the audience. When he graduated in 1925, the Society offered him a summer position as a field representative because of his exemplary academic record, position as senior class president, and editor of the yearbook, as well as his enthusiasm for the history of West Texas. Haley worked hard during that summer and embraced the project with great enthusiasm. He collected artifacts and archival material on the pioneer life of West Texas for an upcoming museum sponsored by the Society. He also enrolled seventy-nine new members, wrote articles publicizing the organization, and conducted thirty interviews with pioneers.¹⁹

¹⁸ Quoted in Price, “J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian,” 190; Holden, “J. Evetts Haley,” 100.

¹⁹ Ibid., 191; B. Byron Price, *Crafting a Southwestern Masterpiece: J. Evetts Haley and Charles Goodnight. Cowman and Plainsman* (Midland, TX: Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library, 1986), 3.

In the fall of 1925, Haley entered graduate school at the University of Texas (UT) where Eugene C. Barker, a political historian, became his mentor as he pursued a master's degree in history. He wrote a thesis on the early cattle trails in Texas, a subject with a meager amount of source material. Undeterred, Haley wrote four hundred pages and earned his master's degree in 1926.²⁰

Haley left UT and returned to Canyon, where he resumed his field representative position for the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society. The local paper hailed Haley as a good fit for the job:

Besides his splendid background of knowledge for his work, Haley is fitted by his personality and his own life experience to do this work as few men could. Blessed with an intense interest in people, particularly the people of his beloved Plains Country, and a correspondingly great ability to get along with and interest people in his own projects, and having lived much of his life in the saddle, Haley has no trouble in finding points of contact with people to whom he goes for information.²¹

Haley wrote historical articles about cowboys and ranching, and as a result of his efforts, the Capitol Reservation Lands Company in Chicago commissioned him to write a history of the XIT Ranch. He established himself as an expert in the western range cattle industry when in 1927 he published, at the age of twenty-eight, *The XIT Ranch of Texas and the Early Days of the Llano Estacado*.²²

In 1929 Barker approached Haley about a position as Collector of Research in Social Sciences at UT where a grant from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Fund had funded a statewide survey to locate and acquire material related to Texas

²⁰ Price, "J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian," 191.

²¹ Price, *Crafting a Southwestern Masterpiece*, 4.

²² Price, "J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian," 192; *The New Handbook of Texas* 3:410-11.

history for the university. Haley's relationship with Barker and his experience as field secretary for the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society made him a good candidate for the new position. Haley accepted the offer and went about his work with great zeal. In his first year he collected 11,000 manuscript documents, 612 books, and 1,700 separate issues of early newspapers, among other historical documents. The documents included collections about the cattle industry, West Texas pioneers, and notes from interviews with Texas Rangers and Indian fighters – all subjects that greatly interested Haley.²³

In late 1933, the Civil Works Administration provided funds to collect historical records nationwide, and Haley assumed leadership of the Texas Historical Records Survey (HRS) with funds from this New Deal agency. Under Haley's guidance, the HRS launched a statewide effort to collect historical materials to be sent to the UT Archives. Later, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) provided funds for workers to index and catalogue records in each of the Texas collections.²⁴

Despite the benefits of this funding, Haley resented the growing federal expenditures of the New Deal, and in December 1934 he wrote an article published in the *Saturday Evening Post* that included a "bitter denunciation" of New Deal agricultural policies. This article established Haley as the primary spokesman for a faction of conservative Texans who opposed the New Deal and the Roosevelt administration. In the article Haley outlined how he had suffered under the New Deal and how he was "galled" because he believed a regulated and planned economy established a dangerous road for the nation. He explained that his first personal experience with the New Deal occurred in

²³ Don E. Carlton, *Who Shot the Bear?* (Austin, TX: Wind River Press, 1984), 6-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

1934 when his father and brother, John, sent a request for Haley to leave Austin and come to the family ranch in West Texas. Haley recalled later: “I got there that night. Father and my brother told me they had already notified the government men they were ready to sell their cattle. There was no point in discussing the matter.” In accordance with the Emergency Drought Relief Program, the government had purchased some of the cattle on the family ranch and required Haley’s father to sign the Emergency Cattle Agreement in order to receive payment for the cattle. Government agents then proceeded to destroy some of the animals. This went against Haley’s independent, self-reliant attitude, and he stood ready for battle to preserve the way of life that was quickly succumbing to the economic programs of the 1930s. Haley began to voice his opposition to the New Deal in newspaper editorials published statewide.²⁵

In January 1935, Congress passed a major spending program during the Second Hundred Days that created more tension for Haley and other dissident Texans. By late 1934, the federal government had spent \$2 billion on relief, but Roosevelt believed too many still suffered. Therefore, the President decided to revamp federal work relief programs and proposed to Congress the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, which up to that time was the largest peacetime appropriation in the history of the United States, at the cost of \$4.8 billion. When passed by Congress this bill created the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided relief for three million Americans throughout its

²⁵Carlton, *Who Shot the Bear?*, 9 (first quotation); J. Evetts Haley, “Cow Business and Monkey Business,” *Saturday Evening Post* (December 8, 1934): 29; Shanks, “A Salty Texas Rebel,” 62 (second and third quotation).

existence, but the legislation also increased the size of the national debt.²⁶ Haley opposed the WPA for its expenditures and because it put the “lazy, shiftless, and thriftless upon the backs of the industrious and the frugal.”²⁷ Haley valued hard work and remembered in a family chronicle that “we rarely went anywhere except [to] work, and if elsewhere, it was usually of dire necessity. . . . There were no government programs to bail out the lazy; inept and inefficient. How simple, natural, wholesome and right it all was.”²⁸ Haley believed relief should be distributed by local charitable organizations, not the federal government.²⁹ He also claimed that the high wages (\$19-\$35 per month) paid by the WPA for common labor made it difficult for farmers and ranchers to find workers. For most workers, the WPA provided increased paychecks and stable employment that seasonal work could not offer. In essence, Haley and his followers lost the source of cheap labor that they had grown accustomed to and blamed the New Deal.³⁰

Most Texans, however, declined to accept Haley’s philosophy, and as one historian stated, “Texan(s) were often at the head of the line for federal handouts.”³¹ Through 1934, Texas ranked tenth among the states in New Deal expenditures, receiving more than \$311 million, and claimed the largest distribution of federal relief funds granted to any southern state. In WPA funds alone, Texas ranked thirteenth in the nation

²⁶ William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940* (New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), 124-26.

²⁷ Radio Address, “The New Deal in Texas,” 15 October 1936, transcript, 7, in Jeffersonian Democrat Folder XXI (hereinafter cited JD), James Evetts Haley Papers, Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (hereinafter cited as Haley Papers).

²⁸ Haley, *Rough Times -- Tough Fiber*, 152.

²⁹ Donald Whisenhunt, *The Depression in Texas, The Hoover Years* (New York: Garland, 1983), 7.

³⁰ Lionel V. Patenaude, “The New Deal: Its Effects on the Social Fabric of Texas Society, 1933-1938,” *The Social Science Journal* 14 (October 1977): 55.

³¹ Whisenhunt, *The Depression in Texas*, 8.

and first among southern states. During the 1930s, Texas claimed an extremely powerful delegation in Congress. In the House of Representatives seven Texans occupied chairmanships, and both senators headed important committees.³² In addition, the Vice-President of the U.S., John Nance Garner, hailed from Texas as did Congressman Sam Rayburn. These veterans of Capitol Hill enjoyed the respect and friendship of many, understood the inner workings of the political system, and used their power to help Texas receive federal funds. According to Jim Farley, Postmaster General in the Roosevelt administration, Texas had “immense power. . . . nothing up there in Washington could compare to it.”³³ Roosevelt even commented that Texas influenced the federal government more than any other state in the Union. This powerful delegation ensured Texans that they would receive as much federal funding as could be sent their way. The frontier individual mores rapidly faded for much of the state as its people became accustomed to federal money.³⁴

While Haley touted his unpopular opinion about the WPA, changes in Washington began to occur regarding the administration’s stance on business. Felix Frankfurter, an advisor to the President, had long tried to convince him that the business-government cooperation enacted via the NRA had failed. In Frankfurter’s opinion, business represented the enemy, and large corporations needed to be regulated more closely. After the Supreme Court ruled the NRA unconstitutional in May 1935, Roosevelt

³² Report on Progress of the WPA Program December 1935-June 30, 1939, Table IX, Washington D.C., U.S. Treasury Department. In the 1930’s, Texas was the fifth largest state in the U. S. with a population of more than 5.8 million. Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone To Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 382.

³³ Quoted in Lionel V. Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal* (New York: Garland, 1983), 58.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35, 166.

switched his efforts from working with business to an emphasis on increasing regulations. He sent Congress the National Labor Relations Act as replacement for the demise of Section 7-(A). This act not only set a new course for business under the Roosevelt administration but further angered the faction of conservative Texans led by Haley. Initially, the New Deal attempted to regulate business by setting rules on what business owners were permitted to do. But Roosevelt changed course with the National Labor Relations Act and began to “discipline business” by making regulations telling business owners what they could not do.³⁵ The president signed the National Labor Relations Act into law on 5 July 1935. Authored by Senator Robert Wagner (D-NY), the act gave labor the right to organize and bargain collectively free from employer interference. To enforce these rights, the bill called for the establishment of the National Labor Relations Board “as a permanent independent agency empowered not only to conduct elections to determine the appropriate bargaining units and agents but to restrain business from committing ‘unfair labor practices’ such as discharging workers for union membership or fostering employer-dominated company unions.” Historian William Leuchtenburg described the Wagner Act as “one of the most drastic legislative innovations of the decade.” The federal government backed labor and its right to bargain collectively and compelled employers to allow the unionization of their plants.³⁶

For those like Haley, this intervention by the federal government directly violated the right of private property as guaranteed under the fourth amendment of the Constitution. They viewed this piece of New Deal legislation as a move toward

³⁵ Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 145, 150, 163, 165.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

collectivism and saw it as foreign and radical, thus increasing their suspicion of the New Deal programs. These conservatives feared a decline into socialism, communism, and even fascism.³⁷ A reader in Dallas voiced his disapproval of the Wagner Act:

The primal right of man to engage himself with another in the matter of wages and hours on such terms as they may agree upon appertains to him by virtue of his creation, inheres in his individual sovereignty and is as much and as sacredly a part of him as any function of mind or body; it was not derived from Government and must not be disturbed by it; nor should such a basic liberty of action, under any pretext or seeming necessity be subjected to the capricious infirmities of arbitration; indeed, it could attain no better end than the prostitution of a high principle of freedom to miserable burlesque, interminable confusion and bureaucratic servitude.³⁸

Another outraged conservative firmly stated his position regarding those who did not support the Supreme Court's ruling on the NRA: "Let them take their peanut-brained hallucinations on social regimentation, constitutional 'modernization' and Government control of private business and holler themselves hoarse in the Kremlin shadows. There are several million of us die-hard constitutionalists who just don't give a nickel-plated darn for their gravy-train politics, and who serve notice here and elsewhere that we intend to smack them backward off their soap boxes, just as long as there's a ballot, a bullet or a big stick left for us to use on them."³⁹

Haley and others from this group became increasingly wary of the New Deal when Congress added more products to the AAA commodity list. A September 1935 editorial in an East Texas newspaper regarding regulation of potato production exclaimed, "Who would have imagined three years ago that it would be a crime for a

³⁷ Patenaude, "The New Deal: Its Effects on the Social Fabric of Texas Society, 1933-1938," 57.

³⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, 25 July 1935.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 August, 1935.

farmer to try to sell his surplus potatoes free and openly? When will regulation end? Never so long as Wallace and Tugwell are given authority.” The editor compared the situation under the New Deal with the communist government in Russia. Haley agreed with this assessment and called government regulation via the AAA as nothing more than “the devastating results of planned economy. . . . a dangerous progression pointing the short way to complete regimentation of the agriculture field, and a corresponding change in the American way of life.” Haley and other dissidents pointed to government regulation as proof that the New Deal intended to turn democratic America into a communist country.⁴⁰

As the United States continued to import more foreign goods, especially beef, Haley’s temper flared again in opposition to the New Deal. In an article in the *San Antonio Express* in October, he complained that, according to the Department of Commerce, beef imports had increased from 136,972 pounds in 1934 to 7,115,925 in 1935. He could not comprehend why foreign imports increased while New Deal programs destroyed cattle in the United States. He charged that increased imports came as a result of increased governmental control over agriculture, which skewed the natural flow of this sector of the economy. Haley believed that the federal plan of parity through scarcity presented clear dangers for agriculture. He predicted that because of economic planning, for example, the cattle industry in the West would be scaled down and replaced by large herds in the South where cotton fields were before the plow-up initiated by the AAA and the Bankhead Cotton Control Act. Haley exclaimed that this was “economic

⁴⁰ *Marshall Messenger*, 12 September 1935, (first quotation); *San Antonio Express* 13 October 1935, in JDXXV, Haley Papers, (second quotation).

bungling, disturbance, and impending disruption, with none of the commendable, shock-absorbing features of the easy, natural readjustments of our economic life.”⁴¹

Haley also charged that the Roosevelt administration attempted to buy political support for the upcoming 1936 election by forcing reluctant citizens who needed aid to go on federal relief. He claimed that the Texas Relief Commission had been ordered to “hunt up the people who were too proud to go on relief, and induce them to take federal support.” He cited New Mexico as another example of Roosevelt’s use of New Deal programs to manipulate votes. According to Haley, Roosevelt paid \$40 a month for WPA wages in that less than solidly Democratic state, while in Texas, which solidly voted for the Democratic Party, the minimum monthly wage lagged at only \$20.⁴²

At the same time Haley continued to attack the New Deal indirectly through his biography of Charles Goodnight, which was published in May 1936. In the early 1920s Haley had contacted Goodnight and asked for permission to write his biography. Haley explained:

A number of things causes me to desire to write this history and story of your life. One of the greatest of these is the fact that I have enjoyed my associations with you so much. Another reason, and an important one, is because you have accomplished so much that every person living in this country should know. For us younger people to know the trials and hardships incident to the settlement of West Texas, is for us to better appreciate our country, and be better citizens of it. . . .⁴³

Charles Goodnight, a legendary pioneer of the cattle industry, and his partner, Joe Long Loving, had created the popular Goodnight-Loving Trail, a route for cattle drives

⁴¹ *San Antonio Express*, 13 October 1935, in JDXXV, *ibid*.

