

This is an interview with Senator Ralph Scott on December 20, 1973 in Burlington, North Carolina, conducted by Jack Bass.

Senator Scott: . . .that's all right, but you don't get them kind of offices just on your own main strength. And a lot of them feared Skipper worse than they did Holshouser. Of course, Holshouser's turned out to be about as bad as they were afraid Skipper would be.

Jack Bass: Do you think that Skipper's downfall was then, part of the fact that he didn't want to be obligated to anybody?

R.S.: No, he didn't to anybody. I mean, I was for Pat Taylor, because Pat Taylor's first cousin is chairman of the party and knew his candidate and I told Skipper all this. And the family has always supported the Scotts ever since we ever run for anything and you just can't turn your back on your own home folks, you know. Well, I don't think that Skipper ever understood that.

J.B.: What happened after the primary?

R.S.: Well, they made no effort. No effort to contact. Skipper was over here and made one of them airplane landings over here at the airport and I don't blame Skipper for this, I think it was some of his own crowd and they got him in trouble and I've seen this happen before. I think that's what happened to ^{Richardson} ~~Richard~~ Preyer when

he ran for Governor. They had this big to-do up there at the auditorium in Greensboro and hell, he had it then. If they had voted that time, he would have gotten 80 or 90% of the vote. But I think that his close supporters got so confident that they drew their circle too narrow and left too many people out. There wasn't no where to go, except to somebody else. And that's the reason they all left. They didn't think that there would be anything for them with Preyer. And so they left him, and he lost the primary and of course, other things entered into it. Preyer was a very timid sort of a fellow. He couldn't say damn or hell or nothing like that to save his soul. And I think one of the finest men I've ever known, and a good public servant. But Skipper, now what happened over here. Jim Latham in the background was handling his campaign for him in Alamance. Well, Skipper now came over and landed over here at the airport. Going to be here twenty or thirty minutes. Well, wasn't a dang soul over there. I went, because I heard it on the radio. Just went over there. And another fellow, working with the highway people, he was over there. But, other than that, it was Jim Latham's wife with a bunch of school kids they got out of some private school over here somewhere and there wasn't anybody else. Press wasn't even there. Now, you just don't win them that way. But anyway, I never could understand, and then of course, I think the main thing, I don't blame him for cussing the Administration, Bob Scott and administration. Up through the primary. I mean, that's good politics. They are always against the fellow

that's in. And his purpose was to tie him to Pat Taylor. Which Bob wasn't, he. . . I never did see no signs where his But Skipper just kept on and on and after the primary was over, he kept on cussing Bob Scott and his administration. And I saw him on T.V. when he said what he did about Ben *Poney* ~~Rony~~. They asked him if Bob Scott put him on the utilities commission. . . of course, he said that it's true he knew he wouldn't appoint in Sam Ervin's place or if there's a vacancy to the Senate, it would be Bob Scott and Ben *Poney* ~~Rony~~. Well, hell, you didn't have to say that. And I heard him say that, and the the press asked him what would he do if Bob Scott put him on the utilities commission. He says, "I'll reorganize it." Well, hell, now old Ben had a few friends. Everybody's got some friends. And hell, I don't know. It was the craziest damn doings I ever saw in my life. Didn't make no difference to me, I wasn't that wrapped up in it. Pat Taylor and I were good friends of Skipper. Cliff Cameron and Hugh Cannon, Bill White, all that crowd. They're all good friends of mine. And I wasn't that damned wrapped up in the thing, just because of this other. And I wasn't upset on him jumping on Bob until he got to the second primary. You just couldn't get friends, a lot of them just didn't give a damn whether he got it or didn't get it. And a lot of employees, especially those appointed by Bob Scott, I think a lot of them figured that they'd be just as well off with Holshouser. So, consequently, I think they voted for Skipper, but you know, there's a whole lot of difference

between saying, "I'll vote for you," and then out trying to do something about it. And I just never did understand his doing, but of course, that ain't what we're talking about today. That's past history.

J.B.: But you think that the key to that election was the failure to put the party back together?

Scott: Well, he didn't want it back together.

J.B.: How do you see the Democratic Party in North Carolina today? We had one person describe it to us as, "The North Carolina Democratic Party is like a bird that has many, many wings, all of them flapping and no head and no body."

Scott: Well, I think we've got three or four heads. Everybody's running for Governor, the way I see it.

J.B.: Well, I think a nose and wings.

Scott: Well, all that's got them a head, they've got them a pair of wings, too. Trying to get a bird together.

J.B.: Do you see anybody emerging to put the party back together?

Scott: It's hard to tell yet. You're going to be able to tell after the legislature. Jim Hunt, of course, running for Governor, Jim Ramsey's running for Governor, Gorden Allen would love to run for Governor and. . .oh, the senator over here at Durham, he wants to run. Kenneth Royall.

J.B.: Well, do you think the 1972 elections, which the Republicans won, both with the Senate and Governor's races, was a one time fluke

or does that represent a change in North Carolina politics? A realignment?

Scott: Well, I think, in the final analysis, the Democrats know that if they're going to win in the fall, they've got to be together. I see Skipper run an ad and I, probably this was his friend, you never know about these things, down in Randolph County, in the paper, that Skipper was really running as an independent. And I don't know who did that. Of course, they're all . . . But they're a lot of damn folks now that voted for Nixon that wished the hell they hadn't. Of course I think here's the trouble. You've got to, I think they're going to get them together, there's going to be somebody to bring them together. I think a fellow like Terry Sanford's got possibilities. Not on the state level, but I think that he could very well be a presidential candidate.

