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STRAUSS

STRAUSS, LEWIS L.

(OH-271)

178 pgs. w/Index

PRCQ

Member, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1946-50; Chairman, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1953-58

DESCRIPTION: INTERVIEW #1: Personal comments (incl. disclaimer of "Admiral" title and correct pronunciation of name); general ancestry; paternal grandfather; anecdotes regarding European forebears; anecdote regarding the Strauss Surgical Research Laboratory; parents; anecdotes about Virginia and West Virginia; secular education; religious convictions and training; grandparents; influence of paternal grandfather; anecdotes about his experiences selling shoes; furthering his education in the classics, the law, and science; experiences in Jewish congregations and inclinations toward the rabbinate; success as a drummer (i.e. salesman); analysis of character of successful salesman and of himself; relationship with brother; comments on closeness in families; Richmond; anecdote regarding his maternal grandfather's business enterprises; Confederate veterans and their stories; the cult of heroes; Virginia conservatism; Strauss' mother and World War I; anecdote concerning his first meeting with Herbert C. Hoover; first jobs in Hoover's office; relationship with Hoover; working for the Food Administration (incl. Strauss' volunteer status, military career/experiences in Europe, letter of commendation, anecdote regarding World War I French ration cards, impressions of [David] Lloyd George, anecdote regarding the Pinsk Massacre); anecdote regarding his return to America on a tugboat; anecdote regarding new employment (incl. Mortimer Schiff and Kuhn, Loeb and Co.,) perceptions of banking, refusal of League of Nations' position as Comptroller, gaining partnership, Justice [Louis] Brandeis' opinion of Strauss' entrance into banking; successes and failures.

INTERVIEW #2: Anecdote about his childhood involvement with the West Avenue Gang and subsequent eye damage; memory development; authorship (both books and articles); anecdote regarding the China Consortium (incl. membership and purpose of club, a dinner at the University Club, the anti-Jewish problem, confrontation with Mortimer and Jacob Schiff, resignation and reinstatement at Kuhn, Loeb & Co.); comments about his love for the Latin classics; career at Kuhn, Loeb (incl. acquiring new clients, comments about railroad management, attaining partnership, comments about Sir William Wiseman, the workings of the investment banking business); details of the Stock Market Crash of 1929; observations about lending money; work with the Jewish Agricultural Society and other philanthropic groups; thoughts about the founding of Israel (incl. early objection to Zionism, Dr. Chaim Weizman and the Balfour Declaration, first acquaintance with Dr. Weizman, anecdote regarding Justice Brandeis and Weizman, comments on several Jewish leaders in Israel, the future of Jewish-Arabic relations); anecdote regarding relationship with the Metropolitan Opera; thoughts on choices made in life; relationship with Temple Emmanuel (incl. the merger of two synagogues, serving as president); relationship with the Institute for Advance Study at Princeton (incl. presidency and the [Dr. J. Robert] Oppenheimer affair); confrontation with [Joseph] Joe Alsop

and aftermath; opinion of Drew Pearson and examples of his misrepresentations of facts; Navy career (incl. duties at the Bureau of Ordnance, streamlining inspection services, anecdote regarding the [Admiral E.J.] King-Strauss "war," other Navy jobs, instituting the "Ordnance E" Award).

INTERVIEW #3: Strauss' book Men and Decisions; retirement from active duty and return to Kuhn, Loeb; appointment to the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC); rationale for developing a thermonuclear weapon; anecdote regarding the first Russian test; anecdote regarding Truman and the dedication of the Hoover Presidential Library; preparing to serve on the AEC (incl. principle of conflict of interest, examples of its application, meeting co-commissioners); background to formation of the AEC (incl. Truman's concerns following Hiroshima, the May-Johnson Bill, the scientists' lobby, General [Leslie] Groves, the military-civilian-control question, the Military Liaison Committee); the AEC assumption of authority from the Corps of Engineers; problems of security (incl. espionage, surveillance, security procedures, history of spying); recording the history of the AEC; leaving the AEC (incl. dissenting votes, an anecdote regarding John F. Kennedy, Strauss' attitude toward security procedures); AEC briefings (incl. examples of espionage problems, effects on personal life); anecdotes regarding Strauss' dissenting opinions and breaches of security; working for the Rockefellers; appointment as Chairman of AEC (incl. lack of interest in job, developing a nuclear-powered submarine, instituting the Shippingport power plant for commercial use, analyzing the growing interest in nuclear power use); nature of his work for the Rockefellers.

NAME INDEX.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interviews by John Mason, Jr., January 23 and February 14, 1962, and February 26, 1963]