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This is an interview with Herb Mabry, president of the Georgia AFL-CIO, conducted in Atlanta on April 25, 1974 by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries. Transcribed by Sarah Geer.

Mabry: I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you. I hope that I will be able to answer some of the things that you have to ask, and add a little bit, you know. Of course, when you go back to 1948... in 1948, I was nineteen years old. Wasn't really active in the labor movement.

J.B.: What is your background?

Mabry: Well, I was born and raised in Atlanta, Fulton County. Attended Fulton County School, and I'm a carpenter by trade. Joined the carpenter's open union (?) in 1950, and served as vice-president of it for a while, then decided that maybe wasn't what I wanted to do. I went back, though, and ran in 1965 for president of it, and was elected. And ran 1967 for secretary of the state body here. No, '69. And was elected and then served almost a full term when Mr. Moore, who was our president here, died. And the executive board elevated me to president.

J.B.: That was when?

Mabry: In '71, I guess. And then in... October '71 to... no, '72. And then I was elected a full-term president at our next convention. And I'm now serving, really, my first full term, and I served his unexpired term. But, I've been in the office basically four years

this October. I am one of the two National Democratic Committeemen from Georgia. I...

W.D.V.: When were you elected to that?

Mabry: I forget what month it was. It was after the Convention. The mandate of the Convention was to enlarge, and each state... and we were allowed another one. Prior to that we only had one. Michael Jones was National Democratic Committeeman from Georgia, then I was elected... I would have to get out my file...

W.D.V.: September of '72, is that...? Should have been right after the Convention.

Mabry: Right. I was a delegate to the National Convention, and then... I guess it was '72. And I was elected for four years through the '76 Convention. And after the '76 Convention they will elect... guess you're right.

W.D.V.: Been involved with the Democratic party a long time?

Mabry: Yes, I ran for commissioner of this county in 19-and-58. I was young... I didn't think I was young then, but I think it was young now. I was 29 years old, and I was a political unknown. I had no organization. And I was just concerned, really, about what was happening to us, and then I ran unsuccessful in '58 and then again in '62. Then I didn't really feel that there was much you could do about it, and then... but now I am running for the state Senate in the primaries coming up this August from the 56th Senatorial District, which is out in the north end of the county, which takes in the north end, really, of three counties. Fulton County, the next county over is Cobb County and the next one over is Paulding County, and takes the north end, just the north end, of all

three counties. When they re-apportioned, they carved out 56. It's the most carved out district in the whole state. And it was carved out to... to satisfy the people that were in office and that time and to create this new district with someone over there they wanted to have it. But he was not successful in getting it... He was Democrat, and we lost it to a Republican, and so now that I'm running, to try to capture the seat back...

J.B.: Are you opposed in the primary?

Mabry: No. So far I'm not. Qualifying is not until May the 15th, and then from close is June 12th. But so far I haven't heard of anyone that is talking about running.

J.B.: So you would be... unless things change, you would be running against a Republican incumbent.

Mabry: Right. Right. Now the gentleman that's in the Senate there now, Tom Moore; normally in the South here, particularly, the Republicans do not offer opposition opponents to their incumbents. I mean, they just discourage that. Once they get someone in there, they feel let's go after another one. But, in this case they are doing it. We had a guy that is the state representative from the 22nd House District in the area that... for eight years, that has announced that he will oppose Senator Tom Moore now for the State Senate seat, because the Republicans felt that they were going to lose the seat. They felt that I would win the seat, but I never did feel that confident about it. But now they've got out now and got someone to run against Moore that they feel is stronger than Moore, to try to keep from losing the seat. But if I was just as confident of winning as they

were of losing it, well, that'd be all right. But I wasn't. I mean, it's a hard.. be a hard thing. It really will. Where's your home?

J.B.: Columbia, South Carolina.

Mabry: And yours?

W.D.V.: Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

Mabry: Wrightsville Beach. Never been in Wrightsville Beach. I was invited up there to this Whispering Pines. That's close, isn't it?

W.D.V.: Southern Pines?

Mabry: Southern Pines. I was invited up to a labor school there the other year, and was not able to attend. And I married a girl from over to Hartwell, Georgia...

J.B.: What's the AFL-CIO affiliated membership in Georgia?

Mabry: 91,000. About 91,900, 800 something like that. The international unions, the International, shows membership here in the AFL-CIO unions of over 125,000.

W.D.V.: What per cent of the work force is that?

Mabry: Approximately 18.2 per cent of the work force in the state is organized.

W.D.V.: Has it been increasing or decreasing?

Mabry: Very, very small increase. And when I say that, if we're able to... basically, if we're able to hold our own, right now, is great, because of the fact that... well, we have so much automazation coming in, we have so many different new techniques. And building trades is a big part of our state body, and, you know, a few years back you could build a forty-story building here in the city and you would have... you could easily have 200 carpenters on the job. Now,

when they build a forty-story building out there, they have fifteen, twenty carpenters. They build it with pre-cast stuff and things of that nature. And so that's been a difference. So we're having to try to keep up the slack and overcome that. But we've been making it. We're not satisfied, you know, but we have been making progress. We have problems, just like everyone else. We... you know, William... Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company is 100 per cent union. They built buildings in Virginia this... in the last two years. They built them in North Carolina, built a building in West Virginia, I think it was, and then one in South Carolina. Every one of them is built union. They employ the employees of the organization, belongs to the Tobacco Workers, Tobacco Workers Union. But they come in the South on further down here to Macon, Georgia, where we have the anti-labor Republican mayor, Ronnie Thompson, the law and order man, and they announced they're going to build their building non-union. I mean, just from one state to the other. Said that they were told down there that they didn't have to build it union. So, I mean, there's... we face those problems. We have to try to turn them around if there's any way possible.

J.B.: Is there... are you also COPE director or is there another COPE director?

Mabry: Right, I'm COPE director. I have a... the office here has two full time people elected, officials, has a president and then over in... a secretary. We have a lady secretary here. And we have... I have two ladies - one of them's off today - that work in the outer office, and then down the hall to the right there I have my COPE office, and I have

a lady that heads up my Workers' Activity Department. And we're in the process now of doing an update on all of our... on all of our members, and we have just done a mail-out to bring all the addresses and everything up to date. And we had, out of, say, 100,000 that was mailed out, we had approximately 15,000 returns. We're in the process now of going through there and correcting the addresses.

W.D.V.: Are you tied in with that national computerized system?

Mabry: Yes. We're just going on it. I mean... excuse me. (Interruption in recording.) I served, and then we have the lady down the hall there. And this is what we're doing. We're going on the computer and, in the past in the state office here, we have the officers/^{who}were great guys, but they were not progressive, they were not forward thinkers, about what we were going to do down the road. They let today take care of itself. And so we had nothing to build on, really, when I started. We are having to start all the way. Our Voter Identification Program was gone, hadn't been updated in five years, and so rather than going back and trying to update ours we just tore all the cards up and everything and ordered a complete print-out. And we're starting new. And then we can process this thing and keep it going, on-going every year, to where it won't be that much trouble.

