

This is an interview by Jack Bass with Ken Powell, South Carolina Republican Party Chairman on February 21, 1974. The interview was transcribed by Susan Hathaway.

Jack Bass: You've been active in the Republican party how long?

Ken Powell: Since 1961.

J.B.: And you're how old now?

K.P.: Thirty-four.

J.B.: Just since you were 22?

K.P.: ah-hugh.

J.B.: And you^{were} ~~are~~ a college student ^{then} ~~now~~?

K.P.: Really, I got sort of active when I was a senior at Clemson. I really got active in the Nixon campaign, which really wasn't active in the Republican party. Then in '61, I came down in the law school, and I got real active in Bob McNair's campaign for Lieutenant Governor in '61; of course, he was running as a Democrat. So I was sort of looking at the men rather than the parties exclusively. But then in 1962 Floyd Spence switched parties in the legislature. He switched to run as a Republican for for Congress. He came to me and asked me to help him some. I didn't really even know him, and I was so impressed with Floyd, I got involved with Floyd in that Republican Congressional campaign and ever since then I have been involved in the Republican party per se.

J.B.: What was it about Floyd that impressed you?

K.P.: Well he was young, he was an outstanding individual.

The things he stood for I really stood for. In other words he was the first really to switch parties from the standpoint that the Democratic party had gone a little bit to the left over here . . . or too far to the left. And Floyd was one of the first persons that had the fortitude to go into the party that I feel, and I felt at that time, more accurately represented the beliefs of most people in South Carolina. A lot of people still haven't come over yet, but Floyd was one of the first, and I felt that he was right so I stayed over.

J.B.: Any specific issues?

K.P.: Well I don't remember any specific issues back at that time. Jack, that was a long time ago, back in '62. I don't remember any specific issues . . . I can just say in a general sense of the term, basically the conservative type of government, which the old Democratic party, the Jeffersonian principals, that sort of thing that the Democratic party once stood for, I felt now the Republican party stood for. In other words, I felt the two parties were switching positions, basically. At that time I remember Floyd and I sitting down and looking at the voting records of your northern Democratic Congressmen and Senators, as opposed to your northern Republican Senators and Congressmen and there was no question about it, that the northern Republicans were much closer to us then the northern Democrats. In fact, you know, I think it's breaking up now but the old southern Democrat northern Republican coalition, and it was obvious that the northern Republicans are much closer to our way of thinking then the northern Democrats. So, we felt that the time was going to come when the southern Democrats were going to go in the Republican party, because they were just so much closer.

So, therefore, we, at that particular time, felt we made a start in something to get people realigned into the proper spectrum in the political party.

J.B.: This realignment was a big theme at the Republican Party meeting in Atlanta last December, and yet I believe it was a Mayor in Bennettsville ^[the only] ~~who got~~ exception in South Carolina in ^[in which] the last year or so there have been virtually no office holders switching parties. Am I correct on that?

K.P.: Yeah, I think you are right.

J.B.: And you did have two members of the legislature switch parties and both got reelected.

K.P.: Right.

J.B.: But nobody has followed.

K.P.: No, but I tell you what that's going to depend on, whether or not we get single member district. Now, in my opinion, and this is just an opinion, it always takes some great shift in opinion, or some great shift in philosophy or something of that nature to cause a real ^[change] ~~(it)~~. Just like the McGovern candidacy caused some realignments. Now, what's going to happen if we get single member districts . . . there are going to be a lot of Democrats that are going to look at their district and decide that there is no way in this world for them to win as a Democrat. Yet these same people who are Democrats basically have the same philosophy as the Republicans, but they have been running as a Democrat very simply because they felt that was the only way to win. And most of them feel this way, which is a very practical way to look at it. I mean what is the use of me running as a Republican if I can't win. Yet I can run as a Democrat and win and yet still think like Republicans. I heard two or three the

other night at Floyd Spence's dinner. Some Democrats, three old Democrats, I mean up in years as members of the legislature . . . they were standing around talking saying they were 99% Republican, but they couldn't win as Republicans, and the reason they can't win as Republicans is because of the apportionment scheme in the legislature. Now, when that has changed and single member districts come, you are going to find those people now, I think switching to the Republican party . . . just not running because they can't win as Democrats.

J.B.: Can you tell me who they are?

K.P.: I hate to . . .

J.B.: If I cut it off can you tell me? (Machine cut off)

K.P.: . . . Judge Baker's son . . . he has told me many times that he has run as a Democrat because he wins. He doesn't care what he runs as, in fact, he doesn't think there ought to be political parties. He's not a Democrat, but he runs on that ticket. People in politics tend to want to get in there when they run, so they run how they can win. You know, so . . .

J.B.: Do you think that single member districts would result in an accelerated realignment?