⁴² Radio Address, “The New Deal in Texas,” 15 October 1936, transcript, 7, in JD XXI, *ibid*.

⁴³ Price, *Crafting A Southwestern Masterpiece*, 16.

from Texas to New Mexico to Colorado in the late 1800s.⁴⁴ Haley described Goodnight as a man “filled with vigorous zest for life,” who lived “intensely and amply.” He fought Indians, policed the frontier as a Texas Ranger, blazed 2,000-mile cattle trails, and gained recognition as a scientific breeder of range cattle.⁴⁵ Haley summed up Goodnight’s life with these words, which were words Goodnight penned to his Texas cowboys:

I wish I could find words to express the trueness, the bravery, the hardihood, the sense of honor, the loyalty to their trust and to each other of the old trail hands. They kept their places around a herd under all circumstances, and if they had to fight they were always ready. Timid men were not among them – the life did not fit them. . . . Despite all that has been said of him, the old-time cowboy is the most misunderstood man on earth.⁴⁶

This was the character of man that Haley admired and tried to emulate in his life. He was loyal to his causes in the face of numerous critics, never timid, always ready for a fight. Haley considered himself among this breed of cattlemen and waged his fight against the New Deal with passion and energy.

Haley took a jab at the New Deal in the Goodnight biography. He wrote that Goodnight and other pioneer cowboys continued their work because they held to a code of rugged individualism: “No labor union protested their lot; no welfare worker tore his shirt to better cow-camp conditions; no woman’s club proposed child labor laws to keep

⁴⁴ J. Evetts Haley, *Charles Goodnight, Cowman and Plainsman* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936), 185.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, x-xi

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 466.

junior cowboys from eating frijoles and taking the trail. Yet somehow they managed to live, and happily.”⁴⁷

Goodnight exemplified the type of man Haley admired, and Haley continued to write a number of historical biographies about similar men from the Southwest throughout his career as an author. Most of his subjects had southern roots, extolled the virtues of simple rural life, and were rugged, resourceful, and self-reliant, especially during the Texas trail drives. Major themes in Haley’s biographies included Jeffersonian democracy, what Haley termed as a “healthy prejudice between the races,” a celebration of regional pride, harmony with nature, and a personal code of honor. All of those represented attitudes that Haley personally related to and depicted in his life. Haley continued to identify with men like Goodnight, men who were fearless, adventuresome, and had strong wills to triumph against overwhelming odds.⁴⁸

When Goodnight died in December 1929, Haley attended the funeral, but left “cold and angry” because the preacher failed to extol Goodnight’s strong character. After the funeral, Haley wrote his own funeral directive, which summed up many of his personal beliefs and character traits:

I want to be taken out on some high pinnacle along the Palo Duro, where no damned tourist hotel can ever be built, and I want myself planted

⁴⁷ Ibid., 447. Historian Randolph B. Campbell in *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, refutes Haley’s claim about contented cowboys. Campbell states, “In the early years of cattle raising, for example, cowboys often received part of their pay in calves or mavericks and even ran small herds on their employers’ land. Corporate ranches, however, insisted on wages as the only form of compensation and kept pay at forty dollars per month. Angry at this treatment, in 1883 a group of cowboys demanded higher wages and went on strike against five ranches, including the T Anchor in the Palo Duro Canyon region. The Cowboy Strike, which may have involved as many as three hundred men, lasted more than two months but failed primarily because ranchers had no trouble hiring replacements.” See Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 303.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Price, “J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian,” 202; Robinson, “The Passing of the Old West,” 29.

without comment from the preachers. If there are any there, I want it seen that they come just as the ordinary waddies do, and I don't want them mouthing over my carcass. I would like to have some cowboys ride in the procession, and ride horses, not Fords. I want my friends to shovel in the dirt, not a hired undertaker. If I still have a horse then, and he is anywhere in the country, I want him to trot with empty saddle in a place of honor, if there be such places.⁴⁹

The typical frontiersman of legend prized resourcefulness and self-reliance, exalted individual initiative and laissez-faire economics, and scorned collective action.⁵⁰ Those like Haley, who viewed the world in these terms, were unsettled and frustrated with the economic programs of the New Deal. Programs such as AAA, NRA, FERA, CWA, WPA, and the Wagner Act threatened the very essence of their belief system and directly conflicted with the frontier-inspired mentality of self-reliance and states' rights.

By the summer of 1936, opposition to the New Deal led to the beginning of a split in the Democratic Party in Texas, though Roosevelt still enjoyed overwhelming popular support in the state. Those opposed to the president and his administration, tired of merely voicing their concerns, saw an opportunity to oust him and return the office to someone who represented what they considered to be true conservative Democratic principles, even if it meant supporting the Republican candidate. Haley confided to a friend in San Antonio that the Republican convention had encouraged him, and he supported their platform because it upheld his conservative principles. He announced his willingness to do what he could "on the stump, if necessary, to fight the 'New Ordeal.'"⁵¹ He then requested a leave of absence from the University of Texas for six months to

⁴⁹ Quoted in Price, *Crafting a Southwestern Masterpiece*, 27-28.

⁵⁰ Boatright, "The Myth of Frontier Individualism," 29, 32.

⁵¹ Haley to Chris Emmett, 15 June 1936, James Evetts Haley Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas (hereinafter cited as Haley Papers (UT)).

“expose the fallacies and dangers” of the New Deal “on the account of the manifest dangers of the Roosevelt administration.” The university terminated his position, supposedly because of lack of funds, although Haley charged that he was “fired” because of his “vigorous fight against the insidious invasion of socialistic Federal power.”⁵²

Haley’s complaints against the New Deal grew, and he joined and led a small faction of Texans, mostly conservative Democrats, known as the Jeffersonian Democrats. Their intense hatred of the New Deal led them to leave their long-time party affiliation and to support the Republican candidate, Alfred Landon, in the 1936 election. They waged an intense campaign to defeat Roosevelt and put an end to the policies that they perceived threatened their way of life.

⁵² Haley to Dr. H.Y. Benedict, 24 August 1936, Haley Papers (UT), (first quotation); Carlton, *Who Shot the Bear*, 11, (second quotation); campaign pamphlet, 29 February 1936, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1936, Box 3, Haley Papers (third quotation).

CHAPTER 3

THE JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRATS: DISSIDENT TEXAS DEMOCRATS OPPOSE ROOSEVELT'S BID FOR RE-ELECTION IN 1936

On 15 September 1936, a poem by Milton R. Gutsch, Texan and life-long Democrat, appeared in an edition of the conservative publication, the *Jeffersonian*

Democrat:

SLAUGHTER the cow and slaughter the sow
For the more abundant life;
The public utility, economic stability
With blind fanatical knife.
DESTROY the potato and the humble tomato
So justice may prevail;
The diminutive pig and everything "big"
For the cause of our "New Deal."
DESTROY our feed and our father's creed,
Our stocks and bonds and our cotton seed,
Our tobacco crop and merchant's shop,
Our corn and rye and the gold standard prop.
DESTROY the power and the air-craft firm
The holding company and the profit germ,
The small investor and laissez-faire,
The middle class and capital's share.
UPROOT Economy and uproot Thrift,
Set Honor, Truth and Trust adrift,
Constitution and Nature's Law upset,
But by St. Franklin increase our debt.¹

This poem represented the beliefs of a dissident faction in the Texas Democratic Party, a faction that believed the programs of the New Deal threatened institutions that they held dear: private property, the Constitution, and states' rights. Their philosophy was simple:

¹ *Jeffersonian Democrat*, 15 September 1936, 3.

to return the Democratic Party to the people. They considered themselves followers of Thomas Jefferson and claimed to follow his beliefs about democracy. Like Jefferson, these Texans adhered to a strict construction of the Constitution, a minimum of federal government intervention, a balanced budget, and lower taxes. They believed, like Jefferson, that “our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves,” and that the New Deal represented a serious infringement on the ideals of Jeffersonian Democracy, especially because of the increasing size of and regulation by the federal government.² This group argued that “we Jeffersonian Democrats stand where the Democrats have always stood. We stand for the rights of the individual, for sovereignty of the State, and for economical government. We stand against an autocratic administration of our affairs from afar, even as the Texans of a century ago stood against the same thing.”³

To save the country from the perceived dangers of the New Deal, these dissidents in the Texas Democratic Party worked against Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1936 presidential election. Led by James Evetts Haley, the Jeffersonian Democrats organized a grassroots campaign to defeat the president and supported the Republican candidate Alf Landon. In doing so, the Jeffersonian Democrats articulated their beliefs and helped lay the foundation for the modern Republican Party in Texas.

The Jeffersonian Democrats based their arguments on what Haley, the primary spokesman, believed to be the fallacies of the New Deal. According to him, “The

² John P. Kaminski, ed. *Citizen Jefferson: The Wit and Wisdom of the American Sage* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1994), 4, 22.

³ Radio Address, “The New Deal in Texas,” 15 October 1936, transcript, 3, in Jeffersonian Democrat Folder XXI (hereinafter cited JD), James Evetts Haley Papers, Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (hereinafter cited Haley Papers).

conservative...cherishes due regard for constitutional restraints, for property, for home, for country and religion....The radical trends of America, inflamed by a persuasive voice on the radio [Franklin D. Roosevelt] and characterized by class antagonism, ruthless Federal power, disregard for law and destruction of property, National pride and honor, is symbolized by the New Deal.” Haley attacked both Roosevelt and the New Deal:

Instead of a President meeting his promise and the Democratic policy of economy, we have the Nation poised on the precipice of bankruptcy, thirty-five billion in the hole. Instead of a President observing the Democratic ideal of the sovereignty of the States and the citizen, we see attempted breakdown of State’s Rights and State lines, and an invasion of every field of private activity, from breeding sows to pressing pants. Instead of adhering to the Democratic tradition of racial integrity, we see Tammany-Jim Farley’s horde of officeholders repudiating the two-thirds rule which has kept the South Solid, and playing ball with negro politicians while the quarterback calls the signals. Instead of a semblance of party loyalty, we see the President himself disregarding Democratic nominees throughout the Nation and openly supporting radicals of variegated hues, from pink to red, for State and National office.⁴

Gutsch’s poem targeted most of the New Deal legislation that outraged these dissident Texans in 1936: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), the Wagner Act, and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). To the Jeffersonian Democrats, these acts not only threatened their own principles and beliefs, but they also violated the ideals of the Democratic Party. In a state that still considered self-reliance based on the frontier-inspired experience a virtue, New Deal policies and programs disturbed them and made it easier for some long-time Democrats to vote Republican.⁵

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lionel V. Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal* (New York, NY: Garland, 1983), 104.

According to Haley, the control that the federal government exerted over farm production via the AAA in the name of “economic planning” adversely affected agriculture and the cattle industry. He believed this was a clear case of “class legislation” by planning for one group at the expense of the other.⁶

The Wagner Act, enacted in 1935, set stringent rules over businesses that conflicted with the private property rights that conservatives valued. These Texans believed that a business constituted the private property of the owner, which entitled him to take any necessary steps to run the business properly. This act regulated corporate activities as never before. Conservatives balked at the infringement of private property rights for business owners, believed it moved the country toward communism, and decried it as class legislation because the National Labor Relations Board ended up being the final judge of all matters in an employee-employer dispute.⁷

The WPA conflicted with Haley’s emphasis on self-reliance. His anger focused on the “shiftless and lazy elements” in the community who received “expensive food” while the “frugal and industrious” [people] worked hard, paid taxes, and supported the lazy ones in the community. According to Haley, cotton farmers in dire need of hands to pick cotton found workers “standing, leaning and sitting along the roads drawing good government pay.”⁸

One anti-New Deal Texan from Dallas summed up what the 1936 election symbolized for this small faction:

⁶ *San Antonio Express*, 13 October 1935, in JD XXV, Haley Papers.

