

An American Dynasty:

I remember studying history throughout grade school, high school and college. I loved it. I always went for the advanced classes. I was struck by the fact that from ancient days through the first part of the 20th century almost all Sovereign States were run by, well, Sovereigns. You know, Kings, Queens, Grand Dukes, Crown Princes, Sultans, Caliphs, Emperors and the like. I also remember thinking how really wonderful it is that one has to actually get elected here in the USA to run the show. A bunch of citizens throw their hats in the ring and the rest of the citizens choose one of them to do our bidding. That's our President. The President of the U.S. is one of us, one of us who's elected. No royalty here. No right of succession here. Nope.

Then something whacked me in the back of the head a few days ago. It was Independence Day, the anniversary of our freedom from Royalty.

For the past twenty years (five terms) our Presidents have been named Bush, Clinton, Clinton, Bush and Bush. If Hilary Rodham Clinton is elected, six consecutive presidential terms will have been filled by Bush, Clinton, Clinton, Bush, Bush and Clinton. Hmmm?

On the face of it, and from the purely democratic (small d) point of view I would say that two families seem to be, how can I say it, favored. If this were a study of Europe it would appear that two Royal Houses were simply exercising their predestined prerogative to be in charge. You know, Divine Right of Succession. Hanover anyone? Romanov perhaps? Windsor has a nice ring.

Could it be that the factors which are so important to the election of our President favor so few contestants that we end up with dynasties of our own? Money, name recognition, connection to the Other Families (Kennedys, Tafts, Rockefellers, Byrds etc.) and the simple human need for familiar authority seem to add up to our repeating choices for leader of the nation.

For sure, one of the great things about our Families is that they are from differing sides of the political fracas. They go at it tooth and nail whenever the issue warrants and whenever the cameras are on. It's not like they are all married to each other.

Hold it now. Wait just a second. We may have the genesis of a scheme here. Especially since so many of us seem to want to tell our fellow citizens whom they can, and can't marry. Let's mandate a wedding.

The Florida Bushes have a son, George P. Bush. He apparently is quite a looker. The Clintons have a daughter, Chelsea Clinton, who is now a

powerhouse hedge fund broker on Wall Street. What I'm thinking is that if the two houses would only get together we'd have what we really want after all. We'd have the logical outcome of our last twenty years of voting. We'd have an Official Family ready and willing, trained and able. Just like old Europe.

It's really compelling. We could do away with all this falderal about the financing of campaigns. Heck, we could do away with campaigning altogether. There would be no boring run up to a silly season of primary elections, "Oh mercy, who will Iowa choose?" The heirs to the Presidency wouldn't have to lie about their moral positions or their qualifications. We wouldn't concern ourselves with who raised how much in what quarter as compared to which other campaign. It would be delightfully moot that John was tortured or that Mitt is a Mormon or that Tancredo is an Idiot. Elections are frightfully expensive and only half of us show up anyway. Princess Chelsea and Prince George would just be themselves, Chelsea and George, the inheritors of the Office. No muss, no fuss.

The nation's business would be seamless. We wouldn't need a transition team, just a really thorough cleanup by the White House Staff (legal immigrants, of course). We wouldn't need Cabinet shake-ups. We'd have the same chamber of counselors year after year after heir after heir. Uncles and Aunts, all connected of course, who could run the Government blindfolded. People who know what's best for us and would govern accordingly.

Best of all, it would be so much easier for our schoolchildren to learn the Administrations in the proper order. I still struggle with Jackson before Van Buren, Johnson after Lincoln, which Harrison? If the young heirs succeeded to the Office after Ms. Clinton's second term we would have, serving consecutively, Bush, Clinton, Clinton, Bush, Bush, Clinton, Clinton and Clinton-Bush. Poetry. Eight terms, thirty-two years of B's and C's. I see an "A" in history for every future fifth-grader. No child left behind.

I guess, now that I think about it, we sort of have this system already in place. There's really no need to worry about upsetting the applecart. There's really no need for concern about third party candidates, latecomers or mavericks. There's no reason to fear the Greens, Libertarians, Nader or anyone. Chances are that the same old Houses will finish first again and again. Apparently, it's a House game.