

RECASTING CONSERVATISM: GEORGIA REPUBLICANS AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTHERN POLITICS SINCE WORLD WAR II

by

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(Under the Direction of James C. Cobb)

ABSTRACT

Emerging from the ashes of the Civil War South, the Republican Party of Georgia languished in political ignominy for almost a century. Generations of ineffectual leaders and a general antipathy toward the “Party of Lincoln” in the region rendered the Georgia Republican Party a distinct, powerless minority in the state. Examining the period between 1940 and the election of the state’s first Republican governor since Reconstruction in 2002, this dissertation analyzes the internal politics and party-building initiatives that transformed the Republican Party of Georgia into the state’s majority political organization.

This study highlights the roles political party building and intraparty competition played in that consequential process. Patronage-obsessed leaders controlled the party until the 1940s when Republicans aligned with the national party’s “Eastern Establishment” triumphed. Rooted in metropolitan Atlanta, these Republicans constructed a moderate alternative to the state’s rural-dominated Democratic Party. Supporters of Senator Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign captured the party in 1964 and set it on a more conservative trajectory. Nevertheless, the state party remained structurally weak and unable to compete reliably against politically savvy Democrats and their biracial coalition of voters. Reeling from Watergate and Governor Jimmy

Carter's meteoric rise in the mid-1970s, Georgia Republicans embraced a forward-looking party-building program that laid the foundations for future political success. Organizational improvements in fundraising, recruitment, campaign support, and voter outreach enabled the party to capitalize on long-term demographic shifts in the state and the influx of social conservatives into the GOP during the 1990s. The Georgia Republican Party has continued to expand its political power since 2002.

Utilizing private correspondence, internal party documents, voting data, oral history transcripts, and contemporary newspaper records, this dissertation explores the complex, incremental party-building and political realignment processes in Georgia. The Republican Party of Georgia has evolved from a politically isolated nonentity into a modern political party. Ultimately, this dissertation underscores the importance of party organizations, campaigns, and electoral strategy in the protracted, uneven political realignment process that has transformed southern politics since World War II.

INDEX WORDS: Georgia, Republican Party, Conservatism, South, Southern Politics, GOP

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## DEDICATION

For Jessica and Margo

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Conventional political wisdom maintains the modern Republican Party did not exist in the American South until President Lyndon Johnson signed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. “We (Democrats) have lost the South for a generation,” President Johnson supposedly uttered to either Press Secretary Bill Moyers or another unnamed aide.<sup>1</sup> More myth than reality, this purported quote remains problematic. On the one hand, the Republican Party did not “win” the South immediately after the Civil Rights Act became law. Partisan realignment at the national, state, county, and local levels transpired in different places at different paces. Indeed, the transformation of southern politics remains a fluid and ongoing process. On the other hand, Johnson’s quote has given continued credence to the misinterpretation that southern Republicanism was a purely post-1964 phenomenon—born in reaction to the civil rights revolution sweeping the nation at the time. That the Democratic “Solid South,” so traumatized by Reconstruction, prove politically inhospitable to the Party of Lincoln in the century or so following the Civil War is undeniable. Nevertheless, there have always been Republicans in the South. So long as the party has existed, it has found adherents in some of the most unlikely environs. This is the story of the Republican Party in just one of those places.

This dissertation examines the development of the Republican Party in Georgia since 1940 through the lens of factional divisions and organizational development—better known as

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<sup>1</sup> John Nichols, “When the Republicans Really Were the Party of Lincoln,” *Nation*, July 2, 2014 at <https://www.thenation.com/article/when-republicans-really-were-party-lincoln/> (accessed December 1, 2015); “Politics in the South: The long goodbye,” *The Economist*, November 11, 2010 at <http://www.economist.com/node/17467202> (accessed December 1, 2015); Jeff Woods, “The Changing South,” *A Companion to Lyndon B. Johnson*, ed. Mitchell B. Lerner (Malden, MA and Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 17.

“party building.” Instead of a steady or inexorable Republican march to political dominance in Georgia and the South, this approach uncovers a more complicated, erratic process of partisan “dealignment” characterized by internecine warfare among competing factions and colorful personalities within the Republican Party of Georgia. Although factional conflict has often hindered the party’s ability to compete with the Democratic Party, a series of “hostile takeovers” over the years has ultimately succeeded in refashioning the Georgia GOP into the state’s sole vehicle for political conservatism. Focusing on Georgia, this dissertation charts the evolution of southern politics from the waning days of the Democratic Solid South to the first signs of a more competitive two-party system during the mid-twentieth century and, finally, to a new era of Republican dominance.

This dissertation contributes to the growing historiography of southern politics, offering a fresh take on the development of the Republican Party and the transformation of partisan politics in Georgia by reconciling multiple, divergent scholarly treatments of conservatism and Republicanism in the Georgia and the South. By exploring three interrelated aspects of political history—intraparty conflict among competing factions within the Republican Party of Georgia, the development and implementation of formal party-building initiatives at the national, state, and local levels, and the GOP’s eventual usurpation of the Democratic Party as partisan vehicle of choice for conservative activists and voters in Georgia—this dissertation rethinks the timeline of partisan realignment as well as the interrelated roles of race, rights, and political economy by incorporating accounts of electoral politics and party development since World War II.

Historians have generally devoted too little attention to the internal dynamics and organizational development of state parties like Georgia’s. Unless scholars explore the complex, incremental party-building process, then explanations for why, how, and when the Republican



Party became the state and region's dominant political vehicle will remain frustratingly incomplete.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, recent scholars have tended to downplay internal divisions within both the Republican Party and the modern conservative movement. Instead of focusing exclusively on interparty conflict, I argue that intraparty competition among various factions within the Georgia Republican Party played an essential role in transforming it from marginal "post-office" Republicanism to a more urbane, moderate alternative to rural-dominated Democratic Party of Eugene and Herman Talmadge and, finally, to an attractive, viable political organization for the state's conservative white majority. This process was neither steady nor one-directional. Depending upon the particular moment, factionalism either advanced or impeded the party's political fortunes. A series of conservative insurgencies have succeeded in pulling the party incrementally rightward over time, and this shift has proven essential to the party's long-term viability and success.

This dissertation stresses the importance of party organizations, leaders, campaigns, and electoral strategy. The Republican organizations in the South have evolved from provincial nonentities—tools of local nabobs and national party leaders alike—into modern, well-funded, technologically advanced consulting firms. They also serve as the backbone of the national party. The region's conservative ideological bent shapes many contemporary Republican policy priorities. In the end, the emergence and development of the Georgia Republican Party transformed the state's entire political system.

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<sup>2</sup> A notable exception to this general trend is M.V. Hood III, Quentin Kidd, and Irwin L. Morris, *The Rational Southerner: Black Mobilization, Republican Growth, and the Partisan Transformation of the American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). See also, Hood, Kidd, and Morris, "The Republican Party in the American South: From Radical Fringe to Conservative Mainstream," in *The Oxford Handbook of American Politics*, eds. Charles S. Bullock III and Mark J. Rozell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 330-354.

In his magisterial *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, V.O. Key, Jr. wrote, “Each southern state possesses characteristics that combine into a unique personality.”<sup>3</sup> More than three generations of historians, political scientists, and other scholars have now studied post-World War II southern politics. While state studies have proliferated, Georgia has not attracted the same level of attention other states like Florida and Texas have enjoyed. Several unpublished dissertations, various chapter-length treatments in edited collections, and sundry articles have appeared, but only two book-length studies dedicated specifically to the Republican Party of Georgia are available in print.<sup>4</sup> Like any state, Georgia’s political development is distinctive. Accepting this premise demands a thorough examination of the forces driving Republican Party growth in Georgia to understand better the historical context in which this long, uneven process unfolded. Doing so exposes the conditional nature of southern politics.

The pace of political modernization may appear plodding and unimpressive at first glance. Locked in a seemingly never-ending series of internal power struggles before and after World War II, Georgia Republicans typically ignored Democrats and, with the exception of presidential races, rarely contested general elections. So long as the Democratic Party remained a reliable bulwark against unwanted federal intrusion, defender of white supremacy, and proponent of conservative governance, few white southerners saw the need for an alternative political party. Overlapping and successive developments at the national, state, and local level—as well as within the Democratic Party—eventually cracked the so-called “Solid South,” fueled the growth

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<sup>3</sup> V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 205.

<sup>4</sup> For dissertations see, Lewis Paul Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” (master’s thesis, Emory University, 1948); Warren W. Heyman, “Development of a Two-Party System in Georgia?” (master’s thesis, University of Florida, 1985); Mindy J. Farmer, “Politics in Flux: The Georgians Behind the Republicanization of the South,” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2011); Robin Marie Morris, “Building the New Right: Georgia Women, Grassroots Organizing, and Party Realignment, 1950-80,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011). For recent book-length treatments see, Olive Hall Shadgett, *The Republican Party in Georgia: From Reconstruction through 1900* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1964) and Tommy Hills, *Red State Rising: Triumph of the Republican Party in Georgia* (Macon, GA: Stroud & Hall, 2009).

of the Republican Party, and catalyzed an overdue partisan realignment. In addition to the modernizing forces of urbanization, industrialization, and migration hastened by the New Deal, World War II, and the Cold War, the GOP profited from the national Democratic Party's gradual embrace of African-American civil rights. Coupled with reforms to the Democrats' national convention structure and presidential nominating process in the late 1930s and 1940s, which weakened the South's ability to restrain party policy, the region's political arrangement with the Democratic Party began to unravel. From the Dixiecrat Revolt in 1948 to the uproar over the possibility of a permanent Federal Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in the 1950s through the upheaval surrounding the postwar civil rights movement, conservative white Democrats in the South found themselves increasingly at odds with their national party. The most significant rupture between conservative, white southerners and more liberal Democrats emerged in the wake of the national party's embrace of landmark civil rights legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which struck at the heart of the Jim Crow South's social and political systems. Once implemented and enforced, federal legislation and court rulings—as well as sustained economic and industrial growth—undermined the structural mechanisms responsible for maintaining the Democratic Solid South: racial segregation, systematic disfranchisement, legislative malapportionment, undemocratic nominating schemes like the county unit system, and, finally, one-party political rule.<sup>5</sup>

In the end, a realignment of the entire southern political system along more national lines—with liberals supporting the Democratic Party and more conservative voters backing the

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<sup>5</sup> George Brown Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition in New South Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 70-72; Tindall, *The Disruption of the Solid South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1972), 29-38; Dewey W. Grantham, *The Life and Death of the Solid South: A Political History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 205-207. See also, Douglas Smith, "Into the Political Thicket: Reapportionment and the Rise of Suburban Power," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 263-285 and Smith, *On Democracy's Doorstep: The Inside Story of How the Supreme Court Brought "One Person, One Vote" to the United States* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015) for a broader analysis of constitutional law and electoral reform.

GOP—proved more elusive than most political observers had anticipated. Despite the almost overnight electoral success of Republican presidential nominees in the South beginning in the 1960s, a commensurate breakthrough down-ballot took much longer in Georgia. Outflanked on the right by shrewd Democrats controlling the levers of power from Congress, the governor’s mansion, General Assembly, and down to practically each of the state’s 159 county courthouses, Georgia’s political transformation and the rise of the Republican Party there took time.<sup>6</sup>

It is small wonder why southern politics has captivated scholars for more than a half century. Published in 1949, Key’s work remains the benchmark against which all subsequent efforts—fairly or unfairly—have been judged. Shaped by the interpretive framework pioneered by Charles and Mary Beard, Key highlighted class-conflict within a bifurcated southern electorate composed of the economic haves and have-nots between the late nineteenth century and the early post-World War II era. After the subsequent publication of C. Vann Woodward’s path-breaking *Origins of the New South* in 1951, which applied a similarly Beardian economic interpretation to southern history, scores of historians embraced the so-called Key-Woodward thesis. Key and Woodward, a political scientist and a historian, respectively, held out hope that a coalition of economic “have-nots” would coalesce across racial lines to produce a more politically, racially, and economically egalitarian South. That model proved extremely influential and durable, and it drove the study of southern political history for several decades.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike Woodward, who authored a regional history, Key included discrete chapters dedicated to the particular brand of politics practiced in the individual states. Taken together, he

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<sup>6</sup> James M. Glaser, *Race, Campaign Politics, and the Realignment in the South* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 178-185 (quote on 184).

<sup>7</sup> V.O. Key, Jr. *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952). For an analysis of the impact of the Beards and other Progressive historians see, Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

recognized several emerging regional trends. Increasing urbanization, industrialization, and economic diversification contained the “seeds of political change for the South.” Change, for Key, meant destroying four barriers to political modernization: widespread disfranchisement, malapportioned state legislatures, one-party political rule, and Jim Crow segregation. Although the Republican Party operated in only a handful of isolated geographic pockets, Key included a discussion of its past and its prospects in the region. Recognizing the geographical diversity of southern politics, he argued the composition and style of these Republican organizations varied from state to state. For a true, two-party system to emerge in the South, though, a viable Republican Party was essential.<sup>8</sup>

Developments in the decade or so since the publication of Key’s *Southern Politics* lent credence to the Key-Woodward thesis. Alexander Heard, a student and protégé of Key’s, concurred with his mentor that urbanization and industrialization served as the primary catalysts for nascent Republicanism in the South. He also identified the growing acceptance of presidential Republicanism in some of the region’s more dynamic cities, but he argued the GOP would become a viable political organization in the South only if conservative white southerners lost their current “avenue of political expression” within the Democratic Party. Thus, Heard recognized the possible transformative effects of increasing black political empowerment on the southern political system.<sup>9</sup>

Although few anticipated the actual nature much less the relatively rapid success of the postwar civil rights movement, the structural barriers to political modernization were either weakened (one-party politics and disfranchisement) or demolished (malapportionment and *de*

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<sup>8</sup> Key, *Southern Politics in State and Society*, 205, 673-674, 277. Published the same year as *Southern Politics*, political scientist Jasper Shannon offered similar conclusions. See, Jasper Berry Shannon, *Toward a New Politics in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1949).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Heard, *A Two Party South?* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 247.

*jure* segregation) during the 1960s. The conditions for a Key-Woodward style coalition of the have-nots may have appeared ripe, but biracial, class-conscious voting proved elusive. Bernard Cosman explored this phenomenon by applying behavioral analysis to understand recent voting patterns in the South. Focusing on the historic 1964 presidential election, Cosman noticed Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater actually polled strongest in the region's rural, Black Belt. This voting pattern deviated considerably from the urban and metropolitan Republicanism of Thomas Dewey, Dwight Eisenhower, and Richard Nixon. This particular voting pattern was understandable given the considerable barriers to black voting that remained throughout the Black Belt as well as the overall racial conservatism of that region's white voters. Nevertheless, Cosman argued Goldwater's campaign represented an outlier and did not necessarily indicate an impending realignment in the South. Similarly, national political commentator Robert Novak also considered the 1964 election a fluke as well as a disaster for the Republican Party's ideological right wing.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent elections, however, demonstrated the remarkable potency of racial and social issues in southern politics. A considerable portion of the region's white electorate registered its collective disapproval of national civil rights policy and a defense of states' rights during the 1966 and 1968 election cycles as the "silent majority" and "white backlash" were both on full display in Georgia and the Deep South. For Republican strategist Kevin Phillips, recent political developments in what he dubbed the "Sunbelt" region proved instructive for Republican office seekers. Applying a combination of historical and data analysis, Phillips found that the

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<sup>10</sup> Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1952); *Revolt of the Moderates* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956); *White and Black: The Test of a Nation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960); Donald S. Strong, "The Presidential Election in the South, 1952," *Journal of Politics* 17, no. 3 (August 1955), 343-389; Donald S. Strong, *Urban Republicanism in the South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Bureau of Public Administration, 1960); Bernard Cosman, "Presidential Republicanism in the South, 1960," *Journal of Politics* 24, no. 2 (May 1962): 303-322; Cosman, *Five States for Goldwater: Continuity and Change in Southern Presidential Voting Patterns* (Kingsport, TN: University of Alabama Press, 1966); Robert Novak, *The Agony of the G.O.P., 1964* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1965), 469.

increasingly vocal demands of African Americans for full civil rights as well as New Left aggressiveness had driven white Americans politically rightward. In the South, this meant conservative whites had begun to abandon the Democratic Party, at least at the presidential level, for more conservative alternatives. If the GOP could stoke the racial fears of white Americans as well as their general antipathy to Great Society liberalism, Republican candidates stood to benefit. Phillips, then, enunciated one of the earliest versions of what would become known as the Republican “southern strategy,” which figured prominently in succeeding historical works.<sup>11</sup>

Historians had remained mostly silent on the transformations rocking the southern political system during the 1950s and 1960s. That began to change by the late 1960s and 1970s. Unlike earlier authors who, like Key, held out hope for a more progressive electorate, these later scholars adopted a decidedly less optimistic tone. Historian Numan V. Bartley published one of the earliest revisionist works, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, in 1970. Utilizing correlations, regressions, and other tools of statistical analysis to assess partisan activity in Georgia between 1948 and 1968, Bartley found little evidence to suggest the “realization of the old Populist dream of a fusion of the have-nots solidified behind a program of economic and social reform.” Unlike Key, he foresaw not an emergent progressive Georgia (or South) based on biracial, class-based voting but, rather, a continuation of the status quo despite the rise of two-party competition. “[T]hat Georgia politics will not become substantially more conservative than it has been in the past,” was the only succor Bartley could offer hopeful liberals. Absent unforeseen circumstances,

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<sup>11</sup> For the most recent analyses of the 1966 Georgia gubernatorial election see, Tim S.R. Boyd, *Georgia Democrats, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Shaping of the New South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Tim Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia and the Ambiguity of the White Backlash,” *Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 2 (May 2009): 305-340; Billy Burton Hathorn, “The Frustrations of Opportunity: Georgia Republicans and the Election of 1966,” *Atlanta History* 31 (Winter 1987-88): 37-52; Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969).

the white backlash appeared to have won out for the foreseeable future. Racial conservatism—not rational, economic self-interest—defined southern politics during the late 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

Race-based interpretations continued to proliferate throughout the decade. Writing alongside Hugh D. Graham, Bartley flatly rejected the Key-Woodward thesis in 1975's *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*. The African-American civil rights movement and ensuing federal legislation had triggered a white backlash against the national Democratic Party. Employing quantitative methods popularized by practitioners of the “New Political History,” Bartley and Graham argued voter registration, mobilization, and turnout were essential to the success of the Republican “southern strategy.” Meanwhile, they recognized lower-class white voters had bolted the Democratic Party to cast their ballots for the most racially and culturally conservative option. These lower-income, white southerners had turned Key’s prediction on its head by aligning themselves not with poor and marginalized blacks but with affluent Republicans residing in the region’s more dynamic urban and suburban enclaves.<sup>13</sup>

Although the “backlash thesis” dominated both scholarly and popular discourse, not everyone concurred with its narrative of conservative dominance via racial enmity. Among the more upbeat contributions came from Jack Bass and Walter DeVries whose 1976 *The Transformation of Southern Politics* diverged from the prevailing backlash theme. The pair explored each state’s political system and identified the declining salience of overt racism as the

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<sup>12</sup> Numan V. Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace: Political Tendencies in Georgia, 1948-1968* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 103, 109, 35-56; Joseph L. Bernd, “Georgia: Static and Dynamic,” in William C. Havard, ed. *The Changing Politics of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 363.

<sup>13</sup> Numan V. Bartley and Hugh D. Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 188; Harold W. Stanley, *Voter Mobilization and the Politics of Race: The South and Universal Suffrage, 1952-1989* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 44-55. For a discussion of the “New Political History” see, Julian E. Zelizer, *Governing America: The Revival of Political History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1-8. Also published in 1975, political scientist Louis Seagull stressed the importance of middle- and upper-income voters to Republican Party development. A throwback to the findings of Heard, Strong, Lubell, and Cosman, Seagull’s conclusions anticipated the later work of class-based, suburban-centric historians (discussed below). See, Louis Seagull, *Southern Republicanism* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).



most important development in contemporary southern politics. They also highlighted the recent campaigns of so-called “New South” governors like Georgia’s Jimmy Carter who had declined to pander to racial conservatives once in office. This new breed of southern politician, they argued, had succeeded in moving the region in a relatively more progressive direction. Increased African-American participation had also produced a new generation of southern black leaders who promised to reshape southern politics still further.<sup>14</sup>

Ronald Reagan’s smashing victory over incumbent Jimmy Carter in 1980 appeared to portend yet another new era in southern politics, but political scientist Alexander P. Lamis suggested Democrats enjoyed an enduring viability rooted in that party’s diverse constituency. While conceding the importance of the southern strategy and white backlash to Republican victories in the South, Lamis argued neither had destroyed or even dislodged the Democratic Party from its perch atop southern politics. Southern Democrats had staved off Republican fusillades by cobbling together an unlikely coalition of rural whites and African Americans as the prominence of overtly racial issues continued to subside. Maintaining this paradoxical voting bloc represented the cornerstone of the Democratic Party’s electoral strategy in Georgia during the 1970s and 1980s. By distancing themselves from an increasingly unpopular national party and burnishing their commitment to “traditional” values and fiscal responsibility, Georgia Democrats continued to dominate at the polls. Perhaps Lamis erred by placing too much faith in the durability of the Democrats’ vaunted, but fragile, biracial coalition. Primarily a product of electoral happenstance, this “coalition” never survived beyond Election Day and collapsed when less-than-ideal Democrat candidates confronted formidable Republican opposition. Ultimately,

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<sup>14</sup> Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). See also, Randy Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections: The New South Gubernatorial Campaigns of 1970 and the Changing Politics of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2007).

Georgia's "night-and-day" coalition was premised on a particular brand of tight-roping Democrat moderate enough to appeal to blacks but still conservative enough not to alienate whites.<sup>15</sup>

Less optimistic were a trio of works published between 1987 and 2002 by political scientists Earl and Merle Black. First, *Politics and Society in the South* surveyed the structural changes in the region's political economy that were reshaping the southern political landscape. Gone were Key's four barriers to political modernization, and the region's pace of economic growth far outstripped the national average. Nevertheless, conservatism still defined the South's political culture. They looked to the burgeoning middle class whose socioeconomic values remained closely aligned with the priorities of the old conservative Democratic order. "A politics constructed around the problems and aspirations of have-littles and have-nots," the Blacks concluded, "can make little headway in such a climate."<sup>16</sup> Next, *The Vital South* examined the central role the region had increasingly played in presidential elections since 1964. The authors found "prejudicial feelings and conflicts of interest between whites and blacks can still be exploited in elections, especially when the appeal can be packaged in symbols or issues that have no explicit connection with race." GOP presidential candidates from Richard Nixon to George H.W. Bush had campaigned on platforms emphasizing lower taxes, stricter penalties for convicted criminals, a stronger national defense, and a less generous welfare state in order to attract conservative white southerners and win the White House.<sup>17</sup> Their conclusions echoed

Thomas and Mary Edsall's *Chain Reaction*. Published in 1991, the Edsalls surveyed national

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<sup>15</sup> Wayne Greenhaw, *Elephants in the Cottonfields: Ronald Reagan and the New Republican South* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1982); Alexander P. Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 2<sup>nd</sup> expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University, 1988 [1984]), 93-94.

<sup>16</sup> Earl Black and Merle Black, *Politics and Society in the South* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), 71-72; 314-315. The Blacks' conclusions regarding the importance of socioeconomic values and views of government were echoed that same year in Stanley's *Voter Mobilization and the Politics of Race*.

<sup>17</sup> Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Vital South: How Presidents Are Elected* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 7.

rather than regional trends and argued the Democratic Party had forfeited the political mainstream by embracing higher taxes and expanded social rights for minority groups. Expanding the notion of the “white backlash” in politics to include economics, the Edsalls suggested the specter of “race-laden and raced-driven conflicts...structure[d] much of the nation’s politics” and sparked a “chain reaction” forcing a political realignment at the presidential level, which redounded to the benefit of the Republican Party during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>18</sup> *The Politics of Rage*—Dan T. Carter’s biography of Alabama governor George Wallace—also embraced this interpretation.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, Earl and Merle Black explained the relatively slow pace of Republican growth at the congressional level in *The Rise of the Southern Republicans*. Drawing on previous scholars’ spadework, the Blacks determined southern Democrats first “exploited their overwhelming advantages in grassroots white Democracy, congressional incumbency, and conservative ideology to suffocate most electoral challenges from southern Republicans” and subsequently “contain[ed] southern Republicans through the creation of majority biracial coalitions.” Republican breakthrough occurred only when “President Reagan significantly expanded grassroots southern Republicanism by realigning white conservatives and neutralizing white moderates.” These processes later bore fruit in the 1990s when the GOP began ousting congressional Democrats as white southerners identified increasingly as Republican partisans<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), x, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995). See also, Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1996). For a recent study of the role racial code words and symbolism have played in recent American politics see, Ian Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Earl and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 38-39. See also, James Glaser, *Race, Campaign Politics, and the Realignment in the South* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996). Glaser argued somewhat counterintuitively that the “white backlash” actually aided

Despite these successes, an unconvinced Alexander Lamis predicted impending difficulties for ascendant GOP in *Southern Politics in the 1990s*. Conditions varied state by state, but Republican newcomers like the insurgent Christian Right had brought not only much needed energy and enthusiasm but increased internal strife. “Everywhere in Dixie the advancing Republican Party is divided between adherents who are motivated primarily by economic conservatism and those who are more interested in an array of conservative social and cultural issues,” observed Lamis. The Georgia Republican Party confronted this intraparty pressure—just another in a long line of insurgencies the party had weathered in its long history.<sup>21</sup>

A new coterie of scholars has launched a full-scale assault on the backlash thesis. Viewing it as reductive and outmoded, these historians have sought to integrate discussions of southern politics into broader narratives of post-World War II American history. Emphasizing the significance of economic development and residential patterns in nurturing the modern Republican Party and hastening the demise of the Solid South, this new historiographical trend has not dismissed the importance of race so much as it has isolated it from the economic factors and regional continuity the authors emphasize. In so doing, these historians have attempted to supplant the backlash narrative by emphasizing so-called “colorblind” appeals offered by conservatives in the region.<sup>22</sup> Setting their stories of partisan realignment in the suburban

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the Democratic Party in the South since Democrats could mobilize African-American voters and defeat Republicans who often relied on clumsy or insensitive racial appeals likely to anger blacks and put off some white voters as well.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander P. Lamis, ed. *Southern Politics in the 1990s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), xi-xii, 382, 381, 383-390. For more on the Religious Right see, Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds. *God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995); Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds. *God at the Grass Roots, 1996: The Christian Right in the American Elections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997); Charles S. Bullock III and Mark C. Smith, “The Religious Right and Electoral Politics in the South,” in *Politics and Religion in the White South*, ed. Glenn Feldman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005): 215-230; Daniel K. Williams, “Voting for God and the GOP: The Role of Evangelical Religion in the Emergence of the Republican South,” in *Painting Dixie Red: When, Where, Why, and How the South Became Republican*, ed. Glenn Feldman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011): 31-37.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, eds. *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (New York: Oxford University 2009), 4. See also, Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

communities of the upwardly mobile Sunbelt South, they contend these white residents prized pragmatism and rejected crude appeals to racial fear.<sup>23</sup> Examining postwar politics in Atlanta, Charlotte, and Richmond, Matthew D. Lassiter has argued, “The suburban strategies developed in the Sunbelt South, not a Southern Strategy inspired by the Deep South and orchestrated by the White House, provided the blueprint for the transformation of regional politics and the parallel reconfiguration of national politics.” According to Lassiter, the backlash thesis has failed to recognize the broader, long-term “convergence of southern and national politics around the suburban ethos of middle-class entitlement.” White suburbanites, he concluded, successfully blended racial moderation with pro-business, anti-tax aspects of economic conservatism while simultaneously rejecting the naked “race-baiting politics of the Black Belt.” Over time, these southerners began casting their votes primarily to protect their own economic self-interest and not white supremacy *per se*, and the GOP proved a more “natural” fit for such conservatives. Historians Kevin Kruse, Joseph Crespino, and Tim Boyd have all advanced similar arguments with respect to other southern states and communities.<sup>24</sup> The interpretative appeal of a colorblind “suburban strategy” has proven considerable, and counter-revisionist scholars have provided nuance to an ongoing debate over the origins of the Republican Party in the South.<sup>25</sup>

The suburban strategy, however, is less persuasive and novel than it appears at first glance. Several drawbacks limit its utility. First, the argument demonstrated effectively the

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<sup>23</sup> For a recent synthesis of Sunbelt-oriented political scholarship see, Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 6, 4, 231; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 10. See also, Matthew D. Lassiter, “Big Government and Family Values: Political Culture in the Metropolitan Sunbelt,” in *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region*, eds. Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 82-109; Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*; Tim Boyd, “A Suburban Story: The Rise of Republicanism in Postwar Georgia, 1948-1980,” in *Painting Dixie Red*, 79-98.

<sup>25</sup> See, Matthew J. Streb, *The New Electoral Politics of Race* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2002); David Lublin, *The Republican South: Democratization and Partisan Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Byron E. Shafer and Richard Johnston, *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

origins of the conservative movement in the affluent communities of the Sunbelt South. These communities had grown rapidly in population, wealth, and importance throughout the post-World War II era, but this trend had caught the eye of Samuel Lubell, Donald Strong, Numan Bartley and others beginning in the 1950s. Extended beyond suburban voting precincts, however, the thesis grows less compelling. The GOP's suburban support base developed in those decades and has persisted, but the path to political power in the South, however, lay in uniting suburban conservatives with likeminded voters residing in small towns and rural communities in states like Georgia. Recent scholars who blamed the slow pace of Republican growth in the South on a misguided application of a racial politics fail to recognize the inconvenient truth that the GOP's suburban base alone was simply too small to guarantee victory.

None of these scholars deny the importance of race in fueling the rise of the Republican Party in the South, and political scientist Matthew J. Streb has reiterated, "Though race may not seem as important as it once was in American politics, it remains a crucial aspect of American society—one that cannot be ignored."<sup>26</sup> At the same time, proponents of the suburban strategy maintain strategic accommodation and "colorblind" politics mobilized conservatives in the region. These scholars seem to be speaking out of both sides of their mouth on the role of race in southern politics. They admit freely the region's long and troubled legacy of racial separation, demagoguery, and violence. At a time, when overt racism is generally shunned by respectable politicians, the southern electorate has grown increasingly polarized along racial lines. Democratic support among blacks reaches consistently above 90 percent while Republicans are approaching similarly high levels of support among the region's white voters—especially men.

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<sup>26</sup> Streb, *The New Electoral Politics of Race*, 2-3.

The suburban strategy offers few explanations for this seemingly counterintuitive phenomenon.<sup>27</sup>

In the final calculus, colorblind economic programs may not seem as abhorrent as traditional race-based appeals, but they are by no means race neutral in their outcomes.<sup>28</sup>

Both the modern conservative movement and the transformation of southern politics remain far too complex for a single explanation to suffice. Historians must consider not only structural explanations like economic growth and suburbanization but also the consequential “white backlash” and “southern strategy.” Several leading scholars have recognized this and have advocated for a more inclusive, broad-based approach to political history. Kim Phillips-Fein has declared the scholarship to be “at a crossroads.” Historian Darren Dochuk has noticed a recent trend toward “a heightened appreciation of how longstanding local and regional political battles over issues of race, space, and place galvanized a national [conservative] movement.”<sup>29</sup> Matthew Lassiter, too, has identified two critical weaknesses endemic in the historiography of modern conservatism. First, recent historians of conservatism may well have “overstated the case for a rightward shift in American politics by focusing too narrowly on partisan narratives and

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<sup>27</sup> Two historians, Dan Carter and Robert Norrell, have issued the most critical indictments. Carter has refused to accept that “economic motivation can somehow be neatly excised from racial as well as other non-quantifiable factors.” Norrell has expressed his own succinct critique, “At some level, that suburban thesis about the roots of modern conservatism is a distinction without a difference.” He continued, “Its spatial accounting of political action was still at bottom a racial explanation, a story of whites acting to preserve their advantage over blacks.” See, Dan T. Carter, “Is There Still a South? And Does It Matter?” *Dissent* 54, no. 3 (Summer 2007), 92 and Robert J. Norrell, “Modern Conservatism and the Consequences of Its Ideas,” *Review in American History* 36, no. 3 (September 2008), 459.

<sup>28</sup> Black and Black, *Politics and Society in the South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 196, 214-215, 213. For additional studies of race and welfare politics see, Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Robert C. Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Anne-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> Kim Phillips-Fein, “Conservatism: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (December 2011), 723; Darren Dochuk, “Revival on the Right: Making Sense of the Conservative Movement in Post-World War II American History,” *History Compass* 4, no. 5 (2006): 975.

specific election cycles.” Instead, future historians should strive to integrate “the more complex dynamics of political culture, political economy, and public policy.”<sup>30</sup> Second, scholars have taken pains to identify and scrutinize “the contradictions and fragmentation of liberalism” while simultaneously “[smoothing] over similar weaknesses and fissures within conservatism.” In the end, the Republican conquest of Georgia or the South was never inevitable. Neither economic development nor the distaste for liberal policies spelled imminent doom for southern Democrats. The diversity of political opinion within the Republican Party of Georgia should remind scholars and casual observers alike that the political right was defined not by unanimity but discord. Political modernization was no steady, inexorable march. It was a protracted, uneven process.

After an abbreviated discussion of the intraparty dynamics within the Georgia Republican Party from Reconstruction and the World War II, Chapter Two begins in earnest during the 1940 presidential campaign and concludes following the historic 1948 election. Unfortunately for Georgia Republicans, political impotence during this period failed to beget unity as disagreements over the party’s purpose, membership, and messaging fueled factional competition within the state party. During the 1940 presidential election, the “lily-white” faction coalesced around Senator Robert A. Taft and while the state’s “black and tan” group rallied to political dark horse Wendell Willkie. Those two factions proved strikingly cohesive and both groups reemerged during the 1944 and 1948 election cycles. Conservative party regulars Clint Hager of Atlanta and Roy Foster of Wadley led the lily-white faction, which clashed with the insurgent reformers who supported the more moderate Thomas Dewey over doctrinaire

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<sup>30</sup> Matthew D. Lassiter, “Political History beyond the Red-Blue Divide,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (December 2011), 760. Another strain of historical analysis questions the potency, appeal, and durability of both the Republican Party and its contemporary brand of conservatism in the United States as well as the South. See, for example, David T. Courtwright, *No Right Turn: Conservatism in Liberal America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Bob Moser, *Blue Dixie: Awakening the South’s Democratic Majority* (New York: Times Books, 2008); Thomas F. Schaller, *The Stronghold: How Republicans Captured Congress but Surrendered the White House* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).



conservative Republicans. Led by Wilson Williams of Woodbury, W.R. Tucker of Dawsonville, and Harry Sommers of Atlanta, the “black and tan” faction brought together modernizers of both races and challenged the “lily-whites” for control. By 1944, these rival groups were identified by their respective chairmen with the conservative “lily-white” faction known as the “Foster faction” while the “black and tans” were referred to as the “Tucker faction.” By aligning itself with the GOP’s Eastern Establishment, the “Tucker faction” outmaneuvered the more conservative “Foster faction” in each successive election. Once in control of the state party apparatus, Tucker Republicans sought to nominate the most electable Republican presidential candidate, forge a biracial electoral coalition, and establish a more competitive two-party system in Georgia.

Intraparty competition in 1940s forged what came to be known as the “Atlanta faction” of the Georgia Republican Party. The 1950s and early 1960s marked this group’s “golden age.”<sup>31</sup> Chapter Three examines the Tucker faction’s final victory over its Foster faction rivals at the 1952 Republican National Convention, and the Atlanta-led party’s subsequent attempts to capitalize on President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s two terms in the White House. Mindful of the three consecutive defeats it had suffered at the hands of the Tucker faction, the Foster Republicans conducted a vigorous, perhaps legally dubious, campaign to ensure its Republican National Convention delegation was pledged to Senator Robert Taft. After appealing its case all the way to the convention floor, the Tucker faction triumphed ensuring Eisenhower’s first-ballot nomination and its dominance within the state party. Peace within the party proved fleeting as the Tucker faction fractured over patronage and personal prestige, and a coterie of Atlanta-based

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<sup>31</sup> The “Atlanta faction” moniker is somewhat misleading since it included several members who hailed from beyond the Atlanta metropolitan area. Similarly, the conservative faction supplanted by the moderate Atlantans included several residents of the capital city. The Atlanta faction’s name, therefore, likely reflected more the city’s dynamic reputation than its geographic boundaries. In the end, members of the so-called Republican establishment were rarely racial liberals during these years; rather, promoting an environment where business could thrive ranked far above maintaining absolute segregation. This prompted the Georgia Republican Party to embrace positions opposing massive resistance legislation and rhetoric in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

moderates gained control of the party. Additionally, the Republican Party embraced bold party-building initiatives designed to cultivate grassroots GOP support among the young, metropolitan professional class. Ultimately, the geographically concentrated, politically moderate Atlanta faction achieved slow, steady growth, but it failed to break the Democratic Party's stranglehold on political power in the state. Electoral disappointment, coupled with the dubious political appeal of "Modern Republicanism" beyond metropolitan Atlanta, left the state's establishment Republicans susceptible to challenges from the party's aggrieved right wing, which would reemerge with a vengeance in the early 1960s.

Chapter Four explores the critical half decade between 1962 and 1967 that witnessed the Atlanta faction's downfall and the rise of "movement conservatives" within the upper echelons of the Georgia Republican Party. Viewed in isolation, Senator Barry Goldwater's historic 1964 presidential campaign appears to have succeeded in Georgia based solely on his opposition to the Civil Rights Act. Although it is difficult to overstate the importance of Goldwater's "no" vote, the Arizona Republican benefited from a lengthy grassroots campaign to capture and reorganize Republican organizations in the South. Establishment Republicans at both the state and national levels underestimated not only Goldwater's political appeal but also the efficacy of his delegate-hunting operation.<sup>32</sup> The Atlanta faction's high regard in national party circles proved no match for the conservative insurgency as Georgia Republicans elected Joseph Tribble, Roscoe Pickett, Jr., and Marilu Smith—Goldwater supporters all—to the GOP executive committee in May 1964. The national Goldwater campaign and the Georgia Republican Party's new conservative leadership alienated African-American and liberal Republicans, but the Arizona senator carried

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<sup>32</sup> According to an early 1963 campaign memo, Nelson Rockefeller adviser Ray Humphrey's referred to the majority of Georgia Republicans as "light-weights." The campaign would come to regret this misreading as it scrambled, unsuccessfully, "to broaden the base beyond just Bob Snodgrass." See, George L. Hinman, Memo Re: Ray Humphreys, [February 1963] and George L. Hinman, Memorandum for Files, March 8, 1963 both in George Hinman Files, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

the state in general election thanks to conservative white voters who bucked their national party. Voters in the Third Congressional District also elected Howard H. (Bo) Callaway in 1964. Georgia's first Republican member of Congress since Reconstruction, Callaway had joined the Republican Party in the early 1960s. Callaway squandered a golden opportunity in addition to millions of dollars donated by an expansive network of Republican supporters after a lackluster gubernatorial campaign in 1966. Callaway's loss raised questions regarding the GOP's electoral base in Georgia while also triggering a new wave of factional strife within the state party.

