

Arkansas Governors' Project

Interview with

Sid McMath,  
David Pryor's Office – Hillcrest,  
Little Rock, Arkansas,  
28 March 2001

Interviewer: Roy Reed

[Note: There were many unidentified people present in the room while this interview was conducted. Also present were Ernie Dumas and Lloyd George.]

Sid McMath: I [ ] at General Motors, but they had an ad on there for automobiles that were tested in Arkansas mud [laughter].

David Pryor: Arkansas mud! I want him to start off telling about the — I want him to tell not only about the Dixiecrat revolt in 1948 and Strom Thurmond — I would also love for you, Governor, to tell about the time you flew up to Berryville and landed in that turkey patch and went to that co-op.

SM: Is there somebody here from the co-op yet?

[Lloyd George?]: Yes, sir!

HA: Yes.

[LG?]: God's people! [Laughter]

SM: Well, you know, the cooperative movement originally wasn't very popular, except for the farmers who were trying to get electricity which was not being provided to them by the private power companies at that time. So the co-ops were considered socialistic. Some of them called them communistic. They were

borrowing money from the government from the REA [Rural Electrification Assistance?] program to build generating and transmission plants, so that was socialistic. But it was all right from some of the big companies to borrow money from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. That was free enterprise!

[Laughter] Anyway, I was the first governor to attend a co-op meeting. They weren't popular, and you didn't gain much political support by going to visit with them, but I thought, potentially, they would be a factor, and I was very much in sympathy with their cause because I'd lived on the farm without these electric accommodations. Well, I flew up to — I was invited by Russ Gates, who was the manager of the co-op at Berryville, Arkansas, to come up and talk to them. They had these meetings in great big tents, you know. The ladies kept [cool] by using a fan that was furnished by the funeral home. I flew up there in a two-seater plane, and we landed in a farmer's turkey pasture. We had to make two passes in order to shoo the turkeys off the turkey pasture. I was all prepared to make a statement when I landed there. There'd be a press delegation or press representation, and delegation for the co-op, and, maybe, the mayor, and so forth. So I was all primed. We landed and taxied up to the gate. I got out and there wasn't anybody there. Nobody. It was July. I took off my coat and started walking down a dusty road, which I paved after that. I had gotten really warm, and a fellow came along in a truck. He stopped his truck and said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to the co-op meeting." He said, "Get in. That's where I'm going." So we went up to this meeting and I visited around, and so forth. It came time for the

program, and I was [introduced]. I was speaking. Russ Gates gave me an introduction, a flowery introduction, and presented me as the governor of Arkansas. Well, this farmer who had brought me to town was on the front row. When [Russ] announced me as the governor of Arkansas, he turned to his neighbor and said in a loud voice, “He ain’t no governor, he’s a hitchhiker!” [Laughter] “I know, ‘cause I brung him to town!” [Laughter]

[Unknown]: That’s great!

SM: And so that was my introduction to the co-ops. Mr. Moses, he was on the other side of this problem with the co-ops because they had the thing going and they didn’t want the competition. They didn’t want to serve the area because, at that time, it wasn’t very profitable, but he realized that someday it would be. And Mr. Moses and I got along personally fine. I was in a meeting with him one time in Berryville. When the meeting was over, he said, “How about riding with me back down to Harrison?” So I rode with him. After a while, he told me what he wanted. He said, “Now, we don’t mind you — ” And Floyd, this is what he told me. He said, “We don’t mind you going around talking to these cooperative people, but don’t you go out there trying to get this steam generating plant for them at Ozark!” He said, “Now, we’re going to look very askance at that.” I said, “Well, you’ve convinced me.” But we found [a site?] for the steam generating plant, and the co-op had done a tremendous job. They really transformed the face of this state and served the people, and today they’re doing a great job. And I hope they continue to get a good source of electric power.

DP: When you got out of the Marine Corps after World War II and came back to Hot Springs, kind of set the stage a moment for us as to what was going on in Hot Springs at this time with the so-called machine and the gambling and what have you.

SM: Well, of course, I think everybody is pretty well familiar with that, but if you've read this story that some guy wrote about Hot Springs recently, that was pure fiction.

DP: Yes.

SM: He had a — it was a good, interesting story, but it was pure fiction. But, as you know, the gambling was illegal and it was wide open. McLaughlin built his power up on the illegal gambling, but to keep the gambling, he had to control — they had to control — all the law enforcement agencies. They had to elect the prosecuting attorney, the sheriff, comptroller, grand juries, appellate juries — they controlled the election machines. They controlled the state's committee over there, the county committee, and they selected their judges and clerks — selected from the gambling houses and business interests who had a common interest with the administration. So they could tell you just about in advance how the election was going to turn — they could not only tell you how it was going to turn out, but they could just about give you the vote! Well, if you opposed that organization, some bad things could happen to you. If you had a mortgage on your place of business, they'd buy the mortgage and close you down, or get your job. If you had a business that required a state license, they'd have the license lifted. And, if you persisted, you could have—some physical harm could [come] to you. I know of one

person who opposed their sheriff in a campaign and ran a really rough race, criticized the administration. After it was over, he was invited by a so-called friend into a back alley, and he was executed. His name was Brad Smith. He was the brother of Cleveland Smith, who was a prominent contractor in Hot Springs. So things like that went on, and if you had a case in the court—if the administration had any interest in that case, civil or criminal, it would turn out the way they wanted it to. They had the jury selected. McLaughlin was practicing law. If you had a case with him on the other side, well, you could just wrap it up. Anyway, we had just gotten back from the war. We'd been fighting for freedom around the world, and we thought we could use a little of it in Hot Springs, so our objective, number one, was to return the vote to the people. Have honest elections and let people vote, and have the vote counted as cast, and just have a place there where the people really rule the community. We selected candidates for all offices to run in the primary. Well, of course, our primary was in July and August, and you had to have your poll tax the year before. Of course, we hadn't had a poll tax drive, and the administration always bought up poll taxes. One man by the name of Jack McJunkin—he was a gambler. He had two thousand poll tax receipts which he used and gave out on election day. He'd attach a two-dollar bill to them and give them to people to go in and vote. They were repeater voters. They'd go [vote] in different places. And if that didn't do the job, when the vote polls were closed, they just cross-marked the ballots — they just counted out whatever they needed. So in the primary, everybody was defeated. All our candidates were defeated except me, and the reason I won, they [ ] the count in Garland County because, partially, Montgomery County was part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial

District. And I had a lot of support in Montgomery County, so I got a good vote up there. It offset the vote against me in Garland County. It so happened that the telephone communication system from Mt. Ida to Hot Springs was cut so that they couldn't get word of how many votes they had to count up in Garland County to offset what I'd gotten in Montgomery County. So we had a foot in the door. We decided everybody would run as an independent. Of course, in the general election, you could get [ ] — you could get a poll tax up until twenty days before the election. So we had a tremendous poll tax drive, and since I was elected — we had a prosecuting attorney because that was tantamount to an election, as you know. So the people got encouraged to believe that, "Well, maybe we can make a change." My people were exhilarated by the fact that, "Well, we've got the prosecuting attorney. We've got a new election in the general election. Maybe we can win." But they still [brought?] up these poll taxes. They had those for every election. So what to do about it? We couldn't contest — get the ballots thrown out in the circuit court. Judge Witt was one of the boys, you know. Nathan Schoenfeld, who was a good friend of mine, a good lawyer and so forth, he came up with the idea, "Well, if we could get it in the federal court, we might get some justice." Pat Mullis, who was a friend of mine in Pine Bluff, Arkansas — it was too late for him to file as a candidate, but he said, "I'll run as a write-in." He announced as a write-in candidate, so that gave us federal jurisdiction. We could go into federal court. We went into federal court and contested it, and threw out enough of the illegal ballots. Judge Johnny Miller was the judge, and he didn't frown upon candidates running as independents because he had gone to the United States Senate, running against Carl Bailey, as an independent. Do

you remember Carl Bailey, who got nominated by the state committee for the senate? Miller didn't like that. A lot of people didn't like it, so he ran against him as an independent. So Judge Miller gave us a ruling on it, and the way we found out, we brought in people to testify that the poll tax receipt they had, they had not authorized anybody to get it, and a lot of the receipts that these people had were signed by dead people. It was kind of hard to believe how these dead people, or people who were out of town, could sign for these poll taxes. Anyway, we made out a good case, and all GIs were elected. McLaughlin was indicted by a grand jury. He got a change of venue [from?] Montgomery County. The jury didn't exactly exonerate him, but they didn't convict him. But he resigned as mayor, and Earl Ricks was elected mayor of [Hot Springs]. Do most of you remember Earl Ricks? He was a great flyer during the war, and he became my attorney general in charge of the Arkansas National Guard. He went on to Washington as commander of the federal air guard, and was appointed to major general.

Roy Reed: Governor, could you follow up on something you said about the night of the election where you won prosecuting attorney . . .

SM: Yes.

RR: . . . because they couldn't control the votes in Montgomery County . . .

SM: Yes.

RR: . . . because the telephone line was cut.

SM: Yes.

RR: Do you have any idea how that phone line was cut?

SM: I — we don't have any idea! [Laughter] We never did find out. Of course, we didn't search — we didn't look too diligently to find out who did it. [Laughter] It was probably just bad maintenance. [Laughter]

DP?: Termites. [Laughter]

SM: Termites. [Laughter]

DP?: As a Marine in World War II, had you learned anything of guerilla tactics?

SM: Had I learned anything of guerilla tactics?

DP?: Yes, sir. Communications are not something that [ ] Marines learn [ ].  
[Laughter]

SM: [Laughs] Yes, we cut a few lines of communication. [Laughter]

DP: One little story, speaking of Governor McMath's Marine experiences — would you mind telling them about the battle scene where the young soldier was informed of a little debt? Would you tell that story because we've got it on the TV thing.

SM: You know, the Marines landed at Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942, and it was the first ground force offensive action of the war. The Marines got ashore without any material opposition. It was just kind of a surprise to the Japanese. But about forty-eight hours later, a Japanese task force came down at night and sunk five of our cruisers, including the Australian cruiser, the [*Vincent?*]. Of course, our cargo and transport ships hadn't completed unloading, so they had to weigh anchor and go out to sea. Fortunately, that admiral, after he had sunk these cruisers, turned around and got out. He could've followed up and destroyed our transports, our

cargo ships, and we would've been in really bad shape. Anyway, the Navy pulled out. We had three carriers down in that area at the time, and the question was whether or not they would support the Marines and risk those carriers. Well, they had a big conference on it. Admiral Halsey was there, and Nimitz, who was in charge, and General Vandergriff, who was in command of the Marines. General Nimitz finally turned to Halsey and said, "What shall we do? What shall we do?" So he borrowed this phrase from—who was the admiral at Manila Bay that [said damn] the torpedoes?

Group: [Dewey]

SM: So they came back and started trying to help us. But, in the meantime, the Marines—the Japanese had control of the air and they had control of the sea, and they had outnumbered the Marines on the ground by ten to one. Of course, it was raining all the time, and we began to get pretty uncomfortable. Well, Uncle Sam delivered the mail. He always wanted to deliver the mail. You know, get it in by submarine or by air. A kid in a foxhole right near the company command post got a letter from home. He was in a foxhole about half full of water and he was reading this letter, and he started laughing. Well, this captain nearby saw that kid laughing and he thought he was cracking up. He said, "Hey, boy, what's the matter with you? Are you cracking up?" He said, "No, sir, Captain. Let me tell you something. I got a letter from home from a music store operator that I bought a saxophone from on an installment plan. It tells me that if I don't pay the installment due on that saxophone, I'm going to find myself in a serious

situation.” [Laughter] That’s right. But we came out of it all right.

Unknown: For the record, I think it was Farragut.

SM: Yes, Farragut.

[A lot of people talking all at the same time — indistinguishable]

DP: Just wonderful. Don’t ask him any questions. I would like to know about 1948.

Go ahead, Lloyd.

LG: Governor, do you remember when the gambling was closed in Hot Springs? I was in the legislature when that happened.

SM: Well, it was closed when I was elected prosecuting attorney.

LG: No, I mean when they went over and smashed all the machines and shut it down completely.

Unknown: 1967.

SM: 1967? Let me think. Who was governor? Was Orval [Faubus] the governor then?

Group: [Winthrop] Rockefeller.

SM: Rockefeller, yes.

Unknown: Roy [Jaggin?], a little preacher from Bentonville. He got up with a simple, little resolution requesting that the governor enforce all the gambling laws in the state. That’s all it said. He sat down and you could’ve heard a pin drop in that [ ].

SM: Oh!

Unknown: I was looking at everybody because I live by Hot Springs. I like to go

over there. All the people in Yell County go to Hot Springs. In an hour they were going [ ] places beating up all the slot machines.

Unknown: It [ ] Faubus that time.

Unknown: It wasn't Faubus, wasn't it?

Unknown: Yes.

Unknown: Was that Faubus? Faubus only lasted a few weeks, and then they opened it up again.

Unknown: [Laughs] I remember that. It was [1962?]

