

Dole waltzes across Iowa — with mustard and relish

Editor's note — This is another in a continuing series of articles about candidates for the 1988 Republican and Democratic presidential nominations.
By Mike Feinsilber
Associated Press Writer

GRINNELL, Iowa — The Republican faithful are gathered in the 4-H building on the Poweshiek County fairgrounds to feast on raw Democratic meat sliced up by Bob Dole and then, for their \$7.50 contribution, to sit down for a Sunday afternoon meal of roasted pig, biscuits, beans, cole slaw, potato salad, pecan pie, rhubarb pie, and apple pie.

But first Dole. And the Dole they see is a more relaxed, more polished Dole than the one the country came to know in 1976.

He talks about compassion. He says welfare is important. He brags that he is a friend of George McGovern, once the very symbol of everything the GOP stands against.

He remembers that "every day in the last couple of years of her life" his mother would tell him, "Don't touch my Social Security."

"Oh, says Dole, the Senate minority leader from Kansas, he is still a conservative. You could look it up. "I've voted about 10,700 times in the last 27 years and you're going to find a consistently conservative record, and one who cares about people."

So solidly comfortable in his old-shoe orthodoxy that he is willing to joke about it.

just keep one thing in mind — there are twice as many Republicans in Russell County as Democrats.

"I said, 'I've just made a great philosophical judgment: I'm a Republican.'"

Dole even risks small jokes at Ronald Reagan's expense, such as how politicians love to claim rural roots. "Oh, a lot of people are sympathetic to the farmer," he says. "Jimmy Carter had a farm. (Pause.) Ronald Reagan got a horse."

And, more pointedly, in a speech earlier in the day at Clear Lake, Iowa. "Do you want someone in the White House who can sit down and talk to a group of farmers without having to bring in 50 staff experts?"

Dole used to shy away from talking about himself. For a time, his campaign speeches sounded like a call of the Senate agenda of pending business. Now he talks about the hard days in Russell, Kan.

Father ran a cream and egg store. Didn't finish high school; swore oaths for 42 years and was proud of it. Mother drove across Kansas selling Singer sewing machines from the trunk of the car.

Dole, home from the war, went to school on the GI Bill, and got elected Republican county attorney. One responsibility was approving the monthly welfare rolls. Every month, his eyes went down the list and found the names of his grandparents, Robert D. and Margaret Dole.

"Not because they were lazy. They weren't. They were farmers. They were tenant farmers. They were kicked off the farm. They were broke."

He is no longer the Midwestern lone eagle who, running against Reagan and the field in 1980, was so soundly drubbed in Iowa that he gave up. "I remember calling town meetings in 1979, and nobody showed up," he says of that vain effort. "Nobody except me and the poor soul who agreed to have the meeting."

In Washington, he is still the hardball player, capable of saying on the Senate floor, "I didn't become majority leader to lose." But on the campaign trail he is doing all he can to erase the image of the glowering Dole who, as Gerald Ford's 1976 running mate, savagely lit into Democrat Walter Mondale in a debate ("If we added all the killed and wounded in all Democrat wars in this century, it would be about 1.6 million Americans").

He can joke about that too: "In the Mondale debate, I went for the jugular — my own."

To survive as George Bush's chief competitor, Dole must do well in the February caucuses in Iowa, neighbor to his native state, but he senses he is doing well, here and throughout the farm belt. He leads in the polls in Iowa.

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He came home from World War II, after 39 months in Army hospitals. His right arm rendered useless in the war. Both parties wooed him as a candidate.

"And I said I don't know anything about politics," Dole says. "They said you don't have to know anything about politics, but you've been shot and maybe we can get you elected. I remember talking to the Democrats and talking to the Republicans and I remember the Republicans saying, we don't care what those Democrats told you."

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POLITICS AND POLICY

Ferocious Ambition Drives Political Junkie Dole, But Candidate Lacks Carefully Fixed Philosophy

By JAMES M. PERRY
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

RUSSELL, Kan.—Nearly forty years ago, John Woelk recruited Robert Dole, a young war hero, to run as a Republican candidate for the state Legislature.

"I didn't know back then whether he was a liberal or a conservative," said Mr. Woelk, a lawyer here and a former county attorney. "I still don't know, and I don't think he knows either. It depends whether the wind's blowing from the north or the south."

