

Interview number A-0352 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Interview

with

SID MCMATH

September 8, 1990

by John Egerton

Transcribed by Jovita Flynn

Project funded by the  
Kathleen Price and Joseph M. Bryan Family Foundation

The Southern Oral History Program  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Original manuscript on deposit at  
The Southern Historical Collection  
Louis Round Wilson Library

Copyright c 1992 The University of North Carolina

Little Rock, Arkansas

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

September 8, 1990

SID MCMATH: We felt we were moving in the right direction.

JOHN EGERTON: You characterize yourself and others as being naive--idealistic would be another way to put it.

SM: Idealistic, I suppose, would be a better term.

JE: One of the first things that fascinated me about you was your leadership of that G.I. revolt in Garland County in '46.

SM: '46, that's right.

JE: There were other very similar things happening in the South almost simultaneously. There was one in a rural county in Tennessee, around Athens, Tennessee, that turned into a gun battle really.

SM: Yeah, I think that was a sheriff, wasn't it?

JE: Yeah, guys ended up surrounding the jail. They had hand grenades and automatic weapons, and they brought them out like prisoners.

SM: 'Course, this was right after the war, and service men coming back were rather displaced, you know. They didn't have any deep roots, and they were in a transition. So they were willing to take on these hot spots. In Garland County, of course, the McLaughlin machine had been entrenched, well, throughout the 19th century anyway. 'Course, he had inherited it and strengthened it, and it was based upon illegal gambling. The gambling, as such, didn't bother me, but all the things that it led to in order to operate an illegal gambling establishment was what lead to so many of the evils. It being illegal, they had to

control the law enforcement officers. Had to control the sheriff's office, the district court, the mayor's office, the marshal. They even controlled the jury system. ( ) was a lawyer, and, 'course, he practiced law. They would select the juries from employees of the gambling establishment--the bookies in Belvedere and ( ) and these other casino places. Unless you had the administration with you in a case, you couldn't win it. In order to protect their empire, they resorted to almost any type of coercion that's imaginable, and even shooting people. I remember the last man that really impressed and made me aware of the situation in Garland County--I was in high school, I guess I was a senior in high school. I was going with a girl named Evelyn Smith, and her uncle on her father's side, Brad Smith, ran for sheriff against the gang, and, of course, he was defeated. Then they assassinated him, killed him. Another man ran for mayor against McLaughlin, and they bought up the mortgage on his home and foreclosed on it. 'Course, they even got into the school system, the employment of teachers. So it was a bad situation that I had an ambition to try to correct. Then when we came back from the war, 'course we had been through some battles, you know, and so forth. So it wasn't intimidating to us.

JE: You knew how to play rough too.

SM: Knew how to play rough too. So we organized, and on election day in the primary of, I guess, July-August of 1946, we had a platoon of people in a central area at the Ricks Automobile Agency ready to move anywhere that they needed to move.

JE: Just like a platoon in the military.

SM: That's exactly right.

JE: Armed and ready to move out.

SM: That's exactly right. The second ward was one of the wards that they used for transients, repeaters, and so forth. They would vote those people several times, whether or not they were qualified to vote or residents or anything. Then they'd move them around to other polling areas. But the second ward was the worst. We put the word out that the FBI agents were in there checking on the election. Hoover, really, gave us some backhanded support. He couldn't get directly involved in anything, but he gave us some information and so forth, the agents did. So we set up cameras at the second ward and started taking pictures of these people coming through, and they disbursed. So it cut down tremendously on their vote in that ward. However, all of our candidates were defeated in that first primary. I was elected because we had another county in the district that was over in Mount Ida, Montgomery County. I carried Montgomery County handsomely. We had the telephone lines cut so that the people who were supporting them in Montgomery County couldn't call in and tell them what the count was so they'd know how many votes in Garland County to get in addition in order to win the election. That kind of saved the situation for us, and, of course, when the votes were published by the newspaper, the newspaper people got it, then we knew exactly how many votes we'd gotten in Montgomery County. So I was nominated, and then we had the general election coming up. The poll tax was



the worst thing in the world for a fair election. It was just used by these machine counties in order to perpetuate themselves in office. Of course, the poll tax originally was enacted, as you know, to keep the blacks from voting, but then it kept a lot of white people from voting. Not only did you have to pay the poll tax, but you had to get your poll tax a year before. In order to have voted in the August primary of 1946, they would have had to have gotten a poll tax by November 1, the preceding year.

