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This is an interview with Bill White, conducted in Fayetteville, North Carolina on December 14, 1973 by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries.

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Bill White: . . .as the county manager for Kerr Scott. From that date on, well, that was the '53 campaign for the senate, see? He was coming out of the governor's seat. . .and I know it's changed since 1953 until 1973.

Walter De Vries: One of the things that we've been asking people is to sort of go back over all the administrations until 1948 and kind of give an evaluation of the impact on the state.

Bill White: Well, I wouldn't be any good for the other parts, I mean in '48. . .let's see, we had Cherry, well, Kerr Scott came in in '48. And we Greg Cherry before him, and I wouldn't know about. . .and I did not get involved in the '48 thing at all with Kerr Scott. You know, I came back from the Marine Corps and was trying to get into business. And a guy by the name of Terry Sanford ran Scott's campaign for the senate and I was over here getting into business and I knew him as an attorney, that's really all I. . .

W.D.V.: Is that how it all started?

White: Yeah, that's really how it all started.

W.D.V.: Sanford had a law firm here in Fayetteville?

White: Yeah. He had a law firm here in Fayetteville and well, first he and Charlie Rose were in a law firm and then he brought Dick Phillips and Donald McCoy over from Laurinburg. Anyway, I came over to buy some property and they were the lawyers that handled the deal for me. From that, one thing lead to another and we, well, you know, history can tell you what happened after that. But, I guess that Sanford really got me into politics, you know. He was really my mentor, if you have one in politics. I believe that he had just got out of the state senate or something and he was wanting to gear up to run for governor, really, in '56, as I recall, and of course, Luther Hodges was the lieutenant governor who became governor and then was running as governor and so it was just almost impossible for him to run in 1956. We, I think, talked him out of it, although I always accused him of going to Raleigh with the filing fee in his pocket and getting chicken before he got to the election office to file it. But anyway, that's really how I got in it and I guess it would be best to go from here on a question and answer basis, I don't know. What are ya'll interested in?

W.D.V.: In those twenty-five years, some people tell us that the Kerr Scott administration and the Sanford administration were the

two most important in terms of their impact on the state.

White: Well, they were the two most independent, Walter. Everybody else kind of came from the dynasty.

W.D.V.: Oh, is that right?

White: Or, they called it the Old Shelby Crowd.

W.D.V.: Could you tell us a little bit more about that? This is the first time we've come across that.

White: It is?

W.D.V.: Yeah.

White: Well, gosh, there's a lot of people that know a hell of a lot more about that than I would. But you see, Cherry was picked out of the old Shelby crowd, Clyde Hoey was out of that crowd, Gardner was picked out of the old Shelby crowd and Charlie Johnson, who was Kerr's opponent for the . . . , in the race in the primaries in 1947. . . he was the pick of the Shelby crowd to be governor. Charlie Johnson was then Treasurer of North Carolina and you know, it looked just like a sure thing for Charlie Johnson and when Kerr Scott announced at the last moment that he was going to run for governor, why, you know, everybody almost laughed him out of the race.

W.D.V.: He was the first one to break that tradition?

White: Yeah, he broke it. And then Kerr's Scott made a very good effort to put Terry out in front, see. He made a damn good effort in

helping Terry get established so that he could run. Kerr Scott had these so called Branch Head Boys . . . in the old days they always used to say that "it's a big family at the head of every branch." . . . a branch being a creek to a man from Michigan, like you are.

W.D.V.: I've heard that about five times, and I haven't had the guts to ask anyone ~~what~~ a branch head boy is.

White: Well, it's the beginning of a creek, Walter, with springs and all and usually, the families that settled this country, they would settle there, because the water was good and that was the main reason. And they were usually at the head of the creek. And a creek in North Carolina terms is a branch. I don't know how you ~~could~~ ^{could} call a creek a branch, but we did anyway. So, the Branch Head Boys were really the Kerr Scott people, and he got them out of the mud and so. . . well, he did a hell of a lot for Terry, as I say.

J.B.: Let me ask you something about the Branch Head Boys. I'm from South Carolina and I'm somewhat familiar with the term, but as it is used in this context, is it what you say, the Branch Heads meant in effect, that it was a single family and everybody was kin to everybody else, and there was usually one figure around whom everybody else more or less depended upon.

White: Yeah. . . they guy in my community that I grew up in was, in my early boyhood, his name was Willard and they had. . .

J.B.: What was his name?

White: Willard. . . W-I-L-L-A-R-D. I think they pronounced it two

different ways. But anyway, his name was C.C. Willard and he was kind of the fertilizer dealer. He was, if there was a master farmer in the community, and I don't know really what his education was, but probably really he was the master farmer in the community. If you had disease on your tobacco, you knew that you could go and get Mr. Willard and he would come in and say, "Look, you've got so-and-so and you better do so-and-so." And that sort of thing. Well, this is the type of man that we're talking about, we're not talking about a political man. We're talking about a man who was a community man. He did a little bit more, he was a better farmer than everybody else, he had a little bit more income than everyone else. . .this man by a fertilizer business. . .and they usually had big families and they were kin to everybody else.

