

Interview with John Grenier, former Republican state chairman and 1966 candidate for the United States Senate, member Republican state executive committee, July 17, 1974, Birmingham, Alabama, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: First could you just give us a very quick summary, background, of your own background and political involvement.

Grenier: I became involved in the young Republicans of Jefferson county, which is Birmingham, in the summer of 1960 and was elected president of the young Republicans here in Birmingham. Had twelve members in all that had already been president [?]. And shortly after that we got word from the Nixon campaign that he was coming to Birmingham . I think it was Red Blount who was Nixon campaign manager for this and other states for the citizens [for Nixon-Lodge] And a gentleman by the name of Caldwell Marks, I think, may have been the local chairman. And they asked the young Republicans to be responsible for the Nixon visit. So we did that when he came to Birmingham in 1960 and that was my first involvement. Then in 1961 I became chairman of the state wide young Republicans. And then in 1962 I became chairman of the Republican executive committee of Alabama, after a contest with Claude Vardaman, who was then the state chairman, and Bill Longsure [?], who aspired to it. And then in 1963 I became the southern regional director of the Goldwater for president committee. In 1964 I became executive director of the Republican national committee and was special assistant to Dean Burch. In 1966 I ran unsuccessfully for the Senate against John Sparkman. In 1968 I ran unsuccessfully for national committeeman of the Republican party against Jim Martin. And

I'm still a member of the state committee. That about winds it up.

J.B.: How do you analyze the development of the Republican party in Alabama during this period? Did it peak in 1966?

Grenier: Yes, probably in the. . . the convention of 1966 was probably its peak strength. At that same time, of course, the party made a disastrous error running Martin against Wallace. But I would say it was probably at its peak strength in 1966, although in 1964 we elected five out of eight of Alabama's Congressmen, five or six probate judges and some 135 local Republicans. In 1964. Two of those Congressmen lost in 1966. Martin ran for governor and Clint Andrews was beaten by Bill Nichols. Three of them are still incumbent.

J.B.: How about the number of probate judges and local officials? Did that decline?

Grenier: I haven't kept current with that, particularly. I think most of them have probably hung on. I'd say the majority of them. Perry Humberdown [?] in Montgomery, Guy Hutton Colman [?]. Couple of them have retired. One in DeKalb county and one in Blount county.

judge down in Shelton county.

Walter De Vries: Why hasn't there been any significant growth in the eight years since then? Really, it's ten years, isn't it? Since '64. '64 was the peak in terms of the elections.

Grenier: Yeah, I think there have been two main factors. One, the kind of internecine war that went on continuously since 1966 between the members of the Birch society and people that shared their views and the Dixiecrats who we got in the party who become naturally aligned with the Birch society against the rest of us.

[Interruption by phone call.]

J.B.: Recently in South Carolina. . . there are two kind of Republicans in South Carolina. Conservative and ultraconservative. Is that basically true in Alabama?

Grenier: Oh, I think that's probably a little bit. . . coming down a little bit hard. Depends on how. . . . The issue of race is in everything in southern politics, I believe. At least in the deep South states. If you get conservatism mixed up with that, that creates a problem ideologically, if you're trying to define people ideologically. But certainly I think most of the Birch society in Alabama and the people that align themselves with them, some of whom are fundamentalist religionists, and. . . . I don't know whether you'd call that conservative or not. I guess they certainly would be ascribed by most people as being ultraconservative. And I think when the party split here, the leader of the Dixiecrat element, which was Jim Martin, I guess, aligned himself with those people against people like myself, Dick Bennett, who were not segregationists. But we certainly were for Goldwater. We were certainly conservative by any definition in his 1964 presidential election. But on the issue of race, we promoted the election of blacks to the state committee and the county committees. We encouraged participation of blacks within the party generally. And that met with a great deal of opposition from the fundamentalists and the Birch society. . . Martin's. So I don't. . . . You find Republicans that have been alligned with our group in the past now, for example, that are very interested in Rockefeller, in Alabama and in other places in the South.

W.D.V.: But is the basis of that internecine struggle on the issue of race? That's the principle issue that divides the two?

Grenier: Well, I certainly think that race is one of the issues.

W.D.V.: What would be some of the other issues that. . . ?

Grenier: Well. . . I guess there is a strain of anti-intellectualism throughout southern politics. From all the histories, even in Key's book. I think there certainly is an element of that. . . at least that view is obviously favorable to our, to my position in the party. But it certainly is a view of anti-progressivism. At least that's the way I look at it and have viewed it. I think probably. . . well, I don't know whether there's always been a fundamentalist religionist attitude in the anti-intellectuals in the South. Certainly in the last decade you've seen some of this institutionalized in new churches, here in Alabama. Which have become very conservative within their own religions. You have offshoots of the Presbyterian church. Some of the Presbyterians become too liberal and they have broken off and formed new churches.

J.B.: Were many of the Presbyterian fundamentalists in Alabama involved in that schism? The recent one. The recent split off.

Grenier: I'm not really knowledgeable about that. Jack Williamson, who has been active in Republican politics, has been the leader of that conservative element, I think. From Greenville, Alabama. He's a friend of Dig Bivens [?]. And on this score he was. . . kind of always been on our side of the fence and yet apparently he's very conservative in that area. There is a new church formed here within the last decade called Briarwood Presbyterian Church where a great deal of this fundamentalism rests. And you see a lot of political activity coming out of that congregation. Prominent members of the Birch society are members of that congregation. A lot of the members of the most conservative, ultraconservative element of the Republican party are

members of that congregation. And I use that church only as an example, but you can see it in other towns and cities, where you have a religious element within that group within the Republican party. This also includes the John Birch society and also the segregationists.

J.B.: Private school movement--

Grenier: -- Dixiecrats who became disenchanted with the Democratic party.

J.B.: Private school movement entwined in that?

Grenier: Private school movement is certainly part of it.

W.D.V.: Are there any other differences between the two groups in the party? Ideological or basic, based on issues?

Grenier: Well, I'm trying to think of the domestic scene at first. I think our group probably is more flexible on things like fiscal affairs. Unbalanced budgets, you know, over a number of years. A revamping of the welfare program. At least a willingness to look at something like the OEO. Whereas on the other hand the other group may have outright opposition to those things. Have to balance the budget every year. OEO is foolishness and shouldn't be tried. Welfare should be abolished.

W.D.V.: Is there a difference in the way the groups perceive Wallace?

Grenier: Ha. Probably, yeah, I would think so. I think that the ultraconservative group probably favors Wallace on the issues more closely than we would. On the other hand, I don't know whether they admire him as much as we do as a politician. It's a little bit of a

.

