

would have been a little too promiscuous, but I would wear it there at home and out on the farm and out to milk. I remember one summer Dick came down and asked me if I would like to have a long suit. I had never had any long pants before. And it was a nice blue suit, lightweight-- first lightweight suit I had ever had for summer--and I'd--I was proud to get that suit, though the coat was somewhat too long. The pants then, because they were what we called the shotgun-barreled pants, you know, very close-fitting pants. They were not too long because they would--that close-fitting that would come down. I wore that suit I know for a good while there when I was in high school--

CATES: And this was his suit that he gave you?

RUSSELL: His suit, his suit. And after that, after Dick had gone to the Senate, he would turn over suits to me and to Jeb and William. I know the three of us benefited from suits that he did not wear and we would take them to Athens and have them altered. Dick had gained quite a bit of weight over his years of the twenties, in the twenties, and we'd have to have the waist taken up and we'd have to have the coats altered. But there were two black tailors--the Cobb brothers--in Athens and, oh, I think they charged us at that time maybe five dollars to alter the suits and it may have been--it had been a quite expensive suit at the time, and so we were continuing I suppose that hand-me-down that--

CATES: You made another interesting comment which I am sure has had some bearing on how Senator Russell viewed things and how you view things and that is that your father was about five or six years old when the Reconstruction started in the South. Would you comment about that?

RUSSELL: Yes. My father was born in 1861, April the 27th, a short time after Fort Sumter. And he had to refugee--he and his mother and father from Marietta when Sherman came through. They went down through Sparta, Hancock County, where they--one of his brothers died--he was younger. And I believe it was Governor [Henry Dickerson] McDaniel, former Governor McDaniel, who gave a drawer out of his chifforobe to bury the infant in. A coffin, nothing was available, and they were trying to get back over into South Carolina to my grandmother's people--her people had been there in South Carolina. So my father never did talk too much about it except that the rigors of economy; he would occasionally mention that my grandfather had to move to Athens and became manager of the cord factory out at Princeton. It was from there that my father went to the University. And so Dad was always--well, sometimes my sisters and mother thought over-frugal--he didn't buy clothes, he wouldn't buy shoes unless they made him and he was, I suppose, one of the greatest sacrificers I have ever known for his children. Anybody who is able to accumulate from nothing a thousand acres of land at his death. Of course, he lived to benefit from none of it, but it was interesting--it was a--

CATES: Would you say that some of those characteristics carried over to Senator Russell?

RUSSELL: Without a doubt. Dick was not parsimonious, he was not stingy, but I know I've ridden to Washington with him many a time and he did not believe in stopping and going into a restaurant and spending a lot for a lunch. We'd buy hamburgers and a milkshake. One of my sons

was the benefactor of Dick's largesse in respect to living in Washington with him for a while and he tells a rather interesting story of one occasion when he went downtown with Dick to look into buying a hat and some clothes in preparation for his going to Europe on one of the Senate committees. And he said that Dick said, "Well, you know, I'd like to have a pair of binoculars to take with me, but they are just too expensive." And my son William said, "Well, Uncle Dick, what are you saving your money for?" He said, "Well, for my damn nieces and nephews, I guess."

CATES: So he never did get the binoculars?

RUSSELL: He finally got some binoculars later but--

CATES: Well, I'm glad you touched on that because some others had spoken of him being a very frugal person--

RUSSELL: He was very frugal--

CATES: Not stingy--

RUSSELL: Not stingy. He was economical and he was never ostentatious. Now he had his--in his younger years he had his ice cream pants, I remember. But he was never a spendthrift. It was amazing. Of course, he didn't have to, being a bachelor he didn't necessarily have to you know save, but he did. He did not--he couldn't stand waste of any kind. I think he acquired some of those traits from my father.

CATES: Do you think this carried over to governmental spending with him being the chairman of the Appropriations Committee?

RUSSELL: I think it did, even when he was governor of Georgia or Speaker of the House. But particularly when he was governor of Georgia during the depression, and he cut his own salary and made every effort to save the state money, and the federal spending he looked at the same way.

