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SOUTHERN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

with

STROM THURMOND

July, 1978

Washington, D.C.

By James G. Banks

Transcribed by Stephanie M. Alexander

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James G. Banks: Let me just start with the early period and home life. You were born in 1902 and I wonder if you could think back to what the house was like, the size.

Strom Thurmond: My wife was there yesterday, that's where I was born, Edgefield. I was born in the town of Edgefield, Columbia Street, I guess about three quarters of a mile from the court house. But we moved--it was three boys and three girls--and my father wanted the boys to work on a farm so we moved out of town, moved out to the country. So we grew up on the farm.

JB: He specifically wanted you to have the farm experience, is that right?

THURMOND: That's right. He wanted us to see how hard it was to make a living on a farm.

JB: How large a farm was it?

THURMOND: I was only about, probably four years old when we moved out there but I remember when I lived on the other street.

JB: How many acres, do you recall?

THURMOND: Well it was in several different tracts. I guess it must have been thirty or forty acres there and pasture, maybe ten or fifteen acres at the other place and then about seven acres I believe, right at the house. Then we had land in the country, we had about six or seven more acres, one place about a thousand and another. After I got older, why, he would take me out in the buggy before automobiles came in.



JB: I was going to ask you, did you have a car, do you remember when you got your first car?

THURMOND: We bought our first car in 1916, a Dodge automobile.

JB: You remember that. And you were fourteen, did you drive it then?

THURMOND: Yes I did. Before then we'd get in the buggy and ride out to these farms in the country. One known as Nicholson Place which is about seven miles from Edgefield. The other was the Hilgal Place, that was about twelve, fifteen miles from Edgefield.

JB: Did you have a lot of farm equipment to run that farm?

THURMOND: No, we didn't have any equipment at all, we didn't have any tractors.

JB: So you had a lot of hired help, right?

THURMOND: Well, the land out in the country was done on division of the crops. My father would furnish the fertilizer and the seed, and finance and everything and split the crop with the man who worked it. We would go out and talk with these people every few weeks--ride the buggy out and talk with 'em. My father would talk to me going out there and back. At the time, sometimes I thought I'd rather be playing, but after going with him several times I learned it was so much fun and I found it very interesting to be with him, and enjoyed being with him.

JB: Did anybody else live with your family in the house, other than family?

THURMOND: Well, except a man. We did have a white man--Logan, cousin of my mother's who lived with us and worked there on the place some. But we had some other people that worked there--I'm speaking now of near Edgefield--we had other people. We had a cook, and we had a man who worked in the field. When I got big enough my job was to milk the cows, so I milked the cows up until I went off to college.

JB: How many cows did you have?

THURMOND: Anywhere from three to half a dozen.

JB: So what did you grow on these number of acres here and there. You had diverse agriculture?

THURMOND: Cotton and corn chiefly, some grains. We generally grew enough oats to feed the horses, corn and oats.

JB: So you didn't have any farm equipment for cotton, so it all had to be hand labor, right?

THURMOND: Oh yeah. And when my neighbor went to war in about 1917, World War I, I bought his crop and worked it myself--I was about fourteen years old. I bought his crop and it helped him out, and then I thought I'd make some money. My brother and I actually bought it. He later became a doctor, obstetrician. He's delivered more babies than any doctors in Georgia or South Carolina, the older brother. At any rate, he didn't like to work much in the farm. I soon saw I wasn't going to get much work out of him so I bought him out. But it turned out he cleared about as much as I did because we had a drought that year. (chuckle) But he was always cutting old frogs and snakes and things like that.

JB: Did you ever get an allowance. You know, kids today want an allowance. Did you get a weekly allowance for doing these jobs around the place?

THURMOND: No, I don't believe we got an allowance. But I worked-- I clerked in the store some on Saturdays. Clerked for Mr. Bob Dunovant Mr. J. D. Kemp. Also worked in a garage for George Adams on Saturdays in the summer time--not all summers but some times, maybe for a month. I had to work on the farm chiefly. When I clerked--well, I guess I was about fourteen, fifteen--I worked on the farm until I got big enough, then do that. And I still did some, my father required us to work on that farm.

JB: Do you have a nickname?

THURMOND: No I don't.

JB: They just called you that Thurmond boy. What did they say, they didn't call you. . . .

THURMOND: I don't think any special nickname. I have an unusual first name. My mother was a Strom--S.T.R.O.M. they pronounce it, back then it was S.T.R.U.M.

JB: Tell me about holidays at home, Christmas, Thanksgiving. Can you remember, think back, what that was like, what was served, any special dishes.

THURMOND: Well we always had good meals at our house. My father was a good lawyer and made considerable money practicing law. And we grew our own vegetables and we produced our own meat--hogs, hams.

JB: Did you slaughter them right at the place?

THURMOND: Yeah, once a year, slaughtered at the farm.

JB: Almost self sufficient.

THURMOND: Self sufficient. We grew our wheat and took it to the mill and we got whole wheat flour. He was way ahead of himself I guess that's the reason that today I still get bran from a mill to use--you know, it kind of puts hay in your stomach. (chuckle) That bran's the kind we used to feed the calves when I was growing up. But we'd get the whole wheat--I mean, we'd grind the wheat into whole flour. And we also had corn and ground that in the mill; and produced the hams and shoulders and sausage and everything of that kind--we cured in the smokehouse.

JB: Tremendous. You know, it's just impossible to do that today.

THURMOND: We used salt and some salt peters.

JB: Did you have any pets yourself, a dog?

THURMOND: Well, my father gave me a calf once. Then that calf grew up and she had calves and he started me off that way in business--livestock. And then he later bought a horse for me--it was the prettiest little red horse you ever saw--a little mare. But she jumped the fence one day and got in the field where we'd cut some hay recently, hay, and she ate too much and puffed up and died. Nearly broke my heart. At any rate, we produced just about everything we needed. We'd kill a calf occasionally.

JB: Chickens too, I suppose?

THURMOND: Oh, we had chickens. The chickens run under the house as soon as they could tell when you were going to pick one to kill. I'd have to go under there and get 'em out.

JB: I'd like to switch to your parents, if I could now. Your father was an attorney, can you give me a little background on his education?

THURMOND: He grew up down in what is known as Hawkins Creek-- it's between Steven's Creek and Savannah River. And he rode about six to eight miles to school every day on a horse. His mother taught him, he said--he learned more from her than anybody else. She was English descent, born in New Orleans. She was well educated, I don't know whether she went to college or not. But, I remember her quite well--she died December 13, 1913--I was eleven years old. She was excellent in grammar. And he accepted his ambition and his ideals from her. His father fought in three wars. He fought in the Indian wars, in the Mexican wars, and the Confederate war.

JB: That's George Washington Thurmond, isn't it?

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: He fought in three wars. Cherokee war?

THURMOND: That's right, the Indian wars, yeah. He went out, way out to Texas, lived out there awhile--Houston, Texas. What's that town right near Houston, a fort town.

JB: Galveston?

Thurmond: Galveston. He lived there awhile. I think he's still got some--he was married twice--some of his children or descendants are out there. At any rate, he came back to New Orleans and met my grandmother and married her. And that's when it took a long time to get around, well he got around somehow. He was an outdoorsman, kind of a roaming sort of fellow, and just went all around. He could drink liquor and work out in the open, had all of his teeth at eighty four, his hair too. Died at eighty four. But didn't seem to hurt him.

JB: Now that was your father's father.

THURMOND: Yeah. G. W. Thurmond. He was tough, he was really an outdoors man. His wife was a very literary woman. Miss Felter, she was a Felter.

JB: Mary Felter.

THURMOND: Mary Jane

JB: Did your father go to college for long?

THURMOND: He went to school out there in the country. Then later he went to the University of South Carolina for one year. That's the only college education he had. He studied law in the office of Governor Shepherd.

JB: John C. Shepherd.

THURMOND: Yeah. He stood the bar and they cited three of those who stood the bar for having excellent papers, and he was named first. Supreme Court cited three of 'em, just having such excellent papers. He was a good student, he had a very able mind, ablest lawyer I ever knew.

JB: Do you think he viewed himself as a success, your father?

THURMOND: Well, I don't know whether he did or not. I think, it was unfortunate, one time he had to kill a man. If it hadn't been for that I think he would have been governor or come to the senate or something. After that, I think he probably felt that he was hampered. Although he was appointed--he was solicitor at the time--he shot this man and killed him.

And then after that he didn't run, he'd but he finished out his term, that was about the middle of his second term. Only later he was appointed here as District Attorney by Woodrow Wilson, so that did not keep him from getting that appointment. Benjamin R. Tillman recommended him for it. He was a best friend of Benjamin R. Tillman, he was his attorney, his personal attorney. Tillman relied on him, he was his campaign manager.

JB: That's coming up. So I just want to ask a couple of more things about your father. Was he home much of the time?

THURMOND: Well, he travelled. He had a branch office in Saluda, he had one in Lexington. He could go by train to Lexington, but he had to go by a buggy to Saluda at that time. He was home later a good deal, later in life.

JB: Did you do a lot together, you told me about those buggy rides, but besides that?

THURMOND: Not so much, he was so busy.

JB: Hunting together, or fishing, or anything like that?

THURMOND: Well, occasionally he went hunting, but I didn't go hunting with him very much. I was away in college. After I came back and started practicing law he started having--one attack before then--he started having heart attacks and had 'em for six to eight years. He was too stout, didn't take enough exercise, and he was writing this law book--Thurmond's key cases. In other words, he didn't follow a course that was healthy that he should have done. Every time he'd have a heart attack, why his pulse would go down to about fifteen. First time we thought he was going to die, but the doctor'd come, give him a puncture. He'd get over it in ten minutes, he's just as normal as ever before.

JB: Give him a puncture?

THURMOND: Yeah, a shot in the arm. A shot in the arm, he give him something, and then his pulse would pick up. Ten minutes and he was all right. And he might go three or four months before he'd have another one. And that thing kept up for six to eight years.

JB: Was it chronic coronary?

THURMOND: I don't know what it was. But he was writing this book though during that period too. I think that's one thing, he just over-worked himself.

JB: Can we go to your mother for a minute. What influence did she have over your life.



THURMOND: She was a very dedicated Christian woman. And neither one of 'em drank whisky or used alcohol. Anyway, she was a great church goer. She could deliver a prayer as good as a preacher. (chuckle) She had six children, had two miscarriages, and with one of the children she developed curvature of the spine, so she wasn't too well for the last number of years of her life. But she was a bright lady too. She won medals in college for declaiming, and things like that.

JB: She went to college?

THURMOND: She went to EWC.

JB: What's that.

THURMOND: Glenville Women's College. It was old GFC, Glenville Female College, changed later to GWC, and then changed later to and then Furman.

JB: What was her attitude toward raising children, can you recall it or summarize it?

THURMOND: Well, she had so many children, so she didn't have too much time to spend on any one. But she always tried to check on us to see if we were properly dressed. And she always checked on the meals, we had a cook, but she would check to see that everything was right.

JB: She didn't work outside the home, did she?

THURMOND: No, except just for exercise out in the flower garden. She would work out there. My father would encourage her to do that, which was good for her--to devote her mind to that, and good exercise.

Her father was a doctor, and he died in his fifties, though, he was an honest and respected doctor--James Harrison Strom. He married a Reynolds, my mother was a Reynolds. A little related to old Maynard J. Reynolds.

JB: Oh, the tobacco king. Would it be fair to say that your mother established a model for yourself as a wife and a mother. In other words, I'm wondering what influence your mother had in terms of establishing what you would look for in a mother or a wife.

THURMOND: Well, she had an influence so far as how I viewed life. Yeah, she did. And she was always interested in seeing the right meals were prepared and encouraging the children to study their lessons. She would help us some if we got stumped but they generally made us do our own work. My father was the dominant character in the family.

JB: Who was--I was going to say-- who was the disciplinarian. Wait 'till your father gets home--did she ever say that?

THURMOND: (laughter) Yeah, that's right. We were afraid of him because he'd use a stick on you, or use a paddle, or he'd use a leather strap. You ever see one of these razor straps--he'd use that or use a paddle, either one. And she would threaten to tell my father if I didn't behave you see.

JB: Did he ever have to give you a . . . .?

THURMOND: Yeah, he paddled me several times. (chuckle) Not to many though because, . . .

JB: Once is enough.

THURMOND: Because he paddled pretty hard. As far as she was concerned, well, we would try to run away from her and she couldn't catch us.

JB: Did you run away from her.

THURMOND: She'd cry, come back here, I'm going to spank you. So we'd run up and get out on the porch on the house and she couldn't get us. We had an upstairs, on the second floor we had a big porch--you could get out on that. And then she wouldn't try to pursue us. She couldn't in the first place, and in the second place she was afraid that we might try to climb down from up there and get hurt. But the threat of telling him, or the threat of having him do it was because he meant business. Now she would kind of plead with you, but when he spoke, he was very firm and very determined and very decisive.

JB: Did your parents ever talk about anyone they admired, or did they describe values to you that they would emphasize. I'm wondering, we have models--I wonder if our parents ever had models for behavior. Did they ever mention anybody to you as children?

