

## *CHAPTER 3*

### *NEW HAMPSHIRE*

It was that classic New England trait of frugality that accidentally caused New Hampshire to have the first presidential primary. The New Hampshire state legislature created a presidential primary in 1913 and scheduled the election in May. Only two years later, in 1915, a penny-pinching public official noticed that money could be saved by holding the presidential primary on Town Meeting Day, when town clerks and other local officials were chosen by the voters.

Every spring in New Hampshire, when the snow begins to melt and the ground begins to thaw, the back roads become muddy and impassable. To make it easy for New Hampshirites to get to the polls on Town Meeting Day, it was scheduled for early March, when the ground and the back roads are still frozen and thus passable. So, when the presidential primary was combined with Town Meeting Day, the New Hampshire presidential primary moved to early March and accidentally became the first presidential primary in the nation.

The New Hampshire presidential primary was a pretty dull affair from 1916 to 1948. That was because New Hampshirites voted for their specific delegates to the Democratic and Republican national conventions rather than voting directly for the presidential candidates by name. That system ended in 1952. Sherman Adams, the Republican governor of the Granite State, began hatching a plot to secure the 1952 Republican nomination for General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the victorious commander of U.S. military forces in Europe during World War II.

Sherman Adams decided that New Hampshire should have a presidential primary in which the voters cast their ballots directly for their favorite candidate. Adams was certain that General “Ike” Eisenhower would win such an election in New Hampshire and thus get an early boost to his campaign for the 1952 Republican nomination. It worked out exactly as Governor Adams planned. “Ike” won a big victory in New Hampshire and went on to win the Republican nomination, eventually being elected to the White House.

If New Hampshire was going to have a Republican presidential primary in 1952, there also had to be a similar primary in the Democratic Party. The incumbent Democratic President, Harry S. Truman, labeled

this new version of the New Hampshire primary “eyewash” and refused to even visit the Granite State. That was a big mistake. A U.S. senator from Tennessee, Estes Kefauver, filed to run in New Hampshire and campaigned actively for votes. President Truman’s name was on the ballot despite the fact he had not officially announced for reelection. In a stunning upset, Kefauver defeated Truman, a sitting U.S. president. Shortly thereafter, President Truman announced he would not be seeking another four years in the White House.

It was Senator Kefauver who first established a New Hampshire primary tradition of getting ahead of better-known national candidates by doing one-on-one, door-to-door, town-to-town campaigning at the grass roots in New Hampshire. Kefauver also did the first “photo stunt” in the New Hampshire presidential primary. He dressed in a heavy fur coat and had his picture taken while riding on a dog sled across the snowy landscape of New Hampshire in the winter time.

Alas for Kefauver, all was for nought. The Tennessee senator won the New Hampshire primary. The Democratic Party in 1952, however, gave its presidential nomination to Adlai Stevenson of Illinois. Stevenson was defeated by Dwight Eisenhower in the general election in November.

The early presidential primary created to benefit Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 has remained in its early position ever since. With each passing quadrennial presidential election, the New Hampshire primary progressively gained fame as the crucial “first step” in the nomination process. Then the Iowa caucuses were created in 1972, and those caucuses have given the New Hampshire primary quite a bit of competition where going first is concerned. The New Hampshire festivities, however, remain an important and decisive event.

The significance of the early New Hampshire primary stemmed mainly from its powerful influence over voters in other states, particularly voters casting their ballots in presidential primaries held shortly after the New Hampshire voting. Political scientists began using the word “exaggeration” to describe the way votes in the New Hampshire primary were reflected in the vote in subsequent primaries in other states. One scholar did a statistical study of the process and found New Hampshire’s vote exaggeration to be “startling.”

Television news played a major role in building the national signifi-

cance of the New Hampshire presidential primary. The Granite State is one of the most picturesque places one can imagine, particularly in winter. New Hampshire's many small towns, with their white clapboard churches and wooden frame houses, made sensational television backdrops for campaign events. There were the mountains, covered with pine trees and buried in snow. Shots of campaign buses and press vans ploughing through snow-packed roads in the New Hampshire hills provided enchanting television "set-up" pieces for formal campaign events such as speeches and town hall meetings.

Many newspaper and television reporters fell in love with traveling around New Hampshire every fourth winter. Longtime political reporters became very familiar with the state. The real veterans, those news persons who had spent decades covering national politics, gloried in the fact that they were covering their fourth or fifth New Hampshire primary. Many members of the press thus came to have a personal interest in building the mystique and the importance of the New Hampshire primary. Doing so guaranteed that they would be coming back four years later for more beautiful scenery and press camaraderie in a classic New England setting.

Another process was taking place as well. As the New Hampshire primary gained importance and influence, more presidential candidates campaigned there and more news reporters came to cover the proceedings. The result was a once-every-four-years economic boom for New Hampshire businesses. Restaurants, coffee shops, motels, hotels, car-rental agencies, and bus companies all benefitted financially from the hordes of candidates, political managers, and news reporters that descended on the Granite State. Best of all, many of these visitors were on expense accounts and sought to sleep in the best hotel rooms and eat at the better-known restaurants. The money flowed in as the political news about the presidential candidates flowed out.

