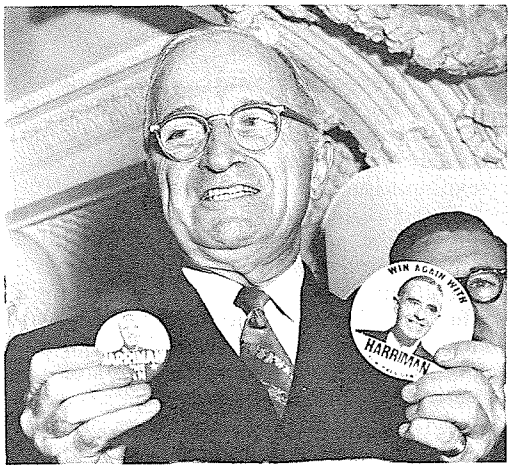
Thank You, Mr. Ex-President

"Harry S. Truman and the Multifarious Ex-Presidency" by James Giglio, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Spring 1982), Center for the Study of the Presidency, 208 East 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

"No former President more extended the authority and privileges of the ex-Presidency than President Truman," observes Giglio, a Southwest Missouri State University historian. From 1953 until old age hobbled him in 1964, Harry Truman's experiences illustrate the nature—and limits—of the influence attending the "office of the ex-Presidency."

As President, Truman invited ex-President Herbert Hoover to chair several federal commissions. He expected Dwight Eisenhower to extend a similar courtesy to him, but bitter exchanges between the two men during the 1952 election campaign prevented this. Nevertheless, in times of foreign policy crisis, Truman threw his support behind Ike, defending, for instance, his decision to help Taiwan fortify the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, in 1958.



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At the 1956 Democratic convention, ex-President Truman championed Governor Averell Harriman for President. But Truman found out his power was not what it had been when he occupied the White House. He swayed not a single delegate. The convention overwhelmingly endorsed Adlai Stevenson.

John F. Kennedy invited Truman to be his first guest in the White House, out of appreciation for the ex-President's campaign help. But there is little evidence that Truman had any impact on Kennedy's policies. Truman was philosophical: "Well, at least [Kennedy] listens," he once sighed. By contrast, Lyndon Johnson, an old friend, banked on Truman's help to overcome political opposition to his Vietnam policy, and gratefully acknowledged Truman's support.

Truman's relations with Congress were more fruitful. He was invited to testify on subjects ranging from presidential disability to immigration to highways. And he helped push through the 1958 Former Presidents Act, which provided a $25,000 annual allowance, a staff stipend,

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office space, and free mailing privileges to former Chief Executives. By refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1953, Truman also established precedent for the "ex-executive privilege" later invoked by Richard Nixon.

Truman threw most of his energies into party politics, and here the limits of his influence are most evident. He worked hard for his party's presidential candidates—Stevenson, in 1956, and Kennedy in 1960. But before their nominations, he tried in vain to rally support for *his* favorites—Averell Harriman and Stuart Symington.

Like other ex-Presidents—Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, Gerald Ford—Truman expected to retain more power than he did. But, says Giglio, his loyalty to old associates (e.g. Harriman and Symington) and to old policies—notably his "gradualist" approach to race relations—diminished the role he had hoped to play.

Republicans Heading South

"Republicans Flow South" by Robert H. Freymeyer, in *American Demographics*, (June 1982) P.O. Box 68, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

In the 1980 presidential election, Ronald Reagan won 13 of 16 Southern states. Some political analysts cite a national swing to the right or a general weakening of old party ties as the cause of this Republican sweep. Freymeyer, a sociologist at Gettysburg College, offers another explanation: More than four million Northerners have migrated to the once solidly Democratic South in the past decade, and a disproportionate number of them have been Republicans.

According to poll data, only seven percent of the South's voters in the presidential election of 1952 were migrants from the North. By 1976, the figure had climbed to 25 percent. Of these migrants, 37 percent are Republicans (compared to 27 percent of native Southerners), and only 42 percent are Democrats (versus 60 percent of the natives). Not surprisingly, Florida, a retirees' haven, has seen the biggest influx. Three-fourths of all Republicans there are migrants. In the 1968 presidential election, claims Freymeyer, migrants handed the state to Richard Nixon. Forty-three percent of Florida voters were transplanted Northerners, of whom 63 percent voted for Nixon. Only 22 percent of the migrants voted for the Democrat Hubert Humphrey, and native Southerner George Wallace won only 15 percent of their vote.

What changes can be expected as a result of this new Republican voice in the South? Freymeyer predicts a continued growth in Republican influence. In 1980, for example, six Southern states sent Republicans to the U.S. Senate. In four of those states [Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina], Republicans replaced Democrats. On the local level, Freymeyer sees future improvements in Southern schools, since only 21 percent of migrant Republicans say they have confidence in the Southern educational system, compared with 42 percent of native Democrats and 62 percent of native Republicans.