

Oral History Interview with
JUDGE OLIVER J. CARTER

Member California Senate, 5th Senatorial District, 1941-49; Secretary, Shasta County Democratic Central Committee, 1941-48; Vice Chairman, California State Central Committee for 2nd Congressional District, 1948; Vice Chairman, California Democratic State Central Committee, 1948-51; and U.S. District Judge Northern District California, 1950-76.

San Francisco, California
February 26, 1970
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Judge Carter, would you begin by giving us a little of your personal background, when and where you were born, your education, and some of your business or professional experience before you went into politics?

CARTER: Well, just a brief resume. I was born in San Francisco in 1911, while my father was attending law school here. Shortly after he graduated from law school, we moved north to Redding, California where I was raised. I went to public schools there, and from there I attended Stanford University. Then I went

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to Hastings Law School at the University of California and obtained my bachelors degree in law there. Then I went back to Redding where I practiced law in my father's office, starting in 1935. My father was appointed to the Supreme Court of California in September of 1939, but prior to that time he had been elected to the State Senate of California in January of 1939, during the period of the term of Governor Culbert L. Olson. Of course, prior to that he had been the northern California chairman of the Olson campaign. Now, Olson was the first Democratic governor of California in forty-four years. So, needless to say, I was involved in Democratic politics, having been active in the Roosevelt campaigns in the thirties and in my own father's campaigns and in United States Senator Downey's campaign in '38.

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FUCHS: In what capacity were you active in these campaigns?

CARTER: Well, in Young Democrats. My father was a great friend of Senator Downey's. Downey being a Sacramento lawyer who was personally acquainted with my father, who was a man who was well-known all up and down the Sacramento Valley. He was also a Democrat and we supported him in those days. He was elected and he defeated William McAdoo, who was the so-called administration candidate and was the Democratic incumbent at that time.

FUCHS: This is Sheridan Downey?

CARTER: Sheridan Downey.

FUCHS: He defeated McAdoo in what year?

CARTER: In 1938. In that same year Olson was elected Governor of California, he defeated

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the then Governor of California Frank Merriam, who was running for re-election. Olson, of course, was in turn defeated by Earl Warren in 1942 when Olson ran for re-election. Warren had been elected Attorney General of California in 1938, and he was a public officeholder during that period of time. When my father was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1939 there was a vacancy then in his office of State senator. It could not be filled by gubernatorial appointment and it was just allowed to remain vacant and no special election was called; and in the regular election of 1940 I ran for the office of State senator and was elected.

FUCHS: Why was there no special election called?

CARTER: Just because there were no sessions in operation at that time. The 1939 session was over and there was no regular session until

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1941 when the newly elected senator of 1941 would take office. So, because there was no regular session to be called, the Governor decided that it would be wiser to let the people elect a senator at the regular election. And, while there were some special sessions that were in operation during that interim period they were not of sufficient importance that it was felt that it was necessary to

call a special election. Based on that, I ran during the 1940 period, and was nominated on the Democratic ticket and was elected in November.

FUCHS: Where were you living then?

CARTER: In Redding.

FUCHS: You were practicing law there?

CARTER: Practicing law there. So, I started my term as State senator in January of 1941. I

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was age 29, and it was my first experience at holding elected public office. I had previously been an assistant district attorney of Shasta County, which was an appointive office, for two years; but that was a part-time job and I left that but stayed in private practice. But the first elective office I held was the office of State senator. I had never had any legislative experience before and so I devoted myself to the legislative work and attended those sessions. As a legislator I was also automatically a member of the State Central Committee for the party. All of the legislators are automatically members of the committee. I was also designated as a member of the executive committee of the State Central Committee for the Second Congressional District, in which congressional district I resided. At that time the principal Democratic

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leader in that area was a man by the name of Francis J. Carr, who was called Judge Carr, and he was a Democratic leader of some importance in our area. He was a very fine man and took quite an interest in me personally. I was very well acquainted with his children, and his sons who were active in public affairs. Two of them were lawyers and one was an engineer and they have since distinguished themselves in the public life of California and of the country. But, through him I became well acquainted with the personnel and people who were connected with statewide Democratic politics at the organizational level of the State Central Committee.

FUCHS: Who were some of these people?

CARTER: Well, the then chairman was William M. Malone. I also became acquainted with the

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man who followed him, who was a man by the name of John McEnery. And, of course, then Jimmy [James] Roosevelt was elected State chairman and he was the immediate chairman to precede me in office. McEnery was a vice-chairman from the north. Under our system here we have a State chairmanship that goes from north to south every two years and the office of State chairman is held for two years. One two-year period is held by someone from southern California and one two-year period is held by someone from northern California. And in the 1948 to 1950 period it was designated to go to the north. At that time it was difficult to get anyone to accept the burdens of that office, I suppose, principally because the Presidential campaign of 1948 was approaching. All of the other races were pretty much attached to that Presidential

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campaign and it was rather anticipated that the Democratic candidates were going to take a beating in 1948. A number of people talked to me as to whether or not I might be interested. Among them was Bill Malone and John McEnery and a number of others who suggested that as a young and active Democrat in the State legislature it might be wise for me to attempt to undertake this task.

FUCHS: They were both residents of this area?

CARTER: Of northern California, yes.

FUCHS: Malone being from...

CARTER: From San Francisco, and McEnery from San Jose. They both understood the difficulties. First of all they had both been in the office of State chairman or vice-chairman, as the case might be, from the

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northern part of the State. They were both active in Democratic Party politics at a statewide level.

The chairman and the vice-chairman are elected by the State Central Committee. The State Central Committee then had some three or four hundred members in it, maybe five hundred, who were delegates to the convention, who then voted for a chairman and a state chairman and for the members of the executive committee. These were all elected by the committee.

FUCHS: Did you have some opposition, then?

CARTER: No, I had no opposition. They finally agreed to offer my name. They caucused by congressional districts, and the congressional districts then agreed, or either disagreed, as the case might be. They all had the opportunity to nominate candidates if they desired --

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but it ended up that my name was the only name presented and there was no opposition.

FUCHS: James Roosevelt had no candidate?

CARTER: No, he was from the south and he understood that there was to be no one from the south who would run to...

FUCHS: I thought there might have been someone in the north that he wanted to have succeed him.

CARTER: No, he was perfectly willing to support me. No, he was not opposed to me because when he was state chairman I was very active in working with him. He always expressed a warm

support for my position. I think he also urged me to run, if my memory serves me correctly. I don't know whether he was very active in that, but my memory is that he urged

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me to be a candidate, because my memory is that it took some urging to get me to do it. I wasn't too much interested in accepting that office at that time. I was also concerned about whether or not there was, as the political leaders put it, any winning in that one. You don't like to preside over a losing campaign. I finally concluded, however, that, win or lose, it was a task that was worth doing. This was an opportunity to give leadership to some people who had a real cause, and, if that were true, who was I to say no. If I was willing to give my efforts, in an honest and conscientious cause, and do this with effort, I couldn't see that there would be anything improper or wrong in it, and that couldn't do anything but redound to my benefit. I could learn many things from it. I was a young man and it was part of the learning

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process and I didn't see anything wrong with that. The only real problem was what compensation were you going to get for the time spent. Now, I'm not talking about dollar compensation because no dollars could ever have compensated me for the hours that I put in in that 1948 campaign or some of the hours afterwards in the Central Committee State chairmanship's work. Those were some of the most exhausting periods of time that I have ever spent in my life. Political campaigning may be thrilling and may be very alluring to the people who were in it, but it's darned hard work. It's very taxing physically. I was young and strong and I was able to withstand it, but it was very rigorous, and I wouldn't want to attempt to do it again. Having said that, I submitted myself to the task and undertook to work at it. Do you have a question?

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FUCHS: Well, for the record, in what month was the State convention?

CARTER: In August of 1948.

FUCHS: In other words you were elected after the national party's nomination?

CARTER: Oh, yes. Now, I should point out this. Before this, of course, there had been a great deal of political activity and I was on the Presidential delegation, that is to the national party convention. This was a separate thing. We submitted a Presidential primary list of delegates to the national convention. I was the one from the Second Congressional District who'd go, there were a number of other people. We all got together and caucused by congressional districts as to who the delegates were going to be and that ticket was presented. James Roosevelt was on that ticket; Malone was on

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it; and there were, oh, a number of people.

FUCHS: Now, this ticket is on the ballot in the primary?

CARTER: In the primary election.

FUCHS: And you're committed to a particular candidate?

CARTER: Yes. We were committed to President Truman at that time. This is one of the things that you're supposed to do. This was one of the real problems that we had with Roosevelt at that time -- whether he would live up to that commitment? And he took the position that this was not a binding and absolute commitment; it was just simply a statement of purpose at the time.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything specifically about your conversations, if you had any, with Mr.

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Roosevelt at that time?

CARTER: Oh, I had conversations with Roosevelt and many others because I was working very closely with Jack Shelley, who was the chairman of our California delegation to the national committee. We interviewed every delegate to the convention on our trip. First of all you have to understand how the delegation gets together. First of all in those days we went by train. Most of us went by train from California to Philadelphia. The convention was in Philadelphia. We had a special train and it was made up in San Francisco and in Los Angeles. The trains left San Francisco and left Los Angeles and met in Ogden, Utah. These are Southern Pacific trains, and we went over the SP lines and that's where the Southern Pacific meets the Union Pacific and

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then it goes on. There's SP, UP, and what is that. I think it's Rock Island from then on into Chicago and then it goes from Chicago over B&O or on in through Pittsburgh and then into Philadelphia, and that's the way we went. The point is that we were separate sections, north and south, until we met at Ogden, Utah. Well, most of us came to San Francisco and joined the train although some joined in Sacramento on the northern section. And this was a train with sleeping accommodations and eating accommodations. Of course, there were no communications between trains while the trains were en route. They didn't have telephonic communications nor did we have radio communication. Except for what could be done at station stops along the way, there was very little communication between trains. So, actually speaking, the southern delegation

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and the northern delegations were doing their own politicking on the way over to Ogden, and there's where they met and the two separate sections got together. So what we attempted to do from the north was to poll our people carefully to ascertain where they stood on this question: Were they going to stand with Truman or weren't they? Were they going to stand by their commitment that was made when they went on the ballot or weren't they? We found that we had an almost solid group from the north, with a very few people who were either equivocal or not sure. By and large the northern group was very strong for standing by its commitment to President Truman and there were no "ifs" or "ands" about that.

FUCHS: In other words they wanted to go beyond

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the first ballot?

CARTER: Right, stay with him until it was concluded. This was the basic approach although some were stronger than others. I think most of the delegates wanted to stay with him until the delegation released them to do what they wanted. Then, when we got to Ogden we had a committee of our people from the north talk to the people in the south, to find out where they stood, and we found out who was with us and who wasn't. In that respect I think we did a better politicking job. This was a matter of communication. We found out who was where on that southern group. We found a great many of people who were not willing to stand on that proposition and were wanting to jump the traces on the first ballot. Some were wanting to bolt on the first ballot and others were saying no, we'll stay. There was

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a small group who would hang fast. There was a larger group who would stay with us until the delegation released us. And then there were those who wouldn't change at all. But this was a very small group.

