

Harold Paulk (Hal) Henderson, Sr. Oral History Collection
Series I: Ellis Arnall
OH ARN 10
Ellis G. Arnall Interviewed by Harold Paulk (Hal) Henderson, Sr.
Date: December 10, 1985
CD: OH ARN 10 Tracks 1-4; 0:39:57 minutes
Cassette: OH ARN 10, 0:39:59 minutes, Side One

[CD: Track 1]
[Cassette: Side 1]

HENDERSON: [Tests tape recorder in preparation for interview] Governor, we were talking about [Melvin Ernest] M.E. Thompson, and in 1946, he ran for the lieutenant governorship.

ARNALL: That is correct.

HENDERSON: Why did you support Frank [Cleveland] Gross--is that the way you pronounce his name?

ARNALL: Right.

HENDERSON: Over M.E. Thompson, since M.E. Thompson had been your executive secretary and also been revenue commissioner in your administration.

ARNALL: That is correct. M.E. Thompson while he was my executive secretary and revenue commissioner would come to me nearly every day, and he would say I'm going to run for superintendent of schools. I said That's fine. So then, when he was all set and canvassed around, another delegation would come into my office and I'd say I want you to

do me a favor when you leave here. I want you to go by to see M.E. Thompson and tell him he ought to run for comptroller general and get everybody you can to go see him and tell him that. So they would go over and see him and then he'd call me on the phone and say I've changed my mind. I'm going to run for comptroller general. Then the next day when I had delegations in I'd say When you leave here, do me a favor. Go speak to M.E. Thompson over at the revenue department and tell him he ought to run for the public service commission in the next election. I'd appreciate it if you'd do it. So then late that afternoon M.E. call me again and say I tell ya, I've changed my mind again. [laughs] I'm going to run for public service commission. And this went on and on. I had him running for everything in the world. And finally he told me he had definitely set himself to run for superintendent of schools, because he was a schoolman and that's what he wanted to do. So, I committed myself to him and then while he was busy running [chuckles] for superintendent of schools, Frank Gross who was president of the [Georgia] Senate and was my right hand man--he and Roy [Vincent] Harris put through all those measures I wanted through the legislature, most of them unanimously--and he came to me and said he wanted to run for lieutenant governor, and I said Fine, Frank, I'll support you. So then I was in a dilemma when M.E. changed his mind again.

But I was very close to M.E. Thompson. I knew him first [when] he was in the school business. I know he taught school at Hawkinsville [Georgia] and several places. And when I knew him, though, he was a representative of some schoolbook publishing company. And we used to sit around and talk about what they needed in the schools and so forth. And then I got him to be my executive secretary, and he served with great distinction. Eugene [(Gene)] Cook was the attorney general--he was revenue commissioner--I had appointed him.

And there came a vacancy in the attorney generalship. [Thomas] Grady Head died, and I appointed Gene Cook attorney general and that left a vacancy in the revenue department. So, I had great confidence and great faith in M.E. Thompson. He was an honorable, fine man. I named him revenue commissioner. It was from the revenue commissioner's position that he ran for lieutenant governor and was elected.

He was the first lieutenant governor ever to serve in Georgia while I was governor, and we wrote a new constitution. We included a provision making the lieutenant governor-- creating the office of lieutenant governor. It's right ironic that before I came out and put through the lieutenant governorship, Eugene Talmadge had gotten through a constitutional amendment for lieutenant governorship and DeLacy Allen from Albany [Georgia] ran for it. He was head of the American Legion then. And DeLacy was nominated as a Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor. But, when they got to the general election, the people voted against creating the office of lieutenant governor. So, there was no lieutenant governor. But we were the only state, I believe, in the union without one, and I wanted one. So, we created the office and had M.E. not been so changeable and had I not been so flirtatious with having him change, [chuckles] I would have supported him. But, as it was, I supported Frank Gross. And M.E. won and made a good lieutenant governor. And then by reason of the three-governor controversy and whatnot, the court held that I was governor for four more years but upon my resignation, M.E. Thompson became acting governor and chief executive of Georgia.