RR: It was my understanding that Governor Faubus was tipped off about that resolution beforehand and got word out to the folks at the house that it might be a good idea to shut it down over there for a while.

Unknown: [ ], the house had passed it, [ ].

RR: Yes, I think Herman Lindsay was on his way when that resolution passed.

DP: 1948. Dixiecrats. Strom Thurmond walks out of the Democratic National Convention. View of the Democrat governor-elect of Arkansas at age thirty-four or thirty-three?

SM: Thirty-five, I think.

DP: And you were about to be governor, and Ben Laney was going out as governor. You were going in — you're going in, but you've not taken over, and you saw the South eroding and leaving the Democratic party and going to the Dixiecrat ticket.

SM: Yes.

DP: Tell a little about that period.

SM: Well, Strom — well, you know, it started earlier in the year when [Harry S.] Truman came with his Bill of Rights proposal — [anti-lynching], abolish the poll tax, the freedom to vote without coercion, fair employment, and so forth. He got a strong reaction from the senators in the Southern states. They began planning to defeat Truman, either with their candidate or to put it in the House of Representatives. Strom Thurmond and Fielding Wright and Ben Laney had a meeting in Marianna — in the outskirts of Marianna — I forget the exact location, but it was in that county. They planned how they would take over the party machinery in Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, and one other Southern state that they felt they could take over the party machinery. What they would do is to get in touch the people who were leaning their way and get electoral votes for their candidates. They tried to take over the state party in Arkansas. They were not successful, but they did take over the state party, as I remember, in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and were able to get delegates who would support the Thurmond and Wright ticket. At their meeting — I think it was in Philadelphia, wasn't it? Didn't they have the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia?

DP?: Yes.

SM: Well, they tried to get somebody to run — tried to block Truman's nomination. They tried to get somebody to run against him who they thought had a chance, and they even considered Ben Laney. They had buttons issued and everybody wore buttons for two days to elect Ben Laney for president. [ ] they walked out and they went to Birmingham, Alabama, and had that Dixiecrat Convention and

nominated Fielding Wright and Strom Thurmond. They made the race. Of course, they carried, I think, four out of five deep Southern states, but Arkansas gave them one of the best polarities of any state in the country.

DP: For the national ticket?

SM: For the national ticket.

DP: Right.

SM: For the national ticket. President Truman always appreciated that, and he was a loyal guy, you know. He liked people who supported the Democratic party, so he was nice to us. Good man. He came down and visited with us in 1949. He came down to the 35<sup>th</sup> Division reunion. That was his old National Guard outfit. If I don't get this right, somebody correct me, but that was in 1949. The high point in the convention, to him, was marching in front of the troops and having a parade. They were going to march on this day, and he invited me to march with him. So we formed up and marched south on Main Street down to Markham and turned left.

DP?: That's a famous picture, too.

SM: Yes. You've probably seen the picture—[we] peeled off and went up in the Marion Hotel, went up to the presidential suite. They didn't have all this entourage around the president at that time like they have now. It was July. We walked into the room in the presidential suite, and he turned to me and said, "Governor, how'd you like to have a drink?" Well, I wasn't about to turn him down! [Laughter] So he said, "How about bourbon and [Pratt's water?]?"

“Great.” He said, “Well, you’re going to be waited on by the highest-paid bartender in the world!” [Laughter] I looked around and there wasn’t anybody there but him and me. [Laughter] So he got behind the bar and he poured us a low-ball glass, half bourbon and half water. We sat there for an hour, uninterrupted, and talked. He talked and I listened. But I did have one question to ask him. President Truman had made a speech just prior to that to the Reserve Officers Convention in Washington, D.C. The Marine Corps, at that time--the Congress had passed--after every war, you know, somebody would try to abolish the Marine Corps. They’d say, “Well, they can’t do anything that the other [privs?] can’t do. We don’t need them anymore.” Well, to anticipate that-- to block that kind action after the second world war, the friends who were in Congress, who supported to the Marine Corps, got a bill passed authorizing the strength of the Marine Corps three air wings and three infantry divisions. Well, that went over to the president’s desk. And in his speech to the Reserve Officers Association, he had something to say about the Marines. He said, “They’ve got the biggest propaganda agency than the criminals. They’ve got a PR man in every squad!” Well, this wasn’t lost on General Shepherd, who was commandant of the Marine Corps, and I had served with him. He called me up when he knew he was coming to Hot Springs. He said, “Could you talk to the old man about that bill and find out what he’s going to do? I’m really [worried].” So I took this opportunity, and, as I remember, the only question I asked was, “Mr. President, what do you think you’re going to do about this Marine Corps bill authorizing the

air wing and authorizing the minimum-strength Marine Corps?" I said, "My commandant is concerned about it. He asked me if I'd ask you about it." He had figuratively put on all his World War I artillery uniform, you know, and his cap [laughs], and he laughed. He said, "Well, I'm going to sign it, but I just wanted to let the boys sweat just a little bit!" [Laughter]

DP: What about Truman at that time in 1948? That was in the late summer, I think. What about in the fall, when he was faced with Thomas Dewey and no one thought Truman could win. Did Truman think he could win that race?

SM: Truman thought he could win, and he went to bed the night before the election feeling that he could win. Roy, help me out on this. There was an Arkansas man - friend from up around Pocahontas, who was with Truman all the way through his political career, just about, and he had gone around over the-- Truman didn't take any polls, you know, but he went around over the country, going out to stock sales and interviewing farmer people about the election, and he reported to Truman that he was going to win.

DP: I bet that was Harold Jenks.

Unknown: Harry Vaughn?

SM: What?

Unknown: Harry Vaughn?

SM: No, not Harry Vaughn.

DP: It wasn't Harold Jenks, was it?

SM: Not Harold Jenks. That's close.

DP: Okay.

SM: Anyway, Truman thought he was going to win the election. Of course, you've seen him with this picture of this *Chicago Herald* saying, "Dewey Defeats Truman." [Laughter]

RR: *Chicago Tribune*. Yes.

SM: Yes, *Chicago Tribune*..

RR: Yes. But he felt he was going to win. You know, his popularity rating at the end of his term, when he went out, he could've run again. It was about thirty-three percent. He turned out to be one of the greatest presidents we ever had. Of course, he integrated the armed services. That was another thing the Dixiecrats were using against him.

Unknown: Didn't Governor Allen Shivers of Texas try to take Texas out, too, in that same 1948?

SM: Allen Shivers tried to take Texas out. And if Texas had gone, and if Arkansas had gone and one other Southern state had gone, they would've put it in the House of Representatives, and that was really their hope that they could put the election in the House of Representatives.

Unknown: When you ran for governor in 1948, you used a comic book . . .

