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University of California  
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Women in Politics Oral History Project

Marjorie H. E. Benedict

DEVELOPING A PLACE FOR WOMEN  
IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

An Interview Conducted by  
Miriam Stein  
1977-1978

Underwritten by a research grant from the  
Research Collection Program of the  
National Endowment for the Humanities

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REGIONAL ORAL HISTORY OFFICE  
THE BANCROFT LIBRARY  
(415) 642-7395

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

April 2, 1984

Mrs. Marjorie Benedict  
430 Michigan Avenue  
Berkeley, California 94707

Dear Mrs. Benedict:

As usual, I enjoyed our phone conversation, but was disappointed that we will have to postpone our luncheon date. I look forward to seeing you some time this spring.

Nonetheless, I am pleased that you agreed, on February 8 when we talked, to deposit your edited and reviewed oral history transcript in The Bancroft Library. The transcript would thus be open to scholars to read. In this way we can fulfill our obligations to the National Endowment for the Humanities to have the entire California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project completed and made available for research which, as you know, is the purpose of our oral history projects.

If funds become available we will have your oral history final typed, indexed, and bound as is customary with Regional Oral History Office interviews. We will thereby make the memoir available for research in other libraries in the United States.

I want you to know that I have enjoyed my contacts with you. The story of your career in politics is vital and fascinating; it is important to understanding the role of a woman in politics as well as understanding the history of California's Republican party.

If the above arrangement is satisfactory would you please sign the carbon of this letter and return it in the enclosed envelope.

I do hope that you will be feeling better very soon. I'll see you in a few months.

Sincerely yours,

*Malca Chall*

(Mrs.) Malca Chall  
Project Director  
California Women Political  
Leaders Oral History Project

*Marjorie H. E. Benedict*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Marjorie Benedict)  
(Marjorie H. E. Benedict)

MC:eme



May 11, 1984

To: Dr. Hart  
Estelle Rebec  
Vivian Fisher  
TBL

From: Willa Baum  
ROHO

Re: Deposit of oral history transcript, tapes, and personal papers of  
Marjorie Benedict.

This edited copy of the transcript of Marjorie Benedict's oral history is being deposited for research. The transcript is open for research, but cannot be quoted for publication without Mrs. Benedict's permission.

If at any time in the future money is made available to final type, index, photocopy, and bind the oral history, the transcript will be withdrawn from The Bancroft Library and the oral history will be completed in standard ROHO form.

Marjorie H.E. Benedict, Developing a Place for Women in the Republican Party, 1984, 143 pages, 5 tapes. Personal papers, photographs also deposited,

--Shelf copy in ROHO

--Edited and reviewed insurance copy in ROHO pending file



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## PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the project, by the Columbia and Fairtree Foundations, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Governmental History Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was



a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

15 November 1979  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley



## CALIFORNIA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- Frances Mary Albrier, *Determined Advocate for Racial Equality*. 1979, 308 p.
- Marjorie Benedict, *Developing a Place for Women in the Republican Party*. 1984 (edited transcript in The Bancroft Library), 143 p.
- Odessa Cox, *Challenging the Status Quo: The Twenty-seven Year Campaign for Southwest Junior College*. 1979, 149 p.
- Pauline Davis, *California Assemblywoman, 1952-1976*. In process.
- Ann Eliaser, *From Grassroots Politics to the Top Dollar: Fundraising for Candidates and Non-profit Agencies*. 1983, 306 p.
- March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government*. 1977, 245 p.
- Jean Wood Fuller, *Organizing Women: Careers in Volunteer Politics and Government Administration*. 1977, 270 p.
- Elizabeth Rudel Gatov, *Grassroots Party Organizer to Treasurer of the United States*. 1978, 412 p.
- Elinor Raas Heller, *A Volunteer Career in Politics, in Higher Education, and on Governing Boards*. 1984, 910 p.
- Patricia Hitt, *From Precinct Worker to Assistant Secretary of HEW*. 1980, 220 p.
- Lucile Hosmer, *A Conservative Republican in the Mainstream of Party Politics*. 1983, 200 p.
- Kimiko Fujii Kitayama, *Nisei Leader in Democratic Politics and Civic Affairs*. 1979, 110 p.
- Bernice Hubbard May, *A Native Daughter's Leadership in Public Affairs*. Two volumes, 1976, 540 p.
- LaRue McCormick, *Activist in the Radical Movement, 1930-1960: The International Labor Defense and the Communist Party*. 1980, 166 p.
- Hulda Hoover McLean, *A Conservative's Crusades for Good Government*. 1977, 174 p.
- Emily Pike, *Republican Party Campaign Organizer: From Volunteer to Professional*. 1983, 389 p.
- Julia Porter, *Dedicated Democrat and City Planner, 1941-1975*. 1977, 195 p.
- Wanda Sankary, *From Sod House to State House*. 1979, 109 p.
- Hope Mendoza Schechter, *Activist in the Labor Movement, the Democratic Party, and the Mexican-American Community*. 1980, 165 p.
- Vera Schultz, *Ideals and Realities in State and Local Government*. 1977, 272 p.



Clara Shirpser, *One Woman's Role in Democratic Party Politics: National, State, and Local, 1950-1973*. Two volumes, 1975, 671 p.

Elizabeth Snyder, *California's First Woman State Party Chairman*. 1977, 199 p.

Eleanor Wagner, *Independent Political Coalitions: Electoral, Legislative, and Community*. 1977, 166 p.

Carmen Warschaw, *A Southern California Perspective on Democratic Party Politics*. 1983 (edited transcript in The Bancroft Library), 450 p.

Carolyn Wolfe, *Educating for Citizenship: A Career in Community Affairs and the Democratic Party, 1906-1976*. 1978, 254 p.

Rosalind Wyman, *"It's a Girl:" Three Terms on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953-1965; Three Decades in the Democratic Party, 1948-1979*. 1979, 150 p.

Mildred Younger, *Inside and Outside Government and Politics, 1929-1980*. 1983, 353 p.





The Helen Gahagan Douglas Component of the California Women Political Leaders  
Oral History Project

Volume I: *The Political Campaigns*

Discussion primarily of the 1950 Senate campaign and defeat, in interviews with Tilford E. Dudley, India T. Edwards, Leo Goodman, Kenneth R. Harding, Judge Byron F. Lindsley, Helen Lustig, Alvin P. Meyers, Frank Rogers, and William Malone.\*

Volume II: *The Congress Years, 1944-1950*

Discussion of organization and staffing; legislation on migrant labor, land, power and water, civilian control of atomic energy, foreign policy, the United Nations, social welfare, and economics, in interviews with Juanita E. Barbee, Rachel S. Bell, Albert S. Cahn, Margery Cahn, Evelyn Chavoor, Lucy Kramer Cohen, Arthur Goldschmidt, Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt, Chester E. Holifield, Charles Hogan, Mary Keyserling, and Philip J. Noel-Baker.

Volume III: *Family, Friends, and the Theater: The Years Before and After Politics*

Discussion of Helen and Melvyn Douglas and their activities at home with their family and among friends, and their work in the theater and movies, in interviews with Fay Bennett, Alis De Sola, Cornelia C. Palms, and Walter R. Pick.

Volume IV: *Congresswoman, Actress, and Opera Singer*

Helen Gahagan Douglas discusses her background and childhood; Barnard College education; Broadway, theater and opera years; early political organization and Democratic party work; the congressional campaigns, supporters; home and office in Washington; issues during the Congress years, 1944-1950; the 1950 Senate campaign against Richard M. Nixon, and aftermath; women and independence; occupations since 1950; speaking engagements, travel to Russia, South America, Liberia inauguration, civic activities, life in Vermont.

\*William Malone preferred not to release his transcript at this time.



## INTRODUCTION

I was so greatly pleased when asked by the Oral History Project to write this introduction for Marjorie Benedict's memoir. She has contributed such a great legacy to the political climate of the state of California that I am delighted to write these few paragraphs about my privilege of knowing her.

I first met Marjorie at one of the various Republican events when she was chosen as National Committee Woman for California, representing our state for the Republican National Committee. At that time I was serving on the Republican National Finance Committee and the Republican State Central Committee, so, naturally, we were involved in many fundraising activities together. I was impressed with her charm and straight-forwardness and believed that she would do an excellent job of representing our state. This memoir will bear testimony to that belief.

The political scenario in California during Marjorie's eleven-year term (1949-1960) as national committeewoman was very challenging. Earl Warren, then Goodwin Knight, then Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, were in the governor's mansion. Harry Truman, then Dwight Eisenhower were in the White House. Yet, Marjorie handled these complex matters with much poise, great ease, and total commitment to the people of California and the Republican cause.

Mrs. Margaret (George C.) Brock  
Los Angeles, California

24 November 1981



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Marjorie Benedict, a second-generation Californian, has been for decades a leader in so many areas of San Francisco Bay Area political and civic life that she was considered an essential participant in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project.

Mrs. Benedict could contribute to the history of women in politics, especially women in the Republican party, knowledge from her experiences, beginning in 1934, as an active grass-roots volunteer in the Republican party through her gradual rise within the party hierarchy to the high post of Republican National Committeewoman for California. By 1949 her skills at organization were well known, as were her loyalty to the Republican party and her ability to work with male leaders without ruffling egos. She remained national committeewoman until 1960.

Mrs. Benedict brought two assets to whatever civic endeavors challenged her: teaching and organization. She had graduated in 1921 with a teacher's certificate from the Oakland College (then School) of Arts and Crafts, after which she taught high school, eventually rising to department supervisor. In 1927, a widow with a one-year old daughter to support, she returned to teaching and helped set up one of the first adult schools in the state (in Oakland). In 1931, she returned to the College to



get an A.B. in art. Soon after, thinking it would be only a temporary position, she went to work in the newly-organized State Relief Administration--the experience which motivated her active interest in politics. Since then, whatever her endeavors, whether in politics, or such civic work as promotion of the Oakland Symphony, renovating the Berkeley City Club, or as trustee of the College of Arts and Crafts, she always emphasized understanding the background of the activity. She believed, with good reason, that the more people know about a project the more enthusiastically they will contribute their time and efforts to it.

Her other special asset was an ability to organize a task and inspire others to join with her to accomplish the goal. In politics her goals were not only a well organized and winning campaign, but assigning Republicans, young and old, men or women, to meaningful tasks along with those dull ones so necessary to campaigns and so often relegated solely to volunteers. Many former Young Republicans, now community and political leaders, feel strongly that Mrs. Benedict motivated them by her teaching and inspiration long before they had stepped onto the first rung of the political ladder.

Concerning women, she wanted them included in as many areas of the party organization as possible, where they could hold constructive and visible roles and function, along with men, as equal partners in a common enterprise--from vice-chairmen of the county central committees to national convention delegates. In





great measure she succeeded, particularly at the county level: in 1949 five women were central committee vice-chairmen; in 1953 the count was twenty-three. Slowly more women were appointed as delegates to the national convention, some aided by Mrs. Benedict as she promoted financial help for women who would otherwise not have been able to afford the expenses of a national convention.

Mrs. Benedict was not interested in moving just any woman forward. She sought women who understood the philosophy of the party, and whose own philosophy was not at the extreme ends of the political spectrum. She sought women who were willing to work as a team with other women and men, who did not consider themselves merely proxies for the male leaders, but would assume responsibility for taking their own places in the party. She applied this same attitude to ethnic minorities, assuring those who wanted to work that there was a place for them within the party.

It is her first-hand accounts of her family background, rooted in California history, the paths she followed into politics and the pursuit of her goals that form the core of this highly interesting memoir.

The production of this oral history has a history of its own. In 1972-3, while this Office was obtaining background on women in politics in preparation for a grant proposal to submit to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mrs. Benedict helped by providing names and information about other significant



Republican women leaders. As a result of our many phone conversations, when by 1975 the funds for the project were available, Mrs. Benedict and I had established a comfortable rapport. But her very busy schedule and then an accident which put one leg in a cast pushed our planned interviewing schedule from 1975 to 1977. By that time the Regional Oral History Office was moving into the second phase of its Government Documentation Oral History Project, and was preparing to interview persons associated with the administrations of Governors Goodwin Knight and Edmund G. (Pat) Brown. Miriam Stein of the staff had been assigned to the Goodwin Knight series and was, therefore, interested in the Republican party. The opportunity to learn at first hand about so many significant people and events within the Republican party prompted me, as director of the Women Political Leaders project, to give Ms. Stein the privilege of conducting the interviews with Marjorie Benedict. Interviewing began on August 23, 1977 and ended on July 24, 1978. Altogether five interview sessions produced seven and one-half hours of oral history.

In February 1979 Mrs. Benedict received the first two chapters of her edited transcript to review. By then, interviewer Mimi Stein had left the Regional Oral History Office and I gladly assumed the task of working with Mrs. Benedict to complete the memoir. In December 1979 we had a delightful lunch together at the historic Julia Morgan-designed Berkeley City Club. Mrs.



Benedict, a past president of the club, had worked with the committee responsible for restoration of this landmark building. She was at the time we met for lunch looking forward to visiting her daughter Marjorie Boyle and her grandson John in Pasadena during the upcoming Christmas holidays. Because cataracts had made reading difficult for her, she planned to review the transcript with her grandson, who was at that time a teaching assistant in ancient history at Oberlin College.

Together they did review the transcript, correcting some dates and names, deleting some material considered irrelevant, and filling in additional pertinent details. The revised transcript, retyped, was sent to Mrs. Benedict in August 1980. She wanted to read it once again and then add observations on Mamie Eisenhower, Pat Nixon, and William Knowland, but cataract surgery and general ill health plagued her for the next couple of years, preventing her from accomplishing this task. During the Christmas holidays of 1980 she and her grandson again reviewed the transcript, made some minor corrections, and pronounced it good.

Meanwhile every three to six months Mrs. Benedict and I have had a phone conference to discuss how to proceed with completion of the oral history. However, during this time project funds had run out, and so Mrs. Benedict agreed to release the manuscript as it is for research use in The Bancroft Library, without planned additions or final processing. To mark the completion of the



Benedict project we plan lunch together this spring in the Berkeley City Club. Should funds become available, the oral history will be final typed and completed in the usual manner.

Copies of letters, news articles, and pictures which enrich the story have been deposited along with the manuscript in The Bancroft Library. There is also a tape of Mrs. Benedict receiving the California College of Arts and Crafts Alumna Extraordinaire Award in November 19, 1972 which has an introduction by William Knowland. Mrs. Margaret Brock, one of the California Republican party's long-time activists, has written a concise introduction to this memoir which puts Marjorie Benedict's activities and abilities into sharp focus.

This highly informative oral history is now available for research.

Malca Chall  
Interviewer-Editor

8 February 1984  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley





# I. BACKGROUND (heading)

## Family: Grandparents and Parents (sub-head)

Interview with Marjorie Benedict

~~Date of Interview: August 23, 1977~~

~~Interviewer: Miriam Stein~~

~~Transcriber: Justin O'Donnell~~

[Interview 1: August 23, 1977]

~~[Begin tape 1, side 1]~~

# #

Stein: Why don't we start with when and where you were born.

~~Benedict: You want to start with me?~~

~~Stein: Yes, and then we'll back up.~~

Benedict: ~~All right.~~ I was born in Pacific Grove, Monterey County, <sup>(California)</sup> December 27, 1899.

Stein: Let's back up to your grandparents. You said all four of your grandparents--

Benedict: All four grandparents were here in California prior to 1860<sup>s</sup>, so that's a long history.

Stein: ~~Goodness:~~ Do you know where they came from?

Benedict: Yes. My grandfather, who was Adolph Theodore ~~Herrmann~~ <sup>Herrmann</sup>, was from Germany. He was trained as a civil engineer, and he came ~~around~~ on the sailing vessels around the Horn to the Sandwich Islands, which of course are the Hawaiian Islands. He stayed there for some time. He thought/~~of~~ <sup>he was</sup> coming to California actually, but that's where the vessel stopped. <sup>off</sup> So he got/~~there~~ for a couple of years, and went on over to the Philippine Islands, and back to the Hawaiian Islands to catch a ship to come up to California. He decided to try a number of places to get just the climate<sup>f</sup> and the general environment that he wanted. ~~and~~ <sup>I</sup> that was why he stayed over there and explored. ~~that~~ <sup>He</sup> he came on to San Francisco, arriving there before 1860. And there he participated not only in some of the civic things but identified himself with a German newspaper



Benedict: there while he travelled around the San Francisco Bay Area of California to select the place he wanted to settle. ~~And~~ <sup>#A</sup> Actually he ~~did~~ settled eventually in San Jose. But, in the meantime, he met my grandmother, Henrietta <sup>Thiel</sup> ~~Thiel~~, who also came from Germany. She was not pure German, <sup>S</sup> She was part-German, part-French, and part-Dutch--quite a combination. ~~And~~ <sup>S</sup> She came by vessel to the Panama Isthmus, across the Isthmus, and then up the coast by ship again to San Francisco. ~~And~~ <sup>#A</sup> After their marriage they stayed in San Francisco for a short time, ~~and~~ <sup>G</sup> Grandfather thought maybe he wanted to go back to the Hawaiian Islands (the Sandwich Islands), ~~and~~ so they went back to the Sandwich Islands <sup>and</sup> and stayed there a short time. Their first daughter was born there, and then they decided to come back to San Francisco, which they did, of course, sailing.

Stein: ~~Now,~~ <sup>V</sup> What prompted these moves? Was he looking for a better climate again?

Benedict: Primarily. ~~And then,~~ <sup>O</sup> Of course, he also was interested in looking into something for his future in the field of ~~engineering,~~ civil engineering. But he was looking definitely for climate. He had been bothered with asthma, and he wanted a certain type of climate. ~~So,~~ <sup>F</sup> Finally, after exploring, San Jose seemed to be just right, and so he settled in San Jose. ~~And,~~ <sup>#B</sup> By that time, one of his brothers, <sup>Karl,</sup> another civil engineer, came, ~~and~~ <sup>H</sup> he came directly to San Jose then, and it was there that they established their own office, <sup>H</sup> ~~Heymann~~ <sup>H</sup> Brothers Engineering Office. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> They were interested in water development, <sup>S</sup> surveying, of course, was the big thing that the civil engineers were doing in California at that time, <sup>since</sup> there were so many of the Spanish ranches <sup>^</sup> and problems of land boundaries and so on. So, they had ~~really~~ a very fine business. They each built their homes there in San Jose, and became an integral part of that whole life in that valley. <sup>#</sup> My ~~The~~ father was born in San



Benedict: Jose and went to the public schools there, <sup>while</sup> ~~and~~ growing up he, ~~of course,~~ helped in the engineering office with his father, went out on the surveying trips, and so on. ~~and~~ <sup>W</sup> When he was in high school he actually was in charge of a surveying crew, ~~[laughs]~~. ~~So he just went up naturally.~~

~~[Tape off for interview break]~~

Benedict: He was really a very, very active, very capable young man.

~~Stein: This is your father?~~

~~Benedict: Yes, this is my father.~~  
 Stein: <sup>what was his name?</sup> ~~And his name was what?~~

Benedict: Frederick Charles. He was born in 1870, ~~there in,~~ in San Jose. <sup>After</sup> ~~and~~ ~~then~~ finishing the public schools there in San Jose, he went to the University of California, <sup>(Berkeley)</sup> in the Department of Engineering, and Civil Engineering, and graduated there in 1894. ~~And then actually,~~ <sup>T</sup> Through all of the experience he had just there in San Jose, he began having a great love of the country, and appreciation of the natural resources, ~~and so on.~~

<sup>4</sup> As his first job after his graduation, <sup>US - no period</sup> other than going back to San Jose and really working as <sup>from U.C. 2</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>a</sup> engineer, civil engineer, with his father and uncle for about a year when he was married, <sup>not in San Jose</sup> he ~~then~~ went with Spreckels Sugar Company as their civil engineer to explore and develop a water and irrigation system for their vast lands in the Santa Clara Valley, and on over into the <sup>adjacent</sup> valleys, <sup>(This took)</sup> taking in Gilroy, King City, and that <sup>entire area,</sup> ~~whole interior valley,~~ where ~~that type of~~ agriculture was being developed and making use of the lands there, ~~And then it was really~~ ~~during that time that~~ <sup>ve said</sup> Now, I've got to back-up, I've just ~~say~~ he was married. My older sister, <sup>Marion Elise,</sup> the first daughter, was born while they were there, and then they moved their home to Pacific Grove, but father

(San Jose)



Benedict: was still in that type of work in that area. And that is where I was born.

Stein: *you* ~~are~~ You're mentioning the kind of work he did. ~~It~~ sounds very timely, <sup>in that</sup> ~~in a way~~ because much later there were enormous irrigation projects.

Benedict: ~~And~~ of course he did deal in *that* ~~water~~ water system.

~~Stein: No did?~~

~~Benedict: For the whole western area.~~

Stein: That's interesting. What sort of things, exactly, did he do?

Benedict: Well, he would study the water, the natural water--the rivers, the drainage areas, <sup>rainfall,</sup> ~~and~~ the contours of the land, and so on--and determine how an irrigation system could be worked out that would really be effective. *(He would determine)* And how to conserve water through dams, and so on, in order to have a reliable water system, both for domestic use and irrigation. And <sup>so</sup> that is where a great deal of that type of thing developed. ~~And~~ of course, all through those valleys they got quite tied in with the old Spanish land grants, ~~And a great deal of the old records that are referred to now in still settling some of those ranch back to those surveying records.~~ <sup>His survey records were, and still are, used in settling disputed boundaries.</sup>

*used*

~~Stein: That's interesting.~~

~~Benedict: It surely is.~~

Stein: A lot of those early land grant records are in the Bancroft Library.

~~Benedict: Are they?~~

~~Stein: A lot of survey work that was done.~~

*do*

Benedict: *Just 3 years ago* somebody said, "Oh, I came across your dad's signature on some records we were looking up in such-and-such a county for some legal decision." Amazing! ~~So~~

~~Stein: We sort of brought it up.~~

~~couple of other questions I had about~~

~~[There are some more records]~~





Did

Stein: ~~I just wondered before we move on to your mother's background, if your father had had any particular religious background, of any kind.~~  
 have  
 ?  
 any kind

Benedict: They were ~~B~~ Protestants, and they were active in the churches there.

Stein: Any particular denomination?

Benedict: I can't remember what my father was.

Stein: ~~Okay then.~~ No doubt there weren't all that many there at the time.

Benedict: ~~[laughs]~~ I can't remember what it was. If there was a Lutheran <sup>church</sup> that would be the logical one, but I don't remember ever hearing ~~Lutheran~~.  
 So I'll have to check that out,

~~I can't remember.~~

~~Stein: Well, that's something you can check out.~~

~~Benedict: I know on the other side of the family.~~

Stein: ~~and~~ I also wondered if he was at all involved in any civic or political activities beyond his engineering work.

~~Benedict: No. He was a good citizen in~~ <sup>301</sup> ~~you're talking about my father or my grandfather?~~

~~Stein: Your father.~~

Benedict: ~~All right.~~ No, he was a good citizen in voting and keeping informed, but he was not active as a campaigner, put it that way. He always identified himself as a Republican, and, as I say, he always <sup>followed the</sup> ~~voted,~~ <sup>issues and</sup> ~~followed,~~ and voted carefully. So, I didn't get any ~~[laughs]~~ leadership there, except with inspiration.

Stein: ~~Well, then,~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~What~~ about your mother, and her parents.

Benedict: ~~All right.~~ They came to California from New York. They were English, with a touch of Welsh. ~~and~~ <sup>S</sup> several of them came over and landed in the very early <sup>years,</sup> ~~years,~~ I can't tell you exactly when, they go back into the 1700 <sup>s,</sup> but I don't know. ~~and~~ <sup>S</sup> some of them stayed on the Atlantic coast, and then they gradually moved over to Wisconsin. Now, ~~mother's,~~



Benedict: my grandmother and grandfather Soper <sup>nearby</sup> came overland to San Jose. One other relative had settled near Los Gatos, ~~and~~ so they came directly there and settled in <sup>nearby</sup> San Jose. *I know all four of them settled in San Jose before 1865.*

Stein: ~~Grandparents~~ That meant they came by wagon.

Benedict: They came by wagon.

Stein: Did you get any stories about that?

Benedict: No, I never knew them. ~~She~~ Treadwell Soper <sup>Nelle Elizabeth in San Jose</sup> was a cabinet maker, and he had his cabinet shop there. Mother was born <sup>in San Jose</sup> ~~there~~. There was an older <sup>Edgar</sup> brother, <sup>and an older sister, Carrie!</sup> ~~and~~ Mother went through the San Jose Normal School, which is now, of course, the state college. ~~and~~ <sup>she</sup> she taught school for a year until she and my father were married. That was in 1895. ~~and they~~ <sup>? Grandfather + Grandmother Soper</sup> were very religious. They were of the <sup>Methodist</sup> ~~Congregational~~ church, there in San Jose, and <sup>he</sup> ~~her father (my grandfather)~~ was superintendent of Sunday School, leader of the choir, so they really were very active. *in the church!*

Stein: ~~yes~~ <sup>it</sup> her family sounds like <sup>it</sup> was much more involved than your father's family in community—

Benedict: <sup>(Well, my father's family)</sup> The Hermann family was very active in all the civic things, ~~and~~ the city and county things. Grandma was a very, very active person. She really was an active suffragette.

~~Stein: Oh, really?~~

~~Benedict: [laughs]~~

Stein: You must tell me that story.

Benedict: She was in every campaign, she was really very outgoing, and <sup>she was involved in</sup> anything that would help the women, anything that would help San Jose, anything that would help the United States. She was just ~~really~~ a very, very active person. <sup>She</sup> opened her home to everything. They had a very lovely, large home, and it was always great fun, too, to go ~~down~~ and slide down



Benedict: those <sup>long, marvelous</sup> ~~long~~ banisters. It was really a beautiful old home, <sup>with</sup> large grounds, and a big carriage house at back with a surrey with the fringe on top, for the horses, and so on. So, we really did enjoy that very much when we had the opportunity to be there, which always included Christmas.

~~Stein: I'll say. What was her name? Your grandmother.~~

~~Benedict: Henriette Fier.~~

~~Stein: You told me that.~~

~~Benedict: And she helped organize the Women's Exchange, <sup>in San Jose.</sup> that was a sort of a new movement to <sup>give</sup> get the women at home an opportunity to have an outlet for some of their handiwork; their sewing, <sup>and cooking,</sup> and so on. And <sup>the</sup> that was ~~sort of~~ beginning of what became quite <sup>an innovative</sup> a movement.~~

~~in process of~~ what was called a Women's Exchange. A store <sup>was</sup> set up in town, and they could bring their things in, and they would be sold if possible, ~~and so on.~~ <sup>It was a means for women to earn a little money for themselves.</sup>

Stein: <sup>It sounds</sup> ~~That's very interesting.~~ Sort of like a craft cooperative.

Benedict: It really was. <sup>It</sup> was sort of the beginning of that whole thought. She was always helping somebody, and always into <sup>many worthwhile</sup> every causes. She lived a long life, ~~and she was always cooperative as far as publicity was concerned.~~ <sup>I think it was</sup> She was 97 when she died. Always active.

~~Stein: She died, when?~~

~~Benedict: I think it was '97.~~

~~Stein: So that was before you were born.~~

~~Benedict: I don't mean '97.~~

~~Stein: You mean 1897?~~

~~Benedict: No, wait a minute. When she herself was 97. She lived to a very old age.~~ She did a lot in her life, ~~though [laughs]~~ She was a very, very busy ~~little~~ person.

<sup>had</sup> They ~~have~~ an orchard in what is now Sunnyvale, ~~still.~~ It was just a family orchard, with oak trees, and <sup>various</sup> ~~fruit~~ trees <sup>(the summer home, and</sup> and <sup>berries</sup> around.



Benedict: <sup>we</sup> ~~so~~ grandchildren all looked forward to being able to spend a little time there in the summer ~~time~~ whenever we were allowed to go there with our parents. <sup>4</sup> But they were just real Californians--very <sup>loyal and</sup> proud. Grandfather was so determined to be a complete American; no German was spoken in the <sup>home</sup> ~~house~~. They had been through some of those early wars <sup>in Europe.</sup> ~~and as a result~~ <sup>W</sup> he thought it kind of amusing afterwards <sup>W</sup>: father, when he <sup>studied</sup> ~~took~~ civil engineering, ~~he~~ had to have a knowledge of German, so he had to take German at UC. [laughter]

Stein: I think there is a certain irony there.

Benedict: So, that's kind of amusing. People can go clear overboard in some directions, you know.

Stein: I guess that was typical in many ways of that generation.

Benedict: I think it was. Of course, <sup>my grandfather</sup> ~~he~~ went back to Germany many times to visit his family. There was a family of several boys or men, all professional, so he'd go back about every two years <sup>for a visit.</sup>

Stein: Have you ever been over there?

Benedict: No, not to Germany. I have never been in that particular country.

Stein: You mention <sup>ed</sup> you <sup>r</sup> parents were married in <sup>1895</sup> ~~1895~~. Did your mother stop working then? Stop <sup>teaching</sup> ~~keeping~~ school? ~~st~~.

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: Then how many children did they have?

Benedict: Three daughters.

Stein: And where are you in that--

Benedict: Right in the middle, ~~[unclear]~~ Yes, my older sister <sup>Marion</sup> was born three years before I was, and <sup>it is</sup> ~~the same~~ recorded in San Jose. And the younger sister <sup>Maurine,</sup> was born in San Francisco, three years after me. That was the family. It kind of shows how we moved around.

Stein: Yes, up and down the peninsula.





<Education> (sub-head)

9

<Cultural Lessons> (sub-sub-head)

Stein: ~~Well,~~ In bringing up in a family of three girls, what sort of expectations did your parents have for you?

Benedict: <sup>That would</sup> ~~We~~ all have good educations. We all went through the public schools, through high school. ~~and~~ I they also wanted us to have something besides a straight education from the schools. My two sisters had private lessons in piano, and I had private lessons in painting, ~~as~~ we had to have vast experience in the cultural field, and of course we were introduced to the theater, ~~and~~ to operas, symphonies and so on.

Stein: How was it that you got painting lessons, rather than piano lessons?

Benedict: I guess that was really sort of a coincidence, ~~I think~~. That was when we were in <sup>the</sup> Imperial Valley--that skips a few years there. But I really think the reason I did was that there was someone there who was needing some employment, ~~I think~~, and she would teach painting in her home, ~~at~~ private lessons. ~~And so, I really think,~~ When we were there it was a ~~very~~ we were desert area, ~~and~~ pioneering (a marvellous experience) ~~that~~ so they thought it would probably be a good extra activity for me. ~~And, so~~ so that's where I started, and kept on. ~~And, let's see,~~ I won a first prize at the county fair down there in painting, I entered when I was nine years old. So, that started things.

Stein: ~~Well,~~ That certainly showed you had promise early on.

Benedict: That, I think, was really the reason, ~~Although~~ I'm not good at creating anything. Music is one of my great interests, and symphony particularly. ~~And~~ I serve on the board of directors of the Oakland Symphony ~~and~~ Orchestra. I ~~and~~ organize <sup>which goes by</sup> a group ~~for their Saturday~~ charter bus to ~~see~~ their Saturday matinees. ~~And~~ I do the same for the San Francisco Symphony for their Thursday matinees. That's all on a voluntary basis; I mean, it's not a business as far as I'm concerned. I do it because I love it, and there are many people, women especially, who don't go out at night any more, ~~for~~ to things



Benedict: of that sort, unescorted, and it's a way in which they can enjoy music. ~~So~~, I've been doing it for several years.

Stein: ~~Well~~, that's wonderful.

Benedict: <sup>(I've received)</sup> High commendation from the Oakland Symphony for doing it, which I was interested in because nobody had done it, apparently, for them. I love it, but I'm not a creator of music.

