

Senatorial Election of 1940.

In 1940 Senator Harry S. Truman had to run for re-election, Ralph, Senator Bennett C. Clark and I were all working hard for him this time. We had all been against him in 1934 on account of being committed to J. L. "Tuck" Milligan long before he got into the race.

Lloyd Stark, who had been Governor since 1936, decided to get into the race as he felt he could beat Truman. He had a strong State organization and plenty of money to make his campaign and was making great inroads into the Truman strength. He even went so far as to call General Truman to Jefferson City and told him very frankly that he expected him to support him, as he had appointed him Commanding General of the 35th Division and should have his support in return. The General told him in no uncertain terms that he would not support him, as we were going to do everything we could to help Harry Truman be re-elected. Stark became very angry and even took it up with the War Department and tried to have the General's Federal recognition withdrawn, fortunately, the War Department did not see eye to eye with the out-going Governor and refused his request.

Senator Clark was back in the State and had made a swing through many of the Counties before coming into Kansas City, he called the General and I and we met him at the Muehlebach Hotel that evening for dinner and we discussed some kind of strategy to off-set Stark's apparent lead. We decided the only thing to be done was to get a third party into the race that would cut into the Stark territory and not hurt Truman.

President Roosevelt had appointed Maurice Milligan, a brother of "Tuck" Milligan as U. S. District Attorney some time before. Milligan took all of the credit for having broken up the Pendergast Organization in Kansas City and sending T. J. Pendergast to the penitentiary for income tax evasion. The three of us decided if we could get Milligan into the race he would pull enough votes away from Stark to elect Truman.

Sen. Clark asked the General to get Milligan on the phone, he still lived in Richmond, The General got him on the phone and asked him if he could meet with him at a certain suite in the Muehlebach Hotel early the following morning, stating he had a very important matter he wanted to discuss with him. Milligan finally agreed to meet him, which he did.

I did not sit in on this meeting, thinking it best to let the General and Sen. Clark handle the matter alone. When Milligan arrived at the hotel the General met him alone at first, Sen. Clark was in the bedroom with the door open so he could hear what was being said. The General explained to Milligan that he and Sen. Clark wanted him to file for the U. S. Senate against Truman and Stark, stating he was sure if he got into the race he could split the vote so neither of them could win the nomination Milligan was quite reluctant at first and said he thought the General was trying to pull a fast one on him. About this time Sen. Clark came out of the bedroom and began telling Milligan how he could win. After quite a lengthy discussion Milligan said he would think about it and let them know in a few days. Neither the General or Senator Clark made any commitment to him about supporting him, but he was under the impression that they would.

In a day or so Milligan called and said he had decided to take their advice and was going to file for U. S. Senator, which he did. As soon as he had filed Sen. Clark and the General went to Sen. Truman and told him what they had done, he became very angry at first and said they were trying to beat him like they had in 1934. They told him what they had been finding over the State and if there was not a third party in the race he, Truman, would surely be beaten.

They explained to him that Milligan would cut into Stark's vote much heavier than he would Truman's and he would have a much better chance of being re-elected and at the same time they would get rid of Milligan as U. S. District Attorney.

They finally convinced Sen. Truman they were on the level and that we would continue working just as hard for him as before, only now we would have to do it more quietly and not get Milligan aroused and have him pull out of the race.

Things worked out just the way we had planned, Milligan took most of his votes from the Stark camp and thus insured Truman of the nomination, had we not done this there is little doubt but Stark would have gotten the nomination.

(Signed)

Mrs. R. E. Truman.

3 July 1964.