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Samuel Ernest Vandiver Jr. Interviewed by Dr. Harold Paulk Henderson (Part D)  
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**EDITED BY DR. HENDERSON**

Side One

Vandiver: Carl Vinson eventually was chairman of the [House] Armed Services Committee, called a press conference and announced that I was going to be the new secretary of the army. He never talked to me about it and the way he got his information I don't know, unless it was from Bobby [Robert] Troutman, [Jr.] but I never did say. What I should have said really was "No, I've got a job to do, and I can't do it." I didn't and I partially am to blame for it getting out of hand 'cause I should have said no in the very beginning, but I was flattered maybe somebody wanted me to be Secretary of the Army. And I'd been in the military and was interested in the military. Finally I told Frank [Starling] Twitty and Phil [James Philander] Campbell [Jr.] and George [Leon] Smith [II] and all of that little group that I . . . . Hell, I wasn't going to leave. I was going to stay in office and they said, "Well, what if [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy offers you something else and you take that?" And I said, "Well, that's not in my plans at all." I knew this segregation thing was coming up and I wasn't going to run away from it. I didn't like the idea of having to deal with it but I couldn't run away from it 'cause I promised the people I was going to serve as governor four years. It wasn't a pleasant feeling to know that you were going to hit that situation 'cause it was getting close and I knew that.

Henderson: Before we get to that let me come back to some personalities in your administration. Garland T. [Turk] Byrd, what was your relationship with him while you were governor?

Vandiver: Garland had always been a good friend of Herman [Eugene] Talmadge's and mine. I worked with him in campaigns before, but I wouldn't run, wouldn't have him on a ticket with me. He knew that. I didn't want anybody on the ticket with me. I wanted to leave it like it was that the lieutenant governor was independent. And there were a whole lot of people that hated Garland Byrd, that little group particularly that we were talking about, just hated his guts. But we had been friendly and I'll have to say this: he always cooperated with me in everything that I advocated. We didn't run on the same ticket but he was most cooperative and I felt obligated to him to a certain extent because he had been so cooperative. But that other crowd who were pretty powerful, I mean the commissioner of agriculture, and the speaker of the House, and those people were just determined that Garland Byrd wasn't going to be governor.

Henderson: How 'bout Frank S. Twitty?

Vandiver: Frank Twitty was the best speaker, the most influential speaker there was in the House of Representatives. I'd known Frank over the years. We'd been friends, got to know him better when I was lieutenant governor. He helped in that fight against [Samuel Marvin] Griffin [Sr.] on the appropriations bill. He'd been a real good friend and he was the most persuasive man in the legislature. And I made him my floor leader knowing full well that probably he represented a few people on the side and I knew that. But to get my programs through he was the most effective man there was in the House and he never wavered on anything I asked him to do.

Henderson: Now when you say he represented some people on the side, what do you mean by that?

Vandiver: He had clients that came to him in his law office, like most members of the legislature have today and have had since time immemorial, that would ask him to do things for him. I knew that. But I also knew that if I wanted to get my program through I needed the most effective man in the legislature and he was that. He didn't have but one eye and he . . . . [You] never could tell exactly who he was looking at. He could scare some of those legislators to death really. He presented the side well, your side well. I don't know whether he read any of those votes or not but most of them were practically unanimous.

Henderson: How 'bout Carl [Edward] Sanders?

Vandiver: Carl had been my friend when I was running for lieutenant governor. I had two friends in Augusta that were in positions of authority at that time. One was Bob [Robert Claude] Norman who I'd known at Camp Dixie and had known over the years and he had his group, and Carl's group was a little bit different from Bob. But they both got together in my race and Carl supported me and raised some money for me.

When he came to the Senate, I asked him to be my floor leader, which he agreed to. And then as I said, we were--back in those days where you rotated your counties would rotate the senator . . . . In this county that was supposed to get the next senator it was up to the Democratic committee in the county as to whether . . . . They could wave their power to have a senator if they wanted to. Carl asked me to make a call to the Democratic committee in that county, the chairman of it, and ask them to wave their term in the rotation and let him run. That he would work hard to help them out and so forth and they agreed to it. Carl wouldn't have been in there to run for, wouldn't have been in the Senate to run for governor if we hadn't have gotten them to give up their rotation 'cause he served two terms back in the days when you

couldn't serve two terms unless the other county waived it, and they usually didn't because they all had their candidates that they wanted to send up.

But they agreed to and then I appointed Bob [Robert Henry] Jordan, who had been president pro tem--I say appointed, back in those days the governor really did appoint people, his leadership. Now they handle it a little differently. But George L. Smith I appointed to be the speaker and let it be known that I was for him and he didn't have any opposition, and the same thing was true of the positions in the Senate. And when I asked him to be floor leader everybody agreed to that. And then I appointed Bob Jordan to go to the highway board and Carl wanted to be president pro tem of the Senate and I asked the senators to elect him president pro tem and they did . . . of the Senate.

He was always very cooperative, helped me every way he could and I did the same for him. I helped him along the way. And when he ran for governor, I supported him. I had some conditions that I talked with him about. Senator [Richard Brevard] Russell [Jr.] was getting old and sick, served many terms in the Senate. He didn't need to have a campaign physically 'cause it probably would have killed him. He had emphysema so bad he could hardly talk. And Carl, I said, "Carl, I'm going to support you but I'm asking you to do this one thing, just don't run against Senator Russell 'cause he's sick and he's not able to run a strenuous campaign." And, oh, he agreed and [Robert E.] Knox was his campaign manager. Knox called Senator Russell and told him, said that Carl had agreed that he would never run against him for anything [unintelligible]. I had got Carl to schedule a speech in Winder, Georgia, where he praised the Senator and [unintelligible] said anybody that ran against him was a fool. So he was, I figured he was carrying out his part of the agreement. But about two or three months after Carl got

elected some of his supporters thought Senator Russell was getting old and sick and Carl ought to be the next senator. And I'll tell you I used to call it blowing smoke up your tail [laughter], if they do it enough sometimes you get to believing those things and he did. Right up until the last minute almost he presented himself as a candidate for the United States Senate. And he had a poll made--taken. I knew what, I got to the numbers on the poll. Eighty-eight percent said they'd vote for Russell; 12 percent said they'd vote for Sanders. That made up his mind. He decided not to run.

Henderson: Did he ever explain to you why he gave the inclination he would run against Senator Russell? Why did he change his mind?

Vandiver: Never did, never did. I gave him lots of opportunities and he never did, and I had it in my craw, I'll tell you. When he went back on his word it was really . . . . I just felt like Senator Russell didn't deserve to have opposition at that time. He was indicating that he was going to run against him.

In fact, Senator Russell started making speeches, and he raised over a hundred thousand dollars in campaign funds if Carl ran. I had assured Senator Russell that he wasn't going to run but the senator thought he was going to and he had to send all that money back after Carl pulled out. He just sent all the money back. But what convinced Carl and the only [thing that] convinced Carl was that poll. He couldn't beat him. There wasn't any way he could beat him even if he didn't make any speeches 'cause he'd been there so long and had been, everybody's family in Georgia he'd been able to do some kind of favor or something over the years, they'd ask him to do something.

