

This is an interview with Robert Shaw, chairman of the Republican Party of Georgia, conducted in Atlanta on April 24, 1974 by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries. Transcribed by Sarah Geer.

Jack Bass: Mr. Shaw, how did you get involved in the Republican party?

Robert Shaw: How did I?

J.B.: Right.

Shaw: When I went into the life insurance business in the middle of 1955, I became keenly aware of government involvement in people's lives and businesses. And the more than I noticed that government was involved, the more I became interested and the more I felt that somebody should be doing something about it. And I became interested from that aspect. And then I decided that I wanted to get involved. The reason that I got started with the Republican party was that I felt that of the two parties that they followed my philosophy more in that they gave more attention to the individual himself. And my basic philosophy is that every person should do everything within his power to do as much for himself as he possibly can. And that government's place is to remove the roadblocks from a man's path that will keep him from going as far as his own initiative will take him. I feel that the individual should always be given consideration and I can't buy a philosophy that says, "Well, this is good for the group, therefore it's got to be good for you." I don't believe that. I don't believe that's

the way this country was made. And to me the Democrats seem to be the group that was following this group philosophy, and so for that reason I wanted to become involved in the party. And in 1960, when Nixon was running, I tried to get into the organized Republican party. But there didn't seem to be one that was that large in this county. And I kept going to every place that I could find that had a Republican storefront operation, and I'd tell them that I wanted to be a Republican and they'd give me books and bumper stickers and literature and say they'd call me. So I ended up with a house full of literature and bumper stickers, but nobody called. So I started just on my own organizing my precinct and trying to get the vote out there for Nixon. And was successful in doing it. And then in '61 one of the fellows that was on the city council, one of the first Republicans on the city council, Rodney Cook, was talking with me and he invited me to some of the meetings and I got active in the party at that time.

J.B.: How has the party changed since that time? Since 1960?

Shaw: At that time, it was a very small group of people. It had been. . . I would say in the metropolitan area you had most of your strength and most of your money. It was controlled, I would say, by the upper class. The money people. And up until that time the blacks had been in the Republican party also. I guess this was about the time when you could hold a convention and put everybody in a telephone booth. Since that time, I'd say that when the Goldwater movement came along in '64 we saw a massive re-organization, or say a massive organization, over the state. It was put together by the Goldwater forces in Georgia, and they organized so well that when they took the convention in '64 we begun to find

grass roots organizations all over the state. And from that movement we've been able to grow because we had contacts that we'd never had before. Now, many people who got involved in that particular movement were not dyed in the wool Republicans. They didn't necessarily stay with the Republican party. So our growth has been rather swift, but yet it has not been such that we are full grown enough to be able to win a statewide election. Where we had so few representatives in the state legislature that you could count them on one hand, in '64 we elected a good number. Since that time we've continued to add to it. In '72, for instance, we won 115 new county seats that we had not controlled before. We got 8 out of 56 senators, 29 out of 180 representatives. But we have made great inroads. For instance, in DeKalb County, which is over in Decatur and considered part of metropolitan Atlanta, we have practically all elected Republicans. We got some counties in north Georgia where this is true. We've made great inroads in the Savannah area. They elected either nine or twelve new people on the county level there in '72. We've got one south Georgia county where we never had any real Republicans before. And there was a special election there for county commissioner, and he's the only one. He's the county government. And we won there. In another south Georgia county, they have three county commissioners. We'd never had an elected official elected there. In '72, we elected one Republican. We've made a . . . since I've been chairman, we've made a concerted effort to start at the bottom as opposed to going to the top. And this has been one of the problems with the party in the early days. They were always trying to get a top candidate, hopeful