J.B.: Di this grow out of the grange tradition?

White: No, no sir. I think that these people were just a kind of people in our state that nobody had every tried to get to politically. These people were usually strong religiously, you know, Mr. Willard was an elder in the church and that sort of thing. And they were looked up to and they were leaders in the community. They were leaders of small communities, the Branch Head Boys were.

W.D.V.: How did he get to them, by promising them. . .

White: Well, no, how he got to them, he related to them, Walter, he was too. And he was Commissioner of Agriculture.

W.D.V.: And they were principally farmers?

White: Yeah, principally farmers.

W.D.V.: But not politicians or governmental office holders. . .?

White: No, there wasn't any governmental experience in any of them. And he got to these people.

J.B.: Might have also been the guy that ran the local general store.

White: Oh, yeah. He could have been and you know, most of the general store people back then had a farm, right back of the general store. And it could very well have been. Or it could have been, for instance, in another community, he was a fireman or engineer on the railroad.

W.D.V.: So, when you talk about the Shelby Gang, is that from the city, the area?

White: Yeah, that's from old. . .you've got to read about that Walt, I don't know that, because, that was before my time. But as I understand it, and you go back and look, I'm sure that this guy, whoever did the history, would have to go into that, because they dominated this state for. . .well, there was a few people that broke them out. Let's see, Cam ^{Morrison} ~~Marson~~ (2) was part of the Shelby Gang, but let's say Bob Reynolds, who ran the United States Senate, he busted them blue for the senate seat, you see. But primarily, they had it pretty well under control there. And it seems to me, if I remember my history, they took over right after Simmons, turned it loose from the senate down in New Bern and they kind of did that, it was kind of like in '24 , '26. . .

J.B.: Simmons was the real old political boss in North Carolina in 1930, but then he supported Hoover and that was his issue was the party loyalty question and that. . .

White: Yeah, that's right. When he. . .his undoing, this group kind of took over and they kind of ran it until Kerr Scott broke it up.

W.D.V.: What happened after Kerr Scott?

White: Well, let's see. . .we had Bill Umstead elected. . .

W.D.V.: Well, the principle thing that his administration was known for, what did he do?

White: Well, hell, better roads. You know, everybody. . .he got the Branch Head Boys out of the mud, which he promised them to do. . .

J.B.: And he brought electricity into the rural areas.

White: Yeah, the REA thing. I remember my father trying to get electricity on an old farm that we had over there. . .

J.B.: Where was this?

White: This was in High Point, Guilford County. It was between High Point and Greensboro. I always used to tell everyone that I lived right behind the Post Office in High Point, about twenty-one miles. But anyway, he used to cuss the power companies, you know. And the power company put in a line back then, they used to charge you so much for the pole and so much per foot for the wire, and then when they ran all this to your house, they charged you an electrical

bill, of course. And of course the REA broke this deal up. This put electricity to most all the farmers homes without a cost. They didn't charge you for it.

W.D.V.: Well, when Kerr Scott finished office, did the Shelby Gang get back into it again?

White: No, I guess that Bill Umstead was not a member of the Shelby Gang, of course, because they defeated him. He got appointed to the senate seat, or maybe it was a seat in Congress, I just forget, Walt, but he was a politician of some sorts and I just don't believe he was part of it. And I'm not sure of this, but Bill Umstead then ran against Hubert Olive, who Scott wanted to continue on and of course Bill Umstead defeated Hubert Olive. And that was in the '52 campaigns. Let's see, Umstead took the seat in '53, I guess. And so, Bill Umstead defeated him, no, I would say not, I guess that Bill Umstead was probably on the fringes of that, Walter.

(interruption on the tape). . .had to make a real input, you see.

A man, could not, I don't believe, make much of a contribution unless some knowledgeable politician was there to guide him, you know.

J.B.: What do you think has been the impact of the Sanford administration in North Carolina, both at the time and since?

White: Well, I'd say, of course, education, you know, I think that the community colleges are one of the big things in Sanford's administration. And then also these other technical institutes were a big thing. And the fact that he put emphasis on education,

I think. That is the biggest contribution he could have made at that moment. No one else had. . .you know, Kerr Scott had kind of built roads and Luther Hodges had kind of wanted to bring business into the state. He was the businessman type governor and Bill Umstead didn't live to do his goals, of course. And those were the people that Sanford followed. At that time, that was probably a good time to hit the education part for this state, if not, I think that it would have fell really behind, if he hadn't. And so, Jack, I would have to say the community colleges and the technical institutes, I think are the big things for Sanford.

W.D.V.: The thing that has impressed us as we interview people who have been active in politics, is the number who were associated with Sanford and are still active politically and hold leadership rdes. You don't find anybody that really identifies with Dan Moore, maybe there's no such thing as a Sanford machine, but there certainly isn't anybody that identifies with Dan Moore or Bob Scott. Now, when you look back, you see this basically stemming from the Sanford administration. What was there about that?