FUCHS: Among the dissidents, was there a consensus for another individual in particular?

CARTER: No, this was, of course, the weakness, you might call it, of the opposition that they had no central figure to whom they could attach their loyalty. Roosevelt was one of those who appeared to be more interested in attempting to get someone other than Truman. His thesis seemed to be that Truman couldn't be re-elected and they ought to have someone who could be elected; this was his basic premise. At first he talked to Bill Douglas, then to General Eisenhower, who later became

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President Eisenhower.

FUCHS: Eisenhower had by this time more or less taken himself out. Earlier in the year, as you well know, Roosevelt had been very strong for Eisenhower according to public reports.

CARTER: Yes, this we understood, and also by the time we got to Pittsburgh Douglas was out.

FUCHS: So, Roosevelt didn't have any personal choice?

CARTER: He didn't have anyone. But the interesting thing was that Roosevelt really hadn't counted his noses, and we had. When I say we, I'm talking about the group from the north who were, of course, standing by their commitment and would not depart from their commitments to President Truman until the delegation released them. This was the basic proposition

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that we took. We had our delegates from the northern end pretty well committed and we found we had a goodly number from the southern group already lined up by the time that we got pretty far away.

Pretty soon I think I said it to Jimmy, "You had better count your votes, Jimmy." And by the time he got to Pittsburgh he issued a statement in which he said he didn't think the California delegation was going to leave President Truman. He had counted his votes by then, and that's the way it stood. I think the work that was done, in terms of discussing it with all of the people as individuals and adopting a policy that we've committed ourselves and we are going to stay with this, and letting each person speak his piece, and letting them know that we stood for our commitment, and operating on that basis, did

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a great deal to solidify the delegation. Having done that, then we had a basic understanding from which to proceed.

At the convention, first of all I was on the platform committee, and I was on it with Ruth -- I think it was Ruth Murray -- Murray is her name, but I forget what her first name is now. A lovely lady from California. I'm trying to remember her first name.

FUCHS: I don't know who was on that committee. Was there one committee, Resolutions and Platform? Were they the same committee?

CARTER: No. There were some resolutions that we worked on -- maybe it's Resolutions and Platform; but I know we were there to iron out or to develop the platform of the national convention and I spent hours on it. We had several sessions; went over every item. They had a

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pre-platform committee, I wasn't on that, which had done the basic work, and had done a very fine job. First, on the civil rights section, Hubert Humphrey had a substitute minority report.

FUCHS: How about Andrew Biemiller, did you know him?

CARTER: I knew Andy, he was on the committee. You bet your life I knew him. Esther Murray, that's her name. Esther was a congressional delegate. She was a great friend and nominee of Helen Gahagan Douglas.

FUCHS: Now, were there two, you and Murray, Californians?

CARTER: Yes, we were the two Californians on that platform committee. We both signed the minority report on the civil rights plank,

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and we reported back to our delegation what the civil rights plank was and that we had been outvoted. We had voted for the minority and we recommended to our delegation that the delegation support the minority; our delegation did support the minority plank.

FUCHS: Now, is this done on recommendation and instructions from your total delegation, or is this your own position and recommendation to your delegation?

CARTER: Well, we voted. Of course, we're free agents to vote as we please, but we reported back to our delegation as to how we voted; and we were, of course, subject to directions. If we didn't agree with what our delegation wanted to do we had either to decide that we would no longer represent the state on the committee and let someone else be substituted in our

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place, or either we would have to agree, I suppose. I don't know what the answer would be because neither of us were in that position. We agreed with our delegation, number one, and our delegation agreed with us.

FUCHS: It sounds like your committee was certainly liberal and your delegates were liberal and that the Biemiller...

CARTER: Yes. Very strongly so. I don't mean to say that it was 100 percent, but it was strongly in favor of the Humphrey-Biemiller proposal. We signed it with them. We're two of the four.

FUCHS: How do you think Mr. Truman truly felt about the majority and minority?

CARTER: I never had a chance to talk to him. My impression was that several of the

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pro-Truman people tried to talk us out of joining the minority on the basis that it was just causing trouble. I just took the position that maybe we needed some trouble but we got some fight into this thing and the answer was that that wasn't the way I felt and I wasn't going to do anything that I didn't think was right. So, the answer was "no," and they didn't tell me I should do otherwise. Nobody took that position. I know Howard McGrath talked to me for a little while. When he saw I felt the way I felt, he said, "No, you do what you think is right." He was not commanding that I do something different. He was the national chairman at the moment. I don't know whether Bill Boyle talked to me. Who else was there? Was Oscar Chapman there? I don't remember whether Oscar talked to me, but Oscar was around. There were a

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number of people there and they were pretty influential. They were fine people but they were not aggressive or demanding about it. They were very understanding, and they were very understanding with Hubert.

FUCHS: Of course Oscar would probably be more liberal than some of the others?

CARTER: Yes, I agree, Oscar was never -- no one was angrily telling me I must do something. They disagreed with me, I must say. They said they thought that this wasn't a matter of -- they were more fearful about Alabama withdrawing. They had the threat, you know, of secession and Alabama did walk out. And I said, "So what if they do walk out. We have to face up to this." But this is what they were concerned about. As a matter of fact, Chairman Shelley, our chairman, was

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the fellow that went over the top and got the microphone. You know our delegation was up near the front and we were the ones that led the charge.

FUCHS: Shelley was the chairman of the California delegation?

CARTER: Yes.

FUCHS: Roosevelt as the State Central Committee chairman was not chairman of the delegation?

CARTER: No.

FUCHS: I see.

CARTER: No, the chairman of the delegation was Shelley.

FUCHS: Now, is he elected to that position?

CARTER: Yes, he was elected by the delegation.

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And this was done at a much earlier time in California at a meeting in San Luis Obispo, as I remember it. At the Anderson Hotel in San Luis Obispo. It's an old-time place.

You've heard of Anderson's Pea Soup? Well, that same Anderson family that made the pea soup also owned the hotel there. But we had a meeting there in which we elected our delegation officers, and Shelley was elected chairman. He was a dynamic chairman and a big strong fellow and a very capable leader. He had a lot of dynamics. He was able to handle what might have been an otherwise unruly crowd. How many members were there on that delegation? I think there was forty some odd, if my memory serves me right.

FUCHS: Let's go back just a moment now. Jimmy Roosevelt was opposing President Truman in

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the middle of '47, and in '48, one of the things, apparently, was opposition to his foreign policy of foreign aid, and lack of appeal to the United Nations.

CARTER: My memory of Jimmy Roosevelt when he was state chairman was that when he came into the northern area he really worked in terms of covering the territory and visiting the places where I thought he should go. He was very willing to do all the things we asked him to do. Yet, I do remember he had this area of disagreement with Truman. I read about it in the newspapers to the extent that it was given publicity, but he did not discuss those things with me and I didn't discuss them with him, so that I'm not in a position to really comment on them. My area of discussion with Jimmy essentially revolved around trying to

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educate him in the area of the Central Valley project and California's local affairs, which he had to get a lot of education in. He had a prodigious capacity to absorb information. He was just like a human sponge. He was a remarkable person. How long he could retain it I don't know, but he was very competent in this area. I suppose he did many other things and then he may have been involved in this other area, but I just didn't have the opportunity or the experience of discussing it with him. You see where I lived and where I was active, in the Redding area -- and that's where I was in those days, in '47 -- I was active in the legislature. I was either in Sacramento or Redding. Well, it was at least six hundred miles from Los Angeles where Jimmy lived. It was only when he would come up to our area that we would see him. You see, we are a long

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ways away. Redding is. Now Sacramento is closer. Sacramento is four hundred miles, say, from Los Angeles; so you're talking about distances now.

FUCHS: You didn't come to San Francisco until you were appointed judge?

CARTER: I didn't live in San Francisco until I was appointed to the bench. I was here quite often when I was State chairman. I really came here in 1949. I practically lived out here in 1949, but I traveled down here by plane all the other times. That's what I was talking about, this exhaustive way of life; I had to be on the road all the time. I had an office here in San Francisco that I was at most all the time and I was up and down this State. I spent a tremendous amount of time on that job as State chairman. I was

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on the go. So, that was not very easy and I can understand how we could have not discussed this. There were no reasons for us to discuss it in particular and unless somebody would have asked me to discuss it with him and then there would have been some reason for me to -- and at that time there would have been none -- and then, until late spring of 1948, nobody even mentioned State chairmanship. I think the first man to mention my being a candidate for State chairman was Bill Malone who talked to me sometime, I think, in June of 1948.

FUCHS: I gather that distances are so great here that, even though you are all Democrats, you wouldn't normally go to a big function in Los Angeles, say?

CARTER: No, not unless I was State chairman. Then I would go and not always, only on most unusual

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occasions. That would have to be something. You run this thing like two separate states when you talk about politics. They're not small units. They are huge and they are huge in size and they are huge in their population content. So, it's not an easy task. As a matter of fact, organizationally it's an impossible thing. When we talk about organization we're talking about the loosest kind of thing. I must say that we didn't have anything.

To illustrate this, I remember one time when one of the people in the national committee said, "Say, Oliver, we'd like to have you go down to San Diego and take care of something for us.

We've got a problem down there." They were talking about national committee problems. He called me in Redding. I happened to be at home in Redding.

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And I said, "Do you know what you're asking me to do? If I asked you to go to Tallahassee, Florida and take care of something, what would you say to me?"

He said, "I'd say, well that's a pretty long trip."

I said, "That's what you're asking me to do."

"Oh," he says, "it isn't that far is it?"

I said, "It's farther from Redding to San Diego than it is from Washington to Tallahassee, Florida. Now, you just think that one over."

"Oh, well," he said, "no, I'm not asking you to do that."

I said, "Now, if I can get him on the telephone and do something, I'll do that. But don't tell me to run down in just a couple of hours."

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So, that's what I'm talking about. We had all kinds of problems. We didn't have the air accommodations then that we have now but we had reasonably good air transportation between San Francisco and Los Angeles. I don't mean to say we couldn't get transportation down there, and when you got in the air you got there reasonably quick. But, oh, boy, getting back here at 3 o'clock in the morning and back in the office at 9 after you'd be at one of those affairs down there and stay there until midnight, and you'd catch a plane and get here at 3, oh boy, that's too much. All right, you've heard my lament, now let's get on with the better part of it.

FUCHS: I have a question about something that occurred in Los Angeles that you probably didn't have brought to your attention, at

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least not very forcefully. This was in June of '47 when there was a Democratic Jackson Day dinner, and Mrs. Roosevelt was the principal speaker. Some of the people from Washington that were coming out were Gael Sullivan of the Democratic National Committee and Secretary [John W.] Snyder. There seemed to have been quite a hassle about this because apparently Edwin Pauley, if these documents are correct, prevailed upon Sullivan to just go back home and Secretary Snyder was called back, or at least didn't attend the dinner. It was felt that this was a slight to Mrs. Roosevelt. Do you have any recollection of that?

