

Harold Paulk Henderson, Sr. Oral History Collection
OH Vandiver 30A
William Donaldson Ballard Interviewed by Dr. Harold Paulk Henderson (Part A)
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EDITED BY DR. HENDERSON

Side One

Henderson: This is Dr. Hal Henderson. I am interviewing Mr. William Donaldson Ballard, who was a member of the Georgia House of Representatives during the Griffin administration and the Vandiver administration. This interview is taking place in Mr. Ballard's home in Oxford, Georgia. The date is July 28, 1994. Good afternoon, Mr. Ballard.

Ballard: Glad to be with you.

Henderson: Well, I appreciate you granting me this opportunity to interview you. Let me begin by asking you: How did you become acquainted with [Samuel] Ernest Vandiver [Jr.]?

Ballard: I was first elected to the General Assembly and the House of Representatives and took office in 1957. Ernie then was over in the Senate, and [I] just met him then and he kind of started running for governor while he was over there that two years. Of course, I got out and worked for him. I helped with his campaigns all during that time, and we went until he was elected governor and from then on. That's how I knew him. I was in the House, and he was over there as--I think he was the president of the Senate.

Henderson: Did you know him while he was adjutant general?

Ballard: I did not, uh-uh. I didn't know him at that time 'cause I hadn't--I was in the service, and then after the service I went to school, and then, of course, after getting out of school I was too busy trying to make a living.

Henderson: Did you play an active role in his 1954 race for lieutenant governor?

Ballard: No, I did not, no. I didn't know Ernie at that time. I was not that involved in politics. I really got into politics in 1956 when I ran for the House of Representatives from Newton County.

Henderson: [Samuel] Marvin Griffin [Sr.] is governor while Ernest Vandiver is lieutenant governor.

Ballard: That is right.

Henderson: Let me ask you to give your impressions of some individuals in the Griffin administration. Marvin Griffin.

Ballard: I liked Marvin. He was honest; he was straight to the point; he looked out for his buddies. But let me put it this way: Marvin didn't look out for his friends near like some of the later ones have looked out for some of their big ones.

Henderson: How 'bout his brother Cheney [Robert Alwyn] Griffin?

Ballard: Cheney was one of the most interesting people I've ever met. You could sit down-- I was never a Griffin man. I never was, but I could sit down with either Marvin or Cheney, either one, and we could carry on a good conversation and really have a good time. I enjoyed Cheney. I later served in the House with Cheney when he came back up to the House later on up in the, I guess, in the sixties sometime.

Henderson: You say you were not a Griffin man. Were you considered a Talmadge man?

Ballard: Nope. I was not a Talmadge man. I guess the first real interest I got in it was Ernie Vandiver. I liked Ernie; I liked what he was for; and he just kind of seemed like my kind of folks. That's the reason I took to Ernie.

Henderson: Let me ask you about Roger [Hugh] Lawson [Sr.].

Ballard: I guess he was all right, but I just never did get around with him that much.

Henderson: How 'bout T. V. [Truman Veran] "Red" Williams?

Ballard: Oh, Red was a good one. I liked Red a lot. Red, he'd kind of look out for his friends too, and he was good man to be over there. Red did a good job for what he was supposed to do. One of the most interesting things I can remember is when Red went out of office, there was a friend of mine from down in Morgan County, and there were some people who had a sales tax problem down there that was up. He kept on and kept on and so. He put it off 'til Red went out. He said, well, he and Red didn't get along quite that good. He said he'd wait 'til he got out.

Well, I knew what Red had done offered to do [was] to knock off all the penalties and the interest and let them pay the principal. Well, this Howard [Hardie] Tamplin was his name, and Howard was an old country seer [?], and so Howard said, "Well, we'll wait around here and I'll see that next and I'll pass Red up." Man, they come around. They popped him penalties, interest, every durn thing else, and I think that was when . . . oh, good gosh went in. I can't think offhand. Well, anyway, it backfired. Red was a good person. I really enjoyed Red.

Henderson: Now, you say he took care of his friends. What do you mean by that?

Ballard: I mean if you had a problem, and it was if it was something within the realm of doing away with penalties or stuff of that nature to go on and get something worked out, he would do it.

Henderson: How 'bout Roy [Franklin] Chalker [Sr.]?

Ballard: Roy was over in the Highway Department. Roy was not one of my big buddies. Roy was kind of on the other side of the fence. He was over in the Griffin camp. I think he was a publisher down in there somewhere, and Roy was on the board, on the highway board, the most I knew him. He was over there. I think it was Roy and a Mr. Evans and I don't know who the third one was because we had set up a new highway board with three members. They were over there and they had the rural roads battle going on and it was a scrap too. Marvin had had one rural roads thing, I believe maybe a hundred million or something, and had done some rural roads improvement, and they had a fifty million dollar one coming up when Ernie was over running the Senate. Apparently Ernie and us got on the other foot and we opposed that fifty million dollar rural roads bill.

Old man Evans called me and wanted me to come over to talk to him, and so I went over. This same fellow, Howard Tamplin, who had been in the legislature, been in the House, probably for fifteen, twenty years, and I thought he knew what we were doing, so we go over and we sit down with the old fellow and we discuss it with him. He asked us, said, "What do y'all think about the rural roads?" I spoke up, I said, "Well," I says, "I just don't think we need it right now." I said, "Well, I think we could do without it for a while." 'Cause money was tight, man, let me tell you. There wasn't no money when Ernie Vandiver went into office. So we were going to save a little of the giblets 'til we got around to Ernie getting in. Well, Howard did the same thing. Well, we went on that list up behind Marvin's desk. He had his list, you know. You go in and he'd say, "Let me look around here at the list a minute." So we went on Marvin's list, but that's where I knew Roy Chalker, was there.

Henderson: Now, when you got on the list, what did that mean?

Ballard: That meant you just didn't get nothing. Your county didn't get nothing. You're in bad shape, and I had probably one of the strongest, I guess, one of the strongest Marvin Griffin men in the state of Georgia from this county, Otis Nixon. He was statewide. He was chairman of the board of corrections for years and years, and he was a big Griffin man, and he ran politics for forty, fifty years here in this county until I came along and kind of broke it up a little bit.

Henderson: Some critics would accuse the Griffin administration of being the most corrupt in state politics.

Ballard: No, sir. They were no more than--let me tell you. You just saw little things. There were little ones. Marvin would help some little thing in them, somebody little. The boys on up the line, when they helped, I mean it was big stuff. So Marvin was no different from most of them.

Henderson: How would you describe the relationship between Governor Marvin Griffin and Lieutenant Governor Ernest Vandiver?