He was the strongest man in Georgia. [Herman] Talmadge wouldn't have touched him with a ten-foot pole. In fact somebody asked Talmadge one time if he'd run against Senator Russell. He said, "I wouldn't touch him with a ten foot pole." But he was planning to run against Senator [Walter Franklin] George. He did plan to run against Senator George and Senator George knew that and he didn't run and the president appointed him ambassador to somewhere to finish out his career 'cause he knew he couldn't beat Talmadge.

But Carl thought he could do the same thing to Senator Russell that Herman did to George. He could run him out of the race. I talked with Senator Russell about that. He said, "Well, there're two things that are different." He says, "I'm not Senator George and he's not Herman Talmadge." [Laughter]

Henderson: One of the State House officials that you have difficulties with from time to time is Zack [Zachariah Daniel] Cravey. What is your relationship with him?

Vandiver: Yes. Zack was an old time Talmadge man. He'd been Gene's [Eugene Talmadge] friend and Herman's friend. He'd gotten elected comptroller general by virtue of the fact that he was a Talmadge man, ran on their coattails. But Zack was the kind of fellow that would do things on the side that I didn't approve of. He was on the pension fund board and I was, too, as the governor. He started making loans or tried to make some loans to people that I didn't think they should have been made to. And I told Zack, I said, "Zack, that's blood money." I said, "These people have been paying that money and the state's been setting aside money for pensions for years," and I said, "You make loans to these people and these loans go bad." I said, "How you going to pay these pensions?" "Oh, it's a good loan, it's a good loan, I know it's a good loan."

It was political on [unintelligible]. He didn't care that much about whether it was good or bad, but the committee that was on the pension board, Zack had been on it a long time and they listened to Zack pretty much, and I had just had to fight Zack on that and some other things, some things that he wanted to do that I didn't think was right. And Zack didn't like it.  
[Laughter]

Henderson: While you are governor do you ever consult with Senators Talmadge or Russell about some problems that you're having and get their input, their advice?

Vandiver: Yes, I talked with Senator Russell and Senator Talmadge--more with Senator Talmadge than I did Senator Russell because we were more contemporaries than Senator Russell. Senator Russell was in the family and we didn't, uh, I just didn't want to talk politics in the family.

But they did, both of them asked me to come to Washington and talk with John Kennedy--this was after the Democratic convention--talk with John Kennedy and Lyndon [Baines] Johnson about Georgia supporting them. They were both were for Lyndon Johnson. Roy [Vincent] Harris was, Hal, he was raising hell about Kennedy and Johnson in his paper at that time, and I think we put it on the ballot and I think the people voted not to support them if I'm not mistaken, on some ballot that we had. Anyway I think Roy overdid it and of the two men that were running they wanted me to support a third party candidate and I didn't want to do that. They said if we support a third party candidate and throw it into the House of Representatives then each state will have one vote and we can trade back and forth and get somebody that'll be amenable to the way we feel.

Henderson: Who in Georgia was pushing the third party candidate?

Vandiver: Roy Harris.

Henderson: Roy Harris.

Vandiver: And, by the way, Roy fought hell out of Carl Sanders. After, he supported Marvin Griffin after Marvin Griffin kicked him off the Board of Regents and I put him back on. [Laughter] Somebody asked me one time--and I probably shouldn't have said this 'cause I hurt Roy's feelings--asked me the worst appointment I ever made since I'd been governor and I said, "Well, I think Roy Harris is among the worst." And it hurt Roy's feelings pretty bad.

Henderson: Besides making that remark was there anybody else that you appointed that you regretted making the appointment? That if you had to do it over again that you would not appoint them to that position?

Vandiver: Roy was the main one that I felt like that . . . after Griffin fired him and he supported Griffin and I was trying to help Carl Sanders. And he was from Carl Sander's hometown and he was fighting [him] tooth and toenail. 'Course they'd always been crossed, different political factions, and the old Cracker party used to run, they ran Richmond County. Roy was the leader of that party. But I didn't want to support a third candidate. I just felt like if we did have some objections to the Democratic candidate we ought to resolve it among ourselves rather than try to go off. We didn't do any good with [James] Strom Thurmond, you know, when he ran as a third party candidate. He carried several counties or states. I think he carried Georgia. I'm not sure about that, but he carried several southern states and it didn't throw it into the House. [Harry S] Truman was elected and I thought we'd be in the same situation that we were in previously. So I decided to support Kennedy. I went up there and talked with Kennedy and Johnson. I got a picture of that, too. [Laughter]

Henderson: All right, sir.

Vandiver: Went up to Washington. They asked me to come up there and we met in Lyndon Johnson's office. He was the majority leader of the Senate at that time. He had a big office and we met in that office and Lyndon Johnson was a very persuasive fellow. He said, "I tell you what," he says, "If you'll support me," he said, "Not only my children but great-grandchildren will all be grateful to you if you'll do this." I said, "Well . . ." I was noncommittal, I said, "Well, I want to talk with the candidate." And so I asked Kennedy if he'd like to talk in private and he said yes and so they had a little bathroom there off Lyndon Johnson's office, and we went in there and I said, "Mr. Senator"--he was a senator at that time-- "Senator, if we do support you in Georgia, there's one thing that I want to ask you not to do and that is to send in federal troops into our state."

I said, "We'll handle our situation in Georgia somehow. I don't know how but we'll handle it and I want you to promise me that you won't do that." And he did. He said, "I will never order a federal troop into Georgia." He said, "Well, what about coming out in support of us now?" And I said, "No, not going to do that in Washington, D.C. If I decide to support you I'm going to do it in Georgia. [Laughter] I'm not going to do it up there. I'm not going to make it look like I got up here and y'all persuaded me."

So I came back to Georgia and announced, oh, about three or four days later that I was going to do everything I could to support Kennedy and Johnson. We had this meeting in the old Dinkler Hotel where we had five southern governors that you saw up there. Every one of them made a speech at this meeting. And I think really Kennedy's votes in the South are what elected him as close as it was.

And then Kennedy asked me on this Martin Luther King [Jr.] thing to do what I could to get him out of jail. And I said, "Senator, they'll run me out of Georgia if try to get him out of jail." He said, "Well, can you do anything about it?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, try," and said, "I've got to be somewhere"-- he was speaking somewhere--and said, "But Bobby [Robert Francis Kennedy] will be at headquarters. This is his number." He said, "You call him if you are able to do anything."

And so I called Bobby [Robert Lee] Russell [Jr.] at the mansion, and we talked about it for, I guess, for an hour. We decided--[James] Oscar Mitchell was judge of the court out in DeKalb County that had put him in jail, and George [Daniel] Stewart, who was secretary of the Senate while I was lieutenant governor and had always been a good supporter of mine, was probably the closest friend that Oscar Mitchell had. So we called George Stewart out to the mansion, told him the quandary that we were in.