J.B.: Do you think he helped himself or hurt himself in the primary last year? Running against Wallace?

Scott: Well, I think what it did, he started too late. Too many people had done, they'd done lined up with Wallace and I'm one of those who don't think we ever should have had a presidential primary to start with. I think that probably did as much to divide this state as anything.

J.B.: Do you think it had some effect in the fall on the standpoint of Terry Sanford being somewhat of a symbol of the North Carolina Democratic Party running against George Wallace, that this resulted in some resentment, particularly in the eastern part?

Scott: Well, people still resent Terry Sanford. They blamed it on the taxes, but it's not the taxes, it's Dr. Lake. Well, they worshipped the ground that Dr. Lake walked on. Those people down east had the same attitude toward Dr. Lake as they had toward Kerr Scott. And they blamed it on the food tax, but that's not it. They use that as the weapon, they don't want to say. . .

J.B.: You think in effect, they just felt that Terry Sanford was too liberal on the race issue?

Scott: They use all that stuff.

J.B.: Is that the cause of his unpopularity, you think? This is something that we've found, you know. That he just doesn't have wide popularity.

Scott: No, he's not popular in North Carolina today.

J.B.: Well, ususally a man, after he's been out of office ten years, is thought of more highly than when he left.

Scott: Well, Bob Scott didn't go on up all the time. I don't know how much of, because you go down so far, there's nowhere to go but up, you know.

J.B.: Well, what was your reaction to Senator Ervin's announcement? Did you know about it in advance?

Scott: No.

J.B.: He's not the type to really tell anybody about it is he?

Scott: I don't think so. I didn't think he'd ever run.

J.B.: How do you assess him as a U.S. Senator?

Scott: Oh, he's been good. He's been good. What I was afraid of that he'd run and he'd get the nomination and then get defeated in the fall. A lot of people get to thinking about that age, you know. And although he was mentally alert and all that sort of stuff, I don't think he would have ever lived to have finished at 84. That's a long time. I think Senator Ervin did all right. Of course, I think that Senator Jordan did a good job.

J.B.: You've been in the legislature how long?

Scott: I went the first time in 1951.

J.B.: So, you've been there continuously since then?

Scott: Well, I missed two turns. We had a rotation agreement with Orange County and I was out in '57 and '59.

J.B.: Well, looking back at that whole period, 1948 to the present, which administrations of governors do you think have been the most outstanding? And why?

Scott: I think Kerr Scott and then next to him would be Terry Sanford. I think when Dan Moore came along, people wanted to rest a little. They didn't want no more progress probably, at that time.

J.B.: A lot of people have told us that the Moore administration was sort of a caretaker.

Scott: Yeah, well I think that he did exactly what they wanted. They didn't want too much done.

J.B.: How do you assess Bob Scott's administration?

Scott: Oh, I think that he did a dang good job.

J.B.: What would you list as the major achievements there?

Scott: Well, the reorganization of state government is the big thing.

J.B.: Is that bigger than the higher education reorganization?

Scott: I don't know if it's any bigger or not, but they both rank pretty high and . You've got to bear in mind that Terry Sanford and I think Dan Moore made a little stab at it, seems to me like there's somebody else in there. . .oh, Hodges. They all wanted to reorganize this higher education, you know. And Bob Scott's the only one that got it done. Terry Sanford went a right good ways and then he backed up and Hodges, he made a stab or two at it and then he forget it.

J.B.: How do you assess the long range impact of the Sanford administration?

Scott: Oh, I think it would be good. I think that historians will record him as being, accomplishing a whole lot while he was governor. Now you take when Kerr Scott was down there, he just as well have been a Republican or something, because see, he's the one that broke up the machine, as they call it.

J.B.: And he's best known for roads, of course.

Scott: Roads, electricity and telephones for all the people. Now, that's one thing. . .Kerr, I wish that I had kept a diary on him. He and I walked to church together every Sunday for two miles and I bet you that I heard about everybody in North Carolina at one time or

another. That was in politics or any of the big movements. But I never did keep no record or nothing. Never even thought about it. I wish I had. I asked Kerr one time why he wanted to run for governor. I said, "You're a layman. I can see where a lawyer would run, it gives him connections of one kind or another. And he can help his practice." But I says, "You can't get nothing out of it." He said, "I want to go to Raleigh to represent those people that don't have any lobbyists down there. That's my main reason for wanting to go. I have no objections to Duke Power and Carolina Power and Light and the telephone people making money." He said, "I've got no objections to that." You know, they just fought him like nobody's business. But he says, "They've got a franchise to serve an area and I want them to give service to those people. And I want them to serve people out in the rural areas." And he. . .well, just to give you an example, when I started Melville Dairy in 1927, we were within three miles of Duke Power line out of Mebane. Well, at that time, when money was money, we had to raise \$1700 to get that three miles of line run. And I guess that with wages like they were, we paid for putting up the line. Well, they run the line on down a little farther and we started our dairy out there in the country, of course we needed electricity. And I had big part in promoting that line. Well, that thing wasn't out there long before they had to split it, they had such a load on it. That's why I sometimes think that these big companies, they ain't no smarter than the

