

Oral History Interview

With

CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN

Governor of California, 1943-53, and Chief Justice of the United States, 1953-69. Republican candidate for Vice President of the United States, 1948. Delivered principal address at the dedication of the Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, July 6, 1957, and also the principal address at the dedication of the Thomas Hart Benton mural in the Truman Library, April 15, 1961.

Washington, D.C.

May 11, 1972

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: All right, Mr. Chief Justice, to begin this afternoon, what are your earliest recollections of Mr. Truman?

WARREN: I believe the first time I met President Truman, at least as far as I can recall, was when he came out to the United Nations convention in nineteen hundred and forty-five, very shortly after he became President, I was the host Governor of the convention and made the first speech at that convention welcoming it to

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California. And when President Truman came to town I met him at the airport and rode in his car with him to the St. Francis Hotel where he was staying during the convention. There I visited with him in his quarters and so on.

HESS: It is well-known that you and Mr. Truman are good friends. Now just what is the basis for that friendship?

WARREN: Well, as far as I am concerned it came from admiration of his forthright qualities. To me he was a man of no guile, a man who was forthright in his positions that he took. I believe not only from what he said, but the manner of his actions, that he was acting from his own inclinations and was not being pressured into any positions that were alien to his nature, and I always felt that he felt highly toward me, too. And as time went on my regard for him grew and

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I came to consider him a most valuable man in the public service.

HESS: As you know, Mr. Truman has said that you are "a Democrat and don't know it."

WARREN: I suppose. I know when he would come out to California, as usual he would just give the Republicans the heck; and it got to be ritualistic, someone in the crowd would say, "But how about Warren?"

He would say, "Oh, Warren is just a Democrat and doesn't know it." And of course, he couldn't have said anything better for me, talking to a Democratic crowd, and me being a Republican with our crossfiling system out there, and my having a penchant for crossfiling. It was that kind of a relationship all the way through.

I remember once I was back here when he was having real difficulties with the Congress, it was quite bitter, and...

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HESS: Was this the 80th Congress that came in in '46?

WARREN: I'd have to look that up. I don't recall. It seems to me it was later than that but I won't be sure. Anyway, the Republicans, most of them didn't show up and the House of Representatives room wasn't filled by any manner of means, and I came in there when he was speaking. I was here on a committee of the Governors' Conference and I suggested we adjourn and go down and hear the President and his state of the Union message. We went down there and I was standing in the back, and when he was talking he apparently saw me, so when he concluded his speech and had gone out, the first thing I knew a young man came in and said to me, "The President would like to see you outside."

I said, "Oh, yes."

He said, "Yes, that's true, he's out at the elevator and he'd like to see you."

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I said, "Very well, I'll go out."

I guess it was a Secret Service man and I went out and there was the President standing at the elevator and he said, "Well, I just wanted to know how you are getting along and how your family is and so forth."

I told him I thought he had made a good speech and so forth, and we visited a little and he got into the elevator and went away. I was the only one he spoke to out of that whole crowd. You know, I never had any close association with him in which to really become sociable. We didn't have a relationship of that kind, but I admired him greatly and still do.

And I remember another time, not so long after he became President, I was on a committee of the Governors' Conference to see the President about some matters that involved Federal-state relations, and we had a date with the

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President. And the day we had set for the date was the day after the Japanese surrender. It was in the morning and I remember we came in and this city looked like it had been hit by a

tornado, papers and everything--you know what a wild night they had that night. We went and he was there waiting for us, and we went in and visited with him.

As I recall it, I've been doing a little thinking about it, my recollection is he told us that the pressure was already on to bring the boys home. And I won't be sure, but I believe he told us that he had already cancelled some war contracts. Now this was about 10 or 11 in the morning, and it was in the evening of the preceding day that the surrender was announced.

HESS: Did he give any indication either by word or tone of voice that he thought bringing the boys

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home at that time would be premature?

WARREN: Well, I wouldn't want to say that he said that, but I just had the idea that he thought it was pretty hasty, you know, and that he could feel this pressure building up. Now that's not too vivid a recollection, but that's the impression that was left with me from the visit that we had.

HESS: All right now, as you stated, your first meeting with President Truman was in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: When did he first come to your attention, if you can think back?

WARREN: As far as I can recall, he first came to my attention as the chairman of the war committee.

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HESS: What came to be known as the Truman Committee.

WARREN: The Truman Committee, yes. I thought that was a very important committee, and it received a good deal of publicity, you know. I thought it was serving a very, very good purpose. I thought it was a great service that he rendered in the war effort through that committee. But I didn't know him at that time.

HESS: What was your opinion when he was selected in 1944, in Chicago, as the vice-presidential nominee on the Democratic ticket? Were you a little surprised? Now if you'll think back you'll remember that Vice President Henry Wallace, of course, wanted to remain, and James Byrnes would have liked to have had it. There was no shortage of candidates in 1944.

WARREN: Oh, no, I know. Well, I don't think that I

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was tremendously interested in that, because...

HESS: You were looking from the other side of the picture.