Ballard: When I was there--see, I went in in the middle of Marvin's term, and it was already being strained at that time because I think Ernie was already working toward running for governor at that time, and he had to have some foundations and all, and I think this rural road thing was one of the main points. As well as I remember, that was the main thing that we had going that was a real battleground was the rural roads bill.

Henderson: Well, let's talk about that a little bit more. Why did Marvin Griffin propose that issue in 1958?

Ballard: I think that probably the reason was was to get some money out and tie in some work out in the counties using the good--you know, giving for the doubt, to put some money

out in the rural areas on the roads. Now, also that was a good fifty million dollars that you could use to build a political thing because your county commissioners ran the state of Georgia back in those days, and he could parcel [it] out. He'd tell one of those--I heard him many a time tell some representative, "Well, I'm going to have to talk to your commissioner." Or some representative'd be sitting over there that didn't vote exactly like they wanted, [and] here come two or three commissioners strolling in there, "Well, you know, I talked to Marvin," or "I did this or that," and they did it because, I tell you, he could drop every road in your county.

Henderson: What role does Ernest Vandiver play in defeating that issue?

Ballard: I think he was the king bee in it. He was the headman. 'Course, he had his lieutenants working too, but I think Ernie was the top man because that's where my anchors came from. If it hadn't been for Ernest Vandiver, I probably would've never seen the political angle of the rural roads bill. Basically it was a good program. If it would have been run to where you do it now--later on I was on the highway department [committee] from the time I went in the legislature until I left, both the House and Senate. We later fixed it where it was done on a kind of percentage-based [system], but, you see, back then there wasn't no percentage about it. You could pave Podunk Road down through Kinchafoonee if you wanted to if the governor decided to go there, and, let me tell you, he ran the highway department. He said what came out of the highway department, and the highway department was what elected governors. Board of education, that wasn't anything. Human resources--well, it wasn't human resources--welfare department and it wasn't anything. Corrections really wasn't. That damn highway department was the one that did the business. Now, your agriculture department--there were

some good machines built up through the agriculture department, but your governor's office, when he controlled that highway department completely, is when it really took place.

Henderson: You mentioned some lieutenants that helped Ernest Vandiver. Who were some of those people?

Ballard: I've tried to think of some of that now that was there at that time. I don't remember offhand. Now, George L. [Leon] Smith [II] was an Ernie man. Well, when Ernie went in, of course, George came back as the speaker. Let's see, who else was? Let me tell you, most of Ernie's people were kind of middle-of-the-road people, you know, that just didn't like too much right or too much left or too much freedom or that.

The House was totally controlled at the time that Marvin was there by Marvin's people. Let me tell you, if you had a bill or something in there, the governor controlled when your bill came up, he controlled when it was brought to the floor, whether it passed, whether it did this, [and] what happened to it in committee. He controlled what committees were appointed, [and] who went on the committees in the House. Now, I presume that happened in the Senate too, but I wasn't in the Senate at that time. But he could. . . [control] who was chairman of the different committees. He definitely placed the floor leader, and he placed them on top of that then, of course, the speaker, and he had--that is, uh, oh good gosh, the boy that's up there now from Macon. . . . Denmark Groover [Jr.] was the floor leader. What was the tall fellow? He was a very eloquent speaker . . . Fred [Frederick Barrow] Hand. Fred Hand was there, and they were all Griffin folks, and then Marvin [E.] Moate [Sr.] from down here in Hancock County, he was one. He was the speaker at one time. We had some pretty strong--Marvin had a strong

organization, and his organization, basically they denied it, but was an old Talmadge organization.

Henderson: Well, now, did Herman [Eugene] Talmadge play a role in this fight?

Ballard: I never encountered Herman in anything inside of there. But now, you know, I wasn't in the upper echelon that Herman would probably take time out to fool with a little freshman legislator in the House or something, but I never encountered anything or any messages from Herman or anything whatsoever. And let me tell you, they weren't beyond giving messages. You could get all kinds of messages.

Henderson: Did Ernest Vandiver contact you to lobby you to find out how you felt on this issue?

Ballard: Not directly. I sat over in the northwest wing of the House, and sitting over there, I sat with Bob [Robert Grier] Stephens [Jr.] and George [B.] Brooks from over in Oglethorpe County and from Clarke County . . . gosh, I almost had him. I thought I'd never forget it. Anyway, it was an enlightened corner. I'm not bragging or anything, but I hit it with an enlightened group, and I had the advantage of hearing and knowing and stepping into a position that I learned quick what was right and wrong. Otherwise, I could have probably gotten in another crowd somewhere and I'd have drifted off the other way. So, but that's how I got in and they were all friends of Ernie's, and a lot of that was from the Dick [Richard Brevard] Russell [Jr.] days, a lot of the stuff that came in was from the old Russell crowd.

Henderson: What are some of the arguments the Vandiver people are using to convince you to defeat this? I mean you; I mean the members of the General Assembly.

Ballard: It was that it was a political--I think we called it a "boondoggle" back then. I believe that's what we used to call it. It was a political boondoggle that if it was handled right it would be--who, we were convinced and we pretty well convinced others that it might not be handled right at the end of a governor's term, and it might be used too much to elect the next governor.

Henderson: Do you think that if he had proposed this, say, in 1957, it would have gone through?

Ballard: It would have had a much better chance of going through then, or a little earlier that you could have looked at it that he was going to operate it through his thing instead of running out here and spending fifty million dollars in one year. Don't kid yourself. They would have done it too, now. They knew how to put that stuff out there when it needed to go at certain places.

Henderson: How active was Marvin Griffin in this fight?

Ballard: Marvin Griffin was damn right, man he was [laughter]. He was tough. I guarantee you. He didn't have nobody to tote his. They said that Cheney was a hatchet man. Shoot, Marvin didn't need no damn hatchet man. But Cheney, you know, tended to the running back and forth in the traffic.

Henderson: Would you see Governor Griffin on the House floor? Would he call lawmakers down to his office?

Ballard: Down to his office, and, let me tell you, Marvin had no problem walking out on there. He was one of the best, next to Ernie, of the governors, and I've served with them from Marvin Griffin up through George [Dekle] Busbee. Of course, the last two I served with them

when was one is in the Senate and the other one when he was in the House, and I have never known one other than Ernie that was friendlier, more easy to talk to. I mean, I was on the other side, and Marvin and I would sit down and we would talk about things, and he'd be going walking through the capitol or something and he'd holler out, "Hey, Donald, blah blah blah." We'd sit down and talk. He's a very, very friendly type person; he was a good politician; but when he said zip, I mean, it was there. I mean, I was on the outside and I knew it. I knew my place, and he had nothing personally tied to that. I got invitations to the mansion. I had no problem. Hell, I got invitations to the mansion just as much as anybody else did. I went out and I enjoyed going out to the old one out there. But other than that, he was *the* boss.

