



Earl Warren Oral History Project

The Warrens: Four Personal Views

Horace Albright

"Earl Warren Job Hunting at the Legislature"

Irving and Jean Stone

"Earl Warren's Friend and Biographer"

Betty Foot Henderson

"Secretary to the Two Warrens"

Benjamin H. Swig

"Shared Social Concerns"

**Interviews Conducted by
Amelia S. Fry
Miriam Feingold
Wendy Won**

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Introductory Materials

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Preface

The Earl Warren Oral History Project, a special project of the Regional Oral History Office, was inaugurated in 1969 to produce tape-recorded interviews with persons prominent in the arenas of politics, governmental administration, and criminal justice during the Warren Era in California. Focusing on the years 1925-1953, the interviews were designed not only to document the life of Chief Justice Warren but to gain new information on the social and political changes of a state in the throes of a depression, then a war, then a postwar boom.

An effort was made to document the most significant events and trends by interviews with key participants who spoke from diverse vantage points. Most were queried on the one or two topics in which they were primarily involved; a few interviewees with special continuity and breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. While the cut-off date of the period studied was October 1953, Earl Warren's departure for the United States Supreme Court, there was no attempt to end an interview perfunctorily when the narrator's account had to go beyond that date in order to complete the topic.

The interviews have stimulated the deposit of Warreniana in the form of papers from friends, aides, and the opposition; government documents; old movie newsreels; video tapes; and photographs. This Earl Warren collection is being added to The Bancroft Library's extensive holdings on twentieth century California politics and history.

The project has been financed by four outright grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a one year grant from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission, and by gifts from local donors which were matched by the Endowment. Contributors include the former law clerks of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Cortez Society, many long-time supporters of "the Chief," and friends and colleagues of some of the major memoirists in the project. The Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation have jointly sponsored the Northern California Negro Political History Series, a unit of the Earl Warren Project.

Particular thanks are due the Friends of The Bancroft Library who were instrumental in raising local funds for matching, who served as custodian for all such funds, and who then supplemented from their own treasury all local contributions on a one-dollar-for-every-three dollars basis.

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

Amelia R. Fry, Director Earl Warren Oral History Project Willa K. Baum, Department Head

30 June 1976

Regional Oral History Office

486 The Bancroft Library

University of California at Berkeley

Key Participants to the Earl Warren Project

Principal Investigators

* Deceased during the term of the project

Lawrence A. Harper

Ira M. Heyman

Arthur H. Sherry

Advisory Council

Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong *

Walton E. Bean *

Richard M. Buxbaum

William R. Dennes

Joseph P. Harris

James D. Hart

John D. Hicks *

William J. Hill

Robert Kenny *

Adrian A. Kragen

Thomas Kuchel

Eugene C. Lee

Mary Ellen Leary

James R. Leiby

Helen McGregor *

Dean E. McHenry

Sheldon H. Messinger

Frank C. Newman

Allan Nevins *

Warren Olney III *

Bruce Poyer

Sho Sato

Mortimer Schwartz

Merrell F. Small

John D. Weaver

Project Interviewers

Miriam Feingold

Amelia R. Fry

Joyce A. Henderson

Rosemary Levenson

Gabrielle Morris

Special Interviewers

Orville Armstrong

Willa K. Baum

Malca Chall

June Hogan

Frank Jones

Alice G. King

Elizabeth Kirby

Harriet Nathan

Suzanne Riess

Ruth Teiser

Earl Warren Oral History Project

The Warrens: Four Personal Views

Earl Warren Job Hunting at the Legislature

Horace Albright

**An Interview conducted by
Wendy Won**



**Horace M. Albright
Superintendent of Yellowstone National
Park
1919**

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Interview History

This tiny interview with Horace Albright carries a double significance. It is narrated by a classmate of Earl Warren's to whom great credit is due for the dreams, the pursuit, and the realization of the Earl Warren Oral History Project. As an interview, it relates the episode in the life of Warren that marks his crucial entry into a life of public service.

Horace had been our friend and advisor for many years when he dropped by the office to tape this during a visit to the campus March 15, 1974, as one of the One Hundred Distinguished Fellows of the university. Although none of the regular interviewers were in at the time, he had told us the story previously and knew the exact piece of puzzle he was to preserve for posterity. With administrative assistant Wendy Won serving as impromptu interviewer, he did just that.

Twelve years before, in 1962, during the fiftieth reunion of that remarkable Berkeley class of 1912, it was Horace and Newton Drury who introduced us (Willa Baum and myself) to Chief Justice Earl Warren. It had not been easy for them to arrange that meeting. In Warren's closely-packed schedule, the reception at The Bancroft Library seemed to be the most likely time and place among the chain of festivities.

Horace's wife, Grace, had stationed herself at various strategic locations to keep tabs on the route of the Chief Justice, and from Alumni House she called in, "He just left here and he's heading toward the library." That was our signal to go downstairs and join Drury and Albright at the reception. The choreography had been planned by the Albrights, and it worked brilliantly. Over cups of punch introductions were made, and we mentioned that we hoped he would start thinking of documenting his life. Horace got right to the point. "You ought to get busy on an oral history, Earl. You know The Bancroft—they do a good job, and after all this *is* your alma mater."

Warren said he wanted to consider it, would like to do it if he could find the time, and invited correspondence on the subject. Since he was on the bench, he felt it would be inappropriate to include his U.S. Supreme Court career, so a cut-off date of 1953 was agreed upon for the project research. In the months and years that followed, our office searched for sources of funding while Albright never ceased in his efforts to keep the project alive in his classmate's mind.

Whenever their paths crossed, Horace brought up the subject of oral history. In September of 1963 the Albrights were touring the Island of Rhodes; the Warrens and the Drew Pearsons, cruising the Mediterranean with *Washington Post* owner

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Katherine Graham, happened to drop anchor to look around the island. Horace, hiking down the dusty mountainside from the Acropolis, suddenly recognized his classmate in the group below him on the road. Neither could quite believe the coincidence of their meeting, but after the initial surprise, Horace reminded Warren of his promise to do an oral history project. (As a glimpse into Warren's vacation mood, Horace told us later that Warren asked, "Where's Grace?" "Oh, she's down the hill in that shop somewhere," answered Horace. The Chief Justice found her, studiously surveying an embroidered Greek dress in a mirror as she held it before her. Warren crept up behind her, put his hands over her eyes, and kissed her before she could see him.) There were other reminders to follow throughout the sixties.

When a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities started the project in 1969, Horace supplied support and names of donors to help raise the necessary matching funds. As research got underway, he contributed suggestions to the "potential interviewees" file, and he stood ready to make introductions when we needed to contact persons unaware of the project.

We have told Horace that he may be known to history as a father of the National Park Service, but we hope his future biographers will also note that he and Newton Drury share the fatherhood of the Earl Warren Oral

History Project.

Amelia R. Fry
Project Director
Earl Warren Oral History Project
1 December 1975
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

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Horace Albright Remembers Earl Warren Job Hunting at the Legislature

Won: I'm so glad you dropped by. I can tape record that Warren story we've been so anxious to hear.

Albright: Mrs. Fry wanted me to say a few words about a contact I had with Chief Justice Warren just after he was discharged from the army in 1919. He had been an officer in the army, and when he was discharged, which must have been in late February or March, he appeared in Sacramento looking for work.

I was there at the time promoting some legislation. The legislation I was working on was a bill to authorize the ceding by California of exclusive jurisdiction over Yosemite, Sequoia, and Lassen National Parks to the federal government. This meant that if the state ceded its exclusive jurisdiction, it would have no more power over the patrolling and protection of the parks; the U.S. Park Service would take over all police work. Everything in the park would be under federal jurisdiction, except the state would retain the right to tax and also issue fish and game licenses. In almost every other respect, the state jurisdiction over all three parks would go to the federal government. That was the job I was assigned to do.

You might say it was a lobbying job, because I had to go up there to Sacramento and help move the legislation along. We had a senator from Riverside who was handling the bill in the senate, and Charlie Kasch, an assemblyman from Ukiah, who was handling it in the lower house. He had been in college with Chief Justice Warren and me. He was in the class ahead of us, the class of 1911. He had also had a year or more at Harvard. He was a lawyer and a very able fellow.

This particular morning, I was with Charlie Kasch at his desk waiting for the session to begin. Everybody was taking their seats. Some had constituents with them or people who wanted to talk to them. They sat there and had their conversations and discussions.

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As I say, I was sitting there with Assemblyman Kasch when Earl Warren came in. He was just out of uniform and just out of the army. He was seeking the help of Charlie Kasch because he had known him in the university just as I did. He said that he was looking for work and would like to get a chance to work at the capitol during this session of the legislature, if he could get a job. Charlie Kasch promised to help him in every way he could. Charlie didn't know what he could do, but said he'd look around, and he told Earl Warren to do the same thing—if he found any openings, come back to him. If he could help, he'd do what he could to get the place for him.

I just listened to them. Of course, I welcomed Earl Warren back as my classmate—I hadn't seen him since he went into the war. I stayed on to discuss my bill with Assemblyman Kasch and Warren left and went about his quest for a job.

The next morning or the following morning at about the same time, we were again at the assemblyman's desk. The legislature hadn't begun its proceedings. Earl Warren was very happy—he'd just landed a job, clerk of the Judiciary Committee of the Assembly. It was a very good one, even better than he expected.

I think he held that position all the rest of the session of the legislature, which in those days didn't run as long as it does now—it adjourned sometime before summer, I think.

That was just an incident of his life that Assemblyman Charlie Kasch, who I think is now dead, and I witnessed together—Earl Warren just coming out of the army and looking for a job in Sacramento. I don't know if that's in the history you've got so far.

Won: It may not be.

Albright: I think it's something that should be included.

Won: Yes, I agree. That is amazing that he went all the way from a clerk in the state assembly to the Supreme Court.

Albright: I think it was while he was there with the legislature, that he met the district attorney of Alameda County. He came on down here as assistant district attorney or something like that. That's where he was until he ran for attorney general some years later.

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My only contact with him later was at reunions that occurred about every five years.

Won: It's wonderful that you were able to keep contact; that Class of 1912 certainly is an unusual class.

Albright: Yes, it certainly is. We had about seventy-five at our 60th reunion a few years ago, and in 1972 I think we had about seventy there. There may have been some wives counted in. [Laughter]. It was a class where there was a good deal of marriages inside the class; the boys married the girls of the class. I did myself; we've been married fifty-eight years.

Won: Congratulations Mr. Albright. You're an amazing man. Thank you for coming by our office.

End of Interview

Addendum

While having lunch at the Faculty Club, University of California, Berkeley, with Newton Drury and Amelia Fry, Horace Albright was reminded by classmate Newton Drury that Charles Kasch had put two jobs together to create one that would pay a living wage for Earl Warren. Kasch was in the Assembly only one term; his starting Earl Warren on a career of public service may have been the most significant task he accomplished.

Transcriber: Lee Steinback

Final Typist: Elizabeth Dubravac

Amelia R. Fry
21 March 1975

Earl Warren Oral History Project

Earl Warren: Four Personal Views

Earl Warren's Friend and Biographer

**An Interview conducted by Amelia R. Fry
Miriam Feingold**

Irving and Jean Stone



Irving and Jean Stone

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Interview History

Date of Interview: 2 April 1970

Place of Interview: The Claremont Hotel, Berkeley, California

Those Present: Irving Stone and Jean Stone; interviewers Amelia Fry and Miriam Feingold

Irving Stone, with the assistance of his wife, Jean, produced the first biography of Earl Warren. [Stone, Irving. *Earl Warren: A Great American Story*. New York, Prentice-Hall, 1948.] Here the Stones tell about their whirlwind of research, interviewing the Warrens and close associates, and writing during the warm-up for the 1948 presidential campaign in which Warren was to become the running mate of Thomas E. Dewey. Selected anecdotes such as Governor Warren's unexpected switch from a presidential hopeful to a vice presidential candidate, and the Warrens and the world of art, are also included.

For this interview the Stones did not have the luxury of our usual forewarning—a letter and a proposed interview outline. They did have a telephone call minutes before the session began. It is a tribute to their open hospitality and patience that, facing a heavy schedule that day as a key honoree in the University of California's centennial celebrations, Mr. Stone did not challenge us for our calloused presumptuousness nor slam down the receiver because he had yet to eat breakfast. Instead, he asked only that we allow him a few minutes to wake up thoroughly, finish his coffee, and then grant him our forbearance if he and his wife should not be quite dressed for the day.

In exactly twenty-five minutes the robed-and-slippered Stones ushered us into their suite in Berkeley's hillside Claremont Hotel. In addition to their natural social grace, it was their loyalty to the University of California and their admiration for Earl Warren that made the taped conversation an easy one. It required little preparation for the relevant stories and insights the university would want to preserve about Earl Warren, for he knew them well. After a short discussion about the Stone papers we had seen in the UCLA Department of Special Collections, he plunged into the taped reminiscences.

It is no secret that oral history transcripts, when sent to seasoned authors for review and approval, frequently come back rewritten into the style of prose that the author has spent years of his life developing. Not so Irving Stone. Nor Jean Stone, although she has been his "board of editors" ever since his 1934 *Lust for Life*. They recognized the importance of the spontaneous flow of conversation embodying their on-the-spot nuances and personality, and restrained their combined literary hands. In a cover letter when he returned the manuscript, April 2, 1975, Mr. Stone wrote, "I have made a few corrections and additions. As you say, it is very informal, but that was implicit in the nature of our discussion."

So this transcript, then, is a jewel of an interview in which we, the interviewers, broke all our own rules before breakfast, and the Stones' own perceptiveness produced exactly what was sought.

Amelia R. Fry
Interviewer-Editor
18 February 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

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I. The 1948 Republican Campaign for Vice-President

Pre-Convention Media Interest

Fry: What we'd like to ask you about is the background to the book you wrote about Warren.¹ We've taken a lot of material for our project from the notes of your interviews with people around

Warren— your files in the UCLA Department of Special Collections.

I. Stone: Did you get to my notes on Warren himself?

Fry: No. How much time did you spend interviewing Warren?

I. Stone: Oh, we spent the better part of a week with them up in Sacramento.

J. Stone: There should also be my notes from the interviews I did with Nina in Santa Barbara.

Fry: Are those notes with Governor and Mrs. Warren open?

I. Stone: Of course. If there's anything closed in Earl Warren's life, I don't know what it is.

Would you like me to tell you a little about the book?

Fry: Yes, I'd like you to.

I. Stone: That was 1948—the vice-presidency race.

It goes back a little way, and I won't go back into our friendship with the Warren family at the moment, because that would take me too far

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back, but I'll tell this particular story.

Life magazine ran a series in 1948 about who the Republicans should nominate. They chose Dewey, Stassen, Vandenberg, Warren—and I've forgotten— you check it. You'll find this in the *Life* magazine files.²

I gather that the person who suggested that I do the Earl Warren manuscript was Palmer Hoyt, who was owner-publisher and editor of the *Denver Post*. (I am not certain; you can check that very easily.) How it came about: Warren was in Denver, I gather, on his way out West, and told Palmer Hoyt that *Life* was going to do this series. This was the kick-off series, really, for shaping up the four or five hopefuls for the Republican nomination.

Warren and Palmer Hoyt were discussing who should do his chapter for *Life*. This was a very delicate matter, you know, because if you are a Republican and a liberal one, you don't want somebody to the right doing your chapter. That harms you before they look at a page. On the other hand, if you are going to get a liberal, you don't want him too far to the left because that is *worse* !

So, for their own reasons (and I wasn't at the interview), Palmer Hoyt suggested to Warren that I do his chapter. Warren very heartily agreed; Warren may have asked. Palmer Hoyt takes the credit for it. In any event, the editor of *Life* magazine called me at my home in Beverly Hills and told me what they were doing—the series—and asked if I would do the one on Earl Warren.

Now, it just so happened that only the evening before, I had read the one on Harold Stassen.³ I thought that the author and the magazine had used that article to whip up the Republican cause. So I said to the editor, "I have to make sure of one thing. If you think you are going to use me to

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help the Republican party in the election, you are wrong. If you think you are going to get a partisan piece, you are wrong again. If I do a piece about Earl Warren, I am going to do an objective piece with no idea that it is going to help the Republican party *per se* in the

election, because Earl Warren is as good a liberal as any Democrat, and most of the Democrats in California voted for him anyway. This is going to come out to be a Republican-Democratic-liberal *whole* piece and it isn't going to serve your purposes."

So the editor said, "Well, we know there is a bit of that in the Stassen, but we didn't intend it. That is not in our minds. We want an objective piece and everything that's good about the liberal movement and Republican or Democrat." He said, "You do your *own* piece. We won't interfere with you. You have absolute freedom to do exactly what you want."

I said, "Under those circumstances, yes." I said, "Oh, I have to make sure that the governor wants me to do the piece."

He said, "The governor has already said he wants you." I said, "Well, I have to confirm that, so I'll call you in a couple of hours."

So I called up to Sacramento and told the governor what had transpired and asked him if he would like me to do the piece. He said he'd be delighted; he had discussed it prior to that.

So with that condition in mind, I was in the middle of a book, but I took off time. I had learned that the Stassen piece had been written by a Washington journalist. He'd left his office early of a Friday afternoon, like maybe two o'clock, and by Sunday night the piece was finished. But we came up to Sacramento and had a long talk. [To Mrs. Stone] At that time we spent just a day or two?

J. Stone: Just about two days. But you forgot that we had already done the Town Hall broadcast. ⁴

I. Stone: The interesting thing was that I finished the

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article, I sent it in, the editors were highly pleased, and then— *nothing* !

The weeks went by. I wondered what in the world! The articles were supposed to follow each other in two-week periods, or perhaps three, and nothing came out!

So I got in touch with somebody at *Life* and found out that they had just about decided that they were going to abandon the series. [To Mrs. Stone] Had there been one other piece at the time? The Dewey piece?

J. Stone: I think there had been one other piece.

I. Stone: [To Mrs. Fry] Would you check the *Life* magazine series? I am not sure, but maybe the piece on Dewey had come, and then they decided they were going to abandon the series. There was no problem of pay; they had sent me the check immediately.

So I called the governor and I told him this; I told him that they were in the process of abandoning the project. It was the only time in my life I had ever heard the governor mad.

He said, "That's awful. I wouldn't do that to a dog!" This was his exact expression.

So I said, "You can't do anything about this because you are involved. Let *me* call *Life* magazine again. Let me pull up my stiffest protest about this."

J. Stone: I think they had run three of them already.

I. Stone: Anyway, they stopped short. He wasn't the last; I think there was one besides him. But he was outraged and rightly so, because he had been announced in the magazine.

But anyway, I called back and I made it very plain that although they may not have intended this series to be political in the beginning, they were now turning it into the worst kind of politics: the American public would assume that either they couldn't get a good enough piece or the man wasn't

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important enough to have a piece published about him, and that they couldn't do this.

J. Stone: Or that the Republicans shouldn't have him in mind to nominate at all.

I. Stone: Or that the Republicans should drop Warren and whoever the last one was, in terms of their own position on the American scene. In addition was the fact that I hate like hell to waste my time on unpublished stuff.

And they said, "We see your point of view and we'll talk it over." The next day they called back and said, "Okay, we're running the next article or two." And it *did* run.⁵

Then, Town Hall of the Air—remember that radio program?

Fry: Yes.

I. Stone: They called me and asked me if I would come up to— I think it was Phoenix—and do a panel show.

So I went on the air for Earl Warren and with the four representatives of the other four candidates. I remember that the Dewey man was enormously effective. He was a professional politician out of the East, but without any of the unfortunate connotations. He was very smooth, very knowledgeable, very practiced in radio. The Taft man was very good. I don't know how I was, but we did get coverage on the whole thing.

J. Stone: I'll tell you what one side thought. The electrician up in the booth, the one who mixes to send it out. He was evidently for Earl Warren. Whenever the applause came through, as you were talking, he would hike it up for Earl Warren!

I. Stone: And he would turn it down for the others. [Laughter]

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J. Stone: So you see, there's lots of people who could influence!

I. Stone: Then I was to give a two-week class at the University of Indiana that summer. I was still in the middle of my book. We had our bags packed. We had a big red convertible and I think the bags were already in the back of the red convertible when the phone rang from an old friend of mine at Prentice-Hall, publishers in New York, by the name of Ken Giniger. He said, "Irving,..."

Warren's Decision to Run

I. Stone: This was after the nomination. Let me go back to the convention. Was that in Philadelphia in 1948?

Fry: Yes, right.

I. Stone: We had dinner at Santa Monica with the Warrens. The Warrens I think were visiting in that big, log wood cabin that was often loaned to them, and we went out there. They invited us to dinner.

We had a drink.

Then we went down to what had been Marion Davies' home. It was then a private restaurant club and the Warrens took us to dinner. We talked about the coming convention and his chances, how things would line up.

Then he said to me, "One thing I want to assure you is that I will not, under no circumstances will I, take the vice-presidential nomination."

I said, "Well, I don't think you ought to either. I don't think you ought to be second man in any of these contests. I think you can afford to wait another four years, if that's the best they have to offer you."

So we parted on that assurance.

I was listening very closely to the radio to the Republican convention. I was up on the Russian

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River with some friends on a ranch and I was glued to that radio. And, lo and behold, Dewey gets nominated, and Earl Warren is nominated for the vice-presidency and *takes* it! Which *absolutely floored me* !

I might be a little naive about people in the heat of political battle. I remember sending a telegram. I can remember the telegram pretty well. It read:

"Having finally managed to drag my battered carcass up from the pavement, I want to congratulate you on the vice-presidency." [Laughter]

J. Stone: Or "A streetcar ran over me," I think you put it.

I. Stone: Or "A streetcar ran over me, I am now able to send congratulations," and he knew damn well what I meant by that!

J. Stone: He said a streetcar ran over *him*, too.

I. Stone: Yes, he said the same thing to us when he came back and we were in Sacramento to work on the book.

Well, anyway, as soon as we got there, Warren picked us up in the car (we got there about noon, I guess) and took us out to a rather large, impersonal restaurant on the outskirts of town where nobody would pay any attention to us. There he told me why he took the vice-presidency. I think I can reproduce this better at home, but I'll give you an indication of this. It's something that you *ought* to follow through, because it is urgent.

He told me that prior to the convention, he went into New York and had a conference with the money-raisers for the Republican party on Wall Street. (Sounds like today.) And he came out of there aghast, because what these Wall Street bankers and lawyers were saying was that, and I quote him accurately, "What this country needs is a little unemployment. The labor unions are getting too uppity and the wages are rising too fast, and we can't control them and we need to put a damper on unions and labor and to hold down this whole economy, so that we can control it."

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Warren looked around him and he saw that Dewey, whom he considered a conservative Republican, whom I considered a conservative Republican, would be the President: the

speakers of the two houses, who would have been, I think, Halleck and Green (but I'll ask you to check this), were both *ultra* -conservatives.⁶

Warren said, "When I looked at the idea that the President would be a conservative, and that the Speaker of the House and the Senate would be conservatives, and that all this influence would be exerted from Wall Street, all of which was ultra-conservative, and there would be no voice there to speak for any liberal idea or anything for all the things that I fought for all of my life, I decided I could do a better job inside the administration than outside. I decided that I *had* to be in Washington, I *had* to take the nomination, and I had to go through with it."

And that was his explanation.

J. Stone: What really scared him were those two Speakers. He said, "At least if I am Vice-President, I may have a chance to break a vote."

And we've seen it happen so often!

I. Stone: Well, didn't that happen on the ABMs? [Anti-ballistic missiles]

J. Stone: That's right. It *did* happen on the ABMs. It has happened *very* often. Nixon broke one or two votes.

But nobody has this story—NOBODY.

I. Stone: No, we never told it. We've never written any part of it.

Writing the Campaign Biography

I. Stone: Now, let's go back to the book, and this is Ken Giniger on the phone from New York, saying, "Irving,

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we've decided to put out a campaign biography on Governor Warren for the vice-presidency."

I said, "Oh, well, there is very rarely a campaign biography for the vice-presidency." You're puzzled, what are you puzzled about?

Fry: I was puzzled because Prentice-Hall wanted to put out a campaign biography. I had supposed all along that this had been organized by Sweigert and all these people around Warren helping him with his campaign.