CARTER: No, I don't have any recollection of that. Undoubtedly if it did occur, I don't know that I would have given any thought to it so that

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I would remember it; because we had so many of those things coming out of Los Angeles that it would have taken a Philadelphia lawyer to straighten them out. They were just too difficult to keep track of. Those wars that were going on down there were constant. Those people cut one another up just for lunch. It's a common practice.

FUCHS: It was shortly after this that Jimmy Roosevelt wrote the President and asked that he invite Pauley and Mrs. Edward Heller, who you know is the...

CARTER: I knew Mrs. Heller. I knew Ellie very well. She was national committeewoman when I was there. I had just tremendous cooperation from her. There was one person who did work with me very closely and we cleared with one another. Now, I did keep in contact with

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her while I was State chairman. She was just a superb official of the Party. She was not officious or commanding. She was a very, very helpful person. One of the finest.

FUCHS: Apparently Jimmy Roosevelt thought that there should be a meeting of the three of them with the President to help to foster unity in the Party. By this time he was talking that Truman could win if there was some unity brought about in the State Democratic organization. This, it seemed to me, probably came out of this episode earlier in the month when they felt that Pauley had something to do with this slight to Mrs. Roosevelt.

CARTER: Well, I do know that Jimmy felt that he didn't get cooperation from Pauley and Pauley wasn't very happy with Jimmy. I do know that

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from having talked to both of them, but I didn't have much to do with Pauley. I only saw him very few times. He moved in many ways. He was a very skillful man and I'm not about to say that he didn't use his power in ways that I never even saw. On the other hand, I know that there was friction between Pauley and Jimmy. However, I can't say that it stemmed from one side or the other. I just don't know where it began or ended. My inclination was to just leave it alone, and not to either add to it or subtract from it but to try to get along with what we had and try to make it go. Use what we had and say, "Well, Jimmy will you do this," and to Pauley, "Will you do this," if Pauley was needed; and I don't think that we used Pauley too much. But to the extent that we wanted him I had no hesitation asking him would he do this. My

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philosophy of how to approach the problem, is to put them all to work. I think it was Tolan who said my answer to that is to get above it all.

FUCHS: Who said that?

CARTER: Jack Tolan. Get above it all. Have a bigger job for all of them, that's the answer to it. And I think that philosophically that's the answer. Let everybody get to work. I think he's got an excellent idea. He was speaking down to earth-wise, I was speaking altruistically; but I think he's

right. I think he's just as right as can be. Get above it all and give them something to do. Put them all to work. If you really put your mind to it you can take all of these dissident forces and let them work in their own way towards a common end. I don't think

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they are at such swords point or going such divergent ways, that you can't harness them and get them all working towards an objective. If you get enough of this going, why, then you've got a big powerful force. Apparently something happened in '48 which none of us saw or understood, which produced this magnificent result. Well, in any event, it was an experience.

In that delegation thing there were a number of incidents. I'm sure that Pauley had his people on that delegation. I'm sure he did.

FUCHS: Was Will Rogers, Jr. on that delegation?

CARTER: I don't know whether he was, but he certainly was active during that time. He had run two years before, in 1946, against Bill Knowland and had been defeated. While he was

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still active around there he more or less started to withdraw. He was not as active then as he had been before.

FUCHS: Do you have any observations about him?

CARTER: Yes, I do. I did get to know him in that campaign. And I managed his northern campaign. I liked Will personally, he was quite a guy except that his metabolism didn't start to work until after 7 p.m. He was a night-time guy and he didn't seem to wake up during the day. You couldn't get him to steam up at all. Oh, I'm sure he could, but he really was much more effective in the night than he was in the daytime. And for country people that isn't a very good way to campaign. They like their people to get out early in the morning and to hit the road you know. Will didn't like to get up before noon, if he even

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liked to get up then; and he liked to work way into the night. He'd work all night. I don't mean to say he was lazy or a sluggard, but he just worked a different hour schedule. He was a very decent person in his personal responses. At least he was to me. I always kind of felt that politics was not made for him, really; that he wasn't tough enough for it. He wasn't, maybe, interested enough. I don't know. Maybe he had too much of a personal fortune of his own and it wasn't necessary to him. He didn't have to fight to live. There was some lack of incentive or something or other that he wasn't as driving and forceful as I thought he ought to be. Because I thought he could have done better against Bill Knowland, I don't know what it was. We carried our county for him. We carried a few of those northern counties for him. But that wasn't too hard to do.

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Politically he was salable. I don't understand it myself, I just don't think the campaign job was done. I think he'd have been a reasonably good senator, too.

FUCHS: I believe in '48 Nixon was elected as a representative, is this correct?

CARTER: He may have been elected earlier than that wasn't he?

FUCHS: Was it '46?

CARTER: In '46 I think he beat Jerry Voorhees. And then he beat Mrs. Douglas in 1950 for United States Senator. That's when Downey retired, you see. After Nixon got elected Downey resigned to give him some seniority.

FUCHS: So, they appointed Nixon even though he had already been elected.

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CARTER: Yes.

FUCHS: He was appointed to the Downey seat.

CARTER: Surely, and that's appropriate I think. I don't think there is anything wrong with that. I think that that was the right thing to do.

Downey wasn't well. You see he had those peptic ulcers or he would have run for re-election and he should have run for re-election. He could have been elected, too, if he had run for re-election. That's my view at least. I did my best to talk him into it, I know. Clair Engle and I, and Bill Malone, we talked to him one night and the next morning his ulcer kicked up and Mrs. Downey gave us hell, I know. Oh, she was kind of wrathful. We talked long and we talked to him, we thought he wanted to do it, but he didn't. His health was such that he didn't think he ought to do it, and he had

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a peptic ulcer and it kicked up on him. But I know Mrs. Downey, she was a lovely person and I felt ashamed of myself afterwards because Sheridan was a nice guy. He was kind of a loner in his personal relations, but he was a very decent human being. His son I know very well. He happens to be our present referee in bankruptcy, but he is a very fine young man. And I knew his brother Stephen, one of the finest lawyers in California, the dean of the bar of Sacramento, who was just a great lawyer. My father always said that if he got into trouble he'd have Steve Downey as his lawyer. He thought he was the greatest lawyer that he ever knew. Steve was a superb lawyer. He's better than Sheridan, and Sheridan was good. But here you have these very capable men; and Sheridan had finished his second term in the Senate, so he already

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had twelve years. The question was whether he was going to go for a third one. He was getting along in years, he was up toward his late sixties. And he had a peptic ulcer. He had tensions, he had had financial difficulties, too. So, life hadn't been too easy with him, the poor guy. So, we tried to talk him into running. I know I always felt, after that night, like I'd whipped my best

friend. I talked with Mrs. Downey the next day. I said to Mrs. Downey, "If he doesn't feel well, you tell him to get out of the house. We'll leave him alone."

FUCHS: Is he still living?

CARTER: No, he died. She died before he did though. He lived quite awhile. I think he died here about five years ago. But he lived for quite a little while. He was a lonely

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little fellow when he died. It was tragic to see him. After she passed away he was quite lonely. Of course, that's understandable. She was a great support for him. She was a wonderful woman. But you see these things in public life where a man does lead a lonely life; he was a lonely man. He was kind of a loner in the way he operated politically. I was very interested in the way his colleagues talked about him. He really didn't belong to the club. He was very competent, able, sharp, he knew the rules, he was a brilliant man, but he didn't belong.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear Mr. Truman comment on him?

CARTER: No, I don't believe I ever talked to Truman about Sheridan. You see, Sheridan was a great friend of the people that I was close to, and we all liked Sheridan and we

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wanted him to run. I managed his campaigns up there when I was just a rank kid. He was one of the few people I could even -- I ought to have been suspicious about it, I guess -- get Republicans to support up in that north country. For a man who had as many radical notions as he did, it's surprising the number of so-called solid citizens that you could get to support him. He was an amazing person the way he could reach out and get support of people. If he had run for re-election, you couldn't have beaten him with a baseball bat, he was that strong.

FUCHS: Was Mrs. Douglas your first choice after Downey?

CARTER: Well, yes, but I tried to get her not to run. He said, "I won't run if she runs."

I said, "Well, Sheridan, you ought to run and I don't think she'll run."

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She said that she was going to run anyway. In my opinion he would have beaten her. Some of my friends, said that you shouldn't do that and I said, "Look, it's my business to get a Democrat elected to this office and if you want my view, Downey is the one that can get re-elected; and while I don't hesitate to say I think that Helen Douglas would make a fine Senator, I just don't think she's going to be elected, if you want an honest view." I certainly supported her. I didn't back off of that at all, but she didn't get elected either.

FUCHS: Did you have a presentiment of Nixon tactics or did you just feel...

CARTER: No, it wasn't Nixon's tactics that bothered me, although we'd already seen what he had done to Jerry Voorhees and suspected he would

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use similar style things on her. Oh, he's a -- boy, he's a bad man. I mean in the sense, he was a vicious campaigner. And that fellow he had with him. I see he's around again, too. Chotiner is it?

FUCHS: Murray Chotiner.

CARTER: Yeah, he was one of his hatchet men. They cut them up pretty bad. Well, I knew Helen Douglas pretty well. I always thought that Helen was a very competent person. Helen in many ways was much more regular and reliable in Democratic politics than a number of the so called liberal people. She played it right down to the line. She went right along with the Party organization. She worked hard for it. She didn't always do everything that the Party leaders said should be done; I don't mean that she took dictation. But in organizational

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work she went with the organization. She was very regular. Helen was a very, very, fine person. Her word was just as good as could be. I never have seen her back down from what she said she'd do. There are some people in this business that you just can't depend on that well. There are others who when they say something their word's just as good as gold. Like Harry Truman's word was as good as gold. And that's one thing you always depended on. These are the kind of people you run on in politics. There are people you know their word is absolutely good, there are people that you know isn't, and so this was the problem with Jimmy. His word, politically, you couldn't always depend on. He'd take a position and then he would back away from it. He didn't think he was bound by the rules that the normal person was bound

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by, or he felt that he was entitled to be released from something if he did take a position that he later found to be improper; and I think this stems from the fact that he came into politics from the top; that he never had to come in from the bottom. And a person who comes into politics from the bottom and has to work his way up, and go through all these processes, understands what it means to make a commitment in the first place, and having once made a commitment, he does not withdraw from that commitment until he has given the appropriate notices, and has gone around to release himself from the commitment in the proper way. Jimmy didn't understand how to do this. At least he never did it properly with the people that I knew. They always said he was a liar. I don't use those words. I don't think Jimmy was that kind of a liar. I

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don't think he deliberately lied; but I think he got himself in positions where he felt that he had to change his position. He saw nothing wrong in that. Well, I don't happen to agree with that kind of philosophy. But at least it technically forces you to distrust him in the political arena where so much turns on the integrity of the person who's taking a position. I guess that what it's all about is how much do you depend on the integrity of the person who's involved.

FUCHS: One Californian who was apparently quite conversant with politics here wrote the President -- or Matt Connelly, I've forgotten which one -- but his feelings were that Roosevelt was insincere, that he lacked sincerity. Do you...