Bo Callaway remained the most popular and influential figure in the Georgia Republican Party in spite of his failed gubernatorial campaign. Neither Callaway nor his brand of Republicanism, though, were without critics. The wide-open 1968 Republican presidential nomination contest exposed ideological as well as strategic differences within the party. This is the subject of Chapter Five, which spans from 1968 to 1974. Members of the erstwhile Atlanta faction initially backed Michigan governor George Romney before shifting their support to New York governor Nelson Rockefeller. The real race for Georgia's delegates, however, emerged between Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Based in suburban DeKalb County, the "Georgians for Ronald Reagan Committee" sought to draft the first-term California governor into a White House bid. Nixon, meanwhile, enjoyed Callaway's support. The feud between Callaway backers and those Georgia Republicans more interested in ideological purity than electability persisted well beyond 1968. Indeed, each statewide election between 1968 and 1974 underscored the diversity of opinion, ideology, and style that flourished within the Georgia Republican Party. Factional strife, though, hobbled a number of ambitious party-building initiatives and the Watergate scandal robbed Georgia Republicans of their hard-fought gains.

Chapter Six deviates from the traditional timeline of the Georgia Republican Party's "Dark Years." Instead of restricting the analysis to the 1970s, I extend this period of relative electoral futility up to 1986. In addition to Watergate, the rapid ascent of Jimmy Carter in national Democratic politics dampened Republican prospects in Georgia.<sup>33</sup> Some observers have suggested the party's fortunes began to improve as early as 1978 when Newt Gingrich won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Others have identified the "Reagan Revolution" and Mack Mattingly's upset victory over Senator Herman Talmadge in 1980 as the turning point for the Georgia Republican Party. Digging beneath the surface, however, suggests an alternative interpretation. Gingrich had lost two previous campaigns, and his victory came in a Republican-friendly, off-year election for an open seat. The Mattingly-Talmadge contest represented less of a victory for a reinvigorated Georgia GOP than the logical outcome for a former segregationist Democrat whose personal travails and unpopularity with black voters doomed his reelection prospects. Ronald Reagan's success in the South has distracted historians from the tremendous modernization effort undertaken by Georgia Republicans beginning in the mid-1970s.<sup>34</sup> A new generation of mostly suburban Republicans committed themselves to revitalizing the moribund state party apparatus. Led by state legislators Paul Coverdell and Bob Irvin as well as ambitious Republican activists like Newt Gingrich and Mack Mattingly, this group set about addressing the party's myriad organizational and financial weaknesses. Accelerated candidate recruitment,

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<sup>33</sup> Some historians have also employed this term when describing Georgia Republican politics. See, for example, Johnson, "The Georgia Republican Party"; Hills, *Red State Rising*; Farmer, "Politics in Flux."

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 26: "Reagan's presidency built the firmest grassroots base of Republican partisans ever to appear in the region. Presidential Republicanism set the state for competitive party politics." The Georgia Republican Party's experience is instructive here. Presidential Republicanism was firmly established in metropolitan and suburban precincts by the 1950s and statewide by the 1960s, but the party remained largely ineffectual down ticket. While no doubt important, the Blacks' emphasis on national political trends and realigning elections discounts the critical importance and long-term consequences of local- and state-level party building efforts in states like Georgia.

targeted campaigning, fundraising programs, and other party-building initiatives laid the foundation for future Republican breakthroughs in Georgia.

Chapter Seven examines a pivotal period Georgia Republican politics beginning shortly before the 1988 presidential election and ending with the historic 2002 midterms that signaled the emergence of a true, two-party political system in the state. A Republican breakthrough down-ballot did not seem readily apparent in 1988 when the upstart Christian Right, backed by ideological conservatives wary of Vice President George Bush and the GOP establishment, clashed with the mainstream Republican establishment at the party's state convention in Albany. As in 1964, the party's incumbent leadership viewed these new socially conservative insurgents warily. Party leaders and political observers alike warned the Christian right threatened the GOP's image and electoral viability—a sentiment that perhaps confirms the old paradox that yesterday's radicals (or reactionaries) often become today's establishment. Although the party suffered a series of narrow losses in high-profile, statewide elections between 1990 and 1998, the Christian Right eventually proved an electoral boon for the Georgia GOP. Ultimately, the Georgia Republican Party utilized its superior political organization to capitalize on suburban and exurban population growth and the influx of Christian conservatives to fundamentally reshape the electorate and party. After ousting Democratic incumbent Roy Barnes in 2002, Sonny Perdue became the first Republican elected governor since Rufus Bullock in 1868. His victory and subsequent developments have precipitated the rapid decline of Georgia Democrats and the concomitant rise of the Republicans.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Controversial redistricting after the 1980 and 1990 proved a boon for African-American Democrats but detrimental to their white colleagues. Majority-minority districts increased the likelihood of African-American elected officials, but Republicans, too, benefited considerably. See, David T. Canon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation: The Unintended Consequences of Black Majority Districts* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Charles S. Bullock III, *Redistricting: The Most Political Activity in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

After spending more over a century wandering the wilderness, the Georgia Republican Party has finally emerged as the state's dominant political party. Electoral success, however, has proven unable to halt ongoing factionalism within the party. The pressures of governing have exacerbated old rivalries while spawning new ones. Crafting public policy that passes constitutional muster, fits within budgetary restrictions, and enjoys a reasonable level of popular support among the electorate has compelled Republican leaders to identify core priorities and broker compromises. Bound by the inherent limitations of political power, Georgia Republicans find themselves at odds not only over preferred presidential candidates but also over more mundane, but no less consequential issues, such as economic growth, transportation, education, and taxes. Many of these squabbles, which now play out at the ballot box rather than party conventions and state central committee meetings, stem from the ideological gulfs that have long divided Georgia Republicans. These divisions and disagreements remain more salient than ever as they will continue to inform and influence public policy so long as Republicans remain the dominant political party in Georgia.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE REPUBLICAN PARTIES OF GEORGIA, 1940-1948

Reflecting on the prevailing state of affairs within the Republican Party of Georgia in 1939, Atlanta Republican Lee Nixon confided to David Ingalls, a close friend and advisor to Ohio senator and leading conservative luminary Robert A. Taft, “[T]he situation is rotten.” Nixon continued, “I suppose it is too much to expect that a delegation will ever be sent from this State to a National Convention uncontested.” Looking ahead to the 1940 presidential campaign, he surmised glumly, “[F]rom what I have seen and heard I think this is no escape from the usual disgraceful contests.”<sup>1</sup> Situated deep in the Democratic Solid South, Georgia’s electoral votes would certainly elude whomever the Republican Party nominated in 1940. Atlanta attorney and longtime Republican H.H. Turner confided to Senator Taft, “Georgia is not highly important in the Republican Party except as its delegates help to nominate a candidate.”<sup>2</sup> DeWitt Cole, a Marietta resident whose staunchly Republican family relocated from New York to Georgia after the Civil War, affirmed Turner’s assessment. “Every four years at the nomination of a President,” he telegraphed a confidante, “money is sent out to the Southern States” in the form of bribes and payoff to secure support from the region’s delegates.”<sup>3</sup> This quadrennial ritual,

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Nixon to [David] Ingalls, October 6, 1939 in Political File, 1924-1953, Box 124, Folder 1, Robert A. Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>2</sup> H.H. Turner to Robert A. Taft, December 27, 1939 in Political File, Box 124, Folder 1, Taft Papers. Turner was an avowed member of the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia. In a subsequent letter to Taft describing how the conservative Ohio senator might capture the political allegiance of the South, Turner offered, “[S]ecret organizations have heretofore operated successfully in the South—notably the K.K.K., which even spread over the nation. I helped to write the ritual of the Klan, helped to get it going. I would think that one able organized would be enough to get the whole South lined up in such a manner as to control the 1944 Delegations [sic].” See, H.H. Turner to Robert A. Taft, November 11, 1940 in Political File, Box 124, Folder 2, Taft Papers.

<sup>3</sup> DeWitt C. Cole, undated [1940?] telegram in Box 1, Folder 13, Cole Papers on the Cobb County (GA) Republican Party, 1913-1966, Kennesaw State University Archives, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA; Thomas Allan

Cole observed, “stirred up bitter resentments” among party members. Nowhere was that “bitter resentment” more apparent and destructive than in Georgia.

Since the Republican Party of Georgia rarely contested general elections between Reconstruction and World War II, the party lacked an external foe to rally against. As a result, the party experienced almost perpetual strife among warring factions vying for dominance and control over its chief responsibilities—selecting national convention delegations, electing the members of the state central committee who governed party activity within Georgia, and assisting the national Republican organization in identifying individuals to fill appointed offices such local postmasters, U.S. district attorneys, federal judges, collectors of revenue and customs, and federal marshals. Several enterprising Georgia Republicans had aspired to the mantle of state party leadership over the years. In spite of differences in age, race, class, or experience level, their goals appeared strikingly similar—enhance the GOP’s reputation, rid the state party of corruption, and boost the Republican Party’s electoral prospects in Georgia. These internal improvement efforts, well-intentioned or not, usually failed as the state party organization remained divided, and the battle for control was continually renewed.

The power struggle stemming from the raucous 1940 Republican National Convention proved to be the beginning of a twelve-year, intraparty war among Georgia Republicans. That year’s Republican presidential contest witnessed the emergence of Ohio senator Robert A. Taft and New York district attorney (later governor) Thomas E. Dewey as major political figures with devoted followings. Meanwhile in Georgia, the petty politics that had consumed the various factions within state party assumed national significance by 1940 as “Old Guard” conservatives did battle with the more moderate adherents of what would become known as “Modern



Republicanism” in the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>4</sup> The question of which Republican faction reigned supreme in Georgia would not be settled until General Dwight D. Eisenhower finally vanquished “Mr. Republican” Robert Taft in 1952, but the cast of characters was set, battle lines drawn, and a decades-long struggle for the soul the Republican Party in Georgia began in 1940. Wendell Willkie and the Republicans failed to carry Georgia against the revered Roosevelt, but his nomination fight and subsequent campaign helped develop a modern, professional party better prepared than ever to capitalize on the rapid socioeconomic and demographic shifts already reshaping the politics of the state, region, and nation.<sup>5</sup>

If the central purpose of a political party is to organize people, resources, and ideas to elect candidates, enact public policy, and govern for a given period of time, then the Republican Party of Georgia had barely met that minimum standard during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That the state’s handful of delegates has helped nominate the GOP’s presidential ticket has been relatively well documented for a state with no history of majority electoral allegiance to the Republican Party until 1964. For most of its existence, the Georgia Republican Party has limped along—underdeveloped organizationally and impotent politically. Surveying the state of the Republican Party in the South near the midway point of the twentieth century, V.O. Key, Jr. painted an extremely unflattering picture in his magisterial *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. “It scarcely deserves the name of party,” Key noted, “It wavers somewhat between an esoteric cult on the order of a lodge and a conspiracy for plunder in accord with the accepted customs of our politics.”<sup>6</sup> According to Key, only in North Carolina,

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<sup>4</sup> For a thoughtful, if often overlooked, analysis of Republican factionalism during the 1940s see, Conrad Joyner, *The Republican Dilemma: Conservatism or Progressivism* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963).

<sup>5</sup> Mindy J. Farmer, “Politics in Flux: The Georgians Behind the Republicanization of the South,” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2011) embodies this impulse. For similar a similar periodization regarding party development see, Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 79-97.

<sup>6</sup> V.O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 277.

Tennessee, and Virginia—where Republican adherents drew on historic ties to the Union sentiment during the Civil War—did the GOP meet his definition of a political party. With the exception of a handful of elected officials hailing from the North Georgia mountain counties of Fannin, Gilmer, and Pickens, most state Republican did not concern themselves with the business of campaigns or elections. “Their occupation is not with voters,” Key recognized, “but with maneuvers to gain and keep control of state party machinery.” It required “a high order of skill in palace politics” to maintain power and thwart rivals who desired the access to national party figures and influence over the federal patronage that trickled south from Republican-controlled White Houses.<sup>7</sup>

From the end of Reconstruction through World War II, intraparty competition within the Georgia GOP featured factions dubbed “Lily-Whites” and “Black and Tans”—monikers reflecting not only their respective racial composition but also their general outlook on race and civil rights. In addition to a well-earned reputation for venality and graft, internecine conflict among squabbling Republican factions degenerated frequently into open political warfare in Georgia. As a result, the Georgia Republican Party underwent several attempts to improve its appalling public image during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Norcross, the former Republican mayor of Atlanta, initiated one of the earliest efforts in 1880. Hoping to rehabilitate the party’s reputation and electoral prospects, Norcross formed a new, white-dominated Republican organization since the Georgia GOP’s white membership had dwindled drastically since the forced political exile of Republican governor Rufus Bullock in 1871 and the subsequent “redemption” of state government by Democrats the following year.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 292, 281; “Charles William Kiker,” *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1933-1935-1937* (Atlanta: n.p, n.d), 107. For a thorough treatment of Appalachian Republicanism see, Gordon B. McKinney, *Southern Mountain Republicans, 1865-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Olive Hall Shadgett, “A History of the Republican Party in Georgia,” *Georgia Review* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1953), 435-436.

Norcross's effort flopped spectacularly when the remaining white, Republican officeholders refused to join his "lily-white," opting to remain in and reestablish control over the entire regular party. Despite Norcross's failure, the notion that the Georgia Republican Party could not survive as a "whites-only" organization remained pervasive.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequent efforts began in 1920 when newly elected president Warren G. Harding launched the "Georgia Experiment," which sought to end the state party's incessant factional squabbling and improve its chronically beleaguered image. Harding had tasked his handpicked state chairman, John L. Phillips, with organizing a new, respectable, corruption-free Republican Party completely separate from the feuding "lily-whites" and "black and tans." Various scandals undermined Harding's reform effort. Phillips, himself, was indicted on corruption charges stemming from allegations his lumber company had defrauded the federal government of almost \$2 million during the First World War. Similarly, a federal grand jury opened in Atlanta during the summer of 1922 to investigate the new Phillips-led organization on charges of patronage selling. Phillips was acquitted and the grand jury failed to indict a single person, but the notoriety had dealt Harding's "Georgia Experiment" a mortal blow.<sup>10</sup>

It would ultimately take a tragic murder-suicide involving a Coffee County postmaster who blamed his deep personal debt on the Georgia Republican Party's unrelenting demands for political payoffs to prod the Herbert Hoover administration into action. President Hoover directed Postmaster General Walter F. Brown to oversee the reorganization of the party during the early 1930s. The effort proved far more successful at ousting the state party's African-

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<sup>9</sup> Shadgett, *The Republican Party in Georgia*, 76-89; Hanes Walton, Jr., *Black Republicans: The Politics of the Black and Tans* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1975), 48-56;

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Hauser, "'The Georgia Experiment': President Warren G. Harding's Attempt to Reorganize the Republican Party in Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (Winter 1978), 288, 297-300. For a more complete account of Harding's region-wide effort to reorganize the Republican Party see, Hauser, "Warren G. Harding and his Attempts to Reorganize the Republican Party in the South, 1920-1923," (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1973).

American leadership and marginalizing its black membership than it did at ending the spoils system. Nevertheless, historian David J. Ginzl has recognized, “The foundation for white leadership of state Republican affairs had been established...but Georgia Republicans, busy feuding among themselves for control of the party organization and patronage, gained little respectability or popular support during the four years of the Hoover administration.”<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, the Hoover-era reforms produced a bumper crop of white leaders bent on diminishing African-American participation. Led by former U.S. district attorney Clint W. Hager, an emboldened, “lily-white” leadership ousted the more moderate Josiah T. Rose and enacted new membership guidelines limiting black Republican access to high-ranking leadership posts. So successful were those measures that only five African Americans held seats on the state central committee while none sat on the party’s influential executive committee between 1932 and 1936. The brazen purge rankled several prominent Republicans of both races in Georgia. The matter came to a head at the 1936 Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, where one lily-white leader was overheard boasting, “The white people are 100 percent in control of the Georgia Republican Party and we want to keep it that way.” The remaining black Republicans joined forces with moderate, white leaders and appealed directly to the Republican National Committee to assist them in preserving African-American participation in Georgia Republican politics. The state party grudgingly accepted an RNC-brokered accord reserving one-third of the seats on the Republican state central committee for African-American members.

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<sup>11</sup> David J. Ginzl, “Patronage, Race, and Politics: Georgia Republicans During the Hoover Administration,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (Fall 1980), 291, 280-281; Shadgett, “A History of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 437-438. For a more complete account of President Herbert Hoover’s reform efforts see, Ginzl, “Herbert Hoover and Republican Patronage Politics in the South, 1928-1932,” (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1977); Anne Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle: Chief Jurist of the Civil Rights Revolution* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 79; *Official Report on the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Republican National Convention Held in Cleveland, Ohio: June 9, 10, 11, and 12, 1936* (New York: The Tenny Press, 1936), 55.

Black Republicans, however, would not hold executive office or dispense patronage. Such was the state of Republican factionalism in Georgia at the outset of World War II.<sup>12</sup>

As with so many intraparty conflicts before it, lingering disagreements over the role of African Americans in the party ruptured the Georgia Republican Party in 1940—splitting it into competing factions that would battle back and forth for dominance over the course of the next decade. That year’s crop of Republican presidential candidates had competed in a handful of preferential primaries during the months leading up to the Republican National Convention which opened in Philadelphia on June 24. Among the aspirants were two United States senators Robert A. Taft of Ohio and Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan and the crime-busting U.S. district attorney from New York Thomas E. Dewey. Having triumphed in five of nine primaries, Dewey entered Philadelphia as the favorite to win the nomination. Taft’s campaign, however, had quietly secured the pledges from almost two hundred delegates during a year-long, silent campaign that had begun in the summer of 1939. While Vandenberg declined to offer himself officially as a candidate and Dewey toured primary states and the West Coast to build his national profile, Taft had relied on a campaign strategy similar to the one that had secured his father, former president William Howard Taft, the Republican presidential nomination in 1912, meaning he predicated his campaign on stitching together enough delegates from his Midwestern base with so-called “post office Republicans” from the South. Taft’s forces remained confident

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<sup>12</sup> Shadgett, “A History of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 437-438; Ginzel, “Patronage, Race, and Politics,” 288, 293 n.20; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 79; Olive Hall Shadgett and Lynwood M. Holland, “Georgia,” in *Presidential Nominating Politics in 1952, Volume Three: The South*, eds. Paul T. David, Malcom Moos, and Ralph M. Goldman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), 91. Clint Hager had initially supported Rose and his reorganization efforts, but he broke with Rose in 1931 after failing to secure a federal judgeship. Rose, meanwhile, sought to pacify outraged African-American Republicans and built a close working relationship with prominent black Republican leader Benjamin J. Davis, Sr. publisher of the *Atlanta Independent*, who had controlled the state party and its patronage operation throughout much of the 1920s.

throughout 1940 in spite of Dewey's strong primary performances and increasing popular support in the press for Wall Street lawyer and erstwhile Democrat Wendell Willkie.<sup>13</sup>

Directed by David Ingalls, Taft's cousin and closest advisor, the Ohio senator's preconvention strategy relied on raising significant sums of cash and lining up Republican Party bosses and faction leaders in uncontrolled states. The campaign called on longtime southern supporters such as R.B. Creager in Texas, Perry Howard in Mississippi, and John Marshall in Georgia to organize the Taft effort in the South. Some correspondence from aggrieved Georgians like A.H. Henslee, a metal salesman from Barnesville, may have persuaded Taft that the state's inherent conservatism might help his cause there. Writing to Taft in late April 1939, Henslee lambasted the Roosevelt administration's profligate economic policies as well as his perceived racial liberalism. "As a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, I have come to the conclusion, after this Administration's spending and taking in all the 'D--- Niggers,'" Henslee fumed, "I am 100 Per cent with the Republicans." He maintained Georgia "can be put in the Republican column in 1940" if the GOP committed to "a little 'Button hole' coaxing." Replying two days later, Taft remarked, "I hope you are right." Organizing Republicans there would prove complicated.<sup>14</sup>

Remitting the sentiments and commitments of various Georgia Republican leaders to David Ingalls, Lee Nixon recognized the serious divisions developing within the state organization prior to 1940 campaign. Nixon found surprisingly few party leaders willing to

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<sup>13</sup> Donald R. Deskins, Jr., Hanes Walton, Jr., and Sherman C. Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 367-368; James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 208-209; Robert Norton Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times: The First Full-Scale Biography of the Maker of the Modern Republican Party* (New York: Touchstone, 1982), 297. For discussion and analysis of President William Howard Taft's 1912 campaign for the Republican nomination see, Lewis L. Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring: The 1912 Election and the Birth of Modern American Politics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), Chapter 3. For a subsequent treatment of former president Theodore Roosevelt's campaign as the Progressive Party's presidential nominee in Georgia during that year's election see, William F. Mugglestone, "The 1912 Progressive Campaign in Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 233-245.

<sup>14</sup> A.H. Henslee to Robert Taft, April 27, 1939 and Taft to Henslee, April 29, 1939 both in Political File, Box 124, Folder 1, Taft Papers.

commit to Taft despite his having a “host of friends in this state.” With the exception of James Arnold and Josiah Rose, most Georgia Republicans remained uncommitted. Neither Dewey nor Vandenberg appealed to Clint Hager, the state party chairman, but he remained opened to Taft. Wilson Williams, a textile machinery manufacturer, refused to support Taft despite several entreaties from Nixon on his behalf. H.H. Turner, longtime chairman of the Fulton County Republican Party, corroborated Nixon’s findings in late December 1939. “Sentiment in Georgia is not yet chrystalized [sic] for any candidate for the nomination,” he wrote. “At present you are probably in the most favorable position with Mr. Dewey,” Turner continued, but he warned Taft against delaying his Georgia campaign too long since many state Republicans would soon begin revealing their preferences. He might also have added those same Georgia Republicans would soon begin entertaining suitors from other presidential campaigns.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the same day Turner exhorted Taft to begin wooing Georgians in earnest, Thomas Dewey arrived in Augusta. Officially, the candidate was in town “to rest, play golf and prepare his campaign speeches” before the final sprint to the national convention. Whether or not Dewey’s statement claiming he wanted “[n]o visitors who want to talk politics” was genuine, his mere presence in the state during a presidential campaign made the trip political. Shortly after Dewey’s Augusta retreat, Harry Sommers, a young member of the more moderate Republican faction, endorsed Dewey on January 17, 1940. “My contacts have convinced me that south of the Mason and Dixon line, it is Thomas E. Dewey far above all others in whom the people have absolute faith and confidence,” Sommers attested in an open letter. “No man selected as a delegate to the next convention will dare ignore the positive mandate of the rank and file of the voters in the South,” Sommers promised. He concluded, “[I] shall cast my vote for Thomas E.

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<sup>15</sup> Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 208; Nixon to Ingalls, October 6, 1939 and H.H. Turner to Robert A. Taft both in Political File, Box 124, Folder 1, Taft Papers.

Dewey...[and] I urge all other southern delegates to the 1940 Republican convention to do likewise since he is the only man in the United States today who can defeat Mr. Roosevelt or any other candidate the Democratic party brings forward.”<sup>16</sup>

Dewey was not alone in launching forays into Georgia. Conservative publishing mogul Frank E. Gannett, owner of several New York newspapers, also visited the state in February 1940 to drum up press and support in Atlanta. Gannett had initially supported President Franklin Roosevelt and New Deal, but he had soured on both by the mid-1930s. Gannett and several other businessmen had established the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government in early 1937 to oppose the president and his policies. Although that particular organization had operated in a nonpartisan manner, Gannett’s flirtation with seeking the Republican Party’s presidential nomination undermined that claim. Gannett never mustered the organizational strength or public appeal of Taft, Dewey, or even Vandenberg, but his sizeable personal fortune—as well as his outsized ego—compelled him to launch a bid for the GOP’s presidential nomination in 1940. Journalist and historian Steve Neal would later describe Gannett’s campaign as a “rich man’s vanity,” but that vanity and \$500,000 meant Gannett could vigorously lobby uninstructed Republican delegates.<sup>17</sup> The scramble for Georgia’s delegates had begun, and it proved to be a public spectacle.

Robert Taft made a final series of personal appearances throughout the South in early June to shore up support in a region notorious for its uninstructed and contested delegations. The

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<sup>16</sup> “Harry Sommers Indorses Dewey,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 17, 1940, p. 1, 3; Harold Martin, “Dewey’s Grasp Found Perfect For Handshaking Campaign,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 28, 1939, p. 1, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Steve Neal, *Dark Horse: A Biography of Wendell Willkie* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 104; Ralph McGill, “One Word More,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 26, 1940, p. 6; Richard Polenberg, “The National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, 1937-1941,” *Journal of American History* 52, no. 3 (December 1965), 582-583, 596-597; According to Neal, Gannett spared no expense during the Philadelphia convention. He maintained a well-stocked bar available to convention delegates despite his unwillingness to advertise liquor in his newspapers, and he hired an elephant troupe to parade outside the convention hall. The copious amount of pachyderm droppings, when combined with the sweltering late June heat, may have done his campaign more harm than good. Elephants or no elephants, Gannett’s path to the nomination was practically nonexistent.



Ohioan and his wife arrived in Atlanta in the evening of June 8 after delivering a series of speeches in Knoxville and Chattanooga. Taft availed himself to all Georgia Republicans during his short stopover in Atlanta. In addition to a reception organized by the state party to fete the senator, Taft had telegraphed ahead to James Arnold on June 6 informing the Republican national committeeman of his earnest desire to “meet the leading Republicans of Georgia.” Taft went even further saying he “would be willing to go anywhere to meet the colored Republican leaders and talk to them.” Such a proposal revealed two assumptions about Taft’s Georgia campaign. First, he and his staff recognized the membership reforms carried out in the late 1920s and 1930s had effectively shifted control of the state Republican Party from its African-American contingent to a coterie of white party leaders. Second, race relations remained a contentious subject in Georgia Republican circles, but Taft needed all the support he could muster in the state. Bernard Kilgore, a *Wall Street Journal* correspondent, claimed Gannett was polling strongest with the state’s fourteen delegates and alternates, but the reporter also admitted, “Georgia remains a mystery state, in more ways than one, so far as Republican politics is concerned.” Recognizing the fluidity of the situation, Taft penned Roscoe Pickett, Sr. toward the end of his southern campaign swing. “I hope there will be a number of the Georgia delegates voting for me on the first ballot,” Taft offered, “still more, I think, on later ballots.” The state’s delegates appeared more unpredictable than ever going as the national convention approached.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bernard Kilgore, “G.O.P. Presidential Politics: Taft Appears to Have Strengthened Position in Group of Southern States,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 1940, p. 1; Telegram: Robert A. Taft to James W. Arnold, June 6, 1940 and Robert Taft to Roscoe Pickett, June 13, 1940 both in Political File, Box 124, Folder 1, Taft Papers. Bernard Kilgore, “Presidential Politics: Taft, Dewey First Ballot Strength About Even as Both Turn Southward,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 1940, p. 1. Dewey’s June campaign swing took him to stops in Charleston, West Virginia, and Greensboro, North Carolina. See, “Dewey Off for Brief Drive Through Two Southern States,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 6, 1940, p. 3; J. Roscoe Drummond, “Taft Gains Added Strength In Final Swing Into South,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 10, 1940, p. 2. Convention delegates were divided among the state’s congressional districts with a variable number of at-large delegates. The number of delegates depended on the Republican presidential ticket’s performance in the previous election.

Senator Taft's southern tour, however, came too late to influence Georgia's state Republican convention, which had opened on May 18. The Fulton County delegation had already dealt a significant blow to both the Taft campaign and the state's more conservative, white-dominated faction led by party chairman Clint Hager at its late April county convention when county Republicans had ousted longtime party boss—and Taft advisor—H.H. Turner in favor of Atlanta Board of Education attorney Elbert P. Tuttle. Continuing the trend toward new leadership, convention goers there installed an entirely new executive committee with the exception of Harry Sommers, the young, outspoken Dewey backer, who retained his position as treasurer. In a further rebuke of Hager and Turner's leadership, insurgent Fulton County Republicans also returned Benjamin J. Davis, former national committeeman from Georgia, to a modicum of influence as a delegate to the state convention. Hager's "lily-white" faction suffered further setbacks at the ensuing Fifth Congressional District convention, which elected Harry Sommers as its delegate to the national convention. A lower-profile maneuver, however, would ultimately prove more consequential to the future composition and leadership of the Georgia Republican Party. Newly elected Fulton County chairman Elbert Tuttle reinstated of several top Republicans who had lost their positions during the high-profile split between former state chairman Josiah Rose and Clint Hager. Indeed, Taft's political operatives had expected a contentious delegate fight in Georgia, but few could predict who enjoyed the inside track among the state's delegates.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Fulton G.O.P. Names Tuttle New Chairman: H.H. Turner, Long-Time Holder of Office, Is Replaced," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1940, Sec. A, p. 9; "G.O.P. Elects Sommers for National Parley: Dean Hilkey Is Named Chairman of Fifth District Group," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 11, 1940, p. 6. H.H. Turner contested the Sommers-led slate of Fulton County delegates to the 1940 state convention in Atlanta. The press reported a split between Turner and Clint Hager in spite of the similarities in the two men's political views. Nevertheless, Hager held a place on the Sommers delegation. In a post-election missive to Taft, H.H. Turner wrote that James W. Arnold and Clint Hager "stole the Fulton County vote." See, H.H. Turner to Robert A. Taft, November 11, 1940 in Political File, Box 124, Folder 2, Taft Papers. This is an odd claim since Arnold's support for Taft had been well-documented, and

The state convention proved schizophrenic not only in the composition of its national convention delegation but also in the ideological makeup of the executive committee. Upholding the compromise brokered at the 1936 Republican National Convention, the state convention selected two African Americans, Benjamin Davis of Atlanta and F.C. Gassett of Cartersville, to serve as delegates-at-large in Philadelphia alongside chairman Clint Hager and national committeeman James Arnold. A controversial decision to appoint Taft supporter DeWitt Clinton Cole as the Seventh Congressional District's delegate prompted a rival, Frank M. Gleason, to walk out in protest. Before departing the hall, Gleason declared, "[A]ny man with the gumption to come out for Tom Dewey has no more chance in this convention than a snowball in Chicago." His outburst notwithstanding, Dewey could count on the voters of several Georgia delegates as could practically every serious contender for the nomination.<sup>20</sup>

Generally, no names are attached to the votes of convention delegates. Individual delegates' preferences are only recorded if a credentialed member of that particular delegation calls for poll of his state. The Georgia delegation was polled three times in Philadelphia. As expected, the state divided its votes during the first round of balloting. Dewey secured seven votes: G.W. Bentley of Augusta, Benjamin Davis, F.C. Gassett, C.M. Jordan of Glenwood, J.H. Rush of Lumber City, Wilson Williams of Woodbury, and Harry Sommers. Three delegates threw their support to Senator Robert Taft: J.L. Phillips, DeWitt Cole, and J.O. Hipp of Elijay. Crummey, Hager, and Herbert (Buddy) Block of Macon cast their votes for Gannett. After the

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Hager stood to lose far more politically than he had to gain with an emboldened Harry Sommers and Elbert Tuttle at the head of the Fulton County Republican organization. That much would become obvious four years later.

<sup>20</sup> "G.O.P. To Name Four Delegates At Large Today: State Convention of Republicans Will Be Held Here," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 18, 1940, p. 5; AP, "Georgia G.O.P. Ousts Former District Chief: B.H. McLarty, of Lyons, Ejected; All Delegates Uninstructed," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 19, 1940, Sec. A, p. 2; AP, "Georgia G.O.P. Leaders Deny 'Dewey Ouster': Reply to Gleason Charge Cites Recognition of Harry Sommers," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 21, 1940, p. 8; *Official Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Republican National Convention Held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: June 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28, 1940* (Washington D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, 1940), 187-189.

first round of voting, the convention proved as divided as Georgia's delegation. Dewey led the pack with 360 votes followed by Taft with 189, Wendell Willkie with 105, Vandenberg with 76, and Gannett with 33.<sup>21</sup>

After three ballots, both Taft and Willkie had increased their overall vote share, but the Georgia delegation showed no signs of coalescing around a single candidate. Dewey's support remained at seven while the state's seven remaining delegates split their votes five ways. The fourth ballot would prove to be the convention's turning point. Dewey's campaign began to falter to the chants of "We want Willkie!" reverberating from the rafters as the audience evinced its loyalties. Equally important, though, was Indiana congressman Charles Halleck's masterful delegate-poaching operation that bled critical support from Dewey states like New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and others along the eastern seaboard. Willkie surged into first place with 306 delegates followed by Taft at 254 and Dewey with 206. Still, Georgia's delegation remained steady in midst of the political maelstrom. By the fifth ballot, though, Dewey began hemorrhaging delegates to Willkie. Absent a single, powerful party boss to ensure loyalty, the New York prosecutor's six Georgia holdouts bolted. Wendell Willkie secured the Republican presidential nomination during the sixth and final round of balloting. That Georgia's delegation remained hopelessly divided as the convention coalesced around Willkie suggested high level of dissension within the state's Republican ranks.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 280-281; AP, "Georgia G.O.P. Fight Delays Ballots Twice," p. 14; Charles Peters, *Five Days in Philadelphia: The Amazing "We Want Willkie!" Convention of 1940 and How It Freed FDR to Save the Western World* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 101. Neither Arnold nor his alternate, Josiah Rose, cast a vote during the first round of balloting.

<sup>22</sup> *Official Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Republican National Convention*, 285-287, 296, 302, 309, 320; Susan Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler—the Election amid the Storm* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 113; Peters, *Five Days in Philadelphia*, 103; Dunn, *1940*, 113-114; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 226-228. The Georgia delegation ceased polling its members after the third ballot. For an in-depth analysis of Willkie's route to the 1940 Republican presidential nomination see, Hugh Ross, "Was the Nomination of Wendell Willkie a Political Miracle?" *Indiana Magazine of History* 58, no. 2 (June 1962), 79-100.

Georgia Republicans proved equally divided during a three-person contest for the coveted national committeeman's post. Harry Sommers, James H. Crummey, and incumbent James Arnold were all in the running. Arnold was supporting Taft while Sommers was an early Dewey backer. Crummey, meanwhile, had allegedly received money in exchange for support from Gannett's organization during the final months of the campaign. The Rochelle Republican would subsequently deliver a speech seconding the newspaper publisher's nomination. Harry Sommers recalled Crummey derisively, "Mr. Gannett found [him] to be a very expensive supporter in Philadelphia." Sommers, for his part, had earned the right to represent the delegation as chairman, but he eventually stepped aside for Wilson Williams, a textile manufacturer and farmer from rural Woodbury. An older, more established Republican regular, Williams possessed a number of attributes his Atlanta colleague lacked. First, Williams had been active during the turbulent early 1930s as state party secretary loyal to Josiah Rose and James W. Arnold. Williams, therefore, could draw support from across factional lines. Second, he neither lived in nor represented Atlanta. The recent developments at the Fulton County and Fifth District conventions earlier in the spring had upset some of the more reactionary "lily-white" Republicans. Third, and most importantly, Williams offered an attractive compromise between an incumbent and a bought-and-paid Gannett operative who abandoned his employer after the second ballot. In the end, the Georgia delegation backed Wilson as a compromise candidate.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Harry Sommers to Paul E. Lockwood, April 19, 1944 in Series X, Box 40, Folder 10, Thomas E. Dewey Papers, Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation (RBCSP), River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY; "Strife Rocks Georgia G.O.P. At Philadelphia: Delegates Get Good Posts But Choice of Candidate Is Problem," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 26, 1940, p. 7; AP, "Georgia G.O.P. Fight Delays Ballots Twice: Battle Over National Committeeman Results in Three Polls," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 28, 1940, p. 14; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 438; Ginzl, "Patronage, Race, and Politics," 289; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 438; *Official Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Republican National Convention*, 344-345; AP, "Georgia G.O.P. Picks Williams; Peace Reigns: Mrs. Bertha M. Field Reelected National Committeewoman," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 29, 1940, p. 6.