I. Stone: Nobody.

Fry: You mean the idea came from the publisher?

I. Stone: Now who Prentice-Hall was talking to in the East about it I don't know, because I wasn't there.

Fry: It could be Dewey, I suppose.

I. Stone: So, he said, anyway, "We have determined to put out a biography. We want to do a big job on it. We've talked around and everybody decided that you're the one who ought to do it."

I said, "Oh, come on. I can't. I've got my suitcases in the car. Jean and I are going to the University of Indiana for two weeks. I am giving a course there. We'll drive there and back." And you know, the usual.

And he said, "Oh, come on, cut it out. You've gone so far with Warren, you can't get off the band-wagon. Now you've *got* to do the book."

So I talked it over with my wife, and she said okay. Then we realized that she would have to stay here, because I only had a month to write the book—thirty days! Now that is absolutely impossible.

So Mrs. Stone stayed here and worked with Nina and several children (I've forgotten which ones) and also got into the newspaper files and the magazine files at UCLA and did all this research stuff, while I took a plane back to Indiana. I would get up at five in the morning and write on the Warren book until eight. My class, unfortunately, was from

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eight to twelve—the union doesn't allow things like that any more [laughing].

Then at twelve, I would have a swim and a quick lunch. Then I would write until six o'clock, when I would have a very light supper and go back and write until eleven, twelve—as long as I could keep my eyes open—because I had to get this book at least half finished by the time I left Indiana.

Then I came back, and *that's* when we drove up to Sacramento.

J. Stone: I had it all ready to go.

I. Stone: Jean had shaped it up. It was one of these three-day weekends—Friday, Saturday, Sunday. We drove up and there was nobody home. Nine and the children had gone. So we had the whole three days in that old-fashioned mansion.

J. Stone: All I know is, I got into the newspaper morgue and they locked me in and forgot to get me out. This was up in Sacramento, I went down to a newspaper morgue—it was very quiet—Irving was going to pick me up at four o'clock and at six o'clock I was still there!

I. Stone: Then we spent these days with him. We were there about a week. The family came home. We spent as much of the day as he could afford from his office duties. Then we'd have dinner always, and I'd spend the evening with him until he tried to suppress his first yawn. He was very polite, very much a gentleman, and he would do his best to get that yawn not to come until about eleven, because he was up at six and worked straight through all day.

The minute I saw the first yawn I said, "Good night, Mr. Governor, thank you."

But I took some notes, and those I didn't take I dictated from memory when I got back to my studio.

It was a very revealing time. After working with him that closely, my admiration for him was greater than ever.

— 11b —

The one thing he said which I've always remembered and which is a key to his life, I think, is this: We were talking about the governorship and he said, "The ability to govern a state, an American state, is the ability to balance the varying pressures that are constantly being exerted upon you." *To balance the various pressures* —I didn't fully understand it then, but I do now. That was part of his task, to balance the varying pressures.

In any event, I came on down to my home and my editor, Ken Giniger, had met me in Chicago when I came back from Indiana and he lived with us. Mrs. Stone was editing behind me, and

Giniger was editing and copy editing behind *her*, because we had another maybe seven or eight days and the printer was waiting for it. Finally when we finished it, Earl Warren came in very early in the morning to my studio and read the manuscript and made a few suggestions and, inevitably, a couple of corrections of fact. And then we had a great big lunch with everybody sitting around, Giniger and my secretary and Mrs. Stone.

J. Stone: And his people from up north.

I. Stone: Oh, that's right, he had two of his—

Fry: He must have had Sweigert with him?

J. Stone: Sweigert was with him. A dark-haired fellow.

Fry: Yes. How about Verne Scoggins, his press secretary?

I. Stone: I think he had one or two men with him who were reading either ahead or behind him, looking for things that might be wrong.

By six o'clock in the afternoon, he had completed the manuscript. He said, "All is well. I like it. Thank you very much."

Then we tucked it under the arm of Ken Giniger and sped him out to the airport. We put him on the plane. Monday morning it went to press in New Jersey and the book⁷ was out within a week or ten days.

— 12b —

Today they want an eight month lead time on books. Well, anyway, you wanted Warren stories, so there is one.

J. Stone: That's the first time it was ever known that Nina Warren had been married before. Their own children didn't know. I spent a whole morning with Nina up in Santa Barbara, telling her that the time had come. They would have to know. That the presidential spotlight was enormous, and that it would come out. It would be much better for her to tell the children herself than to let it come out in this story.

And we got along. She told me a great many stories, most of those we don't have time for now, but I'm sure that I have records of them in the file. Now the only one who has used that file before you is the fellow who just did a book on Earl Warren.

Fry: John Weaver.

J. Stone: John Weaver, yes, and he went to the files.

I. Stone: Who is the other one? There are two biographies.

Feingold: Katcher, Leo Katcher.

I. Stone: I think it was Katcher, rather than Weaver.

J. Stone: No, it was Weaver.

Fry: Because Weaver was the one who sent me to UCLA.

J. Stone: But that particular story, that may still be in shorthand down there. So if you don't find your material, then you just get in touch with me.

I. Stone: Nina finally decided that she had better let it be said.

J. Stone: We called Virginia in, and told her first. She asked Virginia to tell the other children. They had never known.

I. Stone: You see, the oldest boy is her son by a former marriage.

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Fry: Oh, they didn't know this?

I. Stone: Oh, no, no. No one.

J. Stone: The children didn't know this. *Nobody* knew it. It had never been in the newspaper or anything.

I. Stone: Speaking of Virginia, after the book was out and just as the campaign was about to get into high speed, we went out again to pick up the Warrens and we went out to dinner somewhere, the four of us. Virginia took me aside and said, "You know, I've learned things from your book about my father that I never knew! It is amazing, isn't it?"

On the night of the election, when it was clear that Dewey and Warren had been defeated, I called Warren in San Francisco, and asked how he felt. He replied: "As though a hundred-pound sack of potatoes has been lifted off my back."

— 14b —

II. Introducing Warren to Modern Art

J. Stone: One little story, about the pictures: Earl Warren knew nothing about art, was not interested in it, and there were some pictures hanging...

I. Stone: You have to give the background for it. There was a great collection in Los Angeles, the Arensberg Collection—one of the two or three greatest private collections in America. Arensberg and I were close friends and he was in the process of giving the collection away.

Oh, this was fantastic. He had the "Nude Descending a Staircase", and he had endless Picassos and Klees. It was worth millions and brought millions and millions of dollars.

I persuaded him, finally succeeded in persuading him that he should give them to UCLA, because the collection had been in Southern California ever since they moved it out from Philadelphia, which had been, what?—thirty years before? At least thirty years before.

I thought, you know, that we had squatters' rights down there, and I did convince him. He said, "Well, I can't get UCLA to ask me for it properly." I said, "I'm having dinner with the governor tomorrow night. Suppose the governor asked you, would that be proper?"

He said, "If Governor Warren asked me to give this to UCLA, I will give the collection to UCLA."

Great!

So we go to dinner and we are talking politics mostly, and then as a change of pace, I told him this story and described the collection to him as best as I could.

But unfortunately, because of the enormity of his task and the singleness of his purpose, Earl Warren had never taken the time to learn about modern art. (When I am talking about modern art, I am not talking about the Impressionists or the Post-Impressionists. I am starting with Les Fauves and the Cubists, from there on up.) And this is *not* an easy route to understand. You sort of have to be raised in it and spend enormous amounts of time to be sympathetic to it, and he'd never seen any of it.

J. Stone: He never looked at paintings at that time.

I. Stone: He wasn't interested in painting. It wasn't in his realm just as Sigmund Freud in the book that I am doing now was not. He was not interested in music, either. The other arts, yes—music, nothing. It happens.

So anyway, we had dinner in the main dining room. We came out into what had been the former Marion Davies' home drawing room. There were three or four pictures on the wall which were quite conservative. He said, "Now, tell me about these pictures in relation to what you call modern art."

So I explained, "Well, these are representational pictures, and what I am talking about—" and I won't reproduce the dialogue, but it didn't, couldn't make any sense. How do you explain it to a man who has never *seen* one?

Fry: Especially when you don't have the picture there.

I. Stone: Oh, with the picture I could have made sense.

So finally he said, "Irving, I don't understand what this is all about. It is outside my training, and while I could take your word for it and ask for the collection, it doesn't seem proper to me. I am asking for something that I've never seen, and that I don't understand.

"You tell me that it is worth millions of dollars, and I trust your judgment, but *I* don't know this."

So I said, "I got an idea." This was a Sunday night. "Tomorrow morning, very early, I'll go down

to a Beverly Hills book store and I'll pick up the best book on what we call 'modern art' that I can find, with the best color illustrations, and I'll send it out to you by special messenger.

"But you have to make me one promise."

He said, "What's that?"

I said, "That you'll start at the back, not the front. I want you to see the most extreme forms and work your way backward where they're not all that extreme. I think the sense of shock through this thing will work." So I did that. I sent the book out to him.

He didn't send a direct letter to the Arensbergs, but he did get in touch with the chancellor of UCLA and told him that I had made this presentation, and that he hadn't seen the collection and didn't understand modern art and couldn't commit himself in a letter to Arensberg, but on my judgment, the chancellor should comply with Arensberg's demands and gather what I had said was this enormously valuable private collection.

He had no idea how valuable this thing was, and not only from a money point of view!

The chancellor turned it over to the art people, the art people approached Arensberg. He had a couple of pretty wild demands. One was that a special building be built—and it *deserved* a special building, really, and that eighty percent of the collection be on display at all times, which is pretty rough for a museum! But it is a big collection.

When UCLA got the demands, they said, "We can't comply with these."

"Well, " I said, "there are ways of doing this, for heaven's sakes. Let's try to raise some money and get a start on the building, so Mr. Arensberg will see that we are on our way.

"As far as eighty percent on the walls, you can have eighty percent on the walls for a year or two or three. Mr. Arensberg is approaching eighty.

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After he is dead, whose ghost is going to come in and say, 'Oh, you've only got seventy-nine percent on the wall!' Who cares, you know?"

But in the end, we never got them together, and the collection went on to the Philadelphia Museum of Fine Art.

J. Stone: Where it is now valued at \$160 million! And they gave him everything he asked for, and the people here are kicking themselves! We have nothing, absolutely nothing.

I. Stone: So anyway, that was my art-exhibit work!

Well, how else can I help you?

— 18b —

III. Early Acquaintance

Fry: I'd like to know the dates when you first began knowing him.

I. Stone: I'll have to check them at home.

Fry: Was he DA or AG?

I. Stone: No, he was already governor, I think.

We met this way. I lectured to the Sacramento Women's Club—that may not be the exact title, it may be the Sacramento University Club, I don't know.

After the lecture, Nina came up to me and introduced herself and said the governor couldn't spring himself from the office for the two hours, and that he regretted it, but would I come back to the mansion for a cup of coffee with the governor?

Fry: What did you lecture on? I mean, was it the subject of your lecture or did she just want you to meet Earl Warren?

I. Stone: That's all. It wasn't the subject of the lecture. The governor just wanted—

J. Stone: The usual thing on writing, "Writing in America"—whatever Irving Stone talks about.

I. Stone: So I went back to the mansion and had an hour or two with the governor. I liked him and apparently we liked each other.

Not too long after that we had a preview in our house of a collection of art that was donated to us by artists and interested people for the International Relief and Rescue Committee. The money was

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being used to get refugee artists out of Europe and out of Cuba and places like that.

I was talking to the governor about something or other. I said, "You know, I hate to use you, but this is what this cause is about, and if you are going to be down South or can possibly get the whole press." The next night the art was moving to a big room in the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, where we were going to auction it all off.

I said, "If you could possibly come down and appear at this reception in our home it would do us an enormous amount of good." I named some of the writers and artists we had rescued from Europe and other countries through this kind of effort.

So he said, "I certainly will."

Very shortly after the reception opened, a car drew up and out came Earl Warren and Nina and they came in and mingled with the guests for a couple of hours. Of course, I had notified the press, and the press was there taking pictures and we got marvelous publicity. The next night we had an auction and sold it out. He was willing to do things like that, which was wonderful of him.

Fry: Was that during the war or after the war?

I. Stone: I have a manuscript on this. This was written up by a man in Los Angeles for a magazine which then folded, called *Script* or something like that; Bob Wagner's magazine down South. I've forgotten the name of it. Just a year ago or so, the writer (the magazine folded before the piece could be printed) sent me the manuscript, which I have there at UCLA, and it tells about Earl Warren and the group that was there.

Fry: As Earl Warren knew you and your friendship ripened, did he get to know any more about art, through osmosis?

I. Stone: I think he left the subject alone. [Laughs]

J. Stone: Oh, he used to roam the house because we have many, many paintings.

I. Stone: Oh, yes, he used to roam our house and ask me "What does this mean," and "Why hasn't this got a head?"

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(a piece of sculpture), things like that. I explained it to him—Nina, too. But I never brought the subject up again; I thought it indelicate.

J. Stone: Let me tell you an amusing story. The first time we went to visit for dinner at the governor's mansion in Sacramento, we were there about three minutes early. You know that house: it has a frightful number of flights of stairs.

We went into the first little living room (they had a series of them), and of course all the furniture had been made in the prison. It was boxy and it wasn't a very attractive place. However, on one wall they had a pair of beautiful, beautiful old people—

I. Stone: Portraits.

J. Stone: Portraits, yes. Irving and I looked at them and we said, "Well, isn't it wonderful to have your ancestors—to have pictures of your ancestors, to be able to go back that far!"

So when Nina came in with the governor, we said we'd been looking at the furniture. Of course they laughed and explained how it was all made at the prisons. Then they told us about the problems of housekeeping and the four flights of stairs with five kids.

Then we said, "We admired so much these two portraits of your ancestors," and Nina turned around and said, "I bought them at Gumps last month." [Laughter]

I. Stone: That was one of the most delightful and amazing things about both of them!

J. Stone: Our first time in there, and they were absolutely honest!

I. Stone: They were totally honest.

I've always loved Earl Warren, but there's always a tendency, in the human mind, to exaggerate the closeness of your relationship and perhaps the importance of it. I would like to be on my guard against that, and I would like you to be on your guard against it.

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In fact, you might be on your guard against it with everybody, because it *is* a human failing.

Fry: Yes, everyone feels that he was very close to Earl Warren.

I. Stone: Right. That was Warren's genius.

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IV. Encouraging Warren to Write His Memoirs

I. Stone: The only corroboration I can offer you is something that happened recently. I've been urging Warren, since he finished his governorship, to write a book called *Governing an American State*. It has never been done. To tell the whole story of everything that goes on. How long had it been, ten years?

Fry: That's right, just about ten years that he was governor.

I. Stone: Everything that went on showed the mechanics of how this democracy works. He kept saying, "I can't do it, there are too many people alive that I can't tell stories about." Too many people alive who were involved.

So finally while he was on the Supreme Court, and we were living in Florence writing *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, and I came back here to lecture to the Library of Congress in Washington, and Doubleday Publishing Company gave a dinner party for me. Douglas Black, the president, Ken McCormack— still my editor—came down, put on a beautiful dinner party to which Earl Warren and Justice William O. Douglas came.

And at that time I suggested that in the summers or when he had leisure he ought to think about this book, *Governing an American State*, again because it was getting farther away and perhaps, you know—

He said he couldn't do that or anything else while he was on the bench.

So when he announced his retirement, Ken McCormack (I wrote the note) said, "How about the book?"

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My editor, Ken McCormack wrote to him and asked him if he could see him and talk to him, because they *had* met at my dinner, prior to the Library of Congress lecture.

Ken McCormack went down and talked to him. Warren wasn't sure he wanted to write the book, though he *did* want to write it, but wasn't sure he *could*, and didn't know what kind of book. He had had a *vast* lifetime of work.

So we let it drop at that. It so happened that Earl and Nina were going across to Europe on a ship. I have this letter at home, so you can find out about it, and one of the younger editors, Sam Vaughan, editor for Eisenhower and Truman, was on board ship and they crossed together. They chatted several times but the Doubleday editor felt he ought *not* bring up the subject of the new concept about a book, one which would cover the important issues in Warren's life.⁸ He did drop one gentle hint, but he didn't want to force it on Warren.

So the afternoon of the last night out, the Warrens phone him and asked him if he would come in for a drink. They talked about the book and they figured out a way to do it.

Earl Warren said that he wanted to write it for his older son, who apparently is deep in politics now. They figured out a kind of modus operandi for it. In any event (and you can have a copy of this, I am sure) then came the last paragraph, in which this editor, whose name is Sam Vaughan (brilliant editor) said, "I think that if the Chief Justice will write a book, *we* will have it, because he has talked to you about it and he is not the kind to go and take an agent or a lawyer and get the highest price: that is not Earl Warren's way.

"Another reason that I am quite sure we'll get it is his very high esteem for Jean and Irving." (That is what he called us: Jean and Irving.) So that was a very nice vote of confidence.

Fry: I certainly hope he will write the book. We have

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suggested he might want to come and use our files.

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V. Paula Stone and the UC School of Criminology

J. Stone: One brief story, because this we wouldn't think of down South.

When my daughter was graduated from Berkeley, in Criminology in 1960, she became a parole officer. At that time I think she was working with juvenile delinquents. The University decided that they would abandon that department, that there weren't enough students registered for it, not enough people interested in it. There were only four schools in the United States that had a first-rate course in criminology.

Paula, of course, was heartbroken, because she saw the work that these new young people were doing, coming into the field, no longer the social worker being transferred into correction work.

I. Stone: She wrote us from Florida—a six page letter.

J. Stone: She wrote us a very long letter and told us that this was a terrible thing to happen. Could she have permission to write Earl Warren, and as an alumnus of the University and having been very, very close to it, she was sure that in his present position, particularly, he would know how important that school was, and that he could do something about seeing that UC continued it.

I. Stone: May I add one thing?

This six page letter was the most eloquent and convincing plea as to why the school should be preserved that I ever read in my life about anything.

J. Stone: She said, "After all, I have known him for so many years of my life," while she was growing up, all these particular years, "I think it wouldn't be too

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much if I wrote to him."

I. Stone: I took the letter and I sent it to Earl Warren himself.

J. Stone: She also wrote him a letter.

I. Stone: She wrote him too, but I said, "Dear Governor, I think you ought to read this."

J. Stone: In any event, as the result of the pressure and the plea on the part of Chief Justice Warren, Berkeley retained the School of Criminology.

Fry: He wrote back, then, to the administration? That's interesting.

You have a heavy schedule of activities sheduled today around the campus. I think we should let you get about your business. It was most gracious of you to work us into your early morning schedule this way.

End of Interview

Transcribed by: Arlene Weber

Final Typist: Mary Millman

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Interview Footnotes

1 Irving Stone, *Earl Warren*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948.

2 The series, which runs in *Life* in the issues of February 9, March 1, March 22, and May 10, 1948, features Robert A. Taft, Harold Stassen, Thomas E. Dewey, and Earl Warren, respectively.

3 Roscoe Drummond, "Case for Stassen," *Life*, March 1, 1948.

4 Speech in Irving Stone papers, Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

5 Irving Stone, "Case for Warren," *Life*, May 10, 1948.

6 Speaker of the Senate was Arthur H. Vandenberg; House, Joseph W. Martin, Jr.

7 Earl Warren: A Great American Story, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1948.

8 Now ready for the press at Doubleday to be published in 1975 or 1976.

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Earl Warren Oral History Project

Earl Warren: Four Personal Views

Secretary to Two Warrens

An Interview Conducted by
Amelia R. Fry

Betty Foot Henderson



Betty Foot Henderson
1973

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Interview History

Betty Foot Henderson became a secretary in Governor Earl Warren's office in 1944; in 1948 she was asked to go to the mansion as Mrs. Warren's personal secretary. Her experiences, therefore, have a value for two contexts: the operations of the governor's office, especially the governor's council meetings; and the more personal tasks as partner-in-correspondence with Mrs. Warren, from which vantage point the dynamics of family life and the outlook of the parents and children were especially brought to bear on Honeybear's poliomyelitis crisis in 1950.

On June 15, 1973, Betty Henderson and I met for the first time in her pleasant, tree-shaded home in Sacramento. Her husband, Adin D. Henderson, a retired professor in the Department of Education at Sacramento State College, was present, too, and with their own tape recorder so that Betty could have immediate use of their tape if she needed one in putting together her second book on the families of the governor's mansion. Both were gracious and charming. They produced a camera and snapped photographs of the interviewer— unfortunately not including the interviewee.

Her recall was rich and abundant; her cheerful attitude, even during the pressure of an interview was testimony to her value as Mrs. Warren's private secretary, one easy to live with as well as efficient. When time came for the interviewer's next appointment, neither of us was ready to end the session, so plans were hastily made for Betty to continue the taping, sans a questioner but along the same anecdotal lines. This she did four days later, and the result, labeled "dictation," follows the interview transcript here.

Afterwards, she continued her interest in the project by sending material on her father, Montana's Attorney General LeRoy Albert Foot, photographs of the Warren staff and Mrs. Warren's teas, and, with some prompting, her poetry—after we learned she had been the ad hoc poet laureate of the governor's staff when a rhyme or an epic was needed for staff social functions. Later she turned to more serious poetry efforts.

Through Betty's energies and plans, one of the monthly luncheons of alumnae of the governor's office was planned for the interviewer to bring Warren's former personal secretary, Helen MacGregor, to Sacramento from Oakland. The brief reunion was rewarding in re-establishing old ties wrought by the heat and pressure of a chief executive's office; in addition, scrapbooks were passed around and reviewed, with ultimate disposition discussed. Many a story was shared, and because tape recording was technically impossible in such a large gathering, the group was urged to preserve their recollections of sidelights in a collective, do-it-yourself project. It is to be hoped these tapes will be forthcoming and can be added to the collection of donated Warreniana in The Bancroft Library.

The rough transcript was sent to Betty in January, 1975. She went over it, checked out many names and time sequences, added material in the appendix which had been overlooked during the taping, and answered a page of additional questions from us. When she returned it, her writer's eye moved her to comment that it would improve the manuscript considerably if "the paragraphs were reassembled, chronologically, by subjects, with a generous use of a pair of scissors." She conceded, "that would mean, probably, loss of the interview tone, the 'spontaneity' of the thing, but my, wouldn't it improve it structurally!"

The well-structured, formal treatise on life in the Warren family will come shortly, from Betty's pen; in the meantime, these conversations, although looser, may do just as much to re-create the ambience of that period when the only commercial building on the street where the governor's mansion is was one service station.

Amelia R. Fry, Interviewer
May, 1975
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I Secretary in the Governor's Office

Flexibility

Fry: We can begin with how you got into the fascinating job of secretary both in the governor's office and at the mansion for Mrs. Warren. Or was your work for her later?

Henderson: Yes. You see, it was after Mrs. Warren came back from the 1948 campaign train that I was assigned to work with her, because she was writing thank-you letters and all sorts of letters until four in the morning, and then getting up at seven to pack lunches for the children, and ironing the governor's shirts faithfully, and then still appearing with him at functions and luncheons and dinners, and traveling with him. The press secretary (Mr. Scoggins) realized, as well as the governor, that she was simply overdoing. He said (I was told—I think she told me), "Nina, you're too important to have a nervous breakdown." [Laughter]

And she said, "I'll never have a nervous breakdown."

Then he said, "Well, the way you're working, you're going to collapse."

And she said, "Well, I do get tired"—very matter of fact. He said, "Well, it's more important for you to be able to appear with the governor at a banquet than to have ironed his shirt." And she said, "He likes the way I iron his shirts," [laughter] which of course he did.

So anyway, that's when I got assigned.

Fry: [Laughing] To iron the shirts or write the thank-you notes?

Henderson: To write the thank-yous! To try to help Mrs. Warren so she could let go of some of the things she was overdoing on, and so she wouldn't be writing letters until four in the morning. Bless her heart, she wrote such beautiful letters; it was very hard for her to dictate.

[Husband whispers something.]