Stein: But you're a fine appreciator.

Benedict: Oh, yes. They need audiences.

Stein: ~~Absolutely~~.

Is this a bus that people go to meet at a central place, or does the bus come around and pick them up, or how does that work?

Benedict: No, we start from the Berkeley City Club, so <sup>it</sup> ~~to~~ makes it very central and satisfying. ~~But I take them on up~~ On the Oakland one I take <sup>them</sup> on a mini-tour after the symphony because there are places, and things happening, developing in our immediate area, that I think <sup>people</sup> ~~they~~ ought to know about: ~~And~~ <sup>we</sup> We have great times. So, that's what I do for them.

o comma

~~Historically marked buildings, residences, or places of interest, one thing and another. Development of the estuary, some of the parks and some of the flower shows, ~~and things~~ The zoo, Dunsmuir House and Gardens, the Stanford home, <sup>(the marinas)</sup> Well, just about everything, ~~the marinas~~, ~~and~~ I always have something for them. <sup>(laughs)</sup> ~~and~~ I give them the history of it, a formal lecture. So, sometimes I kid them, <sup>about</sup> ~~I say~~, whether they come for the music or whether they come for the ride.~~

<sup>(laughter)</sup>  
Stein: Both, probably. They

Benedict: ~~They really do, it's really--~~

Stein: <sup>get</sup> Get a bargain there: ~~Two for the price of one. Well, we've gotten--~~

Benedict: <sup>We have great tennis, etc. (see above)</sup> ~~for away.~~

Stein: ~~It all has a central thread here.~~

Living in Rural California (sub-sub-head)  
We were talking about your education,

Dict:



Stein: and your private lessons. What schools did you go to?

Benedict: I started in Imperial Valley in Calexico. We were there because of father's employment--there again we have a jump. ~~That~~ <sup>It</sup> was in 1907 that we moved to Imperial Valley. He was one of the engineers who were taken down /to that area to close the second ~~break~~ <sup>break</sup> of the Colorado River, and to establish, ~~and~~ plan, and develop a dependable water system for the Imperial Valley. ~~And so~~, Calexico was the main town at that time, <sup>It's</sup> right on the border of Mexico, across a little river from Mexicali. ~~And~~ <sup>T</sup> there was practically nothing there when we went down other than a very primitive street, a general store, and that kind of thing. We all lived in tent houses.

Stein: Good heavens!

Benedict: ~~It really was,~~ It was absolute pioneering. We had the wooden floor base, and a wooden wall about three feet, ~~I guess three feet~~ high, and then the tent. ~~And then~~ <sup>There was</sup> about a foot space between the peaked roof of the tent, and a wooden roof for weather conditions, both for the cold winters and the heat of the summer. ~~And~~ <sup>T</sup> they had some screening so that the flap of the tent ~~could~~ be taken up so that you had ventilation. So, it was real rugged.

§ We landed there at night on a very antique train from Los Angeles. ~~And~~, It was dark, and we were met by people carrying <sup>lanterns,</sup> and we walked through the sand up and down the irrigation ditches, arrived at the tent and home-made beds that were too high, <sup>(and we)</sup> went to bed, ~~we~~ didn't get to sleep for quite a while. ~~And~~ <sup>T</sup> there were ~~we didn't know~~ where ~~were~~ strange noises, braying, and noises right outside. ~~So~~, In the morning we went out to see what in the world was around us. There was a mesquite bush ~~and little~~ forest on one side, and there were some wild burros [laughs].



Stein: How did your mother adjust to all this?

Benedict: She adjusted. She was a good sport. We had ~~the~~ electricity the second year we were there.

Stein: What did you do the first year?

Benedict: We had lamps.

Stein: Kerosene lanterns?

Benedict: <sup>Yes</sup> We all ~~learned~~ <sup>learned</sup> to clean the glass chimneys of the lamps with newspaper. We had fly paper all over, home-made showers, an ~~olla~~ <sup>olla</sup> hanging up for the water. It was quite a thing. We were there for three years.

Stein: And you went to school from there?

Benedict: I went to school the last <sup>two years</sup> ~~year~~ we were there. ~~Yes, it was the last year.~~ It was a country school; ~~My recollection is that it was just the last year I was there, it might have been longer but I don't think so, though, as I look back at it.~~ I wasn't too interested in ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> school. It was a school of two or three rooms, but several grades in each room. ~~And~~ <sup>It had</sup> the double desks, and benches. ~~They did~~ have some very fine teachers, ~~they were brought~~ <sup>I came</sup> down from the Los Angeles area, <sup>to,</sup> I ~~guess~~ <sup>think</sup> get their preliminary teaching experience, and some of them stayed on. One ~~my~~ <sup>of</sup> teachers stayed on; she was a darling person. <sup>She</sup> married ~~a~~ one of the big ranchers down there; had a regular hacienda, actually, ~~it was~~ over the Mexican border. But, I think, most of them were there just to get their practice teaching in, ~~and I think I was only in school there a year. It might have been a year and a half, but I don't think it was. But, that was where I started.~~

Stein: How did you get to school each day?

Benedict: Well, we walked, <sup>It</sup> wasn't far.





Stein: Well, I was trying to get a picture of where <sup>these</sup> ~~the~~ tent houses were in relation to everything else. ~~Were they way out~~ They <sup>evidently</sup> ~~obviously~~ were right in town, then.

Benedict: ~~No, no.~~ It was right in town. [laughter] ~~It was about, eh, I guess, from~~ <sup>In</sup> what you'd call our blocks (they eventually got blocks and things, but they didn't have them then) it would have been about three blocks from the one <sup>main</sup> ~~business~~ ~~town~~ street.

Stein: Such as it was.

Benedict: It really was, that's all it was. And it was usually lined up with the local Indians and Mexican-Indian mixes, ~~■~~ just sitting on the board sidewalk, with their feet hanging down on the sand street (if you could call them streets). [laughter] <sup>The streets were</sup> ~~Because it was~~ principally irrigation ditches, ~~and that was many of~~ <sup>were</sup> the ways in which you traveled ~~by~~ either <sup>big</sup> burros, donkeys or mules in the hot weather, or horses in the winter.

~~¶~~ We didn't stay there in the summertime <sup>because</sup> ~~it got real hot.~~ <sup>of the extreme heat.</sup>

We went up to ~~the~~ La Jolla and Long Beach for the summers. ~~of course,~~

~~¶~~ The men all stayed down, ~~and the natives, of course, stayed down,~~ but ~~we were able to leave and join their families on weekends and for a short~~ ~~the staff of the engineers, and their assistants, and so on usually got~~ vacation. <sup>The only thing</sup> ~~down, because anything~~ you could grow actually was the castor bean plant.

~~¶~~ <sup>at La Jolla</sup> ~~And~~ you plant that in the winter, and that would be the only shade <sup>you</sup> you'd have in the summer. There were some trees. There was one family

~~¶~~ there that had property, and they had a very nice <sup>garden,</sup> ~~but other than that no one~~ <sup>had</sup> real gardens. That was a real

~~¶~~ pioneering area. <sup>¶</sup> But they got the Colorado River closed safely, and they did develop a very satisfactory irrigation system, and the third year we were there you could see the results ~~of~~ <sup>in</sup> the beginnings of

the very lush <sup>alfalfa</sup> alfalfa fields. And they were beginning to put in some of the vegetables they could grow down there. ~~And, of course, it~~ <sup>required</sup>

It's just a lush garden, that whole area now. <sup>¶</sup> It just ~~took~~ <sup>required</sup> water.



Benedict: ~~that area?~~

Stein: ~~That's really quite amazing.~~

Benedict: <sup>F</sup> From there we came back up to the San Francisco Bay Area.

Stein: ~~That's what I was going to ask.~~ Where exactly in the Bay Area did you settle then?

Benedict: We stopped just temporarily in San Jose, and then we went to Cheyenne, Wyoming, actually, before we came back. ~~And father was with the~~ <sup>Wait,</sup> I've got that mixed up, ~~because we jumped~~ ~~to there.~~  
This came before we went down to Imperial Valley. You asked me about the schools, so that's how we got down there.

Stein: I see, so you went to Cheyenne first.

Benedict: ~~We went to Cheyenne from with the Spreckles Company.~~ <sup>F</sup> ~~And~~ From Pacific Grove we came back to San Jose just temporarily and then jumped up to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where we were for three years. ~~And~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~my~~ father was with the Department of the Interior there to study the sources of water, the drainage areas and basins, and the ways in which irrigation and water supplies might be developed for <sup>that extensive region.</sup> ~~all of the gross west of the Rocky Mountains.~~ ~~And so he had that large area that was what he was given to be interested in.~~ ~~And~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~We~~ were there, as I say, for three years. ~~And~~

<sup>F</sup> It was in 1907 that we came back and went down to the ~~Valley,~~ the Imperial Valley. ~~That makes it right.~~ ~~And then, I guess,~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~We~~ were in Cheyenne at the time of the San Francisco earthquake, <sup>in 1906</sup> and came back after that. ~~And~~ <sup>T</sup> ~~That~~ makes it right because it was in 1909 that I got my first prize. [laughs] ~~And~~ <sup>T</sup> ~~then~~ we came ~~back~~ <sup>to Berkeley</sup> here in 1910. ~~And~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~We~~ just stopped again very briefly in San Jose to ~~know~~ <sup>decide</sup> where we wanted to settle, and Dad decided that we'd come to Berkeley, so to Berkeley we came.

Stein: ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~Is~~ that where you stayed? Did you pretty much stay put <sup>after</sup> at that?

Benedict: Yes, then we were permanent.



<In the Berkeley School System> (sub-sub-head)

Stein: ~~So then~~ <sup>By</sup> that time you were still in elementary school, is that right?

Benedict: Oh, yes. So, I went through the ~~early~~ Berkeley ~~elementary~~ schools, Emerson School, that was the elementary school. I did, I think, the fifth and sixth grades there. ~~And then~~ <sup>T</sup> they had just started the junior high school system in Berkeley, and there was one that was the experimental one <sup>it was</sup> the McKinley Junior High School, ~~and~~ I went there for three years <sup>(seventh, eighth, and ninth)</sup> ~~7th, 8 and 9~~ grades, and from there to Berkeley High School, for <sup>(tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades)</sup> ~~10, 11 and 12th~~ years. So, I went straight through. All three of us followed through with the public schools in Berkeley through high school. But, we all went different ways after that.

Stein: ~~Well, in terms of your own education, first~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~all~~. Were there any courses that you particularly enjoyed, or <sup>that</sup> you found particularly influential?

Benedict: You mean on through--

Stein: I'm talking <sup>about</sup> just through high school now.

Benedict: Well, in ~~the~~ what would be the first year of high school which was actually the last year in the junior high school <sup>(experimental school)</sup> here, there was ~~x~~ one course I was very much interested <sup>in</sup>, and that was the experimental course in California <sup>history</sup>.

~~Stein: Oh, my goodness.~~

~~Benedict:~~ <sup>P</sup> I always liked mathematics and history, ~~and I took French, and in~~ high school, ~~I was on the art of course, I took art classes there as~~ an elective, and French, English, and mathematics all the way through. ~~And, as soon as I got through the~~ <sup>methodology</sup> ~~the usual required courses~~ <sup>in English</sup> ~~one more course in regular English, I went into journalism, and I~~ liked ~~journalism~~ very, very much. <sup>took a journalism class, which</sup> ~~and we had an excellent teacher,~~ a Mrs. Wehr, <sup>W</sup> Weir, who was just outstanding, and ~~we worked very closely~~ <sup>was the advisor for</sup> with the publications that the students got out; the weekly paper, and the annual senior classbook, Olla Podrida. ~~And so~~ <sup>f</sup> I became very



Benedict: active, with ~~the~~ ~~with both actually~~ articles in the newspaper and also active with the "Pod", as we used to call ~~it~~ the Olla Podrida. ~~As I say~~, I was on the art staff for the Olla Podrida because we had title pages and so on. ~~Anyway, so~~ <sup>F</sup> finally we had a journal office for the students to work in, and of course I just loved all of that activity ~~was~~ very much. And I was <sup>active in</sup> the school girls' association, ~~and~~ and jolly things generally. <sup>#</sup> The teacher of French used to turn her class over to me when she wanted to do something else, and she was quite determined that I was going to go to the University of California, and specialize in French and be a French teacher. And that was how I disappointed her. Then, as I say, I <sup>took</sup> ~~was~~ a great deal of mathematics. I liked mathematics. I took mechanical drawing, two years of it, the only girl in a class of boys. But, I liked it.

Stein: Did you have any trouble getting into that course?

Benedict: No. No, the man was a little surprised [laughs] that I wanted to take it. <sup>But</sup> ~~so~~, it was all right. Then, as I say, I did quite a bit with journalism. Well, in the senior year, Mrs. <sup>Weir</sup> ~~Weir~~ said that she had never had a girl editor, <sup>and</sup> ~~and so~~, would I please be a candidate for editor of the Olla Podrida, <sup>and</sup> and the weekly newspaper. Well, of course, I hesitated, because it had never entered my head. <sup>But</sup> But, finally I said, all right, and didn't know what I was getting into or how it would develop.





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Stein: You were saying that she asked you to be editor of the Olla Podrida and the newspaper.

Benedict: Yes, and ~~she~~ she was so anxious about it that I said I would. Well, we had regular campaigns; it was quite interesting. ~~And then they had the whole student body (one of their assemblies and so on), only at that time all the candidates for all the student offices, of course, had to give their speeches.~~ <sup>So</sup> I had to do that, too. It was real fun because the boy that was running, ~~and he~~ was the logical <sup>candidate</sup> ~~one~~, of course, normally we would just vote without any trouble at all, and we were good friends. It was a friendly campaign as far as that went, but we campaigned. And then the election was held and Marjorie was elected. ~~[laughed]~~

Stein: Had you campaigned before hand?

Benedict: We all had to do a little campaigning, but the main thing was that most of us were known pretty well, <sup>to</sup> except the freshman class, ~~The rest of them, you know, we were all together. So, that was that, and~~ <sup>of</sup> course, Mrs. <sup>Weir</sup> ~~Weir~~ was thrilled to pieces, and we had quite a to-do. Well, the next morning, and this was a scream, it was funny. I got to the office, ~~and it~~ <sup>which</sup> was up on the second floor right up in the English Department, and on the door was a funeral wreath. ~~[laughed]~~ It struck me <sup>as</sup> funny. I stood there ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> admired it ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> laughed and took it as a great joke. I know that I disappointed someone, some little group who ~~hated, but of course~~ <sup>figured that</sup> that was just <sup>a job</sup> ~~the jargon~~ for boys, and figured that I would probably take ~~it~~ <sup>the wreath</sup> down; but I left it up because I thought it was great fun. I invited people to come and see it, and that really just annoyed ~~them~~ <sup>the male chauvinists.</sup> ~~[laughed]~~ But it really was funny. <sup>and</sup> I left it up for a long time. ~~Then, of course, it~~



Benedict: ~~kind of surprised~~ <sup>surprised</sup> ~~most of the students~~ <sup>there, and then</sup> the next surprise was that ~~my~~ <sup>[William]</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>e</sup> opponent, Bill Forman, accepted the job as manager ~~because~~ <sup>because</sup> the editor always appointed the manager ~~who~~ <sup>he</sup> would work with. He was a good sport, was delighted; it was fine, and we had a great team. ~~[laughs]~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~we~~ <sup>and</sup> had a great success that year; it really was fun. It was a marvellous experience, and I did a couple of things that were kind of bold, ~~but then that was that~~

Stein: What sort of things?

Benedict: One particularly. This was during World War I, ~~1917-18~~, 1918, and ~~we were~~ <sup>would hold</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~our~~ patriotic assemblies, ~~and so~~ <sup>and so</sup> one of the assignments was that everyone had to ~~really learn~~ <sup>memorize</sup> the words of all <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>verses</sup> ~~songs~~ of the national anthem, and "America"--there were about four. ~~and so~~ <sup>and so</sup> ~~at our home,~~ <sup>we</sup> had home room periods which were really spent memorizing, and finally, after we were given a certain amount of time, ~~then no books,~~ <sup>not</sup> we were <sup>to</sup> open any books in the assembly time. Well, our seats in the assembly were set by grades, and so the seniors are right there in the front in the main part, ~~and so~~ <sup>and so</sup> on that particular day I ~~kind of~~ looked around, and I found several teachers with their books! I was a little shocked, and I thought, <sup>I</sup> if the students have learned all the words, they <sup>(the teachers)</sup> should learn them too. ~~And so,~~ <sup>in</sup> the next issue of the weekly news, in the editor's column, I had a little short article inviting all of the teachers and officers to join the students in singing all of the verses of the songs by memory. ~~I~~ I was polite, but there was <sup>no doubt what I meant,</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>the next day</sup> when next day I didn't know whether I wanted to go to school or not. [laughter]

I just wondered what some of them ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> think about that <sup>"</sup> that little smart upstart, what does she have to say, "you know. ~~But,~~ <sup>anyway,</sup> the



Benedict: next assembly I looked around and there weren't any books open. But, to cap the climax, much to my absolute amazement, the Berkeley Gazette, the

Berkeley paper, had read the article and they ~~fringed~~ printed it, ~~in the Berkeley Gazette,~~

~~Stein.~~

~~Benedict:~~ With full credit. No one ever said anything to me. So, that was one of the daring things I did, and it really went further than I had intended. I hadn't expected it to appear out in the daily paper. So, ~~anyway, that was that.~~ ~~But~~ I thoroughly enjoyed ~~the~~ journalism.

Another thing, ~~the~~ we had school athletics, and I always loved athletics. ~~And~~ <sup>^</sup><sub>≡</sub> there was one time when we had an important baseball game. There wasn't anyone who wanted to go down and cover it because we always had assignments. ~~So, that can't~~ <sup>It couldn't</sup> go uncovered, so I went,

and ~~I~~ wrote the article on it. I knew baseball backwards and forwards because that was one of the few entertainments that we had in Imperial Valley in the winter time, and so I wrote the article. ~~And~~ <sup>FF</sup> following

~~the~~ each edition of the weekly news the journalism class spent the entire period analyzing the articles, ~~that was in~~ <sup>I</sup><sub>≡</sub> that was their lesson, you know. ~~And so, they~~ <sup>Someone</sup> said, "That was a good article. Who

wrote it?" ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> they usually tried to identify the person who wrote them. Many times they knew pretty well from the way they wrote it. Well, they couldn't find out. I wasn't going to tell them; <sup>I wouldn't do that</sup> And they never did find out. But they voted it the best article. ~~I wouldn't~~ <sup>^</sup>

~~do that to the boys.~~ [laughter] That was another funny one, ~~but anyway.~~

So, I really enjoyed journalism. I did think of following that area.

<sup>FF</sup> Some of the sororities, one of the sororities in particular, wanted

me to be sure to come to the University of California. They ~~were~~ <sup>(involved in one thing)</sup> ~~course,~~ were looking for people who would be ~~on something or other,~~ another

~~but I didn't.~~ <sup>(wasn't interested)</sup> It was natural that I would follow through with something else. I really wanted, primarily, to be an engineer.

dent activities,

to the boys.



Stein: Following right in your father and grandfather's footsteps.

Benedict: I used to go out on the jobs, I loved seeing all that construction. But Dad said, "No." There was <sup>just</sup> no place for a woman, no place for a lady. ~~So~~ I didn't <sup>go into engineering.</sup> ~~So~~ then it was natural that I would go into the field of art, which is what I did.

He said that no one could be a good civil engineer without going out surveying <sup>on rough</sup> ~~going out in~~ trips, and so on. ~~So~~ that settled it.

Stein: You were just about fifty years too early.

Benedict: Yes, that's just it. <sup>California School of Arts and Crafts</sup> (sub-sub-head) <sup>(right along)</sup> I had been taking Saturday classes in art at the California School of

Arts and Crafts, ~~right along~~ <sup>I</sup> and they were in Berkeley, and convenient, and so it was natural that I would go there, which is what I did.

Stein: Had you pretty much majored in any <sup>subject?</sup> ~~thing~~ I guess in high school in those days one didn't major in anything.

Benedict: Not so much, no. <sup>I</sup> ~~You~~ took a pretty general academic course, <sup>though</sup> and I don't know what you meant ~~as for~~ <sup>by</sup> majoring. It would have been either ~~over into the~~ journalism <sup>or</sup> French, because I had taken <sup>those</sup> ~~that~~ all the way through. And, of course, I had taken the art. I could really go in most any direction, actually, ~~and~~ I followed through with math, <sup>too,</sup> all the way, except the senior year. <sup>I</sup> ~~And~~ that was always a subject that I liked, ~~and~~ No, we didn't specialize the way that they make

up their plans so early now. <sup>As I say,</sup> I went to the California <sup>School of Arts and Crafts</sup> ~~and~~ it was a school then; it ~~wasn't~~ <sup>didn't offer a</sup> ~~collegiate~~ <sup>degree</sup> ~~graduate~~. <sup>It was</sup> ~~they were~~ state accredited for teacher training, <sup>(Graduates)</sup> etc. ~~they~~ <sup>we</sup> received the state certificate for Art <sup>from</sup> ~~in the~~ <sup>in the state public schools</sup> ~~at the~~ <sup>secondary</sup> ~~secondary~~ levels, through high school, <sup>level</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>And</sup> that was a certificate that the state issued to you in those years. So that was what I did. ~~And~~ <sup>The</sup> school ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> right here in downtown Berkeley. It was ~~it~~ started in 1907.





Stein: So it wasn't at the site that it is now, in Oakland?

Benedict: No, no. It moved to Oakland. They bought that property in the early thirties, about 1930. Then, soon after that, '33 or '34, it was accredited as a full degree-granting college. ~~And, of course,~~ Now they give several masters in different fields of art because they have such a broad field in the field of arts <sup>the (is so broad)</sup> now. They had a very high standing when they were right here in Berkeley as a school. Most of the ~~teachers of~~ specialized teachers of art in California were ~~really~~ <sup>es</sup> graduating from the art school there. So it was quite the thing. ~~And~~ there again, I helped with the school publication.

~~laughter~~ I thoroughly enjoyed their work there. It was a very small, very closely knit school. <sup>(It was)</sup> <sup>by</sup> <sup>[Frederick]</sup> Family operated, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer who were a remarkable team. Mr. Meyer ~~of course~~, <sup>(in charge of)</sup> was the art, and Mrs. Meyer <sup>[Laetitia]</sup> was the administration. ~~and~~ Between them they really did a remarkable job. But they soon outgrew the buildings there. They had some excellent ~~teachers~~, art teachers. <sup>Perham Wahl</sup> ~~Hein Krole~~ was one, and he's an outstanding California teacher. <sup>and artist</sup> Benjamin Bufano was <sup>another</sup> ~~one~~. <sup>Beniamino</sup>

~~Stein: Oh.~~

~~Benedict:~~ I studied sculpture with him. ~~laughter~~ <sup>[Xavier]</sup> ~~and~~ Marty Martinez, who is an outstanding early California artist in oils, <sup>(taught there.)</sup> They really had a remarkable staff. ~~but~~ I graduated <sup>from</sup> there, in 1924.

Stein: ~~There again,~~ did you specialize in anything in particular?

Benedict: It was more general in those years. No, I didn't. But you had both the fine arts and the crafts, and you really had a broad yet sufficiently detailed course in all of those related fields. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> They were absolutely determined that every student had to have basic fundamentals in drawing, ~~and~~ in painting, ~~etc.~~ and in the crafts before they specialized. ~~and~~ It was a very, very wise basic school. By the time you finished <sup>where</sup> you were in a position where you could go in any direction, you really



Benedict: had the greatest talent. You had real prestige in the teaching field, and of course some went on into the commercial fields of one type or

~~another.~~ <sup>do</sup> ~~Early Career: Teaching~~ (sub-head)

Stein: ~~So~~ What did you go on into after you graduated in 1921?

~~Benedict: After I graduated~~

~~Stein: You graduated in 1921?~~

Benedict: ~~Yes.~~ I taught the following term, I taught both drawing and crafts in the Stockton High School. They had an excellent art department. It was a real privilege to be able to fill in there for a term while one of the teachers was away. ~~and~~ <sup>A</sup> actually, ~~it was that area that~~ Mr. Meyer had developed the art department up there, years before. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> they maintained a very strong department. That was my first position. Then I went on to San Rafael as the high school teacher and supervisor of the ~~grades~~ elementary school.

~~Stein: Goodness.~~

~~Benedict: That was what I had there.~~

Stein: How long were you there?

Benedict: I was only there a year because I chose to be married the following summer. Otherwise, I would probably still be there. [laughs] But that was really a very interesting and challenging set up that we had there. I still lived over here <sup>in Berkeley</sup> and commuted weekends. Well, most of the teachers were from other areas, they were not residents of San Rafael. There were a number of us on this side of the bay. We would take the ferry back and forth, <sup>T</sup> that was really quite a chore then. There were two ferries and one train from here to San Rafael.

~~[laughs]~~

Stein: You would do that just on weekends?

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: And stay over there during the week?



Benedict: Oh, yes. We were all, or at least most of us were rooming/~~or~~ <sup>and</sup> boarding over there. ~~There would be~~ <sup>S</sup> some of the residents there ~~with maybe~~ <sup>would</sup> take in two, or three, or four teachers, ~~and~~ <sup>of</sup> course, in those years they didn't have much by way of apartments, or anything of that sort, ~~you know~~, so that is what we did.

Stein: ~~And~~ <sup>Y</sup> you were responsible for the whole lower grades?

Benedict: And I was the art teacher in the high school.

Stein: You had your hands full.

Benedict: I did have my hands full. [laughs] But I did manage to give them some new work. ~~There~~. I pioneered a stage craft activity there in the high school because I was absolutely shocked when I saw that they were having their school plays, and their senior play, ~~and so on~~ in the little movie theater down in the main street, with ~~the~~ two sets, one interior and one exterior, ~~you know you wouldn't know, but anyway,~~ that's what they ~~did have~~ <sup>had</sup> in those years. ~~So~~ <sup>T</sup> that was terrible as far as I was concerned. So <sup>we</sup> made the scenery, and that was a tremendous operation.

Stein: I can imagine.

Benedict: We had no <sup>special</sup> facilities or anything like that, ~~[laughs]~~ but ~~anyway~~ we did, <sup>it</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> they were about to build a new high school, and I had helped campaign on that. All the teachers were asked to and we did. ~~But~~ <sup>The new</sup> school included ~~they incorporated~~ a very fine auditory <sup>ium</sup> with a good stage for ~~their~~ activities for the students, and they followed on through with the boys and girls that I thought <sup>were</sup> interested in the field of staging. They really developed some excellent work over there, ~~and~~ <sup>not</sup> too long after, a few years after that, I think they used to have <sup>in</sup> Marin County (quite an interesting county), some outdoor plays in the summertime. It was just a large community activity, ~~and there were those who were~~



Benedict: sort of a local type of theater group (I can't remember what they called themselves) but they would get together and put on these activities, <sup>one</sup> major one every summer, ~~and~~ <sup>it</sup> was out of doors, ~~it~~ <sup>Marion</sup> ~~was~~ at one of the large estates there in Ross. <sup>My</sup> older sister <sup>was</sup> living ~~over~~ there at the time, and she asked me to come over and attend. <sup>She</sup> ~~I~~ thought I would enjoy it, <sup>and</sup> I knew I would, and so I went. I was just thrilled with the production. ~~It~~ <sup>She</sup> had had something to do with it, and so I was invited to go to their after-show reception, ~~and so on~~, and that's what I'm really getting to. ~~And so~~ I was complimenting them all about the beautiful work they had done, beautifully created, and their costuming and their stage sets <sup>(They said)</sup> ~~and so on.~~ <sup>set-designer?</sup> ~~And~~ "Would you like to meet the ~~person?~~" I said, "I certainly would. I would like to congratulate ~~them~~ <sup>him</sup> because it was so outstanding." Well, <sup>they said,</sup> ~~he went to get~~ "Oh, he's over there." <sup>took one look at me and</sup> ~~He was in charge for the moment.~~ <sup>said,</sup> "Oh, she's the one who started me on all this." <sup>kind of</sup> You could have knocked me over! Of course, he was all grown up, and I didn't recognize him. ~~Oh, yes.~~ ~~So~~ those are things that are ~~quite~~ interesting.

Stein: <sup>That was</sup> ~~Oh, yes,~~ a real tribute <sup>(to your inspirational powers).</sup>

Benedict: Oh yes, I suppose. That was one contribution I did make. ~~So that was~~   
~~that.~~ <sup>{ Marriage and Family } (sub-head)</sup>   
<sup>{ Jack Sterla Everhart } (sub-sub-head)</sup>

Stein: ~~So~~ <sup>W</sup> where had you met your husband, ~~or husband-to-be?~~ ~~Where did he enter the picture.~~

Benedict: Right here in Berkeley, through our mutual activities at the Northbrae Community Church. We moved from the Claremont area, where we <sup>had</sup> settled first, <sup>(and where for</sup> we stayed ~~there~~ three or four years, ~~and then~~ <sup>T</sup> the Northbrae, Thousand Oaks area, <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ opening <sup>up</sup> and being developed, and Dad loved the hills and the view, and so he said this was the place to move. ~~And~~ <sup>He</sup> bought a home on Los Angeles Avenue, which ~~of course~~ is





Benedict: ~~sort of like~~ right downtown, now. But there were really ~~very few~~ <sup>this was in 1913, and there</sup> were really very few people there, <sup>with</sup> (of course that was in 1913) and so it was all kind of new, <sup>people</sup> eager to help develop things, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> there was no church out here in the area at all. There was a retired <sup>Presbyterian</sup> minister from ~~one of the churches~~ just retired from Alameda, ~~Presbyterian~~ who was asked ~~them~~ to undertake the beginning of a local community church for this new area. ~~And~~ I had been attending the St. John's Presbyterian Church over in our part of town, <sup>that's</sup> that's where we were all going, <sup>and</sup> and so it was natural that I would immediately go down to this one. It was just barely starting. <sup>It</sup> was meeting in the pastor's home, Dr. and Mrs. Frank Brush, <sup>they</sup> they were wonderful people. ~~And~~ <sup>and</sup> they didn't have anybody my age; there were <sup>just</sup> some little tots <sup>and</sup> adults. They decided I could take care of the little tots, and I did. We started the little beginners, and that's what I had. <sup>That</sup> ~~then~~ grew <sup>a</sup> to primary department, and we grew, and built a ~~garage,~~ <sup>into a</sup> double garage, and turned that/little church, supplementing the rooms in the home. Then they made the next step, <sup>most</sup> most of the real estate promotion had been completed, ~~and~~ Mason McDuffie had their field real estate building on a little triangle in Northbrae, where the fire station is now, but they were giving it up and so the church made arrangements to have the building left there and they would rent it. ~~As~~ <sup>As</sup> it kept growing, I kept taking on more. ~~And~~ I had the summer activities, dealing with crafts and so on. Of course, ~~that~~ <sup>it</sup> was natural that I would do that. I ran that for three summers, I think it was <sup>two</sup> two or three summers. <sup>In</sup> In the meantime, this family began coming down there with ~~one~~ <sup>no,</sup> ~~she was married so she didn't go down there.~~ Three boys, and the oldest boy was the one that became a friend of mine. He was active with the Boy Scouts, <sup>a</sup> a scout leader. ~~So,~~ <sup>we</sup> we became very friendly, and finally decided we would be married, ~~and that was it.~~

Stein:

~~What~~ What was his first name?



Benedict: He preferred to <sup>be called</sup> ~~the christened~~ Jack, and his middle name is Sterla.

Sterla's really his first name but <sup>he</sup> put that as his second one.