That Wendell Willkie of all people led the Republican ticket in the fall campaign upended much of the conventional political wisdom surrounding the race. On the one hand, Willkie, an attorney and president of the giant utilities conglomerate Commonwealth and South, seemed to embody the moneyed establishment President Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed flaying on campaign trail. On the other, Willkie had been a registered Democrat until 1939. He viewed the New Deal's social welfare provisions as necessary and just in a time of economic hardship. Perhaps most importantly in 1940 as Nazi German armed forces swept across Western Europe into France, the Republican rejected the rigid isolationism of his new party's old guard. A novice with no record in office and a complex *mélange* of political views, Willkie diverged considerably from the presidential campaigns of Herbert Hoover in 1932 and Alf Landon in 1936. As a political outsider whose own nomination was thanks in large part to a grassroots movement, Willkie enjoyed the freedom to pursue an alternative path to the White House.<sup>24</sup>

The eponymously named "Willkie Club" represented the heart and soul of Wendell Willkie's 1940 presidential campaign. The brainchild of Oren Root, Jr., a 29-year-old Wall Street attorney and grandnephew of former Republican secretary of state Elihu Root, the Willkie Clubs began as a vehicle to mobilize support for its candidate before the convention. They grew quickly in popularity with money and memberships from around the country inundating Root's small Manhattan office. Another organization, Democrats for Willkie, sought to capitalize on New Deal fatigue and regional resentments in Democratic ranks—especially in the South. After securing the GOP nomination, Willkie Clubs of all varieties began popping up across the country. According to Root, founder of the Associated Willkie Clubs of America, the grassroots-style campaign would help the novice presidential candidate to "combine the enthusiasm of the

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<sup>24</sup> Lewis L. Gould, *Grand Old Party: A History of the Republicans* (New York: Random House, 2003), 283-284; Robert Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 80-81.

amateurs with the experience of the regulars.” Root’s assertion certainly had merit. Supporting a Willkie club independent of any local, state, or national Republican Party organization freed southerners interested in Willkie’s candidacy from charges of deserting the Democratic Party. Despite the understandable, if lofty, goal of winning independents and Democrats, extra-party organizations like the Associated Willkie Clubs and Democrats for Willkie caused considerable confusion and strife within both the Willkie campaign and Republican Party. Historian Robert Mason has noted how the clubs “foster[ed] intraparty animosities and jealousies, limiting their majority-building contribution.” Mason has also recognized that Willkie club and Republican Party activities often overlapped with counterproductive results. In Georgia, political reality meant official Republican activity remained minimal while the Willkie Clubs became the face of the Republican nominee’s presidential campaign.<sup>25</sup>

The Willkie Club movement began in Georgia just days after the Republican national convention adjourned. Organized by erstwhile Dewey Republican Harry Sommers, the Willkie-for-President Clubs of Georgia belonged to Oren Root’s Associated Willkie Clubs of America. “Believing that the nomination of Wendell Willkie was the result of the expressed sentiment of the American people,” the organization’s inaugural press release read, “and that his election would assure the preservation of American institutions, this statewide, nonpartisan, independent Georgia Willkie-for-President Club was formed.” The organization notably disavowed any direct association with the Republican Party—an implicit was an acknowledgment of the GOP’s poor

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<sup>25</sup> Oren Root, *Persons and Persuasions* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), 46; Dunn, *1940*, 84-85; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 86-88. A quartet of disgruntled Democrats—John W. Hanes, Lewis W. Douglas, Roberta Campbell Lawson, and Alan Valentine—spearheaded the Democrats for Willkie organization. Hanes and Douglas were both former officials in the Franklin Roosevelt administration. Lawson served as the president of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, which had been prominent during the Progressive era. Valentine, president of the University of Rochester in New York, was not as active in electoral politics as his fellow Democrats for Willkie officers. According to historian Ellsworth Barnard, Wendell Willkie encouraged the Democrats for Willkie organization both to bolster the credibility of his bipartisan appeal and stymie rumors of a resurgent American Liberty League. See, Ellsworth Barnard, *Wendell Willkie: Fighter for Freedom* (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1966), 209, 550 n.2.

standing in Georgia. The composition of its top leadership, however, belied that assertion. In addition to Harry Sommers, Charles J. Hilkey, Dean of the Emory University Law School, and Frank Gleason were all active Georgia Republicans. Sommers, who served concurrently as President of the Georgia Willkie-for-President Club, Chairman of the Associated Willkie Clubs of Georgia, and Treasurer of the Georgia Republican Party, explained to state GOP chairman Clint Hager. "From your long experience with the Republican Party, you are thoroughly familiar with the prejudice which exists among Southerners against the name Republican," Sommers declared. Nevertheless, he assuaged Hager regarding his new organization's intentions. "There is no disposition to supplant the regular Republican organization or to prevent it from receiving sufficient fund to conduct the campaign," he wrote, "We seek to supplement the activities of the regular organization and to assist in increasing the Willkie vote." Sommers even offered to coordinate Willkie-for-President Club and Georgia GOP campaign efforts.<sup>26</sup>

No record of any such coordination survives, and any such activity appears to have been nominal as Sommers expended considerable energy collaborating with the Georgia's affiliate of the Democrats for Willkie organization. Alan Valentine, Democrats for Willkie cofounder, had stressed that its affiliates would remain apart from the Republican National Committee, state and local GOP organizations, or the Associated Willkie Clubs, but his claim proved spurious. In fact, Sommers, Hilkey, and Gleason all attended the bipartisan meeting on July 25 at the Athletic Club of Atlanta that spawned the Independent Willkie Democratic Club. Coincidentally, E. Allison Thornwell, treasurer of both the Fulton County Republican Party and the Willkie-for-President Clubs of Georgia, had served as president of the Athletic Club. Proprietor of E.A.

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<sup>26</sup> "Georgians Plan Willkie Drive, Organize Club: Atlanta Considered as Headquarters for 'Solid South' Campaign," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 2, 1940, p. 1; Harry Sommers to Clint W. Hager, July 9, 1940 in Box 16, Willkie Clubs Mss., Lilly Library Manuscripts Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN; "Atlantan Made Acting Georgia G.O.P. Leader," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 8, 1940, p. 7.



Thornwell Incorporated, a machinery and electrical equipment distributorship, he ranked among Atlanta's most respected businessmen, belonging to the Rotary Club of Atlanta, the Capital City Club, and the exclusive Piedmont Driving Club. Thornwell and other Atlanta Republicans, therefore, were well positioned to collaborate with similar individuals beyond Atlanta who sat on the executive committee of Willkie-for-President Clubs. Accomplished Republican professionals like Wilson M. Hardy, a permanent fixture in Rome business and social circles; Charles C. Hertwig, vice-president of the Bibb Manufacturing Company and protégé of its staunchly anti-labor chief, Colonel William D. Anderson; C. Baxter Jones, Sr., an attorney in the Macon law firm of Jones, Jones and Sparks; Landon Thomas III, president of the J.P. King Manufacturing Company, the largest textile mill in Augusta; and Jack Walton, a hotel operator and real estate developer in Columbus also took part in Willkie Club movement in Georgia.<sup>27</sup>

Although Willkie found support among Georgians from all walks of life, the majority of Willkie Club organizers—Republican and Democrat—hailed from the state's upper crust. Many, especially those Democrats-for-Willkie, belonged to what political scientist Jasper Berry

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<sup>27</sup> "Atlantans Form Group To Aid Willkie's Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 26, 1940, p. 8; Donald Bruce Johnson, *The Republican Party and Wendell Willkie* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1960), 116-117; "Willkie Clubs Springing Up All Over South; Republican Leaders Making Strong Bid for Votes of Democrats," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 27, 1940, p. 1; "Fulton G.O.P. Names Tuttle New Chairman," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1940, Sec. A, p. 9; "E.A. Thornwell, 69, Dies; Business and Civic Leader," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 1, 1955, p. 36; Harold H. Martin, *Atlanta and Environs, vol. 3: A Chronicle of Its People and Events: Years of Change and Challenge, 1940-1970* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 229; "Wilson Moore Hardy, 91, Rome Realty Official, Dies," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 28, 1973, Sec. C, p. 4; "Hertwig Named Head of Bibb Textile Firm," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 25, 1947, p. 3; John A. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 177; Arden Williams, "Bibb Manufacturing Company," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, June 5, 2014 accessed at <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/bibb-manufacturing-company>; Walter G. Cooper, *The Story of Georgia*, vol. 4 (New York: The American Historical Society, 1938), 266; James Clark Fifiield, ed., *The American Bar: A Biographical Directory of Contemporary Lawyers of the United States and Canada* (Minneapolis and New York: The James C. Fifiield Company, 1928), 171; "Landon Thomas, former King Mill executive, dies," *Augusta Chronicle*, April 8, 1974, Sec. A, p. 15. The Thomas family invited and hosted William Howard Taft in early 1909 where President-elect Taft launched a southern speaking tour intended to build support among conservative white southerners for his Republican policies. See, Lee Ann Caldwell, "A Most Remarkable Collaboration," *Augusta Magazine*, February-March 2016 accessed at <http://www.augustamagazine.com/Augusta-Magazine/February-March-2016-1/A-Most-Remarkable-Collaboration/> (accessed January 16, 2016) and Edward O. Frantz, *The Door of Hope: Republican Presidents and the First Southern Strategy, 1877-1933* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 203-207.

Shannon called the “County Seat Elite.” In this banker-merchant-farmer-lawyer-doctor-governing class Shannon saw the pillars of communities scattered across the rural countryside attempting to balance the mores of the region’s agrarian past with the pressures of the modern, industrial economy. *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill would later appropriate the “small town rich man” title to describe wealthy, self-absorbed Georgians who owned the land, controlled credit, and exploited local workforces and whose affable graciousness disguised the darker side of countryside paternalism. Historian George B. Tindall has also recognized how these “village nabobs of the small towns” reacted defensively toward the socioeconomic transformations wrought by FDR’s New Deal. Still others belonged to what has become known more ubiquitously and generically as the “establishment.” That group has gone by many names in Georgia. Political scientist Joseph Bernd described it as Georgia’s “best element”—men and women who possessed a “middle class income level, occupational status and point of view.” They tended to reside in the state’s cities, towns, and college communities and belong to civic clubs that reflected and advanced their socioeconomic and political views. Sociologist Floyd Hunter, moreover, examined what he dubbed Atlanta’s “power structure.” These white business and political leaders marshaled their collective wealth, reputation, and social contacts to foster a society that cherished and promoted economic growth, political stability, and social order. Closely related was Georgia’s white “commercial-civic elite.” Like Bernd’s “best element” and Hunter’s “power structure,” these individuals usually resided in Georgia’s more dynamic cities and metropolitan areas and espoused a doctrine of modernization via industrial recruitment and sociopolitical respectability. In the end, the Republican regulars and Democratic bolters who birthed the Independent Democratic Party of Georgia to capitalize on anti-Roosevelt sentiment and “make it possible for Democrats to vote for Willkie without voting the Republican ticket.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Shannon, *Toward a New Politics in the South*, 38-51 (quote on 44); George Brown Tindall, *The Disruption of the*

The driving force behind the pro-Willkie Democrats in Georgia was an up-and-coming, young lawyer named Devereux H. Lippitt, Jr. Lippitt belonged to an old establishment family and worked at the prestigious Atlanta law firm of Jones, Fuller and Clapp. Other Atlanta establishment figures joining Democrats for Willkie included Fair Dodd, an accomplished insurance and real estate broker who sat on the board of directors of Citizens and Southern Bank and belonged to the highly selective Capital City Club; Carlyle Fraser, founder and president of the automotive firm Genuine Parts Company whose extensive professional service also included directorships of at the National Automotive Parts Association and the Southern Life Insurance Company, H.G Hastings, founder of an eponymously named, mail-order garden and seed company; H.G. Hitt, president of Associated Mutual Insurance; J. Henry Porter, director of the Georgia Savings Bank and Trust Company of Georgia and cofounder of the Atlanta Athletic Club; William A. Sutherland, founding partner of Sutherland, Tuttle & Brennan; and Philip Weltner, a renowned educator ( and father of future Democratic U.S. representative Charles L. Weltner), who served as the group's temporary chairman. Beyond Atlanta, men and women from similar backgrounds gravitated toward the Democrats for Willkie movement. Some of Coastal Georgia's most prominent families signed onto the third-party bid. For example, Raymond M. Deméré, Jr., founder of the Colonial Oil Company, member of the elite Oglethorpe and Cotillion clubs, and commodore of the South Atlantic Regatta Association presided over Savannah's

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*Solid South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1972), 35-36, Quote on 35; George Brown Tindall, *The Persistent Tradition in New South Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 69; Ralph McGill, "The South Has Many Face," *The Atlantic*, April 1963, p. 93-94; Joseph L. Bernd, *Grassroots Politics in Georgia: The County Unit System and the Importance of the Individual Voting Community in Bi-Factional Elections* (Atlanta: Emory University Research Committee, 1960), 26-27; Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953); "Meeting Is Held To Co-Ordinate Democrat Units," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 22, 1940, p. 12; James C. Cobb, "Cracklin's and Caviar: The Enigma of Sunbelt Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (Spring 1984), 21; Blaine A. Brownell, *The Urban Ethos in the South, 1920-1930* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), xi. See also, Calvin Kytte and James A. MacKay, *Who Runs Georgia?* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1998 [1947]).

Willkie Club. Indeed, the executive committee of the Independent Willkie Democratic Club was replete with considerable social stature.<sup>29</sup>

The collaboration between Harry Sommers's Willkie-for-President Clubs and the Independent Willkie Democratic Club climaxed when the Independent Democrats convened on October 3 at the Dempsey Hotel in Macon. That city had emerged as a hotbed of Independent Democratic activity with prominent residents—many of them partners and associates with the city's oldest law firms—organizing Independent Democratic Clubs and participating in convention committee work.<sup>30</sup> While the Willkie Clubs remained the province of establishment figures, seasoned political veterans help organized convention activity from gavel to gavel.

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<sup>29</sup> Harry Sommers to Mrs. Henry Breckenridge, August 31, 1940, Willkie Clubs Mss.; Martin, *Atlanta and Environs*, vol. 3, 198, 93, 338, 22; Cooper, *The Story of Georgia*, vol. 4, 72; "Georgia," n.d. and Kenneth Hull to Alan Valentine, August 21, 1940 both in Series II, Box 21, Folder 2, Dewey Papers; "Miss Freeman's File: Georgia," n.d. and Philip Weltner to John W. Haynes, September 15, 1940 both in Series II, Box 21, Folder 3, Dewey Papers; William A. Sutherland to Alan Valentine, October 30, 1940 in Series II, Box 21, Folder 5, Dewey Papers; Harry Sommers to Richard M. Egan, September 17, 1940 in Box 16, Willkie Clubs Mss; "William A. Sutherland; Law Firm Founder, 91," *New York Times*, November 20, 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/20/obituaries/william-a-sutherland-law-firm-founder-91.html> (accessed March 1, 2016). Sutherland was also Elbert Tuttle's brother-in-law. See, Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 102; Jack N. Averitt, *Georgia's Coastal Plain: Family and Personal History*, vol. 3 (New York and West Palm Beach: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1964), 2-3, 101-102; Cooper, *The Story of Georgia*, vol. 4, 382-383, 671-672, 799-800; "H.D. Pollard, Noted Railroad Executive, Dies," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 8, 1942, p. 1; Joshua Brown, "Bridge House has long, complex history," *Albany Herald*, August 26, 2008, Sec. A, p. 4; "W.H. Slack Rites in Hall at Graveside," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 31, 1971, Sec B., p. 19; AP, "Atlantan Named Vice President at Closing Session at Sea Island," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 3, 1934m Sec. A, p. 1; "Georgian Calls New Deal 'Doctrine of Expediency,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 1935, p.1; Untitled list of Georgians interested in Democrats for Willkie, n.d. and "Georgia," n.d. both in Series II, Box 21, Folder 1, Dewey Papers. For members of the Independent Democratic Party of Georgia's executive committee see, Luke Green, "Independent Democrats Attack New Deal," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 4, 1940, p. 12. Other prominent establishment figures supporting or belonging to Democrats for Willkie included Thomas H. Gignilliat, Jr., a prominent attorney, sat on the Independent Democratic Party's executive committee and served as First District chairman. Mabel Pollard, wife of Henry D. (H.D.) Pollard, a fixture in the Savannah social and civic scene, served as an at-large presidential elector on the Independent Democratic ticket. Elsewhere in Georgia, Paul A. Kennan, owner and operator Empire Smithing and Keenan Auto Parts in Albany; William H. Slack of Gainesville, another auto parts dealer who belonged to numerous civic organizations and corporate boards; George W. Varn of Valdosta, a timber and gum magnate with additional business interests in banking and finance; and Graham Wright, a highly regarded Rome attorney and past president of the Georgia Bar Association.

<sup>30</sup> Partners in the law firms of Anderson, Anderson and Walker; Jones, Jones and Sparks; and Martin, Snow and Grant were all represented at the Independent Democrats' convention. One apparent exception was the law firm of Bloch, Hall, Hawkins and Owens where attorney and conservative Democrat Charles Bloch practiced. An close friend and confidante of U.S. senator Richard B. Russell, Bloch would later play key roles in the White Citizens' Council movement and the Federation for Constitutional Government, both of which sought to thwart the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and maintain massive resistance to desegregation in Georgia and across the South. See, Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2003 [2001]), 131-132.

Philip Weltner, whom former governor Eugene Talmadge had appointed to the highly political post of University System chancellor in 1933, issued the official convention call to over one hundred Independent Democratic delegates. Former state representative J. Douglas Carlisle, a Macon attorney and law partner of future federal judge William Bootle, oversaw arrangements and served as convention secretary. After calling the convention to order, Weltner stepped aside as temporary chairman. His replacement, Sam A. Nunn, Sr. (nephew of U.S. representative Carl Vinson and father of future U.S. senator Sam Nunn Jr. ), the pro-Talmadge mayor of nearby Perry, oversaw the convention as permanent chairman. Additional Democratic officials participating included G. Pierce King, an Augusta legislator belonging to House speaker Roy Harris's "Cracker Party" machine, and former Macon mayor Wallace Miller.<sup>31</sup>

From the outset, the Independent Democrats—dubbed "Willkiecrats" by the opponents and the press—cast themselves as the true party of Jefferson and Jackson. Convention speakers launched a series of jeremiads inveighing against Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the national Democratic Party. Weltner warned the convention's three hundred attendees that "the democracy of our fathers is being carelessly sacrificed on the false altar of political expediency." To FDR and the Democratic National Committee (DNC), Weltner continued, democracy meant "subservience to the boss higher up. It stands for patronage offices and personal political power."

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<sup>31</sup> "100 Willkie Groups Name Delegates," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 29, 1940, Sec. B, p. 5; "Willkie Group To Hold State Meeting Today," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 3, 1940, p. 2; "Independents May Duplicate Regular Slate," *Macon Telegraph*, October 2, 1940, p. 1; Martin, *Atlanta and Environs*, 22; Will D. Campbell, *The Stem of Jesse: The Costs of Community at a 1960s Southern School* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994), 5-0; Ed Lightsey, "Statesman and History Maker," *Georgia Trend*, February 2011, 18-23; Charles S. Bullock III, Scott E. Buchanan, and Ronald Keith Gaddie, *The Three Governors Controversy: Skullduggery, Machinations, and the Decline of Georgia's Progressive Politics* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2015), 95. Carlisle became a staunch supporter of Governor Herman Talmadge during the late 1940s and 1950s. See, Andrew M. Manis, *Macon Black and White: An Unutterable Separation in the American Century* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press and the Tubman African American Museum, 2004), 160, 172. Bootle received an appointment as judge to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia from Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954. His rulings proved instrumental in desegregating the South during the latter half of the twentieth century. See, Jeffrey R. Young, "Eisenhower's Federal Judges and Civil Rights Policy: A Republican 'Southern Strategy' for the 1950s," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 536-565.

The best the New Deal could offer the next generation of Americans, Weltner averred, was the promise of a “fat government job.” In his keynote address, Sam Nunn, Sr. lambasted Secretary of Commerce Harry Hopkins as a former socialist and Secretary of the Interior “Honest” Harold Ickes. When the convention chairman exhorted the crowd to name Secretary of Labor “Madam” Frances Perkins, Nunn heard shouts of “Communist” and “bloody Red.” Devereux Lippitt, chairman of the Independent Democrats of Atlanta, offered perhaps the starkest warning of the day when he cautioned the audience that the nation might succumb to dictatorship like so many European countries if FDR retained the White House for an unprecedented third term. “Must we too, because of a world in chaos and internal corruption,” Lippitt wondered aloud, “submit to one-man rule?” Calling on his fellow Independent Democrats “to sound an alarm to our entire nation to repulse this assault upon democracy,” Lippitt nominated for president “a leader whose life exemplifies Democratic principles...Wendell L. Willkie.” Finding fault in only Roosevelt and vice-presidential nominee Henry Wallace, the convention nominated seventy down-ballot Democrats—including Eugene Talmadge—who also appeared on the regular Democratic ticket. Additionally, the convention approved a bipartisan slate of presidential electors composed of six Republicans and six Democrats (Georgia Republicans submitted the same slate of electors). Although the Independent Democrats had endorsed Willkie, they offered their own party platform, which nonetheless resembled the policy priorities the Republicans had adopted in Cleveland. Like the GOP, the Independent Democratic Party of Georgia condemned FDR’s decision to seek for a third term. The Republican and Independent Democratic parties also rejected the New Deal as a wasteful, corrupt scheme that pitted class against class and placed government in direct competition with business and industry. Both parties also demanded that control over federal relief funds be transferred to the states.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Luke Green, “Independent Democrats Attack New Deal,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 4, 1940, p. 12; C.E.

That so many Georgia Democrats were willing to break with the regular Democratic Party is not surprising. After all, the state's lily-white Republicans and "Hoovercrats" opposed to New York governor Al Smith—an urban, Catholic, anti-Prohibition, Tammany Hall veteran with a dubious commitment to white supremacy—had submitted a similar fusion slate in 1928. Anti-Smith forces won approximately 43 percent of the ballots, but they failed to prevent the state from going Democratic.<sup>33</sup> Eight years later, Eugene Talmadge, the state's former governor and anti-New Deal firebrand, keynoted a gathering of anti-Roosevelt Democrats in Macon. Organized by archconservative Texas businessman John Henry Kirby and bankrolled by an array of wealthy industrialists like Henry du Pont, John J. Raskob, and Alfred P. Sloan, the so-called "Grass Roots Convention" sought to boost Talmadge's national profile and stymie FDR's re-nomination. The convention proved as fruitless as it was audacious. Talmadge failed to ignite any significant following, and FDR secured re-nomination easily. The "Three Rs: Roosevelt, Russell, and Rivers" rolled to victory in 1936. The Willkiecrats' approach and purpose in 1940 however, differed from the abortive "Grass Roots Convention." Having failed to prevent Roosevelt's renomination, aggrieved Georgia Democrats brokered an alliance of convenience with their Republican brethren in the hope of denying Roosevelt the state's twelve electoral

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Gregory, "Independent Democrats of Georgia Endorse State Ticket of Party," *Atlanta Journal*, October 3, 1940, p. 1-2; "Gene Evades Direct Answer To Bid From Willkiecrats," *Macon Telegraph*, October 4, 1940, p. 1, 2; Gerhard Peters and John T. Wooley, "Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1940," *The American Presidency Project*, University of California at Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29640> (accessed February 1, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 252-253; George Brown Tindall, *The Disruption of the Solid South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), 27-28; Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, 325-326; Paul R. Mallon, "Plan To Join Smith's Foes In The South," *Pittsburgh Press*, September 7, 1928, p. 2. See also, Fredeva Ogletree, "The 1928 Presidential Campaign in Georgia," (master's thesis, University of Georgia, 1942). Some leaders in the anti-Smith fusion movement shared familial and professional connections with those involved in the Willkie Club movement. For example, Macon attorney George S. Jones, father of C. Baxter and Bruce C. Jones, served as a presidential elector from the Sixth Congressional District. W.A. Carlisle, a Gainesville businessman who served with W.H. Slack, Jr. on the board of directors of the Gainesville Railway and Power Company, was the Ninth Congressional District's elector. See, Ruth Blair, ed. *Georgia's Official Register, 1929* (Atlanta: Stein Printing Company, 1929), 479; Cooper, *The Story of Georgia*, vol. 4, 266; *Poor's Manual of Public Utilities: Street Railway, Gas, Electric, Water, Power, Telephone and Telegraph Companies* (New York: Poor's Railroad Manual Company, 1913), 58.

votes. Still, the vast majority of Georgia Democrats remained unwilling to identify as Republicans since the GOP label remained anathema throughout the state and region. As a result, many Democratic bolters in Georgia opted instead for a quixotic, complicated third party bid to rebuke Roosevelt and the national Democratic Party without committing the political heresy of voting the Republican ticket.<sup>34</sup>

As the election approached, Harry Sommers relayed that state of the race in Georgia to the Associated Willkie Clubs headquarters in New York. Between the Willkie-for-President and Independent Willkie Democratic Clubs, organizations backing the Republican nominee were operating in every major city as well as the Republican enclaves in North Georgia and along the coast. In the end, Willkie garnered a total of 46,414 ballots—23,932 from Republicans and 22,482 from Independent Democrats—or 14.8 percent of the vote. That combined figure represented a more than nine-thousand vote improvement over Alf Landon’s showing in 1936, but an overall decline from Hoover’s performance in 1928. Clearly, Willkie had performed well among Independent Democrats whose minds, in the words of Sea Island resident E.E. Johnson, “boggled at the prospect of four more years of whirling dervish government” under FDR. In practically every county outside the GOP’s mountain base in North Georgia, the Independent Democratic ticket outperformed the Republican. More troubling for regular Republicans was the party’s performance vis-à-vis 1928 in the cities and counties that had grown more hospitable to GOP presidential candidates since Herbert Hoover. In Bibb, Chatham, and Richmond counties, the Republican share of the vote actually declined below 1932 levels when Franklin Roosevelt

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<sup>34</sup> Scott E. Buchanan, “*Some of the People Who Ate My Barbecue Didn’t Vote for Me*”: *The Life of Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 23; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 616-618; Tindall, *The Disruption of the Solid South*, 30-34; Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 10-13. For more on the business crusade against the New Deal Order see, Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2009).



carried the state with over 91 percent of the vote. With the Republican Party still struggling under the combined psychological weight of Reconstruction and the Great Depression, the Willkiecrat-GOP alliance simply proved no match for the regular Democratic Party in 1940.<sup>35</sup>

Georgia Republicans had entered the 1940 general election cycle with high hopes that Wendell Willkie's nontraditional campaign could unite independents, conservative Democrats, and Republicans against Roosevelt. When that coalition failed to materialize, political leaders in the state attempted to rationalize the enormity of Willkie's defeat. Those Republicans who had opposed Willkie's nomination blamed the candidate himself. Writing to Senator Robert Taft a month after Election Day, James Crummey asserted, "We had a weak nominee backed by strong issues." Republican state chairman Clint Hager was even more candid in his negative assessment of Willkie. Hager wrote, "I held my nose and voted the ticket in the general election...I am ashamed of that." Indicating his unwillingness to support Willkie or a similar candidate in the future, he declared, "I am not interested in beating Roosevelt if we have to beat him with someone who is more unsound and obnoxious than Roosevelt."<sup>36</sup>

Independent Democrats, meanwhile, blamed the region's hind-bound devotion to the Democratic Party. Devereux Lippitt shared his doubts regarding the future of the Independent movement in Georgia. "It is impossible to undo fifty years of prejudice in two months," Lippitt resigned, "it will take twelve to sixteen years to show any progress." Robert L. Anderson, Sr., the Macon lawyer who headed the Bibb County Independent Democratic Party, reflected this

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<sup>35</sup> Harry Sommers to Richard M. Egan, August 19, 1940, Willkie Clubs Mss.; E.E. Johnson to Wendell Willkie, July 31, 1940 in Series II, Box 21, Folder 4, Dewey Papers; Harry Sommers to Mrs. Henry Breckenridge, August 26, 1940; "Blue Ridge – Willkie for President Club"; "Rossville – Georgia"; "Waycross – Eighth District Willkie Clubs" all in Willkie Clubs Mss.; Mrs. J.E. Hays, ed., *Georgia's Official Register, 1939-1941-1943* (Atlanta?: n.p., n.d.), 550-552; *Georgia's Official Register, 1933-1935-1937* (Atlanta?: n.p., n.d), 646-650; George Brown Tindall, *The Ethnic Southerners* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 138.

<sup>36</sup> James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, December 14, 1940, Political File, Box 124, Folder 2, Taft Papers; Clint W. Hager to R.A. Weaver, February 4, 1944 in Series I, Box 34, Wendell Willkie Papers Mss., Lilly Library Manuscripts Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

impulse to remain within the Democratic Party. “Personally, I think the members of the Independent Democratic organization of Georgia would prefer to retain their allegiance to the principles of democracy,” Anderson informed Oren Root. He continued, “We feel that we are the only Georgia Democrats who have adhered to those principles. We believe in them and wish to continue to stand for them.” Unsurprisingly, the Georgia Republican most instrumental in orchestrating the ill-fated Willkie Club movement, Harry Sommers, blamed Lippitt, his Independent Democratic counterpart. Sommers heaped praise on Democrat Philip Weltner apprising Root that the Atlanta educator “made great sacrifice in the campaign and merits your confidence.” Sommers, however, made no effort to disguise his displeasure with Lippitt. Sommers maintained the Atlanta attorney was “unpopular with those concerned with the campaign and failed to carry out his particular assignment in Fulton County.” Perhaps former GOP state chairman Josiah Rose came closest to identifying the root cause of Willkie’s—and by extension the Republicans’—failure in Georgia. “Many of these Anti-New Dealers who participated in the Willkie Democratic Clubs were not for Mr. Willkie because it was Mr. Willkie, and many of them were open in their expressions before the election that thought it would be better if some other candidate had been nominated,” Rose informed Root in early December 1940. “They voted for Mr. Willkie because he was the nominee of the party against the New Deal.” In short, the Independent Democrats harbored no affinity for Republicans or the GOP. They sought only to rebuke their national party by punishing it at the polls. So long as Georgia Republicans pinned their electoral hopes on winning over aggrieved Democrats, the GOP would remain hopelessly anemic organizationally and electorally.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Devereux H. Lippitt, Jr. to Oren Root, Jr., January 3, 1941; R.L. Anderson to Oren Root, Jr., November 20, 1940; Josiah T. Rose to Oren Root, Jr., December 2, 1940 all in Box 16, Willkie Clubs mss.

Wendell Willkie still harbored presidential ambitions in spite of his previous defeat. While he made no concerted effort to reactivate the Willkie Club network in Georgia or elsewhere, he remained in contact with former supporters from around the country. Although he remained popular personally, the former nominee's standing within the GOP had fallen considerably in the four years since his dark horse campaign in 1940. Public statements questioning the business community's commitment to free-market principles as well as stinging critiques of lingering isolationist tendencies as a reflexive commitment to states' rights within the Republican Party antagonized top party leaders and the rank-and-file alike. Searching for a new standard-bearer, some conservative Republicans floated General Douglas MacArthur as a wartime candidate. Ohio senator Bob Taft remained the most prominent "Old Guard" Republican, but he decided to seek reelection to the U.S. Senate, rather than the presidency, in 1944. Taft endorsed Governor John W. Bricker, a fellow Ohioan, and placed his political operation at his disposal.<sup>38</sup>

Adhering to its longstanding custom, Georgia Republicans returned to their well-worn custom of scheming and sniping after the 1940 presidential election. Republican national committeeman Wilson Williams remained loyal to Wendell Willkie—whom he dubbed "Chief." Williams rarely missed an opportunity to offer Willkie his take of southern politics. For example, Williams sounded the alarm to Willkie press secretary Lem Jones in early 1943 regarding Bricker-Taft activity in the state and section. "Every old timer in the South has been contacted and is beating the tom toms for Bricker," Williams wrote. His concern proved well founded as

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<sup>38</sup> Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 293; Joseph Barnes, *Willkie: The Events He Was Part of—The Ideas He Fought for* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 334; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 100-101; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 376; Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 2, 1939-1944 (Kent, OH and London: The Kent State University Press, 2001), 297-298, 389; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 268-269; For an analysis of that year's proposed MacArthur presidential run see, Phillip J. Briggs, "General MacArthur and the Presidential Election of 1944," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 31-46 and William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 355-363.

state chairman Clint Hager and James Crummey were quietly organizing for Bricker and undermining the sitting national committeeman's position within the party. "If [Bricker] comes to Georgia expecting to get help out of Wilson Williams," Crummey informed Taft, "he will be more than disappointed." Intent on delivering the state for Bricker, he declared, "We are organized and ready, just waiting for the time." Having soured on Willkie since the last election, Harry Sommers resumed his role as Thomas Dewey's point man in Georgia, issuing regular reports on the state's political situation to the governor. "What there is of a Republican organization in the State is split into factions," Sommers relayed to Dewey in late April 1943. "The State Chairman, Clint Hager, is hopelessly at odds with the National Committeeman, Wilson Williams," Sommers concluded, "and there is little likelihood of their being drawn together." Sommers predicted later, "There will no doubt be two delegations going to the National Convention." His prediction proved remarkably prescient.<sup>39</sup>

No Republican presidential candidate campaigned harder in early 1944 than Wendell Willkie, but he finished a disappointing fourth in the New Hampshire primary behind Douglas MacArthur, Thomas Dewey, and former Minnesota governor Harold Stassen. Bricker, meanwhile, declined to enter any primary elections. After further setbacks in other primaries, Willkie withdrew in early April. His abrupt withdrawal seemed to simplify the race in Georgia. Wilson Williams and former national committeeman Benjamin J. Davis had remained squarely behind Willkie despite his steady decline in support nationally. After they both switched their allegiance to Dewey, the majority of Georgia Republicans were aligned with either Dewey or Bricker. For over a year, faction leaders had busied themselves for more than a year in an

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<sup>39</sup> Wilson Williams to Lem Jones, January 23, 1943 in Series I, Box 88, Willkie Papers Mss.; James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, December 31, 1942 in Political File, Box 149, Folder 15, Taft Papers; Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, April 21, 1943 and Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, August 27, 1943 both in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers.

attempt to gain the upper-hand. “Lily-white” Republican leaders opposing Willkie had worked tirelessly to prevent Williams and his “black-and-tan” allies from selecting the state’s national convention delegates. James Crummey, Republican chairman for the Third Congressional District, shared his faction’s panoply of grievances with Senator Robert Taft. “We do have a good organization in Georgia composed of reputable men,” Crummey affirmed, “not striving to build a party here to just control patronage but one that some day pray God will deliver electoral votes to our party nominee.” Neither of those objectives, he maintained, would come to pass if Wilson Williams and his allies remained in power. He claimed Williams desired nothing more than “a party in Georgia he can control and likewise control the patronage and get himself a good position whether we have a president or not.” Crummey and others would not be content “to just beat Williams and Sommers in our next State Convention but crucify them.”<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, Crummey linked former Republican national committeeman Benjamin J. Davis to Williams and Sommers. He reminded Taft, “No political party was more corrupt than the Republican Party in Georgia headed by Davis and the whole state knows it.” In truth, Crummey did not merely oppose Davis’s leadership; he opposed black participation in the Republican Party more generally. “We want an all white Delegation next year,” Crummey informed Taft. “The Negro doesn’t keep himself qualified to vote, disgustingly harmful and costly to any organization in this state, a traitor and sells himself to the highest bidder when

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<sup>40</sup> Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 293-295; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 376; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 102-103; Herbert Brownell with John P. Burke, *Advising Ike: The Memoirs of Attorney General Herbert Brownell* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 50; Ronald H. Snyder, “Wisconsin Ends the Political Career of Wendell Willkie,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 88, no. 1 (Autumn 2004), 39-40. For more on Bricker’s pre-convention campaign efforts see, Richard O. Davies, *Defender of the Old Guard: John Bricker and American Politics* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 80-91; James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, December 31, 1942; James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, August 29, 1943; James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, June 25, 1943 all in Political File, Box 149, Folder 15, Taft Papers. Crummey incorrectly identified Harry Sommers as a Willkie supporter in his correspondence with Taft. Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, May 26, 1944 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; “Georgia GOP Has June Plans,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 2, 1944, p. 7.

we do carry him the National Convention,” Crummey wrote contemptuously. According to Crummey, Wilson Williams carried around the votes of black delegates in his “vest pocket.” Affirming in no uncertain terms that a color line separated the Georgia GOP, Crummey insisted, “I am for a white party in Georgia and so are the other men who are with me for Bricker. We want Willkie, Williams [Josiah T.] Rose, [Harry] Sommers, [Frank C.] Gleason, and Ben Davis to have the Negro.” No doubt Willkie’s outspoken support for strong civil rights and anti-discrimination policies had troubled conservatives like Crummey who feared losing influence within the Republican Party.<sup>41</sup>

The preconvention activities of Williams and Davis convinced Harry Sommers that the pair were indeed seeking to establish a parallel Republican organization separate from the official, lily-white party. Details regarding their gambit emerged in April 1944 approximately one month before Georgia Republicans began holding district and county conventions. The crux of the Williams-Davis plan involved a series of statewide mass conventions that would take place on May 22, the day before the Georgia GOP’s state convention in Atlanta. According to Harry Sommers, these conventions were to be “controlled by Negroes” and would most likely select delegates amenable to whichever candidate Williams or Davis supported. “Now with Willkie out of the picture,” Sommers informed Russell Sprague, Thomas Dewey’s national campaign manager, “their idea apparently is to bring a contesting delegation to Chicago and pass as the Dewey Delegation from Georgia.” If this contested slate managed to win approval before the credentials committee, the state’s entire delegation would be available for Dewey since “Williams and Davis must go along with us in the end.” That Willkie had bowed out and John

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<sup>41</sup> James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, August 29, 1943 in Political File, Box 149, Folder 15, Taft Papers; Adelaide Walker to Russell W. Davenport, April 13, 1944 quoted in Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 102. For a detailed discussion of Wendell Willkie’s views on race see, Simon Topping, *Lincoln’s Lost Legacy: The Republican Party and the African American Vote, 1928-1952* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 59-79.

Bricker mounted a campaign far feeblower than anything Bob Taft might have mustered meant a Dewey victory grew more certain by the day. Despite the potential for controversy, Sommers reported confidently to Dewey headquarters on April 18, "The situation is well in hand and when the time comes, the entire Georgia Delegation will be available on the first ballot." The events that unfolded in late May belied Sommers's calm demeanor and confident prediction and ruptured the Georgia Republican Party into two warring factions.<sup>42</sup>

The tumult erupted when the Republican State Central Committee of Georgia gavelled into session around noon on May 22 to grapple with the factional scheming. In an apparent effort to wrest control of the meeting, Frank A. Doughman omitted the twenty-two African-American state central committee members from the roll. When attendees objected, lily-white leader H.H. Turner, the meeting's parliamentarian, ruled the protests out of order. His maneuver failed when W. Roscoe (W.R.) Tucker of Dawsonville took charge as temporary state chairman. Tucker and the central committee first had to settle the legitimacy of several county delegations. The most pressing controversy stemmed from a handful of counties that sent predominantly African-American slates to Atlanta for the state convention. In Fulton County, white Republicans had dominated two meetings while the third, organized and overseen by Benjamin Davis, was composed of approximately two hundred African Americans and a handful of white Republicans, including Josiah Rose who became county chairman. In Chatham County, all-out political warfare between Gilbert Johnson, a white attorney from Savannah, and Louis B. Toomer, an African-American banker. Toomer and his fellow delegates from the First Congressional District belonged Williams-Davis delegation while Johnson had allegedly colluded with Clint Hager and other lily-white Republicans to deny African Americans

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<sup>42</sup> Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, September 27, 1943; Harry Sommers to Russell Sprague, April 18, 1944; Harry Sommers to Paul E. Lockwood, April 18, 1944 all in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 438.

prominent roles within the state party. Roscoe Tucker dealt a blow to the lily-white cause when he and the state central committee unseated Gilbert Johnson, approved Benjamin Davis, and settled all but one delegate contest in favor of the African-American petitioners. Bertha M. Field, the white national committeewoman, resigned in protest over the lily-white faction's efforts. "At a time when unity is so important there are those who had practiced disunity," Field asserted in a public statement. "They have pitted race against race and class against class to an extent that may well destroy any chance which the Party may have to win the National Election," she claimed before renouncing her post. She closed with a fiery castigation of the lily-white faction and its cause. How could her fellow white Republicans hear the statements and testimony recounting the travails of their fellow party members "and continue to blame the Negroes for the condition in which our Party finds itself today." Her outburst was a portent of events to come.<sup>43</sup>

M.L. St. John, a reporter at the *Atlanta Constitution*, referred to the 1944 state convention as "the racial fight for control over the party in Georgia." The bickering and chicanery on display at the central committee meeting devolved into two separate, competing state conventions, which, in turn, produced two competing delegations to the Republican National Convention. The state convention opened in the Fulton County Courthouse, but Frank Doughman and Harry Sommers had rented Taft Hall in the Municipal Auditorium to accommodate the anticipated crowd of delegates, contested delegates, party members, and curious onlookers. Clint Hager, retiring state party chairman offered a motion to reconvene at Taft Hall, but several African-American Republicans from Atlanta including John H. Calhoun, Benjamin Davis, and John

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<sup>43</sup> Bertha M. Field, Statement, in W.R. Tucker, "Before the Republican National Committee, 1944" in RCP-25861, Folder 1 in Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1944-1958 (002-02-060) 11 1983-0305A 4518-15, Georgia Archives, University System of Georgia, Morrow, GA; Lewis Paul Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," (master's thesis, Emory University, 1947), 74-76; M.L. St. John, "Negroes Seek GOP Control," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 23, 1944, p. 5; Albert S. Anderson to Ben W. Fortson, [May 1948] in RCB-13963, Folder 11 in Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07).



