

Senator/Governor Huey Long Accomplishments

Dr. Frank J. Collazo

January 3, 2013

Introduction



Huey Pierce Long was born in Winfield, La. in 1893 to a middle class family. He liked to tell people he was from a poor background. This helped him relate to the poor people of Louisiana. He was expelled from high school for criticizing the faculty. Huey Long was a very intelligent man. He was able to pass the bar exam after only one year at Tulane Law School.

Huey preferred to do battle with the powerful, large corporations and Standard Oil Company was his favorite target. Huey championed himself as a lawyer for the poor man and this strategy would benefit him politically. He had a definite plan for his rise to political power and was well on his way to becoming president before he was shot down in the new Louisiana State Capitol building that he had built by a young doctor named Carl Weis.

Long took the nickname "The Kingfish," from the radio show Amos and Andy. He was a Democrat and noted for his radical populist policies. He served as Governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1932 and as a U.S. senator from 1932 to 1935. Though a backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election, Long split with Roosevelt in June 1933 and allegedly planned to mount his own presidential bid.

The Kingfish got much of his power in Louisiana by destroying his adversaries and rewarding his cronies. He also did much good for Louisiana by building roads and bridges and improving education. His program came to be called "share our wealth." The poor people of Louisiana generally loved him and most people of means and wealth hated him. Huey Long was without a doubt one of the most interesting and controversial politicians that the United States has ever produced.

Long created the Share Our Wealth program in 1934, with the motto "Every Man a King," in which a tax on the wealthy would be used to redistribute wealth to the very poor to curb the poverty and crime resulting from the Great Depression. He was an ardent critic of the Federal Reserve System.

Huey was a popular and driven politician that heavily promoted his ideas and willingness to take forceful action, Long was accused by his opponents of dictatorial tendencies for his near-total control of the state government. At the height of his popularity, the colorful and flamboyant Long was shot on September 8, 1935 at the Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge; he died two days later at the age of 42. His last words were reportedly, "God, don't let me die. I have so much left to do." There is much controversy over whether

Dr. Weis actually shot long or that perhaps there was a secret conspiracy to kill him by some of his many enemies.

Early Life and Legal Career

He was the seventh of nine surviving children in a farm-owning middle-class family. He was home-schooled as a young child and later attended local schools, where he was an excellent student and was said to have a photographic memory.

In 1908, upon completing the eleventh grade, Huey Long circulated a petition protesting the addition of a 12th-grade to the curriculum as a graduation requirement, which resulted in his expulsion.

Long won a debating scholarship to Louisiana State University, but he was unable to afford the textbooks required for attendance. Instead, he spent the next five years as a traveling salesman, selling books, canned goods and patent medicines, as well as working as an auctioneer.

In 1913, Long married Rose McConnell. She was a stenographer who had won a baking contest which he promoted to sell "Cottolene," one of the most popular of the early vegetable shortenings to come on the market. The Longs had a daughter, also named Rose, and two sons, Russell (1918–2003), later a seven-term U.S. Senator and Palmer (1921–2010), a Shreveport oilman.

Louisiana History, Role of Huey Long

During the agricultural recession of the 1920s, Huey P. Long rapidly rose in Louisiana politics. In part, Long's rise was made possible by the hard times and agrarian discontent. Long possessed a blunt, freewheeling, even brutal manner that appealed to many poor white Louisianans, particularly in rural parishes. Championing the interests of small farmers and laborers against those of powerful corporations, particularly the Standard Oil Company, Long was elected governor in 1928.

In 1930 he was elected U.S. senator from Louisiana, but he remained governor and did not take his Senate seat until 1932, when his choice for successor became governor. Governor Long maintained almost dictatorial control over the state government until his assassination in 1935.

During Long's political ascendancy, a vast program of public works was instituted in Louisiana, some with state funds, but most with federal assistance. These programs helped to alleviate the economic effects of the disastrous worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s. At the time of his death, however, Long was serving his own political ends by blocking badly needed federal relief and public works programs. After his death, considerable federal funds were spent to relieve the effects of the depression in Louisiana.

Long's political machine, an organization to control public offices and patronage continued under the leadership of his brother, Earl K. Long, and his son, Russell Long. From 1928 to 1960, the real contest for governor of Louisiana was fought in the primary elections between the Long and anti-Long factions of the Democratic Party. The flamboyant, populist, often corrupt Long faction candidates advocated continuous expansion of state services. They were opposed by reformers who stressed their personal integrity and fiscal conservatism.

In 1932, though a backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential election, Long split with Roosevelt in June 1933 and planned to mount his own presidential bid for 1936.

In the summer of 1932, Long took on the Democratic Party machine when he decided to support Hattie Caraway, the first woman to be elected to Congress, in her bid to hold her seat in the Senate. Joseph T. Robinson and other leaders of the party in Arkansas were opposed to the idea and told her she would not win the party nomination. Caraway approached Long, and he agreed to help her campaign and she defeated her nearest competitor by two to one.

In 1934, Long created the Share Our Wealth program with the motto "Every Man a King," proposing new wealth redistribution measures in the form of a net asset tax on corporations and individuals to curb the poverty and homelessness endemic nationwide during the Great Depression.

To stimulate the economy, Long advocated federal spending on public works, schools and colleges, and old age pensions. He was an ardent critic of the Federal Reserve System's policies. He was charismatic and immensely popular for his programs and willingness to take forceful action, Governor Long was accused by his opponents of dictatorial tendencies for his near-total control of the state government.

In 1934, Governor Long, a leftist populist, he was preparing to challenge FDR's reelection in alliance with radio's influential Catholic priest Charles Coughlin, or run for president in 1940 when Franklin Roosevelt was expected to retire.

Long convened a special session of the legislature in Louisiana and pushed through bills that placed electoral machinery in the governor's hands, outlawing interference by the courts with his use of national guardsmen, and created his own secret police.

Governor Long expanded state highways, hospitals and educational institutions. His governance has had critics and supporters, debating whether he was a dictator, demagogue or populist.

Long won fame by taking on the powerful Standard Oil Company, which he sued for unfair business practices. Over the course of his career, Long continued to challenge Standard Oil's influence in state politics and charged the company with exploiting the state's vast oil and gas resources.

In August 1935, Long announced his candidacy for the presidency.

In 1935, Long was assassinated; his national movement faded, while his state organization continued in Louisiana.

Political Career and Rise to Power

Long was elected to the Louisiana Railroad Commission in 1918 at the age of 25 on an anti-Standard Oil platform. In 1921, the commission was renamed the Louisiana Public Service Commission. His campaign for the Railroad Commission used techniques he would perfect later in his political career: "heavy use of

printed circulars and posters, an exhausting schedule of personal campaign stops throughout rural Louisiana, and vehement attacks on his opponents.” He used his position on the commission to enhance his populist reputation as an opponent of large oil and utility companies, fighting against rate increases by the utilities companies, and pipeline monopolies.

In 1920, during the gubernatorial election, he campaigned prominently for John M. Parker, but later became his vocal opponent after the new governor proved to be insufficiently committed to reform; Long called Parker the "chattel" of the corporations.

In 1922, as chairman of the Public Service Commission, Long won a lawsuit against the Cumberland Telephone & Telegraph Company for unfair rate increases, resulting in cash refunds of \$440,000 to 80,000 overcharged customers. Long successfully argued the case on appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court (*Cumberland Tel & Tel Co. v. Louisiana Public Service Commission*, 260 U.S. 212 (1922), prompting Chief Justice William Howard Taft to describe Long as one of the best legal minds he had ever encountered.

