

This is an interview with J. Drake Edens, Former GOP Chairman in South Carolina. The interview was conducted by Jack Bass on February 13, 1974 and was transcribed by Susan Hathaway.

JACK BASS: Drake, how did you get involved in politics and in the Republican party?

J. DRAKE EDENS: Well, I had been a Republican at heart, and support Republican causes and candidates since my days in high school. My daddy was a farm boy, and he started a chain of grocery stores with one little fruit stand down on <sup>Sumter</sup>~~70th~~ Street in 1929 right in the heart of the Depression right after he went broke on the farm. In the 30's with him struggling to get a little grocery business started . . . he was beginning to branch out with little corner stores here and there. Daddy voted for Roosevelt in 1932 and that was the last time he ever voted a Democrat. I was raised . . . I was born in 1925 so when I was 10, 11, and 12 years old I heard my daddy talking about what Roosevelt was doing to the country with all the programs . . . WPA, PWA, and the NRA and all of those sort of things, and when he had to work two shifts at his own grocery store to create more employment and alter regulations and what went with it, so I heard my daddy cuss the Democrats from about 1935 on; so I had been Republican oriented, but we had no two party system

in this state, as you know. I had always pulled for Republicans, I remember when my wife and I came out of service we were both in the Marines you know, and went back to the University to finish college. While we were in college we sent \$50 to Taft's last campaign because labor was determined to beat him, and we felt that Senator Taft was Mr. Republican and I remember going to school on the G. I. Bill and working part time and we sent him \$50 and that was a pretty big check back in that time for us. But anyhow, my involvement, I've always had the feeling but my involvement came in 1960 when South Carolina really put on its first organized concerted effort for the Republican candidate. You know the Eisenhower campaigns had been sort of hybrid type campaigns with independent groups and Republican groups not working together, working separately and that sort of thing. I didn't get involved in those to any great extent, but in 1960 my wife and I . . . first my wife got me into politics actively. She, in 1960 went to the first meeting in Columbia to organize the Republican Women's Club, an official club, and she was elected Vice-President of it. She worked very hard in the Nixon campaign and also we heard that they were going to organize a Republican club in our precinct so she and I went over to the school the night they did it, and we both signed up as Republicans, which back in those days, we signed the precinct form and all that, so I guess we officially put our names on the list in 1960, and she did more work in '60 than I did. I gave a little bit of money and did a good bit of babysitting, and my wife did the work.

After Nixon lost . . . I did some work in the thing, I remember I got in on the poll watching, one thing or another . . . but it was really after the 1960 campaign that . . . in December when the Richland County Republican Party called a meeting at the Court House for the purpose of reorganizing the County Party, and we went to it. I wasn't elected to any official position but my wife suggested that I talk to Weston that night and said that I was ready to really go to work and said why don't you make him county finance chairman so he can raise money. So I . . . that all started the thing and I agreed to help with that. I . . . beginning at that point to really aggressively do something about feeling that I had had for some time, and then in 1961 we had the vacancy in the house and I think you were still working here in Columbia when . . . doing the Charlie Barnhill race . . . I was one of the three or four people that went to Charlie and convinced him to run for that seat and I was sort of Co-campaign Chairman, or whatever you want to call it to Charlie Barnhill . . . I believe that was on August 8, 1961 he won that seat . . .

J.B.: That was the first time in this century that a Republican was elected to the legislature.

J.E.: First Republican in this century to serve in the house, or served in the General Assembly . . . and immediately after that race we started thinking about 1962 Senatorial race with Senator <sup>Olin</sup>~~Oldin~~ Johnston coming up, and it was Hal Love (?) and myself to go into Bill Workman about being a candidate, and Bill agreed to run

as you well know, and I ended up being his campaign chairman, and that is when I virtually deserted my business and every-thing else and was full time politics. Going to the <sup>Baineau</sup>~~Barnhill~~ race, that's when I really started giving it full time, back in '61. I ran Bill Workman's race, as you know we got 43% of the vote. Shortly after the Workman race . . . then State Chairman Chapman resigned and the state committee saw fit to elect me as State Chairman in February . . . I believe it was February 23, 1963, and I set out to build a state wide party organization. As you have written before Jack, and were so right about it, I studied all the COPE manuals I could get my hands on. I did that for the Workman race. I found out that it was a matter of organization. The organization turns out your vote and it raises your money, so I was an organization type chairman. I gave it full time for three years until I ran into that health problem . . . I'm just capsuling the thing really. Of course, as you know, when I stepped down as chairman, <sup>[W.W.]</sup> Mr. Wannamaker, I was then Vice-Chairman of the national committee, the first one we ever had from the south, and Mr. Wannamaker wanted me to hold that position so he resigned as national committee-man simultaneously with my resignation as State Chairman, and he resigned under the condition that the state committee elect me to replace him, that was the only way his resignation could be effective. Anyhow, the state committee did and . . . in October of '65 elect me as national committeeman and I served in that position until the national convention in '72. I became . . . to go back to the original question,



