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BENEDICT

BENEDICT, STEPHEN G.

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PRCQ

Assistant to the Research Director of Citizens for Eisenhower, 1952; Assistant White House Staff Secretary, 1953-55.

DESCRIPTION: PART I: Family background and education; graduation from St. John's College (1943-47); work for the Committee to Frame a World Constitution on University of Chicago campus; Robert Hutchins; Guiseppa Antonio Borghese; Harris Wofford; Stringfellow Barr and the Foundation for World Government; Henry Wallace; Benedict's language and music studies in Europe; return to America (1951) and interest in Voice of America; enthusiasm for Eisenhower, Alf Landon, Wendell Willkie; growing interest in politics (1952); Betty Haines; becomes assistant to Gabriel "Gabe" Hauge (research director of Citizens for Eisenhower); attitude of workers such as Stanley Rumbough and Charlie Willis toward Eisenhower's candidacy in pre-convention days; working with Hauge; the delegate accreditation issue; first meeting with Eisenhower; getting Eisenhower to formulate positions on issues (especially domestic); Eisenhower views as opposed to those of Senator Robert Taft and Adlai Stevenson; pre-convention press attitudes toward Eisenhower; Eisenhower's lack of knowledge in the area of race relations; Hauge as a speechwriter on the campaign train; Benedict's appointment to the speech writing team; purpose of speech writing operation in New York under C.D. Jackson; conflict between New York office and train staffs; Benedict's experiences on the campaign train: working conditions, Eisenhower's speech habits, values of a whistlestop campaign, dealing with difficult political problems, negative aspects of campaign, Eisenhower's effect on crowds, the Nixon problem, staff feeling about Eisenhower's ability to win election; Eisenhower's attitude toward the campaign and the Presidency; lack of coordination between Eisenhower and Nixon campaigns.

PART II: Anecdotes pertaining to the campaign train from Benedict's diary: OCT. 10, 1952—the Salt Lake City meeting in the Mormon Tabernacle, Ezra Taft Benson, and an irascible Eisenhower; OCT. 11—the Denver weekend, Wildon Hart and Dillon Anderson, Gabe Hauge oversleeps; SEPT. 22—Eisenhower's comments about being weary of speechmaking and campaigning, Homer Gruenther as Eisenhower's "look alike" stand-in, the "interior" Eisenhower vs. the public man; SEPT. 21—on the train, arrival of John Kreiter, the "Solvency Speech"; SEPT. 18—Gabe Hauge's comments on Eisenhower's imprecision; SEPT. 23—Nixon's televised "Checkers" speech and Eisenhower's reaction, Eisenhower's refusal to watch Adlai Stevenson's televised speeches, Nixon's meeting with Eisenhower in Wheeling, West Virginia; SEPT. 25—Hauge's comments on Gen. Robert Cutler and his importance to Eisenhower, Mamie's attitude toward campaigning; SEPT. 24—the Baltimore speech, Korea, briefing Eisenhower on foreign affairs, Eisenhower's temper, reception at Governor's Mansion in South Carolina, Governor Byrnes, General Hersey, Eisenhower's charm; JUNE 9—the annual plowing contest at Kasson, Minnesota, weak speech, John Bird and Walter Judd, press conference at Mayo Auditorium (Rochester) and strong speech to write-in workers; JULY (?) 9—meeting Adelaid Enright in St. Paul, George and Sally Pillsbury, Art

