SAN FRANCISCO REPUBLICANS

George Christopher    Mayor of San Francisco and Republican Party Candidate
Caspar W. Weinberger  California Assembly, Republican State Central Committee, and Elections, 1953-1966

Interviews Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris, Sarah Sharp, and Miriam Stein
in 1977, 1978, and 1979

With an Introduction by
Gabrielle Morris
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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

January 1980
Berkeley, California
INTRODUCTION

One of the more interesting factors in California political history is the continuing tension between San Francisco and Los Angeles as focal points in the north versus south dynamics of a long, narrow state coping with the logistics of managing natural and financial resources in response to shifting demographic pressures.

For many years, the balance of this equation rested with San Francisco and with the Republican party. The present volume presents interviews with two notable San Francisco Republican leaders representing significantly different approaches to statewide politics and party. Where George Christopher can be seen as a party loyalist concerned with traditional expectations, Caspar Weinberger clearly speaks to the pragmatic necessity of updating party organization and operations. Both shed light on the role of northern California interests and attitudes in shaping events in the state.

As mayor of San Francisco, Christopher energetically led the city into redevelopment and civic innovation; he had worked hard for the party, and the governor's office and legislature had been reassuringly Republican. Yet later when he ran for statewide office, in 1958, 1962, and 1966, the party support he expected was not forthcoming, nor did he succeed in putting together a statewide organization for his own candidacy. It was no longer enough to be a San Francisco Republican with good party credentials.

Looking at the county central committee a few years earlier, Weinberger saw lack of energy and narrowness of view and set about bringing in new people and new ideas. In the state assembly and later on the state central committee, he played a key role in developing organizational structures that would encompass regional differences and go beyond factional disputes to concentrate on broader goals. For the party, such goals were to elect more Republicans to statewide office and majorities to the legislature. 

Taken together, these interviews offer an overview of Republican influence in the state in the ten years spanning the disarray following the Warren years, when northern influence had been great, and the rebuilding of the party with considerable southern weight.

Gaylord Parkinson, Thomas Caldecott, and Donald Doyle, among others, provide further documentation of this story in other volumes of this series.

Gabrielle Morris
Project Coordinator

25 July 1980
Berkeley, California
GOVERNMENTAL HISTORY DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

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Richard Rodda
Ed Salzman
Mortimer D. Schwartz
Verne Scoggin
David Snyder
Caspar Weinberger

Project Interviewers

Malca Chall
Amelia R. Fry
Gabrielle Morris
James Rowland
Sarah Sharp
Julie Shearer

Special Interviewers

Eleanor Glaser
Harriet Nathan
Suzanne Riess
Miriam Feingold Stein
Ruth Teiser

*Deceased during the term of the project.
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INTERVIEW HISTORY

During the period when Goodwin J. Knight and Edmund G. Brown, Sr., were governors of California, not only was George Christopher mayor of San Francisco, he was also a leading Republican contender for the offices of lieutenant governor, governor, and U.S. Senator. Members of the staff of the Governmental History Documentation Project interviewed Mayor Christopher twice on various important political topics from this era.

The first interview with Mayor Christopher was conducted by Dr. Mimi Stein on 2 May 1977 in his small office, which was lined to overflowing with file cabinets, at Christopher Dairies in San Francisco. Mayor Christopher, taking time out from a hectic business day for the interviewer, reminisced freely about the state and national Republican campaigns of 1950, 1958, 1960 and 1964. In this first interview, he candidly recorded his own private feelings about being one of the less successful Republican candidates of this era. At the close of the interview, he gave Dr. Stein a copy of George Dorsey's Christopher of San Francisco, written in 1962. This book proved most helpful in later research on Mayor Christopher.

I arranged a second interview to probe more deeply into topics already discussed and to ask additional questions. We met on 31 August 1978, late in the afternoon because of his busy schedule, at his spacious condominium which is situated on Cathedral Hill in San Francisco. Both Mayor Christopher and his gracious wife, Tula, greeted me when I arrived. A panoramic view of downtown San Francisco dominated the large window of the living room where we interviewed. Greek artifacts decorated the other walls and cabinets; these colored statues and other objects, gathered carefully on trips back to Greece, contrasted warmly with the soft beige tones of the walls and rugs. At the close of the interview, the Christophers served the traditional Greek drink ouzo and hors d'oeuvres.

An outline for this interview and supporting material to spark Mayor Christopher's memory had been sent ahead. As with the first interview, he declined to review the material, preferring instead to speak extemporaneously and freely on the topics I wanted to cover. Before the tape recorder was turned on, he remarked that he thought it was his duty as a past public official to give his view on the period of California politics in which he had been involved. This comment was a fitting introduction to this second interview because he seemed to enjoy talking about a wide range of topics such as his own political disappointments, the Free Speech Movement, the corporate influencing of politics, and the nature of political conduct as he viewed it. In editing both interviews together, I was impressed by how deeply he felt about his career in California politics.
When Mayor Christopher received his transcript of the interviews to edit, he did so quickly. Along with the transcript, he sent along to me two items from his personal papers which have been included. The first item is a letter from Mr. A.E. Bagshaw to Mr. George T. Davis, dated 4 November 1955, and the second item is Dick Nolan's column from the San Francisco Examiner for 4 February 1962. Mayor Christopher sent these documents to more fully explain details of "The Milk Case."

Together, the two interviews conducted with Mayor George Christopher help to explain critical episodes in California's political history from 1950 through 1966.

Sarah Lee Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

18 September 1979
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California, Berkeley
I was born in St. Peter, Greece (a remote mountain village about forty miles north of Tripolis, Arcadia, Greece). I was brought to San Francisco at age three, in 1911, and have resided here since. I attended Lincoln Grammar School at 4th and Harrison Streets in San Francisco and then I went to high school for one year only (Galileo High).

I left school at age sixteen due to my father's illness and I got a job as a copy boy at the San Francisco Examiner during the day, delivering papers in the early a.m. and also in the p.m. for the old Call-Bulletin. I continued night high school classes for four years (Humboldt Evening). I graduated and enrolled in Golden Gate University (accounting classes). I graduated after four years with a Bachelor of Commercial Science degree, making nine years continuous night school studies. I am happy to note that I am now a life-time trustee of Golden Gate University.

Political matters are noted on the attached sheet, but I can say that my election majorities have never been equaled in San Francisco. I received two and one half out of every three votes cast in the last election for supervisor, and in my mayoralty race, received a majority of over 85,000 votes. Fifteen to 20,000 votes today is considered a landslide.

After graduating from Golden Gate, I entered public accounting, but did not care for it. I purchased a defunct dairy plant for $3,000 and built it into a substantial enterprise with sales into the millions of dollars. I sold out to Berkeley Farms in 1970 and am now their consultant.

I married the former Tula Sarantitis in 1936, and after forty-three years of married life, we still enjoy a bit of traveling and civic work.

George Christopher
San Francisco, 1979
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Former Mayor George Christopher

George Christopher is a product of San Francisco's night schools. Significantly, he later returned to the college he graduated from as a trustee of that college.

In 1945, Mr. Christopher entered public service through election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. San Francisco rewarded his ability by re-electing him by overwhelming majorities.

In 1955, he was elected mayor, and then re-elected by the largest majorities ever given a candidate for that office, a record that still stands today.

San Francisco, under Mayor Christopher's guidance, was designated by Fortune magazine as "One of the Best Administered Cities in the United States."

Two former presidents of the United States (Dwight D. Eisenhower and Herbert Hoover) praised him publicly for his administration of San Francisco. J. Edgar Hoover, the late F.B.I. director, said that Mayor Christopher had the best law enforcement program in the nation.

He has been decorated by the governments of France, Italy, Denmark, Greece and Sweden for his contributions to international good will, and has received numerous awards from other nations for his work in international understanding. His meetings with heads of state throughout the world became historic during the cold war period, especially with General De Gaulle and Nikita Kruschev.

He has also served as advisor to the State Department and U.S. Department of Commerce on economic missions to other lands.

c. 1964
Big-Thinking S.F. Mayor Of ’50s and ’60s Is Dead

By Carl Nolte
Chronicle Staff Writer

George Christopher, the mayor who brought San Francisco into the big leagues, died yesterday at the age of 92.

Christopher was one of the last of the old-time political leaders - an immigrant who made a fortune through hard work, rose to become chief executive of his adopted city, and died full of years and honors.

He was a man of many talents—a shrewd businessman who ran a successful dairy business, a Republican mayor who charmed the world's most powerful communist.

Christopher left his mark all over San Francisco — he not only persuaded the New York Giants to move west, he helped reshape the city into what some of his foes said was a smaller version of New York, and what his supporters said was a whole new and vibrant city.

During his eight years as mayor — from 1956 to 1964 — the Embarcadero Center and the Golden Gateway were constructed, the Japan Center was built, the Hall of Justice went up, and dozens and dozens of new tall buildings transformed the old skyline.

Christopher — the city's last Republican mayor — also built the much-disliked Candlestick Park and was on hand when the Embarcadero Freeway opened. He was a builder and proud of it: "I was aggressive, demanding," he said once.

He was not afraid to make a decision. "I think people will think more of us if we make an honest mistake.

► GEORGE: Page A19 Col. 2
and press on rather than make the mistake of doing nothing," he said.

After he left office, a street was named for him, and so was a mini-park in Diamond Heights. A bronze bust of the former mayor is in the rotunda of City Hall.

City 'Deep In His Heart'

"San Francisco was deep in his heart," the inscription on the bust says.

"San Francisco has suffered a monumental loss," said Mayor Willie Brown on hearing of his death. "George was a dear friend and will be deeply missed.

Brown ordered the city flags lowered to half-staff in the former mayor's honor. And the Giants announced they were working on a tribute to the man who brought the team to San Francisco.

John Burton, the liberal San Francisco Democrat who is president pro tempore of the state Senate, said yesterday that George Christopher "was a member of a vanishing breed of liberal Republicans in the state."

"He was also an outstanding mayor," Burton said.

"His death is a great loss to the history of the city. He was a wonderful guy and he had a hell of a life."

Although George Christopher made San Francisco his main arena, he also appeared on the world stage and was a major player in California politics.

Perhaps his most famous moment came in 1959, when he played host to the mercurial Nikita Krushchev, premier of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and one of the most powerful men in the world.

Krushchev had come to San Francisco as a stop on a historic tour of the United States and was in a famously foul mood. The trip had begun badly, with Krushchev dangling his shoe on the podium at the United Nations, being insulted by the mayor of Los Angeles, and threatening American audiences with war. "Our rockets are on the launching pads," Krushchev told a Los Angeles audience.

But when he got to San Francisco, Krushchev was met by a smiling, and hospitable Mayor Christopher, who used all his considerable political powers to charm the Soviet leader and his wife.

Mayor Christopher loved to talk about that encounter and dined on the story for years: how he had figured that Krushchev's wife had been insulted by the American media, and how the Soviet premier himself was a political animal.

Later, Krushchev and Christopher became unlikely friends, and the mayor was invited to the Kremlin as an honored guest.

Humble Beginnings

It was perhaps the pinnacle of a career that began when George Christopher was born into a poor family in the Greek province of Arcadia in 1907.

His family immigrated to the United States when the boy was 2 years old. They lived south of Market Street in an area called "Greek-town.

That part of the city was rundown and tough in those days, and the watchword was hard work and plenty of it. When Christopher's father became ill, George had to drop out of school at the age of 14 to go to work to support the family. Among other jobs, he was a newspaper copy boy.

As a young man, he married Tula Sarantitis. She was the love of his life, and when she died 10 years ago, he was desolate.

He worked all his long life, and his story became a kind of legend to San Francisco's close-knit Greek community, which valued hard work.

"He was a great Greek hero," said John Konstant, whose family runs restaurants in the city. "Here was someone who came here penniless and made something of himself."

After the day's work was done, Christopher went to night school and studied accounting. Later he had an accounting business and eventually bought out one of his clients, a small San Francisco dairy.

He turned it into Christopher Dairy Farms, which became a multimillion-dollar business.

Christopher's milk business got him in trouble with the law in the 1940s. He was found guilty of misdemeanor violation of the state's milk price-fixing laws. The incident came back to haunt him in his political life and was used against him a number of times.

"Today if I did that," he said, "I'd be a hero."

Clearly, however, dredging up the old incident hurt. The people of San Francisco knew who I was," he said. "And they understood.

Popular With Voters

San Franciscans certainly understood when they went to the polls in 1945; Christopher easily won his first race for San Francisco's Board of Supervisors.

When he ran for re-election, he got more than two votes of every three cast, a record that still stands.

He ran for mayor in 1951 and lost.

He ran again in 1955 and won. It was said that the Greek community went on a fast to help him. Members used meal money to support his campaign.

When he became mayor in 1956, the city seemed adrift. Redevelopment had stalled. There was a whiff of police corruption, and a lack of political leadership. He summoned the entire police force to a meeting and told them: "I know what's been going on," he told them. He wanted honest cops. He also wanted efficiency in government, and he got it. His campaign when he ran for a second term was simple. "He gets things done.

Strong on Civil Rights

His time now seems long ago. San Francisco was much less diverse in those days, and a kind of official racism and prejudice was just under the surface. When baseball star Willie Mays wanted to buy a home in the city, he found that real estate agents would not sell to an African American.

Christopher's sense of justice was offended. "He was strong on civil rights," said Art Agnos, who said he is proud to have been San Francisco's second Greek American mayor.

"He said he offered Ma's own house. He also told the police, who were harassing gay people, to leave them alone."
I THE 1950 REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN

[Interview 1: May 2, 1977]##

Stein: You were just telling me about Goodie [Goodwin] Knight when he was still lieutenant-governor and wanted to run for governor.

Christopher: It must have been, yes. It was just the last time before he ran for governor.

Stein: Yes. That's when it was.

Christopher: Yes. That was an interesting aspect of it.

Stein: What was that story?

Christopher: Well, the rumor got out pretty strongly that Warren would not run again. As a result, Goodie Knight, of course, began to campaign on the basis that Warren would not run.

I had just emerged. It was '49. No, it was just '50, that's right. I had just been re-elected supervisor in the City and County of San Francisco for my second term, and I came in with an astounding vote at the time. It was about 180,000. Well, nobody ever wins now by more than 60-70,000. At that time I happened to get about two and a half votes for every three cast.

But he was impressed, Goodie Knight was. He called me up from Los Angeles. He wanted to see me, and he did. He and I walked up and down Market Street with my wife all the way from Third up to Ninth, and across the street and came all the way

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 58.
Christopher: I recall very vividly how he bought a couple bags of popcorn from the vendors on Market Street. He just liked to pop corn into his mouth, you know. He was kind of an extrovert.

There was nothing to hold his enthusiasm back, and the proposition was that he would be running for governor, he being from the south [southern California], and I would be running for lieutenant-governor from the north [northern California]. Of course I was flattered. I was only a supervisor.

I said, "Well, that's pretty good in my first term as supervisor." So I decided that that would be fine, with a proviso, of course, that Earl Warren didn't run for re-election, because, I said, "I don't think you want to have a conflict in the party."

"Oh no," he said, "I have that assurance, I am absolutely positive that Earl Warren is not going to run again."

Well, about a month went by, and I heard rumors that Warren was going to run. So I called Warren up in Sacramento. "Governor," I said, "I would like to know because here's the story: If you're not going to run, Goodie Knight of course is going to run for governor, and it has been suggested that I be his running mate, which is not a bad idea as far as I'm concerned." "But," I said, "I told Goodie that I would not do it if you were going to be a candidate for re-election."

"I could tell you right now," Warren said, "I am going to be running for re-election." That settled that.

I had already told Goodie I was going to place this call to Sacramento. A half an hour later Goodie Knight called me from Los Angeles. He said, "What did you find out?" I said, "Well, I found out that Earl, that the governor, is going to run again." He said, "Well, I'm going to run anyway." "Well," I said, "You may, but I won't." I said, "I'm not going to do it. As far as I'm concerned it will be disruptive. If you are going to run again, I just can't run with you. That was the pledge I made to you at the time."

He was upset then. He was quite upset. Perhaps it was more show than really being upset because a short time later he withdrew himself, so that was the end of that particular story.

##
Stein: Let me ask you one other question. Do you have any idea who was encouraging Knight to run?

Christopher: Well, yes, I think I might say that a lot of the so-called conservatives in the southern part of the state were urging him to run. They weren't too happy with Earl Warren who was supposedly the so-called liberal part of the Republican party.

So Goodie Knight did have a large segment of the southern California conservatives, the Orange County conservatives, they called them then. I don't know what they call them now. They did have this feeling about Warren.

Generally speaking however, Warren did have a widespread attraction. The handwriting was on the wall, as soon as Warren actually made the announcement. Even these conservatives down south could see the handwriting on the wall. They determined it was a futile case to try to defeat him. So they all backed away.

Stein: Do you know who some of these conservatives were?

Christopher: Well, I don't know, but I have an idea. I don't think it would do any good for me to start guessing at names at this time. They were the usual conservative party members, especially in the southern part of the state.

No, I can't give you the names specifically.

###
Christopher: That was the first time I got involved with him. The next time I got involved was when the so-called "Big Switch" came along. That was a terribly embarrassing thing because, as I say, Goodie Knight and Virginia, his wife, and I were over at friends. I respected them very much, and I liked his outgoing personality. He always managed to put people at ease.

He was running for re-election as governor until Bill [William F.] Knowland came in. Knowland decided he was going to go up and down the state, and so-called "stump the state" to find out if he had any support to run for governor. He was going to feel out the pulse of the public to see what they were thinking. So he made a series of talks up and down the state: rotary clubs, Lions, and Elks, anybody who would listen.

The fact of the matter is that even today, the Republicans of California always vote for their most conservative Republican. A middle of the roader or a liberal Republican encounters more difficulty. It's always the most conservative Republican.

We were taking polls consistently as to the popular standing between Goodie Knight and Bill Knowland. Well, I remember one poll that showed Knowland leading by about 55 to 49, or thereabouts. It was fairly close. This was at the very outset, before he started campaigning. Well, as soon as Bill Knowland started to go down the Central California Valley and started making speeches, and he started to get a little publicity, and people started to surmise that he might run for governor, the second poll showed him up to about 60 to 40. And it came to 65 to 35. Well, the last poll showed Bill Knowland running ahead by maybe 70 to 30. It was that bad. It was obvious that Goodie Knight was going to lose the nomination of his own party.
Christopher: So he disappeared over in Arizona for about seven or eight days, and finally decided that he would make a switch to run for United States Senator, for Bill Knowland's seat. In the meantime, I was supposed to be running for United States Senator, and I had seen Goodie on at least a dozen occasions. This was in '59, wasn't it?

Stein: The "Big Switch" was '58.

Christopher: Oh, '58 then, okay. It was the early part of '58

I said, "Now, Goodie, there is one thing that I'd like to know from you. I want to have your commitment," and this was in front of his wife. "If you're going to run for Senator," I said, "I sure don't want to do it. I can't beat you. I have no illusions. But I don't want to have my dignity hurt to the point where I'm committed and I am still compelled to run against you, because I can't stand that. Once committing myself, I'll be in for good."

"No, no, no, I'm not running. I'm not running. I'm not running." So he told me this consistently at least seven or eight times.

But finally, when he saw the polls so adverse to him, as I said he disappeared in Arizona. That's where he went that time. He finally returned and the "Big Switch" was made.

Well, a lot of people surmised at the time that he had conferred with Bill Knowland about making the switch. They accused Knight of actually entering into an unholy deal. But there was no deal, really. There was no deal between Knowland and Knight that they would simply switch positions. As a matter of fact they weren't even talking to each other. They were that far apart.

The fact is that when Goodie Knight realized, saw the handwriting on the wall, he just became frantic. He disappeared for about a week to think the matter out. I learned later that he had gone to Arizona to reflect on the whole matter. Finally, his closest advisers made up his mind for him and he switched--leaving me in a very sensitive position. Their emissaries maybe had some kind of a deal. He switched and left me out in the cold. I was in a terrible position because I was already committed to run. What hurt me at the time was the fact that he didn't bother to call me up and say, "George, I've got to change my mind on this. Can you find a way of extricating yourself with some dignity?", so that I wouldn't be embarrassed.
Christopher: He simply sent ahead and announced, and became a candidate. So then the Democrats started to come after me. They wanted to know if I would switch over and run on the Democratic ticket which would have further disrupted the party, because Clair Engle ran and defeated them. I said, "No." Politics didn't mean that much to me. "I'm just going to have to stick it through, run anyway, and let the people know that my commitment is my commitment."

So I ran and got trounced, which was anticipated. I didn't mind. I knew I was going to get beat even before I got in there.

Those are the incidents I had with Goodie. I always enjoyed his company. I think he died of a broken heart, the poor fellow.* Here he was a governor and he could have been governor for a long time if that so-called "Big Switch" had not come along.

The one thing unfair about the things they said about Goodie Knight is that he made the deal actually to switch. He did not. Actually he was pushed out of the race by the stronger, bull-like man of Bill Knowland who then was just a tremendous fellow, a great bull in a pampas, rolling down the prairies winning votes like mad. I saw the polls personally, starting out from a mere five percent majority to the point where it was better than two and a half to one finally.

Well, that's part of my memory of Goodie Knight. It has been said that Bill Knowland wanted to be governor to use the office as a stepping stone to the presidency. In those days it was the governor's office, and not the U.S. Senate that could elevate a man to the presidency. But Governor Knight had a secret ambition too. He wanted the governorship so that he could seek the nomination for vice-president. He was not ambitious for the presidency, as the executive part appealed less to him than did the vice-presidency with its lesser challenges and more time for handshaking, which he was good at.

Stein: Do you know anything about Nixon's role in the "Big Switch"?

Christopher: He had no role in the "Big Switch." He had no role at all. He had no role. It was simply—nobody had a role in it. It was Bill Knowland's decision to run for governor. I talked with Bill Knowland about it many times. A lot of people have been accused of having had some part in the decision-making with regard to that incident. But, as far as I know, it was his decision, and I think I knew it pretty well because Bill Knowland and I discussed many times over a cocktail. He had

* [The next passage is under seal until Mr. Christopher's death.]
Christopher: no reason to delude me in any way. We discussed it for many years, up until Bill Knowland's own death.

He decided to come out here and run for governor. At that time it was popular to nominate men to the presidency who were governors. Later on, with the Kennedy administration, it turned out that perhaps it was more feasible to become president from the Senate rather than from the governorship. But at that time it was more popular to become a presidential candidate from the governor's office.

No one had any decision except that Bill Knowland wanted to come back here. His wife wanted to come back. The whole family wanted to come back to California. It looked like, as we say, a sure thing that he'd win the nomination and a sure thing that he would defeat Pat [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, who turned out to be a little more stubborn in his attitude about these things than people surmised. But no, nobody made the decision for him. I'm positive of that.

Stein: I seem to remember reading that after Knight disappeared into Arizona he first surfaced in Washington, and that he had conferred with Nixon, and then came out to announce that he was running for Senator.

Christopher: Well, that may be so. I think I recall that. Actually if he went back to Washington at the time, it was not for the purpose of consulting as to whether he should get out or not. The die was cast. Knowland was winning by seventy to thirty percent.

If you're familiar with polls, as I'm sure you are, the trend is very important, especially when you start in at a very slight margin, and all of a sudden you see the margin widening as time goes on instead of retracting. Then you know that it's a forlorn hope. You can't win.

Goodie Knight was practical politician enough to know that he was not going to win the nomination. You know that's really a double slap in the face. It's one thing to lose the election in a general election, but it's something else again to lose the nomination of your own party after you've been an incumbent.

I certainly felt sorry for Goodie Knight because, as I said before, he was a good governor. He was a kind of an extrovert, a showman. Call him what you will, but he was fun to be with. He was a little different from subsequent governors, I think.
Christopher: I have heard other, have you heard...

Stein: I haven't heard that. I'm not saying that people don't say that. It is just that we have only just started talking to people.

Christopher: I wouldn't say this for the record and I would have to deny it, but I...

Stein: Don't worry. This isn't even being transcribed. This is just for notes.

Christopher: I've been told all kinds of stories about his passing which is unfortunate because he really was fun to be with at all times. He was a good executive and he had the happy faculty of being a very congenial man. I heard later, much to my deep sorrow that he did away with himself. That has shocked me, for it came from pretty reliable authority.

So he died a broken-hearted man in any event.
III  RICHARD NIXON AND THE RACE FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN 1962

Stein: What about 1962? That was when you ran for lieutenant-governor.

Christopher: Yes, that was another one of my losing episodes. I was at that time thinking of running for governor because my name by this time had become a little more prominent up and down the state, whereas prior to that time anybody north of the Tehachapis wasn't well known in southern California. So I had that difficulty of name recognition down there. But I didn't know if Dick [Richard M.] Nixon was going to run or not.

I told my friends that if he did run for governor, I would have to abstain running myself because Dick Nixon at that time had just emerged from the presidential race. He had lost by some 112,000 votes. I said this to my friends as a public statement in addition to my private conversations, "If a man can lose a presidency by a mere 112,000 votes, and from there he wants to go down to the governorship of any state, God bless him, let him have it."

I wouldn't challenge him on it because I felt he was entitled to it.

I got a call from Nixon. I went down to see him. He was then living on one of those estates in southern California, a very nice area. He said, "Well, what do you think I should do?"

I told him, "That's the wrong question to ask me because we're all mature people now. That is a decision you have to make for yourself. I never tell a man to run for public office or which girl to marry."

That's right. That's a cardinal rule with me.
Christopher: The fact of the matter is that Dick Nixon came up to San Francisco a short time later and was supposed to make some kind of an announcement. He and a group of people were at Ernie’s restaurant out on Powell Street here in San Francisco. I believe Cap Weinberger was there. Joe Martin was there and a few others. They were having dinner. Nixon was supposed to make an announcement the next day relative to his candidacy, either for or against it. The strange thing is that he said that he would know by the next morning whether he was going to run or not. Well, the next morning at ten-thirty he had already called a press conference. I had to surmise at that time that his mind must have been made up.

At nine o'clock in the evening, prior to the big conference the next day, I just surmised that certainly by this time his mind was made up whether he [Nixon] was going to run or not. No doubt the announcements were already off the mimeograph machine.

But I can tell you this: He didn't tell anybody that night either. These were his closest friends. He told no one.

Dick Nixon was kind of an introvert, just the opposite of Goodie Knight. Dick Nixon would never show his emotions. He was always to himself. Goodie Knight was just the opposite. He exuded emotions.

So the next morning we learned just as fast as anybody else, no sooner, that Dick Nixon actually was running for governor. So my friends said to me, "Well, now, you've got to run for lieutenant-governor."

I said, "Well, okay."

I ran. Senator Jack McCarthy was my opponent for the nomination, a very fine fellow from across the Bay over in Marin County. I won that nomination and went on to take a licking along with Mr. Nixon in the finals, [laughter] which is all right. I enjoyed all these episodes because it was educational for me. I don't think the state suffered any great harm as a result of my not being governor or lieutenant-governor. I think they managed to keep on existing as prosperously as ever. [Laughter]

Stein: In his book about you, Mr. Dorsey says that in that 1962 campaign, there was a little bit of harsh words between you and Knight.
Christopher: Well, the harsh words were this. You mean when I was running for Senator?

Stein: No, this was in '62. I think it was at the CRA [California Republican Assembly] annual convention. Both you and Knight spoke in Salinas at the CRA on September 16th.

Christopher: And what were the words? Now they escape my memory.

Stein: [Quoting*]

At Salinas, Christopher, who had said repeatedly he would not run for governor if Nixon was a candidate, came to Nixon's defense even before the former vice-president announced his candidacy. Against the advice of Republicans who were still preaching harmony at any cost, Christopher ripped into his old enemy Knight as a man with a "fanatical obsession against his own party."

"The former governor," Christopher told the Republican Assembly, 'has publicly quoted Mr. Nixon as saying that he, Mr. Nixon, is the 'savior of the Republican Party.' The truth of the matter is that Vice-President Nixon, to my knowledge, [this is what you are saying, Mr. Christopher] has never made that statement, nor has he ever intimated that he considers himself the savior of the party. Nor has Dick Nixon ever portrayed himself as the 'indispensable man.'"

Christopher accused Knight of "implying that Nixon as governor could not fight hard for California and compete with other states in securing industry and other benefits in view of his possible White House aspirations."

Christopher: He did have White House aspirations, Goodie Knight did, very strong White House aspirations.

Stein: Goodie Knight did?

Christopher: Oh yes. Well, there may have been harsh words. I think a little bitter enmity carried over because Goodie Knight was continuously saying that I should not have run for Senator. However, as Bill Knowland repeatedly said, 'I don't see why Goodie Knight should be mad--he is not the aggrieved, you are, and you have the right to be mad at him.'

Stein: In '58?

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IV HARSH FEELINGS PERSIST ABOUT 1958

Christopher: Yes. I had to respond that, of course, I didn't want to run for Senator because I knew I was taking my friends down the drain with me. I knew that I was going to get defeated. There was no way that I could possibly defeat a man from the south who had been governor and so forth. I didn't want to run.

I said, "The only thing that you lacked was the common decency to save my own dignity by letting me know ahead of time that you were going to run despite the fact that you had said you were not going to run for Senator. If you had just called me, I would have said, "Give me three days so I can find a way to remove myself with some dignity." I would not have run. So this little incident did carry over to the point where we boiled up to each other from time to time.

However, I must say in all candor in retrospect, now, that at no time did I really deep down inside dislike Goodie Knight. I did like him. I liked his showmanship. I liked the way every time somebody snapped his photograph, he'd say, "Get me a dozen of those." [Laughter] You know he had a very fine way of approaching the public.

But, I must say in all candor in retrospect again, that he did tell me seven, eight times at least in the presence of numerous people, his own people, my own people, and a few times he mentioned it in the press too, that he was not going to run for Senator. Well, lo and behold, he ran for Senator and here I was right in the middle of a campaign. All he had to do was to have called me and said, "George, I'm stuck. I'm in the middle of this stream now. I've got to swim. What can we do?"

