

“Summer Schedule” and “The Fishin’ Season”: Cartoons by Clifford Berryman

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For 53 years, Clifford K. Berryman was a political cartoonist for *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Evening Star*. He drew thousands of cartoons commenting on the congressional and presidential candidates, campaigns, issues, and elections of the first half of the twentieth century. Berryman was a Washington institution, and his decades of daily front-page drawings were internationally renowned. Throughout his extraordinary career, he drew hundreds of members of Congress and every presidential administration from Grover Cleveland to Harry Truman.

Unlike many political cartoonists, Berryman aimed his satire and criticism at policies and processes rather than at individuals. He never exaggerated the physical features of his subjects; instead, he created drawings of individuals that were faithful likenesses. The resulting goodwill from his subjects earned him friendships and influence. One of his favorite subjects, President Theodore Roosevelt, once wrote, “My dear Mr. Berryman, you have the real artist’s ability to combine great cleverness and keen truthfulness with entire freedom from malice.” Berryman’s exceptional work earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning in 1944.

Many of Berryman’s cartoons reflected his view of the repeating cycle of campaigns and elections that he witnessed as a Washingtonian and keen observer of the national political scene. His work captured the seemingly timeless features of the election and cam-

paign process in national politics.

Because members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years, and presidents every four years, Berryman regularly observed and illustrated candidates and campaigns at every point in the election cycle. Some of the details of campaigning have changed since Berryman’s political cartoons were published in the daily newspaper, but the process of campaigns and elections has remained remarkably the same. Two Berryman cartoons, featured in this article, illustrate facets of this process—how a candidate gauges and gathers support and the selection of campaign issues.

“Summer Schedule”

On July 23, 1947, *The New York Times* published a short article stating that “Senator Robert A. Taft [son of former President William Howard Taft], an undeclared candidate for the 1948

Republican presidential nomination, will make what a spokesman described today as a ‘non-political’ speaking tour of the West.” Taft’s western tour would allow him to meet voters and determine if he had enough support for a serious run for the White House.

The following day, *The Washington Evening Star* published a political cartoon drawn by Clifford Berryman depicting Taft with his suitcase, creating his summer schedule, while studying a map of the Western states marked with the electoral college vote count for each state. Berryman clearly believed that Taft would use his tour of the West to accomplish strategic political objectives—not just to deliver speeches.

Berryman’s cartoon on potential candidate Robert Taft reflected his understanding of the process of how individuals test the political waters. His cartoon is a graphic interpretation of, and direct response to, the story published the previous day in *The New York Times*. Berryman took issue with the Taft spokesman’s characterization of the western tour as “non-political.” As a probable candidate for president, Taft’s speaking tour was undoubtedly driven by calculations of political advantage—despite his spokesman’s attempt to ren-

der it more benignly. Berryman's cartoon shows what he believed was truly at stake in Taft's decision to tour the West—the Electoral College vote count of the Western states.

Electoral College calculus is a part of every successful presidential candidate's campaign. A candidate aiming for victory has to consider how to deploy his limited resources to the greatest advantage. One way to maximize time and money spent traveling to meet voters is to focus on those states that are most likely to deliver electoral votes

to that candidate. This was as true in 1947 when Taft was charting his summer schedule as it is today.

"The Fishin' Season"

The second featured Berryman cartoon shows another facet of the election process. "The Fishin' Season" was published in *The Washington Evening Star* on July 7, 1919, more than a year before the next national election, and nearly 30 years before "Summer Schedule." With no obvious presidential front-runner, both parties were seeking a platform

that would lead to victory. Even without candidates, the campaigning had already begun and the hunt was on for an issue that would resonate with voters and draw widespread support.

Berryman's cartoon reflects how the two major political parties, symbolized by the traditional Democratic donkey and Republican elephant, might identify those winning campaign issues. The donkey and elephant are depicted sitting back-to-back on a log, fishing on opposite sides of the "campaign issues pool." Berryman was perhaps illustrating a view

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Campaigns in Cartoons

1. Lead a class discussion about current campaigns for local, state, and federal offices. Who are the candidates? What offices are open? What issues are being discussed in debates?

2. Distribute copies of the two featured cartoons to students; ask students to study the cartoons, noting details such as captions, titles, objects, labels, numbers, or dates. Direct students to complete the cartoon analysis worksheet available online from the National Archives at www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/cartoon_analysis_worksheet.pdf.

