Interview

with

Senator Ernest F. Hollings
Subject:
Senator Ernest F. Hollings

Interviewer:
Prof. Marcia Synnott, USC

Date:
July 8 1980

Place:
Federal Bldg., 1835 Assembly St., Columbia, S.C.

Topic:
Integration of Clemson University, 1962-1963
Professor Marcia Synnott about the time of the interview

Governor Ernest F. Hollings
SYNNOTT: All right Senator Hollings, wherever you want to begin would be fine.

HOLLINGS: In October, you'll have to double check it whether it was sixty-one or sixty-two, but my better memory was it was October of sixty-two, that they integrated Ole Miss.... and therein was Ross Barnett. And he was on the telephone and he was asking, saying let's have a motorcade. I want you, Hollings, to call [Georgia Governor Ernest] Vandiver. He says you can get Vandiver. I can't get him but you can get him. And he says you get Vandiver and get a motorcade from Atlanta and you bring a motorcade from Columbia, South Carolina and I got George Wallace and he'll come from Alabama and we'll all meet. And we're going to have interposition. There's a fella here named Bill Wurton he'll give you a copy, there must be thousands of extra copies ----- on that.

But he got up John C. Calhoun’s “Disquisition on Interposition.” And that's the kind of talk that ensued at that particular time, that we were going to interpose the sovereignty of the state between the state and the federal government, and that this was going to bring it to a head, and who was really going to be in charge of the police powers.

The university was an entity of the state, police powers were reserved to the sovereign states, and President Kennedy didn't have anything to do with it, and Washington federal government didn't have anything to do with it and there we were going to have a classic showdown, high noon, shootout, between individual rights and America under the Constitution and State's rights, under the disquisition on interposition. I told Ross at the time, I said, that would be a very dangerous thing. I can't think of anybody following me in a motorcade, for a showdown to Oxford, Mississippi, that wouldn't include every kook, red-neck, crack-pot, Ku Klux Klanner, and everything else that you could find and they'd all follow me out and expect me to do something when I got there. And what am I supposed to do? I said, you, talking wild talk; we get a lot of people killed that way. He didn't like that at all, got rather angry about it at the time. But I could see that we were closer on the heels then of our own Clemson. The Gantt case was coming along and we're going to have to get ready for the admission of Harvey Gantt, so having had by that time a good four year experience of being, as Bedford Forest said, “fustest with the mostest”....
I was on the scene, I was either out in front of Trinity Church, I was either out down on the mall, I was over in Sumter, there was a competitive thing CORE would demonstrate in Charleston, time you got down there the NAACP had demonstrated in Columbia, time you came back to Columbia then they'd break out with CORE in Rock Hill, and time you'd run up to Rock Hill then they'd try to ----- ----- one on down in Sumter. And so I had general duties during that four year period of getting out there and being in the middle of it and in front of it making sure we had law enforcement so no one was hurt. And fortunately, no one was hurt or seriously injured during that four year period.

So trying to get again ahead of the circumstances at Clemson, I gradually started a little series of educational meetings up there with Bob Edwards, the faculty and everybody else.

**SYNNOTT:** What did you think of the Clemson case? Was Clemson wise to make it the major case against the desegregation of higher education in this state? I've heard that James Byrnes was one who was pushing the fight in the courts.

**HOLLINGS:** Well Byrnes pushed the fight at the very first hearing, in fact Jim Byrnes appointed me to sort of represent, be an observer, because [Robert McCormick] Figg [Jr.] and I didn't argue, but in December 1952, I had authored all of the equalizing legislation within the General Assembly, so I was very familiar with the equalization and the efforts and what the state was doing about it, and I could well brief John W. Davis who made our argument. So Byrnes was totally disillusioned when we lost that case. He'd been on the court itself, and said we had some dangerous fellows like Felix Frankfurter, you couldn't tell which way they'd go but he knew the court would find the right thing, and that there wasn't any chance of us losing and what have you, so when he lost in 1954, that was it. By 1962 he was out of the picture, he wasn't....