I just frankly, my prime motivation, my prime concern, I guess, Jack, that I was convinced that maybe going back to my father's feeling and comments coming right on up, I was convinced that the Democrats were going to break the country financially, that they were completely irresponsible in fiscal matters, and I guess as much as anything else, that is what got me involved in politics. I was one southern Republican that you can personally attest to the fact that race has never been an issue with me. It wasn't in the beginning, its not now, it never has been. I am a fiscal conservative, I do believe in very strong national defense policies, I believe that well a little look after America's interests a little more than we have done over the years, probably through either both Republican and Democratic administrations, but primarily, I was motivated to get active and try to do something about it because I thought the Democrats were going to break the country. So, I guess that is about as good an answer as I can give you. I'm conservative, and generally will be conservative on most matters, I'm sure as the word is used in todays . . . in this time. I'm moderate on some things and reasonable on others. They've been practical about some things, but I just don't like the way the majority of the Democrats that I have known and known about will try to run the country. I'm not happy with all the Republicans, but I think the Republican party comes much closer to trying to do it the way I'd like to see it done than the Democrats would so I am a Republican, make no apologies for it . . . I still think that is the

best hope for the country.

J.B.: How big of a factor do you think it was that Senator Thurmond switched to the Republican party? How big of factor do you think it was that you were chairman at that time, that Republicans had begun to develop a pretty strong state wide political organization?

J.E.: What do you mean . . .

J.B.: How big of a factor do you think that was in his shifting parties?

J.E.: The fact that we had a good strong organization?

J.B.: Right.

J.E.: Well, I want to give Senator Thurmond the benefit of every doubt, I think his philosophy was, as he has said himself, without question, far more in keeping with the generally espoused and voted Republican philosophy in Congress. I think he was not at home in the Democratic party, as it was very obvious that he never did seem to fit there, and I think the Republican party gave him a much more comfortable home to come to, so I think his switching was . . . I don't want to impune his motives for switching at all, I think that he was happy that he had a place to come, but I think it was also governed or dictated by the fact that at that particular time . . . I would say at the time he switched, we probably had the strongest party structure that we've ever had in this state. I don't think we have ever achieved the effective organization status that we had at that time in '64 or '65 along in there, because as you know Jack, I stayed on the road, and I stayed with the people, I was

trying to build a party. As a matter of fact in the three years, I rode all over the state, went into towns that I never knew existed . . . placed I didn't even know about and got alot of people involved, so it gave Senator Thurmond a place to come to.

J.B.: What was that like? I mean give me an example what it was like going into a strange town as a Chairman in a Republican party going into a place that never had a Republican party.

J.E.: Jack, what you had to do, of course, by the time all of this was going on . . . of course, a lot of this started with the Workman race . . . through what ever sources you could . . . people that you might know . . . many of them that I didn't . . . I didn't know people all over the state like I do now.

Unident: Can you give me an example of going into a place where you didn't know anybody?

J.E.: Well I think the toughest county I ever hit was Chester County. I heard that there were one or two people up there who had Republican sentiments and . . . as a matter of fact, they had been for Bill Workman, and they had helped me in the Workman race, and I remember going back into Chester County after the Workman Campaign was over and I was state chairman and I tried to set up a County organization, so I went back to some of the people who had worked for Workman, I couldn't . . . I remember one night we called a meeting, it was supposed to be an organizational meeting, and I think three people showed up,

I think that was 300% over nothing and that we could certainly start from there. I stayed in that county for one or two days with one or two people who had the courage to go out and help me find other people. I remember going to farms, I went to Bess Reed's farm and then I went to a feed store, and this sort of thing just to find people that were willing to declare themselves as Republicans, and you know, we had a requirement that it required at least six people to organize a precinct, and you had to have at least three organized precincts in the county . . . that was a party rule. A lot of times, as I did in Chester, I just had to individually get the commitments and once I got one, then you'd say well will you go with me to see somebody else that might be interested and I guess . . . Chester County, I probably made a dozen trips into Chester County and finally put an organization together. Another one that was a good example, Newberry County . . . I heard a fellow up there by the name of . . . I didn't know him . . . by the name of Ernest Brooks, has been an old time Republican and that because there was no organization there, Mr. Brooks had a heart condition . . . I went up to see him one day, and he and I . . . of course, he wanted to help if he could, but physically, health wise he was limited with what he could do, so he and I started visiting people, and everybody we would see would say I'm with you but I better not publically say anything much in Newberry County. So a couple people finally told us that if we could get Earl Beedenbaugh (?), who was the owner of the Beedenbaugh