We didn't want any publicity about this thing but if he could go out and talk with Oscar Mitchell and get him [Martin Luther King] released on his own recognizance that Kennedy thought that it would be helpful to him in his campaign. And George, good friend that he was, he went right out there and talked to Oscar Mitchell.

And I told George, I said, "Now don't let this come through me." I said, "Let Bobby Kennedy call Oscar Mitchell and ask that he be released." And that was all planned too. And so I called Bobby Kennedy and told him that the way to handle this thing was to call Judge Oscar Mitchell directly and tell him that he would appreciate it if he could release him on his own recognizance and he did. He [Kennedy] called him and Oscar was very flattered that he called him.

I don't know what George Stewart told Oscar really. He might have told him he'd get a federal judgeship out of this thing. He didn't ever tell me what he told him but I do know later that George and Oscar went up to Washington and had a talk with Bobby Kennedy after the election. But they weren't going to appoint Oscar to the federal bench. I knew that. But they might have, George Stewart might have told it'd be a possibility. Anyway, that's the way Martin Luther [King] got out of jail.

And then Bill [William Berry] Hartsfield claimed that he'd got him out of jail and Bobby Troutman claimed that he got him out of jail and I sat over in the briar patch [laughter] for about twenty-five years before I told anybody. But Bobby Kennedy in his autobiography relates that I called him and told him to call Judge Mitchell and to ask him to release him and said Governor Vandiver didn't want anybody to know that he had anything to do with it and he put all that in his autobiography.

And they asked me to write up, after Kennedy was assassinated, write up something for the [Kennedy] library, my association, everything that had had happened. I didn't want to do it 'cause I still had some ambitions I might be able to get to the Senate sometime. And I didn't do it. I never did write up anything purposely 'cause people still didn't know I had anything to do with that.

Henderson: Well, when was . . . ?

Vandiver: But when John Kennedy told me later that that made the difference, Hal. That election was close. I don't know whether you remember how close it was but Martin Luther King, Sr. was supporting [Richard Milhous] Nixon at that time. Nixon sent a telegram to Mrs. [Coretta Scott] King, commiserating with her about the terrible situation down in

Georgia, and John Kennedy called her up and said, "I was glad I was able to help get your husband out of jail." Well, Daddy King [Martin Luther, Sr.], as they called him, let it be known that he was changing and he was for John Kennedy all over the United States. It had a tremendous effect. He got the black vote and Nixon, strange as it seems, was getting a whole lot of the black vote.

Henderson: When does it become public knowledge of your involvement with getting Dr. King out of jail?

Vandiver: I told, I think I told Dr. [Charles Boykin] Pyles about it, maybe Mr. Cook, or Dr. [James F.] Cook about it. It was twenty, twenty-five years before I said anything.

[Laughter] Now Ted [Theodore Harold] White, who wrote *The Making of the President* [1960], he knew all about it. Kennedy had told him, and Ted came down and talked with me for a whole afternoon about it. So he knew the whole story.

Henderson: But he didn't reveal it?

Vandiver: But he didn't reveal it, no. He knew I didn't want it revealed. [Laughter]

Henderson: In March 1960 you have a heart attack.

Vandiver: That's right.

Henderson: Now prior to that time had you had any difficulties health-wise?

Vandiver: I'd had a little bit when I was hunting. We were hunting down in South Georgia and going through the briars and I'd had a little angina, but I really didn't know what it was. I'd never had any heart trouble before but later I realized that I was having some angina after I had my heart attack 'cause I had it many times after that.

But except for that, that hunting trip where I got some twinges, I didn't have any idea I had heart trouble. But I went down with Carl Sanders and a group to play golf at the Masters [Augusta, Georgia]. [Ernest] Fritz Hollings from South Carolina was there and a lot of old friends. Fritz had been governor of South Carolina the same time I was governor. They invited us all down there to play golf at the Masters.

This was in March before the tournament and I got a terrible crick in my neck. I got where I couldn't turn my head. I'd never had any pain like that and so Carl carried me down to a chiropractor in Augusta, and he worked around over my neck and didn't relieve it all. And then we went to see a medical doctor. Carl carried me to see, I've forgotten who he was, but he carried me to see his doctor, and he checked my heart and they said they thought everything was all right.

But the crick wouldn't go away. So I didn't play golf at all. I stayed in bed the whole time I was down there. We got on the plane and went home and got home on a Sunday and that crick just got worse and worse. And on Monday I wasn't able to go to the office, and it was time to sign some bills. I mean, the time was running out that I need to sign or veto some bills. And Henry [Getzen] Neal came out. We spent the whole day going over bills with me in bed, signing or vetoing them or whichever one we needed to do.

I got up the next morning and I felt a little bit better. And I took my shower and dressed and went on down to the office. And Peter Zack [Geer Jr.] and Bee [Walter Odum] Brooks [Jr.] usually came in my office first, and we'd talk about what we were going to do during the day. Suddenly I had a pressure like somebody was putting a whole lot of pressure on my chest, and this was different from the crick. I forgot about the crick because I turned pale and started

sweating, and I went to the bathroom right there at the governor's office and put a little water on my face and tried to get myself straightened out. I really didn't know what was happening.

Finally I got to hurting so bad that they carried me to my doctor, Dr. [Franklin H.] Goodwin who had been my doctor when I had the mumps. That was the only doctor I had anyway [laughter], the one that had treated me for the mumps. He took an EKG [electrocardiogram]. I said, "Is everything all right?" He says, "The ambulance will be here in a few minutes." He sent me to Piedmont Hospital after he took the EKG and he said, "You're having a heart attack."

Then we started looking for a cardiologist and Carter Smith had been Betty's [Sybil Elizabeth Russell Vandiver] father's doctor and he was a cardiologist. And so they asked me who I wanted to talk with, what doctor I wanted, cardiologist, I said, "Well, Carter Smith is the only one I know." So he came and examined me and looked at the EKG and saw that I was having an attack. And they started giving me nitroglycerin and everything they knew to do back then, which is not nearly as much as they know now.

It eased off and I got so I felt real good and I said, told Dr. Smith, I said, "I've got to speak tonight to the Georgia Education Association. I've got a speech, got all prepared and ready to go." He said, "You're not going to make that speech." I said, "Well, I really need to." And he said, "No, you're not going to make it."

So he kept me in the hospital about ten days, checked me every day and put me on some Coumadin blood thinner which was about the only thing they could do back in those days. I stayed on that for several years after that. What it is is rat poison. They give it to rats, and they bleed to death so you have to be real careful about how much you take and you have to be

checked almost every week just to see that your blood doesn't get too thin or you'll have a stroke. It's a right dangerous drug really. But he put me on that, and I got to feeling better. And then after that was when we went to the [1960] Democratic convention, and I was sort of under the weather at that convention, but I did go.

