

Harold Paulk Henderson, Sr. Oral History Collection

Series I: Ellis Arnall

OH ARN 03

Lester G. Maddox Interviewed by Harold Paulk (Hal) Henderson, Sr.

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Cassette: OH ARN 03, 0:38:59 minutes

CD: OH ARN 03, Tracks 1-4; 0:38:59 minutes

[Cassette: Side 1]

[CD: Track 1]

HENDERSON: Mr. Maddox, you had unsuccessfully run for public office on three previous occasions. Why did you decide to enter the governor's race in 1966?

MADDOX: Well, I had never thought really I'd be a candidate for any public office when I was growing up and even as a young man. I just watched people campaign [telephone rings in background] for a long time and noticed that they often campaigned one way and they lived another. And I thought I would see if I couldn't keep working until I got elected and see what I could do – one man outside the establishment could do a better job.

HENDERSON: Any time you need to go, just—[tape stops and starts] That's OK—any time it rings, we'll just stop in the middle of it. Did that complete your answer?

MADDOX: Yes.

HENDERSON: OK. Former Governor [Samuel Ernest] Vandiver [Jr.] was campaigning to return to the governor's office. What were your objections to his candidacy?

MADDOX: Well, I didn't have any particular objections. I had noticed that whoever the governors might be—candidates for public office, as I stated previously—that people campaign one way and then they get elected [and] they act another way. And I had not found anybody in public office--in high public office--that I thought was different from that. And my goal was to see what one man could do free from the establishment--and I was free. The governor [that] you mentioned and the others were part of what we call the “political establishment.” I don't think we need the professional politicians particular[ly]. I think we need mavericks more than anything else in public life. And I'd rather have a maverick in there that make a mistake than someone in there professional who'd cover it all up. And so this was my whole idea that I was wondering in myself what would ever happen to Lester Maddox—would I change as others had changed? And I thank God I didn't. I went in and came out the same way. And speaking about being part of the establishment, the Democratic Party fought me harder than the Republican Party, although I was a Democratic candidate. And when I was elected, the party didn't even have enough money to have a state convention in Macon, Georgia. I had to help borrow money to get a state convention. And it was \$225,000 in debt and when I left office, it had \$225,000 in the treasury. And I had to beat to get there. And all the other candidates but they were represented generally by—most of them—by the political establishment. And I had to beat the major banks and utility companies, railroads, the state and national Democratic and Republican parties, the city halls, and the courthouses and the state house and the daily television and newspapers.

HENDERSON: OK. We talked about Mr. Vandiver just a little bit. Mr. [Ellis Gibbs] Arnall was trying for a political comeback. How did you view Mr. Arnall?

MADDOX: Of course, Mr. Arnall was my political opposite so far as our—what you call constructive or conservative or liberal views of concern. And I viewed him as a very able person that never shunned identifying his views and his position, but they were the opposite of those of Lester Maddox and the rank-and-file Georgian that I represented.

HENDERSON: OK. How about Mr. James [Harrison] Gray [Sr.] who was also a [candidate]?

MADDOX: Mr. James Gray was and is a very able person. He only got in the campaign after Ernest Vandiver dropped out. And I had already announced a long ago that I was going to be a candidate, and I remained a candidate. I think James Gray was qualified of—any successful business man, not just James Gray, any successful business man that has had to build his own business, he's his own legislature, he's his own governor, he's his own president, he's his own secretary—any good business man could make a good governor or a good public official. But often times a good public official could never make a good business man. I say that James Gray could serve well in most any capacity.

HENDERSON: So, if you had not already announced way back in '65, and Mr. Gray had gotten in, would you have supported Mr. Gray?

MADDOX: I probably would have supported Mr. Gray. Yes.

HENDERSON: How about Mr. Garland [Turk] Byrd?

MADDOX: I think Garland Byrd is, you know, generally what we see in public office. He is in the legal profession and a lot of those people are in your government. Sometimes I think you have too many of them in your government. And I think he was a dedicated lieutenant governor of the state. I have no way of knowing too much about his political life other than knowing that one time he was lieutenant governor.