Mr. Dole is running for president, still the war hero from little Russell. But now,

*** IN BRIEF ***

ROBERT DOLE

- 64 YEARS OLD
- DIVORCED AND REMARRIED, ONE DAUGHTER
- WASHBURN UNIVERSITY
- REPUBLICAN OF KANSAS

KANSAS state representative 1951-1953; Russell County attorney 1953-1961; U.S. congressman 1961-1968; U.S. senator since 1969, Republican leader since 1984; Republican national chairman 1971-1973; Republican candidate for vice president 1976.



Proudest accomplishment in politics: "As Senate majority leader, the budget vote in the wee hours of May 10, 1985, when the Republican Senate majority passed a revolutionary deficit reduction package. We really cut spending."

Most-admired American liberal: The late Senator Philip Hart. "I first met him when we were both in an Army hospital after World War II. He was a genuinely good person. Years later, when we became Senate colleagues, those same qualities shined through."

Other than politics, the job you'd like to be doing now: "Law or host of the Johnny Carson show."

a man with genuine compassion for the underdog.

It all comes together on the floor and in the cloakrooms of the Senate, where, as Republican leader, he has become a master legislative strategist. He'll play off a liberal such as GOP Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon, one day, then turn his attention to the needs of a conservative—Sen. Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) has received a lot of favors from Bob Dole—the next. He knows how to win his battles, one at a time.

If he has no carefully fixed philosophy, he does have some basic instincts. Because of his own handicap, a war injured arm, he instinctively reaches out to the disadvantaged. He has established a foundation to help the physically handicapped and led the floor fight to make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday.

He said his candidacy will appeal to "a lot of people in our society who feel they have been left out—whether they are disabled or poor or black or white. I can sit down with a welfare recipient and not be embarrassed about it."

Balanced Budget

He is not always receptive to new ideas, and one old notion he cherishes is that the budget should be balanced. He expresses contempt for supply-side economists who are not so concerned about balanced budgets. "I tell them to get back into the real world," he said.

But it is "character," that overlooked buzz word for the 1988 general election, that Sen. Dole and his key advisers believe will decide the outcome. "There's no war, no major economic disorder," said Mr.

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Ellsworth. "This time the issue is character, strength, integrity."

His character was formed here in Russell and on a battleground in Italy. Bob Dole's roots run deep in central Kansas. Unlike, say, Gary Hart, from Ottawa, Kan.; Walter Mondale, from Elmwood, Minn.; or even Ronald Reagan, from Dixon, Ill., he didn't run away from his small-town past. He keeps coming back to Russell, to savor, if nothing else, Aunt Gladys's celebrated potato salad, but without the onions.

The Bob Dole story is so small-town America, so improbable, no self-respecting Hollywood producer would buy it. When he was in high school, Bob Dole actually was a soda jerk, wearing white ice cream pants, in Dawson's drugstore, on Main Street. As an end on the football team, with seconds to go, he caught a pass in the end zone to win the game, 6-0, in the mud against Ellis. "I didn't catch it," said Mr. Dole. "It stuck to my jersey."

His father, Doran, ran a cream-and-egg station down by the Union Pacific tracks. Farmers would bring produce to the station; Doran would buy it and see it got to market. Later, he operated the grain elevator. Mr. Dole's mother, Bina, dominated the household, too—the family. She whipped the kids when they misbehaved. She taught them, the rest of the family recalls, that "can't" is not a part of the language.

Bob Dole, a kid from the prairie, enlisted in the Army and was ordered, with typical Army logic, into battle in Italy with the elite 85th Mountain Infantry, officered by Fry Leaguers who learned about mountains on New England ski slopes.

On April 14, 1945, Second Lt. Dole, in making what his citation calls "a sweeping flank movement," walked into mine fields and sniper, machine-gun and small-arms fire. All the men under his command were wounded. Lt. Dole pushed forward until he was wounded himself. He still doesn't know exactly what hit him.

It took 39 months in hospitals to put Bob Dole back together. He almost died two or three times. "When I lost my kidney, even I thought I might lose it all," he said. "I had a very, very high temperature. It got up to 108.7 degrees. They packed me in ice."

He went to war a trim 190-pound athlete. He came home to Russell weighing 120 pounds, never again to have functional use of his right arm. "It got to me," he said. "Why me, and what did I do to deserve this?"

"It still takes Bob two hours to get dressed," said his brother, Kenny, who is in what's left of the oil business here. "Just imagine trying to tie your tie with one hand with those starched shirts he wears. But he won't give in. He doesn't ask for help, that guy."

