

Mail Firm Sought Humphrey

Knight Newspapers Service

WASHINGTON — A political mailing company in California, tied to Herbert Kalmbach's law firm, attempted to buy another mailing company then doing 1972 campaign work for Sen. Hubert Humphrey and the labor movement.

The California firm, financed by partners of Kalmbach, who was then the President's personal lawyer and fund-raiser, earlier had gotten the contract to work for Sen. George McGovern, without telling McGovern's aides who the company's backers were.

McGovern's mailings during the June 6 California primary campaign were badly bungled by the company — Computer Ideas.

But more important to McGovern's former aides, as they look back on the campaign, Computer Ideas, which began in business shortly before the election year, closed its doors after the campaigns were over —

Tied to Nixon Lawyer

keeping the valuable computer lists of Democratic voters compiled by the McGovern staff.

While Computer Ideas was working for the McGovern campaign, in the spring of 1972, two of its officials, president Roger Haney and vice president William Butcher, journeyed to Minneapolis.

And although their own firm was mishandling mailings in California for McGovern and other Democrats, and was to go bankrupt a few months later, the officials of Computer Ideas tried to buy Valentine & Sherman.

Norman Sherman, chairman of the firm and a former aide to Humphrey, said he thought it "fishy" at the time. He did not know, however, that Computer Ideas

had been backed by the Kalmbach firm.

Sherman said when he declined their offer, they suggested their company be hired to do the computer letter mailings, meaning that Valentine & Sherman would have turned over its valuable voter and labor movement lists to Computer Ideas.

Sherman said "they offered to do the computer mailings at such a phenomenally low price, we were tempted. But it was so low, it sounded fishy."

Valentine & Sherman, during that period, was handling Humphrey mailings in the Florida and Wisconsin primaries.

Sherman, whose firm continued doing mailings for labor and Democratic candidates during 1972, also said he suspected "someone was sabotaging our operations."

"We suggested one of our operators or programmers was doing something," Sherman said.