There was a double-payoff for New Hampshire from its early primary. Visually exciting scenes of the state played on television. Reporters wrote warmly descriptive stories of life in the Granite State. Viewers and readers could not help but notice that New Hampshire was a beauti-

ful place to go on vacation and, coincidentally, spend some money while there.

There are other charms to the New Hampshire presidential primary. The state is relatively small in size, with most of the population concentrated in an urbanized strip running east-to-west across southern New Hampshire. Thus it is a relatively short drive from one campaign event to another. Neither the candidates nor the news media have to spend long hours in a bus or automobile getting around the state. For the candidates, that makes New Hampshire a very manageable state where more time can be spent campaigning and less time wasted traveling from one event to another.

By the 1970s, it had only been 20 years since Sherman Adams and Dwight Eisenhower created the direct-vote New Hampshire primary. By that time, however, the state's political leaders were completely committed to maintaining New Hampshire's first place position in the presidential primary process. Thus, in 1975, when Massachusetts and Vermont sought to create a New England primary by voting on the same day as New Hampshire, Granite State political leaders became apoplectic. It was then that they passed that famous law requiring that New Hampshire schedule its primary at least one week before any other state's primary. Since that time, any effort by another state to vote the same day as New Hampshire, or hold a primary ahead of New Hampshire, has been sternly, one almost might say viciously, resisted by Granite State political leaders.

To enhance and protect New Hampshire's exalted position as the state with the first presidential primary, the state government has created a special section of the New Hampshire State Library devoted to the historical lore and economic importance of the New Hampshire primary. Called the Library and Archives of New Hampshire's Political Tradition, this state-supported information center estimated the 2000 presidential primary produced a total \$306 million economic impact in New Hampshire.

There have been some stirring moments in the New Hampshire primary over the years. In 1972, U.S. Senator Edmund Muskie was

campaigning hard for the Democratic nomination when a conservative New Hampshire newspaper, the *Union Leader*, criticized his wife. Muskie appeared to be crying when he defended Mrs. Muskie at a political rally in front of the newspaper building. Muskie's tears were interpreted as a sign of personal weakness, the Muskie campaign sagged, and George McGovern, a U.S. senator from South Dakota, became the 1972 Democratic Party standard bearer. McGovern was soundly defeated in the general election by incumbent Republican President Richard M. Nixon.

Another stirring New Hampshire primary moment occurred in 1996, when arch-conservative newspaper columnist Patrick Buchanan planned a quiet "walk-around" at a lumber mill in Center Barnstead. Imported lumber from Canada was creating economic hard times in lumber towns such as Center Barnstead, and Pat Buchanan wanted to show New Hampshire voters that he was strongly in support of protecting U.S. industries from cheap foreign competition.

Candidate Buchanan's plans for a peaceful look at the lumber mill with just a few newspaper reporters in attendance were completely shattered. Literally hundreds of reporters and photographers showed up at the lumber mill wanting to interview and photograph Buchanan. The news-media mob crowded so aggressively around the lumber mill office door that the one TV cameraman invited to be there, the "pool camera," could not get in. Suddenly, it was the giant pack of news personnel, and not candidate Buchanan, that was in charge of this particular campaign event.

Giving in to the news-media pressure, Pat Buchanan returned to his campaign minivan, stepped up on the running board, and gave the news hounds what they wanted. For the next hour, Buchanan answered all questions asked by the press. He posed for photographs. As Buchanan talked, the more intrepid TV camera operators and news photographers climbed up on lumber trucks and sawmill sheds to get better camera angles and a wider view. One agile TV cameraman climbed on to a front-end loader to get high in the air for a downward-looking shot.

The near news-media riot at Center Barnstead was an early look at

what was happening in the 1996 Republican presidential primary in New Hampshire. When the votes were counted, conservative Pat Buchanan won the Granite State over Bob Dole, a U.S. senator from Kansas and the early favorite to win. Dole finally secured the Republican nomination that year, but he was defeated in the general election by incumbent Democratic President Bill Clinton.

Every once in a while, the New Hampshire presidential primary gives a significant boost to a candidate from a nearby New England state who decides to run for president. In 1960, it was John F. Kennedy, at that time a U.S. senator from neighboring Massachusetts. John Kennedy launched his successful campaign for the White House by first winning the Democratic presidential primary in New Hampshire.

Four years later, in 1964, in the Republican contest, a former U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge, won the Granite State. Lodge's victory was quite sensational because he filed to run for president too late to have his name printed on the official ballot. Lodge's supporters launched a "write-in" campaign, and enough New Hampshire voters penciled in Lodge's name to give him a victory. Henry Cabot Lodge subsequently lost the 1964 Republican nomination to Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who in turn was defeated in the general election by incumbent Democratic President Lyndon Johnson of Texas.

Another New Englander who turned proximity to New Hampshire into a presidential primary victory was Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis. In 1988, Dukakis won the New Hampshire Democratic primary and went on to win the Democratic nomination for president. Dukakis was defeated in the general election by the elder George Bush, a native of the New England state of Connecticut, who also triumphed in the New Hampshire primary that year.

Perhaps the best example of a New Englander winning in New Hampshire was former U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas in 1992. Tsongas lived in Lowell, Massachusetts, less than 20 miles from the New Hampshire-Massachusetts border. Paul Tsongas could get up in the morning in his home in Massachusetts, take a short drive north into southern New Hampshire, campaign all day, then drive home and sleep in his own bed

at night.