I would've thought of something. I think I could have found a solution. I don't know what, but I think I could've started to get dubious about it for a couple of two or three
Christopher: days. Then maybe the fourth or fifth day come to the conclusion that in the interests of the party, I think the champs ought to run and not have some upstart like myself try to get into the picture.

But, you know, all you have out of public life eventually is your own personal dignity. I wasn't getting that. I was being pushed around and I didn't like it.

All Goodie Knight had to do then was to simply tell me, "Well, I've changed my mind." One telephone call from Arizona would've done the whole thing.

So that carried over, I must say. That did have some unfortunate spillover because the California Republican party was now in a fratricidal death struggle, with no leadership and no hope of winning. And then, of course, Knight was blasting away at Nixon quite strongly. Nixon was trying to be the statesman above it all. Some of us on the sides were going to defend the party and such.

By that time Goodie had become not cynical, but a little disillusioned about the situation. He really did feel that he was going to go to the White House as vice-president, not as president. He wanted to go there as a vice-presidential candidate.

Well, what can I say as looking back? Woe to the man, woe to the man who has high aspirations and doesn't achieve them. I know I've run for office too, but I just don't feel that anybody could ever get me to go back again. I'm satisfied that I did the best I could at that time and I am as complacent and happy as ever.
Stein: Well, let me ask you just one other question. Were you active at all in the Republican party itself all through those years?

Christopher: I campaigned for Nixon both times. The first time particularly, I campaigned for him quite strongly. The second time I had my own personal affairs to take care of. I just chose spots here and there where I felt some special affection for the candidate. Otherwise I didn't campaign extensively.

Sometimes they thought I was a little, not too liberal, but that I wasn't conservative enough. I didn't know what they meant by that frankly. Having served as mayor of San Francisco, for instance, I had to treat our people in conformity with what this city stands for. Although I have always felt that I was a fiscal conservative. The people up here thought I was a conservative, but the people down south didn't think so. They had different ideas about my philosophy of government, because they did not know me.

I think I was more conservative than Earl Warren, for instance. I think maybe I was in the pattern of Goodie Knight's philosophy, except that I didn't maybe, show myself or manifest myself in the extrovert way that Goodie Knight did. He was a better showman by far than I was.

I think, for instance, I knew more about government than Ronald Reagan, with all due respect to Mr. Reagan who has done pretty well and advanced himself quite a bit. But that's just my opinion. Apparently a lot of people didn't agree.

But, anyway, it's been fun, and very elucidating for me. I'm glad I did it once, but I surely wouldn't want to go through it again.
Stein: Did you ever get involved in the level of the party like the Republican State Central Committee or the County Central Committee?

Christopher: I never held office there, no. No, I didn't. I went to a few of the meetings, but I never aspired to any presidency or office within the party itself. I preferred to be on the outside elective portion of it.

Stein: Were you active in any of the voluntary organizations like the CRA [California Republican Assembly] or the California Republican League?

Christopher: No, I was not. No. No, I didn't take any activity there at all. They seemed to have their own brand of politics and I just preferred to get out into the hustings and discuss issues which I enjoyed. But I never cared much about, oh, trying to run for office or hold office within the volunteer organizations. For some reason or other they didn't appeal to me, although I guess they were essential for the party's benefit. I never got into that phase of it at all.
VI THE 1964 REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN OF NELSON ROCKEFELLER IN CALIFORNIA

Stein: I just have one final question that came up in some research we were doing. Were you at all involved in the '64 campaign, the primary when Nelson Rockefeller ran against Goldwater?

Christopher: Yes, I was. I was Rockefeller's northern California chairman. We carried the North, but lost the South by a small margin. I think we would have won California at the time but the [Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller's] baby came two days beforehand and that was a clincher. In those days, why, their divorce was a major issue. Today divorce doesn't mean anything. Surprisingly enough, at that particular time the Rockefeller divorce was a big contention in California or, as well, throughout the nation. As a result he was defeated, although we carried California pretty well.

This state votes a little funny to begin with. When I ran for lieutenant governor with Nixon, for instance, when he was running for governor, I think I got 150-160,000 more votes than he did. So you can't tell how the electorate in California is going to vote.

Rockefeller almost pulled it out of a bag with Goldwater. And if we had won California at the time, I think maybe there could have been a little stampede in the other states. But that just about finished him.

Stein: Do you remember an incident that was fairly close to the end of the primary? There was a pamphlet, a little brochure, that Spencer-Roberts put out. They were handling the public relations for Rockefeller. The title of it was something like, "Who do you want in the room with the H-bomb?", or "Who do you want with their finger on the button?" Do you remember the story about that?
Christopher: I don't recall how that came out. I remember that pamphlet but I don't recall how it originated or where it came from. I think that might have been a mistake on the part of whoever did it. But I can tell you this: Rockefeller was not too happy with Spencer-Roberts anyway.

Stein: Why not?

Christopher: Because of some things they had written. When I was in a meeting, I was hearing that they had conducted some portions of the campaign which Rockefeller disliked very much. And when Rockefeller has something on his mind, he tells you. He told them that day. I forget what the incident was, but I know there were certain tactics that were not to his liking. Rockefeller expressed himself in rather strong terms about how the campaign should be conducted. On that occasion, at least, Spencer-Roberts learned who the boss was.

Stein: We had heard a couple of conflicting stories about that particular pamphlet. Some of the people we talked to attributed Rockefeller's loss more to the pamphlet than to the baby since the pamphlet came out so close to the election. We get two different stories. One story was that Spencer-Roberts came out with that pamphlet and Rockefeller didn't like it, and the campaign people didn't like it. They finally agreed, however, to make a test run of it in just one county, Orange County.

Christopher: I don't recall that. I was handling only the northern section of California. I heard about the pamphlet at the time but how it originated I couldn't tell you.

Stein: Do you remember if it was distributed at all in northern California?

Christopher: It was not that I know of. I can't think of any incident like that at all. But I had heard of the pamphlet and I don't recall whether or not it was distributed up here.

But I do know that Rockefeller was a little upset with some things being handled by Mr. [Bill] Roberts. At this particular meeting I happened to sit in on, Rockefeller didn't mind saying so.

Stein: Well, that's about all the questions I have. You've been very, very helpful.

Christopher: I wish you a lot of luck and patience.

Stein: Thank you.
VII THE WERDEL DELEGATION, 1952

[Interview 2: August 31, 1978]##

Sharp: I wanted to start today by asking you if you knew anything about the Thomas Werdel delegation of 1952.*

Christopher: I recall it. I was not a part of it nor did I at that time sympathize with it. I was for Mr. Warren. I recall that it had its origin in Los Angeles, and at that time it was construed to be the so-called ultra-conservative area of the Republican party. At first it didn't seem to anyone that it would make a difference or be of any consequence, but as time went on they seemed to gather quite a bit of money. They were highly well-financed, especially on radio they certainly did a saturation job on the Werdel delegation which as I recall was just an out and out effort to defeat Earl Warren at the time.

Sharp: Why would Werdel be supported by some of these people?

Christopher: I don't think it was any so called affection for Mr. Werdel himself. I think it was just that the group who supported him were trying to use anybody who would be used at that time for the purpose of defeating Warren. I don't think the name Werdel meant anything per se because no one construed that he would be the important factor if he had won.

*"When Warren once more prepared to lead a 'favorite son' delegation to the 1952 national convention, the old-guard opposition crystallized in a rival slate of delegates headed by Representative Thomas Werdel of Bakersfield, who was close to oil interests Warren had antagonized. The Werdel slate, publicly committed to supporting 'anyone except Warren' at the convention, was defeated in the Republican primary by more than 2 to 1." Gladwin Hill, Dancing Bear, An Inside Look at California Politics (Cleveland and New York, 1968), p. 105.
Sharp: So there was just a group that was more anti-Warren than pro-Werdel.

Christopher: It surely was not pro-Werdel. It was just completely anti-Warren.

Sharp: It's interesting to us that a lot of Werdel supporters--William Keck and Arnholdt and Jack Smith--were oil people.

Christopher: That made no difference. I don't think the vocations of these people amounted to that much. I think the important thing to consider is that we've always had a so-called ultra-right or ultra-conservative element in California. This Werdel group happened to be that particular group at that particular time. The oil background I don't construe as having--unless there's something that I don't know. But I do know that at that time, Warren had initiated a pretty strong gas tax which may have some connection here. He initiated this strong tax on gasoline for the purpose of constructing highways and the oil industry in general in California opposed all gas taxes. I think he is responsible for the fine highway system that we do have in California. Now, there might be some connection there. I can't say that there is, but I know the great opposition at that time to the gas tax proposals by Warren.

Sharp: Do you think this delegation, this enclave of anti-Warren people had any impact on California politics later on in 1950?

Christopher: No, no. I think it was one of those ad hoc situations that arises every so often in California and it subsides after a period of time. Then when there's another great cause they rise once again. But I don't recall that they had any influence after this election. As a matter of fact, I think the Werdel thing died out as soon as the election was over.

Sharp: One of the reasons I had asked you about this is that we have had trouble finding information about the Werdel delegation. It seemed to be a short-lived union.

Christopher: Yes, it would be interesting to find someone who was connected with it at the time because it was well financed. I was surprised. When it first started out, we all laughed at it. We thought it was just a sort of a comedy, that somebody named Werdel would come out of nowhere and hope to give Earl Warren a contest. But as time went on, we realized that it was quite heavily financed. Of course, in those days they didn't have the laws pertaining to [campaign finance] reports as we have today, so that's beyond us.

Sharp: Is there anything else you'd like to say about that?
Christopher: No, not particularly. No, the matter is so hazy in my own mind as a matter of fact that I just don't recall.

Sharp: I knew you were a supervisor of San Francisco at the time.

Christopher: Well, I had no part in it. I was for Warren and I didn't think that these people were going to have any valid construction in the party's future.

Sharp: Okay, I have lots of other questions.

Christopher: Go ahead!
The next group of questions concerns activities while you were mayor. We're most interested in finding out something about the relationship between state and municipal governments in California. I know that Donald Cleary was San Francisco's lobbyist in Sacramento when you were mayor. In fact he was a lobbyist for San Francisco for a long time, about twenty years. What can you tell us about him?

Well, I can go back into that. Prior to my becoming mayor, and even prior to my predecessor who was Judge Elmer Erwin Robinson, we had a mayor, if you may remember, whose name was Roger Dearborn Lapham.* Lapham was in the steamship business. Don Cleary, at that particular time when Lapham became mayor, was a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle I believe. Well, it came to pass that a few bills were cropping up in Sacramento and somebody got the idea that San Francisco should have a full time lobbyist in Sacramento to take care of our interests and try to work with our assemblymen and state senators.

Don Cleary told me this story himself. When this matter was first broached he went to Roger Lapham and said, "Say, I want that job." Roger Lapham said, "If you want it, you can have it."

*Roger Dearborn Lapham was mayor of San Francisco from 1943 through 1948. His family founded the American Hawaiian Steamship Company. Elmer Edwin Robinson was mayor from 1948 through 1956.
Christopher: It was that simple and I must say that Don Cleary built that job up into a rather important part of the city system because he would wine and dine the legislators. He would spend all of his time up there. He had a pretty good budget too. The only run in I had with him was once when I wanted to check his expense account and he didn't approve of that. [Laughing]

But in any event, he was rather effective in his work. Sometimes we had trouble with our own assemblymen, our own state representatives, but Don would say to bring them in. His door was always open and the liquor flowed quite freely. He never drank himself, however. He always said that he had consumed his a long time ago--

Sharp: --And got the desire out of his system?

Christopher: Yes. He was a rather effective person. I don't know what the situation is today, but in those days we thought he was quite important. He was appointed first by Roger Lapham, and then he usually worked on a three-year contractual basis.

Sharp: What part did you have to play as mayor of San Francisco to back Cleary up?

Christopher: Well, here's what we did. Every Friday afternoon we would have a caucus of our legislative committee, and Cleary would come down and sit with us. We'd go through many of the bills that Cleary would bring down to us and he would tell us what was happening: Was there an increase in the gas tax? Was there legislation pertaining to one thing or another? He would brief the mayor plus the chief administrative officer, plus the controller of the city--the key officers--and he would let us know just what effect this might have on the city's operation, plus where we stood and how much money it would cost. We'd analyze it and then we'd vote as to whether or not we would support that bill or be against it.

Then it was Cleary's responsibility to go back to Sacramento and enunciate the official policy of San Francisco. If we were for it, he'd go to all the legislators he could to get them to vote for it. If we were against it, he went out and tried to defeat it. But we had this meeting every Friday afternoon when the legislature was in session.

Unfortunately, that was later stopped and that's why people around here still remember Don Cleary. But I don't even know today if we have a legislative representative there or not, or if he's effective to what he's doing. I don't hear about the legislative representative anymore. But Cleary,
Christopher: being an old newspaper man, had the knack of being heard, but in a very quiet, effective way. He wasn't obstreperous, he wasn't arrogant, but he did his job.

BART

Sharp: Cleary remarked in an article in the San Francisco Chronicle in '66 that his biggest disappointment in his years as lobbyist was that he couldn't get the $140 million for BART, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. Do you think that's true?

Christopher: I think that was the official policy at the time, but I don't think that was his biggest disappointment. He tried, but I don't know. If that was his biggest disappointment, he never told me that at least.

Sharp: Do you know the story about why San Francisco failed to get that money or part of it?

Christopher: I don't recall it, no. I forget when we voted on BART. Do you have those dates? Are you familiar with the dates when San Francisco and the Bay counties voted on BART?

Sharp: I don't have them with me. I remember reading about your coming up with a plan. You had gone to New York and seen how they had developed a similar system and then came back and tried to propose--

Christopher: Well, I did that but BART was talked about by Marvin Lewis way before that.

The formation of BART is actually one of the funniest things that ever transpired. You'd never believe how BART came into being. The legislative bill provided that we had to have a vote of the five counties. Santa Clara, as I recall, withdrew, and was it Marin County that withdrew? That left three: Alameda, San Francisco and Contra Costa. The supervisors of the respective counties were going to vote to put this on the ballot because it amounted to $750 million to create the BART.

Sharp: That's enormous.

*This occurred in 1957.
Christopher: Well, it was in those days, yes. It still is, but in those
days it was a whole lot more. So San Francisco and Alameda
voted to put it on the ballot. Contra Costa County with
five supervisors were split two and two--two to put it on
and two not to put it on. One fellow, I forget his name now,
I know it was a Portuguese name. He was on the fence and he
would not commit himself.

So one day I came in from Los Angeles at two o'clock in
the morning and I had an appointment with him so I called him
and I said, "Supervisor, you're the important man here. Now,
what are we going to do about this? All I'm asking you is
that you vote to put it on the ballot and let the people decide
whether they want it or not. How about if tomorrow morning we
can meet and discuss it?"

He said, "Fine."

I said, "Where shall I meet you?"

He said, "I'll met you at a restaurant at so-and-so place."

I said, "Do you mind if I bring Adrien Falk along with
me (who was then chairman of a committee that we had here)?"*

He said, "No."

I said, "What time shall we meet?"

He said, "Five o'clock in the morning."

I said, "My goodness, five o'clock in the morning! That's
a pretty early hour, but if that's what you want I'll be there."

Sure enough we got up at four o'clock in the morning
and we went over to Contra Costa County and finally found this
restaurant. It turned out to be a little doughnut shop with
no tables, no tables whatever, and we all sat around the
counter. Here were all the teamsters, the truck drivers
listening to every word we had to say. I said, "Couldn't you
find another restaurant some place where we'll have some
privacy?"

He said, "This is fine. There's nothing wrong with this."

*Adrien J. Falk was San Francisco president of BART.
Christopher: Well, we discussed it until about ten o'clock. I don't know how many doughnuts we had, but we certainly filled ourselves. I remember, his name was Acevedo.

In any event, that's perhaps one of the more comical aspects of BART because we finally convinced him, and he voted to put it on the ballot. But if by some chance he had not voted the way we requested, BART would have been deferred for another couple of years.

Sharp: That's amazing!

Christopher: It's an amazing thing that it had to happen that way.

Candlestick Park

Sharp: To move on to another topic, the building of Candlestick Park has some controversy around it.

Christopher: Oh, sure. Of course, you have to bear this in mind. Every major project has some controversy surrounding it. But I believed in getting things done and I must say with some sense of immodesty, I guess, that everything I tackled I got done during my tenure in office.

For instance, I tackled the Golden Gateway down here, all these big buildings that you see down here now were done in my term of office. I didn't just start and then let it go for two or three other administrations to try to complete such as, for instance, the Yerba Buena project. Since I left it's been [John F.] Shelley and [Joseph L.] Alioto and now [George] Moscone and it still hasn't been finished. It's just about getting started for many, many reasons. The prime reason is that you have to understand the political difficulties that surround any major project.

Now, getting back to the Golden Gateway, without which today San Francisco would be bankrupt, I got that done in my first term. I had the backing of downtown business interests. I had the ground prepared. I proceeded knowing that I was sure footed in every move I made. It got done.

Candlestick Park was done the same way. I prepared everything and got it done. Here's how that came about. Some people wanted to have Candlestick Park in the downtown area at Fourth and Howard, or Fourth and Mission, in that area. I
Christopher: learned immediately that while one or two real estate speculators wanted Candlestick Park (they were taking options on the property, incidentally) in that particular area, the Emporium, Macy's, I. Magnin's, and the major downtown interests did not want it there because if we built a park in that area, it would drive out all the customers.

Now, some people said, 'Well, it will bring business downtown." It doesn't. We learned by checking that baseball fans or football fans go to a game and when they get out of there, they go straight home. They're in their t-shirts or sweat shirts or whatever. They're not interested in going to dinner anywhere. They're not prepared for it. They're going to go home.

In the meantime, Macy's and Magnin's and the City of Paris, oh, they were really upset that the baseball fans would come down, and take up all of the parking spaces, and drive out their customers.

So then the next thing to do was to decide this: Where do we build it? I negotiated with Horace Stoneham for the Giants to come to San Francisco. I used to fly to New York and sit down with them. He told me at least a dozen times, "We will not come to San Francisco unless we have 12,000 parking spaces."

Now, to get 12,000 parking spaces in the downtown area, you need seventy-five acres of land. Seventy-five acres of land would be criminal to take off the tax rolls just for a stadium because the land down here was worth twenty times more than it's worth out at Candlestick Park.

Secondly, I foresaw this. If we went into an area where there are hundreds of small property owners, one fellow could hold you up forever and you'll never have the stadium built, just like they haven't built Yerba Buena yet. If they had tried to build Candlestick Park in the downtown area, Candlestick Park would still not be built.

So then when we got the Giants to come here, I appointed a site committee comprised of the chief administrative officer, the director of public works, the recreation and park department, engineers and so forth, the real estate department of the city and county of San Francisco. These people were on the site committee and they found this location that was owned by Charlie Harney out at Candlestick Park.
Christopher: This committee immediately recommended the site because studies also showed that 40 percent of the fans would be coming from the peninsula. This site was much closer for them and it wouldn't compel all of these people to come downtown, driving out the business from the downtown area. The beauty of it is that it was under one ownership.

Personally I thought that old Seals Stadium out in the Potrero might be a good location. It was a good location if you didn't need the parking, but with the necessity of having ten or twelve thousand parking spaces, there was no way you could use the old stadium because there was no parking there.

Some people who didn't know or didn't understand said, 'Well, you've got a big park across the street. Use that.'

It [Seals Stadium] was a big park. It would hold about five or six hundred cars if you went below the surface, but going below the surface to build anything is the most expensive construction of all. At that time I think they wanted $5 million just for that, whereas we built the entire Candlestick Park for $11 million completely.

But secondly, even if that park was available, or was appropriate, we found that the park had been a dedicated park bequeathed to the city under certain conditions and one of the conditions was that if ever that park was put to some other use, other than what the donor had in mind, it would revert to heirs. So therefore, there was no way whatever that we could use it. On top of that also, in addition, Seals Stadium, the engineer said, could not be double-decked. It was not made for that. So you'd have to scratch it all and start from the beginning.

Finally, the committee recommended Candlestick Park and really it's the biggest bargain in the world because it only cost $11 million. They got their money back many times.

Since then, of course, the subsequent mayor expanded it to accommodate football and that cost—just the expansion to accommodate football—$5 or $6 million more than the total original cost of the park. I tried to get the Forty-Niners at that time to come in and become a part of the whole deal so that they could play football and baseball. That would have allowed, with the added revenue, more bonds to be sold on the projection. But the Forty-Niners at that time declined. They just didn't like the idea of baseball coming to San Francisco. But later, I think, it was Mr. Alioto who finally put a bond issue on the ballot, and the park was expanded. But bear in mind that the original cost was $11 million and then with just the additional cost over $16 million.
Sharp: It sounds cheap right now.

Christopher: Well, you couldn't build it today for $60 million.

Sharp: I wanted to ask you about the controversial aspects of the building of Candlestick Park. I found an article that was written in The Californian in June of 1960.* I don't know if you're familiar with it. It was a very ephemeral journal. It only lasted a couple of years and was edited by Burton H. Wolfe.

Christopher: Oh, he was a bad character.

Sharp: He was a muckraker of sorts.

Christopher: A good writer but a man who held personal prejudices. I'm not going to comment on him because I have no respect for him whatever as a writer or as a person.

Sharp: There was an article in The Californian written by Lewis Lindsay.

Christopher: I don't recall him.

Sharp: He accused you of taking funds from other city departments to finance much of the building of the stadium.

Christopher: No. Well, of course, you've got to bear in mind that we have gas tax funds and we have sewer funds and we have street sign funds and that's all a part of the legitimate expenditure. He thinks you've got to have just the whole thing in one bundle just for Candlestick. There's no such thing.

Every time you have a new project downtown, you go into the sewer funds, you go into the various funds for the express purpose of doing what has to be done to get the facility going. If there was a new residential area today, let's say out in the Sunset, you'd have gas tax funds pertaining to certain areas in the streets. You'd have sewer funds separately pertaining to the sewer installation. Or if you're building a small park somewhere, that's done all the time. That's nothing new. You build a small park if you have facilities of every kind, you go to the respective different funds.

*The article is entitled, "San Francisco's Baseball Stadium."
Christopher: This was a public facility so whatever fund was appropriate had to be certified by the controller of the city and county of San Francisco. These are not my decisions. These are the decisions of the city attorney and the controller especially. He is the man who makes the decision as to where these funds come from. So there's nothing new there. But I don't pay attention to these muckrakers because they're looking for jobs. They're looking for opportunities to criticize and I'd be wasting my time if I answered the people of that sort. As a matter of fact, I just ignored them. [chuckles]

But all they had to do, if somebody had thought that something was wrong, if they felt that monies were expended illegally, gosh, was file a taxpayer's suit and stop the whole thing right then. But you've got to bear in mind that no funds can be expended in San Francisco, unless a controller first certified that the funds are there and that the expenditure is legal and that they're coming from the proper source. It's not the mayor's function in the first place.

The letter reprinted on the following two pages was written by Mr. A. E. Bagshaw, the district attorney of Marin County and prosecuting attorney in Mr. Christopher's trial regarding the milk case. Both this letter and the article which follows Chapter VIII attempt to clarify details about the case and the unfairness with which Mr. Christopher had been treated by his political rivals in California. Although the milk case was not mentioned in Chapter VIII nor in Chapter X, both this letter and the article are included because they deal with issues that came up in the years discussed in those chapters.
Mr. George T. Davis  
Attorney at Law  
98 Post Street  
San Francisco 4, California

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you for your letter of November 3, 1955, relative to the candidacy of George Christopher.

I well remember our conversation of several months ago and also have a very clear recollection of the prosecutions of Mr. Christopher in Marin County by myself as District Attorney in the year 1940. I completely concur with you that any attempt to use that prosecution as a basis for creating the inference that Mr. Christopher has ever been charged with or convicted of serious crimes involving dishonesty, immorality or moral turpitude, would be a low form of political deceit, which should be exposed, if possible.

Shortly prior to 1940, the California State Legislature had enacted certain laws relative to the marketing of milk and other dairy products, the admitted purpose of which was a price control. By the terms of this legislation, minimum prices were established at which the producer, the bottler and the retailer could sell their products.

This and other legislation of a similar type, regulating prices in other industries, were unpopular with the buying public because of a feeling that they made impossible the low prices which come from unrestricted competition. Also, it was a new field of legislation, and there was a great deal of doubt as to its constitutionality. In fact, the legislation with relation to dairy products had already been held unconstitutional by a Superior Court in Los Angeles County at the time of Mr. Christopher's involvement, although its constitutionality has been since sustained by a divided opinion of the Appellate Court.

In 1938 and 1939, Mr. Christopher and certain associates were engaged in establishing a new dairy business in San Francisco, known as Meadow Glenn Dairy. They entered into contracts with a number of Marin County producers under which they were to take the entire output of those producers and at market milk prices. These contracts were extremely desirable to the Marin County producers because otherwise they would have had to sell the bulk of their milk for manufacturing purposes, and at greatly reduced prices. Because of the newly enacted state legislation, Mr. Christopher and his associates were required to pay to these Marin County producers the prices fixed by the state for such market milk.
In 1940 the State Department of Agriculture signed complaints against Mr. Christopher, charging that actually he was not paying to the Marin County producers referred to, the prices thus fixed by the state for market milk, but that he was paying some lesser price. I prosecuted those proceedings on behalf of the State of California, and you defended on behalf of Mr. Christopher. These cases were prosecuted in the Justice's Courts of Novato and San Rafael Townships in this county, before lay judges who had never studied the law. After your motions to dismiss the complaints upon the basis that the legislation was unconstitutional were denied, by agreement between yourself and myself, Mr. Christopher entered pleas of guilty to certain of the counts and fines were imposed upon him. No jail sentences were in any way involved.

It seems that the practice then existed in the Sheriff's office of Marin County, of fingerprinting and photographing any person who was actually arrested for any offense even for a misdemeanor traffic violation. Therefore, when Mr. Christopher was arrested upon these misdemeanor complaints, and despite the fact that he promptly made bail, his pictures and his fingerprint were taken in the usual manner. It now appears from what you have told me and what I have ascertained through my own inquiry, that someone has improperly secured from the official records copies of those pictures and fingerprint with intent to use them improperly, and probably as you have indicated.

I do not wish to be interpreted as condoning Mr. Christopher's offenses. However, in their nature they did not involve dishonesty, immorality or moral turpitude, but constituted violations of regulatory laws not unlike our wartime rationing laws and presently existing price control legislation, which are quite generally violated.

I feel that if Mr. Christopher's political adversaries had wanted to make fair use of this situation, they would have done so timely, thereby giving him an opportunity to reply. The last minute "expose" carried on in the manner in which you anticipate, can only be characterized as a very despicable type of electioneering, which is truly calculated to mislead and deceive the voting public.

In keeping with our former understanding, I rely upon your assurance that no part of this letter shall be publicized unless Mr. Christopher's political adversaries do circulate the pictures and other matter hereinbefore referred to, in which event you may feel free to publicize this letter in any way you see fit.

Yours very truly

/s/ A. E. Bagshaw

A. E. BAGSHAW

(underlining added)
I was wondering if you could talk a few minutes about the 1956 national Republican convention that was held at the Cow Palace. Did you have any role in it?

Well, let's see. I don't think so--'56--that was before I was mayor.

Yes, just before. You were probably more concerned about--

No, I went back to Washington where the committee was holding hearings for overtures from the various cities that aspired to get the convention. I know I made a presentation but I'm hazy as to the details, but I do recall the next one, however, when I went back there. We got it twice. They were glad to give it to me the second time because they wanted a Republican mayor to receive the Republican convention. [Chuckles]

That sounds like a logical wish. Do you know anything about the "Dump Nixon" movement that was part of the '56 national convention here?

Well, these were rumors from the backroom. Yes, I recall that there was such a movement--Nixon had his political enemies just like everybody else, but I didn't think that it was too serious.
X ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE 1958 AND 1962 CAMPAIGNS

Sharp: We would like more information about your campaigns. You talked some in your initial interview about the '58 campaign and some about the '62 campaign.

Christopher: The '58 campaign was what?

Sharp: When you ran for United States Senator. Nineteen sixty-two is when you ran for lieutenant governor with Richard Nixon who was running for governor. Can you tell us how you ran both those campaigns?

Christopher: Well, frankly, I never should have got in the first one in '58 because there was considerable turmoil about that at the time. That was the Knowland-Knight situation. Very unfortunate. It was unfortunate from two standpoints. Number one, it created a schism in the party. But secondly, it also created a lot of hardship and ill feelings, and I'm sure a lot of anguish for Goodie Knight as well as Bill Knowland. It was unnecessary to go through that. It was just unfortunate to have to endure that kind of a situation.

I got into the '58 campaign for Senator only because I was so far committed and I was embarrassed. If somebody had just given me one little opportunity to withdraw; I didn't want to run for Senator. I knew very well I wasn't about to defeat a man who had been sitting as governor and defeat him for Senator.

Sharp: You spoke about that in the first interview and you seemed very much trapped.

Christopher: I was trapped where I couldn't extricate myself. I resented that at the time because Goodwin Knight had given me his word--pledged it time and time again--publicly and privately, but
Christopher: privately first until I finally made him come out openly and say that he would not run for Senator, after I was in there and I was exposed.

Anyway, I don't hold any animosity. The poor fellow, he's dead, and when I look back I kind of regret that the incident transpired at all.

Sharp: In the '62 campaign, when you were running for lieutenant governor, you did speak in the first interview a little about Nixon and his decision to run, but you didn't say very much about yourself, and how you conducted yourself in the campaign. How did you conduct your campaign?

Christopher: First I think you have to bear in mind that Nixon, if you know Mr. Nixon, is sometimes a very difficult man to understand. Even his best friends sometimes--most times--do not understand him. I was at that time considering the possibility of running for governor, although I had no illusions that if Nixon did run, (the rumors were consistently coming up that he might run) I had no illusions.... I wasn't going to do what Joe Shell did, go out and antagonize him by running and spoiling the party's chances in the election.

Sharp: Who was he?

Christopher: and cause a breach in the party. I think when Joe Shell ran he did cause a breach in the party of 300,000 or 400,000 of those so-called "ardent" conservatives who would not vote for any man except their own man; Republicanism doesn't mean anything to them.