rest of us. They run a line down 87 down here, we had a lot of producers on that line, they put in milking machines, and those sort of things, and they run little old wires down there. And it got to where when they would turn on the milking machines, the lines at the house would go out. Or get dim, you know, you know how they do. And they had no judgement in their business management. I built a line, I started a dairy and I saw right quick I had to have a telephone line. I ran a line from out there in the country where we are into Graham. Built it myself. Didn't ask nobody about right of way, didn't have sense enough to. I didn't know you had to have or were supposed to have right of way. But no one objected to me at all going across their property with that telephone line. I got cedar poles and put up a line from my place into Graham. Built it myself. Because I needed it in the dairy business. I had just started Melville Dairy. But you couldn't get Southern Bell, damn, they should, and Duke Power should have been running those lines out there without charging us extra money. But they didn't do it. And the manager of Southern Bell here in Burlington told me one time, said Kerr Scott was the best thing that ever happened to Southern Bell. For he got them off their fanny and made them go to giving service to people that needed it. And keeping people out in the country with telephones, electricity and good roads.

J.B.: Was that REA electricity that he brought in or was it. . .

Scott: No, no.

J.B.: He got Duke out there.

Scott: Duke and Carolina had the franchises and Kerr would get things done. I mean, he wasn't afraid of none of them. Give you another example. I had a delegation from down here at New Hope, out of Chapel Hill. Came up here and I think that Kerr put them a road through there, but they wanted telephones and electricity. Well, Chapel Hill was serving all that there area. Their utility outfit there. And they couldnt get nothing done. So, they come in here and I called Kerr, he was governor then. I called Kerr about it, he says, "I'll see what I can do." And they told me that in less than five days, they come cutting this right of way, laying poles out out there. Then after Kerr died, there was a fellow working here on a milk route, came in here right in this very office and says, "I want to tell you something. I was in high school when Kerr Scott was elected governor and living out of a barn up there in one of them mountain coves. And my Daddy and a bunch of them went down to Raleigh to see Governor Scott. They didn't want no paved road, they just wanted. . . I had to walk four miles to get to the school bus. They wanted him to fix the roads so they could get nearer to the school bus. Not have to walk so far. So, they went down to see Kerr. Kerr told them to get a hold of the district engineer up there and if he didn't do anything or give them any encouragement, he says, 'Don't come back down here. You just

call me up.' He said, 'No need of making all that long trip to Raleigh to see me. You call me up and I'll see what I can do.'" Now, this was this fellow telling me all this story. I never had heard it before. He said, "They called Kerr and said the district engineer said they just couldn't do it. Couldn't get to it. " He said it wasn't a week until they commenced unloading some of the damndest tractors they'd ever seen in that country, up in there. And they cut a road up in there and widened it so that they could get over it, and graveled it. And he said, "I just wanted you to know that." He said he had been working for me, I didn't even know where he was from. Then, I had stories like that one right after the other. People tell me things. They felt like they had a governor that they could go see and sit down and talk to. And they did. Kerr, of course, was Commissioner of Agriculture for a number of years. When he went in as Commissioner of Agriculture, you could grind up rice hulls and make the prettiest corn meal, yellow meal, you ever saw. Of course, they'd mix it with corn meal. But like he said, said the grain people broke many a farmer in the poultry business by giving them sorry feed. They'd put on the bag what they had on it, in there but it wouldn't be there. So, he went to work and got some laws passed to have this inspection and testing of feed. I think they already had the law, but there wasn't any enforcement. And he went into that thing and got that straightened out and the next biggest racket was fertilizer. These farmers bought many a bag of

sand, little stuff in it, not much. But he got that straightened out. And of course, all those folks, they were against him. Like nobody's business, but the farmers weren't against him, they knew what he had done. And now, he had a secretary, Miss Fleming, that was with him while he was Commissioner of Agriculture. And when he went in as governor, she went on with him. And she knew all these people. And if they came up there to see the governor, if he was fixed so he couldn't see them in his office right then, he went out of his office and saw them right there. He wouldn't keep them waiting and all that sort of stuff. To me, the people felt like they had a governor.

J.B.: In a way, he was something out of the Populist tradition, wasn't he?

Scott: Yeah.

J.B.: Do you see someone putting together a Populist coalition in North Carolina now?

Scott: No.

J.B.: Why?

Scott: I think the Democratic Party's going to change. That's the fight. That's the reason you see. . .

J.B.: Well, where do you see it changing?

Scott: Well, it's just like some of these folks say, "The Democratic Party has left me." The trouble is that they had left the people. The Democratic Party ain't left nobody, they just trying to keep up

with what the people wanted and their needs. And of course, now, if you read what was done to McGovern and all, why, all that group that they call "hippies" and what not, and they not no fools, now. I know that much about them. This college crowd, even high school folks, you not fooling them like once did. You couldn't tell them anything. That's the reason they got all strung out and a lot of people didn't understand them. But I'm very much for them. I just think they are beginning to take over the Democratic Party. And of course, McGovern's crowd, they left a bad impression on things, of course the first thing is that he should have kept Eagleton on. But I told somebody that if all them had taken sight after _____ had voted for him and all them that needed him had voted for him, hell, he'd have ^{won} ~~one~~ ^{won} anyhow. But if I had gone that far with him, I'd have never deserted him. I think that's where a lot of people lost a little confidence in McGovern. Then plus other things going and all which went on. You know as much about it as I do. But, even so, I was a McGovern man. The paper said so. I didn't ask them, I didn't want it done, but they put a four column spread in there that I, in the Greensboro paper, that I endorsed McGovern. Well, I did, and of course it turns out now that I was right. But right then, a lot of them were scared to death to open their mouths about these things. But why would a man working on hourly wages vote a Republican ticket? Ain't no reason in the world why he should. For everything's been done for the people by the Democratic Party. Social