In 1924, Long ran for governor of Louisiana in the election, attacking Parker, Standard Oil and the established political hierarchy both local and state-wide. In that campaign, he became one of the first Southern politicians to use radio addresses and sound trucks. Long also began wearing a distinctive white linen suit. He came in third; although he and another candidate had privately opposed the powerful Ku Klux Klan, a third candidate had openly supported it. The Klan's prominence in Louisiana was the primary issue of the campaign. Long cited rain on election day as suppressing voter turnout among his base in rural north Louisiana, where voters were unable to reach the polls on dirt roads that had turned to mud. Instead, he was reelected to the Public Service Commission.

Long spent the intervening four years building his reputation and his political organization, including supporting Catholic candidates to build support in south Louisiana, which was heavily Catholic due to its French and Spanish heritage.



Louisiana State Capitol

Statue of Huey Long looking toward the state Capitol that he built in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In 1928 he campaigned on the slogan, "Every man a King, but no one wears a crown," a phrase adopted from Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. Long's attacks on the utilities industry and

corporate privileges were enormously popular, as was his depiction of the wealthy as: "parasites" who grabbed more than their fair share of the public wealth while marginalizing the poor.

At the time, the rural poor comprised 60 percent of the state's population. The entire state had roughly 300 miles of paved roads and only three major bridges. The literacy rate was the lowest in the nation (75 percent), as most families could not afford to purchase the textbooks required for their children to attend school. A poll tax kept many poor whites from voting. (Of the 2 million residents, only 300,000 could afford to register to vote.)

Together with selective application of literacy and understanding tests, however, blacks had been effectively completely disenfranchised since soon after the state legislature passed the new constitution in 1898.

Long won in 1928 by tapping into the class resentment of rural Louisianans. He proposed government services far more expansive than anything in Louisiana history. Long won the Democratic Primary election on January 17, 1928, with less than a majority of the vote, 43.9 percent (126,842 votes), as his opponents split the anti-Long vote with Riley J. Wilson earning 28.3 percent (81,747) and Oramel H. Simpson garnering 27.8 percent (80,326). At the time, Long's margin was the largest in state history, and neither opponent chose to face him in a run-off election. He won the General Election on April 17, 1928, with 96.1 percent (92,941) of the vote.

Three LSU scholars contend that before his governorship "political power in Louisiana had been nearly a monopoly of the coalition of businessmen and planters, reinforced by the oil and other industrial interests. This situation was changed when Huey P. Long won the hearts and votes of the farmers and other 'small people' and created a countervailing power combination."

At least one statewide official bucked the Long trend. Percy Saint of St. Mary Parish was reelected to a second term as attorney general independent of Long and several times ruled against Long during the gubernatorial term.

Long as Governor, 1928–1932

Once in office as governor on May 21, 1928, Long moved quickly to consolidate his power, firing hundreds of opponents in the state bureaucracy, at all ranks from cabinet-level heads of departments and board members to rank-and-file civil servants and state road workers. Like previous governors, he filled the vacancies with patronage appointments from his own network of political supporters.

Every state employee who depended on Long for a job was expected to pay a portion of his or her salary at election time directly into Long's political war-chest, which raised \$50,000 to \$75,000 each election cycle. These funds were kept in a famous locked "deduct box" to be used at Long's discretion for political purposes.

Once his control over the state's political apparatus was strengthened, Long pushed a number of bills through the 1929 session of the Louisiana State Legislature to fulfill campaign promises. These included a

free textbook program for schoolchildren, an idea advanced by John Sparks Patton, the Claiborne Parish school superintendent. Long also supported night courses for adult literacy (which taught 100,000 adults to read by the end of his term), and a supply of cheap natural gas for the city of New Orleans.

Long began an unprecedented public works program, building roads, bridges, hospitals, and educational institutions. His bills met opposition from many legislators, wealthy citizens, and the corporate-controlled media, but Long used aggressive tactics to ensure passage of the legislation he favored. He would show up unannounced on the floor of both the House and Senate or in House committees, corralling reluctant representatives and state senators and bullying opponents. These tactics were unprecedented, but they resulted in the passage of most of Long's legislative agenda. By delivering on his campaign promises, Long achieved hero status among the state's rural poor population.

When Long secured passage of his free textbook program, the school board of Caddo Parish, home of conservative Shreveport, sued to prevent the books from being distributed, saying it would not accept "charity" from the state. Long responded by withholding authorization for locating an Army Air Corps base nearby until the parish accepted the books.

Great Depression

During the Great Depression millions of Americans cheered the colorful, grandiose oratory of the "Kingfish." He ingratiated himself with a program to eliminate poverty that would give every family a minimum income of \$5000 per year by limiting individual incomes to a maximum of \$1 million per year and would provide old-age pensions of \$30 per month to elderly people who had less than \$10,000 in cash.

In 1932, Long supported the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential election, but, disappointed by the lack of patronage after Roosevelt became president, Long fought him openly in the Senate using the filibuster to delay passage of New Deal measures.

Impeachment Attempt

In 1929, Long called a special session of both houses of the legislature to enact a new five-cent per barrel "occupational license tax" on production of refined oil, to help fund his social programs. The bill met with fierce opposition from the state's oil interests. Opponents in the legislature, led by freshman Cecil Morgan of Shreveport, moved to impeach Long on charges ranging from blasphemy to corruption, bribery, and misuse of state funds. Long tried to cut the session short, but after an infamous brawl that spilled across the State Legislature on what was known as "Bloody Monday," the Legislature voted to remain in session and proceed with the impeachment.

Long took his case to the people using his characteristic speaking tours. He inundated the state with his trademark circulars. He argued that Standard Oil, corporate interests and the conservative political opposition were conspiring to stop him from providing roads, books and other programs to develop the state and help the poor.

The House referred many charges to the Senate. Impeachment required a two-thirds majority, but Long produced a "Round Robin" statement signed by 15 senators pledging to vote "not guilty" no matter what the evidence. They said the trial was illegal, and even if proved, the charges did not warrant impeachment. The impeachment process, now futile, was suspended. It has been alleged that both sides used bribes to buy votes, and that Long later rewarded the Round Robin signers with state jobs or other favors.

Following the failed impeachment attempt in the Senate, Long became ruthless when dealing with his enemies. He fired their relatives from state jobs and supported candidates to defeat them in elections. "I used to try to get things done by saying 'please'," said Long. "Now...I dynamite 'em out of my path."

Since the state's newspapers were financed by the opposition, in March 1930 Long founded his own paper, the *Louisiana Progress*, which he used to broadcast achievements and denounce his enemies. To receive lucrative state contracts, companies were first expected to buy advertisements in Long's newspaper. Long attempted to pass laws placing a surtax on newspapers and forbidding the publishing of "slanderous material," but these efforts were defeated.

After the impeachment attempt, Long received death threats. Fearing for his personal safety, he surrounded himself with armed bodyguards at all times.

In 1930, Bills proposed by Governor Long were rejected in Legislature. Long proposed another major road-building initiative as well as the construction of a new capitol building in Baton Rouge. The State Legislature defeated the bond issue necessary to build the roads, and his other initiatives failed as well.