Henderson: Why do you think Ernest Vandiver finally prevailed in this fight?

Ballard: Ernie was sincere. We believed in Ernie and I still believe in Ernie, and he proved himself after he became governor. He was just the kind of person that you could talk with and you knew he was telling you the facts and telling you the truth when he did. He was a down to earth person. Ernie, even when he was--after [unintelligible], you know, a lot of times you have folks that help you help get in to be the governor or so, and after they get elected they've got so much to do that they don't have time enough to see their friends and so forth, or if you do, we'll crowd you in over here. Ernie was never that way. Ernie was totally opposite from that. He had time for you or anybody else any time you ever needed it.

Now, oft times Ernie was probably mixed with the legislature more than any governor that was ever been up there, I believe before or since. A lot of us stayed up at the old Dinkler [Plaza Hotel] and a lot of us stayed over at the old Georgian Hotel. I stayed over at the Georgian mostly, and it was bunch of us, and [there was] a lot of them from northwest Georgia

that stayed over there. You would never--it'd just be anytime we'd be up there in a poker game or something and hear somebody's knock on the door. Say, "Oh, it's the governor!" And here'd come Ernie--he'd breeze through and speak to everybody over there, and, I mean, this wasn't something that he just did, you know, to show. He did it because he sincerely enjoyed to come in and talk and so forth, and I think he learned a lot about what was going on through the legislators' minds by this conversation coming in. But he did. I was totally flabbergasted later on that none of the other governors ever did that. The only one that ever even simulated it was . . . oh, gosh . . . that we elected.

Henderson: Lester [Garfield] Maddox?

Ballard: Lester Maddox. Lester was very friendly and all too, but he never truly mixed. When you talked to Ernest Vandiver when he was governor and he came around, you felt like you were talking to another legislator. You felt like you were talking to someone that was interested in what you knew or what you were doing or what your problems were, and that's what had Ernest Vandiver [*sic*].

But now, on the other hand, Ernie had the least money. You know, governors perpetuate themselves and all with spending money. That's a great thing. Governors love to spend money and I've never understood it, but Ernie had no money to spend. I mean, those were four poor, lean years. If you got a little piece of road down in your county somewhere, and I'm talking about I was--I think I was as good a friend as Ernie had up there and I think he thought as much of me as anybody. I had no problems doing that, but it was little; it was piecemeal. It had to be grubbing, but he did more with less than anybody that has ever been up there. He actually had nothing to do with to be very honest about it.

Henderson: Now, going back to this visiting the lawmakers in the hotels, you mean Marvin Griffin never did that sort of thing?

Ballard: I never saw Marvin; I never saw Marvin in a hotel. Now, he could have--some of his lieutenants and so forth, he could have gone over there, but this wasn't the lieutenants that Ernie came around seeing. Ernie would drop by, and, you know, different congressional districts would have a room here and another would have a room down here somewhere, and he'd circle by and if there's a crowd in a room somewhere, hell, he'd drop in them and do that--he didn't just do that once or twice. He did it probably once or twice a month during the session, and I think we had a bunch of special sessions. Probably the greatest thing that I think was--I give Ernie credit for--he really had some tough stuff because Georgia had been strictly 100 percent anti-integration or anything, and, man, it was bad. This thing came down and it hit while Ernie was the governor, and he called me up on Sunday night and talked to me personally about this. He says, "Donaldson, I think you're one of these people that will understand what our problem is." He says, "We've got a meeting over at the Board of Regents office tomorrow morning," and said, "We need to discuss some stuff about the University of Georgia."

Boy, it was freezing the next day. It was colder'n hell, but I got up there, and we went over and that's when we got into it and Georgia did what they had to do. Ernie was the leader of that, now. It wasn't someone else that was to take the credit. Ernest Vandiver took the credit for bringing Georgia out of a bad, bad situation that Alabama ended up getting messed up in.

Henderson: We're going to come back to that issue, a very important issue.

Ballard: All right.

Henderson: It's been said--some people have said--that the 1958 governor's election was decided by the outcome of that vote in 1958 over the rural roads issue. Do you think that's a fair statement?

Ballard: I don't think that. I don't think that's right at all. I think it probably leaned on it, and the legislators--let me tell you, I don't know about today. I don't believe it's as much today because before I left the legislature in '82 I saw that the people coming in were more specialty oriented, like they're in there representing the railroads or they're representing the school teachers or they're representing the banks or something. That's happened in the last few years--in the last few--the last twenty or thirty years, but back then each county had a representative, and the sad thing about it back then was the representatives spoke the word or the thoughts of the people from his district, and usually they were--you know, back then they'd say, "Well, sir, what we're gonna do is so forth." Well, let's send him to the Georgia legislature. That's the best way to make something out of him or get rid of him, one or the other. But anyway, they spoke the conscience, and by that many people speaking the conscience with a powerful governor, one, you can't say whether that was the chicken in front of the cart or what, getting run over. I think that it was just one of the things--that it was time.

Henderson: In that 1958 campaign there are two other candidates that run against Ernest Vandiver, and the major candidate, who was not really a serious candidate, was Bill [William Turner] Bodenhamer [Sr.]. What's your impression of Bill Bodenhamer?

Ballard: I liked Bill a lot. If I'm not mistaken, either before or after that, he served with me in the legislature, I believe. Bill was a good fellow. I liked him. He was a preacher, I believe, or something. I never had any problem with Bill, you know, as such, but I just never did

consider [him] gubernatorial material. I mean, I don't think anybody ever took him real serious for it.

Henderson: Why do you think Marvin Griffin was not able to find a stronger candidate, or a strong candidate to run against Ernest Vandiver?

Ballard: I think at that time Marvin--let me tell you, Marvin was a sectional man. He was a south Georgia man, and, seriously, they wanted to keep stuff kind of in that area, and I think that's the reason he picked Bill Bodenhamer. I think definitely that's the reason it was out of that area. He was a neighbor up there, up above in there, and he probably misjudged the thing that this man could do 'cause Bill was, he was an eloquent speaker. I mean, he could do, but, you know, if you thought a lot about it, you just didn't buy it.

Henderson: Is it your impression that Marvin Griffin himself got Bill Bodenhamer to enter that race?