**SYNNOTT:** ...wasn't he *ex officio* or a member of the Board of Trustees of Clemson?

**HOLLINGS:** He was a lifetime trustee, or whatever it is. But, the blacks chose the forum and the arena, Byrnes didn't choose it. And they were trying all different cases around and this one was coming to a head pretty quick. So, we had to just hold all those skull sessions and tell the
people themselves that they were going to have to have peace and good order when he was admitted. I particularly emphasized with the press, I had been down to Cape Canaveral, later named Cape Kennedy, and I noticed a remarkable scene down there whereby we went to watch a blastoff of Wally Schirra, we being a bunch of governors and observers were a mile behind, and a mile behind us was Mercury control out in the field, even behind that was Shorty Powers and a big encampment of 249 newspapers, wire services and everything else. They had the trailers all formed in a circle like the old covered wagon days, and in the middle were little wooden steps and Shorty Powers would step up on the steps and he'd say now the malfunction of the tube has been fixed, the capsule ----- ----- ----- so forth and so on, and by three sentences and Roy Neel for NBC would rush back in his trailer and he'd give a one-half hour report of what was happening from the three sentences!

I asked about that at Mercury control, and they said the primary function of Mercury control was to keep the lines of communications open, for the astronauts and to the capsule, and the doctor and the medical and all the other testing that was going on, and that the news media was way in the back where they wouldn't interrupt and interfere. So when I got the news media at Clemson, I said look you all report the blastoff down at Canaveral and you're three miles behind it, and you're not even at Mercury control you refer to it and what have you on the basis of the primary function is to keep open the lines of communications and what have you the astronauts and I said the primary function of Clemson College, it wasn't a university then, is higher education. It's not a show here, so we're going to let you all on the campus at eight o'clock in the morning and you can follow Harvey Gantt until eight o'clock that evening. But we're not going to just have a constant roaming around of camera crews in front of sorority and fraternity windows and doors. Give us the raspberry signal. What do you think, what does the next think? And just stir up a news story here. And so since they all had fair access, and nobody had more time than the next, they all agreed. I think that was one of the big secrets, to control the press so that they just wouldn't roam around for a week ahead of time. We just wouldn't even let them on the campus. We took them over, we fed them good, and we got them drinks and everything else, and then they all covered and interviewed whoever they wanted to, had absolute open access, but when eight o'clock that evening came, they left. We gave them a big party and they left early the next morning from the Clemson House.
We came to the General Assembly which was important and we were beginning to detain, I'll have to say that, certain individuals around, that we knew would try to get there and try to cause trouble.

But within the General Assembly itself we made our talk about how we had run out of courts and now it was our duty to maintain law and order, and prove that we were a government of laws and not of men. So the General Assembly accepted that as a challenge. They didn't want to upstage me in my talk or anything else like that. Certain members didn't like it at the particular time, but I think that set the tone. We communicated we were working with the law enforcement, we were working with the faculty, we were working with the news media, and it all came off without incident.

SYNNOTT: But do you think if there had been an integration of education in South Carolina before Clemson, because that was the really the first of any public schools, there were parochial schools that were integrated, that if had been say in 195....

HOLLINGS: ...and technical training in Greenville had been integrated....

SYNNOTT: ...that was a program you were pushing wasn't it, as Governor?

HOLLINGS: Yeah. They had them all coming in, blacks and whites studying side by side. We held our breaths, we didn't publicize it. But as long as it didn't get to the hotheads and allow it to happen, nobody said anything.

SYNNOTT: But if there had, what I'm trying to get at is, when did South Carolina begin to change? Because if you look at the early 1950's, and Governor Byrnes' position, his effort to head off integration, some of the things that former governor Timmerman said, one would have thought that maybe South Carolina would have followed the same pattern as say Alabama and Mississippi. Was it just simply luck that the test case didn't come until 1962-63, the Clemson case, or was it more to it than that?
HOLLINGS: I don't think there was any luck about it we had the first cases. And in fact...