Security. You talk to a twenty-five year old person, even today. "I'll save my own money." They don't like Social Security. And especially in the early days of it, "I'll save my own money." I had a brother-in-law that said the same thing, and when he died, he didn't have a damn thing except Social Security. And Medicare, Medicaid. Look how those doctors fought all those things. Everything that's been done for the people has been done by the Democratic Party. And where would folks be at today if they didn't have Social Security? Those class of people? Of course, it's not enough money and all that. They keep raising it a little, but it's a whole lot more than nothing. And there's where a lot of them would have been.

J.B.: When V.O. Key wrote a book on southern politics back in 1948, he talked about North Carolina being more progressive than the other states. Being better in race relations, providing better government services and so forth. Yet, since that time, per capita income and other sort of statistical indices of progress, there hasn't been any relative change. And since that time, you've had, race has come up and we've been told is a decisive factor in a number of political races. Frank Porter Graham's race, two congressmen who failed to sign the Southern Manifesto, Richardson Preyer's race, Jesse Helms' race, George Wallace in the primary. Was Key wrong about North Carolina or has the state changed in that time?

Scott: He was right. When Kerr Scott ran for governor, if they could

tie you to labor, that was the kiss of death. And they made every effort in the world to tie him to labor. But I never will forget Fink. I knew him, he was in there before Miller and Barbee. I'd see him walking up and down the street. He was seeing people that he could talk to. He knew who he could talk to. And on behalf of Kerr Scott, for governor.

J.B.: This was a labor man?

Scott: Yeah. He was AFL at that time.

J.B.: I talked to Wilbur Hobby last night and asked him about that question and he said that he agreed with one of the pollsters which said that if you had a weak candidate which labor endorsed, it was the kiss of death, but if you had a fellow that was strong and had a broad base, labor's endorsement was a help.

Scott: It's more of a help now than it was then. But if it's between labor and the other, chances are ten to one that you'll lose. You

J.B.: You think it's now an asset? In a statelaw race?

Scott: I'll say this. You don't want them against you. But if they want to help you the most, they'll work with their own crowd and handle it like Fink did. That's they way to be the most effective. No, they are an asset, there's no doubt about that.

J.B.: What's been the change in the role of blacks in politics in North Carolina since 1948?

Scott: Well, it's getting to where you don't want them against you either, if you can help it. Of course, now, I've been for fair

treatment for everybody. I don't. . .that's the big thing against us right now on busing. We getting awfully concerned about busing now. Children. . .sending them way off somewhere. But blacks in Alamance County had to come from Liberty to Graham and pass school after school that could have took them. But nobody said nothing about it then. I mean, after all, people ain't dumb, and this young crowd ain't dumb. I mean, they know that. And that's the reason that a lot of them go against their parents in their thinking. Now, even old Wallace is changing his attitude towards the blacks, you know. If you get anywhere nationally, you can't have all that crowd against you. Of course, Illinois and them up there, there having all that trouble, because it's just now coming to them. But I think he was right, North Carolina was a progressive state and still is. And that's where we have these technical institutes. . .we got the trained machinists and we've got to train these high paying jobs to get these industries in here. They just can't come and put a plant out here and nobody to work in them that's qualified.

J.B.: Has the attitude changed in state government toward attracting high wage industry and also high wage industry that might bring in unions?

Scott: I think it's changing some, but that kind of progress comes awful slow.

J.B.: Is there just a lot of opposition from the industrial base in North Carolina, which is basically low wage, textiles, furniture.

Scott: Yeah, well, you take present industry, they want a surplus of labor. They like things like they are right now, and where was it, down in Smithfield or some place, they told them they didn't want them down in there. They wanted to take care of the ones they had. I don't think they ought to take that attitude. I think what labor needs is to have the cards stacked on their side, for awhile. Which will help wages and everything else. We need to train machinists and those type people. See, those kind of folks we've had is doing good, in the past they've gone to Detroit. Where they could use those kind of talents. But if we get enough of them trained here, we'll begin to get these industries, for our people still, I think consciously want to give a day's work for a day's pay.

J.B.: What do you politically think is going to happen in ^{the} East. That's an area North Carolina has always had as Democratic, very strongly Democratic. And voted heavily for Wallace in 1968 and then voted heavily Republican in 1972. Has there been a real shift there to the Republican Party?

Scott: I don't think so, I think they got scared of McGovern, afraid that he had gone too far. North Carolina, you got to sort of be a middle of the road man and your progress has to be made a little slower than some people like it to be made. And that's what they've done up 'til, well, they've done it really up 'till this last election. I mean, the voting indicated they wanted progress. Yes, they came

around and voted for this school bond issue and all.

J.B.: How do you assess the Holshouser administration?

Scott: The trouble with Governor Holshouser is, that he himself is a mighty fine man and I think has plenty of ability. But he's got nothing to draw from to get people in important jobs. He just doesn't have the material. And then, too, you get a lot of good Republicans that are doing well, they ain't going to go down there with the thing as uncertain as it is. Of course, I'm afraid that the danger of what we've already done is that a lot of good people are not going to make a career in government jobs because the Holshouser administration is about the first one that has gone down in the lower levels and firing people that consider themselves career employees. And that's reason I think the morale is so bad. And the prison department is a good example of it. Lee Bounds, got rid of him and then his next man went to Massachussets and this fellow Jones, I don't think he knows what he's doing. In fact, it seems to me that they shifted from trying to rehabilitate these people to punishing them on the old punishing theory, you know. Instead of trying to return them back into society.