Ballard: I don't think there's a question about it. I don't. Bill Bodenhamer might have got in it but he'd have never been any kind of contender without the backing of the Griffin machine, and Griffin had one hell of a machine at that time.

Henderson: What role did you play in the 1958 governor's race?

Ballard: I got out; we went all over the state working for Ernie. At my county--I just went from one place to the other. I was kind of in the middle of the crowd and going. I guess I--whether I was big part of it, one of the big wheels in it or not, I got out and worked all over the state for Ernie. We just had a good organization going.

Henderson: In that campaign he makes the "No, not one" promise. Discuss that for me.

Ballard: All right. At the time he was running if you would have said that "Oh, we got to integrate the schools and all," he could've kissed his tail goodbye right there. He might've got a job sweeping the floors around the capitol somewhere. You just didn't do it at that time. It wasn't the time to do it. He had to say that because he had to keep up, because Marvin had probably forced him into it. I think Marvin, as well as I remember, Marvin said a few times that "Ernie's going to be a little loose on the integration thing" and so forth. Now, he was accused of that, and I think he pushed Ernie into making that statement. [Unintelligible] I'm not quoting for Ernie; I'm not answering his thoughts, but maybe Ernie could have thought that that's the answer that ought to be. But when the time came to, as Marvin used to say, shuck the corn, Ernie made the right decision.

Henderson: At that time, do you think he should have made that statement?

Ballard: At that time, if he wanted to be governor, he almost had to make that statement 'cause Bill Bodenhamer was riding that issue heavy as everything.

Henderson: So at that time you did not see that being a major mistake in his campaign?

Ballard: No, sir, not at that time I didn't.

Henderson: Did he ever consult with you about whether he should make a statement like that?

Ballard: No, sir, never.

Henderson: If he had, would you have suggested that he should?

Ballard: I wouldn't have told one way or the other because I thought that much of his judgment. I was freshman legislator. Hell, I was just a kid up there at that time, and I was too glad to help somebody else, much less somebody take my advice.

Henderson: How would you describe Ernest Vandiver as a campaigner?

Ballard: He was a thorough one. I don't understand yet how he put his package together. I've never understood how he did it, but somehow he got them, and the only thing I can figure, it must have been some of the old, old Russell crowd that he had the tentacles out to that he got, and maybe they brought in some others. People, the metropolitan area, had just started blossoming at that time. There was a people, and they were getting more interested out in these counties like we are: Rockdale, Gwinnett, and all. They weren't big, but they were thinking a little bit different than they had previously. Let me tell you another thing too: they were getting into politics more at that time than they had before because most everything in every county that you could go to except maybe a few of the large ones was run by a political boss. He ran it as a sheriff or usually a county commissioner, a probate judge, or somebody was the political boss in that county, and they usually followed the power. They were power people.

Henderson: What contributions do you think Betty [Sybil Elizabeth Russell] Vandiver made to his campaign?

Ballard: She was a great, great asset. She's one of the finest ladies, and she was the type of person--once again, you went by the mansion, Betty was just--she knew you by name. It was no put-on whatsoever. Absolutely no put-on to her. She was at home with people, and I think that was inbred from the Russell background. I mean, they were that kind of people, and I think that's what it was. But she never at any time made you feel that, "Oh, I'm in the governor's wife's presence," such and such, you know, where you freeze up and all. You didn't do it. You just talked to Betty just like you would anyone else.

Henderson: Did she actively campaign with him?

Ballard: I'd say every time I would see her around somewhere she was around there. She did, and I think she was probably one hell of an asset to him getting elected. Now, he might not've done near as good if he hadn't have been married to Betty. I think that had a lot to do with it.

Henderson: When Governor Vandiver assumes office there is a financial crisis in state government: the state is spending more money than it's taking in. How did Governor Vandiver cope with that crisis?

Ballard: Well, the first thing we went in, we had to start cutting back on everything that we could. The road money dried up, and I think back then probably the highway department was the biggest thing that you spent, you know, loose money on. Other things like state payrolls and so forth, they just didn't hire for a while. You could go over and talk, if you was on the right side, you'd go over and talk to Ernie--I mean, not Ernie, uh--Marvin or Cheney, if you had somebody you wanted to put on to work, well, you could put on them on, they'd find something for them somewhere, no matter what. But now when Ernie hit it, that dried up. I mean, there just wasn't anything there for that, and the only way he could do was just tighten the belt. And like I said, he had nothing to do with when he was governor. 'Course, sales taxes started picking up a little along the second or third year he was in, but that's the first time. By the time we started growing into a growth period he was out of office. He just caught it at the dead bottom of the list.

Henderson: You mentioned the power that Marvin Griffin had over the highway department while he was in office and how he used that to advance his political interests. Does Ernest Vandiver have that same kind of power while he's governor?

Ballard: Oh, I believe he did. Now, I think at that time when he went out, we changed the highway department. My second term, I was made chairman of the House highway committee, and we changed the structure of the highway department at that time and brought back in Mr. Jim [James Lester] Gillis [Sr.]. Jim Gillis, he was a great politician himself. He was a tremendous politician, but Jim had been around long enough to divide stuff up and to be a fair person, and I think that helped Ernie tremendously, having people like him in there.

Henderson: Now, if you wanted a road paved in your county, did you go to the governor or Mr. Jim or to both?

Ballard: All right. Mr. Jim knew who the governor would do, and if you needed to touch up something, I never had to go to Ernie and ask him about a road or something like that. I never had to go that far. Some people might would have to have done that if Mr. Jim didn't know, but he usually knew who was who and so forth. They would help you, but Ernie didn't have that kind of money to spend out there. He was probably criticized, and he was. Let me tell you, Ernie Vandiver was criticized greatly by many people for not doing different things that they would like to have seen done, but there was no money there to do it with.

Henderson: Did he ever contemplate raising taxes?

Ballard: He could have. I don't remember them at that time. There's so many of them that wanted to raise them and did raise them after that 'til I just--I don't remember anything about that. It could've been.

Henderson: But you don't recall him discussing [it] with you?

Ballard: Uh-uh, no, no. I don't. Now, I was chairman of the highway committee, and I was too busy trying to dig up some little stuff, money and scraps, for people throughout the state.

Henderson: One of the first laws that's passed in the Vandiver administration is the law entitled "The Honesty in Government Law." Talk about that law for me.