HENDERSON: Do you think that you and Mr. Gray and Mr. Byrd pulled from the same group of voters, the conservative group of voters? Is that a false statement? Or is Mr. Byrd a little more for the moderate side?

MADDOX: I think that Mr. Gray and myself would have pulled from almost the same people. I think Mr. Byrd would have pulled more from the political segment of our society and that Mr. Gray would have pulled more from the top-level business segment of our society, and that they people that supported Lester Maddox were ordinary people--generally speaking--like when I went to Mr. Mills [Bee] Lane of C & S Banks [Citizens and Southern National Bank] to seek his support he said I'm not going to support you. I said Well, I'm going to beat you. And he said Well, I don't believe it. And I said Well, I will and when I do, I'll call you then and when I do call you after I beat you, you better come running. He said Well, I don't believe you're going to beat me but if you do beat me and then you call me I will come running. And he did and he did a great job. He always has, Lane, Mills Lane.

HENDERSON: How about Mr. [James Earl] Jimmy Carter [Jr.]? First time he ran for governor.

MADDOX: Jimmy Carter personifies what I think about a lot of just professional politicians, and we have an abundance of them. We always have; I guess we always will. He [is] evidently one of the great campaigners the world has ever known, but that's the only thing remarkable about him.

HENDERSON: How would you classify him in that election? Would he be a conservative or a liberal or...would he be taking votes away from you?

MADDOX: Whatever he thought might be best—he's everything. He most of all, he got in over his head, a much larger job and he failed to call on smart people. He got smart alecks and got in over his head and proved to be inept. And a lot of us get in over our head but sometimes we have enough of common sense to call on some qualified people to do the big jobs. And when you've got a big job, you don't call on little people. You call on big people. And I think that was a failure of Mr. Carter.

HENDERSON: During the primary, you charge that agents of James Gray sought to get you out of the race by paying you or offering you \$100,000. Did you think—

MADDOX: No, sir, I never made that charge. A lot of other people did. I didn't know who it was. They had told me first when they brought—they told me that it was \$250,000. They told

me that it was the same people that had worked with a previous candidate that they got out of another race for governor previously and that they were representing Ellis Arnall. And so I had no idea, really, who it was, believing that maybe they were telling me the truth when they approached me. And once they delivered that money to the Dempsey Hotel in Macon, Georgia, I still didn't have any idea. Later, I read in the paper indications--I never had no proof of it--that James Gray's people were involved. I don't know.

HENDERSON: So you're saying—I quoted these words from—*The Macon Telegraph* [Macon, Georgia] quoted you—is that an error, that story's in error?

MADDOX: It is. If I said that James Gray—

HENDERSON: They said *agents* of James Gray approached you. They didn't--

MADDOX: Well, I heard that it was agents of James Gray. I don't know.

HENDERSON: But you do not think that—

MADDOX: They told me they were agents of Ellis Arnall, so I never told them that it was agents of James Gray, other than I had read in the paper later, maybe a year after or something, that they represented James Gray. And all I know is what I read in the fish wrapper.

HENDERSON: So, to the best of your knowledge, Mr. Gray made no effort to get you out of the campaign at all?

MADDOX: No, I know of no effort that he made.

[CD: Track 2]

HENDERSON: You came in second in the primary, and there is a claim that a lot of Republicans and supporters of [Howard Hollis] Bo Callaway decided to vote for you, thinking you would be the weaker candidate and setting Mr. Callaway up. Do you go along with that theory?

MADDOX: I think that's ridiculous. [HENDERSON laughs] He got all the Republican votes and a lot of Democratic votes. There were not that many Republicans in the state for him to have gotten the votes that he did. And what you're saying and what some people have claimed is that a lot of the Republicans voted for Lester Maddox. That's not true.

