



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer's Briefing Materials Claude Hooton Interview, 12/16/2009

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Miller Center Documents¹

- Claude Hooton Timeline.
- Claude Hooton Fact Sheet.

Secondary Source Materials

- Ronald Grele and David Powers interview with Claude Hooton, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, 03/24/1966.

Oral History Interviews

- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 02/18-19/2005.
- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/23-24/2005.
- Melody Miller interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/23-24/2005.
- Paul Kirk interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 11/23/2005.

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CLAUDE E. HOOTON, JR. TIMELINE

Prepared Mark D. Nevin; revised by Janet E. Heininger, Ph.D., 12/07/09

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1950

Fall EMK enters Harvard University, where he becomes friends with John Culver, Dick Clasby, and Texan **Claude E. Hooton, Jr.** “I guess the reason we became friends,” **Hooton** recalls years later, “was the fact that his accent was worse than mine.” EMK meets **Hooton** playing freshman football. EMK later recalls that **Hooton** was told by the coach to change his low cut shoes for the higher cut shoes the other players are wearing. But four years later, EMK remembers, “everyone on the team was wearing low cuts.” During his freshman year **Hooton** meets John F. Kennedy (JFK) and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy on Cape Cod after the couple had just returned from their honeymoon. (Clymer, p. 18; Claude Hooton oral history interview, JFK Library, 03/24/1966)

1951

May EMK is expelled from Harvard University after he is caught cheating on a Spanish exam. The dean offers to consider EMK’s reentry into Harvard the following year.

June EMK enlists in the Army.

1953

Late Spring EMK completes his military service at Fort Devens, Massachusetts.

Summer EMK takes several summer courses at Harvard in government and philosophy to satisfy his requirements for re-acceptance into the university.

Fall EMK is readmitted to Harvard University. One vacation EMK and **Hooton** teach water-skiing in Acapulco and, on the drive back to Harvard, are detained temporarily in a jail after the police question the title of the used car they are driving. During his summer breaks in 1954 and 1955, EMK works as a forest ranger at the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and crews in a Trans-Pacific yacht race to Hawaii. (Burns, pp. 46-48; Clymer, pp. 19-21; Hersh, pp. 83-84, 86)

1954

Summer EMK travels and works out West.

Fall After successfully completing his probationary period at Harvard University, EMK is able to rejoin the football team during his junior year. EMK goes on to letter in football. EMK also plays rugby in his final two years at Harvard. (Clymer, p. 20)

1955

*Spring/
Summer* EMK spends time in Palm Beach with JFK who is recuperating from his second back operation in the past year. JFK had almost died after his first operation the previous October. While recuperating, JFK writes *Profiles in Courage*. **Hooton** visits JFK in the hospital in Boston. (Rose Kennedy, pp. 145-146, 353; Clymer, p. 23; Goodwin, pp. 775-776; Hooton interview, JFK Library)

Summer EMK travels and works out West.

1956

Spring EMK graduates from Harvard University. (Clymer, p. 21)

Fall EMK enrolls in the University of Virginia Law School.

1957

October EMK meets Joan Bennet while speaking on behalf of the Kennedy family at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in Purchase, New York.

1958

November EMK marries Joan Bennett at St. Joseph's Church in Bronxville, NY. JFK is best man. (Clymer, p. 24)

1959

October EMK attends a key strategy meeting in Hyannis Port to set up JFK's run for the presidency in 1960. EMK is named western states coordinator and is assigned to manage eleven western states plus Alaska and Hawaii. (Burns, pp. 64-66; *Esquire*, April 1962)

1960

February EMK takes a break from his work on JFK's campaign to be with his wife during the birth of the couple's first child, Kara Anne Kennedy. Joan Kennedy had been staying with her parents in Bronxville, New York during her pregnancy but joins EMK on the campaign trail a month later. (Clymer, pp. 28; Chellis, p. 35)

March/April While campaigning for JFK in Wisconsin, EMK lands a 180-foot ski jump. (Clymer, pp. 28-31; Hersh, p. 129)

May EMK calls **Hooton** to ask **Hooton** to campaign with him in West Virginia after Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) decides to challenge JFK in that state. During his three weeks in the state **Hooton** travels extensively through five poor, rural counties. He encounters considerable anti-Catholic bias and receives little help from the local Democratic party. But he helps arrange very successful speaking engagements for Franklin Roosevelt Jr. FDR Jr. plays up his service with JFK in the war and JFK's war record. **Hooton** is with JFK the night before the primary for the filming of an election eve television special. (Hooton interview, JFK Library, 03/24/1966)

July JFK is nominated for the presidency at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. EMK serves as a floor leader and helps to deliver delegates in key states such as Wyoming, which clinches JFK's nomination. (Burns, pp. 66-67; *Esquire*, April 1962; *Time*, 09/28/1962)

Summer EMK is appointed campaign coordinator for the Rocky Mountain and Western States. **Hooton** campaigns with EMK and is in Montana with EMK when EMK rides a bull for five seconds. (Rose Kennedy, pp. 364-365; *Esquire*, April 1962)

November JFK is elected president defeating Republican Richard M. Nixon.

