

Huey Long Study Guide

Huey Long by T. Harry Williams

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Plot Summary

Huey Long, by T. Harry Williams, is the story of the Kingfish and Louisiana politics. Williams tells the story of Long, from his family's arrival in Louisiana until his death on Tuesday, September 10, 1935. He was shot in a corridor outside the governor's office in Baton Rouge. The young doctor who performed surgery on him missed the damage to a kidney. As a result, Long died several days later.

The story of Huey Long tells of an exciting chapter in the history of Louisiana and the country. From his humble beginnings on a Winnfield, Louisiana farm, Huey rose to national fame and was a United States Senator and aspiring presidential candidate when he died. His flamboyant style amused many people, but he drew crowds wherever he went.

Huey Long did not work within the Louisiana political machine known as the New Orleans Regulars and Rings. He built his own apparatus parallel to the existing structure, which he vowed to destroy. He very slowly amassed a power base throughout the state until he controlled the entire state political and legislative apparatus. He maintained this control even when he was a United States Senator and spent more time in Louisiana, working to have his programs enacted by the state legislature, than he did in Washington D.C.

The first office Huey was elected to was the Railroad Commission in 1918. He was a young lawyer at the time who had passed the bar by completing a few law school courses and spending a year studying. His service at the Commission made him known throughout the state as a champion of the people. This was also the view he had of himself and the way he wanted to be known. It was here that he began his life long battle against Standard Oil.

Huey lost his first bid for governor in 1923 when he was thirty years old. He made such a strong showing that he made it known that he was a future contender. He won the next election and became governor on May 21, 1928 and pushed through programs that he felt would benefit the people. Long was elected to the United States Senate in 1932, and continued his control of the state that continued to enact his programs.

This book is not the typical biography that people are used to. The author mentions that Huey and wife Rose had three children, but only two of them are named at various places in the book. The book emphasizes the Louisiana political scene of the time and Huey's role in it. It is fascinating reading for those who want to learn about this period in the history of Louisiana. The book is lengthy but well worth the reader's time.



Chapters 1-2, pgs. 3-46

Chapters 1-2, pgs. 3-46 Summary and Analysis

Huey Long became a very powerful man in his time. He had charisma. He became famous for tackling big corporations from his position of the Public Service Commission in the mid 1920s and became the governor of Louisiana in 1928 at the age of thirty-five. Long set out to destroy the hierarchy of the opposition. He created his own hierarchy through patronage that led to his control of the Louisiana government.

Long won a seat in the United States Senate in 1930 but did not go to Washington until 1932, until he had totally consolidated his power base in the state. He became a foe of Franklin Roosevelt who feared his [political power and ability to bring on a revolution. Long was assassinated in Baton Rouge in 1935.

The Longs arrived in Winn parish Louisiana in December 1859. They had come from Mississippi. They went on to Tunica. Among the fourteen children was seven-year-old Huey Pierce Long, Sr. John Long became a farmer. All of the children were educated.

Chapter Two begins with young Huey meeting Harley Bozeman in December 1905 in the dry goods store. They would become best friends.

As a child Huey was hard to handle. He was curious about everything. He was full of energy but avoided physical confrontations. Huey was an avid reader as a child and memorized long passages from books, which he was always able to cite due to a photographic memory. In spite of winning a scholarship to Louisiana State University, he quit high school in his senior year.

When Socialism became popular in Winn, Huey and his friend Harley spoke out against it and defended capitalism. Both were avid debaters. It was important for him to win the matter of principle.



Chapters 3-4, pgs. 47-90

Chapters 3-4, pgs. 47-90 Summary and Analysis

Huey's philosophy was that he could sell anything to anyone. His selling ability had been demonstrated in various ways. After he quit high school in 1910, he had to earn a living. Huey and Harley worked as traveling salesmen for a lard product called Cottolene. Huey was the star salesman and an organizer of the banking contests. In Shreveport, he met a baker names Rose McConnell who would become his wife several years later.

When the company fired most of the staff, Huey and Harley received all of north Louisiana as their assignment. They thought the assignment represented the company's faith in them but they were terminated two months later. Huey returned to Winnfield with the intention of leaving as soon as possible. He went to Shreveport to attend high school then left to work with Harley for the Houston Packing Company. Huey, a star salesman, rose through the ranks and had a broad sales territory by the time he was eighteen years old. He could not produce as well in the competitive territory and was terminated in Memphis where he remained. He couldn't find another job and was turned out on the street with less than a dollar to his name and slept on park benches until he learned of the Salvation Army.

Huey's family sent him money on the condition that he attend the Oklahoma Baptist University, which he claims he attended to the end of the semester. He secured a selling job with the Dawson Produce Company and planned on attending law school at the University of Oklahoma. Huey met a man named Ralph Jackson who helped him financially.

Huey became involved in the presidential election on campus, working on the Clark side since the Wilson side had ignored him. But Huey was bored and Harley helped secure a sales job for him. He married Rose on April 12, 1913. After the outbreak of World War I, his brother Julius agreed to pay the expenses for Huey to attend law school.

Chapter Four examines Huey's relationship with Julius. Julius is a successful lawyer who had always taken a special interest in Huey. Huey acquired the knowledge he needed to pass the bar in one year by taking a special exam. Attorney Charles J. Rivet tutored Huey for the bar examination and he was admitted to the bar on May 15, 1915. He went to work in Julius's law firm, but their association last only a few months.

Huey opened his own practice but could not earn enough so he returned to a sales position while Rose managed his law office. Huey became an expert in workman's compensation law, which was a new field. He began to win cases by representing the underdog. He won election to the Railroad Commission.



Chapter 5-6, pgs. 91-128

Chapter 5-6, pgs. 91-128 Summary and Analysis

Huey moved to Shreveport in November 1918, after he won election to the Railroad Commission. He continued his law practice there. He formed partnership with other lawyers on and off during the years and continued to specialize in damage suits. He represented the only corporation that ever hired him, Consolidated -Progressive Oil Corporation. He handled a lot of oil land lease cases. Huey represented businessman Ernest R. Bernstein in a libel suit and won the only big fee of his legal career. He and Rose built a house with the money.

