

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project  
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

REMEMBERING WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND

Emelyn Knowland Jewett	My Father's Political Philosophy and Colleagues
Estelle Knowland Johnson	My Father as Senator, Campaigner, and Civic Leader
Paul Manolis	A Friend and Aide Reminisces

Interviews Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser in 1979

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## PREFACE

Covering the years 1953 to 1966, the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., Oral History Series is the second phase of the Governmental History Documentation Project begun by the Regional Oral History Office in 1969. That year inaugurated the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, which produced interviews with Earl Warren and other persons prominent in politics, criminal justice, government administration, and legislation during Warren's California era, 1925 to 1953.

The Knight-Brown series of interviews carries forward the earlier inquiry into the general topics of: the nature of the governor's office, its relationships with the legislature and with its own executive departments, biographical data about Governors Knight and Brown and other leaders of the period, and methods of coping with the rapid social and economic changes of the state. Key issues documented for 1953-1966 were: the rise and decline of the Democratic party, the impact of the California Water Plan, the upheaval of the Vietnam War escalation, the capital punishment controversy, election law changes, new political techniques forced by television and increased activism, reorganization of the executive branch, the growth of federal programs in California, and the rising awareness of minority groups. From a wider view across the twentieth century, the Knight-Brown period marks the final era of California's Progressive period, which was ushered in by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 and which provided for both parties the determining outlines of government organization and political strategy until 1966.

The Warren Era political files, which interviewers had developed cooperatively to provide a systematic background for questions, were updated by the staff to the year 1966 with only a handful of new topics added to the original ninety-one. An effort was made to record in greater detail those more significant events and trends by selecting key participants who represent diverse points of view. Most were queried on a limited number of topics with which they were personally connected; a few narrators who possessed unusual breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. Although the time frame of the series ends at the November 1966 election, when possible the interviews trace events on through that date in order to provide a logical baseline for continuing study of succeeding administrations. Similarly, some narrators whose experience includes the Warren years were questioned on that earlier era as well as the Knight-Brown period.

The present series has been financed by grants from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the office of the Secretary of State, and by some individual donations. Portions of several memoirs were funded partly by the California Women in Politics Project under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including a matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation; the two projects were produced concurrently in this office, a joint effort made feasible by overlap of narrators, topics, and staff expertise.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative direction of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library, and Willa Baum, head of the Office.

Amelia R. Fry, Project Director  
Gabrielle Morris, Project Coordinator

## INTRODUCTION

To augment the interviews with William F. Knowland conducted by Amelia Fry in 1969 and 1973,\* which were curtailed by his death on February 24, 1974, three of the people closest to him were interviewed in 1979: his daughters, Estelle Knowland (Mrs. Richard E.) Johnson, and Emelyn Knowland Jewett; and his aide and close friend, Paul Manolis. Helen Herrick Knowland Whyte, Senator Knowland's first wife, declined to be interviewed; she was ill, and she died on March 8, 1981.

Mrs. Johnson was interviewed in her Oakland penthouse on February 16, 1979. Paul Manolis came to The Bancroft Library to be interviewed in a seminar room on April 24, 1979. The interview with Mrs. Jewett was held in her office at the Oakland Tribune, where she is senior vice president, on June 11, 1979. All three admired Senator Knowland and spoke seriously and thoughtfully to the purpose of illuminating his career and shedding light upon certain apparent contradictions.

There was very little editing by the interviewees. Mrs. Johnson made a few, but very few, changes and additions to the transcript of her interview. Mrs. Jewett made several deletions and several additions. Mr. Manolis let the text of the transcript stand as it was returned to him with only the technical editing corrections made by the interviewer.

All three interviews of these people of a generation after Senator Knowland, recollecting and considering him five years after his death, help fill out the loss of his own further memoirs and give valuable perspective upon his career and the public affairs in which he played an important part.

Ruth Teiser  
Interviewer-editor

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\*See interview with William F. Knowland, "California Republican Politics in the 1930s," in Earl Warren's Campaigns, Volume II, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1977.





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Emelyn Knowland Jewett

MY FATHER'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND COLLEAGUES

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser in 1979

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[Date of Interview: 11 June 1979)##

The 1952 Convention and the Presidency

- Teiser: Shall we begin with the 1952 convention? Were you on the train to the convention? There was said to be a group from California going to the convention. Senator Knowland was not on the train, but others from his group were. Nixon got on at Denver and tried to sway sentiment away from Warren toward Eisenhower.
- Jewett: Yes, it was a delegation that was pledged to Warren when they went there.
- Teiser: Were you there?
- Jewett: I believe I was on that train trip going back there. I have to be candid with you; as I say, I mix up one convention versus another. I do recall that I did attend the convention that you're talking about, and I believe I was on the train. You say that was 1952. That would have been after I was married, and I know my husband did not attend that convention, and so whether or not I actually went on the train I'm not sure. I'm unsure. I have no recollection of Nixon boarding the train or what you were referring to a moment ago.
- Teiser: Were you aware that at that convention your father had been asked to possibly run with Taft?
- Jewett: Yes.
- Teiser: How did that happen? Do you know?
- Jewett: Well, I didn't sit in on any of the meetings of the Republican leaders or the politicians. I do recall being aware, not only from my father telling me, but also from some of the delegates who were friends of mine, telling me that there had been a strong effort to encourage my father to release early on in the convention the Warren-pledged delegates for the expressed purpose of, well, giving them a free choice; but the thought was that there was more support in that delegation for Taft than for any other candidate, and actually I think that my father was a very strong supporter of Taft and would have liked very much to see him nominated as president. But my father was a man of great integrity, and he was pledged to Warren and wouldn't consider releasing the delegation until Warren said [to] release the delegation. And I don't think that Dad necessarily had the strong feeling that there was a real chance of success of Warren receiving the nomination, but you never know when a convention gets into a

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 22.

Jewett: deadlock, and California was a very pivotal block of votes. There was that vague chance that it might have to be worked out, and he felt obligated to hold that delegation together to its pledge until Warren released it.

I was told that Dad had been told and urged that if he did release the delegation that he would be Taft's choice for running mate, and it would have been a good ticket. And, of course, as history shows it, Taft died within four years of that election, and if Dad had been his running mate and if they had been elected, Dad would have become president as the vice president acceding to that position. So it's one of those things that, hindsight, you never know what might have been had circumstances been different. But Dad would have never made a deal to do something that went back on his word and his integrity in order to further his own career. He should have--I mean in my judgment, I think he should have done it because nobody else was watching out for his interests. Why shouldn't he have, because it was the thing he really wanted in life. That man wanted to be President of the United States. He never admitted it publicly, but that's where his whole career was shooting for. That's where he wanted to be. That's where he thoroughly expected to be at some point in his career and this was one of the avenues by which he could have accomplished it.

Teiser: How long ago do you think he conceived that?

Jewett: That he wanted to be President of the United States? I think he conceived it when he was in high school. I think it was a lifetime ambition. I think it was his father's ambition for him. Unlike today, in the forties and fifties and even before then it was not politic, it was not good form, to admit that you wanted to be president. For some reason everyone always felt they had to deny that this was what they wanted to do. And I heard my father deny it, I can't tell you how many times, publicly, in speeches and press conferences. But the truth of the matter is, yes, he did want to be president.

Teiser: Do you think he and his father discussed it?

Jewett: Oh, I'm sure they did, I'm sure they did, and I discussed it with him. I know that he wanted to be president, but it was not the politic thing to state that this was what you wanted to do. If it happened and if you could work your footprints along in the right direction to make it happen, that was the way you did it. I think it's different now. People are not afraid to come out and say, "Yes, I'd like to be considered as a candidate," or "I want to run." They were all reluctant dragons before.

Jewett: I think that another thing that was denied (and maybe I'm going into areas that you don't want, but the thought comes to me), although he never publicly admitted it and although it wasn't the sole reason for his decision to retire from the Senate and run for governor, that was part of his plan. He did feel, even though he denied it publicly, that it was a firmer stepping stone to the presidency from the governorship than it would be from the United States Senate. To my recollection (I could be wrong, you can check the historical facts on this) but I do recall Dad telling me that there--and I don't know whether he said "never"--there never has been, or seldom has been a president at that point in time who had come out of the United States Senate. They had come either from the executive branch of government or from governorships. I don't know, but I think Jack Kennedy was the first Senator that came straight from the Senate into the White House. Then, of course, Goldwater became a candidate, and Nixon, and then there were quite a few, and now the Senate seems to be the breeding ground of presidential candidates.

#### The Decision to Run for Governor

Jewett: But I think that in response to your question of Dad's desire to eventually serve in the White House, the desire was there and part of his reason--although not his main reason, but part of his reason--for running for governor had to do with that desire.

Teiser: What was his main reason?

Jewett: His main reason was as he stated. My recollection--check the record--is that he stated that he had served in the United States Senate thirteen years and he felt that he had made all the contribution he could there and he felt that there were things that he could do in another office, namely the office of governor of California, and he wanted the challenge, and that was valid.

There were personal reasons. Life in Washington was very tough on my mother. This is not unique to the political spectrum of people whose wives have to go through being torn from their families. The husband's first love is his job in Washington. The wife has to make new friends. Her children and grandchildren are out here. The strain of being in a political campaign, being involved in the Washington life--I think he was looking towards, if he could get Mother back in Oakland and in California, their personal life would be better. That was valid.

Jewett: The other stated reason (and this also was true) was that he felt it was important for him to return to California where he could be closer to the family business. My grandfather was getting along in years, he was still active in the business but he was well into his eighties. He was depending more and more upon Dad for business advice. Dad was in Washington. This was a big business, and it required family leadership, and Dad was the only other member of the family who could provide leadership, and so sincerely he felt that if he were in California during this interim period of my grandfather's declining years he could be of more help, and those were honest reasons and those were his publicly stated ones.

Teiser: We have heard that J.R. Knowland was angry when he heard that your father was going to not stand again for the Senate.

Jewett: That is correct. My grandfather told me that too. He felt that Dad was making a dreadful mistake. He told him so personally. He was opposed to my father running for governor--not opposed to him running for governor per se, but at that particular point in time. He felt that Dad was at the pinnacle of his career, that he had a leadership position.

He really did not think he had a chance of being elected in California to the seat of governor. It was going to be a rather exciting primary campaign, to say nothing about the general campaign. He liked my Dad to be a winner. Dad had never been defeated in any election, and he was a shoe-in to be re-elected as Senator, no question. He could have been re-elected if he had stayed in that seat. My grandfather was a political realist. It's true he was opposed to him running. But nevertheless, when the decision was made he supported him in every way that he could. He didn't thwart his candidacy in any way.

Teiser: When he decided to run for governor, do you think he foresaw that Knight would not run against him?

Jewett: No. In fact, Dad never ran away from a fight in his life. Despite all those arguments and speculation about deals and so on and so forth, Dad was disappointed, I think, when Knight changed his mind and decided to run for the Senate. Dad went into this with his eyes wide open. He decided that he wanted to run for governor, he felt that he would be a better governor than Goodie Knight, he believed he could beat whoever the candidate [was] that was put up against him. He did not feel that it was unhealthy to have a primary fight within your own party and select the strongest candidate. He believed in the primary system, and that's



Jewett: what it was all about. And he saw no reason--in fact, he did not allow his supporters to negotiate Knight out of the picture in order to leave a place for Dad.

Teiser: There were and still are, I guess, those who say that a great deal of pressure was put on Knight by Nixon and various others. There are tales of a meeting in Arizona where everybody jumped on Knight and said, "Now, stay out of the governor's race."

Jewett: I don't discount that that may very well be true. But I do say that my father was not behind any pressure to get Knight out of the race. I think that his political supporters may very well have been, or the supporters of both men who didn't want to see these two men running against each other and were afraid of a primary fight, and if I was active in Republican political things I might also have tried to avoid that fight so that you get all the forces rallied behind one candidate. But Dad did not instigate nor support any move to get Knight out of the race.

Teiser: There was also some suggestion that your father might resign before the end of his term so that Knight could appoint himself to the Senate--or some very complicated maneuver. Have you ever heard of this?

Jewett: [pause] You're really digging back into my thoughts, and right now I can't say that I did. I think that it is not to be discounted. Certainly there may have been those who might have suggested, when he had announced he was going to run for governor, that the politic thing to do in order to ease the potential political conflict within the state would have been for him to resign in order to let Knight appoint himself so that Knight could then run as the incumbent. That is rational, and I can see how that would have been, but I also know that Dad believed in the right of the electorate to select their candidates and if, in fact, that question was posed to him which I don't know whether it was or not, but putting myself within his frame of reference and his thinking, I think he would have turned it down on the basis that he was coming into a primary fight and he felt the electorate should have the opportunity to select whoever would serve in his place in the United States Senate. And in all candor, I'm not sure that he really felt that Knight was that strong a personage for either position. Dad would not have considered running against Knight if he had not felt that there was something lacking in Knight's abilities or capabilities.

However, if a Republican had been elected Senator in '58, I believe Dad would have resigned some time between November '58 and January '59, in order to give the new Senator some degree of seniority over the other freshman Senators.

Teiser: Your mother, I think, expressed herself about Knight in a famous letter to Republican leaders.\* Did your father know about that letter before it went out, do you think?

Jewett: I don't know; I really don't know the answer to that. There was very little that Dad didn't know about. However, let's assume that he did know about the letter and let's just assume for the sake of argument that for some reason he objected to the letter. That wouldn't necessarily have stopped Mother from sending it out if she believed it was right. She had been his closest political confidante and ally and supporter all through his marriage and his political life, and she had given him good advice all the way along. She believed certain things were in his best interests and if, in fact, that was another thing--maybe she was wrong, but I don't think she would have been dissuaded from doing what she felt was right for her Billy.

Teiser: [laughs] I remember hearing someone say that at every meeting where your father spoke, your mother was giving him absolutely rapt attention.

Jewett: I think she marveled at the man and his ability to comprehend the major issues. She really did. She was his chief supporter, and it wasn't just a marital thing where you support your husband come hell or high water. She believed; she believed that Billy could be the salvation of this nation and of the world and all those wonderful things that you like to think about of a statesman. Mother wasn't brainwashed into it. She believed, she pushed, she sustained him.

Teiser: The campaign for the governorship--I'm bringing you all the rumors!

Jewett: Well, that's fine. [laughter]

Teiser: The L.A. Times was said to have played a part in your father's decision to run for governor because they wanted a "right to work" candidate. They didn't want Knight because he was too close to labor and so they, in effect, put pressure (through Kyle Palmer possibly) on your father to run. Does that square with anything you know?