1961

September EMK's and Joan Kennedy's second child, Edward Moore Kennedy, Jr. (EMK, Jr.), is born. John Tunney is named godfather. (Clymer, p. 284; *Time*, 09/28/1962)

December JPK suffers a stroke in Palm Beach. EMK quickly travels from Boston to be with JPK and the rest of the family. The stroke leaves JPK partially paralyzed and unable to speak. (Rose Kennedy, pp. 416-419; Burns, p. 76)

1962

February EMK and **Hooton** travel to London, Brussels, Israel, Greece, Vienna, Poland and West Berlin; EMK meets Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in Israel, has lunch with President DeValera in Dublin, and meets RFK in West Berlin for EMK's 30th birthday. West German leader Willy Brandt sends EMK and **Hooton** a private train to take them from Poland to West Berlin. EMK sees the Matka Boska/Black Madonna in Czestochowa, Poland and meets with Prime Minister Karamanlis in Greece; EMK also stops in Italy and makes his first visit to Ireland, where he gives a controversial anti-British St. Patrick's Day speech, prompting JFK to joke that EMK has his own foreign policy; EMK meets Taoiseach Sean Lemass in his '62 and/or '64 trip to Ireland.

May **Hooton** challenges incumbent Rep. Bob Casey (D-TX) for his House seat in Houston. Casey wins the party's nomination. (*Los Angeles Times*, 05/07/1962)

November EMK is elected to the U.S. Senate.

1963

Spring **Hooton** decides to challenge Representative Albert Thomas (D-TX) for his Houston seat. Thomas is the senior member of the Appropriations Committee and a protégé of Vice President Lyndon Johnson. After learning about **Hooton's** announcement JFK calls EMK and tells him to get a hold of **Hooton** and "get him out of the race." Presidential aide Kenneth O'Donnell tries to convince **Hooton** to drop out but is told to "stick it." **Hooton** loses to Thomas.

Summer **Hooton** joins EMK for weekends on the Cape. One weekend Hooton travels to the Cape with EMK and JFK from Washington, D.C. in the President's helicopter.

November JFK is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. **Hooton**, who is in Washington to attend a party for EMK's fifth wedding anniversary, is with EMK at the Senate when EMK learns JFK has been shot. **Hooton** rides with EMK and Milt Gwirtzman to EMK's Georgetown home to see Joan. During the car ride **Hooton** says over and over, "The President was shot . . . and in my state." After reaching the house, EMK and **Hooton** search for a phone that works so that EMK can call his brother Robert, while Gwirtzman goes to pick up Joan who is at a beauty salon. After EMK finally reaches the Attorney General, who tells him that their brother is dead, EMK drives to the White House. (Clymer, pp. 52-53; Hersh, pp. 185-186)

1964 EMK's back is broken in a plane crash in Massachusetts in June.

1967

July EMK's and Joan Kennedy's third child, Patrick Joseph Kennedy (PJK), is born. (Burns, p. 348; Clymer, p. 95; Kennedy photo of christening, 07/29/1967)

1968

March RFK announces he is running for president. EMK is assigned to work the non-primary states, but his responsibilities are expanded to include Indiana. **Hooton** also works for RFK's campaign.

June RFK is shot and killed in June the night he wins the California primary.

July EMK travels to Spain with **Hooton**, Chuck McDermott and Joe Kennedy.

August EMK speaks at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts, which is his first public appearance since RFK's assassination. In the speech, EMK announces that he will not retire from politics and will continue his brother's fight against the war. (Clymer, pp. 121-122)

EMK resists heavy pressure to accept either the Democratic nomination for the presidency or vice presidency. (Burns, p. 348; Clymer, pp. 123-125)

1969

July A few days after EMK's accident at Chappaquiddick Island **Hooton** flies to Hyannis Port from Paris to be with EMK. **Hooton** is one of the few people outside the Kennedy family to meet with EMK in the immediate aftermath of the accident. (Hersh, p. 412)

On the 30th, EMK announces that he will remain in the Senate. The next day EMK announces that he will not run for president in 1972 and that he will fill-out his full term if reelected to the Senate in 1970. (Clymer, pp. 155-156)

On the 31st, **Hooton** drives EMK to the Senate for his first day back and is in the Senate gallery, reportedly with tears in his eyes, when EMK comes onto the floor. (*The New York Times*, 08/01/1969, 06/24/1979)

November JPK dies after having a heart attack on the 15th and slipping into a coma.

