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GUIDE

THE RISE AND FALL OF SENATOR JOSEPH R. McCARTHY

SR Scholarly Resources Inc.
Wilmington, Delaware

First published 1982
Second printing 1983
Printed in the United States of America

SCHOLARLY RESOURCES INC.
104 Greenhill Avenue
Wilmington, Delaware 19805

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor and publisher are grateful to the following for their permission to reprint selected material:

Maurice Rosenblatt for his assistance in obtaining permission to reprint from the manuscripts of the National Committee for an Effective Congress. Reprinted by permission of National Counsel Associated Inc., Washington, DC.

Typescripts of "See It Now" with Edward R. Murrow and "Meet the Press" with Lawrence E. Spivak. Reprinted by permission of Columbia Broadcasting System (New York).

Milwaukee Journal (Wisconsin).

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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FOREWORD

From early 1950 to late 1954 the single most dominant personality in American politics was Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy of Wisconsin. No political or policy decisions were taken during that period without first considering McCarthy's possible reactions. In December 1954 the U.S. Senate officially condemned him. Almost immediately McCarthy slipped back into the obscurity from which he had emerged so dramatically in Wheeling, West Virginia, on 9 February 1950.

On that day McCarthy told a Republican party women's club that he had in his possession a list of names of subversive employees of the State Department. As the senator left Wheeling on a cross-country speaking tour, his name reached the headlines for the first time. While the Truman administration defended itself against McCarthy's first barrage, the young senator fired new and more extravagant charges. Within a few weeks he provoked powerful senators into instituting a formal investigation. The Tydings Committee Hearings of 1950 gave McCarthy his first opportunity to practice his unique talent for accusation and confrontation. For the next four and one-half years the senator involved himself in a succession of contentious, often tumultuous, investigations and public political wars.

The introduction to this documentary collection recounts the events of McCarthy's stormy political career, from his youth in Wisconsin through his first four years in the Senate. The succeeding chapters follow in chronological order and provide substantial detail on all of McCarthy's principal public activities, beginning with a chapter on his little-studied first two years in the Senate. Careful analysis of any of these chapters will reveal the elements of the senator's technique, which proved so successful for him during his brief period of ascendancy but which finally brought him defeat and humiliation.

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INTRODUCTION

Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy stared across the hearing room at the witness. "We have trailed you all through the country," he said, as he demanded from the slight bespectacled New York City lawyer names that were crucial. Isiadore Ginsberg, citing constitutional protections that only seemed to make the senator more adamant, refused to cooperate. "It [may] take legislation to do it," McCarthy threatened, "but I sincerely hope [that] once and for all we can get--I will use that expression--men like Ginsberg out of business." As legal remedies failed, he promised to ruin Ginsberg "by turning the weight of publicity upon him. . . ." (1)

Two weeks after this exchange, when Ginsberg again appeared before McCarthy and tried to read a prepared statement, the senator cut him off: "You are not going to read anything, Mr. Ginsberg, until you have given me the information which I have asked [of] you." Ginsberg replied: "I do not intend, sir, to give you the information. I intend to state my ground for refusing to give it to you, sir." McCarthy thereupon had the witness step down. At once prosecutor and witness, McCarthy proceeded to read into the record his own interpretation of the statutory basis for compelling Ginsberg to produce information. Ginsberg could only reply that "we are being convicted in the eyes of the public through Senator McCarthy before we are given a fair opportunity for defense in the proper forum."(2) To anyone familiar with the McCarthy investigations of the early 1950s, this scene will compare to a well-remembered old song. But, in fact, the hearings took place in 1948, more than two years before the senator's famous Wheeling speech. Isiadore Ginsberg stood accused of profiteering in building supplies.

McCarthy's life in the years before he became a dominant national figure revealed character traits and accomplishments that suggested both the possibility of a bright and lengthy career and the dangerous instabilities of a hyperactive and irrational temperament. Just over thirty-eight years old when he entered the Senate in 1947, from a state that traditionally elects its legislators to multiple terms, McCarthy clearly possessed energy, intelligence, and political skill in abundant quantities. Within ten years he rose from obscurity to celebrity, achieved enormous influence, enjoyed success, suffered defeat, and died. The emotional excesses that produced his rapid rise and devastating fall between 1950 and 1954 had been clearly visible for years.

On 14 November 1908 Joseph, the fifth of Timothy and Bridget McCarthy's seven children, arrived in the eight-room farmhouse that stood near the northern shore of Lake Winnebago, about 100 miles north of Milwaukee. The soil-poor, 140-acre farm demanded everything of the McCarthy brood and returned little beyond subsistence and instruction in unrelenting work. Daily life absorbed the great physical energy that young Joe displayed. He dropped out of school at fourteen, started his own chicken business, and settled into the relentless routine of the small farm. After five tough and unsuccessful years, McCarthy went to town, to Manawa, and took on several jobs at once, packed a four-year high-school curriculum into one, and won admission to Marquette University. There he plugged along academically, won class elections, boxed in a brawling style, got by well enough, and in 1935 graduated with a law degree.

Like so many young mid-Depression lawyers, McCarthy struggled in a lean small-town practice. Life in the mid-state county-seat town of Waupaca meant cases now and then and membership in every civic and political organization. Unlike others, McCarthy pushed ever harder. Soon president of the regional Young Democrats, he unsuccessfully stood in 1936, at age twenty-eight, as Democratic candidate for district attorney. Soon thereafter, he moved north to Shwano and on to a partnership with a prominent Republican. A quick falling-out ensued when the younger man unexpectedly entered the race for circuit judge, a post coveted by the senior partner.

Young McCarthy won the election in inimitable style. His opponent, a well-regarded long-time circuit judge, quickly found that McCarthy had cited his age as seventy-three. While this lie forced Edgar V. Werner to advertise himself as "only" sixty-six, thus making age an issue, McCarthy went on to more innuendo. Adding up the modest annual salaries that Judge Werner had received over a public career of thirty-five years, McCarthy announced that his opponent had cost the taxpayers up to $200,000, an embarrassing sum in mid-Depression. The campaign, unusually harsh for such an office, featured McCarthy's relentless search for votes. Twenty-hour days found the inexhaustible young man bumping an old car along country roads from farm to crossroads to town to farm, handshaking, cajoling, noting names and faces, and moving on. He won.

Circuit Judge McCarthy's brief tenure on the bench featured politics and controversy. He kept the court in extraordinary session, often until midnight, as he furiously ran cases through; within weeks he had cleared a 250-case backlog. Restless and ambitious, he visited other circuits to help out while meeting local politicians, businessmen, and the press. Politics and friendship sometimes mix poorly in a courtroom, however, as McCarthy's role in a complex case involving a major dairy chain proved.

