

National Politics Go South
The Southern Strategy and the Campaign to Defeat Gore

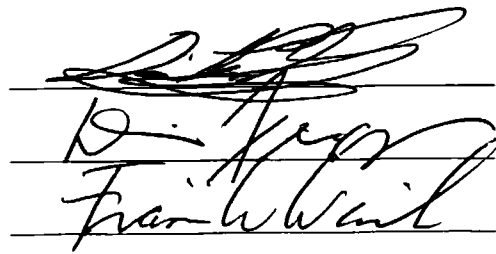
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Baccalaureate Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Department of History of Vanderbilt University
In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements
for
Honors in History 2006

On the basis of this thesis and of
the written and oral examinations
taken by the candidate on

4/14/06 and on 5/2/06
we, the undersigned, recommend

that the candidate be awarded
High Honors in History



The block contains three handwritten signatures, each written over a horizontal line. The top signature is the most stylized and difficult to decipher. The middle signature appears to be 'D. J. ...'. The bottom signature is 'Frank W. ...'.

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Introduction

The Southern Strategy in Perspective

While the Republican Party lost the 1960 Presidential election to the Democrats, the conservatives within the Republican Party, history would prove, were the real winners. Eight years later, following Goldwater's ascendancy within the party, Richard Nixon, spurred by strong showings in the conservative-leaning South and West, emerged victorious and eager to turn his electoral plurality into a majority, thus ensuring reelection in 1972.¹ Part of Nixon's strategy to achieve this majority was to use conservative Republican candidates to defeat key Democratic opponents in Congress during the 1970 midterm elections, thus winning him additional support in Congress and broadening his party's support. One of these candidates was a 39-year-old, fourth-term congressman from Chattanooga named Bill Brock. Brock's subsequent campaign against Nixon's nemesis Albert Gore proved to be the most contested and intense campaign that year and one that demonstrated the inroads the Republican Party was making in the traditionally Democratic South.

Nixon's most fertile ground in gaining voters between 1968 and 1972 was in the South, where he sought to demonstrate to George Wallace's supporters that the Republican Party was where their future interests lay, despite their history of voting with the Democrats. Such a goal was indeed formidable, as the American South had been dominated for nearly a hundred years by the Democratic Party that, in the aftermath of the Civil War, had grown out of hatred for the Republican, the scalawag, and the Negro.²

¹ Robert Mason, *Richard Nixon and the Quest for a New Majority* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) 3

² For general histories of Reconstruction and the source of this attitude, see Eric Foner's *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877*.

The strength of the Democratic Party in the South, largely unchallenged throughout the first half of the 20th century, was damaged by the societal changes America was experiencing during the 1960s. The general sense of lawlessness caused or demonstrated by the civil rights movement, the drug culture, the riots of Watts and the Chicago Democratic National Convention, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy, and the student protests against the war all served as demonstrations to Southern whites that the Democratic Party was leading the country in the wrong direction.³ Southern whites, long the rank and file of the Democratic Party, began questioning whether the Republican Party, which had since come under the control of conservatives like Barry Goldwater, would be a better fit. Republicans took notice of the gulf between Southern whites and the policies of the National Democratic Party and, beginning first with Goldwater in 1964 and continuing with Nixon in 1968 and 1970, actively courted their votes.⁴ Such was the goal of Nixon's Southern Strategy; to convince conservative white Southern Democrats, especially those who supported Wallace in 1968, that the Republican Party was indeed the party closer to their ideology. This was accomplished by recruiting Southern Republican candidates and supporting them with money and appearances by prominent national Republicans.⁵

Nixon, however, was only the most recent in a long line of Republicans dating back to Reconstruction who had sought to make the South competitive. George Tindall dates Republican efforts in the South to Rutherford Hayes and follows them through Goldwater to point out trends in the efforts. After Hayes and until Goldwater's candidacy, most Republican efforts were focused on "fusing" splinter Democrats with Republican-voting blacks. V.O. Key

³ For a general history of the 1960s and a description of how support for Democratic ideals and policies eroded between 1963 and 1968, see M.J. Heale's *The Sixties in America: History, Politics, and Protest*.

⁴ Harry S. Dent, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978) 64-66, 73-75

⁵ Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) 3

made evident in his *Southern Politics in State and Nation* that the results of this effort were mediocre at best when he titled his chapter on the Southern Republican Party, “A Note on the Republican Party.”⁶ Eisenhower’s election, however, marked the first time that Republican candidates began ignoring the black vote to appeal more to whites.

Jeffrey Young, in his article “Eisenhower’s Federal Judges and Civil Rights Policy: A Republican ‘Southern Strategy’ for the 1950s,” traced how Eisenhower led “the party away from its traditional advocacy of the African-American cause, and toward an increasingly fruitful relationship with white Southerners.”⁷ His Texas campaign manager even implored him to court Southern whites rather than northern blacks. Eisenhower responded by saying that such thinking was “generally parallel with [his] own.”⁸ However, Eisenhower did not have to parlay such thoughts into overt action. Truman’s promotion of black civil rights, which sparked the Dixiecrat movement in 1948, was endorsed by Adlai Stevenson in 1952, thus leaving many Southern Democrats once again looking for an alternative. The result of Eisenhower’s choosing a moderate line, whereby he did not pander to either white segregationists or blacks, was Eisenhower victories in Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida.

Once in office, Eisenhower continued to try to walk a middle line. Out of political necessity, he nominated many campaign supporters for positions on Federal Courts. However, “the racially conservative Eisenhower. . . . Never anticipated [these judges’] advocacy of civil rights.”⁹ Ironically, many of these judges, including Chief Justice Earl Warren, became major proponents of civil rights whom Nixon vehemently wanted replaced on Federal benches. Young even argued that the school desegregation crisis in Little Rock demonstrated Eisenhower’s

⁶ V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

⁷ Jeffrey Young, “Eisenhower’s Federal Judges and Civil Rights Policy: A Republican ‘Southern Strategy’ for the 1950s,” in *Georgia Historical Quarterly* LXXVII (Fall 1994): 538

⁸ Ibid 544

⁹ Ibid 552

commitment to racially conservative whites. Eisenhower said that his use of federal troops was to maintain order and “*not* to enforce integration,” and after the crisis had ended, “increased his efforts to calm white southern fears.”¹⁰ Young concluded that “Eisenhower had perfected a southern strategy that hinged on the politics of race” and that the Republican Party would never again be the “party of Lincoln.”¹¹

While most scholars agree that the Republican Party was indelibly changed by Eisenhower’s posturing, most looked ahead to Goldwater’s ascendancy and ignored the outcome of the 1960 election in which John Kennedy, a Northeasterner, was able to bring the majority of Southerners back to the Democratic Party. Most point to Lyndon Johnson’s presence on the Democratic ticket as the reason, but doing so fails to recognize that Nixon, in choosing Henry Cabot Lodge as his Vice Presidential candidate, wrote off the South to appeal to the traditional Republican constituents in the Midwest and Northeast. Young even writes that Eisenhower “blamed Nixon” for failing to continue to practice the politics of race.¹²

A recently published book by Robert Mason, entitled *Richard Nixon and the Quest for a New Majority*, one of several revisionist histories of Nixon’s legacy, traces how Nixon, who lost in 1960 by running an overtly partisan campaign lacking a coherent conservative ideology, bought into Goldwater’s ideological conservatism and used it to his advantage in his subsequent campaigns. Goldwater’s conservatism, as defined by Mason, incorporated fiscal conservatism, the rights of states to practice racial inequality, anticommunism, and concern about crime and permissiveness.¹³ While Goldwater failed to carry any states outside of the Deep South or his own state, he, like Eisenhower, struck a chord with many traditional Democrats throughout the

¹⁰ Ibid 563

¹¹ Ibid 565

¹² Ibid 565

¹³ Mason 9

South who realized that the National Democrats' desire for federally enforced civil rights did not mirror their own.

In the aftermath of Goldwater's disastrous defeat, Nixon reemerged at the front of the party in 1965 intent on expanding the party through strong showings in midterm elections.¹⁴ As his memoirs demonstrate, all of his efforts between 1966 and 1968 were directed at winning the Republican nomination. However, in posturing for the nomination, Nixon was threatened by two other potential candidates, Ronald Reagan and Nelson Rockefeller. Harry Dent, an advisor to Nixon and a former South Carolina Republican state chairman, wrote of how Nixon was able to convince Southerners prior to the 1968 Republican convention that his views, especially on civil rights, would be, in Strom Thurmond's words, the "most satisfactory of the candidates."¹⁵ Dent claims that Nixon expressed opposition to busing, but did not deny his support for the *Brown* decision.¹⁶ This assertion is contrary to the one made by journalists Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver who claim that Nixon made a promise that went something like this: *If I'm president of the United States, I'll find a way to ease up on the federal pressures forcing school desegregation—or any other kind of desegregation.*¹⁷ Regardless of the specific language of Nixon's promise, the image painted by Dent, Murphy, and Gulliver is one of Nixon's pandering to Southern Republican leaders to ensure their support in 1968. As the result of such promises, and with Strom Thurmond's backing, he was able to win the Republican nomination on the first ballot despite a challenge from Ronald Reagan's stronger "law and order" rhetoric and Nelson Rockefeller's appeal to the traditional Republicans of the urban Northeast and industrial Midwest.

¹⁴ Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978) 264

¹⁵ Dent 83

¹⁶ Dent 82

¹⁷ Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) 2

Following Nixon's strong showing in the South in 1968, Dent, Murphy, and Gulliver credited him for slowing desegregation, especially by refusing to withhold funds for school districts not in compliance. Nixon began by installing supporters in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Department of Justice, thus ensuring that his plans for slowing desegregation were followed. Additionally, upon the retirement of Abe Fortas, Nixon nominated first Clement Haynsworth and then Harrold Carswell, both Southerners, to the Supreme Court.¹⁸ All of these efforts were made, Harry Dent wrote, to ensure that there was no doubt "that there was indeed a Nixon Southern Strategy."¹⁹ Murphy and Gulliver wrote that such "was a cynical strategy, this catering in subtle ways to the segregationist leanings of white Southern voters—yet pretending with high rhetoric that the real aim was simply to treat the South fairly, to let it become part of the nation again."²⁰

Taking issue with and offering an opposite conclusion to Murphy and Gulliver is Dean J. Kotlowksi, who also presented a revisionist view of Nixon in his article "Nixon's Southern Strategy Revisited." Attempting to reconcile the seemingly "Janus-faced Nixon," Kotlowksi explains how Nixon was able to appeal to white Southerners by claiming to retreat from civil rights while simultaneously desegregating many more schools than his predecessors.²¹ Kotlowksi's thesis is focused around the fact that Nixon was incredibly flexible; he understood that a politician's primary objective is to be elected. Therefore, "he sought a maximum number of votes with minimal commitments."²² To accomplish this objective and maintain his appeal in all regions, Nixon relied on publicity and rhetoric to garner the maximum effect. Some of the propaganda gambits intended for maximizing his appeal in the South included making Harry

¹⁸ See Chapter 2, "Headhunting in the Old South," of Murphy and Gulliver's *The Southern Strategy*

¹⁹ Dent 121

²⁰ Ibid 3

²¹ Dean J. Kotlowksi, "Nixon's Southern Strategy Revisited." *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1998, 207

²² Ibid 208

Dent the Nixon spokesman for the South, honoring former South Carolina Governor and U.S. Supreme Court Justice James F. Byrnes with a state dinner, and nominating two Southerners to the Supreme Court.²³ Contrasting these images are ones of Nixon having sent his children to integrated schools, endorsing the *Brown* decision, promoting the Family Assistance Plan to help the impoverished, and desegregating many school districts.²⁴ The conclusion of Kotlowski's analysis of Nixon's Southern Strategy is that it "proved more symbolic than substantive [and] support for the president's reelection [in the South] was not assured;" only the Democratic Party's nomination of a Northern liberal and the attempted assassination of Wallace prevented any credible threat to Nixon in the South.²⁵

While Kotlowski's analysis of the sincerity, or lack thereof, of Nixon's Southern Strategy is convincing, it fails to explain why the South became increasingly receptive to Republicans between 1968 and 1972. Even in the midterm elections of 1970, which Kotlowski, Murphy, and Gulliver all labeled a failure for the Southern Republicans, they were able to field qualified candidates for every statewide race except Mississippi's Senate race. Additionally, in several states the Republican Party was able to elicit the highest support for local and state candidates in decades. While not necessarily victorious, these elections marked yet another step toward the scenario envisioned by Kevin Phillips in which the South would once again be solid, but this time in its support for Republicans.

Kevin Phillips, identified by Joe McGinnis in his *The Selling of the President* as Nixon's "ethnic specialist,"²⁶ was an aide to John Mitchell in the Justice Department. His book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, predicted Republicans as being the recipients of Wallace's votes

²³ Ibid 209-212

²⁴ Ibid 213-214

²⁵ Ibid 223-224

²⁶ Joe McGinnis. *The Selling of the President* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969) 91.

in the South in the years following the 1968 election. Drawing on election returns, Phillips demonstrated how the Democratic Party's shift from the South's domination to the North's had isolated many Southern Democrats. Their sense of abandonment led to their finding a voice in George Wallace and his American Independent Party (AIP). This isolation from the national Democrats was demonstrated in a chart in which Phillips demonstrated how "Wallace's strength proved to be negligible . . . in the states which found the national Democratic Party most appealing." These Wallacites, in a state of transition and uncertainty, found themselves in no-man's territory between the two parties. According to Phillips, this uncertainty meant that Wallace's movement was only a stepping stone as Southern Democrats, finding the national Democrats' positions on civil rights unacceptable, began a migration into the fold of the Republican Party.²⁷ While Phillips did not necessarily believe that Republicans would shift their ideology to embrace these voters, he was certain that the Wallacites would find enough in common with the Republicans not to return to the fold of the Democratic Party.