⁷ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal*, 104.

⁸ Radio address, “More Baloney and Less Bacon, or the New Deal in Texas,” 26 October 1936, transcript, 5, 10, JD XII, Haley Papers.

Yes, the year 1936 may see demonstrations innumerable that the people are determined that America shall not lose what she has gained through a period of 150 years of struggle, of honesty and fair dealings, we will be allowed to choose our public servants who will demonstrate by deeds that they are only temporary custodians of that symbolism of the sovereign people – the Government.

If these dreams come true, the people will be allowed to make all the money they can honestly; they will be allowed to produce wealth and till the soil. One famous statesman of the American type, prior to the horse and buggy days, said, ‘Give me liberty, or give me death!’ In 1936 this slogan may be somewhat changed to, ‘Give me liberty, or give me back my government.’

If we could only realize that to receive the so-called benefits that are being poured out of our cashbox every moment – the taxpayer’s money, all over this country, is equivalent to selling our heritage for a mess of pottage. We must be up and doing ere it is too late.⁹

These Texans belatedly began their efforts to defeat Roosevelt on 1 August 1936, when W. P. Hamblen, a successful Houston attorney, called on Texans who opposed Roosevelt to meet in Dallas at the Adolphus Hotel. The invitation list consisted mainly of lawyers, businessmen, and bankers, but Hamblen specifically invited Haley to the meeting because of the anti-New Deal editorials he had written since the *Saturday Evening Post* article in December 1934.¹⁰ While not all could attend, some, like Sol F. Zacarias from Liddell & Brown Cotton in Gainesville, Texas, replied to Hamblen’s invitation with expressions of moral support. Zacarias contended that he came into daily contact “with men who have been life long Democrats who absolutely refuse to support the present administration.”¹¹

⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, 11 August 1935.

¹⁰ Interview with Haley, interviewer unknown, Midland, Texas, 1985, transcript, 3, JD II, B, James M. West, Haley Papers; *The New Handbook of Texas* (6 vols., Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 3:928-29.

¹¹ Sol F. Zacarias to W. P. Hamblen, 29 July 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, copy in Haley Papers.

Approximately thirty men attended the meeting on the first day of August, where they discussed the principles of the Democratic Party and the possibilities of campaigning against Roosevelt in the 1936 election. They chose the name “Constitutional Democrats of Texas,” and elected Hamblen as permanent chairman and Haley as state chairman.¹² Haley recalled his election in an interview years later: “I had to get up and go to the bathroom, and in the meantime I had popped off about what I thought about the campaign, and it seemed to get their attention. I had been articulate about what kind of issues were concerned, and so when I came back in I glanced around and found I had been elected chairman of the organization. And I learned never to get up and leave a political meeting when you’re personally involved.”¹³

Delegates at the Dallas meeting unanimously adopted a declaration that described the views of those present:

With a full realization that our country faces a political crisis transcending all partisan interests, we Democrats of Texas now pledge our best services to the Nation upon a non-partisan basis. We reassert our belief in the Constitution, in the rights of the States, and in the Jeffersonian principle. Believing thus, we must condemn the Roosevelt Administration. Roosevelt has disregarded the platform upon which he was elected, broken the campaign promises he so solemnly made, flouted the Constitution he swore to uphold, repudiated the traditional principles of the Democratic Party, and undermined the financial structure of the country with wanton expenditure. He has played upon the credulities of a distressed people with a false humanitarianism, and endangered freedom and democracy by opportunistic measures and incitement of class warfare. His administration is the antithesis of what the Democratic Party has stood for in abstract ideal and in patriotic service. . . . We condemn the broken faith and the devious, political philanderings of the administration we helped elect to office, and as loyal American citizens we pitch the battle against

¹² *The New Handbook of Texas*, 3:928-29.

¹³ Haley interview, interviewer unknown, Midland, Texas, 1985, transcript, 3-4, JD II, B, James M. West, Haley Papers.

Roosevelt upon the Democratic soil of Texas. The New Dealers deny us any voice in political affairs through avenues which once were our own. Hence, in devotion to the best interests of our country, we organize to support Landon, an outright American, and the Republican Platform, because it is more representative of the men and the political philosophy which we have always cherished.¹⁴

The declaration summed up the discontent among some Texans toward the New Deal. The expanded role of the federal government via the various New Deal agencies and its perceived interference in matters of private property caused such a strong current of opposition against the administration that the time had come, they believed, to cross party lines and support the Republican nominee for president. This move represented no small feat for these men. Most had been lifelong Democrats, and the Republican Party still represented for them the party of Abraham Lincoln and Radical Reconstruction. They believed, however, that the New Deal had so tainted the Democratic Party with liberalism that their conservative values and beliefs were more attuned toward the Republican Party.

The Republican platform introduced at the 1936 national convention attacked the New Deal because it had not made “durable progress, either in reform or recovery.” Landon declared that the time had come “to unshackle initiative and free the spirit of American enterprise.” Therefore, the platform focused on liberating business from “government hostility and extravagance.” The Republicans pledged to keep the government’s obligation to the farmer, the worker, and the unemployed while providing all the benefits of the New Deal within the confines of a balanced budget.¹⁵

¹⁴ “Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, A Declaration,” 1 August 1936, JD XXV, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 601-602.

Discontent over the New Deal occurred not only in Texas. A national organization composed mostly of leaders from the South also took shape. Headed by ex-Senator James A. Reed from Missouri and Sterling Edmunds, a St. Louis attorney, the National Jeffersonian Democrats convened in Detroit on 7-8 August 1936. Claiming that Roosevelt no longer upheld the original principles of the Democratic Party, this group opposed his re-election. Representatives from twenty-two states attended the meeting, including Haley, as state chairman of the Constitutional Democrats of Texas. The consensus among attendees charged that Roosevelt had blended socialism and communism in the Democratic Party, but with the election only three months away, the delegates agreed that a third-party movement would be ineffective. Therefore, the National Jeffersonian Democrats focused their efforts on bringing all the anti-New Deal movements together to defeat Roosevelt in the presidential election. Unlike those at the Dallas meeting, however, the Detroit attendees did not endorse Landon because they wanted to restore the principles of the Democratic Party that Roosevelt had allegedly taken away. In their declaration, they left it up to the individual as to whether to vote for the Republican nominee or refrain from voting altogether. Although displeased that the Detroit declaration did not support Landon, attendees from the Dallas meeting decided to begin a grassroots campaign in Texas for the Republican candidate. The Constitutional Democrats of Texas resolved to be in harmony with the name adopted at the Detroit meeting and changed their name to the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas.¹⁶

¹⁶ *Jeffersonian Democrat*, 15 September 1936, 3; William Jean Tolleson, "The Rift In the Texas Democratic Party – 1944," (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, 1953), 6-7; George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin

After the meeting in Detroit, Hamblen and Haley sent letters across the state to potential members of the organization. They announced a meeting in Waco on 12 August 1936 to establish an executive committee for the organization. Composed of forty men, primarily lawyers, oilmen, businessmen (especially those in the cotton business), and ranchers who came from counties throughout Texas, the committee, in Haley's opinion, contained men of "vigorous, patriotic, and high class personnel who believe that the Roosevelt administration is subversive of the traditional principles of the Democratic Party."¹⁷

On 24 August, Haley announced the opening of the state headquarters of the Jeffersonian Democrats in Austin at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel. He hired two full-time stenographers and one part-time person to circulate letters to prospective Jeffersonian Democrat members. Haley and the Jeffersonian Democrats then focused for the next three months on a campaign to defeat Roosevelt.

The national organization of the Jeffersonian Democrats communicated to Haley its campaign plan for Texas. They advised him to find an organizer for each congressional district and an additional organizer for each county. Within each county, precinct organizers compiled lists of names of potential members of the organization. These lists then passed from the county to the congressional to the state level. The national organization also recommended that Haley supply information to the newspapers

Company, 1962), 196-97; Haley to Judge Kell T. Freeman, 26 August 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, Haley Papers.

¹⁷ Haley to Judge Kell T. Freeman, 26 August 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, *ibid*; JD Committeemen XXV, *ibid*; Haley to Legrand Kelly, 20 August 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid* (quotation).

that favored the Jeffersonian Democrats' cause. For larger towns, the national organization suggested the formation of clubs opposed to the re-election of Roosevelt.¹⁸

Under Haley's leadership, the Jeffersonian Democrats held a meeting of the state executive committee in Austin on 29 August to implement a version of the national plan. The committeemen divided the counties of Texas among themselves at the meeting, and their primary responsibilities included enlisting support from residents of these counties to add to the membership of the Jeffersonian Democrats. The national office supplied a list of 2,200 potential Jeffersonian Democrats in Texas. The executive committee sent letters to people who shared their views about the administration and asked them to join. They also requested that their contacts give them other references that might be favorable to the organization. This political movement wanted to place one man from each county in Texas on the executive committee and for that representative to run the grassroots campaign for Landon. Many declined the offer to hold the chair's position in their county as a Jeffersonian Democrat because of their business connections, but they agreed to support Landon in the election with their votes.¹⁹

After setting up the initial organization, the Jeffersonian Democrats began to formulate a public relations strategy to inform Texas voters of the alleged fallacies of the New Deal. An executive committeeman, Guy B. Fisher, suggested that the organization start a publication to express their opinions in a "high-class conservative paper." As a result, the *Jeffersonian Democrat* began publication in Austin and printed six editions

¹⁸ Sterling E. Edmunds to Haley, 25 August 1936, JD XI, *ibid*.

¹⁹ Edmunds to Haley, 24 August 1936, JD XI, *ibid*; Haley to S. W. Adams, 20 August 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*.

between 15 September and 22 October of the same year. S. W. Adams, committeeman and editor of the *East Texas Times*, served as editor of the new newspaper, and committeemen throughout the state, including Fisher and Haley, contributed editorials to the paper.²⁰ In the Haley papers, there was no mention of why the organization did not print more editions, but the author's assumption is that funds for the printing and distribution of the newspaper dried up, while at the same time publicity focused on radio addresses as the election drew near.

The *Jeffersonian Democrat* became the official publicity vehicle for the organization, and through this publication Haley and his group attempted to educate the voters of Texas about the negative aspects of the New Deal. The first edition of the newspaper began with the headline: "Why We Accept Gauge of Battle." Haley, the author of the article, emphasized the individualism of Texans and wrote, "As Democrats and loyal Texans, we will expose the loose thinking, the loose spending, and the loose morals of the Roosevelt Regime." He predicted that Roosevelt would continue to support the New Deal, and if he were elected to a second term, Texans should be greatly concerned. Haley was outraged that "In spite of the broken promises, the mounting deficit and uncurbed waste, the erosion of human character and ideals, the destruction of honest property by ruthless politicians, the mounting costs of living in the cities and the destruction of the farmers labor market in the country. . . ." Roosevelt did not plan to end the New Deal. He informed the readers that "honorable men" of the Democratic Party

²⁰ Quoted in Guy B. Fisher to Frank Blount, 31 August 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, copy in *ibid*; Haley to S. W. Adams, 24 August 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*; Haley to J. M. West, 22 August 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*.

“unalterably opposed” Roosevelt and that the New Deal should make every “thoughtful” Democrat pause. Haley continued, “If Roosevelt and his Brain Trusters are true Democrats, it seems strange that all the sturdy Party leaders of the past have suddenly become Republican.”²¹

The *Jeffersonian Democrat* drove home this point by printing another article under the headline: “We Are for Landon and Knox,” explaining why the Republican candidate represented the Democratic Party better than Roosevelt. It argued that Landon believed in the strict construction of the Constitution, the sanctity of private property, and local self-government, while Roosevelt stood for communism, fascism, and “government by regimentation.” Landon, therefore, was the better candidate.²²

The first edition further attacked the New Deal. One article entitled “28 Facts You Should Study -- The Damn [sic] New Deal” addressed the problem of how the New Deal created \$20 billion in public debt, created class prejudice between labor and capital, and gave the President the power of a dictator. The Jeffersonian Democrats tried to appeal to labor by stating that Roosevelt wanted to take over all businesses and lead the country to communism. The article claimed that human slavery would soon be the condition of all workers because of the New Deal and that to retain their freedom voters had to defeat Roosevelt in the election. The newspaper played upon the fears of Texans by claiming that Roosevelt supported communism and that, if he won in 1936, private property would

²¹ *Jeffersonian Democrat*, 15 September 1936, 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

be confiscated by 1937. The article went so far as to say that if Texans voted for Roosevelt, they would be casting a vote for communism.²³

On 15 September 1936, Jeffersonian Democrats in counties across Texas and Oklahoma dispersed 225,000 free copies of their newspaper. Haley sought one person to distribute the paper in each county to cut down on the cost of mailing.²⁴ He advised those distributing the paper to make “full coverage of rural routes and a good distribution in all towns in the county. The paper should reach business houses, automobiles, and residences. The easiest rural distribution is by mail delivery, and the postmaster can tell you the number of box holders. A mailing permit can be secured from him.”²⁵

Dissident Texans embraced the newspaper and the movement, and they requested additional copies from Haley and his staff. R. F. Evans wanted 20,000 copies of the first edition so he could pass them out to voters from the Red River Valley to Denison and into Oklahoma.²⁶ Wyatt W. Wilson from Caviness, Texas, asked for additional copies of the *Jeffersonian Democrat* to distribute throughout Lamar County. Wilson agreed with the position of the conservative newspaper and observed, “I think that the paper stands for Constitutional Government like myself. I am a Baptist minister, and full blood [sic] American, bred and born. I believe in a Government for the whole people; not a Kiser [sic] DICTATOR. I am a white man 67 years of Age.” He signed it “Yours for the Truth, and Landon for President.” Haley sent him 2,000 copies of the paper to distribute.²⁷

Another supporter requesting additional newspapers wrote, “You may be the devil, but if

²³ Ibid., 2, 4.