Thanks to this geographical advantage, Paul Tsongas was omnipresent in New Hampshire the year before the 1992 New Hampshire Democratic presidential primary. He thus easily won the contest. The man who finished second, however, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, subsequently wrested the 1992 Democratic nomination from Tsongas. Clinton went on to defeat the elder George Bush in the general election and become president of the United States.

This raises an interesting point. For almost four decades, from 1952 until 1988, *a candidate for President had to win the New Hampshire primary if he or she was going to be elected to the White House*. Now the reverse of that statement was not true. Winning the New Hampshire primary was not a guaranteed ticket to becoming the American president. A candidate could win in New Hampshire but then lose the party nomination in subsequent caucuses and primaries. Or a candidate could win in New Hampshire and a number of other states, gain the party nomination for president, and lose the general election to the other party's presidential nominee.

One thing, however, was definitely true. In the ten presidential elections from 1952 to 1988, every man who was elected president of the United States began his drive for the nation's highest office by first winning the New Hampshire primary.

That perfect record of New Hampshire's was broken in 1992. As noted above, Paul Tsongas from nearby Lowell, Massachusetts, captured the Granite State laurels for the Democratic Party that year. However, the man Tsongas defeated in New Hampshire in 1992, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, ended up with both the Democratic nomination and the presidency.

In 1996, the normal pattern of the White House winner also capturing New Hampshire returned. Bill Clinton, the incumbent president, was unopposed for the Democratic nomination and thus won the New Hampshire primary by default. Clinton subsequently won the general election against U.S. Senator Bob Dole of Kansas. As previously noted, Dole lost the New Hampshire Republican presidential primary in 1996 to conser-

vative columnist Patrick Buchanan. According to the “New Hampshire rule,” that loss guaranteed that Dole would not make it to the White House.

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Thus it was that aficionados of the New Hampshire primary were watching the 2000 presidential election very carefully. Would the eventual winner of the presidency also have won New Hampshire, thus keeping the New Hampshire rule in effect? Or would there be a repeat of 1992, when a New Hampshire victory was not required to get to the Oval Office in the White House? As the 2000 New Hampshire primary got underway, no one could answer that question for certain.

In the 2000 Democratic Party race in New Hampshire, it was a two-person contest between incumbent Vice-President Al Gore and former-Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. The two had squared-off eight days earlier in the Iowa caucuses, with Gore scoring a considerable victory over Bradley. The New Hampshire primary thus was viewed as Bill Bradley’s last chance to reverse the results in Iowa and get his campaign for the Democratic nomination back on track.

If ever a state looked like a sure bet for a candidate such as Bill Bradley, it was New Hampshire. The state’s citizens are generally well-off. New Hampshire ranks 13th of the 50 states in median income. Most New Hampshire voters are suburbanites rather than farmers. A disproportionate number of Granite Staters live in southern New Hampshire and drive into the nearby Boston metropolitan area to go to work.

New Hampshireites also are well-educated, which gives them a tendency to listen to high-minded campaign appeals and respond favorably to visionary reformers. Bill Bradley repeatedly called for Americans to build a better United States and gain something more in their lives than economic prosperity. This call for Americans to live by their better natures should have had widespread appeal in the Granite State.

Unfortunately for Bill Bradley, his speaking style was do dull and pedestrian that it did not get across to New Hampshire voters. Newspaper reporters and television commentators noticed this lack of excitement and vitality in the Bradley campaign and began putting it into their stories



and TV reports. As Bill Bradley's campaign lost its zip, election eve polls showed Al Gore comfortably ahead of Bill Bradley in New Hampshire, a state that Bradley should have been winning.

As the polls closed in the 2000 New Hampshire Democratic primary, good news was quick in coming for the Al Gore campaign. Early returns showed Gore comfortably defeating Bill Bradley by 53 percent to 47 percent, a 6 point margin. Television and newspaper exit polls were unanimous in predicting a clear-cut Gore victory.

That good news produced a wild celebration at a Gore victory party at Jillian's, a sports bar in a restored brick factory building in downtown Manchester. This crowd was younger. It was composed mainly of volunteers and student interns. The merriment reached its peak when Al Gore, his image projected ten times larger than life on a wall-sized television screen typical of sports bars, gave his victory speech.

At that precise moment, the 2000 race for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States was over. Al Gore had defeated Bill Bradley in both Iowa and New Hampshire, the two most important stops on the nomination trail. Other states, most of them more-populous than Iowa and New Hampshire, were still to vote, but their Democratic primaries would simply "confirm" the decision made in Iowa and New Hampshire. With Al Gore possessing all the "Big Momentum" from winning Iowa and New Hampshire, there was no way anyone but Al Gore was going to win such states as California and New York that were still to vote.

Hardly any news reporters or television commentators bothered to mention the fact that, in effect, the Democratic nomination had been decided after only two states, Iowa and New Hampshire, voted.

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On the Republican side in New Hampshire in 2000, the two major competitors were George W. Bush, the governor of Texas, and U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona. George W. Bush easily won the Iowa caucuses that year, but the shine on his victory was tarnished by the fact that John McCain decided to bypass Iowa and put all his time, money, and effort into winning New Hampshire.