K.P.: I certainly do. That is, if they want to win; because it is going to put some Democrats where they can't win. It'll be impossible for them to win. So they are either going to have to run and lose, which most people won't do, or either they are going to have to switch parties and run as a Republican or something of that nature. Because the only reason they are doing it now is because they are in such big, tremendous multi-member districts. The minority is absolutely submerged whether it be

black or Republican.

J.B.: Do you think that is going to be the wave in the future of South Carolina?

K.P.: What?

J.B.: Let me rephrase the question then. there seems to be two theories at this time among the Republicans . . . southern Republicans, 1) Insofar as expanding the party and building the party, one is through realignment converting conservative Democrats to the Republican party in building that way. The other way seems to be to expand the party base, bring in more blacks, build the party up, generally just expand the base in moderate party philosophical image so that it becomes still a conservative party but more middle of the road conservative, and still more conservative than the Democrats.

K.P.: Ugh, hugh. Well to begin with, I hate to be cynical, but I guess I have gotten that way . . . to begin with there is no way in the world to convert conservative Democrats to the Republican party unless they think they can win. That's what the whole ball game is about. There is no converting to it. If a conservative Democrat, which feels that he or she can win, they are going to run as a Republican. It's that simple. The only reason, like I say, they run on the other side, because they aren't at home over there, is because that's the way you win in South Carolina at this particular junction in history. There is more and more . . . as the Republican party gains strength, then you are going to find these people switching over. It's just a practical matter of where can I best win.

That's all there is to it. So there is no converting to it. As far as broadening the base, I have said many times and still feel this way, that you don't have to change your philosophy, you just have to go out and get all those people who believe in that particular philosophy. In other words, you've got to broaden but not necessarily your base. I think the base is broad enough. It's just a matter of going out and getting black people, white people, every color people, race, creed, it doesn't make any difference to get into the Republican party. Now what has happened in the past is that conservatism somehow got tied in with racism, that sort of stuff. In other words, a conservative . . . a part of the philosophy that people thought a conservative had was to keep certain elements of society where they are. In other words, they were defining conservative as status quo. In other words, if the black people had bad schools, let them keep bad schools. If white people had bad schools or good schools, let them keep them that way. In other words, status quoism, now that is not what it is all about, and I think that our problem has been status quoism rather than anything else. As long as you keep your conservative philosophy, your base is conservative, But get rid of this status quo type stuff and reform some things, then you are going to broaden it enough to get enough people in. I just don't think you need to change your actual philosophy on the base. Just like, for instance, the Republican party in South Carolina is a conservative party. We've been advocating single member districts since 1971. Now if you look at that in the general sense of term and say that is conservative or liberal, a lot of people say that is liberal because it changes the status quo.

But I think it's conservative for the simple reason when you talk about conservative or liberal to me, you are talking about philosophy, not status quo, and not no change versus some change. One of the biggest (?) of the Republican party is on the conservative philosophy and one of the biggest tendency on the conservative philosophy is that government closest to the people is the best government. There is no way of getting government closer to the people in South Carolina than single member districts.

J.B.: It is also politically advantageous.

K.P.: Oh yeah, it'll be politically advantageous, it certainly will. And that is the second thing you look at. You know, but that is part of a philosophical thing too, from a standpoint . . . it may be politically advantageous, but that is a part of the philosophy too, because the philosophy to me . . . the conservative philosophy is that a state legislature is there so that you can represent as many viewpoints as possible. If not, then what's it for, if not to represent as many viewpoints as possible. So when you say that, that means representing black viewpoints, representing Republican viewpoints, Democratic viewpoints. So even though you say it is politically advantageous, it is because it will get more Republicans over there. But then philosophically that's what you want to do . . . get more blacks, more Republicans, more farmers, more blah, blah, blah, see. It's not only politically it's philosophical thing too.

J.B.: So what you are saying is that as far as Republicans are concerned, single member districts are both . . . fit in the philosophical framework of the Republican party and also it would be advantageous for the Republican party.

K.P.: It would be advantageous up to a certain point, Jack. In other words, it would bring us up, I think, to our rightful numbers in representation. It's not going to make us the majority party in South Carolina, but what it is going to do, it's going to take (?) of our large minority. It'll still leave the Democrats the majority party in the state, because they are the majority party. But what it is doing right now without single member districts, it's making the Democratic party almost the only party, and it's not taking any cognizance of the minorities in this state.

J.B.: Are you suggesting then that single member districts are really the single most important thing in building the Republican party into a viable and challenging second party in a two party system.

K.P.: In my opinion, it is in state government. I think it is.

J.B.: Do you think that if that occurs that that would result also in greatly broadening the field of potential candidates within the Republican party.