WARREN: ...that was the year that they tried to force the vice-presidential nomination on me at Chicago, and I had run for Governor just a little over a year and a half before on the theory that I wanted to be the war Governor of California, that our incumbent Governor wasn't giving it the attention that it should have been given; and the people had accepted that, and had elected me and we were still in the war, and I just felt that I couldn't honorably do it then. They just took it for granted that I would do it, they wouldn't believe me. Tom Dewey talked with me for upwards of an hour, the day of nomination, but I told him that I just could not do it, and so I didn't do it. So, I don't know that I

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thought a great deal of the vice-presidency in either party.

HESS: Does it seem to be an idea that's a little difficult to get across that a man would like to remain in state government? Now what I'm thinking of is a parallel with Adlai Stevenson in 1952.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: As you will recall he wanted to remain in Springfield.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: And he was prevailed upon in 1952.

WARREN: Yes. Well, it's a very exciting position to be in in a big state where you have a complex situation and mine was a very happy situation, people were treating me very well, and I felt

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I had a great feeling of independence out there that I didn't always have other places, and it was really a very attractive place to remain and I wanted to do it.

HESS: How did you assess Governor Dewey's chances in 1944?

WARREN: I remember the pictures of Roosevelt during the campaign in New York, you know, where he went through the rain.

HESS: He caught cold in the rain in the open convertible.

WARREN: They talked about it then and so forth. I felt he was not in good health.

HESS: When did you first notice a deterioration in President Roosevelt's health?

WARREN: Oh, really I don't know, but I think it was...

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HESS: Sometime before the election.

WARREN: Sometime, I think, before the election, yes.

HESS: As you know, he died on April 12, 1945.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: What were your impressions upon hearing the news of President Roosevelt's death?

WARREN: Well, it gave me a very depressing feeling. I hadn't been of the party of Roosevelt, but I thought he had been a great President anyway.

HESS: What kind of a job did you think that the new President, Mr. Truman, would do at that time and just what did you know about him? Now, we've mentioned the Subcommittee to Investigate the National Defense Program, which became known as the Truman Committee, but just what did you know

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about Harry Truman on April the 12th of 1945?

WARREN: Well, as far as I can remember, I didn't know anything except about his work on that subcommittee, and also whatever I heard about the convention when he was nominated for the vice-presidency. I think that's about all that I knew about him at that time.

HESS: All right, now moving on to the 1948 election. As you were the vice-presidential nominee of the Republican Party, would you give me your assessment of that election and why Mr. Truman and the Democratic Party were supported in 1948?

WARREN: Well, I think one reason, the main reason, that he was elected was because he was such a plain and simple man, going out on his own, on a whirlwind trip to talk with the people, whereas Governor Dewey was talking at them, and there's a great difference. I don't believe it was

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because the people were satisfied with all the things President Truman had done in his administration, but I think it was largely a matter of personality between him and Governor Dewey.

HESS: Support for the underdog?

WARREN: I think that played a part in it, I think the 80th Congress played a great part in it and I think his carrying the Midwest, by going out for the farmers had a lot to do with it. I don't know that I could describe any one thing that would be responsible for his election other than that.

HESS: Do you think that part of it could have been that the many Republicans thought that Mr. Dewey's election...

WARREN: Oh, yes.

HESS: ...was a foregone conclusion and therefore

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they didn't have to go vote ?

WARREN: I sure do. They started me out on a train on, I think it was the 15th of September, from Sacramento and I was on this train for thirty-five days, never got off of it; and we went to thirty-eight states around the country. When I came home about ten days before the election--and I was entirely out of touch with what was going on at home while I was on this train--and talked with some of my friends there, they told me that the Republican office in San Francisco was closed, and some others told me some other city headquarters were closed. I said, "Closed, what do you mean by that?"

They said, "Well, there isn't anything to fight, nothing to fight. The Democrats aren't making any fight out here, they have no offices running, and there is just no money available,

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people think there is just no contest."

I wouldn't take that, and I went around the state right up to midnight before election giving talks and so forth; but they were just lackadaisical, everybody thought it was all over, you know.

HESS: The vote in California was extremely close.

WARREN: Eighteen thousand that day.

HESS: If there had been a shift of 8,933 votes California would have gone for Dewey.

WARREN: Yes, that's right, that's about half a vote a precinct.

HESS: About half a vote a precinct.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: What could have been done? Ways it just lackadaisicalness...

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WARREN: Oh, yes.

HESS: ...or was it overconfidence at that time?

WARREN: Oh, absolutely, they didn't work, they didn't work at it at all. They just thought it was in the bag and let it coast and how people who have been through campaigns can ever get that idea, I don't know, but it seems to be human nature for a lot of people to do it.

HESS: Now, according to some statistics I have, if Illinois, California and Iowa had changed--and it would only have taken 29,294 votes to swing all three states...

WARREN: Yeah.

HESS: That's the final page there that I have given you.

WARREN: Yes. And Indiana was very close, too--870-821.