JE: Have to have paid their poll tax.

SM: Paid their poll tax, see, and 'course, you can't generate much interest. The professional politicians know about that, and go out and buy them up. 'Course, in Garland County they bought up blocks of poll tax. They just went down the telephone book and had them issued, you know. And they held those in reserve, and, of course, the judges and clerks, people who worked in the gambling establishments, when the poll closed, they could count out whatever votes they needed in order to win the election.

JE: It's amazing, considering all that, that you guys were able to. . . .

SM: Well, I tell you how we did it. We had a boy by the name of--what was his name, he was from Fort Smith--and we got him to run as a write-in candidate for Congress. The time had passed to file. I'll think of his name in a minute. But he was a write-in candidate for Congress. So that created a federal question. So we brought suit in United States District Court to

avoid the poll taxes which they had purchased illegally, which they had obtained illegally. They had a very complicated formula that they used. It took us a long time to break that formula, as a matter of fact. My wife did it. She's a good bridge player.

JE: You're referring now to the November election where all of the defeated candidates ran as Independents.

SM: That's right. They all ran as an Independent, and I supported them. We launched a poll tax drive to get people registered, because we could register them up until a week or two, a year before the election, see. And the people began to see, well, maybe we can win this. Maybe we can defeat this organization. My election gave us one law enforcement officer, so it was tantamount to nomination in the primary. So we went to work, and we avoided those illegal poll taxes. That was we were able to elect all the G.I. candidates.

JE: Well, now, if you had not. . . .

SM: Pat Mullis was the lawyer in Fort Smith who ran for Congress as a write-in candidate, and gave us a federal issue.

JE: Did he win?

SM: No, no, we didn't even expect him to win.

JE: It was just for the purpose of getting into it.

SM: Getting into federal court. And Judge John Miller was the federal judge who decided that case.

JE: And also if the G.I. faction had not bolted the Democratic Party and run as Independents, you couldn't have done that either.

SM: Couldn't have done it. The Democratic primary was over. In order to have a shot, they had to run as Independents. Then you could file as an Independent twenty days before the election. So they all ran as Independents and fortunately were elected.

JE: Now, that propelled you into the state picture.

SM: That's right.

JE: The visibility that you gained on that, and in '48 you ran for governor, and got elected in a run-off primary against a man who raised the race issue.

SM: That's right. As a matter of fact, we had several opponents. One of them was Jack Holt, and one was Uncle Mack McCrill. I forget who the others, several others.

JE: But it was Holt that made the run-off?

SM: Holt made the run-off. I got into the run-off by 12,000 votes. McCrill was eliminated, but McCrill had a very strong following. He was a radio preacher, had a little orphanage, and he would go out and give out flour and things. He had a strong following among rural people. In the last days of that election, which was in August, they raised the race issue. They told the people I was going to hire black policemen and so forth and so forth. It was catching fire. As a matter of fact, our lead was cut down because of that.

JE: Well, if you put that in the context of what was going on, that was Dixiecrat summer.

SM: Oh sure.

JE: Even the governor of Arkansas at that time, Ben Laney, had effectively left the Democratic Party to help run a campaign for Thurmond and. . . .

SM: They walked out of the convention with Strom Thurmond and Fielding Wright. Strom Thurmond was running for president, Fielding Wright for vice president, on the Dixiecrat ticket.

JE: Which was a racist thing?

SM: A racist thing. That's right.

JE: That's clear and simple, what it was.