that he would attract the candidates at the lower level. But it's been my contention that if you build from the bottom up, then the top will take care of itself. So we put real emphasis on recruiting candidates at the grass roots level, and Georgia has 159 counties. We have never carried a statewide race, because, just for example in '72 when Fletcher Thompson was running for U.S. Senate, Fletcher got 46 per cent of the vote, and he carried only 27 counties. We feel that we've got to be able to carry 50 counties in order to win a statewide race. Now, the Democrats in the past, when this was a one-party state, played courthouse politics. One faction would go into the courthouse crowd, sell them on the idea of giving support to this particular candidate in return for these favors if they were elected. And the courthouse crowd would make sure that the votes turned out for that particular man. Well, they do that with us now. And we find that in so many instances, the courthouse crowd itself will control what goes on in that county. And if we don't have any real input, we got no way of fighting back. Just an example, in 1970 our gubernatorial candidate was Hal Suit. Hal was born up north, Ohio, I guess, and they lived there until he was eleven years of age. And then they moved to north Georgia. And he was actually raised in north Georgia. Well, when the race between he and Carter came up in the general election, we'd find that the courthouse crowd would be putting the word out in south Georgia, "You don't want to have no Yankee to be your governor, do you?" Well, this guy's from up north." On the other hand, if we'd have had some type of an organization going in those counties, if we'd known what they were saying, then we could have

come back and countered it with the fact that Hal's mother was a Church of God preacher. That would've offset a lot of what the courthouse crowd was doing. But the more we can penetrate each of the courthouses in the 159 counties, the better chance we have of holding our own and building a substantial organization so that we can carry the 50 counties that we feel that we need. Since we usually do our most vote getting in the urban areas.

W.D.V.: When did you start this building from the bottom process? Because didn't ^{Be} ~~Ben~~ Callaway in '66 follow the thesis that if you won the top, it would help you all the way down?

Shaw: Possibly. I became the first vice-chairman of the party in '70, and became involved in the candidate recruitment at that time. I became the state chairman in March of '71. So I had started some of that in '70. But then when the '72 elections came on, I made it the number one project.

W.D.V.: Was candidate recruitment getting easier or more difficult?

Shaw: It's really no more difficult now than ever before. You just have to. . . you just have to find a fellow that's willing to sacrifice to be the candidate. We don't have enough people who are willing to sacrifice their own business lives and social lives, to actually run for office. Then, in some of the counties, where we're trying to grow, it's difficult to convince a man that if he runs as a Republican he could really win. Now, where we have been. . . . Where we have made some inroads, in the Fulton County area, and DeKalb County and and Gilmer County, over in Muskogee County and Chatham County, Richmond County, Bibb County, places like this we have no problem

getting candidates, because they see others around them winning, and they realize they too could win. The most difficult place, of course, to do candidate recruitment is out in those areas where we're trying to target and trying to convince an individual that with our help that he can be elected. The. . . so many of them feel that they don't have any real strength, they don't have the local know-how. And we're trying to convince them that if they are willing to put out the effort that through the state party we can furnish them the training for themselves and their staffs, and give them the help that they need to win. And, of course, money always enters into it. Some individuals that you talk to about running for office think that it costs a fortune, 'cause right off of the top of his head he feels like he's got to be on TV and newspaper and all of these expensive forms of advertising, which actually is wasted, because usually he's running from a small district, maybe, for the house of representatives, and the people he's hitting are, many times, the people in other districts that won't even have an opportunity to vote for him. And when we show him how logical it is to use his money and his people and just contacting the people in the district from which he's running, then he sees that it's not as costly a matter as he thought it was.

J.B.: What kind of services does the state headquarters, the state party, provide the candidates?

Shaw: First of all, we give no financial support at all. We just don't have that kind of money. We try to build a good file on statistics. We try to know the number of registered voters, the make-up of the people in the county by blacks, whites, other groups, the income, how they turn out to vote, who they supported in the past, the history for

a long period of time, the industries that are there, the issue that may have been. . . that may have involved that group over several years, what primarily they may be interested in as a candidate. We try to furnish them with the names of everybody that's ever been a Republican, not only just the present party elected officials, but anyone who's ever run for office before, who has ever voted in our primary, given money to us, and so forth. Then we run schools, not only for party people, but we run them for the candidates and their own workers. We try to assist them in any way we can with ways of raising money. Any type of support we can give, that's what we try to do, is be a support arm from the state headquarters.

J.B.: What percentage of the party expenses just to run the state headquarters comes from the state? As I understand it, in Georgia the party gets a percentage of filing fees.