CARTER: I don't believe that's true. I think

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Jimmy always believed that what he was doing was what he should do at the time he was doing it but he was not consistent. He then changed that position. I don't think he deliberately misstated at the moment what he was believing. I think he was -- at least that's my impression -- sincere about what he was doing but then he'd come back two weeks later and he would have a different position. Then he would say, "I'm not going to do that," and then he would come back and do it. He'd say, "But conditions have changed." According to the way I was taught, there aren't any changed conditions that can let you out of -- in the first place you shouldn't commit yourself (that's the first rule of politics), unless you intend to live up to it. Many times you have to do things that hurt because you have committed yourself. You do them, and

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you don't squawk about it. You say, "Well, I agreed to do it and I'll do it." I think that's the answer. Well, Jimmy was -- he was Jimmy. He wasn't bound by the normal rules. I think that's where he made a mistake. I think that's what would hurt him in the long run. These are hard judgments to make. I don't really know what went through his mind or how he arrived at the end results. I've never seen him deliberately do what I thought was telling a lie as such, but I have seen him try to justify his position and just enlarge upon his error. Now, some people call that lying, but I think he just simply made a bad situation worse. The guy was attempting to do something that just couldn't be done.

FUCHS: Did you know a Jefty O'Connor?

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CARTER: No, Jefty was not in my period of time. I knew of him but I did not know him.

FUCHS: Well, we might go ahead with your recollections of the '48 convention.

CARTER: Maybe we had better have something to eat before we do that.

FUCHS: (The interview was interrupted for lunch.) Okay, you can go ahead now.

CARTER: Well, when we left off before dinner, we were on the '48 convention, and I'm talking about the '48 convention in Philadelphia, and I think that I had discussed the fact that I had been on the platform committee with Mrs. Esther Murray and had been with the California members on the platform committee, and joined with the then Mayor Humphrey of Minneapolis and Congressman Biemiller of

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Wisconsin, in the minority plank on civil rights. Others may have joined in that also, but we joined in it and we recommended to our delegation that the delegation support the minority report. So that when the matter came down on the floor and Mayor Humphrey, later Senator and Vice President Humphrey, but then the Mayor, made his now famous speech for the adoption of the minority plank, the California delegation was one of the more active delegations in supporting his position both vocally and physically. As I remember it, the then Vice President Barkley, or he was then a Senator, I guess, and about to be Vice President, was the chairman of the evening. There had been some maneuvering to keep that plank from being heard, and it took a little maneuvering to get it heard, and finally the Mayor got the chance to make his speech.

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During this period of time I remember we charged the platform and took control of the microphone. I know that our delegation leader, Jack Shelley, actually got the microphone and, of course, Senator Barkley was not unfriendly nor was he angry about it but he stayed out of the road.

FUCHS: He had really been an obstructionist as a Southerner to the...

CARTER: No, but on the other hand, I don't know what his personal attitude was on the minority plank. I think perhaps he would have gone along with whatever the majority was. He was not particularly concerned one way or the other, but trying to maintain order is what he was trying to do, and one of the things we were doing was creating some disorder. But, in any event, it was a little active there for a

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while; but in the end result it was arranged so that the Mayor got a chance to make his speech and the issue was finally determined, and then it was put to a vote. And, voting by states, the minority plank carried. Well, I always felt that that added some life to the campaign. It seemed to me there were two things in the convention that meant anything. One was, of course, the nomination of Truman and Barkley, and the other was the minority plank, they adopted the civil rights stand. The civil rights fight was the only real fight we had in terms of the ideological fight. There was some inside maneuvering and fighting about the nomination of President Truman, but he really had the votes almost already counted, when you look at it in retrospect. There was a lot of talk about he can't win and therefore we ought to get somebody

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who could win, but nobody could come up with a better candidate. And while it wasn't just winning by default, he certainly was not carrying the day with his own personal force. The final thing that was so outstanding, was his acceptance speech. This, had it occurred before the vote, would have carried the day for him because he made one of the great acceptance speeches. I thought he was tremendous. I also thought that Barkley's keynote address was a tremendous effort and a remarkable speech. He did a beautiful job, but I felt that Truman's acceptance thing brought that convention to life. It just made it snap. That and the civil rights plank were the two things that had them really alive and moving and really made it a viable, going thing. Otherwise it was just a bunch of meetings.

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FUCHS: Did you have any degree of optimism about the candidate's chances, say before the acceptance speech and after the acceptance speech, or was there any difference?

CARTER: Well, I thought his acceptance speech improved his position, but I don't think anybody really thought he was going to win. I can't say I thought he was going to win, but I always said I was going to go with him whatever happened, it made no difference to me. I was going to fight all the way and I was going to try to win. My philosophy was simply to do everything that I could and leave nothing unturned, and when I went back to California, to do my best. It's hard to appraise what personal impressions do to you. I don't know what effect Harry Truman's acceptance speech may have had on me and

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the way I accepted the office of State chairman, which came later; although they had been talking to me already about being State chairman, and these were natural sequences and I knew the chairmanship fight was going to be something of a matter of course because I didn't have any opposition. Unless somebody showed up who was a formidable opponent, I was going to be elected without opposition. Let's see, the convention took place, in late -- when was it, July?

FUCHS: In July.

CARTER: It was in July, the national convention, and our state convention took place in August, as I remember. So, then we came back from the national convention and went right into preparation for the state convention and we were in Sacramento for the state convention in just a couple of weeks.

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FUCHS: Is this customary of the states to have their state convention follow the national convention?

CARTER: Oh, it happens here. I don't know whether it does in the other states, but this happens usually in California sometime in the summer. Now, whether it is before or after the national convention depends upon when the national convention is held. The state convention is usually on a more fixed date over the years. In other words, the time arrangements for the state convention has been set months in advance, usually speaking, so they know when the state convention is going to be. It could be altered one week or another. I don't suppose they'd have a state and a national convention on the same day, or the same weekend. That's one thing they wouldn't do. They'd move the time

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of the state convention to conform to the national convention to permit the national convention to go on without the conflicts of the state convention. I'm sure they recognized, that that would be a dangerous conflict from the Party point of view.

We then had our state convention and had the same fundamental proposition. We had the national ticket set and all decided. We had a number of congressional races and in 1948 we had

no United States Senator race. We had several congressional fights in the various congressional districts. You see in California we then had the cross-filing system, so several of the congressional elections had already been decided by that time and there was not an election contest in every district at the time of the state convention. In some of the districts the Congressmen had already been

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elected; either a Republican or a Democrat. In those days they could run on both tickets and if they won on both tickets in the primary they were elected at the primary election, which occurred in June. In our then 23 congressional districts, I think eleven of our Congressmen were already elected.

FUCHS: Now, was this true of the Governors, too? Like when Warren cross-filed in '50 against Roosevelt?

CARTER: Yes, he did and that's what...

FUCHS: And he won both.

CARTER: You're right.

FUCHS: I was thinking that that would be so, but then I thought I read that Roosevelt was still running in November.

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CARTER: No, wait a minute. Warren did that in 1946 when he beat Bob Kenny. He beat him in the primary. He won both nominations. Against Roosevelt he did not win the Democratic nomination. He only won the Republican nomination in 1950.

FUCHS: Oh, I thought he had won both.

CARTER: I remember I had a discussion with Roosevelt about running for Governor; my advice to him was that he should not run for Governor and should run for some other office in order to get some experience in California in an elective office-holding position before he attempted to run for Governor. For his sake, not for his reputation, but for experience so he would be a better public official. I was trying to sell him on that idea and he said, "But I'm the only one who can get the Democratic nomination away from Warren."

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And I said, "That may be. You may be the only Democrat who can get the Democratic nomination away from Warren, but if you get the Democratic nomination you are going to lose the election. I don't know what good it's going to do you to win the Democratic nomination."

"Well," he said, "that may be right and if so I'll just have delayed the time in which I would be eliminated." But he said, "I have to try."

I said, "Well, if that's the way you feel, that's what you have to do, but I strongly suggest to you that you should seek another position."

There was then a state senatorship in Los Angeles and a congressional election available in Los Angeles, and also a board of supervisors or city councilmen in Los

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Angeles open think that he for him to seek nomination. I could have been elected in any one of those positions had he chosen to run. I think his career might have been extended and he would have been much better political timber. But that's hindsight and I don't know whether it would have been any better or not. He has later served in Congress. He's been an excellent Congressman, or a good Congressman at least. So, he's had that experience but the press turned on him and there was a whole area here of negation in the sense he had this domestic trouble develop, which was a tragic thing to happen and I'm sorry it did happen. I don't know whether it might not have happened anyway whether he ran or not, because I'm inclined to think that there would have been domestic difficulties in his life regardless of what

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happened unless he had completely withdrawn from politics. But again, that is second-guessing and I'm not about to make any final or complete conclusions about that. I would say that he tried and all I can say is that it came out as I predicted. He won the Democratic nomination and lost the general election.

FUCHS: Again we'd like you to respond in view of your feelings at the time, but in retrospect, do you feel that there was any cynicism in any of those who pushed so hard for the Biemiller-Humphrey plank in that they thought that Truman had lost the election anyhow, but they might just as well get this on the record, and they wouldn't have pushed as hard if they felt that Truman had a chance.

CARTER: I never felt that, and I was strongly for the Biemiller-Humphrey plank and it was

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not cynical with me at all. I thought it was the better plank and that if we were going to run we should run with the better plank. I thought that it gave Truman a better chance.

FUCHS: It wouldn't be the opposite, the fatalistic thing then?

CARTER: Oh, no.

FUCHS: Whether he had a good chance or not?

CARTER: No, I always felt that Truman had a chance but that it was a very difficult situation. I don't mean to imply that I then had the confidence that he was going to win, because I am quite sure that I shared the general view that he was probably going to lose. Although I know that I always felt that the election was going to be much closer than the general public or the press, or any

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of the writers thought it was going to be; because I remember when we talked just a couple of weeks before the election with the national committee people, I think it was Howard McGrath himself, asked me how I thought we were going to do out here in California. And I said to him, "Well, the prediction is that we are going to lose California by two hundred and fifty thousand votes. This is the common talk; this is what they're betting even money on; that Dewey will carry California by two hundred and fifty thousand votes." I said, "If I were a betting man I would bet my homestead that that wouldn't happen. I can't sit here and tell you that Harry Truman is going to carry California but I know that it's going to be a very close vote, and I would be willing to venture, from my own appraisal, based on my own individual examination of from place to

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to place, that neither candidate will carry California by more than one hundred thousand votes, and if anyone does carry by more than one hundred thousand votes, he'll be lucky. That will be my best estimate. Now, who carries it by one hundred thousand votes is a very difficult question. This year we are going to have about five million votes cast, or more than five million votes cast, and if anyone can predict this election with a hundred thousand votes he's a much better person than I. We'll just have to leave it that way, but we have a chance, if not a good chance or one in which it appears to be very easy, but it can be done, and don't let anyone count us out. Don't you count us out either. We're working at it and we're not going to give up. Now, we have our programs outlined to run till election time and we're going to complete

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it and we'll take care of our end of the campaign. We have done another thing here, too, we have operated our finances so that when we end this campaign we will not have a deficit. We will have spent all the money we have. If we have a deficit it'll just be a very, very small sum of money and we are going to be a solvent organization, so that if we lose we will still have something to go on. Now, we think, within the limits of our capacity, we've done reasonably well, but if you think we can do anything more and to the extent we have the finances, or the physical capacity, we will do it." Well, they felt that we had done rather well up until then and they were pleased with the plan that we had in mind, which as I remember it, was principally to have the Secretary of Agriculture, Charlie Brannan, come to the Central Valley area of California;

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that is from Bakersfield to Fresno. And we were having someone else come into the southern area, I forget who that was, into the Los Angeles area, but someone of national stature. And the southern California chairman, Senator E. George Luckey, was in charge of the southern California campaign and I didn't have too much control over those details, but I had discussed this with the Senator and we coordinated our work. We both kept pretty good control of what we were doing. When I say Senator, he was a State senator, as was I at that time. So, we had both kept a pretty good control of expenditures as well. Neither of us ran very expensive campaigns. Our campaign was very modest in terms of finances. I don't know, I think we spent around \$40,000 and we did end up with a deficit of \$3700, I might say; and after the election day was over I called my treasurer and I said, "Bill, we're

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in business, and I don't think we have to worry about our deficit now." It appeared that the President had won and there is nothing like winning to meet deficits.