J.B.: Do you think the legislative election of next fall is going to be some sort of anreferendum on Holshouser's administration.

Scott: I'm not so sure of that. I think it's going to make a lot of people realize just how near we came to real disaster with the Nixon administration.

J.B.: Do you think that Democrats are going to gain seats in the

legislature next year.

Scott: I think they will. Of course, when you get down to individual patterns and things, it gets back to the individual man then and how hard he works and whether people like him or don't like him. I don't care how smart he is, if they don't like him, they'll vote him out. And I think a lot of people, I think North Carolina is really controlled politically by the independents. Just like here in Alamance County, I had one fellow supporting me very strongly and he was strong for Jesse Helms. And I asked him one day, I said, "I can't see how you can support us both. For we don't think alike a bit more than nothing." And the answer he gave me was "Anytime there's a lawyer running and a non-lawyer running, I'm going to vote for the non-lawyer, I don't care who he is." And I sort of, I reckon that's what he was doing, I don't know, but he. . . I don't know what he's got against the lawyers, but. . .

J.B.: It must be something.

Scott: But that's the way he felt about it. Then, I don't. . . like I told Jesse one time. I told Jesse, I said, "A fellow asked me about you one time and I told him that if you wasn't for nothing and nobody, then Jesse Helms's your man." My wife chewed me out. I told him that up there in the airport at Washington. Chewed me out for making such a statement as that to him.

J.B.: How did he respond to that?

Scott: Oh well, he took it pretty good. He and I, we know each other

right well. And I didn't ^{have} nothing to worry about with him. He'd never vote for me for nothing, nowhere.

J.B.: What's been the effect of reapportionment in North Carolina?

Scott: Well, I thought that Washington was going to take a lot of the power away from the east, but I don't know whether they have or not.

Like, I appeared before this panel, you know, about East Carolina Medical School? And they thought that if they had another school that politically, of course, they're highest second in terms of politics, I guess. . .it ought to be at Charlotte. That's where the people was and this and that and the other. I said, "Well, that may be true." But I says, "East Carolina, they want a medical school. And the Charlotte delegation, they want liquor by the drink and they'll trade their souls for a vote for liquor by the drink." I said, "East Carolina ain't going to trade off. They'll trade off in favor of helping that school out down there."

J.B.: How do you explain the power of the east in the legislature? They have a lot of seats, right?

Scott: They leave them down there. As long as they want to run, they'll send them. Up here, now of course, I've served right good time, but before me, men wouldn't get over two terms down there before they'd vote him out.

J.B.: We've had some people tell us that the small towns and more rural areas send better quality people than the urban areas. . .to the legislature.

Scott: Well, I . . .

J.B.: Did you have more first rate people coming out of the less populated areas?

Scott: I think that's true and then. . .

J.B.: Why?

Scott: And then, they're a little more conservative. Well, you have somebody coming down there, that all he's interested in is maybe the labor movement, if he gets elected by that group. And I don't think that your better people in the Piedmont area of North Carolina run for office.

J.B.: Why not?

Scott: Because it ain't worth it. If I'd have had any sense, I'd have never run. I don't know why I run to start with. Except I did, I got interested in it while Kerr Scott was governor and I just saw an opportunity to do something for people.

J.B.: Henry ^{Hall} ~~Earl~~ Wilson told us that it was more that people ran out of noblesse oblige, that people felt an obligation to run. The community sort of pushed them to run, in the smaller towns and the rural areas.

Scott: Well, the first time I ran, I ran for County Commissioner up here. I had never give it a thought. And I did have somebody come see me, people I respected, wanted me to run. And, then I served as County Commissioner for several terms. And you get interested in it. Ofcourse, our family's been interested in politics back since my Daddy's days. We always been interested in it, but I never had give

any thought to running for office. Then, you get into it and I think that politics is just like bridge, or golf or any of those things. It's just in your blood and you like it.

J.B.: We've had some people tell us that they consider the Bob Scott administration a caretaker administration. How do you respond to that?

Scott: a caretaker administration. You don't know what a fight that reorganization of higher education and reorganization itself was.

J.B.: How about the tobacco tax? How big a fight was that?

Scott: Well, it was big enough to where he had to compromise on it and the tobacco folks wanted a tax on the soft drink people and they finally agreed to go along with the soft drink. To get any tax is rough, you know. And of course, the tobacco farmers, they just couldn't stand the thought of North Carolina having a tobacco tax. But they'll admit now that it wasn't all that bad. Of course, what I've never understood about this. . (end of side 1 of tape. Interruption follows)

Side 2

Scott: . . .liquor does a lot more harm than cigarettes does. I don't care what they say. Liquor put more people on welfare than any one thing, in my opinion. Of course, I don't know anything about it, but certainly, liquor is harmful.

J.B.: We've also had people tell us, a fair number of people, criticize both the Bob Scott administration and the Holshouser administration

as having weak staffs.