Ballard: The papers, in going back and giving Marvin credit, the papers had ridden Marvin. They were anti-Marvin Griffin, generally. They called them the blind Atlanta newspapers. They rode Marvin in every little thing. There'd be some boats. The state bought some boats one time down on the river Suwannee or some river down there somewhere, and, oh, there's big stink about it. Well, hell, they probably spent two or three thousand dollars. Well, that's a big one. That was one of Marvin's henchmen that did that. Then he had one, the Dykes boys, one of. . . Jimmy [James Marion] Dykes. Jimmy was a big operator, and there's something in the road building business that "oh, Marvin did this." Well, really it was very small, but they had built all of these little things together. It was just a smear on the state of Georgia that everything was so corrupt up there. We want honesty in government, and it was good. I mean, it was good for publication. That's about all it was.

Henderson: Why were the Atlanta papers so down on Marvin Griffin?

Ballard: I think Marvin was down on them, so it was kind of tit for tat [laughter].

Henderson: In the Vandiver administration there is a new criminal division created in the state attorney general's office. The purpose of this division is to prosecute alleged corruption in the Griffin administration. Do you remember the activities of this division?

Ballard: I just remember about it, and I think, once again, I think that's something that Ernie was pushed into. I mean, Ernie understood what was going on. Hell, everybody in government understood what was going on. Let me tell you, Marvin's thing was he did not hide his crap. He didn't care if you knew about it. These later ones, they liked to hide theirs, and they knew

how to hide it and they learned how to hide it. But Marvin didn't care, and that's why all of it came out. Little stuff! I'm talking about little piddling stuff, and I was totally on the other side from Marvin Griffin. But the stuff they blamed Marvin Griffin with today, good lord of mercy, what some of these last few of them done wouldn't be chicken feed. I mean--what'd I say, chicken feed? They wouldn't even be in the ballpark if you put it all together and did it with what some of them have done. [Cut off]

End of Side One

Side Two

Henderson: I'd like for you to discuss some individuals in the Vandiver administration. Let me just go through and give you a list of people and you just give me your impression of them.

Ballard: All right.

Henderson: Let's begin by Griffin B. [Boyette] Bell.

Ballard: Griffin Bell, he was a good lawyer; he gave Ernie some real good direction while he was there. He was a good, a real good one to give Ernie. . . . He was a good supporter. He was one of Ernie's--probably--strongest supporters as far as rights and wrong[s] and so forth. He was one of those people I was kind of talking about that you run into when you were around Ernie.

Henderson: Do you see him as a major advisor to the governor?

Ballard: Yes, I did, definitely, definitely.

Henderson: William R. [Redding] Bowdoin.

Ballard: Bill Bowdoin? Not that much. I didn't encounter him that much.

Henderson: Peter Zack Geer [Jr.].

Ballard: Peter Zack, I mean, God, I didn't realize Peter Zack was an Ernie Vandiver man.

Henderson: He was his executive secretary.

Ballard: I know it, but I never. . . . Uh, I just don't never picture Peter Zack being that kind-- seriously, I mean, he was always more like the Griffin crowd than anything else. Naw, Peter Zack . . . umm-umm.

Henderson: You've already mentioned. . . .

Ballard: I've known Peter Zack--listen--since I first went in the legislature. I've known him and all up when he was over in the Senate and all of that too, but I had even forgot that he was down in the governor's office. I can't imagine--I guess that was something to have somebody from down in southwest Georgia. That's the only reason I could figure.

Henderson: You've already mentioned Mr. Jim Gillis. Anything else you want to say about him?

Ballard: He was a good administrator. He was a great politician and he was a damn good administrator, and he didn't mind calling a spade a spade, and he knew when to turn stuff in the highway department. This is something that Ernie did too. They knew when to turn over to the engineers things that engineers ought to tend to. If there was a danger or a problem somewhere it would do. Probably, I think, the greatest thing that Jim Gillis and Ernie Vandiver did with the highway department was the road-widening thing. I don't know if you've even encountered that yet or not, but that was a program that we floated some bonds. That's about the only money we had spent to widen the main state highways in the state of Georgia, and you can ride down them--if you don't believe it you can ride down them today and you look about four feet from the side of the edge of the road on a lot of these, and you'll see where the road used to be and

what was widened under those road widening bond issues. That was a great thing, and it's probably saved more lives in the state of Georgia than anything else that's ever been done.

Henderson: Walter O. [Odum] Brooks [Jr.].

Ballard: Walter Brooks . . . I think he was close to Ernie, but I just never did, me and Walter never did--I mean, I just wasn't in his--he was older and he was up in the different. . . thing from me. I just never did get around Walter that much.

Henderson: Let me move over to the legislature and ask you about some people over there. Lieutenant Governor Garland T. [Turk] Byrd.

Ballard: I think Garland was as friendly as he could be. Garland was kind of--well, Garland was a politician, I'll put it that way. That's about one of the best things I can say for him. He was a good politician and he was always at the right place at the right time. But. . . I don't think he added much to Ernie. I don't think he caused him any trouble and I don't think he helped him that much.

Henderson: Senate President *Pro Tem* Robert H. [Henry] Jordan.

Ballard: All right. Bob was another one of those that you could put over there with Bell. He was a good influence; he was a steady person, had real good background, high morals. He was another one that I would I say was a very good advisor to Ernie.

Henderson: Carl E. [Edward] Sanders.

Ballard: Carl was too busy running for governor all the time. I mean . . . Carl, he was running for something from the first time I ever met him when he first came to the Senate, and me being chairman of the highway committee, Carl got over there and he'd introduce the damnedest bills you ever saw in your life and send them over to the House. I'd get George L.

to--George, I don't think him and George L. ever really got along too good together. I mean, I don't believe they did.

Henderson: Why is that?

Ballard: I don't know. I never understood it, but they just never seemed to be real close. They'd send us bills over there and I'd tell George, and I've worked heavy for Carl Sanders too for governor--for lieutenant governor and then governor. They'd put those bills in my committee and I'd put them in there and hold them just so they wouldn't be killed 'cause, boy, a lot of them in that House didn't like Carl. I don't think Carl had anything one way or the other to do with Ernie's campaign 'cause, seriously, he was running all the damn time himself for governor--not for governor, for something. Hell, I don't know what he was running for.

Henderson: House Speaker George L. Smith.

Ballard: George L. Smith is very, very strong, very influential as to the House of Representatives. George L. carried a lot of weight. He'd been up there a good while. George L. was political, now, as he'd have to be, but when George L. was fair, if he told you something, he did it. Of course, you know, the governor still, at that time when George L. was speaker, still named the speaker, and probably the biggest position, the toughest position, I ever got into--here I am a chairman of a committee, a second term--been in two years before--a second term chairman of a major committee. Well, theoretically a speaker appoints you, but I knew where the appointment came from. Hell, it come from Ernie Vandiver like it always did.