Jewett: Again I can't refute it. [pause] My father was not one to be easily pressured by anyone so I would strongly doubt that any single force put pressure upon him to do something that he didn't want to do anyway. In fact, I could almost categorically say that.

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\*Reported in the Los Angeles Times, October 26, 1958.

### The 1958 Campaign and the Issues

Jewett: As far as the "right to work" issue, and undoubtedly you'll have some questions about that, but this thought just comes to me now which I'd like to say. Dad did not select nor want the "right to work" to be the platform or the issue upon which he ran.. He didn't go into the election like that. He didn't expect that to be the issue and he didn't want it to be the issue.

Now, that deserves an explanation. "Right to work" per se, the way it developed, was not a proposal that was developed by or presented by Dad. The way that that came up as an issue in his campaign (there was a "right to work" issue), he preferred to call it voluntary unionism, and that is the way he spoke of it at a press conference some place, and I guess it was after he'd announced for the governorship and he was talking about voluntary unionism. There is a distinction. So much time has passed right now that I can't really tell you what the distinction was between what he called voluntary unionism and what the "right to work" people had as their proposition (18 or whatever it was at that time),\* but there was a distinction.

Dad was asked at a press conference by Clint Mosher of the San Francisco Examiner, I think, did he support the "right to work" issue. His response was, "That is an initiative before the voters of California and that's what the initiative process is all about and I believe that's for the voters of California to determine." Then they proceeded one step further and said, "If the proposition (18?--how can I forget what number it was?) is passed, will you as governor support its implementation?" His response was in the affirmative because he said, "Obviously, if I am governor and this initiative passes I will use everything that's in my office to be sure that mechanically it does work out." Right at that point he was labeled as a supporter of the "right to work" initiative. Now, actually, I imagine he cast a favorable vote for the "right to work" initiative, but he did not politic for it specifically. But he was backed into the corner. The press, especially Mosher, wouldn't let him alone on the issue. He would not go out and say, "I'm opposed to it" because he wasn't. He wouldn't have written the initiative the

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\*Proposition 18 on the ballot.

Jewett: way it was written if he had had the opportunity. He didn't approve thoroughly of the way it was written, and it was not a politic thing to have tried to support at that point in time in California and he knew better than anyone else, but he was saddled with it. It's kind of like have you stopped beating your mother-in-law? There's no right way to answer the question.

Teiser: It seems at this distance that he should have been able to find some other issue to catch the attention of the public. Did anyone ever suggest a way to take the whole thing into another issue?

Jewett: I can't respond to that. Certainly there must have been a lot of discussion about trying to bring up what he considered the more critical issues. Not that this wasn't a critical issue because it was here. I mean it was a critical issue and he wasn't going to back away from it and he was not going to negate--get into an anti-"right to work" thing because he didn't believe that. He certainly wasn't going to refuse to respond to questions that were asked. He tried to be candid and honest and it strangled him in that it was the press and, goodness, what can I say about the press? That's our business. You'd think he would have known better how to handle them being in that business, but he didn't. The press wouldn't let him drop the issue. So as far as other issues, right now--I know there were other issues in that campaign but it was so overshadowed by the "right to work" issue that my memory can't even go back. If you were to refresh my recollection or if I were to read some articles, I'm sure I'd come up with them.

Teiser: A group of women campaigned for your father in his absence.

Jewett: Oh, the girls?

Teiser: Yes. Were you with that group?

Jewett: Indeed I was.

Teiser: What was it like? That was a remarkable--

Jewett: Well, first of all let me explain why that group went out, again, to set history straight. Dad did not resign from the Senate. He still was in the Senate. He felt that he had been elected by the people to serve as the United States Senator and it was a very critical time in Senate business. They were meeting through the summer and fall. As I recall, they only took a two-week recess around election time and then at Christmas time. It was one of those years when the Senate met right through the summer instead of taking a long period of time off, and how in the heck was he going to campaign? He felt that his obligation was to be in

Jewett: Washington. I do recall sitting in meetings with some of his political advisors in our home in Piedmont (Guilford Road) and they were really pressuring him [that] he had to take more time out of Washington to be out here to campaign, and he said, "And then I'm subject to criticism for not doing the job to which I've already been elected; no, I will just have to make speeches when I can and let my message be carried by others."

Teiser: I'll interrupt to ask who were these advisors; do you recall?

Jewett: I can't recall.

Out of that meeting in the house came a suggestion that at least publicity could be developed for his campaign if his wife and daughters went on some sort of a tour that would draw together with Republican women's groups and things to give publicity in various communities. So it was a way of keeping his campaign alive. The decision was made and in a very short time the bus tour was set up and the kick-off was down in Los Angeles on May Day, as I recall. This was for the primary campaign. We went on a bus for thirty days, and it was rigorous. It truly was. There was my mother, my sister, myself, and my sister-in-law (my brother's wife)--the four of us girls.

We had a good time doing it. Maybe we got a little flip during the thing. Remember, we were all young. We were all in our early twenties. Mother was attractive and articulate. She was the spokesperson, and she was a good speechmaker and she knew Dad's issues and his position and she could speak as if she were he. So the meetings were fruitful. People could ask questions about Dad's positions and Mother responded to them. We three girls were just there. It was always popular to show off your family in a strong family unit. Then we got a little silly on the bus a few times and began making up songs and we would sing songs out of the bus and suddenly people--my sister-in-law is quite musical and good at the piano, and we'd make up ditties that went to familiar refrains and we'd write our own words, and suddenly we were being asked at all of these meetings to sing the songs at the end. Suddenly we got the words printed up and the whole audience was singing them. Hindsight being what it is, maybe that wasn't the image that my father and the people expected, I don't know. But it at least made the passage of those thirty days a little more pleasant for us young folks that were on the bus tour.

Teiser: Was it hard for the women to get the attention and the respect of the men in the county organizations?

Jewett: Oh, heaven's no, heaven's no! You'd have to ask my mother--you don't know my mother if you ask that. Mother's a very bright, very attractive, articulate, feminine woman. She had been at my father's side all through his career. She knew as many of the political leaders and politicians in the state as he did. She was warmly received everywhere, treated on a par not just because she was his wife but because she was a bright, intellectual, intelligent person. No, there was no problem of her gaining the ear of anyone she wanted to gain the ear of. [laughter]

Teiser: Then in the course of the whole campaign did it appear that it was going to end in defeat?

Jewett: Well, I can recall November whatever-it-was, the day of the election, when he was defeated. We went over to the headquarters in San Francisco and his concession speech was made. I know what my thoughts were. Maybe sometimes you just don't listen to the winds of progress that are out there because certainly I had friends who would tell me, "Your father just doesn't have a chance. This 'right to work' issue is going to kill him." I didn't believe it. I didn't believe it. I don't think Dad believed it. Dad thought he was going to win that election. He knew it was a tough battle, but he didn't believe he would be defeated.

Teiser: Up to the last minute?

Jewett: Those were sincere tears in the eyes of my father that night. He hadn't really been prepared for defeat. As his daughter, obviously I shared the same concern. Now, I think his political advisors and his supporters and the Republican people throughout the state sensed the defeat, but my father didn't. He was a winner. He had never been defeated in anything in his life and he couldn't bring himself to see the possibility of defeat. So I don't think he expected that defeat until election day.

Teiser: After the primary there was a shake-up in his campaign organization. Do you remember that? Ed Shattuck was replaced as its chairman.

Jewett: No, I remember Ed Shattuck very well. Maybe if you tell me who he was replaced by it might help me. [pause] No, I can't help you with that.

Teiser: It sounded as if after the primary someone realized a need for a realignment.

Jewett: Well, that may very well be. I don't know.

Teiser: Let me go back to the Republican National Convention of 1952 for a moment. At the time that it became apparent at the convention that Eisenhower would win the nomination, it has been said that your father attempted right away to get the attention of the chairman and vote California for him, since it was apparent that Governor Warren would not win--and that he tried but failed to get the chairman to recognize him. Were you there? Do you remember that?

Jewett: If you say so that may be right. That didn't seem to me to be-- obviously once the thing is a fait accompli everybody is scrambling to get on the bandwagon, and if that's what you are saying he was trying to do I won't dispute it.

Teiser: No, I don't know that he was. It was just a question.

Jewett: I don't know. I don't know.

#### Giving Oakland Leadership

Teiser: Following 1958 then, he returned to the newspaper.

Jewett: That's correct. He came in and really took charge--although his title here at the Tribune was assistant publisher, because my grandfather was still alive and then lived until 1966. Dad really took over the active management of the paper, but more importantly he jumped into the community of Oakland with the same enthusiasm and sense of importance that he had devoted to international and national affairs; which gave a tremendous boost in the arm to the local chamber of commerce, to things that were going on here in Oakland. Imagine a man of his stature suddenly taking an interest in things in the city which seems like small potatoes to what he'd been involved in. But there was never anything that that man did that he did half-way.

I am very much involved in the community myself. I'm very active. More and more, I realize what a tremendous effect Dad had on things that were positive, such as the formulation of the New Oakland Committee. It was a time in the early sixties, late fifties, when Oakland was said to possibly be another Watts in the future. The Watts thing had gone on, [and there was] Oakland with its high concentration of dissatisfied, unemployed minorities, lack of communication between free enterprise and the unemployed and city government, and so on and so forth. My dad agreed to sit down with the black leaders and the labor people and the city

Jewett: officials in this community and said, "Hey, this city is precious and we cannot allow a riot or something of that nature to develop in this city. Let's sit down at the table and discuss our differences and how we can help each other."

In fact, he and Edgar Kaiser and a couple of others, the big men of this town, sat down at a table with the Baptist minister and the head of whatever neighborhood district of East Oakland and so on and so forth, all on a par, all discussing what should be done, and out of this was born the New Oakland Committee [NOC] which had representatives from the major businesses, from small business, from the unemployed, from the ethnic communities. Edgar Kaiser and Bill Knowland were just two of many that actually served and attended all these meetings and held Oakland together. And that New Oakland Committee still exists and operates, and it was born out of his ability to see that this was necessary.

His support of and aid in getting the Oakland Coliseum established. He served as president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, and many positive things were happening in Oakland at that time, and actually it was after his terms of office and going off the board that the Chamber things kind of began to slip. It had such a strong leader that nobody could really fill his shoes locally is what happened, and we suffered as a result of it. But he did throw himself one thousand percent into community affairs and made his office open to everyone who felt they had a vested interest in Oakland, to see if compromises couldn't be worked out in order to keep the lid on the potential of riotous conflict that everyone really thought would come to Oakland, but didn't come.

Teiser: Then gradually he returned to active politics?

Jewett: Well, Dad never lost his interest in politics. When something is that deeply ingrained in you, how can you? Dad was terribly hurt by the defeat. It was an emotional scar on him that frankly never healed. He never had the desire to run for public office again. Because he stated right then, "I've had it in public office," and that's an over-reaction to the scar of defeat. He over-reacted to his defeat. He had less clout when he wasn't going to be a candidate himself in the future, and I think that he suffered some from realizing that his clout really wasn't as prominent as it had been when he had been the United States Senator. People turned elsewhere for leadership. He was still very popular and invited on the speaking circuit. Certainly he supported Goldwater, and he was still involved in the delegation the next



Jewett: time around. But it wasn't in the same perspective that he had been when he was on top of the crop so to speak. He never lost his interest in politics, but he did lose his interest in actively playing a role in politics. He didn't seek it and he wasn't sought after.

Teiser: It was said that he was, however, important in Goldwater's campaign against Rockefeller.

Jewett: Yes, they spoke the same language. That's right, I think that is true. Yes, well, he did. Obviously, you don't just drop off of the face of the map. But it was because it was Goldwater, and because of the positions that Goldwater stood for, which were essentially the same thoughts and positions that my father had. It was very easy for him to be a supporter of Goldwater and very logical. Had Goldwater been elected I suppose there is a high sense of probability that Dad might have been selected for Goldwater's cabinet in some form or other, although I can candidly say I never heard that discussed. In which case his career might have started out in another cycle.

Richard M. Nixon

Teiser: I wanted to ask something about Nixon. Let me turn this tape over.  
##

Teiser: Early on, I think they worked together moderately well, didn't they?

Jewett: Well, that depends on what you call early on. My first recollection of Nixon--I know he was in the House of Representatives first and I am aware of his business on the Alger Hiss case and all that. Then he ran for Senator and became the elected junior Senator from California. So he and Dad were compatriots in the United States Senate. I guess I would have to agree that during those early years in the Senate they worked well together. They didn't always agree on the same issues, but who does?

We're talking history now, so let's be candid. I think that it is fair to say, and it has been said, that Dad didn't trust Nixon even from the early years, and that I think is true. I think it's a fair statement that he never publicly washed that linen, but he watched very carefully what Nixon was up to. I think they had a good working relationship as far as the business activities in the Senate were concerned. Dad did some things that

Jewett: were contrary to this thing that I say was a lack of trust in Nixon. But again, you have to understand Dad and his sense of morality--that even if you don't like or trust someone, if they're getting a bad rap they're not responsible for, Dad doesn't feel they should be hung on that issue; hang them on the issues that they're really responsible for.

That brings me to whenever it was--I guess it was the '56 election when--what was the problem Nixon got into that they were thinking of dumping him as the vice presidential candidate? I can't even remember what the issue was about. I remember Nixon flying in suddenly when the word was out that maybe Eisenhower wouldn't keep him on as the vice presidential candidate.

Teiser: Was it something like that cloth coat speech?

Jewett: It was something that really was not important but it became a big issue. There was serious pressure, I believe, on Eisenhower to get rid of Nixon and it wasn't just the cloth coat issue.\* It was [sighs] a general lack--[a] distrust of his integrity, and they were using the cloth coat issue kind of as a way of getting this thing out of the spectrum.

Teiser: There was a possibility that your father--

Jewett: There was a statement at that time and I heard it, I read it in the press, I heard it directly from my dad that the statement was, "Nixon's strength is that he's from California; let's dump Nixon and put Knowland on the ticket with Eisenhower." You might ask me a question about that later because I can tell you what my father had told me about Eisenhower's discussion on that.