After the Bernstein case, Huey became more involved in politics. Chapter Six focuses on the beginnings of Long's political career. He had admitted to his family that he had local political ambitions but it was Rose that he confided in. He had very definite plans that included the presidency. His law career was the basis for his move into politics in the area of employer's liability law.

He attended a legislative committee session with his friend, Senator Harper. Long became an advocate for change in corporation law and employer's liability law. When Harper was indicted for violating the Espionage Act, Huey and Julius handled his defense and won acquittal.

Huey represented the underdog and supported the poor. He became interested in the concept of concentration of wealth and eventually began a movement to redistribute wealth.

Long had built an organization of support among local leaders in rural areas before he ran for the Railroad Commission. He ran his campaign out of his mother's house in Winnfield. His campaign relied on the political circular distributed by hired children. He was one of the first politicians to use an automobile to campaign in and visited almost every town in the district.



Chapters 7-8, pgs. 129-180

Chapters 7-8, pgs. 129-180 Summary and Analysis

In Louisiana politics of the time, the sheriff was the local political boss in the parish. The New Orleans political machine was known as the Old Regular or Ring. Rural candidates usually won when they had the support of the New Orleans ring. IN the 1916 elections, Long supported John M. Parker for governor. Parker promised to destroy the New Orleans Ring and to support the independent oil producers. Parker won the election and fought the New Orleans Ring for years.

Huey formulated a pipeline bill that was not accepted by the independent oil producer's association. The bill adopted by the legislature contained enough of Long's provisions that he supported it until it was weakened. He then broker with Parker. Huey also opposed Parker on the severance tax that applied to entities that extracted national resources from soil and water. Parker made a deal with Standard Oil, whose legal department drafted the law. Huey and others believed that the corporation should bear a greater amount of the tax burden. This became an issue at the state constitution convention in 1921 as Parker opposed any severance tax increase.

Huey exposed Parker's deal with Standard Oil and used it to his own political advantage. When there was an investigation into the Commission's handling of phone rates, Parker supported the move to impeach and indict Long. The House did not impeach Long but he still faced a libel suit. He was found guilty and fined one dollar, as the judge tried to save face for Parker.

Chapter Eight begins in February 1921 when the Commission approved a rate increase for the Cumberland Company. Huey announced that he would continue to fight rate increases. People knew to call Huey when they had problems. He was known for winning victories for the people. In the Cumberland case, his actions resulted in a refund for customers.

Long next tackled Standard Oil. Even though the action was against all common carrier pipelines, Long was targeting Standard Oil. Standard separated the Louisiana pipeline company into the Stand Pipe Line Company. Long won the right to inspect some of their books.



Chapters 9-10, pgs. 181-243

Chapters 9-10, pgs. 181-243 Summary and Analysis

Huey ran for governor in 1923. He didn't have the support of the trusts and the wealthy and was a long shot to win. He began to give more interviews. Huey tried to avoid the issue of the Ku Klux Klan but couldn't. He would lose support if he did or didn't renounce them.

Huey and his brother-in-law, Dave McConnell drove around the state hanging posters and making appearances. He made Standard Oil a campaign issue and was often attacked by the press and accused of being a member of the Klan since he wouldn't take an anti-Klan stance. When pressed he agreed to support legislation against masks and secrecy but wouldn't go any further. Huey didn't win the primary election but he made a good showing.

In Chapter Ten, at this point Huey didn't have much control over his followers. After the primary, they supported whom they wanted without consulting him. Huey attended the convention and tried to influence the platform but was not successful. After the convention, Huey had to concentrate on his own campaign for re-election, which he needed to win if he was to run for governor 1928. Huey won an impressive victory with 83.9 percent of the vote and was stronger than ever.

In the New Orleans mayoralty race, Huey began to influence decisions and build his power base for the next gubernatorial election. Now he had to develop a base in the southwestern parishes.

Since Huey had transformed the commission into a modern agency, there weren't too many important cases in the next few years. The big case that influenced his career was the Watson-Williams bridge or Lake Pontchartrain bridge case. Huey fought the awarding of a franchise for a toll bridge.

Huey made deals with other politicians. He would give them his support in exchange for their support in 1928. He built support in the southwest parishes in the same way. Huey supported Senator Edwin S. Broussard in his re-election bid and traveled around the state campaigning, making himself known.



Chapter 11-12, pgs. 244-311

Chapter 11-12, pgs. 244-311 Summary and Analysis

Campaigning for the 1928 gubernatorial race began in February 1927. It was known that the machine would not support Huey. He was dangerous to them. In spring of that year, the Mississippi flooded more than two million acres of land in Louisiana, and flood control programs were a campaign issue. Huey was presented as a Bolshevik by his foes, but he now had money and an organization behind him. Even though he knew the weaknesses in his organization, he still felt that he was strong.

Huey built his own rings in the same way that the New Orleans Regulars had. He attracted powerful people from the parishes and denounced the New Orleans Ring. Circulars were used heavily as they were in previous campaigns. Huey wrote them himself. Huey did not receive the majority of the popular vote but he made a very strong showing. He established his campaign headquarters at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans and continued to negotiate support. The New Orleans Regulars decided not to hold a second primary and Huey Long became governor.

Chapter Twelve begins in January with Huey being feted as the incoming governor. The party was ready to select its national delegation and Huey felt that he had to exert his influence. The state constitution did not require a convention since the committee could name the delegates. Huey decided that this was the procedure he wanted followed. The named slate of delegates did not include any Old Regulars so the Regulars had their own slate of delegates. Both went to the convention in Houston.

On the train, Huey's delegation made a deal with Franklin Roosevelt and was given credentials at the convention.

