

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

AMERICA'S POLITICAL DYNASTIES:
FROM ADAMS TO CLINTON

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Introduction:

DARRELL WEST
Vice President and Director, Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speakers:

COKIE ROBERTS
Political Commentator
NPR and ABC News

STEPHEN HESS
Senior Fellow Emeritus
Governance Studies

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WEST: Good afternoon. I'm Darrell West, vice president of Governance Studies at The Brookings Institution, and I would like to welcome you to our discussion of America's political dynasties. And in particular, we are here to celebrate the new book by Stephen Hess on this topic. And this is the inaugural event of the Brookings Book Club. This is going to be a series of discussions of the latest books being published by Brookings Institution Press. And we do appreciate the financial support that the Press has provided for this particular event.

The topic of dynasties is as American as apple pie. As Steve has demonstrated very convincingly in his book, the United States has seen dynasties from the Adams to the current period of the Clintons and the Bushes. His book is a fascinating account of this phenomena. Tom Brokaw says his book is "a great gift to students of American history." Chris Matthews meanwhile notes the threat represented by dynasties, he says Steve's book is "a fascinating study of the dangers of selecting a country's leaders based on their bloodlines."

So tonight, we are going to hear a terrific discussion of the history and contemporary relevance of political dynasties. We have two fabulous speakers who will be presenting their points of view on this subject. And after we hear from them and take questions from the audience, we invite you to join us after the event for a reception. And for those of you who didn't pre-order the book, Steve will be right outside the auditorium signing books after the event.

So to help us understand this subject I'm pleased to introduce our experts for tonight. Steve Hess is a senior fellow emeritus in the Governance Studies Program here at Brookings. And he is one of our nation's foremost authorities on American politics. He joined Brookings in 1972 and is the author of numerous books. I

won't go through all of them, but his books include *News and News-Making, The Presidential Campaign, The Ultimate Insiders, The Washington Reporters, American Political Cartoons*, and most recently *The Professor and the President*, which is a terrific book that Brookings Institution Press just published last year on the fascinating relationship between Richard Nixon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Steve served on the White House staff during the Nixon presidency, so had a front row seat for that particular relationship, and it is a great read, so I highly recommend that book along with his new book.

Joining him is Cokie Roberts, an award-winning journalist. Cokie served for many years as the congressional correspondent, senior news analyst, and political commentator for National Public Radio. She still is there as a contributing senior news analyst. You often see her on the roundtable for *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*. And she also serves as a commentator for ABC News. She is the recipient of many distinguished awards, including the Edward Murrow Award, the Everett McKinley Dirksen Award, and an Emmy Award for her news reporting. She also is the author of several books, including *Capital Dames, Founding Mothers, Ladies of Liberty*, and with her husband Steven Roberts, *From This Day Forward*.

So please join me in welcoming Steve and Cokie to Brookings.

(Applause)

MR. HESS: I should make one correction. Not only will my book be out there for me to autograph, but there will be one of Cokie's books, the one I picked for this, which was *Ladies of Liberty*, which I look. And she, I hope, will sign that for those who are interested.

I want to start with a Cokie story. (Laughter) This starts in late July, and it was my idea that with the publication of *America's Political Dynasties* I would put

together a little game called "Which is the Greatest Dynasty?" And eventually, in a couple weeks, I think it's going to go on the Brookings website. But with my wonderful interns, using the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, we put together a system that was really three parts. It included generations, how many generations were the family in politics; members, how many were in politics; and then finally, some scale based on the jobs they held: 10 points for President, 2 points for members of the House of Representatives.

So in late April, I called Cokie and I said I have great news. Your family, the Claibornes, are the third greatest American political dynasty. We thought that was nice. (Laughter) She asked for the data. (Laughter) She went over the data and she noted that we had left out, because it wasn't in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, but she could prove it, we had left out a senator from Alabama who served two terms. I should say in the order of importance, number one was the Roosevelts, number two were the Kennedys, the Claibornes were number three. The point score was listed.

So she informed us that there was a two-term senator from Alabama who resigned to enter the Confederacy. And this, therefore, was worth 3 points a term or 6 points plus 2 bonus points or 8 points, which happened to put her ahead of the Kennedys. (Laughter) Now I was worried that she might be going after the Roosevelts. (Laughter)

MS. ROBERTS: I was. I was totally going after the Roosevelts. And I found three more today.

MR. HESS: Well, we'll get to -- yeah, that's right. At that point, I said -- or I sent her note, I said, well, genealogists have shown that Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt are blood relations to eight presidents.

MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

MR. HESS: Yeah. But at any rate, we shall see Cokie's latest. Going back a little farther, about 1970, a relative of yours, Claiborne Pell, said more in sorrow, anger not, why didn't I include the Claibornes in this book, which originally came out in 1966? The truth of the matter is I didn't know. There are 44 families in American history that could have qualified for this book. We think of this as an event, dynasties that are all around us, but, in fact, of the 44 that had more than 3 generations in Congress, this really only amounted to 6 percent of the 11,000 men and women who have served in Congress. And we're talking about a very special bunch of people.

And why I didn't pick this family, had I had foresight I would have said to the senator, well, if you wait a couple of years, we will have Lindy Boggs and she was elected 9 times, so that's 18 points.

MS. ROBERTS: Right there.

MR. HESS: She gets another 2 bonus points. That's 20 points. So I could have seen that, but, unfortunately, I didn't have that. How I picked them, I don't know. Obviously, there were the presidents, they had to go in. There were some families that you -- it's so interesting, you had to put in. The Washburn family of Maine had four brothers who were in the United States House of Representatives from four different states: Maine, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Three at the same time. You had to put them in. I don't see how you could avoid the Longs. They were --

MS. ROBERTS: I could.

MR. HESS: You could. (Laughter) Louisiana, what can I do? The Longs. There was a family, a very important family, from Massachusetts who was spelled H-O-A-R, and I would love to have put in the Hoars of Massachusetts, but I already had three Massachusetts families: the Adamses, the Kennedys, and the Lodges.

So at any rate, all I can promise with my mea culpa to you is 50 years

hence, when I do the 3rd edition, I absolutely promise that I will include the Claibornes.

And so my first question to you, I hope, is what should my lead be?

MS. ROBERTS: About the Claibornes?

MR. HESS: Absolutely. When I write about the Claibornes, how should I start?

MS. ROBERTS: Oh, I think your lead should be that they have been a family dedicated to public service, but also very much wanting to get elected for generations. And I should say, by the way, Barbara Manard, Courtney Kane, granddaughters of Ethel Claiborne Dameron, are here; and Nina Boggs, wife of Douglas Claiborne Boggs and mother of William Claiborne Boggs, is here. And is Claiborne Pell here? He was -- there he is. Stand up Clay. This is our cousin Claiborne Pell.

(Applause) He is the grandson of the Claiborne Pell that Steve just reference. And Clay ran for governor of Rhode Island and he will win next time. And so it is carrying on onto the next generation, which is wonderful because it really is a dedication to public service.

And, you know, when I was going back, some dedicated descendant of the first William Claiborne who came in 1621 wrote the Claibornes of Virginia and he did it down to the seventh generation, eighth in some cases. And it's unbelievably footnoted and all of that, so I went dashing through it, found three more in Congress. But what was so remarkable was even if they weren't in Congress, they were in some public office in every generation, so that by -- he, the one who came, was the counselor and secretary of the colony, of Jamestown. But then, you know, by the time you're down to the fifth generation, there are 14 members of them in the House of Burgesses or in the sheriffs or in the House of Delegates, depending on the state.

And by the sixth, the United States was a country, and so 7 went to Congress -- I mean, excuse me, 2 went to Congress, but 18 of their cousins were in the

state legislatures. One was the mayor of Richmond. There were sheriffs, justices of the peace, I mean, they were all over the place.

And then by the seventh generation, they were populating the United States Congress, and so they were, you know, two of the sons of the first congressman, Thomas, who one took his Virginia seat, the other was from Tennessee. Also from that generation James Robert Claiborne of Missouri in Congress. Another one I just learned about today, William Osborne Goode of Virginia, son of Lucy Claiborne.

Nathaniel Herbert of Virginia, brother of the most famous Claiborne of the 19th century William Charles Cole Claiborne, whose story alone, Steve, would be a lead. You know, he came to Congress before he was 25 years old. He had to be seated in contravention of the Constitution because he was the only person from Tennessee to take the seat. And then when Jefferson -- when the Burr-Jefferson tie comes, he's the only member from Tennessee, so his vote counts as much as all of Virginia, all of Massachusetts. And everybody thought he could be turned because he was so young and so vain. And then he stuck with Jefferson, and a month later became governor of the Mississippi Territory. And then when Jefferson bought Louisiana, became governor of the Louisiana Territory, and then was elected to the Senate for Louisiana. So it goes on.

MR. HESS: You partly lead to my next question, though, because if you look at many of the dynasties throughout the United States, they are really rooted in one state: the Tafts of Ohio, the Bayards of Delaware, the Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania, the Frelinghuysens of New Jersey. Your family just keeps wandering. They keep going -- well, I counted, what, nine states?

MS. ROBERTS: Nine states.

MR. HESS: Nine states.

MS. ROBERTS: That we know of so far --

MR. HESS: That we know of.

MS. ROBERTS: -- and I keep finding them.

MR. HESS: Yeah. And the reason?