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Henderson: He wants me to tell you—oh, you mean on the test. That's how I got into the governor's office in 1944, because I took a legal secretary's test. The first year I think I placed second on the junior legal secretary's exam and twelfth on the senior, but then when I took it later I placed first on the senior, and he wanted me to tell that. [Laughter] But that's how I got in the office, because I was on the state legal secretary list, and they were looking for a legal stenographer to work under Marguerite Gallagher and Mr. Sweigert. I had a friend, Mrs. Bernice Tisdale,¹ who worked for the personnel board, and she said, "Betty, I wish you'd apply."

And I said, "I have no political pull." (This was in 1944.)

She said, "Well, I don't think it matters. They're asking for somebody from the legal secretary list. Of course, it's not a civil service position. It would just be for two or three years, and it would be so interesting."

Well, I admired Earl Warren, as everyone else did, so because she gave me that little push, I went in and made my application and was hired. And I was so surprised.

So, I worked under Marguerite. I had told Mrs. Tisdale when she was talking to me, "I know Marguerite Gallagher," because we'd gotten acquainted on the bus; she was a neighbor of mine.

Fry: Oh, you mean riding to and from—

Henderson: Riding to and from work in Sacramento. So, I said, "I'd love to work under Marguerite." And Mrs. Tisdale said, "Of course you would." So as I say, I got the job. I was there from April 17, 1944, until—when the [Governor Goodwin]Knights left, so did I (Jan. 1959). Then I went back to my senior legal secretary rating. I'd been taking the test through the years to keep on the list.

Fry: Were you hired right at first to work with Mrs. Warren?

Henderson: Oh no, I was hired to work as a legal secretary under Miss Gallagher with Mr. Sweigert.

Fry: Totally in the office?

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Henderson: Totally in the office, yes. And in the office, you had admiration for the family, just because they were a charming family. So, when they came back from the 1948 campaign and I was asked if I would like to have the job of being assigned to Mrs. Warren, I was just thrilled and awed. Then Miss MacGregor talked to me, and began by telling me a Scottish story, about how the village council had chosen a new station-master for the railroad station that went through the village. If I recall correctly, the ticket-taker was the man they chose. He had held his job for a goodly length of time, and while he did not, perhaps, have the education, or the railroad training, or some other qualifications that were usually considered essential, still, through the years he had demonstrated a personal concern for all with whom he dealt, and the council unanimously voted for him. They said of him, "He has the imponderables for the position." And Miss MacGregor told me she felt that that would be true of me, in the liaison assignment.

Isn't that lovely? I have been warmed by that word all my life since.

And, of course, it was just exactly as true of Helen MacGregor, for any and every position she held. Not only did she have all the qualifications, she had such glowing imponderables.

Now, there was nothing in the budget for a secretary to the first lady. My title was "liaison secretary to the governor's mansion," and that is what the title was through the entire Warren administration, I'm sure. I held it for a little more than two years, and then they needed me in other jobs in the office. Of course, I was working out from the office. I would go over to take dictation at the mansion, and then come back to the office to work.

They also had other work for me at the office. For instance, I wasn't a hearing reporter, but it never occurred to me that I couldn't be. So when they asked me to take minutes at the governor's council meetings once a month, I did. They told me it didn't have to be verbatim, so I took as close to verbatim as I could do it. I would have about fifty pages of transcript, and it would take about a week to transcribe, because I would be working the transcription in with other things. Then suddenly they'd find they needed it faster, and then Mrs. Warren would need me, too. So they decided if there was anybody else in the office who could be freed to work with her, maybe I should be back in the office. There was this darling girl, Gwen Couch, who was working under Helen MacGregor, so she finished up the term with the Warrens. But I was on call, available to help Gwen when Mrs. Warren's work got too heavy. It was a nice arrangement to have two people who could take over from each other, or who could help each other.

Fry: I see. So it was kind of a flexible arrangement.

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Henderson: The whole office was that way. Where you were needed, you worked.

Fry: Now, when did this flexible arrangement start with both of you—

Henderson: Well, I'm not sure. I worked all of 1949, and then all of 1950, so it must have some time in 1951. I can't remember the date.

The Governor's Council Meetings

Fry: I want to ask you more about those governor's council meetings.

Henderson: Oh yes, they were fascinating. All the department heads once a month would meet with the governor, and he would have in advance a report from each of them, and Mr. Merrell "Pop" Small, whom you have interviewed, the departmental secretary, would have boiled down those reports into a concise summary. He took the important things, the current news items, out of each report so that there would be a stack like this [measuring about ten inches]. One of my responsibilities was to check that each department had submitted its mimeographed report for the month. Then at the council meeting, the governor would have this short form; he would have read the long ones that seemed, from the short form, important to have read beforehand.

And then all the department heads would sit there, and he would call on them in turn to report. And they would tell, in effect, what they had written. And sometimes he would have a question that would bring out more things, but the important thing that this did was to coordinate the government, really. A department head would make a report about his department, and the governor would say, "Well now, water resources should have an interest in that aspect of it." And the attorney general's office would have an interest in something that was coming up, you know, and you could just feel the aliveness of their interest in coordinating government and in the best possible government.

That was the thrilling thing about working for Earl Warren: it was that you felt that everything he did was focused into trying to make this the best possible government for California that it could possibly be. Of course, that was why we all had him on a pedestal.

But anyway, to go back to the council meeting—then each person in turn, as I say, would talk, and sometimes there would be inter-communication. And I was supposed to try to get verbatim the governor's words, but the rest of it I could get as nearly as possible. And, of course, Earl Warren tended to speak with careful deliberation, which was a blessing. [Laughter]

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So, that was a very exciting experience. I discovered that the only way I could do it was to do nothing at all on Sunday before except get all the rest I could and take a shorthand notebook home and take radio broadcasts for half an hour, about five different times during the day. I couldn't keep up with the radio speech, but the next day, with the men's speaking and trying to carry their points to the governor, my pencil didn't seem like it was going too fast. I could keep up with them.

Fry: So that was the way you kept up your pace—

Henderson: That's right. When I read about Olympic champions reaching a peak, I think of that in a very minor comparison. But that was the way I did it.

Fry: I think it was Dick McGee who was telling me that the governor's council evolved a method in which heads of certain related departments would have their own meeting—was it the morning

before, and the governor's council was held in the afternoon?

Henderson: No, the governor's council in Warren's administration was always from ten to twelve.

Fry: Then maybe they held their small sessions afterwards. Were you aware of them?

Henderson: Well, Governor Warren would call small groups in. Is that what Mr. McGee meant? I thought it was from what developed in the conference. He would say, "This afternoon, would you and you and you come in? I'd like to discuss this more carefully, more fully."

Fry: In Knight's administration the governor's council was not as important, I understand.

Henderson: Well, it was continued. But I wasn't taking notes on the meetings then. Somebody else did. I was in the research section at that time, and the departmental secretary—and sometimes the press secretary— was in charge of the governor's council, because it was all the department heads. But Governor Knight had them very faithfully, as I recall. I don't know that he utilized them, you know, in the way that Warren did. I wasn't there, so I really don't know how he did it.

Fry: We'll just have to find out from someone else.

I'm wondering, for people who will be researching this later, what sorts of things will be found in the minutes of the governor's council? In other words, was it only departmental matters, or did they go into outside problems—social and economic general problems arising in the state? And did they go into legislation?

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Henderson: Not very much. No, it was the physical job of running the state government—I mean what people actually do to make government work. They reported on what had been done this last month. They would give statistics on what had been done this last month in building highways, for instance. Then they would say what they were projecting, perhaps. Now, weren't those governor's council reports kept?

Fry: Yes.

Henderson: Yes, because I remember when I was working with Mr. Small one time, and I said, "You know, these are history on record." And he said, "Oh, absolutely."

Fry: Yes, they are. And when they're available, they'll be quite valuable.

Henderson: Oh, those are still not available? That's a shame, because I would think that the—

Fry: Well, I imagine that in the various departments they are still available because we have departmental reports open, but what was done in the governor's council is sealed until Earl Warren's death.

Henderson: Well, it was a guide to the governor that the work of the state was being done properly and kept up to date.

Now, for example, before I was taking minutes on the council, there was a director of the Department of Motor Vehicles who tried to change over from a hand operation to a machine operation. They just stopped the hand operation, and the whole thing clanked to a stop. They had so much trouble with the transfer that people who bought cars didn't get their pink slips for six months and were arrested in other states for driving cars that they didn't own, and that sort

of thing. The correspondence to the governor became prodigious on that subject.

Fry: So that is why the Department of Motor Vehicles file will be so fat for that year. [Laughter]

Henderson: Yes. And the man resigned. The governor called him on it and called him on it, and he couldn't untangle it. Three of the women in the Motor Vehicle Department really untangled that—three supervisors. They got a basement in the Memorial Auditorium, and they set up a work staff down there. They continued with the hand operation on an intensified basis down there, under the supervision of these three women, while the bugs were being taken out of the new mechanization of the records. And these three—I don't think they got any recognition, but one of them was Julia Rader and one of them was Nell Kennedy.

Fry: Were they assigned by the governor?

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Henderson: No.

Fry: They were still under the Motor Vehicles head?

Henderson: Yes; they were assigned by whoever succeeded this man—

Fry: Was that Edgar E. Lampton who resigned?

Henderson: I don't know—there was a man named Lampton, and there was a man named Garland, and I have those people all mixed up.

It was early in my years in the office, so it was 1947 when the key punch system was installed.

Fry: Okay.

Henderson: But they said that the correspondence asking about why their previous correspondence hadn't been answered, you know—that sort of thing was stacked on top. People would write to the governor, and the governor would write to Motor Vehicles, and then that correspondence was stacked on top. They said it was just an appalling situation.

Ambience of the Governor's Office

Henderson: But when you worked for Governor Warren, you always had the feeling, "This is a problem. But he can solve it." You just were so confident in his judgment and ability that it—it was a wonderful way to feel. You could work outrageously hard because it was going to accomplish something.

Fry: Did everybody seem to enjoy working hard?

Henderson: Oh yes. Everybody did. It was a *cause* you were working for. You weren't promoting Earl Warren as a politician; you were working for real government, and you had that feeling so ingrained in you that it was just a wonderful way to feel.

Fry: Was this verbalized in the office, that you're here to produce good government, and "We must all work together as a team"?

Henderson: It didn't really have to be.

Something like this motor vehicle situation used what they called the "Form Letter Department." I suppose that's been discussed with you. They would work out the way the governor felt about a subject, and they would work out these very carefully phrased paragraphs that could be assembled to answer a letter. And you

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learned what his policy was, and then the woman in charge of the form letter department² would choose the appropriate paragraphs, and you would type it up and send it with the letter that had been received for the governor's signature or for the signature of the secretary, if it seemed that the secretary should handle that rather than it be something that the governor would have to sign.

Then they would read it, and it would be all ready to mail out, but many times they would add something and send it back, and it would be rewritten. And you never minded, because you knew that every rewriting was going to improve it and make it more personal for the recipient. So, while we called them "form letters," they were far from form. They were personally focused to the person who wrote.

And as I say, they would say, "We must not have a typographical error in a letter that goes out from the governor." And the tone, I think, that verbalized it—they didn't say that we must all pull together as a team; they would say, "The governor wouldn't like to have said this," or, "We must find out what the governor feels about this before we answer this letter." And then the secretary would take it in and find out. It wasn't ever a delineated attitude; it was a spontaneous attitude.

Fry: I have had some complaints that Warren never did thank people enough or show appreciation for hard jobs and long hours spent.

Henderson: Well, let's see—well, at Christmas time he would usually give little speeches at the Christmas parties and say that. And he used the word "we" so much about himself and the office, which I think was very tactful and sort of indicative of him. I don't remember— let's see, did he ever thank me specifically? I don't know. But I *felt* that he appreciated things.

Fry: You didn't miss being thanked at the time?

Henderson: No, it never occurred to me. I couldn't say whether he did or he didn't because I felt that the things I did were appreciated. He would kind of nod and smile. That was a thank you. He could make people cry, too, but that was because you wanted so much to please.

Fry: His immediate assistants, like Bill Sweigert—how did you work with them?

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Henderson: Well, when I first went to the office I was Marguerite's assistant, you see; so I would take Mr. Sweigert's dictation, too, and work with Margeurite and take dictation from her and substitute at her desk when she was gone. At that time, when I first started there, I hadn't yet gotten this feeling of office cohesion. I was an employee just at the beginning. But it didn't take long before you felt—a family situation, almost, in the office.

And I remember one time I was taking dictation from Marguerite. (I read about this sort of thing in John Weaver's book;³ I probably wouldn't mention it otherwise.) Mr. Sweigert had been in conferring with the governor, and he came back, and his face was white. Marguerite looked at

him, and she said, "Bill, he hasn't any right to do that to you!"

And Mr. Sweigert said, "Oh, Marguerite, think of the pressure that man is under every minute of every day." And in saying that, his color came back, and he went and sat down and started making phone calls.

I'm kind of obtuse about personal relationships, I think, so it wasn't until I thought about it afterwards that I realized that probably something Mr. Sweigert had said had precipitated an argument at the time, and that Marguerite was aware of the fact that he was going in expecting an argument, so she was aware of the fact that he came back momentarily rebuked.

Then afterwards, many times when somebody would say that the governor was upset about this or that, I would think of Mr. Sweigert's having said that. The staff understood it. And it wasn't often; it really wasn't often. But he was a perfectionist. You *never* sent him a letter with a typographical error.

Fry: Oh! I'm just sitting here thinking of the letters I've sent to him.

Henderson: It would go to about three or four secretaries, you see, so it wouldn't have a typographical error when he got it. It was very good practice, which I can't do any more. [Laughter] You were working at a peak of intensity. And I sometimes wonder how many years we could have gone on doing that.

Fry: Yes, if he hadn't been called to be the Chief Justice.

Well, was this true under Knight, or were there some variations?

Henderson: Well, we carried on—I think Knight benefitted from this perfectionist attitude, and he kept the staff, and we did carry on with it. But there was a relaxing of that intensity; Knight was not that intense a person, you know. He was far more jovial. Warren was good humored, but he didn't have that spontaneous humor.

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The Speech-writing Process

Henderson: I remember one time—now, one of the things I did with Governor Warren that I always treasured was taking dictation on speeches. I was single, so I was always available for the overtime or the—

Fry: The sudden—

Henderson: —the Sunday calls. And besides, everybody knew I liked to take dictation, and I was so proud of working with him. So, as I say, one time we were working on a speech and something came up that we were working on, and I had a joke that just fit. I said, "Governor, you could use this joke." So I told him. I've forgotten what the joke was now.

And he looked at me and kind of smiled and said, "Well, I think I'll leave jokes to the master of ceremonies." [Laughter]

Then another time I was over in the mansion, and we were working in the breakfast nook. This was late in the evening and the speech had to be ready Monday, and this was a Saturday evening. It had gone on to about ten o'clock trying to put a speech together, and he was trying to find something to say, you know. The secretary [Mr. John French] was there and I, and I said

"You know, Governor, it really wouldn't matter that much. If you just went there and said you were glad to be there, everybody would be so glad that you were there that that would be enough." And he looked at me and kind of half smiled, and then he shook his head and said

"No, when I accept an invitation to make a speech, I must give them something." And I felt rebuked, but I also, there again, was impressed with the man, that he had that attitude.

Years later, I told Mr. Small that anecdote, and he laughed and said, "Don't think he wasn't pleased just the same." And then thinking back and remembering his expression, I think he was. He was pleased—

Fry: —that people would have appreciated the fact that he was there?

Henderson: Just being there, yes.

Fry: Well, how did he write speeches? Can you just give us a picture of what this man went through to pull a speech together?

Henderson: Oh yes. They were ordeals, really, because he took them so seriously.

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Well, say that he was going to give a talk on the dedication of a portion of a highway: the Division of Highways would send his research secretary all the material they could find about that highway and about the highway program in California. Of course, we would have had the governor's reports to draw on too. So the research secretary would sit down under this array of facts and statistics and start trying to put a speech together. And he would think, "Well, now, maybe in this instance the governor could stress this fact" (highway safety, maybe, or the distribution of agricultural products). So he would put that together as a tentative speech, and I never had any qualms about suggesting words and phrases and telling him I thought that was poor, so I did. I worked under a man who would take that.

Fry: This was the research secretary?

Henderson: Yes.

Fry: Who was that?

Henderson: Well, Malcolm Harris was the last one in Governor Warren's office. There had been a series of them. There was a man named John French, who went to the federal government. There was a man named Roger Deas, and he went to the American Can Company in Connecticut. I still exchange Christmas cards with him. Let's see, who else? Mr. Small was—even when he was departmental secretary; and, of course, Mr. Scoggins, the press secretary, had done this in the beginning—had worked with the governor on his speeches. Those two (the governor and Mr. Scoggins) must have had parallel thoughts and attitudes about things. And Mr. Sweigert often wrote these first drafts of speeches. And the legislative secretary, Mr. Vasey, would write speeches about legislative matters.

Marguerite used to call me "the peripatetic secretary," because I would hop around and get assigned to this one and that one. I used to say that stenographic work in itself is dull and three years any place is long enough, but in the governor's office you were doing so many different things that it wasn't dull. It was—those fifteen years were just [snaps fingers] like that.

Fry: I interrupted you in the speech writing process. The research was being done—

Henderson: The research was being done, and then almost paragraph by paragraph, you'd type it out as a rough draft. Then the secretary would say, "Well, we'll submit this to the governor." So we would retype all those rough draft paragraphs into a draft of the speech with an original and a carbon copy, and he'd go in to the governor, who'd take the original, and he'd take the carbon. They'd sit down, and

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sometimes I would go along with my notebook, and they would take it all apart and put it all together again. And the governor might have completely different ideas, but he would launch himself from this preliminary work. I never worked with him on any speech that he discarded entirely and did a new one.

Fry: Did he never use much humor in his speeches? Were they all serious?

Henderson: His humor was anecdotal. Once in a while, there would be humorous things that he would say, but he didn't tell jokes as such, as I recall. He would have something funny that had happened, but it was—I know that people would laugh in the course of hearing his speech, and he'd stop and smile, but it wouldn't be because he told a joke.

And then, you see, following him Governor Knight came in, and Governor Knight was like Abraham Lincoln: he used jokes to emphasize the points he was trying to make. And unfortunately for Governor Knight, after Warren, it made people accuse him of levity, and perhaps of not taking the problems as seriously. It was—it took a while for the public to recognize he was just as serious about government, but he was trying to point it up and to emphasize it with these jokes that he would tell.

The Foots: Family Background in Public Service

Fry: I want to switch a minute to your point of view here, because when I was talking to [Earl Warren's former private secretary] Helen MacGregor on the telephone yesterday, she said that you had a sense of public propriety because your father had been the attorney general of Montana. Is that right?

Henderson: Yes.

Fry: Can you spell out what sort of experience this had given you, to have a father who was attorney general? Were you involved at all in his public service activities in Montana when you were growing up?

Henderson: I worked in his office sometimes. This in a way was nepotism, I suppose, but I worked for nothing, for the experience, when I first started taking shorthand. In fact, I worked in campaigns. One of the first things I remember when I was a child was counting out campaign cards. Somebody counted out ten, and then I would measure others, and put them crosswise. And then presently, I learned to count to ten and put them crosswise to each other so that they could pick up ten or twenty or fifty—

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Fry: For the workers to take and pass out?

Henderson: For the workers to take. But as I say, when he was attorney general I worked for nothing a couple of summers, and then the law clerk in the office told my father, "Betty should be paid

for that work. She does a good job, and she should be paid for it." So I was paid the minimum salary for two different girls when they went on vacation, and I was very pleased to be doing that.

My father was a man something like Earl Warren. I mean, to him government was a very serious personal responsibility. So I was able to make that transition; I was able to respect and recognize Warren's point of view from having had that background.

Fry: Since we have Montana material stashed in The Bancroft, I'd better get the name of your father and when he was attorney general. ⁴

Henderson: Oh. LeRoy Albert Foot, L.A. Foot, and he was attorney general from 1924 through 1932. The Democratic landslide in 1932 washed him out of office.

Fry: He was a Republican. A Progressive?

Henderson: Yes.

Fry: What about the social life in the home of the attorney general of Montana?

Henderson: Well, I was never aware of it as "social life." Helena is not a large town, and everybody knew everybody.

Fry: You mean it was on an informal basis?

Henderson: Well, the governor's wife would have teas and parties, and women would call on each other, and there would be luncheons, but not—it wasn't really formal.

Fry: Were you conscious of protocol?

Henderson: Not really.

Fry: —of who would be invited where?

Henderson: No. Miss MacGregor attributed to me more of a background than I had in that, because mostly I was conscious of the fact that you mustn't hurt somebody's feelings by leaving them out, or by inviting

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them when somebody who was not friendly was going to be there. But it was on that basis.

Fry: Social consciousness training.

Henderson: Yes, and very undefined. But, I mean, it was—I think the phrase that my mother raised me with was, "How would you feel if somebody did that to you?" You know.

Fry: Back to the old Golden Rule.

Henderson: Exactly.

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II Secretary in the Governor's Mansion

Private Lives: Nothing to Hide

Fry: I'm so glad you can tell us about life in the mansion, too, because, frankly, I find it very difficult to intrude with interviews with family members, so far. It seems such an invasion of privacy.

Henderson: I know how you feel about this sense of intrusion, because that is exactly the way I felt when I went over to the mansion. I would take mail that had arrived at the capitol over to the mansion with me, and it would say "personal" on it. And I wouldn't have opened it; nobody would have opened it. Mrs. Warren took a handful of that one day, and she kind of smiled and said, "Betty, nothing that comes to our house is personal. If we can't trust our secretaries to keep anything that's confidential, we—" and just let it go at that.

So then I had no qualms about opening the personal mail, except if it came to the children, I didn't open it. But that was her point of view. She said, "We have no secrets." I thought, "How wonderful."

But nevertheless, for the children this growing up in the public eye must have been very difficult. Their driver used to take them— because Mrs. Warren insisted they be driven to school, and the youngsters resented it. So, their driver would let them out about two blocks from McClatchy High School, and they'd get out with their paper-bag lunches, and walk on, and he would drive slowly in sight of them.

Fry: The reason they didn't want to be driven was because this was a big black Cadillac and—?

Henderson: Well, the other kids weren't driven in a chauffeur-driven car to school. It set them apart and made them feel conspicuous. And the driver went along with them on that and didn't tell Mrs. Warren that he did that. If anything had happened in those two blocks, he would have been in very serious difficulties, but nothing ever did.

Fry: This was "Pat" Patterson?

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Henderson: Oh, several of them. There was an officer named Penny, and there was an officer named Sparks, who adored those children and they adored him. And when they left, Sparks corresponded with every one of them. They all came to see him when they came back. Pat Patterson was another one who was very close to all of them.

Fry: Is Sparks still around?

Henderson: No, he died. I think I have a clipping about his death in my clippings. Anyway, as I say, the officers could understand the youngsters' feelings, but still they had to be there. And then when they would come to pick them up after school, they would be parked around the corner come place. So the kids could saunter out of school with their own contemporaries and then get picked up, instead of having the limousine right there. I don't remember the car. I know that it was a big car.

I know that I would be picked up in the basement of the capitol with my sheaf of things for Mrs. Warren, sometimes a cardboard box full, and go over to the mansion. I'd take them up to the library on the third floor, and she would come up to go through them with me up there and tell me what to answer on things and sometimes dictate an answer, and I would leave the letters

for her to sign on the desk. And then I'd come back later and find some of them signed. But anyway, when she would be through with my services that day, I would go downstairs and go out the garage (in the old stable, the officer's office) and the officer would be off taking one of the children somewhere. And I have waited out there for an hour to an hour and a half, waiting for the officer to come back and take me to the capitol.

Well, Gwen Couch, my successor, had a car of her own, so she didn't have that problem, but I had never driven at that time, so I didn't have a car. I was dependent on that transportation, and, as I say, often there would be this hour and a half wait until he was free to come for me, because there was only the one driver for the family.

Fry: And he doubled as guard and driver?

Henderson: They had another guard on duty when he was out. They decided that that was necessary. I feel I'm taking time telling personal things, but—

Fry: Well, that's fine. This is what we don't have.

Henderson: Well, let me tell you some of them, then. For my first real job when I went over there, Mr. Scoggins, the press secretary, said to me, "Betty, see if you can make some order out of the photographs. The press will ask for some photograph of the governor in high school, and Mrs. Warren says, 'Yes, I have it, but I haven't time to get it today'." She had cartons under beds with the photographs in them. So she would

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have to get out a carton, and it wasn't in that carton, and then she'd have to get out another one. So he said, "Please make some order out of the photographs."