J.B.: Do they favor him on the issues or do they favor him on his rhetoric? Or is there a difference?

Grenier: Well, certainly where he stood on the issues in the past.

Now what he's going to do now. . . I don't know where they'll stand with him.

W.D.V.: How has this division effected the party in terms of candidates and organization?

Grenier: It's just wiped it out.

W.D.V.: Wiped it out?

Grenier: Yeah.

W.D.V.: You mean all the energy is focused on this internecine warfare?

Grenier: Yeah, but I think the energy is probably out of that, now.

W.D.V.: It is?

Grenier: Yeah, I think we've managed to keep hold of the state committee. . And we've managed, at least either the control some of the larger counties or at least those that we don't control, they don't exist as viable units. Which is I guess the better alternative. But I don't know whether it is or not. I never have seen much purpose in creating a Republican party that was an institutionalization of the Dixiecrat movement. As far as I'm concerned that's just the waste of a lot of time and effort.

W.D.V.: You think that's behind you now?

Grenier: Yes, I think it probably is behind us. I think we've come to the point where we haven't got much standing, after the fight, but I don't think the Dixiecrats can get control of the Republican party of Alabama. And I don't think it's controlled by the Birch society. But it's been a very difficult and long struggle to avoid that. And on the other hand, of course, you're always subject to possible exploitation by

business interests who seek to impose their views on the party generally. I think we've been successful in avoiding some of that. Of course we haven't got much left after all that. And I think if there's going to be a future in the Republican party in Alabama now, it's going to be a question of reviving support. Generally on issues that are of broad appeal to the people generally in Alabama.

W.D.V.: Do you see that revival coming?

Grenier: Well, I think it depends upon an opportunity, an electoral opportunity. I don't know when that will come.

W.D.V.: You mean for state wide offices?

Grenier: State wide office or in the presidential situation. I think the 1976 presidential election could be very important in the revival of the Republican party, not only here but elsewhere. Because it might. . . it seems to me, result for the first time in a real coalition among southern leadership with leadership throughout the rest of the country. I don't think we've really seen that within the Republican party yet. We had a fight in 1964, which accomplished the redistribution of power within the Republican party in accordance with where the votes had started to come from. It seemed to us that there was an imbalance in 1964 in the leadership of the Republican party. Whereas most of it rested in the East and to some extent the Midwest, whereas for years the Republican party had been losing strength in the East and to some extent in the Midwest and gaining strength in the South and the West. And yet that new strength wasn't represented to any extent in the leadership councils of the Republican party. And to correct that imbalance was a first step, I think, to. . . if you wanted the South and the West fully supporting the Republican party as a national party. That

was a very difficult imbalance to correct, but I think we corrected it in 1964. Traumatic as it was. But again in 1968 I guess the delegates from the West and the conservative delegates from the Midwest and the South had to establish that that balance had been corrected. And I guess they did pretty clearly although I don't think the question was ever in doubt that Nixon was going to be nominated--from 1964 on, basically. And when he was nominated, I think that made it clear to everybody within the party that the South and West was going to play a role. That's just the beginning of it. To make it effective, there has to be, it seems to me, a liaison and a communication established among the leaders nationally on some ground which they can agree. Throughout the country, on issues. For the South to be able to do that, in large measure, it could not go to those councils being controlled by the Birch society. It couldn't go to those councils as a segregationist party. And it couldn't go to those councils with an attitude of anti-progressivism. Those elements would have to come out of the Republican party in the South to establish any ground for communication with the national Republican party.

J.B.: Do you see that happening?

Grenier: Well, I have not been as close to the situation in other southern states in the last five years as I had previously been. So I really don't know what the situation is in Mississippi. I don't know what the situation is in Louisiana, South Carolina. I do know what the situation is in Alabama and I think probably, I would hope at least, that the majority of the Alabama delegation. . . . And I know the leadership of the party at this time. . . . is in a position to have that kind of a dialogue that would be productive. I don't have any doubt that Tennessee,

Virginia, Arkansas, Florida, Texas and Georgia would be in that position. I don't think there's much chance that parties in those last states I mentioned, Texas and Florida and so forth, which had large Republican elements before 1964, I don't think they would be [marred?] with the issues that would prevent a cohesive, national Republican party. But I think that up until the time when we could get rid of those elements and those issues within the Republican party, number one it made it profitable for people like Hugh Scott, Scranton and to some extent--although I always thought he did it a little reluctantly--Rockefeller to exploit that southern element of the party on those issues for their own benefit. Once those issues are removed, that opportunity for exploitation will no longer be possible. And as a result of that not being available, there won't be the opportunity for that kind of friction among elements of the party. So I would say that. . . the party in the South as a part of the national party has made progress. It's been a very difficult struggle within the party itself. And great opportunities have been missed as the result of it and some very unfortunate things have been done. Throwing away Congressmen after gubernatorial seats that couldn't be won. Even in 1964, the failure of the party throughout the South to simply choose candidates and put them on the ballot in all these Congressional races. I don't know how many tens of Congressional seats that cost. Even a couple of Senate seats. So great opportunities have been missed which I guess is just. . . means that it's going to take a longer time to mature the party in the South.

W.D.V.: Some of the Republicans we've talked with suggest that the party is sort of treading water until Wallace leaves the scene. Since your and Martin's defeat in '66. Since Red Blount's defeat in '72. They

feel that because Wallace dominates the state, it's really not too important or practical to field state wide candidates. But that until he gets off, we just sort of tread water and pass the time.

Grenier: Well, Blount and Martin have always had kind of a Wallace fixation. If they've had a problem--and I'm not suggesting that they have--then that's been one of them. Gov Wallace is. . . . The Republican party came to prominence in Alabama at the same time George Wallace did. In 1962. And George Wallace was no deterrent to that growth in Alabama. Nor do I think that it was ever necessary that he be a deterrent. I think that. . . once you decide to bunt heads with him. . . it just didn't make a lot of sense. George Wallace very much represents the people of this state in majority fashion. But if you don't butt heads with him directly, then I don't think it's ever very likely that he's going to do anything concrete to impede the growth of the Republican party. I don't think that Gov Wallace ever has seen the Republican party of Alabama as a direct threat to him.

W.D.V.: Is that just a rationalization then?

Grenier: What?

W.D.V.: To not really do anything because Wallace dominates--

Grenier: Yeah, I think so. I think that's probably irrelevant, basically, that Wallace dominates the scene.