The town of Peterborough is a cultural and art center nestled in the beautiful Monadnock Mountains of New Hampshire. The Peterborough Town Hall is a classic New England building, sporting pristine painted white woodwork, clear glass windows arched at the top, and a spindled wooden balustrade on its upstairs rear balcony. An antique wall clock with a brass pendulum ticks off the seconds, minutes, and hours of the day. The stage looks positively luxurious with its red velvet-like curtain.

On that stage on January 30, 2000, were seven American flags. With primary election day only two days away, John McCain was holding his final town hall meeting with the voters of the Granite State. It was John McCain's 114th town hall meeting on the New Hampshire campaign trail.

McCain picked Peterborough for a reason. Months earlier, he had held the first of those 114 town halls in Peterborough. He wanted his campaign to wind up in the same place where it began.

Only 40 persons attended that first McCain question-and-answer session in the Peterborough Town Hall. At that time, John McCain was almost completely unknown in New Hampshire and was barely registering in national public opinion polls. Such was not the case on January 30, 2000, when McCain returned. The Peterborough Town Hall was packed to the rafters, with every seat taken and standees lining every foot of the back and side walls.

More than ten television cameras were present, with at least 100 reporters and photographers jammed into a standing-room-only area to the right of the stage. Before John McCain arrived, his political managers enthusiastically announced to the crowd that Peter Jennings, the national anchor person for ABC Television News, was in the hall.

How had John McCain gone from almost complete obscurity in New Hampshire to being George W. Bush's major competitor for winning the state's Republican presidential primary? The answer lay in two phenomena: the unique character of John McCain himself, and the totally innovative campaign he organized to try to win the Granite State.

If ever a man symbolized military heroism, it was John McCain. He was the son and grandson of two U.S. Navy admirals. He attended the

Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, graduating fifth from the bottom of his class. He trained to fly Navy jet planes in Pensacola, Florida. By the late fall of 1967, he was flying his A-4 Skyhawk in combat in the Vietnam War.

The rest of the story became nationally-known legend. John McCain's jet was shot down. He ejected and was subsequently captured by the North Vietnamese. Although badly wounded, McCain refused to be freed by his captors just because he was the son of a top U.S. Navy admiral. Tortured, often in solitary confinement, McCain somehow endured until he, along with other captured U.S. airmen, was released by North Vietnam.

John McCain completed his military career as Navy liaison to the U.S. Senate. He then moved to his wife's home state of Arizona and ran successfully for the U.S. House of Representatives. Four years later, in 1986, he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

Although very definitely a Republican and a conservative, McCain quickly established a reputation in the Senate for being a maverick reformer. In direct opposition to the wishes of Republican party leaders, Senator McCain joined with Senator Russ Feingold, a Democrat from Wisconsin, in sponsoring a major campaign finance reform bill. Although opposed to abortion, McCain made it clear he would not, if elected president, require opposition to abortion of his judicial appointees.

There was more, however, to the McCain for President campaign than his heroic, almost mythic, biography. Early on, John McCain invited newspaper and television reporters to ride with him in his minivan from one New Hampshire campaign event to another. During these one-on-one sessions with the news media, McCain dutifully answered every question that was asked, no matter how politically damaging to him the answer might be. He allowed reporters to talk to him for hours on end, and he answered their questions with palpable honesty, never bothering to check with campaign advisers or stick to a limited number of talking points.

The press was charmed by this lack of stage management on the part of a presidential candidate. McCain was granting unlimited access to the

news media. It was a far cry from the carefully-prepared statements, often backed up with public-opinion polls to guarantee popularity, that most candidates for the White House were issuing. In addition, it was fun for the reporters to bump down the back roads of New Hampshire in McCain's minivan and talk personally, and always quite frankly, with a bona fide war hero and presidential candidate.

The result was that John McCain got a tremendous run of free stories in the newspapers and on television. As his campaign exploded in press popularity, the minivan had to be replaced with a giant highway bus, aptly named "The Straight Talk Express." The coach was equipped with leather armchairs and a couch so that McCain could conduct rolling bull-sessions with several news persons at once. Eventually, a second highway bus had to be added to the McCain caravan to hold all the reporters who wanted to cover the campaign and "take their turn" riding with and talking to the candidate.

Thus it was, that when the Straight Talk Express pulled up to the Peterborough Town Hall just two days before New Hampshire primary day in 2000, the McCain campaign had lost much of its maverick character. McCain had befriended the "press beast," but now that beast was demanding that the McCain campaign operate in a big-time manner. One writer noted that, now dwarfed by the demands and hurly-burly of a successful campaign, John McCain was looking back at his early, less-popular, minivan days "with great nostalgia."

John McCain and his wife, Cindy, marched into the Peterborough Town Hall to a standing ovation. McCain briefly reviewed his military exploits, then said pointedly: "I am fully prepared to lead. I do not need on-the-job training to lead the military."

McCain then took the military issue one step further. "Right now," he said, "twelve thousand American military personnel and their families are on food stamps. There will be no 'Food Stamp Military' when I'm president."