Shaw: When a person qualifies to run for the U. S. Senate, for Congress, for governor or any statewide office, for the Georgia house and the Georgia senate, he qualifies with the state party. The legislature determines the fees that will be charged for qualification, and when the qualification has ended, we turn over the certified papers on each individual that is qualified, and we turn over 75 per cent of the qualification fee. The party keeps 25 per cent. If the individual is going to run for an office within his county, such as county commissioner, ordinary sheriff, any courthouse job, then he qualifies with the county party. Then the county party turns over 75 per cent of their money to the county government, and they keep 25 per cent. So the state party itself gets 25 per cent on those races that deal

with the state government and the national government. That's true for both parties.

J.B.: And roughly what percentage of the expenses of the party come from that?

Shaw: I'd hate to venture a guess. I've forgotten how many candidates we had running in '72. Forgotten how much we kept. Our expenses at the state level are running approximately \$7,500 a month.

For some reason or another, it seems to me that. . . . Well, I'm confused. . . Now, I keep. . . of the base of the Fulton County party and the state party, and I can't recall how much, but it's. . . but that is not the. . . our percentage of the filing fees pays a small amount of our expenses. More so than it would with the Democrat party, because they've got so many candidates running with them, they have so many contested primaries, that you'll find that, for instance, there must be twelve or thirteen guys that's already announced they're running for lieutenant governor. Nine or ten that's running for governor. Well, we've got three guys that say they're going to run for governor, and only one man running for lieutenant governor. We may have one man that may drop in to each one of those races that has not already made any public statement. We won't have all of the congressional races covered. If we do, it'll only be one man running. Democrats'll have, in many instances, three or four running for congress. They have so many candidates running for every job, that their take is tremendous and they pay a large portion of their expenses from that. But in the Republican party, for instance, we're still such a small, close-knit group that if you're

thinking about securing a candidate to run for the house of representatives in this district, one fellow speaks up and says, "I think I'll run." Well, another guy may be interested, but he finds it difficult to say, "Well, old John's my buddy, and I think I could do a better job than he could, but if he wants to run for it, I'll just back out and let him run." So we have very few contested races, and I've been trying to insist that more people get involved and give the people a chance, and that that's what will make people vote in our primary. The voter doesn't register by party in Georgia. He goes to the polls and they find out he's a registered voter, they say, "Which ballot do you want?" Because the primaries are held on the same day at the same location. And you can tell them that you want a Democrat ballot this year, next time the race comes up you can take a Republican ballot. And usually they want to vote in the Democrat primary because every office is covered there. But. . . and in a county, say, even like Fulton County, there'll be seven candidates for the county commission, seven seats for county commission. We'll be lucky to have four candidates running, none of them contested. They'll have contests up to three to five people practically, running for every seat. Many of the judgeships. We won't have any of our guys that will run for judge. One of their feelings is that we probably would have a difficult time carrying Fulton County on a countywide basis because the blacks just vote against us. They vote a straight ticket practically. So you're giving away so many votes to begin with. Also, they realize that they've got to go before these fellows in court, so consequently if they step out and try to venture into it

and win, they may antagonize the very guys that they're going to have to go before. So we have so few people running, and the Democrats have so many running, that people feel that they're not getting their money's worth unless they vote in that primary. (Interruption for telephone call.)

J.B.: When do you think it will be possible to elect enough local officials so you can control fifty counties and thereby elect the statewide officials?

Shaw: '78. We're trying again this year to increase our number of elected officials on the local level, and then we hope to increase that again in '76. And then by '78 we should have the people that we need working over the state to give the support needed to elect a statewide candidate.

J.B.: Are you basically working to attract conservative, disenchanted Democrats?