Anyway, when Nixon got into the race, I withdrew. It was suggested that I run for the lieutenant governorship, but I hadn't even thought of it. I ran and got the nomination over Senator [John] McCarthy who was then a state senator from Marin County.

But our campaign was not what you would call a coordinated campaign as such, where the boss at the top takes charge. We hardly ever saw each other. I don't think we saw each other two or three times during that entire campaign. One time in Fresno we were on a joint program and that was a disappointment to me for a number of reasons. There seemed to be no coordination on the part of my campaign for lieutenant governor and the governor's campaign. I had a very small campaign manager from the standpoint of his compensation.
Christopher: I forget. I think it was Don Nicholson. I forget who it was. But in any event, we didn't have a campaign that could be construed as a joint effort where we worked together and planned things together and what we were going to say, who was going to meet whom, and all that. No such thing.

Sharp: There was no sense that it was a team?

Christopher: Well, in a way everybody understood it to be a team, but there was no central planning office that said, "Christopher we'll plan this for you down here, and Nixon, you go over here." There was no such thing as that.

There was no coordination whatever and, frankly, the funds were not coming in my direction either. In other words, Nixon had his own campaign fund, and I had to go out and scrounge around to get my own campaign funds. I couldn't get them from the Republican central committee itself.

Sharp: We'd like to know a lot about the funding. In terms of Nixon's ability to get a lot of funds, why was that possible?

Christopher: Well, he did get a lot of funds.

Sharp: Why was he able to accomplish that and the funds didn't come to you as well?

Christopher: I was perhaps the meager nonentity in this campaign, although I got more votes than Nixon in the final analysis because I was able to attract more Democrats, I suppose. Also, I think that the ardent conservatives were not as mad at me as they were at Nixon. If Joe Shell had not got into that race and had been a supporter of Nixon, and if Joe Shell had not after the primary continued his antagonism of Nixon (which he did), Nixon still would have won.

But I have to extend my sympathy to Nixon and I did at the time. I was very sympathetic to Nixon because here was a man who just lost the presidency by, I think, 115,000 votes and then he's running for governor. He should be what we call in politics "a shoe-in," a certainty to win, and then he was defeated. Well, this was a pretty sad blow. Even today people say, well, he made some untoward remarks like, "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore." Well, I don't know how many people could stand that kind of disillusionment under the circumstances. I have to sympathize with Nixon.

Sharp: If you look at your relationship with the CRA (the California Republican Assembly) and his relationship with the CRA, was it more or less defined by money?
Christopher: No, I think it's philosophy. I think it's philosophy. I think the CRA might have felt at the time, and maybe they still do, that I was not too liberal but not sufficiently conservative. There's an old axiom in the Republican party that I learned late: in order to win the Republican nomination, get out there and be an ultra-conservative during the primary. Then after you win it, go out and be yourself. [Laughs]

Sharp: I wonder how many times that works!

Christopher: Well, it worked in quite a few cases.
TODAY I want to tell you how the Mayor got arrested. When, why, and all about it, including some material never published before.

THE GAME of politics-watching is much like the day-to-day conduct of military intelligence. You gather a fragment of talk here, a document there, somewhere else a rumor; and you patiently fit the bits and pieces together until they make a pattern.

Lately I have been making a little file on the George Christopher campaign for Lt. Governor.

The pattern that has emerged leads me to believe it might head off some dirty politics if we all take a look, right now, at what has come to be known in local political legend as “The Milk Case.”

ONE FRAGMENT is word that reached me a while back that a certain character with a long police record was about to start publishing a gossip sheet. Publishing costs money. It’s a political year. It seemed likely that somebody’s campaign funds might be behind such a venture.

Another hint was information I got about a quiet meeting in a certain law office in which the seamier side of political strategy was the topic: How best to clobber the Mayor, while at the same time appearing to remain aloof from the mayhem.

Still another bit of the puzzle was a certain fidgetiness among the Mayor’s people. To a seasoned politics-watcher, the signs of restiveness can be sensed in casual conversation, in the way questions are answered, and even in a too carefully adjusted mask of composure.
THE MANEUVERING proved to be centered on The Milk Case. One side calculating how best to use it as a weapon against Christopher. The other side working on the problem of how best to counter it.

As a nosy neutral with a Katzenjammer complex, I would like to explode the firecracker right now in everybody's face. With the hope that we politics watchers, with this one out of the way, can then be entertained with other and better and more lively issues.

A DOCUMENT I have at hand, never before published or circulated, is a letter written by Lawyer A. E. Bagshaw. He happens to have been the Marin District Attorney who prosecuted The Milk Case. His recollections and analysis are illuminating, and ought to be the last word on the subject.

GEORGE CHRISTOPHER, in 1938 and 1939, was getting his start in the dairy business. He and his associates entered into certain contracts with Marin dairy farmers to buy their product at "market milk" prices.

The farmers were delighted to sign these contracts, because "market milk" represented top dollar—the price paid for milk to be sold for table use as milk or cream. The Christopher enterprise sold milk only for such use.

Other dairies at the time, in their contracts with farmers, paid so much for "market milk," and a scale of lower prices for milk to be used in the manufacture of dairy products—ice cream, cottage cheese, and so on. This system has since been changed, for obvious regulatory reasons.

IN THEIR NEW enterprise, Christopher and his associates found themselves immediately in a legal tangle, because in 1939 the State enacted a law under which the Agriculture Department was authorized to control the prices at which milk could be bought and sold.

Christopher fought the price control law bitterly. I do not believe he did this out of altruism, but for the common sense reason that the law put him in a weaker position competitively, as compared with companies that could pay the "manufacturing purposes" price for much of the milk they bought.
AT ANY RATE, Prosecutor Bagshaw recalls in his letter the legal questions that were still be fought in 1940, when Christopher was arrested, charged with paying (on his contracts) lower prices for milk than the newly established prices fixed by law.

"In fact," writes Bagshaw, "the legislation with relation to dairy products had already been held unconstitutional by a Superior Court in Los Angeles at the time of Mr. Christopher's involvement..."

In the Justice's Courts of Novato and San Rafael, nevertheless, motions to dismiss the misdemeanor charges against Christopher on constitutional grounds were refused. Pleas of guilty were then entered to some of the counts, and Christopher was fined.

"No jail sentences were in any way involved," says Bagshaw.

"NO JAIL SENTENCES" is an important phrase in the Bagshaw letter, because an invariable accompaniment in the political use of The Milk Case has been the use of an unflattering "jail photo" of Christopher.

Bagshaw explains: "It seems the practice then existed in the Sheriff's Office of Marin County of finger printing and photographing any person who was actually arrested for any offense, even for a misdemeanor traffic violation."

Later, after a long court fight, the milk price law was upheld as constitutional. That's the whole chapter in what should be a closed book.
In connection with the CRA, they were very interested with the development of the California Republican League in 1964. What could you tell us about it? Our sources say that the development of the CRL is a reaction to the conservative takeover of the CRA.

It was. That is correct. There were a lot of people who were upset, concerned about the fact that the Republican party was going in one direction. The John Birch Society at that time was quite active and quite powerful I might say. They stood for certain things that I couldn't accept.

So the CRL was formed as a result of people just leaving that area of the Republican party and saying, "We need," what they called, "a so-called middle-of-the-road type of organization." However, the CRA never did accept the CRL as being moderate. They accepted them as being radicals only.

In the CRA's perspective the CRL might have seemed so.

Yes. So we went through that situation, but it didn't do the Republican party any good. When I ran for governor against Reagan the CRL did endorse me. They supported me, but there just were not enough of them. Also, the big money is not in the CRL, it's in the CRA.
XI THE ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Sharp: I'd like to ask you about money. I don't know how sensitively I should approach the question--

Christopher: No, no, just ask it bluntly. [laughs]

Sharp: Okay. We're very interested in the history of campaign financing in California. Some of our sources say there is a very strong connection between certain industries in California and the CRA, the very conservative Republicans. It especially seems the oil companies fit into a categorization of being very conservative and wanting to support conservative Republicans. It may explain the abundance of funds that the CRA has and the lack of funds that the CRL and smaller organizations seem to have.

The question is if you were looking at a history of campaign financing in California, who do you think the biggest campaign contributors are in terms of industry, especially for Republicans.

Christopher: I think today frankly industries channel most of these funds through individuals. We had a rule. We never accepted any large amounts even when I ran for mayor. I remember when I ran for mayor, one of our very prominent citizens locally sent a check for $5,000. It was returned to him. I saw it and it was returned to him and we had a rule of either $500 then or $1,000. I forget.

I didn't get any such funds. I can tell you very frankly and bluntly that we got no such funds. The only funds we got were from individuals. I didn't get any money at all myself from the so-called oil companies, unless some of those oil companies did what I suggested before--channel it through some individual. But if they had done that, then the amount would have been large, say, $10,000 or $15,000. I never saw a check over $1,000 at any time during all these statewide campaigns.
Christopher: So there's a certain melting pot in the Republican party and I suppose it holds good for the Democrats too. It's a certain distilling of the funds. You have two or three candidates running. The last two months the big contributors seem to distill themselves down to a common denominator: "Who is the candidate?" Heretofore it has been the conservative candidate of the Republican party. That's the man who got the major portion of the funds. Then all the rest of us got token donations, just to perhaps to make us happy or whatever.
The next series of questions is on the 1966 campaign. Because we're now moving into the Reagan period we're conducting a full examination of that campaign.

Christopher: The '66 campaign was what?

Sharp: When you ran for governor against Ronald Reagan and both of you were the Republican candidates against Pat Brown. We'd really appreciate having your story about the election. I have some short questions that will hopefully give us most of your whole picture about it. The first one is how did you run this campaign? There's very little about you.

Christopher: Very poorly! [laughs] I had terrible management, I had no money, and again the old axiom of the ardent conservative getting the Republican support worked.

I didn't believe--frankly, I just didn't feel that Mr. Reagan was qualified to be governor. He turned out to be all right, especially in his appointments. He made some good appointments in the judiciary which I think is essential. But I looked around to see who was going to run and thought that if only Mr. Reagan was going to run, well, that we needed somebody with some governmental experience. Of course, he's a great speaker, very able to take care of himself. Despite my experience in politics I encountered difficulties that I didn't anticipate down in Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange Counties. If you sweep Los Angeles County, you've swept the state. You don't have to go much further.

But I recall I was trying to debate these issues on a pretty practical basis. I recall one meeting particularly down south where there were several thousand people present and Reagan and I were the speakers. Reagan had the floor first and he mentioned that when he became governor he was going to
Christopher: just automatically delete ten percent of the budget. "Any business can deduct ten percent if they try hard enough, so why can't we do it?" Well, that sounded great and the crowd cheered and gave him a tremendous ovation.

It was my turn and I was asked the same question. I said, "My experience in government tells me that you just can't do this automatically, cut ten percent. You have to work, number one, through the elimination of duplications but through the process of attrition. You don't fill jobs as they become vacant." Well, I got booed. So I realized that this was a lost cause.

They were trying to prevail on me at the time to run for lieutenant governor with him, but I didn't feel that I wanted to do that.

In retrospect I must say that the most important function of the governor, in my opinion, is to appoint good people, especially to the judiciary, and I have to say that Reagan did do that.

Sharp: What is the political significance of the milk case?*

Christopher: It was not to my advantage, although in San Francisco the case was understood. But down south they could never understand it. That goes back forty years when the milk law was first enacted and it compelled everybody to sell milk for the same price.

Well, there was no question in my mind then that if I was going out and selling Christopher Milk to a housewife and she's got the opportunity of buying Foremost or Borden's at the time for the same price, she's going to prefer Borden's because it's a name brand.

So we went to court and we fought it, not only I but quite a few people in the same category as myself in the dairy industry. We won the case in the superior court of Los Angeles and the law was declared unconstitutional. But the state persisted and about a year later reversed the whole situation which put us in the position of having violated the law. This...

*George Christopher pleaded guilty to violating the Young Milk Law and the Milk Marketing Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area on May 9, 1940. He was fined $5,000 and put on two years probation. This case was brought up in the 1966 gubernatorial election by other candidates.
Christopher: violation was a misdemeanor, mind you, not a felony, although my opponents at that time construed it as a felony because they had a picture of me and everything else.*

The local newspapers had researched this thing considerably in detail so they knew what the story was. As a matter of fact, as of today, if I were running today I'd be a hero for having tried to cut the price of milk! [Chuckles] But in any event, anyone never told the full story. Only half a story was told and during the Reagan campaign it was used considerably against me.

[Upon his review of the transcript, Mr. Christopher added the following passage.]

Christopher: In re: Page 50 - "Milk Case." Your reference to this case does not fully explain my position. First, we were in violation (along with about eighty other dairymen) because we challenged the constitutionality of the law. At first, the law was declared unconstitutional, and it was at this time that we disregarded the law. A year later however the superior court was reversed and thus in the interim period, we were in violation.

Ironically, some thirty-eight years later--just last year--the law was again ruled unconstitutional, and it is now invalid, proving perhaps that we were right in the first instance. In fairness, this should be explained.

[transcript resumes]

Sharp: Did Reagan use it or did Brown use it?

Christopher: Brown used it, but Reagan didn't discourage it either. It's okay. I'm not resentful of that because Pat Brown and I are good friends now, and Reagan and I are good friends, so I feel that, I guess, sometimes you've got to make allowances for a battle such as that. It was the survival of the fittest in every way. But now that same law has been ruled unconstitutional. As of today, that law is gone. So if I was fined then, which I was (misdemeanors are finable at $500), today I wouldn't be because the law has been repealed.

*The picture referred to here is the photograph which the sheriff's office of Marin County took of George Christopher when he was arrested, February 2, 1940.
Christopher: But those are the vicissitudes of public life and you have to take them. I guess as of today, if some young fellow is starting in the milk business and he is up against the so-called fair trade law and he goes to court, and the court tells him that this law is constitutional, and then a year later the court is reversed and it's no longer constitutional, or just the opposite, and the law becomes valid, what is he going to do? He is standing right in the middle of the ocean and he doesn't know which way to turn. That's what happened to me and I have no regrets except that I know that it was detrimental to my campaign in 1966.

Sharp: Generally, how would you compare yourself with Reagan now, and how did you compare yourself with him then?

Christopher: He was very adroit. For instance, every time we'd meet in Los Angeles at a joint meeting and there were other candidates present, and they would put us in line for a photograph, the same thing happened. As soon as the photographer was ready to snap the picture, Reagan would put up his hand like this [raises forefinger into the air] and make it appear that all of us were deferring to him and looking to him for advice. Well, this was the actor's ability to steal the scene. I still say he is a very, very adept speaker. Cliche or otherwise, he knows how to portray that role quite well.

I don't think he's as conservative as he would have certain people believe he is, because at one time he was finance chairman for Helen Gahagan Douglas. He was rousted all over the state for his various activities and the more liberal causes. But to bring all this up in those days was wrong. They had the so-called "Eleventh Commandment" which they concocted for specific reasons, and if you dared open your mouth against somebody you were ostracized.* But they nevertheless condemned me, and blasted me, and did certain things to me by indirection from various other insidious areas. I was a little helpless I guess.

One time I would have given my right arm to be mayor or my right arm to be governor. Today I'd give both arms not to be mayor or not to be governor. So every situation has to be met as you go along.

*Mr. Christopher refers here to the "Eleventh Commandment" issued by Dr. Gaylord Parkinson, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, for the 1966 gubernatorial campaign. He said, "Thou shall not speak ill of any Republican."
Sharp: Do you think the fact that you had been unsuccessful in previous campaigns made you even more vulnerable to Reagan?

Christopher: No, no. In the Reagan campaign I think if I'd gone out swinging with both hands and challenging Reagan as to his pliability, as to his diversification of thought, as to his prior connections, and if that so-called "Eleventh Commandment" hadn't come up, I could have conveyed my thoughts. The mere fact that I had run before and lost was not a detriment. It was an asset because you have to have name identification. Of course, after that I didn't have name identification sufficiently, whereas Reagan is quite well known.

You can take people even today. Here you have Sam Hayakawa, the United States Senator, who was elected not because of his prowess, or his great intelligence, or because of his great ability; but only because when the Republicans went there they said, "Well, we heard about what he did in San Francisco in connection with the student strikes," and so forth. His name was immediately recognizable and that's what did it.

You see some candidates who walk the highways to get attention. They do this to simply try to have their name become better known. My name was never sufficiently known in Los Angeles or Orange County.

Sharp: Do you think that is because of the protective nature of the conservative Republicans in southern California?

Christopher: I don't know what it is. I think the conservatives of southern California are a different type of conservative from northern California. I've always considered myself a conservative. I don't think I'm a liberal. I think I'm a conservative, but the conservatives of southern California are unique in that they have certain fixations.

They'd argue with me, for instance, about the compulsory joining of unions. They call that right-to-work and I would say to them, "This matter was resolved once on the ballot of the state of California.* Why bring that in again and cause more dissension within the Republican party?"

*Here Christopher refers to Proposition 18 on the 1958 statewide ballot which outlawed the union shop. It was defeated.
Christopher: Only a small group would be for it, the so-called right-to-work measure. Well, you'd be surprised how many people still wanted to discuss that and make that a part of the campaign issue. I heard Reagan support right-to-work. If I were to say, "How about the time when you were a union leader and you were a real radical union leader at that?" [chuckles]--you start an argument just between parties, and that's not going to bring about any results.

Sharp: I don't know if along the line you've answered this question or not but it seems to me from what I could tell from your role in the '66 election that you meant to portray yourself as a middle-of-the-road Republican.

Christopher: Yes, I did.

Sharp: It seemed to be part of your attack that you took against Reagan.

Christopher: Yes, that's correct, and I was a middle-of-the-roader and I've always been in that category. My contention was that Reagan was versatile. He was much more liberal than I ever was at one time and in the 1966 campaign he was portraying himself as a conservative. As of today even, if you'll follow Mr. Reagan's remarks--I'm not condemning him--as of this very moment you will see that they're not conservative remarks at all, but rather are approaching the areas of some sort of liberalism. He himself has realized that he has to get a wider segment than he has in the conservative area.

Sharp: When Reagan first came into recognition or prominence, the southern California Republicans that supported him did so because they thought he was extremely conservative.

Christopher: Yes, that's right, and many of them still do. Sure, and that's the reason, the only reason, that they did that. Also he had the charisma of standing on a podium and sweeping you off your feet. He has that.

I've always said, however, that there was no depth sometimes to what he said and you need more than clichés and you need more than rainbows at both ends of the room to really make a good administration. But I have to give him credit that despite these clichés and despite these rainbow utterances, when he did become the governor he didn't act precipitously at any time. He did, I think, take counsel from these so-called conservatives who put into office certain people who I think were good, especially in the judiciary which I think is very important.
Christopher: I've always said that the most important function of a governor is to appoint good judges because that's of lasting moment, whereas everybody else passes out of the picture.

Sharp: One of the very important incidents that I found out about the '66 election deals with an article that I found in the San Francisco Examiner, February 20, 1966. It revealed that there was some sort of a secret agreement between you and Ronald Reagan. The agreement said that whoever was ahead in the polls by January of '66 would remain in the race and whoever was second in popularity would leave the race to insure victory against Pat Brown. Can you shed any light on this?

Christopher: The fact of the matter is that I never spoke to Reagan prior to that election. I never spoke to him more than once or twice during the campaign, but prior to the election I never met the man.

As a matter of fact, I met him one night for the first time at the Hilton Hotel when he came up there to speak and I was in there speaking. He passed right by me and I said, "When's this fellow Reagan coming in? I want to see what he looks like." [chuckles]

Somebody said, "He just walked by you!"

So I didn't know Mr. Reagan. There were all kinds of rumors then I suppose.

Sharp: This story about the agreement was a rumor?

Christopher: It must have been. I don't recall it, but it must have been a rumor. There were a lot of rumors about different things. There were rumors saying that I was going to withdraw and run for lieutenant governor. I had people coming to me suggesting that. I had people who came to me and said, "Step out of the picture. You're from the north and Reagan's from the south. This will make a great team. You can't beat it."

Maybe they were right. I don't know. But I didn't want to be lieutenant governor. I had no ambition to become lieutenant governor.

With Nixon it was different. Because this was a man who had just been on the verge of being the president and I felt that some day he aspired to go back once again. That's the reason I thought he was running for governor. I went down to his home to see him outside of Los Angeles. I forget the name
Christopher: of the place. But I felt that he was going to win. I also felt that once he won the governorship he would aspire once again to the presidency.

But it shows you what kind of a dogged determination he has. I think his comeback after that defeat is one of the biggest political accomplishments perhaps in the history, outside of Lincoln's defeats. Lincoln was defeated more times than anybody and still came back and became president. I think you have to put Nixon up there too.

Sharp: If Nixon had become governor and you had become lieutenant governor, and he had then aspired to the White House, do you think there would have been any chance for you?

Christopher: For governor?

Sharp: Either governor then or perhaps on the national level with Nixon?

Christopher: No, I think that if Nixon had gone on to the presidency again, there's no question I would have succeeded automatically to the governorship. But as of today, I look back on these things and I realize that they're all passing, temporary glories. They're fleeting moments of glory that tomorrow are so meaningless. I wonder why in the name of heaven I ever ran for office under difficult circumstances in the first place. [chuckles]

Sharp: Perhaps now you're probably more aware of the burdens that those offices carry.

Christopher: I was younger then. I didn't mind the burdens. Look, I didn't mind the burdens. I worked hard. When I was mayor I got there at seven o'clock in the morning and I'd work until ten or eleven o'clock at night. But now, with twenty years or more on my shoulders and my hair a whole lot grayer than it was then, to begin with I couldn't do it, even if I wanted to do it.
There are some very dynamic, very tension-filled years around the period when you were running for governor in '66. This, of course, is the period of the Free Speech movement and the anti-war movement on the Berkeley campus. What did you think of the Free Speech movement?

I didn't mind the Free Speech movement. I thought that was a healthy debate. I did mind, however, certain people who came later who were more than just making speeches expressing their ideas. For instance, I could never understand the Tom Haydens and Hayden's wife [Jane Fonda] who went to Vietnam. On the supposition that they were against our participation in the Vietnam War, they would nevertheless consort with our adversaries in that war and make them feel good, whereas our soldiers who were drafted and had to be there, whether they liked it or not listened to an American singing songs to the opposition. Now, that I could not understand and I still don't understand it to this very day. But I've always felt that every campus should have a certain area for the discussion of like a Hyde Park type of thing. I don't know if you've been to London but Hyde Park is just absolutely great. I'd go back there and just stand in the corner someplace and listen to these spellbinders give their ideas. I think that the University of California and Stanford and every place should have a place to discuss these matters. But I certainly never approved of them taking over the president's office. I never approved of the graffiti on the walls. I never approved of things of that sort.

There's a difference between free speech and real insidious license. There's a difference between free speech and that kind of action. It doesn't do the young people any good to gather into a mob under the pretext of free speech and then
Christopher: take clubs and stones and rocks and stone "the academy." There's a difference between constructive belief and espousal in a legal way. If you believe in something, you help it. If you don't like what they're doing, you don't burn down "the academy." If you don't like the sermon in a church, you don't burn the church down. You talk to the preacher later and maybe try to reason with him. There's no such thing as burning the church down because you don't like a sermon that's going on at the particular time.

I think we tolerated that kind of action in the name of free speech and it wasn't free speech at all. It was just abrupt action which led to some deaths as we know. It led to some disasters, some tragedies, and that's the barbaric way. Free speech is the civilized way, but violent action with clubs and sticks and stones is barbarism; it's nothing less.

Sharp: That's a very painful part of our state's and our whole nation's history. It's very tough to think about.

Christopher: When mob action takes over--as in Kent State--well, it's pretty hard to say who's right and who's wrong. It's terrible that these kids went through that ordeal and the death that ensued. But when you have mob action, common sense seems to disappear and almost anything can happen then.

But as I say, if the University of California could have a couple of acres some place, just get little bench seats and say, "This is the place where you're going to say anything you want and if somebody doesn't want to hear it, they just don't have to go there." Let it be the Hyde Park type of situation where free speech is really free speech.

However, if one side says, "I don't like what you're saying. Therefore, I'll go out and get a baseball bat and I'm going to attack you," then we're resorting back to primitive stages and that's no longer free speech.
Sharp: I think I understand your views on the Free Speech movement. They certainly help give some perspective on a really tough time when you were on the line and thinking about it a lot. The last topic that I wanted to ask you about is the general question of lobbying in California state government. I know we could talk from now until next week about lobbying.

Christopher: [laughs] Yes.

Sharp: Again, we're concerned with the oil companies. I wondered if you could tell us how effective you think lobbyists like Joe Shell or Charles Stevens were in getting benefits for the oil companies which they represented. Joe Shell, of course, represented the independents, while Charles Stevens represented Richfield and some of the larger oil companies.

Christopher: I can conceive that the larger oil companies would have somebody looking after their interests, and frankly I wouldn't blame them. I wouldn't blame them if they're going at it in the sense that it's a legitimate advocacy type of situation. The only time I'd resent it would be if somebody was getting something surreptitiously under the table, as we say, which amounts to bribery and nothing else.

I think as long as you have oil companies, you're going to have these people striving to better achieve their ends. Sometimes those ends don't conform to what you and I or somebody else might think are valid, but I don't think--call it lobbying, call it anything you want--you're going to be able to stop that. The thing that I think should be stopped is the corruption of certain legislators, and you know it's happened, by certain elements that can do this only because money is involved.
Christopher: If an oil company gets up and buys an ad in the paper, or their advocate makes a speech somewhere and says, "Here's why we think we're wrong or we're right; here's why we believe we should do it this way," well, you can disagree with them, but I think they're exercising their prerogative to advocate their position too.

The only time I take issue with them is if, instead of getting up and saying all these things publicly, or buying newspaper ads, or getting on television, is if they got a couple of legislators in the corner saloon and had a few envelopes to spread around. These legislators were then susceptible to a change of position. That is a thing that we ought to try to stamp out and we ought to concentrate on that.

But I don't think we should just blast either the milk industry or the oil companies or anybody just because they stand up and are counted with respect to their position. What better is their position in that particular industry if they didn't do that? Who else is going to do it?

Sharp: For instance, with the oil companies, because there are so many of them in California you get the feeling that a hierarchy exists. Some of the companies are large and very powerful and others are smaller. Do you know anything about any Richfield attempts throughout the fifties to influence the State Lands Commission in order to get the kinds of oil leases that they wanted?

Christopher: Well, that I don't know. All I know is that I've been through several statewide campaigns and I was never the beneficiary of their largesse or their favors. [laughs] I don't know. If I had been and they'd come in with a reasonable sum of money, I suppose my campaign committee would have accepted it. I'm not saying that they wouldn't have.

If the oil companies had come in with what I would consider to be an undue, oversized check, I'd have done as I've always done in my campaigns. I've never accepted a check that I considered just too large for what the occasion called for.

Sharp: It's very interesting that you would talk almost in the same way about your campaign with Nixon, when you ran for lieutenant governor, and your campaign for governor in '66. You don't talk very much about the party. I don't get a feeling that there was a really strong sense of party. Some political scientists who have looked at California politics
Sharp: have said, "It isn't really parties that run the state, it's pressure groups and special interests." Do you think parties or special interests run California?

Christopher: Well, take this last presidential election. I don't know that I'm a good party man. I belong to the Republican party because I think that party even today personifies best the things I believe in and I sincerely believe that. On the other hand, I could never understand Gerald Ford being President of the United States. I thought he was inept and unqualified. I don't know. I have to just admit quite candidly that if it comes to a choice where the nominee of my party is inept or if he's a crook, if I may use that terrible term, or whatever, I'm not going to vote for him just because he's a Republican.

I have no great allegiance or I have no great fealty to any one party to the point where I've got to compromise my conscience and vote for him or work for him just because he happens to be a Republican. I've known some of the biggest incompetents in the Republican party and I've met an equally large number in the Democratic party.

Sharp: That finishes the questions that I have. I don't know if I drained you or not!
Christopher: No, no, no I enjoyed this. It reminds me of my old war-horse days when I'd get up on the stand and stay there all night and discuss matters forever after. No, I think it's my duty in a way to try to help you people who are doing this work because you have a responsibility, not only to yourselves and to your institution, but also to the general public. I feel that, since I elected in the first place to become a candidate, I have an abiding responsibility to the people to try to analyze things, in my perspective at least, and let them be the judge as to who's right or wrong or whatever.

There are only a few votes that make a difference between a president and a governor or a United States Senator. [Laughs] What is the deciding factor? I remember we discussed Senator Knowland, for instance, when he came out here running for governor in 1958, anticipating that perhaps that would be a step to the presidency. Well, it turns out in later years that a stepping stone to the presidency doesn't necessarily have to emanate from the governorship, that a United States Senator can do it just as easily, as was proven by Kennedy and others thereafter.

I always was asked many times, "When you were mayor did you follow the polls and did you act accordingly?" I said, "No." A lot of people do this today. I'm sure President Carter is doing this today and others did it. President Ford especially did it. But that isn't leadership, that's followership. I used to get on the air and if the polls showed that my statements were not well received, and people disagree with me, I would get on the air or go through the newspapers. I would tell everybody why I thought they were wrong and why I was right and I found that conveying the message helped me win my cause.
Christopher: I remember when Khruschev was coming out here, everybody was saying, "Get rid of him, insult him, do everything possible not to have an association with him." In those days--of course, you weren't around here then, you were probably too young to remember. Anyway, everybody said, "Don't have anything to do with him. It's political suicide to receive him." I said, "You can't do that." The polls showed that they were right.

That's why Murray Polsen who was then mayor of Los Angeles actually did insult Khruschev and he was about ready to leave. For two weeks before Khruschev came to San Francisco I had tapes made and I was on the air three or four times a day.

I said, "This man is coming here at the invitation of President Eisenhower, and President Eisenhower is going to Russia in a short time, too. Just as we don't want our president insulted, neither do the people in Russia want their chief of state insulted."

Little by little it sunk in. By the time he got here, my gosh, he got a tremendous welcome.