J.B.: Someone told us that you encouraged Martin to make the race for governor. At least that you were perceived as having encouraged him to make that race in '66.

Grenier: That's absolutely not so.

J.B.: What was your position at that time?

Grenier: Well, of course I guess everybody is trying to pin the

tail on that donkey, I'm sure. But basically. . . I was running for governor

in 1965. I started running for governor in the summer of 1965. Called the entire state committee. Asked them what their thoughts were. Then I met with the Congressmen in Washington in the fall of 1965. And I had several meetings with Martin, to make. . . because I recognized him as the leader of the party as far as candidate was concerned. He could do anything he wanted to do as far as I was concerned. Run for Congress, run for the governor, run for the Senate. And the party would nominate him and should nominate him. So my understanding of the situation was. . . is that he was not interested in running for governor. So we had a meeting in Birmingham, which Red Blount attended and Hall Tomson [?] attended and Jim Martin attended. And there were several other people. Dig Bennett was there. And my closely political associate at the time, whose name is Tom Brail [?]. And we made our recommendations. That was in December of 1965. And we made our recommendations to Jim, that he either run for Congress. Our first recommendation was that he run for Congress and keep his seat in Congress. And then run for Hill's Senate seat in 1968, which would be a presidential year. And we had understood that Hill might be retiring and that would be an open seat. It seemed to us to be a very good opportunity, particularly if the presidential thing was going to look good. The second alternative was for him to run against Sparkman. And under no circumstances did we think he ought to run for governor. At that time there were two main candidates on the Democratic side. One was John Patterson and the second one was ^{Ryan} ~~Red~~ de Graffenreid, who was very popular at the time. And there was some talk of Mrs Wallace, but at that time it was not at the point of being very serious. At least nobody thought it was. Well, I wouldn't say it wasn't serious. It certainly hadn't been decided at that time that Mrs Wallace would run in

December of '65. Our thought on the gubernatorial campaign was that, although in 1962 we were able to persuade the convention not to nominate a candidate for governor against Wallace--and that was over a stiff battle on the floor. They agreed not to nominate a candidate against Wallace and we ran Jim Martin for the Senate by himself with three other Congressmen on the ticket. And he did very well. We didn't think we could get through the 1966 convention without nominating a candidate for governor. Thought we would have to have somebody. So we knew we had to have somebody run for governor and we concluded pretty well that they couldn't win. There was just no chance. And we had a poll done by Opinion Research out of Princeton, New Jersey, and the poll indicated that there was very little if any chance that either Martin or myself or Blount or anybody--even though Blount wasn't active in the Republican party at the time, we still had his name in the poll's list. But nevertheless, we thought somebody ought to run. And that confronted us with the problem that the main objective of 1966 was to elect members to the legislature and to the state senate and to retain our Congressional seats. That was our game plan for 1966. Was retain the five Congressional seats. Nail them down. And get maybe a third of the state legislature and a third of the state senate. That's what we wanted. So in order to give some cohesiveness to the legislative campaign, we wanted a good candidate for governor who understood he was going to lose and that was me. Is what we decided. Because I had some ambitions of running for office in the future. If we ran a decent race against whoever it might be, that wouldn't hurt anything. And it would give us some control in the field and some cohesiveness out of the legislative candidates, who were going to have a difficult time getting across to people

what they stood for. Because none of them had run, basically, before. None of them were well known. And we were limited as to the funds. So what we recommended was that I run for governor and that Jim Martin either run for Congress or against Sparkman. Jim said he didn't want to run against Sparkman. Didn't think he could beat him. And said, at the conclusion of that meeting, that he would run for governor on the advice of Blount and Hall Thompson, who was his chief financial advisor. And Hall and Blount were going to put up the money. Which I think was the key element in persuading Martin to go forward with the thing. At least I've always thought that. But I don't know. So I told Jim that if he were going to do that then I would oppose him at the convention. Because we thought this was insanity. So after that meeting I went back with Tom Brigham and Herbert Stockum, as I recall, and I told them that I wasn't thinking about staying in any governor's race. And if Jim Martin wanted to run for governor, well, that was fine. If that's what he wanted to do. But I was getting out. I mean, I had other things to do. I was practicing law and the last thing I needed was a convention fight against Jim Martin for a race I didn't want to be in anyway. So we agreed, nevertheless, to stay in the race for a month to see whether Martin would drop out. I'm sure that Martin and Thompson and Blount were plotting on the other side about how to get me out. Unbeknownst to them, that was no problem at all. So in a month, when Martin didn't drop out, I just called Hall Thompson and told him I was getting out and wished him good luck. And so I dropped out of the governor's race and we called a meeting of all the leaders of the Republican party: regional directors, vice chairmen and so forth. And I announced I was withdrawing as a candidate for governor. Martin announced that he

was going to be a candidate for governor. And the question was asked at that meeting: would he be a candidate if Laurleen Wallace was the Democratic candidate. He said he certainly would be. And at that meeting Tom Brigham, who was the state chairman, again reiterated his recommendations to the leadership of the party as to what ought to be done. Which is that I should run for governor. Martin should run for Congress. And something be done about the Senate seat, or nothing be done about it. So Martin determined to run for governor and I more or less withdrew from any activity. I wasn't state chairman or anything else. And left my law practice and went into the investment business. For all intents and purposes, I was finished with politics for that. . . you know, for the short run. Then de Graffenreid got killed. And then Mrs Wallace announced. And by June. . . here we'd spent two years recruiting some 250 candidates for the legislature and the state senate and raising the money to fund those races. And by June because of Martin's opposition--he announced for governor against Laurleen Wallace. The thing was just absolutely in a ditch and going down quickly, in our view. So the Democratic primary was held. Mrs Wallace beat everybody in sight and Martin was still making noises about running against her. We got the results in on the Sparkman race and it was clear that there was an element of vulnerability in Sparkman. So I called Martin in Washington and asked him whether or not he wanted to run for the Senate. He said no, that he had talked to Earl McGowan in Greenville about running for the Senate. So we concluded that I would run for the Senate, mainly to get some position on the ballot that could get this thing together and provide some leadership to all the candidates running. So when Martin said he wouldn't run, I called him back again and told him I'd decided I'd