MS. ROBERTS: Well, part of it was that they needed to make a living, but part of it was they would have to run against a brother or a cousin to be where they were. (Laughter) So, you know, to move on to another state so they could have a free slate was a useful thing for them to do.

MR. HESS: Yeah, that, of course, is another thing. Some states just run out of jobs for the ambitions of the people.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: Obviously, the Kennedys are of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: And Maryland, as well, that's unusual.

MS. ROBERTS: And the reason William Charles Cole ran from Tennessee, actually, was because he was a young, very young, teenager, working for the House of Representatives. And the enrolling clerk was the brother-in-law of his uncle. And the enrolling clerk said to him, look, I know you want to be in Congress, but you're from Virginia. Forget it. You know, those seats are taken, including by several members of his family. So he said go to Tennessee, there's nobody there. And it became a state very quickly, as you remember. And so then Andy Jackson was in the Congress. He quit to become a senator and it left the seat open.

MR. HESS: Well, you know, of course, again, many of these families have a real founding father. Joseph Kennedy, Sr., new very well that he wanted his son to be President and his son died, the next son would become President. I think Alphonso

Taft had the same feeling. They're not really a founding father or is there?

MS. ROBERTS: No, but it is true that as I was saying it was just in the blood. I mean, this first guy who came in 1621, his father and grandfather before him in England had been alderman and mayor in the 16th century, so, you know, and I don't know how far back that goes. They weren't electing a lot of people in the England at that point, you know. (Laughter)

MR. HESS: Right. Yeah, but you haven't said yet about the thing that is so important in your books and is so hard to construct in a book called America's Political Dynasties, which, after all, well into the 20th century is all about men, is the amazing role that women did. And we both love the Adamses in different ways greatly, and I said to Cokie, and she didn't quite agree with me, that if women had had the right to vote from the Constitution that Abigail Adams would have been a lot better politician and probably wouldn't have been defeated, had much greater social skills, actually writing skills, as well, for that matter.

MS. ROBERTS: She had wonderful writing skills and she was very savvy politically and John counted on her political advice all the time. He was really a total clunker when it came to political sensitivity.

MR. HESS: Yeah, he was.

MS. ROBERTS: And she wrote him very telling letters all the time that he was abroad and all of that. And then when he was elected President and she was trying to get things in order at home, he wrote her one letter after another, you've got to come, I can't do this without you, get here, you know. And his mother is dying and she says I really have to take care of your mother. He says, the mother? What about me? (Laughter)

But the truth is, you know, something funny happened to Abigail Adams

and it happens, I think, in every administration. You've seen this from inside the White House, Steve. They develop such a bunker mentality that they think that everybody outside is out to get them, and she definitely developed that and became such a devotee of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Then that went a long way to defeating him.

MR. HESS: Yeah. I added a story about her. This edition, I've hinted at, was first written 50 years ago, published 50 years ago. And I thought when Brookings asked me to bring it out 2016, it seemed to be a good year for dynasty books, that all I would have to do would be add an extended, italicized side to each chapter, other than write about the Bushes, the Clintons, and an introduction. This turned out not to be possible. It's simply too much had happened at too many levels.

At one level, of course, is historians don't stop writing and this is the case with the Adamses. Of course, the Adamses saved every piece of paper that ever came by and people have been writing about the Adamses since. And I simply had to add this story to the Adams chapter. I'm sure you think what could you add? They haven't been in politics for 150 years. And the story was very simple.

When he was off in France and for a very long time, she had to run the farm initially. This was not easy because there weren't any farm laborers. They were all in the Army.

MS. ROBERTS: Yeah, the British were coming.

MR. HESS: And taxes were very high and the British were coming and so forth, and so she figured out a very clever way to do tenant farming and did that. But she did something else: she went into trade. And what happened was John was sending her little things from France -- a handkerchief, a silk scarf -- and she would sell it. And she said, John, this is retail. We should be in wholesale. And he said, but, you know, all those ships that intercept, we would -- and she said, John -- and this is a letter of hers -- if

we lose two out of three ships, we will still make a profit.

He said, wow, you seem to know your business. And so he said he was happy to turn it over to her. And now, of course, she could adjust the market. Well, we have too many scarves this month, maybe we should have handkerchiefs, and so forth. And it was -- because he never worked other than for the federal government in his life.

MS. ROBERTS: He never earned any money, right.

MR. HESS: She turned the family to solvency. I think it's a marvelous story.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, she did a lot of things like that. And, of course, you know, married women were not allowed to own property. They were the property of their husbands. But she was buying and selling property and everybody knew he wasn't there. He was in Paris, but they basically just did business with her because she was a very astute businesswoman.

He would write her the most ridiculous letters, though, from France. I mean, you know, he wrote her one letter saying how beautiful and gifted all the French women were.

MR. HESS: Oh, my.