Well, we came down to the reorganization in government bill, and this was the one, the battle between the speaker and the president of the Senate and the governor. Well, you had to do it and Ernie was the governor. I sat there and I dodged George L. and I'd hide and I'd dodge,

and I had a crowd that we kind of buddied around with. I'm sitting down there and I had stayed out of it. I had stayed completely out 'cause I hated to have to tell old George that I was going to have to go with the governor. Boy, all of a sudden here we are down here and I had on some dark glasses, you know, sitting down there with the crowd. George is up there. He looked--we were in session. It was something [where] I had to be there, you know. He looked down there and said [tap, tap, tap], and I made like I didn't see him. Roy [R.] Kelly from down here, he punched me. He said, "Ballard, speaker wants you." There wasn't a damn thing I could do. I went up there. He said, "Darla [?] says me and you haven't had a chance to sit down and discuss this reorganization bill." [He] says, "I need to know how you're going to vote, you know?" Says, "You're practically a freshman chairman of the highway committee" and this and that and all.

Man, let me tell you, I hemmed and hawed and did [laughter] just nearly a freshman, and I mean I was put on the hot seat heavy, and I decided right there and it went all the way through my legislative career: make your decision and go with it and bite the nail and go. I told him that I had to go with Ernie on the reorganization, and that's when we reorganized and I think it was right.

Henderson: What was this reorganization bill all about?

Ballard: It was to come back in and take it out of the governor's control where the governor didn't have any control over the House or, I presumed, the Senate also, and to get it out of those things. Really, that's when you built the speaker's control over the House. That's why Tom Murphy is as strong as he is up there today, is from that bill forward is where the speaker took over.

Henderson: Well, now, on this particular bill which side prevailed? Did the governor's side prevail or did Speaker Smith's side?

Ballard: Speaker Smith's side prevailed, but I voted with the governor.

Henderson: Speaker *Pro Tem* George T. [Talmadge] Bagby.

Ballard: George was kind of a scat-about type, and he . . . he was a good--he talked a lot. Marvin, I think, had fired his brother from the state patrol or something because George didn't vote right or so, but George was good at talking. He talked a good game and all and that was basically it. He wasn't--I think maybe in his own county or maybe two or three around there he was, but statewide, even when he was natural resources, I never anticipated George being that much of a power.

Henderson: House Floor Leader Frank S. [Starling] Twitty.

Ballard: Frank Twitty, he was a killer. Now, you talking about a nut cutter. Frank Twitty would do it. He'd get that old eye up [unintelligible]. God dog, he ever cocked that eye back down at you, you better look out! He didn't want nobody crossing him. He was good. He was probably the most effective legislator I have ever met for being--you know, I'm talking about being [crushing noise]. He was, man, now, Frank Twitty was hell [laughter].

Henderson: [Edwards] Culver Kidd [Jr.].

Ballard: Culver served with me in the House early and Culver was always, as I remember Culver in the House, he was always trying to pass some kind of bill that anybody that worked in a pharmacy for a certain number of years could get a druggist license. Well, that thing came up, and that's all really all I knew about Culver back when he was in the House with me. Well, he left the House and went to the Senate many years before I did. I didn't keep up with Culver that

much over there, but I don't think Culver was that much of a thing one way or the other. He was older. He'd been in the House longer than I had at that time, and he was there when I went there.

Henderson: How effective was Governor Vandiver in dealing with the legislature?

Ballard: Like I said, he was very effective. He . . . went to them with the straight thing. There was just two or three--like I say, that reorganization of government thing and all, those things like that, but other than that there wasn't any great issues that came up as I remember except the integration thing, and I think everyone realized right off the bat that that was what it was, and his leadership. . . . If we would've had Marvin Griffin there at that time when that issue came up on that Sunday morning, we might have been looking kind of like Alabama and Arkansas. But Ernie--we went over and sat down with the regents and discussed it. It was a group of us that was there. I guess it was some of his friends, and we all sat around in there and did it. It was a thing and he was the leader in it. It was a dangerous ground for him to be treading at that time too. I mean, it was dangerous ground because most folks wasn't ready for that, but it was something that its time had come, and Ernie was smart enough and had enough guts to follow with it.

Henderson: Do you recall any of the lobbying activities or techniques that Ernest Vandiver would use to convince people to see it from his point of view?

Ballard: Ernie had been up there and around when all the real politicking went on, and he still had some of that. I mean, they do it today. Hell, they still do it. They did when I left there in '82, but it wasn't anything like Marvin and them used to do. It wasn't just "no, cut your throat if you don't do this," but he had things. [Unintelligible] and he didn't do it himself personally--

old man Jim. Old man Jim was saying, "Now, Donald, you know that little thing over yonder, we got a little bill over there," such and such, you know. "We just need that. That helps us, and, you know, that road you had down there, we put in down there last month or two ago." Well, you see, Marvin would have told you that himself, but Jim Gillis did it for Ernie.

Henderson: Did you ever see him or ever hear of him getting mad with a lawmaker for any reason?

Ballard: I never remember a time that--I know there must have been. Hell, you couldn't be governor without it, but I don't ever remember him getting into a real confrontation with one that was known about. He must have because a lot of the Griffin--boy, let me tell you, a lot of the Griffin folks were still in there, still in the House. Now, I never knew that much about the Senate because the House and the Senate was two different groups because the Senate came up every three terms. You were swapped around for senators and you never knew any continuity there. But the House was there all the time and I was in it and I knew more about it.

Henderson: It has been said that governors in the past have swapped jobs and highways, roads, in return for votes. Do you ever have any indication that Ernest Vandiver did things like that?

Ballard: If he didn't I don't know how in the hell he'd have got through being governor. I mean, you have to crack the whip sometimes, I mean, and I'm probably as liberal minded about anything of that nature as could be, but you had to do it and he had to do it. Ain't no question--I never remember him doing it except like I say . . . be reminded, but they didn't have to remind me. I mean, seriously, all of them that had known me coming up that--hell, when I make up my

mind it's there. Ain't no need to fooling [sic] with me, and they didn't. But I tried to do what was right. Ernie never asked me to do anything that I didn't feel was right. He never.

Henderson: In the 1960 legislative session the legislature creates the Sibley committee. What was the Sibley committee and why was it created?

Ballard: Gosh, you done got me. Back, so many committees over twenty-six years I was up there. I remember it was something about the government straightening up government and all of this. I just don't remember that much about the Sibley. At that time it was a big issue, and it was good and it looked good and it made the Atlanta newspapers happy. That's the best I can say about it.

Henderson: Do you recall the chairman of that committee, John [Adams] Sibley. What was your impression of John Sibley?