J.B.: From whom do you get a print-out?

Mabry: From national COPE. See, they... a lot of the international unions, though, will not divulge their list to anyone. Not even to the COPE organization. Now they'll leave it up to the individual local unions in each individual state if they want to divulge it, then they have the right to do so. And we are able here to get most of them, and

if national COPE doesn't have them, then we get them here, then we send them to national COPE and *[they get]* on the print-out up there.

J.B.: Where is your Political Action Program, say, compared with Louisiana or South Carolina?

Mabry: South Carolina, I would say, is high... further along than anyone. Now, I'll tell you why. Of course, you know why, I guess, because South Carolina has all their registered voters on a computer, and none of the other states do. They're further along there than anyone.

J.B.: Virginia does.

Mabry: Does it?

J.B.: The state does. I don't know about the AFL-CIO.

Mabry: No, well, I should have corrected that. In the area of the COPE director that works this area, Clem Dowler, says that South Carolina's the only one of his states that has it, and that's what I should have said. So we have to get ours in order to do a match to see if our people are registered to vote in the county. Then we take and separate the people against union members, and then we go and get the tape from Fulton County - of course, we have to buy each individual county - and then we do a match to see how many of our people are registered. And we're getting ready right now to do our first match to see how we come out. We have obtained the tape on Cobb County and the union members in Cobb County. We have obtained the tape in Fulton County and we're in the process of getting it now. Now, we're going to run these two counties. They're the most populous counties in the state.

J.B.: What does the state office here get per member?

Mabry: Fifteen cents per member per month.

J.B.: Fifteen cents a month per member?

Mabry: Yeah. We're one of the lowest there are. I mean, per capita.

J.B.: I think South Carolina gets that. When the legislature's in session, what do you do?

Mabry: When the legislature's in session, I go to the courthouse, I mean, the capitol. I go to the capitol when they start, and I stay there until the legislative session is over. At nights, I am out attending some kind of a function. Not as the function that I feel that I should be at it, but I attend them if I am invited to where I can become acquainted with the representatives and be with them. And the senators and all, and be able to talk to them more. Then we are up there attending committee meetings, hearings and what have you, and trying to influence legislation or trying to get legislation killed.

W.D.V.: How do you assess your impact on the legislature compared to other organized groups?

Mabry: Well, we are making progress with our standings with the legislature. I think the image of organized labor in this state and other southern states has improved somewhat in the last few years. Now, this could be brought about by several things that I think that could cause it, was the fact that I like to think that we have better leadership and more concerned leadership in the labor movement. That is genuinely concerned with the welfare of the people and the welfare of the ones we represent, and all, and have the respect of the legislature

more than any time in the past. Again, it might be the thinking of the times, the fact that the people that are moving in to the the South from other areas are coming here from highly unionized states. And they're coming in here... they have been brought up with unions, and they more or less accept unions as a way of life. And this partly was brought about by the fact that we were able to eliminate the...

Secretary: Now, what do you want in yours (coffee)?

Mabry: Sugar's over here, if you want one.

Secretary: Right here. All righty.

Mabry: And when... traditionally in the South, the control of your state body, control of politics, period - even from the courthouse to the capitol - was controlled by what I always refer to as the wool hat boys.

W.D.V.: Excuse me just a moment, please.

(Interruption in recording.)

Mabry: The control of the politics in the South was in the hands of the wool hat boys, the ones that you traditionally saw hanging around the courthouse and the policy for the whole county was made on the courthouse steps by a handful of people. Well, when we were able to abolish the county unit system, and put it more on a one vote... one man, one vote basis, it spread the power. And you don't have the concentration of power in the state like you used to. So consequently we can get out and talk to a group of people and explain our position, more so than we could attempt to talk to one person with a closed mind. And this is what they had, because they had the textile industry and all in the South that were not interested. They lured business into this

state with a... with a... on a pretense of a cheap tax structure, to come in here. And cheap labor. And that's the worst thing the state could possibly do, is to bring someone in here and give them tax breaks and put the burden of tax on the citizens that's in the community now, and with cheap labor. Because the businesses... they can't even thrive if the workers don't make much. So I think we've been able to...

W.D.V.: You think your impact is growing?

Mabry: Very much so.

J.B.: Are your members, officers in your union or directors serving on state agencies, boards and commissions?

Mabry: Yes. Yes.

J.B.: You know of many?

Mabry: Well, you know, how many... are you... did you say how many I am serving on?

J.B.: How many are you serving on and officers in the AFL-CIO.

Mabry: Well, we have... we have a good many. I mean, really, and just some of them. I serve on the state Manpower Planning Council. I serve on the state Workmen's Compensation Study Committee, the Unemployment Advisory Council. I serve on the State Re-organization Committee under Governor Carter, you know, under his re-organization program. Serve on that committee. I serve at... as chairman of the state council on aging - that's not the real name of it, and all. I was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging from the state of Georgia, appointed by the governor. And we are... we're involved a good bit. Now, different people. We have our H.R.D.I. man, a black man, a very capable person, that serves on the state vocational education, along with myself. No, he serves on the state Manpower Planning Council and I serve on the state Vocational Education Advisory Council. But we are able, in other

parts of the state, to have people. Now, where we fall short is we don't have a representative on the Board of Regents. I believe that I speak for as many families that their children would go... be going to college, as anyone that he could put... the governor could appoint to the Board of Regents, to get the people that we represent, and all, and speak for the working, organized working people of this state... does not have a representative on the Board of Regents. Now, I mean...

W.D.V.: Basically, you're on boards and commissions, though, that deal with the interests of organized labor, you understand. I mean, you're not on really broad, generalized things like mental health or higher education.

Mabry: Right, right. We're not.

J.B.: Is this changing at all? I mean...

Mabry: It will change. It will change. That I...

W.D.V.: The reason I was thinking of Victor ^{Bussie's} ~~Busey's~~ on about, what, Jack, thirty or forty different boards all across the spectrum...?

Mabry: That's right. That's exactly right. So this is a result of the fact that Victor Busey... Victor Busey is in a state that is even more . . . but, now , we have a guy that's running for governor, and all, and one of the leading contenders for the governor. And, I had a meeting with him...

J.B.: Who is that?

Mabry: Well, I would rather not say. On that, I just wouldn't want it to get out before the election.

J.B.: Okay, we're not coming out until '76.

Mabry: Okay, it's George Smith, who is running for governor of this

state. And he came in and. . . he come in the office, and he gave me a list of the things and I talked with him about the department heads. He assured me that they would be one person in his administration from off the ranks of organized labor that was recommended by this office, to be a department head. The Board of Regents, we would get the first opening on the Board of Regents hafter he become governor. And the Board of Education, Department of Industry and Trade. We would get one on the Pardon and Parole Board, and Veteran's Service, Board of Natural Resources, Personnel Board, and all. And Board of Corrections. And this is how much it's changed. Now, here's a man that...