Sharp: You were very welcome when you went to the Soviet Union.

Christopher: Oh, yes, people received me like I was Eisenhower because Eisenhower was about to visit the U.S.S.R. soon thereafter and my visit in a sense was a prelude to his and this made me the beneficiary of the program.

Eisenhower never did get to Russia because they had that U-2 incident. That was unfortunate. Anyway, I mean to say that everybody has to conduct themselves in their own way and let the chips fall. Then in later years, if you do it your way, you don't have any regrets. But if you do it somebody else's way and you fail, then the regret is always with you: Why didn't I do what I wanted to do in the first place?

That's politics and that's life and it's a sacrifice, especially for persons like myself. I was in business and my business suffered terribly when I was mayor for eight years and when I was running for office. It's cost me a tremendous fortune to have been engaged in politics, but I don't regret it. I've loved every minute of it.

Looking back, I'm glad I did it once but I wouldn't do it again for anything in the world. [chuckles]
Sharp:    Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.

Christopher: Not at all, it's my pleasure.

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CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY, REPUBLICAN STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND ELECTIONS, 1953-1966

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris
in 1978 and 1979
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Gabrielle Morris

B.A. in economics, Connecticut College, New London; independent study in journalism, creative writing.


Chief of radio, TV, public relations, major New England department store; copy chief, network radio and TV station in Hartford, Connecticut; freelance theatrical publicity and historical articles, 1953-55.

Research, interviewing, editing, community planning in child guidance, mental health, school planning, civic unrest, for University of California, Berkeley Unified School District, Bay Area Social Planning Council, League of Women Voters, 1956-70.

Research, interviewing, editing on state administration, civic affairs, and industry, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1970-present.
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Sarah Lee Sharp

B.A., University of California, San Diego, 1971, with major in history.

M.A., University of California, San Diego, 1975, with major field in United States history; Teaching Assistant in Comparative Americas, 1972-1975.

Ph.D., University of California, San Diego, 1979, with major field in United States history; dissertation entitled, "Social Criticism in California During the Gilded Age."

Interviewer-Editor for Regional Oral History Office, 1978 to the present, specializing in California political and legal history.
Miriam Feingold Stein

B.A., Swarthmore College, 1963, with major in history
M.A., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1966, in American history; research assistant - Civil War and Reconstruction.
Field services and oral history for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1966-1967.
Instructor: American history, women's history, and oral history at Bay Area colleges, 1970 to present.
Leader: workshops on oral history, using oral history as teaching tool, 1973 to present.
Interviewer-editor for Regional Oral History Office, 1969 to present, specializing in law enforcement and corrections, labor history, and local political history.
INTERVIEW HISTORY

After Earl Warren left the governor's office to become Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, strife among rival leaders and the sprouting of conservative extremism caused considerable disarray in the California Republican party. The struggle of Goodwin Knight and William Knowland for the 1958 gubernatorial nomination, Richard Nixon's campaign for governor in 1962, and the influence of the John Birch Society were major topics for inquiry in the Knight-Brown oral history project's study of the 1954-1966 era in the state's political history. One of the key figures in the effort to maintain an effective stance and organization for the party was Caspar W. Weinberger, San Francisco assemblyman, candidate for attorney general, and vice-chairman and chairman of the State Central Committee.

In the following interview, it becomes clear that Weinberger's particular attributes for these varied political tasks are a good-natured even temper and great interest and skill in organization. His point of view is that of a person who has "always been very concerned about the opportunities for individuals to do things that they wanted to do, and to be free of governmental restraint—or direction," imbued with an interest in government from childhood, when his father used to tell him stories of the Constitutional convention.

When he went to the assembly in 1953, Weinberger was made chairman of a subcommittee of the Government Organization Committee to look into scandals about liquor licensing and tax collections. More experienced legislators might have considered this issue a hot potato, but Weinberger responded to the challenge and succeeded in winning passage of legislation overhauling the licensing process and setting up a separate department for alcoholic beverage control, something that had eluded the legislature for many years.

Another crucial organizational task in which Weinberger was closely involved was the negotiations for a single overall water department. "My interest was in getting the California Water Plan adopted and in getting a governmental structure ready to build and operate the project...They all had their various favorites among the existing agencies and they didn't want a new agency formed, and particularly they didn't want an old agency abolished. You always have a terrible time then—but a reorganization, to be worth anything, obviously has to abolish a lot of things...Ultimately, there was a substantial saving, and I think there is general agreement now that both the water department and the liquor department are well organized...They have been scandal free and are doing good jobs." (pp 27-8)

After a race for attorney general in the 1958 primary, which was short-circuited when Congressman Pat Hillings ran against him in the big switch of candidates, Weinberger turned his considerable energies to the party, serving
as secretary, vice-chairman, and chairman of the Republican State Central Committee from 1958 to 1964. He discusses his efforts to build a stronger organization, emphasizing communication with the general public and the California Plan to win more local races, and, with equanimity and occasional touches of wit, the "fierce presentation" of the extreme conservative viewpoint. "I wanted the party to win. I wanted the party to be strong and I wanted that much more than so-called ideological purity that they did." He comments on William Knowland's efforts to heal factional wounds, urging Richard Nixon to run for governor, the impact of Goldwater supporters on Republican volunteer organizations, and the growing appeal of Ronald Reagan to party loyalists. While carrying out all these party responsibilities, Weinberger also maintained an active law practice and for a period was a weekly public-affairs commentator for San Francisco's educational television station, KQED.

The interview concludes with a brief reference to Weinberger's work in the transition period after Reagan's 1966 victory on plans for the new administration's executive branch reorganization. It is hoped that further interviews will be possible at a future date to document how the reorganization plan was implemented and Weinberger's role as director of the Department of Finance, as well as his later service in Washington.

The Regional Oral History Office had originally contacted Weinberger for interviews on his legislative work, in connection with its study of the Earl Warren administration. This plan was postponed when Weinberger was appointed secretary of HEW by Richard Nixon. In 1978 he was again located in San Francisco as vice president and general counsel of the Bechtel Corporation and readily agreed to discuss a broader range of his experience. Two interviews were recorded in December, 1978, and two more in March, 1979, interrupted by urgent business overseas for Weinberger. He would address the topics from the preliminary outline briskly, sketching out a quick cogent reply and adding detail in response to further questions, packing a remarkable amount of material into the scant one-hour sessions. He reviewed the edited transcript carefully, making minor emendations and answering a few queries about points that were unclear. As we worked together he expressed an interest in the project as a whole and the intention of using his personal papers to do some writing about political concerns, which would be most valuable to both scholars and administrators.

Gabrielle Morris
Interviewer-Editor

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Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley
Early Interest in Government; Election to the Assembly, 1952

Morris: A good place to start might be how you came to be interested in politics and government.

Weinberger: That's a very long time ago. I suppose, more or less, it starts actually with my father, who used to tell us the story of the Constitutional Convention for his evening reading. Usually he told us his own stories based on the Constitutional Convention instead of reading some other version.

That plus--I don't know where all the rest of it developed, but I've always been interested. I used to read the Congressional Record every day when I was in high school in San Francisco and, after the war, I became interested in the new group that was formed here in San Francisco to do something about the moribund state of the Republican party. We formed a group to try to get control of the county committee so that we could do something to strengthen the party.

The 1948 election had been lost by Dewey, and San Francisco had contributed virtually nothing to the campaign. I had assumed Dewey was going to win so I didn't do any campaigning. After that, I think we all felt that each of us had to do something more effective if we wanted the party to win. We formed a group which ultimately won about half the seats--or little more than

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 96.
Weinberger: half in the election for the Republican county committee in San Francisco. We then had a court fight over the actual result. I was one of the attorneys representing the group, and ultimately we won and were seated. Then I became increasingly active with the county committee. Ultimately, one of the assembly seats in San Francisco became vacant. The incumbent decided he was not going to run for re-election. People asked me to run, and I agreed to run and that's the way it all began.

Morris: Could I go back a minute and ask why you picked the Republican party rather than the Democratic party?

Weinberger: I don't know. That's interesting—I've always been sort of associated with it one way or another. I suppose I like the idea that the philosophy of the party permitted each individual to realize all the best that was in them and to rise as rapidly as they could to the top of the ladder they chose for themselves.

I thought the Democratic party, where there's much heavier emphasis on more and bigger government, would restrict the opportunity for an individual to move ahead. I've always been very concerned about the opportunities for individuals to do things that they wanted to do, and to be free of governmental restraint—or direction—and I guess I always instinctively felt that the Republican party offered more of that than the other side.

Then, too, I remember I had listened on the radio to the 1924 Democratic convention, and although I was excited by the long 103-ballot struggle, I thought the whole proceeding untidy and disorderly. I was seven.

Morris: Had you worked at all with Earl Warren, who was running for vice-president in '48?

Weinberger: No, not actively, I hadn't. I had some minor Republican involvement when I was in college before—back East. All of the editorials I wrote for the Harvard Crimson were heavily Republican in nature. But I hadn't done any specific work with Governor Warren or any other Republicans in 1948.

Morris: What kinds of things did you and your group want to do with the Republican county committee here in San Francisco?

Weinberger: Mostly we wanted to make the party effective in the city. I think in the '48 presidential campaign, there'd been something less than $20,000 raised in the whole city for the campaign. Dewey had lost very badly in the city. There was no precinct
Weinberger: organization—there was no telephone organization—there was just a handful of people who'd always been part of the Republican committee. They never were either effective or very vigorous.

Also, the city's Republican organization had no standing in the state Republican organization because it was so ineffective. What we wanted to do was rebuild the party and strengthen the party here.

Morris: Having ousted a group of people from the committee—did that cause you any problems when you came to run for the assembly yourself?

Weinberger: I suppose some of them still weren't very pleased about it, but they didn't seem to be any more effective then than they were earlier, although I had a very close race for my first GOP nomination. [laughs]

Morris: Who were the other people that came on to the committee with you?

Weinberger: There was Joseph Martin, Jr., who is a San Francisco attorney now, and later became Republican national committeeman and held many other high posts. Robert Harris, who was in the same law firm I was then. Roger Lapham.

Morris: The mayor, or his son?

Weinberger: Son. Roger Lapham, Jr. And several others in that group. Alvin Derre, Arthur Dolan. All together, I guess there were about fifteen or twenty. Then we attracted a larger group. There were some Young Republican groups that were affiliated, and a number of volunteer organizations. This was all back in 1950.

Morris: At that point, did you think of running for office yourself?

Weinberger: Not specifically, no. I didn't really until the incumbent assemblyman decided he was not going to run and people talked to me about doing it. I'd been active helping draft a platform for the local party and doing a number of legal chores for them. A few people suggested that I should run for this seat, and I have to say the suggestion fell on fertile earth. I was very interested in it, but I had a lot of problems with my law firm. I was an associate at that time—not a partner, and they didn't have any familiarity with, or basic support for, the idea of anybody running for office. They employed them to practice law; not to run for office.

Morris: Not to run for office.
Weinberger: But after consideration of the idea, they agreed that they had talked a great deal about participation in public affairs, and contributing to their community, and they decided they would authorize it, so I ran.

Then when I won, why I went on half-time at the firm. I gave up half my salary as an associate and gave up any idea of becoming a partner while I was in the legislature. They were very helpful in the campaign and basically, quite reasonable and understanding thereafter. The legislature at that time met for six months one year and about one or two months the second year—and there was quite a lot of committee work—so possibly three-quarters of my time was in the law firm and about a quarter of my time spent in the legislature. I enjoyed the legislative work thoroughly.

Morris: How were freshman legislators oriented in 1953?

Weinberger: Not really at all. They didn't have any formal orientation program. You learned by watching and on-the-job training, and things like that. But there wasn't any specific formal course of instruction. In fact, it would have been much—cause for much amusement if there'd been anything of that kind then.

We watched the old hands and tried to do what they did. I was very fortunate in my first term because a fellow legislator, Glenn Lipscomb—a Republican from Los Angeles County—was chairman of the Government Organization Committee to which I was assigned. There was a big scandal about liquor licenses, and alcoholic beverage legislation that fell to this committee, and he appointed me chairman of a subcommittee my first term to look into this matter. So I had a lot broader, more interesting assignment than might otherwise have been the case.

I also—before I took my seat, there was a big struggle for the speakership. I supported the man who won, which always is helpful, so I received some good committee assignments—the ones I wanted.

Morris: That was James Silliman, wasn't it?

Weinberger: That was Silliman yes. He was the sound anti-lobbyist, clean-government man, and the people we opposed were all supported by the lobbyists who were under the thumb of the special interests. [laughter]

Morris: Who were the other people?
Weinberger: I can't even remember his name at the moment [laughs]. I don't know who was the other candidate for--oh, he actually was a very good man too. He later became a congressman. His name was H. Allen Smith. But his support seemed to come more from the old lobbyists than Silliman's support. Also, Silliman was from northern California and was supported by many of my friends.

Morris: Silliman was only speaker for two years--did he retire or was he defeated?

Weinberger: Silliman left the assembly to run, unsuccessfully, for lieutenant governor.

Morris: Was Lincoln a logical successor?

Weinberger: No, although he had been actively for Silliman.

Morris: Unruh was also in the assembly by then--did he take an active part in negotiations on who would be the new Speaker?

Weinberger: No.

Anyway, it turned out that Silliman won and that was helpful in the committee assignments. I had a lot of luck.

Morris: Was liquor licensing an important issue to Silliman? How much involved was he in actually writing the bill and getting it through the legislature?

Weinberger: Not particularly--he was helpful to me in getting it through the assembly, and very supportive of my proposals.

Morris: Various sources suggest that there was some resistance from more senior legislators to freshman members proposing the liquor licensing reform bill and that they attempted to amend it heavily, and that at one point Governor Knight declared that it was his bill. Could you sort this out for us? Were there any senior legislators active in getting it passed?

Weinberger: Senator Breed; Senator Parkman.
Liquor Licensing Investigation

Morris: Had you, by any chance, campaigned at all on the liquor licensing?

Weinberger: No, it was not an issue at that time. It came up as the result of a series of articles that appeared after the election in a Los Angeles newspaper—the old Mirror, and a San Diego paper also. There had been a lot of dubious happenings and these were investigated and a series of articles written by the papers about the Board of Equalization's administration of liquor laws.

The question in our committee was whether we should do anything about it, and I said I thought we should look into it, and Glenn Lipscomb then appointed me chairman of the subcommittee to do it.

I didn't know it at the time—never even heard of him, but William Bonelli was the Board of Equalization member in charge from the Los Angeles-San Diego district, and was considered a very powerful, much feared figure. But I rushed in where fools or angels feared to tread, and I didn't know anything about it. I accepted the chairmanship. We investigated Bonelli rather thoroughly, and ultimately he left the state—went down to Mexico to dodge an indictment and never came back officially. Died in exile, I believe is the expression.

Morris: Yes, that's always a curious kind of thing.

Paul Leake, from Northern California, was on the Board of Equalization.

Weinberger: He was, and he was very helpful. He was very suspicious of the committee at first. I had a long meeting with him in my law office and he became a great supporter of the committee's—and of mine—and we became fast friends. He was a Democrat and had somewhat different views on other matters, but he was one of my greatest friends and supporters, and he supported the committee with great vigor and complete dedication and was very helpful all the way through. He was a fine man—a first-class person.

Morris: There are some reports that Earl Warren appointed Paul Leake to the Board of Equalization to try and get some light and air into this matter of liquor licensing.

Weinberger: He appointed him, and he certainly brought all of that into it. The Board of Equalization is a very strange kind of old-style politics group that was quite foreign to California. We didn't
Weinberger: really have any other major form of corruption—the liquor licensing was it. As soon as we kicked aside the surface, we found all this terrible mass of squirming things underneath and it was a big major scandal—it really was—without any question.

Liquor licenses were salable legally, and they had a very high value. The Board of Equalization members were allowed complete freedom in deciding who could buy or obtain liquor licenses and so forth in their own district. They were a board, but nobody ever questioned what each did or recommended for his district, Los Angeles. So Bonelli was free to do as he wished in San Diego.

Then George Reilly would do the same for San Francisco and Paul Leake would have freedom in his Northern California. I've forgotten who the fourth member was—oh, a man named [James H.] Quinn from Oakland district. So each was completely supreme in his own district by common consent and custom. They didn't act really, then, as a board at all.

What was happening was that Bonelli was selling these liquor licenses which were very valuable—$15, 20, 30 thousand sometimes—and he would issue them at the nominal state fee to his friends, and they would kick back to him and give him some of the money they could realize from the sale of the licenses as bribes. Frequently, the licenses were issued for operation at non-existent addresses and all kinds of shenanigans. It was real major corruption—just old-fashioned Tammany Hall style corruption of a really very major kind.

As we uncovered bits and pieces of this, why, more and more indictments ultimately were brought in. We turned over all of our information to the district attorney in San Diego where the principal violations had occurred. Several indictments were brought in and several people convicted and sent to jail. Bonelli fled the state and never returned.

And there was a great deal of interest in it in the state. As a result, we weren't just investigating it; we were doing as I always felt legislative committees should, holding hearings for the purpose of trying to see what legislative changes were needed. We recommended a constitutional amendment that took all these powers over alcoholic beverage control away from the Board of Equalization and put them in the hands of a department with the department head appointed by, and responsible to, the governor.
Weinberger: There was a total lack of responsibility in the board. The members were elected, but there's no way you could really say that they felt in any way responsible to the state was a whole. They couldn't be removed—they couldn't be impeached, and it had a very bad organizational pattern, among other things.

Morris: The Board of Equalization members could not be impeached or recalled?

Weinberger: No, they couldn't be removed.

Morris: Although they were elected officials?

Weinberger: They were elected by the people, yes.

Morris: That's very strange.

Weinberger: Very strange indeed, yes. [laughter] So that we had a difficult problem, but solved it with a constitutional amendment, which was adopted by a huge majority—over two to one. The voters stripped the board of all their liquor powers. I always felt that the board itself ought to be abolished and the tax matters should be put in a department similar to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, but we were not able to get that through in a later session, primarily because we didn't have a scandal.

The only way you get a major reorganization through is to have some kind of a major scandal or a major crisis. We did get the third one through that I tried—and that was water. We got that because there was a major water shortage and floods and that kind of thing.

Morris: Did you work at all with Pat Brown, who was then attorney general?

Weinberger: To a limited extent. He, again, was very suspicious at the beginning of the inquiry, and assigned a deputy to follow us around. The deputy became a good friend. He was William Bennett, who later was elected a member of the Board of Equalization, and that kind of changed his views. He became very extreme in his views, but at that time he became quite a supporter of the committee and was very helpful, and I think persuaded Pat Brown that we were honestly trying to do something about it. So Pat Brown didn't interpose any objections or hinder anybody doing the investigating.

Morris: It would seem that the attorney general would have an interest in a matter in which there were illegalities.
Weinberger: He did. But everybody was really very worried about doing anything overt against Bonelli. I was told later that there was quite a joke that a freshman assemblyman had taken a chairmanship and was going to investigate Bonelli, because nobody dared really even mention his name or do anything that could be construed as opposing him.

So everybody was sort of sitting around the sidelines waiting to see what would happen. Paul Leake was not in that category, but a great many other people were. We had some very good support on the committee. We had Glenn Coolidge, who was a member of the committee, Byron Rumford--they were both enormously helpful. And we had a couple of senators--Senator Breed and Senator Parkman, who were also helpful. It was a joint committee.

Morris: Right. I came across one reference to something called the Hahn Bill, which was introduced at some point but never got out of the senate.

Weinberger: Well, I don't know what that would have been. There were a lot of bills that were introduced before the committee completed its work. But when the committee completed its work and made its recommendations, why, most of our bills went through.

What they actually did was to take the bills that we had introduced under my name as chairman of the committee and dropped those and put in senate bills that were copies of our bills. I think that the actual constitutional amendment that was passed was my constitutional amendment with another senator's name on it, or something like that. They do that--so instead of the Weinberger bill, it becomes the somebody-else bill. It's kind of a minor matter. I never cared about it much, as long as we were sure that what was in the bill was the same as ours or something consistent with our recommendations--and it ultimately was.

Morris: Did you have any feeling that the senate was more reluctant to get into this matter than the assembly?

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: Why were they afraid of Mr. Bonelli?

Weinberger: I don't know [chuckles]--I never found out. In retrospect it's hard to say why. But his reputation was one that caused fear. The belief seemed to be that if he opposed you, you could not be elected or re-elected. He didn't seem to me to be much to worry
Weinberger: about, but he was a much-feared character. I grilled him very extensively at the hearings of the committee, and everybody was quite horrified that he would be treated in this way and so on.

I remember he told me that he didn't know anything about it—he'd never been in the file room. I told him I'd be ashamed to make any kind of acknowledgement of that kind. He was trying to divest himself of any kind of responsibility, so he said with great pride that he'd never been in the file room and didn't know anything about these—all these details were handled by subordinates. I questioned him very closely and vigorously about his shortcomings, as I saw them.

Morris: Being appointed a chairman might be considered a plum for a freshman assemblyman and might also—[interruption as someone comes into the office]—so was it a matter of a plum for a freshman assemblyman or a hot potato?

Weinberger: A chairmanship of a committee was considered quite a plum. This was a special hot plum that had all kinds of other implications to it, I guess. Yes, I think to get a chairmanship of a subcommittee your first year is unusual, but gratifying.

Morris: Some thought that part of the problem was that there were criminal elements involved.

Weinberger: Oh, there were—there were without any question. Bonelli was a criminal element. And there were dealings with people who were later identified or had been indentified as having past criminal records all through the San Diego area. That was one of the problems. The people who were being licensed were people who had criminal records and under the laws that then existed, why, they were not supposed to have—they were supposed to have been people who had been investigated by the board, and found not to have records.

Morris: Was the constitutional amendment your first choice for the way to resolve it?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, yes, it was the only way to strip the Board of Equalization of its powers.

Morris: At that point, did you have to mount a large campaign for it or was it—?

Weinberger: To some extent. We had a lot of help from many organizations after it was passed by the legislature and went on the ballot. We didn't have any money. We didn't raise any money to do it.
Weinberger: We didn't have a campaign fund, but we had a lot of newspaper support, a lot of editorial support—I made a lot of speeches. The League of Women Voters was very strongly for it and did some mailings. A number of groups got behind it and supported it, and it passed by a very large margin—better than two and a half to one, as I recall.

Morris: Did Mr. Smith figure at all in your work?

Weinberger: No, he was pretty well finished by that time. His organization was sort of standing by watching things with amusement and, I suppose, some fear, but he was pretty well finished by then. His employers professed not to have any interest one way or the other in how this went, but I'm sure that if he had been there and been active at that time, he probably would have opposed the constitutional amendment. He said how the state licensed these places was not a matter of concern to him—he represented the distillers and the manufacturers.

Morris: Did you get any sense in your hearings of how long this had been a matter of illegal activity?

Weinberger: Well, I don't recall precisely, but it had extended back some years. I think it had been getting worse as they were able to do it more easily without being caught, but probably a good five years back, or something like that. Our committee began work in 1953.

Morris: And then the constitutional amendment—

Weinberger: --was before the voters in 1954. I was elected in '52. We started work on this in the fall of '53, and we finished it and got the amendment on the ballot in June of '54.

Morris: In the June election.

Weinberger: I believe so. Maybe it was November but I believe it was June.

Morris: I'll check that—just so we have it.

Weinberger: I think it was June. We had big problems getting the Governor to call a special session, which he did.

Morris: You said it was a problem to get him to—

Weinberger: The Governor had to agree to call a special session. We couldn't even have considered the matter until 1955 if he had not. At that time, the only item that the legislature could consider in the even numbered years was the budget. In order to consider
Weinberger: anything else, the Governor had to call a special session which ran concurrently with the budget session. He designated the topics, and we had to get him to agree to designate this topic and he had to be shown--this was Governor Knight--that we had made some findings and that there was some substance to it and that we recommended a sound program.

Morris: He'd been governor then for just about a few months when he called this special session.

Weinberger: Yes, I think Governor Warren left in October of 1953.

Morris: Right. And how did Goodwin Knight feel about your whole investigation?

Weinberger: He supported it.

Morris: Was it a matter that the governor had much to say about it, or was this a legislative--?

Weinberger: The governor didn't have to approve the constitutional amendment. He did have to approve the other legislation.

Morris: Do you want to stop at this point?

Weinberger: I'm afraid I'll have to. Yes. Then we can resume whenever you make another appointment.

Setting Up the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department

[Interview II: December 20, 1978]##

Morris: Last week, we were talking about the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department, which you helped to institute. One of the things that interested me was that a man named Russell Munro was selected as the first executive.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: I wondered if you had any say in the actual selection of the director?

Weinberger: Not particularly, no. Actually, his was the second selection. The first man who was selected didn't take it. I can't remember his name--he was the head of the State Selective Service System. He was first selected by Governor Knight, and I had no say or anything in that selection.
Weinberger: After a couple of days of a lot of publicity and interviews and everything, he finally decided he didn't want to do it. Then, they selected Russell Munro and I did not have anything to do with that either.

Morris: He was in the public works department.

Weinberger: Yes. He was a career civil servant. I think the feeling was that there wouldn't be any suggestion that he had any industry ties or whatever. He had no previous connection with the subject. He was given it as a straight management-administrative job.

Morris: Governor Knight did not want to want to use that appointment to pick someone that was close to him or--?

Weinberger: I don't know. I've no way of knowing. I think the area was very, very sensitive. It was the only major area of corruption in California government in the last thirty-four years. I think the last thing the Governor would have wanted to do was to put somebody identified in the press as a crony or something of that kind [chuckles] in that type of position, so I think his first choice was a man who was also a state official—the selective service administrator, which is a comparatively minor role in state government.

Then when he turned it down, the governor turned again to the state government. So I would think that it's a fair conclusion that he didn't want to have anybody who could be criticized as a liquor industry nominee or that there was going to be any continuation of the Bonelli-type thing, or anything of that sort.

Morris: Having involved yourself in the legislation and the constitutional amendment that set up the department, did you have any say in how it was organized administratively? Did you have any idea?

Weinberger: Yes, yes. As soon as the appointments were announced, why Mr. Munro and a couple of people he was going to work with—as I recall it—came and talked with me and wanted to be sure that the organization they had in mind was one that seemed to be suitable and appropriate. We had a lot of discussions about that—not about who would be appointed but just various organizational matters.

It seems to me he did discuss the appointment of one of his chief deputies with me. It was Malcolm Harris—of whom I thought well and—again—a state public servant.
Weinberger: He was a very tall, thin man who, I believe, came over from the insurance department and was highly regarded. Then he later became the director. But in any event, there was some discussion initially: because it was a brand new department, and they wanted to organize it in the best way to handle the business, and we had acquired a certain amount of knowledge in the whole area because of the investigation.

Morris: Do you recall what, in particular, you were concerned that there be in the new department?

Weinberger: No, nothing special, except that we wanted a good clean line of responsibility. The investigation had demonstrated to us that the Board of Equalization didn't have any, and there was no clear responsibility to anyone. There was a lot of shifting of the buck from one thing to another, but in the department, we wanted to have certain clear lines of authority and so we recommended that there be three or four deputy directors. I believe we secured exemption of them from civil service, so that they could be appointed on the basis of competence and merit completely. We just thought those people ought to report directly to the director, and that they ought to have reasonably similar functions under them, and things of that kind. We also had the Department of Finance recommend some organizational patterns.

Goodwin Knight as Governor

Morris: That was the year that Goodwin Knight was elected governor in his own right.

Weinberger: No, it was about a year after that. Yes. This passed in June '54, and he supported it. He made it an issue in his campaign. He defeated a man named Graves, who was lobbyist for the League of California Cities.

Knight supported it and defeated Graves, and so one of the major things he had to do when he took office was fill this new position and so, that occupied a fair amount of time during the November-December period.

Morris: What I was wondering is, when he became governor by his own election, did he make many changes in his office or--?

Weinberger: No, I think he had made most of the ones he wanted to. I can't remember when John Peirce left as Director of Finance, but he got John Peirce fairly early as Director of Finance. I think he stayed on quite a while. Then when he left, Jeff Mugford, who was a permanent finance department official, became director.
Weinberger: I don't think that there were major changes in Governor Knight's own administration, beginning in 1955, from people that he had in when he first went in as governor.

Morris: How did his ideas about how to organize and run the governor's office differ from Mr. Warren's?

Weinberger: I don't know that they did very materially. He kept some of the people on. He brought in a man named Alderman as his executive secretary--his chief of staff. He didn't last very long and went back into the campaign-management business. His successor was a newspaper man and very well regarded--a first-rate man.

Otherwise, I don't know that there were a great many changes but there were undoubtedly some changes in the legislative liaison and in the governor's scheduling secretaries, and people close to the operation. But I don't think it was greatly different.

I think it's fair to say Goodie Knight had a great deal more interest in politics as such that he publicly displayed than Governor Warren did, but I think they were both very interested in it. They had different styles of speaking and approaches. The popular conception was that Governor Knight was far more conservative than Governor Warren, but in a fairly short time I think that was disproved because Governor Knight formed a very strong alliance with organized labor.

A man named Harry Finks was the AFL-CIO lobbyist. He was a great friend of Knight and in a very short time, Knight nearly always came down on the liberal-labor side of most state issues, which surprised a great many people who thought they were going to have a very much more conservative governor after Governor Warren left.

But as far as styles of management are concerned, I don't know that there was a major difference.

Morris: There was a suggestion that he did make some changes and that you might have given him some suggestions on--

Weinberger: People, you mean?

Morris: No, government organization and operations.

Weinberger: Well, yes. I was very interested in Alcoholic Beverage Control organization, of course, and I was very interested in general state government reorganization, and the water department, and trying to create a department of revenue--all of that was on
Weinberger: the legislative side. I helped him in his campaign a bit--made some speeches for him and appeared with him jointly on television on a few things.

I recall once I went up to Sacramento on my birthday—in 1954—to appear with him on a television program at his request and things like that. He would ask a few questions and ask me for some suggestions or ideas that I would have, and things like that. But I wouldn't call it any close counseling or anything of that sort.

I did much more of that with Governor Reagan than with Governor Knight.