K.P.: Greatly. For a number of reasons. Number one, what it would do . . . it would give young people an opportunity to run. We've got a lot of young people in this party. For instance right now in Richland County if you want to run for the house, it's going to cost you \$10,000 to \$15,000, before you blink your eyes, because you've got to go out and approach 250,000 people. The single member districts . . . it might cost you \$1,000 to run because then you only have to go to 20,000 people. So therefore it would give people who are young . . . it would give black people, it would give the average

income people an opportunity to run where it can't now. Even a housewife could run from a single member district. That would broaden not only the base of the Republican party, it would broaden the entire spectrum of government in this state, because then you would have over there an honest cross section of the people of South Carolina, which you don't have now.

J.B.: When you announced your resignation, you made reference . . . not resignation but your decision to seek re-election to . . . as party chairman, you made reference to the fact . . . the problems of getting along with party fat-cats?

K.P.: No, I didn't say that.

J.B.: That was the implication, what was it?

K.P.: Well to do.

J.B.: Well to do?

K.P.: Umh, hugh.

J.B.: What specifically were you referring to?

K.P.: Well, I was just referring to the fact that some of the well to do people in the party . . . we really don't have that many well to do people in the party. We've got some just like any organization does. Some of the well to do people help me a lot. But some of them really would not cooperate. In fact actively harassed me quite a bit. I think that was for two reasons, 1) Cause I am young, and you know it seems to be in this sort of world that . . .

J.B.: You're how old now?

K.P.: 34. But I was 31 when I became chairman. A lot of people feel that with gray hair comes greater intelligence.

That may be true, or judgement or maturity . . . you know, better judgement, that may be true. But it is not always true, but it is basically true. Plus the fact, I think one of the main problems was that society is such that you tend to gravitate towards the peer group. My peer group . . . I am too young for one thing to have reached any sort of financial status to become a member of the elite peer group through finances. I do not have an illustrious South Carolina name, so I can't be in that peer group because of that. Therefore, I feel that some of your well to do people within the party and you know, in South Carolina had much rather have as state chairman, someone who is in their peer group, that moves in their circles. As a consequence, I was looked upon by . . . with a little disdain by some of your more illustrious type people, and I just didn't get the cooperation I could have gotten out of some of them through . . . not necessarily their money, that's not the important thing really because we had a surplus for the first time in history this year in the Republican party, it came from small contributions. In the past we had some big ones and we were always in the hole and so the money wasn't the thing. It's the influence, in other words, the reason that I felt it best for me not to run again is because not being in a particular peer group, I could not have the clout to pick up the telephone and call the President of X bank, you know, and get in the door like somebody in his peer group would. So this creates somewhat of a problem. I was always dealing through intermediaries, as you know, like I know some fellow who knows some fellow, would

you get me in to see him, or would you talk to him for me. It's just a big difference.

J.B.: Could you name any of these people?

K.P.: Well, no, because there really is no reason to do that. I mean, I don't want to cause any controversy about it, I just merely want to make the statement I made, because I might misname some of them. Some of them I might be wrong about.

J.B.: I'm just going to mention the name ~~Robert~~^{Roger} Milliken who was opposing your reelection in 1972, and is referred to by the Democrats as the ~~Daddy~~^{Wabucks} ~~war~~^{votes} of the Republican party, as you know?

K.P.: Umh, hum.

J.B.: What's been his role in the Republican party?

K.P.: I really don't know Jack. He has never . . . as long as I have been state chairman, or even before I was state chairman, I've checked the records . . . he has never given the Republican party over \$1,000. That's it. His role is . . . Mr. Milliken is a sort of a reserved individual who doesn't really get involved, you know, personally to my knowledge in any politics. Now some of the people who work for him may, but not him. I have had a very . . . of course, he was against me, there is no question about that, he was against me personally to be state chairman. But I have never had anything but pleasant dealings with him. You know, face to face. I don't see him that much, nobody really sees him that much. I have seen him, you know, at the national convention, and at some meetings and at some dinners and receptions - he has always been very pleasant to me. I am sure he didn't give me . . . I am sure he didn't support me for state chairman, In fact,

he was opposed to me. I am sure he would have preferred for someone else and probably may not have given whatever support he would give through . . . not money, but other ways, he probably did not give it to me. He and I have always been very pleasant and had a very pleasant relationship.

J.B.: When you were chairman, you did present a certain youth image in the Republican party, did that help make it more attractive to young people?

K.P.: Well I think it did, because when I became state chairman, we had on the college Republican role . . . we had something like 2900 college students on our role. At last count we had 13,000. So we went from 2900 to 13,000, during the time I have been state chairman. So I think it has been an attractive thing to young people.

J.B.: Do you think a new chairman in a more traditional role will make it less attractive to young people?

K.P.: Not so long as the issues that young people are interested in are still talked about. I talked about things like . . . I guess I am sort of a farm type individual. I mean I have talked about one house legislatures and single member districts . . . we were the first to talk about a state auditing commission; we brought that out in '71 publically, we brought that out first, brought single member districts first . . . this sort of thing that we have talked about is reform type thing and I'm going to have a press conference on Monday, and I am going to talk about the Judicial system which I think should be reformed.