And then the next November after Kennedy had been elected he asked the governors who could and who would to make a goodwill trip to South America, sort of a people to people situation that [Dwight David] Eisenhower had started. Kennedy wanted to start what he called a Good Neighbor Policy. [Editor's note: Alliance for Progress] I believe that's what he called it. Anyway, but maybe that was [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt that called it that.

But anyway, he wanted us to go down there and go to Argentina and go to Brazil and so Betty and I along with twenty-eight other governors went to South America, flew down there, spent about half of our time in Argentina and half of our time in Brazil. And we got to know, it was a good experience really, we got to know some of the governors we never would have really gotten to know very well from the West and New England particularly. Maybe you see them once a year at the governors' conference but you didn't really get to know them, [but] when you get off on a trip like that you get to know [them] pretty well.

The two governors that ended up being the most unpopular after that three-week trip was Pat [Edmund Gerald] Brown of California. He'd always get out and call a press conference and they had somebody that they were going to send to the chair out in California. I don't know if you remember all that hullabaloo they had but he . . . .

Henderson: Was that Chessman?

Vandiver: Chessman. Carol Chessman. If the press didn't know anything about it, he'd tell them about it. He was getting all this publicity. And another one was [G.] Mennen Williams from Michigan. He had just had to have a press conference everywhere he went. It ended up they were probably the two most unpopular people on the whole trip. [Laughter] The rest of us got to be real good friends, a lot of them that I never would have known very well had we not made that trip.

One of the funny things, I don't know whether I've told you this or not, about Ross Barnett?

Henderson: No, sir.

Vandiver: Ross Barnett was from, of course, from Mississippi, the governor of Mississippi. And I'd known him at governors' conferences. Ross didn't have but one speech and that was on the Constitution. You violated the Constitution to integrate the schools. And he'd made it at every governor's conference we'd ever been to. So he and Miss Pearl [Barnett], they did all right in Argentina. They weren't any blacks in Argentina. They did away with slavery in Argentina a good many years before they did in Brazil and the Argentineans did, they sold all their blacks to Brazil and so Brazil--90 percent of the people in Brazil have black blood in them, and they'd given us all this material--the State Department had--about what we ought to say and what we ought not to say and that the fact that the Brazilians were . . . almost all of them had black blood in them. And not make any statements that would be offensive to our hosts.

But Ross--they assigned each one of us an aide and the man that they assigned Ross Barnett to be his aide was head of IBM [International Business Machines] in all of South

America. I mean he was really a top-flight man. He'd gone to school in the United States. I think he'd gone to Harvard, a very educated man.

Ross would got to bed about eight-thirty at night. He and Miss Pearl would go up, and so the aide brought him into the hotel where we were and said good night. So Betty and I were sitting there. Governor Barnett came into the hotel and he and Miss Pearl went up to bed, and this aide that had been assigned to them was there in the lobby. Betty and I asked him if he'd like to have a drink since his governor had gone to bed so quick. [Laughs]

He decided to have a drink with us, and we got to talking with him and we asked him, said, "Well, you and Governor Barnett get along all right?" He said, "Yeah, we got along pretty well." But he said, "You know," he said, "We were riding down the main street of Rio," and said, "Governor Barnett asked me, said, 'Have y'all ever had any trouble with integration down here?'" He said, "Why no, Governor, we never had one bit of trouble." He said the governor said, "By God, just wait'll it hits you." [Laughter]

I've enjoyed telling that story 'cause Ross later . . . 'course had all that trouble with James Meredith in Mississippi and they had to call out the guard and the troops and the marshals and everybody else. I think that was when the people in Georgia decided that maybe we had handled it better than they had in Mississippi. They were glad that we didn't get into that kind of [unintelligible].

Henderson: Governor, let me raise a question about speeches in your administration. Now, did you have speechwriters? How did a major speech come about? Did you have a rough outline of what you wanted and told them to write a speech?

Vandiver: Yes, that's what I'd do. I'd give a rough outline, usually to Bee Brooks or Walter Brooks; he was the man that was the expert speechwriter, not only to me but to Griffin and Herman and Gene [Eugene Talmadge]. He'd been at it a long time and he knew what he was doing. And I would, if I was speaking to a group of teachers, of course, we'd give statistics. He'd get up statistics that we needed and do all the research on the thing and, I'd tell him what generally I wanted to say. And he'd write the speech and then we'd go over it and we'd change and sometimes we'd go over it eight or ten times before we finally came to the final copy, final speech.

But the governor doesn't have time if he does his job to sit around and write speeches. You need some help. But we did go over it very carefully, and as long as Bee Brooks was working with me, I never had any problems with it 'cause he knew how I felt. And he knew how Herman felt. He was the most experienced man in Georgia at writing political speeches. Although we always fought sometimes over phrases, sentences, and ideas, we'd get together.

Henderson: Okay. Let's go . . . .

Vandiver: He did all the research. You don't have time to do the research, statistical research.

Henderson: Let's go back and talk about the secretary of the army appointment just for a moment. Did you ever seriously consider accepting that appointment if it'd been made to you?

Vandiver: As I stated to you previously, Bobby [Robert] Troutman [Jr.] was the man who was close to Kennedy, had gone to school with John Kennedy and his brother at Harvard, and because of my military background Bobby was the one that . . . .

## End of Side One

## Side Two

Vandiver: And as I told you I didn't say yes or no, and the president called me up and asked me if I wanted to be secretary of the army. And I told him that I couldn't leave Georgia, that I was elected for a four-year term. There were a lot of real problems coming up and although I was flattered by the fact that some people had considered me for the job of secretary of the army that I wouldn't leave Georgia under those circumstances.

Although I admit it would have been tempting to have avoided all of that, what I knew was coming. I hoped we'd get through with it, but I knew that it was getting closer and closer. But I knew I couldn't dodge that responsibility; I couldn't live with myself if I'd left Georgia and left that situation like it was. So I thanked him for consideration--he didn't ask me. He said, "Would you like to be secretary of the army?" He didn't say, "Will you be--would you be secretary of the army?"

He said, "Would you like to be?" And I said, "Well, I very much appreciate the fact that I'm being mentioned." Carl Vinson had come out and said I was going to be secretary of the army and he said it; everybody believed it. But I did tell him I appreciated being considered, but I couldn't leave Georgia under the circumstances.

And I don't know whether I could have been confirmed or not. The NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] would have probably been all over me. The Black Caucus might have kept me from being confirmed if I'd accepted but I really didn't consider that because I wasn't going to do it anyway.

Henderson: The situation with desegregation finally takes place in your administration.

Vandiver: Yes. It's amazing how quickly it took place. We had the case, it was before Judge [William Augustus] Bootle, in Macon, middle district. Athens is in the middle district of Georgia, was at that time--I presume it still is. And Judge Bootle had considered the case and had ordered . . . .

Maybe I should start this way: we anticipated that it might come a year before all of this happened. And we knew that if it did come that the law was that we had to close the school. It was in the law. [They] tried to get it in the Constitution; they didn't get it in the Constitution. But it was in the law; it was in the statute. And we knew that it could possibly come, especially after what happened in Arkansas.