White: Well, Sanford was an unusual fellow and he's an unusual sort of leader. And you know, he would just catch your imagination. He'd say, "We ought to do this and. . ."

J.B.: What was there about him that caught your imagination? You've known him a long time.

White: Yeah, well, I don't know. . .

J.B.: What is this mystique about him?

White: I don't know. He's just a down to earth fellow and he did not. . .

J.B.: Why did you go to work for him?

White: Well, really, I went to work for him because I believe that he would do the right things, basically, Jack. I thought he had the good instincts to do the right things.

J.B.: The right things for. . .

White: For the people of North Carolina. The things that needed to be done. Now, I didn't agree with him on the food tax, I thought there were many other ways we could have taxed things. There are many things that I didn't agree on, that he didn't take my advice on. But let me say this, I got my day in court and that I appreciated about him. In other words, I got to tell him what my thoughts were and ~~there~~ are not many other people that I think that you could elect governor that would give you an opportunity to give those thoughts to them. And I thought that then, and of course, he lived up to my. . . what I had anticipated would happen. Sanford is an unusual fellow. Maybe he shouldn't take anymore advice than he does, but if he would take just an ounce more on some things, I think, you know, he would be a hell of a lot more effective. God knows, he's a great leader. I mean, he just really is a good leader. You can't help but like him. I don't know anyone that. . . I imagine a lot of people hate him, but that's because they just don't know him and never sat down and talked

with him. I don't believe that you could have a conversation with Sanford and come away disliking him. And he's got real good instincts, he wants to do, I think, the right thing about everything. And he's got one ulterior motive always, and that is now how to get in public office. And that's the politician in him and I can't fault him for that. He's a lot different now from when he was running back then, but not a whole lot. He'd just like to get back into office and in a position to do something. If that was possible, I'd like to see him do it, but I, you know, I just think that his image is just not such as to make that possible.

W.D.V.: Isn't one of the reasons that his people have such a long impact is that they were all so young. In other words, you were. . . how old were you in that administration?

White: Well, I got sworn in up there at say, thirty-four.

W.D.V.: Wasn't the average age alone thirty-five?

White: Oh, everybody was below forty. Sanford was the only one over forty.

W.D.V.: Isn't that one reason it's had a lasting impact, a lot of these people. . .

White: Yeah, that's it probably Walter. Yeah. The Highway Commission. There weren't many people over fifty on the Highway Commission. I believe there were just very few over fifty on that. . .

W.D.V.: Was his administration different from other people's in that respect? Did they tend to pick older people?

White: Yes. They always took the older people, you see. Dan Moore took what was left over from the Hodges Administration talent, people who had been trained in government during the Hodges administration. And this was about the only place he had to go, if he didn't go to the Sanford people, which he didn't do.

J.B.: Why do you think he went for the sales tax?

White: I don't know, Jack. We had several conferences at the Mansion, and we examined all sorts of taxation. We had to have additional revenues to afford his education program, or we thought we did. And I think that we were misled by the Treasurer and now Treasurer, and you know, this is the reason why I don't want to be quoted, but I think at that time, Edwin Gill could have very well told us, "If you'll raise your estimates a little bit, with the economy like it is and my experience of being here, you won't have to raise taxes." And we wouldn't have had to. You see, we had more of a surplus at the end of the biennium more than we increased taxes.

J.B.: Does Gill traditionally make the estimates?

White: Gill has a hell of a lot to do with it, Jack. And Gill is out of the Shelby group, you see. He was O. Max Gardner's private secretary and when Charlie Johnson was Treasurer, he was Commissioner of Internal Revenue in Greensboro, you see, he's of the Shelby group.

W.D.V.: Is he the only one left out of that group?

White: I'd say yes. He's the only one left. Thad Eure never did

pay any attention to them, he was kind of a maverick with them.

W.D.V.: We interviewed Thad two or three days ago. It was like sitting in another century.

White: Yeah. He's living yesterday. But, we really didn't need to, and we examined all the taxes. And brother, we really went through them. You know, we went through the possibility of putting through a telephone tax, or electricity, I mean, that's how far fetched we went looking at taxes. And we had a guy by the name of Bill Johnson who Walt met during the Bowles campaign, from down in Harnett County, who was the Commissioner of Revenue. And he had been over there like sixty or ninety days and he was having a hell of a time administering the sales tax program, due to all the exempt items. I mean, in other words, you go into a store to check the store owner and see that he's doing the proper thing and Bill said that this was almost impossible, to find out whether he was collecting the proper amount of taxes. He could have been collecting them and not turning them over to the state, too. Well, Bill was in on these conferences, and Bill's a real sharp individual, and he brought up the idea of closing the exemptions. And really, that's all it was. What Sanford did, when they made the sales tax, back in 1933. I believe that Eringhaus came with the sales tax to keep the state from going broke or for education or something, I forget what it was. But, anyway, they exempted food and maybe prescription drugs. Anyway, all Sanford did was to remove the exemptions, but it became known as the food

tax and was commonly referred to as the food tax. And, of course, I remember lobbying with the legislature to get the food tax passed and I always told them that this was for the program and the package, you know. I never referred to what was in the package.