But what I wanted to relay to you was that when Nixon came into San Francisco Airport from wherever he had been traveling when the issue hit, my dad greeted him. Nixon wept. In fact, there's a picture some place in archives of Nixon weeping on my dad's shoulder, Dad comforting him and assuring him that everything's going to be all right--and here was the loyal supporter of the vice president that was going to support him through this thing. Dad did that because he didn't believe this was the issue upon which Nixon should be thrown out and that the man deserved support at this time on that issue. But that did not mean that there was a lasting close friendship and alliance there. That was not so, but it was an incident.

---

\*The cloth coat speech was made in 1952 in reaction to a reported secret Nixon fund. In 1956, there were concerns that Nixon was not electable and considerable intraparty Republican strife. See Totton Anderson, "The 1956 Election in California," Western Political Quarterly, March 1957, and T.H. White, "The Gentlemen from California," Collier's, February 3, 1956.

Jewett: I don't know that this is true or not, except I never knew my father to tell me a falsehood; I don't know whether in my youth and exuberance and confidence in my dad I misinterpreted the remarks that he made to me, but I remember where it was, not precisely when, but it was during the time precedent to the second Eisenhower term when Eisenhower was going to be renominated, and would or would it not be Nixon? My father told me that Eisenhower had called him into the oval office in Washington and had discussed with him the possibility of his being the nominee. This, I believe, was even before this dreadful incident, whatever it was, that raised the furor about Nixon.

Dad said, "Emelyn, I just don't know what the future is going to be on this. If my president asks me to stand, obviously I would do so." He was reticent to accept that offer if in fact it was an offer that was made--I think it was more of an exploring of the possibility, the political implications and such, rather than an offer. But the conversation came up. He said, "My hesitancy is again the vice presidency, unless the president passes on, is not the greatest steppingstone to the White House. There are very few men who have ever succeeded to the presidency who served as vice president, unless they succeeded to it by virtue of their office when the president died. It was more or less a being put out to pasture. I would take it if Eisenhower asked me to because I would do anything that my president asked me to do, but I would not seek the vice presidency under Eisenhower."

Now, I remember that conversation very well. We were in the car riding the Richmond-San Rafael ferry from across the bay to Oakland, and that was our conversation in the car. He said, "But history may do strange things. It will be interesting to watch what happens at this next convention." So that is just a little side comment to something I recall.

Teiser: Then, however, later on your father sort of passively supported Nixon in his campaign for the presidency?

Jewett: He supported the party slate.

Teiser: Do you think that Nixon had a long range plan?

Jewett: Do you mean a long range plan to get the presidency? Certainly. Remember, I was never privy to Nixon's inner thoughts but, yes, I believe that, and I believe it because whether or not Nixon stated it I think that that was his goal, just as I candidly tell you it was my father's goal. I don't see anything wrong with having that as your goal. Nixon tended to select strange bedfellows at the time, and his supporters which were not necessarily the

Jewett: type of supporters that Dad would always want to have. They certainly had differing opinions on a variety of things. They didn't travel in the same political thought circles or political-person circles. Although there were some political supporters who supported both of them, people were either Nixon loyalists or Knowland loyalists and very strong one way or the other. Very few were equally supportive of those men, and I think it was because of their different personalities but more importantly because of their stances on different issues. Dad was definitely more conservative in his thinking. Nixon was more liberal or moderate or whatever the terminology was that we used in those days. Dad was straightforward and honest and candid, and when he made a statement it was based upon his true beliefs. Nixon was a political expedient. I think my dad saw through him and didn't admire him because of that, because Nixon would take sides on issues based upon what was going to help Nixon. Dad took an issue based upon what he felt was right whether it would hurt him or not. That was the difference in the two men, and it wasn't easily reconcilable.

#### Supporters and Friends

Teiser: You mentioned your father's political supporters. Who were the chief people around him with whom he discussed political matters?

Jewett: Gee, I would think you would have all of that in your files that are out there. I just can't dig back. I remember names--Ed Shattuck--what was the fellow's name?

Teiser: Tom Caldecott was one.

Jewett: Oh, Tom Caldecott, yes. Phil Wilkins in Sacramento. Gardiner Johnson. Oh, there were so many that I can't--

Teiser: There were no key figures?

Jewett: Well, I think they all were key, but he was a team player. He didn't have a single, most important--he didn't have, for instance, a single, strong, major financial contributor that was running his campaign that was his main advisor, if you're looking for that type of a thing. Unlike some candidates who were really almost beholden to their key source of financial support.

Teiser: Some people have only two or three men, who come and play cards with them and that sort of thing.

Jewett: No, my father did not. Dad had very few close friends, I mean truly friends. Admirers--oh--they came out of the woodwork. Supporters, admirers, yes, but friends as we would define friendship--a friendship is a two-way street. You have to give as much as you get, and Dad had only time for his job, his country, his politics. He was not a good friend to people, but he was loyal to people he was friendly to. But there's a difference. Many men have really close friends. When Dad died we tried--who were Dad's closest friends? The family were his closest friends, and Mr. [Paul] Manolis who was his employee was his closest friend. Other than that, they were associates, admirers of him, you name it. But close friends, no, because he did not open up and expose himself as you do to a friend. He didn't let his inner self be known by people. He was known as the great stone face. People said he had no personality, that he was all business. Well, he did have personality. He had a wonderful sense of humor, but he didn't expose it publicly.

Teiser: You said your mother gave him advice.

Jewett: Yes, she was his best friend until their marriage broke apart. There was no question about it. In fact, she sometimes--funny, laughing, sense of humor. Within the family confines, Mother was referred to as his "brutal friend" because she was also his greatest critic, and she would candidly tell him what other people were afraid to tell him. She never minced words, she never covered up things to him. If he was wrong, by God, she told him really and he'd listen a lot of the times--most of the time he'd listen to her and he'd take it from her. So she was lovingly called his "brutal friend." [laughter]

Teiser: Did Mr. Manolis give him advice?

Jewett: No, I don't think so. Mr. Manolis was more a sounding board. He was a friend you could talk to, sound things out, discuss, but I don't think Paul really gave him advice. I think there are many who thought Paul gave him advice, but Dad wasn't one to take a lot of advice from other people. He'd explore thoughts with Paul.

Teiser: Did you give him advice?

Jewett: I don't know that I ever gave my dad any advice. I was very close to him. He'd discuss practically anything that was on his mind with me, but I think I acted more as a sounding board too. I'd ask questions. I'd ask why this, why that. But I'd very seldom (with one or two exceptions that were more of a personal nature) very seldom argued with him on the stands he was taking because

Jewett: once he explained why he had a position I agreed with it. I was easily brainwashed by my dad. I absolutely felt he was right about everything and I still believe he was. [laughter]

Teiser: I understand that there was a change in your father's and Governor Warren's relationship in later years. Can you explain it?

Jewett: I think so. First of all, let me say I cannot recall ever hearing my father, even in the confines of the household and even to me whom he confided in a great deal, ever truly be critical of Earl Warren. However, I know that the feeling of closeness that the two men shared, which had been about as close as--I would say that in the early years, Earl Warren came as close to being a friend to Dad and vice versa as Dad ever had. But when Earl went on the Supreme Court, either Earl changed or his true colors came out that had been deeply hidden before. Decisions that he made on the Supreme Court were not at all in keeping with the type of thinking that he had had when he was governor. I think my father found it hard to understand. They never had a falling out, but they grew apart. Number one, my father is not an attorney, and their relationship was no longer--Earl was no longer political once he got on to the Supreme Court. I think my father and my mother--oddly enough, maybe my mother more than Dad--were singly among the most important elements that got Earl Warren his appointment to the Supreme Court. This demonstrates the closeness which our family unit felt for Earl Warren up until the time he got on the court. But I would say within a year's time, two years at the most, that after Earl was on the court, as I say, he either changed his philosophy, or a hidden or buried thought pattern that had not evolved during his political years came forth, and I never knew which it was. But I do know that this changed the relationship between the men.

However, my friendship with the Warren family has remained throughout the years. Virginia and I were very close friends. We developed our friendship because of our fathers' positions. She was a bridesmaid for me. I talked to her just a month ago, and I still feel a very close relationship to Nina and to the girls. [pause] Dad felt a very strong personal relationship to Earl, right up until their deaths. I'm trying to think--let's see, Earl died after Dad did. Earl Warren's death and Nixon's resignation, all that came along within a year after Dad died, and so that was the end of the era there.

I came to the Tribune right after Dad died. I hadn't worked here before and I came in as president of the company. I remember the first year, my office was down on the second floor, and I remember sitting at my typewriter, and I believe it was the day

Jewett: that Earl Warren had died, not the day that Nixon resigned. But it was one of those two days, and I guess the Nixon troubles were going on and Earl died and I sat down and typed out about a three or four-page chapter of the book I'm going to write some day as to what I feel my father's thoughts would have been on that day, and I was calling it "The End of an Era" because the three main Californians had all come to their demise one way or another during that year's time--Dad's suicide, Nixon's almost impeachment (and I guess it was impeachment that was being discussed at that time), and Earl Warren passing away. I felt very emotional about the passing of history. Whether that was late '74 or early '75 I can't remember.\*

Teiser: I hope you are going to write this book.

Jewett: Oh, I've got chapters but I don't know quite how to put it together and what kind of a book it should be. It just keeps going on and on and on. It's going to be a saga by the time I get through with it. [laughs]

Teiser: Well, we're very grateful to you for being so candid and informative. Is there anything that you would like to add?

Jewett: No, except that I'm remembering one thing in the '58 campaign that you haven't asked me a question about, and it was really kind of humorous, on the primary election for the Senate. Knight was the candidate against George Christopher. My father had steadfastly refused to take a position of endorsement of either of them in that race, as you may note. But the press was constantly upon him: "Which one do you support? Will you have an obligation to support [one]?" Dad said, "No, I don't. I feel that the primary election is for"--you know the same old statement, "It's for the people to decide, the candidates sell themselves, and I will cast my vote in the privacy of the ballot box as is mandated in the election code." While we were on the bus tour, we girls, Mother was asked to go on some talk show down in Los Angeles, a political interview thing. She had gotten laryngitis at the last minute and she'd taken lozenges and sprayed her throat and had a doctor, and she just plain couldn't talk. Well, you can't go on a television talk show if you can't talk, right? Yet the show was scheduled and they wanted it to be on Knowland and somebody from the campaign tour, so guess who was elected to go on and take the interviewing?

---

\*Earl Warren died on July 9, 1974.

Jewett: Well, I'd learned enough about everything that Mother said on the tour and I'm not afraid to speak up. I've always been comfortable on my feet and in interview situations, so I agreed to go on. I was a little nervous, I'll admit, getting all my make-up and everything. I can't remember who the interviewer was, but it was someone whose name was--it wasn't a Johnny Carson [laughs]--but it was that type of thing. Sitting out in the audience were all of the people that were leading us around on this bus tour. I remember Mrs. [Gladys] O'Donnell who is chairman of the--I think she was a Republican national committeewoman or she was chairman or vice chairman of the Republican State Central Committee or something. She was kind of head cheerleader on our bus tour, and there were a couple of others--Mary Something-or-Other whose name escapes me now--they were there. We had twenty women out in the audience--everybody except my mother who was home in bed or at the hotel in bed.

Almost the last question that the interviewer asked me was, "Who is your father going to support for the Republican nomination for the Senate?" I said, "My father is not stating who he is supporting. That I can't answer." Then he looked at me and he said, "Who are you supporting?" I said, "Well, I don't think it's appropriate--I'm not actively supporting either candidate." "Well, certainly you know who you're going to vote for." (By now it was within two or three weeks of the election.) I said, "Yes, I know who I'm going to vote for." They said, "Do you only vote the way your father tells you to?" I said, "No, I'm a free thinker although I usually agree with his philosophy." "Have you discussed who you're going to vote for with your father? Do you know who he's going to vote for?" The answer was, "No, I really didn't know whether Dad was going to vote for Christopher or Knight." I don't know to this day who he voted for, as a matter of fact. But in that interview this guy--as newsmen can do--pushed me into a corner and asked me a question in such a way as, "Don't you have a free-thinking mind? Are you too afraid of your father to speak out and say who you are going to vote for?"

Finally I got mad and I said, "Of course, I'm not afraid." They said, "Well, who are you going to vote for?" I said, "George Christopher." Well, I wish you could have seen the women in the audience--"Oh, my God, she's done it!" [laughter] Dad was in Washington at that time. We went back to the hotel and, God, they gave me hell. [raps hand for emphasis] They said, "You certainly have enough political sense to know that you shouldn't have done that." I said, "I felt backed into a corner and I didn't know how else to handle it. My dad had always told me, 'Be honest; if all else fails, be honest.'" And so I was.



Jewett: We got back to the hotel and immediately they put in a call to Washington to Dad to tell him "the cat's out of the box; your dumb daughter has come out and said she's supporting--" And sure enough, the next day in the press it was "Knowland's Daughter Supports George Christopher." I did vote for George Christopher. When the political people that were with us asked Dad, "What shall we do? You have to make a statement and disavow your daughter's endorsement," Dad said, "No, I've brought my children up to be free thinkers and if indeed she supports George Christopher she has a right to say so and I would never hasten to negate what she said publicly. That's her position. She didn't speak to my position. Let it stand. I will not issue a press statement denying it."

I suspect that Dad may have voted for George Christopher, too, but I really don't know. But it was kind of one of those funny asides that happened. [laughs] Well, win a few, lose a few. I don't know.

Teiser: Well, we do thank you very much for sharing these various thoughts.

Jewett: Okay, I was happy to.

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## TAPE GUIDE -- Emelyn Knowland Jewett

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Estelle Knowland Johnson

MY FATHER AS SENATOR, CAMPAIGNER, AND CIVIC LEADER

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser in 1979

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[Date of interview: 16 February 1979]##

The 1952 Election

Teiser: We were discussing a moment ago the 1952 election of your father, which he won by the greatest majority--

Johnson: --majority of any other state elected official in the history of California. It was in excess of a million votes, which was a tremendous margin in those days, with that population, twenty-five, twenty-six, or whatever, years ago.

He did so, I think, with the capability the candidates had in those days of cross-filing. That is, as a Republican he could also have his name appear on the Democratic primary ballot, not labelled as a Republican. There was no party label. Therefore, people voted for William F. Knowland, incumbent Senator, not for a Republican or anything else. Of course, everybody in either party had the advantage of that.

It was a tremendous sweep, no question.

Teiser: Was your father surprised?

Johnson: No! Oh no, he expected that. I don't think he was surprised. I think he was terribly proud of his margin, because it was an historical marker as far as numbers go. His support was strong in northern California too, which of course has traditionally been a weak area for Republicans, so it was a statewide endorsement.