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HESS: Yes, and there's one--Mr. Truman took some states that it was very unusual for a Democrat to take, Iowa for instance, a farm state.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall the issue of the 80th Congress rewriting the charter for the Commodity Credit Corporation and leaving out the provision to buy and to provide government storage for corn?

WARREN: I believe that that was a vital thing in the campaign, his speeches on that. I remember reading about them when I was on this trip around the country and I thought it was vital. I remember at the Republican convention I had a press conference and I remember they asked me what I thought of the 80th Congress. I told them I thought it was a liability.

HESS: You did?

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WARREN: Yes. They didn't like it but I told them I thought it was a liability. I just thought they hadn't performed.

HESS: Why did you view the 80th Congress as a liability?

WARREN: Because they did very little if anything, that I could see. They didn't satisfy the farming community, they hadn't done anything on reclamation out our way. I know that their attitude and Tom Dewey's attitude toward the water and power issue wasn't at all satisfactory, and he wouldn't discuss it further with them out there either.

HESS: Now all of those are domestic issues. If you will recall, the 80th Congress passed the Truman Doctrine for aid to Greece and Turkey; the 80th Congress passed the Marshall plan, one of our largest foreign aid things. The 80th Congress did, with the help of Arthur Vandenberg, come through and carry out Mr. Truman's request

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in foreign aid matters.

WARREN: Yes, but they were domestic affairs.

HESS: Yes. Do you think elections are settled more on domestic affairs than foreign affairs?

WARREN: Normally I do.

HESS: In the absence of a shooting war.

WARREN: Yes, normally I do. At least I did out in my part of the country, out in California. It may be different back here in New York, Pennsylvania, I don't know. But I think out there people are more concerned the way the Government is functioning domestically than it is internationally. If there is no crisis, I mean.

HESS: In rereading Mr. Truman's campaign speeches, he strikes out quite often and quite forcefully at the 80th Congress; you and Governor Dewey

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were not mentioned too often, once in a while, but he made more of a target of the 80th Congress than he did his opponents running on the other ticket.

WARREN: That's right, that's right.

HESS: Why do you think that he did this?

WARREN: Well, I talked to him about politics a time or two and he says he doesn't attack individuals, he says he attacks what they do or what they don't do, and I think that's true. I like that way of campaigning myself. I ran three times for Governor, was elected three times, and ended with a friendship with all three of my opponents; and I was on the ticket against Mr. Truman and ended up with his friendship. I don't believe in all of this rhetoric and polarizing that's going on in politics. I don't believe you get any votes that way. I believe you can attack issues, but I don't think attacking people is either good

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campaigning or solves any problems.

HESS: As you well know, after the election Governor Dewey received some criticism, by the benefit of hindsight, of taking too high a plane during the campaign and not coming out with a hardhitting speech. Do you think that he should have taken a stronger stand in some of his speeches in '48?

WARREN: I think the big mistake he made, was to have all those speeches written before the convention. And you just can't be oriented to a campaign if you're stratified, and I know that he had these speeches scheduled for--let's say for conservation in Oklahoma City--and that would be his talk on conservation, he wouldn't talk about it other places, or answer any questions on it, refer to any speech he made at that place; and Social Security down at Los Angeles, and so forth. I don't believe you can structure a campaign that

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way, I believe you've got...

HESS: Not that rigidly.

WARREN: ...to meet things as they arise, and that's what Mr. Truman did.

HESS: Did you discuss political strategy with Governor Dewey during the campaign?

WARREN: No, I never--I was on this train, and I only talked to him a couple of times.

HESS: Do you find that a bit unusual, that the man...

WARREN: I think so. It would be for me.

HESS: Why weren't you called upon for your advice?

WARREN: I don't know. I don't know, but I wasn't. I was in second place and I took whatever they asked me to do. I went about and did it, but I didn't force myself on any counsel. No, I had nothing to do with their deliberations at all.

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HESS: I believe Hugh Scott was chairman of the Republican National Committee that year, correct?

WARREN: He was, that's right.

HESS: Did you have conversations with Hugh Scott as to how...

WARREN: I did just before or just after the convention, I saw him, but I don't think I saw him again during the campaign.

HESS: Your convention was also in Philadelphia that year, correct?

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: I think they held three there, did they not?

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: Henry Wallace came in a little later with the

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Progressive Party.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: How did you view Henry Wallace's Progressive Party? Now many of the people who voted for Wallace were the extreme leftwing of the Democratic Party. Did you think that having Wallace in the campaign, as well as J. Strom Thurmond off on the right, did you view this as advantageous to your hopes?

WARREN: Yes, I did.

HESS: Was anything tried by the Republicans to further the fortune of Wallace on the left and Strom Thurmond on the right?

WARREN: If there was, I have no knowledge of it. I can't believe so, because I know in our state at the beginning of the campaign it was thought he was going to get a tremendous vote in Cali-

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fornia; it shrunk to a point where I think he got a hundred and fifty thousand or something like that.

HESS: He got 190,381 in California, but actually that was his second largest total of any state, but much lower than New York, where he had 509,559.