Jack Sterla Everhart. ~~Then~~ <sup>We</sup> lived at Thousand Oaks which was the next development then. <sup>^</sup> Bought a home there on Capistrano Avenue.

So <sup>^</sup> I didn't teach ~~there~~ for a while. [end tape 1, side 2]

~~[chit chat]~~

# #



<The Soper Grandparents> (~~sub-sub-head~~)

[Interview of: 6 September 1977]

Interview with Marjorie Benedict

~~Date of Interview: September 6, 1977~~

Interviewer: ~~Miriam Stein~~

Transcriber: ~~Justin O'Donnell~~

~~[Begin tape 1, side 1]~~

Stein: Let's start ~~then~~ with the correction that you wanted to make about your Soper grandparents.

Benedict: ~~[laughs] All right~~

Stein: You were just telling me that they did not come out here straight from Wisconsin. Now what's the story?

Benedict: There is a different story. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup>It's amazing how one can come across other information where one branch of the family has one idea then comes along something that's more official. ~~But~~ <sup>For</sup> I ~~have~~ received a family history that had been worked out date by date by date, and it seems that this branch felt I should carry it on, so finally I opened it and much to my surprise I found that the Soper family varies from what I had believed and what my sisters had believed.   
# Treadwell Soper and [consults cards] Nancy Hannah Evans Soper ~~of~~ ~~course they~~ were both born in New York, as I knew, <sup>she</sup> in Rome and he ~~was~~ in Huntington, Long Island. ~~And~~ they were married back there, but then they joined another part of the family in Wisconsin. ~~And~~ ~~where~~ we had felt that they were there just on a stop-over on the way ~~coming~~ to California, they actually lived there for several years.   
~~And~~ <sup>T</sup>their two oldest children were born there. They returned to New York, and then later came to California by ship to the ~~Panama area~~ Isthmus of Panama, <sup>then</sup> <sup>^</sup>overland, and then by ship up to San Francisco.   
~~And~~ <sup>T</sup>the brother of Treadwell was in the area of Los Gatos at the time, and that was ~~the reason that~~ how they happened to first learn of the



Benedict: area of San Jose. ~~And so~~ Rather than stay in San Francisco any length of time, they settled very early in the small town of San Jose, where Treadwell set up his cabinet shop, because he was a ~~special~~ cabinet maker.

Stein: I see. Is this family history from something I could borrow, or something, that we might want to put in with the interview?

Benedict: I don't know. You're welcome to look at it and see if there's anything in it. There are several pages where they track the various branches of the family. You're welcome to look at it.

Stein: I would be very interested in looking at that because it's ~~very~~ unusual <sup>for a</sup> ~~that someone's~~ family <sup>to</sup> had taken the time ~~and~~ <sup>to do something</sup> like that, <sup>would</sup>

Benedict: Yes, they did. There was one branch of the family--and I <sup>have</sup> to go <sup>to the records to find</sup> back ~~to the records~~ the exact ones because I had not known where I fitted into the family before, so I do have that on there now. They lived in Oakland for a short time. They were here before we (that is I should say <sup>my sisters & I</sup> ~~my and my sisters~~) really were aware of them. ~~And~~ I they were the ones who really kept in touch with the branches of the family in Wisconsin, ~~and~~ Some of them had moved over into Chicago, so there were the two locations there. ~~And~~ I they were the ones who really helped compile the family history. ~~And~~ I they, in turn, moved to <sup>the</sup> Palo Alto area, and Carmel. ~~And~~ Of course, the older generations are not living. Only one of my generation is living.

Stein: Is there anything else we should add about that story before we plunge ahead?

Benedict: Well, I don't know. You see, I never knew them, so I don't have ~~a~~ personal knowledge. <sup>Grandmother</sup> ~~But, Nancy~~ was a very small, and her portrait is just beautiful. Just that kind of picture book type of little elderly lady that is just lovely. My older sister has that.

Stein: ~~Well,~~ Speaking of your older sister reminds me that I never asked you <sup>(The Herrmann Sisters) (Sub-sub-head)</sup>





Stein: last time about your two sisters, and what happened to them.

Benedict: Well, my older sister, <sup>Marion</sup> as I think I indicated earlier, wished to be a nurse. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> it was felt that that wasn't quite the thing that they wanted her to do, and so she went to a private school ~~to~~ training kindergarten teachers. ~~Because~~ <sup>K</sup> kindergartens in those years were really private schools. ~~And~~ <sup>There</sup> ~~was~~ Miss Bonnard's School here in Berkeley. It was quite well known then as a particularly good one. She did only a little practice teaching, and then she was married to a man who had trained in engineering, Sidney <sup>Hugh</sup> ~~Smyth~~ <sup>He</sup> ~~was a family~~ from Portland. He and his next brother <sup>Francis Scott</sup> attended the University of California, and his brother went into medicine and was eventually ~~Dean of the medical school in San Francisco~~ UC Medical School. But they're the only ones of that family that came to this area. ~~Let's see~~ <sup>(Sidney Smyth's</sup> ~~his~~ employment was with the Standard Oil <sup>Company</sup> in Richmond for ~~a~~ while after they were married. Then ~~they~~ picked up and went to Peru, almost the top of the Andes, for <sup>a</sup> engineering expedition that they thought was going to be very wonderful. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> it was certainly very, very interesting. But they came back in about two and a half years, ~~and~~ <sup>their</sup> second son was born down there, ~~laughed~~ But then they came back. His last employment was as safety engineer with the state of California. ~~And~~ <sup>They</sup> settled here in Berkeley at that time. ~~And~~ <sup>then</sup> later, when Rossmoor opened at Walnut Creek, they were among the first ones, ~~they were~~, I think, in the second group to move in over there. ~~And~~ <sup>He</sup> since has died. My sister's still there.

~~Stein: What is her name?~~

~~Benedict: Marion Elizabeth Hoffman Smyth.~~

Stein: ~~And~~ <sup>What</sup> did your parents feel was unsuitable about nursing?



Benedict: I think at that time it did not have the feeling of professionalism that it has now. That's my only thought on that. ~~My~~ <sup>M</sup> sister has two ~~sons~~, <sup>sons; Frederick</sup> ~~and one~~ is in Walnut Creek and ~~one~~ <sup>Sidney Hughes, Jr</sup> is in Moraga. <sup>B</sup> Both live over the hills.

Stein: ~~What~~ <sup>W</sup> what about your other sister?

Benedict: My other sister <sup>Maurine</sup> went to Mills College, ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> Then, when she decided that law was the thing that she was interested in, she transferred to the University of California at Berkeley for her junior year, and she went on through Boalt Hall, and received a doctor of laws degree at that time. ~~And then~~ <sup>S</sup> She had several legal positions, and her last position ~~was in the~~ ~~I can't remember the exact title.~~ <sup>W</sup> Within the Department of Employment of the state of California, ~~but it was~~ <sup>involved</sup> primarily in the employment of women in checking through on possible ~~legal~~ violations of the labor laws and so on pertaining to women.

~~Stein: How interesting~~

~~Benedict: Yes~~ She was a very capable person. She died in '65, in Sacramento.

~~Stein: What was her name?~~

~~Benedict: Maurine~~

Stein: ~~Oh~~, <sup>Y</sup> your parents ~~was~~ really <sup>liked</sup> ~~into~~ M's, <sup>in</sup> naming their daughters.

Benedict: They certainly <sup>did</sup> ~~were~~. I don't know whatever started all of that. [laughs]  
But maybe <sup>after</sup> getting two of them they said they had to have a third M because they certainly didn't change that route.

Stein: I'm interested that your sister decided to take up law. Was that fairly unusual for a woman?

Benedict: It was but there were more coming into that field then. In fact, there are quite a number here in this area who were in Boalt Hall at about the same time as she was. So there evidently was a period ~~at~~ <sup>when</sup> that was opening up <sup>as a</sup> ~~that~~ field <sup>for</sup> to women.



Stein: Did she get at all involved in politics? I know that law frequently leads to ~~to~~ political activity.

Benedict: Yes, she was very active politically. In fact, she was even more vivacious in that field than I was for ~~a~~ while, but not with the organization end that I was interested in. She had affiliations, ~~with~~, but never in top elected responsibility. ~~But~~ She was with the Republican Women's Club. ~~Then~~ She was a very conservative person, and she became interested ~~really~~ in some of the non-official party organizations, if you know what I mean.

Stein: ~~Yes~~, Which ones in particular? Do you remember?

Benedict: I would have to think about that. We used to have pretty hot arguments at times. [laughs]

Stein: I ~~was just going to~~ mention a few groups: ~~W~~ <sup>California</sup> the Republican Assembly, ~~the CRA, or~~

Benedict: She had some contact with them, yes, but didn't take a very active part with them. As I say, she was a real conservative person. ~~And~~ many times the party organization wasn't quite as conservative as she thought it ought to be. [laughs] She would lean further over than what I cared to be. ~~Because~~ I always had, I always felt more of a ~~sort of a~~ practical realistic point of view in politics, ~~or~~ <sup>and</sup> in civic affairs, ~~too~~. (that was true of) In fact, everything that I did, as far as that goes. But she was inclined to get very, very excited, <sup>and</sup> concerned about it. ~~And~~ I in her later years she was very active with the Birch Society, <sup>(the groups she was interested in)</sup> that was one of ~~them~~. But there were others. These groups, ~~I mean,~~ whatever the movement, ~~they~~ usually hold on to one or two principles (do the same.) ~~issues,~~ you know, and ~~I~~ she would. But she was really a very sound person. Of course, when she was with the state, as she was for



Benedict: a good many years, she had to be pretty careful about being very open politically.

Stein: Yes. It sounds like she ~~was the one who~~ stuck <sup>to</sup> ~~with~~ principle above all.

Benedict: Yes, I guess *that's right*. I think her legal training had something to do with that probably, you know.

Stein: ~~And~~ <sup>2</sup> Did she marry and have children? ~~did you say?~~

Benedict: She was married; <sup>there</sup> ~~there~~ were no children. But professionally, she was always Maurine Her<sup>F</sup>mann.

Stein: That's interesting, <sup>that</sup> ~~so~~ she retained her maiden name <sup>throughout</sup> her professional career.

Stein: *(Family and a Return to Career) (sub-sub head)*  
Last time we ended up where you had gotten married and I would like ~~just~~ to quickly review the family side of your subsequent life, because we won't be concentrating on it very much after this. ~~But~~ You have children?

Benedict: One daughter. That's another <sup>M</sup>, Marjorie Jean. [laughter] I refuse to be "Old" Marjorie, so I said if they insisted upon Marjorie then they'd have to have a second name.

Stein: ~~So~~ <sup>2</sup> Did you call her Jean, as a nickname?

Benedict: No, I used the double name. <sup>I'm</sup> About the only one who does. She goes by Marge most of the time. And she had the nickname of Benny for awhile. She was born in 1926.

Stein: I ~~just~~ wondered ~~if your having a family, how that~~ how you balanced <sup>(having a family)</sup> ~~that~~ with your political work.

Benedict: Well, of course, I wasn't active in politics right then. Mr. Everhart died in '27. [pause] Subsequently I went back into some of my former work, my own work.

Stein: Teaching?





Benedict: Well, first <sup>(I worked)</sup> in a leather crafts studio that I had, and then <sup>I</sup> went back and did some more studying in the field of art. ~~and~~ <sup>Of</sup> course it was <sup>the</sup> depression ~~time~~ then, ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup>hen I did some long-term substituting in the Oakland schools, and established their art department in the ~~Rose evening school, the~~ evening high school at Roosevelt High School in Oakland. That's the Roosevelt Junior High School. They had the senior high school evening school there, and I set <sup>up the art department there.</sup> ~~that up.~~ ~~and~~ then. I did some special work ~~with the~~ augmenting the high school teaching ~~for a long term,~~ with the adult ~~the~~ Americanization Department in the schools, where they had the foreign-born who were taking English and other subjects. ~~and~~ <sup>A</sup>t that time, there was a sort of a festival, a dance festival, of one of the nationality groups to help teachers of the work that was being done. ~~and~~ <sup>I</sup>t aroused such interest that other nationality groups wanted to display their ~~folklore~~ <sup>customs</sup> through dance and so on, ~~and~~ <sup>I</sup>t was a rather staggering idea, because it entailed a great deal of work and more than the regular staff in that department could handle. ~~so,~~ <sup>T</sup>hey appealed to me to help them out and do it. It sounded like something quite interesting, so I did it. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup>here were quite a few different European nationalities that had their native folk dances. ~~and~~ <sup>A</sup> few had their native dress. ~~so,~~ <sup>I</sup>t was a question of making native dresses for the rest of them. ~~and~~ <sup>were</sup> the only thing that the department could afford/ ~~was~~ bolts and bolts of unbleached muslin. So, we got permission to work in one of the unused areas of one of the schools, where there was a stove, and space where we could dye ~~and~~ <sup>un</sup>bleach <sup>ed</sup> muslin by the mile. <sup>P</sup> We started in. In order to have vessels that we could even boil the dyes in, we begged and borrowed the five gallon--I guess they were kerosene cans; they were square, but tall. ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup>'d get the top<sup>s</sup> off and put wire



Benedict: handles over them, and fill them with water and put them on the stoves to heat, and mix the colors that we needed. Oh, it was kind of a wild and interesting session, but we got it done, and the women were just thrilled to pieces. They had their real pride and all, and so that year they had what really turned out to be a festival of the foreign born in the Oakland Auditorium. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> That started the annual festival that they still have there now. It's great fun. ~~But~~ <sup>But</sup> I was very interested in these different women, they were so sincere and so anxious to be good Americans and to be proud of their heritage and all, so that was a great experience. I don't know, I think I enjoyed that, although it was one of those crazy sorts of ~~assignments~~ <sup>undertakings</sup> ~~but~~ rather unusual. ~~and~~ I look back afterwards and it was a way of having a natural interest and understanding of the various nationalities that I enjoyed working with and helping in the political years ahead. ~~I think that was it,~~

~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> then I continued having activities with the California College of Arts and Crafts from which I graduated in '21, but in the meantime it had been granted a state accreditation for <sup>the</sup> collegiate level, and ~~was~~ certified for a bachelors degree in art education, and I completed that work. ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> then I did start some graduate studies in the Department of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, with the idea of earning the supervisory certification. I had been the supervisor in the elementary schools, but at that time the supervisory certification was not required, and the teaching credential was sufficient. ~~for~~ I did some of that, and then in '35 I married Henry <sup>Harshaw</sup> H. Benedict, who was on the administrative staff of the University of California.

Stein: ~~That's interesting.~~ In the ~~Chancellor's~~ office?

Benedict: ~~He was in~~ Well, he started out with the ~~Controller's~~ Office, and then he was ~~a~~ manager of their insurances, and reorganized ~~and~~ that program.



Benedict: ~~And then~~ <sup>H</sup>his next special job was managing the retirement system. They had so many different retirement arrangements that it was necessary to get that all revamped. Then he was manager of that. ~~And~~ there were <sup>all</sup> sorts of combinations. He spent at least a year at <sup>that</sup> the time ~~that~~ at the Los Angeles Normal [School] that was incorporated into the UCLA campus <sup>;</sup> ~~where~~ he handled a large part of that.

Stein: That's very interesting.

Benedict: Administrative work, and so on. ~~And~~ that is <sup>how</sup> ~~where~~ Marjorie Jean became

Benny,

~~Stein: I see~~

Benedict: ~~Instead~~ of Marge.

Stein: I see. In these years before you married Mr. Benedict, how did you manage raising a child and doing all these many things?

Benedict: Well, I was living several years there with my parents. That made a difference. So, it was a combination of adjustment. She went to a private <sup>(all-day)</sup> kindergarten ~~and~~ through the first grade. Then in the second grade she went to the public school.

Stein: ~~And~~ that would have been here in Berkeley?

Benedict: Yes, right here in Berkeley. Yes, I'm an old Berkeleyan.

*Daughter: Marjorie Jean Benedict*

You were going to tell me a little bit about your daughter, ~~and how much she~~.

Benedict: ~~All right.~~ Yes, Marjorie Jean was born here in <sup>OAKLAND</sup> ~~Berkeley~~ in 1926, ~~and~~ she was educated first in a private <sup>school</sup> ~~pre-elementary grades and on~~ through the first ~~and second~~ grades in this private school, ~~and then~~.



Stein: Which school was this?

It was the Sunflower School;

Benedict: It isn't one that is known now. It has been out of existence for many

a very small school North years, but ~~it was~~ in Berkeley, ~~that was a very small school, and~~

~~it was~~ <sup>an</sup> former teacher ~~who had~~ it. She worked very, very well with the children, and it was actually an all-day type of school, where they had supervised special play that would be correlated to their ~~little~~ things that they were doing in kindergarten and then on into the ~~first~~ <sup>second</sup> grade. It was not really until the ~~third~~ <sup>SECOND</sup> grade that ~~you~~ <sup>she</sup> attended the public schools, and continued through ~~all~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ high school here in Berkeley.

~~Then~~ Then she entered Stanford, where she was a very good student and had no problems whatsoever. She graduated from Stanford in

'46, <sup>with honors</sup> ~~with honors~~. She ~~was~~ had

a double major, political science and economics.

She, as I say, applied herself exceedingly well, and then she ~~took her~~ <sup>did</sup> graduate work at the ~~University of California~~ <sup>[at Berkeley]</sup>. She had not wanted

to go to the University of California <sup>as an undergraduate.</sup> ~~in the first place~~. She rather

wanted to be on her own because Mr. Benedict was in the administration

~~department~~ there, ~~[laughs]~~ <sup>So</sup> she was going to be on her own,

which was fine, and she did, I think, the right thing.

~~She~~ <sup>she</sup> received her master's <sup>degree</sup> then from the University of California,

<sup>in Constitutional law.</sup>

although there again, it seems that ~~every place she was in any form~~ <sup>whatever she was studying</sup>

of education, she always seemed to have something else along with it.





Benedict:

Then from there she did ~~do~~ some work here in Berkeley with the Howell - North Press, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ that wasn't really big enough for her qualifications. ~~She~~ She didn't find just what she wanted, so she decided to go ~~try~~ <sup>try</sup> other fields <sup>down</sup> in Los Angeles. But prior to that time, all the time she was here in Berkeley, and I was active in the Republican work—as a volunteer always—she was very active in the Young Republicans assisting in any way that she could with the special things that was I doing, ~~and~~ She was a tremendous help—very, very capable. For instance, in any of the preparations for the conferences or local activities that I was always into, she could be counted on very definitely to ~~be~~ be really a professional, except that she was a volunteer.

Stein:

You have a picture ~~of her~~ in your scrapbook of her on the telephone...

Benedict:

Yes. Now, that was in San Francisco. That was in 1960, when I had the responsibility of all of the women's activities for the entire national convention as the local Republican National Committee member. The time she was doing that was when we were working very hard on the ~~lunch~~ fashion show lunch, honoring Mamie Eisenhower in the Palm Court of the Palace Hotel. She really was the ~~main~~ <sup>treasure</sup> main treasure, as far as the helpers were concerned. ~~She~~ She really



Benedict: worked along with many of the activities. And in campaigning--in the campaigns, <sup>that</sup> I was interested in <sup>working</sup> with Young Republicans, she was one of the Young Republicans right along.

I was very interested in the Campus Young Republicans and helped them with their organization work and with their ~~work~~, /practical education in <sup>politics,</sup> giving them ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> background of party organization for both major parties, and how to go about campaigning, what to do in canvassing a precinct or a district, and so on, and so on, ~~even~~ <sup>Taught them</sup> some of the aspects of fund raising.

So ~~she~~ <sup>major</sup> had all of that experience, of course, as far as that was concerned, ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> went back to the inauguration with Mr. Benedict and me. That was /inauguration of President Eisenhower for his first term. That was a very exciting adventure, and interestingly enough, this goes back to Joe Martin, the congressman, who was just a fabulous individual there in Washington. ~~I had~~ ~~nothing that I did~~ ~~but~~ ~~conversations on other things that we did~~ ~~but~~

He was doing some campaigning here in California just before President ~~Kirk~~ <sup>some of</sup> Eisenhower's election, and I saw to it that /the Young Republicans had a chance to meet many of the guests, the national figures, as they came in, so that they weren't just shoved off to doing the little menial jobs that had to be done, ~~that~~ That was always very great <sup>for them:</sup>. Well, at this particular time, I had some of them come into meet Joe Martin because he was such an interesting <sup>person</sup> ~~and~~ and well known in the press, ~~and~~ ~~so~~ So at that time, Joe Martin said to my daughter, "Well, I'll see you in Washington." I said, "Well I'm not so sure about that."



Benedict: He said, "What's the matter?" →

I said, "Well, you know we have very few tickets, and ~~and~~ I give out all those tickets because there are so many who deserve <sup>them</sup>. She may go back, but I doubt that she'll have tickets <sup>for the special events.</sup>" He said, "She will have some from my office, and I'll see you there." And I <sup>thought,</sup> said, "Well, that's great."

So we went off on that footing. ~~and~~ when we did go back, I ~~thought,~~ <sup>said,</sup> "Well, I'll call his office." And sure enough, his executive secretary said, "Yes, they're right here on the desk, waiting for you to pick them up."

A I never <sup>knew of</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>a</sup> memory. Anyway, ~~she~~ she went to all the things, ~~and~~ <sup>As</sup> a matter of fact, one of the things that goes on at these inaugurations, it makes no difference whether it's a Republican or a Democrat who is being inaugurated, all of the members of Congress receive tickets, and of course, their tickets are very good. So when it's a Republican being installed, or inaugurated, why many of the Democrats will give their tickets to the Republican members of Congress because they know what it means to be able to give out tickets, and vice versa. And of course, the Republicans had been giving out some tickets to the Democrats [laughs] just before that.

# Anyway, ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> much to our interest and surprise, when we got there for the actual inauguration, she had better tickets than we did [laughs]. Then, when it came to the parade, she sat directly across the street from the presidential box. I was right next to ~~it~~ <sup>the president's box</sup>. [Laughs] We had a great time. But she deserved it, and that was a great experience for ~~her~~ for her.

Stein: Imagine!



Benedict: This is sort of a diversion from some of the things we probably should  
in a way,  
be talking about, but on the other hand, no, because it fits in ~~very~~  
perfectly. ~~Of~~ Of course, when she was back there, she did all the things  
that everyone did.

~~#~~ So then, after this employment ~~there~~<sup>here</sup> in Berkeley for a year or so,  
she decided to go south. And she got a job--oh, dear, with who?--  
[shuffles through papers]. That must be Remington Rand.





Benedict: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Yes she was with Remington Rand as a systems consultant, and she had the responsibility of visiting many large businesses and small, reviewing their problems of equipment and analyzing them and recommending ways in which they could be improved and then supervising the installation. She was with them for about two years when she decided she would like to do something else, where she didn't have to travel quite so much. You know what those distances are, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ She was driving all the time.

So she was applying <sup>at</sup> various places, and she applied to the Jet Propulsion <sup>Laboratory</sup> ~~Lab. of \_\_\_\_\_~~, under Cal Tech--California Institute of Technology--there in Pasadena ( she was then living in Glendale), and they were very much interested in all of her experience and said ~~yes~~, they'd consider it. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ She thought ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ maybe she'd hear from them, maybe she wouldn't. She didn't know. But the next morning, she had this call--could she start in right away? [Laughs ]

She certainly could.

Benedict: Well, she was working with the flights, and the first successful flight to the moon <sup>Ranger, a</sup> was her big ~~first~~ accomplishment. You may remember that at first, ~~you know~~, they were doing all of these experiments and laboratory work ~~experiments and so on~~ before sending a man <sup>to</sup> the moon, ~~you know~~. And they had not had an ~~early~~ <sup>earlier</sup> success, but the one that she worked on and ~~patrolled?~~ <sup>approved?</sup> was the first ~~one to make~~ <sup>successful unmanne</sup> ~~one to make~~ <sup>get through</sup> flight to the moon, ~~the flight~~. And it was interesting, because, of course, this was a whole new field, you know.

~~There had been one successful flight from the Soviet~~ <sup>Union,</sup> as you may recall, and so they really were pushing to win anything. Our own program was ~~really~~ working very hard to really get it going. ~~so~~



Benedict:

Well, there  
 was a conference of the directors in Washington prior to this actual  
 flight. ~~When~~ When it was practically ready to go, ~~representa-~~ representa-  
 tives of the different laboratories, or whatever they are, and some  
 of the naval stations--wherever they were pulling <sup>in</sup> technical work--  
~~were there.~~  
 So the manager there at Cal Tech <sup>- JPL</sup> ~~Jet Propulsion Lab~~ was, of course,  
 there.

completely...



Benedict: So they were all working on a brand-new thing, and there was a very close relationship in ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> work and also with those that reached out to various component parts of the whole. ~~Well, anyway, so the managers went back there, and [laughs] there was only one that was~~

~~on time. So that was very exciting.~~ And the man--who was a very interesting man who was the <sup>project</sup> director there at ~~that~~ <sup>JPL</sup> for a good many years--said, well, he had a person who got it all done. He gave all the credit to Marjorie

So Marjorie Jean was held up as quite an example, even though she was a woman. *[Mrs. Benedict relates these episodes with deep emotion].*

Stein: Did the work that she did actually involve engineering? Because she hadn't been working in engineering, had she?

Benedict: Well, the thing that she did was to bring in many of the parts that were, of course, a combination of ~~field~~ engineering and the technical fields--all of the scientific, technical fields, which involved engineering. But of course, most of that was done in these various ~~xxxx~~ component parts and areas. And she got these things, put them together, got them integrated, you know, and saw to it that they were kept on schedule, that they would stay within the budgets, ~~that~~ would be completed in certain routines, so that when they really were to be integrated into the whole, they were in order. ~~So~~ I'd almost call it more of a management type of job, you see.

Stein: Yes, I was going to say it was more ~~of~~ administrative, ~~over~~

Benedict: That's right. But in that early stretch, that's the way they classified them, and she really has continued in that field of assistant manager, director--that type of thing, over in the administrative end. But that was the big breakthrough that really opened our aerospace program. She has worked on a good many <sup>projects</sup> ~~of them~~ since. ~~then~~



Benedict: ~~I say "a good many," a number of them~~ because they work on one flight for years, you see. <sup>Her</sup> ~~the~~ last one <sup>was</sup> the Mars flight <sup>different</sup> ~~one~~. The she wanted to be transferred to a little type for a change, and I think she was right →

~~She is working on a good many different things now, because there is a possibility of following through from many of the things that were developed in the process of a successful flight and applying some of these things to everyday life, you might say, or to things that can be beneficial, and in some instances, maybe necessary for use on our earth. These are the things that she is work-~~

~~in on.~~ We rarely talk about her work because most of it has always been <sup>discrete</sup> ~~confidential~~. <sup>It's only if she says, she said,</sup> "After you see it in the paper or hear about it on the air, then I'll talk about it," period. And that's the way it should be.

But I have seen her with stacks, literally a foot, two feet high, just going through these reports and worksheets of different elements that all have to be put together. They have to be analyzed, they have to see whether it is something that we can really recommend, or that we feel that can be done, and working against deadlines and so on. And figures--ho! I don't see how she does it. Or how any of them do it. Put it that way. But she has certainly <sup>been</sup> an integral part in a lot of that, and that is great. So that's it.

Stein: I think it's interesting that in a way she's following in your father's footsteps. //

Benedict: That's right. That's right. It all kind of goes <sup>along</sup> ~~on~~. She ~~has~~ is a very orderly, business-like--and yet, here and there she does lots of interesting things. She, too, is very interested in her church and very active. She's very interested in music and is a real sup-





concerts and theatre

Benedict: porter, subscriber to ~~symphonies and opera~~ and museums and so on.

She is very well-rounded, as far as that goes. She is a great traveler, and she and her son, John, are just fabulous travelers together because they have so many interests in history, and archeology, and all the backgrounds. For several years now, she has been having real interesting trips. She's gone to the Near East and to the British Isles. Those seem to be her favorites. And she's returning for a longer trip to a couple of areas in Near East this spring. One that was closed off and she couldn't go into the last time she went [Iraq]. So she's going to do that, and Mother is holding her fingers crossed.

Stein: Boy!

Benedict: [~~what?~~ <sup>settly</sup>] I don't like it. Then she'll spend some time in <sup>Venice</sup> ~~Vienna~~ and the rest of the time in the British Isles. But they do their traveling in a very--oh, what? Not only an enjoyable way, but they put a lot into the studying of those areas before they go. And they go with a real purpose of almost--well, an educational trip. And she usually ties in with a--a short part of her trip will be <sup>in</sup> ~~some~~ small group of maybe twelve or fifteen, <sup>u</sup> under the direction of a specialized professor, sometimes from Cambridge. ~~and~~ <sup>It</sup> just depends what she wants, which one she goes with, but there's any number of them. ~~It's~~ <sup>travels</sup> ~~It's~~ a good thing she ~~does~~ <sup>does</sup>, because one couldn't keep up the intensive work <sup>on</sup> of the space program unless they had something to balance it out, I think. Because she's terribly conscientious, which is good. So that is really her life, pretty much. <sup>#</sup> As I say, she was a Young Republican. She was with the Sweet Adelines, the women's singing group here in Berkeley. ~~She~~ <sup>She</sup> was elected a member of the Political Science Honor Society when she was taking her master's degree. And she was active with the young



Benedict: people at the Berkeley City Club when she was here. She's really an interesting person, and she's very outgoing [laughs].

Stein: Let me <sup>ask you</sup> ~~add here~~, it sounds in many ways as though her career has paralleled yours in being very involved in community and...

Benedict: Well, it's true. I mean, she has lots of interests and does many things for many people or causes. She doesn't have too much time, but what she does have, why, I don't know how she gets as much done as she does.

Stein: Did you rear her to follow in your footsteps?

Benedict: No. I mean, after all, I took advantage of her availability when I ~~was~~ <sup>could</sup> [laughs]--I guess I could call it that. But it came along naturally because as a closely-knit family, ~~why~~ we were interested in everything that people did, and she was with me in lots of these things. She had a lot training in that field, and I really was a little surprised, I guess, that she majored in political science and economics, and yet, that was the natural field for her.

Stein: Was she unusual in her generation in pursuing the interests that she did?

Benedict: Well, there weren't many girls who were really political science majors. As a matter of fact, ~~look~~ at Stanford--of course, their classes were small--but most of the members of the political science department were boys. There were some girls. ~~I don't mean that she'd be alone, but it wasn't that--except maybe in the first year, it was a general elective class.~~ But she really was very much in the minority side of that. She always seemed to have a way of working very naturally, I guess <sup>I</sup> ~~one~~ would say, with whoever she was associated with in the class. I mean, she never stood out as being a <sup>feminist</sup> ~~feminine~~ what



Benedict: ~~have you. And that was the way in her work for her master's~~  
~~at~~ ~~the University of California there they were most anxious~~  
~~that she continue for her Ph.D., but she [laughs] decided that wasn't~~  
~~what she wanted. She wanted to get out in the world.~~ <sup>she's</sup> So ~~she~~ had, I  
 think, quite an interesting life. And of course, the Jet Propulsion  
 Laboratory ~~is~~ is a tremendous set-up there in Pasadena. And it is, of course,  
 under the California Institute of Technology, just the same as the  
 University of California, you see, has the cyclotron and the  
 Livermore Laboratory, ~~and so on, you know,~~ where they do these things  
 under contract, ~~all through many, many things.~~

Stein: Just for the record, let me just get what her name is now.

Benedict: Marjorie Jean Boyle, b-o-y-l-e. Mrs. Henry J. is what her name was,  
 but really, being professional, they're all on <sup>their</sup> own names. Although  
 in any of the other things, of course, she is "Mrs. Henry J."



Two Years with the State Relief Administration, 1934-1936

Stein: Well, then, did you continue to work after you married Mr. Benedict?

