

Prepared by: EWH
Date: 3/26/96

KNIGHT

KNIGHT, GOODWIN J.

OH-114

94 pgs. w/Index

PRCQ

Lieutenant Governor of California, 1946-53; Governor, 1953-59

DESCRIPTION: [Mrs. Virginia Knight participates in this interview.] The pre-convention period of 1952 (incl. effects of Earl Warren's decision to run for the Presidency, results of the delegate arrangement between the Warren--Richard M. Nixon people); development of the enmity between Warren and Nixon; Knight's understanding of the Warren--Eisenhower Supreme Court arrangement; Warren's political ambitions; federal-state relations (incl. a White House Conference, an anecdote concerning former President Truman, Eisenhower's attitude toward state government); an anecdote regarding Eisenhower and the poetry of Mrs. Virginia Knight; an anecdote regarding an Eisenhower speech at the Hollywood Bowl; an anecdote involving Robert Finch's animosity toward Knight; Eisenhower's relationship with Senator William F. Knowland; Nixon's relationships with Warren, Knowland, Knight; the 1958 gubernatorial campaign in California (incl. figures involved, political conditions, the right-to-work issue, Knowland's misreading of the situation, Nixon's attitude, Knowland's political record, Knight's position); Knight's speculations as to "what might have been if . . . "); Mrs. Virginia Knight's anecdotes about meetings and conversations with the Eisenhowers; Mrs. Knight's scrapbooks; the California right-to-work issue (incl. Eisenhower's attitude, the initiative movement, the calamitous gubernatorial election of 1958, the power of labor); remembering the 1956 Inaugural events; the 1958 campaign (incl. Eisenhower's involvement, the Democrats as governors in California); the growth of conservatism within the California Republican Party (incl. a quote from Theodore White's book, The Making of the President, 1964, analyzing the California political situation, progressive Republicans vs. right wing Republicans vs. liberal Democrats, the future of the Republican Party in California, the effects of the cross-filing method of election, Democratic strategies, the effect of the extreme radical right on Republican politics in California); Knight's analysis of the outcome of the 1966 gubernatorial election (incl. the candidates Ronald [W.] Reagan and [Edmund G.] Pat Brown, the effects of Proposition 14 on the election); the extremely conservative Republican element (incl. strategies for securing party control in California, the make-up of the movement, the limitations of extremism in politics, Barry Goldwater's influence, conservative farm states vs. industrial states, the tension between radical politicians and the average American); personal material concerning Knight (incl. biographical data, an anecdote regarding his ownership of a gold mine); Eisenhower's participation in Governors' Conferences; SAC (Strategic Air Command) briefings for the governors; the Knight--Nixon relationship (incl. details of Nixon's alleged duplicity in the 1954 California State Central Committee elections, Knight's actions, results and aftermath of the election, history of the animus between Knight and Nixon, anecdote concerning Nixon's behavior in the Raymond Darby campaign, anecdotes concerning Nixon's treatment of Knight at Whittier and the Los Angeles airport, Knight's support of Nixon for a Senate seat, an anecdote concerning a Drew Pearson column, Knight's attitude toward the effects of negative publicity, Knight's rationale for the motivation behind the behavior of Nixon and his supporters); Nixon's

treatment of other political figures (incl. Ronald Button, [Horace Jeremiah] Jerry Voorhis, Helen Gahagen Douglas); the role of the Governor in California state politics; Knight's involvement in the 1956 Presidential campaign; Knight's political actions from 1958 through 1964.

NAME INDEX

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by Ed Edwin, June 16, 1967]