So they got me two two-drawer filing cabinets and put them up in the library, like end tables at either end of the sofa. Have you ever been in the mansion?

Fry: Yes.

Henderson: Oh good. You remember the library on the third floor.

Fry: Yes.

Henderson: Then I got quantities of file folders, and I marked them by decades in the early years: "Earl Warren, ages one to ten," and "Ten to high school," "College," and then as it got more and more recent and there were more pictures, I had them by year. Then I had one that was "Family Group." Then I had each child, almost by years—maybe the first ten years in one folder, and brought them up to date that way. Then we took those cardboard cartons of pictures and Mrs. Warren and the three girls and I sat on the floor in the library and looked at them. She'd give me a date or an approximate date on the picture, we'd look at the picture and pass it around, and she'd tell the girls anecdotes about the people. I wish I'd had a tape recorder going then! And I would write the date and try to write the names of people on the back while she was talking, if they were somebody aside from their family.

Then they would all leave, and I would take those pictures and file them by date in the folders. Well, when Honeybear had polio and the press was asking for picture, picture, picture, I was able to find them immediately. I don't know whether they all got filed back properly, but they were all labeled, if they didn't get filed back. But you know, press pictures that would be sent, like Honeybear jumping a jumper—

Fry: Oh, a horse—

Henderson: Yes, because she was quite a horsewoman for a while.

Fry: Can you explain the various scrapbooks that have been kept?

Henderson: One of Governor Warren's secretaries, the mail girl, Arlene Tomlinson Hawkins, has a scrapbook, and she has this interview with Honeybear Warren after she had recovered from polio, printed in the *American Weekly*. It was obviously some time in 1951, but there's no date on the clipping. But that clipping, which is about two full newspaper pages, tells how she contracted polio, and how she recovered, and how she was always sure she was going to recover, and how her family

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helped her to recover. In that clipping she uses a quote that I remembered and could find nowhere else: that when Honeybear's parents came back from Oakland when she was so sick, and they went to see her in the hospital in Sacramento, and it was the day that Governor Warren was re-elected for his third term, Honeybear said to him, "Oh, Daddy, I've spoiled your day." I thought it was a most touching thing to say. That stuck in my memory, but I had no documentation.

John Weaver—you've read his book ⁵—had a different statement, that Honeybear had said, "Mother, take him [the governor] home and make him rest. It isn't so bad," which made him weep. Everyone else remembered the John Weaver quotation, Mrs. Warren included. But Arlene comes up with that clipping right there in print, so that's what I used.

Fry: That's in the scrapbook?

Henderson: That's in her own scrapbook. She's going to let me borrow it to make a Xerox copy of it, but it will have to be done in pieces because it's such a big page.

She married an army sergeant and has been located several places abroad, and she has showed her children these scrapbooks all through the years, you know, because—

Fry: You mean her own children?

Henderson: Her own children, yes. She still has the scrapbook all intact; she's shipped them around like that from place to place—Germany and Japan— and now here.

Fry: I hope that we can eventually have accession to those for The Bancroft Library.

Henderson: You really should meet her. She's just the sweetest little thing. Yes, now you might be able to arrange it with her. She lives in Rancho Cordova, and I'll give you her address before we go. In fact, if you want it right now, turn the tape off. [Tape discussion]

Well, I was going to say that, speaking of the scrapbooks, when the Warrens were on the campaign train, people from all over the country sent newspapers to the governor's office. And they had a group of middle-aged ladies hired to clip the papers and paste them into scrapbooks, and they worked so fast that they turned the pages

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while they were wet and they stuck together. Mrs. Warren was just heartsick about it.

Fry: Oh well, that might be restored if it's a water-base paste.

Henderson: It was probably just this old white library glue, because that's what they had at that time you know.

I don't know where those scrapbooks are, but the clippings were from all over the country, and she had been so looking forward to seeing them.

Fry: I'm a little confused as to how many sets of scrapbooks there are.

Henderson: I have no idea.

Fry: There are some that have been in storage for quite a long time.

Henderson: That she sent from the mansion?

Fry: They may have come only from the governor's office. Was there a separate set in the mansion?

Henderson: No; I don't know. I doubt it.

Fry: I think you'd know about, wouldn't you, if anyone does?

Henderson: Yes, and I don't remember her ever keeping scrapbooks, because she was too busy. I think that she relied on the office, and as I say, at the time of the campaign train in particular, they had these three middle-aged ladies—darling women—in a little back office, and the newspapers would get taken in there in armfuls. They would clip and organize them, and they worked steadily.

Fry: What campaign was that?

Henderson: 1948, the vice-presidential. Now, I don't know about the other campaigns.

Fry: Well, I hope no one got discouraged and threw those out because the pages were stuck.

Henderson: I don't know. I've wondered about that.

Honeybear's Poliomyelitis Attack

Fry: How did Honeybear's polio attack affect the other girls and the family in general?

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Henderson: They were such dear girls, they were such a dear family. Miss MacGregor made the comment that it's perfectly astonishing how many people focused their love on the Warren girls and the Warren family, and how many lonely people seemed to have sort of adopted them—you know, from the letters that we would get in the office, and the Warrens would get. When Honeybear was ill, that was when I was really able to be of secretarial help to Mrs. Warren, because she was at the hospital much of the time.

I would go over to the mansion at eight in the morning and go up to the library and call the hospital and get the sentence I could use about Honeybear's condition that day. This was the first week after she was ill [November 1950]. Then, when people would call I would answer the phone, and I would tell them that "the hospital says that Honeybear is improving," or that "Honeybear didn't have a very good night, but she is feeling better this morning"—you know, some sentence. Sometimes it was "Honeybear is getting along very well," and people would cry—strangers calling about her.

Fry: It surprises me that telephone calls weren't screened into the mansion, that strangers could call—

Henderson: Mrs. Warren answered the phone herself, always, until that week. And at the end of the week—let's see, polio hit on a Tuesday, and I don't know whether it was the first Friday or the second Friday; I think it was the second Friday. But that whole week I'd been there all week long. (I think the first weekend I wasn't there, the first Saturday and Sunday, and I don't remember how they handled it then.) But anyway, Mrs. Warren didn't answer the phone that first week, and it was the second Friday evening. We'd had a lot of calls and mail. And that afternoon, Mrs. Warren phoned me from downstairs to thank me for having helped, and she said

"Betty, you won't have to come tomorrow. I'm sure I can answer the telephone tomorrow, but I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't been here this week," and her voice broke.

And I said, "Mrs. Warren, I'll be here tomorrow." So I was there on Saturday, but I don't remember being there on Sunday. But anyway, she said "Thank you," and hung up.

Then one day that I was there, the doctor called about ten in the morning, and he said, "I want to stop by and see Mrs. Warren." This was after this first week; she was sleeping in that morning, finally getting some rest. She didn't call me from downstairs until about fifteen minutes or half an hour before the doctor had said he was going to come.

So I said, "Mrs. Warren, Dr. Harris said he would like to stop

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by and see you about noon and, by the way, the hospital says Honeybear is very much better today." I said it all in one sentence.

Later on that afternoon, she called me and thanked me, and she said, "When you said 'Dr. Harris' my heart dropped. Thank you for telling me immediately that Honeybear was better."

What he had called about was wondering about arrangements to bring Honeybear home. And this is one of the dearest things that happened in the mansion, I think, and I've got it very abbreviated in my book.⁶ Honeybear had received these thousands and thousands of get-well cards, just beautiful ones, mostly from strangers—lavender, pink, yellow, blue, green. Mrs. Warren and Virginia and Dottie went downtown and got inch-wide ribbon in all these pastel colors, long rolls of them. They pinned all the lavender cards on a lavender ribbon, starting with the pale ones at the top and going down to the deep ones at the bottom—or else the other way around, I can't remember for sure—the yellow ones, pale to deep, on a yellow ribbon, pink ones, pale to deep, and the rose ones, and the red ones, and the green ones and the blue ones—each pinned on a ribbon about this far apart, about ten inches, you see. Then they took scotch tape and fastened the ribbons at the top molding and the bottom molding in Honeybear's room. They had a ladder up there and they were busy all the morning before Honeybear was brought home. And the room looked like—this sounds sentimental, so I didn't use it in the book—but it looked like a bower of love—all these loving wishes that had been sent.

Fry: In rainbow form.

Henderson: Yes! So, they brought Honeybear home. I was working then in the library, still opening mail. And all of a sudden, I hear these gales of laughter coming up the stairs, just hilarity, and I thought, "My goodness, something is funny," and I went and leaned over the bannister. And then I heard Honeybear say, "That one's going next," and then I heard Dottie say, "There goes

another one." When I came downstairs, Mrs. Warren said, "You know, we had to warm her room because she's just come from a hospital, and the scotch tape keeps melting." The ribbons would let go and just slither to the floor. I don't think they all came down. They put them back again. [Laughter.] But it was hilarious.

But then, the governor saw the problem of the mail. There were some 20,000 pieces of mail about Honeybear's illness. You see, these bags of mail would be brought in to me in the library, and mixed in was mail about a pardon for somebody, or mail requesting an

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extradition for somebody, mail about important government business. How could the postman know whether it was official mail or not? And up there, I shuffled it around the floor. I'd open a letter and paper clip it with its envelope. If it went to the office, I'd put it here. Then Honeybear's get-well letters—if they came from someone whose name I recognized from having worked in the office—some official—I would stack them in a separate pile. If they came from somebody who was obviously a friend of Honeybear's, I would put them in a separate pile, and those Mrs. Warren would take down for Honeybear to read. She took them to the hospital too, in the beginning. And then—well anyway, I tried to guess all these twenty or so divisions around the floor. Then I would send the office mail back to the office with the officer just as soon as I could get it opened, to keep it flowing over there, because that was important; that couldn't wait until—

Well then the rest of it—the 20,000 pieces of mail that came to Honeybear alone—had to be coordinated, because if the governor were writing to a judge in Los Angeles who had written three letters hoping that Honeybear was improving, he couldn't ignore that, nor could he assume that somebody had written about Honeybear if he were writing. So it had to be coordinated. So he hired a separate staff that time, a woman and two stenographers. They made files of all this mail. Then in the office when we were writing a letter for the governor's signature, we would phone and say, "Is there any correspondence from Judge Jones of Orange County about Honeybear?" And they'd call back in fifteen minutes and say, "Yes, there were letters on this date and this date and this date, and his wife wrote on this date." Or perhaps there was a gift of some sort—

Fry: And you'd have to acknowledge them.

Henderson: Yes, and that would be incorporated in the governor's business letter, so they wouldn't have to acknowledge that separately. But finally what they did—I found that I have a copy of that—they got out a little form letter that Earl Warren signed that they sent to hundreds and hundreds of people, because it was just impossible to write in a hurry to all those people.

Fry: Well, I'd like to put that form letter in the appendix. We could photocopy it. ⁷

Henderson: That was quite a time. Mrs. Warren said, "She had to get well, with so many people praying for her." You know, teachers came to the mansion so she could continue with her studies; and the next June, Honeybear walked across the stage, by herself, to get her high school diploma.

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She had a classmate who didn't recover, whose mother was a friend of mine. She had polio and came down the same day as Honeybear. It was in a different set of muscles. Honeybear walked across the stage to get her high school diploma the next June, and the other girl got hers at the same time but she didn't make an appearance, I think. She wept about it, and she said, "People

will think I don't have as much spunk as Honeybear." And the doctor told her, "It isn't a matter of spunk with you. It's just that your polio attacked a different set of muscles, and there's no hope for you to walk."

Phone Calls and Letters

Fry: This business of the extradition and other office matters coming to the governor's mansion—

Henderson: Many people would address Earl Warren at the governor's mansion. That was a very frequent happening even in normal times. We knew that. And normally Mrs. Warren would just package it up and send it over to the office.

Fry: Were there requests of that sort sent to Mrs. Warren, as the governor's wife, in an effort to—

Henderson: I think sometimes, yes. But of course, she didn't bother with them. She just sent them to the office. She didn't even answer letters like that. But a governor's wife has such an astonishing array of miscellaneous requests, that she does need a secretary. And she needs a secretary that she can say, "Handle that," because, well, people will write, they'll want a tie that the governor wore, because they're making a patchwork quilt of ties of famous people. Just for themselves. They will want a suit that the governor wore, for a fashion show or a rummage sale! They'll want to give an award, and "would the governor's lady give them a hat?"—as an award for this "good cause."

Fry: Or something to auction off for fund raising for a cause.

Henderson: Oh, yes. And parcel post requests used to be frequent—and handkerchief sales. People used to ask for handkerchiefs from first ladies that they could auction off for good causes. And we found some handkerchiefs that had a California poppy on them. I did a lot of shopping for that. Not going out on office hours, but looking on my noon hour to see if I could find a handkerchief that might be suitable. And one of the stores suddenly appeared with this handkerchief with the California poppy that said "California" under it, and they were sixty cents apiece. And we ordered—I don't remember how many—but we ordered a whole lot. And those took care of the handkerchief sales for a long time.

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Then somebody got out a box of notepaper that had Sacramento scenes, including the governor's mansion. And we were able—they retailed for a dollar and a quarter, I believe. And by ordering reams of them— we got boxes and boxes for sixty or seventy-five cents a box. And people were delighted with those. It was nice notepaper. And they were attractive black and white drawings of Sacramento and the capitol. I think those were the only two. I think we ordered them for those two.

Fry: Oh, I thought you would have your own engraved notes that were done by the state.

Henderson: No, there was nothing in the budget for that. These were Mrs. Warren's personal obligation, these gifts. No, people think that a state official has a lot of money, and very few of them have. Most of them—Earl Warren, for instance, has been living on his salary all his life and raising his family. And Mrs. Warren was a wonderful manager. I know she must have been.

Fry: Well, on the big requests, like "Could you please send me one of the governor's old suits?"—did you try to honor those?

Henderson: No, those were declined. And also, this is something that they did, and I don't know whose good idea this was: they selected specific charity focuses, and then if they got miscellaneous requests from other charities, they would say, "The Governor and Mrs. Warren have selected a few personal charities that they sponsor and contribute to, and unfortunately, they are not able to help every good cause. We wish you well." This became a form letter.

Fry: What were their favorite charities?

Henderson: I'm trying to remember. Salvation Army was one. Mrs. Warren used to bake seven chocolate cakes in Sacramento and take them down to the big Salvation Army bazaar in Oakland, every time they had a bazaar, which was at least once a year.

Fry: In Oakland?

Henderson: Yes, because that was where she had started being very active in that Salvation Army activity. She was a minister's daughter, you know, so she was very interested in that sort of activity.

Fry: Well, I want to go on to her cake baking in a minute, but before we do that, I'm a little appalled at this information I have that his telephone number was listed openly in the telephone book—

Henderson: Oh, yes.

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Fry: And that Mrs. Warren—I thought this meant that his telephone calls would be screened at the mansion, and you've just told me that Mrs. Warren answered the phone herself!

Henderson: Yes, every single time—I mean, when she was there.

Fry: Why didn't they have a separate phone for the family or the kids or something.

Henderson: I think that would have seemed undemocratic perhaps. And, also, I think for the most part, that the period of obscene calls hadn't started yet. I don't remember ever taking a call that was hateful—

Fry: Or crank calls?

Henderson: I know that—Virginia one time was telling me about—young men that would call for her. She said, "If I didn't recognize their name, I would find out where I had met them," and if they said, "Well, I haven't met you yet!" she'd say, "Well, I'm sorry, you must wait until we have met," and hang up. But the youngsters—they all had this gracious manner that could—they coped with things; they learned to cope with things like that. But I don't know, when I wasn't in the mansion, I don't know what kind of calls they may have gotten. That's something you could ask the youngsters—if they ever had unpleasant calls.

Virginia, at the beginning of the war, when she was in her early teens, had patriotically started writing to servicemen. I don't know where she would get the names and addresses. Then one day at the mansion, the guard accompanied a young man to the door who said, "I'm a friend of Virginia's; we've been writing." And it was somebody that she hadn't met, but corresponded with, and he wanted a date. And she said to me, "I got kind of scared. I sort of stopped writing letters after that." [Laughter] I thought that was really kind of poignant.

And Honeybear—one of the correspondents that she had when she was ill was a lad from Florida who sent a picture of himself on the beach with his muscles, and said, "As soon as you

get well, I think we should get married." He said, "I've seen your picture, and I think we have a lot in common." She got a number like that. She laughed about them, of course. [Laughter]

One of the things—one morning shortly after she was home from the hospital and I was opening the letters, here was this letter from Europe from Dinah Shore. I remember it so vividly—a handwritten letter on blue paper about like this, and very distinctive handwriting. She said, "I have just learned about your having been stricken with polio. And I want to write you right away to let you know that this is not the end." She said, "I too had polio when I

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was a girl. I want you to know that we who have had polio will end up by learning to do things better than other people, because we have to prove to ourselves we can do them as well." Now, wasn't that a wonderful letter?

I took that right downstairs to Mrs. Warren, and I said, "Mrs. Warren, Honeybear has a letter from Dinah Shore." And she said, "Oh!" So, she took it in and she said, "Honeybear"—and I can just hear her voice—"guess who this letter is from?"

And Honeybear said, "Who?" in just a little bit bored tone. And her mother said, "From Dinah Shore."

Honeybear said, "Dinah Shore?!"

Mrs. Warren said, "Yes. I'll read it to you: 'Dear Nina—' " and then I thought, "Well, I'm intruding," and left.

Also, President Truman sent her a telegram; that was one of the early things I opened, and Honeybear had that under her pillow, she was so thrilled to have it. You know, "Pop" Small mentioned the fact that Margaret Truman didn't mention Truman and Warren's friendship in her book.

Fry: Oh, she didn't?

Henderson: And he was astonished, because he knew that both men admired each other, in spite of the political party difference at the time. Well, that's an aside—

But anyway, there were three letters that were hateful that came to the Warrens at that time, and I didn't show them to Mrs. Warren. I took them over and gave them to Helen MacGregor, and we agreed that neither the governor nor Mrs. Warren should see those.

Fry: Well, three out of 20,000 is a pretty good ratio. [Laughter]

Oh, on the telephone calls—were there any phone calls which Mrs. Warren would answer that were espousing a cause which they felt hadn't had enough attention from legislators or the governor?

Henderson: Oh, I'm sure there must have been, because when I was Mrs. Knight's secretary and I answered the phone, we got lots of those. So, I'm sure there must have been. Mrs. Warren is an incredible woman, though. In the first place, she has this warm voice. I never heard a reporter mention her voice. I mentioned it in my book because she had this warm speaking voice that puts you on her side right away. And I think that was a great tool for her, an unconscious tool.

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Fry: In that it disarmed?

Henderson: Yes. And then they would accept it if she would have to say "no." I'm sure she must have gotten unreasonable calls, and I don't know how she handled them; I really don't know. I would presume that she would ask them to call, probably, Helen MacGregor at the governor's office and talk to her.

Fry: Well, how was this set up? Was there a special line from the mansion to the governor's office, or would the caller have to hang up and dial?

Henderson: Have to hang up and dial again. If they were calling from out of town, I think we could flash the operator—no, we couldn't. It was only in the capitol that we could flash the operator.

Fry: Helen MacGregor said sometimes late at night if the guard answered the phone from—somebody, for instance, who was drunk on the East Coast and decided to call the governor, they could transfer the call, and they usually gave it to Helen. She would get these crazy calls at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Henderson: That's right. Late at night they could turn the phones off so that they only rang in the guardhouse. Then if it were something really urgent for the governor, it was the officer's responsibility to go and waken him. I don't know how he wakened him; I don't know. Maybe Helen MacGregor would know. Maybe Pat Patterson could tell you.

The governor has a 24-hour duty and knows it. He is 24 hours a day on call. But he has to protect his family.

You know, when I said it's hard for the children to have privacy, it's because anything they do, people know *who* is doing it.

Fry: No anonymity.

Henderson: Yes, no anonymity, that's right.

I remember one time, Dottie came in to the—I'm trying to picture which room this was—but she was standing in the doorway talking with her mother and I guess to Virginia and me. She had accepted a date to a dance with somebody, and then another young man had asked her, whom she would rather have gone with. Her mother said, "But you're already committed."

And she said, "That's what I told him. I told him to go and ask somebody else, but I told him I knew he wouldn't have as good a time as he would with me," and then she laughed. She was so cute. She's kind of overlooked, in a way. But she has this pixie charm. And she had, I think, her mother's level-headedness—I think they all had, really. I always thought she got the least little bit overlooked, but

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BFH: maybe that was to her advantage.

Fry: You mean overlooked by the press?

Henderson: By the press. I mean they would speak of Virginia, as the oldest; they'd speak of Honeybear, partly the nickname, I think, and partly because she'd had the polio. And she was a warm youngster. I had a cousin who was a life guard at the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles, and the Warrens used to be down there in Los Angeles in the summer time, and he said, "That Honeybear scared me to death. She had no fear of anything. She would dive off the highest diving board." And he said, "I'd tell her, 'You're not old enough. I can't permit you to go up there.' And she'd say, 'Yes, I am, and I can,' and she would." [Laughter] He said, "She had no physical fear of anything."

The Incredible First Lady

Fry: Well, now tell me about Mrs. Warren.

Henderson: Well, as I say, she was absolutely incredible. The very first day I was to go over there to take some dictation from her, I had checked at the office on the governor's schedule and learned that there was a dinner at Mare Island. Some admiral was entertaining the governor and Mrs. Warren, and they would be leaving about four o'clock. And I thought, "My, it's strange she would be wanting me to come over and take dictation at one o'clock when they're going to this dinner." But, I got over there, driven by the guard, about one-thirty. Oh, this was my second day, I beg your pardon.

The very first day when I went over there, she was dressed up, and she said, "You'll never see me like this again on a midday, Betty, but I believe in first impressions." [Laughter] Of course, I'd seen her before and she knew it. So then we decided we would work up in the library, and we went up there together and decided what we would need to work, and she took some letters up.

She said, "I don't know how to dictate. I've written letters in longhand for so long I don't know how to dictate."

I said, "Well, we can consider that it's a draft. I'll type it, and then if you don't like it, we can rewrite it." So, that's the way we did it. That was the very first day.

But then this second day, which was two or three days later,

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as I say, I had checked the schedule. I came over and Mrs. Warren was moving a big double bedstead out of the room that had been Honeybear's, helping Heijo Sprock, who was the janitor and house cleaner there, to carry this double bedstead. I mean, he was at one end and she was at the other. She had on this attractive little house dress in kind of uniform style. She had different colors that she had had this made in. So she was carrying the beds and she said, "I'll be with you in a minute, Betty. You can go on up to the library."

I stopped there, looking at them working, and I said, "Let's see, Mrs. Warren, the governor is going to be here about four o'clock to pick you up," and she said

"Heijo, just a minute," and they put the bedstead down, and she turned and looked at me, and she said, "To pick me up? For what?"

And I said, "You're going to Mare Island this evening for a banquet that Admiral So-and-so and his wife are giving."

And she said, "Oh, I had completely forgotten! Oh, my hair! Betty, go back to the office; I haven't time!" [Laughter]

The next day, I went over there, and they'd had a perfectly lovely evening. She said, "Oh, I'm so grateful to you. I had completely forgotten. What if the governor had come at four o'clock and I had looked like I did at one?" [Laughter]

Fry: She had to go have her hair done?

Henderson: She had this very fine hair that was beautiful when it was freshly done. And hard to keep freshly done. Hairspray wasn't invented yet. I'm sure that hairspray became a godsend to her later on. And it was such a beautiful color.

Fry: What color was it?

Henderson: Reddish gold.

Fry: There are so few good color pictures of her.

Henderson: I've got some color pictures, but they aren't really good.

Fry: They get faded out.

Henderson: Yes, they all yellowed, which was horrid. I sent her some of these. They're all stuck together. You see, I took these at teas. When she gave teas for the legislative wives that I would help her with, I would ask in advance if I could bring my camera and take some pictures,

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and she was delighted. I would try to take them before people came. You've seen these—

Fry: Oh, I'm glad you took these.