See, at the time I was elected governor, Arkansas hadn't happened; Little Rock hadn't happened. But Roy Harris and Marvin Griffin and a group went out to Arkansas and talked to [Orval E.] Faubus and got him all stirred up. And he recommended to the Arkansas legislature that they pass these same laws that we've had in Georgia. They told him, they said, "This is what we've got in Georgia." They said, "We put a stop to that business."

And so he recommended the legislature pass them and they did in Arkansas. Well, the case, Arkansas case, came up and the Supreme Court ruled all of those laws unconstitutional. That was a month after I had been elected. And then when Faubus resisted and got everybody all stirred up out there they sent the federal troops in there and then just caused a hell of a mess . . . terrible riots.

So I knew that we were . . . I hoped I could get through my term without having to deal with it, but I talked with some of my advisors. Griffin [Boyette] Bell was one of my advisors. Griffin came up with the idea which I give him credit for 'cause it was his idea, to create a

commission with Judge John [Adams] Sibley who was probably the most respected man in Georgia at that time. Everybody that knew him loved him, and he was really a great American, great Georgian. He [Bell] suggested that if we could get him to be the chairman of the committee then we could appoint this commission to travel all over Georgia in each congressional district and let people get up and say how they felt.

If they were opposed to segregation let them get up and talk about it. If the blacks wanted integration let them get up and talk about it. Let them get it out of their system. Let them blow off steam. And I agreed to that and we decided who was going to be on the commission. But before that I went to see Judge Sibley myself and I said, "Judge Sibley, I'm asking you to do something now for your state and I hope you can do it." And I told him what we planned and he said, "Oh Lord, I'm seventy years old. I don't want to get involved in politics again." I said, "Well, Mr. John, unless you do it with your prestige and with the way people feel about you, we could really get in trouble. You'd be doing a service to the state of Georgia if you'd do it."

So he finally said, "Yes, I'll do it." So we got up the names of the people on the commission. I remember one of them was George [Dekle] Busbee who was a freshman in the legislature at that time. We got up the names that we wanted on the committee and introduced the resolution creating the commission to study the possibilities of what could happen under the same conditions that they'd had in Arkansas.

And Judge Sibley went into every congressional district and carried the members of the commission with him. He let people say what they wanted to say. Then he would very gently say, "Well now, this is a possibility of what could happen if you take this stand: no schools;

have you got the resources to have a private school?" He just laid it out there, what they would face, and he did a great job. By the way, that was about the time I had my heart attack. I was really under a lot of pressure. We'd just had the legislative session and I was under a lot of pressure.

But, anyway, he agreed to do it, and he went into every congressional district and let them talk, let them blow steam, let them say what [sic] so their neighbors would know how they felt on this issue. And then they came back to Atlanta for the final meeting and made their recommendation. The recommendation was I believe, eleven to seven in favor of not closing the schools. That was when I, after we got into our . . . . Judge Bootle ruled that we had to integrate Charlayne Hunter and. . . .

Henderson: Hamilton Holmes?

Vandiver: Hamilton Holmes. I went before the legislature and made a speech at night. A governor had never spoken [to the legislature] at night before. [I] asked all the television stations and all the radio stations to carry it, if they would, 'cause I was going to deal with that subject. And every station in Georgia, radio and television, carried it live.

We made this speech to the legislature and laid out what our plan of action was. We introduced the bills to implement it, and out of the whole legislature, the House and the Senate, and we had a bigger legislature back then than we do now, out of the whole General Assembly there were only seventeen votes against the bills that we introduced. Cheney [Robert Alwyn] Griffin and the group of Marvin Griffin's cronies were the only ones that voted against it.

A lot of Marvin Griffin's friends voted for it. They figured, "Hell, we'll let Vandiver take the heat. We'll just go home and let him take the heat." And I figured then, I said, "Hell, if

I do this and I've got to do it, I'm probably through politically. I won't ever be elected, can't ever be elected." At that time 90 percent of the people were really opposed to integration.

But anyway, you have to live in your time and do what you have to do when you are living in that time, and I went ahead with the decision to do it. I also made the recommendation that every law against integration be repealed. We had, I guess, fifty or sixty laws involving segregation, and I could see where they'd file suits on every one of those. We'd be just covered up with lawsuits. But if we repealed them we wouldn't have anything to sue about. And I thought that would slow down the situation rather than keeping it in constant turmoil. And they passed that too. They repealed every segregation law. And the only one that they missed was the one that little girl called me about a while ago, the private [school]--I thought that that was one of them that they had repealed.

Henderson: Now prior to you speaking to the legislature you have a meeting at the governor's mansion?

Vandiver: Yes, I had . . . .

Henderson: And you bring in about fifty or sixty of the state leaders.

Vandiver: That's right. Every department head and my close friends and leaders in the state. We sat out there in the sunroom of the old governor's mansion. Everybody had a seat. And I went around the room and asked every one of them what their opinion was, what we should do under these circumstances. And they knew exactly what the circumstances were--that's before we made the speech. Every one of them said, "Close the schools. Close the schools." Until we got to Frank Twitty. Frank Twitty said, "No, we can't close the schools, can't close the university, can't close the schools." And then we went on down the line and

Carl's [Sanders] name came up and he said, "No, we can't close the schools. I just don't think there's any way that we can close the University of Georgia." But it was about forty-eight to two.

Henderson: Who were some of those forty-eight there?

Vandiver: Well, there's Jim [James Lester] Gillis [Sr.], [Curtis] Dixon Oxford, every department head I had thought we ought to close the schools.

Henderson: Why do you think these two [Sanders and Twitty] spoke up in keeping the schools open?

Vandiver: I'll tell you the reason. I've thought about it a whole lot. They just had these speeches, the Chamber of Commerce Eggs and Issues, and Carl and Frank had been invited to speak to all these speeches, Eggs and Issues speeches around Georgia and that was on everybody's mind. And they got a feeling from those speeches as they went around into each congressional district that the people couldn't tolerate closing the University of Georgia for any length of time--they knew it would close down permanently--that we ought not to close it down for any length of time.

I think that was the reason: they had been in closer touch with the people of Georgia through those speeches than any of the rest of those people.

Henderson: Now after this meeting do you make a decision then or do you mull all this over and go back to the governor's mansion and make a decision later on, what you're going to do?

Vandiver: Well, that was at the governor's mansion.

Henderson: Okay, all right, when . . . .

Vandiver: I didn't make . . . . No, I didn't make any decision right then. I tried to think it through and I knew, I thought at that time, that if I made the decision to introduce legislation to keep the schools open and not cut off the money that I was committing political suicide. I guess I did. I didn't get elected anymore. [Laughter]

Anyway, I couldn't say--there were a million children in school at that time in all of our schools. And I couldn't see a million children out on the street, not going to school. And I knew--Betty and I talked about it, Betty had a great influence on me . . . . We got down on our knees and we prayed about it. I just knew that I couldn't do anything else. By the time we made this speech the situation had gotten so desperate they wanted to follow some leadership, and although a lot of them did it under great pressure from home, the people told them to vote to close the schools, Hal, they went along with us. And I think a lot of them figured that "Well, Vandiver's the one that'll take the heat so let him take it." [Laughter]

Henderson: Did you consult with the senators [Russell and Talmadge] in Washington about this?