Scott: I wouldn't think so. Of course, I thought that Bob Scott was a little hard to get to see and I said something to him about it one time and he said, "Well, I don't know how in the world my Daddy saw all the folks he saw." And as you remember, Clyde ^{Hoey} ~~Hoey~~, he'd walk down to the drug store every morning for a Coca-Cola and every afternoon for a Coca-Cola.

J.B.: Hasn't government grown a great deal in that time, and isn't that a reason?

Scott: Oh yes, it's grown a tremendous amount and then people are more interested and there are more problems now. And I never thought of Bob Scott's as anything like a caretaker's administration. Of course, I told that there wasn't nothing wrong with Bob except he had a dose of his Daddy and his mother in him and he didn't care nothing about, I'd say the social end of state government. You know, that's what Raleigh bases it all on. Having country club parties and dinners and dinners at the mansion and dancing and all that damn shit. When Kerr Scott was elected, they didn't expect nothing like that. All that class of people was against him to start with. Bob Scott had some crowd over there and somebody had a book of matches in there with "Burn Scott" or something of the kind. Well, what in the hell, that's the reason he didn't have no more of them. That group wasn't for Bob Scott.

J.B.: You said that unlike Terry Sanford, who went out of office

basically unpopular, is that right, and has never regained that popularity?

Scott: Not all of it, he's got a lot of it back but there's a lot of people that think a lot of Terry Sanford. Don't you underestimate him now, he's got quite a following.

J.B.: I realize that, but I'm saying that he still couldn't win in that primary in his home state. Of course, there were some extenuating circumstances.

Scott: Well, I think that there's a whole lot of things entered into that.

J.B.: Mrs. Chisholm being in the race probably was one.

Scott: Well, I don't think it was as much that as it was still the Dr. Lake people and supporting Dr. Lake and anything about Terry Sanford, they didn't like.

J.B.: You said you thought that Bob Scott's popularity was going back up.

Scott: Well, I go by what a fellow down east told me. When that soft drink tax went on, this fellow, he had a picture or two of Bob Scott, I think he mailed them back to him and all that sort of stuff, you know. He was a soft drink bottler at Mumford, you know, and there was a lot of other things he was he was interested in down there. He told this fellow that liked Bob, he told him one day, "You know that son-of-a-bitch is getting more popular every day." Not with him, evidently.

J.B.: Do you have any explanation why?

Scott: Well, people, you know when you begin to get away from something, you begin to get rational in your thinking. And then too, they begin sort of comparing him with Holshouser, I think. I think in that sense, I think Governor Scott had a much better organization than Holshouser has. And people compare.

J.B.: You mean his staff?

Scott: Yeah. Now, a lot of folks talk about Ben Rony . Only thing that was wrong with Ben Rony was he drank a little liquor. And that's bad in anybody in that position. But politically, Ben Rony was. . .well, Kerr Scott told me one time, said, "Ben Rony is the smartest man politically that I've ever dealt with. He can sense what the people are thinking and doing and saying." But Bob Scott, is sort of one of these fellows, he and some of them in there, you know how there's an old saying that goes . He didn't like none of that kind of stuff and if he sensed that, he didn't mind telling a fellow, so that wasn't smart either. He'd do things like that. But, no. . .we got a lot of roads built in North Carolina. Of course, I notice that Holshouser says that they're spending more money for secondary roads than there was spent by any Democratic administration. I don't know where they're spending it, they ain't spending it up here. I told him that he took politics out of Alamance County, but he wasn't doing nothing. Of course, I'm sure he's going to build some up here. I know he will.

J.B.: What's he done that's caused him the most political problems in your opinion? Holshouser?

Scott: Some of them people that he's surrounded himself with. Then of course. . .

J.B.: Gene Anderson create problems in the legislature for him?

Scott: I never did see Gene. Gene is smart politically, you don't ever hear nothing out of him. And I never did see him either, but he dealt with his own crowd and I think that he dealt with a rough hand and that's what some of them didn't like. Of course, that Rouse and Bennett fight. That didn't help the Republicans any.

J.B.: Do you think that's going to really hurt them in the east?

Scott: Yes sir. Ain't no doubt about it. Sure it'll hurt them. It may be the reason they get disillusioned with them, you see, and . . .

J.B.: Do you think that Holshouser's coming across with an image that's too liberal for the Republicans in the east, or least the people that voted Republican in the east?

Scott: Well, I think that he's too liberal for a whole lot of Republicans in their thinking. Of course, now, you've got to bear in mind when Bob Scott was advocating these taxes, Holshouser made a trip all over the state, making speeches against them. "They're unnecessary," and everything. But he changed that attitude when he got in there as governor. And he's changed it now.

J.B.: You mean in opposing any repeal.

Scott: Yeah. Well, I think that he was wrong back then and he's right

now. But he had to get in there. You know, when you, when it gets to where you say yes or no, that's a different story.

J.B.: Let me ask you this. . .in 1976, do you think there's going to be a big field in the primary, the Democratic primary for governor?

Scott: I hope not. See, we've got a state treasurer job that's going to come open sooner or later and we have a Secretary of State, that'll come open and State Auditor. I don't think he's running next time.

There are several positions ready for young people and I think a lot of them should get together and they can wait through some of these things. Of course, I know that a lot of them feel that now's the time and if you don't do it now, you'll never get it. We may have a good field, we do have a lot of potential candidates, I'll say that. I mean people that are qualified.

J.B.: Do you think Skipper Bowles has a political future?

Scott: No. I sure don't.

J.B.: Because he alienated too many people?