The audience, similar to so many New Hampshire audiences before, was obviously pleased just to sit and listen to McCain talk. This candidate was doing more of a stand-up comedy routine than giving a political

speech. McCain reminded the audience that the incumbent president, Democrat Bill Clinton, had allowed major campaign contributors to sleep overnight at the White House. "Clinton turned the White House into a motel," McCain said derisively, "with the president of the United States as the bellhop."

Soon it was time for questions from the audience. Youthful McCain campaign aides carried portable microphones into the crowd so that everyone in the Peterborough Town Hall could hear the questions clearly. One person asked McCain if he favored legalizing the sale of the drug marijuana in the United States.

"I will not support marijuana," McCain answered, displaying the same direct honesty he used with the news media. Then McCain winked at both the questioner and the audience. "Good luck with your crop," he said with a smile.

Candidate McCain saved his strongest words for the campaign finance reform issue. He noted that Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, when questioned about making illegal fund-raising calls from the White House, said his actions were legal because there was "no controlling legal authority." McCain took that line and shaped it to his own purpose. "Once I'm in the White House," McCain said, "I'm going to give you a 'controlling legal authority' on campaign finance reform."

At the end of McCain's talk, a portable confetti machine filled the entire Peterborough Town Hall with red-white-and-blue confetti. Ordinarily a confetti shower lasts a few seconds, but McCain's went a full three minutes. During that time, the audience went wild with sustained cheering and the newspaper photographers clicked away. There were photos of John and Cindy McCain in their red-white-and-blue confetti shower all over the newspapers the following day.

As voters tramped to the polls in the 2000 New Hampshire Republican presidential primary, public-opinion polls showed John McCain with a lead over George W. Bush. The Bush primary election night party, similar to all other aspect of the Bush campaign, was massive. More than 1,000 persons gathered in the gymnasium of St. Anselm College. The main crowd stood shoulder-to-shoulder on the gymnasium floor, cover-

ing more than three-fourths of a basketball court with humanity. The spectator stands on one side of the gym were packed with the news media. Across from the news hounds, the other half of the spectator stands were packed with those Bush supporters who had wisely decided to get the primary election results sitting down.

There were all the customary hallmarks of a victory celebration. A high school band, with all the music makers dressed in Bush T-shirts, played brisk and lively tunes as the gym filled with people. Giant television screens, visible throughout the gymnasium, carried the latest election results along with the customary pundit analysis and candidate interviews. The crowd, as it grew, was enthusiastic. There were periodic group cheers for George W. Bush and a buzz of happy and excited conversations.

The Bush campaign that night had everything but votes. Word slowly spread that John McCain was defeating George W. Bush by 49 percent to 30 percent, a spread of 19 points.

This was astonishing. It was a colossal defeat. To the politically astute, a lead of five points or more is considered a landslide. What words, other than “total blowout,” could describe a 19 point McCain victory margin?

Someone wisely had switched off the audio on the giant TVs. As soon as the election outcome was clear, at 8:20 P.M. Eastern Time, a humbled but not disheartened George W. Bush went to the podium and spoke frankly to his supporters. “New Hampshire is a bump in the road for frontrunners,” Bush said, “and this year is no exception. But my road will go through all 50 states, and it will end at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.”

As usual, Bush kept his speech short. He congratulated his “good friend” John McCain on his victory. He called for teaching children to read and write, but also for “teaching them right from wrong.” He pledged to end “an era of scandal and bitterness in Washington, D.C.,” a not-so-veiled attack on the Clinton-Gore administration.

Just in case he might need to ask for votes in New Hampshire at some time in the future, Bush talked about how much he enjoyed campaigning

in the Granite State. “The chats, the parades, the picnics” were all terrific, Bush said, dutifully praising a state whose Republican primary voters had just rejected him totally.

There was no such gloom over at the McCain election-night party. McCain’s wife, Cindy, began to cry when her husband was declared the victor. John McCain himself played up his 19-point victory margin. “You can’t help but be amazed by the size of this,” he said. “The people in Washington, D.C., are going to wake up.”

How had McCain done it? The answer was independent voters. New Hampshire election law allows registered independents to declare a party affiliation on primary election day and vote in that political party’s presidential primary. As the Bill Bradley campaign faded and the McCain campaign gained strength, it was widely speculated that most of the independent voters were going to give-up on Bradley. These independent voters then would declare themselves Republican on primary election day and vote in the Republican primary for John McCain.

Exit polls suggested exactly that happened. Registered Republicans voted for Bush over McCain by 42 percent to 37 percent, but independent voters in the Republican primary preferred McCain to Bush by an overwhelming 60 percent to 20 percent.

John McCain received the expected “exaggeration” from his big win in New Hampshire. The following week, his face was on the cover of the three national news weeklies, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. The press was said to be “obviously in full metal swoon.” As Walter Isaacson, the managing editor of *Time* pointed out, McCain got more “exaggeration” out of New Hampshire than previous candidates, partly because “the size of his victory was so amazing.”

In the end, however, John McCain’s giant victory in New Hampshire in 2000 produced no long-range benefit. His campaign for the Republican nomination for president flourished for a while, but Texas Governor George W. Bush subsequently scored major primary victories in South Carolina and Virginia and went on to win both the nomination and the White House.

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In 2004, the New Hampshire primary was the final event of the nominating season.

