

A Private Decision, 1969

Newscaster: ...the political situation here in New Hampshire. The rest of the country is still watching us...

Narrator: Once every four years, when the United States turns its attention to choosing a leader, a small snowy state in the northeastern corner of the country becomes the political center of the nation.

Newscaster: ... it will show the other states that New Hampshire clearly wants Richard Nixon to be the next President of the United States.

Radio Announcer: The final campaigning is underway in the New Hampshire presidential primary coming up next Tuesday. On the Republican side, Richard Nixon is urging New Hampshire Republicans to give him a big send-off in his quest for the GOP presidential nomination.

Narrator: New Hampshire signals the start of the national presidential campaign by holding the first primary election of the year. So the men who then wanted to be president – Richard Nixon, Michigan's Governor George Romney, and Senator Eugene McCarthy from Minnesota – drew national attention to New Hampshire as they started the campaign with ritual treks through the snow, hoping these visits would bring them victory in this first voter test, where one man from each political party would win the state's support at the political conventions in the summer.

Laconia is a small town in New Hampshire. The most popular pastime in winter is dog sled racing. The problems that concern other parts of the country may seem far away, but behind its placid landscape and its comfortable homes, Laconia's people were aware of the challenges their country faced in this election year, and many became actively involved in the primary campaign.

Jim Wilson lives in Laconia. Like many of his neighbors he is a member of the Republican Party. This year he is chairman of the Laconia Chamber of Commerce...