Morris: Then you were in an administrative spot yourself.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: We hope to get to Governor Reagan's administration.

Weinberger: I'm sure we will today [laughs].

Morris: I'm not sure that our office will for a while. We try to do this stage by stage. Was Knight's connection with organized labor because of interest in problems of labor and legislative concerns?

Weinberger: Partly, probably. But I think also because Governor Knight was very ambitious politically and felt he had the conservative vote reasonably well sewn up and wanted to broaden his base, and get into the national picture very quickly. He wanted to be vice-president and, generally, started very quickly after his election as governor to broaden and develop his political base.

Morris: How did he go about that on the national scene?

Weinberger: One of the labor people in the East picked up supporters for him, urged on by the California State Federation. He made a lot of appointments that the State Federation of Labor wanted. He was much more partial and close to the State Federation of Labor, I think, than Governor Warren, although Governor Warren had always been supported by them. But Governor Knight made a conscious effort to court labor, or else he succumbed to labor's courting—one of the two—but between the two, they formed a very close alliance. He would never do anything that organized labor didn't want, so that he hoped, I think, in that way to develop some strong labor support in later campaigns.

Morris: Was there somebody on his staff who was close to the labor movement?
Weinberger: No, I don't think, particularly. I think this fellow, Finks, was the closest. He was a very amiable, familiar figure around Sacramento, and a long-time friend of Governor Knight. I think that probably developed mostly from there.

Morris: Mr. Finks doesn't figure particularly in state labor circles.

Weinberger: Mr. Finks was secretary of the Sacramento Labor Federation. He appeared quite frequently as a lobbyist for labor in general. I think his base was the Sacramento Labor Council. I believe he was also vice-chairman of the state federation.

Morris: Pat Brown later did a lot with reorganization of state government. Was it a major interest of Goodwin Knight's? Were there pressing problems?

Weinberger: No, I think the state government, as such, was not a major interest of Governor Knight, really. He was very interested in the political side—political advancement. As a state governor, he appointed good people and generally reached what I considered to be a supportable, proper conclusion on most issues. I think he was a good governor.

He called the special session on Alcoholic Beverage Control. He called a special session on water. He usually supported these efforts. But I think it's fair to say that he wasn't as interested in the government side of being governor as some others.

Morris: Did that leave more leeway for the legislature to do things?

Weinberger: Yes. He wasn't rigid about a lot of things, so that if something he wanted didn't quite pass, but something that he could call halfway between did, he would usually sign that.

S.F. Palace of Fine Arts

Weinberger: I have no basis for criticizing him at all, because I worked quite well with him. He certainly supported a lot of the things I wanted and signed the bill for my district that Governor Warren had vetoed twice, so I was very—that was to appropriate state funds to rebuild the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts.

Morris: I see—to refurbish it?
Weinberger: To put some state money in to rehabilitate it and restore it if the funds were matched locally. It was bitterly opposed by the San Francisco Parks Department, because they didn't want the park money going for the Palace of Fine Arts building.

Morris: The money came from the state parks treasury, then.

Weinberger: Yes, partly. The state portion came from the state park fund. They wanted to buy more land and I thought we had enough land. That was my issue when I first ran for the assembly and it took three terms to get the bill signed. Then the city voters turned down the match in a bond issue, and then Walter Johnson put it up personally. I was shepherding the thing through all of those years, so that became a major obsession. Governor Knight did finally sign the bill.

Morris: I see. Had you known Mr. Johnson? Did you encourage him to become involved in this crusade?

Weinberger: No. He became very interested on his own. He lived down there himself. I worked with him in trying to get the city's bond issue passed--the matching fund, city bond issue. He joined the basic crusade at that time, and we worked together very closely, trying to get the bond issue passed and on plans for the Palace after it was rebuilt, and forming the Palace of Fine Arts League, and all that.

After the bond issue was defeated by a very small margin, we were sitting around wondering what would be the next move, and Walter Johnson said, "Oh, wouldn't it just be simpler if I gave it all myself?" We all agreed that it would be much simpler. [laughs]

Morris: Yes--to find an angel, one--

Weinberger: He became involved in it. He just died recently. He had a very large fortune, which he used effectively. And this was his great pride and joy--that building. And he lived to see it all completed and kept his home down there for many years.

Morris: And it has became part of San Francisco's life again.

Weinberger: Yes, yes.

Morris: Has the state continued to have a financial interest in it?

Weinberger: No. The thing we worked out was that they put in the money and then they leased it back to the city for a dollar a year or something. I believe that lease is still in effect. I don't
Weinberger: think it was ever formally transferred as a gift. I think it's still technically—unless they changed it—there's still technically state park land under a very long-term lease to the city.

The city owns it and runs it and operates it and has all the maintenance costs, and all that. That was a major side issue. I spent a lot of time on it over the years.

Morris: Yes, that sort of combines your local interests—

Weinberger: My father spent a lot of time at the Exposition, right after he came out from Colorado. One of my first memories of him is that he had a lot of pictures of it around the house and talked a lot about the Exposition. He thought it was the most beautiful set of buildings he'd ever seen. So I was very happy to have a small role in preserving the Palace in permanent form (all the Exposition buildings were built in temporary form, and the terra cotta was just tumbling down).

But the structure and the design was still there, and it is a very beautiful building.

Morris: Yes.

Judiciary and Ways and Means Committees

Morris: You also served on the Judiciary Committee in the assembly.

Weinberger: Most of the lawyers were put on that.

Morris: That's interesting. When you were in the assembly, were there not just enough lawyers to serve on the Judiciary Committee?

Weinberger: There were quite a few lawyers. I suppose out of the eighty, there must have been at least fifteen or eighteen lawyers, and most of them were on the Judiciary Committee. One or two were sort of exceptions, but most all were lawyers.

Morris: I'm interested in the way you phrase it because nowadays it's quite often said that perhaps there are more lawyers than any other kind of professional training in the legislature.

Weinberger: There probably still are and there were then, I think. There were many real estate people, and one or two people who were retired, and then some professional legislators who didn't do
Weinberger: anything else but that—and some ranchers and one thing or another, but I think the largest single bloc of occupations was attorney.

Morris: Even twenty years ago.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: Did Governor Knight take a particular interest in the Judiciary Committee, having been himself on the bench?

Weinberger: No.

Morris: Wanda Sankary served on the Judiciary Committee in 1955-56. We're interested in the few women legislators; do you recall her on that committee or in the legislature at all? What were her interests on the Judiciary Committee and was she an active member?

Weinberger: I do not recall any specific legislative interests she had.

Morris: Is that committee primarily a routine kind of—?

Weinberger: It considers major changes in the statutes involving procedures and the codes, and anything involving the judiciary, but primarily it's the codes or changes in the procedures and laws. If there were changes in the vehicle code, they'd go to the motor vehicles committee; but if they were just changes in the civil code, or the criminal code, or something of that kind, they would be heard by the Judiciary Committee. We had a long agenda and used to meet at night—until quite late.

Two people who later became judges were chairman when I was on that committee—Judge [Gordon] Fleury and Judge [Thomas] Caldecott, who is still a judge on the District Court of Appeal. Before he left the legislature he became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Morris: While you were a member of Ways and Means?

Weinberger: Yes, yes.

Morris: That is generally considered kind of a central committee.

Weinberger: Yes, Ways and Means is a very important committee. It used to be that the chairman was named entirely at the request of the governor. There was Assemblyman [Marvin] Sherwin from Oakland, who was Governor Warren's nominee. When he left, why then Assemblyman Caldecott was made chairman of Ways and Means at strong request of the Governor. [1955]
Morris: Of Goodwin Knight.

Weinberger: I believe so--it may have been just at the end of Warren's time.

Morris: Did that continue through your--?

Weinberger: Yes, he remained as chairman of Ways and Means the rest of the time I was there, I think. I believe so.

Morris: What we pick up in going through the budgets from '54 on through '66 is beginning concern about the cost of state government and the beginning of deficits. Goodwin Knight referred to those several times in his--

Weinberger: You weren't really allowed to have a deficit in California. The constitution precludes it. The constitution requires a balanced budget. You have to make an estimate of the revenues coming in and you cannot appropriate anything beyond that that would unbalance the budget. Sometimes the estimates don't come out right and they overspend, but basically, they're not supposed to. They're supposed to fit the spending to the estimate revenue so that it comes out at balance.

Morris: The way Goodwin Knight put it in his budget messages to the legislature was that to avoid having a deficit, they were going to go into reserves--

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: --the end of which were--

Weinberger: Yes, they had a $75 million dollar so-called Rainy Day Fund which Governor Warren had put aside very early in the days of burgeoning revenues when more and more people came to the state and we didn't have a lot of things and he was afraid the revenues someday (a "rainy day") might fall. He put $75 million aside in what was known as the Rainy Day Fund, and guarded it very zealously, and everybody was always trying to tap it, so they could get a lot of their projects paid for without increasing taxation. Knight opposed Warren on a lot of things and opposed him on that, so he said he was going to make use of the Rainy Day Fund, but it wasn't to stave off deficits or anything of that kind, I don't think. I think it was primarily because it was another source of spending which could be done without raising taxes.

Morris: How did the Ways and Means Committee in general feel about Knight's budgets and his--?
Weinberger: The Ways and Means Committee rarely made major changes in the governor's budget. There are a few individual items that are always hotly contested, but overall, they usually come out within a few million—ten or fifteen million or less of the governor's budget.

Morris: Were there thoughts that the state needed more revenue?

Weinberger: No, I don't think so. There was no suggestion of raising taxes or anything of that kind. The major tax increase came later. First, Governor Brown refused to do it because of his political worries, and he tried to resort to such things as changing the accounting year, going from the cash to the accrual basis, and various stratagems to try to postpone the evil day. When he left, they had major deficit problems that had to be covered by additional taxation, which Governor Reagan was strong enough—courageous enough—to ask for.

Morris: What I was interested in is if there were any signs that this was coming in the Knight administration?

Weinberger: You mean whether or not there was going to be a need for—?

Morris: That there would be the need for additional revenues or concern about controlling public expense.

Weinberger: No, I don't think so. I don't think there was any suggestion that we needed to raise the level of taxation. The revenues were increasing. The general prosperity of the state and the increase in population, brought an increase of revenue. I never heard any discussion of any need to raise taxes.

Morris: It's interesting that in eight years things can turn around so.

Weinberger: Well, you had a combination of a lot of factors. They had spent on an increasing scale, and as more and more people came in, that required larger increases to maintain that base, and there were new projects that were started from time to time. But it wasn't until Governor Reagan came in that there was a major effort to hold down expenditures.

There was some talk, from time to time, about increasing the highway tax, so that you could build more highways, but not much more than that.
II WATER AND OIL

California Water Plan

Morris: The major item of expense in Governor Knight's time looks like it was the beginning of construction on what became the California Water Plan.

Weinberger: Yes. We had a lot of discussion about the water project. In 1956 there was another special session and we got the water department reorganization bill through. Then we formed a Water Department and Governor Knight again made the first appointment. Again, we had quite a few discussions with him about the best means of organizing their department and we started on the California Water Project plans.

We hadn't formally worked out the allocation of, or division of the water from north to south, or secured an agreement of the northern counties to release some of that water. That came a little later, in Brown's administration. But all the design groundwork was laid, and the plans were done, and the new Water Department was formed with Harvey Banks, an engineer, as first director. So all of that did start in the 1956-57 period.

Morris: You mention that "we" had quite a few discussions with Knight on the water project. Who were the people closest to Knight on developing water policy? What were Knight's own ideas as to how the project should be organized and funded? What were the points on which you differed?

Weinberger: The degree of consolidation.

Morris: What was it that seemed to make it the sensible thing to have a single water department?
Weinberger: Primarily the fact that a number of agencies with conflicting responsibilities and overlapping duties would be unable to produce a unified water policy and operate a very large water project for the state. We had never been in the water business before and it seemed clear that anything on that scale would have to be done by the state, and that essentially it required a new kind of unified, streamlined, responsible department—which is what we formed.

Morris: Hadn't Warren in '53 had a bill for a unified water department?

Weinberger: I don't know. A lot of people had asserted that we needed a major reorganization. But no one really wanted to eliminate a lot of existing agencies or consolidate them into one. That was an essential feature of it as far as I was concerned. All of the major agencies that could be operating agencies I felt should be combined into a single department, and that's what ultimately we got through in '56 [Department of Water Resources].

Morris: There are a number of factors mentioned in the texts. One being that there were a lot of problems in the south—that the Metropolitan Water District had a number of reservations about the plan.

Weinberger: They had a number of contracts with the water districts around Southern California, and they all had different ideas as to how they wanted to organize the department, and they all wanted to have various things exempted from it. If that had happened, there would be too many water agencies left outside and uncoordinated. I was always pushing for a single, unified department that would be responsible to the governor and could carry out a new water policy for the state and would have some power and some ability to do that.

Morris: Was the Metropolitan Water District primarily serving the Los Angeles area? Did it have any interest in agriculture at all?

Weinberger: Yes, it had interests in agriculture. It had some contracts with some outlying water districts, as I recall it, and covered quite a large service area. It was very big.

Morris: What about the comment that's made that some of the growers in the San Joaquin Valley wanted a California water plan as a way around the Bureau of Reclamation's 160-acre limitation. Was that something that came into the discussion?
Weinberger: I think that was one factor in it, yes. There was a lot of talk about the 160-acre limitation and its inapplicability to modern farming conditions. The Metropolitan Water District had been supreme in that area, and I think they were worried about the state as a big water supplier coming in and what it would do to them. They were a powerful group of people, and they wanted to keep that kind of monopoly authority.

I think ultimately they did support additional water supplies, and indeed they had to.

Morris: Was there a decision on the acreage limitation in the California legislation?

Weinberger: We were bound under the federal law. We couldn't change that. The basic rule was that land could not be served by federally-developed water projects if the owner owned more than 160 acres.

There were federal elements to all the water. We tried to work out a system under which the state-developed water would not be tainted by the federal water and the federal law, but they did merge together, and we had various suggestions as to how we could color it and keep it colored and all kinds of things like that, or we could do it on an average acre-foot basis.

One way or another, the worry and the feeling seemed to be that when you mingled the waters coming down from Trinity and from Shasta, that you had tainted the whole project with 160-acre limitation and you would need federal legislation to get out of it.

Morris: Were federal representatives, either congressional or departmental, trying to influence the decisions on the California Water Plan?

Weinberger: No, I don't think so.

Morris: How about the various departments that were to be merged into this one giant water agency?

Weinberger: They always opposed it. They never liked any diminution in their own authority. That's one of the problems with a reorganization. It's very difficult to get through. Anyway we got that through, as I mentioned before, primarily because we had such a series of floods in the north and continuing water shortages in the south, and it was viewed as a method of flood control and of getting surplus waters of the state south. But to carry out the water plan, we needed an organizational structure that was capable of doing that. But all the organizations that were to be abolished or merged, uniformly opposed that sort of thing.
Morris: Did they lobby?

Weinberger: Oh, yes. This was a very close vote. We barely got this through. We didn't get this through till the conference committee in the final hours of the special session.

Morris: Who was on that conference committee? Do you recall?

Weinberger: One of the people who was most helpful on it was the Democratic senator from Merced named James Cobey, who later became a state court judge—he's still a state court judge—and his son ran for the assembly last year. He was very understanding and helpful. His district needed the water and he supported our bills, worked out and helped support a compromise set of provisions that were ultimately adopted and became part of the department structure.

The bills in the special session were all designed to reorganize and strengthen California's ability to construct and manage and operate a big water system and handle water rights, and all manner of activities connected with that. We'd only been on the fringes of it before.

Morris: How about the engineering aspects? It would be the largest state construction that had been undertaken.

Weinberger: Yes, a lot of that was done by the state engineers and by people in various agencies of the state government. There was a lot of—obviously, I'm sure a lot of it was contracted out, but the basic concept and design came out of this new state department.

Morris: With a state engineer named Edmundson?

Weinberger: He had been very active in water matters for many, many years, and he certainly had a role in the development of the state water plan, but not in its construction or operation.

Morris: Did he continue on in the new department?

Weinberger: No. I'm not sure he was even alive then. But he did not.

Morris: Did you ever talk to him about his view?

Weinberger: Probably. He probably testified before the committee, but I don't have any specific memory of it. But I'm sure he would have been one who would not have wanted to abolish existing agencies.
Weinberger: There were two or three agencies which you might call contenders for the job of doing this, but they only had limited jurisdiction and limited authority, and there were a great many other agencies that would continue to have a lot to do with water. We felt—I felt, that it was necessary to consolidate all of the state's activities in connection with water into the one department and give it enough authority and ultimately enough funding to do these things.

Citizens' Groups and Advisory Boards

Morris: There's one note that Mr. Edmundston had put together something called the Feather River Project Associates.

Weinberger: The Feather River Project people were people who were in the north, and who later had a great many adherents, primarily in the south, who wanted the Feather River water brought south. They were sort of the citizens' group supporting the water plan. They had a lot of support from southern groups and from farm groups, and from others who needed the water and those who also wanted flood control in the north. They furnished strong civilian support for the water plan. They were always kind of ambivalent on whether they wanted a water department to administer it. My interest was in getting the California Water Plan adopted, and in getting a governmental structure ready to build and operate the project.

Morris: You said they were ambivalent about having the water department run it. Who did they—?

Weinberger: Or even formed. I think they all had their various favorites among the existing agencies, and they didn't want a new agency formed, and particularly they didn't want an old agency abolished. You always have a terrible time then—but a reorganization, to be worth anything, obviously has to abolish a lot of things.

Morris: Were many people laid off as a result of the reorganization?

Weinberger: No, they never are. They're all absorbed and added to. You can get some reductions by attrition, but hardly anybody's ever fired.

Morris: Was that part of your thought: that the job could be done more effectively with fewer people?
Weinberger: Yes. We thought we would have the new water department and have a lean staffing pattern, and that they could do it. There may be some people who lose their jobs in the end, but mostly you do that by attrition. You don't fill vacancies as they come along.

When agencies were abolished by the new department, some people from the older ones went over to the new ones. Ultimately, there was a substantial saving, and I think there is general agreement now that both the water department and the liquor department are well organized, and capable of carrying out their assignments. They have been scandal-free and are doing good jobs, as far as I can tell. That was certainly the generally-held view of the liquor department, a few years after it was organized.

Morris: And the water department has by and large continued on the--?

Weinberger: Yes, they've made a few changes. We set up--first of all, the legislature is always very big on advisory committees because the governor gets a lot more appointments that way and so on. So we had a citizens' water rights board, which was, as I recall it, a three-man board which had the authority to deal with disputed questions of water rights and allocations of water rights; that was quite separate from the department, and deliberately so, because we didn't want to have a quasi-judicial agency influenced by the executive agencies.

So that ran along a separate track, just as we had an alcoholic beverage appeals board in the other initiative.

Morris: There had been a pre-existing water quality board. What happened to that in the reorganization?

Weinberger: The water quality boards, I believe, were all left as such. That was a great mistake. But again, they had a lot of strong local support. I think there were something like twelve of them and a state one. They all had quite divided functions and jurisdiction. They were supposed to issue permits or stop pollution of local water areas.

Morris: Industrial--?

Weinberger: Industrial waste and that kind of thing. Some of them were felt to be not very effective, and some of them were felt to be causes of pollution and other things. But they fought very strongly against being abolished, and, as a matter of fact, they were ultimately left substantially alone. It was part of the price of getting that bill through. They fought very hard and they're still in existence.
Morris: Why did you feel it was a mistake?

Weinberger: I think they should have been consolidated. I think the department should have had responsibilities over water quality which is an integral part of the quantity of usable water available. I don't think you needed eleven or twelve regional boards. I think you just get confusion and conflicting rules, and it makes it much more difficult for the citizen to deal with or to get any kind of response out of, government.

Morris: In the legislative special session and working out the compromises, was pollution yet a concern?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, yes, very much so. These boards had been set up a few years earlier to try to deal with that problem, but always strong special interest groups were able to impose organizational patterns of their desires onto the legislature and onto the substance of a demonstration, because nobody was much concerned with that. If you had a water quality control board, there was a feeling you'd fulfilled your function of cleaning up the water, and it didn't matter if you put it into twelve regional bodies. That made them quite ineffective because of the lack of responsible, coordinated direction. I wanted to abolish them and put their function into the water department, because I felt it was a logical portion of the water department's duties.

We were unable to get that, and part of the problem, I think, was that industry was afraid of any major change in the group's administering the pollution control laws.

Morris: I think you're right, and it sets a kind of a pattern for other environmental organizations in the later years. Were there other compromises that had to be made?

Weinberger: Oh, I'm sure. We failed to abolish one other group, or we agreed to exempt it from the department. But I don't think of anything major at the moment. The concessions that I made, just as in the liquor thing, were ones that I didn't think materially or seriously weakened the basic idea of a unified department with sufficient authority and powers, and elimination of enough duplication to do the job. And I think we got that.

Morris: How about the protection of the water for the counties of origin?

Weinberger: What we had to do was to get some kind of a formula that would protect those counties, and the ultimate formula was not finally accepted until the Brown administration some years later. But the basic idea was that there was a surplus of water in the north; that it was causing a lot of floods and other problems
Weinberger: and that there should be flood control as part of this project; and that there should be some protection for the counties of origin, so that if they grew at an unexpectedly rapid rate, they would still have enough water left for that purpose.

It was clearly a situation that could be compromised and ultimately was, but the water department and the decision to proceed on the water department plan had to come before that.

Morris: What about what one reads subsequently, that more northern water has been promised by various contracts that now exist than there is water in the north?

Weinberger: I haven't heard that, but I'm sure there were a lot of wild promises made, and there probably will have to be some attempts later to develop more water in the north and also to bring more water down from Oregon and Washington. That was foreseen at the beginning.

Morris: How did you feel as an individual? Did you feel akin to the concerns of the north or the needs in the south?

Weinberger: I felt the concerns of the north were very well served by the recognition that they had not only surplus water but surplus water which caused major floods and that they would be greatly benefited by having some of the surplus water transported south and getting some flood control measures along with it. I knew the south needed it, and so I was very much in favor of transferring it. I didn't just want to grab it or steal it or anything, and I didn't want to leave them with nothing, but I thought a lot of the northern demands were illogical and not really supportable.

Ultimately, I think what was worked out protected both parts of the state.

Bond Funding and Tidelands Oil Revenues

Morris: The funding of it is something that is also of interest to researchers. At one point, Governor Knight—again, in one of his speeches to the legislature, asked the legislature to come up with a plan for financing this gigantic construction.

Weinberger: There were bonds—there were state bonds. They were voted by the people and there was some local funding. There were some contracts for water—there were some revenues that were dedicated to it—things of that kind. It was well within the financial ability of the state to finance, and it was financed.
Morris: What role did the tidelands oil revenues play in it? Were they a major source of funds or controversy?

Weinberger: Yes. There was a good amount of money that was built up there. Again there was a problem, because there was a feeling on the part of a lot of cities and counties that they should have that for recreational or other purposes. But some of that money ultimately was used for the water project.

Morris: Yes, I think this is one of the things that is unclear—whether it was all dedicated to the water project or whether some of it stayed for beaches and parks.

Weinberger: Probably there was a compromise to leave some of it for those purposes, but I believe some of it was used for the water project.

Morris: Was that a major debate in the legislature?

Weinberger: No, not really, at that time. The debate with which I was most familiar was the formation of the department. Now after that, they had very strident debates for the protection of the counties of origin, and on the financing—and those were mostly in the Brown administration.

Morris: There were some questions about the tidelands oil leases in general and some questions about the way that was handled by the State Lands Commission.

Weinberger: About leases?

Morris: Yes. That the State Lands Commission was not necessarily getting the best deal for the State of California.

Weinberger: I don't know what that would have been. These were the leases of the rights of way for the water project?

Morris: No, this is on the tidelands oil. The state got the revenues from that in return for leases.

Weinberger: I'm not specifically familiar with it, but it wouldn't be surprising that there was criticism. There were, I'm sure, a lot of people who either didn't want anything leased, or any oil drilling, or who wanted more revenues, but I don't have any specific memory of any major argument or dispute about that.
Morris: There are a number of commissions that seem to have a fair amount of regulatory power, like the State Lands Commission. The controller sits on some, the treasurer sits on some, the Director of Finance sits on a lot of them. To somebody not in government, it looks like those boards have quite a large amount of power in terms of resources and decisions involving large sums of money. Does the legislature have any kind of overview? [brief interruption as Mr. Weinberger answers intercom buzzer. Tape resumes]

Morris: Why don't we finish up for today with my question on the State Lands Commission?

Weinberger: The State Lands Commission did have authority over state leases. I'm sure that there was a lot of opposition to leasing some of the tidelands. I'm sure there were feelings that they could have obtained more money. But I don't really know of any specific charge one way or the other. There was a lot of feeling, of course, when the Santa Barbara oil spill came along that there shouldn't be any leasing. This deprived the state of revenues. After a while, when I was on the Lands Commission, we began to ask whether or not the conditions for granting the permit couldn't carry sufficient safeguards to prevent another spill and so forth.

But I don't recall--certainly not at that period or indeed at any time--any particular problem. I was not on the Lands Commission, of course, at that time. I became a member of the Lands Commission ex officio when I was finance director.

At that time, we had long meetings and a long agenda, and staff recommendations, and sometimes hearings because people would object to this, that, or the other. But generally, the staff recommendations were pretty well followed, and some good leasing revenue was produced. A lot of this was unproven land. There wasn't any proof that there were oil reserves there. There was a lot of high hope for it.

Morris: So that some of it was speculation?

Weinberger: Yes, and would have required a substantial investment and probability of dry holes. The Baltimore Canyon had several dry holes in the East, although that was leased from the federal government for a very large amount.
Morris: The other half of the question was, in general, did the legislature have any kind of oversight over the State Lands Commission?

Weinberger: Not specifically. I'm sure they could have initiated a proposal to take the leasing powers away from the Lands Commission, or they could have tried to set up some sort of guidelines, but I don't believe they did very much of that during those years. I don't have any memory of it.

Most of the objections or criticism would be directed at the Lands Commission itself or the governor.

Morris: Yes. And you mentioned staff work, so that primarily the detail work is done by staff.

Weinberger: Well, the application for the lease would come in, and the state would look it all over, and get some appraisals, and decide what would be a fair rental, and see if the applicant was willing to sign a lease. Then, ultimately, that would be presented as one of a number of proposed leases to the commission, and there would be opportunity for people who objected to say what they want to do, and the commission would then vote.

Many of them were not controversial; many of them, there were no objections to. But the detailed work, the appraisals, the allocation of the lands, the qualifications of the applicants, all of those things were sort of vetted for us by the staff. I think a man named [F.J.] Hortig was the secretary and chief of staff of the Lands Commission when I was a member.

Morris: He'd be a career government employee?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, very much so. He made a complete career of it.

Those fellows, necessarily, got quite independent and you couldn't do very much about dismissing them. They had all full tenure and all of that. For example, the head of the Franchise Tax Board is a man who could only be dismissed by the senate—or some such silly provision as that. That has now been changed. The staff should not be independent of the commission. Then the staff is responsible to no one.

There was no real responsibility to the governor on any of these, and that's one of the things I was always trying to do was to bring some direct responsibilities to all these boards.

Morris: With some kind of accountability?

Weinberger: Yes.
Initially, the idea was that the independent staff freed them from all kinds of political pressures and the spoils system and all of that, but the way that it usually worked was that the staffs were so far freed from political pressure that nobody could do anything to them at all. They had a totally independent kind of orbit, and were not subject to public opinion or public control.

That's an interesting effect of the civil service.

And the Highway Commission! The original justification of the Highway Commission was this fine expert body of people would be above all of this grubbing around that the legislature did, bargaining over routes. So you ended up with five people who were total dictators of a very large amount of state activity. They had their own taxation: the highway money went directly to them, and they had the right of eminent domain. They could condemn and they set routes. They didn't even have to hold hearings. So they really were completely independent of political pressures.

Did you ever raise the question about the Highway Commission?

Oh yes, many times! I was always after the Highway Commission. I wanted to abolish the whole thing, including the special fund and everything, and put it right back into a department headed by the governor, so that you would have a person whom the governor appointed who was in charge of this. If he didn't perform well and there was criticism, the criticism would come to the governor's office, and the governor, as an elected official, would do something about it. And I wanted them to have to justify their budget request to the legislature each year.

You see, highway commissioners are appointed for seven-year terms. Their terms continues beyond the governor's, and they were completely independent. It was this old idea that you have to free everybody from political pressure. Political pressure is really nothing more nor less than public opinion getting to assert itself.

It's the opposite swing of the pendulum.

Surely. You can go too far both ways, of course, but your independent merit system, where you can't fire anybody, has an awful lot of flaws in it. All right.

This tape is just about done, and I know you have other--
1958 Primary Campaign Complications

Morris: I wanted to pick up today with 1958 and get the background to your election campaign that year. I wondered if, while you were in the legislature, you had spent much time on party matters and campaign matters?

Weinberger: I think everybody in the legislature and assembly was more or less running for reelection most of the time, with a two-year term. That's almost inevitable. In my own district I was very fortunate because I had been reelected twice without opposition. But as we got closer to '58, I began to consider state office and spent a certain amount of additional time, then, on politics.

The legislative work came first. I remember some extreme frustrations at having to cancel and miss political meetings in the spring of '58 because of the long deadlock on budget. I think we went through three conference committees that time, and I was on the Ways and Means Committee and felt I could not get away from Sacramento because of that long budget deadlock. Also there were other matters that were of major importance that year, too.

Party matters—well, a fair amount of time in spent on party matters, mostly at conventions and state committee meetings, things of that kind.

Morris: Somewhere you commented that you thought that Mr. Caldecott should have been governor. I wonder if that was a personal feeling or if he had, indeed, had any thought of running for governor?
Weinberger: I don't know if he did or not. It was a personal feeling. He was a very able legislator, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. He was an extremely effective legislator, and well-liked by all the people who knew him there. I thought he would have made an excellent governor. He knew a great deal about state government.

Morris: But as far as you know, there was no effort--?