Shaw: I don't really call them Democrats. Georgia has always been a one-party state, yet the Georgia Democrat has always - or not always, but for the last fifteen, twenty years or so - has disassociated themselves from the national party. So much so that people just accept the theory that there's a difference, a total difference, between the state party and the national party. When the Republicans came on the scene with Goldwater, that was the first time since Reconstruction that Georgia had ever voted Republican. And it's funny, Georgia went for Kennedy in '60, went for Goldwater in '64, for Wallace in '68, and then Nixon in '72. But now that there has been a birth of the Republican party, most people, I think, even

though they may tell you they vote in the Democrat primary and so forth, most people in Georgia are independent. They'll usually, if you say how you're going to vote, they'll say, "Who's running?" They don't just up and say, "Well, I'm voting Democrat." It's my feeling that people have not seen enough difference between the two parties themselves to say that they'll cast their lot totally with one party or the other. And I think probably for maybe even the next ten years there's going to be a job for the parties themselves to convince the people that there is this difference between the parties. And eventually start attracting some people. I think we've done a good job in that, as evidenced by the fact that even in '66 Callaway got more votes than Maddox did. But he didn't get the majority, so the way our state law read at the time, the state legislature made the selection. And Carl Sanders worked the legislature and had them give the votes to Maddox. We were able, in the Senate race in '72, with Thompson running against Nunn, to get 46 per cent of the vote. Yet all of those people that voted for Thompson would not claim to be members of the Republican party.

W.D.V.: Ideologically, would they be conservative? On race and economic matters and so on?

Shaw: I would say that probably more people may be attracted to the Republican party as conservatives. We have. . . . I don't think we have many people who could be classified liberals. They're the minority. Ultraliberals, I don't believe I can think of any ultra-liberals that we got in the party. Around your urban areas you've got a lot of moderates, but I'd say by and large our votes are coming

primarily from the conservative vote. And our big increases every year come probably from the conservative element of those undecideds.

W.D.V.: Do you see the two parties re-aligning, then? The Republicans becoming more conservative, or picking up more conservative votes as it grows?

Shaw: Yes. I think we definitely will. We're faced with this problem: for years all the Democrats had to say was, "Remember the depression. Remember the soup lines. If you put Republicans in, you're going to have a depression." And with very few people out there arguing the point, and then some of them not being well enough versed to argue the point, we had no counter attack. And there was even that feeling in '64 with many people. Boy, if you vote Republican, the world's going to come to an end. But they did it anyway, and the world didn't come to an end, so it kind of broke a trend. More and more people are willing to vote Republican now, and yet we find that down in the south Georgia area this same type campaigning of "Republicans bring on depressions" still works. So what catches us is that you find the conservative rural vote going in voting the straight party ticket, and by the same token you find the urban blacks voting the straight party ticket. And they'd be considered a liberal element with the south Georgia farmer, voting conservative. And yet they're voting hand in hand, and when they do, they're squeezing the lives out of us. And yet there's no tie-in between the two at all. Ideologically, they're as far apart as night and day, but the Democrats have been very, very successful in keeping the black vote strictly voting a straight party ticket. That's the most damaging thing that's on our ballot, by the way,

in the state, is the straight party vote. They can pull any kind of shenanigans they like in the state legislature to beat us out. They can have. . . they can have the presidential candidates on top, followed by the straight party vote, or they can put the straight party vote on top, and we don't have enough votes in the legislature to stop it. They decided that they were going to have a hard job winning with Hubert Humphrey, so on your ballot when you went to the polls, because the legislature voted so, the ticket was headed by the U. S. Senator. The names of the president on your ballots was over on the side. If you wanted to vote, for instance, in '72, you had an opportunity to go in and cast your vote for Nixon or McGovern, and then right underneath it you had your straight party ballot. The local Democrats didn't want to be tied in with him. So to vote the straight ticket you'd vote twice. You'd vote for the president, and then the straight ticket. Also, they realized that Nixon would be popular. That would give them an opportunity for people to go in and vote for Nixon and then pull the straight party. As long as that happened, and as long as the work goes on in the black communities as it does now, we're going to be greatly hurt by the straight party slot. We've had black candidates laugh at us in Fulton County when we'd attempt to run black Republicans. One fellow laughed at us and said, "You'll take \$3,500 and spend it on one of your black candidates running, and he'll get out and he'll put out all of his literature. He'll see everybody in the world. And he'll go out and work hard, and I'll just sit back and wait until the night before the election, then I'll rent me a truck, put me a p.a. system in front of it or on top of it, and then have me