In September 9, 1930, Long filed the necessary papers to run for the election for the U.S. Senate in the Democratic primary. He portrayed his campaign as a referendum on his programs: If he won he would take it as a sign that the public supported his programs over the opposition of the legislature, and if he lost he promised to resign. Long defeated incumbent Senator Joseph E. Ransdell, an Alexandria native from Lake Providence in East Carroll Parish, by 149,640 (57.3 percent) to 111,451 (42.7 percent).

Although his Senate term began on March 4, 1931, Long completed the remainder of his four-year term as governor. Leaving the seat vacant for so long, he said, would not hurt Louisiana; "with Ransdell as Senator, the seat was vacant anyway."

Mississippi River Bridge-Renewed Strength

Having won the overwhelming support of the Louisiana electorate, Long returned to pushing his legislative program with renewed strength. Bargaining from an advantageous position, Long entered an agreement with his longtime New Orleans rivals, the Regular Democratic Organization and their leader, New Orleans mayor T. Semmes Walmsley. They would support his legislation and candidates in future elections in return for his support of the building of a bridge over the Mississippi River, an airport for New Orleans, and infrastructure improvements in the city. Support from the Old Regulars enabled Long to pass an increase in the gasoline tax to finance road construction projects, new school spending, a construction of a new Louisiana State Capitol, and a \$75 million bond for road construction. Including the Airline Highway between New Orleans

and Baton Rouge, Long's road network gave Louisiana some of the most modern roads in the country and formed the state's highway system.

Long retained New Orleans architect Leon C. Weiss to design the state capitol, a new governor's mansion, the Charity Hospital in New Orleans, and many Louisiana State University and other college buildings throughout the state.

As governor, Long was not popular among the "old families" of Baton Rouge society. He instead held gatherings of his leaders and friends from across the state. At these gatherings, Long and his group liked to listen to the popular radio show "Amos 'n' Andy." One of Long's followers dubbed him "the Kingfish" after the master of the Mystic Knights of the Sea lodge to which the fictional Amos and Andy belonged. The nickname stuck—with Long's encouragement.

Governor Long Supported Higher Education

As governor, Long became an ardent supporter of the state's primary public university, Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge. He greatly increased LSU's state funding and expanded its enrollment from study programs that enabled poor students to attend LSU, and he established the LSU Medical School in New Orleans. He also intervened in the university's affairs, choosing its president. To generate excitement for the university, he quadrupled the size of the LSU band and co-wrote some of the music that is still played during football games, including "Touchdown for LSU." Once, he had the football team run a play he created. He also chartered trains to take LSU students to out-of-state football games.

Long's Share Wealth Distribution Plan

In February 1934 he told the Senate: "Unless we provide for redistribution of wealth in this country, the country is doomed." He added the nation faced a choice; it could limit large fortunes and provide a decent standard of life for its citizens, or it could wait for the inevitable revolution.

Long quoted research that suggested "2% of the people owned 60% of the wealth." In one radio broadcast he told the listeners: "God called: 'Come to my feast.' But what had happened? Rockefeller, Morgan, and their crowd stepped up and took enough for 120,000,000 people and left only enough for 5,000,000 for all the other 125,000,000 to eat. And so many millions must go hungry."

Long's plan involved taxing all incomes over a million dollars. On the second million the capital levy tax would be one per cent. On the third two percent, on the fourth four percent and so on. Once a personal fortune exceeded \$8 million, the tax would become 100 per cent. Under his plan, the government would confiscate all inheritances of more than one million dollars.

This large fund would then enable the government to guarantee subsistence for everyone in America. Each family would receive a basic household estate of \$5,000. There would also be a minimum annual income of \$2,000 per year. Other aspects of his "Share Our Wealth" plan involved government support for education, old-age pensions, benefits for war veterans and public-works projects.

Some critics pointed out that all wealth was not in the form of money. Most of America's richest people had their wealth in land, buildings, stocks and bonds. It would therefore be very difficult to evaluate and liquidate this wealth. When this was put to Long he replied: "I am going to have to call in some great minds to help me."

Some economists claimed that if the Share Our Wealth plan was implemented it would bring an end to the Great Depression. They pointed out that one of the major causes of the economic downturn was the insufficient distribution of purchasing power among the population. If poor families had their incomes increased they would spend this extra money on goods being produced by American industry and agriculture and would therefore stimulate the economy and create more jobs.

Long employed Gerald L. K. Smith, a Louisiana preacher, traveled throughout the South to recruit members for the Share Our Wealth Clubs. The campaign was a great success. and by 1935 there was 27,000 clubs with a membership of 4,684,000 and a mailing list of over 7,500,000.

Governor Long vs. Lt Governor Cyr Contest

In October 1931, Lieutenant Governor Cyr, by then Long's avowed enemy, argued that the Senator-elect could no longer remain governor. Cyr declared himself the state's legitimate governor. In response, Long ordered state National Guard troops to surround the State Capitol and fended off Cyr's proposed "coup d'état". A dentist from Jeanerette in Iberia Parish, Cyr had subsequently broken with Long and had been threatening to roll back his reforms if he succeeded to the governorship.

Long then went to the Louisiana Supreme Court to have Cyr ousted as lieutenant governor. He argued that the office of lieutenant-governor was vacant because Cyr had resigned when he attempted to assume the governorship. His suit was successful. Under the state constitution, Senate president and Long ally Alvin Olin King became lieutenant-governor.

Long chose his childhood friend, Oscar Kelly Allen, to succeed him in the election of 1932 on a "Complete the Work" ticket. With the support of Long's voter base and the Old Regular Machine, Allen won easily, permitting Long to resign as governor and take his seat in the U.S. Senate in January 1932 with his chosen successor already ensconced in the state house.

Long Elected to the Senate (1932–1935)

Long's three-year term in the Senate overlapped an important time in American history as Herbert Hoover and then FDR attempted to deal with the Great Depression. Long often attempted to upstage FDR and the congressional leadership by mounting populist appeals of his own, most notably his "Share Our Wealth" program.

Long arrived in Washington, D.C., to take his seat in the United States Senate in January 1932, although he was absent for more than half the days in the 1932 session. With the backdrop of the Great Depression, he made characteristically fiery speeches which denounced the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few.

He also criticized the leaders of both parties for failing to address the crisis adequately, most notably attacking conservative Senate Democratic Leader Joseph Robinson of Arkansas for his apparent closeness with President Herbert Hoover and ties to big business. Robinson had been the vice-presidential candidate in 1928 on the Democratic ticket opposite Hoover.

Long's Impeachment

Long also attempted to increase revenues by imposing a new tax on the oil industry. The legislature rejected the measure and attempts were made to impeach Long. He was accused of misappropriating state funds and making illegal loans. However, the Senate failed to convict Long by two votes, and afterwards it was claimed he had bribed several senators in order to get the right result.

Long Supported Senator Caraway Campaign

Long managed to find other venues for his populist message. He campaigned to elect Senator Hattie Caraway of Arkansas, the underdog candidate in a crowded field, to her first full term in the Senate by conducting a whirlwind, seven-day tour of that state. (Caraway had been appointed to the seat after her husband's death.) He raised his national prominence and defeated by a landslide the candidate backed by Senator Robinson. With Long's help, Caraway became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate. Caraway told Long, however, that she would continue to use independent judgment and not allow him to dictate how she would vote on Senate bills. She also insisted that he stop attacking Robinson while he was in Arkansas.