THURMOND: I don't know, dad especially, we kind of looked on him as the model.

JB: He was the boss.

THURMOND: That's the reason I guess I never did smoke cigarettes, or drink, 'cause he didn't. And that's the reason I guess I learned to eat whole wheat bread, 'cause he did. And that's the reason that, a lot of the health habits I picked up from him. He ate a lot of fruits and

vegetables, except he got so busy and ate too much, and that thing got him into trouble. But we used to go down to Senator Tillman's, particularly on a Sunday afternoon when he was there. When Congress was not in session. It was just six miles, to go in a buggy down there, you can go down there in about an hour. I remember one time we went down there, well he told me, he said--when you get there now, you go up, put your hand out and shake hands with Senator Tillman.

JB: Your dad telling you this now?

THURMOND: Yeah. Well, when I got there he spoke to him and I came up to the man, I'd shake hands with him. Senator Tillman was a stern fellow, very profane too. He looked at me and says, "What do you want?"

JB: Scare you? (chuckle)

THURMOND: Well he didn't scare me because my father had told me what kind of man he was. I said, I want to shake hands with you. And he says, "Well, why in the hell don't you shake then." I shook it several times, I been shaking hands ever since. (laughter)

JB: That's very good. (chuckle) He had a kind of a terrifying appearance--missing an eye wasn't it.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's right. I think maybe, I don't whether someone shot him in that eye or what happened, but something happened. He was a very dynamic fellow though. The best stump speaker, I guess, the state ever produced.

JB: Did you ever hear him?

THURMOND: Yeah. I heard him speak, 'course I was just a kid. But my father always wanted us to hear the different people who came to speak, all the campaigns. See, the big entertainment back in those days was two things. One was to go to courthouse and hear cases tried. So I'd go up and hear a lot of cases tried, just got intrigued by cases being tried.

JB: How often did you go there to hear these cases, every week?

THURMOND: Well, when they'd have court. They'd have it about, once in the spring, once in the fall, once in the winter. And as school was out I'd get to the courtroom to hear those cases. That was a big entertainment. They have those picture shows there, but I liked this better than a picture show. And then, every two years when people ran for office and have stump speaking, I'd want to go and hear them.

I remember when Blease and Ira Jones ran for governor in 1912. And we were for Jones, he had been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and a very fine man. But he was not a stirrer of people's souls. He was not a picturesque character like Blease. I remember they had him down there close to where the old high school was where I went to school, down at the bottom by the Creek they had a platform built.

Well, Blease was quite a speaker you know. He kind of ridiculed Jones. Well Jones wouldn't pay any attention to him make his speech. Blease won by a close vote. That's one time we felt the best man didn't win. But Blease was such a speaker.

JB: Bowled them over.

THURMOND: Yeah, he did. And that's the way then they judged people. And now, you're on television and different things. But back then it was stump speaking, whoever could make the best speech on the stump was going to get elected.

JB: You didn't need a press writer, wrote your own.

THURMOND: No, you just didn't have any press writers.

JB: I want to move into school, early school. Where, and what you studied, whether you liked it, your favorite teacher, and that kind of thing.

THURMOND: Well, I went to school at Edgefield--went to grammar school and high school at the same place.

JB: Do you remember a favorite teacher, that made an impression on you?

THURMOND: Yeah, there was a Miss Hyde was a favorite teacher, and Snow Bland who was married to a Jeffries was a favorite teacher. Those were two of my favorite teachers.

JB: How many were in your graduating class?

THURMOND: I didn't graduate, I went from the tenth grade to Clemson. I was sixteen years of age at that time. They did add the eleventh grade the next year.

JB: So you went as far as you could.

THURMOND: Yeah, I finished. The tenth grade was as far as they went. I could've stayed another year and attended the eleventh grade but I didn't see any need in doing that because I was accepted at Clemson in the tenth grade so I went there.

JB: That was quite an accomplishment. Sixteen and off to Clemson. Why did you decide to go to Clemson?

THURMOND: There were only two boys that remained in school--the boys back there would stop and go to work. We started out with about ten or twelve boys I guess, and probably twice that many girls. We ended up with about almost the same number of girls finished the tenth grade, only two boys. Ralph Wood, who got a scholarship to Citadel and went there, and I went to Clemson. He later became Dr. Wood and head of the physics department at Clemson.

JB: So we could say, since you went as far as you could go, which was the tenth grade, and then graduated. So only two . . .

THURMOND: I didn't graduate, didn't give any diplomas.

JB: Well, but you left and only two of you left--two boys who left--one went to Citadel and you went to Clemson. Any reason for going to Clemson rather than USC?

THURMOND: Well, I knew some boys around Edgefield that had gone to Clemson, and I liked them and I'd heard about Clemson. They had a good spirit at Clemson. My father that you wouldn't be tempted to run around at night,--if you wanted to go to a university of some other place. In other words, it was out in the country.

JB: Yeah, it would be. It still is kind of, I was there a couple of weeks ago--at Fort Hill there.

THURMOND: That's right, it still is. And he thought that would be a good place for me to go. Because the environment would be good, you could devote yourself to building your body and building your mind too.

JB: It was not coeducational was it?

THURMOND: No, it wasn't. We had a Corps Cadets.

JB: So it was compulsory ROTC?

THURMOND: Compulsory ROTC. Everybody had to be in the ROTC. I went there, fall of 1919, let's see, the war ended I believe in eighteen, so we were there; the boys coming back from the war was there. And that was a rough set too. A lot of 'em were older and they hazed terribly there you know. I've had many a broom handle broke over my rear end. (laughter)

JB: Because you were a plebe, right?

THURMOND: Yeah, freshman. Then when you get to be a sophomore of course, you could haze other. But I never did care about hazing people, except I'd send 'em on errands, such as that you know. And they'd clean your rooms--just like I cleaned the others rooms.

JB: Did you have a roommate at Clemson?

THURMOND: Yes I did.

JB: Who was that, do you remember anything about him?



THURMOND: First one was R. N. Murray. I think he's here in Washington now. He left though and went to Wofford and I believe he finished at Wofford. I was just with him one year. But he didn't like the military so much, so he decided to go to And then I had--A. K. Enman, was the next roommate I believe I had. P. M. Garland was my roommate my senior year.

JB: You got on well with all your roommates?

THURMOND: Oh yes, got along fine. P. M. Garland became a county agricultural agent. He was in Greenwood for twenty years or more. He's now living in Anderson, he's retired.

JB: Were you a member of a fraternity?

THURMOND: Didn't have any fraternities.

JB: What about social life?

THURMOND: Oh, we had dances about once a month. I love to dance.

JB: Where did you meet the girls to go to the dance.

THURMOND: Well, they would come by train.

JB: Train? (laughter)

THURMOND: They'd carry us across from old Calhoun. Calhoun was a little station over there, they changed it to Clemson--the name was Calhoun then.

JB: Would they come from another school or college?

THURMOND: Well, they'd come from other colleges or come from cities. Some high school girls.

JB: You didn't have any regular. . . .

THURMOND: Didn't have any social life at all except when these girls were coming there.

JB: Did you see anybody regularly. In other words, did you have a favorite girl friend?

THURMOND: No, I just played the field. (chuckle) I had been, ever since I was big enough, I used to go to dances in Aiken. I remember one time I was going to Aiken for a dance, borrowed a car from the home demonstration agent. She said there was plenty of oil and gas and we got halfway to Aiken and the next you know, it began to knock, the oil was too low. So rather than tear it up we just stopped and walked to the nearest house to Mr. Harrison. Got him to drive us back to Edgefield--I was just about fourteen years old then. The dances we had at Edgefield--we used to go to a good many dances on weekends in surrounding towns. They all had a good time too. Everybody would be swapping--you know, you danced with different girls. You wouldn't take one girl and dance with her all night. You'd take a girl and if the boy didn't break with you wouldn't take her any more 'cause you wanted to break and have a good time with everybody.

JB: Who did the music?

THURMOND: Well they'd have bands, good bands.

JB: And it wasn't square dancing, this was big time stuff?

THURMOND: No, just regular dancing. Edgefield was quite a social center. It was an intellectual center--when my father grew up down there in the country--they used to have public debates down there on the issues of the day. And he got very interested you know, they had

literary societies, things such as that, down there. And Edgefield county--I don't know --

that I know back there. People were so interested in public affairs. And I was the tenth Governor--that little county produced more governors than any county in the state.

JB: Maybe in the nation.

THURMOND: I was the tenth judge. A number of United States senators and congressmen--Preston Brooks was from there. Preston Brooks was the one that walked out on the floor of the senate over here and caned the senator of Massachusetts. He was castigating Senator Butler from Edgefield. Brooks may have been related to Butler. Anyway he walked out, and took his cane, and just knocked him to the floor.

JB: What do you think about that?

THURMOND: Well, of course that was improper, but back then they didn't care whether it was improper or not. I mean, back in Edgefield County everybody would fight (chuckle)--fighters and lovers. There were more people killed on that square right in the town of Edgefield--there must have been fifteen people killed right where you see.

JB: Within a what, twenty year period?

THURMOND: Yeah, I imagine in a twenty year period. I mean they didn't bother to go in court. They'd settle their affairs out of court.

JB: Hot blooded.

THURMOND: They were, they really were. They were that way, I don't know why it was, but it was. At any rate, the Brooks had that spirit about 'em, don't you see.

Now he was reprimanded by the House so he resigned, and went back down there and ran again, and they overwhelmingly reelected him. But he died before he ever came back.

JB: Let me just ask you some family ties. Did you ever take a vacation together--all of you--the four kids and mom and dad?

THURMOND: We had no where to go then. My father used to take some of us on trips. I remember, as soon as they bought this Dodge automobile--about six months after they bought it--my father was going to take several children up to Asheville, North Carolina. He was District Attorney from about 1914 to 1921. And so in 1916 we planned to go in this car to Greenville, his headquarters, 'cause he had to go up every week. I'd take him up every week, it was about four o'clock in the morning driving

And so, he said, well we'd just go in the car that day. For some reason the car wouldn't start. And later, after he went on on the train, I got the car started, got it repaired and took my sister who was two years younger and my brother who was about three years younger that she was. And we got in that car and drove all the way to Greenville. The speed limit was about fifteen miles an hour--it took a long time to get up there. It took about six, seven hours from Edgefield to get up there. But we made it, walked in and surprised him. He didn't know we were going to come. I didn't know where to go

but asked where the county courthouse was, went in there, and he was there. So we spent the night there, next day went on up to Asheville. And got up to Asheville, we stayed several days.

Stayed at a boarding house--they had a boarding house, then you could stay at a reasonable price. You get rooms and meals, you see. I remember we were on a streetcar up there, he told me to sit down and I sat down. But the next time we got on one I was walking around and we were going around those mountain curves and the car turned quick and I nearly fell off, but I grabbed like that--having to catch a post so I didn't fall off.

And I remember another thing he told us. We went out to Vanderbilt's Estate. They were selling ice cream and milk and everything there. We walked in, he says, "Now you're not to have any ice cream, any of you," he said, "You drink buttermilk." Well, you see ice cream has sugar in it, travelling it's not so good, you should drink buttermilk. So we had to drink buttermilk. We all wanted ice cream but we wouldn't disobey. He was a strict disciplinarian. When he spoke we'd used to always obey him.

JB: That was a noteworthy outing.

THURMOND: He took us to Columbia a number of times when I was a kid just big enough to hold onto his coat tail, about four years, five years old.

JB: How would you get there?

THURMOND: Train. One time we were going down the street, and my older brother who's two years older--see we were looking at everything, we hadn't been there much. And he was holding him by one hand on the coat tails, and I was holding him on the other side by his coat tails. And I got to looking at something, and dropped my hand from his coat and before I knew it he'd gone on up yonder. Somebody else came along, I just grabbed his coat tail. (laughter) Man turned around and said, "What you want?" I looked up and said, Oh I thought you were my daddy. So I had to run way on up half a block to catch up with him.

JB: Had he taken you up to the capital there?

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: That's quite a sight isn't it?

THURMOND: Yeah, he took us up to the capital and introduced us to the judges on the Supreme Court. He's sat on the Supreme Court numbers of times as special judge. He never did care to be a regular judge but they'd call him in especially when they'd have some tough cases. Chief Justice Blease said he was the ablest lawyer that ever came before the Supreme Court.

JB: I've heard that from a number of people. What I was going to mention about family times--was there any crisis in the family, any illness or tragedy?

THURMOND: My mother had several operations. Her health was not too good. She went to Columbia, Dr. Geary operated on her and she went to Augusta for treatment--  
--but Geary had a famous name  
so my father took her there.

JB: Were you a member of FFA, 4-H, Scouts, or church groups?

THURMOND: I remember the Boy Scouts. We didn't have FFA at that time or 4-H.

JB: You didn't have them.

THURMOND: Didn't have 'em at that time when I grew up. Now later, after I graduated from Clemson, I taught agriculture for six years and we had the Future Farmers there.

JB: You said church was important early on there.

THURMOND: Every Sunday we went to church.

JB: Was there Sunday School too?

THURMOND: Sunday School and preaching.