But to get back to the state convention, we had our state convention and there were a number of things that occurred there but they were not anything of any great moment. Again, there was a clash between Roosevelt on one side and, oh, McEnery and Malone and a number of the others on the other side, about standing where we stood on Truman. Again, Roosevelt still wanting to be freed to support whoever might still run. They were having that third party fight, you know, at that time. This is the year that Henry Wallace and Glenn Taylor were in the race. I don't think Jimmy was actually promoting Henry Wallace as such -- I'm quite sure he

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wasn't -- but he didn't know who else might get into the race in addition to Truman. I know he was extremely reluctant to get enmeshed deeply in the Truman campaign at the moment, although he later became very much involved and went all the way. He did not spare the horses and Jimmy was the kind of a fellow that, when the chips were down, he supported the ticket. I think he honestly felt that Truman was going to have difficulty in being elected.

FUCHS: Were you apprehensive about the inroads the Progressive Party might make in California in that election?

CARTER: Well, now that I think about it, yes and no. There was certainly a group of vocal supporters for Wallace out here, this Independent Progressive Party, as I remember them; they did a lot of shouting. I never did think

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they had much strength vote-wise. I did engage in some debates with them, on one side, and the Republicans on the other. I generally got us, the Democrats, in between them, which I thought was a favorable position to be in politically, that we were more middle of the road and that we were at neither extreme. The few times that I did that I thought that we came off rather well.

FUCHS: Where were these debates?

CARTER: One was at the University of California and this was with the students a great many of whom were enamored with the Wallace picture, but they were also caught up in this extremes argument and they were very much enamored with that one, too. They didn't want to get into either extreme. And they listened with great attentiveness to argument, but there weren't

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a lot of votes there, they were mostly students. But the other places were in front of labor unions and there were some strong Independent Progressive Party people in labor unions. And Glenn Taylor in particular had strong appeal to labor unions because he had been a strong labor man. But the defection was, if it was a defection, very minor. And I thought that President Truman handled that very well. He talked very straight on that and he made a speech to the liberals about

how he was going to use his votes. Was he going to waste it or was he going to use it usefully. And I thought it was an excellent speech. I thought this was one of the better speeches that he made. Harry Truman, from the number of times that I saw him -- and I guess I saw him make, oh, about ten political speeches in three and a half days -- was not an outstanding

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political orator, in his style or any of the normal qualities that we talk about when we talk about outstanding orators. He didn't have those qualities that we ordinarily rate highly, such as a good speaking voice or a fine stature or neither did he read his words well. If I remember he had trifocal glasses and he had difficulty in reading the words. He stumbled over them. Yet, when it was all said and done, he had a tremendous ability to communicate personally to the listener. This was his finest attribute and this, of course, I suppose in its ultimate is the greatest thing that a political leader can have, is to communicate to the person who is listening. When he closed that book and stopped reading and started talking he was a very, very effective man even though his style was not very fancy or very good or even not even pretty to watch, or

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anything of that sort. It was a remarkable expression of his faith in the people to whom he was speaking and watching their faith coming back; it was a tremendous experience in this area of human relationship. It was my privilege to introduce him at all of these occasions and, of course, since he was the President all you would say was, "Ladies and Gentlemen, may I introduce the President of the United States," or "I introduce the President of the United States," and that's all you say. You don't say anything more. You don't make any wise remarks or anything of the sort or give anything in introduction, you just use those few words; and then you step aside and stand back and you watch, and you listen, and if you're fortunate, you are able to observe. And I felt very privileged being in a position to observe something.

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Here I was a young man in the political field and I had a chance to see history being made. I thought I caught the mood. At least I tried to express that to him. And I meant it sincerely when I told him that I thought that the people out here were moved by his expressions. The more he could reach people the better chance he had. And the response that we had from people coming to see him was the thing that kept all of us really hopeful -- hopeful isn't the proper word -- it kept us saying to ourselves, "Well, he can win. Look what is happening." And this is an example, and this is my memory of what things occurred. Our first stop in California was in Sacramento where he made a public appearance.

FUCHS: Did you meet the train there?

CARTER: No, we met it in Reno, Nevada, and we came

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on down through the Sierras. There was a crowd at Truckee but he didn't make any public appearance. I say a crowd, it wasn't a huge crowd. Truckee, to the uninitiated, is a small, relatively small mountain community. It's grown much larger since the 1948 election. It's up in the Sierras, up about seven or eight thousand foot elevation, and it's on the way over to Donner's

Summit, so it's up in the mountains. This is a railroad stop, and there were those people there. During the summer it's a recreation community. It's near Lake Tahoe, and it has grown considerably, of course, since the Tahoe area has developed but it still is not a huge community. But, it was a railroad center. So, we had a small crowd there, and then we had a small crowd in, I think, Colfax or Roseville. Colfax is not a small place and Roseville is a fairly

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substantial community just fourteen miles out of Sacramento, but we just barely paused there. It's a railroad community.

By the way, Truman had a rapport with the railroad men. They loved him. They didn't like Dewey because -- I don't know that it was because of the remark -- the remark that Dewey made about that railroad man had gone through the whole railroad structure. They just widely cheered Harry Truman wherever they saw him and they liked him. So, wherever we went into the railroad centers or a railroad division point, or a railroad yard, we just had all those working men there. They were all really out cheering and shouting, you know, "Give them hell, Harry." That always came back to us.

He then came into Sacramento. He made a speech there in that Civic Center Plaza in Sacramento, which is a whole block square plaza

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and it was substantially full of people. It has a lot of trees in it, it's flat and it's pretty hard to see clear through it because it has so many trees in it, but he had a tremendous crowd. It was at noon. Sacramento is the state capital. This was in October; the legislature was not in session but there was a lot of people there. So, it's a busy place. But it drew a big crowd and I thought he made an excellent speech there. He handled himself extremely well and he got a warm response. Sacramento is a pretty good Democratic community and he carried Sacramento County. He carried that rather well. He was warmly supported there by the McClatchy newspaper in Sacramento, which is the *Sacramento Bee*. So he had some local support, but he himself made an excellent presentation there.

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We then, that same day, came on to San Francisco, and he made a speech in the Civic Center Plaza in San Francisco and he had anywhere from, oh, forty to fifty thousand people in the Civic Center Plaza in San Francisco, in front of the city hall, and he made another major speech there.

FUCHS: Now, that isn't what they call Golden Gate Park is it?

CARTER: Oh, no, no. This is the Civic Center Plaza in front of the city hall. That's to the east of the city hall.

FUCHS: I didn't realize he made two speeches here then?

CARTER: He made one in San Francisco and one in Oakland. Then he made one in Sacramento which is not, of course, in San Francisco.

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FUCHS: The one in Oakland was the one in Lakeside Park?

CARTER: Yes, which is at Lake Merritt Park. That's at lakeside. Lake Merritt is where the Lakeside Park is.

We had some incidents that were quite interesting, of course, we had Secret Service people. We got acquainted with the Secret Service people, and they looked at that Oakland thing and they were very dubious about whether we should go down into that park at 10 o'clock at night with the trees overhanging and not very light. It was not a very inviting proposition, but we finally went down and it came out all right. We all heaved a sigh of relief. He made his speech and again he did very well. We had a nice crowd there. I don't know what the size of it was but all three, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Oakland were

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well attended. His response was excellent, and he got a real good response himself.

Now, we got back to the train about midnight. We got to bed about 1 o'clock. That was a full day. He made three major speeches. I would say that he spoke to a good seventy-five thousand people that day, if not more, closer to eighty-five thousand. Perhaps that would be more like it. He had maybe ten thousand in Sacramento and forty to fifty thousand in San Francisco and another ten to fifteen thousand in Oakland. That's seventy-five to eighty thousand I'd say. He covered real good mileage in those speeches. The other thing that had occurred, that I remember, is that we had done a great deal of work about what speech was to be made in each of those communities. Right after we got on the train in Reno and started back, I had a conference

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with Jonathan Daniels and Mr. Bell, I forget his first name. Is it David Bell?

FUCHS: David Bell, yes.

CARTER: Yes, David Bell. Jonathan Daniels was in charge of the writing of the speeches and several speeches had already been written. I read those speeches. The content of the speeches was fine. They were, content-wise rather good -- I made some minor suggestions on content which was of no moment, as I remember it. But the main thing that I saw that was wrong was that the speeches were not properly placed. The places where they had then scheduled the speeches, I thought, was the wrong place for the speech to be given and I said so. I said, "You should give this speech in this place, and this speech in another, and the other speech in this place and this place. Really rearrange the schedule of the

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speeches without changing the speeches. I thought that the speeches themselves were all very good, well written, documented, properly developed items and political speeches for their times on items of importance of the day. They were well done. But the problem was to get them in the proper place. One was a foreign affairs speech. Well, that, obviously, should be given in San

Francisco or at least not at Oakland. One was a Central Valley speech and I think I got them to give that in Sacramento. No, he gave the octopus one -- that had to do with, you know, the public utilities octopus. It had to do with the power division of the Central Valley, I mean the electric power. And he made a little play on *The Octopus* written by Frank Norris the writer. He made, I thought, a rather excellent reference to the business octopus of the public utility

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in the area. It was one of the current problems and this fit right square in with the then press policy of the local news media in that area, rather than in the San Francisco-Oakland area. I thought it just fit the right place, so they agreed with me when I told them just how it fit. So, without much hesitation, they changed them and we got them in that order, and they came out very well I thought. Then he made other speeches as he went down the Valley. So, then we left Oakland, pulled out of Oakland in the morning while it was still dark, because we were at Tracy at 5 in the morning. Tracy is a little town considerably out of Stockton -- it's between San Francisco and Stockton -- but it's just over the Coast Range into the San Joaquin Valley. It's a railroad center again, but it's just a short distance out of Oakland.

