

HERRIN: Yeah.

CATES: Did he talk to you about--either up there or down here in Winder in your drugstore, about the merits or the talents of any of his colleagues, shortcomings?

HERRIN: Well, I've heard him express something on one or two of the senators. I don't know whether I should say anything about that or not, but I did--

CATES: Well, here again, you can put it on a time seal which--actually, 40 or 50 years from now somebody might be writing a history.

HERRIN: Well, I've heard him discuss about [Hubert H.] Humphrey several times.

CATES: Well, shall we just put this on a time seal until the death of Humphrey?

HERRIN: Yeah. I said, "Dick, I want you to tell me one thing." I said, "What do you think of Senator Humphrey?" And I never will forget what Dick told me. He said, "Well, the only thing I can say, he's a stinker." (laughs)

CATES: And he didn't elaborate?

HERRIN: He didn't elaborate. I said, "What do you mean by he's a stinker?" He said, "Well, one thing about it, we do know that when we have any bill or anything, we know that he is going to be against it." So--I tell you who he really liked in the Senate, was Senator [Robert] Taft. I've heard him elaborate on that a lot of times, and I think he went to the--he was at the funeral of Senator Taft. I'm not sure.

CATES: What were some of the things that he said about the senator?

HERRIN: One time he told me--he says that when they would go to Senator Taft about this and that or some bill or something, Senator Taft would express his views and said, "Now when he expressed his views, we knew that that was it." He never did change his mind on anything. I think that he was really high on Senator Taft.

CATES: Did he and Senator Taft usually think alike or did he indicate that?

HERRIN: Well, they voted alike a lot in the Senate. I take the Congressional Record, I still do and I read it all the time, and they voted alike a whole lot of times on different bills. Now, some bills they were against each other.

CATES: Did Russell ever talk about the Kennedy, John F. Kennedy, or Robert or [Edward M.] Ted Kennedy?

HERRIN: I don't remember too much about that, I mean his thinking of those people, whether he talked too much about that or not. I guess he did, but I don't remember what he said.

CATES: Did he ever talk to you at the drugstore about the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the probability of it being a Communist conspiracy?

HERRIN: No, he never did.

CATES: Did he talk to you about serving on the Warren Commission?

HERRIN: Well, I've heard him express--talk some about the Warren Commission, but right offhand I can't say what he said about it.

CATES: What did he tell you about his association with Lyndon Baines Johnson?

HERRIN: Well, I've heard him express himself a lot of times about Lyndon Johnson and I think they were pretty close in every way and I know he--I did hear him tell two or three times about getting Lyndon Johnson to come down to Atlanta to see some heart specialist. You knew about that, I guess.

CATES: No, I didn't know about that.

HERRIN: Well, when he had that slight heart attack in Washington he came to Atlanta and I forgot who it was or which doctor it was but he--

CATES: Dr. Willis Hurst, probably.

HERRIN: I believe that's who it was. Anyway, he came back several times to see him. He put him in the hospital, and he stayed about a week or two.

CATES: That was not general knowledge, was it that the president came down to Atlanta?

HERRIN: He wasn't the president then. He was a senator.

CATES: He was a senator.

HERRIN: He was a senator.

HERRIN: But he did come to see him, I think, once while he was president. Or the president went over there to see him; I think that was it--in Austin, Texas, see.

CATES: Do you think that their relationship was strained over the years because of their differing political views?

HERRIN: Well, I always felt like it would be--should be--knowing the difference and everything, but seemed like they just accepted each other's viewpoints, the way I figured it. They

were such good friends until they accepted each other's viewpoints. Dick never did criticize him too much about that--about his views.

CATES: He never said anything--

HERRIN: I'm talking about Senator Johnson, I mean President Johnson.

CATES: I mean, he never said anything to you derogatory about--

HERRIN: No, he never did say anything--

CATES: --about President Johnson. Did you ever kid him or did he ever say anything about not participating in some of the national elections?