Feed and Seed Cleaning Company, a highly respected person in the community, that if we could get Earl Beedenbaugh to head the thing up that some of the rest of us would join us. Well this was a rainy day and Newberry County is so full of mud and clay and we found all over the place . . . we were soaking wet . . . and I finally went out ~~and~~ <sup>to</sup> Earl's ~~Barn~~ and he and his brother were down there working, and I asked Earl, I told him what I was trying to do, and I told him that I couldn't find anybody with the guts in Newberry County to come out as a leader of the Republican Party movement and that I had been told that he was the man that . . . of conviction and if he believed it that he would do it. After a real discouraging couple of days, Earl spoke up and said yeah, I'll do it . . . this is one of the happy moments you remember as you go along, you know. So when Earl said yeah, he was willing to help, then he and I started going to see people and they started coming in, and before long we had a real fine organization. One other one that was tough . . . God it was tough . . . in Beaufort County. I spent two days in Beaufort County going to see people who I had been told by different sources may be sympathetic. Everybody I went to said I'd be willing to get in but I don't want to be the leader. Almost without fail, they told me that if I could get Charles <sup>Aimar,</sup> ~~Amar,~~ the Druggist, said if Charlie <sup>Aimar</sup> ~~Amar~~ would head it up again I would get active in it. My wife went with me on a lot of these trips. In fact she would do the driving and I would

carry the dictaphone along with me. As I went from place to place, I would dictate my thank you letters, instructional letters, and one thing or another from the town we just left. But she and I went into <sup>Aimar</sup>~~Amar~~ Drug Store in Beaufort one day, and I went back in <sup>Aimar's</sup>~~Amar's~~ little office in the back of the Drug Store and we sat down and I just faced him, I told him what I had been doing for a couple of days, and that I had to find a leader somewhere. Again after Farrell, and I both talked to him, about 30 minutes, he agreed to do it. But once he did, that broke the ice and this was sort of the way the thing had to be done. It was not a matter of putting out a public notice that there was going to be a meeting and that people would flock in, it just didn't happen. You just had to go in and dig them out one by one. And the most crucial thing was to find a respected person that would be the leader, the chairman, the committee man, whatever it might be . . . this is what we went through in most counties . . . those are enough examples that I could go through probably 35 or 40 counties in this state with the same kind of thing.

J.B.: You said earlier that since that time there hasn't been a whole lot of organizational effort at least developing. It sort of peeked about that time.

J.E.: Well. Jack, I think . . . I'm talking now from a party structure standpoint. You see, when I became the chairman, or when we started to work on a campaign a long about that time, there were only about eight or nine counties

in South Carolina that even had a Republican organization on paper. A lot of those were just strictly on paper. So, I think that Workman's convention that we had organized 42 or 43 of the 46 counties, and then when I became State Chairman, my goal was . . . for the '64 state convention, to have 100% organization throughout the state, and we did. I mean a real live viable organization from all 46 counties at the '64 convention, and we got a devil of a boost out of that because that was the goal all year.. Of course, Workman's race had broken the ice, and people were willing to more and more identify with the party and associate with it and so I guess the strongest . . . of course, we still organize throughout the state but . . . I was so dedicated to believe that you just couldn't run a party without an organization in every county, and that is where I put my effort. If I had a county, when I was chairman, that broke down, and the folks in it did not function, we weren't real mean to anybody, but I would simply go to the people who held the position . . . the county chairman or the state committee man or what have you and talk the thing out with them. If they did not have the time, or the information to do the job, I think I said please let me get somebody else. Usually we did . . . I don't ever remember falling out with anybody about it. A lot of people in many cases would be relieved to be free of the responsibility, but anyhow we stayed behind it and I think I put on the first field man, I had a Secretary and one field man, and he did a lot of

work for me. I mean, he would dig up leads and then I would go and follow them up. So, you see, it went for me, really organizational oriented . . . then you went from . . . as Chairman, then you went to Harry Dent who was issue oriented, I mean, Harry had never worked within a party structure. He'd been with Senator Thurmond and had thought in terms of individual candidates and individual campaign organizations, and that sort of thing. (inaudible) campaign organization, but as I said he was strictly issue . . . almost strictly issue oriented, and the emphasis has never been put on organization since then to the extent it was when I was chairman. I think that is just a simple matter of fact.

J.B.: Do you think it will be again?

J.E.: Jack . . . well . . . I'm just not sure . . . with the maturity of the party, I don't know, I guess that is just going to depend on the leadership and the approach they take to party affairs. Now one thing I did see as national committee man . . . its a new ball game once you get a national administration. You have a whole lot of things to be concerned with and spend time on that you don't have when your party is not in power. In other words, right after Mr. Nixon's election in 1968, his first successful campaign, you got into the matters of patronage, and all of this sort of thing, you never did have to be concerned with prior to that. In fact, we were always on our side. The Democrats were the incumbent party, state and nationally, so I guess you could spend a lot more time trying to build organizations and that sort of thing. Once



you get in power, then you've got all the matters of patronage and everything else that goes with it when your party is in power . . . I guess that changes the nature of the thing some. So, of course, organizational strength too is in large measure going to depend on the attractiveness of the candidates in any given campaign year . . . the more attractive your candidates the more . . . the better chance in rank involved that they have to be elected, the easier it is going to be to get them to go out and go to work.

J.B.: On that score, getting back to Senator Thurmond, how important was his conversion to the Republican party, if I may use that term, affiliation to the party insofar as attracting other people into the party and attracting candidates, how important was that to the party itself . . . and what effect did it have?