W.D.V.: Why is he willing to do that for you? Is it because he thinks the power of organized labor has increased that much, or... ?

Mabry: Yeah. Well, he's not the only one. We have had governors come into this office and. . . all right, I could pick up the phone, I could pick up this phone, and I can call Governor Carter's office. Now, if Governor Carter is in his office, he is not in conference, and he's in there talking with someone, he'll talk to me. But if he's in conference with a group of people, he will not. This is the relationship that this office has never enjoyed in party politics...

J.B.: I think Governor Carter told us he meets regularly with you for breakfast about once a week. Is that right?

Mabry: I'm with the governor all the time.

J.B.: What legislation has passed in his administration that organized labor specifically wanted?

Mabry: The elimination of the waiting week on unemployment.

J.B.: That was a big thing in labor's book.

Mabry: That was a big thing. Because every state had it. We are one of five states - I think it's six now - that have repealed it, eliminated it.

J.B.: Is Georgia the only southern state that does not have it now?

Mabry: We're the only southern state that does not have the waiting week on unemployment. We have several...

J.B.: Are you working on agency shop legislation?

Mabry: We are working on agency shop, and, you know, to show you how far we have progressed, now, this is what I was telling you about. The... .

J.B.: Let me ask you just a little bit about that.

Mabry: All right.

J.B.: Explain just very briefly what that elimination of that waiting. . . one week waiting period does. What does that mean?

Mabry: All right. The elimination of the waiting week, it means that if you were working or if I were working out here in a factory and the boss come in today and told me, says, "Well," says, "We're running short of material. We're going to have to close the plant down, and we're going to have to lay you off for a while." Then it means that I have to wait one week before I can sign up for unemployment compensation. Well, I'm being laid off through no fault of my own. I didn't ask to be laid off. So, what we're saying, it is ridiculous for a person to miss one week's work and no compensation at all, and get behind with his bills, for the sake of building up when we had \$300,000,000 something in a treasury over here. It. . . it's a backlog. So we passed this,

and I don't have the bill right in front of me. And it specifies, though, if ours ever goes down below \$200,000,000, I think it is, then it's eliminated. Automatically. Until such time it's built back up. But. . . and this means a person doesn't have to wait. They go up. Now, if you quit, or you go out on a strike, you do not draw it. It plainly states, "Through no fault of his or her own... ."

J.B.: Okay, now, is there any other legislation?

Mabry: Well, others, and we have had an increase in unemployment benefits. We have had that. That's great. We have had. . . .

J.B.: Weekly rate.

Mabry: The weekly rate, that's right.

J.B.: What's that gone up to?

Mabry: \$70 now. Will be, I think, the first of July. \$70.

J.B.: From what?

Mabry: Well, when I took office, from \$55. And now and then we have increased the workmen's compensation benefits from. . . from. . .

I'm not sure of this, but I'm wanting to say \$60. And I'd have to get. . . up to \$80 a week now, if a person is injured on the job.

They draw \$80. And we've been able to do this in the last two years.

And this is the result of the willingness of Governor Carter, and we have a very dynamic man, as far as we're concerned, in the. . .

Sam Caldwell, commissioner of labor, in this state. He. . . we've only had two to my knowledge, Hewitt and him, but Hewitt just was tied to the old wool hat boys, and he would not make any. . . .

J.B.: Now, did you have any. . . didn't organized labor help Caldwell get in that office?

Mabry: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

J.B.: Was that an appointive office?

Mabry: No, it's elected. It's an elective office, and he is up for re-election this year. There is no announced opposition.

J.B.: What did labor do in that race?

Mabry: Everything in the world that's possible for anyone to do in a campaign.

W.D.V.: Wasn't Hewitt anti-labor?

Mabry: Yeah.

J.B.: Did they defeat him?

Mabry: We defeated him.

J.B.: He was up for the re-election.

W.D.V.: How many people. . . .

J.B.: Does the U.A.W. . . . excuse me, does the U. A. W. . . . it is not affiliated with AFL-CIO.

Mabry: No, we work close together.

J.B.: And they have fairly large numbers here in Georgia, don't they?

Mabry: Yes, they have real large numbers here. Now, we don't know many. Now, Herb Green and Herb Buckner are the leaders of the Auto Workers in this area here. Very, very. . .

J.B.: How many members do they have roughly? I mean, ten thousand? Twenty thousand?

Mabry: Yeah, I would say. . . and that's roughly, between ten and fifteen thousand, I would say. And I have no way of knowing. But even we are in the process now of trying to work with them and get their membership, not their list . . . I mean, a mailing list, to where we

can put their people on, if we meet and agree on an endorsement of a candidate, then we will do one mail-out. Rather than them mail one and us one, we would do one mail-out and say that the AFL-CIO and the Auto Workers are jointly endorsing this candidate.

J.B.: Now, will you likely be endorsing a candidate in the primary, for governor?

Mabry: No. Lieutenant governor, yes. We will go with. . . I don't know whether you've ever met. . .

W.D.V.: What about

Mabry: We will be in the run-off.

W.D.V.: But not in the first one.

Mabry: We will be going with Tim. We have not made an endorsement, and we don't. . . until such time as we have a COPE meeting, we don't.

Here's a guy that . . . this ^{Zell} ~~Zale~~ Miller, ran against Phil ^{Landrum,} ~~London,~~ one of the authors of the ^{Landrum-} ~~London-~~Griffin bill. And he ran against Phil in the Ninth District a few years back and like to beat him.

In fact, he got about 49 per cent of the vote. And all. But then. . .

but he lost it anyway, and so ^{Zell} ~~Zale~~ has always been a friend of ours.

Never bent over backwards to do anything against us, and all, like other people do, and there's just no way we can. . .

J.B.: He's former executive director of the Democratic party, is that right?

Mabry: Right, right.

J.B.: Why are you running for the senate?

Mabry: Because I feel that I can. . . when, as I see it, when the legislature convenes over there, I go to the state capitol, and I sit

the corridors out in the hall and all around on the benches. And taking a chance on contacting and stopping the senators and representatives. And I go to these meetings at night to where I can be there and talk with them. I feel if I could run and be successful and get inside, that I would be in there where the policies are made, I can talk to these people and explain my position to them on the floor of that senate, where I have no one that can do it now.

J.B.: Is the agency shop number one priority?

Mabry: Agency shop. Repeal of the right to work law is number one, but we haven't got that brave yet. But I believe - and we got off on something else, I did, rather - that when you mention agency shop, the agency shop bill. They were afraid this time that that bill could have been passed, had it been allowed. Now. . .

J.B.: They being whom?

