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Rehnquist Denies Harassing Negroes

WASHINGTON (UPI) — William H. Rehnquist yesterday denied he was present at a Phoenix, Ariz., election precinct on the day in 1964 that two black democratic poll watchers swore he harassed Negro voters.

Rehnquist, one of President Nixon's two Supreme Court nominees, also denied he was ever a member of an Arizona political group that Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) called the "precursor" of the John Birch Society.

Rehnquist's denials were included in written answers to 15 questions submitted to him Friday by Democratic liberals on the Senate Judiciary Committee. The panel is considering Nixon's nomination of Rehnquist, now an assistant attorney general, and attorney Lewis F. Powell Jr. of Richmond, Va.

FBI Inquiry

Powell's nomination has stirred only mild opposition.

The committee is scheduled to meet on the nominations Tuesday, when it will review Rehnquist's answers as well as the results of a special committee-requested inquiry by the FBI into his political background.

During hearings on the appointment, Clarence Mitchell, the NAACP's Washington

representative, gave the committee two affidavits alleging that Rehnquist, in his role as a Republican Party challenger, pulled Negro voters out of the line at the Bethune precinct and made

them recite portions of the Arizona constitution.

The affidavits were sworn to by two Democratic Party workers, Jordan Harris and Robert Tate. The affidavits identified three women by

their last names as among those Rehnquist allegedly tried to intimidate.

STRUGGLE

The men said they interceded and that the conflict became so heated there was a struggle.

Rehnquist had previously denied the substance of the charge, but in his written answer to the senators he denied even being present on Nov. 3, 1964.

"I was not present at Bethune precinct at any time on election day in 1964," he said in his one sentence answer to a detailed question about the charges.

On another issue, the senators, who besides Bayh included Sens. Philip A. Hart (Dem-Mich.) and Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) asked Rehnquist about a St. Louis Post-Dispatch story suggesting he may have once been a member of an organization in Phoenix known as Arizonians for America.

DISAVOWED

Rehnquist disavowed any membership, past or present, in the organization.

"I have never been a member of Arizonians for America or for America, Rehnquist wrote.

"I have seen a newspaper clipping from a local newspa-

per in 1958 which indicates that I was one of four panelists who appeared at a meeting of Arizonians for America in 1958 to discuss the federal income tax. While I have no independent recollection of speaking at such a meeting, I have no reason to dispute the newspaper account."