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When I say a short distance, why, maybe sixty, seventy miles. And at 5 o'clock in the morning, they estimated that there were fifteen hundred people in the station. If my memory serves me right, it was Bill Bray who was there and he said to me, "You can't do this to him," meaning you can't get him up and get him out there.

I said, "Of course, you can't do this to him. I wouldn't get him up. You keep him in bed and I won't disturb him at all. I agree with you. I'd love to have him out there but I know what he's been through and I'm not going to put him through this. These people came here on their own and they just take their chances. I'm not going to quarrel about that." Bray said he thought I was going to give him an argument about it and I said, "No, I do want him, however, to be up by 7 o'clock when we will be in Modesto, which is a larger

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community and we'll have a larger crowd." But, the only reason I mention Tracy is that this was an indication of the kinds of turnout that we were developing. I don't know what had occurred in other places across the country coming to us, but this was the kind of thing he was getting, and the people on the train said, "Oh, this is tremendous, we're getting something now." They were very enthused by the response that we were getting. We were pleased ourselves. Of course this was our first experience on a Presidential train and we didn't know what to expect, and we were pleased that they were pleased, that's number one. And, number two, we were very pleased on our own.

So, then we went on to Modesto. That's further down the Valley, a little more than a hundred miles, I guess. Anyway, down the

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San Joaquin Valley on the Tuolumne River. But in any event, it's just before it runs into the San Joaquin. It's in the Valley and it's a good-sized community. We stopped there and we had, oh,

3,500 people in that station at 7 a.m. Then we went on to Fresno, which is the next town down the way, about two hundred miles south of San Francisco. I guess we were there at ten in the morning and we had, oh, seventy-five hundred people there at that station. That was a big crowd. That's the southernmost newspaper of the McClatchy newspapers, the *Fresno Bee*. There is a *Modesto Bee*, too. So, I must say that at Sacramento, Modesto, and Fresno we had the favorable comment of the McClatchy newspapers. Then we went on down to Visalia or Tulare. I think Tulare is the station.

FUCHS: I think he made some back platform remarks there.

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CARTER: That's right. All this was done from the platform. Along this route we never got out of the train until we got to Los Angeles. We were in Visalia or Tulare -- I think it was Visalia. Tulare was the station, or at least the Visalia people were over at Tulare, if that's where we stopped. You see they are only, what, ten or twelve miles apart. Visalia is the larger city you know, it's the county seat. Tulare is a pretty good-sized place, but it's not as big as Visalia; but in any event, this is in Tulare County, a big agricultural county. It's one of the bigger agricultural counties, and again he made another talk and he had a good crowd. I don't know what the size of it was. I don't now remember what it was but it was substantial, and it was good.

Then we went on to Bakersfield in Kern County where we met a bang-up of a turnout. We had a good Democratic committee down there,

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and they just did a bang-up job. They were really enthused and this is the south end of the San Joaquin Valley. This is where you're down in the deep south of California, in the south end of the San Joaquin Valley. This is real farming country and we're in the grape country where the *Grapes of Wrath* story was written and all that business. This is a fabulous agricultural area. This is just -- well, it's out of this world. Wherever you have water, you have just -- gardens. But you have desert where you don't have water; so it's a fabulous place. And then the mountains on both sides of the Valley; but it's a wide valley there, extremely wide. Bakersfield is the county seat and we stopped there; and then we went on through the Tehachapi mountains. That's the mountains that separate what we call northern and southern California.

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And the train went on through the mountains and we came to a little town of Tehachapi on the upper Mojave Desert, which is a railroad center and we had fifteen hundred people there, at, what, I don't know, 7 o'clock at night. We went on into Los Angeles from Mojave and we went to the -- let's see did we go to Gilmore Field or Hollywood Bowl, I forget which.

FUCHS: Gilmore Stadium.

CARTER: Gilmore Stadium, that's what it was, where we had a full stadium. Some thirty thousand people there and that is just as full as it could get. That was that night, and then -- but where was it that we had the parade in Los Angeles? What day was that? Did we stay a whole day in Los Angeles?

FUCHS: Well, he gave a major speech on the evening of the 23rd of September, and then the next day

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he went to San Diego.

CARTER: San Diego, yeah; because at 7 o'clock in the morning we were out at the Lane Field in San Diego. And this I want to mention because this was the most fantastic thing I've ever seen. At between 7 and 8 in the morning going through the streets of San Diego, after it had rained. Now, mind you, when it rains in San Diego the people pull up the sidewalks.

FUCHS: Is that right?

CARTER: It doesn't rain enough down there you know. They don't have raincoats at all. They are not bad weather people, and they just don't go out in the bad weather. Well, it had rained that early morning, and yet we had over seventy-five thousand people on the streets of San Diego. We went to Lane Field which holds

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twenty some odd thousand, and we had the bleachers -- that's a baseball field -- full and we had the infield and outfield full. He made a speech on a stand in the middle of the field. And we just had it completely full, just bulging at 8 o'clock in the morning, in San Diego, on a rainy day. I just can't understand that. I just don't understand that.

FUCHS: In Los Angeles wasn't there something about Dewey speaking the following day and that he prevented Truman from having the same hall because they rented it on the pretext that they had to test the lighting?

CARTER: I don't remember that.

FUCHS: Where would the other hall have been that...

CARTER: Well, it might have been Hollywood Bowl. That's the big hall there.

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FUCHS: That would have been much larger than your stadium?

CARTER: Well, that isn't too much bigger than Gilmore but it's a much better place. Hollywood Bowl it's called.

FUCHS: You don't recall anything about that?

CARTER: Not now. I didn't have the arrangement of those places down there. This was done by the southern people and we just went where we were supposed to go, but they had done a tremendous job apparently of arranging these things. I thought that San Diego thing was fantastic

although we lost that country by a few thousand votes. The Republicans have been winning there big every since. We kept it down to fairly low. But this was just a fabulous turnout, and, of course, the

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local newspapers there were just simply solid, hard rock Republican newspapers. I don't think there is any Democratic press in that area. It's just like hitting a stone wall. So, we were up against a tough press proposition and it was a means of communication. I thought he had a terrific response.

But we had a parade through Los Angeles in the streets. I remember that. We must have had a couple thousand people on the streets in Los Angeles. This was a fabulous thing; this was just fantastic in the number of people on the street. This is the question the reporters were all asking us. "Where do all these people come from? Why do they come?" You had to say, "Why, I don't know why they come, they're just interested in the fellow." They said to me, you know, I'm State chairman, "Are you responsible for it, your organization?"

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I said, "My goodness, we couldn't get enough people to keep us out of the rain, let alone do this. There is only one person who is responsible for it and that is the candidate. He's done it alone." And that was the impressive thing about it, that he did do it alone. If anyone is entitled to claim credit for doing the task, I'd say it's Harry Truman. He made the contacts, he did the basic campaign job. All we did was just a few minor trappings here and there. We did keep body and soul together and we did do a few basic organizational things that I suppose you can't negate, and I wouldn't want to say that we did poorly in that sense, but I wouldn't want in any sense to overrate the quality of what we did, because we didn't do an awful lot, in comparison to what he did. I thought his personal attraction to the people and his expression of faith in them brought a response

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from the people themselves. This was the most remarkable and expressive thing that occurred. This is where I think it started. They tell me, when I talked to Howard McGrath and Bill Boyle, that this occurred on his trips to the East. Then it never stopped, everyplace he went it was the same. They said, "Oh, it's going great," and they were really enthused about it. Of course, I wasn't at those places. We just kept plugging along and working for all we could do, and we didn't have a big organization, but we did the best we could. Then, let's see what was the other thing -- we had that tremendous turnout in the streets in Los Angeles, and a good crowd, that is it was just as full as you could get Gilmore Field; you couldn't put any more in with a shoehorn. And that thing at Lane Field in San Diego at 8 o'clock in the

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morning -- I don't think they have ever done that before or since. I don't think they ever have, at that time a day. I just have never seen anything like it. I don't think it will ever be repeated.

FUCHS: Did you go all the way with the train to Colby?

CARTER: Then we went to Colby and that's where I left it. Then he was on his way to Albuquerque, as I remember it.

FUCHS: I think he went to Yuma and then over to Phoenix, and then to Albuquerque.

CARTER: Yes, yes, but Albuquerque was supposed to be his next big stop. This is what they were saying. I was talking about the schedule. All I know, I was ready to drop. I was so tired that they could have gone on to the moon

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as far as I was concerned. I was done. I was so physically exhausted I couldn't have gone any further. I got off and I went to bed and stayed there for three days, because it was physically the most exhaustive thing that I've ever done.

FUCHS: What stands out in your memory about the train besides the speeches, and the crowds? Was this the first occasion, for instance, that you had met Bill Bray?

CARTER: Yes, I had never met Bray. I met, for instance, Clifford. I remember we walked one night and chatted. He wanted to get acquainted with me. He hadn't seen me before. I guess I was something new to those people. They hadn't seen my kind of politician before and they were interested in me. Howard McGrath knew me. Of course, Howard wasn't along, but he maybe told them about me.

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FUCHS: You mentioned that earlier conversation with McGrath about how Mr. Truman's chances were lining up. Was that at the convention and prior to your being made State chairman, or was that after?

CARTER: No, that was after I was state chairman and after the campaign was on the road.

FUCHS: Where was this?

CARTER: A couple of weeks before the general election when we were discussing what chances he had in terms of are we going to make it up there. They were hearing these reports about California going for Dewey with two hundred and fifty thousand votes and they were trying to prospect how I felt about it.

FUCHS: This was a phone conversation.

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CARTER: This was a phone conversation and I said to McGrath, "Look, I'm not a betting man but if I would have been, I would have bet my homestead that he wouldn't have carried it by two hundred and fifty thousand votes, he won't even carry it by one hundred thousand votes if he carries it at all; and I'm not so sure that Harry Truman isn't going to carry it and he might carry it by a hundred thousand votes. But I'm sure that none of them -- neither one of them is going to carry it by one hundred thousand votes. It's just that close. Now, I think we can win but it's so

close that I wouldn't want to tell you we're going to win but I'll tell you it's just going to be a blanket finish." And that's the way it was. We won by seventeen thousand eight hundred votes, and we won it, as I explained to you last night -- in the San Joaquin Valley from

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Sacramento to Bakersfield. Although Sacramento is not strictly in the San Joaquin Valley, it's part of the Sacramento Valley, but you throw Sacramento into the San Joaquin Valley picture, and that gave us a fifty-two thousand some hundred vote lead. We lost southern California, as I remember, by thirty-two or thirty-three thousand votes, and we won California by seventeen thousand, eight hundred votes. The difference between thirty-three and fifty-two is about seventeen thousand some and this is where it was. The other areas of the state pretty much counterbalanced one another. As I told you, the counties around the Bay area split, so it was almost even. And then the mountain counties on the east and the north split with the mountain counties on the west. The western ones going for Dewey and the mountain counties on the east, that was the Angel district which was strongly Democratic,

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went strong for Truman. The Second Congressional District is gigantic in its size, big as all New England almost. It's that big in size. It's a tremendous area, but it runs from Inyo County, which is out back of Los Angeles (Mount Whitney is in Inyo County), north clear to the California-Oregon border all along the Nevada border, clear up there, and then across the California-Oregon border to the coast, that's the Second Congressional District. Then it has some counties up along the fringe that are in between. Now, that's my own home congressional district. Now, that's a thousand miles long and three hundred, four hundred miles wide in one place. In most of the places it's at least a hundred miles wide. But it's mountainous, it's very sparsely populated. Well, we won those people -- that's my home country. I was going to bank on those people. That is, if we had to win with them, we would have won.

