

Harold Paulk (Hal) Henderson, Sr. Oral History Collection
OH ARN 01

Howard H. (Bo) Callaway, Sr. Interviewed by Telephone by Harold Paulk (Hal) Henderson, Sr.

Date: May 8, 1981

CD: OH ARN 01, Tracks 4 and 5; 0:19:57 minutes

Cassette: OH ARN 01, 0:19:57 minutes (End of Side 1; Side 2)

[CD: Track 4]

[Cassette: Tape counter 333 on side one]

HENDERSON: Mr. Callaway?

CALLAWAY: Yes.

HENDERSON: This is Hal Henderson in Tifton.

CALLAWAY: All right, Hal.

HENDERSON: I appreciated you doing this for me; it's really helping me out.

CALLAWAY: Well, good. I am going to ask your cooperation in being as fast as you can, 'cause I've got people running in all directions, and I got late coming back from a lunch.

HENDERSON: All right, sir.

CALLAWAY: [unintelligible] time.

HENDERSON: Do you have any objections if I tape this interview?



CALLAWAY: Not a bit.

HENDERSON: OK. To expedite matters I have some questions already written out.

CALLAWAY: Good.

HENDERSON: Let me begin. You were a Democrat up until the mid-sixties. Why did you decide to switch to the Republican Party?

CALLAWAY: I changed primarily in order to support Barry [Morris] Goldwater for president and that was in 1964.

HENDERSON: When did you decide to be a candidate for governor?

CALLAWAY: I was in Congress from 1964 to 1966; it was probably around February or March of 1966.

HENDERSON: I see. What indications did you have that a Republican could be elected governor in 1966?

CALLAWAY: Well, we didn't have any polling information at that time, but we knew [that] the Republican Party was beginning to build some steam, and I had at least felt I had some

popularity in the Third Congressional District. Since I was the only Republican in Congress--the only we'd had in a long time--I got a lot of statewide press and felt that I had pretty good statewide name identification and pretty good support statewide. Going to such things as Junior Chamber of Commerce, state conventions... I just got a feeling that from all over and around the state that there was a lot of support.

HENDERSON: OK. If Mr. [Samuel Ernest] Vandiver [Jr.]--who dropped out of the campaign--if he had stayed in the race, would still have continued your campaign?

CALLAWAY: Yes.

HENDERSON: OK. Mr. Vandiver withdraws on May the eighteenth. Senator [Herman Eugene] Talmadge announces that he might be a candidate. Would you have run if Senator Talmadge had indeed been a candidate?

CALLAWAY: I'm almost certain I would have. I had already decided to run prior to that.

HENDERSON: Uh-huh.

CALLAWAY: Having made those commitments to people, I imagine I would have stayed in.

HENDERSON: OK. Did you see Senator Talmadge's possible entry in the campaign as an anti-Callaway movement or an effort?

CALLAWAY: No, I didn't see that way at all.

HENDERSON: I see. OK. There were five candidates in the Democratic primary. I wonder if you can briefly assess their candidacy? Which one would you have preferred to run against, is what I am really asking. Now, let's start with Ellis [Gibbs] Arnall. How did you assess Mr. Arnall?

CALLAWAY: Well, I guess in retrospect, I would have rather ran against him, because the issues would have been clearer. He was perceived, at least, to be more on the liberal side. I was perceived to be more on the conservative side, and it would have been relatively easy to have any issue-oriented campaign. I feel that, naturally, I feel that I could have won that.

HENDERSON: OK. When Mr. Vandiver drops out, did you see Mr. Arnall as your major opponent and possibly winning the primary?

CALLAWAY: Well, I certainly saw him as *one* of the major opponents. I don't think I would have gone so far as to say *the* major opponent. There were several strong people in the race.

HENDERSON: How about Mr. James [Harrison (Jimmy)] Gray [Sr.]?

CALLAWAY: Probably, at that time, I would have seen him as the strongest candidate. He had a lot of backing from the traditional, so-called “king-makers” of the Democratic Party, a very attractive personality, and [he was] quite well known statewide.

