

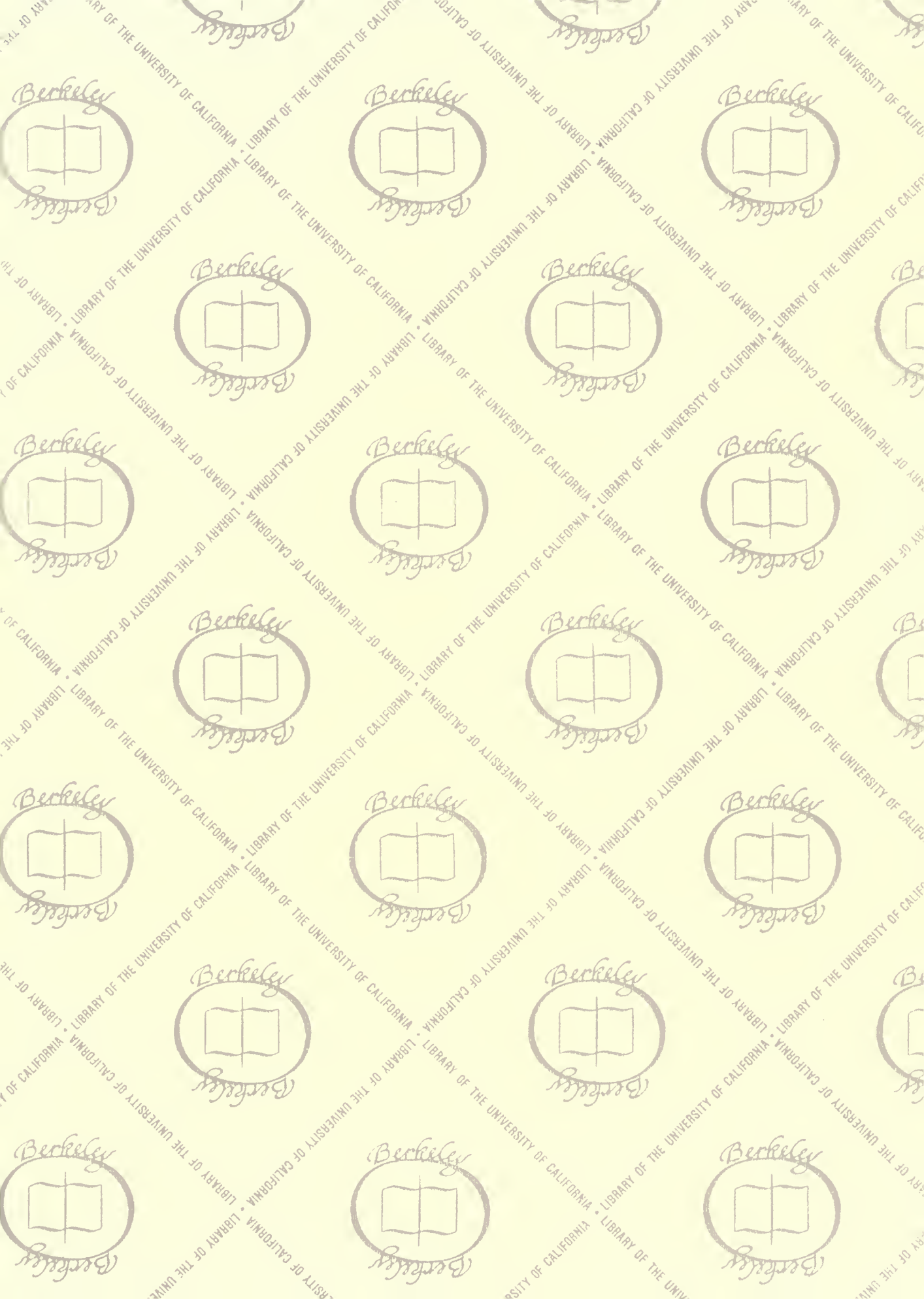
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Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

BROWN FAMILY PORTRAITS

Bernice Layne Brown	Life in the Governor's Mansion
Francis M. Brown	Edmund G. Brown's Commitment to Lessen Social Ills: View from a Younger Brother
Harold C. Brown	A Lifelong Republican for Edmund G. Brown
Constance Brown Carlson	My Brothers Edmund, Harold, and Frank

Interviews Conducted by
Amelia R. Fry and Julie Gordon Shearer
1978-1981

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PREFACE

Covering the years 1953 to 1966, the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., Oral History Series is the second phase of the Governmental History Documentation Project begun by the Regional Oral History Office in 1969. That year inaugurated the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, which produced interviews with Earl Warren and other persons prominent in politics, criminal justice, government administration, and legislation during Warren's California era, 1925 to 1953.

The Knight-Brown series of interviews carries forward the earlier inquiry into the general topics of: the nature of the governor's office, its relationships with the legislature and with its own executive departments, biographical data about Governors Knight and Brown and other leaders of the period, and methods of coping with the rapid social and economic changes of the state. Key issues documented for 1953-1966 were: the rise and decline of the Democratic party, the impact of the California Water Plan, the upheaval of the Vietnam War escalation, the capital punishment controversy, election law changes, new political techniques forced by television and increased activism, reorganization of the executive branch, the growth of federal programs in California, and the rising awareness of minority groups. From a wider view across the twentieth century, the Knight-Brown period marks the final era of California's Progressive period, which was ushered in by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 and which provided for both parties the determining outlines of government organization and political strategy until 1966.

The Warren Era political files, which interviewers had developed cooperatively to provide a systematic background for questions, were updated by the staff to the year 1966 with only a handful of new topics added to the original ninety-one. An effort was made to record in greater detail those more significant events and trends by selecting key participants who represent diverse points of view. Most were queried on a limited number of topics with which they were personally connected; a few narrators who possessed unusual breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. Although the time frame of the series ends at the November 1966 election, when possible the interviews trace events on through that date in order to provide a logical baseline for continuing study of succeeding administrations. Similarly, some narrators whose experience includes the Warren years were questioned on that earlier era as well as the Knight-Brown period.

The present series has been financed by grants from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the office of the Secretary of State, and by some individual donations. Portions of several memoirs were funded partly by the California Women in Politics Project under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including a matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation; the two projects were produced concurrently in this office, a joint effort made feasible by overlap of narrators, topics, and staff expertise.

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

Amelia R. Fry, Project Director
Gabrielle Morris, Project Coordinator

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GOODWIN KNIGHT-EDMUND BROWN, SR. ERA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
(California, 1953-1966)

Interviews Completed and In Process, March 1982

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- Brown, Edmund G., Sr., "Pat", *Years of Growth, 1939-1966; Law Enforcement, Politics, and the Governor's Office*. 1982
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- Dutton, Frederick G., *Democratic Campaigns and Controversies, 1954-1966*. 1981.
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Lincoln, Luther, *Young Turk to Speaker of the California Assembly, 1948-1958.*

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Bonderson, Paul R., *Executive Officer, Regional and State Water Pollution and Water Quality Control Boards, 1950-1966.*

INTRODUCTION

This volume of oral history interviews yields a mosaic portrait of Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, Sr., the thirty-second governor of the State of California, composed of reminiscences by close family members. Here he is the child of his parents, Edmund Joseph and Ida Schuckman Brown; brother to his siblings Harold, Constance, and Frank; schoolboy; young attorney; budding politician; governor; and husband of fifty years to his childhood sweetheart, Bernice Layne.

The family's descriptions converge on a picture of a middle class, San Francisco household, vigorously upwardly mobile (and male-oriented, according to his sister). They recall a family who valued industry, frugality, and learning and who delighted in witticisms and well-used words. And they sketch a family in which the parents' Catholic and Protestant allegiances were an unsettled (and ultimately an unsettling) issue between them.

The Brown family's financial fortunes rose and fell as Edmund Joseph Brown's various enterprises waxed and waned--the Liberty Theater, the photo arcades on Market Street, and the curio shops. However, according to Harold, his father's hopes and entrepreneurial energies never flagged: "He was always trying something new; he never gave up." The father engaged his two older sons Edmund* and Harold in business, encouraging the little boys to sell Christmas cards and bringing home newspapers from downtown for the boys to peddle in the neighborhood. Sometimes the boys were put in charge of the photo arcade after school. There they learned an indelible lesson. When Harold took an unsatisfactory picture of a couple, he offered them their money back. He was given a round scolding by his father, who said, "For the love of St. Petersburg, never, never give the money back. Take another picture--take five pictures--but never give the money back."

His father took considerable pride--and a hand--in Edmund's career and political campaigns--to the point of handing out his son's election cards at the funeral parlor on the occasion of a relative's death. Frank, the youngest child, remembered his father with affection but concluded that he had spent his parental energies largely in coaching the two older boys ten years before. "We didn't talk much, but he liked to have me with him," Frank recalled. He remembered vividly breakfast time and his father's distaste for eggs cooked more than two minutes. "Father would toss them out the window. The wall of the house next door was well splattered," he remembered.

Constance Brown Carlson recalled their father being able to recite pages of poetry from memory and, in spite of his limited education (equivalent roughly to the eighth grade), he could be relied upon to supply the correct spelling to help her with her high school homework.

* Former Governor Brown was always called Edmund by his parents, brothers, and sister.

Ida Schuckman Brown's strong presence was continuous during her children's growing up and adult years. Often left alone in the evening while her husband was engaged downtown, she enhanced her own grade school education by attending lectures and then searching out library books to help her understand what she had heard. Her use of the library impressed her children. Harold, two years younger than Edmund, the eldest, remembered starting a lending library with his older brother, using their own books. The enterprise foundered when the youthful library patrons failed to return the books.

Ida Brown's growing skepticism of Catholic dogma, which turned to active dislike, was a strong current of dissent, her children recalled. She agreed to raise the children Catholic readily enough, Harold recalled--it was she and not their father who took him and Edmund to catechism class--but she refused to send them to parochial school, as she was urged to do by her husband's sisters. She held fast against their pressure, which caused a certain estrangement between them, Harold recounted.

Mrs. Brown withdrew from her children's formal religious education eventually and refused to attend her daughter's first communion, which the little girl sturdily arranged for herself with the encouragement of her father's sister Annie. Interestingly enough, only Edmund, who quit catechism class before he was confirmed, experienced a renewal of faith as a young man after which he and Bernice (who had three children) were remarried in the Catholic church. Now only Edmund's church attendance is more than occasional.

As schoolboy, Edmund was remembered by his brothers, sister, and then schoolmate, Bernice, as being busy in studies, active in sports and as a cheerleader and in clubs, intelligent and gregarious--one who made friends easily and kept them. Harold, with whom he practiced law, considered him an outstanding lawyer, but felt his interests were always more in politics than in law. To Harold, his older brother seemed marked for success early. He recalled a high school dance at which an object, "a monkey, I think, was lowered from the ceiling. Of all the hundred or so people there, Edmund reached up and got it, and pulled that thing down."

The former governor's delight in reading and study was recalled by his sister. She described the "little blue books" of philosophy he used to carry in his pocket to read on the streetcar when he was working days and studying law at night. She remembered profiting by his purchase of the Harvard Classics for the family home by starting in herself on volume one and marching through the whole set.

Harold and Edmund were "extremely close," according to their brother Frank. He recalled his older brothers talking in their sleep to each other, bidding their hands in bridge--"One spade." "Two diamonds." Constance remembered her father saying proudly, "There goes Edmund, and there goes Harold, right behind him."

The two older boys attended law school, entered into practice together, and were active members of the New Order of Cincinnatus. This nonpartisan group was organized by Edmund to promote good government and included young men and women of various political persuasions.

Edmund involved his family and friends in his political campaigns: Constance commandeered her friends to help stuff envelopes, Frank canvassed the area, and Harold (a lifelong Republican) mobilized committees of Republicans for Brown. Edmund loyally remembered them in his administrations. After winning the post of San Francisco District Attorney, Edmund appointed Frank to the staff, and after becoming governor, he appointed Harold to the bench.

Bernice Layne, or "Bern," has been a part of Edmund G. Brown's life since Lowell High School when he first asked her out. She had to turn him down because her mother, Alice Cuneo Layne, considered her thirteen-year-old daughter too young to accept a date. (The precocious Bernice had been passed ahead two years into Lowell where to her despair she had to wear socks and Mary Jane shoes while the older girls in her class were dressed in more sophisticated clothes.) She recalled the dances at All Saints Episcopal Church arranged by her mother, chiefly to give her daughter a suitably chaperoned occasion for socializing with her older high school classmates.

Later, when the future Mrs. Brown was studying at the University of California at Berkeley and dating Edmund, he would arrive by taxi to call for her. Then they would go by streetcar downtown for the evening's entertainment. The taxi trip from the Browns' residence on Grove Street to the Layne family home at 17th and Shrader was made so often that the dispatcher would fill in the Layne address as soon as Edmund would give his name. Bernice remembered dating other boys when she went to the University but that Edmund was "always the one." One of five children of Police Captain Arthur Layne, she and Edmund eloped "to save money." She was warmly welcomed into the Brown family, especially by Constance, who was delighted to "get more girls in the family."

Mrs. Brown underscored her brother-in-law Harold's judgment that although her husband embraced high-minded ideals of reform government espoused by the Cincinnatus group, he loved the stuff of personal politics. She agreed that his nature was to be curious about people, optimistic, and forgiving. She illustrated these observations in her account of life in the Governor's Mansion. She described moments of high spirits and of high strain, such as when the governor went outside the Mansion to talk to demonstrators holding a vigil the night before Caryl Chessman was scheduled to die.

The themes of industry, frugality, and generosity are interwoven in this composite picture of former Governor Brown.* Spurred by the necessity of his meager family resources, he peddled papers and sold Christmas cards, worked days so that he could attend law school at night. He paid "a magnificent sum of five dollars a week" to his brother Frank for serving and filing legal papers. He kept a daily account book down to the nickel as a matter of course during his early married life, walking instead of riding the streetcar during the Depression years so he could afford to buy a newspaper. Yet after building a lucrative private law practice, he left it to run for an \$8000-a-year district attorney post that required him to live on savings in order to support his wife and three children.

While living in the old Governor's Mansion the first year, he would walk across the street to swim in a nearby motel swimming pool, changing his clothes in the men's room, until his wife overruled his press staff and insisted on a pool being built for the Mansion.**

Yet, as governor, his grasp on the State's purse strings was more relaxed than his early training and experience would predict. In a program he termed "responsible liberalism" in his 1959 inaugural address, he proposed (and largely enacted) legislation to increase maximum benefits for unemployment insurance, disability, and workman's compensation. His program increased taxes to aid school districts, created a master plan for higher education that led to a system of tuition-free community colleges and extended the minimum wage to workers not covered by federal law. This is not necessarily what one would expect from a governor who had had to count his pennies and struggle to educate himself.

Bernice Brown's observation may speak to this seeming paradox:

Apparently there's some prayer in which...they pray for the most forgotten soul in purgatory, which, I guess, is about the last person on earth you would pray for, that needs your prayer. And he said he used to pray that in some way what he did would touch the most forgotten person in the State of California, somebody who couldn't help himself, and I think that's where he got the satisfaction [from politics], out of really doing things for people.

Julie Gordon Shearer
Interviewer-Editor

8 July 1982
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

* Many of these observations and anecdotes will find reinforcement and amplification in the former governor's own oral history memoir: Edmund G. Brown, Sr. Years of Growth, 1939 to 1966; Law Enforcement, Politics, and the Governor's Office.

** Construction funds were raised by private subscription.

Regional Oral History Office
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University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

Bernice Layne Brown

LIFE IN THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

An Interview Conducted by
Amelia R. Fry and Julie Gordon Shearer
in 1979





BERNICE LAYNE BROWN

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

The historical record may be the richer for a painful encounter between former First Lady Bernice Layne Brown and an angry yellow jacket, which immobilized her two days before her second oral history interview.

Mrs. Brown greeted the interviewer at the door wearing a floor-length caftan, a style she "lives in" and wears to striking advantage. Smoothly tanned, her vivid coloring, elegant chiseled profile and trim figure belied her seventy years. She explained that her mishap with the yellow jacket prevented her from wearing a shoe and required that she soak the injured foot, but that we should proceed with the interview as planned. The tape equipment was placed on the coffee table next to the sofa where she could comfortably follow her doctor's instructions while her narrative was recorded.

Usually Mrs. Brown's agenda is crowded with activities she subsumes under the categories the "three G's." A visitor to the handsome ranch-style house overlooking Beverly Hills could easily conclude that two of the G's are gardening and grandchildren. Flowers and shrubs artfully frame the swimming pool just outside the living room, and pictures of her children's offspring are very much in evidence. The third is golf, a three-day-a-week activity at the Bel-Aire Country Club in Los Angeles and a compelling feature of frequent trips abroad with the former governor. (She has played far-off courses in Hawaii, the Caribbean, and Greece, to name a few.)

With her foot painfully swollen from the bee sting, however, she had spent two days rather on her own, her husband being out of the country, and so she had both the time and the inclination to talk. Her difficulty in obtaining from the local druggist soaking solution in sufficient quantity at a reasonable price evoked her vivid recollection of her speeches supporting the work of the Consumer Counsel Helen Nelson to combat deceptive packaging and provoked comment on the high cost of medical care. Her polite but relentless questioning of the druggist, whose phone call interrupted the interview, demonstrated her effectiveness and her zest for dealing with an issue in detail.

During her interview, she acknowledged experiencing frustration during her husband's early political career, when the salary was small, the children were small and she had to be the chief disciplinarian in her husband's absence. By 1959, only Kathleen, the youngest of four, was living full-time with her parents. With the other children grown and married and only a teenager left in the Governor's Mansion, Mrs. Brown could turn her energies to the role of First Lady. She recalled with the relish of a successful manager and hostess the challenges of maintaining a normal family life while remaining graciously in the public eye. The narrative plainly conveys that she took seriously

these responsibilities. She personally supervised details of entertaining, experimenting with seating arrangements, borrowing ideas that seemed to work for the Kennedys at the White House, and carefully selecting the menus to produce occasions with warmth and flair. And sometimes with just a few hours' notice. Even now, she is no stranger to the kitchen. "Pat really prefers my cooking to restaurant food," she said. She insisted on preparing a delicious melted cheese concoction on pita bread for the interviewer when the momentum of her narrative carried the interview through to afternoon.

Her recollections ranged from the droll (having to requisition a cat to chase the Mansion mice) to the dramatic (the kidnapping of the Hale Champion family, and the fateful call from her son to his father, urging his intervention to spare Caryl Chessman). She became an expert at the "rehearsed spontaneous speech--in Spanish," she wryly recalled. She also proved herself quick witted on her feet when she turned aside a hostile question from a TV audience member on a "right to work" proposition by giving her recipe for banana cake as the answer.

Two interviews were conducted with Mrs. Brown. The first brief questioning by Amelia Fry and the editor took place in the Regional Oral History Office at The Bancroft Library a half hour before Mr. and Mrs. Brown were to make an appearance at the University of California, Berkeley, Charter Day ceremony, April 5, 1979. The second was on May 17 in Beverly Hills. Mrs. Brown completed review of both transcripts by September of 1981, amid trips to China, Las Vegas, Palm Springs, and Hawaii. She made few changes in the substance of the discussion except to clarify some comments, portions of which were inaudible on tape.

The interviewer had asked Mrs. Brown to select some photographs from her very extensive collection to illustrate the volume. This proved to be a formidable task, since it required her to sort through many boxes of photographs, identify the people pictured, decide how many duplicates to keep (when they were available), and who should get them. In the hope of eliminating one of the tiers of decisions facing Mrs. Brown, the interviewer urged her to simply pull a half-dozen photos from each of five categories and to allow the Regional Oral History Office staff to select the illustrations to duplicate, returning all originals to the Brown family.

Mrs. Brown agreed to this plan and was as good as her word. A huge box of pictures arrived in April 1982, in time to illustrate the memoir presented to former Governor Brown on May 23 as well as the present volume.

Julie Gordon Shearer
Interviewer-Editor

3 July 1982
Regional Oral History Office
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BERNICE LAYNE BROWN

LIFE IN THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

[Interview 1: April 5, 1979]##

Fry: For this interview we will do a little bit on your childhood to get your background, and who your father and mother were and so forth, and what sort of a home life you had, what did you read, and what was your favorite thing to do. Then we'll go on up to the high school where you met Pat and we'll probably ask you what your favorite subjects were.

Early Schooling

Fry: Then from there [we'll] go on into your University of California [experience]. You went straight to the University of California from high school, right?

Brown: Yes.

Fry: And that was fairly early.

Shearer: You were put two years ahead in grammar school, weren't you?

Brown: No, I was never accelerated. I went a year and a half to the public school and then my mother didn't think I was learning anything. In those days--now, this is really going back a long time ago!--the children did baskets, raffia baskets, but they never started arithmetic or the serious subjects till the third grade.

Shearer: Really?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 79.

Brown: That's right.

Shearer: Not reading either?

Brown: No, not really, not much. A little, but not much.

Fry: Yes, that's right. There was very little.

Brown: So, anyway, she took me out and sent me to what was called a state normal school. It was a forerunner of the state teachers' colleges.

Fry: Oh, and they had a laboratory.

Brown: It was the Frederick Burke School on Duboce in San Francisco, Duboce and Buchanan. Then they put me back in the first grade because I hadn't had any arithmetic or anything. So I did the eight grades in three and a half years.

Fry: Once you got back in public school?

Brown: No, no. Well, this is public school. It's not an experimental school, and yet it is.

Fry: It was what we'd call lab schools for teachers?

Brown: It was individual, and you progressed at your own rate, so I was only there three and a half years to do the eight years. I finished arithmetic in less than the three and a half years; that was one of my favorite subjects. We had little pads. I don't know what they called them, but they were yellow pads. I can just see them now. [chuckles] We'd start in with the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and so on, and then problems and whatnot. I used to take them home. I enjoyed doing them. And the same with the grammar. They had booklets that were about so big [gestures].

Fry: And you just went through the booklets?

Brown: Yes. We filled in words and that sort of thing. When we finished a certain prescribed amount, that was one grade, and then we went into the next grade, and so on. So I did that in a couple of years. I think I did the books for about two and a half years of the arithmetic and grammar.

We had three teachers, three different periods, and they changed them every six weeks. These were student teachers, you see. So I never got to learn the teacher's last name. So it was always "Miss." I just called her "Miss." [laughter] We had three a day, and then they were only with us for six weeks, so nobody ever learned the teachers' names; we just went from one to the other.

Brown: The thing that took me so long was reading because we could just read anything we wanted, and my taste in reading was very plebian. I read all the Horatio Alger books from beginning to end. [chuckles] A hundred points; that was a grade.

Fry: For each book?

Brown: No. A hundred points was for one grade (or semester]. They finally got so they'd only give me a half a point for each Horatio Alger book. [laughter] Now, the yearbook, like the fifth-year reader or fourth-year reader, you know, which is pretty thick and has everything in it--we got twenty-five points for reading that, with the hundred points counting as the entire grade.

Fry: I see, yes.

Brown: I read The Rover Boys, too. I was a tomboy in a way. They were adventures and I enjoyed reading those. So, I didn't have very elevated taste in reading.

Fry: You didn't read any books about little girls who were--[chuckles]

Brown: Some.

Shearer: How about Little Women?

Brown: Oh, yes, I read Little Women.

But then I finished all the subjects. But, I had a sister who was two years older than I was who was also in the school, so my mother didn't want me to graduate before she did, plus she thought I was too young. I was only ten. So they kept me there six months longer. But I'd finished everything, so they said I could do anything I wanted. Well, I thought it would be fun to work in the library, you know, to stamp the due date on the books taken out. That sort of appealed to me. I was a ten-year-old. [laughter]

Fry: [laughter] Oh, running the book stamp.

Brown: I felt very important--like I was the librarian, and the stamp was fun to use.

Fry: [laughter] Looking very officious.

Brown: Yes.

And the other thing was I liked to cook, so I spent hours in the cooking classroom. I learned to make bread. You know, I could do anything I wanted. They were just trying to keep me busy until the next--

Fry: This was until May Layne could graduate?

Brown: Oh, no, no, not May. May is my youngest sister. She's five or six and a half years younger than I am.

Fry: Oh.

Brown: No, this was my sister Corinne who was two years older. I have two older sisters, Alice and Corinne, and then a brother Arthur (we call him Bud) and May, my youngest sister. No, May was very bright in school, but she went the normal way to school, not to the normal school. I mean she went to the regular public school, the neighborhood public school, and went through the eight years and then went to high school and so on, whereas I had gone to this sort of experimental [school], if you can call it experimental.

Fry: Yes. That sounds marvelous. Did you like it or not?

Brown: The only thing that's bad about it--two things, and not necessarily in that order. But one thing, you had very little classroom activity, you know, where you participated as a group. Everything's individual. You're a loner, you know. Each one's doing his own work, which I think is kind of bad.

They compensated for that in a way in that they had dramatics. Of course, there it was group work when we used to perform in plays and stuff like that. In some of the science courses, you had lab work; you were all together in a room and kind of working on the same experiments.

Then I remember we had a club called the Vikings. The school is across the street from where the Mint is, you know, up on top of the hill. Well, before the Mint was ever built, that was just a big hill, you know, with sand up there. Before you became a full-fledged Viking you had to perform certain tasks. I mean, there were physical ones like discus-throwing, almost like an Olympics things, and then there were other ones. One was they sent us up there with a map and we had to find something [chuckles] like buried treasure; it really wasn't treasure. They gave us some clues. I never could find that thing! [laughter] But I'll always remember that hill up there where the Mint is! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] How funny! This was sort of gymnastics society?

Brown: No, it was just a club called the Vikings. It was just a group, and really part of the schoolwork, too, because they had different tests you'd have to take. I do remember the--I think they called it the decathlon, where there were like these different things you had to do, jumping and so forth.

Shearer: But it was sponsored by the school? Everybody participated?

Brown: Oh, yes, yes. And the dramatics were fun, too. I enjoyed those. They went into it in a bigger way, I think, than the other public schools did.

Shearer: Were you active in dramatics? Were you in plays and--?

Brown: In school I was. I can't remember the name of any part I took or anything like that. [laughter] I can remember the song we sang at our graduation. I'll never forget it. It was [sings] "Finiculli, Finiculli, Finiculla."

Shearer: Oh, yes!

Brown: [laughter] We sang that one. That was one of the songs we had to learn for graduation.

But I was born in 1908, and we're talking about, you know, like 1917. It was wartime, the First World War. We took sewing, and there was a huge house across the street that had been taken over by the Red Cross, and they had sewing machines in all the rooms. We went over there for sewing, and we made dresses for the Belgian babies. Well, it took me the whole year to make one. [chuckles] You were only there for one period--maybe an hour. One time I was there I would do the seam, and then the next time I had to rip it out and do it over again, and, oh, I never was very good at sewing. Then I remember I knitted a sweater. Grey was for the Navy. Olive drab was for the Army.

Fry: Oh, how dull!

Brown: I did a grey one, and it got wider and wider. I kept adding stitches. Usually you drop them. I added them (by mistake)--right in the main part of the sweater--that's why it kept getting bigger! [laughter] So I don't know whether anybody ever got to wear that or not.

Fry: [laughter] Well, let me get a few dates straight now here. You went for just a while to public school or not at all at first?

Brown: I went to public school for a year and a half.

Fry: Do you remember the name of it?

Brown: Yes, Grattan Grammar School. They didn't have kindergarten in those days. You started school at five and nine months, which is almost six. I was born November, 1908, so I probably went in August of '14. Would that be right? Would I be six then? Not quite six.

Fry: When's your birthday?

Brown: 1908.

Fry: I mean, what month?

Brown: November.

Shearer: Oh, so it would have been 1914.

Brown: Yes, it would have been in August of 1914, I would think. Right?

Fry: Yes, it would have been.

Brown: That would have been five and nine months then.

Shearer: They had year-round school then so that you could plug in at any time?

Brown: Yes, you could start school in January or in August, and they had semiannual promotion, which they've done away with since.

The Drawbacks of Being the Youngest in Class

Brown: That's why when Jerry went from the public schools to the St. Brendan's, the Catholic school, he was put up six months, because the Catholic schools always had yearly promotion and the public schools, even when Jerry was going to school, had semiannual promotion. He was in the middle. They built this new school and we sent him to that. He was in the half year, and so it was a question of whether he went into the third or the fourth grade, and they put him in the fourth when he was really in the third. So that's why he got out of school a little bit earlier.

Fry: Yes, that almost happened to my son too.

Brown: Did it?

Fry: Yes. But I fought them off because I felt he was too immature physically to--you know, later on he was a--

Brown: Well, with boys they say that is true. Now, one of my daughters, not Cynthia [laughter]--well, it was Barbara, because you can figure it out by the process of elimination. Her oldest son was born on December the 7th, and you had to be five and nine months for first grade or four and nine months to get into kindergarten, which gets

Brown: it back to August--[calculating months] September, October, November. His birthday was December the 7th. He missed it by a few days.

In Sacramento [pauses]--yes, she lived in Sacramento. In Sacramento the schools started late. I think they waited till Admission Day. Whatever, he missed it by two or three days, that's all. She thought that was awful. He'd have to wait, I guess it was, a year then. Yes, it was when they had yearly promotion. So she faked his birth certificate. [laughter] I don't know what she made out of the seven--a one, I think--because I remember we kiddingly used to say, "Well, now, which birthday are we celebrating, the real one, which is Pearl Harbor Day, or the other one?" [laughter]

Then she regretted it later because he was the youngest in the class all the way, and apparently with boys they say it's not a good idea. With girls it doesn't seem to matter. I don't know whether she made him repeat a year or something later as a result of that. She thought he was too young for the grade.

Fry: Did you have to do that with Jerry?

Brown: Do what?

Fry: Let him repeat a year later?

Brown: No, no, because he got out of high school at seventeen. That's when he came home and said he wanted to go into the novitiate, and he couldn't go in without both of our permissions before he was eighteen. You see, he was a year ahead of himself, actually.

Fry: Well, how about yourself? When you got out of the elementary school, were you a lot younger than your classmates?

Brown: Are you kidding? That was the other thing. The most important thing I said where I objected to acceleration is you're thrown into an entirely different age group. The year I was ten, or I think I'd just turned eleven, I started in December or January. January, I guess it was. It seems to me they used to end the school term in December or January, and my birthday was in November.

So when I started to Lowell High School, I wore short socks and Mary Janes or that type of thing--what I'd been used to wearing. I can remember the seniors, when I'd go up the stairway of Lowell High School--it was a big wide stairway--and they'd say, "Look! What am I seeing? This little child here in high school!" I was embarrassed a lot by being too young.

Brown: Even when I was a junior--a high junior, I think it was, I was only thirteen, and that was when Pat asked me out the first time. I'd never been allowed to go out with a boy because my parents thought I wasn't old enough. It didn't matter that I was a high junior in high school and that all my peers in school were going out and had been dating for years.

So I didn't want to say, "I'm not allowed to go out with a boy." I had a little more pride than that. So I accepted, and I had like three weeks to work on my mother [laughter], and I thought I could convince her, but I couldn't. She kept saying, "No, you're too young, much too young to go out. I don't know the boy and I don't know his mother and his father," and all this and that. Finally, the day before, I had to tell him I couldn't go. Of course, his friends all teased him and said that I'd stood him up. Well, I hadn't. Even then, I wasn't going to tell him, "I can't go. I'm too young," so I just said, "I'm sorry. I can't make it."

Fry: Oh, poor thing!

Shearer: Isn't it sad!

Brown: I tried to say it in a way that he'd ask me out again. [laughter]
I guess I succeeded. [laughter]

Fry: You did get to go out again that year?

Brown: This is Pat!

Fry: I know it. But I mean, did you have to wait very long?

Brown: I've forgotten how old I had to be, but it was just almost before I graduated. You know, I was brought up very strictly.

So that was a very great disadvantage, going to school and being ahead of myself in school, because I--

Shearer: You couldn't participate--

Brown: Your social life is nonexistent [chuckles] because you can't do the things that your peers are doing.

Fry: If your parents had known Pat Brown's parents, would they have let you go out? [laughter]

Brown: No, I think it was that I was just too young.

Fry: But Pat's always laughing about the fact that your father was a police captain and his father was running a gambling place. [laughter]

Dancing at All Saints Episcopal Church

Brown: My mother, although she'd been raised as a Catholic, married my father, who was a Protestant. We were taken to All Saints Episcopal Church on Waller Street in San Francisco, and my mother became very active in the ladies' guild there, and she got them to start dances on Friday nights. See, I wasn't allowed to go out, so she started--they had a big hall where they had Sunday school services. (I played piano for the Sunday school and I taught Sunday school.) [laughter] But at any rate, they'd have the dances in this hall which was downstairs of the church proper. Oh, they got a band, and a pretty good band, and whatnot. All the kids from Lowell High came. It got to be known as a great place to go.

Shearer: Did you attend these dances?

Brown: Yes. I remember one time someone stole Pat's overcoat and it probably cost like \$13 in those days [laughter]; in those days I think that was all you paid for an overcoat.

Fry: That's a lot!

Brown: But at any rate, my mother, who was very active in the guild, insisted on the guild paying to buy him a new overcoat [chuckles] because it had been stolen in the church. I'll never forget that.

Fry: Was this when you were dating him or before?

Brown: Well, I don't know if I could go out with him yet, but he could come to the dances at All Saints. I got to dance with him there [laughter] and I think probably that's why she did that because she thought I was too young to go out, but yet she could understand that we should be able to dance and whatnot. Those [dances] were very popular. You can ask Pat about it. He always remembers those dances at All Saints.

Lowell High School Social Scene

Fry: I understand that there were two places where the kids hung out at Lowell High. Let me see.

Brown: That's Pat.

Fry: That's Pat? Oh. Well, I was going to ask you.

Brown: It was the Bonbonniere, which was down at the corner.

Fry: That's it.

Brown: And there was a place across the street. I think it was Frank Romano's.

Fry: Romano's.

Brown: Romano's. It had a name. It was mostly the boys who went there to eat.

Fry: Oh, I see.

Brown: The girls would eat in the cafeteria. I brought my lunch because my allowance was very small and it included carfare and lunch, so it wasn't really enough to cover lunch. As a matter of fact, I walked to school most of the time and it was probably two miles, a mile and a half or two miles. I'd walk to school and walk back to save the carfare.

Shearer: Did you walk by yourself or did you have a group?

Brown: Sometimes, or sometimes I'd meet someone that was going the same way. Actually, it's not as bad as it sounds because to get from my house you had to walk five blocks to get to the streetcar, and then you rode maybe seven or eight, and then you had to walk another five to get there, so you had to walk a good part of it anyway. So it wasn't as bad as that.

Courting by Streetcar

Brown: As a matter of fact, Pat lived very near the high school that we went to, and when he was courting me later--this was years later, in fact, when I was in college and I'd be home for the summer. You had to go through--do you know what the Panhandle is in San Francisco? It's a continuation of Golden Gate Park.

Fry: Yes.

Brown: Well, he had to cross the Panhandle to get up to Haight Street to get the streetcar to get to my house. He got so he would arrive by taxi, and then we would walk the five blocks to the streetcar to go downtown to go to a movie, and come home on the streetcar. Then he'd call a cab and he'd go home by cab. I always thought it was because he didn't want to cross the Panhandle at night! [laughter]

Shearer: Even then it was formidable?

Brown: Well, I don't know. I don't think it was then, no, but I think he was scared. It was dark. You ask him! [laughter]

Fry: [laughter] All right!

Brown: My house had a strange address. A doctor had built the house. I don't know what that had to do with it. But at any rate, it was on the corner of Shrader and 17th Street. It's still there. As a matter of fact, I think it's six apartments. You might want to have a look. May went through it once. I've been dying to see it since they made it into six apartments, but I've never been inside.

Fry: Seventeenth Street and Shrader?

Brown: Yes. It's on the corner. It's the northwest corner of Shrader and 17th Street. The address was Shrader Street, 1461 Shrader Street, but the entrance was on 17th, so it was very confusing.

So anyway, after Pat would call a cab and it would come, usually he would say, "The northwest corner of Shrader and 17th." There weren't that many people who'd call a cab at that particular time. They probably had just one operator on. It got so when he'd call that she'd say, "Well, I know. The northwest corner of Shrader and 17th." [laughter] They knew him, you know, when he'd call.

Favorite Subjects

Fry: Well, in high school did your interest in mathematics continue, or did you have other subjects?

Brown: Well, I took algebra and I liked that, and I took geometry and solid geometry, and I signed up for trigonometry, and I finally pulled out of the class. I decided I didn't want to take it; it was getting too complicated. [laughter]

I liked languages too.

Fry: Oh, really?

Brown: I had a lot of language.

Shearer: Which ones?

Brown: Well, I had two years of Latin and I had Spanish and I had French, both in high school and in college. I remember at UC Berkeley here when I was taking both French and Spanish, one time I had both finals

- Brown: on the same day. I'm telling you [laughter], I was getting them interchanged. You know, I was trying to think in one and I was thinking in the [other one]. Yes, I had them both on the same day, the finals. That really happened.
- Fry: Oh! [laughter] Pat says you always made good grades though.
- Brown: No. Well, I did, sort of, but not really that--I was average. I did well the first year. I was taking languages and I think I got A's in both Spanish and French. It seems to me one of them I was taking was a five-unit course, or maybe both, and so it gave me quite a few units of A's in the languages, but I didn't--you know, in the others I got by. I'd say B's and C's. I didn't get any D's. Oh, I did. I got an E; that's a conditional grade. Did you ever hear of an E?
- Fry: No.
- Shearer: In what subject?
- Brown: In archery.
- Shearer: Archery! Oh, for heaven's sake!
- Brown: Well, there's a building there now, but there used to be a field way over near the west entrance to the campus, near Oxford Street, before the--is there a Haviland Hall near there?
- Fry: Yes.
- Brown: Well, next to Haviland Hall was the archery field. Most of my courses, of course, were in Wheeler Auditorium or South Hall or something like that, and it would be raining, and the archery teacher expected you to go over and answer "present" to the roll call. Then they'd count you as present, but they'd dismiss you because it was raining. I didn't want to walk all the way over there in the rain just to say "present," so I didn't go. So I got an E because I had too many absences. I flunked archery. [chuckles]
- Fry: For not going to the nonexistent class.
- Brown: Yes! I thought that policy was kind of dumb. I thought we should be permitted to phone in, or they should just cancel the class because it was raining.
- Shearer: That figured into your academic average?
- Brown: I don't know whether it did or not.
- Fry: Probably not.

Brown: It was only a unit, I think. I don't even think it was a unit.

Fry: [looking at watch] I have that it's five after twelve!

Life as First Lady##

[Interview 2: May 17, 1979]

Brown: I've always enjoyed cooking. I don't mind it. I've done a lot of it. I don't go in for anything real fancy, although I have cooked lamb shanks Moroccan style, which is good, and I've frozen that. I take it off the bone though because it takes up too much room. And I have another one--barbecued lamb riblets with rice--which is very good.

Shearer: When you were doing sort of official entertaining, did you often prepare the meals?

Brown: No. That's the one thing I couldn't do. I didn't cook in Sacramento. Occasionally, if there was nobody there, you know, I could get Pat's breakfast. He'd want me to because he thought I cooked better than the cook [chuckles], and I'd say, "I can't do it. I'll lose Maria if I do." And Kathy felt that she had a deprived childhood [chuckles] living in the Mansion, because she didn't learn to cook, that she couldn't go in the kitchen, that there were cooks and maids and whatnot there. It's kind of funny, I think--sort of reverse discrimination. [laughter]

Shearer: Yes. [laughter] I'm trying to think now. How old was Kathleen when you were in the Mansion?

Brown: Kathy went to junior high school up there. We had a problem. We tried to get her in California Junior High because it was near where my sister lived, and I figured that if I was away she might be staying there or something.

Shearer: So, she was in junior high?

Brown: The Warren children had been permitted to go to this particular junior high, but she was in the Sutter district, and they were very embarrassed when I asked for this change [laughter] and they turned me down. They apparently had had so many requests for changes that they had made a flat rule that under no circumstances would anybody be allowed to go out of the district. So, she had to go to [Sutter].

Shearer: That's interesting. They wouldn't make an exception even for the governor.

Brown: They didn't. So, she went to Sutter Junior High and she had to be driven. For security reasons. The Warren children were always driven too. I was driven when I went out and I hated it. I finally got them to let me drive myself out to the golf course because it was such a nuisance [to be driven], and I was perfectly safe there. I was in the car and then parked it there, so it wasn't like parking on a street or anything. But it was a nuisance because I had to phone them then to come and get me, and I thought, "That's ridiculous for them to waste the time coming to pick me up and take me out there," so I did get to do that.

But with Kathy, it was funny; she hated it. And, of course, we didn't use the big black car. That's the one the governor was driven in. He was driven by the [California State] Highway Patrol. For some reason, we were a notch down; the State Police drove us. They're two different breeds, really, the State Police and the Highway Patrol.

Shearer: Really?

Brown: Oh, yes!

Shearer: How are they different?

Brown: Well, the requirements to be it and the people who are in it. In fact, I have sometimes thought some of the State Police shouldn't be allowed to carry guns. [laughter]

Shearer: Really? [laughter]

Brown: That's right. [laughter] You know, they're not in the same category at all. The Highway Patrol are well-trained and well-educated and whatnot, but the State Police--they're custodians. Basically, they're custodians of public buildings and that's what they're used for, you see, to take care of the Capitol. So, they were there at the Mansion as custodians so that nobody would break in. They were the ones who drove Kathy and drove me, and they had-- I think it was an Oldsmobile. Virginia Knight had gotten a new one when she was still there, so it [was], you know, just an ordinary car.

But Kathy didn't like it. Of course, the drivers wore uniforms, and she didn't like to be driven up to school. She was afraid that her peers would make fun of her. To tell you her age--she was in junior high. She was born in September of '45, and we moved to the Mansion in January of '59. But she started in February because I waited until the end of the term. So that she would be [pauses to calculate age] thirteen, because her birthday is in September.

Shearer: And Jerry is how many years [older]?



San Francisco District Attorney Brown, then running for attorney general, and family. From left: Brown, Edmund G., Jr. (Jerry), baby Kathleen, Cynthia, Mrs. Brown, and Barbara. Christmas 1945.



Dinner in the Governor's Mansion after the inauguration. Seated, left to right: Grandmother Ida S. Brown holding Charles Casey, Governor and Mrs. Brown, Kathleen Brown holding Kathleen Kelly. Standing: Edmund G., Jr. (Jerry), Cynthia Brown Kelly, Charles Casey, Joseph Kelly, and Barbara Brown Casey. January 1959.



Brown: Jerry was born in '38. But he didn't live there. The only time he lived there was [when] he was taking a coaching course one summer at McGeorge Law School, when he was studying for the State Bar [exam]. Have you ever been in the Mansion?

Shearer: I never have. I've driven by it many times and looked.

Brown: Oh! Well, you can go in. They have tours. I even had tours when we lived there. But now I think it's twenty-five cents. Maybe they've raised it with inflation; it's probably fifty [cents] now. [chuckles] It's well worth it and I think it's open all the time.

Private Life in a Public Building

Shearer: What was it like to live in a public building that was open to the public?

Brown: Well, we didn't have to open it to the public, and Mrs. Warren didn't, but she had a lot of kids at home; I can understand that. And the Knights didn't either. As a matter of fact, they had an open house on New Year's. They stood in line all afternoon--and that's the way they opened it to the public.

But, no, I let them. Pat was a great believer that it belonged to the people and they liked to see it. As a matter of fact, that's why he fought the idea of building the Mansion way out; he thought it should be downtown. Built in such a way so you do have some privacy, if such could be done, but he thought it should be in Capitol Park or somewhere like that.

He said, "People like to drive by and see their Governor's Mansion. They paid for it; they're entitled to see it." We started getting some requests for tours and whatnot, so I let them have them. But we set our own ground rules. You couldn't come up and ring the doorbell and say, "Can I come in and see the house?" [chuckles] It had to be arranged through the governor's office. I had a secretary over there who did work for me. And it had to be a group, not an individual, and she would take them through. I didn't have to be there.

Sometimes large groups, I'd take through. As a matter of fact, I invited--you know, the governor was always inviting people. There was a big library conference in Sacramento, and they had invited me to go to it. He was speaking and then they called on me to say something. [laughter] This was when he first started being governor, and I couldn't think of anything to say, so I said, "Have any of you seen the Governor's Mansion? How many of you have seen the Governor's

Brown: Mansion?" Well, nobody had. And so I said, "Would you like to come over and see it?" I invited them all over for tea after their meeting was over, like four o'clock. [I thought,] "I've got to serve them something," and I went home and I said to the cook [laughter], "Send out for some cans of--" What's that punch?

Shearer: Hawaiian Punch?

Brown: Yes. Or something. I said, "You don't have time to make it from scratch. We can put tea in and put fruit juice and stuff like that in it," and we made punch and cookies. She was great at making cookies. I just gave her a couple of hours' notice, though. And, oh, there were four or five hundred people, six hundred people.

Shearer: Oh, my word!

Brown: Oh, yes! And they all came, they all came. We just had punch and cookies. It was in the summertime. It was warm.

Shearer: Did you choose the cook? Was that part of your--?

Brown: Yes, I hired the cook and paid her out of my allowance. The others, the rest of the staff--there were two girls, and then there was a man who did kind of the heavy work. They were Civil Service and they were classified as janitors.

Shearer: All three?

Brown: Yes. They were the lowest echelon of state employees in salary and in ability and whatnot. I had one who was excellent, Alberta [Taylor]. She was so good, I felt she should get more money. But she had reached the top of the scale--you know, Civil Service. Originally, [these employees] all came in in the morning, so then after four o'clock [chuckles] you didn't have anybody there except the cook, who lived there. But on her days off, there wasn't a soul there. You didn't have any help at all.

Shearer: But only the cook lived in?

Brown: That's the only one that lived in, yes. So, anyway, I got it changed so one employee came in from eight to four and the other one from twelve to eight. And this one that did that, Alberta--she could cook and, oh, she could do anything. She was really good. She was competent. I thought, "She really deserves more money." And you go into all these Civil Service regulations and so on. So, anyway, my secretary and I connived and we finally had her reclassified as a supervising housekeeper. There's no such classification in the state system, so they had to draw up rules and regulations for a supervising housekeeper, and they set the

- Brown: scale--you know, the beginning salary up to the top scale. But it started, you see, at a higher one than she had reached being a janitress.
- Shearer: What was her last name? Do you recall? Alberta--?
- Brown: Taylor. Alberta Taylor.
- Shearer: And your secretary was who?
- Brown: Helen Amick. I gave her name to your office--oh, no, it was to the Mansion--they love it when I come up there to visit the Mansion; they get so much information from me. [chuckles] So, I always said to them, "Call Helen Amick if you have any questions. She knows as much about it as I do because she was working for me while I was there."
- Shearer: Had she been with you through Pat's earlier campaigns?
- Brown: No, no, no. I didn't have a secretary when I first went up there. Virginia Knight had one, and she worked at the Mansion, but she didn't live there. She wrote a booklet on it, too. Her name escapes me at the moment [Florence Henderson].

At any rate, we had these requests for tours, we had dinners and things to plan, and I would be traveling with the governor sometimes and so these requests were just directed to anybody in the governor's office. Then, finally, they directed them to one person and decided to have her kind of concentrate on it. So, she did and then she'd come over to the Mansion and work out of there sometimes when she'd have a group of tours going through. There was a little office upstairs that she used there.