HENDERSON: OK. Let me go back to the '42 campaign. What role did M.E. Thompson play in your 1942 campaign?

ARNALL: He was very active with me, particularly among the school people. Those were his contacts and acquaintances. And he was tremendously active for me. He went all over the state, traveling. He wrote letters. He did everything a good friend can do for a man.

HENDERSON: OK. In the general election in '46, [James Vinson] Jimmy Carmichael receives 669 write-in votes. Carmichael on December the twenty-first of 1946 said that he would not be a candidate for legislative election. And, of course, Herman [Eugene] Talmadge was saying that because his father was dead the [Georgia] General Assembly could choose the top two candidates who had the most write-in votes.

ARNALL: Right.

HENDERSON: Which Jimmy Carmichael would be one. Did you ever try to convince Carmichael to change his mind about being elected by the legislature?

ARNALL: No, because I didn't believe the legislature had any right to elect the governor and the [Georgia] Supreme Court held they didn't. So, I never undertook to... As a matter of fact, as I recall it had it, not been for the question of some late votes coming in from Telfair County [Georgia] that were very questionable, Herman would have not been in that deal either. I think it would have been between Carmichael and some other almost unknown man.

HENDERSON: [D.] Talmadge Bowers.

ARNALL: Yeah, unknown. And I never undertook to persuade Carmichael to let the legislature elect him because I didn't think they had the right to, and the Supreme Court held they didn't.

HENDERSON: OK. Now, according to representative Pierre Howard [Sr.] who was, I understand, a close friend of yours—

ARNALL: Right.

HENDERSON: --he discussed with you, during this period of time, about Carmichael being elected by the legislature. And this is a quote from the *Atlanta Constitution*. He said this is what you told him: "We're reversing our position, and we're going to elect him (Carmichael) and I will save the office for him."

ARNALL: I don't remember any such quote.

HENDERSON: OK. Now, both Ralph [Emerson] McGill—

ARNALL: How could I--and the reason that I question that--is because how could I have taken the position that I automatically became governor for four more years? And I could have served every day. But I had no desire to hold [over] under a technicality. And therefore

I resigned because then M.E. Thompson was the next highest official elected by the state, the people who were [unintelligible].

HENDERSON: Now, Governor, efforts were made in '45 and '46 to change the constitution to where you could run again.

ARNALL: Right. [emphatically]

HENDERSON: When this came up, did it ever come in your mind that here was a possibility that you could serve another term?

ARNALL: No, because, there are two reasons, and it never crossed my mind. And I wouldn't have done it. And didn't do it. Number one, the first reason was, that I did not believe in being a holdover under a technicality of law. I thought the governor ought to be elected for four years--I was the first four-year term governor--by the people. And second, at that time it seemed that Georgia and Ellis Arnall were in the national news day in and day out and I had determined that when I finished my governorship to go all over the United States lecturing as a paid lecturer. I made more money lecturing and book writing than I ever made before or since. And I had these definite booking engagements all over the country. They paid me a thousand dollars a speech. I only went out when I could make three a day for a solid week. The lecture agent got a fourth and the expenses were a fourth and I netted half. And so I was up to my neck in contracts, and I couldn't have continued if I had wanted to, which I didn't want to do.

HENDERSON: Let me come back to this question of reversing, or people saying that you possibly reversed your opinion about getting Carmichael to run for the legislature or being elected by the legislature. According to Ralph McGill in the January twenty-sixth issue of the *Atlanta Constitution* and Herman Talmadge in January the twentieth issue, both of them say that you had indeed reversed your position.

ARNALL: Well, how would they know that? What would they base it on? What documentation do they have? My position was very simple, as I have explained. I think the chief executive of the state ought to be elected by the people and not by the legislature. And it's fixed now to where the legislature never again can elect one. You know they elected [Lester Garfield] Maddox because of the '66 fiasco, but actually Lester was never elected governor by the people. And I just feel that the governorship, the highest office in the state, is an office that belongs to the people and not to members of the legislature where politics can enter in to how they vote and whatnot. No, I never took the position that the legislature had the right to elect the governor. I don't take that position, never have, and the reason I didn't continue to serve for four years--in view of the Supreme Court decision--I resigned before they decided, by the way, but they held [that] I was right. And the reason I knew I was right--I want to tell you something I'm not supposed to say but I'll say it because it's been a long time ago.