Benedict: That was at the time when I was with the State Relief Administration, so I guess I'd better back up a little, <sup>f</sup> that, because, oh dear, what year ~~it was that, '33~~ I guess. I guess it must have been '33 that some of the teachers in the Oakland Schools who were mature and had experience with some of the adult teaching, (etc.), were asked to help out in staffing the State Relief Administration offices that were being set up very hurriedly right at the opening of the summer vacation. There were about six of us who were asked to give up part





benefit. *of our summer - it would only be two months at the longest* 49  
*because they* were just waiting for a hurry-up class at the university to be

graduated in social services so that they could staff it adequately.

~~So~~, some of us put our heads together and decided that certainly we could give up most of our vacation, and help out. Maybe <sup>it</sup> it wouldn't even take that long. So, we did <sup>a</sup> That was ~~the~~ great mass of work, interviewing people applying for assistance, and I really was very glad that I had that experience. I had ~~had~~ been interested in social service of <sup>a</sup> purely/personal volunteer type of thing, and then in <sup>as</sup> much as we were rather senior members of the staff--I mean <sup>with regard to age</sup> ~~agewise~~

[laughs] <sup>it</sup> it was very good that some of us were ~~really~~ interviewing some of the professional people who were coming in. <sup>Well</sup> Well, anyway, we were there working. They were not organized by the time school opened, so ~~we~~ (stayed on) most of us ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> We found <sup>a</sup> challenge was tremendous; <sup>(just about)</sup> we ~~not~~ killed ourselves but then that was beside the point. ~~But~~ The way in which it lacked good top organization and principles was something that really bothered two or three of us, ~~anyway~~, ~~and~~ <sup>Because</sup> because we were more mature, and with a little more experience, we were assigned to some of the special types of groups that would be coming in and getting them interviewed and placed and so on. ~~But~~ Then, as it supposedly settled down, we were given some very tough, difficult areas in the county which were <sup>personally</sup> exceedingly depressing in some ways, but on the other hand, a <sup>marvellous</sup> marvelous education.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS VERY DIFFICULT WAS SEEING SOME PEOPLE COME IN WHO WERE SO ORGANIZED AND SO GRASPY THAT THE OVERALL DIRECTOR WOULD JUST SHRINK AWAY AND NOT SEE THAT SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS THAT CAME IN WENT WHERE THEY SHOULD HAVE GONE. YOU SEE, WE WOULD BE SENT MATTRESSES, SHOES, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, (ETC) AND THEY WERE TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO PERSONS WHOSE CASE FILES INDICATED NEED. WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT SOME PEOPLE WERE COMING IN <sup>and</sup> TAKING SUPPLIES WITHOUT ANY CHECK BEING MADE AS TO WHETHER THEY DESERVED WHAT THEY WERE TAKING. AND THE DIRECTOR SEEMED HELPLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I THOUGHT THIS WAS VERY UNJUST AND THE PARTIALITY SHOWN TOWARD THIS SPECIAL GROUP OF PEOPLE WAS COMPLETELY WRONG.



Benedict:

But they just were, completely seemingly irresponsible  
~~just to placate~~ <sup>in the way they</sup> all these demands of crowds of characters who would  
 come in, ~~and so~~ <sup>and</sup> some of us really got terribly upset over some of it.  
~~But~~ <sup>Anyway</sup>, ~~that~~ much to our surprise the work continued and continued  
 for about two years instead of two months.

STEIN: SO YOU GAVE UP YOUR TEACHING?

BENEDICT: YES. STAYED RIGHT THERE. THERE WAS SUCH A CHALLENGE, SO MOST  
 OF US DID STAY ON UNTIL THE WORKLOAD BEGAN REALLY DECLINING.  
 FORTUNATELY, THE DEPRESSION WAS EASING A LITTLE. THEN I  
 WAS APPROACHED THAT I SHOULD CHANGE MY REGISTRATION IF I  
 WANTED TO KEEP MY JOB. I SAID THAT I WOULD CHANGE MY  
 REGISTRATION FOR NO ONE, AND TWO WEEKS LATER I RECEIVED MY  
 NOTICE. THIS WHOLE EXPERIENCE PROPELLED ME INTO POLITICS.

STEIN: JUST TO GET THIS STRAIGHT ON THE TAPE: THIS WAS UNDER THE

BENEDICT: THE STATE RELIEF ADMINISTRATION.

STEIN: WAS IT DURING THE OLSON ADMINISTRATION?

BENEDICT: IT WAS IN THE THIRTIES, I THINK IT WAS IN 1937 DURING THE  
 LAST YEARS OF GOVERNOR <sup>[Frank]</sup> MERRIAM'S ADMINISTRATION.

You could detect a great deal  
 of influence from Washington.

~~Stein: Oh, really.~~

~~Benedict: Yes.~~

Stein: <sup>Would</sup> ~~now, is~~ this allocation of things like mattresses, ~~would that~~ reflect  
 the influence of Washington?

Benedict: It reflected--the way I looked at it--the efforts to cater to  
 organized trouble groups. <sup>(I don't know)</sup> ~~and~~ whether that came right through from  
 Washington, <sup>but</sup> I always rather suspected that some of it did, ~~because~~  
 it seemed that the changes in the orders and in some of their policies



excd  
Benedict:

certainly were influenced in two directions, <sup>from both the state and federal levels -</sup> But one certainly learned a lot about the population, and some of the growing problems, ~~and~~ there were two of us who really had some ~~real~~ difficult situations where we actually teamed up rather than going alone, which is interesting.

Stein: Why did you do that?

Benedict: Well, we just didn't know what would happen.

Stein: You were afraid of difficulties?

Benedict: You just didn't know because some of them were real nasty. ~~and~~ There was a little influence ~~coming~~ (and I don't know, I may be giving it a great deal of credit, it may have been quite large) of real radicalism, I mean real radicalism, which in a few areas was a little frightening. ~~And, in~~ <sup>which was one of the leaders,</sup> one family, ~~I know~~ I finally won over; that is, they trusted me completely, ~~and was one of the leaders, and I was kind of interested because~~ I was determined they were going to accept me as their representative, so to speak, you know. It worked out really exceedingly well, but he was a real leader, and he was circulating a great deal of literature and material directly from Russia, ~~and those years later, etc.~~ ~~He finally,~~ <sup>It</sup> there was a little chain of these people ~~that would~~--I never could find out exactly where they would get the word first, but they did, and they'd just take over the place. But they finally got the word through that I was okay, that I would be fair if they would be decent. ~~and~~ <sup>He</sup> he was one of the leaders who really laid the law out to some of them, this one family. ~~and~~ I finally went ~~to him one time,~~ up to the family there one time, and talked to him, <sup>I</sup> asked him about a new arrival that I thought I had seized up pretty well, but I just wasn't too sure. <sup>(This new arrival)</sup> ~~and he~~ was coming <sup>(into the headquarters there)</sup> ~~as a real troublemaker, in their in the headquarters.~~ So he said, "I'll take care of him." And he did. ~~So, you know,~~ <sup>T</sup> there was just that type of <sup>problem</sup> ~~thing~~ there. <sup>4</sup> It impressed you, that is if you were



II. REPUBLICAN ORGANIZING (heading)  
(Berkeley Republican Women's Club) (sub-head)

Benedict: trying to do a decent job, it really impressed you of a way in which some of these things are organized and how they can spread and <sup>what</sup> ~~the~~ powerful controls <sup>(they have.)</sup> And, [laughs] ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> got along. It practically put me to bed afterwards. I was always glad that I had that experience.

~~And that was from the work that I had done with the adult people.~~

I thoroughly enjoyed those experiences even though they were terribly rough at the time. I was there for about two years, and then they'd gotten down to a reasonably small organization. But it certainly made me determined to find out what was going on in the civil activities in general, and really pricked my curiosity.

Stein: ~~So~~ What did you do ~~then~~ after you left the State Relief Administration?

Benedict: I stayed home for a little while, while I recuperated. [laughs] I gave up, then, any professional work. As a matter of fact, I was married just before I became a lady of leisure, if one calls it that. ~~And it~~ <sup>I was</sup>

with the State Relief Administration

<sup>from</sup> ~~was in~~ '33 to '35, and it was in the fall of '35 that I left ~~there~~

Because it was in '35 that Mr. Benedict and I were married, and we were living in this area then.

Stein: ~~And~~ <sup>then</sup> how did you get involved in the Republican group?

periences in the Relief Administration

Benedict: As I say, ~~that really~~ <sup>from</sup> aroused my curiosity as to what was really going on politically as well as in local civic things. ~~And so~~ <sup>So</sup> after

I had a chance to get caught up with myself, I decided to find out, and went around the city of Berkeley to find out whether there was any organization of the Republicans, Republican women or anything.

~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> made some inquiries in the county, and there was a small organization of Republican women, so I decided to visit ~~it~~ <sup>them</sup>, at one of their meetings; I got in touch with them. ~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> attended the meetings and

it was, as I say, quite small, and most of them <sup>were</sup> older than I was by quite a bit, ~~and~~ I thought, "Well, I'm not so sure that they really represent me completely." But I stayed with them as far as that was





¶

Benedict: concerned because I wanted to get a feel of the whole thing. When the national election came along, of course, I always <sup>reviewed the issues and</sup> ~~voted.~~ ~~I~~  
<sup>the candidate's records and voted as</sup> ~~thought that was fine, seeing~~ <sup>I thought</sup> that was all that one needed to do to be a good citizen, ~~you know~~. So I went into the headquarters and volunteered to help, and see who gets together. <sup>I</sup> they had a lot of good workers, but it was <sup>a</sup> sort of a humdrum <sup>a</sup> type of an organization.

~~¶~~ That was where I began to really get into ~~the real world of~~ active political participation. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> wasn't long before I decided that much more should be done about it. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> in the meantime, the Republican women had dwindled down to <sup>a</sup> very, very low <sup>(number)</sup> and older and older, and it wasn't sustaining itself. <sup>So</sup> ~~several of us~~ <sup>(were getting)</sup> I had gotten two or three other good friends. <sup>(together)</sup> <sup>one</sup> was Bonita Herrick, who was ~~the~~ a city councilwoman a little bit later, <sup>she was</sup> ~~but~~ a very fine, dedicated citizen, <sup>(there were)</sup> <sup>and</sup> several others here in Berkeley. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> the question was; what shall we do? Shall we start another Republican women's club, or shall we try to do something about this one. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> thought, <sup>Well</sup>, I didn't like the idea of competing with them, I thought there should be some way of getting the whole thing <sup>put</sup> together. So, finally, several of them said, ~~well~~ <sup>I</sup> if you'll be president we will stand behind you, and we will build together a real Republican women's club that ~~really~~ represents the average woman." <sup>I</sup> Well, that was what we wanted, and that's what happened. ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~really~~ enrolled many of our friends <sup>and</sup> <sup>women</sup> many whom we didn't know, but by then people were beginning to hear about us, <sup>because</sup> ~~and~~ we would have some good programs. <sup>(It was)</sup> <sup>just</sup> a good wholesome group. Then a very, very sincere person by the name of Betty Chase of Berkeley agreed to be membership chairman, and we put a goal of five hundred members, ~~[laughs]~~ which sounded wild at that time. But we got them. ~~And then~~ <sup>I</sup> In another year we went up to a thousand. So, it was just like that. But we did a lot of real



Benedict: honest to goodness, <sup>practical civil and political work.</sup> ~~just practical citizenship.~~

Stein: Was this mostly of an educational nature?

Benedict: It was, but it was building toward campaigns. But it had to be educational, you see, to begin with to get a foundation. ~~so~~, that made it ~~possible~~, a marvellous recruiting ground for campaigns. ~~and~~

That's what they should be.

Stein: ~~How~~, Was this group affiliated with the California Council of Republican Women?

Benedict: ~~That's what it became~~, Yes, it became affiliated.

Stein: Why did you search out a women's group and not one of the co-educational groups like ~~the~~ California Republican Assembly.

Benedict: Well, the CRA was primarily a young people's organization--young professionals at that time, and principally men. ~~and~~ I really just hadn't become particularly familiar with them. This is where I just happened to be able to get my first feel for actual ~~work~~ politics.

[End tape 7, side 1] # #



[begin side 1, tape 2]

the CRA (in 1934)

Stein: My notes say ~~1934~~ it was organized. You say that you gave a lot of papers about the CRA [~~California Republican Assembly~~] <sup>to</sup> into their headquarters in Los Angeles.

Benedict: I don't remember who it was who wanted anything that I had, and I found a few things that I thought would be helpful to them. I've forgotten the name of the person, somebody I didn't know. It was a newcomer, perhaps, but they were trying to build a history. So, I did send some things down to them. I have some, <sup>still</sup> <sup>(papers)</sup> and I'll ~~send back~~ <sup>try to find</sup> them.

~~on that, but I've forgotten~~ <sup>But</sup> It must have been about the mid-thirties <sup>(that they were organized)</sup> or somewhere through there because their main goal was to find and build up potential candidates, <sup>that's what they were.</sup> ~~and~~

<sup>T</sup> There really were some interesting people in the group, and of course later on I did work with them, ~~pretty much~~. As a matter of fact, at a later date, and I don't know, I'd have to look <sup>(that</sup> up, ~~the date~~) in order to keep the struggling Berkeley CRA alive, they persuaded me to be president <sup>(of</sup> it. I said I thought that was wrong because they always had men. ~~and~~ I was busy with other things then anyway, but they really did beg me to, so I did <sup>it</sup> for a year to carry it through. But there hadn't been a Berkeley woman <sup>as president</sup> in the years that we're talking about, I'm sure.

<sup>(Alameda</sup> ~~(County Republican Central Committee)~~ (sub-head)

Stein: ~~Well, now,~~ <sup>did</sup> your work with the Berkeley Women's Republican Club then lead into your being appointed, or joining, the Alameda County Republican Central Committee?

Benedict: Yes, it was rather natural that that would happen, <sup>what</sup> <sup>the</sup> with a combination of both the Republican Women's Club of Berkeley and the campaigns, ~~because~~ I love campaigns. ~~[laughs]~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~and~~ did some kind of interesting



Benedict: things with some of their displays, because when you look at the campaign headquarters they usually will have a lot of ~~press~~ notices and dodges all stuck up in the windows, and just a hodge-podge of stuff, ~~and~~ <sup>T</sup> to me, as I said, it just looked like an old laundry.

[laughs]

~~Stein:~~ Of course, ~~and~~

~~Benedict:~~ I persuaded them to let me do a real window display for them one time (this was in Berkeley on Shattuck Avenue, the main street). I can't remember the subject, but it ~~was~~ <sup>had</sup> something to do, I'm sure, <sup>with</sup> ~~it was on~~ finance or budgeting or something of that sort, ~~because~~ I built the whole graphic type of <sup>theme</sup> --nothing original, but taking your <sup>strings</sup> out to show the different allocations and problems and so on. Well, anyway, it was a type of graphic window display. They were all so surprised that even the press came to look at it. [laughs] So, it made news. ¶ Yes, I really enjoyed the work. It made no difference whether I would sit down and address envelopes, lick ~~ed~~ stamps or whatever it was, or talk with people, or get volunteers, or do poll watching, or anything along that line. I just thoroughly enjoyed it. <sup>You've got to</sup> ~~if you~~ believe in something, <sup>of course</sup> ~~you know~~, and you've got to do things in a very decent way in which you don't give up your femininity, you don't give up your ideals, your sense of the practical things at all; you're just yourself. [laughs] ~~and~~ I really enjoyed it. ¶ Of course, with this big <sup>sput</sup> ~~surge~~ of ~~the~~ growth <sup>in</sup> the Republican Women's Club and all that was going on with their immediate campaign and so on, ~~and~~ it was natural that I would be asked to be a candidate for the county central committee, ~~and of course~~ <sup>but</sup> that is on the ballot, <sup>but</sup> very few people even know it, <sup>or</sup> pay any attention to it. But, I did, and then I served on it for many years. I think I stayed on until the end





Benedict: of the sixties. ~~and~~ I served as a vice-chairman, and chairman, and just worker.

Stein: When were you vice-chairman and chairman, do you remember?

Benedict: ~~I came across that thing~~ It was in the early forties if I remember correctly.

[Tape turned off] while Mrs. Benedict locates a resumé of her political activities.

Stein: Where we left off was that you were a member of the Republican Central Committee. It says here <sup>[on the resumé]</sup> From 1942 to the present. ~~and~~ 1946-1950 you served two terms as vice-chairman. Is that correct?

Benedict: That's correct, and later for a brief spell as chairman. But I didn't stay with that because I was doing too many other things: ~~flourish~~ state central committee, and the CRA, <sup>the Republican women</sup> and campaigns, and so on.

~~Stein: What's SCRA? You were just saying you were involved in other things~~

~~Benedict: Yes, the CRA. And the state committee, and the Republican Women, and campaigns.~~ And then I was active as adviser for the Young Republicans.

Stein: <sup>That was</sup> ~~1946, 1947,~~ 1946 and 1948.

~~Benedict: And then beyond that, but that was the <sup>257</sup> then~~

~~Stein: Adviser Young Republican Organization in Alameda County, it says here.~~ <sup>[the resumé]</sup>

Benedict: That was to really get them organized and work with them. And then I worked with them just in an advisory way after they got well established. ~~and~~ bringing them into campaigns. <sup>and</sup> those are the things that I thoroughly enjoyed. I worked with a marvelous group at the university campus here in Berkeley, and involved them in campaigns, and ~~we~~ we had a great time.

THEY WERE JUST FULL OF LIFE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HELPED WITH THE YOUNG REPUBLICANS STATEWIDE, TOO. I WAS ABLE TO INVOLVE ONE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN, BARBARA WELLS, WHO WAS VERY ACTIVE WITH THE YOUNG REPUBLICANS. I COULD MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONVENTIONS, SO I TOOK HER BACK WITH ME TO WASHINGTON.



Benedict: ~~Washington, and so on.~~ She became active there in the Republican National Committee office, ~~as a job position,~~ and she is, has been for a number of years now, in the directorship of the TAR organization, that's the Teen-Age Republicans. It's a national program, ~~and~~ Interestingly enough she called me the other day, ~~and~~ I hadn't seen her since I had retired. ~~[laughs]~~ ~~and~~ <sup>S</sup> she called to say, "Why haven't I heard from you lately?" Every year I'd send them a little contribution. She hadn't been out here, but she said, "There's a ~~possibility~~ <sup>possibility</sup> that I may get out there before long and I want to be sure that I see you." ~~It's~~ <sup>It's</sup> so exciting to catch up with some of these young people that you've kind of helped along in one way or another, ~~you know,~~ ~~and~~ Every once in awhile a couple of judges <sup>on</sup> of the bench ~~have fun with me;~~ <sup>have fun with me;</sup> ~~that I had kind of fun with,~~ "Well, you remember Marjorie, you're the one who started us. You're responsible for all of this." [laughs] ~~and~~ Really, it's very heartwarming because we have had some wonderful young people there, and some older ones, too, who ~~really~~ have given a great deal of good work to either the local level or the state level, or the national level. I get real pleased about some of them, ~~but~~ ~~anyway.~~

Stein: ~~Who is this girl who is back in Washington with TAR?~~

Benedict: ~~Now you ask me. Isn't that funny. I'll tell you one day. Isn't that awful. I'll have to fill that name in.~~

Stein: ~~It will come when you're not thinking about it. Don't worry about it~~

now. <Women in Republican Politics: One Woman's

Stein ~~I have a couple of questions~~  
~~A couple of things I wanted to ask you about the County Central~~  
 Committee. At the time that you became active and then were vice-chairman of it, was there any sort of fifty-fifty rule at that time?

Benedict: No, no.

Observations (sub-head)



Stein: Or was there any regulation governing women in office?

Benedict: None at all, no.

Stein: Was that a concern of yours?

Benedict: Well I liked to see more women active and taking responsibility.

Of course, I'm not <sup>in favor</sup> ~~not~~ of these activist feminine groups; I don't like many of the things that come out of that. I think many times more harm is done than good, or at least as much. It was always my way of working to bring about women's participation and work in a more natural way. And the way to do that, you see, was ~~of course~~ to build a strong Republican women's group and have them accomplish things, ~~and~~ have them become ~~x~~ successfully active in their local campaigns so that their potentials are recognized, ~~so~~ that they become known. ~~And~~ then, too, <sup>we</sup> ~~to~~ encourage ~~x~~ some of them to be candidates, ~~because that is, of course,~~ on the regular ballot ~~the regular~~ primary ballot. ~~And~~ <sup>I</sup> In that way we helped build women's participation in a very logical, normal, solid way, on their own abilities and recognition. ~~And~~ <sup>you</sup> you could also, of course, work at it in two ways; while you're doing that, ~~of course,~~ there are many ways ~~x~~ in which from time to time that you can educate the <sup>men</sup> ~~man~~ about it.

Stein: I was going to ask you about that. How successful were you at educating the men?

Benedict: Oh, I didn't have any trouble with it. I don't believe in fighting them at all. We just sat down and worked together. I never said anything about it, really, in that way, you know. That's to say, the only time I ever did that was once. I won't say the only time, it's the only time I really recall right off the bat. ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~we~~ 'll probably get to that later, but I'll mention it now so that we won't forget it. ~~But~~ <sup>When</sup> when the <sup>conventions</sup> delegations for the national ~~conventions~~ were being selected, ~~set up~~



Benedict: according to our rules and laws in California, I was ~~one~~ the only woman to sit on that committee, with Governor Warren, ~~and of course~~ the was governor then and the titular head of the state party. ~~and~~

delegation ~~[laughs]~~ W We were discussing the different people who should be on the because of their party position and those who had worked and deserved to be on, and could be helpful in a delegation ~~you know~~ to balance things out and so on. So I said, "Governor, ~~not quite in that voice~~

the one thing that I ask is that this time we must have more women on the delegation than were on last year." He ~~says~~ <sup>said</sup>, "All right Marjorie, how many do you have to have?" And that's the way we did it. ~~[laughs]~~

4 But, normally, as I say, things will just naturally work out if you ~~kind of~~ work it that way, but it was nothing for me to sit down in those early pioneering years ~~and they were that~~ to sit down as the only woman on a committee, simply because I was working, or because of an office or something. We never thought about differences. I never let them think that I had to be treated differently. I mean, we just worked together. It was very easy then that they would maybe counsel with me on any inclusions or expansion or whatever, and a recommendation or a bit of wisdom that I ~~may~~ <sup>might</sup> be able to offer would be considered.

Stein: ~~I know~~ Q One of the points that is made today by women who were working primarily in a man's world in politics or in business, is that what they object to is that they have the feeling sometimes that decisions are made not at the meetings but ~~in both sections~~ behind the scenes, at the bar or wherever. Did you ~~perceive~~ perceive that?

Benedict: There are bound to be discussions that way, but I never felt that I was out of things. I really didn't.

Stein: You felt that your input was taken as seriously as anybody else's.

Benedict? Well, I could because I could sit down and talk with them at any time I wanted to. I never had any problems. ~~And they would open the doors~~





I'll give you an example.)

Benedict:

~~for me.~~ And, ~~as a matter of fact,~~ <sup>in</sup> the legislature, ~~of course we~~  
~~have the party~~ they have their party caucuses ~~and so on,~~ <sup>for</sup> and we had  
the two major parties, ~~who had their caucuses.~~ ~~We had a~~ and I assume  
that the Democrats did <sup>this, but</sup> too, <sup>^</sup> the Republican caucus was exclusively  
for the legislators. No outside people <sup>(were allowed)</sup> because after all if you start  
having it for anyone outside of the legislators you'd be having  
problems then with lobbyists, you'd be having problems with different  
ones who had something they particularly wanted to drive through, <sup>and so</sup>  
~~on.~~ <sup>on.</sup> ~~you know.~~ ~~And~~ I felt that that was the way it should be. And it was  
held to very <sup>strictly</sup> ~~definitely.~~ <sup>^</sup> Well, this particular year, ~~and~~ I was  
national committeewoman then, <sup>^</sup> I don't remember the specific issue  
that was up, but there were problems in the legislature and there were  
quite a few split votes where they didn't hold together a few times  
when they should have. ~~And~~ I don't mean to indicate that they should  
always vote in a bloc because that, of course, shouldn't be either.  
But, there are times when it is necessary to compromise <sup>one's</sup> ~~out the~~  
feelings on something that is really very urgent, and show some real  
unanimity. Anyway, <sup>in</sup> ~~so~~ this particular <sup>instance</sup> they invited me to attend their  
lunch that they have just preceding their caucus. ~~So,~~ I accepted.  
This was the first time that they'd ever had a woman there. They  
felt that ~~they would have~~ ~~they had~~ the national committeeman, and  
<sup>the</sup>  
maybe somebody else from ~~the~~ party organization, could have lunch but  
<sup>(even then only)</sup>  
~~very, very~~ seldom, almost never. ~~And so~~ I thought that was pretty  
<sup>said</sup>  
fine, and <sup>^</sup> sure I'd make a trip up there and have lunch with them,  
which I did. <sup>^</sup> Well, it was kind of amusing because I could feel that  
they felt uncomfortable <sup>because they couldn't invite me</sup> ~~so,~~  
<sup>to come to the rest of the meeting.</sup>  
~~when the time came, of course I knew because I knew what the set up~~  
~~was.~~ <sup>I had</sup> ~~And~~ they talked it over, and they said yes they really wanted  
<sup>to the lunch</sup>  
me to come, <sup>^</sup> so I did. ~~Well, anyway, so~~ <sup>^</sup> When the time came, we visited



Benedict: and they asked me to speak to them, and I did, ~~and then I could~~ put in a barb but I ~~didn't~~ <sup>didn't</sup> say anything specific. But I was emphasizing some of the importance of their working things out among themselves, and coming out once in a while with some real strong unanimity, and so on. ~~and~~ there was something else, but off-hand I can't remember what it was, but there was something, so they could ~~transfer it over~~ <sup>apply it to their work</sup> if they wanted to. "After all, <sup>I said</sup> we're in a position where we ~~could~~ <sup>can</sup> really do a good job, and it would make a great deal of difference, etc., etc."

~~So~~, I never referred to anything specific but gave them a few things that we were working on from the national point of view, as well as the state, ~~and~~ then came time for them to go to their caucus, and they apologized. <sup>[that I couldn't come.]</sup> I said, "Listen, don't apologize to me, I don't approve of anyone ~~going in, anyone~~ <sup>of</sup> outside/the legislators going into the caucus, you know that." I said, "Now go out and do your work," and I left.

¶ That session was the first session for a long time <sup>(in which)</sup> that they came out with something solid. [laughs] It was really kind of interesting. But you can do those things, if you just have the thought of doing it in that way. Now, I could have caused a lot of trouble there, you know. I mean, those are the things you can do. ¶ Some of the Democrats agree with me which is kind of amusing, ~~too, at times.~~ <sup>once sat in at a</sup> I think back at what joint committee <sup>(meeting)</sup> and it was down in ~~southern California, now what in the~~ <sup>Jesse</sup> ~~dickens was that, it was a hard one.~~ Unruh was there, and

~~Stein. Jesse Unruh.~~

~~Benedict. Jesse Unruh. What could it have been? He was there, there were several leaders from both parties, and they argued back and forth. It was around a large table; there couldn't have been more than sixteen or twenty eighteen people there; it couldn't have been any more. ~~and~~ They just couldn't seem to get any place on a compromise, ~~thing.~~ I just sat there, and listened.~~



Benedict: I wasn't joining in this heated argument! they were just killing themselves. ~~I'm trying to think what that was.~~ Anyway, ~~so~~ finally after they all seemed to have petered out completely, and couldn't arrive at anything, I came up with some sort of a compromise, ~~and~~ there was this complete silence, and Jesse Unruh said, "Well, I'll agree with that." And you could have put everyone under the table!

[laughs] ~~So, I mean, you know,~~ *I preferred it. when they didn't* ~~not~~ fight openly too much, ~~when~~ you get people ~~just going~~ *When talking* like this, you can accomplish so much more. It was really funny. Sometimes/~~they~~ say, "Well, in meetings she often will not say very much but when she does you'd better listen." ~~[laughs]~~ ~~Well, anyway~~

*ff* You were talking about getting along with the men on committees.

~~Stein: No, that isn't quite the subject.~~

~~Benedict: Well, I don't know.~~ I never had the problem in politics or anything else of feeling that I'm a second-class citizen, that's all. And many a time I've been ~~a single.~~ *the lone woman,*

Stein: ~~Well, that was the last question I'm going to ask you today, was~~ ~~if there were~~ *there* any other women on the County Central Committee when you were there, ~~in those~~ *early* ~~years?~~ *?*

~~Benedict: You mean~~

~~Stein: In the forties~~

Benedict: I'll try and see if I can find one of those ropsters. I rather doubt it. If there were there would just be one or two, because there were no rules on that at all. But we did then bring in some so that we have had a good representation of women.

Stein: *(something)* Was that you specifically worked on, bringing more women in?

Benedict: Oh yes, I did work on it, sure, ~~in~~ that indirect way.

Stein: Did you encourage women to run for ~~senior~~ office?



BENEDICT: OH YES, I WOULD DEFINITELY ENCOURAGE THOSE WHOM I FELT COULD DO A SENSIBLE JOB ON THE COUNTY REPUBLICAN CENTRAL COMMITTEES. I MIGHT DO THIS SUBTLY BY ASKING A CHAIRMAN--ALMOST ALWAYS A MAN OF COURSE -- IF HE HAD A WOMAN ON THE COMMITTEE WITH WHOM I COULD WORK ON MATTERS DEALING MAINLY WITH PARTY ACTIVITIES WHICH I WANTED TO BE SURE WERE COVERED IN THE COUNTY. AT FIRST THERE WEREN'T SUCH WOMEN, AS I KNEW, BUT MY QUESTION AT LEAST BROUGHT THE ISSUE TO THE FRONT. THEN WHEN A VACANCY DID OCCUR I MIGHT BE ASKED TO SUGGEST A WOMAN, AND WHEN I DID, I USUALLY ALSO SUGGESTED THAT SHE MIGHT BE ELECTED A VICE-CHAIRMAN. IN THIS WAY SHE HAD A POSITION FROM WHICH SHE COULD ORGANIZE WITH SOME AUTHORITY. ALSO FROM THIS POSITION SHE COULD BE APPOINTED CHAIRMAN, IF SHE WERE A REALLY CAPABLE PERSON. SO YOU SEE, I COULD GAIN MY POINTS BY COMING AT THEM QUIETLY AND CAREFULLY.

*And* then in time, you see,

if they felt they had a good woman candidate who would be on the ballot, and I guarantee everything I say more or less, but I mean, their accomplishment would speak for ~~itself~~ <sup>itself</sup> then they would not encourage too many men to run so that it would make it possible for them to win their election.

Stein: So you had the cooperation of the men in this?

Benedict: Sure, oh yes.

Stein: Well I think that might be a good place to stop for today. ~~And~~ <sup>at this time</sup> ~~the next time~~ what I would like to do is pick up with the State Central Committee and your appointment to the State Central Committee. ~~And~~ <sup>election</sup> that will lead us into your appointment as national committeewoman. ~~[end tape 1, side 1]~~





~~This segment is quite short and general~~ 65

Interview with ~~Marjorie Benedict~~

Date of Interview:

Interview 3.

Interviewer: ~~Miriam Stein~~

Transcriber: ~~Bob McGargar~~

10/2/78

[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

Stein *Concerning Picture of Republican Party Colleagues*

Stein: Just one thing before we begin--One of the photographs that I've reproduced, I forgot who you said all these people were in the picture. It's a picture of you on President Eisenhower's arm. Now who were the other people in the picture?

Benedict: This was in San Francisco. All those in the very back row were San Francisco people, plus the secret service, and the manager of the Saint Francis <sup>[Hotel]</sup> was the one immediately in back of me.