So, we arranged the tours. This is all mixed up. I don't know whether it makes any difference. But I remember one funny episode. You know, in the nice weather, I like to go swimming, so I'd say, "Arrange the tours when we're going to be gone," or when I was going to be out. So, we were supposed to go to a Western Governors Conference in May, and something came up of an emergency nature or something, [so] that Pat said he wasn't going to go to the Governors Conference. So, he cancelled it. Well, she'd put all these tours on because we were supposed to be out of town, and it was a hot day, and I wanted to go swimming. [laughter]

So, I looked at the schedule. She had them separated, and I thought, "Gee, I think I can go in between this tour and that tour." So I go in swimming, and the next tour comes early! They congregated in the driveway. They'd come through the gate. The pool was--see, if you haven't been there, you can't tell what it's

Brown: like, but it had a fence around it. You come through the gate and the driveway and the pool was here [gestures]--see?--and the house was here [gestures].

Shearer: Yes. On either side of the driveway?

Brown: Yes.

But, at any rate, I was stuck. I couldn't get back in the house. [laughter] So, I went in the--we had a little bathhouse there to change clothes and shower. So, I was stuck out there in a wet bathing suit for forty-five minutes or an hour, until the tour--

Shearer: But not under water, I hope. [laughter]

Brown: Oh, no, no. I got out of the pool, but I was cold. I didn't have a change out there and I was sitting in this wet bathing suit.

Shearer: Oh, dear!

Brown: [looking out the window] Look at the quail. See? Isn't that a quail?

Shearer: Yes, it is.

Brown: You know, they come in families. I wonder where the rest of the family is. They're fascinating to watch.

Shearer: That looks like the lookout. I've heard that often a lookout will come first and then the others will follow. [interviewee moves out of recording range to observe quail in the garden]

Brown: Now, back to the Mansion. That was the tours and whatnot.

Shearer: Did you have a chance to garden when you were at the Mansion, or was that taken over by the pros?

Brown: That was taken over and, anyway, I didn't really have time.

I was trying to think of some of the other things. Well, you start in by following the way it's been done before the first time you do something, until you get your feet on the ground. But I did start the tours because I thought that was worthwhile and they didn't interfere.

Building the Governor's Swimming Pool

Brown: I built the swimming pool the first year we were there, and his press staff said, "Oh, you can't build a swimming pool! You'll be criticized," and all this and that. I said, "I don't care." The reason I went ahead was, I caught Pat on a hot day--I told you he loved to swim--carrying his swimming trunks, walking across the street. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to the motel across the street to take a swim." I said, "Where are you going to change?" He said, "Well, I can't walk across the street in my bathing suit!" (You know, it's a stoplight and it was the main road between San Francisco and New York at that time, before the other freeway was built.) He said, "Oh, they'll give me a room to change."

So, when he came back, I said, "Where did you change?" "Well," he said, "they had a different girl on the desk. She didn't recognize me. So," he said, "I changed in the men's room."

I said, "No governor should have to change in the men's room, and no governor should have to swim in a postage-size swimming pool with all the people that are staying in the motel. That does it. We're building a pool. I don't care what your press staff says and I don't care what the people of California say. If we came here to Sacramento to live and you were a private lawyer, I wouldn't live in a place in this heat if it didn't have a pool. I'd put one in if it didn't. So, why should I be penalized just because you're governor?"

So, anyway, we thought about it and we compromised with the press staff. We decided we would have it built not at public expense. So, Tommy McBride, who was at that time the assemblyman from Sacramento, had a campaign or something or other to collect the money. They had people sending in dollars. They limited the size of contributions to \$50 or \$100; I've forgotten which. The pool cost only \$5,000 or \$6,000. That's before inflation.

Shearer: Before it all happened.

Brown: Yes. Well, that's twenty years ago. They limited it to either \$50 or \$100. It would have been very simple to have had one person or two people contribute the whole thing and say, "Sure, I'll contribute a pool to the Governor's Mansion."

Another reason I wanted to build it was [that] in San Francisco I walked right out the door from my breakfast room into the garden. I have always been used to sitting in the garden, working in the garden. The Mansion has heavy draperies. On a beautiful day, it's

Brown: kind of dark and dreary in there. It has charm, but it's more at night when the lamps are on. In fact, they keep the lamps lit in the daytime. It's that dark.

Shearer: Really?

Brown: Well, I think it's because of the heavy draperies and window curtains. They're not the open glass like you have here [gestures] and I think that's what makes it dark.

On the first nice Sunday we had in January or February when we first moved in there, we took the Sunday papers and took a couple of chairs and went out and sat on the lawn. At that time, the only thing separating the Mansion from the public was this iron picket fence and this big lawn was completely open, and then the driveway comes in. We were sitting there reading, but we weren't there ten minutes when someone started coming in, and they kept coming, and they wanted Pat's autograph. They wanted to know if they could go in and look at the house. We weren't there a half hour; we finally picked up the papers and gave it up as a lost cause and came in the house. So, that was another thing. I wanted a place to sit outside. We put a grapestake fence around the pool to make a nice area to entertain in and to sit in, as well as to swim.

And the funny thing [was that] there was absolutely no criticism, except one. The day it was announced, I went to San Francisco. A heat wave had started. It was in June and, oh, it was a hundred and something early in the morning and they predicted it was going to go to 115 degrees. It was, I mean, a real heat wave. Coming from San Francisco, I wasn't used to the heat, so I said to Pat, "Let's go to San Francisco for the weekend." He said, "Fine." I said, "I'm going down this morning. You meet me later. I can't stay here all day." There was no air conditioning except in the bedrooms in the Mansion.

So, anyway, we made arrangements. We were going out to dinner with some friends, and I went to their house, and he was to meet me there. They had--I think it was the radio--on. I don't know if it was radio or TV, but I have a feeling it was radio for some reason or other.

Shearer: This was what year?

Brown: Well, '59. It was the first year. Oh, they had TV then, but it seemed to me they had the radio on. It doesn't matter.

When I got to San Francisco, it was 91 degrees, and 91 degrees in San Francisco is hotter than Sacramento at a hundred and something because of the humidity. There was a heat wave all over the state, and on the evening news, the six o'clock news, they started

Brown: giving the temperatures. They started mentioning, "In Red Bluff, it was 117 degrees," and in Redding it was this, and Sacramento this. The whole state had a heat wave and they gave the temperatures all the way down the state. You know, it was breaking all records.

You knew people were sitting out on their porches if they didn't have air conditioning.

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Brown: At the end of the report the announcer said, "It was announced in Sacramento today that the governor was putting in a swimming pool in the old Governor's Mansion."

Well, nobody could have objected. [laughter] The timing was marvelous! And I had absolutely nothing to do with the timing when the press release went out. So, there was no criticism, except one--the Sacramento Union. If you're familiar with the papers, that paper is Republican, and anything a Democrat does is wrong, per se. So, they had an editorial against it, and they said, "Of course, we think that a governor needs exercise; and of course, we think swimming is good exercise; and of course, we don't think that a governor should have to go across the street to swim in a motel swimming pool," and all these "of course's" and "of course's." But the punch line at the end was, "But it should not have been publicly subscribed. It should have been paid for by the state."

Now, if we'd had it paid for by the state, they would have written it the other way around. That was the only criticism, which I thought was petty. I mean, they were just going to say something wrong against it.

Shearer: Isn't that something!

Brown: And it [the pool] came in handy. We used to have the legislative luncheon. At the end of the session, the next day, before they all went home, we had a big luncheon out there for all the legislators. You know, there are 120, so it was a nice area to have it. We couldn't have gotten them all in the house.

Preceding First Ladies--Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Knight

Shearer: Were the style of entertaining and the occasions and so forth set by your predecessors, or did you innovate?

Brown: Set by what?

Shearer: By Mrs. Knight and Mrs. Warren?

Brown: No. Well, I'll tell you, it's different. Each first lady--I don't know how they did it going way back. Of course, Olson's wife died a month or two after he was in, so I don't think he did any [entertaining], and he was sick most of the time.

Mrs. Warren did not do much entertaining but, as I say, she had children at home and that makes a difference. She had stag dinners for the legislators. You see, there are 120. There are eighty assemblymen and forty senators. So, even that takes quite a few dinners, but if you have the wives it takes twice as many.

Then every other year, during--it used to be they had what they called the long session, the regular session, and then the budget session on the alternate year. But then they really made them annual sessions, so that they're in session every year now. But at that time, it was a short budget session on the alternate year.

So, in the long session, she [Mrs. Warren] had a tea and invited all of the wives to the tea, once every two years, and that was all the entertaining that she did.

Mrs. Knight had legislators to dinner, you know, and their wives. She did entertain them.

Shearer: In small groups? Maybe twenty or thirty?

Brown: Well, I don't know how many she had each time, but she probably had the same as I did. I usually had around sixty. I tried to keep it to about that, because we would also invite the constitutional officers, and then we would have some staff. You know, the purpose of it is for the staff to get to know the legislators and for them to know each other more.

So, it took, it seemed to me, about six dinners for us to get through the whole legislature, and we did it every year. They looked forward to it. When I meet any of them now, they still say, "Oh, things have never been the same." You know, they looked forward to these dinners, and I tried to make them special--several things I did differently.

For instance, the first thing--Virginia Knight used card tables. They were available. They had them from the fair grounds or something and, I remember, they were big, heavy card tables. The thing that--I don't know whether I should mention this or not.

Shearer: Oh, go ahead and mention it. You can always take it off later.

Brown: Well, she ordered china. She ordered a complete set of china from some firm in Oakland--very nice, white, with a gold band. It came right after the new administration came in, so it had to be paid for by the Brown administration. But, at any rate, it was great to have it, but I never could understand the odd pieces that she had ordered. She ordered seventy-two place settings, which was fine, because you break china and so on. So, that was fine--the dishes, the salad plates, the cups and saucers, and the whole bit. She had seventy-two of each. But she ordered eighteen small vegetable dishes, eighteen large vegetable dishes, eighteen small platters, eighteen larger platters, and what I think is funny, eighteen gravy boats! In other words, eighteen each of the serving dishes; thirty-six, if you consider the small and large vegetable dishes.

Shearer: Yes. How extraordinary!

Brown: I couldn't figure it out. I couldn't figure it out. Finally, I sat down--I was always pretty good in math in school--and I figured out the common denominator between eighteen and seventy-two. Well, I finally came up with it.

Shearer: What is it?

Brown: It's times four. The card tables seated four people.

Shearer: Oh, of course, yes.

Brown: In other words, she got all these serving pieces for each card table. Well, you can't even get any serving pieces on a card table! You're lucky to get a goblet or a wine glass and the silverware on it.

Shearer: Isn't that something. [laughter]

Brown: I couldn't believe it. So, anyway, there are eighteen gravy boats. And what you use them for, I don't know. [laughter]

But, at any rate, she used the card tables, so they were available. So, I used [them]. And she had the cloths for them and the napkins. She didn't have the silverware, and I was darned if I was going to rent Abbey Rent silverware.

Shearer: There was no silverware in the Mansion?

Brown: Well, this is another interesting story that I don't know the answer to. They had hammered silver. It was made by Shreve's in San Francisco and it had a bear on it, a strange bear. It looked like he was carrying an umbrella and it said "1911" on the umbrella. It was like a shield. I never knew what that [signified]. It was a bear standing up.

Shearer: Under an umbrella? [laughter]

Brown: Well, no. Holding the umbrella. I don't know if they'll show it to you when you're up there. [chuckles] You should go up when I'm up there sometime and they'd show you everything! I ordered silver later. They had eleven complete place settings of this--

Shearer: Bear with the umbrella?

Brown: Yes, including such things as a seafood fork, an ice cream spoon or fork--whatever they call that--but, I mean, all the little odd things. There were exactly eleven of each one, which means that somebody took a whole place setting as a souvenir. [laughter] That's all that was there, when I got there; it was eleven place settings.

Shearer: Isn't that something. Do you know who ordered such an unusual design as the bear with the umbrella? [laughter]

Brown: No. It didn't look that bad. It was just [that] we tried to figure out why it had this "1911" on it. I don't know whether that was the year that it was made or not.

I went to Shreve's to increase the pattern, thinking that since I had the serving pieces it would be cheaper that way, and they said it would cost more because they had to make new dies.

So, since I had to have the dies made, I went to Alan Adler, who is one of the finest silversmiths in the country. He is well noted for his designs. And I'm glad I did, because then he came up with this other bear design [derived from the Bear Flag, with the bear on all fours], and he gave it to me at a wholesale price, so that I got the silver for less than if I had ordered it from Shreve's to increase in the same pattern. And they're compatible; the two go together.

But what I had done before, as I say--certain things, I am fussy about. One is, I like my silver. So, I had my silver [that] I brought up. I borrowed my sister's, who lived in Sacramento. I borrowed Helen Amick's, my secretary's. [chuckles] And then we had the eleven place settings of the bear pattern. Everybody didn't have the same pattern, but they were at different tables.

And, incidentally, you know, people struggle with that and worry, if they don't have silver that matches. Say people have a service for eight, and they're going to have twelve guests, and they'll borrow four extra, and they'll worry about it. Alan Adler said that what he often does--and he thinks it's "fun"--he gives everyone a place setting in a different pattern. Of course, he's in the silver business [chuckles], so he would have that, but he thinks that's fun. So, I tell that to people who worry about their silver not matching; I think it's an interesting tale.

Shearer: Yes, very reassuring. [laughter]

Establishing a Personal Style in Entertaining

Brown: So, at any rate, that's the story about the silver. But to get back to the card tables. At that time we had two assemblywomen.

Shearer: Pauline Davis?

Brown: Pauline Davis was one, from Portola or somewhere, and we had another one. She was the one whose name was on the higher education bill.

Shearer: Dorothy Donahoe?

Brown: Dorothy Donahoe, yes. You're right. She was from Bakersfield, I think.

Shearer: That's right, yes.

Brown: So, Dorothy Donahoe brought her mother, I think it was, and Pauline Davis brought a woman friend, or vice versa; I'm not sure which.

Shearer: They were both widowed? I guess Miss Donahoe was not married.

Brown: I don't know if Dorothy had ever been married. I think she was Miss Dorothy Donahoe. I think she was.

Shearer: That's right.

Brown: But at any rate, at one dinner I had two assemblywomen with two female companions, mother or friend, and I naturally wouldn't put them at the same table. But I would have two card tables where an assemblyman would have his wife and an assemblywoman and her mother or friend. And I thought, "You know, he's not going to have as much fun. Who am I going to put there?" I had two tables to do that to, so I said to Helen, "Put two tables together here and put two tables together there in the other room, so we'll get six at this table. At least they'll have someone else, another assemblyman, there."

Well, you know, it worked out so much better that I started investigating to see if they couldn't make me some round tables. Well, they made me two round table tops that fit on card tables, but they were enormous. In fact, they would seat like ten instead of eight and they took up so much room. We finally used them, because I think round tables are better for conversation. We used two of them in the parlor. We couldn't get more than that in there anyway, and since they were large tables we could get like twenty people in there.

Brown: In what we called the living room, the bigger room, we put the banquet tables. I don't like them as well as the round, but I think we got four of those in there, with eight [people at each one], so that was thirty-two, and then we used some in the music room; we could get two banquet tables in there. Of course, we had the folding chairs.

Well, it was much better, but I still found out that--I didn't eat much, you know. I'd take a bite and then I'd go around checking the tables and speaking to everybody and seeing how they were doing and whatnot.

Shearer: With whom did you seat yourself and the governor?

Brown: Well, we never sat at the same table or in the same room, but I'll answer that in a minute. I don't know how I did it the first time; you know, just at random.

I never had place cards, because I didn't know who was having a feud with whom [chuckles] and who was friendly and who wasn't. In a large group like that, I wouldn't know and I just didn't want to take that responsibility, so they just sat anywhere they wanted. What happened was they sat with their wife and there would be three other assemblymen and their wives, because those tables were for eight.

In going around the tables, there would be conversation at all of them, lots of conversation, but at every table I went to, the assemblymen were all talking across the table to each other about bills in the legislature, about business. The poor wives, who had come up from their homes and bought new dresses for it--it was a big occasion, going to the Governor's Mansion--were just sitting there and they [the assemblymen] were ignoring them.

I thought, "That is awful," so I decided to shake them up. I still didn't want to pick who they sat next to, so what I did was, I had my secretary make little number cards. I had two different colors of construction paper; one was for the men and one for the women. Then they each had a table number on them--you know, Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and so on. So, they picked what table they sat at. Occasionally, they would be at the same table with their wife, but not often. Then they could sit anywhere they wanted at the table, so I didn't tell them who they sat next to.

This worked like a charm. As a matter of fact, the wives were delighted. Then the men were talking to them, you know, so they had a good time. I had many of them tell me that they did this at home at parties afterwards. They thought that was such a good idea that they copied it.

Shearer: A very good idea.

Brown: And it worked out fine.

Shearer: It sounds as though you enjoyed it a lot.

Brown: Well, I did, and then I tried to do little extra things like for example--there wasn't a ballroom. (Well, there was one, they said, on the third floor, when it was a private home, which has been made into a den and a bedroom up there. But, you know, we weren't going to climb all those stairs for that.) But we had this hall but it wasn't terribly big.

In the meantime we'd gone to the White House to a number of dinners and I was noticing how they did it to see if I could pick up any ideas. Of course, there they'd have place cards and everything, and it was all done very formally. After dinner, they'd go into the hall, but it's a much larger hall than we had at the Mansion, and they'd have the Marine Band, and they'd dance. You've probably read some articles about it, that President Johnson would be dancing all night and he stayed up late, and another one--was it Ford?--would leave early to go to bed or something like that.

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: And I don't know whether the Carters have dancing now. We haven't been invited to the White House since he's been there [chuckles] and I don't anticipate we will. But I don't know, because he's quite religious. He's a Baptist and some Baptists don't really believe in dancing, although he did dance, I think, at the inaugural.

Shearer: He just gave a big country music award to Willie Nelson.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: And perhaps you don't dance to country music.

Brown: Well, I really don't know. I know they don't serve hard liquor there now, because some of the reporters have written sort of unkind things about jug wine [laughter], that that's what they serve and it apparently isn't a very good quality wine and so on.

But, at the White House, when we were there, the waiters passed trays of champagne and they had it in the tulip glasses, which I like. Now, Jackie Kennedy ordered the glassware for the White House, and I got the booklet from the place where she'd gotten it, and I ordered glassware for the Mansion from that.

Brown: Mrs. Knight had rented it from Abbey Rents every time, and I said, "That is ridiculous." We bought cases of the highball glasses and the kind of glasses you use for drinks, and we bought the stem glassware. I like this tulip shape. It's very nice. I always hate the other kind at weddings. You know, you have a nice dress on, and they're so shallow. Somebody knocks your elbow--it's always a crowd--and they could spill on your dress, whereas the tulip you don't fill it full and it doesn't [spill].

So, at any rate, I thought, "Gee, I wonder if we could do that at the Mansion." [laughter] So, the next legislative party I had-- I couldn't have the Marine Band, obviously, or a big band. I think one time I had an accordionist and then I got a three-piece combo. There was a place in the hall where they stood, and we rolled up [the rugs]. They were Oriental rugs and easy to take up. And we passed the champagne, see, and they had it just like they do at the White House. [laughter]

So, at any rate, they thought it was great, and that's why the legislators say that they had such a good time at the parties we had for the legislature. They've never had it so good before or since.

One other kind of entertaining that I did that I knocked myself out for because it meant so much to them--I think when it means something to people, you go to a lot of trouble for it. It gives you pleasure to do it--the old hedonist theory that everything you do is because it pleases you. [laughter] But I thought the girls in the office should--some of them had never seen the Mansion. So, at Christmas time, it looked beautiful! At Christmas we had--I didn't have to trim the trees [laughter]--floor-to-ceiling trees, and it was a fourteen- or fifteen-foot ceiling. We had one in the parlor, in the window; one in the hall, in the window; two fifteen-foot trees. And then in all the other rooms we had small ones, upstairs and downstairs, and it really looked lovely. Plus, they had all these marble fireplaces, which I'm sure you've heard about.

Shearer: Oh, yes.

Brown: If you'd been to the Mansion, you'd know what I'm talking about. [laughter] I'm going to chide you!

So, on the mantelpieces we'd have Christmas arrangements. It looked lovely around Christmas time, so I wanted people to see it. So, I decided to have two lunches for the girls in the office, because they couldn't leave it not staffed, and I figured that they could overlook the hour lunch time and give them two hours if half the staff was there. So, I'd have it two days in a row and have all the girls in the office over for lunch.

Shearer: Did you know them personally?

Brown: No. A couple of them; but I didn't know the others.

Oh, we'd sing Christmas carols. We never served hard liquor for lunch in the Mansion, even though the governor would have different groups that had come to Sacramento--businessmen or some committee and he'd have lunches at the Mansion for them--or even for the legislators. But we never served hard liquor at lunch. We always thought it would make them sleepy and they wouldn't do their job afterwards. [laughter] They talk about these two-martini lunches. I don't know how people can do that.

Shearer: It would finish me!

Brown: And I'd think they'd be sleepy; you know, tired.

But we did serve California wine. So, at any rate, I started in with sherry the first year and then I tried to do something different each year. So, then the next year, I thought, "I'll have champagne." And do you know, there was one woman--she has since retired--she was an older woman in the governor's office. I can see her, but I can't think of her name. And she said to me, "You know, this is the first time I have ever tasted champagne!" And there were many of them like that.

Shearer: Really? Isn't that something.

Brown: So, you can imagine, well, this was a big point in their life, a high point.

So, then I'd struggle with the menu to try to get something really special for them. It was fun to do because they appreciated it. On the drinks, I changed them each time. I finally had pink champagne another time. I was trying to find something else and I'd heard of Dubonnet, but I thought it was French. I finally got a bottle of Dubonnet and found out it was bottled in Fresno [laughter], so we had Dubonnet on the rocks another year. We had something different each year.

I had this cook, Maria, who was very good. She wasn't the first one I had. Amanda was the first one. But Maria was very good and she was European. She was actually German, but she spoke German and Italian and English pretty well. I thought she understood me, but sometimes [laughter] when I'd say I didn't want something, I got it; and when I said I did want it, I didn't get it. I mean, there was a little communication problem there.

I wish I'd written down some of her phrases. She had the most marvelous colloquialisms. For instance, something that she made that my husband liked--instead of saying, "He likes it," she said,

Brown: "It likes him." She'd get the pronouns mixed up and things like that that were charming, and I should have written them down. That's the only one I really remember.

But, at any rate, she was more frugal than I am. In fact, I had to throw things away on her day off. She would keep food till I was afraid to have her use it. She wouldn't even throw away a tea bag. She saved it. She'd drink the tea and then she'd use the tea bag for something else--I don't know--to polish something I guess. She used it for something.

Shearer: Do you remember her full name?

Brown: Maria Honek, or Honeck, and I think it may have the two dots [umlaut] over it. I've often wondered if she's still alive, because I'm sure then, when we had her, she must have been like sixty or sixty-five. She's probably not alive now.

But, at any rate, she used to go back to Europe in the summer on her vacation. She flew Icelandic Airlines and they had a very cheap air fare then. She'd go back to have her teeth fixed. She had a lot of dental work done, and she could pay the air fare and get her teeth fixed back there cheaper than getting them fixed here [laughter], if you can believe it, and I can. I can believe that, you know, with the prices and all.

Shearer: Heavens. That's amazing.

Brown: Well, at any rate, Maria made some cannelloni. When she made pasta, she made it from scratch--nothing out of a box. She made the dough--the flour and the egg--and rolled it out, and let it hang. So, she made these cannellonis, and my husband loves pasta. He doesn't get to eat it very often because he's supposed to watch his weight.

Shearer: Do you also make your own pasta?

Brown: No. I haven't gotten to that point. [laughter]

But, at any rate, he loved them and I did too, and that's a light [lunch], you know. I thought, "Those would be marvelous!" So, I said, "Let's have them for the lunches for the girls." And she said, "I can't make them." (She was stubborn, too.) And I said, "Why not?" And she said, "I don't have enough leftovers." She made them out of leftover chicken or leftover lamb or whatever, and she said, "I don't have enough leftovers."

So, I fooled her. This was a couple of weeks ahead of time that I had mentioned it, so I ordered leg of lamb for Pat and myself [laughter] twice in a row. I said, "Now you've got your leftovers to make the cannelloni!"

Brown: So, the girls loved them and they all wanted the recipe. She said, "Oh, they'll never make them." But you can buy--there is a cannelloni thing that you can use.

Shearer: The dough for it, you mean?

Brown: Yes. You buy it in a box like macaroni or spaghetti or lasagna and you stuff them.

But that was one special thing I did for them. Another special thing I did for them--we were at the Palladium [in Los Angeles] at a dinner for Jack Kennedy. [Mrs. Brown shows interviewer pictures taken at Palladium dinner] I was sitting next to Kennedy, and they had these special desserts. They were like sherbet, but each one was different--the shape, the color and the flavor of different fresh fruits--orange, banana, lemon, and so forth.

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Shearer: I wonder if you recall any incident where you've been under really intense pressure or had to smile through your tears?

Brown: I'm trying to think. You know, I didn't finish that about the dessert though.

Shearer: Oh, the dessert. Let's finish that.

Brown: You know, we were on that. So, I got the manager of the Palladium and asked him if it would be possible to order those desserts (it was in December or something, so that I knew the lunches were coming up) and if I could fly them back to Sacramento. So, we arranged for it on a day when I knew Pat was going to be down here and where they took them out to his plane and put them in dry ice and took them up to Sacramento. We had another refrigerator and another freezer in the basement up there and we put them in there. I got enough for the luncheons for both [groups] of the girls. They were all talking about the dessert, and I said, "This is the dessert that they served to President Kennedy on his trip on such-and-such a day in Los Angeles at the Palladium." So, that made it very special to them. Anyway, I just wanted to finish that story.

Now, your question again?

Shearer: Well, before I ask the question again--do you feel as though, in your entertaining of the governor's staff and the girls from the office, you reached out to people who hadn't been entertained in such a kind of a personal way before?

Brown: Well, I know that the girls in the office hadn't.

Brown: Another thing too. When we were gone (we went to Europe one summer while he was governor, in 1963 and then other times when we'd go away for any period of time) and it was hot in Sacramento, I also arranged with my secretary to have the girls come over for a swim and bring a picnic lunch. I left it up to her, how many she could fit, you know, so that they couldn't take the whole office in one group. I didn't have anyone there to fix anything for them. But Alberta, this girl that I said was so good, made coffee, or we had soft drinks or something like that for them. It was hot. I think probably that's what we had, the soft drinks. They'd bring their lunch and they'd take a swim, sit around the pool, in the summer.

Shearer: Oh, what a nice idea.

Brown: And they loved that too! But, I don't know, I just enjoyed doing that, and I think it meant so much to them. And, as a result, he had a marvelous rapport in his office. I didn't do it for that reason, but that was an end benefit that happened. They were all very loyal to him.

Pressures of Public Life

Shearer: On the subject of living in a fishbowl, which, of course, you did--

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: In the public eye at all times, there must have been times when you wished the public and your constituents were a thousand miles away, in times of strain or embarrassment.

Brown: Well, I kind of hated it when I went shopping, you know. I would have liked to have gone incognito. [chuckles] I'd try to put on dark glasses, but it didn't do much good. As a matter of fact, I didn't do much shopping in Sacramento as a result. I'd do it in Los Angeles or San Francisco when we'd be there. It's a bigger place and it was easier [to remain anonymous].

As a matter of fact, after Pat left the governor's office and we moved to Los Angeles, for a while people recognized me. Then it got so--this is a big city, you know--that I could go places and not be recognized. I could go down with whatever I wanted to wear, dressed casually and so on. But, of course [in] Beverly Hills everybody dresses that way. All the movie stars dress that way. They don't get dressed up like you do in San Francisco to go downtown, and I'm not sure they still do it there now; I mean, times have changed so. But I wasn't recognized so much.

Brown: And then, when Jerry ran for governor I remember saying to Pat, "Oh, here we go again!" You know, back in the limelight. Then it started again, and I can't go anywhere that I'm not recognized, or if I'm not recognized, then the minute I give the charge name, then they know who I am.

Shearer: Do people ask for autographs or treat you differently in a way that you would rather they wouldn't?

Brown: No. Oh, maybe a couple, but not enough to notice, ask for autographs.

Shearer: I should think it would be difficult to carry on a married life and family life when you're in the public eye all the time. I mean, there must have been times when you had disagreements or had to discipline your children.

Brown: Well, of course, you're more in the public eye when your husband's governor. When he was attorney general and district attorney, that is not so true, you see. [Later, in the Governor's Mansion], we only had Kathy at home then; the rest of the family was grown.

One thing that you miss is you don't have time for your friends. You really don't see them, and I missed that. I made the time for the family, and we always spent holidays together, and the Mansion was the greatest place in the world for the holidays.

And Barbara lived in Sacramento.

Shearer: At that time, she was married?

Brown: Oh, yes. She was married. She's the oldest. Barbara and Cynthia were both married. As a matter of fact, Cynthia was pregnant with her second child when Pat was inaugurated, because she's got a maternity dress on.

Shearer: Oh, that's right.

Brown: So, she was pregnant with her second child, and Barbara already had one child and had another one that year.

But they were over for Thanksgiving and for Christmas. [On] Easter we used to take them down to the desert. The weather was nice down there and they loved that. But we have always gotten together for holidays and we still do. We've taken them to Hawaii four years in a row. This is the first year we took them [shows interviewer photograph], and this is the last year [shows second photograph].

A Teenager in the Mansion

Shearer: But Kathy was a teenager in the Mansion.

Brown: Yes, she was.

Shearer: How did that work out? Did she have a rough adolescence, or not so?

Brown: I don't think so. I don't think so. As I told you, she felt deprived because she didn't learn to cook [chuckles], and she's a very good cook now.

But, oh, a few things--I started to tell you about the driving, about the State Police driving her, and she used to have them let her off at a friend's house that was two blocks from school and pick her up there, because she didn't want to be seen getting out of the car driven by a State Police officer in uniform. I didn't finish that part of the story.

One day she came home and her feet were sopping wet. She was absolutely drenched, and I couldn't see how she could get wet when she was picked up at school. So then I found out that she was picked up at Dottie's house, which was two blocks from school, and they had walked there.

So, I said, "Well, you're going to have to get galoshes." She didn't want to wear galoshes. You know [imitating a teenager's expression], nobody wears galoshes! [laughter] I said, "Make up your mind: you either wear galoshes, or you're driven right to the front of the school." So, she preferred to get galoshes rather than to be driven to the front of the school.

Oh, I remember one other incident. She was going out. I didn't know if she would have been, at this time, fifteen, sixteen, or whatever. But, at any rate, the boy picked her up, and she hadn't come downstairs yet, and Pat was talking to him. He [the boy] was giggling and laughing when it wasn't appropriate to, and beyond the point of being nervous because he's talking to the governor. You know, at first Pat thought that was the reason but finally he said to him, "Have you had anything to drink?" Then the kid admitted he'd had--I don't know what he said; apparently it wasn't much. But Pat called the guard and said, "Drive him home and leave his car here."

Shearer: Oh, for heaven's sake!

Brown: So, at any rate, she didn't get to go out. That was kind of embarrassing for her, but--

Shearer: Yes. But any father, perhaps--

Brown: I think it would have happened even if he hadn't been governor, you know. But he wouldn't have had a guard to drive the [boy] home. [laughter]

Shearer: Did she feel that she was limited in her friendships or her dating or anything by being the governor's daughter?

Brown: Oh, I don't think so, no. She used to have slumber parties. And, would you believe it--you know, they were small slumber parties; she'd have maybe six [girls] or something--and we could have found enough beds for them to sleep in, but no, they went up to the third floor and they had their dirty, dusty sleeping bags stretched out there [laughter] and took the Coca Cola and potato chips and all the stuff up there. There weren't any rugs up there; there were hardwood floors. It was right over my bedroom, and they kept going on until it was late, and I finally had to go up and lower the boom and say, "You'll have to go home unless you all go to sleep. I want to get some rest myself."

But I don't think that she was particularly inhibited. She had a lot of advantages in that she was the only one left at home, so we weren't about to leave her home. So, she was the most traveled thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year-old you've ever seen. In fact, her sisters thought she got too many things. [laughter]

Well, the first year Pat was governor, '59, the Governors Conference--we always went to the National Governors Conference, which was usually in the summer, and then there were western ones in between, a zone one. The first one was in Puerto Rico, and so we went to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and we stopped in Jamaica on the way back, so Kathy got to go there. Then, the next year it was in Hawaii, and then we took her to Europe with us, and so she had some advantages.

Shearer: Did she pretty much amuse herself?

Brown: Well, she had friends, and had friends over or she'd go to their house after school. And then she went away to school. We lived [in the Mansion] eight years, and she went away to school in '62; it was the '62 campaign. So, she really only lived there at home, I would say, three and a half years.

Pat wanted me to campaign for him, so we put her in boarding school. She went to Santa Catalina School for Girls in Monterey for her last two years of high school, and then she went to Stanford after that, and then she got married when she was at Stanford. So, she really only lived like three and a half years at the Mansion. But I don't think she felt inhibited particularly. I really don't. And, as I say, she did have advantages.

Politics and Family Life

Shearer: In the earlier years when Pat was campaigning for attorney general and serving as attorney general and so forth, how did you manage to apportion your time between the family and the--?

Brown: Oh, it was completely different then. In the first place, we didn't move to Sacramento until he became governor. The attorney general had three offices then; I think they've got four or five now. But the main office had always been San Francisco when he was attorney general. Earl Warren lived in Alameda County. He made it the main office. And U.S. Webb, who'd been there for forty years, lived in Oakland, so it [San Francisco] had always been the main office. There was no problem that way. We lived in San Francisco; and, of course, district attorney--the same thing.

I didn't travel with him campaigning and, as a matter of fact, I resented politics then. I didn't like it because I felt it put too big a burden on me.

Shearer: You were almost a single parent.

Brown: Yes, I had to raise the kids, and that's why I didn't go with him. I figured someone had to stay home and raise the kids, when he was gone most of the time.

In my opinion, and I think it would be corroborated by a number of people, I think he built the Democratic party. There was no Democratic party before--the first time he ran for attorney general was '46 and he was defeated, and then he ran in '50 and was elected. But between 1946 and 1950, he went throughout the state of California constantly. He went to meetings and whatnot and really built up the Democratic party to where, when he was finally elected governor in 1958, for the first time in the history of the state you had a majority of Democrats in both houses of the legislature, and they'd never had it [a majority] before, as well as electing a Democratic governor.

So, as I say, I felt I should stay home, so I never campaigned. In the first campaign in 1958, I did do a few things, when they'd set up some special things in Los Angeles, and I made a few trips, to Los Angeles or to Sacramento or something like that, but very few. I didn't campaign like I did in '62 and '66 where they set up separate schedules for me and for Pat because they could double the exposure.

But the reason I resented it and thought it put too much of a burden on me--when your children are small and they're infants, if they get sick you call the doctor, and beyond that there's no problem.

Brown: But the problem is when they get to be teenagers and all the decisions you have to make--can I do this, and can I do that, and so on. It's awfully nice to have somebody to talk it over with and make it a joint decision.

I was brought up very strictly, so I brought up my children [that way]. I think people have a tendency to bring up their children the way they were brought up, and so mine were brought up very strictly. I brought them up never to waste anything, that it was a sin to waste, and that's the way I had been brought up. It wasn't particularly a necessity when our children were growing up. But I thought, "They may marry someone who doesn't have everything," so I wanted them to know the value of the dollar. They didn't get everything they wanted.

I can remember getting a letter from Barbara when she wanted a particular pair of shoes, and I didn't think they were practical. They were spectator shoes. She was about thirteen years old, fourteen years old, and they [the shoes] were brown and white. They'd never made them for kids before, so it was something very new, and I thought they were impractical to clean, so I wouldn't buy them for her. And [there was] another time when she wanted an extra pair of shoes, a dress or something or other, and I didn't think she needed them, and I didn't get them for her.

But in this particular case, she wrote this letter, promising everything: She'd do the dishes every night for a month if I'd just buy her the shoes, just buy her the dress, and so on. [chuckles] But they were brought up very strictly.

Shearer: I'm just wondering if the fact that by then Pat was the attorney general and he had a prominent position and you had a certain financial standing that would have allowed you to give your children what they asked for if you had chosen to--did that make it hard for you?

Brown: Well, let me go back and tell you something else. It was a financial sacrifice when he was district attorney. We lived on our savings. We had three children then. We couldn't afford to live on the district attorney's salary. He ran for district attorney, and this, I think, is his commitment to public service, that he didn't think of the financial impact on the family.

He had two brothers who were attorneys who went away to war. He was elected in '43 and took office in '44, so that's wartime, and he was a lawyer. Those were lucrative times for the lawyers who were left, who didn't go into the service.

Shearer: Little competition?

Brown: Yes. And he gave up that to run for district attorney, which at that time paid eight thousand dollars a year.

Shearer: Really? Oh, that's below poverty level, I think, now, for a family of six.

Brown: Well, now. Of course, prices were cheaper then. You've got to relate to that. But we couldn't live on it, and fortunately we had some savings. He'd been a successful lawyer, so we had some savings, and we were going into our savings.

He got his assistant district attorneys' salaries raised. They were making less than the eight thousand dollars. He got them raised to twelve thousand dollars a year because it could be done through the budget process, through the Board of Supervisors. So, they were making twelve thousand dollars and he was making eight thousand. His salary was frozen in the city charter, and it took a charter amendment at election time [to change it]. Eventually it was changed, but for some years we lived in our savings. So, we weren't doing too well in politics [chuckles] as far as salary was concerned.

But now I was going to tell you, to get back to the children and my resentment in politics because I had to make all these decisions, this was a sample. One of them was graduating from high school and said that they were staying out all night. This was something new that started then. I think it still is done. I know when we were in Sacramento it was still done. But for the parents it was a case of "if you can't lick 'em, join 'em." They [the parents] had entered into it and they took over the whole Civic Auditorium, I think, the Memorial Auditorium, and they had a whole committee of parents that took turns at different hours, so they were well chaperoned. They had dance bands. And they did stay out all night, but this is how they spent it.

Shearer: They were supervised.

Brown: Yes, they were supervised. But when the kids pulled it on me, I think it was Barbara who wanted to stay out all night, and I said, "Of course, you can't!" I had never heard of such a thing! We never did anything like that in my day! I was really an old-fashioned mother. [laughter]

But you know what she said? "When will Daddy be home? He'll be more receptive to my idea." And, as a matter of fact, he was. He had a guilt complex when he came home, because he'd been away, and so when he came back, why, they could do anything.

It reminded me--at about this same time, right after the war was over, I read this [study]. Columbia or some university did a study on returning veterans--this was just before most of them came

Brown: back--to try and make it easier for their return to civilian life. Now, many of them had never seen their children who had been born after they'd left, or the children were so small that they didn't remember them. So, they did this study and the way they did it was, they had a one-way window so they could look in and watch the children playing, but they [the children] couldn't see they were being monitored. They gave them dolls to correspond to their family group--the mother and the father and their siblings--and they just let them play and watched them.

The results of the survey were that in every case the father was something like Santa Claus. He was somebody wonderful. He was the kind that would say, "Let's go to the beach. Let's ride on the dipper. Let's get an ice cream cone." He did everything great. He was just great.

The mother, who was the authoritarian figure, while he was gone--they drowned her in the toilet! Almost all of them. They resented her because she represented authority, [laughter] and I always thought of that. I thought, "That's what my kids probably think of me," because I was strict with them in bringing them up. But they all turned out all right!

It was funny. Pat was making a speech one time at a black church on a Sunday and it was Mother's Day. I think he was making a Mother's Day speech. They [black congregations] are very responsive, you know. They were giving him the "hallelujah, hallelujah," and so on. And, of course, he waxed eloquent because they were just [laughter]--

Shearer: So inspiring? [laughter]

Brown: Oh, yes. So, he was talking to them about his children and he said, "And I have to give credit to my wife, the mother of my children. She was the one that raised them, and I owe how they've turned out to her. That's the case in so many--it's the mother who does--" You know, it was his thing on Mother's Day. But the people he was talking to, most of them were a one-parent household, so they were chanting, "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" [laughter] It was really funny!

Shearer: Exactly! [laughter]

Well, if you got a bigger dose of child-raising as a result of Pat being in politics, did you also feel a corresponding loss of companionship with him because politics occupied such a central place in his life?

Brown: Well, I wouldn't put it that way so much, but we weren't able, as I told you, to see our friends, to do the normal things that people do--you know, going out--because he was gone so much of the time.

Brown: As a matter of fact, I always regretted the fact that we got married on October 30, because October 30 is always the week before election, and there was always an election. The municipal ones were the odd-numbered years, and the even-numbered years there's the state or national election. It seemed to me he was always running for something or involved in somebody's campaign.

They used to have their Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, which was the big fund raiser. In the olden days, you didn't have all these fund raisers for individual candidates like they have now--\$100- and \$150-a-plate dinners. They had a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, which raised money for the Democratic party, and they had one a year, and they used to be \$25 a plate. In those days, they thought that was expensive. I spent many anniversaries at Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners. [chuckles] They'd seem to have them just before the election, and October 30 is always the week before the election.

[interruption for telephone conversation between Mrs. Brown and druggist] [speaking to druggist] This is why medical costs are so high, because you overcharge. Now, I think you overcharged on this particular item [premixed foot-soaking solution]. [druggist replies] Well, the tablets. And how do you sell those? How many are in a box? [druggist replies] Twelve in a box. And one of those makes how much solution? [druggist replies] [tape off briefly]

[returning to interviewer] Some hospital offered a course in economics for the doctors. It was on the price of all of the things that they order for their patients, and the doctors were amazed. They didn't even know what it was costing, things that they had ordered. And sometimes doctors had ordered two different tests that gave the same results, and it was unnecessary, you see, and yet the patient had to pay it, and they didn't know it. And then they showed them on drugs where if they ordered--I get this mixed up--is it the generic--?

Shearer: The brand name is supposed to be much more expensive, I believe.

Brown: Than the generic, yes. And the same with the prescription rather than if you get just the name, you know; it's in a bottle. He [the druggist] was telling me it costs so much for the typist [chuckles], and he said it costs for the parking. I said, "I didn't park a car." You know, because they validate a parking ticket. If you have a minimum of \$7.50 or something in prescription drugs, they pay for the parking thing. But I said, "I didn't park." And he said, "Well, the delivery boy is using dollar-a-gallon gas." I said, "But you were delivering an antibiotic, as well." I wasn't going to argue. I just wanted to make my point to him that he's overcharging, and I certainly will to the doctor. I'm a frustrated consumer advocate. [chuckles] I should be out there on the hustings. You know, I can afford it, but there are so many people who really can't afford it.

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Brown: [recounts how her doctor asked her to enter the hospital in advance of scheduled surgery]--one night ahead of time, and my doctor didn't operate until the afternoon. I didn't want to do it, for emotional reasons, to just sit there and worry about it all night, the next morning, and noontime. So I said, "I'll go any time in the morning, but I won't go in the night before," so the doctor said it was okay, and I did.

So then he came in to see me after the operation, the next day, to check me out, and he said, "Don't you think you ought to stay another day?" And I said, "No. I want to go home." The reason I wanted to go home was, my hospital room was so small; my bathroom's bigger. I got claustrophobia. It was just so small. My bill for the one day in the hospital was \$762.

Shearer: Just for the hospital room? Not even the operation?

Brown: Oh, that was \$1,200 for the operation. It was \$762 for one day for a room that's not as big as my bathroom at home.

Shearer: That's just staggering.

Brown: Well, that was a year ago. I'll bet it's higher now.

Shearer: Oh, it probably is.

Brown: The cost-of-living increase. That was a year ago, February the 8th. I'll bet it's higher now. It's just terrible, the prices, really.

Anyway, that's why I think people should not take it sitting down. They should complain every time they feel like they're being overcharged.

Shearer: And complain to the doctor, too?

Brown: Well, I'm going to complain to him because, as I told you, I saw this program, where they are not aware of it, and I'm sure he doesn't realize that that eight ounces of Burroughs solution, which was ten parts water, was \$4.95.

Shearer: When you were talking before the phone call, we were on the subject of the demands of politics and what impact it had on your family life when Pat was district attorney and attorney general. Did you have any idea what you were getting into when you first got married.

Brown: Did I think I was going to marry a politician, somebody who'd become governor? [chuckles]

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: No! I wouldn't have been married on October 30 if I had [laughter], because it's a week before election. No, I had no idea, although he was always interested in politics, if you can put it that way, in high school. You know, he was the yell leader and he ran for secretary of the student body, and he was the president of the debating society, and he always wanted to be the head of everything, so I guess I should have been forewarned.

Shearer: When he decided to run for district attorney, was that a decision that you arrived at jointly, or how did that develop?

Brown: No. He always wanted to be district attorney. He said he used to go down to the courts when he was studying law, and he'd sit and listen to cases, and he said, "Someday I'm going to be district attorney of this city." He'd had that goal in mind. I don't think at that time he thought about governor. Maybe he did. [chuckles] You should ask him that. I don't know.

But, no, I think he made the decisions on those options. As a matter of fact, if he'd listened to me--I said this on a TV program, "Over Easy." Have you ever heard of that program with Hugh Downs?

Shearer: Oh, yes.

Brown: That if he'd listened to me, he probably wouldn't have run for anything [laughter], because I didn't like politics then because it took him away so much. Of course, in San Francisco, at least he was home at night, but not the whole evening. I mean, he was home to sleep, but he'd be gone at meetings, improvement club meetings. He'd cover the whole bit.

Politics takes an awful lot out of people, and I think it is hard on a family, and I don't think people realize that and how much they do give up to go into politics, plus the fishbowl atmosphere. And now, of course, with the Fair Political Practices Act or whatever--you know what I'm talking about--where you disclose your financial holdings and whatnot--some people like to keep some things private, you know. I can see the necessity for it [the act] and, of course, they don't go into absolute details. I think it's over \$10,000 [the threshold for disclosure], and they leave it a little bit vague. But you really do live just in a fishbowl.

Shearer: I read somewhere that the incidence of divorce is, I guess, highest among--

Brown: In Sacramento.

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: I read that too. Well, you know, a lot of them don't want to maintain the two homes, probably more so if they have children who don't want to leave their friends. That's hard on children, to yank them up. It used to be very bad because before, when they had the long biennial session of the legislature, it was about six months, so their kids would be taken up there for six months. Then, very few of them lived permanently up there, but now many of them own homes in Sacramento because, presumably, it's in session all year. It is most of the year. And then they have to, of course, get back to their district, to keep in touch with their constituents.

But I read that about the divorce [rate] and it's easy to understand. You've got all those single secretaries up there. [laughter]

Shearer: I read, too, somewhere that it's like a little Washington, D.C., in that respect, that there are many young single professionals moving up and it's kind of a transient situation, too. Was that true to the same extent, do you think, when Pat was governor?

Brown: I don't think so, because I don't think that too many of them--well, see, then they had the biennial session of the legislature, so that I don't think it was really true then. I don't know. I can't remember hearing of any particular divorces in the legislature then. I don't know.

Shearer: Maybe I'm mishearing what you're saying, but I get the sense that in the beginning, when Pat was in politics as district attorney and attorney general, and when your children were small, that politics was much more of an intrusion and an irritation to you than it was later on.

Brown: Well, I said that I resented it because mainly I thought that--and I was selfish--I thought it put too much of a burden on me. I had to make all these decisions. Decisions are tiring to make. [chuckles]

Then, when the children were grown--see, Kathy was the only one left at home--and when he became governor it was different because he was there more of the time, or when he went on trips I would go with him or something like that and we'd take Kathy with us, and there wasn't that many decisions to make. [laughter] The rest were on their own. They were all grown. They were married. Jerry was in the novitiate. We only had Kathy left, and there just weren't any problems.

Interest in Consumer Issues

Shearer: Well, it sounds as though you had quite an active role as first lady too. Now, you mentioned working with Helen Nelson on consumer things.

Brown: I did that, yes.

Shearer: How did you [do that]?