J.E.: Ahhh, Jack, it . . . Senator Thurmond's conversion to the Republican party, has been beneficial. I don't want to get into any book you write, or anything else, or any disagreement about Senator Thurmond's place in the party. I know its been written before, I personally strongly support Senator Thurmond and always have. I mean, as a matter of fact, I voted for him every time he ever ran for anything . . . statewide, going back to Governor, right on up. I have said before many times that I probably would not express myself exactly like Senator Thurmond expresses himself in speaking, but if I were in the Congress, I'd probably have about an identical voting record with Senator Thurmond. The problem, and there was a little bit of a problem, when

he first came in several areas. The reason for it, which I can understand now, much better than I did then, he had never been a part of the Democratic party. I mean there was no such thing really as the Democratic party structure. I think you wrote one time that we forced the Democrats to organize. Of course prior to our becoming active, there had not been a need for it, so every office holder of the Senator's stature or even less, they had their own following. The Senator was not used to working within a party structure, and he was a little bit apprehensive as to how to work with a party and how much commitment you make to it, that sort of thing. I fully understand that sort of feeling now, because it was a brand new experience for him, and it was certainly a brand new experience for us to have a U. S. Senator on the Republican label in the state, but I would say on balance that Senator Thurmond's coming into the party had been a plus for us. He did work hard to help recruit the ticket in 1966 . . . that was the year we ran pretty much a full slate of state wide offices. Some people say he did his part, some say he didn't. I say he did. I think the Senator campaigned very hard when we had this band wagon deal and all. So, with any man or any person holding public office, you are going to have some minuses and pluses as it would effect his party probably, but I am saying that in the Senator's case the pluses far outweigh the minuses. I think that he definitely has been of benefit to us, and of course now you are beginning to spread that with two Congressmen, of course, this adds to it.

Albert Watson coming in was certainly a help. Of course when Floyd succeeded him in the Second District, and Ed Young in the Sixth, and hopefully this year we may get another one or two. Certainly this helps. So on balance I'm very happy that Senator Thurmond came in, although during the original conversion, I was . . . the thing is with me and those people working closely with me, we were so party oriented and Senator Thurmond was so oriented to this idea of an individual looking out for his own best interests, which he had to do . . . I mean he had no choice when he was running as a Democrat or an independent or whatever he was. But I think that all of that has kind of taken care of itself and another thing that helped too was that the Republican party in Washington was by in large was darned glad to get Senator Thurmond. In fact, he found himself much more at home with fellows like Goldwater, and many of the others up there, particularly the western and mid-western Senators, so, I think that it was good for us that it happened.

J.B.: Drake, you are very close to the . . . a part of the organization that developed into the Nixon campaign in '68 and were very active on national as well as state and regional levels. Do you think that Richard Nixon would have gotten the nomination in 1968 in Miami Beach if Strom Thurmond had been working for another candidate instead of him?

E.D.: Ahh, Jack, let me . . . well you are talking about two people I think a lot of and that is Strom Thurmond

and Richard Nixon, I don't want to . . . I'd remind you of one thing . . . you may remember on the first or second of November of 1966, Richard Nixon came to Columbia to speak at a fund raising dinner at the Wade-Hampton Hotel at my invitation, I was the one who got him down here. I still have all of the correspondence. In fact I've got my Nixon file now, it's about that thick I'm saving. Some day it'll be real interesting to go back and read through it, but when I introduced him that night, do you remember he came down here to raise money and a lot of our candidates were so scared that he was going to say the wrong thing, or do the wrong thing at a press conference, that I couldn't even get them to go to the airport with me to meet him. After the speech that night, and after his press conference, when he did a terrific job for both of them, they were all ready to have their pictures made with him, and everybody went back to the airport with him, nobody would go meet him, but everybody wanted to send him off. But if you remember when I introduced him that night, I said, and I meant, I've never missed predicting since I'd been active . . . I've never missed predicting way ahead who was going to be the nominee of the party, and I said in introducing him that night that he was the most qualified man to be President of the country and that he would be the Republican nominee in 1968. So, that's beating way down the bush to answer your question. I think that Senator Thurmond's help in Miami was very beneficial and made it virtually a unanimous nomination. I do not belittle, or I do not play down in any way, the beneficial effect that Senator Thurmond had

in helping keep down any rebellion among many delegations not only in the south but on boarder states. But I am also convinced that there was in '66, that Richard Nixon was going to be the nominee in '68, so it could have been a lot tougher, and it could have been a real tight fight maybe . . . but he was so logically the one to be in . . .

J.B.: You don't think that it was necessarily decisive?

J.E.: Well, I mean, a lot of people give the Senator credit for being decisive and if they want to give him that credit that's real fine. I, myself just phrase it to say that Senator Thurmond's were very very helpful and made it a real easy nomination to get. His help was very real. I mean there is no question about it but I still think that Richard Nixon would have been the nominee.

J.B.: In view of what you said earlier, who do you think is going to get the nomination in '76?

J.E.: For the first time, I can't predict. I think we're going to have to go through the '74 election and then see how things stack up.

J.B.: After the '74 election?