HENDERSON: OK. How about Mr. Lester [Garfield] Maddox?

CALLAWAY: In the early part of the campaign, I did not take him as one of the strongest candidates. It was obvious as the campaign went along, however, that he began to become a very major and very strong candidate.

HENDERSON: How about Garland [Turk] Byrd?

CALLAWAY: Well, I had run against Garland Byrd for Congress and knew him quite well and respected him, but I did not think he was as strong [of] a candidate as someone like Ellis Arnall or Jimmy Gray.

HENDERSON: OK. And finally, Mr. Jimmy [James Earl] Carter [Jr.]?

CALLAWAY: I don't think any of us thought [that] he would be the strongest candidate in early stages of the governor's race. I think he amazed us in every political race he's run as being able to do a good job of campaigning. Toward the end of the campaign, he was

considered, by me at least, as a very serious candidate. And, of course, he almost got in the runoff.

HENDERSON: OK. Mr. Maddox does, of course, get the nomination, but in the primary-- the first results--there is some speculation that your supporters came over and voted in the Democratic primary for Mr. Maddox, thinking that he would be the weaker candidate. Do you subscribe to that theory?

CALLAWAY: I think a number of those supporters probably did, but I don't think that was anything like enough to change the results. I think it was not correct to say that the Republicans, in effect, nominated Maddox; he won quite handily. I am quite sure that the numbers who did that were relatively small.

HENDERSON: All right, so there was no effort on your part to encourage your people to vote in Democratic primary?

CALLAWAY: The Republicans generally voted for whomever they wanted to.

HENDERSON: I see. Both you and Mr. Maddox were segregationists. You were conservative; you were anti-federal government. What was the difference between the two candidates?

CALLAWAY: Well, I'm not sure anybody would like the term "segregationist." There were many things that I felt were better by being done in such things as giving freedom of choice, which some people might say is segregationist. In the term that that means, I'm not sure that my thoughts were what most people think of when they say that. So, I'm not sure I feel comfortable with your calling me that—

HENDERSON: OK.

CALLAWAY: But I understand what your question is.

HENDERSON: I'm going by what most of the press was saying at that time.

CALLAWAY: Yes, yes. I understand what you're saying. And I guess a major difference that I felt was important was a difference in experience. I had had substantial business experience, successful business experience. It was my father's idea, of course, starting from the very beginning Callaway Gardens [Pine Mountain, Georgia] and making it into what I feel is one of the outstanding, both resort and horticultural, areas in America. To start something like that from the beginning, when almost everyone would say there's no chance of it succeeding economically and making it into an economic success, I think it was a business experience that I think was substantially more than Mr. Maddox had had with his restaurant. But, politically, of course, having served in Congress.... And I just think it was one of experience and one of responsibility. I don't think that people looked at Mr.

Maddox's race as particularly one of needing responsible answers. In other words, he could do things that seemed irresponsible, and it didn't seem to bother anybody.

HENDERSON: OK. All right now. According to the press reports and again, this is going by what the press was saying, that once Mr. Maddox gets the nomination, you have to run against a conservative candidate. And that it was an error on your part by not shifting or modifying your position a little bit to pull in some of the moderate votes. The moderate vote felt like it had nowhere to go. And again this is just what the press is saying. Do you feel it was an error on your part by not appealing more to the moderate vote?

CALLAWAY: Well, I think in retrospect, it was, and it was on a basis, as most people think of politicians, you run a race and you just posture yourself and put yourself wherever you think you can get the most votes. I've never really thought [chuckles] that's what I got in politics for. I think I did remain true to the same principles pre-primary, post-primary, and I think I'd do essentially the same thing again. I probably would spend more time with the so-called moderates that you are speaking of right there. I think I would have been, had I realized the write-in kind of situation, I think I could have done some things to nip that in the bud. But, I don't think that I'm the kind of person who ever would have shifted my "stands" in a way to appeal to different people. I don't just don't think you need politicians to shift with the winds. I think you need people to stand for what they stand for. I think I could have run a campaign which put more emphasis on talking with the people who would have had influence with the write-in campaign. And had I done that, that would have been better, and so, of course, that was a mistake.