CATES: Getting back to childhood memories, you were saying something at lunch about you never will forget your father buying, I think it was 165 tickets, round trip tickets between Winder--

RUSSELL: 156.

CATES: 156 between Winder and Atlanta. Would you comment about that now?

RUSSELL: Well, that was a conversation piece for the family particularly. There were thirteen of us. My father was commuting to Atlanta while he was on the Court of Appeals and while he was Chief Justice and when he was practicing law in Atlanta, the three years or so that he practiced law. And he would go daily in the earlier years now, and the last two or three years he

would stay up there during the week and come home on the weekend; but back in the twenties, he would, well, and before, he commuted to Atlanta at a time that I remember not, at least seventy years ago or seventy-five years ago he was commuting to Atlanta. But the Seaboard Railway had a ticket book, we called it, that contained 156 single trips and in the back of the book were lines for the names of those who would use the ticket book. And, of course, my mother and father headed the list and then the other children. There were spaces for only twelve children. My twin brother and I would alternate our names as a new book was purchased. Of course that did not bar the other one from riding on in. We didn't go to Atlanta too often. I'd flag the train out in front of the house. That was my daily chore in the wintertime to run down with the lantern or light a newspaper and flag the train. In the summertime, wave my handkerchief. And my father was, as I mentioned about his clay digging--he would stay out, and my mother would send one child after another out to tell him that his breakfast was ready and he was going to miss the train, and he would finally come in. And many a morning he went running down the walk with one child carrying a cup of coffee, and another child carrying his coat, his vest, and his tie and dressing himself on the way down to the train.

CATES: Did he ever miss the train? Which is not there now because my father moved it away in the clay, and that is actually the truth that we used to get under a cut? You know where the walk is there at the house. Well, about seventy-five feet to the left of the walk, the cut began. Now it is entirely moved on this side because we moved it with a wheelbarrow or with the wagon. We did making spending money. Sometimes the train would--my father would get there just in time to wave at the engineer as he went by and he would slow down and back up. Many a time I've seen the train gets up into the cut and back up to let Dad on. We heard later that it cost a tremendous sum, no telling what it would cost today, the tremendous sum of five dollars every time the train stopped out there. We heard somebody that said that. And yet we could ride if we wanted to, we rarely ever did it, and except after the grandchildren started coming to the house, and you could ride from our station into Winder for a dime.

CATES: For a dime.

RUSSELL: All you had to do was flag the train and the train was flagged with passengers taking the train down to New Timothy, Statham, Bogart, and Athens or up to Winder or Carl or Atlanta. It was not allowed to use flag stops.

CATES: Another notation I made on my envelope last night when I was talking to Miss Ina, and I don't want to forget this although this might not be the most appropriate time to mention it, but she said that she really wished that you could remember the toast that Dick made to you in Washington when he was in Walter Reed Hospital. She said that she recalls that an army general brought a bottle of champagne and you and Virginia and Miss Ina were there and Dick was in the bed and I don't know if this was his final illness or not--

RUSSELL: Yes, it was his final illness.

CATES: And he made an outstanding, eloquent toast to you. Do you recall what he said?

RUSSELL: Well, it was a very touching thing. He--I don't remember the exact words, but it was something like to them--and I never will forget it--To the kindest hearted man I have ever known. I mean that was the--

CATES: That was the gist.

RUSSELL: That was the gist of it; and I don't know that I deserve that but I did--of course I was greatly concerned, and I was privileged because of the schedule of the academic life where you have days there before each quarter begins and I'd had in between sixteen days, and so I was allowed as no other brother was--now the sisters went up to go up with Dick, and so I was there with him for about twelve days in September before his death in January. Then I happened to go back to--the South Atlantic Modern Language Association was meeting in Washington and Dick was in Winder. He had flown down to Winder and the day I got to Washington, I just happened to call the office to see how things were and was told that Dick had flown in and entered Walter Reed and so neither of my sisters was available at the time, so though I had driven my car up with three of my colleagues to the meeting, I let them drive the car back and I stayed there and missed two days of school until one of my sisters could fly in to be with him and then as soon as the Christmas holidays came I flew to Washington. He was still in Walter Reed, back in Walter Reed because he went back to his apartment before I left there that November that was in November my language association was meeting. And I flew up during the Christmas holidays and I couldn't stand the thought of Dick spending Christmas day alone by himself in the hospital so I called Virginia, my wife, and our children except for one son were married and had their families though we tried to get together on Christmas. So our son Dick joined us in Washington and we spent Christmas with Dick. The hospital staff was awfully nice--