[CD: Track 2]

Before I plunged the state into banana republic war, I wanted to know that I was right. I knew I was right, but I wanted it confirmed. So, in violation of all law and legal ethics and everything else, I called one of the members of the Supreme Court down to my office and I said Look, if I make this fight and I'm wrong, I'm a fool and I've embarrassed the state. If I am right in my view that I'm governor for four more years and upon my resignation lieutenant governor becomes governor, I want to know it before I pitch the battle. This dear friend of mine who was a justice on the Supreme Court--that was in the morning--that afternoon came back and said I have canvassed the reaction of the court and while they're not committed to this I believe that a majority court supports your view. So, I wasn't just shooting in the dark. And I felt that I had a right to violate the law and legal ethics because of the principles at stake. The highest office you can give to the people was at stake, and I wanted to know that my procedure was right before I adopted the view that I did.

HENDERSON: Well, now, that leads to the next question which comes to mind. Suppose your justice friend came back and said the votes are not there for your position. What would you have done then?

ARNALL: I still would have made the fight. Because I held about twelve days. I resigned. I told you I couldn't have served, but I made the issue. But I knew I was right, and I knew the court would hold that because if you'll pardon me saying so Doctor, in the field of political law, I'm somewhat of an expert. As a matter of fact, every fight I ever made was supported by court decisions. For example, when I was attorney general, John [Stephens] Wood, who was a former congressman, took the position that I had to run in the first election,

and I took the position that he was crazy. And he found that he got 350 write-in votes, approximately, and he brought a full warrant to the Supreme Court against me. And the Supreme Court unanimously held I was right and he was wrong. But I didn't run that election. I ran in the same election the governor runs in, so that was wrong. Then in the '42 fiasco the court held that I was right. I was to hold over since the governor-elect had died before he was qualified. Then it became my duty to hold over under the constitution, to [affirm?] my resignation. Then M.E. Thompson, lieutenant governor, became governor—acting governor. While they said “governor,” technically it's acting governor, but he was chief executive. And then in the '66 imbroglio that having to do with the question of the write-in vote in the primary and all that, the courts held that the views that I expressed were right there. So, I've had a pretty good batting record in that.

HENDERSON: Let me go back to M.E. Thompson again. One of the big issues after he became lieutenant governor or acting governor was the white primary bill that the legislature had passed while [Eugene] Talmadge had been governor.

ARNALL: When I was governor we did not have a white primary bill. We did away with it, and we did away with it in the constitution [committee?].

HENDERSON: The issue comes to the governor, though, M.E. Thompson, should he veto the white primary bill, which he eventually did. Did you ever recommend to M.E. Thompson that he veto the white primary bill?

ARNALL: Not to my knowledge. As a matter of fact, let me say this about the... Doctor, I, at the peak of my career as governor, was very popular. To illustrate this, the legislature passed everything I wanted, and they passed them usually without a single vote against them. Many of them [were] Talmadge people but they went with me. My loss of political strength and power came about because I refused to utter defiance to the edicts of the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts. As a lawyer, I believe in law and order and I believe law is the sinew that holds society together. And it was wrong, I've always believed in first-class citizenship and I would not be a party to making a fight against the U.S. Supreme Court, which is the highest decision-maker in this land under law and order. Had I done so, had I chosen the route that Herman went--and by the way, we're good friends, he and I been on television together and we talk like this together--had I followed that concept, I could have named the next governor of Georgia for forty years. But it was just not in me to do it. I didn't think it was right, and I didn't do it. In time, sometimes justice is slow, but in times, it's the best system we have and ultimately work out. I believe that every citizen is equal under the law and if I could read the United States Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, that's what it says.

HENDERSON: In 1948, there's a special election to fill the governorship or at least fill the two-term remaining years of Gene Talmadge four-year term.