There was no Republican primary of any significance in 2004. George W. Bush, the incumbent Republican president, was essentially unopposed for renomination to a second four-year term in the White House. New Hampshire Republicans went to the polls and cast a reflex vote for George W. Bush, who won overwhelmingly. That was that.

The Democratic contest in New Hampshire in 2004 was dominated by the results in the Iowa caucuses, held eight days earlier. John Kerry's upset victory over Howard Dean in Iowa gave Kerry a tremendous "bounce" coming into New Hampshire. Howard Dean had hoped to win in New Hampshire because he had been governor of the neighboring state of Vermont. Unfortunately for Dean, John Kerry had just as good geographical credentials, being a United States senator from the neighboring state of Massachusetts. John Kerry's "Big Momentum" from his surprising win in Iowa enabled him to overwhelm Howard Dean in New Hampshire and chalk up a second-straight caucuses/primary victory.

Once Howard Dean lost New Hampshire, there were no other states on the primary calendar where he had a chance of winning. John Kerry thus went straight from his New Hampshire victory to the Democratic nomination for president. Kerry lost narrowly to incumbent Republican President George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election the following November.

Close observers of Democratic Party politics noticed something about the 2000 and 2004 races for the Democratic nomination for president. In each year, the candidates who were nominated sewed up their nominations by winning both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, and only the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. In each year, it had only taken those two states voting to determine the victor. Would the same be true in 2008? Would one candidate win both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary and thereby lockup the 2008 Democratic nomination for president?

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The 2008 presidential primary in New Hampshire was dominated by



*compression*. There were only five days, rather than the usual eight days, between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. Front-loading of the caucuses/primary calendar pushed the Iowa date so far forward in January that, to avoid holding the caucuses on New Years Day or the day after, the Iowa caucuses were scheduled for Thursday, January 3, 2008, only five days before the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday, January 8, 2008. That meant there were only four full days to campaign (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday) between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. In previous presidential election cycles, there had always been eight days between Iowa and New Hampshire.

The effect of this compression between Iowa and New Hampshire was that the candidates campaigned about equally in Iowa and New Hampshire in the year prior to the caucuses and primaries. A strategy of concentrating all of a candidate's time in Iowa, winning there, and then beginning to campaign hard in New Hampshire was not going to work. The campaigning period between Iowa and New Hampshire was much too brief for that.

On the Democratic side, the biggest victim of this tight scheduling appeared to be Hillary Clinton. Her humiliating and devastating loss to Barack Obama in the Iowa caucuses put her in the position of needing to play catch-up in order to come-from-behind and defeat Obama in New Hampshire. Four days was simply not enough time for her to do that, it was thought.

The Clinton campaign debated launching an all-out negative campaign against Obama, emphasizing the discrepancies between the positions he took as a state senator in Illinois, as a U.S. senator in Washington, D.C., and as a candidate for president. Many in the Clinton camp believed four days was not enough time to effectively carry out such a negative campaign. Hillary Clinton's husband, former-President Bill Clinton, made a number of comments that revealed he was particularly upset by the short period of time his wife had to try to recover from her discouraging loss in Iowa.

Meanwhile, Barack Obama was playing his big Iowa victory to the hilt, working to ride the wave of support that originated in Iowa to a

second big victory in New Hampshire. The news media joined Obama in this effort, waxing at great length about the significance of Obama's Iowa win and suggesting that he was now leading a "movement for change" rather than just being a candidate for president. The short four-day period between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary was seen as greatly helping Barack Obama, because the "bounce" from his Iowa win would be so strong and fresh in New Hampshire voters' minds.

Barack Obama worked hard to sustain the idea that his campaign gained so much momentum that he was going to sweep to victory in New Hampshire and go straight from there to the Democratic nomination for president and then right on into the White House. Speaking to an overflow crowd in Lebanon, New Hampshire, Obama enthused: "There is something stirring in the air. You can feel it. We are happy warriors for change. We are cheerful about the prospects of *taking over*."

He immediately clarified that remark by adding that it was the American people who were "taking over."

Al Gore garnered the Democratic nomination in 2000 with twin wins in Iowa and New Hampshire. John Kerry pulled the same trick in 2004 by sweeping only those two states. It now appeared that Barack Obama possibly was going to go right down Gore's and Kerry's dual-win path to victory in 2008. Suddenly, with only one jolting win in Iowa, Barack Obama changed places with Hillary Clinton. It now seemed it was Obama who was going to be the "inevitable" winner of the 2008 Democratic nomination for president.

Hillary Clinton did not lose her composure. She continued to campaign hard in New Hampshire. She attacked Barack Obama for conducting a campaign that was more froth than substance. She described him as a waffling newcomer, and her husband Bill referred to parts of Obama's message as "the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen." Hillary Clinton noted that Obama was reaching voters by talking about "change," but then she pointed out it was she, Hillary Clinton, who had a record of bringing about "real change" in the United States. She summed this idea up with the statement: "You campaign in poetry; you govern in prose."

Some observers thought that Barack Obama was campaigning with so much confidence and assurance of victory in New Hampshire that he was becoming “overbearing” toward Hillary Clinton. This idea was highlighted during a television debate between the Democratic candidates on the Saturday night prior to the Tuesday New Hampshire primary election.