Evidence strongly indicated that the powerful Quaker Dairy Company had engaged in a long-term conspiracy to cut prices to small mid-state dairy farmers. The Wisconsin Agriculture Department moved

against Quaker, and the case came before McCarthy. Defense counsel included a close McCarthy friend, which by itself was not unusual. But there followed an uncustomary--for McCarthy--six-week delay, and then in rapid order the judge's injunction against Quaker, his almost immediate order voiding the injunction, and his dismissal of the case. The conclusion proved less shocking than McCarthy's explanation.

The judge announced that Quaker had violated Wisconsin law, but since the statute in question was expected to lapse six months later, conviction would mean "undue hardship" for the dairy company. On appeal, the State Supreme Court could find no legal rationale for McCarthy's decision, concluded that his actions abused judicial power, and requested a transcript of the trial. McCarthy replied that he had ordered his court notes destroyed as immaterial. The affair thus ended with a stinging rebuke to the new circuit judge from the State Supreme Court as well as a bruising retrial in which Quaker's financial and political clout caused the Wisconsin Agriculture Department to relent. McCarthy presided, assailed the prosecution, and once again failed to preserve a transcript. By the time he won this battle, he was ready to enter the real war.

The substance of McCarthy's record in the Marine Corps revolves around several basic contradictions. According to McCarthy and his supporters, the thirty-three-year-old jurist resigned from the bench and enlisted in the Marines as a buck private. Later commissioned, he served in various frontline capacities including intelligence officer, counselor of younger men, and sometime combat tail gunner. In one action or another he received a leg wound that, at least one political audience heard, contained "ten pounds of shrapnel."

McCarthy detractors present the exact opposite case. According to this version, requested and received a leave of absence from the Circut Court, to which he returned in 1944. He requested and received a Marine commission. His war work featured not only ordinary behind-the-lines intelligence, but also such military play as machine-gunning coconut trees and other mock targets. He occasionally occupied a rear seat on milk runs and may have fired some bullets against the Japanese, but probably not. The injury came in a traditional raucous celebration when McCarthy's troopship crossed the equator.

One cannot dispute the fact that Marine officer McCarthy remained intensely involved with politics throughout his days in the South Pacific. In 1944 he cooperated with political supporters in mounting a primary challenge to Wisconsin Senator Alexander Wiley, the Republican incumbent. Gaining thirty days' leave, McCarthy returned home to campaign and appeared in uniform throughout the state in spite of explicit military and constitutional proscriptions. He evaded the military ban on campaigning in uniform by "apologizing" to audiences for not being able to present his views before he quickly continued: "If I could speak I would say that . . . ." And then he would. Even more restrictive was the Wisconsin statute that barred sitting judges from running for

elective office. This obstacle, which McCarthy again would test in his 1946 Senate campaign, was removed by a compliant Republican state official who allowed him to stay on the ballot while the offense remained unchallenged.

McCarthy lost to Senator Wiley, but drew about 100,000 votes and a great deal of encouragement. The Senate seat of Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., would be contested in just two years. His leave over and his political appetite strong, McCarthy still faced months in the Pacific, where the major assault on Japan neared. He asked for another sixty days of leave. The Marine Corps denied the request and ordered him either to return to duty or to resign. McCarthy stayed in Wisconsin.

"Young Bob" LaFollette appeared to be such a formidable political fixture that McCarthy's challenge initially seemed ridiculous. Son and political heir of the legendary senator "Fighting Bob" LaFollette, he had held with distinction his father's Senate seat for twenty-one years. To some Washington observers, he was the best of the Senate. In this national strength, however, lurked a fatal weakness.

McCarthy may have sensed LaFollette's Wisconsin liability before other politicians did because he certainly exploited it. Given the LaFollette family's long tradition of third-party independence through the Progressive party of Wisconsin, "Young Bob's" political base inside the Republican party remained shallow, even though many Republicans and Democrats habitually had voted for both father and son through the years. By the mid-1940s, however, the progressive impulse in Wisconsin had so weakened that the party was dissolved, and the younger LaFollette looked to the GOP, Wisconsin's stronger major party. In addition, the very criteria that persuaded Washington observers of LaFollette's national importance detracted from his political base back home. LaFollette's preoccupation with major issues left him out of touch with the volatile crosscurrents of Wisconsin Republican politics.

For his part, McCarthy simply ran other Republican challengers out of the race with a combination of energy and nerve. The well-cultivated "Tail-Gunner Joe" image proved unbeatable, and the Wisconsin Republican organization swallowed its many doubts and chose him over LaFollette. In the primary campaign, McCarthy suggested that the senator was a wartime profiteer, a Communist sympathizer, and an opponent of the fledgling United Nations. LaFollette, aloof and confident, remained in Washington until just two weeks before the election and paid a heavy price for doing so. McCarthy prevailed, 207,935 votes to 202,539.

In the general election campaign against Democratic candidate Howard McMurray, McCarthy depended almost exclusively on the patriotic themes popular with dozens of politicians in that early Cold War autumn. McMurray, a University of Wisconsin political science professor, had an impeccable moderate record, yet spent most of his time in the intolerable position of having to deny that he was a subversive. McCarthy rolled to victory, 620,430 votes to 378,772. (3)

The three years in the Senate between his entrance in January 1947 and the Wheeling speech of February 1950 are worth consideration. Although the new senator from Wisconsin attracted little national recognition, he commanded attention from senior colleagues in ways to which the nation would soon respond. Brash, energetic, bombastic, intelligent, and determined, McCarthy showed no reverence for the Senate custom that constrained young backbenchers to sit quietly and do the bidding of their elders. From the beginning he fought on issues great and small. When opposed, he frequently responded indiscriminately, personally, and sometimes cruelly. Attracted by an interesting variety of legislative issues, with many of them designed to advance his own economic interests, he turned on full throttle from the start.

On any number of occasions during the early years, McCarthy mastered a complex subject and dominated a situation in which he was the layman and his opponents the experts. (4) If quick intelligence formed one element of this public warp and woof, the tendency toward overkill, bombast, with an eye for the knockout punch, was also in evidence. In one of his first appearances on the Senate floor on 22 January 1947, McCarthy managed to suggest that the failure of the Democrats to support Republican demands for an investigation into wartime defense spending constituted a scandalous rejection of wounded veterans. He told his new colleagues that he spoke as one of the 15 million fighting men of World War II, and that on the previous day he had spent three hours in a veterans' hospital talking to his friends, some of whom were permanently crippled. McCarthy continued:

> One young man, a marine with both legs amputated, said---I shall try to quote him as nearly verbatim as I can: 'When we were in the islands and the days were especially rough and the number of dead and injured mounted, and you would lie there at night and listen to the moan of the jungle on the one side and the music of the sea on the other, then the veil between life and death became very, very thin, and very often your good friends who had died that day were much nearer to you than those who still lived, and we knew then and know now that many of those men died because of the graft and corruption which the Senate proposes to investigate'.