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: But it was his second state, but then it's a populous state.

WARREN: Of course, it's a populous state, it was the second in the union then.

HESS: At that time.

WARREN: At that time, yes.

No, I would be quite sure that nothing of that kind happened, because I think I would have sensed it or heard something about it in my own

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state, but I didn't, I never heard anything about it.

HESS: Well, why I asked that question was, usually when I interview people who are influential in the Democratic Party, I ask, "What did you do to counter Wallace on the left and Thurmond on the right?" So, I thought I would ask to see if anything was done to try to support them in one way or another.

WARREN: Yes. I doubt it very much, I never heard anyone suggest that, and I certainly have no knowledge of anything like that.

HESS: Where were you on election night?

WARREN: In San Francisco at the St. Francis Hotel.

HESS: What do you recall of the events of that night?

WARREN: Well, the newspaper people were all there. I had a little group in one of the rooms there.

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We had dinner there and listened to the returns. About 2:30 in the morning I got a call from Tom Dewey saying we had lost. Of course, that would be 5 o'clock here, don't you see. Oh, we sat it out until morning and then the newspaper boys all wanted to see me and they said, "Well, Governor, what do you think was the reason Mr. Truman won?"

And I said, "Because he got more votes than we did."

They laughed and they never asked me another question and let me go home.

HESS: That's a pretty good reason, wasn't it?

WARREN: Was a damned good reason I thought.

HESS: In years after that did you speak with Governor Dewey about "maybe we should have done this," and "maybe we should have done that?"

WARREN: No, I didn't. Tom and I never discussed the campaign after that. We met each other at

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the Governors' Conferences, that's the only time I think I saw him. I never saw him before except at Governors' Conferences; practically the only time I ever ran across him. Oh, maybe I saw him at a few Republican gatherings, but they were very few. Then I never got really into national Republican policies because I always realized that the nonpartisan way that I came into my own office, and the independence that I maintained as Governor, while very helpful in California to be reelected, sort of circumscribes it so far as outsiders are concerned. States like New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, all the big states believe in solid organization, you know, controlled by one group and I never courted them.

HESS: During the campaign of '48 did you ever have occasion to meet Mr. Truman or Senator Barkley?

WARREN: No, but I spoke in both of their cities.

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Well, I don't think I was in Kansas City, I think I was in St. Louis. I don't think I went to Kansas City. I won't be sure, but I did go to St. Louis and I went to Paducah, too, I spoke there.

HESS: What kind of a reception did you get in Paducah?

WARREN: Oh, fine. I told them Barkley was a great citizen and a wonderful man and so forth, and they were friendly. Barkley always was friendly about it. I remember in 1950 when--well, before I tell you about 1950 I'll tell you about 1948. When the election was over, I got a telegram from the chairman of the Democratic Committee of California, and he wanted to know if I would like to come down to Los Angeles and welcome the newly elected Vice President. And I'm sure he thought I wouldn't do it, but I wired him back that I said I would

be delighted, that my wife, and at least one of my daughters and I would be down there to the reception.

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Barkley was coming in on Friday, I think, after the Tuesday election, and they had big bleachers set up there in the airport and a big stage, a place for a lot of people to sit, and there wasn't absolutely anybody to sit on that platform at all, and the only people that he could talk to at all were people that were there at the airport. None of the prominent Democrats came, because they hadn't done a thing for him out there. So, to fill the time, Barkley and I spun a few stories and talked to each other in a perfectly friendly way, and he went on. I know he appreciated that very much, because I welcomed him and wished him well.

I remember when they sent him out to campaign against me in 1950 when Jimmy Roosevelt ran against me; and he arrived first at San Diego, and they said, "Well, Mr. Vice President, will you tell us just how active you're going to be in this campaign?"

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"Well," he said, "I'll tell you one thing I'm not going to do, I'm not going to say anything against Governor Warren because they tell me he's been a great Governor. I'm just going to say a few kind words for Jimmy Roosevelt;"

HESS: That's pretty good.

WARREN: Can't beat that can you?

HESS: Do you recall that before the Democratic convention that summer, that Jimmy Roosevelt was one of the leaders that was trying to get Dwight Eisenhower to run on the Democratic ticket?

WARREN: I do. I can see his picture now, either in the paper or on the television, at the railroad station with a sign for Eisenhower, in Chicago I think it was.

HESS: The ADA, the Americans for Democratic Action, were even trying to get Eisenhower to run.

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WARREN: Yes. Yes, I remember that.

HESS: Just as an opinion, how difficult would it be for a party to not give an incumbent President the nomination if he so desired that nomination?

WARREN: Well, I think it would be almost impossible under any kind of normal conditions. Of course, I could see a debacle or something of that kind, but under anything like normal

conditions I don't think it would be possible for a party to reject its President; it would be a total admission of failure.

HESS: You know there were movements, Jimmy Roosevelt and the ADA in May and June...

WARREN: I know that.

HESS: ...of 1948 to have someone other than Mr. Truman?

