

Prepared by: EWH
Date: 12/7/95

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS, W. WALTER

OH-276

104 pgs. w/Index

PRCQ

Active in the Eisenhower campaign, Citizens for Eisenhower, 1951-52; Under Secretary of Commerce, 1953-58.

DESCRIPTION: PART I: Biographical material (incl. early years and education, military service, business association with Continental Incorporated, involvement in civic affairs, the Infantile Paralysis Foundation); the Committee for Economic Development (incl. various positions held, purpose of CED, anecdote concerning appointment as national chairman, influence of group); political activities (incl. acquaintance with Paul Hoffman, service as Republican state chairman, details of trip to Paris to see Eisenhower, anecdote regarding Eisenhower and the CED, anecdote regarding Eisenhower in Paris, purpose of trip); Citizens for Eisenhower (incl. association with group, Mary Lord, anecdote concerning Eisenhower and the committee, complexities of fund solicitations, reason for the Citizens organization, solving the "duplication of funds" perception, Williams' role, anecdote regarding Williams and a Town Meeting of the Air, coordination of groups supporting Eisenhower, reason for dedication of Eisenhower supporters, attracting voters outside the Republican Party); general factors involved in candidate selection (incl. Williams' assessment of characteristics of Eisenhower and Senator [Robert A.] Taft, reactions from Republican Party to Williams' support of Eisenhower); the Chicago Convention (incl. delegate problems, Williams' role at the convention); Williams' estimate of Paul Hoffman (incl. character, misconceptions concerning accomplishments); the campaign (incl. Williams' role, using [Richard M.] Nixon's political expertise to coordinate efforts); assuming the post of Under Secretary of Commerce (incl. preparation for position, job description, the St. Lawrence Seaway project, the running of the Commerce Department with Secretary Sinclair Weeks); the speech-making of the administration (incl. large volume of speaking requests, an anecdote regarding Williams, Milton Eisenhower, and a garbled newspaper report, the need for coordination to prevent conflict in policy statements, pressures on the Under Secretary as a spokesperson); problems faced by the Commerce Department (incl. attempts to change the fee structure in the Patent Office, Congressional opposition, political in-fighting, dealing with the Appropriations Committee); the balanced budget issue; the budgetary process (incl. bureau and departmental requests, strengths and weaknesses of the process); preparing Presidential messages (incl. involvement of departments, the governmental calendar); the civil service (incl. continuity of work force, working with senior civil servants, necessity for cooperation between career and appointive personnel, desirability of retaining qualified people); Eisenhower's grasp of business and commercial affairs; Williams' relationship with [John] Foster Dulles (incl. anecdote concerning a Dulles' birthday party, anecdotes covering different aspects of Williams' friendship with Dulles).

PART II: The National Bureau of Standards (incl. disproving the nuclear physics law of parity, the low temperature studies, problems of funding, importance of Bureau); development of personal contacts between members of Cabinet and Congress; the Departments of Labor and Commerce (incl. relationship between the two departments, the question of merging the

departments); The Trade Agreement Act; areas of concern for the Under Secretary (incl. personnel problems involving security risks, the purpose of the Office of Business Economics, working with the Advisory Board on Economic Growth and Stability, the Budget Director, and the Security Council); the Atomic Energy Commission; relationship with Dr. Arthur Burns (incl. assessment of character, anecdote regarding Burns' position as chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors); economic cycles (incl. recessions from 1948 through 1961, transition problems from the wartime price-controlled economy to a free market economy, strategies for dealing with the economy, difficulties of cutting government expenditures); Williams' part in the 1956 campaign; responsibilities of the Coastal Geodetic Survey and the Bureau of the Census; Williams' decision to leave the Commerce Department (incl. reasons for leaving, the costs of being a public servant in Washington); confirmation as Under Secretary of Commerce; comments about Lewis Strauss; the Nixon campaign in 1960 (incl. Williams' role in the campaign, assessment of Nixon as a candidate, comments about [George W.] Romney, [Charles] Chuck Percy, Nelson [A.] Rockefeller, [Ronald W.] Reagan); other members of Williams' family with political careers.

NAME INDEX.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by John T. Mason, Jr., Part I, September 20, 1967; Part II, September 22, 1967]