In the peroration of his speech, he fervently hoped that the Democrats would join with the majority party "in telling the wives and the mothers of the 250,000 men who died during the war---I hope they will join with us in telling the legless and sightless---that not one single individual who was guilty of graft and corruption which may have directly led to the death or wounding of an American soldier, sailor, or marine, will be able . . . to escape the just consequences of his acts." (5)

McCarthy's insistence on being recognized was by no means limited to assaults on the Democrats. Early in March 1947 he took the floor to challenge both a senior member of his own party and the Senate's tradition-laden committee hierarchy. At issue was the administration's proposal for unifying the three major military branches into a single Department of Defense; this naturally came to the Armed Services Committee. Senator McCarthy rose to object on behalf of his own decidedly less prestigious Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments and spoke of sharing committee responsibility. "Unthinkable," responded Chan Gurney, the South Dakota Republican and chairman of Armed Services. Annoyed, Gurney then expressed his doubts that McCarthy was reflecting the sentiments of his own committee's membership. McCarthy fired back with false deference, claiming that members of his committee recognized the ability of Senator Gurney "almost to a man." If rejected, he threatened, "we should then make an all-out fight and argue this question at very great length."

While in fact no filibuster developed, McCarthy's threats were not entirely idle. He perceived military unification as a menace to the sovereignty of the Marine Corps, to which he felt strong loyalty. Consequently, he invited himself to Armed Services Committee hearings, badgered witnesses, made speeches, and finally introduced an amendment that would have preserved intact the existing state of the Corps. (6) This rich blend of self-assurance, quick intelligence, and outrageous style also characterized McCarthy's involvement in enterprises that seemed related only to his persistent fascination by and problems with money.

A penchant for political gambling matched his money habits. Soon a familiar figure at Washington area race tracks, McCarthy also continued to plunge into the most speculative stock market activities. In 1942, as he left for Marine Corps duty, he gave a $2,200 nest egg to a Chicago brokerage house for investment in a high-risk market. The speculation paid off. Records later would reveal that the absent Marine's taxable income for 1943 amounted to nearly $43,000, none of which he reported to Wisconsin tax authorities. Instead, when tax time came McCarthy notified state officials that he would not file because he had not lived in Wisconsin during the year and held no property there. The state tax assessor, assuming that McCarthy had received only nontaxable military pay, agreed. Not until 1947 did the truth emerge, and McCarthy reluctantly complied with an order to pay over $2,500 in back taxes and interest. (7)

Another money matter arose in the spring of 1947 when the Senate considered sugar decontrol and allocation questions. After the fight was over, people in Washington began to refer to the junior senator from Wisconsin as "the Pepsi-Cola Kid." Without question, Pepsi-Cola stood to benefit from the measures advocated by McCarthy; indeed, they seem to have recruited him for the task. For his part, McCarthy sought his objectives with complete abandon, and it should be added, with considerable success. He finally managed, amid extraordinary

tumult on the floor that included sharp personal assaults on other Republicans, to pass an amendment to shorten the effective date of decontrol in consonance with the position pursued by Pepsi-Cola with great vigor all over Capitol Hill. A few months later, when McCarthy made an urgent request for assistance, Pepsi-Cola's principal Washington lobbyist underwrote the senator's overdue $20,000 note at an Appleton, Wisconsin, bank.(8)

Within a year a similarly venal piece of self-interest would earn another reward for the senator: a $10,000 check from a corporation whose interests specifically were advanced by a McCarthy-designed piece of legislation. The Lustron Corporation of Columbus, Ohio, had promised to manufacture hundreds of thousands of modular prefabricated homes, thereby significantly alleviating the postwar housing crisis. The Housing Act of 1948 contained provisions precisely tailored for prefab manufacturers. Within a short time after its passage in August, Lustron purchased for $10,000 the publication rights to a pamphlet ostensibly written by Senator McCarthy but actually the product of employees of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Years later Lustron's president told of a social involvement with McCarthy, of drinks and race track visits, and of both cashing the senator's checks and tearing up some of them.(9)

This picture of corruption corresponds with McCarthy's historical reputation, and so it should for it is accurate as far as it goes. Easily overlooked, however, is the enormous political skill that he employed in plotting the campaign for housing legislation.(10) He devoted more of his time in 1947-48 to the housing crisis than to any other subject. If his legislative effectiveness were measured by the results he achieved, he would receive high marks. While at first a novice associating with such recognized senatorial experts as Robert Taft and John Sparkman, McCarthy, within fifteen months, emerged as the principal architect and prime political force behind the Housing Act of 1948. Looking back over thirty years, Senator Sparkman characterized this bill as "the most comprehensive and best housing act we have ever passed." (11) Yet, corruption negated the value of McCarthy's effective leadership in this difficult and complex political struggle.

By the end of 1948 the senator's notes at the Appleton State Bank totaled over $73,000 against an annual salary of $12,500 and collateralization of under 20 percent. His friend Matthew Schuh, president of the bank, found himself under pressure in McCarthy's case. One year after Pepsi-Cola money had bought time, McCarthy needed someone else. At the same time, the Lustron Corporation needed another friend on Capitol Hill. The $10,000 "fee" for publishing a booklet composed almost entirely of public information relieved the pressure. (12)

In the spring of 1949 McCarthy plunged into the most bizarre episode of his pre-Wheeling career. It began with an ordinary Senate investigation of allegations of impropriety against some American military prosecutors in Germany. The aggrieved parties were among the seventy-three officers and men of the First SS Panzer Regiment, who had murdered about eighty American prisoners of war

near the Belgian village of Malmedy during the Battle of the Bulge. Charges of beatings, mock trials, and false promises of immunity against American military officials came from within West Germany and suggested embarrassing political complications in the precarious Cold War atmosphere. At this time the Armed Services Committee named the Republican senator from Connecticut, Raymond Baldwin, to head an investigations subcommittee. An untraditional choice for the Democratic majority, Baldwin enjoyed great respect in the Senate. He became personally involved when his young law partner, Dwight Fanton, a former Malmedy prosecutor in Germany, was the target of many of the charges.