WARREN: I remember that, yes.

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HESS: Okay, and as you have mentioned the annual meetings, the Governors' Conferences, Dean Acheson in his book, *Present at the Creation*--this is on page 368--relates an episode that took place at the Governors' Conference at White Sulphur Springs on June the 20th of 1950 in which you and Governor Dewey gave him some assistance. Do you recall that?

WARREN: Well, I remember that we invited Dean Acheson to speak at the convention, and I remember it was a very controversial time and some of the Governors were critical to the point of talking with him to the point of bad manners it seemed to me, and I did what I could to keep the thing on an even keel. I don't believe in treating guests that way whether you agree with them or not. I had no reason to feel that Dean Acheson hadn't done his job well, and if I thought that I never would have invited him to the conference. And I think

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Tom Dewey felt very much the same; that he was a little ashamed of some of the treatment they were giving Dean at the time. Then I remember when his speaking was over, it was about lunchtime so we suggested that he go to lunch with us. So Dewey and Acheson--I don't recall whether we had anyone else with us or not--went to lunch there in the hotel, in the dining room. That's about all I remember about it.

HESS: Speaking of Mr. Acheson, just what would be your general opinion of his handling of the State Department?

WARREN: Well, I thought he handled it very well. I wasn't particularly interested in foreign affairs, I didn't follow it real closely. But I saw him at the peace conference in San Francisco, the Japanese Peace Conference, when he presided at that conference. I thought that he was magnificent. I thought he handled that big conference

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in a magnificent way. You know the Russians and the Poles were quite rambunctious in that affair, and he just seemed to be able to handle the situation so smoothly and ironed it all out. I admired him very much for what he did there. I thought he was a skilled diplomat, and I

didn't disagree with President Truman's viewpoint on the peace conference or any of his actions after he became President, and so I had no reason at all to feel other than kindly towards Acheson.

HESS: What's your general opinion of the caliber of some of the other men who held high offices in the Truman administration; General Marshall, Averell Harriman, to just name just two?

WARREN: Well, I'm very devoted to Averell Harriman as a man and as a public servant. I think he's been one of the most dedicated men that I've known. He's undertaken any kind of an assignment

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that was offered to him, without regard to the prestige of the job, or whether someone else was over him and getting the glory or not. He just went ahead and did it, in all kinds of situations, and he was a man who, of course, didn't have to accept humble positions of any kind, I think he's a man who's been a very great public servant, and do to this day.

HESS: Any views on General Marshall?

WARREN: I think he's the greatest man of the war, and I think that he was treated worse than any man in the war on our side. I felt very badly, and felt personally humiliated, when President Eisenhower went into Wisconsin and deleted a laudatory phrase he had in there of General Marshall to placate Joe McCarthy.

HESS: That caused a little difficulty between Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Truman did it not?

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WARREN: I don't recall that.

HESS: Any other comments, sir, on the general nature of the caliber of the Truman appointees, Cabinet members?

WARREN: Well, it seemed to me that Stettinius was a little out of character. It was hard for me to appreciate the fact that without experience in public service at all he would come in and be Secretary of State.

HESS: Of course, he was a holdover from Roosevelt.

WARREN: Oh, that's right, he was wasn't he? He was appointed by Roosevelt wasn't he, yes. Yes. I remember it now, I had thought that President Truman had appointed him.

HESS: And then he was "allowed to stay", if that's the correct words to use, through the United Nations

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Conference and then was replaced by James Byrnes shortly thereafter.

WARREN: Yes. Well, I didn't form any real opinion of Jimmy Byrnes as Secretary of State, but it didn't appear to me that he cooperated with the President as a Secretary of State should. And that's just an impression. I have no inside information on it at all, and so when Acheson came in I thought it was a good appointment.

HESS: One of the main men in the Department of Defense at this time was James Forrestal.

WARREN: I never knew Forrestal.

HESS: I understand that at the time that Governor Dewey, during the campaign, made known in one way or another who he would select as Cabinet members, he said that he would return James Forrestal as Secretary of Defense. Is that correct?

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WARREN: He never mentioned anything of that kind to me, as to any possible Cabinet members.

HESS: Is that right?

WARREN: No, never to me.

HESS: I have heard that he mentioned it in one way or another, but I'm not sure.

WARREN: He never mentioned that to me. I would have no idea who he had in mind. Of course, I would assume that he would put Herb Brownell in as Attorney General because they were so close. But no, he never mentioned that to me. And to this day I have no idea as to who those proposed Cabinet members might be.

HESS: In the 1952 campaign you met President Truman in Davis, California and introduced him to the crowd. What do you recall about meeting with the

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President on that occasion?

WARREN: Well, he was coming down from Oregon, I think; he wasn't coming into Sacramento. He was going through to Davis--a little university town there--and then going right down to San Francisco. So, again, the chairman of the Democratic Party wired me and inquired if I would like to come out to Davis and greet President Truman. I wired him and said, "Sure I will."