ARNALL: Right.

HENDERSON: Did you ever consider running in '48 against Herman Talmadge?

ARNALL: No.

HENDERSON: Why not?

ARNALL: Well, as I understood the provision of the constitution that Gene Talmadge got through creating the office of governor for four years instead of two. And I used to say he made the feather bed, and I'm going to get in it, which I did. But it prohibited a governor from seeking the office again until after the expiration of four years. So, there was no way it could've been done, and I was too busy speaking, lecturing. I was under contract all over the country. My lecture agent, [Samuel] Russell Bridges [Sr.]— without I'd be[?] a celebrity hero who was my primary agent in Atlanta—well, he had contracts all over the country—said that I made him more money than any lecturer he ever had except [Sir] Winston [Leonard Spencer] Churchill. [HENDERSON laughs]

HENDERSON: In 1950, did you consider running against Herman Talmadge?

ARNALL: I have forgotten the exact year, but there was a period of time that I toyed with it and would have run if... I believe [Samuel Ernest] Ernie Vandiver was governor then, but anyway, the issue was about rather or not we have integrated schools.

HENDERSON: That was in '62.

ARNALL: '62. And I was prepared then if they closed the university and the schools to run, because I had an issue. You see you got to have an issue in politics. You don't need this "I'll run now for good government"—you've got to have an issue to touch the people really. And I frequently said I was considering it, but I never seriously considered it until the sixty- ... two?

HENDERSON: '62, yes, sir.

ARNALL: --and then they backed down. Remember, Ernie said "No, not one," but he backed down. He was smart in backing down. And reverting to the time I was elected governor in 1942 and went in in '43, the heart of that campaign issue was whether or not the politicians could control the schools and universities. And Talmadge had removed regents and played havoc with Dr. [Walter Dewey (Dean)] Cocking [at University of Georgia] and President [Marvin Summers] Pittman at Statesboro [Georgia, Georgia Southern University] and whatnot. The one fear I had all during that campaign was that he may go before the people and say I've made a terrible mistake. I'm leaving the university alone and all the schools and will help them pass laws removing my power and firing[?] the governor from interfering with their education. If he had done that, he would have beat me, 'cause that was the sole issue. But he was determined, and I kept baiting him saying he was going to do it and the more I did this the less he had a chance to it.

So, the reason I ran for governor when I did in '66 was that I had been out of office nineteen years and I'd been reasonably successful in business and law and things. And I felt

I could run a campaign and win, because most of the reforms and changes that I had advocated had come about.

[CD: Track 3]

But I misread, in the public mind, the fact they were acknowledging these changes and claims. Publicly, yes. But when they got to the ballot box, they still voted against the black man. And since I had made it possible for the black man to vote, they voted against me. And actually, you know, in this connection, there's no way in the world you can change attitude by passing a law.

When I was attorney general there was a man that came to me in the legislature from Calhoun County [Georgia], and he said I was elected because I promised that I'd make agriculture prosperous and help the farmers in our county. And I want you to draw me a bill so I can introduce it today and make them prosperous. So, I said How do you propose to do it? He said Well, I don't know that. You know more about things like that than I do. You're a lawyer. I'll come back in about thirty minutes and get it. So, he came back and I dictated the bill. Well, I remember it: [quoting] a bill to entitle an act to make agriculture in the State of Georgia prosperous and for other purposes. To be enacted by the General Assembly and leadership I enacted on authority of the same. On and after[?] the passage this bill, agriculture in the state of Georgia being the same, it shall be declared to be prosperous. Section Two. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act be in same are hereby repealed. I gave it to him, and he introduced it, and it never got out of committee, but that was it. Now, I tell you the story because you can't pass a law removing hatred from the