Teiser: And you connected that with the end, finally, of cross-filing?

Johnson: I believe so, because it was during that. I'm not sure when the state legislature repealed it. It was not a repeal specifically, but it was certainly-- Cross-filing was no longer in effect in 1958. I don't believe that it was. I think it was a closed primary.\* Therefore I would have to guess, anyway, that there might be some correlation between the landslide by a minority candidate having some impact on the removal of the mechanism by which a minority candidate could win by a landslide--which was the elimination of the cross-filing opportunity in party politics.

Teiser: That's an interesting connection.

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\*It was abolished in 1959, according to the records. Nineteen fifty-eight was the last primary in which the candidates cross-filed.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 22.

Johnson: It would be interesting to see, if it could be checked out, who in the legislature sponsored the bill and supported it, and the exact timing. My memory is that the '58 primary was a closed primary, not an open. I know in '46 cross-filing was allowed.

Teiser: Yes. Your father's majority was not as great in '46, but of course he wasn't as well known.

Johnson: No. I don't remember if that was a squeaker, or if that was a substantial victory,\* but it was nothing as it was in '52.

Of course in '52, he was probably at the height of his national popularity, or recognition anyway, with his role as party leader, and his positions, which were vocal in those days since Korea had broken out, and the islands of the Pacific and so forth, as well as the support he was giving to the development of early civil rights law. Which wouldn't necessarily make him a household word in those days, but these were things he was dedicated to and worked hard at, and let people know what he thought about.

#### The 1957 Decision Not to Run Again for the Senate

Teiser: When it came time to run again for another term, he decided against it. And someone has suggested that what was considered was that he should resign before the end of his term--

Johnson: Oh, yes, what was it--so that--who was in the Sacramento state house?

Teiser: So that Knight would be named to fill out the term--how did it go?

Johnson: You're close. I remember those stories. It was that if there were vacancies, then the governor would have the right to appoint to fill the vacancy.

Teiser: That Knight would be out of the way, and your father could walk in as governor, or something of that sort--

Johnson: No. The story was, I thought, that Knight wanted to appoint himself to the senate, so that he wouldn't be out of a job.

Teiser: That's right.

---

\*It was a substantial victory; he defeated Will Rogers, Jr. by more than 260,000 votes.

Johnson: Yes. It was never considered by my father.

Teiser: I don't suppose it would have been true to character?

Johnson: No. We used to laugh about it because it got so convoluted. You know the machinations. How in the world would Governor Knight appoint himself a senator, which he theoretically could do. Of course, how could anyone do it? No, that was never considered seriously.

Teiser: Didn't it involve his stepping down and having the lieutenant governor then succeed him and appoint him?

Johnson: He probably would have to have done that.

Teiser: Your father's decision to leave the Senate remains a mystery, because I suppose nobody ever has a simple single answer to why they do things. Can you theorize about the various circumstances that caused him to decide to run for governor, rather than continuing in the Senate?

Johnson: Yes. I fortunately had the summer of 1956 with him in Washington, and it was during that summer that he began serious consideration of retiring from the Senate and running for the governorship. I believe I do have an understanding of what he thought his reasons were, what he expressed to me, anyway, what his reasons were at that time. There may have been other factors. Of course, nothing is ever completely simple.

I think his reasoning was incorrect, because I think he didn't have enough accurate data, but he believed that in American history no one--and this is what's incorrect, no one--had gotten to the White House directly from the Senate. They got to the White House from the state house. Therefore, having the platform of governor of California would be a stronger avenue to winning a convention nomination than a seat in the Senate.

Teiser: Someone said that he thought it would be a weak place to start from minority leader of the Senate.

Johnson: What was there you could do unless change parties!

Teiser: Or waited it out. It seemed that he was the kind of optimist who, if that had been his theory, would have been willing to wait it out until his minority situation changed, rather than waiting it out in Sacramento.

Johnson: I've never heard that quote or statement before. I don't know. Practically speaking, in those days the minority leader was the fourth most important person in the government, so it's hardly a weak platform.

Johnson: Dad was a wide reader of American history and biography, but he was not, of course, completely correct that no one had ever moved on from the Senate, let alone from party leadership in the Senate.

Teiser: I suppose it was true that more often--

Johnson: Statistically yes, no question about that, but it was not without some merit. Of course, all that's changed since then. The Senators seem to be the people who do come up to the forefront, not the governors.

Teiser: Your father had plenty of experience in the California legislature, so he knew Sacramento. It seems logical from that point of view to come back.

Johnson: Well, we had a history of very powerful governors in California preceeding him. Earl Warren, of course, who was a very strong national figure, particularly after he acceded to the court. Strong--that sounds judgmental. I don't necessarily think he was a strong governor of California, but he did hold a seat of tremendous influence and power in this state, and as a result even though California wasn't the state in the nation in those days, it was getting there. And Warren's tenure was impressive. Herbert Hoover, and people who had come from California really had a power base, so the establishment of a relationship between California and the figure was an important identification, it seemed then, in '58.

Teiser: Well, you knew then something of this apparently before anyone else did.

Johnson: It's possible, except I would think Mr. [Paul] Manolis, whom you'll be interviewing later, would have perhaps known this and discussed it with him probably at good length. Probably Jim Gleason too, whom you said you might be able to interview in Washington. He'd be well worth it, because Jim would have been privy, maybe not at the beginning, as I was at home, but certainly the idea jelled. He would give you more insight if he chooses to. Maybe I'm all wet, but I don't believe so.

Teiser: It has been written frequently that he did not confer with party people prior to his decision, that his announcement came as a surprise.

Johnson: The party people in California? In general? In Washington or California?

Teiser: Both.

Johnson: That's possible.

Teiser: You don't specifically know?

Johnson: I don't remember in a positive way his ever having conversations with other political people, whether they were his confreres in the Senate, or people here, other than, I would say, his close staff, and successively, the rest of the family.

### The 1958 Campaign for Governor

Teiser: I think the election itself has been fairly fully discussed, but you may have insights into it. I know that your mother, and was it your sister--

Johnson: --and sister-in-law and myself--

Teiser: --were all on the state--

Johnson: --were all on the Bill Knowland Special Greyhound Bus. [laughter]

Teiser: I've heard about that.

Johnson: I have some photographs, I think, in the back, of the campaign. They were absolutely fascinating. It was quite a trek.

Teiser: It must have been. Speaking of historical precedents, has anything like that ever been done before?

Johnson: No, and I didn't think it would ever be done again either! [laughter] I cannot speak for my mother, and as you know she felt that she could not take part in the interview, but I do know that there were times during the campaign, and certainly afterwards as we reflected back, that perhaps we did more harm than good. We have no idea. [laughter]

The campaign was kicked off at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, with live elephants, and balloons. (A baby elephant, of course.) But it was something, and from there it was six straight weeks without a break on the road, three, four, five cities a day.

Teiser: Who managed it? Who co-ordinated your activities?

Johnson: Paul Manolis was our advance man, and I guess he was actually our logistical manager. We were in Paul's hands to get from place to place. Gladys O'Donnell was the Republican National Committeewoman in those days, and she did travel with us the entire campaign, as did a number of other party officials, depending on which part of the state we were in. A person from the state committee, I mean,

Johnson: would come in and help us out. The different county chairmen would always ride with us when we were in a particular county. But Gladys was very important in the logistics and set-up of the campaign also.

Now, whoever the professional management was, I don't remember. There would have been professional agency people, I'm sure, involved statewide, but I don't know who they were.

Teiser: You had a very strong issue to discuss. Did you spend most of your time on the "right to work" issue, or did you just speak about your father's record in general? You talked, I suppose, to groups?

Johnson: Oh, yes.

Teiser: What was the general tenor of your talks?

Johnson: I think the general tenor of the talk was a request for indulgence from the audience that Dad was not there because he was in Washington working on vital legislation, which he was. He was frankly unable to join us more than probably a day each week in the campaign, which was too bad, of course. That had to have a tremendous effect on the campaign, regardless of all the effort we put out.

When the campaign had its early start in San Francisco, there was a press conference, which was attended, in those days, mostly by newspaper reporters. Clint Mosher of the Examiner asked Dad his opinion of the initiative, which was known as the "right to work" law,\* if it did become enacted. Frankly, that question caught Dad seriously off balance, I think, because it was quite unexpected. The ballot issue, I think, had just qualified. It was not widely understood or known, and this I think was probably quite early. I don't even think the campaign itself had begun--yes, it had, because this was our first week north, and it was the first big press conference in San Francisco. We were underway.

I don't remember the exact words of Dad's response, but it was something that would be very in keeping with his principal position that a person should have the right to be employed, whether one did or did not belong to a union. One should not be denied the right to be employed because one did not choose to belong in the union. That was a position he had held for years.

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\*It was on the ballot as Proposition 18.

Johnson: Dad's response was taken to be an automatic, complete endorsement of the proposition, and the campaign and the proposition became intertwined after that. We did spend a great deal of time trying to keep separate that issue from Dad's campaign, and it was not possible.

Additionally, [there was] the weakness of having four women out on the road campaigning for the candidate, no matter how charming and hardworking and so forth, we were. [laughter]

We didn't specifically speak on issues, whether they were legislative issues that were being worked on in Washington, or political issues, or social issues in California, taking the position that we were not the candidate. We were representing him, doing our best to show the enthusiasm of the campaign, to gain support for the election, but we did not represent ourselves as experts or spokesmen for the candidate--spokeswomen.

Teiser: When your father joined you, did he answer questions further, and take substantive positions on questions, or did he just speak and rush back to Washington?

Johnson: I'm trying to think of the times when he was with us. I remember one time was in Sacramento, and it was an address. But there would be a press conference accompanying the address.

The way the format would be set up there might be a reception. He didn't have the time to do the things like the shopping centers, and so forth; that was up to us. But it would be a convention hall, a conference, a major meeting, usually with a reception to meet the people, at least who organized it, if not all the people who were there, time allowing. There was the address and always questions from the floor. His format always included an open forum, for maybe a brief period of time, and as often as possible a press conference. Of course one of the reasons he was in the West was to get the newspaper and television coverage. You had to have a press conference; the speech itself wouldn't make the news.

Teiser: Was there any feeling at all that the combination of the Los Angeles Times and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association backing worked to his detriment?

Johnson: Well, to this degree-- No, not specifically, because everyone who is a Republican in this state would like to have such support. So, no, I don't think so.

But I think what happened in that year was that, with the exception of the Teamsters Union, who did support Dad publicly, the proposition itself on "right to work," with which Dad campaigned, became linked.

Johnson: It did more in the history of California, and perhaps in the history of the country, to solidify organized labor. The corollary to that is that those who were supported by, or supported, business--you know, if you're not with me, you're against me--it was a very simple division, I think, caused by the tremendous effort of COPE, the Committee on Political--COPE was the CIO's political arm--

Teiser: Education?

Johnson: Education, that's right. How could we forget that? It really tied up and strengthened not only the position of labor to fight that particular campaign issue and proposition, but gave the real kick for California becoming the strongest labor state in the union, which we still are. This has given us the highest standard of living and the highest cost of living, and the highest unemployment rate, and all the other things concomitant with it, as well as some of the biggest harbors, as well as some of the finest industries, as well as the greatest agricultural factory. It has had a tremendous impact. I think that election year really gave it a kick off the ground that never would have happened otherwise to this degree.

Teiser: It had gained great strength in the Depression, and then after that it had had no good opponents.

Johnson: Yes, and when the war came the unions were really on a plateau, except perhaps for some of them like the coal miners began to get strength in particular areas where there was a regional industry that affected some people. But nationally, unionism was not something on the tremendous rise that it had been during the building of the CIO, and the beginning of the tremendous admirable guilds and trades unions that began in the late nineteenth century and early part of this century. It was waning, but they sure turned it around. Again, this is theory. There's no documentation of this, but this is twenty years later looking back and seeing what's happened.

Teiser: Well, it's your perspective, and you are a student of history.

After the primary there was a change in the campaign or the chairman of the campaign.

Johnson: In '58?

Teiser: In 1958. Do you remember that?

Johnson: No, I really don't. I don't remember.

For those who were on the inside, the result of the election was not a surprise. I think the size of the defeat, which was as great as the size of the victory in 1952, was a surprise. The degree of the loss. That there was a loss, I think was not a surprise.



Johnson: One cute little vignette--the night before the election, the eve of the election, the last day of the campaign, was spent in Los Angeles, and then we flew back the next day to vote up here. What do you do the night before an election? Go to the movies. Dad was with us, of course. The family piled into whatever cars people offered to drive us, and went to a theatre. I somehow think it was Grauman's Chinese, but that's just probably romantic memory. The movie was The Last Hurrah with Spencer Tracy, which was an ideal election eve movie to see.

Somehow there was an intermission, and at intermission we went out into the foyer for a breath of air, and who was there--Pat and Bernice Brown! That was fun. [laughter]

Teiser: Someone said that your grandfather, Joseph R. Knowland's first reaction to hearing that your father would not run again for the Senate was anger. Is that right? Do you remember that?

Johnson: I wasn't present when Dad would have told his father, and I don't know that. Anger, could be--I do think my grandfather felt my father was extremely foolish, that it was a mistake, before the fact.

Teiser: I suppose he supported him after he got--

Johnson: Oh, of course. Once the decision was made and committed, then absolutely, he supported him with everything he could do. All the encouragement and political help, calling in all those calling cards, and so forth that "Papoo," as we called him, could do.

Anger, I don't know. I don't know that in their lives he was ever angry at Dad. They did not have a stormy relationship, they had a very amiable one. Dad's closest confidant was his father, up until his father became infirm the last three years of his life. He lived until he was ninety-three.

#### Knowland, Nixon, Knight

Teiser: Again, bringing up reports, there was a story that Nixon somehow stirred things up during that election here in California, that he backed dissention so as to keep everybody weak, or one way and another tried to keep people off balance to build himself up.

Johnson: Nixon's participation in Dad's campaign was nil, which says a great deal. He was Vice President of the United States, he was a Californian, he'd been a confrere of Dad's in the Senate. When Nixon was first elected to Congress in 1946, he came to call on

Johnson: Dad, which was a courtesy thing of the new congressman calling on the Senator. I remember getting his autograph that day--I had a collection as a kid--and he signed it, "This is the first autograph I've signed since being elected to the United States Congress."

Therefore, the men obviously had known each other over the years, and they'd had a relationship that one would have. Nixon's absence and lack of participation would have to be assumed to speak for itself. His lack of taking part, his lack of endorsement certainly didn't support the opposition, but it didn't help calm the discontent within the campaign in the state. There was no boost. Of course, maybe it was no harm either. [laughter]

What else do you hear about that? That's interesting, because there was never anything concrete that I knew of. There was just a lack of support of the Vice President of the United States for a major election in his home state.

Teiser: I think some people said that he may or may not have been at a conference in Phoenix, Arizona, in which it was decided to boost Knight over to the Senate race. Other people who were there are known, but nobody knows really whether Nixon was there or not. It was their impression that he was there in spirit.

Johnson: What was the timing of it? Because Dad did not consult with the party people, either here or in Washington, regarding his decision to run for governor. Had Knight already announced he was not going to run? Was Dad intending to take him on head to head in the primary? I think so, at that time.

Teiser: It seems to me that Knight backed right out early.

Johnson: I think so.

Teiser: He started out bravely, saying, "Well, I'm going to run anyway," but that didn't last long.

Johnson: I think he did pull out after it was established, and then it was a matter to save face, to save a job, whatever--

Dad and Knight did not confer, to my knowledge, on what would happen to Knight, nor did Dad even, I believe, let the governor know that he was going to go out for his job head on before he announced it publicly.

Teiser: I think the general idea is that then the party people had to scramble around and decide what in the world they were going to do with Knight. Does that fit in with your--

Johnson: Yes, I think so, but I don't think that was particularly a concern of Dad's.

Teiser: I wonder if Knight and Nixon ever got on the phone.

Johnson: I've always had the impression they did, but I have no idea if they did or not. I think where I would have my impression would be the same place you'd have yours, and that would be from rumor and scuttle-but, and hearsay and supposition. Who knows? There are people saying where there's smoke there's fire, but that's not history.

Teiser: Your father couldn't have been very friendly personally with Nixon, so far as I can gather. Nixon seemed to be constantly doing the wrong thing to make friends with your father. Wasn't it before the '52 convention in Chicago that Nixon got on the train in Denver? Were you on that train?

Johnson: Yes, yes.

Teiser: Nixon gummed things up, or tried to.

Johnson: I was pretty young then. I remember going to the convention on that train, and being so excited about going to Chicago and going to a convention, but I don't remember a great deal of what happened on the train. I do remember parts of the convention itself, and I do remember my understanding of what Dad's interests, position relative to the California delegation, relative to the major candidates, and so forth, were. Nixon's getting on the train and gumming things up, I don't know.

Teiser: I think it is fairly well supported that Nixon unexpectedly got on the train and started beating the drums for Eisenhower.

Johnson: Yes, that's right, because of course the [California] delegation was committed to Warren as a favorite son candidate, as well as a serious candidate. The switch began to get a little complicated because traditionally the favorite son candidate of course was not the same thing as the candidate, particularly from California.

I do believe that before the delegation left for Chicago, if one could have taken--and I don't know how you could document it today--an informal head count of should they be released before the first ballot, where would they go, the majority of the California delegation at that time would have gone for Taft, without question.

However, by the time they were ready to start casting that first ballot in Chicago, had they been released on the first ballot to vote, the majority certainly would have gone for Eisenhower, which is, of course, one reason why they were held on the first ballot.

Teiser: It was said that when the balloting took place on the convention floor, and it was clear that Eisenhower was going to get the nomination about mid-way through the states, that your father attempted to attract the attention of the chairman in order to change California's vote just then to come right in on the Eisenhower side (because it was clear that Eisenhower was going to get it), and give California credit for coming right in. He failed somehow--the chairman ignored him, or something of the sort.

Johnson: I'll tell you that that morning my brother and sister-in-law and I overslept, and we did not get to the convention hall until the first ballot was complete. So I didn't see it. As long as I live--it's one of the things that taught me to be on time for the rest of my life, I think, because that had to be one of the most historical times in the history of conventions, and I slept through it!

Paul [Manolis] would have been there, and I think Jim Gleason might have been there. There would have been a number of people. There are still a lot of Californians around who were delegates there that would remember.

Teiser: This must have been something that wasn't necessarily obvious to everyone.

Johnson: There may be a rumor involved in that. That would be in keeping too, because it was the kind of thing--there were a couple of times in the Senate where-- Once when Truman was being castigated for his what some Senators felt excessive authority in dealing with the Korean situation. Dad was the only Republican to stand up and say, "He's our President, and we're going to follow him. This is a nation of honor and he's our President right or wrong, and he's my President."

Same thing during the fifties when Eisenhower was President and the McCarthy era was hot. The Democrats were just having a field day criticizing Eisenhower, and he was the only Republican to get up and say, "Mr. Eisenhower is our President."

So, that kind of a thing, of maybe wanting to get the chairman's attention to throw California into the swing would have been, "It's obvious we have a candidate, let's all unify behind him and give him all the support you can give." It was probably a good public image of a unified party, and it's done with, close the ranks. That's in keeping, that would be consistent with his behavior and principles. But Paul or someone else would be someone to verify that. I really have no idea.

Teiser: Your mention of Truman--I think it was in your father's interview that he said he had a great deal of respect for Mr. Truman.

Johnson: Oh, yes.

My own opinion is that he probably is the president of the century. I suppose, does the man make history or does history make the man? He was involved in events that there was nothing like it in this century, so far, and he handled himself extraordinarily. He really did quite a job of it. I'm an admirer of his also.

#### Knowland and Warren

Teiser: One of the other questions I have is whether your father had a hand in any way in Earl Warren's being appointed to the Supreme Court?

Johnson: Yes, Dad did directly support to the president that Warren would be certainly a good candidate to consider for the Supreme Court justiceship. There was no love lost between those two men, but they respected each other in principle, and there's no question that when Warren was elevated to the Court, that his stature--or how he was perceived anyway, by people who might have thought that he'd been a light-weight politician before that time--was, of course, tremendously increased. The Warren Court had the impact on this country--there's been nothing like it since Hays' time. The impact was incredible of what happened during the Warren decisions, right or wrong. Some of them may be being reconsidered today.

Warren was supported by Dad, as far as encouraging the president to appoint him. There's no question, of course, it had to be considered in some ways as an act of reciprocity, I suppose would be a polite way to put it, for whatever support did come from the convention. Except it really didn't--you know, when you come right down to it, those California votes didn't matter at all. So it might have been a thing of there was a man to do the job, and he actually did a very good one.

Teiser: You say there was no love lost between those two men?

Johnson: Between Knowland and Warren. Ultimately. I mean as their lives ran out.

Teiser: Why was that? Was it ideological?

Johnson: I think so. I believe it really was, because they were very close--I mean, they grew up together. Here he was the district attorney of Alameda County, and Dad was a young legislator. My grandfather

Johnson: had gotten Earl Warren in a position where he became the district attorney of Alameda County, and practically took him by the hand and elevated him all the way along in the attorney general and the governorship. He always had my grandfather's support.

Governor Warren, in turn, appointed Dad to the Senate, so you've got a full circle of ties and things together, which were fantastic.

As children we were friends. The Warren children and we were friends. Personally, I think we all got along quite well.

But there was a strong division of their political theory. They were never in the same forum where they were dealing in a competitive way about foreign policy, so that wouldn't relate, but on domestic issues they did differ. Dad considered Warren a liberal, and Dad in those days was certainly considered a conservative. They differed, and they differed on how they were involved in and handled partisan politics within the state.

Teiser: Apparently Governor Warren never realized this, and I think mentioned off the tape that he never quite understood why your father was not as friendly with him later as he had been earlier.

Johnson: I think it was strictly a matter of philosophy, I really do. Unlike the situation with Nixon, I never had any information or intimation that something that could be considered as duplicity ever occurred or was caused by Warren. I always had the impression he was a man of honor, dealt up front, and so forth. So, I can only think that it was philosophy, and I know that Dad was critical of Warren's politics.

#### Asia Interests##

Teiser: This is not a California state matter, but just now it's interesting. How do you think your father began his interest in Taiwan?

Johnson: I think the Pacific basin, and our focus to the west was a major factor. I think, obviously, the war, and our involvement in an Asian situation which was not the United States' primary area for victory. You know, first on the list was to beat Germany and second was Japan. But on the Pacific Coast, whether it was "San Francisco is going to be bombed next," or whatever, our western focus was strong.

I do know that in, I think 1946 and/or 1947, and/or 1948, Mother and Dad did take fact-finding tours of Asia, including Mainland China--well, China--and Japan, and other areas of the

Johnson: Far East that one could get into and tour. Parly because tremendous amounts of aid were going into Chiang's forces to defeat Mao, or to resist the defeat by Mao, on the mainland, and also our efforts under McArthur in Japan for "rehabilitation," quote, rebuilding Japan. Dad's interest in foreign affairs had gone on for many years.

I do know that the last plane that left Chungking with the Chiangs aboard also had Mom and Dad aboard, fleeing in the face of Mao's troops.

Teiser: Right in the middle of it?

Johnson: Right in the middle of it.

Their personal experience of the presence of the expansion of Mao and the collapse of Chiang's administration in China-- And, of course, then witnessed the establishment of the Chiang government on Taiwan. (Formosa, as the Japanese called it, and our newspapers called it in those days.) So that was first-hand experience being sent there for the Senate to see what was happening with American funds and report back--you know, a typical fact-finding tour. He also had I suppose a personal knowledge of the individuals involved as time had gone by.

Teiser: I suppose the possibility that China would do as she did, and align with Russia--

Johnson: Yes.

Teiser: Did he anticipate that?

Johnson: Would you clarify that question a little bit?

Teiser: Did he anticipate that mainland China would turn completely communist, and for a time, would have an alliance, which he might assume would last forever, with Russia?

Johnson: Well, either that, or form its own necklace of "balkan" states, which could include Japan, Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, etc. I think there was a definite fear. And, looking back on it, right or wrong, today after how many years, normalizing relations with China. It took us until 1933 to normalize relations with the Soviet Union. Times come about. Whether it's because of correct or incorrect politics which change over the years, or an economic recognition of the facts because of trade needs, who knows?

But, if it weren't for the interest of the United States in maintaining the strength of what was called Formosa in those days, as well as the rebuilding of Japan, there is no question that today

Johnson: Japan would not be, I think, one of the world's great powers economically, any more than Europe would have been rebuilt had we not had the Marshall Plan. So I think the American policy, and Dad's interest in it, was one much broader than "We've got to have mutual defense contracts with Formosa." It was one looking to the protection of the Pacific Basin from balkanization.

#### The 1956 Republican Convention

Teiser: I don't think we've touched the 1956 convention. I don't know, from what else you've said, that there was anything special. Were you at the '56 convention?

Johnson: Yes, I was a page that year.

Teiser: Was that when your father made a talk supporting Nixon's nomination?

Johnson: He may have. He was part of the ticket. He may very well have been one of the speakers nominating Nixon as the procedure of the convention goes along. It was a rather quiet convention.

I do know that Nixon came over to our home in Piedmont one evening during the convention. Mrs. Nixon was not with him. He had drinks and dinner. My personal memory of it was that Nixon felt disheartened, almost as if, "Yes, I'm being kept on the ticket, but nobody means it." It was a very interesting evening.

Other than that, I don't think that convention particularly had a tremendous impact, other than continuing on the tone of more of "We Like Ike."

#### Work with Oakland and the California Republican Party, 1958-1974

Teiser: Now perhaps we can go on to the period of the early sixties that we were discussing before we started taping. Your father, after 1958, came back to the paper and worked hard, didn't he?

Johnson: Yes.

Additionally, I would say the other things he did were things of a civic nature.

Teiser: Yes, I think they've been documented a good deal for Oakland specifically.



Johnson: Probably so.

The newspaper--any newspaper today--has less impact than it used to. With the tremendous influence of television, I think the influence of newspapers has declined, without question, other than for that segment of the community that looks to the editorial policy and leadership of the newspaper. Through its efforts to support things like the Port of Oakland, and the expansion of our trade, which has built Oakland's harbor into the second greatest containerized port in the world, next to Rotterdam. Efforts like that. Continuing efforts to support such things as the New Oakland Committee (NOC). This was a group of business and labor leaders and community leaders--neighborhood leaders, as they would be referred to today--who began to try to sit down together to say, "Look, let's keep Oakland from burning." There was a book written about that era called Oakland's Not for Burning. Then there was a television documentary that was done called Oakland, a Tale of Two Cities. Lonnie Dillard was taken as one person who was representative of black community leaders, a construction person, and Dad on the other side.

I think Dad did more, during the time when Watts and Detroit were burning, to keep Oakland in harmony, which is a very interesting thing, and which people might not think of as compatible with his personality because you think of him as conservative, and therefore perhaps anti-civil rights, or something else. In the Senate, one of the things I think about which Dad was most proud on domestic legislation was his role as the minority Republican leader in putting through the first major civil rights law since the Reconstruction. And he believed in it. When he got back home, one of the things that he devoted himself to was the amiable development of Oakland.

Oakland's not the most dynamic economic city in the country, and we do have a high unemployment rate, and still have tremendous problems. But we didn't burn, we didn't riot, and the people on both sides of any fence in this town have learned how to begin to talk to each other. I think Dad's contribution was the primary one of all the individuals in this town. As a result of his death, and Edgar Kaiser's sick now, this town doesn't have leadership. [added later:] However, Bart Shetterly of Clorox and Cornelle Mien of Kaiser Aluminum are doing outstanding jobs in developing and giving leadership today.

There was the kind of thing at the Tribune Tower just like his father: the door was always open. No matter who it was in town, you could go to him and say, "We want a hotel," or "We've got too much unemployment, what are we going to do about it?" It wasn't that there was a pot of gold there, or any elixir, but it was a start to get people to talk about it and see what we could work out.

Teiser: Every time I come to Oakland, I think this is a city on the rise. I see your redevelopment areas and they look as if something is being done to them.

Johnson: I think one of the things he did was to help Oakland keep a sense-- maybe gain a sense--of its own value. It's a community of value, and everybody in it has value. For so many years there was a "Kick me, I'm here, I'm the bedroom community of San Francisco, and that's all." Oaklanders were the first ones to make a joke about themselves. Things have happened, whether it's the excitement of the Raiders football team, or the restoration of the Paramount Theater.

Teiser: The Museum--

Johnson: The Museum, which is gorgeous. It gives everybody in town something to hold onto.

Teiser: You said you're not so sure of the specific function your father had in re-consolidating the Republican party in the sixties.

Johnson: I was not active or involved in politics. Well, that's not true because my husband at that time was on the Oakland City Council, so we were interested in government affairs.

But as far as Dad's role, as it related to the Republican party in the early 1960s, the party itself appeared to have changed from what it had been in the late forties and fifties. I think you and I discussed before--

Teiser: Yes. Would you say it again?

Johnson: Part of the change was perhaps that the personalities who were involved in those fifteen years of the late forties through the fifties had changed. Whereas I would consider, from my memory and my understanding of partisan politics in California, perhaps Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight, and perhaps Richard Nixon, could be considered to be influencing one line of thought in the Republican party in California. Dad, on the other hand, and then later, Ronald Reagan, would be considered, I think, to represent another line of thought. I don't know if I'm correct about where I'd put Nixon.

Subsequently, I'd have to say that when Dad aged he moved more to the left. For example, his feeling of Nixon's trip to China was, "It's about time." He had tremendous praise and admiration for the trip and for the beginning of opening the door. We were together the morning that the news broke. As I say, Dad's position on civil rights began to separate him from the John Birch Society, and so forth. Dad just couldn't tolerate that kind of conservatism any longer as he got older.

Johnson: As a result, he may have become someone who was believable by both the conservatives and the moderates in the party. He was the elder statesman, the only one left in town, so to speak. Nixon was out of office and practicing in New York, defeated in '60 and out of the California scene in those days. Warren was gone, Knight was gone, Reagan was upcoming. He (Reagan) was, I think, a fantastic scholar of political lore, and of constitutional law, and of court interpretations. He really is incredible. And of course he was a good speaker, made a good presentation. He was a good candidate.

Teiser: Did your father think so, too?

Johnson: Yes, he had a lot of admiration for Reagan. I did, too. At first I thought, "What are we doing with this Hollywood actor?" But this was a man who'd been active in politics all of his life, quietly, and who really was a student of political history--and still is. This validated my opinion of him.

Teiser: Did your father give him advice? Did he come to your father for advice?

Johnson: I don't know. Paul [Manolis], again, would be someone who could give you information. I know that whenever the governor spoke here in the Bay Area, if it was a fundraiser or a campaign situation, Dad would always take a table for ten. He always supported the governor's efforts publicly, openly, so it would be known that Bill Knowland was there and supported the governor's activities.

Teiser: In this case, both ideologically and personally?

Johnson: Ideologically, I think they were pretty much in accord. Fiscal conservatism was something Dad never turned away from, I have to say that. He may have changed his position on a number of things about labor, but never about communism and never about fiscal conservatism, but about many other things.

Teiser: There was an article after your father's death that said that in the early seventies there was a movement by the California State Chamber of Commerce to bring up a "right to work" bill again, and your father discouraged them.

Johnson: Interesting. I didn't know about that.

Teiser: Would that fit in with what you were saying?

Johnson: I think so. Of course, that would also be the practical advice to give. If you're kicked by the mule the first time, it's the mule's fault. [laughter]

Major Contributions to California

Teiser: Well, you've really cleared up a lot of questions that would have been put to your father. I'll ask you a very general question, which you may have thought about: what was your father's major contribution to the state?

Johnson: I think in the conversation we've had, we've touched on most of them. I'd start with the broadest, probably, and come down to the more specific.

I would say that on a great scale, a good deal of California's strength today is its economy, much of which is based on trade. It is the Pacific Basin with which we trade. I think the focusing of the West Coast of the United States on the Pacific perhaps--this may be stretching it--can be tied to the emphasis of our concern about China, and Chinese affairs, over the years, and Japan, which certainly started in the forties and fifties and carried on through now to the opening of a tremendous market.

Another part of California's greatness also related to economics, and that is the impact I mentioned before--right or wrong, good or bad--of the strengthening of California into one of the bastions of organized labor, one of the strongholds of unionism in America. Also, where everything goes. In Michigan, Cesar Chavez wouldn't have had a crack as a Teamster. In California our attitude about tolerance for one's civil liberties, one's right to speak out, which has never been trampled, was enhanced by the election of 1958, in which the "right to work" issue itself became a primary issue of the campaign. The unionism seemed doctrinaire in those days, but the issue of unionism itself--California has certainly grown. It was not stifled by it.

Another impact, I would say, would be Dad's interest in the civil rights issues, not only as he worked on the legislation in Congress in Washington, but it was clearly demonstrated to me by his continuing on with such work as a business person here coming back to The Tribune. It was a major contribution to California's wellbeing. I don't know how much the impact was, obviously. Things may not have improved down there. But in the Bay Area, where we have been a more liberal population and a heavier concentration of minorities, or non-whites, I think an attitude of let's try and shake hands and work on it has been the factor that has designed the life in northern California. I don't think that's necessarily true in many parts of southern California. I think southern California has probably not changed an awful lot in the last twenty-five years on issues like that.

Johnson: I think probably overall his greatest contribution, or impact on California, was his nature--himself. My memory of him, of course, is that I was his child, that I looked up to him like a girl looked up to her father, as a marvelous man and a hero. What I see him, and how I remember him from the fifties and sixties particularly, even the forties, obviously may be painted pink, rose colored. But I don't think so. Unless people have been just over-complimentary over the years, I do think he represented someone in American government in those days.

He was referred to as a statesman, not a politician, during most of his public life. I certainly believe that although people disagreed with him violently, vehemently, they always respected that he meant what he said, and that he could be relied on to back it up. He wouldn't waffle on an issue. Once he took a position, he could be counted on. Whether you disagreed, or not, there was a predictability, and therefore a respect for the loyalty of what he stood for.

He may have been the last of his kind. I don't know that I see today in politics people whom I consider the same caliber of person in public life. Maybe that was caused by such things as stubbornness. People used to call him Stubby, his nickname, for stubborn. But I think really he was a man of incredibly high principle, and I think that kind of leadership was something that was unique to California during the time that he was in office, even though he was in office for most of his time of public life in Washington representing California. It's something Californians can be proud of, that they had a man like that to represent them. I think it lifted the state up a little bit. Certainly better than Chicago, or some kinds of political things, and it was good.

I think that covers what I had thought of before about the areas that he had impact.

Teiser: Thank you very much.

Johnson: Thank you.

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## TAPE GUIDE -- Estelle Knowland Johnson

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Paul Manolis

A FRIEND AND AIDE REMINISCES

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser in 1979

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[Date of Interview: 24 April 1979]##

The 1952 Campaign

Teiser: May I ask you when you first met or when you first started working with Senator Knowland?

Manolis: I went to Washington in late 1954, December of 1954, as Senator Knowland's executive secretary. At that time he was the majority leader of the Senate, soon to become the minority leader in the organization of Congress in January of 1955 as a result of the congressional elections of November 1954. The Democrats had obtained a majority in the Senate, as I recall, of one or two votes, so that Mr. Johnson, who was then minority leader, became majority leader. It seems to me that very close division in the Senate was also based on the fact that Wayne Morse of Oregon had left the Republican party and either became an independent or a Democrat (I don't remember), but that played a role in determining the majority in the Senate, so that Senator Knowland, who had succeeded Senator Taft (Robert Taft of Ohio) as majority leader, served as majority for that period of time until the congressional reorganization of 1955. I went at that time, in December of 1954.

Teiser: The first question I was going to ask you (it could have been before your time but I wondered if you knew about it), that was the 1952 convention, the matter of Senator Knowland having been pledged to Warren and Nixon coming on the campaign train and trying to swing it--

Manolis: Of course, that was before I went to work for Senator Knowland. Senator Knowland often related the 1952 campaign to me and what had taken place. I think that the best source for the 1952 material might be Mrs. Helen Knowland Whyte, because it seems to me that she was on the train going to Chicago and, of course, was able to observe first-hand what happened there. As I recall--have you spoken with Mrs. Knowland?

Teiser: She hadn't been well and she decided that she wouldn't do an interview. We can ask her for a memorandum.

Manolis: I think that might be worthwhile. I might suggest that other people here in the area who would be good sources for that period, people who were part of the delegation and were eyewitnesses to what happened. One is Mr. Robert Arkel here in Berkeley, who is a former president of the California Republican Assembly. He was very close politically to the Senator. Another one is Mr. Worth Brown of Capitola, also a past president of the California Republican Assembly--another close associate of Senator Knowland's politically.

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 20.

Manolis: But basically, as I recall--and, of course, it's been so many years --Senator Knowland and then Senator Nixon went to the Chicago convention in 1952 as part of the Warren delegation and while it is true, as I recall, from conversations with the Senator, the Taft people were willing, for the purpose of getting votes from the California delegation--Senator Knowland always felt that he could not do anything as long as Governor Warren did not release the delegation. I believe the Senator was also chairman of that delegation. While everything that I've read and heard was that the then Senator Richard Nixon was negotiating with the Eisenhower people behind the back of Governor Warren and Senator Knowland, it would seem to me that I just don't recall that those negotiations would have meant anything unless Governor Warren had released the delegation, because I think they were bound to vote for Governor Warren on the first ballot. I don't know what the laws of the state of California were at that time on the election of delegates. But I recall many times that Senator Knowland said that he was unable to do anything as long as Governor Warren did not release the delegation.

Now, that leads, of course, to a theoretical question of what would have happened if Governor Warren had released the delegation. From my association with the Senator and the many talks we had on politics, there's no doubt that he would have swung his vote or as many as he could influence toward the candidacy of Senator Taft. That leads then to the question, what would his position have been to an offer of the vice presidency.

Teiser: Which I think was mentioned as a possibility.

Manolis: Yes, I believe that Senator Knowland would have accepted an offer to be second on the ticket. The reason I say that is because the Senator a number of times told me the story of the meeting he had with the then Senator Hiram Johnson in 1938 or 1939. Senator Knowland was then the national committeeman for California and had come to Washington, and he visited with Senator Johnson, and he told me a number of times the story that Senator Johnson told him. When Senator Knowland asked him whether it was true that he had refused the offer of--I guess it was Coolidge in 1924. I can never remember who came first, Coolidge or Harding.

Teiser: Harding, I think.

Manolis: I don't remember. But the offer to accept the place on the ticket. And Senator Johnson said that he was asked repeatedly two or three times and he refused and, of course, the rest is history. Harding died and Coolidge succeeded, and Hiram Johnson would have become president of the United States. So I don't think the Senator ever lost sight of that lesson. I don't think that he ever had the notion



Manolis: that we sometimes have of some candidates who want the top job or nothing. I think he would have accepted the vice presidential nomination. That's about all I can tell you about the '52 election. I was a student at that time and followed the conventions then on the radio and the television, but I was not a participant because I was afraid of conventions.

Teiser: There was a story--and perhaps Senator Knowland might have reminisced about this--about at the convention itself in '52, that he attempted to catch the chairman's eye after it was apparent the election was going to Eisenhower, in order to swing California's vote at a crucial moment--and he couldn't manage to get his eye or recognition.

Manolis: That I'm unaware of.

Teiser: You had a couple of peaceful years then in Washington in which you were with the Senator when he was minority leader.

Manolis: You have to remember, you see, it's going to be difficult for me to reply to questions which revolve around the formulation of his views and policies with respect to the major questions that arose during his term in the Senate. The reason is that I arrived at a time when those policies had been pretty well defined. In other words, I arrived in Washington when he was already recognized as the leader of the pro-Nationalist Chinese supporters, when he was already recognized as a leading anti-communist. So whatever took place during the years I was with him were really decisions which fell in with the patterns of policies already established. So I'm going to be unable to help you in coming to any understanding as to how those views were formulated.

Teiser: In any case, there is a separate oral history program on the history of Congress which will be, I'm sure, taking on his development of ideas in Congress. Our viewpoint is as of California in this series.

#### California Gubernatorial Campaign

Teiser: Our next major interest is his decision in 1957 not to run once more for the Senate. Can you give your ideas as to why he decided from that position of power to leave it?

Manolis: Well, first I should say that Senator Knowland was the type of politician who generally made his own decisions and expected his supporters to follow him, and I say that because he operated his

Manolis: office and his senatorial staff that way, contrary to the impression that we have from some politicians who surround themselves with advisors. Because I remember specifically the matter of his deciding not to seek re-election, and the other staff member in the office, Jim Gleason, who was then the administrative assistant, and I, met daily with the Senator. This particular day we were called into his office and he told us that he had an interview (I forget whether it was radio or television) that afternoon, and the interviewer had asked him--I forgot his exact language--of his plans for re-election or whether he was going to run for re-election, and the Senator said, "No, I'm not going to run for re-election," which of course came as a great shock to the interviewer. He came right back to the office he told us, wanted us to know, that he had said this and I think he immediately notified Mrs. Knowland, and he had probably called his father here in California.

So that decision was not a result--I give that example because it was not a result of our sitting down and discussing for weeks and days or whatever. The decision was just announced to us. So I cannot give you the reasons for it. There's been, of course, a great deal of speculation about the reasons for it. His publicly stated reasons were that his father was in his late eighties, was the head of a large publishing company, and he felt that he had given his service to the country and that he should be near home and should participate in the family business and be closer to it and be closer to his family. And shortly thereafter, of course, when he was obviously a candidate for governor, he said that being in Sacramento would allow him to be closer to Oakland and do those things. Of course, that's what he said. There has been great speculation as to the reason, if it was he wanted a steppingstone to the White House.

Teiser: Would that have been a reasonable steppingstone?

Manolis: Well, traditionally, until the election of President Kennedy, our presidents came from the state houses. The Senate was not historically a place that was the--what do you want to say?--the school for presidents. After all, Eisenhower had never been a Senator. Of course, Senator Truman had, but he had succeeded from the vice presidency. President Roosevelt had been a governor--Harding, Coolidge, Wilson, Teddy Roosevelt, Taft. So you go way back, and until the election of President Kennedy we didn't have in this century an election of the Senator as president. So he might have thought that he should become governor of California, and historically when we look back also the candidates were governors, the loser was also a governor--Landon, Dewey.

Teiser: There was another factor that's been mentioned. That was that the Los Angeles Times, either before or after his decision to leave the Senate, had wanted an anti-labor, "right to work" candidate for governor and that it believed Governor Knight was too close to labor, so the Los Angeles Times urged him to run.

Manolis: That theory I've never heard. Of course, Senator Knowland knew the Los Angeles Times people well, knew the Chandler family well, but that I've never heard and I can't comment on it. I would doubt that that would play a role because after all, the Los Angeles Times people were really close to Vice President Nixon. Kyle Palmer, who was then the political editor of the Times, was a close associate of Nixon, and that just doesn't make much sense for the Times to have wanted Senator Knowland in Sacramento. I think that when it happened and they were faced with the choice between Knowland and Knight they had to accept Knowland because he was philosophically more in tune with them. But I don't think that the Times played a role in the decision at all. That would come as a great surprise to me.

Teiser: What about the position of Governor Knight in all this? I understand that there was some possibility that he earlier had aspirations for higher office himself. I don't know whether that would have been--

Manolis: I knew very little about Governor Knight. One of the reasons is that the years prior to my going with Senator Knowland I was not here; I was at Harvard. I had done my undergraduate work here at Berkeley but then I was doing my graduate work at Harvard so prior to going to work for Senator Knowland I was away from California, so I was unaware of the currents of political action here in the state. When I left--this also is a reason why I don't know much about Goodwin Knight as a public figure--Earl Warren was still the governor. So I never knew much about Goodwin Knight.

Teiser: When Senator Knowland declared his intention to be a candidate for governor, however, it must have been a blow to Goodwin Knight. The question in my mind--while Senator Knowland was loyal to his party and, as you said, loyal to his loyalties as in the case of Governor Warren, he felt it was not a breach of any ethics or of spirit or of party unity to go in against Knight apparently.

Manolis: I would say that the Senator felt that he better represented the mainstream of the California Republican party than Goodwin Knight did, and I think at that point, given the framework of time in the fifties, that was probably true. I think Governor Knight recognized that, and that's why Governor Knight withdrew his candidacy against Senator Knowland.

Teiser: Was there no pressure that you know of?

Manolis: No. In fact,--of course, that's another of the myths. Now, I was very involved during that time. That's another of the myths that there was pressure on Knight to withdraw so they wouldn't have this fratricide. Senator Knowland was very unhappy that Knight withdrew, because he felt that if Governor Knight had stayed in that, a stronger Republican party would have emerged because he was very confident of winning and I think he would have won because I think that the mainstream of the party was with Senator Knowland. It would have solidified the party. The division in the party philosophically wouldn't have been as great. Of course, Governor Knight was handicapped, I think, in party matters by the fact that from his state two of the national Republican leaders came--the vice president and the majority leader of the Senate, who each had a base here in California. So as a result, Governor Knight did not control the party in the state.

Teiser: If he had stayed in the race, then he simply would have been out in the cold?

Manolis: That's correct because as soon as Senator Knowland had declared for the governorship, and thus his seat was going to be vacant, the then mayor of San Francisco, George Christopher, declared his candidacy for the Senate seat. Then, of course, Governor Knight switched to the Senatorial race and defeated Mayor Christopher. Senator Knowland ostensibly was neutral in that race during the primary, but his feelings were really for Mayor Christopher. I know that to be a fact. He preferred Mayor Christopher.

I don't think he had much respect for Governor Knight and, of course, we have the famous remark of his wife who called him "macaroni spine"--called Governor Knight "macaroni spine." Of course, Governor Knight's withdrawal from the race, he sort of staged it. He went back to Washington and met with the president and then he came out and he announced on the White House steps that he was withdrawing from the race against Senator Knowland and he was going to run for the Senate--which gave the impression that the White House influenced him to switch. That, of course, we don't know.

Teiser: There was--and perhaps this is one of the myths you spoke of--there was talk of a meeting in Arizona in which Nixon, Knight was, other Republican party people were, in which they talked Knight into switching.

Manolis: Well, that may have been, but Senator Knowland was not part of such a meeting.

Teiser: No, I didn't mean that.

Manolis: I don't recall anything about such a meeting. But as I say, Senator Knowland was surprised when Governor Knight withdrew, and he was sorry that Governor Knight withdrew because he felt the withdrawal of Governor Knight from the race avoided settling the issue.

Teiser: I wonder what would have happened.

Manolis: Oh, that's very hard to conjecture, of course. George Christopher would have won the Senatorial race and then would have been opposed by--his opponent would have been Clair Engle. But of course I think the 1958 campaign was influenced by many things. There was a recession in that year, so it was influenced by economics.

#### The Right to Work Issue and Other Problems

Manolis: Then of course the overriding issue became the "right to work", Proposition 13.

Teiser: If all things had been equal, do you think that Senator Knowland would have chosen that as the thing that became most prominent in his campaign?

Manolis: No, I don't think he would have chosen it, and I recall exactly how that issue arose. It was in Sacramento at a press conference. I think it was September of '57, a full year before. Is that correct?

Teiser: Probably so.

Manolis: I don't recall. I remember the locale was the Senator Hotel in Sacramento, and the Senator was having a press conference, and I think it was after the annual host breakfast. Usually at the host breakfast all of the state political editors are there, and there was a press conference afterward. I was sitting in the room and I remember a reporter asked the Senator--no mention had ever been made of "right to work"--the reporter asked the Senator if he were elected governor and the legislature passed a "right to work" bill would he sign it? The Senator said, "Yes," and that's how the issue started. He just said honestly, "Yes, I would sign it." Well, then that was the headline the next day because he was for "right to work."

Manolis: Then it became a big issue and labor went immediately on the attack. Pat Brown, of course, took the negative position to "right to work" and was strongly supported by labor. But in framing your question I would say that I do not think that he would have taken that as an issue, given the position of the state of California.

Teiser: Was he then unable to bring in enough other issues to get headlines on other subjects?

Manolis: Well, no, I think that once he had answered that question that way and the opposition focused in on it as a vulnerable point, I don't think he could avoid it. So then he went on the defense against the attack that was being made upon him.

Teiser: It seemed to me as if he got inadvertently into a narrow--

Manolis: That's always been my feeling that he inadvertently got trapped into that. Of course, once he had said he would sign it there was no way of--he was not a person to straddle issues, you see. That's an issue that you are either for or against, and since he had taken a firm position on the issue, a straightforward position, there was no way of satisfying labor once you said you'd sign a "right to work" bill--

Teiser: But he couldn't find another issue, like prison reform or anything else, that would attract attention, I suppose.

Manolis: Well, the opposition wouldn't let him forget that issue.

Teiser: The campaign itself then, I gather you were extremely active. After the primary there was a shake-up I believe in the committee and Shattuck resigned as chairman and someone else took over. Was that a significant event?

Manolis: Yes, it seems to me as I recall Edward Shattuck was the Republican national committeeman for California and he was one of those who was urging the Senator to run for governor, and he was chairman of the campaign during the primary. After the primary in which the handwriting was on the wall for the fall election, there was a shake-up of the campaign and Earl Adams became either state chairman or southern California chairman, I don't recall. Do you have that?

Teiser: I don't.

Manolis: But there was a shake-up in the voluntary aspect of the campaign.

Teiser: Was that simply indicative of the fact that there were problems?

Manolis: There were problems, yes.

Teiser: There were some spectacular things during the campaign. I believe that you were here more than the Senator was--or did you stay in Washington?

Manolis: No, I was with the Senator all the time. We stayed in Washington and we flew out every weekend. I traveled with him as his assistant, as his press secretary, so I was with him at all times and we came out nearly every weekend from Washington, and he campaigned. Then following the adjournment of Congress in the summer, then we campaigned through November.

Teiser: If he had decided to spend more time campaigning here would it have made a difference in the election?

Manolis: I don't think so. I think you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. If you come out and campaign, then your opposition accuses you of not paying attention to your job in Washington. So that issue never really arose.

Teiser: There were several things that apparently caused a good deal of comment during the campaign, and one was that the Senator charged that Paul Ziffren was somehow connected with Capone.

Manolis: I don't know how that issue arose. I remember it very well and it was an unusual issue for the Senator because the Senator never attacked the personalities. In this campaign, it was the first time he did. It was not only Paul Ziffren, but it was also Ben Swig later. I forget the details of that. How that issue arose, I don't know. I don't know where he got the information. I don't know who influenced him in making those charges. But I remember now after the campaign I was with him one time in Los Angeles, and we met Paul Ziffren at a social occasion and they were very friendly with each other. He thought highly of Paul Ziffren.

Teiser: Well, were there people around him who would have--or maybe it had come to him through the mail.

Manolis: I don't know how that came about.

Teiser: Were there people who were influential in his campaign--

Manolis: That would not have come from people on the campaign committee, because I knew the people on the campaign committee. In Los Angeles, Earl Adams is probably one of the most distinguished gentlemen I have ever met, a man of great integrity, who would never have suggested a thing. I don't know where that came from.

Teiser: Then you were just mentioning Mrs. Knowland's characterization of Governor Knight as macaroni-spined; I think she had written a letter to Republican committee members stating that, and charging that he was being too sympathetic with unions. Was that what somebody decided would be a good idea?

Manolis: No, I think that's something that Mrs. Knowland decided to do. She was a very independent person. I think that's just something she decided to do and I don't think the Senator knew about it until it came out.

Teiser: Did that have any effect upon the events then?

Manolis: It must have. [pause] One of the things I recall vividly is a cartoon in the Sacramento Bee which was an unkind cartoon against Mrs. Knowland for making that remark.

Teiser: I don't quite see the context in which the letter would have been written.

Manolis: I don't recall. I recall the letter being written and her mailing it all over the state, but I don't remember the context either.

Teiser: I don't know why she would have hit out at Knight at that point.

Manolis: I don't recall.

Teiser: What was Senator Knowland's position with regard to Brown?

Manolis: Well, the position, of course, the official campaign position, was that he was pro-labor, after the Senator had gotten boxed into this anti-labor stand, and I don't think that he had any negative feelings about Pat Brown. I think he considered Brown a very honest, capable public servant, and from that point of view I think it was a difficult campaign to wage because after all, Governor Brown had been the attorney general. He had never been a governor so that you could attack the policies. So the Senator never harbored any ill feelings against Pat Brown. He liked him personally, I think, and both before and after the campaign they had friendly relations.

Teiser: I gather that Senator Knowland was not one to have personal animosities.

Manolis: He really didn't.

##



Teiser: I don't know if there's anything very mysterious in other events. The Chronicle's turn-around--I think maybe the only thing mysterious about it was why it came so late.

Manolis: I think the Chronicle's withdrawal of the endorsement was greatly influenced by the accusations that were made about Ben Swig, which were similar to Ziffren. I don't remember the details of the accusations. Ben Swig, being the personality that he was and is in the city of San Francisco, in addition to the fact that the city of San Francisco historically has been such a strong labor city. Those two reasons, I think, prompted that rather unusual action of a newspaper.

Teiser: I've heard that it was also the factor of the managing editor's (at that time) point of view.

Manolis: Of Scott Newhall?

Teiser: Scott Newhall.

Manolis: That may have been. Scott Newhall had completely changed the Chronicle, so that may have been a factor I'm unaware of. [pause] Although I will say, now that you raise that question, it strikes a bell. I remember a few days after that decision that Senator Knowland received a personal letter from one of the deYoung daughters. I don't know who that would be. There was Mrs. Cameron and Mrs. Tobin. I think it was either from Mrs. Cameron or Mrs. Tobin; I don't recall. I remember the letter very clearly, a handwritten letter to Senator Knowland saying that she regretted the decision very much, that it was not one that she had any part in making or any influence, and yet you see she was a major stockholder in the Chronicle and the implication was that the decision was out of her hands. I did not know her at the time and I remember the Senator showing me the letter and saying that that was one of Mike deYoung's daughters, one of the owners of the Chronicle. So the management made the decision and she as stockholder was apologizing for it. That I remember.

Teiser: Was it clear before the final election that the Senator was going to lose?

Manolis: Oh, yes, yes. He knew he was going to lose.

Teiser: From what time?

Manolis: Well, that I don't know, but he knew he was going to lose. He knew. He was going through the emotions at the end.

State and National Politics, 1958-1966

Teiser: As I understand it, then, after going back to Oakland and getting back to work, he became a very influential member of the Republican party in California, one of its leaders. Is that correct.

Manolis: Well, when he first came back he devoted his first few years to Oakland activities. He took a very active part in civic activities. He was still a national figure and was invited throughout the country to speak. I remember I went with him a few times. I remember one time on Lincoln Day (it must have been 1960 or '61) going to Spokane, Washington, and going to the East. Then I also remember in the campaign of '62, the Republican national committee asked him to go on an extended campaign tour and I went with him for part of that in the South. I remember we went to Florida, Mississippi and Alabama and also places in the North. But in California for some time he took a hands-off attitude. He did not try to force himself onto the party here. He took a sort of elder statesman position and he only re-emerged in 1964 during the presidential campaign.

Now one of the interesting things is that the Senator, as soon as he came back to the paper and took over as manager of the paper and became editor and eventually publisher after his father died, he covered the political conventions each year as a reporter. He had done this in his youth with his father. He had been to many national conventions in the twenties and thirties, and I recall in 1960 going with him to both conventions. I recall the Democratic convention in Los Angeles very well and it was sort of [laughs] humorous, because we'd be in the press section and here was the former majority leader of the Senate sitting in the press section with a typewriter. All of these national reporters sitting around him who knew him very well would come by and say, "Hi, Bill," and he became a mecca because they would come to him and ask him as a newspaperman what did he think about what was going on and was Kennedy going to do this--it was very interesting.

I remember distinctly at that convention Lyndon Johnson, who was running against John Kennedy, wanted to see the Senator. I went with the Senator to the Biltmore Hotel to see the Senator. I went with the Senator to the Biltmore Hotel to the Johnson suite and the door was opened by Speaker Sam Rayburn. I sat in the other room with Speaker Rayburn, and Senator Knowland went in to speak to Lyndon Johnson. When we left--and this was the first hint we had--Senator Knowland told me that Senator Johnson asked him (because they were good friends--even though they were of opposing political parties, they were good friends). Senator Johnson asked

Manolis: him what he should do if the Kennedy people offered him the vice presidency, and Senator Knowland told him to accept it, and he told me that when we left the hotel, that Johnson had asked him this question and he told me that he told Lyndon Johnson the story that Hiram Johnson had told him about not accepting the nomination for vice president.

So that night the Senator wrote a story predicting that Lyndon Johnson would be the vice presidential nominee because he assumed that for Johnson to have asked that question that had already been asked of Johnson by the Kennedy people. Well, all the reporters saw this and they said, "That's nonsense! The Kennedy people would never accept the candidacy of Lyndon Johnson." And then a day later it happened. So, of course, they all attributed it to the fact that there was a leak from Johnson, which there was in the sense, except that it was the senator's astuteness to analyze it.