So, I went out there and went into his car and there was just he and Margaret there, I don't believe Mrs. Truman was there at the time, but if she was I didn't see her. But anyway, Margaret was there with him and we visited him in his car a little while and he said he appreciated me coming out. After we had been there awhile, somebody came in and said, "Governor would you mind standing out here on the rear platform and being photographed with the President?"

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The President hearing said, "Now, here you let that man alone. It's very kind of him to come over here," he said, "and I'm not going to embarrass him."

I said, "Well, Mr. President, there's no embarrassment to a Governor greeting the President of the United States. Of course, I'll go out there with you and if you want, I'll introduce you."

"Would you do that?"

I said, "Of course, I'd do that." I went out there and I saw a lot of young Republicans they had out there. They all had signs you know that hadn't been disclosed yet and they had them behind them, and were...

HESS: Going to say, "I like Ike?"

WARREN: ...going to bring them out when it was the right time; and so I told them that one thing about

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Californians and particularly Sacramentins, that we're always happy to have a President of the United States there, and when he came we always showed him the courtesy that his position called for and I was sure that on this occasion no one would think of embarrassing the President, and so forth. I talked along those lines for a little while, and then I said, "Now, Mr. President, you and the Democrats can do your own job," and I left, but they never brought those signs out.

HESS: Didn't bring the signs out.

WARREN: Never brought the signs out.

HESS: They heeded your admonition didn't they?

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: Did Mr. Truman--now this is on October the 3rd, when you were speaking with Mr. Truman--say anything about Governor Stevenson's campaign or his chances

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in the election, or how the election campaign seemed to be going?

WARREN: I don't think so.

We didn't have that kind of a relationship, you know, and I don't remember anything of that kind, and if he had I would have thought it a little unusual, I would have remembered it. I don't think he did, because he was out campaigning for Stevenson, and I had done a little for Eisenhower, and it wouldn't be a normal conversational topic.

HESS: What was your view when President Truman announced that he did not intend to run for reelection? Did that surprise you or not? He made that announcement over here in the National Guard Armory on March the 29th of '52.

WARREN: No. As a matter of fact, I don't remember it. I don't remember the occasion for it.

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HESS: Did you think that he would? You know, I think the 22nd amendment had been placed on the books, but he was the last President who could have run again.

WARREN: I had some recollection that that happened in Eisenhower's time.

HESS: Is that right?

WARREN: I think that was done in Eisenhower's time.

HESS: Well, we'll check it when we get the draft back and see.

WARREN: But I'm not at all sure. That is a recollection of mine, because I always thought that Eisenhower was a little sorry it went through.

HESS: Think he would have liked to have run a third time?

WARREN: I kind of thought so.

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HESS: Did he ever say so?

WARREN: No, never said so to me.

HESS: Do you think he could have been elected a third time?

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: All right, we should discuss your association with President Truman after he left office. What do you recall about your association with Mr. Truman since 1953, and probably the highlight of that association was when you gave the address dedicating the Library on July the 6th of 1957.

WARREN: Well, I think the only contact I had with him before that was when he was out around the country talking about raising money for that. And when he was out in California, as I recall it, I joined in the sponsorship of those meetings

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in getting the people to contribute to it. And I know he thanked me personally for that. I think that's about the only thing I have, because you see I came to the Court in '53, and I was tied down here pretty close up until the time that his Library was opened, and then he asked me to serve on his board, trustees. I said I would and when it came to the dedication of the building he asked me to make a speech. I told him I would be glad to, and I went there.

HESS: What do you remember about that day? Rather warm, I understand.

WARREN: Well, I remember it was as hot a day as I've seen in a long time, and I was quite fearful of President Hoover and Mrs. Roosevelt. President Hoover, who was pretty old at that time, you know, and Mrs. Roosevelt were there and they were both sitting out there without their hats on and I

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was sitting not far from them and I was very much concerned about their welfare; but nobody was hurt by it.

HESS: I understand someone asked President Hoover if he would like to move back in the shade and he said no he was going to sit out there in the sun.

WARREN: Is that so? Then after that I think I've gone to all of the board meetings; I don't think I've missed any of them. There were some they called for one reason or another, but I think I've gone to all of the annual board meetings. And then when it came to dedicating the mural...

HESS: The Thomas Hart Benton mural.

WARREN: Yes. He asked me again to come and make the speech, and I did. Then later when they set up this fund for the Truman Peace Center, over in Israel, they asked me to come and make the keynote

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speech of that one, and I did it. And I remember about that, that's when I had my speech alongside of me in the airplane, and when we got to Independence, instead of picking it up I went away without it. And by George, we went right to the Library, and the meeting gathered and so forth. And I asked Jack Valenti who was running the plane if there was any way he could get that to me so I would have it, because there was no real program devised and I didn't have the thing in mind too well. But Jack said, "Well, I'll try, but I don't know that I can make it." But finally he came in and just as they were introducing me, he came in and he handed me this manuscript.

HESS: Just in the nick of time.