Phillips' reasons why these Wallacites would become Republicans were primarily because of the politics of race. He pointed to increased black political participation in the Democratic Party that had displaced "white Democratic organizations." Also, drawing on his expertise in how demographics affect political behavior, he concluded that the out-migration of blacks and the in-migration of whites coupled to create an increasingly white population that would look toward the political party dedicated to serving its economic and social interests. While Wallace's AIP would serve this purpose at first, third parties' inability to persist meant that it would only serve as a temporary home as white Southerners became more receptive to the Republicans' conservative appeal.²⁸ As further evidence to the Democrats' inability to endure as

²⁷ Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Arlington House, 1969) 35

²⁸ *Ibid* 286-288

the party of the white South. 1968 was the first time that both the “Negrophobe Deep South and modern Outer South *simultaneously* abandoned the Democratic Party. And before long, the conservative cycle thus begun ought to witness movement of congressional, state and local Southern Democrats into the ascending Republican Party.”²⁹

Phillips’ analysis, history would prove, was generally correct.³⁰ As he pointed out, however, such major transitions take time as voting realignments filter down to state and local offices. While this process of trickle-down politics was not new, candidates for statewide positions, such as Bill Brock in 1970, needed to find a way to bridge Presidential success and local success. Since Republican candidates in Tennessee could not depend on local organizations to gather the necessary votes for a majority, Brock sought to build the party’s following by appealing to former Wallace supporters, as Kevin Phillips had described. His appeal stressed that racially conservative whites needed to come together to defend against the liberal, integrationist policies of the Democrats and Albert Gore. Since an analysis of how Republican candidates at the state level appealed to those Wallacites is missing from the existing historiography, a thorough account of this effort is needed. Therefore, this thesis, in following Bill Brock’s campaign from its formation in 1968 to its triumph on November 3, 1970, examines why the campaign made racially-charged issues central, how the campaign conveyed Brock’s stands on these issues to the voters, and to what extent this effort was successful.

²⁹ Ibid 36

³⁰ For a comprehensive look at Southern politics since the mid-1960s, see Merle and Earl Black’s *The Rise of Southern Republicans*.

Chapter I Fertile Soil for Competition

Before analyzing why the Republicans' Southern Strategy was successful in Tennessee and why certain demographics, especially East and West Tennessee whites, responded by voting for Bill Brock, a basic understanding of Tennessee's political history prior to 1970 is necessary. V.O. Key's analysis in *Southern Politics in State and Nation* traced the modern political divisions in Tennessee back to the votes of secession in 1861. Counties in the eastern mountains and valleys that had fewer slaves voted against secession. Conversely, those counties in the central basin and western plains that relied on a high proportion of slave labor voted for secession. While the desire to remain with the Union became indelibly cast with Republicanism and the party of Lincoln, the desire to secede brought Middle and West Tennessee under the control of the Democratic Party.³¹

For the next hundred years these divisions, which pitted the Democratic West and Middle Grand Divisions of the state against the Republican East Grand Division, were on display in general elections.³² However, with each division accounting for roughly a third of the population, Republican candidates could rarely poll more than a third of the votes cast in any general election. Such an inability of the Republican Party to muster a majority meant that the truly competitive elections were the Democratic Primaries in which the eventual winner of the general election would be elected. With East Tennessee firmly entrenched with Republicans, competition for control of the state Democratic Party grew between Memphis and Nashville, each the urban and cultural hub of its respective division.

³¹ V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, 76.

³² William Lyons, John M. Scheb, and Billy Stair, *Government and Politics in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001) 184.

Although Nashville's political elite had held state power until the 1920s, Memphis, led by its boss, E.H. Crump, challenged it for supremacy of the state Democratic Party during the early years of the Great Depression. The Middle Division latched onto Roosevelt's class-based coalition that pitted labor interests against capital interests, but Memphis's political structure came much more closely to resemble that of the agricultural Deep South states in which the white elites used government to ensure their continued dominance, especially over the large black minority. To achieve and maintain his personal control, Crump depended on the support of the city's forty percent black population. He was able to do this by herding blacks to the polls, paying their poll taxes, and cajoling them with barbeque and promises of city jobs in the city's sanitation department.³³ This system reinforced a racially conservative political system that could survive only so long as the black population remained subservient and relied on the white politicians for patronage. While politics of racial authority were dominant in West Tennessee, the class-based politicians from Middle Tennessee were more committed to Roosevelt's New Deal. They proved to be far more egalitarian as they sought a more progressive distribution of wealth between urban and rural whites, as well as increasingly between white and black communities.³⁴

Since the two factions of the Democratic Party had very different objectives, each struggled to ensure that its candidate for statewide positions would win the primary and the nomination. Therefore, East Tennessee was the Division in which the election was typically decided. Crump was able "to evoke strong support from East Tennessee Democrats, who were in the minority in most counties and tended to stick together and look outside their division

³³ David Tucker, *Memphis since Crum: Bossism, Blacks, and Civic Reformers, 1948-1968* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1980) 17.

³⁴ Key, 72-73; Norman L. Parks, "Tennessee Politics Since Kefauver and Reece: A 'Generalist' View," in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 28, No. 1 (1966), p. 145-147.

toward a winning candidate for governor. Their affiliation with Crump helped to put the anti-Crump faction centered on Middle Tennessee in a bind between East and West Tennessee."³⁵ Additionally, the open primary, which allowed Republicans to cross over and vote in the Democratic primary, created the phenomenon of "Post Office Republicans" who were willing to support the Democratic victor in return for either state or federal appointments and patronage.³⁶

Crump's conservative East-West alliance, however, broke down in the 1948 election when he abandoned his support of Sen. Tom Stewart and instead backed another, unknown candidate. Since many continued to support Stewart, Crump's influence was divided, and Estes Kefauver consequently won the primary with a forty-two percent plurality. Four years later, Albert Gore defeated Crump's chief beneficiary, Senate President Pro Tempore and 36-year veteran Kenneth McKellar. These two elections broke Crump's control over Tennessee and ushered in a group of class-based politicians, mostly from Middle Tennessee, who were "more moderate in racial outlook because they lived in counties where farms were smaller than in the western area, blacks were in smaller numbers, and race relations were not as prominent nor traditional bases for political outlook."³⁷

Although the elections for state representatives continued to favor Democrats, national Republicans were seeing dramatic success in Presidential elections, as Eisenhower won Tennessee in both 1952 and 1956 and Nixon won in 1960. Throughout this period of Republican success at the presidential level, the "Post Office Republicans" maintained power in East Tennessee. Led by Carroll Reece and his protégé, Howard Baker, Sr., they remained unwilling to challenge Democrats for any major statewide positions for fear of losing their control over

³⁵ J. Leiper Freeman, *Political Change in Tennessee, 1948-1978: Party Politics Trickles Down* (Knoxville: Bureau of Public Administration, 1980) 2-3.

³⁶ Lyons, et al. 185.

³⁷ Freeman, 3.

both federal and state patronage in their districts. However, their subsequent deaths in 1961 and 1964 left a vacuum in Republican power.³⁸

Just as Nixon's loss in 1960 allowed Goldwater's brand of conservatism to become dominant among Republicans nationally, Reece's and Baker's deaths allowed a "new guard" of conservatives to rise in Tennessee's Republican Party. Many of these conservatives, like Bill Brock, were former Democrats who became Republicans during Eisenhower's first efforts to reach out to conservative Democrats. Brock recalled that "a group of us got together and decided that we should be Republicans if for no other reason than the Democrats in our area had no competition and that was unhealthy."³⁹ These Democrats' conversion to the Republican Party and their commitment to bringing the Republican Party out of the mountains to compete elsewhere was a major stepping stone toward true political competition. To achieve a majority and win power, these Goldwater Republicans' "goal was the merging of the Democratic party traditionalists, the West Tennessee planter belt, the white supremacists, the representatives of banking, finance, industry, and insurance, and ideological conservatives in general under the Republican banner."⁴⁰ Their success was evident in 1962 when Brock won the 3rd district's congressional seat for the Republicans for the first time since the 1920s. Two years later, in electing the delegates to the state convention and then to the national convention, the new leadership "crushed opposition from the first and second districts, . . . threw out the appeal of the Lincoln League of Memphis on behalf of negro party veteran, George W. Lee, and sent an all-white delegation to the national party conclave for the first time in history." Such a change was

³⁸ Key, 73; Parks, 150.

³⁹ William E. Brock, III (R-TN), Feb. 1979, Oral History Collection, Former Members of Congress, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

⁴⁰ Parks, 151.

in direct contrast to the integrated delegation which the Democrats sent for the first time to their national convention.⁴¹

Also taking place in 1964 was the crucial vote for passage of the Civil Rights Act. Kefauver's death in 1963 had made Albert Gore Tennessee's senior Senator and, therefore, its most important voice in the Senate. Gore had always been a supporter of Civil Rights, not so much because he especially catered to his black constituents, but because he possessed a "Populist attitude that he served all people regardless of race."⁴² 1964, however, was different. For the first time he was to face strong competition in the general election from Dan Kuykendall, the leader of the Goldwater movement in Memphis. Gore was well aware of the Republican challenge and voted against the bill, as much to gain reelection as "to adopt a more moderate long term program that ensured alterations in attitudes and actions."⁴³ While some whites and all blacks were upset about his vote, many whites were thrilled, believing that Gore had finally turned the corner and was beginning to stand up to the encroachments of the federal government. One of those upset was J. Leiper Freeman, a Vanderbilt professor, who wrote to Gore, "It is too bad Kefauver is not still alive. Perhaps then you could have had enough support to vote for [the act]."⁴⁴ In no small measure thanks to his vote against the act, Gore easily won the Democratic primary and, despite Kuykendall's victory in his hometown of Memphis, the first Republican majority in that city since Reconstruction, handily won the general election by eight percent. The other Senatorial election that year, for the unexpired term of Kefauver's seat, pitted Republican Howard Baker, Jr. against Ross Bass, a former Congressman who had been promoted the year before to fill the vacancy left by Estes Kefauver's death. While both

⁴¹ Ibid 154.

⁴² Kyle Longley, "White Knight for Civil Rights?" in *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (1998), 116.

⁴³ Ibid, 125.

⁴⁴ Undated letter to Senator Gore, "Correspondence" J. Leiper Freeman Collection, Vanderbilt University Special Collections.

Republican Senatorial candidates lost, both ran several points ahead of Barry Goldwater. Although this election saw the Democrats win handily, the historical importance of this election was the “unprecedented degree to which the class base of the New Deal coalition, [which appeared following Crump’s demise.] virtually disappeared in Memphis.”⁴⁵ Replacing it was the emergence of a race-based political system in which the majority of whites came together under the Republican banner and nearly all black voters flocked away from the Lincoln League and toward the Democratic Party.

Two years after the Republicans’ defeat in 1964, however, Howard Baker was able to bounce back and defeat Gov. Frank Clement, a man once so highly thought of that he was asked to give the Democratic National Convention’s keynote speech in 1956. But by 1966 his time in the spotlight had come to an end as he “was no longer a fresh young face, and his personal problems, [especially alcohol,] had become political liabilities.”⁴⁶ One of the deciding factors was Baker’s success in West Tennessee. Rather than having a coattail effect on West Tennessee congressional races, he was the beneficiary in both the 9th district, Memphis, where Dan Kuykendall won that district’s seat for the Republicans for the first time since Reconstruction and the 7th district, where the Republicans mounted a strong challenge for an open seat.⁴⁷

Considering the Republicans’ success in 1966, 1968 was thought to be a great opportunity for continued advancement. Events occurring that year would only help their confidence as Memphis had become a powder keg for civil rights. Memphis, with a black population of forty percent, had long been home to extreme segregation and a political elite

⁴⁵ Numan V. Bartley and Hugh D. Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1975) 105.

⁴⁶ Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976) 124.

⁴⁷ Freeman, 6.

nostalgic for a return to Jim Crow.⁴⁸ As the white elite were becoming more oppressive, the black community was becoming increasingly willing to challenge the city government's discriminatory practices.⁴⁹ Sanitation workers, hotel workers, and others in majority black occupations began organizing themselves into labor unions. Most of these were migrants who had sought the city for the possibilities of "nonagricultural jobs, better schooling, mass culture, and even voting." Rather than entering a more hospitable land, however, "migrants encountered a racialized urban geography that made turning the corner from Beale Avenue onto Main, or taking a city bus from home to school, a transition from comfort to unease."⁵⁰

The final straw fell February 1, 1968 when two garbage workers, while seeking shelter from a rainstorm, were crushed to death under their collection truck when an electrical malfunction triggered a switch. With the city offering no worker's compensation or life insurance to their families since they were only hourly employees, blacks felt that the time to display their discontent was at hand, and they voted to strike on Monday, February 12.⁵¹ Two months later, Martin Luther King, Jr., in town to support the sanitation workers, was assassinated. The black response was immediate, as widespread rioting and demonstrating rocked the city. The police responded to the protesting with hostility and violence. James Lawson, speaking to a crowd in Memphis on the national day of mourning, said, "from now on until there is no longer any written history, Memphis will be known as the place where Martin Luther King was crucified."⁵²

⁴⁸ Yung Wie and H.R. Mahood, "Racial Attitudes and the Wallace Vote: A Study of the 1968 Election in Memphis," in *Polity*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1971), 532.