SM: That's right. And they were against Truman because of his attitude toward race and fair employment and these other things that finally became a matter of course later on, this social legislation. Of course, Ben Laney joined them as--he was governor. When the primary was over, the gubernatorial primary, that was tantamount to election, in August, 1946. Well, I started campaigning for Truman, and he carried Arkansas by a large plurality. As a matter of fact, I think he got a better percentage vote, I know, than any state in the South, because I don't think he carried any states, maybe Arkansas and Texas. I'm not sure he carried Texas.

JE: I don't believe he did.

SM: Anyway, he carried Arkansas by a large plurality vote, and he never forgot it. Truman came back to Arkansas. He came to Arkansas three times during his presidency. People were very helpful to us in our water development program and extending our rural electrification program and so forth. I got to know him quite well, and he was a great president.

JE: Right, he was. What concessions did you feel you had to make in that primary campaign to this notion that all the charges. . . .

SM: I didn't make any concession. I didn't even deal with the issue.

JE: Well, I mean, like on the question of the Truman civil rights and that kind of thing?

SM: Oh, oh, I see. Well, I supported it. I didn't make any concessions. I supported it. Of course, one thing I was for was, you know, this tidlands oil thing was an issue, see. The Texans wanted the tidlands oil, and California wanted the tidlands oil and so forth. I took the position that Truman had taken that the tidlands oil belonged to the federal government and should go for national educational programs, you see, as well as giving to the states. That was one thing. Of course, on the civil rights issue and the fair employment and so forth, I supported the Truman civil rights program.

JE: You did?

SM: Yeah. 'Course, I opposed the poll tax. I tried to abolish the poll tax which was one of his plans.

JE: Federal antilynching law?

SM: Yeah, and I introduced an antilynching law. 'Course, we, in the state Democratic convention in November of 1946, changed the rules so that the blacks could be members of the Democratic Party. You know, the Democratic Party was an all white party, see, and that was tantamount to disenfranchising black people. Because at that time you had no Republican Party,

no viable Republican Party, and a Democratic nomination was tantamount to election. So they really didn't have anybody to vote for. So we took them into the Democratic Party. We got money to build the [black] A&M College at Pine Bluff and get it accredited. We had a black student go to med school, and a black student enter the law school.

JE: That actually happened before you became governor, didn't it?

SM: Yeah. The girl, I think it was a girl, that entered the med school, I think in 1948.

JE: I think, or '47 maybe.

SM: Maybe it was '47, yeah. And then we tried to get more money allocated to the black schools. But my big fight was the power company. The power company was my big fight. One of the first things that I wanted to do, well, I wanted to build roads, which we had to had a road program. We had a bond issue, and we sold those bonds for less than 3%, 2.7% interest. 'Course, I was for building the medical center, which I built. But the rural electrification program was very close to my heart, because I had lived in the country without electricity, and I knew what it would mean to the farmers. So we were very strong for a rural electrification program. Because of my relationship with Truman, we were able to get Secretary of the Interior Wicker[?] to loan the coops money to build the Ozark generating plant at Ozark, and of course, the power companies opposed it. They were opposed to the rural electrification program. They didn't want to got out into this area because at the time it was not profitable, but

they thought someday it would be. They were against the whole water development program because of the public power issue. They thought it was unfair competition and so forth. So I had a running battle with Ham Moses over at the power company all the time during my administration. When I was nominated in August-- in July--we were doing the run-off between me and Jack Holt, Ham Moses came to see me at the Lafayette Hotel, and we had a visit, about thirty minutes. And when he got ready to leave, he made a remark that didn't register on me at the time. He was trying to decide which one of us to support. The power company was a very powerful politically at that time. He said, "Well, it doesn't make any difference which one of you is elected, because you ain't going to get anything done anyway." We have a constitutional amendment, passed in 1933, called the Fuqua Amendment, which requires a three-fourths vote to increase any tax other than the sales tax. And I learned that the power company had about all the members of the senate who were lawyers on their payroll. And every governor has had to fight that. The special interests, you know, hiring these legislators and senators, and that has made it difficult to get a progressive program through the legislature, see. Of course, we got the loan for the Ozark steam generating plant, and the Public Service Commission granted it. But the power company got it reversed, and it was delayed, and I think maybe under the Faubus administration the Ozark generating plant was completed. 'Course, Orville Faubus came to work for me, first, as administrative assistant to talk to road delegations, people

coming down to get roads. We had about twelve counties in the northern part of the state that didn't have a single hard surface road. He was from that part of the state. He knew these people., knew their language, how to talk to them and so forth. So his first initial job was to visit with these people on these road projects. Then when Orville Faubus was elected governor, we had a falling out when he called out the troops to prevent the children from going to Central High School.