The gubernatorial inauguration was on May 21, 1928. Harley had been elected to the state House, and the key positions in the legislature were given to Long supporters. Huey used patronage to further consolidate his power and control as he staffed the various agencies. He had promised people surfaced road during the campaign and now looked for a way to provide them, Huey proposed financing them by selling bonus with an accompanying tax to raise revenues. Huey was always fiscally responsible. He also supported a bill for a tax on barrels of oil, thus continuing his war with Standard Oil. He proposed a bill for a tax on carbon black to provide revenues for hospitals and other charitable organization.



Chapter 13-14, pgs. 312-383

Chapter 13-14, pgs. 312-383 Summary and Analysis

After moving into the governor's mansion, Huey acquired the nickname of Kingfish and liked using it. Huey always had visitors at the mansion, but never his family. Rose and the three kids moved out when Huey's affair with Alice Lee became obvious. Many people characterized him as a womanizer. He maintained suites at hotels in Baton Rouge and New Orleans at the public's expense. He employed a variety of bodyguards, carried a small gun, and feared assassination. Huey also hired Joe Messina as his personal attendant and assistant but was paid through his appointment to the Highway Patrol.

During the campaign, Huey promised free textbooks for school children and now had problems. In some parts of the state, it was considered to be state socialism and the case⁴ reached the United States Supreme Court. He also had the severance tax being challenged by the Ohio Oil Company. All the amendments that Huey supported were voted for and passed.

Huey supported a program to build roads. Since Louisiana did not have the technical people, Huey had then hired from out of state. By the end of his first year in office, he had already enacted most of his programs. He fought his own Lieutenant Governor, Paul Cyr, on several issues and won. His one problem was the increase in the severance tax. Since it was being contested the oil companies could pay the lower rates under Louisiana law. This jeopardized the free schoolbooks program. Huey called for a special session of the legislature to correct the problem in Chapter Fourteen.

The special session was to last for six days. One the agenda was an occupational license or manufacturer's tax on oil. The proceeds of the tax would support education and provide funds for the disabled. This brought him into confrontation with the legislature. They attacked Huey in resolutions revealing his various dealing and patronage. The Manship newspapers also attacked Huey. There was a strong opposition to the oil tax bill. There was talk of impeachment and Huey instructed his people to adjourn the session. Before they could, it was announced that Huey had offered Harley money and immunity to arrange to have Huey's foe, Representative J. Y. Sanders, killed. There was a vote for adjournment in which people say the voting mechanism was rigged and fistfights broke out on the floor. The event became known as Bloody Monday. It was later found that the slow mechanics of the voting machine were to blame.

The next day the adjournment vote was not passed and more resolutions were presented asking for investigations of Huey's offer to Harley. A group of four, known as the Dynamiters, presented a resolution for the impeachment of Huey Long on a list of nineteen charges.

Bob Maestri provided the money that Huey needed to fight the impeachment charges and a higher-powered legal team was formed. Most of Huey's followers supported him during the impeachment hearing but some of them switched allegiances. The hearings delved into all of the allegations in detail.

The House voted to impeach Long on the basis of the Manship charges, involving bribery, before the session ended on April 6. The trial would be held in the Senate with the Chief Justice presiding.



Chapter 15-16, pgs. 384-453

Chapter 15-16, pgs. 384-453 Summary and Analysis

The whole situation involving the impeachment was carried out in an emotionally charged atmosphere. Huey maintained that Standard Oil money was involved in the fight against him. There were charges of vote buying on each side. The Long faction tried to halt further charges from being delivered after the April 6 scheduled adjournment date, but was defeated.

Huey was collecting the signatures of Senators on a document known as the Round Robin saying they would not vote for impeachment because of legal irregularities in the proceedings. The Long forces moved to have the Senate vote that the impeachment charges were brought illegally but lost the vote. They won the vote on the content of the charges. Another Round Robin was written with the same fifteen senators signing it. The Long forces requested an end to the impeachment trial and that ended the impeachment trial.

After the hearings, Huey tried to force a recall election in the districts of those who had opposed him, but was successful in only one case. Long became characterized as a demagogue. Others classified him as a mass leader. He had the capacity to do a lot of good or a lot of evil.

In Chapter Sixteen, Huey didn't want anyone around him that wouldn't profess allegiance to him. He began to consolidate and strengthen his power base. His opponents were still trying to destroy him

He had proposed the construction of a new governor's mansion that would be a skyscraper and also house the government departments. He was building up support for the public improvement programs in 1930. These programs would require large bond issues and he planned on introducing them to the legislature in the May session. He supported the construction of eight toll bridges that would have closed off the possibility of federal aid. Some say that he was repaying a political debt.

At this time the courts ruled in his favor on the school textbook issue and the severance tax. He was also gaming support for his road-works program. On July 15, Huey announced his candidacy for the United States Senate.



Chapter 17-18, pg. 454-525

Chapter 17-18, pg. 454-525 Summary and Analysis

Huey wouldn't talk with Louisiana reporters but would talk with out-of-state reporters. There was only one Louisiana reporter he would talk to and that was Charles Frampton from the Item. He decided to start his own paper called the Progress, the ownership of which was hidden behind fronts. State employees had to pay 20 percent of one month's salary to finance the paper. The paper was provided for free to people on the mailing list for circulars. They responded by subscribing. The Progress was basically a political newspaper dedicated to Huey Long. It lasted until January 1932. Its purpose was to help elect Huey to the United States Senate.

Long said he would run for the Senate only if he could serve out his term as governor. He didn't want Lieutenant Governor Cry to become governor for fourteen months. He would miss only four months of the Senate term. Throughout the campaign, he referred to his opponent as Old Feather Duster Ransdell. Since Huey appointed the people to the state boards, they were asked to donate 10 percent of their salaries for two months to his campaign.