WARREN: Just in the nick of time and I made the talk. Then since the President has not been able to

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attend the annual meetings of the board of trustees, whenever they have the meetings, why, he always invites me to come over there to his home and I visit with him and Mrs. Truman and sometimes Margaret is there, and I visit with her. My wife and I are very fond of Margaret, we think she's a very fine person. I remember when she made her debut out in Hollywood Bowl, the President and his wife had to cancel out at the last moment and couldn't be there, so Mrs. Warren and I went, took their places and stood in line for the reception that they had afterwards with Margaret. I was Governor then.

HESS: When you were at the President's home, it's been a little bit less than two weeks ago, is that right?

WARREN: It was on a Saturday, I think it will be two weeks the day after tomorrow.

HESS: How did you find Mr. Truman in health? How did

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he look to you?

WARREN: Well, I thought he was quite alert, and he was conversational, but he looked very frail, very frail. Of course he doesn't have that dynamism that he had, and those little quick reflexes he always exhibited, they are not evident anymore; but I really thought, and I said to John Snyder who was with me at the time, "John, I think the President looks equally as well as he did last year."

He said, "I think he looks better."

HESS: Good. Now, Mr. Chief Justice, in recent years, historians and other writers have set forth various theories on the theme that when the United States employed such programs as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall plan, and Point 4, that to marshal public support behind those programs the Government purposely set out to frighten the American

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people by invoking visions of Communist world conquest, and that basically the reason we wanted to restore Europe and the other countries of the world, was only to restore our prewar markets for our products; if Europe failed our markets would dry up and unemployment and depression would result and self-interest was our only or basic consideration. What is your opinion of that general line of thinking?

WARREN: Well, I think it's an aggregation of half-truths. I think, of course, when he advocated the Marshall plan, and aid for Greece, and the Truman Doctrine, he--of course we were anticipating to make a better world in which we would have a chance to prosper, that's human nature and to do otherwise would be silly almost. There might even be some people whose only interest was that, but I think the Marshall plan was basically a humanitarian plan and I think America is entitled to get credit for it. I think his Point 4 program was a

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very, very sensible program and if used to better advantage by succeeding administrations, would have made it much more viable than it has been. So, I don't think that anyone can honestly say that the only interest of our Government was a selfish one to help ourselves. It isn't a normal reaction to help humanity to that extent just for personal benefit. There are other things that they could have done, without that expenditure of money and so forth, if that was their only interest. But I think they were good programs and the best programs that we've had, and I think they are not only wholesome, but I think that they were humanitarily conceived.

HESS: Where would you place President Truman on the scale from a liberal to a conservative and what would be your thumbnail definition of those terms, liberal and conservative?

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WARREN: Well, I don't like either of those terms; I think they are misnomers. I think they have been made epithets rather than philosophies of government. I think that there's no irreconcilability between being a liberal and a conservative, according to my concept of those two things. I think some people by instinct want to walk more slowly than others, even though they are going in the same direction; and I think that both conservative and liberal thought in this country can accommodate to each other and we have to do it to have a viable government, because neither of them can be satisfied with the status quo, or to turn the clock back. We have to go forward and any movement toward the general welfare of the country and all of the people in it, to my way is a liberal thought, and I think Mr. Truman thinks very

much like that too. I'm not an ideologist and I don't think he is either, but he's been more of a pragmatist than otherwise, and I don't believe

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that liberals or conservatives can appropriate any of the good things that are done in government, they can belong to each.

HESS: Do you think Mr. Truman is a little closer to one viewpoint than the other, if we're going to have a liberal and a conservative viewpoint?

WARREN: Well, I don't know, it's pretty hard to appraise a man's overall line of thoughts and desires. He's liberal enough for me.

HESS: In your opinion what were Mr. Truman's views on the subject of individual human rights and the striving by minority groups for a place in society?

WARREN: Well, I think that his position--at the time that he was in there--is a perfectly reasonable one and I think the platform on which he ran in 1948 spelled that out in very good form. Spelled it out better than, I think, the Republicans have.

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I think that was the time Humphrey made the fight, wasn't it?

HESS: Hubert Humphrey, Andrew J. Biemiller plank, that was put through at the convention shortly before a few of the southern states decided to go home.

WARREN: Yes. So, I think his record was good. As I recall it, he was the first one to integrate the armed forces, wasn't he? And he ran on that civil rights platform and it was tougher then than it has been in recent years even to assume that position because it was newer.

HESS: Now there were times when Mr. Truman had a good deal of difficulty getting his civil rights measures through Congress. What's your view on that? Was it just at the wrong time? Was it a little too early? Was the Congress too conservative?

WARREN: Well, the times had a lot to do with it, it's

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a long story but the erosion of civil rights started with the old Tilden-Hayes affair.

HESS: 1876.

WARREN: 1876, then it went right along and during the twenties and the thirties civil rights eroded very greatly.

HESS: Now during Mr. Truman's administration of course, there still was the separate but equal...

WARREN: Well, yes. But I will say this that during the years of the Vinson court, the separate but equal doctrine was eroded to the point where it only took one more step to put it entirely behind and that was the step we took in Brown versus the Board of Education. Now those things were done during the time Vinson was in the Court.