SYNNOTT: ...Well the Clarendon County case....

HOLLINGS: ...yeah but I mean the first instances of the marry-ins, the bury-ins, wait-ins, the sit-ins. I turned on the early morning Today show and saw Frank Blair and that was on a Thursday and he says Monday morning they're going to march in Rock Hill, South Carolina. That's the first news I had of it. That was CORE, Martin Luther King. So I raced on up to Rock Hill, and I found that the city police force was not good, trouble. I pulled them. I in turn got the few black deputies I had on SLED and then I got black policemen from Bill Campbell who was the chief of police here in Columbia, black policemen from Charleston, I got black policemen off the State College campus board, State College campus, I got black policemen from Sumter, and when Martin Luther King marched in, there was a Reverend Ivory that used to stir them up. We had black policemen policing the streets and the incidents, and when one of them stepped out of line there was a black policeman leading him into the paddy wagon and they threw away their cameras. They said this isn't what we want. And they went on down to Montgomery where Bull Connor, the sheriff, with his hoses and police dogs.

So they started in this state but they couldn't get the news story and the impact that they thought was necessary and we just stayed out there ahead of them every time. I saw King coming over to Camden one day, march there. I went out on the assembly street to one of his right there and one time they arrested him coming out of Camden and I didn't even let him get to the police station. I said, I'll take charge, and let him go, just kept following him, and that kind of thing. And, you ask Pete Strom, I think it was working, law enforcement and local officials. We had trouble with Jackie Robinson up in, with Kenneth Cass and the mayor of Greenville and the airport case. We had all the cases that we could think of. There wasn't any luck; it was hard work of all of these folks together.

That was the biggest job I had in four years was to keep a lid on everything. Keep talking and keep the lines out and they knew I was fair. And I was firm, in Rock Hill, when they started
into the Woolworths, they said look, we've got a right to do whatever we want to do, we can march in and sit and everything else of that kind, and I said, no you can't cause a situation where someone is going to get hurt. Up in Nashville, Tennessee they marched the little kids in and they sat at the lunch counter, then after being there two, three hours the little kid would get up to go to the bathroom or something, and white punks and all with duck-tail haircuts and pegleg britches they'd all crowd about two hundred strong in the aisles and everything else, and so when one got off the white punk would dive for the chair. And there was a physical contact and thirteen people ended up in the hospital. So I said I'm not going to allow that to occur so I'm going to have fourteen people in the shop and fourteen people out. Now I can't tell you how to run your lunch counter, you've got you say segregated feeding. But I said around the counters you have integrated serving. If you want to buy a piece of candy over here, it's integrated, if you want to buy a toy down at this counter it's integrated, but when you come up to this counter you say it's segregated. And I guess that's your lawyer and he says that but, it's causing a situation where people are going to get hurt, and I'm in charge of the public safety and I'm not going to allow it to happen, I'm going to have only fourteen people in the store and fourteen out. When they get through shopping then we'll let fourteen more in.

I'll never forget the fellow called his New York lawyer, he called me, got on the phone, said I couldn't do it, I said, I'm doing it, you don't understand. And then this ---- called back another time and said we'll have the Supreme Court and the order. I said, you can get the Chief Justice and send him down here. But if you don't think I'm not in charge, you're talking to the wrong fella. I will arrest him and you and put you both in jail. Come on down here, I'm waiting on you. So they knew they weren't playing around with any hanky panky or somebody waiting for the Army to come in for law and order or anything else. I had enough SLED officers, police officers, and enough National Guard officers. And I literally would have put the Chief Justice and if the federal judge had ordered me differently at that particular time, I would have put him in the jail, because I was going to maintain the public peace and safety.

They could always appeal, so the blacks knew I was doing it fairly. That I wasn't just enforcing a law against them, I was enforcing the law against whites as well. And so once they got that feel
around, even when they marched down in Orangeburg, and we had to use fire hoses down there because they took over the main street and everything else of that kind. James Clyburn remembers it.