Long Became an FDR Supporter

Long had now earned a reputation, as Williams reports, as "a leading member of the progressive bloc in the Senate." In the presidential election of 1932, Long became a vocal supporter of the candidacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He believed Roosevelt to be the only candidate willing and able to carry out the drastic redistribution of wealth that Long believed was necessary to end the Great Depression. At the Democratic National Convention, Long was instrumental in keeping the delegations of several wavering states in the Roosevelt camp. Long expected to be featured prominently in Roosevelt's campaign, but he was disappointed with a speaking tour limited to four Midwestern states.

However, after his election, he was highly critical of some aspects of the New Deal. He disliked the Emergency Banking Act because it did little to help small, local banks. He bitterly attacked the National Recovery Act for the system of wage and price codes it established. He correctly forecasted that the codes would be written by the leaders of the industries involved and would result in price-fixing. Long told the Senate: "Every fault of socialism is found in this bill, without one of its virtues."

Long also claimed that Roosevelt had done little to redistribute wealth. When Roosevelt refused to introduce legislation to place ceilings on personal incomes, private fortunes and inheritances, Long launched his Share Our Wealth Society

The New Deal Break Support

In 1933, Long was generally a strong supporter of the New Deal, but differed with the president on patronage. Roosevelt wanted control of the patronage and the two men broke in late 1933. Aware that Roosevelt had no intention to radically redistribute the country's wealth, Long became one of the few national politicians to oppose Roosevelt's New Deal policies from the left. He considered them inadequate in the face of the escalating economic crisis. Long sometimes supported Roosevelt's programs in the Senate, saying that "Whenever this administration has gone to the left I have voted with it, and whenever it has gone to the right I have voted against it."

He opposed the National Recovery Act, calling it a sellout to big business. In 1933, he was a leader of a three-week Senate filibuster against the Glass banking bill for favoring the interests of national banks over state banks. He later supported the Glass–Steagall Act after provisions were made to extend government deposit insurance to state banks as well as national banks.

Roosevelt considered Long a radical demagogue. The president privately said of Long that along with General Douglas MacArthur, "He was one of the two most dangerous men in America." Roosevelt later compared Long's meteoric rise in popularity to that of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

In June 1933, in an effort to undermine Long's political dominance, Roosevelt cut Long out of consultation on the distribution of federal funds or patronage in Louisiana and placed Long's opponents in charge of federal programs in the state. Roosevelt also supported a Senate inquiry into the election of Long ally John H. Overton to the Senate in 1932. The Long machine was charged with election fraud and voter intimidation; however, the inquiry came up empty, and Overton was seated.

In 1934, in order to discredit Long and damage his support base, Roosevelt had Long's finances investigated by the Internal Revenue Service. Though they failed to link Long to any illegality, some of Long's lieutenants were charged with income tax evasion, but only one had been convicted by the time of Long's death.

Long's radical populist rhetoric and his aggressive tactics did little to endear him to his fellow senators. Not one of his proposed bills, resolutions or motions was passed during his three years in the Senate despite an overwhelming Democratic majority. During one debate, another senator told Long, "I do not believe you could get the Lord's Prayer endorsed in this body."

Huey Long Relationship with FDR Worsened

Roosevelt went to work in Louisiana on the rebel Kingfish. He poured money into the hands of Huey's enemies to disburse to Huey's loyal Cajuns. And there came a moment when Huey seemed to be on his way to the doghouse. But he was an incorrigible figure of unconquerable energy. When Roosevelt sought to buy with federal funds the Louisiana electorate and ring, Huey struck back with a series of breathtaking blows that brought the state under his thumb almost as completely as Hitler's Reich under the heel of the Fuehrer.

First of all, he stopped federal funds from entering Louisiana. He forced the legislature to pass a law forbidding any state or local board or official from incurring any debt or receiving any federal funds without consent of a central state board. And this board Huey set up and dominated. He cut short an estimated flood of \$30,000,000 in PWA projects. Then he provided, through state operations and borrowing, a succession of public works, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, farm projects and relief measures. The money was spent to boost Huey instead of Roosevelt. The people were taught to thank and extol Huey rather than Roosevelt for all these goods.

On June 12, 1935, the fiery Louisiana senator began what would become his longest and most dramatic filibuster. His goal was to force the Senate's Democratic leadership to retain a provision, opposed by President Franklin Roosevelt, requiring Senate confirmation for the National Recovery Administration's senior employees. His motive was to prevent his political enemies in Louisiana from obtaining lucrative NRA jobs. Huey Long spoke for 15 hours and 30 minutes, the second-longest Senate filibuster at that time.

Long Blamed the Federal Reserve Bank as Cause of Depression

Long was a staunch opponent of the Federal Reserve Bank. Together with a group of Congressmen and Senators, Long believed the Federal Reserve's policies to be the true cause of the Great Depression. Long made speeches denouncing the large banking houses of Morgan and Rockefeller centered in New York which owned stock in the Federal Reserve System. He believed that they manipulated the monetary system to their own benefit, instead of the general public's benefit.

As an alternative, Long proposed federal legislation capping personal fortunes, income and inheritances. He used radio broadcasts and founded a national newspaper, the *American Progress*, to promote his ideas and accomplishments before a national audience.

In March 1933, Long offered a series of bills collectively known as "the Long plan" for the redistribution of wealth. The first bill proposed a new progressive tax code designed to cap personal fortunes at \$100 million. Fortunes above \$1 million would be taxed at 1 percent; fortunes above \$2 million would be taxed at 2 percent, and so forth, up to a 100 percent tax on fortunes greater than \$100 million. The second bill limited annual income to \$1 million, and the third bill capped individual inheritances at \$5 million.

The resulting funds would be used to guarantee every family a basic household grant of \$5,000 and a minimum annual income of \$2,000–3,000, or one-third of the average family homestead value and income. Long supplemented his plan with proposals for free college education and vocational training for all able students, old-age pensions, veterans' benefits, federal assistance to farmers, public works projects, greater federal regulation of economic activity, a month's vacation for every worker and limiting the work week to thirty hours to boost employment.

Denying that his program was socialist, Long stated that his ideological inspiration for the plan came not from Karl Marx but from the Bible and the Declaration of Independence. "Communism? Hell no!" he said, "This plan is the only defense this country's got against communism."

Long held a public debate with Norman Thomas, the leader of the Socialist Party of America, on the merits of Share Our Wealth versus socialism.

Long believed that ending the Great Depression and staving off violent revolution required a radical restructuring of the national economy and elimination of disparities of wealth, retaining the essential features of the capitalist system. After the Senate rejected one of his wealth redistribution bills, Long told them, "[A] mob is coming to hang the other ninety-five of you damn scoundrels and I'm undecided whether to stick here with you or go out and lead them."

With the Senate unwilling to support his proposals, in February 1934 Long formed a national political organization, the Share Our Wealth Society. A network of local clubs led by national organizer Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, the Share Our Wealth Society was intended to operate outside of and in opposition to the Democratic Party and the Roosevelt administration. By 1935, the society had over 7.5 million members in 27,000 clubs across the country. Long's Senate office received an average of 60,000 letters a week. Some historians believe that pressure from Long and his organization contributed to Roosevelt's "turn to the left" in 1935. He enacted the Second New Deal, including the Social Security Act, the Works Progress Administration, the National Labor Relations Board, Aid to Dependent Children, the National Youth Administration, and the Wealth Tax Act of 1935. In private, Roosevelt candidly admitted to trying to "steal Long's thunder."