HENDERSON: No, I'm not saying that. I'm just asking do you agree with that theory, and obviously you don't. [HENDERSON laughs]

MADDOX: No, sir, I do not agree with that theory. There were not enough of Republicans, in other words—

HENDERSON: Mr. Arnall was thinking that was one of the causes why he was defeated. He is quoted as saying—

MADDOX: What defeated Ellis Arnall was—well, what caused the legislative election was the result of Ellis Arnall being a write-in candidate. He had no business being a write-in candidate. And he said he wouldn't take that position on it either to be taken off or to stay on, but so long as he left it that way then some 55,000 or 60,000 Democrats wrote in the name "Ellis Arnall." Most of those people, I would say 99% of those 55,000 or 60,000 people, were hard-core Democrats, and they would *never* vote for a Republican or never write in or vote for anything other than a hard-core liberal Democrat. And so, had they not written in Ellis Arnall's name, those that went to vote would have voted for Lester Maddox, the Democrat. Some of them would have not voted at all, but it would have been a very small percentage of what we would call the write-in vote that would have stayed home. The ones that went out would have never voted Republican. So if there had not been a write-in candidate—

HENDERSON: You would have gotten it.

MADDOX: --I would have gotten it by a pretty good sized amount.

HENDERSON: So you see the write-in movement as really an effort against you?

MADDOX: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

HENDERSON: Do you think Mr. Arnall behind the scenes was involved in this, this promoting this either financially or organizational structure or anything?

MADDOX: Well, I have no way of knowing.

HENDERSON: But you think he should have just —

MADDOX: I called him and asked him to get out. I told him that if he stayed in and got a lot of write-in votes, he would be taking them away from Lester Maddox.

HENDERSON: I believe you call Mr. Gray thirteen or fourteen times according to the papers asking him to get out. This was during the primary. Was that because...?

MADDOX: I don't recall...

HENDERSON: OK, I'm again quoting the papers.

MADDOX: Yes, sir. I don't recall ever calling him and asking him to get out.

HENDERSON: OK, you do not, OK. [chuckles]

MADDOX: Before he got in, he had agreed to be the state chairman of the state Democratic Party under my administration.

HENDERSON: That was—

MADDOX: And I did name him later even though he was my opponent, later in the race.

HENDERSON: That was before the campaign...

MADDOX: Before he announced his candidacy.

HENDERSON: Uh-huh, I see.

MADDOX: He had agreed to be and I had called upon him and asked him to be chairman of the state Democratic Party when I got elected governor of Georgia. And then after he agreed to do that he announced after Vandiver got out that he was going to run. So that killed that particular thing at that time *if* he got elected governor of Georgia.

HENDERSON: Mr. Arnall, during the primary, said that he really was not as liberal as a lot of people thought he was. In fact, he was a fiscal conservative who during his previous administration had balanced the budget and had not raised taxes and that sort of thing. But yet do you still see him as—I think you used the term—a hard-core liberal? Why do you call him a *hard-core* liberal? His stance on what?

MADDOX: Well, I think he was generally identified as a liberal by the public, by the media, and even today when the news media write about Ellis Arnall, they identify him at that time as the governor of this state is a liberal. So, I was carrying along with it.

HENDERSON: Do you think that label hurt him? He tried to get away from it.

MADDOX: I believe it did. Yes, sir. I believe my election was--not just here in Georgia, but nationwide there was a movement of conservative, constructive conservatives, a movement going on across the nation. It was really only interrupted by the election of Carter which was caused not by Carter but caused by Richard [Milhous] Nixon. Richard Nixon had messed up—had not messed up--Carter would have never gone to the White House. So he ought to thank Richard Nixon for getting Jimmy Carter elected president.

HENDERSON: Let me go back to Mr. Vandiver. He withdraws on May the eighteenth because he has a heart attack, he says. And on that day Senator Talmadge announces that he might be a candidate. And for a period of days there it seems that he would be a candidate. Why do you think Mr. Talmadge even thought about leaving the Senate and returning home to Georgia?