Senator McCarthy once again requested permission to participate in another committee's hearings. This time, in spectacular fashion, he took them over. From 18 April to 20 May, through seventeen days of testimony, he expanded upon the premise that inhumane and unjust Americans had denied due process of law to the SS troops. He attacked the honesty and competence of everyone who challenged him, senators and witnesses alike. He characterized a recently sentenced Nazi war criminal as a long-standing friend of the west, indeed as a secret agent for the Allies. He demanded that lie detectors validate the admissability of testimony. He impuned the courage of Jews who fled Hitler. On 20 May, McCarthy noisily quit the hearings because of "a deliberate attempt to avoid the facts and effect a whitewash of the army officers involved." (13)

Even after he left the investigating panel, McCarthy continued a spasmodic guerrilla campaign. Sympathetic Wisconsin newspapers published a five-part series by him on the whitewash. In the Senate, McCarthy reduced the Malmedy massacre to personal insult: "the man primarily responsible" for what the senator termed "this disgrace" is "the present law partner of the Chairman of the Subcommittee that is investigating the charges . . . ." In return, the junior senator from Wisconsin received a political rebuff strong enough to stun most politicians. The prestigious Armed Services Committee took the probably unprecedented action of releasing a public letter of commendation to Senator Baldwin for his conduct in the Malmedy affair. The bipartisan statement received the signatures of all thirteen members, including the Republican stalwarts Styles Bridges, Chan Gurney, and William F. Knowland. The letter concluded with the declaration that "we, his colleagues on the committee, take this unusual step in issuing this statement because of the most unusual, unfair and utterly undeserved comments that have been made concerning Senator Baldwin and his work as Chairman of this Subcommittee . . . . " (14) The target could only have been McCarthy. Undeterred, he persisted in his cause, enduring both the scorn of his colleagues and the defeat of his campaign. (15)

In the six months prior to the Wheeling speech, McCarthy's major political involvement was in the so-called "Five Percenters" or "Deep Freeze" scandal. Hearings before the Investigations Subcommittee of the Expenditures Committee were held on almost every working day between 8 August and 1 September, with the Wisconsin senator the ranking Republican and most conspicuous participant. Politically,

the event exceeded even Republican fantasy. Democrats high and low apparently had been caught in a variety of embarrassing activities, with the cast of characters coming from all walks of life. McCarthy never missed a session and made the front page of the New York Times for the first time. (16)

Scarcely able to mask his delight, he had great success in tying a string of witnesses to presidential aide Harry Vaughan and elicited testimony linking Vaughan to a California racetrack, improper Pentagon promotions, illegal sugar allocations, suspect dispersals of war surplus, improper visa preferences, and even ties to mobster Frank Costello. Perhaps the most embarrassing aspect of the entire affair for the White House was the revelation that Mrs. Truman had accepted a deep-freeze unit. McCarthy thoroughly exploited this gift. One can only imagine Mr. Truman's reaction to the senator's words of absolution:

> . . . I personally, from all the information I have---and as I say, I hope the balance of the committee joins me in this---feel that there is nothing in the record even remotely suggesting any impropriety or anything improper on the part of Mrs. Truman. I think she is the type of lady who is incapable of doing anything that would bring any discredit on her position.

A moment later McCarthy returned to the First Lady as others attempted to move on. "In other words," he said. "the record definitely proves, so far as I know, that Mrs. Truman had no knowledge at all that there was any attempt at influence being used. In fact, I think she is one of the finest things about the White House. That is one of the few times that Harry used good judgment, when he picked Bess." (17)

Shortly thereafter the senator returned to Wisconsin and instigated a red-baiting campaign against a Madison newspaperman; the convergence of McCarthy and McCarthyism approached. (18) Yet even just a few weeks before his trip to Wheeling, McCarthy still had to chart a firm course. There is nothing to suggest that he consciously planned to launch the anti-Communist crusade at Wheeling. In fact throughout the 1947-49 period the junior senator from Wisconsin had remained indifferent to the whole issue of anti-Communism. With Washington awash in red-baiting in those years, McCarthy is listed in the Congressional Record as having made comments on 215 or so separate topics, only two of which clearly involved communism. (19) All this changed, for the man and for the nation, after his speech in Wheeling on 9 February 1950.

The many documents in this collection provide a unique perspective for studying McCarthy and McCarthyism. The techniques that the senator had developed throughout his public life were now to be focused and perfected. Because of the man and the times in which he operated. no effective defense against McCarthy materialized for over four years. He bulldozed his opponents while convincing many Americans that he had discovered and was digging out a conspiracy of massive proportions.

The principal explanation for the senator's success during the early 1950s lies in the Cold War context created during the immediate postwar period. Interpreting Soviet objectives as a comprehensive plan for world domination, the Truman administration responded by reducing conflicts everywhere to confrontations between Washington and Moscow. Remilitarization abroad and the search for subversives at home attracted both political parties. By 1950 China had been lost to Mao Tse-tung, ostensibly an underling of the Russians. American and Soviet alliance systems confronted each other from the North Sea to the Sea of Japan. In June 1950, just five years after the end of World War II, the United States went back to fight in an obscure place called Korea. Charges of espionage and subversion within the United States produced some evidence and endless allegations. Courier rings, pilfered atomic secrets, cells within key government agencies, years of treason, the charges and suspicions continued to build.

Senator McCarthy unsuspectingly unleashed a furious anti-Communist political force when he told his West Virginia audience that the State Department contained a large number (57 or 205) of dedicated subversives, and that the secretary of state was aware of it. While other politicians had trafficked in such wild charges, none could match McCarthy's technique or commitment. That he was never able to convict anyone mattered not at all. McCarthy had the answer to the set of circumstances that had produced anxiety and bewilderment. He had the names and knew of the activities of traitors and dupes; he would fight tirelessly to expose and destroy them. Thus the campaign began against the State Department, the "Voice of America", the Democratic party, the media, the U. S. Army, the Central Intelligence Agency, selected colleges and universities, fellow senators and generals, cabinet officers, and presidents of the United States.

From 1950 to 1954 McCarthy dominated American political life more than any other individual. As he fought his battles he took nothing personally, seemed surprised that others did, and would welcome today as an ally a man tarred yesterday with the strongest vilification. He seemed in battle to have no regard for institutions or opponents; he played always by his own instinct and outside of everyone else's rules. He never outlined a coherent political program and gave no evidence of any vision for American society.

The chapters that follow begin with the days immediately preceding the Wheeling speech and end with McCarthy's official comdemnation by the Senate late in 1954. His political power gone, he then faded into obscurity as quickly as he had emerged. Joseph Raymond McCarthy died in May 1957 at the age of forty-eight.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. U.S., Congress, Senate, Joint Committee on Housing, Hearings, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 16 January 1948, pp. 5154, 5444.