human heart...in relationship with people. There still is a great space for things that come from the heart. And I mistook the attitude of the people. All the reforms I'd fought for and brought about were in effect and I thought that I could take some advantage of those reforms. And I thought I could pave my own way. I thought I could. But politics then had become so expensive and also expensive now--it's very difficult. I will say this to you, though. I ended up after that campaign of '66--I put a lot of my money in it and a lot of contributions from the public, and I still borrowed a lot of money. And I never asked anybody to help me with campaign expenses; that was my debt. I say to be successful in politics today, you've got to have a fat pocketbook and a strong stomach and a strong will. [HENDERSON chuckles] So, I worked and paid off that debt. Now, they have fundraising dinners to help fellows. When you run for office and get beat, nobody asked you to run. You know you're taking a chance. Somebody's going to win and somebody's going to lose. And I have no sympathy for a fellow who goes out and mortgages all he's got and then gets beat and then asks his friends and the public to help him. He ought [to] bear the burden himself.

HENDERSON: Let me ask you a question that has nothing to do with M.E. Thompson but in doing research on this paper I just did on your administration, I was struck by the fact that Roy Harris played such a key role in getting a lot of your legislation through, which you acknowledge from time to time. But my point is, if you look back, if people look back on Roy Harris they usually think upon him as a racist, a race-baiter that sort of thing. But yet he was just as progressive, according to some of your statements, as you were, but you split on the white primary issue--

ARNALL: That's right.

HENDERSON: --and he went with the Talmadge crowd.

ARNALL: Right. That's correct. Roy was very close to me and Frank Gross, the president and speaker of the House. It was through them that I had such a fine reception in legislative programs. I am the only governor, I think you will find in history, who got the legislature to pass every one of his platform pledges unanimously. Every one of the platform pledges unanimously. And Roy was a power; the speaker of the House is a power; the president of the Senate is a power. Roy and I split on the race issue. He didn't want the blacks to vote in the Democratic primary or elsewhere. And I said as citizens, they're entitled to vote. And so we split on that issue and then he became not only a Talmadge man, he became the most ardent segregationist in the state. He had a newspaper published every week or two. He made speeches everywhere and defianced the court and whatnot. So then he was ambitious to run for governor and do a lot of things. But his power was in the speaker of the House. So, they had an election over in Richmond County [Georgia] and I went over there and campaigned for his opponent, and Roy got beat and he gave up the speakership. Now, from that time on we were friends sometimes and enemies sometimes in politics. Right before he died, recently, I telephoned him and had a nice visit. But I can never forget no matter how irrational I thought he was in later years or earlier years for that matter, while I was governor and running for governor, he was a tremendously strong help to me--probably more than any man in the state. Let me say one other thing about politics too. In politics you can

compromise little things, but a basic principle you cannot compromise. And Roy and I could have compromised with each other on everything except that fundamental. Do we defy the courts? And I said Not on your lifetime.

HENDERSON: He also made the statement, I read somewhere, that under the county unit system there were about seventy-five counties that had enough money you could control those counties. How persuasive was corruption in Georgia politics back then?

ARNALL: Well, I don't think it was any more corrupt then than it is now. It takes money in politics and there are some people who don't deserve to be good citizens because they will sell their birthright for a pot of porridge. The way you did it in those days, in each county there was an organization. You went to see the leading citizens and if they were for you, you'd carry the county. I remember, I called John [B.] Kennedy who was the boss of Richmond County, that was Roy's county. And I said John, shall I schedule a speech over there or not? He said Not necessary. Go spend your time somewhere else. He said You're going to carry this county. You know we've got it covered. He was the head of the Cracker Party [Augusta, Georgia] and they had an organization like Tammany Hall [New York, New York]. And so, I said Well you going to look after that; you're for me. He said A hundred percent. He said I want to ask you a question. What if I told I was against you. Would you have come to Richmond County and made a speech? And I said No, it would have been a waste of time. [HENDERSON and ARNALL laugh] Let me say this to you. We're in a crisis in our political system where now if you go to Tifton [Georgia] and get the leading citizens for you, the election comes up, you lose the county.

HENDERSON: Probably so.

ARNALL: It used to be that they could control it. As a matter of fact, the unit system was unfair for many reasons. One, the way they split it up. It would give a county without a town in it two votes and it just wasn't right. They probably voted [unintelligible].