MADDOX: Well, he liked to be in a position of making the decision and being able to execute it. You can't do that in Congress. And he wanted to come back, but then he later announced that his people had asked him to stay where he was.

HENDERSON: Right.

MADDOX: And I'm sure some of them did but there was more of them telling him that he better not [laughter] get in the governor's race.

HENDERSON: If he had entered the campaign would you still have remained in it as a candidate?

MADDOX: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

HENDERSON: OK. And how would you have campaigned against Mr. [Herman Eugene] Talmadge?

MADDOX: I think he would have lost his Senate seat and the governor's race at that time.

HENDERSON: All right, now how would you have campaigned against him? Here was a segregationist like yourself, conservative and he had fought the Civil Rights Acts and that sort of thing—what would have separated you from Senator Talmadge?

MADDOX: Well, I suppose the only was that I was not in the political establishment. And not one of them. I was an outsider.

HENDERSON: Did Senator—

MADDOX: I think that's a big difference.

HENDERSON: Did Senator Talmadge, during the primary, give you any support?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: Did anybody in the political establishment?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: OK. Once you get the run-off and once you are the nominee of the party, how about Senator Talmadge then? Does he work behind the scenes for you?

MADDOX: He moved in real strong.

HENDERSON: Now when you say "real strong" what do you mean?

MADDOX: After the primary run-off and some before the primary run-off.

HENDERSON: With financial support...?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: But just word of mouth...?

MADDOX: A politician never did support me at all financially.

HENDERSON: But after you get—

MADDOX: They still haven't.

HENDERSON: During the period you're running against Mr. Arnall, during this run-off campaign, is Talmadge supporting you behind the scenes? Or do you recall?

MADDOX: His people were supporting me.

HENDERSON: His people were. He made no speeches endorsing you?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: During the primary, did Mr. [Carl Edward] Sanders, who was then governor, get involved to your knowledge? Was he supportive of Mr. Arnall?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: He was not. How about during the run-off?

MADDOX: No, sir.

HENDERSON: Once we get down to the general election, did he give support to you against Mr. Callaway?

MADDOX: I don't recall.

HENDERSON: So, if he did, it was not very vigorous?

MADDOX: I believe this about Mr. Sanders—he wanted a Democrat to go back in to follow him. And in the general election he gave me an opportunity and Bo Callaway an opportunity to—not after—it was after the general election—we studied the budget, be prepared, whichever one of us got the nomination or election would be ready to go or near ready as possible. He supported me. I don't know whether it was public or not [but] he supported me *after* the general election when it become necessary for the legislature to handle the election.

[Cassette: Begin Side 2]

[CD: Track 3]

HENDERSON: All right. You run against Mr. Callaway in the general election. Both of you are conservative, both of you are segregationists, both of you were opposed to Lyndon [Baines]

Johnson and “The Great Society.” How did you differ? What was the difference between your candidacy and Mr. Callaway’s candidacy?

MADDOX: Well, Bo Callaway had already been in public office. And he had a record. And Bo Callaway--the great difference was he came from a different make-up socially and financially from Lester Maddox, and he had difficulty relating to ordinary people. He could do a great job with those at his level and did a great job for those at his level. He did have difficulty relating to ordinary people. You might recall all during the campaign if you picked up the papers now that—how constantly the media was after Lester Maddox, almost totally as though I were going to wreck Georgia and drive industry out, close the schools. We’ve had more industry come in than ever dreamed of. Nothing to close, no schools were closed. Exact[?] opposite of what they had predicted. But all during that campaign we had Democrats for Callaway, and in particular, the Atlanta fish wrappers all constantly attacking Lester Maddox. Far more than they did [Adolf] Hitler or [Fidel] Castro [Ruz] or [Alphonse] Al Capone.

HENDERSON: If you had not been a candidate and if you had a choice say, of Mr. Callaway and another Democrat, could you have supported Mr. Callaway?

MADDOX: Yes, sir.

