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BUSH

BUSH, PRESCOTT (OH-31) 458 pages PRCQ (M)

Business executive; United States Senator from Connecticut, 1952-1962.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. Personal background: education, military service, father's career. Discusses at length his career in investment business: association with W.A. Harriman & Company, an investment banking organization, its merger with Brown Brothers & Company in 1931, impact of depression on investment business, effects of New Deal regulations and soundness of Banking Act of 1934; comments on Richard Dupree and Stanley Resor; comments on Bush's experiences on the Board of Directors of CBS; briefly discusses investment in Latin America; discusses in detail Averell Harriman career: compared with Kennedy family and contrasted with his brother, Roland Harriman. Relates Bush's early political activities: his participation in Greenwich, Connecticut town meetings, involvement in Republican politics in Connecticut, his money raising activities for such national candidates as Alfred Landon, Robert Taft, and Thomas Dewey, and his chairmanship of Connecticut Republican Finance Committee. Describes efforts to persuade Bush to run for Congress in 1946; comments on Henry Luce's interest in politics and on Bush's decision to run for election to complete unexpired Senate term in 1950; describes narrow loss to William Benton in 1950 and relates decision to run again in 1952. Describes relationship with Senator William Purtell; comments on religion as a political issue in Connecticut.

Interview #2. Comments on politics and personalities: DDE's attitude toward political cooperation, nomination of Martin Durkin as Secretary of Labor and Senator Taft's reaction, nomination of William Taft as ambassador to Ireland. Describes relationship with Robert Taft and comments on relationship with Sherman Adams. Describes dinner at burning Tree Golf Club; comments on Margaret Chase Smith and Smith's opposition to Lewis Strauss nomination for Secretary of Commerce. Discusses Bush's appointment to commission on Foreign Economic Policy (Randall Commission); describes work of Commission and DDE's desire for guidance from it. Comments on service on Senate Public Works Committee, Banking and Currency Committee and on Armed Services Committee; discusses travel while member of Senate Armed Services Committee; comments on "junkets" and actual value of travel. Gives impressions of Senator Joseph McCarthy: comments on McCarthy appearance in Connecticut during 1952 Campaign, dinner conversation with McCarthy re George Marshall, Army-McCarthy hearings, Roy Cohn and David Schine, Senate censure of McCarthy, and McCarthy's personality.

Interview #3. Comments on certain individuals including Oveta Culp Hobby, George Humphrey, John Foster Dulles, Robert Lovett, and Richard Nixon. Briefly discusses various issues: establishment of Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the St. Lawrence Seaway, racial segregation and civil rights legislation. Discusses methods of obtaining views of various groups from within Connecticut on legislative issues. Comments on veterans and postal employees lobbies. Discusses logrolling and pork

barrel legislation; mentions 1954 Congressional elections; comments on DDE's popularity as a factor in legislative matters, DDE as Republican Party man, and DDE's real human sympathy. Discusses urban development in Connecticut. Comments on Congressional briefings on foreign affairs, classified testimony, and leaks. Explains rationale for national highway program; criticizes agricultural programs and expresses agreement with Ezra Taft Benson's philosophy; discusses Senate powers, especially treaty ratification and approval of appointments; remarks briefly about Formosa, Hungarian and Polish uprisings, Aswan Dam and Suez Crisis, and minimum wage legislation.

Interview #4. Emphasis on politics and 1956 campaign. Discusses Bush's Senate campaign against Thomas Dodd and describes Bush's duties as Chairman of Resolutions Committee of Republican National Committee. Describes Bush's campaign routine; comments critically about Thomas Dodd and describes Bush's confrontation with Vivian Kellums; Comments on lack of support from Republican conservatives such as William Knowland and Andrew Schoepel. Describes Eisenhower's meetings with Republican legislative leaders. Discusses Bush's support from the university community in Connecticut and mentions university opposition to communist affidavit bill. Remarks re Republican platforms for 1956 and 1960. Comments on birth control as state issue, League of Women Voters, Abraham Ribicoff, allegations of anti-Semitism, Clare Boothe Luce and assertive women. Also discusses use of television in campaigns, campaign expenses, nuclear testing as 1956 campaign issue. Some discussion of Sputnik's impact on public opinion and on education.

Interview #5. Interview devoted largely to developments during 1957-58 including Sputnik and U.S. space efforts, Little Rock crisis and race relations, foreign economic aid, European Common Market and the trade balance, and brief comments on Lebanon. Assesses U.S. role in world and comments on Vietnam. Discusses at length Sherman Adams and Goldfine incident. Remarks about Drew Pearson. Comments re Harris-Fulbright Act, George Bush and oil industry. Mentions James Hagerty as Press Secretary and comments on Lewis Strauss' personality clash with Senator Clinton Anderson; Strauss' failure to be confirmed as Secretary of commerce. Some comments on reciprocal trade, civil defense, missiles, railroad services, and a brief comparison of John Foster Dulles with Christian Herter.

Interview #6. Discusses in general manner foreign affairs during Eisenhower administration and DDE's popularity as factor in conduct of policy; comments on John F. Kennedy's use of foreign policy as issue in 1960 campaign; Talks about Christian Herter as Secretary of State and as possible vice presidential candidate in 1956. Discusses Richard Nixon at length including: DDE-Nixon relationship, Nixon's refusal to take position on Senator McCarthy, Nixon's usefulness to DDE, DDE's press conference remark re Nixon during 1960 campaign, difficulty of job of Vice President, Nixon's use of the communist issue during campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas, Nixon as President of Senate, Nixon's personality, Nixon's friendship with William Rogers, Nixon in Venezuela, and Nixon's "kitchen debate" with Nikita Khrushchev. Mentions Khrushchev's trip to the United States and discusses the philosophy of the Senate Armed

Services Committee members on national security matters. Describes social life of Senators. Comments on Eugene Black and compares World Bank with the United Nations and with the International Monetary Fund. Comments on Douglas Dillon as Secretary of Treasury under Kennedy and mentions DDE remark re Dillon as promising Republican presidential candidate for 1964. Comments briefly on legislation: minimum wage, Taft-Hartley repeal, Landrum-Griffin Bill and union power.

Interview #7. Discusses 1960 campaign and Bush's participation, DDE and Nixon during campaign, Kennedy charge of slipping U.S. prestige. Comments on labor involvement in politics. Briefly discusses Kennedy inauguration, Peace Corps, Alliance For Progress, Kennedy efforts at arms control, Kennedy's relations with Lyndon Johnson, and Kennedy's relations with Congress. Some remarks re Mike Mansfield as Senate Majority Leader. Discusses Bay of Pigs and CIA operations in general. Mentions Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting in Vienna, and refers to Germany and Cuba. Comments on Kennedy's rollback of steel prices, presidential oversight duties regarding economy and federal aid to education including parochial schools; mentions planned parenthood. Comments on cloture and filibusters in Senate. Talks about decision not to run for re-election in 1962, mentioning health as a factor; comments on retirement and his regrets at not running again. Humorous record of Alfalfa Club's nominating convention in 1959.

[Columbia University Oral History Project interviews by John T. Mason, Jr. in 1966]