CATES: This was Christmas of 1970?

RUSSELL: Christmas day of 1970. That's right. He died January 22nd, I believe.

CATES: 1971.

RUSSELL: Yes, 1971. And so they arranged a very nice Christmas day dinner in the dining room there in the wing in which he was. I think it was called the presidential wing, I'm not sure. So it was those last days were very painful because he was not, you could tell, he was not regaining any strength and right before we went to the dining room and we thought he ate a very good meal, or relatively speaking, more than he had done before but he didn't stay, he wanted to get back in bed almost as soon as the meal was over, but he did have the champagne in his room before we went down to the dining room meal.

CATES: And was that with the army general? I think Ina had it--I think it was a Major of Nurses now really to be honest about it. Now many a general came in there, many a senator came in there while I was there. In fact, on one occasion while I was there Nixon and Kissinger came, and we went into the sitting room and I remember my--the President said that he wanted Kissinger to brief--Kissinger had just come back from Vietnam and he wanted Kissinger to brief Dick on what had happened in Vietnam and so I said, "Mr. President, if you would like for me to do so I'll retire." And the President looked at Kissinger and said, "Do you think he ought to?"

And he shook his head a little. And so I sat in on that and I don't remember exactly all that was--but I didn't say anything about what was said or not and I don't remember what. It was primarily a mentioning of the moving of troops and the disposition of certain war materiel and efforts that were being made to contain the North Vietnamese and that I was not up on enough, I wouldn't make a very good spy. Of course, I never mentioned it to anybody anything that happened--was briefing. But it was a rather memorable affair for me to be there and interestingly enough I was struck by the memory of Mr. Kissinger when he came down with the President to the State Capitol when Dick was lying in state. He remembered me immediately, came over to me and said, "You're Senator Russell's brother who was with us in Walter Reed Hospital." I was amazed because I didn't have any idea he'd remember.

CATES: My goodness. I'm sure that President Nixon did this as a courtesy to Senator Russell although he probably well knew he would never be back in the Senate, don't you think?

RUSSELL: I think possibly, in fact, that one occasion after we left the hospital in November I may have been a little too insistent. My words to Dick were that he ought to try to exercise. He ought to bestir himself. If he stayed in bed too long and it makes it that much more difficult for him to get up

CATES: This is Side 2 of Tape 66 and we were just discussing with Fielding Russell the time that he was in the Senate Gallery and he had urged Senator Russell to get back on his feet and stir around and so when he came back into the Senate chamber there was a standing ovation for him, and he was saying while I was changing the tape that he thinks this was the last time Senator Russell spoke on the floor of the Senate. Do you recall what he said?

RUSSELL: No, I do not. It was some matter I suppose, of no, not of any high impact or interest. It may have been the last time he appeared on the Senate floor. That could be checked because I had to leave in November and then when I went back, of course, he was in Walter Reed, and then he didn't leave Walter Reed. He went back I don't know whether it was in December but he did not leave Walter Reed again. But he was there I believe continuously until--now I could be wrong about that because I was there with him through the 26th of December, and we flew back to Savannah on the 26th, could have been the 27th. And then the next thing I knew was when /Barboura G./ Babs Raesly called me to say that Dick had died and that was on the 22nd.

CATES: How did he view his pending death? Did he ever discuss that with you?