J.E.: After the '74 election, I'll be ready to try to make a prediction on that one. I think it is a little bit early yet. It's not at this point real obvious who's going to be it.

J.B.: Where do you see the state of the Republican party in South Carolina and where do you see it heading?

J.E.: Where is it? Where is it heading?

J.B.: And what are the dominant forces?

J.E.: Jack, I believe that South Carolina . . . I don't know whether it is going to happen in a year or in four years from now . . . but, the elements are present to make this a Republican state. I don't know how much longer it is going to take to do it, and it could happen this year . . . I'm not sure that it is going to happen this year, but it is entirely possible. We could elect enough Republicans throughout the state, including state wide offices, and hopefully Governor, and that race is still up in the air . . . the Democrats have absolutely plagued the devil, all my associates in the party will tell you that I have said from the very beginning that ~~them~~ <sup>Doh</sup> (?) could not beat Morris and he ain't going to beat him . . . Earl Morris is going to be the nominee (inaudible) and I don't want to be quoted on that, because I don't make a business of tending to their business. But Earl has been the State Chairman, he's done too many things, he's got too many IOU's, he owes too many people when you get right down to the nitty griddy of getting nominated within your party structure, it's who's got the most friends or who could get out and go hustling for them. Earl made friends and from that point of view I think Earl is a good State Chairman. He did his own work and he made friends and folks are not going to forget that, but I think, going back to your question that we are somewhere near the threshold of this State becoming Republican. It may be four more years before it happens, but I really sincerely feel that the philosophy, the

political thinking or whatever you want to call it . . . the people of this state, in the final analysis would end up being a Republican State, and I think we are going to stay that way for a long long time. I've had Democrats to tell me that this was going to happen. They agree with us, and I think it will. Now events beyond our control can dictate the time schedule as to when it will happen, but I think that it is a perfectly natural sequence of events that we keep moving along until we do become predominantly Republican state, and it will . . . when, I don't know, not too far off . . . we are just going to have to see how a few things develop. I don't know, for example, what effect the current national administration is going to have on the situation. Indications are that it is not going to be much of a backlash. You are not going to know until you count the votes though. There is a very strong possibility that we could pick up the Governorship this year with the right candidate. There is also a very real possibility that we could pick up at least two more congressmen, which would give us control of the congressional delegation for the first time ever, and if that happens you almost automatically go on and elect a good many additional people to the general assembly. If you win the Governorship, certainly you would hope to win maybe some of the other Constitution offices. So I think the transition is going to be made Jack, it is just a question of when.

J.B.: What is and what has been Roger Milliken's role in the development of the Republican party of South Carolina? As you know, the Democrats refer to him as the daddy warbucks

of the Republican party. What has been his actual role, a lot of people close to him are active in party affairs and party positions.

J.E.: <sup>Roger</sup> ~~Rodney~~ Milliken's role in the party has been absolutely honorable, forthright from the very beginning Mr. Milliken was one of the very few industrialists and persons of means to openly identify with the party. He has done certainly his part in every sense of the word. He has not tried to dominate the party in any way. So far as I know, I have never known Mr. Milliken to make any demands on the party of any kind for anything. I've also had the feeling that politically Mr. Milliken might be just a little bit naive politically, but then you know, and I say, I've said this a million times to a lot of people, <sup>Roger</sup> ~~Rodney~~ Milliken reminds me of the kind of brother who would have signed the Declaration of Independence. He is a fellow that if he believes it, he believes it and to hell with the consequences. I mean, I highly respect Mr. Milliken for doing what he thought was right, and he has not been the daddy warbuck, as the Democrats have wanted to say, he has done his part I guess in proportion . . . I don't know if you would say in proportion to his means because if he wanted to do that he could have (inaudible) the whole thing, but he hasn't done that, but he has done what other people have done . . . made reasonable contributions to the state party organization. He has never underwritten it in any sense, we have never asked him to. I think that would have been wrong. The fact that a number



of his people, if you want to call him his people, a number of people that are employed by the <sup>Roger</sup>~~Barry~~ Milliken interests are active in the Republican party, is a perfectly natural thing because they are businessmen, and their interest, whether it be <sup>Roger</sup>~~Barry~~ Milliken or some other type of business, their interest would lie with the Republican party. I don't think to my knowledge Mr. Milliken has never ordered anyone to do anything in the Republican party. It has been a matter of what they wanted to do. I know a lot of people like to use him as a whipping boy, jump on him, but I've never known Mr. Milliken to do anything except the absolutely honorable thing in every situation, and that is just it. I have a high regard for him, a very high regard, and the books are here to speak for themselves. As I say, he's done his part, but never has he underwritten the party ever, which . . .

Unident: Is he generally a campaign contributor to state wide and congressional level campaigns?