HERRIN: No. I remember when Harry S. Truman ran, he was in the store. He never did leave Winder when Truman was elected. He was up there and we were drinking a cup of coffee and we were talking about the election and everything and, of course, Dick came down there to vote, of course. He'd always come to vote, you know that. And I said, "Now, how do you think this election is going with Truman?" And he said, "Did you vote for Truman?" And I said, "Yes sir. I voted for Truman." And I said, "Did you vote for Truman?" And I forgot what he said and I said, "Who's going to be elected, Truman or"--let's see, who ran against him?

CATES: Was it Thomas Dewey in 1948?

HERRIN: Thomas Dewey, Dewey. He said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "He hasn't got any more chance of being president of the United States than I have."

CATES: Who was he talking about?

HERRIN: He was talking about Truman.

CATES: Truman?

HERRIN: Yeah!

CATES: Didn't have a chance?

HERRIN: Didn't have a chance! That's what Dick said.

HERRIN: He just said he didn't have a chance. Course, I don't want to start no controversy on this thing because--but Dick just believed that way, I think, and, you know, it was mighty close.

CATES: Well, actually, yes, because I believe it was one of the Chicago papers that came out with an early edition saying Dewey was elected.

HERRIN: "DEWEY WINS"

CATES: Yeah, right. So Russell thought, like most of the country did--

HERRIN: What impressed me about Dick was that he didn't get out and work for Truman. Now he worked for Johnson. He went to Texas and he'd tell me about making these speeches in Dallas and Fort Worth and San Antonio or wherever it was. But he never did go out and work for Truman.

CATES: But he never did indicate whether or not he abstained from voting or whether or not he voted for him.

HERRIN: No. I guess he voted for him. I really think he voted for Truman. He just didn't take any real part in that election.

CATES: Did he ever relate to you any stories about his campaigning for Johnson in Texas? One day and he was talking about that he had just gotten back from Texas and telling about some of his experiences out in Texas and everything. I think Dick did a good job for Johnson out there though. There were a lot of people against him out there--Johnson.

CATES: What do you think prompted him going out there, because I believe this was at the tail end of the election, probably in 1964, and I believe he had been in Spain on a military inspection trip or something. So what--why do you think--what prompted him to go out there?

HERRIN: I don't know on that. We have a friend here that was connected with big gas and oil company out there. He was one of the vice presidents and he talked to me a lot about Dick going out there and how much good Dick did Johnson out there, and I believe that Johnson asked him to go out there.

CATES: So he probably went out there at the pleading of Johnson.

HERRIN: I think so. I believe yes.

CATES: How about in the summer of 1964 when it looked like Russell was going to have opposition? Did he discuss this with you at the drug store?

HERRIN: No, I never heard him discuss that at all. I did talk to his brother about it and some of his sisters and relatives about it, but I never did talk to Dick about it. I never did think he'd have opposition.

HERRIN: Yeah, I know Carl Sanders--the paper said that he was thinking very seriously of running. Some of the people that were supporting him thought that.

CATES: Did you ever go to any of the celebrations that were given to honor Senator Russell?

HERRIN: Yeah, I went to several of them.

CATES: Would you describe some of them?

HERRIN: Well, the one that impressed me most was the one they had at the Biltmore Hotel. I forgot which year that was. Do you remember that?

CATES: I'm not sure if I remember exactly. It was probably the Great American Award presented by Atlanta Federal and WSB.

HERRIN: That's the one.

CATES: Why did that impress you the most?

HERRIN: Well, I don't know. It seems like there were more people from Winder that took part in that and I expect it looked like half the town was there and they took more interest in that and so forth.

CATES: How did Senator Russell feel about such honors?

HERRIN: Oh, he was thrilled to death about that meeting and that tickled me and, I know, and I guess he was on all the others honors and meetings that he had.

CATES: Did he ever try to help the county or the little town of Winder in his position as senator.

HERRIN: Well, let's see. Well, I think he helped a whole lot from--I think some of the large business in Winder was attributed to some of his efforts like the Rohr Corporation. I think probably he had something to do with Rohr coming here. See, Dick owns a lot of land down there and I sold Dick a farm one time. (laughs) It adjoined his, it adjoined Dick's and he kept calling me up and said, "Hal," Dick says, "I want that farm." He said, "You don't need it." And I said, "Well, you don't need it either." And he said, "Well, how much will you take for it?" He called me up from Washington. I said, "Dick, I don't want to sell it." It was right in town nearly. And finally, he called me up one time and said, "I'll give you \$5500 for that farm. You didn't pay but \$3500 for it." So finally, after he called me two or three times, I said, "Well I'll just sell it to you." And he said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to send you \$250 a month and," said, "when we get it paid for, I'll get Bob [Robert L. Russell, Jr.] and we'll draw up all the deeds and everything." And the funny thing about that thing was that he went on for several years and I checked up one time and he'd overpaid me four or five payments.