This thing of the legislature electing judges is absurd. These sort of issues, basically, are what young people are thinking about, because they want improvement. As long as we keep talking about these issues, as long as we don't sit around and "me to" you know, then we are going to attract young people. Once we start "me toing" and saying yeah, everything is beautiful, then we are going to lose them.

J.B.: How much has Watergate hurt?

K.P.: I can't find it's hurt any in South Carolina. I mean, I guess '74 might tell a tale, but like I say I can't see anything that hurt. We've kept on winning. We've lost very few races. We've won probably 75% of the races that have been won in the last two years in this state; Greenville, Myrtle Beach . . . places in Myrtle Beach like we have never scratched down there before. But right in the midst of Watergate we beat a very popular incumbent Mayor down in Myrtle Beach. John West even went down there and held a dinner for him and said that it was very important that he win, he went out and campaigned for him and we beat him. We took all the city council seats we were running for down there, so we just swept it down there. We swept it in Greenville. Here in Richland County during Watergate Bill Durham won for city council. I mean, you know, we've won just about everything we have gone after.

J.B.: What do you think you will do in the legislature this year?

K.P.: It depends on whether or not we get single member districts or not. If we don't get single member districts we are going to have a tough time again. It's just like . . . excuse the personal reference when I ran for the state senate, I didn't

get in the race until five weeks before the election. Of course, Isadore Louie was probably the strongest man around but yet I beat him real bad in Richland County, but they ~~attacked on~~ ^{tacked on} ~~Fairfield and~~ ^(to the senatorial district) fair feeling Chester up there and there was no way in the world for me to carry Fairfield and Chester, and they got enough up there to beat me and to overcome my lead in Richland. It's the same everywhere. Up in Greenville in the Senate ~~Kerry~~ ^{Laurens} ~~Greenville had Lee (?) but~~ they tacked Lawrence on there, just enough to kill us. Down in Charleston they attacked Georgetown. In the house reapportionment this time, the one (?) farmers just, you know, rejected. They've got them tacked like that all over the state. They have some house districts . . . they have a little county tacked on to a big county, and that is on purpose see, that's to minimize the Republican vote. So with the present reapportionment scheme, it's tough for us. I mean we can't get but so many. We are stagnated. But if you go and change the reapportionment, and I mean don't put any political input into it . . . just take a map of South Carolina sit down and get a population expert, if you want to, to just close his eyes and draw 124 single member districts, don't care how they draw them, no political input, Democratic or Republican, then we will have a good chance to win.

J.B.: Win how many seats?

K.P.: In South Carolina house? 50.

J.B.: How about if the Senate had single member districts?

K.P.: Half. I'd say at least 20, we'd have a chance to win. I mean with no political . . . not draw lines around Republican precincts, just close your eyes and draw on a

population basis single member districts in this state. Don't worry about county lines. Just draw some single member districts.

J.B.: Where do you see the Wallace movement in South Carolina?

K.P.: In general election or democratic primary?

J.B.: In the future, insofar as the whole question of re-alignment is concerned.

K.P.: Well right now I see the Wallace vote at this particular time continuing as it is unless there is some change of voting basically national Republican if Wallace isn't running and local Democrat. It depends on some of the states and I really don't know.

J.B.: What has been Harry Dent's role in the Republican party since he returned from Washington?

K.P.: Well Harry . . . before he came back to South Carolina, he fought me pretty hard, the first time I was elected, and the second time, he tried to beat me both times. When I first ran for state chairman in 1971, it was in the middle of a term and Ray Harris had resigned as state chairman so the election was before the Executive Committee. Well, for reasons I have never really understood, Harry flew down from Washington and came into the Executive Committee that morning of the election and made a speech basically for my opponent.

J.B.: It was who at that time?

K.P.: ~~Gord~~ ^{Cordes} Seabrook ^{of} ~~(?)~~ Anderson. Well as it turned out, I can't remember the exact vote, but it was something like I got 37 votes and ~~Gord~~ ^{Cordes} got 13. Well that's the only time I know that Harry has ever lost on anything. So Harry wasn't very happy for the whole year I was state chairman. Then '72 came up . . . I ran again, this time before the state convention,

and again an effort was made by Harry to beat me and I won overwhelmingly before the state convention by 3 to 1. So, frankly I just went to Washington and sat down with Harry and said look, I don't know what the problem is, but what do you have against me . . . I said I mean we have to work together and this is stupid, so Harry agreed and from that point on, he was very helpful, and when he came back to South Carolina he was very helpful. Helpful in recruiting candidates, there was no more harassment, he and I worked together real well. I am sure that maybe we will never be the greatest of friends, but Harry is the type of person that when it comes to politics, he doesn't really have any friends, you know. But he has been very helpful ever since then and I have no complaints whatsoever about his cooperation and his efforts on our behalf the last year, or year and a half.

J.B.: He was not among those that you were commenting about?