SM: Yes. George Fisher's.

Unknown: How did you happen to come up with that? How did that come about?

SM: You know, George Fisher was over at West Memphis, and he worked with the [Coffin?] boys against Cy Bonds over there. They had a pretty bad election

situation over there. There was a farmer who had a cow that fell in a well, and they were having a hard time getting her out. The [Coffin?] boys had this newspaper, so they ran a front-page story that said, “The way to get that cow out is to let Cy Bonds [cow her?] out.” [Laughter] I think one of those-- and George Fisher was doing cartoons for them. I don’t know who came up with the idea, but that was a great political campaign piece. People still come up and say, “I’ve got that campaign [comic book] that you put out.”

Unknown: I think I’ve still got one.

SM: Yes, yes. That was great.

DP: There’s a great book out on Governor McMath that came out about fifteen years ago, if you all haven’t read it. It’s called *A Man for Arkansas*. It’s written by the son of Ed Lester, Jim Lester. Isn’t that right?

SM: Jim Lester. Jim Lester.

DP: It’s a wonderful book on you and your career. I thought that was really a fine book.

SM: Right. He had this Dixiecrat thing down there. And, of course, Ben Laney campaigned for Thurmond and Wright outside the state, you know. He went all over the country campaigning for him. Ben was a good man. He had gotten into the oil business and had done well. He was the mayor of Camden. When he ran for governor, he ran against me for the second term. He ran on a business platform. Spider Rowland had started calling it business [ ]. But he said he’d reduce taxes. So we did some research. We found out that the only taxes that had

been reduced during his administration was on lightning rods, beehives, and buggy whips. [Laughter] So that became a refrain, you know. When you'd get to that, the crowd would pick it up: "Lightning rods, beehives, and buggy whips." [Laughter]

DP: Was that the campaign when your dog became an issue in the race?

SM: No, I was talking to [laughs] Roy about that a while ago. That was Old Red. That coon dog, Lloyd, was given to me by some coon hunters up in Scott County. I brought him home and kept him there at the mansion. The newspaper-- John Wells, wasn't he a writer? Johnny Wells?

DP: Johnny . . . ?

SM: He wrote an article about feeding Old Red at state expense there at the mansion. [Laughter] Of course, my response was that Old Red is a good watch dog. As a matter of fact, the neighbors had told me that they were glad we had Old Red out there because he surveyed the area at night, and if anything was moving around that wasn't supposed to be there, why, he'd sound off. And he had a good, deep voice! [Laughter] You could hear that hound dog barking up there behind the mansion. Anyway, I said, "He's a guard dog and he's enabling me to relieve one man on guard duty at night, and since he was working for the state, I thought the state ought to feed him." [Laughter] I took Old Red-- when we went down to Grant County, we lived on a little farm out there, and the boys had a lot of fun with Old Red. He was a great coon dog. They hunted in those woods. He was killed crossing the highway there at that bridge, Cane Creek bridge. He was hit

by a car and killed. He was a good dog.

RR: Governor, tell us about Spider Rowland. Some of these young fellows here have probably never heard that name.

SM: Spider Rowland was a character of all characters. He was an avid cigar smoker, or cigar chewer. He chewed it more than he-- and he had a hat that he wore on the back of his head. He had been shot and was kind of crippled a little bit. He had to lean over, and so forth. Somebody had shot him three or four times. There was a friend of his-- they'd meet together and talk politics down at the Marion Hotel, and you'd know him if I could think of his name. Anyway, he went out to see Spider at the hospital. He said, "Spider, I want you to tell me something. Are you going to make it or not? I want to know because I'm putting some money on it!" [Laughter] Spider said, "Yes, I'm going to make it." Bob Faust. Bob Faust.

RR: Bob Faust.

SM: So Bob Faust went in the back and cleaned up that Spider was going to survive. He was shot three times. [Laughter] Anyway, he was very much interested in this race in Hot Springs. He didn't think that McLaughlin could be beaten because he controlled the machinery and everything, you see. Well, not many other people thought he could be beaten, either. Anyway, he came out to my house and he liked to have a drink. We'd have some drinks and visit and so forth. He wrote some favorable articles in my behalf during the campaign. He had a keen sense of politics and a wonderful sense of humor, but he always had something germane in his articles that made it worth reading, more than

entertaining. He was a good friend. I had a long session--I don't want to get into this, but I had a long session with Spider Rowland when I was trying to make up my mind whether or not to run for governor. See, I was the prosecuting attorney, so I had to make up my mind whether or not I was going to run. I had taken my wife and boys down to Biloxi, Mississippi. We spent in the sun and fishing, and so forth, and I came back and stopped at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. Spider Rowland came over there to see me, and he wanted to know what I was going to do. So I discussed it back and forth. He got ready to leave, had put his hat on the back of his head, and had a cigar in his mouth. He said, "Well, I'm going to give you some advice. All it's going to cost you is that cup of coffee we just finished drinking. Never call retreat." That's all he said. "Never call retreat." Pretty good advice.

RR: Didn't he call you the champ?

SM: Yes, champ.

RR: Where did that come from?

SM: Well, I was a fighter, you know, when I was in high school. I started boxing in Hot Springs. I had a scoutmaster over there by the name of Richard Gaffney. He took the boys-- the bookie gophers [ ] newspaper boys-- scouts [ ] troops-- we formed the Boys Club. He convinced the Fordyce Bath House to turn their gym over to him on certain nights for their meetings. They had all the facilities for boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, and so forth. And we had some good instructors. I don't know whether you remember Tommy Freeman or not, but he

was the welter weight champion of the world. He came up occasionally and would give us some pointers. I saw Jack Dempsey. Jack Dempsey came to Hot Springs, and he was married to Estelle Taylor. I saw both of them. So I kind of had a yen for boxing. I went up to the university-- I didn't play football. I went to two terms down at Henderson State College before going to the University of Arkansas. I was trying to get ready to take my examination for the Naval Academy. I wanted to be a Marine. I had always wanted to be a Marine. Captain [ ] said, "Well, you've got to go to the Naval Academy and get a commission." Well, Congressman Glover, D. D. Glover, gave me an appointment. In high school, I started studying math and studying physics and studying chemistry. I studied dramatics and public speaking and debating, see? I made the wrong choice. So when [ ], I was down at Henderson trying to make up for this lost time on math and so forth. I flunked the examination. So I went to the University of Arkansas. I got a job in Hill Hall waiting tables and washing dishes. I believe Hill Hall is still there, isn't it?

RR: No, they . . .

SM: Did they tear it down?

RR: They've torn it down. That's another [ ].