Brown: I didn't hold any position or title in the state government. I was just interested in it, and so she briefed me on it, and then I'd have requests to speak to different women's groups, or during campaigns I'd go out campaigning and they'd want me to say something. I think they didn't really care what I said, but they just could see me better if I were standing up. [chuckles] They liked to see what I had on, and that's one reason they always wanted me to be introduced and say something.

But I didn't want to get into issues per se. There are so many issues that a governor deals with, and I certainly didn't know [them all]. I knew a lot of them because, of course, a lot of our conversation at home was about what was going on, and I wasn't ignorant of things that were going on--the Water Plan and how that got passed by one vote and so on. I mean, I didn't know all the little details about politics.

But I had been a teacher before I was married, and so I felt comfortable talking about education, and Pat had done so much for education. He had the Master Plan for Higher Education, and under his administration they built, I think it was--I've forgotten my speech; it's so long ago. [chuckles] But I think he built three or four new campuses of the University of California, six new state colleges, two medical schools, and whatnot. He really did a lot for education, and I felt comfortable talking about that, and I was interested, just personally interested, in consumer problems and problems that housewives had managing a budget.

Helen Nelson was working on that in the governor's office and before the legislature, trying to get them to pass bills that would protect consumers and help them, like the bill requiring comparative pricing. Remember? I don't know if it became law, but some supermarkets use it, where they have what the cost is per ounce.

Shearer: Yes, the unit pricing.

Brown: The bigger package is not necessarily the better buy. Sometimes the smaller one is, as you find out, and we found that out through some studies on that, and the misleading terms of "giant package" and all this and that. I was interested in it; that was all. And so I used to make talks on it.

Shearer: What were the forums you used for your speaking?

Brown: Well, mostly Democratic groups, I would say. They have meetings or lunches, and they always like to have a drawing card, an attraction to get people there. If they can get the governor's wife to come like to Bakersfield or something like that, they'll get a big crowd at their luncheon, and they get publicity on their activities. So, I would say it was mostly that, and then during campaign times, of course, you went everywhere in California.

Shearer: Was it mostly women's Democratic groups?

Brown: Well, not always. As a matter of fact, when Pat was governor I substituted for him a couple of times. One time was when we were down here in Los Angeles, and I remember it was a large Mexican-American group and it was honoring some judge--Sanchez, I think his name was. Pat developed a sore throat and a temperature. He was in the hotel down here, the Beverly Hilton, and they called the doctor, and he came and said, "You've got to stay in bed." Gene [Eugene] Wyman (it was his doctor that he'd brought over) and Gene said, "Oh, Bernice, you've got to go take his place."

Well, he [Governor Brown] had a speech prepared, so actually what I did was I read his speech, but I gave them a little extra, too. [laughter] I gave them my flavor, and so I gave them a prepared "spontaneous introduction" in Spanish, which Pat couldn't have done. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] What did you say?

Brown: Oh, I can't remember now. [tries to recall introduction] "Good evening. It's a pleasure for me to be here, and I'm so sorry that the governor isn't here, but he's ill and running a temperature and the doctor ordered him in bed." Something like that I said, in Spanish though. I worked on it ahead of time and looked up a few words I didn't know, but then gave it [chuckles] as if it were unrehearsed.

Shearer: What was the reception? They must have been just thrilled.

Brown: Oh, of course, they were. It brought down the house. I did the same thing one time at a huge meeting in the Sports Arena. I've forgotten the event or the occasion, but it could have been Cinco de Mayo or something like that. There were a lot of Spanish-speaking people there, so it probably was Cinco de Mayo. They had some entertainment, and they had every politician that ran for anything--you know, the city council, and there was a whole bunch of them, and the supervisors. They were all there and they would drone on. The crowd really wasn't listening to that. They were waiting for the entertainment in between the speeches. They'd be watching for that, and it was getting later and later and later.

- Brown: So, I was representing Pat, and finally they called on me, and I gave my speech, the whole thing, in Spanish. The television cameras, which hadn't been paying much attention till then, focused on me. And, I remember, Annie Miller--you know Ann Miller, the dancer?
- Shearer: Oh, the dancer, yes.
- Brown: She's a very dear friend of ours, and she called me on the phone. She said, "I didn't know you could speak Spanish!" [laughter] She was so impressed. And it made the evening news, me speaking in Spanish. You see, it was an election year, and this was, I guess, before the June election, the primary. And here I gave another prepared unrehearsed [laughter] speech in Spanish, where I'd have to look up the few words that I didn't know, and it was just bringing greetings from him, sorry that he couldn't be there, and hoping they would vote for him in an election next Tuesday. And I remember it was next Tuesday, because that was the word I looked up, so it was the week before the primary. [laughter]
- Shearer: Had you known Helen Nelson before she was named consumer counsel?
- Brown: No, I didn't know her. I don't know where Pat found her, but I think she was the first. First in the United States unless New York had one first. I'm not sure.
- Shearer: New York had had the first consumer counsel but not one ratified by its legislature.
- Brown: I don't know where she lives now.
- Shearer: In Marin, in Mill Valley.
- Brown: Is she retired?
- Shearer: No, she's working at the Consumer Foundation in San Francisco, and writing a book, and serving on many boards of directors of consumer groups.
- Brown: This was funny. It was during a campaign, It ended up in Marin County, and she was there. I had been campaigning all day through the Valley. I'd been on a three-day trip and they were going to have me end up at this dinner and join Pat for dinner. Of course, I'd stayed two or three nights at different motels and I'd had a terrible time with the plumbing. I remember when they called on me to speak. I'd had wine for dinner, I was tired, and I had a headache. The only thing I could think of--I said just what came to me spontaneously. I saw Helen Nelson there and I said, "Helen, I've got something for you to do. I wish you'd standardize plumbing fixtures in the state of California. [laughter] I told her about some you

Brown: push and pull, and some you turn to the left or to the right. They're all different! You know I got scalded. They work differently, and they should be standardized.

Shearer: What were you doing with all the plumbing fixtures?

Brown: Taking a shower. Staying in motels and just trying to take a shower.

Shearer: I see, trying to get the water on and off.

Brown: Yes. And you'd forget, and the next one would have it a different way, and I'd think, which way do I turn for cold, left or right? You do forget, and they should be standardized. There's no reason why they shouldn't be standardized. And some you pull the faucet up, like this [gestures], and some you raise up this way and then down.

Shearer: Yes, I know. I always do it wrong and get a geyser to splatter me.

Brown: But if you get hot water out of it--you know, sometimes they keep it pretty hot--instead of cold, it's not funny. At any rate, that brought down the house. That was one of the funniest speeches I ever made.

Campaigning for the Governor

Shearer: [laughter] It sounds like you really came to enjoy the stuff of politics, pressing the flesh a little bit.

Brown: Some of it I enjoyed. I think the thing is, I didn't fret about it and worry about it. Like this time, when they called on me, instead of thinking, what do I say, this just popped into my head and so I just said what popped into my head about the plumbing fixtures. I saw Helen Nelson, and it reminded me of it. I think that if you're natural and just say what you think, people accept you, and also they kind of want to get to know you, and I think that's the way that they get to know you.

Well, I'd tell about living in the Mansion, for example, things you're asking me about, and some of the problems we had. Not real problems, but I mean, for example, we had a rat problem. You know, the Mansion is old and whatnot. So, they tried everything, and we still had the rats, so I called the director of buildings and grounds, and suggested that he get a cat, thinking that would help.

So, he said, "You wish to requisition a cat?" [laughter] I said, "Yes, for the Mansion." So, he got the cat. He picked it out. I didn't go down and pick it out. And we had the cat. Well, about

Brown: a week later, one of the maids came up and told me we had a problem about the cat. The cat had seven kittens. He'd picked out a pregnant cat and didn't realize it. He didn't think it was funny. It was in the papers, and it was really quite a story [chuckles] about the cat giving delivery on a couch in the basement of the Governor's Mansion. It was an old couch that had been stored down there, and so she did have the kittens there. I thought that was funny.

But there were different stories like that. And then one time we couldn't sit out by the pool because the odor was so awful. Ugh! It was just terrible!

Shearer: Odor of what?

Brown: Well, it was just a very bad odor. So, I sent someone to investigate to see [what it was]. [The Mansion] backed up against the American Legion Hall. That was our next door neighbor on that side. We had a motel across the street and two gas stations on the other corners. Our pool area was right next to the American Legion Hall. They'd had a crab feed for 150 people the night before and had stacked the garbage right next to the fence, which was right next to our pool. [laughter] And it was just awful!

But, at any rate, I mentioned things like that, and they enjoyed it. That was before I got into issues. And then later, during the campaign, I would discuss some of the issues. I usually stuck to ones that I knew something about.

Shearer: When was the campaign when you began to get into issues?

Brown: I think that was during the '66 campaign. In '62, I didn't. In '58, I did come to a few special things, like a dinner and a luncheon, something like that. I remember one episode in that campaign, in connection with Carmen Warschaw. (She's probably on your list to interview, because she was very active in Democratic politics. I don't think she is anymore. I think she's probably retired.)

But, at any rate, she had arranged to get me on television while I was down here, because that's the name of the game. In a state the size of California, you've got to talk to the masses. So, I wasn't too happy about this, and we went to the television station, and she said, "Oh, it's going to be very easy, very relaxed," and I hadn't been on any [television programs].

Shearer: This was your first time?



Gubernatorial campaign, 1965



The Governors Brown



Brown: Yes. I hadn't been on any television at all. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to think if that was the one that Pat watched. He was supposed to be at a luncheon at noon, and he wouldn't go in to eat [laughter]; he wanted to watch me on TV. He knew I was going to be on.

But they said it would be so easy. (Yes, this is the one he watched.) So, they told me, "They'll just ask you, 'Where did you meet your husband?' and 'How long have you been married?' and 'How many children do you have?' You know, just be relaxed. It will be just family type of questions."

So, I get in there, and the first question they asked me--they may have asked me one other one; I can't remember. But they certainly didn't ask me where I met my husband or anything like that. He [the interviewer] said, "What do you think of Senator Knowland?" That was when Senator Knowland ran against Pat.

Well, I'm telling you, I gulped. I started talking because I knew I was on television and I thought, "You've got to talk." But I was trying to think all the time, "How am I going to answer this question?" [laughter] I had no answer, really. And I said, "Well, I've met Senator Knowland on a number of occasions," and I'm talking very slowly and dragging it out, trying to think, now, how am I going to answer this question? I finally decided there was no answer to it. I certainly didn't want to praise him. He was my husband's opponent. And I didn't want to criticize him; I didn't think that would be appropriate.

Finally, I said, "I'd much rather you'd ask me why I think my husband would be a good governor." He said, "All right, I will." [laughter]

Pat was watching it in a bar. They'd had a luncheon in some sort of a dining room, a restaurant or something, and the television was in the bar; they always are. And he went out. They were eating lunch, but he kept them waiting because he'd heard I was going to be on television and he wanted to hear me. [laughter] But that was really funny!

The first part was sitting down with an interviewer and I got through that all right. So then they said, "Now, would you please step forward." They had a microphone on a stand, and I was on a stage, with a live studio audience, and I had to stand. All I had to hold on to was this microphone in front of me. I'm telling you, my legs were like rubber. And here they'd told me it was going to be so easy! I didn't know what they were going to say next, after that other question. So, they started asking me questions.

Shearer: The audience did?

Brown: Yes! And, I'm telling you, my legs were like this. [makes wobbling gesture] So, the first question was, "How does the governor stand on the right to work?" If you remember, in 1958 there was the big issue of right to work on the ballot and that's why there was a tremendous vote that year, and one reason Pat won.

Shearer: Yes. That was Prop 18.

Brown: I don't know what the number of the proposition was. But it was the right-to-work one. Knowland was for it. The labor viewpoint was opposed to it.

But, at any rate, I knew the answer to it; I would have been stupid if I hadn't. It was a big, hot issue and I'd heard Pat discuss it and I knew exactly how he stood on it. But I was afraid to answer the question, because I thought I would open the door to all sorts of questions on other issues that I wouldn't know the answers on.

So, this is how I answered that. I said, "You know, I make a wonderful banana cake, but if I turned my husband loose in the kitchen, I don't think he could make a very good banana cake. By the same token, he knows all the answers to all the issues, where I'm not as familiar with them as he is. And I think really you should ask him that type of question. I don't like to comment on the issues." That's how I answered.

When we came out, Carmen Warschaw said, "That's the first time I've ever heard the right-to-work question answered by a banana cake!" [laughter] It was funny.

Shearer: [laughter] Do you think that you could make, or would want to make, that same answer today?

Brown: On the banana cake? [chuckles]

Shearer: Well, about separating your sphere from Pat's sphere.

Brown: Well, no, but the truth of the matter is that he spent all day on gubernatorial matters and, of course, some of them he discussed at home. Naturally, he'd bounce off his ideas on me, and I was familiar with government, but I didn't know all of the ramifications of it. Naturally, I didn't. So, I don't know today what I'd [say]. Well, he's not in public office. [laughter] That's the easy answer. So, I wouldn't be able to--

Shearer: And you don't think he will be? He's not going to run for the Senate? [laughter]

Brown: No, no. He's not running for the Senate. I'm sure you heard that; the wire services picked it up. As a matter of fact, a friend of ours, a mutual friend, sent a contribution to his campaign for Senator [laughter], which Pat sent back. She took it for real! And then he mentioned in San Francisco, still kidding, "I'm going to make Ben Swig my campaign chairman," and Ben Swig got a contribution. [laughter] Some people! But you know how that happened, don't you?

Shearer: No. How did that come about?

Brown: Well, he was making a speech. He still makes speeches and he loves it. He was making a speech at some college--some state college or maybe it was even a high school. I don't know. He loves to talk to kids (he does a lot of that). When he finished the speech, someone asked a question and said, "You know so much about state government, and you've participated in so many things, and you contributed so much and have so much still to contribute. You're surely not going to retire. Aren't you going to do something more in public life?"

Well, Pat has what he calls a sense of humor, and I call it low comedy, and he said, "Yes. I'm going to run for the Senate against that Hayakawa. He's too old anyway." Hayakawa's a year younger than Pat. I think he's seventy-three, and Pat's seventy-four.

And that's how--it was just picked up by the wire services up in Sacramento. Then Pat went away after that, so they were calling here, asking me if there was any truth in it, and I said, "No." [laughter]

The Chessman Case

Shearer: Back to the issues that you discussed with Pat, you were saying that he bounced ideas off you on the issues that he was grappling with. What were some of the things that you had heart-to-heart talks with?

Brown: Gosh, I can't think [of them] now. That's a long time ago. If you'd suggest things, I could think of--

Shearer: Well, the death penalty, for example, the Chessman case that came up over and over.

Brown: Oh, that was a grim time at the Mansion. That was another one of the things in public office that was not one of the nicer things about it. I was really worried.

Brown: You know, of course, the history of that, which most people do not understand. He [Governor Brown] could not commute his [Caryl Chessman's] sentence to life imprisonment. He [Brown] did not have the power because he [Chessman] was a two-time loser. He'd had two previous felony convictions. And under those circumstances, a governor does not have the right of commutation unless he gets the consent of the California Supreme Court, the concurrence of the Supreme Court. He had talked to Chief Justice Phil Gibson about it, and Phil Gibson knew the mood of the court, and he said, "They not only would turn you down, but they'll kick you in the teeth." I think [that] was the expression he used.

So, Pat knew that he could not commute him, and that was when Jerry called him when he was--I'm sure you read about this.

Shearer: I heard, yes.

Brown: He called him, and he [Jerry Brown] was either in the novitiate or was just--

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Brown: Jerry called him [Pat Brown]. As a matter of fact, I was on my way to Squaw Valley when this happened. It was the Winter Olympics and Pat was supposed to be there, at the opening of it. Nixon was there; he was vice president at the time. Pat said, "You've got to go," and so I went with Kathy and my sister. We drove up there.

The minute I got there--it was the old Tahoe Tavern; remember the old Tahoe Tavern?--I tried to call Pat at the Mansion. I was reluctant to go. I really felt I should stay in Sacramento.

Shearer: Had he been losing sleep and very upset?

Brown: Well, this was February. Well, he [Chessman] was sentenced to die, you see, and the execution was about to take place, and, as I told you, he [Pat Brown] did not have any power to commute the sentence to life imprisonment.

So, I'm gone. I'm at Tahoe. I tried again; I couldn't even get a line. They had world press there, covering the Winter Olympics, and every telephone line out of Squaw Valley was used. You just couldn't get a line to Sacramento.

So finally, I had friends there and they said, "Well, why don't we go out to dinner, and then you call him when you come back," and it worried me that I didn't get him. I often wonder how the course of history would have changed [laughter] if I had gotten him.

Brown: But in the meantime, Jerry called him, and he [Pat Brown] explained that he didn't have the power to commute the sentence and so on. But Jerry said, "Well, you can grant him a reprieve for sixty days." And I don't know if it was his idea or Pat's or whatever. [And Jerry continued,] "And then see if you can get the death penalty repealed. Go before the legislature and see if you can get the death penalty repealed."

Pat said, "Oh, there's no one chance in--" I've forgotten what odds he gave that they would repeal the death penalty. He didn't think that the legislature would do it. The mood was such that he didn't think they would.

And Jerry said--and I'm sure you have the quote from him, because I've heard him say it before--"Well, if you were a doctor, Dad, and you had one chance in a thousand"-- (I don't know what odds he gave either)-- "of saving the patient's life, don't you think you should do it?"

So, he convinced Pat to give him [Chessman] a sixty-day reprieve. Now, there's a difference between commutation and reprieve, and an awful lot of people did not understand that. He gave him a sixty-day reprieve, and he did go to the legislature, but it never got out of the Judiciary Committee. They debated it and debated it, and it was turned down; they never approved it.

Shearer: What would you have advised if you had been able to get a line through?

Brown: I didn't want him to do it. I was afraid that he would do something like granting a reprieve or something. I felt that it wouldn't do any good [for Chessman] and that it would hurt him [Pat], and it's exactly what did happen. It's exactly what did happen. In fact, his executive secretary, Fred Dutton, was very strong on it. Have you interviewed him, incidentally?

Shearer: Amelia Fry has been interviewing him, yes.

Brown: He lives in Washington. I think he said [to Pat], "You don't have the right to do that. You have the responsibility for" --whatever we were--"eighteen million people in your hand. You can lose all of your power and not be effective by just granting this reprieve to this one individual."

Pat agreed that the guy Chessman was a bum, no good, and I think he felt he was guilty, too. But he felt, as a lawyer, that he had really--[pauses to think] I don't know whether it was that he hadn't had a fair trial or the fact that he had--. He [Pat Brown] felt justice had been denied, because he [Chessman] had been eleven years in prison and they hadn't executed him.

Brown: See, if you know the history of the case, Chessman studied law while he was in prison and became an authority on it. He represented himself, I think, went into court, and he was able to keep getting these extensions or whatever they were, reprieves and so on, for all these years, through many different justices.

And was that the case where there was a transcript--? Was that the one where the court reporter died, or is that another case?

Shearer: I don't recall that.

Brown: I don't know. I'm a little confused here, but you can certainly check this out.

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: Whether the court reporter had died, and someone else had to read the transcript, and there was some discussion over that. Now, I don't know whether that's the Chessman case or some other well-known case.

But I just felt, as Fred Dutton did, that it was the lesser of two evils for him to die than for him to be reprieved and for Pat to lose his effectiveness, which he did, which he did. It hurt, really.

Shearer: Did you know at that time what Justice Gibson had told Pat?

Brown: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Shearer: So, that was taken into account?

Brown: He told him that there was no way he could get the concurrence of the California Supreme Court. If he could have gotten that, he could have commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. That wouldn't have been a reprieve. The reprieve was only for sixty days. And the interesting thing [was that] you heard from both sides before-- I'm trying to think which one. This is fuzzy in my mind. [tape off briefly while Mrs. Brown pauses to think]

It's still a little fuzzy, but I think you get it. See, he was due to be executed the following morning, the night that I went to Squaw Valley, but previous to that the pressure had been terrific. He had movie stars from Hollywood--you know, they're always interested in liberal causes and the downtrodden and all this and that--that made trips to Sacramento, pleading on behalf of Chessman. This case had international attention, because he had written a book--I've forgotten the name of his book--and it had been translated into several languages. Pat had letters, telegrams, phone calls from all over the world, mostly the Scandinavian countries and Brazil.

Shearer: [surprisedly] Brazil?

Brown: Brazil. Well, I guess the book had been sold down there or something. And he received a petition. It was on parchment or something. You could have stretched it out to here. [gestures] I don't know how many feet it was. [It had] five thousand signatures on it that had been sent up to him from Brazil.

When we went to Brazil in 1960, I don't know whether it was after Chessman did die or not, but it was in the same year anyway. We went with twenty-seven other governors, and it was still 1960, which was the year Chessman was executed, so it was either just before or after. It was embarrassing. They had twenty-seven governors there, and I remember it was in the palace in Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro. But, at any rate, we were guests of the two governments, one week in Argentina and one week in Brazil.

They took us all over the country and wanted us to see everything. In fact, the reporters who wrote it up said they'd heard about junkets, but this was the hardest working one they'd ever seen. It was the kind of thing [where] you'd get to bed about three o'clock in the morning. They'd fly you all over. And then they'd built a new jet airport and it was ninety miles from--that was in São Paulo, Brazil. The airport is ninety miles away, so it was a three-hour drive. We'd get to bed about two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock in the morning, and they'd say, "Bags have to be in the hall at six." You'd get three hours' sleep. [laughter]

But on that trip, in one of the palaces, there were press covering it. It was in Rio, because I remember we were assigned this lovely couple who were our hosts, and I remember him saying, "As far as the press is concerned there is Governor Brown and twenty-six other governors." He was the only one they were interested in.

At the palace they had a receiving line in the living room and finally the press would come, in the middle of the receiving line with their television cameras, asking him questions. It got to be embarrassing, so Pat would say, "I'll talk to you in the other room." He'd find a room, a library or something, where he could talk to them all in there, and it was like a press conference.

All the other governors got a little annoyed [laughter] because they paid so much attention to Pat. But it was just this world-wide interest in the case.

To get back to my phone call, I finally got Pat after we got home from dinner about eleven o'clock, and he said, "I just granted a reprieve to Chessman." I said, "I knew I shouldn't have gone to

Brown: Squaw Valley." I don't know whether I would have been able to prevail, or whether Jerry would have prevailed. That would have been an interesting thing, to see who would have been the most persuasive. But he was sitting there alone in that Mansion. It's a big house, and he was sitting there alone and pondering this thing. Then Jerry called, and Jerry can be persuasive, and he persuaded him to do this.

So, anyway, he granted the sixty-day reprieve, and then the legislature turned him down, as I told you. So, at the end of sixty days, he was up for execution again on the following morning. The night before, all around the Mansion, all night long, there was this vigil of people marching and chanting. There was no sleep that night, I can tell you that.

I got worried because I thought, "They're tired, people get tired--" Some of them had coffee, so I guess they did have things to eat, and blankets. But I just was afraid something might happen. They might say, "Let's storm the Mansion." They had fire escapes so we could get out, but then you can get in through the fire escapes, and we had this one lonely State Police officer out there, which I didn't think was too much protection, and that kind of worried me.

So, the next morning--I think they usually execute them at 10:00 on a Friday, don't they? I think it's customary. Why, I don't know. I came down to breakfast, and I asked where the governor was, and they said, "He's out there talking to the crowd out there." He'd gone out there and talked to them, and I was scared to death because I thought they could by this time be tired and could be angry and there could be an incident. But he just went out and told them what the problem was. And they seemed satisfied--not satisfied at the result, but that he'd done all he could.

So then he was executed. Then, after it--no, wait a minute, before. Oh, I know what I was going to tell you that I didn't mention. When he granted the reprieve, all the telegrams and all the phone calls, were from people who wanted him executed: "Why did you reprieve him? What right have you got to reprieve this rapist?" and so on.

He never did murder anyone, you know, and it was a technical ground where the death penalty [was applied]. It was very technical. Under the Lindbergh Law, I think it was, that if a person is kidnapped during the commission of a felony--it had to do with robbery. The thing that made this a death penalty case that he took \$3.50 out of her purse. The kidnapping was moving her out of the car or something. No, wait a minute. Was his kidnapping? Or his was rape? [pauses to think] No, it was kidnapping. I think he took her out of the car into his car or something. But it was very technical. This is the point, that he didn't kill anyone.

Brown: But all the people who wanted blood and wanted him killed, then you heard from them when Pat granted the reprieve. And then finally, when Chessman died, you heard from all the others. But there was no approval: "Well, you did the right thing." See, you only heard from the ones that were against it each time. It is just the ones that are against that protest, you see. The other people don't say anything; you never hear from them.

Shearer: That must really take its toll on the person who has to make the decision. Did it--?

Brown: Oh, yes. Well, Pat, in every death case--and he worried about them. He took them very seriously, and in every death case he held a clemency hearing, and he had a clemency secretary, Cecil Poole, who, I think, is a U.S. attorney in San Francisco now. He was a federal judge. One or the other; he's been both. They would hold this hearing. They would bring evidence and all kinds of testimony. You'd hear from the relatives, the parents, and the other people, the families of the people who'd been killed and whatnot. They'd hear both sides of the question, and they would hear from probation officers. They got all kinds of testimony. They'd go back into their history. And in every case, most of these people [who were convicted] were of rather low IQ. [pause while Mrs. Brown and interviewer take a break]

Shearer: Was Cecil Poole an opponent of the death penalty?

Brown: I don't know. I don't know if he had a philosophy on it. He is black. And I don't know. Usually they have a tendency, I think, to be a little more liberal and maybe be opposed to it, because so many people of their race are the ones that are finally executed, whereas the other ones, they say, get off. So, I don't know. I have a feeling he would have opposed it. But he was the clemency secretary, and they did hold these hearings.

But they found there was always something--the person to be executed had been abandoned as a child or had come from a broken home. They were sort of the dregs of society, most of the cases that came to them that were convicted. The others, I guess, had good attorneys; they could afford them. There has been this criticism of the death penalty, that it is not equally administered.

Shearer: Do you know what he advised in this particular instance?

Brown: Cecil Poole?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: No, I don't. You'd have to ask him. I imagine he's probably on the list of interviewees. In connection with my husband, aren't they interviewing people like Fred Dutton?

Shearer: Yes, I think he is on the list.

Brown: Probably Cecil Poole would be one of them because he'd been with Pat for quite a while and because he was his clemency secretary. I would think he would be.

The Governor's Influential Advisors

Shearer: But you were very much aware of how Fred Dutton felt. Was that because he was sort of an influential voice, or you knew him personally?

Brown: Oh, I knew him, and he used to come over to the Mansion.

As a matter of fact, one gripe I had about the Mansion [laughter] and Pat being governor--as I say, I did see more of him, although he was out a lot, but I never could have breakfast with Pat alone. I'd have things I'd want to ask him about or something, and I never could.

There was a back stairway from upstairs, the second floor. There were three stairways: the main circular ones; and one that went from the cook's bedroom down into the kitchen; and then there was a third one that went from this back hall down into the breakfast room. I would start down this back staircase with a robe on to have breakfast with him, and I had a whole bunch of questions I wanted to ask him. Well, I'd get halfway down, and there he'd be talking, and he'd have company for breakfast. It was another appointment in the day. He's always been this way. The day isn't long enough for all the appointments he'd want, and so it would be another appointment in the day. He'd say, "Come over for breakfast." Usually it was staff or department heads or something like that.

In fact, I discovered a really good dish for breakfast one day, which happened because he was always having company. One time the cook had been away and we'd been away, and we'd just come back. She called me on the phone frantically this one morning [laughter] and said, "He's bringing someone for breakfast, and we only have so many eggs," and there wasn't time to send out for more eggs. So, anyway, I came down to the kitchen and started thinking what we could put in it to stretch it out, and we opened up some cream of mushroom soup and put some of that in it. I've forgotten how many eggs we had and how many people we had, but it was not enough to go

Brown: around, that's for sure. So, we added some of that soup, and then we had some cheddar cheese and added some cheese, and it was so successful. [chuckles] That became sort of the regular breakfast menu when Pat had company for breakfast. They all loved it so much that that's what she started serving, and that's how that recipe was concocted.

Shearer: Who were the people that Pat really listened to on these issues? Fred Dutton apparently was a real stalwart advisor.

The Champion Family Kidnapping

Brown: Yes, he was one. Yes, he was very knowledgeable.

Hale Champion. He thought highly of Hale. Speaking of Hale Champion, that was another thing I remember that happened. Certain incidents, you know, seem like they happened yesterday; you remember the drama, the tension. One was the Chessman case. The other was when Hale Champion was kidnapped. Do you recall?

Shearer: Oh, yes. I remember.

Brown: He and his wife and small baby were kidnapped. They had a son and a cousin, who was staying with the son. They had left a sleeping porch door open, and that's how they got in. But they [son and cousin] were sleeping, and the burglars left them, and they went in the Champions' bedroom with a gun and pulled a gun on them and said, "Get dressed."

She had this young baby. I've forgotten the age, but she [the baby] was in arms, and so she [Mrs. Champion] said, "I can't leave her." So, they said, "Take her. Wrap her up and take her."

They drove them all over. God, they went up to Nevada and back into California. They were all over, and they weren't able to find them.

So, it was at nighttime, the incident that I remember so well. We were sitting there in the living room, and there were some other people, probably Fred Dutton and different ones from the staff, sitting there. Of course, someone was in constant communication, and then Pat would answer the phone, and I remember there was one particular call, and we were all like this [gestures to indicate tension]. You could make quite a play about this. Pat was talking, and all of a sudden he said, "Oh, my God! Was he killed?" So, we knew that someone had been shot or something. Or [he said,] "Who's

Brown: shot?" We got words so that we could kind of piece it together a little bit, and everybody was just dead silent, and then the minute he hung up the phone everybody said, "What happened?"

Well, what happened was that they drove by a sporting goods store or something. They went in and got more ammunition and everything, but no problem. Isn't that ridiculous?

Shearer: Just amazing, yes.

Brown: And I think they even bought more guns; I don't know. But they threw Hale out of the car at this particular point, and I think it was in front of this sporting goods store. It seems to me someone in the store shot, and he was hit in the leg. I don't know. It's a little fuzzy in my mind. But he was hit in the leg, so it was just a flesh wound. He wasn't seriously injured or anything like that. But I think they threw him out of the car first and then kept driving Marie around with the baby. Apparently, having brought the baby was a lifesaver because they were kind to the baby and kind of sympathetic and then finally let her go. But I just remember that. It was so dramatic.

Measures for Personal Security

Shearer: How did that affect all of you? You must have been just horrified. Did your life change? Did you put on more guards?

Brown: Well, I don't know as they did. They found out that it was a random [burglary]. They weren't after Hale Champion. I don't know whether he was press secretary or director of finance at that time. The burglars weren't after him for that. It was a random selection. They were out to rob, and why they kidnapped them, I don't know. That was kind of silly. That door was open, and that's why they went in. I don't think they knew who they had. But it seemed so dumb for them to be driving them around. I don't know whether they were going to send a ransom note or what. It's kind of fuzzy in my mind. Now I'm going to have to ask Pat tonight and find out what it was, because I've kind of forgotten. You know, this is quite a few years ago. You remember certain things vividly, like sitting in the living room and hearing him on the phone say, "Oh, my God!" You can remember that, but then the details are kind of fuzzy in my mind.

But, I'll tell you, one time when they did put the security around the Mansion--they doubled it--and I remember this phone call. Pat called me and told me that President Kennedy had been shot, and

Brown: then he kept calling me when they'd get reports from the hospital and so on, because he didn't die right away although he was out of it mentally-- They put guards around the office and put guards around the house, and they did in other Governors' Mansions, because they thought it might be a plot against the government.

Shearer: And that other people would be marked, too?

Brown: Other people, yes, would be. Until they found the answer, they did that.

They had Kathy with guards one time. This was after the Patty Hearst kidnapping; well, during the Patty Hearst [incident]. I mean, after she had been kidnapped. And they were after some other people. The police got hold of a hit list they had, and Kathy's name was on it, the sister of the governor, and so they threw security around her. It just happened that she was going to a weekend conference. I think it was someplace in San Bernardino. Wherever it was she was going, she was going to be gone overnight, and I was minding the children.

Well, she said they had helicopters flying over and surrounding her and watching her, and she hadn't told me. She hadn't had a chance to. She didn't know at first what it was all about. There was a car parked across the street here with two men in it, and my next door neighbor's husband came home, and he noticed it. The neighbors kept watching, and they noticed it was there for quite a while. So, she called me, and I said, "I don't know anything about it."

So, anyway, they finally called the police, or they went out and talked to them; I've forgotten which. The men were watching my house because Kathy's kids were staying here. And it was funny. [chuckles] The next day, I got in the car and had the kids in the car, and pretty soon I see their car following me. It got so I waited for them if they missed the signal, because in the meantime Kathy had called me [chuckles] and told me.

Shearer: Oh, you know that they were [security guards]?

Brown: Then I knew, so I'd wait so they wouldn't miss the street signal and wouldn't lose me and feel badly about it. But that didn't last long. They finally got that solved.

Shearer: But you weren't particularly frightened then? Do you remember how you felt?

Brown: When? With Kathy?

Shearer: With Kathy.

Brown: Oh, yes, with that SLA [Symbionese Liberation Army]. I mean, they were a bad group. Who wouldn't be? Yes.

Shearer: What about during your days in the Mansion? Was there any time that you remember being just really frightened for your own safety or for Pat's safety?

Brown: Not really, not really, because we did have a guard, and an electric eye signaled when you went through the driveway. I often wondered about the fences; if they jumped over them, whether that rang a bell. [laughter] I never did check that out to see how far we really were protected. They did protect it against fire, because they made hourly checks in the basement. There were three furnaces in the Mansion; it took that to keep it warm. They did check those every hour, and the first floor they checked. They didn't come above the first floor at night when they were on their vigils.

##

Brown: At the 1956 Democratic convention, Pat was chairman of the delegation. When his big moment came--now I think they do it a little differently. But do you remember when each delegation's chairman would cast [the votes] and they'd say, "California casts 120 votes for--" and this sort of thing?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: When his big moment came as chairman of the delegation, he couldn't talk. He'd lost his voice from air conditioning. He did it anyway, but it was hoarse. [imitates hoarse voice] [laughter] His big moment on television!

Shearer: Oh, what a pity!

Brown: So, that's why he doesn't like air conditioning.

Shearer: Well, that would be so frustrating to get lights, camera, action, and the moment, and then have your voice fade out.

Who did the portraits of you and your husband? [looking at portraits on wall]

Brown: Marilyn Sunderman. She lives in Hawaii now, has her studio there, and she's a very interesting artist. She majored in philosophy and psychology as well as art. She tries to portray not a photographic likeness of you, like some portraits are, but what she sees of what she thinks is inside of you, what you're like, what you're really like.

Brown: The reason she did mine with those [indicating portrait] flowers, she saw me working in the garden. You know, those [indicating flowers outside] I rooted and grew myself.

Shearer: The pelargoniums?

Brown: Yes. They haven't been as good this year. I've been troubled with white flies the last couple of years, but they have been beautiful in some years. I started with five plants, five different varieties, and I had them in the ground, and they get very leggy in the ground. They're actually better in pots. They like their roots to be crowded. So, I had them in the ground over there [gestures]. See? [shows interviewer picture of Pat Brown beside flowers] You'd think that Pat had grown them all. He had nothing to do with them. But I was taking the picture. He thinks a person should be in the picture all the time. He should have had me in it instead of [himself], but that's the way he did it. [laughter] But I like the pots there because you can see them from both inside and outside.

So, I had five in the ground. And when it came time to prune them back--you know, they got so leggy. You know what I mean by leggy, just growing out this way and that way [gestures]. I had to cut them back. I cut them back, and I looked at them, and they were so healthy looking, these branches, and I thought, "I can't throw those away. It's a sin." I told you I was brought up never to waste anything. I've told this story. This is one I told [laughter] when I campaigned for Jerry last year. But I remember one time Gray Davis was ecstatic.

Frugality: A Family Trait

Brown: Jerry called me a year ago Mother's Day. (This Mother's Day he came over on Saturday because he was going to be in northern California on Sunday.) But last year on Mother's Day he called me and invited me to brunch, and I thought, "How nice!" Well, then I found out that he'd invited a lot of other mothers that he didn't think had any place to go on Mother's Day from the old people's homes out there in Santa Monica. He had it at a restaurant, a real nice restaurant. I'd never been there before and had never heard of it. [tries to think of name of restaurant] The Great American Food and something Society. Well, it's something like that. It's very good. They had fresh fruit. They had marvelous food, sort of health food and things like that, and he'd invited all these elderly women there.

Brown: So, of course, the press covered it on television. It was a campaign year. So, they came over, and I'm sitting at a table with some of these older women, and they started questioning me. One of the questions--this woman said to me, "Well, what qualities do you have that you think your son inherited?"

Gray Davis happened to be standing there and heard it. I said, "Well, I don't know. I think he gets his fiscal frugality from me," because, you know, they'd been talking about his fiscal frugality. And then I went on and told them the story like I told you about how I was brought up never to waste anything, that it was a sin to waste anything. I don't think in that particular case I talked about the pelargoniums, but I have on other occasions.

But it was on the six o'clock news on two different stations, it was on the eleven o'clock news on the two stations, and Gray Davis was absolutely ecstatic. [chuckles] He said, "We would have paid \$10,000 for a commercial like that!" [laughter]

But it's true. I really think that he does get that from me. I mean, it bothers me to waste things. It really does. It hurts me to throw something away. That's the trouble. I never get the house straight now. I've got so many things back there I should throw away [laughter], and I can't throw them away.

Pat's the same way. He's got stuff stacked up here, and his bedroom drove me crazy because the two nightstands had stuff piled high. He'd be in the middle of a lot of magazines and books, and [he'd say,] "Don't touch them."

And newspapers. The newspapers! You should have been here yesterday. I had the man who drove him home from the airport take the papers out. They were up to the ceiling there, and every two weeks he takes some.

That's another thing. It makes me angry. I cannot stand to throw the newspapers in the garbage can. I've stacked them on the side, and they just take them and grind them up with the garbage. They won't stack them and recycle them. It just gets ground up as garbage, and that bothers me because I think of the trees that could grow from the paper and so on.

Shearer: There's no recycling project here?

Brown: Yes, but you have to take them to the project yourself. I found out a place where you can take them, and I get somebody to come and take them for me. I feel better. I had a cleaning girl, who used to take my papers every week when she came, and she got enough money for gasoline for her car. Of course, that was before it was almost a dollar a gallon.

Brown: But we have so many papers. Pat takes the Sacramento Bee. He says it's the only paper he can get any news out of, state news and whatnot. Occasionally he gets the Chronicle or Examiner, especially if he has flown up there, and he takes the Herald-Examiner and the Los Angeles Times, and he takes the Wall Street Journal. You name it! So, we have a lot of papers.

Shearer: Do you attempt to plough through the papers, too?

Brown: Well, I read the Times, and I think it's too long. Their stories are much too long.

Shearer: This is the Los Angeles Times?

Brown: Yes. Their reporters--I don't think do a good job of reporting, because if they did they would condense the stories and give you the important stuff, although I think it [the lengthiness] may be contrived. They continue it and continue it and continue it. Are you familiar with the Los Angeles Times?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: A story is continued on, three or four times, on different pages, and I think it's so you'll read the ads. I don't read the ads, so they're fooled in my case.

Shearer: They jump it, just in little segments, from page to page to page.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Yes, I have noticed that. The Chronicle makes it very easy. They have the headline stories on the front, and then you just flip it over.

Brown: On the back page. Now, that's good.

Well, Pat had all this mess in his room.

It's hard to find things for him for his birthday or something and Father's Day. He doesn't have many wants, and he has what he needs, so I never can think of anything. So, usually I end up by doing the prosaic things. I get him shirts and ties and underwear and so on. He has never bought a thing for himself other than suits (because he has to have them made--I can't get them for him) for, I don't know, twenty or twenty-five years. I don't think he'd even know what size underwear he wears. He's never bought anything for himself. He won't take the time.

Shearer: He doesn't have interest in that?

Brown: He doesn't take the time, no. Now, the shirts and ties, I have picked them out carefully to go with a particular suit, a particular tie with a particular shirt. Invariably he wears it with another suit. [laughter] He doesn't have color sense. I go like this [gestures]. I'll say, "It was to go with this!" [laughter] It's a minor thing, but it upsets me.

Shearer: I take it that he doesn't buy clothes for you then.

Brown: No. But you know something funny? Take a dress that I'd wear to a party. He likes all my clothes. He really likes them. But the point is, I don't buy anything I know he doesn't like [chuckles], so it's that easy. But how he shows that he especially likes it--and it's with almost every dress I wear, I must say--he'll say, "How do you like my wife's dress? I picked it out for her," or, "I bought it for her." He has never bought anything for me, but that's his way of saying that he likes it, which I think is kind of cute.

Shearer: He really approves.

Brown: Yes.

Do you know what a baker's rack is?

Shearer: Oh, yes, to stack up all the breads.

Brown: Well, I got a big one, black wrought iron, and I think it holds four to six stacks of magazines on each shelf, and it's got about four shelves. I figured it'd take hundreds; all the reading matter that he could possibly bring home for the rest of his life. He would have a neat room. And now that is absolutely filled to the top, and the nightstands are already like that [gestures].

I said, "What would you have done if you didn't have the baker's rack? Where would this stuff be?" I've been trying to get him to go through it, and I've been trying to go through things. I said, "You know, if anything happens to us, the kids are going to call in a junkman and say, 'Just take it all out.' They're not going to go through these things." And some thing you want to keep that are important. I don't know. I haven't been able to get him to do it.

I've been going through pictures. I've got cartons in my closet in my bedroom. All these books they wrote on Jerry--they all want pictures...early pictures and so on. I've got lockers out there in the carport, and I've got cartons and stuff there. I had some in my closet, on the floor, and I would go through them. They were in no order at all and, you can imagine, we had quite a few pictures taken when Pat was governor. [chuckles]

Brown: So, I decided that I was going to go through them, that this was ridiculous, and get them in some kind of order, separate them--like family pictures, our children, early pictures of them; then pictures with the grandchildren; in other words, in categories; pictures when Pat was governor; when he was attorney general; pictures of him with other people; pictures of the two of us together; and so on. I started on this project, but I haven't finished it.

I bought--I'm kind of afraid to leave too many things outside there [in the lockers] because of the weather. I've had some things disintegrate.

Shearer: It's not insulated?

Brown: Well, no. We had such a wet winter that some things did get water spotted.

But I found these things in a department store, and I thought they were absolutely marvelous. They're metal and they're like a suitcase, with a handle, and even a lock, if you want to lock them up. The beauty of them is they're not deep; they're made to go under a bed. I bought four of them, and then I found out under the king-sized bed I could get more, so I think I'm going to go back and get another one.

I found so many things that could be thrown away and that I waited to show him before I threw them away. For example, somebody would take a picture, and there would be five copies of it with him with different people, and I figured, "We don't want those." Some of them, I don't even remember who the people were. One set of prints was from Labor Day at the Mansion. We always went to the races that day, and I'd have the labor leaders' wives over to the Mansion before lunch. (I think we had lunch out at the races.) They'd take these pictures for me to sign and autograph, and there were about five copies of each one. I came across those, so I just threw those out.

Shearer: When you were doing that kind of official entertaining, did you ever feel constrained? I remember your saying that when you addressed groups, you tried to stay away from discussing substantive issues. Did you feel that you had to be a little bit guarded in your relations with legislators and wives of legislators and staff people?

Brown: Well, it never occurred to me as such, but I'm rather a cautious person by nature, so I think that I would instinctively not blurt out something that I felt I shouldn't. In fact, I can keep a secret. Pat can't always. [laughter]

Recollections of Ida Schuckman Brown

Brown: He takes after his mother in that respect. She was the kind that you'd never tell anything to if you really wanted to keep it a secret, because she couldn't keep the secret.

Shearer: Is she still living?

Brown: No.

His mother was marvelous, and she lived to the ripe age of ninety-six, enjoyed marvelous health until the last year. It would have been better if she'd died about a year or a year and a half before she did, because she had never been sick in her life. Then she started having one operation after another. It was cancer, and she was in and out of hospitals, and uncomfortable, so it would have been better if she hadn't had that [experience], because before that she was in excellent health, and her mind was as clear as a bell. She was sharp as a tack right up until the day she died.

Pat called her every day, every night or day. He never missed, unless we were overseas and it would be difficult to get her. She died, I think it was on a Saturday around three or four o'clock in the morning or something like that. He'd called her Friday night. She was telling him--she called him Edmund; I call him Pat--she said, "Oh, Edmund, I had the loveliest lunch today." She was living with Frank, the youngest son. She said, "Frank took me to the Palace Hotel for lunch," and, like older people, she told everything she had. She said, "You know, I even had a bourbon with soda before lunch." Now, this was a few hours, really, before she died.

Her mind was so clear. I remember other examples of it, too. We used to lease a house here in Los Angeles because, after all, the bulk of the population is down here, and we'd have to spend so much time down here, and we didn't want to be in hotels all the time. We wanted to entertain; it was easier to do it in a house. So, we had this very nice house that we leased that had a big, big garden, and we did a lot of entertaining of different groups.

One time we were going to have this group of senior citizens. So, I called his mother and said that we'd like her to come down for it. I thought she'd enjoy it and that Pat would be so proud to introduce his mother. She was ninety-three or something like that then. She said, "Oh, I can't." I said, "Why not? We'll have somebody pick you up and take you to the airport. We'll meet you at the airport here and drive you in." And she said, "I just can't." I said, "Why not?" And she said, "Oh, my hair is a mess." And I thought, "If at that age you're worried about your hair, you're all right," and that was so typical of her.

Shearer: Was Pat really down when she died?

Brown: Well, no, because when [they're] ninety-six, you think you've been lucky to have had them that long, and she had been so uncomfortable and sick, and she passed away very peacefully, so it was just--. She was very independent. She lived alone up until the last couple of years of her life in an apartment.

Shearer: Really?

Brown: Yes. That's the way she wanted it.

Shearer: In San Francisco?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: That's very fortunate.

Brown: But she had all her faculties. I'm trying to think of some of the other things she said. [pauses to think] But she had a great sense of humor too.

Shearer: Are the people that you saw for fun the people that you saw for politics, or are they two different groups of people?

Brown: When? At what stage?

Shearer: Well, I guess, two stages: in the Mansion, and now.

Brown: In the Mansion, as I said, we didn't have time to see old friends and, anyway, most of them lived in San Francisco, where we came from.

Oh, that reminds me of another remark of his mother's [chuckles], which is priceless.

But the first Christmas we were in the Mansion, before Christmas, in December, when they decorated the Christmas trees-- and I told you how lovely it was. You know, at Christmas you get into the Christmas spirit, and Pat said, "Gee, you know, I miss all my old friends in San Francisco around Christmas." So, I said, "Well, why don't we have a party? We'll charter a bus, and we'll invite them up for dinner. A lot of them haven't seen the Mansion, and they would be delighted to come."

Well, it was about nine days before Christmas, something like that. [chuckles] There wasn't much time. Well, I wanted to do it on a Saturday night, so it was nine days before the Saturday night before Christmas. I put it all together, chartered the bus. Everybody came, not a one didn't come, and it got to be an annual

Brown: tradition, and every year we'd have a Christmas party up there, and they'd all come up on a bus. Oh, a few didn't come from San Francisco, like some came from Walnut Creek, and they'd come up and stay at the motel across the street. But that way we got to see them. But we almost had to do that to maintain old contacts, because there just wasn't time otherwise.

Shearer: Who were the people you invited?

Brown: All of our friends. We had [pauses to think] seventy, seventy-five people, something like that. We just invited all our friends.