MS. ROBERTS: Right. Great, good work, John. (Laughter)

MR. HESS: Good work, John, right. You know, there's something else about that family which I think is interesting because, unfortunately, it comes over in dynasty after dynasty. John and Abigail had one son who was President of the United States and two sons who became alcoholics. And the whole -- it's a sad history you see throughout these families. It's hard to be an Adams. John Adams had one son who was a great diplomat and another son was a suicide. And so the stories of these dynasties which you think are going to be glorious are often very, very sad.

MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

MR. HESS: Drug addiction, alcoholism, sex scandals, business scandals, and so forth. It's just true.

MS. ROBERTS: No, really out of the four children of John and Abigail Adams, the four that survived, you know, two of the boys were total wastrels and their daughter married a jerk. He was in Congress, though. (Laughter) And so it was really only John Quincy. And you can make the case, I hate to do it, but John Quincy wasn't raised by his mother, the others were. But he went off to Europe with father when he was 10 years old.

MR. HESS: That's right. That's right. Yeah, it's not only, of course, their children, but the stories of the in-laws. Well, you know, families are fascinating. (Laughter) Everybody knows that. Every family is fascinating. There's a story there and it's not just your children, it's your in-laws.

And wow, you look at some of these in-laws, one was accused of being a witch. This goes far back and she was having fits, and this was in the Bayard family. Fortunately, her husband's uncle was Peter Stuyvesant, who happened to be the head of New York City, and he just got in touch with the governor of Massachusetts and they straightened that all out very quickly. But not every family had a witch in it. Some had spies. Some of George Washington's spies were in the Stockton or the Livingston family.

MS. ROBERTS: Stockton.

MR. HESS: Yeah, right. One married a person who claimed -- they claim he was dead for four years -- four days and returned to Earth and told about heaven. (Laughter) So there are wonderful stories throughout.

The nice part about your books, my book, they're perfect for storytelling.

The first --

MS. ROBERTS: Well, of course, I argue that all of history should be storytelling. That it was the word means. But people have managed to squeeze all the juice out of it and make it boring as opposed to telling the wonderful stories.

MR. HESS: Yeah. But something happened, in a sense, in dynasties. When I first wrote the book, your own experiences with your mother and father, I think dynasties were quite honored. We've reached a moment where there's great skepticism about them and great dissatisfaction and so forth. What do you think turned that suddenly?

MS. ROBERTS: Oh, I think some of it is that everybody's dissatisfied with politicians, period.

MR. HESS: Right.

MS. ROBERTS: And anybody who's an insider particularly, and so who is more inside than somebody whose family has been around forever?

MR. HESS: Yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: And so I think that's a very strong view.

MR. HESS: Well, when you have a Bush -- when the two dynasties people seem to be upset about are the Bushes and the Clintons, everybody is upset with at least one of them. That's the way it works quite naturally.

MS. ROBERTS: But you don't really -- the Clintons are not a dynasty.

MR. HESS: That's very important. The Clintons had to be written about, you've got to sell a book, there's no question about that. (Laughter) But what do you do, a husband and wife are not a dynasty? And the chapter starts with the fact that the dynasty will become in 2040 when Charlotte is first eligible to run for the House of Representatives. Should she be elected, and, of course, she will have had maternal and paternal grandparents who are all politicians, she will really be the first dynast in the

family. And so what do you do about the Clintons?

Well, what I chose to do and I like to think I'm right is I call them a partnership. And I could play on that threat which you could see from almost the beginning of their relationship and that in itself is unusual in politics. So that's how I dealt with the Clintons at least.

The Bushes, again, you deal with a family that you think everybody knows something about. What do you do --

MS. ROBERTS: But they definitely qualify as a dynasty.

MR. HESS: Yes, yes. What happens is the Bushes, who are a dynasty, but deny that they're a dynasty, and the Clintons, who are not a dynasty, but want to be a dynasty, it gets very confusing at this point. (Laughter) Don't you think? Yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: Yeah. But, you know, talking about the in-laws, Steve, you know, that's one of my favorite things because when you write women's history, as I do, you come upon letters that have never been published. And the Adamses, as you say, have saved all of their letters. And actually there are two that I just love. One is from Louisa Catherine Adams, John Quincy Adams' wife, and she was here in town. He was Secretary of State and she was running him for President, and she says that. She's writing these gossipy, wonderful letters home to John Adams after Abigail dies. And she says it's my vocation to get him elected President.

But the year of the Missouri Compromise, which was 1820, Congress stayed in session much longer than usual in order to hammer out the Compromise. And so then it was over, they finally adjourn. She goes to a meeting of the Trustees of the Orphan Asylum, which Dolly Madison had helped found after the British invasion. And she writes this letter home to John Adams which had never been published when I found it and it was just so wonderfully eye-opening. She says that she's gone of the meeting of

the trustees and they said we're going to need a new building. And she said why? And they said, well, the session had been very long, and I'm quoting here, "and our great and moral fathers had left 40 cases to be provided for by our institution."