SM: Anyway, to supplement my income, I'd fight. I went down to Fort Smith and would box down there, you know, and make-- I forget how much it was, but twenty or twenty-five dollars was a lot of money back then. I tell you, I discontinued that ambition. [Laughter] I fought a man-- he was-- I say, he was a

man! He was just out of the penitentiary. I'm sure-- I don't know what kind of labor he did down there, but he was tough! [Laughter] His fighting name was Woodchopper. I fought him-- it was a three-round bout. I fought him for three rounds, and I kept away from him! [Laughter] Three rounds! There at the fourth round, there was a tie. So the fourth round he'd hit me in the chin-- I still have a sore chin-- and I gave up boxing. [Laughter] But Spider called me champ. I was anything but a champ.

Unknown: Give us your impressions of another opponent of yours, the English godfather of Hot Springs, Ohne Madden.

DP: Ohne Madden?

SM: Ohne Madden?

Unknown. Ohne Madden.

SM: Well, Ohne Madden, as you know, left New York by invitation of his opposition, which meant that he could either leave town, or he'd wind up in the Hudson River with concrete shoes, so he elected to go to Hot Springs. He married the postmaster's daughter and became a respectable, law-abiding citizen, as far as everybody could tell. As far as I know, he never got involved in the local rackets, but he spent a lot of time-- he kind of had a semi-official office up at the Southern Club. People looking for Ohne knew where to find him. And people on the lam, you know, these people going to-- looking for a handout or trying to escape something-- escaped the FBI, wanted or whatnot, they'd go by and see Ohne. He'd give them a lift, a handout, or give them some advice, but I never knew him

to be an accessory to anything or had been involved. Well, I was living out on Cedar Street, and if you've been to Hot Springs, you go out Cedar Street-- you go into the country. It's not very far, just a mile or two out Cedar Street. You go up a hill, then you go down, and that's country. Well, I had moved out there and got a few acres there so we could have a horse and the boys could have a dog, and so forth. At about 10:00 one night, I got a call from Ohne Madden. I had never talked to him, never met him. I was the prosecuting attorney and had some cases coming up. He said, "I'd like to talk to you." I said, "Fine. I'll be glad to talk to you anytime. You can come to my office tomorrow. That would be fine." He said, "No, can't we-- I've got to see you now. It's urgent." I didn't want to invite him out to my house-- my family was asleep. I said, "Well, I'll meet you up at the top of the hill." I didn't know whether that was wise or not, but I told him I would, so I did. I got my flashlight and I wandered up to the top of the hill. When I got up to the top of the hill, over on the left, in the dark, was a great, big limousine. I threw my light on it, and it was black. I threw my light on the driver, and that driver had a cap on and he was big-- he almost filled up that front seat. He looked like a wrestler. He was tough. I walked over to the passenger side where Ohne was. I said, "Ohne, how are you doing? I came up to talk to you." While I was greeting him, I looked in the back seat. There were two of the meanest-looking guys I ever saw back there. [Laughter] I mean, they were tough looking, had their hats on, smoking cigars, looked the part. He said, "Well, you know, those two guys coming up that you're getting ready to prosecute for

breaking into the jewelry store down on Central Avenue? They're friends of mine. If you could dismiss the case against them, I sure would appreciate it. I assure you, they'll never come back to Arkansas." Well, I didn't want to say no right then! [Laughter] [ ] "Hell, no!" What do you mean?" So I thought a minute. I said, "Well, let me see." I said goodnight, and I turned around and started walking back down that hill. The hairs on my neck started standing up, and I had a sensation that I've only had once or twice--when I was in Dallas through the war--but I--the motor didn't start up, see? It was still sitting there when I got out of sight. So I tried those guys and I sent them to the penitentiary. One day, Ohne-- eighteen months later or two years later, he called me up and said, "You know those two friends of mine you sent to the penitentiary for breaking into that jewelry store?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, they're out. They served their time and they're out. They came by to see me to get a little lift [ ]. They told me they'd never come back to Arkansas again, you can be assured of that, because they ain't going back to that cotton patch! So we got them to commit themselves that they wouldn't come back to Arkansas, but . . .

DP?: You talked about Spider Rowland. Now I'd like to hear you talk about another friend of yours, a guy who I used to accompany over to Hot Springs covering your election over there--John Scudder.

SM: Oh, John Scudder! Man! He wrote for the *Democrat*.

DP?: Yes, sir.

SM: He wrote for the *Democrat*. Johnny liked to take a drink, you know [laughter].

He covered the--he'd go around and traveled with me. We were up in Clarksville. It was close to Clarksville or Ozark, no matter. We got in there after dark. Johnny wanted a drink bad. He walked up and down the street. He didn't see anything. I told him there wasn't--it was a dry county. They didn't have any whisky stores in Ozark. Well, he suffered through the night, and the next morning he went down to get a cup of coffee. He went a block further than he'd gone the night before, and there was a liquor store [laughter]. He had run out of a liquor. There was a [Arkansas State] Trooper who was driving me named Ed McKinley. When Scudder would get in a bad humor, old McKinley would say, "Well, he just packed too many socks!" [Laughter] Johnny went to see a doctor--he was feeling bad. He was nervous and shook up, and so forth, so he went to see the doctor. The doctor examined him and said, "Johnny, I can't find anything wrong with you." He said, "I sure do feel awful, Doc." He said, "Well, Johnny, do you smoke?" He said, "Yes, I smoke." He said, "How much do you smoke? Do you smoke a pack a day?" He said, "I smoke three packs a day." He said, "Well, do you drink?" He said, "Well, I take a social drink." [Laughter] He said, "Do you drink as much as a pint a day?" He said, "You know, I drink more than that." He said, "Do you drink as much as a fifth a day?" He said, "Doc, I spill more than that!" [Laughter] But he was a good reporter.

Unknown: I was with [Judge Lawnsdale?] when you started your campaign. He was a big admirer of yours. You were the first politician that I ever saw, and John Scudder was one of the first old-style newspaper reporters that I ever

saw.

SM: Yes.

Unknown: That was quite a time. But he was a great admirer of yours.

SM: Yes. He was a good man, and he was very loyal to me.

Unknown: I wrote a story about Spider Rowland. I was the first football coach that Gillette ever had. The town decided to have something to raise money to buy uniforms. They decided to have a [coon \_\_\_\_?] for us to help start the football program. I don't know who wrote and invited him, but Spider Rowland-- I didn't know Spider Rowland! I didn't even know the *Gazette* or anything. But Spider Rowland showed up down there that night and got [ ] that we had. I asked him if I could ride back to Little Rock with him. I lived at . . .