J.B.: How much of a factor was it, that this was a tax that you could, in effect, at that time get the business establishment of the state to accept? They weren't going to have to pay it, and if you had their support, you could get their support for other things. . .

White: Well, you see, the business establishment never did quite come to Sanford. They said, "We don't want anybody to dominate this state for twenty years." And they were kind of for John Larkins or anyone they could get, other than Sanford. They had no connections, no ties to Sanford, they had no way of getting a hold of Sanford, so to speak. And he was truly independent from them. And they thought that if they built Sanford up, they would be dominated by him for twenty years and they probably would have been. So, they just didn't cotton to anything that Sanford wanted to do and they didn't quite go along. They didn't quite trust him, Jack. They just didn't have enough grip on the fellow, they thought that they just didn't have very much input, and they didn't. You know, they would go to bat, and you know, I lived up there and I always laughed about the visiting firemen coming in to put their input into government. I used to tell everybody who used to be quivering and afraid that we were going to move in this or that direction.

I said, "Look, they all have got to go home and when they go home, I'm going to still be here." And it never did bother me. But the business community, as I saw it, just never did quite give Sanford what they should have. They should have supported Sanford more than they did. Of course, the food tax was a very fair thing and as the population increases and the cost of education, the needs of education increase, you all know this without me telling you, the taxes will be there for support. I guess that was his real reason for doing that, and it was unfortunate that he got tabbed with that sort of thing.

W.D.V.: Do you think since he was in office, his prominence or stature has risen in this state, or has it decreased?

White: Well, of course, from the day he was elected, Walt, it's decreased.

W.D.V.: Why?

White: Well, you can't do these things, Walt. Number one, he increased taxes. He played on all the emotional things that people have. He increased taxes, then he went to California. . .well, first, let's go back to it. The basis of all of this. He ran in a racist type campaign, and that was a big emotional thing and it aroused strong feelings in people. He went to California and supported Kennedy. And you know, the religious issue was there. Now, you take race, religion and taxes, and if those three emotional issues won't tear a man down, I don't know what will. And he fought all three

of them.

W.D.V.: Yeah, but generally, the longer period away from the time you were in office, they tend to look at them a little bit more. . .

White: Well, yeah. . .but like I used to say, a lot of people have got to die before a man becomes a statesman, who has fought those emotional issues. You see, that Lake campaign was a right rough campaign. I'll tell you this. The Bowles-Taylor campaign was a party compared with the Lake-Sanford campaign. I guess that Jack remembers that. Were you in the state, or nearby during that?

J.B.: Close enough to remember.

White: Yeah. But it was a knock-down-drag-out thing, brother. That got down to the. . .

W.D.V.: But, all these years later, it's still. . .

White: Yes sir, that's a strong emotion.

W.D.V.: What do you hear when you hear people running Sanford down? What do they say?

White: Well, really, they say, you know. . .they like to tick off about the taxes, well, really, they don't know why they dislike him. I don't think anybody really knows.

J.B.: Is race a big part of it?

White: Yeah, it's the underlying thing.

W.D.V.: Is that how you explain the '72 presidential primary?

White: Yeah.

W.D.V.: He got. . .who told us that he got the same percentage of

the vote in that primary that he got in the first primary of 1960?

White: Yes sir. That's about right.

W.D.V.: People have memories that long?

White: Yeah.

J.B.: Race against George Wallace.

White: Yeah, race is the cause. You see, he ran the similar thing that he did in the primary, Walt.

W.D.V.: You would equate the Beverly Lake race with the George Wallace one?

White: Yeah, they did. I didn't, of course, but they did. Yes, they do have long memories.

J.B.: Did it boil down to the fact that Terry Sanford was too liberal for North Carolina?

White: Yes sir, at the time, that's what it boiled down to. He carried them too far.

J.B.: And is still considered too. . .

White: And is still considered too, just too liberal. Just carried us too far, further than we should go.

W.D.V.: Well, did he make that many changes in a four year period? Or did

White: Walt, I don't know. You know, you go back and look. I think that we made a heck of a lot of changes and they were all good changes, but that wasn't what we got credit for doing.

W.D.V.: Well, because it looks Bill, that in the eight years after

that, it looks like the whole government just kind of coasted. Like the two governors were just kind of caretakers.

White: Yeah, well, that's right. If they had administered those programs, you know, they. . .

W.D.V.: Well, do you think that the net result was that there was so much change in that four years that the state just wanted to coast?

White: No, well, you know, in some of our polls, we found out that they didn't want a whole lot of change, they were pretty well satisfied. And maybe he gave them more than they wanted. And I'm not sure that he didn't. You would hate to say that a man didn't want to educate his children, but maybe it was too much, too quick. I don't know.