HENDERSON: So, even though he were not a Democrat, you could leave the Democratic Party and vote for the man.

MADDOX: Yes, sir. I've voted for a lot of Republicans. I've voted for [Dwight David] Eisenhower, Nixon...

HENDERSON: How would you describe—

MADDOX: [Ronald Wilson] Reagan, in fact I predicted two weeks before the southeastern news service that Reagan would probably take every state in the South except Georgia and that I assured 'em he would take four of them but I thought it was a good chance he'd take all the southeastern states except Georgia. It wasn't but a few days that he took every southeastern state but Georgia.

HENDERSON: What was the biggest problem that you had in your campaign? Was it money? Was it organization?

MADDOX: No, sir. I didn't have any money--that didn't make any difference. I didn't have organization—that didn't make organization--I think that helped me win, not having the money not having organization. They couldn't tie me to anything that had gone on. I guess the only difficulty I had was the dishonest, bias, deceptive, misleading prejudiced attacks of the media and some of the Democratic leadership.

HENDERSON: How do you respond to the charge that you were an irresponsible campaigner[?]?

MADDOX: Well, that was part of what was going on. I had proven myself in my personal life, family life, business life, and all that I was not irresponsible. And when you don't have no way to hit at anybody and you can't prove them wrong, then you lie about them. So I was lied about.

HENDERSON: Do you think the fact because you were involved with the Civil Rights Act of '64 [1964] and your ultimate closing of the Pickrick [Cafeteria, Atlanta, Georgia] that this really aided your recognition throughout the state and gave you an advantage that a lot of candidates didn't have? People *knew* you—

MADDOX: I think it hurt me.



HENDERSON: You think it hurt you?

MADDOX: Yes. That's what the media used and some people leading in labor and business and professionals, they used that all day long with every person they could reach as an attempt to destroy me. See, I ran for lieutenant governor in '62, and I beat all the candidates except one and that was my first state-wide race. And had I not had my problem at the restaurant I think I would have had a far greater vote in 1966, but they used the restaurant and my position there—closing--the fight that I waged that I wish today that I had won. I think black people and white people would all be better off. I was defending private enterprise for black people and white people and right to private property. They used that as though I was far worse than Hitler or Castro or Al Capone or most vile person on the Earth, and it hurt--it hurt terrifically, their

deception, deceptive lies, dishonest use of that particular way of campaigning against someone. And a lot of them that voted against me have been to me over the years and apologized for it.

HENDERSON: Well, my next question is about newspapers. I was looking at some of the newspapers in the general election endorsing Mr. Callaway, and just page after page and I don't see any that endorsed you. Maybe I overlooked some, but I didn't—

MADDOX: I don't recall one or a courthouse or a city hall. Lyndon Johnson was fighting me and everybody else.

HENDERSON: Did you say Mr. Johnson was fighting you?

MADDOX: Yes, sir.

HENDERSON: How was he—

MADDOX: I went to—you know he wouldn't even let me in the White House the year before, and I got elected and he welcomed me with open arms. He sent [William] Marvin Watson picked me out of all the other governors up there to come in his office with him and so forth. And I told him then, you know, after that election—before the election they said if Callaway could be elected that the possibility of four or five Georgia congressmen--Democratic congressmen--losing in their race for reelection, and they told me--the congressmen did--“we hope you make it” after I got in beyond the general election “because we feel like if you lose,

we're going to lose." So I brought this up to Lyndon Johnson. He had lost forty-four or forty-five Democratic congressmen in 1966, and I said You were fighting me and if your people had won in Georgia you wouldn't have just lost those forty-four or forty-five, you would have lost four or five more. And he agreed with me, Lyndon Johnson did.

HENDERSON: But you say he campaigned against you in the primary? Did I hear you correctly?

MADDOX: Yes, sir. His people around him that supported him here in Georgia...

HENDERSON: Uh-huh. I see.

MADDOX: Yes, sir.