some handbills printed. And then on election day just go up and down the street with that truck, with that p.a. system going. 'Don't be misled. Don't let anybody mislead you. Get that. . . get that ballot, that endorsement sheet from that boy standing there at the drive of the polling place. Vote like it tells you to do.'" And he laughed, he said, "I'll bet kinfolks to your candidate even came up and picked up that thing and voted for me." He said, "I'll beat you with \$550 and you can spend \$3500 any time you want to." Well, this is true. Blacks have made a lot of progress, and they've made a lot of progress by sticking together. Their leaders will tell you, "Sure we're racist, but we have to be if we're going to get anywhere. And we have to try to train our people to believe in us and vote the way we feel it's best. And if we can't keep them together, then we've got nothing to bargain with." So they're able to sell this philosophy, and consequently you'll find that in every one of those places, there's going to be somebody standing there and they're going to have an endorsement sheet to give every voter. I don't know whether they did it in '72 or not, but in the past, they had a Voter's League made up of reputable people that the black voters trusted, and the night before the election a ballot that had been marked with their endorsements was delivered and people would go to the polls and vote just exactly like that ballot said. Usually they'll say, "Don't take a chance on letting so-and-so get in office. Vote that straight ticket." And that philosophy has continued to work.

J.B.: You said back in 1960 that the Republicans had a substantial

black vote when you first got active. Why do you think they lost it completely and what do you think would have to happen to get a portion, a substantial portion, of that back?

Shaw: The black vote went to the Democrat party when John Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy were smart enough to see that securing the release from Reedsville prison of Martin Luther King, Jr. would be their inroad into the black community. And they went to work and they gained his release. And at that particular time, of course, Nixon as vice-president could have been able to do something about it himself. He didn't. It was a big political coup for. . . furthering Kennedy's hat. And when they did that, the black vote in that election switched from the Republican to the Democrat side, and has remained there ever since. Also, in order to get his election, Kennedy was able to put together the biggest composite, I guess, of minorities ever known. His total appeal was not to the basic. . . the basic working American. He went to the. . . he made an appeal to the old, as senior citizens. He made a special appeal to the young. He made a special appeal to labor, to the blacks, to every element, he worked and he put them together. And this is the thing that put him in. Because he was able to get elected, and he begun to give recognition to the blacks that they'd never had before, they begun to feel that they were getting somewhere. And the blacks will probably not be back in the Republican ranks until some of the effectiveness of their present day leaders has just dimmed. King could affect the thinking of 85 per cent, 83 to 85 per cent of the blacks in America. No one else has ever had that much control over the blacks. I think back at the time Roy Wilkins probably could affect the thinking

of 56 per cent of the people, that has declined. But since Dr. King's death, there have been a number of warlords. None of them have been able to affect the total thinking. His replacement, Ralph Abernethy, has been totally ineffective compared to Dr. King himself. Now, you're already seeing now that there is a big fight among the blacks over whether Roy Wilkins still wields the big stick or not. And his effectiveness is draining every day. As more and more of the blacks quit following these particular warlords, and as the younger group comes on who have not been used to following the dictates of these leaders, they'll make their own decisions. And as they do, there is a strong possibility that they will start coming back in to the Republican fold.

J.B.: In 1972, did the Republicans in Georgia lack adequate campaign financing? Or was that any problem?

Shaw: Are you speaking of the president's race, or are you speaking of our races here?

J.B.: Races here, state races. State congressional races, state legislative races, Thompson's race.

Shaw: No, Fletcher didn't have that big a problem. He ended up with a campaign debt, but it was not astronomical. But the financing was not that difficult, no.

J.B.: We've read in a number of states that Republicans say that the Campaign to Re-Elect the President just took a lot of money out of the state that could have been used, that could have been put back in to help senate and congressional candidates.

Shaw: That's possible, but I don't think that we can complain and say that our Georgia Republican candidates were that hurt by the contributions

to CREEP. Fletcher was able to come out all right, and I'd say that most of our candidates were able to raise the money that was necessary to run their races. I don't know of anybody that was particularly hurt because of the big money going to the president's race. We didn't make that much of a push. The reason is that the way CREEP decided to run their organization was to have an independent organization. They had an independent chairman, independent organization totally and completely. They had to raise their money in that manner.