JB: So even as, probably a five year old, you had to sit through the sermons too?

THURMOND: That's right, after we got about five we'd have to sit through the sermons.

JB: How long was that, did you have those long sermons in those days?

THURMOND: No, well it would take about an hour, an hour and a half I guess, for the whole service. About like it does now.

JB: So everybody went, the six children and mom and dad?

THURMOND: All six of us.

JB: Did you like going to church?

THURMOND: Yeah, I liked it all right. Miss Cleota Tompkins who was my teacher, I remember one time she gave me a Bible, I still have it. She was a good teacher and a very sweet, kind woman. She was Cleota before she married. By the way, she's an aunt of this young man, Congressman Mann's wife.

JB: All relations. Were you active in the church group there. There was a young Baptist group or something.

THURMOND: Yeah, we actually called it the BYPU. Then later, after I finished with teaching school, I was active at an office of BYPU for that area, several counties around there. Later, I believe that's when I practicing law, I was superintendent of Sunday School.

JB: And today the church is still a regular. . . .

THURMOND: First Baptist Church. Except I'm a member of the First Baptist Church in Aiken now, I moved the membership. I'd rather stay at Edgefield while I was governor, I did move to Columbia, although I went to the First Baptist Church in Columbia.

JB: Have you ever given a sermon, preached?

THURMOND: Well, I don't preach a sermon, I've talked in a church. for God and Country Day and I talked. But I don't hold to be any preacher . . .

JB: No, no, but you mentioned your mother could give a sermon as good or better than a preacher, I wondered. Did you ever think about that when you were making a decision about politics--did you ever consider the ministry as a possible career.



THURMOND: No I never did consider the ministry. I have a nephew who's kind of undecided between the ministry and medicine. He used to be an obstetrician, tremendous practice in Greenwood.

JB: Let me back into a little bit more about your father and politics. Was politics a family thing or was it mainly your father.

THURMOND: Well, we were in politics from the time I can remember. 'Cause he was working--he was with the Tillman crowd you see. Now, he was a member of the House from 1894 to ninety six and then he became Solicitor, he was elected from 1896 to nineteen four.

JB: This was your father now.

THURMOND: Yeah. He must have killed this man, I guess, about 1899.

JB: What was that over, if I might ask.

THURMOND: The fellow grew up in the same part of the county, way down there where you came from.

JB: In Edgefield.

THURMOND: Yeah. And, I don't know what he was drinking but anyway, he was threatening and they got in a fight. Fellow Harris. I think he followed around my father's horse, and my father was trying to get away from him. But the fellow was just determined to cause trouble, following him around. But I think he grew up down in that same area down there where my father lived and was probably a little jealous of him, I was told. 'Cause my father had done well you know, in law.

JB: Were you aware of what your father did for a living, did he tell you or did you ask him?

THURMOND: He told me later, about having to kill the man, after I was older.

JB: What I meant is, some kids today don't really know what their father does, the father goes away and comes home. Did you know that your father was an attorney and in politics?

THURMOND: I knew what he did, yeah. 'Cause I would be with him.

JB: You always went with him.

THURMOND: Yeah. In other words, we'd go up to the office practically every day and sometimes he'd send us on missions and things, you know, just to do. And then during court time we'd go up and hear the cases tried.

JB: Can you remember at what age that you might have thought that you would pursue a political career.

THURMOND: Well all along I thought I might get into politics. But in 1912 when Jones and Blease ran and I saw Blease castigate Jones unnecessarily without reason and degrade him, I made up my mind then I was going to run for governor some day.

JB: Well, I guess you did. Because of the abuse?

THURMOND: And I made up mind I was going to learn to speak and never let a man do me like that. (laughter)

JB: Because that's how--Blease just snowed him over didn't he. I can appreciate that. Did you say to yourself I could do that good myself.

THURMOND: Well, Jones, he made a good talk, a literary talk. But he just didn't stir the people. And Blease did. I was ten years old then.

JB: Later on when your father was still living, did you ever ask him for advice as to what you should do?

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: Did you ever have a disagreement with him, politically?

THURMOND: No, I don't think so, politically, we were pretty well together.

JB: Did you ever have a disagreement with him when you were older.

THURMOND: Well we may not have agreed on everything. He--law is a tough task master. When I thought about studying law, he just wanted me to think it over well and be sure. Since I went to Clemson and they taught agriculture and to live out in the open--he thought that was a good life for a person. 'Cause he's pinned down to an office and he said, you'd better think it over well. But I'd about made up my mind when I was grown up I was going to be a lawyer. But I just went to Clemson because so many other Edgefield boys I liked went there. And then I got interested in teaching--it's a great challenge to teach school. He taught school himself. And anyway

BEGIN TAPE I SIDE II

JB: You mean in a day you would do that?

THURMOND: Oh, not at the same time, no.

JB: Oh, you'd teach awhile, a couple of years.

THURMOND: I was in the McCormick just one year. And Ridge Spring only one year. And then I decided to go back home because I thought I'd study law and wanted to be around my father. And then of course, football and basketball.

JB: I meant to ask you, when you were up there at Clemson, what sports did you play up there?

THURMOND: I played company football and basketball, but my main varsity sport was track and cross country.

JB: Is that where you developed your interest in jogging and running?

THURMOND: Yeah. We ran, one time at the end of the cross country season in 1922, there were five of us decided to see if we could run twenty miles. That was before they straightened the road from Clemson to Anderson. It was up hill and down hill and not paved until we got two miles from Anderson, it was paved.

JB: So you ran from Clemson to Anderson, which was twenty miles.

THURMOND: Yeah, twenty miles, all of us made it.

JB: Who was first?

THURMOND: Well we didn't run, we weren't competing. Just to see if we could do it. I remember I had shoes that were a little too big--they were new shoes. I never should've done that, that taught me a lesson. They were a little too big and they rubbed my toes but if I stopped I wouldn't have accomplished what I wanted to so I kept on.

And I rubbed--every toenail came off, it rubbed so. About two miles from Anderson when we got in there, we hit this pavement. Every time you put your feet down it'd feel like you were driving--'course those kind of shoes then were not the kind--they got good jogging shoes now. I jog on the pavement. But back then they just would wear plain tennis shoes. And every time you'd put your foot down it'd feel like you were driving a nail right in your leg. Those last two miles. . . .

JB: You ran though before 1920. Did you run around Edgefield, jogging?

THURMOND: Not very much, no. I played football at school, but there wasn't any running then much. They did have some track events there, but I didn't take much interest, I liked football at that time. But I wasn't heavy enough hardly at Clemson to make the team up there.

JB: At Clemson you were on the track team. Did you set any records there?

THURMOND: No.

JB: Mostly a long distance runner?

THURMOND: Long distance--two miles in track and then three and five miles in cross country.

JB: The loneliness of the long distance runner, you probably know about that--always out in front. When did the concept of diet begin to take more and more of a hold. Or was it always because of living in the natural setting.

THURMOND: Well, I think there was always a certain--because my father kind of set an example by eating vegetables and fruits and eating whole grains. Oatmeal, wheat--in other words he advised eating whole grains.

JB: Let me ask you about when you were a boy and also through college, some of the reading habits that you had. As a boy, what stories did you read or were read to you and what authors and what subjects interested you most when you were growing up?

THURMOND: Well I read the usual books that were available then, stories, and novels, and Huckleberry Finn, stories of that kind.

JB: Is Mark Twain one of your favorite authors?

THURMOND: Mark Twain, yeah.

JB: What do you read today?

THURMOND: I don't read any books, today I don't have the time. I've got to get others to read books and report to me on 'em.

JB: Do you read any magazines today?

THURMOND: Yeah, I generally read U.S. News and World Report and get others to report to me on some of the other magazines.

JB: What about what we might call relaxing.

THURMOND: Now at Clemson I always made it a point to read a good daily paper every day. And they got the State up there and so I read that.

JB: Oh, Columbia State.

THURMOND: Yeah. Because that covered where I lived at Edgefield and I was accustomed to reading that paper. I started reading that paper when I was six years old.

JB: Today, do you do any television watching?

THURMOND: Don't have time much. I listen to the radio while I'm exercising and dressing. Occasionally I watch the T.V. but not very often.

JB: Nothing regular, six thirty news or something?

THURMOND: Yeah, something like that if I'm home.

JB: You don't play an instrument do you?

THURMOND: No.

JB: Sing?

THURMOND: No.

JB: What do you do to relax, I mean, you have to relax sometime.

THURMOND: Well, I don't really do anything relaxing. I run, but that's in the mornings.

JB: I mean, do you and Mrs. Thurmond and the kids just go somewhere?

THURMOND: Well, I take a massage or sit in the bath. I try to do it normally, I can't do it this year--I'm so busy. Once a week, we adjourn, I try to get a massage once a week, sit in the bath. But the jogging and exercising keeps you in pretty good shape. See, I do about twenty minutes of calisthenics every morning. Twisting, bending, pull ups, kick ups, and things of that kind. And then lift weight five minutes, and then run two and a half, three miles. I ran three and a quarter miles this morning. I generally run from two and a half to three and a half.

JB: Every day, seven days a week.

THURMOND: Well, every day, unless there's something that comes up. I mean, you might be out late some night, one or two o'clock and have an early appointment. Now tomorrow morning I may not run because I promised to jog with some people in Spartenburg tomorrow afternoon at 6:00.

JB: A.M.?

THURMOND: Spartanburg, South Carolina.

JB: Yeah, what time are you going to be there?

THURMOND: Six o'clock tomorrow afternoon. I'm going to leave here about four something to go to Spartanburg. They just wanted to jog with me, some at the Y.M.C.A. down there.

JB: Good. Can you describe when you were studying for law. You didn't go to law school did you?

THURMOND: No, I studied under my father.

JB: How did you do that, he would just tell you what to read?

THURMOND: Well the Supreme Court proscribed--the other courts would have to read them. So I got those books, my father had most of 'em, so I got those books and read 'em. Then, if I came across something that I didn't quickly understand, instead of having to go and look it up and wasting time, I'd just ask him and he could answer like that. (snaps his fingers) See, I had a three year law course in one year.

JB: But you read three years . . .

THURMOND: Well, I'd hang around the court room a lot. And I had been--before I took the bar--I furnished my own office as Superintendent of Education. I moved down next to his law office, right next door to before I was admitted to the bar. In fact I tried three cases before I was admitted to the bar.

JB: You could do that?



THURMOND: Well, I had to get permission.

JB: From the judge.

THURMOND: Yeah. He had a heart attack and couldn't argue a case in the Supreme Court. And Chief Justice Blease gave him permission for me to argue the case for him. It was a case about illegitimates, with so, I won the case.

JB: You won the case?

THURMOND: Yeah. That was before I was admitted to the bar. Let's see, I was admitted in 1930, so this must have been about 1929 I guess.

JB: How was that test administered, to the bar?

THURMOND: Well you stand three days. You have three different examiners--each one examines you for a day on certain subjects and the other ones on other subjects.

JB: Was this an oral exam?

THURMOND: No, it was written. And the next case was in the Surrogate Court, that's the highest trial court in the common. A man was killed at a railroad crossing, pressed a charge. My father had the case, and he had another heart attack and couldn't try that. So I tried that particular one too. I had learned to try cases pretty well from just watching him try cases, see, over the years.

In the third case--I started at the Supreme Court and came on down. The third case was in Greenville--the man was charged with having a hog with cholera--in the Magistrate's Court. So I went up to defend him, didn't charge him anything--he was from Edgefield and a friend of

mine. Well he didn't know if he had cholera, but he did have cholera, so the veterinarian said.

JB: Oh, who had this disease.

THURMOND: A fellow Wood was charged with selling hogs with cholera. That's against the law you see. Except what the law says, who knowingly does. Well, he said he didn't know and argued before the jury.. I remember Dr. Barnett who was the father of some Barnett boys in Greenville, a good friend of mine now, was a veterinarian. He testified that they had cholera. And I remember I had taught agriculture and I knew something about those things. And I had good many bulletins from Clemson on various subjects. I asked him if he was familiar with a certain man who taught at Clemson and who was an expert on this subject. He said, yeah. I said, would you mind taking this bulletin here and read what it says about hog cholera. And I had marked the portions and its says the only way you can definitely if a hog has cholera,--'course there are other symptoms--the only way you can definitely tell for sure, is to make a post mortem. So I had him read that to the jury. And then I said, now did you make a post mortem. He said, No. I said, well then you couldn't definitely tell then. At any rate, we cleared the man.

JB: About the military, when did you first become interested in a military career?

THURMOND: Clemson. I was offered a commission in the army I believe when I finished. But I didn't take it, I was put in the commission in the reserve. one of my classmates went in the regular army.

JB: So you were in the reserves?

THURMOND: I was in the reserves.

JB: Any relationship between Edgefield and it's prominent people--military has anything to do with that?

THURMOND: Yeah, they're rather military minded, and defense minded, we always have been.

JB: I also think maybe the war would have something to do with that.

THURMOND: That's right, World War I.