Mabry: Oh, the powers to be. The Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Business and Industry Association, the textile manufacturers and all. But we. . . two years ago, we introduced. . . I guess four years ago, we had prepared an agency shop bill and all, and I worked with that bill day and night. I mean, I lived with the legislators and the senators and all in case it ever got over that far. And it was. . . the bill was introduced, and it was assigned to a committee. And the committee met and voted the bill out of committee. And then it went out of committee and then they wouldn't call it up. They said it was a too controversial bill. So the last session, we put it in the senate, and we got it over into the senate. When it was introduced to the senate and assigned to the Industry and Labor Committee, then

Lester Maddox, when the. . . if you remember, last session, this last term of the legislature, they tried to strip the power of appointment of committees away from the lieutenant governor. So they had the vote on it, and Maddox won and retained the right of appointments. In order for him to win, the only way he could win, he had to have the Republican members of the house and senate on his side. So he made a deal with Armstrong Smith, the most notorious anti-labor Republican senator over there, to. . . if the Republicans would go along with him, he would put Armstrong Smith the head of the Industry and Labor Committee, and that's just like throwing a damn rock in our face. But he did. So when agency shop was introduced into the senate, it was assigned to the Industry and Labor Committee. And I had enough votes committed out of the senators that was on that committee to bring the damn bill out of committee for a vote on the floor. So he knew I had them, and when the committee met he assigned immediately the agency shop bill, Senate Bill 77, to a sub-committee for a study. And he put Al Holloway, who is another. . . he is the Chamber of Commerce man, state Chamber of Commerce, from Albany, Georgia, and he's finance chairman of the George Busby campaign for governor this time. And he assigned it to a committee and made him chairman of it. Al Holloway has never voted for organized labor but one time since he's been in the senate, and that was on the elimination of the waiting week, because he was formerly for Governor Carter and Governor Carter was supporting the legislation. So that's where our bill died in sub-committee. We had a hearing on it, but what good is that, you know. We had a hearing and it died. So Lester Maddox went up to the

University of Georgia to make. . . he went up to the University of Georgia and they/attempting to organize now the custodial workers at the University. And Maddox was up there and they asked him what he thought about it, and he said he didn't think they should be organized, and that it was just a scheme to make the union officials fatter, and all. So I cornered him over at the capitol about it one day, or somebody did, and they said, well, . . . he said that just some of Mabry's lies he's scattered around. He said, "I didn't say it." So they produced a newspaper and says, "Mabry didn't lie about this." And I walked up about that time, and then he and I had it out in the hall up there and they was about, I guess, 75 people listening to it. And I told him about our bill. And he says, "You get the bill re-introduced and I assure you it'll come out of committee." So I got the bill and it was introduced the next morning. Had it re-drawn and introduced next morning. And it died in committee. So, I mean, it's. . . .

J.B.: It was agency shop?

Mabry: Agency shop. Yeah.

J.B.: How does labor view Maddox?

Mabry: When you going to put out this book?

J.B.: '76.

Mabry: Maddox is one of the biggest frauds and phonies that ever hit the state of Georgia. He has. . . he ran for office and was. . . he was not elected by the people. ^{Bo}~~Beau~~ Calloway beat him, and then the legislature elected him as governor when Ellis Arnold was a write-in vote and kept either one of them from getting a majority. He ran as a

you know, on a segregation platform and all. And the working people traditionally was the ones that he was appealing to. And champion of the. . . he was champion of the little man. But he left the little man. The little man doesn't realize it, though, but if you will get the newspapers, every time Lester Maddox runs an ad in the paper of any kind he puts down at the bottom of it, "If you want to help pay for the cost of this ad, send contributions." You know, he closed his Pickwick restaurant out here, said he'd close it rather than integrate it. But the truth of the matter was that the urban renewal was going to take his business anyway. And he closed it, but it was opened up about a week later by Mr. Duncan, who was his brother in law. Opened it up. I mean, it was just closed for a few days. And he left the little person and he is. . . he's one of the richest governors we've ever had. He is. . . he's become a millionaire at the expense of the poor ignorant people that believe in his philosophy. And. . .

W.D.V.: What's his appeal to the people in organized labor? Is it the segregation?

Mabry: Yes. Segregation.

W.D.V.: Is that abating any, or just as strong as it was?

Mabry: Oh, no. It's nowhere near as strong as it was. We, you know. . .

J.B.: What percentage of your membership is black? Do you know?

Mabry: Know I don't.

J.B.: Roughly. What would you estimate it to be?

Mabry: Twenty per cent. And that is a rough. . . . You know, I guess I'm. . . really, I never look at my membership. I tell my people every-

where I go in order to speak to them that any labor official that is honored to be an official and represent the people, and if they can't represent the black and the white the same, and give them the same representation, that they shouldn't be in office. Because the black work just as hard for their money as the white does, and when you're up here. . . . So I never think of my membership as black or white. Probably, if you get right down to it, I have better friends that're black in the labor movement than the whites, some of them. I have them on both ways, but, I mean, when you get right down to. . . . We have two members of our board that are black. We have one from Albany, Georgia who works with the Goodyear plant there, in the rubber workers. Frank Gillette is with the laborers here that's on our board of directors, state body, here. We had a vacancy in the Second District, that's Albany, and when I was. . . the president that I succeeded would not appoint a black to the board down there. He was going to wait and let the convention. . . until the convention elected one. So when they appointed me president and all, to take over and all, and I took over president, then I turned right around and asked the vice president to preside. I said, "Will you take the gavel and preside for just one minute?" He said yes, so I made him a motion. . . I made the motion that we seat Ken English as vice president of the Second District for the state AFL-CIO. I got a second to it and there wasn't a damn dissenting vote.

J.B.: Walter, you'd asked a question and I sort of interrupted you. You were asking why the change?

W.D.V.: Yeah. Could you say that Maddox was for the little man or the

working man when he was governor?

Mabry: Well, I was not active in this office when Maddox was governor.

W.D.V.: But you're saying since then it's apparent that he's not?

Mabry: No, he is not. He ran for office and says how in his campaign he would talk about how he worked at the steel plant about here, how he was a union member, and how his daddy was a union member and everything. So after we. . . up here I was talking to him one time and he said he could never support legislation that would require anyone to join a labor union. But this is right contrary to what he has always said he believed in. He did not like freeloaders. He wanted to clear the welfare rolls of people that was able to work. Well, hell, we go out here and I know that you gentlemen know what we have to go through with in order to organize a plant. We go out to this plant and we have to have a per cent. . . thirty per cent of the people in the plant to sign signature cards before we can petition for an election. And they come in, the NLRB and holds an election. In order for us to become the bargaining agent for the people in that plant we have to receive 51 per cent of the votes. Well, the law says if we get that the people, the other ones, aren't required to join the labor union.

I mean, Taft-Hartley said that they shall not. . . that we have to represent everyone in a plant regardless of race, creed or color. The right to work law in the state of Georgia says that nobody shall be required to join a labor union, it's a condition of the employment. But yet a person can go to school and be a doctor, and they cannot practice medicine in this state until they join the medical association. And they can go to school and become an attorney, and they cannot practice law in this state until they belong to the Bar Association.

But I could. . . .

J.B.: Is that message getting across to people, that Maddox is two-faced?

Mabry: We have no way. Well, yeah, I try to get it across.

W.D.V.: If the most important issue for blue collar workers or organized labor was race, say, four years ago, has that diminished? Is race still. . . ?

Mabry: No, among the organized labor people, it has diminished. But we are only 18 per cent of the work force. Now, when they talk about the. . . .

W.D.V.: But as an issue among all the blue collar workers, do you think it's basically. . . .

Mabry: Not a lot. Listen, I can go out here and go out on some of these construction jobs where they're non-union and all. . . . I tell you , leadership in the union has brought about a great change, because we are involved in meetings with the blacks and everything. Out here, the non-union people, they go on that job every morning, they work, they go home, they attend no meetings at all. They know nothing about how it came about that they're making five dollars an hour, a union carpenter making eight dollars. They don't know how it came about that they're making five. They don't realize that they're making five dollars an hour as a result of the fact that organized labor organized and has forced them to bring it up to a living standard. But they still go around in the communities talking about that they're not going to associate with a nigger and there's no damn way that my kids are going to school with a nigger. And this is what Lester Maddox

has always. . . .

W.D.V.: So that makes him still pretty powerful?

Mabry: That's right. He is powerful. Now we are hoping. . . we are hoping. . . . You asked me a while ago if we were going to take a part in this run-off. We have a lot of candidates running for governor that's acceptable to the labor movement. We have George T. Smith, who is acceptable to us. We have former senator David Gambrell, who is acceptable to the labor movement. We have George Busby, who is acceptable to us, but we don't like the damn people that's with him. The Chamber of Commerce group and all this, we don't like that. But he'd be acceptable to us, because we think he's a progressive man running for governor. We have Bobby Rowan, state senator from Enigma, Georgia, who is acceptable to us. Bert Lance, former highway director up here, running, he is acceptable to us. So, if we. . . we feel if we get in the primary and make an endorsement and we happen to lose. . . . and we're not going to endorse Lester Maddox, that's for damn sure, but we are. . . if we were to get in the primary and make an endorsement of George Smith and lose, with George ^{Busbee}~~Busby~~, or Bert Lance, or Gambrell, right now, Gambrell is the second leader in the thing. I feel that Maddox is leading, Gambrell is second, and on down, maybe George Smith third and Busby fourth. But this is changing as the campaign progresses. So we make the wrong endorsement and we get in there, then we pick up the one that's against Maddox, then Maddox can say, "Well, they were not for him. They're only doing it to beat Lester Maddox." And it would give him an issue. And what we're going to. . . .

W.D.V.: Would organized labor being opposed to Lester Maddox in the

first primary, would help Maddox. In other words, is the endorsement of organized labor to many people a kiss of death?

Mabry: No, no, no. Used to. . . .

W.D.V.: It used to be?

Mabry: It did, right, because they made lip service, that was all they done. This office, last election, two years ago, and the elections for congress and senator, when Senator Nunn was elected, we went with Gambrell the first time. Then, when Nunn beat Gambrell in the primary and placed Fletcher Thompson with Nunn, but out of this office we put in campaigns between \$75,000 and \$100,000 in the various campaigns around. And state races, congressional races, senate races. . . .

W.D.V.: In the senate races and congressional races, what kind of commitment do you make in terms of resources, in terms of money, say for that whole '72 thing?

Mabry: Do you mean what kind of commitment did we get out of them?

W.D.V.: No, what did you contribute to those federal offices, the Senate and congressmen?

Mabry: How much money?

W.D.V.: Yeah.

Mabry; Oh, a total of 30 to 45.

W.D.V.: And what other resources did you put into that? Organization?

Mabry: Manpower and. . . .

W.D.V.: More than ever before?

Mabry: Oh, yes. We put. . . well, see, traditionally in this state we had never had a senate race. (Interruption in recording. Side two.) I mean, look at his record traditionally, how he voted.

J.B.: You're talking about Russell now?

Mabry: I'm talking about Russell, and Talmadge is worse. Herman Talmadge has never voted for organized labor, never voted the views of the working man. Here's a man, a senator, that's head of the Agricultural Committee in the state senate, in the United States Senate, didn't even as much as know we was giving our damn wheat away. Didn't even know what's happening. If he did, you know, he plays dumb about it. And so he doesn't vote for the working people. But who you going to get to beat him? We have no one here that wanted to take him on. I thought for a while Carter was going to take him on this time, but Carter didn't do it, so he's going to get by without opposition or token opposition. As he says, "Political unknown or an idiot." That's his statement that they were going to be. So we have never had a senate race.

W.D.V.: You endorsed Nunn. The ^{ten} ~~Tenth~~ Congressional District, how many did you endorse there?

Mabry: We endorsed Andy Young and we won.

W.D.V.: He was the only one?

Mabry: We endorsed John Davis over Dr. Larry MacDonald, the John Bircher, and we won. And we endorsed Beau Ginn over Elliot Hagan in the Sixth - I mean, in the First, and we won. We endorsed Bill ^{Stuckey} ~~Stuckett~~ and we won. Phil ^{Landrum} ~~Landron~~ had no opposition. And his district. And neither did Jack Brinkley down in Columbus. Now, Stevens over in the Tenth District, he is one that. . . he is the only congressman, really, that we have never taken out after. And we might get him too, we might. We're building up. We have a good strong labor union coming on in Athens

and then Augusta. We have a Central Labor Council now in ~~Everton~~^{Elberton}.
And these are all three in the Tenth District.

W.D.V.: So the Tenth, you endorsed, what, for four?

Mabry: Yeah, we made endorsements. They had opposition. We were able to beat ~~Edgers~~^{Elliott} Hagan. When ~~Edgers~~^{Elliott} Hagan was first elected to congress, he pledged that he would vote for organized labor and help and all like that. And he went up there and he abandoned us and we beat him. And we got one down here, we got one right now in the Sixth District, Jack Flint, who has Republican opposition. And, you know, the *post card* registration bill is important to the labor movement. I had the *post card* registration bill introduced in the house up here. I was. . . I got. . . I worked with that registration bill day and night, just like I did the agency shop. I got it out of committee with a due pass recommendation on it. One dissenting vote. And the speaker of the house would not call it up. So I asked him why he wouldn't, and he said it was too controversial. But finally they agreed to call it up, and Mike Egan, the Republican, the minority leader, got up and made a motion to table it, and they (snaps fingers) voted just like that and tabled the motion. This was a year ago. So this last session, I worked and got it brought off the table, and I lost it by eleven votes. I lacked eleven votes getting enough votes to pass the *post card* registration bill here. But on the national *post card* registration bill we were running short, and they're supposed to vote on it today in Washington. And I called Jack Flint and told him, I said, "Jack, you have never voted a lot with us, and you say that you can't because of your constituency

and all that," but I said, "But I'm reminding you that you either vote for the damn postcard bill, or you consider it a direct vote against organized labor and me personally, and I'm going to work against your lacks to beat you." So he told me he would vote for it. It will remain to be seen whether he's up there today to vote for that bill. But anyone that would deny someone a right, an easy way to register to vote, I mean, is afraid of something. I mean, the most. . . this is why the blacks in the South are having a problem - and not only the South. This is how Adam Powell and all was always against voter registration drives, because he had his people in his church and all. The ones that was in his district he had no trouble, but he didn't know what would happen if he got these new ones registered to vote. And this is what we're having a problem with some of the blacks that's in power here now, and got in power, that they are not as concerned about registration and all as they once was because they know the people in the district that's ready to vote now will return them to office. And if they get more registered, they don't know. Well, that's top priority.

W.D.V.: *[IS organized labor]* involved in a lot of primaries in the state senate?

Mabry: Oh, yes.

W.D.V.: About how many? What per cent of the races? Where you got involved and made an endorsement and worked for somebody.

Mabry: Right. We. . . I would say that we were involved in a hundred per cent of them that had opposition. Everybody that had opposition we were involved in it. Now, I would have to go to my records and pull

them and find out just who and what per cent of them we made financial contributions to, in a small amount. Now, we were not able to, in the senate race and in the congressional races, if we were involved in. And the Andy Young race was real important to us here because. . . . Have you ever met Andy Young?

J.B.: Yeah.

Mabry: Well, Andy Young is a very, very dynamic person as far as we're concerned. Not one time has he ever voted against us, since he's been in Washington. And so he is. . . we consider that a great accomplishment for us.

J.B.: What did you. . . specifically, what did you actually do in his campaign?

Mabry: Everything, again, that's possible for anybody to do to get somebody elected. We set up a hundred telephones, we manned those telephones, we called people on the phone from the registration voters list. We put cars out in the community, we rented automobiles, we paid for these cars, we put drivers in them to haul people to the polls. We had literature printed, we passed out literature, we contributed financially to his campaign, we rounded all of the labor unions in his behalf and we worked with other groups in coalitions and all to get him elected.

J.B.: And he ran. . . he got a fairly decent, respectable vote in those blue-collar white precincts in his district?

Mabry: Oh, yes. Very much so. Very much so. And we're hoping we'll get by without opposition this time.

J.B.: Did you actively support Carter?

Mabry: Jimmy Carter?

J.B.: Yeah.

Mabry: The labor movement, no. They went with Carl Sanders. They endorsed Carl Sanders. I personally was a Jimmy Carter man but I did not work for him. Couldn't work for him because the labor movement endorsed somebody else. I felt that Carl Sanders betrayed us, he has, since he went out of office, mis-represented things to us. And he tried his best to bust up organized labor support in the Gambrell-Nunn race. He was for Sam Nunn and he went to the people that he was friends with when he was in power and this is the bad part about organized labor, not only in this state but in every state, it's holding them together, because everybody running for office has friends within the labor movement. And when we're as big as we are, I'm merely in the legislative arm of the labor movement, and I speak for organized labor as far as legislation is concerned as it is passed down to us on a national level. And on a national level they speak for the presidential elections and the vice presidential elections and then we speak for the. . . . (Interruption for phone call.)

W.D.V.: . . . house of representatives here, that you were in opposition, wherever they. . . (Interruption for coffee.) When there was a contested primary in the house, was that generally true? Were you generally on the side against the incumbent?

Mabry: Not necessarily. Not necessarily. Some of the races we did not get involved in. Supposing. . . unfortunately, and this is a hell of a position, this is the first time, in this election

that's coming up, that we have two good issues that we consider to judge whether a person voted against organized labor or not. One is the postcard registration bill. They were every one notified, they were every one talked to. Not one time, but two or three times. They knew that organized labor was supporting that bill, that it was a labor bill prepared by us and introduced by one of our people up there, friends of ours. And the ones that voted against it, this is the first time in years the unemployment. . . elimination of the waiting week on unemployment, we didn't have any votes against that thing. Because they knew that bill was going to go through, they wanted to be on the side of it. They were so full of momentum noone voted against it. So a person voted for that bill that was probably against us. So we have the ERA and we have postcard registration. Those are two things that the labor movement. . . they knew we were for, and the ones that voted against them, we consider them our enemies. And they are enemies of ours if they voted against us on those two bills.

W.D.V.: Based on that. . . .

Mabry: We will be able this time to know more than ever where our friends are and where they are not. And, really, a person could - and I know - that a person could be in favor of organized labor, the goals of organized labor, and still be against both of them. I realize that. I realize that, and we're going to have to weigh that. And I guess I'm very fortunate that I can sit down and talk to a man and find out his feelings.

W.D.V.: Will this election be about the strongest involvement in any campaign that you've had?

Mabry: I think so. We're going all out to beat Ben Blackburn. We're going all out to beat him. We have two people that are running in the Democrat primary, Elliot ^{Levittas} ~~Levittus~~ - do you know Elliot?

J.B.: No.

Mabry: All right. Elliot is a former representative up here, and announced last time that he would not seek re-election to his house seat. And the other gentleman that is running is a architect and a home designer, what have you. And they've announced. So we are. . . we will be going all out to beat Mr. Blackburn. We're going to be really very much involved in the governor's race after the primary. We're going to be involved in the lieutenant governor's race. We're going to be involved in some senate races. We have some senate races around that we're going to be very involved in beating this Armstrong Smith that I told you. We have a fellow that's president of the Palmetta Bank down there that's a pilot for Eastern Airlines, and all, that is going to run against him. And we're going to try to beat him. And we have some more areas, seats that we're going to try to capture. And we believe if we're successful and, you know, if the word gets out that. . . that we have been able to knock off a couple of the guys that's anti-labor, then the others're going to stand up and take over so that it's not going to be like that.

J.B.: Do you contribute money to legislative campaigns?

Mabry: Right.

J.B.: How much?

Mabry: Not a lot. Not a lot.

W.D.V.: Couple hundred dollars?