K.P.: No, he might have been at one time, but he wasn't recently because he came back to South Carolina and was helpful to me.

J.B.: Since he has come back to South Carolina is he a major voice in the Republican party? At this time in the State?

K.P.: You mean in the . . .

J.B.: influence?

K.P.: You mean in the organization itself?

J.B.: Organization . . . more important in terms of policy.

K.P.: No. Harry has those people who are somewhat loyal to him in which he has great influence.

J.B.: Has he played a dominant role in the recruitment of General Westmoreland?

K.P.: I don't know Jack, because Jim Henderson was involved in that, Harry was involved in that, I was involved in that to a degree. Jim and Harry met with General Westmoreland and . . . a number of times before I did, so I don't know what was said among the three. So who occupied the dominant role, I don't know.

J.B.: How was patronage handled during his time in the White House? Was he the key man?

K.P.: Yeah and that was one of the ways in which he showed his displeasure with my election to state chairmanship. The patronage was completely and absolutely cut off the first year I was state chairman and really until he got back to South Carolina.

J.B.: You mean, insofar as being handled through the party?

K.P.: Yeah. We never saw anything. There was none, it was zero. He handled it all.

J.B.: Patronage, but he controlled . . .

K.P.: That's right he controlled every bit of it personally. Or, somebody did, maybe I shouldn't say him, but I'll tell you this, the day I got elected state chairman it just cut off absolutely. We didn't even know if there was an appointment to a Board . . . we just didn't know anything. We got nothing. It was handled all up in Washington.

J.B.: Through Thurmond's office.

K.P.: Well some through Thurmond's office. A lot went through the Senator. The Senator never heard a lot of it. I mean they did things to me like . . .

J.B.: How do you ~~access~~^{assess} Strom Thurmond's role in the party and the effect of his switching to the party. . . my question is did he really make the Republican party in South Carolina into what it is?

K.P.: Well that is hard to say. I think this, that Senator Thurmond's switch to the Republican party in 1964 gave us a boost that we needed . . . a tremendous boost that we needed. It's sort of like you are going down the road and you're not getting anywhere. You're kind of just at an even speed, but not getting anywhere fast enough, and then along comes a puff of wind behind you and gives you a big boost and blows you down the road. That is what Senator Thurmond's switchming parties did. It gave us a big boost and brought some other people in that wouldn't have come in. He brought some people with him. But, a U. S. Senator, by the nature of the office, it can not do much to build a political party. Because a United States Senator is not a grass roots office, and a U. S. Senator just can not do what a Governor, for instance, can do to build a party.

J.B.: What did he give the party is my question. Did he give the party his . . .

K.P.: His prestige.

J.B.: His prestige.

K.P.: That's right. In other words . . .

J.B.: He was very valuable to the party in terms of recruiting candidates . . .

K.P.: That's right . . . recruiting candidates, other people.

In '64 he lent his tremendous prestige to the organization, which was a tremendous boost for us. I am not going to say that that is what made the Republican party, I am going to say that that is one of the things that made the Republican party . . . in lending his prestige. After that, there was not too much he could do. Because, you see, you can't lend your prestige but once, you know. His prestige is continuing in helping us some, but he is not in a position like a Governor is, or something, to, just like the Governor has three thousand appointments in South Carolina that he can appoint to various places. Well that'll help you build a political party.

J.B.: That is a theoretical figure, right?

K.P.: Well theoretical in that all . . . we have looked it up, he has . . . I mean consider the Senate . . . I mean I don't mean he has three thousand he can just say you, you, you. I mean they have some restrictions on it. But he has a hand in appointing about 3,000 people in this State, because we have looked it up, and checked it and counted them. But what is a U. S. Senator, what can he do? Not much. So the nature of the office is why it can't build a political party.

J.B.: If he had set his mind on ~~party~~ building he could have done more in terms of patronage, I mean, couldn't he?

K.P.: Yeah. He could have, but he is just not that type of individual. He is just not a party man. He is a person who came up during the days of South Carolina when it was one party and you looked at individuals completely because you had no other party and it was a fight within the Democratic primary, and that was the election. So he is not oriented toward a political party. Therefore, he didn't do everything he could

he could have done, but I am not complaining because he's just not oriented that way.

J.B.: What do you think is going to have to happen in South Carolina for the Republicans to become the dominant party?

K.P.: A whole lot of people to die off. I am not really being funny, that's true. There a lot of people who live in South Carolina that live and breath Democrats. You couldn't change them under any circumstances. So really what is going to have to happen, there is just going to have to be a lot of new people born and older people pass away. It's a matter of time.

J.B. Do you think then that the Republicans are winning the allegiance of a majority of the younger generation?