Yes, the Congress had left 40 pregnant women behind and there only like 187 members of Congress at the time. Now, some of them might have been recidivists, I don't know. (Laughter) But she then says to Adams, she says, "So I recommended to that great and moral body that they take the \$2 additional that they have voted themselves as an increase in pay and use it to build a foundling institution." So, you know, it doesn't get much better than that. (Laughter)

MR. HESS: No, it doesn't. And you remember what she called her autobiography?

MS. ROBERTS: Mm-hmm.

MR. HESS: Yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: *Autobiography of Nobody*.

MR. HESS: *Autobiography of a Nobody*.

MS. ROBERTS: And she wrote that when she was First Lady of the United States.

MR. HESS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: She was fairly depressed.

MR. HESS: Okay. Who would be your favorite?

MS. ROBERTS: Of the what?

MR. HESS: Oh, of the dynasties. Not yours.

MS. ROBERTS: The Claibornes, of course.

MR. HESS: No, no, no, no. No, put aside your own.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, in going through your book, you know, I loved the

Livingstons because, again, the Livingston women were so interesting, the New Jersey Livingston women. But now I didn't like Janet Livingston one bit. She was the wife of Richard Montgomery, after whom Montgomery County is mysteriously named, but he was one of the first people killed in the war, the Revolutionary War. And you would have thought she was the only widow in America, you know, from her letters. But Sarah Livingston Jay, the wife of John Jay, was one of the most delightful people and wonderful letter writers ever.

MR. HESS: Well, here's where we go male and female. I hated the Livingstons. (Laughter) The Livingstons started, the first lord of manor, went to upstate New York. He had a piece of land, about 2,000 acres on the Hudson, and then he got 200 acres on the Massachusetts border and he asked for a patent from the Royal -- for his land which was contiguous. So they gave him a patent to something like 250,000 acres that he didn't own. It was perhaps the greatest, gross land swindle and so forth.

MS. ROBERTS: Land grab.

MR. HESS: That's how that particular family started. And what happened to them, just to finish it because they did have some fascinating women, I'll stick with you on that, but if the Adamses left politics because they were so flinty, so unsocial that, in a sense, the American people couldn't accept them as politicians, the Livingstons were exactly the reverse. They left politics because they didn't want to deal with the hoi polloi. These are the people that they didn't want to associate with. So the Livingstons as a family moved back to their estates, married each other, had fewer children, made their money by acquiring, not by agriculture, and became a sort of Shinto group that --

MS. ROBERTS: No, no, no.

MR. HESS: Okay.

MS. ROBERTS: Now we have Edward Livingston, who was mayor of New York --

MR. HESS: Oh, yes.

MS. ROBERTS: -- came to New Orleans and married -- he didn't marry one of those Dutch people. He married Louise D'Avezac and she was from Santa Domingo.

MR. HESS: Right.

MS. ROBERTS: And she was quite a person. And, in fact, she did eventually retire after he was minister to France. And when he was appointed to that, crazy John Randolph was in the Senate and he said, oh, I can't think of anybody better to go as our minister to France than Louise D'Avezac and him. And he said, and then she won't have to put up with all these yahoos in Congress. He actually used the word "yahoos." But she did eventually retire to New York, but she became one of the first real conservationists in this country and I can make an argument really started the conversation movement, so.

MR. HESS: And he wrote in his old age that he owed everything to her.

MS. ROBERTS: Oh, she was great. She was great.

MR. HESS: So there. But just my favorites, as I told you my unfavorite, would have been -- this happened a few years ago, and I was on one of those talk radio shows where for President's Day they had asked me for my favorite President, hoping that they would then build a Q&A call-in show. And I said, oh, my favorite President is William Howard Taft. The moderator was very upset because he thought I'd do Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, or Lincoln or Washington.

MS. ROBERTS: Or somebody you'd heard of. (Laughter)

MR. HESS: Somebody who you could build a program around. And I

said, but you didn't ask if he was the best President, you said who's my favorite President. William Howard Taft was the nicest man who was ever President. He loved his parents. They loved him. He loved his wife. She loved him. He loved his -- you know, he wasn't a particularly good President, but, oh, wow, that love. (Laughter) That's got to mean something.

We're being flashed a sign called Q&A.

MS. ROBERTS: Okay. Let me just say, thought, before we do that, you know, you talked about the flinty Adamses and, you know, husbands and wives loving each other and all that. A letter than I came upon from writing this last book, *Capital Dames*, was from Abigail Brooks Adams, the wife of Charles Francis Adams. Again, had never been published. They were briefly in Washington when he was in Congress before he went off. He was the last. I mean, it was just the three of them: John, John Quincy, Charles Francis Adams. And he went off to become the Union's ambassador to the Court of Saint James, but he was briefly here in Congress for the Secessionist Congress, the 36th Congress. And she's writing all these hysterical letters home to Henry Adams, their son, including things like President Buchanan is a heavy old toad and other such things.