run for the Senate. That was a very bad mistake. Because the situation at that point just could not be salvaged and in any event it couldn't be salvaged by me running for the Senate. That was just a personal mistake in judgment. I thought I could exercise some leadership from that Senate position and as it turned out, that was impossible. People looked on me as a candidate for the Senate and that was that. As far as giving the party any direction, it simply wasn't possible. So Martin continued in his efforts to run for governor and I continued in my efforts to run for the Senate. Before the convention there was some suggestion that I withdraw from the Senate race and let Martin run for the Senate and I was far too committed to do that. So I was nominated for the Senate and Martin went through with the gubernatorial campaign. And as far as being elected to the Senate itself, from a personal standpoint, Brigham and I had concluded that we would probably run about 10 points ahead of the ticket against Sparkman. And the bet we made, which was also a mistake from my personal standpoint in as far as just being elected to the Senate was concerned as apart from the leadership of the party. We concluded that Martin would get 40% of the vote or at least there was a 50-50 chance that he would get about 40%, at least 40% of the vote against Mrs Wallace. And if he did that, then we'd be at 50. As it turned out, I think he got 29 and we got 40. So that bet didn't pan out. So we still think that Martin should have run for Congress. And I think had he run for Congress Gov Wallace would not have been . Even running for the Senate, I think we probably could have beaten Sparkman, although that would have been very difficult.

W.D.V.: Well, why did Martin do it?

Grenier: I don't know why he did it.

W.D.V.: One version that we heard. . . was that the meeting at the airport? The meeting you were talking about? December '65.

Grenier: No, that was in the state committee headquarters.

W.D.V.: Well, one of the meetings that we heard about was that Martin just announced unilaterally that he was going to do this. And that everybody was surprised that he was going to run for governor. Everybody we talked to said they advised against it and were really surprised when he did it.

Grenier: We had a meeting at the airport, but it was after the Democratic primary and it was a round table meeting. And that's when I announced that I was going to run for the Senate. But at that meeting I asked Martin what he was going to do. And at that meeting he could have changed his mind. And if he had I would have walked right out of the meeting and back into the investment business. But he said that he was going to run for governor. Blount was at that meeting. This was really the first time I ever recall Blount participating in any Republican party politics, was that meeting in the state committee in December '65 and then in the meeting at the airport. He'd made a cash contribution to Goldwater in '64 and of course he'd been in these citizens' movements for Nixon. But he'd never taken an active role in the Republican party.

W.D.V.: But that series of decisions, or that decision, was really critical for the Republican party in the '70s.

Grenier: Oh yeah, that made all the difference in the world.

W.D.V.: That's why I'm trying to understand it a little better. Because it really was a critical decision.

Grenier: It was THE critical decision in the growth of the Republican party in Alabama.

J.B.: Is it your interpretation that his entry into the governor's race resulted in the virtual dessimation of the legislative candidates?

Grenier: No question about it. I say no question about it. I don't know how the legislative candidates would have done. But with Martin running against Wallace, it was impossible.

J.B.: Was Wallace out campaigning for the whole ticket? For the Democratic ticket?

Grenier: No, but it was a straight ticket pull in south Alabama. I think John Sparkman carried Dolphin and Houston counties, Alabama, for the first time in his political career. Whereas I was doing all right up in places. . . Tennessee valley, Lauderdale county, and so forth. But in south Alabama it was a straight ticket pull. Martin made a couple of remarks about Mrs Wallace, one of which is "We don't want no skirt for no governor." I recall one of the remarks. And I think some of the remarks he made about Mrs Wallace during that campaign tend to explain the situation a little bit. And by October. . . I mean the deal was down the shute. Irretrievable. But as far as the decision was concerned. . . as far as I know, that was James D. Martin's sole decision out of his own ambition.

[Phone interruption.]

W.D.V.: -- five or six months in which that decision could have been reshaped. It could have been changed. All the way from December through the primaries. . . still could have been changed based on the polls, based on de Graffenreid's death and so on, Laurleen's announcement and so on.

Grenier: Oh yeah.

W.D.V.: It could have been changed--

Grenier: -- any time up to the time he was nominated. That's right. I started talking to him about it in either July or August of 1965.

W.D.V.: Well, then you had almost a year of time.

Grenier: A year. I mean I knew the decision was going to be critical. I wanted the entire party to be looking at this thing for a full year. And we talked about it and the Congressmen talked about it. And Martin talked about it. And when he decided to run for governor, I got out.

J.B.: When was it at the end there when he wanted you to get out of the Senate race and for him to run there?

Grenier: He never directly asked me to get out of the Senate race. Actually, I don't ever recall anybody directly coming to me and saying "John, how about withdrawing from the Senate race and letting Martin run." But there were newspaper stories and there were indirect suggestions that I do it. I was not willing to do it.

J.B.: Was this before the nomination?

Grenier: Yeah. Now I was willing to be defeated for the nomination. If somebody wanted to come at me, that was fine. But I was not going to. . . after having announced for the Senate, having started a campaign, having them, given them, given Martin a year's time to make this decision. And having put it out there for over a year for everybody to comment on and then having announced for the Senate, I was not going to withdraw. Now if somebody wanted to come at me on the convention floor and take the nomination, as far as I was concerned that was fine. That's fair and square and the way it ought to be. And if he'd won the nomination that would have been fine. But as far as withdrawing,

I was not willing to do that.

W.D.V.: When was that convention?

Grenier: I think it was in July of 1967 [?].

W.D.V.: Did you have any polls which showed you that by having somebody like Martin opposing Mrs Wallace, Laurleen Wallace, that it would hurt the candidate opposing Sparkman?

Grenier: No, and I'm not sure that you can get a poll like that. Really. I'm not sure it's possible to construct a poll like that. The only real poll we had. . . . There was a lot of talk at the time that Martin was a better candidate than I was and certainly that's so. He was more popular. He was better known, had run before and was an incumbent Congressman. There wasn't any question in my mind about that--either then or now. But the one poll we did have, showed Sparkman beating Martin for the Senate something like 63 to 23 and beating me for the Senate about 65 to 19. Which indicated to us, when we were looking at the governor's thing, that it didn't make much difference whether Martin or I ran for governor, because we'd both get beaten pretty badly and if you get beat what difference does it make who gets beat the least. Now, as to running for the Senate, we never really compared that. We didn't have a poll, except that poll that showed Sparkman ahead of us both by a wide, wide, wide margin.

W.D.V.: Yeah, but there must have been some way to measure the feeling about Laurleen Wallace.

Grenier: Oh, there wasn't any question in anybody's mind that if we ran against Laurleen Wallace it was going to be very bad.

W.D.V.: But you made the decision to go ahead anyway.

Grenier: Jim Martin was a Congressman. I mean he was 45 years old,

a successful businessman. And to suggest, as it has been suggested from various sources, that somebody cohersted him into running for governor. . . . I just don't know how you make a man put his name on a ballot if he doesn't want to run. There isn't any way to do that that I know about.

