

The original documents are located in Box 4, folder “Louisiana and Mississippi Trip, September 25-26, 1976” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Football

Football is more than a sport in the South, it is almost a tribal ritual. College football is very much a part of the social season. I have friends who graduated from Ole Miss ten years ago, and they still go to almost every game, both home and away. Most people aren't that fanatical, but I can't remember a fall in Memphis that did not include at least a couple of football games and accompanying parties.

Here's the rundown on pertinent games for this weekend. Ole Miss (the University of Mississippi, located in Oxford) plays Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg. This is a fierce in-state rivalry. Mississippi State University, the third major state university, will play the University of Florida at Gainesville.

Louisiana State University (LSU) will be playing Rice University at Baton Rouge. Tulane University, which rarely has a decent team, will be playing Boston.

The competition between LSU and Ole Miss is so fierce that one year the irate losers overturned and burned a railroad car.

The pro team in New Orleans is the Saints. The number two quarterback is Archie Manning, a former Ole Miss star. Archie has had problems with his throwing arm, but he has lots of fans. The Saints play in the Super Dome, the world's largest enclosed sports arena.

Political

The Almanac of American Politics describes Louisiana as one of the weakest states in the country for the GOP. But there are two Republican representatives in the eight-person delegation.

David Treen, who represents the 3rd District, was the first GOP member of Congress from Louisiana in the 20th century. Treen, a conservative, had run several times before he was successful in 1972. Most of the district is Cajun country with miles of swamps, but it also includes some of the almost totally white suburbs of New Orleans. French is considered the first language in this area. The Republican Congressional Committee does not think Treen's opposition is serious.

Henson Moore captured the 6th District seat in 1974, after incumbent Democrat John Rarick was defeated in the primary. Actually Moore ran twice against Democrat Jeff LaCaze, because of voting irregularities. The 6th includes the capital, Baton Rouge, and surrounding rural and solidly conservative parishes. (Counties in Louisiana are parishes, a term dating back to the French influence.) Moore, an attorney, will be 37 on October 4th. He also has minimal opposition.

Rarick, whose virulent racism is well-known, is running as an independent in the 1st District. Rep. F. Edward Hebert is retiring after 36 years in Congress. The district includes northern and eastern New Orleans and two parishes along the Mississippi River. The delta lands of the Mississippi are communities of French-speaking river pilots and shrimp fishermen. This is also an area rich in oil with large offshore deposits. The Republican candidate is attorney Bob Livingston. He will face the winner of a Democratic runoff September 25th.

Livingston is a former U.S. attorney and District Attorney for Orleans Parish. He also is assistant Attorney General for Louisiana. A Navy veteran, he is 33 years old, married with three children. His wife's name is Bonnie.

The RCC thinks he could be a winner.

The other possible Republican victory is in the state's most rural district, the 5th. This is Otto Passman's seat. Passman was defeated in the primary by dairy operator Jerry Huckaby.

The Republican candidate is Frank Spooner, an independent oil and gas operator and producer from Monroe, the district's only urban center. Spooner, 38, is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. He is married with four children. His wife's name is Mary Louise. Spooner was a Reagan delegate and vice chairman of the Louisiana delegation at the National Convention. This is considered a tough race.

Passman has been in Congress 30 years. The 5th includes large plantations along the Mississippi and small hill farms. It has a 35 percent black population.

There is a Republican candidate opposing Rep. John Breaux in the 7th District. His name is Charles Huff. He is not considered a strong candidate.

Neither of the two Democratic Senators, Russell Long or J. Bennett Johnson, is up for re-election.

Democratic Governor Edwin Edwards, a former House member, was the first Cajun elected in decades. Edwards is not a Jimmy Carter fan. He has officially endorsed Carter, but privately he has released his people to work for the President. Edwards' wife, Elaine, will be on the boat.

Moon Landieu, the Mayor of New Orleans, will also be on the boat. Landieu, a Democrat, is active in the League of Cities. He is considered very liberal.