[End of Tape One, Side One]

[Beginning of Tape One, Side Two]

Unknown: (continuing same person, same story) . . . turned into-- whatever he'd turned into. [ ]. So [ ], he says, "Spider Rowland hitchhiked [ ]."

RR: Governor, how did it come that Spider got shot?

SM: Oh, you know, I don't remember the details of that. I don't think it was by a jealous husband [laughter]. I think it was maybe over a gambling debt or something like that. I don't know.

RR: Yes, yes. I know that he ran with a pretty [tough] crowd.

SM: Yes, he did. He did. You know, he was in the Navy. He served-- no, Merchant Marines, believe.

RR: I didn't know that.

SM: During the war.

Unknown: Governor, what about growing up in Hot Springs and seeing the Al Capones of the world at that time? What was that like?

SM: In Hot Springs when I was a youngster?

Unknown: Yes.

SM: Well, I went to-- my family drove from Smackover to Hot Springs in a wagon by two fine horses, named Cap and Dallas, I've remembered them all my life. They moved to Hot Springs in this wagon. When they got set up, I went to-- my sister and I, who was two years older, went to Magnolia to live with my grandmother while they were getting set up in Hot Springs. He got a job as a barber at [Raso's?] Barber Shop in lower central, and my mother got a job as a manicurist. So they sent for us and we joined them. I had missed the fifth grade, at least missed most of it, and then went to school-- I was supposed to be in the sixth grade-- and the teacher advised Mother that I probably should take the fifth grade before going to the sixth. So I was a year behind, and I never caught up. Then I went out to Oaklawn School that was out at Oaklawn. The superintendent out there was a good man. I was talking about boxing. We were out doing a recreation thing-- his name was Forrest Hall-- during the recreational hour, another boy and I got in a tussle. He happened to be on hand and he separated us.

Next recess, he was out there and he had some boxing gloves. He made us put on those gloves. He gave us some instructions and said, "Now, shake hands and come out fighting." So we fought an indecisive fight. That was the first time I'd ever had on a glove. I didn't even know anything about boxing. My opponent, I think, was the same way. I never saw that boy again. During the war, I heard that he had landed at Normandy and had gone inland to where all the fighting was around the hedge rows, and he was killed there. But there were a lot of youngsters in Hot Springs who sold papers and who worked for the bookies, and so forth, to kind of make ends meet. You could get a three-way lunch at George's. It would be spaghetti, beans and chili, and a lot of those little crackers for a quarter. That's where a lot of us would have lunch. I sold newspapers, and the newspaper press was-- it was old Hot Springs [new era?], and it was located about a block off Central Avenue behind the First National Bank. They'd start running off the papers at about 4:00 and the news boys would get them there. The bigger boys and the older boys would be at the front of the line, of course. They'd get their newspapers first. The object was to get to the choice areas where people were waiting to buy papers. Of course, the biggest boys didn't get there first because they weren't that fast. I worked the Bath House Row and the Arlington Hotel, and then the west side of Central Avenue--the bookies. The bookies were the best place because you sold more papers, and they always wanted to get the lineup for the next day, and so forth. They were good tipplers. The paper was a nickel, and if he didn't have anything but a quarter or fifty cents,

or sometimes a dollar, he'd say, "Oh, kid, keep the change." That was a good area to cover, so I tried to get there fast. And then [the invitation of that?], talking about boxing again, I boxed at the old Princess Theater on Friday and Saturday nights. They had amateur hour-- singers, dancers, and boxers-- I boxed there and I made either two dollars and a half a night or-- I'm sure it wasn't five dollars a night. Anyway, in a weekend I'd make five dollars, which would buy me a lot of beans down at Georges [laughter]. I fought a boy from Texas. He came up-- they were up there visiting, and so forth, and somehow they had attended the show and saw the boxing. He was a really good boxer, a scientific boxer. His dad was his second. I didn't have a second. His dad would come over to see me between rounds. He'd say, "He's not going to hurt you. I'm not going to let him hurt you." He had me scared to death! [Laughter] I lost the fight. He was from Vernon, Texas. I'll never forget it. I haven't liked Vernon since then. [Laughter] Oh, let's see.

DP: Tell us what happened building the medical center. Governor McMath built a med center in a very unique way. Tell us. It wouldn't be there without you.

SM: Well, if Roy will bear with me-- I told him most of this a while ago when we were visiting. You've been down to the Old State House. You've been in it. It's such a marvelous old building. It's a repository of Arkansas history. Well, you know, the legislature voted when they voted to build a new capitol to sell the old capitol building. The women objected to it and stopped it. Finally, they kept it in abeyance and, in 1912, got this new capitol finished. Governor Donaghey took it

over. They just used the old state house then for state offices, and they'd let people downtown use them, then the American Legion used it, and so forth. But then the medical school was in the basement and they were in some of the other rooms of the old state capitol. In addition to having the cadavers and doing all the work that they had to do, they were conducting tests on animals to find a cure for the anzac disease--what is it?

RR: Anthrax.

SM: Yes, anthrax disease, which invested the mules, sheep, and hogs. They found a cure for it. And they also came up with a cure for malaria, or how to eliminate malaria and reduced incidence of malaria in Arkansas by seventy-five percent in the first year it was put in operation. Anyway, they had these animals down there, and the animals made a lot of noise. They had separate pens, and so forth. The dogs were barking and the sheep were bleating and the hogs were grunting, and everything. People lived down there. They were complaining about the noise the animals were making. They couldn't sleep, and they were depreciating the value of their property, and so forth. Nothing was done. There was a deputy sheriff who had a red-bone hound that came up missing. He was gone for a couple of days and that dog didn't come home. He was sitting on the steps of the courthouse one morning and he heard a dog barking. He recognized his dog. He followed the direction of the barking dog, and he came up behind the old state capitol, and there in a pen with a half a dozen other dogs, was his pet dog, his good friend. He got in touch with the two doctors who were in charge of the

experiments, and they wouldn't let him have his dog. They said, "Well, you know, he's just an old hound dog. He's serving a humanitarian purpose. Just let us go ahead and keep him." Well, he got a warrant out and had them arrested for stealing his dog! That was the upshot of the medical school moving out to MacArthur Park where, I guess, the law school is now. They stayed there until we built the medical center. In 1949, as part of my inauguration talk, I asked the legislature to appropriate funds for the building of the medical center. We were about to lose the accreditation of that school, and we would've lost it if we didn't do something. I couldn't get it passed that first session, so we kept trying. The [bill to build?]- construct the medical center, the hospital and the medical school so fast, but they didn't appropriate any money. So the next session, I got them to pass a two-cent tax on each package of cigarettes, and what better source of revenue because half of the cost of operating the hospital in recent years has been in treatment of people with tobacco-related diseases or injuries. So we started building the medical center. We now have one of the finest medical centers in the world. People come out for cancer treatment from around the world. You go out to the cancer center there, and in the waiting room there, you'd think you were in a foreign country. Different people, different nationalities there. And the same thing about the eye clinic. Of course, the center for old people-- what do you call it?