Controlling the Louisiana Legislature While Senator (1932-1935)

Long continued to maintain effective control of Louisiana while he was a senator, blurring the boundary between federal and state politics. Though he had no constitutional authority to do so, Long continued to draft and press bills through the Louisiana State Legislature, which remained in the hands of his allies. The program included new consumer taxes, elimination of the poll tax, a homestead tax exemption, and increases in the number of state employees. While physically in Louisiana, Long customarily stayed at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, where he was fond of the Sazerac Bar (see Peychaud's Bitters). According to Thomas M. Mahne in the *Times-Picayune*, Long had a personal interest in seeing to the quick construction of Airline Highway (US 61) between Baton Rouge and New Orleans as the new road cut 40 miles from the trip?

Long's loyal lieutenant, Governor Oscar K. Allen, dutifully enacted Long's policies. Long berated the governor in public and took over the governor's office in the State Capitol when visiting Baton Rouge. On occasion, he even entered the legislative chambers, going so far as to sit on representatives' and senators' desks and sternly lecture them on his positions. He also retaliated against those who voted against him and used patronage and state funding (especially highways) to maneuver Louisiana toward what opponents called a Long "dictatorship". Having broken with the Old Regulars and T. Semmes Walmsley in the fall of 1933, Long inserted himself into the New Orleans mayoral election of 1934 and began a dramatic public feud with the city's government that lasted for two years.

In 1934, Long and James A. Noe, an independent oilman, and member of the Louisiana Senate formed the controversial Win or Lose Oil Company. The firm was established to obtain leases on state-owned lands so that its directors might collect bonuses and sublease the mineral rights to the major oil companies. Although ruled legal, these activities were done in secret and the stockholders were unknown to the public. Long made a profit on the bonuses and the resale of those state leases, using the funds primarily for political purposes.

Long began a reorganization of the state government that reduced the authority of local governments in anti-Long strongholds New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Alexandria. It further gave the governor the power to appoint all state employees. Long passed what he called "a tax on lying" and a 2 percent tax on newspaper advertising revenue. He created the Bureau of Criminal Identification, a special force of plainclothes police answerable only to the governor. He also had the legislature enact the same tax on refined oil that in 1929 had nearly led to his impeachment, which he used as a bargaining chip to promote oil drilling in Louisiana.

Foreign Policy, Long an Isolationist

In terms of foreign policy, Long was a firm isolationist. He argued that America's involvement in the Spanish-American War and the First World War had been deadly mistakes conducted on behalf of Wall Street. He also opposed American entry into the World Court.

1935, Long's Final Year

In his final year, Long was preoccupied with his presidential ambitions and attempted to limit the influence of his Louisiana opponents. After his assassination, his political machine broke up into factions, although it has remained a strong force in the state's politics into the 21st century.

Presidential Ambitions

Even during his days as a traveling salesman, Long had confided to his wife that his planned career trajectory would begin with election to a minor state office, then governor, then senator, and ultimately election as President of the United States. In his final months, Long followed up his earlier autobiography, "Every Man a King", with a second book entitled *My First Days in the White House*, laying out his plans for the presidency after the election of 1936. The book was published posthumously.

In 1915, after only a year at Tulane, he convinced a board to let him take the state bar exam. He passed and began private practice in Winnfield. Later, in Shreveport, he spent ten years representing small plaintiffs against large businesses, including workers' compensation cases. He often said proudly that he never took a case against a poor man.

In 1918, Long won election as state railroad commissioner for the northern district of Louisiana. The following year he supported John M. Parker, in his successful campaign to become Governor of Louisiana.

In 1919 Long began attacking Governor Parker for failing to increase taxes on Standard Oil.

In 1921, Long became chairman of the Public Services Commission and over the next couple of years successfully achieved lower telephone, gas and electric rates, railroad and streetcar fares and a severance tax on oil.

In 1928, Long ran for office as Governor of Louisiana. Education was the main theme of his election campaign. As he pointed out, Long's attacks on the utilities industries and the privileges of corporations were popular, and he won the election by the largest margin in the state's history (92,941 votes to 3,733).

Louisiana only had 331 miles of paved roads. When Long gained power he launched an infrastructure program aimed at building 3,000 miles of roads and establishing schools within walking distance of all the state's white children. To pay for the roads and schools that were built in Louisiana, Long increased taxes on local corporations.

In 1930, Long was elected to the Senate. To keep full control of Louisiana he installed an old friend, Alvin King, the president of the state senate to act as governor. In the Senate, he was highly critical of President Herbert Hoover and the way his government was dealing with the Great Depression.

In 1934 and 1935, Huey Long was discussed as a presidential possibility. He wrote two books in which he explained his program: *Every Man a King* (1933) and *My First Days in the White House* (1935).

God Invited Us to the Feast

God invited us all to come and eat and drink all we wanted. He smiled on our land and we grew crops of plenty to eat and wear. He showed us in the earth the iron and other things to make everything we wanted. He unfolded to us the secrets of science so that our work might be easy. God called: "Come to my feast." But what had happened? Rockefeller, Morgan, and their crowd stepped up and took enough for 120,000,000 people and left only enough for 5,000,000 for all the other 125,000,000 to eat. And so many millions must go hungry and without these good things God gave us unless we call on them to put some of it back.

Some editors who supported Roosevelt said Huey's plan was "like the weird dream of a plantation dorky." It is not clear why Huey broke with Roosevelt. It is probably because it was impossible for him to endure the role of second fiddle to any man and he had come to see wider horizons for his own strange talents.

Long's Obsession with State Government

Huey Long believed that state government was his government, Huey's legislature, his committee, his statehouse, his state. He used to place himself strategically in the legislature special sessions to answer questions from the floor. In the committee meeting, Long read and explained each bill, then the chairman put it to a vote, smashing down his gavel. The committee consisted of fifteen Long supporters and two oppositionists. Three bills were approved in the first six minutes; thirty-five were acted on in seventy minutes, all but one being approved."

Despite his criticisms of the way Long governed, Swing admitted that some of his reforms helped the poor: "This has to be said for Huey Long: he had strong liberal instincts and left to his credit a list of reforms not to be matched in any other Southern state. He shifted the burden of taxation from the poor to those who could afford to bear it. To finance his reforms, he increased the state's indebtedness from \$11,000,000 to \$150,000,000, but met each increase by new taxation. He passed legislation postponing the payment of private debt. He laid out a system of highways and bridges, and, above all, he dedicated himself to improving the state's education.

Standard Oil Tax

It plastered an occupational tax on the refining of oil by Standard Oil, which Long had fought throughout his career. Subsequently, the company resisted by lying off a thousand workers. The workers held a protest meeting. Senator Long, threatened with revolt, rushed back from Washington, called out the militia, summoned the legislature in a special session, and struck a bargain with Standard Oil that he would remit some of the tax if Standard Oil would refine more Louisiana oil. He remitted four-fifths of the tax, which the legislature ratified. But the occupational tax was on the books to be used to gouge any business the Long machine cared to exploit or punish.

After Standard Oil agreed that 80 percent of the oil sent to its refineries would be drilled in Louisiana, Long's government refunded most of these tax revenues to Standard Oil.