J.B.: Well, was it also. . .because Sanford told us this. He said that one of the mistakes he thought that perhaps he made was that he thought that if he just did the right thing, that was enough. Looking back on it, he thinks maybe that he should have been a little more conscious of public relations and should have done a better selling job to the public, rather than just giving them the good program and think that they were going to recognize it.

White: That's right, and we did not. We got caught flat footed on our public relations. All the bad things got said about Sanford, none of the good things got put forward. Of course, you could say that today about Nixon, so. . .What he did, the unusual things he did were

the bad things, and I think that everybody expected him to do what he did about education. I don't think they were suprised about that. Although he did say in his campaign that he would have the guts to raise taxes if that was what it would need to carry his educational program forward. He said that in the campaign.

J.B.: In retrospect, do you think he would have done better if he would have raised other taxes?

White: Yes, I think there were other ways. Well, one, he didn't have to do it, Jack. To begin with. It was never needed. We didn't have experience enough to know that at the time.

W.D.V.: Do you think that you were deliberately done in on that one?

White: I don't think so. I think it was just omission, you know.

W.D.V.: Just the. . .

White: Well, Sanford, you see, was the State Treasurer's paper boy.

W.D.V.: Oh he was?

White: And it was something about seeing your paper boy become governor when you had longed to be governor, you know, I guess you would say that you would try to do this fellow in almost any way I can.

J.B.: Do you think that Gill always looked at Sanford as his paper boy?

White: I do. I think he looks at him like that today.

J.B.: This is going to become one of those great stories where you shouldn't become a paper boy.

White: That's right. So, I would say that it was an omission. You know, he could have guided us very easily. He had been setting there about ten years at the time.

J.B.: But he still makes these very low estimates, doesn't he? He still comes up with the big surpluses, as a result. Every biennium?

White: That's right.

J.B.: Have you ever had a deficit?

White: You can't have one, you call the legislature back, you see, if you have a deficit, Jack.

J.B.: So, they come up with a huge one, don't they?

White: Yeah, always, they usually come up with a huge surplus.

J.B.: Let me ask you this question. Because North Carolina with its progressive image. . .and we talked to one person who said that the further away you get from this state, the more progressive it looks. The closer you get, the less progressive it looks. And you look at how it stands nationally in all sorts of statistical rankings and economic data, per capita income and so forth, it is always 46 or 47, 48. And the most convincing explanation that I've received is from someone who explained that the state is dominated by low wage industry. So, my question is, here is what I wanted to get around to, although you mentioned the Kelly-Springfield rubber plant, how much opposition was there to that plant coming here and how much opposition would there have been if that plant had tried to locate

in the Piedmont?

White: Oh, I think there would have been a great deal of opposition to the plant in the Piedmont and I think that's why it came here, primarily. Textiles have just been a low paying industry and that was our big industry. And just traditionally, that's just been at the bottom of the wage scale. And I don't understand why textiles. . .

J.B.: Do you think there's a conscious effort by the textiles, furniture, tobacco people to keep high wage industry out?

White: I don't buy that. I think they probably tried in the thirties and forties, Jack, but when the fifties and sixties hit in here, why I think that the good Lord had taken enough of those old people away that the new ones that came on the scene saw that there was no use to try to continue that program. I don't think so. I think Luther Hodges just really loosened the thing for them.

J.B.: Well, as I say, Luther Hodges came into office almost twenty years ago and North Carolina still has one of the lowest manufacturing groups in the country, if not the lowest.

White: And I really don't understand it. And I've often questioned those statistics. Well, you know, twenty years ago, we got this nice plant over in Kinston, of DuPont and I believe they pay the highest wages of any industry in the south. They have some such reputation like that. And they don't have a union, but have good benefits and high wages and I really never have quite understood that. But I know how we fell behind, and that was with the textile

industry. I don't know why we haven't caught up, maybe everyone is moving quicker, faster than we are, I don't know. But we've got some real good industry in this state, now and it's paying a great deal more than the textile and furniture industry is paying. I think that during the forties and fifties, they did keep it out.

J.B.: Well, we heard today that that there was one county in the last month in North Carolina that. . .

White: Well, New Hanover, yeah. Yeah, I'm very familiar with that.

W.D.V.: Well, what was that one, because I think that might be different from the one we know about.

White: Well, this one in Hanover County is where the chairman of the county commissioners wrote the letters, right in your home county.

W.D.V.: Oh yeah, I ~~remember~~, I forgot about that.

White: Yeah.

W.D.V.: Saying that this was some big high paying industry, and "we don't want you." And the rest of the commissioners got upset about this, but yet that industry took this as the. . .

White: Well, that was enough. If you just say one thing like that, they aren't going to fight that.

J.B.: So, my question is, doesn't that mentality still exist to a fairly substantial degree?

White: I guess that when you assume that the statistics are correct, I guess so.

J.B.: Do you see anybody on the horizon politically that's going to sort of fight that system.

White: Well, we just tried with Bowles, didn't we. . . (laughter) We had high hopes, Jack, but I don't know. Oh yes, somebody will come along in North Carolina. North Carolina voters are pretty fair folks.