Pat had a birthday not too long ago. It was his seventy-fourth, so he wanted to have a party in San Francisco, and he was just going to have a few people go out to dinner. Well, it ended up that he had a big party at the Fairmont Hotel [chuckles], and I said to him, "You know, it's not your seventy-fifth, and you're not trying to duplicate your seventieth."

On his seventieth, he had five birthday parties. He had one down here, which I gave for him, at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel; he had one in San Francisco; he had one in Sacramento; and he had two judges' parties, north and south. They were all his judicial appointments. They have this warm, personal feeling for him, and so they always have this party for him around his birthday, not right on it. So, he had five on his seventieth. But, you see, he wanted to go to San Francisco rather than have it down here last year, because he said, "I never get to see the people up there, whereas down here I do."

But I've got to tell you the one on his mother that I just remembered when we were talking about this. When she had her eighty-fifth birthday, it was when he was first governor, and I said, "That's a milestone. We really should--" In fact, I think the [Christmas] trees were still going to be up, because his mother's birthday was the eleventh of January; and a good old Episcopalian like I am, you take it down on the Twelfth Night. [laughter] Well, that would be January 6 though, wouldn't it, not January 12. They left them up quite a while.

But, at any rate, I said, "You ought to do something really nice for her. It's a milestone, eighty-five years old. Why don't we have a dinner at the Mansion and have all her friends up, and we'll charter a bus like we do at Christmas for our friends, and bring them up, and have an early dinner because I know older people like to eat early, and they'll get back reasonably early."

So, he said, "That's a great idea." So, I said, "You call her," so she'd think that he thought of it. So, he calls her and he says, "Muth" and he starts telling her the plan. And she calls him Edmund,

- Brown: as I said. And when he got to the part, "We'll charter a bus. Bring all your friends up," she said, "Edmund, to bring my friends up you'd have to charter a fleet of ambulances!" [laughter]
- Shearer: [laughter] Oh, goodness!
- Brown: To show you her sense of humor--[laughter]
- Shearer: That's so valuable.

Political Colleagues as Friends

- Brown: Oh, you asked me another question with regard to that. So many of the people who were connected with him in politics became our very close friends, like Gene Wyman and Roz Wyman down here in Los Angeles. They were very close.
- Shearer: The Duttons?
- Brown: And the Duttons. Well, some of them live in Sacramento. Of course, the Duttons live in Washington now, but we have dinner with them when we're back there in Washington, and Pat does when he's there alone.

I'm trying to put together a dinner. We just haven't entertained in so long because we're out so much, to begin with. Pat's away so much, and when he has one night home he is so exhausted that he would like to--now, he came in yesterday afternoon from Tokyo and came home and went to bed, because it was a night flight and with the difference in time he was bushed. He would have loved to have stayed home tonight, but he has to go out tonight.

I think he's free tomorrow night. I don't think we have anything on the calendar. But Saturday night we're going out, Sunday night we're going out, and it just goes on like that, so I haven't entertained at all.

But he's been wanting me to have a small dinner. He likes the small dinner parties where I'll cook it, because he thinks my food's better than the restaurants' and so on. So, he mentioned three other couples, which would be eight with us. Because they all live in this area now, he said, "I'd love to have my three former press secretaries for dinner." One's Jack Burby, the other's Roy Ringer, and the other is Lu Haas. Jack Burby and Roy Ringer both work for the Times now. Jack Burby just moved out here. He lived in Washington. Lu Haas is Alan Cranston's administrative assistant. He's the one that is in the field out here.

Brown: But, at any rate, they're all good friends. We're having them [for dinner]. It has nothing to do with politics or anything, but you know politics will be discussed. [chuckles] But I mean, in other words, they are personal friends that we consider personal friends, but we just happen to have originally known them through politics. And, I think, when Hale Champion came out here one time, Pat put together a party for him. So, we consider them good friends, although they were originally political.

Shearer: Do you and Pat have the same friends by and large? I mean, do you enjoy the same sort of people?

Brown: Pretty much so, pretty much so. Of course, they're friends, you know, that we go to their place for dinner, and we have them over here, but we owe them all. [laughter] I'm going to have to start entertaining. It's going to take me a couple years. Then we have the friends from the club. He has a small group that he plays golf with, the same ones all the time, whereas I play with a lot of different people.

##

Pat and Jerry and the "Political Personality"

Shearer: I just want to be sure that I ask you a couple of things about Pat's style of governing and Jerry's style. I've read that there is such a thing as a "political personality," and that a person who has certain traits is likely to want to be a politician and succeed in politics, and then I see the two men who have succeeded to the governorship, who apparently have such different styles. How does that strike you? Do you think there is such a thing?

Brown: I think they're two different personalities, and I think Jerry has a few of my genes, so he's a little different from Pat. Pat is very outgoing, as you know. You didn't interview him though; Chita [Amelia R. Fry] did.

Shearer: That's right.

Brown: But he's very--they used to call him ebullient. I think that's the word they used, or the word they use now. But he loves people and, oh, he stops and talks to them, like on trips in foreign countries. He can carry on a conversation with anyone and become acquainted and know more about them before you get through. He's really interested in young people, in finding out what school they're going to, what they're studying, and so on. But he's just more gregarious and more outgoing.

Shearer: What is it that you think he really wants out of politics?

Brown: Who?

Shearer: Pat.

Brown: Pat? Wants out of politics? Well, I think it's finished. He's not going to run for the Senate! [laughter]

Shearer: Well, what did he really like the best out of politics?

Brown: I think really the thing that gave him the most satisfaction in politics was the things he could do for people, that he could make someone's life a little bit better, and I've heard him say this.

He's not particularly religious now. I mean by that he doesn't-- he did go to church a couple of weeks ago. He decided he'd go. He said, "It's kind of nice to go sit there for an hour." But he used to be a practicing Catholic; that's what I mean. He'd go regularly. But he said they have something in Catholicism where, in your prayers or something, you pray for the most forgotten soul in purgatory. I'm not a Catholic, so I don't know if this makes sense to you or not, but apparently there's some prayer in which they do that. They pray for the most forgotten soul in purgatory, which, I guess, is about the last person on earth that you could pray for, that needs your prayer.

And he said that he used to pray that in some way what he did would touch, I guess, the most forgotten person in the State of California, somebody who couldn't help himself, and I think that's where he got the satisfaction, out of really doing things for people. He got pleasure out of doing that, helping them.

And he spends an awful lot of time, as a matter of fact, in his law business with people coming in, and sometimes it's not law business, but [they] just need his help, and no fee or anything like that. But, oh, he's done a lot for people--parents who have problems with their children. I'm thinking of one man in New York, for example, whose daughter was out here and in trouble, where he [Pat Brown] spend hours, days, trying to get her straightened out and so on. That's his nature. That's just what he's like.

Jerry is more private, a more private person, but I think he's just as compassionate as Pat, and I think he has the same commitment-- I think this is what Jerry gets from him--commitment to public service, and I think that's why he got into politics. He certainly took a circuitous route. First he was studying to be a priest.

Shearer: Did that make waves in the family? I mean, was everyone pleased at his decision to study for the priesthood?

Brown: Well, it was just accepted. I didn't want him to go in until--I really wanted him to finish college. He couldn't go in without both of his parents' permission before he was eighteen. He was only seventeen when he graduated from high school, and he wanted to go in then, and I wanted him to wait. I really wanted him to wait four years, but he went to Santa Clara for a year, and then he was eighteen, and so he went in.

Shearer: Were you surprised by his decision, or did you see it coming a long time?

Brown: Well, he was an altar boy and he did all these things. You see, I'm not a Catholic, but I brought the children up Catholic because Pat was a Catholic.

The Question of Religion in a Mixed Marriage

Shearer: Was that a difficult decision for you?

Brown: Well, no. You more or less promise that in the mixed marriage, that you will raise them Catholic. I don't know whether they still do that or not now. They've liberalized so many rules of the church that there aren't too many anymore, but I don't know about that one.

Shearer: But when you were married in the first ceremony--did you have to promise that then? Or wasn't that in the church?

Brown: No, no. We weren't married in a Catholic Church the first time. We were married in an Episcopal Church. And then when we were remarried, it was by a Catholic priest. They call it blessing the marriage or something, because Pat was denied the rites of the church because he'd been married outside the church, so in order to be able to go to communion and whatnot he had to be married by a priest. So, that was when we did that, and then part of that was you agreed to bring up the children Catholic.

As a matter of fact, it was funny. I had to take them for instruction. They were about four and six years old, something like that, Barbara and Cynthia, and I remember taking them for instruction for their first communion. The priest was questioning them, "Do you know the Lord's Prayer? Do you know the Apostles' Creed?" and so on. So they'd say, "Yes," and so he'd say, "Say it."

Brown: When they came to one, they ended it the Episcopalian way, which is, "For Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever." He said, "Well, we make it easy. That's all you say. You don't have to say the other." [laughter] So, they had had training, but it was Episcopal training [laughter], but then they became Catholics.

But after Jerry left the novitiate, he went to Berkeley to get his degree, and he got it in a classics major, Greek and Latin. I don't think there are many. Look that up sometime and see if he's the only one that graduated from Berkeley as a classics major. How do you find that out?

Shearer: Oh, I'm sure there are records. They've got everything on computers now. [laughter]

Brown: Well, I'm just curious, because that is very unusual.

Shearer: What year did he graduate? In 1960?

Brown: No, it wasn't '60. It was about '61 or '62. Pat was governor, because he gave him his degree. Clark Kerr was president of the University. And I remember this picture of them. It wasn't '63, because I know that year he was going to Yale Law School, and he worked in NATO in Paris that year, because that was the year we went to Europe and he met us over there, so it was not '63. It could have been '62 or '61; one or the other, I'm pretty sure, because '60, I think, is when he came out.

Shearer: What does it mean to leave the novitiate?

Brown: Well, you have to get permission, I believe, to leave, unless you just walk over the hill, as they say, which some do. But, I mean, if you want to still be in the good graces or still be a Catholic, you'd have to get permission to leave. They take certain vows when they go in. They take three main vows, the Jesuits--I don't know whether the others are the same way--and it's poverty, chastity, and obedience. The one that Jerry could not accept and, really, the one he came out on was obedience.

Shearer: Really?

Brown: Well, maybe it's not what you think it means. It means that if the church tells you that this is so, you don't disagree with it; you accept it as being such because they've told you it is such--the dogma of the church. Some of the things he questioned. He couldn't accept them, couldn't accept everything they said--just because they tell you it's so. He was inquiring about it. So, that was really the reason that he [left].

Brown: And the funny part of it is, you'd think that when he was going to leave that he'd leave the next day. [chuckles] He said he was leaving, and he said, "I don't know; I think I'll leave about February." He was in no hurry to leave when he made up his mind to leave. Isn't that strange?

Shearer: That's interesting, yes.

Brown: He stayed there at least a month, and it might have been six weeks or two months, after he made up his mind to leave, before he actually came out.

Shearer: Did he discuss that decision with you, or did you notice him struggling with it?

Brown: No, no. I knew nothing about it. It was his decision to go in, and it was his decision to come out.

Jerry's Unconventional Route to Politics

Brown: Then, when he came out, he went to Berkeley and he got the degree in classics because he could get it quicker that way. He had had so much Greek and Latin, you see, in the novitiate, and he had very little science--they're not strong on science--I'm not sure he had any.

Then he thought he would like to be a psychiatrist. This intrigued him. He had all kinds of books I know he was reading. Even up to the time when he was studying for the bar, he was still interested in psychiatry. Then he found out that you had to be an M.D., and you had to have so much science to become an M.D., and it would take eight years. It would have just taken a long time, and he had spent three and a half years down there at the seminary, so he felt that he didn't want to spend that much time.

So then he thought, well, he'd be a clinical psychologist, which actually does the same work and requires almost as long a preparation, but not quite as long. You don't have to study to be an M.D. first. So, I said to Pat, "Why don't you see if you can get him a job, a nonpaying one, or have some contact, or just go visit some of the state institutions and visit with clinical psychologists and see what type of work it is. Expose him to it. See whether it is really something he wants to do, so he won't waste another four years finding out and then deciding he [doesn't want to do it]." And Pat did, and Jerry just decided it wasn't for him, because he came home one day and he said that he'd decided he

Brown: would like to go to law school and would we finance that? He applied, and he was accepted at Yale Law School, and so he went to Yale Law School.

Pat was delighted. He'd been dying for him to study law all the time. As a matter of fact, I had to restrain him, because I was afraid that if he urged him, Jerry would never study law. I'd just give it the soft sell and say, "Well, don't overlook the law, Jerry. After all, your father's a lawyer. You have two uncles that are lawyers, two brothers-in-law that are lawyers. It might have something in it." But it was his decision to study law, and he became a lawyer.

Then the added dividend for Pat, since Jerry is our only son, was that he decided to get into politics, [laughter] which we never would have dreamt that he would have done. So, of course, he [Pat Brown] got a vicarious pleasure out of him being in politics.

Shearer: You were saying that you thought it would be wise to give law the soft sell, so that he wouldn't be turned away from it. That was your idea?

Brown: I did. I'd just point out to him, "Don't overlook it. Consider it," whereas Pat comes on awfully strong, you know. He really does. He would be the kind to say, "Jerry, I want you to study law. Now, you ought to study law. Now, this is the thing," and that would turn Jerry off. Pat comes through kind of forcefully.

The Useful Double Entendre

Brown: Getting back to the artist Marilyn [Sunderman who did Pat's portrait], this is what she saw in him--strength, power, a very strong personality. I like the painting. I like it a darn sight better than the one in the State Capitol. I hate that! I hated it the day they hung it, and I had a hard time controlling myself when they asked me what I thought of it.

Shearer: What did you say?

Brown: I've forgotten. It was something very double entendre, I would say. [chuckles] You could interpret it any way you wanted.

Shearer: [laughter] It was "memorable"?

Brown: Another time when I did the same thing. I dedicated the Palm Springs Tramway. Have you ever been up in that?

Shearer: Oh, I never have, no.

Brown: Well, it was in September. It was very hot, 117 degrees on the floor of the valley, and when we got up there it rained; it was cold. I had to stand in front of the tram because I cracked the bottle of champagne over the thing when I was leaning out the window. It's a fairly big car. Have you ever been up in the Eiffel Tower in Paris?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: Where you stand up. It's that kind of a tram. It's not one you sit in. It holds quite a few people; I've forgotten how many.

I was right in front of the window, and the window was open. This was in September. I have a feeling, if it were in wintertime--the snow looks soft, whether it is or not [chuckles]--it wouldn't be quite as frightening. But [in summer] these are jagged rocks, and they look further down, when you go up in this thing. [laughter] I suffer from acrophobia a little bit. I can't get too near the edge of a building or anything like that. It really worries me.

So, I'm standing there, and we're going up this cable. At first, when it starts off, it kind of goes down a dip, and then it goes up, and then toward the top it does the same thing again. (It's the cables and so on.)

When I got off, there were all these television cameras rolling. You know, the State built it; it belonged to the State. And the reporters said, "Well, what did you think of it?" [laughter] Well, I didn't want to say I was scared to death, because I thought then the State would lose all the revenue, but yet I didn't like to lie. So, I said, "It was the most exciting ride I've ever had in all my life!"

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Francis Marshall Brown

EDMUND G. BROWN'S COMMITMENT TO LESSEN SOCIAL ILLS:
VIEW FROM A YOUNGER BROTHER

An Interview Conducted by
Julie Gordon Shearer
in 1978





The family gathers in honor of Harold C. Brown's installation as Justice of the California State Court of Appeal, 1966.

Standing: Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.; Harold C. Brown, Jr.; Justice Harold C. Brown; Helen Louise Brown; Francis M. Brown

Seated: Ida Schuckman Brown, Constance Brown Carlson

OBITUARIES

Frank Marshal Brown

Frank Marshal Brown, 70-year-old brother of former Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown and father of San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Brown, died unexpectedly yesterday during a medical examination at Fort Miley Veterans Hospital.

Jeff Brown said his father was preparing to have a CAT scan for glaucoma when he had a reaction to some medicine, suffered a respiratory problem and died.

Mr. Brown retired from his private law practice this year. Before that he had practiced law with another brother, Harold C. Brown, who later served for 10 years as a judge on the state Court of Appeal in San Francisco until retiring in 1976.

Mr. Brown was born in San Francisco, was a graduate of Lowell High School, attended the University of California at Berkeley and earned his law degree from Hastings College of the Law.

From 1946 to 1954, Mr. Brown was an assistant district attorney in San Francisco.

One of his most sensational cases was the conviction in 1949 of Donald Panattoni for killing his wife and burying her on Mount Tamalpais in Marin County.

In 1953, Mr. Brown successfully prosecuted Phillip Watson for killing his wife. That case is still the landmark decision cited in California courts for the proposition that "harmless error" during trials does not void a conviction.

During World War II, Mr. Brown served as a lieutenant in the Navy and was an armed guard on merchant vessels.

In addition to his son, Jeff, he is survived by two daughters, Madeleine Holmen of Concord and Faye Straus of Huntington Beach, and seven grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Francis Marshall (Frank) Brown, the youngest brother of Edmund G. Brown, Sr., was the first beneficiary of "my brother's nepotism." When Edmund was elected to the post of district attorney in San Francisco, he appointed his brother Frank to a staff attorney position in the office. As a member of the DA's staff, Mr. Brown had ample opportunity to observe the administration of the office and his brother's style of decision making, informed by the intimacy of family connection.

On December 15, 1978, Mr. Brown contributed an interview to the oral history memoir documenting his brother's family background and early career. The interview took place at Mr. Brown's residence on Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco.

In response to the interviewer's questions, Mr. Brown characterized his eldest brother's interests as being markedly political from the beginning. He described his brother Harold as having a more "businesslike" bent. He considered himself to be "more of a philosopher." And indeed his pauses for reflection before answering the interviewer's questions were lengthy and his observations resonant. He dwelled at some length on the former governor's personal characteristics which contributed to his success in politics and which influenced his administrative style both as district attorney and governor. Mr. Brown grounded these observations on the context of parental influences, family relations, and religious beliefs. His narrative extended to observations on the administration of his nephew, Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

Mr. Brown had cleared an afternoon of appointments for the interview, although he would have to deliver some papers to be used in court the following day. It was agreed that we would cover as much as possible until then, take a break to drop off the papers, and resume so that we could complete the section on his brother's administration of the office of district attorney in San Francisco. During the twenty-five minutes of the round trip to the office of the opposing attorney, conversation was carefully directed to the present so that nothing would become stale for the taped commentary.

The remainder of the interview was occupied with discussion of appointments of women and minorities, criminal procedures in the district attorney's office, and the role of Bernice Brown in political life.

Mr. Brown completed his review of the lightly edited transcript in May 1981, at which time he contributed an elaboration of his remarks on the Chessman case and further clarifications in response to the interviewer's queries. The transcript was then typed in final form.

Julie Gordon Shearer
Interviewer-Editor

26 June 1982
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley



FRANCIS MARSHALL BROWN

EDMUND G. BROWN'S COMMITMENT TO LESSEN SOCIAL ILLS:
VIEW FROM A YOUNGER BROTHER

[Date of Interview: December 15, 1978]##

Growing Up in San Francisco

Shearer: You were going to start out, I think, by saying something about the age difference between you and your brother Edmund, who is 12 years older. Can you sketch a little bit of what you remember about your very earliest recollections of childhood?

Brown: Yes. I saw more of [my brother] Harold as a young boy. Harold would teach me how to play football and various forms of athletics. Then, as time rolled on and Edmund married (I call him Edmund--the family all calls him Edmund) in 1931, I believe it was, I remained in the home with Harold and my mother.

My father, who was still alive, had moved out of the house, and was living downtown.

Shearer: Edmund was twenty-five when he married? So you'd have been thirteen at the time?

Brown: In 1931--and I'm sixty-one now--so it's '78.

Shearer: You would have been a young teenager then.

Brown: Yes, I was a young teenager. I recall very well the day that he married Bern [Bernice Layne] because I was in bed. He had gone with Bern through high school and then she went over to the University of California. He worked and went to night law school--San Francisco night law school.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 38.

Brown: In 1931, I think they had been going together for many years, from the time that she was a freshman at Lowell High School.

We received this telegram. I remember it because I was in bed and they were in Reno, and they had married. My reaction was, "What else is new?"

Shearer: Were your parents surprised at all or was it so long expected?

Brown: No, no. We knew that they had gone together for so long that it was almost a foregone conclusion that they would marry.

Shearer: Why did they elope instead of having a big family wedding?

Brown: Our family was a poor family. Bern's family, Edmund's wife--her father was a captain of police in San Francisco. I think Edmund had just been admitted to the bar or very shortly thereafter when they married. I think that was probably the reason [chuckles]--it was just a spur of the moment thing.

Edmund was always a great one for taking hold and doing things. That might be the explanation for that.

Shearer: A little bit impulsively?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Let's see, you would have been in school where at that time?

Brown: I was at Lowell High School.

Shearer: Did all four of you go to Lowell?

Brown: Yes, we all went to Lowell High School.

Shearer: Did you have an earlier parochial schooling?

Religious Beliefs: A Source of Conflict

Brown: No, I had no parochial schooling at all. As a matter of fact, none of us did. My father was Catholic, and my mother was Protestant. As long as I could remember, there was always a conflict in the family, and my being the youngest, they had decided to agree to disagree at that time. But we all did--my mother insisted that we all go to public schools, and we went to public grammar schools. For example, Edmund went to Fremont grammar school. As a matter

Brown: of fact, that's where he picked up the nickname "Pat."

I don't know whether you've been told this story or heard about it.

Shearer: I've heard a little bit about it. How do you remember it?

Brown: It was during a Liberty Bond drive in the First World War and he was making a speech at Fremont grammar school. He remarked in the speech--he quoted Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death," and from that point on, he was known as Pat to all of his friends. But it never took hold in the family. We always called him Edmund.

Shearer: I think your brother Harold has commented on the strength of your mother's convictions--really the strength of her skepticism, I guess, concerning some of the dogmas of the church and how strongly she felt about not sending the children to parochial schools. How did that appear to you as a conflict between your parents?

Brown: There was a tremendous conflict. It went back to his family and his sisters--my father's sisters who all had married very well and were well to do. They would come over to our flats, as I remember it, and make comments with respect to my mother's feelings about public education.

This made her more determined. She was German and very strong-willed--self-educated.

Shearer: They were suggesting that the children ought to be educated in Catholic schools?

Brown: Yes. They used to comment, "You're not going to make black Protestants out of those children, are you?" I can remember them--this seemed to be their main concern, as a matter of fact, later on. When my father became very ill, they sent a priest to the hospital.

I remember as a young man--I must have been in either college or just starting law school--being in opposition to his going in to see my father because I felt that a priest would scare him, my father not having been to church in so many years.

My father had a very good sense of humor which Pat, I think, had--we all have, I believe. When the priest told me, "Well, let me handle it, son," I backed away and he went in. He asked him whether he would like to make a confession, and my father said, "Oh, it would take too much of your time." [laughter] So, that was the end of that.

- Brown: She was strong willed--they were both very strong willed. My father was a very aggressive but unsuccessful man in business. Very intelligent, quick witted. Loved poetry and quoted it. My mother was self-educated, well read, and as a young woman went to lectures at night by herself--to all types of lectures in all fields.
- Shearer: Was that very unusual that a woman would go unaccompanied or with a woman friend?
- Brown: Yes, it was. She usually would go by herself, as I recall.
- Shearer: Was that because your father was working at night?
- Brown: My dad, of course, was a bookmaker; he was out much of the time at night.
- Shearer: Was that, do you think, a source of trouble between them? Your brother Pat has remarked on your father's long absences, or frequent absences, from the home and that disappointed your mother.
- Brown: That didn't seem to be apparent with me. My dad was home at night. He would come home late at night and he would get up late in the morning. If it was vacation time, when I was around, I could always remember his calling me. I'd be out playing ball in the streets outside the family home on Grove Street. He'd call me in and I'd sit down in the kitchen.
- There was really no conversation, but he just liked to have me around him. My mother would cook his breakfast but nothing much was said between them. The only thing that I remember very well was that he demanded two-minute softboiled eggs and if they weren't right, there was a window right next to the table and there was a vacant lot next door. He used to use it if the eggs were not right.
- I used to sit there, terrified that the eggs would not be right. Then they put up a building next door but that didn't deter my father at all, I'm afraid. [laughter]
- Shearer: Was there a window opposite your window?
- Brown: No, it was kind of a blank wall. It was well-splattered. [laughter]
- Shearer: It sounds as though they had somewhat different interests, or is that a fair comment?
- Brown: My mother and father?

Shearer: Your mother and father.

Brown: Yes. My dad loved to gamble. He had many activities. He ran a penny arcade, and I guess my brothers told you about that. And he had a store on Market Street.

Left in Charge at the Penny Arcade

Brown: Edmund and Harold worked in all of his various endeavors. For example, they had a cigar store in front of the gambling places and I can remember pictures of Edmund playing the 26 game--it was a dice game--in front of the store.

Shearer: This was just to lure customers in?

Brown: No, no, no. They just loved to play that game. It was just something you do on the way in or on the way out.

He had a dry goods store and he had a photograph place in the back where he'd take pictures. I'll never forget--it comes down through the family lore--that one occasion, my brother--there was a difference in the amount of sales rung up and the amount of cash in the cash register. My dad asked Harold what happened and he said, "Well, I took a picture and they didn't like it, so I gave them the money back." My father's remark was, "Well, take another picture but never give the money back." [laughter]

My dad was great at that. He taught Edmund and Harold--not so much me--but he gave them experience in life and how to deal with people that was something that I didn't have.

Shearer: Why was this?

Brown: He was older and didn't take the interest in me as a young man as he did with Edmund and Harold. Harold and Edmund were only two years apart. Everywhere that Edmund went, Harold seemed to attempt to do the same thing.

I remember one time my father had a cash register in front of the store and left Harold in charge. Harold had to go to the back. Dad said he was going down the street, so Harold was left in charge of the store. He went in the back and my father came in and took the cash register off the thing and hid it, and then came into the store and said, "Well, where's the cash register?" [chuckles] Harold had no answer. He [my father] said, "Be very, very careful of that cash register." Then he brought the cash register back.

Schooling

- Brown: I think this was great training for my brothers. Now I grew up in an atmosphere of--like they went to Fremont grammar school--it was an old school by the time I came along, so I went to another school. I wouldn't go to that school. I went to--
- Shearer: It was considered sort of run-down and inadequate?
- Brown: Yes, it was run down. I went to kindergarten. I had on a new coat. One of the fellows behind pulled at the coat. I was upset. It was lunch time and I went home, and I just didn't go back to school. That's all. I told my mother, "I'm not going back to that school," and I didn't go back until the following term when I enrolled at this new school and I got on very well there.
- Shearer: The neighborhood had deteriorated or had become tough?
- Brown: No. It was just that I didn't care for that school. That was it. Then I went to this grammar school and then to Lowell High School. I almost went to Commerce High School because my best friend went down there. He was interested in a business course.
- When I came home to the family table, it was just heresy that I would go anywhere else but Lowell.
- Shearer: Your parents were together on that point?
- Brown: I don't believe my parents were there. It was just that the family went to Lowell. It was more a family decision than my father and mother.
- From my standpoint, I don't remember any occasion when my mother and father were out together, except when Harold graduated from night law school. I remember that. There might have been occasions but they don't stand out in my memory at all.
- Shearer: Do you think that was a source of disappointment to her at that point?
- Brown: I think that they had pretty well agreed to disagree. I think I was a surprise to them [chuckles]. My mother was forty and my father was forty-eight when I was born, so I came as quite a surprise.
- Shearer: Can you sketch in a little bit the arrangements of the household?

Concerns over Money

Brown: Oh, very well, yes. What happened was that my father was very fortunate at one time when he was bookmaking. My mother had the foresight to put the money in these three flats. She knew that she'd have a place to live. She was worried about whether he would be able to make any money or not because of his propensities. So, we had three flats and there was always income from the two other flats.

She was very frugal, worked very, very hard in the home.

Shearer: Did she have any help? Your brothers remember that variously, I think. Harold said he didn't remember her having any.

Brown: We didn't have any help that I remember. When I was born, I think perhaps an aunt would come over for a short period of time, but there was never any help around the house. Whatever was done was done by my mother. As I grew up, I worked around the house. I know my sister worked around the house.

We were a working family. It remains a factor with us today. You feel guilty if you're not active and doing something which is constructive and meaningful. It came I think from the fact that we were a poor family.

I know the boys worked much harder than I did. By the time I got through high school, Edmund had already left the house, as I recall. I remember my brother Harold having investigated whether I could go to college or not. My sister had gone two years to the University of California. My brother Harold had gone to St. Mary's College for six months. I don't think Edmund went to college at all. He went to San Francisco night law school. I think he took some courses at the University of California Extension.

Shearer: Do you remember how you handled the chores around the household? Did each of you have jobs that you were expected to do?

Brown: When I was doing them, it seemed like--well, my sister would be doing the dishes, of course, but I had the chores of cleaning the brass. There were three flats and you had to clean the brass and wash the front stairs, sweep down the backstairs, and clean the alley way.

As far as you were asking me about the layout of the house, it was really a very well-planned house. There was a stairway and a bedroom over the stairway. Then there was a front room and a big dining room. A fireplace in the front room was the only source of heat, and we all used to gather around there to get the chair

Brown: closest to the fire, put our legs up over the fireplace--a chance to get warmer that way.

Then the kitchen and washtubs and a bin for coal and wood. Then a long hallway with a half a bathroom, then the bathroom, then two bedrooms in the back.

Shearer: So it was essentially a three-bedroom house.

Brown: Three-bedroom house, yes.

Shearer: Did you share a bedroom with the two other boys?

Brown: My father had the bedroom in the front and my mother had the bedroom in the back. My sister and myself, I think, slept in the dining room. I might have slept with my father at times. I know that Edmund and Harold would sleep together and talked in their sleep incessantly and--

Shearer: [laughs] Really? Speeches?

Brown: As a matter of fact, as they grew older, they'd bid in bridge and you could hear them.

Shearer: In their sleep?

Brown: In their sleep, yes. "One spade."

Shearer: Oh, how funny! Nobody's ever said that before.

Brown: "Two no trump." And, "What did you bid that for?" [laughter] It was terrible!

Shearer: Would they talk to each other?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Were Pat and Harold very, very close?

Brown: Yes, I would say that they were close. Very close. They went through high school together. Then they had jobs. When Pat started law school, Harold started law school, I think about two years later. They had their own circle of friends, but their activities seemed to parallel one another except for the fact that after they had passed the bar and formed an association, Edmund immediately started on his political bent and Harold was busily engaged in the law practice. He had a faculty for developing law business, getting law business. They were both very good lawyers. But Pat was interested in politics and I think after twelve years in law practice, he ran for district attorney for the first time.

- Shearer: That's right. He also, I guess, ran unsuccessfully for the assembly in 1928.
- Brown: Oh yes, I remember that very well. He ran against Ray Williamson.
- Shearer: Were you involved in that campaign?
- Brown: I remember handing out election cards for it. Edmund was a Republican at that time.
- Shearer: When did he change?
- Brown: He changed after that election, I think. I remember him telling about a meeting where they had criticized--I don't know whether it was before or after--his manner of dress.
- Shearer: Who had criticized him?
- Brown: Someone at this Republican meeting had criticized him. He decided maybe he was in the wrong party.
- Shearer: Did they think he was dressed too--?
- Brown: His shirt wasn't tailored or pressed, or something. I don't know. This is folklore.
- Shearer: That's exactly what I'm set up to hear.

Relationship with Harold and Edmund

- Shearer: Do you remember--I guess you may have been too young to remember but what about teasing or competition in the family? What kind of a relationship did you have with Pat? Did he play with you when you were a little boy?
- Brown: I can't remember him playing. We were all too busy. We were a very busy family. There wasn't much teasing as far as the boys were concerned. They were all business. They were going out [with girls]. I can remember Harold more than Edmund. We knew Edmund was going with Bern. Harold would say, "Well, I have to see a client tonight." He was very secretive about the whole thing.

It was a dead giveaway. He was dressed in his best suit. He had only one or two, so we knew it wasn't a client.

Brown: We had fun in the family. We all enjoyed ourselves. We had a spirit of independence that came from--I really think it came from my mother. She had a saying, "To thine own self be true" and so on. This had a great impression on me. I think that my brothers were more purposeful in their activities.

I can remember when I was going to the University of California. That would take us to 1935. And they were in practice in San Francisco.

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Brown: Pat and Harold would invite me over to lunch. I was going to the University of California and was used to taking two-hour lunches. So I'd make the trip over there at twelve o'clock and get up to their office in the Russ Building and they'd say, "Fine. Just a minute." They'd come out and we'd rush downstairs to the coffee shop, have a milk shake and a ham sandwich, and "How are you?" "Fine." And that was about it. Back upstairs and they said, "Well, see you later." That was our luncheon engagement.

I was in hopes of a deep discussion of law. Because actually I wanted to be a lawyer before either one of them, back in high school.

Shearer: This was a childhood ambition?

Brown: Yes. I was very poor with my hands at anything, so I felt that law--I loved history and English--so I felt this is where I should be. But Edmund had a very fortunate life in that he was a very healthy person. He had great drive and he was very intelligent, and he was very competitive and very aggressive.

He had a lack of sensitivity towards criticism. He wouldn't look at things that he had done and think that perhaps that was wrong or something. He would go on to improve what he was doing. I'm not trying to say that he wasn't open to advice and suggestions, but there was no reflection, such as, "Gee, maybe I shouldn't have done that." It was always a moving forward.

Shearer: He didn't dwell on past mistakes or supposed mistakes?

Brown: No, not at all. I think this was one of his strong points. With Edmund's other qualities, good fortune or luck also played a part. The blind lawyer's story illustrates this, in that I think that the blind lawyer, whom he'd read for and would take to court, passed away very shortly after Edmund passed the bar. So he inherited that practice [of Milton Schmitt].

Brown: I remember when he ran for district attorney the second time (he had lost the first time that he ran by a huge vote). Then he ran the second time. We were having dinner at this restaurant and the radio said a spot tally shows that Matt Brady, who was then district attorney and who had been in office a very, very long time, looked like the winner.

I made the remark that he was born with a golden spoon in his mouth and that he was going to win the election. There was no question in my mind [in 1943].

Shearer: He, meaning Edmund?

Brown: Edmund. I remember Judge Shoemaker who was there, as the report came in, said to Edmund, "Well, Pat"--Judge Shoemaker had just been appointed. He said, "It's much easier winning political office this way than the way you're trying to win it."

But by the time we had left the restaurant and got up to the headquarters, which were completely deserted, another report came in saying that he had just taken the lead--

Shearer: That Pat had taken the lead.

Brown: Yes, and he won by 97,000 to 90,000, I think. Which was quite thrilling.

Shearer: Is this Dan Shoemaker?

Brown: Yes, Dan Shoemaker.

Shearer: The judge?

Were you in this group called Cincinnatus? Was that still going on when you were active as a young professional?

Brown: I wasn't in the group. I was too young for it, but I remember the Order of Cincinnatus. My sister worked for one of the leaders-- my sister Connie. Have you met her?

Shearer: I've spoken with her on the telephone and she's agreed to an interview.

Brown: She worked for the firm of Derby, Sharp, Quinby and Tweed. [laughter] Joe Sharp was very active in the Order of Cincinnatus.

Shearer: That's S-h-a-r-p.

Brown: Yes.

Brown: It was an organization. Cincinnatus, of course, left his plow and returned to public life. So this is what these men were attempting to do, and they were free of political bonds, so to speak. They were successful in their efforts.

My brothers have probably told you about the Skip the First Five Movement.

Shearer: Oh yes,

Brown: It was interesting.

I can remember he worked very hard in his first campaign. It was mostly hand-to-hand work, you know, speaking at meetings, and Edmund was very, very good at this. If he were in a small group or even a large group that he could circulate in, he was very, very effective.

Shearer: This is when he was backing the five supervisorial candidates endorsed by Cincinnatus?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Speaking for them?

Brown: Yes. He was very, very good at that. I remember a story about a political leader in the Mission District when he was running for district attorney. He was taking him around to introduce him to various people and there was a painter up on a ladder. This political leader said to the painter, "I'd like you to meet Pat Brown. He's running for district attorney."

Pat said, "Hi. How are you," and waved up to him. The political leader nudged him and said, "Climb the ladder. What's the matter with you?" [laughter]

All of these things, I think, were a part of his success in politics, I mean.

Shearer: Do you think he put that nudge and that advice to good use in his future campaigns?

Brown: I think he was very, very good in meetings. I remember attending one district attorneys' convention. After he was elected district attorney in '43, and I returned from the war in '45, I was the first beneficiary of nepotism in the Brown family because I was given the lowest job in the district attorney's office and that was clearly set forth in the newspapers.

Shearer: They were critical of that move?

Brown: Yes, they were critical of it. They weren't critical of it, but they noted that Pat Brown had appointed his brother to the lowest job in the district attorney's office.

That reminds me of an anecdote that goes back to the days when Edmund and Harold were in practice together. I worked for them when I was going to law school. I went to school from eight to eleven, then in the afternoons, I would deliver papers, serve papers on other attorneys, file papers out at the City Hall, and for this, I received the magnificent sum of twenty dollars a month, five dollars a week.

They had a joint checking account so that they both had to sign. I don't think they trusted each other. I used to go in and I'd have to detail to them everything that I'd done during the week to justify the five dollars--two and a half from each of them. I'll never forget that as long as I live.

Shearer: What year was this?

Brown: This was in 1937 because I had just started to go to law school. I made twenty dollars a month and Judge Peery, who's now retired, made forty dollars a month, and I used to bring that up. They said, "Well, you're still living at home. What are you crying about?"

Shearer: Was Judge Peery employed by your brothers, too?

Brown: No, he was employed downstairs in another law office. He went to law school with me and then we'd drive down together and go to work at the same time.

Shearer: So they were going to get full measure out of their little brother.

Brown: They certainly were and they did.

I'll never forget that. They were building their own law practice at the time. That was, let's see, 1937.

I'll never forget one day they had purposely gotten together as many complaints as they could. I think they saved them all week long because they were published in The Recorder, the legal newspaper, all new filings, and they'd name the attorney, Brown and Brown.

- Brown: So here they had all these new complaints that were to be filed and I was to take them out on the street car to the City Hall. I started out. I got out to the City Hall and as I got off the street car, it was raining heavily. I hadn't zipped up the briefcase and I picked it up by the bottom--all those complaints--I brought them all back and Edmund just--he didn't know what to do--he just shook his head. [laughter]
- Shearer: They were all soggy, I suppose.
- Brown: Yes, all soggy. Just shook his head.
- Shearer: Did they pull rank on you a little bit as big brothers?
- Brown: No, not very much. They always felt that I had it so much easier than they did because they had gone to night law school and worked during the day and I was going to day law school and I had been over at the University of California for two years. They felt that I had received many, many benefits that they hadn't received.
- Shearer: Was this possible because your father's fortunes were then on a higher level, or did your brothers contribute to it?
- Brown: No, it was more that--well, I did it on my own except for the fact that I lived in the home. Going over to Cal was only \$26 a semester. The commute from the East Bay--I mean from San Francisco--was \$6.50 a month. Living at the university--I lived in a boarding house over there--was only \$25 a month. I worked five dollars of that off by washing dishes in the place.
- Shearer: Before I ask you about the administration of the district attorney's office, I'd like to just pick up a couple of questions on your family again.
- I'm a little hazy about the time your parents separated. How old were you?
- Brown: I was seventeen.
- Shearer: You were seventeen. So you would have graduated from Lowell?
- Brown: I graduated from high school--
- Shearer: --already then. Was that a shock to you that your parents separated?

Brown: No, not at all, because they hadn't gotten along all through my life. I think that Edmund and Harold really saw them together much more than I did, so it didn't come as a shock at all.

I would have dinner with my dad downtown and he was very much interested in Edmund. He wanted Edmund to be a lawyer and I believe he was the one who suggested to Edmund that he be a lawyer. I think he wanted him to be a professional man and a lawyer.

I can remember when he was running for district attorney, someone in the family had passed away and they were having a wake--or just services--mass--a rosary. My dad sat in the back--it was probably at the funeral--because I can remember these people passing out [the door], and he was passing out election cards.

Shearer: For your brother.

Brown: For my brother, yes! [laughter]

Shearer: There's a loyal supporter!

Brown: He was tremendous but, unfortunately, he didn't live to see my brother elected district attorney.

Shearer: What a pity. So he died, then, before 1943.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: But he lived through Edmund's first years as a lawyer, though?

Brown: Oh yes, he knew he was a lawyer.

Shearer: Do you think that pleased him a great deal, that all three sons are attorneys?

Brown: Yes, he was proud of us all. He thought I was spoiled--I was the spoiled one. Naturally, I was closer to my mother because my dad, by the time I arrived, didn't take as much interest in the proceedings as he did before.

[brief interruption]

Parental Influence

Shearer: I have one more question about the family. You were saying that Pat and Harold were sort of closer to your parents, enjoyed a different kind of relationship. Can you elaborate a little bit on that? What was Edmund's place in the family? Because he was first born and so forth, do you think he got more attention from your mother?

Brown: I think he received greater attention, being the first born, from my father. Among the children, he was recognized as the oldest brother and, really, the leader. I think that Harold tried to emulate Edmund in certain ways. Yet, after becoming a lawyer, he struck out in a different direction.

Edmund was political and Harold was businesslike and I was more of a philosopher. [laughs] I can remember talking to Edmund on the phone long distance when my mother died, who lived to be ninety-six.

I was explaining the monument that we were going to put up. Over the phone to Los Angeles I said, "It will say 'Loving Mother of Edmund Brown, the 32nd Governor of California; Harold C. Brown, the Associate Justice of the Circuit Court of Appeals; Constance Carlson, Teacher; and Frank Brown, son-of-a-bitch.'"

Without any hesitation at all he said, "Can't we shorten that to s.o.b.--it'll save us some money. [laughter] The old family trait of being frugal.

Shearer: On your mother, you said you were really closer to your mother than to your father.

Brown: Yes I was.

Shearer: Do you feel that she was more of an influence, generally, on you boys? Maybe in terms of attitudes?

Brown: No, I think that she was hard working, she was independent, and she was very, very liberal in her approaches, except on Catholicism. But I think my father exercised a greater influence on the boys [Harold and Edmund]. I know that my mother played a greater role in my life than did my father.

Administration of District Attorney's Office

Shearer: Looking at some of the concerns and accomplishments of your brother's administration, does it seem to you that your mother's influence is coming through in terms of liberal attitudes, for example?

Brown: No, I don't think I can say that, but I think that our life, coming from a hard-working family, without too many of the niceties of life, played its part in our attitudes towards social ills and society in general. In other words, I think it showed in Edmund's administration of the district attorney's office, which I knew better than any of the other [administrations] because I was with him for five years in the district attorney's office.

He felt very strongly about crime prevention and the need to work on social ills. These things came across in the handling of his office. He treated his deputies as lawyers. They were given a great deal of freedom in their decisions. His staff meetings were very effective in calling for comments from the various members. We never had a sense that the big boss was looking down on us or that we had to go to him for decisions--not that we wouldn't go to him--but he gave us a feeling of independence. I don't think I'm saying that just because I was the brother and I was in a favored position for that.

But I think his administration differed from that of later district attorneys in San Francisco. I'm not familiar with the latest district attorney. I know there was a greater feeling that the deputies were to be held strictly accountable with later district attorneys.

Shearer: By deputies, you mean deputy district attorneys. So they were lawyers.

Brown: Yes, they were all lawyers.

In other words, we had, oh I don't know how many, lawyers in the office--maybe twenty-five or thirty, at that time. There were four superior courts and four municipal courts. The lawyers handled these courts. You'd have a calendar, in the superior court, maybe fifteen or twenty cases a day on the calendar that would have to be either disposed of or continued.

Brown: You just worked on it as a lawyer and you didn't have to ask Edmund. I remember one time his calling me when I was in the municipal court and I was working in the traffic court. He had evidently received a phone call from someone who asked whether something could be done for a particular man who was up.

He called me on the phone and asked me about it. I said, "Well, I'll read you the report and my reaction is no." I read him the report, and he said, "I agree with you 100 percent." And that was the end of that.

Shearer: I have some questions on his style of decision making, and I think we've already gotten into that topic. There's a lot of interest in the process of decision making: whether a person tends to rely on experts around him, whether he has more an egalitarian style, or whether he tends to dominate. I guess in this instance you would characterize Pat as being more egalitarian in his approach.

Brown: I think that what Edmund would try to do would be to get the consensus of the staff's opinion on a subject and would listen, weigh it, and probe it with the staff and then make his own decision. But it was his decision.

Edmund was a little in awe of well-educated people--the Harvard man--almost to a fault, because he hadn't had that. But his own background and experience so far exceeded the experience of formal college training that any reservation Edmund might have about his own judgment was long since rendered unfounded.

Shearer: Can I go back just a little bit to the district attorney campaign?

Brown: Sure.

Shearer: And you were involved pretty heavily in that.

Brown: I was involved in the campaigns, yes. In distributing literature, making speeches, and not so much in fund raising because I was too young. They were older and they were looking for funds from their contemporaries. But handing out literature, making speeches, and things like that. That was '45.

He was elected in '43 and I was in the service. So I wouldn't have been in that campaign at all.

Shearer: That would be the 1939 [campaign], I guess.

Brown: Yes, I was active in '39 in law school.

Shearer: What were the issues that you spoke of when you would make speeches?

Brown: We were speaking mostly on the fact that the district attorney had been in office too long and that crime prevention was necessary, a new look at law enforcement in San Francisco was necessary, this type of thing?

Shearer: Did you make use of the Atherton Report?

Brown: I didn't. I don't remember using it. We were stressing more what Judge Brady hadn't done than anything else in the campaign.

Shearer: What did you feel he was deficient in at that point?

Brown: We felt that his office had just developed an attitude of not challenging problems aggressively or developing new approaches.

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Brown: --and he [Edmund] stressed these things and he stressed major cases where there had been failures. These things were stressed in the campaign. It was a practical campaign, but it was based on the fact that there was need for new blood in the office. This was our major attack.

[The following question and response were added in writing]

Shearer: The 1935 to 1937 Atherton investigation of the San Francisco Police Department discovered that from \$4 to \$5 million were spent annually for various types of vice and generated about \$1 million per year in graft payments. The investigation centered on Peter McDonough, a bail bondsman who apparently controlled underworld networks responsible for this vast cash flow. The investigation revealed that several important civic officials were in debt to McDonough, including Matthew Brady. Was this fact known and used as a campaign issue in the 1939 race for DA?

Brown: I wouldn't know what their connection was with Brady or anyone else. I just wouldn't know. I think Edmund could tell you. I remember they [the McDonough brothers] were bail bondsmen at the time; I just don't remember what they smoked out of that bail bond investigation at all. Even that their license was listed is news to me. If it was made an issue in the campaign, I don't remember it.

[end of added material]

Shearer: On the question of crime prevention, was Pat's interest in dealing with social causes of crime?

Brown: Yes. The study on alcoholism and its effect on crime was made.

Shearer: This was after he took office.

Brown: After he took office, yes.

Then there was a system whereby the police had control of making the arrest and getting the complaint, and judging what complaint would be issued, whereas we [lawyers in the district attorney's office] felt this was not the role of the police. They had the role of the investigation of the crime, but it was our role to decide on what complaint should be issued against the party. We put in--which was novel then in San Francisco; it's used almost universally now--a suspicion booking whereby all felony cases had the suspicion booking first and then the case would be reviewed with the inspector in charge of the case. These were felony cases. Then the district attorney would either issue a complaint based on the suspicion booking or reduce it if he felt it was appropriate, or dismiss it. We developed a greater control over the police department than had been present in the Brady office.