1972

Summer Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern calls EMK on the Cape to ask him to be his running-mate. **Hooton** is there when EMK takes the call. EMK goes for a walk on the beach to think it over before declining McGovern's offer. **Hooton** later criticizes McGovern for telling EMK he should run for the good of the country. **Hooton** says, "I just wanted to beat McGovern up; it was so cruel to come at Ted that way, with that line about the good of the country." (Clymer, pp. 188; *The New York Times*, 06/24/1979)

1973

November Teddy Kennedy Jr. is diagnosed with cancer in his leg.

1975

January EMK is one of the guest speakers at a Beverly Hills gala hosted by the City of Hope Medical Center to honor **Hooton** for his "dedication to his profession and his humanitarian principles." Senator John Tunney (D-CA), a close friend of both EMK's and **Hooton**'s, also speaks at the event. **Hooton**, an architect, is vice president of the architectural firm of John Carl Warnecke & Associates and runs

its newly established Los Angeles office. (*Los Angeles Times*, 01/19/1975, 01/22/75)

- 1976** EMK travels to Italy, Corsica, and Greece with **Hooton**, Joe Kennedy, and staff, including Bob Hunter and Dale DeHaan. EMK meets with President Leoni in Rome, with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican (EMK 1, p. 55), and with Prime Minister Karamanlis in Greece, who has recently returned to power following a military junta.
- 1977** Joan Kennedy moves out of the Kennedy's house in McLean, Virginia and into the Beacon Street apartment in Boston that EMK had bought to use during his 1976 Senate campaign.
- 1979**
- November* EMK announces he will challenge Carter for the Democratic presidential nomination.
- 1980**
- August* EMK withdraws his bid for the presidency in a powerful speech to the Democratic National Convention.
- 1981**
- January* EMK and Joan Kennedy announce they are getting divorced.
- 1982** EMK announces he will not run for president in 1984.
- 1984** Rose Kennedy suffers a debilitating stroke. She spends much of the next year recovering at the family's home in Hyannis Port.
- 1985** EMK announces in a televised statement that he will not run for president in 1988. He acknowledges the following day at a news conference that his decision may mean that he will never again run for president.
- 1991**
- Spring* William Kennedy Smith is charged with sexual battery in Palm Beach, Florida.
- October* EMK gives a speech at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in which he acknowledges that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his private life.

1992

July EMK marries Vicki Reggie in McLean, Virginia.

1995 Rose Kennedy dies.

2004

July **Hooton** attends a tribute to EMK at Symphony Hall in Boston. The tribute takes place during the Democratic National Convention. (*The Boston Globe*, 07/28/2004)

2008

January EMK announces his support for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama.

May EMK is diagnosed with a brain tumor.

August EMK makes a surprise appearance and speech at the Democratic National Convention.

CLAUDE E. HOOTON, JR. FACT SHEET

Prepared by Rob Martin

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/29/2009

Relationship with EMK:

- Hooton is a life-long friend of EMK's from Harvard University.
- He has spent much time with the Kennedy family, particularly in 1950s and early 60s.
- Campaigned for JFK in 1960 in West Virginia primary and with EMK in western states in the general campaign.
- Campaigned for RFK in 1968.
- Hooton is an architect from Texas; he had also worked in Los Angeles, CA in the 1970s.

Important issues:

- **1950:** Hooton enters Harvard with EMK; they become life-long friends and play football together Hooton's freshman and senior years; they also play rugby together Hooton's senior year, which includes a rugby trip to Bermuda.
- **1954:** Hooton travels to Acapulco with EMK over summer break.
- **1960:** Hooton campaigns for JFK in the West Virginia primary at EMK's request.
- **1960:** Hooton campaigns out west with EMK, the western states coordinator, in general election campaign; Hooton witnesses EMK riding a bull in Montana for the campaign.
- **1962:** Hooton travels with EMK to Europe; they meet RFK in Berlin for EMK's 30th birthday and visit Dublin, where EMK meets Taoiseach and gives controversial anti-British speech on St. Patrick's Day.
- **1963:** Hooton challenges Rep. Albert Thomas (D-TX), LBJ's protégé, against JFK's wishes (Thomas is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee and plays a key role in bringing NASA to Houston); Thomas wins the nomination by a comfortable margin; the year before Hooton had also challenged Rep. Bob Casey (D-TX), the incumbent from another congressional district in Houston.
- **1963:** Hooton is with EMK at the Senate when they learn JFK has been shot; Hooton rides around D.C. with Gwirtzman and EMK searching for a working phone.
- **1968:** Hooton works for RFK's presidential campaign.
- **1968:** Hooton travels to Spain with EMK in July after RFK is killed.
- **1969:** Hooton travels to Hyannisport a few days after Chappaquiddick to be with EMK.
- **1969:** Hooton drives EMK back to the Senate for his first return since Chappaquiddick.
- **1972:** Hooton is with EMK in Hyannisport when McGovern calls from Democratic National Convention in Miami to ask him to be his running-mate; Hooton is reportedly furious with McGovern for appealing to EMK "for the good of the country."
- **1976:** Hooton travels with EMK to Italy and Greece with Hunter and DeHaan.