Minnich's views on Eisenhower's problems with taking a position on an issue; SEPT. 5—Orchestra Hall (Chicago) meeting, strong speech to precinct worker, reworking the farm speech; SEPT. 14—Mary Lord's worry over defections of independent voters, Congressman Halleck; SEPT. 17—AF of L labor policy speech elicits "warm reception" from labor delegates, Eisenhower's lack of expertise in labor affairs, campaign team's apprehensions concerning outcome of election, role of Mary Lord and Katherine Howard in campaign, reasons for Frank Altschul's defection to Stevenson, C.D. Jackson; SEPT. 18—Truman's denial of Eisenhower's steel strike story, the Nixon trust fund story breaks; SEPT. 19—Eisenhower's refusal to judge Nixon before "all facts were known"; SEPT. 21—Max Lerner's assertion that Harold Laski started ADA (Americans for Democratic Action) movement for Eisenhower in 1948, comments on various speech writers (Gabe Hauge, General Robert Cutler, Emmett Hughes, Raymond Moley, Kevin McCann, John Foster Dulles, Stanley High, Thomas Dewey, C.D. Jackson, Sherman Adams) and particular speech responsibilities, potential influence of a speech writer on a speech text, Eisenhower's revision work on speeches; OCT. 20 (?)—Adams' influence on Eisenhower and a foreign-policy document drafted by Dulles; OCT. 30—Eisenhower on party contributors; OCT. 29—Senator Frank Carlson, the Senator Joseph McCarthy problem; SEPT. 30—South Carolina, the Dulles document on bipartisanship, Arthur Vandenburg, Jr., Governor Jimmy Byrnes, Eisenhower telling campaign stories; practice of "policy by letters" and dangers thereof; SEPT. 10—Ed Green (Eisenhower's personal secretary), Benedict's reaction to Eisenhower on formally meeting him for first time; SEPT. 5—reaction to Dulles' foreign policy speech; FOLLOWING ELECTION—C.D. Jackson and the work on Eisenhower's first major foreign policy speech (containing the Fifth Fleet-China policy material), Dulles' exclusion from the process, Dulles' attitude toward Eisenhower's command of foreign policy; OCT. 3—reactions to the McCarthy problem and the union speech, Benedict's opinion of McCarthy; OCT. 5—Hauge's comments on Sherman Adams, Bill Chartner, speech drafts; OCT. 16—Al Smith speech, working on the Newark civil rights speech (Milton Eisenhower, Mel Pitsley, Harold Stassen, Robert Cutler, Emmett Hughes, the "liberals"), Eisenhower's attitude toward laws on civil rights, Harold Keller's complaints about C.D. Jackson's egoism, Harold Burton's problems with Jackson, Hauge's comments on the pressures exerted during the McCarthy-Marshall controversy (Wisconsin speech), Hauge's comments on Eisenhower's ability to select good men and opinion of Sherman Adams; OCT. 31—Chicago, last trip of campaign, Wally Tibbels; OCT. 29—discussion concerning Eisenhower's taking MacArthur with him to Korea or mentioning him in Chicago speech; OCT. 28—Eisenhower's "intense dislike" of Thomas Dewey; NOV. 3 and 4—after the Boston rally, Eisenhower in relaxed mood, Fred Waring and the sing-along.

PART III: Hauge's appointment to Eisenhower's White House staff as special assistant for economic affairs; Benedict's appointment as Hauge's assistant; the transition period following the election; cooperative efforts of Truman White House staff; "purging" the White House (firing all non-civil servants) by Roger Steffan; attitudes toward the transition period; Benedict's later study (the Brookings' Institution, 1960) with Laurin Henry on the problems of the transition of the Presidency from one man to another; scope and use of the study; rationale for the study; functioning of the new team following Inauguration Day (Jan. 20, 1953); the Joseph McCarthy situation; anecdote concerning Benedict's first meeting Robert T. "Bob" Stevens (Secretary of the Army); anecdote

concerning Dr. Gabriel Hauge, Eisenhower, and the Council on Foreign Economic Policy; C.D. Jackson as spokesman for the anti-McCarthy forces; Hauge's comment on Eisenhower's "naiveté"; further recollections based on Benedict's diary: MAY 20—planning for a TV program featuring Cabinet members; JUNE 2—filming the program with Eisenhower; AUG. 11—Adam's comments on the first six months of the Presidency, Eisenhower's place in history, the news media generally; AUG. 12—Eisenhower's quote on military budgets; NOVEMBER (?)—the Harry Dexter White case, staff reactions, Eisenhower's reaction; NOV. 16—tariff cases (hand-blown glassware and oats) and economic problems generally; MAR. 8, 1954—Eisenhower's anger over effects of McCarthy issue on country; MAR. 24 --staff division on McCarthy problem and how Eisenhower should react; Eisenhower's effort not to involve the Presidency; MAR. 26—the butter subsidy; APRIL 29—Eisenhower's meeting with the Commission on Foreign Economic Policy (Clarence Randall, Charles Percy); the tung oil argument; Eisenhower's interest in trade affairs; Joseph "Joe" Dodge, Budget Director; Roger Jones; establishment of staff secretariat in White House; Benedict's appointment (along with Arthur Minnich) to assistant staff secretary to General Paul T. Carroll, Staff Secretary; Benedict's duties involving White House staff functions, White House security reports; General Andrew Goodpaster's appointment as Staff Secretary; Benedict's decision to leave White House staff and move to US Information Agency to work with Abbott Washburn (May, 1955); Benedict's observations on stresses of White House positions; Sherman Adams, Robert Frost, and the White House staff poetry readings; Adams' love of classical music; staff social occasions.

A Name Index is located at the end of the transcript.

[Columbia University Oral History, interviews by John T. Mason, Jr., Sept. 13, 1968, Oct. 18, 1969, Dec. 6, 1968.]