J.B.: Is the general interpretation though that Martin's being on the ballot against Laurleen killed off the legislative candidates?

Grenier: That's my conclusion.

J.B.: If he had not run for governor or if nobody had run for governor, the Republicans hadn't put up a candidate for governor, would it have made any difference?

Grenier: Oh my heavens, yes. The best situation was not to run anybody for governor. And the only reason the question ever came up was because we didn't think we could get through that convention without a candidate for governor. Now when you get into a convention, if you don't have a candidate that you know you can go with, anything can happen. And what we didn't want to end up with was an unstable candidate who was going to cause these legislative candidates problems. We didn't want some wild racist or wild radical or just generally unstable, unthoughtful person running for governor. Because what we wanted to do was get these legislative candidates in office because we felt like that would sink the taproot of the Republican party in state politics like nothing else could. And it was of absolute, critical importance to the growth of the party in this state and elsewhere that that be done. And everything else could have stayed pat for 1966. We wouldn't have lost anything if. . . we'd of kept all five Congressmen. And it was insane to run against Wallace. There was no way to beat George Wallace or Laurleen.

That was just pure insanity. And we knew we were going to have trouble with the Republican party. Because those delegates had a full head of steam after the Goldwater election. They thought they could beat anybody. And we knew we were going to have some difficulties. Because, you know, they figured what they would do is take on Wallace, beat him.

W.D.V.: They figured they were the majority party after '64?

Grenier: Oh, they just thought they could take on anybody. And they'd been, you know, stepped on, shunted into the back room for low these many years and they wanted a piece of these Democrats. And when Martin said he wanted to run for governor, boy, that's just all they needed. They just knew they were going to win then. And there wasn't anyway to stop them. Only way to stop them was for Martin to get out. And I'm sure that some people say "Well, if you'd gotten out of the Senate race then he'd of gotten out of the governor's race." I never saw the two as being necessarily tied together.

W.D.V.: Since that time has it been difficult to recruit candidates and money and build the organization?

Grenier: Well, of course, the party was dissipated after the election of '66. Then the pinning the donkey tail started and I think a lot of. . . . During the end of the campaign I ran some ads which appealed to the Wallace vote. And the ads were that George Wallace was not endorsing Sparkman--

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--one was, we asked the question "Why wasn't George Wallace being seen with John Sparkman?" And then we waited about a week to see whether Wallace would be seen with Sparkman. And he wasn't. So then we asked. . .

something else "Why wasn't George Wallace endorsing Sparkman?" And waited another week and George Wallace didn't endorse Sparkman. And then the third ad we ran we said the reason he's not being seen with him and the reason he's not endorsing him is because he doesn't want him to win. And he didn't say anything about that, either. But I, as chairman, I guess had built into the Republican party a great deal of camaraderie and had made it kind of a unitized party, which seemed to me necessary in building the thing against the odds they had running against them. And then, to me, it seemed disloyal to the party, by making a pitch for Wallace votes while Martin was running for governor. Which implicitly said that Martin doesn't have enough votes and I need some Wallace votes. That angered the Republicans a great deal and lost me considerable support among people who normally would vote for me within the party. And then, in addition to that, gave the enemies that I had within the party a very good issue upon which to oppose me for leadership within the party. But I didn't think we could just walk off, after 1966, and let the Birch society and that element secure control of the Republican party. So in 1968 I ran for national committeeman in order to see that that was not done. Martin, out of the clear blue sky. . . and I went to Gaston, talked to him, see whether he was interested in the national committeeman's race. Said absolutely not, what he was interested in, perhaps, was the Senate race that year. Was I interested in that? I told him no, I sure wasn't interested in that. So I announced for national committeeman and some of these people went over there and convinced him that if I was elected national committeeman, apparently, that I was going to do something bad to him. So he announced for national committeeman against me and we had a knock down drag out fight and he won, in Mobile. The fight was inconclusive as far as the

state committee was concerned because I don't believe it was elected that year in that convention. So we had to do the same thing again in 1970. I didn't have much taste for it, but in any event the job had to be done. So, even though I wasn't personally involved except running for a member of the state committee, which I lost. I kind of organized the fight in Jefferson county and to some extent around the rest of the state. So that in the convention of 1970 we had another fight and we managed to win that and keep control of the state committee and Dick Bennett was elected chairman. Not by a very great margin. And I was defeated for a seat on the state committee in that state convention. Which I kind of looked at as the termination of my active participation in the leadership of the party.

W.D.V.: What's Martin doing now?

Grenier: I have no idea.

W.D.V.: Is he still involved?

Grenier: Politically? I don't think so. No, I think he tried to do something. . .

J.B.: The innerparty fight in Alabama is almost comparable to that in Florida.

Grenier: Of course I haven't been. . . . It has absolutely dissipated the party here. I don't know really what the fight has been in Florida in recent years.

J.B.: Gurney and Cramer. That '70 Senate race.

Grenier: Well, I guess so, except that you had two candidates fighting in that situation. Whereas I guess I never have essentially been a candidate although I ran for the Senate. That wasn't really my essential role in the party.

W.D.V.: How do you assess George Wallace?

Grenier: Well, I just have the greatest respect for his political acumen and his ability. I'm not sure, strictly from a standpoint of pragmatic politics, that there's a more able person on the national scene, politically. He's just a natural in the political business. He can just put his hand out the window and tell, closer than anybody I've ever seen, how an election is going to come out or what the people are feeling.

W.D.V.: Why? I mean most politicians, after eight years, ten years, are down the chute.

Grenier: He's just got a marvelous ability. I mean that's my opinion and assessment of him. He really just has a marvelous ability to communicate with people and understand what it is they're thinking on any particular issue. And I don't know that he's tied to any particular positions on any particular issues. George Wallace is a professional politician and his idea and concept of politics is to be in office. His idea is to win and the positions you have to take to win are the ones you take. And I'm not saying that in any critical tone by any manner or means. He can assess what the interests of the people, the electorate are and adequately articulate them in words they can understand. And that's the formula. So he is a very accomplished, professional politician. And I think he's got integrity in that profession or business or whatever way you want to term it. How he's going to do in the future, I guess, is anybody's guess.

J.B.: Why did Red Blount get beat worse than you did by John Sparkman in a year when Richard Nixon got what, 70 something percent of the vote in Alabama?