Mabry: Yeah. That was what I was going to say. The going thing, maybe, a couple of hundred dollars to a legislative candidate and then if we have a legislator over there that's really a dynamic friend of ours and can talk to - not necessarily vote with us every damn time the way we want to, but at least willing to set and listen to us. Now, a lot of them won't even listen to us. I mean, you just say it's labor and it's gone. Then we would contribute more to him if he was in trouble and needed help and all. And the senate races the same way. Last year I contributed high \$500 to some races, and then this time I hope to be able to do that, \$200 to some and on up to \$500. In the governor's race I was hoping we could maybe put \$15,000, \$20,000. The lieutenant governor's race. . . the lieutenant governor's race is more important to me this year than the governor's race. I mean, that really sounds stupid, but the governor is the third most powerful person in our state. The most powerful person in our state is the speaker of the House of Representatives, because he can stop any damn bill that he wants stopped. The governor was not able to do it. The governor was not able to get legislation passed, but the speaker has the prerogative of calling a bill that's on the calendar any time he wants to, or not call it. So any piece of legislation that he don't want called up, all he has to do is by-pass it. The speaker, and then the lieutenant governor is the same identical way. He appoints the committee, and then the committees. . . and then he can turn right around then on the thing and veto and get. . . pass by legislation like that. And then on the. . . if the governor, if it gets down to his office, he can veto it if he don't want it. (Interruption

for phone call.) Can we? Yeah?

W.D.V.: What's it going to take to make Georgia vote for the national Democratic candidate for president?

Mabry: To have a candidate that presents a program that is in line with the thinking of the country. And I don't mean George. . . I don't believe the thinking of the people in Michigan or the people in California are that much different from the state of Georgia. And you see what George Wallace did in the other states, and they talk about how he was doing in the South. I believe that in the past the Democrat party had written off the South and said they didn't need them. And I believe if a Democrat governor. . . I mean, Democrat preidential candidate would come to the South with a program and - for the people - that he could carry the South no problem. You have a lot of them that could. Hubert Humphrey could carry the South. You have. . . Walter Mondale could carry the South. I'm not sure about Ted Kennedy. I'm not sure about him. But I don't believe that the. . . Chappaquiddick would play that much of a role in it. I just believe that his liberal. . . . You have the Lester Maddox type people. I don't know what role George Wallace would play. I don't believe that you and I will ever live to see the day that George Wallace and Ted Kennedy share the ticket together. I mean, they talk about a presidential ticket in '76 with George Wallace and Ted Kennedy - I don't believe that. I believe that you and I will see. . . there's a great possibility that I see that Ted Kennedy could possibly be the nominee and you see someone like Carter or Askew or Bumpers, according to what happened to Bumpers in the senate race, in Arkansas or someone like this, that would

be on it. Don't rule Terry Sanford, Stanford. . . Terry Sanford out, that. . . and all, some of them, to pick someone from the South to run with. I believe that either Mondale and Carter or. . . I don't know where Humphrey, with even his health, that would permit him even trying again or whatnot, but he would be a dynamic person. People in the South would vote for him. But people in the South would not vote for nobody like McGovern. I voted for McGovern and all. I didn't beat my brains out for McGovern on account of the no endorsement policy of the AFL-CIO, but I voted for McGovern and all. Hell, McGovern looks good today, and this is the first time, but, I mean, he does. He looks good. And I believe. . . I believe you'll see the South go Democratic.

J.B.: You work. . . how much work do you do with Republican legislators?

Mabry: Well, now, I enjoy a good relationship with Bob Shaw. Bob Shaw and I are good friends. Our kids go to school together out at Sandy Springs. We know one another and we've appeared on TV together a couple of times. Of course, I'm not the spokesman for the party here. That's Mr. Kirbo, Charles Kirbo. And. . . just like Bob Shaw for the Republicans. So I. . . that was what she buzzed me while ago.

Senator Wiley Wasden from Savannah, who is a Republican and former party chairman for the state of Georgia before Bob Shaw, had called me and said he'd be in his office until 10:30 and all. But I enjoy a good - but he's a Republican - I enjoy a good relationship with him. And some of the other Republicans, George Larsen, a representative here, and I, we get along. And he supports legislation that we're interested in. And we can get him to sign and help us on any legislation

we want. But as a general rule, the Republicans don't help us.

Of course, it's just like in congress. We have. . . .

J.B.: How about on ERA legislation?

Mabry: They were against it.

J.B.: I mean, a hundred per cent, or solid?

Mabry: Hell, they don't. . . . Every now and then you may get a straggler, but the way the one votes, they all vote. I mean, they have a caucus and they decide that before they vote. And you may have one that has to vote because of personal reasons or something like that, but, I mean, it's a general rule. They. . . .

J. B.: The Republicans in the legislature have pretty much party discipline?

Mabry: That's right.

J.B.: How about the Democrats?

Mabry: (Chuckles.) No.

J.B.: I mean, Busby is majority leader over there. Can he. . . does he actually swing votes at Democratic caucus meetings?

Mabry: Yes. Yeah, they do. On the postcard registration bill, when it was originally introduced, the guy that I got to introduce it I thought had more influence in the house than what he did. I found out he didn't. And so I went to Busby and I got Busby to take it, and Busby got it off of the table and got a vote and all, and him in the middle of all the budget hearings and everything else. If he had had time to work the floor and had got the bill, we could have passed it. But he didn't. But he talked for it, spoke for it and everything up there, and we lost it by eleven votes. If he'd a had an opportunity. . .

So he is pretty. . . .

J.B.: How about the blacks in the legislature? How closely do they work with you?

Mabry: One hundred per cent.

J.B.: Are they solid for ERA?

Mabry: Yeah.

J.B.: All of them?

Mabry: Yeah, I'm pretty sure all of them. I don't have the vote here, but I'm sure they all voted for it. And I'm mighty near positive.

J.B.: How do you assess the black legislators? Their influence and role and. . . .?

Mabry: The black legislators are a vital part of the legislative system of this state. I think as a result of the blacks being elected, it has brought about the changes that we had to have, and if it hadn't of been for them in the legislature and the blacks being able to be up there and know how the officials were voting on it and what they had to say on that floor about it and everything, it has made the elected white officials realize and all that they are going to have to do different if they're going to come back up there. Because they're in an area where the blacks can make the difference in an election.

J.B.: Does Georgia have a state minimum wage law?

Mabry: Yeah. \$1.25 now. And we have about 500 up there in that capital that needs to be on it. We need to put the governor - and I'm sincere about this - the governor and every elected official up there, every representative and the senators and everything, should be required to work a damn month for a minimum wage. And they'd go

back up there and they'd change. When one of my people, one of the poor black people that's in the ghettos out here and has no education and no means of bringing himself up, when he goes into the grocery store to buy a piece of meat or a sack of flour, he pays identically the same damn sales tax, the same price and all, that the governor of this state has to pay for it if he goes to buy it. And it isn't right. They should be somebody - you and I - that have been blessed in life that we can provide for ourselves and our family a living, that we can enjoy some of the wonderful things in this country that they already enjoy, that if we don't take a little bit of our time and help build a damn bridge to where the people that is not as fortunate as you and I, that they can cross over a little easier and enjoy some of it, then we're falling short and we don't deserve to have what we have. If we do not help somebody else. And that's the way I feel about it, and I don't think our elected officials. . . I mean, I'm sick to death of some of the blacks that have been elected to office in this state. They know how the blacks have fought, they know how the working people have fought. And when they got up there. . . they will vote for legislation that organized labor is interested in, they will vote for legislation that blacks are, but they don't take as much time and use as much influence in the community, in their own communities, to try and help the blacks that really need help and all. And we in this country, when we think of people that really need help, we refer mostly to blacks. But this really isn't the case. I mean, we have poor white people in this country. But the whites had a little better opportunity than the blacks did. And so

we. . . I like to work with all of them.