Ballard: He was older, retiring, and he had the background, he had the reputation of being an honest type person. He was probably one of the most powerful people in the metropolitan area.

Henderson: Now, you have already alluded to this about Governor Vandiver meeting with some lawmakers about the desegregation issue at the University of Georgia.

Ballard: I think Sibley was there and I think he had a lot to do with that too.

Henderson: Now, you were in attendance at that meeting?

Ballard: Over at the Board of Regents on Monday--no, on Sunday evening.

Henderson: Now, what was that meeting about?

Ballard: It was about the integration of the University of Georgia, about the two [black students] that was to be entered to go to school over there.

Henderson: Is Governor Vandiver telling the regents what he wants to take place or is he asking them for leadership or direction or. . . . What's going on?

Ballard: All right. Ernie did what he always did: he got the crowd together, the people that he thought that he needed to get the feelings of, and went around. Different ones discussed different views and there was some hard views in there, in the crowd too, but the different ones went around and discussed different ideas about the thing, and that's where he did. He gave his leadership. He didn't tell anybody to do or not to do, but the people--you could listen and you knew where you were coming to when you heard what would happen. He had people there that could tell what would happen if this went otherwise, and I believe Bo [George J.] Hearn [Jr.] was there at that time. I believe Bo was there because there was even stuff about if they didn't do it what's going to do with the [National] Guard and so forth, and I think Bo was the adjutant general at that time.

Henderson: All right. Now, let me see if I'm getting this straight. Are we really talking about two meetings, one over at the governor's mansion where there's. . . ?

Ballard: This wasn't at the governor's mansion. This was at the Board of Regents.

Henderson: Board of Regents.

Ballard: This was at the Board of Regents.

Henderson: Did you attend a meeting at the governor's mansion where the issue of the University of Georgia desegregation came up?

Ballard: I don't believe I was there as well as I remember. I could have gone. I was at meeting on Sunday and then a meeting on Monday morning. I don't remember. . . whether--but one on them was at the Board of Regents. The other one could have been over at the governor's

mansion, so I wouldn't tell you yay or nay because I do not remember. But I went to two meetings, one of Sunday and one on Monday morning early.

Henderson: All right. Now, at either one of those meetings did the governor turn to you say, "What would you recommend that I do in this situation?"

Ballard: No, sir. Hell, I wasn't nothing but a little freshman legislator up there, good God almighty [laughter]. It was just a discussion between people. That's what it was.

Henderson: Do you remember? Was there a consensus there to close down the university, to keep it open, or was it divided?

Ballard: It was divided. There was one group, one parcel, that wanted to say, "Let's lock the doors and let's close it up." And the others had a better idea. They said, "Well, Georgia's got to move on. We can't do this, this, and this." Let me tell you, we parceled out the thing and discussed it as to what would happen if you did this or what would happen if you did that, where the troops--are you gonna use the [National] Guard for this? It got into the real discussion and that's how it came out. That's why it came out like it was, and Ernie did not push that thing one way or the other. He led it to finding out what it was, and he was trying to find out just as much as any of the rest of us.

Henderson: Now, I know this has been several years ago, but do you remember who were some of the major leaders on each side? Who was speaking to close it down and who was speaking, "We need to keep it open"?

Ballard: Really, I didn't pay that much attention to the ones that was to close it to down, but the ones that you and I have mentioned that I said was his big backbone up there, those people

were talking about "Let's move on. Let's keep the doors open," and "Let's look at Georgia instead of backward--look forward instead of backward."

Henderson: All right. Eventually he makes a decision to keep the university open. Now, this was the man who was very closely associated with Herman Talmadge. . .

Ballard: That's right.

Henderson: . . . With Dick Russell. . .

Ballard: That is right.

Henderson: . . . Was a segregationist who campaigned on "No, not one." Why do you think he changed his mind on this very important issue?

Ballard: Ernie was a statesman as well as a politician. That's about the best thing I can say. He was a statesman. He saw the time had come that this had to be done. He couldn't drag his state through it. He knew it would not be something that would be there. He had to use his statesman like thing. He had to make decision when he talked to the people he had confidence in and heard both sides of the picture. He made his decision based on that, and then he made it in the General Assembly and came to the General Assembly with it.

Henderson: When he makes that decision, at that time do you think that was ending his political career?

Ballard: Nope. At that time everybody, Marvin Griffin's old crowd and all, everyone of them said, "He's gone, so that's the end of it," and some at those meetings said, "If you do it you're dead." I don't even think we had a recall thing at that time. I think some of them said, "They'll throw us all out of office." But apparently there was other ideas besides that.

Henderson: Anything else you want to say about the desegregation crisis?

Ballard: It was very, very tense. It was touch-and-go in the legislature, and there was lot of people in there that had problems because this was a total change of politics in Georgia. You just hadn't considered anything else in politics that was even *contraire* to what the run of the mill was, and for a governor with no money to spend and nothing else, no easy things to do, to come up and be confronted with this, which was a major, I mean, a major political hurdle for anybody to have done, and I would say that's probably the greatest political hurdle any governor's ever touched since I went to the legislature and since then. There just hadn't been anything in that category.

Henderson: There had been some laws passed in the previous administrations to shut down public education if there was any integration, and Ernest Vandiver recommends that those laws be repealed.

Ballard: That is right.

Henderson: How did you vote on his request?

Ballard: I imagine I voted for every one of them because I knew what the situation was, what we would be into.

Henderson: Now, are you getting any pressure from your constituents about some of them saying, "Let's close it down," some of them saying, "Let's keep it open"?

Ballard: Would you believe no one ever told me from my county--see, my county at that time, we probably had twenty to twenty-two thousand people in this county at that time. I don't ever remember a person, even Otis Nixon who I told you was the power here, I never remember a person telling me, "You ought to shut the doors." I don't ever remember one telling me that. Really there wasn't a whole hell of a lot of them that told me to keep them open because it was

such a touchy subject folks just didn't talk about it. I mean, really, it was a touchy issue, but you had to go up and make your decision.

Henderson: In the 1961 session he goes before the legislature at night. I think that's the first time the governor had ever done that. I know this has been a long time ago. Do you remember that speech?

Ballard: I don't remember it.

Henderson: Also in that 1961 session there is major fight between the governor and the legislature over the budgetary process, the battle of the budget.

Ballard: Yes, sir.

Henderson: Discuss that for me.