⁴⁹ Laurie Green, "Race, Gender, and Labor in 1960s Memphis: 'I AM A MAN' and the meaning of Freedom," in *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2004), 470-472.

⁵⁰ Ibid 478, 470.

⁵¹ Ibid 481.

⁵² Bobby Lovett, *The Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005) 222.

That summer and fall, as election season heated up, no Presidential candidate was more willing or able to vocalize the anger whites felt towards blacks for their perceived lawlessness than George Wallace. Running a campaign that appealed directly to lower- and middle-class whites, Wallace directed his anger at both an insubordinate black population and the white collar capital interests which had sought to improve race relations to attract industry and make money.⁵³ In Memphis, the voters' response to Wallace's message was remarkable, as he won sixty-seven percent of the white lower class vote, fifty-one percent of the white lower-middle class vote, and fifty-seven percent of the white upper-middle class vote.⁵⁴ An additional study of Memphis voters found that Wallace's candidacy considerably weakened party identification as a reason for supporting a particular candidate as a reason for supporting a particular candidate. Instead, eighty-six percent of Wallace supporters indicated that they supported him because of his positions on the issues. As the AIP was the product of Wallace's own presidential aspirations, only four percent voted for him because of his party affiliation. Overall, less than fifteen percent of voters cast their votes based on the candidates' party affiliations. Wallace's lack of votes due to his affiliation demonstrates the appeal that Wallace's opinions on racial issues had on the white population of Memphis. Only the strong black turnout, which voted ninety-eight percent for Humphrey, kept the city thirty-seven percent to thirty-five percent in favor of Humphrey over Wallace.⁵⁵

While it would be easy to discount Wallace's appeal in Memphis as simply being the result of the tumultuous social unrest that plagued the city for much of the 1960s, he also found tremendous success in both Nashville and Chattanooga, polling pluralities of thirty-five percent

⁵³ For a description of how economics improved race relations, see James Cobb's *The Selling of the South*.

⁵⁴ Numan Bartley and Hugh D. Graham, *Southern Elections: County and Precinct Data, 1950-1972* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978) 392

⁵⁵ Wie and Mahood, 534-535.

and thirty-eight percent respectively. For Nashville, the only other city where such a detailed analysis of the vote according to class is available, Wallace polled fifty-six percent of both lower and lower-middle class white votes and won forty-five percent, a plurality, of upper-middle class white votes.⁵⁶ However, the source of these Wallace votes in Nashville and Memphis was quite different. Wallace's votes in Memphis came principally from former Goldwater supporters, whereas his votes in Nashville came predominantly from former "hard-core Democratic precincts" that had supported Gore, Kefauver, Kennedy, and Johnson.⁵⁷

Despite the major voting changes that occurred in 1968, which brought Wallace to within four percentage points of winning a plurality in Tennessee, the one Division that stayed remarkably loyal to previous voting patterns was East Tennessee. There, Nixon was able to poll fifty-three percent in Knoxville and fifty-one percent across the rest of the East Division. Although this was not an improvement over Goldwater's fifty-two percent, the race was far more competitive statewide, and Nixon's ability to maintain a majority in the division, keeping Wallace and Humphrey to twenty-five percent, was ultimately the source of his thin margin of victory in the state. Additionally, Nixon was able to retain most Republican support throughout the state. In one study, only seventeen percent of those who reported being affiliated with the Republican Party shifted their vote to Wallace as compared with forty-four percent of those who reported being affiliated with the Democratic Party. Even more shocking is that of those reporting as a Democrat, one-third actually supported Nixon.⁵⁸

All of this boded well for the Republican Party heading into the midterm elections of 1970. Their presidential candidate had managed to withstand a strong challenge from Wallace

⁵⁶ Bartley and Graham, *Southern Elections*, 391.

⁵⁷ William Berenson, Robert D. Bond, and J. Leiper Freeman, "The Wallace Vote and Political Change in Tennessee," in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 33 (1971), 518.

⁵⁸ Wie and Mahood, 536.

and the state's General Assembly had passed into Republican hands for the first time since 1928, thanks to Republican victories in rural West Tennessee and in the suburbs of both Nashville and Memphis. The situation in Tennessee was ideal for Nixon's Southern Strategy as it sought to recruit George Wallace's supporters into its fold to support Republican candidates for Gore's U.S. Senate seat and the state's governorship.

Chapter II

Building the Southern Strategy: Organization

Following Richard Nixon's victory over Hubert Humphrey in November of 1968, Albert Gore knew that conflict with his old nemesis was inevitable. The two had frequently been in opposition since 1953, when Gore had been a freshman Senator and Nixon the recently elected Vice President.⁵⁹ Gore recalled that the Nixon-Humphrey campaign "was a time when false patriotism was prevalent, a time when frustration, bigotry, recrimination, fear, and littleness of spirit and mind spread across the land like waters from a flash flood."⁶⁰ Nixon, backed by a "team with remarkable talents for exploiting these attitudes," made clear that his presidency would be aimed at furthering the competitiveness of the Republican Party in the South. Gore recognized that his personal animosity and distrust for the President made him a particularly inviting target in his reelection campaign in 1970.⁶¹

Knowing that a reelection battle would be vicious and exhausting, Gore summoned his "council of war"⁶² over the Christmas holidays of 1968 to help him decide his future as a Senator. On one side of Gore, himself a 32-year veteran of Congress, was a future Vice President. On the other sat one of the first female graduates of Vanderbilt Law School and a capable politician in her own right. While this may seem an impressive group of aides, the reality is that Gore's "council of war" was composed of his family, including son Al and wife Pauline, and took place at the family's dinner table. The family members were unenthusiastic about the effort needed for reelection, but they recognized that of the possible replacements, only

⁵⁹ Kyle Longley, "Target Number One," *Diplomatic History*, Vol 28, no. 4 (2004) 539.

⁶⁰ Albert Gore, *Let the Glory Out* (New York: Viking Press, 1972) 201.

⁶¹ *Ibid* 201-202.

⁶² Tony Badger and Michael S. Martin, "The Anti-Gore Campaign of 1970." *Tennessee Conference of Historians*, Sept. 27, 2003.

he had the credentials and courage to stand against the Vietnam War, push for tax reform, and fund improvements in education. Gore seemed enthusiastic that the voters who supported Wallace would return to the Democratic Party in 1970. Thinking that his Senate seat would remain secure, he even noted that “Phillips’ optimism about a Republican majority in the South was based on *Presidential* elections.” rather than state and local elections. For these reasons, Gore felt confident about his decision to run, and his family committed fully to supporting his candidacy.⁶³

The animosity between Gore and Nixon had begun in 1952, when Gore publicly questioned Nixon’s integrity after it had become apparent that Nixon had received money from wealthy individuals to “supplement his income and pay for travel, printing bills, and radio broadcasts.”⁶⁴ The criticism continued during the 1960 presidential race when John Kennedy came to rely on Gore’s expertise in tax affairs. Gore wrote that he “never understood how millions of sensible citizens could bring themselves to vote for [Nixon] for public office.”⁶⁵ Eight years later, Gore supported George McGovern for the Democratic nomination due to his anti-Vietnam stance. Once the pro-war Hubert Humphrey had received the nomination, however, Gore fully supported the nominee, declaring that “the alternatives are to me most uninviting.”⁶⁶

Nixon’s victory, rather than making Gore more politically cautious and calculating, compelled him to stand more fervently for those policies which he cared strongly. Soon after taking office, Nixon began emphasizing America’s need to build an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system, which Gore adamantly opposed. “Gore announced his opposition early on, building on

⁶³ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 210-212.

⁶⁴ Longley, “Target Number One,” 530.

⁶⁵ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 141.

⁶⁶ Gore to Kitchey Hume, August 31, 1968, “Politics, DNC, Chicago, Gore Senate Collection,” Folder, Gore Center at Middle Tennessee State University.

his reputation as a person who supported disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, by calling any deployment ‘a grave error.’⁶⁷ Although Nixon won funding for the deployment of the ABM system, with Agnew casting the deciding vote in the Senate, Gore continued to criticize Nixon’s policies concerning Vietnam.

Once again, Gore’s policy differences with Nixon dated back to Gore’s first term in the Senate while Nixon was still Vice-President. In 1954, Nixon had advocated sending massive aid to the French at Dien Bien Phu, prompting Gore to respond that “the president is golfing in Georgia and the secretary of state is fishing at Duck Island while the vice president speaks. The vice president has no constitutional responsibility in the matter.”⁶⁸ Eisenhower, however, chose to send minimal aid and several military advisors to help the South Vietnamese government in its transition from colonialism to statehood.⁶⁹ Gore’s increased popularity after his unsuccessful bid for the Vice-Presidency in 1956 and his outspokenness on the matter of American involvement in Vietnam led to his receiving an appointment to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1959, a position from which he continued to warn and criticize both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson on their policies for Vietnam.⁷⁰

Although Gore was quite favorable toward Lyndon Johnson’s domestic policy, he believed that too many resources were being diverted to the conflict in Vietnam. He was also adamant that Congress had been tricked into supporting the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and that Johnson had liberally interpreted the Resolution to accumulate personal power and increase American involvement. Writing a friend in Tennessee from the 1968 Democratic National Convention, Gore wrote that “four years ago our party and the nominee of our party promised

⁶⁷ Longley, “Target Number One,” 531.

⁶⁸ *Spartanburg Herald*, April 19, 1954 as quoted in Longley, “Target Number One,” 532.

⁶⁹ Albert Gore, *Eye of the Storm*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) 5.

⁷⁰ Longley, “Target Number One,” 532

the people that American boys would not be sent to fight a land war in Asia. The people made an overwhelming commitment to peace. They voted for our distinguished leader, President Lyndon B. Johnson, but they got the policies of Senator Goldwater.”⁷¹

Nixon’s election in 1968 left Gore convinced that there would be no withdrawal of America’s forces in Vietnam. “In May 1969, the *Baltimore Sun* reported that the senator wanted American people not to buy ‘another pig in a poke labeled secret negotiation.’”⁷² The following year, on April 30, just ten days after Nixon had made a television speech in which he claimed that “we finally have in sight the just peace,” he launched an invasion of Cambodia.⁷³ This about-face prompted Gore and Sen. William Fulbright, leading doves of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to request a meeting between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the President. Choosing to honor their request, Nixon also invited the hawkish House Foreign Affairs Committee as well. Gore recalled that he asked the President why he had limited himself to not invading more than thirty-five kilometers without the further approval of Congress. “What is the difference, in principle, between invading thirty-five kilometers and fifty kilometers? The important event was the crossing of the boundary of a sovereign nation with an invading Army, which you ordered without authority from or even consultation with Congress.” Nixon responded with a two sentence answer, far “from the kind of ‘consultation’” Gore had envisioned.⁷⁴

Another area of consternation for Gore concerning the consultative function of Congress involved the Senate’s “advice and consent” role in confirming Supreme Court Justices. Upon the retirement of Abe Fortas in 1969, Nixon made evident his intention to name a Southerner.

⁷¹ Gore to Phillip Livingston, August 21, 1968. “Politics: DNC Chicago, Gore Senate Collection,” Folder. Gore Center at Middle Tennessee State University.

⁷² Longley, “Target Number One,” 534.

⁷³ Gore, *Eye of the Storm*, 22; Longley, *Target Number One*, 538.

⁷⁴ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 233

His first nominee was Clement F. Haynsworth of South Carolina. Gore, agreeing with a slight majority of Senators, voted against Haynsworth “because he had violated the code of ethics in deciding cases in which he had a personal financial interest.” Nixon’s second nominee, G. Harrold Carswell, of Florida, also opposed by Gore and an even larger majority of Senators, had a record of supporting racial segregation, a position that made Carswell, according to Gore, “unfit” for the office. Additionally, Gore contended that voting for him would be for “no other reason than to serve my own personal political interest.”⁷⁵ These stands against Southerners left Gore with few influential supporters in Tennessee willing to defend those votes. Representative of the mail he received concerning these votes was one from woman who wrote, “As Tennesseans and Southerners, we resent your depriving us of a judge on the Supreme Court.”⁷⁶ Although Gore did, in fact, want a Southerner on the Supreme Court, he could not bring himself to vote for unqualified nominees for the position. He did not have the chance to demonstrate such a desire for a Southern justice since Nixon’s next nominee was Harry Blackmun of Minnesota. Therefore, Gore was well aware that his votes against Carswell and Haynsworth could cost him reelection in 1970.⁷⁷ Gore’s prominent and frequent stands against Nixon on so many issues, ranging from involvement in Vietnam to deployment of ABMs to Supreme Court nominations, left little doubt that his opponent in 1970 would receive the full support of Nixon. However, Gore would certainly have no idea the full involvement and crucial role that Nixon would have in the 1970 election.

Bill Brock was a 39 year-old Congressman who had first won election in 1962 in Tennessee’s 3rd Congressional district, solidly Democratic since Reconstruction. He was the

⁷⁵ Ibid, 239.

⁷⁶ Mrs. E. T. McGlothlin to Gore, August 1, 1970. “Politics: 1970, General 1 of 3” folder, Gore Center at Middle Tennessee State University.