Weinberger: I don't think there was ever--no, you see the gubernatorial race was initially an incumbent running for reelection, Knight. Caldecott was basically a supporter of Knight. Then in 1958 Knowland switched and decided he was going to run for governor. Caldecott and his family had been supporters of Knowland for many years. So I don't think there was ever any suggestion that anyone else run for governor, really, Caldecott or anyone else.

We had one too many running for governor. That was one of the problems. [laughter] But Caldecott would have made a fine governor.

Morris: Did you make your decision on running for attorney general before Knowland announced his candidacy for governor?

Weinberger: Oh yes, yes. I made that decision long before that. Perhaps if that had been known to me at that time, I wouldn't have made it, but I decided to run for attorney general in the fall of '57. At that time, Knowland was going to run for Senate and seemed an easy winner. Knight was going to run for reelection for governor and expected to win. I was going to try to be attorney general. There wasn't significant party opposition at that time.

Morris: Opposition--

Weinberger: --within the party.

Morris: To your running?

Weinberger: There weren't any other announced candidates.

Morris: For attorney general.

Weinberger: For attorney general at that time. There was some suggestion that Knowland might not run for Senate and that Hillings, the congressman, was going to run for the Senate. I believe Knowland had indicated that he was not going to run for reelection.
Weinberger: Later on in the fall, he had made it clear he wasn't going to run for the Senate again. At that time, Hillings got interested in the Senate. Then of course, when the big switch came, and Knowland decided he was going to run for governor, Knight, after a lot of anguish and consideration, decided that he would back out of the gubernatorial race and would run for the Senate seat. Hillings, on hearing that, decided he wouldn't run against Knight, but would run against me for attorney general.

All of these switches came shortly before filing time and long after I had announced and long after I had been out securing support and trying to get some funds together.

Morris: Had you talked with Goodwin Knight or Bill Knowland or Pat Hillings about your candidacy?

Weinberger: Generally, oh, yes. Hillings agreed orally with me to support my race for attorney general when he was going to run for the Senate. He made his decision to run for the Senate before the time that Knight indicated that he would run for the Senate.

Knowland made speeches in the state in the fall of '57 in which he first said, as I recall, that he wasn't going to run for Senate. Hillings said he was going to run for Senate, and told me he was going to support me. Then after Knowland said he was going to run for governor, the assumption was that Knight would stay in and run against him for governor.

Morris: In the primary.

Weinberger: In the primary, yes. Then as we got closer and closer to filing, why, Knight got less and less interested in a face-up contest, and eventually switched and said he was going to run for the Senate seat and leave the governorship to Knowland. Hillings then switched and said he was going to run for attorney general. I was the only one who did not switch.

Morris: You stayed where you had started out.

Weinberger: I stayed in the race because I thought I had made my commitment and had secured commitments, support from friends, and so I stayed in it. And lost it because, of course, the heavy Republican vote was in Los Angeles County. The Republican County Central Committee in Los Angeles County mailed out a million pieces of Hillings literature and tied him to Knight and Knowland as a ticket, and we didn't have the funds to compete with that. We had less than $50,000 for the whole race.

Morris: Would that be mostly Northern California?
Weinberger: We tried to put as much all over the state as we could, but it was not enough to cover the state. Our campaign efforts in Southern California were really blanketed out by massive county central committee mailing.

Morris: In the primary.

Weinberger: In the primary.

Morris: Is that usual?

Weinberger: No. It was also of doubtful legality. [laughter]

Morris: In the primary, technically the county central committee is supposed to stay out of it.

Weinberger: That's right. They're supposed to stay out of it. That's correct.

Morris: Was there anything that you could do to try and stop that?

Weinberger: No. The mailing was already out. I don't think court actions are very effective. You couldn't really very well block a mailing or anything of that kind. I'm not sure it was illegal, but it certainly was not customary.

Morris: I'm interested that you stayed active in the party after--

Weinberger: Oh, yes. Well, my commitment to the party's principles was very strong, and I did stay active in the party. Shortly after that, Senator Knowland called after the primary when I was taking a position on the state committee; I think he wanted me to be secretary of the state committee or something and also work for him. I told him I would.

Then I moved up from secretary to vice-chairman to chairman, over the years, of the state committee. But by that time, that's all I was doing in politics; although that was a fair amount, of course. But I was practicing law at the same time.

Morris: Where was Richard Nixon in all this shifting around in 1958?

Weinberger: Hillings always claimed that Richard Nixon was solidly with him. Richard Nixon said he was neutral. It wasn't entirely clear whether he was or not. Hillings used his name constantly, and would always open his campaign speeches with a statement that he had just come from a meeting with Dick and things like that, that were all designed to convey the impression that he was supported by Nixon. Nixon was officially neutral in most of these races.
Morris: There's some thought that he was instrumental in convincing Knowland to run for governor.

Weinberger: I would be surprised at that. I don't think he was instrumental in it. I think Knowland made up his own mind to run for governor. I think Nixon may have helped switch Knight so that there would be not a contested primary in those races. Hillings always claimed that he promised Hillings support and that's how Hillings got in. Hillings used his name frequently and there was some speculation that the Los Angeles County Committee support of Hillings was traceable back to Nixon's request. But I didn't have any evidence.

1956 National Convention: Nixon and Knight

Morris: We've also gotten a couple of comments that Mr. Knight, in 1956, had a very serious interest in replacing Mr. Nixon as vice-presidential candidate.

Weinberger: Oh, he did! Yes, yes. He was the California labor choice for vice-president. There was no love lost at all between Nixon and Knight. In the state committee meetings, there were Nixon people and Knight people and Knowland people.

The delegation to the 1956 convention was split three ways with Nixon getting one-third, Knowland one-third, Knight one-third of the delegates. That was an official agreement that was worked out to try to preserve some facade of party unity, which worked at that time.

But Knight tried very hard to displace Nixon from the vice-presidential renomination and made no progress whatever. He had California labor people's support for that. They were trying to help him do that.

Morris: How strong--

Weinberger: Stassen was also trying to replace Nixon in 1956 as the vice-president, but these were just token oppositions as far as the national party was concerned.

Eisenhower wanted Nixon renominated and that was all there was to it.

Morris: Were you a delegate to that convention?
Weinberger: I was a delegate to that '56 convention, yes.

Morris: Which of the third were you--

Weinberger: I think I was officially--I went as an alternate, though I can't remember if I voted at the convention. I was officially there as a Knight delegate but I was not pledged to Knight's vice-presidential ambitions and voted for Nixon, if I voted at all. I can't remember whether I was an alternate delegate or a delegate, but one way or another, I was at the convention.

Morris: How much of a factor was labor in the California Republican party?

Weinberger: Very little. There were two or three labor lobbyists who were very close to Knight after he became governor. Harry Finks and one or two others. Knight was very partial to them and always believed that they would be very helpful to him in winning elections. But they weren't, really, because the ultimate labor endorsement nearly always goes to a Democrat even if a Republican has been basically fairly friendly to labor.

But Warren had received a lot of labor support and Knight, I think, was trying to emulate that, although he had criticized Warren heavily for taking labor support and for being too liberal when Warren was governor.

Morris: We've had Mr. Finks' name mentioned several times. I wonder if you recall who the other labor people were?

Weinberger: No. There were two or three other labor leaders. I didn't really know them very well, but I know Harry Finks was very active in supporting Knight personally, and I think, persuaded Knight that with labor support, Knight might make quite a credible showing against Nixon in the vice-presidential thing.

Breaking the California delegation down three ways was designed to prevent a primary fight and designed to send a delegation, if not unified, at least one that didn't split the party by a long primary fight. Otherwise, there would have been a Knight delegation and a Knowland delegation, and a Nixon delegation.

Morris: What was the basis of their differences?

Weinberger: Personal ambition, mostly. But Knight was viewed as much more liberal by that time than the others. That was a surprise because Knight had been elected as a conservative response to
Weinberger: the liberal Earl Warren. But he switched while he was in office and became more and more friendly with Finks, and his basic policies moved somewhat more to the left.

Knowland was very conservative. Knight was heavily against the right-to-work initiative. Knowland was strongly for right-to-work. Nixon was concerned primarily with foreign matters and national matters and was sort of aloof from the whole thing except that he wanted to keep his strong base in California.

Morris: Were Nixon and Knowland allied at all?

Weinberger: Not really. No. But if there had been any philosophic labor issue, they probably would have come somewhat closer together.

Morris: Was right-to-work an important issue in 1956?

Weinberger: No, it was a philosophy at that time. It became very important in '58. Knowland formally espoused it in '58 and Knight had opposed it right along. It was a major issue in '58 and a fatal one for the party because it brought out a huge labor, anti-Republican vote that otherwise would not have been there.

Morris: Was it a factor in your race with Mr. Hillings in the primary?

Weinberger: Only insofar as the party was so weakened, generally, by it. The race with Hillings was mostly decided on geography. That was not an issue in the race, really, at all. There was more of a personal note--more of the fact that he was from Los Angeles and I was from the north, and the vote was in Los Angeles. That's the way it seemed to be.

Then, too, whatever credence anybody gave to his claim of Nixon's support may have been a factor.

Morris: Again, more strongly affecting voters in the south than in Northern California?

Weinberger: Yes, presumably.

Statewide Concerns

Morris: Could I go back just a minute and ask how you go about developing a statewide organization for an election campaign?

Weinberger: I can't answer that. I never did. [laughs]
Weinberger: You just try to get people in various counties to agree to serve as your committee there and to recruit others, a treasurer to raise funds, and try to get as much newspaper support as possible, and interest people professionally to organize it, and get the billboards up, and all of that. It's a major undertaking and one of the problems was, I think, we didn't have any really full-time people at it. We tried to do it all part-time when I was in the legislature and didn't have the funds.

You really need a very large amount of money, and a large amount of money was spent, for those times, on behalf of Hillings and later on, on behalf of Mosk, to get the Democratic nomination.

Morris: Did Mosk have major opposition?

Weinberger: Yes, he had a fellow named [Robert] McCarthy from San Francisco running against him, and a couple of others. But Mosk, again, was the heavily financed Southern California candidate, which put him in the same position as Hillings. Then in the final, of course, he defeated Hillings decisively with a huge margin.

Morris: Would that have been because Brown was also winning heavily?

Weinberger: Well, the state is basically about 60-40 registered Democrat, and with a Republican split, why, it was automatic that our party would lose in the fall. There was no question about that. The only way we win is when we are unified and have candidates who can attract about eighty percent of our own vote and about twenty-five percent of the Democratic vote. When we can do that, we can always win, but when we have the kind of conditions we had in '58, we can't possibly win.

Morris: Were there some specific things that you were interested in doing as attorney general?

Weinberger: Yes, I thought we could generally improve the quality of the personnel in the office, I thought we could improve the relationship with county law enforcement and with federal law enforcement. I thought we could do more about narcotic law enforcement, and that the attorney general, by reason of his membership on a number of statewide committees, could have an active role in the general policy formation of the state, particularly water policy. Those were primarily the things that we talked about.

Morris: Was it your experience working on alcoholic beverage reform and reorganization that got you interested in a statewide position?

Weinberger: I think probably, yes. Also the attorney general had quite a role to play on the water question, both in the opinions given and in his membership on a number of state boards. I had been
Weinberger: very interested in water, water department reorganization. It was also a natural, I think, interest for an attorney that was interested in state government. It was kind of a natural place for both of those interests to come together.

Morris: Had you gotten, what, bored or overly familiar with the legislature?

Weinberger: No. I just thought that six years was probably about right and that one should move on to other things. I enjoyed the legislature thoroughly, I had a lot of fun with it, but I didn't want to spend a lifetime as an assemblyman. I was, I think, ambitious for additional duties and responsibilities, and the attorney general seemed a very logical kind of outlet for that.

Morris: And you were prepared to spend full time in government.

Weinberger: Yes. At that time. I had not been before but was at that time, and I would have been really quite relieved to do it because trying to divide yourself into all of the different pockets is very difficult when you are practicing law, running for office, and trying to be a legislator.

Morris: I can believe that.

Weinberger: When I got to be finance director later, much later on, why, I enjoyed it thoroughly and perhaps all the more because for the first time in my life, I was only doing one thing, and that was a very enjoyable thing, a very big job and all. When I moved from law to full-time government, I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Morris: You said it was Mr. Knowland who asked you if you would take a job in the state--

Weinberger: State committee. He was the candidate for governor and he also wanted me to help in his campaign, which I of course agreed to do.

Morris: Did all the shift around in the primary have any lasting effect on the Republican party per se?

Weinberger: I think not really a lasting effect. A lot of people thought that it had crippled the party permanently, but this was in 1958, and in 1960 we carried the state for Nixon, although by a small margin. We did not carry the legislature and have not since held the legislature.

I think there were some scars, certainly. I think it was inevitable. But we were still able to win statewide races. When Governor Reagan came along, why, the party was greatly strengthened by his work, by the unity that he was able to inspire and the strength that he was able to bring to it.
Selection as Vice-Chairman and Chairman

Morris: Did you have to run for the job of secretary of the state central committee?

Weinberger: Well, no, theoretically. What normally happens is that some of the leadership people will try to get together on a slate. The chairman is nearly always the vice-chairman of the year before. Then there are sometimes contests for the vice-chairmanships, but usually the other positions aren't contested.

I don't remember that year whether there was a contest or not. In any event, I became secretary. Then when I became vice-chairman, there was a big struggle. At that time, a number of people were interested in the office. I think some of the Goldwater people at that time were supporting various candidates. I was not allied with any presidential candidate in 1960. That's why I became vice-chairman. Then in '62, I became chairman with only more or less scattered opposition.

The big struggle was in '60 when I became vice-chairman.

Morris: There are a couple of times when, according to newspaper clippings, Joe Shell, or supporters of Joe Shell, were challenging you.

Weinberger: That's correct. And he was trying to be the gubernatorial nominee.

I knew Shell very well; liked him, but I did not support him for governor in 1962. Shell ran against Nixon for the nomination. When I was vice-chairman, primarily it seemed to me it was the Goldwater group that was opposing and supporting another candidate. Chap named Christina, as I recall it.

Morris: Christina?

Weinberger: Yes. He was from San Jose.
Weinberger: The vice-chairmanship rotated. When the chairman was from Northern California, the vice-chairman would be from Southern California. I was being elected as vice-chairman from Northern California. Then in two years the chairman would be in Northern California and, in the normal course, the vice-chairman would be in Southern California. And that's the way it worked.

There was some opposition to me in '62, but there was a lot of opposition to my initial election as vice-chairman in '60.

Morris: What was the opposition?

Weinberger: I think I was considered not sufficiently aligned with the Goldwater people. I was not supporting Goldwater. They were trying to get control of all of the party organizations.

Morris: Four years before Mr. Goldwater was going to run for president?

Weinberger: It was the elements which later supported him in '64. I think basically it was probably more or less of the liberal-conservative split, but there are always people who had personality differences and all of that. I don't remember specifically who the backers of Christina were, but basically they were the Goldwater people who preferred him over me.

The Goldwater campaign came into the open in '62, but we won in '60, by a pretty good margin.

I'll tell you one person who was against me was Governor Knight, at that time former Governor Knight. And Senator [Richard J.] Dolwig. They were all people who had, I guess, in one way or another made up their minds as to who should be the vice-chairman. I had calls from a lot of assemblymen, friends of mine, colleagues of mine—who had been colleagues and wanted me to run for it. I, rather late in the game, agreed to do so, and got enough support to win.

Morris: So that for the vice-chairmanship, there is a lot of interest and there is--?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, because in the normal course, he succeeds to be the chairman in two years—at that time.

Morris: How did you go about insuring that you got the election for vice-chairman?

Weinberger: I guess mostly it was—I didn't particularly want it or even want to run for it because I was back then practicing law and trying to pay off the campaign debts, and all the rest. But it was
mostly a group of people I'd served with in the assembly who were not satisfied with the choice that the so-called leadership had made, and who wanted me to run. I finally did agree to run.

Was Christina the choice of the leadership?

Yes, yes. As I recall it. He was a party person from San Jose. I think he had a trucking company or something. Perfectly nice fellow.

We've got a little chart here of who was on the state central committee and his name doesn't appear.

No. He didn't win.

He didn't win but he had been active--?

He'd been on the county committee.

Let's see. When you were state secretary, George Milias was chairman.

Yes.

And John Krehbiel was vice-chairman.

That's right. And then John Krehbiel became chairman and John Krehbiel was also basically supporting this other group. We had quite a division. I think it was sort of a maverick kind of win because the designated people were Christina, Krehbiel, and so on. Krehbiel won but Christina did not. We had quite a struggle. I've forgotten what the vote was. It was a fairly close vote.

How many vote on state central committee officers?

I think they had around four hundred people voting on that. It's a good-sized committee. It's a big committee.

Who in the assembly were not comfortable with the designated choices?

Well, let's see. Jack Beaver [San Bernardino] was one of the ones who called me at that time, and a number of others. John McCarthy was the senator from--Jack McCarthy from Marin. There were a lot of the people with whom I've served. I believe Caldecott--maybe he was a judge then. But quite a few of the people with whom I had served and people with whom I campaigned and all were for me.
Weinberger: I remember I had a meeting early in the morning with Dolwig and Knight. They asked me to come in and told me that they had the votes to defeat me, and they thought I should withdraw. I said if they had the votes to defeat me, they would not have to waste their time having this kind of meeting. [laughter] That I didn't think they had and so I would go to a roll call because I didn't really care too much one way or the other, but I promised my friends who had asked me to run that I would stay in. I did have some congressional support too. Charles Cubser, congressman from Santa Clara County and three or four other congressmen, and quite a few assemblymen.

Morris: Joe Martin was national committeeman and Pat Hitt was national committeewoman. Did they get involved in this campaign?

Weinberger: Yes. They were both for me.

Morris: Were they some of the people who encouraged you?

Weinberger: Yes, they were indeed.

Martin later resigned as national chairman because he wanted to support Rockefeller before the primary, and that was the honorable way to do it.

Morris: So that he wouldn't be chairman and also working for a candidate?

Weinberger: So he wouldn't be a national committeeman and working for one of the candidates before the primary, yes. Pat Hitt was one of the original supporters of Nixon, from Orange County, and she was supported by Bob Finch from Los Angeles and later became an officer in HEW under Bob Finch. She'd been very active in party matters for a long time. She was very active and very effective.

Women in the Party

Morris: I wondered, from your point of view as a party official, what kinds of strengths and weaknesses there were in women in political activities?

Weinberger: Oh, almost all the strength of the Republican party was in the women's organizations. They were the ones who worked. The men talked a lot, the women got out and really worked in the precincts and did the telephoning. The Federated Republican Women's Clubs were enormously effective.

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Morris: You were speaking of women doing the leg work.

Weinberger: Well, in all kinds of work. In getting out the vote, in doing the telephoning, in precinct work, and in many organizational jobs. They held a lot of meetings, they attracted new members to their own clubs, and they strengthened the party in every way. They were one of our great major secret assets, so to speak, because I think without the strength and organization of the women's groups, the Republican party would never have been able to win as many races as it did.

We were a smaller party, but we managed to win a great deal. I always attributed a large part of it to the effectiveness of the women's organizations.

Morris: What about as candidates?

Weinberger: We didn't have as many women candidates as we would have liked. There were not very many Republican women candidates for the assembly and only one for the senate in recent times—up to that time; that was Mildred Younger. But we should have had more candidates. They didn't run for one reason or another. There were some Democratic members of the assembly, but not nearly—I can't remember any Republican members of the assembly during the time I was there.

Morris: Were there any efforts by either the county committees or the state committees to recruit women into leadership?

Weinberger: I don't think sufficient efforts. There wasn't all that much pressure for it, really. But it probably would have been a lot better if we had made special efforts to get women candidates. They were certainly good campaigners. But again, the state and county committees didn't make much effort to get candidates of any kind. They tried to elect the candidates that were nominated in the primaries, and those candidates usually appeared voluntarily, sort of independently. I was always pressing the county committee here to make a conscious effort to go out and find candidates, but the pattern in California is the other way.

The party reacts to the primaries. It didn't act to get people in very much—men or women.

Morris: In other words, the party sort of keeps its ears open to see who is available or able.
Special Elections

Weinberger: Yes. The party is kind of a misnomer. The county committees and state committees really aren't all that powerful. They're sort of bodies that follow along afterwards. Once the primary results are in, why then, if they're good committees, well-organized committees, well-led committees, they will help try to win elections. The state committee is particularly active in by-elections [special elections].

When I was vice-chairman and chairman, I think we won every by-election practically and made substantial gains that way. We were able to put all the strength of the committee into one race and were successful sometimes in keeping more than one Republican out of the race by persuading them not to run.

There's nothing comparable to the Eastern parties here. There the party structure is pretty well able to say who will run and who won't. That is not true now.

Morris: But when you were vice-chairman and chairman, you were trying to do some of this?

Weinberger: Trying to. In the by-elections, we were trying to make sure that we didn't divide or split too much. Obviously in the final analysis, you can't do anything. You can just try and persuade people that it would be better to have one person who appears to have the lead or appears to be more qualified to get in or stay in the race, and others not to. But it's just a very informal kind of procedure.

The real decision is always made by the individuals, not by the party. Because there isn't any one party. The party is not a monolithic thing in California. There's a whole raft of volunteer organizations and a whole raft of official state organizations, but there isn't any unifying factor except so far as the leadership can try and secure it.

That's where Reagan was very good. Governor Reagan was excellent at that. We tried to do as much of that as we could.

Morris: You said you had good success with by-elections.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: Is this the California Plan?
Weinberger: No, these were elections where there were vacancies for one reason or another, and instead of having forty seats up at once, or eighty seats up at once, why, we had only seat. So you could get people—we had three or four of these in which you could get precinct workers from many counties—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Alameda, and they'd all go into one district. We'd take them down by bus or by special plane, and they'd go in and just fan out through the district and ring doorbells, and telephone people, and all of that. So that we had a large army of volunteer precinct workers in each special election. Because you were able to concentrate all of your forces in one district, you were able to be much more effective.

Morris: Was this something that you instituted?

Weinberger: I certainly was active in it. I don't know if I began it or not, but I was active in it.

Morris: Did you have a special group of people in charge of special elections?

Weinberger: We had committees that worked on that. The committee staff or the state committee worked on it, of course, too. But we made an effort and a very successful effort. Later I think the Democrats began imitating it. We had substantial success with the by-election results.

The California Plan

Morris: Where did the California Plan come in?

Weinberger: The California Plan was an idea that some people in Southern California—San Diego and Los Angeles had originated and sold it to [Gaylord] Parkinson, who was elected as vice-chairman when I was elected chairman. It essentially was a plan to look over the previous year's election results and see where the Republicans had come closest but had not won, or where there were other factors that made the race look very close or promising, and to concentrate the available resources into those districts and to do that on a six-year basis so that each two years, we would try to pick up more seats. It had substantial success because it was basically a good idea to concentrate your resources into the most promising districts.
Morris: Is it the vice-chairman's job to keep an eye on special elections and details like that?

Weinberger: No. The vice-chairman is pretty independent and does pretty much what he feels is desirable, and the chairman generally gives overall direction and leadership to the party. But I was very interested in the California Plan and spent a lot of time at it and, I think, had something to do with it.

Morris: How did Spencer-Roberts happen to be selected to work on the California Plan?

Weinberger: Mostly because the people who were going to pay them felt they would be good ones to do it. I suspect that earlier than that, they had in turn sold themselves to the people who were going to pay them. It became a state committee effort, but it was a state committee effort that was financed by a number of contributors who, in turn said that they wanted Spencer-Roberts to be the professionals to try to work at it full time. The state committee staff was pretty small at that time.

Morris: Who were the people who contributed to this?

Weinberger: There were a lot of contributors, people who had contributed in the past to the party, people who later backed Governor Reagan and backed Knight and Knowland. I don't know their names, all of them, but there were fifteen to thirty people.

Morris: Were they regular contributors to the Republican party?

Weinberger: Yes. They weren't factionalists, so to speak. They were people who wanted to have basically Republican principles, have more representation in the legislature and the executive chairs. It was a party-strengthening thing.

Morris: I'm interested that a relatively new firm like Spencer-Roberts would be chosen as opposed to Whitaker & Baxter, who had been active as a Republican campaign-management firm since the 1940s.

Weinberger: I don't know that Spencer-Roberts was all that new. They'd been around quite a while.

Morris: They started around 1960. Mr. Spencer and Mr. Roberts had been active in the party earlier.

Weinberger: Yes. I suppose they had in their individual capacities. I've forgotten just when they formed a firm, but in 1960, I guess they did some work for Nixon. They had one notable victory.
Weinberger: And they got quite a lot of publicity as a result of that. I think they'd been active in one or two of the special elections. They had obtained quite a bit of publicity or notoriety or whatever it is, because this one candidate they supported won. I think they were felt to be effective and young and vigorous, and sold themselves to some contributors and perhaps devised this plan. I think they probably had a fair amount to do with devising the plan.

Morris: Were Whitaker & Baxter considered at all?

Weinberger: I have no idea. I don't remember. They did a number of jobs for the individual party candidates. The state committee, you see, rarely employed any public relations people. They didn't have any money. If the state committee had any money, they used it to hire their own staff. That's why I say this effort originated, not with Parkinson or anybody, but with people who--I suppose some business people were involved, and others who wanted a better representation of their viewpoint in the legislature, and who employed Spencer-Roberts to work out this plan, and ultimately, to get it adopted.

Morris: You said that Mr. Krehbiel largely represented other factions in the party.

Weinberger: He had broad support in the party. He was an insurance man in Southern California. He was strongly for Nixon. Most of the Southern California people were. He had general leadership backing of that. He'd been county chairman in Los Angeles, which was a normal progression.

Morris: From Los Angeles to the state central committee?

Weinberger: For the southern chairman, so to speak. There's a southern chairman and a northern chairman. After he was county chairman in Los Angeles, then he became the vice-chairman of the committee. I think that was with strong backing from the Nixon people and no particular opposition.

Morris: I wondered if since there'd been some opposition to your candidacy as vice-chairman, if that made any difficulties for you and Krehbiel working together.

Weinberger: No, not really. I liked John and worked well with him. I wasn't conscious of any difficulty. There's no reason for the vice-chairman to try to oust the chairman because he's going to be chairman shortly and there's no percentage in doing it anyway, because the job is not one of the best in the state. It's one of the worst, actually. [laughs]
Morris: I was thinking of it more in terms of the flow of things that you were trying to get done and personal viewpoints.

Weinberger: No, I think the relationship can be closer. That is to say, they could have much more frequent meetings or much more consultation, or less, depending on who the people are. But I had a perfectly correct relationship with John Krehbiel.

The headquarters of the committee was down south at that time, which is normal, and I was busy with a law practice in addition to trying to be vice-chairman, but I saw a good bit of him. We worked together well and, as far as I know, remained friends. I had no major differences with him. But you see, you don't get into very much of that. It's more of a mechanical kind of thing about running the meetings, keeping the party machinery going, and doing a few things in special elections, making speeches, working in the party committee meetings, and things like that.

Morris: But in general, you feel that the candidates are developed more by their own group of partisan supporters?

Weinberger: Or themselves. The party as a party, represented by the various committees, does very little in California. They pick up after the nominating primary is over. They react and they try to elect people who are nominated, but they don't do very much before.

Morris: In terms of developing candidates.

Weinberger: Oh, they do some. They run candidate forums. I don't think there's very much—I don't think it's nearly enough of a conscious effort—to develop people or put people into positions where they can have some visibility and some platforms from which to speak.

Morris: So that events sort of shape who the candidates are going to be. And then the party comes in.

Weinberger: Usually the candidates have their own campaign organization. Very few candidates rely on the county committee. They nearly always have their own campaign headquarters, their own campaign organization.

Earl Warren more or less started that. It's a tradition which has been pretty completely honored ever since. Every once in a while, you get an effort to have a slate and try to campaign as a group. Younger and Curb did it, substantially.
Weinberger: Governor Reagan did it because he was a very loyal party man and wanted to strengthen the party, so he could put his own campaign funds into the campaigns of others on the ticket to try to get the whole ticket elected.

Dealing with Extremist Viewpoints

Morris: While you and Krehbiel were chairman and vice-chairman, were you beginning to have concerns within the central committee about some of the extremist groups?

Weinberger: Yes, I always worried about them because they gave the party such a bad name and they circulated literature from time to time which was usually attacked as being libelous or scurrilous or something. I had a theory that the Democrats were planting it at our meetings, and I still think that was probably true.

There were extremist groups. They also would tie up the party with all kinds of silly resolutions and that was what the press particularly wanted to report so that we had trouble getting the proper impression around, in my opinion, of what we were trying to do.

I was worried about extremist viewpoints giving the party basically a bad name.

Morris: Was the John Birch Society--?

Weinberger: I can't remember the years but they began to emerge at this time, and they were regarded as very fanatical, and they were basically very much opposed by a large number of people. Nixon opposed them and I opposed them.

Morris: Would you say that their impact was greater than their number?

Weinberger: Oh, by far, yes. For a short time, for a few months, maybe a year, everybody was sort of terribly alarmed by them, the way people were terribly alarmed by Senator McCarthy, and were afraid they would be attacked by the Birch Society and that that would tar them for life, and so on. So there was a lot of cautious shuffling around and concern that they were going to be speaking for the party as a whole. But they were actually supported by a small group of very fanatical people.
They had a fair amount of money, so they got to be a lot more effective than they would have otherwise. They weren't just your ordinary, average, small group of noisy dissidents, they had a fair amount of money and a national organization. They worried people.

Nixon's opposition to them when he was running for governor in '62 was basically considered quite a courageous step because he was alienating a group that might otherwise have supported him. Shell, at that time, was either for them or not against them, and they basically backed [Joe] Shell. That division within the party was exacerbated during all those years. And they contributed to that.

Your feeling was that they backed Shell rather than that Shell really represented their point of view?

About half and half, I guess.

Half and half?

About half and half, yes.

Shell was against Nixon and Nixon was against the Birch Society, so it was natural that Shell would pick up and not reject Birch Society support.

Were there any specific reasons for Shell's opposition to Nixon?