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FUCHS: Were there any particular issues that you felt were going to cause California to go for Truman?

CARTER: Well, we felt that we had a pretty good deal on the agriculture side of it. We thought Charlie Brannan did an excellent thing with the grape, raisin people, number one. He also did an excellent piece of work with the cotton people, and this had to do with this Commodity Credit Corporation and the way it handled things.

FUCHS: Was the storage bins shortage a factor in California? I imagined that was more in the wheat and corn areas.

CARTER: No, it was a problem here although the California cotton, you see, is different. It's fairly long staple cotton and therefore, it goes off of the market quicker than the shorter

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staple cotton in the deep South. And they have less holdover on California cotton than in any other crop of cotton in the country. It's more salable, but they do have a long transportation

problem. It's a long way from the textile market. It's a long way from the processing market and, therefore, it has that deficiency, it has to be hauled there, number one; number two, they have to get it to the water ports, Stockton or to San Pedro or the other Los Angeles port, Wilmington. Those two ports are the shipping points. This is where the cotton moves out. Some comes out of Oakland but it mostly goes out of Stockton, that's north, or as I say, out of the San Pedro-Wilmington area. It depends on which end of the Valley the cotton is grown. They haul it the shorter mileage, whichever way is the easiest. Then they haul it to the warehouses

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which are in the ports, and this is where the Commodity Credit warehouses are. It moves then on the vessels which is a much cheaper method of transportation. But he had done something there which they were very pleased with. I tell you he was very helpful.

FUCHS: You are speaking of...

CARTER: Brannan.

FUCHS: Yes.

CARTER: The raisin price supports I know had some difficult areas. Here he brought about a very stabilizing effect, and the raisin people that counted thought he was a very good guy and they were for him all the way down the line. Then we had the good fortune, as I say, of having the editorial support of the McClatchy newspapers. Then we had this highly

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controversial Central Valley project. This is a very complicated issue and I can't take the time to explain in detail. Truman went down the line with the Interior Department on the, oh, the acreage limitation provisions and all these provisions of the reclamation law, which he had to as President of the United States. I don't think any President could do otherwise, although there can be variations of the emphasis that is put on the enforcement of that law. The important thing is that he went right down the line. He didn't hesitate one iota and he carried out the purpose of that law. This was controversial, but it didn't kill him in the agricultural areas. This is where the big argument is, and it's a nice argument. It's not easy, that fight of the small landowner versus the big landowner, and the spreading of the benefits of the water from these reclamation projects. This has been

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a long historical proposition and Truman didn't begin it or end it. He just came along at one phase of a lengthy battle that's been going on almost since reclamation began. So, this is nothing new; California has been having this fight, and we've got some of the biggest and most effective reclamation projects in the country.

FUCHS: Did you feel that Mr. Truman's vilification of the 80th Congress and his opposition to Taft-Hartley were major interests of the voters here and that they were telling in the campaign.

CARTER: I thought the "do-nothing Congress" argument was very effective. I don't know whether you call that vilification of Congress, if that's the correct term, but he...

FUCHS: Well, I probably misused the term.

CARTER: Well, no, I'm not being accusatory when I

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say that. It was just what he called it, a "do-nothing Congress" and he took them right on and they were in for this. I thought that this was a legitimate argument and the people responded to this. They came right back, "Give 'em hell, Harry." This was the kind of thing that they understood. And they were with him on that. They thought that was a do-nothing Congress and they didn't like it. So, he touched a responsive cord there. Now, I don't say this was a hundred percent, by all means, but he got a real good response. Now, what was the other thing you mentioned?

FUCHS: The Taft-Harley law, labor.

CARTER: Well, the Taft-Hartley thing was a much more sophisticated argument and that, with the labor guys was great, but with the rest of the people that was a pretty ho-hum argument. I

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don't know, this is hard to appraise, but again it was an indication that he was a man who stood for something. This is the more important side of it. They just really almost didn't care what he stood for. They didn't want any of this -- if I may be a little profane -- any of this crap that Dewey was feeding them that he didn't stand for anything. But he was just for being good and against sin and against beating your mother and all that stuff. They didn't like that. They read that and they didn't like it; and with Truman saying I'm for this and I'm for this, and I'm against this, and I'm against this, that was very effective. Now, that's where I saw it and, boy, he got a response on that. Not that they thought he was right on the issue, but that he stood someplace, that's the important thing.

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FUCHS: Do you recall your first personal meeting with Mr. Truman?

CARTER: Oh, when did I first meet Harry? Well, I suppose it was when he was Vice President when I first met him.

FUCHS: Oh, you had seen him prior to the convention.

CARTER: Oh, yes I had met him, but it was just meeting and I was a State senator and he was Vice President, I just shook hands. But I don't think we ever got to talk, or anything like that. But if you mean just meeting...

FUCHS: Well, I wondered about that, but then I also mean your first substantial, substantive meeting.

CARTER: My first substantial acquaintance with him was when I became active in this State chairmanship.

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FUCHS: Did you meet him first in that capacity back in Washington or when he came out here on the train?

CARTER: When he came out here on that train.

FUCHS: You didn't see him at the convention?

CARTER: Well, I saw him but I didn't get to talk to him. I wasn't one of those who was close to him, no.

But I knew people who knew him. I did know that and I knew Matt Connelly by then, I am sure. I'm trying to place now when I got better acquainted with Matt. You see Matt was his Appointment Secretary.

FUCHS: Yes, of course, he had been chief investigator for a while on the Truman Committee and then became Truman's executive assistant.

CARTER: I was not connected with that committee. That I had no experience with.

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FUCHS: Even casual acquaintance?

CARTER: No, many of my friends knew him in that capacity and knew of Truman and knew Truman. You see, Tolan and Abbott, who worked with me -- and here's maybe where I get confused a little bit because I'm confusing what they have told me about these experiences, and maybe I'm doing a little running together of my memories.

FUCHS: It's easy to do.

CARTER: Oh, it's easy. And it's hard to separate this. But I know that I didn't know Harry as a member of that committee. That I never had anything to do with. I read about it in the paper and he was a stranger to me just like many of the others. You see, one of the problems we have out here in California, is that we don't get a chance to get around the Nation's capital and see these people. The

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few times I went back, I went back as a State legislator to appear before Congressional committees. I never, during that time, met Truman either. It just so happened our paths didn't cross. I was either with Senator Downey or with Congressman Engle. I met a number of the Congressmen. I met Andy Biemiller through Engle before I met him on this committee. And I knew Andy Biemiller; so that wasn't the strange thing to me. I had never met Humphrey before.

He impressed me tremendously at that convention. He was a kind of a person that I hadn't seen. I had seen very few dynamic people as dynamic as he was. He had tremendous dynamic force, and this was very alluring to me; I hadn't had too much experience with this kind of people. I wasn't yet around to where I was blasé about these men that have all this appeal and dramatic

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pulling power.

FUCHS: What is it they say now days, "charisma?"

CARTER: Yeah, whatever you want to call it. But I'd seen all the Californians and I knew them, and I had my own notions of how good or how bad they were, or where they were in the political spectrum. I had my own sense of rating about them. I knew some of the Nevadans. Like I knew Senator Pat -- from the Senate Judiciary Committee for years.

FUCHS: Pat McCarran?

CARTER: Yeah, McCarran. I knew Pat for years. I knew him before I ever went into the legislature. I knew some people who knew one of his children and I'd met him through that way; but he was always given a great deal of publicity out here in California. You see these Nevada Senators are covered rather well in our California press,

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whereas the other Senators aren't covered nearly as well day in and day out. They maybe are now better than they were then. Of course, I knew Hiram Johnson here in California, and I knew Sam Shortridge, but not well, who was a California Senator. These are both Republicans. Shortridge preceded McAdoo who had preceded Downey. And Johnson, Hiram Johnson, just went on you know, he never lost his touch until he died. He was a great man, Hiram Johnson was. And, of course, Hiram was a different person; he was a different breed of man, too. I don't mean to say that he was always right or that he always was a great leader, but he was a tough guy. But he was a different breed of cat. He was a great individualist. But you're talking now about men who are old enough to be my great grandfather. My goodness, Hiram Johnson was near the end of his

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career when I was a very young man.

FUCHS: Did Oscar Chapman show up out here ahead of time?

CARTER: Yes, he was the advance man.

FUCHS: Did you talk with him?

CARTER: Oh, you bet I talked to him. Oh, I sure did. He's the guy who we did all the preparation with. Oscar was very good and very helpful and we worked together, you bet. Oh, I should say so! He told us how to do things, what they expected and we worked on all these things. Oh, I wouldn't have known how to get along without Oscar. No, I have a high regard for

Oscar. I think he was very good. He's got a good sense of timing and proportion, and he was never phony; he was always high on the ball. And he wasn't pompous or hard to get to; easy

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to talk to; straight forward; no funny stuff; and right down to business. Some of these guys are -- you know we had all these secretaries and there was some awful stuffed shirts among them. Their secretarial staffs were all braying you know, to keep them into their proper position, to see that they weren't treated improperly. Well, we had these conferences out here, and the battles you'd have between the secretaries of the secretaries were classical. They were the greatest things that you ever saw the way they cut one another up, these different secretaries of the secretaries.

FUCHS: You mean the Cabinet secretaries.

CARTER: Yes, the Cabinet secretaries, and they'd have their own flunkies out here, what I call the satraps. The troops, they'd be out here; and each guy fighting for a little foothold

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advantage for his boss. I thought that was stupid as could be.

The greatest guy of all, of course, as I told you was Alben Barkley. He never had any advance people. He never had. He came alone; he had an old battered suitcase. Once he had one fellow with him and he didn't show up much. He wasn't around too much. I don't know what he was doing; but only once did he ever have anyone with him. All the other times he was alone and he came with a battered suitcase or two -- a battered suitcase and one briefcase, that was usually it.

FUCHS: Now, did you see him in '48?

CARTER: Oh, pre-'48 and post-'48. I mean when he was Vice President, I'm talking about. This was amazing. Here's the Vice President of the United States coming up with a damned old

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suitcase and a briefcase. "What do you want me to do, boys?" He was wonderful. Oh, he was wonderful!

FUCHS: He came to give speeches?