⁷⁷ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 238-239

grandson of a former Democratic Senator and heir to the fortune of the Brock Candy Company in Chattanooga, prompting Albert Gore to suggest that Brock had grown up with “Chattanooga chocolate” on his hands rather than the “Tennessee dirt” which Gore himself had experienced.⁷⁸ Following a childhood in Lookout Mountain, the upper-class suburb of Chattanooga, Brock left Tennessee to attend Washington and Lee University. A stint in the Navy was followed by his moving back to Chattanooga to begin work at his family’s candy company. He quickly rose through the ranks to the position of Vice-President of marketing within only five years. While family wealth was apparent, he became even more richly endowed when he married a woman from one of the wealthiest families in Chattanooga. Gore’s press consultant was later to say that “Brock has all the money in the world except three or four dollars, and he knows where those are.”⁷⁹

Brock’s civic involvement spread outside of his family’s business as he became active in local and national organizations. He served as the president of the local Jaycee chapter and even rose to the position of President of the National Federation of Young Republicans, a position that led to his being named the National Republican of the Year in 1963, his first year as a Congressman.⁸⁰ This success resulted in his being named one of only five Southerners to sit on a position committee for Nixon’s 1968 campaign. He, Howard Baker, and George H.W. Bush, each of whom were too inexperienced to be selected as Nixon’s Vice President in 1968, but were each considered potential replacements for Agnew in 1972, were the only Southern Republicans chosen as official speakers for the campaign.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Longley, “Target Number One,” 538.

⁷⁹ Richard Harris, “Annals of Politics: How the People Feel,” *The New Yorker*, July 10, 1971, p. 37.

⁸⁰ Murphy and Gulliver, 114.

⁸¹ Box 15, Folder 57 Brock Collection, University of Tennessee Special Collections: David Broder, “Nixon May Find ’72 Mate” in *The Washington Post*. Tuesday, October 27, 1970.

While Gore and many of his supporters speculated that Nixon had drafted Brock to run against Gore, Brock actually began to consider running before Nixon had even taken office. During the Christmas recess of 1968, while Gore was making his decision around his family's dinner table to run, Brock was also beginning to consider his prospects as a candidate in the election almost two years away. He commissioned a survey by Cambridge Opinion Studies, Inc. to be conducted across the state ascertain to the opinions and preferences of Tennesseans. In a twenty-six page document, the study laid the foundation on which Brock built his campaign.

While one objective of the survey was apparently to discover whether Brock had a better chance of winning as a senatorial or gubernatorial candidate, he and his supporters' ambitions seemed geared towards Albert Gore's Senate seat. First, the study found that besides Brock, the only other potential Republican candidate was Dan Kuykendall, the congressman from Memphis and loser in the 1964 Senatorial campaign against Gore. However, Kuykendall's base in Memphis could be a liability since he was only remembered in East Tennessee as being unable to defeat Gore four years earlier, thereby making Brock "the best candidate [because] he can defeat Gore with a good effort. Kuykendall, [on the other hand,] would have a difficult time."⁸²

Brock also found valuable information within the study about Tennesseans' personal opinions, their impressions of the candidates, and their opinions about the "ideal" candidate. Sixty percent reported viewing themselves as "being middle-of-the-road, or only slightly to the right," nine percent reported leaning to the right, and thirteen percent considering themselves either extremely or somewhat liberal.⁸³ "In contrast to these relatively low levels [of self-reporting liberals], Gore is positioned on the liberal side by 23% of voters and Hooker [the future Democratic nominee for Governor] by 26%." This information was valuable because Gore and

⁸² 1970 Campaign Notebook, box 14, Brock Papers, University of Tennessee Special Collections

⁸³ Ibid

Hooker, although having significantly more name recognition and familiarity, were widely “perceived to be somewhat more liberal than the voters they seek to influence.”

An additional objective of the study was to determine which issues would be of great importance in the campaign. The study presented voters with a list of issues and asked which ones they considered to be the most important ones in the 1970 campaign, thus leaving the opportunity for multiple responses. Forty-five percent “spontaneously” mentioned the Vietnam War, overwhelmingly the most popular response. Twenty-two percent mentioned either taxes or the cost of living, and ten percent said poverty. However, the rest of the responses were focused around domestic social problems and were to form the basis around which Brock would build his campaign; twenty-two said racial conflicts or problems, sixteen percent said student unrest and campus riots, eleven percent law and order, ten percent the Federal Government’s intervention in state and local affairs, and eight percent said crime.⁸⁴ These were especially pertinent to Brock in his desire to defeat Gore since all of these issues were “national in scope,” and, therefore, of more importance in the Senate campaign. Other issues, according to the study, such as “education and the need for Increased State Revenues,” should be reserved for the gubernatorial campaign.⁸⁵ While the aggregate percentage of individuals who pointed to social issues as their primary concern is unclear due to their ability to give multiple responses, what is evident is that those issues were very important.

While it would be easy to assume that those findings were homogenous throughout the state, the divisions’ differing demographics and political histories ensured that there was not homogeneity. The study focused especially on Middle Tennesseans’ reluctance to mention race as an important issue in the campaign. Whereas thirty-two percent of West Tennesseans

⁸⁴ Campaign Materials, Folder 17, box 17, Brock Papers.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

mentioned “racial issues and federal intervention in state or local management of civil rights enforcement,” only twelve percent of Middle Tennesseans gave the same response. In another place, it is written that “voters in Eastern and Western Tennessee tend to assign greater political significance to Racial problems (30% level) than is observed among voters in the Central parts of the state (15%).”⁸⁶ This difference gave further credence to the notion that Middle Tennesseans supported Wallace in 1968 because of his populist economic agenda rather than his segregationist policy that won him votes in West Tennessee.

From the results of the Cambridge Opinion study, Brock knew that the Republican nomination for the Senate was his for the taking and which issues were emotional and struck a chord with Tennesseans. Thanks to the valuable information in the study, Brock and his advisors met in April, 1969, to decide his future and to begin setting up the organization for the campaign. The organization and planning for the campaign proved to be phenomenal: no previous Tennessee campaign featured such intense preparation with as many full-time employees and volunteers.⁸⁷ Notes from the meeting indicate that the “primary objective of the campaign, of course, is to elect Bill Brock. A secondary but important objective is to continue to build the Republican Party in Tennessee.”⁸⁸ At this meeting, it was announced that Ken Rietz, former Assistant Communications Director of the Republican National Committee, would be the full-time, salaried campaign coordinator. By comparison, Gore hired his first full-time employee for the campaign in June, 1970, upon Hudley Crockett’s announcement that he would challenge Gore in the Democratic primary.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid. Capitalizing and underlining of “racial” found in original.

⁸⁷ See Parks, “Tennessee Politics since Kefauver and Reece,” Longley, *Albert Gore, Sr. Gore, Let the Glory Out*.

⁸⁸ Brock-For-Senate Campaign Meeting, box 17, folder 17, Brock Collection.

⁸⁹ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 241.

The organizational chart that served as the template for this campaign was first found in Brock's notes from a Republican Campaign Management Seminar in Georgia in April, 1966, conducted by the Republican National Committee's Division of Education and Training. This model called for fifty people to be employed by the campaign. Typed on the bottom of the page on which Brock had drawn the organizational chart's hierarchy was a quote: "Spend half your budget on media – and the other half on people."⁹⁰ Therefore, while Brock's extensive campaign organization may have been unique by Tennessee standards, the Republican Party had worked hard to ensure that it was ordinary by national Republican standards.

Also announced at the meeting was the retention of an advertising director. Harry Treleaven, the advertising director of George Bush's congressional campaigns, Florida Sen. Ed Gurney's campaign, and Nixon's presidential campaign, would be responsible for "[maximizing] voter awareness of the Brock name, likeness, record, and stand."⁹¹ Working to the advertising director's advantage, according to the Cambridge Opinion study, was the unfamiliarity of a large number of voters with Brock and thus were unable to accurately depict Brock's "political postures on this [liberal/conservative] scale." While such unfamiliarity was once thought to be a major detriment to a campaign, media driven campaigns made that a non-issue since television advertising could ensure that within only a matter of months the candidate could be recognizable to a large percentage of the population. The combination of Brock's youthful attractiveness and lack of name recognition arguably made the position of advertising director the most important position in the campaign; and it was believed that Brock hired the absolutely best man in the industry to work towards his victory.

⁹⁰ Box 15, Folder 83. "Republican Campaign Management Seminar 4/20/66." Brock Collection.

⁹¹ Box 14, 1970 Campaign Notebook, Brock Collection.

Treleaven had been known in Republican circles as the best media consultant in the business after he had begun his career in political advertising by working first for George Bush's failed 1964 Senate campaign and again in his victorious 1966 Congressional campaign. However, his work for Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign had elevated him to almost mythical status after Joe McGinniss' recently released book, *The Selling of the President*, had credited him with being the reason for Nixon's victory, since Treleaven had been able to make Nixon appear likeable on television. McGinniss wrote that television was "particularly useful to the politician who can be charming but lacks ideas. Print is for ideas. . . . [On television] his personality is what the viewers want to share. . . . Success and failure are easily measured: how often is he invited back? Often enough and he reaches his goal—to advance from 'politician' to 'celebrity.'"⁹² Treleaven believed that if a candidate could become a celebrity, audiences would become more receptive to his positions on the issues, even if those positions did not match their own. As Bush's and Nixon's victories demonstrated, there was truth in Treleaven's "amoral"⁹³ approach toward campaign advertising.

In addition to the positions of campaign coordinator and advertising director, the positions of campaign manager, field director, publicity director, finance director, research director, treasurer, state volunteer chairman, field assistants, and advance men were also a part of the organizational chart. The position of campaign manager, those present at the meeting determined, should be held by a Tennessean well-known and respected by both Democrats and Republicans throughout the state. The decision was later made to appoint Dr. Nat Winston, a noted psychiatrist who had worked in the state's Department of Health under Governors Clement and Ellington, served as president of a chain of private mental hospitals called the American

⁹² McGinniss, 29

⁹³ Ibid, xx.

Psychiatric Hospitals, and considered running for the Republican nomination for governor.⁹⁴

Additionally, the Cambridge Opinion study had found Winston was widely considered to be the best candidate for governor. Winston's credentials and political connections, which he had developed by working in the state government, made his selection ideal. The field director would be John Stuckey, Brock's administrative assistant and a future aide in Nixon's White House. All in all, there would be 15 full-time paid workers and approximately twenty part-time paid workers, plus hundreds of volunteers, each fitting into a campaign organization chart proven successful by other Republican candidates across the country.⁹⁵

Although the organization had come together in the spring, not until the fall did it begin to focus on the campaign to defeat Gore. On September 12, Brock's "campaign Advisory Committee" sat down to begin to structure Brock's schedule for the next fourteen months leading up to the election. According to the calendar, found in the minutes of the meeting, several key dates stood out. The first was October 1, 1969, when the Brock for Senate Campaign Committee would be formed and six regional directors, each to coincide with the six television markets throughout the state, would be named. By January 1, 1970, the Campaign Chairman and Finance Chairman would be named and the first telephone poll would be commissioned. By March 1, twenty-five percent of the finance quota would be raised and by May 1 fifty percent would be raised. For a campaign that sought to raise well over a million dollars, Rietz determined that raising such a sizable sum early in the campaign was indeed attainable.⁹⁶ Additionally, the primary campaign would begin July 1, with the primary being held on August 1. Following a break to be used for sizable fundraising following what was thought to be an overwhelming victory, the general campaign would begin September 1, with a statewide meeting of state, city,

⁹⁴ Richard Harris, "Annals of Politics: How the People Feel," 40.

⁹⁵ Box 14, 1970 Campaign Notebook, Brock Collection.

⁹⁶ Box 31, Folder 17, "Campaign Re: Rietz - memos," Brock Collection.

and country chairmen and finance chairmen and a major kickoff event. Finally the final phase of the campaign would last from October 22 until Election Day on November 3. This would see “intensified advertising on radio and TV, including a special election eve TV activity, and Newspaper ads (sic) in dailies.”⁹⁷

Brock’s planning and organization even caught the eye of Jim Allison, the campaign manager of both Bush’s 1966 Congressional campaign and Nixon’s 1968 Presidential campaign and current Deputy Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Allison sent a memo to Harry Dent on October 10, 1969, informing him that President Nixon was calling a meeting that would “include his cabinet, [Republican National Chairman] Morton, Brock, [Howard] Baker, Rietz, [Assistant to the President] Harry Flemming, and [Assistant to the President] Peter Flanigan.” Allison wrote that “using the Brock campaign as an example, per your suggestion, the President will call a meeting” during which the issues of patronage, grant announcements, and grants and projects would be discussed.⁹⁸

The meeting produced a draft of the ideal campaign strategy, suggesting eight different roles for the White House. While the draft is not specific to one state, Brock’s notes in the margins are specifically for his campaign in Tennessee. First, members of the executive branch would visit. The President would visit twice, and according to Brock’s notes, Nixon should visit both Memphis and Knoxville. Additionally the Vice President would visit once and each Cabinet member would visit once. The President would also send a letter of endorsement to be published either in campaign literature or in newspapers and would appear in “TV and radio clips for candidates’ use.” Additionally, Cabinet secretaries would “be alerted to give special consideration to candidates’ requests,” apparently to give the appearance that the candidate had

⁹⁷ Box 17, Folder 17, “Brock-For-Senate Campaign Meeting 9/12/69,” Brock Collection.