HENDERSON: In your, I believe, your Fourth of July speech, your opening speech, you attack the Sanders administration. Did that have any repercussions later on? Did Governor [Carl Edward] Sanders work against you actively in the campaign? Or did that hurt you with the moderate vote? Or do you think it had any impact?

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[Cassette: Side 2]

CALLAWAY: Yes, it had some impact. I [never attacked] the Sanders administration. I did say that--and it's just sort of a conservative thing, that I felt, a fiscal conservative, conservative in the right way--and I think the one sentence that as I recall, it's been a long time ago, but as I recall, the one sentence that was interpreted as attacking the Sanders administration saying that if they didn't need the huge surplus, they shouldn't have collected it, you see.

HENDERSON: Uh-huh.

CALLAWAY: Or, if they had the money, they should have either spent it or not have collected it, something along that line. And you know, I happen to believe that. I don't think government is for the purpose of taxing people and raising huge amounts of money and just sticking it in a pocket somewhere. In retrospect, that was a mistake, in retrospect I think

Sanders wasn't [hurt?], and I think he got pretty mad about it. In other words, I think he was taking great credit and pride in the fact that he had this huge surplus, and I was just saying that he shouldn't have done it. And in retrospect, there was no need of my saying that; it didn't really accomplish anything.

HENDERSON: OK. You--during the campaign--you voted against the minimum wage bill. Do you think that cost you any support with labor or the working class?

CALLAWAY: Yes. [It] cost me a *lot* of support, I knew it at the time, and it was one of those things where I'm campaigning, and I had to go all the way back to Washington to vote, and it took a lot of time away from the campaign. It was one of those things that I did. But, I thought it was such an important vote. I took a lot of time away from Congress in order to campaign, but I tried to make all of the major votes--you only get maybe one or two of those a week and the others are relatively inconsequential. I thought I should have been recorded on that, I thought the people elected me to Congress to vote on the controversial issues. It hurt me, it hurt me a whole lot, and I knew at the time I voted it would hurt me a whole lot. I happen to have believed then and believe now what many people are believing now that the minimum wage does work a disadvantage on the young, the blacks, the minorities, people who have a hard time getting a job. And that had been my business experience, and the more I talked to people the more I believed it. Realizing that labor does not share those views and labor thinks that a vote against the minimum wage is a vote against labor.

HENDERSON: Mr. Maddox, during the campaign makes a major issue of your wealth. Do you think the fact that you were a wealthy candidate hurt your campaign?

CALLAWAY: I don't know. I suppose that's always a good issue. I look at that as a demagogue issue. [pause] I don't know. I suppose there are some people that figure that anybody who has got any money couldn't be a good governor. I don't think it hurt much. I think what Maddox did a whole lot better job of was he was able to--in a very, very good campaigning way--to say to people Look, you and I understand each other. I've been poor, and you've been poor, and therefore we share experiences that Bo Callaway can't understand. I think that's the way that he was more effective with it, and it was fairly effective.

HENDERSON: Do you think the television debates damaged your campaign any?

CALLAWAY: I don't think so. I thought, I thought we probably broke even on those. My crowd thought we won, and his crowd thought he won.

HENDERSON: The write-in effort, of course, plays a major part in the campaign. Do you think that the write-in effort prevented you from being elected governor?

CALLAWAY: Oh, without question.

HENDERSON: Who do you think was behind the write-in movement?

CALLAWAY: I don't remember now, all of the people that were behind it, but it's been pretty well documented. There were some out of state people either with the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] or some people of that kind that came in and put money into it. There were some people working with various minority groups, and I've forgotten now whether it was CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] or NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] or some of those. But that was pretty well documented. And, I don't object to the right of those people to do this, it's a perfectly legitimate expression of democracy. So, I'm not being critical when I say these people did that.

HENDERSON: Do you think that Mr. Arnall is behind it in any way?

CALLAWAY: Well, certainly he was behind it. Without his permission it couldn't have happened.

HENDERSON: I see.