RUSSELL: Well, not to any great extent. We didn't--I suppose it was a natural thing that we didn't, you know; you don't usually. Though we did discuss I remember on one occasion he said that he had discussed with our nephew Richard the form of his tombstone; and he said "I want to tell you about it so that you will--if Richard should forget," but Richard didn't forget as far as I know.

CATES: When did you first become aware of the fact that he, and this is going back some years, and I don't mean, you know, like say 1970, that he had a serious difficulty with emphysema?

RUSSELL: Well, I learned it indirectly, not directly. Dick went into the hospital you know, very serious, had a very serious time several years before his death. And then when he would come down, you see, I would miss seeing him. Occasionally I might be able to run up there during the Christmas holidays and see him when he was at home because he was always on schedule to leave for Washington soon after Christmas--he was back in his office. And so that serious illness--I did not see him--I did not go to Washington during that time--and then the first time I became aware of the seriousness of his condition was at the family reunion in 1970.

CATES: Not until then?

RUSSELL: When--because as I say, I did not see him often, you see, and there up on the hill we were having the ceremony--Dick didn't stand up a single time. And so afterwards he came down and didn't come out to the barbecue and went up to his room and got in his bed. And I went up to initially to twit him in a way and say, you know, "Look here, what's going on here?" And I told him, I said, "You know you didn't even stand up this morning to say anything?" And the way he looked at me, I could see that he felt that maybe I was doing him an injustice that I didn't realize, and I gave him a rough time. It was a great shock to me. So then I told him, I said, "Well, now, I wish I were able just to stay with you." And he was kind enough to say, "Well, I wish you were too. I wish you could stay." In fact we discussed that at one time. And I could not very well in June give up a place that I had already signed a contract for in September, but it didn't go too far in that respect. But then that September my twin brother and I went up to see him, and we went up really to get Ina, or my twin brother did because he was working and using part of his vacation and he stayed for, oh, I guess we were there together two or three days, and then he and Ina came back, and I stayed with Dick for almost three weeks until my school, until I had to come back to school. That was in September of 1970 and then as I have already repeated I saw him in November and in December and, of course, I didn't see him after that.

CATES: Last Thursday night I interviewed /William C./ Bill Harris and you will remember he was Congressman Hugh Peterson, Sr.'s executive aide, and one of the things he said toward the end of his interview, which lasted for about two and a half hours, was he first became aware of Senator Russell's problem when he /Bill Harris/ was attending the reception for Hugh Peterson, Jr.'s wedding down in Ailey, Georgia. Were you there?

RUSSELL: No.

CATES: Were you there? You weren't there?

CATES: When did Hugh Peterson, Jr., get married? Do you recall the year, about how many years ago?

RUSSELL: Well, that was about the time--

CATES: About 1970?

RUSSELL: No, he married about 1967 or 1968. They have two children now.

CATES: The reason I mentioned it--

RUSSELL: That was the time he had that serious illness. It was after he had had the serious illness and discovered it was emphysema and finally, you know, there was some tumor in the lung, and they thought they had removed that with the cobalt treatment and so that was about the same time, you see, that--so I realized it. You see he became very active after that so far as his senatorial duties were concerned as far as I, you see, as I say, I did not see him. I did not go to that reception. I did go to Hugh's wedding but Dick did not come to the wedding. And so I didn't see him although I'm only seventy miles from Ailey, sometimes I had another engagement, a talk maybe, or a meeting or something and I just couldn't. I was invited I know but--

CATES: Well, what I was going to say was that Bill Harris happened to come by where Senator Russell was talking to somebody and anyway he whispered to Bill and said, "You got to get me out of this room." And so Bill came back a few minutes later and said, "You've got a very important telephone call and you've got to come get it." And so he went outside or went in the other room, and I didn't know what Bill was doing, it was almost midnight last Thursday, he jumped up off the couch and he sucked his breath in and then let it out. He said that Senator Russell told him he just had to get out of that place because he couldn't let the air out of his lungs.

RUSSELL: That's right that was the trouble.

CATES: Yes. He could not let the air out of his lungs and so he said that was that first time that he was really aware that he had a problem, a serious problem.