⁹⁸ Box 31, Folder 16, “Campaign: Re: Rietz – Correspondence” Jim Allison to Harry Dent, 10/10/69, Brock Collection

strong ties with the White House and would be able to match the Democrats' seniority and patronage in Congress. One key Administration staff member was to be assigned full-time to each of the target candidates: those whom Nixon and the RNC thought had a reasonable chance at victory. Brock noted that his liaison would be Bill Timmons, his administrative assistant from 1963 to 1969 and the current head of the White House Congressional Relations Office. The administration also promised approximately \$100,000 to each target campaign and granted access to private opinion surveys conducted by the Republican National Committee, and, as Brock had written in the margin, his study, performed by Cambridge Opinion, would be the example to be used in other states.⁹⁹

This meeting demonstrates the true relationship between Brock's campaign and Republican leaders in Washington. Although contemporary journalists and historians have described Brock's campaign as dependent on campaign advisors "dispatched"¹⁰⁰ from Washington, there is nothing to suggest that Brock's organization was not his own accomplishment. In fact, Nixon's desire to include Brock and Rietz in a discussion about the role of the White House in other campaigns suggests that Nixon was reliant on Brock to determine the degree of influence the White House would assert in the Southern Strategy. In light of this meeting, Brock's campaign strategy and organization was the catalyst in urging the Republican leadership in Washington to play a more prominent role in other Southern Republican candidates.¹⁰¹ Nixon's holding of Brock's campaign in such high regard explains why he was willing to do almost anything to help assure Brock's election. It also led to speculation that

⁹⁹ Box 31, Folder 16, "Campaign: Re: Rietz – Correspondence," Draft, Brock Collection.

¹⁰⁰ Longley, *Albert Gore, Sr.*, 224; Also see David Halberstam, "The End of a Populist;" Richard Harris, "Annals of Politics: How the People Feel;" and Gene Graham, "Gore's Lost Cause."

¹⁰¹ For descriptions of Nixon's involvement in other campaigns, see Murphy and Gulliver's *The Southern Strategy* and Glen Moore, "Richard M. Nixon and the 1970 Midterm Elections in the South" in *Southern Historian*.

Nixon intended for Brock, should he prove victorious, to be his next Vice President.¹⁰²

However, for purposes of Nixon's goal of expanding Republican influence throughout the South, his future plans for Brock mattered far less than his having an "example" campaign developed by Brock that other Southern Republicans would emulate.

While Brock was getting encouragement and support from Nixon's administration, he was also finding that his conservative message was being received positively by the remnants of Wallace's American Independent Party. In a letter dated November 10, 1969, Gene Hunt, a Brock campaign worker, wrote to Ken Rietz that he had been contacted by the Marion County AIP requesting a "swap out"; i.e. the AIP would support [Brock] for Senate if the Republicans would back Joe Hendley (AIP) of Columbia for governor." Hunt then wrote that he told Lucille, his secretary, to "listen and make no commitments."¹⁰³ While Brock, being a loyal Republican, would certainly not support Hendley's candidacy, his campaign was careful to keep relations with the AIP friendly in the hope that voters who had supported Wallace would see that Brock was indeed their closest ideological ally.

As 1969 was coming to an end, Brock's campaign had made significant advances since he had first commissioned the Cambridge Opinion Survey a year earlier. Besides laying the organizational framework for a vast and well-funded campaign, he had also received commitments from the White House and influential supporters in Tennessee like Nat Winston, who could command loyalty from East Tennessee Republicans, and Dan Kuykendall, who led the Republican Party in Memphis as its Congressman. Additionally, he had begun making contacts with unlikely sources of support like the Marion County American Independent Party.

¹⁰² David Broder, "Nixon May Find '72 Mate" in *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, October 27, 1970.

¹⁰³ Box 31, Folder 16, "Campaign: Re: Rietz - Correspondence," Gene Hunt to Kenneth Rietz, 10/10/69, Brock Collection.

All of this bode well for a candidate trying to unseat an eighteen year Senate veteran by convincing the voters "BROCK BELIEVES IN THE THINGS WE BELIEVE IN."

Chapter III The Rhetoric of the Southern Strategy: Outreach

Bill Brock's campaign had begun early in 1969 when the Cambridge Opinion study revealed that the Vietnam War and taxes were, according to Tennesseans, the most important issues in America, and social problems such as racial conflict, student unrest, crime, and the Federal government's intervention were secondary. Brock believed that his positions on each of these issues made him the preferred candidate of Tennesseans. However, Brock also had opinions on other issues, mostly economic, which made him highly vulnerable. These positions included his desire to privatize TVA, his opposition to federally funded hospital construction, his opposition to a minimum wage, and his desire to partially privatize Social Security.¹⁰⁴ Because of these unpopular positions, the campaign decided that Brock would focus on the social issues in which he held the advantage.

According to the notes from the September 12, 1969 meeting, Brock's campaign estimated that "there are approximately 400,000 solid Republican votes in Tennessee that can be counted on for any reasonable candidate." Estimating that 500,000 votes would be needed to win in 1970, it concluded that the balance needed to come from Wallace's supporters.¹⁰⁵ A list of county vote quotas was calculated by adding Nixon's 1968 vote plus fifty percent of Wallace's 1968 vote.¹⁰⁶ Given the depressed midterm voter turnout, which likely affected independent voters the most, such county quotas were more wishful than realistic thinking, but they also demonstrate the appeal Brock's campaign believed he would have among these

¹⁰⁴ Editorial, Page 4-B, *Nashville Tennessean*, October 26, 1970; Box 17, folder 15, "News Release, October 5," "News Release, October 19," "News Release, October 28," Brock Collection.

¹⁰⁵ Box 17, Folder 17, "Campaign Material," Brock Collection.

¹⁰⁶ Box 14, 1970 Campaign Notebook, Brock Collection.

disenchanted Democrats. Since these goals were so ambitious, they necessitated that Brock's campaigning be concentrated on his reaching out to these potential supporters.

This strategy of reaching out to former Democrats, even those who had supported Wallace, was highly problematic. Six years earlier, Barry Goldwater had tried the exact same method and had been beaten overwhelmingly throughout rural West Tennessee and most of Middle Tennessee, while managing to garner fifty-two percent of the votes in East Tennessee, a region that traditionally supported Republican candidates overwhelmingly.¹⁰⁷ To demonstrate how poor Goldwater's effort had been, Dan Kuykendall and Howard Baker, each running for U.S. Senate seats the same year, polled fifty-eight percent of the vote in East Tennessee, and Baker polled an incredible sixty-eight percent two years later.¹⁰⁸ Even Nixon was able to poll fifty-one percent in 1968 against Wallace and Humphrey.¹⁰⁹ The cause of Goldwater's poor showing was his outspoken desire to privatize both TVA and Social Security and decrease overall government expenditures; these economic policies were unpopular in East Tennessee, which had benefited greatly from TVA, headquartered in Knoxville, and the nuclear research laboratory at Oak Ridge.¹¹⁰

The Southern Strategy was an effort to reach out to the electorate supporting Goldwater's and Wallace's positions on civil rights and other social issues. However, adopting those positions risked losing the votes of traditional Republicans, a threat that meant little in most other Southern states which lacked any significant Republican minority. Therefore, the Southern Strategy in Tennessee was unique in that it sought to combine its appeal to the Wallacites of Middle and West Tennessee with those traditional Republicans primarily concentrated in East

¹⁰⁷ *Tennessee Blue Book, 1965-1966*, Joe C. Carr, Secretary of State (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1966) 244-245.

¹⁰⁸ *Tennessee Blue Book, 1967-1968*, Joe C. Carr, Secretary of State (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1968) 201-202.

¹⁰⁹ *Tennessee Blue Book, 1969-1970*, Joe C. Carr, Secretary of State (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1970) 246.

¹¹⁰ Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1976) 293.

Tennessee. Brock, like Goldwater, was aware that raising contentious social and racial issues could be beneficial as he reached out to those “racially conservative”¹¹¹ Democrats. However, Goldwater’s espousal of a smaller, more state-rights’ Federal government had isolated him from many traditional East Tennessee Republicans; Brock also risked losing their support if he followed Goldwater’s model too closely.

Further illustrating this threat of revolt in East Tennessee was the Republican primary campaign which pitted Tex Ritter, the country singer and movie star, against Brock. Although Howard Baker announced a policy of neutrality early in the campaign, Ritter later explained that “the Baker people came to me and asked me to run because they did not feel Bill Brock [could] beat Albert Gore – Gore [would] crucify him for his votes against every progressive piece of legislation that [had] affected Tennesseans.”¹¹² Jack Hurst, a reporter for *The Nashville Tennessean*, speculated that Baker would rather see Gore re-elected than defeated by Brock because Brock “loves to vote no rather than aye on things, even some measure which could positively benefit Tennesseans.”¹¹³

Lacking any campaign organization, prior political experience, or much credibility as a legitimate candidate, Ritter relied on stage appearances in which he sang with other country stars to draw crowds before he would give a political speech. In them, he “previewed Gore’s campaign against [Brock], . . . He castigated Brock as the ‘against’ man, the negative congressman who was lukewarm on TVA and who had voted against Hill-Burton hospital funds and against funds for the Appalachian Regional Commission.”¹¹⁴ Due to Ritter’s efforts in East Tennessee, his economic policies’ limited appeal elsewhere, and Baker’s influence there, Ritter

¹¹¹ Bobby Lovett, 131.

¹¹² Jack Hurst, “Rednecks, City Slickers.” *The Nashville Tennessean*, August 2, 1970.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Martin and Badger, 4.

was able to poll forty-five percent in the 1st Congressional District and thirty percent in the 2nd, whereas he only managed fifteen percent in the other seven districts.¹¹⁵

Another factor that led to some consternation was Gore's reliance on a strong showing in East Tennessee in the Democratic primary to defeat his own opponent, Hudley Crockett. Crockett, Gov. Buford Ellington's press secretary, announced his candidacy in late June, just over a month before the primary on August 1, and his campaign "previewed almost all the main themes that Brock would pursue against Gore in the general election."¹¹⁶ The campaign challenged Gore's opposition to both Nixon's policies in Vietnam and his Southern Supreme Court nominees. Crockett also "supported Nixon's and Brock's plans for revenue-sharing and fervently opposed gun control. These were all issues that would loom large in Brock's campaign against Gore."¹¹⁷

With fifty-one percent of the vote, Gore barely survived Crockett's appeal to conservative Democrats. In urban and suburban Nashville and Memphis, Gore ran even with his opponent. However, in the rural, West Tennessee's 7th and 8th Congressional districts, Gore polled only forty-three percent. His margin of victory, therefore, came in the three eastern Congressional districts that supported him by a margin of three to one.¹¹⁸ Such a competitive primary demonstrated how torn the Tennessee Democratic Party had become as to whether it should continue to closely ally itself with traditional, conservative Southern Democratic policies and politicians, represented by Crockett, or follow Gore's efforts to bring the Party more in line

¹¹⁵ *Tennessee Blue Book, 1971-1972*, Joe C. Carr, Secretary of State (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1972) 243-244.

¹¹⁶ Martin and Badger, 2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Tennessee Blue Book, 1971-1972*, 225-226.

with the national Democratic agenda. Even once the primary had ended, bridges were not rebuilt as neither Gov. Ellington nor Crockett was willing to publicly endorse Gore's candidacy.¹¹⁹

Considering Brock's perceived strength among conservatives in Middle and West Tennessee and his weakness in East Tennessee, it is practical to divide Brock's campaign into two distinct campaigns: an ideological appeal to former Wallace supporters who were most apt to leave the Democratic Party, and the other an overtly partisan appeal in East Tennessee. Brock sought support in the Middle and West Grand Divisions using Nixon's 1968 Southern Strategy theme, which stressed resisting school desegregation, encouraging or even mandating school prayer, and ending lawlessness that was manifested in drugs, riots, murder, and anti-Vietnam demonstrations. Emphasizing just how important Brock's reaching out to former Democrats was to his election prospects, one of the more influential and resonant commercials that Treleven produced depicted Alfred MacFarland, "a lifelong Democrat" who was "supporting Bill Brock for the United States Senate." He says that such support

may seem a little paradoxical, but I've been angered as a lawyer at Senator Gore's vote on the Supreme Court nominees. As a sportsman, I've been dismayed at his vote on the gun control bill. As a Tennessean, I've been frustrated, angered, dismayed at his persistent, consistent vote with the ultraliberal Democrats of the Northeast who have apparently captured the Democratic Party.¹²⁰

MacFarland's withdrawal of support for Gore demonstrates how Gore's policies had eroded his political base since his last reelection. Even his supporters recognized that he was a "civil rights advocate in a state that once seceded, [and] a consistent critic of the Indochina war in a commonwealth nicknamed 'Volunteer' for the oversubscription of its young men to past military causes. He had remained a Democrat when his state was giving that party's Presidential

¹¹⁹ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 249-250.

¹²⁰ Brock Campaign Commercial, "Alfred MacFarland's Endorsement." University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

nominee. Hubert Humphrey, the smallest share of its vote of any state in the Union.”¹²¹

Therefore, Brock sought the support of Democrats like Alfred MacFarland who found themselves increasingly at odds with Gore’s policies.