J.E.: Sure he is . . . now I say that like I know he is . . . I have always understood that he has always helped in financing cabinets for office. I know, as a matter of fact, I know . . . I was real amused the first time I ever had a chance to discuss political finances with Mr. Milliken was in the Workman campaign. Gayle <sup>Avery</sup>~~Everette~~ with Colonial Life, he was the finance chairman, and I was the campaign chairman and we drew up a budget of about \$250,000 from a public relations firm and some other people that were willing to help us put it together, so we

had to meet not only Mr. Milliken, but a whole group in Spartanburg, and Mr. Milliken was there, and we told him we were going to raise \$250,000 and this was in 1961 or 1962, I guess, and Mr. Milliken said it's fantastic it's impossible, he said it can't be done. You all don't realize how much money that is. We said we don't know sir, but we are going to try it. We did raise it, we raised \$252 or \$256, I forget. We ended up the campaign with about \$6,000 in the bank, which we turned over to the party. That just flabbergasted Mr. Milliken that we could raise that kind of money through county voters and getting out and just beating the bushes down all over the state coming up with the money, and we did. So our financing has always been pretty well broad based, Jack. As far as him giving money to other candidates, I don't place myself anywhere near his position financially, but I'm relatively well off, and I try to help them all out . . . I don't know what he gives them, I give what I think I can, but I've got a whole lot of dollars invested in the Republican party, so I give to the party here every year, I give to the national party, and I give to campaigns. I will assume that this is what he does.

J.B.: If you had the list of people that are now active in the party in an official capacity, those who have had relationship with Mr. Milliken would be ~~Halberg's~~ <sup>Hal Byrd is</sup> national committeemen.

J.E.: Right.

J.B.: His former attorney was Bob Chapman . . . (tape flipped) <sup>[now a federal]</sup> district judge

Unident: (inaudible) Any prediction on whether the state is going to become Republican in the Constitutional offices and so on in the near future. Why is that? Is that because the people in this state are basically conservative, is there a realignment taking place between the two parties, what is going to cause that?

J.E.: The Democrats power structure in this state has been held together for all these years, however long it has been, I'd say since ~~18~~<sup>8</sup>76, wasn't that when we threw Chamberlin out I believe at the Wade Hampton.

J.B.: 1876.

J.E.: I mean 1876. You have people like <sup>Sol Blatt</sup> ~~Sal Block~~ <sup>Edgar</sup> ~~Edmund~~ Brown and Marion Gressette, and Rembert Dennis and you can go on and on, who were basically conservative people. They are also people who were people who were entrenched in the general assembly and in the total affairs of the state government to the point that they sort of hold things together, and they were basically I mean if they had been living in some other Republican state, they would have been Republicans, a lot of them would have. But they are vanishing from the scene and they are being replaced by much younger and much more, well, for the sake of a better word, much more liberal people, and they are not going to be able to give this state even financially or in any other way as conservative government as it has had in the past. Neither are they going to have the power to hold the thing together. Now,

up until four or five years ago, I guess maybe five or six people, or six or seven people could have gotten together up around the state house and probably with one or two people who were interested, and they could pretty well write the ticket as to what was going to happen on a piece of legislation or any other matter in this state. Because you see Senator Brown retired and Speaker Blatts stepped down as Speaker, Marion Gressette is 76 or 78 years old. I mean these people as they pass from the scene the younger people that are coming in to replace them are not going to be able to hold on to this state like they have in the past. This is the number one factor that is going to help loosen the grip and give . . .

Unident: Has there been a shifting of conservative Democrats into the Republican party, is that where the Republican party is getting its strength?

J.E.: Oh yeah, in the beginning, sure. I mean . . .

Unident: Do you see this continuing?

J.E.: Yeah, yeah, I mean . . .

Unident: So you have a little bit of the conservatives under the Republican party, that leaves the Democratic party as more or less the liberal party.

J.E.: Right, right.

Unident: Is that true all over the south in your experience?

J.E.: In so far as I know. I mean this has been . . . I am not as close to a lot of these other states that I was

two, three or four years ago . . .

Unident: At that time that was the backbone of the strategy. . . When you compare the Republican party with the other ten states, how is it in terms of its development, is it stronger here than in other states, is it weaker, or is it about the same, or what?

J.E.: I'd say we are sort of in the medium, some may be stronger, some are definitely weaker. Now Florida, for example, we completely blew a chance for Florida to come out and out solid Republican when the party started (inaudible) back among themselves a while back. What was it about '70 Bill Cramer and Judge Carswell got into that scrap down there. The fellow we elected Governor down there, had a golden opportunity to work with that of course Senator Gurney, . . . you had the Governor and you had several fine congressmen down there that got to fighting among themselves and they almost blew the whole thing. They are going to have to rebuild and I think probably they will. Florida is the state that naturally ought to be Republican based on the type population they have. But I'd say we are probably just good average, probably medium so far as the Republican effectiveness goes right now.

Unident: How about, you are looking at the south in terms of the national Republican Party, it's a hell of a lot more important now than it was ten years ago, right?

J.E.: Yeah.

Unident: And among the southern states, isn't South Carolina one of the most important in terms of Republican national politics of the southern states. I mean you became Vice-Chairman, I mean you've got Harry Dent and so on and ~~Buzget~~ <sup>Buzhardt</sup> in the White House.

J.E.: I'd say this, that South Carolina is just . . . it happened for whatever the reason, that South Carolina, although one of the smaller states, has had probably the largest influence and the largest voice, all things considered than any of the southern states.

