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Friday, Apr. 07, 1961

## Rockin' with Jack

For years, quietly and unsung, workers at the tiny P. & P. Chair Co. in Asheboro, N.C., have turned out rocking chairs for a limited clientele, mostly old ladies and pensioners. Then word got out of a more famous customer: President John F. Kennedy, who has installed a P. & P. chair in his White House office and rocks as he chats with visitors. Last week the creak from Kennedy's rocker was being heard from Maine to California, and thousands of Americans, from housewives to executives, scrambled to buy "a Kennedy rocker" from P. & P.

Kennedy has been using the high, cane-backed rocker since 1955, after an operation for an old back injury. I was recommended by Dr. Janet Travell, who has since become Kennedy's personal White House physician. When questioned about the rocker's presence in the White House, Dr. Travell explained that it "provides gentle, constant exercise and helps prevent muscular fatigue." She added that "a really good rocker is hard to find."

P. & P. is hustling to cash in on the publicity. The company's rockers, made of oak with a specially curved back to increase comfort, had usually been made in a natural light finish, sold for \$24.95. In order to make them look more like Kennedy's chair, which he has had stained. P. & P. has added a chair with a dark, or antique, finish, sells it for \$34.95. President William C. Page, 71, is stepping up production of P. & P.'s Kennedy-type rockers (it also makes chairs and stools) from 200 to 1,500 a month, raising his work force from 20 to 60 workers. Whether or not the rocking chair becomes a symbol of the New Frontier, its newfound popularity gives a boost to at least one Kennedy program: Asheboro's unemployment is about 5% and P. & P. had cut its work force because of the recession.

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