Brock found that schools were continuing to be a major source of resentment toward the Democrats and he sought to portray himself as able to rectify the problems if elected. Schools had become a major battleground for civil rights in the 1950s when *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled that *de jure* segregation was illegal. *Brown*, however, “had not proven to be a substantial threat to southern segregation by 1963.” In rural areas, blacks lacked legal access to challenge segregation or were too fearful of violent reaction if they did. Wealthy whites were not worried about their children having to attend integrated schools because they were given the option of either moving to a suburb or sending their children to expensive private schools. Only poor, working- and lower-class whites, those who supported Wallace, feared integration and voiced opposition to *Brown*.¹²²

Between 1963 and 1968, however, blacks, led by the NAACP, began challenging the continued pace of and efforts toward further integration. Their success came in 1969 when the Warren Court, in deciding the *Alexander v. Holmes County* case, struck down dual school systems and mandated that all efforts, including busing, be made to integrate school districts. Gore spoke against school busing and adamantly opposed using federal funds to help pay for it.¹²³ However, he failed to communicate his opposition to the policy back home to Tennesseans. Although busing to achieve integration was not used anywhere in Tennessee, the *Alexander* decision made voters aware that busing was indeed a real threat. Hayes Mizell, an advocate of

¹²¹ Gene Graham, “Gore’s Lost Cause,” in *New South*, Spring, 1971, p.27.

¹²² Lovett, 69.

¹²³ Kyle Longley, *Senator Albert Gore, Sr.: Tennessee Maverick* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004) 206.

desegregation efforts and future education advisor to Pres. Jimmy Carter. wrote in 1970 that the Republican strategy of emphasizing busing was reliant “upon the confused majority of Americans for whom mortality has removed Ho Chi Minh as the adversary but who now see yellow school buses as the real enemy.”¹²⁴ By 1970, the battle over school integration had reached its zenith as Bill Brock and others, fearing that the Supreme Court would soon decide that busing should be enforced nationally, began speaking about the need to pass a Constitutional amendment banning busing.

Although Brock did not press the case for a Constitutional amendment during the campaign, he did address the issue in two campaign commercials. Both were filmed at the same time and depicted Brock talking with a group of five white individuals about the merits of busing. His argument in each was that “the purpose of a school is to give a child the tools to grow and be a responsible” adult, and that this could most easily be accomplished by sending children to a school that is nearby and with children from their neighborhood with whom they can associate outside of the classroom. In the first, he describes a woman who had “a little girl in kindergarten, one in first grade, and one in third grade and they live right next door to the school.” The woman was forced to put her children onto a bus and “haul them three miles across town to a school where they didn’t know anybody, and I think that’s as wrong as rain, because you’re ignoring those kids.” He concludes the first commercial by suggesting that the Supreme Court be changed, and if it cannot, “then let’s change the law and force the courts to abide by the law.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Hayes Mizell, “School Desegregation and the Southern Strategy,” *The New South*, Spring 1970, 40.

¹²⁵ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Busing I,” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

In all but a couple West Tennessee counties, a public call for segregation and the reinstatement of Jim Crow was unacceptable Tennessee by 1970.¹²⁶ However, certain code words had instead been substituted. “Busing” was considered one of these words and through its use, Brock “subliminally”¹²⁷ suggested that segregated schools would be preferable to integrated ones. This rhetoric was especially important as he sought the support of those “poor, working-class, and lower-middle-class whites” whose children stood the greatest chance of being bused to integrated schools and for whom the possibility of attending a private school was not economically feasible.¹²⁸

Just as the debate over school integration had been reinvigorated over the issue of busing, communal and compulsory school prayer, banned in the 1962 *Engel v. Vitale* decision, was once again a major issue in 1970. Albert Gore recalled that “the subject of prayer in schools came into the campaign [during a debate] in Memphis. I replied [to a question] that I favored voluntary prayer by anyone, anywhere, but that I was opposed to any proposal to grant authority to any government official to prescribe or require a particular prayer by public-school pupils or anyone else. . . . Brock agreed.”¹²⁹ However, just four days later, a Constitutional amendment mandating school prayer passed the Senate after Everett Dirksen and his son-in-law Howard Baker, who had campaigned in 1966 on the issue of introducing such an amendment, had introduced it. Gore voted against the act and later claimed, although without verification, that after the amendment passed the Senate a telephone call was made “from Baker’s office to my opponent’s headquarters in Nashville to the effect: ‘The ball is yours now.’”¹³⁰

¹²⁶ See the chapter entitled “The Black Democrats” in Lovett.

¹²⁷ David Halberstam, “The End of a Populist.” *Harper’s*, January 1971, p. 37.

¹²⁸ Lovett, 69.

¹²⁹ Gore, *Let the Glory Out*, 269.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Gore believed that the amendment's introduction and the timing of the vote were politically charged, and it is likely that they were, but Brock was able to dominate the issue and cast Gore in a very negative light. Although Brock had agreed with Gore's position that all had the right to voluntary prayer, he criticized Gore's votes against school prayer in a full-page ad in the *Nashville Banner* on October 22, claiming that "Albert Gore has taken position against school prayer three times."¹³¹ Gore was reportedly "shocked at the injection of the religious issue into the campaign," but was left with little time or money necessary to publicly defend or explain himself. The timing of Brock's charge against Gore was, in the words of Gore aide Ted Brown, "calculated to send the subliminal message that Albert Gore may not believe in God, may not believe in the white race, may not believe in America the Beautiful, but by God, Bill Brock does."¹³² Eugene Graham, Gore's volunteer press aide, called the whole amendment a farce and said it was nothing more than "an election-year stunt."¹³³ While it may be true that this issue, which Brock raised so late in the campaign, "put Brock over the top,"¹³⁴ David Halberstam, who was following Gore during the campaign, wrote that they "knew it was cooking, even knew the time on it; it is precisely the same schedule that was used against Ralph Yarborough in Texas."¹³⁵ Regardless of whether Gore, himself a practicing Baptist, anticipated school prayer's injection into the campaign, Brock was able to dominate the issue and keep Gore answering charges rather than focusing on the issues for which he held the advantage.¹³⁶

Brock's campaign did not stop at suggesting that Gore himself was responsible for busing and the end of school prayer, but proceeded to point to Gore's domestic agenda as being

¹³¹ *Nashville Banner*, October 22, 1970.

¹³² David Maraniss and Ellen Nakashima, *The Prince of Tennessee: The Rise of Al Gore* (New York: Simon and Schuster 2000) 121

¹³³ Harris, *The Annals of Politics*, 50.

¹³⁴ Longley, *Albert Gore, Sr.* 238.

¹³⁵ Halberstam, 44.

¹³⁶ Harris, *The Annals of Politics*, 51.

responsible for the nearly 300% increase in violent crimes in Tennessee between 1960 and 1970.¹³⁷ Many had the impression that the federal government had let crime get out of control. The Johnson Administration, which had Gore's complete support on domestic issues, had funneled tremendous resources into welfare and supporting the poor, but many could not understand how so much money had failed to reduce crime and drug proliferation, especially in urban areas. Instead, the prevalence of crime extended into the public arena with John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 and Martin Luther King's and Robert Kennedy's in 1968. Additionally, the Watts race riot of 1965 produced 34 deaths, and was a major impetus in Johnson's efforts to bring the impoverished into mainstream America. Two years later, major riots broke out in Newark and Detroit in addition to 39 other "major" or "serious" disorders during that year.¹³⁸

President Johnson's War on Poverty, combined with the Supreme Court's efforts to increase criminals' rights in the *Gideon* and *Miranda* decisions, further focused public attention on urban disorder and crime as racial in character. In this environment, even the seemingly disparate issue of taxes, race, and crime became closely associated. David Halberstam succinctly explained how the issues became intertwined when he addressed why the new middle class was so upset about paying of taxes. He wrote that these workers make "\$7,000 a year in the factory and picked up another \$2,000 through the soil bank. You go through their returns and they owe \$1,500 in taxes. And they're pissed off. Mightily. You can see them thinking, 'Where does the tax money go? Welfare. And who gets the welfare? The niggers (sic). And who did I just see on my color TV raising hell and carrying on and burning some damn thing? The niggers (sic).'¹³⁹ Further evidence that taxes were irrevocably coupled with crime is found when one angry white

¹³⁷ See FBI Uniform Crime Rates, www.fbi.gov.

¹³⁸ M.J. Heale, *The Sixties in America* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001) 95.

¹³⁹ Halberstam, 40.

voter wrote to Gore in 1968, “My income taxes have been raised so there would be money to give someone who will not work, or to bribe some street gang not to cause trouble.”¹⁴⁰ Following the logic of both Halberstam and this voter, Brock’s approach that favored tougher punishment for criminals would, according to the previous rhetoric, reduce the number of blacks on welfare and consequently reduce the need for taxes.

This appeal to lower- and middle-class whites, especially those described by Halberstam, for the support of stronger law and order was made by first asserting the need to appoint Federal judges who not only disagreed with the need to bus children to further integrate schools, but also favored harsher sentencing for criminals. In criticizing Gore’s vote against Carswell in April, 1970, Brock said it was “cast despite the crisis facing America in law enforcement, drugs, and crime and despite a record abuse of our lower court decisions to force school busing of our children to achieve numerical and racial balance.”¹⁴¹ In one commercial, Brock said that justices were needed who “will put a criminal in jail rather than turning him loose. The Supreme Court has . . . passed decisions that have tied the hands of police so that they cannot put a man behind bars when they commit a crime. We ought to be protecting the rights of the average citizen.”¹⁴²

The second aspect of Brock’s appeal came when he criticized the encroaching drug culture of the 1960s. While Brock could have associated anti-war, dope-smoking hippies with this drug culture, his efforts to reach out to young people meant that he portray them as the victims, rather than the instigators, of the drug culture. In one a commercial, he said that those who commit “murder” by selling “a hard narcotic like heroin to one of these children that doesn’t

¹⁴⁰ Charles E. Morton, III to Gore, October 20, 1968, Box “Politics,” Folder “1968 Presidential 2 of 3” Albert Gore Research Center.

¹⁴¹ *New York Times*, April 19, 1970.

¹⁴² Brock Campaign Commercial, “Busing I,” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

know any better” should be “put in jail for a long time.”¹⁴³ He said that college students engaged in unlawful activities, such as drug use and illegal protesting, should be “expelled.”¹⁴⁴ His refusal to say that those individuals should also be put in jail is better understood when viewing past efforts to engage students and elicit their entry into the political process.

In 1968, he had supported Jack McDonald, his young protégé, in his efforts to capture control of the Young Republicans National Federation from Republican National Committee chairman, Hugh Scott.¹⁴⁵ In 1969, Brock had headed President Nixon’s investigation into campus culture and had recommended that the voting age be lowered, college students be encouraged to become involved in political campaigns, draft reform be enacted to remove “the sword over their heads,” and there be no repressive legislation against college students since it is “the fundamental responsibility for order and conduct on the campus lies with the university community.”¹⁴⁶ This report gained him widespread publicity in the press and he was certainly fearful of contradicting his own published report. To demonstrate his efforts to engage students during the campaign, he enlisted the support of Curt Watson. Watson was a clean-cut, square-jawed All-American tailback at the University of Tennessee who volunteered for Brock’s campaign in the spring of 1970. Appearing in a campaign commercial, Watson said that Brock “listens to young people’s problems, and that’s one thing a lot of people don’t do nowadays.”¹⁴⁷ Brock’s use of Watson as a spokesman only added to his efforts to represent better the hard working middle-class family, which had stood in silent opposition to the changes America was enduring.

¹⁴³ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Drugs.” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁴⁴ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Equal Treatment.” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁴⁵ Martin and Badger, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Box 17 folder 14, “Bill Brock’s Campus Reports to the President, 1969.” Brock Collection.

¹⁴⁷ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Curt Watson,” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center

The final issue directly related to the issue of crime prevention was gun control. Gore had voted in favor of the Gun Control Act of 1968, which had limited the sale of guns through the mail and across state lines, while Brock had opposed it. Many thought that this was the first step toward outlawing all guns, and Brock sought to capitalize on this inaccuracy. As Dr. Nat Winston stated when asked about gun control, “Now, there’s a *real* issue!”¹⁴⁸ Although Dr. Winston claimed that the gun control issue had no racial overtones, nearly all the evidence points to them. The same individual who wrote Gore complaining about his income taxes being used as a bribe to a street gang complained that he “can’t order a gun through the mail anymore, and I don’t doubt that . . . it won’t be but a few years until (sic) I won’t even be allowed to own a gun.”¹⁴⁹ This sentiment was not reserved for the lower- and middle-classes, however, as evidenced when James Stahlman, editor of the *Nashville Banner*, described his attitude towards guns in a letter to a Thomas Storke in early 1970. Stahlman believed that police were unable to cope with the crime, making it necessary for him to take additional precautions to protect himself. He described sitting with a “thirty-eight revolver on his coffee table every night while watching TV.” He had “directed Western Union to stop sending out messages . . . after nightfall and [kept] the whole seven and one-half acres floodlighted until [bedtime].” Other security precautions included having metal guards installed on all outside doors except the front in which the glass was replaced with “bullet shatterproof glass.” Stahlman also describes having “two shotguns and a carbine ready to take on any bastards who come up my hill. I have seen this thing coming too long to be a sitting duck, unless I am mowed down from behind as has happened to several of our Nashville police recently.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Harris, 40.

¹⁴⁹ Charles E. Morton to Gore, October 20, 1968. Gore Collection.

¹⁵⁰ James Stahlman to Thomas M. Storke, March, 13, 1970, Box VIII-2 Folder 20. James Stahlman Collection, Vanderbilt University.