JB: Well, and even the Confederate war, reconstruction, that was a tough chapter there.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's right. Oh yeah. Every year Miss Woodson would come to the school and conduct exercises and tell all about the Confederate war. That it was fought not over slavery, it was fought on the right to secede--the state's had to join the union voluntarily, they had the right to secede voluntarily. Which seemed to make sense, you know. (chuckle) But force held it didn't.

JB: I've got a couple of questions on that later on. I just wanted to get this one point about your military career. Have you ever thought of a career in military service, you know a regular army rather than, say, politics?

THURMOND: Well, I considered it when I was a senior in college. But I decided I'd rather just take the commission in reserve and be available if war ever came rather than go in full time military. Because I could make more money in civilian life, and I felt I could show more initiative. It took ten years then to go from second to a first lieutenant. I mean, it wasn't enough incentive there, if you

worked hard you still didn't get there any faster. And I felt that I wanted to get somewhere where if I worked hard I could rise faster.

JB: You married rather late.

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: Why.

THURMOND: Well, my father died in 1934 and my mother lived on and didn't die until 1958. After he died my sister was there teaching school.

JB: This is your older sister?

THURMOND: No, the younger sister, Mary Tompkins. She married Mr. Tompkins and they lived on in the house, the home house, and my mother lived there with them. Later she moved over into town. But at any rate, I guess, having a mother and a sister to kind of look after that part of that--meals and such as that. And then, I could go and come. And another thing, I wouldn't be tied down, because I felt sooner or later I'd go into politics. I started making contacts when I was teaching school, I felt sooner or later I'd end up in statewide politics. So I could make more contacts--if I'd had a wife it'd hold you back. Have to come home every night, or you'd have to be in by a certain time, take your wife out. And whereas I felt being unfettered that I could make my own schedule wouldn't inconvenience anybody. But then after I got to be governor why--in other words I had gotten there then so it was feasible.

JB: You'd arrived, right.

THURMOND: (chuckle) And so I felt I could take time to get married.

JB: Did you almost--this is maybe asking too much--but did you say, well, it's time to get married. Almost like that?

THURMOND: Yeah. I'd sort of like to get married and have a family. But I didn't have any children by my first wife.

JB: Who would've been the most important women in your life. Have there been some dominant women?

THURMOND: I guess your mother probably, of course, is the most important. I think another important lady was Miss Gloria Tompkins I mentioned who was my Sunday School teacher when I was a kid. Another was Miss Mamie Tillman who was wife of Jim Tillman who lieutenant governor who killed Gonzales.

JB: Mamie Norris Tillman, is that who that is?

THURMOND: Yeah. She was very active in matters. She was so interested in history, and always interested in people. And I admired her very much because of her public spiritedness in the community. And then, my wives.

JB: Your first political office, if we want to call it political, was Superintendent of Education, because you were elected to that.

THURMOND: I had to run for that, yeah. Mr. Fuller was the man I opposed.

JB: What goals did you have as Superintendent of Education. Because you had been a teacher.

THURMOND: Well he had run the country way in debt and I was always a believer in fiscal responsible. And he ran the county in debt and they didn't put on the taxes to pay it. That was one thing. The other thing was, I wanted to instill a course in health for the children of the county--teach 'em a course in health. I felt

that's the basis of everything, if you don't have a healthy body you can't do anything. Then we wanted to instill a course in character for students. And during that four years I was superintendent we were able to get the dentists to volunteer their services and examine all the school children free. It turned out that they got a lot of business from it, because they found so many cavities and things like that. But that's all right, I wanted 'em examined to point out defects. Then we had the doctors to examine all the children. And we sent a card home showing if they needed dental treatment--I had cards printed up--or if they had anything wrong with 'em physically.

JB: Of course the schools then were segregated weren't they?

THURMOND: They were segregated, that's right.

JB: But everybody got to see the doctor?

THURMOND: Yeah, and that was a big thing for those children, it was a big help to 'em. It was something that had never been done before.

JB: Well, black kids as well as white kids I would expect, never had that service.

THURMOND: That's right. So, then when I was teaching I had gotten up farm boys to take off to a summer school that I had charge of 1925, '26, '27, and '28. And they were not able to pay their way--it was only twelve dollars for a month--but about half of 'em weren't able to pay that. So I went to the Lion's Club and I went to the churches and I got them to raise some money for scholarships for these boys. That helped me politically. (chuckle) But it was a worthy

cause, I wanted to do it to help the boys, and incidentally it did help me.

JB: Was that really a conscious step, I'm going to run for County Superintendent?

THURMOND: No, I wasn't sure I was going to run for County Superintendent then.

JB: But it was a good political base.

THURMOND: Well, I wanted to help those rural children that needed that help. At the same time I was keeping in mind that some day I probably would run, but I didn't know when. And when I decided to take law, the superintendent's place was a place that I could kind of arrange--that I could study at night and be at home with my father and do some things for the schools I wanted to do anyway. Of course having been a teacher I saw the need of a lot of these things. And so it just fitted ideally. I kind of hated to run against old man Fuller. But he'd been there a long time, all he did was hunt. He didn't do anything to improve the schools much. And there were so many things I saw that could be done.

JB: Did you have to raise the property tax a little bit, a special bond?

THURMOND: We did raise it. Because I called in the trustees and I said, now here last year, why you spent so much and your income was only so much. They said, well Mr. Fuller said we could do it. I said, you just can't do that, we've got to balance this budget and we've got to raise taxes. We did raise taxes and paid off that debt. And when I left I left with a surplus. I left a surplus there and

then I went to the state senate and I put the county on the county unit system so that the towns with the railroads would have to help out these country communities who had four times or more as much mileage as the towns did, to run the schools. Because they're poor country districts, no railroads, no industry, no anything.

JB: Well, Edgefield was like that wasn't it?

THURMOND: Yeah. Put the whole thing on the county unit system, put on a uniform tax on all of 'em, and give 'em all the same education. And that helped the poor, you can tell that.

JB: I want to ask you a question about your self concept, self image. Do you see yourself as a self made man.

THURMOND: Well, no necessarily. Because I had a good father and a good mother.

JB: A good start.

THURMOND: Yeah, a very good start.

JB: Of course you're from Edgefield remember. That counts for something, doesn't it.

THURMOND: Well, I think I would have done it without them, frankly. But they were encouragement. I'm confident that I would've gone and got a college education if both of them had been killed in a wreck. Because I had it instilled in me by them that if you're going to do anything worthwhile you've got to have an education.

JB: You had saved some money too, right--for it?

THURMOND: By the time I'd finished the sixth grade, from the cows I had raised and the pigs I had raised and the trading--I was



quite a trader--horses and everything. I had saved six hundred dollars.

JB: When you were in the sixth grade?

THURMOND: No, by the time I finished the tenth grade I had saved six hundred dollars.

JB: Of your own money?

THURMOND: That's right. Six hundred dollars then, would be worth about six thousand dollars today. But when I went to college my father paid my actual expenses. The money I had saved--I had a little savings if I wanted to do things for myself.

JB: Does the word ambitious bother you? They say, he's ambitious, does that word bother you?

THURMOND: No, I admire anybody who's ambitious, wants to get ahead.

JB: Drive?

THURMOND: You don't get anywhere unless you're ambitious and willing to work I don't think.

JB: Would you describe yourself as confident? Self assured?

THURMOND: Well, I'm pretty confident. I've always felt if anybody else could do it, I could do it.

JB: Do you have any goals or did you have any goals, for example, to be at a certain point in your life by a certain age?

THURMOND: Not exactly. Because when I was a state senator, I still had in mind--I had made up my mind when I was ten years old to run for governor--I wanted to be governor. And then I'd see what worked out from there, and if I'd come to the senate it was possible

to do so. But Judge Ramage died and I had in mind maybe that after being governor, if I didn't come to the senate I could be a judge.

JB: State judge?

THURMOND: Circuit judge, the highest trial court the Supreme Court. I liked the trial work better than the work actually, stronger courtroom is so interesting. At any rate, Judge Rames died and I didn't know just what the situation would be later about running for governor and I decided I'd better go on and take that judgeship and try to do a good job with that. And I was taking the rotating--in the summer time you're in your home district, fall, another district, spring, another district. You cover two circuits a year besides your own, every year. Takes six and a half years to cover the state. I decided I'd better take that and try to do a good job at it and then I'd make friends going around travelling as a judge over the state, and that would be a good foundation if I cared to resign and later enter politics for governor or the United States Senate. I didn't especially care about going to the Congress, you have to run every two years. So I took that, and I stayed on there--let's see, I was elected in thirty eight, stayed on there 'till the war came. I volunteered the first attack against Germany and went in several months later, as soon as they would take me. Then came back, went back on the bench in October, forty five and then resigned April the fifteenth, forty six, to run for governor. So it worked out very well because--some people would've got on that bench and sat there because it was a soft job. It was the easiest, nicest job I ever had, just from the

standpoint of health, and respect--everybody respected you, looks up to you.

JB: And fairly good income.

THURMOND: And good income. And I could've gone on to the Supreme Court if I'd wanted to, I'm sure. But I resigned and took the tough course to run for governor because I felt the state needed some reforms. Managed to take the                      and power away from the governor and do a lot of things. We can give you a copy of things we've accomplished when I was governor if you want.

JB: I would. Would you say now, as you look back, you've accomplished all that you've really set out to do. I mean, you're sitting there, and that's where you wanted to sit.

THURMOND: Well, I don't know that. (chuckle) It's kind of hard to say that. Well, I ran for president in 1948. And the reasons I ran for president, I just got sick and tired of seeing more power being centralized here in Washington. Truman was advocating this unreasonable Civil Rights program, and I've never been against blacks, but he was just catering to that group to win votes. And he was advocating a law against lynching. Well lynching is nothing but murder and every state has laws in the murder. And he was advocating passing a law to repeal the poll taxes as prerequisite for voting. Well, I had always advocated that as governor, my first year, and gotten it repealed it down there. Congress never did pass a law to repeal the poll tax. Later, ten years after we'd done it in South Carolina, or maybe ten years after I came here, Harlan introduced a constitutional amendment. That's the proper way to do it--contitutional amendment to repeal the poll taxes as prerequisite to voting. And that

was done. But when I was governor we were way ahead of 'em on so many progressive things. But as I said, Truman was advocating things--he was trying to do by statute what should have been done by amending the constitution. And then advocating so many other things too that were unreasonable and centralizing power in Washington. I've always been afraid of federal power. Or too much power in any one place. Because it ultimately brings tyranny. And ultimately can result in totalitarianism if it's carried far enough. I've always believed in the rights of the states to run their own affairs.

JB: Did you ever speculate on what, if you had been elected president in 1948?

THURMOND: I think the country would be different today.

JB: How would it be different?

THURMOND: I think we could have reversed the trend of centralizing more power in Washington. The federal government has gone into almost every conceivable field of activity here. The field of education, no one believes in education more than I do. I have put my honorariums and got money from other sources. I've established twenty five, twenty six scholarships in twenty four different places in institutions in South Carolina--colleges. Four black colleges and white colleges and even at correctional institutions where these young people go who have committed crimes. Give them a chance to do well and reform and to go to college. I established one there. And I established scholarships, several, at the Strom Thurmond high school that's named after me.

And no one believes in it more than I do. But the word education is not even mentioned in the United States constitution. And if they're

going to go into the field of education, they should amend the constitution. I'm a strict believer in the constitution of the United States. I think it ought to be followed or it ought to be amended in the way provided in the constitution. And not try to pass a law to do things that they don't have the power to do. Now that's just an illustration. That way, education not found in the constitution, they have no right to go into it unless they amend the constitution to allow 'em to go into it.

They're going into so many field like that. That was disturbing me, and they've done a lot of it since I've been here in the Senate. I've opposed it--after we go into a field, then I vote on the merits--but I vote against going into it to start with because I didn't think it was proper.

So, if I had been elected president I think we could've stopped that trend that was just beginning along about that time, to a great extent.

JB: I'd like to follow up on that idea a little bit, with your reaction to national historical movements.

THURMOND: Now we can give you a sheet too that will tell you about why I ran for president, if you'd like to have that.

JB: Fine. What do you view as the most important historical event in your life?

THURMOND: The most important historical event? I'd have to think over that some, it's kind of hard to say off hand. One of the most vivid experiences I've had was when the sheriff over there was

killed. I was the judge then, that was the fall of 1941. Wadd Allen was the sheriff, he was killed by George Logue. I'll give you a book that was written about me and my first wife that tells about that. I don't know if that's such a historic thing. The most historic thing I guess was running for president. Because if we--a change of 20,000 votes in two states would've thrown that election to the House. It was that close.

JB: Do you think you could've won it in the House. Or traded, maybe.

THURMOND: Well, we might have won it in the House for this reason. The Republicans hated Truman. The whole country seemed to have hated him for the most part. (chuckle) But I think the southerners at that time--the Civil Rights program had so upset the southerners--it would have been very difficult for them to have voted against a candidate from the South running for president. And the Republicans might have just gone--I was told by some Republicans--that they would've chosen me if it'd gone to the House over Truman. Of course no one knows what would've happened. But there was a chance there, there was a chance that with the southerners and the Republicans, it might've been done.