CATES: He had?

HERRIN: So I made the deed out to him and gave him his money back.

CATES: Well, now is this the farm that he sold to Rohr?

HERRIN: No, that's not the one. That's the one on this side of town.

CATES: But he did sell the land to the Rohr Company.

HERRIN: I think probably he sold some of the land. Now, he didn't sell the majority of the land. I don't think--maybe he didn't sell any of the land, but I think his land kindly surrounds or adjoins the Rohr property.

CATES: Did he ever discuss with you any other thing that might have helped the town as far as he was concerned. I'm thinking now maybe of things now like the *new* federal building. I'm sure he had something to do with that.

HERRIN: Yeah, that's right. He did. I think he had a great deal to do with that. And I think he had a lot to do with the real estate that they put the building on. He kindly favored that. He told me that he favored that place right there in town. And you know how it is in a small town. Everybody's trying to sell the government some land and so forth.

CATES: Who owned that property?

HERRIN: It was owned by two people: the J. P. Strange estate and the W. Howard Perry estate. It's two big lots in there.

CATES: Were you there when they unveiled the painting of Senator Russell? I believe it was in his office. DO you think that's a pretty good likeness of the senator?

HERRIN: Well, I think it's fairly good. I don't think it is extra good.

CATES: I think Mr. W. B. Thompson and Harry Dwoskin had something to do with that. Do you know these gentlemen, from Atlanta?

HERRIN: No, I don't. I don't know them.

CATES: In later life, the senator's health was not too good. Did you ever talk to him about his health, his failing health?

HERRIN: Well, I talked to him several times about it and it was a mighty bad situation, He talked about his respiratory trouble, more about that than anything else.

CATES: Did you try maybe to advise him? I know you're not a medical doctor, but you know a lot about medicine and so forth. Did you ever talk to him about his cigarette smoking before he gave it up?

HERRIN: I talked to him about that a lot of times.

CATES: Before he gave it up? Why do you think he finally gave it up?

HERRIN: Well, I think he gave it up in the latter part of his life, you might say, and three or four years before he died. He used to smoke a lot of cigarettes. He smoked Old Gold cigarettes

and he smoked a lot of them and I don't know--he talked about it a lot of times that he wished he had quit smoking a long time before he did and he always mentioned something about his brother, you know Bob [Robert Lee Russell, Sr.], he was a judge, you know he died with cancer. And then his nephew died also. And they were heavy cigarette smokers. And I always--when people say that cigarettes don't bother you, I refer them to those three cases right there and I know I used to smoke two packs a day and I quit. I quit before Dick did.

CATES: Was it hard for him to quit?

HERRIN: It was. He told me that it was hard for him to quit.

CATES: Did you ever see him irritable or where he lost his temper?

HERRIN: Well, I can't say that I ever have seen him when he'd completely blow his stack or anything. I've seen him when he kindly didn't like what was going on, but I think he held his temper pretty good on all occasions.

CATES: What things would irritate him the most?

HERRIN: I can't--right offhand, I can't say. We had a lot--taught me a lot about sports. I told you, he was a great believer in sports in his early campaigns. But I don't know of any one thing that irritated him more than another.

CATES: Did he have any business interests here in Winder other than the land?