J.B.: Who was their chairman in Georgia?

Shaw: Jack Ray. He was a former state treasurer that switched to the Republican party in '68, when the five Democrats came over. And he was defeated for re-election in '70 as state treasurer. . . I mean. . . yeah, in '70. And he was the chairman of that organization. But we ourselves, in the state, were not primarily interested in raising money for the president. The money that was primarily raised here was raised on campaign dinners. We did have one large dinner. . . we had two large dinners here, but one of them had a lot of people in attendance. And we participated in that one 'cause the state party was to get back a percentage of the proceeds on that particular salute to the president dinner. And that meant money for us, and if we had money within the state. . . coming to the state party, then that meant that much less that we had to try to solicit from people, and that gave more money to the candidates.

J.B.: How much support did Thompson get from the White House, in effect. Did Agnew come down and campaign for him?

Shaw: Yes. Yes, Agnew came down and went to Columbus and Augusta.

J.B.: With Thompson?

Shaw: Fletcher's brother was the pilot of the American Airlines plane that they'd chartered that time.

J.B.: Why'd he miss Atlanta?

Shaw: We just chose to go to those places because we're stronger in the metropolitan Atlanta area. And besides that, we had the president here. And we felt that Agnew would be more effective for us in those areas. And that was my choice, was to have Agnew in Columbus and Augusta.

W.D.V.: Has the last year hurt the development of the Republican party in Georgia?

Shaw: It hasn't helped.

W.D.V.: How has it hurt?

Shaw: It's hurt the morale. So much of the media covers the anti-Nixon approach. And when you've got a party faithful out here that doesn't have. . . is not receiving anything that can boost his morale, he keeps hearing only the anti-Nixon side, and then when somebody that. . . on the street wants to question him about these things, he has nothing to come back with.

J.B.: Is it hurting the recruitment of candidates?

Shaw: (Long pause.) I think it may have hurt the recruitment of candidates for. . . congressional candidates. I don't think that it has hurt any as far as recruiting candidates on the local level, because if a man's running for the state senate or for the state house, or for county commissioner. . . (Interruption in tape. Side two.) . . . the local candidate with a national administration. So it has had. . . won't have

any bearing on the recruitment of candidates on that level. But those guys who consider running for congress realize that one of the issues that'll be thrown at them is the Watergate and the impeachment issue, and if they're going to be running with the president then they've got to assume some of his burden. And, yes, that would have an effect there.

J.B.: How about statewide candidates?

Shaw: No, I don't see Watergate having any effect there, either, because once again, the governor's on the local level. He doesn't have that connection with the White House. And I don't think that that's had any bearing on the recruitment of candidates for that job.

W.D.V.: What's been the impact on you?

Shaw: Keeps me awfully busy trying to keep the morale up, trying to get the word out to the four corners of the state to not lose hope, to where you see this side, consider the other side of the coin. Try to keep meeting the optimist, when it would appear from reading the papers and listening to the radio that we should be down, that we're not down, we're up. That we're not going to lay down and play dead. That's been the biggest job on me. Then this federal financing, or these new regulations requiring everybody to have to list the name of their contributors has had some effect on everybody else. In the past, a lot of people would contribute to campaigns that they didn't necessarily want their names flung around in the paper. You'll find that maybe one man who represents a particular business would be willing to give you a large amount of money as long as it was secret. But if he has to. . . if his name's going to be put on the front

page of the paper, he realizes that many of the people he's doing business with may be people that are for the other candidate. And he doesn't want it made public that he has contributed to the other candidate for fear that it will interfere with his business, and so forth. So consequently, many of your big contributors have just decided to sit back and just make the normal contribution that anyone else would make. And it's having its effect on all the races this year. For instance, those people that may not want to see Maddox return as governor will think twice before they give any sizeable contribution to one of his opponents, for fear that he may be returned as governor, and if he is, then he may want to take it out on them in some way. So it's having its effect on everybody. Money for campaigns is going to be tremendously hurt this year. I'd say that it's going to have a . . . it's going to dry up maybe 40 per cent of all the funds for candidates. But then that's not just from our side. That's from everybody's side.