SYNNOTT: Right. I have just a copy from a letter in the Kennedy papers in October 1961. You wrote the Attorney General protesting about his sending agents to Clarendon County, South Carolina....

HOLLINGS: ...that's for the voting registration....

SYNNOTT: ...because of civil rights violation, and you said that, unwarranted encroachments on South Carolina and that you had the situation under control in the state.

HOLLINGS: Well not only that we took, in Alabama they burned voting records, registration records. And we in turn took Bobby, and we got SLED and we went around and took photostats of all the voting records and sent them to him. See they were going door-to-door intimidating the white women. Did you register, did you do this and everything else like we were federal, you know. One is a federal officer, showing a badge, investigating about that registration and everything else like that. They thought they were registered, wondered whether they'd done something wrong, and they were going door-to-door. And I said our records were open and we didn't need FBI agents. They had twenty-three FBI agents. And I said if you don't hurry up and get them out, that was said to him personally, I'm going to arrest them. And if you don't think I'm going to arrest them, keep them in there another day. I said you want the voting records, we'll photostat them and send them to you. That same week Alabama burned their voting records, so they couldn't be obtained. Destroyed the evidence so they couldn't bring a case. I said if they're not registering blacks properly, then bring your case. Don't go door-to-door intimidating people. All these FBI agents in one little country town, like something’s going wrong.

MS Did you send Pete Strom to Oxford to look around?
HOLLINGS: Ask Peter. He ---- about that. I know we studied every case we could and Pete Strom did a magnificent job, and our sheriffs were good, our city police officers and all were bad, in certain towns we had trouble, but we could get good ones from around the other place, we just had to pull them. And make sure that they enforced the law properly. And the black leadership all around, you ask I.D. Newman, he was jailed, he'll tell you that it was done fairly and it was done firmly, and there was a clear understanding, so no one got into any trouble on the thing, and it was when they broke down the lines of communication later in the Orangeburg case that the three were shot. That should never have occurred.

SYNNOTT: What did you do to try to keep the lines of communication with the black community?

HOLLINGS: I kept it open all the time. I.D. Newman would come in and cuss me from one end to the other.

SYNNOTT: Right. And I know you ----- to travel with him....

HOLLINGS: ...all of them ----- ----- ----- we had a news conference every day for the evening, the next day and the afternoon for the morning paper. We had our news conferences, we had open access could come in there, which was new, Timmerman wouldn't ever even have hardly a news conference. And when the black groups came and had grievances, I tried to find out what was the truth behind it, and satisfy those grievances. If they were being wronged, I wanted to make sure of it. We found a lot of things going wrong from time to time.

SYNNOTT: Besides I.D. Newman, what other black leaders do you remember as having -----...?

HOLLINGS: Reverend Ivory, I.D. Newman, big tall Butler, Nelson from Orangeburg, some of the old time leaders, of course I had in Jose Williams, Martin Luther King, Andy Young used to
come over along with them. Actually Young and King trained under Esau Jenkins. Esau would come, Esau started this whole thing, if somebody wants to write a really fascinating story about peaceful resistance, Esau Jenkins brought Andy Young and Martin Luther King to ----- Center to train them as Presbyterian ministers. Resistance, and he's the one did the co-op and all these other things under John Tyler. Poor fella's dead now, but he was the forerunner of all of them. Esau Jenkins. They had different leaders from time to time, I can't remember all their names, but we saw every one of them, talked to every one of them.

SYNNOTT: Well for a time I think there was an effort to forbid state employees to belong to the NAACP?

HOLLINGS: Oh yeah. That there's changed. Oh good heavens. ----- they sold me a membership. I've got a card.

SYNNOTT: Well you know of course the state of Alabama outlawed the NAACP after the Autherine Lucy case, and it was not in the state at all for ten to twelve years...?