Vandiver: No, I didn't. The reason I didn't was that I didn't want them brought into this situation, for them to have responsibility for it. I was the governor. It was my responsibility. It wasn't the senators' responsibility. It wasn't a federal . . . well, it was a federal matter, but it was not something that they could do anything about. And I knew that and there wasn't any need to scar Herman and Dick Russell by bringing them into the situation. And so I said, "No, I'm not going to do it. I'll make this my sole responsibility."

Henderson: After this did they ever discuss your decision with you?

Vandiver: I talked with Herman about it beforehand occasionally. We'd see each other. He'd told me one time, he said, "Ernie," he said, "You got to figure out a way to go to jail." [Laughter] I said, "Well, I'd rather not, Herman." But he said, "If you could figure out a way to go to jail, " he said, "I think you can get out of this situation." And I said, "Well, maybe there's another way." 'Course there was no other way. That's what we did. I didn't want them to have to take any responsibility for it. Really, they were both . . . . Senator Russell was in the family and was my political idol really. I thought he was one of the greatest statesmen we ever had, and Herman and I had been friends since we were boys and I didn't want to bring him into it.

Henderson: Now at first the desegregation is peaceful at the university but the following night there's some disturbance.

Vandiver: That's right. And I got a call from the university over there. I had Bill [William Perry] Trotter who at that time was head of the State Patrol, I had him out at the mansion 'cause I was anticipating there might be some problems. And if there were any problems then I wanted to have him there so we could use the State Patrol to put down any disturbances.

And Bill Trotter stayed with me until about eleven o'clock that night and then we figured, "Well, everything is settled down. There's not going to be any problems." And he went home. And then about twelve o'clock Dr. O. C. [Omer Clyde] Aderhold called me and said that they were having some disturbances over there, and he was afraid somebody was going to get hurt and we needed to do something about it. I said, "Is it a problem that you don't think your university police can . . . . Don't you think they can handle it?" He said, "No, they can't handle it. There's not enough of them." They didn't have that many university police,

security people. Really they had no experience in handling anything anyway. They were just people that would check buildings and that sort of thing.

So I said, "Okay, we'll call the State Patrol down over there first." I sure didn't want to call the National Guard in. That would've been the last thing I wanted to do. And I said, "I'm not going to let any state patrolman go on the campus unless you tell me it's absolutely necessary. But they are on stand-by and if you call me back and tell me that it's necessary, that lives and property are in danger, I'll send in the State Patrol. But I'll have them over there ready to use if we need them."

So I called Bill Trotter and told him to get at least fifty state patrolmen over there, or as many as he could get quickly as he could get [unintelligible] the State Patrol station in Athens until we called them and let them know that we needed them. Well, one of the heroes of that night was Dean [William] Tate. Dean Tate was a greatly beloved man. He felt the same way about integration that 90 percent of the other people of Georgia felt, but he loved the university more and so he was one of those that through his efforts helped to settle that thing down so that we didn't have to send the state troopers in there.

Aderhold frightened me so I was afraid they might kill Hunter and Holmes. So I did send the State Patrol and get them and take them home, get them out of the area so they wouldn't . . . . The Klu Klux Klan got involved in it. They came over there and they were raising hell. I didn't know what they'd do. If they'd lynched one of those students they never would have gotten over it.

So I got the State Patrol to carry Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter home. The thing quieted down and then Judge Bootle thought I'd sent them home permanently, which I

hadn't, I was just getting them out of the line of fire. But he ordered that they be sent back and I said, "Okay, we'll send them back. I don't know how safe it'll be."

But we did send them back and by that time we had newspaper people from all over the United States, CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System], NBC [National Broadcasting Corporation], and from everywhere down there to see--cover the riots and the killings and the lynchings that we going to happen. But the students settled down and they got the Klu Klux Klan out of there. They didn't want to come in the daylight; they wanted to come at night . . . and got them out of there. And the students began to realize what the situation was, that there wasn't any choice. And so they settled down. But I never will forgive CBS. CBS stopped some students that were on the campus and they had the cameras there and they said, "What do you think about all this problem?" They said, "Well, it's settling down. Don't think we'll have much problem." They said, "Well, why don't you shake your fist and tell them you're opposed to integration?"

So they did, those students. They were on national television so they made a big to do and then walked off and that night it looked like the whole university was blowing up, but it wasn't. It was just these damn newspaper people that wanted a story, and they were trying to make one and when there wasn't one there. And Roy . . . . Not Roy Harris, but his law partner Roy from . . .

Henderson: [James Roy] McCracken?

Vandiver: McCracken. Roy McCracken. He was in the House and after we passed the bill Roy came to me and he said, "My daughter is in the dormitory over with that nigger," and he said, "I'm just not going to stand for it. I'm just going to go over there and take her out of

school." And I said, "Well that's your prerogative, Roy. You do what you feel like you have to do." Roy had been a good friend, always been a good supporter.

So I ran into him when the legislature came back into session the next week. I said, "Roy, did you take your daughter out of school?" He said, "I tried but she wouldn't go." [Laughter] He said that that girl was down at the end of the hall and she wasn't bothering her, and she was going to stay in school and get an education. And he said, "I couldn't make her go." He was probably the most ardent segregationist, he [McCracken] and Roy Harris, who we had in state government at that time.

The Board of Regents worked with us real well, all except Roy [Harris] and Roy raised hell. But Jim [James Anderson] Dunlap who I'd appointed and Jim [James Coleman] Owen [Jr.] who I'd appointed and the others I had appointed, they realized what the situation was and they knew that you can't fight the whole federal government. The judges had ruled. You either go out and call out the National Guard and fire out on Fort McPherson or you follow the rules. We didn't do too well in that last engagement we had about a hundred years ago.

Henderson: During that disturbance your executive secretary Peter Zack Geer made a statement . . . .

Vandiver: He did. He was up at the Henry Grady Hotel and he was up there with Roy Harris, and he was drinking and he made a wild statement that they attributed to me. Well, I had Peter Zack out there at breakfast the next morning and read the riot act to him. And I said, "Peter Zack, you're not the governor and you're not the one making the decisions. I'm making the decisions and I want you to keep your mouth out of it." He never did open his mouth again. He did make some statements that stirred up some people. A lot of people try to take over in

an emergency like that and make statements when it's not their responsibility really. He had no right to make a statement.

Henderson: Let's go back to the Sibley commission. Is there any division among your advisors as to whether this commission should be created?

Vandiver: Yeah, I think there was some division. However, everybody was looking for a way out of this thing and they didn't know exactly what the Sibley commission would do and Mr. Sibley was a segregationist. I mean he was a segregationist but he was a fair man. Everybody knew he was a segregationist. He had supported Herman Talmadge and he'd always been a real conservative. So they really didn't know what that commission was going to do.