2. Ibid., p. 5958.

3. The preceding sketch is based on several secondary sources, many of which are now considerably dated and all suffering from one or more limitations. The best biography remains Richard Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy (Cleveland, 1960), a masterly impressionistic sketch by the late New Yorker essayist. Nearly all accounts of McCarthy's life before 1946 borrow heavily on Jack Anderson and Ronald May, McCarthy: The Man, the Senator, the "Ism" (Boston, 1952), a thin election year polemic. For an analysis of the McCarthy-LaFollette campaign see also David M. Oshinsky, Senator Joseph McCarthy and the American Labor Movement (Columbia, MO, 1976). An interesting collection is Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, The Specter: Original Essays on American Anti-Communism and the Origins of McCarthyism (New York, 1974), which contains some analyses of Wisconsin politics. Other treatments, both general and nonscholarly, include Fred J. Cook, The Nightmare Decade: The Life and Times of Senator Joe McCarthy (New York, 1971).

4. In February 1947 a committee attempted to determine financial liability for a San Diego area aqueduct. McCarthy debated and easily bested an Interior Department expert, the mayor of San Diego, and the senior senator from California. U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Hearing on Senate Document #7: Aqueduct Near San Diego, California, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 25 February 1947, pp. 62-69, 112-13, 160-63, 168-69, 174-77. For two additional virtuoso performances on equally obscure subjects see U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Hearing on Investigation of Expenditures, Bureau of Customs, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 14 April 1947, pp. 82-86, 92-97, 99-101; and U.S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments and Subcommittee of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, Hearings on a Resolution Authorizing an Investigation of Surplus Property and Its Disposal, War Reserve Program of the Navy Department, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 17 June 1947, pp. 23-29, 35-37, 40-41.

5. U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 22 January 1947, p. 503.

6. U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 3 March 1947, pp. 1604-5. For McCarthy at the Armed Services

hearings see U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings on Unification of the Armed Forces, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 30 April 1947, pp. 491, 504-5, 507-10, 514-24, 542-53. See also ibid., 7 May 1947, pp. 581-637; and 9 May 1947, pp. 643-93. Characteristically, his warnings to the public were apocalyptical. McCarthy told the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce in a speech on 26 May that the nation would "live to regret it more than any other piece of legislation of the last century [for] . . . this measure was drafted by military men long removed from civilian life. It can and will in the next twenty years give to the military complete and absolute dictatorial control over civilian life." New York Times, 27 May 1947. The amendment was lost 19 to 52. U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 9 July 1947, pp. 8522-26.

7. The Progressive (April 1954): 19-20. For a defense of McCarthy's financial habits (and virtually everything else) see Roy M. Cohn, McCarthy (New York, 1968), p. 270. The opposite case is in Cook, Nightmare Decade, pp. 92-94.

8. For McCarthy's closed-door admission of support for Pepsi-Cola see U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Banking and Currency, Minutes of the Executive Sessions, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 8 March 1947, RG 46, 8E-4/21/10A, National Archives. For the spectacular fight on the Senate floor, which featured McCarthy's oratorical skill and personal overkill, see U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 1st sess., 26-27 March 1947, pp. 2611, 2698-2702, 2706-25. See also Fortune (January 1947): 143. A New York Times editorial termed the decision to lift controls six months early, which McCarthy demanded, "the worst possible time of the year for making the transition." New York Times, 30 March 1947. Pepsi-Cola's most voluble spokesman in Washington was its president, Walter Mack, whose frequently expressed opinion that the United States already possessed an enormous sugar surplus formed the basis for McCarthy's Senate arguments. New York Times, 3-5 June 1947 reflects Mack's views. In 1952 Russell Arundel, testifying under subpoena, freely admitted the underwriting of McCarthy's note. He identified himself as a consultant retained by Pepsi-Cola to do legislative footwork in Washington. In 1947 he owned the largest Pepsi-Cola bottling plant in Virginia. He testified that he felt that McCarthy's note was backed by a solid portfolio, as McCarthy had assured him that the endorsement was only to carry for six months and that he had no idea until he appeared before a Senate subcommittee in 1952 that the senator had not paid the note when due. Over and over Arundel denied that he had ever discussed sugar problems in any way with Senator McCarthy. U.S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, Committee on Rules and Administration, Hearings to Determine Whether Expulsion Proceedings Should Be Instituted Against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 12 June 1952, typescript copy in NCEC Papers, Washington, DC.

9. Lustron proved to be better at politics than at manufacturing. In the few years before it managed to spend itself into bankruptcy with millions of federal dollars, the company had close relationships with both parties. White House aide John R. Steelman was a particularly

useful conduit to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the chief source of Lustron's capital. A Democratic congressman who served with McCarthy on a Joint Committee on Housing that held nationwide hearings soon became a Lustron vice-president. U.S., Congress, Senate, Special Committee of the Committee on Banking and Currency, Hearings on S. Res. 132, 80th Cong., 2d sess., 15 January 1948, pp. 348-73. New York Times, 26 February 1949. For the social relationship between McCarthy and Lustron president Carl Strandlund see U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, Hearings to Determine Whether Expulsion Proceedings Should Be Instituted Against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 12 June 1952.

10. Richard O. Davies, Housing Reform During the Truman Administration (Columbia, MO, 1966), pp. 93-94; Susan Hartmann, Truman and the 80th Congress (Columbia, MO, 1971), pp. 200-1.

11. Interview with Senator John Sparkman, 16 June 1977.

12. [Matthew A. Schuh] to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, 13 October 1948, Papers of the National Committee for an Effective Congress. The NCEC was a public interest lobby that led the struggle against McCarthy in 1953 and 1954. [Schuh] to McCarthy, 12 November 1948, NCEC Papers. This letter was backdated to 29 September to protect Schuh against hostile bank examiners.

13. U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 27 January 1949, pp. 598-99. U.S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, Hearings Pursuant to S. Res. 42, Malmedy Massacre Investigation, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 18 April 1949 et seq. Witness-baiting by McCarthy took place at each session. See, for example, the senator's interrogation of Fanton in Malmedy Massacre Hearings, 11 May 1949, pt. 1:483-533. The lie detector question and the ethnic smear were aimed at William R. Perl, an Austrian Jew who fled Hitler, became an American citizen, and served as an interrogator of Malmedy defendants. See Malmedy Massacre Hearings, 13 May 1949, pt. 1:609-39; and ibid., 16 May 1949, 1:655-91 et seq. The war criminal was Baron Ernst von Weizsacker, who served throughout the Third Reich in several high posts. Even in his own self-serving Memoirs of Ernst von Weizsacker (Chicago, 1951), there is nothing remotely resembling McCarthy's fable.

