

Prepared by: EWH  
Date: 12/4/97

HAYS

**HAYS, BROOKS**

**OH-295**

**166 pp. w/Index**

**PRCQ**

Congressman from Arkansas, 1943-59; involved in Little Rock, Arkansas, school integration crisis, 1957

**DESCRIPTION: PART I:** Biographical information; political activities (incl. Arkansas state politics, Congressional experiences, post-Congressional offices, teaching posts); comments about Eisenhower's character and talents; anecdotes involving a trip to Europe in 1944; anecdote involving a visit with Eisenhower in 1951; comments concerning Eisenhower's potential as a Presidential candidate; general background of Hays' involvement in civil rights (incl. rationale for introducing the Arkansas Plan, political criticism resulting from civil rights' advocacy, major provisions of the Arkansas Plan); acquaintance with Sherman Adams; concerns raised by the Supreme Court decision, *Topeka vs. Brown* (incl. Hays' feelings about the decision, his role as a states rights liberal, the importance of the Declaration of Principles in terms of Southern unity, the role played by Gov. Orval Faubus); background to the Little Rock crisis (incl. implications of calling out state troops, Hays' sense of responsibility for taking action, anecdote involving Sherman Adams and the developing situation, Hays' record of events, negotiating for the Faubus-Eisenhower meeting, Faubus' reputation as a moderate, Hays' role in the negotiations with Faubus, Faubus' view of the meeting with Eisenhower, the meeting in Newport).

**PART II:** Major aspects of Hays' Arkansas Plan; the situation regarding integration prior to the Little Rock crisis (incl. Faubus' public statements, the Little Rock school board integration plan, the pressures exerted by the White Citizens Council movement, Faubus' vacillating stance, the Faubus advisors, the Hays-Faubus relationship, the attitude of the Little Rock business community, Winthrop Rockefeller's position); Hays' conversation with former President [Harry S] Truman regarding Faubus; consequences of the National Guard call-out; the Newport meeting with Eisenhower and subsequent events (incl. Faubus' attitude, Atty. Gen. Herbert Brownell's role, Eisenhower's position, details of Faubus' statement following the meeting, Hays' speech to the Little Rock Lions Club, the question of when to begin integration in schools); Hays' comments on the public need for law and order; anecdote regarding reactions to a proposed federal troop pull-out; attitudes of other Southern governors; Hays' comments on the efficacy of actions taken by both federal and state entities; comments about the relationship between Hays and Faubus; evolution of Hays' convictions.

**PART III:** Recapitulation of the events preceding the violence in Little Rock (incl. the question of state vs. Federal power, political ramifications, community input, questions concerning the use of federal marshals); Hays' personal situation during this period; Bishop [Robert] Brown's assessment of the controversy; Hays' comments on the necessity for federal action; Hays' re-election campaign (incl. strategies used against him, his reasons for not contesting the election); general comments about the political climate in Arkansas (incl. Dr. Dale Alford's political career, the governor's race in 1966, the issues raised); incidents at Central High School following integration; Hays' position as head of the Southern Baptist Convention; the attitude of the community during the Little Rock crisis (incl. the stance taken by the clergy, the firing of

Virgil Blossom, the performance of the media, the feeling of the black community); general comments about leadership (incl. that of the black community, President Eisenhower, Hays himself); Hays' TVA experiences; anecdote involving the Eisenhowers and humor; general comments about Eisenhower (incl. assessment of his character, two incidents involving foreign affairs policy, anecdote concerning some civil rights questions).

### **Name Index**

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interviews by John Luter, Part I, June 27, 1970; Part II, June 28, 1970; Part III, July 27, 1970]