Grenier: Oh, I think. . . . Course it's difficult for one candidate
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to assess the race of another without some prejudices I guess. I think Red got mixed up on the race issue. Was a mistake he made. And secondly, he attempted to project an impression to the people of Alabama that they didn't quite equate with what they understood him to be. And then, when those two elements combined to start him on the down side, he then attacked Sparkman personally. And although I think the people of Alabama might be of a mind to think about recalling Sen Sparkman because of many reasons--the time he's been there, age, and so on--I don't think they want to do it uncerimoniously. John Sparkman's been a Senator for 30 some odd years and vice presidential candidate and has done a lot of things for a lot of people and a lot for the state. If they were going to call him home they weren't going to do it under the onus of a personal attack. So I think there was a mistake on the race issue and I think there was a mistake in attempting to convey the impression that Red was a good old country boy. And then, when those two factors got him in the ditch, he exacerbated the situation by attacking Sparkman personally. And that resulted in the landslide.

J.B.: You think he had an opportunity to get a substantial black vote?

Grenier: No. I wouldn't think so. No, I think Sen Sparkman has got the loyalty of the blacks in this state pretty tight and continuously. When I say Red made a mistake on the race issue, I don't suggest that he should have come out as a segregationist or taken any position on the race issue. What he did do was equivocate, I think. At least it came out to me that he was. Say one thing one day and then he'd kind of. . . . He brought people's attention to his taking a position on the race issue and then he equivocated. Now you can stay away from it if you

want to. Or you can get into it, if you want to. But if you get into it, and you want to win in Alabama, you better come down on the white side. Otherwise, you better stay away from it. Seems to me. Just as a pragmatic view. You're not going to win in the middle. That's very difficult. And you're not going to win on the black side, yet.

J.B.: Where do you see the Republican party heading after Wallace leaves the state, leaves the governor's office?

Grenier: Well, I think. . . . The Republican party needs an electoral opportunity. To regroup itself. To gain some new strength. And to start anew, at the state level. I don't think that's necessarily tied to what Gov Wallace does except as it may relate to his activities on the national scene, in the presidential election. Because I would think almost certainly that it's going to take a presidential opportunity to recreate the Republican party in Alabama. Now how Wallace complicates that is something we have yet to see. He's going to complicate it. But I would think that the 1976 presidential election may well be another watershed, like '64. A very significant and critical election for the nation as a whole. That kind of a motivation, if it's sensed and it will be by the people generally--which is what would make it a watershed--that's the kind of thing that would present an opportunity for leadership in the Republican party. Rally the Republican party within that kind of atmosphere.

W.D.V.: Are there any readily identifiable state wide Republican leaders now?

Grenier: Oh, I certainly think that Martin was one of the best candidates I've ever seen. . . .

W.D.V.: Is he still being considered?

Grenier: I don't know how people consider him. I would think that he wouldn't be much of a force. Certainly he's not much of a force within the party, I wouldn't think. And whether he's much of a force among the electorate generally is always difficult to tell. I mean candidates resurrect themselves.

W.D.V.: Is there anybody else? I mean if you were thinking of fielding state wide office, where would you go today in the Republican party?

Grenier: Well, of course your three Congressmen are very well known and I would say very popular.

W.D.V.: There's not much likelihood they would run for state wide office.

Grenier: I would hope not. Unless it would be the Senate seat. I think we probably made a mistake back in '72 by not having one of the Congressmen run for the Senate. But with Blount appearing as strong as he did, I think he probably just scared everybody off of that situation.

J.B.: How much did Nixon's letter to Sparkman undercut Blount?

Grenier: I'm not sure I recall that letter specifically. I know there was some. . . I think there was some activity in the White House that hurt Blount a little bit, but I don't think that kind of thing is more than superficial basically. You know, I think it caused some discomfort to the Blount campaign and probably cost him a little bit of credibility. But I don't know that it's one of those things that gets you from 50 to 30 percent.

J.B.: What was the effect on the Republican party?

Grenier: Of that letter?

of activities on behalf of Blount. Maybe even the activities on behalf of Sparkman by the Committee to Re-elect and the White House.

Grenier: I don't think that bothered the Republican very much. Blount more or less had built his own campaign organization. And I don't know how much really he was depending on the Republican organization or how much communication there was. I wasn't in the Blount campaign. I was on his steering committee, but the steering committee never met. We met once, for the first time, in September of 1971, and never met again. So I really don't know what happened in the Blount campaign. But I was active in the Nixon campaign, state wide, which mostly involved the Republican party. And I don't recall anything very traumatic happening to Republicans as a result of any White House activity or lack of White House activity. It certainly wasn't very appropriate for a couple of the things the White House did. I think they sent an airplane down for Sparkman. And then there was some statement made on a press conference about Sparkman out of the White House. Which I'm sure was a little bit damaging and unsettling. But I don't know if the voters paid a lot of attention to that or not. But to get back to your question, we've got a couple members of the House of Representatives--Nevilles, Doug Hale and Hudson [?]. I'm sure there must be people I'm leaving out, but I don't know of any really prominent Republicans associated with Blount that are really known state wide. But I'm not sure that's necessarily a deterrent.

J.B.: But that suggests that leadership in the future is going to have to come from people that we don't even really know about.

Grenier: Yeah, I would hope that would be the case.

J.B.: Maybe from the legislature, where you are expecting to pick

up 15 or 20 seats in the house.

Grenier: It might come from the legislature. That would be unusual. You don't ordinarily build a new institution out of people who, by virtue of their jobs, are self-seeking. In the short run self-seeking. You ordinarily don't expect a candidate to give you much help in building a party. [Unclear.]

W.D.V.: What we're really saying is that they're really not identifiable at this point.

Grenier: running the party is barely identifiable.

J.B.: How about the mayor of Birmingham?

Grenier: George ^{Seibels}~~Seagals~~ is certainly one.

J.B.: Is he perceived as a potential state wide candidate?

Grenier: He certainly could be a state wide candidate. He's popular and has done a good job in the city of Birmingham. His health, I think, is a problem. He's had two or three heart attacks.

J.B.: He's generally perceived as a progressive--?

Grenier: Yes, I would think so.

J.B.: Dynamic sort of--

Grenier: Very much so. I persuaded George ^{Seibels}~~Seagals~~ to run the first time for the legislature back in 1962. We've been good friends since and I admire him a great deal.

W.D.V.: Are you going to run again?

Grenier: I have no plans to run again, or even to be active in politics again.

W.D.V.: What happened to your earlier ambition?