RUSSELL: Well, I knew it before that but as I said only indirectly, you see, from being told by the members of the family. Now I think possibly, of course, Dick was a rather inveterate smoker for a long number of years. Of course, he had that pneumonia I mentioned, and I think that had some effect and then I don't know of a Russell who hadn't had some respiratory trouble. It just runs in the family.

CATES: Do you have that trouble?

RUSSELL: No, I have sinus trouble. I have--I had a very serious illness with my respiratory system when I was a junior in high school--and asthma runs in the family, although most of us escaped it. Ina's was the most severe. Rob had terrific hay fever. My two older children, when children, just ran us crazy with asthma. Of course, well, like I know our great-great grandfather, Richard Trapier Brumby had to give up his position at the University of South Carolina--he taught there in geology in the fifties-- and he finally had to give that up because it was called--they called it bronchial trouble, they didn't call it emphysema, but I'm sure it must have been about the same thing, because people have emphysema even if they don't smoke. Of course, smoking aggravates it.

CATES: You might be interested to know that I was talking to some of the private physicians there at Walter Reed Hospital and talked to them specifically about the autopsy, etc., and they

found that in one or both of his lungs that he had absolutely no elasticity, absolutely no elasticity in one of the lungs, I think. And they were surprised that he could breathe as long as he did. I think it was Dr. Pearson, his personal physician that was saying he tried his best to get Senator Russell to take one of these portable inhalers with him but he wouldn't do it because he had so much dignity and pride that he wouldn't do it. From the Senate floor he would have to come down to his office to get treated, you know, with that air machine.

RUSSELL: He did have one in his apartment.

CATES: He did?

RUSSELL: Yes. The kind that would go anywhere he put it. He needed it particularly to relieve his trachea. I suppose, because they put some medication in the inhaler to relieve his trachea of the inhalation of phlegm. It was terrible. And--

CATES: Excuse me.

RUSSELL: That's all right. He had an inhalator or some machine that I had to rig it up many a time, every day in fact.

CATES: Was it a very complicated machine to operate?

RUSSELL: No, well it was for me because I'm not much of a dealer with machines, and Proctor Jones could rig it up just like that, and I think sometimes Dick probably lost his patience with me because I couldn't. He knew more about it than I did.

CATES: Don't you guess that one of the reasons he lost his patience was because he couldn't breathe?

RUSSELL: Of course.

CATES: And he needed that.

RUSSELL: Yes. It was--and he felt much better after using it and--but he was constantly trying to rid himself of phlegm in those last days. [At this point, a time seal was placed on a portion of this interview. That portion will be released at the proper time. Following the time seal, the interview continues.]

CATES: Along the same line, would you comment about any other girl friends that your brother R.B. or Dick might have had over a period of time, any time period?

RUSSELL: I don't know how serious, how serious, you see. There again that ten year gap comes in. Well, Dick was a very social person, and he went with the girls. He had dates with innumerable girls, and if he were ever serious with one of them to the point of coming to a

marriage or thinking about marriage, I don't know. And I'd seen girls there in Winder that he took to dances, Mary Louise Johns--

CATES: Mary Louise Johns?

RUSSELL: Rounette Woodruff, who's a wife today. Ruby Woodruff, her younger sister, too. But Rounette Woodruff was the wife of Clair Harris, who was a big industrialist.

CATES: Let's see and he dated--

RUSSELL: He was over at, he was a--how they would have prom parties and dances, so I heard him tell. Now I had prom parties when I was in school, high school. I didn't go to many dances because I, as I told you. But Dick was a very, I remember a girl who was Ina's roommate. She could tell you more about that than I could. But I know he dated her, went with her when he was in Athens, a Hazelton girl, Dot Hazelton. And the girls used to have house parties there at the house and Dick would date then. They'd dance, go swimming, picnic, play tennis. Now whether he was--as I said, there was ten years difference there, I don't know.

CATES: There was some talk that he was linked romantically with the daughter of a governor, a former governor of Georgia. I think it was the governor just prior to his becoming governor.