Although Stahlman's precautions verge on paranoia, both of the previous letters express the private fear that individuals had concerning their ability to use guns to defend themselves. Brock understood this fear and exploited it in a commercial in which he is dressed in hunting attire and flanked by three men dressed in hunting camouflage and carrying rifles. The commercial began with one of the hunters asking Brock in a deep Southern drawl how he felt about gun control. Brock responded by saying that he was against it because it punished the law-abiding citizen when the laws should be aimed at punishing the criminals. The result, should gun control advocates get their way. Brock worried, would be the confiscation of all registered guns. Since only law-abiding citizens were legally allowed to own a gun, the criminals not registering their illegal guns would then have a monopoly on firearms.¹⁵¹ Rather than worrying about gun control, Brock suggested gun control advocates be more concerned about crime control. Despite Nat Winston's assurances that this issue had no racial overtones, it is obvious that Brock sought to demonstrate that whites owned guns for noble purposes like hunting while blacks owned them for theft and murder.

Concern about crime was becoming an increasingly political topic in Tennessee as the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and subsequent riots and demonstrations in Nashville and Memphis brought the unrest of the Northern ghettos within Tennessee's own borders. Additionally, the migrations that had sparked the famous *Baker v. Carr* lawsuit in Tennessee had brought families away from their traditional comfort zones and into unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people.¹⁵² This resulted in a populace quite fearful and in need of a sense of security. As Stahlman's letter indicated, this security was easily found in the possession of a

¹⁵¹ Brock Campaign Commercial, "Gun Control," University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁵² Graham, 30.

firearm. Too often these fears were the result of racial prejudice, and Brock's efforts to exploit those prejudices throughout his addressing of the crime control and prevention were evident.

While these racial appeals had a captive audience throughout Middle and West Tennessee, which had witnessed racial strife and violence first-hand, East Tennessee was also fertile ground for such rhetoric despite the absence there of a significant black population. As Richard Harris wrote in *The New Yorker*, in East Tennessee "there were towns in the area that had no black residents and would countenance none; some municipalities even put up signs on the main road at either end of town saying 'Nigger (sic), Don't Let the Sun Set on You Here.'"¹⁵³ However, these towns that were so set in their racial attitudes had continued to vote for the Republican Party, which resisted the glorification of the Confederacy based on their affirmation for the Union in 1861. Therefore, it was in question whether they would continue to support the Republican Party once its foundation and appeal for voters shifted outside the region to the growing cities of Nashville and Memphis, thus taking away the opportunities for Federal patronage that the "Post Office Republicans" once had. To ensure that East Tennessee remained firmly entrenched in the Republican column, an all-out effort was made to stress the importance of party loyalty and the support of the President of the United States.

¹⁵³ Harris, 34.

Chapter IV The Exception of Tennessee: Keeping the Base Loyal

Albert Gore's and Richard Nixon's personal animosity was well known, and neither made any effort to shore-up any previous differences once Nixon became president. But to say that Nixon's personal dislike for Gore was the reason for his playing such a central role in the 1970 campaign is both naïve and incomplete. Nixon had always been willing to put past differences aside to achieve a political end, as evidenced in his reaching out to Rockefeller's supporters in the aftermath of a bitter Republican primary and convention in 1968. But when the opportunity presented itself to achieve both a political end and settle an old score, the partisan Republican still possessed the strong political instincts that had served him so well earlier in his career.¹⁵⁴ It was in this spirit of partisanship that Nixon, upon Harry Dent's telling him in early December, 1969 that the Republicans' campaign against Gore was "one of our most winnable," became dedicated to defeating Gore.¹⁵⁵

While Nixon desired a Republican to defeat Gore, his primary objective was to replace Gore with a conservative who would support Nixon's domestic and foreign agendas. Therefore, Nixon first tried to recruit Gov. Ellington to oppose Gore in the Democratic primary.¹⁵⁶ Nixon was a close friend and confidante of James Stahlman, who in turn was Ellington's biggest supporter in Middle Tennessee. As Kyle Longley explained, "Ellington was a viable choice. At the best, he would weaken Gore in the primary. At the worst, he would defeat Brock but give the administration a much more pliable ally in the Senate, despite his party affiliation."¹⁵⁷ Based on the dates of Dent's unsuccessful recruitment of Ellington to run and Nixon's meeting with

¹⁵⁴ Mason 30-31.

¹⁵⁵ Dent to Nixon, December 3, 1969, NPMP, White House Special Files: Harry Dent, Box 9 as quoted in Longley, *Senator Albert Gore, Sr.: Tennessee Maverick*, 223.

¹⁵⁶ Longley, *Senator Albert Gore, Sr.: Tennessee Maverick*, 224.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 224.

Brock, Baker, and his cabinet, which occurred within a month of each other. Nixon's first priority was to defeat Gore with an ally of either party.

By 1970, however, with Ellington still refusing to challenge Gore in the primary, Nixon began turning what had long been private support of Brock's campaign into public endorsements of his candidacy. Just as Nixon came out early in his support of Brock, Brock eagerly clung to the name and image of Richard Nixon. This was important because Nixon was an incredibly popular figure both nationally and in Tennessee. As Gallup polls indicate, Nixon was both the most popular and the most respected man in America throughout 1970, and while his national approval rating in late July was sixty-one percent, it was sixty-eight percent in the South.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, his close relationship with Billy Graham, the second most popular and most respected man in America, made him a champion of the predecessors of the religious right.¹⁵⁹ Historian Steven P. Miller wrote that Graham, in supporting Nixon in 1968, began "attempting to influence the direction of Southern politics. In doing so, Graham involved himself both implicitly and directly in the machinations of the Republican 'Southern Strategy.'"¹⁶⁰ Therefore, Nixon's religious identity, his hawkish military attitude, and his nominations of two Southerners to the Supreme Court had made Nixon an incredibly popular figure amongst all Southern Republicans and many Southern Democrats.

While events throughout Nixon's term in office bolstered his support in the South amongst conservatives, the events of April and May 1970, served only to solidify his popular image in Tennessee. Meanwhile, Brock presented himself as Nixon's loyal supporter and cast Gore as an impediment to Tennesseans' preferences. On April 30, Nixon announced on

¹⁵⁸ *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971, Volume Three, 1969-1971* (New York: Random House 1972) 2231, 2257.

¹⁵⁹ Martin and Badger, 8.

¹⁶⁰ Steven P. Miller, "Billy Graham, Civil Rights, and the Changing Postwar South," in *Politics and Religion in the White South*, edited by Glenn Feldman (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005) 174.

television his decision to send troops into Cambodia, thus spreading the Vietnam War into a neighboring country. The decision caused protests and riots on many college campuses, but it was widely popular throughout Tennessee, even on college campuses, where protest was both minimal and peaceful.¹⁶¹ James Stahlman wrote in a telegram to President Nixon the morning after his television announcement. "Let's get this war over with on our own terms and our men back home on our timetable. Clobber, Clobber, Clobber. And the American people will stand up and cheer. You need not be concerned for your place in history. You carved one out last night [in your television address]."¹⁶² While the public was quite supportive of Nixon, Gore's criticisms of Nixon's decision received little public endorsement, even in Gore's most supportive newspaper, *The Nashville Tennessean*.¹⁶³

Less than a month later, the conflict between Gore and Nixon shifted from the political setting in Washington to the campaign trail in Tennessee when Nixon, seeking to "connect with college students . . . in light of the recent shootings at Kent State University," decided to attend Billy Graham's crusade in Knoxville at the University of Tennessee campus. Although Graham said that "he would 'stay away from politics' during the crusade." Nixon's announcement that he would attend the crusade as a guest of Graham made that promise untenable.¹⁶⁴

Nixon's intention to attend a Graham crusade was far from surprising, since he had attended previous ones, and Graham had extended an open invitation for Nixon to accompany him at any time.¹⁶⁵ However, the political timing of the trip and the fact that Nixon was accompanied by Sen. Howard Baker and Congressman Brock made it a *de facto* campaign stop.

¹⁶¹ Ruth Anne Thompson, "A Taste of Student Power: Protest at the University of Tennessee, 1964-1970," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* vol. 57 (1998) 81.

¹⁶² Stahlman to Nixon, May 1, 1970, Box VIII-2, Folder 21, James Stahlman Papers.

¹⁶³ See *The Nashville Tennesseans* Editorial page for May 1 and 2.

¹⁶⁴ Miller, 175.

¹⁶⁵ Charles Henderson, "Richard Nixon, Theologian." *The Nation*, September 21, 1970, p. 232

Considering that not since 1938, when Franklin Roosevelt campaigned against the opponents of his New Deal Legislation, had a sitting President campaigned against a U.S. Senator in that Senator's home state, Nixon's visit to Tennessee was even more shocking in that it was cloaked with the veil of religion.

The party that traveled with Nixon to Knoxville for the crusade included Brock, Howard Baker, the three other Tennessee Congressional Republicans, and one House Democrat.¹⁶⁶ Gore and all other Tennessee Congressional delegates were invited to attend, but each declined. With Brock's opponent not in attendance, the political nature of the visit was all the more apparent. Nixon's speech prior to Graham's taking the podium was political throughout, as he only invoked God's name once; when he referred to America as a nation "under God." He did, however, reach out to disillusioned students by promoting the freedom of dissent and free speech, while also applauding the "great majority of America's young people [who] do not approve of [the] violence [of protestors]."¹⁶⁷ Lest the political nature of the visit be forgotten, one image captured and printed in *The Nashville Banner* portrays Graham in the foreground speaking to the overflow crowd exceeding 100,000 while Brock sat between Baker and Nixon in the background.¹⁶⁸ If East Tennessee Republicans were in doubt of Brock's commitment to the Republican Party, no image could have better assuaged their fears. In the aftermath of the event, even the University of Tennessee's Chancellor, who had fully supported Nixon's decision to attend and encouraged all Vietnam dissenters to be silent during the religious event, later acknowledged the "visit was a political move."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Miller, 175.

¹⁶⁷ "Transcript of Nixon Talk Before Billy Graham Rally at University of Tennessee." *New York Times*, May 29, 1970

¹⁶⁸ *The Nashville Banner*, May 29, 1970.

¹⁶⁹ Thompson, 89.

While Brock was trying to promote his relationship with Nixon to maintain his support amongst Republicans in the East, Gore's tactics of portraying Brock as a proxy for Nixon only fueled Brock's efforts. Gore would later claim that he took the high road by conducting a pro-Gore campaign rather than an anti-Brock campaign, but the reality was that Gore's attacks on Nixon were just as scathing as Brock's attacks on Gore. At one point, Gore responded to a Republican National Committee publication that labeled him as the "big spender of the week," by saying, "This official publication has charged me with supporting anti-poverty programs, housing programs, programs to improve education, and veterans benefits and Appalachia, all of which President Nixon has vetoed. To this I plead guilty."¹⁷⁰ In another attack on the President, Gore criticized the racial element of the Southern Strategy when he said that it "is based on the notion that we are not only conservative, but we are so prejudiced and bigoted that our prejudice – if stirred – will outweigh our better judgment."¹⁷¹

Although Gore criticized Nixon's involvement in the campaign, the central issue over which they clashed in Washington, whether America ought to stay and fight in Vietnam, was also being raised by Brock. Gore had long opposed American involvement in Southeast Asia, even going so far as to make his argument against involvement the first chapter of his book published during the campaign, *The Eye of the Storm*. Brock, however, promoted himself as the pro-war candidate committed to "peace with honor." He went to great lengths to promote this policy, since it was, according to the Cambridge Opinion Study, thought by Tennesseans to be the most important issue facing America. By all accounts, Brock's stance was preferred by Tennesseans, and he capitalized on the public's preference by joining General William Westmoreland at the Army-Tennessee football game on October 3 and by filming two campaign

¹⁷⁰ Kelly Leiter, "Tennessee: Gore vs. the White House," *The Nation*, October, 2, 1970, p. 397.

¹⁷¹ *The Nashville Tennessean*, "Gore Calls Nixon Tactics Inflammatory," by Bill Preston, 8/5/1970.

spots that highlighted his differences in opinion with Gore concerning Vietnam.¹⁷² In one, he is featured having a conversation with an elderly veteran who asks Brock how Senator Gore justifies his position of “tucking tail and running.” Brock responds that he doesn’t understand Gore’s justification, and that it’s not honest and doesn’t represent the people of Tennessee, who have “never been cut out of the cloth of those who want to cut and run.”¹⁷³

Once Brock’s pro-war credentials had been solidified, equally by his own rhetoric and through Gore’s own anti-war stance, Brock could shift his focus to the “peace” aspect to defend against any charge he was supportive of a war causing unnecessary death. Therefore, in the second commercial, Brock defended Nixon’s policies by saying, “we are withdrawing. [That’s] one of the things that’s sort of difficult to understand. . . . President Nixon is the first president out of the last four who has pulled people out of Vietnam rather than sending them over. I believe we’ll be out of there in a matter of months.”¹⁷⁴ This commercial’s efforts at supporting Nixon’s Vietnam policy while criticizing any attempt to withdraw unilaterally were reinforced by a billboard campaign that saw advertisements throughout the state announcing that “Birds of a Feather Flock Together.” Underneath this slogan was Gore’s name side by side with those of Edward Kennedy, George McGovern, and William Fulbright, each an anti-war senator.¹⁷⁵

Brock’s efforts to invoke Nixon were matched only by his efforts to cast Gore as an out-of-touch scalawag who had more in common with those aforementioned Senators than with his own constituents. Many Tennesseans already viewed Gore as out of touch, as his constituent services had long been considered inadequate. Emphasizing Gore’s poor record, one constituent, having sent two different letters to Gore’s office and receiving the exact same response, albeit

¹⁷² Longley, *Albert Gore, Sr.*, 237

¹⁷³ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Vietnam.” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁷⁴ Brock Campaign Commercial, “Nixon’s Right.” University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁷⁵ Leiter, 396.

with different signatures, wrote back that he was “amazed” that Gore had chosen to ignore his constituents.¹⁷⁶ Brock turned this perceived aloofness into a political asset by advertising in newspapers a picture of Gore at a fund-raiser at the home of Ted Kennedy along with other national Democrats.¹⁷⁷ In a campaign visit to Memphis intended to reach out to the “new guard Republicans” there. Spiro Agnew, Nixon’s hatchet man and the administration’s face for the Southern Strategy throughout the rest of the South during the 1970 campaigns, claimed that Gore “is most sincere in his mistaken belief that Tennessee is located somewhere between New York City and Hartford, Connecticut.”¹⁷⁸ Just as Goldwater Republicans in the rest of the state detested the thought of a Senator who supported the North’s interests above Tennessee’s and the South’s, East Tennessee Republicans were also alarmed at Gore’s consistent opposition to Nixon’s policies and efforts to continue to build the Republican Party.