Grenier: I don't know that I ever really had any ambition for public office, particularly. In all these discussions that we had with

part of it when we were talking about running for governor and running for the Senate, he would say to me "Well, I'm going to run for governor, why don't you run for the Senate?" And I said to him specifically that I was not going to run for the Senate in January or February of '66.

So I had no particular burning ambition. I don't mean to suggest that, once committed to run, I would not have liked to have won nor that I would not like to be in the Senate. I'm not a person who says "Well, now that I've run, I'm really glad I lost." I'm not glad I lost. I'm sorry I'd lost. I wish I'd won. And it would be very nice to be in the Senate. Anybody would be a fool. . . to have the opportunity, I would think, at least for one term, to not want to go to the United States Senate. But my ambition was never to be a candidate for public office. It seemed to me at that particular time that it was necessary for me to be a candidate for the Senate in order to satisfy what responsibility I had to the party itself. Because I'd been very instrumental in building it and very instrumental in recruiting the candidates for the legislature and the state senate. As it turned out, I didn't help them any but. . . that was one of the motivating forces of running. In addition to wanting to be in the Senate. But I enjoyed the party politics and still do, although I'm not very active in it. The running for office never held any particular appeal for me.

J.B.: What was Goldwater's appeal in the South and to people like you beyond. . . appeal in the South beyond his vote against the Civil Rights Act? This is what has been widely attributed. . . a lot of support he got from traditionally conservative, racially conservative areas that had not voted Republican before. But there were other elements of appeal that didn't have anything to do with race. What were those elements?

Grenier: Oh, I think all the various positions he took on issues

which generally could be seen as conservative, which could be grouped under a general heading of a reduction in power at the federal level and an increase in power at the state level. Which basically is why the South was for Goldwater. And on the race issue. They interpreted some of those positions as being more favorable to their position on race, even though the positions themselves may not have had to do with race.

J.B.: His vote against the Civil Rights Act.

Grenier: His vote against the Civil Rights Act was quite. . . . I was in his office when he went to the floor to vote against that. He'd just returned from discussing it with Gen Eisenhower.

J.B.: What was his attitude then? Why was he saying he was voting against it?

Grenier: He felt surely that that was the constitutional position he should take. And it was a very troubled night for him. Very troubled day. And politically he interpreted it as one that was going to cost him dearly. He had no illusions about that. He didn't need it for the southern delegates, I can say that to you fairly confidently. We would have had difficulties, but I don't think he would have lost in the South on the basis of his civil rights votes. It may have lost a few votes in the general election and he may have lost a few delegates, but I didn't think it was going to be a serious matter. As far as that convention was concerned. But it cost him severely in the November election. He knew it was going to. But I think now and thought then that Sen Goldwater was a man of principle. The most honest and best person I've ever met. And he thought that was the right thing to do was to vote against it and that's what he did.

J.B.: What's the effect and what will be the effect of Watergate?

Grenier: I don't know. I think that's hard to assess while we're right in the middle of it. Certainly can't help us. But the extent to which it's going to hurt us, I don't know.

J.B.: What we hear is that it's already hurt considerably this year in terms of candidate recruitment.

Grenier: I wouldn't be surprised at that, particularly in your states where your two party system, like Michigan, is very well. . .

W.D.V.: Well, even here.

Grenier: Even here?

J.B.: In Alabama.

Grenier: I doubt whether that's the case. I doubt it. That may be a good reason, but that's not the basic reason for not getting candidates.

J.B.: What is?

W.D.V.: Maybe it's the rationalization.

Grenier: Yeah, I don't think there's enough Republican party in Alabama for Watergate to bother. We just don't have the body of the Republican party as a breathing, ongoing, productive machinery that excites the voters and attracts support to them.

J.B.: What's your reaction to the Democratic charge that we've heard from more than one person, that the Republican party is too much of a country club party in Alabama? You never have appealed to the mass of voters.

W.D.V.: They moved from a post office kind of party to a country club party.

Grenier: I don't know that that's justified. Certainly a lot of leaders in the Republican party are in country clubs, but I don't know

that that classifies it as a . . . if you judge a party by its candidate,

I think we probably drew in 1966 pretty broadly, although basically I would say it was a middle class party economically. And we certainly didn't draw candidates from the labor unions or the labor people in the state. We didn't draw very--we didn't draw them at all from the blacks until recently. So I would say basically, looking at it from the candidates, that it was a middle class, economically speaking, party. And I'm sure a lot of them are in country clubs. I don't know that that has any particular effect on--

W.D.V.: No, they were talking about a country club mentality, whatever that is. Suggesting that the party is interested in keeping itself elitist and small and not very interested in attracting a large number of voters.

Grenier: That's foolishness. The leaders of the Republican party are interested in winning elections. I don't know of any deliberate attempt to keep the party small. I mean Dick Bennett is the state chairman and if there's any person, from 1948 on, who has labored to broaden the party more than he I don't know who it could be. And when you get in a ditch with something, you know, a lot of people have got all kinds of reasons for why you're staying in the ditch. But basically, we haven't seen an opportunity to get out. I think as soon as the opportunity arises, and hopefully there will be one--there's no assurance that there will be--, then I think the party will respond to it. The leadership will, too. But Goldwater. . . . We have one problem in southern politics. A major problem. We could get majorities in the urban areas, Dallas, Columbia, South Carolina, Charlottesville, Richmond, Birmingham, Mobile, Nashville--not Nashville, it's an exception--other cities and

urban areas of the South. Charlotte, North Carolina. But until we crack the black belts of the South, from east Texas on in to the tide-water in Virginia. . . . And they voted something like 45 to 1 for Jack Kennedy in 1960. Jack Kennedy stood for everything they didn't stand for. Now what we needed, in the Republican party, was somebody to break those black belts. Because although you can elect a Congressman from St Petersburg and you can elect a Congressman from Birmingham, you aren't going to elect anybody state wide as long as you have the black belt areas voting against you five and six to one. Just wasn't possible. What Goldwater did was break those black belts. Now it's true that he got a reduced percentage in the urban areas from Nixon and Eisenhower, but I think probably across the South he got about the same percentage. Which meant that he got a dramatic increase over Nixon and Eisenhower in the black belt areas across the South. And that made it possible to have a Republican party in the South. Secondly, Goldwater defeated the leaders of the eastern establishment of the Republican party along with their allies throughout the country and made it possible for western and southern leadership to participate in the leadership of the national Republican party. Which is two of the reasons we were for him.

J.B.: There was some talk--not a whole lot--but there was some talk about 1968 of a Nixon-Brooke ticket being effective in the South. What would that do to or for the Republican party in Alabama? If Ed Brooke were on the ticket as vice presidential candidate in 1976?