Unknown: Geriatrics.

SM: The geriatrics center is one of the best in the country. And we have an excellent

medical school. Excellent medical school. I got the first black student into the medical school in 1948. It was during the Dixiecrat revolt. A student from Hot Springs. She was a woman who had applied for admission to med school in Chicago, Northwestern, and somewhere else. She hadn't been admitted, but she wanted to go to med school in Hot Springs. Her name was Edith Irby. She applied for admission, and it was during the 1948 campaign. The race issue was hot! It was during the runoff, and they had all kinds of literature. They had put out a brochure, put it in a newspaper, and so forth, questioning me, "How many niggers are you going to put on the State Police force? How many niggers are you going to hire as school teachers? How many niggers have given you campaign contributions?" and so forth. So it was a hot issue. Lewis Webster Jones-- he asked what to do about it. He asked me what I thought he should do. He had been following the campaign. I said, "Well, wait until after the runoff in August, and then decide." So when I won in August, right after that, he announced her admission to the med school. When she was first admitted, she was an excellent student. When she was first admitted, she couldn't eat with the other students. They had to have a separate dining room for her, a separate place to go to the bathroom, separate place to get water, and so forth. Finally, the med students broke that down themselves. But she went on to be an outstanding doctor in Houston, Texas. And she became president of the National Women Doctors Medical Association. But building the medical center was one of the best things I did, or getting it started, getting it built. Were you there then? That was

in 1949, 1950, 1951.

Unknown: No.

SM: That was before your time.

Unknown: That was before my time.

SM: Yes.

DP: He just looks old! [Laughter]

Unknown: The only thing that's happened today that has bothered me-- Governor, you told a story about a damned old coon dog named Red. There was another governor one time who had a coon dog plan and his floor leader thinks he passed every bill he had except the coon dog plan. [Laughter] And that's always hurt me, and I was hoping David wouldn't think of it! [Laughter]

DP: We took Lloyd George up to Mount Nebo one night. We cooked us a big old steak, and we took charts and blackboards and all this stuff. Lloyd was our floor leader, I'd guess you'd say that. We did all this stuff for about an hour and a half. We told how we were going to send back money to the citizens, and they could do what they wanted to locally with it-- build a new fire station, or what have you-- we went through about an hour and a half of explanation with Representative George. So when we finished, we said, "Well, Lloyd, what do you think?" He said, "I don't understand a damn thing about it, but I'm for it all the way!" [Laughter]

SM: Lloyd, did you ever go to one of those coon suppers? The ones down at DeWitt?

LG: Gillette.

SM: Gillette. Yes.

LG: Yes. Frank White took me down there. We went with some crop duster, or something, in some little old bitty airplane. We were flying down there and about got lost. I said, "I don't believe we're in the right place." And we weren't!  
[Laughter]

SM: Tell me the truth here. Did you eat the coon?

LG: Well, I felt obligated to. I did take a bite or two.

SM: Well, when I went down there, they had an option. They had either opossum or coons. You could take your pick! [Laughter]

LG: I went back three or four years ago to my fiftieth [high school class] reunion down there. That was 1947.

DP: You all, I hate to do-- about another question or so-- Governor McMath and I, we've got-- you all are young. Now, we're old. We've got to go take a rest because we've got to go back down to the state house at 5:00.

SM: Yes, we're way past my nap time! [Laughs]

DP: We've got to perform!

LG: I could listen to him all day.

SM: He has given me two minutes at that meeting this afternoon, so [laughter] . . .

Unknown: Don't wear yourself out! [Laughter]

SM: Two minutes!

DP: We're going to try to figure out who's going to interview Frank White now for

the series-- Governor White. Ernie, are you going to do that, or Roy . . . ?

Ernie Dumas?: I think Brummett's going to do that.

DP: Oh, John Brummett's going to do that. Yes.

Unknown: Open up a whole box of Pandora's [ ].

DP: That will be good.

SM: Well, this sure has been a pleasure for me to see everybody and meet everybody.

A show of friends and people who go pretty far back. I've known all of you in one way or another, I suppose. It's good to see Lloyd getting along well. And my neighbor here from Columbia County.

DP: Magnolia.

SM: Magnolia. Yes, I was born and raised in Magnolia. Well, not in Magnolia. I lived out in the country. Now, when people ask, "Where were you born and where did you live in Magnolia?" I say, "West of Magnolia. I lived at Bussey." They say, "Where's Bussey?" "It's ten miles north of Taylor, and Taylor is about five miles north of the Arkansas/Louisiana line," so my area was Bussey and Taylor and Magnolia.

Unknown: My dad said we never had pavement in Columbia County until after you were governor.

SM: Well, I think that's right. I came down there campaigning, and I had to ride from Magnolia to Taylor on a horse [laughter]. You couldn't get over it in a [car].

DP: In Camden, the big push was that the good Governor McMath paved the road from Stephens to Camden, and he had an option of paving it from Stephens north

of Camden, or from Stephens south to Magnolia, so because he was from  
Magnolia, he paved it from Stephens [laughter] . . .

Unknown: [ ] had a lot of [ ].

DP: Yes, you had a lot of IOUs out there that we didn't . . .

SM: Speaking of roads, may I ask a question? What do you think about this proposal  
of electing a highway commissioner? Roy? Ernie?

ED: I think it's a bad idea.

RR: I can remember-- if you get a guy like Orval Faubus-- it's terms [ ] eventually  
taken over, but it just seems to me that it's a good idea to have a little firewall  
there.

DP: Wouldn't the contractors be able to give all the money to . . .?

RR: Well, that's . . .

ED: That's what I think, that the contractors and the asphalt supplies, and everybody  
else would be . . .

Unknown: Not by the [ ]. I mean, if that [ ]. They can't [ ].

RR: Well, that's what he's saying, if they're elected.

DP: But if they were elected . . .

Unknown: Well, I don't know.

RR: It wouldn't?

Unknown: The vice principal [ ] . . .

RR: You mean the [ ] they're talking about in the legislature now would not replace  
the [ ]?

Unknown: The entire thing would just be supplemental to it [ ] for this election process would keep [Mac Blackwell amendment?] government [ ] simply elected. I may be wrong. It's a bad idea.