Stein: Oh, is that the one with the little mustache?

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: He was the manager of the Saint Francis. Now when was this?

Benedict: This was in '52. Well, that is that campaign.

Stein: I see, and this is before the campaign.

Benedict: Yes, before the campaign. Oh, dear. The one who has moved ~~there~~ Massachusetts, Katherine Howard, was the national committeewoman from ~~Howard~~. And she moved right as that picture was taken. And the one right in back of her was someone from Washington, but I don't remember the name.

Stein: Is that the person on the other side of you?

Benedict: Well, in back of me, yes. I think he was on Eisenhower's immediate campaign staff. Either that or secret service.

Stein: I <sup>(see)</sup> ~~see~~ the person..?

Benedict: With the light suit.

Stein: With <sup>the</sup> light suit. Oh, I see. Yes, who looks as though he's guarding you.



Benedict: That's right. And I think he must have been--because I don't recognize him as ~~National Committee~~, but there was quite an entourage, you know, that goes along. ~~and~~ <sup>In</sup> back you see ~~there~~ at least two of the security people coming out. Because we stopped, but we didn't go down in a set <sup>order</sup> ~~thing~~ for a photograph. This <sup>is</sup> taken so that really, Katherine and I, I think, are the only ones from ~~National Committee~~ there--or political people. And the other one, I'm sure, is the ~~campaign~~ <sup>campaign</sup> representative.

Stein: Okay. And this <sup>is the</sup> photograph of the Leonard Hall breakfast?

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: ~~If~~ <sup>you</sup> could ~~give~~ tell me a little bit about the circumstances of that meeting--what the group was and why you were there?

Benedict: Well, this was in Los Angeles, right?

Stein: I don't know. It didn't say on the back of the photograph.

Benedict: I'm sure it was, because these people are from <sup>the</sup> Los Angeles <sup>area</sup> ~~and~~. This is a Negro group, a minority group <sup>in which</sup> ~~that~~ MacIntyre Faries, who was <sup>the</sup> national committeeman <sup>from Los Angeles County</sup> at that time, and I were very interested <sup>the</sup> and did a great many things with and for/minorities. And this is one of <sup>the groups</sup> ~~that groups~~. It is a--[pause]--oh dear, what was their name?

[Pause]. They had evening meetings, and they were very dedicated people, <sup>and</sup> they wanted to <sup>and</sup> ~~really~~ be <sup>and</sup> active a part of the Republican Party as a really integrated part, and we attended ~~their~~ meetings many, many times with them. This was at one of those times. We always had to be there for their installation meetings every year. In fact, they wouldn't have one unless we could be there. The date would be changed. ~~But that's really what that was~~ It's just typical of many meetings and things that we did with and for the minorities.

[Pause, apparently looking looking at pictures]



Stein: And then, this photo of you with a large group of women in Senator Knowland's office--Mrs. ~~Charles~~<sup>Chall</sup> thought that she recognized Lucille Hosmer.

Benedict: Well, she certainly was there, ~~and oh, that's that and probably,~~

~~[Away from the very faint.]~~ And Cecil Kenyon ~~was had~~ ~~time~~ ~~?~~ he would probably have spoken ~~to her~~. She was very active in the Federation. Very conservative and very strong <sup>person</sup> a good organizer. Her husband was a fund raiser to a fair extent. She was president of the Southern California <sup>Republican Women's</sup> ~~in~~ in the Southern Division. She went on to be the state president, but her real work was in San Marino ~~[photo-mike-back on]~~. Yes, that's who this one is.

~~Stein:~~ ~~who?~~  
Stein: That one is ~~John~~<sup>Mrs.</sup> Hosmer.

Benedict: ~~Stein:~~  
~~RENECIK:~~ Oh, that's Mrs. Hosmer?

*Let me look over here.*

Benedict: It looks like her. This one is Cecil Kenyon--that's right. Right there.

~~Stein:~~ On the left. Now, wait a minute. [Long pause] I think I'm going to take her out and put her over here. That, I think, is

Stein: That's what Mrs. ~~Charles~~<sup>Chall</sup> thought.

Benedict: Yes, there's another one who looks very much like her, but I think that that one is. It's her stance there that--I think she is that one. <sup>[Pause]</sup> Yes, we'll settle for that.

Stein: Okay.

Benedict: I let the various ones always stand in front so they have a chance. I'm peeking over

Stein: ~~[Laughs]~~ Yes, [laughs] I <sup>t</sup> took a little while <sup>for me</sup> to find you the first time.

Benedict: Yes. Of course, if we were going by protocol, I would have crowded up in front and said, "This is my place," but I always let the others go on in front of me because it's important to them when we get there. But that was that. This was one of the conferences, the women's conference that we had



Some Recollections of Statewide Political Activities

Let's <sup>talk about</sup> ~~start in with~~ your work

Stein:

with the Republican State Central Committee and the Federation of Republican Women. You mentioned last time that there was quite a story there.

Benedict:

Well, that's really the way I went into the field of politics, and I doubt that I ever would have been National Committeewoman, and I'd say I shouldn't have been unless I had that type of experience. Unfortunately too many just go into <sup>a</sup> the National Committee spot without enough varied experience. I think that in every state where they have variations of their ~~types of~~ local and statewide organizations that they have to adapt themselves, of course, to whatever is there. And some of them really do not have the experience of working with the wide variety of organizations that we have in California. We're really rather unique, you know. But of course, <sup>California,</sup> as far as my beginning

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Benedict: was concerned, was with the Republican Women's Club, the local ~~was~~ club. I think we covered that a little bit, coming from the State Relief Administration and then <sup>into</sup> that. So I believe we have the record of the general development of that club, where we ~~really~~ built it up to a thousand members and really did a job. ~~But along with that, I always encouraged the women... [End tape 1, side 1]~~  
 # #

~~[unclear]~~

~~Benedict:~~ Well, one of the things that I realized that was so absolutely necessary was that the women needed to know the general organization of their Republican ~~Party~~--or Democratic ~~Party~~, as far as that goes--whatever party they were affiliated with. In this case, I was working with the Republican women. And they needed to know what the state organization was, what the divisions were, what the county organization was, and how their work should be integrated into the all-over plans and policies of the official organization. Of course, that was pretty difficult because many of our [laughs] dear <sup>women</sup>--bless their hearts--~~but~~ as far as they were concerned, the Republican Women's Club was all there was to it, you know. And it had to be related into the campaigns <sup>and</sup> really integrated completely as far as possible.

<sup>P</sup> It was necessary that they would realize, for instance, there was a county central committee, regardless of how weak it was, ~~or what~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~But~~ that was, officially, the head of the Republican activities in their own county. And on the state level, it was the same thing. The county had to tie in under the state program and direction. And then, of course, the national committee. And by the very fact their membership is set up in state laws, there are only a certain



Benedict: number that serve on, for instance, the county committee. And they are elected from the different Assembly districts. Well, what is an Assembly district? (Etc, etc.) I mean it just was elemental. But when you had a county central committee, it was very small, and they couldn't possibly fill all the places, all the responsibilities of campaigning in the districts, in the precincts, and so on. And that ~~there~~ was the place for them to be active. And so on and so on.

~~It~~ It was very illuminating when you really got right down into it. So I finally made out charts for them.

Stein: Ah!

Benedict: [Laughs] Oh, yes, I did lots of things. But realizing the necessity of a natural place to go for campaign power, or people, it was very obvious that more <sup>local</sup> organizations had to be organized--volunteer organizations. So ~~I knew~~ besides building the one in Berkeley, I was very active in doing what I could to organize new ones in other parts of the county and where there were a few very small ones, to bolster those considerably. So I guess you could say that I went out to do some real organization work. But that's the only way you're going to get things going.

~~Then~~ Then we had the potential of the Young Republicans. Theoretically, there was always the Young Republican organization, but find them sometimes, you know? So I worked very closely with the group on campus and some that had graduated, of course, ~~and~~ or didn't attend the university, and we really did quite a bit with young Republicans. In a couple of instances, they became so interested in campaigning that then the high school chaps wanted to be included, so I took them in, too. [Laughs]



Benedict: <sup>P</sup> But then here in California, we had the complication of cross-filing. Of course, that was a complete mystery to every other state. I had always had questions on that later on. But that had to be explained, as to what it really meant and what, as Republicans, they still needed to do.

<sup>J</sup> We had with the cross-filing and all this other complication, you know, the organization developed that was completely separate, and that was the Republican Assembly. And that really started here in Alameda County, primarily because there ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> a group of young men who wanted some change in leadership, and they decided that the way to go at it was to build some candidates--pick out some candidates and build them. Didn't make any difference about anything else, that was their purpose. They were not interested, primarily, in the party as a whole. But they were going to do that. And they were, as I say, entirely independent. They were not included in the all-over party organization in those years. Now they are recognized as an adjunct to the Republican Party organization. But not until quite recently has that happened. But there they were ~~eager~~ <sup>eager</sup>, great potential, and they were willing to really get in and campaign and work and help put money in and so on. ~~■~~

Some way or other, we had to have something coordinated.

<sup>J</sup> ~~Bo~~ T The Republican Assembly grew quite fast throughout--well, state-wide. Not in every county, but it was not just located right here, although they were really instrumental in getting it going. So I used to work with them, too. I was <sup>a</sup> member, ~~of them~~, and I was <sup>in</sup> the chairman of one of their units here, Berkeley because they didn't have anyone else to bring it up, so I did, along with the other things, because to me, all of these things had to go



Benedict: together. You can't go in all directions and come out with a net result. I was on the County Central Committee, you see, here, too. And in that way I worked around, trying to bring things together ~~always~~ <sup>I worked</sup> with the women as well as the men, but always urging more organization of the Republican women. They're the ones who had the time to go out and do a lot of these things, as volunteers, ~~you know.~~

Anyway, when I really got in and got those things started, why naturally it was logical that I would be appointed to the State Central Committee, and I was, back in '44. I noticed the appointment dated '44 as I was going through papers. I couldn't remember how long ago it was, but it was then.

Stein: Who appointed you?

Benedict: It was <sup>State</sup> Senator Arthur Breed. That was his paper that I just happened to thumb over. I've got stacks of files and papers that I have brought up <sup>[from the basement files]</sup> and I'm kind of weeding them through and [laughs] I've got to <sup>go</sup> through <sup>things</sup> -- I've got them all mixed up again.

Anyway, That, I'm sure, was '44, ~~because I didn't start in that,~~ ~~you see, until '75.~~ <sup>3</sup> I guess it was that I went in ~~in '44~~ that I started ~~with the organization that was, right.~~ Of course, I became then interested first-hand <sup>in</sup> the problems of the statewide organization, although I respect <sup>it</sup> for what it theoretically did.

Then I became very active in other areas within Northern California, in encouraging the organization and growth of the organization, primarily of the Republican women's clubs and Young Republicans. ~~and I~~ <sup>helped with organizing</sup> ~~through that~~ and campaigning, because here locally, I was particularly interested that we ~~all~~ pitch in and do a real job for not only our immediate California <sup>[state]</sup> candidates, but also for Congress and the U.S. Senator. So I was active in the campaign that we had, filling





Congressman  
Allen, Jr. - 1946

*Managing the Winning Campaign*

Benedict: in the local offices. Then the one that I really took charge of completely was the one for the election of John J. Allen, Jr. in 1946. I had set up the office, the headquarters, and ran it for that Congressional district. I can't recall the name of the Democratic candidate, but he was in those years very liberal. He wouldn't be considered particularly liberal now, [laughs] I don't believe, but he was then, as far as our thinking was concerned.

Republican and Democratic

offices ~~and~~ headquarters were in the same building. It was kind of interesting that added interest, too. But we had a very interesting situation, where Professor <sup>[Peter] Odegard</sup>, who was

Odegard

a very dedicated Democrat and a very outgoing person, invited the <sup>me and</sup> Clara Shirpser, <sup>or</sup> national committeewoman to come in, ~~and~~ <sup>our</sup> representatives from ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup>

~~Democrats~~, to speak to the class in political science that he was giving. I always stuck to organization and functions. I never got into issues, because I didn't think that was particularly the place for partisan politics in that way in classes--unless they were going to have a <sup>session</sup> particular where it was all going to be-- they were on that basis.

Anyway, he decided that he would like to have some of his students serving not only in the Democratic headquarters, but also in the Republican headquarters. So he gave them their choice, and he called me afterwards and said he had so many that wanted to be <sup>in</sup> headquarters. So I said I'll be very glad, but they will each have a personal interview, which I will have with each one who wishes to--[laughs] I wasn't going to have any double-crossing--and they ~~they~~ would have instructions. It's really education in campaigning. They will have a full range of experience, and at the end of the cam-

headquarters



Benedict: paign, I would like to have a report from them. He was floored.  
 [Laughs ] So anyway, he agreed, and we made appointments. ~~for~~ I said, "I'll set aside time, because I want to know each one individually that I work with." And much to my surprise, because I hadn't anticipated it all, there were more who wanted to come and work in that campaign than in the Democrat campaign. I don't know, it was very strange.

Stein: About how many students did you have working with you on the Republican campaign? Was it about a dozen, or ---

Benedict: ~~No~~, it was more than that. It was more than that. Probably about twenty. And each one came in, and we had a good conversation and went over things, and I got the chance to ~~kind of~~ know them. ~~to~~  
 Whenever there were different things to do, after we got into the campaign, I would go over/<sup>it</sup>with them all, I mean the Young Republicans and the students from his class. Some of them were Republicans and some of them weren't. So that they would have the advantage of being with some of the Young Republicans who had campaigned with me before, they would be teamed. I always had two together. I never sent one out alone. Usually it was in teams, and particularly when there were new people that I didn't know, <sup>who</sup> and hadn't worked with ~~before~~ us, so they knew what to do. We would have our briefings and so on. That was how I got them going.

Every time that we would go out, when the time for actual precinct campaigning was concerned, we had everything outlined, so they had everything down pat for real campaign work--door-to-door, or whatever. After they would come back from a day like that--because we always did it on weekends, you see, for students--why, we would all get together. And I would serve donuts and coffee or something, you



Benedict: know, Coke or whatever it is they wanted. And usually, I would be able to have <sup>in the office</sup> one official from the Republican Party, maybe a congressman, maybe an assemblyman, or a state senator, or a chairman of something, ~~you know~~. So that they always had someone to meet and to hear from and mingle with. And that, of course, was one of the keys of keeping <sup>interest</sup> ~~things going nicely~~. We really had a great time, ~~and~~

¶ We won that campaign, and that was a new district that we had not had for some time. That was our district, so that was great. And then of course, <sup>they could be a part of the group</sup> on getting the returns ~~you know~~, and doing all these precinct jobs. <sup>So</sup> It was an all-around, step-by-step education. And I think everyone really should <sup>I have this experience</sup> because otherwise they don't know what in the world [laughs] the sum total of votes means, ~~you know~~.

¶ Anyway, ~~I~~ I was very much interested and surprised when this was all over and the reports went in to Mr. <sup>d</sup> Odegard from both headquarters. He just couldn't get over it. [laughs] He was so surprised. He said, "You have really just given a tremendous education to these <sup>students</sup> ~~---~~ They were all excited about it. It was fascinating, just fascinating. And he said, "You'll be interested to know that the reports from those in the Democratic headquarters were principally addressing envelopes, sticking on stamps, stuffing envelopes, and that type of thing." So it really was very, very interesting <sup>and rewarding</sup> <sup>[laughter]</sup> Well, that made history <sup>ne</sup> along with other things, ~~the way~~ <sup>¶</sup> So it was more or less natural, in a way, that my time would be spread out to go into other areas, other districts, other than my own, Alameda County. And I did do a good deal in encouraging organizations of all segments of the party. And we got really a lot of organization going among the



Benedict:

women and the Young Republicans throughout Northern California, and  
of course as I went on, in <sup>other</sup> ~~the~~ areas, too. And because I was doing it  
here, some of the Central Valley and Southern California, of course,  
would want me to come down there and speak to their groups or help  
them out, and I did. I mean, after all, <sup>anything</sup> that could be done was  
part of the sum total. And so I was with the ~~State Central Committee--~~  
oh, I don't know--from then on. I was on the ~~State Central Committee~~  
through--I don't remember whether I accepted an appointment in '60  
or not. I might have, but I didn't accept anything after that. I  
said, "Let the others do it," because I had had more than my share,  
and I wanted to do other things. I would still be active, ~~but in~~  
~~the way in which I was.~~





# II Marjorie Benedict: Republican National Committeewoman for California, 1948-1960

## Background and Special Political Considerations

# I worked closely with the Republican National Committeewoman for California, who lived in Berkeley. It was Jessie Williamson.

And we worked very differently, as far as that goes, but she was free, and <sup>had</sup> plenty of time, and she covered the state spasmodically.

She was a person—when a thing had to be done as far as the elections <sup>campaign</sup> or of the organization <sup>of</sup> elections <sup>campaign</sup> in the state—would really put her

shoulder right to the wheel and would go in for just plain hard politics and get those things done. She also would be available

for speaking to any of the organizations within the state. She attended all the meetins <sup>d</sup> of the Republican National Committee and

was very loyal in carrying out anything <sup>that those meetings</sup> ~~that that~~ entailed. And <sup>she</sup> ~~the convention~~ attended and always participated as a member of whatever committee

she was assigned to, because we were always assigned to/committees working for the conventions--I mean, all national committee members were.

So, on the convention—it's hard, because I go in so many different directions. Well, put it this way, and then I'll backtrack. In



Benedict: the convention of 1948, which was held in Philadelphia, if my memory is correct on that. I think it was.

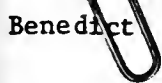
Stein: Yes, I think you're right. Yes, it was.

Benedict: She wanted me to go back with her, and she said, "I think you should go back; ~~and~~ I can't stay with this forever," and so on and so on. I said, "No, I'm not going back." First, frankly, I saw no reason why I should spend that much money to go back and just be uncomfortable. [Laughs ] In the hall and so on. I was very happy just to stay right here in the state and do the things I <sup>was</sup> doing. And I did not go back <sup>to the convention</sup>. There were plenty who wanted to go, as far as that goes. There're always too many, but she figured that I could really help her; ~~and~~, but I didn't go back.

~~ff~~ Now, I wanted to backtrack on the Republican Assembly because they had a very important part in bringing younger people into the state government, particularly, and also trying to get them into spots on the congressional level, too, but primarily in the state. And that was where Earl Warren, you see, came in, because he was here in Alameda County. Alameda County was the real hub of the Republican Assembly activities. They were determined to get some of the people they knew, some who would not be too conservative, would not be too liberal and who would be young enough to go through a couple of terms and do a good job, and so on and so on--be close to the people and all that type of thing.

~~ff~~ So, Earl Warren, of course, was our district attorney here, part of that time he was assistant, and so they were well acquainted with him, you see, through these steps, and ~~he~~ he was one of their men to promote. There were some others there, too, who came along, but their big interest was primarily <sup>in</sup> ~~on~~ the governorship. So that





... tied in definitely ~~was~~ with this period, and all of it really focused together, and we pulled all these things, you might say, more or less together, ~~and worked together on all of these things~~.  
~~Well, ...~~

Stein: Let me just ask you about the Republican Assembly. Who else besides Warren do you remember working with?

Benedict: Butch Powers was another. He was a lieutenant governor. Frank Jordan was one. He was more mature, but was one of the younger ones. Of course, they helped on John J. Allen because he was a newcomer, you see, coming in in those times, ~~and~~ I'll get my head thinking on some of the others in the state offices. They had Gardiner Johnson for the state legislature. ~~Thomas~~ <sup>Thomas</sup> (Tom) Caldecott came up with much of their support a little bit later. Not so much later, but--they all kind of tied in in these areas.

I ALSO REMEMBER [1942] THERE WAS A VACANCY FOR THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION FROM THIS DISTRICT [SECOND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT] SOME OF US ON THE STATE COMMITTEE HAD TO SELECT THE CANDIDATE, AND WE SELECTED JAMES H. QUINN. THE REPUBLICAN ASSEMBLY WAS VERY ACTIVE IN THAT CAMPAIGN. QUINN ALWAYS SAID THAT I'D BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ELECTION. HE WAS IN OFFICE FOR THREE TERMS.

Stein: Who were some of the local leaders of the CRA that you worked with? Maybe what I should do is plant that question, and next time--

Benedict: Yes, you should. Let me know ahead of time, so that I can go back, ~~because I had so many in so many ways~~--because I never intended to do anything like this. I just had all these memories just to enjoy [laughs] and never had any intention of ever even making up a diary of my own, or anything.

Stein: Well, I bet I can look up some of these in our files and see if I have some names.

Benedict: Oh yes, that'll be all right. Yes. So anyway, after that convention, of '48, we continued our work for the next presidential election then



Benedict: in '52. No, that isn't right...

Stein: Yes, '52 was the next race.

Benedict: Yes, that's right. <sup>52</sup> Fifty-two. That's right. And that '48 election never should have been lost, but it was. [Laughs]

Stein: Yes, that's a famous one.

Benedict: Yes, that certainly is a famous one, and I could tell they were just too cock-sure of it. They believed all of the polls, and there was nothing to do. I was on that committee for campaigns here, and then there were many requests from further north to have speakers come up into those <sup>rural</sup> districts, and the headquarters, "Oh, no, Marjorie. No, no. It isn't necessary to wear yourself out doing those things. It's a cinch. We don't have to worry."

# So people didn't go out into the districts, and they didn't do the work in their own districts, <sup>I remember</sup> ~~and as the~~ one who was the top person and very much the leader ~~of the~~ with the Republican Assembly and all of the "inner circles." "Oh," he <sup>said</sup> ~~says~~, "Marjorie, look at this." He <sup>said</sup> ~~says~~, "I've just gotten a whole new--isn't this a beautiful set of luggage, <sup>that</sup> and I'm going to take <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ my <sup>inaugural</sup> ~~inauguration~~ trip." I don't know what ever became of that luggage, but I was so furious because he just sat down on the job. "It wasn't necessary." "Look at this, Marjorie,"

"Look at this poll," you know. "Just in the bag." And, it was lost. So I was polite, but not too polite. When they had their meetings afterwards to see what happened, they realized, with a little help, what <sup>had</sup> happened. Well, anyway, ~~so~~ then it was ~~really~~ a real build-up job from then on.

# And it was at this '48 convention, on the national committeewoman's return home that she died. ~~at~~ That's where everything started hap-





Benedict: pening. Because that was just before a very important election, ~~consider~~, and we were having a State Central Committee meeting very soon after that. ~~And the logical thing was to elect in~~ ~~fact, it wasn't~~ logical. All the <sup>party</sup> officers were up for election, at ~~You~~ their annual meeting. So a ~~national~~ national committeewoman would have to be selected, *there was no question that Jessie Williamson would have been reselected* Well, ~~there were two ways to go.~~ The policy of California was to rotate North and South. ~~and~~ The national committeeman had been appointed to fill a vacancy about a year before, and they were practically obligated to carry him on for a full term. And he was an excellent man. That was Mac[Intyre] Faries. It was logical, then, *(after the death of Jessie Williamson that the new)* ~~it would be~~ national committeewoman ~~from~~ *would be from* Northern California. ~~and~~ There were women in Southern California who would like to have had it go ~~to~~ to Southern California. There were several who were more or less ready—and I'm sure you have the names of two or three of them—and yet, that was the pattern. So someone had to be elected from Northern California.

*Well*, they approached me immediately. That is, those who usually took care of those things for suggestions and so on and handled nominations and did most of the work. Well, I thought I just



Benedict: couldn't do it. I didn't want to do it; I shouldn't be away that much, and I certainly did not want to spend that much money. I'd rather work, do all my volunteer work here. Well, I soon found out that many of them had their transportation paid for and their major long-distance telephone calls and so on.

Stein: By whom?

Benedict: By the party. The State Central Committee. So I said, "Well, that would make it easier, but I don't want it anyway."  
We went up to the State Central Committee meeting, and--ohh! Everybody was campaigning in little knots, you know, around the place. And so they were still having much pressure--I was--to let them put my name up for nomination. I said, "Absolutely no. I don't want it. I'm in too many things. I'd rather stay where I am. I'll keep working as a volunteer, and I'll keep doing what I can to win elections and keep building." But I did not feel that I wanted to do the other. That would be unfair to my family and unfair to me and everything else.

# So up to the very last minute [laughs]--and they left that for the last office to be elected. They went through everything else, and then they postponed it to the next morning. When they went back to the meeting, no, I still would not do it. I didn't get any sleep that night. So then they finally decided--all the officers and the office holders, meaning the elected officers in the legislature, in state office, and local ones and all, decided the only thing to do was to have the election postponed, because they simply would not accept the ones that were self-propelled candidates from Northern California. <sup>They feel</sup> That they would not have a cooperative organization, and it just wouldn't work. ~~And when you get each~~



Benedict:

IT WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED BECAUSE PRO-AMERICA THOUGHT IT WAS THEIR CHANCE TO GET IN, BLESS THEIR HEARTS. BUT THE REPUBLICAN PARTY ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FUNCTION WITH THESE PEOPLE AT THE HEAD OF THE PARTY.

ain:

Well, I was going to ask you what Pro-America was doing.

Benedict:

Well, they were very busy. Very busy. And Pro-America, in its own type of organization, did a great deal. They did a good deal financially. They made generous financial contributions to candidates and their campaigns that they were really supporting. They were more conservative than the over<sup>all</sup> party organization and played such limited favorites that there would be so many who would be outside of their sphere of coordinated work that I'll admit, it would have been hectic to try to have a real Republican organization, because they were not really recognized as an official <sup>organization within the</sup> Republican Party, because they really weren't. And yet, they had memberships, you see. They had their own organizations, and some of their individuals were members of the Republican Party organizations, ~~and~~ because some of our people who received their backing--and were fine people, of course, appointed people to membership of the State Central Committee, as you know. And so they could always rely on the fact that a number of them would be members of the State Central Committee and the County Central Committees, which was all right. But they had, as I say, their own, closely-knit type of operation. ~~and~~ many of them I knew personally, and we got along fine as individuals. There ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> two or three that [laughs] we certainly disagreed <sup>with</sup> on most



everything. But anyway, this whole thing was left up in the air, because we had to concentrate on the campaign, ~~you see~~. Let's see, the meetings were held in August, as I remember.

July or August.

ICT: IT'S EITHER JULY OR AUGUST. I'M NOT SURE NOW WHICH MONTH IT WAS. BUT IN THE END THERE WAS A COMPROMISE. I AGREED THAT I WOULD CARRY ON THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEEWOMAN AS FAR AS OUR CAMPAIGN WAS CONCERNED IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, AND JEAN FULLER AGREED TO FOLLOW THROUGH IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WHERE SHE HAD ALWAYS DONE MUCH CAMPAIGNING. SHE WAS A GOOD ORGANIZER AND REALLY HAD A GOOD GRASP OF ~~and~~ POLITICAL SAVVY. ~~and~~ FUNCTIONING. IF THE COMMITTEEWOMAN COULD HAVE COME FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA I'VE NO DOUBT THAT SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN ELECTED. SO THE ELECTION WAS POSTPONED. I STILL HAD NOT AGREED TO TAKE THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE POST, ONLY THAT I'D CARRY ON THE DUTIES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

TO GO BACK TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND EXPLAIN SOME OF THESE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS. THEY AGREED THAT THE BEST THING TO DO WAS TO POSTPONE THE ELECTION ON THE BASIS THAT WE WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING UNTIL AFTER THE NATIONAL ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT TAKE A CHANCE OF DISRUPTING THAT CAMPAIGN. SO THE TWO OF US, JEAN FULLER, AND I WERE TO CARRY ON. THAT WASN'T MENTIONED AT THE TIME BUT THAT WAS PART OF THE PLAN AND THE REASON BEHIND IT.





dict:

~~So that was agreed upon by the meeting at the State Central Committee.~~

They did [laughs] a lot ~~to~~ to work it out so it would ~~work out~~ <sup>be acceptable</sup>

After all, some of those people—they were all member of the legislature, you know, and they knew how to maneuver, as well as many others who

know the ways of parliamentary procedure and so forth. So it was postponed until the first <sup>meeting</sup> of the State Central Committee after the presidential election in '48 ~~the national election.~~

That was in January, wasn't it? I don't remember.

dict:

Well, the national committee meeting was in January. Now, I'll have to look up and see whether the State Central Committee was held in December or the first part of January. I'll have to check back on that.

dict:

Okay. *But that is in the public records, so you needn't see, get it.*

dict:

It seems to me it was in December because the election, you <sup>see,</sup> was in early November. Yes, I'm sure it was before January. I'm sure.

~~I'll have to look that back up, when we had that ~~meeting.~~~~

dict:

My notes indicate a couple of names of women who, I guess, wanted also to be elected national committewoman. Mrs. A. H. Robertson, from Sacramento, Mrs. Leroy Johnson, from Stockton, and Mildred Prince.

dict:

Yes. And Barbara Whitaker from Santa Barbara.

dict:

Oh, Barbara Whitaker. She was a big Pro-America lady, wasn't she?

dict:

You bet she was, ~~and~~. Yes indeed. She was very, very active. And she had very strong beliefs and backed them up completely. And she also was not only Pro-America, but she joined the Republican Women's Club there in Santa Barbara so



Benedict: that she could work the two together, as far as possible.

Stein: I notice the tape is about to run out here, and it's getting late, and you've been going a long time. So maybe we should call it quits for today.

Benedict: I thought that that was probably a good place to stop.

Stein: That's a good place to break, and next time we'll pick up any of the loose ends here and talk more about <sup>what</sup> you did as committeewoman.

Benedict: Yes, we'll get <sup>into</sup> the committeewoman. Well, in the meantime, you can just realize that there was a great deal of work going on, and all of these people who <sup>were</sup> interested in being national committeewoman--I wasn't among them [laughs].

Stein: Well, we've covered quite a bit of ground today, very well.

Benedict: Yes, we really did. I think we did.

Stein: Then next time, we can carry on. Is next Thursday a good time?

Benedict: Yes, we can do next Thursday, I think. I expect to stay up and-- oh, I get so cross with myself--I've crossed off everything for next week except this, except the tape recording. I haven't gotten to income tax or any of those things yet.

Stein: Oh, no!

Benedict: Yes. I think it's two weeks from today that I cannot do it, and I've got symphony again.

Stein: That's okay. And next week I'll have to leave promptly at four. I have an appointment back in the City at five. That'll be no problem because we can start right in next <sup>time</sup>.

Benedict: Yes. I have no idea what time it is now. It must be real late.

Stein: Close to five.

Benedict: Oh, my goodness! ~~[unclear]~~

HH



~~Interview with Marjorie Benedict~~

~~Date of Interview:~~ March 9, 1970 ~~o.k.~~

~~Interviewer: Miriam Stein~~

~~Transcriber: Bob McCargar~~

~~[Begin tape 1, side 1]~~

Stein: I think where we were going to start this time was, you were going to tell me a little about some of the other women who wanted to become national committeewoman. I had a couple of names in my outline here

Benedict: Mildred Prince was one.

Stein: Mildred Prince was one of them.

Benedict: She was the main one, yes.

Stein: And Mrs. Leroy Johnson and Mrs. A. H. Robertson.