Brock’s efforts to maintain Republicans’ loyalty in East Tennessee were a crucial part of his campaign strategy throughout the summer and early Fall, but by October, with even Kenneth Rietz saying that Gore’s campaign was “making some gains,”¹⁷⁹ the national Republican juggernaut kicked in to offer an all-out blitz for the final month of the campaign. Not that fundraising had ever been a considerable issue for Brock, but Jackie Gleason, a Republican National Committee operative, delivered some \$200,000 to Brock’s campaign that he had collected from various wealthy Republicans throughout the country.¹⁸⁰

This influx of money allowed Brock to fund a massive last-minute blitz that his campaign had planned over a year before. Howard Baker’s submission of an amendment allowing prayer in schools gave Brock ammunition to fight Gore on that front, but Baker also was filmed giving

¹⁷⁶ Frank M. Smith, Col. Ret. To Gore, 9/1/70, Politics: 1970 General 1 of 3, Gore Center.

¹⁷⁷ Leiter, 396.

¹⁷⁸ Longley, “Target Number One” 544

¹⁷⁹ “Gore Battles Back,” by David S. Broder, *The Washington Post*, October 23, 1970.

¹⁸⁰ Longley, *Albert Gore, Sr.*, 224.

an endorsement of Brock that was released only ten days prior to the election. While Baker personally disagreed with some of Brock's positions, as evidenced by their opposing votes on some issues, Baker was indeed a loyal Republican who called on voters to support Brock, stating that "there's a realistic opportunity to give President Nixon control over one house of Congress, the Senate, and give much needed assistance [that] President Nixon needs."¹⁸¹ With Baker having considerable support amongst East Tennesseans of all political persuasions, this endorsement was critical to Brock's chances there.

While much campaigning and rhetoric had been used to portray Brock as a loyal Republican, all paled in comparison to Nixon's historic visit to East Tennessee State University on October 20. This visit was certainly anticipated as far back as the meeting between Brock, Nixon, and others on October 10, 1969. In Brock's own words, the visit was "beyond all expectations."¹⁸² Nixon used his speech to emphasize Brock's and Gore's respective roles as proxies in a larger ideological fight. He said that the two differed tremendously on "issues that cross party lines," those that deal with war, taxation, crime, and judges who will "be effective in controlling crime."¹⁸³ He proclaimed that Tennessee needed a Senator who would support the President's judicial nominees and agenda rather than oppose them at every step. While bipartisan appeals permeated the speech, Nixon touted his position as the leader of the Republican Party by reminding those present that he carried Tennessee when he was on the ballot in 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1968. This support should be reflected and sustained by Tennessee electing a Senator "who votes with [the President] and not against him on the great issues."

¹⁸¹ Brock Campaign Commercial, "Baker's Endorsement," University of Oklahoma Political Communication Center.

¹⁸² *The Nashville Banner*, page 2, October 21, 1970.

¹⁸³ Nixon's speech at ETSU as quoted in *The Nashville Banner* on October 21, 1970.

Nixon's appearance at East Tennessee State University was but a culminating event of a carefully orchestrated campaign. While Brock devoted most of his time to the West and Middle divisions of the state, he relied on a strong partisan appeal to maintain the support of traditional Republicans who otherwise might have chosen to support Gore for his economic policies or decide to not vote at all. Supporters verifying Brock's commitment to the Republican Party came from both inside and outside the state. Howard Baker's endorsement and timely introduction of the school prayer amendment won Brock considerable support and carried his favor. Additionally, visits from General Westmoreland, Attorney General Mitchell, and Vice-President Agnew only contributed to the impression that Brock would truly be a valuable representative in Washington.

Chapter V Tallying the Votes

The campaign concluded with the election on November 3. Gore's "people figured they would have to stay within 55,000 votes of Brock in East Tennessee to win."¹⁸⁴ As it happened, Brock won that Division by over 93,000. In Gore's political base of Middle Tennessee and Nashville, Gore bounced back and won by a resounding 75,000, but the returns from West Tennessee favored Brock by almost 30,000. At the end of the night Tennessee had just elected its second Republican Senator by a margin of nearly 45,000 votes and its first Republican Governor since 1928. Of especial importance to the Republican Party, Tennessee in 1970 had become the first Southern state since Reconstruction to elect Republicans to its three major statewide positions.

The question of how the Republican Party had grown from such humble beginnings in Tennessee, with only local appeal, into a statewide organization capable of running and winning statewide campaigns was troubling to journalists at the time. They were quick to blame the racially divisive aspects of Brock's campaign for inspiring fear and intolerance among the population, and they feared that the South was reverting to the days of race-baiting and segregation. David Halberstam, covering the Gore campaign, wrote that the "national television commentators are giving the Nixon-Agnew Southern strategy credit for the victory, but I think they are wrong. . . . Tennessee is becoming a Republican state anyway. If the Republicans had run a more decent, more liberal, more honorable campaign, I think they would have won even more votes."¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, two other contemporary journalists, wrote that "the Republican victory in Tennessee came *in spite of* the Southern Strategy, rather

¹⁸⁴ Halberstam, 45.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

than because of it."¹⁸⁶ These journalists believed that Brock's racially conservative rhetoric was unnecessary since Gore's anti-war position was sufficient reason for voters to support Brock. However, this consideration runs into problems when one takes into account where Brock won votes. Assuming that Tennesseans from all divisions were homogenous in their level of support for the war, Brock would win equal levels of support from each. However, his overwhelming defeat in Middle Tennessee demonstrated that other factors than voters' support for or against the Vietnam War determined their votes. Determining what these factors were has been the source of debate among Southern historians.

For much of the past thirty years, historians have pointed to race and civil rights as the chief instigators of Republican insurgency and two-party competition. This argument is based on V.O. Key's conclusion that "the politics of the South revolves around the position of Negro." Whites rallied together when faced with the threat of black social and economic advancement.¹⁸⁷ Although writing prior to the civil rights movement, Key's analysis was supported by Numan Bartley and Hugh Graham in 1975 after the movement had subsided. They argued that the national Democrats' support of civil rights caused blacks to flock to the Democratic Party and Southern whites of all classes to abandon the Democratic Party in favor of the Republican Party.¹⁸⁸ More recently, Alexander Lamis, Merle Black, and Earl Black have reached similar conclusions that the beginnings of Southern Republicanism are found in black enfranchisement and the end of Jim Crow.

However, a recent study by Byron E. Shafer and Richard Johnston has questioned whether the civil rights movement was truly the cause of Republican growth. Their analysis is founded on the idea that economic development and a politics of class resulted in Republican

¹⁸⁶ Murphy and Gulliver 129.

¹⁸⁷ V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 5.

¹⁸⁸ Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, 195-196.

growth.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, Republican candidates performed best in white collar areas and worst in both white and black working class neighborhoods. The authors' speculate that if the Republican Party was indeed founded on the politics of race, then racial homogeneity would have ensued in partisanship. According to their results, it did not. Thus, the Southern Republican Party was founded as a means of protecting white-collar interests and, although temporarily capitalizing on racial hostility during the civil rights movement, endured as the party of well-heeled whites.¹⁹⁰

Ecological regression allows for the testing of each of these hypotheses to determine which factors could predict high support for Brock in the traditionally Democratic Middle and West divisions. Key's observation that white voters rally together in response to black advancement should have implied that Brock received higher support in counties with a high percentage of black inhabitants. Alternatively, Shafer's and Johnston's conclusion that economics and class were the reasons behind Republican support should have implied that Brock received higher support in counties that had higher levels of income, white collar workers, and education.

The results support the notion that whites voted Republican in a reaction to the Democrats' advocacy of civil rights. Black population as a percentage of total population was the only variable found to have a sufficient level of significance to predict Brock's vote with any reliability. With a coefficient of .391, this variable predicts that for every ten percent increase in the black population as a percentage of the total population, Brock would receive 3.9% additional support from that county. This suggests that if fifty percent of a population in a county was black, Brock would receive nineteen and one half percent more votes than if there

¹⁸⁹ Byron E. Shafer and Richard Johnston. *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 9.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

were no blacks in that county.¹⁹¹ Although this data does support the argument for race at the county level, it cannot conclusively reject that results favoring the economic and class argument might not have been found at the sub-county level.

The results of this analysis confirm that Brock's reliance on the Southern Strategy was necessary to his success in West Tennessee, with its high concentration of blacks. Although Brock found little success in attracting Wallace voters from Gore's own Middle Tennessee, he was tremendously successful in attracting them in West Tennessee, where voters were twice as likely to assign a high degree of importance to "racial problems." According to Brock's county quotas, in which he sought Nixon's entire vote and fifty-percent of Wallace's, he predicted winning approximately 210,000 out of 423,000 votes in West Tennessee. Brock was unable to reach such goals as voter turnout decreased throughout the state by eighteen percent. However, he was much more successful in expanding his party's vote than Gore was. In 1968, Humphrey polled 129,600 votes and Nixon polled 128,700 votes across West Tennessee. Two years later, Brock was able to increase Nixon's total by 63,000 votes, nearly fifty percent. Gore was only able to increase Humphrey's total by twenty-five percent. If these increases were only from the candidates' success in soliciting votes from Wallace's supporters, Wallace's supporters from West Tennessee were more than twice as likely to vote Republican as Democrat in 1970.

Brock equaled his success from West Tennessee in his party's natural base of East Tennessee. Although Brock was unable to significantly increase Nixon's totals from two years before, Gore was equally unsuccessful improving upon Humphrey's. Nixon polled fifty-two percent to Humphrey's 24%, roughly a two-to-one advantage: Brock received similar support with sixty-three percent of the vote. Therefore, East Tennessee, like Middle Tennessee, was

¹⁹¹ The data for this analysis is found in the 1970 U.S. Census for Tennessee and the methods are replicated from Michael W. Giles and Melanie A. Buckner, "David Duke and Black Threat: An Old Hypothesis Revisited," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 3, August 1993, pp 702-713.

proving resilient to the breakdown of partisanship, which had already begun in West Tennessee. Brock's success came from a high degree of cohesion within the Republican ranks. Although Tex Ritter had not been a formidable challenge, his success in the mountain counties could have been a bad omen for Brock's fortunes there, just as Gore's poor showing in the Democratic primary in the West predicted Brock's success there.

Conclusion

Republican resilience in East Tennessee, coupled with success in West Tennessee, resurrected a conservative alliance defunct since Crump lost power in 1948. Crump had created his alliance in the Democratic primary to prevent New Dealers from Middle Tennessee from winning the nomination, and consequently the general election. Similarly, the Republicans brought together anti-civil rights advocates calling for a reduction in the size of the Federal government in West Tennessee with Civil War Unionists from East Tennessee who maintained the Republican belief in a business-friendly government. Just as Crump was the kingmaker in Tennessee politics throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Bill Brock and Howard Baker commanded a sufficient number of Republican Unionists and the “new guard” to elect Republicans to statewide positions.

The Southern Strategy, in appealing to the fears and prejudices of voters in the high black counties of West Tennessee, was the reason for Republican success. However, this strategy was not suggested, much less directed, by Republican leaders in Washington. It was the product of leaders like Bill Brock and Dan Kuykendall, both former Democrats, who were committed to challenging Democratic hegemony. Although Nixon had anticipated immediate success using the Strategy, the story of Tennessee Republicanism demonstrated that even in a hospitable environment, building the party took time. Brock had initiated this effort in 1962 by winning the 3rd Congressional district, thus leading the Republican charge out of the mountains. Kuykendall’s and Baker’s failed efforts in 1964 were avenged with their successes in 1966. Four years later Republicans held four out of Tennessee’s nine Congressional seats, the governor’s mansion, and the two U.S. Senate seats.

Although Halberstam was correct in suggesting that Tennessee was becoming a Republican state prior to Brock's reliance on racial issues in 1970, Brock was following a script that had first been devised when race was first used to build the party in the early 1960s and had subsequently been reworked according to its success. In winning fifty-two percent of the votes and capturing the most votes for any Republican candidate in Tennessee history at that time, Brock demonstrated that his strategy that hinged on the politics of race was successful. From the beachhead that Republicans had established in Tennessee, and using the model that Brock's campaign had perfected, Southern Republicans thus began turning their Presidential success into local and state success.

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