

VOTING

1-26-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach

I have voted in every election since Denver 1948 arrival. Excepting ten years as an Aurora resident, that in Denver. And forty of those years, from 745 Steele St.

On arrival in Denver, I registered, went to my Democrat Precinct Assembly, then as voting Delegate to both the Denver County and Pueblo State Assembly.

A sense of patriotism is generated, at both the Democratic and Republican Conventions, as Flag waving and Patriotism dominates even as pledges of “no tax” or “more benefits” wafts from the floor to the anxious delegates.

All went smoothly until October 1, 1950, when I took the Oath of Office as Denver Policeman under the eye and words of then Mayor, Quigg Newton. I thought I had a fair idea of what he might say, smiling, encouraging we young, twenty-four men, to uphold the laws of Denver, Colorado, these United States. Instead, fire in his eye, he promised to personally fire any Police Officer engaging in Politics, local, state or national. I had a sense of what was happening in Denver, changing rapidly from the WWII tumult, but even after asking friends later, none had a sense of what had rearranged the mild mannered Quigg Newton that Monday morning.

That quietude ended late in the decade. In the Colorado Senate race in 1956 the seat was being vacated by the popular Republican Eugene Millikan. The Republicans intended to insert their candidate, Dan Thornton, popular Colorado Governor. He would be opposed by John Carroll, former Denver Policeman, Denver District Attorney, and twice defeated Democrat Colorado Senate candidate, 1950 and 1954.

Thornton could have been a Hollywood actor, handsome, loquacious, equally at home in Ten Gallon Hat, boots, spurs, bolo tie; then tuxedo for fancy events. No one outside Colorado considered Thornton could lose. John Carroll didn't see victory would come except by selling himself throughout Colorado, which two years earlier elected Republican Eisenhower by 60%.

Thornton lazy, shadowed always by the thought, where was he during WWII. Carroll energetic, plodder, served in Military Government in Italy WWII.

John Carroll became Colorado Senator the years 1957-1963. He further cemented our family ties to the Democratic party by appointing Harry Schnibbe as his Legislative Assistant. Harry, my former Navy Commanding Officer,

now brother-in-law.

My volunteerism with politics was restrained to getting out the vote. My wife had other hopes, became the first woman Denver District Captain.

In earlier years, there has been male and female District Captain, the lady always Co-Chair.

Employment made it possible for me to take the day off on all elections. I became a Democratic Precinct poll workers. Other workers, Dem and Rep, were pretty much female; men seldom had free time all day Tuesdays. And it did require never leaving the building, working the twelve hours polls was open, be there 6:00 am, set up machine before any voter might arrive at seven; then after the polls closed, tabulate results, secure building, the results certified by all workers, taken to the elections Commission headquarters. A rewarding fourteen plus-hour work day.

Renewing neighbor acquaintances one at a time, all day long.

And more often than not, some victory celebration into the late hours, as Denver registration, was and remains, predominantly Democratic.

A P.S.

As a brief aside, a Republican neighbor and I jostled about what-ever those days of voting. A radio-TV veteran, I met him again four years ago. He tells me his friend, Fed Hobbs, had moved here. We should say hello. And that's how I met our mutual friend, and he joined the Writers of Windsor Gardens.

Politics can make great bedfellows.