HENDERSON: OK. Mr. Callaway, of course, receives the plurality of about three thousand votes. The election has gone into the legislature. There was some talk about having another election to let the people decide the issue. And ultimately, it was decided that the legislature would decide. I believe you were in support of going ahead and letting the legislature decide the issue.

MADDOX: I supported either one. If it had a reelect—you know, have another election—or that way, either way it would suit me at the time.

HENDERSON: You were not strongly fav—

MADDOX: That was my public position that I would like to go back to the polls. I don't know what they published or what they printed.

HENDERSON: I think Mr. Gray made a statement that you had gone through with having elections, the primary and the run-off and the general election, and now it was time to decide who she wants to support. You were not adamant one way or the other—

MADDOX: He was the defeated candidate at that time.

HENDERSON: Well, at that time he was chairman of the party—well, he had been nominated by you for chairman of the party and so forth. But you had no strong feeling one way or the other, is that correct?

MADDOX: Well, I would have preferred that it go back to the people, but the law went the other way.

HENDERSON: What do you think was the major issue of the Democratic primary? A lot of the candidates agreed on we need more money for highways, more money for schools--there was a consensus there. But what was, as far as you saw, what was the major issue?

MADDOX: Well, you know, and all the candidates and the news media said that I couldn't do what I committed that I would do in education. Even some of the educators didn't believe it. When I left public office one-fourth of the salary being received by Georgia teachers had been gained in four years, and it takes ninety-six years to get the other three-fourths. I think a major issue was whether they could believe someone or not. I don't think that any other issue would approach that.

HENDERSON: And you think they—they thought they could believe you better than the other candidates?

MADDOX: I believe so. I wasn't one of them. I was an outsider. And I took the poster showing where Georgia was ranked number seven out of eight states in industrial growth. And I showed where we had to use our department of industry and trade as a political dumping ground and play house rather than business house—business [unintelligible]. I'm sure what we thought we could do with education... And my defense of the courthouse that belonged in state government while others were talking about consolidation, removing a lot of it, those kind of things. But the major issue was whether you could trust someone, believe in someone. And I promised the people over and over and over that I wanted to have the most efficient, honest, and open administration in Georgia history. That was my major goal, and I thank God we sustained [tape stops and starts]

[CD: Track 4]

HENDERSON: What do you think was the major issue between you and Mr. Callaway? The same thing?

MADDOX: I believe his not being able to relate to ordinary people was Mr. Callaway's problem.

HENDERSON: Does wealth hurt him?

MADDOX: I think Mr. Callaway maybe was looked upon as a professional in public life or public office, and I think that the people had had enough of professionalism. Now I believe even today they have.

HENDERSON: According to the press reports, you made on several occasions the issue of his wealth. Do you think that was an issue [unintelligible].

MADDOX: Well, I'm sure that that was part of the reason he could *not* relate to the ordinary people. He would go in—I was in Moultrie [Georgia] one day and I went into a restaurant there and Callaway had been there, I was told. And that he met some of the manager and some of the distinguished looking customers but never did speak or shake the hands with the personnel or others. And it wasn't a real fault of his; it was just maybe an innate thing with him that he had circulated with certain people most of his life as a young man. It was a different practice from the way I have expressed myself.

HENDERSON: Do you think that the segregationists looked upon you as a symbol to resistance and that's why they supported you?

MADDOX: I don't believe so. I believe if they had then I would have probably gotten ninety percent of the vote. Because I think I was representing about ninety percent of [unintelligible] people.

HENDERSON: Black and white?

MADDOX: Yes.

HENDERSON: Well, let me see, Mr. Maddox, if I've covered all my questions. I believe I have. I always ask this question, and I know the memory begins to fade out after fifteen or sixteen years, but this is just a rough answer if you will. Mr. Gray spent, he said, around \$800,000, roughly speaking. Mr. Carter says he spent around \$250,000. Roughly speaking, how much do you think you spent?