Scott: He alienated too many people and they all figure he could have been governor if he had played it right. And that's to have took some of these people into confidence and worked with them. But I'll say this for Skipper. I think a lot of his harm was done by his kind of managers, just like I mentioned about out here. He didn't want nobody in there, except his crowd. And he wanted to be the only one that Skipper would go to for appointments and all that kind of stuff. Well, now, I think that that day is gone. I think that when you get in there

and get the nomination, then you've got to treat your opposition in the primary fairly and take. . .just go back. When Bill Umstead was running for governor, all he'd of had to done was to told Kerr, "Now if you've got some folks that you want me to particularly take care of, if I get in there, well, I'll be glad to do it." And he would have had no opposition. But they wouldn't let him, some of his backers, LeRoy Martin and some of that crowd, and Griffin, they wouldn't let Bill Umstead talk to Kerr. Just shut him every chance he had. That was the instructions he had. And he did it and then he ended up with Hubert Olive running against him and if Hubert Olive would have had two more weeks, he would have defeated him.

J.B.C.: How did you feel when you first heard about this "dark meat, white meat" speech?

Scott: Well, I just thought it was as crazy as hell. I mean, that was another example. Skipper just did so many things like that. See, he virtually told them fellows that they'd be outside looking in. And you just don't do that. You've got to give them hope, whether you take them in or not. He did a lot of deciding of things that he should of decided after he had the election. Then, like I say, from now on I think that's demonstrated that whoever wins the nomination of the Democratic party has got to work with those that they defeated in the primary and they've got to take them into the primary and work with them. And if they're loyal people, in the fall election, then, they're all right too.

J.B.: Senator Scott, when you have some people discuss that Kerr Scott running and feeding to the Branchhead boys and you're probably as good a person as I could ask. What are the Branch Head boys? When he was talking about the Branch Head boys, who was he referring to?

Scott: He was talking about what I would call those on the bottom half of the totem pole. That the Republicans have never done nothing for them. I remember and I never will forget. One instance, I was over there, I used to go over there on Sunday afternoon, old folks used to come over there to see Kerr in the afternoon and sit under that old oak tree and talk to him and fairly good friends; a dairy farmer, he was over there and Kerr was telling him what a hard time they was having with the legislature to get anything done. They was just all fighting him. And he said to Kerr, said, "Kerr, just as sure as there is a God in Heaven, and there are one, politics is hell, ain't it?" And that was just his feeling about it. I know another time, I'll have to tell you this one. Kerr couldn't get any money and I ain't ever got over this election yet, I spent so much and my brother Dr. Scott, he and I did a lot of financing for him. But in the second primary, ~~Capers~~ Capus Waynick called me up and said, "I want you and Dr. Scott to guarantee me ten thousand dollars in case Kerr loses." Said, "I think he's going to win, but I need money. I need that guarantee." Well, I had just done drained myself dry, I told him I'd see what I

could do and call him back. And I called up Dr. Scott, my brother, and told him what they wanted. He said, "I done put all the money I'm going to put in that thing, I'm not going to put any more in it." And it went an and I talked it tall and told him that. I think *Cameron* Morrison beat Gardner that time by 99 votes, in a state wide election. I named one or two others that I happened to know about at that time. I said, " if you wake up here, Sunday morning and Kerr loses because we didn't dose this, you'd never get over it, and I wouldn't either." He studied a minute and said, "Well, go ahead." So, we went ahead and called him back. Now, I told that I didn't have no more money, I done spent all I had and everything else. But he knew that Kerr and I walked to church together every Sunday morning and he called me up Sunday morning and says, "You tell Kerr I'm a damn sight glader that he won than he is." And that's the only time I ever heard him use the word "damn" or anything else like that.

J.B.: Who was the man who called you up originally to ask for the guarantee?

Scott: Capus Waynick. He was his campaign manager.

J.B.: But you don't see anybody, you know, some people talk about the south, the possibility of putting together a coalition of blacks, organized labor and blue collar workers, more or less liberal community into a winning coalition. Which Henry Howell was trying to do in Virginia. You don't see this in North Carolina?

Scott: No, i think that they are going to go back to the Democratic Party. I think they are going to do it in the Democratic Party.

J.B.: Well, you think the Democratic Party is going in that direction? That's going to be the future of the Democratic Party?

Scott: I think it always has been of these minorities of one kind or another.

J.B.: Do you see anybody bringing these people back into the Democratic Party.? Do you see the Wallace vote joining with the black vote behind a Democratic candidate?

Scott: I think for self preservation they're going to have to. I don't think the Republican Party will ever do it.

J.B.: Do you see anybody in the Party that can pull it together?

Scott: Not off hand, but we've got all kinds of leadership in there.

J.B.: Can Morgan do it?

Scott: Morgan could do it. I think Morgan can come about as near doing it as anybody else.

(interruption in the tape)

[Morgan had said before the 1960 campaign that he would support]
Scott: . . ^ . Terry Sanford for governor, unless Dr. Lake runs. If

Dr. Lake runs, I'll have to be for him." Said, "He's done a lot for me." And of course, Dr. Lake did run, and Robert Morgan ended up handling his campaign.

J.B.: Well, we've heard from several people that his, Morgan's affiliation with Lake on a close personal relationship, more than

philosophical. They say that's what it was. Was that your opinion at that time?

Scott: Oh yeah, let's go back a minute. Kerr Scott depended on Dr. Lake to help him handle the utilities crowd. Dr. Lake was a liberal, he was for Dr. Graham.