Issues

Abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment are especially sensitive topics in Louisiana. The lower part of the state is about 75 percent Catholic. ERA has been defeated seven times in the state, and the PFC contact says many of the President's volunteers are from the anti-ERA forces.

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There is solid opposition to busing. Louisiana has a black population of 30 percent.

The PFC contact says amnesty has hurt Carter in Louisiana. Like many Southerners, people in Louisiana are strong on the military and pro-defense.

Food and architecture are two sources of great pride in southern Louisiana. With many French and German descendants, there is a strong ethnic flavor to the area.

The oil and gas industry is also very important economically along with fishing and agriculture. Carter's stand on divestiture has not gone down well in Louisiana.

The PFC contact describes the political battle in Louisiana as being over the Wallace vote. Wallace carried the state in 1968. Louisiana is fairly typically Southern conservative on most issues, although less strenuously opposed to social welfare than other states, because of the Huey Long influence. Huey has been dead 30 years, but because of his son's power, the influence is still there.

Mississippi

Political

Senator John Stennis, 75, is unopposed for re-election. The Governor, Cliff Finch, is also a Democrat. There are two Republicans in the five-man House delegation.

Both Republicans are young, married, Baptists, lawyers, Ole Miss graduates with two children. Thad Cochran, 38, was first elected in 1972. His district includes the capital, Jackson, which has a population of 153,000. His wife's name is Rose. He has opposition, but is expected to win.

Trent Lott, who represents the 5th District, was also first elected in 1972. His district includes the Gulf Coast, where the President will be campaigning. The 5th was Rep. Bill Colmer's district, and Lott was his administrative assistant. Lott, 33, does have a well-financed opponent. His opposition is a state representative and a Catholic (the Catholic population in Mississippi is concentrated along the Coast). Lott's wife's name is Patricia. Lott is expected to win, but the race could be tough.

Dorothy Cleveland, 65, is the Republican challenger to Rep. Sonny Montgomery of the 3rd District. She is not expected to do well.

Roland Byrd is challenging Rep. David Bowen in the 2nd District. Although Byrd is not expected to win, he is considered a good candidate, who may run again.

Issues

The sensitive issues in Mississippi are very similar to Louisiana. Mississippi statistically is the Nation's poorest state. Unlike the PFC contact in Louisiana, the Mississippi contact made a point that there were no racial conflicts in the state. The ugly image Mississippi got in the 60s has been of deep concern to both races, and there is genuine pride in having survived the turmoil. Jackson has busing, but there was a minimum of fuss when it was implemented several years ago. There are, however, a number of white private schools in the state.

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The beautiful old homes, legacies of the "Old South," are very much centers of pride in Mississippi. Spring pilgrimages, like those in Virginia, are planned for all year round. The one in Natchez is justifiably one of the most famous.

(PASS CHRISTIAN, *Mississippi*)

Hurricane Camille of 1969 and its devastating impact on the Mississippi Gulf Coast continues to be excess baggage for many South Mississippians, particularly those who live in Pass Christian where the most severe damage was inflicted. They have struggled to rebuild and, in fact, have made remarkable strides but the scars still remain. They have survived mainly because of their fighting spirit, their will to overcome tremendous odds. They have emerged a stronger people because of Camille. The President should commend them for this fighting spirit. He should also remind them that the Federal Government responded with massive assistance and financial aid and that Trent Lott, who was then the administrative assistant for Congressman Bill Colmer, worked feverishly to obtain that federal assistance.

Other areas of interest to the people of Pass Christian include the Child and Family Services Act; the large number of veterans who have retired in Pass Christian or other areas of the Coast; and even the Naval Oceanographic Office which has recently been transferred from Suitland, Maryland, to the National Space Technology Laboratory in Hancock County, Mississippi; and continuing concern about crime and drug abuse.

Tom Houston
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