J.B.: What effect has re-apportionment had on the development of the Republican party in Georgia?

Shaw: It's helped us. Every time we have a re-apportionment and we get districts that are smaller, it helps us. The larger the district, the less chance we have of winning. We have a number of multi-member districts that are still in existence in the state. We had hoped the Justice Department would step in and cause the state legislature to have to re-apportion on all single-member districts. We have elements, for instance, in some counties, that - maybe there are three representatives to be elected from that particular area. They'll run in District 87, post one, post two and post three, the guys that run

can all be next-door neighbors, they can all come from the same street. They run over the whole district. Maybe one particular segment of that district would go Republican. If it were cut up into three single-member districts, then we could maybe win wone out of the three. And the Democrats know this. They even argue that. They say that on the floor when they re-apportion. They know we don't have enough votes in the house to do anything about it, or the senate either, so they'll say, "Now, you better be careful when you start this re-apportionment bill, because you going to turn around and you going to help the Republicans." And so consequently as long as they can hold off getting all single-member districts, they're going to do so.

J.B.: Why do you think Thompson lost, when you said he got support from the White House. In Mississippi, and of course I'm sure you know, Gil Carmichael just got, you know, nothing except opposition from the national Republican party. I'm sure you're familiar with the story, so there's no need to go into it, but you say that that didn't happen here, that Thompson did get support.

Shaw: The south Georgia. . .

J.B.: And he still ran thirty points behind Nixon.

Shaw: The south Georgia rural votes went against Fletcher as well as did the black vote.

J.B.: How influential was Talmadge's support of Nunn?

Shaw: It was very effective. Talmadge didn't campaign for Nunn. He campaigned for Talmadge. He went around over the state saying, "I'm chairman of the Agricultural Committee, and Georgia needs that chairmanship.

And if you vote for Fletcher Thompson, and if Republicans. . . and if other people from other states go on and do what they're trying to do and elect enough Republicans, they'll take over the Senate and I'll lose my chairmanship and Georgia'll lose that post." And people in Georgia who're glad to have a Georgian head of the Agricultural Committee voted with him, voted with Nunn. Also, Carl Winson, who had been chairman of the Armed Services Committee in the House, was a member of the House, I guess, for fifty years, was kin to Nunn. This got him all kinds of support. Fletcher was an unknown in south Georgia. He was well-known up here, running for congress. But still, he was unknown down in south Georgia. And he made great inroads, but once again, we didn't have the outlets within the different counties to get him well enough known quick enough.

J.B.: Do you think Talmadge's role was decisive?

Shaw: Since only four per cent. . . there was only four per cent shy, I would have to say yes. Talmadge and Marvin Griffin, the former governor of Georgia, travelled the state together saying the same thing. And that... . I would say that had Talmadge stayed out of the race, Fletcher could've possibly won. Polls showed Fletcher ahead until Talmadge really got involved in a big manner. But. . . .

J.B.: Talmadge, of course. . . if Thompson had won, Talmadge, of course, could have likely expected strong Republican opposition himself this year, right?

Shaw: Yes. The re-apportionment of the House of Representatives made it almost impossible for a white candidate to win the Fifth Congressional District, which takes in a good part of metropolitan Atlanta. Fletcher had been serving from the Fifth District, but re-apportionment put him

in the Sixth. And this is not a good example to use, but in 1966 the vote from this area was substantial enough that ^{Bo}~~Beau~~ Callaway was running behind Lester Maddox statewide, and the vote from this county came in and gave ^{Bo}~~Beau~~ a 40,000 or so vote margin. Put him ahead and he never went behind for the rest of the night. Fletcher had always carried the Fifth District here, since '66. His staff calculation indicated that he would have a majority again. But he lost this district by a large majority, which was all the blacks voting against Fletcher. And they did statewide. I hate to have to run out on you, but I'm. . . .

(End of interview.)