RUSSELL: Hardman?

CATES: Hardman. Do you recall that?

RUSSELL: I never heard that.

CATES: I see.

RUSSELL: That's, I was in school with [Lamartine] Lam Hardman, Governor Hardman's--must have been much younger son, and I think he was a freshman my sophomore year. I saw Lam recently last October, but that was the first time I had seen him since we left college, but now I never heard of that. I didn't even know that Hardman, I don't know her name.

CATES: I don't, yes, I don't recall it either.

RUSSELL: I think he did have an older sister, but I don't know her name and I didn't know anything there.

CATES: Okay. Jumping much farther in time and more recent times but yet not in the immediate past, did you ever know about a girlfriend he had in North Carolina, who now lives in North Carolina?

RUSSELL: There was a--well, I don't know who she was, but, there again, I think it comes down to the Georgia Society. I don't, I don't know of anybody by name.

CATES: Yes, but did you hear of that?

RUSSELL: I've heard it, yes.

CATES: Excuse me just a minute. This is September 5, 1974. This is Tape 67, Side 1, a continuation of my interview with Dr. Fielding Russell. We were talking about the various girl friends of Senator Russell, and Fielding had said that he was aware of the fact that there was a girl or lady, who now did move to North Carolina, and he didn't know exactly how deep the relationship was or anything like that in that really the only one that he has any knowledge and that's limited is with Patricia Collins. He does recall, however, thought that at one time R.B. or Dick dated some of your teachers?

RUSSELL: Some of my schoolteachers as he did the girls in Winder. He took them to dances. I remember on one occasion he was very, oh, I don't mean, I mean to say friendly--I remember on one occasion a first cousin of mine brought a girl out, her roommate out from Agnes Scott and Dick--they were staying there at the house, and he took her over to Athens for dinner, I believe, one night, but I don't know exactly how close he got with anybody except, as I said, Patricia Collins. I don't have any knowledge. Of course, after, you see, when I left, well, when Dick was in the governor's mansion, now, whether he had what are social acquaintances and relationships or whatever, I don't know. I was in the governor's mansion two or three times during the time that he was in the, in there.

CATES: Did he ever talk to you one way or the other or express any regrets at having not married?

RUSSELL: Yes. When I married he said, "I should have married about your age." And I think possibly he could have well been thinking of Rob or Walter--we all married about the same age, the three of us, and Jeb was older, Jeb was twenty-seven or twenty-nine, but Walter, Rob, and I were not twenty-five when we married. And I remember his saying that. We had, Virginia and me--that's one of the few occasions I went to the governor's mansion, the summer we were married. I took her over there one Sunday afternoon from Duluth, and I believe it was on that occasion--of course, the announcement had already been made and we were to be married within a month or two. It had to be within a month or two because he was inaugurated as governor then, you know, in June, and so he hadn't been in the governor's-- and we married August 3rd, so it was sometime in between the two but I remember that statement.

CATES: Was he your best man? Did he attend your wedding?

RUSSELL: No. Yes. He came down from Atlanta, but my twin brother was my best man, and I didn't ask Dick or Rob to be in my wedding and I probably should have. I've worried about it. I didn't ask Walter. But Alex and Jeb and William, we were all the same age and I felt that that was--in fact, I thought it might have been an imposition on Dick particularly if I had said--Now, that's not always, Jeb wanted Dick as his best man when he married. Of course, then Dick was United States Senator in 1938 and he was Rob's best man, I'm sure. But I always felt that they're children the same age, and there again that ten year gap was something with respect to something

like that, you know. So it wasn't any attempt to consciously eliminate Dick and Rob, but they were separated from us, you see, by some eight or ten years in all.

CATES: I know we have only got probably another five or ten minutes because you've got somewhere you've got to go here in Atlanta, and it's almost fast approaching five o'clock and the traffic, etc. One question I'd like to ask you is do you think that Senator Russell was really aware of the important person that he really was, aware of the importance of the office that he held and the tenure in the Senate, etc?