I guess he wanted to be governor.

I mean any reasons other than personal ambition.

I don't think so.

How about the John Birch Society in relation to the Goldwater supporters?

It seems to me they were somewhat less important. They never were really important. They were given an importance way beyond their numbers. I don't think they ever numbered five thousand people in the state. I don't know. Maybe they did, but not much more than that.

But then, instead of more energy being directed into the Birch organization or anything, which wasn't all that attractive a program, why then they began to coalesce behind Goldwater with a lot of other people. The Goldwater organization was very strong and effective, and they got control of a number of the volunteer organizations in 1963, I guess it was, and 1964, and ultimately carried the state in a fairly close primary.
Morris: Why don't we stop there if you're short of time.

Weinberger: What about five, ten minutes more?

Morris: No, I think I've probably got about half an hour more, anyhow. There's Mr. Nixon's campaign for governor when you would have been chairman of the party. Then there's Mr. Reagan's campaign in '66. Our present study goes up to and includes the '66 campaign.

Weinberger: All right. We'll try to put together another time then and see what we can do.

Morris: Thank you.

[Interview 4: March 29, 1979]##

Weinberger: In the normal course, the vice chairman succeeded to the chairmanship and it moved north and south. If you had a northern vice-chairman, you had a southern chairman. If you had a southern chairman, you had a northern vice-chairman.

When Mr. John Krehbiel had been vice-chairman and elected without any particular opposition two years before, then he moved up in 1960, I guess it was.

Morris: Yes.

Weinberger: He moved up to be chairman and I was elected vice-chairman and there was a rather difficult struggle at that time. Various other candidates were put forward.

Then I succeeded to the chairmanship in 1962. On the move from vice-chairman to chairman, there was not significant opposition. There were probably a few people who would much rather it wasn't going to happen, but there wasn't any opposition candidate, as I recall it. And the vice-chairman who was elected at that time was Parkinson.

Morris: Right. Emily Pike recalled taking some leave from her job to work for your candidacy before the '62 state convention.

Weinberger: I was in Europe and there were a number of people who were concerned about it and who were going around trying to insure that the succession would be orderly and that there would be no major opposition to what ordinarily was a routine move from vice-chairman to chairman.
Weinberger: I think that it is perfectly correct to say that a lot of the work that was done probably prevented that happening, although I don't know whether it was contemplated or not. But what they did was to go around and try to get pledges and get things sewn up ahead of time, and they succeeded in doing that. So that when the matter came up on the floor in 1962, as I recall it, there was not significant opposition.

I recall primarily that I flew over from London, got into San Francisco about eight or so at night, and then drove up to Sacramento with Joe Martin and had about a thirty-six hour day, because as soon as I got to Sacramento that night, having flown from London, there were all kinds of meetings and caucuses and so on. I don't recall there was any major opposition on my move from vice-chairman to chairman, but maybe it was because Joe Martin and Emily Pike and various others, had worked around the various delegations and, in effect, convinced them that there shouldn't be any challenge mounted.

Morris: So that it would have been preliminary work before the state convention.

Weinberger: Yes, but there was always a basic undercurrent of opposition because the people, Goldwater people for example, who were interested in ultimate control of the party when he was going to run in two years and so forth, were convinced that I was going to be either too moderate or not with them, and so forth and so on. They wanted, and succeeded in getting, control of all the volunteer organizations between '62 and '64.

The only organization in the state of which they did not get control was the state committee. They were convinced that they wouldn't get it if I was chairman, so I think they would rather have not had me be chairman. They had made their big fight against me in '60. Basically, these were the very strongly conservative elements within the party.

It's sort of ironic because I always regarded myself as philosophically very conservative but not aligned with the rather fierce presentation of that viewpoint that seemed to accompany them. Then I wanted the party to win. I wanted the party to be strong and I wanted that much more than so-called ideological purity that they did.

We always used to say that there were a great many people in the party who would much rather pass a resolution than win an election. And I wanted to win elections.

Morris: Win elections.
Weinberger: Yes. Because I didn't think we could put our fine philosophy into effect unless we won elections. [chuckles]

Morris: In January of '63, there must have been some interim meetings of the state central committee.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: There are some Examiner newspaper reports that it was the John Birch Society that was opposing you.

Weinberger: Yes, they were very active then and I was against the John Birch Society.

Morris: Was that a separate effort from the Goldwater forces?

Weinberger: I think it was technically, yes, a separate thing. But I think many of the same people and the same basic philosophy were involved. But that was certainly there.

I had urged Nixon to run for governor and they opposed Nixon. I think they were backing Shell at that time. Both the gubernatorial and the presidential politics were wrapped up in the chairmanship. Basically what they wanted was control of the state committee and ability to make statements and raise money.

The state committee had very few powers, but one of them was that you couldn't raise money in the name of the Republican party unless the state committee formally gave its approval. So a lot of these organizations, particularly their professional staffs, wanted to raise money. That's how a lot of them make their livelihood. And they wanted to do it in the name of the Republican party. For that reason, and also because of the delegates to the national convention, and for other reasons, they wanted to get control of the state committee.

They did of the Republican Assembly and the Young Republicans and of the--what was the other one?

Morris: United Republicans?

Weinberger: You're right. United Republicans of California.

But they didn't get control of the state committee and they were convinced that they wouldn't if I was the chairman and they were right. I didn't want any organization to get control of what I wanted to be the umbrella organization of the party. I wanted to work to keep the party as a whole strong.
Seeking Winning Strategies

Weinberger: What I tried to do was to get everybody, all these elements—UROC and the Assembly and the League, and everyone, to pledge to support the nominees of the party—once the primary or the national convention was over, regardless of who they were. If it was Goldwater, fine. If it was Rockefeller, fine.

They didn't want that. They wanted to bolt the party if their particular candidate didn't win. They didn't want to have that kind of neutrality or non-ideological fervor, as they viewed it, or whatever. I wanted a good strong party and recognized that we had to have a lot of Democratic votes to win. That was basically the nature of the conflict.

And maybe there was personality. Maybe they didn't like me, I don't know. [laughs] You never know about that.

Morris: In '63, you also appointed a committee of the state central committee to discuss strategy against the Birch Society.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: What particular strategy did you come up with?

Weinberger: It wasn't so much that. It was more to discuss strategy of how we could win. I think it was more or less that. I don't think it was—it wasn't so much an anti-Birch Society committee, as I recall it. It was more just to discuss ways in which the Republican party could win.

Morris: Was there any sense in which compromises were made in order to—?

Weinberger: No, I don't think so. Not so much compromise. The solution I always proposed was that we take, in advance of any primary or any convention, a pledge that we would support the nominee of the party, whoever it might be, and that we then go, if they insisted on it, separate ways, until the primary or until the convention. And once the convention was over, then we would automatically be reunited because we would have pledged in advance to reunite. That was basically what I was trying to do.

Various groups, committees, and others that I appointed were all designed to try to secure those pledges in advance. It's very hard to get people to pledge to support a candidate after they fought him in a primary or a convention. It's very hard to run against anybody without learning to dislike them very strongly.
Weinberger: What I was trying to do was get these pledges in advance before the heat of the primary, before the heat of the convention, so that your reuniting would have been done ahead of time. That was essentially the policy I was trying to establish.

At the same time, we were trying to win all the special elections we could, and increase the strength of the permanent party organization and things like that. Fund-raising of course. But, no, there weren't any philosophical compromises or anything of that kind because there wasn't any either possibility or desirability of doing that with the Birch chaps. They were very fierce and they didn't want to have any—they would much rather pass resolutions, really, and do things like that—to demonstrate—

It was rather curious. They felt they had to demonstrate repeatedly their absolutely permanent attachment to the most extreme-right wing philosophy, whereas I always felt and still feel and describe myself as a conservative, politically and economically, but I didn't feel I had to put a large badge on that said "I am a conservative" and parade it around every day. And that's essentially what they seemed to do. Sort of a macho symbol, is that what we call it?

Morris: I don't know the proper pronunciation, but I recognize the term. It also, as you describe it, sounds like there's some similarity to what's called the confrontation politics of the left.

Weinberger: Oh, yes, if you weren't with me, you were against me. And if you were against me, you had to be crushed. And all of that. It was a fierce sort of philosophy. It was totally antithetical to anything that might have been described as a way to win. It wasn't a winning strategy—it wasn't designed to be.

They'd much rather lose with their ideological purity as they express it. [chuckles] They were quite frank about that.

Morris: In describing all these things you were responsible for as chairman, I wonder how much time did it actually take you.

Weinberger: It took a lot of time. And it took much more time than it should because I was practicing law and I wasn't on any kind of leave of absence or anything. I was trying to fit it in on weekends, nights, and holidays as usual. Generally, it was another of what my wife called my "many nonprofit activities" and it was a very time-consuming thing.
Weinberger: I always remember—I don't recall if I told you about it in an earlier meeting or not, but I went up north and made a long, long drive, starting about five and got there about 8:30, to some very remote area up in the mountains, Shasta County or Alpine County or something, too late for dinner but in time to make the speech.

While I was being introduced, one of the people introducing me at the meeting was thanking me for coming and making the long drive up. A woman sitting next to my wife, who didn't know she was my wife said, "Well, I don't know what's so great about that. That's what we're paying for him, isn't it?" And my wife said, "As a matter of fact, it is not. No, you are not paying him." [laughter]

Morris: They thought you were the visiting speaker?

Weinberger: They thought I was a paid party organizer or something of that kind. But of course, no salary went with this, no travel expenses. You paid all your own way on practically everything.

It was a very time-consuming kind of job. It would have been done better, obviously, if I could have spent full time at it. We had a few staff people, but not very many. Very small staff. And we weren't terribly successful at raising money because the people didn't want to give to a state committee. They wanted to give to a candidate who might win, and who, ultimately then, they would be very friendly with.

Radio and TV

Morris: Was this also the period when you were doing the commentary on KQED?

Weinberger: It wasn't a commentary. I was moderator of a television program there called Profile Bay Area. It was not a commentary; I was just a moderator, yes. I did that from 1959 to 1969. I did that for ten years. That was every week, Thursday night.

During part of this period, I did have a Republican commentary on radio, paid for by a group of Republicans who wanted a Republican program on. I think it was the NBC station and it was up on O'Farrell Street. That was five nights a week. That was to comment on the news from a Republican viewpoint.
Weinberger: So if President Kennedy did something about price or wage control, or something of that kind, I would go and comment on it and comment on the various Republican speeches that were made, occasionally have a visiting Republican on the program. I did that five nights a week, I believe, or three nights a week. Maybe three nights a week. It was a fifteen-minute program paid for, regular by purchased time. It was paid for not by the state committee, but by a group of Republicans around San Francisco, who wanted to have that on the air.

Morris: Were you paid or was it just for the station time?

Weinberger: No, the station was paid.

Morris: Who prepared the scripts?

Weinberger: I did, usually. For a while, we had somebody who also helped with it. It was Ruth Newhall, who was the wife of Scotty Newhall. For a while she did it and then I think the funding was greatly reduced.

During the period that she did it, I may have received five dollars or ten dollars per program or some thing, but I don't think so. At the end, I think all the money went for the station time. It wasn't terribly expensive, then; I've forgotten what it was. It seemed like a lot, but by today's standards, it was not. Of course, they were 1964 dollars then, which is different.

Morris: True. And radio time is a different scale than television.

Weinberger: It was. Yes. But it was a good time. It was six to six-fifteen, something like that. A pretty good time. It followed one of the news programs. The station had a long, internal dispute. I think they went to the national network, as to whether they could sell time to a party as opposed to a candidate and whether they could do it in a non-election period. They finally concluded that they could, and that if the Democrats wanted to buy time, it would be available to them.

I enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun. But again, it took an awful lot of time.

Morris: Yes. Some people spend their entire career producing a daily news program.

Weinberger: Well, I couldn't. It was usually easy for me. I would clip a few things out of the paper or I would hear some radio news or something and then just make a note or two and get up to the station. I didn't read a script. It was informal. We had a very good audience, as a matter of fact.
Weinberger: That was the other thing that worried the station. They thought they would lose their audience completely during that fifteen-minute period. It wasn't just a policy question, it was a financial question too. They thought that if they lost an audience during that period, they'd have a hard time getting it back and all. They had no basis for that worry apparently, because we had a good audience and quite a lot of mail and the ratings stayed very high during that period.

As a matter of fact, they told me once that they had the highest rating around the Bay Area during that period. They were delighted with it. But, of course, we ran out of money.

Morris: There was a Ev and Charlie show at that point, nationally. Dirksen and Halleck. Was this similar?

Weinberger: No. This was a commentary on the news. It was probably much too soberly done. I didn't try to have any showmanship. If there was a bill introduced that would have extended the federal government's authority or something, we'd comment on that and talk a little about how it had been tried before and it wouldn't work, or if there was some blatantly political tactic on the part of some of the Democratic congressmen, I'd comment adversely on that.

Occasionally, there'd be a visiting Republican speaker in town and we'd put him on for a few minutes and things like that.

Morris: Was this related to voter registration? Were you asking people to register Republican?

Weinberger: Occasionally. It wasn't pointed that way. The whole idea was to have a Republican viewpoint on the air as a party viewpoint. And rather unusual because it wasn't pointing to any candidate. We didn't plug one candidate or another. It was party philosophy, party views, party comments on the news, frankly partisan, paid for, advertised as such, but designed to give the party a voice.

Voter Registration

Morris: In relation to registration, did you make any particular effort toward signing up minority voters as a Republican?

Weinberger: We tried to sign up all voters. I had several registration drives, one or two major ones when I was state vice-chairman and state chairman. When I worked here in the city, we tried
Weinberger: our best to get increased Republican registration and in doing that, why, you try to reach all voters. We didn’t try to focus on one or another.

We had ethnic group chairmen and things like that, but we tried to increase our registration as much as we could, and with some degree of modest success—Republican registration is much lower now than it was then. But we made major efforts to increase our registration.

We had the basic theory, which I think is absolutely correct, that while people in California don’t vote their party registration automatically, we felt that if we could increase the Republican registration, we could increase our chances of winning because people registered Republican do tend to vote that way. If they moved or something, they would probably be more likely to stay with their registration than otherwise.

We felt that if we could get 80 percent of our own vote and 20-25 percent of the Democratic registration, we could win every election, and we usually managed to do that.

Morris: So there weren’t any particular efforts directed toward blacks or Asians or chicanos?

Weinberger: There were efforts directed toward all groups in the community. There were some committees that were seeking black registration. There were some committees seeking Chinese registration, Italian groups; there were Japanese groups. We had all manner of special ethnic committees, but they were a part of a major drive to get people registered as Republicans. We tried to do it on all fronts.

We had dentists’ and doctors’ committees. We had professional committees, accountants’ committees. We organized the registration drives much as you would organize an election drive. We tried to reach all groups. So I guess the answer to your question is yes and no.

There were certainly committees organized trying to get black voters to register Republican. But there were also, at the same time, committees organized to get every other kind of group we could think of. So I would have to say no, there was no special emphasis on minorities, but yes, there was emphasis on minorities and majorities and everything else.
V 1962 ELECTION

Richard Nixon's Decision to Run for Governor

Morris: Going back to '62 per se, you said that you talked to Nixon, trying to convince him to run for governor. Was there some doubt in his mind?

Weinberger: Yes. He initiated the conversation. He was going around the state trying to find out if he should or should not run for governor. I found out later than anybody who advised him not to run for governor, he barely spoke to again. [laughter] I wasn't aware of that at the time. I had a very simple mathematical approach to the thing.

He had beaten Kennedy in California in 1960. He had carried the state for the Republican party, as we say it, carry the state in '62. We had reapportionment coming up and we wanted to carry the state legislature. We wanted to have a well-known candidate at the head of the ticket, and Nixon was clearly that.

He had very nearly been elected president. He carried the state against the person who had been elected president, so yes, I urged him to run for governor. He was, during many of those interviews, quite negative about it. He felt that he didn't know enough about state government, and he felt he would be frankly bored by it.

He said once that anybody who'd served on the National Security Council couldn't really be very interested in the problems of Los Angeles sewage. I said, "But you know, Dick (as I called him then; later it was Mr. President), the governor doesn't have anything to do with sewage in Los Angeles." "Well, there, you see," he said, "I don't even know that much about it."
Weinberger: But he was eventually persuaded to run for governor or had concluded he was going to, and did; not successfully.

Morris: We have a comment about his announcement of his candidacy; that he had a meeting in San Francisco with close advisors, of whom you were reported as one, and he said he would decide the next morning.

    Then at a press conference the next morning, he announced he would run, apparently without telling those close friends.

Weinberger: I don't recall much about that. I know that he did talk to a lot of people about whether he ought to run for governor or not. My meetings with him were substantially in advance of his formal announcement, and a lot of the other meetings were also. But I was one of the ones who thought that he ought to run and I put it on the straight basis that he had won in '60 and he was the most likely person to win in '62, and that while Shell was being mentioned and all, I didn't think that he had a broad enough appeal either to be nominated or to be elected, or obviously the national experience and familiarity with government that Nixon had.

    That was another reason for the internal party problems that I had, because, of course, there were a number of people—about a third of the party wanted Shell. So, if you allied yourself visibly with an effort to get someone else to run—and this was long before anyone was nominated or anything—why, then, automatically, you had a third of the party against you.

Morris: How about the strength of George Christopher's supporters and Goodwin Knight's supporters? There was some thought that you and Knight might--

Weinberger: Christopher was for Nixon, as I recall it, in '62. And Knight was pretty well out of things since 1958. You never heard much about Knight anymore. I don't think Knight was a factor at all in '62; he didn't have any particular group of large supporters. ##

Morris: Knight did announce he would seek nomination on September 11, 1961. Withdrew January, 1962, because of hepatitis. He wasn't around at all during the state convention or other meetings?

Weinberger: No.

Morris: It's very difficult trying to document Knight since he's no longer around.
Weinberger: What was the year of his death?

Morris: Some time later. [May, 1970]

Weinberger: But it was not much later. But by '62, I don't think he could be correctly described as a factor in state politics.

Morris: In the state politics.

Weinberger: No.

Morris: That's what we were interested in.

Was it characteristic of Mr. Nixon to play it close to the vest and make up his mind without telling anybody?

Weinberger: Oh, yes. His role, so to speak, during these interviews, was essentially as I've described it, sort of taking what turned out later to be, I guess, a devil's advocate position of trying to--

He would say, "Why should I run?" Or, "I wouldn't really be very good at it." Or, "I don't know enough about it." Or, "I'm more interested in national affairs" et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. You'd then present various points why you wanted him to run. I wanted him to run and said so, but he had some rather close friends--Jim Bassett, of the Los Angeles Times, who was extremely close to him and had been very active in the 1960 presidential campaign, flatly told him that he should not run for governor, that it was a terrible mistake.

And that was much better advice from Nixon's personal point of view, as it turned out. But he practically never spoke to Bassett again. [chuckles]

Morris: The comment being that if he ran for governor, that would be damaging to him if he wanted to run for president?

Weinberger: Yes. Essentially. That he might lose. That it wouldn't be good for him in either event, that he had a perfectly good national-international platform the way he was as a person who'd barely lost the presidency, and that he shouldn't get mixed up in state politics; it was a great mistake.

And that was very good political advice for Nixon. I wasn't giving advice to Nixon on the basis of what I thought would be good for him personally. I was doing it on the basis of what I thought would be good for the party and for California.

Morris: In California.
Weinberger: Yes. I wanted the party to win and here was our strongest candidate, and I thought he could be a very good governor. So it was very logical from my point of view that we should push him very hard to run. But, he, I'm pretty sure, now, on the basis of that and what Jim Bassett and others have told me, that he had pretty well decided that he was going to run. Anyway, Jim Bassett said that when he advised Nixon not to run for governor, Nixon never really consulted him again. But I did not know anything about that then.

Morris: You gave him support for what he wanted to hear?

Weinberger: Apparently. It accorded with what he wanted to hear, I think.

Morris: Did he continue to show some reluctance to being governor while the campaign was going on?

Weinberger: No. No. I think he worked very hard in the campaign. I don't think it's in his nature not to campaign hard. I don't think that anybody could call it half-hearted. He worked very hard in the campaign, very effectively. But he was running against an incumbent who'd done nothing very wrong, and Californians usually give an eight to ten point advantage to an incumbent regardless of philosophy or party or anything else.

Morris: Were there any special efforts made to brief him or bring him up to date on state government?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, indeed.

He wanted me to resign from my law firm and put full time on the campaign and go with him to all the meetings, and he was very complimentary about what he felt I knew about state issues and so on. But I told him I just could not do that at that time. I had recently become a partner in the firm and I had a lot of obligations that I felt I had to fulfill by remaining in the firm.

But there were others who did. It seems to me that [William] Bagley eventually took a full-time role in the campaign, and I think two or three other people did. They went around with him. Bagley was in the assembly at that time, and two or three others. I can't remember who else.

[Houston] Flournoy may have. And they briefed him and gave critiques on the speeches, and developed issues. Yes, he had a number of people trying to help in that way.

Morris: And briefing him on current issues in the state government.

Weinberger: Right.
Lieutenant Governor Candidate George Christopher

Morris: How about the selection of—I guess not selection, but the candidacy of Christopher as lieutenant-governor? Was Nixon—?

Weinberger: He was very supportive of that. Yes.

Morris: That's kind of odd because he had only local experience here in San Francisco.

Weinberger: Yes, but he had very good local experience. He was a very good mayor. He was very active in the national organization, the National League of Cities, and the National Association of Mayors, whatever the official title is. I think he had risen to the presidency of that.

He'd done a lot of good things in San Francisco. He'd been very visible. He'd gone around the state a great deal, made a lot of speeches, and was in every way considered a very strong running mate.

They worked together very well and had a very good relationship. I don't recall any problems between them at all. I don't remember if Christopher had any primary opposition when he ran for lieutenant governor.

Morris: Yes. He had several—

Weinberger: A number of people, but he won rather handily, as I recall.*

Morris: Yes.

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*The Republican primary vote was 1,262,772 for Christopher, 568,359 for S.F. Assemblyman John F. McCarthy, and 2,347 write-in votes for the Democratic incumbent, Glenn Anderson.
Dubious Tactics

Morris: There's something we'd like to ask here your opinion on. There was something called the Committee to Preserve the Democratic Party, which sent out a postcard poll reputed to have been put together by the Nixon committee.

Weinberger: That was Leone Baxter, actually. Whitaker and Baxter. I don't know very much about that. It wasn't part of the regular Nixon campaign that I can recall, but it certainly was designed to help him.

There was a lawsuit developed out of that. Somebody tried to block the mailing of that and--

Morris: Roger Kent was very upset about it.*

Weinberger: He was always very incensed about that. I never knew why he was in such a lather about it. It was just a post card, but a post card that urged--

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Morris: So Roger Kent was in more than a usual lather about--

Weinberger: I don't know--he was always so upset about everything. Professional outrage--he always expressed outrage.

I used to speak with him at various meetings around the state and, afterwards, a lot of the outrage vanished. I guess most of it was just manufactured for the audience. But he seemed to be particularly worried about that post card.

As I say, it was a little post card thing; it was not anything that the Nixon committee organized. As I recall it, it's something Leone Baxter organized and took around and sold to some people supporting Nixon and got the funds for the postage or something, I guess, from them. At least, I think that was it.

The Nixon campaign was not run by the state committee. The Nixon campaign was run by Nixon's committee. The state committee, even after the candidates were nominated, never ran the campaigns.

*See interview with Roger Kent in this series.
Weinberger: This developed into a lawsuit, some sort of an injunction to bar the use of it or something. I think most of them were in the mail at that time. I don't know. But it was a very minor factor. I don't think it affected anybody one way or the other.

Roger wanted to make a big thing out of the unfair campaign tactics. He was always talking about Helen Gahagan Douglas and Nixon and that. I think his idea was that this was some sort of unfair campaign practice or something. I've never been in a campaign in which there wasn't a Republican committee for the Democratic candidate and a Democratic committee for the Republican candidate. Essentially, that's all I think this thing was. But it was a very minor thing.

Morris: Was Miss Baxter Nixon's campaign manager?

Weinberger: No, she was an independent public relations person. The firm used to be Whitaker & Baxter. When Whitaker died, the firm went to his son, Clem Whitaker, Jr. And Leone formed something called Whitaker & Baxter International, which didn't, theoretically, get into local campaigns, but dealt with international public relations of companies.

Nevertheless, on an individual basis, she had this, as I recall—it was a long time ago—she had this idea and took it to some people within the Nixon group and apparently they liked it or something like that.

Morris: So she wasn't already working on Nixon's campaign?

Weinberger: I don't believe so, no. Not that I can recall. But you see, I wasn't part of the official Nixon campaign committee. I was state chairman at that point and was supporting him and the Republican ticket.

In California, each statewide candidate has their own campaign committee group. Now she may have been officially part of that, I don't know. But to the best of my knowledge, she developed this thing independently and took it around to various people to get some funding for it.

Morris: Is it possible that a well-known person would be collecting money for a campaign piece and the candidate would not know about it?

Weinberger: Oh, yes. The contributors would probably tell the candidate later, especially if he won, but there were many people soliciting funds about which the candidate probably had no specific knowledge.
Morris: It did go to court in 1964.

Weinberger: Yes. There was some kind of suit about it long after the election, and Roger just kept pursuing it and pursuing it. I think he had a Democratic attorney—I know—O'Gara was his attorney; later he became a judge.

Morris: Yes. And there was—

Weinberger: He was a state senator at that time, Gerald O'Gara, and very active in the Democratic party. He and Roger developed this suit. They went after the printers, they went after everybody.

Morris: There were also, in that same election, some questionable flyers which were passed out by something called the Independent Voters of California.

Weinberger: Those, I don't recall exactly what they said but they were very inflammatory. They were passed around at Republican meetings. I remember I was presiding at some kind of Republican meeting in Los Angeles and reporters came up to me afterwards and asked why I had these things distributed.

I'd never seen them before. They'd been passed around by some people in the far back of the meeting room. I was always convinced that they were printed and distributed by Democrats who wanted to claim that Nixon was using very inflammatory and unfair posters. I can't even recall what they were but they were clearly totally different than this postcard. They were clearly a very scurrilous kind of thing. They attempted to link Brown with some communist group or some damn thing, but basically, I'm just convinced to this day that it was part of the Democratic campaign. That this was Roger's way of trying to show that Nixon used these unscrupulous tactics and all of that.

But that was a kind of one-day wonder, that story. I don't think it mattered much, but I was very unhappy with it because they were using a Republican meeting room to distribute these things. I don't know who they were, never did find out who they were, but I'm convinced they were people employed by the Democratic party to do that.

Morris: You didn't make any effort to track it down?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, certainly we did. But these were just some people who were in the back handing out these pamphlets and then when they got them to the press, they disappeared. There were never any Republicans identified with it.
Weinberger: As I recall, we located one printer or somebody who said that people ultimately identified with the Democratic party had given the order, or some Democrats had given the order. There were a lot of stories about it at the time, but I'd have to go back through it.

But I do remember that particular incident of these things being handed out in the back of the room. They were one of these—not composite photographs—but these tampered, doctored photographs where they cut off a head of Brown and showing him at a meeting with some obvious revolutionaries or some nonsense like that. And of course, anybody who knew Pat Brown just--

Morris: If you'd gotten any more information on it, would you, the Republican committee, have taken legal action?

Weinberger: We put out statements blaming the Democrats for it and we did try to track down where they'd been printed and who had distributed them. To the best of my knowledge, we had some indication that there was—just in my memory now—we had some indication that there was some Democratic association with one of them.

They were never made the subject of a lawsuit or anything of that kind. Once that charge that I had made was public, why, they never appeared again and they were not later a factor in the campaign.

But there was, I'm convinced, this attempt made comparable to—on a very small scale, of course—the burning of the Reichstag. [laughter]

Morris: Well, quote, dirty tricks, unquote, have come to be a part of most campaigns?

Wienberger: Certainly there are an awful lot of them. When I ran for attorney general in the Republican primary, people purporting to be my campaign workers, would telephone people at eleven-thirty and twelve-thirty at night, asking them to vote for me, and things like that.

They circulated a story that I was against trial by jury, which was one of the most amusing things I've ever seen in my life. If I hadn't been in the middle of a campaign it would have been even funnier. Those were all, I assume, most of them, on behalf of my Republican opponent in that primary. I don't think the formation of a Democratic committee for a Republican candidate of Republican committee for a Democratic candidate is a dirty trick.
Weinberger: You try to show broad support, bi-partisan support. But there certainly have been all kinds of attempts to influence the electorate and some of them slop over into definitely unethical, illegal practices. Certainly, the circulation of a doctored photograph is a very dirty trick, but it's a reverse dirty trick if it's done by the Democrats themselves with an attempt to convince the voters that the Republicans are using dirty tricks--a double agent sort of thing.

Cuban Missile Crisis

Morris: On a more serious kind of issue, the Cuban missile crisis came along late in that '62 campaign. The press, again, attributes that as having a decisive effect on the campaign. Would that have been a factor in Nixon's losing the election?

Weinberger: I think nationally that had a very big effect. I think it had a good effect on Senator Kuchel, for example, who was summoned back to Washington. A famous picture was shown of him being flown back in what was then a very unusual thing, a jet fighter, because it would go much faster back to Washington.

In order to fly in a jet fighter at that time, it appeared to be necessary to wear a jet fighter pilot's helmet. Here was a picture of Kuchel being suited up for this rush trip back to Washington to take care of this national crisis. It was obviously something that transcended politics, which was the current phrase.

So this was something big and important in government. This might affect the whole future of the country and war was imminent, and so you ought to put aside these petty concerns and not rock the boat, and keep everybody in office who was in office. I think that helped Tommy Kuchel's re-election campaign very much. I think that it helped Democrats nationally because the idea of partisan replacement, or something at that time, with a world crisis around, was repugnant--you normally tend to stay with incumbents.

Morris: Pat Brown also went flying back to Washington.

Weinberger: Yes, he put on a helmet, too, immediately after that.