Henderson: But I don't know where the negatives are. This was before Adin and I were married, and I don't know whether these negatives got destroyed or whether they're in the garage and have never been unpacked since we were married.

Here's Mrs. Warren and Miss MacGregor in this last one, but you see it's all discolored. Oh, she did her own flower arrangements in the mansion. She loved to do flower arrangements, and she did these magnificent arrangements. Every mantel would have a stupendous display. Well, you can see, here's one.

Fry: This looks professional.

Henderson: Yes. And after one of these teas, at 6:30 Virginia said to her, "Mother, sit down." Everyone had left except just a few of the office staff people who were helping. Mrs. Warren said, "I'm afraid to sit down, I'll never be able to get up," and she laughed and sat down. And she said, "I think I'll take my shoes off, but I'll never be able to get them on again." [Laughter] And she took her shoes off, sitting there in her lace dress.

Virginia said to me, "Mother got up at six this morning to start the flower arrangements," and she said, "You haven't sat down since, have you?"

And her mother said, "Well, yes. No, I didn't. At lunchtime I had a sandwich and a glass of milk." And Virginia said, "I thought so." But that incredible stamina.

Fry: Which is still going on, apparently.

Henderson: Evidently. But both she and the governor, I think, had more stamina than most people.

Fry: We have some incredible little anecdotes that people have dropped from time to time, like her ironing the shirts of the visitors who would come and having them ready and out on the bed the next morning.

Henderson: And who didn't know that she had done it?

Fry: Yes.

Henderson: She seemed to have the capacity for having a finger in everything, and for doing almost everything she did better than anybody else could do it.

Fry: Another little pattern that has emerged in a lot of different interviews was how she would remember to—how can I say it?—send people little gifts now and then, choosing what meant the most to each. For instance, the shoe repairman's wife collected little silver spoons, and so whenever the Warrens were traveling, she'd always send back a spoon.

Henderson: She had a knack for giving a gift in a way that made it more than a gift. The last week that she was here, Officer Penny brought me this pair of figurines that somebody had given the Warrens, and she wanted me to have them. And her card with it said, "I want you to have these because the girl always reminds me of you." Now, I have no idea why she could say that, but nevertheless, the words have made the gift that much more precious. I think they're just charming.

Fry: They are.

Henderson: They're made by Joy Thompson of Pasadena, California. This one is called "Spring" and this one "Autumn."

Fry: What a treasure.

Henderson: But, as I say, the words double the treasure. That was typical of her.

Fry: That must have made it a challenge for you to write some of her notes.

Henderson: Oh, yes.

Fry: —compose them yourself.

Henderson: Well, as I say, I would draft them, and never know for sure when she would send them. When we were packing up, I would find letters that I had typed without an envelope. I'll bet what she did was take this typed letter and write her longhand one and use the envelope to mail it. [Laughter]

Oh, I was going to tell you some of the kind things that Mrs. Warren did. She did these little kindnesses so inconspicuously. There was a woman who was on welfare—one of the officers told me about this; I think Sparks told me about this, or else it was Officer Penny, years later. This woman lived in a room in a rooming house down in the lower part of Sacramento, on a very limited income. I don't know how Mrs. Warren heard about her or met her or what, but every once in a while, when she knew that the governor and the family were going to be away from home, Mrs. Warren would cook up a dinner. She would roast a turkey and get an entire dinner, and then, along about three in the afternoon or maybe earlier, she would call Penny

in and she would say, "I want you to take this down to Mrs. So-and-so this afternoon and tell her that we were planning a family dinner and suddenly the governor's plans have changed, and we are going to be away for several days. And I can't let all this good cooked food go to waste. So will you please take it to her and tell her that I want her to have it." A single woman in a room with a hot plate. And Officer Penny said he would do it. Maybe she would phone the woman first and say, "Please do me a favor and take this food off my hands." So, you see, Mrs. Warren's gifts were more than giving.

Fry: Being sensitive to the other woman's—

Henderson: And so—it *was* Officer Penny; he said, "This woman was so much like Mrs. Warren that it was incredible." But she didn't have the means to do it with. So, she would know that she was being given the dinner, and he said she would get on the phone and call all these people around her whom she knew who were also on short rations and short income, and she would say, "Mrs. Warren is sending me a meal because they're going to be out of town." And she would give to all these people because she was like Mrs. Warren—she enjoyed the ability to give. And he said she had a wonderful time distributing food to all those people who—she would say, "Well, it would just go to waste if I didn't divide it." But nobody ever knew of that. Officer Penny told me that this had happened on a number of occasions. He thought Mrs. Warren kind of kept track when the woman's pension money might be running low. That was a typical thing, you see, her keeping track of things—in her head.

As I said, the first day when I went to work for her, the last thing she gave me as she was leaving—she said, "Oh, Betty, I almost forgot: please get in touch with Susan and tell her—she's expecting the governor and me for dinner next Saturday evening in Santa Monica and we can't make it. This has just come up and we won't be able to be there. Maybe you could telephone her or ask Helen [MacGregor] to phone her." So, I take the letter, thinking, of course, that the whole name and address is on the letter and envelope. But there's only a postmark, Santa Monica, and the letter says, "Dear Nina, You have no idea how much John and I are looking forward to next Saturday evening when you and Earl will be here. It will be a very small group. We're only going to have—" and she named maybe just two other people by first names— "Fondly, Susan." So, I come back to the office, and I say, "Who is Susan?" Mrs. Warren has already left. I go downstairs and say to Helen MacGregor, "Who would Susan in Santa Monica be?" And Helen says, "Oh, my goodness, I don't know. Who were Mrs. Warren and the governor going to have dinner with Saturday evening? They were going to be in Santa Monica." But this was off-calendar. Nobody knew.

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Oh, I almost went crazy trying to find out who Susan was. Finally, somebody knew that there was a John So-and-so the governor might have been going to see in Santa Monica. I call, and his wife's name is Susan, and that's who it is. [Laughter] So then I started a first name file, and I'd have, "Susan; Mrs. John McCormack, Santa Monica," "Susan; Mrs. James Wilson, Santa Rosa," et cetera. And that first name file was a godsend.

Fry: That's a wonderful idea.

Henderson: One time I was filing for Mrs. Warren, and she was there, and we had this box of things that I was putting in the file. I said, "Betty! Anybody with a name like Betty should know enough to sign her last name to a card. For Heaven's sakes!" And I turned it over, and it's a birthday card I'd sent her! [Laughter] And I'd never dreamed she'd file it.

Fry: Did you help with the packing process when Earl Warren very suddenly left for Washington to be the Chief Justice?

Henderson: Well, Gwen Couch, of course, was her secretary at that time, and the housekeeper and the cook were left—were paid for by the state. No, not the housekeeper. The housekeeper Mrs. Warren paid for, but she kept her. And the state inventory, you see, had to be checked, but they had all these personal gifts.

I went over to the mansion to help Gwen Couch and Mrs. Warren a number of times.

At that time, I was working in the governor's office and assigned to the research section under Malcolm Harris. The whole office had to work hard to get all the governor's papers packed in an orderly manner, to be stored in the state archives.

Well, now, this is my personal reaction, but I think I discovered between the Warren and Knight administrations why a governor puts his files into limbo—because a man might write to the governor and say, "For Heavens sakes, if you're making an appointment in Umpty-ump county, don't pay any attention to anybody who recommends John Jones. He's a crook of the first water. I hate him. He says he's for you and I know he's not. I know that behind your back and behind my back he's working against you. Don't pay any attention to John Jones. He's an absolute heel."

So, that letter goes into the recommendations file, and the governor has it on hand. It's indexed, so if any consideration is given to John Jones, they know there's this antagonism between these two men. Well, then, if that letter were made public, there are two men who are really good citizens but who have a difference of opinion.

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Fry: In other words, the unfounded accusations in the files.

Henderson: Yes.

Fry: I think this is what's worrying the Chief Justice right now. He hesitates to make any of this open because that sort of thing is scattered through it.

Henderson: Then in the next administration, John Jones will write to Governor Knight, and he'll say something about the first writer. Or he'll say, "For some reason, I could never get Earl Warren's ear. But now that you're in office, I want to tell you what I think about politics in this county."

You see, when those subsequent letters came in to Governor Knight's office, we little people in the office who had read them just kept our mouths shut, because that was a closed book that had gone into the state archives (under seal, until Warren's death). On the other hand, the research files in the office, the abstract research—I mean, we had gotten things like the history of business in Monterey County that had been of interest to Governor Warren because he was going down there to make a speech—all those research files were cleared out too, and they also were put in the boxes and stored in the archives. There was nothing possibly controversial in those. We just had to do those all over again. If Knight were going to Monterey County, we remembered we had done research on these businesses in Monterey County. We called the library and said, "Would you send us that material again for Governor Knight?"

Fry: Oh, you did.

Henderson: Yes, magazine articles that we had to copy or printed reports we had to excerpt. So we would have to work up a whole new compilation. But the research files were lots of fun. They had, for example, quite an elaborately indexed history of the Elks Club in the United States, in California, and in a community, which we had researched for the governor's use as background. Important people in the state—we would get a biography on them and put that in the research file. And we would have that indexed to the town as well as the man. We had a lot of information! In fact, we had a fourdrawer card file full of it. I think that's why I started getting interested in research as such.

Then, in the Knight administration, when Mrs. Knight was collecting the portraits of the first ladies—only fifty years, only eleven women before her—and there were some that it was almost impossible to get a photograph of. That's when we started really realizing that history was slipping away from us and that

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somebody should start writing about the mansion.

Of course, Mrs. Warren had really started me, because after one of the teas she phoned me at the office and said, "Betty, could you find out anything about the Steinway grand piano in the music room? People ask me where it came from, how old it is, did it come around the Horn, and I don't know. I don't know about anything in this mansion that happened before we moved in." And so I started trying to research the history of the Steinway, and in the Department of Finance—they handled it then—in the inventory of the governor's mansion, they had every piece of furniture with a number on it, and the Steinway piano was among them. All it had was the serial number, and it said, "In the mansion in 1938. Said to have been a gift to the mansion."

So, I wrote to the Steinway company, and the president said, "Our records on that serial number show only that in 1904 it was sold to Sherman & Clay Music Company in San Francisco. I have no idea how it was shipped to them. Their records would show." I wrote to Sherman & Clay Company in San Francisco and got a reply, "We regret that we cannot help you. Our records before April 18, 1906 [the earthquake and fire] are non-existent." But then, later, the [Governor] Pardee daughters said to me that their mother used to say, "With the money the state gave me, I had to buy everything in the mansion from the nutmeg grater to the grand piano." And that's in this book.⁸ So—the grand piano. And what's more, on that grand piano they had a player piano attachment for the girls and it was stuck into the two front legs—the plugs are there, where the attachment was removed. So, it is the same piano that their mother bought. So there is my story of the grand piano. But, of course, I found that out much after Mrs. Warren had left.

But that's how I got started being curious about the mansion.

Fry: I see. Did Mrs. Warren make any changes in the mansion while you were there?

Henderson: Oh, she made a great many in their term there. Not that I remember while I was actually in it.

Fry: I guess I'm aware of some that she made very early, when they first moved in, and Oscar Jahnsen helped her execute these.

Henderson: You have the interview with him. Isn't he wonderful?

Fry: Yes, fantastic! [Laughing]

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Henderson: He has a tremendous memory, or he had when I talked with him.

Fry: Yes, he does. So, I wondered if there were any others that you were aware of during your tenure.

Henderson: No, I couldn't say specifically. Perhaps—I mean, this moving of the mahogany bedstead out of Honeybear's room. I didn't know it had been in Honeybear's room, and I don't know what room it was put into, unless that was the one that was put in the west bedroom.

Fry: Helen MacGregor mentioned that she had had the sun porch in the back made into a very comfortable family dining—

Henderson: —breakfast room, yes. The lower room of the annex. Oh, it was a charming breakfast room. She had this rose-covered carpeting, and when she chose that carpeting, she wanted it in that room and to go up the back stairs and in the little room above it. That little room subsequently was my office, but in the beginning it was Bobby Warren's bedroom. Mrs. Warren found this carpeting with roses on it that she liked, and the store went to fill the order, and they were short by about a half a room to do all of that. So, they went to the lady to whom they had sold the last order and said to her, "Would you sell us back this piece of carpeting? We will give you any other carpeting at half price, or a great bargain, and install it for nothing. But they want this pattern at the mansion, and we would like to supply it for the mansion." And the lady said, "Yes."

Fry: Everyone felt very honored, I guess, to participate in the furnishing of the mansion.

Henderson: Well, and you see, those Oriental carpets that W. & J. Sloan provided, they made the mansion glow, really. Now, I would like to see the inventory, but I don't know where it would be—maybe that's in the file—to see what the price was on those. You see, Mrs. Warren was given quite a sizable budget, because the mansion had not been refurbished for some years. The Olson family lived there and kept it going, but they hadn't recarpeted or—I don't know what all they hadn't done. I have had ladies tell me that they were guests during the Olson regime, and "it was a beautiful place." And I would say, "What color were the carpets?" "Well, I don't really remember." Colors are what people forget. And kitchens— people never remember. They say, "Well, it was a nice modern kitchen for the time. It was a big old-fashioned room, of course, but everything was efficient." I say, "Well, where was the stove?" "Well, I don't remember." [Laughter]

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Fry: Did she choose the Oriental rugs?

Henderson: W. & J. Sloan—I don't know how they made the contact, but they had these large Oriental rugs, and they said, "This is wartime. Nobody can buy them. Will you pick all you want for the mansion, and we will make you a very good price on them, because we don't want them stored sitting here, and we would like to have them used in the governor's mansion." So, she and Oscar Jahnsen selected the ones they wanted, and they made this very good price, and I have been told that if those carpets were to be sold now, their value is more than the mansion was to buy—more than \$32,000. I have no facts and figures on that except the statement, and I can't remember who made the statement.

But, anyway, they're oversized for most needs—almost hotel size— 18'x 36'rooms. So, they picked the parlor carpet, which has a kind of glowing red tone, and the living room carpet, which is blue toned, as I think of it, and the garnet tones in the music room. I forget the color of the one in the dining room. Then there were matching runners that they could put up the winding stairs. There were enough matching runners to fit and make that a complete Oriental carpeted stairway—and, of course, that really enhanced the hall. And then, the velvet portieres, or velveteen or whatever they are, which were the originals. So far as we've even been able to find, those are what Albert Gallatin placed—

Fry: oh, really?

Henderson: And Mrs. Reagan took them down. There's one set that has been replaced in the hallway from the living room. I thought they were handsome. [Doorbell rings. Tape off momentarily.]

Fry: You want to go back to the packing? It was a two-month job.

Henderson: Well, I was going to tell you what I knew of it. I went over to help Gwen Couch with it, not regularly, just intermittently. But as I understood what Mrs. Warren did, she got cartons and decided whether this was something that should go into storage in Oakland, whether this was something that should go to Washington, D.C., for their apartment there, and whether this was something that should be given away, or given to one of the children, or held for one of the children in storage because their living situations weren't settled—

Fry: Must have been ten million decisions a day.

Henderson: Yes, it was constant; and what's more, she was continually being asked, "Before you leave, we want to have a tea for you, we want to have a luncheon for you." So, as I say, Gwen and I would go over and help with the decisions she had made. We would help where we

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could. She asked us if we would go through this file of correspondence and see what we could throw out, and she would tell us what we could throw out. She'd say, "I think that you can throw out anything about this," you see. So, all this correspondence that I had carefully filed—

Fry: [Laughing] And there it went.

Henderson: But, it was a real major job for one woman to do by herself. If Governor Knight had been a hostile governor, I don't know what she would have done—

Fry: If he would have insisted on moving right in.

Henderson: Yes. I was going to tell you about the library. The Warrens built cupboards up there and shelves for a collection of the useless memorabilia that is so cherished—[interruption—tape off].

Fry: Were there correspondence files from the governor's mansion that were kept and stored away?

Henderson: I don't know. If there were, she'd put them in storage in Oakland. But you see, I helped to put them into the boxes, but greeting cards like that we discarded—

Fry: In Oakland?

Henderson: No, no. Oh, any personal boxes she took from the mansion were stored in a warehouse or in some storage place in Oakland.

Fry: Oh, I guess I know of the Bekins Warehouse material stored here in Sacramento. Is there a different—?

Henderson: I don't know. This was my understanding only. I never had it in writing nor—you could talk to Gwen Couch about it, but, unfortunately, I doubt if she'd remember, because she had a cerebral hemorrhage a few years later and was very ill—

Fry: Mrs. Warren might be able to tell us.

Henderson: Yes.

Fry: I want to get all this collected together someday.

Henderson: One time I was leaving the mansion, and there was a girl's meeting going on in the living room; so when I went out through the kitchen, to whomever was in the kitchen I said, "One of the girls must be entertaining." And she said, "Oh, yes, they're having one of their club meetings this afternoon." And she had a platter of little sandwiches. I don't know what club, and I don't know which girl.

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Fry: With six children, I wonder if she held a lot of—

Henderson: There were five children in the mansion. James was married and in the Army.

At Christmas time they had Christmas trees all through the mansion, small ones in their rooms—for a year or more. I don't know whether they had them every year. But I know that they had them the year that Honeybear was home, in her room.

Fry: Oh, who did their Christmas cards? We've got a file of their Christmas cards.

Henderson: Oh, have you; how wonderful! I used to help with the addresses, but I didn't write them because my writing wasn't big enough to please Mrs. Warren. It wasn't flowing enough. But I helped check addresses. Her son James designed most of them. There were almost 10,000 names on the Christmas list, by the way.

Fry: You can tell they were made personally for the family; they usually have little drawings of each member of the family.

Henderson: Almost cartoons—with a face on each and the name under them. Yes, James designed them. I think somebody else—oh, there was somebody else who did it early in their term, because James was young and in the service. But when he came home, he started designing them, and he did for a number of years. Now, I don't know whether this was only my suggestion, but I remember saying to Mrs. Warren once, "If we had the envelopes in September, we could start addressing them then." I think someone else had also said that to her, because we started getting the envelopes in September, and then Mrs. Doty—Madelaine Doty, whom you've met, the office receptionist—kept the personal address files coordinated with the office correspondence; and when they'd get a change of address it would come across Mrs. Doty's desk, and she would make the correction. Then Mrs. Warren wrote personal notes on an incredible number of those cards!

Fry: If you even did it on ten percent of 10,000, it would be quite a job.

Henderson: She would go through and divide them by state—the post office loved her because when they got them, they were all ready to go, divided into bundles by states and by cities; this was before zip codes. But she would work hours and hours and hours. Nothing ever seemed to be too much trouble.

Fry: When you tell me how many things she did, I wonder what other sorts of positions were in the staff of the governor's mansion. You've

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mentioned a man who was sort of a janitor/housekeeper—was he there full time?

Henderson: He was there eight hours a day—Heijo Sprock.

Fry: In addition to that, did she have a cook and a housekeeper?

Henderson: She had a cook and a housekeeper. And [laughing] one time—this was when Honeybear was still ill—Mrs. Warren was telling me that her cook and her housekeeper were at odds with each other, and Mrs. Warren said, "Really, I'm very fond of my housekeeper, but I told her that if they forced me to decide between them, she would have to be the one to go, because I can do my own housekeeping. I cannot get along without a cook." [Laughter]

Mr. Small tells the story of her being in the hospital and weeping and a nurse saying to her, "Well, what are you crying now for? Honeybear's getting very much better." And she said, "Well, I know she is, but I just—my cook has just quit, and I have to cry somewhere." [Laughter]

Fry: What a terrible time for a cook to quit.

Henderson: I don't know whether it was that same contretemps situation. But, those two, I think, were the only live-in servants, and then the state provided Heijo Sprock, who was the janitor. I don't remember maids from the state janitors' service in Mrs. Warren's administration, and yet there must have been.

Fry: You mean, as additional—

Henderson: Yes, they assigned them to the mansion from the state janitorial staff. Of course, they're kind of specially chosen. They have to be women who are presentable and experienced and skilled. But, isn't that strange; I simply don't remember—you see, I would go into the mansion from the west door and go right up to the library as a rule. And when I was working there all day, at noon somebody, usually Dottie or maybe Mrs. Warren herself would come up with a lunch tray for me, and it would be a stupendous tray: a heaping salad and a great big slab of chocolate cake. And I never told her, but I'm allergic to chocolate; it gives me a migraine.

Fry: [Laughing] You'd never fit in, would you, to the Warren family?

Henderson: I think I learned while I was still working there that chocolate was one of the things that gave me a migraine. Anyway, I know that I knew it some of the time, because I would think, "Well, now, tomorrow is Saturday, and I'm not going to have to work, so I can eat this cake, because if I have a migraine I can spend the day in

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bed." [Laughing] Sometimes I would. Oh, it was so good! She was just marvelous. I've got her recipe—

Fry: Oh, in your governor's—

Henderson: In the PALS cookbook. I gave one of these to the mansion. I ended up with two. This was compiled by—you know what PALS is? The wives of legislators, state officials, and lobbyists, all of whose husbands were hard at work during legislative sessions. It stands for Protective Association of Lonely Souls. They asked Mrs. Warren for a menu and some of her favorite recipes, and to put her name and the girls' names on recipes and then they sold the books to everybody; so naturally I bought one, and then somebody gave me one, too.

Fry: We could put in the appendix some of the recipes.

Henderson: Yes. However, Mrs. Warren told me that Mrs. Charles "Gus" Johnson, who was of French background, edited and assembled the book. Mrs. Johnson chose the menu printed under Mrs. Warren's name, and the chocolate cake was not appropriate. It really was not the sort of menu

Mrs. Warren would normally serve. It was a catered meal, with Oysters Rockefeller, Filet of Beef Parisien, et cetera. All that was really Mrs. Johnson's choice. The chocolate cake recipe was printed under the name of one of the Warren girls.

Fry: That's not the steak and potatoes that I associate with Earl Warren [laughing].

Henderson: Yes. Of course, they had wild game, you know, that the governor would kill or people would give them. They had a freezer in the basement. One day, in the governor's council meeting, it came out that people could only keep wild game six months, and then it was against the law to have it in the freezer. And I was taking the minutes on this, and this was right when I was working with Mrs. Warren too, and I thought—"Six months—when did those geese—? When did I write that thank you for the geese that somebody sent the governor?" So I went back to my desk and phoned Mrs. Warren and read her this excerpt that I had just taken, and I asked, "How long have you had those geese?" And she said, "Oh Betty, thank you. I think it will be six months tomorrow." [Laughter] I don't know whether she wasn't perhaps joking, but it was very imminent, and I was told they cooked all six geese in one day [laughter].

Fry: [Laughter] So they wouldn't break the law in the governor's mansion.

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Accepting or Rejecting Gifts

Fry: Well, that brings up another thing I wanted to ask you, and then I have to leave for my next interview. How did you draw the line on accepting gifts, somewhere between wild geese and a vicuna coat? How did you know what to accept and what to reject?

Henderson: Of course, I didn't have to make that decision. That would be made by Miss MacGregor, Verne Scoggins, and the executive secretary, Mr. Sweigert, or Mr. Oakley.

Fry: Do you know what the policy was?

Henderson: Well, I know that the policy was—food was acceptable, but I know that major gifts were not. But, as I say, that was—I think it was handled very discreetly before it ever came to the governor. Because if a gift was coming, they would hear about it in advance. If a gift were delivered, a vicuna coat for a theoretical instance, they would be advised it was coming; or if it came, they would give it to one of the secretaries, who could then quietly let the donor know that the governor couldn't accept a gift of this value. But I know that they were very meticulous about what they could accept.

[Laughter] I got so tired of writing thank-you letters for flowers that were sent from this dear friend who'd been in the governor's company in the army, who was a florist in Honolulu—a Japanese. He sent anthurium, and sent at least a box a month; and, as I say, I got tired. How do you say "thank you for the beautiful flowers" differently? I learned how to spell it, and Mrs. Warren loved them, because they would make a showy display and last. But, how do you say thank you month after month after month to the same man differently?

Fry: And for the same gift. [Laughter] I can see that you must have come out of this with a large vocabulary of synonyms.