Unident: Why?

J.E.: Well, you make me say something that sounds egotistical. I don't know, we just seem to have had some people . . .

J.B.: Would the combination of Strom Thurmond and his role with President Nixon and you, and your role, and the fact that you were very close to Richard Nixon during the time time leading up to his campaign.

J.E.: Well not only close to Mr. Nixon, now don't print this because this sounds awful, but you could interview the members for the Republican National Committee, and talk to Ray Bliss, who was Chairman, I think in the most critical period of modern times of the Republican party . . . I had a hell of a lot of friends on that national committee (inaudible) I mean when I was chairman and committeeman, I made it . . . I didn't make it my job in the sense that I had an alterior motive, I just led the people, I mean, I just got to know a lot of people and nobody was closer to

Ray Bliss than I was, and during the time he was the National Chairman, I mean when Ray had problems there were four or five people he called to come to Washington and sit down . . . we were liable to sit there all night, and smoke four or five packs of cigarettes and climb the wall and . . .

Unident: It all went back though to '63, '64 and '65 when you were building this organization . . .

J.E.: And we were recognized and had done a good job here in this state. As a matter of fact, I was invited to go around the country to talk to old line Republicans on how to build an organization.

J.B.: Did you work with Bill Brock any?

J.E.: Yeah.

J.B.: Did you tell him how to do it?

J.E.: No, not really. No, I couldn't claim that credit, Jack.

J.B.: But did you pass on ideas and information to him?

J.E.: Yeah.

J.B.: Was he among the group that you talked about . . . the ideas.

J.E.: The people from this state, yes. You know when Ray was Chairman we used to have state chairman seminars, they have quit that thing now, but Ray Bliss, we had real serious two or three day workshops. I mean we went in there on nuts and bolts . . . this was the thing he was trying to get across to everybody, and of course I, on

several occasions had a significant part in these workshops that Ray was putting on . . . a participant in the program and went out to the western conference when they met in Denver, conference in western states, I went out there and we wanted to (inaudible) speakers and the workshop back their organization and work with me in that capacity, and so . . .

J.B.: My question is simply in Tennessee didn't that organizational effort begin after the organizational effort began here.

J.E.: Yeah. But I mean I am not going to claim credit for that. Bill Brock also did apparently . . . he and some of the folks who were close to him, Bill Timmons and some of the others, I am scared to start naming them, for fear I would leave some of them out, but they did very much what we did in trying to set up an organization that had live bodies in it.

Unident: But for the most part, as I remember, in '63 your's was about the only organization in the south that was not the traditional patronage kind of an organization . . .

J.E.: You are so right. We had the first . . . we had the first real viable organization in the south that you could call an organization state wide. Now I'll tell you where another one was. It was coming along about the same time, it was Alabama under John <sup>Grenier</sup> ~~Grenyate (?)~~. John was an organization man. In fact he and I went to some of these conferences together. He was managing Jim Martin's



Senatorial campaign the same time I was running Bill Workman's campaign. John and I swapped a lot of ideas and what have you . . . let me see Alabama at one time, I don't know how they are organized now . . . back when John was Chairman . . . another fellow who did a top job, although he had a tremendous state to organize was Peter O'Donnell in Texas. To me one of the most really brilliant political minds that I have ever run in to is Peter O'Donnell, and I just regret that he hasn't been used in the last five or six years, but he hasn't, it has been certainly a party loss, and I almost say the country's loss. Peter O'Donnell is absolutely brilliant, that applies to organization as well as to everything else. I remember so often in different campaigns, we were seeing people walking around with that organizational chart of his wanting to put names in the slots. I mean He wouldn't put a name down until he had done something. I mean when he put it down, by God, it had to be somebody that would get the job done . . .

J.B.: Where do you see the Republican party and blacks going in South Carolina?

J.E.: The Republican Party and the blacks? Jack, I really can't answer the question. Thank God, apparently race is no longer the issue with the party in this state. I haven't heard it come up in the Executive Committee meetings or small gatherings, or anything in a long time. As you know we have a number of real fine black people working for us in the Nixon campaign in '68, and then we

have had some involved in nearly every campaign . . . every major campaign since then. As a matter of fact, there was quite a number of them that were helpful in this break through in Richland County about two years ago. So I just think that the old prejudicial barrier or whatever you want to call it, that used to exist with some people, and it did, no longer is there. We had a meeting down here last night, we had several black gentlemen that attended the Executive Committee Meeting last night, and they want to get active in the party, we appointed a number of them to different boards and committees and commissions and that sort of thing. So Jack, I don't know, I used to think, and I may still think, I'm not sure, it is sort of an economic thing . . . Don Fowler I don't know where you got that twisted quote of his about . . . I said we didn't want anybody that didn't make \$10,000 a year or something . . . (inaudible) I always thought I got along pretty good with Don. You know him damn well, you ask him where he got it. I know what he twisted it out of . . . a remark I made one day that as the economic level of the black person . . . the black family increases, and they begin to experience a lot of the same responsibilities and what have you that the average working white family . . . trying to buy a home and educate children and send them to college and that sort of thing, and most importantly begin to pay taxes in some consequential amount, then we've got a chance for those people to be Republicans. A person that is going to be oriented to be aware of their type of situation, they would probably continue to vote Democrat. As I say, I