Morris: And you wonder why the governor was needed.
Weinberger: I think he wasn't, but I think he saw it was good politics for Tommy, so he wanted to do it, too. I suspect that he won more on the basis of simply being an incumbent who hadn't done anything that was discernably identifiably wrong, and that's very important in California. An incumbent who is not guilty of anything major and under whom nothing very seriously has gone wrong has a tremendous political advantage. And always has had.

It's curious because we pride ourselves on not voting the party, but we do vote incumbents very strongly. Incumbency is a very powerful political asset. Nixon was viewed as trying to push out an incumbent governor who hadn't done anything very wrong. And that's a very hard role to play.

He didn't have any major issue except that he was more competent and more experienced and knew more than Pat Brown.

Morris: I gather that just before the Cuban missile crisis, Nixon was slightly ahead in the opinion polls.

Weinberger: The general theory seemed to be that he had started out quite strongly and that as the campaign wore on that general issues didn't develop and so on. He started out strongly because, of course, he was very well known nationally--indeed as a world figure.

But I don't really think the Cuban missile crisis was the decisive factor locally; but I think nationally it certainly prevented our making major congressional and senatorial gains that we might otherwise have made. I think it probably had some residual effect in California.

Aftermath

Morris: After the election, do you think that Nixon was serious about not running for office again?

Weinberger: Yes, I think so. I think that that first morning he certainly was. He was very, very unhappy with life that first morning and I think he wouldn't have held that famous last press conference it he had planned to run again. I don't think he gave any real thought to the possibility of it. He was totally and completely written off.
Weinberger: But maybe he did. I don't know. He was a very secretive sort of person. At least, I didn't know him ever. Although I've been acquainted with him for years and years, I didn't have any feeling that I ever knew him well or knew anything about what might be called his inner thoughts, or what he really had in mind. He masked his thoughts. Generally he talked about issues and all, but he never talked about himself personally.

But I think people in New York, a lot of people convinced him that he had world-wide fame, so to speak, and that many other people had come back from serious defeats and that he could, too. He'd given up his whole political base in California. He moved to New York and had no political base in New York. He had a national base, unlike most people, and that was, as it turned out, sufficient.

But he worked terribly hard at it. He never, once he started back on that path, I don't think he ever deviated. He may, even on that post-election morning—he may have felt that he still had a political future. He certainly didn't give any evidence of it, and I can't believe that he would have held that press conference if he had planned it.

Because when he held all of his press conferences in 1960, after having lost the presidency by a very narrow margin to Kennedy, he was completely gracious, the good loser personified. He said certainly he wasn't going to have any challenge. He wasn't going to have any contest to the Illinois and Texas elections, both of which were, in my opinion, totally and completely corrupt. He wasn't going to do that; it wouldn't be fair to the United States.

He said all of those things, and he received substantial praise for that. But after he lost in 1962, there wasn't any slight attempt to be a good loser. He was bitter and unhappy and thoroughly finished, as far as he was concerned.

The only thing he ever cared about was politics, and he saw this whole thing just closed off to him. I think that morning, he clearly had given up. But he revived. I think you saw the whole thing right out in the open, which you rarely do. Yes.
VI 1964 ELECTION

Republican National Convention, San Francisco

Morris: As your two years as chairman were ending, you were getting ready for the national Republican convention in San Francisco.

Weinberger: Yes.

Morris: Did your committee and you, particularly, have any role in the selection of San Francisco?

Weinberger: Yes, we urged that very strongly. The national convention selection committee of the national committee, and I was a member of the national committee, came to California. There were civic committees that met with us. I was part of them, and we wanted very much to have the convention.

In those days, cities wanted conventions. I wanted it in California and the committee wanted it. We spent a lot of time urging the selection of San Francisco and supporting the city's official bid.

Morris: Do you think having it in San Francisco had a bearing on the outcome of the convention?

Weinberger: Yes, I think so. I think if a convention goes well and you don't have a kind of a Chicago disaster and all, that normally having a convention breeds a lot of interest in the party and in the candidates who are nominated, it gives a lot of people who are not interested in politics an interest in it, and that's basically a good thing.

And, of course, it brings an awful lot of tourists to a city, too, and they're getting to be a bigger and bigger factor now. But now, many cities don't want them and consider that they're more problems, and nuisances and services required than there's money brought in.
Weinberger: But at that time, it was still a very traditional thing for a city, and for everybody connected with the city, including a lot of Democrats, to try their best to get a convention to the city. We tried to get both conventions to the city.

Morris: Was the fact that the California primary had been such a close fight between Rockefeller and Goldwater--

Weinberger: Oh, the decision was made months before that!

It usually goes to a city or to a state where there's no major contender. If Nixon had been a major contender in 1964, California wouldn't even have been considered because the selection of California would be viewed as something favorable to or helping one candidate. And the national committee, by definition, is neutral--almost by law, is supposed to be neutral, till the conventions are over.

The conduct of the convention is supposed to be completely neutral. So California was a logical enough choice when you had a New Yorker and an Arizonan competing. And there were a lot of other candidates--Pennsylvania, Scranton for a time--

**Goldwater Purists and Unity Efforts**

Morris: I gather that was a fairly bitter primary in California.

Weinberger: Very bitter, yes. Yes indeed, it was.

Morris: Did that cause any problems for the central committee?

Weinberger: Oh, certainly! And it was very apparent that we would weaken the party seriously if we didn't recover from it quickly. That's when I spent all of that early spring and winter preceding it, trying to get people representing both of these candidates to pledge they would support the winner of the convention.

It turned out to be Goldwater. I immediately supported him right after the convention, but not very many people would take that pledge or support it because the Goldwater people, by that time, had control of all the volunteer organizations and were strongly opposed to anybody else and made it very clear that anybody but Goldwater who was nominated, they wouldn't support.

It was a very bitter fight and fierce divisions. I have many, many times since then been automatically lined up by the Goldwater people as having been for Rockefeller. While I liked
Weinberger: Rockefeller very much and particularly liked his people--
George Hinton and others out here were very close friends of
Joe Martin, who was the national committeeman, and who resigned from the national committee to support Rockefeller, which was a very honorable, proper way to do it. I did not--I didn't leave the state committee, and I didn't think I'd serve anything by resigning from the state committee.

I specifically refused to support either candidate before the convention or the California primary. I took the position that I would support the winner of the convention and asked everybody else to do so. As a result, I didn't go to the convention as a delegate. I went to the convention simply as a visitor, as a member of the national committee.

Morris: Because Goldwater--?

Weinberger: Because the delegates were chosen in the primary and I was not on the Goldwater slate, nor the Rockefeller slate. I specifically refused to go on any slate.

Morris: I know there's a list of delegates for a specific candidate that one votes for in the primary. But there seem to be a number of changes before the convention is held. Who actually decides who will go as a delegate, and when.

Weinberger: Usually the organizing committee for the candidate. They raise the funds for the signature gathering and campaigning, and they naturally have a sufficient leadership role to put together the delegate lists.

Now Joe Martin resigned his party position as national committeeman and went on the Rockefeller slate, which is exactly the honorable and right way to do it and what I would have done if I had decided I was going to go on either slate.

But always since then and even later, years later, when Governor Reagan wanted me to be finance director, why, a lot of his people said, "You can't have him. He supported Rockefeller in that primary." And of course, I didn't. It was thoroughly documented that I hadn't supported anybody but I'd supported the idea of a pledge to the winner.

Morris: Gardiner Johnson's name turns up quite a bit.

Weinberger: Gardiner Johnson was a strong Goldwater supporter.

Morris: Strong Goldwater supporter?
Weinberger: Yes. Long time party worker, on the conservative side of the party. San Francisco attorney. I'd known him very well for many years. Again, he was one of the leaders of the Goldwater delegation and strongly anti-Rockefeller and strongly against taking any pledge of loyalty support, or anything of that kind.

He was one of the leaders of the Goldwater delegation that ultimately beat the Rockefeller delegation in the primary.

Morris: He's also indentified as a strong Republican.

Weinberger: Oh, yes.

Morris: I would have thought that he felt as you, that the party was more important.

Weinberger: I would have hoped so, but I wasn't able to persuade him that that was the right course to take. Maybe he would now—I don't know.

Morris: Because he had also served in the legislature?

Weinberger: He was a long-time party worker and still is, I guess, reasonably active, still in party affairs; I don't know. He may pretty well have stepped aside from active participation. But he was a strong Goldwater supporter, and maybe in order to keep his position with that rather fierce delegation, he felt that he couldn't get into pledges of support for anyone else later.

Morris: Make any kind of compromise.

Weinberger: Have you talked with him?

Morris: We talked to him about his legislative career, and hope to interview him again about his party activities.

Weinberger: There was nothing mysterious or anything about it. He was just part of the strong Goldwater delegation, and maybe in order to keep that position, he had to take a somewhat fiercer position than he might normally have. But he was not friendly to anybody who was not strongly for Goldwater. It's part of that same syndrome: if you weren't for him you were against him, and if you were against him, you had to be crushed.

Morris: But Mr. Knowland was willing to speak out for loyalty.

Weinberger: Yes. Knowland was also part of the Goldwater delegation, though. Oh yes. And he was the leader of it, I think.
Morris: Did he make any efforts to get Gardiner Johnson and his people to join the pledge of--?

Weinberger: No. I don't know that the Senator took the pledge. I tried to get him to. I had a meeting with him, had him down to the house once. But at that time, Goldwater obviously hadn't won the primary and I think they were afraid of, or at least the Senator was, of any particular action that might be interpreted as weakness. I was a great admirer of Senator Knowland. I liked him very much, but I was not allied with him in that fight.

Murphy and Goldwater Campaign Styles

Morris: That was the year that George Murphy was running for Senator. Is there any truth to the reports that many people were so disillusioned by the Goldwater candidacy that they sat out the presidential campaign but did work for Murphy?

Weinberger: I think some felt that way. Some of the people who had been Rockefeller people and some of the people who were unhappy with Goldwater before or Goldwater's speech at the convention, or his campaign afterwards, were not very interested in supporting Goldwater, but did work for Murphy.

Murphy had stayed in a neutral enough position during the primary and did very well. Yes, I think he picked up some considerable support that way. Probably more—it's support he would have had anyway, but I think it was concentrated support. It was support that worked hard for him but didn't work for anybody else.

Morris: Did it draw off any significant number of people on the state central committee, working for Murphy rather than Goldwater?

Weinberger: I don't know. I think they were people who wanted to work for the Republican party, didn't like Goldwater, didn't like his campaign, and so they didn't work for him but they did work for Murphy. If Murphy hadn't been running, they would have found some other candidate. I think that under no circumstances would they want to have worked for Goldwater.

[chuckles] I did to the extent I was allowed. It was pretty funny. Right after the convention, I said that in keeping with my pledge, I would support him. I was told later that a lot of the Goldwater people in California were very adamant that I shouldn't be allowed to do anything. Well, I
volunteered to do anything they wanted; but I never heard from them until about a week before election. Then they asked me if I would preside at a closing Goldwater rally in the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, which I said I'd be glad to do.

Also, they asked me if they could use my name in a full-page ad that they were taking for Goldwater, to run about a week before the election. I said, of course. Then I said, "As a matter of curiosity, why have you waited so long to begin this campaign? Or to see if you couldn't get some help?"

"I've always been perfectly happy to help and I wrote letters to the Senator and to"--his campaign was very badly organized in California--"but when you could find anybody, I wrote letters, again offering to help in August and September. I never heard from anybody.

And they said, "Well, there was a big fight. It wasn't determined until last week by Senator Goldwater himself, as to whether you should be allowed to do anything." Of course, you see, that's why they lost. They spent all their time discussing stupid questions like that instead of getting out, trying to get the vote. And Senator Goldwater said, "Of course, if he wants to help, let him help."

So I was then asked to go on this ad and to preside at this closing rally at which he spoke in the auditorium. I told him I'd be delighted to do that, that was in keeping with my pledge. I worked for Murphy, too, during that period, but I would have been available to Goldwater.

I think many people probably were in the same boat. They weren't even asked to work by the Goldwater--The Goldwater campaign in California was extremely badly organized. Or, it was organized by people who wanted to keep it small, which is no way to campaign.

Morris: Or who wanted to keep out those whose ideology--?

Weinberger: Yes. This purity business. So, I would suspect that it wasn't so much that people wouldn't work for Goldwater as the fact that they either were not asked or there didn't seem to be any visible available outlet for them, whereas Murphy ran a traditional good campaign--well-organized and urged everybody, was trying to get everybody he could. So sure, we all worked for Murphy.
Weinberger: I would have worked for Goldwater too, and did, to the limited extent I was permitted to do so. [laughter]

Morris: From your point of view, was Murphy's candidacy unexpected?

Weinberger: No, I don't think so. Murphy had been very active in the party. Murphy had been a state chairman and Murphy had always turned up at Republican gatherings. He wasn't in any sense, a johnny-come-lately to the party.

Morris: He was state chairman?

Weinberger: Oh, yes, he was a state chairman, and a very active one. And spent a lot of time at it. He had facilities that I didn't--private planes made available to him, and so on. He was very effective. George Murphy was a very active party worker and it was no surprise to me or to people who had worked in the party that he might aspire to office.

I think it was unexpected in the sense that I don't think anybody had imagined he was going to run for U.S. Senator, but he did and did very effectively.

Salinger was not a good candidate for the Democratic party and had been an unexpected, late candidate; hadn't any real base of support, and George Murphy had a strong base of Republican party support, which is a narrow base in the sense that not very many people participate in party affairs, but George Murphy had done it over a long period of time.

Morris: Did you and he have any conversations about his candidacy?

Weinberger: For the Senate?

Morris: Yes.

Weinberger: Not that I can remember. You mean, before he ran? Before he announced his candidacy?

Morris: Yes.

Weinberger: No, I don't believe so. No. I don't recall anything especially. I supported him for it. He had been told later that I had not supported him once, and I had to straighten him out on that. But I did support him and had supported him, yes.
Ronald Reagan's Visibility

Morris: The other thing from the point of view of California politics about the '64 campaign is that's where Ronald Reagan emerged.

Weinberger: That's right. He was very, very effective in fund-raising. He made an extremely effective national speech for Goldwater that was on national television networks. It wasn't any surprise to Californians who knew that Reagan had been very active in party matters, as with Murphy. He had been tireless in speaking to fund-raising events, party gatherings for years. But people, nationally, hadn't been exposed to his extraordinary persuasiveness or his extraordinary political speech-making ability.

Morris: When would you say was your first encounter with Mr. Reagan in the political sphere?

Weinberger: It all sort of merges together, but as he emerged as a top Republican fund-raising speaker, moving from his television work with General Electric where he was getting national recognition as a film actor, a film star, of many years of standing, we began to encounter each other at various Republican fund-raising meetings where I would go as vice-chairman, chairman.

I suspect it was probably during the Knowland campaign in '58, but it may have been a little later than that. It was right in that period. But there are an awful lot of political meetings--dinners, fund-raisings, receptions lunches, breakfasts, and more and more you see each other on the trail and this leads to that.

But I was always enormously impressed with his ability to communicate to audiences. Fantastic!

Morris: At what point do you begin to think of somebody as a candidate?

Weinberger: Again, it's hard to pick out any particular time or place. I suppose that as more and more people, nationally, indicated how enormously impressed they were with his fund-raising speech for Goldwater, he began to believe that he too could be a candidate, a far more effective candidate than Goldwater.

Morris: Did you have any problems, either with the fact that Reagan and Murphy were actors, or that they had little experience in government?

##
Weinberger: No. There are an awful lot of people in politics who are always either delighted to carry bad news or trying to undermine a particular person whom they might not like or might not approve of, or one thing or another, and I have always taken a very strong stand and have always been fairly controversial with the legislative work and taking sides in party matters.

There were people who were conveying to—I'm sure, well, I'm sure to George Murphy, because I had to talk to him about it. We are, I believe, very good friends now. And there were people, probably, who talked to Governor Reagan, who would say, "Oh, that Weinberger says you're just an actor" or something like that. So that there's always that kind of undercurrent going on. That may have taken place, I don't know.

I do know that George Murphy heard some tales once and I had to talk with him very seriously and firmly to convince him that that was absolutely not so.

And then newspaper people occasionally might like to build up something, so they would imply that somebody had said something derogatory about actors or something of that kind, but I had no problems with that.

Morris: The Democratic campaign made quite a lot of this.

Weinberger: Oh yes, surely, yes. This was intellectual snobbery at its worst. If anybody had criticized a Democrat as being a mere college professor or something, why, they would have been all over the lot with how bigoted the remark was. But it was perfectly all right for them to say that somebody was a mere actor and so shouldn't run for office. [laughs]

But acting is a very honorable profession. I'm very familiar with a lot of English history, and actors have always been a very major part of the community in England.

Morris: Yes, indeed.
Reagan and Brown Contrasts

Morris: When we were talking about the '62 campaign, you commented that part of Nixon's difficulty was going up against an incumbent governor. What had happened in four years that Ronald Reagan had apparently much less difficulty in campaigning against Pat Brown?

Weinberger: No, I think he was too incumbent by then. By then, he had done too many things that people began to be tired of. He had appointed the people he was going to appoint and therefore, the people he hadn't appointed knew he wasn't going to appoint them.

And he'd served two terms. There was a lot of feeling against a third-term governor. I don't think Pat Brown, while he's a very comfortable, pleasant, cheerful sort of fellow, wears terribly well. And he had been, more or less, humiliated by not having the support of, or control over the California delegation at the Democratic convention, and he was getting to be kind of viewed as somewhat of a laughing stock and so forth.

Also, there were a lot of people who were unhappy with some of his policies—water policies and things of that kind. I just think he'd probably worn out his welcome a little bit. Reagan was a very electric, dynamic, charismatic figure and a magnificent speaker, and Brown was nothing like that at all. I think the contrast was just too great, whereas the contrast four years before had not been that way.

And we didn't have the missile crisis and so forth and so on. But in any event, I think people were clearly ready for a major change.
Morris: The same question about Ronald Reagan as about Richard Nixon four years before, the question of inexperience in state government.

Weinberger: Yes, it was levied against him. It wasn't levied against Nixon, but it certainly was levied against Reagan. But again, his speeches, his appearances overcame some of this, and maybe there was a public feeling that they didn't want all that much experience, that they were tired of experienced people. They wanted something fresh and new, and a person who hadn't held public office. That's a very appealing posture to be in.

Senator Hayakawa proved that. And Senator Hayakawa's efforts to try to get some new candidates to run against Cranston, reported in this morning's paper, are a part of that. He's looking for new people who haven't run before.

And, God knows, Carter proved it.

Morris: So that was considered an advantage in a candidate?

Weinberger: It might very well have been, yes. But you see, Reagan is a lot of things. He's enormously persuasive, he has great ability to communicate with people, he had a certain amount of national fame, a wide name-recognition which was an enormously important advantage, and a very friendly, very happy attitude. He's basically a very happy, serene, secure person and he conveys that very well.

He appealed to a very broad segment who don't care about politics or politicians or parties or issues, but vote on the individual personality. There are a lot of people who do that.

We couldn't, for example, in the Reagan campaign, get any recognized labor leader to form a labor committee for Reagan. But our polls afterward showed that he got something in excess of forty percent of the union labor vote and he did that because he was talking about things they were very interested in. Union labor was very much more affluent at that time, and when he talked about low taxes and keeping government small and less intrusive and that, he was striking a very strong chord with individual union members.

And they knew he wasn't going to "bust the union." He wasn't going to have a right-to-work bill; he just talked about things they were interested in, all from a very conservative viewpoint.
Weinberger: He also got something around forty-nine percent of union wives' votes. That's because he's extremely attractive to women and they liked what he was saying too. He said things that appealed to them as people who had family responsibilities.

Campaign Techniques

Morris: The other side of that is that the '66 Reagan campaign is often cited as one in which media techniques and public relations packaging was almost a new style of campaigning.

Weinberger: Oh, I don't think so at all. There was nothing new about the '66 campaign. It was a very well-organized campaign, and there was more television because there was more television in '66 than there was in '64. It was a good campaign, well-organized, but there was nothing new or unusual about it at all. There were Democrat committees for Reagan and Republican committees for Reagan, and we tried to get union labor committees. We couldn't do it, as I mentioned.

There were rallies and there were television speeches. We tried frantically all through the campaign to arrange a debate with Brown. I was on the committee that the Governor had appointed to meet with the Brown representatives, and we soon learned very early in the game that one thing the Brown representatives did not want was a debate with Reagan and they would go to any ends to avoid it by putting up new conditions and constantly changing. They did, practically speaking, avoid it.

But there wasn't anything particularly new about the campaign.

Morris: How about the use of issue research?

Weinberger: Yes, there was a lot of that. There was polling done to see what things people were interested in, but we had done that before. I did polling in San Francisco to find out what people were interested in 1951.

Morris: Did it make a difference on things that you recommended or--?

Weinberger: Oh yes, he tried to find out things people were interested in and develop issues on those, but he didn't say, "Whatever the people want, that's going to be my stand." He had a philosophical rudder, unlike our present governor.
Weinberger: He determined his stand on those issues, based on where that philosophical rudder guided him.

Morris: Was there any feeling that Spencer-Roberts as campaign management firm had more of a role in the decisions than others on the committee?

Weinberger: No, not to my knowledge. I was obviously not part of the campaign during the primary because I had been supporting Mr. Christopher during the primary. But I, again, pledged to and did support the winner of the primary, and I was reasonably active with him after the primary. The Spencer-Roberts firm did a good job, but they didn't have any more role in it than others.

California campaigns for years and years had been different than the national campaigns because of the role of the professional campaign managers and the lack of authority and power of the party, as such, and the need for a candidate's campaign committee. All of those factors were present in '66, but not in any surprising or unusual way.

Brown had his public relations campaign firm and Governor Reagan had his. Brown had his committees and so forth and so on.

Morris: The tighter the organization, it seems, almost the more likely the charge would be raised that the campaign manager is running the campaign.

Weinberger: No, I don't think there was anything of that kind. Governor Reagan was very frank in admitting that he needed briefings and had to do some homework to learn about state government matters. He did it. He made himself very well informed and, as a result, he became one of the best governors we ever had, in my opinion. But he was perfectly frank to say that he wasn't familiar with a lot of the issues, and he did need briefing and did need help.

He called on a lot of people to try to help him, and he listened to what they said and learned a great deal very quickly.

Christopher's Primary Campaign

Morris: How did you happen to support Mr. Christopher rather than Reagan in the primary?
Weinberger: I knew George Christopher better than I knew him in San Francisco. I was a San Franciscan; he was our mayor. He asked me very early on and I liked him, liked what he stood for, and decided that I would support him. But it was more a matter of being aboard earlier than anything else. Once you tell somebody you're going to support him, why, you don't jump ship and go with somebody else. But I liked George Christopher and do to this day, and think he would make a good governor.

I supported him through that primary. I was chairman of his speakers' committee, I think. I tried to do it in such a way that I was campaigning against Brown, not against Reagan, because I was still obsessed with the idea of trying to keep the party together.

One thing Reagan did that nobody else could do specifically including me, was to unite the party. He united the party very strongly. He was very strongly conservative; he was consciously so. He never hid it for a minute, but he also strongly believed in party unity. For example, he would support Senator Kuchel for re-election, although Kuchel would never support him.

When we had a Republican candidate, he would help him in any way that he could, even if that candidate had been a legislator who hadn't voted with him in the legislature, or something of that kind. He was very, very good at building party unity, but never compromised his own principles.

That's one of the reasons why I admire him so much. I tried to keep the party united without concealing the things that I stood for, but he was able to do it! That's why I think he'd do very well nationally. I think he could bring a high degree of unity to the national Republican party.

Morris: Were you aware of Mr. Christopher's difficulties over some of his previous business affairs at the milk company?

Weinberger: Oh, there'd been some problem during the war with milk pricing, as I remember it. I had known that there had been a federal action based on, I believe, price control or something of that kind during World War II. I had talked to George and was convinced that he was personally completely free of any wrongdoing, and I am to this day.

But that was used very widely against him because he was cited in a federal court case. I don't know if it was a formal indictment or not, but they did have a picture of him,
Weinberger: a mug shot, as they say, and it was used very widely by a lot of his opponents in that campaign. But that was not an atypical kind of thing.

Again, Governor Reagan had nothing whatever to do with that, but Christopher was bitter about it. He did not support him in the final.

But it's very hard to run against somebody without getting awfully mad at them. [laughs]

Morris: Were there ever times when you were in charge of a campaign, or working on a campaign, when a personal attack like bringing up the milk-pricing difficulty was something that you thought would be effective?

Weinberger: No, I never think that's effective at all. I think that turns off the people that I want to attract to a party campaign—this is totally aside from the moral values. I think it's also very bad behavior.

I think it's very bad politics because in California, particularly, I don't think people are guided by that or influenced by that. I think they're turned off by that. I think that the great bulk of the people in California aren't the least interested in either party as such.

They aren't interested in party politics. They don't go around to a lot of meetings and make speeches and go to party conventions. It's a very tiny minority of people who do that. The great bulk of the people in California aren't firmly attached to either party. I think they're disgusted and turned off by one candidate saying you should vote for me because my opponent was indicted, or whatever.

I think particularly if it's not either true or if it's overdrawn, or something of that kind, I think it backfires very quickly. I think it's very bad politics, very bad campaigning. As I say, I also think it is bad morality.

Working with the Reagan Team

Morris: Who do you recall asking you to become active in Ronald Reagan's campaign?
Weinberger: The Governor (candidate as he was then) himself asked some of his people to do so. He had a man named Battaglia who was very active. He at least became active later. Bill Clark became active a little later. Battaglia and two or three other people, who I can't remember right now, asked me and the Governor himself asked me, as I recall it, to be on his negotiating team to try to work out the debates with Brown.

Then Bill Clark. After the election, I worked very closely with him on the development of the proposed executive-branch reorganization. Thereafter I worked almost entirely with Bill Clark and say very little of Battaglia.

Morris: Bill Clark is a new name to us.

Weinberger: Bill Clark is a justice of the California State Supreme Court. Justice William P. Clark.

Morris: Oh, no wonder I don't recognize him by that informal title.

Weinberger: You should. [laughter]

He is one of the best men in California. When Battaglia left, Bill Clark became--well, first he was the Governor's cabinet secretary in working on the various--

Morris: Liaisons?

Weinberger: --liaison missions, but mostly the conduct of the government, I suppose. Battaglia had been the executive secretary, in charge of the whole thing. Battaglia left. Bill Clark was appointed to that position and did an absolutely magnificent job and is one of the ablest people, I think, in the state. Then after about two years, he was appointed to the superior court, then appointed to the District Court of Appeal, and then was appointed to the Supreme Court. And he's a very young man.

Morris: All in fairly short order. He moved up quite quickly.

Weinberger: Reasonably so. Yes, two-year intervals.

Morris: So the two of you were working on this executive reorganization during the--

Weinberger: --in the transition period after the election; before the inauguration.

Morris: You have a long history in that. I came across a note that you testified before some legislative hearings on government reorganization during Brown's administration.
Weinberger: Yes. Because I had done some in my legislative work on the water department and the alcoholic beverage department. Way back.

Morris: Did you work with Bert Levit on government reorganization? He also has a great interest in effective operations.

Weinberger: He was the finance director previously. Let's see, I guess—I don't think he was finance director under Brown—

Morris: He was for a short while, the first six months or so.

Weinberger: Yes. Generally, I did not work terribly closely with him, but I know him very well.

Morris: He was then chairman of Brown's committee—the committee that Brown appointed to look into reorganization.

Weinberger: Yes. And we went over a lot of the basic ideas I had. When I'd been in the legislature in '53, '54, '55, I'd been very interested in that aspect of it and alcoholic beverage control reorganization and the state water department and a state department of revenue.

I was consulted by Bert Levit and we talked about some of those matters. Yes, that's right. He was Brown's finance director for the first few months.

Morris: Right. Just to get Brown started.
VIII CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Morris: This is time to wind up.

Weinberger: Have to, unfortunately.

Morris: It looks as if not only party organization but governmental organization is kind of the central theme of your work in public life.

Weinberger: I was interested in all the state issues. The reorganization was designed to enable the state government to handle these issues better, more expeditiously, more efficiently.

So I was interested in organization from that point of view, but ultimately, I was interested in the solution of problems and working on issues.

Morris: Organization as a means of solving problems. Is it a continuous matter?

Weinberger: Oh, yes.

Morris: Would you ever evolve an organization which could then continue to function well as conditions change?

Weinberger: You can in a broad sense, yes, I think we've done that with Alcoholic Beverage Control. I think we've done that in water, although the water's been tampered with a bit since I left.

The problems change, but you can get an organizational structure that can deal with most of the problems, just as a broad, written constitution can serve as a charter for quite a long time.

Morris: Are there any other things that I haven't thought to ask you about this?
Weinberger: [laughingly] I'm sure there are, but I can't think of them. What I'll have to do is refresh my own memory by going back to some articles and my own papers and I plan to do that if I ever get around to writing this book or these books I've been talking about.

Morris: Good. Maybe when the transcript comes, you might, if you have time, do some of that checking. If something turns up that looks like a particularly relevant report or memo we'd like to include it with your interview.

Weinberger: Yes, to try to develop that a little bit more. Do you have quite a few of these oral histories already?

Morris: We start state government history documentation from the Warren years; we have about forty-five volumes, some of which go back to the 1920s and 1930s.

Weinberger: Oh, that's good. I'd like to look at some of those.

Morris: I'd be happy to send you a list of those we've interviewed.

Weinberger: Yes, I would like to see that. That might be very good. There might be a lot that people that are telling you that is quite different from what I'm telling you. Maybe that's just because they have better memories or more vindictive memories, you never know. [laughs]

Morris: What we want is the variety of observations, from different points of view.

Weinberger: Surely. Well, every event looks different from the vantage point from which different people view it, and there've been a lot of very successful novels written on the basis of taking one set of events and having eight or ten or twelve different characters examine it. That was Durrell's Alexandria Quartet series of novels based on that whole idea.

Morris: Fascinating, yes.

So that these interviews will all be there for the writers of future history, as well as novels.

Weinberger: Well, I hope to be. [chuckles]

[End of Interview]
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