Henderson: Oh, yes. And I would draft it and go through and cross out adjectives— Incidentally, Mrs. Warren and Honeybear both had this knack of saying succinctly and warmly, "thank you". I

drafted some thank-yous for Honeybear for little gifts that were sent her, and she'd say, "Betty, that doesn't sound like me." And she would give me a sentence that would say the whole thing in one sentence, and it would sound warm and teen-age and right. She was just like her mother.

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Fry: I'm going to have to fold up my tent and steal away, but I wonder if I can get back later this afternoon—you are rolling along so beautifully, and you and your husband have your own recorder here. Do you think you might put on tape those remaining stories in your mind that you want to preserve?

Henderson: Yes, I think we could do that. We'll see how it goes. Call me and let me know if you can make it. Then we'll see.

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June 19, 1973

Each Warren Had a Room

Dictation

Henderson: Mrs. Fry, I have made quite an array of notes about some little things that might be of interest. I'm going to try to speak of the things that happened in connection with the mansion first, because I think that would interest you primarily.

In the mansion, Virginia had the front bedroom and the big square bathroom as hers, and it was decorated—well, it was a green and gold room, which set off her blonde prettiness very well. It seemed to fit her. Honeybear had the middle bedroom with the shower bath. I think I mentioned in my book—although I don't know, I can't remember if I put that in or not—that when they were moving into the mansion and went all the way through the rooms after Mrs. Warren had decorated them and they were ready to move in, that east bedroom had been considered the master bedroom. But Honeybear looked at them all, and then she said gently, "I would like the room with the shower." And the rest of the family all looked at each other and said, "Of course she should have it." And so there was that little girl in that great big room with the shower bath adjoining.

Dottie had the southeast bedroom, and it was repapered and redecorated while she was living there. I took pictures of it, but no picture really shows that room. It's a very difficult room to photograph. It has colonial design wallpaper all over the walls, and she had maple furniture and toby jug lamps and other ornaments. I think there is just one toby jug lamp left in the room now for visitors to see. And the bathroom had great big red roses in it. The bathroom, once upon a time, had been a linen room and was long and narrow. And before the Warrens were there, the door had been cut into the adjoining room, the southeast bedroom, for connection with the bath. And the hall doorway, I think, was kept locked at that time. Later the hall door was sealed off.

Anyway, then Mrs. Warren had the sleeping porch on the east side of the bathroom enclosed and made into an enclosed sun porch-bedroom for Bobby, with built-in chests of drawers and a mirror,

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and it was a nice quiet green. It was a very pleasant green tone, and she had it carpeted. Later on, Bobby had his famous boar's head—when he was on a hunting party with his father and friends, and Bobby was the youngest in the party, he had shot this boar; I think he was the only one who got game on that hunting trip. And so the head was mounted, and there it was, this wicked looking, tusked boar on a plaque hanging from the wall in this light, airy, green, boy's room.

Well, then later, when Honeybear was ill, Bobby traded with his mother—no, I shouldn't say that. She had used the second-story room of the annex as a sort of a spare guest room and as an extra office, and she used to go in there to write her longhand thank-you letters at night, so that she wouldn't disturb the governor who was sleeping in the west bedroom. So when Honeybear had polio, Bobby moved in there (there was a single bed in there) and Mrs. Warren then slept in the sun porch room, which had a door opening into the east bedroom where Honeybear was.

And then, of course, Mrs. Warren combined the two servants' rooms in the back of the house. They must have been little tiny rooms, because it isn't a large room even now, but she had the wall cut apart between them and made them into one room, kind of an oddshaped room. That was for Earl Jr., at the head of the back stairs, in the southwest corner of the house, right over the kitchen. It gave him an extra measure of privacy, because there was a little hallway with a door between—he had two doors, then, you see, between his room and the main hall where people trafficked back and forth. He was really a student, and Mrs. Warren wanted to enable him to have the privacy for studying.

Then, as Honeybear was getting well, Mrs. Warren, who had been in that sun porch room, continued to stay there, and she used it as an office. She continued to utilize it as her room.

All right, that's one thing I was going to tell you about their living in the mansion.

You know, both Helen MacGregor and Mrs. Warren herself told me at various times, and I'm sure they told other people in the office, that insofar as keeping confidential things that you knew about the family or knew about what was going on in the office, it was a confidence until you saw it in the paper. When you saw it in the paper, that meant it was no longer confidential, and you could talk about it. And I have sort of tried to carry out that point of view in regard to the material I used in my *Families in the Mansion*⁹ story. When I would be told something, if I couldn't verify it with a newspaper account or a letter that one of them

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would write to me, I tried not to use it, because I don't want to repeat unwarranted gossip in print.

Oh, one time Mrs. Warren told me—we were talking about the cost of things, and she chuckled, and she said, "The governor has no idea how much ties cost." Somebody was showing him a tie that he had just bought, and he had paid eight dollars for it, and the governor said, "I've never paid eight dollars for a tie in my life!" And she said, "And the girls and I looked at each other, because when we buy him ties, if the tie we think he should wear is eight dollars, that's what he gets." Of course, this was 1948-9-50. Eight dollar ties were really beautiful in those days. But she felt that because the governor was a large man, his frontal appearance, so to speak, should be just right. And I think she was right. I think they complemented each other just beautifully.

One time when the governor was to make an appearance on TV (this was in the early days of television, you remember) he was going to wear a white shirt, and then was advised, luckily in time, that it must be a pale blue shirt, because a white shirt under the television lights would create a glare, whereas a pale blue shirt would look white. So Mrs. Warren had to dye one for

him, and I'm sure that was one of the times she worked late into the night and early in the morning to get it right.

One time when I was in the mansion—and this has never been in print, but it's a memory that pleases me to think of—this was when Honeybear was convalescing, so it was in the spring of 1951. Mrs. Warren and I were in the little second-story annex room, and she was giving me some correspondence, and it was quiet. And then all of a sudden, we heard a "thump, thump, thump" and then this—the strains of "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze," and the governor's voice was just booming out, and there were a bunch of youngsters singing with him. And then, laughter; and then the next verse, and then "Oh, he flies through the air"—you know. And Mrs. Warren and I smiled to each other, and it was fun to listen to. You could just tell everybody was having a good time. And Mrs. Warren said gently, "When the governor sings, he rocks the mansion." I like that.

I told you about the organization of the photographs. And there was some other time when I was there working with Mrs. Warren; I think it was when I was there filing, and we were working together on a great box of correspondence. We spread it around, and she said, "I've always said that I could make the worst clutter, and clean it up the fastest of anyone." I don't know whether she was quoting what the governor said of her, or whether she was quoting it of herself; but anyway, that was a cute little incident.

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Helen MacGregor and Madelaine Doty used to say that Mrs. Warren had "an educated heart." When I would be taking dictation, she would say, "I haven't had the advantage of a college education like you have, Betty, so you be sure and tell me if I'm using the wrong word or not using the correct grammar." Well, she never used the wrong word, and she never used incorrect grammar. She just—I think she felt that she wasn't educated, so consequently she became truly educated. But, as I say, Helen MacGregor and Madelaine Doty both used that phrase of her, that she had "an educated heart." And I've always thought that she did. She had such a quick feeling for other people's feelings. But she did—it was just—well, her sensitivity, I suppose is the word, for how other people felt about things. She was always so welcomed at women's functions in Sacramento, and she enjoyed them.

The State Women's Club luncheon she was invited to every time, and she often went; and, oh, they were so pleased to have her. She would sit there at the head table enjoying everything about it, and it added to the joy of the meetings. They used to have *tremendous* -sized meetings in those days. The Elks Club room would be just filled. And, of course, a speaker talking about some aspect of California government, from one of the state agencies, would be—oh, he would just outdo himself because Mrs. Warren was there. And she always looked so beautiful. She's small, but she was a small woman who could wear large hats, and she was a picture.

In the mansion—I told you about going over these photographs, and I remember that as we were going over them, she would tell the girls anecdotes—and me; but because her three daughters were there, and they were all enjoying this, she would tell them about little things that happened. Some picture, and I don't remember what it was as they were passing it around, reminded her of the time that Earl Warren, then district attorney, and his crew were making a raid on some house. I don't remember for what crime the house was being raided, but Mrs. Warren said to the girls, "And Oscar Jahnsen was so fast. He would maybe climb over a fence, and your father and the other men would rap on the front door and tell them that this was a raid and that they were under arrest; and some of them would try to run out the back door, and there

would be Oscar, all ready and waiting for them. He was the fastest thing you ever saw." And one of the girls—it was either Dottie or Honeybear—said, "Daddy was fast, too, wasn't he?" And I was touched and tickled, because I thought, "How like an adoring daughter." And Mrs. Warren chuckled and she said, "Oh, yes, but I really think Oscar could move a little bit faster in those days."

In that mansion library, when I first went to work, there were just some book shelves that had been put in at the end of the room,

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but it wasn't very long before they realized that they were simply going to have to do more than that about them. They were overflowing. And so Mrs. Warren had the west wall of the library completely built in with the bookcases, and it was very handsome. And on those bookcases they could display all the memorabilia that a governor is given: the keys to the city, the plaques, the cups, the hats—hats of every kind—and commemorative plates. And books: when they would give him a kind of resolution of pride, it would be in a kind of book-type binding. Everything you can imagine: little statuettes, little figurines that were historic—like the one of John Marshall panning gold (the fellow that found gold in Sutter's Mill); and in 1948 when they established that Coloma Park—where gold had been discovered—as a state park, they got out hundreds of these little cast figures, and they gave Earl Warren one, of course—the first and the best one. And all these things that there's really no place for, unless you build in something like this, and it was just full to overflowing. It was really astonishing. Then they had cupboards underneath for the long and tremendous pieces of paper—great big maps, for instance, that could be rolled up and put away in there. And they had a safe behind closed doors, so it was concealed, but it was there. And that library, that thirdfloor library—Governor Warren would go up there and study bills and sign documents, and sign correspondence many times at home. There was a telephone connection up there, but it got him out of the way.

But one time later on, I was showing a family through the mansion— I think this was in the Knight administration—a ten-year-old looked at the array of memorabilia on the shelves in this library and she said quietly, "Now I understand why presidents have museums." And that's true. I wonder where all those memorabilia things are now?

Let's see—oh, you know, Mrs. Warren and Oscar Jahnsen—he probably told you this, and maybe she did: when they were restoring the mansion, between January and April of 1943, they spent days finding lighting fixtures for it throughout, and I'd love to go through the mansion with her again and have her point out to me which ones they placed. I don't mean the chandeliers, but the additional fixtures. And she commented that the next day they both had sore necks, and they didn't realize what it was until they suddenly realized that they had spent eight hours or more just looking up at the ceiling; because, of course, all the lighting fixtures were hanging from the ceiling. Mrs. Warren said they placed them all through the mansion.

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Mansion Emergencies

Now, this anecdote shows in a way why a governor's mansion needs a guard on duty: one of the first days that I was over there, Mrs. Warren and I were working on the third floor. Dorothy was having a high school sorority group meeting in the living room, and they were expecting the parents of one of the girls to come and pick her up. Suddenly, Dorothy came running up the stairs and said to her mother, "Mother, there are three strange

people on the front porch, and they want to see Daddy." Her mother said, "Well, isn't the officer there?" And Dorothy said, "No, he's taking Bobby somewhere, and he'll be gone until after five." And Mrs. Warren said, "Well, you didn't let them in?" And Dorothy said, "No, I told them I'd have to see you. I said Daddy wasn't here." So, Mrs. Warren turned to me, and she said, "Betty, will you handle this? You go down and tell them that you're the governor's secretary, and that he is not at the mansion, and that he is over at the office, and they must go over to the office to see him."

So, I went down, and there on the front porch were these three rather ominous, forbidding-looking people—a woman and two men, one of whom looked to be her brother and one her father. That was the way I automatically placed them. And they all had a heavy, peasant, angry look to them. So, the woman started to do the talking, and she said [with an accent], "Ve must see the governor. Ve must see him now!" And I said, "Well, I'm very sorry, but the governor is not here, he's over at the Capitol. And you must make an appointment to see the governor." And then the older man said, "Ve must see him today. Tomorrow is too late!" This was about, oh, 3:30 I would say—no, maybe it was later than that. And I said, "Well, if you'll wait here, I'll telephone the office and tell them that you must see him. Could you tell me what you must see him about?" "No!" They wouldn't tell me at all. And they were a threatening trio in a way, and yet they didn't make any move to try to force their way in. But they were angry and sullen.

So, I called the office and talked to Mr. Oakley, who was the executive secretary then, and he said, "Well, Betty, you tell them that the governor has left. As a matter of fact, he's leaving in five minutes; by the time they get over here, he would have left. He has left to go to a meeting in Oakland this evening, and he will not be back until late in the evening. And if they must see the governor today, ask them if they will come over here to see me. But if they are coming here to see me, would you ask them to telephone me and tell me they're coming? I'll see them."

So, I went back to tell them this, and one of them made a

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motion as if he would come into the house to use the telephone from the house, and I said, "No, there's a pay telephone at the service station across the street." There was a service station on 16th and H, the southeast corner, the only service station there at the time. I remember that I had a coin purse in my pocket. And something they said—I thought they might not have the money. They looked poor. So, I gave them a dime, and I said, "If you don't have the change," and I wrote the telephone number out, and Mr. Oakley's name on the telephone number. And I said, "Now you must call him before five o'clock, because at five o'clock he will be going home and the office will be locked."

Well, in the course of that interview with those people, I was intermittently angry—and yet, when I would start to get angry, I would think, "Now, you mustn't get angry, because you are representing the governor. You must be courteous." But the kind of ferocity of the people was really quite frightening.

The next day, I was so grateful that I had been consistently patient with them, because what had happened was, they did phone Mr. Oakley, and they got over to the governor's office before five o'clock, and what was wrong was that their son had been killed in the Pacific, and his body had been brought back in a coffin to be buried in a cemetery in Northern California, in their home town, and they were sure it was not their son and brother. They were trying to get permission to open the coffin to assure themselves that it was theirs.

So, what Judge Oakley did, bless his heart, was this: there were two telephones in his office, one on Marguerite Gallagher's desk and one on his desk, and he phoned three different high-ranking officers, a general and an admiral and somebody else in the Bay Area, and explained the situation to each of them, and each of the trio took turns talking. The officers explained that it was impossible to open a coffin when it was brought back, and that if there were any possibility of error, that this was not their son, the body would not have been brought back; that when they brought back a coffin with someone in it, they were absolutely sure that that was the

man who had died. Judge Oakley was there from about five o'clock until half past six placing these calls and calming these people and comforting them.

My, I was so glad that I had tried to be helpful, too, instead of being rude. But they'd wanted to see Mrs. Warren, and she wouldn't come (which was right!). I remember, when they were insisting that they should see her, I said, "No, no, you cannot see Mrs. Warren." It was in those moments that my hackles would sort of rise.

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Henderson: One time—you know, I spoke of doing the filing in the library—well, Mrs. Warren's correspondence outgrew the file boxes that she had been using, so they got a four-drawer filing cabinet and were bringing it over. I was organizing files in the boxes—in the little room at the foot of the cupola. We had decided that this was the place where the four-drawer cabinet could be placed unobtrusively in the living areas of the home.

So, I was sorting out correspondence, and all of a sudden, fire alarms. I looked out the window at the foot of the cupola, and here were three fire engines converging and coming into the driveway of the governor's mansion! At that time, H Street wasn't a one-way street. One was coming from the east and one was coming from the west, and there was one already coming in the driveway as I looked down. They filled the driveway, of course, and I thought, "My heavens, is the mansion on fire?" And I went out and leaned over the railing, and it was absolutely quiet—there wasn't a sound in the mansion, and I thought, "I wonder if anybody knows I'm up here?" Then I thought, "Well, surely Mrs. Warren knows I'm up here. If there really is danger, somebody will let me know, and if they don't let me know and the mansion burns, I might just as well die working as just sitting here waiting to learn if there's a catastrophe." So, I went back to my filing. About half an hour later, Mrs. Warren came up the stairs laughing, with a plate with a piece of chocolate cake on it. And she said what had happened was that the new metal filing cabinet that was being carried up from the basement had been dropped on the basement stairs, the curving stairs, right beside the fire alarm. And she said, "Within two minutes after that went 'thud' on the floor, these three fire engines were in our driveway, and they were saying, 'Where's the fire? Where's the fire?'; and, of course there wasn't any fire, but we all looked around. Then I told them I was so happy to learn what good care they took of us. There was coffee in the kitchen, so they all had some chocolate cake and coffee before they left." Anyway, there was one drawer in that filing cabinet that never did work easily after that. It always had to be kind of twisted as you pulled it out, and every time I pulled it, I thought of the fire engines.

Images of the Governor, the First Lady, and the Family

Henderson: I did mean to tell you that after those three people came to the mansion door and I had acted as the governor's secretary and sent them over to the governor's office, they didn't ever let the mansion be left alone without an officer on duty. If a driver had to take a car to take the children somewhere, another officer came on duty at the mansion. The Warrens never acted as if there were any danger

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or any threat to the family, but they always, obviously and naturally, had to live with that possibility in mind. That's true of any first family.

All those officers had so much admiration for each and every one of the children. Sparks one time said to me, "You know, people ask me which is my favorite of the Warren children, and I

just don't know. I just don't know."

That whole area, that 16th and H Street area, across the street going down H Street, was mostly old homes at that time of Sacramento's history. I think that the service station across the street at 16th and H Street was the only actual business in the area. It was kind of strange to see those old homes going down one by one through the following years.

One of the notes that I made was about the gifts Mrs. Warren gave me through the years I was working with her. When I first started to work with her, I had a pin of artificial roses made by a shop in San Francisco, and they were kind of unique—tiny little rosebuds on a pin, and I loved them. I remember I had a gray suit I wore them on, and she used to admire them. One day she was going to San Francisco, and she learned they had come from the artificial flower shop there, and she said, "Betty, let me take that pin along. Maybe I can find something to go with it." I was abashed. I thought, "She has no reason to buy something for me," and so I said, "Oh, no, thank you," but she went ahead. And when she came back, she had a pair of artificial-rose earrings that were exactly the same tones of pink, and I wore that as a set for a long time.

Another time, somebody had given me a pair of those Siamese earrings that have a silver dancer on a black background; so, when she discovered I liked those, why, from Honeybear there were several gifts of that type of Siamese jewelry: a link bracelet, and more earrings. Then she gave me a lavender cashmere sweater one time, and she said, "Once you wear a cashmere sweater, nothing else is quite as comfortable." And she said, "My girls just love these, and so do I, and so I just thought you should have one, too." And as I told you—her knack of enhancing a gift with the words she gave it with.

Let's see—to go back to the third floor library, I was going to tell you that her housekeeper had the west room on the third floor, and the cook had the old ballroom, the east room on the third floor. And Mrs. Warren had a bathroom built off the cook's room. That might have been once a powder room. I never have gotten that quite straight. I should check with Mrs. Warren about that. But anyway, it was converted into a bathroom, and that was for the use of both women.

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Oh, the gifts to the Warrens: they got so many, as I told you; in the library they had so many gifts and souvenirs. But one time somebody sent Mrs. Warren a crate of vegetables, and when we first opened them, we thought they were artichokes that hadn't opened out. Then we thought maybe they were avocados. They were a funny green alligatorish sort of thing and very odd-shaped, and we never did figure out what they were. And nobody knew; we enquired and asked. There was no identification on them, and no way of telling how to prepare them. Mrs. Warren said she tried to peel one, and it was too hard to peel. She simply couldn't do it. She thought perhaps they were supposed to be served raw like an avocado. Then, she boiled one, and it didn't boil. So then she tried to bake one, and it didn't bake. By that time, she just gave up. So, we had more laughs about how we were going to say thank you for that particular gift. Finally, I think we phrased it just, "Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness, which all of us appreciated" [laughing]. But we knew we had to omit any noun because we didn't know what they were. I still wonder what those vegetables were, because I've never seen them since.

Mrs. Warren traveled a great deal with the governor, of course. Whenever the governor had to be at any function, she was with him. One time they had asked him to lead some kind of ceremonial parade in Monterey, and then he was going to give a talk. There was some reason that Mrs. Warren preferred not to go on that occasion. Mrs. Hortense May was the governor's invitations secretary at the time. She received a telephone call saying if Mrs. Warren wasn't

going to be there, they would ask Ginger Rogers if she would come and lead the parade in the front car with the governor. And Hortense said, "Oh, I'm sure that that would be just lovely. The governor will be very happy. Miss Rogers is a friend of theirs."

Then when she hung up the phone, Mrs. May turned to me, and she said, "I'll bet Mrs. Warren decides to go." And sure enough, Mrs. Warren went, and so the governor and Mrs. Warren were in one car, and I think Miss Rogers was in a separate car, leading the parade. Anyway, Mrs. May said, "No one's ever going to get the governor in a position where it might imply any lack of appreciation for Mrs. Warren on his part. He likes Mrs. Warren with him, and he's just never going to make it possible for anybody to create any possible scandal about the two of them." I guess that was very true.

Oh, their pony, Peanuts—I have a note about that. For several years on their Christmas cards, if you've looked at them, they always had all their pets named, and they had a pony whose name was Peanuts. I think they got him when Dottie and Honeybear and Bobby were still little. Those three children had ridden him and loved him, but as they got older and busier, they outgrew him.

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So, there he was: a pet that wasn't ridden and played with any more. Honeybear was riding real jumpers at that time.

Mrs. Warren had her hair done by a lady who lived quite a long way from the mansion—I don't know how she happened to go to her. But this lady and her husband had a couple of acres at the edge of Sacramento, and they had a shed for a horse, and they had a little boy who was six or seven. The little boy used to ask Mrs. Warren, "How is Peanuts getting along?" And she would tell him that Peanuts was fine.

Then one day when the lady was doing Mrs. Warren's hair she said, "You know, ever since you gave us the Christmas card with Peanuts' picture on it, our little boy has been coaxing us for a little horse that he could ride." And she said, "And he says, 'We have a place for the horse to live,' and he's right, we do; we could take care of a horse, but we simply cannot afford to buy a horse for our son."

So, Mrs. Warren questioned her, in the way that Mrs. Warren could, and learned that, yes, they would probably be able to care for it if they had a horse, but they couldn't afford the original outlay.

So, Mrs. Warren went home and was telling her children about this little boy who always asked about Peanuts, and how much he wanted a horse, and she probably planted the idea in the childrens' minds. Anyway, they decided that Peanuts should be a Christmas present to the little boy. So, he had been given at Christmas time to this little boy who loved him very dearly. The way I learned about this was that Mrs. Warren had a letter from a friend asking why Peanuts wasn't on this year's Christmas card, when he had been on the last several Christmas cards, and saying, "I do hope that nothing has happened to Peanuts." And Mrs. Warren had replied that Peanuts was now the happy pet of a little boy who "loved him as much as all three children put together." [Laughing] So I thought that was a nice little anecdote to record.

Oh, on the campaign: I don't think I told you about this before. As they were traveling around the country—the governor one time had given Mrs. Warren a pin and earring set. I gather—now, this is a presumption on my part, except primarily from the way she prized this set that looked like snowflakes, and it just struck him that that was something Mrs. Warren would like. And she did; she just loved them dearly and wore them very often.

On the campaign train in the course of their travels, the earrings disappeared. She couldn't remember where she had last worn them. So on one of my very first assignments, when I was working with her, she gave me thirty addresses, and I wrote a letter as her secretary to each of these addresses asking if by any chance Mrs. Warren had left the snowflake earrings at their respective places, and if so, would they return them to us.

Anyway, we got thirty letters regretfully telling her that there had been no trace of them, they hadn't found anything that the Warrens had left, and they were very sorry, and they did hope that she would find she had left them somewhere else where they would be returned.

Well, let's see—they got home from that 1948 campaign by November. Then it must have been some time the *next* fall that Mrs. Warren was telling me with some embarrassment that they were some place and it started to rain, and she said to the governor, "What did you do with your raincoat?" And he said, "I haven't seen it since our campaign train. I used to wear it on the platform in cities where it was raining." So she said, "Well, I'll find it for you." So, she searched for it and found it, and when he put his hands into the pockets, here was a little twist of paper, and her snowflake earrings were in the twist of paper. And then she remembered. She had been wearing them some place, and when she was packing she had put them in his pocket, thinking, "Well, I'll get them from him. I'll remember that I put them there." But there were so many things happening that she had forgotten it.