Wesley Dobbs protested. They worried the lily-white faction intended to bar black Republicans from entering the Hall as a means of ousting them from the party. After Davis's motion to table Hager's proposal failed, Frank Doughman began calling the roll. This formality proceeded uneventfully until he read Gilbert Johnson's name in place of L.B. Toomer. Wilson Williams, joined by Ben Davis and several others, protested the switch at which point the convention descended into a cacophonous competition to be heard and recognized. In an apparent effort to regain some semblance of order, Hager preempted Doughman and called the question on reconvening to Taft Hall. The chairman asked for all those in favor; a chorus of "ayes" answered him, and Hager adjourned the meeting without calling for those opposed. Hager, Doughman, and other lily-white Republican leaders including James W. Arnold, H.H. Turner, and all ten district chairman (except Josiah Rose whose legitimacy remained questionable) marched out of the courtroom. What had begun as a disagreement among intraparty rivals had finally led to a physical separation of the two factions.<sup>44</sup>

Republican national committeeman Wilson Williams reconvened the 267 delegates who had remained behind at the Fulton County Courthouse. All but three African-American delegates had remained with Williams while three black Republicans from Johnson County accounted for the entirety of lily-white diversity. Wilson nominated Roscoe Tucker to serve as state party chairman, and the convention approved overwhelmingly. The new "Tucker faction" discarded the national convention delegates selected at the district level, and, instead, elected a full slate from the state at-large. The Tucker convention also instructed that delegation to cast its votes for Thomas Dewey at the national convention. Interestingly, James Crummey had remained behind

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<sup>44</sup> M.L. St. John, "Georgia GOP Splits; Both Sides Back Dewey," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 24, 1944, p. 1; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 438-439; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 76-79; *Minutes of the Republican State Convention of Georgia Held in Fulton County Courthouse, Atlanta, Georgia, May 23, 1944* in RCB-13963, Folder 14, Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07).

at the Fulton County Courthouse, served on the Tucker faction's credentials committee, and voted in favor of sending a delegation bound to Dewey. His political conversion seems to have been one borne out of Dewey's perceived inevitability rather than the New York governor's policies. Writing to Dewey's long-serving executive assistant, Paul Lockwood, Harry Sommers warned the campaign against trusting or investing in Crummey. He admitted, "While we want him with us, I have no intention of assisting him financially in return for his support." For his part, Sommers tried to play peacemaker between the two factions, but he learned quickly that no accord between the warring could be brokered before the convention.<sup>45</sup>

Led out of the county courthouse by Hager and Doughman, the lily-white Republicans reconvened in the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium on the afternoon of May 23. That group's 210 delegates elected Roy G. Foster of Wadley to succeed Clint Hager as state chairman. Henceforth known in political circles as the "Foster faction," this splinter group followed established party protocol by endorsing the ten delegates sent to the state convention from the districts and selected four at-large delegates to round out its delegation. Unlike the Tucker faction, the Foster group declined to bind its delegates to any candidate, but press reports suggested the majority of delegates chosen at the Foster convention recognized Dewey's strength and were likely to cast their ballots for the New York governor anyway. Having shuttled between the two conventions before "[giving] it up as a bad job," Harry Sommers relayed his assessment to Dewey three days later. "Based on close observation of the relative merits of the two groups," Sommers wrote, "I honestly believe that the Williams-Davis Group is entitled to be seated in Chicago." Anticipating an "outright row" at the Republican National Convention, Sommers suggested the Tucker faction

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<sup>45</sup> Harry Sommers to Paul E. Lockwood, April 19, 1944 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; St. John, "Georgia GOP Splits; Both Sides Back Dewey," 1, 5; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 78; *Minutes of the Republican State Convention of Georgia Held in Fulton County Courthouse, Atlanta, Georgia, May 23, 1944*; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 438.

should “emphasize discrimination against the Negroes in the party in Georgia” to undermine the Foster faction’s legitimacy and burnish its own.<sup>46</sup>

The two competing delegations traveled to Chicago at the end of June, and both groups presented their cases to the assembled Republican National Committee on June 24. The Tucker organization stressed their lily-white rivals’ determination to oust African Americans from the Georgia GOP high command. The Foster organization, meanwhile, highlighted the Tucker faction’s failure to identify official delegates as well as its irregular method of selecting statewide delegates. Ultimately, the RNC ruled in favor of Tucker’s mixed-race delegation. After the Foster faction lost its appeal before the RNC’s Credentials Committee, the Tucker organization emerged as the state’s official delegation. Wilson Williams won reelection as Republican National Committeeman from Georgia while Harry Sommers chaired the delegation on the convention floor. Unlike the 1940 floor fight, Dewey romped his way to the nomination winning every vote with the exception of a single Wisconsinite who cast his vote for Douglas MacArthur. The convention nominated Dewey’s chief opponent, John Bricker, for vice president. Called “an honest Harding” by the acerbic Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Bricker balanced the ticket ideologically and geographically.<sup>47</sup>

Not content to wage political war against the Democrats alone, the Foster Faction challenged the Tucker organization’s legal right to appoint the state’s slate of Republican

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<sup>46</sup> Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, May 26, 1944 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; St. John, “Georgia GOP Splits; Both Sides Back Dewey,” p. 1; Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 79; *Record of Proceedings* [Minutes of the Republican State Convention of Georgia Held in Taft Hall, Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta, Georgia, May 23, 1944] in RCB-25861, Folder 1 - Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1944-1958 (002-02-060) 11 1983-0305A 4518-15; U.P., “Racial Clash In Georgia,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1944, p. 12; M.L. St. John, “Republicans Are Also Divided,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 28, 1944, Sec. C, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Alice Roosevelt Longworth quoted in Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 296; Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 80-81; AP, “Georgia Group Seated by GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 23, 1944, p. 20; “Dewey’s Delegate Vote By States Is Tabulated,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1944, p. 22; Gladstone Williams, “Reputed Bricker Man, Rose Concedes to Dewey,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 28, 1944, p. 2; *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Republican National Convention Held in Chicago, Illinois: June 26, 27, and 28, 1944* (Washington D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, 1944), 204-205; Davies, *Defender of the Old Guard*, 92.

presidential electors. Georgia law required the secretary of state, Democrat John B. Wilson, to rule on the matter. After hearing from both sides, Wilson ruled in favor of the Foster group. Wilson noted in his “Statement of Facts” that the Tucker faction’s attorneys “did not deny any portion of the evidence submitted by the [Clint] Hager group...[nor] did they deny the truthfulness of any statement made by counsel or by any members of the Hager group at the [August 9] hearing.” Moreover, Wilson recognized the Foster faction had adhered to Republican Party rules while the Tucker-led convention deviated from those guidelines. The Secretary of State affirmed the Foster faction’s right to select the state’s twelve presidential electors, which included six Independent Democrats—including Mabel Pollard of Savannah, G. Pierce King of Augusta, and Robert L. Anderson of Macon—whose names appeared on both the Republican and Independent Democratic Party lines.<sup>48</sup>

Wilson’s ruling elicited howls of protest from both the RNC and the Dewey campaign. Herbert Brownell, Jr., Dewey’s campaign manager and recently elected RNC chairman, issued a strongly worded statement promising swift legal action guaranteeing the political rights of Georgians “regardless of race or color.” Brownell also criticized Wilson for endorsing “the bogus Republicans” rejected previously by the RNC and its Credentials Committee. Sensing an opportunity to use the controversy in Georgia to boost African-American turnout nationwide, Brownell announced that he had met with African-American leaders from around the country to coordinate the Dewey campaign’s messaging regarding “the rights of Negro citizens which are constantly being flouted by New Deal leaders.” Wilson replied with a statement of his own calling Brownell’s accusations as “amusing, ridiculous and apparently made in utter ignorance.”

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<sup>48</sup> John B. Wilson, “Statement of Facts of Principal Points at Hearing August 9, 1944,” and Roy G. Foster and Frank A. Doughman to John B. Wilson, August 9, 1944 both in RCB-25861, Folder 1, Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1944-1958 (002-02-060) 11 1983-0305A 4518-15; Julian Harris, “Hager Group Wins Georgia GOP Place,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1944, p. 9; Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 81-82.

Seeking to undermine Brownell's case, Wilson cited the unpredictable James Crummey. Exhibiting a propensity to shift alliances with considerable alacrity, Crummey had turned coat again and testified on behalf of the Foster organization at the national convention in Chicago. Although Wilson was most likely unaware of Crummey's distaste for African-American participation in Republican politics, he actually bolstered Brownell's overall point. The legal battle reached all the way to the Georgia Supreme Court, which heard Tucker's appeal for a writ of mandamus enjoining Wilson from certifying the Foster slate. The high court denied the petition on October 6. With the case settled, Wilson fired off a rancorous note to Brownell. Beginning almost every paragraph with an accusatory "You know," the Secretary of State posited Brownell's gambit had done nothing except to "bring out the ugly and deceitful plane of [his] intellect." FDR's victory over Dewey must have elicited from Wilson more than a modicum of self-satisfaction.<sup>49</sup>

In defeat, Dewey became the fourth and final Republican presidential candidate to fall victim to FDR. Dewey had certainly improved on Willkie's showing nationally—winning 12 states, 99 electoral votes, and almost 46 percent of the popular vote. In Georgia, Dewey's 56,507 votes more than doubled the Republican tally from 1940 and a 10,000-vote improvement on that year's combined Republican-Independent Democratic ticket. Although he carried only two counties, Fannin and Pickens, Dewey performed well in several other North Georgia counties.

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<sup>49</sup> Ralph B. Jordan, "Suit Promised to End Dispute Over Georgia's GOP Electors," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 17, 1944, p. 15; Statement of John B. Wilson, Secretary of State, August 17, 1944 and John B. Wilson to Herbert Brownell, Jr., October 7, 1944 both in RCB-25861, Folder 1, Secretary of State – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1944-1958 (002-02-060) 11 1983-0305A 4518-15; AP, "Court Action Seen in G.O.P. Georgia Split," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1944, p. 3; AP, "G.O.P. Fights Georgia Factional Slate," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 28, 1944, p. 5; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 81-82; *Tucker et. al. v. Wilson* (1944) 198 Ga. 474 – 15038. Unable to oust Crummey from its delegation, the Tucker faction subsequently replaced him with Columbus hotelier Jack Walton on its list of presidential electors. See, W.R. Tucker to John B. Wilson, August 8, 1944 in RCB-25861, Folder 1, Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1944-1958 (002-02-060) 11 1983-0305A 4518-15.

The New York governor also outperformed Wendell Willkie in key population centers like DeKalb, Fulton, and Chatham counties. Seventeen percent of DeKalb County voters backed the Republican nominee—a more than 10 percent increase from 1940. The Independent Democrats’ share, meanwhile, plummeted from approximately 11.9 percent in 1940 to 0.5 percent four years later. Fulton County voters delivered 15.9 percent of the vote to Dewey via the Republican ballot while an additional 1.2 percent voting Independent Democrat—a steep decline from 1940 when 9.2 percent of residents voted “Willkiecratic.” Similarly, 17.8 percent of Chatham voters supported Dewey in 1944 where the Independent Democratic share of the vote declined from approximately 10 percent in 1940 to just over 1 percent four years later. Dewey’s economic and civil rights programs certainly appealed to two key demographics in urban centers like Atlanta, Savannah, and Macon—upper-income white professionals and African Americans. First explored by Numan Bartley, this nascent coalition of affluent whites and blacks from all socioeconomic backgrounds would develop over the next two decades into “a somewhat unnatural but nevertheless effective alliance” in metropolitan politics. In an calculated effort to expand the party’s base and finally win back the White House in 1948, RNC chairman Herbert Brownell released a statement in 1945 reminding his fellow Republicans of the “real need for national legislation which will improve the position of the Negro race and constructive proposals dealing with such matters as the poll tax, lynching laws, fair employment practices and other matters of concern to this important minority group.” Exhorting the party to “dedicate itself in fact and spirit to the goal of helping our Negro citizens to create for themselves a lasting measure of prosperity,” The RNC chairman recognized not only a moral prerogative but also a political opportunity. If the federal government could remove the barriers to African-American suffrage

in the South and elsewhere, the GOP might win back northern black voters and increase turnout among southern blacks who remained, by and large, loyal to the “party of Lincoln.”<sup>50</sup>

President Franklin Roosevelt’s death on April 12, 1945, fewer than three months into his fourth term, shook American politics. With Roosevelt dead and Harry S. Truman in office, Republicans aspired for a postwar political revival. This hope materialized during the 1946 midterm elections. Republicans rode a wave of voter discontent sufficient to retake U.S. House and Senate for the first time since 1933. Many emboldened Republicans viewed their mandate as a belated rejection of the New Deal. Having framed the election as a stark choice between “Communism and Republicanism” B. Carroll Reece, Tennessee congressman and RNC chairman, exemplified the confident mood of resurgent Republicans. For better or worse, opposition to FDR and liberalism had defined Republican politics at the national level. How that would influence the 1948 presidential campaign remained an open question.<sup>51</sup>

The Republican Party had a long history of denying unsuccessful presidential candidates a second chance at the office. Since Dewey had received the party’s nod in 1944 and lost, Ohio senator Bob Taft appeared to be next in line for the nomination. He had much to commend him. Taft became the Senate Republican Policy Committee’s inaugural chairman when the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress convened in January 1947. Taft and the GOP scored a significant legislative victory in June 1947 when the Taft-Hartley Labor Management Relations Act amended major portions of the landmark 1935 Wagner Act. The Ohio senator also boasted high name recognition and an

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<sup>50</sup> Numan V. Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace: Political Tendencies in Georgia, 1948-1968* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 47; Herbert Brownell, “Chairman’s Report, Indianapolis,” January 22, 1945 quoted in Topping, *Lincoln’s Lost Legacy*, 104; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 1944; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1945-1950* (Atlanta: n.p., n.d.), 430-433; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1933-1935-1937*, 646-650. For a thorough examination of African-American defections from the GOP to the Democratic Party during the 1930s and 1940s see, Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>51</sup> Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 310; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 117. For the most recent analysis of the 1948 presidential election see Andrew E. Busch, *Truman’s Triumphs: The 1948 Election and the Making of Postwar America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012).

extensive network of supporters especially in the South and Midwest.<sup>52</sup> Republicans, however, were hardly unanimous in their support of Taft, whose prickly manner and solemn demeanor led journalist Richard Rovere to describe him as a “man of impregnably parochial culture and of a personality even less beguiling...than that of the late Calvin Coolidge.” Taft’s campaign organization had also grown rather antiquated and out-of-touch, and his penchant for isolationism, which stood thoroughly discredited in the wake of World War II and the emergent Cold War gave pause to Republicans likely to support Taft.<sup>53</sup>

Taft’s perceived weaknesses convinced a handful of Republicans to offer themselves as candidates including Governor Dewey who ignored precedent by retaining the bulk of his presidential campaign staff who continued to expand the New Yorker’s national support network. To that end, the governor supported and signed a raft of progressive legislation killing closed-shop legislation backed by anti-labor conservatives, and even called for expanding the Truman Doctrine’s containment policy, all of which served to differentiate him from Taft.<sup>54</sup>

Although the contest drew a bevy of contenders from past presidential aspirant Harold Stassen to General Douglas MacArthur, who was still serving as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan, entered the race at the behest of prominent conservative publishers

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<sup>52</sup> Roy V. Peel, “The 1948 Preconvention Campaign,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 259 (September 1948), 81-82; Ralph M. Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees: Factionalism at the Top* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), 486-490; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 116; Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 49-50; F. Suzanne Bowers, *Republican, First, Last, and Always: A Biography of B. Carroll Reece* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 64-65.

<sup>53</sup> Richard H. Rovere, “Taft: Is This The Best We’ve Got?” *Harper’s Magazine*, April 1948, 289; William S. White, *The Taft Story* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 119; David Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 36; Joyner, *The Republican Dilemma*, 21, 76; Busch, *Truman’s Triumphs*, 10, 48. Taft, like the Republican Party, had forsaken much of its traditional isolationism by 1948, but many, especially in the press, viewed his foreign policy credentials with considerable skepticism.

<sup>54</sup> Simon Topping, “‘Never Argue with the Gallup Poll’: Thomas Dewey, Civil Rights and the Election of 1948,” *Journal of American Studies* 38, no. 2 (August 2004), 182-183; Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey in His Times*, 470-472; Peel, “The 1948 Preconvention Campaign,” 84.



Colonel Robert R. McCormick and William Randolph Hearst, but withdrew later.<sup>55</sup> The race, however, centered on Dewey and Taft and their conflicting personalities and policies. Likewise, Georgia Republicans remained divided into the warring Tucker and Foster factions, and these two national campaigns sought to capitalize on this rancor for political advantage. Indeed, historian Michael Bowen has argued Herb Brownell, Dewey's campaign manager, launched an initiative to cultivate new, young Republican leaders willing to challenge pro-Taft leaders or establish new Republican organizations wholesale. Make no mistake, however, Georgia's two Republican factions were already firmly established by the time Brownell initiated his "southern strategy" in late 1947. Veterans of unrelenting, internecine conflict on both sides were well positioned to boost their candidate of choice during the 1948 Republican nomination campaign.<sup>56</sup>

Tucker Republicans remained closely aligned with Dewey between 1944 and 1948, and Brownell set out early to lock down their support. Although identified with state party chairman Roscoe Tucker, Republican national committeeman Wilson Williams served as the pro-Dewey faction's spokesman and chief political strategist during this cycle. Determined to leave the Georgia Republican Party a more professional, respectable, and effective political organization than he found it in the 1920s and 1930s, Williams had led the fight in Georgia against the so-called "forces of reaction" for decades. Offering Brownell a "frank and candid appraisal...of the

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<sup>55</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 386; Manchester, *American Caesar*, 521; Richard Norton Smith, *The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick, 1880-1955* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 472; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 118; Michael Bowen, "The First Southern Strategy: The Taft and Dewey/Eisenhower Factions in the GOP," in *Painting Dixie Red: When, Where, Why, and How the South Became Republican*, ed. Glen Feldman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 222-223.

<sup>56</sup> Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 118; Bowen, "The First Southern Strategy," 222-223; Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Time*, 494-495; Brownell, *Advising Ike*, 72-73.

policies, plans, and procedures of the Dewey campaign,” Williams served as an influential and effective Dewey surrogate in the ensuing battle against Taft campaign and the Foster faction.<sup>57</sup>

Joining Tucker and Williams was Harry Sommers who remained Dewey’s chief political liaison in Georgia. In that role, Sommers relayed updates concerning party affairs and rival campaign activity in the state. He also assisted Brownell in wooing black Republicans to Dewey’s standard. Two such recruits were John Wesley Dobbs, a retired railway mail service clerk, and attorney Elbert Tuttle. Both Dobbs and Tuttle had been active Republicans for a number of years, but neither had worked closely with any national campaigns. Dobbs had worked closely with former Republican national committeeman Benjamin J. Davis before emerging as one of Georgia’s leading African-American Republicans when Davis passed away in 1945. Known throughout Atlanta as “The Grand,” a moniker derived from his status as Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masonic Grand Lodge of Georgia, Dobbs exerted his influence promoting African-American civil and political rights. A founding director of the black-owned Citizens Trust Bank and a member of the Atlanta NAACP, Dobbs was a pillar of Atlanta’s black establishment, and that is how Harry Sommers described him to Governor Dewey in early 1947. “He is very important and trustworthy,” Sommers confided, “I don’t believe you have a more sincere supporter in the country than he is.” With Davis dead, Sommers recognized “the Grand’s” obvious value to the Tucker faction and Dewey campaign. Indeed, Dobbs proved essential to solidifying support for Dewey with black Republicans like B.F. Cofer, Davis’s erstwhile business manager at the *Atlanta Independent* and William J. Shaw, Davis’s former

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<sup>57</sup> Wilson Williams to Wendell Willkie, April 6, 1944 in Series 1, Box 88, Willkie Papers Mss.; Wilson Williams to Herbert Brownell, January 10, 1946 and Harry Sommers to Tom Stephens, January 13, 1947 both in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers. According to Harry Sommers, he traveled to New York as early as February 1947 to meet with Dewey—well in advance of declaring his candidacy. “I am glad to get started on plans for the future, because when you carry plans out in a leisurely way and do things thoroughly, rather than in hast, it always makes for a better jobs, and it will be a real privilege to work with our friends in New York.” See, Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, February 25, 1947 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers.

secretary at the *Atlanta Independent*. Dobbs also brought along his “right-hand man,” John H. Calhoun. Calhoun had begun his career at National Benefit Life Insurance and later joined prominent black-owned Atlanta businesses like Cornelius King Realty and the *Atlanta Daily World*.<sup>58</sup>

Elbert Tuttle was a rising star in Atlanta’s burgeoning white business establishment. Born in Hawaii to lifelong Republicans, Tuttle graduated from Cornell University Law School in 1923 and relocated to Atlanta the same year. Tuttle and his brother-in-law William Sutherland founded Sutherland & Tuttle (later renamed Sutherland, Tuttle & Brennan) in 1924. Tuttle solidified his social status by joining the elite Piedmont Driving Club in 1925. Unimpressed with state sorry state of Republican politics in Atlanta, Tuttle nevertheless joined the Fulton County Republican Party in the 1930s and served as president for a brief period in 1940 before deploying with his Georgia National Guard unit. Tuttle attended the national convention in 1936 and 1940, and he would most likely have traveled to Chicago in 1944 had he not been commanding an artillery battalion in South Pacific at the time. After the war, Tuttle restarted his promising legal career and planned to curtail political activity. Harry Sommers, however, had other plans. He reached out to Governor Dewey via Thomas Stephens. According to Stephens, Tuttle was inclined to support the governor but Sommers believed the attorney needed “a little ‘buttering up.’” Dewey heeded Sommers’s advice, letting Tuttle know in late 1947 that he was “delighted to know of

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.; Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, December 26, 1946 and February 11, 1947 both in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; Gary M. Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Race and Family* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 180, 123; Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, March 3, 1947 in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Stephen G.N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 38, 59; Donald L. Grant with Jonathan Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1993), 259, 262-263; “John Wesley Dobbs: A Biographical Sketch—1959” in Series 1, Subseries 1.2, Box 11, Folder 2, Gary M. Pomerantz Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta GA; John Wesley Dobbs to Thomas E. Dewey, February 28, 1947; Harry Sommers to John Wesley Dobbs, March 3, 1947; Thomas E. Dewey to John Wesley Dobbs, March 3, 1947 all in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Herman E. Mason, Jr., *Black Atlanta in the Roaring Twenties* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1997), 18; Clifford M. Kuhn, Harlon E. Joye, and E. Bernard West, *Living Atlanta: An Oral History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 331, 347.

your interest and want you to know how very much I appreciate it...It is mighty good of you to undertake to help and I am grateful to you for it,” and suggesting they meet next time Tuttle happened to be in Albany or New York City.<sup>59</sup>

Bob Taft, meanwhile, turned once again to John Marshall to hustle delegates in the South. Assisting him there was John Gordon Bennett—grandson of *New York Herald* founder James Gordon Bennett, Sr.—who served as Taft’s chief southern fieldworker. In Georgia, Taft’s team relied primarily on those Republicans who had supported his unsuccessful nomination bid in 1940, and most of those Republicans identified with the Foster faction. Although Foster’s own views on African-American participation in Republican politics were far more inclusive than Clint Hager’s, he still enjoyed the loyalty of “lily-white” Republicans in Georgia. Backing Foster were such familiar conservative Republicans as James Arnold, Louis H. Crawford, Gilbert Johnson, Roscoe Pickett Sr. as well as his son Roscoe Jr., and H.H. Turner. James Crummey had also returned to the lily-white fold and pledged renewed fealty to Taft. One particularly important addition was Josiah Rose. An Ohio native, Rose had always preferred a more conservative alternative to Dewey. Following his defection from the Tucker faction, Rose informed Gilbert Johnson, “After full consideration on my part and following the dictates of my judgement...I have declared myself openly for Senator Taft, and I have ‘burned all bridges behind me.’”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas E. Stephens to PEL [Paul E. Lockwood], November 15, 1947; Thomas E. Dewey to Elbert P. Tuttle, November 16, 1947; Elbert P. Tuttle to Thomas E. Dewey, November 22, 1947 all in Series 5, Box 192, Folder 6, Dewey Papers; Tuttle, Elbert P., Interviewed by Clifford Kuhn, 10 April 1992, P1992-05, Series L. Portraits of the Past, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta; Judge Elbert Tuttle, Interview Transcript in Series 1, Subseries 1.2, Box 5, Folder 17, Pomerantz Papers; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 44-45, 80-81.

<sup>60</sup> Josiah T. Rose to Gilbert Johnson, November 6, 1947; Josiah T. Rose to Senator Taft, November 7, 1948; T.A. Chastain to Robert A. Taft, March 4, 1947 both in Political File, Box 177, Folder 7, Taft Papers; Memorandum: Coverage of the States and Field Men in Political File, Box 230, Folder 3, Taft Papers; Taft Slate – Georgia in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 18, Dewey Papers; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 376, 416; Michael Bowen, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North

Taft's organization recognized the high level of support the senator enjoyed among conservative white southerners who approved his anti-union, small-government, states' rights brand of conservatism. This admiration came not only from Republicans but also southern Democrats who bristled at their national party's continuing leftward drift on those matters. Few issues bolstered Taft's reputation among conservative whites more than his opposition to the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). Established via executive order in 1941 to mollify national civil rights activists, the FEPC prohibited racial discrimination in defense industries and required nondiscrimination clauses in all federal defense contracts. Largely a symbolic victory for the nascent civil rights movement, the FEPC achieved relatively little in the way of redressing systematic bias and discrimination in the workplace. Still, white southerners who feared the FEPC might seriously undercut the Jim Crow were delighted that Taft had joined with his Democratic colleagues to curtail and kill the commission in June 1946. Dewey meanwhile had signed New York's own version of the FEPC into law in 1945. Taft's steadfast opposition to the FEPC trumped his tacit support for federal anti-lynching and anti-poll tax measures in the minds of some embittered Georgia Democrats like A.F. Smith, a self-proclaimed "small businessman" from Fairburn, Georgia, who wrote to thank him for his efforts and to assure the senator that he shared his disgust for "our New Deal bureaucratic leadership" who sought "more Gestapo Groups drawing the tax payer's money...to force upon the South the mixing of the white and colored races." W.E. Bowen of Atlanta agreed. "A great many Southern Democrats will like what you say about States' Rights," Bowen claimed, "And a lot of us are ready to vote Republican because of Mr. Truman's anti-segregation commitments." Fed up and seemingly out of options, these voters looked to Taft as a plausible alternative. All the goodwill among

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Carolina Press, 2011), 62-63; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 83 n.44; *Georgia's Official Register*, 101-102; Williams, "Reputed Bricker Man, Rose Concedes to Dewey," p. 2.

aggrieved Georgia Democrats would mean little, however, unless Taft secured the state's delegates and, eventually, the Republican presidential nomination in Philadelphia.<sup>61</sup>

Taft was a less consistent ally than many white Georgians apparently recognized, for despite his opposition to the FEPC, he admitted it was "hard to find good arguments against" federal legislation seeking to outlaw poll taxes and clamp down on increasing incidents of lynching, especially in the South. This nuanced position complicated Taft's campaign in Georgia. On one hand, he had to maintain his core support among conservative whites, and, on the other, he needed to bolster his reputation among African Americans who remained extremely influential in the state's Republican politics. Recognizing Taft's predicament, Josiah Rose convinced Roy Foster to tone down the hostility toward African Americans that had long defined the lily-white faction. Rose also suggested increased outreach efforts in the black community to diminish Governor Dewey's sizeable advantage among not only the state's black Republicans. "As a purely local matter affecting the election of colored delegates to the Philadelphia convention," by doing "what I can to bring about a different attitude among the Negroes regarding you," Rose pledged Taft. Although not a Taft supporter, John H. Calhoun exhorted the senator "to convince the vested interests that the principles of Democracy must be extended to all citizens in America as well as the rest of the world." Although Dewey enjoyed strong support in

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<sup>61</sup> A.F. Smith to Robert A. Taft, February 10, 1948 in Political File, Box 178, Folder 1, Taft Papers; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 713-715; Dewey W. Grantham, *The South in Modern America: A Region at Odds* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 182-184, 195-196; Feldman, *The Irony of the Solid South*, 170-172, 185; Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, 39-40, 75-83; Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., "'Be Patient and Satisfied with Their Progress Thus Far': Senator Robert A. Taft's Opposition to a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission, 1944-1950," *Ohio History* 120 (2013), 92-95; Glenn Feldman, *The Great Melding: War, the Dixiecrat Rebellion, and the Southern Model for America's New Conservatism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015), 42-43; Topping, "'Never Argue with the Gallup Poll,'" 183, 187. For a detailed explanation of the ideological underpinnings of Taft's opposition to a permanent FEPC see, Robert A. Taft, "Speech at Kenyon College," October 5, 1946 in Wunderlin, Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 3, 192-201.

the state, Georgia Republicans of all races afforded Taft the opportunity to improve his own position throughout the long pre-convention campaign.<sup>62</sup>

All in all, Taft attempted to have it both ways on the issue of civil rights in the South that year. Responding to Rose's offers of support, Taft replied with documents claiming to show "how consistently I have been on [African Americans'] side on every matter except the extreme form of the FEPC bill." To that end, Taft planned to introduce substitute legislation "setting up a permanent commission to undertake a general improvement in the employment situation among negroes," and he promised Calhoun new public housing legislation. Ultimately, Taft hoped these bills and his continued support for federal anti-poll tax and anti-lynching legislation would boost his support among black voters. Although it may have improved his standing among African Americans, this political calculation dismayed conservative whites like Savannah automobile salesman M.A. Russell who reacted to the senator's refusal to collaborate with anti-civil rights Democrats by noting that "Taft has been well thought of in the South, and it is indeed discouraging to see that he has lined up with the Reds, Liberals, N.Y. foreigners, etc. against the AMERICANS of the South in the iniquitous 'Civil Rights' legislation." Likewise, Mrs. E. Stewart, chair of the Atlanta's Women's Republican Study Club, warned Taft his public statements supporting anti-lynching and other civil rights legislation "has disturbed many of your friends here." Taft or his campaign aides often replied to such missives by affirming the senator's support for the anti-lynching and anti-poll tax bills but hastened to add that he disapproved of Truman's plan to revive and expand the FEPC. Ultimately, Taft's clumsy attempt

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<sup>62</sup> Robert A. Taft to Stanley M. Rowe, December 31, 1946 in Wunderlin, Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 3, 235-236; Josiah T. Rose to Robert A. Taft, November 7, 1947 and Josiah T. Rose to Robert A. Taft, January 30, 1948; Robert A. Taft to Josiah T. Rose, February 5, 1948 all in Political File, Box 177, Folder 9, Taft Papers; J.H. Calhoun to Robert A. Taft, February 29, 1948 in Political File, Box 177, Folder 7, Taft Papers.

to play both sides of a contentious issue failed by alienating black Republicans in a ploy to sway white conservatives.<sup>63</sup>

While Taft sought to improve his crossover appeal, the Tucker faction began plotting an audacious scheme to deliver the state's national convention delegates to Governor Dewey. While Wilson Williams proposed selecting delegates in a presidential preference primary, some of his Tucker faction counterparts remained unconvinced.<sup>64</sup> Harry Sommers seemed reluctant to endorse any primary gambit without the Dewey campaign's explicit approval. "While the idea of the Primary has been talked for some time," Sommers relayed to Thomas Stephens in late July 1947, "Wilson has never gotten to the point as he did in the last meeting where he seemed definite in feel that it is the thing to do." Sommers suggested, "I think it should be discussed with the others in New York and everyone would have to be in complete accord in their approval of the idea, or we couldn't go ahead with it." Sommers opposed the idea publicly—calling it "unnecessary and unfeasible." Nevertheless, Williams and Tucker announced in late January

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<sup>63</sup> Robert A. Taft to Josiah T. Rose, December 27, 1948 and Robert A. Taft to George H. Bender, January 21, 1948 both in Wunderlin, Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 3, 353-354 and Robert A. Taft to Josiah T. Rose, February 5, 1948; M.A. Russell to Clarence J. Brown, April 14, 1948; Clarence J. Brown to M.A. Russell, April 19, 1944 all in Political File, Box 177, Folder 9, Taft Papers; Robert A. Taft to J.H. Calhoun, March 4, 1948; J. Connie Covington, February 5, 1948 all in Political File, Box 177, Folder 7, Taft Papers; J.G. Hollis to Robert Taft, February 29, 1948 in Political File, Box 177, Folder 8, Taft Papers; Mrs. E. Stewart to Robert A. Taft, May 6, 1948 in Political File, Box 178, Folder 1, Taft Papers. Apparently Taft's own statements recognizing the improbability of a Republican presidential candidate receiving significant support from southern Democrats failed to alter his campaign strategy. See, Taft to Rowe, December 31, 1946 in Wunderlin, Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 3, 235-236. Political scientist Alexander Heard noted African-American Republicans in the South almost always backed candidates pledging to support a permanent and potent FEPC. See, Heard, *A Two-Party South*, 214.

<sup>64</sup> Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, 294; Alexander Heard, *A Two-Party South?* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 105-106; Thomas L. Stokes, "GOP Primaries in South To Break Taft Hold," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 12, 1946, p. 8; Editorial, "Democracy in the GOP Ranks," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 13, 1946, p. 8; "State Republican Committee Slates Year-End Meeting to Five Primary," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 24, 1947, p. 1; AP, "South's GOP Oppose Idea Of Primaries," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1946, Sec. A, p. 6; Matt Winn Williamson, "Contemporary Tendencies toward a Two-Party System in Georgia," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1969), 28-29. Wilson Williams claimed to have supported a preferential primary since joining the Republican Party in 1916. See, John Couric, "State Republican Committee Slates Year-End Meeting to Fix Primary," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 24, 1947, p. 1.



1948 their intention to hold a preferential primary on May 11 open to all Georgians who pledged to support the GOP's general election nominee.<sup>65</sup>

Pro-Taft Republicans were all too aware of their candidate's weak position among the state's small number of rank-and-file Republicans, especially African Americans. Josiah Rose claimed, "This scheme was hatched up right soon after New York state voted the FEPC bill and that the Negroes were very enthusiastic about it." Cognizant that those Democrats who may have supported Taft would dare cast a ballot in a Republican primary, the Foster faction viewed a primary contest as nothing less than an existential threat. Louis Crawford described the situation in stark terms. "This primary as suggested by Wilson Williams," Crawford informed the Taft campaign, "is not only a threat to the Foster organization but was designed to kill us off completely." Indeed, Wilson Williams had already articulated his Manichean view of the current factional conflict within the state party in a conversation with Harry Sommers. "It is not enough to win—we must completely wipe out the opposition in Georgia" in order to build a true opposition party and end one-party politics once and for all. Motivated by self-interest, Foster Republicans lined up unanimously against any primary contest in Georgia.<sup>66</sup>

Roy Foster, furthermore, maintained neither Williams nor Tucker had the legal authority to speak on behalf of the Georgia Republican Party—much less conduct a primary. The two factions had been at loggerheads since the 1944 convention when the Republican National

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<sup>65</sup> Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Stephens, July 30, 1947 and Harry Sommers to Herbert Brownell, Jr., September 17, 1947 both in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Harry Sommers to Paul L. Lockwood, October 22, 1947 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers; M.L. St. John, "Georgia's Dewey, Taft Supporters Against Primary Next Year," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 1, 1947, Sec. A, p. 5; M.L. St. John, "GOP Primary Is Open To All Georgia Voters," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 22, 1948, p. 7; "Southern Dewey Support Claimed By New Yorker's Campaign Chief," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 23, 1948, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Josiah T. Rose to Senator Robert A. Taft, March 29, 1948 in Political File, Box 177, Folder 9, Taft Papers; James H. Crummey to Robert A. Taft, July 19, 1947 in Political File, Box 177, Folder 7, Taft Papers; John Gordon Bennett, "Supplementary Georgia Report," September 6, 1947 in Political File, Box 178, Folder 2, Taft Papers; Wilson Williams to Harry Sommers, March 1, 1948 in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers. Williams added, "We must take the offensive away from [the Foster Republicans] and abandon our defensive attitude."

Committee had recognized the Tucker delegation at convention, but Georgia Secretary of State John B. Wilson had certified the Foster faction's slate of presidential electors. The Foster organization, however, had not convened officially since being certified by Wilson. Some thought Foster too preoccupied with his machinery business and outmatched politically by Wilson Williams, and Louis Crawford admitted that the Tucker faction—with its regular meetings and plans for primary elections—had gained an advantage by behaving if it were already the official Republican Party of Georgia.<sup>67</sup>

After Wilson Williams received the Republican National Committee's official "Call for the Republican National Convention of 1948" on January 27, 1948, the Tucker faction began preparing its primary as well as the various county, district, and state conventions required to select Georgia's delegation. Undeterred, the Foster faction issued its own convention schedule beginning with county conclaves on April 8 and the state convention on May 3. Taking steps to exclude the Tucker faction, the Foster group authorized state and district chairmen to designate loyal members in counties without an existing Republican Party or where "uncooperative" leaders held sway. Foster also appealed to Republican National Committee chairman B. Carroll Reece of Tennessee on March 12. Reece's subsequent actions set into motion a series of events that eventually determined not only which faction emerged victorious but also whether Dewey or Taft received the state's delegates.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> AP, "GOP Presidential Primary Seen in Georgia," *Washington Post*, August 31, 1947, Sec. M, p. 9; "Georgia," *New York Times*, January 18, 1948, p. 49; M.L. St. John, "GOP Plans Candidate; Foster May Oppose Gene," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 31, 1946, p. 10; "Georgia," *New York Times*, January 18, 1948, p. 49; "Foster Blasts At Williams As 'Speaker,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, October 8, 1947, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Dudley C. Hay to Wilson Williams, January 27, 1948 in RCB-13963 – Secretary of State – Elections Division – Election Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 10; Roy G. Foster and Frank A. Doughman, "Call For A Republican State Convention To Be Held In Atlanta, Georgia May 3, 1948," in in RCB-13963 – Secretary of State – Elections Division – Election Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 13; "Foster GOPs Call Convention To Name National Delegates," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 7, 1948, Sec. D, p. 8.