Circulars continued to be used in the campaign and he was the first to use a sound truck. Huey was weak in New Orleans which Ransdell was expected to win since he was supported by the Old Regulars. In spite of this, Huey won the election.

After the election, Long's proposed improvements packages were passed by the state legislature and the voters approved the bond measures in November. Work immediately began on the roads since Huey had made all the plans.

Chapter Eighteen discusses the new campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. The school did not rank highly academically basically suffering from low funding. When the position of college president became vacant, the board had to fill the position, and it was one of the few boards Huey did not control. Huey began to take an interest in the university. He involved himself in the size of the band and the naming of the bandleader when the school officials didn't see the band the important factor. Huey interviewed the man the board selected and approved. Huey often visited the campus and liked to lead the band he developed in parades. He also became a football fan and appeared at practice sessions with plans for plays that irritated Coach Cohen. In December 1930, Huey announced plans for a medical school and classes began in October. Appropriations for LSU were increased.



Chapter 19-20, pg. 526-582

Chapter 19-20, pg. 526-582 Summary and Analysis

The gubernatorial candidate that the Old Regulars and Huey agreed to was Oscar K. Allen. Huey refused to give his brother, Earl, the lieutenant governor's spot. Fournet was the choice for lieutenant governor and Earl ran as an independent.

Huey continued to work on his public improvements projects and on the cotton surplus problem. He supported a plan to not plant cotton in the 19232 growing session in any of the southern states if the other cotton growing states adopted the measure. The other states favored acreage reduction programs.

The ticket supported by Huey won the election on January 19 and his candidates won the local elections throughout the state. Cyr filed suit saying that Huey became a senator when he presented his certificate of election and had himself sworn in as governor. Huey had the governor's mansion surrounded by state police to prevent Cyr from entering and announced that the office of lieutenant governor had been vacated and had the president of the senate, Alvin O. King, sworn in as lieutenant governor. Huey counter sued and Cyr's suit was dismissed.

Huey was sworn in as Senator on January 25 in Washington. Immediately after, King was sworn in as the governor of Louisiana. Huey was proud of his accomplishments as governor. These included the building of roads and bridges, expanding LSU and medical and other educational facilities. He reformed prisons and implemented rehabilitation programs. State spending had increased and so had bond issues.

Chapter Twenty begins with Huey's first day in the United States Senate. He introduced himself to and talked to everyone on the floor. After a few days, he returned to New Orleans to move his family into a house near Tulane University. He also opened a law office in New Orleans. He was absent from the Senate more than he was present. Huey was now interested in the redistribution of an earth and tried to work the topic into any speech he made on the Senate floor. He felt the redistribution of wealth should take place through wealth and inheritance taxes and began to educate himself on the subject.

Huey continued to influence his power and control in Louisiana. His bills continued to be introduced in the legislature and he frequently met with the state legislators. He led the state's delegation to the 1932 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He favored a progressive candidate but Roosevelt was the front-runner and he helped Roosevelt obtain the nomination.



Chapter 21-22, pg. 583-647

Chapter 21-22, pg. 583-647 Summary and Analysis

In July 1932, Huey helped in the campaign of Arkansan Senator Hattie Caraway. She had the seat next to him in the Senate and they became friends. He had at first advised her not to run because he didn't think she could win, then he decided to help her. He espoused his views on concentration and redistribution of wealth and introduced his usual campaign tactics into Arkansas. Caraway won the election.

Huey continued to help his candidates in Louisiana and he still had his power in the state, controlling the different levels of government. He campaigned for Roosevelt in the states designated by the Roosevelt headquarters. He had to pay his own expenses.

His support of John Overton led to a Senate committee inquiry on campaign expenditures.

Chapter Twenty Two begins with the December 5, 1932 lame duck session of Congress. Huey met with Roosevelt to discuss the programs Roosevelt planned. He opposed a banking bill presented by Senator Glass in January. It did nothing to promote the redistribution of wealth. Huey filibustered. A vote for cloture failed by one vote. The Glass bill was not enacted.

There was opposite to Huey from among the ranks of the Roosevelt administration but Roosevelt tried to make the Kingfish an administration supporter. Huey began to take more of an interest in his Senate duties and requested assignment to the judiciary, interstate commerce and interoceanic affairs committees. He began to act more like a conventional senator.

As Roosevelt assumed office, there was a multitude of bank failures and Roosevelt proclaimed a bank holiday. The Congress passed emergency legislation that Huey supported. As the Roosevelt administration's New Deal programs were introduced, Huey supported some and opposed others. He managed to attach amendments to some. He supported the Glass-Steagall Act only because he insisted it include a clause for deposit insurance. Huey opposed the administration on the National Recovery Act.

Huey felt he could still work with Roosevelt even though Roosevelt wouldn't accept all of his ideas. This soon changed. Roosevelt brought on the break.

A campaign began in 1933 to destroy Huey Long. It was rumored to be financed by J.P. Morgan. The press attacked him but felt the publicity benefited him. He soon established his own newspaper, the American Progress, as a vehicle for publicity. He wrote an article for every issue. The same group that had organized his Louisiana newspaper organized the paper. He also wrote a book called Every Man a King.



Chapter 25-26, pg. 648-706

Chapter 25-26, pg. 648-706 Summary and Analysis

Huey was in New York and went to a nightclub with a group of people. He was allegedly attacked in the bathroom. The incident made national news. There were all kinds of stories about what had happened. Because of all the publicity, he labeled the reporters as polecats and referred to them that way. The polecats were attacking him even in Louisiana.

In Louisiana there was an investigation into a local election with charges of fraud against the commissioners. Huey's involvement was seen as a bid for power since the bond issues were passed.

When the Tax Reform Commission delivered its report in summer of 1933, it recommended a complete reform of the Louisiana tax system. Huey campaigned for the proposed taxes. This didn't make Huey popular with the people. He was heckled and attacked with eggs and tomatoes. When Huey slated his own candidates for the January election, most of them were forced to withdraw. The power of the Kingfish was being challenged successfully.