Benedict: Yes. <sup>Now</sup> Well, of course Mrs. Robertson was from Sacramento, and she could have qualified geographically, but there was not sufficient support for her to really be the designated nominee for Northern California. But she was a very able person and had served in various capacities. We had all worked together, definitely, in our women's activities, primarily on the State Central Committee and then in her own county. And she was very capable, but she was not sufficiently active, really, throughout the state and with some of the broader responsibilities, according to most of the people who were trying to decide who could follow through

And Mrs. Leroy Johnson really, as far as I know, was not particularly active at all, as far as wanting to be the national committeewoman. Leroy Johnson, of course, was



Benedict: very active in the political field, and they did a great many things together. So I think that was probably just a little flier. I don't believe that was really serious. It didn't come to my attention that she was at all serious on that. # But the main person that Pro-America was anxious, you see, to have <sup>in</sup> that position ~~of being a member of the~~ <sup>on the</sup> national committee, <sup>was Mildred Prince.</sup> Mildred Prince was a very capable person, but she had not really worked sufficiently with the party organization as a whole, and the official Republican women's organization, which was a part of the national Republican Party organization. The Republican women's clubs had made the transition from being <sup>the</sup> California Council of Republican women to the Republican Women's Club, Federated, which was ~~officially~~ <sup>official</sup> part of the ~~Republican~~ Republican Party organization, ~~and~~ They had a definite office with the National Committee, in Washington, D. C. And there was an executive director of women's activities. # They were, just prior to this time, trying to get all of these independent Republican women's organizations, statewide or even less, into one, main, overall organization, where there would be some unanimity in the type of educational material, of real meetings that were practical, would be supportive of the general Republican National Committee policies and financing, and so on.

# So, Jessie Williamson, and I, <sup>to a lesser</sup> ~~at a lesser~~ degree, were cooperating with the National Committee to help make that transition <sup>by</sup> ~~from~~ our bringing the California Council of Republican Women in as an integral part of the National Federation of Republican Women, ~~and~~ that took quite a little period of time, ~~and~~





Benedict: because, of course, it meant changing the names of the organization, which is always a hard thing to do. But generally speaking, most of that organization could be really brought right into the national women's organization on a full basis, without much disruption. ~~and~~ Of course, they were strengthened a great deal by doing so, rather than being completely just state-wide in their scope and in their direction, ~~and all~~

# ~~she~~ Marian Martin was the executive director of the women's activities there at the Republican National Committee headquarters. She was a very able person. As I remember, she had had legal status and was excellent in trying to pull this whole reorganization throughout the United States, ~~really~~. And California was, of course, a large part of that operation. It, in effect, was completed before Jessie Williamson's death.

~~It was~~ All of the work had been done, and we were really working on very well then as a federated organization, <sup>federated with</sup> ~~the~~ the official Republican organization.

# ~~and~~ Of course, one of the advantages of that, that they thought very important, was not to have individual, independent organizations going in all different directions. And of course, here in California, we had the cross-filing. So it was a little difficult to know just who was who and where they were going, ~~you know~~. And of course, that was something that Pro-America was very much <sup>opposed to</sup> ~~interested in~~, because they did believe very <sup>straight Republican</sup> of course, strongly in policies. Nationwide, the cross-filing just puzzled everyone. They would say, "Well, how do you know where your voters are? How do you know who to work with and <sup>what</sup> to do?" We explained



Benedict: what we had <sup>as our electoral method,</sup> ~~was~~ whether we liked it or not. That was what we had to live with and had to work with. ~~It~~ <sup>It</sup> Of course, the Republican Assembly--and I'll go back to that, you see-- that was primarily a candidate-finding group and candidate promotion group, <sup>That group</sup> ~~which~~ worked right in very nicely with the cross-filing. ~~It~~ <sup>Of</sup> course, they were until rather recent years, definitely an independent organization, ~~and for many years was not even,~~ shall I say, they were recognized as an independent organization, <sup>not</sup> ~~but~~ as one that was completely identified <sup>with</sup> the State Central Committee and the party organization headquarters and so on, although there was always informal coordination. They did not really become an integral part of the financial picture, on the all-over party basis until quite recently, and they were financially independent, so that they could do what they wanted to do in finding candidates and promoting them. And they did a great job in the way in which they wanted to operate ~~and it was~~ because they wanted to bring in new blood and find younger candidates and promote them, ~~and so on.~~ <sup>In addition they</sup> ~~They did not do that~~ and did their own type of precinct work and campaign work, which was quite different than the tried and true type of campaign work. But you'd find them with memberships in all of the various organizations, and I was a member of it for many years, too, along with my regular party organization work and served as chairman of one of the Republican Assembly organizations <sup>the 18th assembly district</sup> here in Berkeley for a short period of time, rather than let it die out, because they were having difficulty at that time in keeping that one particular one going.

<sup>the CRA</sup> But ~~that~~ was a very worthwhile organization, and they were very, very active back in Governor Warren's period. He was one of



Benedict: their chosen candidates, whom they were promoting. And of course, there were quite a few people who felt that Governor Warren was much too liberal, and there were some in the Pro-America group who certainly agreed with that. And there were times that as the period went on, they--or many Republicans--seemed to feel that Governor Warren was increasingly taking a more liberal position in government. So there was a natural--not split within the party, completely, but definitely different opinions as who should be who, etc.

But Pro-America members were very sincere in their work, and they were well-financed. Some were really <sup>of them</sup> ~~of~~ the very social San Francisco and Monterey area--that is, Pebble Beach area--and Santa Barbara area. And they did a job. There's no question about it. And Mildred <sup>Prince</sup> was very effective in many ways. And there were times that she was the speaker at the Republican clubs--the federated clubs--and she was a member of the State Central Committee. Many of them, rightly, were members of the State Central Committee and some of the county committees. So it seemed to be a time when they maybe could have the national committeewoman spot.

Stein: So what did she do to try to get it?

Benedict: Well, <sup>they</sup> ~~it was~~, as far as ~~of course~~, I ~~on the outside~~--really put on quite <sup>an active</sup> a campaign. ~~And~~ Of course, some of their husbands were very influential, and so they campaigned for votes among the members of the State Central Committee, ~~you see~~, who would be voting at that meeting, when it was to be decided.

I don't know <sup>the entire story</sup> I refused to get mixed up in it, because I don't like that type of thing. So I heard a good many things second or third hand--which I wouldn't repeat, at all. ~~I~~ I know that some of them worked very, very hard--I'll put it that way--in



Benedict: whatever <sup>way</sup> they could. <sup>of</sup> course, because of the work that I had been doing right along with all of our organizations statewide, as a member of the state central committee and <sup>because I was</sup> personally active with the federated clubs from way back-- ~~but~~ I naturally had many who were supporting me. <sup>So</sup> ~~but~~ they all did the work. I didn't. And the legislators were very strong supporters of mine too, apparently, ~~because~~ I knew <sup>many of</sup> them of course, <sup>because</sup> they were all on the State Central Committee.

Stein: And is that how they knew of your work? Through the state central committee?

Benedict: Yes, and the work in the clubs and the campaigning and all, you see. This was just two years after I had won--I had taken charge of the congressional campaign here in this area, which took in most of Oakland and Berkeley, ~~and so on~~, and Piedmont. And we won the seat for John J. Allen, Jr. Well, <sup>we put</sup> that district, <sup>held by</sup> into the Republican column--it had been <sup>a</sup> Democratic congressman ~~and that~~, ~~was that that I had~~

That was a very intensive campaign here in this district, ~~where~~ where I brought the various organizations together for their campaign work, including the Young Republicans and some of the people from Professor Odegard's political [laughs] <sup>science</sup> class. And we really--I guess we made history, political history, with that campaign, <sup># I was known too because</sup> ~~because~~ I had done a lot of organizing of Republican women's clubs, because I felt that that was very, very important all the way through. And I did a good deal of speaking and helping to organize those organizations in not only just Northern California, but, if I was asked to go, into Central California or Southern California, I would always try to accommodate, because





Benedict: it was needed.

Stein: That's what it sounds like. YOU were travelling all over.

Benedict: Well, I really was.

Stein: What did you see the function of the women's groups, as differentiated from, let's say, the Republican Assembly?

Benedict: Well, the Republican Assembly had their own policies, period. They <sup>had</sup> their very carefully thought out bylaws. They were incorporated as a separate organization and <sup>had papers</sup> filed <sup>in</sup> the Secretary of State <sup>office</sup> in Sacramento. So that they were entirely--~~from organization~~ financially and otherwise--they were definitely independent, you see. But it's only because we all more or less worked together that there was a good deal of overlapping through individuals. ~~the Republican Assembly,~~ <sup>also,</sup> you see, could endorse in primaries or before the primaries, even. ~~the~~

~~The~~ The Republican women, or any official Republican organization, was not supposed to. And of course, <sup>we had to operate</sup> on the basis that it was an obligation ~~for them~~ to support wholeheartedly, vigorously, etc., the party's nominee for the general election, ~~you see~~. And particularly with women--and I'm sorry to say it, but particularly with women--because they had <sup>had</sup> not much real political experience, from a practical point of view, <sup>it was often</sup> ~~and it was~~ very difficult. ~~They~~ They would want to have very strong opinions ~~for~~ before the primary, and then it was so difficult/for them to realize that they had to pull back together, ~~you see~~, for the general campaign, whether it was national or state<sup>n</sup>wide, or just in local areas, with the <sup>n</sup> assembly districts and senatorial districts. ~~And it was not~~ Even though the candidates do not always



Benedict: meet all of your own requirements of a perfect representative, for your ideals or principles, still, if that's the person who is nominated, it's incumbent upon you to support that person. And those are things that <sup>the</sup> women had to learn, the hard way, many times. ~~That's~~ <sup>That's</sup> one reason that I did a great deal of speaking and explaining some <sup>of</sup> the simple A-B-C's of campaigning, of personal activities within the party structures, and so on. Because it's the only way to have a united enough strength to win elections. And then, <sup>I tried to get them</sup> to follow through in supporting that candidate after election. ~~Many~~ <sup>Many</sup> times, if there are some things that should be modified in some of his positions, you can work with him after election, without breaking up a situation.

~~So~~ ~~with the many necessary types of organization~~ it was natural that the legislators and the party organization would want to have someone who would have the broader political sense and <sup>had</sup> demonstrated work in that area, or within those bounds, to have representing them or working with them in the future, in the campaigns that were coming up and building. ~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> really was just one of those things, ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> me it wasn't a personal thing, as far as I was concerned. I refused to let it be that. So I said very frankly, as I told you before, I did not want to be the national committeewoman. I much preferred to stay in my own district and continue doing what I was doing because it was very interesting and quite satisfying, and <sup>it meant</sup> staying within the state. ~~I~~ I kept refusing it, and the election was postponed, and I think wisely so under the circumstances, because it would have been very easy to have had quite a split at a very crucial period.



Benedict:

~~As it was, I guess maybe there still was, but there was a cer-~~  
~~tain amount of [unclear] quite inexcusable~~  
~~in some [unclear] of [unclear] right along on~~  
~~the [unclear].~~

Well, of course, that <sup>presidential</sup> election, as you know, was a great surprise and shouldn't have been that way.

So it was all the more important that real party organization had to go on right down in the grass roots, and that was what I was doing. <sup>Finally, after continued pressure, I agreed to be nominated for national committee woman.</sup>

Stein: I just found, in my notes, that your election was reported in the San Francisco papers at the end of November. November 26, it was in the paper.

Benedict: Oh good. Thank you, because I hadn't come across it, and I was sure that it was not later than December. November 26. I'm glad. I'm going to write that down because I'll remember then. I know I have it in my files someplace, but I'm delighted that you came across that.

Stein: It was a news clipping in the San Francisco News of November 26, <sup>the</sup> 1948. So probably, the meeting was / day before.

Benedict: Yes, it would have been. Well, that was fine. That was ~~really~~ a real experience, that day was.

Stein: How so? Tell me about it.

Benedict: Very tense. [laughs.] But I just felt--well, I didn't know what was going to happen, really, although they say, "Now, don't worry. You <sup>know</sup> perfectly well there are lots of people working." That was what I knew, but anyway, the meeting was held, and there was a feeling of ~~tension~~ <sup>tension</sup> there, and I certainly wasn't [laughs] too confident about anything. ~~but when the ballots [unclear] of~~ course, this was a special meeting, so that was the only <sup>item</sup> ~~subject~~.



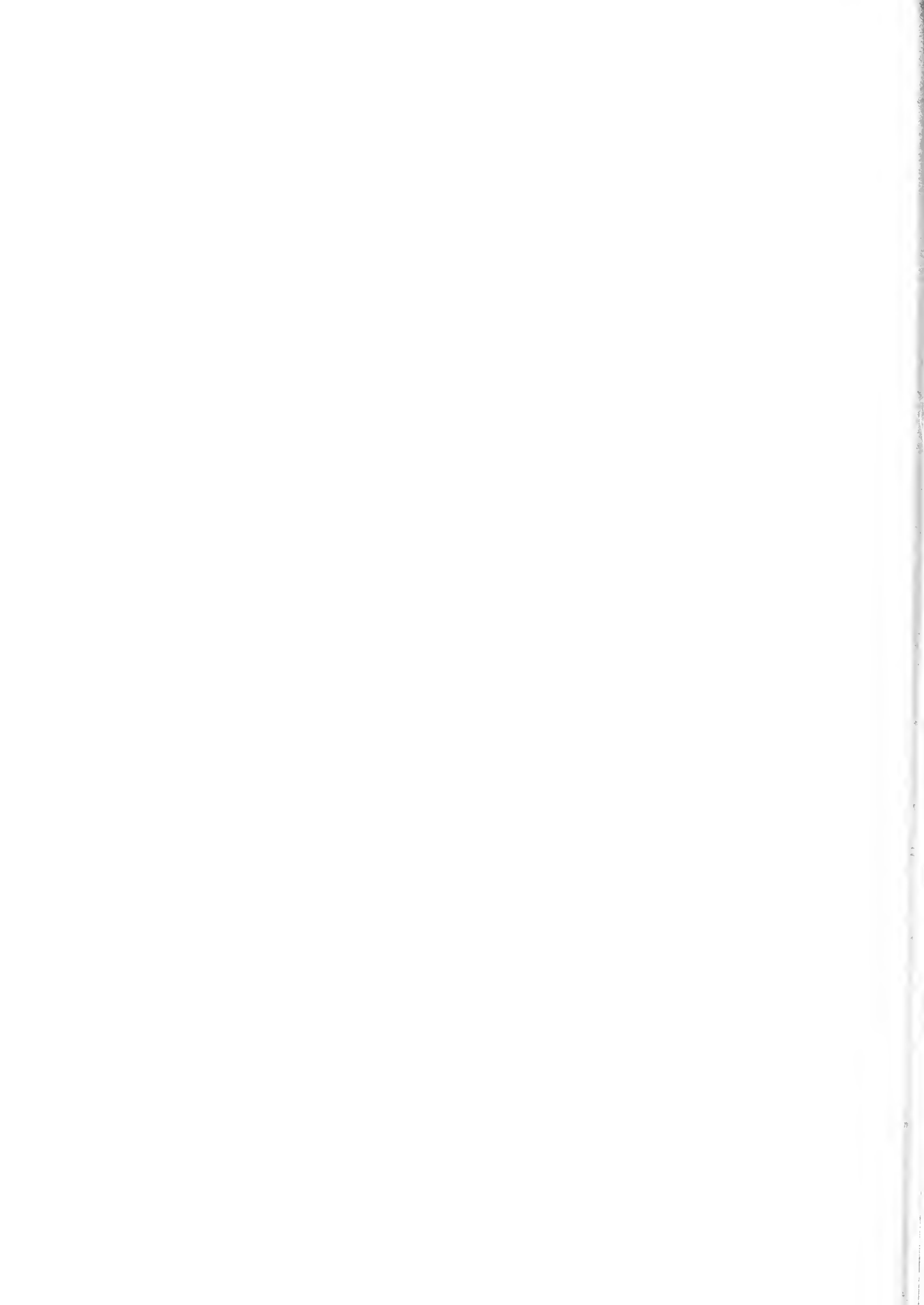
Benedict: <sup>on the agenda</sup> ~~you see, that was covered~~. And so the election was <sup>held</sup> ~~taken~~. And there was one person in Monterey County--and this must have been a little personal conflict and competition in that county because there was a strong Pro-America support in that area, and I wish I could remember the name of the man <sup>2</sup>--I will think of it sometime--who was really a very fine person in Pebble Beach, who would do anything, of course, to support the Pro-America, and that meant to work against me, which was all right. <sup>P</sup> But there was <sup>/</sup> Dudley Swim that I was absolutely amazed at because he was practically a--I shouldn't say it, but--most enthusiastic. If it was in college, you'd say he was a "rah-rah" boy [laughs] you know, <sup>js</sup> but full of pep. ~~And~~ <sup>U felt strongly he was on</sup> ~~he was going to be on~~ the winning side, <sup>along with the leadership of the Republican Women's Federation</sup> and he evidently did a lot of work. As I say, I kept out of it. I don't know who did what.

~~Laughs~~ <sup>Laughs</sup> ~~But I kind of put together to some extent--~~. But he was so excited, and keeping the tally of the votes, and you could tell, you know, You'd see these expressions, and you'd know some that you might wonder about. But anyway, when the votes were tallied, I had a good majority, ~~and~~ I really don't remember; ~~and~~ I must have it someplace, <sup>if</sup> and/I find it, I'll let you know what that vote actually was. But <sup>it</sup> was enough of a majority so that that was fine.

It was no question. But he was so excited, in fact quite a few were, that they really had a celebration. And they picked me up and carried me as [laughs] though I was practically a football hero. I'M SURE BY NOW YOU REALIZE THAT THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WAS AT THE CROSSROADS IN THIS ELECTION. MY ELECTION WASN'T JUST FOR ME AS MARJORIE BENEDICT BUT FOR POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION. I REALIZED THAT TOO. <sup>P</sup> Well, my husband didn't

oppose this. He knew that I didn't want it, and he appreciated that, but as long as it was in, of course, he was interested.

But he questioned very much whether I really should be taking it on,





Benedict: because he said, "I don't think you can take the rough-and-tumble and the criticism, the things that happen in politics." Well, of course I had observed plenty along the line, but anyway, he ~~says~~ <sup>said</sup>, "That'll bother you. You're too sensitive, and too sincere in the the things you do."

# But I figured that any opposition is usually because of a difference in principle, and not a personal criticism. There're some, of course. You always have some. So I did. I let it shed [it] off. It didn't bother me. And I found that helped a great deal over the years in being in that spot. But there was a big celebration, as far as that goes. I mean, they were all very, very pleased, and I certainly was relieved, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> I got to work right away, and we started in to build, and I said, "We're going to work, and we're going to win." And that was sort of a--almost a logo that I used right through, because it was work and organization, and then we would <sup>win</sup>. And we did, in the fifties. And I did <sup>a</sup> tremendous amount of organization work during ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> first two years, all through the state.

Stein:

*Organization as National Committee member.*  
This was mostly with women's groups, or ~~was~~?

Benedict: Yes. I really concentrated very definitely on the organization of women's groups and helped with the Young Republicans. ~~when~~ ~~was~~ I always tried to be ~~available~~ available, as far as time and energy could permit, to assist anyplace. And of course, I worked closely with the Republican Assembly all the way through. I didn't do any actual organizing for them, but whenever we could dovetail our works, why we worked right together, too. And when you're organizing in a county or a district, you have to pull



Benedict: everything together. So I did. I worked, definitely with that type of thing in mind, and building not only organization, but confidence among the officeholders, or people in governmental positions, so that there was a real liaison right through. I found that it ~~really~~ built ~~well~~ well. ~~And~~ And I was welcomed, very genuinely, by the members of the Republican National Committee, and there again, it was a turbulent time, because of the loss of the election. There were lots of machinations and so on, <sup>and some</sup> but I saw <sup>^</sup> real, real animosities that I hadn't expected to see anyplace, but you learn that it all works out. They all get together when <sup>they</sup> ~~you~~ have to, ~~and~~.

~~And~~ Hugh Scott was the chairman of the ~~National~~ Committee when I went on, and he was very controversial because of the loss of that election, of course, ~~and so on~~. So I decided I would feel my way around before [laughs] I tied myself into one group or another group.

~~But~~ <sup>C</sup> ~~in the meantime, Marian Martin had accepted--she was the director of the women's work in the~~ <sup>consolidation</sup> ~~changeover~~ of the women's organizations. ~~So when that was really completed, she accepted~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ appointment in the Department of Labor. And she was really a very capable person. As I said, she had legal background. ~~and~~...

Stein: Was she any relation to Joseph Martin?

Benedict: None at all.

Stein: Because there <sup>are</sup> enough Martins floating around.

Benedict: Yes, well, that's true. And of course, we had a Martin who was ~~County~~ Chairman of San Francisco, too, ~~you know~~. Yes, there're quite a few Martins in some other spots, <sup>also</sup> ~~too~~.



Benedict: But we stepped up some ~~of the~~ <sup>of the</sup> ~~recognition~~ recognition of the value of the women's organizations through the national committee members.

Stein: How did you do that?

Benedict: Well, simply in educating the men, many times. ~~Of course,~~ Of course, I was sort of a puzzle to many of the national committee members because <sup>although</sup> I didn't realize it at the time, ~~but~~ many of the national committeewomen did not get out and do the work that I did. They would function primarily as a liaison, you might say, and figured that their only time of activities was when they were getting ready for the national convention, and that was in effect the way their work was laid out in many of the states. And particularly in those states that had conventions clear down into the precincts, because there <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ varieties of party organization in the different states. <sup>It</sup> It was a real education just to be on the National Committee and find out how the different <sup>states</sup> ~~ones~~ functioned, ~~you know~~ ~~that~~. ~~Basically, we were all there as members, and some~~ The interesting part was some of the members of Congress put some pressure on that they wanted more organization "like Marjorie's out in California," ~~and so on~~. It worked along very nicely in getting more real direction, more cooperation from the National Committee, ~~and~~ After all, we were all there as members, and some of them, of course as I say, really were there pretty much in name. ~~Of course~~ Of course there ~~was~~ would be a reason from their own state that that's <sup>the</sup> way it was. But we did get a lot of real activity, <sup>and</sup> a lot of material out. <sup>It</sup> Betty Farrington was serving in the capacity of directing quite a bit of <sup>the women's</sup> ~~the national committee~~ activities, <sup>and</sup> through the National Federation of Republican Women. Then we finally got a woman to represent the West, the ~~Western~~ area.









Benedict: of course in the <sup>West</sup> Western states, we found that none of the people in the ~~West~~ <sup>East</sup> had any idea how much federal ownership and control there was out here in the lands, ~~lands, and minerals, and water~~ <sup>and other natural resources</sup> ~~and so on and so on~~, or what we could do to educate them or to get them to understand that our problems were very different than those little states that are closely knit on the Atlantic Coast, for instance, or <sup>different from</sup> the more ~~casual~~ <sup>the</sup> "southern elegance," I think maybe it would <sup>be - - the</sup> ~~be~~ leisure of the Southern states. So it was a means of us all trying to ~~really~~ get together and understand each other.

*Organizing the National Woman's Conference*  
 Anyway, we moved on and on, and we can go on into some of those things later, but with it, of course, we continued to develop our recognition of the women's interest and activity by organizing, during Bertha Adkins's term, the women's national conferences, ~~that~~ <sup>They</sup> were not planned during the heat or the activity of the campaign, but at other times of the year, so that ~~they~~ <sup>the women</sup> could meet there in Washington, ~~and~~ <sup>We</sup> decided not to hold those in various parts of the United States, but to have them right there in Washington, where the women would have an opportunity to see their government in action, to meet their senators and their congressmen, or any cabinet members, or <sup>whomever</sup> ~~whoever~~ from their own states, and get acquainted, and also to let those people know that the women were among those present and active in their states. And it really developed into a very important phase of our Republican work.

Stein: You mentioned that you were working on this with Bertha Adkins also trying to educate the men in the national committee. What other women were working with you on this?



Benedict: Well, Ivy Baker Priest was another one, and we really teamed up exceedingly well on that. ~~Both~~ Oregon, ~~and~~ Washington and Nevada-- we were all together on much of this--and we had a very close liaison, really. Arizona was another; ~~and~~ we had great relationships. We really developed some very fine sharing of a program that we felt was important. And then of course, we could educate our own National Committee members, and our own state committees-- although here, they were pretty well aware [laughs] of us before, because we had been developing a great deal right here in California, of course, among our own. ~~I~~ I had no problem at all with our officials, our members in Congress, and our senators, and in the state legislature, and the governor's office, and so on. ~~The~~ ~~first~~ ~~time~~ ~~we~~ ~~went~~ ~~back~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ first women's conference back there, I'll tell you, there were a lot of eyes that were opened, ~~there~~.

Stein: How so?

Benedict: Well, they just hadn't realized. ~~When~~ <sup>When</sup> they saw all these women together, who wanted information, and <sup>was</sup> not just celebrating; I mean not just having parties or luncheons or what have you, whenever we had anything, we always had a speaker. We had something concrete, so to speak, that they were called upon to report to us, ~~to~~ to tell us what they needed and so on. And they ~~really~~ realized that we were active people and important to them in their own states. So after the first one, ~~they~~ they had learned a very big lesson, ~~really~~. And they were thrilled over it, most of them. They really were. They got so they ~~really~~ looked forward to them. ~~As~~ <sup>As</sup> far as California was concerned,



Benedict: I'd let them know ahead of time when it was scheduled, and believe me, they participated. And I always had a breakfast or a luncheon or a reception or some get-together for all of our California members of the Congress, the senators and ~~Congressmen~~, and any who were in the administrative <sup>office</sup> and of course there was a period when we had quite a number there in very high offices, and they were all included. I'd mix them up so we all got acquainted. ~~And~~ If it was a breakfast or a lunch, they'd be seated with the people from their district, so they couldn't escape. [laughs] It was a great opportunity for them to ~~really~~ get acquainted in a different way. And the wives--I always included the wives. It worked out, really, in a most interesting way. It really did. They ~~discussed~~ discussed issues; they discussed some of the legislation and some of the problems therein, and then any suggestions one way or another. Or they wanted to know how they could be more helpful to the women back here in getting out material to them and so on. It developed into a very fine program, as far as we were concerned. And it certainly helped in a lot of the states.

Stein: It sounds as though part of what was happening was that these conferences were disturbing, perhaps, or they were upsetting previously held ideas of what women were supposed to do.

Benedict: Yes, well it certainly gave quite <sup>a</sup> changing picture to them, yes. And it stimulated their thinking as to what was possible, and what was going on in some states or some areas, and the real potential there. ~~No~~, It worked out real well. Of course, there were always some that were problems. I mean, you'd get some [laughs] that didn't have much--I mean, among the women. But



Benedict: by and large, it really worked out ~~real~~ well.

Stein: A thought just occurred to me. One of the people who's been interviewed for our project is a woman who was very active in the Democratic Party, in the Democratic National Committee, and she helped organize a series of very similar conferences for Democratic women, and I wondered if in the Republican Party you were <sup>a</sup> aware of what the Democratic women were doing and if that served as ~~an~~

Benedict: Do you remember the year that that started?

Stein: It was in the 1930's, the late (30 s) that she was talking about.

Benedict: No, I don't know about that. No. I know that after I began organizing through the state with the Republican women's clubs, I got the word that I had stimulated the Democratic women's organizations, and they were really out to try to equal us. [laughs] So I was doing ~~an~~ organization work in the district. But no, I hadn't heard about the conferences.

Stein: I don't know how extensive they were.

Benedict: I don't know. I haven't any idea, and I never heard about them back there, which I'm surprised about. And I had lots of Democratic friends, but I never heard about <sup>those conferences</sup> ~~them~~ in any way.

Stein: Maybe ~~this~~ was in the late forties ~~they'd~~ stopped.

Benedict: I don't know. I haven't any idea. But I had the problem of being at such a great distance from Washington--we all did here in the West--it was terribly expensive for such a trip, ~~and~~ Many of the women had never been back to Washington, and it would be once in a lifetime for quite a portion of them. So I always wanted to make it more than worthwhile for them, and planned a great many





Benedict: extra trips for them that would be definitely educational. While we were back there, we always spent two or three extra days, and then we would take, for instance, a day at Philadelphia or <sup>a</sup> day going down the Potomac and going down into Virginia and so ~~and~~ ~~so~~ on Mt. Vernon. We would always have--for the entire conference, we always had an open house in the White House. ~~[End side 1]~~ H H

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ We're ready.

PH

~~SECRET~~ All right. ~~and~~ I always had a group of seats reserved for us in the Supreme Court, so they could get in there. And our former governor, Earl Warren, who was <sup>chief justice</sup> ~~the top man there, as you know,~~ was most cooperative. I always had a way of getting every one of our women <sup>in</sup> there to observe the very, very impressive session of the Supreme Court, ~~so~~ <sup>it in action.</sup> so they could say that they had been there and they had seen ~~some of it~~ Then we would go into some of the other historical and governmental buildings and areas, so that they would have more than just a casual trip that would be confined just to hotel rooms, ~~and so on, you know, the things~~ ~~were~~. And I <sup>always</sup> had arranged with their congressmen and senators that they had their passes, so that they would attend sessions of the Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate. So they got an all-over feel <sup>for</sup> of it, and even now I hear about some of those trips. It was really a lasting thing.

And another thing, I felt that these people who would go ~~to~~ to these conferences would bring back so much that was worth-  
 Republican women's  
 while that the/organizations would do well to really send a representative--usually the president, unless the president



Benedict: had been too many times, <sup>y</sup> and then ~~she~~ <sup>we</sup> help finance their transportation or their fees that were necessary back there.

That worked out real well, because they would put on maybe a little fund raiser--they were always raising funds anyway, you know, for campaigns or for their own things. So they really followed through ~~very~~ nicely on that. ~~And that~~ <sup>P</sup> one time we had, oh, about six or eight of our colored women from Southern California who went back, and that was a tremendous thrill, <sup>A</sup> tremendous. And they stayed <sup>(at)</sup> not the YWCA, but ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> a building, I've forgotten the name of it, that was named after a very outstanding Negro woman-- I'll think of it--that was just opened up. So we made arrangements, they could stay there at night, ~~we~~ I saw to it that they didn't ever feel ill at ease on anything that we did, and we took care of a number of things for them.

<sup>P</sup> That was one time that we went down to Mt. Vernon, and we went down by charter bus. I always chartered buses when I went back there to do these various things. <sup>We'd</sup> have them all together.

So we went down, and it was a stormy day, unfortunately, ~~but it was~~. <sup>But</sup> He went anyway. ~~So~~ The whole group just stayed together pretty much. Then we went back to Washington, ~~1916~~, on the boat, on the river, and of course that is very interesting, too, for them. So we were careful; <sup>Everybody</sup> was very good. They held pretty much to themselves. I mean by that they didn't push themselves where they felt they might not be welcome, but of course our California women were great as far as that was concerned. We were just one delegation. ~~So~~ I always saw to it that they were never just ~~really~~ left alone, of course. <sup>P</sup> But coming back on the boat, coming up the Potomac it was so miserable and cold, ~~and~~



Benedict: ~~so on~~ I had taken down ~~the~~ a gift box of cookies and things that <sup>I</sup> felt ~~they~~ <sup>the delegation would probably enjoy</sup> probably like to ~~take~~ on the boat coming back, because it was ~~kind of~~ a long day. ~~Just~~ Just to illustrate their enthusiasm and their appreciation, I passed them around and I said, "Well, where are so and so and so and so?" Well, they didn't know. "Well," I said, "they're on this boat someplace." So I went around to find them, ~~but~~. ~~They~~ They were off in a little area, ~~enjoying~~ enjoying it all together, and so I said, "Well, I've been hunting all over for you," and "Have some cookies," and oh, they just were so thrilled to be remembered. They just weren't asking for things. They were just precious.

*P* They were hard workers down in the Los Angeles area, and I attended many of their meetings and their annual meetings. They wouldn't have an installation unless I could come down. They'd change their dates [laughs] so I went down every year, as well as others. Anyway, so then the leader came out, with a voice ~~that~~ that you could hear all over the boat, almost, and said, "Now who would do anything like this but Marjorie Benedict, our National Committeewoman!" <sup>And verbally turned around:</sup> ~~And~~ [Laughs] But they were so dear and so appreciative, I don't know whether they saw how red I turned, but anyway, that was it.