With unimpeachably conservative credentials, Reece had secured the RNC's top post with strong support from backers of Senator Robert Taft, and naturally this worked for Tucker Republicans in Georgia. Harry Sommers informed Dewey campaign officials that Foster Republicans were boasting publicly of Reece's support. Understandably troubled by these assertions, Sommers telegraphed Reece who struck Sommers as "truthful and sincere" in his claims of objectivity despite his support for Taft.<sup>69</sup>

For Tucker Republicans who had repeated the chairman's assertions that the RNC had not recognized the Foster organization, Reece's subsequent about-face must have come as a considerable shock, but perhaps not more so that the actions of RNC general counsel Harrison Spangler who decried "the factionalism that occurs every four years in the State of Georgia," and ultimately he ruled in Roy Foster's favor, calling for Georgia Republicans to unit spurn "factionalism and discord" and unite behind Foster in order to organize "a real of a real party against the New Deal." Chairman Reece then directed Wilson Williams and Mrs. J.M. Nichols, Georgia's members of the Republican National Committee, to issue a new convention call to the Foster-led state central committee.<sup>70</sup>

Defiant Tucker Republicans refused to comply and sought an injunction preventing Williams and Nichols from issuing the call. A Fulton County Superior Court judge issued a temporary order enjoining "unauthorized persons" from selecting national convention delegates, but the Foster organization had already moved ahead with its convention schedule to thwart the

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<sup>69</sup> Harry Sommers to Tom Stephens, January 18, 1947 in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Carroll Reece to Harry Sommers, December 13, 1947 in RCB-13963, Secretary of State – Election Division, Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 10; Bowers, *Republican, First, Last, and Always*, 7-24; Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees* 489-490; "Tennessee's Rep. Reece, 71, Dies of Cancer," *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1961, Sec. 3, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> "Tucker GOP Claims Exclusive Party Okay," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 6, 1948, p. 18; Harrison E. Spangler to Carroll Reece, March 15, 1948 in RCB-13963, Secretary of State – Election Division, Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 13; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 88; "GOP Nods to Foster But Primary Is On," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 21, 1948, Sec. B, p. 3.

proposed primary election. *Atlanta Constitution* publisher Ralph McGill recognized that “Chairman Reece’s effort is transparent,” McGill opined. Foster Republicans “could not risk a primary since the Taft forces are counting delegates as miser counts.” In the end, the Foster faction’s ploy foiled the Tucker group’s preferential primary. Blaming the “obstructive tactics” of men and women who “have entered into a conspiracy with certain individuals who are officers in the Republican National organization,” Tucker faction secretary Barnaby Hill announced the organization’s own convention schedule. A subsequent court ruling declining to enjoin the Foster organization from holding its convention meant the Georgia Republican Party was headed for another delegate fight. The Foster faction selected its sixteen-member delegation on May 3 as John Marshall, Taft’s southern campaign coordinator, looked on. Tucker Republicans convened their state convention on May 18. With two competing convention slates and state central committees, Republicans turned to Secretary of State Ben W. Fortson Jr. for relief.<sup>71</sup>

A provision included in a 1946 law, S.B. 142, authorized the secretary of state to settle legal disputes regarding the national convention delegations any party polling less than 150,000 votes in Georgia in the most recent presidential election, Fortson, like his predecessor John Wilson, had to wade into the political thicket of state Republican Politics. Scheduling a hearing for May 28, he took it upon himself to seek a mutually agreeable solution before then and

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<sup>71</sup> Ralph McGill, “Joe Martin’s Plans for the South,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 1, 1948, p. 14; “GOP Abandons Preferential Primary Hope,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 18, 1948, Sec. A, p. 10; “Tucker GOP Asks Court Bar Foster,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 24, 1948, p. 6; “Court Refuses to Enjoin Foster GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 30, 1948, p. 14; “State GOP Committee Urges Picket for Helm,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1948, p. 1; M.L. St. John, “Uninstructed State Delegation Slated for GOP National Parley,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1948, p. 1; M.L. St. John, “Tucker GOPs Demand Law Ban Vote Buying,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 19, 1948, p. 2; AP, “GOP Squabble Party Affair, Judge Rules,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 16, 1948, Sec. B, p. 1; Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 83-84. The Foster faction’s state central committee included Roy G. Foster of Wadley, chairman; Roscoe Pickett, Jr. of Jasper and Dr. H.J. Carswell of Waycross, vice-chairmen; C.B. Edwards of Talbotton, secretary; Victor Limehouse of Atlanta, assistant secretary; Ray Spitler of Atlanta, treasurer. Roscoe Pickett, Sr. presided over the convention. Tucker’s state central committee included W. Roscoe Tucker of Dawsonville, chairman; John Wesley Dobbs of Atlanta and C.P. Gray of Perry, vice-chairmen; Barnaby Hill of Atlanta, secretary; W.J. Shaw of Atlanta, assistant secretary; Harry Sommers of Atlanta, treasurer. Former Emory University Law School dean Charles J. Hilkey presided over the convention.

suggested to both the two campaigns meet on May 26 and hammer out a compromise slate. “I don’t care personally,” Fortson confessed in a phone conversation with Herb Brownell, “I would like to see it settled amicably instead of going to a knock-down drag-out affair here.” After the Taft and Dewey organizations failed to reach an accord, Fortson proposed his own, but Roy Foster refused to agree to the terms. Each campaign presented its case to Fortson. Frank Evans and Elbert Tuttle served as co-counsel for the Tucker faction while Roscoe Pickett, Sr. along with his son and namesake, argued on Foster’s behalf.<sup>72</sup>

Frank Evans devoted the bulk of his thirty minute presentation attempting to persuade Fortson that he, as secretary of state, had absolutely no authority over internal party matters. That authority, Evans reiterated, was vested in the Republican National Committee. Evans also reiterated that the Republican National Convention had recognized the Tucker slate in 1944, and the RNC had, until recently, considered the Tucker faction Georgia’s official Republican organization. The RNC had even assigned the Tucker organization a fundraising quota. The Foster Faction disagreed vigorously, and the Picketts proceeded to re-litigate the 1944 delegate dispute that Wilson and the courts had previously settled in their favor. The RNC may have

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<sup>72</sup> Ben W. Fortson, Jr. Press Release, May 30, 1948 in RCB-13963, Secretary of State – Election Division, Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 11; Shadgett, “Georgia,” 93; M.L. St. John, “Ben Fortson Dodges a Fast One,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 25, 1948, Sec. C, p. 18; “Fortson Hears GOP Claims,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 22, 1948, p. 2; Telephone conversation with Mr. Brownell, Campaign manager for Thomas Dewey, May 26, 1948 and Telephone conversation with Sen. Taft, May 26, 1948 both in RCB-13963, Secretary of State – Election Division, Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07), Folder 12; Rowan, “The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia,” 84-93; “Fortson Gives Ruling Today on GOP Group,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 29, 1948, p. 2. Roscoe Pickett Sr. co-founded Pickens County’s oldest law, Pickett, Pickett, and Pickett, and served dutifully in that county’s Republican Party organization throughout his life. Pickett ran for governor in 1920, but he lost by a wide margin to U.S. Senator Thomas W. Hardwick. The elder Pickett even named his youngest son after former Republican National Committee chairman Will Hays. The younger Pickett followed his father into law and politics. Pickett Jr. maintained practices in Jasper and Atlanta, and he represented Pickens County in the House of Representatives. See, Pickens County Heritage Book Committee, *The Heritage of Pickens County* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing, 1998), 369-370.

recognized the Tucker faction at the 1944 convention, but Secretary of State John B. Wilson had certified Foster's presidential electors and the courts had upheld his decision.<sup>73</sup>

Fortson issued a ruling on May 29. According to Fortson, his decision hinged on whether or not Wilson's 1944 ruling had been legal and correct. "I have come to the conclusion that his decision was the correct one," Fortson wrote, "and that the faction known as the Roy Foster group represented the Republican Party in Georgia at that time." Since he found no reason to overturn his predecessor's decision, Fortson certified the Foster faction's slate of delegates and alternates to the 1948 Republican National Convention. Seemingly undeterred, though, Harry Sommers wired Herb Brownell soon after Fortson ruled. "We are coming to Philadelphia determined to be seated," he declared, "We don't believe the Republican National Committee is going to turn loyal Republicans over to the Democrats of Georgia." Brownell encouraged Sommers and company to appeal the decision in Philadelphia where the Dewey campaign would have "many friends" on the various committees that would ultimately determine the matter.<sup>74</sup>

Dewey's well-organized, disciplined operation explained Brownell's confidence. The Republican National Committee recommended seating the Tucker slate by a close 48-44 vote. The second hurdle, however, proved more challenging since Republicans loyal to Taft and

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<sup>73</sup> Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 85-93; "Delegates and Alternate Delegates At Large From the State of Georgia," in RCB-13963, Folder 13 in Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07). In rebuttal, Frank Evans pointed to a sworn statement given by Savannah Republican Gilbert Johnson claiming Clint Hager failed to ask the negative votes before adjourning and departing for Taft Hall in 1944. Roscoe Pickett Jr. reminded Fortson that Frank Doughman, then serving as party secretary, had transported all official documents, including the delegate rolls, to Taft Hall. The Tucker faction did not possess the requisite paperwork to conduct a convention. Frank Doughman, along with James Crummey, Louis Crawford, and Senator T.A. Chastain, had defected to the Tucker faction prior to the May 28 hearing.

<sup>74</sup> Honorable Ben Fortson's Decision, May 29, 1948 in in RCB-13963, Folder 10 in Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07); Telegram: Harry Sommers to Herbert Brownell, May 29, 1948 and Herbert Brownell to Harry Sommers, June 1, 1948 both in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 93; Jim Furniss, "Fortson Rule Favors Foster GOP Faction; Taft Bid Gets Boost," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 30, 1948, Sec. A, p. 1; Harry Sommers to Paul E. Lockwood, March 25, 1948 and Harry Sommers to Tom Stephens, April 7, 1948 in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 17, Dewey Papers; Harry Sommers to Thomas E. Dewey, May 20, 1948 in Series 10, Box 40, Folder 10, Dewey Papers.

Stassen composed a majority of the national convention's Credentials Committee. Confident of an outright victory, Taft declined a last-minute offer from the Dewey campaign to divide the Georgia delegation equally among the Tucker and Foster factions. In retrospect, the senator should have accepted, as the credentials committee affirmed the RNC's decision and seated the sixteen Tucker Republicans. Committee members loyal to Dewey and Stassen had held firm, but two pro-Taft members bolted. Historian and Taft biographer James T. Patterson has suggested these delegates may have switched their votes either to protest Taft's support for "lily-white" delegations or in response to lucrative promises by Herb Brownell. The Foster slate included token black representation, but proved insufficient to rehabilitate its notorious reputation within the national party. Brownell's influence, too, cannot be discounted. Ray Bliss, a top Taft campaign aide and future chairman of the Republican National Committee, recalled later, "The CIA were amateurs compared to the Dewey people." Whatever the case, the Tucker faction had triumphed once again. Acknowledging defeat and wishing to avoid embarrassing Taft further, Roy Foster declined to appeal the decision to the convention floor. In a letter to Ernest Klein, brother of a prominent Chicago Republican, Taft complained his campaign's "biggest failure was our conduct of the Georgia contest." The senator had lost his main toehold in the South, and the nomination soon followed.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> White, *The Taft Story*, 118; Bliss quoted in Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times*, 494-495 (quote on 494); Robert A. Taft to Ernest L. Klein, June 28, 1948 in Wunderlin Jr., *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 3, 438-439; "Tucker Groups Wins GOP Nod As Official Party in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1948, p. 1; Jay G. Hayden, "Dewey Georgia Coup Seen As a Boomerang on Floor," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1948, p. 8; James A. Hagerty, "Dewey Wins in Test on Georgia Group, Picking Up 16 Votes," *New York Times*, June 19, 1948, p. 1; James A. Hagerty, "Taft and Stassen Join To Stop Dewey As Republicans Await Gavel Today; Philadelphia Hails Chief Candidates," *New York Times*, June 21, 1948, p.1, 2; Jack Tarver, "Dewey Power Bared in Tucker Victory," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 22, 1948, p. 1, 7; *Official Report on the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Republican National Convention Held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania June 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 1948* (Washington D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, 1948), 98-99. Brownell and Burke, *Advising Ike*, 77; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 410-412; Felix Belair, "Georgian Backing Dewey Are Seated," *New York Times*, June 22, 1948, p. 1, 4. According to press reports, African-Americans composed one-third of the Foster delegation. See, Felix Belair Jr., "Floor Fight on Georgia Unit Abandoned by Taft Forces," *New York Times*, June 23, 1948, p. 1.

As Tucker faction leaders had promised, the Georgia delegation backed Governor Dewey overwhelmingly on his way to a third-ballot nomination. Harry Sommers, Dewey's Georgia liaison, succeeded the outspoken-but-aging Wilson Williams as Republican national committeeman while Mildred B. Snodgrass, wife of Atlas Auto Finance Company president Robert R. Snodgrass, became national committeewoman. In a show of unity, the Tucker-led state central committee granted Roy Foster and Clarence B. Edwards positions on the party's governing board, and the GOP eventually submitted a presidential elector slate divided between the two factions. Seemingly more cohesive than ever, the Republican Party of Georgia began plotting its most ambitious campaign season yet.<sup>76</sup>

While Republicans in Georgia and elsewhere coalesced around Thomas Dewey, the Democratic Party fractured along ideological and sectional lines. Finding Truman insufficiently liberal, former vice president Henry Wallace mounted a third party challenge on the Progressive Party ticket. A more serious challenge came from racially conservative southern Democrats who formed the States' Rights Democratic Party following several rebukes at the Democratic National Convention. The new party nominated South Carolina governor J. Strom Thurmond for president and Mississippi governor Fielding Wright for vice president. In Georgia, the Dixiecrats would surely have found a sympathetic ally in Eugene Talmadge, but the fiery former governor had died in December 1946. His son and successor, Herman, saw little wisdom in unrealistic third party gambits. Backed by party elders, Talmadge refused to break entirely with the national Democratic Party despite his qualms with President Harry Truman. With a divided opposition in

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<sup>76</sup> Gladstone Williams, "Superior Strategy Won For Gov. Dewey," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 26, 1948, p. 4; *Official Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Republican National Convention*, 257-275; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 413-415; Rowan, "The Rise and Development of the Republican Party in Georgia," 94; Doris Lockerman, "Northside Wife New GOP Leader," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1948, p. 19; Shadgett, "A History of the Republican Party in Georgia," 440; W.R. Tucker and W. Barnaby Hill to Secretary of State, August 2, 1948 in **RCB-13963, Folder 11 in Secretary of State – Elections Division – Elections Reference and Documentation File – 1946 thru 1948 (1998-1979A – 2937-07)**.



Georgia and across the country practically assuring victory in November, Georgia Republicans were riding high.<sup>77</sup>

The Tucker faction's triumph signaled to some a new day in Georgia politics had arrived. "Now that Georgia's Republican Party is indisputably in the hands of men who want to see it expanded numerically," the *Atlanta Constitution* noted, "it is receiving unprecedented encouragement from both the press and public." The time seemed ripe for the Georgia GOP to wage not only a vigorous campaign for Dewey and Warren at the top of the ticket but also one for governor against Democrat Herman Talmadge. Few Republicans actually believed a GOP ticket could overcome Herman Talmadge's daunting advantages in a general election, but those who favored a down-ticket contest maintained the race would gin up excitement and jump start a permanent two-party system. Others feared such a race would divert resources away from the presidential race. African-American Republicans like John Wesley Dobb and L.B. Toomer were the most vocal supporters of fielding statewide candidates. Explaining his rationale Toomer declared, "Now is the [time] to run Mr. Sommers against a demagogue who had deluded his folks and is utterly lacking in statesmanship." Unfortunately for Toomer, neither Sommers nor Tuttle were interested in seeking elective office. Instead, Tuttle offered a resolution during a state central committee meeting forswearing a state ticket but committing the party to building a "strong, active and militant statewide organization" in preparation for the 1950 election cycle.

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<sup>77</sup> Allen Yarnell, *Democrats and Progressives: The 1948 Presidential Election as a Test of Postwar Liberalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 71-73; Busch, *Truman's Triumphs*, 73, 105; Grantham, *The South and Modern America*, 201; Bartley, *The New South*, 55-57, 86-90; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 70-73; J.R. Wiggins, "South's Rebellion Dwindles Against Truman, Civil Right," *Washington Post*, July 14, 1948, p. 1, 2; Jay G. Hayden, "Can They Stop the Dixiecrats?" *Atlanta Constitution*, September 10, 1948, p. 10. For the most recent and extensive analyses of the campaigns of Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond see, respectively, Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013) and Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

There would be no seriously contested down-ticket races in 1948. Republican focus remained fixed on retaking the White House for the first time since 1933.<sup>78</sup>

Atlanta businessman Robert Snodgrass managed Dewey's Georgia campaign, which sought to build on emerging electoral patterns. The GOP needed to maintain its foothold in North Georgia mountains, maximize turnout among African Americans, and increase its share of the metropolitan vote. Unlike the 1940 Willkie campaign, all Dewey-Warren clubs were organized by the Republican Party of Georgia and tasked with identifying, registering, and turning out voters at the county, city, and precinct levels. The first Dewey-Warren Club opened on September 9 in the African-American Auburn Avenue neighborhood of Atlanta. It was followed by clubs in Muscogee, Fulton, and Cobb counties. By Election Day, clubs had popped up in Bibb, Chatham, Clarke, DeKalb, Richmond, and a host of other counties in North Georgia.<sup>79</sup>

Bolstering Republican support in the state's growing urban and suburban counties required more than storefront headquarters and the typical campaign season bluster. Georgia Republicans needed to bolster support among key, persuadable constituencies—many of whom had representatives among the more inclusive Tucker faction. Sommers, Snodgrass, and Tuttle were already established members of Atlanta's commercial-civic elite in 1948, but younger, ambitious professionals seeking to make a name for themselves looked increasingly to the Republican Party as a vehicle for political as well as personal advancement. For example,

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<sup>78</sup> "For a Two-Party System," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 4, 1948, Sec. B, p. 2; "Georgia GOPs Promise Big Vote," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 29, 1948, p. 6; "GOPs Eye Governor Candidate," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 10, 1948, p. 1, 8; Albert Riley, "State GOP Passes Up '48 Slate," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 12, 1948, Sec. A, p. 1, 13 (quote on 13); *The Georgia Republican*, September 17, 1948, p. 1 in Series I, Subseries B., Box 1, Folder 2, Georgia Republican Party Central Committee Campaign Collection, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA; "Georgia GOP Drops Ticket," *New York Times*, September 12, 1948, p. 31.

<sup>79</sup> "Dewey-Warren Club Hoping To Swing State," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 18, 1948, p. 6; "Campaign Launched in Georgia for Dewey and Warren," *The Georgia Republican*, September 17, 1948, p. 1, 2; "Columbus Organizes Dewey-Warren Club With 400 Members," *The Georgia Republican*, September 25, 1948, p. 2; "Dewey-Warren Club Formed in Marietta," *The Georgia Republican*, September 25, 1948, p. 5; "Georgia Campaign Gains Momentum for Dewey-Warren," *The Georgia Republican*, October 2, 1948, p. 1 all in Series I, Subseries B, Box 1, Folder 2, Georgia Republican Party Central Committee Campaign Collection; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 85;

Kiliaen Van Rensselaer (Kil) Townsend, an attorney who also owned and operated a heating and cooling franchise, met Elbert Tuttle at the city's exclusive Lawyers Club. Townsend recalled later his last name and New York roots first attracted Tuttle's attention. After meeting Sommers and Snodgrass, Townsend joined the Fulton County Republican Party and worked as a "leg man" assisting Tuttle with party and campaign matters. Another young Republican, Richard J. Demeree, joined the Fulton County GOP in 1948 along with Kil Townsend. Demeree, an attorney who also served on the faculty of the Emory University School of Law, designed a mailer directed at lawyers residing in key swing states. This new generation of highly educated, upwardly mobile professionals represented a key Republican voting bloc in 1948, and it continued to grow in significance along with the state's burgeoning cities and suburbs.<sup>80</sup>

Unfortunately for Republicans, Thomas Dewey's 1948 campaign lacked the sense of urgency and vigor found in Georgia. Squaring off against an unpopular nominee of a party that had split three ways, an overconfident Dewey snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Truman defeated his three opponents securing 49.5 percent of the popular vote and 303 electoral votes. Dewey trailed with 45.2 percent and 189 votes in the Electoral College. Strom Thurmond's States' Rights Democratic Party garnered 2.4 percent of the total votes (approximately 1.2 million ballots) and 39 electoral votes. By any measure, the national election results were shocking since the national press corps had long predicted Truman's defeat.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "Fulton County Organization is Near Completion," *The Georgia Republican*, October 2, 1948, p. 4; "University Students Start Republican Club," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 8, 1948, p. 2; "General Tuttle Says Two Party System Is Essential to State," *The Georgia Republican*, October 30, 1948, p. 4 both in Series I, Subseries B., Box 1, Folder 2, Georgia Republican Party Central Committee Campaign Collection; "Dewey-Warren Club Hoping to Swing State," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 18, 1948, p. 6; Richard B. Russell Library Oral History Documentary Collection, OHD 010, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA; Richard J. Demeree to Harry Sommers, July 25, 1948 and Richard J. Demeree to Herbert Brownell, Jr., July 25, 1948 both in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 16, Dewey Papers.

<sup>81</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 388-391; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 320-321; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 122-125.

Thanks to the deft political maneuvering of the state Democratic Party, President Truman secured Georgia's twelve electoral votes winning nearly 61 percent of ballots. Thurmond won just over 20 percent of the vote, but, without the benefit of the Democratic Party label, he failed to expand his appeal much beyond the racially conservative, black-majority counties of Middle and South Georgia. Dewey won 18.3 percent of the vote statewide—a modest increase of 1 percent over his 1944 bid. This figure would most likely have been higher if Thurmond and Wallace had not offered additional avenues of political protest. Nevertheless, Republican campaign manager Robert Snodgrass deemed it “a very creditable showing.” Dewey carried traditionally Republican Dawson, Fannin, and Pickens, and he kept the race close in other mountain counties. Across North Georgia, the Republican ticket generally ran second to the Democrats and usually exceeded its statewide average. Dewey improved his share of the vote in Bibb, Chatham, DeKalb, Floyd, Fulton, and Muscogee counties. The Republican candidate underperformed in Clarke County where Truman exceeded his statewide average by over ten points. The GOP's most remarkable gains, though, came in Atlanta where Dewey won three precincts and 29.3 percent of the vote in Fulton County. He also garnered 29.5 percent of the vote and carried one precinct in DeKalb County. Those precincts encompassed some of Atlanta's most affluent, exclusive, and overwhelmingly white neighborhoods. For instance, Dewey won roughly half the ballots cast in the Morningside, Ansley Park, and Druid Hills/Emory University precincts while voters in the Brookwood Hills section of South Buckhead favored Dewey over Truman by a three-to-one margin. The New Yorker performed similarly in an upscale precinct in Macon. In general, Dewey performed best in those white, middle- and upper-income districts in urban counties. He polled worst among lower-income whites, especially those residing in small towns and rural counties that supported either Truman or Thurmond. Black voters tended to

support President Truman, but Dewey managed to keep the margin relatively close. The Georgia Republican Party had planned a “big city” campaign designed to turn out its emerging base. By that measure, at least, the Republican Party had succeeded.<sup>82</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party’s weaknesses remained evident. First, the factional truce among state Republicans was predicated on Dewey winning the White House and lavishing the state with spoils. His defeat rent the party asunder once more. Second, Republican appeal in Georgia remained extremely limited despite considerable strides. No one could deny the Republican brand was on the mend in Georgia. As the party grew increasingly popular among the state’s younger, metropolitan professionals like Elbert Tuttle and Kil Townsend, the GOP assumed a more respectable air and the press and general public took notice. Similarly, with the Tucker faction’s inclusion of African Americans, the Republican Party of Georgia could argue its biracial politics offered the Georgians their best hope for political moderation and modernization. Unfortunately for state Republicans, their party’s key strengths also heralded future conflict. The growth of Atlanta and its commensurate strength within the GOP spelled potential doom for the sort of post-office Republicanism that had defined the party for decades. Rural Republicans from the state’s mountain counties and wiregrass plains were understandably reluctant to step aside for politically ambitious newcomers. Republicans had a herculean task before them. The party needed to transcend those factors that kept it weak and divided while also capitalizing on the growing unpopularity of some state and national Democrats. If the Georgia

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<sup>82</sup> “GOP Manager Pleased With Showing in State,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 3, 1948, p. 3; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1945-1950*, 608-610; George Goodwin, “Fulton and DeKalb Loyal to Truman,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 3, 1948, p. 11; “Truman Increases Margin in Georgia,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 4, 1948, p. 59; “Bibb Piles Up Large Lead for Truman,” *Macon Telegraph*, November 3, 1948, p. 1; “Chatham County’s Vote for President Shown by Districts,” *Savannah Evening Press*, November 3, 1948, p. 4; Charles Ewing, “Truman Sweeps Muscogee,” *Columbus Ledger*, November 3, 1948, p. 1, 14; Bill Kinney, “Truman 3 to 1 Victor In Cobb,” *Marietta Daily Journal*, November 3, 1948, p. 1; “Truman Carries Clarke County By Wide Margin,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, November 4, 1948, p. 1, 7; Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, 109-110; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 32-33; LeeAnn Lands, *The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2009), 54-56, 135-138, 174-176.

Republican Party succeeded in uniting its own, maybe then it could finally offer the chance of a truly two-party state.

## CHAPTER 3

### “TRIUMPHANT AND TROUBLED,” 1949-1961

The *Atlanta Constitution*'s Ralph McGill rarely concealed his Democratic affinity, but he remained one of the most high-profile voices calling for a two-party political system in Georgia and across the South. Unwilling to fall for wiles of quixotic third-party bids, the Atlanta newsman judged the Republican Party to be Georgia's only hope of breaking the one-party stranglehold gripping the state.<sup>1</sup> A keen political observer, McGill insisted in 1949, "Here in the South we still need two parties." He continued, "[L]ast November it looked as if fate and circumstances were about to create such a South," but Thomas Dewey had failed to crack the Democratic Solid South, disappointing not only McGill but also scores of Georgia Republicans like Elbert Tuttle, Robert Snodgrass, Kil Townsend, and others who composed the party's nascent "Atlanta faction." Emerging from within the Tucker faction, which had prevailed throughout the 1940s, this influential group of Republicans gained prominence within the state party and steered the Georgia GOP in a more progressive and professional direction.<sup>2</sup>

Creating a competitive two-party system remained the Georgia Republican Party's paramount goal during this period. Dewey's disappointing defeat notwithstanding, Georgia Republicans still had considerable reason for optimism. First, the Dewey network of moderate Republicans remained active despite the governor's back-to-back losses, and they played

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, "For a Two-Party System," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 4, 1948, Sec. B, p. 1 and "The Republicans Organize in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 8, 1948, p. 10; "Re-Emphasizing the Two-Party Need," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 23, 1948, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph McGill, "Mr. Sommers and His Harpoon," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 9, 1949, p. 8; Richard B. Russell Library Oral History Documentary Collection, OHD 010, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA 30602-1641.

important parts in a historic effort to modernize and moderate the Republican Party during the 1950s. Second, the GOP's share of the presidential vote in Georgia continued to grow slowly but steadily. Finally, and perhaps most encouraging, presidential Republicanism had grown most rapidly in the state's fastest growing, economically dynamic sections of the state.

Between 1950 and 1961, the Georgia Republican Party attempted to capitalize on the socioeconomic transformations reshaping the state's political economy and culture alike. Pursuing a strategy devised by Elbert Tuttle and implemented by fellow Atlantans Robert Snodgrass, William B. (Bill) Shartzer, and James Dorsey, the "Atlanta faction" charted a moderate course in line with so-called "Eastern Establishment" Republicans like Thomas Dewey and Dwight Eisenhower. These Republicans appealed to voters in upper-income, white precincts as well as African-American neighborhoods in cities like Atlanta, Savannah, Columbus, and Augusta rather than seeking the votes of aggrieved, conservative Democrats.

Scholars have employed a variety of terms over the years such as "urban Republicanism," "metropolitan Republicanism," and "enclave Republicanism" to describe this partisan phenomenon first identified by Alexander Heard in 1952.<sup>3</sup> Prosperous urban precincts home to upper-status white residents who had either grown weary of the Democratic Party's redistributionist New Deal and Fair Deal programs or never supported them in first place proved increasingly hospitable to Republicans in Georgia.<sup>4</sup> Although this top-down approach drew some complaints

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<sup>3</sup> See Donald S. Strong, "The Presidential Election in the South, 1952," *Journal of Politics* 17, no. 3 (August 1955), 343-389; Donald S. Strong, *Urban Republicanism in the South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Bureau of Public Administration, 1960); Alan I. Abramowitz and Wendy Davis, "Georgia: Ripe for the Picking—Presidential Politics in the Peach State," in Laurence W. Moreland, Robert P. Steed, and Tod A. Baker, eds. *The 1988 Election in the South: Continuity Amidst Change in Southern Party Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 51-72; Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, esp. 64-71; Alexander Heard, *A Two-Party South?* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952).

<sup>4</sup> A contemporary analysis divided new and prospective Republican recruits into three categories: "former Democrats of established reputation and influence," "other Georgians who have prospered in recent years and retained or regained a conservative attitude typical of the old South," and "college students and young men and



from within party circles, a campaign strategy prioritizing presidential and congressional races over statewide contests held sway during the period. The Atlanta faction's recruitment and development strategy reflected the Republican National Committee's preferred approach. Led by Eisenhower loyalists Leonard W. (Len) Hall and Meade Alcorn, the RNC undertook a major effort to bolster Republicans ranks in the South almost as soon as Eisenhower took the oath of office in January 1953. What began as the GOP's Committee on the South, led by Louisiana Republican John Minor Wisdom, evolved into a well-funded, aggressive party-building initiative known as "Operation Dixie" operating out of the RNC's new Southern Division. The ironically named Operation Dixie sought to recruit Republicans and convert Democrats in districts where Eisenhower had performed best. Like Ralph McGill and Georgia GOP, the Republican National Committee also coveted a two-party system since "any argument for a two-party system is automatically an argument for the Republican Party."<sup>5</sup>

Tremendous impediments to party growth and electoral success still confronted Georgia Republicans. Perennial bickering and backstabbing among rival factions continued to hamper party-building efforts. Anticipating victory in 1948, the rival Tucker and Foster factions had united in the hope of sharing the spoils that would inevitably trickle down from the Dewey White House. His defeat, however, nullified temporary ceasefire. Political infighting resumed—reaching a fever pitch during the 1952 Republican presidential campaign. Scholars agree on this point, but they have largely erred in claiming that the Tucker faction's triumph over the more conservative, lily-white Foster forces at the 1952 Republican National Convention spurred

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women too tender in years to remember the depression." See, Albert Riley, "GOP Relies on New Voters, Dissidents For Ga. Build-Up," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, December 7, 1952, Sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel J. Galvin, *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 63-67 (quote on 63). The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) had launched an aggressive drive to organize southern laborers following World War II dubbed "Operation Dixie." It is unclear if the Republican National Committee appreciated or embraced the irony. See, Barbara S. Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor: Operation Dixie and the Defeat of CIO* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

greater unity within the state's Republican ranks.<sup>6</sup> In some ways, Georgia Republicans fell victim to Eisenhower's success. Disputes between Atlanta faction leaders and "old-line Republicans" over federal patronage and personal prestige were regular occurrences during Eisenhower's first term.<sup>7</sup> Further difficulty arose when the Eisenhower administration tapped high-ranking Georgia Republicans for nonpolitical positions. Placing a party leader like Elbert Tuttle on the federal bench, for example, robbed the Georgia Republican Party of a rising star and created a volatile power vacuum within the party.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party of Georgia loomed large as the unquestioned political power in the state. Benefiting politically from iniquitous practices like disfranchisement and undemocratic institutions such as the county unit system, Georgia Democrats sought to deny the nascent Republican Party a permanent foothold in state politics by sponsoring a constitutional amendment in 1950 requiring all general election contests utilize the county unit system. Proponents like Governor Herman Talmadge argued the amendment was essential to safeguarding racial segregation while its opponents complained the measure would simply intensify rural domination of Georgia politics. Republicans, however, had additional cause for concern. Since most statewide contests were uncontested in the general election, preemptively undercutting thwarting Republican challengers appeared the only logical explanation for extending the system's use into November. Indeed, Georgia Democrats proved so intent on

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<sup>6</sup> Political scientists Olive Hall Shadgett and Lynwood M. Holland predicted in 1954, "With the Republican Party in power nationally and with the degree of unification that occurred in Georgia during the general election campaign, presumably all Republican factions in Georgia will organize within a single party framework during the next few years." See, Olive Hall Shadgett and Lynwood M. Holland, "Georgia," in Paul T. David, Malcolm Moos, and Ralph M. Goldman, eds. *Presidential Nominating Politics in 1952: The South*, vol. 3 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954), 115. More recently, M.V. Hood III, Quentin Kidd, and Irwin L Morris have written, "Compared to 1952, the Georgia GOP was quite united in 1956, electing an uncontested delegation for Eisenhower to the national convention." Eisenhower's incumbent status likely contributed considerably to the pro-Ike sentiments in Georgia, but Hood et. al. give short shrift to other intraparty disputes regarding patronage and race relations. See, Hood, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 85.

<sup>7</sup> "Old-line Republicans" were distinct from the "Old Guard" supporters of Robert Taft. The former tended to be older members of the Tucker faction who broke with the younger Atlanta faction on issues like patronage.

disfranchising urban and suburban dwellers—those residents most likely to vote Republican—they offered the amendment in 1950 and again in 1952.<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately, Dwight Eisenhower's twin triumphs in 1952 and 1956 belied the inherent weakness of the Georgia Republican Party's moderate, urban-based Atlanta faction and its inability to vanquish Democratic opposition. Despite the best efforts of Elbert Tuttle and other likeminded Republicans, neither Eisenhower nor the Atlanta faction broke the Democratic Party's hold. Without meaningful victories, the Atlanta faction remained susceptible to criticism that their approach to partisan politics was, at best sluggish, or, at worst, ineffectual. Ralph McGill offered an insight into Atlanta faction's plight. "In the Deep South, the Eisenhower Republicans are at once triumphant and troubled," he suggested. The Atlanta organization had endeavored to "root out the old 'post-office' Republicans and establish legitimate, genuine statewide GOP organizations," but infighting among high-ranking officials, insufficient assistance from the national party, and lingering futility at the ballot box strained the Atlanta faction's grip on power.<sup>9</sup> If it faltered, McGill warned presciently, the Georgia GOP's conservative wing might regroup and retaliate.

The same demographic transformations that gave heart to Georgia Republicans also worried the dominant conservative wing of the Georgia Democratic Party whose politics and policies were so often rooted in the rural countryside. Rapid population shifts that had commenced in the early decades of the twentieth century accelerated during the New Deal and World War II eras to the benefit of the state's metropolitan areas—especially Atlanta and its

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph L. Bernd, *Grass Roots Politics in Georgia: The County Unit System and the Importance of the Individual Voting Community in Bi-Factional Elections, 1942-1954* (Atlanta: Emory University Research Committee, 1960), 4, 71-105; James C. Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 54-55; Jennifer L. Brooks, *Defining the Peace: World War II Veterans, Race, and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ralph McGill, "Look Away, Dixieland," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 2, 1956, Sec. A, p. 1.

surrounding counties. The state as a whole remained heavily rural prior to World War II with approximately one-third of residents living in communities classified as urban by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1940. By 1960, however, 55 percent of all Georgians were classified as urban dwellers. Furthermore, the out-migration of native Georgians drained the state of both its best and worst educated during this pivotal two-decade period. While the in-migration of new highly skilled white residents helped offset the state's white out-migration, economic historian Gavin Wright has demonstrated that African Americans "left the South at all ages and education levels." Indeed, African Americans, who had composed 47 percent of the state's population in 1890, had declined to 37 percent in 1930 and just 29 percent by 1960. More Georgians were employed in manufacturing jobs than agriculture by 1950. By the mid-1950s, regional out-migration had slowed and would reverse completely by the early 1970s. Young, educated, and upwardly mobile professionals flocked to the South in great numbers seeking work at new, large-scale industrial and commercial employers. By 1960, metropolitan Atlanta's three core counties—Fulton, DeKalb, and Cobb—accounted for a quarter of the entire state's manufacturing output. This, in turn, spurred the growth of a largely white-collar service economy. The so-called FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate) sector of the local and state economy also exploded during this period, bringing increasing numbers of middle- and upper-income residents to Georgia. These trends also marked the decline of Georgia's Black Belt with its insecure, white ruling clique holding sway over its disfranchised black masses, the region represented the backbone of the Georgia Democratic Party. The Black Belt's population share had dropped from 60 percent in 1940 to 40 percent in 1960, and many of those who remained relocated to cities like Columbus, Macon, and Augusta.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Gavin Wright, "Persisting Dixie: The South as an Economic Region," in *The American South in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Craig S. Pascoe, Karen Trahan Leathem, and Andy Ambrose (Athens: The University of Georgia

These relatively rapid shifts in population and wealth did not trigger commensurate growth in political clout, thanks to undemocratic practices like the county unit system and the malapportionment of the Georgia state legislature. Likewise the Republican share of the presidential vote had grown steadily, especially in the African-American and affluent white precincts of Atlanta and Savannah, but the GOP had yet to establish a political beachhead any significance. Still, population trends surely troubled the state's rural-oriented Democratic establishment. Population was surging in DeKalb and Fulton counties, where Thomas Dewey had outpolled Harry Truman in a handful of wards and precincts. Between 1940 and 1960, Fulton County, already the state's most populous, grew by 41.6 percent to a population of just over 556,000. DeKalb County, meanwhile, remained less populous than its neighbor, but its rate of growth far outstripped Fulton's. DeKalb expanded by a staggering 195 percent during the same 22-year period from a total population of 86,942 in 1940 to 256,782 in 1960. Still more impressive was Cobb County, which lay to the west of Atlanta just across the Chattahoochee River. With a modest population concentrated primarily in its two major population centers, Marietta and Smyrna, it had remained mostly rural and undeveloped for much of the early twentieth century. That changed during and after World War II when it became a major producer of military aircraft. In 1940, prior to the opening of the Bell Bomber plant, Cobb's population hovered at just over 38,000. By 1960, that figure stood at more than 114,000—a 198 percent increase.<sup>11</sup> Other urban counties saw significant, if less dramatic, increases during the period.

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Press, 2005), 80; Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 250-255; Numan V. Bartley, "Part Six: 1940 to the Present," in Kenneth Coleman, ed. *A History of Georgia*, 341, 351-352; James C. Cobb, *Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 56; Numan V. Bartley, *The New South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1995), 262-263; Buddy Sullivan, *Georgia: A State History* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2010), 155, 177; Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1990 [1983]), 192-193.