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama had been attacking each other vociferously throughout the debate. Then Hillary Clinton was asked why so many voters did not like her. She replied:

“Well, that hurts my feelings, but I’ll try to go on. I don’t think I’m that bad.”

At that point, Barack Obama chimed in with the curt remark: “You’re likeable enough, Hillary.”

Obama’s comment, delivered somewhat as a sarcastic theatrical aside, may have convinced many voters, particularly women voters, that Barack Obama was coming down a little too hard on Hillary Clinton.

The biggest moment in the Clinton campaign in New Hampshire, however, could have been an accident. It came the Monday before primary election day at a roundtable discussion in Portsmouth with a group of women.

One woman asked Hillary Clinton a personal question: “How do you do it? I mean, as a woman, I know how hard it is to get out of the house and get ready. Who does your hair?”

After acknowledging that she gets professional help with her hair much of the time, Hillary Clinton gave what appeared to be a heartfelt answer to the question. “I couldn’t do it if I didn’t passionately believe it was the right thing to do,” she said. “I have so many opportunities from this country. I just don’t want to see us fall backwards.”

As she made that statement, her eyes seemed to be welling with tears and her voice was cracking a little. She never broke down and cried. She did not have to stop speaking, but it was obvious it was a very emotional moment for her. She continued:

“You know, this is very personal for me. It’s not political.... I see what’s happening.... It’s about our kids’ futures. And it’s really about all

of us together.”

At first Hillary Clinton’s advisers did not know for certain whether her demonstration of emotion in Portsmouth was going to help or hinder her campaign in New Hampshire. Her critics immediately accused her of faking her emotional tears in order to win votes. One thing was certain. Every television news program carried video of Hillary Clinton in her “near tears” moment, and almost every newspaper columnist wrote about it.

As New Hampshire voters went to the polls on Tuesday, January 8, 2004, the latest polls showed Barack Obama leading Hillary Clinton by anywhere from 5 to 13 percentage points. No poll showed the race to be close or Clinton in the lead. The Obama forces continued to exude confidence in a big victory. The Clinton camp was putting a brave face on the situation, but Clinton staffers and even Hillary Clinton herself could not avoid being depressed and thinking she was going to lose the primary.

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The Republican contest in New Hampshire in 2008 was dominated by a script left over from 2000. That script read that U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona would gain the support of independent voters and thereby steal New Hampshire from Mike Huckabee, the runaway winner of the Iowa Republican caucuses in 2008. It would be a repeat performance for McCain, who used those same independent voters to dramatically defeat George W. Bush, also an Iowa winner, in the New Hampshire Republican presidential primary in 2000.

There was a problem for McCain in 2008, however. According to New Hampshire law, independent voters have the choice on primary day to vote in either the Democratic or Republican presidential primary. In 2000, by far the vast majority of independent voters chose to vote in the Republican primary for McCain. One of the reasons given for U.S. Senator Bill Bradley’s defeat in the 2000 Democratic presidential primary was that independent voters who might have supported Bradley were almost all over in the Republican primary voting for McCain.

John McCain’s problem in 2008 was that there was a candidate

running for the Democratic nomination, Barack Obama, who might have real appeal for independent voters. Obama could possibly convince a number of those independent voters to vote for Obama in the Democratic primary rather than vote for McCain in the Republican contest. There also was the possibility of women independents electing to vote in the Democratic primary for a candidate of their gender, Hillary Clinton. If either of these two things occurred, or both together, McCain would probably lose the 2008 Republican presidential primary in New Hampshire to either Mike Huckabee, the big Iowa winner, or Mitt Romney, the former-governor of Massachusetts, a neighboring state to New Hampshire.

The strategy of focusing so strongly on New Hampshire was forced on John McCain by economic reality. In the spring of 2007, he began running an expensive national campaign with a big professional staff. As a result of weak fund raising, he soon ran out of money and was forced to lay off much of his campaign staff. McCain was described by the news media as essentially out of the race.

Instead of quitting, however, McCain went back to the strategy that had worked so well for him in 2000. He concentrated virtually all of his campaign time in New Hampshire. He put most of his limited funds into advertising in New Hampshire. He started doing those famous “town halls,” such as the one in Peterborough in 2000, where he frankly answered every question anyone in the audience cared to ask him. One of McCain’s top campaign workers estimated that, in 2008, McCain talked directly to at least 25,000 New Hampshire residents.

A popular campaign sign for John McCain, waved at his increasingly well-attended rallies and town halls, read “The Mac is Back.” It summed up the idea that McCain was on potentially favorable ground when campaigning in New Hampshire.

Throughout the fall and early winter of 2007, John McCain began to catch up in the polls with Mitt Romney, the original frontrunner for the Republicans in New Hampshire. Romney had hoped his successful service as governor of nearby Massachusetts would give him an easy win in New Hampshire, but the comeback of the McCain campaign from the

political dead was sharply narrowing Romney's lead in the polls.

Former-Governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas campaigned in New Hampshire, particularly during the four days following his surprise victory in Iowa. The news media pretty much completely discounted Huckabee in New Hampshire, however, repeatedly pointing out there were many fewer evangelical Christians to vote for him in New Hampshire than there had been in Iowa. The press was busy painting Mike Huckabee as a "one-constituency" candidate, that constituency was evangelical Christians, and there were not enough of them in New Hampshire to make Huckabee, in the media's collective opinion, a credible candidate to win the primary.