3. Direct students to familiarize themselves with the Electoral College system by either reading about it in their textbooks or through the information available from the National Archives' Federal Register at www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/. Provide students with black-line masters of a U.S. political map and ask student pairs to label their maps like the one in the cartoon, indicating the number of electoral votes per state today. Ask students to consider why a presidential candidate needs to understand how the Electoral College works. Share with students information from the previous essay regarding Taft as a potential presidential

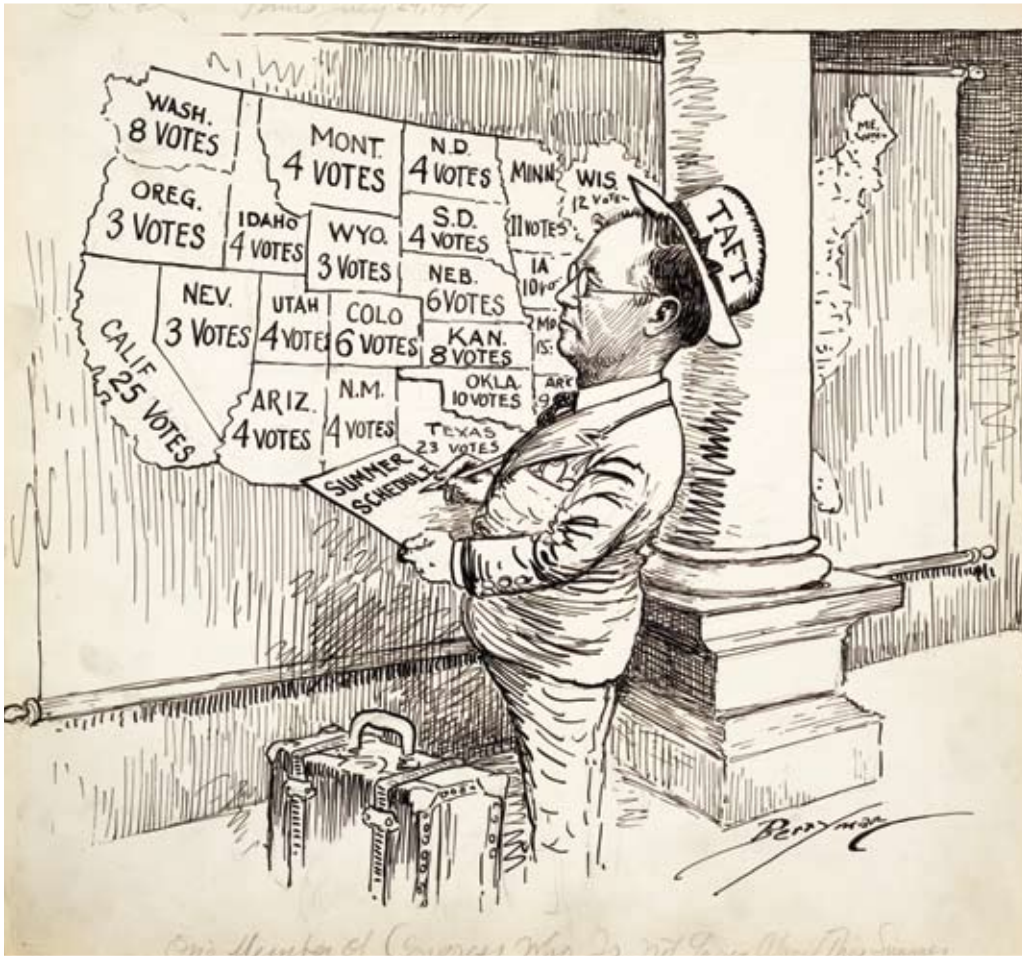
candidate. Ask students to speculate on cartoonist Berryman's intended message regarding Taft and his travel plans for the summer. Instruct them to color the states on their map that they think candidates in 2008 will focus significant attention on.