MADDOX: I don't know. I guess I could find some people that could give me an idea about it. I know that to get in the primary run-off, I spent \$36,000. \$18,000 in donations and \$18,000 of my own money to beat all those candidates. And it took me from September '65 to April of '66 to raise my purse, total, combined, [\$36,000] dollars.

HENDERSON: So it would be fair to say that yours was not the most lavishly-financed campaign? Is that—would that be...?

MADDOX: I would think I spent less to get through than any, all in any one—far less than any of the rest of them.

HENDERSON: I had another question that slipped my mind right then when I was asking you that one. And it was about your campaign organization. What kind of organization did you have?

MADDOX: I didn't have any organizations.

HENDERSON: No campaign manager?

MADDOX: After I got into the thing and got to running real good, they begin to come in and the better I got to running the faster they got there.

HENDERSON: How did you—

MADDOX: I used to have two fellas here J. L. Allen in Atlanta and [S. O.] Buster Sutton and they drove all over Atlanta with—Georgia with me and we'd tack up signs. They'd drive and I'd just tack up signs and shake hands.

HENDERSON: Did you write your own speeches?

MADDOX: Yes, sir. One day I wrote one of them on the back of a—"Maddox Country" signs—I cut it into about four or five pieces I [unintelligible]. I didn't cut it; I put it on the back of a sign. Somewhere before I got to that town, I nailed it up somewhere. You know, you don't really have to have those things...

HENDERSON: Let me ask you one other question, Mr. Maddox. After you get the nomination, do you see a tremendous shift in the Democratic political establishment coming to you and saying Now, you are a nominee and we're going to support you because we don't want Mr. Callaway to get elected. We don't want a Republican in the governor's chair. Did you find any of that?

MADDOX: I didn't—they didn't come to me and say that. They came to me to support me because I was nominated—because I was their governor. I went to a performance one night and I looked out in the audience--I'd been elected governor about three days. In fact, I was the only one ever went in there didn't have five minutes to get ready for it, you know. I went down there and I said I see about three people out here's been with me almost six months. And I said I see about ten more that's been with me about two weeks. And then I see about 400 that's been with me since last week. And I said that I appreciate you even if I had to beat you to get you. I'm glad I got you.

HENDERSON: Mr. Maddox, we have gone through my questions. Anything else you—
Would you have done anything differently if you had to do it over again?

MADDOX: Well, in my life I would, but not in the political thing. I thank God I had that opportunity to stand there and say what I please—

HENDERSON: If you'd been able—

MADDOX: --Do what I please and nobody, nobody could come in there and tell me what to do or how to do or when to do. I was free. I had a judge to come in one day with \$25,000 from my banker and I hadn't been there less than a week and he said The banker wanted you to have this because you're so busy during the campaign, he couldn't get to you. And I said Well, you tell the banker take it and ram it. I said I'm busier now than I was in the campaign. And I had a member of the House of Representative offer me 10,000 shares of stock to put his brother on the board of pardon and paroles. I said Your brother had a chance until you made that remark. Now he couldn't get a job even sweeping in here. So, I thank God that I—we did open up government. We had more people come to that governor's office than they had the rest of this century. And more people visit with us in the governor's mansion than the whole history of the state of Georgia. We opened up everything. [I] didn't go by the join up; [I] went by the open up--clean up best I could. And it wiped me out financially. I left there with a campaign debt greater than all my salary per year. If I had put every check in the back, it wouldn't have been enough to pay that campaign debt. But I would've taken a million dollars to be able to stand there and be Lester Maddox. It's worth it all. Now, I could be that with anybody. I still can

today, thank God. I never will forget one day a lot of the media came in one day and they said What's new today, Governor? And I said Nothing, but it shouldn't bother you folks. They said Why? I said Well, you made it up yesterday. Make it up again today. [laughter]

HENDERSON: If you had been able to keep the Pickrick open and we had no Civil Rights Act of '64, you think you would have run for governor anyway?

MADDOX: Oh, I think after I got so disgusted with seeing people lie when they campaign, I would have never quit running.

[End of Interview]



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