CARTER: Sure, sure. And he would give a great speech. He'd take his notes out and he'd say, "Here," he'd say to Mrs. Heller. He'd say, "Here, Hellie, here's my notes. They are no damned good anyway." He said, "I'm going to give a speech." He'd give her his notes and then he'd get agoing. Only one time did I ever see him keep his notes, and that's when: he made a speech to the Commonwealth Club I think. Then he thought he was on full dress and he wanted to get his notes right. And so he read it. He didn't, you know, see too well, and he had to have that big type. He read well but what I mean is he didn't see too well, so

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he had to have that special print. I thought he did very well. Gee, he had good delivery. He's the guy who had the old style oratorical style and he was about as good as they come. He had a fabulous memory for facts and details. He had class. He was a gracious, kindly man. That's the thing that I loved about him. Never was a mean word in that man's mind. He always said the nice thing about somebody. He never said a bad thing about anyone. He never got mean or discourteous. Now, maybe he can afford to be that way and maybe we only saw him in that situation, but whatever it was he handled it beautifully. Oh, I have some few, nice little stories about him. Abbott had one of the best stories I believe I've ever heard. The colloquy between Abbott and Vice President Barkley when we had a big affair here. I don't know when it was. Well he made the

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speech, and we had an affair up in his room after the speech. We had had a couple of bottles of Old Forester sent up to his room because this is the kind of bourbon whiskey he liked. I think we drank up one of the bottles and one bottle had just about that much out of it, and all the rest of it was left. Almost a full fifth of Old Forester there. So, he had to catch a plane the next morning and go to Los Angeles and make a speech, and Abbott was to pick him up and take him to the plane the next morning. I think they had to get down there by 8 o'clock. And Abbott came in about 7 and Barkley, I think, was just finishing getting shaved or something or other, and the suitcase was open on the bed and the bottle of whiskey was still on the dresser. So he came out and he was just closing his suitcase and Abbott said, "Mr. Vice President,"

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he said, "aren't you going to take that bottle of whiskey with you?"

Barkley said, "Oh, you fellows are so nice to me," he said, "I don't think I should impose on your hospitality and accept that gratuity, you've just done so much for me anyway."

And Abbott said he thought quick and he said that he knew if we left that bottle of whiskey sitting there the maid would have it before we got down the hallway, and so he said to him, "Mr. Vice President, the place to which you are going abounds with snakes." He said, "I said it with a little grin and he looked at me, and he grinned back and he twisted the cork in and he says, 'Young man, I'll be eternally grateful for your calling that to my attention,'" and he put it in his suitcase and away they went. He was real cute.

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That's almost word for word from Abbott.

FUCHS: I can't blame him for that, Old Forester is good stuff.

CARTER: He was awfully nice. Gee, he wouldn't impose on you for all the tea in China. He was just a nice guy. I liked him, I really did like him.

FUCHS: Did you ever have any dealings with Oscar Ewing?

CARTER: Yeah, I met Ewing. Where did I meet Oscar Ewing? What did he do?

FUCHS: Well, he became Federal Security Administrator. But he had sort of a political strategy board that used to meet in his apartment.

CARTER: No, I never had anything to do with him politically. The answer is no. But I knew

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about him.

FUCHS: All right. Did you have feeling or any knowledge that the Wallace movement here in California was fostered by the Communist Party?

CARTER: Well, I don't know whether it was fostered by the Communist Party, but all the people that I knew to be Commies were on that side, let's put it that way. And I knew quite a few who at least I thought were Commies. And they were all in that camp. No, I don't mean to say in saying that, that I think that Wallace and Mr. Taylor were Communists or even associated with them because I don't know, or think, that they were. But all the lefties out here in that sense, the real party members that we know -- and I know a few, because you can't be around and not have seen it -- were lined up

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shoulder to shoulder in the Independent Progressive Party. Right behind that kook. Now, I suppose if you're going to give it the quacking duck philosophy, why, you'd say if they walk like a duck, and they quack like a duck, and they fly like a duck, they are a duck.

FUCHS: Do you have any further observations about the Nixon-Helen Gahagan Douglas contest in 1950?

CARTER: Well, my sister was Helen Gahagan Douglas' manager up in the north. I, of course, was out of politics at that time because I either was nominated for, or was about to go on the court, or was already on the court when the campaign came on. Yet, I was so darned incensed with some of that stuff that came out that I just couldn't withhold myself. I had to do what I could to help, in the sense of trying to get the people who I knew were

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the qualified people out to do work; and I knew quite a few of them then because I had not been away from it long enough. While I myself didn't go out and publicly take any position, because I couldn't, I must admit that I certainly was pro-Helen Douglas in this and did everything that I could. I even was her escort to some public function here, which I don't think was compromising in any sense of the word. I was very proud to be her escort. She is a very lovely person and I know her well, we're old and dear friends. But she wanted somebody who had a title. I was one of the Judges here and I guess they considered I was distinguished enough; I was her escort. She was, as I say, an old and dear friend. I am very fond of her. She's a fine person. But, the answer is that, other than that, and as I say, I had my sister and my brother-in-law up in Redding

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and my sister really put an effort in on that. However, she's not a real old politico, except what she's acquired by having been around my father and me, who have been around the political hustings so to speak. She hadn't had too much experience in the area -- she's gone now -- but she showed some talent in that fight; and Helen did pretty well in Shasta County which was her county, but there weren't enough like her. My sister got out and really worked like the dickens. But, those are the kinds of things. I think I could have called my sister off, but I said, "No, you stay right there." She called me and asked me should she do it and I said, "By all means do it, don't you back off on account of me." She was afraid you know that she might injure my position. I said, "You're free and white, and nobody's going to put me down on account of you. You

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stay right up there and do what you want. No, sir." So, she stayed there and she did an excellent job. Well, that was my sister. As I say, I got myself in it in a limited way, but only in a limited way. I must say that Nixon didn't object to me. He was the Senator at the time my appointment was up for confirmation and he did not object to my appointment. So, I couldn't have done anything too badly.

FUCHS: The papers of the President show an appointment that you had along with William Malone to see Truman on February 28, 1950.

CARTER: Oh, let me think. February '50. That would have been before I went out of the State chairman's office. I did not go out of the State chairman's office until August of '50, and I wasn't appointed to this office until October

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of 1950; so I had been out of the State chairman's office for some time. We undoubtedly had some party affairs...

FUCHS: I thought it might ring a bell.

CARTER: No, we were in there a few times. Now, let's see, '50, what else would have happened in '50? February, Congress was in session. We would have seen the Senator, that's when we tried to get Downey to run. I don't know whether we mentioned that to Harry, but that's when Engle and Malone and I tried to get Downey to run. Downey was then the United States Senator. If my memory serves me right it was about that time. He had his peptic ulcer. Mrs. Downey was madder than the dickens at us; and I don't blame her. I still think that as a political tactician, that was a sound move to make whether he could have stood it physically, that is, whether his health was such that he

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shouldn't do it, I couldn't make that decision. As a political tactician, he was the right man for that job. That's what I'm here to tell you and that's what I was saying then, and that's what I still say. He was the right man for that job then.

FUCHS: There is a letter in the files from an Edwin Talbot Thayer, who was head of the national committee of the Young Democrats.

CARTER: I knew Eddie Thayer, yes.

FUCHS: He wrote Matt Connelly on March 30, 1949, and one of the things in the letter was that William Malone was supposed to have been on his way, then, to Washington to see what was the matter with the patronage question. Do you have any knowledge of what that referred to in 1949?

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CARTER: No. And, of course, I would discount what was said by Thayer in many ways. Not that Thayer is dishonest, because I'm sure he's not, but Thayer was an ineffective person. He was a great friend of an Eddie Mattox who was a main squeeze in that Young Democrat thing. There was a Levin and Mattox and Thayer. Mattox was the chief guy in there, and he was a Federal employee so he kept his self out of office but actually ran it, and he did it through Thayer. Thayer was a nice enough guy, but he was purely a puppet-type person. They were one of the most difficult groups that we had to try to handle in the sense of organization, keeping them working for a common objective. They were off on tangents of their own so much. You always had to watch them that they weren't starting some special deal going and you had to watch them for their venal interests,

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too. This was something you had to be careful about. Finally, we got a young fellow by the name of Lionel Steinberg to move into the Young Democrats, and he finally took over the Young Democrats and developed them into a much more viable organization. At least I thought it was more viable. I don't know whether Mattox and Thayer and Levin ever appreciated that; but they were hard, tough guys. They claimed they were anti-Communists and they were fearful that the Communist Party was going to take over and they saw, you know, Communists under every bed and this was a problem. They were very much interested in patronage, they wanted to control. I had great problems with them I must say. Maybe I'm a little negative about them because of that experience. I think Thayer was a decent enough person though. I never knew anything evil or bad about him as such. But Eddie Mattox was a pretty pushy guy,

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a pretty aggressive type of person. Levin was a pretty sharp guy, too. Levin had brains, now; he was an intelligent man. So, that combination made them kind of a difficult thing to handle. But it was one of the more dissident areas we had. I said that we didn't have many, but that was one of them. And it was one that was hard to get around and just say, get everybody in the tent. I talked about this before, get everybody in and get everybody working for the same objective. It was pretty hard to keep those guys in the same tent as Steinberg for instance. They just didn't see eye to eye with one another.

FUCHS: These were all part of the Young Democrats?

CARTER: Well, they claimed to be. Ed Levin is an attorney. He's a pretty bright guy, he's not a dummy. But, the others -- Mattox isn't smart,

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but he's a pretty willful guy and I think quite venal; and Thayer is just a nice guy who hasn't got too much mental capacity. He was used by Mattox and Levin, that was my impression of him. If I've done him an injustice, I've done him an injustice, that's all. I'll have to leave it that way.

FUCHS: Do you have any other comments about personal contacts with Mr. Truman, anecdotes or otherwise?

CARTER: I remember he discussed Joe Kennedy with me one time when we were having a highball together. He was discussing why he, Harry Truman, never drank scotch. Of course, I was drinking bourbon and he highly approved of my drinking bourbon, and he was, in plain unvarnished language, saying what he thought about Joe Kennedy. He said he never bought scotch and he never drank scotch because every time he paid for a drink of scotch he was putting some money into Joe

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Kennedy's pocket and he wouldn't have any part of that because Kennedy was such a so and so. He had run Franklin Roosevelt down after Roosevelt had done all of these things for Kennedy and Truman couldn't understand this. He didn't see any human value in Kennedy because he was an ungrateful dog in his terms. He didn't use those words. But he was an ungrateful person. He said, I think, that Kennedy had called Roosevelt a syphilitic bastard or something like that, because Joe Kennedy was very much upset with Franklin Roosevelt. He, in part at least, blamed Roosevelt for young Joe's death. This was a personal problem, and Harry Truman thought that was a terrible reaction for him to have. He thought he was just being unusually bitter. I thought he was being a little harsh on Joe in some ways, but he sure didn't spare any horses on him. He just called it in his usual style. He was

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very complimentary to young Jack though. He thought Jack was a fine guy, but he didn't think that Joe was worth two bits. Young Joe he didn't know, of course, at least he didn't indicate that he knew him. All he just said was that old Joe Kennedy had blamed Franklin for young Joe's being in the service that brought on his death. And this he thought was an unfair accusation. He was rather hostile about it.

FUCHS: Thank you very much.

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