Furthermore, in the homicide department, we introduced a system of assigning several of our deputies to go out on homicides with the police so that the police would make the investigation and we would question the various witnesses. Then we would advise on homicide cases what booking to make--whether to make a manslaughter booking, a murder booking, or justifiable homicide. That decision was completely taken away from the police.

There was a conflict between the police and the district attorney's office on these various matters and Pat was very aggressive in his position and he won the support of the city in his efforts to put these things through.

I worked for many years on the homicide detail.

Shearer: What was the reason for this? Was this to promote efficiency?

Brown: Yes, it was an efficiency move and it was also we felt that we could better control the bookings and the number of cases which would come into court. For example, rather than have so many felonies in the court, we would reduce those where obviously the evidence was lacking or the police couldn't produce evidence. We would point out that certain elements of the crime were not

Brown: present. In these situations--the police finally, I think, approved of this because it took that responsibility off their shoulders.

I met and liked working with the police. I found them to be a fine body of men, but the temptation [existed for graft] in being able to go in and ask for a felony warrant when they knew that they had a battery instead of an assault with a deadly weapon and then come back, say, with a battery complaint. If there was any opportunity for a payoff, well, this was eliminated because they had no control over our office at all.

Shearer: Did it also increase the rate of convictions?

Brown: It was the first step in increasing the rate of convictions. If you reduced the number of felony bookings, naturally, the case was a better case when it was finally brought to the superior court either by indictment or by preliminary hearing. Of course, that seems to be the great issue today: whether the Grand Jury should continue to have their indicting powers or whether it should be limited or changed in any way.

Shearer: How do you feel about that?

Brown: I have mixed feelings about it because I know there were many cases that were brought through the indictment stage without having the witness cross-examined, where further evidence could be developed [without subjecting the party to cross-examination]. Also, a witness might be a very sensitive witness, and having her first experience before a grand jury would give her some opportunity to see what was required as a witness in court--I'm thinking of rape cases and cases like that.

In this way I think it was good and is good, but I can also see that the defense should have the right to cross-examine and I think they probably will change the system, or alter it, to give further protection to the defendant's position.

Shearer: Thinking back to the days of the campaign for district attorney, which issue do you think it was that actually interested the voters?

Brown: I think the thing that interested them most was the age of Brady, length of time in office, and the fact that Edmund presented such a vigorous, alert personality to the public.

Shearer: Did he talk about some of the things that he would do in terms of eliminating the abortion mills and fighting gambling interests and so forth, during the campaign?

Brown: No. I don't remember those things being brought up at that time. He certainly embarked on those things after he got in, but I don't think that they were stressed in the campaign. It was really a question of an office holder having been in there too long, and that there was a need for new ideas, and that certain cases had been mishandled. He stressed that. He stressed his youth and his energy and that he wanted to bring in a new staff--those issues.

Shearer: Did I understand you correctly that your brother, Pat, appointed Brady a judge?

Brown: He was instrumental in seeing that he was appointed. No, Pat did not appoint him [thoughtfully] because I was still in the municipal court. There was a Governor Olson--no, I think that would have been too early--but I think Pat was instrumental in seeing that Matt Brady had a position. He was put on the municipal bench.

I remember him saying to me--I came in to the [district attorney's] office in 1945 when I returned from the war, and he looked down at me and said, "Young man, when your brother beat me, I took offense at the situation but I view it in an entirely different light at the present time, and I want you to know that." [laughter]

Shearer: He didn't want you disqualifying him for--prejudice?

Brown: No. He was a very, very kindly, kindly fellow. As a matter of fact, in the old courts in the Hall of Justice, they would bring the prisoners down and they would be put in cages. There were cages in the courtrooms. These were just so they wouldn't escape. He made them take the cages out. Yes, Matt Brady had to have them out of his court and I think the other judges followed suit.

Shearer: So Pat didn't think really ill of him as a person.

Brown: No. He loved the old guy. Pat was really an astute politician. He was born to politics and I think that, given certain turns in his political career, he could have gone perhaps even to the presidency. That was my feeling anyway.

When he was governor, I think Kennedy was--you'd have to check me on this--but I think that Kennedy and Symington and Johnson were all candidates and Pat had had this horrible Caryl Chessman case to deal with which--

Shearer: That's right. It was 1960.

Brown: --lessened his effectiveness terribly when he was governor. The people felt he was wishy-washy, he didn't want to execute him--he was against capital punishment but knew he had to carry out his oath of office. He declared a moratorium, I believe, on the death penalty and suggested that the legislature take another look at the thing. They had looked at it only a year before and they were angry at that--they didn't want the thing thrown back to them. They thought that Pat was wishy-washy in that.

The Governor's Style of Decision Making

Shearer: Can we look at that for a second as a kind of case of point? We were talking about styles of decision making and how Pat used the people around him as resources in arriving at a decision, or the extent to which he did so.

Brown: He was great at sending up trial balloons. He would listen. He would call people in and question them. But he always reserved the final decision for himself. I think that--now this, I didn't play a direct part in, but it was just my impression.

As governor, he surrounded himself with the "palace guard." He had a tendency to listen to these men. He'd always make his own decisions, but there were certain of them that he seemed to be in awe of, actually.

Shearer: Who were they?

Brown: I think Fred Dutton played a great role in Pat's decision making and Hale Champion did too. But Pat was a pretty independent soul. If he decided that this was the path, there was no deterring him from it. He was strong. But he did place a great deal of confidence in his staff--as he did in the district attorney's office.

He felt that they were the men that had been chosen. He delegated the powers of deciding whether to prosecute or not to you. He'd leave you alone. Unless it turned up a cropper, that's the way it ran.

I think he did that all the way through. I think that there were very many young men in his office who developed leadership in themselves and decision-making quality by Pat's tendency to delegate a job to them and expect them to work out the wrinkles in the problem.

Shearer: It's a real opportunity for growth.

Brown: Oh, it really was. I can think of many of them that had this opportunity.

Shearer: Who?

Brown: For example, William Bennett was--I don't know whether you know Bill--

Shearer: I do.

Brown: Bill was given a great opportunity in the office to develop.

Shearer: In which office was he originally? I know he went to the PUC, but--

Brown: Yes, he was with the PUC, then he was with the attorney general's office. It was there that he would take on issues like Don Quixote. He was very emotional about it, too.

Shearer: I remember one issue in particular. He wrote a ringing dissent in a matter of the Bodega Bay nuclear plant--going against all the other commissioners on the PUC.

Brown: If Bill took a stand, he was just hell-bent for election. I remember we lived over in Marin County together, and he was going up to argue a case before the Supreme Court. He got so emotional about the thing, I said, "Bill, control yourself."

But the Supreme Court commended him on this work. He was just that type of fellow. Now he's on the Board of Equalization over there.

Shearer: Can you think of whom Pat might have listened to most carefully on the matter of the Chessman case, going back to that.

Brown: On what?

Shearer: On the Chessman case, was there any one person who was particularly influential?

Brown: I think that he really was affected by Jerry, who was [studying for] the priesthood, and he listened to my mother. As a matter of fact, on one of the--I think at the time that he declared a moratorium on the Chessman penalty, they were very influential. And he was working against the advice of other [political] people, as I recall the situation. I wasn't that close to it.

Brown: I remember feeling myself that it was cruel and inhuman punishment to keep Chessman coming back and forth to the gas chamber 13 times and that should be the issue for reducing the sentence to life imprisonment. But of course, unless you had the consent of the Supreme Court, you couldn't do it. I don't think the Supreme Court would have consented to it. I tried to stay out of it, because I think if you're not in the midst of it, you don't know all the factors that go into the decision. Finally I couldn't stand it anymore, so I called Cecil Poole.

Cecil said, "Please, Frank, stay away from it. Don't try to inject your views into the thing because he's receiving so much advice from so many sources all over the world--Peru; the question's covered completely." I decided, not being privy to what had developed, that my arguments probably had been covered. I had to have confidence that the people who were dealing with it every day were handling it. I had talked to Pat in general and was in complete agreement with his feeling against capital punishment.

Shearer: Wasn't Cecil Poole his clemency secretary?

Brown: He was the parole and clemency secretary at that time.

Shearer: He was receiving so much counsel against the death penalty or just on both sides?

Brown: Both sides. There were just too many people working at the problem. Cecil has a very incisive mind, and I have great respect for him. He and I were courtroom associates for many years in the district attorney's office--several years I should say.

Shearer: How did he come to your brother's attention? He was appointed by him to the district attorney's office, wasn't he?

Brown: He worked in some federal office, I believe, not as a prosecutor, and then came over into the district attorney's office. I really don't recall. He came into the superior court directly and he came into my court with Judge Wollenberg, Albert Wollenberg, Sr., who is a federal judge now. Wollenberg had great admiration for him as did I.

Cecil, I think, was tempered by his inability to receive the appointment as a federal judge when he tried for it the first time, when--I forget--there was a Republican Senator and both Senators had to agree on the appointment. They turned him down because when he was U.S. district attorney, the way he had handled the situation in Oakland, involving--oh, I forget what it was now--a protest against the war?

Shearer: It must have been with the Oakland Army Terminal?

Brown: Pardon?

Shearer: Would it have been the Oakland Army Terminal protest?

Brown: No, it was a question of using U.S. marshals over there, and he wouldn't use them. This rankled the Republican Senator and evidently--

Shearer: Which Senator?

Brown: I forget who it was. It was Rafferty, I guess. Was it Rafferty or--?

Shearer: Let's see, Murphy was elected--

Brown: Murphy! It would have been Murphy, yes; not Rafferty, no.

Shearer: And that was held against him?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: What was Poole's position on Chessman? Would he have inclined to recommend clemency?

Brown: No, I think he would have [chuckles]-- You'd have to ask Cecil.

Shearer: Do you remember the time when he lost the judgeship? The date or the year, roughly?

Brown: Gee, I can't remember.

Shearer: I'll look that up.

It's a quarter of six. I don't want to keep you forever, but you're giving me such good information.

Brown: Go ahead.

Shearer: I want to jump back to the Matthew Brady situation just briefly again. Do you think that Pat decided to run against Brady mainly because he thought Brady was ripe for a challenge because of his years in office? I mean, that it was essentially a political decision?

Brown: Yes, I think that he was--you'd have to check this with Pat--but my recollection of the way it went was that his practice, he was doing well for a practitioner. He was well thought of and he was able. But, one of his principal backers was a William Newsom, whose son is now a superior court judge.

Brown: Bill was in the first campaign and told Pat, "You have this political bent, and this practice of yours is--while it's developing, go after that office."

He told kind of a funny story that when he decided to do it, they got together the signatures and they sneaked out to the City Hall and sneaked from pillar to pillar to the Registrar's office [chuckles] in order to file his candidacy because it was unheard of that anyone would run against Matt Brady, the district attorney. [laughter]

Bill Newsom and these other fellows put money into the campaign and they lost, and the next time Edmund ran, the odds were very good that Brady would be reelected, about five to one. I think they all came out whole at the end.

I don't know who their bookmakers were.

Shearer: Pat's emphasis, when he took office, when he was successful in achieving district attorney, was mainly on aspects of social causes?

Brown: After he took office, it was a well-run office. He chose good deputies. They were all conscientious. There was an esprit de corps.

Shearer: How many appointments was he able to make?

Brown: You take the four superior courts and the four municipal courts--that'd be eight. Then there would be maybe twenty or twenty-five deputies.

Shearer: Deputy DAs.

Brown: If I recall now--my memory for numbers is terrible.

Shearer: Twenty comes up in one of those interviews.

Brown: But it doesn't seem that there were many more than that. We had a great, great spirit. All these fellows were intelligent.

##

Appointments of Women and Minorities

Shearer: I guess some women, too, were appointed to the district attorney's office. There was a Doris--

Brown: There was a Doris Schnacke who was a member of the office. As a matter of fact, I heard from Doris for the first time in many, many years. She congratulated me on my son being elected public defender. She now lives in Boise Springs.

Then Janet Aiken, who became the federal district attorney, didn't she?

Shearer: I think I heard that she stayed on.

Brown: She was in the office. She took a federal position after she left. She was a judge for a period of time.

Shearer: Did Pat appoint her to the bench?

Brown: I believe that he did. No, I'm not sure of that. I'm not sure who appointed her. But she was a judge for a time. I just don't remember whether she ran for re-election and lost or whatever. I kind of lost track of Janet, as a matter of fact.

She became more proficient after I had left the office. She was not that developed as a trial lawyer at that time.

Shearer: But she did try cases?

Brown: Oh, yes. She tried cases in the superior court. I tried cases against her when I had gone over into private practice. She was a vigorous prosecutor. [chuckles]

Shearer: I understand that Pat also appointed a fellow named Jack Chow. Do you recall that name?

Brown: Yes, Jack Chow was a lawyer. He was active in the office, not as a trial man, though. He didn't try many cases. He was active in whatever links there were with Chinatown at that time.

Shearer: Do you think Pat intentionally appointed an array of ethnic and racial minorities? Was it unusual for him to have appointed Cecil Poole, for example?

Brown: No, no. Pat appointed people based, in the major part, on their skills. If you took the men that we had there at the time that I was in the superior court, we had Cecil Poole and myself, and Fran Mayer, and Jack K. Berman, who was the former husband of Mayor Dianne Feinstein. That was several years before she married Dr. [Bertram] Feinstein.

Brown: All these fellows were able prosecutors. And the group before them-- Charley Peery who became a judge, Alvin Weinberger who became a judge, Vincent Mullins was a terrific trial man--very very able fellows on the whole.

Shearer: These are familiar names. Were they members of this New Order of Cincinnati?

Brown: No. When we're speaking of--Norman Elkington was. Al [Alvin] Weinberger was not. I don't know where--

Shearer: Dan Shoemaker, I guess, is the one I'm thinking of, but he was not--

Brown: Yes, but Dan Shoemaker was not a member of the DA's office. Many of the fellows who were supporters like Ray O'Connor, who later became a judge, bemoaned the fact that although he had supported Pat for district attorney, that Pat hadn't put him on the bench. Pat said, "Well, don't worry about it, Ray, you continue in private practice and when I become governor, I'll make you judge." And he did. [laughter]

Shearer: When you were telling me about Pat's practice of surrounding himself with the best expertise he could find and that he made a habit of studying other offices, you said he got into trouble doing that.

Brown: When he ran, he studied the office of Fred Howser, who was the district attorney of Los Angeles County, and later made the remark that he felt that it was the best run, most competent district attorney's office that he had investigated. Later, he had to run against Fred Howser for attorney general when the job was vacated, I think, by Governor Warren. And the words came back to him.

Shearer: To haunt him?

Brown: Yes, yes, they did.

Criminal Procedures in the District Attorney's Office

Shearer: Can you comment a little bit on the way criminal procedures were handled under Pat's administration as district attorney? The investigation, confession, bugging, rights of the defendant, and so forth. How were these processes handled?

Brown: The investigation of the cases, except in homicide cases, was a function of the police department. As I told you, it was jealously guarded. We did break through in the homicide detail and for certain other crimes we were called in. But not normally.

The cases were brought to us by the police department and we would make suggestions that these areas of the cases should be checked and evidence should be developed if possible. This was one of the phases.

If we had a case which we thought was weak, we would plead it out at a lower crime. We tried to be sensible about it. We couldn't do it in narcotics when Judge Twain Michelson was there because Judge Michelson had made his career on his fight against marijuana and all other forms of narcotics.

Shearer: This was in 1945?

Brown: No, this would have been after that. Let's see, I went in in 1945, so this would have been--I was there for eight years. This would have been before I left--I left in '54--so it would have been say sometimes between '50 and '54 that I became the deputy in Judge Michelson's court.

Our calendars were just loaded with narcotic cases--marijuana cases. One marijuana case I remember where I had just maybe a couple of grains. It was just a joint. The paper was--I just had a little piece of paper. I was afraid that as I was showing it that I would lose my evidence.

Shearer: [laughingly] In the palm of your hand.

Brown: The case had to be prosecuted. The calendars would back up so much and they would all ask for juries. Then the other judges in the other courts were [plea] bargaining on the things and taking [guilty pleas to] lesser [charges]--giving the defendant a break in some cases just to clear their calendars.

We couldn't do that in our court. So it was inevitable that he would have to take a vacation and during the vacation, a visiting judge would come down from the City Hall and I would then clear the calendar! [laughs]

Shearer: You'd save up your marijuana cases?

Brown: Yes. Michelson would come back and he had 120-day cases listed and he had ninety-day cases, sixty days, thirty days. He would look at his record and they were all gone! He'd say, "What happened to all my cases?" I'd say, "Well, ask your associate on the bench. He was here and I just followed his advice." [laughter]

Shearer: But you had the discretion to save up the cases until there was--

Brown: I wasn't saving them up! I would have gotten rid of them. But when Michelson was there, you couldn't get rid of them. You had to try them, so they just backed up. There was a backlog of cases. If he had never gone on vacation [laughter], we'd still be trying them. It was terrible.

Actually, to see the morals of a community change where marijuana now is almost accepted. Abortions are looked at completely differently. Bookmaking has become, more or less, a minor crime. Those things were great issues in our day.

Religious Views and Political Issues

Shearer: I wanted to ask you a little bit about Pat's sort of reconversion to Catholicism. Do you feel that the emphasis of his district attorney administration was related to his religious beliefs?

Brown: I think that what occurred was that he came in contact with or had many friends who were strong Catholics. I think that they played a great part in influencing Pat to return to the church. He developed a very firm conviction as far as the church was concerned.

I think it was the association with these various Catholic men, both on the bench and as members of the bar, that had played a part in it. It was the ruling factor.

Shearer: I think he said that Leo Cunningham had invited him down for this retreat at--

Brown: Yes. Leo Cunningham was one of them that I had in mind. There were several others, though.

Shearer: Who are they? Can you remember the names?

Brown: Ray O'Connor was a very strong Catholic, if I remember correctly. I just can't think of any others. But I think that was what changed him.

Shearer: The example of personal friends and personal influence?

Brown: Yes. Personal influences.

- Shearer: Were these men you think he talked to throughout his political career and whose opinions mattered to him? Or just at this formative period of time.
- Brown: No. I don't think that played a great role in his decision making later on. He was quite a student. He loved to read. He was a great reader and his briefcase was always packed with material, bulging with articles on everything. He was avid. This is one of the factors--he had this tremendous energy and tremendous drive. He still has it at seventy-three years old!
- Shearer: It's hard to believe he's seventy-three.
- Brown: Seventy-three years old, yes. It's his voice. But I think he's slowing down a little bit.
- Shearer: I wonder if maybe that's to Bernice's relief. [laughs] I guess they have a lot more time together now.
- Brown: Yes. Bern played her role in the thing. Bern was perfect in her role as the wife of the politician, especially in the attorney general's office and the governor's office.

Bernice Brown's Role in Politics

- Shearer: What was her role really like then?
- Brown: She didn't play an active part, I don't think, in the decision making, but she spoke before women's groups, and Bern is a very, very bright woman and handles herself with a great deal of grace and charm. I think these things were tremendous attributes. She also had a great quality of not involving herself in family situations.
- I can't ever remember any type of situation developing between Bern and anyone in the family.
- Shearer: You mean any friction?
- Brown: Yes. Friction or anything like that.
- Shearer: That's real diplomacy!
- Brown: It really was. It was just that she just wouldn't do it.

Shearer: Were there special sort of strains, do you think, operating on the family because of the involvement with politics and everybody kind of joining in? Would she have had more than ordinary opportunity to become involved or get hurt feelings and so forth?

Brown: She handled the thing, and then Bern's sister was very active with his--you'd have to find that out more from her, from Pat than from myself. She, May Layne, was very close.

I'm sure Bern spoke her piece, but it wasn't an outward thing. It wasn't a thing such as you find with the president's wife today--Rosalyn Carter.

Shearer: You mean actively campaigning as a spokesperson?

Brown: She campaigned--spoke before women's groups and things like that. It wasn't emphasized. I didn't recognize it being emphasized.

Of course, when they moved to Los Angeles--of course, that was after he got out of Sacramento. But I don't recall her playing a public role as much as some of the other wives of politicians have.

Shearer: Do you think she was happy not to?

Brown: Yes, I think she was.

Shearer: She had, I guess, a lot to keep her busy.

Brown: Pardon?

Shearer: With the children, I guess she had plenty to keep her hands full.

Brown: Yes. She had her hands full with the family. I think she enjoyed her role as being the governor's wife and the wife, but she didn't want to--she wasn't involved in any great causes, so to speak.

She was called on to make a speech. She'd speak on those things that she knew.

Shearer: She left the day-to-day politicking to Pat?

Brown: Yes, to Pat. He was enough. [chuckles]

Shearer: One of the interviewees in this project--I think it was Elizabeth Snyder--remarking on how as the governor's wife, Bernice was almost apolitical and didn't play an outward, overt, vigorous role in politics, but in terms of her children's campaigns, that she has been strongly enthusiastic and involved. I think Mrs. Snyder described her almost as acting like a campaign manager.

Brown: I really couldn't comment on that. Since they moved to Beverly Hills, I haven't seen as much of them as I would like to. Pat is always on the go. I just don't get down there that often.

Jerry Brown's Style of Governing

Shearer: Do you see Jerry very often?

Brown: No, I don't see Jerry. I haven't seen Jerry in I don't know how long. He's a different generation, you know. He's maintained that generation gap pretty much--he's looking for the youth and not the old-timers like myself.

Shearer: That's interesting. And yet your views, as I hear them, don't seem to be so very far removed from his.

Brown: No. I find that, politically, I'm in tune with him. I think he's a very astute politician and I think he learned tremendously from Pat. I think that living in the Mansion up there--in the old Mansion--which was a beautiful old place.

Shearer: Oh, I've seen it.

Brown: I think that he benefited from his father's experience. He was not a worshipper. He was analytical. I think he was proud of what his father had done and accomplished but he [Jerry] was analytical in his approaches to him. He wasn't afraid to state his position if he disagreed with him. That's my understanding of their relationship and I think it's even more so since he's been the governor.

Shearer: Does he listen to his father?

Brown: That I don't know. I've heard comments where Pat'd say, "Well, you call him up. You probably have more influence than I would!" [laughter] He's his own man. That's all there is to it. I just haven't tried to--I know in his appointments, they're mostly of the younger age group--the 30 and 40 bracket.

Shearer: Is that what you meant by maintaining the generation gap?

Brown: Yes. I think that he's looking for the younger people. There's an age gap--I'm sixty-one, see, so there's quite an age gap. People of my age group feel this way with regard to Jerry.

Shearer: They feel that he's kind of left them behind?

- Brown: Jerry has developed his own political style. It's not a conventional style at all. For example, the way he handled Proposition 13, I think was just amazing! How he could take one side of it and then when he was so beaten down, just turn around and say, [laughs] "Well, if the people want it this way, I guess my job is to implement it." He got away with it! I'd probably still be in the corner, pouting about it. [laughs]
- Shearer: Do you think it helped that [Evelle] Younger took a vacation right after the election and wasn't around to call him on it. [laughs]
- Brown: No, I didn't follow that too much. I thought the election would be closer than it was because of [Proposition] 13. But when Jerry turned it so well, I thought that Younger was in pretty tough shape.
- Shearer: You must have seen the debates.
- Brown: Yes.
- Shearer: How was your reading of their impact?
- Brown: I felt that Younger came on stronger in the debates. I was rather surprised at his ability in the debates.
- Shearer: Stronger than you expected or stronger than Jerry?
- Brown: Stronger than I expected. I don't think that as far as Jerry is concerned--the best test is William Buckley. You know Bill's ability to turn a phrase and quote someone from literature or quote a Latin phrase.
- He took Jerry on one night and he had to stop and smile because Jerry was ahead of him. That's all there was to it.
- Shearer: Yes. That's remarkable.
- Brown: So I had no fear as far as Jerry was concerned. My son debated, oh, my lord!, this man he was running against--
- Shearer: Now, this is your son named--
- Brown: Jeff.
- Shearer: Jeff.
- Brown: He debated Hiram Smith--Brown and Smith--and Hiram is an associate of Willie Brown's. Jeff just astounded me! I thought he did a remarkable job. I thought he was a combination of Jack Kennedy and-- I was just astounded!

Shearer: Isn't that wonderful! To have your children surprise you that way.

Brown: I have made a practice of not following his trials or anything else--just stay out of it. But I know he's got the same energy and he's a hard worker and he has a gift of gab--I don't know where he gets that from--I think from his mother.

Shearer: I haven't heard from Mrs. Brown, so I can't speculate. [laughs]
So he is now the public defender.

Brown: Yes. In San Francisco.

Shearer: You're founding a political dynasty, I think.

Brown: I don't know what Jeff will do. Once the bug bites them, you know. But the public defender's office is not a job that I would think he would stay in for too many years.

Shearer: I've heard it's just grueling.

Brown: Yes. The district attorney's office has much more color than the public defender and they have greater opportunity. Here you get these people in the public defender's. Your clients are usually caught with the flaming gun and three priors, so it's awfully rough.

Shearer: It's a real challenge.

Is there anything you would like to say that you feel would add to the record?

Brown: No, I think I've covered it just about. I'll just end by saying I think that he [Edmund] had a deep sense of a need to improve the lot of the underprivileged and a commitment to endeavor to lessen the social ills of the state or city, in whatever job he found himself.

Shearer: That's wonderful. That could almost be an epitaph. [laughter]
I hope it won't be. Not right away, anyway. One last question. You mentioned that Cincinnatus left his plow and came back into public office? No one else has explained who Cincinnatus was.

Brown: Cincinnatus was--I don't know--I'm not a student of Greek history. But as I remember it, he was a public figure and left public life and went back to an agrarian life. Then he left his plow, so to speak, and came back into politics because he felt there was a need for him. That was how they chose the name of the Order of Cincinnatus.

Shearer: I'm glad to know that. I feel wiser than I was. [laughter]

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A LIFELONG REPUBLICAN FOR EDMUND G. BROWN

An Interview Conducted by
Julie Gordon Shearer
in 1978



Harold C. Brown

Retired State Appellate Court Justice Harold C. Brown, a member of one of California's most prominent political families, died May 19 at his home in San Rafael. He was 90.

The brother of former California Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Justice Brown was the father of Marin County Supervisor and insurance commissioner candidate Harold C. "Hal" Brown Jr. Brown and Marin Democratic Central Committee member Helen Louise Brown, and the uncle of former Governor Jerry Brown and San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Brown.

His brother, Governor Pat Brown, appointed him to the Municipal Court bench in San Francisco in 1964. In 1966, he was elevated to the California Court of Appeal and presided over the Third District until his retirement in 1976.

"As an appellate justice, Harold looked for the equation of humanity in his judicial decisions," said his nephew, Jeff Brown. "What Harold represented more than anything else was a commonsense, human and realistic view of what jurisprudence ought to be. It was grounded in what human beings really feel."

His uncle had a vast historical perspective on the court, Brown said. "He loved the history of California. In the long life he had, he never begrudged the future. He never said: 'Things are going to hell because everything's different.' He was always looking for the bold stroke."

Harold Brown's grandfather came to California from Ireland during the potato famine; his grandmother emigrated from Germany. They settled in Colusa County, where they farmed on a ranch that is still held by the family.

Justice Brown was born and raised in San Francisco and grew up near Golden Gate Park, where his grandfather worked as a gardener.

He attended Fremont Grammar School, graduated from Lowell High School in 1925 and won a scholarship to St. Mary's College, then in Oakland.

He worked his way through law school by taking a variety of jobs: in construction, in the mail room of the San Francisco Examiner, as a stevedore for American President Lines and as a legal librarian.

He earned his law degree from San Francisco Law School, where he also edited the school annual yearbook in 1931.

Throughout the 1930s, he practiced law in San Francisco, where he and his brother Pat started the firm of Brown, McDonnell, Macken & Brown, and later formed Brown & Brown.

During this period, Justice Brown also led the campaign to win needed reforms — for overtime pay and better working conditions — for San Francisco police officers. And he edited the reform newspaper, the San Francisco Police Signal.

During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy and rose to the rank of lieutenant commander. After the war, he resumed his law practice and civic involvement. He was admitted to practice in the federal courts, the U.S. Supreme Court, Los Angeles; two grandsons and numerous nieces and nephews.

Justice Brown was preceded in death by his wife, Helen Louise Brodie Brown, in 1966, by his brother, Pat Brown, two years ago, and by his younger brother, Frank, in 1988.

Visitation was held over the weekend at Keaton's Mortuary in San Rafael. A memorial service will be held tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. in the Shield Room of Caleruega Hall, at the intersection of Magnolia and Palm avenues on the Dominican College campus in San Rafael.

The family prefers that memorial donations be made to the Mental Health Association of Marin, the Salvation Army, the Marin Humane Society, Hospice of Marin or the Sierra Club Marin Group.

Court and Immigration Court.

When Pat Brown launched his campaign for the statehouse in 1958, Justice Brown rallied bipartisan support for the race.

A lifelong Democrat, Harold Brown already had experience working on dozens of political campaigns, including Pat Brown's first campaign for district attorney.

But Justice Brown's allegiances were based on character rather than party affiliation. He worked on the campaigns of Clare Engle, Alan Cranston, Thomas Kuchel, Earl Warren, George Christopher, Stanley Mosk and Dianne Feinstein.

He also campaigned for his nephew, former Governor Jerry Brown.

Justice Brown and Pat Brown formed the San Francisco Chapter of the Order of Cincinnati, which had as its credo that elected officials should promise no favors and that supporters would seek no favors.

"He and his family believed in good, honest government," said his daughter, Helen. "They felt very strongly about citizens' responsibility to vote and at every opportunity urged people to vote."

Justice Brown's reverence for all living things, fostered by long boyhood hikes in Yosemite, led him in later years to serve on the board of directors of the Marin Humane Society. He was also a supporter of several other animal welfare and environmental organizations, including the Humane Farming Association and the Wilderness Society.

In addition to his daughter, Helen Louise Brown of San Rafael, he is survived by his son, Hal Brown of San Anselmo; his sister, Connie Carlson of San Francisco; his sister-in-law, Bernice Brown of





HAROLD CLINTON BROWN

1976



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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewing for the Brown Family Portraits was begun appropriately with Harold Clinton Brown, retired justice of the State Court of Appeal. Just two years younger than his eldest sibling, Edmund G. Brown, Sr., Justice Brown practiced law with the former governor from 1931 to 1942, was active in all his campaigns, and was appointed by him to the municipal court in 1964 and to the Court of Appeal in 1966.

The brothers clearly are related. The family resemblance is marked, as are the familiar resonance of voice and energetic manner in conversation.

Justice Brown described himself as the "family archivist." Indeed, photographs of forebears and family cover the walls of his comfortable townhouse overlooking the Marin Hills near San Rafael, California. His grandmother Schuckman's organ from the ancestral ranch near Williams (Colusa County) stands at the entry hall to the sitting room. Now a widower, Justice Brown was married to the former Helen Louise Brodie. His daughter Helen Louise Brown and son Harold, Jr., live in Marin, as do his grandchildren.

In his retirement, Justice Brown has planned to write a history of the Brown family and has gathered photographs and background information in preparation for the task. It became clear to the interviewer that this plan would have to compete with Justice Brown's active interests in the present tense--golf, bridge, travel (most recently to Panama, England, and India), and the practice of law.

Two interviews were conducted, on November 8 and December 11, 1978. Discussion centered on the background, meeting, and marriage of his parents, Edmund Joseph Brown and Ida Schuckman, and recollections of their personalities, of family life and of Justice Brown's San Francisco boyhood, law practice with his brother Edmund, and their membership in the reform-minded organization, New Order of Cincinnatus.

Pictures from his extensive file illustrate his account of the family ranch in Colusa County in the 1880s--Mountain House, and the stage to Wilbur Springs and the Market Street photo arcades of his irrepressibly entrepreneurial father. A letter from his nephew "Jerry" while in the novitiate is included with his comments on the governing style of Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

Justice Brown evidenced the same pleasure in books that he attributed to his brother. The interviews were halted several times while he verified the source of a literary allusion or searched for the book he had recommended to the interviewer.

The interviews were transcribed, and, after light editing, were returned to the judge. A mishap in the mails, the judge's heavy legal calendar, and convalescence after breaking his leg delayed review for the better part of a year. Another copy of the transcript was sent for review and the judge supplied answers to the interviewer's queries and clarified several ambiguities. The approved transcript was then typed in final form and printed.

Julie Gordon Shearer
Interviewer-Editor

July 5, 1982
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

HAROLD CLINTON BROWN

A LIFELONG REPUBLICAN FOR EDMUND G. BROWN

[Interview 1: November 8, 1978]##

Mother's Background

Shearer: First of all, I'd like to talk a little bit about the family background of each of your parents.

Brown: Shall we start with my mother?

Shearer: Good, let's do that.

Brown: Her name was Ida Schuckman, and she was born in Williams, Colusa County, California, of German parents. Her father's name was Augustus and her mother's name was Augusta.

Shearer: It seems almost a pre-ordained marriage, with their names so similar--

Brown: He came to California about 1851, somewhere between 1849 and 1851 or 1852. He went back to Germany and got his wife, and then came back here again. He came across the country in a covered wagon.

Shearer: Both times?

Brown? Both times.

Shearer: He went all the way back to the East Coast to retrieve--

Brown: And then to Germany, and then came back.

Shearer: How remarkable.

Brown: He must have really loved her. [laughter]

Shearer: How long a journey was that?

Brown: It was about six months or three-quarters of a year, at that time.

Shearer: Your grandmother must have been a remarkable woman.

Brown: Well, she died at a very early age, and she hated it in California. She came from a refined German family, and she was the youngest child in the family. (In the German families at that time the youngest received all the benefits--learned to play the piano, and learned about the arts and cultural things of that sort.) Colusa County was Indian country, you might say, at that time. The weather was harsh--hot in summertime and cold in winter. Their ranch was not a very profitable one and required all to work hard. And of course, wild animals abounded, and it's rattlesnake country. So it really wasn't a pleasant place.

But she so feared the trip over the Plains, Indians, the hardship of the long trek across the United States, and the sea trip over the Atlantic, that she determined never to go back to Germany.

Shearer: So she felt trapped?

Brown: She had eight children.

Shearer: How old was she when she died?

Brown: She was about fifty years of age. She is buried in the little cemetery in Williams, which has the dates of her birth and of her death. It also has an inscription drafted by those who loved her.

Shearer: How had she known your grandfather?

Brown: Apparently he left Germany to escape getting drafted into the German military service. There, everyone had to be in the service when they became of age. Then he came over. How they met, I do not know.

He's in one of the pictures I have upstairs. He was very nice looking when he was a young man.

Shearer: They married at about what age?

Brown: They were quite young, in their early twenties.

Life on the Family Ranch in Colusa

Shearer: Can you tell a little bit about what the ranch was like at that point?

Brown: Well, the ranch was located about fourteen miles west of the town of Williams. That was the nearest town. At that time there were a scattering of small ranches--when I say small, say five to twenty acres each, some much larger. The Schuckmans had one of the smaller ones.

Brown: They raised crops. They raised turkeys. Everything they ate, they raised.

Shearer: It was more than a subsistence farm, though.

Brown: Yes, they raised wheat and barley and turkeys, and things of that sort. Then they had this Mountain House, where there was some profit made. People who were traveling on the stage to the various springs would stay overnight, or would stop at the bar, or have lunch.

Shearer: The Mountain House was a building that was part of the ranch?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: But it wasn't the house where your grandparents lived?

Brown: No, they lived there.

Shearer: It was their large house?

Brown: Yes, where they all lived. They were all born and lived there.

Shearer: Did they take in travelers overnight as well?

Brown: Yes. They first had a place called the Eight Mile House, and then they moved a little further west and Frank Schuckman built the Mountain House in 1907. This place was right on the road to Lake County, to Bartlett Hot Springs and to another town called Stonyford and a few places that were probably twenty miles further west. But twenty miles in those days was a long ride, four or five hours by stage.

Shearer: And your grandparents traveled by horse and carriage, of course.

Brown: This was 1850, 1860 up to the time of their death.

My grandfather, Augustus Schuckman, died somewhere around 1904, 1905, I think. I might be wrong on that, but he died much later than my grandmother, at any rate. He sort of raised the family.

Quite a few of the members of my mother's family died very young.

Shearer: Your mother's family? Brothers and sisters--

Brown: Yes. They died, usually of tuberculosis. They didn't understand how to cure or control it then. Of course, they didn't have the antibiotics, and they knew nothing of rest. They just didn't know what it was.

Shearer: Was it a hard life for your grandmother?

Brown: I think it was a terribly hard life. They had no modern conveniences. They used outhouses. They obtained water from wells and springs. To get to Williams, twelve or fourteen miles away, was a long day's trip.

Brown: Edmund and I would go up there almost every summer. My mother would take us up to her sister's place. My Aunt Emma. She was married to a Canadian named Allen, last name was Allen. Every year we would go there and stay for three or four weeks to a month. We'd take the train from Oakland (take the ferryboat over to Oakland, and then the train from Oakland). The train was put on a ferry going over the Carquinez Straits, and then up to Williams. That was a long day's ride. It was about ten to twelve hours to get there--a hundred miles. You'd go there in two hours now.

Shearer: So your mother had happy memories of the ranch in Colusa?

Brown: She left there when she was quite young. I think she was about nineteen when she was married to my father in Oakland, California.

Shearer: Had she had any of the advantages that your grandmother had? Was she the youngest?

Brown: She was the youngest girl, but I don't think she had very many of the advantages of the family, because there was none to give her.

Shearer: But there was an organ in the house. That must have been unusual in those days.

Brown: Yes, it was. She had the organ. I think that came from the Eastern United States--some Eastern city where they manufactured them. My mother could play both the organ and the piano.

The town that she lived in was named Venada. For a long time it was on the road maps. It was the post office address for all the little ranches around. She was the postmistress there for a while.

She told how after the telephones came in, when the phone rang at one place it rang at every ranch around. Everybody would pick up the phone and listen in. She said she had devised a system where she could steam open all the letters and read them. [laughter]

Shearer: Her intellectual curiosity was evident very early--

Meeting and Marriage of Ida Schuckman and Edmund J. Brown

Shearer: She seemed to have such a love for self-improvement and an interest in books. How do you think that was developed?

Brown: She made a visit to San Francisco with another girlfriend from Williams. While here, she met my father and within a few years they were married.

Shearer: What was your father doing then?



Stage coach shown in front of the drugstore in Williams, on the way to Mountain House, family home of Augustus and Augusta Schuckman and a guest stop on the way to Wilbur Springs, ca. 1900. The 16 miles between Williams and Mountain House took more than three hours to cover.



Mountain House, built by Augustus Schuckman. In the foreground is Grandfather Schuckman; at far right is Aunt Emma Allen, ca. 1895.



Brown: I think he had a laundry route. At that time, people used a laundry route where the laundry was picked up and returned. I think that was his occupation then.

Shearer: So he was a driver for a laundry?

Brown: With a route that he owned. How they met she never confided in me.

They lived in San Francisco for several years before the fire and earthquake. Edmund was born the year before the fire and earthquake and I was born the year afterwards. He was born in April 1905 and I was born in July 1907.

Shearer: How did your grandparents Schuckman feel about the marriage? Was there any indication that either family had any reservations?

Brown: That subject never came up. I never discussed it with them.

Shearer: How about the religion?

Brown: My mother, at first, was not antagonistic to the Catholic faith. As a matter of fact, her mother was named Fiedler, and she was Catholic. It's in the records. Pat went over there--I use Edmund and Pat interchangeably--and he found the place where my grandmother was born, and she was a Catholic.

When my mother came to San Francisco she was not opposed to the Catholic faith at all. [telephone interrupts]

Shearer: You were saying that your grandmother was a Catholic--

Brown: I don't think there was any friction between my grandmother and grandfather Schuckman about it. I don't know what religion he was. I think he was Protestant, because everyone else in the family was Protestant, cousins and things of that sort.

But after Edmund and I were born, my mother took us to the Catholic church and to Sunday school. We received our first Communion at St. Agnes Church and she did not object.

My mother turned against the Catholic church later. My father had three sisters, very nice women, all were married and were quite wealthy. They attempted to tell her how to bring up Edmund and myself, and it didn't work. One of the things they insisted upon was that we go to Catholic schools, and my mother wouldn't permit that. She read a great deal about the church after that and just became very much opposed to the faith.

Shearer: But you think it had a personal impetus from the family friction?

Brown: Yes, from my father's family.

Brown: My father didn't interfere. He was a Catholic and proud of it, but he never really insisted that we do anything about it. He'd go to church probably once a year. But my mother took us there. She attended church service regularly and also made a point of listening to traveling speakers.

Education and Interests of Ida and Edmund J. Brown

Brown: In the early days there were no radios or TV, or moving pictures or anything of that sort. One of the principal forms of intellectual entertainment was the number of speakers, prominent people who would visit San Francisco and make talks. She attended all these lectures of people, like Robert Ingersoll, Mark Twain, and many others. I can't think of all their names.

Shearer: His name is familiar.

Brown: You can't get his books any longer. I happen to have one. [gets up to search for it]

Shearer: Did you ever accompany your mother to any of these lectures?

Brown: No, we were all too little.

Ingersoll, if you can get him out of the library, you'll really enjoy him. He was an agnostic. You'll like him because of his beautiful manner of expression. He wrote this. It's an old book that belonged to my mother. It's by Robert G. Ingersoll, Colonel, they called him, Wit, Wisdom and Eloquence. If you can get any of his books, and they are scarce, you'll enjoy him. You'll enjoy the contents but also his beautiful manner of expression.

Shearer: Is that something that particularly pleased your mother?

Brown: Yes, she got a tremendous enjoyment out of it.

My father was engaged in a number of different businesses. He was sort of an entrepreneur. She had to occupy her own time and she occupied it in this manner.

Shearer: Did he continue with his driving route?

Brown: No, he stayed with that line of work only a short time. His education was limited, I think, to grammar school. My mother's education was also limited to an elementary school but her own studies afterwards were really very extensive. She was very, very well read. But in Williams, the town of her birth, there was the one school with the eight grades in the one classroom, with one country teacher.

Shearer: Her education was limited by the circumstances of the available schooling at the time.

Brown: Yes, but also in the early days people didn't place great importance on education as they do today. That is, formal education in schools. Of course, they did have advanced school, and a great many people who were fortunate enough did go to high school and college. But the importance of having a degree from a university wasn't so great then.

Aunts and Uncles

Brown: For example, my mother had a brother named Gus Schuckman, who never married and lived at the Mountain House until the time of his death. He was one of the best educated men in the whole county, purely from his reading of newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and trade literature and literature put out by the University of California at Davis, or other governmental agricultural departments (I don't know whether Davis was established then). They did have these trade journals that the government mailed on request. I recall seeing them piled up in his room and all were indexed. People would come from miles around to get information on crops and diseases of animals that he had studied.

Shearer: How many of your mother's brothers and sisters lived to adulthood?

Brown: Her brother Frank Schuckman was the one who was the most active and the most successful of the brothers. He died at the age of about ninety-five. My mother died at the age of ninety-six or seven. He was the one that took the ranch and then bought the surrounding ranches, and built this ranch to its present size, which is about 2800 acres, that by brother and myself now own.

Shearer: Did he rely on his brother Gus to help in the management?

Brown: Yes. Gus was a willing and capable worker. A very loveable character, but not a person of ambition. All he wanted to do was survive. If he was paid any money, he'd give it to the first tramp that came along. He just didn't care for money.

My uncle Frank Schuckman was just the opposite. He was known for his frugality.

Shearer: So Uncle Gus was more interested in theory than the application?

Brown: Theory, and animal husbandry, and things of that sort.

Shearer: So those were your mother's two brothers?

Brown: The others, Louis and Charlie, worked for the Southern Pacific Railway as telegraphers. They died rather young; both of them died of tuberculosis.

One of her sisters, Emma, married a Canadian named Rufus Allen. She lived to be about eighty-four or five. She raised a family and still has one son, Gilbert Allen, living in Williams. He still resides there.

Shearer: Emma finished out her days in Williams as well?

Brown: Yes. The others died early. She had, I think, four brothers and three sisters, and they all died rather young. I think two or three others died at birth, but those were the ones that lived past eighteen or nineteen.

Shearer: In your mother's day, was it considered quite an accomplishment for a young woman to find a husband who had a steady job? Was that the highest level of expectation that a young woman would have?

Brown: I don't think that was the prime objective. There wasn't the women's lib, as we know today, and I think that they stressed the family. Of course, the Germans are very family oriented.

When we grew up in San Francisco, she did all of her own housework, washing and scrubbing.

Shearer: Regardless of how high your father's income was?

Brown: Right.

Shearer: It was considered a mark of pride?

Brown: Cooking, and everything else. Although she did have one of my father's sisters living with us for quite a period of time.

Shearer: That must have caused some friction.

Brown: No, this one sister, Nellie, she really loved. There was no friction between Nellie and my mother. All the family loved her.

I mentioned before the three sisters. They all wanted her to raise us as Catholics, but there really wasn't open friction or animosity. She wasn't having an exchange of fisticuffs or any pulling hair. It was only that she completely and utterly disregarded their views on any subject, in general, and on religion in particular.

Shearer: Was this sister who lived with you the younger?

Brown: Nellie. She was the youngest of the three sisters.

Shearer: What were your father's sisters named?

Brown: One of them was Edith. She married name was Braverman. She married a diamond expert and they were very, very wealthy.

Then there was Annie Doyle. Doyle had stables in San Francisco.

The other sister was Nellie. She married a person whose name I can't think of now. She was the youngest of the three.

Father's Background and Interests

Shearer: What kind of a growing up did you father have? He grew up in San Francisco?

Brown: He grew up in San Francisco. His parents came from the East, and from Ireland, the mother and father. Whether they met in San Francisco or whether they met in the East, I don't know. How they came over here, I don't know. I do think, from what I hear, that they came over via the Isthmus of Panama, also in the early 1850s.

My father's family is supposed to be related to Edmund Burke, the Irish statesman. I received that information from some cousins living in Portland, Oregon, the McGraths. I asked them for information about the family once when they visited San Francisco a couple of years ago. They wrote me and gave a little background and mentioned the fact that they traced the McGraths and Browns back to Edmund Burke, the English statesman from Ireland.

Shearer: Is that the source of the name Edmund in your family?

Brown: I don't know. I doubt it, because my mother is the one who probably named us all, and I think that she named Edmund after my father, Edmund Joseph Brown. My brother is Edmund Gerald.

Shearer: So your father grew up in San Francisco and attended grammar school there?

Brown: He had one brother, Michael Brown, who was older than he. He was the youngest member of that family, also. He had one brother and three sisters. His brother died at a very early age, thirty-five or so. The sisters lived the be quite elderly women, all three of them.

Shearer: Did your father have the same kind of interest in reading and philosophizing as your mother?

Brown: No his interests were more along business lines. He bought a moving picture house out on Broadway, known as the Liberty Theater. It later became a burlesque and had a poor reputation, but when he had it, it was properly run with good road shows and silent movies.

Shearer: What were the road shows?

Brown: Musical comedies and things of that sort. They'd have acts like the old Orpheum Theater at times.

Shearer: Did you attend any of these?

Brown: My mother would take Edmund and myself about once a week.

Shearer: What were some of the shows? Do you remember?

Brown: I can't remember them, but they had everyone there, every good actor came out here.

Shearer: What fun! Once a week--

##

Brown: He sold the Liberty Theater. The theater was located opposite the present Chinese Theater, on Broadway. That was built subsequent to the Liberty Theater's operation, and it put the Liberty Theater out of business because it was more modern and it had a balcony, and a few other things. It was right in the middle of North Beach and Chinatown, as it is right now, at the edge of both.

San Francisco Childhood

Shearer: How far away was your house?