Infrastructure

Long created a public works program for Louisiana that was unprecedented in the South, with a plethora of roads, bridges, hospitals, schools and state buildings that have endured into the 21st century. During his four years as governor, Long increased paved highways in Louisiana from 331 miles to 2,301, plus an additional 2,816 miles (4,532 km) of gravel roads.

By 1936, the infrastructure program begun by Long had completed some 9,700 miles (15,600 km) of new roads, doubling the size of the state's road system. He built 111 bridges and started construction on the first bridge over the Mississippi entirely in Louisiana, the Huey P. Long Bridge in Jefferson Parish, near New Orleans.

Long's free textbooks, school-building program, and school busing improved and expanded the public education system. His night schools taught 100,000 adults to read. He expanded funding for LSU, tripled enrollment, lowered tuition, and established scholarships for low-income students. He sometimes befriended persons in need.

In 1932, a young Pap Dean, later political cartoonist with the *Shreveport Times*, wrote to Long after hearing him speak in Dean's native Colfax to explain that Dean's college funds had been lost in a bank closing. Long helped Dean procure financial aid to attend LSU, from which he graduated in 1937.

Long founded the LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans. He dedicated himself to improving the state's education. He backed Louisiana State University, assured it a good faculty, added a medical and dental school, and increased its enrollment from 1,500 to 4,000 in his first term as governor.

He also doubled funding for the public Charity Hospital System, built a new Charity Hospital building for New Orleans, and reformed and increased funding for the state's mental institutions.

Long's statewide public health programs dramatically reduced the death rate in Louisiana and provided free immunizations to nearly 70 percent of the population.

Long reformed the prison system by providing medical and dental care for inmates.

His administration funded the piping of natural gas to New Orleans and other cities.

He launched a highway program that built the 11-kilometer (seven-mile) Lake Pontchartrain seawall and New Orleans airport. He laid out a system of highways and bridges.

Long slashed personal property taxes and reduced utility rates. As governor, he fought the public-utility companies and forced down power and telephone rates. He obtained a reduction of electricity rates in New Orleans.

Long repealed the poll tax in 1935 and increased voter registration by 76 percent in one year.

Long's popular homestead exemption eliminated personal property taxes for the majority of citizens by exempting properties valued at less than \$2,000.

His "Debt Moratorium Act" prevented foreclosures by giving people extra time to pay creditors and reclaim property without being forced to pay back-taxes.

His personal intervention and strict regulation of the Louisiana banking system prevented bank closures and kept the system solvent—while 4,800 banks nationwide collapsed, only seven failed in Louisiana.

Long endorsed legislation to provide free school textbooks, free night school courses for adult illiterates and increased expenditure on the state university. He remodeled the school system to enable eight-month terms to be maintained in the poorest parishes and provided free textbooks.

He strongly supported the Julius Rosenwald campaign against illiteracy, so that 100,000 adults in Louisiana, white and black, learned to read and write in his first term as governor.

He built a new five-million-dollar Governor's Mansion and the new Louisiana State Capitol, at the time the tallest building in the South, rising on the bank of the Mississippi. All of these projects provided thousands of much-needed jobs during the Great Depression, including 22,000 – or 10 percent – of the nation's highway workers.

Long Third Party Strategy

Long biographers T. Harry Williams and William Ivy Hair speculated that the senator never intended to run for the presidency in 1936. Long instead planned to challenge Roosevelt for the Democratic nomination in 1936, knowing he would lose the nomination but gain valuable publicity in the process. Then he would break from the Democrats and form a third party using the Share Our Wealth plan as its basis. He also hoped to have the public support of Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest and populist talk radio personality from Royal Oak, Michigan, Iowa agrarian radical Milo Reno, and other dissidents. The new party would run someone else as its 1936 candidate, but Long would be the primary campaigner. This candidate would split the progressive vote with Roosevelt, causing the election of a Republican but proving the electoral appeal of Share Our Wealth. Long would then run for president as a Democrat in 1940. In the spring of 1935, Long undertook a national speaking tour and regular radio appearances, attracting large crowds and increasing his stature.

Increased Tensions in Louisiana

By 1935, Long's most recent consolidation of personal power led to talk of armed opposition from his enemies. Opponents increasingly invoked the memory of the Battle of Liberty Place of 1874, in which the white supremacist White League staged an uprising against Louisiana's Reconstruction-era government.

In January 1935, an anti-Long paramilitary organization called the Square Deal Association was formed. Its members included former governors John M. Parker and Ruffin G. Pleasant and New Orleans Mayor T. Semmes Walmsley.

Two hundred armed Square Dealers took over the courthouse of East Baton Rouge Parish. Long had Governor Allen call out the National Guard, declare martial law, ban public gatherings of two or more persons, and forbid the publication of criticism of state officials. The Square Dealers left the courthouse, but there was a brief armed skirmish at the Baton Rouge Airport. Tear gas and live ammunition were fired; one person was wounded but there were no fatalities.

Long called for two more special sessions of the legislature; bills were passed in rapid-fire succession without being read or discussed. The new laws further centralized Long's control over the state by creating several new Long-appointed state agencies. A state bond and tax board holding sole authority to approve all loans to parish and municipal governments, a new state printing board which could withhold "official printer" status from uncooperative newspapers, a new board of election supervisors which would appoint all poll watchers, and a State Board of Censors were created. They also stripped away the remaining lucrative powers of the mayor of New Orleans to cripple the entrenched opposition. Long boasted that he had "taken over every board and commission in New Orleans except the Community Chest and the Red Cross."

Long quarreled with former State Senator Henry E. Hardtner of La Salle Parish. While proceeding to Baton Rouge in August 1935 to confront the state government over a tax matter relating to his Urania Lumber

Company, based in Urania, Hardtner, known as "the father of forestry in the South," was killed in a car-train accident.

Assassination

On the day of his assassination, September 8, 1935, Long was at the State Capitol attempting to oust a long-time opponent, Judge Benjamin Henry Pavy. "House Bill Number One," a re-redistricting plan, was Long's top priority. If it passed, Judge Pavy would be removed from the bench. At 9 p.m., the session was still going strong. Judge Pavy's son-in-law, Dr. Carl Weiss, had been at the State Capitol waiting to speak to Long. He tried to see him three times to talk to him but was brushed off each time in the hallway by Long and his bodyguards. At 9:20 p.m., Dr. Weiss approached Long for the third time and, according to the generally accepted version of events, fired a handgun at Long from four feet away, striking him in the abdomen. Long's bodyguards returned fire, hitting Weiss 62 times and killing him. Long was rushed to the hospital but died two days later. Historians do not accept the speculation that Huey Long actually died after being struck by a bullet fired by one of his own bodyguards. Edgar Hull, a founding faculty member of the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans, was among those called upon to treat Long for his wounds.

In 1983, after nearly a half-century, Hull published his memoirs, *This I Remember: An Informal History of the Louisiana State University Medical Center in New Orleans*. Unlike LSU historian T. Harry Williams, who suggested Long might have survived with better medical care, Hull said that Long could not have survived the shooting. He denied that Long had died from medical or surgical incompetence. Hull also criticized his own conduct; though he had called for an autopsy, Hull had not been persistent enough and allowed him to be overruled in the swarm of events.

Funeral

An estimated 200,000 people flooded Baton Rouge to witness the event. The minister at the funeral service was Gerald L. K. Smith, co-founder of Share Our Wealth and subsequently of the America First Party and the founder of the "Christ of the Ozarks" passion play in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Long was buried on the grounds of the new State Capitol, which he championed as governor, where a statue and a plaque at his grave-site now depicts his achievements. Also, a bronze statue of Long is located in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol.

Long's Accomplishments

Huey Long, Speech in the Senate (29 April, 1932)

Huey Long was the best stump speaker in America for the period 1920-1935. When he talked about politics, public policies, and life generally, he cast off the manner of a demagogue as an actor wipes off greasepaint. He was the best political radio speaker, better even than President Roosevelt. He was not a fascist, with a philosophy of the state and its function in expressing the individual. He was a plain ruling dictator, and opponents had better stay out of his way. He punished all who sought to thwart him with grim, relentless, efficient vengeance. The following is a summary of the substance of the Share-Our-Wealth movement:

Every family would be furnished by the Government a homestead allowance, free of debt, of not less than one-third the average family wealth of the country. The yearly income of every family shall be not less than one-third of the average family income, which means that according to the estimates of the statisticians of the United States Government and Wall Street, no family's annual income would be less than from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

Every family shall have the reasonable comforts of life up to a value of from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

No person to have a fortune of more than 100 to 300 times the average family fortune, which means that the limit to fortunes is between \$1,500,000 and \$5,000,000, with annual capital-levy, taxes, imposed on all above \$1,000,000.

To limit or regulate the hours of work to such an extent as to prevent overproduction; the most modern and efficient machinery would be encouraged, so that as much would be produced as possible so as to satisfy all demands of the people, but to also allow the maximum time to the workers for recreation, convenience, education, and luxuries of life.

An old-age pension to the persons of 60 years.

To balance agricultural production with what can be consumed according to the laws of God, which includes the preserving and storage of surplus commodities to be paid for and held by the Government for emergencies when such are needed.

To pay the veterans of our wars what we owe them and to care for the disabled.

Education and training for all children to be equal in opportunity in all schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions for training in the professions and vocations of life to be regulated on the capacity of children to learn, not on the ability of parents to pay the cost.

The raising of revenue and taxes for the support of this program to come from the reduction of swollen fortunes from the top, as well as for the support of public works to give employment whenever slackening was necessary in private enterprise.

Senator/Governor Long Critics

William E. Leuchtenburg has argued: "Huey clowned his way into national prominence. A tousled redhead with a cherubic face, a dimpled chin, and a pug nose, he had the physiognomy of a Punchinello. He wore pongee suits with orchid-colored shirts and sported striped straw hats, watermelon-pink ties, and brown and white sport shoes. He had mastered a brand of humor which pricked the pretenses of respectability and appealed to men convinced that beneath the cloth of the jurist sat the fee-grabbing lawyer, beneath the university professor the carnival faker, and, most of all, beneath the statesman the self-serving politician."

Attempts were made to smear Long. One friend wrote that when Long "launched a campaign to limit the size of fortunes a price was set on his head and thugs were employed by big business to rub him from the national picture." Stories began circulating that Long was an alcoholic and to protect himself he gave up drinking and avoided visiting night clubs.

Raymond Gram Swing argued in *The Nation* in January, 1935, "He (Long) is not a fascist, with a philosophy of the state and its function in expressing the individual. He is a plain dictator. He rules, and opponents had better stay out of his way. He punishes all who thwart him with grim, relentless, efficient vengeance. But to say this does not make him wholly intelligible. One does not understand the problem of Huey Long or measure the menace he represents to American democracy until one admits that he has done a vast amount of good for Louisiana. He has this to justify all that is corrupt and peremptory in his methods. Taken all in all, I do not know any man who has accomplished so much that I approve of in one state in four years, while at the same time that he has done so much that I dislike. It is a thoroughly perplexing, paradoxical record."

Over the years, Long had been in constant conflict with Judge Benjamin Pavy of St. Landry Parish. Unable to unseat Pavy in St. Landry Parish, Long decided to gain revenge by having two of the judge's daughters dismissed from their teaching jobs. Long also warned Pavy that if he continued to oppose him he would say that his family had "coffee blood." This was based on the story that Pavy's father-in-law had a black mistress.

Communist Party and Socialist Party Leaders Attacked Long

Leaders of the Communist Party and Socialist Party also attacked Long's plan. Alex Bittelman, a communist in New York wrote: "Long says he wants to do away with concentration of wealth without doing away with capitalism. This is humbug. This is fascist demagogy." Norman Thomas claimed that Long's Share Our Wealth scheme was insufficient and a dangerous delusion. He added that it was the "sort of talk that Hitler fed the Germans and in my opinion it is positively dangerous because it fools the people."

Long admitted that certain aspects of his scheme was socialistic. He said to a reporter from *The Nation*: "Will you please tell me what sense there is running on a socialist ticket in America today? What's the use of being right only to be defeated?" On another occasion he argued: "We haven't a Communist or Socialist in Louisiana. Huey P. Long is the greatest enemy that the Communists and Socialists have to deal with."

Family Members in Politics

He set in motion two durable factions within the dominant Louisiana Democratic party--"pro-Long" and "anti-Long," each diverging meaningfully in terms of policies and voter support. A family dynasty emerged: his brother Earl Long was elected lieutenant-governor in 1936, governor in 1948 and 1956. Typically anti-Longite candidates would promise to continue popular social services delivered in Long's administration and criticized Longite corruption without directly attacking Long himself.

Long's son, Russell Long, was a U.S. senator from 1948 to 1987. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Russell Long shaped the nation's tax laws. He was an advocate of low business taxes, but also passed the Earned Income Credit and other tax legislation beneficial to the poor and working people.

The political machine Long established was weakened by his death, but it remained a powerful force in state politics until the election of 1960. Pockets of it persisted into the 21st century. The Long platform of social programs and populist rhetoric created the state's main political division. In every state election until 1960, the main factions were organized along pro-Long and anti-Long lines. For several decades after his death, Long's personal political style inspired imitation among Louisiana politicians who borrowed his colorful speaking style, vicious verbal attacks on opponents, and promises of social programs. His brother Earl Kemp Long later inherited Long's political machine. Using his platform and rhetorical style, Earl Long became governor in 1939 following the resignation of Richard Leche and was elected to subsequent terms in 1948 and 1956.

After Earl Long's death, John McKeithen and Edwin Edwards appeared as heirs to the Long tradition. Most recently, Claude "Buddy" Leach ran a populist campaign in the Louisiana gubernatorial election of 2003 that some observers compared to Huey Long's. Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell tried the same approach without success in the 2007 jungle primary.

Long's death did not end the political strength of the Long family. His widow, Rose McConnell Long, was appointed to replace him in the Senate, and his son Russell B. Long was elected to the Senate in 1948, and re-elected until 1987.

In addition to Long's brother Earl K. Long becoming governor, brother Julius Long was a Winn Parish District Attorney and brother George S. Long was elected to Congress in 1952. Long's younger sister, Lucille Long Hunt (1898–1985) of Ruston, was the mother of future Public Service Commissioner John S. Hunt, III (1928–2001), of Monroe.