4. Divide students into small groups and direct them to choose an office that is currently up for election (local, state, or federal). Ask them to determine all the candidates running for that office and identify the issues at stake. Encourage students to call the campaign offices and ask for literature, visit websites, observe paid advertisements in newspapers and on television, and read editorials and political cartoons. They can also seek information on issues from each candidate's political party (the major party platforms and issues are available at www.gop.org, www.democrats.org). Ask students to consider: What issues are being discussed and debated? What issues are highlighted by one candidate but not the other? Are the candidates ever in agreement? How does a candidate select a particular issue on which to focus? How do these issues become part of the campaign? What other actors or events may affect campaign issues? How important are these issues from a national perspective and from a personal perspective? Direct each group to prepare a chart or other

graphic organizer that lists the issues for their race and each of the candidate's positions on them. Finally, ask each student to select one of the issues and create a political cartoon that depicts a point of view on the issue or on a particular candidate's stance on the issue. Invite student volunteers to share their cartoons with the class.

5. More cartoons from the Berryman collection are accessible through the Archival Research Catalog on the National Archives website at www.archives.gov/research/arc/ using the search term "Clifford Berryman." Ask students to look for another campaign or election-themed cartoon from this collection, and ask them to write the newspaper article that could have prompted Berryman to draw that cartoon. Ask students to share their articles aloud with the class and consider what other timeless campaign features are depicted in the cartoons.

6. Direct students to conduct research and select a current campaign or election-related cartoon recently published in a newspaper or online. Ask students to write a short essay describing the cartoon and the cartoonist's opinion, as well as their own ideas on the issue portrayed.



Note on the documents: The cartoons "Summer Schedule," July 24, 1947 (C-043), and "Fishin Season," June 7, 1919 (H-19), are original Clifford K. Berryman drawings from the U.S. Senate Collection, Center for Legislative Archives, at the National Archives Building, Washington, DC.


that the parties were not really all that different and needed to hunt for ideas to differentiate each from the other.

The cartoon raises interesting questions. Most political campaigns revolve around the candidates' positions on a handful of issues deemed important at that time. But who decides what those issues will be for any given election? Berryman asserts his opinion in this cartoon on the role of parties in issue selection, but what other ways are issues put forth and discussed? How do new issues become part of a campaign? When is the door to debate reopened on an issue already in the public arena? Are the parties really very similar? How far apart do the parties have to be to make a topic a campaign issue?

Perhaps Berryman meant something else. Political cartoons reflect a person's perspective at a particular point in time, and the cartoonist can't know what will happen later to his subject. Berryman's 1919 cartoon shows his view of the nascent presidential campaign the summer before the election. By the time of the 1920 election, several major issues had arisen in the campaign. Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, was particularly contentious, but Berryman's cartoon doesn't appear to reflect this. Was his cartoon drawn in a period of calm before the storm brought by the treaty ratification

controversy? Or is this cartoon an ironic critique of the supposition by others that there were no important issues at stake in this election?

The Berryman Collection at the Center for Legislative Archives

These and other Berryman cartoons are available for teaching and learning about the campaign and election process. The Center for Legislative Archives within the National Archives, holds 2,400 original drawings from Clifford Berryman. In 1992, in honor of former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, the Charles Engelhard Foundation purchased the drawings from Berryman's daughter's estate and donated them to the United States Senate. More than 100 cartoons have been digitized and are available online through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) on the National Archives website at www.archives.gov/research/arc/ by using the search term "Clifford Berryman." 

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Clifford Berryman Cartoon Exhibit at the National Archives

Running for Office: Candidates, Campaigns, and the Cartoons of Clifford Berryman

February 8, 2008 – August 17, 2008

A special exhibition of Clifford Berryman's cartoons will be held at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., from February 8, 2008, to August 17, 2008. The exhibit features 42 original pen-and-ink drawings, including the two highlighted in this article. Timed to coincide with the presidential primaries and the 2008 campaign season, this exhibition highlights both specific and timeless aspects of the American campaign and election process. The cartoons on display are part of the U.S. Senate Collection in the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives.

Cartoonist Clifford K. Berryman was internationally renowned for drawing tens of thousands of daily front-page political cartoons during a career that spanned the entire first half of the twentieth century. Berryman is most celebrated for his November 16, 1902, *Washington Post* cartoon, "Drawing the Line in Mississippi," which portrayed an image of the teddy bear for the first time. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt had famously refused to shoot an old bear during a hunting trip. Berryman changed the old bear into a cute, cuddly "teddy bear"—named for the president—and it became a common symbol in Berryman's cartoons.