Brown: Our house was 1572 Grove Street. That was many, many miles away in an altogether different district. It was located a couple of blocks from the old Lowell High School, if you know where that is, on Masonic Avenue in San Francisco. Masonic and Grove, a red brick building. You know where the beginning of Golden Gate Park is--the Panhandle? That's where we lived, right at the beginning.

At that time it was a new neighborhood. From Lowell High School out to the beach was almost a sandlot. The area to the north, out Geary, had been built upon, but from Grove Street where we lived, out to the beach wasn't built.

Shearer: You mean the dunes had actually encroached that far into town?

Brown: Oh, sure, right down to Lowell High School.

Shearer: How far did you have to walk to get to the water?



Two family portraits in Father's photo studio,
Photo Arcade, 902½ Market Street, San Francisco,
one of five owned by Edmund Joseph Brown.

Above, left to right: Harold, Constance, .Ida
Schuckman Brown, Edmund, ca. 1918.

Below: Edmund, Constance, and Harold, ca. 1915.



Brown: Oh, miles! We lived at Grove and Lyon. Lyon Street is about a mile from First Avenue, and from First Avenue to the beach is forty-eight blocks. So it's four miles, approximately, and about five miles from where we were.

Shearer: That area was not built up?

Brown: The only thing that was built, and was in the process of building, was Golden Gate Park. The Panhandle was the beginning of the park, and then it widens out when you get to Stanyan Street. That's why they called it the Panhandle. That was built right out of the sand dunes by [John] McLaren, the superintendent of parks.

Shearer: I hadn't realized that he built that beautiful park on sand.

Brown: Right on the sandlots. He brought those trees and plants from all over the world.

Shearer: I wonder where he got all the dirt?

Brown: Just ingenuity. He built the building for his office and house and he lived in Golden Gate Park, right at Stanyan and Fell, at the very entrance to the park.

You know, we talked of the Doyles and the Doyle stables. I subscribe to American Heritage magazine. They had an article in an issue of several months ago which was a copy of an article written back in 1907 or 1908. In the article written at this time, the author states, "Thank the Lord for this newfangled thing that's coming out, called the automobile, because it will eliminate all the pollution. All the flies will be eliminated, all the disease."

Cholera, smallpox, chicken pox, diphtheria were attributed to flies. He also listed the pounds of horse manure that were on the streets, and dead horses, and the number of stables. I've often thought if that author could have lived today to see the pollution from that "new-fangled thing" called the automobile, he'd turn over in his grave.

Shearer: But the high hopes they all had for those marvellous machines.

Back to your parents and your memories of your house on Grove and Lyon--

Brown: My mother and father built three flats. We lived in the middle flat. We were born about a block west of the house, and then we moved in there when my brother Pat was about four and I was about two.

Shearer: What was your father's business at that time?

Brown: At that time I think he had the Liberty Theater. He had some other interests. He had a few penny arcades and photographic studios and other small businesses. Curio shops and things of that sort.

Shearer: Was that a remarkable investment for him to build a house as a relatively young, newly married man?

Brown: I imagine it was a tremendous undertaking for him. I remember my mother asking the architect why they didn't provide a garage. The lower flat was so constructed that they could never get a garage in. He said that the automobile was just going to be a passing fad.

Shearer: This was the architect's idea?

Brown: That's what the architect said.

At any rate, we lived there all of our lives. That's where my sister Constance was born, as was my brother Frank, who is the youngest. Connie is five years younger than I am, and my brother Frank is ten years younger than I.

Shearer: So you were well spread out, then.

Brown: There's two years between Edmund and myself, and then five years later Constance, and five years after that, my brother Frank.

Shearer: You said that your mother took pride in doing all the household things for herself, the cooking and the cleaning, and so forth. Was she also interesting in taking direct care of the children, or was a nursemaid employed?

Brown: She was very interested in our grades, and going to school, and spurring us on to getting better grades than one of the neighbors, Otto Johnson. I remember, she was always using Otto Johnson (and other people in the neighborhood who got better grades than we did).

Styles of Parenting

Shearer: How would you characterize her style of parenting, in terms of discipline, for example?

Brown: She was very meticulous in our dress and cleanliness and habits. If I showed you the pictures I have here, you'd understand how she had us dressed. That was up until the end of grammar school. Then, I don't know what happened, but our financial situation seemed to lessen after that. From that time, Pat and I both worked pretty hard.

Shearer: Did you find that the fancy clothes crimped your style?

Brown: Oh, no, it wasn't fancy clothes. Just well dressed. There was nothing fancy about it, but new suits and clean white collars. Everyone wore stiff collars in those days. She was very careful about those things.

The same thing with her daughter and young Frank. She directed our educational pursuits, and my father directed our business acumen, if you would call it that.

Shearer: He got you into the business at an early age?

Brown: Yes. He at one time had about five or six photographic studios and curio shops in San Francisco. Edmund managed one and I managed the other. We were both very small.

Shearer: How old were you?

Brown: I think I was about twelve and he was about fourteen.

Shearer: Your father must have had quite a bit of confidence in you to put you in charge.

Brown: He did. He had other people working there too, but we put in full shifts, and that went on for a long time.

Shearer: Did he believe very strongly that a young boy should be given a chance to work?

Brown: I don't know whether he thought too much about it. I think he thought it would be good training and it would keep us out of mischief, and things of that sort. He could trust us.

Later, when Edmund graduated from high school, and then he went to law school, he worked for a blind lawyer. You have that, Milton Schmitt.

Shearer: I think I have that in notes elsewhere.

I'm curious as to what kind of behavior earned you discipline from your mother or from your father.

Brown: I don't recall either one of them disciplining us very much. My mother never disciplined us.

Shearer: You mean, she never spanked you?

Brown: Never. When she told us to do something, we obeyed. She was firm about it, and kept after us, but she couldn't really see that we ever did anything wrong. But we did, obviously. [laughter]

Shearer: Did you get much teasing from Pat when you were very little? You were very close in age--

Brown: We were close in age, but our paths really went on a little bit different lines. Two years makes quite a difference. Our circle of friends was different in school, and everything else. He sort of went one way, and I went the other. He was a Democrat and I was a Republican.

Shearer: Really?

Brown: Sure, I just became a Democrat when Jerry was seeking the nomination for governor the first time. I went on the Democratic side so I could give him a vote.

Shearer: What about during Pat's campaign?

Brown: No, I was a Republican. I conducted the Republicans for Brown.

Shearer: What a valuable ally!

Brown: As my father said, we worked both sides of the street.

Shearer: I was going to ask you in a later session, Pat started out as a Republican, too?

Brown: Yes, he ran for the assembly when he was very young, I think he was about twenty-three years of age. He ran against Ray Williamson, who was the incumbent Republican, [who] defeated [him] rather substantially.

New Order of Cincinnati

Brown: I really think one thing of importance that I don't know if you've gotten into at all, was an organization called New Order of Cincinnati.

Shearer: Yes, I know a little about that, and that's something I wanted to talk about when we talk about career. But if you want to, we can talk about it now.

Brown: I think that was one of the most important factors in my brother's political life.

We were both lawyers, and we were both, of course, interested in the elections, particularly locally. He had an organization called the New Guard, which was made up of all groups--Republicans, Democrats. They participated in local elections, where party politics usually

Brown: didn't enter into the scheme of things. An attorney named Ralph Potts, from Seattle, Washington--(he's still alive and I still correspond with him, he's in the Hoge Building in Seattle)--started an organization called the Order of Cincinnatus, there. He came down to San Francisco and he met with my brother and several of my brother's friends, and myself, and helped organize the Order of Cincinnatus here.

It was a young organization, all people under forty-five, I think they had it. [It had] both sexes, and no bias as to color, or creed, or religious belief. Everyone who joined the organization--and I cite this to show how idealistic young people can be, and we really meant this--had to sign a pledge.

The pledge went something like this. I don't think I have a copy of it, but I recall it very well. It had a printed form which stated: "If I am chosen to run as a candidate sponsored by the Order of Cincinnatus, I promise to give no favors to anyone in the organization, nor shall I accept any favor from any member."

Shearer: No favors to any member of--

Brown: The organization or to anyone else. [continues reciting oath]

"And if I am not selected, I pledge myself that I shall ask no favors."

We covered both angles of it. Then you had to sign that, among other things. It was idealistic, and everybody sincerely accepted it.

We had a group of supervisors in office who had been in for many, many years, and the first time we sponsored candidates we ran four members opposing them. We elected one.

Shearer: This was 1935?

Brown: In the early thirties, right around thirty-five. The 1941 election, we elected four candidates; we eliminated four of the old guard on the Board of Supervisors. (By the way, my brother was the founder and president of this Order of Cincinnatus.) One of the factors in our success in the second election was the avariciousness of the Board of Supervisors, as a body. They went up to the Sacramento legislature and lobbied with city funds for an act which would place the names of the incumbents first on the ballot. Usually twenty-five or twenty-six candidates ran for the Board of Supervisors, and you could see the importance of being one of those first five. Many people would be interested only in the district attorney's fight or a mayor's fight, and when they came to the Board of Supervisors, they'd pick the first five.

We developed a slogan, and I take credit for it, "Skip the First Five," and we painted it all over town. The people were impressed. They skipped the first five. I think there were five offices, five

Brown: incumbents running, and we eliminated four. The only one that got in was a man named Adolph Uhl, who was an ultraconservative. He hated to spend any of the taxpayers' money. He was one of the incumbents re-elected whom we opposed.

Shearer: When you say you painted this slogan all over town, how did you go about doing it?

Brown: We got signboards, and we published a newspaper ourselves. We put it right in our headlines, "Skip the First Five." We published a newspaper of 200,000 copies and distributed it ourselves--the organization to the voters.

Shearer: How many were in the organization?

Brown: Probably four hundred.

Shearer: This must have been a very cohesive, hardworking group.

Brown: It was.

In those days, at five o'clock everybody took the streetcar to return home from work. We had people stationed a block apart with the newspapers and passed them out as people got on the streetcars. Besides, we mapped out the city and had a door-to-door delivery--three issues of that. This was financed by the group itself.

Shearer: You tithed yourselves to pay for the printing costs?

Brown: Yes. We had a publisher, George McLoughlin, who later got into our Police Signal [a newspaper published for members of the San Francisco Police Department]. That paper itself was an important paper later in my brother's campaign for district attorney, because it came out so strongly for him to be elected district attorney, among the policemen.

Shearer: You're speaking of the police?

Brown: The policemen were a potent political factor.

Shearer: I think this is a topic worth going into even more. First I would like to cover a little bit more on your early background.

You were saying that although you didn't really get any kind of physical discipline from your parents, you understood what you were supposed to do.

Brown: It seems we were always so busy, actually. There was never any real reason for it. We were working for my father and going to school, and that took a long time. Then we were also engaged a little bit in athletics at school, and that took time.

High School Days at Lowell

Brown: Later, when we were in high school, I forget what my brother was doing, but he had some other job also. I remember after managing one of the stores for my father, I had a job working in the pressroom of the Examiner for many years

In those days they didn't have the inserting machines. They'd print many sections of the paper eight or nine days in advance, and then put them all together on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Usually it was Friday nights; we would go to work at 4:30 in the afternoon and quit at 4:30 in the morning--quite a long shift at fifty cents an hour. Then it was good pay; we made six dollars two days a week, which was twelve dollars a week, which was good pay.

We just didn't have time to do very much or to talk too much about discipline. I can remember how good a cook my mother was, and things of that sort. How immaculately she kept the house and how she enjoyed having a good library. She'd read everything. She read the Bible extensively; she knew it from the beginning to the end. Even in later years she continued to study. She continued to study all of her life, and it was a long life, ninety-seven years of it. She acquired quite a bit of knowledge and wisdom.

Shearer: She took quite an interest in your studies as well, I gather?

Brown: In the kids' studies, she did. She was very concerned about us, always.

Shearer: So she must have been very pleased when you did well in school?

Brown: Edmund was a better student, at least he was in high school. He was always so busy. He was two years ahead of me and had an altogether different circle of friends.

Shearer: Did you feel as though you wanted to be part of that circle?

Brown: No, because I had an entirely different set of friends myself. I liked his friends, and enjoyed them, and later in life I got to know them, just as he got to know mine. In every one of his campaigns they all supported him.

He [Edmund], in high school, became a member of a Jewish fraternity. He and one other fellow by the name of Harry Kamp, who was an optometrist, were the only Christians in this Jewish fraternity. Every single one of these fellows in the Jewish fraternity later made tremendous successes financially. Norton Simon, Ben Lerer, a lawyer, Simon Annixter. You should ask my brother their names, because they were huge successes and credits to the community. I think to a great deal my brother developed his theories of frugality by his association with the people in that fraternity.

Shearer: How did he happen to join that particular fraternity?

Brown: I think he was turned down in another fraternity and then joined that one or organized it.

Shearer: So fraternities were a big part of the social life at Lowell?

Brown: Lowell was the outstanding high school in San Francisco as a preparatory school for universities. They had without doubt the best faculty. I think it was an admitted fact in those days. The good teachers who wanted to progress further all strove to get a position at Lowell High School.

The building is still in existence. If you are in the city, you should drive by Masonic and Hayes, the beginning of Golden Gate Park. It's only one block to the north of that.

It was good in athletics, too; it had some very fine athletic teams. But scholastically, it was really a preparatory school for the university. That's why all the wealthier families sent their children to Lowell. Edmund and I went there, and my brother and sister, because we lived two blocks away, not because of our wealth or because of our desire to go to the university. Our house at 1572 Grove Street, where we lived, was two blocks away from our grammar school and two blocks away from our high school, so we went eight years to Fremont and four years to Lowell, within walking distance. We came home for lunch.

Shearer: What a wonderful, stable existence.

Brown: Yes, it was. We always had a hot lunch.

Shearer: Did you keep the same friends all through grammar school and high school?

Brown: We have friends today that are still living. Of course, when you pass three score and ten, most of your friends have died, or they are crippled. Many, many of mine have died. I don't know if many of Edmund's have.

One of our closest friends, Arthur Belcher, is a client and a friend today, and he went to Fremont Grammar School with us. Many others are still around that we still see.

Shearer: That must be wonderful to be able to reminisce with someone who has been to kindergarten with you.

Brown: Well, Fremont Grammar School was ideally situated. There was a Hebrew Orphan Asylum--I say Asylum because that's what they called it then--and all the Hebrew kids who were orphans went to Fremont. They came up there and they all had the same uniform and the same suits on, and you could remember it. It [the asylum] was only four or five blocks away on McAllister and Broderick.

Brown: At that time, the Fillmore area in San Francisco was all Jewish, and McAllister Street all the way down from Fillmore to the City Hall was all Jewish shops. It was the Jewish ghetto.

Shearer: So you were on the edge--

Brown: No, we were quite a distance from that. We were in a brand new neighborhood, and the neighborhood was absolutely one of the best of the newer neighborhoods. It had nice residences, some of them very large. It had good flats, and a few nice apartment houses. And all new, or nearly new. When I say new, I mean ten years old or less.

It was one of the outskirts of San Francisco at the time. It was really a nice neighborhood, and the people were of a mixture. In our house, we had the Isaacs, that lived upstairs, and the Israel family downstairs.

##

A Political Family

[Beginning of a conversation which took place off tape]

Brown: I don't know if you really want all this family and personal information.

Shearer: I think the background will interest scholars studying the "political personality." Your family has become something of a political dynasty.

Brown: Well, it's true that my brother was governor--
[tape resumes]

Brown: --and his son also becomes the governor. Then 'also to have my brother Frank a lawyer, and myself a lawyer, and my sister a schoolteacher. You wonder how we all could get together, without getting into trouble. [laughter]

No one's ever accused us of any criminal act, and it's getting pretty late now for us to start.

My brother was defeated by Reagan by a very substantial vote, I think it was almost a million votes. But when he left office, he left with honor. I think that represents a substantial degree of credibility, and the fact that when he did leave, he had a tremendous number of people who still liked him. There was a fight in the Democratic Party, a complete split, with Unruh fighting my brother in the legislature, and Yorty from Los Angeles. My brother called him a

Brown: paranoid. And then the third term issue for governor. I think all combined to defeat him. But there was nothing anyone could really point to that he had done that was wrong.

He did appoint me to the court of appeal. [laughter] But, after all, I'd practiced law in San Francisco for thirty years before that and represented some very fine clients. And I'd been on the board of directors of the California State Bar Association and the vice-president of the Lawyer's Club, and had conducted a good law firm. It was nepotism, but--

Shearer: But it was earned nepotism!

Brown: You like to rationalize. You know the definition of rationalize, don't you?

Shearer: I would like to hear it.

Brown: Most people think that the definition of rationalize is to reason something out. To the contrary, it's to reason something out to satisfy a wrong conclusion. [laughter] That's exactly what it is.

A book that you would be interested in--I don't know whether this should be on tape, or not--is Thirty Days to a Better Vocabulary. It's a paperbound volume, by Funk and Wagnalls, I think, the dictionary people. They've had about fourteen or fifteen editions of it. It gives the derivation of words, and you would really enjoy it.

Shearer: Oh, I would.

Brown: I'm not saying that you need it, because you certainly have a very good vocabulary, and your educational background is obvious. But that's the reason you'd enjoy the book.

Influences of Parents, Teachers, Peers

Shearer: Well, your mother has really done some remarkable things with her children.

Brown: She was the outstanding person of our parents, in my opinion, but she gave all the credit to my father.

Shearer: Did she?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: How did she do that?

Brown: Well, she said that he was a man of positive beliefs, and of integrity, and a tremendously hard worker. He got into a few enterprises later in life that might be subject to some criticism, but in the whole he paid his bills promptly, never evaded then, never was sued, never arrested.

Shearer: He was a steady provider for his family?

Brown: Well, he was anything but a steady provider. He was either wealthy or poor. He was not the steady type.

Shearer: What effect did that have on the family? You were telling me that your style of dress changed noticeably when you father's fortunes dipped.

Brown: Not so much. It only made us work harder, ourselves, individually.

Now, it didn't affect my sister Connie as much, or my brother Frank, because they were so young. Ten years is a tremendous difference in age. Things affected my brother Edmund and myself. And we were interested, with him sort of being the leader always in these enterprises.

Shearer: Your father?

Brown: No, my brother Edmund.

He went to law school and made excellent grades. I think he was the top man in his class at the night law school, without ever going to college a day.

Then I went to Saint Mary's. I went over there on an athletic scholarship. I played basketball, and football, and every other thing. I loved Saint Mary's. Some of the profs I had there were unequalled and they made a tremendous impression--Brother Leo, and Brother Agnon, and Brothers Edward and Henry. There men were tremendous men.

Have you ever heard of Brother Leo? Leo Meehan. He was a professor of psychology at Saint Mary's, and he had degrees that very few other men in the world have. He is wellknown to the older generation, because he lectured, much like Monseigneur Sheehan.

Shearer: He went on the lecture circuit?

Brown: Yes, and he was tremendous.

Then I quit Saint Mary's and went to law school because I really didn't have anything else to do. I didn't really have any great craving to be a lawyer, but I thought, well, the night school is there, and I'm not doing anything nights; I'll go down.

- Brown: Then I got in there and I got into the spirit of competition. We went to a night law school where seventy-eight different colleges over the United States were represented by people in attendance. I met them, and they were good.
- Shearer: How did you get into law school? Were there stiff requirements?
- Brown: I don't think you had to have much more than a high school diploma. I took the bar examination at the end of my third year at law school.
- Shearer: How long was the usual term of study?
- Brown: Four years. At that time, they only passed 38 percent, the same as they do now. Five of us in our class of forty took the bar examination at the end of our third year, and out of the five, four of us passed it.
- Shearer: Were they your friends?
- Brown: Yes, they were all friends of mine, I'd been to school with them for three years.
- But, then we went back to law school and got our degree, but it was an anticlimax.
- Shearer: So a law degree wasn't a prerequisite to taking the bar?
- Brown: No.
- Shearer: Did Pat influence you at all in going to law school?
- Brown: He influenced me only by way of example. He went to law school and he got very good grades. He was studying, and the books were always around. He was the older brother, and he set a good example.
- Shearer: By that time did you share friends?
- Brown: No, hardly at all.
- Shearer: Your interests were quite different?
- Brown: Absolutely the opposite.
- Shearer: He was more interested in politics?
- Brown: Well, I wouldn't say he was interested in politics at that time, we just had a different set of friends. Then when he went to law school, he was quite young. Heck, when I graduated from law school I was only twenty-two or twenty-three. That was in the depths of the Depression in 1931; that was almost fifty-eight years ago. I don't feel that old--now don't say I don't look it!

The Young Lawyers

Brown: Edmund had been in law practice for four years ahead of me, because I had taken the time out to go to Saint Mary's. Then, when I started, he had been in the practice, but we didn't go together immediately.

Shearer: You didn't? I thought that started in 1931.

Brown: No, I think we went together about 1933. I practiced with a young lawyer, Frank Mackin, for a year or so before going in with Edmund.

It was the depths of the Depression and I couldn't get a job, so what I did was open my own office.

Shearer: Then who in the world were your clients, for brand new lawyers?

Brown: You know, the funny thing is, I've never had any difficulty with getting clients. Isn't it a funny thing?

And not from our relatives. One thing you mentioned that you were interested in, how close we were to my father's three sisters. Well, two of them were very, very wealthy. The Doyles, of the Doyle stables, had a family--two sons and a daughter. And the Bravermans, of the diamonds. Then, my father was not in the same financial class, although he was much more of an aggressive man than either one of them. Both the girls were not backward in their expressions of their views. I think they sort of looked down on us a little bit, as being the poor members of the family. When each one of them died, my brother and myself were practicing law, and we didn't have their estates to probate. They didn't give us the estates. Both of us were a little disturbed about that. After all, they had asked us to do work for them occasionally and we did it without even charging them.

An odd thing--when I retired from the judiciary, I associated with Garrett McEnerney the second. It's an old, established firm. His father was Garret McEnerney, and his grandfather was Garret McEnerney, both lawyers. They were very famous lawyers, and my aunt went to him. Do you know, that in that office today, one of the estates is still pending, in a yearly account? One of the trusts that was set up in the estate of Braverman is still pending. And this has gone on for forty-five years.

Have you read Bleak House by Dickens?

Shearer: No, I haven't.

Brown: Where they settle this case of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce, the oldest case in the world? You have to read that, this is one of them.

Shearer: Did either of your well-heeled aunts contribute anything towards your education?

Brown: Nothing, absolutely nothing. They were not interested in any educational pursuits. They were very interested in their wealth and a social life. They wanted the social background that goes along with wealth. But they contributed nothing to any member of our family.

Although they did visit. Annie Doyle and her daughter visited our house regularly, once a week. After dinner they'd come over--they had an automobile--and sit down by the fireplace and chat with my mother. My father might come in, or he might not.

Edith we saw very little of. Both Annie and Edith were very attractive women, and very highly moral women. Very religious and very, very nice. There is no criticism I can direct toward them at all. We expected nothing from them and there was nothing we wanted from them. We had everything we wanted.

Shearer: How would you characterize someone of advanced social standing? Your father's sisters and their husbands--would they go to the opera?

Brown: I think that's what they wanted. Jewels and things of that sort. They had a great deal of money. They [the Bravermans] had a very large home out on Pacific Avenue, a nice neighborhood. And the Doyles had a very beautiful set of flats on McAllister near Divisadero. That's a black neighborhood today, but then it was a beautiful neighborhood, really beautiful. I'd been in it many times.

They were very nice to us. There was no friction. We didn't fraternize with their children, their children were a little bit older than us, probably seven or eight years, so there was no reason to.

Shearer: You don't think your mother felt uncomfortable--

Brown: Hurt? Oh, I think she did. I think she felt that they could have been of a great deal more assistance to us, especially after Edmund and I became lawyers.

Actually, it was a passing thing to both of us. It was a lawsuit that we would have liked to have gotten, that we didn't get--the estate--that we probably deserved to get in the family because Edmund was a very good lawyer.

We were together for a number of years before World War II, and we worked awfully hard at being good lawyers, both of us. We were down there early in the mornings, were there Saturdays and Sundays, and worked late at night. There was no such thing as hours.

Shearer: Is that something that you think your father would have admired?

Brown: I think that's something he may have instilled in us, yes. He was a good businessman.

A Father's Advice: "Never Give the Money Back"

Brown: I'll tell you an interesting story. When we had this photographic studio in the back of the place, and I took a photo of a couple. I think they were three postcard pictures for one dollar. I developed it, printed it, and had it ready for the people when they arrived. I really had to admit that although the workmanship on the picture was good, their expressions were really terrible; they did not look good. [laughter]

It was the first time that had occurred, and they said, "These pictures of us are really terrible." I said, "Yes, they are." They said, "Will you give us our money back, because we haven't got time." I said, "Well, I can't do that, but I'll give you less the cost back." And I gave them fifty cents on the dollar back, or some damn thing.

My father came down, and he said, "Harold, for the love of Saint Petersburg, never give the money back. Do anything you want. Take another picture. Take five more pictures. But here we advertise, and put a nice front on the outside, and go to all the trouble of getting the people in, and you have to never give the money back." He said, "Follow that as a rule."

Well, later in life I had a divorce case. The man had beaten up on his wife. (That apparently doesn't make much difference to many wives.) She came down and filed a suit for divorce, and they paid me fifty dollars. Then they went back together again. So they came back and they said, "Harold, you didn't earn the fifty dollars, because we're not going through with the divorce." And I said, "Listen, one rule I have made, I never give any money back. I'll tell you what I will do, I'll draw your will, free of charge." [laughter]

Shearer: So you put your father's wisdom to wonderful use!

Brown: You have to have a sense of humor in this thing. Drive yourself nuts if you don't.

Law is a fascinating field.

Shearer: My husband's an attorney so I hear a great deal about some of the challenges and frustrations of lawyers.

Brown: Well, my brother and I worked together on many cases, successfully. They weren't the hardest cases in the world, but at that time we couldn't pick and choose. Mark Twain said that the devil even has a side to his case; it might be a weak one but still a side. We as lawyers had to take that viewpoint when a client came in. He had a side to it. It might be a weak one, but still--

Shearer: That's often the biggest challenge.

Brown: I will not take a divorce case any more.

Shearer: It's a lot of heartache.

Brown: And you accomplish nothing.

[Interview 2: December 11, 1978]##

Further Discussion of the New Order of Cincinnatus

Shearer: I thought Pat Brown was actually the founder of Cincinnatus.

Brown: He was in San Francisco, but Ralph Potts was the one who came down from Seattle and really stressed the importance [of the organization] and gave us a great many ideas and programs to follow. He was a young lawyer up in Seattle.

Shearer: And it was formed for the same purpose, to encourage--

Brown: --young people to interest themselves in politics, and to oust entrenched politicians and to get new candidates from the younger group of people.

Shearer: Was there a particular reform movement afoot in San Francisco?

Brown: Not so much reform. There was a deeply entrenched group of politicians who had been in our Board of Supervisors for over twenty years. They were just becoming stagnant.

Shearer: You told me last time something of your success in being able to oust the first five by having "Skip the First Five" as your campaign slogan.

Brown: "Skip the First Five," right.

Shearer: Were you encouraged then to go on and in future campaigns use the Cincinnatus as an organizing base?

Brown: Yes, after the first two campaigns (they were two years apart). The first time we had one man elected--Dewey Mead, a young labor leader--out of the five that were up for re-election. We had four young people who were defeated. Norman Elkington was one of the men who ran on that first ticket, whom you are going to interview this Wednesday. We had a ticket, Elkington, Mead, Pardini, and Reade. Mead, the labor leader with the labor support, and our own, was elected. [In 1941] we had four out of the five [on our slate] elected to the board.*

Then war was declared in 1941. Cincinnatus was in effect, and it helped Pat be elected DA, he still being the president of it, but after that, it sort of disintegrated.

Shearer: This was in the election of 1943, when he ran for district attorney?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: How did it actually help him? Simply because he was known within the organization?

Brown: Well, we had a built-in campaign committee that was for him, with the experience of two prior campaigns, of raising money, distributing newspapers and letters, getting billboards, and things of that sort that are necessary in a political campaign.

Shearer: How was the fund raising accomplished?

Brown: The fund raising was purely by mail circulation, or at meetings where the money was contributed by members. There were some very affluent members of the organization who put in substantial sums of money.

Shearer: What about outside the organization?

Brown: The organization ran with very little money, really. We published a newspaper on two occasions. We put out some 250,000 copies for about \$500. That was raised by the group dues and spontaneous contributions.

Shearer: Those were pretty much your expenses then?

Brown: Yes, there were no other expenses.

We had a campaign headquarters on upper Market Street, opposite the old Whitcomb Hotel. It's now the San Francisco or the California Hotel. PSA owns the hotel now.

Shearer: The Franciscan, it must be.

* Chester McPhee, Gerald O'Gara, Robert Miller Green and Dan Gallagher.

- Brown: The Franciscan, yes. We were just opposite that. We had our headquarters way up on the end of Market Street, at that time.
- Shearer: So your fund raising and expenses were low.
- Brown: The expenses were kept down. It was more the active workers circulating in the neighborhoods and the clubs; a large speakers committee that covered all the meetings, picnics, and things of that sort; and smaller contributions for the members themselves.
- Shearer: How were members recruited?
- Brown: It was sort of a combination of the organization called the New Guard, that was started by my brother, which was nonpartisan. Then it combined the two other groups, the Young Republicans and the Young Democrats. So you had a built-in group that came in to the groups.
- Shearer: These were political clubs?
- Brown: Yes, of younger people--the Young Democrats, the Young Republicans.
- Shearer: Were there other people who then sought to join?
- Brown: Oh, yes. The newspapers gave us a great deal of publicity, and that brought new members in. Even the editorial pages editorialized favorably on us as a younger group of people with idealistic motives.
- Shearer: Do you think that was partly due to the fact that your group was clearly nonpartisan, in that you spanned both Democrats and Republicans?
- Brown: We were concerned mostly with San Francisco politics, and that of course is nonpartisan. There are no partisan offices in the San Francisco political offices.
- Shearer: I got the impression, however, that most of the supervisors whom you wished to oust were Republicans.
- Brown: No, no. The party affiliations didn't enter the picture at all. It was merely their complete incompetency, number one. Number two was their selfishness, their going to Sacramento to vote themselves into office by getting legislation to have the incumbents on the board of supervisors [listed] first on the ballot. You can see the advantage of that, because there were usually twenty-five to thirty candidates for the board of supervisors alone. People would go to the ballot, being interested in the mayor, or the district attorney, or the assessor, or some of the more important offices. When they got down to the board of supervisors, they'd pick the first five. It's a tremendous advantage to be named the first on the ballot. The incumbents, prior to the election, lobbied in Sacramento with city funds to have this legislation put through. Our group discovered it and publicized it. It was a good campaign weapon.

- Shearer: What was your political philosophy at that time? Yours and Pat's.
- Brown: I can't remember at that time whether Pat was a Republican or a Democrat.
- Shearer: I remember he ran as a Republican in 1928 against Williamson.
- Brown: He ran as a Republican against Ray Williamson, and then he changed over. Just how much later he changed over, I don't know.
- Shearer: By the time he was running for district attorney for San Francisco though, he was running as a Democrat.
- Brown: He may have been a Democrat at that time, but of course, that also is a nonpartisan office. All the San Francisco offices are nonpartisan. You don't run as a Democrat or a Republican.
- Shearer: I guess that the cross-filing situation complicates that a little bit too.
- Brown: After it got into the state offices, yes.
- Shearer: It would certainly blur the party lines when you begin filing--
- Brown: --on both tickets.
- Shearer: Last time you made a few intriguing comments about how different you and Pat were as boys and, I gather, as men, too. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

You said you had different friends, and different interests.

Attributes of a Good Trial Lawyer

- Brown: Norm Elkington has some interesting comments on that. He always said that I was the one that was more interested in the legal profession, and Pat was more interested in politics. I don't know how true that is. Pat was a very good lawyer. I tried a lot of cases with him, and he had a good personality for trying cases. He was always busy.
- Shearer: What is a good personality for trying cases?
- Brown: If you're trying cases before a jury, you have to have some feeling of empathy, or feeling of togetherness with them. They have to know you're sincere, and you have to have a pleasing personality and pleasing looks, although some very homely fellows have made very fine lawyers. Pat was all the former.

Shearer: Do you think it's important to have a certain amount of aggressive spirit? Or is it more important to have an appealing personality and image and demeanor for a jury?

Brown: [nods affirmatively] And also to let them know from the beginning that you have a thorough knowledge of your lawsuit. In other words, that you have worked that case to its ultimate degree of perfection as a lawsuit, to eliminate any thought in the jury's mind that you're being tricky or underhanded, or any thing of that sort.

The elements of a good trial lawyer, of course, are the native ability to speak and to argue a case, to debate it, and to prepare a lawsuit. It doesn't hurt to be on the right side of the case, too.
[laughter]

When we were practicing law, there were not very many cases that we didn't think we were on the right side. We couldn't pick and choose, we had to take what came to us. It's like Mark Twain said: "Even the Devil has a side to his case--a weak side, but still a side." [laughter] That's the side we represented.

Shearer: It sounds almost as though the attributes of a good trial attorney are also the attributes of an effective politician.

Brown: I'd say so, yes.

Norman Elkington was an excellent trial lawyer. When you meet him, you'll find that he's not a colorful or flamboyant type of man, but he'll immediately impress you with his sincerity, and also his ability and his willingness to work out a problem. That's the way he always was. He was the chief trial lawyer for Pat for a good many years in the district attorney's office, as the chief deputy--he and Tom Lynch. [Tom Lynch] later became the United States attorney and attorney general.

Alumni of Cincinnatus

Shearer: They were all members of the Cincinnatus?

Brown: Right. Tom Lynch was sort of an inactive member, but Norman was right in the thick of it.

Shearer: Who were some of the other alumni of the Cincinnatus?

Brown: A lot of them are dead. Bill Newsom was one, and Ed Hills. (Bill Newsom's son was recently appointed to the California State Court of Appeal in this district, by the way.)

Shearer: His son?

Brown: His son. His name is also Bill [William A.] Newsom.

The Sloss brothers, Frank [H.] and the other [Richard L.] Sloss. I knew them both; they're older men now. Chester McPhee. Dan Gallagher, who later became sheriff of San Francisco. Chester McPhee became supervisor and he became collector of customs. All these men had their start in Cincinnatus, really.

Chester McPhee would be a very interesting man for you to talk to. He was supervisor first, then collector of customs. He was also city administrative officer of San Francisco. That's a job next to the mayor's and it's a lifetime job.

Shearer: How long did he hold that position?

[tape off here]

Brown: I would like to go back for a moment to the Order of Cincinnatus, and especially to Ralph B. Potts, the lawyer who formed the organization in Seattle. He wrote an article that was the prize-winning essay of the American Bar Association. It was a very short article--I think it was in the thirties--and it was entitled "The Responsibility of the Citizen as a Voter." Do you want me to read it for the record? It's short.

Shearer: Sure.

Brown: "The blood of free men stains my ballot sheet. Whatever others may do, I shall not carelessly make my mark. I vote not because I can, but because I must. Those that died for this, my voice in my government, had a right to expect that I would prepare with every faculty to use it wisely, honestly, and courageously. They did not die that fools, blind partisans, or the reckless might make a game of free elections. Only my secret heart knows whether I justify the definition of voter as they wrote it on the reddening sands. If I love my country as they did, I question my qualification again and again.

I carefully study the issues and candidates to determine not what is best for me, or my minority, but for my country. I will not be confused or deceived by propaganda, slogans, or histrionics. I shield my eye to the glitter of personalities, purge my mind of passion and prejudice, and search diligently for the hidden truth. I must be free of all influences, save that of conscience and justice. I garden for dreams, but with a realistic spade. My test is not a trend of popularity, but of principle and liberty. I vote as if my ballot alone decided the contest. I may lose my preference, but I will not throw away my sacred vote, for within the booth I hold in my humble hand the living proxy of all my country's honorable dead."

Isn't that beautiful?

Shearer: It's wonderful. Is that a copy that can be appended to the interview?

Brown: Yes, I'll tell you what I did. Each year in almost every election since that was printed, I had it printed with a little American flag on it and mailed out. I sent it to The Recorder, a legal newspaper, and other newspapers. They all published it on each election. It's purely to get out the vote. It has no interest in what candidate you might be supporting. I thought it was really very beautifully expressed and it really hit the nub.

But you won't need it now that it's on the tape. This is the last one I've got.

Shearer: I was thinking of the punctuation.

Brown: You can do it.

Also, I wrote to Ralph Potts on a number of occasions and told him I'd like to use this essay, and he said, "Go ahead, Harold, any time you want to use it."

Shearer: So permission has been granted.

Brown: I'm certain that if you would publish it, or tell him that I have read it to you on the tape, and would he give you his permission, I'm sure he'd be glad to do so.

I would send a thousand or two thousand of those out before a campaign.

Shearer: When did you start doing this?

Brown: In all of Pat's campaigns, particularly, and then other campaigns that I was interested in, too. A very small percentage of the people are registered to vote, and then a smaller percentage of those registered go to the polls. A minority of the people are deciding who should run our country, and what issues should be decided one way or the other. I was really of the opinion that everyone should exercise his franchise of voting.

A Lifelong Republican in the Brown Campaigns

Shearer: This is an interesting lead-in to the question of what your role was in Pat's campaigns. You've been a lifelong Republican. How did you function as a member of his campaign?

Brown: I was very close to him. He could not see everybody who wanted to give money to his campaigns. They could give it to me, and I'd give it to him. They could trust me, and they also knew that I would tell him that they gave money, or they made a contribution of sign space, or things of that sort. If they gave it to the chairman of a committee, that person might never tell Pat. He might say, "This is the result, and incidentally, here's a list of the people who helped." It wasn't the personal touch.

I think you'll find in campaigns that everyone likes to deal directly with the candidate himself, rather than some chairman of his committee or campaign chairman, if they can.

I participated as much as I could. I made speeches at different meetings and attended all their executive meetings, participated in the few policies that they had.

In his campaign in 1943, I was in the Navy then. I went in in '42. I think Pat's campaign was in December, and I was back in Quonset Point, Rhode Island, where we had our officer's training.

Shearer: So you functioned as a liasion--

Brown: I was just a member of the team working for him.

When it got into the partisan politics, when he ran for state office, I conducted--without naming myself as chairman--all of the Republicans for Brown. I was a Republican and could do that. A great many Republicans were for my brother.

Shearer: Before then, you dealt with both Democrats and Republicans--

Brown: Yes, because it was local politics. After he got into the attorney general races, and the other races, I was a member of the Republicans for Brown Committee. We got headquarters and things of that sort for him. And money.

Shearer: That would be 1950?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Before we discuss the fund raising, I'd like to hold you back just a bit to the period of Cincinnatus and a few years after that.

[The following question and response were added on May 26, 1981.]

Shearer: Going back to the Atherton investigation of 1937. The Atherton report revealed that about \$5 million were spent annually for various kinds of vice and generated about \$1 million per year on graft payments. The investigation centered on Peter McDonough, a bailbondsman who

Shearer: apparently controlled the underworld network responsible for this vast cash flow. The investigation also revealed that several important civic officials were in debt to McDonough, including Matthew Brady, Pat's opponent for district attorney. Was this fact known and used in the 1939 campaign for DA?

Brown: That was the McDonough brothers. No, that was never used. Matt Brady was an easy going, very friendly guy. He was friendly with McDonough, but he was friendly with a great many people. He was not connected with the graft and not connected with the graft investigation. It was not used at all. [end of added material]

Pat Brown's Reconversion to Catholicism

Shearer: In 1939, on one of the tapes, Pat talks about going to a Catholic retreat at the behest of Leo Cunningham. In that three-day period, he underwent a reconversion to Catholicism. He characterized himself as "just a grasping young lawyer" before then, and said that it changed his philosophies.

Brown: Leo Cunningham was a judge here in San Francisco, in the municipal court, and a very brilliant man. He was very friendly to Pat and myself. I tried a great number of cases before him.

I don't know the facts of who encouraged my brother to go to the retreat at El Retiro. I know he did go there, and when he came back-- I don't think he changed from being a grasping lawyer, because I don't think he was a grasping lawyer. He was a hard-working lawyer. What did change was that he again became a Catholic. I think another ceremony was performed of marriage for him and his wife, and they had the three children who were living then baptized. Pat originally was a Catholic, I told you that, but he was an inactive Catholic and became a very active one.

Shearer: He also mentions that during the retreat he was so taken with the words of a very young, talented priest, who talked about the doctrine of love. He [the priest] characterized hell as not fire and damnation and eternal pain, but rather eternal separation from God's love. Apparently, this was something that had troubled Pat--his concept of pain and severe, unending punishment. Perhaps he got it from boyhood?

Brown: If it's true, I never recognized that in my brother. I really didn't.

Are you Catholics?

Shearer: No.

Brown: And your husband is not a Catholic?

Shearer: No.

Brown: The retreat at El Retiro is not just for Catholics. Everyone attends it--Catholics, Jews. It doesn't make any difference what religion you are a member of, but mostly Catholics attend, of course. It goes all year round. You attend on a Thursday and you leave on a Monday morning or a Sunday night, whichever you prefer. There are moments of silence. They have a retreat master. Jesuits, as you know, are highly and well educated. The retreats are just beautiful.

Shearer: You've attended them?

Brown: Yes.

When you leave the retreat, you really are sprouting wings. You feel like an angel. All of your sins are gone, and you will never do it again, whatever you did in the past. But unfortunately, it doesn't last too long with most people. [laughter]

Shearer: You have to renew it.

Brown: You have to renew it. Right.

I do think it had a remarkable influence upon my brother because of his change from a very passive Catholic to a devout Catholic. How much influence it had upon his political life, his honor, his integrity, or things of that sort, I do not know. I don't think it had much. I think he had that from the beginning.

Shearer: That was his own characterization of himself.

Brown: Yes, but I don't think there was ever any thought of dishonesty. I was with him from 1931 until his election, and of course knew him before that, and I can't remember anything dishonest or tricky about him. He wasn't that type of person.

Shearer: You think he may have been too hard on himself?

Brown: He was a very hard worker, yes. But trickiness, or crookedness were just not part of his makeup.

Shearer: Maybe he was too hard on himself in terms of his characterizing himself as being grasping.

Brown: I think so. That there was some big change, I think that was so much hogwash. [laughter] I really do. I think it reflected upon his thinking on religious matters, and probably--

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- Shearer: Do you mean it may have represented a great inspiration to him, but not a real change in behavior, because he was honorable before?
- Brown: No, there was no change in behavior pattern. That's what I meant by using the word hogwash. The change was in religious thinking, for probably the family, and probably he increased his already deeply ingrained theories of honesty and integrity. But it didn't certainly create any, I don't think.
- Shearer: One thing intrigued me about his concern about the doctrine of hell, and the doctrine of love. It goes back to your childhood and the skepticism that your mother apparently had for those same concepts as they were explained in the church. I wonder if perhaps Pat, or any of you children, felt apprehension about her safety, and feared that maybe she would go to hell if she didn't practice.
- Brown: Absolutely none. No fear of that at all. She believed that the hell was right here on earth, that there was no such thing as hell. She had read a great deal, and she attended all these lectures. She'd read Ingersoll, for example. I recommended that to you. She was not the agnostic that Ingersoll was, but she really believed in his writings, that there was no hell. You don't throw your children out because they commit some sin. You're needed more then, than at any other time. She had theories of that kind.
- My father was never one to be too concerned about hell, or things of that sort.
- Shearer: So this was not of concern to you children either?
- Brown: No.
- Shearer: The strength of her belief was something you took for granted.
- Brown: I think we adopted that much more. Of course, it's an easier theory to adopt, too. [laughter]

Parents' Separation

- Shearer: When your parents separated, was there a living apart? Pat describes a kind of a separation, but I'm not clear on how it was handled.
- Brown: I remember the separation, after they'd been married for a great number of years. He went downtown and lived in some hotel, and she stayed in 1572 Grove Street, where we'd always lived, and managed that. At that time my father was not a very good provider. I don't know what the trouble really was.

Shearer: How old were you at that time?

Brown: I've got to think. I guess I must have been about twenty-four, going to law school. I was a lawyer. I was still living at home. Twenty-two.

Shearer: Constance would have been living at home?

Brown: Yes, and Frank.

Shearer: Did you find it very troubling? How was it presented to you?

Brown: No, all of us would see my father frequently. We knew where he was living, and we'd go by there. I think we all sort of wanted to take care of my mother--not that we had any greater affection for her than for him. It just seemed he could always take care of himself pretty well, and she had no ability or earning capacity. She'd devoted her life to her kids. She never had any servants. She did the washing, and cooking, and running a house on rather a modest income.

Shearer: Were you and Pat then able to help take care of her?

Brown: I think Pat got married. I don't know how old my brother was. I think he was about twenty-five to twenty-six.

Shearer: He was married in 1930. He would have been twenty-five then. Wasn't he born in 1905?

Brown: Yes. How old would he be then, twenty-five?

Shearer: Twenty-five.

Brown: Yes. I was twenty-three, and I was still living at home. He moved out then. I was home, and my younger brother Frank was home. He was still going to high school, and later went to the University of California. My sister went to the University of California.

Shearer: So you and Pat were able to make some contribution to your mother?

Brown: Yes. And my father too. He became ill later. He had a stroke, and he needed a little help financially, and we gave him some.

Shearer: You said something last time that I'm afraid I didn't catch on tape. It was about your mother's view of his chances in life, and very supportive view she had. She said something like, "If he'd only had something or other and an accountant--" Do you recall that?

Brown: He was a very good businessman, but if he had been properly advised by a lawyer and by an accountant, or a securities investment counselor, or a banker-- But he was not, and as a result, he didn't save very

Brown: much money. Then he got into the field of running clubs--the Railroadmen's Social Club, and a few others--where there was gambling and card playing. Everybody knows that gambling doesn't make very much money, or doesn't keep it, at any rate. You'll be up at one time, and down at the other.

Shearer: You had related your mother's comment.

Brown: People were always praising her, that she made such a contribution in raising a family, and a governor. She always said, "It's not me, it's their father," and gave him full credit for it.

He had more influence probably on Pat and myself, because we worked with him and for him. Of course, Connie didn't work, and neither did my brother Frank. At that time, they were too young.

Shearer: How old were they?

Brown: She's five years younger than I, and Frank is ten years younger.

Shearer: She would have been eighteen when they separated, so she would have had a chance to be close to him up to then.

Brown: After that she went to work, and then she became married, too. Her first husband was killed in an automobile accident, and then she remarried, and had two children by her second marriage.

Shearer: Did you have quite a bit of contact with your father apart from the business situation, or was that mainly where you had contact?

Brown: We had a very close relationship, I'd say. Even when I was in law school I'd see him frequently, even though he was away from the house. We were very friendly.

Shearer: When did he die?

Brown: I was trying to think of that the other day. I can't figure that out. I think he was seventy-one or seventy-two when he died. He was about ten years older than my mother, eight to ten years older. I don't know. I could get the information, but I just don't know, and I don't want to guess at it.

Shearer: But he would have seen Pat through several campaigns?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Probably attorney general?

Brown: Yes. He contributed his part, and got other people to help. I forget--one of his sisters died, and he was passing out election cards at the undertaking parlor. [laughter]

Shearer: So he was a loyal supporter of all the campaigns.

Childhood Pursuits

Shearer: You mentioned that your father had a theater where plays were given, and you would frequently see the plays. I understand also that you children used to put on plays. Do you recall that?

Brown: I don't recall that so much. We had a circulating library, and my mother always had a lot of books--the Rover Boys and the Horatio Alger series, every book that came out. We put them all in the library, and we lost them all. [laughter]

Shearer: You read them first?

Brown: We'd read them first. Our library function didn't work out. I don't recall the plays so much though.