DP: One of the hardest things I ever did when I was governor-- I was getting all this pressure to appoint Mr. Smith from Birdeye-- to reappoint him. He had been in ten years. He'd been a great commissioner, but I guess-- Lloyd, you remember that?

LG: I remember that well! [Laughs]

DP: That was a tight one, a tough one. I wanted to, yet I couldn't see a man being on there twenty years.

ED? You put David Solomon in there.

DP: Yes, I went over to Helena to speak at the chamber of commerce banquet right before I became governor, three or four weeks before, and I looked out into the crowd--a big crowd that night--way back. I can tell you right where he was seated. I was just going through [judicants?] trying to make that decision. I just happened to be scanning the crowd before I got up to talk. I looked out there and saw David Solomon. Just as clear as a bell, I said [to myself], "That's the man I want." I got in that night at about 11:30 back to Little Rock-- I flew back to Little Rock and called him up. I woke him up. I said, "David, I want you to be on my commission." He said, "On the highway commission." I said, "Yes." So that's how that happened. Lloyd, the hardest call I ever made was to Marty Smith. That was one of the hardest calls.

Unknown: You also appointed the first woman to the highway commission, Patsy Thompson.

LG: That's another story, yes! [Laughter]

DP: Actually, I think you--now, wait a minute--there had been one other woman, I think-- no, Governor [Frank] Cherry, I think, appointed one.

LG: No, we had one. We had a woman.

DP: I said Cherry . . .

LG: That was in my part of the state.

RR: Governor, what do you think about the idea of electing a highway commissioner?

SM: Well, I think it would be bad. I think the contractors and your suppliers, and so forth, would own him-- that he would run the people that they wanted to run in a small area-- over a period of time, they could be in control. That's my feeling about it.

Unknown: One reason it made it past the legislature is that [the current governor, Mike] Huckabee [ ] one more appointment [ ] appointed the whole thing.

Unknown: There are a lot of Democratic representatives who would rather elect them than [fight?] Huckabee. That's part of the problem.

LG?: When you appointed Patsy, we were having trouble with two different-- someone claiming where they lived-- some arguments between districts.

Unknown: Boy, that's [ ]. That got tough.

DP: She voted in Rison, but lived in Little Rock, or vice versa.

LG: You have them going both ways. Each one of those districts wanted a commissioner, and you picked Patsy [ ]. [Laughter]

Unknown: [Kind of like a Dickey split?]. [Laughter]

DP: Yes, the Jay Dickey split. The Jay Dickey split.

LG: What about that lady highway commissioner? Did she live to be really old? She lived out there by the Pulaski Heights Theater. I went to see her a time or two. I remember one time we wanted her to pave the road over a mountain there from [Danville?] over to the [fish \_\_\_\_\_], and she went-- Danville had city dump up there on the highway. You just backed up a truck and dumped trash off down the bluff and down on the road. What was her name? I remember she came to talk about it and she said, "If you all can clean up that dump, I'll pave that road." And we did, and she did. I can't remember who she was, but I know where she lives.

DP: I know who that was. I can't remember.

LG: It was before Patsy.

DP: Let me ask you one final question. You knew Orval Faubus before any of us knew Orval Faubus. You discovered Orval Faubus and built Highway 23, the Pig Trail, and then they said that's the road that you built to let him out of the mountains to come to Little Rock, and so forth. [Laughter] Do you think--and Roy Reed may want to get into--visit with you about this because he has written the definitive book on Faubus's life--do you think that Faubus himself was a segregationist, or do you think he was just someone who seized this issue to get elected governor? What do you think it was?

SM: Well, I met Orval in Fayetteville. He came up to my room at the hotel there and we had a visit. Going back to Little Rock, I dropped him off at Huntsville, and he was trying to make up his mind then as to who to support. So he supported me, and he did an excellent job up in those mountain counties for me. I carried Madison County with a good vote, and he helped me in those other counties. When I was elected, he told me he'd like to have a paying job. He came down and I put him in charge of meeting with these committees coming in on the highways-- wanting roads. See, that was in the governor's responsibility at that time, and he had a lot of influence on it. Orval did an excellent job. He understood these people, and built up a basis of a following, an organization. Orval ran for a second term. Roy, you can check me on this, but I think Jim Johnson was his opponent.

RR: Right.

SM: And Jim Johnson was a racist, as I recall, and I know that Orval observed [ ] tough race for a second term [ ] his main campaign. He said, "If I run again, nobody is going to help [nigger me?]." Now, that gave me the first inclination that he would use it as a possible political weapon or issue, but he had no prejudice against blacks. There wasn't a prejudiced bone in his body. He had a compassion for working people. I'm sure he had a compassion for everybody. He was a strong Truman Democrat. I feel that he saw this as a-- do you remember the United States Senate passed a resolution in which they opposed integration, and they opposed Truman's Civil Rights Program. It passed the

Senate-- what was the name of that . . . ?

DP: The Southern Manifesto.

SM: Southern Manifesto. Thank you, David.

DP: Yes.

SM: They passed the Southern Manifesto. We mentioned Allen Shivers. Allen Shivers went back to Texas and was in his race for governor, I think, in 1954 or 1955. He promised the people that he would not integrate the schools, and the federal court ordered the school at Mansfield, Texas, to be integrated. Good to his word, he opposed it. He sent rangers out there to control the crowd, and so forth. They prevented the blacks from entering the school, and President Eisenhower didn't do anything about it. I think, perhaps, that that action on the part of President Eisenhower gave Orval an idea that he could do this, and that was a big issue that he be on the right side of what he thought was the sentiment at the time. For the first time, he showed that he was opposed to the blacks going to the white schools. Up to that time, he had never discussed it with me, and he had never shown any indication of being a segregationist. I feel that it was a way of--and it looked like, at that time, you know, that the Dixiecrat movement was still in vogue, and they had made a good showing in the South. The Southern governors were against fighting integration [ ] those other people. It looked like it might be becoming an issue to stay in power, so he used it. That's my feeling about it.

Unknown: Do you have a sense of whether he would've gotten beat if he had just let [

] happen [ ]?

SM: I think he could've been reelected. Orval had a good following, he was a good administrator, and I think that if he'd just taken the position that "We're going to obey the law. We don't agree with it, but we want to obey the law and be a law-abiding citizen," that he could've been reelected. I don't know how many times, but he had a good, strong organization. And I think it was a sad thing.

DP: He could do some interesting things to a crowd, couldn't he?

SM: Oh, man, he was good! [ ]

LG: [ ]

Unknown: Are you kidding? Yes, sir, do I ever!

DP: We'll save that until [ ]. Well, listen, let's give a standing ovation!

[Clapping]

DP: That was wonderful. That was just wonderful.

End of Interview