CALLAWAY: Now, I'm not saying he promoted it, but I'm saying once it happened, it could not have happened without his permission. All he had to do was to send out one sentence that says "I do not authorize this effort on my behalf," and it would have been over.

HENDERSON: Do you think he was doing the state a disservice by not doing that?

[CALLAWAY and HENDERSON laugh]

HENDERSON: That's a loaded question, isn't it?

CALLAWAY: In my prejudiced view, I would have been a better governor. And had he done that, I would have been governor. [laughs] No, that's a prejudiced view.

HENDERSON: OK. You said this has been documented. Do you have any knowledge where I could pick this documentation up? I haven't run across this...

CALLAWAY: You know, I really don't, but there was some people, there was a national—it was either the ACLU or something—and I should remember the name, but it's been a long time.

HENDERSON: OK. Well, I'll look into this some more, because--

CALLAWAY: He wrote a book about it or something in which he talked about this. It was a national book about, oh, something his life and what he had done. And he talked quite a bit about what he was doing then and also he appeared before the Supreme Court when it came time for that part of it. It was either ACLU from Mississippi or something. But, I'm not sure that that significant; I'm not saying that it didn't spring up from local people either. But,

there were some people that were going around to the various cities organizing the write-in, and those names are in the papers, I'm sure, because I've forgot who all they were.

HENDERSON: There was a suit filed in federal court, after neither you or Mr. Maddox got the necessary majority, which sought a run-off election. Mr. Maddox charged that you were behind this suit. Were you?

CALLAWAY: I was not behind it in the sense of paying for it, nor as I recall was I the one who originally thought of the idea. But I did meet with the people who were doing this, and I certainly was in favor of it.

HENDERSON: Uh-huh.

CALLAWAY: I was always in favor of a run-off. It was clear to me that I would not win in a Democratic [Georgia General] Assembly. And I think the people of Georgia were almost unanimously in favor of a run-off. And in every election we'd ever had for governor, there had always been a run-off, because the elections previously had been in primaries rather than in general elections. No, I think the people were for that. It made sense; it's where it ought to be. I don't think many would disagree with the fact that we should not have a governor who was actually beat in an election to become governor. If you want fifty percent, fine, but let's just have a run-off instead of making the guy who came in second governor.

HENDERSON: Right. As the campaign progresses do you have any indication that it's going to be as close as it is or do you think you are going to have a good solid victory? How did the campaign progress?

CALLAWAY: Well, of course, you've already mentioned one of the big turning points, when Ernie Vandiver got out.

HENDERSON: Right.

CALLAWAY: When I was running with Ernie Vandiver in, I knew that it would uphill fight--and Ernie's a good friend of mine. And there's nothing wrong with running against good friends, I guess. I knew it would be a tough, uphill fight. And from the time he got out I thought I had a really good chance to win. The campaign went well, was moving well, and we were leading in the polls at the time of the run-off. I guess the support for Lester Maddox, which was a combination of the kind of campaign he ran, which did appeal to, well, everything that would appeal to...enormously to rural people. I thought I had a rural background, but he sure appealed in the rural areas, and he appealed to people that identified with his background of being poor and one of them and all of those things. We knew we were in a tight race certainly from the last two or three weeks.

HENDERSON: OK.

CALLAWAY: I had expected to win, but I knew it was going to be tight. Well, I did win.

[CALLAWAY and HENDERSON laugh]

HENDERSON: The charges made, and again this is a charge made in some of the newspapers at the time, that what really did you in, one of the factors, was that you were really an ineffective campaigner. How do respond to a charge like that?

CALLAWAY: Well, that's a legitimate charge if anybody wants to make it. I would just say in the history of Georgia at that time, in modern history, only one person had been elected as a Republican to Congress. I wouldn't think that sounds like too ineffective campaigning. I was the first person to run for elected office for *any* statewide office in some hundred years as a Republican. And I won the election. So, I'm not uptight about that, if they want to think it was a poor campaign.... Now I'm sure of this: had I been a better campaigner, I would have won that extra percent or two that would have gotten me over fifty percent. But, everybody makes mistakes in campaigns. I made my share, but on the whole it had to be an effective campaign. Why is it the first Republican to run, and not only because Lester Maddox was running. Most people think that I would have done better against Ellis Arnall, so, I'm not uptight about that. If some people want to feel that way, that's fine.