I really don't know whether we ever wrote all those thirty people to tell them she had found the earrings, because this was a long time after. But anyway, that Christmas time, I found a little quilted jewel box, a little round satin jewel box, brocade— soft, with a zipper around it, which I gave to her. And she was delighted with it.

A few months later, there was a State Women's Club luncheon, and Carol Lane talked—you know, the trade name of the Shell Oil Company travel lady who would go around and talk. She was showing how to pack efficiently, quickly, and what to take and what not to take; and among other things she said, "Now, your costume jewelry you can pack into a soap dish and that will protect it, and it will tuck in anywhere in your luggage, or else you can pack it in a little bag that you can tuck in the toe of a shoe." Later, Mrs. Warren told me that after the luncheon she had said to Carol Lane, "I have something even better than a soap dish or a chamois bag. I have this quilted jewel holder that is soft and packs anywhere and keeps anything safe," and then she said, "Oh, Betty, you gave it to me. Oh, I use it all the time." And that made me feel very good because I had found something that she could really use.

(Most of these anecdotes are essentially trivial, but I presume that's what you want.)

At one time, working in the governor's office—this is going back to Governor Warren himself—Miss MacGregor was telling me that sometimes he had no realization of how long it took to complete a job of work. She said that, for instance, one day they hadn't had a chance to get together with dictation for some time, and so they started at one o'clock and he was dictating to her. He dictated until four. The first letter had been an important letter, and he had dictated it very carefully, and at four o'clock, as she was picking up the correspondence and her notebook to go back into her office, he said, "Oh, by the way, Helen, is that letter to so-and-so ready to sign yet?" And she said she looked at him and said, "Why, Governor, I've been taking dictation ever since you gave me that letter." And he said, "Oh, oh, that's right." [Laughter]

Another comment that Miss MacGregor made to me one time was that anything that you wrote could be improved upon indefinitely. Anything that used words could be—whether it was a letter or a speech, you could make an indefinite number of improvements. You simply had to come to the point where you decided that now you must stop improving on it and send it.

You know, you told me that Miss MacGregor had mentioned that my father was attorney general in Montana. He was attorney general, of course, many years before Governor Warren, but the governor was district attorney, I think—well, I don't remember just what years the governor was district attorney, but anyway, when my father came to California, he went down to meet then-Attorney General Warren and introduce himself as a former attorney general. And they had a very pleasant talk. In fact, the first year I worked there, I told Miss MacGregor that my father would very much appreciate having an autographed photograph of the governor. And when she told Governor Warren that, why, I got one right away, autographed to "L.A. Foot, With very best wishes, Earl Warren."

But anyway, one time my father's sister and brother-in-law and their two little boys from Los Angeles were in Sacramento, and I was showing them through the governor's office. It must have been an early Saturday afternoon, because there weren't very many people in the office, I know; but as we went down the corridor—that was the old office, and at the end of the corridor was the opening door to the large office where the governor was, and he had someone with him at the desk. I stepped to the door and could see him, and he was turned half-way away from the entrance of the door, talking to the person, and so I said, "Well, the governor is busy, so I guess we won't get to meet him." I stepped back, and my father then stepped to the door; and as he stepped to the door, Governor Warren saw him,

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and he jumped to his feet and came out to shake hands with Dad, and Dad introduced him to his sister and brother-in-law and the two boys, and they were all so gratified and so pleased, and so was I.

Mrs. May, the governor's invitations secretary, had been in the office, and a day or so later she said to me, "When the governor is there and the door is open, you really shouldn't stand in the doorway. It interrupts his appointments. He shouldn't have taken time out." And I thought, "Well, he could have pretended he didn't see my father, but he obviously wanted to see him." So I wasn't sorry it happened. In fact, I've always been glad it happened.

I'm just about to the end of my notes, I guess.

Oh, I know—I was going to tell just a few of my little recollections of the Warren children. The very first time I ever saw a jet airplane, Bobby Warren helped me to see it. Doesn't that show how the times have changed, and how recent, really, jets are! This must have been 1949 or '50, and Bobby was out in the guardhouse off the garage on the mansion grounds, and there was an officer there. They were talking together, and Bobby was polishing the wooden handle on a rifle—the butt. The two of them were discussing how much more waxing it should have. He was just working away at it. I was waiting for an officer to take me back to the capitol. And a jet went by overhead. I looked up at the sky, and I said, "I have never yet seen one of those. Every time I look up they've already gone." And Bobby said, "Well, the thing to do is to look ahead of where you think they are." And then we heard another one, and he pointed and said, "See?" and I looked, and sure enough, ahead of where the sound seemed to come from, there was a jet, and that was the first time I had seen a jet. So, I always associate Bobby Warren and jet airplanes. Whenever I hear one now I think of Bobby's pointing that out to me.

And Earl, Jr., was a gentle, kind of shy—with me—young man, tall and slim. My recollection of him at the mansion is mostly out with his dogs. They were running up and down in the runway that he had built adjacent to the garage, and barking and bouncing. And he was out there in the runway with them, rubbing their heads, and they were bouncing all over him, and we exchanged a few words about what nice dogs they were.

Oh, I know something I was going to tell you: this happened in the Los Angeles office. In the summertime, the Warrens went to Santa Monica on vacation, and I had the good fortune twice to be assigned to the small staff that worked in the office in Los Angeles for his convenience. This one time, the governor had been away for a couple of days, and Hortense May, who was the invitations secretary, as I said, had accumulated a sheaf of invitations that she felt she had to clear

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with him. So, finally, she called him at dinnertime from our hotel room, and when she got him on the phone, he said, "Oh, Mrs. May, I'm not going to accept any invitations for the next four days. The boys and I have been invited on a fishing trip." And they would be away for four days. And she said, "Well, Governor, that's all right, except tomorrow," and she told him what important invitation was happening tomorrow. And he said, "Oh, well, I guess I'd better go to that one. You call them and tell them that I'll be there. Then, we'll be gone for three days." And she said, "Yes, but Governor, the next day," and she had another important invitation. And he said, "Well, I guess we'll have to make it a two-day fishing trip." And she said, "But Governor, the next day—." And the fourth day, they were having a birthday celebration for Herbert Hoover at Palo Alto, and Herbert Hoover had expressly hoped that Governor Warren would be there. And the governor said, "Well, I'll be there, I'll be there. I guess the fish will just have to wait a few days longer." And when she hung up she turned to me and she had tears in her eyes, and she said, "I just feel so mean, I just feel so mean. That poor man, he ought to be able to have time to go fishing!" But anyway, then she had to sit down and spend the rest of the evening phoning everybody to tell them the governor would be there.

Oh, in that Los Angeles office, this was one of my catastrophes: they had—the office had a telephone switchboard, and the state assigned a telephone operator whose name was Tilly Webb, and she was a darling. It was so easy when she would connect the governor with other people. Well, she was at lunch, and he was talking on a conversation. And she had showed me how to do it, but I had never done it before; but, "Oh, it's so easy," she said, and it looked easy. So, a telephone call came in and, in trying to handle it, I disconnected the governor's call, and when I realized, I plugged right in again, and I said, "Governor, I'm sorry, I accidentally disconnected you." And he said, "Is that what happened? Well, I was talking to the mayor. Get him back on the line right away, please." There, he did say "please." So I said, "Oh, yes." So I quickly dialed the mayor, and his secretary answered, and she said, "Mayor's office" (I can't remember his name), and I said, "This is the governor's office. I disconnected the conversation the governor was having with the mayor. I'm so sorry. Will you please put him on?" And she said, "Is that what happened?" and then she turned around, and I heard her say, "Mayor, this is the girl in the governor's office. *She* disconnected you." And he said [imitating gruff voice] "Is that what happened?" Then they got back on the line again. [Laughs] And I just felt awful, I just felt awful. Evidently it came out all right, but I have always had a great deal of respect for telephone operators.

Well, I think that that's about all I have of interest, Mrs. Fry, so I'll just sign off now and hope you can use some of this. Goodbye.

Interview Footnotes

1 She was the person who found stenographic and clerical help for all state agencies from the civil service lists. She made quite a reputation for putting the right person in the right job. Later on she recruited professional personnel for the state. [Added note by Betty Henderson.]

2 Mrs. Alice Jones. She held this job under Governors Warren, Knight and Brown—a very competent person. [Note added by Betty Henderson.]

3 John Weaver, *Warren: The Man, The Court, The Era*. Little, Brown & Company, Boston, Toronto. 1967.

4 See appendix material on LeRoy Albert Foot.

5 Weaver: *ibid.*

6 Betty Foot Henderson, *Families in the Mansion*. Sacramento County Historical Society, 1973.

7 See appendix.

8 Henderson, *ibid.*

9 Henderson, *ibid.*

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Earl Warren Oral History Project

Earl Warren: Four Personal Views

**An Interview Conducted by
Amelia R. Fry**

Benjamin H. Swig



Benjamin H. Swig

Interview History

The chance meeting of Bostonian Benjamin Harrison Swig, the finance and real estate virtuoso, and Earl Warren, Governor of California, took place in 1944 on a train speeding toward the governor's state, where Swig was destined to move his family, his investment talents, and his philanthropic interests two years later. The two men were to become close friends eventually. Now, as they chatted on the train, one from the field of public service, the other from the world of business, each perhaps found stimulation in the contrasting frame of reference of the other, and in the fact that each was well on his way to attaining the apogee in his own special orbit.

In 1944 Swig and his partner, Jack D. Weiler of New York, "were possibly the biggest individual real-estate operators in the United States," writes biographer Walter Blum [*Benjamin H. Swig, The Measure of a Man*, privately printed by Alfred and Lawton Kennedy, San Francisco, 1968; page 25] "In the world of high finance, Ben Swig and his methods were being talked about. He would pick out a property that cost, say, \$1,000,000, obtain a first mortgage from a life insurance company and perhaps a second mortgage from another investor. His actual investment might run as little as \$86,000 and his personal outlay even less, since this latter amount would be farmed out to friends and relatives, Ben Swig retaining only a relatively small piece for himself. The property would then be leased to a chain-store outfit. The store's rent would cover interest, taxes, insurance and debt repayment. What was left would be counted as profit. How many friends and relatives benefited from these operations? The number would be difficult to calculate. There were literally dozens of little people for whom the hand of Ben Swig represented the golden touch."

If Swig joined his golden touch with the golden state, he brought with it a latent but strong political concern. Swig's father, Simon Swig, had won the state senate seat in Boston three times as a Teddy Roosevelt Republican, an outlook shared by all his family. However, when Ben Swig entered the national political arena in 1952 as a worker in Adlai Stevenson's presidential campaign, he jumped with both feet into the Democratic party. He vigorously supported Stevenson in '56, then John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and on the state level, Governor Pat Brown.

The pre-interview conference was held, almost heroically, in Mr. Swig's office in the Fairmont Hotel December 3, 1970. Heroically because he had gone to his dentist just preceding our meeting and was still suffering after-effects that would have led lesser men to cancel all appointments for the day and quietly retire in private agony. He didn't. He went through a mental catalogue of anecdotes and memories, which provided an outline on which to base the recorded interview, then proceeded to tour the interviewer around his office. Citations, scrolls, plaques, and honorary degrees hang frame to frame, wall to wall, and floor to ceiling; this visitor could not resist a discussion of the various generousities and efforts that produced them.

The pattern of his numerous charity interests defies description. His spirit and resources for giving have produced everything from a memorable weekend for a troop of Boy Scouts at his elegant Fairmont to a shiny new Chrysler for the president of Israel; from Catholic institutions like the University of Santa Clara to his own Jewish projects like the United Jewish Appeal; and from the then-Negro school of St. Paul's Polytechnic Institute in Lawrenceville, Virginia, to "Careers Unlimited for Women," a job placement service for women over forty.

His civic consciousness extends beyond simply funding various organizations. In 1957 Judge William Sweigert, former executive secretary to Governor Warren, appointed Swig foreman of the San Francisco Grand Jury; also, for five years he acted as a dollar-a-year financial advisor for the Blackfeet Indians of Montana; and he headed campaigns to increase the school tax base in San Francisco, to defeat an anti-union state constitutional amendment ("Right to Work" in 1958), and one to preserve a new fair housing law. His labors to set up the Harry Truman Research Institute of Hebrew University are well known, and he recounts how he restructured it so that Earl Warren would consider becoming its head.

The enthusiasm with which the finance genius tours a guest through the myriad symbols of his philanthropic achievements is ample evidence that here is the *raison d'être* of his life—more than his beautifully restored Fairmont Hotel (which, by the way, has had a policy of non-discrimination from the first). More than his complex successes in real estate. Perhaps here, too, in a concern for the needs of society, lies a clue to the basis of the friendship between Warren and Swig.

Next came the scrapbooks of photographs and letters from political, educational, and civic leaders. He acted as librarian and steered the interviewer to his collection of Earl Warren letters for her own information as background for the interview. In the process he provided, in his suite atop the Fairmont, the most resplendent study nook that was ever an environment for a researcher. First, the elegant round table at one end of a living room with a towering ceiling, long windows, and an Oriental rug so large, thick, and vibrant it was a distraction. The next study session was on a fogless day with a benevolent sun, so Mr. Swig provided a table near the tiled fountain in his Florentine roof garden overlooking San Francisco and the Bay.

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It was clear that the friendship of the two men eventually involved their families, and in the latter years of Warren's sojourn on the Supreme Court there were trips to Europe, to Israel, Mediterranean cruises, fishing off California or off Baja, and even a Christmas at the Fairmont shared by the two families, which now embrace three if not four generations. At the time of the interview, the Fairmont had become the regular locus for the Warrens whenever they were in California.

The interview was recorded March 17, 1971, in Swig's office, with his secretary shielding us from most telephone interruptions. He had gathered his thoughts on his friend and talked freely, apparently glad to have the opportunity to contribute what he could to the record for posterity.

When his transcript was sent to him October 11, 1973, his willingness to check it over was dampened by some unexpected surgery. Wanting to avoid delay, he returned it November 6, 1973, with the note, "Very frankly, there is so much accumulated [in my office] that I have not had time to go over the transcript at all, but I have signed the agreement and am returning it herewith..." We checked over the transcript a second time at the Oral History Office, then final-typed it in the usual manner. Mr. Swig, again, was generous in his willingness to let us copy photographs for the final copies.

This, then, is that slice of Ben Swig's recent life that relates to the Chief Justice. There is much much more to be told, and in the meantime the reader can refer to the Blum biography (*opus cit.*), which was written especially for Benjamin Swig's seventy-fifth birthday.

Amelia R. Fry
Interviewer-Editor
25 March 1974
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

— 1s —

Early Acquaintance with Earl Warren

Fry: In dating my notes here I notice that it's March 17th, and Earl Warren's birthday is March 19th.

Swig: Nineteenth, yes. I'm going back to Washington for it.

Fry: How did you first meet Earl Warren?

Swig: I first met the Chief Justice when he was governor of the state, when I was on board a train, the City of San Francisco; I was coming from Chicago to San Francisco. I think it was when I acquired the St. Francis Hotel in 1944. My attorney was the late Jesse H. Steinhart and he introduced me to Governor Warren at that time. I had quite a little chat with him going over from Chicago to San Francisco, and I became greatly impressed by him. Then I didn't see much of him until a later date and subsequently we became very close friends.

Fry: At this first meeting, you said you were impressed by him. What kinds of things?

Swig: Well, just to hear him talk in general. I can't tell you just which points it was, but he just impressed me as being an honest, conscientious, fine man.

You know, sometimes you meet people and they make a great impression and others you're not impressed with. But I couldn't be more impressed with anybody than I was with him at my first meeting. I left him that day with a great deal of admiration for him.

Fry: Were you a Democrat at the time? Or did this have any bearing on your judgment?

— 2s —

Swig: It didn't have any bearing. It wasn't political at all. I just admired the man for his outlook on life. I think I was a Republican at the time. Yes, I know I didn't change my registration 'til a couple of years later.

Fry: When was it that you got to know him again, better?

Swig: He was having some big affair in Sacramento and he wanted some help from the army and I was very friendly with General Mark Clark. They wanted the army band to come to Sacramento or Los Angeles, I don't remember which it was, and I went on to see General Mark Clark and accomplished my mission for him.

I was never too friendly, or a close intimate of his while he was governor. It was after he became Chief Justice that I became really friendly with him.

Fry: Would you like to explain how that happened?

Swig: [Laugh] I just really don't know how it did happen. He used to come to the Fairmont Hotel and stay overnight, and he always paid me a visit when he was here. We'd talk a while, and the next year talk some more, and we finally became friendly. Very friendly.

Fry: When he lived in Washington, this became his Northern California headquarters when he came back, didn't it?

Swig: No, it was not. I believe he had a home in Oakland or Berkeley at the time. Across the Bay some place.

Fry: Oh, even after he went back to Washington?

Swig: I think he did own it for some time. I'm not sure really. But it's only the last—I'd say six or seven years that we became very close.

Warren's Family, Personal Ethics

Fry: We'd like to have any sidelights you can give us that will show this man in other ways than as a very talented state administrator. You're one of the rare people who can comment on him as a person.

Swig: In describing him I think I have to describe both him and his wife.

— 3s —

They're really like one and they work together and they're so close. Such closeness between man and wife, you don't often see. It's a rare thing to see such close feeling. And not only between man and wife but between the parents and the children and the grandchildren. The closeness.

For example, last Christmas I was ill and they generally meet with their children in one of their homes on Christmas Eve and they didn't want to leave me. They were my house guests, and they didn't want to leave me. So I arranged to have the whole family, the children, the grandchildren in my apartment. And I came out of a sick bed to be with them. And the feeling between the children and the grandchildren, the whole family and one another—it's just remarkable, the closeness. And the admiration, not only the children and the grandchildren but he and Mrs. Warren for the children and grandchildren. It was just wonderful. I may seem immodest and generous, but it reminded me of my own family.

Fry: A really closely knit family?

Swig: A really closely knit family, and they were so solicitous of all the children and hearing them talk—they talked about every detail of what the children were doing, what the grandchildren were doing. And it was really wonderful. So many things that I notice in the Chief Justice that you don't notice in many men.

In all the times we've talked, I don't think I've ever heard him use a profane word. He expresses himself [laugh] very clearly on things but never with profanity. And I think it's a custom and a habit of most men, when they want to express themselves clearly, to use profanity. But I've never heard the Chief Justice use a profane word.

Fry: You would expect that he might, since he's been a tough district attorney.

Swig: That's right. But not from him. Never heard him, and I've heard him be very, very strong when some questions came up, discussing various people and various decisions. But never any profanity.

Fry: Do you use profanity?

Swig: Occasionally. I try to use very little but I'm sure I have used profanity many times.

— 4s —

Fry: But it's not your usual custom.

Swig: It's not my usual custom and that's why I noticed that he never used it.

Another thing—the Chief Justice has gone around to make speeches to different colleges, hospitals and civic and charitable institutions and he has—I know that he has never, never taken an honorarium from anybody to make a speech. He wouldn't accept it. I know, we had

him speak at the University of Santa Clara, and we sent him a check for his expenses from Washington to Santa Clara, San Francisco to Santa Clara, and he returned it. He said he was coming to San Francisco anyway and he wouldn't accept it. Returned the check to us. Which is unusual.

Fry: That wouldn't have anything to do with a conflict of interest; that was just expenses, wasn't it?

Swig: Just expenses. And he wouldn't even take his expenses and he returned the check.

Fry: This was that speech last fall at Santa Clara, after he retired?

Swig: Yes.

One thing I notice about Earl Warren too. That he could read a book and he wouldn't put it down—he'd stay up 'til two in the morning, or take some homework and he'd work 'til two o'clock in the morning. I'd come home late at night and I'd see his lights still burning there.

Fry: So he's a late worker.

Swig: He's a late worker and he's got the knack of concentrating. He's got a retentive memory—oh my gosh, he can remember anything he's ever read. I wish I could. I wish I had one per cent of his retentiveness.

Fry: What sorts of things does he read?

Swig: He'll read almost anything. He'll read politics, he'll read sports. He'll read the stock market. He's well versed—and while I don't believe he owns any stocks, he likes to know what's going on. He likes to see what's going up and going down. Sports—I think he'll read every paragraph pertaining

— 5s —

to sports. He likes to read books of history, books of the United States, modern writers. He'll just read and read and read.

Another thing: I tried very, very hard and really pleaded with him to allow me and a group of his friends to have a big birthday party this coming Friday, March 19th, which is his eightieth birthday. I said, "All of your friends want to honor you and tell you what they think of you, and I'd like to have it in Washington or San Francisco or Sacramento, any place." I said, "Let us express to you how we feel about you."

He said, "No, no. I don't want anything like that. I just want my close, intimate friends, a few of them, if I am going to have any kind of a party, and my immediate family." He says, "I don't like to have a big crowd around when I have my family. I want to spend all my time with my family."

Fry: That's a pretty big crowd.

Swig: And that's a pretty big crowd itself. And so, as a result, his daughter Virginia is having a small group of people at the country club in Washington this Friday, which I'm going to attend. And then he did allow former Senator Kuchel and Congressman Mailliard to have a small party, I believe, at Congressman Mailliard's home on the following Monday, which I'm also going to attend.

Fry: I had a note from John Weaver, who wrote a book about Warren, that they are going to be there at the Friday night party, too.

Swig: Oh, that's fine. I have no idea how many are going to be there but I don't imagine it'll be more than forty or fifty. But, I could have had two thousand people for him that would have loved to have gone, probably given some money for a college or university in his honor, but he just wouldn't allow it.

Fry: I wondered if Earl Warren and Senator Kuchel would remain close after Kuchel came out for Reagan for governor [in 1970].

Swig: Well, I suppose, I don't know—he never expressed it but I know the Chief Justice's feelings. He feels everybody's got a right to do what they think best, and he'll never let anything like that interfere with their friendship. He may not go along with someone's views, but he has always had a feeling that he wanted everybody to be free to do what they want.

— 6s —

And I think that's where he's so wonderful on the Supreme Court. It wasn't only the rich or the influential people that he was looking out for, but he was looking out for the individual rights of any citizen or even a person who wasn't a citizen. He wanted their rights respected and felt they had rights, too, as well as the influential people. I think that's one of his greatest contributions to this country. Looking after the rights of the underprivileged and the minorities.

Fry: He's become so interested in the whole Jewish culture; the July 14, 1961 issue of the Jewish Community Bulletin says the Warren Institute of Ethics and Human Relations is launched, and I understand he's actually studied the Talmud. I wondered if you had anything to do with this.

Swig: I'm going to be frank with you. He knows a lot more about it than I do because I never have been able to study it. I've never read the Talmud, to be frank with you. I'm a little ashamed to say so, but I never had a chance—I always had to work and I never had a chance to study.

Fry: Maybe you could ask him [laugh] to teach you—

Swig: I'll have him teach me something about it one of these days.

Founding the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace

Fry: I think you told me when we were planning this session that you had something to do with his interest in and acceptance of a position with the Harry S. Truman Institute of Peace.

Swig: The Harry Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace. I did get him to agree to accept the presidency of it and the operation of it if when certain things were accomplished the way he wanted them.

Fry: You mean the legal set-up?

Swig: No, no, not the legal set-up but the moral set-up. He wanted it to be an institution of all peoples and not only of Jewish people. This originally was formed by the Jewish people, but he didn't want to represent only the Jewish people; he wanted it to represent the world. And we have succeeded in disassociating

— 7s —

it from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He would not have accepted it under those conditions where it was going to be under the auspices of any certain group. It was going to

be a worldwide group if he was going to have anything to do with it. He felt that he couldn't accomplish anything unless it was made up of people all over the world and not under the auspices of any sect or any religion.

Fry: What did you mean when you said "heading the operation of it"?

Swig: Well, actually he would practically have complete control of the Harry Truman Institute, and President Truman wanted him to. I talked to President Truman's mouthpiece just this morning and I know Truman, former President Truman wants Earl Warren to run it. He has so much confidence in Earl Warren, that he can accomplish things with it, that he wants Earl Warren to be the controlling power in it.

Fry: Is this as chairman of the board or as a top administrator?