K.P.: I don't know, That is hard to say. I do know this, I knowthat . . . a lot of our office holders are very young, just like, you know, Sherry ^{Shealy} ~~Shiellie~~ at one time was the youngest state legislator. Ray Ham over here a Probate Judge in the United States . . . the youngest in the United States. We've got the youngest Sherriff in the United States. So that is three big offices that we have the youngest officeholder. Most of our office holders are relatively young. So, I don't know whether we are winning a majority of them or not, but we are winning a lot of them. See, it's a strange situation, Jack. Where as a lot of young people are probably somewhat liberal which would tend them toward the national Democratic party; but the weird thing about it is it would also tend them toward the Republican party in South Carolina. Not because we are liberal, but because we are the party of change in South Carolina. So where as they may be national

Democrats, they would tend to be State Republicans. On the other hand, you've got your older people who tend to be state Democrats and national Republicans, just the absolute reverse.

J.B.: Do you see the new growth in the Republican party being reform oriented?

K.P.: umh, hum. Yeah . . .

J.B.: Let me ask you this, I have heard it said that one of the great assets in the Republican party in South Carolina is the fact that Senator ^{Rembert} ~~Edmund~~ Dennis is a Democrat. Is that perceived as such within the Republican party?

K.P.: Yeah. I mean, not necessarily him but just all these status quo people over here, see? The Republican party . . .

J.B.: Is he perceived as a symbol of this?

K.P.: Yeah, Marion Gressette, ^{Rembert} ~~Edmund~~ Dennis and those people, they are status quo people. I mean, they're the people that think our institution should be geared toward an agricultural economy. Our institutions in this state haven't changed in 300 years; it's still geared toward an agriculture economy, and we're becoming industrialized, and you can't operate that way. I mean it's fine to be a legislative state . . .

J.B.: Let me ask you, is that where the issue is, or does the issue revolve around domination by what sometimes as referred to as special interest?

K.P.: Well that's got something to do with it . . . special interest. The biggest special interest in this state is the South Carolina legislature.

J.B.: Yean, but they represent interest.

K.P.: Umh, Hugh.

J.B.: But is it this rural orientation that's the issue, or is it domination by the legislature by what is referred to as special interest . . . that's the issue?

K.P.: Well, I think it is both of them . . . I think it is both tied in together. I don't really think it is a rural urban fight. . . I just don't think it is to that degree. They tried to make the single district fight (inaudible).

J.B.: All right, when people joining the Republican party, your people in particular, and they cite these symbols that you mentioned, such as Senator Gressette, Senator Dennis, both of whom are very powerful legislators and have been around a long time. What is it about them that makes these people antagonistic?

K.P.: Very simply this. Every one that lives in this State, especially young people that have their future ahead of them, who have got 40 years of life ahead of them, they look at where we stand on the ladder of progress in relation to other states, and they see us on the very bottom in almost every thing that means anything to their future and their children's future. There must be a reason we are there, and why we have stayed there, and why we do not move up. The symbol of that is the Dennis's and those sort of people who continually defend our status quo institution. And the symbols over there are keeping our institutions as they are and therefore are not . . . will not allow progress to come.

J.B.: What are the Republicans in the legislature doing to create an image that the Republicans are the progressive party?

K.P.: Well . . .

J.B.: They voted against kindegartens . . . I'll use that as an example.

K.P.: Umh, hum.

J.B.: Kindegartens are frequently referred to as progressive in terms of moving educationally progressive.

K.P.: Well, to begin with, Jack, you can't do much when you don't have but a few people over there. You can do very little when you have twenty some legislators. But most Republicans feel this way, I think, and this is the way I feel, there are specific issues like you are talking about that people make a judgement on on its merits alone. But what we are looking for is simply this, it really makes no sense at all to, just to give you an example, get a football team in the locker room and to say to the football team that we've got a diagram on the board, a tremendous play that we want you to use the second half that's going to get us a touchdown. Now that is stupid if your team can't even block and tackle. They don't even know the fundamentals. So what we're saying is that it is ridiculous to get up and talk about all these wonderful things that you are going to do when your institutions aren't even set up to get the things passed. I mean, how long have they been arguing about insurance in the legislature? Years, for years.

J.B.: But has the Republican party done anything . . . or Republicans in the legislature, even though small, have they taken any unified position on say no fault insurance.

K.P.: No, but they took a unified position on the state auditing commission. They introduced the first bill on that. Every one of them without exception and that is one of the

biggest reform measures in this state. I mean that one issue that we brought up in '71, and all the Republicans introduced a bill with every name on it has gotten more editorial comment, and has gotten more favorable comment, and is more progressive than any other single thing done in this state, and the Republicans did it. The Republicans also, the vast majority of the Republicans fought for single member districts, that's the most progressive thing.

J.B.: That's another example of the point . . . I am not trying to make so much but trying to talk about . . . single member districts did not receive unanimous Republican support.

K.P.: And that upset me greatly, but the state auditing commission did. But we had five Republicans who didn't go along with single member districts because they thought it was a urban-rural fight. They were all from Greenville and Richland. Everybody else went along with it. Those fellows thought that the rural interests were trying to take over, so they were going to fight for the urban candidates. That's the way they say it, I didn't see it that way; and I so told them. They made their own decision but it was 16 to 5. Sixteen Republicans for it and five against it. That is a pretty good majority.