HENDERSON: Let me ask you question about your '66 campaign run. You said you toured around in '62 running for the governorship and you backed from it then. Why—

ARNALL: Because Vandiver changed his mind.

HENDERSON: Right. Why in '66, it looks like in hindsight the timing was wrong because we just passed the Civil Rights Act of [19]'64. A very emotional state of feeling in Georgia. Lester Maddox was running around the countryside. Looking back on it, was '66 the wrong year. Should you have run, say, in '62 against [Samuel] Marvin Griffin?

ARNALL: Well, I think, number one, after nineteen years out of office, you lose your political contacts. Many of the leaders die, move away, change persuasion, and therefore it's better if you can run, say, four years after you've been out while you've still got the organization together. But my organization in '66 had dissipated because it was approximately twenty years later. Now, you asked me about...oh, Lester Maddox. This is something that no one knows. I don't whether Lester would approve of it, so I'll repeat that.

We're good friends too. It's funny[?] about politicians that in the end they get to be good friends because they share the same experiences. But Lester was running--listen to this--for lieutenant governor. This is the first time, I think, that he had ever been in government. He'd run for mayor and gotten beat and all that stuff. I had a friend here in Atlanta, a lawyer--[tape stops and starts]

[CD: Track 4]

about the unity of the Talmadge strength. The fight against the black man. The fight for bigotry. So, I called my friend on the phone, and I said I want you to do me a favor. You see Vandiver was then getting all the strength for the Talmadge support. He later withdrew, but at that time he was. I said I want you to persuade Lester Maddox to run for governor. He's got just as good a chance as lieutenant governor. It'll help me because it'll cut into the race baiters. [Of] course after [that] Lester became the candidate for governor. Let me add another footnote. In the write-in campaign that was being waged for me without my approval or objection--I had nothing to do with it. Toward the end of the campaign, Lester Maddox called me at my home in Newnan, and he said Governor, if you don't put a stop to this write-in campaign, I'm going to be beaten. Or this damn Republican is going to win. And I said Well, Lester I didn't start it and I'm not going to stop it. As a matter of fact, I was in California during that period, except for one or two days. Well, he said, I'm going to get beat. Now, if you would talk with Lester today he'd probably would continue to believe that the write-in campaign for me hurt him. Whereas many historians would say that that was the

one thing that pushed him through, including me. Now, those are two things that have never been said before.

HENDERSON: You mentioned the Supreme Court justice that you conferred with about lining up the votes. Would you be at liberty to mention his name or would you rather keep that a deep, dark secret?

ARNALL: No, I have no objections. Henry Jeffery [or Jeffries? or Jeffers], who wrote the opinion.

HENDERSON: Let's see. He was the chief justice—

ARNALL: He was the write-in justice.

HENDERSON: Presiding justice. Let me come back—

ARNALL: But, again, I thought I was doing right to find out. Why should Georgia had been subjected to all this hoopla unless I would write in when I did.

HENDERSON: Let me come back again to the '62 race. Marvin Griffin was running for another term. He has the image of corruption around him. Why not run against Marvin Griffin in '62, instead of waiting four years later after the Civil Rights Act has been passed?

ARNALL: Well, that would have been the propitious time to run, better than '66. But at that time I just, other than the corruption issue, I didn't see an issue. And of course, you remember [Eurith Dickinson] Ed Rivers was supposed to have been in the pardon bit. Let me tell you about Marvin just a minute. Marvin's father [Ernest Howard (Pat) Griffin] and I sat next to each other in the legislature, and we were good friends. And Marvin came to the legislature and we became good friends. And then the war came along and he went into the service and ended up in the Pacific somewhere. He would write me nearly every week, a letter. I had appointed Clark Howell, who was editor and owner of the *Atlanta Constitution* [as] my adjutant general. And they had Clark stuck in a mosquito-infested area down in Mississippi somewhere. [ARNALL and HENDERSON chuckle] And he kept calling me. He'd like to be cut out of the army now; he'd served his military term. So, I worked it out whereby he was discharged from the U.S. military with distinction. That left my office of attorney general [sic] vacant, and I named Marvin attorney general and brought him home--named him adjutant general--brought him home from the South Pacific, and he was good. But, as far as loyalties go, if there be such a thing in politics, in the '66 imbroglio after the dye was cast, he joined the Talmadge people as my adjutant general and I used the state guard. And for a while it looked like we were going to have some real contrasts, but we didn't. Georgia was subjective enough to elect the [unintelligible]. But getting back to the corruption issue. In that campaign, who won the governorship?