HOLLINGS: It was ----- mainly in the same category with the Ku Klux Klan. You could just say Ku Klux Klan and NAACP, you'd say it in the same breath, the same expression. I had a time too, I would say we had around, Pete Strom will tell you, around 16,000 members when we started. We infiltrated, I ended up by ----- an officer was down to its lowest point, I figure there couldn't have been over five or six hundred members left in the state. Ask Pete, because we talked about it at the time. We knew when the meetings were, where they were. I had informers.

SYNNOTT: Was this the Klan or the NAACP?

HOLLINGS: That's the Klan. Oh ----- the NAACP didn't bother me. It was the Klan. That was the crowd that was really going to cause trouble. They'd do anything. And so they had the Klan Bowl on Highway 41. I'll show you the field. They'd go every Friday night and they'
meet out there and they'd have the lights up just like a baseball field, and all the cars would come in and they'd have a big planned rally. Every Friday night. And we had the remnants, were in Lexington County. That's where they finally ended up. But I had put in an anti-lynching bill as a member of the House, and the Wizard then, a fella named Green, cussed me from the gallery, he bellowed out in the gallery, and a guy named ----- Ellison was a member, and got up and said he'd never be seated or seen seated in the same body with me. Later, when I ran for Governor, -----Ellison helped run the campaign. Turned into a good friend.

But I put in the anti-lynching bill in 1950 and we passed it. But we had to get control over that Klan, we had to make it known that it was not a popular thing to be, or an accepted thing to be a member of the Klan. So I was really working more at the time against the Klan than to be involved ----- the NAACP.

SYNNOTT: What about the White Citizen's Council in South Carolina?

HOLLINGS: Well that was organized as a result of the 1954 decision. And they immediately went then to the White Citizens Council. The premise was that your office holders would be members, and that, ----- ----- see Tom Waring, and the outstanding writers, editors, publishers, white leadership at that type of thing all the time. ----- ----- White Citizen's Council to try to maintain the Southern way of life.

SYNNOTT: Weren't they sort of an obstacle to you?

HOLLINGS: They were an obstacle ----- a time. They were probably a pretty good ----- or a pretty good harboring of, actually experience shows they were all right. They didn't cause any trouble, and they got a lot of people placed to go to react. And to react responsibly. And Marion Gressette can tell you more about that crowd because he worked with them. But they gradually blended out. His time passed, but you had to have someplace to see.

SYNNOTT: Well the White Citizen's Council ended up taking control of Mississippi and
dominating it for ten years. And it had a negative impact on that state....

HOLLINGS: It didn't dominate here. It was very active and well accepted. But I think back at one time there when we sat down with Roy Wilkins. Figg will tell you about this. We said all right you've won the case, now how are we going to implement it? And we proposed at the time that to integrate the first grade the first year, the second and the first grade the second year, the third, the second and the first grade the third year, and right on through, and in twelve years it would be integrated. An orderly process. Wilkins thought it was a good idea, he went back and....

SYNNOTT: ...I think similar things were proposed in New Orleans or in Louisiana or one of those states, that's how they....

HOLLINGS: We had the lead case and so this was a test and that lady Greenberg or whatever, I've forgotten her name now....

SYNNOTT: ...Constance Baker Motley-....

HOLLINGS: Constance Baker Motley, she and all the rest said you're delaying our constitutional rights, the rights delayed or rights denied, and we won't be delayed our ----- Integration now and immediate. They couldn't accept it. So rather than doing it in a twelve year period in an orderly fashion, twelve years later we were burning down towns and demonstrating and raising, all ----- instead of 1954 and 1966 we were burning Detroit and ----- other places like that. Martin Luther King was marching and killed in 1968. And being assassinated. So we could have done it in a more orderly way but they wouldn't accept it. So therein is, was that just divisiveness, that complete cleavage, and so the White Citizens Council was a place where these strong feelings and emotions to find a place, where people could express them to each other, but not cause too much trouble.

SYNNOTT: Well, do you think South Carolinians were just more politically moderate than
Alabamians and Mississippians?