J.B.: Do you think single member districts in this state (inaudible) in effect are two examples where Republicans take strong basically party positions.

K.P.: Right. Right. Right. Those are two real progressive measures, Jack.

J.B.: Any others that come to mind?

K.P.: Well, of course, we consider, you know, we consider it to be progressive to save a little money, and we fought that budget over there with tooth and toe nail trying to cut some of the fat out of it and switch it around a little bit and get some money in the right places, where we thought it was in the wrong places. Except with those three issues, that's all that comes to mind right now.

J.B.: But even on the budget, was there any specific general policy positions taken? That could be considered reform?

K.P.: Well, I remember some of the things. But it is kind of hazy, I'd have to go back. They took out . . . they took specific parts of that budget and tried to do something with them just like, for instance, one part of the budget, there was a requirement in the budget . . . I may get this confused, but there was a requirement in the budget that so much be allocated . . . so much money be allocated to each student in each district, and even so . . . there should be . . . just to use an example . . . there should be a nurse to every 500 students, in a particular school district. Yet, there was no money to provide that. Some of your local districts, they would appropriate the money, but the state was requiring something that couldn't be done, and the Republicans fought that tooth and toe nail to get a realistic ratio there and try to find where the money was coming from. I mean specific things like that in the budget they tried to change around. I tell you, we've done some other reform things, like in Richland County, we got a whole new election commission here. The Republicans did that. The election commission that was here before them, they didn't even . . . they hadn't even read the election law (tape flipped over - break in

J.B.: Question inaudible.

K.P.: Well, if the black community does not give us some consideration this time, they never will. Because the most important issue that has ever faced them is single member district. And the South Carolina Republican party, as an organization, and most of our legislators stood side by side with the black community on single member districts. The Democrats kicked them in the face on the issue. If they don't give us some consideration this time then I just feel like giving up.

J.B.: On that issue alone?

K.P.: On that issue alone.

J.B.: I mean wouldn't blacks perceive that you all weren't voting single member districts because . . . just to help blacks, you were voting single member districts to help Republicans. I mean there was a ~~common analogy~~ ^{commonality} of interest.

K.P.: That's right.

J.B.: Coalition . . .

K.P.: But that's the point. The point showed we had a common interest in a lot of things as minorities, and it showed they had no common interest with the Democrats, because the blacks are minority. The Democrats are a majority. So they don't have any common interest at all.

J.B.: Because of that one issue?

K.P.: Well other issues, I mean there are many other issues that will come and have come.

Jb: For an example, on a black perspective, when they look back on the vote on the Martin Luther King resolution last year and every Republican in the house except one voted against

it. Wouldn't that suggest that there is less than a commonality of interest.

K.P.: No. How is getting the resolution on Martin Luther King going to help the black people economically or get representation or anything else?

J.B.: It's symbolical.

K.P.: Well I know it's symbolical, but that is the problem, you see. That is the exact problem.

J.B.: How about when several years ago when kindergartens came up Republicans voted overwhelmingly in the legislature against kindergartens?

K.P.: Well, I really don't know exactly why the Republicans did that. I mean, I don't know what their reason was. I don't know that they had a reason. The symbolic thing, you see, that's the problem. So many times the Democrats have symbolically done something for the blacks. There is no substance to it. I don't see where kindergartens would help blacks more than whites. Why is that a black issue?

J.B.: It's not just a black issue, especially, but it's an issue in which blacks express an interest. Educational deprivation in the past.

K.P.: But it wasn't that to Republicans, Jack, because it was not an issue . . . it was an issue that would have helped whites just as much as it would have helped black, and the Republicans didn't vote against kindergartens because they didn't want the blacks to have kindergartens. It was obviously something else. There are as many deprived whites . . .

J.B.: That's right. I am not suggesting that they voted against it because of the blacks, but I am saying that they

voted against it, and it was a substance of issue which blacks took interest in.

K.P.: It was an interest in which a lot of whites were interested in. I'm just saying that, you know, the Republicans have a philosophy that they look at and you know it is not black or white. It depends on why they voted against it. Maybe they didn't have enough money, maybe they thought there wasn't enough money for it. I don't know. I don't have any idea. But, you know, you talk about symbolically, this is what has always amused me, is the fact that the people in the Democratic party like ~~Sal Black~~ ^{Sal Blott}, Marion Gressette, all of those people, they have done everything in the world against black people. They are the leaders of the Democratic party. There are no Republicans in the state that have done as much against black people as some of the leading Democrats in this state. The Gressette committee tried to keep them out of school, I mean, they just kicked them in the face, Over and over again.

J.B.: Of course there are those that say that Senator Gressette has since changed.