HENDERSON: You mentioned you made some mistakes during the campaign. Have you enumerated those in our conversation or are there some that you have not discussed?

CALLAWAY: Well, I guess mostly I have, I guess one of the mistakes would be not to, we didn't shift gear as quickly as we might have. Realizing the difference between Lester Maddox and Ellis Arnall, really the campaign had been prepared, and we had thought it well out to run against, originally Ernie Vandiver and then Ellis Arnall or not Ellis Arnall maybe Jimmy Carter.... I think the campaign strategy was very well done. And a quick shift--not a shift of positions--I don't believe in that. I don't believe that, "Hey, suddenly I was liberal and now I've become a conservative" or that, I don't mean that. But a shift in the strategy of where you put your resources, where I spend my time, which people I spend my time talking to--

HENDERSON: Yes.



CALLAWAY: --things of that kind. I think we went as quick to shift as we should have been. It was hard for us to suddenly realize the dramatic shift in the campaign in one day.

HENDERSON: Right.

CALLAWAY: You've been working for a year on something and it's hard to get your mind changed in one day.

HENDERSON: Right. Now I have been asking all the other candidates this, and I realize that it has been fifteen or so years ago, and I'm not trying to pin anyone down as far as exact

amount. But, roughly speaking, do you have any recollection about how much your campaign cost?

CALLAWAY: My recollection is in the order of a quarter million--I mean, three-quarters of a million dollars. That's right [unintelligible].

HENDERSON: OK. Did the national Republican Party aid in any way your effort?

CALLAWAY: They aided by sending people down and helping. I don't recall that they gave any financial aid, but as you say, it's fifteen years ago.

HENDERSON: Right. [chuckles]

CALLAWAY: But, they did send people down. They advised with us, and they were helpful.

HENDERSON: OK. Let me ask you one other question, Mr. Callaway. What would you have done differently, if you had the chance to do it again?

CALLAWAY: Well, I mentioned that I think I would have stopped everything for a day or two, everything except absolute commitments, for a day or two or three. And just gotten with--and we had some very bright people, both in our campaign and just volunteers around--advise us, and just gotten together for two or three days away from everything and said, "All

right, now we've got a different campaign, we've had strategies, we've had campaign manuals, we've had everything. Let's throw them all out the window and start over. And how do we effectively, again, I want to emphasize this, again, not changing positions. I ran because I believed in something, and I didn't want to do that. A campaign is far more than positions and issues. It's how you use the candidate's time, who you speak to, and just from that point said, "How do we--in this changed environment--how do we do everything differently?" I don't think we realized the differences I've said.

HENDERSON: OK. Is there anything that maybe I should have asked that I haven't asked?

[HENDERSON and CALLAWAY laugh]

CALLAWAY: Gee, I don't think so. I think you're prepared.

HENDERSON: OK.

CALLAWAY: And what's going to be the upshot of this? Is this a book or this a...

HENDERSON: No, this is my doctoral dissertation.

CALLAWAY: Doctoral dissertation.

HENDERSON: Yes, sir.

CALLAWAY: Oh, that's interesting. Will be able to send a copy to those of us that are talking to you?

HENDERSON: Well, I saw Mr. Arnall the other day, and he requested a copy, and if you'd like one, I'd be glad to send you a copy.

CALLAWAY: I'd sure like one. I'd be interested in what you come up with.

HENDERSON: OK.

CALLAWAY: Be interested in what his answers were.

[HENDERSON and CALLAWAY laugh]

HENDERSON: OK. Mr. Callaway, I appreciate you taking your time to do this for me, it helped me a lot.

CALLAWAY: Thank you, Hal. I appreciate you rushing through it, because I am on a tight schedule.

HENDERSON: Right. Thank you very much.

CALLAWAY: Right. Good.

[End of Interview]



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