JE: But here you were in 1950 the most liberal governor in the South, aside from Ellis Arnall before you and Jim Folsom before you, who had taken somewhat similar positions, I dare that neither one of them went as far toward a progressive reform in the South as you went in that period of time. And you were reelected in '50.

SM: That's right. Against Ben Laney.

JE: Yeah, which, I mean, you could hardly imagine a more clear cut ideological match-up than you and Ben Laney in 1950, and that wasn't a very good year for liberals either.

SM: No, it wasn't. Plus Truman was at his lowest popularity. He came down. We dedicated the dam, the Bull Shoals Dam, and he endorsed me. His popularity at that time was about 30%.

JE: Way down. That was the year that Claude Pepper lost, and Frank Graham got defeated for election in North Carolina. It was not a good year for the South, for people who had any notion of bringing about progressive change. How do you figure that you were able to maintain that image in Arkansas at that time and



still win against that tide? What kind of racial issues got brought into that '50 campaign?

SM: Well, there was really no racial issue as I recall in that '50 campaign.

JE: Laney didn't throw that at you?

SM: No, he didn't. Oh, they accused me of being liberal, of being a Truman liberal, see, but they didn't, at least publicly, say anything about me being an integrationist.

JE: I'm surprised they didn't do that.

SM: Yeah, I am, too.

JE: How much did you beat him by?

SM: Oh, it was tremendous. It was decisive.

JE: Then in '52 you ran?

SM: I ran for a third term in '52 and was defeated.

JE: And you lost by a fairly sizable margin?

SM: Yeah, I was in the run-off with Francis Cherry. I was in the run-off about 10,000 votes above him, and then in the run-off he defeated me about 2 to 1, nearly 2 to 1.

JE: Did race have anything to do with that?

SM: No, that was the highway audit. See, Senator, when you get old, your memory fades.

JE: You got into a squabble, I know, over highways.

SM: Highway audit, yeah. Anyway, they passed a highway audit bill, and it was sponsored by Senator Ellis Fagan, who was in the electrical business, and he did all his business with the power company. They named the people who would serve on the audit committee, five of them, and the chairman was a member of

the board of directors of the Arkansas Power and Light company. So they conducted that investigation, and then in the spring before the election, they started publicizing it. They presented their findings to three different grand juries. The first grand jury did not return any indictments, and, incidentally, they had at least two members of the Power and Light Company on each grand jury or people who were partners to Ham Moses on the grand jury. I've got all that documented. The second grand jury, they hired a private lawyer to come in and act as prosecuting attorney and they paid him from funds raised by members of the board of directors of the Power and Light Company. When the judge found out about that, he dismissed the grand jury. Another grand jury was convened and they returned two indictments. No highway employee was indicted but they returned two indictments, and one indictment was dismissed for lack of evidence, and the second indictment was a swinging door verdict. The jury wasn't out five minutes and brought in the verdict for the defendant. So that was the highway audit. They defeated me with the highway audit, the accusations of fraud and corruption and so forth.

JE: Let me ask you about some people--again, coming back to the whole issue of race as a factor in all this--I have a hard time understanding why the Ben Laney's of Arkansas didn't jump all over you with both feet after your victory in '48 and '50, and Truman's support and your support of his civil rights program.

SM: Well, they tied me in with Truman and said I was a ultra-liberal and I supported all the Truman civil rights

measures and so forth, but I can't recall them ever calling me an integrationist.

JE: Would it possibly be because at that time the notion that any real, substantive change along racial lines was going to come to the South still just hadn't sunk into most people's. . .

SM: I don't think it had sunk in. They never realized that, and it didn't sink in, really, until the Central High School incident.