JB: Just some general questions. Can you recall one of your happiest boyhood memories, maybe we've touched on that. Probably with your dad or in the court, maybe something else.

THURMOND: Well, there were so many. All my memories were happy, everything I did I've enjoyed it. I didn't do things I didn't enjoy much.

JB: Anything really outstanding, birthday or Christmas?

THURMOND: You mean, before I finished college?

JB: Yeah.

THURMOND: I think some of the most pleasant things was helping these farm boys go to these summer schools and taking 'em off for a month. First month we went were some colleges held there. Next year, a year later, at Long Creek Academy in County. Next year at Academy in 1928 which has been abolished now. Next year at Academy in 1928 down around near Leesville, in that area.

I expect some of the happiest moments, maybe, was when the family got together.

JB: You mentioned the pony, that was probably a sad point for you.

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: That was the worst, the most poignant.

THURMOND: I guess as a kid, it probably was. I've always been in the family.

JB: Of course when your father died, did that come as a real shock?

THURMOND: Well, it wasn't so much of a shock because we expected it. He'd had his heart attacks for six to eight years and every one he'd have, we knew it could be the last. So it wasn't so much of a shock.

JB: I'd like to focus now on Edgefield. So we'll go back to Edgefield, and just think of all the kinds of things we can think about Edgefield. How and when did you first become aware of Edgefield's history?

THURMOND: (chuckle) Well you couldn't have lived in Edgefield with Miss Woodson, and Miss Mamie Tillman, and those ladies around there--you couldn't escape it. And then, seeing the lawyers at the bar like John C. Shepherd who was an eloquent speaker, and B. R. Tillman at Trenton who was the best stump speaker I guess the state's produced in the United States Senate. And learning about people like Preston Brooks. At one time the second race for governor was two men from Edgefield, B. R. Tillman and John C. Shepherd. Of the whole state, there were two from one county.

JB: Both were from Edgefield.

THURMOND: That's right. You couldn't have lived there in that atmosphere, I don't think, without taking an interest in history. Whether you wanted to or not--it was thrust on you almost.

JB: That's my next question. Edgefield's so rich in history, why do you suppose that is. What makes Edgefield the way it is?

THURMOND: I never have figured just what it is but I remember the rivalries there between the lawyers. I remember my father always felt that one of his greatest victories in politics was winning the county attorneyship, by the county commissioners--they selected the county attorney. 'Cause all the lawyers wanted it for prestige.

JB: To be chosen you mean.



THURMOND: He had to be chosen as county attorney. He later ran for the House, two years in the House. They gave him a cane down there for leading a drive to defeat some bonds that were brought in by the carpetbaggers. And anyway, then he was solicitor eight years. And then his interest in political races came along.

JB: They gave your father a cane.

THURMOND: Yeah, they gave him a cane with a gold cap on it. He led the movement to defeat some bonds during his term down there that were illegal issues he said. And he won out on it.

JB: When you said cane I immediately think of Preston Brooks. Is that the symbolism there.

THURMOND: Walking cane. That's right. Well, back in that day my father didn't use a cane, but just as a symbol--you see a lot of people then, the lawyers and they call 'em colonels and so forth, would carry a cane just for prestige. Walk down the street. And then they'd keep dogs away--see everybody had a dog--and they'd walk down the street with a cane just for prestige. I've seen many of the prominent people around there use walking cane when they didn't need to use 'em, but just for prestige. And so they gave him this cane, and that was quite an honor at that time.

JB: Are you yourself conscious of being part of Edgefield?

THURMOND: Well, I don't guess you'd get away from it.

JB: You mean, you became aware of history, and law, and politics, all within Edgefield, and you had Mrs. Tillman coming around and Miss Woodson coming to school--almost as if they wouldn't trust the teachers to teach it to you. So you've got kind of a double dose right.

THURMOND: That's right. They would come in the schools and give lectures.

JB: And the UDC was active, and the DAR.

THURMOND: That's right, UDC and the DAR both.

JB: Do the people of Edgefield mean a lot to you today?

THURMOND: Yes they do.

JB: Pretty close to them. Does it seem like home when you go there?

THURMOND: Oh yeah. Where you grow up, I think you feel close, and I grew up there you see, and knew the people. And when I ran for governor, they gave me ninety two percent of the votes.

JB: Edgefield gave you ninety two?

THURMOND: Yeah. In the first race. (chuckle) In the second race Dr. McCloud, my opponent, couldn't believe anybody could get that big a percentage. So he sent some people over there . . .

JB: To Edgefield?

THURMOND: Yeah. McCloud was a good man.

JB: He was from Charleston?

THURMOND: He was from Florence. And he sent some people over there to observe the balloting to see that everything went right. They went back and told him (chuckle). I think he thought it was stolen, but they didn't do it. I think Edgefield has had honest elections, as far as I know, except in 1876 when Hampton went in. The carpetbaggers were in charge of the state and I was told then that a lot of people from Augusta came over and voted to help him out.

JB: Augusta, Georgia?

THURMOND: Yeah. To redeem the state from the carpetbaggers. That's what I was told. Mart Gary of course we had the Red Shirts,. And his home is at Edgefield now.

JB: Did your dad ever talk about him?

THURMOND: Some, not so very much.

JB: He was a pretty fiery fellow.

THURMOND: Well he was. Mart W. Gary. He was bald headed and had a long nose--they called him Bald Eagle. 'Cause he kind of looked like an eagle with his bald head and his long nose.

JB: I've got a question that might get at some aspects of Edgefield. Immigration seems to have bypassed Edgefield and it seems to be a rather homogeneous community basically of southerners. Is that your impression of Edgefield?

THURMOND: That's right. There ain't no foreigners there that I know of.

JB: Maybe that is one aspect that makes Edgefield. Have you ever thought about the close relationship of marriages, relatives, cousins, brothers. It's almost impossible--you can't say anything . . .

THURMOND: Everybody there is kin. My mother was a Strom, and that's a tremendous family. Not only in Edgefield, but McCormick, and Greenwood, and, oh, a lot of counties.

JB: Today they're Strom's all over the place?

THURMOND: Yeah, they're all over the state. It's a big family. Pete Strom, the head of law enforcement division down there--he's not a close kin to me. But, I imagine, his father was a Strom

and my mother was a Strom, they're probably fourth or fifth cousins. Anybody by the name of Strom, you see, well that attracted them to me in elections. I think my father may have had that in mind. (laughter)

JB: Very good. J. Strom, then you dropped the J didn't you.

THURMOND: Yeah, my grandfather was named James Harrison Strom, so they named me James Strom Thurmond.

JB: Some historians, and probably the most influential historian --C. Van Woodward among others--says that Edgefield has had a violent past, a very violent past. Do you think that's. . . .

THURMOND: I think that's true.

JB: Do you have any explanation of why it is?

THURMOND: I had some report from somebody not long ago about the violence and the daring and the adventuresome people from there.

JB: Was that Billy Ball?

THURMOND: It was Billy Ball I believe. I believe that's who it was, did you read that? What did he have to say?

JB: More daring, impetuous. He would paint the picture of Edgefield in strong colors.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's right. That's the way they were. If they had a war, they'd go.

JB: And of course, why were they that way, what made them so impetuous?

THURMOND: I don't know, I just don't know.

JB: Quick on the trigger, he said. He said they were quick on the trigger emotionally.

THURMOND: That's right.

JB: O.K. still continuing about Edgefield. Are you conscious of being a southerner?

THURMOND: Conscious of being a southerner--yes I am. Although I'm interested in the people of the whole nation and I've taken a great interest in national and world affairs in the Senate. Especially national defense and foreign policy and things like that. Because I think we're all one nation and we've got to work together to try to preserve it. But the southerners seem to understand the constitution better. They seem to realize that we do have a constitution and to realize what it means and that it should be adhered to.

JB: Do you think that goes back to Jefferson and Virginia and that whole aristocracy.

THURMOND: I think probably it does. You see South Carolina was settled by Virginians more than any other group. The Thurmonds came from Virginia.

JB: New Kent County, wasn't it, Albemarle, New Kent?

THURMOND: Yeah, that's right. My ancestor John Thurmond before the Revolutionary War. Then King went to Georgia and crossed over to South Carolina. So Virginia people have had a big part settling out of state. It's different from North Carolina. The people of South Carolina, I wouldn't say they're South, but their culture is very much-- a lot of 'em are very cultured people like Virginians, you know. Virginians were considered the cream of the crop back in the early formation of the country. And South Carolina was settled by Virginians more than North Carolina.

JB: You're also--well, you just said it. You are conscious of being a South Carolinian because there are some distinct relationships between the Virginian and the South Carolinian.

THURMOND: There's an old saying that North Carolina is a valley of humility between two mountains of conceit.

JB: (chuckle) That's very good. I guess you're also conscious of being from Edgefield too.

THURMOND: Yes, I guess so. You couldn't get away from it. But I want to say this. Although I'm proud of being from Edgefield and I'm proud of being from South Carolina. I'm proud to be a southerner because I think those people--I guess it's what I believe in--I think they're military minded and I think that's essential if you're going to maintain your freedom. You've got to be willing to fight for it. And then I'm proud too because

BEGIN TAPE II SIDE I

THURMOND: For instance, people down there seem to think more alike. Well now, during the Vietnam War, you didn't see people down there causing trouble. I remember when I spoke up at Massachusettes, University of Massachusettes, one night, I was lucky to get out of there alive.

JB: Oh really?

THURMOND: Yeah. Had to rush to the car and they almost turned the car over. That never would've happened in South Carolina.

JB: They may disagree but I don't think they would do that.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's what I say. You can disagree, but the point is, they're not willing to fight, a lot of 'em. And they did desert, and went to Canada and went to Sweden, a lot of other places. I don't think many southerners were in that group that did that. I think most of them fought. And although they may have disagreed with the situation I think once their country called 'em they felt an obligation--that patriotism is just kind of instilled in 'em.

JB: It's born out by polls. John Reed, at University of North Carolina, did a book you might like to see. Maybe I'll send it to you. It's called "The Enduring South." He went around and asked people about religion, politics, and attitudes and it bears out exactly what you said.

THURMOND: And that's more or less the Bible Belt of the nation too, you might say. Now Charleston is a little different from the rest of the state, that's almost an independent state itself. It's a very historic, most attractive place.

JB: I was there in April by the way, first time.

THURMOND: Very interesting place.

JB: Very. I enjoyed it immensely. I went aboard the Yorktown as a matter of fact.

THURMOND: Yeah, I got that Yorktown for 'em.

JB: I kind of thought you had something to do with it. What's your attitude toward the future. Optimistic, pessimistic, you don't care?

JB: Well I'm optimistic if our people are willing--if they will retain the will to fight, I'm optimistic. But if any people ever get to where they're not willing to fight for their freedoms, then they're gone. Their freedom is going to vanish.

JB: What do you think about the past. Do you ever think about the past?

THURMOND: Now down South, I think the people down there will be willing to do that. And I hope up North and other places too, but sometimes I get concerned when I see some things happening and hear some people talk. Even here in the Congress, some of the attitudes

taken by some of the people--I mean I just don't understand why they're willing to tolerate some of the things they do. Willing to go along with some of the measures they do and willing to cater to the Soviet Union like they do and willing to cater to Castro like they do. In other words, the Soviets have as their goal to spread their communism throughout the world, and I'm afraid a lot of people don't understand that. And they're going to do it unless we keep strong militarily to stop 'em.

JB: What is your attitude about the past? Do you think about that at all, or is that just gone?

THURMOND: I don't think too much about the past. Except I like to study the past because if you don't study history and know some history you can't judge the future.

JB: Would you change anything at all if you had the chance? Change a vote, would you take a different path, anything?

THURMOND: Well, that's kind of hard to say. I think at the time--you mean the votes I cast in the Senate.

JB: Well, or any decisions you've made, in politics or--I guess what I'm asking is--do you have any regrets about the past at all.

THURMOND: No, I don't have any regrets about the past. I think at the time that any actions I took in public office have been in line with the thinking of the people I represented. I've always--well now, you don't necessarily have to just follow your people. I've tried, since I've been in the Senate, writing newsletters and making speeches and everything--I've tried to lead 'em as best I could. And to what I thought is the right course to pursue. But at the same time, it's well to stay a little ahead of 'em but you better not get too far ahead of 'em.



JB: Yeah, you'll lose 'em won't you.

THURMOND: Or you'll lose 'em. But if you don't stay ahead of 'em now. (chuckle) You heard the story about this fellow--he said, you see those troops out there? Well those are my troops, I've got to run around here and get in front of 'em--I'm their leader.

JB: (chuckle) They'll go off without me won't they. Do you ever think of retirement?

THURMOND: Well, I plan to run this time and then I don't plan to run anymore. But I don't intend to sit around and do nothing.

JB: (chuckle) O.K., well you've never done that. Where would you like to retire to?

THURMOND: I'll retire somewhere in South Carolina. I haven't decided where yet.

JB: Edgefield?