So we would go to these conventions but, as I say, it wasn't until the convention, until the campaign of '64, that the Senator took an active part in California politics again. When Senator Goldwater of Arizona declared his candidacy for president and he turned to the Senator for help in California in organizing the committee, the Senator became campaign chairman of the Goldwater Committee, became chairman of the Goldwater delegation which defeated the Rockefeller delegation and therefore put the Knowland people back in the saddle as far as the party machinery goes. So that was the turning point, because you see in winning the primary, the delegation then elects the national committeeman and the national committeewoman, the national delegation. So that was the turning point. It came, in other words, six years after he left the Senate. That was the turning point.

In the intervening period, the Nixon people were in control, because you see in 1960, Nixon was the candidate. The Nixon delegation had been elected for the '60 convention in Chicago, and the Nixon delegation, of course, then controlled the party. But in 1964 it changed when the Goldwater delegation defeated the Rockefeller delegation. For the most part, the Nixon people left in the state went on the Rockefeller delegation.

Teiser: Then Nixon re-emerged.

Manolis: Then Nixon moved to New York after his defeat for governor in 1962. The Senator took a very neutral part in that campaign. He just said he was a newspaperman. He wasn't involved in party politics, did not go to state conventions. Nixon, after his

Manolis: defeat and his famous remark about the press, that they won't have him to kick around anymore, he moved to New York and removed himself. He did not take a part in the California campaign of Goldwater versus Rockefeller. Vice President Nixon didn't.

Teiser: Then by '68, however, he was back at it.

Manolis: He was back at it, but his base was really from New York. He was living in New York and, after all, '64 was a disastrous defeat for the Republicans. I forgot who the other Republican candidates were in '68 against Nixon. I just don't recall them.

Teiser: Did Senator Knowland support Nixon in '68?

Manolis: Yes.

Teiser: Actively or tacitly?

Manolis: I would say actively. I mean actively in the sense that the newspaper endorsed him. The Senator, if he was invited to speak he'd go speak on behalf of the Republican ticket. But he was not a part of the delegation. I think he had been asked to be a part of the delegation at one point, but he declined because he didn't want to be partisan. He was a newspaperman and he was no longer active.

Teiser: Then, back to state politics, I understand he supported Reagan.

Manolis: Yes, he supported Ronald Reagan.

Teiser: Did he have a part in developing him in his political--

Manolis: In some sense, yes, because Reagan's first appearance was during the campaign for Goldwater. Reagan was one of the prime speakers on behalf of Goldwater and made a great impression, and I think that's what put Reagan in the spotlight.

Teiser: Did he then confer with Senator Knowland?

Manolis: I think once in a while. They weren't close friends. But I think once in a while he spoke with the governor about things.

Teiser: So there was some continuity?

Manolis: There was some contact.

Relationship with Earl Warren

Teiser: I think the other area that we're somewhat interested in that we haven't asked about is Senator Knowland's relationship with Governor Warren.

Manolis: Now, that is a subject that is all before my time, all before my time, because I don't know. If there are people like Mr. Bartel and others that you can talk to but you see that's the period-- I was a child--that period of the thirties when Governor Warren was the district attorney of Alameda County and the Senator was an assemblyman and a state senator, and the assistant publisher of the Oakland Tribune. Later when Earl Warren ran for attorney general and Senator Knowland was the Republican national committee-man for California, and then Governor Warren being governor and appointing Senator Knowland to the seat upon the death of Hiram Johnson--all that happened when I was a child, a young boy, so I really can't tell you anything about that. Then, of course, when I was in Washington, Earl Warren was the chief justice.

Teiser: He had already been named chief justice?

Manolis: Yes, he was named chief justice I would say in '53 or '54, before I went there. But that was on such a high--you know, the chief justice is practically like the president and if he and Senator Knowland saw each other it might be at some White House banquet or something. But I never saw the chief justice even though the Supreme Court was just a block from the Senate. So I really don't know anything about their--

Teiser: It was said that they had earlier been friendlier, and that they somewhat grew estranged as they grew older.

Manolis: I think that's true, and I read the Warren autobiography, which I think is a very interesting autobiography, because it mentions nothing about the role of the Knowlands, especially the Senator's father, J.R. Knowland, as publisher of the Tribune, in getting him elected as district attorney or in urging him to run for governor or the role that the Senator played, a very strong role in getting him appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court. He mentions nothing. Earl Warren, whom as I say I do not know, if you read the autobiography, everything that happened in Earl Warren's life, it happened because of Earl Warren. [laughter] But I think it is true to say, if "estranged" is the right word, but there again I was not a party to the early relationship and then when I got to Washington it's like asking me what was the

Manolis: relationship of the Senator to the president. Well, that's a little more easy to define because you can say the Senator is majority leader and disagreed with the policies of the president. Well, you don't disagree with the chief justice who never makes any pronouncements, so that there was not even a public forum for judging that friendship.

Teiser: Of course, Governor Warren became more liberal, but as I understand it so also did Senator Knowland in his general concepts. Is that true?

Manolis: Yes, I think that's true. I don't know whether Mrs. Warren-- would--Mrs. Warren is still alive, but you might get something out of her. But that's something I just cannot--I sense--the Senator was not one to talk about people. The Senator never discussed people, never gossiped. So you know you ask about these people, and as close as I was to the Senator (I was his closest friend) he never said unkind things about people. So if there was anything between him and Earl Warren, the most that I recall is a feeling I had that he felt that Earl Warren--I don't know, I don't want to say was ungrateful--and I remember up until Earl Warren's death, Earl Warren always came to Oakland for Christmas because he had old friends here and he would always come to the Tribune and come and see the Senator up until oh, a few years ago when Earl Warren died. So he did the external, obvious things; but outside of coming into the office at the Tribune for ten minutes at Christmas time, I don't think that there was any communication or anything between the two.

Teiser: The subject of Senator Knowland's slight shift perhaps (or maybe it's more than slight) in his viewpoint in the last ten years of his life, fifteen maybe, I remember reading a story that someone had the idea of bringing up the "right to work" amendment again, a "right to work" law in California, and he said no.

Manolis: Well, I think he felt the issue had been settled. I think also that what might have played a role is that the Senator came back from Washington and he came to the Tribune and he took over management of the paper; he sat in on labor negotiations, he dealt first hand with labor, and it might have changed his views.

Teiser: Do you think his other views were changed? I guess on the subject of Taiwan not particularly, but were they on--

Manolis: Oh, I think so. I think his views softened. I can't recall, for instance, whether the Senator was still alive when President Nixon went to China. I don't know when that took place.

Teiser: I think so.

Manolis: It would be interesting to look at Tribune editorials at that time, especially if the Senator was alive. I don't when that happened.\*

### Major Contributions

Teiser: This is perhaps a very large question. Have you ever thought of Senator Knowland's major contributions to your state? It's something that a hundred years from now people would be interested in knowing, what his very close associates thought were his major contributions.

Manolis: [tape interruption] That is a large question and one that is difficult for me to extemporize. I think that Senator Knowland, taken in the context of his time, which after all was post-World War II--he was appointed to the Senate in August of 1945. Germany had collapsed and Japan was collapsing. He represented a state which had seen an enormous growth during the war years because of the Pacific theater of war. California in those five years had changed from the somewhat rural state to a great industrial state. It had industry before, of course, and great natural resources. But with the war effort and the shipyards and the aircraft industry, I think the war years changed the state and as a result, being in Washington he played a great role in the development of the state because unfortunately these things don't happen with a lot of federal money. I think he will be remembered for many of the reclamation projects. He took a leadership role in those, realizing how vital agriculture was to the state. Many projects which he fathered, like the Port of Sacramento and others. I think that his role in international affairs was a contribution consistent with the Senator from a great state which had become more cognizant of its position in the world as a result of the war.

His main thrust, of course, if one were to remember his Senate years, was in foreign affairs, military matters, because he served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee. He was on the joint committee on atomic energy. He served on the appropriations committee, which was vital to the state of California for appropriations for great

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\*President Nixon went to China in 1972. Senator Knowland died in 1974.

Manolis: projects, reclamation projects, dams. He fathered the legislation for many of the dams that were built in the state with federal money--Auburn Dam, Folsom Dam, Shasta Dam and others.

I think he was one of our Senators, who, if you take all of the Senators in the history of California, approached--if I may use the word--statesman. He was also a delegate in 1956 to the United Nations, appointed by President Eisenhower because of his membership on the foreign relations committee. It's hard to say whether he took his position vis-à-vis China because of his awareness of California being on the Pacific and being the gateway to the Orient or whether that policy came as a result of his feelings about communism. I think it might have been a combination of the two; of course, being in California he was very aware of the problem in the Orient.

In his life he met many world leaders, both while he was in Washington and during his travels. In the years that I was with him he was not a senatorial junketeer. He didn't go on any junkets in the years I was there, to Europe or wherever. [pause] He had a great sense of history. I remember when he came back and Professor [George] Hammond asked him to come and talk to The Friends of The Bancroft Library at their annual meeting. In those days that was a smaller organization than it is today. They gathered for their annual meeting here, and it was a nice meeting and the Senator came out and he spoke on historical reminiscences of the years in Washington, his reminiscences of California history which he knew extremely well because his father, of course, is one of the great figures in California history in this century (he was chairman of the Landmarks Commission and [president of] the California Historical Society and the chairman of the State Parks Commission for thirty years). He recalled as a small boy, traveling with his father up and down the state visiting the missions before they were rebuilt, and that was one of J.R. Knowland's great contributions. He was very interested in missions, and as president of the Native Sons of the Golden West he urged the Native Sons and Native Daughters to take on the project of historical landmarks. That's how J.R.'s interest, and how he became chairman of the Historical Landmarks Commission. But the Senator, as a very small boy, used to travel around with his father, so he had a vital awareness of California history. He grew up with it as history and, of course, J.R. himself was a great public figure. He had served in the Congress for twelve years, retiring in 1914, and then fifty years later he was still here and he would reminisce. I knew J.R. very well.



Manolis: So the Senator had a feeling of history and a feeling of destiny for California. He loved California very deeply and that's why, when I get back to the talk at The Friends of the Bancroft Library, he sort of surprised Professor Hammond and sort of surprised everybody. I knew it--in fact I suggested it to him--he was overjoyed with the idea, and without any hesitancy he announced at that meeting that he was going to leave all of his papers to The Bancroft Library with the hope that other Senators would follow him too, because he was also a very devoted alumnus to the Berkeley campus and he felt that that would be his contribution to the Berkeley campus to start the tradition of California Senators giving their papers to The Bancroft Library so that The Bancroft could become known as a repository of the papers. To some extent that wish has been fulfilled with the Kuchel papers and other papers. I think that, as I told Professor Hart, he has the trump in his hand and all Senators should always be reminded that those papers are there and the importance to the scholar is the continuity, so that some papers aren't at USC and some aren't at Chico and wherever.

So his contributions are hard to enumerate. [pause] I don't know what more I could say.

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# Oakland Tribune

Monday, March 9, 1981

## Helen Knowland Whyte

Memorial services will be held Tuesday for Helen Herrick Knowland Whyte, a prominent Oakland civic and cultural leader who died Sunday at 73.

Whyte was an author and literary critic who reviewed books for the Oakland Tribune under the name of "Clay Roberts." Her first husband was the late Sen. William F. Knowland, former publisher of the Tribune.

Born in Nevada, Whyte grew up in Alameda. She eloped with Knowland, whom she had known since childhood, in 1926, while they were students at the University of California at Berkeley. Whyte was affiliated with the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority there.

Knowland was actively involved in her husband's political career, hitting the campaign trail with him. The couple lived in Piedmont and then in Washington, D.C., for 13 years while he served in the Senate.

They returned to the Eastbay in 1958 for Knowland's unsuccessful bid for the California governorship against Edmund G. Brown Sr.

Knowland died in 1974. In 1975, she married Charles "Chuck" Whyte, a widower and former executive of the Borden Corp. Their friendship dated back to their college days when his first wife and Mrs. Knowland were sorority sisters.

Mrs. Whyte was an avid writer for most of her adult life.

Her first book, "Madam Baltimore," was published in 1949. She described it as a psychological study, a novel in which action arose out of character.

She had long aspired to the post of literary critic at the Tribune, and in 1974 she was giv-



**Helen Knowland Whyte**

*Eastbay community leader*

en the job, reviewing hundreds of books before her retirement a few years later.

She also was an accomplished amateur painter.

Whyte devoted countless hours to civic activities, serving on the 1939-40 Alameda County Grand Jury and working with the Oakland Community Chest, the Alameda Charities, Oakland Forum and the Junior League of Oakland.

She held office at various times in most of those organizations, and was president of the Junior League. She also was active in Republican women's circles and was affiliated with the Methodist Church.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by three children — Emelyn K. Jewett, Joseph W. Knowland and Estelle K. Johnson; a sister, Ruth Narfi, and eight grandchildren — Deanne

and Rebecca Knowland, William F. Knowland II, Emelyn Carothers, Helen Jewett, Harold Jewett III, Bryan McKeen and Robert McKeen Jr. — and two great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 2 p.m. at the Mausoleum Chapel of the Mountain View Cemetery under direction of the Albert Brown Mortuary.

S.F.  
Herald - S.F. 3/9/71

## Helen H. Whyte

Memorial services will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) for Helen Herrick Whyte, a member through marriage of the Knowland family of Oakland.

Mrs. Whyte, 72, died yesterday in her Oakland home after a long illness.

The former wife of the late Senator William F. Knowland, Mrs. Whyte was active for many years in Republican Party politics.

She met and married Senator Knowland when they were both students at the University of California at Berkeley in 1926. They were divorced in 1972.

While married to Knowland, who was publisher and editor of the family-owned Oakland Tribune at the time of his death, Mrs. Whyte began a career as book editor under the pen name Clay Roberts.

Mrs. Whyte married retired executive Charles J. Whyte in 1975.

She is survived by Whyte; two daughters, Emelyn K. Jewett and Estelle K. Johnson; a son, Joseph W. Knowland; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Tomorrow's memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. in the Mausoleum Chapel of Mountain View Cemetery, 5000 Piedmont Avenue in Oakland.

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Ruth Teiser

Born in Portland, Oregon; came to the Bay Area in 1932 and has lived here ever since. Stanford University, B.A., M.A. in English; further graduate work in Western history. Newspaper and magazine writer in San Francisco since 1943, writing on local history and business and social life of the Bay Area. Book reviewer for the San Francisco Chronicle, 1943-1974.