JE: Even Brown didn't make it sink in?

SM: No, it didn't. You know, Virgil Blossom had this plan which he had taken to all the civic clubs and the labor organizations and various groups in Little Rock, and had their approval. It was an integration, but people were willing to accept, you know, people are law abiding. They were willing to accept it as the law of the land. They didn't like it. 'Course, they would welcome an alternative, and Faubus gave it to them. The Virgil Blossom plan, if Faubus had stayed out of it, would have gone in and worked. We never would have had all that. . . .

JE: Well, I guess in a way, to prove that what you're saying is correct, whoever had the idea to integrate the University of Arkansas by letting somebody into the medical school and the law school. . . .

SM: I think that happened under Laney.

JE: It was during his administration.

SM: Right.

JE: And that seems to be is proof positive that people are essentially law abiding, and if somebody has an idea and a way and they say, now, we're going to do this. . . .

SM: Sure, right.

JE: And people will do it.

SM: And of course, the youngster that went to the law school, and I'm sure you know who he was.

JE: Jack Shropshire.

SM: Yeah, he went to the Law School. When he first went there, they put up a barrier around his seat so he'd be segregated, you know, in Judge Bob Lefler's class. He finally took it down.

JE: And those people went through school. They got their degrees. They went out, and there was no hue and cry, and that was ten years before James Meridith going to the University of Mississippi, the state next door here, and two or three people were killed. They had to call out the marshals to get him in there.

SM: That's exactly right.

JE: So people are law abiding, and they will do if they have leadership.

SM: If they'd had proper leadership at the time the Central High School thing never would have happened.

JE: Well, the period, '45 to '48, kind of looks to me, looking back on it, as a sort of window of opportunity, '45 to '50, when, the right kind of leadership, the South could have done some amazing things.

SM: Sure could. Well, the Dixiecrat thing set everybody back.

JE: The politicians, by and large, failed us.

SM: The politicians, exactly right. You know, the politicians, they holler nigger, you know, and get the redneck's vote, and they get the money from special interest. They get elected by the rednecks because they holler nigger, but then they serve the interests of the corporations.

JE: And then institutions failed, too. The church failed. You look for moral leadership in this period when the crunch was on, the church was not able to deliver it. And ultimately the universities turned to be not really instrumental in preventing a long period of turmoil, and the press, too. You had the Arkansas Gazette taking a moderate position, but at the same time, you had papers all over the southeast, like in Jackson and Memphis and other places, that took the line of the power structure.

SM: Of course, in Arkansas the pillar of the power structure was the Arkansas Power and Light Company. They were very conservative, and actually they were just treating Arkansas as a colony.

JE: Right. Do you think that most people by that '48, '50, time, knew in their gut that segregation was not going to last forever?

SM: People generally didn't know that.

JE: They just couldn't assimilate the thing.

SM: They couldn't assimilate that. You know, custom dies hard. But there were people, intelligent people and educated

people and people in positions of leadership, that knew it was inevitable. The Brown decision, you know, and after that, it's just a matter of time. Then, of course, when you get right down to it, what's America all about. What's your values? "We hold these truths to be self evident. All men. . . ."

JE: You can't have that kind of language written into your history and dodge that question.

SM: And it's taken us a long time to bring it about. Look at the impact that that concept, that philosophy, has had on western Europe. They're all inspired by the American Bill of Rights and the American Declaration of Independence. So we have to make it work at home. And of course, after the war, we were motivated by the fact that we'd been fighting against this kind of thing that exists in, say, Garland County and a lot of other places over the country. If we're going to fight for it in the world, we want to fight for it at home.

JE: Right. Do you think that you yourself as a politician and as a lawyer saw the Brown decision coming before it got here?

SM: Oh sure, absolutely, it's inevitable. I knew it was coming. I knew that we couldn't continue to keep the black people ignorant, and you can't keep them enslaved. You know, the Emancipation Proclamation didn't free the blacks. It freed them from slavery, but it placed them in servitude under this sharecropper system. And it wasn't until the Second World War that we escaped from that. I guess it was the John Deere tractor and the cotton-picking machine that did more to free the blacks

than anybody. It wasn't until 1965, wasn't it, that we abolished the poll tax?