Grenier: I don't know that I'd even speculate on that. I don't know what that would do. Depends, I take it, to a large extent on what was on the other side, who they were running against.

W.D.V.: Kennedy and Wallace. [Laughter.]

Grenier: Kennedy and Wallace would be very tough in Alabama, I would think. I don't know whether you could get those two together though. Guess they don't know either.

W.D.V.: Well, isn't there a new George Wallace?

Grenier: That's what he says.

W.D.V.: You believe him?

Grenier: I don't think there's a new George Wallace. I think George Wallace is the same as he's always been. Going to perceive those things he thinks to be a profitable position on the issues and that's what he's going to take, whatever race he's in at any particular time. Now he may take new positions on same issues that he was speaking about years ago. And to that extent you might call him a new Wallace. Fundamentally there's nothing new about George Wallace. He's just a very astute political person and still is. He'll be fun in 1976 for the Democrats and the Republicans.

J.B.: Anything else?

W.D.V.: I don't think so.

J.B.: Anything else you wanted to add that we have not discussed? Some insights?

W.D.V.: What dark secret haven't you told us that we should have asked you about?

Grenier: [Laughter.] I don't have any secrets particularly. I think the third thing I'd say about Goldwater was that he made it possible to coalesce the new leadership in the Republican party in the South. So there were three important things he did. Was make it possible to have a Republican party in the South with the black belt areas. Second, he made

it possible for you to have a national Republican party. And third, he created a viable cadre of leadership throughout the southern Republican party.

J.B.: Did he have the effect of bringing in to the Republican party the elements of discord that you talked about originally from the other side of the Republican party, the other wing of the party, say in Alabama and many other states?

Grenier: I don't know whether he brought them in or not. They were having trouble out in California with the Birch society before the Goldwater thing, I believe, if I'm not mistaken. When did Nixon run for governor? 1962? They were having trouble with that wing of the party before Goldwater really got cranked up. No, I don't think he brought them in, but I'll tell you, we sure had fits with them. In the Goldwater nomination drive. And I was told on the floor of the Georgia convention by the leader of the Birch society there that he didn't care what Goldwater said or wanted done or anything else. I had Sen Goldwater on the telephone and we were requesting that they do something or other in making compromises with the leadership in Atlanta. They weren't going to listen to us. We had a fight with them in Arkansas, where we installed Gov Rockefeller as the national committeeman in Sen Goldwater's name and were able to reduce their influence in the Arkansas Republican party. And of course we have them pretty well under wraps here in Alabama. But they were troublesome. And it was clear to see that they were going to be even more troublesome. Then when you dessimated the ranks of the Republican party in Alabama in 1966, it was just like ants coming through a honey comb.

J.B.: Has that had the same effect in most southern states? Differ-

ing degrees.

Grenier: I know they had a problem with it down in Texas, particularly in Houston. And it took John Tower and Peter O'Donnell and probably George Bush too to solve it. I think they had that same problem in South Carolina.

W.D.V.: Do you want to see the two parties realigned along liberal-conservative lines? In the South? Or are they pretty much that way now?

Grenier: I don't think that that would necessarily be a good thing. With only two parties it might get to be too rigid a situation.

W.D.V.: Are they moving that way now, or have they been that way?

Grenier: Yes, I think probably they are moving that way. I think the major impact of Wallace leaving the scene, if he ever does, suggesting that he will. But if he ever is no longer an influence in politics, I think the major impact is going to be on the Democratic party. Because the leaders of the Democratic party in the South, as far as I can perceive, are worlds away from George Wallace and his followers. And I think you'd have a Democratic party without Wallace that was much more liberal than George Wallace is. It would certainly be more in the stripe of Bob Vance. Not that Bob is that liberal. But certainly he would endorse and enthusiastically support any candidate of the Democratic party, including McGovern or anybody else I would think. And I think you have that kind of leadership throughout the Democratic party in the State. So, I think the position of the Republican party at a time when Wallace is no longer influential, has got to be moderate to moderate-conservative. But certainly not to the far right.

J.B.: You see the Republican party in the South being more like the

Republican party in the rest of the country?

Grenier: Well, that's the evolution I would like to see. I think that's the only thing. . . the only rationale for a Republican party in the South. The national Republican party has created a precedence. If you're going to have a viable Republican party in the South, then the only rationale it can have is to be aligned in that effort. And it takes a national effort to do that. If you're going to build a Republican party that's going to be at odds with the Republican party in the rest of the nation, then that just doesn't make any sense.

J.B.: Has Richard Nixon been good or bad for the Republican party in the South?

Grenier: I think over the long pull he's been good. This recent Watergate thing, of course, has not been good for anybody. But certainly in 1960 he was helpful. In 1962 he was helpful. In 1964 he was helpful. '66 he participated. And since he's been president he's been helpful. He hasn't helped anybody with Watergate, least of all himself. So I think we have to except that from anything that's said about him.

J.B.: How has he been helpful since he's been president? In so far as the Republican party in the South is concerned. Because in terms of growth and office holders, there's been very little. I mean, Alabama in 1966 was sort of the high point. South Carolina, '66 was sort of the high point. North Carolina would be an exception to that. But most of the other Southern states. . . Georgia has lost Congressmen. Florida I think has actually lost Congressmen and legislators. They haven't grown in Florida since '66.

Grenier: Well. . . . I say over the balance that Nixon has been helpful. I don't know that there's anything he could have done personally to cure the situations you mentioned.

Grenier: I guess he didn't do anything down here. But I don't know if. . . we had Blount going and he could have helped Blount, which he didn't. I don't really know what the extent of his activities were elsewhere. Except, he came down to Atlanta I guess and had a South wide meeting in Atlanta, which was nationally televized. I think he generally has talked favorably about the South and he certainly hasn't treated the South in any stepchild kind of a way. I think he's given the impression of treating the South on a parity with the rest of the nation and within the Republican party, the southern Republicans on a parity. At least since 1960 that's a new attitude towards the Republicans in the South. But I think in the 1964 convention we dropped the average age of the delegates something like 55 to 32 or something like that. 30 years of age. And it takes time to mature and time for that kind of a traumatic situation to stabilize.

J.B.: Are you optimistic about the future of the Republican party in Alabama?

Grenier: No, I wouldn't say I was optimistic about it. I guess I think about it and study it. I don't know where it's going at this point. I don't know where the basic two party system of the nation is going at this point. I think a lot of it depends on the. . . .

[End of interview.]