But my favorite was, and this plays entirely into your theory about their flintiness and inability to get reelected, she says, "I would advise any young woman who wishes to have an easy, quiet life not to marry an Adams." She says, "They are headstrong, willful, and fighting ever, but honest, brave, and straightforward." (Laughter)

MR. HESS: Okay. I've got to answer that because this is very interesting. The Adamses were poor folks. They were farmers. It wasn't until that generation and that lady --

MS. ROBERTS: A woman, right.

MR. HESS: -- that woman, whose father was the richest man in Boston.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: And suddenly, the Adamses had money. And we discussed earlier why they may have left politics, their flintiness, but having money helped them leave politics. Money we think of in politics as something that's going to continue the dynasty. In this case, the Henry Adamses and the Brooks Adamses found a lot of other pursuits that they would have preferred to do and they had the money to do it.

And, in fact, as you go through these dynasties one of the great sources of money is how well these people married, it wasn't just the Adamses. (Laughter)

MS. ROBERTS: Always wise.

MR. HESS: All right. You know the Frelinghuysens came as ministers, clergymen, and ultimately in the last three generations had married a Ballantine of Ballantine Ale, a Havemeyer of the Havemeyer Trust, a Procter of Procter & Gamble. They did very well. In fact, Rodney's father, Peter, who was sort of --

MS. ROBERTS: Rodney Frelinghuysen is now in Congress from New Jersey.

MR. HESS: Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen's father had the same seat in Congress, was sort of friend because there weren't many moderate Republicans around to join together. And when I wrote that, he never spoke to me again. (Laughter) That was (inaudible) you do not talk about where the money comes from. So be it.

MS. ROBERTS: All right, questions. Anybody? Yes, go ahead.

QUESTIONER: I have a question about one last name I (inaudible) Harrison.

MS. ROBERTS: Harrison. Well, the Harrisons were pretty much related to everybody. (Laughter) They certainly were related to the Claibornes. They were

related to the Jeffersons, the Randolphs. You know, they were very much there. But only two of them, right? Did you find more than two Harrison's?

MR. HESS: Well, I found enough to write a chapter. The Harrison's just kept moving west. And so from a distinguished Virginia family they kept going to Indiana and the last one ended up in Wyoming. And they -- hmm, how do you describe a family that probably shouldn't have even been President of the United States? William Henry Harrison was clerk of the court in Hamilton County at the time that he was nominated to be President. They were -- I'd say they were probably the most undistinguished in my book, although the one who became President -- and I think a not very assertive President -- was actually a great general in the Civil War. Everything on the march to the sea with Sherman, he was right there. So I can't take that away from him.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, of course, that's why William Henry got elected, too, was Tippecanoe.

MR. HESS: Well, it wasn't much of a battle. (Laughter) I'm sorry. Yeah, you have to have a favorite and you have to have one that's not a favorite, and I guess I put Harrison in that category.

MS. ROBERTS: Who else?

QUESTIONER: (inaudible) you decided to declare the Clintons a partnership because, quite right, they haven't got enough generations yet. But it strikes me that you're talking about a number of partnerships along the way, some of them at the beginning, like John and Abigail Adams. And you've mentioned some of the others and, of course, we have Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. So I think that's an interesting part of the dynasties.

MR. HESS: Yeah, certainly it is. Rewriting a book 50 years later caused some problems with some. Obviously it caused problems with the Kennedys because

when I started in 1964 Jack had just been assassinated. And when I reread my chapter, it read like --

MS. ROBERTS: Lives of the saints?

MR. HESS: Yeah, it read like a myth as the way we thought of the Kennedys. And so it wasn't just adding 50 years. It was scrubbing down the Camelots to get there.

You talked about the Roosevelts, Franklin and Eleanor, who I admired greatly and at the time, interviewed some of their children. They tried to be generous to them. But ultimately, 50 years later, looking back, particularly the three eldest sons, that the children, five of them, had been married 19 times and divorced 14 times. Elliot had been investigated eight times by congressional investigating committees. Franklin was the representative of Trujillo in Washington. And you had to ask a lot of questions about how they were raised, who raised them, if anyone raised them. The grandmother raised them and so forth. But they turned out to be the most exploitive children of presidents and I had to rewrite the book to say that. I couldn't leave them up on a pedestal as I had 50 years ago.

And I worry, indeed, about Franklin and Eleanor. Great people, but what about the parents?

MS. ROBERTS: Do you think, Steve, is that -- I mean, yes, the time has passed and you've learned more about these people, their lives have evolved, but is it also true that there's some degree of history writing being more skeptical than it was 50 years ago?

MR. HESS: Oh, I'm sure that's true. In this case, there was still a story to be written, put it that way. I mean, their lives continued. They kept getting into increasingly messy divorces and other things, and some financial scandals, as well.

What interested me there, and I wish I had had more time to pursue it, was, okay, what happened to their children and their grandchildren? Of course, their children were not being raised by them, probably, but by their former wives. And the best I could figure out they did very nicely. They really did very nicely. They didn't go into politics by and large, with one exception, but they were professors, they were writers, they were educators. And, in fact, with a great grandchild, one became a rabbi it turned out and has a synagogue in Ashland, Oregon.

QUESTIONER: Well, being from the West Coast this all seems very East Coast establishment, your so-called Ivy Leagues, all that stuff. As I start to see Latinos taking over politics, West Coast people, I mean, look at the Supreme Court. I mean, I can't believe how undiverse it is in terms of background, but I'm wondering if this is the end of it.

MS. ROBERTS: Except no Protestants. There are not Protestants on the Supreme Court.

QUESTIONER: No Protestants and all the women are from Manhattan. Really? So as do become more diverse and I wonder if this is the end of the dynasties really.

MR. HESS: Oh, no, I think it's the beginning.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: You're quite right in what you're saying, but, first of all, with the empowerment of women over the last 50 years, we're going to have twice as many people who can be dynasts, so there's going to be much greater there. And then as we have groups, as you say, whether it's Hispanic, whether it's black, Cuban, and so forth, they live in the same places by and large. And where they live in the same places, they have a voting bloc. And you're going to see them building up as we have starting in

Congress, whether it's in South Beach Miami, whether it's in Southern California, and so forth.

MS. ROBERTS: Southern California.

MR. HESS: So we're going to get a much more diverse -- we're always going to have dynasties. It's in the cards. We are a free country. We elect people. What we don't have, we don't always have the same dynasties. Dynasties die and dynasties are born.

So I think your point is well taken, but you have to look ahead. They dynasties of the future are going to look more like the ones you're talking about.

MS. ROBERTS: I mean, there have already been the Roybals, you know, Hispanic father and daughter; the Sanchezes, the sisters, right? You've got in Florida, the Diaz-Balarts. I mean, you've got several families already that are sending several people of the same generation or of two generations to Congress, and it's only going to increase.

QUESTIONER: Wait till to the 2016 (inaudible).

MS. ROBERTS: The Castro dynasty, that's right.

MR. HESS: Castro dynasty, right.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: Right, right, right. Yeah. Other questions.

MS. ROBERTS: Sir, back there.

MR. HESS: That's you.

QUESTIONER: I have a comment that Franklin Roosevelt's grandfather, Warren Delano, made his money in the opium trade.

MR. HESS: Was in the drug trade.

QUESTIONER: Yeah.

MR. HESS: Oh, absolutely.

QUESTIONER: In the opium trade.

MR. HESS: He had ships. That's what ships did, they went back and forth. Yeah.

QUESTIONER: At the India end, the opium is procured by a family called the Tatas and now they are the largest industrial family in India. Just comment.

MS. ROBERTS: In the what?

MR. HESS: I don't know, you know more than I do, so I'll leave it there.

(Laughter)

MS. ROBERTS: Yes, sir.

QUESTIONER: You haven't mentioned the Rockefellers, whose political tendencies covered quite a range. I wonder if you might mention something.

MS. ROBERTS: They're also several states.

MR. HESS: Yeah. There are really two things to be said about the Rockefellers. First of all would be that the generation of the robber barons -- the Rockefellers, the Harrimans, the Morgans, the Goulds -- didn't run for office. You know, Gould would buy a --

MS. ROBERTS: They ran other people's office.

MR. HESS: He'd buy a politician. He didn't do that. But, again, as we said before, they would be happy to rent their children, to marry their children. So, in fact, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., the richest man in the United States, his daughter married the son of his -- wait, I got to get it straight. His son married the daughter of --

MS. ROBERTS: Aldrich.

MR. HESS: Nelson Aldrich, who was the most powerful politician in the United States, and they joined together. And then their son became Nelson Aldrich

Rockefeller. What you start to see there, and I include this in another category, are sort of the mix-and-match dynasties. It was really the collection of Rockefellers and Aldriches that created that as a dynasty.

QUESTIONER: Like Ms. Roberts, I'm originally from New Orleans. And while we appreciate the Claibornes a lot --

MS. ROBERTS: I see your fleur-de-lis.

QUESTIONER: Yes. While we appreciate the Claibornes a lot, one dynasty that perhaps gets more attention in Louisiana is obviously the Longs. And I would want to ask if you found anything interesting about them in particular.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, you have a chapter on the Longs.

MR. HESS: I do. The Longs, yeah. The Longs were busy fighting other Longs. (Laughter) They were quite fascinating at it. I'm not sure there's still a Long around running for office. The last Longs were busy running against each other. That was Speedy Long.

MS. ROBERTS: Speedy. Speedy and Gillis Long.

MR. HESS: Yeah, Speedy and Gillis.

QUESTIONER: (inaudible) Longs in our state (inaudible).

MS. ROBERTS: In the state legislature?

MR. HESS: Mm-hmm.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, of course, you know, Huey Long was the great character and really enormously powerful and corrupt in his time, but then he had two brothers: Earl, who, of course, became governor and also very powerful; and then his brother George, who was in the House of Representatives. And George would get up every year and give a speech about the Redcoats coming. And so he was very much against the Marshall Plan or anything like that because it involved giving aid to Great

Britain and he was against it.

MR. HESS: And, of course, there was Blanche.

MS. ROBERTS: Blanche was the wife of Huey.

MR. HESS: Earl, yeah, yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: Of Earl.

MR. HESS: While Earl had Blaze Starr --

MS. ROBERTS: And others, yes.

MR. HESS: It was an interesting family. (Laughter)

MS. ROBERTS: Other questions.

QUESTIONER: So, in general, do you think that political dynasties are beneficial to our political system in general? Are they a sign of health or sort of decay for a political system?

MR. HESS: I'll give two answers to that. One is a semi-objective reason because I've been studying them for 50 years, I've seen a lot of them. And I would say on balance they have given us above average service. So we haven't lost out. Looking back historically there have been some weak ones, some very great ones like the Roosevelts. But I think in general we've done well by them.

The other question, since my argument is that we will always have them, there like apple pie, is that while the word "dynasty" seems to be regressive and tight, it is part of the flow of history. It is part of our moving on and I think that's perfect positive. And, in fact, I'm really more interested in some ways in why they die so that others can replace them rather than why they were there. They're ambitious, they're bright, they're smart, they want their good jobs and they go after them. But we touch on some of the reasons why they die, but there are lots of reasons.

The great fascinating Breckinridge family of Kentucky, marvelous,

fascinating family, a family of passion which they were equally divided between the South and the North, for each other and all of that. And then, of course, after the war, Kentucky wasn't much of a place to live, so they --

MS. ROBERTS: Well, and Breckinridge, also, became --

MR. HESS: -- started to move other places.

MS. ROBERTS: -- Vice President of the United States and then he signed up with the Confederacy.

MR. HESS: Yeah.

MS. ROBERTS: There was a problem there.

MR. HESS: Yeah, and they did some wonderful things, but they were no longer a dynasty. They no longer had a base in Kentucky.

The Lees of Virginia were a fascinating family in the same way. And you look at them and after a while they left politics, and what did they do? They all went into the military. They were either generals or admirals or married to generals. And so instead of being a political dynasty, they became a military dynasty, which was another type of public service. So I find them very interesting and not at all worried that we're going to turn our lives over to people who are strictly oligarchs.

MS. ROBERTS: I think the words "public service" are the right words. I mean, first of all, keep in mind, in every field you see people going into the field that their parents are in because the one they know and it's familiar and so they do it. But I do also think that there is in families where public service is highly valued that the generation coming up, and Clay Pell can speak to this, you know, that there is a sense that that is an obligation almost.

But the other thing to keep in mind is that these families are like all American families. It's not like they're all marrying each other. They're marrying

everybody. And so you're talking about an ethnically diverse and religiously diverse and, in some cases, racially diverse groups of people because that's who we all marry.

MR. HESS: They do marry -- often enough they marry each other.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. HESS: You know, you look at Howard Baker. Howard Baker, who we love dearly, his father was in Congress when he died.

MS. ROBERTS: And his mother.

MR. HESS: His mother was there, too, and he then married Everett Taft Dirksen's daughter. When she died, he married Nancy --

MS. ROBERTS: Landon

MR. HESS: -- Landon Kassebaum. Her father ran for President against FDR. That's quite a collection.

MS. ROBERTS: You can't point to many like that.

MR. HESS: But that's who they knew, those were their neighbors and friends. It's not -- end this comment. (Laughter)

QUESTIONER: Is there (inaudible; audio drop).

MS. ROBERTS: The question is, is there a danger that so many of these dynasties seem to have come from money? I don't think that's true, is it?

MR. HESS: They ended up with money, they didn't necessarily start with money. Figure that one out.

MS. ROBERTS: Okay, we are getting the least subtle signal you've ever seen to stop. So we will do that. But Steve and I will both be signing books and I think there's a little reception out here. And thank you all so very, very much for coming.
(Applause)

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