K.P.: Oh well, but isn't that interesting how a lot of people are saying, you know, he can change. He's been kicking black people in the face all of his life and all of a sudden because he is a Democrat he changed. But the Republicans, because of something hundred thousand years ago, they can never change. This is absurd.

J.B.: Some people say that Senator Thurmond changed.

K.P.: Yeah, but on a local Democratic level, we don't have anybody, any office holder in the Republican party in South Carolina that has done anything as near as much to black people as

people like Marion Gressette and those people. But yet they'll vote for him. They voted for him when he kicked them in the face. (Interruption by female)

J.B.: As you look ahead do you see Republicans attracting basically middle class blacks?

K.P.: You know, we have a real tough time, we have more attraction to middle class than anybody, obviously. (Inaudible) that was specifically to help blacks and get them in a position where they could own something, rather than living in some tenement, you know.

J.B.: But then it was a Republican President who cut out the program.

K.P.: Yeah, because of so damn much fraud and corruption. That's why it was cut out, not because it wasn't a good idea, it just didn't work. A bunch of contractors got fat and rich and built a bunch of horrible houses . . . walk in there and the floor would fall through. The contractors ruined that damn thing.

J.B.: Yeah, but what I am saying is the program was discontinued rather than the violators being prosecuted.

K.P.: Well the violators were prosecuted when they could be caught, but there were so many foreclosures. Man, the problem with that was that we tried . . . the Republicans tried to put people into a home who had never owned a home and didn't know how.

J.B.: What do you see as the basic strengths and weaknesses of the Republican party in South Carolina?

K.P.: Well, the strength of the Democratic party really is

tradition. That is their biggest strength. The biggest weakness is that their whole party is built on economics . . . the entire party. In that the Democrats love to say that we have appointed that is membership . . . that's membership goes entire spectrum, liberal, conservative, there is room for everybody; but what they don't say is that entire coalition is held together by the almighty dollar. That's the only reason they stay together. If there was not a financial interest, it would fall completely apart. But where the Republican party is built on basically a philosophical entry. Nobody gets anything in the Republican party. I mean it's not built on getting a job here or getting a contract here, or something like that because we get nothing. We come in and work because we believe in a principal, whereas the Democratic party . . . they hold it together with the almighty dollar. I mean, if you were liberal or conservative, you getting so that you're going to stay there. But that great coalition would fall completely apart if they were ever out . . . if we ever got in . . . they would no longer be in a position to get the benefits of being in and you wouldn't have this great coalition. That's their greatest weakness.

J.B.: So the Republican party is basically built around an ideology particularly in the South?

K.P.: That's right. The Democratic party is build around . . .

J.B.: Is it basically a conservative philosophy?

K.P.: Umh, hum.

J.B.: Does that philosophy encompass, is it based on a basic belief that the role of government should be kept to a minimum?

K.P.: Sort of, but not exactly. Republicans have come to believe, which I think is the proper belief, is that government on the national level should be held to a minimum. And we are now dwelling much more on state responsibilities rather than state's rights. We have now come to finally see that you can't have the state's rights . . . that being a small government on the national level if you don't meet your state's responsibilities, then in order to conserve your philosophy then I think (telephone) . . . what I am basically saying is you are going to keep conservative government, that being a balance, a small national government, then you're going to have to do those things on the state level. That is why we are for reform. We feel as long as we do the job on the State level, we don't have to worry about the national boys coming in kicking us in the teeth. But just as sure as you don't do it on the state level, then the national government is going to come in here and kick you in the teeth. So we feel the best way to preserve conservative government and the balance in the constitution is to do the job right here. (Inaudible - break) . . . is that you do the job on the state level, then you have a minimum of government on the national level, then you do have states rights. So you do have to meet state's responsibilities before state's rights come into effect.

J.B.: I just want to ask you one more question. How important is it that the Republicans have a state wide nominating primary, or is it important?

K.P.: Well, it's important for reasons different than that of what most people say. I don't think that it makes a particle

of difference to the people of this state how you nominate someone. They are not going to vote for you or against you on the basis of how you were nominated. They are going to vote on you because of your qualifications. It is very important that we have a state wide primary for two reasons: 1) It gives people more of an opportunity to participate, you get more people involved in . . . doing the political thing. Once you get them involved, they tend, you know, to stay involved, 2) We don't have the money to gain recognition factors on TV and so forth. When you nominate by convention, you get no publicity up until right before the general election. Therefore, you have to put out hundreds of thousands of dollars to get your point across. If you have a primary and it's a contest, then you get automatically free publicity in the newspapers and get your name recognition factor built up at no cost to you. Those are the two reasons why we should have a primary.

J.B.: General Westmoreland is the candidate and he already has the recognition factor.

K.P.: Umh, hum.

J.B.: So is it mean that it really won't matter if the Republican's have a primary or not?

K.P.: Yes it does matter, because of the other reason. Get more people involved in political process.