thought this for a number of years, and so I think affluence is not up to Don's \$10,000 figure but affluence in some amount . . . to put them in more or less the same situation that you find the average white family in, and I think we've got a chance, they may see that their interest is better served through the Republican party than the Democrat party and I don't men . . . I don't think we are going to lose it on the basis of us being prejudice against them, because I think that is gone. I think everybody now even some of the people who used to feel the strongest about that no longer have that feeling. I really don't run into that anymore. So, they certainly are welcome, politics is part of the process, so I just . . . I always hoped that they would affiliate with us as many as would, but I think this now pretty well the feeling of all the people that I know anything about. But now where they are going to go . . . I was reading just last night Mr. Harper, UCP talking about what they wanted to do this year. I think some of them will continue maybe for a while to be concerned with their being a third force rather than a part of the two traditional parties, but I don't think that has a chance to succeed. I don't see how in the world 25% or 35% of the population can hope to overcome 70%, and that is what he is talking about trying to do. So I think sooner or later . . . you'll always have some people who are going to try to lead this third movement, but the majority of them are going to be found at least voting and some of them certainly

working in one of the two traditional parties. I just hope to heck we get our share of them. I really do. I think there are a lot of them that should be for us in their own best interest.

J.B.: Predicting ahead ten years, what percentage of blacks in South Carolina will be voting Republican?

J.E.: Lord Jack, I don't know. I don't know. I remember before Senator Dirkson died, I remember him talking about his last campaign in which he . . . I mean he was adequately staffed with black staff members as well as white that did not neglect any of the black areas. Sent in workers in those areas and all. Did everything that you would do there, do anything there that you would do anywhere else, and he got 3 - 4% or 4 - 5% of the vote or something . . . it sort of just mystefied him - why. He had been the guy who hammered out the compromise on the Civil Rights Bill . . . I mean he had all the potential of getting black vote. In the Presidential elections, you know what the percentages are, you all know better than I do, I guess. I know they are very small. I just say hopefully that this can be overcome, and people don't automatically categorize themselves just because their skin is black. I mean, they say I'm supposed to be a Democrat. I think the Republican party is certainly wide open to receive them if they want to work with us, and I don't mean in a passive sort of way. I mean actively, we've gone out and asked them to. It's encouraging to me that the few

have during the last two or three elections, and I just hope it will continue, but to predict a percentage, I don't know. I would hope that we may have grown somewhere in the neighborhood of 25% of the black vote, in the not to distant future . . . if we do then we surely will become the majority party in this state, without any shadow of a doubt we will. I think we will regardless of how it turns out, but it would come a lot quicker and a lot easier if we had that 20% - 25% voting with us. I just hope that is what will happen.

J.B.: Anything else you wanted to add?

J.E.: No. I just . . . the only thing that . . . and I am sure again you fellows are much more aware of this than I am, this process of . . . and you all are working on the eleven states (inaudible). This thing started in '48, wasn't it? In '40, wasn't it in '40 . . . wasn't it in 1940 that there was some sort of independence ticket? . . . A Harry Byrd ticket . . . I believe there was one in this state in 1940 . . . I'm not sure, there was some kind of ticket in 1940 that involved Harry Byrd who was then a U. S. Senator . . . then of course the big break coming in '48 . . . but this thing had been going on, and the process of converting is becoming aggressively easier the further you get away from the Court House. By that, I mean you can convert somebody to vote your ticket for President a hell of a lot quicker than you can get someone to vote your ticket for Sherriff. You know, so going back to '48, we began the first significant break when we

actually did enough to change the electoral votes when the Senator carried 38 or 39 votes or whatever it was, Senator Thurmond did. I don't believe ever again since then, that you have had a solid south. It has always been a progressive thing . . . we got around to voting Republican on national level and then it just . . . once somebody does that then it is easier to vote on a state level, and easier to vote on the local level, so I think the old taboos about voting Republican have been broken down, and I think now it is going to be based on strictly who does the best job . . . candidate recruiting, or whatever you want to call it . . . you gets the best candidates and who does the best job of working for those candidates, but I don't think that ever again will be have a solid south that is in the bag for either party, and certainly I think it has proved to our benefit, I don't think there is any question about it. So, in that regard we have become pretty much like the rest of the nation . . . we're doubtful territory for everybody and this is good, and Lord knows in the last eight to twelve years . . . going back to '60, there have been more Presidential candidates in the south in that period of time then there have been in the whole history of the country put together. Just like recently, there have been more people to South Carolina . . . Ronald Reagan, Mr. Ford and this sort of thing, this is attention that we have never got. In fact it was a rather rare occasion when anybody of that stature in either party would be found down in these states because it was considered a

waste of time. Thank goodness that is no longer true. That is all I have got Jack, unless you all can think of something else.