THURMOND: Aiken is a mighty nice place to live. Edgefield is a nice place to live. The only thing, it's not quite large enough to have some of the advantages I like to have. I like to be in a place where you have a nice YMCA. I'd like to be in a place where you have more cultural advantages for the children. I've got these four little children--the youngest is two years old. Six years from now he'll be eight years old and the oldest one will be seventeen and they'll need the best advantages. I think I'd like to give 'em the best advantages. I'll try to go where we can get good schools. There's no place I love better than Edgefield and I'm very fond of Aiken too. But I think I'll have to go someplace where I can give the children the best advantages.

JB: Wouldn't it be great if they could go to Strom Thurmond High?

THURMOND: That would be very nice, very nice.

JB: I'm going to mention some names that we've already talked about, so maybe we don't have to go over them. But some of them we haven't really gone into much detail. Either describe your relationship with them or if you have any opinion about them. Benjamin Ryan Tillman, you've said pretty much about.

THURMOND: I think he was a very able man. I heard--one man was telling me about when he was speaking. And when it was known he was going to speak over here, the word got around. All the papers got excited and everybody got excited, 'cause they knew he was going to stir things up every time that he'd speak.

JB: In the Senate.

THURMOND: Yeah, in the Senate. 'Course, this is just handed down, but I was told that one time--now he didn't finish high school and didn't go to college of course. But he read books and educated himself. Just like I read law with my father, and educated myself with law. Well at any rate, he read literature and books and he knew a lot of Shakespeare. And the Senate got him to speak over there. A lot of senators didn't like him because they felt that on the race question that he was too violent. And so they were walking out. And one senator--he started reciting some Shakespeare.

JB: Tillman was reciting some Shakespeare now?

THURMOND: Yeah. And this particular senator stopped at the door just for a moment to see if he really knew any Shakespeare. And he got to reciting Shakespeare and he kept on reciting Shakespeare--and this fellow was a literary type man. He returned, went back and

sat down and listened--in the back of the senate where they couldn't see him, but he wanted to hear it. And he spoke there for about thirty minutes, reciting Shakespeare. It just amazes me, that here was a fellow, raucous he was, and as violent as he was on the race question. Because, I understood on the race question, that he'd tell you stories about how this black man raped a white woman, go into all these details about pulling her dress, go into all the gory details you know.

Well now, that's just handed down. Well of course I didn't admire that part about him. Now I have taken stands in court, some people will say I'm a racist. But I'm really not a racist. I've always helped black people as well as white people. But I've taken stands that I've felt were in accord with the constitution and the law of the state. When I was governor of the state I held up my hand to enforce the laws. And the law was separate schools, separate facilities. But we had no trouble, we didn't have any trouble enforcing--the people obeyed it. But some people haven't understood some of my stands in public life. When the Brown decision was handed down, our state obeyed the law, and I've encouraged them to obey it and there's been no trouble along that line.

I came out a day or two ago for representation for the district here. Some people may not understand that, it's a it's going to make some people in my state mad. I'll lose as much as I'll gain by it. But I felt it was my duty to do it because we are now so close in the world, the countries are so close. If our countries are going to tell other nations that we follow democratic processes, how can we stand up 'cause it's thrown back in our teeth that right in

your own capital you don't let the people vote for their representation in your Congress. And it would just be inconsistent.

JB: They said that in 1850 too, you know, about us. Because we had slavery in the capital, and here you talk about democracy. A lot of foreign countries made that you see.

THURMOND: Well, and of course, if I'd lived back in the time of slavery I'd have done all I could to have abolished it. And my father was bitterly opposed. Of course he was born in 1862, during the war. But I've heard him say how his father abhorred slavery, yet it was a custom because that was the only way he had help I guess then. But it's so hard to think about slavery.

At any rate, people misunderstand unless they really know you, and know what's in your heart, and that you want to help people. But you can't do it all overnight, and then it's the method. Now I think what should have happened back in the Confederate era is the government should've--since the slaves were sold--the government should've bought 'em up and freed 'em all. Of course it never should've started to start with, but since it did I think the government should've just paid everybody for their slaves because they were personal property. And they should've paid 'em and turned 'em all loose, that's what they should have done, I think, back then.

JB: There's a historian of the South that was born right next to you. His name is Francis Butler Simkins. Did you know him?

THURMOND: Yeah, I did.

JB: What did you think of him? Did you know his work?

THURMOND: Well he wrote a book on the Tillman movement. Did you read that?

JB: Yeah.

THURMOND: Well we didn't like some things, I think, he said about my father. I've forgotten what he said, but . . .

JB: I don't recall anything.

THURMOND: He said, well maybe used some words about being frustrated. My my father didn't get frustrated over anything. He was a strong man and nothing would discourage him. But Simkins was an able writer, taught in universities. He lived right next door to us when we were living in town before we moved. I knew his sister Miss Grayton at Columbia who was a wonderful woman. He has a son now, Clayton Grayton Junior, or Gus Gradton I believe. And he's quite a historian himself. He's writing a history on the government of the state I think. I sent him some material. I think he was an able fellow, I think he was an able writer.

JB: Did you know him personally at all?

THURMOND: Oh yeah, I knew him.

JB: How would you describe him.

THURMOND: When I was in World War II I was at Camp Picket, Virginia and he heard I was there and got in touch with me at my-- went out to his house for a meeting. He was teaching at Longwood I believe.

JB: Longwood College.

THURMOND: Yeah. I didn't know him, I mean I didn't know him well after he started to write. I knew him as a younger man, except just seeing him at intervals, when he came home or something.

JB: Nothing outstanding, personality.

THURMOND: I don't think there was anything outstanding either way, for him or against him especially.

JB: How about this one, I bet you know something about this one. Coleman Blease?

THURMOND: Yeah, he's the man I told you ran for governor in 1912 against Ira B. Jones.

JB: And then he went on to be senator didn't he.

THURMOND: He was elected in 1924 to the senate, served one term. He defeated Byrnes, I worked for Byrnes in that race.

JB: Jimmy Byrnes?

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: That was his first senate race, wasn't it.

THURMOND: Yeah. And then Byrnes moved to Spartenburg in the other part of the state of where he got a heavy vote, and next time he defeated Blease. Blease served only six years. But Blease was a very picturesque type character. I mean, if he'd walk down the street, you'd look at him.

JB: Did he wear bright clothing?

THURMOND: Yeah. He used to wear a big white hat, very impressive. Everybody wore hats then. See now they don't wear hats, but back then they did. Had the walking cane, was the sign of a gentleman you know. Well anyway, when he was governor he was accused of turning loose all the prisoners. A lot of people thought he got paid for it and the word got out how much money he was getting out of turning all those prisoners free. I'm not sure he ever got a dime himself. He may have

JB: Abuse of the pardoning power?

THURMOND: Well, the man, Olin Johnston whom I ran against for the senate in 1950 turned loose twelve murderers his last day in office. And he had a terrible pardon record. I don't say it disparagingly, of course I ran against him, but the record speaks for itself. I had the record, and I used some of that record in that race. And that's the reason I didn't get elected. If I had forgotten him and went on and ran on my record as governor and then running on the states rights ticket for president I'd have been elected to the senate. But I had some advisors that told me that you had to show up a man's record if it wasn't the right kind to unseat a seated senator.

JB: That was a rough race though, wasn't it.

THURMOND: It was a close race.

JB: I mean, rough, tumble, lot's of charges.

THURMOND: Yes it was, that's right. If I had not followed those people, why I would've gone to the senate at that time. But it was four years later before I went.

JB: What kind of a senator was he, he was something of a reform governor, wasn't he, Olin Johnston?

THURMOND: Well yeah, he ran on a theory of putting out Highway Commision, that was one of things he ran on, to reform as governor. And he did go so far to try to keep his pledge, I think, of calling out the National Guard to take charge of the Highway Department and putting 'em out. But then the legislature turned around and rebuked him and passed a law that what he did was wrong and condemned him.

They took that power away from him. They even took away his appointment to appoint commissioners of the highway commission.

JB: Abuse again?

THURMOND: Well, they were just afraid to trust him after he used it as he did. In other words, they took the power of appointing commissioners out of his hands. The governor appointed them, the Senate confirmed. They took it away from him and let the legislators in each judicial district select the Highway Commissioner of that district.

JB: Ellison Durant Smith.

THURMOND: I remember him well. He was another good stump speaker. He was a contortionist, so to speak. Remember Time magazine came out with a picture of him at the 1936 Democratic convention. I was a delegate there. But when they called on a black man to pray he got up and walked out. Some photographer caught his picture all--you know, showing disagreement. And it came out, I think it was in Time magazine. But he was, I'll have to say this for Senator Smith, he was a staunch supporter of the constitution.

JB: You were in political agreement, basically?

THURMOND: Well, we were in political agreement, not on his attitudes especially towards blacks, because I've always felt kindly to blacks. But on his stand about the constitution. In other words, he felt that the Congress ought to adhere to the constitution or amend the constitution. But he wasn't as active like Byrnes was, when Byrnes was here. And Byrnes stood in for Roosevelt, so Byrnes' man had gotten things done.



JB: Edgar Allan Brown.

THURMOND: Edgar Allan Brown. (chuckle) Well, when I ran for governor, I ran against him.

JB: Is he still alive by the way.

THURMOND: No he's dead. He was a President Pro Temp of the Senate, Chairman of the Finance Committee and probably the most powerful man politically in the state.

JB: The Bishop.

THURMOND: They called him Bishop. Solomon Blatt speaker of the House. And when I ran for governor, I ran on the platform of bringing in new industry and economic development and relieving the tremendous power that the Barnwell ring had on the state. I mean not being influenced by 'em. The governor's, all candidates governors all felt they had to stand against those two people to get elected governor. And after you got elected governor you had to bow to them and everything. And so, one of my planks of my platform was to oppose the power of the Barnwell ring. And Brown and Blatt both came. Now Blatt's a good friend of mine. I don't know whether Brown ever got over it, but anyway.

JB: After you were elected governor, were you still friends, you and Brown.

THURMOND: Oh, well I always spoke to him, treated him nicely, but I think when I was governor, I don't think he did anything to try to help me as governor. And Blatt Probably didn't do too much either. Because I had advocated trimming their power and I didn't let them exert their influence on the governor's office that their reputation had warned they had exerted, you see. At any rate, Brown was an able

man. I think he did a lot for the state in fiscal responsibility. I think Blatt did the same. I think he rendered the state a lot of good service in a lot of ways. But, I just always opposed anybody having too much power or trying to control things too much. Just like Thomas Jefferson says, you can't trust any man with power, you've got to chain him down to the constitution. Well, I think Brown was typical of the type of person who grasped power at every opportunity, and wielded power at every opportunity and wanted to control everything. Wanted everybody to run him for everything. Wanted control of all their jobs, and everything of that kind. But I do say I think he, so far as fiscal responsibility is, he did a lot for the state.

JB: Hortense Woodson. I just saw her last week and I saw the little dish you and Mrs. Thurmond gave her, she was very pleased with that. We talked for a little bit. You've known her all your life.

THURMOND: Well, she knows a lot of history and she's good in family work. I mean, she knows so many families.

JB: You've known her since you were--what?

THURMOND: Yeah, I've known her just about all my life. That was her mother that was so active in UDC matters. She used to come to the school and give lectures and put on programs, honoring Robert E. Lee, or you know.

JB: You just had Jeff Davis' birthday celebration down there a few months ago.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's a holiday in our state.

JB: June third, I think.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's a holiday in our state.

JB: Jeff Davis' birthday?

THURMOND: Yeah. I don't know if they observe it, but legally--I don't think they do observe it much.

JB: Do you remember Reverend I. DeQuincy Newman?

THURMOND: Yeah.

JB: Is he still here or in South Carolina?

THURMOND: He's in South Carolina. He's working with the governor.

JB: Do you have any memories of him, or thoughts about him, or any reflections.

THURMOND: Not especially. He's an active black leader.

JB: Has been for quite a while.

THURMOND: Yes he has.

JB: How would you regard him in terms of--because obviously the black movement is certainly divided at least into two groups, maybe three in terms of moderate, liberal, conservative and some cooperation, some not.

THURMOND: I would think he'd be more of a conservative black man. I don't think he's the kind who would go out taking charge of riots, or make the kind of speeches Martin Luther King used to.

JB: Did you know, or were you old enough to remember Daniel Augustus Tompkins?

THURMOND: Yes. Well I just knew of him. He was an uncle of Mr. Graydon. He was a half brother to Mr. Wallace Tompkins of Edgefield who I knew well and this friend of mine who worked in the bank there. He went to Charlotte, you know, in the newspaper up there, and he was a great industrialist--textiles.

JB: Very much a part of the new South. You know, of Henry Grady that we talked about in the 1880's and 1890's.

THURMOND: He was an uncle of Clinton Graves, I believe, too. Clinton Graves reminded me somewhat of him.

JB: Now your sister married a Tompkins, is that the same one, I mean a relative?

THURMOND: It's the same family. Yes, she married Robert Tompkins.

JB: How about Judge Waites Waring, do you remember him?

THURMOND: Yes I do.

JB: Do you have any thoughts on him.