²⁴ Haley to J. M. Lynn, 28 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, Haley Papers.

²⁵ Haley to S. M. Monsingo, 23 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*

²⁶ R. F. Evans to Haley, 29 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*

²⁷ Wyatt W. Wilson to S. W. Adams, 12 October 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, copy in *ibid.*

so I can take you by the hand and say Old boy you are right one time.” A man from Windom, Texas, agreed with the paper’s views on the New Deal, and he, too, requested additional copies to distribute so that “in November we may burry [sic] the New Deal so deep it will never be heard of again.”²⁸

Some articles in the *Jeffersonian Democrat* tried to appeal to farmers. Haley instructed those who distributed the newspaper in their counties to “place [it] in farmers’ cars on Saturday afternoons and upon other trade days.”²⁹ The Jeffersonian Democrats hoped farmers would agree with their grievances against the New Deal and government regulation via the AAA and, in turn, vote against Roosevelt. The majority of farmers in Texas, however, supported the AAA. One pro-Roosevelt cotton farmer from Mineola commented: “But one thing the farmer wants, and that is Government control over cotton acreage to reduce the surplus. I’m for cotton reduction to our domestic needs, for Roosevelt, and the New Deal.”³⁰ As a result of the AAA, farmers nationally received \$292,821,000 in direct payments during the course of the New Deal. This influx of cash positively affected the standard of living for Texas farmers and often made up the bulk of their income. Most Texas farmers fervently supported the New Deal and accepted government control rather than risk price collapses in the future. In essence, the Texas farmer willingly surrendered his individualism in return for government programs that ensured his prosperity.³¹

²⁸ W. M. Spence to Haley, 24 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*

²⁹ Haley to J. M. Lynn, 28 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*

³⁰ Keith Joseph Volanto, “Ordered Liberty: The AAA Cotton Programs in Texas, 1933-1940,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, 1998), 143.

³¹ Lionel V. Patenaude, “The New Deal: Its Effects on the Social Fabric of Texas Society, 1933-1938,” *The Social Science Journal* 14 (October 1977): 54-55.

Texas voters also received copies of the newspaper through the establishment of a Jeffersonian Democrat headquarters in various cities. Sam Lipscomb, executive chairman of Jefferson County, established a headquarters in Beaumont. The office hired a woman to address and mail letters to voters in the county. Although the effectiveness of the office is unknown, a supporter of the movement wrote to Haley that the “gum-chewing girl” in charge of the office did not appear to be productive.³² Hamblen and Fred Moore, the local chairman, established a headquarters in Houston, where a former newspaper reporter handled the administrative work. Hamblen exalted her efforts and viewed her as “very intelligent.”³³

The Jeffersonian Democrats found that obtaining support in the Dallas area proved to be much more challenging than in other parts of the state. Neither Haley nor the Dallas newspaper ever identified a leader or a headquarters in the city. In a letter to Dewey Young, a friend to the organization, Haley reported that “we have several men who are now upon our executive committee [from Dallas], though some of them cannot be active on account of age.”³⁴ He commented to a supporter in Paris, Texas, that starting an organization in North Texas had been difficult. Haley observed many active supporters in the Gulf Coastal region of Texas and commented that he was “greatly heartened over the outlook for a very strong campaign” in that part of the state.³⁵ For example, an active executive committee member, Lewis Valentine Ulrey, sent a telegram to Haley requesting 15,000 copies of each issue of the newspaper so he could distribute them in

³² Sam Lipscomb to Haley, 16 September 1936, JD XXV, Haley Papers; Sam A. Robertson to Haley, 15 October 1936, JD XXV, *ibid.*

³³ W. P. Hamblen to Haley, 16 September 1936, JD XXV, *ibid.*

³⁴ Haley to Dewey Young, 23 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, *ibid.*

³⁵ Haley to H. G. Wheat, 29 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, *ibid.*

Brazoria and Matagorda counties. Republican Party officials received the *Jeffersonian Democrat* so well that the county chairmen informed Haley that, because “our aims are identical,” they would distribute the paper in their counties.³⁶ By the end of the 1936 campaign, distribution of the *Jeffersonian Democrat* had reached more than 1,850,000 Texas potential voters, and the last two issues went to all rural mailboxes in the state.³⁷

The next phase of the campaign strategy, which began in late September, involved the distribution of a book written by Elizabeth Dilling in 1936. Dilling, a Chicago socialite, visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s and saw first hand the effects of communism. When she returned to the U.S., she devoted her time to exposing communism and socialism and focused primarily on President Roosevelt. Dilling was also known as a fervent critic of Judaism and wrote two books regarding its negative influence on Christianity and the world. In *The Roosevelt Red Record And Its Background*, Dilling charged that Roosevelt was connected to communism. She argued that as a puppet for the “Red ruling clique,” Roosevelt and his New Deal fit nicely with communist plans for the nation. Roosevelt’s alleged attacks on private business, incitement of class hatred, control of lines of communication in the country, and plans for government ownership of munitions signaled America’s descent toward communism under his administration, she claimed. Dilling argued that if anyone read the *Communist Manifesto* and its rules for communizing a state and compared it to the New Deal legislation, it would “convince any intelligent person that America is facing a crisis in its

³⁶ Rice Wood to Haley, 25 September 1936, JD XIII, *ibid*.

³⁷ Haley to Lewis Valentine Ulrey, September and October 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*; C. W. Hutchinson to Haley, 31 October 1936, JD XI, *ibid*; Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal*, 114.

history.”³⁸ Marrs McClean, an oilman from Beaumont and executive committeeman of the Jeffersonian Democrats, paid for these books to be distributed to newspaper editors across the state as well as to his business associates, colleges, and elected officials in the Texas Legislature.³⁹ Coke Stevenson, the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, informed Haley that he “read the book carefully and think(s) that it is an excellent publication.”⁴⁰ Not everyone who received the book agreed with the accusations made against Roosevelt. F. P. Sterling of Houston responded, “The book you sent me will just make a bonfire, and that is all, and I do not hesitate in saying that of all the blackguard things that any man could do, would be to send this book to a thinking man who believes in doing the right things by all parties.”⁴¹

The Jeffersonian Democrats also distributed a pamphlet entitled “The New Deal and the Negro Vote.” The pamphlet played on racial prejudice in the state and encouraged Texas Democrats to vote for Landon because the black population would support Roosevelt in 1936. An editorial in the *Tyler Telegraph* and republished in a West Texas newspaper expressed outrage over the pamphlet:

Nothing could be sillier than to turn from a Democratic President to favor a Republican candidate solely on the scare of racial feelings. Texas will not be disturbed one bit by such wicked, malicious and hypocritical outcries. . . . It is nothing but a cheap, contemptible trick to create antipathy to the good and great man whose ministry of public service has benefited all classes, who has held that every man, however humble, is entitled to a fair chance to live.⁴²

³⁸ Elizabeth Dilling, *The Roosevelt Red Record and Its Background* (Kenilworth, IL: published by author, 1936), 4-5, JD Pamphlets XXI, Haley Papers; “The Jewish Religion: Its Influence Today;” accessed 5 March 2004; available from <http://www.come-and-hear.com/dilling>.

³⁹ Clarence C. Farmer to Haley, 30 September 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*.

⁴⁰ Coke Stevenson to Haley, 26 September 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*.

⁴¹ F. P. Sterling to Haley, 25 September 1936, JD XXV, *ibid*.

⁴² *Marshall Messenger*, 29 October 1936.

Radio addresses broadcast throughout Texas became another facet of the campaign to elect Landon. Beginning on 15 October and continuing through 2 November 1936, the organization sponsored sixteen speeches on radio stations via the Texas Quality Network. The addresses centered around speeches delivered by Republican vice-president candidate Frank Knox and Landon. Many members of the Jeffersonian Democrats executive committee delivered speeches, including Hamblen and Haley. Haley initiated this part of the public relations campaign on 15 October with an address titled “The New Deal in Texas.” He began by declaring that “the issue before the American people today is not Roosevelt versus Landon; nor is it the Republican Party versus the Democratic Party. The issue here is the same as that which rocks the rest of the world, and that issue is regimentation versus freedom and democracy.” Haley reiterated to listeners the Jeffersonian Democrats’ arguments against the New Deal, including wasteful spending, government relief programs detrimental to agriculture and businessmen, incitement of class warfare, and destruction of private property. The majority of the address blasted the AAA and the turmoil it caused farmers by destroying their crops and allegedly putting them out of jobs. He ended by pleading with America to choose “the American way,” which meant a vote against Roosevelt.⁴³

On 26 October, Haley delivered the second of his four addresses called “More Baloney and Less Bacon, or the New Deal in Texas.” He continued to play upon the fears of Texans by claiming that “the average man fears that his retail business may be

⁴³ Quoted in Radio address, “The New Deal in Texas,” 15 October 1936, transcript, 2, 4-5, 9-10, JD XXI, Haley Papers; Radio Program Schedule, 26 October – 2 November 1936, JD XIII, *ibid.*

boycotted; the credit on his farm refused, his surplus wiped out by excessive taxation; his honest return on income promptly and autocratically reviewed, and even his own home be invaded for confiscation of his private letters and telegrams.” Haley alleged that all these things underscored the fears of people who wanted to speak out against Roosevelt, but feared intrusions by the federal government. He defended the Jeffersonian Democrats as an organization of loyal Texans financed with Texas money and Texas Democrats, not Republicans or the Liberty League. The rest of Haley’s speech pushed the same ideas the Jeffersonian Democrats associated with the New Deal, such as labor-management problems and the destruction of cotton under “High-Bred Corn” Henry Wallace, Roosevelt’s Secretary of Agriculture. Haley encouraged cowmen, cotton farmers, ginners, truckers, bankers, and housewives, “whose budget is always straining between a modest allowance and the needs of her table,” to vote for “a President from the Plains, for an open man from an open country, for Alfred M. Landon.” This radio address was also beamed into Arkansas, Alabama, Kansas, and Indiana. Haley received favorable responses to the speech from supporters in each of these states and continued to broadcast the radio addresses until the day before the election.⁴⁴

The final phase of the campaign placed advertisements stating the beliefs of the Jeffersonian Democrats in large daily and small newspapers across Texas. One in a September edition of the *Houston Post* declared in the first line that the Jeffersonian Democrats consisted of Texans who would like to vote straight Democrat in the 1936 election, but could not because they refused to put party loyalty above the American

⁴⁴ Radio address, “More Baloney and Less Bacon, or the New Deal in Texas,” 26 October 1936, transcript, 2-3, 8-9, 12, 14-15, JD XII, *ibid.*

institutions that Roosevelt had violated. The ad listed seven reasons why Landon constituted a better choice for President than Roosevelt, including all the reasons why the New Deal harmed the country: it denied states' rights, wasted huge sums of money and added to the public debt, supported a huge political machine of bureaucrats, and attempted to control farmers, oilmen, doctors, and ranchers in an effort to destroy free enterprise. The organization hoped these ads would draw support from Texans who shared their views of the Roosevelt administration and who would in turn realize that Landon constituted a better choice for president.⁴⁵

For three months the Jeffersonian Democrats waged an aggressive public relations campaign to convince Texans to use their votes to support the Republican candidate, whom they claimed represented true Democratic ideals. They believed that their efforts would make a difference in the election of 1936. Haley realistically assessed Texas voters and confided in October that "we may not be able to carry Texas but our fight here will have a tremendous influence upon the doubtful states."⁴⁶ He based his assessment of the state on a series of nine polls conducted by the *Literary Digest* that surveyed one out of every five voters in the nation. The polls consistently reported on Roosevelt's lead in Texas, while Landon received majority support from thirty-two states, which seemed to indicate he would win the election. Haley believed the magazine's prediction because of its accuracy in prior elections for twenty-five years. Thus, a Republican victory was inevitable.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Houston Post*, 27 September 1936, in JD XXV, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Haley to Allen R. Johnson, 15 October 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Haley to E. W. Cole, 5 October 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, *ibid.*; *Literary Digest*, 31 October 1936, 5.