I remember my father put a punching bag, and sort of a ring with gloves in it in our basement, and we used that a lot. Neighbor kids came in, and things of that sort.

Shearer: Who were your heroes? If you dressed up and pretended you were somebody else, who would you be? Superman was not around then.

Brown: No, it was mostly cowboys and Indians. In the early 1900's (the Civil War was over in 1865--only thirty-five years had elapsed) there was a great deal of talk of the Civil War. And there was the athletics that we have today on a smaller scale. They didn't have the football, but they had baseball, and fights. My father used to take us to the fights, and to the baseball games.

Shearer: Did you follow a team?

Brown: The Seals was our team, the San Francisco Seals.

The world's fair was in 1915, out where the Marina is now, and that was quite a thing to go to. Golden Gate Park was a beautiful place to be, and the beaches. The beaches over here [in Marin County] were hiking places, or Mount Tamalpais was a thing to conquer. There were ample activities for growing kids in a city.

San Francisco, at that time, wasn't free of crime, but you could leave your front door open at night, and you could walk in any part of San Francisco and you wouldn't be troubled. The crime was altogether on a different scale, and of a different sort.

Shearer: What was it like to be a little boy going into another neighborhood? Did each neighborhood gang have its turf?

Brown: Yes. You were a little bit cautious and fearful of the other neighborhoods, and particularly some of them were supposed to be a little bit tough.

Shearer: Did you ever put your boxing practice into use defending yourself?

Brown: We all had a lot of fistfights. It was common. There was never any of these knifings that they have today, or use of guns or clubs. It was a little slower scale, but fistfights were very, very common.

Shearer: What were the boundaries of your neighborhood, beyond which you would feel a little apprehensive when you were a boy?

Brown: From Fillmore to Masonic Avenue, and from Haight Street over to Turk Street, and the cemetery. They had the cemeteries in San Francisco at that time. There were two Protestant cemeteries, and one Catholic, I think. They moved all those bodies out, and it's now the district that is Geary and Masonic Avenue.

[tape off here]

Romance between Pat Brown and Bernice Layne

Shearer: I wanted to ask you if you knew Bernice Layne as a schoolgirl?

Brown: Yes, I knew her at Lowell. She had her sisters there. She had three sisters. Some of them went to Polytechnic High School, I think.

Shearer: What was she like as a young girl?

Brown: She was a very pretty girl. Her sisters and herself were very, very pretty girls. Charming girls. I mean they were very pretty, and neatly dressed.

Shearer: Was she the same class as Pat, or was she younger?

Brown: I think she was a year behind him, but she was three or four years younger. She was very bright.

Shearer: So she was put ahead?

Brown: Yes. I think it was in grammar school where she was put ahead.

Shearer: So she's your age?

Brown: Yes, I think she's seventy. I think she's a year younger than I am.

Shearer: She looks very young in her pictures.

Brown: She's seventy and I'm seventy-one. I think she's a year younger--at least she claims to be. Is this going on record? [laughter]

Shearer: Well, it could be sealed!

I noticed that she and Pat eloped. Why was that? Finances?

Brown: It was sort of a surprise to everyone, because everyone knew that they were going to be married. They'd been going together for about ten years.

Shearer: Pat was twenty-five at the time of his marriage.

Brown: Well, from the time they entered high school. And Pat had gone through law school and been practicing a couple of years. So they were going together at least four years of high school, four years of law school, and a couple of other years--ten years--and then they eloped. It seems sort of silly. Everyone expected it.

Shearer: Were her parents disappointed at not being able to put on a wedding? Was there any talk of that?

Brown: No. If there was, it was kept within their family, and they didn't make any comment that I heard.

Shearer: Did they set up housekeeping close by?

Brown: No, they had an apartment on Chestnut Street, down at the Marina and lived there for a number of years. Then they moved up to the side of Twin Peaks. They rented a very charming house up there, and lived there for a great number of years before they acquired the place out in West Portal. Tom Lynch, the person who was district attorney of San Francisco and attorney general, and was Pat's second or third in command under or equal to Norman Elkington, now lives in their home. It's up on the side of Twin Peaks. I forget the name of the street, but it's in the telephone book, Thomas Lynch.

Shearer: Did Bernice take part in the campaigns right from the very beginning, or was she involved with the family?

Brown: I can't remember her ever being involved in any of the campaigns.

Shearer: Was it that that wasn't done, or it wasn't expected?

Brown: After he was elected and ran for re-election, then she was quite a part of the picture. I think that she assisted, but not as a part of the organization.

Brown: She had a great many friends herself that she encouraged to participate, but I don't remember her ever being the chairman of a committee, or things of that sort.

Bernice Layne's Background

Brown: Her father was quite a prominent man in San Francisco, Captain Arthur Layne, of the Police Department. In those days, police captain was a tremendous job. He had under him a neighborhood of approximately a hundred thousand people. There were at least fifty to seventy-five thousand people in the district that he was captain of. If he was captain of the central district, which is the downtown area, it was a tremendous voting population. It was a big job and very small pay in those days.

Shearer: A lot of responsibility.

Brown: A great deal of responsibility. They said in those days that the reason San Francisco was free of organized crime of any sort was because the police themselves kept all the swag. Captain Layne was the exception. There were one or two others that were named in the investigation. He was one. He was known for his honor and his integrity by everyone. I'm not just stating this because of Bernice or anyone else. They had what is called the Atherton Investigation, where they indicted bail bond brokers and they uncovered police captains with thousands of dollars in cash in their garages which just could not be accounted for under normal circumstances from their salaries.

But Captain Layne was not one of those who ever had a great deal of money. In fact, they lived in very modest circumstances. Mrs. Layne was a charming woman, whom I knew very well, who raised the family in a very fine manner, and very economically. The girls were always well dressed, and attended college. There was no real source of money. Bernice herself says that today her habits are somewhat frugal because of her training in her family, where they had to use the older sister's things for the younger sisters.

Shearer: I imagine that her police captain father, who had such responsibilities, probably wasn't in the household a great deal.

Brown: I think he had regular hours. He had regular shifts that he would work on, and the assistants would take over. I think he had regular hours when he was home.

Shearer: I was wondering if perhaps his long hours out of the home might have helped to prepare her a little bit for being a politician's wife.

Brown: I kind of doubt that. I think that he was home and helped in rearing the family.

Bernice Brown's Role in Politics

Shearer: A woman very active in Democratic politics in Southern California has described Bernice--and I'm not quoting her exactly--as being essentially apolitical as the wife of the governor, but becoming very much interested in politics when her children entered politics, almost acting as though she were a campaign manager. How do you account for that?

Brown: You mean Bernice's children?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: She only has one son who is in politics.

Shearer: I thought Kathleen was also.

Brown: That's right, Kathleen was elected from Los Angeles to the same job that Jerry had.

I've been separated from them. They've lived in Los Angeles all this period of time. I see them infrequently, and it's only since they've been there that Jerry has gone into politics, or their daughter, so I wouldn't have any information on that at all, or even any thoughts on it.

She was always interested in Pat's campaigns, and active in them in her own way.

Shearer: Do you think she liked the limelight?

Brown: I think she enjoyed every moment of it. People enjoyed being with her. As I say, she is a very intelligent woman. I don't think it was any great hardship for her to participate in the campaigns as the wife of the candidate. I think that she was just an excellent candidate's wife and contributed greatly to Pat's campaigns by reason of the way she conducted herself.

Shearer: Did she make public appearances and speeches in the later campaigns?

Brown: Yes. I think when she was called upon she made a great many.

Shearer: I know that Ann Eliaser has talked about her as being just a model political wife, saying that no one has ever had anything unkind to say about Bernice and the way she has supported Pat through the years.

[tape off here]

Jerry Brown's Political and Personal Style

Shearer: Would you say that Jerry is more like his mother or his father in his political style?

Brown: I think he takes after his mother to a great extent. I believe that he listened to Pat so many times at the breakfast table or dinner talking politics that he developed theories. Whether they were in agreement or in disagreement, at least he became knowledgeable on the subject of politics through his father.

Edmund--my brother Pat--has a very outgoing personality and just makes thousands of personal friends. Wherever he goes, he'll meet somebody, and be very interested in people. He asks a lot of questions of everybody, even on the first occasion that he meets them.

Now Jerry, to me, is more the introvert type. I think his mother would be also inclined that way. I think he inherits his brains from both of them. He has an excellent brain. I think outstanding.

Shearer: Is Jerry inclined to make a few close friends and keep them through thick and thin, rather than many casual friends?

Brown: I can't answer much about Jerry. I always liked Jerry. When he went into the seminary, he came over to my house--I lived on Gellert Drive in San Francisco--and I gave him my navy footlocker to pack his clothes in when he entered the seminary. Our family always liked all the nephews and nieces, and Pat likes all the rest of them. He would do anything, and has, trying to help them.

But I don't know Jerry well enough. I've talked to him. I received a beautiful letter from him when he was in the seminary, about eight to ten pages. It tells all about his experiences there--very interesting letter.

Shearer: Has this been published anywhere?

Brown: No, it's never been published anyplace. I think I sent a copy of it down to Pat, I wanted him to read it.

Shearer: Would you be willing to give another look at it, and see if there's something that we could add?*

*See pages 44 a-f

April 14, 1959

Dear Harold,

Thank you very much for your check. I surely appreciate it as does the rest of the community.

It was good to see you in Sacramento, even if for only such a short time. I wish I could have a longer visit with you. If you can ever get down this way some Sunday, I'd love to have you drop in. Just let me know a few weeks in advance if possible, because the family or someone might be intending to come on the same day.

So much has happened since the last time we really talked together I don't know where to begin. You remember I think, that just before I came in here I went to New York. That was a tremendous opportunity. My friends and I had quite a time for ourselves. We were in New York eight days - living like millionaires with an apartment on Park Avenue. We saw four plays and went to most of the spots we had intended to. Then we went up to Boston for a few days and then to Washington where we met many interesting

people. Then flew home in time to loaf around for a couple of weeks before heading down to Los Gatos.

The change in routine was immediate and noticeable — especially having to get up when a few weeks before I was used to going to bed. Five o'clock in the morning ^{around here} is a beautiful time of the day — birds are chirping, the sun is coming up over Mount Hamilton casting a glow over the whole valley that joins with the dew to sparkle forth a freshness that you see at no other time, but I didn't know this for awhile because it hated lousy to me for weeks. However in time, the old body acclimated itself so I could hardly distinguish between the pain of five o'clock rise and that of the eight o'clock a few months before.

The time past surprisingly quickly, considering the continually unchanged program for almost two years. Novitiate life is different and by no means a complete training in itself. Its idea

is to furnish a man with an extended opportunity of looking into the meaning of life and then trying to come up with some basic answers. It gives you a chance to see the Society of Jesus first hand and for them to see you.

The remarkable thing is that the schedule can be so similar day in and day out. Prayer, spiritual reading, work or playing, and a bit of studying are the essential items. But, looking back over the time, I can sure say it opened up for me unthought possibilities. Becoming acquainted with Christianity in a serious way and the spiritual life that it implies was a tremendously expanding experience. It laid out a new world for me — one which I hope to spend the rest of my life as a priest exploring.

Then in August I took the three vows that made me an official member of the Society and began to hit the books in earnest. I would

like to tell you all about what I'm studying, but I have so little time that that will be impossible. However, here's a brief rundown on some of the stuff I've been taking. In Latin: Cicero and Virgil. Both of whom are tremendous. The speeches of Cicero are the clearest you would ever want to read and they roll out like a symphony. He could work over every line so the whole thing would be a finished masterpiece of literature as well as persuasive oratory. Of Virgil's works, we are reading the Aeneid. It too is great. a real privilege to be able to read in the original. In the English translation you can get the story and follow the epic hero, Aeneas, but you miss so much more. When you take Aeneas out of Latin, you take out all the guts - the music, the meter, and much of the original imagery. I have found it a very exciting story and the most beautiful!

poetry that I've seen.^{44e} In Greek: the apology
of Socrates and a little of Homer. The apology is
a magnificent piece of writing. Plato wrote
it and he is considered one of the greatest writers
of all Western Civilization. It's not only a well
thought out defense, it is but an inspiring
picture of a man that was ready and eager
to die for his ideals. It didn't come as
easily as the Latin - there is still much
drudgery in hacking through this language. But
I think it is worth it. Homer's Iliad is
beautiful and similar in some respects to the
Aeneid, but fresher and more naive in its vision
of life. I didn't read enough of it to really
appreciate it as a story yet. Other courses have
been: Shakespeare, Western Civ., Public Speaking,
and English survey. They have been good but some-
what shallow, I'm afraid, as we have so little
time and try so much.

This got going further than I had expected,

but I hope you find it interesting hearing a little about what I'm doing here. This is only the beginning of the training — eleven more years to go — however, so I'll have to write you again and tell you what comes after basic training.

Give my love to the family.

Hello to Frank too!

Please write when you get a chance.

Love and prayers,
Jerry

P.S. I've been meaning to write Grandma for months, but haven't. Please tell her that I haven't forgot her and will write as soon as possible.

Brown: It would probably give a little on his philosophies of things. He certainly studied a great many difficult subjects--Greek and Latin--and read in those subjects. He tells how much more interesting and enjoyable the books were in these old languages.

Shearer: In the original.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Were you surprised when he came out of the seminary and entered politics?

Brown: As I say, I wasn't closely associated with Jerry as he was growing up. He went back to Yale, and he was in the seminary. Years when I might have known him, or talked more at length to him, he was away at school or in the seminary. The other years he was small, and going to high school and had the interests of any young boy.

Shearer: Pat's political style, of course, you had considerable opportunity to observe. I guess you were saying that he seemed to enjoy meeting and dealing and empathizing with people.

Pat Brown: Marked for Leadership

Brown: I think Pat had the attributes of leadership. Whether they were born in him-- He was very small, he only weighed about a hundred pounds. He played in the hundred-pound basketball team at Lowell. Yet he was elected yell leader of the school, which is quite an honor. Lowell High School was an outstanding school, and had about 2,500 students. I think he had those attributes from the beginning. Certain things actually showed in him.

I went to a dance that he also attended. I forget where it was-- at the Palace Hotel. He was dancing with Bernice, and they dropped a monkey down from the ceiling--a way to grab at--and he got it. It is an odd thing that one individual would get that, if you think about it. There were a number of those incidents that happened that would indicate that he was just a step above people, and could out-think them a little more.

##

Brown: --the outstanding leaders in the school. The outstanding football player, a fellow named Newman, was a close friend of his, both before and afterwards. And other people--Gene [Eugene] Van Horn was a great halfback. Then he had this Jewish fraternity that he was a member of. I told you that before, and you probably can get that information from other people.

- Shearer: These people were generally admired at school, and they turned out to be friends of Pat's?
- Brown: Right.
- Shearer: It seemed to you that he was marked for leadership, even then?
- Brown: In looking back on it. I wouldn't recognize it then, but in looking back I can see a great many incidents. The normal young fellow, he seemed to be a little ahead of them.

Harold Brown's Choice of a Law Career

- Shearer: Were you interested in running for office? You'd been through Cincinnatus together, the campaign for assembly together. You knew how campaigns were put together. Were you never tempted?
- Brown: I really wasn't too interested in running for any political office. I didn't have as outward a personality as Pat, I don't think. I just went in an entirely different direction. It just didn't seem that I could do two things, being a lawyer and being into politics. I just chose to be a lawyer.
- Shearer: That was really what you enjoyed more?
- Brown: I enjoyed it after I got into it. My brother was four years ahead of me in law school. I went to Saint Mary's for a year and a half or two of college in Oakland, and then worked for the PG&E and the Pacific Telephone Company. I went to law school purely and simply because I had nothing else to do. I thought I might as well occupy myself in the evening rather interestingly and profitably.

Then, after starting the study of law, there was the tremendous competition with the other students, and it was an entirely different subject than I had ever studied. A different system, too, of studying. I really became interested, and got good grades. I'm not boasting, but I was always among the first five in a class of seventy-five or eighty, and usually was second. I really felt that I outstudied these people. I studied more and longer on the subjects. I had a job--this shouldn't be for me, this is Edmund's deal, I shouldn't be going on like this.

- Shearer: Let's hear it! [laughter]
- Brown: I worked for a stock and bond house in the morning. We'd have to be there when the New York Stock Exchange opened, at six o'clock, and then we were through at twelve. So I had from twelve until class opened at seven, to study, and I did it.

Shearer: You were caught up in the excitement of the competition?

Brown: In school, yes. We had a great many colleges represented there from all over the United States. The San Francisco Law School provided a place for people to go who didn't have the money to go to a day school. Either they were married, or they had jobs and had to support themselves, and they couldn't afford a day school.

Shearer: In Pat's interview, he says that it was clear that he wasn't going to be able to enter the University of California because of the financial burden that it would entail at that point. Rather than admit that to his classmates and fraternities, he allowed his grades to slip to the point where he could say, "Well, I just don't have the grades."

Brown: He had the grades to get in the University of California, I'm sure. I've never checked with Lowell. He was working awfully hard when he was in high school.

Shearer: The "slippage" may have been just the last semester.

Brown: I forget how many units you needed to get into college at that time-- twenty or twenty-five, or something.

Shearer: I was interested, though, in the kind of philosophical point that that made: somehow it was better to be a dilettante than to be a little bit poor. At least that seemed to be the prevailing opinion among his peers.

[phone rings, tape off here]

Shearer: What was your role in the campaign? Were you an advisor, a strategist with Pat or did that vary from campaign to campaign?

Brown: Political campaigns are tremendously disorganized, as you know. I don't think he had really any organization. I was always welcome at a meeting, or as a part of it, and would go in with him. If there were things to advise or discuss, everybody was free to say whatever they wanted. I think I spoke up as much as anyone did.

Pat Brown's Style of Leadership

Brown: He was very close to different people in his jobs, like Bert Levit and Norman Elkington, and Tom Lynch, Bill Newsom, and Ed Hills. He had a lot of other people around with brains. He discussed things with them and made up his mind. I think most of the decisions were really made by him, though. He listened to everybody, but didn't pay too much attention to them.

Shearer: How did they react to that? Was that a congenial situation?

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: They were willing to defer?

Brown: I think they did. They all profited by their relationship with him. Tom Lynch, when he first met Pat, was employed in the U.S. Attorney's Office as a deputy. He became Pat's top deputy. Then he became district attorney through Pat's solicitation and persuasive efforts with the mayor, Elmer Robinson of San Francisco. Norman Elkington was less desirous of ever using Pat. Norm was very, very independent, as you will notice when you talk with him. He also became a deputy district attorney, and then Pat, as governor, appointed Norm directly to the superior court, which was quite a jump. Since then, he's appointed him to the court of appeal where he now sits.

So they've all profited by it. Although Norm was a good lawyer, and was with a law firm and practicing law. In those days you could practice law and be a deputy in any of the public offices, such as district attorney or public defender, and others. Norm was a very capable and able lawyer, and has been a credit to the bench in every way.

Shearer: Were you also serving in the district attorney's office?

Brown: No. My brother Frank did.

Shearer: He was a deputy.

Brown: He was deputy DA.

When I got out of the navy, I opened an office and started my law practice all over again. Frank went down to the DA's office.

Pat appointed me to the municipal court, and then jumped me, not to the superior, but to the appellate court. You know, I was at a cocktail party the other day, and somebody said to me, "What bench were you?" I told him I was on the municipal and the appellate court. He said, "Who appointed you?" I said, "My brother." He said, "I've often wondered, what does it really take to be a judge?" I said, "First of all, you have to have great ability. You have to have a great knowledge of the law, and you have to have a knowledge of mankind, and you have to have a personality that will accept these things." But I said, "It helps to have a friend as the governor, and it helps a hell of a lot more if he's your brother." [laughter]

I don't know what the hell he wanted me to say!

Shearer: Very good!

Brown: I felt that I did the job as a judge and served with credit.

Now Jerry, he doesn't believe in nepotism, but that didn't trouble Pat at all. He had Bernice's sister in a top job. He had Joe Kelly on as attorney for the California State Dental Board.

Shearer: What was her position?

Brown: She was on the California Adult Authority and the State Personnel Board, and she was his personal secretary there. That's May Layne Bonnell.

Shearer: How long did she serve in the position?

Brown: Many, many years. The whole time he was governor, I think. Pat had quite a few of his relatives on. [laughter] But they were all good, I will say that. Including his brother. If I don't add--and I'm saying this facetiously--the sound of my voice might not indicate that I'm really trying to be humorous here.

Shearer: The transcript indicates when laughter follows a remark, so the reader will get a clue that way.

How does Pat, in your view, deal with adversaries? I know he had a real run-in with Jesse Unruh, and there was a time when there was a real split in the Democratic party.

Brown: I think he was absolutely firm with these people. He was firm on the water project to Los Angeles, on what happened there in delaying with them. I was in his office in Sacramento one day when he was on the telephone talking to some of the Los Angeles supervisors. They couldn't change him one iota from his views, even if it cost him the election.

Shearer: This was when?

Brown: This was in his first term as governor, when the water project was being first organized.

Shearer: This was when the bond issue was being voted?

Brown: Not only the bond issue, but the plans for it. The whole project was being put into effect.

Also, I think he cared little or nothing about views that were offensive to him, whether it be Unruh's or Yorty's, or anyone else's.

Shearer: You mean he was unaffected by people's animosity?

Brown: Absolutely firm in what he was doing. He knew every step of the way. He was a voracious reader, if I can use that word. He read everything. He lived his job.

His outgoing personality, which seemingly was one of friendship, with whom anybody could say anything or get by with anything, is quite contrary to his real actions as governor, and as attorney general and as district attorney. I think he called them exactly as he saw them, with force, even though they were offensive to a lot of people that he could have benefited by.

I'm not trying to say these things just because he happens to be my brother. I really believe that he's a very strong individual, not easy to get around, or fool, or trick, or cajole into anything. I think that he would do things politically, but you'd have to have a good reason for it.

The Chessman Decision

Shearer: I was thinking of the Chessman reprieve, which was unpopular with a great many people.

Who in Sacramento among his closest advisors supported his decision?

Brown: I think Cecil Poole, who's now United States Attorney, would know of his activities on this. Have you got his name on your list? Cecil Poole was his clemency secretary, and he could tell you on that.

I think my brother spent a lot of agonizing hours on that. It was a strange crime. It had gone through the courts for many years. The crime carried the death penalty because they had moved the victim--it was considered a kidnapping with the rape--and the movement of the victim was about two feet! Kidnapping was such a minor part of it. But he was a rapist, and he was a fellow who had done tremendous harm to people, and the public outcry was such that they were going to eliminate him. It's like Bret Harte's story of Tennessee's pal. Have you read that?

Shearer: No.

Brown: Well, they arrested Tennessee's pal for being a horse thief. Bret Harte says the jury "accorded him the benefit of every doubt, knowing in advance there was none." They were going to hang him anyway, which they did. [laughter]

Shearer: I just wondered if that was a subject of conversation between you?

Brown: No. I think he might have asked me once or twice, what would you have done? I said I would have hanged him earlier.

Shearer: On his suggestion to the legislature that they consider the abolition of capital punishment, that, too, went against the grain of a great many people. Was this the kind of issue that he would discuss with you?

Brown: No. But he asked my views on it a great many times. As a matter of fact, I sent him an excerpt from Justice [Benjamin N.] Cardozo, who was a justice of the United States Supreme Court, who pointed out that in England, less than a hundred years before Cardozo wrote in 1936 or 1937--so it would be 1835--they punished people by the death penalty for over 135 crimes. Then he made some statement that Dickens tells us that while they were hanging them in the public square, which they did for pickpocketing, the pickpockets were working the public square. The question was, as Cardozo was attempting to point out, whether the death penalty was a deterrent to crime, or to certain crimes.

Cardozo spoke of Dickens, who is a favorite of mine, and I couldn't remember where the devil that quote came from. You know where I found it?

Shearer: Where?

Brown: In Oliver Twist. You remember when Fagin took little Oliver and sent him out to the crowd to pick the pockets of the rich people. He sent them out to the place where they were hanging people in the public square for pickpocketing. That's where Cardozo got this from Dickens. I had one hell of a time thinking where it came from and I have read all of Dickens because I enjoy him so much.

Shearer: He's a wonderful writer.

Brown: But Edmund never consulted me. I think he talked to Jerry.

Shearer: Did he, on that question?

Brown: I think he did on Chessman. Yes.

Shearer: That's very interesting.

Brown: Jerry told him to pardon him.

I think that my brother's powers of pardoning him were limited. I think the California Supreme Court had to recommend it, and my brother did not have the power. He might have exercised power that he did not have, and do it. Then they would have been in a mess. But I think that the Supreme Court had to make the recommendation that the sentence be changed to a life sentence. I'm not certain of that.

Shearer: As I understand it, he gave Chessman a reprieve, or several stays of execution, but didn't actually pardon him.

Brown: He never pardoned him. I'm using the wrong word. I mean commute the sentence to life [imprisonment.]

The rest of these questions that you told me you were thinking of off the record, I think you can just as well get from Norman Elkington, or Bert Levit, or Tom Lynch.

Shearer: Concerning his decision-making style--

Brown: They'd be much better. My part in Pat's political career was just that of a very interested person that was assisting him in every way I could. I wasn't too concerned about being named chairman of anything, when someone else could be named the chairman and really put a little dough in the campaign.

Campaign Funding

Shearer: I want to ask you about campaign funding, since you did act as--

Brown: Finance chairman of Republicans for Brown. [laughter]

Shearer: In Brown's 1950 attorney general campaign against Shattuck, the northern California finance chairman was Max Sobel, the liquor industry spokesman.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: Did that raise any potential conflict?

Brown: No, Max Sobel was a highly respected member of the community. He was in the wholesale liquor business, but that was a legitimate business. He was very highly regarded by all the Jewish people in San Francisco. He has two or three very nice sons, who are now middle aged or past middle age. He was very close to people like Ben Swig, Louis Lurie, and others. He had the respect of the entire community, there's no question about it. Of course, a person who might be adverse to liquor might think that a person dealing in that is a bartender or something.

Shearer: As part of the fund raising, did you approach members of the business community, corporations, and utilities, as organizations, or were they personal connections, friends of friends?

Brown: No. I had no hesitancy about phoning somebody to put some money in Pat's campaigns whom we were both acquainted with, or ask them to do it. For example, W. P. Brauner of Fuller Paint Company at one time was

Brown: a factor in public life in San Francisco, and I went to him and he put money in our Cincinnatus campaign. I think he put a thousand dollars in, which was a tremendous sum. He did it without being desirous of any gain, he just thought the organization was good, and the theories and the ideas were his.

Other people would take me to lunch, or for dinners, or we'd have meetings with, and introduce me to, and I'd have no hesitance about asking them to put money in the campaign. It's the only way they could help. They didn't want to be chairmen of committees, they didn't want to leave their homes. Their activity was to put money in.

Shearer: Some of the other interviewees have talked with what almost sounds like despair about how difficult it is to raise money for political campaigns. Roger Kent talks about the early fifties--1953, 1954--and how hard it was.

Brown: Did you meet Roger?

Shearer: Yes.

Brown: He's a charming gentleman.

Shearer: Just a wonderful man. I'm working on his interviews. He has recorded twenty interviews some years back.

Brown: He was the Chairman of the Democratic Party for many years, and really a fine gentleman.

Police Reform Movement of the 1930s

Shearer: I wanted to ask you about the police reform movement. You mentioned that the police force in San Francisco, in general, had a reputation for a certain amount of graft, and that Captain Layne was one of the notable exceptions.

Brown: Yes. Here's another one--Captain Gough. There were two or three more.

Shearer: At what point did you organize--

Brown: That was about the time Cincinnatus came in, because they had the Atherton investigation. Atherton was an FBI agent who left the FBI and took this special assignment. It was all over the newspapers of the day.

Shearer: I was thinking of your police reform newspaper.

Brown: That was more of a little house organ.

Shearer: It was for the police department?

Brown: For the police department. It was sent to all public officials because the police department with its 1,800 members were a potent political force. They would respect things that were said about the various officials. But in main, the Police Signal was not a major factor, it was a contributing factor.

Shearer: Did it grow out of an interest of the Cincinnatus group?

Brown: No, it grew out of the sole interest of a young captain, Walter Ames, then a patrolman. He was my best friend. He was just very disturbed about the organization of the police department, graft conditions, low pay, no pensions, and things of that sort. His feelings were that if you have a very well-paid police organization, with good hours and a good pension, you will get good law enforcement. If you don't have it, these people are going to seek it elsewhere, either by getting jobs--moonlighting, as they say,--or elsewhere.

He determined to change them [these conditions] and I think that he did. The paper became known and was respected by all policemen and their families, and was a power.

Shearer: I had the impression that it was helped in some fashion by Pat and by you, informally.

Brown: No, he had nothing to do with it. He had nothing to do with it at all. It was completely outside the ken of his knowledge. He was friendly to Walter Ames, but distantly, and hardly knew Arthur Hexterman, who was another member of the advisory board of the Police Signal. Frank Shirley was a lawyer, and always active in Pat's campaign, who wanted nothing from Pat. When I say he wanted nothing, that means he wanted something to happen, but he did not want anything from Pat, as a matter of fact. He was always a lawyer. He's now deceased.

Shearer: But I seem to recall your saying last time that the police, as an organization, have been supportive in Pat's campaigns.

Brown: Yes.

Shearer: He must have, at some point, given them support for their aims.

Brown: Oh, yes. I think that he recognized them after he got on as DA, and he assisted in a great many ways, by giving them certain priorities of appearances, and backing their pension plan.

##

Brown: The San Francisco Police Department endorsed him, too.

Shearer: Because of past support for their pensions?

Brown: Right. Also because they remembered Captain Layne being a member of the department, and understanding their worries and their concerns.

Shearer: Was Pat close to his father-in-law?

Brown: I think they were very close. They were very, very friendly in every way, yes.

Shearer: So he would have been in a position to hear the policeman's side of the story all the way along through his career.

Brown: I don't know whether Captain Layne was very talkative about that, or whether Pat was very interested then.

Well, I see it's now five thirty, so--

Shearer: It's that time. Thank you very much.

Brown: You're very welcome.

##

Transcriber: Catherine Scholten

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Constance Brown Carlson

MY BROTHERS EDMUND, HAROLD, AND FRANK

An Interview Conducted by
Julie Gordon Shearer
in 1981





CONSTANCE AUGUSTA BROWN CARLSON

1945



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INTERVIEW HISTORY

The strains of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" ceased abruptly as the doorbell summoned Constance Brown Carlson from the piano for her afternoon's tape-recorded conversation in her San Francisco home about her childhood, family, and her eldest brother Edmund G. Brown, Sr. The door opened to reveal a small-boned woman with a ready smile and lively brown eyes. The family resemblance she shares with her brothers Edmund, Harold, and Frank is softened and refined but the manner--brisk, alert, curious, and energetic--carried through.

Mrs. Carlson sketched a picture of a hard-working, upwardly mobile, "male-oriented" household in which learning and industry were prized by both parents but in which different agendas were presented to their sons and daughter. The boys were encouraged to get an education beyond high school; the daughter was encouraged to get a job and contribute to the household expenses until she should get married.

Nonetheless, Mrs. Carlson did attend the University of California, braving parental protests and a three-hour commute by streetcar and ferry that began in the predawn darkness. After two years, illness put a stop to her studies. Then marriage intervened, then widowhood, teaching, marriage to Arthur Carlson, and the arrival of their children Arthur Ronald (Ron) and Karin. After Ron and Karin were well along in school, Mrs. Carlson returned to school and earned her bachelor's degree from San Francisco State College.

Mrs. Carlson observed her brother Edmund with admiration and affection, tempered with a shade of skepticism that suggested the constraints imposed on the little sister of two high-achieving brothers. Although she loyally stuffed envelopes and urged her friends to do the same for all of her brother's political campaigns, she maintained her own opinions, notably on the issue of the Vietnam war.

Subjects of the interview centered on the family home on Grove Street in San Francisco, the boys' schooling, Edmund's engagement and early married years, the parents' conflict over religion and growing alienation and eventual separation, her father's constant striving for business success and her mother's hunger for education. She discussed the Vietnam war and the Chessman case and how they contributed strain to family and political life. She also reflected sympathetically on her godson "Jerry," Edmund G. Brown, Jr., as a small boy growing up in a household of women--a possible counterpart to her own childhood in a household of men.

Mrs. Carlson was invited to contribute an interview to the Brown Family Portraits in late 1978 but a recurring back ailment and intermittent convalescence postponed the recording session for six months. After some difficulties in meshing work, vacation, and interviewer schedules, the interview took place on February 10, 1981.

Mrs. Carlson was gracious in consenting to the interview and forthright and generous in giving time to produce a reflective and detailed narrative. However, she plainly felt more comfortable in discussing her well-known brothers than in dwelling on her own perspective on their childhood and careers. She devoted careful attention to reviewing the lightly edited transcript and, after consulting with her husband and children, she edited heavily some sections to shift the weight of the discussion to her brother and his career and administration. After Mrs. Carlson conferred with the interviewer to review these revisions, the transcript was typed in final form and readied for publication.

Julie Gordon Shearer
Interviewer-Editor

16 June 1982
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

CONSTANCE BROWN CARLSON

MY BROTHERS EDMUND, HAROLD, AND FRANK

[Date of Interview: 10 February 1981]##

Shearer: Why don't we start out by finding out where and when you were born.

Carlson: I was born in San Francisco, in the family house. Do you want to know the year, on tape? [chuckles]

Shearer: Oh, indeed. You're the baby sister.

Carlson: I was born in March--do you want [me to wait] a minute or two?

Shearer: No; I'm just taking notes for the transcriber.

The House on Grove Street

Carlson: In 1912, on Grove Street. I was born in the house. I was the only one born in the house, I believe. All the boys were born in hospitals.

Shearer: Really? Even at that time? I thought home births were more the pattern.

Carlson: No, all my brothers were born, in a hospital. You're mainly interested in Edmund. You see, in the family--while he's known as Pat [now]--I never heard this. My mother always called him Edmund. I have never called him Pat, and my mother never did

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see page 42.

- Carlson: either. Isn't that funny? It was just strange to us. Although Bern always called him Pat. That was when I first got to hear the name--when they became engaged.
- Shearer: I guess they became--well, not quite engaged, but certainly sweethearts at a very early age. They were dating.
- Carlson: I think that probably toward the end of high school for my brother. Bernice is somewhat younger.
- Shearer: What is your first vivid memory of the house on Grove Street and your childhood?
- Carlson: I don't seem to have any particular vivid memory. I was born there. It was a comfortable house. My father built these three flats. Fortunately, with all of us in them, they had the foresight to have a bathroom with a toilet, and then an extra toilet. This was quite convenient, you see, with all of the family there. I don't know. I just remember it was a rather normal household, but cold. We didn't have much heat. We had a fireplace there. No heat. I can remember it being cold. I've been cold my whole life! [laughs]
- Shearer: Isn't that funny? I can remember Harold saying that your mother used to say, "Put on another sweater. Don't use the heat. Put on another sweater."
- Carlson: We didn't have any heat.
- Shearer: What would it have been? A fireplace?
- Carlson: We had the fireplace. Oh, they had coal-oil stoves in those days. I don't know if you know about them. They were little round stoves, and you lighted them, and they threw out quite a bit [of heat]. You had to put a little pan of water on the top. They were quite common.
- Shearer: Coal oil stoves?
- Carlson: Yes. They were round, and they had a handle on them; you could carry them from room to room. You know the old coal-oil lamps you see in cowboy pictures? Well, they were like that, only larger. They had a container and a wick, and you lighted the wick. I can remember that they heated up a room nicely.
- Shearer: There was no venting, so you had to turn them off, or put out the flame at night.
- Carlson: Yes. You turned the wick down. Then they had no oxygen, and they went off.

Carlson: I don't know what they've done over there now. I've driven back to see the three flats. I've often wondered what they did for heat. They probably put in furnaces or something.

Edmund: Long-Awaited and Beloved Baby

Shearer: Frank is how many years younger than you?

Carlson: Frank is five years younger than I. I used to tell everyone--I really believed this for years. I used to say, "My mother had a child every five years." Frank was five years younger; Harold was five years older. I guess I didn't connect--that they [Harold and Pat] were only two and a half years apart. They were closer. So, there's quite an age difference between Frank and the older ones.

Shearer: It's interesting you noticed that as a child. I've often wondered how women spaced their children as appropriately as they did in those days.

Carlson: My mother waited a long--she didn't wait, she just didn't get pregnant for a long time--for many, many years. I would say she was married seven or nine years before Edmund was born.

I guess he's the one we're interested in. He was really a beloved baby. My father used to take him downtown, as an infant. My mother would tell these stories. She'd dress him up, and my father would take this little baby out. I don't know; maybe he was a year old. They wore dresses in those days. I was going to try to find you some pictures, just for your interest. I couldn't find the box--I have the pictures. Didn't Harold show you any?

Shearer: He does have quite a bit in the way of memorabilia, and photographs, and so forth. Would he have your box, though?

Carlson: No, no, I have it around here someplace.

But he [Edmund] was--you know, they waited a long time for him. He was just absolutely beautiful and--they were delighted with this baby. He was beautiful from the pictures. As a matter of fact, so were all of the children. My mother kept an old pair of shoes of Edmund's. They were little tiny shoes, patent leather, and kind of pink tops, little lace shoes. There's a picture of him in the shoes. I know one Christmas I got the shoes out and took them over and gave them to Bernice, and I said, "Don't lose them!"

Carlson: My mother saved them all these years, and I saved them."

She said, "Oh, don't worry. I won't." You try to get rid of things, you know. I mean, this goes to their children, and so on and so forth.

I remember my mother talking a great deal about this. I often think--you know, they say a child is secure with a great deal of love. Well, Edmund really had it. So maybe that had something to do with his success.

Shearer: He was long anticipated and hoped for?

Carlson: Yes. So they finally had him. Then of course, in two and a half years, they had another one.

Shearer: Were you aware, as a little girl, that your brother occupied a special place in the family? Did that seem to be the case to you?

Carlson: No, my father was quite interested in both the boys. There seemed to be a feeling that there was a certain amount of partiality shown to Edmund rather than Harold. But everything I'm telling you is not of my own knowledge. I wasn't very observant. I didn't know this. Are you warm enough?

Shearer: Oh, I am.

Carlson: My mother would talk of all this, particularly to Edmund and I'm sure Harold felt this, too. I don't think Edmund noticed it, particularly. But I know that it seemed to me that my father thought they were both wonderful. He always used to say, "Edmund goes down the street, and Harold's right with him, right with him! There they go. Whatever one does, the other one does." That I do remember.

Shearer: With pride? Speaking of Harold as being able to keep up?

Carlson: Yes.

Shearer: Harold certainly talked about being very close. He doesn't, at least now, speak of a feeling that there was any partiality shown to Pat.

Carlson: I think he felt it.

Shearer: Your mother, apparently, picked up on this, and it was of some concern to her?

Carlson: She favored Harold. She compensated for this. They were awfully cute little boys. Edmund was quite dark, and the other one was blonde. I have a cute picture. I'm sorry; I don't know where it is. I have a niece who also is interested in family history. She has five children. She has a whole wall in her room filled with family pictures, which might be of interest to you.

Shearer: Which niece?

Carlson: This is Edmund's second daughter, Cynthia. Have you met her?

Shearer: No, I haven't.

Carlson: She has the flunow; otherwise we could go around the corner and you could take a quick run in and look at them.

Shearer: I didn't realize that she lived so close by.

Carlson: Yes, she does. It's not around the corner, but it's not far. They all used to, on the way to school, wander in and out when they were little.

I had an original picture of our grandmother, in the original frame that my mother had--my mother's mother. I gave that to [Cynthia], and she has it on the wall. I hope my children don't want it later. But what's the difference who has it?

Shearer: As long as it exists, and you know where you can find it.

Carlson: Yes. And I think we have copies of it.

Shearer: They can do wonderful things with older photographs now.

Carlson: It had an interesting frame, and that's what I wanted my niece to have.

Relationships among the Brothers and Sisters

Shearer: What else do you remember about the way things were when you were children? Frank, being the real baby, he was--

Carlson: Of course, I just adored Frank. You know, I took him around with me. I was always the closest to Frank. He was the one that I loved the most--except when we were teenagers, and fought. Then I was evidently quite mean, and he was quite teasing. You

- Carlson: know, I was stuck getting him out of the room when a boyfriend came, things like that. I always just loved him. He was a gorgeous baby, too. I remember what he looked like. I thought he was just beautiful. He was so much younger than my other brothers.
- Shearer: They'd be like young uncles.
- Carlson: Yes. His older brothers. I think they took an interest in him. I don't know if they took him out. I don't think so. I think they were too busy at this time. You see, they were both go-getters. They were always into something, the older ones.
- Shearer: How about you and Harold? Did you play together, or did you have any connections?
- Carlson: No.
- Shearer: There really was a hiatus as far as your activities were concerned?
- Carlson: That's right. He was with Edmund, you see. I might have tried; I remember they had a library in the basement--they were all boys, you know. I can remember being told to get lost. So I imagine that was the way it was.
- Shearer: This was the three of them, now?
- Carlson: No, the two of them. The little Frank wouldn't have been in on it.
- Shearer: This was a lending library that they cooked up?
- Carlson: Oh, they had books down there. Maybe they were twelve. Maybe Edmund was twelve. This puts me back to five. So I would really just be a nuisance.
- Shearer: But taking it all in, probably.
- Carlson: I don't know. I remember the books; I remember that. Edmund was always a tremendous reader. I've always felt that he had a great intellectual capacity and a high intelligence. I always felt that in his kidding, and so on and so forth, that he didn't put it across.



Above left:

The 32nd governor of California and
his father Edmund Joseph Brown.

Above right:

Edmund G. and Harold C. Brown,
ca. 1912.

Left:

Edmund G. Brown, Sr., ca. 1928.



Parental Influence

Shearer: Did your mother used to read to you? Harold talks about her being a great reader herself and very interested in education.

Carlson: Oh, yes. She always read. She was self-educated. She had a tremendous background. She came to San Francisco as a young girl and got married, and then she didn't get pregnant, so she filled in other ways. She went to lectures and churches. Then I can remember her saying she'd read a book with a reference to mythology, and she'd think, "What's this?" So then she'd study mythology. She was quite an authority on the Bible, too. I don't know whether she gave me the interest, but I know I always read the Bible and have a tremendous interest in it.

Shearer: Oh, it's fascinating literature, besides everything else it offers. But this was evident to you, as part of the household, that there were books around, and that she was interested in them?

Carlson: And my father too. My father died so much earlier, that I feel that he is kind of left out of the thing; and he had a tremendous influence on both boys. You see, my mother lived so much longer that I don't think he got a fair shake in the whole thing.

When we were little children, my father had the boys out selling Christmas cards. Did either of the boys mention this to you?

Shearer: They didn't mention the Christmas cards. They do mention selling from the shop, that he used to put them in charge.

Carlson: Before that, he had them selling Christmas cards. He also had them sell newspapers. I don't remember this of my own knowledge; I remember about the picture cards. I remember Harold somehow or another with the money from the picture cards, very, very faintly. But I remember the picture cards, and some sort of a problem about it. I don't remember the newspapers. You see, in those days, if something happened, they'd get out an extra. My father used to work night, and he brought home the papers in the night.

He had penny arcades, too, and in the back there'd be a photography shop. He used to bring newspapers home for [Edmund and Harold]. He'd carry them home on the streetcar--big piles, one for each of them.

You see, he had a tremendous amount of drive. And he told me, "I wanted them to be businessmen, and learn how," My father was tremendous at math. He could figure out interest and everything mentally. It's kind of interesting.

Carlson: And another thing, too: I don't know how far in school my mother and he went. I guess they got through what would be grammar school, the eighth grade now. In high school, I don't know where they went or what--I don't know about this. You could ask my father to spell any word, and he could spell it correctly. I'd be in high school, and I'd be writing something, and if he were home, I'd say, "How do you spell that?" He always spelled it. Isn't that interesting? He loved poetry, too.

Shearer: Did he ever recite it? Did he have favorite authors?

Carlson: Oh, yes. He had one poem in particular. I wish I could find it. It was kind of corny, in a way. But he liked it. He used to recite this. Yes, he could recite pages. So wherever he went to school--he was taught to memorize poetry. You don't learn to do this unless you have it in school. When I went to school, you had to memorize poetry, too. I'm going to put a little heat on for us. Excuse me.

Is this kind of material what you want?

Shearer: This is exactly, yes. Just say on.

Carlson: Does smoking bother you?

Shearer: No. Go right ahead.

Carlson: I wish I didn't, but I do. [from other room] Have you interviewed Edmund?

Shearer: No, I haven't. I interviewed Bernice. We had one long, nice, wonderful day together when I was in southern California. But my colleague in the office, Amelia Fry, has interviewed--

Carlson: My brother?

Shearer: Yes. I'd say, eight or nine times they talked.

Carlson: Are there transcripts of that?

Shearer: Yes. But he's so busy that it's very hard to get them back.

Home Birth in a "Male-Oriented" Household

- Carlson: Did I tell you about when I was born?
- Shearer: Oh, no you haven't.
- Carlson: They were just little boys. They must have been tremendously impressed. Evidently, I was born, and they brought me out and put me on the kitchen table. Here were these two little boys. This was a tremendous event for them to see. Right in the house. So they talked about it. This is what I heard.
- Shearer: Was it planned to be a home birth, as far as you know?
- Carlson: Yes, I think so. I think my mother must have figured, "By the third one, what difference did it make?"
- Shearer: She had it all down by that time?
- Carlson: But I don't think there was a doctor. I don't think he got there in time. I think the delivery took care of itself.
- Shearer: No midwife?
- Carlson: No, just the nurse. Well, the doctor was supposed to be there, evidently.
- Shearer: How was the explanation handled when you were a child--of how babies come into the world? Did your mother handle that?
- Carlson: I don't think she handled it. She was very shy about that. And, as a result, I had quite a lack. I don't know about the boys. I suppose they found out--I don't know. My birth must have certainly solved their problem. The mother's there, and then there's two all of a sudden.
- Shearer: The stork wasn't evident.
- Carlson: No.
- Shearer: How about Frank? Was he born at home, too?
- Carlson: No, he was born in a hospital.
- Shearer: She changed. Was there just enough change in the milieu, then, that hospitals again were considered the place to go?
- Carlson: I don't know. I always said they had a female child--as the

- Carlson: Chinese would say, a poor, miserable female child--so they just had me at home. I've always felt deprived. I said, "Gee, you had all the rest in the hospital, and I had to be born at home."
- Shearer: Did you have a sense that there was a different agenda for you?
- Carlson: Oh, yes, definitely. It was a male-oriented household.
- Shearer: How did you deal with that?
- Carlson: I didn't become aware of it until probably three or four years ago with women's lib [laughs]. Now I realize how deprived I was! That's a fact. You know, children just accept things. I was supposed to grow up and get married, and that's all there was to that. It was a male-oriented household.
- Shearer: But you, in fact, did go on to the University of California at Berkeley, didn't you?
- Carlson: Yes, under their protests.
- Shearer: Really! Why did they protest?
- Carlson: You see, there wasn't very much money at this time; there was the Depression.
- Shearer: What year would this be?
- Carlson: This would be about## 1930, I'd say.
- Shearer: So that would have been a bad time.
- Carlson: Yes, that was a bad time. People lost a lot of money in that '29 crash. We didn't. We didn't have any to lose. [laughs]
- Shearer: What was your father doing at that time?
- Carlson: Let's see. What was he doing the? I don't know. But long before that I should have told you that I remember--but I don't know how old, perhaps three years old--my father had one of the first theaters, evidently, in North Beach. The boys would know more about this.
- Shearer: Harold mentioned that.
- Carlson: See, that's why I say, if you had Harold's transcript now, it would be very helpful to me. I can remember being in the theater and having this tremendous feeling of "I'm in an abyss"--of

Carlson: running down the aisle. I don't remember the theater or anything, but I remember the feeling of running. Somebody stopped me, of course.