HESS: You know there were several things civil rights

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people were calling for, a permanent Federal FEPC, Fair Employment Practices Commission...

WARREN: Yes.

HESS: ...which is sort of an on again, off again, sometimes by law, sometimes by executive order. That was not put through. That was one of the things that civil rights people would have liked to have put through. In other words, were there things that Mr. Truman could have done but he did not do in the field of civil rights?

WARREN: Well, I don't think I could answer that because I don't know. But I'll say this that President Roosevelt with all of his popularity couldn't put it through, as a law, he put it through as an executive order.

I know how hard it is to get those things through. When I became Governor I started out

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my first session in the legislature asking the legislature to set up a commission to determine what we could do in that area. I think New York at that same session enacted its fair employment practices act, but there was no state in the Union that had it. But I thought that the thing for us to do was to pave the way with a commission to say it was all right, and I got nowhere from either side. Those that were extremists and wanting, like today, an FEPC, were against it, and those who were against any form of FEPC thought this was just the camel's head in the tent and they wouldn't go for it, so I just left there without practically any support at all. In the next two years I studied the matter and I came to the conclusion that we ought to have one, and I introduced it in our legislature and advocated it. And again, I lost the support of both sides, because the extremists wanted to put such powers in it that no one would stand for it and the other people

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who were against it, of course, were against it in any form. So I lost that one too.

Then the extremists put their bill on the initiative ballot and drove everybody who was in favor of the movement away from it; they lost it by an enormous majority, just didn't go at all. So, I have some knowledge of how difficult it is to do those things.

HESS: That's right, you know what it's like to work with the legislature, don't you? One that won't go along.

WARREN: That's right.

HESS: In your opinion, what were Mr. Truman's major accomplishments and what were his major failings?

WARREN: Oh, I think only history can determine that. I think that generally speaking you can say that in all his most important decisions he made good

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decisions, and some of the smaller ones, why, you could disagree more about them. But I think he had to go to Korea and do what he did, and I think he was wise in doing it with the United Nations. I think, as I've said before, his Point 4 program and his Marshall plan were very forward-looking programs, as the present condition of Europe would testify to. I don't think of any great failures he made in his administration. We all have weakness, you know, and some things you would like to do you can't do, you can't get support for them and so forth; but I think his instincts were all good and things he did put through were good.

HESS: Not that I'm putting it in either category, an accomplishment or a failure, but what is your view of the droppings of the two atomic bombs on Japan?

WARREN: Well, that's a very difficult thing to answer,

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but I can see his viewpoint that doing it maybe saved a million or so lives by taking as many as he did. I have wondered somewhat if it wouldn't have been wise to get the Japanese military to some place and show them what the atomic bomb would do? Maybe, out therein the Pacific someplace we might have saved the necessity of doing it in Japan, but I don't know whether that would have been even possible or not. But I think we had to do something to end that war and if that was the only way that it could be done I think it was justified; but I've always wondered if there wasn't some way it could have been demonstrated to them what power we had in the atomic bomb and maybe they would have folded without it, and maybe they wouldn't have, so I don't know.

HESS: How would you characterize Mr. Truman as the man you know him to be?

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WARREN: Characterize him in what respect?

HESS: What kind of a man is Mr. Truman in your view?

WARREN: Well, I think he's a very honest man, I think he's a thoroughly dedicated American and that his entire interest is in seeing that our country prospers for everybody in it.

HESS: What is your estimation of Mr. Truman's place in history?

WARREN: Well, again, I think history will have to decide that. I think it's too soon to say, but for myself I believe that the forthright manner in which he acted internationally, and the things that he did to revive the world after World War II are accomplishments that few Presidents have ever exceeded. Our country domestically was not left in bad shape by him when General Eisenhower took over, and so I think his place as one of the outstanding Presidents would be assured. It is in my

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mind anyway.

HESS: What is your favorite memory of Mr. Truman? When you just look back and think of Mr. Truman, what's the favorite thing that comes to mind?

WARREN: I never thought of that. I don't know.

HESS: Surely not the time he was holding up the *Chicago Tribune* with "Dewey Defeats Truman," that must not be it.

WARREN: No...

HESS: Do you recall that?

WARREN: ...that never bothered me.

HESS: That didn't bother you.

WARREN: No, that never bothered me any, any at all. In fact, I went right back, from staying up all night to hear the election returns, to Sacramento, about ninety miles away from San Francisco, and

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went to work and worked all day.

HESS: Back to work.

WARREN: Back to work as Governor, that I'd been away from a couple of months. I went right back and went to work, so it didn't bother me. I really don't have in mind any one thing that I can say was the highlight of my experiences with the President. My personal relations with him have always been friendly.

HESS: Have anything else to add on Mr. Truman,, on your association with him?

WARREN: No, I think we've covered the situation very well.

HESS: Well, fine. Thank you very much, sir.

WARREN: I think that's about it.

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