J.B.: Where does campaign financing come from in North Carolina?

White: The business community.

J.B.: Where in the business community?

White: All segments of it. From tobacco farmers right on up to the bankers. They're all interested in it. And they'll support a good candidate with money. It just comes from all walks, you'd be suprised. And I guess that maybe this state is, you know, people think in terms of the big industries as being the people who are putting more money in political campaigns and have more power to call the shots, but they're not, really. They don't put the money in the campaigns that you think they do. And the way they really get in, I've come to believe, once the thing is over with, the campaign is over with and the man is elected and he goes to make appointments and getting people to make the administration, they've got some good talented people that he needs and this is really how they move in on a fellow. It's not from political giving, I'll tell you that. They don't hold no big hinge over a fellow because they gave more money than anyone, because you might find some group of people here

in Fayetteville that would give as much as one of the banks would in North Carolina.

W.D.V.: Are you saying that he has to draw on them for personnel to staff his administration?

White: I think so, Walt. I just know that, you know, if you'll look back in the Moore administration, they drew just right out of Wachovia Bank for about five key positions. Wachovia had a real. . .

W.D.V.: Are you saying, though, that Wachovia didn't make any substantial contributions?

White: Yeah, they probably did, but let's say that, I would almost venture to wager that they didn't give more than \$20, 000. And yet I bet that I can find you more than four people out of some community in eastern North Carolina that gave more than \$20,000 to Dan Moore. So, it wasn't the money, that's not the way they got in. It was through, you know, those people that went to work for Dan Moore, how they influenced the thing. Well, these guys didn't have anyone to push forward to work in the administration, or if they did, they were split on him, you know. They didn't have any unanimous selection anyway. But, I don't believe money. . . money is ^{broken}~~broken~~ down so well in North Carolina, and we just got through with this campaign and I think, I don't believe Skipper Bowles was indebted to anyone over money. . . it would have had to been a combination of things for him to have been indebted to one more than the other.

W.D.V.: Has it always been that way, or has it changed?

Was it that way twenty years ago?

White: Walt, it was that way. . .well, Kerr Scott didn't need a great deal of money to run for the senate, you know. That was a different race from the governor. Terry needed a great deal of money, but that was. . .you know, we just got that by main strength and awkwardness. Everybody was trying to come along and make a little money at that time. . .well, you know, if we needed money, I'd just come up with it some way and if we didn't have it, I'd borrow it. Try to work and pay it back.

W.D.V.: So, it wasn't one group or. . .it was still. . .

White: You know, it just never has been that. I'm sure you have heard about maybe the old Wachovia Group, you know Wachovia Bank was a big influence. Well, Wachovia Bank was a big influence back in Bob Hanes's time, but that was really before 1948, I guess.

Bob Hanes was a very dynamic man who built Wachovia into one of the biggest banks in the south. But he never gave. . .you know, he didn't give a lot of money to political campaigns that I could run into. He was a member of the old Shelby Gang and. . .

W.D.V.: Did the Shelby Gang get their power from the money they contributed, or was it something else?

White: Well, I don't know, Walt. I gather they came through the legislature and it was just kind of a combination of money and being influential in the legislature. I don't think money. I think

they were influential legislators.

W.D.V.: As you think back over the last twenty years, have there been any major political changes in terms of campaigns and anything else.? Is it really any different now?

White: It certainly is. Well, of course, when Kerr Scott ran, I go back to that, it was the first one I was involved with. Of course, we didn't have any polls, we had very little or no t.v. As I recall, the only t.v. program I saw Kerr Scott make, we had sort some of t.v. program at Greenville, North Carolina and he was telling Bob Scott goodbye. Bob was going over to fight in the Korean War or something and he made some sort of pitch, which I thought was not too appropriate. But that was about the first t.v. I saw in a campaign. But you know how much it's changed. I guess with all the polls and with all the different ways of projecting a candidate on t.v. and the ways to buy t.v. time in all sizes, you know, it's just night and day, all in the last twelve years, rather than the last twenty.

W.D.V.: Thad Eure said that twenty years ago, he could go to one or two people in each county and if he had them behind him, that was it. And he could walk out of that county and say, "Look, I've got it wrapped up." He concluded today that there are, what, two counties left like that? One was Madison and I forget what the other one was.

White: Richmond.

W.D.V.: Who was the colorful guy up in eastern North Carolina. . .

White: Zeno Ponder in Madison County.

W.D.V.: Not him, no. He showed up, I think, election night at our headquarters. You know the guy I'm thinking of, from some county up near the Virginia line in eastern North Carolina? He said that he was going to deliver x-number of votes and he was only one or two off. Who am I thinking of? . . . colorful character.

White: Northeastern North Carolina?

W.D.V.: Northeastern North Carolina.

White: I don't know, Walt.

W.D.V.: Well, was Thad right, was that the situation twenty years ago?