<sup>11</sup> For more on Cobb County politics during this period see, Ashton G. Ellett, "Organizing the Right: Service Clubs, Conservatism, and the Origins of the Two-Party South in Cobb County, Georgia, 1942-1968," (master's thesis,

Muscogee County, home to Columbus, more than doubled its population from 75,494 to 158,623 while Chatham (Savannah), Richmond (Augusta), and Bibb (Macon) saw increases of 60, 66, and 69 percent respectively. The rising clout of these rapidly growing counties, as well as the Republican Party's increasing popularity there, disturbed many Georgia Democrats who recognized the demographic transformations reshaping the state's political economy might soon upend its political system as well.<sup>12</sup>

Historian Tim Boyd has identified three goals pursued by the Talmadge Democrats as soon as Herman Talmadge became governor in 1948. In addition to rolling back African-American gains in voting rights and maintaining absolute segregation at all costs, Talmadge and his political advisors proposed expanding the county unit system. The amendment began as an attempt to quash anti-Talmadge Democrats by undercutting their racially diverse, urban and suburban core of support. That such a move would have also forestalled, or perhaps precluded, the development of a competitive Republican Party was nevertheless a welcome byproduct within most Democratic circles.<sup>13</sup>

Primary elections in Georgia remained the sole province of political parties until the Georgia General Assembly passed the Neill Primary Act of 1917. In addition to setting a regular date for statewide primaries, the act required parties utilizing primary elections to nominate candidates for statewide office to do so on a county unit basis—with the candidate receiving the most popular votes in a given county winning its unit, or electoral, votes. The system classified as counties as urban, town, or rural based on that county's total number of representatives in the

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University of Georgia, 2010) and Matthew D. Lassiter, "Big Government and Family Values: Political Culture in the Metropolitan Sunbelt," in Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk, eds. *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 82-109.

<sup>12</sup> All census data drawn found at The Georgia Statistics System: Cross Sectional Analysis at <http://georgiastats.uga.edu/crossection.html> (accessed on June 4, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 75-76.

state house. Urban counties were worth six unit votes, towns four, and rural two votes—double the number of representatives in the General Assembly’s lower chamber. Unit votes, not the popular vote, determined the Democratic Party’s nominee. Below the state level, the Democratic Party’s congressional district committees determined whether or not primaries were run on the county unit or popular vote model.<sup>14</sup>

Writing on the eve of Herman Talmadge’s successful run for governor, Calvin Kytle, an outspoken critic of both Talmadge and the county unit system, described the scheme in unflattering terms. “This system—unheard of anywhere else in America—is a wonderfully efficient device for canceling the votes of a considerable part of the electorate,” he indicated. The allotment of unit votes privileged sparsely populated rural counties over more populous urban and suburban ones since no county, regardless of population, possessed more than three state representatives. Strong support in two- and four-unit counties could deny victory to the winner of the popular vote. This scenario had played out in 1946 when Marietta businessman James V. Carmichael secured more popular votes than either former governors Eurith D. Rivers or Eugene Talmadge, but Talmadge prevailed in the all-important unit votes. So great was the dilution of urban voting power by 1948 that a single vote cast in tiny Chattahoochee County was worth 114.6 in Fulton County, 54.6 in Chatham, and 38.8 in DeKalb. “By disfranchising the people in the large population centers,” Kytle explained, “the county unit system pares down the electorate to a number that can easily be influenced and, when necessary, manipulated.” The Talmadge machine, rooted in the countryside, was designed for and adept at doing just that. But an

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<sup>14</sup> Albert B. Saye, “Georgia’s County Unit System of Election,” *Journal of Politics* 12, no. 1 (February 1950), 94-98; William G. Cornelius, “The County Unit System of Georgia: Facts and Prospects,” *Western Political Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (December 1961), 942-945, 954; Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Longman, 2010), 19-21; Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 54-55; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 202-205; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 76. Counties with six unit votes were Bibb (Macon), Chatham (Savannah), De Kalb (Atlanta), Floyd (Rome), Fulton (Atlanta), Muscogee (Columbus), Richmond (Augusta), and Troup (LaGrange).

increasingly cohesive anti-Talmadge faction strengthened by metropolitan population growth and the demise of the white primary in 1944 concerned Talmadge Democrats who worried they might lose control.<sup>15</sup>

Herman Talmadge launched his county unit gambit during the 1949 legislative session. In January, pro-Talmadge legislators, with the governor's full support, proposed an amendment extending the county unit system into the general election and making its use in primary election a constitutional, rather than a statutory, mandate. If approved by voters in a November 1950 referendum, rural Georgia's dominance of statewide elective politics would extend beyond the Democratic primary and into the general election. The County Unit referendum pitted the Talmadge machine against an ad hoc assemblage of anti-Talmadge Democrats, good government advocates, two-party proponents, and the majority of self-identified Georgia Republicans.<sup>16</sup>

Democratic in-fighting over the amendment has overshadowed the Georgia Republican Party's role in contesting the 1950 county unit amendment, but the GOP's experience provides valuable insight into how party leaders assessed its current strength and future prospects. Speaking at a meeting of top Republicans, Elbert Tuttle, chairman of the Fulton County Republican Party, attacked the amendment as an audacious move "to disfranchise residents of big cities and make it impossible for the Democratic Party ever to have any opposition in the general election." Underscoring the dire consequences facing his party in the upcoming referendum, state party chairman Roscoe Tucker declared, "The possibility of every creating an effective second party in Georgia will be practically eliminated if the people of the state vote in favor of the proposed amendment this fall." Such was the perceived threat posed by the county

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<sup>15</sup> Calvin Kytte, "A Long, Dark Night for Georgia," *Harper's Weekly*, September 1948, 57; Cornelius, "The County Unit System of Georgia," 955; Saye, "Georgia's County Unit System of Election," 102.

<sup>16</sup> Cornelius, "The County Unit System of Georgia," 945; Bill Boring, "County Unit Vote in General Elections Wins House Approval in 147-37 Vote," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 8, 1949, p. 4; Louis T. Rigdon II, *Georgia's County Unit System* (Decatur, GA: Selective Books, 1961), 76-89.



unit amendment that Georgia Republicans abandoned any pretense of offering a slate of candidates for statewide office. The party made its anti-amendment stand official during a meeting of the state central committee in early August when it endorsed a resolution establishing a GOP campaign committee “to organize a statewide campaign to work with other Georgia citizens to defeat this proposed amendment.”<sup>17</sup>

Although their political survival instincts spurned most Georgia Republicans to join the fight against the county unit amendment in 1950, a handful broke ranks and backed the measure. Roscoe Pickett Jr., an attorney and personal friend of Governor Herman Talmadge, called a meeting where he and a handful of other erstwhile Foster Republicans passed a resolution endorsing the amendment. This move apparently came as something of a shock to Roy Foster who disavowed the group’s action, declaring, “That’s [Pickett’s] own thinking. It certainly is not mine.” Naturally, dissension in the party ranks was nothing new, but the timing and motives behind the split troubled top Republicans. Peace between the Tucker and Foster factions had held since the two namesake leaders had agreed to combine forces and campaign for Dewey in 1948. Pickett broke that accord just two days before the 1950 referendum. In a 1952 letter to prominent Seattle businessman and Eisenhower supporter W. Walter Williams, Elbert Tuttle claimed that members of Pickett’s clique were on the Talmadge administration’s payroll. Whether or not there was any truth to Tuttle’s accusation is unclear, but Tuttle and others viewed Pickett’s actions as a direct threat to the future of the Republican Party in Georgia.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Republicans Plan TO Run State Slate,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1949, Sec. B, p. 2 (first quote); “State GOP Out to Make Capital of 2-Party Trend,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Sec. C, p. 9 (second quote); “State GOP Chiefs Caucus Here for Unit Vote Fight,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 6, 1950, Sec. A, p. 2 (third quote); “State GOP Opposes Unit Extension,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 26, 1949, p. 5; M.L. St. John, “GOP Delays Entry Into State Politics,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 11, 1949, Sec. E, p. 2; “Georgia GOP May Forego Race in Fall,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 4, 1950, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> “Challenged GOP Group Urges Unit Vote Okay,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 5, 1950, Sec. B, p. 3; “Young GOPs Ask Unit Vote Defeat,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 8, 1950, Sec. A, p. 2; M.L. St. John, “95 Pct. Of Group Going Into United GOP—Foster,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 9, 1952, p. 1, 3; M.L. St.

Georgia voters rejected the 1950 county unit amendment by a vote of 164,337 to 134,290. Ironically, had the referendum been conducted under the county unit system, it would have triumphed 230 to 183. With seven of the state's six-unit counties opposing the amendment, anti-county unit forces racked up huge margins in some of Georgia's most populous counties. Chatham County where Talmadge loyalist John J. Bouhan controlled the political apparatus was the only exception. More than 80 percent of voters in both Fulton and DeKalb voted down the amendment. In total, the state's more populous, six-unit counties contributed 82,808 no votes—better than half of all opposition ballots. Republican opposition may well have contributed to the amendment's defeat in Gilmer and Pickens, which both rejected the proposal by narrow margins. Republican-trending precincts in Fulton and DeKalb proved more fulsome in their opposition. Since binary referenda lacked party identification, it is impossible to know precisely how influential Republicans had been in defeating the amendment. Districts and wards with a recent history of Republican vitality voted heavily against the measure. Hailing the county unit amendment's defeat, the *Atlanta Constitution* affirmed, "Georgia has left the way open for establishment of a State Republican Party." Had the GOP been denied the right to nominate candidates via petition or convention, the small, cash-strapped party would have suffered a crippling blow.<sup>19</sup>

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John, "Can Georgia GOP Remain Unified," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 30, 1951, p. 4; "W. Walter Williams, an Ike Aid & Civic Leader," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 21, 1983, Sec. D, p. 8; Elbert Tuttle to Walter Williams, May 21, 1952 in Series I, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Elbert P. Tuttle Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

<sup>19</sup> Editorial, "Clearly, the People Said 'No!'" *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1950, p. 14; M.L. St. John, "The Hand of Esau; Voice of Jacob," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 13, 1950, p. 10; Rigdon II, *Georgia's County Unit System*, 36-37, 103; *Georgia's Official and Statistical Register, 1951-1952*, 470-474; M.L. St. John, "Unit System Would Have Put It Over," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1950, p. 18; Bernd, *Grass Roots Politics in Georgia*, 47; Ken Turner, "Unit Extension Appears Lost," *Atlanta Journal*, November 8, 1950, p. 1, 16; "Atlanta Vote on Amendments," *Atlanta Journal*, November 8, 1950, p. 19; "Fulton Vote on Amendments," *Atlanta Journal*, p. 19; Georgia Goodwin, "Foes of Unit Extension Plan Step Up Drive," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 15, 1950, Sec. A, p. 3. The *Constitution* editorial of November 9, 1950, continued, "This newspaper, though Democratic, firmly believes in the two-party system. The State would benefit from two vigorous parties."

Unwilling to accept what the *Christian Science Monitor* described as “a thumping rebuff” at the polls, Herman Talmadge and his allies began plotting another county unit extension almost immediately. Indeed, pro-Talmadge Democrats passed yet another county unit amendment. Perhaps seeking to avoid some of the sharpest critiques that hounded the 1950 effort, the 1952 proposal made no changes to general elections, but it would require all political parties to nominate statewide candidates in primary elections featuring the county unit system.<sup>20</sup>

The general election provision’s omission did not substantially alter the composition of either camp. White residents of and legislators from small, two-unit counties, especially in Middle and Rural Georgia remained the county unit system’s most vocal supporters while African Americans, organized labor, big city daily newspapers, residents of urban and metropolitan communities, civic and booster clubs, and the Georgia Republican Party all generally opposed the 1952 extension effort. Its adversaries championed more equitable enfranchisement, higher voter turnout, and the creation of a viable a two-party system in an attempt to thwart the amendment. A late January 1951 *Atlanta Constitution* editorial explained, “Under this proposal, the Republican Party would be unable to enter a candidate in the general election. Independents, too would be barred for the same lame reason they were not nominated in a state-wide primary—under the county unit system.” The Atlanta Junior Chamber of Commerce (the Jaycees) unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the amendment. Addressing the group

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<sup>20</sup> “Georgia Voters Buck Proposal,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 8, 1950, p. 20; Charles Barrett, “Talmadge Concedes Defeat of County Unit Amendment,” *Savannah Morning News*, November 9, 1950, p. 1-2; Charles Barrett, “Unit amendment defeated by voters,” *Augusta Chronicle*, November 9, 1950, p. 1-2; William M. Bates, “Big City Counties Apparently Bury Move to Extend County Unit System,” *Savannah Evening Press*, p. 1-2; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1945-1950* (n.p., 1951?), 681; Rigdon II, *Georgia’s County Unit System*, 36; M.L. St. John, “Unit Ban In Primary Is Sought,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1950, p. 1; Bernd, *Grass Roots Politics in Georgia*, 16; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1951-1952*, 570.

just after it approved its resolution, state Senator Osgood Williams reminded the audience, a key GOP demographic, the county unit amendment would likely “liquidate the Republican Party.”<sup>21</sup>

The second county unit amendment campaign coincided with a highly competitive presidential election, but the referendum did not escape notice entirely. Again, an overwhelmingly majority of self-identified Republicans denounced this renewed effort to extend the county unit system. “The top Republican leadership—which is the best judge of its party interests—opposes this amendment,” noted M. Neil Andrews, a Democrat, who chaired the prominent Citizens Against the County Unit Amendment. Elbert Tuttle, who was serving as Republican state chairman by the fall of 1952, had relentlessly attacked the amendment. Speaking in south Fulton County to the Hapeville Chamber of Commerce, Tuttle warned that extending the county unit system would “severely hamper the creation of a second party in the state.” In addition to Tuttle, Charles A. Moye Jr., DeKalb County’s first Republican candidate for state representative, included a plank denouncing the amendment in his campaign platform. Ultimately, the amendment represented an undemocratic threat to the creation of a competitive two-party system, and Georgia Republicans mobilized to oppose it.<sup>22</sup>

The 1952 amendment fight drew more voters than the first, but the results were largely the same. A more forceful pro-amendment effort and a competitive presidential election

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<sup>21</sup> Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 80; Joseph L. Bernd, “A Study of Primary Elections in Georgia, 1946-1954,” (PhD diss., Duke University, 1957), 233; Bernd, *Grass Roots Politics in Georgia*, 16-17; Editorial, “Fair Play vs. Partisan Politics,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 23, 1951, p. 12; M.L. St. John, “Jaycees Start Drive To Beat Unit Proposal,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 5, 1952, p. 1; Editorial, “The Same Vicious Scheme,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 30, 1951, p. 10; M.L. St. John, “GOP Says State Law Blocks 2-Party System,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 14, 1951.

<sup>22</sup> Harold Davis, “‘Smear’ Tactics Laid To Pro-Unit Forces,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 26, 1952, Sec. A, p. 10; “Tuttle Says State Needs Two Parties,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1952, p. 16; “Moye Seeks Appraisal of Election Laws,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 28, 1952, p. 30. As in 1950, not all Republicans fell in line to oppose Talmadge’s county unit amendment. Once again, a member of the Pickett family was at the center of controversy. Will Hays Pickett, one of Georgia’s two Republican state representatives, followed his older brother Roscoe Jr.’s example and endorsed the amendment. See, “Two Change Stand on County Unit,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 7, 1951, p. 3; St. John, “Can Georgia GOP Remain Unified,” p. 4; Pickens County Heritage Book Committee, *Pickens County Heritage Book*, 369; *Georgia’s Official Register, 1951-1952*, 238-239.

campaign almost doubled the number of ballots cast in 1950. The amendment failed, but this time by a narrower margin: 52.5 percent to 47.5 percent. Balloting, once again, fell mostly along rural-urban lines throughout the state. The populous, six-unit counties all voted down the referendum. Several of the affluent wards in Northside Atlanta and DeKalb County that voted down the amendment by wide margins also backed Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower. Only in Atlanta's majority African-American voting districts did the county unit amendment fare worse than in the tony precincts incorporating Buckhead, Morningside, and Druid Hills. This unorthodox fusion of upper-income white voters and African-Americans formed the crux of the anti-Talmadge coalition during the 1940s and 1950s as well as the core of Atlanta's racially moderate, business-oriented regime epitomized by the mayoral administrations of William B. Hartsfield (1937-1941, 1943-1962) and Ivan Allen Jr. (1962-1970). According to historian Numan Bartley, "Blacks and affluent whites found common cause in opposition to rural domination of state politics and in support of progressive urban government." The inequities of the county unit system, legislative malapportionment, and the proliferation of courthouse gang politics "tended to suppress the social and economic divisions between black poor and white wealthy." Whether or not this unconventional electoral alliance could transcend nonpartisan and bifactional Democratic politics remained to be seen since Georgia's African-American voters had proved to be the most mercurial of all voting groups in presidential contests.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Numan V. Bartley, "Atlanta Elections and Georgia Political Trends," *New South* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1970), 28; Rigdon II, *Georgia's County Unit System*, 39, 103; *Georgia's Official Register, 1951-1952*, 579; Albert Riley, "Unit Defeat Is Conceded By Talmadge," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1952, p. 1, 12; "Atlantans Out In Big Numbers To Cast Ballots," *Atlanta Daily World*, November 5, 1952, p. 1; "DeKalb Election Returns," *DeKalb New Era*, November 6, 1952, p. 1; "How They Voted In Fulton," *Atlanta Journal*, November 7, 1952, p. ?; M. Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler, "Class, Party, and Race in Four Types of Elections: The Case of Atlanta," *Journal of Politics* 28, no. 2 (May 1966), 399-400; Clarence A. Bacote, "The Negro Voter in Georgia, Today," *Journal of Negro Education* 26, no. 3 (Summer 1957), 307-308, 316. With the exception of Mississippi, black voter registration in Georgia lagged behind the rest of the South between the 1940s and 1960s. Concentrated in Atlanta and Savannah, approximately 125,000 black Georgians were registered to vote in 1946. That number had grown by more than 31

With an increasingly unpopular Democrat in the White House and an auspicious showing in the 1950 midterm elections, Republicans maintained high hopes for winning their first presidential election since 1928. Not surprisingly, the election drew a large field of aspirants. Leading the pack was perennial candidate Senator Robert Taft. Fresh off a smashing reelection victory in 1950, Taft had tacked noticeably rightward both in tone and substance—especially on foreign policy. Not only had Taft honed his policy positions, but he also built new national campaign team. A handful of Republicans rose to challenge Taft including former also-rans Harold Stassen, Earl Warren, and Douglas MacArthur, but none were expected to contend seriously for the nomination. Nevertheless, several moderate Republican moderates balked at uniting behind Taft. Angered by his strident critiques of liberal internationalism and unconvinced he could actually win a national election, anti-Taft forces scurried to find an alternative.<sup>24</sup>

Republican moderates focused increasingly on World War II hero General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower had become president of Columbia University in 1947 and published a highly acclaimed memoir, *Crusade in Europe*, the next year. Talk of an Eisenhower candidacy had swirled in 1948, but nothing materialized. The general had taken a leave of absence from Columbia in late 1950 to organize North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military forces in Europe. His position as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, understandably complicated the behind-the-scenes attempts to draft Eisenhower into a presidential campaign. Nevertheless, a coterie of high-profile Republican officials including Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. of Massachusetts and James Duff of Pennsylvania; governors Sherman Adams of New Hampshire and Val

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percent, to 163,842, by 1957. Almost 334,000 African-American Georgians were registered to vote in 1968, and that figure represented 18.4 percent of the total electorate. See, Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 41, 215.

<sup>24</sup> Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 131; John L. Moore, Jon P. Preimesberger, and David R. Tarr, eds., *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2001), 271; Richard H. Rovere, "What's Happened to Taft?" *Harper's Magazine*, April 1952, 41; Deskins Jr., Walton Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 396-397; Clarence E. Wunderlin Jr., ed. *The Papers of Robert A. Taft*, vol. 4, 1949-1953 (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006), xii.

Peterson of Nebraska formed the nucleus of the draft Eisenhower effort. Led by Thomas Dewey and retired general and Wall Street executive Lucius D. Clay, pro-Eisenhower forces also included the heads of major corporations and financial institutions. Their efforts ramped up in the fall of 1951 and finally succeeded in dragooning the general into the 1952 Republican presidential nomination contest. Only after he won a sizeable victory in the New Hampshire primary as an unannounced candidate did Eisenhower finally retire his military commission and launch his presidential campaign.<sup>25</sup>

The South, which controlled one-sixth of all delegates in 1952, would once again play an important role in selecting the GOP's nominee. Initially, Taft enjoyed the support of the region's top Republicans. The senator's fortunes looked especially bright in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas where pro-Taft Republicans controlled the party machinery. This was not the case, however, in Georgia where pro-Dewey Tucker Republicans had outmaneuvered their Taft-leaning, Foster faction rivals at the 1948 Republican National Convention. Nevertheless, the new and improved Taft-for-president campaign made a vigorous play for the state's delegation.<sup>26</sup>

Taft scored an early coup when Georgia's national committeeman Harry Sommers joined his campaign in the summer of 1951. David S. Ingalls, Taft's cousin and campaign manager, understood Sommers's decision would place him in an awkward position with his colleagues. "I

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 2012), 466, 468-471; Deskins Jr., Walton Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 397; Louis Galambos, ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: NATO and the Campaign of 1952*, vol. 12 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), The most notable of Eisenhower's well-healed associates became known collectively as "the Gang" and included William E. Robinson, a top executive with the *New York Herald Tribune* and the Coca-Cola Company; Clifford Roberts, Wall Street investment banker and chairman of the Augusta National Golf Club; Robert W. Woodruff, chairman of the Coca-Cola Company; W. Alton (Pete) Jones, chairman of Cities Service Oil Corporation; Ellis D. Slater, chairman of Frankfort Distilleries; and George E. Allen, a lawyer, lobbyist, and political operative from Mississippi. For "the Gang" see, Michael Beschloss, "The Gang That Always Liked Ike," *New York Times*, November 15, 2014, Sec. BU, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Bowen, "The First Southern Strategy," 227-228.

can appreciate that you will be under quite some pressure from the Eisenhower Crowd,” Ingalls empathized, “They are, of course, making a tremendous effort simply because they are afraid that Taft is getting this thing sewed up.” Indeed, Ingalls was attempting to do just that when he traveled to Georgia in late August to meet privately with top Republicans, including Roy Foster Sr. who agreed in principle with Ingalls’s suggestion that the two rival factions unite. At a subsequent gathering, Ingalls, Sommers, and Foster devised the Taft campaign’s Georgia strategy. Foster and Sommers would split the four at-large delegates between the two factions with Foster endorsing Sommers for national committeeman. Foster’s organization would call the district conventions where Taft delegates would prevail. Ingalls reported back to Ohio, “Sommers and Foster both agreed that there shall be only one delegation, and there shall be no fight, and they will do everything they can to bring their groups together along this line.” He added, “So unless things blow up, we have a pretty good set-up in Georgia and should have all of the delegates with the exception of [Elbert] Tuttle, and maybe one other.” Recent political history should have warranted greater caution from Ingalls.<sup>27</sup>

Eisenhower’s supporters in Georgia had remained relatively inactive until Roy Foster had endorsed Taft shortly before the senator announced his candidacy in mid-October. At the behest of someone in Governor Dewey’s organization, Elbert Tuttle instructed Kil Townsend to organize the nation’s first “Citizens for Eisenhower” club in Atlanta. Townsend enlisted fifteen colleagues as charter members, but the group made headlines when legendary golfer Robert T. (Bobby) Jones Jr. joined. Jones signed on after receiving approval from Eisenhower. Unwilling

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<sup>27</sup> David S. Ingalls to Harry Sommers, August 2, 1951; Davis S. Ingalls, “Memorandum – Georgia,” September 1, 1951; David S. Ingalls to Harry G. Sommers, September 2, 1951 all in Political File, Box 340, Folder 1, Taft Papers; St. John, “Can Georgia GOP Remain Unified?” p. 4; It is unclear why Sommers decided to support Taft over Eisenhower in 1952.



to permit Taft to campaign unchallenged as the presumptive Republican nominee, former Dewey partisans mobilized Eisenhower's Georgia operation in short order.<sup>28</sup>

Styling himself as Republican state party chairman, Roy Foster Sr. summoned his erstwhile faction to a meeting at the Dempsey Hotel in Macon on January 15. Shortly afterward, Foster's son informed the press that "a separate Republican movement was in full bloom." The conclave and declaration appeared to break completely with the course charted by Harry Sommers since meeting with Foster Sr. and David Ingalls. Sommers fired off missives to David Ingalls and former RNC chairman Carroll Reece. Sommers told Ingalls, "I have tried to work with Foster over a period of years...The Group has always been an obstacle in my efforts, not only for raising money for the Party nationally, but in building confidence in the people of Georgia in the leadership of the Republican Party." He struck a more exasperated tone with Reece. "You people have apparently decided that Foster can carry the ball better than I can. Whether you are right or not, remains to be seen," he stated bluntly, "If anyone from the Foster Group is at the Chicago Convention, other than as a spectator, I shall be a very surprised man." The Republican national committeeman from Georgia pledged his continued personal support for Senator for Taft, but he warned Reece in a parting shot, "[I]f he doesn't get the nomination, it will be because of the people who are running his show." Clearly, the Taft organization, Foster

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<sup>28</sup> "Georgia GOP Won't Instruct 1952 Delegates," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, September 30, 1951, Sec. C, p. 16; "Georgia's GOP Leaders Cautious on Candidates," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 30, 1951, p. 6; AP, "Georgia GOP Leader Asks Taft Candidacy," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 11, 1951, p. 25; Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees*, 502; "Georgia GOP Lauds Taft, Pledges Fight," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 8, 1951, p. 19; Joseph Alsop, "Ike's Forces Organizing," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 29, 1951, p. 4; Robert Mason, "Citizens for Eisenhower and the Republican Party, 1951-1965," *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 2 (June 2013), 519-520; Jane Dick, *Volunteers and the Making of Presidents* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1980), 79, 91-92, 98; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 87-88; M. L. St. John, "State-Wide Ike Drive Is Started," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 31, 1951, p. 32; "Group for Ike Gets Charter Here: Bobby Jones Among 15 Launching State Move to Draft General," *Atlanta Journal*, October 30, 1951, p. 1; Gladstone Williams, "Ike's Backers Set to Move," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 1, 1951, p. 4.

faction, or both had decided to launch a more aggressive campaign for Georgia's delegates than Sommers had anticipated.<sup>29</sup>

Foster apologized later for employing the state party chairman title to call his group's meeting, and he also claimed he had only intended collaborate with the Tucker group during the upcoming campaign. Still, the Dempsey Hotel Meeting seemed uncharacteristically bold for Roy Foster, and subsequent developments suggested a hardline rump within the Foster organization led by Roscoe Pickett Jr. had initiated the public break with Harry Sommers's more conciliatory approach. High-ranking Taft aides recognized that Pickett posed a threat to any unity slate in Georgia. David Ingalls admitted as much following a meeting with Pickett the previous August. Dubbing him "one of the firebrands in his organization," Ingalls acknowledged, "Pickett is probably going to be one of the biggest stumbling block [sic] in the two organizations getting together, as he hates Sommers as well as Sommers hates him." Pickett and his family had already demonstrated a willingness to buck the Tucker Republican leadership during the county unit amendment campaign, and he had stubbornly maintained Roy Foster remained the legally recognized state party chairman.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the action of individual Foster Republicans, however, that faction appeared inclined toward unity until mid-February 1952 when Roy Foster Jr. claimed an *Atlanta Constitution* article had "so changed the situation that we have no alternative than to continue our fight." That article informed readers, "Peace and harmony in the usually stormy state GOP camp was indicated Thursday by Republican National Committeeman Harry Sommers."

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<sup>29</sup> Harry Sommers to David S. Ingalls, January 16, 1952 and Harry Sommers to B. Carroll Reece, January 16, 1952 both in Political File, Box 340, Folder 2, Taft Papers; "GOP Split Started by Foster Body," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1952, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Davis S. Ingalls, "Memorandum – Georgia," September 1, 1951; David S. Ingalls to Harry G. Sommers, September 2, 1951 all in Political File, Box 340, Folder 1, Taft Papers; "Tuttle Wary On GOP Elector Vote," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 31, 1952, p. 6. Contemporary political observers noted the close personal relationship between Foster faction Republicans and the Talmadge administration. See, M.L. St. John, "Georgia GOP Reviews Trends," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 5, 1952, p. 4.

Offering no direct quotes, but the article claimed Roy Foster Sr. had resigned as the head of his eponymously named splinter group and taken a position on the Tucker-led Republican state central committee. Foster Jr. denied this report and informed the Taft campaign that his father's organization would hold party conventions in the state. "When this is done, we will have seventeen delegates prepared to come to Chicago and fight to the man for your nomination," Foster Jr. pledged to Taft. Thus, the Foster faction reemerged fully animated to challenge the pro-Eisenhower Tucker organization for control of the delegation and party in 1952.<sup>31</sup>

In response, Roscoe Tucker issued a convention call on behalf of the Republican state central committee on February 16. According to the schedule, Georgia Republicans would meet in "mass" county conventions on March 29, congressional district conventions on April 26, and the state convention on May 31. The Foster faction, meanwhile, scheduled an organizational meeting for March 1 in Macon and called for county conventions on March 26 with a state convention to follow on May 24. Although Senator Taft admitted "the alienation of Mr. Harry Sommers would be unfortunate," but neither he nor his campaign denounced the Foster organization's insurrection.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike previous presidential campaigns, both organizations ran orderly, strife-free conventions. That the Foster group simply ignored Roscoe Tucker's convention call probably accounted for the relative calm. As a result, the Tucker faction certified 296 delegates to the May 31 state convention in Atlanta, which subsequently re-elected Tucker chairman and named its delegates and alternates to the Republican National Convention. Foster Republicans had

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<sup>31</sup> Roy Foster Jr. to Robert A. Taft, February 22, 1952 in Political File, Box 339, Folder 7, Taft Papers; "Foster Acts To Solidify State GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 15, 1952, p. 18; Shadgett, "Presidential Nominating Politics," 100.

<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Taft to Roy G. Foster Jr., March 6, 1952 in Political File, Box 339, Folder 7, Taft Papers; Shadgett, "Presidential Nominating Politics," 94-95; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 88; Georgia Goodwin, "Georgia GOPs Planning Conventions Month Apart," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 17, 1952, Sec. B, p. 4; "Ike or Taft? Battle Stirs State GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 25, 1952, p. 11.

convened the week before and selected their rival leadership and national convention slate. Approximately 250 people attended what chroniclers described as a “Taft rally.” Foster confirmed this assessment by suggesting the convention “instruct” delegates to cast their votes for the senator at the national convention.<sup>33</sup>

After Griffin Superior Court judge Chester A. Byars declared Foster’s group the “parent organization of the state Republican Party,” the Georgia contest proceeded to the Republican National Convention in Chicago.<sup>34</sup> With a pro-Taft majority on the Republican National Committee, Tucker forces found themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Nevertheless, Elbert Tuttle argued his group’s case with a raft of supporting evidence. Not only had the Tucker organization issued the only official convention call and conducted all conventions according to party rules, but it had also supported the national party financially. The Foster faction, which Tuttle dubbed a “small clique,” had taken no part in fundraising efforts. Tuttle concluded the Foster Republicans had orchestrated the entire contest to circumvent Georgia’s legal Republican Party and deliver the state’s delegates to Senator Taft. Toward the end of the hearing, Senator Taft’s lead counsel Monte Appel proposed a compromise. The RNC should seat a Georgia delegation split evenly between Taft and Eisenhower delegates, which would re-elect both

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<sup>33</sup> Frank O. Evans and Elbert P. Tuttle, “Georgia Contest – Summary of Argument of Frank O. Evans and Elbert P. Tuttle Counsel for Harry Sommers, W.R. Tucker, et. al.,” [July 1952?] in Series 1, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Tuttle Papers; AP, “2 First District GOP Groups Meet on April 26,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1952, p. 7; George Goodwin, “Ike Backers Claim Most Faction Votes,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 27, 1952, Sec. A, p. 1, 16; “Ike Wins Fulton Vote; DeKalb Split on Taft,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 30, 1952, Sec. A, p. 1, 6; “State GOP Group Here Favors Ike,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1952, p. 11; M.L. St. John, “Foster GOP Group Meets at Macon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 24, 1952, p. 6; George Goodwin, “Georgia GOP Split Settles to Taft, Ike,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, June 1, 1952, Sec. A, p.1; Shadgett, “Presidential Nominating Politics,” 95-98.

<sup>34</sup> W.R. Tucker to Elbert P. Tuttle, June 26, 1952 in Series 1, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Tuttle Papers; “Georgia Taft Faction Asks Court Legalize Its Convention Delegates,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 12, 1952, p. 1; M.L. St. John, “Georgia Taft Suit Labeled Local Action,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 13, 1952, p. 1, 16; “Writ Forbids Decisions by Tucker GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 25, 1952, p. 1, 5; Jim Pinson, “Foster Faction Ruled Legal State GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 1, 1952, p. 1, 7; M.L. St. John, “Such a Small Party to Have So Many Delegates Fights Over Recognition,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 29, 1952, Sec. F, p. 2; Shadgett, “Presidential Nominating Politics,” 101.

Tucker and Harry Sommers. In substance, Appel offered the same arrangement Sommers had brokered with Roy Foster Sr. and David Ingalls the previous August. Despite his acrimonious split with Foster in January, Harry Sommers had evidently never divulged the scheme to his Tucker faction colleagues because Tuttle exhorted him to denounce the offer. Recognizing he was in a no-win situation, Sommers offered weakly, "In view of all the controversy, I will not make any comment." Unwilling to disavow publicly a deal he had reached privately with Taft, Sommers instead repudiated the Republican organization he had led for almost a decade. The RNC voted 62-39 in Foster's favor.<sup>35</sup>

Bobby Jones exclaimed in dismay at the ruling, "I don't know how you get any self-respecting person to join the Republican Party in Georgia when no one knows what group is the party." Elbert Tuttle, meanwhile, took the setback personally and upbraided Sommers for deserting his friends in their hour of need. According to Tuttle, Sommers had agreed before to deliver a speech supporting the Tucker delegation's seating during the hearing. "We relied on that stand very strongly until he threw his weight to the other side," Tuttle explained deeming Sommers's action "the most amazing worst double cross I've ever experienced." The Tucker

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<sup>35</sup> Tuttle and Evans, "Georgia Contest," [July 1952?] and Harry Sommers et. al., Delegates at Large of the Republican Party of Georgia v. Roy G. Foster et. al., Contestants, Record and Brief of Harry Sommers et. al., Representing the Republican Party of Georgia, Elbert P. Tuttle and Frank O. Evans, Attorneys, July, 1952, Session both in Series 1, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Tuttle Papers; "National Affairs: Marching Through Georgia," *Time*, July 14, 1952, p. 2; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 409; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 90-91; Shadgett, "Presidential Nominating Politics," 102; W.H. Lawrence, "Georgia Taft Faction Seated As New 'Steal' Is Charged; Nixon Warns Party Chiefs," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1952, p. 1, 5. Apparently, Sommers's "no comment" failed to impress fellow Georgia Republicans back home who flooded Chicago with telegrams condemning his behavior. See, M.L. St. John, "Ike's Forces In Dixie War On 'Roller,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1952, p. 1, 3. In a private letter to Elbert Tuttle, E.D. Allen of Atlanta considered the RNC's decision a "blessing in disguise" because "it vindicates my opinion of Harry Sommers stated freely to you some time ago. I stated to you I did not trust him as far as I could throw a bull by the tail." See, E.D. Allen to Elbert Tuttle, July 3, 1952 in Series 1, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Tuttle Papers. Sommers defended himself in a post-convention public statement claiming, "I never had any deal or commitment with the Foster group on any subject, including the national committee membership." Based on available evidence, this assertion is misleading. See, "Sommers Raps 'Steamroller' In 'Double-Cross' Counter," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 18, 1952, p. 6.

Republicans vowed to appeal the decision as angry telegrams and negative press reports assailed the “ruthless, arrogant” Taft campaign’s “steamroller tactics.”<sup>36</sup>

Tucker Republicans appealed to the Credential Committee. Tuttle’s rationale for seating his delegation was similar to the case he had made before the RNC, but he introduced additional pieces of evidence—a 1948 letter from Roy Foster pledging loyalty to Roscoe Tucker’s leadership as well as Harry Sommers’s correspondence with David Ingalls and Carroll Reece in which he had identified Tucker’s group as Georgia’s legal Republican organization. Perhaps in an effort to accentuate the Tucker delegation’s racial diversity, John Wesley Dobbs played a prominent role in the hearing, delivering a short, but impassioned speech demanding his delegation be seated. Unmoved by either Tuttle or Dobbs, the pro-Taft panel affirmed the RNC’s ruling. Undeterred, the Tucker faction appealed to the full convention.<sup>37</sup>

Donald Eastvold, a young, telegenic state senator from Washington, outlined the Tucker faction’s case to the convention. Seconding Eastvold’s motion to overturn RNC and Credentials Committee rulings, Gordon Richmond of California remarked wryly, “[O]n this Georgia contest, the same issues that are here before us tonight were decided by the National Convention in 1944 and in 1948...The only difference was that there was a change in political sentiment of certain members of the National Committee.” Governor Alfred Driscoll of New Jersey closed the Tucker case, reminding delegates the Republican National Convention was the sole judge of its

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<sup>36</sup> “Tucker Slate To Fight ‘Double Cross’ Seat Ban,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1952, p. 1, 5; St. John, “Ike’s Forces In Dixie War On ‘Roller,’” p. 3; Wright Bryan, “Unseated Georgians Map Strategy Meet,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 6, 1952, Sec. A, p. 1, 17; Editorial, “Taft Machine Is Ruthless, Arrogant,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1952, p. 4; Telegram: S.P. Stephenson to Robert A. Taft, July 5, 1952 in Political File, Box 340, Folder 2, Taft Papers; Telegram: C.C. Robinette and Friends to Taft Headquarters, July 5, 1952, Political File, Box 340, Folder 1, Taft Papers. Contests among competing delegations from Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas also featured prominently at the 1952 Republican National Convention. See, Bowen, “The First Southern Strategy,” 230-231.