Ballard: Well, it was the control of where the money went. Up until then the governor went in and he did the budget. I mean, he drew the budget and the legislature came in and rubber-stamped it. I mean, there was no process through which the legislature went through the budget to look at what their ideas were or hear the department heads or decide whether giving Red Williams or John Doe or whoever it is over yonder--who was it succeeded Red Williams? Who was the revenue [commissioner] after Red Williams? Uh. . . [Curtis] Dixon Oxford. Dixon Oxford. Whether you give Dixon Oxford this or that or what you do with this, and we just had no say-so whatsoever, and that was where the change came and that was it, to put it back in the legislative field and so that you would have to look at it and come out with a budget. That started it and that's probably--I don't know if. . . . I think George Busbee was probably in the House then. Maybe he had come up there then. George was probably had a pretty good hand in

that. I think he probably did. 'Course, George L. Smith. Who else was it? There was somebody else who had a big hand in that.

Henderson: Jim Pannell? [Editor's Note: Charles Adam instead of Jim.]

Ballard: Not that much. He never did get--he could have, but he never was in the big power pushing.

Henderson: Which side did you come down on in this issue?

Ballard: I came in on the budget end of it.

Henderson: On the House side or the legislature's side?

Ballard: Yeah.

Henderson: Why did this come up? You've been talking about the power of the governor, of the legislature.

Ballard: All right. The legislature just got to the point. Marvin, he had run it with an iron hand, now, and Ernie did not really run it with an iron hand. He did what the governors usually did, but, at the same time, the legislature was kind of biting at the bit a little bit. They wanted to get out some and do some of their own, and, seriously, it had a lot to do with electing your own speaker, electing your pro tem or electing different things that goes in there--your committee chairman. All of this ties back into about the same thing. It was a battle between. . . if the legislative is gonna be one section of government and the executive's gonna be another. It was the separation of the two things because really, when I went to the House, the legislative branch was controlled completely by the governor. Ain't no question about it. Probably Bill--what was the old man's name from down in Forsyth County? Bill, Bill, Bill [William Bradford] Freeman.

I remember when Marvin was up there and then even I think when Ernie was there, he served maybe four years with me. He was on up in age, had served a number of years, and I always really respected him because there would be one of these steamrollers that come through that the governor was sending through, and Bill Freeman, you could just watch him. He was kind of getting on up in there. He kind of sloooowly come down to the front. He'd take that mike [microphone] and he'd lay on it. He'd say, "I'll probably be the only one, me and maybe a dozen or so more, but we've got to watch out for this steamroller" and so on. But he did it and I always respected him and do to this day, respected a man that did that in the face of what the governor did, and the governor ran it.

Now, I don't know about the Senate, but I presume it was the same over in the Senate as it was in the House. I just don't think it was. . . . But the Senate didn't . . . they didn't get into the operation of government too much, I mean, seriously, in those days. Hell, they didn't know that much, come up there two years. They couldn't serve but two years. Carl Sanders was the only one that served other than that. Probably those in Fulton County--Charlie Brown and them.

Henderson: How did Ernest Vandiver react to this challenge?

Ballard: I think Ernie--the best I can remember, he probably. . . . It probably rankled him that his friends would jump on him that way and try it with him. You know, mostly governors don't like things like that to be done while they're there. Do it when I'm gone, and so that's probably what it was, but I think in his last year is when the first one went in, the first independent budget went in. Let's see, '59, '60, '61, '62. Probably '62 was the year of the first

independent budget. Now, I could be wrong but I kind of think that's the year that the first one went in.

Henderson: Did he lobby you on this fight?

Ballard: Oh, I suspect I went down there and talked to him several times. I just imagine I did.

Henderson: In the 1960 presidential election Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is arrested in Georgia, and Governor Vandiver is involved in getting him released. Did you have anything to do with that episode?

Ballard: None whatsoever.

Henderson: After the election of President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy, there is some speculation that he would appoint Governor Vandiver to be secretary of the army. Governor Vandiver withdraws his name from that consideration. Did he consult with you on this matter in any way?

Ballard: Nope, nope. Like I tell you, I wasn't that far up the list.

Henderson: The Vandiver administration not only has to deal with desegregation, there is a challenge to the county unit system.

Ballard: That is right.

Henderson: Before we talk about the legislative sessions, talk for me just for a few minutes about the county unit system. What was your impression of it?

Ballard: I had no real problem [with it]. Every county in the state had a representative and had somebody up there. It really--it wasn't as bad as they made out it was. The big counties, they had three [representatives]. I think the first--what was it? The first three or four had three

and then six or seven had two. [Editor's Note: The eight most populated counties had three, the next thirty most populated had two and the remaining counties had one representative each.]

You had a general spread of representation throughout the state of Georgia. Really I had no real problem with the county unit system. You had your Senate, which was to represent--and if they would have changed it and said the Senate represents the people such and such or the House represents the people such and such, and the Senate represents area or so forth, I wouldn't have had that much trouble changing, but I really was not that favorable to change the county unit system. I was probably was one of the forefront that was looking to the future, but I did not see that much problem wrong with it.

Henderson: Under the county unit system how much power did the sheriff or county commissioner or political boss have over how that county was going to give its county unit vote?

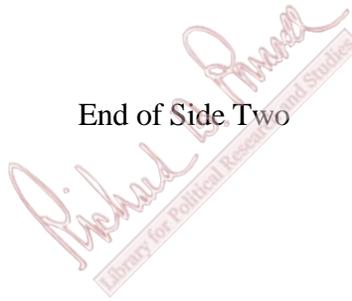
Ballard: They pretty well controlled it, yes, sir. Like I said a little while ago, you usually, in most of your counties out in the state, you had a political leader in practically every one, whether it was--ours was the clerk of the superior court here in Newton County, or you had a sheriff in some county, or so forth. It was very, very, very strong. Usually that leader--and we had militia districts and in every militia district he had a head that was out there, and pretty well, they controlled it pretty damn good.

Henderson: Now, it has been said that there were some counties that could be bought under the county unit system. Did you ever have any experience with that?

Ballard: I never did see it in this area but I suspicioned it sometimes. But the worst part of it was. . . somebody, I'd talked to somebody down in south Georgia in one area, and I asked him, I

said, "How in the hell did you ever send such and such up here to the legislature?" He said, "Well, that's the son of so and so, and, hell, he wouldn't work and wouldn't do nothing. We figured that the only place he couldn't get in no more trouble than he does is up at the Georgia legislature, so we sent him up there." I mean, this is the type situation we got into with that. But your county unit thing, it was definitely--but let me tell you, your vote still came out of those areas up--when Jimmy [James Earl] Carter [Jr.] ran the first time. Don't you remember? They still had the thing going on down there in two or three counties then, so it didn't stop. [Cut off]

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