W.D.V.: Since you've been involved in politics and the union movement, what's the major change you've seen in the last ten or fifteen years? Major political change, in this state.

Mabry: The involvement of blacks in the decision making. . . on the state level, city level, county level. We have seen this, in the last ten years we have seen it go from where the whites used to. . . the whites, you never would see a white having dinner downtown with a black, but you would see the whites over/ⁱⁿthe black community trying to get the black vote. And you'd call one of them and tell him you wanted to talk to him, tell him "How about having... . let's have dinner at Paschals or Bee man's on Auburn Avenue." But now then, you see a change. They say, "Listen, let's meet up at the Top of the Mart, or the Commerce Club, or somewhere like that and have dinner. I'd like to talk with you." Which is a great change there. On the boards and all, the Board of Regents. Jesse Hill serves on the Board of Regents. First black that ever served on it. You have a black on the Pardon and Paroles Board here. You have a black mayor. You have a black congressman and all. This tells me that the thinking of the people and all is getting more in line with the nation, the working class of people. That they want someone to represent them and vote. I think that organized labor's the. . . the kids today are becoming more educated. The people that are educated, the higher educational people, and all, think more in line with organized labor than just the average person, because they understand organized labor more than someone that has never studied it. And I have a. . . I had

a niece that come up to me the other day and put her arm around me and she said, "We're studying labor and all in school," and she said, "And I understand it a lot more now," and she said, "And I'm for you." And, I mean, really, she had never been for organized labor, because she had. . . .

J.B.: Went to school where?

Mabry: University of Georgia, and all. So. . . and then, I go out to high schools and colleges and speak maybe two and three times a month over this state, presenting organized labor's views. And when they see. . . the kids see someone come in and all from organized labor and talk to them, they form their own opinion rather than what they have been told. And so I think it's helped a lot.

J.B.: How do you assess the ability of the blacks in the legislature? I mean, are they about average in the legislature?

Mabry: They are becoming more effective, and, of course, their effectiveness does not necessarily reflect on their ability. It's just the fact that they're so out-numbered, and you still have the rural dominated legislature over there by there's so many from the rural area. And there's nothing wrong with the rural area, because the rural areas even change in their thinking today.

J.B.: How about someone, say, like Hugh Gillis?

Mabry: Well, Hugh Gillis has always been. . . he's not with us. I mean, he does not vote organized labor and he does not support our programs and everything. But, see, this is what I was saying. LeRoy Johnson went to Soperton, and that's where Gillis is from, last year and - I was not there, I have been told - he was running this LeMar Passmore

who runs a bank over in Dexter, Georgia, was running against Gillis and had him beat. And then LeRoy Johnson. . . . Lester Maddox got LeRoy Johnson to go down and get the black vote away from Passmore and get it back over to Gillis, and that made the difference in the election. So this is what I say, if the black. . .

J.B.: Has it made any difference in Gillis' voting?

Mabry: Hell, no. I don't think it'll make no difference in his voting. He's going to still. . . because he figures that they can make deals as long as they got somebody up there that will deal with him, like Lester Maddox and LeRoy Johnson and all, and that he can do it again. It don't matter how they vote. I mean, that's not an issue. The issues in the campaigns are not as important any more as, say, personalities, a person's appearance, and all, that you can see Dr. Larry MacDonald over in Cobb County there, real young nice-looking doctor and all, and has finesse. And he goes out and campaigns and damn, he'll beat John Davis. Of course, John Davis is not a real dynamic person, but the people vote on that rather than on issues. And so it. . . the issues don't mean any more. It's a popularity contest. And the one who gets there first with the most. . . I mean, with eight people running for governor here, the issues. You go out and eight out of ten voters can't tell you what the issues are. They don't know, they're not involved. They vote on the one that they're heard his name mentioned the most.

J.B.: Is there a labor newspaper in Georgia?

Mabry: Yeah, we have the Journal of Labor, the official newspaper of the labor movement.

J.B.: It comes out how often?

Mabry: Weekly.

J.B.: What's the circulation?

Mabry: Approximately 15,000. Their office is two, three doors down on the left here on this hall. We own the paper.

W.D.V.: Anything we didn't cover?

Mabry: Well, I hope we did. I hope I was able to. . . . I have an appointment, I'm going to have to attend. . . I'm going to have to get out by 10:30. I was glad I talked to you though and glad we talked about our role in the state. I would never want to see organized labor get a hold on any state to the point where they control it, and I would never want to see management get a hold on any state to where they could control it, to hell with organized labor. I think as long as we have a balance in this country of management and the workers and. . . that we don't have any problems. But if we have an unbalance like we did in '29 to see a crash coming, we're all in trouble.

J.B.: Do you think it's in balance in Georgia now, or do you think. . .

Mabry: No. But we're working on it.

J.B.: Who. . . what would be the most influential groups in Georgia in terms of controlling state policy?

Mabry: Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Industry Association. Georgia Business and Industry Association.

J.B.: How about the banks? How far do the bankers get. . . .

Mabry: The bankers don't control that much. They're not that. . . I don't believe they're that much involved, you know. Why would a banker over there, why would he be objecting to a minimum wage? Because the more money's made, the more he can loan, and the more they're going to get back. I mean, and they don't apply to the textile and the Business and Industry. . . . They think of it in terms of keeping the wages down. And all, so. . . . You know the cost of living increase has been ten or eleven per cent a year, Occidental Petroleum reports their earnings up eight hundred and something per cent. Texaco went up and all them. And the people of this country that's surviving that's employed by the Georgia Power Company here, and all, that haven't had a rate increase. . . I mean, a raise in two years and all, they haven't had a raise in two years and in order to meet what has been taken away from them the cost of living increase up twenty per cent in two years, they'd have to have a thirty per cent increase in salary tomorrow to break even. And there's no one willing to do that, and the people, the workers

in this country. And that's why I say that they are interested. Hell, they're not going to. . . they're not going to put these kind of people back in office again. They are ready for a change. They don't care. . . . It would not make one bit of difference if the Democrats were in office now and things happening like they are the Republicans would be in. They're going to vote everybody out. That's what the people's going to do. Every day I talk to the people, and they say, "I'm against everybody that's in office." And this is the feeling of the people. I don't know how y'all find it in other places

you go, but. . . .

W.D.V.: They're pissed off.

Mabry: That's right. I mean, they are absolutely tired of it.

And I