Texans did not succumb easily, however, to the Jeffersonian Democrats' tactics to convince them that Landon represented the right candidate. The movement only represented a small group of Texans, even though they believed they represented the interests of the entire state. A supporter of the Jeffersonian Democrats from Tyler County informed Haley in September that the 2,000 voters in his county would probably not vote against Roosevelt because, he alleged, they directly or indirectly received government relief. This letter revealed the overall belief in Texas about the Roosevelt administration and its programs. Since most Texans, including farmers, benefited from the New Deal and received help to make life more endurable, they would be unlikely to vote against Roosevelt in 1936.⁴⁸ Also, loyalty to the Democratic Party was deeply engrained in Texans, making it hard for them to switch parties and vote Republican. Robert Hill of Dallas informed Haley that, although he agreed with the organization's view on the New Deal, "I do not think that I can share with you or your party the idea of supporting the Republican candidates, for reasons perhaps hereditary and environmental."⁴⁹ Another supporter of the Jeffersonian Democrats wrote, "There are so many of our good Democrats who want to remain 'regular' that it is difficult even to arrest their attention. They think of us as 'bolters,' and all the like of that. . . ."⁵⁰ Bad memories of the Republican president Herbert Hoover remained strong for Texans; therefore, they

⁴⁸ J. C. McBride to Haley, 23 September 1936, JD Correspondence Folder I, Haley Papers; Patenaude, *Texans, Politics and the New Deal*, 110, 112.

⁴⁹ Robert T. Hill to Haley, 28 September 1936, JD XXV, Haley Papers.

⁵⁰ J. B. Cranfill to Haley, 27 October 1936, JD Correspondence Folder II, *ibid.*

supported Roosevelt.⁵¹ Despite this newspaper's disapproval of Roosevelt and the New

Deal prior to the election, an editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* expounded:

People who do not suffer from short memories can recall the promises of past years made by Republican candidates. They can remember that those promises eventuated in special privilege, in protection of vested interests, in exploiting of the people for the benefit of the few who were in the favor of the administration. No Republican administration can cite history to show that it did anything for the little man when in need. . . . President Roosevelt has caused the spending of a lot of money but it has been spent with and for the man who was in need. . . .⁵²

On 3 November 1936, Texas Democrats turned out in lesser numbers than in the presidential election of 1932. More than 25,000 fewer Democrats voted in this election than had done so four years earlier. Haley had predicted that Landon would receive one-third of the votes in Texas, but his prediction proved inaccurate. Roosevelt won by an overwhelming majority – 87 percent, winning 253 of the state's 254 counties, while the Republicans increased their vote by only 5,886 over Hoover's total in 1932. Haley theorized that "instead of voting they merely went fishing or took the lazy course of sitting at home." Although there is no way to determine for certain, the Jeffersonian Democrats probably did contribute to the loss of some potential votes for Roosevelt, which declined only 1 percent from 1932.⁵³ Roosevelt won the election in part because Texas remained a one-party state made up of Democrats, and most Texans still believed that the Republican Party was the black man's party. The biggest reason, however, stemmed from the failure of the Jeffersonian Democrats to convince the rest of the state

⁵¹ John T. Banks to Haley, 3 November 1936, JD XI, *ibid*.

⁵² *Marshall Messenger*, 1 November 1936.

⁵³ Quoted in Haley to W. P. Hamblen, 20 November 1936, JD XI, Haley Papers; Haley to Sterling E. Edmunds, 2 November 1936, JD XI, *ibid*; Seth Shepard McKay, *Texas Politics 1906-1944* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech Press, 1952), 412-13.

that the New Deal did not contribute positively to their lives. In an editorial entitled “The Dominant Reason,” the editor of the *Marshall Messenger* stated:

Among the many reasons that caused the triumphant re-election of President Roosevelt, the controlling one in our opinion, was the returning prosperity that is evident throughout the country. The people were convinced that we were at last emerging from the depths of depression and they were in no mood to change the administration. . . . The president in his campaign made no promises except to carry on his policies as in the present administration. The people endorsed that policy in overwhelming number.⁵⁴

Where did the results of the 1936 election leave the Jeffersonian Democrats in Texas? The Austin office of the organization closed its doors with all bills paid the day before the election. On 2 November, Haley wrote to Hamblen and confirmed his political principles and how these principles shaped his role as executive chairman:

Whatever the results of the election, I know that our campaign of education has been productive of some good. We have fought fair and hard. Some of our action may have been stupid politics, but none has been dirty politics. We have drawn the facts from the record and placed them before the people of Texas without fear or favor. . . . I can simply say that every dollar and every duty has been handled in trust. I have drawn less for personal expense than those in the field, and not a dollar of the money advanced for this campaign has been spent in entertaining any man or woman; not one cent upon a cigar or a bottle of liquor. If this is stupid politics, and it may be, then the blame is entirely mine. Not a promise nor a trade has been made, nor any suggestion thereof, and this group is as free of such obligations as of debt.⁵⁵

After the election, Hamblen suggested to Haley that a nucleus of the Jeffersonian Democrats be maintained in order to campaign in other elections against New Deal programs and recover some of the ground lost with Roosevelt’s re-election. In December, Hamblen continued this line of thought and proposed re-opening a headquarters in the

⁵⁴ *Marshall Messenger*, 6 November 1936.

⁵⁵ Haley to W. P. Hamblen, 2 November 1936, JD XI, Haley Papers.

spring in order to fight against the president's proposals. He discussed with Haley the cost of keeping the facility open for the next two years, but the proposal never came to fruition. Sterling Edmunds, secretary of the national office, advised Haley in February 1937 that the National Jeffersonian Democrats planned to stay in the background on the court reform issue and to pressure Congress by opposing the proposal on an individual basis.⁵⁶ The national headquarters discouraged re-entering the fight against Roosevelt and advised Haley and supporters of the movement in Texas to lay low for the time being.⁵⁷

Haley and Hamblen continued to correspond about their grievances regarding the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal through 1937 and 1938. Haley stayed involved in local politics, kept an eye on the national scene, and wrote editorials for Texas newspapers that expressed his conservative views. Sterling Edmunds also continued correspondence with Haley throughout 1937. He stated in his last letter to him that the Jeffersonian Democrats might get involved in the 1938 Congressional election by unseating some "rubber stamps" and tapping into Republican support.⁵⁸

A unified campaign by the Jeffersonian Democrats failed to materialize in 1938. Hamblen, Haley, and probably others on the executive committee still aligned their beliefs with the Jeffersonian Democrats. Hamblen made a prophetic observation to Haley in August 1938: "I think the trouble with you and I is that we were born thirty years too

⁵⁶ William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt And the New Deal 1932-1940* (New York, New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1963), 232-33. On February 5, 1937, Roosevelt attempted to enlarge the United States Supreme Court to fifteen justices, causing irreparable harm to his own political fortunes as well as the Democratic Party and widening the split between liberals and conservatives within the Party.

⁵⁷W. P. Hamblen to Haley, 4 November 1936, JD XI, Haley Papers; W. P. Hamblen to Haley, 8 December 1936, JD V, B, *ibid*; Sterling E. Edmunds to Haley, 2 February 1937, JD XI, *ibid*.

⁵⁸ Sterling E. Edmunds to Haley, 31 July 1937, JD XI, *ibid*.

soon. I cannot make up my mind whether to try to be a Jeffersonian Democrat or just go whole hog and join the Republican Party.”⁵⁹

Hamblen’s observation in 1936 provides the key to understanding the foundation for the rise of the modern Republican Party in Texas. Because of the liberalism of the New Deal, this small faction refused to remain silent about what they believed severely infringed upon their individual rights. They supported neither the NRA in 1933 nor the Wagner Act of 1935, believing that both acts violated private property rights and clearly represented a move to give employees more power at the loss of their own. In their view, another New Deal agency, the WPA conflicted directly with the self-reliant attitude of these dissident Texans. They believed that able-bodied persons should work instead of receiving relief from the federal government, and, even though the WPA was a form of work relief, the Jeffersonian Democrats viewed it as direct relief from the federal government. Outraged by the expenditures of the New Deal, the significant increase in the public debt, and actions by agencies such as the AAA in the name of economic planning, they not only refused to support the New Deal, but they actively sought to prevent Roosevelt’s re-election. The Jeffersonian Democrats fought hard to expose the fallacies of the New Deal through a massive publicity campaign. The result, they hoped, would be the defeat of Roosevelt and the election of a man who would uphold their principles as president – Republican nominee Alf Landon. Although they failed in this endeavor, they unknowingly helped lay the foundation for the modern Republican Party in Texas.

⁵⁹ W. P. Hamblen to Haley, 8 August 1938, JD V, B, *ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTINUING FIGHT AGAINST THE NEW DEAL LEGACY

After the 1936 election, J. Evetts Haley continued his fight against the New Deal. He earned a living by writing historical accounts of men he admired and also managed ranches in the Southwest through the early 1940s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April 1945, but the legacy of the New Deal remained. Two years later, an article in the conservative publication *Human Events* addressed the challenges faced by conservatives who opposed the continuing New Deal policies:

The New Deal is dead but the evil that it did lives on. Because it is now without a leader, a party, or even a symbol, we tend to forget how deep were the changes it made, and how much effort will be needed to repair the damage wrought. State Socialism, however begun, soon shifts to an oligarchy in which a small elite assumes control of the productive life of the nation. The New Deal democracy was not a representative party, based on free individual choices, but a pyramid of blocs—farmers, labor, Jews, Negroes, Southern Democrats, little businessmen, etc.; there was the right bait for all of them.¹

Frank Hanighen, the editor of the magazine, described the theme as “man versus state,”² a theme that Haley echoed as he continued to fight against the legacy of the New Deal through the 1960s.

At the end of World War II in 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union remained as world powers, but at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum – capitalism

¹ Edna Lonigan, “The End of the Beginning,” *Human Events*, 1 January 1947.

² Frank Hanighen, “Not Merely Gossip: A Supplement to Human Events,” *Human Events*, 8 January 1947.

versus communism. Insecure times prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s as the fear of communism permeated the United States. Americans watched nervously as Soviet power and influence appeared to increase and spread. In 1949, the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb, thus altering the balance of power. Later that year, Chinese Communists led by Mao Tse-Tung overthrew the American-backed regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Alarmed by these events and in an effort to contain further communist expansion, the United States fought the Korean War from 1950-1953. Increasingly, conservatives like Haley grew concerned about Soviet expansion around the world and even within the United States itself. On the domestic front, they feared that New Deal policies inaugurated during the Roosevelt Era threatened American liberties and led America down a path toward communism.³ These fears led Haley to engage the political arena in a variety of ways from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. Whether as a political candidate, writer, or leader of a conservative committee, Haley continued to fight against what he saw as the negative effects of the New Deal.

When the doors of the Jeffersonian Democrats' office closed in 1936, Haley left politics briefly and focused on writing and ranching. He returned to Canyon, Texas, and began to research and write two biographies, one of George W. Littlefield, a Texas banker and cattleman, and the other of Jeff Milton, a former Texas Ranger. In 1937, he became manager of the Zeebar Cattle Company in Arizona, and that same summer he bought a small ranch in Hutchinson County, north of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle. While managing the Zeebar and working his own land, Haley continued to observe and

³ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995), 19, 38.

criticize the after effects of the New Deal. For example, he commented that, although the Arizona ranch was “underdeveloped” and the “sewerage arrangements would make Mrs. Roosevelt start another rural rehabilitation project,” he [allegedly] told the “federal boys to go to hell with their range programs, and as for plumbing, we are using the same that cowboys have flourished on since the beginning of the cow country.”⁴

In 1939, Texas Governor W. Lee O’Daniel recommended Haley for appointment to the state Livestock Sanitary Commission. The legislature, however, rejected the appointment after it discovered Haley’s leadership role in the anti-Roosevelt organization, the Jeffersonian Democrats. That same year, James M. West, a former member of the Jeffersonian Democrats, hired him to manage his ranch, a property that extended from Clear Lake (outside Houston) to the lower Rio Grande to West Texas. Haley not only believed in the self-reliant, resourceful attitude of the frontier, but lived it. He worked alongside his cowhands and received an injury in Gallup, New Mexico, during a stampede. He quickly recovered from the accident and continued to work with his men to ensure proper management of the ranch. When West died in 1942, Haley left his position and returned to the Panhandle to take care of his ranch and to work on the Milton biography.⁵

⁴ Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts, Jr. *The Censors and the Schools* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 116; *The New Handbook of Texas* (6 vols., Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 3:410-11; Quoted in B. Byron Price, “When a Good Man With a Gun Met a Good Man With a Pen: Writing Jeff Milton’s Biography,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 33 (Spring 1992), 4-5, 7.

⁵ George Norris Green, “The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics 1930’s – 1960’s” (Ph.D. dissertation: Florida State University, 1966), 37-38; *The New Handbook of Texas*, 3:410-11; Nelson and Roberts, Jr. *The Censors and the Schools*, 117; Price, “When a Good Man with a Gun Met a Good Man With a Pen,” 11.

In 1944, Haley wrote a short book on Charles Schreiner, a Texas merchant, and authored a series of essays concerning the controversy surrounding the Board of Regents at the University of Texas and its president, Homer Rainey. The regents had attacked the alleged liberalism within the university and fired four economics professors who defended federal labor laws at a meeting in Dallas. They also removed funding for social science research, and took other controversial actions. Rainey made a public statement based on sixteen points that attacked his competence and motives and charged the board with the suppression of academic freedom. As a result, the regents fired him. Haley aligned himself with the regents' and defended their actions in the essays. He argued, "It is not only the right but the bounden duty of the board to govern the university. If the president needed firing, then the regents would have been derelict in duty had they not fired him. This much seems elementary under our scheme of things, simply because the university belongs to the people of Texas. The people have designated the board to run the school, and the board has delegated the job to a hired hand, and now the board has fired the hired hand." He charged that Rainey did not keep within the legal limitations of his position and therefore the board fired him for insubordination.⁶

Haley re-entered the political arena in 1948 and ran for the first and only time on the Republican ticket for a seat in the state House of Representatives from the eighteenth district in Amarillo. With the exception of one speech, he chose not to campaign extensively. Rather, he allowed his name to be placed on the Republican ticket because

⁶ Quoted in Haley, J. Evetts, *The University of Texas and the Issue*, 2nd ed. (Clarendon, TX: Clarendon Press, 1945) 8, 34; Price, "When a Good Man with a Gun Met a Good Man With a Pen," 11; Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 411.

he believed a vote for his Democratic opponent exhibited support for that party's U.S. Senate nominee, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Haley opposed Johnson because he saw him as an extension of the New Deal. He also charged that Johnson had won the Democratic nomination by stuffing ballot boxes in Duval County. Although he lost overwhelmingly (48,985 to 6,266) to the Democratic incumbent, Eugene Worley, this Democrat-turned-Republican continued to voice his opposition to Johnson's alleged liberalism and criticized his policies through the 1960s.⁷ Haley attacked liberalism in America with articles in various Texas newspapers that demanded the "purge" of the United Nations and intellectuals. The San Angelo, Amarillo, and Marshall newspapers published a weekly column by Haley from February 1950 to July 1951, entitled "Texas Tory Talks."⁸

In September 1952, Haley received an offer to serve as director of a new foundation at Texas Technological College (currently Texas Tech University). Funded by C.E. Maedgen, a Lubbock banker and civic leader, the Institute of Americanism defined its mission as a desire "to perpetuate the fundamentals of the great American system of free enterprise, and the inherent values of the American way of life."⁹ The Institute worked with the university's history department to offer courses at the college about the basic ideals, values, and traditions of America. It stressed the "dignity of the individual" and the "indestructible moral nature of free men." Dedicated to instilling these

⁷ Green, "The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics," 210-11.

⁸ *San Angelo Standard-Times*, 28 January 1951, in Series IV, Literary Productions of J. Evetts Haley, D, Sub-Series 2, James Evetts Haley Papers, Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (hereinafter cited Haley Papers); *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe*, 25 February 1951, in Series IV, Literary Productions of J. Evetts Haley, D, Sub-Series 2, *ibid.*

⁹ C.E. Maedgen to Parker Prouty, 9 March 1953, in Series III, Institute for Americanism, Box 1, *ibid.*

conservative values in Texas school children, the Institute focused on students at Texas Technological College who intended to teach.¹⁰ The Institute advocated:

the sanctity of property rights, the importance and necessity of morality in state and national government, the sanctity of the Constitutions of the State of Texas and the United States of America and the Bill of Rights, the preservation of religious freedom and the freedom of the press, the rights and dignity of the individual in contra-distinction to any and all forms of state socialism or communism, socializing of business, professions of industry; the control of national government by the majority of the people of the United States, the encouragement of thrift and economy in government, as well as in individuals, and the self-respect and satisfaction to be found by all individuals in the opportunity, privilege and liberty afforded by the dignity of labor, whether mental or physical, to the end that those who toil and sacrifice may enjoy for themselves and their posterity the fruits of their labors.¹¹

Haley's philosophy fit well into that of the Institute of Americanism. For decades, he had defended and fought for most of these principles. Now, he carried his message not to the masses but to the young minds of the college in hopes that they would take up the fight. Although Haley stepped down from the directorship in 1954, he remained on the Board of Directors for the college. The following year Haley and his fellow historian, William Curry Holden, pushed for passage of a bill sponsored by state Senator Dorsey B. Hardeman that required "the taking of a course in history, ideals, and traditions of the American way of life by every person receiving a degree from any state supported college and university."¹²

At fifty-five years of age, Haley sought the state governor's position in the 1956 Democratic primary. He entered the race because the other candidates did not reflect his

¹⁰ The Institute of Americanism document, Series III, Institute of Americanism, Box 1, *ibid*.

¹¹ The Charles Ernest Maedgen Foundation, Section III, Exclusive Purpose, Series III, Institute of Americanism, Box 1, *ibid*.

¹² Quoted in David J. Murrah, "William Curry Holden," *Great Plains Journal* 18 (1979), 111-12; Campaign pamphlet, 29 February 1956, Series III, Texas Governor's Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*.

conservative political convictions, and he hoped that his candidacy would arouse Democrats to return to a more conservative platform. To finance his campaign, he sold fifteen steers to pay the \$1,250 filing fee. Fortunately for him, Haley received financial contributions from friends and supporters, including conservatives such as Dan Smoot, author of the “Dan Smoot Reports,” a weekly conservative radio and television commentary, Dr. Demetrius Mal Rumph, chairman of the White Citizens Council, an organization that opposed progress in race relations, and Giles Miller, prominent businessman and publisher of *Park Cities – North Dallas News*.¹³ Other supporters, including Jack Taylor, Democratic Executive Committee Chairman of Randall County, historian Eugene C. Barker, and Haley’s colleagues, wrote letters to potential backers to request additional funding for the campaign. While the response to those pleas for funds proved disappointing, Haley continued his quest. Despite cash flow problems, he launched radio and one-minute television spots during the week of 9 July 1956, appeared in Houston on “Meet the Press” in late June, and attended receptions throughout the state hosted by his friends.¹⁴

Haley railed against the Supreme Court, the federal income tax, foreign aid, the draft, President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s foreign policy, racial integration, the United Nations, and communism. In doing so, he articulated a doctrine he called “interposition,”

¹³ *Dallas Morning News*, 8 April 1956, in Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, Haley Papers; Green, “The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics,” 212; Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 66; Fred J. Cook, “Hate Clubs of the Air,” *The Nation* Vol. 198, No. 22 (May 25, 1964), 524.

¹⁴ Jack Taylor to unknown, 4 May 1956, Series III, Texas governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, copy in Haley Papers; E.C. Barker et. al: to Fellow Historian, 22 June 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, copy in *ibid*; Jack Taylor “News from the Haley Corral,” 26 June 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 1, copy in *ibid*; Jack Taylor “News from the Haley Corral,” 9 July 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 1, copy in *ibid*; Jack Taylor, “News from the Haley Corral,” 11 July 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 1, copy in *ibid*.

defined by him as the right of Texans to refuse to comply with federal laws imposed upon them. In a statement to the State Democratic Executive Committee on 11 June 1956, Haley observed:

The most critical issue in our national existence faces us today. It is the destruction of the Constitution and the American Republic through the complete disregard of the 9th and 10th Amendments that reserved all undelegated powers to the States. . . . In cases of ‘palpable. . . deliberate . . . and dangerous’ destruction of the rights and liberties of the people – as James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, the principal authors of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence pointed out – it is ‘not only the right but the bounden duty of the state’ to interpose its authority and say it will not comply.¹⁵

Haley’s view stemmed from John C. Calhoun’s position on the subject. In 1828, Calhoun, vice-president for John Quincy Adams, wrote the South Carolina Exposition and Protest, which disagreed with a tariff supported by the administration and articulated his belief that states had the right to interpose their authority and prevent the enforcement of federal legislation.¹⁶

Haley used his interposition argument primarily as a tool to oppose the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which ruled segregation unconstitutional in public schools. He opposed integration because he believed it would lead to “spiritual degradation” and “biological decline,” and he equated the Supreme Court and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) with the Communist Party. He charged the Supreme Court with subscribing to a communist plot that sought to agitate the races by integrating them. Haley and other

¹⁵ Statement by J.Evetts Haley to the State Democratic Executive Committee, Austin, Texas, 11 June 1956, 1-2, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*.

¹⁶ “John C. Calhoun, Biographical Essay” [essay online]; accessed 13 May 2004; available from <http://www.oll.libertyfund.org/Intros/LFBooksClassics/Calhoun.html> 1-9.

southerners believed the decision threatened traditions of the South and “normal” race relations. He viewed integration as an end to the white race, an immoral enforcement on whites that replaced their Christian right to exercise free will and an end to individual liberty. Haley argued that “an all-wise Providence, making man dependent upon the exercise of his own free-will under the dictates of his conscience, would never deny salvation of his soul by forcing him to comply with the immoral decision of any coercive, political agency.” With these beliefs intact, he promoted the doctrine of interposition throughout his campaign.¹⁷

In addition, Haley supported other issues popular with Texans, including the so-called “right-to-work” anti-union laws, a commitment to identify alleged communist teachers and fire them, and a campaign to disallow the federal government to set the price of oil or gas at the well-head. Issues he opposed included the graduated income tax and federal control of labor, agriculture, and education. Haley presented himself as a strict constructionist and as a Christian who believed that the Constitution embodied religion in government. Dissidents like Haley charged that the New Deal had extended federal power into the states, set up social policies that threatened the frontier mentality, and supported labor policies that conservatives believed moved in the direction of communism.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., 2-3; quoted in States Rights – The Issue, 4, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, Haley Papers; Green, “The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics,” 11; Campaign pamphlet, 29 February 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Platform document, 1-2, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid.*; Statement by J. Evetts Haley to the State Democratic Executive Committee, Austin, Texas, 11 June 1956, 3, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid.*

Two decades after implementation of the New Deal, Haley still ranted against its liberalism. In a speech made in Fort Worth on 26 June 1956, he charged that

We, the solid people on the soil of Texas, have been sold a socialistic bill of goods that has upset the free and legitimate markets of this country. We have had our affairs thrown into utmost confusion; our crops and plans subjected to control; and our profits – when profits were there – confiscated by immoral and progressive income taxes, and then boondoggled away on national foolishness and international intrigue under the dishonest guise of saving the world.¹⁹

Haley feared that government intervention in fixing gas prices at the well-head would lead to increased regulation of prices for cotton, corn, cows, and labor. He alleged that the federal government wanted to control every facet of life for Americans, much like the communists. In his final plea to voters, Haley declared, “As an ardent American spurred with deep concern for our future, concern rooted in regard for our future, concern rooted for moral principle, concern cultivated and confirmed by the tragic lessons of history, I intend, with ordinary cowpuncher ingenuity, to tell this story to Texas.”²⁰

Haley addressed many controversial subjects, especially about Texas as a right-to-work state. Right-to-work laws meant that no person had to become a member of any labor union or labor organization as a condition of employment, thus outlawing the closed shop. When two representatives from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) approached him after a rally in Dallas and asked what he thought about labor, Haley replied that he believed labor had a right to organize and a right to quit work, but did not have the right to keep anyone off the job. He informed the CIO members that if

¹⁹ Fort Worth speech, 26 June 1956, 1, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*.

²⁰ Quoted in campaign pamphlet, 29 February 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*; Unknown document, 1, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*.

they tried to use these tactics with his cowhands, he would meet them “at the fence with a .32, and, if necessary, I’ll draw a bead on you and rim a shell and leave you lying on the fence line. And if that isn’t plain enough, I’ll make it plainer.”²¹

Haley did not mince words and throughout his campaign gained respect from Texans and the media for shooting straight. The *Dallas Morning News* commented that he “brought a refreshing quality to the 1956 race for governor. There was no pussyfooting by this cowboy-writer.”²² Haley’s friends described him with phrases like “a man’s man,” “intelligent,” “a complete antithesis of the typical politician,” “courageous,” “independent,” “the traditions of Texas are a part of him,” “ducks no issues,” “honest,” and “avoids no controversial subject.”²³ The *Dallas Morning News* compared Haley to Andrew Jackson, president of the United States from 1829 to 1837, a rough and tumble man who spoke his mind. A 10 June editorial noted that “no matter how this campaign turns out, this is not the end of Evetts Haley. The man means what he says.” In the end, Haley finished fourth among six candidates in the Democratic primary, drawing 90,577 votes out of 1,567,471 cast. Senator Price Daniel won the primary with 622,321 votes and then went on to win the governorship.²⁴

Despite his political defeat, Haley continued in the forefront of Texas conservatives. In August 1956, he opened an office for Texans For America, a charter group of For America, and assumed the chairmanship. For America, a national

²¹ *Dallas Morning News*, 10 June 1956, in Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*.

²² *Dallas Morning News*, 8 April 1956.

²³ Jack Taylor to unknown, 4 May 1945, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, copy in *ibid*; E.C. Barker et. al to Fellow historian, 22 June 1956, Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, copy in *ibid*.

²⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, 10 June 1956, in Series III, Texas Governor’s Race 1956, Box 4, *ibid*; *Dallas Morning News*, 1 August 1956.

conservative organization founded by Colonel Robert McCormick, owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, and Hamilton Fish, former congressman of New York, promoted such issues as isolationism in foreign policy matters, repeal of the federal income tax, abolition of immigration, withdrawal of diplomatic recognition for communist countries, impeachment of the Supreme Court and curbing their powers, support for right-to-work laws, and an end to federal involvement in education. The organization's national membership reached 40,000 in 1957. In Texas, the organization consisted primarily of Haley's supporters from the governor's race, a roster similar to the membership of the Jeffersonian Democrats twenty years earlier.²⁵

Haley described Texans For America as a political action committee "devoted to the preservation of our Constitution, the loss of which is being threatened by the inroads of Communism." To join, the interested person filled out an associate card, and the organization encouraged him to contribute to the cause, although no dues were required. The group then used those contributions to spread their conservative message through letters, radio programs, and newsletters. An April 1957-August 1957 financial statement revealed total contributions of \$3,805.50 with \$1,310.90 spent on office expenses, postage, and printing. A secretary handled office procedures and received a monthly salary of \$225, but Haley and other volunteers handled most of the workload. By June 1957, Texans For America boasted 1,500 volunteers in Texas.²⁶

²⁵ Helen Armstrong to Mrs. W.A. Benton, 18 May 1957, General Correspondence 1957 folder, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, copy in Haley Papers; Texans For America newsletter, January 1958, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Green, "The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics," 216.

²⁶ Quoted in Haley to John Sanford, 15 December 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to John Sanford, 15 December 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to M.

Haley attempted to rally Texans to his cause and began a public relations campaign to draw support for Texans For America. Ever watchful for new members, he clipped “letters to the editor” in which writers espoused similar beliefs to his on a variety of issues ranging from segregation of the races, opposition to federal involvement in education, repeal of the personal income tax, the threat of communism, and opposition to agricultural subsidies. Haley applauded the letter writers and encouraged them to communicate with more newspapers, congressmen, etc. In addition, he then sent information about Texans For America in the hopes that the writers would join the organization.²⁷

Under Haley’s leadership, Texans For America sponsored a political rally in Fort Worth, Texas, on 20 September 1957. When the scheduled keynote speaker, former governor of Utah and national chairman of For America, J. Bracken Lee, fell ill, Brigadier General Bonner Fellers (retired) filled in and spoke on the importance of repealing the income tax. Other topics addressed at the rally included states’ rights, communist conspiracies, and how to abolish the “socialistic federal bureaucracy.” During the week of the rally, the organization sponsored one-minute radio spots to draw supporters to the event. The spots challenged Texans to restore America by ending federal abuse of taxes, of foreign affairs, of education, and of their liberties. Texans For

Lyle Cashion, Sr., 11 December 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Wayne Stokes to Haley, 8 August 1957, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Camille Hammond to Curly Armstrong, 20 June 1947 (misdated, should be 1957), Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, copy in *ibid*.

²⁷ Haley to Mrs. John W. Coles, Jr., 6 October 1959, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to John Chrisman, 20 April 1959, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to Henry T. Hinsch, 22 May 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to E. Hale, 6 June 1959, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to I.A. Bird, 12 December 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to Ward J. Burkholder, 16 October 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*.

America had predicted 3,000 supporters, and it received coverage in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* prior to the event. But on Saturday, 21 September, the newspaper mentioned only that Fellers spoke at a Rotary Club meeting sponsored by For America on Friday. It is possible that poor attendance at the political rally contributed to the Fort Worth newspapers lack of coverage.²⁸

In the summer of 1958, fifteen Fort Worth members of Texans For America created the Committees for Correspondence. They met twice a month to discuss potential letter writing campaigns to defeat liberal legislation and to support conservative issues. Impressed by this idea, the national For America organization challenged its policy committee to put a similar plan into motion in other states.²⁹

During the fall of 1959, Haley expanded the Committees of Correspondence across the state. He invited those who wrote “letters to the editor” on conservative issues to join the committee in order to secure “large numbers of letters on specific issues addressed to our representatives in both the state legislature and the Congress.”³⁰ He appealed to the Committees of Correspondence to write letters to the press and to public officials that defended the Constitution and supported “sound government,”³¹ as well as other conservative issues favored by Texans For America. By 1960, Texans For America thoroughly monitored newspapers in three of the state’s largest cities: Houston, Dallas,

²⁸ Haley to Fellow American, 7 September 1957, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Radio spot schedule, 16 September and 20 September 1957, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Radio spot, date unknown, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 21 September 1957, 2.

²⁹ Texans For America newsletter, June-July 1958, Vol. 1, No. 5, 4, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Becky Bergesen to For America National Policy Committee, 14 July 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, copy in *ibid*.

³⁰ Committee of Correspondence to Mrs. Billy Crider, 23 November 1959, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, copy in *ibid*.

³¹ Haley to R.R. Allen, Jr., March, year unknown, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*.

and Fort Worth. Haley enlisted support of organization members throughout the state to find conservative letters in the contributors' column, and he requested that a tear sheet be sent to the Fort Worth headquarters so that an invitation could be extended to potential members of the Committees of Correspondence. A new member's responsibilities included "alerting Texans to inimical and dangerous trends and legislation on both the state and national levels," by writing personal letters to Texans and exposing these problems.³²

By October 1959, the committee had grown to 295 members. Haley believed it imperative for the committee to unite conservatives because, he claimed, socialists and communists effectively controlled many aspects of the nation. A committee member stationed in Austin and active in legislative affairs kept the organization abreast of legislation favored by Texans For America. In fact, Texans For America boasted of a successful letter writing campaign that resulted in passage of H.C.R. 6, a petition to Congress to repeal the income tax amendment, and in the defeat of a "teacher tenure" bill that would have removed the ability of local school boards to fire what Texans For America described as "inept, inefficient, and even immoral school teachers." Haley claimed that the *Houston Chronicle* and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* became aware of the "teacher tenure" issue as a result of the Committees of Correspondence and that both publications joined this group in opposing the bill.³³

³² Haley to Mrs. C.C. Rodgers, 8 March 1960, Series III, Texans for America, Box 1, *ibid.*

³³ Haley to Special Report To The Committees of Correspondence, 1 October 1959, 2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid.*

Haley issued a report that boasted of the organization's success at a minimum cost, and he also pointed out that no other letter writing campaign in America compared to the volunteers of the Committees of Correspondence. He asked his readers to send money to expand the effectiveness of the movement and encouraged current members to continue to send names of potential members. Haley kept the members informed of issues on the local, state, and national level by writing to them and suggesting issues to support or oppose.³⁴

Another campaign, not as successful for Texans For America, circulated petitions across the state calling for the impeachment of members of the Supreme Court. Haley became a staunch opponent of the Supreme Court when it ruled in favor of integration in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954. He believed that the Court represented “the last bulwark of the lowliest citizen against oppression from any power. . . .” and that with this controversial decision, it had failed in its duty to protect citizens.³⁵ In January 1958, Texans for America placed ads in several Texas newspapers that included one-person petitions to Congress to impeach the Supreme Court justices. The petition charged the justices with breaking their oaths to uphold the United States Constitution by enforcing integration on the South. It also claimed that the Supreme Court had destroyed states' rights by conforming to communist ideals. Texans For America called for the impeachment of justices in order to “restore the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and

³⁴ Ibid., 3; Haley to Special Report to the Committees of Correspondence, 12 November 1959, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid.*

³⁵ Labor and the New Deal, 3, Jeffersonian Democrats Correspondence Folder XI (hereinafter cited JD), *ibid.*

to reinvigorate the Republic.”³⁶ Although no action resulted from the impeachment petitions, the drive itself indicated how far Haley and his organization would go to voice their concerns on issues that they believed threatened America.

From January 1958 through November 1959, Haley continued efforts to expose the threat of communism and tout his conservative views through a newsletter published by Texans For America. Issued sporadically, it included six issues in 1958 and two issues in 1959.³⁷ It may have ceased to exist after 1959 and been replaced by the “Special Reports for the Committees of Correspondence,” although evidence remains sketchy. To stave off the communist threat, Haley believed liberals had to be replaced with conservatives at the local, state, and national levels. With the election of Republican Dwight Eisenhower to the presidency in 1952, whom Haley actively supported, conservatives hoped for a reversal of many of the programs of the Roosevelt Era and a return to conservative politics. They endured disappointment, however. Haley agreed with an article in the *American Mercury*, a conservative publication with a national circulation of 90,000, that charged Eisenhower with not pursuing an “honorable” peace with Korea and not having a firm policy toward “Red imperialism.” It characterized him in the following terms: “Moderation, Compromise, and Caution.”³⁸

Haley echoed this line of thought in a Texans For America newsletter in January 1958. Labeling Eisenhower a “modern Republican,” i.e., not conservative, Haley criticized the president for sending 1,000 federal troops to enforce integration at Little

³⁶ Quoted in news release, unknown date, 2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Wayne Stokes to H.H. Campbell, 16 January 1958, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, copy in *ibid*.

³⁷ No other evidence of the newsletter existed in the Haley files.

³⁸ Quoted in Patrick McMahon, “Third Party Coming?” *The American Mercury*, 77 (August 1953): 42; *Dallas Morning News*, 8 April 1956.

Rock Central High in 1957. An angry Haley and other southern Democrats believed this action represented a “betrayal of his platform and his oath of office to uphold the Constitution.” When the Democrats adopted a national civil rights agenda in the 1950s and voiced the hopes of African Americans, white southern conservative Democrats began to abandon the party, thus inaugurating a slow movement toward the Republican Party. Unhappy with the two established political parties, the national and Texas organization of For America wanted a third, strict constitutionalist party. The newsletter cautioned those interested in a third party to be patient, however, because the group wanted to avoid a split among conservatives. At the time, the newsletter reported that Georgia and Virginia had conservative Democrats in power, and a third party of conservatives would prove ineffective if it acted too quickly. Conservatives needed more time to rally support from other groups fighting the same cause, to recover the Constitution and restore the Republic.³⁹

In a letter dated 26 July 1960, Haley revealed discussions in December 1959 among his close friends who suggested he run as an independent candidate against Senator Lyndon B. Johnson under the banner of the States’ Rights Coalition. Although tempted by his dislike and distrust of Johnson, Haley did not want to run for public office again and described the idea as “obnoxious.” However, he considered it because his greatest concern “was the future of our country.” His dislike for Johnson originated in the 1930s when LBJ wholeheartedly supported the New Deal as a representative in the U.S.

³⁹ Quoted in Texans For America newsletter, February 1958, 3, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, Haley Papers; Texans For America newsletter, January 1958, Vol. 1, No. 1, 3, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 83.

Congress. Johnson's support for the Civil Rights Bill in 1957 further angered Haley. The first civil rights law since Reconstruction, this legislation established the Commission of Civil Rights to investigate charges that civil rights had been denied and created the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice to enforce such federal laws. In Haley's opinion, the passage of the Civil Rights Bill was a betrayal of the South.⁴⁰

Haley also disagreed with Johnson's initiative to defeat the Jenner-Butler Bill in the spring of 1958. Designed to "curb the Court's usurpation of the power and its destruction of our tri-partite system of government," this bill was defeated by one vote in the U.S. Senate, and Haley blamed Johnson. Senator Johnson's dealings with foreign countries also met with disapproval from Haley. His association with Nikita Khrushchev, head of the Soviet Union, who visited the United States in 1959, intensified Haley's belief that Johnson linked himself too closely with communism. Johnson also voted for foreign aid to Poland and Yugoslavia, both communist countries, in the 1950s, and he supported expenditures that did not maintain a balanced budget. Haley and Johnson stood at opposite ends of what they believed was best for the nation. In the end, Haley decided not to run for the seat because resentment in Texas for Johnson's civil rights stand failed to generate the level of opposition that Haley had anticipated before the election.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Quoted in Haley to Bard A. Logan, 26 July 1960, 1-2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, *ibid*; Texans For America newsletter, October 1958, Vol. I, No. 6, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Texans For America newsletter, October-November 1959, Vol. II, No. 2, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 69-70.

⁴¹ Quoted in Texans For America newsletter, April 1958, Vol. I, No. 3, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, Haley Papers; Haley to Bard A. Logan, 26 July 1960, 1-2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, *ibid*; Texans For America newsletter, October 1958, Vol. I, No. 6, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*; Texans For America newsletter, October-November 1959, Vol. II, No. 2, 1, Series III, Texans For America, Box 3, *ibid*.

Like many Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, Haley observed his own backyard closely for any encroachments by communists. In January 1960, *American Mercury* printed an article entitled “Southern Methodist University Pampers Leftism.” The writer of the article accused the president of Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dr. Willis Tate, of being a communist sympathizer because of his respect for the Council of World Affairs and the fact that he allowed John Gates, former editor of the *Daily Worker*, a communist publication, to speak at the university. Because Haley had distrusted intellectuals since Roosevelt’s administration (the “Brain Trust”), and because of his agreement with the conservative school of thought popular in the 1950s and 1960s that academia had abandoned the free enterprise-private property teachings and promoted communism, he decided to take action. In a bold move, Haley reprinted the article and mailed it to 6,000 parents of students at SMU. In addition, he distributed a report by Dan Smoot, entitled “6,000 Educators,” which accused some SMU professors with communist activities and was based on information volunteered by university students.⁴² Tate denounced the article as “filled with obvious untruths and malicious deceit,” and, despite the attacks, he remained president of SMU.⁴³

In addition to the Committee of Correspondence, Texans For America founded two additional committees, one for farmers and another for education. The latter studied textbooks proposed for use in the Texas public school system and established criteria that

⁴² Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 30, 59; Harold Lord Varney, “Southern Methodist University Pampers Leftism,” *American Mercury*, 90, (January 1960): 18, 20, in Series III, Texans For America, Box 4, Haley Papers; Report to Committees of Correspondence, 7 March 1960, 2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, *ibid*; Report to Committees of Correspondence, 7 March 1960, 2, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, *ibid*.

⁴³ Quoted in Nelson and Roberts, Jr., *The Censors and the Schools*, 119.

represented America in the best light. For example, in October 1960, the committee presented criteria to the State Textbook Committee that emphasized the following: men made America, not natural resources and machines; America was built on Christian principles; the United States Constitution was “the greatest political document ever conceived by the mind of man and a sacred possession of every American”; the strength, nobility, and greatness of America should be emphasized because young minds are too immature to understand both sides of an issue; honor should be given to “capitalism,” “free enterprise,” “personal initiative,” and “profits”; and American students should be taught about America first before they are taught about the world.⁴⁴

“Haleyites,” as historians Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts Jr. referred to Texans For America, opposed any mention of many New Deal programs such as federal subsidies to farmers, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Social Security, labor unions, and compensation for the unemployed. Other items they opposed in textbooks included the United Nations, integration, the Marshall Plan, and the Supreme Court. Haley led the fight in the textbook matter and attended several hearings. He demanded that textbooks give better treatment to the “traditional” presentation and stories of Christianity and national heroes. He also demanded that Herbert Hoover, the Republican president of the 1920s who supported big business, and Senator Joseph McCarthy, who started a national

⁴⁴ Quoted in Textbook Criteria for Young Americans, 1-4, Series III, Texans For America, Box 4, *ibid*; Kara Hart to Committees of Correspondence, 24 August 1960, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, copy in Haley Papers.

manhunt for communists in America via the Senate Committee on Government Operations, be depicted positively.⁴⁵

Texas schools in the 1960s purchased textbooks at a cost of six to ten million dollars a year, making them one of the biggest such customers in the world. The State Textbook Committee approved five books per course taught in public schools, and local boards chose any one of the five. The approved list for courses remained in place for six to nine years. The State Textbook Committee responded to pressure from Haley and Texans for America and removed some textbooks from the list available to Texas public schools during 1961-1962. Haley claimed that two hundred Texans would have to be dealt with before the committee adopted a book that did not meet their criteria. After reviewing the proposed books, Texans For America objected to fifty that might be used for the 1961-1962 school year. When the State Textbook Committee met, it approved fifty books for the courses taught in Texas public schools; Haley's group opposed twenty-seven of them.⁴⁶

The liberal *Texas Observer* reported a victory for Haley and his organization, however, because the committee turned down twelve books opposed by the group and rejected four of the five books opposed by both Texans For America and Daughters of the American Revolution. The committee also ordered substantial corrections in line with Texans For America criteria to some of the books they approved. Those books challenged

⁴⁵ Nelson and Roberts, Jr., *The Censors and the Schools*, 122; Don E. Carlton, *Red Scare: Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism and Their Legacy in Texas* (Austin, TX: Texas Monthly Press, Inc., 1985), 306.

⁴⁶ Nelson and Roberts, Jr., *The Censors and the Schools*, 120, 122, 124; Richard M. Morehead, "Textbook Tempest: Haley, Dobie Disagree on Censorship" in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 82.

by the organization but approved by the State Textbook Committee failed to post high sales because local school officials refused to buy the books for fear of attack by Haley and his organization.⁴⁷

Although out of politics, Haley kept a close eye on political races. In 1962, he and Texans For America fervently supported General Edwin A. Walker in his race for the Texas governorship. Walker, a World War II and Korean War hero, had commanded the Twenty-Fourth Infantry Division stationed in Germany but had been relieved of his command in 1961 because he indoctrinated United States troops with the John Birch Society's right-wing propaganda about communism. Walker charged the United States government with communist subversion because of its social legislation that included a graduated income tax, expansion of Social Security, and federal aid to education. These programs, in Walker's view, moved the nation toward communism. Walker campaigned on a platform to alleviate these problems in Texas, and he encouraged voters to elect the "last free candidate." While Walker finished last, he received a surprising 138,000 votes, more than 10 percent of the votes cast, mostly because of the efforts of Texans For America and other conservative groups. This vote tally for Walker indicated the beginning of a serious shift to the right among citizens in Texas.⁴⁸

In 1964, Haley again entered national politics in support of the Republican Party. He attacked liberal Democrats by writing a biography of President Lyndon B. Johnson entitled *A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study In Illegitimate Power*. He depicted Johnson

⁴⁷ Ibid., 127-128, 132.

⁴⁸ Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 48, 57; Green, "The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics," 262-64.

as an egotist, coward, and traitor and alleged that he had won his U.S. Senate seat because he was “a protégé of extreme liberal forces of the original New Deal.” Haley described Johnson’s World War II record as “fraudulent,” charged Johnson with stealing the 1948 senatorial election in Texas, and outlined how Johnson’s wealth came from a radio and television monopoly in Austin.⁴⁹ Haley summed up his view of Johnson by writing:

Lyndon Baines Johnson, the restless man who is now President of the United States, is not so much a product of Texas as of the strangely deranged times that have set the stage for his ambitious desires, his vanity and monumental egotism, his vindictive nature and his evil genius. . . . Federal bureaucratic pressure, state demagogues, intellectually elite, labor, money and criminal tactics combined to elevate him to the high office in Texas.⁵⁰

Haley not only researched and wrote the book, but he financed its publication as well. With no advance promotion, it became a national best-seller and sold more than seven million copies. The John Birch Society, a right-wing organization founded in 1958, distributed the biography. Meanwhile, oilmen and southern Republicans sold the book door to door in cities like Amarillo and Dallas, posting high sales. The book’s early success forced Democrats to take notice, and they waged a vigorous attack on Haley via campaign brochures, newspapers articles, and radio and television commentators. They described Haley as a “bitter failure,” a man consumed with “invective, festering hate and frustration,” and “a case of unhospitalized paranoia.” One syndicated columnist even

⁴⁹ Ibid., 262-64; J. Evetts Haley, “A Texan Looks At Lyndon” in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 107-8.

⁵⁰ J. Evetts Haley, *A Texans Looks At Lyndon: A Study In Illegitimate Power* (Canyon, TX: Palo Duro Press, 1964), 7.

claimed that Haley had ties to the Nazi Party, a charge Haley vehemently denied. The strategy worked. All Baptist bookstores removed the book from their shelves, and National Republican officials “avoided the book like the plague.” In the final weeks of the 1964 presidential campaign, sales of the biography plummeted, and by late October printing orders almost ceased to exist.⁵¹

In that race, Haley and conservatives throughout the country united behind the Republican nominee, Barry Goldwater, “an outstanding American,” as Haley called him. When both the Republican and Democratic parties adopted civil rights planks in their platforms in 1960, conservatives of both parties looked for a candidate to represent their views. They found him in Arizona Senator Goldwater. He attracted the southern vote because he believed federal civil rights policies to be unconstitutional, promoted a 10 percent reduction in the federal programs created by the New Deal, proposed an end to all federal farm subsidies, supported a ban on political activities by trade unions and industry-wide bargaining, and opposed the graduated income tax. Goldwater stood for the issues that Haley had been fighting for since 1936. The Arizona senator lost the election, however, because the overwhelmingly majority of the nation rejected his conservative platform.⁵²

Historian George Norris Green noted that actions by conservative organizations like Texans For America declined in power in the mid-1960s probably for two reasons:

⁵¹ Quoted in Joseph Warren, “Suppression Of A Book” in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 111-15; Green, “The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics,” 3, 239; J. Evetts Haley, “A Texan Looks At Lyndon,” 107.

⁵² Quoted in Haley to J. S. Kimmel, Sr., 26 January 1965, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, Haley Papers; Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 63, 84.

one, continual defeats in elections and, two, the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas. After the assassination, national leaders, the clergy, and the American public recoiled from those who had spewed such vitriol at the Presidency. Whatever the reason, after the 1964 presidential campaign, Haley and Texans For America remained relatively quiet.⁵³

In 1965, Haley wrote to a national member of For America and rejected his suggestion to unite several conservative movements into one organization as had been done in the Goldwater campaign. Rather, Haley recommended retaining “conservative control of the Republican Party where we have it and capture it where we do not.” He noted that Goldwater had carried five deep South states (Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Georgia), attracting a large number of votes from southern conservative Democrats. Haley concluded the letter by expressing his frustration with the “apostles of moderation” in the Republican party “as exemplified by our transplanted carpetbagger George Bush.”⁵⁴

By the mid-1960s, Haley had moved into the ranks of the Republican Party and no longer supported the Democrats. The increasing liberalism of the national Democratic Party angered him. He contended that “Party loyalty is due only when the Party keeps faith with the people.”⁵⁵ For Haley, the Democratic Party had initially betrayed him with the New Deal and then proceeded to become more liberal in the succeeding three decades, culminating in the adoption of a civil rights agenda.

⁵³ Green, “The Far-Right Wing in Texas Politics,” 287; Cook, “Hate Clubs of the Air,” 524.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Haley to J.S. Kimmel, Sr., 26 January 1965, Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, Haley Papers; Diamond, *Roads To Dominion*, 64.

⁵⁵ Unknown speech, 3, JDXII, Haley Papers.

Texans For America reactivated in the Spring of 1966, and Haley continued to serve as chair. The bank balance for the organization on 20 December 1965 was \$376.67, and indication of the group's decline in the mid-1960s. The organization began to meet again, and Haley tried to revive the Committees of Correspondence. The Haley files did not document significant accomplishments of the organization after the reactivation, nor did the records reveal when the group disbanded.⁵⁶

In the 1970s, Haley's political activities waned. He remarried in 1970 to Rosalind Kress Frame, also a conservative political activist. From 1970 to 1985, he spoke to several organizations, mainly local groups in Midland such the Kiwanis Club and Rotary Club, not about politics but about life on the plains and his historical works. Still interested in politics, though, Haley expressed his disappointment about the disunity among conservative political tactics to a professor at the University of Dallas in September 1975: "The 100% conservatives, largely our kind of die-hards, will never, of course, get their perfect man." The following year he wrote his last book, a family chronicle entitled *Rough Times-Tough Fiber: A Fragmentary Family Chronicle*, and he opened the Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library in Midland to preserve the history of pioneer Texas and the American Southwest. Haley died in Midland on 9 October 1995 at the age of ninety-four and was buried in Bell County, Texas.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Report to Texans For America by Warren D. Lowry, 23 May 1966; Series III, Texans For America, Box 2, *ibid*; Financial sheet, 20 December 1965, Series III, Texans For America, Box 1, *ibid*; Haley to "Dear Patriot," 25 March 1966, Series III, Texans For America, Box 4, *ibid*.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Chandler A. Robinson, "The Passing of the Old West" in *J. Evetts Haley and The Passing of the Old West: A bibliography of his writings, with a collection of essays on his character, genius, personality, skills, and accomplishment*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson (Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1978), 14; *The New Handbook of Texas*, 3:410-11.

Haley did not live to see what he had fought for so long: a successful, conservative Republican Party in Texas. But after the 2002 state elections, Republicans dominated local and state offices, including the governorship. Haley would have been proud of this conservative platform and the majority of Texans who supported it.

CONCLUSION

J. Evetts Haley contributed significantly to the development of ideas that created the philosophical base of the modern Republican Party of Texas. The 2002 Texas Republican Party platform contained the political ideals that he stood for and promoted from the 1930s into the late 1960s. That platform called for a reduction of federal control over the states; promotion of a strong private sector unimpeded by federal regulation; belief that the United States reflects a nation based on Judeo-Christian principles; curtailment of the welfare system; rejection of textbooks that undermine America; support for the Texas right-to-work law; demand for a federally balanced budget; as well as an end to the United States Department of Education, sixteenth amendment, and U.S. participation in the United Nations. These were all political issues that Haley believed would make America stronger.¹

Although he supported the Democratic Party and Roosevelt in 1932, Haley's distaste for the New Deal grew as the administration developed its reform and recovery programs. Haley argued that these programs dangerously increased government control over the nation's citizens and that the New Deal directly conflicted with his belief in self-reliance and independence from federal regulations. By 1936, Haley's frustration had ascended to a heightened level toward the New Deal because he feared that it endangered

¹ "2002 Texas Republican Party Platform," [platform online]; accessed 23 July 2003; available from <http://www.txdemocrats/gopplatform2002.htm> 1-43.

America. That same year, Haley headed the Jeffersonian Democrats and embarked on a three month campaign to defeat Franklin Roosevelt and elect the Republican candidate, Alfred Landon. Although the organization was unsuccessful, he continued to lead a small faction of anti-New Deal Texans and defend the principles he espoused. These same principles were adopted years later by the modern Texas Republican Party.

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