White: I really don't know. As I say, when I got in with Scott, that tally had been broken up. He had been governor, you see, from '48 to '52 or '53 and I didn't know that period from '48 to '52, I just wasn't, I just didn't have enough interest in politics to observe it at all. I would suppose so, because, you know, that was Sanford's big thing. That's why he started running in about '58, to go around and cultivate all these people who were supposed to be able to carry these counties for him. I never did put much. . .

W.D.V.: Isn't that what Taylor sort of relied on in '72?

White: Who?

W.D.V.: Pat Taylor.

White: Oh yeah, sure. You know that as well as I do. He had the establishment, that's why everyone thought that he was going to win.

W.D.V.: Can we talk about that one a little bit? Why do you think Helms and Holshouser won?

White: Well, I can give you that short answer. . .they got more votes than the others. But, Walt, I think that people in North Carolina were looking for a change and they really didn't think that Bowles would change it enough. They just didn't trust him to change it coming in behind a Democratic governor who had been what I think is a caretaker-type of governor and one who did not particularly do the right things. I think that was just a big thing and all these other things were just contributing things.

W.D.V.: Well, when we ask people about '74 and '76, we get basically two kinds of responses. One is that 1972 was a kind of accident and that we will go back to normal in '74 and we'll get more Democrats in the legislature and we're going to win it back in '76. That nothing really changed. Because Helms was unusual and so was Holshouser. The other school of thought is that a basic change has occurred in the state.

White: A basic change has occurred and it's getting to be more of a two party state and I think that's probably because all this industry has moved in and it's brought a different group of people in. We'll just have a different view of politics than the people who have just been in North Carolina.

J.B.: Well, how about eastern North Carolina?

White: Well, we haven't had that much change down there.

J.B.: Well, you have had. . .

White: Not in industry.

J.B.: Well, not in industry, but you have had the biggest change there in voting patterns. How much of a factor is race in this, insofar as Republicanism there is concerned?

White: Well, I think. . . race is a big issue in the east, in my mind. It's the underlying thing in eastern North Carolina. Yes, it plays a big part in a race today.

W.D.V.: But it's all below the surface.

White: You won't ever find it. It's at the country store level, is what I always say.

W.D.V.: When V.O. Key wrote that book, he started out and he said that in order to understand politics in the south, you've got to understand race. Period. If you understand that, you can understand politics. Yet, in all those years, with the exception of Sanford's campaign and '72, there never was really a head on clash between a racist and a liberal position on race, until '72. That would suggest that really things hadn't changed that much in the last twenty years. That maybe people, you know, maybe the whole thing was just suppressed. There wasn't really a basic change in people's attitudes about it.

White: Well, I don't know, Walt. Race is a big factor and it has been a big factor in North Carolina politics, you know. And I went through two bitter campaigns over that with Sanford and

Preyor.

W.D.V.: Well, other people look at North Carolina as being the most progressive of southern states on race. And have thought that. . .

White: They've thought that, yes.

W.D.V.: Well, what we're saying now is that maybe that wasn't true.

White: No, I don't think. . .

W.D.V.: Maybe Key was wrong.

White: I think he was wrong. I don't know how liberal the others were, you know, I don't. . .

J.B.: Somebody said he got seduced by Chapel Hill.

White: That's probably right. Because the race question has always been here. I mean that you could go to the textile mills and the farmers and you had the race issue. You know, it just was there.

J.B.: Let me ask you a question, you should be in a position to remember this. When Frank Graham got beat by Willis Smith, we had one person tell us that race wasn't the factor, it was the Communist issue.

White: Oh, Lord. It was just a big racist campaign. That's all it was. That's the only thing they used against Frank Graham, was race, race. That's all you heard, what a big "nigger-lover" he was. That's all you would hear. A man would stand up on the courthouse steps and tell you who he had driving him around and who he was appointing to West Point, and you know. Terrible, just a big racist campaign.

No one can recall to you what were the issues in the Graham-Smith campaign. There was no issue. There wasn't any doubt about Frank Graham being qualified to be U.S. Senator. What made Willis Smith any greater qualified to be senator? He was a country lawyer from Wake County.

W.D.V.: Is that how you explain Helms?

White: Well, I don't know how you explain Helms, really. I'm beginning to get like Nixon. If you give them that steady diet, ten years of that stuff, you know, they'll begin to think like that. They'll begin to think this fellow is telling the truth. And he's had a constant anti-campaign going on. And I think now they thought maybe he could do something when they elected him. I don't know what they'll think when six years is over.

W.D.V.: Where do you think the Democratic Party is going in the next three or four years?

White: I don't know, Walt. There's just so many views in the Democratic Party. That's just. . .

W.D.V.: One of the people we interviewed described the Democratic Party in North Carolina as "having a whole lot of wings, all flapping, but no head and no body."

White: Well, I don't think that's quite true. I think they've got some. . . I think it's a struggle for leadership. That's it primarily. And if we get a good strong governor like Sanford was, well, you know, I think it'll shape back up. If we don't, it won't shape back up.

W.D.V.: Do you see anybody on the horizon that can do that?

White: Why, certainly. No problem there.