Other more distant relatives, including Gillis William Long and Speedy O. Long (both now deceased) were elected to Congress. Jimmy D. Long of Natchitoches Parish served for 32 years in the Louisiana House. As of 2010, Jimmy Long's younger brother Gerald Long holds the distinction of being the only current Long in public office and the first Republican among the Long Democratic dynasty. Twelve members of the Long family have held elected office.

In 1993, Long, along with his brother Earl, was inducted posthumously into the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame in Winnfield. In the same ceremony, his son Russell, then still living, was also among the 13 original inductees.

Bridges Named after Senator Long

Two bridges crossing the Mississippi River have been named for Long: Huey P. Long Bridge (Baton Rouge) and Huey P. Long Bridge (Jefferson Parish). Another bridge, the Long-Allen Bridge over the

Atchafalaya River between Morgan City and Berwick, honors both Long and his successor and supporter, O.K. Allen. There is also a Huey P. Long Hospital in Pineville across the Red River from Alexandria.

Legacy

Huey Long has made important innovations in campaign technique, including sound trucks and radio commercials. But his most enduring contributions were to the state of Louisiana rather than to the nation.

Quotes of Huey Long

“Every man a king but no man wears a crown.”

“Evangeline wept bitter tears in her disappointment, but it lasted only through one lifetime. Your tears in this country, around this oak, have lasted for generations. Give me the chance to dry the tears of those who still weep here!”

“The man who pulls the plow gets the plunder in politics.”

“I looked around at the little fishes present and said, 'I'm the Kingfish'.”

Who took on the Standard Oil men?
And whipped their ass,
Just like he promised he'd do?

“No Standard Oil men are going to run this state, this state is going to be run by little folks like me and you.”

Huey Long (1893-1935), U.S. Senator/Governor, Published Books

Long's first autobiography, *Every Man a King*, was published in 1933 and priced to be affordable by poor Americans. Long laid out his plan to redistribute the nation's wealth. His second book, *My First Days in the White House*, was published posthumously. In it he describes his presidential ambitions for 1936.

The life of Long has held continuing fascination. In 1970, the biography *Huey Long* by T. Harry Williams won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in category History and Biography. Alan Brinkley won the latter award in 1983 for *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression*, which describes Long's brief but vast popularity early in the 1930s.

In October 1933, he published his autobiography, *Every Man a King*. One reviewer described the book as "unbalanced, vulgar, in many ways ignorant, and quite reckless." Long also began publishing *American Progress*. Financed by political contributions from his organization in Louisiana, Long mailed it free to his supporters. Normally 300,000 copies were sold per issue but for special editions 1.5 million were printed.

Published His Own Newspaper

Huey Long published his own newspaper, but in Louisiana he depended still more on a remarkable system of circulars. His card catalogue of local addresses was the most complete of any political machine in the world. It held the name of every Long man in every community in the state, and told just how many circulars this man would undertake personally to distribute to neighbors. Huey then mobilized all the motor vehicles of the state highway department and the highway police. The circulars could leave New Orleans at night and be in virtually every household in the state by morning.

Films

Warren's novel was the basis of two motion pictures, a 1949 film and a more recent 2006 film, and the 1981 opera *Willie Stark* by American composer Carlisle Floyd. The 1949 film won three Oscars, including best picture, and best actor for Broderick Crawford, playing the Long role.

There is a prominent mention of Long in Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire* and other film versions.

In 1985, Ken Burns made a documentary about Long. Two made-for-TV docudramas about him have also been produced: *The Life and Assassination of the Kingfish* (1977) starring Ed Asner and the fictionalized *Kingfish* (1995, TNT) starring John Goodman.

Music

In popular music, chronicler of American culture Randy Newman featured Long prominently, with two songs on the 1974 album *Good Old Boys* (Reprise). On Newman's album, the song "Every Man a King," originally written and recorded by Long and Castro Carazo, is followed by "Kingfish" (a reference to Long's famous nickname). The song, being explicitly about Long, is sung from the point of view of a blue-collar southerner (as is the rest of the album), and discusses Long's popularity in his prime, the building of the Airline Highway, and refers to "The Kingfish" as "friend of the working man" - an allusion to Long's unwavering popularity amongst the working classes, and attributes the reason for this by referring to his populist ideologies.

Summary

Huey Pierce Long was born in Winfield, La. in 1893 to a middle class family. He liked to tell people he was from a poor background. This helped him relate to the poor people of Louisiana. He was able to pass the bar exam after only one year at Tulane Law School. Huey preferred to do battle with the powerful, large corporations and Standard Oil Company was his favorite target. Huey championed himself as a lawyer for the poor man, and this strategy would benefit him politically.

Long took the nickname "The Kingfish," from the radio show Amos and Andy. He was a Democrat and noted for his radical populist policies. He served as Governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1932 and as a U.S. senator from 1932 to 1935. Though a backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election, Long split with Roosevelt in June 1933 and allegedly planned to mount his own presidential bid. Long created the Share Our Wealth program in 1934, with the motto "Every Man a King," in which a tax on the wealthy would be used to redistribute wealth to the very poor to curb the poverty and crime resulting from the Great Depression. He was an ardent critic of the Federal Reserve System.

Long won a debating scholarship to Louisiana State University, but he was unable to afford the textbooks required for attendance. Instead, he spent the next five years as a traveling salesman, selling books, canned goods and patent medicines, as well as working as an auctioneer. In 1918, Long won election as state railroad commissioner for the northern district of Louisiana. The following year he supported John M. Parker, in his successful campaign to become Governor of Louisiana. In 1928, Long ran for Governor of Louisiana. Education was the main theme of his election campaign.

When Long gained power he launched an infrastructure program aimed at building 3,000 miles of roads and establishing schools within walking distance of all the state's white children. In 1930, Long was elected to the Senate. To keep full control of Louisiana he installed an old friend, Alvin King, the president of the state senate, to act as governor. In the Senate, he was highly critical of President Herbert Hoover and the way his government was dealing with the Great Depression. In 1932, though a backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential election, Long split with Roosevelt in June 1933 and planned to mount his own presidential bid for 1936.

In 1934 and 1935, Huey Long was discussed as a presidential possibility. He wrote two books in which he explained his program: *Every Man a King* (1933) and *My First Days in the White House* (1935).

In 1934, Long convened a special session of the legislature in Louisiana and pushed through bills that placed electoral machinery in the governor's hands, outlawing interference by the courts with his use of national guardsmen, and creating his own secret police.

In 1935, Long was assassinated; his national movement faded, while his state organization continued in Louisiana.

Bibliography

Biography of Huey Long

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAlongH.htm>

Carl Weiss, Biography

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Weiss

Earl Long

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earl_Long

Huey Long (film)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huey_Long_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huey_Long_(film))

Russell B. Long Biography

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russell_B._Long

“Share the Wealth”: Huey Long Talks to the Nation

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5109/>

Huey Long

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huey_Long

Huey Long, PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/hueylong/>

Huey Long Filibusters

http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Huey_Long_Filibusters.htm

Opposition to the New Deal

http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/New_Deal_opposition.htm

Why Huey P Long Was Called The Kingfish

<http://hoov45.hubpages.com/hub/Huey-Long-The-Kingfish>

Huey Long History

Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2007. © 1993-2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Louisiana History, Role of Huey Long

Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2007. © 1993-2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Quotes of Huey Long.

Huey Long (1893 - 1935)

U.S. politician, Speech, U.S. Senate,

Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2007. © 1993-2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.