HERRIN: No, he practiced law here for several years. He was my attorney. I bought a television set, I mean a radio set when they first came on the market. That's been a long time ago. A fellow came around. It was in a beautiful cabinet, and he said, "If you'll give me a hundred dollars down and sign notes for \$50 a month, then I'll sell it to you for \$350." So I said, "All right." So, he set the radio in there and it would never play. We never did get any sound on it. So they threatened to sue me. I told them they could come get it or I would send it to them, but I wasn't going to pay anything else but I wanted my \$100 back. So I told Dick about it and Dick said, "Don't you pay them anything else. Let me handle all the correspondence." So I gave the correspondence to him and they had transferred my notes to a holding company. And Dick noticed the holding company; the letter "k" in their letters was the same as the parent company's letter "k" in that letter. So he went over and we went to court about it and, of course, we won the case and Dick came back by the store. I said, "Dick, I want to pay you now. You saved me \$250." He said, "Oh, I won't charge you anything. You ought to get your \$100 back." I said, "Well, how much do I owe you?" Dick said, "Well, give me \$10." (laughs)

CATES: Ten dollars.

HERRIN: Ten dollars. I'll never forget that.

CATES: Whatever happened to the radio?

HERRIN: I can't remember and Dick said that they sold those things all over the state of Georgia and every one of them was the same way. They wouldn't play and all. They wrote for his file on it, all the lawyers around. They filed by it, see. They knew he won his, see.

CATES: Did he have any other business interests? Someone said that they thought he had an interest in the motel here.

HERRIN: Well, his nephew did. He might have had some interest. I remember when he was a representative, this telephone company went bust [sic] He came to the store and asked me would I put \$1000 in it, said he was going to bid on it and it was sold in the courthouse, the franchise. I said, "Dick, how much are you going to pay for it." He said, "I'm going to pay \$16,000 for it." I said, "You're not going to pay over \$16,000." He said, "No." I said, "I'll take a \$1000 stock." So they ran it up to \$16,500 and that's the people that have it now and I guess it's worth several million dollars now. They didn't pay that much for it.

CATES: So he would have been willing to have bought it for \$16,000--

HERRIN: \$16,000--He said, "Now that's all I'm going is 16." I said, "Don't you go over 16. It's not worth over 16." He said, "Well, I won't." So he never had any active business dealings, I don't think besides practicing law. He had a lot of land and he did some farming and so forth.

CATES: Someone else was telling me that they believe that he had told the sheriff or some official of the county or the city here that whenever any land came up for bids to buy it for him if it was a reasonable price. Do you know anything about that?

HERRIN: No, I never did hear that, but he did own a lot of land around here. I remember one time we were going to Athens and we went around the back way and there was a little lake out there and he said, "You know, that belongs to me. I got it through a fee--a fellow couldn't pay me for a fee." And that's been a long time ago.

CATES: He never did sell land, did he?

HERRIN: He never did sell anything. He wouldn't sell anything. If he had a house on it, it used to rot down. He never would spend any money on it; he'd just let it go.

CATES: Just let it rot down.

HERRIN: He's got the land though, planted it in pines. He was a wonderful boy. He was a good friend and I enjoyed him so much. We had so many nice visits, especially before he got to be governor. We'd go to football games and everything and then he'd come down to the house when Georgia was playing basketball. He'd come down here and I'd see him get down on his knees, you know, a tight game, you know. And he'd get down on his knees and go to praying. (laughs)

CATES: He was that much of a fan?

HERRIN: He was the most terrific basketball-football fan I ever saw, but he wasn't that way in the latter part of his life. He really was a big football fan.

CATES: What would you say was his most outstanding personality trait, Dr. Herrin?

HERRIN: Well, it's like I told you, I think that he's--when he got to be twenty-one years old or twenty-two, or three or four, up in his maturity, he knew what he wanted to do and he had ambition to do it and he did it. And I think that's the reason that he never got married. He just didn't have time.

CATES: Singleness of purpose.

HERRIN: That's right. I used to beg him and beg him and beg him to get married. I said, "Dick, you'd just be better off." And he'd agree with me, you know, "Yeah, that's right." (laughs) But he said his girl in Atlanta fooled him one time, see. So he--

CATES: Did he elaborate about the girl in Atlanta?

HERRIN: No, he just said that she fooled him, said he loved that girl and she fooled him. I don't know how she fooled him. It's been so long, so I don't know.

CATES: Someone had told me that they thought that he was very much in love with a girl when he was at the University and that she died of pneumonia. Did you ever hear him tell about her?