RUSSELL: Yes. I don't see how any man could be unconscious of it. But I'll have to say that he was the most unassuming, I'll phrase it this way, the most unassuming important man, really important in national life that I have ever known. But I think that was also a characteristic; nobody--I'm going back to my father again. But nobody would ever have known just meeting him that my father was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Now he had the most brilliant mind I've known. But he was--he dressed--now if one of the daughters got married, or if Dad would take Mother off to the American Bar Association, he'd take along his tuxedo and his dress suit, his evening wear. But otherwise, you just wouldn't know, just to see him, because he was really a, almost a slovenly dresser, because he wouldn't buy, he wouldn't spend money for clothes. Now Dick dressed well, but not lavishly, not, he was a spendthrift as we mentioned, but he was always well-tailored and well-dressed. But he was, he was unassuming. And I admired him for that. That's one of the things--I'm not, you've probably been able to tell that my chief relationship with Dick is as a brother whom I loved and revered, not that I disregarded his public accomplishments, but I just didn't keep up with those, and I was proud of him, what he did, but I--he ought to have been president. I believe he would have made a darn good president.

CATES: That leads to the question do you think in 1952 Senator Russell really thought that he had a chance of becoming president?

RUSSELL: He never discussed that with me, but I think, there again, that you know, in 1948, wasn't it, he received almost as many votes without even seeking them, as he did, and if I were equating that on my feelings I would have felt that yes, I have a chance. Here without any solicitation, who knows but that things might change so far as the national attitude is concerned? And yet I, I'd have to say at the same time it's possible that in the back of his head he could have said, "Well, now, it just can't go." But I don't feel that he would have gone into it had he not felt that he had a reasonable chance. Now that sounds strange I know, and I'm no political commentator.

CATES: No, what you're saying is that you don't think that he would have tried to receive the nomination if he didn't really think there was a possibility that he would get it.

RUSSELL: That's right, that's right. And I really feel that. And yet, when you look at it you see what in a calmly objective way and particularly with the words of Harry Truman, saying you know, "Were it not for the fact that this man was born where he was, why, he possibly could have been president." Along that--I just feel that he felt, well, now, you can't tell, you know. They could have gotten into a knock-down drag-out fight as they did with twenty-four votes for Underwood, you know, in the 1928 convention when Al Smith was nominated, but I'm sure, if I

remember my history correctly that nobody thought anything about Al Smith's being nominated at that convention, you know. It did come up and there are the incidences, of course, with the choice of a nominee that nobody thought had a chance, but it's a difficult, that's a difficult question to say, well, now, and yet I think that Dick felt--I know I got, when I listened, I didn't go to Chicago--there again I was held down by my schoolwork, I was teaching summer school. Well, I listened, and I got so angry at the way things were going I called Dick up long distance, and I said, "Why don't you come home? Don't take all of that." And he says, "Why, Fee, you just can't afford it in public life, you can't, you got to take the blows and all."

CATES: You have to be tough-skinned.

RUSSELL: And I'm not tough-skinned, I never have been with that respect insofar as, but I really think that he felt that he, that it could happen.

CATES: Let me ask you this, now. This might sound a little strange in asking it, but I've spoken and I've asked you if you thought he realized the important position he held within the American system of government. Did his family realize how important a person and position he had while he was alive? I meant everybody has certain knowledge and you know it, but then finally it sinks in to you that something really is more important than it really was at the time.

RUSSELL: Well, I think that would be experienced by all of us. You know, how, it's like you don't realize the worth of your father--until it's almost too late, you know. You look back and you say, well, now, why in the world didn't I see what the man was doing and what he was. I didn't fully, and I think it happened somewhat like that, that I knew that with respect to the positions he held, you know, the committee chairmanships, the MacArthur trial, and all of that that came about and that he was highly regarded, and I'd read newspaper clippings sometimes that Mother would cut out particularly or he would send to Mother and his speeches, some of his speeches we'd kept. I didn't, I wasn't a regular receiver of the *Congressional Record*, though some of my brothers, and some of my brothers-in-law got it every day, but it was this old thing there of too much familiarity, you see, lessens the stature. That was like Mrs. Ford doesn't see the same stature that somebody else is going to see, and certainly Mrs. Lincoln didn't from what we read about her problems and all. But, now he was, I thought he was, of course, I still think he's great.