But one person who did help him was Phyllis Holden, an occupational therapist he met in the hospital. They were married three months later. The marriage ended years afterward when Mr. Dole announced he wanted out. "We didn't have any discussion about it," Mrs. Buzick (she remarried after the divorce) said. "Of course, I was angry, but vindictiveness never got anybody anywhere."

Pins and Earrings

She supports her ex-husband for president, to the point of making and selling Dole-for-President pins and earrings. "I guess one reason I'm for him," she said, "is that he works so hard. I'm living proof of that."

Sen. Dole's second wife, Elizabeth—he hastens to point out he didn't know her at the time of his divorce—has resigned as transportation secretary in President Reagan's cabinet, effective Oct. 1, to help the senator campaign.

Mr. Dole's parents were Democrats, and Mr. Dole himself isn't sure just where he stood politically when he came home from the war. His only political hero at the time, he said, was Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was recruited by the Republicans because, as a war hero, he appeared to be a winner.

"It was just sort of a game then," said Mr. Dole. "You had to be Republican or Democrat, and you ran, and you didn't get into any philosophical discussions." He said it wasn't until 1960, when he first ran for Congress, that "I even started focusing on what the federal government did and what it could do."

He's trying now to catch up a little on the theoretical side of politics, reading several books recommended to him by Daniel Boorstin, former librarian of Congress. But, pressed to name these books, he replied, "Oh, you know, the one on Washington, one on Jefferson." But he can't remember who wrote them. "I don't read a lot of books," he said, finally. "I don't write many either. I haven't read any of Kemp's."

Sen. Dole is still trying to live down an image of being mean and ruthless, much of it stemming from his brutal performance as President Ford's running mate against Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale in 1976 and a mean-spirited campaign for re-election to the Senate two years earlier. "He is

I think we are, at least our constituents think we are, the ones who ought to be making the decisions, rather than some automatic processes that have not worked. That is why we had Gramm-Rudman-Hollings I. That is why we are going to have a Gramm-Rudman-Hollings II. If it works, Congress will have to confront some tough choices and set their spending priorities and revenue priorities. Maybe the budget will be in balance.

It seems to me there are other things that we should have done that we are not doing here: to try a 2-year budget and appropriations cycle, some way to break up the massive continuing resolutions so the President is not confronted with an all or nothing situation. As it stands, you can load up a continuing resolution with a lot of junk and send it to the President. He does not have any alternative but to sign it or let the Government come to a screeching halt.

I would prefer a proposal that would guarantee there will not be any tax increase and I do not think we made that judgment today. I think what we are saying today is that we are going to pass this; the spending and tax decisions are going to come later. They will be made, those suggestions and recommendations, when we have reconciliation and appropriations legislation. Like everybody else, we will all have to review that legislation. Certainly I will, particularly as it may address itself to any revenue changes or attempts to treat defense unfairly.

So, what we have before us is probably not perfect. But there is one thing I think deserves some attention. I think in many cases that to many Senators it may be the deciding factor. We will be back probably, addressing some of the problems in the Gramm-Rudman later. I would guess the next President may not like what he sees in this package. But there is one thing that I think has a lot of merit and that is extending the debt ceiling to get it beyond the 1988 election.

I recall when I was the chairman of the Finance Committee, I do not know how many times we had to extend the debt ceiling, but it seemed like it was every other week. Every time it is brought to the floor, as the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee knows, it is fair game. I think at one time we had 21 different amendments on the debt ceiling dealing with everything from foreign policy to economic policy to farm policy; none of which was in the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee or the Ways and Means Committee in the House.

I think what we are saying is the United States, if it wants to continue paying its bills, if we want to continue our credibility worldwide, for at least 1 1/2 years we are going to enact in fiscal brinkmanship. That I think is going to be of some solace to the mar-

kets and others who look to us reliable in many, many ways. One of the best elements of this package is it is going to increase the debt ceiling through May of 1989.

So, I think the distinguished manager of the bill. This does keep the process moving in the right direction, hopefully keeps the deficit moving in the right direction, and that is down. I believe, based on the information that I have, that it is in our interests to support the conference report.

Again, I would say, some of my most respected colleagues, particularly the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, has a different view, one that I respect totally. I want to again express my appreciation to him for moving the process in the right direction and for raising the objections he has today.

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