J.B.: Now that, I didn't know.

Scott: Well, he was. I mean, you check it out, I'm pretty sure I'm right on it. But he got in with that crowd of just anti-black or something, I don't know what it was, and it was a popular horse to ride at that time. And he came damn near making it.

J.B.: Senator, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about that we didn't discuss?

Scott: I don't know. Lord have mercy.

J.B.: Any more insights into twenty-five years. It's hard to cover twenty-five years in one hour.

Scott: Well, I don't think I can sell my papers to anybody. I don't write many letters either. I do mostly telephoning. But I'll say, right now, just between us, I think Kenneth Royall, Jim Ramsey, and Gordon Allen, their main objective right now is to see that Jim Hunt doesn't get the nomination, in my opinion.

J.B.: How do you assess Hunt?

Scott: Why, I think he's tops.

J.B.: Do you think he's the front runner?

Scott: Oh he's the front runner, right now. Of course, like I say,

Rich Preyer was the front runner in January before the primary in May.

(interruption on the tape)

Scott: . . .just a song that happened to come out at the time. Well, they took that thing and capitalized on it. I was on the bus, the legislature went up to Western North Carolina and I was on the bus, my wife and I, and sitting right in front of us was Dan Moore and his wife. Legislators on it. I told her at that time that I'd bet anybody this dairy, or anything here that Dan Moore would never be governor of North Carolina. I think his wife was drinking and he wasn't saying nothing. Then, a fellow of Watts Hill's band that flew Dan Moore around everywhere, the pilot told me that he carried Dan Moore down, I think it was east Carolina somewhere, to a big meeting they was having, political rally or something, I don't know. Anyway, they had all the political folks down there. He said that old Dan Moore would go around and shake hands with people, you know. He did know how to do that. And he said that Rich Preyer was sort of standing back, timid, was very, said, "I told myself right then that Dan Moore was going to beat him." And he did.

(interruption on the tape)

Scott: . . .told Kerr one time, says, "Kerr, everybody's against you except me." And then he told him another time, or told somebody, the thing about Kerr Scott, he's got one or two friends in every precinct in North Carolina and that they believed in him and would

swear by him. This fellow down here in Laurinburg, when Kerr died, he had a little money in a little old store down there, when Kerr died, why he locked the door and went home and put up a wreath. And a fellow told me about another case. . .

J.B.: Has there been anybody like that since?

Scott: No. When Kerr, they announced his death, ^a wife heard it on the radio and she went out to the field where her husband was plowing and told him about it and said he just brought his tractor on back to the house and quit. When folks do something like that, that's a little more than a fare-thee-well acquaintanceship, as you call it.

(interruption on the tape)

Scott: I know, I was going up Valley up here, some kind of school. He'd always go ahead of me, start early enough, because there was two or three places he wanted to stop before he got there. Well, he got up here at Kernsville and he went around to somebody's house there and that old number one was as long as his house was wide. And visited with old folks for a little while. Then, he told me about this. He said that when he was running for governor, up there at Mt. Airy somewhere, he had a friend up there, he and his wife ran a cafe, and I think they lived upstairs over the cafe or something. Anyway, he spent the night a time or two with them when he was Commissioner of Agriculture and then when he was running for governor, he spent the night with them up there. And that fellow, when he got to be governor,

he went up there and spent the night with him then. He parked that old number one there somewhere, wherever it was. And he said, the next morning, he took the car around to the back of the restaurant there and he said the fellow had tears in his eyes and says, "Kerr," says, "I've helped many a man running for office and get to be governor. But when they come back up here they go up there to old Judge's house somewhere up there and spend the night with him. I just wanted you to know that me and my wife, we appreciate you coming back." And then another time, he was over here at Davidson College, you know, they didn't have cafeterias at that time. They had just boarding houses. I mean, eating places. Well, some old fellow up there was running him, and his wife ran one of them places and they had a big dinner fixed for him somewhere, the big wheels. And he said no, he was going over here to eat with him, he and his wife run that place. And don't you think that that didn't impress them students. Politically, that was a smart thing to do. That other crowd, why they are either for you or strong against you. Chances are ten to one that they'd be against him anyway. But he went on over there, he didn't give a damn whether they liked it or not.

J.B.: There was one other question I wanted to ask you and I almost forgot about it. That is, who are the most influential lobbyists in North Carolina?

Scott: I don't know. Of course, when Kerr went down there, they all

ganged up on him.

J.B.: I mean now.

Scott: Well, now, of course, each one looks after his own doings. But I would say Lexy with Duke Power. Now, Lexy does a lot of ground work before he ever goes, before the legislature ever meets. I bet that he's done visited with every one of them that'll be down there. And then you'll see him. He just sits around down there, talks to them. It's low pressure with him.

J.B.: Who after him?

Scott: Of course, I thought this fellow, what's his name, Ralph Timber with the , Association or something, School. He did the best job when I was down there, to get them on twelve months or something. Got that thing through, did it himself. He's pretty well stayed down there. Of course, the beer people are all around there, never had too much to do with them.

J.B.: How about the banks?

Scott: Oh, the banks. I can tell you, they're one of the strongest lobbies down there.

J.B.: How about textiles? Do they have a strong lobby?

Scott: No, you never hear much out of them. The banks. . .

J.B.: Is insurance strong?

Scott: They evidently do a lot, for it's hard to get any changes in insurance laws in there.

(end of interview)