HENDERSON: Carl [Edward] Sanders.

ARNALL: That's what I thought. So, he used the corruption issue. Now, Carl Sanders and I were awfully good friends, are still. You'd be interested in this, too. [telephone rings] This never been told before. [tape stops and starts] Tell ya—

HENDERSON: Something—

ARNALL: Oh, about Carl Sanders. Carl in that year, that was '62, wasn't it?

HENDERSON: Yes, sir.

ARNALL: Was running for lieutenant governor. And he came to my office in the Fulton Federal Building [Atlanta, Georgia (now One Park Place part of Georgia State University)] and told me that he was out working hard but said it's a big state and so forth. And I said Carl, you're wasting your time. Get out of the race for lieutenant governor and run for governor. It's just as easy; you'll get more support; you can be more in the headlines; and you can walk away with it because you got a great issue of corruption. He did that, and he ran for governor.

HENDERSON: Well, then, why couldn't you have turned that around and said well here's a great issue of corruption. Why don't you use that issue?

ARNALL: Well, you see, I'm a lawyer and I have a lot of cases and whatnot. [ARNALL and HENDERSON chuckle] And I was all tied up in court then and it just wasn't a

propitious time for me to do it. My personal affairs were such that I was suing—I sued forty states and won every case. And I was traveling all over the country, in court and whatnot. I represent all the people who make these non-dairy products and in every state they were trying outlaw them as being imitation milk or cream or something. We won every case. If we'd lost one, we would have been out of luck because then every state would have copied that law and used that decision to put us out of business. And I just had so many commitments and things to do that I couldn't do it.

HENDERSON: I suppose the next question is do you ever regret not running in '62, now looking back on it?

ARNALL: No, I do not regret it at all. When I finished the governorship, I told you I was doing the professional lecturing and writing, but I also was building a law firm. [Solomon Isaac] Sol Golden came to me and said he wanted to found a law firm, and I said Fine. He said he could get all the clients we could handle, I said Fine. I said Well, what'll I do? He said You shake hands with them. I said Fine. [HENDERSON laughs] Well, I said Saul, don't we need a lawyer up here. He thought so, so I got [Cleburne Earl] Gregory [Jr.] to come in as one of the founders, who had been assistant attorney general, and one of the great lawyers that I've—one of the greatest I've ever known. We started the firm with three people and we went along and we made good money. We began to represent people all over the United States. Today we represent IBM [International Business Machines Corporation], General Foods [Corporation], Carnation [Company], the Dutch industry--so I building a law firm. My son [Alvan Slemons Arnall] is a partner now in it. And I don't know how many

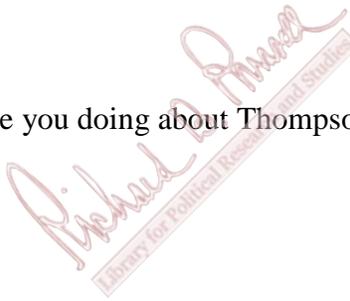
lawyers we have here because they come so fast and go so fast. But, I think we've got 210 people on the payroll--a lot of those are paralegals and secretaries. A lot of them are lawyers; I say we're about 100 or close to it [ARNALL and HENDERSON laugh]. So, I couldn't play politics. I'd enjoyed it and the people'd been good to me. I'm glad I ran in '66 though. I enjoyed it, and I was at an age where I could afford to do it.

HENDERSON: Well, those are my questions for M.E. Thompson, and they led to some others, but I hope you don't mind.

ARNALL: Not a bit. What are you doing about Thompson?

HENDERSON: We had—

[End of Interview]



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