**HOLLINGS:** I'm not sure. I know this. There never was really, during those days any hate, too many of us had grown up together, we didn't play at the playground or go to the same schools, but we all had black friends and black people around, the black people liked the white people and the white people liked the black people. And I had a ----- as an attorney, black clients and friends around and everything else of that kind, and we laughed about it and talked at the time, and there just wasn't that basic fundamental hate, that permeated other areas, in a way. There was a sort of respect, what really we hated was what we called the outsiders. There was definitely a feel that this crowd wasn't looking anywhere, to get better homes or better health care, or better housing, better jobs, they were only looking for votes. The outside crowd. Well, they were right, they proved it was the only way to get power and strength, and now everybody looks, white politicians, to the black vote and the black politicians, and Bill Saunders for example down in Charleston got elected by the white vote. Just this month. I think that there was just that general feel, and we never did get all out of sorts with each other. We talked to each other and we communicated better, and everything else of that kind.

**SYNNOTT:** I also....

**HOLLINGS:** ...it was a kind of responsibility, to the blacks.

**SYNNOTT:** ...heard that there were, perhaps less militant blacks, other than visitors, coming into the state, and less militant whites than in say, Alabama and Mississippi, and it was the rise of extremists of both sides in those states that caused the explosion.

**HOLLINGS:** I would rather think ----- ----- we had the militants here, we had Jesse Jackson and all the rest, not that these are militant, but the real articulators of black rights. I would look at the governors we had and the leadership we had and it was all responsible leadership. We didn't have a Ross Barnett or a George Wallace. And we didn't have anybody demagoguing. And we refused to demagoguing. And that, I don't think that the community, the civic and business
community would have allowed a demagogue to get in it. In fact, I got a tremendous respect for Albert Watson when he was demagoguing when he was down at Lamar when they were turning over the buses and that's how John West got elected. That was a decision. So they'd take West although West was trailing I believe at the time in that race. Watson's crowd overreacted and they turned over buses down there at Lamar. We're not going to have that in South Carolina. And that was just a general feel. So we had West and McNair, and ----- -----. 

SYNNOTT: Well they had yourself as well....

HOLLINGS: ...and all the rest, I mean they had responsible governors working all the time....

SYNNOTT: ...What about Timmerman? How would he have handled....

HOLLINGS: Timmerman worked good, he had ----- ----- there, he just didn't have the problem, but what he did have, his reactions were sound, his father was a federal judge, and he was respected, and he respected them. He wasn't any demagogue, I can tell you that. ----- most responsible fella. So it just, we didn't have that.

SYNNOTT: Do you think that the newspapers and the press played responsible positions? I've been reading a dissertation recently by Donald Secrest, who published the Cheraw Chronicle, and he thought that the News and Courier and The State and the Greenville News were, not as responsible as newspapers as they should have been, in terms of their editorial page in preparing South Carolina for integration, that they were adhering to the old line until rather late, until maybe '59-60. I know The State....

HOLLINGS: ...that's true....

SYNNOTT: ...gave you a very nice compliment when you left office....

HOLLINGS: ...left office, yeah....
SYNNOTT: ...and I also note that you sent that, copy of it, to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in January '63. I pulled this out of the John F. Kennedy papers, so, but by then I think the state had changed, but that in the early 1950's, Donald Secrest, excuse me it's not Donald, I can't remember what his first name, Mr. [Andrew McDowd] Secrest, editor Secrest, argued that they weren't, that they were adhering like Thomas Waring, that taking that very tough line....

HOLLINGS: They did take a tough line. And that's where they got the disposition; their best writer was Bill Workman. And he used to write for the News & Courier. And they had a tough line so there wasn't too much preparation, but I don't remember it being of a vitriolic nature to stir us up or anything else of that kind. They took a very sort of constitutional line about it, and the separation of powers. No one could satisfy Secrest over in Cheraw, he was way ahead of his time or whatever it was.

SYNNOTT: He's now a journalism professor, I think up at Chapel Hill. But, no, I just wondered that, I think that South Carolina was lucky to have the leadership it had. I think it was also lucky that it, that things just didn't get out of hand, because....