14. Green Bay Press-Gazette, 30 July 1949; U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 26 July 1949, pp. 10160-75. The Armed Services Committee's letter and statement (dated 16 August 1949) are in the NCEC Papers.

15. The final floor debate on Malmedy came on 14 October, with McCarthy reiterating his objections in vigorous style. Raymond Baldwin's subcommittee report, which received unanimous approval from the Armed Services Committee, exonerated the American prosecutors and concluded that the Malmedy affair had been kept alive by groups within West Germany in an effort to discredit U.S. occupation forces. U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 81st Cong., 1st sess.,

14 October 1949, pp. 14507-15, 14522-34. The most frequently cited explanation for McCarthy's motive is his political and financial association with Milwaukee industrialist Walter Harnischfeger, who remained a strong Germanophile even during the Nazi years. New York Herald Tribune, 13 April 1942; Milwaukee Journal, 27 October 1944, 17 June 1947, and 14 October 1948. McCarthy to Schuh, 9 May 1947, NCEC Papers, assures the banker that Harnischfeger will soon "put up sufficient collateral to cure both of our ulsers [sic]. . . . "

16. New York Times; 16 August 1949.

17. U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, Hearings Pursuant to S. Res. 52, Influence in Government Procurement, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 8 August-1 September 1949, pp. 184-85.

18. Michael O'Brien, "McCarthy and McCarthyism: The Cedric Parker Case, November 1949," in Griffith and Theoharis, The Specter, pp. 224-38.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEW JUNIOR SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN: McCARTHY IN THE SENATE, 1947-48

The documents in this chapter span the early months of Joseph R. McCarthy's first term in the Senate, from January 1947 through April 1948. The issues in which he became involved amount to a grab bag of the substantial and the minute. In all cases, however, McCarthy displayed none of the reticence traditionally observed by young backbenchers. Indeed, many of the techniques that later would become so well known were already familiar to his colleagues on the Hill within a few short weeks after McCarthy's swearing in.

In the spring of 1947 the Senate fell into a roaring battle over the question of lifting price controls on sugar. McCarthy, despite his junior status, seized a leading role and vigorously denounced in strong language both the Democratic Department of Agriculture and the Republican Senate leadership. Years later many allegations and some evidence pointed to McCarthy's connections with the Pepsi-Cola Company in the struggle. In addition, the broad scope of his complex financial activities and the substantial size of the young senator's indebtedness are revealed in several documents throughout this first chapter.

During the period between spring 1948 and February 1950, when his speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, made the senator an immediate national figure, McCarthy remained consistently active. His special interest was in housing legislation, and he became the single most influential senator in the passage of the omnibus Housing Act of 1948. Yet, until early 1950 McCarthy remained a provincial politician, well known in Wisconsin and easily recognized on Capit 1 Hill, although he was of no true significance either in his own party or in the nation's politics.

CHAPTER II

THE CRUSADE BEGINS: THE FIRST DAYS OF McCARTHYISM, JANUARY-JUNE 1950

The obscure young Republican senator from Wisconsin transformed himself into a national celebrity, when at an out-of-the-way Lincoln day rally in Wheeling, West Virginia, on 9 February 1950, he touched the national nervous system. McCarthy's claim that the State Department contained a massive subversive element (the exact numbers 57 and 205 soon became a public game) immediately made headlines from coast to coast. Unlike several similar-minded predecessors McCarthy had the ability and the disposition to sustain his charges, at least to the satisfaction of an impressive number of Americans in all stations of life.

From West Virginia the senator went on to Utah and Nevada, repeating his charges and theatrically telegraphing the White House to urge action and pledge cooperation. On 20 February McCarthy took to the Senate floor for the first full-dress presentation of his case before his peers. Although many senators were obviously skeptical, the Senate unanimously agreed to appoint an investigative committee. Within days a subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee was appointed, headed by the prestigious and powerful Millard E. Tydings (D-MD) and including Brian McMahon (D-CT), Theodore F. Green (D-RI), Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-IA), and Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA). The so-called "Tydings Committee" opened hearings on 8 March with Senator McCarthy as the principal witness. On this occasion and in all his subsequent appearances McCarthy and the Democratic members of the panel engaged in unrelenting verbal warfare.

Toward the end of March McCarthy identified Professor Owen Lattimore of Johns Hopkins University as the principal Soviet operative in the State Department, an allegation that in many ways somehow would withstand a mountain of contrary evidence. And by the end of May the senator had taken to referring to Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson as the "Red Dean." Although seven Republican senators, in a "Declaration of Conscience" published on 1 June descried McCarthy's tactics, their action had little immediate effect. Nor did the emergence in mid-June of the revelation that the senator had received a $10,000 check ostensibly for a brief article from a company that had directly benefited from his legislative efforts.

The Wisconsin senator also remained active on other fronts, following a predictable pattern of steadily escalating the scope of his campaign while maintaining a public tone of scorn, hostility, and rejection of anyone who disagreed.

CHAPTER III

KEY VICTORIES: McCARTHY DEFEATS MILLARD TYDINGS AND WOUNDS DREW PEARSON, JULY-DECEMBER 1950

During this six-month period Senator McCarthy remained on the attack despite embarrassments and setbacks. On 20 July the Senate accepted, by a 54 to 37 vote, the report of the Tydings Committee, which had been appointed to investigate McCarthy's allegations. In effect, the panel, headed by Senator Millard E. Tydings, the powerful and prestigious Maryland Democrat, branded McCarthy as a fraud. And one week later a report out of Wisconsin indicated that McCarthy had a severe problem with his income tax return. For his part, however, the Wisconsin senator gave more than he took. He kept up a steady attack on the Tydings report, always referring to it as a "partisan whitewash." He lost no opportunity to attack the Maryland senator politically and personally. When the veteran Tydings was ousted in November by a McCarthy-supported political unknown, Washington received a clear political message.

The Wisconsin senator also conducted a successful campaign against another national institution, syndicated columnist and newscaster Drew Pearson. The two men actually had exchanged punches in a noisy brawl at a Washington restaurant on 12 December. Immediately, McCarthy began a no-holds-barred attack on Pearson, which was centered on the proposition that the popular news figure was, either knowingly or unknowingly, a key conduit for the propagation of the Communist line in the United States. On 15 December McCarthy virtually demanded that Pearson's radio sponsor, the Adam Hat Company, drop its support for his Sunday evening broadcasts. A week later the sponsor did just that.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND THE KOREAN WAR: THE ASSAULTS MOUNT JANUARY-JUNE 1951

On 5 January Senator McCarthy took to the Senate floor to condemn a Drew Pearson column that recently had appeared in the local Daily Worker and the Washington Post. The article apparently contained verbatim excerpts from intelligence reports dispatched to Washington by General Douglas MacArthur's Korean command. McCarthy charged Pearson's Pentagon source with treason and characterized the columnist himself as "the great smear artist and mouthpiece of Moscow," and as "a degenerate liar." Throughout the following months the senator kept after the newspaperman, creating enough pressure to bring federal investigations of Pearson, who responded by suing McCarthy.

Early 1951 also included the beginning of the vituperative relationship between McCarthy and Senator William Benton (D-CT), the former assistant secretary of state who had referred to McCarthy as "a ruthless propagandist." The Wisconsin senator replied in kind. These two combatants soon would introduce censure motions against each other and battle fiercely until the McCarthy-influenced 1952 Connecticut election in which Benton met defeat. McCarthy simultaneously plunged into several other controversies.

President Harry Truman's shocking dismissal of MacArthur presented the Republicans with a spectacular political opportunity, in which the Wisconsin senator enthusiastically joined. McCarthy's major anti-administration effort came on 14 June when he spoke in the Senate for about three hours in denunciation of General George C. Marshall. The 60,000-word text occupied nearly fifty pages in the Congressional Record, advancing the theory that throughout the 1940s Marshall made "common cause" with Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung.

On 1 March innuendos regarding the senator's financial dealings were expanded by testimony, claiming that McCarthy had accepted large amounts of money to cover gambling debts from the Lustron Corporation, a federally subsidized company that had directly benefited from the senator's legislative efforts and responded in kind before going bankrupt.

CHAPTER V

THE SENATE CAREFULLY COUNTERATTACKS: McCARTHY ASSAILED AND DEFENDED, JULY-DECEMBER 1951

The last half of 1951 featured an escalation of charges and countercharges. Partisan wrangling with the Democrats quickly degenerated into ugly personal battles. On 6 August Senator William Benton (D-CT) asked the Senate to conduct a full investigation into McCarthy's activities in the 1950 Maryland senatorial campaign in which Millard E. Tydings was upset by a McCarthy-inspired unknown, John Marshall Butler. Benton's resolution also included provision to probe "other acts since his election to the Senate . . . with a view toward the expulsion from the United States Senate of the said Senator Joseph R. McCarthy." A subcommittee under Senator Guy M. Gillette (D-IA) was appointed. Unmollified, the Wisconsin senator remained on the attack.

McCarthy's major offensive thrust was an assault on Philip C. Jessup, a veteran State Department figure who had been the editor of the so-called "China White Paper," the department's 1949 explanation and justification for the fall of China. In his career Jessup had been confirmed by the Senate five times, on three occasions as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations. President Harry Truman once again nominated Jessup to the delegation and sent his name, along with several others, to the Senate for confirmation.

Hearings in September and October featured Senator McCarthy as a principal witness. In spirited exchanges with other senators, and in particular with J. W. Fulbright (D-AR), the Wisconsin senator provided a classic example of his technique. Jessup ultimately failed to receive confirmation. Despite two interim appointments by the White House, the experienced diplomat never recovered from McCarthy's assaults, and within a year he had left government service.

CHAPTER VI

THE SENATOR DISCOVERS NEW TARGETS: THE SENATE'S WARS JANUARY-JUNE 1952

During these six months Senator McCarthy uncovered new charges faster than his opponents could respond to existing ones. While his foes, principally leading Democrats, built defenses, the Wisconsin senator remained on the attack.

On 26 March McCarthy took the probably unprecedented action of suing a fellow senator for libel when he filed charges against Senator William Benton (D-CT), whom McCarthy had begun to refer to as "Wee Willie Benton, Connecticut's mental midget."

CHAPTER VII

THE 1952 ELECTION: McCARTHY WINS AND LOSES
JULY-DECEMBER 1952

The presidential election naturally dominated political activity during these months, with Senator McCarthy playing the part dictated by his controversial standing. Virtually ignoring his own reelection campaign against a little-known and indifferently received Democratic challenger, McCarthy traveled the nation wherever politicians welcomed him. The results were decidedly mixed. In Indiana McCarthy helped reelect William Jenner; in Connecticut he campaigned successfully against old nemesis William Benton; and in Montana, Missouri, and Washington McCarthy's right-wing Republican mates lost to Democrats Mike Mansfield, Stuart Symington, and Henry Jackson. On 27 October McCarthy made a nationally televised attack on Democratic presidential candidate Adlai E. Stevenson.

The election returns that took McCarthy back to Washington for a second term indicated political weakness. Running well below the victorious presidential ticket, McCarthy received the fewest votes of any successful Republican, thus being carried to victory on Dwight Eisenhower's coattails. By year's end the senator faced a much more serious problem. The Senate Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, chaired by Thomas Hennings (D-MO), issued a report filled with embarrassing evidence of McCarthy's financial adventures and political intrigues.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW POWER IN THE REPUBLICAN SENATE: McCARTHY TAKES OVER HIS COMMITTEE, JANUARY-JUNE 1953

In January 1953 the Republicans organized the 83d Congress. Senator McCarthy was named chairman of the Committee on Government Operations and of its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. For the next two years the senator used this position, with its large staff and substantial appropriation, to conduct his many investigations.

Among McCarthy's first targets were two State Department programs--the "Voice of America" operation and the "information centers"--that the department maintained in scores of foreign cities around the world. The senator found traces of subversion in both programs as he conducted widely publicized hearings that included confrontations with writers Howard Fast, Langston Hughes, and Dashiell Hammett as well as New York Post editor James A. Wechsler. During these investigations subcommittee aides Roy M. Cohn and G. David Schine visited U.S. information centers in Europe, further escalating the struggle between McCarthy and others within the State Department who defended the program.

McCarthy remained active on several additional fronts. He initiated an individual campaign to reduce Allied shipping contacts with the Soviet bloc, which produced a conflict with Mutual Security Administrator Harold E. Stassen. The senator also led an unsuccessful fight to block the nomination of Charles E. Bohlen as ambassador to the Soviet Union, and engaged in vigorous exchanges with, among others, former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Senator Herbert Lehman (D-NY).

CHAPTER IX

FUROR OVER SUBVERSION IN THE ARMY: McCARTHY'S TARGETS AND ENEMIES EXPAND, JULY-DECEMBER 1953

Senator McCarthy continued to create violent political storms through the rest of 1953. His appointment of J. B. Matthews to head the staff of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, a committee already under fire from Democrats who were not consulted, soon turned into a national furor. In the July issue of American Mercury, Matthews began an article by asserting that "the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen." McCarthy quickly yielded to the ensuing outrage, replacing Matthews with an ex-FBI man, Francis C. Carr. At the same time the Wisconsin senator maintained his sole power to hire and fire staff members, which produced the 10 July resignation from the subcommittee of its Democratic members like Senators John McClellan, Stuart Symington, and Henry Jackson. In the months that followed McCarthy ran his many investigations single-handedly; his targets, actual and potential, were many.