<sup>37</sup> M.L. St. John, “Dewey Sees Victory for Tucker Unit,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 4, 1952, p. 1, 16; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 91-92; “Letter Laid to Sommers Denounced Foster Faction,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, 1952, p. 9; M. L. St. John, “Tucker Camp Asks Decision From Floor,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, 1952, p. 1, 5; Rose McKee, “Credential Unit Backs Seating of Georgia Taftmen But Battles Rage Over Texas and Louisiana,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, 1952, p. 1, 5.

membership. “I have a healthy respect for the American judicial system,” Driscoll contended, “I also have a healthy respect for the judicial system of Georgia. But I submit to you that this is the supreme court of Republicanism and is the proper tribunal before which the issues raised by the contest must be settled.” Speaking for the pro-Taft Foster faction, Illinois senator Everett Dirksen implored convention delegates to trust the judgement of Republican Party councils. Taking a jab at his “good friends from the Eastern Seaboard,” Dirksen explained, “[W]e followed you before and you took us down the path to defeat.” The sneer elicited a mixture of applause, boos, and shouts. Voting on the motion remained close throughout, but strong support from California, Michigan, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania tipped the decision in Tucker’s favor—607 to 531. Because the convention had previously approved the so-called “Fair Play” amendment barring contested delegations from voting on seating-related questions, 68 delegates from Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas did not participate in the close-run balloting. Georgia had broken Taft’s southern firewall, and the convention nominated Eisenhower on the first ballot. Afterward, Roscoe Tucker replaced Harry Sommers as Georgia’s national committeeman with Elbert Tuttle assuming Tucker’s former post as state party chairman. The delegation also re-elected Mildred Snodgrass to another term as Republican national committeewoman.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Republican National Convention had seated the Tucker faction and nominated Eisenhower, it had failed to end Georgia’s intraparty squabbling. Roy Foster signaled a desire to “unite in a common effort to establish a two-party system in Georgia,” but Roscoe

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<sup>38</sup> *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Republican National Convention Held in Chicago, Illinois: July 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, 1952* (Washington D.C.: Judd A. Detweiler, 1952), 164-185, 424; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 92-93; William Barry Furlong, “The Senate’s Wizard of Ooze,” *Harper’s*, December 1959, p. 44-49; Brownell, *Advising Ike*, 111, 117; “Tucker Unit Pins Hope On New Fair Play Vote,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, p. 1; Ralph McGill, “Ga. Pivots GOP Swing To General,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 10, 1952, p. 1, 5; M.L. St. John, “Ike Appears on GOP Victory March As Convention Seats Tucker Faction,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 10, 1952, p. 1, 8; Shadgett, “Presidential Nominating Politics,” 102; M.L. St. John, “Tucker Put On National Committee,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1952, p. 1, 5. For a most colorful exploration of the 1952 Republican National Convention see, John Dickerson, *Whistlestop: My Favorite Stories from Presidential Campaign History* (New York and Boston: Twelve, 2016), 219-239.

Pickett Jr. resisted and convened a meeting to announce Foster's resignation *in absentia*. As the Foster organization's first vice-chairman, Pickett assumed the chair and declared his organization was the official Georgia Republican Party. Elbert Tuttle, meanwhile, refused to negotiate with Pickett. Ultimately, Pickett's coup hastened Tucker dominance. Repudiating Pickett's statements and actions, Roy Foster issued a statement encouraging all Republicans to "unite to build a strong Republican Party, which Georgia needs." Pickett subsequently withdrew his legal challenges, but he reserved the right to "continue our efforts to get court recognition." Chastened but defiant, Pickett remained an active Republican but he pursued no further legal action.<sup>39</sup>

While Georgia Republicans were endeavoring to unify behind their party's nominee, the Associated Press broke news of a nascent Independent Democrats for Eisenhower movement in Georgia. Similar to the independent elector scheme devised in 1940 by anti-New Deal Democrats and Republicans, the scheme would have offered Georgians the option of voting against the Democratic Party's presidential nominee without the mental anguish of casting an actual Republican ballot. Neither Herman Talmadge nor Bobby Jones divulged who was spearheading the Independent Democrats for Eisenhower, but evidence points to John A. Sibley, chairman of the Trust Company of Georgia; Hughes Spalding, partner at the prominent King & Spalding law firm; and Robert W. Woodruff, chairman of Coca-Cola Company and close friend of General Eisenhower's. Sibley had suggested to Talmadge that southern Democrats consider

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<sup>39</sup> "Foster Calls GOP State Fight 'Over,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 15, 1952, p. 9; Editorial, "The GOP Decision Should Be Accepted," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 16, 1952, p. 4; "Pickett Takes Foster Reins, Maps Electors," *Atlanta Constitution*, Jul 28, 1952, p. 1, 10; Elbert P. Tuttle to Roscoe Pickett, Jr., July 31, 1952; Resolution of the Republican State Executive Committee and the Republican State Central Committee in joint meeting, Atlanta, GA, July 27, 1952; Roscoe Pickett Jr. to Elbert P. Tuttle, July 29, 1952 all in Series 1, Subseries 1.1, Box 12, Folder 5, Tuttle Papers; Shadgett, "Presidential Nominating Politics," 103; AP, "Georgia GOPs Launch Court Move To Clear Slate," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 20, 1952, Sec. B, p. 8; M.L. St. John, "95 Pct. Of Group Going Into United GOP—Foster," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 9, 1952, p. 1, 3; AP, "Independent Democratic Backing Of Ike Being Talked at State Capitol," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 30, 1952, p.1, 6; "New Georgia GOP Fight Shaping Up Over Ike Slate," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 27, 1952, Sec. C, p. 1; Harold Davis, "Hearing Set Monday On GOP Squabble," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Sec. C, p. 1; "Tucker Group Given Official Label," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 12, 1952, p 1, 6; Shadgett, "Presidential Nominating Politics," 103.



nominating Dwight Eisenhower on a fusion ticket if their party nominated a liberal, “anti-southern” presidential candidate. Talmadge agreed Eisenhower would prove formidable and might “sweep the country and carry most of the Southern States” if Democrats failed to nominate Georgia senator Richard B. Russell, Jr. Sibley marveled at the enthusiasm Eisenhower elicited among his “big business associates.” More importantly, Sibley maintained Eisenhower could win the White House and create a competitive two-party system in the South. Sibley’s appraisal of Eisenhower grew more effusive over time. “Seldom in the history of a country have a people had a man possessing Eisenhower’s qualifications to meet both our domestic and foreign problems,” Sibley informed Woodruff in June 1952, “The times demand his service.” Convinced both Republicans and Democrats would like Ike, Sibley sought to tip the scales in Eisenhower’s favor.<sup>40</sup>

Fueling Sibley’s gambit was a widespread conviction among southern Democrats that Governor Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, the Democrats’ presidential nominee, would continue Truman’s progressive “Fair Deal” agenda. Just as the independent movement seemed to be gaining steam, Herman Talmadge and Lieutenant Governor Marvin Griffin both announced their reluctant and unenthusiastic support for Stevenson. Responding to Hughes Spalding’s plea to launch an Independent Democratic Party, Roy Harris confessed his support, but he would be unable to garner enough signatures to earn a place on the ballot. Ultimately, the independent movement foundered in Georgia for a number of reasons. Harris and Talmadge’s statements to the contrary, neither was keen to launch a high-risk campaign on Eisenhower’s behalf. Depriving

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<sup>40</sup> John A. Sibley to Herman Talmadge, May 5, 1952; Herman Talmadge to John A. Sibley, May 8, 1952 both in Series 1, Box 279, Folder 8, John A. Sibley papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; Memorandum: John A. Sibley to Robert W. Woodruff, June 11, 1952; Memorandum: John A. Sibley to Robert W. Woodruff, June 16, 1952 both in Robert W. Woodruff papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; AP, “Independent Democratic Backing of Ike Being Talked at State Capitol,” p. 1, 6. See also, Ralph McGill, “Political Men or Mice,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 31, 1952, p. 1.

the movement of his personal endorsement and political machine, Governor Herman Talmadge doomed the endeavor. Had he thrown his support behind Eisenhower as fellow southern governors Allan Shivers of Texas, Robert Kennon of Louisiana, and James F. Byrnes of South Carolina had, the independent gambit may have succeeded in Georgia. Sibley and Spalding, meanwhile, blamed uncooperative Republicans for torpedoing the movement. Sibley grouched, “[T]he chief Republican supporters of Eisenhower did not want the movement started,” and their intransigence put “loyalty to the Republican Party ahead of the success of the candidate and the welfare of the country.” If aggrieved Democrats wanted to oppose Stevenson, then they would either need to vote Republican or, as Herman Talmadge suggested, “Go fishing that day.”<sup>41</sup>

Eager to put talk of party factionalism and independent movements behind them, the Georgia Republican Party launched its general election campaign in early August. Elbert Tuttle promised the most extensive Republican presidential campaign in the state’s history. The party opened a record number of campaign headquarters, launched a massive speaking tour targeting potential Republican voters, and initiated massive fundraising drive to pay for it all. Fundraising letters outlining the Eisenhower’s virtues arrived in mailboxes around the state in late August. Not only was Eisenhower “an honest, forceful, plain American, dedicated in every fibre [sic] of his being to serving his country,” attested Republican finance chairman Bobby Jones, but he would also “resist to the utmost any effort to extend or enlarge upon the powers of the Federal

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<sup>41</sup> Hughes Spalding to Roy V. Harris, August 28, 1952 and Roy V. Harris to Hughes Spalding, August 30, 1952; Herman Talmadge to Hughes Spalding, September 2, 1952 all in Series 2, Box 28, Folder 1, Hughes Spalding Family papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA; Harris to Spalding, August 30, 1952, Series 2, Box 28, Folder 1, Spalding papers; John A. Sibley to Luther Cleveland, August 7, 1952; in Series 1, Box 95, Folder 6, Sibley papers; AP, “Independent Democratic Backing of Ike Being Talked at State Capitol,” p. 6; Hughes Spalding to Roy V. Harris, September 3, 1952, Series 1, Box 86, Folder 7, Woodruff papers; “Harris Sees Georgia Rebellion to Ike,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 31, 1952, p. 21. “Harris Sees Georgia Rebellion to Ike,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 31, 1952, p. 21; “Dixie Democrats Line Up for Adlai As Rumor of Ike Ticket Fizzles Out,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 1, 1952, p. 1, 13; Thomas L. Stokes, “Southern Leaders Will Not Bolt,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 2, 1952, p. 4; M.L. St. John, “State Solons Rap ‘Splinter’ Voting for Ike,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 4, 1952, p. 1, 6; Bartley, *The New South*, 101-102;

Government.” Neither Eisenhower nor his Georgia campaign repudiated New Deal programs, but both remained skeptical of efforts to augment the existing social welfare safety net. Thus, Eisenhower appealed directly to business-minded conservatives who prized low taxes, limited regulation, and minimal government intervention in key sectors of the economy such as health care, education, and utilities. Although a campaign endorsing small-government, states’ rights conservatism would appeal generally to the state’s white electorate, Georgia Republicans focused on expanding their support in the state’s metropolitan centers.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, similar talking points found their way into Eisenhower’s early September campaign speech in Atlanta’s Hurt Park. Presidents and other politicians had vacationed in Georgia over the years, but they rarely campaigned there. Several hundred Georgians—Republicans, Democrats, and independents—greeted the “Eisenhower Special” when it touched down at Atlanta’s Municipal Airport. After greeting a bipartisan delegation that included Governor Herman Talmadge, Atlanta mayor William Hartsfield, *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill, and Georgia Republican Party chairman Elbert Tuttle, Eisenhower met with a group of African-American Republicans led by John Wesley Dobbs. Afterward, a thirty-car motorcade proceeded on an eight-mile jaunt northward through Downtown Atlanta. Halting briefly to allow Eisenhower to christen the Peachtree Street campaign headquarters, the parade continued through Five Points and into Hurt Park where an estimated crowd of 30,000 to 40,000 had gathered. Despite the event’s bipartisan air, Eisenhower pounded the Truman administration with what one reporter described as “the mailed fist” for bungling the Korean War and creating a

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<sup>42</sup> Robert T. Jones Jr. Fundraising Letters, [August 1952]; Robert T. Jones Jr. to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, August 23, 1952 both in White House Central Files, Pre-Inaugural Files, Geographical Series, Box 4, Folder Jones, Robert T., Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS; Mack McCants, “Rival Ticket Disguised New Deal, Tuttle Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 15, 1952, p. 6; “Katherine Barnwell, “Citizens for Ike Clubs Planned Through State,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 13, 1952, p. 1, 6; “GOP Plans Most Intensive Campaign Ever Seen in Dixie,” *Washington Post*, August 20, 1952, p. 29; Franklin Nix, “Tuttle Opens GOP Offices On Peachtree,” *Atlanta Journal*, August 6, 1952, p. 3; Shadgett, “Presidential Nominating Politics,” 103; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 106.

“mess” in Washington. Eisenhower also castigated Democrats for creating a culture of “waste and extravagance and inefficiency” in Washington. “The hide that the cost of this mess is being taken out of is your hide,” Eisenhower asserted, “It is being taken out of your hide in higher taxes. It is being taken out of your hide in higher prices.” Appreciative Atlantans cheered with shouts of “We Like Ike” and the ubiquitous “Rebel Yell.” It was precisely the message Tuttle and others could sell to the region’s chambers of commerce and civic clubs.<sup>43</sup>

Eisenhower’s appeals to the South went beyond the three-pronged message of “Korea, corruption, and cronyism” he deployed nationally. Eisenhower tread more carefully than Dewey had on controversial topics like the FEPC and civil rights. Eisenhower opposed a compulsory FEPC, and he had accepted a diluted civil rights plank in the party’s platform. The Republican candidate, however, was no racial conservative, and black Republican leaders in Georgia campaigned earnestly on his behalf. Harkening back to earlier presidential campaigns, one voter guide insisted Eisenhower would “appoint Negroes to office and provide Federal jobs for us everywhere.” The Republican had indicated he might appoint qualified African-American candidates to federal posts, but he had issued no such blanket guarantee. Nevertheless, black Republicans posting letters from the Auburn Avenue branch of Atlanta’s Republican campaign headquarters, encouraged men and women of color to support Eisenhower.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jim Pinson, “Rebel Yells Salute Eisenhower Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 3, 1952, p. 1, 8; Willy Folk St. John, “How Atlanta Welcomed Eisenhower,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 5, 1952, Sec., SM, p. 12-14; AP, “Ike’s Invasion GOP’s First Dixie Drive,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 3, 1952, p. 13; Strong, “The Presidential Election in the South, 1952,” 355; Editorial, “Georgia Welcomes Gen. Eisenhower,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 2, 1952, p. 4; “Tuttle Says State Needs Two Parties,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1952, p. 16; “Tuttle Plans GOP Talk To Realtors,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 5, 1952, Sec. B, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Flyer: “Vote For The Republican Electors On November 4<sup>th</sup> – Because” in Series 7, Box 2, Folder 5 and Eisenhower and Nixon Campaign Letter, October 29, 1952 in Series 7, Box 2, Folder 3 both in A.T. Walden papers, Kenan Research Center – Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA; Mark Stern, “Presidential Strategies and Civil Rights: Eisenhower, the Early Years, 1952-54,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1989), 772-774; Deskins Jr., Walton Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 399.

Eisenhower's earned endorsements from major newspapers such as the *Augusta Chronicle*, *Cobb County Times*, *Columbus Enquirer and Ledger*, *Savannah Morning News* and *Evening Press* as well as the African-American owned *Atlanta Daily World*, which bucked black press by backing Eisenhower over Stevenson. Each one offered a variation of the general theme of change in Washington and the need for a viable two-party system in Georgia. Eisenhower's evident popularity throughout the region coupled with the Georgia GOP's most comprehensive presidential campaign in history led state party chairman Elbert Tuttle to predict "at least 10 or 15" counties would vote Republican on November 4.<sup>45</sup>

Voters, though, proved the overly optimistic Tuttle wrong as the state remained Democratic in 1952. Nevertheless, Eisenhower garnered almost 199,000 votes—roughly 30 percent of the total. The Republican also won five counties and secured over forty percent in ten others. That Ike triumphed in Fannin and Pickens surprised no one since "mountain Republicanism" remained strong. His success elsewhere reflected a combination of two factors. First, Eisenhower polled strongly among voters belonging to what historian Numan Bartley dubbed the "urban bourgeoisie"—prosperous, white Georgians residing in dynamic cities and suburbs who chafed at rural domination and cherished "economic progress and conservative moderation" on social issues. These voters cast ballots for Eisenhower and against the Talmadge-backed county unit amendment. Second, "mad Democrats" who opposed Adlai Stevenson voiced their disgust with an increasingly liberal Democratic Party by voting the Republican ticket. As a result, Eisenhower scored narrow victories in Chatham and Richmond counties where local

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<sup>45</sup> Editorial, "We support 'Ike,'" *Augusta Chronicle*, August 5, 1952, p. 1; Editorial, "We reaffirm our choice of 'Ike,'" *Augusta Chronicle*, November 2, 1952, p. 6; Editorial, "The Voters Should Think Seriously," *Atlanta Daily World*, November 2, 1952, p. 1; Editorial, "The Day For Decision," *Atlanta Daily World*, November 4, 1952, p. 6; "Tuttle Sees 10 Counties In State for Eisenhower," Sec. B, p. 11; Editorial, "The Times Feels This Way," *Cobb County Times*, October 30, 1952, Sec. B, p. 4; AP, "Ike Gets Backing From Several State Papers," *Rome News-Tribune*, October 18, 1956, p. 3; James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 275 n. 51. The *Pittsburgh Courier* also endorsed Eisenhower.

Democratic machines—controlled by Talmadge lieutenant John J. Bouhan and Roy V. Harris, respectively—appeared more interested in winning the county unit referendum than campaigning for Stevenson. Local observers in rural Effingham County, located just north of Chatham, credited Eisenhower’s twenty-nine vote margin of victory to anti-Stevenson sentiment rather than a strong surge of Republicanism. White conservatives in other rural and small-town counties across the state rallied to Eisenhower, but few embraced the Republican label. Although Eisenhower did not secure majorities in DeKalb, Fulton, Glynn, or Muscogee counties, he carried several affluent, upper-income wards and precincts there. Had Eisenhower managed to cut into Stevenson’s share of the state’s more than 100,000 registered black voters, he may have carried DeKalb, Glynn, and perhaps Fulton counties where some African-American precincts voted upwards of 90 percent in favor of Stevenson.<sup>46</sup>

Despite Stevenson’s victory in Georgia, Republicans hailed Eisenhower’s triumph as the beginning of “real two-party politics” in the state. His strong showing along with the county unit amendment’s second defeat in as many election cycles cheered the Georgia GOP. Party leaders planned to maintain a permanent party headquarters in Atlanta to facilitate party business, plan campaigns, and coordinate with county and local Republican organizations year round. Elbert Tuttle even pledged to offer candidates for governor and other statewide offices in 1954. Still

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<sup>46</sup> Bartley, “Atlanta Elections and Georgia Political Trends,” p. 26; *Georgia’s Official and Statistical Register, 1951-1952*, 534-536; Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 83; Riley, “GOP Relies on New Voters, Dissidents For Ga. Build-Up,” Sec. C, p. 1, 6; Strong, “The Presidential Election in the South, 1952,” 357-358; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 6, 31; Albert Riley, “Chatham GOP Hopeful Of Ousting Rival in ’54,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 9, 1952, p. 1, 14; Albert Riley, “Ike’s Visits to Augusta Helped Win Richmond,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 11, 1952, p. 1, 16; Albert Riley, “Effingham’s GOP Vote Said Protest, Not Trend,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 10, 1952, p. 1, 16 Tindall, *The Disruption of the Solid South*, 52-56; Numan V. Bartley and Hugh Davis Graham, “Whatever Happened to the Solid South?” *New South* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1972), 30; Harold Davis, “Unit Vote Still in Balance As State Tally Continues,” *Atlanta Journal*, p. 1, 3; “Republicans Carry Court House, Emory,” *DeKalb New Era*, November 6 1952, p. 1, 2; “How They Voted In Fulton,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 7, 1952, p. ?; Albert Riley, “GOPs in Glynn Dented Its Democratic Solidarity,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 12, 1952, p. 1, 6; Albert Riley, “Muscogee GOPs Gird For Spring Campaign,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 13, 1952, p. 1, 3; Bacote, “The Negro Voter in Georgia Politics, Today,” 808; Strong, “The Presidential Election in the South, 1952,” 358.

other Georgia Republicans discussed openly of campaigning in the state's ten congressional districts. Such halcyon predictions, however, ignored real challenges confronting the party.<sup>47</sup>

The Republican Party of Georgia had unquestionably secured a beachhead in the state's prosperous urban and suburban communities, but an electoral beachhead and a political breakthrough were not one and the same. Confined chiefly to cities and suburbs, Republicans were poorly placed to launch a concerted attack on Georgia's one-party system. Legislative malapportionment attenuated further growth opportunities at the state and congressional levels. Indeed, Eisenhower's strengths and Stevenson's weaknesses in 1952 may have also obscured the Georgia Republican Party's most daunting, strategic challenge moving forward. Could the GOP craft a message and policies that were simultaneously more conservative than the national Democratic Party yet more progressive than the state Democratic Party of Herman Talmadge?<sup>48</sup>

Well aware of challenges still facing their party, Georgia Republicans celebrated Eisenhower's inauguration and welcomed approximately 1,500 federal jobs now at the state party's disposal, but personal vendettas, patronage squabbles, and the scramble for party leadership flared up after the inauguration. These conflicts not only caused considerable embarrassment to state and national Republicans, but they also ruptured a seemingly cohesive Tucker Faction that had remained largely intact since 1944. The spoils of electoral success, it seemed, had triggered a new wave of political infighting that threatened to smother the incoming administration's inchoate plans to reform Republican organizations throughout the

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<sup>47</sup> "Tuttle Says 2-Party Politics Assured by Ike and Unit Vote," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1952, p. 15; Harold Davis, "Republicans Gear to Enter Top State Races in '54 Vote," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 16 1952, Sec. F, p. 1, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Strong, "The Presidential Election in the South, 1952," 357-358; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 83; Bartley and Graham, "Whatever Happened to the Solid South?" 30.

South. Although certainly not new, this bout of infighting signaled the last gasp of “post-office Republicanism” in the state.<sup>49</sup>

Presidential candidates from the national Republican Party’s conservative wing had long courted support in the South. Even in Georgia, where the convention delegates eventually aligned with Willkie, Dewey, and Eisenhower, establishment Republicans had to fend off quadrennial challenges from the pro-Taft Foster Faction. If Eisenhower and the Republican National Committee succeeded in reorganizing the region’s parties, then they might not only revitalize the two-party system but also secure the region’s delegates in future presidential nomination campaigns. President Eisenhower had a staunch ally in Georgia state party chairman Elbert Tuttle. As a reward for his able assistance in securing Georgia’s delegation for the president-elect, Secretary of Treasury designate George M. Humphrey asked Tuttle to join the new administration as general counsel to the Department of Treasury. After Tuttle agreed, incoming White House press secretary James Hagerty announced Tuttle would resign as chairman of the Georgia Republican Party. Robert Snodgrass, a close Tuttle associate, quickly rebuffed Hagerty, claiming Tuttle had only accepted the post on the condition he could still lead the state party. Tuttle later confirmed Snodgrass’s statement. Citing his determination to building a “permanent, stable and effective” Republican Party in Georgia, he declared his intention to remain as GOP chairman unless asked to resign by Eisenhower administration officials.<sup>50</sup>

Although few doubted Tuttle’s qualifications for the treasury job, some questioned his decision to remain actively involved in partisan politics. John Sibley wrote Tuttle when news of

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel J. Galvin, “Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered: Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, and the Rise of Polarized Politics,” *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (March 2013), 50; Eric Schickler, *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 252.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Bowen, “Getting to Goldwater: Robert A. Taft, William F. Knowland, and the Rightward Drift of the Republican Party,” in Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, ed. *Barry Goldwater and the Remaking of the American Political Landscape* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 88, 93-94.



his appointment broke, “I am glad the Treasury will have you to look after its legal affairs. I know you will do an outstanding job,” Sibley penned. Recognizing the potential for conflicts of interest, though, Sibley beseeched Tuttle to relinquish control over patronage jobs “to some other high class Republican.” Doing so would save Tuttle “a lot of headaches.” Tuttle replied that Robert Snodgrass would “stand in” for him on such matters. Furthermore, Tuttle explained he had only remained as state party chairman because “we would have a terrible cat and dog fight, with all of this patronage ahead, if we called a State Central Committee meeting to elect a successor.” Tuttle offered Ralph McGill a similar explanation. “[T]he only reason I feel I can’t relinquish the chairmanship of the Party at the moment is that I can’t imagine anything worse than the scramble that would result,” Tuttle confessed. As his correspondence made clear, Tuttle intended to step aside as soon as the party’s patronage apparatus was operating efficiently and reputably and as soon as a likeminded successor was in place. In short, Tuttle hoped to hold his organization together while continuing to shape it into a respectable, viable political party.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the proactive steps of Tuttle and his top lieutenants to forestall conflict, political infighting broke out in late February just as Georgia Republicans were set to hold their first post-inauguration party meeting. Rumor that a coterie of embittered Republicans planned to oust Elbert Tuttle reached the press on the eve that meeting. Upset with his handling of patronage matters, anti-Tuttle party members sought to sideline the absentee chairman in favor long-serving party secretary W. Barnaby Hill. Dr. W.Y. Gilliam moved that the state central committee designate Hill to act on Tuttle’s behalf when the latter was out of state. John Wesley

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<sup>51</sup> “Tuttle Says He’ll Stay At Helm of State GOPs,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 15, 1953, p. 12; John A. Sibley to Elbert P. Tuttle, January 14, 1953 and Elbert P. Tuttle to John A. Sibley, January 15, 1953 both in Series 1, Box 312, Folder 11, Sibley Papers; Elbert P. Tuttle to Ralph McGill, January 15, 1953 in Series 5, Box 70, Folder 9, Ralph McGill Papers, 1853-1971, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 101-104; “Tuttle Named Counsel of U.S. Treasury Dept.,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 14, 1952, p. 1.

Dobbs—once a close ally of Tuttle’s—seconded the motion. Rising in his own defense, Tuttle indicated his Treasury Department job required him to reside full-time in Washington D.C. If Gilliam’s motion passed, it would make Hill *de facto* state party chairman. He then ruled the motion out of order since party rules stated the two vice-chairpersons served in the chair’s absence. Tuttle forces sustained an appeal by a 63-44 vote, but the battle lines for future power struggles within the party had been drawn. Caretaker or not, Elbert Tuttle along with his top allies—Republican national committeewoman Mildred Snodgrass, Fifth Congressional District chairman Robert Snodgrass, and Fulton County Republican Party chairman William B. Shartzer—were determined to hold sway in the party. Together these top Fulton County and Fifth District Republicans formed the nucleus of what became known as the “Atlanta faction” of the Georgia Republican Party. Opposing them were “old-line” Tucker faction leaders such as Roscoe Tucker, Barnaby Hill, John Wesley Dobbs, and remnants of the defunct Foster faction. Unlike the Atlanta-based Tuttle group, which emphasized party building, Tucker-Hill Republicans prioritized patronage above almost all else.<sup>52</sup>

Private bickering over patronage matters often spilled over into the press as Georgia Republicans scrambled to fill hundreds of federal positions during Eisenhower’s first year in office. Allegations of job selling were common, but one particular episode from South Georgia exposed not only the dark side of the Republican patronage bonanza but also the power struggle among the party’s incipient factions. James M. Kent, a wealthy real estate dealer and leader of the Eisenhower for President Club of St. Simons Island, alleged Eighth Congressional District chairman Tom C. (T.C) Williams, a prominent African-American mortician from Waycross, had extracted “a sizable sum” from several individuals seeking rural mail carrier positions. “I am not

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<sup>52</sup> Albert Riley, “Tuttle Here; State Fight Rumored,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 21, 1953, p. 1, 10; Harold Davis, “Tuttle Group Keeps Reins Of State GOP,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 22, 1953, Sec. A, p. 1, 16; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 104.

interested in this kind of politics,” Kent informed Tuttle, Snodgrass, and Tucker. Kent claimed to have devoted considerable time organizing Republican organizations across the Eighth District during the 1952 campaign. This work had prompted Kent to seek a wholesale restructuring of his district. In fact, less than one week before accusing Williams of wrongdoing, he had written Tuttle requesting the names of Republican county chairmen in the district. Kent informed Tuttle Willis J. Milner and he had “lined up men in practically every county.” Their effort, Kent claimed, would be wasted “unless we can control all activities in this district.” Regardless of motive, Tuttle referred the matter to the U.S. Justice Department, which opened an investigation in early April 1953, and a federal grand jury had returned six indictments by mid-May.<sup>53</sup>

Among those indicted were T.C. Williams for soliciting payments as well as the two rural mail carrier applicants—Henry Grady Smith and Chestnut A. Thompson—Kent had identified in his letter to party leaders alleging wrongdoing. The grand jury indicted Pierce County Republican Party chairman Isaac J. White for soliciting bribes. Ironically, Kent also found himself under indictment. “I have been instrumental in the Eighth District trying to clean up this mess and some of my political opponents are attempting to pin on me the same charges with which they are charged,” Kent claimed in a prepared statement denying all charges. Barnaby Hill, meanwhile, defended both Williams and White, declaring both victims of racial prejudice. Willis Milner, president of the Eighth District Republican Club, lambasted Hill for “using one of the lowest known instruments—racial prejudice—to secure political power.” Hill remained a

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<sup>53</sup> J.M. Kent to Elbert P. Tuttle, March 11, 1953 and J.M. Kent to Elbert P. Tuttle, March 6, 1953 both in Series 1.1, Box 3, Folder 27, Tuttle Papers; Editorial, “Chairman Tuttle Hits P.O. Job ‘Sales,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 16, 1953, p. 4; “Brownell Orders Georgia Job-Sale Quiz by Jury FBI,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 3, 1953, p. 1, 8. The Eight Congressional District snaked inland from the coast toward the middle of the state. Although both Elbert Tuttle and Mildred Snodgrass likely supported Kent and Milner’s mission in the Eighth District, both recognized that party rules prohibited the state central committee from recognizing anyone except the county chairmen duly elected in county conventions or mass meetings. See, Mildred Snodgrass to Elbert P. Tuttle, March 19, 1953 and Elbert P. Tuttle to Mildred Snodgrass, March 23, 1953 both in Series 1.1, Box 3, Folder 28, Tuttle Papers.

detached observer, but he had dispatched a statement from his Long Island residence cheering the indictments as evidence the Eisenhower administration did not tolerate corruption.<sup>54</sup>

Not long after the Eighth District scandal died down, the White House and RNC launched the party-building program to restructure and strengthen southern Republican organizations that had begun the previous year. The brainchild of Louisiana Republican John Minor Wisdom, the proposed “Committee for a Two-Party South” would help make the Republican Party “respectable in the South.” In the short term, the committee would study problems related to organization, policy, public relations, and appointments while working toward long-term of growing the party and developing a competitive two-party system. Less bullish than Eisenhower on the GOP’s ability of expand in the South, Wisdom dubbed the committee’s task “a tight-rope type of operation.” The RNC dispatched top staffer James McKillips to Atlanta for an informal meeting of the Southern Committee on November 15 where he joined Wisdom and other principals including Elbert Tuttle, Bill Kimbel, Bill Francis, Bobby Jones, and Stetson Coleman. The group discussed the possibility of holding “Republican referendums” across the South in the spring of 1954 to elect Republican leaders who reflected the Southern Committee’s goals and supported the Eisenhower administration’s policies.

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<sup>54</sup> AP, “6 in State Indicted In U.S. Job Sales,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 17, 1953, Sec. A, p. 1, Constitution State News Service, “Glynn GOP Sees Spite in Indictment,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 19, 1953, p. 5; “Race Charge False, Says District GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 29, 1953, p. 3; “Resolution of Eighth District Republican Club, St. Simons Island, Ga.,” June 20, 1953 and W. Barnaby Hill to Leonard W. Hall, June 29, 1953 both in Series 1, Box 172, Folder Georgia Situation 1953-57, Republican National Committee, Office of the Chairman (Leonard W. Hall) Records, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library; “GOP Leader Defends Accused State Pair,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1953, p. 6; Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees*, 509. Although the actual resolution to the Eighth District case is unclear. T.C. Williams passed away in early autumn 1954, and a dearth of news reports and private correspondence regarding the indictments suggest the cases were either settled or dropped. See, William B. Shartzer to Roscoe Tucker and Mildred Snodgrass, October 14, 1954; W. Roscoe Tucker to W.B. Shartzer, October 18, 1954; J.Q. Davidson to W. Barnaby Hill, October 18, 1954 all in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia 1954, Hall Records and “GOP Leaders to Discuss Patronage,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 5, 1955, p. 12.

McKillips noted such a plan would almost certainly result in “more bitter fights with the Party for patronage recognition.” Perhaps for this reason, the committee never enacted its scheme.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, Hall, McKillips, and RNC and Eisenhower administration members pressed ahead with plans to restructure and strengthen the Republican Party in the South. Historian Michael Bowen has demonstrated this party-building program was “essentially a continuation of [Herbert] Brownell’s 1948 and 1952 campaign strategies to replace southern leadership and punish Taft’s supporters.” In the case of Georgia, however, bothersome old-line Georgia Republicans like Hill, Tucker, and others who backed both Thomas Dewey and Dwight Eisenhower were targeted. Following a field trip through the South, McKillips apprised Leonard Hall on the state of the Georgia Republican Party. “Elbert Tuttle seems to be in control of the situation in Georgia,” he noted, “while Roscoe Tucker and Barnaby Hill seem to be the two most outspoken opponents of Tuttle within the organization.” Once allies, Tucker and Hill had broken with Tuttle over questions related to patronage and membership. Throughout the spring and summer of 1953, Tuttle and his allies grew had wearied of Tucker’s antics in particular. Louis J. O’Connell, a former Taft supporter and Georgia Power employee from Augusta, alerted Tuttle in March to a pay-to-play scheme involving various, unnamed Republican county chairmen. O’Connell did not implicate Tucker directly, but he included a handwritten postscript advising, “For good reasons, do not let Roscoe know anything whatever about this matter... You can never tell how far such things may run.” Fulton County Republican chairman Bill Shartzer also complained that Tucker had failed to follow the proper procedures for filling Fulton County’s postmaster position. “Either his mind is warped, or he is drunk with power,” Shartzer stated in

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<sup>55</sup> Memorandum for the Record, August 19, 1953 in Louis Galambos and Daun Van Ee, eds. *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The Presidency: The Middle Way*, vol. 14 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 479-480; John Minor Wisdom to Leonard W. Hall, September 26, 1953; Jim McKillips, *Report on the Southern Committee Meeting*, [November 15, 1953] both in Series 1, Box 166, Folder Southern Situation 1953-57, Hall Records; Bowen, “Getting to Goldwater,” 94.

one of his more restrained assessments of the national committeeman's behavior. "No matter who would be the state chairman," Shartzter declared, "Roscoe would use the same tactics to achieve his end whatever it might be." Relaying news of this "considerable friction between some of our Georgia Republican leaders" to Jim McKillips, Louis O'Connell sided squarely with Tuttle. "I have seen the Party make more progress under the leadership of Elbert P. Tuttle than ever before," he averred. Tuttle and his associates had taken direct aim at old-line Republicans like Tucker and Hill in a fight for the heart and soul of the Georgia Republican Party.<sup>56</sup>

Patronage rows and party infighting continued into early 1954, but the conflict intensified as Elbert Tuttle prepared to step down as state party chairman. Still, Tuttle "felt that party affairs in Georgia had attained a broad enough base so that the State Central Committee would elect a Chairman who would stick to the rules and who would conscientiously carry out the obligations of building the organization through the State." After Tuttle announced his resignation at a fundraising dinner at the Druid Hills Country Club outside Atlanta, speculation concerning his replacement commenced immediately. Some speculated Bob Snodgrass or Bill Shartzter would replace their colleague while others hinted Tucker and Hill would nominate their former adversary, Roy Foster, for chairman. In a preview of the intraparty fight to replace Tuttle, Bob Snodgrass and Barnaby Hill sparred verbally for a half hour over the state the Georgia Republican Party on WSB-TV's *Press Gallery*. When that debate failed to settle matters, both Snodgrass and Hill issued public statements labeling the other an impediment to the party growth. "There is a handful of dissidents, of which Mr. Hill is evidently trying to assume

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<sup>56</sup> Bowen, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism*, 175-176 (quote on 176); Jim McKillips to The Chairman, November 24, 1953 in Series 1, Box 166, Folder Southern Situation 1953, Hall Records; Louis J. O'Connell to Elbert P. Tuttle, March 6, 1953 in Series 1.1, Box 3, Folder 10, Tuttle Papers; W.B. Shartzter to Elbert P. Tuttle, July 25, 1953 in Series 1.1, Box 3, Folder 27, Tuttle Papers; Louis J. O'Connell to James McKillips, July 28, 1953 in Series 1.1, Box 3, Folder 10, Tuttle Papers; Bowen, "Getting to Goldwater," 94; Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees*, 508; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 42.

leadership,” Snodgrass proclaimed the next day, “The plain truth is that this group does not want a Republican Party in Georgia.” Hill claimed alternatively that Snodgrass, Tuttle, and their allies were plotting “to rub out regular Republican organizations” in favor of newcomers. Replying to Hill’s charge, Snodgrass repeated his earlier complaint regarding the Tucker-Hill faction. “They do not want the party to be enlarged,” Snodgrass reiterated, “They resist newcomers.”<sup>57</sup>

The Republican state central committee convened at the Fulton County Courthouse on March 13. Bob Snodgrass had Bill Shartzter for chairman while Barnaby Hill endorsed J. Strozier Harris of Moultrie when Roy Foster had declined to run. The outcome of the Shartzter-Harris contest would likely determine the fate of Eisenhower’s party-building experiment in Georgia. Those who opened a copy of that morning’s *Atlanta Constitution* may have read an editorial asking, “Will Georgia GOP Turn Back Clock?” It read, in part, “We cannot imagine the men who supported Gen. Elbert Tuttle at Chicago and who have endured the always harassing pioneering work of allaying factional bitterness, throwing up the sponge and abandoning the policy of building a real party free of the old-style methods.” The editors concluded darkly, “But sometimes men act unwisely.” Their uncertainty proved unwarranted as staunch Tuttle ally Bill

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<sup>57</sup> Elbert P. Tuttle to Leonard W. Hall, April 13, 1954 in Series 1.1, Box 2, Folder 12, Tuttle Papers; Albert Riley, “Hill Blocks Strong GOP—Snodgrass,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 12, 1954, p. 1, 11; “Judge, Postmaster Appointments Set Off State GOP Patronage Row,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 20, 1953, p. 1, 5; “Tuttle Expected To Quit Helm of Georgia GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 19, 1954, p. 1; “Pro-Ikemen Studied for Tuttle Post,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 20, 1954, p. 1, 3; Albert Riley, “Tuttle Quits GOP Post; No Hint on Successor,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 24, 1954, p. 1; “GOP’s Hill, Snodgrass Duel on TV,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 11, 1954, p. 12. Roscoe Tucker did not publically endorse Harris, but off-the-record reports suggested the Moultrie resident had the controversial national committeeman’s support. See, Albert Riley, “Both Sides See Victory On State GOP Leader,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 13, 1954, p. 1, 3. President Dwight Eisenhower selected Elbert Tuttle to fill a vacancy on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in July 1954 where he served until his retirement in 1981. Fellow southern Republican leader, John Minor Wisdom, joined him on the Fifth Circuit in 1957. Tuttle and Wisdom, along with John Robert Brown and Richard Rives, became known as the “Fifth Circuit Four” because of their progressive rulings favoring desegregation and racial equality. For a thorough and sympathetic history of Tuttle, Wisdom, and the “Fifth Circuit Four,” see, Jack Bass, *Unlikely Heroes: The Dramatic Story of the Southern Justices of the Fifth Circuit Who Translated the Supreme Court’s Brown Decision into a Revolution for Equality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981).