W.D.V.: Who?

White: Well, this fellow Bowles, that ran. . .(laughter)

W.D.V.: I had to ask that one. I just love playing recorder.

(interruption on tape)

White: . . .but he's got all the good instincts and would do all the right things and that's what would make him a good strong leader.

He has as good instincts as Sanford does, only Sanford is just in a different little vein than Bowles's goals, I'd say.

(interruption on the tape)

W.D.V.: . . .ready for another administration like Sanford's?

My impression was, in all this time interviewing, was that. . .

White: That was a far-reaching thing. No, they. . .

W.D.V.: . . .that Bowles would have been something like that, but not quite.

White: No, he would have been between that and. . .

W.D.V.: Between that and. . .

White: Between that and the caretaking type, yeah. As I viewed Bowles, you know, he was wanting to help everyone. And he would have had some of this education thing in there, but not to the tune that Sanford had it in there. Sanford spent, I don't know what, 250 more million and Bowles had a very modest program on this career education to. . .

W.D.V.: Do you think the state's ready for something like that?

White: Yes.

W.D.V.: For a guy like Sanford again?

White: Well, not like Sanford, no. I say somewhere in between that and caretaker, though.

W.D.V.: How did Friday describe that, do you remember? He cited something both nationally as well as the state, named a person that he thought both the nation and the state was ready for. . .because Holshouser, I guess you could almost say is another kind of caretaker. I guess you could say that he's a Republican caretaker.

White: Well, I think that the government will go down under him. You know, at least under the Scott and, well, the government went down under the Moore, the state government, I'd say that we didn't gain anything in the Moore administration, we lost. In the Scott administration, I think we stayed even, you know, we didn't lose anything. But, I think now, Holshouser will allow the state to go down even further. Now, this won't be because he necessarily won't be a good leader. He just doesn't have experienced people to run the government, Walt. And that means a great deal, I don't care what anyone tells you.

J.B.: Well, Sanford didn't have experienced people.

White: He had some semi-experienced people. Well, let's go back to an old friend over here in Rockingham County, who's the sheriff over there, L.C. Webb. He had L.C. Webb and then he had a Bill White

type. L.C. Webb being a lawyer over there, being a big politico, knowing what had gone on in state government before, had held several posts. L.C. Webb became a highway commissioner and Bill White became part of the administration, but when L.C. Webb came to town, you can believe that I listened to what he said had gone on before in administrations. And he doesn't have any. The point I'm making is that Holshouser has no L.C. Webbs.

J.B.: How much, if any, did Sanford's race last year in the Presidential primary hurt him with his traditional supporters.

White: I don't think it hurt him any at all.

W.D.V.: You don't think that any of the people that advised him not to run and saw him do it and then lose, didn't lose some confidence in him?

White: Yes, I'll take that back, yes they did, Walt. I did, you know. I hated to see him run.

W.D.V.: Well, yeah, when he asked his former advisors, how many advised him to run?

White: No one.

W.D.V.: We haven't found anybody yet.

White: Well, it's like Henry Hall Wilson. You know, I asked the other day, "How many people have encouraged you to run?" Well, I don't believe he named anyone.

W.D.V.: So, you think that the net result was that it has hurt him?

White: Well, if Sanford had a chance today, if you could go out

here and figure out how he had a chance, I think everyone would fall in behind him that had supported him, they'd support him again.

W.D.V.: Well, how does he retain that, nobody else has been able to do that? We keep coming back to the question with which we started out the conversation, how has he been able to do that? You said that if he pushed a button, they'd all fall back in line.

White: I think they would. I don't know, Walt. I guess that it's what, well, it's more than a charisma about him, that isn't the word. It's just somebody. . .he projects to you the image that you can believe in this fellow and that this fellow has got all the good instincts and is going to do the right thing. I mean, he gives you that confidence. On a one on one basis, he just assures you in your mind that he's going to do all the right things.

W.D.V.: Well, we're right back where we started the interview.

J.B.: We made a full circle.

White: That's right.

J.B.: Well, I guess we covered everything around. Is there anything in the middle that we left out? Anything that you wanted to comment on a little bit?

White: I don't know.

W.D.V.: Well, doesn't that intrigue you though, that he goes through all this and. . .(interruption on tape)

White: . . .I don't want to support someone, that I'm going to go out here and work hard for and then they're not going to listen to

what input that I'm going to have in their administration. And that's why I didn't support Scott and why I didn't want Moore to be governor and why I wanted Bowles to be governor. I want someone that I feel like when I say something, they'll take me seriously. I don't want a fellow that's going to get elected and then run off and do basically what no one thought he would do. I always like to tell it like Kerr Scott did, you know, "I want to be willing to eat what my dog trees." And that's another thing. If you elect somebody, you want to be able to go back to your friends and say, "Look, I told you he was going to be a pretty good governor." And that's basically why I supported Bowles, and why I would support Bowles again. I think most people have the same feeling that I do, Walt. I see no reason why Bowles couldn't do a great deal for this state.

(end of tape)