In the immediate aftermath of the Matthews affair, McCarthy announced his intention of investigating the Central Intelligence Agency, which immediately brought Secretary of State Foster Dulles to the senator's office as part of a successful effort to deter this threat. Other targets soon arose, chief among them the U.S. Army. In a lengthy string of hearings McCarthy claimed to have uncovered a vast espionage network in several army bases, particularly at the Signal Corps facility at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. These and related charges gradually built into the army-McCarthy hearings, which captivated the nation in the spring of 1954.

McCarthy's political opposition gathered throughout this period. In the Senate a handful of Democrats and Republicans rose to challenge the junior senator from Wisconsin in tones that ranged from mild disapproval to roaring denunciation. Bootlegged copies of the Senate Elections Subcommittee report, which contained extensive embarrassing documentation about the senator's political and financial dealings, were reprinted and sold in substantial numbers throughout the nation.

CHAPTER X

THE NATION WATCHES: THE ARMY-McCARTHY HEARINGS JANUARY-JUNE 1954

The political destruction of Senator McCarthy took shape over the first six months of 1954. The culminating event was the bizarre army-McCarthy hearings. While the Senate panel that considered the charges and countercharges exchanged by McCarthy and the army could reach no solid conclusions, the American public apparently could. In this first televised political extravaganza, the senator's well-practiced techniques failed. McCarthy's popularity, at least as it was measured by the polls and reflected in the media, declined significantly. His enemies sensed the senator's vulnerability and moved in for the kill.

The events that precipitated the celebrated thirty-six-day-long hearings remain a subject of dispute. The senator never wavered from his argument that the army, acting through Secretary Robert T. Stevens, sought to end McCarthy's investigation of subversive activities at such installations as Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. The senator had excoriated General Ralph Zwicker for his command there, particularly on the events surrounding the promotion and honorable discharge given an alleged Communist dentist named Irving Peress.

McCarthy, claiming the discovery of a pattern of espionage throughout the defense establishment, promised a comprehensive investigation. Stevens, said by McCarthy to be manipulatable by others with political or subversive motives, sought to stop the senator. But the army's counterargument was simple. McCarthy's circus-like tactics hurt morale and were inspired by narrow personal interests. A young man named G. David Schine, heir to a movie theater fortune, served as an unpaid consultant to the subcommittee. Schine, a very close personal friend of subcommittee chief counsel Roy M. Cohn, had received an army induction notice. Cohn, according to the army, brought extraordinary pressure on Secretary Stevens and his assistants to secure preferential treatment for Schine and suggested that in return the subcommittee's investigations would not continue.

The hearings matched McCarthy with several principal antagonists, especially army counsel Joseph M. Welch and Senator Stuart Symington (D-MO). Their struggles constitute perhaps the most brutal political spectacle in American history.

CHAPTER XI

THE FINAL ACT: THE SENATE CONDEMNS THE JUNIOR SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN, JULY-DECEMBER 1954

The final act of Senator McCarthy's dramatic story began as the army-McCarthy hearings came to an inconclusive end in the early summer of 1954. The subcommittee's majority and minority split along bitterly partisan lines in a failed attempt to assign praise and blame over the bizarre affair that millions of Americans had tuned into each afternoon like a soap opera. Nonetheless, McCarthy's enemies were convinced that the prolonged television exposure seriously had damaged the senator's political standing. On 30 July Senator Ralph Flanders (R-VT), often termed "senile" by McCarthy, had introduced a motion of censure. Inside the Senate it soon became clear that many men were now ready to confront him. Elsewhere, a highly dedicated and well-financed lobby, the National Committee for an Effective Congress, attracted scores of influential and well-known people to the struggle. NCEC lobbyists and publicists plotted strategy with key senators, wrote letters, and drafted speeches and press releases.

Momentum took hold, and on 6 August a Select Committee headed by Arthur V. Watkins (R-UT) and including John Stennis (D-MS), Edwin C. Johnson (D-CO), Sam J. Ervin, Jr. (D-NC), Frank Carlson (R-KS), and Francis Case (R-SD) opened hearings. McCarthy, aided by counsel Edward Bennett Williams, testified at length. On 27 September the committee recommended censure, the Senate was recalled, and the final battle began, with the Wisconsin senator conducting his defense on the floor of the Senate in characteristic fashion. He immediately announced that the Select Committee was "the handmaidens of the Communist Party," and that Chairman Watkins was "cowardly" and "stupid." The committee had refused to admit pertinent evidence. The Senate would trim free speech and set new rules of conduct just because one senator had used rough language in his fight against subversion.

Despite McCarthy's vigor and persistence, senator after senator arose in opposition over the first three days of lengthy sessions. Suddenly, on 18 November McCarthy was hospitalized with a "traumatic bursitis" of the arm. As the Senate took an eleven-day recess, McCarthyites redoubled their efforts and the senator decided to cut his losses. On 29 November McCarthy returned to the floor to issue an apology of sorts for his choice of words and then went on to call for the end of the debate. The senator told his colleagues that he knew what the result would be and wished to get it over with so that he might return to pressing anti-Communist business. That same night over 13,000 McCarthyites rallied at Madison Square Garden. The two votes came on 1 and 2 December, and the junior senator from Wisconsin suffered overwhelming defeat.

Although he had anticipated the result, McCarthy apparently did not foresee its effect. He tried to continue as before, but he had lost his audience and, more importantly, prominent press coverage. A few days after the Senate's condemnation, McCarthy, in announcing that President Dwight Eisenhower was soft on Communists, "apologized" to the American people for "an unintentional deception [for promising] that if they should elect the Eisenhower Administration that they could be assured of a vigorous, forceful fight against Communists in Government. . . . I was mistaken." It was vintage McCarthy, but it no longer mattered.

GUIDE TO LOCATING DOCUMENTS

Individual documents can be located by referring to the right-hand column on the list of citations. The first set of letters is an abbreviated title to the specific primafiche program and is followed by the microfiche card number. The second letter and number determines the actual document location within a particular chapter.

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CHAPTER I

The New Junior Senator from Wisconsin: McCarthy in the Senate, 1947-48

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CHAPTER X

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CHAPTER XI

The Final Act: The Senate Condemns the Junior Senator from Wisconsin, July-December 1954

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