Shearer: You would have been how old during the separation of your mother and father?

Carlson: I was about seventeen.

Shearer: That was when he took apartments downtown.

Carlson: I don't know. No, I think it was later than that. I think he was home. But getting back to my going to UC, it didn't cost anything to go to the University then. We lived right near Lowell, and I had gone to Lowell. I happened to be tremendously interested in the subjects and everything. And the thought of getting over to a university to me was just like continuing going to Lowell. All I had to have was a commute book. I think the tuition was something like twenty dollars. I did have to get twenty dollars from my father.

Edmund was home then, too. Although I think he was a lawyer by this time.

Shearer: Was he living at home and commuting downtown?

Carlson: Yes.

Shearer: How far along did you get at UC?

Carlson: I think I was just going to start the junior year when I had a mastoid operation.

Shearer: Were you terribly disappointed?

Carlson: Yes. The mastoid took so long to finally heal.

Edmund's Self-Education at Home and on the Streetcar

Carson: But getting back to my brother, Edmund, who is the subject of this interview--this I can remember, too. It's kind of interesting. He worked in the daytime and went to law school in the night, so he was pretty busy. But there was a little tiny set of books, little blue books. They were five or ten cents each. They were of all the philosophers. He used to buy these books and he'd read them. You see, he did read a great deal. Then I would get them out of his

Carlson: pocket or someplace--he'd be finished or leave them around--and then I would read them. I remember little discussions at the table. Not too much. He never had any time. He worked, came home, ate, went to law school. But I remember that. This was quite nice for me. But they were wonderful little, tiny, blue books. I think they had [Rene] Descartes, and all the philosophers. You see, this man not only worked and had to study law, but then on the streetcar, he did the cultural education for himself.

Shearer: What most people would consider rather heavy reading.

Carlson: Yes. I'm sure he absorbed it.

Another thing he did that was kind of interesting. Some very good salesman got a hold of him, because money was very tight in those days. He was still home then, and he bought a set of the Harvard Classics and a whole set of history books. I was going to UC at this time, so I was pretty busy, too. I carried a full course and commuted by ferryboat and train. But I had a marvelous time with these Harvard Classics, but I don't think Edmund got to read all of them. He put them in the bookcases in the living room. I started out with the first one--"A"--who would that be? I don't know.

Shearer: Aristotle! [laughs]

Carlson: I cut the pages in these books. I can remember sitting in front of the fireplace and--it was a thrill reading the new books.

A Different Agenda for Boys and Girls

Shearer: When your parents opposed your going to the University, did Edmund stick up for you?

Carlson: No, the brothers were absolutely selfish! They really were, both of them. They had no interest in what I did at all. My father had no objection one way or the other. You see, his idea was, I think, that I would just be going to school. So he would just accept it. My mother thought I should go to work. My mother was great on everybody going to work and paying room and board, because she needed the money. So she had a small interest in my going to the University.

But I had a marvelous time there. I really did. I enjoyed all my courses in everything. Just loved all the subjects. I didn't have time to cover them all. I didn't even have money to buy all the books. You couldn't get them at the library. So if

Carlson: there was any outside reading, I couldn't do it.

Shearer: Did that put at a very severe disadvantage? Did your grades suffer?

Carlson: The first semester I went, I think I got all A's and B's. Then I got kind of cocky, you know. So the second time I got all C's. Then the rest of it was A's, B's, and C's. I couldn't tell you exactly. I could have, I'm sure, done better.

But, as I say, I sat up in the night also and read. I have to admit I would slough off studying. Spanish I did nothing with. I always got a C in that. That was just memory. You had to go five times a week, too. And I was always hungry. I was always hungry in Spanish! [laughter]

Shearer: How long did it take you to get to the University? You said you had this long commute. Was it an hour?

Carlson: Hour and a half before you did the walking, so I spent three hours a day. If I had a section, which I did--I tried not to get one at eight o'clock-- Why do I use the word "section?" It must have been a science course. That would be a lab that you would have to go to.

Shearer: Large humanities courses often have small discussion sections.

Carlson: That was right, but you'd have to go--I can remember getting up in the winter in the night when the stars were out, and being a little bit timid--although there was no crime then--walking up to take the streetcar--to get there for an eight o'clock ferry, or seven-thirty. Yes, it was quite early.

Shearer: What was your field of interest?

Carlson: I really hadn't decided at the time. What I really think I wanted to do was social work at that time. I didn't want to teach. Although later I went back and graduated from [San Francisco] State, and I have taught.

Shearer: What field did you teach in?

Carlson: The teaching was just kindergarten through eighth grade. Actually, I didn't go back to school for that reason. I wanted to take a harmony course, and I wanted to take a geography course. Then I got into other things as I went along. At State you had to have some kind of program. This interested me.

Shearer: When did you go back to school? After your children were older?

Carlson: What stage were they? Yes, they were growing up and--I thought, "I'm going to need something to do." My husband worked at the newspaper, and he wasn't home until late at night. I think my daughter was about in junior high.

Shearer: And what is her name?

Carlson: Karin.

Shearer: K-a-r-e-n?

Carlson: K-a-r-i-n, the real Scandinavian spelling. The boy is Ron.

Shearer: Ronald, or Ron?

Carlson: We call him Ron. His name is Arthur Ronald; but my husband's Arthur, so we always call him Ron.

Shearer: So they were more or less in school when you went back?

Carlson: They were in high school.

But they weren't intrigued either with my going to school--nobody wanted me educated!--they couldn't see much point in this, either. It was so ridiculous. As I say, since women's lib, I'm realizing all these things. I used to kind of study on the sly, when they were in bed. Or I arranged for my husband to take the boy--they'd go to the ball game, and I'd get out my books--it's silly, you know?

Shearer: It's strange to hear of your mother's opposition to your education when she was so hungry for that herself. She seemed to pour it in. At least that's Harold's recollection--that she was out to lectures, and reading, and was drinking in as much information as possible.

Carlson: I guess she figured I didn't need it when I had gone to school for twelve years, all solid. I think it was a matter of money. She felt, what am I, Constance, doing in school? I ought to be working supporting myself.

Shearer: To come back a little bit to why your parents pushed work, if pushed is the correct word--your father--his assumption must have been that he was fitting his boys with something that they would use later? But, apparently, your mother's expectation was not necessarily that you would be working later, so her interest was in the immediate, short-term economic--

Carlson: I guess she thought I'd get married. As I say, now I resent it. I didn't at the time. The boys educated themselves. So she just figured, why don't I? I did, of course. I got a job right away.

Shearer: So you had given in to your parents?

Carlson: I didn't go back after being ill. I must have realized, "This is it. I can't keep up any more college now."

I learned to type. I know, I must have gone to night school or something to learn it. Then I got a job and worked.

Entering the Working World

Shearer: What was your job?

Carlson: Yes, I was a stenographer first. I worked at one place, and I didn't like it.

I had a problem there. I did bookkeeping, which I didn't like. In those days, there weren't any jobs. There were very few jobs.

Shearer: This would have been 1932, 1933.

Carlson: Yes, in there someplace. Yes. Maybe '33. I did some temporary work for a lawyer. I guess an agency sent me there. This man was so kind to me. He was just so taken--I could tell he thought I was smart and beautiful and everything else! [chuckles] He found a little ad for another job. He even went and scouted the place out before he told me about it. He said, "Now, this is a good office, and you go there. If you can get the job, that's fine."

So I got the job. I'll have you know there were one hundred applicants!

Shearer: Who were they?

Carlson: They were an admiralty law firm, and their names--you'll die with this--everybody does--it was Derby, Sharp, Quinby and Tweed.

Shearer: Oh, it's wonderful! Just out of Dickens. Did they look like their names?

Carlson: No, they were--as I look back, they looked older to me. But now I realize they were only ten or so years older than I was.

- Carlson: Joe Sharp was the secretary for the international relations division of the Commonwealth Club, and he ran for supervisor in San Francisco. This is kind of interesting, too. My brother was always president of everything. He was president of the New Order of Cincinnatus. Joe Sharp ran on that ticket, and I was awfully disappointed when he didn't get it.
- Shearer: Just to go back a little bit to when you were job hunting. At this point, in 1933, Pat would have run for district attorney--no, not district attorney but assembly--
- Carlson: The first thing he ran for--
- Shearer: In '28 was when he first ran against Ray Williamson.
- Carlson: I'd still be in high school.
- Shearer: He would have been notorious, I guess. Or his name would have been known?
- Carlson: My brother? Oh, not too much. That wasn't much of a campaign, I think. He was pretty young.
- Shearer: But you told your employer after you were hired that Pat was your brother, as though that was something you wanted to conceal.
- Carlson: Yes, but that was because they were all in New Order of Cincinnatus together--Joe Sharp and Edmund and Harold and all of them.

Edmund's Early Campaigns

- Shearer: Were you involved in any of Edmund's campaigns?
- Carlson: I was quite interested in the New Order of Cincinnatus. I took all my friends, and we all contributed. Gave them five dollars, which was a big sum. I've always been quite interested in politics, and law, and legal matters. I'd have to be, just from the background. I remember my brother was interested in the the campaign of [Raymond L.] Haight, who ran for governor. [Upton] Sinclair also ran. Who was the Republican candidate? Olson. I guess it was [Culbert E.] Olson. I think he was a little later. I don't know. I was always interested in politics because my brother was always interested in politics.

What could I have done when he ran for office? Nothing, I guess, except hand out cards, or whatever you did, or papers. This

- Carlson: comes back to now, that I remember all his campaigns. I worked as a volunteer in his offices, and took my lady friends down. I'd take them to lunch, give them a little treat, and then have them work all afternoon doing envelopes! We didn't do anything with policy. Just the menial stuff.
- Shearer: Did you ever speak for him?
- Carlson: No. Never. I've never done anything like that. I don't think I'd be very good at it.
- Shearer: Really! That's surprising.
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- Carlson: But the second campaign was against Matt Brady; we were all interested. I think my brother lost that campaign, didn't he?
- Shearer: He did. He lost to Ray Williamson in 1928, and I think he lost the first district attorney race to Brady in 1939, and then won the second time around, in 1943.
- Carlson: He changed parties by this time. He was a Republican in the first one. Then he became a Democrat.* Then he ran.

Matt Brady was a nice old guy, evidently. Everybody liked him. Everybody in our neighborhood thought Matt Brady was great.
- Shearer: What was the issue, then, on which your brother ran?
- Carlson: I don't know what the issue was the first time, but the second time there was some kind of a big scandal with the bail brokers, the McDonough brothers [Peter P. and Tom]. There was some kind of a big issue. But my brother had a good talking issue at this time.

Matt Brady had had the position a long time and was quite old. He seemed like an old man to me. Then Edmund became district attorney.

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Losing a Brother and Gaining Some Girls in the Family

- Carlson: Then Edmund married Bernice; this was just great. I could hardly wait for them all to get married and get some women in the family, you know what I mean?

* In 1934

Carlson: Edmund and Bernice had a family right away. They had the two little girls; Barbara and Cynthia. My mother and I just had a grand time with the girls. And Edmund and Bernice had it pretty nice, too. I didn't know it at the time, but as I look back, they could bring them [the girls] and drop them, and we took care of them. So my interest was much more with them, truthfully, than with the campaigns.

Shearer: Were you and Bernice close at that time?

Carlson: Yes, I would say so. I have always felt very close to Bernice. I've admired her, enjoyed her. I think that's the thing--I've enjoyed her the most.

Shearer: Were you still living at Grove Street then?

Carlson: Yes, I was at home then.

Shearer: When did you meet your husband?

Carlson: My present husband? I met him in--we were married in--can't even remember--1941. Just before Pearl Harbor. I had been married before. It was kind of a sad part of my life. My first husband* was killed in an automobile accident.

Shearer: Oh, how awful!

Carlson: It was a terrible shock to me. I had never--

Shearer: Did you have children then?

Carlson: No. No. My children are my second husband's children.

Participating in Edmund's Political Campaigns

Shearer: Were you aware of the Atherton investigation? Was that something of the scandal that you referred to? The Atherton probe investigated the fabric of graft that existed among the police.

* Aubrey Corbin

Carlson: Yes, it does ring a bell now. That was probably the time--I don't know why the name of McDonough remains in my mind--I think they were bail bondsmen.

Shearer: But you were active in every single campaign, then?

Carlson: To a certain extent. I really did very little, except in a very small way. But I was interested in all of them. And I was interested in the issues, too. I always did feel--and I feel the same way about Jerry--I feel that both of these men are underestimated. As I say, I was a very loyal supporter, and I did go down and work the election headquarters. I don't think my brother even knew it.

Shearer: Did you feel as though you would have wanted to do anything in the policy field?

Carlson: I don't think so. I was doing my own thing. I was probably going to school again! And I opposed the war in Vietnam.

Opposing Views on Vietnam

Shearer: How has that worked out?

Carlson: Sometimes not too well.

Shearer: How did that work out in the '66 campaign? That was a real issue in Democratic party politics.

Carlson: I don't know. My brother was governor when Kennedy was president. I remember they went on a battleship someplace together. I met President Kennedy when he wasn't president. He came out for an event at the Fairmont Hotel. I think Symington was one of the candidates. I was quite impressed. They were tall and handsome. Of course, Symington was much older than Kennedy. I don't remember what the event was.

I know Bernice did induce me to go back to a governors' convention with her. My husband had relatives in Minneapolis, and they were having a governors' convention in Minneapolis. So she called, and said, "Why don't you go back? You could visit your husband's relatives. We're going on the airplane, and it won't cost you anything to go."

I was still so un-women's lib that I thought, "I can't go and leave my family"--

Carlson: So finally Bern said to me--I'll never forget it; she said, "Look, Connie, you won't have to cook a meal for six days." And, you know, that did it. I said, "Okay, Bern, where are you going to be?" She had a dentist appointment. I said, "Okay, I'll meet you downtown after the dentist." She came out and picked me up, and we went up to Sacramento and went back [to Minnesota]. This was very nice.

The president didn't come, but Hubert Humphrey came. As I say, I feel a lot of gratitude that I got to meet so many interesting people.

Shearer: What happened when you and your husband were concerned and active in your opposition to the Vietnam War? I remember in the '66 campaign and just prior to that, Governor Brown was under considerable pressure from President Johnson to speak out in defense of his administration's position.

Carlson: Did my brother? I can't remember. I think he must have straddled the issue.

Shearer: I think that he--

Carlson: We probably fought over it at Christmas Dinner!

Religious Views and Background

Carlson: My husband and I have always been interested in the Quakers, the American Friends. The little support I've ever given, just financial, has been to them. We've been of this persuasion.

However, our children attended a neighborhood Protestant Church.

Shearer: That suited the children and you and your husband as well?

Carlson: Yes. I became active with the children. I didn't teach Sunday school, but--you know how it is when you have children. Pretty soon you're on the committee, and the ladies' clubs, and so forth. The children both went there the whole time. But I think that they both had imbibed the Quaker nonviolence philosophy.

This philosophy created problems with the army when my son was draft age. With my son's life, too.

My husband was at this time at the paper.

Shearer: Which paper is this?

Carlson: Chronicle.

Shearer: San Francisco Chronicle. Is he a writer?

Carlson: He was in the editorial department.

Oh, yes, those war years were really something.

What could poor Johnson do? He was trapped. But I turned against Humphrey, because he had to back the administration, and I realize that, but I didn't think he had to be so vociferous about it.

Shearer: I think he shocked a lot of people who had been long-time admirers of his.

Carlson: Yes. I mean, this horrible, stupid war, you know? That whole southeast Asia. And at the time, the Quakers were having conventions, too. Every year they have some kind of meeting at the Unitarian church. That's another religion we've always been interested in.

I was in a group--we were studying Mohammedanism. I was thinking, "My God, I'm a Catholic, a Unitarian, a Quaker." Really, I could see nothing wrong with following Mohammed.

Shearer: Religion seems to come up over and over again in your family. Your brothers perceived your parents as having a kind of contentious, almost a relationship of conflict over their religious issue. How did you see that?

Carlson: Definitely. My father was a true Catholic. He believed in the religion, although he wasn't a practicing Catholic. He wanted all the children brought up Catholic. He expected my mother to take us to church. So I don't know. Of course, you see the church at that time, too, was quite arbitrary. The church has progressed since then, too. Children were supposed to go to Catholic school.

My mother, I think, started out all right. She had no objection to the children being baptized, and we made our first communion. But she became very disenchanted with the whole thing as she studied a lot of their irrational, to her, beliefs. She became very anti-Catholic. As I say, my father--I don't remember him ever pushing it in any way. My oldest brother, with all this reading, Edmund--it's kind of strange, his conversion to

Carlson: Catholicism, because I remember my mother telling that he questioned it right from the beginning, when he went to catechism. As a little boy, he was bright, evidently, and questioned it.

Harold's kind of quiet. I don't know what he thought of it.

Shearer: You say his conversion. What are you referring to?

Carlson: Edmund?

Shearer: Yes.

Carlson: I guess in about--after Bernice's father died--

Shearer: That was Captain Layne?

Carlson: Yes. The Laynes were Episcopalians. I don't know about Captain Layne. I know Bernice is and was, and her mother worked in a little church up on Haight Street.

Edmund and Bernice were married in the Catholic church.* It was St. Agnes' church, and we were all there. Or maybe we were there for the christenings. See, this is where I get mixed up, on what the event was. And I guess all the children were then baptized in the church. I'm Jerry's godmother. I said, "I don't know what you want me for a godmother for, because I'm not into this at all." Maybe they felt it would help me or something. Didn't anyone speak of that?

Shearer: We spoke mainly of the childhood.

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Carlson: I don't remember them ever fighting about it or anything.

Shearer: Your parents?

Carlson: No, they didn't fight about it. I don't remember them fighting about it.

Shearer: Did your father's sisters live in the household when you were growing up?

Carlson: No.

Shearer: Harold remembered that the sisters were very firm in their Catholic beliefs.

Carlson: They were all good Irish Catholics, you know. My father had three

* Ten years after Edmund and Bernice eloped in 1930, they had their marriage blessed in the Catholic church.

Carlson: sisters. Evidently, when I was born, his youngest sister lived with us for a time. They were all beautiful. Annie wasn't so good looking, so I take that back. But the other two sisters were attractive, particularly one, my Aunt Edith. I just thought she looked like the dowager that you always see, with the grey hair. I thought she was so beautiful. She didn't photograph as pretty as she was. She was an old lady, too, because she was a lot older than my father. The generations were a little mixed up.

Nellie, the youngest one--she lived with my mother and father when I was born. But then she married and left by the time I--don't remember her in the house at all. They were all good Catholics.

Shearer: Your mother was Episcopalian?

Carlson: My mother was never Catholic or Episcopalian. She went to the--she really worked in the Unitarian church most of her life.

Shearer: Really?

Carlson: Yes, down at the First Unitarian. She went around the corner to a little Protestant church there and worked there when the children were small.

My father had some kind of an influence, but by the time I came along, evidently this fight was a dead issue. I don't ever remember going to catechism, as other children did. But I remember when I was in school as a little girl, some of the other little girls were going to make their first Communions. I said, "I'm a Catholic." And they said, "Why aren't you making your first Communion?" I said, "Okay, I'll make my first Communion."

My father was delighted, and my aunts rallied round. My mother got me a dress. My aunt brought over a veil. I'll never forget--Harold said it looked like a window curtain. Aunt Annie was absolutely horrified. This was evidently something very valuable, and that she'd saved from her daughter. Then I wouldn't wear it. [laughter] My mother went to somebody in the neighborhood and borrowed one that was probably quite chintzy, but I thought it was charming. And my aunt took hers home.

My father went down with me to the ceremony. My mother wouldn't go. It's funny.

Shearer: But you didn't experience any feelings of disappointment or surprise that your mother didn't come to this occasion?

Carlson: No. That didn't bother me at all.

- Shearer: At that time she had sort of cut herself off from the Catholic ritual?
- Carlson: Oh, we all knew she hated the church. That was obvious. She hated the church, the priests, the nuns. She hated everything about it. She hated the schools.
- Shearer: You didn't feel any censure toward yourself?
- Carlson: No. I was just a rugged individualist. My father was a Catholic. You know what I think it was, probably. It was the clothes. I think so. I think--the white dress. I don't know. I'm just guessing.
- Shearer: It must be irresistible to a little girl. You're like a little bride.
- Carlson: Yes, seven years old. The girls probably talked about it at school. I thought it was like a party--I don't know. There was certainly no religion attached to it all, as far as I was concerned.

I kind of liked the Catholic Church. I can remember--this will bring this dichotomy to you. My mother used to send me around to the little Sunday school. It was right around the Panhandle, there. After Sunday school, I used to go up to mass, to St. Agnes, on my own. I was quite small at the time, too. I'd say maybe ten. I don't even know if I told anybody. Isn't that funny? So I must have had some feeling of loyalty to each parent's religion.

The boys--Harold, I remember--he was the only one who was confirmed.

- Shearer: At that point, Edmund was not attending catechism? Or was he?
- Carlson: He probably went to catechism. Yes, he probably went all through that. I don't know how he missed being confirmed. I know he wasn't confirmed as a child, though. I know Harold was.

Godson Jerry Brown

- Shearer: You said that Jerry was your godson. Were you close to him as a little boy?
- Carlson: No. I tried to be, too, because I'd had so much fun with the girls. I thought, "I'm not going to lose out on him." But some way or other, I was busy when he was small. The little fellow was an awfully cute little boy. I remember I wouldn't miss his

Carlson: little birthday parties or anything, just to go and watch.

I saw him as a little kid, and played with him. I always felt his grandfather, Captain Layne, just adored him as a little baby. I guess I was always nervous or something. It seemed to me that the other children were jumping on Jerry. Cynthia was four or five years older. They could handle it, and Bernice knew they could. But I'd go and watch them, and I'd think, "Oh, my God, that little girl's going to kill him!"

I'll never forget. I was visiting, just going crazy. This was at Captain Layne's house; they lived there for a while. At any rate, Captain Layne came in, and he said to Cynthia, "You leave that little boy alone, and stop doing that!" I thought, "Thank heavens! Two of us are worrying about Jerry."

I always felt that. I always felt that I wanted to protect him or something. I don't know what. I was a terrible godmother. That wasn't my thing. And I had my own children, and I wasn't a Catholic or anything. But I was always interested in Jerry.

Shearer: Did he ever come over to visit?

Carlson: Not often. He played at home with his little friends. They could play on the street and ride bikes and play ball. The girls didn't visit either then. As soon as they get to school, they have their own little thing. It would be more of family gatherings when they came over. Or we'd go over on a Sunday and sit in the backyard or something.

Shearer: You were talking about fighting it out at the dinner table when the war question came up. I've heard--I'm trying to think where I heard it--maybe I read it--that there always was lots of arguing and discussions.

Carlson: Oh, yes, always brisk discussions.

Shearer: Was that something that Jerry thrived on, do you think, or was he a little intimidated?

Carlson: I just couldn't tell you. I think that Jerry was a little bit bored with all of it at the time. His father would go on and on, and pontificate at the table. My husband's quiet, but he was anti-war--I was, too. We were liberals, far out. I can remember Christmas dinners over there. Bernice's brother and his wife would often be there. They were quite rigid and followed the flag. So I think that they probably took up the other side--There was always a lot of confusion in everything--

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Carlson: This seems more like reminiscing. I don't feel like I'm giving you anything on point. But I'm just figuring you can cut all this out. It doesn't seem very significant.

Shearer: Certainly it can be edited. But I think there's very often much more of value than you realize.

Carlson: Oh, really?

Shearer: Yes, because we're documenting not only an era, and the issues, but the personalities that really put a stamp on this portion of California history.

Carlson: I shouldn't be talking too much about myself. I'd rather be talking more about Edmund, and Harold was a judge, you know. Jerry is governor. I would imagine that would be more what you'd want.

Shearer: The background is interesting, and your perceptions of your brother and your nephew, and your parents and your own milieu are very interesting, and help to deepen the portrait. [telephone rings] So don't you edit in your mind. Let's do it on tape.

Carlson: Excuse me. [Carlson speaks on telephone]

Shearer: I did want to hear out what you had to say about Jerry and how he enjoyed or benefited from or was bored by the amount of political contentiousness in his family.

Carlson: I don't know, but Jerry's going into the priesthood was kind of amazing, because--

Shearer: Did that surprise you at the time?

Carlson: Somewhat. He was impressed by the church as a child but he was also full of fun and mischievous.

People would make a big to-do--a window got broken, or something. Then I'd hear about these things on the block. I always thought, it's just good high spirits. People say to me, "He was no saint as a little boy." I think he had kind of a hard time. This is the way I felt. I always felt sympathetic, in rapport with Jerry, because--this is my recollection; it might not be right at all. My brother was busy, and Jerry was surrounded by girls (his mother and three sisters) and they were interested in feminine things--clothes, shoes, and so forth. So I suppose Jerry listened to them, and then he went out and broke a window. [laughter] And I felt he was justified. It's very simple, but this is my feeling. I felt the girls were more demanding, in a way. They

- Carlson: had to have this, and they had to have that, and they had to have the other thing. I certainly was in sympathy with the girls, too.
- Shearer: Of course, his mother was on the scene most of the time.
- Carlson: Well, Bernice had activities too. She was in the California League of Women Voters when Jerry was little. I used to go with her to the meetings. Of course, she could have gone very, very far in anything she went into because she's interested, and she's bright, and quite interested in detail. She's extremely precise about things. She would have been successful in anything she did.
- Shearer: It's interesting that you seem to be seeing Jerry occupying the same position in his largely female household that you did as a child in a largely male-dominated household.
- Carlson: Perhaps that's it. I felt that he wasn't getting the attention he should. Maybe it's kind of a guilt feeling. For example, I would be much more interested in buying a little dress for the girls than I would in buying a little pair of jeans for him. Now--well, they both wear jeans!
- Shearer: Was his decision to enter the seminary one that caused ripples or resentment or upset in the family that you could see?
- Carlson: Did he go to college for a year before he entered, or did he go right from high school? I don't remember. I think that they were all terribly, terribly crushed by this. I think my brother and Bernice were just crushed by this. They didn't try to dissuade him, they tried to get him--as I remember it--to wait. How old was he? Eighteen or nineteen?
- Shearer: I guess he was just about seventeen.
- Carlson: I so agreed with them. They didn't raise any objection per se, but they wanted to delay it. You can imagine what this would be for Bernice. She wasn't Catholic, number one. Here her boy's going to go away, and you're not even allowed visitors. It's ridiculous.
- Shearer: It's a long term.
- Carlson: Yes. My brother, I think, was disappointed, and Bernice was just absolutely crushed by it. What did my mother think of it, the black Protestant of the family! I don't know. She didn't seem to--which is strange--have as much objection. She didn't like it. I kept thinking, "He's so smart. He'll come out of there." I didn't think it was final. I didn't have any basis for my conviction of that at all, because he certainly seemed very, very dedicated.

The Chessman Case

Shearer: Thinking back to the differences in conviction and recalling the Chessman case, there is a story that Bernice Brown told of how-- I think Pat has also told this story--how Pat received a phone call the last night on which he was to make a decision about staying Chessman's execution. Jerry said, "Please do it for the following reasons." He prevailed. But I gather that Bernice felt quite differently about it. Was this something that you talked about in and amongst the family? Was this a hot--?

Carlson: Did Bernice feel differently? Yes, she probably would analyze it differently. I've never believed in capital punishment. I don't think my brothers believe in capital--Harold might. I would say I don't think Edmund ever believed in capital punishment. I think as far as the Chessman case was concerned--that was a tremendous issue at the time--people felt very, very strongly about it. I thought it was a great tragedy. I thought the man had rehabilitated himself. Actually, wasn't he convicted on circumstantial evidence? As I understood it, though, it got to the point where my brother referred it to some board? Then when they confirmed that Chessman should die, I really don't know whether Edmund could still have commuted it to life imprisonment. I don't know the law on that.

Shearer: There's a limit to the power he had to do what he was asked to do.

Carlson: There were three judges, I think, and I think they were two to one for execution. Then I gathered it was out of my brother's hands at this point.

I thought it was a terrible tragedy. Jerry had him postpone it, and it was a short stay. But the other ones, I think, were all legal stays. I read somewhere that Chessman said that was the only thing in his life that was ever given to him. He was given this stay. The others had to be stayed. I remember people were violent about it.

I was doing practice teaching then. I remember that distinctly. Of course, no one knew that I was related to the governor. I can remember them talking about it. "He was killed! Hooray! That's great. We finally got rid of him." People felt very strongly about that.

Shearer: These were mostly other teachers at your school? Or parents?

Carlson: I remember somebody working in the cafeteria--some woman heard the news, and she was just dishing up some food. I don't think we discussed it much with teachers. I meant just the general public that you came in contact with.

Shearer: What sort of an effect did that have on the family? I should think it would be a great strain to have to make that kind of decision and have it come up again and again and again.

Carlson: We probably figured that's the governor's province, and he's got to do what he can with it. I can't remember any big discussions. I can remember feeling very badly about that; but I felt badly about the Rosenbergs. But I felt they were guilty. I don't know anything about them, but I felt they were guilty. This Chessman case, I didn't know whether he was guilty or not.

Different College and Career Tracks for the Brothers and Sister

Shearer: This is going back again to your family, and Frank and Harold. You said that you went to UC. I think Pat and Harold both worked and went to night law school. Then Harold went to St. Mary's for a little while, maybe when he was not working.

Carlson: He went to St. Mary's on a scholarship right from high school.

Shearer: Then Frank went to UC, and did not work while attending school.

Carlson: That's right, except he earned room and board waiting on tables.

Shearer: So he did what you were not encouraged to do. [someone enters; he is introduced]

Carlson: Frank went to school--I don't know how he worked that one. He graduated from UC Berkeley. He went over and found someplace to live where he served at the table--a boarding house. I think that was it. I don't think he commuted. I think he lived over there. And some of his friends probably went over from Lowell. So he probably got his room and board over there. I think that's how he went. Then all he would have needed was the \$25 or whatever the tuition was. He could come home and borrow some of Harold's clothes, when in need.

Shearer: One think I wanted to check out with you--a story, and I'm not sure who told me this--during high school, Pat was a member of a fraternity, as were many of the boys in high school. He had the

Shearer: grades, and certainly the desire, to go to the University of California. But he didn't think he had the money, or he couldn't do it without working at the same time, which was impossible to swing then if you were going to go to a day school. But rather than admit publicly that the reason that he didn't go to the University was financial, he allowed his grades to slip the last semester of high school. So he could say to his fellows, his fraternity brothers, "Well, I had so much fun I couldn't get in." Is that apocryphal?

Carlson: I don't know what the true story would be there. He could have let the grades slip. I don't know. You'd have to look at his Lowell records. But it seemed to me he was on the debating team, and he was yell leader, and this and that and the other thing. Both boys were both out of there when I went to high school. I would still be in grammar school when Harold and Edmund were in high school. I don't believe it. If they [his grades] slipped, I think he let them slip because he was doing something else--working, or--I don't know what he was doing.

Shearer: But not to succumb to peer pressure--

Carlson: No. I don't think that would even interest him.

I was trying to think if he worked in some of my father's places then. They used to go down and take pictures. I remember all different things happening, but I can't remember the sequence. Somehow or another, I can't think of Edmund caring enough to try to make any excuses. I don't know. I just wouldn't know how to answer that.

Shearer: That's interesting. Your parents clearly valued education because they worked hard to get it any way they could. And yet, there was a kind of dichotomy in the message they gave to you and your brothers.

Carlson: Those were different times. I think you have to look back. Now many more people go to college. In those days, they didn't. College was not a necessity at all then.

Shearer: Were you very active as a student? Were you a cheerleader and social club chairman, and--?

Carlson: No; no, no! I did very little. I had gone to a girls grammar school.

Shearer: What was the name of it?

Carlson: The name of it was Denman. It was on Pierce and Scott.

Shearer: What was the whole name of the girls' school? Denman--

Carlson: Just Denman Grammar school.

Shearer: Then you started dating in high school?

Carlson: I had a couple of old boyfriends in high school that didn't amount to much. I didn't have fun until I went to college. I was young for my age in high school.

Although I went out to shows with different boys. I had my friends from Lowell. I guess I had two or three chums. They all lived out here someplace.

There was a tremendous monied group that went to Lowell High School in those days. My mother didn't want me to go to Lowell. She wanted me to go to Commerce, because then the minute I got finished with Commerce, I could get a job.

Shearer: That would be Commerce High School?

Carlson: I think she wanted Frank to go there, too. But I didn't know anybody that was going to Commerce. My idea was, "Why should I go to Commerce when all I have to do is walk up a few blocks to Lowell?"

Lowell, at that time, they said it was such a fine school. Even at the time, they had some teachers at Lowell that were unbelievable; they were so poor. They were just absolutely unbelievable. They bored me to death. We'd get in to class, and one woman would talk about her grandchildren all the time.

Shearer: Not a modern phenomenon at all!

Carlson: Yes. But I did get a good education at Lowell, though. Sciences were good. Sciences, history, Latin. You didn't have to take Latin but I did.

Shearer: Actually, I did too.

Parents' Separation

Shearer: One other thing I wanted to ask you: How do you think the separation of your parents affected you and your brothers? Was that a great rupture in the family?

Carlson: No. I don't think it affected any of us. It just seemed kind of silly. It seemed odd to us. I don't think that had any effect on anybody particularly. Probably me the most, because I think it was shortly after that my father had a stroke. I was working, and then I'd have to go to see him and take him out. I really had the psychological, the emotional care of the parents much more than my brothers did. They were all good, and did what they could. But they were busy, that's all.

Shearer: You were still living at home then?

Carlson: I guess, so, yes.

Shearer: You would have been in the front lines, then. How long did your father live after the stroke?

##

Carlson: He died at age 72.

Caring for Aging Parents

Shearer: But your mother lived up until just a few years ago.

Carlson: Yes. She was ninety-six when she died. She was quite remarkable. She had an apartment near me. The day-to-day responsibility with my mother was mine. I had a very good relationship with my mother. She was intelligent and she was interesting. She was the hub of the family.

I kind of always felt a responsibility going on trips or anything; I'd wonder what's going to happen to her. Harold was always good. He would drop in on her. But long periods would elapse--he didn't think so--maybe a month or something where he wouldn't drop by. Mine was an everyday thing.

Shearer: That's a very large responsibility.

Carlson: Yes. As people get older, they become more and more demanding. They just don't understand that you can't stop and do everything exactly when they want it.

Shearer: I'm becoming more and more aware of the way girl children are raised and the way they take in what they feel their responsibilities should be. It's just very interesting to see how they select those.

Carlson: Oh, really it's a whole new deal. I've lived my whole life wrong!
[laughs]

Shearer: Where did you learn to play the piano? Was there music in your house then?

Carlson: No, there was quite a dearth of music. I took piano lessons. I wanted dancing, but I took piano. That is what my mother wanted me to do. She played a little. I think the boys gave that one up real early, if ever they were involved. We always had a piano. My father used to like to have me play Irish tunes for him. He liked that on the piano. I enjoyed it. I'm glad I have a piano--not that I use it very much. But once in a while I get out a whole lot of music and sit down and play.

Shearer: Do you ever play four hands?

Carlson: No.

Shearer: I have some extra four-hand music. I thought you might be interested.

Bernice Brown and Political Life

Shearer: You were saying that you and Bernice were close--and I really am going to take pity on you and not ask you too many more questions--

Carlson: I don't meant that we were too close--I mean, I don't know whether she'd say we were close or not. You see, Bernice just has one brother. And she has three sisters--there were four girls and a boy in that family. So she had her own sisters. And her brother always lived close. She was always fond of her brother. So she has quite a few people, and her daughters, to be close to. I always had a feeling of rapport and interest.

Of course, we were closer before the politics became so all-absorbing, all the functions.

Shearer: She told me she didn't participate very much in the campaigns, except, as you say, handing out leaflets. She was not in the front lines.

Carlson: Probably after my brother became governor, when she'd be called upon to do things, she did them well. She could have left all this political life--take it or leave it. I think she would have

Carlson: preferred to leave it, as a matter of fact. I don't think that it ever meant that much to her.

Shearer: And yet it occupied so much of Pat's attention.

Carlson: I think they all regretted leaving San Francisco for Sacramento, particularly Kathleen, the youngest daughter. I know that when my brother became governor, Kathleen hated moving to Sacramento.

I think a political life has a certain disadvantage. It has many advantages, and also certain disadvantages for the children in the family.

Shearer: For the wife?

Carlson: Yes.

I think that's what I thought in regard to Jerry. It's strange that he is into politics, because, at the time he saw his father as governor, it was my feeling that he'd like something entirely different. Then, I think, he got into it. I don't know how or why.

Shearer: From his father or from life?

Carlson: I think at one time he didn't think he'd go into politics. I think that would be the last thing he would have thought he'd do into. Say he was in high school at the time. Of course, I guess at that time he didn't--maybe he knew he wanted to go into the priesthood, I don't know.

Shearer: Gosh! I know, life is so unexpected, surprising.

Carlson: I think you've gotten about all my recollections that I have.

Parental Expectations and Guidance

Shearer: I was going to ask you just a little bit more about which of your parents undertook to discipline the children, and what sorts of things were you disciplined for?

Carlson: I don't think there was ever any discipline in the house at all, of any kind. No, I can't remember anyone--my father might have gotten angry at the boys; I don't know. I guess he'd get angry and yell at Frank, my youngest brother, for not closing the front door. I can remember things like that. He'd just yell, though;

Carlson: that was all. Then he'd get disgusted and walk out.

My father thought I was perfect. [laughs] There was never any need for any discipline there at all. Let's see--what did he-- he wanted me to go to church. I can't think of anything regarding discipline with my mother. We were very good children. What would we do wrong? We really were. We went to school and minded our own business. I can't think of anything--

Shearer: No teasing or roughhousing, or that sort of thing?

Carlson: I guess the boys did that. You see, I would have been between everything. I can remember loving and playing with Frank when he was little. I was pretty little too, then, you know. If I were seven and he were two--I would have taken care of him.

Shearer: But you don't remember ever being spanked?

Carlson: Never, no. There was never any of that.

Shearer: There was just a very strong expectation of good behavior?

Carlson: I guess so. That was it. No, there was never any discipline at all.

Shearer: It must have been a very effective expectation, because you all performed so beautifully!

Carlson: [laughs] It sure must have been a cruel and ironclad something! Well, they were very strong characters, both my mother and father.

Shearer: What would she say? Would she say, "We don't do things like that?" Or what?

Carlson: My mother?

Shearer: Yes. Do you remember any articulation of expectation?

Carlson: Let me see. I don't know. I think my mother's greatest contribution, in a way, was that she gave everybody the self-confidence that they could solve their own problems, and to go ahead and do it. That was it. She'd had it. Of course, she was home more, so I remember her more. My father just thought the boys were wonderful. They accomplished so much.

Harold was kind of an unsettled person in high school. Then he went to St. Mary's, and he got very good grades. Then he came home, and he said to my mother, "I think I'm going to study law."

- Carlson: My mother said, "Are you, Harold? Well, I think that'll be very nice." I can't remember whether she told me this or not. Harold walked out of the room and she thought, "My God! He has a hard time getting through a book. How's he ever going to study law?" In high school, he wouldn't read a book. He has since. He has a tremendous library and he's read everything known to man. He's a great reader. But she didn't discourage him at all. She said, "I think that'll be fine." She said she was the most surprised person, because Harold was the highest--I think there was one fellow that was ahead of him in law school.
- Shearer: That's right. He was very high in his class. Second in his class, or some percentage point away from number one.
- Carlson: He was the next to highest. There was one fellow--I even remember his name. He always beat him. He was first, and Harold was second in the school. Then Harold decided that--he didn't have the self-confidence--I guess he decided he'd practice taking the bar examination, so he did in the middle--he wasn't through law school. Have you heard this story?
- Shearer: No.
- Carlson: I think he had another year or something to go. He took the bar examination and passed it. He went on and finished law school, but he had passed the bar already. I'll never forget it. It seemed to me that there was great jubilation that he had passed the bar examination, and a year ahead of time. Some of his friends took it two or three times. Some of them never made it.
- Shearer: They say now that 51 percent pass.
- Carlson: Oh, is that so? I don't know what it was in those days. So he certainly got into the law and was interested in it, and taught it.
- Shearer: What do you think is the most important thing your parents--?
- Carlson: Gave us? Just the things I've been talking about. Just that-- [pause] I don't know what the thing is about IQ. I just think we were all high IQ; I really do. I know Frank, for example, when he went to school, was just very smart. They just skipped him right along the whole way until finally--I don't know whether he skipped the whole second grade. But at any rate, he was getting out of his age group. Finally, they just stopped him. You see, he had no problem at all in anything.
- I can never remember having any problem. I can remember going back to San Francisco State with fear and trepidation, but I did well. Even though they [parents] didn't get along, I think the heredity was there. And I think the environment--you see,

Carlson: necessity is the mother of invention. I think that was the whole thing.

My mother did very little outside of her home. She did just what she wanted. And what did my father do? He tried everything, failed, and went on to something else. I do think that my father, with guidance or education, could have just been a tremendous success. Maybe it was his nature, that he couldn't stick--I don't know. I can't say.

Shearer: And yet, trying over and over again is not such a bad example to set, perhaps, either.

Carlson: No, it isn't. Whether he failed or not, he didn't want just any kind of a job. He had to do something expressing himself. He had to be in business for himself. Whether it was a little cigar store, or whatever it was.

He started out when they were first married--working at my aunt's husband's livery stable. The first thing, as I say, that I can remember is the theater. Also I remember those arcades, those places he had on Market Street, where people would come in and he'd take the pictures. One of them was a store where he had sundries, as you'd say. Then in the cigar stores they'd have a little gambling in the back.

As he got older--sometimes he made pretty good money, and sometimes he didn't--I don't know. I think that was more the generation of accomplishment then. There were more opportunities. It's harder for everybody now. There were no unions, for example. My brothers could go down and work on the docks. They could go down and board mark--you know, work on the stock exchange. Harold did more of those things. Then I think Edmund got into the law and just stuck to it. It's kind of hard to say. But whatever it was, the combination worked all right.

I always felt that Harold and Edmund were more driven than Frank and I by my parents. Or maybe it was my sex, with me. But I didn't have any great ambition to be somebody or something. Frank was much more easygoing, too. He was more interested in his home and his family and his trees, and taking it more easy. He was a different temperment than the other two.

Self-Image and Expectations

Shearer: You mentioned a couple of times today how you re-examined your life in terms of women's lib. Would you have done things quite, quite differently, do you think, if you had the opportunity?

Carlson: That's kind of hard to say. I don't know. I think with different attitudes, yes, I think you would do things differently. I do. I think I probably expressed myself, but didn't do too much about it. So what would come out as just the normal thing to do now, would have probably been quite looked down upon in my youth.

I think one thing kind of typifies this. I was going over to UC Berkeley--I can remember saying this to Harold one time, too. He was doing something and I was doing something, and I got mad at him. I said to him, "You know, you think just what you're doing is important because you're doing it. But what I'm doing has no importance."

I remember my mother got sick one time, and I had finals at Berkeley. You see, they [my family] had absolutely no comprehension of what I was doing. You just don't work and study, particularly if you have a comprehensive six months' final. And they were sort of an ordeal, particularly in a course like paleontology, where you're taking everything down all the ages, every trilobite known to man. Everybody thought I would stay home to take care of my mother [on the day of the final exam]. I said, "Of course, I would make the breakfast." I said, "You'll just have to manage until I get back. I have a three-hour final." She got her sister-in-law or somebody who was around to come in for that time. I don't know what was the matter with her. She had a bad shoulder. It wasn't anything serious or anything like that. It was probably very painful.

I would advise young women to do their own thing. I really would. I think if you have children, you have a responsibility to them, but you owe yourself, too.

Shearer: It's hard to get out of thinking of yourself in certain ways, too. Very hard.

Carlson: That's right. And it's very frustrating, and you do wind up--this is where Bernice was always very bright. She was smarter than I am in a lot of ways. She took time to do her own thing, I think more than I did, even though she took care of her children. This is what I think.

Shearer: During the real heated political years was she able to do this?

Carlson: Yes, I think she did her own thing. She had more of an intensity. For example, she took piano lessons when she was pregnant. She didn't neglect anything at all. She would always see that the [the children] were all right but she could concentrate on [her own thing] too. She has a great power of concentration.

Another thing, too. Bernice isn't a reader. You see, this reading is a very bad habit. [laughs]

Shearer: It eats up your time.

Carlson: It sure does, and you always want to get back to it. I've spent my whole life going on jags, what I call my reading/studying jags!

Father's Influence

Shearer: Is there anything that you'd like to say to summarize or make a point that you feel I've missed?

Carlson: No. I don't know. This is why I'd like to read the transcript. I think that my father has not been given the credit due him on things. I think the reason for this is that he died so much earlier than my mother. If somebody's around all the time making a lot of noise, you don't forget them. In a lot of little ways, I think that he hasn't gotten the credit that he deserves for things. I think that he had a tremendous influence on Edmund and Harold. I had a good relationship with my father. It wasn't the same; it wasn't a deep relationship as with my mother because being women, you have the children and this and that. He certainly was--I don't know how to put it. He kind of rang true to himself. Do you know what I mean? I think this is the thing. I don't think he's gotten as much credit. I don't think Edmund or Harold or Frank realize this. That's just from my view of the thing.

His whole interest was his family. Just because he and my mother didn't get along, it didn't make any difference in our family.. Isn't that funny? That's really strange. Each of them were so family oriented. I think that's a very strong point.

Shearer: And by getting along, you mean they didn't just simply have differing opinions on religion, but they actually had difficulty getting along as well?

Carlson: I think I can truthfully say that they--##

Shearer: You were saying that you thought your parents actually came to dislike one another.

Carlson: Yes, I think they did. But, I think they respected one another. I think each one respected the other one. You can do this, too. I think my mother felt that my father was a good father, and I think that my father felt that my mother was a good mother. I think they might have thought they were impossible as a husband and wife situation. This I really don't know about. But I know that they didn't get along.

But my mother never denigrated my father. You know, she might say, "He's driving me crazy with this, but he's a good father." My father just didn't talk about my mother. He would always say, "She takes care of you well," which is kind of interesting. It's kind of interesting, too, in the modern thought about the role of the family. Children are pretty selfish. We were getting love from our mother and our father, so we really didn't care if they were having a miserable time with each other. It did bother us somewhat but not much.

Shearer: There's so much allusion now as to how children apparently seem to take on to their own shoulders the responsibility for their parent's unhappiness. But you didn't feel that?

Carlson: Oh, no. We just felt, "It's their problem." No, I didn't feel any responsibility for the fact that they didn't get along. I don't know how they got along when Edmund and Harold were small. I don't even remember the older boys too well when I was little.

Shearer: The two older boys?

Carlson: I can remember Edmund--I remember his romance with Bernice. I was very interested in this. I remember he called her every night. I used to want to use the phone. Every night after dinner he'd call Bernice, and I was very interested in that and the marriage, and very pleased about that.

Shearer: Why did they elope after they'd been going together for so long? That surprised me, that they didn't have a big family wedding.

Carlson: It might have been that there wasn't any money. After all, Captain Layne had a large family to educate.

Nowadays, sometimes both the families put in the money for a wedding. I don't know. I know what I was going to say, I think Ed and Bern wanted to spare the families the expense of a wedding.

Carlson: The first time I met Bernice, she said something about having a checking account! I thought, "Oh, God, she's rich!" But she wasn't. She had to economize going to school. So that probably was the full answer there.

Shearer: Thank you so much. You just did tremendously.

Carlson: I've enjoyed talking to you. I can't remember talking so long and trying to think up so much.

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