I picked out the people I wanted on there. I wanted both sides represented because I didn't want them to think it'd been stacked. Peter Zack was on it. I had George Busbee on it. He was from Albany. Howell Hollis [Jr.] from Columbus, who was a classmate of mine at the university, was on it. In fact I've got a picture of the Sibley commission. You might want to use that in the book.

Henderson: Okay.

Vandiver: Let's see if I can't find that . . . [Cut off] This committee came in almost equally divided but I think there was one vote that favored keeping the schools open when the other wanted to close it. But anyway, the importance of the Sibley Commission is the fact that it gave anybody who wanted to the chance to sound off and give their feelings about it. When you give a person a chance to say what he wants to say and a forum to use so his neighbors will know what he wants to say it gives him . . . at least [a chance to] say, "Well, I was opposed to that thing and I stood up for it." Or "I was in favor of it."

I think it relieved a lot of the tension that we had and it made it easier for me to go before the legislature and ask that the laws be repealed 'cause we couldn't do away with the public school system or the university system. There just wasn't any way we could do that. It was either secede from the union again or abide by the law.

Henderson: Let's suppose that instead of integrating the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology] was under the possibility of being integrated. Do you think you would have made the same decision?

Vandiver: Yes, we would have had to make the same decision, but it would have been more difficult, and the reason for that is that I think every family in Georgia has got somebody that went to the University of Georgia and that's close to them. And Tech has a world of out of state students that come in here and a lot of Georgia people, too. But it's not the same situation as it was at the university. It would have been more difficult. There'd have been a lot of people that would've said, "The hell with it! Let's close Tech!" [Laughter] But it would have made it difficult although we would have had to have made the same decision. But it made it easier because it was the University of Georgia and the university is so close to every family almost.

Henderson: All right now. The votes that the legislature has to take, do you do any lobbying to try to influence those lawmakers to vote to keep the schools open?

Vandiver: I did not after all this is done. I just made the speech and sent the bills down there. I didn't think I had to lobby, and I didn't because there were only seventeen votes in the whole General Assembly against it, but I didn't think it would be quite that unanimous. It wasn't unanimous but it was close to it. I think it was just there was a relief that we had this

thing behind us. That we'd made a decision--we didn't like it, we opposed it, but we were under a court order, and you either obey the order of the courts or you're an outlaw.

Henderson: Did President Kennedy call you and congratulate you on the way you handled this or . . . .

Vandiver: He told me in Washington at the inauguration--all this happened just about the same time as the inauguration. He told me in Washington that he appreciated the way that Georgia had handled the situation and that he was hopeful that other states would handle it the same way. And with the exception of Mississippi and Louisiana, all the other southern states handled it just like we did.

Henderson: Because of this, is this when James [Harrison] Gray [Sr.] breaks with your administration, over this incident?

Vandiver: No, he didn't break with my administration over that. He was opposed to it but we didn't have a break. In fact, when I thought I might be able to run again, James was one of my strongest supporters. In fact I even made a videotape of my first speech down in Albany and he, we videotaped it down there. I had a breakfast appointment the next morning at Dalton [Georgia] so he flew up there in his plane.

The pressure that I was under really, I think, brought on the recurrence of my problem. As long as I can eat right and get plenty of sleep and live a normal life, a fairly normal life, I get by all right. But if I get under great stress then I carry it [nitroglycerin] with me all the time. I've had it in my pocket for nearly thirty-five years and I use it occasionally when I get under stress.

Henderson: Now what is that?

Vandiver: That's nitroglycerin. Stick it under your tongue when you start getting some pain.

Henderson: In the 1961 session there's a major confrontation between you and the legislature over the budget.

Vandiver: That was the confrontation because they thought that I was going to resign my office as governor and go to Washington [D.C.]. And they were afraid that my successor who was named in the Constitution in the event I did resign, that he would be in charge and that they were not willing to work with him on the budget. They wanted the legislature to take control of the budget rather than having to deal with him. And that was a big fight.

Henderson: Now there is a study committee appointed, the Special Budget Study Committee. What came out of that committee, if you recall? Or let me rephrase the question: How did this fight turn out?

Vandiver: I won it by a good many votes. It came in like a lamb [laughter]; [it] went out like a lion. It was a tough fight. I was fighting against some of my friends, some of the people that had been my supporters like Phil Campbell and George Smith and Frank Twitty and really my leadership. And I didn't really have another leader. I called on Charlie [Charles Adams] Pannell who was in the House and had been my good friend and had always supported me to lead the fight against my friends, a lot of my friends who were over on the other side. We beat them and we beat them soundly. It wasn't overwhelming but we beat them soundly.

And then after that they saw that I meant it when I said I wasn't going to leave and go to Washington. We went about repairing old friendships. Everything got back just about like it was. George [Bright] Hamilton resigned as state treasurer. One of those people who was in

that core group was Jack [Bowdoin] Ray. He was one that fought over this budget thing, one of the leaders. But I appointed Jack Ray to succeed George Hamilton and that helped cover the disagreement. Jack was well qualified to be state treasurer. He was a friend of George Hamilton's.

So Jack could be treasurer and Jack would have served there as long as he lived if he hadn't gone Republican after that [1968] Democratic convention in Chicago. He and Phil Campbell and . . .oh, the public service commission . . . . They were four or five of them who declared they were Republicans after that. The next time they came up for re-election in the Democratic Party they got beat, although I think most people were as upset as they were at what happened in Chicago. You remember what a terrible fight that was. The mayor [Richard J. Daley] got into it and had his police beating people over the head. It was a bad convention.

Henderson: Let me come back to you as governor. What are some ways a governor in Georgia could encourage law makers to vote with him on a piece of legislation? How did you lobby the lawmakers?

Vandiver: Mostly on the basis of friendship. I attended all of the--you half killed yourself going to these festivals and doing things that they want you to do in their home county. But I did a lot of that and then we'd fought some battles together when I was lieutenant governor, had some staunch friends who'd stick with you through thick or thin. You call them down and ask them to support you, and some of them would. I mean most of them would if they told you they would. But I had one fellow from Tift county that [would] come down every time, say, "Governor, I'm going to vote for you this time," and I would get the voting list and he was opposed to me every time. [Laughter] You know who he is?

Henderson: I'm not sure.

Vandiver: Leonard . . . .

Henderson: Morris.

Vandiver: [Francis Leonard] Morris.

Henderson: Yes, he's still around.

Vandiver: He'd tell me every time, "I'm going to be with you this time, Governor." Get the voting list and he was against me.

Henderson: There were four themes, you said, in your inaugural address that you wanted to carry out. One was economy; one was efficiency; one was maintaining the county-unit system; one maintaining segregation. What did you mean by efficiency?

Vandiver: Well, the government had gotten out of balance really, mainly because of apathy. Most of the power had gone to the executive department. The legislature . . . I sent my appropriations bills over there to the legislature and in thirty minutes they would pass.