In Chapter Twenty Four, Huey requests that his name be withdrawn from the Washington Social Register. He was basically demonstrating his disdain of the rich. He still had three armed bodyguards that accompanied him everywhere. Rose wasn't living in Washington and he didn't socialize much with this Senate colleagues. Huey and his bodyguards frequented nightclubs nightly until early 1934.

Huey had enemies in Louisiana that wanted him ousted from the Senate. They wanted to reopen the Overton investigation, but they couldn't prove that fraud had occurred. Huey's fitness to be a Senator was then challenged. Huey was infuriated that the Senate would even consider a preliminary investigation.

Huey Long continued his fight for the decentralization of wealth and made a national radio broadcast on February 23, 1934. He discussed his plan on limiting family fortunes and income through taxation. The revenues from the taxes would go to families. They would be provided with a guaranteed income. There would be other benefits also. Some critics denounced Huey's plan as socialist. His plan was known as Share Our Wealth and Share the Wealth Clubs were formed in various states. Many of these clubs were formed by Negroes, which brought Huey the scorn of the Ku Klux Klan.



Chapter 25-26, pg. 702-762

Chapter 25-26, pg. 702-762 Summary and Analysis

Huey introduced a bill including some of his wealth distribution proposals in January 1934. This would be his theme for the rest of the year. He was viewed by many as being a negative force. He supported a farm credit relief bill and opposed the ratification of the St. Lawrence waterway treaty and the reciprocal trade bill.

Long's Louisiana enemies felt that they were making progress in eroding his power. Huey had to return to Louisiana to attend to the problem. Little by Little, the group that was orchestrating the reorganization lost support. After handling the problem, he returned to Washington.

Many of the programs Huey supported were killed or stalled in the legislature. His solution was to write the provisions of the tax bills in to other bills since few legislators read them. Huey had to spend three weeks in Baton Rouge to accomplish this. Huey wanted to complete the work on the programs in Louisiana before he began his national agenda. There was a September election in September in New Orleans.

When Long helped force through a probe into New Orleans vice, five shots were fired into his home. The hearings were held in a suite in the Canal Bank Building. Two thousand national guardsmen were brought to New Orleans on September 7, four days before the election. They were worried about a Choctaw armed coup. Huey's candidates won the election. He seemed to be regaining the power he had lost.

Chapter Twenty Six addresses the power that Huey had. At the end of 1934, there were a variety of amendments before the Louisiana legislature. The governor called a special session of the legislature. Huey used the same tactics that he had used the previous August and all were passed. There was support in the state for the Long programs.

Huey, himself, commented that he didn't always like the way he did things but he did what he had to do to get the job done. He believed he was fighting a dangerous opposition and built a strong machine to fight them. Huey felt he was not a fascist or a dictator. He needed power to help the people.



Chapter 27-28, pg. 763-818

Chapter 27-28, pg. 763-818 Summary and Analysis

Huey remained an LSU football fan. He continued to interfere in the team's affairs even going so far as to hire a coach, when the school had already hired one. Their coach quit because of Huey's continued interference. Huey interfered so much in the affairs at LSU that the National Student Federation considered passing a resolution to censure him but didn't.

In January 1935, Standard Oil announced that it was laying off one thousand workers in Baton Rouge and might move its refinery to a different state. They blamed the situation on the oil tax. Huey talked about Louisiana setting up its own refineries. The government began negotiations with the company and the settlement was announced by Huey.

People began to organize and formed a group called the Square Deal Association. These were militant anti-Long people. In Baton Rouge there was a court case questioning Governor Allen's action. The session fired the parish employees and then there was a rumor that a Square Dealer was arrested. Hundreds of people took over the courthouse. The arrested Square Dealer, Sidney Songy, a Long informer, was released and the crowd disbanded.

The National Guard was called in because Huey said there was a plot to assassinate him. Songy testified at the trial and told of the plot and who was involved.

In Chapter Twenty Eight, Huey's is absent from the Senate because of the problems in Louisiana. He returned to Washington on January 7. Roosevelt was concerned with Huey's behavior and influence. He viewed Huey as a threat to his own re-election. Huey and his associates were under investigation by the Internal Revenue Service.

Huey opposed Roosevelt on the ratification of the World Court treaty and felt the 1935 work relief proposal was not broad enough. There was no minimum wage provision. He said Louisiana would have a say in how federal money was spent within its boundaries.

He continued to make speeches in various states since he received numerous speaking invitations during 1935. The speeches were giving him the national exposure he needed for his presidential bid. He was publicly non-committal about his intentions.



Chapter 29-30 and Epilogue, pg. 819-876

Chapter 29-30 and Epilogue, pg. 819-876 Summary and Analysis

Some of Huey's associates began to be convicted of income tax evasion. Huey refused to comment on the situation. He planned on cleaning up his organization after the 1936 election. The IRS was looking into the sources of Huey's income since he seemed to live beyond his means. There was talk that the Long organization was receiving money from illegal gambling operations in Louisiana.

Huey continued his verbal attacks on Roosevelt. He supported the Patman bill for payments to World War I veterans that Roosevelt opposed. In June, Roosevelt sent six tax bills to the Congress but they were not as broad based as he had claimed. Huey spent three weeks in July to direct some political matters in Louisiana. He was back in the Senate in August and on the ninth announced that he had learned of a plot to assassinate him.

Long was planning his 1936 presidential bid. He purchased two more sound trucks and a private plane. He wrote a book entitled *My First Days in the White House* describing the policies he would propose and who his cabinet would be.

Chapter Thirty opens with Huey arriving unexpectedly in Baton Rouge on April 14, 1935. The state legislature was convening for a five-day session to consider various measures to do with finances and elections. They passed all the bills that Huey supported, and he went to New Orleans on July 3. Governor Allen called another special meeting of the legislature where twenty-six bills were introduced. Most of these laws would deprive Mayor Walmsley of New Orleans of his power. The mayor was being pressured to resign but refused.