Swig: Probably chairman of the board and the top administrator, both.

Fry: This change in its scope happened since December?

Swig: Yes, it has changed. We finally accomplished that. I'm hopeful that within the next thirty days we'll have the money in our possession and this new non-profit corporation can begin. It wouldn't represent any particular group or sect, just a worldwide organization for the purpose of trying to have permanent peace.

They'll have no powers or anything but what I hope they do, and I've talked to the Chief Justice about it, is that a group of them would go around and probably see somebody from Russia, somebody from China, the top men in China and Russia, and try to get not only the heads of the governments but individuals that are interested in peace, to go on the board and work towards achieving peace. And then go to Israel and go to Egypt and probably see Golda Meir and probably see the successor to Nasser—what's his name?—Anwar Sadat, and probably go and see Fidel Castro; and go all over the world.

He feels, like I do, that nobody ever won a war. All we've ever had is death and sorrow and burdens: you have to build hospitals to maintain and take care of the wounded and the sick and for generations have to pay for the maintenance of these hospitals when we can be doing so much more good with

— 8s —

that money to help the underprivileged and to help in education and hospitals. That's where that money should go.

Fry: You have a very great record of helping finance the hospitals and helping rehabilitate military people who've been through war, so you have a personal viewpoint and conviction on all this, I guess.

Swig: I have a personal conviction; that's one of the reasons why we are so friendly. Our views are very much alike. That's where the money should be used. To help people: the underprivileged and the sick and the minority groups who don't have the equal opportunities.

Fry: How does Harry S. Truman relate to this center?

Swig: Well, a group of us got together originally, before Earl Warren was ever thought of in connection with it, and felt that Harry Truman—it was a group of Jewish people, to be frank with you. It started here in San Francisco, with a man by the name of Stanley Langendorf, who was with the Langendorf bakeries, who said the Jewish people in the world never really gave

Harry Truman the honor and the credit he deserved for the establishment of the state of Israel. And he felt that the Jewish people should do so. And then, as a result of that, after several meetings we created the Harry Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace and forty-five people gave \$100,000 apiece towards that, pledged \$100,000 apiece towards that institution.

And then, somehow or other, it got mixed up with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Chief Justice didn't think he could do a good job if it was sponsored by the Hebrew University. And that's why, as I said previously, we founded a new non-profit private corporation to do this work that will consist of people, probably, from all over the world.

Fry: This sounds like it will take him out of the country a lot.

Travels, Awards and Other Activities

Swig: It might take him a lot out of the country. Of course, he's been all over the world on different projects. As Justice of the Supreme Court, he's been all over the world.

— 9s —

Fry: Yes, he was in Thailand in September of last year [1969] in connection with Peace Through Law, Charles Ryan's organization.

Swig: I think President Johnson asked him to go to Thailand, and I know he went several other places, representing this country. I remember he went to Rome, representing the President when the new Pope was inaugurated. (They don't say ordained—we'll have to look that one up. Whatever you do to become Pope.) And he and Rabbi Finklestein were representing this country at that affair. Rabbi Finklestein is president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York.

Fry: Is that the rabbi that Earl Warren went or goes to for his instruction in the Talmud?

Swig: I really don't know. I never knew that he went to any rabbi for instruction in the Talmud. I think he just took the Talmud and read it.

Fry: A rabbi in New York told us once that he did travel to New York fairly regularly for instruction.

Swig: It must have been Rabbi Finklestein because they're very, very close. I introduced them way, way back.

Fry: Maybe you are responsible for his study of the Talmud.

Swig: Maybe indirectly, you never know. Well, there are so many things you could keep talking about. For example, I talked to Mrs. Warren as to how many honorary degrees the Chief Justice has received from universities and colleges, and I found out that there are over eighty-five of them. You never get the Chief Justice to admit there are that many; I don't think he would today.

There must be a record, but I know that there are over eighty-five. And he never discusses it; he doesn't brag about it. I don't know, he takes things just in stride, so easily. The ordinary person, if they received eighty-five honorary degrees would brag about it. I would! I received five and I brag about them. But you never hear him discuss it. Of course, he has a great loyalty to the university he went to, the University of California. He has a great loyalty to that University. And he goes back there very often.

Fry: He's feeling quite pressed right now to write this autobiography that he's promised Doubleday.

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Swig: Yes, but he worked on one book, I know. It's the toughest book in the world to write, and he worked hard. [*A Republic If You Can keep It*]. I was with him in Cape Cod this summer. We went on vacation together, and I know he worked on it somewhat there and then he came up here and spent a month; he worked on it. It's a hard thing to talk on citizenship, you know, to really—there's nothing personal about it, and I guess it was a tough book for him to write. I think when he works on his autobiography that'll be very, very interesting.

There are a lot of things he likes. He likes to be out in the open all weekend, he loves to go hunting. Not so much to kill any birds; I think he gets more fun at watching the others there than he does himself. I've gone out fishing with him a few times. I went up to Tahoe this spring and we've gone to Mexico fishing a few times, and Montana.

Fry: What kind of fishing does he do, trout?

Swig: Oh, any kind. He enjoys anything if he's with the right kind of companionship. I think it's companionship more than the sports. His probably very closest friend is Wally Lynn. He lives in San Francisco and Wally and he go duck hunting and fishing and do a great many things together like that.

I'll tell you another thing he likes, something he loves to do. I've seen him go in the water and stay in that water, in deep water, for an hour, an hour and a half, two hours, at a time. Float and then swim and then float again.

Fry: You mean in the ocean?

Swig: In the ocean. Out in the Mediterranean, both of them just would stay there. I'd be tired and I'd go on board the yacht, and they'd be out there just floating, swimming around, and how they love it! And how they love to do it together! They'll be floating in the water and talking about different things.

It's remarkable. You learn so much by watching both of them together. Really, it's the most unusual thing, the most unusual couple I ever saw—as I said at the beginning, I have to add Mrs. Warren in, too. I've gone on trips with them when my grandchildren were here and if anybody's hurt, she knows

— 11s —

how to take care of them. She knows how to bandage their leg or if they get a cut or if they get a bite she knows what to put on and has the materials to fix them. My grandchildren call her a fairy godmother, they call her Fairy Godmother. She always helps them do everything. The way she watches him when he gets dressed in the morning; or if he's going out at night, she's got to fix his tie and see that his shoes are shined and watches over him like a mother would over a babe, really.

Fry: I guess he's been so busy all his life, with high pressure things that—

Swig: Yes, he has, but she certainly takes care of him.

Fry: I was going to say that I think they first met in a swimming pool.

Swig: Is that so?

Fry: Well that's the way the story goes. I haven't asked Earl Warren how true this is, but that's the story that Irving Stone wrote about.

Swig: I never heard that.

Fry: So perhaps they're both swimmers. I think he swims a lot when he can in Washington.

Swig: Yes, he does. He does swim a lot. And he likes it.

Fry: He certainly looks like an athletic man.

Swig: Yes, he does. He's built that way. He's got a powerful physique.

Fry: Have you been one of his football-watching buddies?

Swig: No, no. I've heard him though. I have watched him when he sits around a television, and he knows every football player for every college and every baseball player and who they played with previously and what league and who they're sold to or who they're bought by and how much they paid for them and how many hits they made and their records—he knows all that. It comes out just like that.

Fry: Does Mrs. Warren share in this?

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Swig: No, she doesn't. No, she's the domestic type. She doesn't care for sports like that. She probably goes with him a great many times, but she'd rather work around the house and do the work. I think she does all the cooking herself at home. They don't have a maid. She does all the cooking and most of the cleaning and she always took care of the children. She's a domestic type. He loves sports of all kinds.

Fry: Do you know of any formalized institution, like a church, that the family went to or anything like this?

Swig: I really don't know. I really don't know. I've never discussed that with him and I've never heard him talk about it. And he believes in—I know he doesn't try to rule his children. He lets each one do what they want and always did. They always had the right to express themselves and I know, when they're together, they express themselves. I've heard them differ with him on things, and they feel free to disagree with him.

Fry: Earl Jr. felt free to go into a different political party.

Swig: That's right. That's right. Well, I think if Earl Warren had his choice today, if somebody asked him which party he'd like best, I think he'd say the Democratic party.

Fry: That's the kind of the feeling I have.

Swig: I'm sure he would. I think he feels that the Democratic party does more for the smaller man. I think he feels as I feel, that if the little man is employed at a decent salary and makes a decent living that we will have prosperity. I think that's the theory of the Democratic party. If the little man is employed and making money, he'll spend it and, eventually, most of it will get in the hands of the big businessman. And I think the Republicans feel that if big business makes money, it will drop down and somewhere here the little man will get it. But that doesn't seem to be the case today where we have six and a half percent unemployment during the Republican

administration.

I see it in the hotel business. We have so many days when we're booked 100 percent and by the time the people show up, they don't even let you know, you have 70 percent. Thirty percent of your hotel is vacant, many a day. I've seen it happen this month when our occupancy was supposed to be filled and we stopped taking reservations and the day comes and they don't show up. People are just afraid, they're trying to save their

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money. (I'm afraid I'm getting away from Earl Warren.)

I'm on the board of the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, and we have charge of all the savings and loan associations in California, Arizona, Nevada. People were drawing their money out `til last November, I think it was, and all of a sudden, we've started to get so much money in, they don't know what to do with it.

They had been coming to us, all the savings and loans, to borrow money. They hadn't even had enough money to pay off their depositors and they had to borrow money from us. And now they come up, the money's coming in so fast that they want to pay us off and they don't have the place to invest it. I don't know, I can't figure it out.

Similar Early Experiences

Fry: You and Earl Warren obviously have a deep basis of compatibility. It seems to me that both of you have had a similar experience and life style in that each of you have been in a position to do something responsible in dealing with ambiguities in our society: the problems of the working class people and the minorities and seeing everybody gets a fair shake. He on the Supreme Court, and you in your own corporate empire, and you have each used a similar criterion for applying your power.

Swig: I think that's true. I think we both have backgrounds that are somewhat similar. When Earl was young I think his father worked on the railroads in Bakersfield. And he had to work his way up the hard way. His father never acquired anything and Earl had to work his way up and he finally went to law school and practiced law and became district attorney. And I similarly, had a chance to know the feelings of the poor and the insecure. My father came over to this country when he was, I'm not sure, when he was thirteen, fourteen years of age, and brought up a big family of eleven children, outside of Boston, Massachusetts originally. And we knew what it was to suffer. I won't say the "pangs of hunger" but many's the day that they didn't have the money to pay for the groceries and all the children had to go out and work. And had to work after school and work at night to help one another. And I know, in my family, some of us worked a great deal to send my two oldest brothers to college. We didn't have enough money for me to go to college, but we were

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successful in sending my two oldest brothers to college. And we could see the struggling going on and then, when luck and success came up, why I remembered the past, I remembered the suffering and how hard it was for people to get along, and I think the same happened to Earl Warren in his life.

We have great memories; we can think back on all the different people like ourselves that were trying to succeed and weren't as lucky or successful as we were. And I think we both have a

compassion for them.

I remember when we used to work in silver factories in Massachusetts and get twelve cents an hour.

Fry: Silver?

Swig: Silverware—knives and forks. In Brattleboro, Massachusetts. We used to work ten hours a day and make a dollar: twelve cents an hour is \$1.20, and we'd work six days a week. If you made seven, eight, nine, ten dollars a week, you were doing very well in those days. And we remember those days.

And I think (I don't know, I've never asked Earl Warren whether he agrees with me or not), but I think the labor unions were a great step forward and a big success, but I think now it's gone too much that way. The demands are too great and we're having too much inflation, but if labor hadn't been successful, if we had no labor unions, we'd probably still be working for ten, fifteen, twenty cents an hour. And living the way we used to live.

Fry: There was a big gulf between the working class and others.

Swig: The way it is today, the working man's able to have an automobile and sometimes two of them in the family and a television, a radio, own their own home. I think that makes for a better America. And I think Earl Warren felt that; that if the poor people have enough so they can have the necessities and a few luxuries, it would make for a better United States.

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Negro Advancement

Swig: There are too many that can't make a living today and too many that don't have the opportunities because they never had the opportunity to get the education and they never had the opportunities of employment. It was very difficult for a black man (Negroes we used to call them) to get employment any place. It was very difficult in the South. They had to go into a different room in a railroad station or be in the back of a streetcar and they couldn't go into restaurants and they didn't have the opportunities to learn from the whites. And I think the Chief Justice recognized that. And I recognized it.

I know in this hotel, when I first took it over, they didn't allow blacks to come in here.

Fry: Oh really? What did you do?

Swig: I changed it immediately and allowed them to come in; if they were decent, that's all we wanted. And now we have black conventions here, and we're glad to have them. I think we whites have got to show them that we want them to mingle with us. I think they've got to learn from us. We stop them from learning by not giving them the proper schooling and not associating with them and they couldn't learn. And we couldn't allow them to learn. By holding them back, we were the ones that— in the southern United States—that caused all this rift between the blacks and the whites.

Fry: Are you ever with Earl Warren when he is out publicly where there are black people? What has been the public reaction to him?

Swig: I've seen blacks come up to him and say "How wonderful you are and we don't know where we'd be without you." I've heard them say that to him, express themselves.

Fry: You mean just come up to him on the street?

Swig: Yes, on the street. I've seen so many of them. They worship him. We've got to be more understanding. I think that a lot of them do things that are wrong, and there's more crime amongst the blacks, but I think a lot of it is our fault, in the way that we have them subdued and kept by themselves.

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Fry: In crime-producing surroundings.

Swig: That's right.

Fry: They also get a different kind of police protection sometimes.

Swig: That's right. There's been prejudice against them, there's no question about it, and maybe all of us have some prejudices against blacks. I really think we did. I think there's still prejudice now. I don't know, I'm sure I wouldn't like it if my daughter came home and said, or my granddaughter came and said, "I'm going to marry a black." I don't think I'd like it.

Fry: I don't know—do you think that we can ever throw this off completely?

Swig: I don't know whether we can or not. Yet, if they marry the right kind, there's no harm in it. I know I'd have some feeling against it, I couldn't help it.

Fry: But you probably wouldn't stop her?

Swig: I probably wouldn't stop her. The same as I don't try to stop my children or grandchildren from marrying out of the Jewish faith. I have a son who's married to a non-Jew and I have a granddaughter who's married to an Italian boy. They're living in Milan now. And we love him just as much as we love any of the other grandchildren.

Aftermath of the Warren Court Decisions

Fry: Some people have also been very bitter about some of the Warren Court decisions and have said abusive things about him. Have you had this experience?

Swig: Well, I don't think they'd ever say it to me. I'm very proud of our friendship. [Laughter] I brag about it. I don't mind bragging about it, because I think he's probably the greatest man who ever lived in these United States. I know I talk to different businessmen that know that I'm friendly with him. And they start talking about him. And I let them have it. I tell them that they're very, very selfish individuals. And I said, "This man had to make decisions that he probably didn't want to make."

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I know one that we discussed and I think I can talk about it now. And that was on the prayers in the schools. It came up from New York state, I think, and they had to rule that it's in the Constitution that there should be a separation of church and state and that we could not make a kid in the school say his prayers.

I think after he retired I discussed it with him. And he said, at that time, that it was tough for him to make a decision that you couldn't say prayers in school. And I said I agreed with him. I said I remembered when I was a child, we were taught to say "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," and so forth and so on, and I said, "I don't care whether it's a Jew or a Catholic or a Protestant said that. I think it did us all good to say it." But the law of the land is that it shouldn't be said in school. And I don't see how he could make a ruling any other way when there's a separation of church and state.

Fry: Was this his point to you?

Swig: Yes, he disliked to make that decision, because he felt it was good that people said prayers in school or said their prayers any time. But he said he had no alternative. He had to live up to the Constitution, so that's what he had to do. That's the job of the Supreme Court, to interpret the law. And he said he didn't like to do it but he had to.

He said he had several other instances when he had to make decisions like that; that he thought the decisions had to be made but he didn't think it was good that they had to make it. I know he's criticized for a lot of things that he just had to make decisions on, where people felt that he gave the individual too much freedom—the crook and the thief or a burglar or a robber or a murderer.

Fry: Such as the Miranda case.

Swig: He just felt that they had to have their rights and they had to be protected. That they had a right to have attorneys and they had a right to be defended and they had a right to ask for an attorney before they made a statement. That was the law of the land. And they had to rule that. So all the people I know spoke to me and said, "Well he's just helping the murderers and the thieves and the cutthroats." But he had no alternative, that's the law; that's the Constitution.

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I know how much he, when he was district attorney, how much he prosecuted those people, and he would today. But he still felt that they should be told of their rights. It was a very difficult decision for anybody that wanted to look out for the rights of any individual. Whether you're poor or rich, whether you're innocent or guilty, they still have certain rights, inalienable rights. And he felt that their rights should be protected and as a result, he's been called everything.

They've had the "Impeach Earl Warren" banners out all over the country, especially in the South. I can imagine how discouraged he must have been at the time. But he takes it with a grain of salt and he just figures he's doing the right thing and that's what he has to do. And that's all he ever thinks about, not what the people thought of him. And not what they thought of his decisions. But whether he was doing the right thing by his country and by the people who inhabit it. That was his main, main thought. That he was doing the right thing. He was interpreting the law the way it should be interpreted. And protecting the rights of everybody. Sometimes I think that he thought big business was given too many privileges and rights which the little fellow didn't have and he wanted to correct it.

And I think he was absolutely 100 percent in his court decisions, but he did it like a man and whether you agreed with the results or not, that wasn't the question. The question was, what was the law.

Fry: Do you know if he had any mixed feelings about the Brown case, the desegregation case?

Swig: I never discussed it when he was justice of the Court, but we have discussed those things later, and of course he felt that he did the right thing in all those things. And he dissented on a great many opinions of the Court, one way or the other. And a great many dissented with him. But he always thought for himself. He never let anyone else make his decisions and he would never be influenced by anybody. He wasn't influenced by what other people thought was the right thing to do, and the fair and the honorable and the decent thing and what was best for the people and the country.

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California Politics

Fry: You know when he was the governor he was looked upon as a great political strategist with a very strong sense of public opinion, public concern. He could put his finger in the air and give you a complete political breakdown of the state. Then when he went to the Supreme Court, apparently he was—

Swig: He got above politics. I think he forgot about politics when he was *governor* of the state. He didn't care whether a man was a Democrat or a Republican. I think he wanted to do everything he could for his party, but when he appointed a man to office, why he'd try to appoint the best man. I knew a lot of Democrats that he appointed. And I know when I was a Democrat, I voted for him because I thought—

Fry: You mean when you were a Republican?

Swig: No, I mean afterwards, when I was a Democrat. After I changed in 1952, I voted for him, and I remember I voted for him when I was very friendly with [his opponent] Jimmy Roosevelt, who's a very good friend of mine. And when Jim ran against him he wanted me to support him. I said, "I wouldn't Jimmy, even though I'm a Democrat and so are you. I think Earl Warren's doing a wonderful job and I'm going to support him." And Jimmy was quite angry with me for about a year. But now we're just as friendly as we ever were. I think he feels that I had a right to my opinion. While I like Jimmy and I liked what he stood for, I think Earl Warren was more tried and we knew what he stood for. Jimmy only told what he was going to stand for. So I had to tell Jimmy that Earl Warren made a great governor and I was going to support him.

Fry: California was not a terribly partisan state at that time.

Swig: Well, there were always more Democrats than Republicans in the state.

Fry: But more Republican governors.

You've been very active politically in the Democratic party, in supporting candidates, right?

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Swig: Fairly active. I'm not like a great many Democrats, who think the Democratic party is the only party in the world, that we have the only good men in our party. I voted for Goody Knight, after Earl Warren got through, against the Democrat. I voted for [Congressman Bill] Mailliard [a Republican] every time he ran; I thought he was a good congressman.

How I came into it—I think mostly through Adlai Stevenson. I was a great admirer of his. He got me interested in politics; I was so enthused about Adlai Stevenson that I became interested in the Democratic party and then I helped on the committee for Governor Brown, and the committee for Mayor Alioto.

Famous Friends and Good Works

Swig: I've got a picture over here of Adlai Stevenson and Earl Warren out cruising on the bay. [Brings a picture out from a stack on his desk.]

Fry: What a picture! I hope we can have a copy of that in our collection at The Bancroft Library?

Swig: Yes.

Fry: That's a very unusual picture.

Swig: That is an unusual picture. I have a picture of Hoover, there, and my boys' club, back to the days when I was getting a new building started.

That's one of the Supreme Court. Here's another—the Chief Justice and I had an audience with the Pope. Both of us together and the same time, with my two granddaughters.

Fry: When was that?

Swig: Let's see, they must be sixteen, seventeen—about five years ago.

Fry: How was that arranged?

Swig: I arranged it. I asked my friend, Cardinal Spellman to make an appointment for me. I brought a couple of priests with me from San Francisco to meet the Pope; they'd never met him before.

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Here's one where I'm receiving an award from the Pope. I was made a Knight of St. Sylvester.

Here's a picture of Bobby Kennedy the night before he was killed. He was staying here and then the next day he went down to Los Angeles—

Fry: And did you have a lot to do with John Kennedy's campaign, too?

Swig: I raised the first money toward his campaign. Right after he was nominated in Los Angeles, he was going to Alaska. I knew he was going to stop in San Francisco to change planes, so I arranged a luncheon at the airport. I had about forty, fifty men there, and I raised considerable money from them. It was the first money for his campaign.

I had known John Kennedy for years. I knew his father in Boston, and I knew his mother before she married Joe Kennedy. I knew John Fitzgerald, his grandfather, very well; we were close friends. Johnny Fitz, we used to call him. He used to sing "Sweet Adeline" at all the campaigns in Boston.

Upstairs, I've probably got twenty personal letters from Jack Kennedy.

Fry: I understand you've got a number of letters from Earl Warren, too?

Swig: I've probably got some right here. My secretary likes to keep letters she thinks are important.

Here's a man I recommended to be a judge to Governor Reagan, thanking me and telling me "the verdict was favorable."

Here's one I got from the Secretary of the Army's office. I'd put up the \$150,000 to build this theater at the hospital for wounded veterans here at the Presidio. They made me put up my money before they even started the building.

This one in 1970 from students at the University of Santa Clara—I go have a meeting with twelve, fifteen of them, tell them the way I feel—that we are contributing, supporting them so they can go to college, and they should consider it a privilege that they're going to our university. I told them frankly, one time, "If I ever hear of any one of you disobeying the laws of our country, our state or our city, or the rules of our university, I'll be the first one to ask to have you expelled."

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I say that to them, and I think they mind me; they grin; they're some of the finest young men you've ever met.

Here's one from NAACP. I've made the pitch for them and raised money for them every year. I'm a life member. Then I took my three children and my ten grandchildren and gave five hundred dollars apiece in their names. I put my money where my mouth is. [Chuckles]

Here's one from the priests at Carroll College in Montana; I help them out. "You are truly a man of God," he says.

Here's one from Clarence Berger of Brandeis University thanking me for all I did. It's nice to get letters like this.

Fry: Yes, it is.

Swig: When Abba Eban was here, I made a pitch to sell Israel bonds and we raised \$300,000 at one dinner. The area chairman wrote me and said, "Three hundred thousand thanks!"

Here's one from a nun—and one from Ted Kennedy (I had breakfast with him last Saturday). One from the University of Hawaii thanking me for making it possible for them to acquire the papers of Adlai Stevenson.

Fry: Oh, is that where they went? And you gave them money so that they could buy—?

Swig: Yes.

And this one is from Mayor Lindsay; he was out here recently. I had him for breakfast.

Fry: I see that the end of the hour has come. This has been an interesting interview. Thanks for working it into your busy day.

Swig: Glad to.

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Fry: You say your letters from Earl Warren are upstairs?

Swig: I'd be glad to let you take them. If you want to come in tomorrow, you can pull them out of the different books they're in and bring them down here and make copies of them.

Fry: That would be fine.

Swig: I wouldn't want them shown around a lot; I wouldn't want to abuse his friendship.

Fry: We can keep them confidential and under seal for a time.

Swig: All right, fine—until I'm gone and he's gone. A lot of them are very personal.

[Mr. Swig closed the letters until 15 April 1976. Ed.]

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