Nobody knew what was in the appropriation bill really. They hadn't studied it except maybe the appropriation committee. The legislature was just out of it. The governor could use his surplus fund--and there was always a surplus fund--to do anything he wanted to in the state government. He could give schools money; he could build a park or highway or anything out of this surplus money. There was no controls over it at all. If it was above the appropriated amount and it always was . . . .

'Course you tried if somebody was really opposed to you and you try to persuade them not to be against you. Some of them you knew there wasn't any use to talk to because you knew how they were going to vote, but there was always some of them that were on the fence, or had

some special reason why they couldn't vote with you or thought they couldn't. And some of them liked to be persuaded and courted, 'cause they think they might have something they want to ask you about later on and they want help in some way.

Henderson: What did you mean by economy?

Vandiver: Well, money had been thrown around pretty wildly by the Griffin administration. [Unintelligible] a tax raise. All that money was spent. When I went into office I had enough in the surplus fund to run the state a day and a half. They spent it down until it was just nothing [sic] left in the surplus fund. And we had to economize in order to build up our funds so we could operate and he left me just all--left the state broke really.

One of the first things I did was I tried to cut back those departments that I could without really affecting the departments too much. We had a 5 percent cutback, roll back. 'Course, it didn't affect the teachers' pay; we couldn't change welfare. But we cut back on highways; we cut back on practically every other part of state government, not build parks or other things that the state did until we could see daylight. And we did that for two years, and it was awful tough because we weren't able to make much progress 'cause we were so broke when I went in there that we had to build up some surplus to get something done.

At the end of two years the economy improved because we had cut back on nonessential things, things that were not absolutely necessary even including the National Guard. We had built up enough so that we could then see our way clear to start spending some money on things that needed to be done.

What had been neglected more than anything else, and I think probably the thing that people appreciated most, they'd had the rural roads built, but the primary roads had just been

neglected. We had people, tourists coming through Georgia writing letters back to their editor talking about the "terrible roads." "I could tell when I hit Georgia because of the terrible roads."

And so we submitted a bill for a hundred million dollars for our primary roads and got that passed. And we were able to repair. I told them to start this way, to go to the state lines, every state line that we had, and start working on that road first [laughter] because I was tired of listening to these people say that they could tell when they got to Georgia by the bad roads. But we were able to do a whole lot; the base was already there. They [the roads] just had potholes and it was wearing thin and. . . . They needed repair and we were able to do a whole lot with a hundred million dollars back in those days. And since that time I don't believe you've heard anybody complain about Georgia roads.

Henderson: How much power did you have over the Highway Department back then?

Vandiver: Well, if I wanted to exercise it I could tell, I appointed all the members, I could tell them exactly what I want[ed] them to do and they would do it. I didn't exercise that power. I never did tell them "you have to do this and you have to do that." Somebody would come in with a problem of the road and I'd pick up the phone and call Jim Gillis and say, "Jim, this man's got some problems. See if you can help him." And he'd go over there and try to work it out for him. But if you wanted to you could run it the way it was then because I'd appointed all of them. They were all my appointees.

They're not that way now. That's one thing that Carl Sanders did that probably has helped a little bit. He let the legislature elect the board members. He expanded the board so

that each district, congressional district, would have a board member. He'd make his recommendations and the legislature would elect the board members.

End of Side Two

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## Name Index

22

**A**

Aderhold, Dr. Omer Clyde (O.C.), 26, 27

**B**

Barnett, Pearl, 16, 17  
 Barnett, Ross, 16, 17  
 Bell, Griffin Boyette, 20, 21  
 Bootle, William Augustus, 20, 22, 27  
 Brooks, Walter Odum, Jr. (Bee), 13, 18  
 Brown, Edmund Gerald (Pat), 15  
 Busbee, George Dekle, 21, 30  
 Byrd, Garland Turk, 1, 2

**C**

Campbell, James Philander, Jr. (Phil), 1,  
 33, 34  
 Chessman, Carol (death row inmate in CA),  
 15, 16  
 Cook, Dr. James F., 12  
 Cravey, Zachariah Daniel (Zack), 6, 7

**D**

Dunlap, James Anderson (Jim), 29

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight David, 15

**F**

Faubus, Orval E., 20

**G**

Geer, Peter Zack, Jr., 13, 29, 30  
 George, Walter Franklin, 6  
 Gillis, James Lester, Jr. (Jim), 37  
 Gillis, James Lester, Sr., 24  
 Goodwin, Franklin H., Dr., 14  
 Gray, James Harrison, Sr., 32  
 Griffin, Robert Alwyn, 22  
 Griffin, Samuel Marvin, Sr., 2, 8, 18, 20,

**H**

Hamilton, George Bright, 33, 34  
 Harris, Roy Vincent, 7, 8, 20, 29  
 Hartsfield, William Berry (Bill), 11  
 Hollings, Ernest Fritz, 13  
 Hollis, Howell, Jr., 30  
 Holmes, Hamilton, 22, 27  
 Hunter, Charlayne, 22, 27

**J**

Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 7, 8, 9  
 Jordan, Robert Henry (Bob), 4

**K**

Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, 1, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
 11, 12, 15, 18, 32  
 Kennedy, Robert Francis (Bobby), 10, 11  
 King, Coretta Scott, 11  
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 10, 11, 12  
 King, Martin Luther, Sr., 11, 12  
 Knox, Robert E., 4

**M**

McCracken, James Roy, 28, 29  
 Meredith, James, 17  
 Mitchell, James Oscar (Oscar), 10, 11  
 Morris, Francis Leonard, 35

**N**

Neal, Henry Getzen, 13  
 Nixon, Richard Milhous, 11, 12  
 Norman, Robert Claude (Bob), 3

**O**

Owen, James Coleman, Jr. (Jim), 29  
 Oxford, Curtis Dixon, 24

**P**

Pannell, Charles Adams (Charlie), 33  
Pyles, Charles Boykin, 12

**R**

Ray, Jack Bowdoin, 34  
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 15  
Russell, Richard Brevard, Jr. (Dick), 4, 5,  
6, 7, 25, 26  
Russell, Robert Lee, Jr. (Bobby), 10

**S**

Sanders, Carl Edward, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13, 24, 37  
Sibley, John Adams, 21, 30  
Smith, Carter, Dr., 14  
Smith, George Leon, II (George L.), 1, 4,  
33  
Stewart, George Daniel, 10, 11

**T**

Talmadge, Eugene, 6, 18  
Talmadge, Herman Eugene, 2, 6, 7, 18, 25,  
30  
Tate, William, 27  
Thurmond, James Strom, 8  
Trotter, William Perry (Bill), 26, 27  
Troutman, Robert, Jr. (Bobby), 1, 11, 18  
Truman, Harry S., 8  
Twitty, Frank Starling, 1, 2, 23, 24, 33

**V**

Vandiver, Sybil Elizabeth Russell (Betty),  
14  
Vinson, Carl, 1, 19

**W**

White, Theodore Harold, 12  
Williams, G. Mennen, 16