HOLLINGS: ...Right....

SYNNOTT: ...if it could have been done all over again, what would you have preferred, say the whites and the blacks to have done in bringing desegregation to South Carolina. If you'd had a timetable, let's say it's 195....

HOLLINGS: ...you can't plan human --------.

SYNNOTT: ...right....

HOLLINGS: ...too many factors. That's an over-simplification to try and answer the question ----- ------....
SYNNOTT:  ... I know you wanted to integrate it grade by grade, year by year....

HOLLINGS:  ...yeah, we tried that, and that wasn't going to work and we were going to have to sell our own, it was just like lawyers settling a case, we look upon something that would be fair, manageable, and then we go back to our client and try and to sell it. So we were acting really as advocates at the time. I don't have any particular reflection or memory as to how you'd do it differently. One blemish of course was down at Orangeburg, but other than that we did well all the way along, and we kept up the lines, we tried to bring them into law enforcement. I had the first blacks on law enforcement. I remember the feeling in law enforcement that we don't want them, and you're making the worst mistake you can possibly make, and they hadn't been on a week when they had the rape of two young teachers down in a motel in Florence. And I sent those two black....

SYNNOTT: ...Were they white teachers or black?....

HOLLINGS: ...White. And I sent the two black, and they had the fella by the next evening, and we got a conviction. And the word went around with the sheriffs, I want those two black deputies. And they worked them to death. It was Jenkins and Wall, now Wall is dead, but Jenkins is a deputy marshal, a federal marshal, but he, first black police officer. So we put them there, we tried to give them positions of responsibility. We integrated the board, got some blacks on the [South Carolina] State College Board, began loosening them up. Giving ----- ----- ....

SYNNOTT:  ...Was this early in your administration or later?....

HOLLINGS:  ...Yeah....

SYNNOTT:  ...'56-57, or around '57-58....

HOLLINGS:  ...'59-60....
SYNNOTT: Excuse me, I meant '58....

HOLLINGS: ...yeah I got in in '59....

SYNNOTT: ...you were elected in '58, took office in '59....

HOLLINGS: ...'59-60. And of course being a Kennedy man they knew I wasn't totally backward.

SYNNOTT: Do you think you took a risk supporting Jack Kennedy in 1960?

HOLLINGS: Wasn't any question, that's why that newspaper came out after they finally spanked me and whipped me in 1962. They were glad to write that in January '63.

SYNNOTT: ----- apparently he carried the state by just a very slim, slim....

HOLLINGS: ...8,000 votes, that's right.

SYNNOTT: ...and then of course the state went for Nixon after that.

HOLLINGS: That's right. That's exactly...

SYNNOTT: ...What attracted you to the Kennedys?

HOLLINGS: Oh, his class, his intellect, his personality, his dynamism. He was an inspiration. That fella had a lot on the ball, he attracted the best and the brightest, he had the best of motivation. He was an inspiration, I really did like that fella.

SYNNOTT: Do you remember what time, when it was that he began to have an effect on you?
I'm just curious.

HOLLINGS: Well, Bobby and I were two of the ten men of the year in 1954. We went to an awards dinner in January 1955. So when we got to the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1956, I saw Bobby and I immediately was picking up votes for Jack Kennedy. He'd been down to the University of South Carolina and made a talk. Well accepted. Here was a bright young Harvard fella, won the Navy Cross, war hero, good Congressman, popular, happy fella, just a dynamic guy, and so, we lost out. Edgar Brown, bunch of us all voted for Kennedy, ----- ----- us some time, Kennedy had a been nominated rather than Kefauver, but that, history now, and good history, because Kennedy probably could not have run if he'd a been on that ticket. But....

SYNNOTT: ...His father, Joe Kennedy was just as happy that Jack was not on the ticket with Stevenson, because he pegged Stevenson as a loser against Eisenhower in '56.

HOLLINGS: That's right. So ----- ----- all came back in '60, so I headed up his whole southern effort. I talked Terry Sanford into being for him, I quieted down, Vandiver never would get with him, so I got Griffin Bell. That's why Griffin Bell ----- be later a judge. We ran the campaign in Georgia with Griffin Bell and Bobby Troutman. We had Howard Edwardson all the way over there in Oklahoma. We had to beat George Smathers and that crowd, Scotty Pete down in Florida. George had been in Jack's wedding, but he was against us. We just carried around all over in the southern states. I was the Kennedy man and had a lot of fun doing it. Because when we got up there he'd work with me on the textile problem, understood it, knew it. Was forthright about it, and that's why we got the solutions we have, that's why the industry's still here doing well today on account of the Kennedy program.

SYNNOTT: What do you think of the Kennedy's civil rights stand?

HOLLINGS: Thought they were absolutely right. I can see him on that T.V. that afternoon, I was driving over to the beach, he made the comment, he said if they cannot get any relief in the courts, where else can they go but to the streets of America? I can see him just as clear as day.
Talking about the dilemma of the blacks, they tried in the Congress and couldn't get anywhere, they tried in the courts and couldn't get anywhere, where else could they go but the streets? So he tried to modulate it, he ------ King ------,

SYNNOTT: All I did know is that Kennedy was very, very concerned, Robert Kennedy, that his pushing of the Ole Miss would cost Jack votes in 1964. Of course that never came.

HOLLINGS: I know he was. I sat with Bobby when he called him. He called down at the ----- Lucy case in Alabama. Let me see....

SYNNOTT: ...that was in '56....

HOLLINGS: ...he called John from -----, and I was in the Attorney General's office, he called down, oh yeah, he called down there and Ross Barnett wanted to put up some kind of sham. I'll never forget it. He wanted to say that you'll do this and I'll step forward and he'll step ----- ----- getting around. And I'd rather not recall this, but I can tell you what happened.

SYNNOTT: Go ahead. It's just, I was....

HOLLINGS: ...I said well, you've got to get him. And the only way you're going to do it is get him in his pocketbook. I said Ross has got that office building. I said you get civil contempt ----- a $10,000 fine for a state campaign ----- ----- individuals going to have to ----. That's what broke Ross Barnett, the civil contempt. $10,000 a day fine, if you own a big building and got all of that property and the federal government throws a lien on your building, say five days at $50,000.

SYNNOTT: That's a lot of money.

HOLLINGS: You begin to talk sense, to Ross Barnett. That's what got him. I'll never forget it, I said Bobby don't fool with that fella that way. I said just hit him in his pocketbook, he owns the
SYNNOTT: One final question. This is, do you think that the desegregation in Mississippi and Little Rock and all of this, hurt federal-state relations, or do you think we've come through this, ----there was not permanent damage by having that time of defiance between the federal government and....

HOLLINGS: ...I think, I don't think it hurt it save....

SYNNOTT: ... some people were just upset, this is the end of our way of life, when this was happening, federal troops ....

HOLLINGS: ...I think the propensity of governors to immediately call in the federal troops was bad. And I think that's, I hear that today, for example, I just had to argue that the other day on the floor of the Senate. And [U.S. Senator Hugh] Heflin, he wanted more money for ---- federal money to train the officers, and do all of that ----- Justices sit around at the, Williamsburg and go up to the Greenbriar and have all of these conferences and eat and look at each other. But I said it's a rather disgraceful thing for us, sitting up there and wallowing around in the trough of federal aid for law enforcement at the state level. And that was the big mistake we made in the Sixties, was governors running from Detroit waiting for the federal, Los Angeles, waiting and watch for the federal troops to land. When you give a people an idea that you don't have control and they can take over, by gosh they'll start burning and ripping and tearing and everything else. That's what happened in those areas. Well the chief law enforcement officer didn't do his job. That was Romney's fault. But other than that I don't think it's hurt.

SYNNOTT: O.K. All right. Fine.

[End of interview]