JE: That's really true. That's right. That's how long it took.

SM: And talk about individual rights and personal freedom and so forth, look at the women. Women didn't get the right to vote until 1920. 'Course, I felt and I knew it was inevitable, and I felt for these people. I lived in south Arkansas and I saw the plight that the black people were in. I had a great deal of empathy for them as a child.

JE: And yet growing up as an adult, the common thing that you heard white leadership say in the South was, two things, separate but equal, and they knew it wasn't equal. And the other thing was if everybody will leave us alone, we can work this out ourselves.

SM: Yeah, don't want any outside interference, outsiders coming here telling us what to do.

JE: Can you imagine that the South would ever have worked it out by itself, if it hadn't been for Brown and the courts and the black revolt?

SM: Oh, in a century or two centuries. The economic conditions change and people get educated and so forth, and if the blacks are not equipped to earn a living and so forth, it might have eventually come about, but it would have taken a century or two centuries to do it.

JE: Do you think the notion that. . . ?

SM: Well, just like would the South have abolished slavery?

Maybe eventually, economically, maybe in a hundred years it would have come about. No, you had to have the Brown decision, and you had to have federal intervention. It was federal intervention that abolished the poll tax. And look at the child labor laws and the right of women to vote, and all this came through the federal government.

JE: And so to say that the '45 to '50 period was an opportunity for the South. . . .

SM: Great, tremendous opportunity. Gone either way, could have gone either way.

JE: And yet to imagine that it might have done it any other way is kind of hard to. . . .

SM: Oh, sure, that's right.

JE: Because as you say, without the leadership, without the federal intervention, without the pressures from the outside.

SM: We wouldn't have had it, wouldn't have gotten there.

JE: It's hard to imagine.

SM: You needed leadership and you needed the pressure. You had to have public leaders who were willing to take chances, willing to expend their credit to accomplish something. If you're elected, what are you supposed to do with your power and your influence? You're supposed to accomplish something, see. If you know of something that's right, this is what you should do, it's what's good for the country and so forth, you shouldn't have to take a poll to determine whether or not it should be done. One thing about Harry Truman, he never had to take a poll to decide what was right for this country. He went into Greece,



and the Berlin airlift, and the Korean War, and dropping the bomb, and firing MacArthur. He didn't take a poll.

JE: Later on you ran again for governor.

SM: Ran for governor against Faubus.

JE: Then you also ran for the Senate.

SM: Ran for the Senate in 1954. I lost the Senate in 1952. When they beat me, see--I mean I lost the Senate in 1950 when I ran for a third term. I ran for a third term in 1950.

JE: No, in '52.

SM: '54, I ran for the Senate. 'Course, they got my opposition, and when I say I was naive, I took on all the power interests at one time, the oil companies, the power companies, and the special interest insurance companies and so forth, at one time. I should have done it individually, you see, but I combined them. Well, they had Francis Cherry from Jonesboro. They had Jack Holt again from Harrison. They had a lawyer from south Arkansas who was attorney general. You know his name. And then they had Boyd Tackett, a Congressman, from western Arkansas. Ike Murray. Then they had somebody else. So when I was eliminated, I mean, when I did not win in the preferential primary--it was between me and Cherry in the runoff--well, see, they all gathered at Jonesboro and endorsed Cherry, all of them. And they were all being financed by the power company. All being financed by the power company.

JE: So you lost an election in '52 and one in '54.

SM: That's right.

JE: And one in '62.

SM: '62 is when I ran against Faubus.

JE: Did any of those hang on the race issue?

SM: Oh hell, '62 did. I mean, against Faubus was all race.

JE: Did you '54 one when you ran for the Senate?

SM: No, the race issue was an undercurrent.

JE: Really wasn't until Little Rock, until Central High, that race became really the burning issue in Arkansas.