*P* Well, going back, they just were full of pep, going back on the bus ~~we got on the bus~~. And some of our people saved a seat for me. I always waited to see that everybody got on and <sup>took</sup> ~~the~~ count ~~and~~ because I didn't want to leave anyone behind. ~~Two~~ Two or three had left a seat by them for me. So then, some of the girls came on, and some <sup>one didn't</sup> ~~wasn't~~ <sup>it</sup> apparently wasn't quite as cozy as it might have been, and so when I came on, I sat with them. I



Benedict: mean, that was fine. I didn't do it for any ostentatious type of thing because we had all worked together, and that was perfect. I was interested in seeing what they had enjoyed and what they got out of it and so on. Well, this leader was just priceless. She finally got up as we neared Washington, and she started in as a yell leader, and she started in with it. She got up and just really--just like a yell leader--"Who's all right? [In a cadence.] Our national committeewoman! Marjorie Benedict!" And then she'd get them all to go, and it was the darndest thing I ever went through. It was fun, but ~~it~~ I thought Oh, "what will these people on the street think of all this going on/a charter bus?" And then she went on with one after another that she made up. ~~So~~ She got everybody joining in. But it just was a great experience. And that time, as I say, it was storming, and of course they expected to get off at the hotel and walk the rest of the way. Well, I wouldn't let that happen, and I said, "Stay on. We're going right on over--" Bethune was the name of the building.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I, of course, had contributed to that memorial. So

I was interested in seeing the building, too. And I went all through it, and they really were serving a lovely purpose, and it was working out beautifully. So we went/around by the bus, and we didn't have to get wet, and oh, they were so appreciative. But they're just really a very great group. And they did a lot of work in Los Angeles County. And different times various things came up. I had a lot of unusual things, I guess, I don't know. But we also had some excellent groups here in Alameda





Benedict: County. And I worked very closely with them, and to this day, I'm just grabbed whole-heartedly by some of them, regardless of where we are or anything. It's just priceless. Just absolutely.

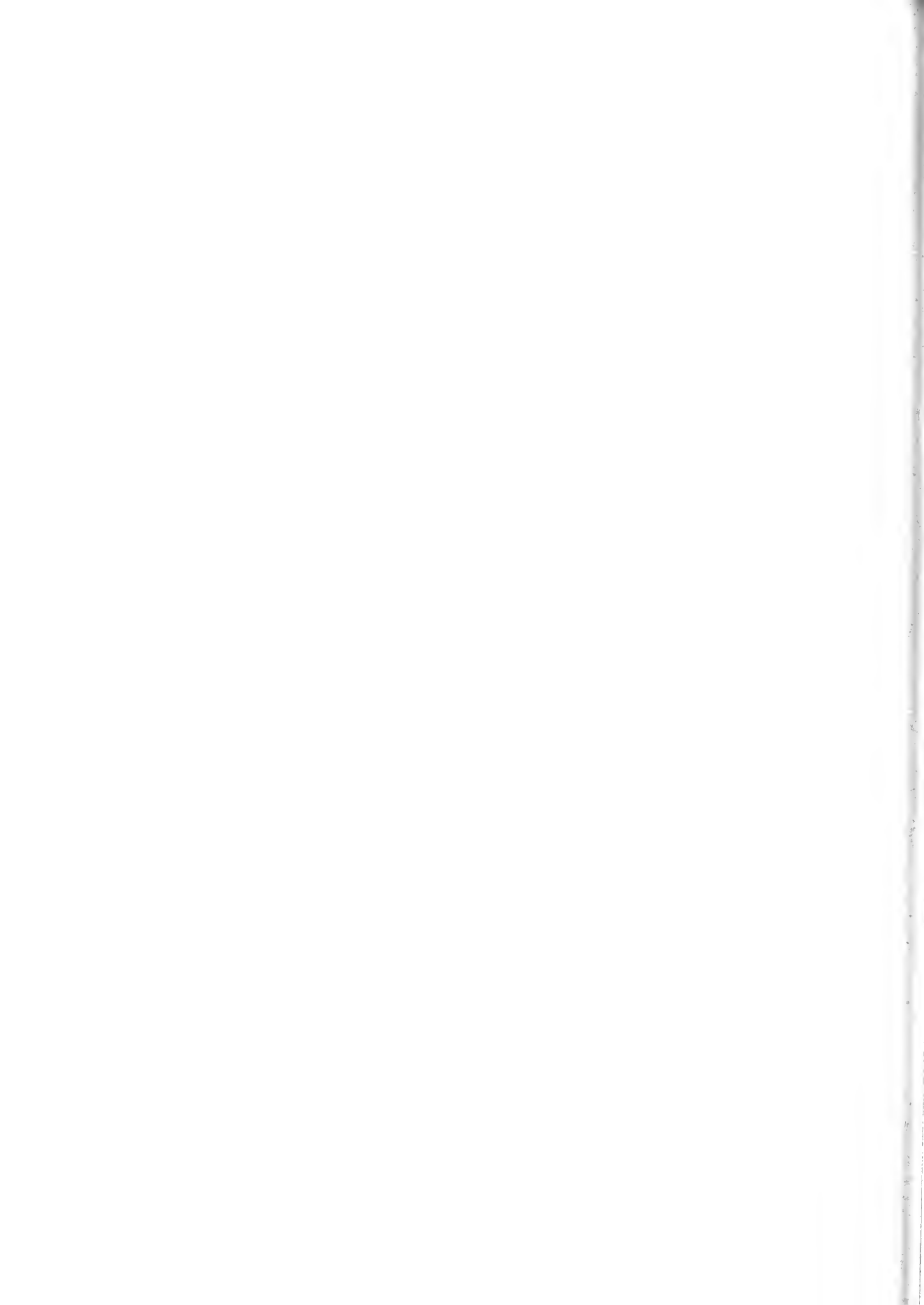
So there's a great deal that can be done with all of our citizens, and we had a very--well, we had a number of organizations here in the Bay Area, nationality groups. There were the Italians, and some of them were very active, and they wanted me to help with them, and I certainly did. We had the Chinese, and I worked with them, and I'll tell you about ~~them~~<sup>that</sup> sometime. And then we had any number of groups. There was a Russian group that was a very interesting ~~group~~<sup>one</sup>, too, ~~who~~<sup>which</sup> wanted to be helpful, and appealed to me to help them and so on. So it's just great we'll if just open our eyes and our arms be good citizens.

George Mardikian, of course, was a wonderful person, and he did a great deal. And I was very honored, really, to work with him in many ways, within the Republican Party activities. There just wasn't enough that he could do. He was so devoted to the United States, which he adopted, and they certainly adopted him, and the Republican Party. And of course, he worked very closely with the Armenians all through the San Joaquin Valley, ~~and~~. ~~And of course,~~ His book was just great, and I treasure the volume that I have that he autographed very nicely for me.

Stein: Oh, Song of America.

Benedict: Yes. And ~~that~~ I had the privilege of presenting a commendation, from the Republican National Committee, to him in Washington, D. C. <sup>time,</sup> one, And oh, he was so pleased and so proud of that, and it was a real privilege to present ~~it~~ to him.

Then I also enjoyed the same privilege in presenting a commendation



Benedict: to Earl Louie, who was the leader of the Chinese in San Francisco -

Stein: Oh yes. We have a photograph of that.

Benedict: Yes. And I really spent a great deal of time with the American Chinese there who wanted very much to know how to work within the Republican Party. And they were an interesting group to work with, and it was an eternal [laughs] list of surprises along the way because it was just something very, very different. Did we have any of that on tape? I don't remember.

Stein: I don't know. The problem is that we've been going for about an hour, if you can believe it, and

~~Benedict: Oh, we'd better stop then.~~

~~Stein: Yes. The problem is I have an appointment.~~

Benedict: Yes, I know you have.

Stein: I don't usually like to cut things off.

Benedict: No, no. That's fine.

Stein: But ~~you~~, you loaned me the Chinese newspapers.

Benedict: Yes, I know I did.

Stein: So we'll have to get the stories.

~~Benedict: Yes. I didn't remember. I know we had talked about it before but that's all right.~~

~~Stein:~~ We'll do that next time.

Benedict: Yes. And we'll get on to these <sup>other activities</sup> next time, too.

~~[End tape 2, side 2]~~  
|| ||



~~Interview with Marjorie Benedict, Interview~~  
Date of Interview: July 24, 1978  
~~Interviewer: Miriam Stein~~  
~~Transcriber: Michelle Stafford~~  
~~Begin tape 1, side 1~~

# Republican Presidential Politics, 1952

Stein: What we have here is a program from the Republican National committee meeting and conferences in San Francisco. Now this was just the California committee?

Benedict: No, this was the full national committee.

Stein: This is the full national committee?

Benedict: Right.

Stein: This was in January of '52.

Benedict: Yes, and the purpose of calling that meeting was to make the general plans and details of the convention that was to be held, of course, that year for the presidential nomination.

Stein: By that time had Eisenhower agreed to run?

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: You were saying that this meeting turned into a mini-convention.

Benedict: It certainly did. All of the potential ~~[redacted]~~ nominees for the nomination for the presidency were there--either they or ~~with~~ their representatives. There was a tremendous amount of pressure and excitement and, of course, ~~each one was given a~~ ~~place, that is,~~ if they were major potential candidates, ~~each~~ each one was given a place on the program because there was no ethical possibility of playing favorites. It was a ~~great~~ *great* difficult ~~balancing~~ situation to keep it balanced. [laughter] That was a time when Governor Warren had hopes perhaps of being nominated



Benedict: and being in the host state he was given, of course, the usual place of the governor wherever we had meetings <sup>in</sup> welcoming the meeting and extending some remarks, ~~and~~ <sup>so</sup> in that capacity he appeared and was right at the opening of the meeting.

Then Senator Robert Taft was represented by Mr. [David] Ingalls. That was one that came in not as early as we had anticipated, but it was very important. Of course, as long as he was representing Bob Taft he would come and of course we accepted it.

Then there was one speaking on behalf of President Eisenhower who ~~of course~~ was then General Eisenhower.

Stein: I noticed that Henry Cabot Lodge--

Benedict: He spoke on behalf of--

Stein: He was the one speaking on behalf of Eisenhower.

Benedict: On Eisenhower's <sup>behalf,</sup> yes, Henry Cabot Lodge is a fascinating person. He's very, very alert, very intelligent, handles himself exceedingly well, speaks beautifully, ~~and~~ a delightful personality. I was at the head table of course all of the time as hostess and local national committeewoman and the national committeeman <sup>and</sup> ~~of course~~ <sup>were</sup> also there. But I seemed to have the pleasure [chuckles] and responsibility of being very close to the speaker each time! That was very, very delightful <sup>and</sup> actually but it kept you on your toes because you couldn't show any partiality from the audience's point of view or anything





Benedict: else.

Governor Warren made a very fine welcome and made a very good appearance for himself. ~~He~~ I'll just speak of the three candidates ~~and~~ and I'll give <sup>a few</sup> ~~some~~ sidelights. ~~Then~~ Mr. Ingalls spoke on behalf of Bob Taft. I was very, very disappointed in Bob Ingalls. He did a type of hatchet job which was not good. It wasn't appropriate. He had been out campaigning in states and I assume he was so wound up and so tight about things/ <sup>that</sup> he continued to show that type of character in his presentation. ~~Of~~ Of course, it went against the feeling of most of the group because they did not want that type of participation which was too bad for Senator Taft. Senator Taft deserved much better than that. He was a very capable, very fine ~~Senator~~ Senator and citizen.

So that was a problem because in that <sup>presentation</sup> there were a number of things <sup>said</sup> that were against another candidate, which wasn't in order. ~~Of~~ Of course, that other potential candidate was General Eisenhower. ~~At~~ At that time, Henry Cabot Lodge was sitting beside me and we both just cringed at part of that speech [laughter] because we didn't want--I certainly didn't want <sup>any-</sup> thing of that sort on the part of any candidate or ~~potential~~ speaker for a candidate. Anyway, I, on the side, would nudge Cabot Lodge and afterwards I said, "How often I nudged you! --You have to answer that in a very polite way tonight--not an answer, but you've got to cover that base." ~~Well,~~ Well,



Benedict: of course, he was fit to be tied if I may use that expression, on his own, ~~that~~ that hurt him very much because he, ~~course~~, was tremendously enthusiastic about General Eisenhower and, of course, all of California was supposed to be supporting their governor and we were.

Anyway, that occurred following the dinner meeting. With that, usually people stand around and there's a great deal of conversation, politicizing, <sup>and</sup> planning, ~~and so on~~ afterwards. Well, Henry Cabot Lodge disappeared a little earlier than usual after all of that and we didn't see him again until well into the morning of the next day. [laughter] I couldn't help but laugh! Well, he stayed up practically all night and re-wrote his speech [more laughter] and he did a very gentlemanly, very good job. So that sort of balanced things out, but I've often thought of that, ~~type of thing~~.

We had many work meetings because all of the committees were as far as possible ~~having~~ having preliminary reports and discussions of their responsibilities. <sup>It's</sup> unbelievable, ~~until~~ until you're really in a thing of that sort, ~~how many~~ how many details and responsibilities are carried by the members of the national committee as they are assigned to various committees. You have the credentials, you have the badges, you have communications, you have transportation, <sup>you have</sup> you have <sup>comma</sup> any number of things, programs, music, decorations, even thing, housing, ~~and many~~ and many, many <sup>extra details</sup> ~~and many~~ We were very busy with responsibilities, ~~throughout~~ throughout the ~~various~~



Benedict: three national conventions that I served on as national committeewoman and delegate-at-large I <sup>took</sup> ~~served~~ on quite a good share of the work in committees--credentials, site.

*P* Site is an interesting committee. On that one it took three days to hear all of the rhetoric in connection with invitations from the various cities who wished to have the convention. To be very honest, I really don't know why any city wants a convention of that size! It's so complicated and it just takes over the city completely. It does, of course, bring a lot of money into the city but they have to forego everything else and there are several days afterwards of getting ready to get back into normal operation at the hotels, ~~at~~ restaurants, and just everything.

The one year that I was on the site committee it really was very exciting. The one thing that I thoroughly enjoyed was seeing so many very serious participants who were pleading for their own city and state and you always usually had one of the top officials, of course, who was presenting it. Chicago always bid for the convention. That was the first time that I had ever seen Mayor Daly in operation, and it was absolutely fascinating. He gave a tremendous presentation. He was the gentleman of all gentlemen and the perfect person in presenting all of the plusses for his city. ~~and~~ Of course, it was one of the main convention cities and sooner or later you always had to be there and you usually were there many



Benedict: times. But it was just fascinating to see the way in which he handled himself. There was none of the hard politics that you know him by, nothing at all of that character, and I've always been very glad that that happened to be the time that I served on the site committee!

We had long sessions and we really did a lot of work in tabulating the advantages, the disadvantages, in all these categories that one has to consider. Then, of course, you're supplied with voluminous reports and you just have miles of things to go through to be able to feel that you had really done a good, fair job on it all.

*Credential Problems*

Then ~~credentials~~ I served on credentials. It seemed to me I always used to get a difficult year. We had such problems with some of the southern states.

~~Stair: This was in '52 that~~

~~Benedict: It was in '52?~~

~~Stair: It was in '52?~~

~~Benedict: No, it was in '52.~~

~~Stair: It was in '52?~~

~~I had~~

~~Benedict: It was in '52?~~

~~Stair: It was in '52?~~

~~Benedict: It was in '52?~~ I never

realized until then, <sup>1952</sup> the type of politics that were carried on in some of the southern states and Puerto Rico! [laughter] That really is almost a comedy in itself, although it's a





Benedict: serious comedy, I'll put it that way. Each one is so serious, of course, and ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> just go at it. ~~we~~, For instance, with Puerto Rico. ~~of course~~ they just had the three delegates and it was really quite funny. But they couldn't get together at all, though it was worked out.

But on some of these others that really were exceedingly difficult, they really would be just locked out of some of the committee meetings and district meetings and so on, because they had the convention system theoretically. Sometimes they wouldn't even be notified of where the meeting was to be or when, so then they'd have to go off on a rump meeting and make their own appointments or elections for their delegates and then ~~compete~~ <sup>compete</sup> before the national committee, ~~we~~ We really had ~~some~~ <sup>several</sup> sessions on that. ~~I~~ I [laughs] really was ~~at a loss~~ <sup>at a loss</sup> for some of these ~~rules~~ <sup>strange</sup> and regulations on their political party organizations. That was totally foreign to me, so I had to have ~~quite~~ <sup>a good many</sup> conferences with some of our lawyers that were on our delegation to find out what was really bonafide and what wasn't. But that ~~really~~ <sup>really</sup> startled me!

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~~So we~~ <sup>So</sup> ~~really, as I say, we really~~ had a very difficult time and there were very hard feelings of course because of such tremendous, tremendous feelings on the parts of those contesting ~~the~~ seats. ~~So~~ That was an experience, but I was glad I didn't ever get appointed to that ~~again~~ <sup>committee</sup> although they never had another



Benedict: one that was quite that difficult.

Stein: That's what I understand. I remember reading accounts of that in Time Magazine. It was actually on television, I think.

Benedict: Oh, indeed it was, yes. It ~~was~~ <sup>became</sup> a huge thing and, of course, a great deal could have depended upon it. It naturally does, but it was kind of a rude awakening to me. That ~~really~~ was because I had never seen any or been near that type of political participation. ~~I~~ I had become acquainted with the different political systems, particularly in the midwest and in the northeast where so many of them go by the straight convention system from the precinct on up through the different levels of political districts up to their final national committee, ~~But~~ that's totally different really. Once in a while they'll have some problems, but nothing to match these other things that I discovered there. ~~-----~~ ~~-----~~

*All this may seem like a digression, but*  
It does have to do with representation for conventions and the various processes of electing the delegates. I was almost convinced by the time that I had close contact with some of the other states that maybe the system of precinct convention, and the county convention, and the district convention (that would be the congressional district convention), and ~~-----~~ <sup>to some had</sup> ~~-----~~ on into the senatorial district conventions, each one going up the <sup>ladder</sup> that maybe the women may have gotten a better break there in representation in conventions. Of course, it didn't make a difference on conventions because we in California



Benedict: had a ~~pretty~~ good rule on that. But, yes, it really did make a difference ~~there~~ elsewhere.

But it also made a difference in their being able to be nominated for political office.

Stein: How did it make a difference?

Benedict: Well, it was a little difficult in an open convention for men to get up and oppose women, I think.

Stein: So given the way things were then--

Benedict: Yes, at that time, I could see ~~there~~ there were many ~~women~~ women who served on the national committee who had been candidates for legislative offices and some successfully elected. ~~Here~~ Here in California, of course, it's much harder.

# Well, ~~anyway~~, we ~~got~~ <sup>got sidetracked</sup> ~~away~~ from that meeting <sup>of the national committee</sup>

I always had a great deal of responsibility with our own California delegation because we have huge delegations,

Of course, one of the hard subcommittees to serve on is the ticket committee. I was on that several times because there were never enough tickets to go around. You had the smaller states that were not going to be able to fill their delegations--well, they may fill their delegations but they would not have their quota of tickets used because not too many would be traveling great distances. But do you think they'd give up their tickets to California that had so many <sup>people coming</sup> that they couldn't possibly <sup>have enough tickets?</sup> Oh, no! They'd wait until they got out here



Benedict: and then they'd hand them out, some of them, to the elevator boy, or the ~~whom ever~~ <sup>whom ever</sup>, and then they'd show up and people would say, "How did So-and-So get a ticket when we couldn't get one?" Oh, we used to have real problems being from California because no matter where they went we always had a large delegation that would go to wherever the convention was. Californians were used to traveling! [laughter]

But those are just some of the asides of problems of this committee, at this meeting of the national committee. It really concentrated on these various committees actually. There were various meetings. ~~At~~ <sup>At</sup> luncheons and dinners they had these potential nominees.

Stein: I notice that Senator [William] Knowland spoke.

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: Was he speaking on behalf of Taft, or just on behalf of himself, or just speaking?

Benedict: No, he was speaking because he was the one of the real leaders of the Senate and being from California he was definitely honored or given that honored spot. In national committee meetings wherever they met, they always made place for the Republican senators or Republican members of Congress. ~~It~~ <sup>If</sup> I remember correctly ~~didn't~~ --I don't know, I guess not--I was thinking that Senator Kuchel introduced or did something on that. Did he introduce the governor? ~~Didn't he introduce~~ ~~the governor?~~ No, that would be another meeting.





Stein: Let's see. [consults notes] McIntyre Faries introduced the governor.

Benedict: Oh, yes. Well, he was the national committeeman and I introduced somebody. I guess it was [pauses]--I don't know.

Stein: It's all in here. Oh, you introduced Knowland actually.

Benedict: Yes, that was it. I know that we always split--the two national committee members always share, at least they're supposed to.

Stein: Yes, no doubt Kuchel did something here. I don't immediately find his name.

Benedict: That's all right. I was thinking that he was the next one or right before me. [pauses] Of course, let's see, that was '52.

The '52 ~~con~~ *convention*

was in Chicago, and that was the one that, oh, we had such a time with the credentials--in '52 in Chicago.

Stein:

Yes, you mentioned about the delegates, about choosing

delegates. I seem to remember reading somewhere that you were on a committee that helped select the delegates to go to the convention in '52.

Benedict: From California, yes. I was on each time, each one.

Stein: My understanding from reading about that year, there was quite a lot of conflict because that was the year that Warren hoped--

Benedict: Yes, there was conflict. Most of the pro-America group felt,



Benedict: of course, that Governor Warren was too liberal, and there were others who did, a few other individuals who were not necessarily ~~holding~~<sup>in</sup> any official capacity. There were some in another organization that was eventually--or a group I should say--~~that~~<sup>that</sup> was eventually organized as another Republican organization. Those were volunteer groups.

That is bound to happen but there were, however, some members of the official Republican party who preferred--several who definitely preferred Senator Taft and those who definitely wanted General Eisenhower. So there were some very definite splits, but we tried to balance it out as best we could.

Stein: By balancing it out, do you mean choosing delegates from each faction so to speak?

Benedict: To try to have some representation, yes, from the others.

But on the other hand, they had to sign a pledge in order to serve on a specific delegation to support that particular candidate through the first ballot. Of course, a good many would do that and then go their own way later and do what they could and some did. But on those committees in California, it was usually <sup>the custom that</sup> if you had a Republican

governor then he is the titular head of your party in the state. So he has the right and privilege and the obligation to appoint a committee to work



Benedict: with him in selecting the delegation that goes to the national convention. Now that works out really I think about as well as anything as far as California is concerned. ~~Of~~ Of course in those years we had cross-filing and so it really was ~~[laughing]~~ kind of touch and go sometimes. That of course was something that the other states just couldn't understand. Some of ~~the~~ <sup>the 7 states</sup> finally got into some difficulties and they decided to understand-- some of them went into it. Of course, we finally got out of it.

So the governor very wisely worked through the California members of the national committee, and the state chairman, and if he wanted, the ranking Republican members of the two houses of the state legislature. He had the privilege to have anyone else if he wanted, ~~he~~. It just happened, Governor Warren

~~held it to~~ held it to a very small committee and I was the only woman on it. They didn't take the federation, <sup>[Federation of Republican Women]</sup> some of the federation ~~were~~ <sup>were giving him</sup> trouble. [laughter] Some of the Young Republicans were <sup>too</sup> But that was the committee that was set up. ~~But~~ ~~STATE~~ Senator Tony DeLap was on that committee too.. [pauses to recall] I'll have to think back, <sup>mixed up,</sup> I get the young but I think Tom Caldecott was on that one also as a state committee member.

~~But~~ But they were all good level-headed people. We really worked at it district by district.

Stein: I have a list of one of the committees that you served on that



Stein: included Mac Faries, Tony DeLap, Thomas Mellon, yourself, Laughlin Waters, Ron Button, and <sup>[Bernard]</sup> Brennan.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Does that sound like that committee?

Benedict: You don't have the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ *year on that?*

Stein: That's '52.

Benedict: Oh, I was going to say I think that I don't remember <sup>Bennie</sup> Brennan attending the meetings. However, he was chairman of the Los Angeles County Committee at that time and it would be logical that he was serving because after all, the tremendous majority of the districts were there, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Laughlin Waters was the state chairman instead of Tom. Tom Caldecott was state chairman *after that.*

Stein: The next thing that I always read about in '52 was the train ride, the campaign train.

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: Were you part of that?

Benedict: No, the national committee members had to go ahead of the train because we had work to do. But there was a great deal that apparently went on in the train and we had activities definitely that were against Warren. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Although most of us realized that it would definitely be an outside chance for Warren to be nominated/for state loyalty, state party loyalty, that was where we were supposed to be. Then when the first ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>that</sup> ballot ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ held and you know/there isn't a chance, then the delegation is usually released so they can support whoever they





Benedict: wish. Sometimes they will split up. Sometimes they will get together. It depends ~~on~~ who is chairman <sup>of</sup> the delegation. ~~It is~~ possible to have an agreement <sup>among</sup> the delegates that they will support <sup>one</sup> of the other candidates or, if they wish, they can split up and <sup>go whichever way</sup> ~~go whichever way~~ they want. Of course, your state is much more effective if they hold together.

So that on the train, of course, those who didn't have any responsibilities could have quite a good time and I guess they did. Those who had worked very closely with Dick Nixon were on the train and so they figured if they could <sup>draw</sup> ~~draw~~ strength <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ General Eisenhower, there was enough ground work so that ~~there was a possibility~~ <sup>that</sup> Dick Nixon could be given a place on the ticket. Murray Chotiner was on the train working and he's a ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> able politician.

Stein: So I've heard. He was on the train?

Benedict: That's my report.

Stein: Because \_\_\_\_\_ Nixon himself joined the train at Denver, I think.

Benedict: Right, yes, and he was supposed to be in Chicago, and was in Chicago earlier but disappeared.

Stein: What is your understanding of what he did on the train?

Benedict: Of course, I wasn't there on the train, but obviously from all that <sup>one could</sup> ~~was~~ put together, he was was giving <sup>the</sup> ~~and the~~ pitch and helping and working with Murray Chotiner to do all they could, <sup>among</sup> ~~among~~ the other delegations, in promoting Eisenhower and



Benedict: Dick Nixon.

Stein: Do you know if he was doing any actual campaigning of that sort among the California delegates on the train?

Benedict: *I am pretty sure he* ~~he surely~~ must have been because there were a few there that would have been interested.

Stein: One of the other things that I had heard was that--this is attributed to Murray Chotiner, *Now*, I have no idea if it's true or not, but when the train arrived in Chicago there was a bus waiting to meet the train for the California delegation and it had an Eisenhower for President banner on it. Did you hear anything about that?

Benedict: I heard about it but I couldn't say definitely whether it was true or not, but it's the type of thing that could have been done and that one would expect.

Stein: Then what actually happened at the convention in terms of all of these conflicts?

Benedict: Well, let's see, \_\_\_\_\_, Senator Knowland was chairman of the delegation and he really did a remarkable job! We had meetings every morning--early--sometimes another one in the evening. Supposedly all of the developments that had occurred would be reported that morning, but a lot of things happen at night at conventions, and after the day is over, and in the evening of course it was wise to have the group get together and have another meeting. Senator Knowland did something that was practically unheard of--in fact, it was unheard of until he did it--*which* was to invite the potential candidates to speak to



Benedict: our delegation there or their representatives. [laughter]

~~There were~~ <sup>There were</sup> so many of the people on other delegations that got ~~wind~~ <sup>wind</sup> of it and they just couldn't imagine anyone being that fair! ~~Of course~~ <sup>Of course</sup>, Senator Knowland is all business. He's a good friend to all of his friends but he's always been just so full of business that that's it. ~~But~~ <sup>But</sup> very fair and his word is ~~word~~ <sup>good</sup>. There's no question once he gives his word where he was ~~going~~ <sup>ever</sup> going to be. He had that reputation all over in Washington. He held one of the highest records of respect and admiration for his personal qualities of anyone I ever heard of. Senator Taft really also had a very high reputation throughout Washington too.

~~In~~ <sup>these</sup> having ~~the~~ meetings, and having the different candidates or representatives speak, it ~~really~~ showed real openness for our delegation, but it also held the delegation together. Those were times when you ~~really~~ didn't get any sleep at night hardly. You'd get telephone calls; I had some. ~~Well~~, they'd call anyone who was official, or supposed to be with influence or control, whatever they think of in connection with their own political standards. ~~I know one night--in fact, every night--I had late telephone calls to try to get messages through, for this, and if this could be done, this other thing could be done, and so on--just wrangling forever. It really was very, very difficult. <sup>P</sup> But there were those who were working very hard to alienate people or to move~~



Benedict: people away from Senator Taft, <sup>also</sup> and to try and get commitments from any of us possible, and not only just ourselves but to pull some of the rest of the delegation on the second ballot if Warren didn't go for a second ballot. Oh, it really was a terribly difficult convention but it was held together really very, very well. Of course, there was too an understanding that if Taft--and I never followed it through--but if Senator Taft was the nominee, he would liked to have had Senator Knowland as vice-president. ~~Even~~ Even in spite of that, Senator Knowland would not release or ~~leave~~ <sup>leave</sup> the candidacy of Governor Warren on the first ballot. He wouldn't, and he held. So it really was a difficult one.

Stein: Ultimately though, the decision was made to release the California delegation wasn't it?

Benedict: Yes, they finally did. Of course, then we had ~~really~~ a landslide for Eisenhower.

Stein: Was that Warren's decision to release the delegation? Do you remember how that happened?

Benedict: Well, I would say that it was the combined decision between Warren and Knowland because Governor Warren was not really familiar with national politics and I assume that the Supreme Court was a reward. [chuckles]

Stein: Yes, somewhere in there?

Benedict: Someplace in there. Well, after all those things happen and understandably. Definitely. But many people felt that





Benedict: Knowland had stood fast in face of the possibility of his being a vice-presidential candidate. Now, I never heard him indicate anything of that sort.

Stein: No, I've heard that also.

Benedict: Oh, yes. It was just too bad to have someone whom he had helped all the way through up to the senatorship ~~under-~~ cut him. So that was it. Then <sup>Nixon</sup> almost got undercut at the very last few weeks of the campaign ~~with~~ with this Checkers thing. I think I told you about that.

Stein: *Richard Nixon and the "Checkers" Issue*  
I looked through the transcripts this morning and I don't remember seeing it so maybe we better just quickly review that situation.

Benedict: All right: \_\_\_\_\_ I can't remember the dates now exactly--but it was in the last two or three weeks of the <sup>campaign</sup> ~~contest~~ on itself that we were making a last minute push of campaigning for our delegation and for the congressional <sup>Candidates - -</sup> ~~that~~ that is both Senate and representatives.



Benedict: I had Joe Martin, who was the minority leader in the House and a great campaigner, come out to go through Central and Northern California with me. We had a tight schedule starting with the Bay Area and going on up through the state. I got, as well as the other party officials (the national committeemen, and the state chairman, and the woman vice-chairman of the state central committee)-- [laughs] "invitations" is the polite way to put it--to be down in Southern California to join Dick Nixon's train rally through the state, with no regard for any of our schedules whatsoever and very short notice. We had to make very quick changes and we did go down.

We got down there. [laughs] We weren't even met, nor greeted in any way, shape or form, nor were we told where we were to go on the train. Pretty soon there was a little rally at the station where Dick Nixon was and, of course, he was given a big send off receiving a very good response. Then he gets on the train and the rest of us almost miss the train not knowing where we were going [laughs] but we got on and went in. We never were greeted. We never even saw him.