THURMOND: I was the judge in Charleston in 1938 when Maybank and Manning ran for governor. And Waring was Maybank

in that race. The Maybank crowd didn't trust the grand jury, seeing as most of them maybe would've been for Manning. The election commission--Manning didn't trust the election commission. And the question came up, well, they wanted to recount down there. And neither one would trust the other one. Well, I finally settled it as the judge. I said now, the grand jury can take these votes and count 'em but we're going to have representatives of the election commission there. Or the election commission can count 'em if you have representatives of the grand jury there. And finally I think, after I settled it that way, neither one of 'em wanted it. Both of 'em wanted it and the rumor was they wanted to come out with whatever count they wanted it to, both sides. But after I did that, well, the matter just eased off.

Waring came into court there one day, and was trying a case. Just ran right up in front of me and says, your honor so and so. I said Mr. Waring--he later became a federal judge of course--I says Mr Waring,

now wait a minute, we're trying a case here. What do you want. And I told him to sit down and wait a few minutes until we got through with this witness. But he was all head up and something about that Maybank, he just couldn't wait. I'm surprised this man didn't have more calm about him than that you know--later became a federal judge. At any rate, after he became a federal judge and handed down the decisions he did, it isolated him from the white people.

JB: Yeah, Rice vs. Ellmore, remember that case, '47.

THURMOND: Yeah. Well, he became very unpopular down there.

JB: Charleston.

THURMOND: And I understood the white people in Charleston just didn't have anything to do with him.

JB: You were pretty close to Billy Ball weren't you, the editor of the Charleston newspaper?

THURMOND: No.

JB: William Watts Ball?

THURMOND: No. I think he opposed me for governor probably, I wasn't conservative enough. As a governor, I was considered a liberal.

JB: I know he liked you when you ran for president.

THURMOND: I advocated the property share. Now, after I got elected and ran for president trying to stop this federal power, then the conservatives flocked to me. But the conservatives were for MacLeod. Of course I got some, just had to to get elected. At any rate, he said the greatest reform brought to South Carolina in a hundred years was what I advocated in removing the pardon power from the government, it had been so much abused back then. I don't know whether you saw his article on that.

JB: Ball editorialized. Yeah, I've read his book, The State that Forgot, South Carolina.

THURMOND: Did he have that in there. I don't know whether he had that or not, but he had it in an editorial.

JB: Well, I've got a collection of his editorials too, and then John Stark at Duke wrote a biography of Ball called Damned up Countrymen. And there's some comment from you, citing letters in the Ball papers at Duke University.

THURMOND: Letters from me about Ball.

JB: Well, you wrote him a couple of letters thanking him for the endorsement, that kind of thing.

THURMOND: Oh, I see. Yeah, he supported me for president I'm sure.

JB: Oh yes. He turned the Charleston News & Courier--he used the front page as an editorial. Just right on the front page, that was his editorial page, he used that as a front page.

THURMOND: (laughter) Now the picture of my write in for the Senate--that's the first time that anybody has ever been elected, it's right over there if you want to see it before you leave.

JB: Yeah I would.

THURMOND: That's The Edgefield Advertiser.

JB: Yeah, well that's my next question. What about the Advertiser. Do you have a close feeling, that paper's the oldest in the state.

THURMOND: Well, it's just about going out of existence. Have you seen a copy of it lately.

JB: Yeah, it's

THURMOND: Nothing. And that fella, he sued the people over there and a lot of people feel there was a great miscarriage of justice when the jury gave a verdict to him against those people over there who were trying to build the water line. He tried to stop it.

JB: Old Mr. Mims, yeah. He's a fiery guy.

THURMOND: Well he tried to stop this water line being built. I got the money for him to perform his homework. He had to go back several times to get more. The water line was badly needed, they never would get industry down there until they had the water. Now that they've got water I think they'll get industry. He owns some land down up in Martintown County off that way. He wanted it to go another way.

JB: Oh, he wasn't against the water line.

THURMOND: Yes he was, he was against it going the way it is now.

JB: He wanted to go across. . . .

THURMOND: Yeah, he wanted to go up near his property I understood. At any rate, he put on a fight there and caused a lot of trouble. Went into court and then sued these people for ruining his business because after he acted that way the business people just quit patronizing him. And he sued 'em there under the anti trust laws and got a verdict. I'm just amazed that . . .

JB: A jury trial.

THURMOND: A jury trial.

JB: The people of Edgefield.

THURMOND: No, the people of Edgefield didn't do it. They wouldn't have given him a dime. But the people over the state who didn't know him, you know, evidently felt sorry that these people had quit his business and got the idea of this conspiracy to ruin his paper. But anyway, his paper is practically nothing now. But back then, they were for me in the write in in fifty four and that was the front page of the Advertiser--it shows a picture of the ballot and how to do it.

JB: How to mark it, right?

THURMOND: Yeah, you see my name wasn't on the ballot and you had to show them where to write it in. And on the sample ballots, we had a picture of the ballot, and drew an arrow down to show 'em where to write it in. And a lot of people when they voted drew the arrow down there too. (chuckle)

JB: O.K. I've just got a couple of more and then we'll be finished.

THURMOND: Well, Mr. Ball was a very able writer and very fixed in his opinions. He was a very firm man. I didn't always agree with him about everything. He opposed, for instance, the Clarks Hill Dam over there. When I was running for governor, I advocated that the dam be built. And after I was nominated for governor in September I went to Atlanta and testified in favor of that dam, and we finally got it. But he was against that. So, we were not together always 'till I ran for president. When I ran for president he supported me.

JB: James Byrnes, probably one of the better known South Carolinians.



THURMOND: I knew him just about all my life. My father supported him for Congress. He had a very close race one time, I think he won only by about maybe seventeen votes--or under a hundred votes. There was a lot of talk in that race about, different things. Anyway, he won. He was a court stenographer, he didn't go to college like Benjamin R. Tillman.

JB: He did not go to college.

THURMOND: No. His father died and his mother raised him down in Charleston. But he was smart and he became a court stenographer. And then he became solicitor. Then he ran for Congress. Then he ran for the United States Senate, that's when Blease ran. They both ran in twenty four. In thirty he was elected to the Senate, and of course you know his record from then on. I knew him well, I admired him very much.

JB: Who were some of the great South Carolinians?

THURMOND: Well, I was always an admirer of Andrew Jackson, before when I was studying. I think he was a man of strong determination and would not be swerved in what he thought was right. Although one time he threatened South Carolina. (chuckle)

JB: That's right.

THURMOND: I don't think you can get around the fact that John C. Calhoun was a very outstanding man. I think probably James F. Byrnes would be among those who would be considered great South Carolinians.

JB: Wade Hampton, maybe?

THURMOND: Wade Hampton, I think was a great South Carolinian. He led the movement the time he ran for governor in seventy six to redeem the state from the carpetbaggers. Martin Gary didn't run for governor or anything like that, but I think he was a great man.

JB: Martin Witherspoon Gary.

THURMOND: Yeah, that's right, he was. I admire people of courage, and I admire people of conviction, people who are willing to stand for their convictions if they have to go down doing it. I'd rather be here in the Senate and stand for what I believe in for one time than to get reelected a dozen times.

JB: If it didn't mean anything?

THURMOND: No, if it doesn't mean anything, what do you want to be in office for. You can make more out in private life. I gave up a good law practice when I came here.

JB: Who do you think the best governor was, except we won't put yourself in there because I think you had a good career as a governor.

THURMOND: The best governor. That's kind of difficult to say. I think in my lifetime, probably that's about as far back as I can go on that. Probably Richard I. Manning and James F. Byrnes was about as good as any of 'em.

JB: Who do you think the greatest--well I did ask you this, who the greatest Edgefieldian was. Well, you mentioned Gary, he was from Edgefield. The two governors during the war, Andrew Pickens I think was governor, and Milledge Bonham, they were both Edgefieldians and governors of the state during the Civil War.

THURMOND: Francis W. Pickens was governor first two years of the war. That's kind of a tough answer to give. There were so many prominent people back then, they had fine records. I expect if you leave out the race question, Tillman probably he would have been ranked equal or superior to any of 'em. I didn't admire him on the race matter but other than that, it was his forceful personality, his burning interest to educate, to give a chance to the poor people, to establish

JB: Tillman Hall, I've seen it up there at Clemson.

THURMOND: Yeah. And when I was governor I advocated establishment of a trade school system to help people learn trades. That was the foundation for the technical school system we got now. In fact those schools just advanced into a higher echelon. One of the biggest things we needed then was to teach people a skill to make a living. And then if we did that we could get more industry. And I went out and got industry. We brought industry like the DuPont Company in Canada. I went up there and I remember they gave a luncheon for me that day and they didn't like Truman much, what he was doing. I looked over that crowd and said, as I look in your eyes here today, I see more intelligence here around this table than Truman's got in his cabinet. (chuckle) At any rate we got the industry.

And Singer Company. They were headed for Kentucky. I told the president, he was looking out over New Jersey--it was on a dreary, damp rainy day and he was discouraged. He'd had a strike after weeks and weeks.

JB: Who was this now?

THURMOND: He was the president of the Singer Company, sitting in New York. He looked out there I said, well now, if you had this company in South Carolina you wouldn't have that. We have less than one ten thousandth of one percent loss of time because of labor disputes, strikes. And we talked, and he said, well we've decided to go to Kentucky. I said, I'm amazed you talk that way when down in Washington Truman and Barkley advocating all kind of policies that are not in favor of industry and to tell you who you can hire and who you can fire and how you're going to run your industry and putting restrictions that sorely discourage his business. We talked along that line for awhile. Finally, he said, well I'll send down there and look over the situation in South Carolina. He did send down there, and we got the industry. Well, we went after the industry because we needed it, we needed those jobs. Today every chance they get now, try to--hardly a week that passes I don't have some industrialist in here that will have lunch with me in the Senate. Talk to him about new plants and provide him with . . .

JB: Edgefield's got a couple since I've been here. FPE is it?

THURMOND: Yeah. They got some. Yeah, they got some at down there too.

JB: And there's a Derring Plant or something at Johnstown?

THURMOND: Johnston, yeah. They've got a Dave Milliken plant.

JB: Yeah, Milliken Plant.

THURMOND: And Rease Brothers has a plant there too. They still need more industry, those people down there. They go way up to Greenwood and other places to work.

JB: You mentioned race a couple of times and maybe you'll give me an opportunity to mention that. What is your first awareness as a boy and when you were growing up when you became aware, obviously, that there are races, and that there was segregation and how you began to absorb that.

THURMOND: Well, we just accepted it. In other words, it was unheard to think about mixing the blacks and the whites. It was just plain unheard of.

JB: Well, you had black people working for you didn't you, in the house?

THURMOND: That's right, worked with them in the fields and worked with 'em everywhere. Liked 'em, done anything for 'em, or loaned 'em money. When I was a lawyer I represented 'em whether they could pay or not and do things for 'em, help 'em every way I could. But it was just considered unheard of that you would mix 'em in the schools and churches and such as that. They were happy to go with their own race to those places, I think at that time certainly. But as time came on and they became better educated and they dressed better and had better facilities for bathing and everything like that, it changed the whole picture. And of course as time has gone by, they were afforded more opportunities--I think that everybody right now just accepts it. But a lot of people don't understand that at the time I was governor and when Byrnes was governor, that, well, you held up your hand and enforced the law, and the law was segregation. It wasn't they were against the blacks, it was just a law of the state. Although we didn't have to enforce it because the people enforced it themselves, because they were satisfied to have it that way. I'm glad that things have changed now where there are better opportunities and I want to see 'em

have every opportunity of everybody else.

JB: Do you think if you were governor and you tried to break down segregation, the people and the state legislature would have revolted against you.

THURMOND: Yeah, they were not ready at that time to do it.

JB: Byrnes, of course Byrnes was governor after you.

THURMOND: Yeah, Byrnes was governor after me. And he defended the case when the Brown decision was handed down. They were just not ready at that time to go that far. But it was just a matter of time, they're getting better educations, which I tried to provide for them, and I'm sure Byrnes is too. It's just a matter of time until the situation would come. But it just takes a little time, you can't do it all over night.

JB: Do you think we've reached now the point where we could call it an ideal race relationship? I mean, that we are in equality, we have equality in society?

THURMOND: Well, I wouldn't say it's ideal. Undoubtedly there are pockets, in my state and in every other state, where probably there still is some feeling maybe that they're not satisfied with everything about the blacks. But I do say this, I think South Carolina has gone as far and as fast as any state in trying to provide equal opportunities. And I think they ought to provide equal opportunities, I'm in favor of that. I think the best thing you can do for 'em is to educate 'em. If you educate 'em--as I say, I've established scholarships in four different black colleges. I want to do everything I can to help 'em. I've helped the black--well I got the President of Morris College here

tonight. Thanking me after we got a four hundred thousand dollar grant last year for a new building over at Morris College in Sumter. He's just thanking me for it, and expressing his desire that I be reelected seeing how much I've done for him and everything.

JB: Speaking about your reelection now, do you ever think about your place in history at all.

THURMOND: No, I don't think about it. I don't know as I deserve any place in history.

JB: Well, I wouldn't be here if we didn't think that.