Huey was helping select candidates for various offices since he would also be running for re-election and felt he would carry the state slate with him to victory.

In Alexandria, twenty-seven men formed the Minute Men of Louisiana on August 1, 1935. They were a secret organization dedicated to overthrowing an oppressive government. Their leader was David Haas. They were organized like a military organization and had thousands of members, all of whom were armed. They planned to kill Huey if necessary just as a group of remnant Square Dealers planned.

Huey arrived in Baton Rouge on September 4. A special session of the legislature had been called for the consideration of Huey's bills. Huey played golf on Saturday with Seymour Weiss then returned to the Roosevelt Hotel. He was called to Baton Rouge for the legislative session and sent on September 8. After dinner in his apartment, he went to the house chamber. In the corridor by the governor's office, a man walked up to Huey and shot him. Huey's bodyguards killed the man.



Huey was taken to Our Lady of the Lake Hospital. He identified the man who hit him as Dr. Carl Weiss. Weiss apparently had punched Huey who was apparently killed in the barrage of gunfire that followed although there were reports that Weiss had said he was going to kill Huey.

In the Epilogue, Huey is taken to surgery at the hospital. The young doctor who performed the surgery missed damage to a kidney. Huey Long died on Tuesday, September 10, 1935.



Characters

Huey Long

Huey Long was the son of Huey Long Sr. and his wife Caledonia. Born in 1893, he and his brothers and sisters were raised at the family farm in Winnfield, Louisiana. He was educated in Winnfield public schools and was an avid reader. He quit high school during his senior year in 1910 and became a traveling salesman. Huey enrolled in law classes at the University of Oklahoma while supporting himself as a salesman and gambler.

Huey married Rose McConnell on April 12, 1913 in Memphis. They spend a year in New Orleans where Huey studied for and passed the bar examination. He practiced in Winnfield and represented the underdog until he was elected to the Railroad Commission in 1918, when he moved to Shreveport. As a member of the Railroad Commission, he was known to side with the poor and the people against big business. He led a life long battle against Standard Oil.

Huey first ran for governor in 1923 when he was thirty years of age. He lost the election but served notice that he was a power to contend with. He was inaugurated governor on May 21, 1928. Huey was elected Senator in 1932 and delayed taking the oath because he didn't want Lieutenant Governor Cyr to become governor. In the Senate he at first supported Roosevelt, then opposed him, planning on launching his own presidential bid in 1936. While in the Senate, he continued his control over political and legislative matters in Louisiana. He was assassinated in 1935 in the corridor outside the governor's office in the state house.

Julius Long

Julius is Huey's older brother, fourteen years older. He had promised their mother that he would see that Huey had an education and paid the expenses for Rose and Huey for one year in New Orleans so Huey could attend law school and pass the bar examination. Julius was the district attorney in Winnfield and took Huey into his law firm, but their partnership lasted only a few months. Julius ran for and lost an election to become a judge and moved to Shreveport in December 1920 to form a partnership in Huey's law firm. The partnership lasted less than a year. Even though they couldn't work well together, Julius was on Huey's defense team whenever Huey got into legal trouble. He also helped Huey when he defended other political clients. Julius let it be known that he did not like the way Huey treated his family after he became governor and would not allow them to visit the governor's mansion. He also complained that Huey wouldn't help his family financially. Julius was always there to help Huey until Huey refused to give their brother Earl the lieutenant-governor's spot on that ticket that he and the family wanted. They broke with Huey and Julius supported Earl in the campaign making many remarks about Huey who chose to ignore his brothers.



Harley Bozeman

Harley Bozeman met Huey when he was fourteen-years-old. He had just moved to Winnfield and met Huey at the dry goods store. The two became best friends. Harley was also an avid reader and debater. He dropped out of high school in his senior year and became a traveling salesman.

Harley also went into politics. He was elected to the state house in 1928. He asked Huey to make him chairman of the appropriations committee. Harley supported Huey throughout the first year. The second year, Huey who was drunk, told Harley, if he would handle the assassination of Huey's foe, Representative J.Y. Sanders, Huey would see that he had money and immunity.

Harley, in addition to being the chairman of the house appropriations committee, was also chairman of the Tax Commission. He was opposed to Huey's oil tax and suggested that Huey resign rather than face impeachment hearings. Harley eventually was forced to resign his position at the Tax Commission. He was not as close to Huey once he began to oppose him.

Earl Long

Earl Long is the younger brother of Huey and the one family member that was closest to him. Earl was an attorney who supported Huey in both gubernatorial campaigns and was rewarded with a good job with the stipulation that he supported their father and sick sister. Earl wanted the lieutenant governor's in 1932 but Huey wouldn't agree so he ran for governor as an independent.

Alice Lee Grosjan

Alice Lee Grosjan was Huey's secretary. She began to work for him in 1923 when she was eighteen and had only two years experience as a secretary. Huey would confide in her and look to her for advice. She was trusted with his campaign funds. She was married to James Terrell but divorced in 1928. Her apparent affair with Huey caused Rose to move out of the governor's mansion.

Robert S. Maestri

Bob Maestri was a wealthy New Orleans businessman and property owner. Even though he only had a third grade education, he had built a business empire. He was in his early forties when he began to support Huey in 1927. Maestri could always be counted on to supply money when Huey needed it. He financed the fighting of the impeachment case against Huey. Maestri headed the Louisiana Democratic Association until 1932.



Rose McConnell Long

Rose married Huey on April 12, 1913 in Memphis, Tennessee. She had grown up in Shreveport and met Huey when he judged a baking contest in which she was entered. They had three children. Rose and the three children moved out of the governor's mansion because of Huey's suspected affair with Alice Lee. She never lived with him again but appeared for official functions.

Hattie Caraway

Hattie Caraway had been the wife of Senator Thaddeus Caraway of Arkansas. When he died, she was appointed to fill his seat. She was seated next to Huey Long in the Senate. Huey helped campaign in her July 1932 campaign.

Joe Messina

Joe Messina was Huey's bodyguard. He met Huey at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge. His salary was paid through his appointment to the Highway Patrol.

Franklin Roosevelt

Franklin Roosevelt was a New York politician who became President of the United States.

Charles J. Rivet

Charles J. Rivet was a young New Orleans attorney who tutored Huey for the bar examination.



Objects/Places

Winnfield

Winnfield is the area of Louisiana where the Long family farm was located.

Baton Rouge

Baton Rouge is a city in southern Louisiana.

Memphis

Memphis is a city in Tennessee where Huey worked as a salesman and where he married Rose.

New Orleans

New Orleans is the major city in Louisiana where Huey and Rose lived while Huey studied law at Tulane University.

Houston

Houston is a city in southwestern Texas where the 1928 democratic convention was held.

Louisiana State University

Louisiana State University, LSU, is located outside Baton Rouge.

Washington, D.C.

Washington D.C. is the nation's capitol.

Chicago

Chicago is the major city in Illinois and the site of the 1932 Democratic Convention.



Arkansas

Arkansas is a southern state north of Louisiana where Huey campaigned for Hattie Caraway.

New York City

New York City, New York is where the Roosevelt campaign headquarters was in the 1932 presidential election.

Themes

Power

The dominant theme of the book is Huey Long's need for control and power. The Kingfish could not be a part of a group or a team. He had to be the leader who exercised absolute control. Everything had to be done his way and he had to control people and situations. Those who opposed Huey Long had problems.

Huey amassed a power base over a number of years in Louisiana basically through the practice of patronage. He awarded jobs to those who were loyal to him, which led to his control of the state and its government apparatus. This allowed him to easily implement the programs that he wanted in Louisiana. He would use a variety of tricks, like having the provisions of his programs included in other bills voted on by legislators, knowing they didn't have the time to read them. He felt that his programs were for the good of the people and he did what he had to do to have them enacted.

Huey's need for power and control is shown by the fact that he continued to control the Louisiana legislature after he became a Senator. He spent more time in Louisiana helping push his programs through the state legislature than he spent in Washington. He wouldn't give up his control. His ultimate goal was to be president of the United States and he had plans to run in the 1936 election.

Planning

Another theme of the book is planning. Huey had his life planned out when he was eighteen years old as he confided to his new bride Rose, He would first gain election to a local office, then become the governor of Louisiana, then a Senator, and finally he would become President of the United States. Huey spent the next twenty years fulfilling these plans and was an announced candidate for the Presidential race in 1936, when he died in 1935. He never once deviated from his plans and all of his actions were tied to his plans and preparing for the next stage.

Huey Long's meticulous planning was also evident in his day-to-day life as he out maneuvered politicians and legislatures. He employed various methods to have his programs enacted and always had a plan in the case of problems. Sometimes this meant hiding the provisions of his programs in other bills and knowing that the legislators wouldn't read them. If he had to manipulate people to get what he wanted, he would do so. What was important to him was the end result and he used his planning skills to achieve these results. Everything that Huey Long did was tied to his overall plan.



Relationships

Relationships can be another theme of the book. Huey had different kinds of relationships with different people. He remained married to Rose even though they didn't live together once he became governor. When Huey moved his secretary, Alice Lee, into the governor's mansion, Rose and the three kids moved out. She would appear for official functions in Louisiana and Washington but she never lived with Huey again. Not much is said about her, but she did whatever Huey wanted.

Huey had long-term relationships with those who were loyal to him. An example of this is Harley Bozeman. They first met in a Winnfield dry goods store in their early teens and remained friends throughout their lives. Harley was loyal to Huey.

Huey's family took a back seat to politics. His brothers, Earl and Julius, were always there when Huey needed them, although Julius and Huey could not work together for long as law partners. They tried numerous times but couldn't make the partnership work. When Earl wanted the lieutenant governor's spot on the ticket, Huey wouldn't allow it, despite pressures from his family. This caused a break between the brothers and Earl ran as an independent with Julius supporting him. During his years as governor, Huey never allowed his father, brothers or sisters to visit the governor's mansion.



Style

Perspective

The book is written in the academic perspective. It is written in the third person point of view with the author, T. Harry Williams, functioning as the narrator. This allows the author to provide the background information that is such a vital part of the book. And there is plenty of information provided since the book is basically a history of the structure and functioning of Louisiana politics of the time.

In the 1950s, the author became interested in the Oral History project at Columbia University. This project utilized interviewing people and taping the recollections of these people while they are alive instead of relying solely on written sources. The author decided to use this approach in his biography of Huey Long. He interviewed a total of two hundred ninety five people in the course of his research for the book.

T. Harry Williams is well qualified to write such a book as the biography of Huey Long. He was a professor of history at Louisiana State University until his death in 1979 and has published books on other historical figures.

The intended audience of the book is anyone, especially those with an interest in politics, Louisiana, history, Huey Long or fans of biographies. But the reader doesn't have to have any special interests or expertise to enjoy this book. It can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of their interests.

Tone

T. Harry Williams writes the Huey Long biography in an objective tone and he stresses this point in the Preface. He is an academic and academic endeavors stress objectivity and the objective tone of the book is obvious and accounts for the length of the book. Williams was a meticulous researcher and the results of this intense research are obvious in the book. The author presents the different points of view regarding each situation, which is one of the reasons for the length of the tome. The different people he interviewed and the documents he consulted presented different opinions or views of events and situations, and the author is meticulous in presenting the different views and opinions.

The objective approach allows the reader to draw his/her own conclusions about the different situations and events discussed in the book. Even though the author may draw his own conclusions, they are not forced on the reader. He makes his conclusions known but presents the other points of view for the reader thus providing the reader with all of the information regarding the situation. The reader benefits from the expertise of Professor Williams in the analysis of the material but is still free to reach his/her own conclusions. Even though this approach results in a lengthy volume, the reader has to appreciate the approach William takes and the way he presents the material.

Structure

The structure of the book is appropriate to the kind of book that Williams has written and the massive amount of information that it contains. There is a short Preface that precedes the body of the work that the reader should read. It explains the author's approach and is very informational for the reader since it will give the reader a different view of the book.

The body of the book consists of thirty chapters and an Epilogue. The overall direction of the book is chronological, but it jumps around a lot in the chapters. A topic will be mentioned in one place and then the author discusses something else and then returns to the topic. This happens throughout the book and is somewhat irritating to the reader.

Instead of presenting a copious and traditional Bibliography, Williams presents the information in the form of a Bibliographical Essay, which is an interesting approach, even though it is a break with tradition for books of this source. All of his sources are well documented in footnotes throughout the book so the reader who is interested in checking sources can still do so. There is a well-developed Index that allows the reader to easily look up information. The book also includes a list of Illustrations at the front of the book. The inclusion of photos is good because it allows the reader to associate a name with a face. The Chose structure works well for the book.



Quotes

Some people would say today, as some said then, that the incident was characteristic of Huey P. Long, that it revealed all the cynicism and contempt of democracy and all the scheming ruthlessness of the man who seemed in the 1930s to be the first American dictator, the first great fascist, who was compared to Hitler and Mussolini, who finally commanded one of the largest mass following the the country and appeared to be on verge of taking over the national government as he had his own state (Chapter 1, pg. 3-4)

No matter how much money Huey made, he would never keep any if left to himself. He cared for money only because with it he could do things that gave him pleasure. He had the same attitude toward all of life - he was a man of unrestrained desires (Chapter 3, pg. 67)

Perhaps the finest tribute so Huey's legal ability was paid by Chief Justice William Howard Taft of the United States Supreme Court. After Long had argued a case before the highest tribunal while public service commissioner Taft said that he had seldom seen a lawyer with a greater legal mind or a better capacity to argue a legal point (Chapter 5, pg. 105)

Before Huey came to dominate the agency, one-man hearings had been its policy, even for important cases. A member who had an interest in a particular case would call a hearing, summon witnesses, and, after listening to as much evidence to be cared to, prepare an order and get his two associates to sign it. When Huey became chairman, he stopped this practice (Chapter 8, pg. 158)

A new day ity would be if Huey, or any candidate who said the things he was saying, could carry a Louisiana election. The barriers in his way seemed insuperable. Indeed, to some people it seemed a colossal impudence that he was even running (Chapter 9, pg. 182)

By its very nature, the machine had to reject Huey. Its conservative leaders viewed him as a wild radical who should be crushed before he became dangerous (Chapter 11, pg. 245)

Huey's apprehension that he was in physical danger, displayed during the campaign, assumed the proportions of a psychosis after he became governor. Before he was elected, he had seemed to think that enemies were lying wait to beat him up; he still thought so, that enemies were lying in wait to beat him up; he still thought so, but now he began to fear assassination (Chapter 13, pg. 321)

One of the fundamental processes of democracy was on exhibit - the right of a legislature to remove an executive whom it judged to be tyrannical or evil. The representatives of the people in the lower house had impeached this executive of high people in the lower house had impeached this executive of high crimes, and the



representatives of the people in the upper house were going to weigh the evidence and arrive at a judicious opinion. So it seemed on the surface and so in part it was. But it was also something else (Chapter 15, pg. 386)

When he was a mere youth, he had shocked Rose McConnell by telling her that he had planned his career - he would be a secondary state official, governor, senator and President. Now, with calculation and deliberation, he was about to rise to the third of these steps (Chapter 17, pg. 461)

Huey could point to many accomplishments during his almost four years as governor. And because he was proud of what he had done and because he wanted the people to realize what he had done for them, he pointed frequently, compiling and publicizing records of his achievements (Chapter 19, pg. 546)

Huey's announcement did not deceive Louisianians, but it impressed others. Time ran his picture on the cover of an October issue and hailed him as an emerging national figure. If Franklin Roosevelt was elected President, the 'Incredible Kingfish' would probably be the Southern Democrat closest to the White House during the next four years (Chapter 21, pg. 600)

The polecats seemed indeed to be everywhere in 1933, attacking Huey from every direction. That year there was apparently a dramatic downturn in his prestige and power, so much so that many observers predicted his political demise. The fiercest onslaughts came in Louisiana (Chapter 23, pg. 654)

In January 1934, shortly before he unveiled the Share Our Wealth program to the nation, Huey introduced in the Senate a bill embodying the principal features of his plan - limiting fortunes, inheritances, and income and providing pensions to needy persons over sixty years of age (Chapter 25, pg. 707)

A superb judge of public opinion, he read in the signs a threat to his re-election in 1936, and from associates he received warnings that Huey represented another and more sinister threat: Long was not only a probable presidential contender but also a potential fascist leader. Roosevelt was increasingly inclined to believe the fascist charge (Chapter 28, pg. 795)

By early morning on Tuesday, September 10, it was obvious that Huey was sinking fast. His family was called into the room to witness the end, and at six minutes after four he died, some thirty hours after he had been short and slightly more than a week since he passed his forty-second birthday (Epilogue, pg. 876)



Topics for Discussion

How did Huey Long get his start in politics? What did he run for?

Why did Huey Long spend his life battling Standard Oil?

How did Huey Long use his position at the Railroad Commission to build a power base and make himself known?

Huey Long was impeached on the basis of nineteen charges brought against him. What was the outcome of this situation?

The terms demagogue and mass leader have been used in referring to Huey Long. Would you agree with those labels? Why or why not?

Why were the actions of Huey Long so controversial? What did he do and how? Was he a fascist?

How did Huey Long die? What controversy surrounds his death?