~~End of side 1, tape 1, begin side 2, tape 1~~

##  
p.?





Benedict:

*He went off on a siding for the night. 128*  
Then we stayed up quite late, expecting him to come ~~and~~ *and let us know what the plan was.*

~~and~~ *Finally* went to bed because he had been too busy to come through the next pullman where we were. So we got up early the next morning for the morning platform

rally in the San Joaquin Valley. We made two more stops and we finally got up to Sacramento. *I had made special arrangements with Congressman Joe Martin because I had had to leave my responsibilities and plans for a joint speaking tour.*

~~He~~ *He* was going to take care of what he ~~had~~ *had* to do here in the Bay Area and then meet us on the train outside of Sacramento and go in on the last bit of mileage into Sacramento with us.

*So he did and we had a big rally in Sacramento which she and I were putting on.*

*In* the meantime those who were not tied up with the rally went by plane up to Reno where Dick Nixon spoke. Then *they went and got on* that train. By that time Joe Martin and I were through and went to *the train.*

*Of* course, the plane wasn't back; no one was back. So we just settled down and then got up early the next morning *in order to hear* the platform talk that Nixon would be giving on behalf of the campaign *in* Sacramento. *When we* got there *we* heard the heckling going on: "What about Checkers?"

What about Checkers? What about Checkers?" I was completely *at sea* as to what this was all about and so was Joe Martin. ~~Nixon~~

had a little difficult time with those interruptions. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

But anyway, *that* was finished and we got back on *the train.*



Benedict: [redacted] So I asked what had happened. ~~She~~ <sup>They</sup> said, "Oh, you didn't see the <sup>early</sup> issue of the paper?" No, we hadn't.

*missed copy  
at El Paso*

When ~~so~~ <sup>the paper it reported</sup> we saw ~~it~~ with the talk that Nixon had given in Southern California with Checkers beside him.

*A* We still hadn't seen Nixon. He hadn't come into the car to see us. We got on up through the Sacramento Valley north of Sacramento and ~~there~~ <sup>that</sup> was ~~about~~ <sup>about</sup> time for Joe Martin and me to get off. The national committeeman left earlier because he had to get back into Southern California. So we waited, *those of us who were still* ~~on~~ on the train. We waited until we were just about to get off and started to pack up our things, and ~~one~~ one of the assistants to Nixon's campaign came in and said, "Oh, you can't go now! Mr. Nixon has ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> see you; he has to see you."

We had been on this train all this time. Well, we said to him that we were obligated to speak at this rally, and <sup>that</sup> I had to leave and the <sup>so did</sup> ~~vice~~ vice-chairman of the state central committee whom I had taken along, (and that was Pat *[Patricia]* Connich and the two legislators, and those were Lock Waters and Tom Caldecott). [sighs] It just couldn't be done. Well, Joe Martin, bless his heart said, "Well, Marjorie, I'll get off and I'll cover the meeting; we'll go through the dinner and I'll give my speech and I'll meet you there."

So I said, "All right then. That's a possibility."

Word came back from Nixon's car that ~~there~~ we had to stay on because he had to see us and ~~that there would be~~





Benedict: ~~the~~ guarantee that there would be a plane ~~to~~ to meet us further north. So we went into a huddle to figure whether we could or couldn't. We said then, "All right, <sup>on that basis</sup> we would."

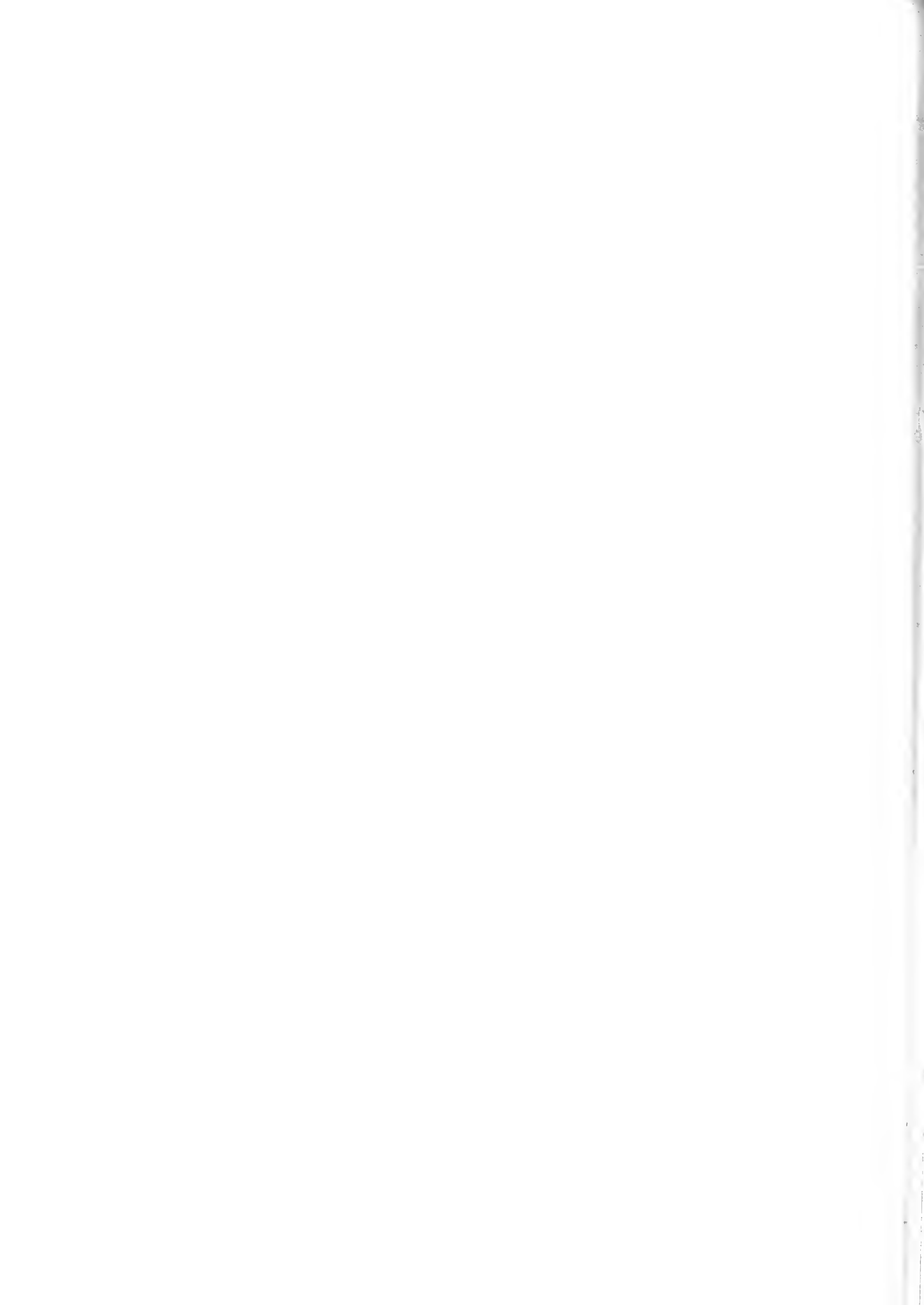
← So we went on and we got off at the--oh, it's the railroad service <sup>place</sup>, [pauses to recall] not far from the northern boundary where the trains were always serviced, fuel and water and so on, before they went up into the mountain district. <sup>P</sup> But before that

we finally did go into the private car that Nixon had and [she indicates a large, round table] we sat around the table like this./ I was sitting beside

Nixon and Lock Waters and Tom Caldecott were opposite me .

~~He~~ He started. <sup>He</sup> spoke a bit about the Checkers thing and, of course, <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ the funds had been ~~to~~ tied to Hughes and so on. So he wanted our complete support and he wanted it right out in writing. I turned to him; ~~I~~ I looked at the boys and they looked a little startled, but they were thinking it over. I turned to Dick right at my side and I said, "Dick, can you promise us that this sort of thing will not happen again?" I mean that was a logical question for me to ask I would think. <sup>honest, I guess</sup> ~~I'm too damned~~ But anyway, without any hesitation he said, "No, I won't." [chuckles]

So that put a barrier between me and Nixon as far as my personal confidence in him. However, that was a hard thing to do, a very difficult thing to do, but I decided to hold off, <sup>P</sup> As a result, ~~so~~ we did leave the train and we went up



Benedict: to this—oh, I can't remember the name of that place.

~~Anyway, there's nothing~~

~~Stein~~

~~Ben~~ Oh, no.

~~Stein~~ 294

~~Benedict~~ It's not even a town. So

we got out there. There wasn't even a light on and they hadn't sent a plane and there we were. We got back but we finally had to call a state car that was up in that area to

come get us. <sup>It</sup> But ~~that~~ that put a shadow on that campaign and it was exceedingly difficult. When we did get back I, was

~~was~~ too late to get to the rally at

all, ~~but~~ I went <sup>directly</sup> ~~right~~ to the hotel. Oh, there was a stack

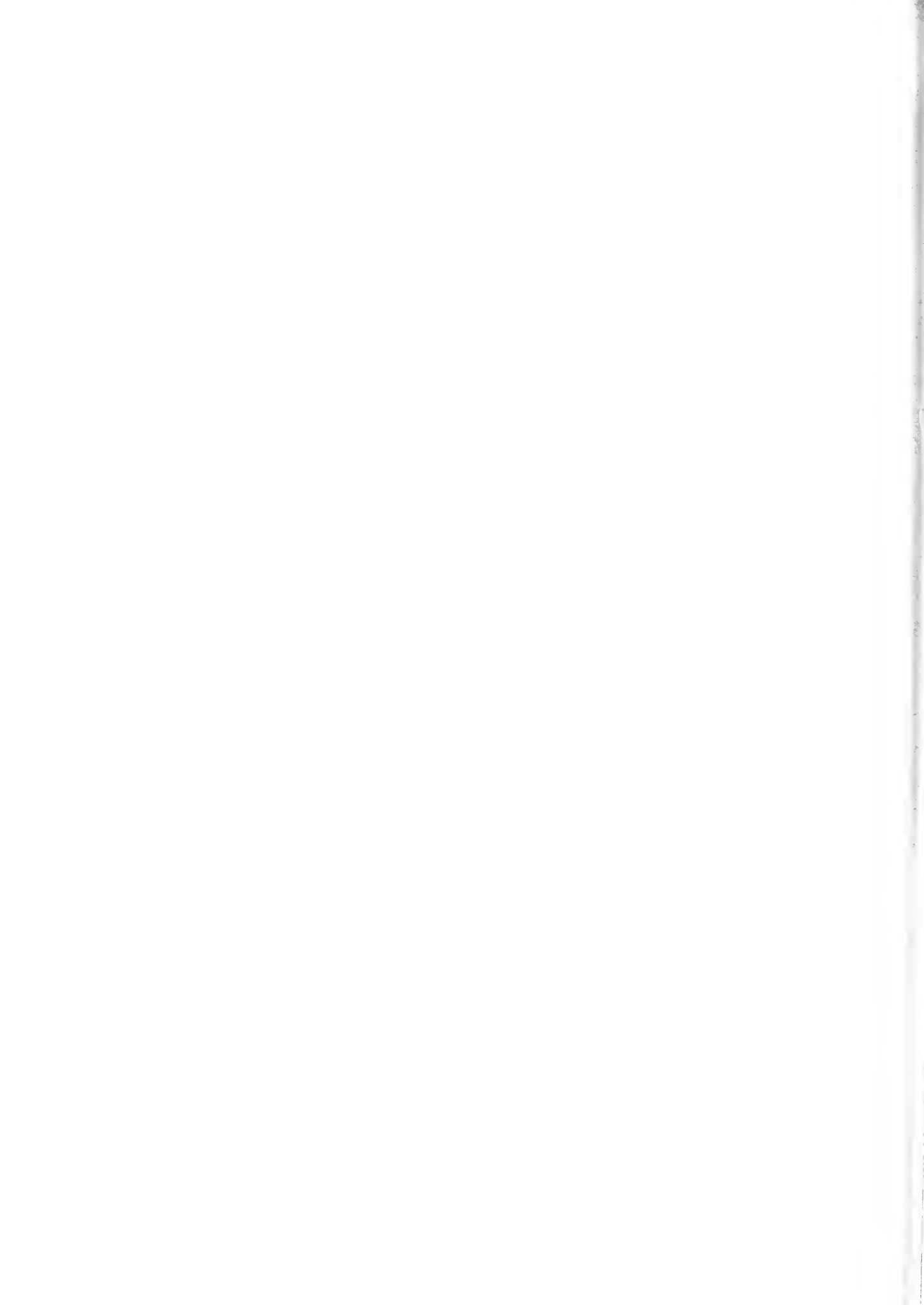
of calls to return! I tell you, for the next few days it was certainly difficult; very, very difficult. Calls from

the national committee headquarters, calls from the representatives of the different campaigns, <sup>all over,</sup> ~~and~~ they were

very, very, very difficult. It was unfortunate;

it was just too late to make a change because there's no way, no provision of being able to get another set <sup>up.</sup>

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

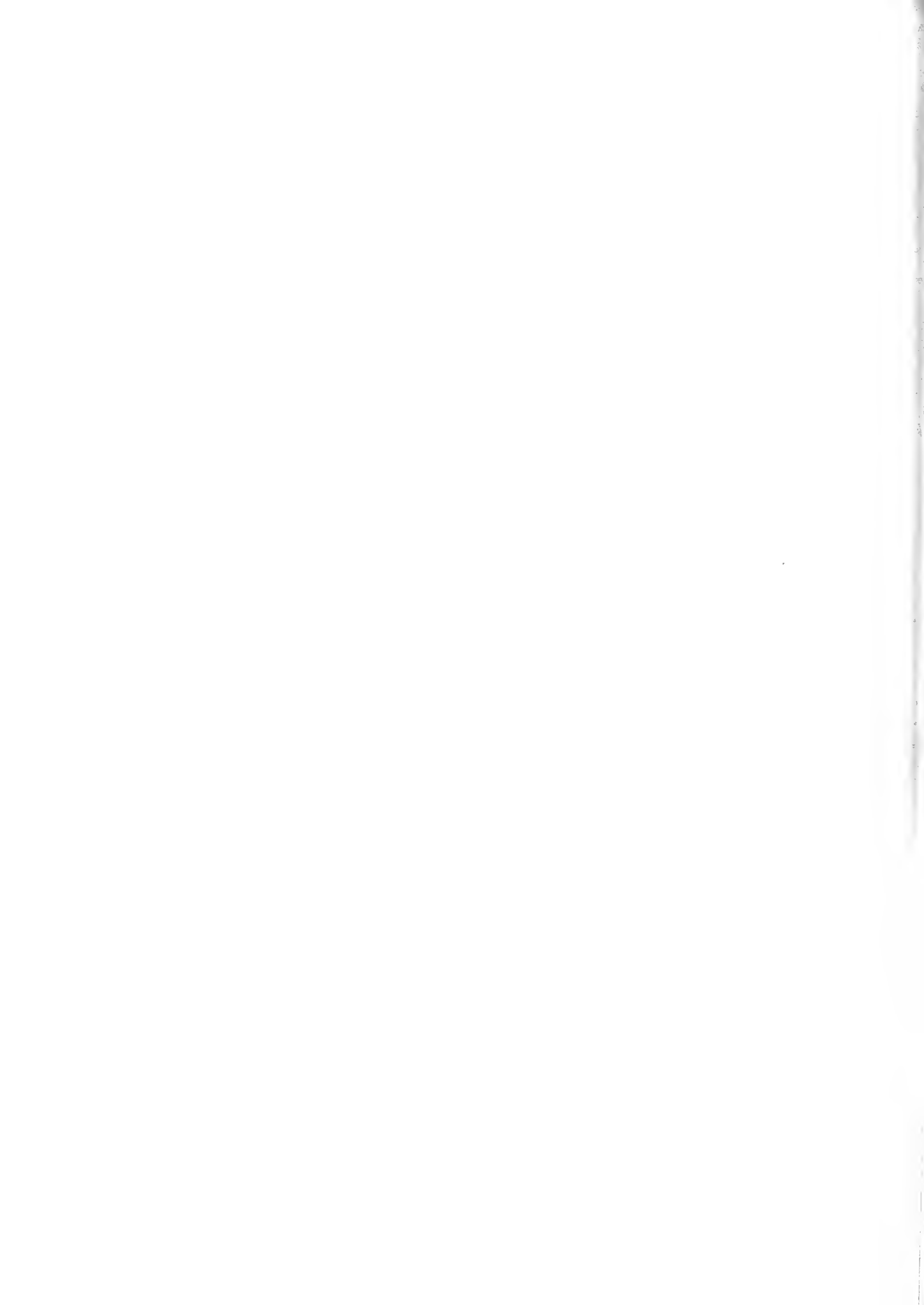


Benedict: That was before the actual election.

*The Substantive Campaign: "The Big Switch," 1958*

Stein: I'm going ~~to~~ sort of hurry on ahead so we can get some of this <sup>other</sup> ground covered. One of the things I also want to ask you about is the Big Switch in 1958, ~~that's~~ That's skipping down the road a few years there, but that was the year that Goodwin Knight would have run for re<sup>e</sup> election as governor, and Knowland decided that he wanted to run for governor, and he resigned from the Senate and Knight then announced that he would run for the Senate, and as a result everybody was defeated at the polls in November. But there is obviously quite a story there in why Knowland decided to make the switch, why Knight decided to make the switch, and what role Nixon had in all of it if any. I wonder what your perspective was on what happened.

Benedict: [pause] I didn't take a part in the Knight switch there at all. I know he, of course, expected to go <sup>on</sup> ~~down~~. As far as I knew from a distance, ~~There~~ <sup>There</sup> were however many who felt that he wasn't as effective a governor as they really wanted and there had been quite a change in his vitality and all. Then there had been a great deal of push for Senator Knowland to be a candidate. He <sup>was highly respected for</sup> ~~had a great respect for~~ all of his work in Washington. ~~He really was highly respected there.~~ There were some people in Southern California who felt very strongly that Senator Knowland should take hold of the state, and there were some of our women who were active in feeling that perhaps



Benedict: that would be the best place for him and they were looking forward, <sup>knowing</sup> that sometimes governors go on to higher national offices. I really don't know who did what on that particular. I didn't get mixed up in that. I really didn't.

Stein: Why not? Were you deliberately keeping yourself clear of that?

Benedict: Well, I always <sup>tried</sup> to follow through with everything, but there were many who did not like the way Nixon had <sup>chuckled</sup> [laughs] worked his way through. I guess some of them wanted revenge and I don't work that way particularly. But anyway, there was a great deal of feeling at that time that ~~Geoff Kenyon and Gladys O'Donnell~~ <sup>some of the</sup> and her group of women in the Long Beach area, <sup>and a number of active men too,</sup> were very strong for the right-to-work <sup>[initiative]</sup> and there was great feeling that they wanted Senator Knowland for governor because <sup>the growing power of labor.</sup> of ~~some of the things~~. I really stayed out of it. # I was always trying to support very honestly the entire Republican ticket. There were some of course that you would do more for than others, and even up to the time of '60 I really always treated the vice-president as the <sup>head of the party</sup> ~~vice-president~~ and from California. But I was not in on that switch around. I campaigned for him, however, when he was a candidate.

*Gette discussion?*

Stein: Knowland?

Benedict: Yes.

Stein: That was another thing that I was curious about. Through all those years Knowland, of course, was an extremely important





Stein: person in the Republican party and it seemed to me, ~~that~~ just reading about it, there were two or three people that Californians tended to line up behind and I wondered how you fit into that picture. There were Knight people, Nixon people, and Knowland people and then I suppose people who didn't line up with any of them.

Benedict: Putting it on that basis I think there was no question that I certainly had great respect and worked harder for Senator Knowland in the various offices starting clear back when he first went to the state assembly after he was right out of college. ~~He~~ I ~~was~~ always *thought he was a* particularly valuable person and very capable.

Of course, I think there was no question that he would have been elected governor if he had not come out openly for the right-to-work ~~proposition~~ *proposition*

Stein: That's interesting.

Benedict: That's what defeated him.

Stein: That's what defeated him?

Benedict: Yes, *and* ~~for~~ for years after that defeat ~~that~~ the *people* in Washington said they just couldn't understand it. "Big Bill defeated?!" The sun just rose and set on his capabilities. But it was when he came out over Knight for the right-to-work law. Then the unions were really organized and they put out a terrific campaign to defeat him.



Benedict: <sup>P</sup>The women ~~that I mentioned~~ were very strong on the right -  
 to work and something tipped the balance there. I think  
 they were over anxious about it, not realizing, not being  
 practical about the possibility of what would happen. ~~At~~  
 At that time those women had \_\_\_\_\_ top  
 responsibilities in the Federation of Women's clubs and  
 they had close relations with the office of Senator Knowland,  
 and one, ~~Gladys O'Donnell~~, I know wanted to be national  
 committeewoman later. I know she was a heavy contributor,  
 et cetera. I think really that some of those things  
 were the things that threw it off. I really do.

Governor Knight was not the strong governor that we  
 were accustomed to having actually and he really had  
 lost a lot of his vitality and he really lost a lot of  
 his support, just generally, just naturally, and there  
 was the feeling that he could easily be defeated and we'd  
 have a Democrat go in. So I think it was pretty much  
 tied up in that ~~type of~~ bundle of situations.

Stein: *The Republican Convention; Women's Activities, 1960*  
 The last campaign I was going to ask you about was in '60.

That would have been the last one that you were involved  
 in. Were you a hostess again in that one?

Benedict: Oh, yes. That was in San Francisco. That was my last campaign--  
 I mean my last official campaign!--at the ~~convention~~ convention  
 here.

Stein: What was that one like?



Benedict: Well, that didn't have nearly the excitement that the  
~~the~~ '52, and '56 had. We had really a very busy one,  
of course, and I did have charge of all of the women's  
hospitality, et cetera, over there. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Oh, there  
were ever so many things that we ~~really~~ did. But one of  
the big things that was exciting or satisfying I guess I'd  
say is that I did put on a big luncheon and fashion show  
for Mamie Eisenhower, *in her honor*, because she loved clothes  
and hats, ~~and~~

Of course, there were many of the cabinet officers and  
their wives you know everybody comes to national conventions.  
So they were all invited. We had it in the Palace Hotel in  
the Garden Court because that's such a delightful place and  
we just took over the Palace Hotel. There was a beautiful  
fashion show, ~~and~~ I always made it a point personally  
to wear nothing but California clothes. I had to depart  
somewhat on hats, but no more than I had to. But I always  
featured personally California garments. So I wanted this  
to feature California fashions which it did and did very,  
very well. Hedda Hopper commentated.

Stein: Oh, my goodness!

Benedict: Oh, it was tremendous, just tremendous. [pauses to recall name]

Stein: I know whonyou mean. *I can't recall her first name.*

Benedict: We'll think of it and put it in. Isn't that stupid? I  
hadn't thought about this *for so long.*

*Mrs Behr*  
*Benedict*



Stein: Bernice?

Benedict: Oh, absolutely. Bernice Behrens helped in coordinating with the fashion people because she herself was representing-- and so it really was a great show.

Stein: She represented a hat manufacturer, didn't she?

Benedict: Yes, she did. So I had her, and the people who knew her, and she worked through ~~the~~ stores here in the Bay Area, <sup>to</sup> do all of my "hatting" for me. Oh, dear! They knew my wardrobe completely and would do the hats. ~~That~~ That was fun. ~~That~~ That

was really a good thing, but a ~~terrible~~ <sup>terrible</sup> job. We featured begonias because those, of course, are very rare in so many states as far as <sup>quantity</sup> ~~quantities~~. <sup>One of our</sup> active Republican workers, and <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ the Republican assembly, and several times <sup>a</sup> delegates <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ the convention--

*Correct editing*

~~the~~ ~~has~~ has a tremendous nursery of begonias, beautiful ones. So we got one of our friends to fly down <sup>to his gardens in Capitol</sup> the night before and get a whole <sup>mass of them,</sup> and they mounted them on every one of these round tables. It was gorgeous, just gorgeous! But they loved it. Well, that was one of the big things.

*of these?*

Then, ~~of course,~~ they had a headquarters for all women-- information, and orange juice, or cokes, or whatever they would like, and a place to sit down in an uptown area, ~~the~~ things of that sort. ~~Of~~ Of course, when it's in your own state you ~~get~~ get a few more instances





Benedict: of appointments for assistants on the floor of the convention.

*biggest thing*  
~~of various categories that they could have done.~~ Because  
 I had all of those <sup>responsibilities</sup> I really didn't work on any other full  
 committee--no credentials, no sites! <sup>[laughs]</sup> The site, that was  
 a funny one because <sup>on</sup> that one <sup>in 1950</sup> I was startled, completely  
 startled. The first time that we had the convention out  
 here I didn't even go to the site committee. [laughs] I  
 had no idea what it was. I didn't pay any attention to it.  
 All of a sudden someone came out [and said], "Marjorie, you're  
 going to have the convention this time!" ~~That was the first~~  
 one. ~~and~~ This one I knew of course ahead of time.

*wasn't this?*  
 We did have some special meetings for the women on this one  
 which worked out very well. Bertha Adkins was the head of our  
 women's activities. She was assistant chairman of the national  
*Committee of*  
 women, from Maryland, and she came out well ahead of time and we  
 had some meetings for the women. ~~and~~ They were really work  
 meetings, ~~was~~ to put out some of the plans for ~~the~~  
 campaigning, ~~right~~ We really started early with our  
 women's campaigning. In fact, for all of our campaigning  
 I have stacks and stacks of samples of materials that we  
 used. I sometimes wonder as I look back at it ~~if~~ maybe  
 we should use the same one over and over again! But every-  
 time everybody thinks they have to have something new.

Stein: Oh, of course. They have to have a role in creating something.

Benedict: Yes. But anyway. No, there wasn't anything more than ~~the~~



Benedict: usual convention at that ~~time~~. We had the unpleasant experience of having—I don't know whether they were *union* ~~young~~ people or who they were that blockaded the entrances and exits from the convention for awhile. I can't remember what that was, ~~but~~ it was on labor. *or some other issue.*

~~A~~ <sup>9</sup> A cordon of local police had to make a pathway for us to go out to get into our various cars and ~~the~~ charter buses. ~~That~~ That wasn't a very good way to entertain people except to let them know that we have lots of that in California, <sup>*much more than they do in some of these other states*</sup> That's why some of these other states were horrified. In some of our buses we had to sit and wait and wait and wait before we could move. The police *said there was* nothing they could do about it and it was pretty horrible. That was really taking it too far, ~~and~~ We waited for forty-five minutes <sup>*one time,*</sup> so finally the San Francisco police came and said, "Well, I guess ~~there's~~ <sup>*the only*</sup> way you can get <sup>*out*</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>*ee*</sup> ~~back~~ to back out and go down the back alley." That's a great way for a national convention to exit.

Stein: Sneaking out the back door!

Benedict: Yes, it really was. But there really wasn't anything out of the <sup>*ordinary*</sup> ~~As~~ I say, it was <sup>*pretty*</sup> much of a routine type of convention. Of course, they're all exciting and the tensions build up tremendously. ~~As~~ <sup>*in*</sup> In the '52 one and '56, but '52 in particular, oh, the tensions really were dreadful. You just get to the point, because you



Benedict: don't get your sleep and you're just up so--that finally *the tears* just pop out. But it's a great experience and that is our American politics.

Stein: You once mentioned, I think, in one of our very early conversations, that one of the things you worked hard on with the various conventions was getting more women *on the delegation.*

Benedict: Oh, yes. I always did stand up for the women, *needless to say.* Governor Warren was very cooperative and I indicated to him as the committee was discussing the appointments and all that I did want very definitely to have *more* recognition for the women. He looked at me and he said, "Marjorie, how many do you have to have?" [laughs] I don't know; maybe I shouldn't say that. Maybe it was "how many should you have" or "how many do you need" or something.

*So* with that they looked over the different districts. The difficulty is that your wealth of capable women who deserve to really take a part in the convention and can be very helpful, of course, live in the areas where they have an abundance of men too. So it's always difficult. You try to balance them out and there's no way of getting everything that you want, either for men or for women in our large areas, our large districts. But we do the best we can, ~~and~~ *We* never went backwards on the participation of women.



Benedict: We would gain a bit. Of course, there's always the question of expense too--having to travel for quite a distance.

If you are a delegate you really have to figure on about a week of hotel expenses and meals and so on, and it's a large item. <sup>Majorie Benedict's innovations for the Inaugural</sup> One of the things that I thoroughly enjoyed about the inaugurals is the possibility of having participation in the parade from your state. On the first one in '52 I persuaded the parade committee, through the national committee, ~~that~~ that it would be very well to accept the suggestion that I was going to make and that was to have a high school band in the parade. They had never had a high school band. There were always so many others that want<sup>ed</sup> to go. ~~and~~ ~~it~~ They thought it over and said, "Okay." ~~SA~~ I had one of the towns in the San Joaquin Valley (and I don't remember now which town it is; I'll have to look it up) <sup>which</sup> had won a prize for their band in some of the school contests that we have here. I had been informed that they had had this honor and they of course would like to be remembered in some way. So that was what I arranged; ~~was~~ for them to go and be in the parade, with the promise that locally they would raise the funds to send them and take care of them. They did a good job and I was very proud. Since then there ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> been some high school and college participation, which is good.

Parade, 1952

Then we ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> lots of equestrian units in that parade.





Benedict: Of course, there are so many marvelous equestrian units in Southern California with the Pasadena parade and they're marvelous. So there were two there that had been before ~~and~~ and they expected to go again, but I also got the Ahmes mounted unit from Oakland to go.

Stein: Which mounted unit?

Benedict: The Ahmes. [spells name] It's the ~~Templers~~<sup>a</sup>--the Shriners. They had beautiful horses and, of course, they take their own horses and that's a lot of expense. Then they went in their best dress and so on and, oh, that was a big thing for this area because we, of course, had never had any such before or since, as far as I know. I also got tickets for them to some of the things back there which thrilled them no end. I have no idea where they stayed or where they slept. [laughs] I told them that was up to them; I couldn't do anything about that! That and their food they had to take care of. Well, they would and they did.

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-I guess they must have asked me where I was going to be or something *of the sort,* and so I told them ~~that was the party~~ Oh, that was a bitter cold day, ~~when they came by,~~ the national committee and some of the other dignataries in the party and in the Congress were seated in the section next to the president's box. Somehow or other I rated a front seat. I don't know just how but ~~anyway~~ <sup>anyway</sup> I was there. So when this Ahmes group went by, the leader was looking for me and he spotted me so they gave me a bow. [laughs] People turned around and looked wondering



Benedict: what brought that on. Then, of course, they went on a few more steps to the president. But that really was very exciting. Those are things you don't anticipate and when they come it really is fun. ~~the~~ They ~~did~~ did a great credit to California which I was glad for.

Stein: That's all the questions I have for this time.

If we are able to meet together for another interview we can talk more about your experiences and ideas about women in politics, but if not I think we have covered some very significant areas of your years as a Republican party organizer and your interests in politics and in supporting the women and young people to move ahead in American politics--particularly of course in the Republican party. This has been a most interesting interview and I want to thank you for your participation in the project when at times I know that you were not feeling up to sitting and talking to me.



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Miriam Feingold Stein

B.A., Swarthmore College, 1963, with major in history.  
M.A., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1966, in American history; research assistant - Civil War and Reconstruction.

Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976, in American history, with minor field in criminology.

Field services and oral history for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1966-1967.

Instructor: American history, women's history, and oral history at Bay Area colleges, 1970 to present.

Leader: workshops on oral history, using oral history as teaching tool, 1973 to present.

Interviewer-editor for Regional Oral History Office, 1969 to 1979, specializing in law enforcement and corrections, labor history, and local political history.