THURMOND: I just want to serve humanity and do the best I can to leave a better world in which I lived. I figure history will take care of itself.

JB: We just do our job, history will take care of itself.

THURMOND: That's right. In my campaigning people ask me about it, I say, well I'm going to do my job right here. I think the best campaigning I can do is to do a good job in the Senate.

JB: The rest will take care of itself. Do you see any relationship between the Bible and the U.S. Constitution. Because in your book, The Faith We Have Not Kept, as I read that it seemed to me you looked upon the literal and the strict interpretation of the constitution, that's what the book was about. But I couldn't help but think back, also, about the role the Bible played in terms of your attitude about those two guides. You did say in The Faith We Have Not Kept, and that does suggest something kind of biblical, even though the book is about the constitution and how you view the fact that we've strayed away from it and haven't been paying very strict attention to it.

## BEGIN TAPE II SIDE II

THURMOND: But the institutions in the states, penitentiaries, mental institutions, nursing homes and everything. Well now, why does the attorney general have any more sense than the attorney general of South Carolina or the governor of South Carolina. Those people down there are just as smart as they are up here. In fact, I think a lot of 'em are a lot smarter, they got their feet on the ground and they're more practical. They're not dreaming up schemes for power, those people are helping humanity. And if those people down there can't run those institutions, well, why can the federal government do it any better. But these do gooders are determined to get more power and they'll use any means that sound good to do it. It disturbs me that if that bill goes through, and it probably will, that the attorney general of the United States will have the power to go into any institution down there and just wreak havoc.

JB: Would he close it down or something?

THURMOND: Well, he'd do whatever is necessary to accomplish his goals I think.

JB: You wrote that book, The Faith We Have Not Kept; what prompted it really. You wrote it in sixty six I think.

THURMOND: Yeah, I wrote it I believe in sixty six. Well, I just thought it would be well to put it in writing my views of the constitution.

JB: Time's come. I mean, any incident that just--that does it.

THURMOND: I just thought it would be well because the federal government then, and before then had been encroaching on the rights



of the states, it had been usurping more power, centralizing more power here in Washington. And I wrote that with the hope that if people read it maybe they would see the dangers and try to reverse this flow of power. And when Nixon ran for president I remember he told me in Atlanta, when I was down there with some southerners to talk with him in the summer of 1968--he says, there are several things I want to do. He says, the first is I want to appoint sound people to the Supreme Court because they'll be here after I'm out of this presidency and if we can get sound people there it'd probably be the most important thing I can do. And the next thing is, I want to reverse this flow of power. He says, it's all been going to Washington. There's too much power going to Washington. We ought to reverse that flow of power and turn it back to the states as the constitution provides. Then he mentioned several things, but I recall that those were the two things that he mentioned specifically at that time.

JB: Even though President Carter is of the opposite party, aren't you just a little bit proud that a southerner is in the White House?

THURMOND: Yes I am proud a southerner is in the White House. And I was hoping he'd make a really good record, although I didn't support him, because that would give credence to other parts of the country that a southerner can be a good president. But I've been disappointed in his actions. When he ran, he made statements about this and that, and he hasn't lived up 'em. I've been disappointed in him.

I think, for instance, in the matter of defense--now, he wants to cut this ship program in half. Stop the B-1 bomb. He doesn't deploy the neutron warhead--they call it a neutron bomb, it's a warhead. He wants to negotiate away the cruise missile. Well I hope he's not, now he wouldn't--these Soviets in my judgement, are going to take the world unless we take a strong stand to stop 'em. We're the only country can do it. We've just got to remain strong militarily.

JB: There's one book that we've been reading in the seminar that a young man wrote in 1941. He was on The Charlotte Observer. His name was W. J. Cash. The book was called Mind of the South. Have you ever read it or heard anything about it?

THURMOND: No I haven't read it.

JB: In that book, almost all books since seem to go back to Cash. Because he talks about the southerner, the southern mind, southern attitudes. And I was hoping you might have heard about it because it's a very significant book.

THURMOND: You might get that book, David. I'd like for you to read it and give me a report on it. (phone call) Call back and tell her that I'm interviewing the man here now and I'll be through in about fifteen minutes.

JB: So anyway, I can't really ask you about it. But I'll just take the title, do you think there is a southern mind. Because he talks about the mind of the South and things that are distinctly southern, the way the southerner looks at things, attitudes, values.

THURMOND: Well I think we've got good people in all parts of the country. But I still go back to the fact that I think

it's the most patriotic part of the country. Now I don't say it because I'm from the South. I think it's because we haven't had all these immigrants come down with different ideas and theories and some of 'em to contaminate in their own way. But at any rate I still think that it's the most patriotic part of the nation. I think it's the soundest thinking part of the nation. And I think that's been evidenced by they haven't allowed these unions to come in and take over like they have in some places. And we haven't had strikes of public employees like they have in some places. I'm bitterly opposed to public employees striking. I think any man who works for the public should never strike. If he doesn't want to take the pay the public offers, well he can get some other job.

JB: Would you agree with Calvin Coolidge, you know he said in the Boston police strike, it's against the interest of the people to strike any time, any where, for any reason, if you're a public employee.

THURMOND: That's right, I agree with that. Collective bargaining, I think, should not be carried on by a public employee. Don't think there ought to be any union of public employees. I'm interested in the people and I don't think your interest in the people is served best when you have a group like the unions working--the unions are allright in private employment--but not in public.

At any rate, I think the South has avoided some of the pitfalls. And I don't know if its due to principles, but I think it may be because we haven't had the false leaders down there that they've had in some parts. Maybe there hadn't been the attraction, there hadn't been the

corruption, there hadn't been the bribery, there hadn't been so many things that had taken place in other parts of the country. I think the majority of 'em love their country, they worship god and, the family life is sounder although it's not what it could be. But families are held together better, generally speaking. And they feel an interest in each other--if you go down in the South, the people are friendly, most any of 'em will talk to you on the street. They'll give you any advice, help they can. If you break down in an automobile, they'll stop and help you. Well, you just don't find that in a lot of places in other parts of the country.

JB: I have two last questions. You've touched on it a little bit, but maybe the recent headline jogged it, I read it in the Washington Post tonight about the representation. Some people have said you've changed, become more liberal. Is that true?

THURMOND: I wouldn't say that. I think so far as liberalism goes, it depends. I mean, it's hard to find--a true liberal is to be admired. But the word liberal today, is one that believes in big government, the one that doesn't trust the people, you've got to have an almighty government here to protect him from the time he's born until he goes to his grave. Now I abhor that type of government. I believe in incentive, only putting restrictions 'round that you have to have, turn 'em loose and let 'em work hard, save, have something, have incentive to do things. And with all the laws we've got today restricting business, I don't see hardly how a business can operate, to tell you the truth. And I'm not for big business--the very reason I say that is because I'm for the working people and I think it's

best for the working people to have these opportunities rather than putting restrictions around it that the federal governments doing. I think they've gone too far in that respect. Let's see, now what else did you ask me?

JB: Well, just some say Senator Thurmond is just changing because he's in a campaign and he's shifting, and he appointed a black because-- you know when Al Watson ran, you appointed I think Tom Moss, wasn't it.

THURMOND: Well, I appointed the first black when I was governor. I entered that race for the Senate, Olin Johnson used that against me. I appointed a black to the Health Department. And Olin says, why he's appointed a black. (chuckle)

JB: That was a race. There was even one case--the senator, I think he was up in the northern part, Greenville--and somebody from the audience threw a pair of boxing gloves up on the stage. Because they had had some words. Do you remember that.

THURMOND: Yeah. (laughter)

JB: And Mrs. Thurmond was thinking they were going to break down the door one time.

THURMOND: Yeah, that was a rough race. (laughter)

JB: And then another time, the S.L.E.D\* was out there and they were waiting for the senator and he said, I'm not going out the back door, I'm going out the front door. Remember that. He says, no there's kind of, you know. Because you were not going to go out the back door, you were going to go out the front door. And then even Olin got a little upset and says, I was the champ of my unit in the army now. 1950 you know, that was a tough time. Just one point, any plans or vision for the future. Would you like to see your oldest son think about a career in politics if he wants it?

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\*State Law Enforcement Division

THURMOND: If he wants it.

JB: Free choice.

THURMOND: Absolutely.

JB: But you'd have to be more than proud, you know, if he chose that political career.

THURMOND: chose whatever he wants. I'd probably like to see him become either a lawyer or a doctor.

JB: What about the girls too? Lawyers, doctors.

THURMOND: Well, just as interested in them. I want them to have every opportunity those boys have.

JB: Maybe be doctors and lawyers too.

THURMOND: That's right. And they might become doctors, there are doctors in my family.

JB: This is a question for a friend of mine who is writing a book on the boll weevil at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. I don't know anything about this, maybe you can help me. He wants me to ask you to comment on what you did when you were governor for the problem of the boll weevil. Did you introduce any legislation, or did you have any contact with the Cokers, was it Mr. Coker who was involved in it.

THURMOND: Well, when I grew up, right on the cotton farm, and many a day I have used those cotton dusters with calcium arsenic. You go out there early in the morning, and when the moisture was on the cotton plant . . .

JB: By hand.

THURMOND: By hand. And turn this machine, walk down the row, and put calcium arsenic on these. And then another way, you'd mix it with

molasses and go an put it on--I've done that many a day. Well, by virtue of my interest in the farmers and knowing what a hard time they have making a living, I supported and advocated more research and development for agriculture including the boll weevils. And since I've been in the Senate up here too, I have worked with the Cokers and have supported their efforts. They're carrying on all kind of research now. For instance, one of the things they're doing is about how to track these weevils so that--in other words there's some material that smells very much like a female boll weevil and the male will come in there and you catch 'em all, you see, and are destroyed so they won't reproduce. But the boll weevil has cost the South hundreds, literally billions of dollars. And I always supported efforts to control the boll weevil 'cause that was the chief crop in the state. It was the number one crop until a few years ago. Tobacco is number one now,-- I believe soy beans have even passed tobacco now.

JB: So he could write the Cokers, would that be. . . .

THURMOND: That's fine. Tell him to writer Robert Coker at Hartsville, and Clemson University. And they will give him the latest information on it.

JB: Right, but he's also doing a history of it. So if he would write Columbia, would there be some documents that you were involved with, or laws that you advocated when you were governor, that you could get a record of that too.

THURMOND: Well he could get a copy of my speeches to the legislature and see what they were. And then, I talked to a lot of legislators and encouraged them, though, to take steps too about the boll weevil and about other things. I advocated a farmer's market which

is in Columbia now, when I was governor, and they built that system of markets. We were to have a number of them throughout the states, but they built that and kind of stopped. I think they built one or two others since then. But I was interested in the economic development of the state because that's really where we needed help. We needed that to get better schools, and better hospitals, and better facilities for the people.

JB: I think I've covered 'em all. Thank you very much.

THURMOND: I don't know whether I've covered very much that would help you or not but. . . .

JB: Well, you've been awfully good with your time, very generous, and maybe after November, we could. . . .

THURMOND: I'd be glad to talk to you some more if you want to go into more details. There are so many things that you can go into.

JB: Love to. Is this your fifth term coming up.

THURMOND: Yeah, fifth term. I've been elected five times already though, 'cause I resigned in fifty six to keep the promise to the people since they had been denied a primary, which was equivalent to an election then--democratic primary. Told 'em I'd put it back in first primary after that general election, and I did. And I resigned in fifty six. So I was elected in fifty four, fifty six, sixty, sixty six, and seventy two. I've been elected five times, but have just completed four terms.

JB: I told David on the phone, I bet you've even forgotten this, that in November after you'd, I think won--I don't think you had any problem really--but you will have been in public office fifty years. Weren't you twenty six when you were elected superintendent.



THURMOND: I was twenty five. But didn't go in until I was, let's see, twenty five--well yeah, I did go in, I was still twenty five, because I went in in July, twenty nine.

JB: That'd be a nice celebration.

THURMOND: I was the youngest superintendent of education at the time, I was the youngest state Senator. I wasn't the youngest--yeah, I was the youngest jury judge at that time. I wasn't the youngest governor, probably, but I had run when I was forty four. But, gosh, the years roll around. I finished college in twenty three, twenty three from seventy eight is fifty five, isn't it. Fifty five years now that I've served the public.

JB: Well I'm off, I thought it was fifty but it's more than fifty.

THURMOND: Well, if you count the time teaching school.

JB: Well, yeah. And it was three years of private practice, so knock that off and still--you know the three years of private law practice.

THURMOND: Oh, well, four years of private practice, but even then I was city attorney for North Augusta.

JB: Oh you were, for North Augusta.

THURMOND: Yeah.                      was city attorney in Aiken, he'd been there a long time. Probably could have gotten that if I'd wanted it, but. . . . In North Augusta, I was city attorney down there. In other words, I've served the public in one way or the other. Ran across a preacher, I spoke at a garden country meeting in this church last Sunday. He reminded me that I was attorney for his church down there in Warrenville. And his personal attorney. But I never charged a

dime for any work, and never charged a church a dime for any legal work, because they don't make much, you know, and they have a hard time.

JB: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW