Interview

with

Donald S. Russell
**Interviewers:**

Herbert J. Hartsook, South Caroliniana Library and Marcia Synnott, USC Department of History

**Location:**

Judge Russell’s office, Spartanburg

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**Topics:**

Integration of Clemson University and Judge Russell’s political career

**Transcriber:**

Andrew Daniels, November 1995
[Begin Tape 1, Side One]

**Russell:** We had a pretty good gauge of things in South Carolina at the very date of inauguration. During the campaign, I had made the statement that we were going to have a barbecue at the Governor's Mansion, on that big lawn, and everybody in the state was to be invited. And the question arose immediately, was there to be any bar on account of color? The answer was there would be none. Anybody could come that wished. Well, lots of people thought there would be a very difficult time, that this might be something, and the newspapers and some of the magazines up north were convinced the same way.

So they sent down people. One of them was from *Time*, and he had a photographer there. And what we did, we had the barbecue out on the grounds, and then the people were welcomed into the Governor's house. And they came in, and Mrs. Russell and I met them at the door, spoke to them and shook hands with them, and they went on in. There was a minister in Columbia, a black minister, by the name of Bowen as I recall his name. And he came through the line, and the photographer for *Life* took his picture. And when he saw that he'd gotten that nice picture there, I think he came through the line about two more times, hoping to get his picture taken again. But I don't think he got a picture taken again.

But we had blacks and whites there, and had no trouble whatsoever. Everything was fine. It sort of set the stage for the feeling that we were going to be a law-abiding people, and that all we had to do was to show our faith and our confidence in what they would do. We didn't have to have any big show of any force of any kind around, or anything. It was just like we knew people would act decently. They did, and that, I think, was a good omen for what was going to happen at Clemson. There, once again, there was great apprehension of what was going to occur.

Now in connection with those people coming into the Governor's house, the Columbia *State* ran an article on it, and they said that for the first time since Reconstruction, a black had been welcomed into the Governor's house. I think they were trying to pay a tribute, but on the other hand, I thought perhaps it might be something that would inflame people. But it didn't. It turned out very nicely.

When they came to Clemson, I got a call, first from Bobby Kennedy, and then his brother, the President, came on the line. They wanted to arrange about having United States marshals or
whatever might be necessary so as to avoid whatever might happen, like in Mississippi. And I told both of them that I took full responsibility for law and order at Clemson, that Mr. Gantt would be enrolled without any trouble at all, and we would have no riots, and we would have no gun play, and we wouldn't have anything of that character, that I had enough confidence in the people of South Carolina, that they were going to be law-abiding, that they recognized what the law was, and that we would live by it. "We might not like it, but we were going to live by it, and you should not have any apprehensions whatsoever."

They were, at first, I think, a little uncertain that we were going to have that, but that's the way it did turn out, by the bare fact that we acted with confidence. We were certain how the people would react. Oh, I guess we had some people that didn't like it. I got some rather nasty letters about it, but that didn't amount to very much and I think actually when it was all over, everybody in this state was very pleased that we'd conducted ourselves as well as we did.

Synnott: Now in terms of the planning...and this sort of goes back to some sort of little discussion I had with John Edmunds. I had said, "Well, I thought Governor Hollings set up the Clemson plan." He said, "No, no. You're dead wrong. It was Donald Russell and Fred Sheheen who were responsible. Hollings had little to do with it." Now I'm not trying to get into a political contest here, but I was just curious, since the Clemson integration came in January when you were inaugurated, what input did you have into developing a plan for Clemson, and also what role did Fred Sheheen have, who I believe was your assistant then?

Russell: Well, I will say we did have officers nearby. They did observe and they got the feel of any developments that were taking place, but there was no big planning. It was just a question of how you had confidence in people, and if you didn't act like you were going to give in and you were going to treat this just as a normal activity, why, everything would be all right. If you started to make a big show, why, you might create trouble yourself. So our idea was -- it's a very simple one -- we would try to get the feel of the pulse of the people as best we could without generating in them any particular apprehensions, and gauge it that way and follow that procedure. That's about it.

Synnott: And did you have discussions with Daniel McLeod or Pete Strom in particular?
Russell: We had to talk to Pete Strom, yes. He was the head of the constabulary.

Synnott: So would it be fair to say that basically you delegated the authority to him to see that law and order was maintained?

Russell: Well, it wasn't quite that general. He was there on the ground, but we had telephonic communications set up so that we were in constant touch with the situation.

Hartsook: How confident were you that nothing violent would occur?

Russell: Very. I was completely confident.

Hartsook: Did you feel that the Kennedys tried to pressure you to accept troops?

Russell: No, no. They didn't want anything to occur, and they were much more apprehensive than I. I think that they perhaps had been dealing with Mississippi and Alabama, and I think that they did have a real feeling...they wanted to be helpful to you, but they were just a little uncertain about how basic you had this feeling and how justified it was.

Hartsook: But you did not feel pressured to take troops.

Russell: No.

Synnott: Did you ever meet with outgoing governor Hollings to discuss Clemson, or did you just go your separate ways on this?

Russell: No, I never talked to him about it.

Synnott: So there was not any communication on that.
Hartsook: We got the impression from John Edmunds that the transition wasn't very orderly or organized, that Hollings's people left, and you and your people came in and basically started fresh. Is that fair?

Russell: Well, there's a certain amount of truth to that, yes.

Synnott: Did Fred Sheheen play a particular role in this? I'm just going by what John Edmunds [said]. He was saying that Fred Sheheen was doing this, that, or the other. I intend to try to talk to Mr. Sheheen at some point, but I'm really just responding to what John had said last summer when he was doing some research down in Columbia.

Russell: Now I'm not clear about that. Fred had just come with me, but he was there, and I'm sure he took part in anything that was said and done. Also, my son was also there and actively engaged.

Synnott: I have seen a copy of a Clemson plan that was developed during the Hollings administration.

Russell: I think there was one. I don't know about it.

Synnott: Right. There's one particular thing...and I think they worked with Clemson on it, but one great concern they had was the media getting out of control and lots of sort of media attention to anything that went on that could get blown out of proportion. So one thing that they emphasized in this plan is that the media would go into one sort of room, they would get briefed, and their access to the campus would go through certain people connected with public relations, rather than having them roam over the campus. This had happened at Ole Miss, for example; the media was everywhere. So it was felt that one of the ways to ensure a peaceful integration was to keep everything very well controlled; the campus controlled, the media controlled, and so forth. And that's what I do remember from the plan that was developed in the Hollings administration. Did you ever see such a plan?
Russell: No, I never did.

Synnott: To get off this topic in just a minute, it does seem to me from what I've studied of the Clemson integration that this plan was sort of more or less followed by the people at Clemson, and as far I could gather, more or less followed by Pete Strom. So I wonder if even though it wasn't because of the disorderly transition from the Hollings administration to your administration, even though you may not have seen it, or Fred Sheheen seen it, that this plan was more or less the one that Clemson was following as well as Pete Strom.

Russell: Well, I don't think Pete Strom followed any plan that I knew of, because we talked to him very definitely. Now so far as Clemson is concerned, about all that they had planned there was that they should go through the regular channels, just like normal. "Don't make any abnormality about this at all." That was a very simple way to do, and I don't know...people may have drawn up a plan, but I don't think any particular plan like that was followed. It was more just a general thing that you just handle this in a normal way. Keep things on a normal...

Synnott: What's interesting is a copy of that plan is in the papers of Thomas Jones at the University, so when U.S.C. had to deal with integration in the fall of 1963, they also were very concerned with controlling the media, and -- I've been told this -- that that's one reason some of the fence was added to the U.S.C. campus, to control...there was no problem whatsoever, but I'm just saying that that's what I've been told.

Russell: Where are the fences? What other fence?

Synnott: They extended the fence around the old campus, the area that would be bounded by Greene Street, Pickens Street, Pendleton, and Sumter.

Russell: I thought the fencing was there all the time.

Synnott: Well, it may have been, because I didn't come down here to work until 1972, but that's one of the stories people have told me, that they added some fencing around the core of the
U.S.C. campus, just to avoid problems and protect the students.

Russell: I don't remember anything about that.

Synnott: Well, you've given me a good idea that your basic philosophy was to give the communication that there should be law and order and to work with Clemson and the law enforcement for the peaceful...?

Russell: And never seem to be in an uptight situation, worrying all the time. Act, more or less, matter-of-fact. "We're going to handle it this way. We're going to be law-abiding. People shouldn't be apprehensive."

Synnott: One final point I think that John mentioned is...I was talking about Pete Strom and he said the custom in South Carolina is when a governor leaves, officers like Strom are not necessarily continued, but that you consciously decided it was important to keep Pete Strom as head of the patrol.

Russell: Well, I did do that.

Synnott: But you didn't have to, is that correct?

Russell: I didn't have to, that's right. But he'd been there a long, long time, and he'd work with you. And so far as the press is concerned, we were always very open to the press.

We were threatened with trouble down at the state college, and one of the leaders was a dean down there by the name of Thomas. And so when I heard that, I just picked up the telephone and called him. And he didn't think that I was who I said I was at first, but then I told him that I'd seen what he said, that the constabulary and the local police were not handling it properly and were treating his people badly and so forth, and I told him that I'd be glad to correct it if there was anything there, and if he's bring his people up to Columbia, a short distance, I'd be glad to hear him or hear from them.

He didn't believe me for a minute. He said, "Well, I'd have to bring a lot of people."
said, "The conference room will take about fifty, but if you bring fifty, we'll be glad to have them in there. And if you bring any more, we'll have them out there in the hall, and you can call them if you want." And finally he said, well, he'd come up. And he came up, I think, either that day or the next day. I had Pete Strom there, and I had one other; I've forgotten who it was. And as they made their complaint, I asked Strom about it. And as it worked, as we finished up, we satisfied all the complaints. And they went on back, and we never had any trouble at State College. Of course, their troubles occurred later. But we didn't have any.

This was settled there. But some of the people brought recorders like this, and somebody rushed in and whispered to me that they were going to have a recorder in there. And I said, "Well, that doesn't make any difference. We don't care what they have. What we say at a meeting like this can be recorded if they want to. We don't have to go to any secrecy about it; just come on right straight out and get their machines and use it."

**Synnott:** I have one final question. Integration occurred in South Carolina at the university level in 1963. It was the last of the Deep South states to integrate one of its public institutions of higher education. And some could argue, "Well, why not? Every other state had integrated." I just want to know whether you think had there been suitable candidates -- and I think there could have been -- would it have been possible at all for South Carolina to have integrated earlier than it did? I mean, they did try it in Alabama in 1956, and because of mobs, the ----- Lucy had to leave campus. Obviously, it was too hot over there to try it in the Fifties. Do you think there was any possibility earlier than 1963 for South Carolina to have experienced integration...at the higher education level, not necessarily Clarendon County?

**Russell:** Well, that's right. You have to differentiate the counties. I think that if we had had an order, we could have integrated at the University of South Carolina without any trouble when I was there as president. But I said if there was a court order.

**Synnott:** What about Governor Timmerman's opposition, or would he have gone along with that?

**Russell:** I cannot tell you. I doubt it.
Synnott: Would you have gone along with it if you had a court order and Governor Timmerman said, "Over my dead body"? I'm asking you a tough question here.

Russell: Well, I can't tell. I think that's circumstances that I would have had to either have done it or resign, one or the other. I wouldn't have given an ultimatum to the governor.

Synnott: But if you would have had a court order, you would have tried to integrate it?

Russell: Yes.

Synnott: And you would realize that the consequences might be you'd have to resign.

Russell: Yes.

Synnott: But you would have done that?

Russell: Yes, that's right. I think I told the faculty that; I'm not sure. I'm not absolutely sure about that, but that's my recollection.

Synnott: I think you did tell the faculty that, because Howard Quint once told me that you had said that.

Russell: I think that's right.

Synnott: But I don't have anything in writing on that one. He just told me before he died back in eighty--...

Russell: Well, I don't think it was in writing. As I recall, they sent me questions -- it might have been old Howard that was asking the questions, I don't know -- and I answered it. That's right. But I didn't go into what if...of course, the president is always subject to the action
of the board of trustees, but on an issue like this, if you don't agree, I think you ought to resign.

Hartsook: If we could shift gears, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about your decision to step down as governor to be appointed to the Senate. Could you tell me, was that a difficult decision for you to make? Did you weigh appointing Mrs. Johnston or Bill Johnston, or...?

Russell: No.

Hartsook: It was not a difficult decision.

Russell: No. That's right. It may have been a bad decision, politically, or not. Events indicated it may have been, but I didn't have any doubt, and I decided without any question on it.

Hartsook: Do you think that played a role in your campaign for...?

Russell: I can't tell you. Others think it did; I can't tell you.

Hartsook: And you're not a man that second-guesses...?

Russell: No, and I don't regret anything like that at all. I take them as they come.

Hartsook: So this was not a subject of conversation. You didn't speak with your wife or with your son, or this wasn't something that...?

Russell: Well, now I don't want to say I didn't speak to my wife about that. I think that most things you talk to your wife about, but that doesn't mean that.... My wife is a person that has opinions of her own, but it was my decision, and I never hesitated on it.

Hartsook: One of the things that I wanted to do today is to get your impressions of people. I've heard many people tell me that they thought Gladys Johnston was the more intellectual of the two, and had a major influence on Olin Johnston's career. Did you know her personally?
Russell: I just knew her. I would not be in a position to give an opinion on that. I did not know them intimately at all.

Hartsook: Switching subjects again on you, how did you pick your staff? I know your son played a valuable role for you as governor and in the Senate, and I know that you took Fred Sheheen with you from the governor's office to the Senate, and other staff members. How did you pick your staff, and what kind of a role did they play in decision-making, both in your administration as governor and in your...?

Russell: Well, we had a very small staff. I think Fred and my son were the more active ones.

Hartsook: And didn't Emslie Hendrix...?

Russell: Yes, he was more or less the office manager and he'd been my personal secretary, that's right. He was a person of very real ability and all, but he confined himself largely to those matters.

Hartsook: How did you pick these people, though, and did they just automatically come with you to your Senate office?

Russell: No, Governor Byrnes recommended to me Hendrix. I met Fred while I was campaigning. He was representing the Charlotte Observer during the campaign, and I thought he was, as he is, a very bright person with a very attractive personality and easy to work with and a person who didn't hesitate to express his views, whether they agreed with what you had initially or not. He'd give you a good argument one way or the other. And it was good to have a person like that around. I had great respect for his judgment, so that's how he was selected.

Hartsook: And Thomas Hutto?
Russell: Well, Thomas Hutto was an old-style political figure from down in Charleston who really was very good at walking around talking to people and getting a sense of what was being said and done and all. But mainly in the legislature, anything dealing with the legislature, Fred and Donnie handled that primarily.

Hartsook: Was your son really your key aide? Would that be fair to say?

Russell: Well, I'd said that he and Fred were, yes.

Hartsook: We hear a good bit today about the power of the staff on the Hill, that it's the staff that write the bills. If you want something done, if you know key staff members, you can get things accomplished.

Russell: Well, you're talking about a lot of staff. There wasn't any staff. You just mentioned the two that constituted the staff. They didn't have to write your memoranda and stuff like that; they'd come in and they'd talk to you, and we'd discuss it. That was the best way. Today, the government has grown, and you have big staffs and big things. It's a lot like...well, at the university when I was there, it was a very informal sort of thing. She [Synnott] was talking about Howard Quint. The members of the faculty would come drifting over. Any time they'd see there wasn't anybody there in the office of the President, they'd just come in. If they had some gripe or anything, they'd just take it up with the President, and you'd discuss and try to get it settled, or tell him what you thought and so forth. I've observed this with some interest, how expansion has developed in all of state and federal government. You have a tremendous staff everywhere. I was up with Mr. Byrnes in Washington, at the White House. He had charge of everything in the domestic operation, and we had a staff of three.

[Side 1 ends, Side 2 begins]

Russell: You didn't have all this big staff meetings, and the staff would come up and present you with their recommendation and all that sort of stuff. Of course, a lot of that originated, I guess, as we began to...the military has a very heavy staff operation there, and I
guess some people follow that practice.

Hartsook: You had a short term in the Senate, but you were surprisingly effective. How does one come in and in such a short period of time get the confidence of his peers in such a select body?

Russell: Well, I don't know. Most of the senators are very good, and they're open to talk to them and all. At that time, we had some very effective senators there. One [Richard B. Russell] had the same name as I did, from Georgia, and I would say that probably he was the most influential and effective member of the Senate at the time. I think that President Johnson would admit that.

Hartsook: Did anyone take you under their wing, or were there people in the Senate that you felt most comfortable with that you would consult?

Russell: Well, I would say that Dick Russell was probably one, but my relations with Bobby Kennedy were very, very good in the Senate. We didn't necessarily vote the same way, but we respected each other and we talked freely to each other and discussed things. I enjoyed the relationship.

Hartsook: Did you have any kind of a relationship with Thurmond?

Russell: Oh, yes.

Hartsook: A good one, or...?

Russell: Excellent, yes.

Hartsook: How about members of the House delegation? Did you have much contact with them? I know we were doing an interview with Senator Hollings and he was saying that in the old days, he knew most of the delegation -- and I think he was talking probably about the late
Sixties -- but that now, he rarely gets a chance to meet with them, that you don't go out on speaking tours, or on the stump, and you don't go out to dinner or ride in the taxi together.

**Russell:** Well, there wasn't much difference about that, today, when I was there. Other than a meeting of the Southern Society, or the South Carolina Society, or somebody from some business interest would come up and they would give a big dinner for all the delegation and the staff; you'd see them there, but you didn't -- I don't know -- see them very much. After all, they've got to run every two years, so they are taking care of their own political situation, so you didn't see very much of them. And, also, with the problems that they had, many of them would never come over to the Senate, because they'd get sidetracked already in the House and never reached the Senate.

So I wouldn't say that you had a highly close relationship, though it was always very cordial in our situation. Mendel Rivers was there from Charleston, and you had some very fine representatives that you saw from time to time, but I don't know if you'd say that you were carrying on constant communications with them or anything like that.

**Hartsook:** Were there any members of the delegation that you particularly respected or anyone that you thought was a particularly poor representative?

**Russell:** Well, I don't know that I saw enough to make that sort of a judgment. I liked all of them, and I had very pleasant relations with all of them. Quite a number of them were graduates of the University of South Carolina, so I'd known them there, and my relations there with them as President of the University of South Carolina would be more intimate than this, as a senator. So I knew practically all of them that way. For instance, Spence was a president of the student body at the University there the year before I came down there. And I think that Mendel Rivers took his law -- I'm not sure about academic -- there. And McMillan played football for South Carolina and was a great graduate there. Offhand, Bryan Dorn, I'm not sure whether he went to the university or not.

**Hartsook:** No, he didn't. We have his papers as well. Was that a political boon to you later, having been President of the University?
Russell: It was a double-edged sword. I think [there were] some people -- this was a small group -- who carried on the Clemson-Carolina feeling, and I think that there may have been some feeling there about it, but not overly. One of my closest friends was the president of Clemson, a person with whom I had very close personal relations.

Synnott: Dr. [Robert C.] Edwards?

Russell: No, Dr. [Robert F.] Poole. Well, I knew Dr. Edwards, but I didn't know him like I knew Dr. Poole.

Hartsook: Your campaign staff, were they different people from the ones that worked...?

Russell: No. It was roughly the same ones.

Hartsook: And you didn't bring in outside consultants to assist you?

Russell: Yes. There was a firm down there. It was three women; I've forgotten their names. One of them was Bradley, and one was Ingram, and I've forgotten the other's name [Bradley, Graham, and Hamby?]. But they only handled advertising, placing advertising and arranging television programs, the timing, scheduling. That's all.

Hartsook: You were in two very bitterly fought campaigns with...?

Russell: Yeah, but people didn't have all this set-up that you have now. You didn't have campaign managers and things like that. In fact, I think that the feeling was that that was just a little bit of a handicap, publicly, to have a...

Hartsook: A big entourage?

Russell: Yeah. Now, I think, you have to do it, I guess. All of them have a lot. Some
are actual advisers, and some are people that advertise themselves as advisers, so they have both kinds.

**Synnott:** Did you feel you had a temperament for politics? Because, after all, you're really sort of in the scholarly mold, having been a university [president]. I mean, as a man of affairs, but, also, it is a scholarly mold. And the political world is somewhat different. I'm just speaking because I've done some reading on Woodrow Wilson, who went from being a university president to a governor. I just wondered what you thought were the strengths and maybe liabilities of going from an academic environment into a political environment. Or maybe you didn't find any.

**Russell:** Well, it's a sort of microcosm, in a word, but a president of a university is engaged in politics. Not on exactly the same scale as the others, but he's in it. He's got to maintain relations not only with the public, but when it's a state-supported institution, with the state government, and -- probably the most important one -- an intimate connection with the faculty.

I would say to anybody that was a president of the university, the first thing you want to do is to establish a relationship with the faculty and gain their confidence and let them feel that they can go to you and deal with you freely any time they want to. That's just my own personal feeling. Now, I think it got so big, you can't do it, I guess. The faculties are so large and the constituency is a little different, too. But I do think that's very important, to have that contact.

**Synnott:** But in politics, your constituency is different. Do you find this caused other problems, or how would you deal with your political constituency differently than you would deal with, say, faculty or students?

**Russell:** Well, the faculty would bring to you problems of a more academic character than what you would encounter in public office, but, generally, they have similarities. Now so far as students are concerned, that would be mainly complaints, and you have that everywhere.

**Synnott:** And as in politics, you get constituent mail saying that they were unhappy about this, that, or the other.
Russell: That's right. Yeah, we get it here. In sort of the rarefied atmosphere of appellate court you have that.

Synnott: Well, do you think being president of the university was good training for going into politics then?

Russell: No, I wouldn't say that it was. I wouldn't say that it's harmful, or anything like that, but I think that in many respects, there's a difference. And I think that if you're going to be a college or university president, you've got to have scholarly interest in a rather definite way. I think it is sort of an intellectual operation, more so than in public life. I don't mean by that you don't have to use a lot of intellect in political life, but it's a different kind. But I think that by and large, I guess one of the things you've got to learn in life is to deal with people on their own level.

Synnott: But of course, in a political campaign -- now maybe the faculty would do this to you, too -- your opponent could say something about you that you'd hope you'd never hear from your faculty, a lot of mud-slinging and charges and so forth. How would you sort of deal with that in these tough campaigns that Herb referred to? That was hardly scholarly discourse.

Russell: Well, sometimes you got mad, sometimes you didn't. The worse thing you could do was to get mad. I think if you go into public life, you've got to take the brick-bats, and you're going to get them. And you'll get them as president of a university or a college. You're not going to have a bed of roses now. So that's the reason why, today, you're having such difficulty getting presidents for universities. You're seeing them quit everywhere, Yale and Columbia being two of the outstanding ones recently.

Synnott: But it's also getting harder to get good people to go into politics, because the impact it has on their private lives and this intense scrutiny of everything they've ever done, thought, said.

Russell: That's right. That's correct.
Synnott:  Do you have a solution to something like that?

Russell:  No, I don't. No. If you go into politics, one of the things, I guess, they start doing is to engage somebody to go investigate everything you've ever written, everything you've ever said, every relationship you may have had, and build up a big...and they have what they want to say. If they want to say something good about you, they can pluck it out of there. If they want to say something bad, they can pluck it out. That's just the way things are, I think, in that business nowadays.

Hartsook:  When you were growing up, did you want a career in public service? Did you want to be a governor, or a senator, or a federal judge?

Russell:  Well, I don't know. I was very ambitious. I don't know that I knew exactly which way I wanted to go. I knew I wanted to be a lawyer. That attracted me from early years. But beyond that, I don't know that I thought of much beyond that. I didn't grow up in a very metropolitan situation, so I don't know that you had any high aspirations of things. You sort of let things come as they would, but you did have the idea that you'd try to take advantage if you did get an opportunity. That's about the best you could do.

Hartsook:  If you were a young man today, would you consider going into politics, given the changes that you've seen?

Russell:  Well, I would never go into politics myself. I wouldn't go into politics unless I had, some way or another, set aside sufficient...that I would not feel that if I lost my job, all the world descended upon me. I would want to have that freedom. I've seen too many people that had an awful situation.

I was a very close friend of Judge [Frederick M.] Vinson's, and, my Lord, when the poor man died, he died with nothing for his wife. And yet he'd had all these jobs, ending up as Chief Justice of the United States. Senator Walter George of Georgia, who was one of the great senators, a wonderful man; he had been a justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. He had a
great career in law as a jurist. He went to the Senate, everybody thought he was impregnable, he got old, and the young man, Herman Talmadge, came along. He was governor of Georgia, he announced for it, and suddenly poor Walter George saw -- and the people are very fickle now in politics -- they began to desert him, people that he thought would support him. And he sort of was left there, and there was no point in even trying to run. He didn't have a chance, and he knew it. And here he had no money, no job, and be it said to the credit of Eisenhower, he gave him a job, even though Eisenhower was a Republican and George was a Democrat. But you saw too many examples like that.

I think going in, if I had a family, I'd want a little something set aside in a sort of a trust fund or something. I did not run for any public office until I was in my fifties. I never held any public office, elected public office.

**Synnott:** Did James F. Byrnes ever urge you to run for politics?

**Russell:** No. He did offer me the appointment to the United States Senate when Maybank died, but at the time I'd just gone to the university, I think. I hadn't been there very long, and I didn't feel that I could, having accepted that responsibility, leave it so precipitously. But, no, he was always very kind and considerate to me, and my relations with him were always the strongest.

**Hartsook:** John Edmunds mentioned that we should ask you about Alger Hiss, and I was not aware that you had played a role in the Hiss case. Could you tell us what...?

**Russell:** Oh, I didn't play any particular role. I was there in the State Department at the same time Alger Hiss was. Alger Hiss was in charge of our relations with United Nations, and I was in charge of all administration including the Foreign Service. And I came in contact with him on one or two occasions there in connection with various things that had arisen in connection with the United Nations, particularly the imbroglio with, as many people called it then, Persia. We call it now Iran. That was probably the main one, but I did have charge of all of these charges that were made against any employee of the State Department, like espionage and so forth, things of that character.
But the Alger Hiss case had been going on for a long time before I went to the State Department. I didn't know much about Alger Hiss. You had lots of reports on him. And I didn't know Whittaker Chambers. Even the name didn't ring anything with me. I thought they were talking about a man named Chamberlain, who had been a very prominent writer for the *Time* organization, when they talked about that this man claimed that Alger Hiss was a communist. But I guess after that, lots of people heard about Whittaker Chambers.

**Hartsook:** Do you look back on that as having been a very unpleasant time, or...?

**Russell:** Oh, no. It was a right interesting time, to tell you the truth. You were having a lot of things happening very fast.

[Interview ends]