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Late at night on Monday, January 7, 2008, it was time for the people of Dixville Notch to gather at a local hotel in that northern New Hampshire community. The entire citizenry of Dixville Notch constitutes approximately 25 persons of voting age. As the clock struck midnight, it was Tuesday, January 8, 2008, and officially primary election day. Every four years, the good people of Dixville Notch endeavor to cast what is promoted as "the first official votes" of the U.S. presidential election.

Each Dixville Notch voter is assigned a private voting booth. By having all the voters cast their paper ballots into a ballot box simultaneously as the clock hands both point to the number 12, Dixville Notch seeks to guarantee that it is, indeed, the first New Hampshire town to report election results. Valuable time is not lost as one voter stands in line waiting for another voter to finish. Dixville Notch reveals its final tally to the news media within the first five minutes after the midnight hour.

Dixville Notch perfectly symbolizes the "exaggeration" effect of the New Hampshire primary. Under ordinary conditions, the votes of 25 or so persons in an obscure rural village more than 100 miles from a major metropolitan area would be of no interest whatsoever. This is New Hampshire, however, and these are the first votes. The results from Dixville Notch are faithfully reported by the major news media through-

out the nation. In recent years, the midnight voting in Dixville Notch has been covered live on cable television.

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When the first precincts were reported in the Democratic presidential primary in New Hampshire in 2008, a shock went through the news media and the attentive political public. Hillary Clinton, projected in all the polls to lose by a substantial margin, was off to an early lead. As more and more precinct results came in, Clinton began to widen the gap between herself and the second-place finisher, Barack Obama. It soon was obvious that a stunning upset was in the making. Hillary Clinton was winning New Hampshire and thereby cooling the big head of steam Barack Obama had garnered by winning Iowa. The race between the two of them for the Democratic nomination for president was once again dead-even.

Former-Senator John Edwards of North Carolina finished third.

The gloom that dominated the Clinton campaigners throughout New Hampshire's primary election day suddenly lifted. Former-President Bill Clinton was so obviously happy over his wife's surprise victory that he almost cried for joy on television. Barack Obama had *not* swept to a double victory in both Iowa and New Hampshire, which would have been a disaster for Hillary Clinton. It now was obvious that Hillary Clinton had lived to fight another day, and the struggle between her and Barack Obama was going to last through many additional caucuses and primaries, probably right on to Super Duper Tuesday on February 5, 2008, when 22 states would vote.

How had Hillary Clinton won it? The news media immediately attributed her victory to what was being labeled her "Moment." The near-tears incident in Portsmouth on the day before primary election day apparently swayed large numbers of women, particularly older women, to come out and vote for her. The pollsters missed this sharp swing because the "Moment" occurred in the last 24 hours before election day. The shift of women voters to the candidate of their gender had been sharp and immediate and too late for the polls to catch.

The New Hampshire primary for the Democrats in 2008 had broken

the pattern, established through two presidential election cycles (2000 and 2004), of the Iowa victor also winning in New Hampshire and the race for the nomination essentially being decided at that point in time. Barack Obama lost momentum because of his surprise defeat by Hillary Clinton in New Hampshire, but he was still very much a contender. Because its results differed so sharply from the results in Iowa, the 2008 presidential primary in New Hampshire decided nothing of a permanent nature for the Democrats. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama could look forward to a protracted nationwide battle for the Democratic nomination for president.

In contrast, on the Republican side in New Hampshire in 2008, everything went pretty much as the script said it would go. John McCain scored a substantial victory over second-place finisher Mitt Romney. Mike Huckabee came in a distant third with former-New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani in fourth place in single digits. As they had done in 2000, large numbers of independent voters in New Hampshire chose to vote in the Republican primary for John McCain and contributed mightily to his margin of victory. Mitt Romney's strongest showing was among registered Republicans.

The New Hampshire primary was a mini-disaster for Mitt Romney. His original strategy, well-publicized to the press, was to win both Iowa and New Hampshire and use those two victories to propel him to the top in subsequent primaries and caucuses in other states. By creating such high expectations for his electoral performance in Iowa and New Hampshire, Romney made his dual loss in those two states all the more devastating in the eyes of the news media. It also was embarrassing that Romney's years in the Governor's Mansion in Massachusetts did not win him more support in next-door New Hampshire.

The Romney forces tried to put as pretty a face as possible on the situation. They pointed out that two second-place finishes in a row were something of an achievement, particularly since McCain finished third in Iowa and Huckabee came in third in New Hampshire. The argument was made that only Romney possessed broad enough support in a number of states to finish first in the long run.



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The New Hampshire primary has evolved into a sort of electoral theme park. It is a Disneyland for politics fans. Where else can one experience things like John McCain's three-minute red-white-and-blue confetti shower in the town hall in Peterborough in 2000, and Hillary Clinton almost breaking into tears and thereby winning the Democratic primary in 2008, and, every four years, everyone in the remote hamlet of Dixville Notch casting their ballots together at the stroke of midnight?.

One man summed it up perfectly. In 1996 he went from one campaign event to another with a hand-painted sign on his chest that read: "My lifetime dream is to attend the New Hampshire primary."