CATES: I don't know if that's a true story or not. The reason I asked you about girlfriends is that it was pretty well documented that he was married to the Senate and to his work as a politician and an office holder. But I'm sure that over the years he must have had some involvement there and affection for certain, you know, girls along the way and I have heard that there were one or two times when he was either engaged or almost engaged and that's why I ask this question to try to find out if anybody has any knowledge of this.

HERRIN: I don't know. The only thing he ever talked to me about was that one that did him wrong or something.

CATES: And how old was he would you say was he when he told you that. Was he in his thirties or--

HERRIN: I guess so.

CATES: --Or forties?

HERRIN: Between thirty and forty.

CATES: Was he a Senator then?

HERRIN: Well, that was after--yeah, I guess he was. I guess he was. That was after he was governor.

CATES: Well, before we close, I'd like to ask you this question. Do you have any words that you might like to pass on, in addition to what you might have already said about the senator, to future researchers and historians that want to know as much as they can about Senator Russell as a man?

HERRIN: Well, I don't--it's like I told you, he had a wonderful personality. And everybody liked him and I think, as a general rule, he knew how to get along with people. And like he was a politician, we know that, but I know after he'd beat you in politics, he would put his arm around you and you'd think there'd never been anything wrong anywhere in the world I know this man that he ran against here, they were always good friends.

CATES: The man he beat the first time?

HERRIN: Yeah, always, he was that way. And he never did openly--he never would--Dick never did talk about anybody much in a way that was degrading in any way--he never did do that. He took the standpoint that a little praise would help him more than the otherwise.

CATES: How about when Richard Russell III ran against Mark Dunahoo, who used to be his aide? Did he talk to you about that race?

HERRIN: No, he never did. I never did say anything to him about it and I know Richard is a mighty good friend of mine, and my wife taught him in the first grade. I thought that Richard would win the race hands-down but after analyzing the situation afterwards I found out that my own belief is that Richard is just not a politician--he's just not a politician. He never did come in the store and shake hands. I worked about ten people; and he never did, all the time he was running, he never did come in and shake hands with anybody or ask them to vote for him or anything like that. And this Dunahoo boy was in there every other day.

CATES: How do you think Senator Russell felt about the defeat of his nephew? Did he ever--?

HERRIN: I never did--I know it must have hurt him in some ways but I never did bring it up to him or say anything about it because I just didn't know how to say anything about it' cause I knew that he and Mark used to be pretty close together.

CATES: Were they in later life?

HERRIN: No, I don't think so.

CATES: Do you think there was any animosity there?

HERRIN: I don't know--I wouldn't want to comment on that because I don't know. I think knowing both people, I know the Dunahoos and I know Richard and Dick, and I wouldn't want to comment on that.

CATES: Dr. Herrin, I want to thank you for this interview. Like I told you when we had the tape recorder off changing the tape, I wish we could have had a tape recorder in your drugstore when you were talking to Senator Russell over the years because I'm sure that that really would've given an insight into his personality--to kind of eavesdrop and see what you talked about and how he felt about things and questions he asked you about the town while he was away and things like that.

HERRIN: Well, you know how it used to be around drugstores--just like barbershops--that's a bureau of information. I know Dick myself and I've had several programs. I've had him speak to the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and he has always been real close to me and it kind of hurt me how he had to suffer before he died and everything.

CATES: Do you think if he had given up smoking earlier he probably--

HERRIN: I'm pretty sure.

CATES: --he would have probably survived.

HERRIN: --cause his two relatives both died with it. I think he told me that. I'm not sure, but I think he told me that

CATES: Did he ever talk to you about the tracheotomy that he had in 1965?

CATES: Somebody told me, I believe it was a member of his staff, that he was really not--didn't have all of his faculties--I don't want to say out of his head, but I mean he was really at the point of death. He had told one of them later that if he had really known what he was doing he would have never agreed to the tracheotomy. But indeed it did save his life because he was that close to death. This was in 1965. I just didn't know if he ever discussed that with you or any aspect of his health situation.

HERRIN: No.

CATES: Okay, Dr. Herrin, I want to thank you again for this interview. I appreciate the time.

HERRIN: Well, I'm glad for anything I can do. Glad you came by. Thanks.