CATES: How do you think he would eventually rank in American History as to his importance?

RUSSELL: That's difficult, that's difficult to say. I think there will be enough stones to build a rather unusual monument--the REA, children's lunch program, the various things that could be mentioned, his military, his concern, interest in the military strength and preparedness of America, things that will, in which he will have to be taken into account. He's going to be always, as any other figure; he's going to be always overshadowed by this president or that president with respect to it because it just runs that way.

CATES: Let's see, I had a question right on the tip of my tongue that I wanted to ask you and it's momentarily slipped my mind. Maybe I'll recall it before we end the interview, but what would you say was the most outstanding characteristic of Senator Russell, in your opinion?

RUSSELL: Well, his ability to realize in a world of reality, certainly his ideals of what government ought to be and what people ought to be. Now he had his flaws, the flaws with respect to--and I listened to some of them when I was working the--what do you call it, delayed tactics they call them in the North and we say they're legitimate?

CATES: Filibuster.

RUSSELL: But, in the eyes of others, that's going to be one of his great accomplishments, because there's no doubt about it, he was one of the most skillful fencers in debate you've ever seen and I could tell that. Now insofar as? Paul Douglas, Senator Douglas getting up, you know and saying, "Even as I rise, my knees tremble." Well, of course, he was overdoing it somewhat but it was, it was the truth, and his acute knowledge of parliamentary procedure, his ability to compromise, which is naturally a necessary ingredient that they have. I don't know, it's difficult to say just what--

CATES: The question I recall that I wanted to ask you--and this is just in the realm of speculation--how do you think he would have viewed what has happened in the last month or so regarding the resignation of the President of the United States?

RUSSELL: I think he would have been absolutely stunned.

CATES: How do you think--

RUSSELL: He would have been the man who, as others did, certain others, who would have unquestionably, as I did, not the same stature and all that, believed the President when he said, "I am not involved." And then for him to--it disillusioned me; now, I'm frank to confess.

CATES: How do you--

RUSSELL: I still think that Nixon did a lot of good things as president.

CATES: How do you think he would have counseled Nixon, if Nixon had asked for his counsel at any time?

RUSSELL: I think he would have said, "You'd better put this on the board, on the table right away, right now." And I feel that if Nixon had done that--myself, you see, see I'm intruding myself in the talk--in the beginning, now, this doesn't belong on tape, but if Nixon had said, "Yes, *mea culpa*. I did do this and I'm sorry." I believe the people would have responded in an entirely different way. It was his attempt to withhold it, and I don't blame him too much for that because that's just a natural, human action as anything in the world.

CATES: I don't want to intrude on your time and it's almost five o'clock so before we end this tape and I might just inject this one personal note, this very well could be the last tape that I will be participating in as far as the oral history is concerned. I don't know, might have somebody else to add later, but is there anything else you would like to put on this tape, considering the fact that we are talking about your deceased brother, Senator Richard Brevard Russell, and the fact

that these tapes are going to be used by future historians to evaluate him as a person and the office that he held in the time in which he lived? Is there anything else you'd like to put on this tape?

RUSSELL: That's a difficult task, Hugh. I'd just like to say that any future historians, of course, that the true spirit of the historian will say, "Here is a human being with his flaws, yet withal one who tried to the best of his capabilities to perform persistently, service to his country." Now that's one thing I think that Dick--nobody knows how he went to the office, how he gave up things and stayed in the office--that was his life. Now that has been remarked on, too, but of course it's true, and yet he is the human, he was a human being. He got angry, he may have been at times selfish, but the greater part of him was nobility, I think in the truest sense.

CATES: I think that was probably an inherited quality from what I've been able to see.

RUSSELL: Well, it could be due more to his parents that are right.

CATES: Okay, well, thank you very much.

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