SM: Yeah, that's right. McCarthyism was an issue in the Senate race. Of course, I was opposed to McCarthy and his tactics and so forth. Senator McClellan, although he was on that committee, we had some divisive issues, and 'course, McClellan was against Truman's program, see. I really got afoul with McClellan during the Truman administration, and 'course, he knew I was going to run against him for the Senate. Laney ran against me in 1950 for my second term. They were, at that time, trying to head me off.

JE: Right, they saw what was down the road. McClellan and Fulbright both turned out to be fairly obstructionist on the whole racial thing.

SM: Fulbright, bless his heart, although he's a great man and so forth, he never took a stand on the race issue. I mean, he went along with his ( ).

JE: He really did.

SM: He never did anything.

JE: Signed all the manifestos and all the rest.

SM: That's right, and he was an educated man, Rhodes scholar.

JE: Pretty disappointing for a man of his. . . .

SM: Never raised his voice on behalf of the oppressed.

JE: That's not a happy legacy for a man of his stature.

SM: No, it isn't. The Fulbright scholarship is his legacy, but as far as the blacks are concerned, he never turned a hand, or as far as the labor people are concerned. 'Course, you know, the laboring issue was a big issue, see. I was for the unions, and at that time, we were trying to get workman's compensation increased. We were trying to get the minimum wage increased and so forth and so forth. And McClellan and I were just like that as far as the labor issues. Of course, the labor unions had fallen into disrepute, but they served a great purpose.

JE: They really did.

SM: Served a great purpose.

JE: I shutter to think what would have happened without them through that period.

SM: Through that period of time. That was a big issue.

JE: Can you think of anybody, white or black, in the South in this period from '45 to '54, who just comes to your mind now, as being honest and forthright and outspoken and correct on the racial issue, in that period, not later, not after Brown but before?

SM: Well, you mentioned the governor of Georgia.

JE: Yeah, Ellis Arnall.

SM: Ellis Arnall was out front. He was a great man.

JE: Yeah.

SM: Ellis Arnall, and I'll tell you somebody else, Earl Long.

JE: Really?

SM: Earl Long, with all the troubles he had and so forth, he was right on the race issue.

JE: Jim Folsom was right.

SM: Jim Folsom.

JE: Kind of hard to think of others.

SM: I was trying to think about somebody in Texas, but Shivers and. . . .

JE: Maury Maverick.

SM: Yeah, Maverick was one. Jim Trimble from Arkansas, he was right on the race issue.

JE: Was he a Congressman?

SM: Congressman, yeah. He did more for the development of the water resources than just about anybody.

JE: Where was he from?

SM: He was from Dairyville, Arkansas. He was a Circuit judge before he ran for Congressman.

JE: Anybody else come to your mind?

SM: Clyde Ellis.

JE: Another Congressman?

SM: Yeah, he was a Congressman. When he retired, he became head of the Rural Electrification Program.

JE: Harry Ashmore?

SM: Oh, Harry Ashmore, by all means. Johnny Popham of Chattanooga.

[Interruption]

JE: Just one more thing or two, and I'll be on my way. Daisy Bates was a person who later on in Little Rock became a sort of leader of the black protest against Faubus. Did you ever know her during this early . . . ?

SM: Never worked with her. 'Course I knew of her and so forth.

JE: Anybody black in Arkansas or elsewhere in the South?

SM: Harold Sherman was a black, Methodist preacher.

JE: Where was he from?

SM: In Arkansas. I think he was from Little Rock. 'Course, Henry Woods, United States District Judge. Ed Dunaway who was a judge and who was a prosecuting attorney. You know Ed? Have you talked to Edwin Dunaway?

JE: No. Any journalists that you got to know, other than Ashmore and Popham? What about Ralph McGill or Hodding Carter?

SM: Oh, Ralph McGill and Hodding Carter were outstanding. They were the greatest. 'Course, Mr. Heiskell, you know, and then Pat Patterson. I guess he was publisher when he was at. . . .

JE: Right. Well, that pretty much covers the ground that I wanted to go over with you. I can't tell you how much I appreciate this.

SM: John, it's good to talk. . . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW