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Waiting for its favorite son, a town remembers

By Bob Yoho
RUSSELL - Main street in Russell started humming during the early morning hours in anticipation of the visit of President Ford and his GOP running mate and Russell's favorite son, Sen. Bob Dole Friday.

"I'm waiting for Lis Ray to go by," said Jim Byler, a semi-retired barber, who was standing in front of his barber shop. He was joking with a visiting Hutchinson couple who walked by during the morning.

Waiting for Lis
"I cut his hair every two weeks," Byler said about the man who walked by with his wife. "He likes a flat-top, and its unusual to see 'em anymore."

Other hair he cut included Bob Dole's, when the GOP vice presidential running mate was younger.

"I cut his hair when he went to school here. I cut his hair and his dad's," Byler said.

Like most everyone else in Russell, Byler was delighted that Dole was picked as the running mate.

"It's a great thing for the ticket as well as the community here," he said.

got Reagan up there on the podium Thursday night at the GOP Republican convention at Kansas City).

Dole's father
Krug said Dole's father was the best elevator man in Russell. They mentioned that Dole's father died in December.

"His old dad would have gotten a big charge out of that," Marietta said of Dole's selection.

Others who seemed to be getting a kick out of the goings on were the sons and nephew of Mrs. Jerry Gates, who said Dole's parents used

to live next to her parents. The three boys and Mrs. Gates were on their way to the courthouse.

"They wouldn't miss it," Mrs. Gates said of the boys' anxiety to see Ford and Dole. Their wide eyes gave away their eagerness.

"I'm kind of excited about meeting the President," said 7-year old Bryan Gates, his brother, Billy, 6, and cousin, Bud, 6, nodding their heads.

Watching the early action from the top of a downtown roof were Phillip Miller, Mike Hill and L. D. Hudson. They were taking a breather from a hot roof job and

watched the colorful beginning of the event. They were expected to be cleared from the roof before the motorcade arrived.

About a block south of the courthouse square earlier in the day, Martin Heaton and Wayne Smith were sitting in lawn chairs drinking beer. They were hoping Ford and Dole would go by their home.

"We were out cleaning our yard this morning and they're not coming by this way," Heaton said.

As the time of the arrival of Ford and Dole came

closer, the platform where they spoke became busy. Don Arnold, president of the Chamber of Commerce, kept the people abreast of what was happening.

Quick practice
The growing courthouse crowd was entertained with an impromptu concert by the Russell High School band which ran through "Hall to the Chief" several times.

"You can bet they had a fast practice this morning," a person in the crowd said of the band.

Norma Stangle made note of all the strange faces,

mostly those of newsmen from across the state and nation, in the crowd, and said:

"It took them long enough to find it. We always knew it (Russell) was famous."

Paul Keller, who owns the Standard Service station only a few blocks from the courthouse said, "I may frame the receipt I got today." Keller's station sold gas for President Ford's limousine and a Secret Service car.

Keller himself didn't wait on the president's cars but employs Waldo Landis and John Marietta did the honors.

Hutchinson News - Aug. 22, 1976

Choice of Dole surprise to all

By Dean Hinnen

They're busy taking down the bunting at Kansas City's Kemper Arena, the news organizations are packing their bags to return to the coasts or wherever and the sale of Kansas City strip steaks has returned to normal at the Golden Ox.

But Kansans and Republicans throughout the country still are buzzing about the selection of Sen. Bob Dole as the GOP's vice presidential nominee.

Convention week was an up and down one for Dole supporters. Dole was talked about as a potential veep in almost every news story filed from Kansas City on Sunday and Monday. By Tuesday, the president's list reportedly had been trimmed to four potential running mates, and Dole wasn't among them. The New York Times never mentioned him in its Wednesday story on possible running mates for Ford. Neither did the Kansas City Times.

Dole talked on the telephone to his 1974 campaign chairman, Dave Owen, at about 10:45 a.m. Thursday morning. Both expected Ford to choose Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee.

Less than 45 minutes later Dole's phone rang. It wasn't Owen this time, and within seconds the Russell native had accepted the second spot on the GOP ticket.

"Dole isn't a household word, but it's a four-letter word you can get used to," Dole told newsmen after the president announced the selection.

Many convention delegates, particularly the long-time party pros, knew Dole. He stumped nationwide during his tenure as national chairman in 1972 and 1973. The pros haven't forgotten.

News analysis

But many of the delegates at this year's convention were new to Republican politics - particularly the Reagan delegates, who were often compared to Sen. George McGovern's forces at the 1972 Democratic convention. They were Reagan supporters first, Republicans second. Many knew little if anything about the junior senator from Kansas.

Delegates and commentators alike expressed surprise that the GOP ticket would have two midwesterners on it - although Kansans have difficulty considering Michigan the midwest.

The geographers had an abundance of theories for whom Ford should select and why.

A southerner - Baker, for example - might loosen Jimmy Carter's grip on the South.

A westerner - and names were scarce after Reagan said he wouldn't accept the vice presidency - might salvage the Sun Belt and bring Reagan country into the Ford camp.

A northeastern - Pennsylvania's Bill Scranton or Commerce Secretary Elliot Richardson, who hails from Boston - could help Ford take advantage of Carter's weakness there.

Geography aside, the others all lacked one attribute that apparently tipped the scales in Dole's favor.

With the exception of Ronald Reagan, Dole has no peer among Republicans as a campaigner. He should be the most exciting of the four national candidates to watch during the campaign.

And with Ford planning to use the so-called "presidential strategy" - staying in Washington to run the country and doing a limited amount of stumping for votes - the number two man had to be a campaigner.

And even his critics acknowledge that Dole is an articulate, hard-hitting campaigner whose humor and personality win

him friends even among those who disagree with his politics.

He also is a good debater and he and Carter's running mate, Sen. Walter Mondale, are expected to debate during the campaign.

While it would be difficult for Carter to insist that Ford debate him and not let the vice presidential candidates do the same, letting Mondale accept the Dole debate challenge may be one of Carter's first campaign mistakes. Dole thrives on verbal warfare. Mondale, on the other hand, does not have a reputation as a great debater.

Dole also is the conservative darling of many eastern liberal newspaper columnists, and a popular guest for the Sunday television political shows. His staff members say he even has managed to make peace with Washington Post publisher Katherine Graham, despite his harsh criticism of the Post during Watergate.

Columnists, publishers and television hosts aren't a large voting bloc, but their friendship is an asset to any candidate, particularly one who is not a household word.

And at this time last year how many Americans could name a former governor of Georgia other than Lester Maddox?

The Salina Journal, Sunday, August 22, 1976

Bob Dole can draw on good supply - of quick quips on campaign trail

By JOHN SCHMIEDELER

At least one of Bob Dole's engaging characteristics has not been in the least changed by his new status as a candidate for national office.

The Kansas senator is still the quickest quip around with a stock of one-liners that Henry Youngman would envy.

In fact, his selection as the Republican vice-presidential candidate has provided a whole new sea of material. Dole shared his quips, most of them turned toward himself, with about 100 Salinans Friday afternoon at the Salina Hilton Inn.

Surprised by choice

He professed he was "totally surprised" that he was President Ford's selection as a running mate.

"Before I left Washington (for the Kansas City convention where he was a delegate and member of the platform committee), I had a call from the White House. Was I available as a vice-presidential candidate?"

"Well, why not?"

"So I took my tax returns, financial statement, latest health report, all that

kind of thing to the White House. "But 500 other persons had the same call."

"When I didn't hear anything further, I thought it was one of those home consumption things."

"The editors said my selection wasn't possible and, for once, I agreed with the editors."

"I really thought it would be Senator Baker (Howard Baker of Tennessee). He had a direct line to (President Ford) in his room... and I didn't. He had champagne all ready in Washington... and I didn't."

"When the President called I remembered that my room was right next to John Connally's room. And I thought perhaps he had been connected with the wrong room."

"So I accepted before I identified myself."

"President Ford asked how I was and I said I was a bit nervous. He said: 'What are you nervous about? I think we'll do well together.'"

"And then I don't remember anything."

Dole, of course, can be serious and was before the Salinans in his endorsement of Ford and the planned vigor of the Dole campaign.

"I know this man. I spent 8 years in the House of Representatives with him. He's a good and decent person. I think the people know this."

"But we're not certain of the opposition. So we'll be pointed in our attack - not personal, but to point out the contradictions in Mr. Carter (the Democratic candidate)."

Praises Reagan

He was lavish in praise of Ronald Reagan, the defeated challenger. "It took courage for Governor Reagan to come out of the bleachers Thursday night and embrace President Ford. He's committed, not just to this ticket and this party, but to a philosophy many persons in this country share."

Dole also repeated the promise made by Ford in Russell. "No more embargoes! (Stopping foreign sales of US grain). He means it. It was a mistake. He has been very emphatic."

Dole said he expects to see a new farm program "very much like the pre-

sented one. The Congress seems to like it."

"Allotments? Not if you vote Republican."

About his own campaign plans: "We're going back to Washington and I'll appear on 'Face the Nation' (CBS television interview show) Sunday. I guess we'll get the rest of Sunday off."

"On the flight here from Russell, President Ford mentioned there is to be an American Legion convention in Seattle which he cannot attend. It was suggested maybe someone else could go there."

Dole also expects to go to Vail, Colo., where President Ford is vacationing, for some campaign strategy sessions.

"When you start campaigning 20 points behind, you can't waste time."

Dole was presented an engraved silver plate from Salina supporters, Mayor Jerry Simpson, who introduced him as the "next vice-president of the United States." The inscription read: "To Senator Dole: Congratulations from the heart of your state and the hearts of your supporters. 20 August 1976."

"Now they've heard about us" Dole puts Russell on the map

RUSSELL, Kan. (UPI) - Residents say this dusty, central Kansas town usually is quiet, but the small oil and agricultural community exploded in celebration during a brief visit by President Ford and hometown boy Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan.

Ford and Dole, the newly selected GOP presidential and vice presidential ticket, visited the city briefly Friday, but after the one-hour campaign stop the thousands of cheering supporters returned to their homes and businesses re-opened their shops.

"This is probably the biggest thing that's ever happened to western Kansas," said Steve Cole, a co-owner of the drug store where Dole worked as a boy. "When he goes to Kansas City now, we won't have to spell Russell for them, because now they've heard about us."

A woman sitting at the store's soda

fountain counter agreed. "I guess things are really going to change around here," she said. "Maybe now we'll get direct dialing for long distance calls instead of having to go through the operator."

Dole, whose mother still lives in the one-story red brick house where he grew up, spoke from a stage set up in front of the Russell County Courthouse where he worked for eight years as county attorney.

"I can recall the time when I needed help and the people of Russell helped," he said and then stopped speaking for nearly a minute and sobbed quietly.

Recalled collection

Bud Dawson, a boyhood friend, said Dole probably was remembering the time the town took up a collection for him after he was wounded in World War II. Dole spent 39 months recuperating in a Veterans Hospital, but the severity of his wounds, which left his right arm crippled, required the attention of a non-government specialist.

"When he was wounded he spent so many months in the hospital they had to take up a collection for him to help defray expenses," Dawson said. "Many of those people who helped him then and through all his campaigns were at his speech."

Dawson said he was not surprised Dole decided to kick off his campaign in his hometown.

"It's typical that he'd want to come back here first to share his happiness and victory with the townspeople," he said. "Bob's appreciative of the people here."

"He'll never forget them."

Too much alike, Carter says

PLAINS, Ga., (UPI) - Jimmy Carter says one of the weaknesses of the Republican ticket is that President Ford and his running mate, Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, are too much alike.

In a news conference Friday, in which he accused Ford of "completely dormant" leadership in the White House, Carter also questioned Ford's campaign strategy.

"I was surprised," the Democratic presidential nominee said of Ford's selection of the Kansan.

"I know, for instance, of at least three prominently mentioned candidates for vice president that would have done well in the South and border states - certainly Ronald Reagan, John Connally and Howard Baker would have."

Carter also said that Ford apparently decided not to go into the Northeast with a strong running mate. "Someone like Elliot Richardson or William Simon, who would have been very help-

ful up there."

Carter said the "homogeneity" of the ticket "possibly could be a weakness for the Republicans."

Carter said Ford chose Dole apparently to give him strength in the Midwest.

Dole ready to debate Mondale

RUSSELL, Kan. (UPI) - Republican vice presidential nominee, Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, says he's ready to spar with a public forum with the Democrats' number two man, Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota.

And Mondale says he "would be glad" to debate Dole any time.

Following the example of President Ford, who has already challenged Jimmy Carter to a debate, Dole expressed a willingness Friday to tackle Mondale in verbal battle.

"Sen. Mondale and I have been debating for years on the Senate floor," Dole said. "I guess we'll just have to move it out of the Senate chamber."

"Of course it's up to the President," Dole added.

9-1-76-3
Page 3