Shartzter defeated Strozier Harris by a vote of 63 to 34. Gracious in defeat, Hill moved to make the election unanimous.<sup>58</sup>

Shartzter's successful elevation from Fulton County to state party chairman was welcome news to the Eisenhower administration. After all, Shartzter fit Eisenhower's profile of the ideal Republican leader he had outlined in a personal memo to top White House counselors and RNC officials. "We must see to the revitalization of the party through the appointment of young, energetic precinct, county, and state officials and committee members." A relatively young, successful businessman and real estate broker from Atlanta, Shartzter brought the "fire and energy" Eisenhower looked for in a top party officials. So interested was the administration in keeping the Georgia GOP in friendly hands that, according to Roscoe Tucker, White House chief-of-staff Sherman Adams had contacted state central committee members to request "someone of Elbert's choosing should fill his unexpired term." The veracity of Tucker's claim is unclear, but Tuttle's parting words to Leonard Hall before becoming a federal judge made plain his assessment of the Georgia GOP's leadership situation, "I want to assure you again that everything that is being done in the State of Georgia of a constructive nature is being done under the leadership of Bill Shartzter, Mildred and Bob Snodgrass, and their associates." Any effort to promote or prop up the "other crowd," Tuttle asserted, would prove "destructive [to] the best interest of the State of Georgia in its struggle for two-party government." Ultimately, Shartzter proved every bit the ally Elbert Tuttle had been to the White House and RNC.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Editorial, "Will Georgia GOP Turn Back Clock?" *Atlanta Constitution*, March 13, 1954, p. 4; Albert Riley, "Both Sides See Victory On State GOP Leader," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 13, 1954, p. 1, 3; Charles Pou, "W.B. Shartzter Named Georgia GOP Chief," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 14, 1954, Sec. A, p. 1, 14; Emanuel, *Elbert Parr Tuttle*, 104-105.

<sup>59</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to Sherman Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, Leonard Wood Hall, George Magoffin Humphrey, Thomas Edwin Stephens, and Arthur Ellsworth Summerfield, November 23, 1953 in Galambos and Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, vol. 14, 686-688; Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bill Flenniken, December 3, 1953 quoted in Louis Galambos and Dawn Van Ee, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The Presidency: The Middle Way*, vol. 15 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 727-728; Galvin, *Presidential*



The peace between the ascendant Atlanta faction and “old-line” Republicans proved fleeting when Shartzter and Republican national committeewoman Mildred Snodgrass sided against Roscoe Tucker on two-to-one vote recommending James F. Brophy, a Rhine merchant and farmer, as the U.S. Marshal’s for the Southern District of Georgia. Unwilling to let this seemingly perfunctory vote stand, Barnaby Hill claimed Shartzter and Snodgrass had endorsed Brophy to repay the Dodge County Republican for backing Shartzter for state party chairman. Both Shartzter and Snodgrass denied the charge vehemently and called on the “dissident” Hill to resign. Perhaps prompted by this episode, Mildred Snodgrass complained to Leonard Hall and Jim McKillips regarding Roscoe Tucker’s unwillingness to abide by the so-called “three-of-five” patronage-approval process the state central committee had approved in February 1953. She requested that Bill Shartzter replace Roscoe Tucker as Georgia’s patronage contact. “In my opinion, this constant heckling, attempts to thwart, hamper and restrict, boils down to the fact that older Republicans wish to keep the so-called Party here in Georgia, in a tight-fisted group through which to dispense patronage,” Snodgrass affirmed. The state party leadership, frustrated and weary from near-constant infighting with one of their own, sought a clean break with Roscoe Tucker and Barnaby Hill. The Atlanta Faction endeavored to build a respectable, financially secure, and electorally attractive party. Tucker, Hill, and other “old-line” Republicans did not.<sup>60</sup>

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*Party Building*, 45, 53 (quote on 53); Tucker to Hall, July 17, 1954 and Elbert P. Tuttle to Leonard W. Hall, September 24, 1954 both in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia 1954, Hall Records. In one of his more colorful outbursts regarding Shartzter’s election as state party chairman, Tucker alleged, “And if Bill’s few ardent backers spent as much money and made as many wild promises as I heard that they did, one could employ the same tactics and elect an Eskimo Chief as Chaperone at a Hula-hula festival.”

<sup>60</sup> “Brophy Wins GOP Nod as U.S. Marshal,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 9, 1954, p. 3; Albert Riley, “Shartzter Denies ‘Deal,’ Asks Hill to Resign,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 10, 1954, p. 1, 3; “Call Of GOP Board Eyed In State Row,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 11, 1954, Sec. A, p. 1, 8; “Misquoted on Affidavit, Hill Replies,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 14, p. 9; Mildred Snodgrass to Leonard W. Hall attn.: James F. McKillips, Jr., April 10, 1954; Tuttle to Hall, April 13, 1954 both in Series 1.1, Box 2, Folder 12, Tuttle Papers; Leonard W. Hall to W. Roscoe Tucker, May 8, 1954 in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia Situation, 1954, Hall Records; W.B. Shartzter to All Members Republican State Central Committee of Georgia, June 17, 1954 in Series 1.2, Box 12, Folder 24, Tuttle Papers.

Hall summoned both Shartzter and Tucker to his Washington D.C. office in early May to hammer out a compromise. The meeting produced a “memorandum of agreement” between the state chairman and national committeeman. By mid-June, Bill Shartzter had begun distributing updated patronage referral forms and procedures to county and district chairman. As the Atlanta faction gained the upper-hand within the party, Hill and Tucker groused Shartzter and others were attempting to “rub out the regular Republican organizations” and “eliminate all so-called ‘old-line’ Republicans” in a plot “to deliver the Party to those who are at heart Democrats.” Tucker complained similarly to RNC chairman Leonard Hall, “I suppose it is an open secret that there is an effort on the part of a few high-placed officials in Washington to displace, or ‘purge’ the old-line Republican leadership in the South.” The “old-line” refused to yield.<sup>61</sup>

“We are always fighting,” Bill Shartzter lamented at a special meeting of the Republican state central committee in early February 1955, “This has been the history of the Republican Party in the state.” Shartzter and Tucker’s accord of the previous May had collapsed after yet another disagreement patronage recommendations. As a result, Barnaby Hill and twenty-one petitioners convened the Georgia GOP’s governing body to call the question. Described alternatively as “[a]n all-out tug-of-war” and “one of the most bitter seen in recent Georgia history” by reporter Harold Davis, each faction’s representatives took turns disclosing and denouncing the other side’s “lies” and “vicious practices.” Hill accused Shartzter and Snodgrass of hiring Democrats and other “ambitious young men” to “rub out the Republican organization.” Snodgrass, rising from his seat, cried out, “Let’s keep it clean, but I say you lie.” Howard Jarrott,

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<sup>61</sup> Leonard W. Hall to W. Roscoe Tucker, May 8, 1954; W.B. Shartzter to George Z. Brinson, May 26, 1954; W. Barnaby Hill to Leonard W. Hall, May 4, 1954; W. Roscoe Tucker to Leonard W. Hall, July 17, 1954; W. Barnaby Hill to Leonard W. Hall, July 21, 1954 all in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia 1954, Hall Records. Hall responded directly to Hill on July 28, “I know Jim [McKillips] realized his mistake and apologized to Roscoe for the error he had made.” Their belated apologies likely proved little comfort to the aggrieved Georgia Republicans. See, Leonard W. Hall to W. Barnaby Hill, July 28, 1954 in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia 1954, Hall Records.

a Tucker-Hill supporter from Savannah, upbraided the Atlanta faction's "personal empire building." He maintained, "Roscoe Tucker is the vigilant safeguard against the abuses in patronage." Ultimately, the state central committee voted 64 to 24 to reaffirm Bill Shartzer's status as Georgia's official patronage contact—a considerable rebuke to the incumbent Republican national committeeman's power and personal prestige.<sup>62</sup>

Bobby Jones wasted no time relaying news of the Atlanta Faction's triumph to President Eisenhower. "Our crowd, led by Bob Snodgrass and Bill Shartzer, our State Chairman, put the Old Guard completely to rout and won such a convincing victory that I am led to hope we will have no more trouble from them." With the patronage rows behind them, Jones and others in the party focused their time and energy on fundraising, recruitment, and fielding candidates for public office—in short, continuing the complex task of party-building.<sup>63</sup>

With only a few exceptions, Bobby Jones' prediction bore out as the party readied itself for another presidential election year. The Republican state central committee issued its convention call in early March, and the pro-Eisenhower Atlanta faction entered the state convention on May 18 in high spirits, which rose even higher when Roscoe Tucker declined to seek another term as national committeeman. With "old-guard" Taftites and "old-line" Tucker-Hill Republican attending the convention, though, Republican delegates remained on tenterhooks. In the end, however, the most contentious debate concerned two proposed amendments seeking to expand the state central committee's geographical representation. The first, proposed by Roy Foster Jr., would have added four additional seats from each

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<sup>62</sup> Harold Davis, "Shartzerites Keep Control In Ga. GOP," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 6, 1955, Sec. A, p. 1, 20; "Tucker Side Rebuffed by GOP Ruling," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 10, 1955, p. 1, 19 (quote on 19); "Patronage Rows Over, Top Georgia GOP Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 23, 1955, p. 21; Leonard W. Hall to W. Roscoe Tucker, February 19, 1955 in Series 1, Box 185, Folder Georgia 1955, Hall Records.

<sup>63</sup> Excerpt from Bob Jones' letter to DD, 2/9/55; Robert T. Jones, Jr. to Thomas E. Stephens, February 17, 1955 both in Series 1955-56 Correspondence, New York Address, Box 33, Folder Georgia, Stephens Records.

congressional district. The second, offered by C.B. Edwards of Talbotton, would have guaranteed every county at least one seat on the Georgia Republican Party's governing body. Opponents countered that the committee's 131-person membership was both manageable in size and equitable based on voter turnout. Edwards withdrew his amendment, but Foster's remained on the floor as Roscoe Tucker rose in support. Offering a rationale similar to one employed by proponents of the county unit system, Tucker claimed, "If we follow the popular vote entirely, the result will be the populous areas of this state will have complete control of the Republican Party." The out-going national committee warned in closing, "As it is going now, we all see it—everybody knows it—it is drifting toward regimentation and city rule." Indeed, both amendments would have diluted the voting power of rapidly growing metropolitan counties and, in turn, weaken the Atlanta faction. As it turned out, however, Foster's proposal failed 110 to 203, and the Atlanta faction would control the state convention gavel to gavel. "Our crowd is now in complete and unquestioned control of the Georgia Republican Party," an exultant Jones boasted to President Eisenhower. Eisenhower replied positively a week later. "I am indebted to you for all you have done to bring about the changes," the president wrote—exaggerating, somewhat, Jones' role in the matter.<sup>64</sup>

The only serious controversy at the Republican National Convention in San Francisco concerned the platform's civil rights plank. Ever since the United States Supreme Court took up

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<sup>64</sup> Albert Riley, "Georgia GOPs Expected to Choose Shartzer, Snodgrass Here Today," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 19, 1956, p. 1, 3; Republican State Central Committee of Georgia, *The People and Their Party: Republican Party of Georgia Delegate State Convention, Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta, Georgia, May 18-19, 1956* (Atlanta: Republican State Central Committee of Georgia, 1956), 14; Robert T. Jones, Jr. to Clifford Roberts, May 22, 1956 and D.E. to Robert T. Jones, Jr., May 29, 1956 both in Papers as President of the United States, 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, Name Series, Box 19, Folder Jones, Robert T. Jr. (2), Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library; M.L. St. John, "Ike To Win Georgia, Says State GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 1, 1956, p. 1, 8; "State GOP's Call Parley To Organize," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 11, 1956, Sec. C, p. 1; "Air Vote Rows April 21, Georgia GOP Chief Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 27, 1956, p. 7; Curtis Driskell, "Georgia Republicans Re-elect Shartzer, Pick 11 Officers," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 20, 1956, Sec. A, p. 1. The state convention elected Robert Snodgrass Republican national committeeman Alberta Elliott Republican national committeewoman.

a raft of school segregation cases in 1953, southern Republicans dodged and downplayed civil rights while distancing themselves from the Eisenhower administration on the issue. This strategy became more difficult when Chief Justice Earl Warren, a Republican and Eisenhower appointee, issued the unanimous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in May 1954. Most Georgia Republicans accepted the ruling as settled law but shied away from the issue in favor of more comfortable talking points. At the convention, Margaret Twiggs, a former *Augusta Chronicle* society editor, pushed through a more restrained civil rights plank over the objections of northern party leaders. Although Bill Shartzer and Bob Snodgrass would surely have preferred no publicity on the subject, the pair issued a joint statement calling it “a plank we can all live and work from.” Indeed, the compromise avoided a messy and unwanted floor flight, but with strong support for a minority report demanding federal enforcement of *Brown* and endorsing the pending 1957 civil rights bill, the controversy seemed far from settled.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the president’s landslide reelection—41 states, 457 electoral votes, and 57.4 percent of the popular vote—Stevenson still outpaced Ike nearly 2-to-1 in Georgia. The Republican secured just over 32 percent statewide, and ran best in the state’s metropolitan districts. In addition to his strong performance in upper-income white precincts, the state’s African-American vote swung heavily Republican thanks in large part to the pro-civil rights positions staked out by the Eisenhower Justice Department and the Warren-led U.S. Supreme Court. In Atlanta, the president received 86 percent of the black vote and just under 42 percent of the total in Fulton County. Unsurprisingly, Eisenhower’s share of rural, white voters declined

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<sup>65</sup> Ralph McGill, “Rights Plank Pleasing To Georgia GOP Chiefs,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 21, 1956, p. 1; Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 85; “Kill-Segregation Plea Assailed by Talmadge As a Stab in the Back,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 28, 1953, p. 1, 9; Allen Drury, “Dixie GOP Plans Own Plank on School Edict,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 20, 1956, p. 1, 2; Ralph McGill, “Georgian Sparks Dixie GOP’s View on Rights,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 20, 1956, p. 11; ; Deskins Jr., Walton Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 408-409.

from his showing in 1952. In the end, the Republican incumbent performed best where he could count on the support of affluent whites and African Americans. A recipe for success in places like Atlanta and Savannah, perhaps, but the electoral strategy did not bear fruit statewide.<sup>66</sup>

Hoping to benefit from Eisenhower's coattails, Atlanta Republicans fielded a congressional candidate in the populous Fifth Congressional District in 1956. Atlanta attorney Randolph W. Thrower, chairman of the Fulton County Republican Party, faced Democrat James C. Davis. This was actually the GOP's second attempt to unseat Davis. Another Atlanta lawyer, Charles A. Moye, Jr., had challenged the arch-conservative Davis in 1954. Moye, who ran unsuccessfully in 1952 for a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives, described his politics as "[j]ust a little to the right of center" and his campaign literature described him as "committed to President Eisenhower's program and policies" while attacking his Democratic opponent voting against Social Security, the United Nations, and "legislation favorable to working people." Although he had lost, Moye secured 35.6 percent of the total vote including almost 40 percent in Fulton County. A relatively strong showing for a midterm election against an incumbent, Moye's 1954 campaign confirmed the Fifth Congressional District's status as an emerging electoral battleground.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "State GOP Leaders Assert Ike Will Win 15 Counties," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 26, 1956, p. 5; Moore, Preimesberger, and Tarr, eds. *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Election*, 273; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 409; AP, "Dixie Negroes Shift to GOP; Northerners Stick to Demos," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 11, 1956, Sec. A, p. 12; Joshua D. Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 63; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 31; Strong, *Urban Republicanism*, 31-34. Eisenhower managed to win eleven counties in 1956: Fannin, Towns, Liberty, McIntosh, Chatham, Richmond, Glynn, Effingham, Muscogee, Gilmer, and Pickens. See, "Ike Doubles His Counties in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 8, 1956, p. 1, 19.

<sup>67</sup> M.L. St. John, "Moye Sees Need for Two-Party South; Claims To Be a Little Right of Center," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 17, 1954, Sec. E, p. 2; Randolph Thrower to Gilbert, October 25, 1954 and Charlie R. Yates to Judge Gunby, October 12, 1954 both in Series 2, Box 12, Folder 10, James C. Davis Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library; Randolph Thrower to Citizens for Eisenhower: Northside Men, October 21, 1954 in Series 4, Box 73, Folder 11, Randolph W. Thrower Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library; Gladstone Williams, "Shartzer Tells Hall Plans For GOP Races in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 23, 1954, p. 17; *Georgia's Official Register, 1955-1956* (Hapeville, GA: Longino & Porter, [1957]), 708; Albert Riley, "Davis Edge Over Moye Is 24,631," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1954, p.

Thrower ran a similar campaign in 1956. Describing himself as “a leader who will reflect the true spirit of our dynamic metropolitan area,” he endorsed “the Eisenhower approach” and promised to give the district “a spokesman in the Republican half of our national political affairs.” Like other Georgia Republicans, Thrower downplayed the civil rights issue, but, bowing to political reality, campaigned as a segregationist. Addressing a gathering of Democrats-for-Thrower in DeKalb County’s Avondale Estates, Thrower pledged to uphold “the Southern point of view” on school segregation while accusing Davis of running a race-baiting campaign. “I suspected my opponent would attempt to use the issue of segregation if he were running against Robert E. Lee himself,” Thrower joked. His rhetoric, however, ran counter to other African-American outreach efforts. His campaign distributed telegrams to majority-black housing developments that read, “If James C. Davis had his way, you would not be living here today.” Like Eisenhower, though, Thrower lost all three counties in the district to his Democratic opponent while running strongest in the same precincts. Thrower even outpaced Eisenhower among white voters in Fulton and DeKalb. Both Thrower and Eisenhower had waged respectable, competitive campaigns in metropolitan Atlanta. By any measure, their efforts represented progress for the Georgia GOP.<sup>68</sup>

As it had done since Eisenhower entered the White House, the Georgia Republican Party continued to build the party around the president’s brand of Republicanism. As a candidate,

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10; “Moye Folk Claim Voting Difficulty,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 3, 1954, p. 26; Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 84; M.L. St. John, “Georgian GO-PS Plan Active Race,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 22, 1956, Sec. E, p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> Pamphlet: Randolph Thrower: Republican Candidate for Congress From the Fifth District of Georgia” and Untitled Statement by Randolph W. Thrower, September 8, 1956 both in Series 4, Box 74, Folder 7, Thrower Papers; “Residents of the Fifth District!” 1956 in Series 2, Box 13, Folder 1956 Campaign, Davis Papers; DRC to RWT, October 18, 1956 in Series 4, Box 74, Folder 1, Thrower Papers; “Dixie School View Backed By Thrower,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 30, 1956, p. 17; Randolph W. Thrower for Congress Campaign Committee Telegram, 1956 in Series 2, Box 13, Folder 1956 Campaign, Davis Papers; “State GOP Leaders Assert Ike Will Win 15 Counties,” 5; “Split-Ticker Vote Wooed By Thrower,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1956, p. 8; Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 84-85; Bruce Galphin, “All 3 Counties Vote Sixth Term for Davis,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1956, p. 1, 16; Bruce Galphin, “Thrower Runs Ahead of Ike Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1956, Sec. F, p. 19; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 65.

Eisenhower had run as a fairly traditional Republican in terms of domestic policy while embracing the internationalism of Thomas Dewey and the so-called Eastern establishment. As president, he attempted to broaden the GOP's appeal nationally by downplaying the party's reflexively antigovernment image by approving legislation raising the minimum wage, expanding Social Security, approving major infrastructure projects, and accepting, by and large, the post-New Deal social welfare system. Historian Robert Mason had observed, "He accepted the need for activist government in tackling socioeconomic ills, but his solutions were usually less generous than the Democrats' version and more conscious of a need for balanced budgets." Eisenhower offered a more thorough definition of "Modern Republicanism" after his landslide reelection. The federal government, he told reporters, should "take the lead in making certain that the productivity of our great economic machine is distributed so that no one will suffer disaster, privation through no fault of his own" while simultaneously protecting the sanctity of the free enterprise system by limiting the regulatory regime. His was a middle-of-the-road, "Moderately Progressive," pro-growth agenda free from the constraints of ideological extremism, and it enjoyed considerable appeal among Republican voters living and working in Georgia's burgeoning cities and suburbs into which federal military and infrastructure spending flowed by the billions. These "progressive Republicans" living in metropolitan Atlanta embraced Eisenhower and his moderate (and malleable) political philosophy throughout two terms.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, the Georgia GOP's party-building efforts received a considerable boost as Eisenhower began his second term. Bill Shartzter had already participated in an RNC-sponsored

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<sup>69</sup> Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 150, 154-155; Bowen, "Getting to Goldwater," 108; W.B. Shartzter to George Z. Brinson, May 26, 1954 in Series 1, Box 179, Folder Georgia 1954, Hall Records; Dwight D. Eisenhower to Clifford Roberts, December 7, 1954 in Galambos and Van Ee, eds. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, vol. 15 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1428-1430; Nicol C. Rae, *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans: From 1952 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 39; Miller Center of Political Affairs, University of Virginia, "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Domestic Affairs," <http://millercenter.org/president/biography/eisenhower-domestic-affairs> ((accessed January 12, 2017); Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 84.



“Campaign School” back in September 1955 designed to help state parties organized down to the precinct level. The Georgia party also participated in the “Salute to Eisenhower” dinner series. Held concurrently throughout the nation, dinner-goers at fifty-three locations watched a simulcast presidential statement reviewing his administration’s accomplishments and future goals. Attendees were also treated to an in-person speech from a high-ranking, national Republican figure. Assistant Secretary of Treasury David Kendall addressed Georgia’s fete at Atlanta’s Biltmore Hotel. Meade Alcorn, a former Connecticut state legislator and chairman of Connecticut Citizens for Eisenhower, succeeded Leonard Hall as RNC chairman in late January 1957. He identified “three ingredients” for Republican success: “[G]ood candidates, a good program and good organization.” Alcorn then launched two of the GOP’s most consequential party-building initiatives to develop all three—regional conferences and “Operation Dixie.”<sup>70</sup>

The RNC planned a series of six regional conferences to bring together Republicans from different sections of the country to discuss strategies for how best to organize parties according to their particular needs and available resources. Bill Shartzter, Bob Snodgrass, Albert Elliott, and a host of district chairmen traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, in early May 1957 for the southern regional conference. Attendees heard Alcorn label Eisenhower’s “Modern Republicanism” a “winning formula” for future elections in the South and across the country. Speaking to conference-goers via telephone, Eisenhower explained the GOP’s protracted weakness in the region stemmed on its failure to field candidates in down-ballot races. “If we work long enough and hard enough, there can be no such thing as a hopeless state or a hopeless district,”

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<sup>70</sup> Editorial: “Ike’s New Political Arm,” *Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 23, 1956, Sec. A, p. 12; “GOP Calls Shartzter To ‘Campaign School,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1955, p. 24; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 47-49, 58-59, 63-67; “State GOPs Join Party Fete to Ike,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 21, 1956, p. 1, 3; Goldman, *The National Party Chairmen and Committees*, 519-520; W.H. Lawrence, “Alcorn Elected G.O.P. Chairman,” *New York Times*, January 23, 1957, p. 1, 14. Not every Republican applauded Alcorn’s election. U.S. Representative Clare Hoffman of Michigan suggested the elevation of Eisenhower’s handpicked chairmen meant “[t]he conservative wing has been liquidated and is about to be buried.”

Eisenhower declared. On the final day, Alcorn appointed a five-person “Southern Division” tasked with building up the region’s Republican organizations and expanding its political appeal. Similar to the Southern Committee first devised by John Minor Wisdom and Elbert Tuttle back in 1952, this new group enjoyed the RNC’s full support and considerable financial backing. The Southern Division’s flagship program, Operation Dixie, launched on July 1, 1957.<sup>71</sup>

Coordinated by I. Lee Potter, former chairman of the Virginia Republican Party, Operation Dixie began as a congressional campaign drive targeting vulnerable Democrats in the region, but it morphed quickly into the RNC’s most aggressive attempt yet to organize and expand in the South. According to political scientist Daniel J. Galvin, Operation Dixie began by making “investments in infrastructure and new organizational capacities; once an organization presence was established, new headquarters were set up, new leaders were installed, and new strategic plans were designed.” In fairness to the Republican Party of Georgia, however, the Atlanta faction had already implemented most of Operation Dixie’s initial steps. The group led by Shartzer and Snodgrass in 1957 had already defeated the Foster faction and routed the “old-line” Tucker-Hill dissidents. Without painting too sanguine a portrait since electoral accomplishments were few, no credible political observer could argue the Republican Party of Georgia lacked purpose, drive, or respectability by the summer of 1957. In Georgia, therefore, Operation Dixie reinforced the Atlanta faction’s achievements.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> John N. Popham, “Republicans Map Tactics In South,” *New York Times*, May 10, 1957, p. 14; AP, “GOP in Dixie To Stay, Ike Tells Party Rally,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 11, 1957, p. 1, 9 (quote on 1); “State GOPs Plan Role in Facts Parley,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 12, 1957, p. 6; William M. Bates, “GOPs To Mold Strategy For a Buildup in Dixie,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 10, 1957, p. 11; John H. Popham, “5 Named In South To Expand G.O.P.,” *New York Times*, May 12, 1957, p. 52; AP, “Georgia Laws Balk GOP Drive, Ike Told,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 14, 1957, p. 2. The RNC’s newly formed Southern Division received an initial financial outlay of almost \$20,000—third only to the Young Republicans and Women’s Division. See, Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 78.

<sup>72</sup> Galvin, “Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered,” 51; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 63-67; William M. Bates, “Georgia Election Laws Worry High-Level GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1957, p. 7.

Just as Operation Dixie was getting off the ground, the Eisenhower administration's handling of the civil rights rulings in Little Rock, Arkansas, provoked the ire of many southern Republicans. Muscogee County commissioner Steve Knight, one of two Columbus Republicans elected since Reconstruction, resigned from the party on August 29. "They have shown the South less consideration in our position on this matter than they would have shown any foreign country with whom they deal," Knight lamented in a prepared statement, "I do not care to be associated with this party." Knight's resignation was undoubtedly an organizational setback for the Georgia Republican Party and Operation Dixie, but many more would befall them in the coming months after President Eisenhower deployed federal troops to Little Rock to enforce federal court rulings desegregating that city's public schools.<sup>73</sup>

Little Rock exacerbated Democratic-led massive resistance efforts in the South, and sparked a political firestorm for the region's Republicans. "Whether this is temporary or not depends on the outcome at Little Rock and developments in other states," wrote Ralph McGill during the desegregation crisis. Operation Dixie chief Lee Potter was less hopeful. "I have been into every one of the Southern States and I can tell you that there has been severe damage done," Potter reported to the RNC's executive committee in late January 1958. Recruitment and fundraising slowing to a trickle as Potter worried the Little Rock episode had set GOP back fifty years in the South. Georgia's Republican leaders proved far more circumspect. Meeting in Atlanta on October 3, the state central committee rejected a resolution censuring Eisenhower for the "naked use of force" during the "unconscionable invasion" of Little Rock. Instead, the committee approved a characteristically restrained statement of policy. "The Little Rock situation is extremely regrettable," it began, "If the problem of school integration is not to be

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<sup>73</sup> Joseph H. Baird, "GOP Boosts Bid for Dixie in '60," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 5, 1957, p. 3; "Georgian Quits GOP, Rips Ike's Rights Policy," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 30, 1957; Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, 715-730.

handled by mob violence, it must be handled in accordance with the law.” Although the party lost some supporters, it did not suffer the mass defections that occurred in other southern states. Even Margaret Twiggs, who claimed Eisenhower had “knifed the South in the back for a handful of Northern votes,” pledged to “continue fighting within the Republican Party.”<sup>74</sup>

Neither Operation Dixie nor the Georgia Republican Party folded in the wake of Little Rock or desegregation crises elsewhere. The RNC increased its financial commitment to its Southern Division, and Randolph Thrower planned another congressional campaign against James Davis. The *Christian Science Monitor*’s Joseph Baird described Thrower’s campaign as “the focal point of the GOP’s effort to establish a ‘grass roots’ organization in Georgia,” but it proved stillborn when the Fifth District Republican Committee failed to file Thrower’s candidacy papers on time. “[W]e very badly stumped our toe,” Thrower wrote Margaret Twiggs explaining the blunder, “and consequently will have no campaign this year.” Despite this embarrassing setback, the Georgia Republican Party continued pitching itself as a centrist alternative to extreme wings of the Democratic Party during the final months of the Eisenhower administration. “The people of Georgia, caught up in the maelstrom of social revolution,” Bill Shartzer declared in early 1960, “have only the Republican Party to look to for a well anchored haven of normalcy.” No single issue represented the Atlanta faction’s moderation better than the open-schools movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. As the breastworks of segregation collapsed in the wake of Little Rock, key elements within the Republican Party of Georgia—namely the Fulton and DeKalb county organizations—remained among the most vocal opponents of massive resistance in the state. The state party went so far as passing an open-

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<sup>74</sup> Ralph McGill, “The Cost of ‘Little Rock,’” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, September 29, 1957, Sec. A, p. 1; Quoted in Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 65; “State GOPs Support Ike On Troops,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 4, 1957, p. 1, 13; Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 85; William M. Bates, “Little Rock Called Blow to State GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, p. 5; AP, “Dixie Republicans Walking Out of GOP in Drove,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 3, 1957, p. 6.

schools resolution calling for the uninterrupted operation of public education in Georgia at its 1960 convention.<sup>75</sup>

Vice President Richard Nixon won Republican presidential nomination in July after beating back a challenge from New York governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. Nixon won the Georgia delegation in spite of his support for the liberal civil rights plank favored by Rockefeller. Bob Snodgrass, who had previously addressed the convention's platform committee on behalf of southern Republicans, asked the panel to pass a resolution committed to expanding ballot access and upholding constitutional government. "Human rights are based on the orderly processes of the ballot and our courts," Snodgrass concluded, "We must guarantee these and not cruelly deceive those long deprived of rights by extravagant promises which cannot be kept and which are made out of cynical expediency." Georgia Republicans had hoped to use a moderate stand on civil rights to outflank Democrats in the fall. As Shartzer and Snodgrass admitted, however, their party's sounded strikingly similar to the Democratic Party's.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Joseph H. Baird, "GOP Steps Up Effort In Georgia Politics," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 2, 1958, p. 14; Randolph W. Thrower to Margaret Twiggs, September 26, 1958 in Series 4, Box 74, Folder 7, Thrower Papers; "State GOP Will Meet in Atlanta April 15," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 11, 1960, p. 5; Schickler, *Racial Realignment*, 253; Editorial, "Georgia GOP Leaders Again Display Courage," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 11, 1958, p. 4; William M. Bates, "Ballot Blunder Killed GOP Beachead Here," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1958, p. 7; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 85; Ralph McGill, "What's Your GOP Image," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 29, 1959, Sec. A, p. 1; Gene Britton, "State's GOP Faces Integration Battle," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1960, p. 1, 5; "Big Gains in State Predicted by GOPs," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 20, 1960, p. 10; William O. Smith and Patrick McCaffrey, "GOP Units Against Closing Schools," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 21, 1960, Sec. A, p. 12; Douglas Kiker, "Keep Our Schools Open, Fifth District GOP Asks," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 27, 1960, Sec. A, p. 10; Douglas Kiker, "Georgia GOP Urges Steps To Assure Open Schools," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 17, 1960, Sec. A, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> Eugene Patterson, "Go Easy on Rights, Snodgrass Urges," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1960, p. 1, 5 (quote on 5); Republican State Central Committee, *The Party of the People: The Republican Party of Georgia: In Convention April 15-16, 1960* (Atlanta: Republican State Central Committee, 1960), 21-22; W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 107-113; Albert Riley, "Snodgrass, Shartzer Stand Behind Nixon," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 10, 1960, p.1, 13; Bruce Galphin, "Georgia GOP Counts Out Rockefeller," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 20, 1960, p. 1, 9; "GOP's Snodgrass Sees Moderate Rights Stand," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1960, p. 12; Charles Pou, "Dixie GOP's Worried Over Rights," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 24, 1960, Sec. A, p. 1, 13; Eugene Patterson, "State's 24 Back Nixon—Almost," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 28, 1960, p. 1, 10. For a thorough retelling of the Nixon-Rockefeller nomination fight see, Laura Jane Gifford, *The Center Cannot Hold: The 1960 Presidential Election and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

Vice President Richard Nixon traveled to Atlanta for a late August rally in Hurt Park. Staffers suggested Nixon avoid any reference to hot-button civil rights issues like schools, and mention instead highly regarded individuals such as Mayor William Hartsfield and Georgia Tech football coach Bobby Dodd. As with Eisenhower's 1952 campaign stop, the city went all out for the Republican nominee. Georgia Republicans had "scored a coup" when they convinced Scripto Corporation executive and former Democratic gubernatorial candidate James Carmichael to introduce the vice president. In his remarks, Nixon hammered away at the national Democratic Party for its "wild spending, higher taxes, [and] higher prices...They stand against states' rights." Nixon concluded, "The South can never accept such men or such a platform." Journalist Theodore White later wrote that Richard Nixon claimed the Hurt Park reception was "the most impressive demonstration he had seen in fourteen years of campaigning." The event was, according to White, a "Roman triumph." Following the Nixon visit, Georgia Republicans announced a campaign swing through the state's largest cities and counties echoing the key themes from Nixon's Hurt Park address. The strong show of support in Atlanta and a bevy of newspaper endorsements encouraged the state party leading up to the election.<sup>77</sup>

Polling a respectable 37.4 percent and winning ten counties, Richard Nixon continued the GOP's trend of steady improvement at the ballot box. His performance, however, did not mimic Eisenhower's two previous campaigns in Georgia. Across the South, Nixon improved considerably on Ike's showing in metropolitan areas while running slightly better in rural, Black

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<sup>77</sup> "Georgia," in PPS 77, Campaign 1960, Subject File, Box 12, Folder 05 - Georgia Background; "Excerpts of Remarks of The Vice President of the United States at Birmingham, Alabama [and] Atlanta, Georgia," August 26, 1960 in PPS 208, Pre-Presidential Speech File, Box 49, Folder BRM-ATL, August 26, 1960, , Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, CA; Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1967 [1961]), 268-272 (first quote on 269, second on 271); Quoted in Scott, *Cobb County*, 475. Georgia newspapers endorsing Richard Nixon in 1960 included the *Atlanta Daily World*, *Augusta Herald*, *Columbus Enquirer*, *Columbus Ledger*, *Marietta Daily Journal*, *Northside (Atlanta) News*, *Savannah Morning News*, and the *Savannah Evening Press*. See, Editorial: "The Nixon-Lodge Team Best Qualified To Lead Nation," *Atlanta Daily World*, October 7, 1960, p. 1; "Nixon for a Better America," *Marietta Daily Journal*, November 6, 1960, Sec. A, p. 4.

Belt counties. Nixon, meanwhile, performed worse among African Americans and Catholic voters. Although Nixon won a majority of black voters in Atlanta and across Georgia, his margins—58 and 56 percent, respectively—were much lower than Eisenhower’s performance in 1956 among that key demographic. Even in the predominantly black precincts Nixon won, John F. Kennedy outperformed Stevenson’s 1956 showing thanks to a sustained advertising campaign in the African-American press and Kennedy’s highly publicized phone call to Coretta Scott King after her husband’s arrest for protesting segregation laws in Atlanta. The Republican ticket still surged in Georgia’s urban and suburban counties thanks to increased support among upper- and middle-income white voters. Nixon carried Chatham, Muscogee, and Richmond counties, and he lost both DeKalb and Fulton by the slimmest of margins—0.2 and 1.6 percent, respectively. In fast-growing Cobb County, Nixon won 39 percent of the total vote, but he secured 40 and 44 percent, respectively, in Marietta and Smyrna. The Georgia Republican Party’s long-term growth strategy appeared to be paying off in urban and suburban communities.<sup>78</sup>

The state party had, nevertheless, failed to meet the meteorically high expectations set by some of its more enthusiastic members. Boasts that Richard Nixon would win 25 counties and secure 45 percent of the popular vote in 1960 seemed less like campaign-season puffery and more like amateurish ravings. Republican disappointment also trickled down-ballot. Ralph Ivey,

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<sup>78</sup> Alice V. McGillivray, Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook, eds. *America at the Polls: A Handbook of American Election Statistics, 1960-1996* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1998), 185, 214; Research Division, Republican National Committee, “Voter Turnout By Counties in the 1960 Presidential Election,” (January 1964) in Box 61, Folder 5, Thruston B. Morton Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections; Cosman, “Presidential Republicanism in the South,” 320, 314, 306; Memo: Bill Safire to Bob Finch, Len Hall, and Pat Gray, November 11, 1960 in Public Relations File, 1953-1969, Box 6, Folder 9, William Safire Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.; Stanley D. Brunn and Gerald L. Ingalls, “The Emergence of Republicanism in the Urban South,” *Southern Geographer* 12, no. 2 (November 1972), 139; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 113; “Negroes Back Nixon Here But Kennedy Does Well,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1960, p. 25; “Kennedy Pressed in DeKalb But Squeezes By in Fulton,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1960, p. 1, 12 Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 85. For an insider’s contemporary analysis of the 1960 presidential campaign in Atlanta see, J.H. Calhoun, “The Atlanta Story of 1960: A Confidential Report on Why Fulton County, Georgia, Negroes ‘Went Republican,’” pamphlet in Box 19, F. Clifton White Papers, Carl A. Kroch Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY.

the Seventh Congressional District's first Republican candidate in more than fifty years, waged a vigorous, open-seat campaign against Democrat John W. Davis. Despite assistance from high-profile, national surrogates like Arizona senator Barry Goldwater, Ivey lost by a three-to-one margin. State chairman Bill Shartzter, who resigned his position the following January, admitted reluctantly that Georgia might not be ready for a two-party system. Assessing the state of the party following the election, Ralph McGill channeled Edgar Allen Poe, "Discouragement sits ravenlike above the door of Southern Republicans these days, and some seem to hear the words 'Never More. Never More.'" McGill, though, encouraged Republicans to look on the bright side. The GOP had polled historically high numbers in the state's metropolitan areas even without "the glamor and magic of Mr. Eisenhower." Organizationally, southern Republicans could count more individual members than at any time since Reconstruction. He might have added the GOP's advance at the district and county levels where the party had established more than a hundred legally recognized organizations. "The GOP is some time yet away from a genuine two-party system," McGill concluded, "but the foundations are laid and construction is well along." In the days and weeks leading up the election, news of Nixon-Lodge triumphs in business and civic club straw polls were routine. For the Republican Party to succeed in Georgia, though, it needed to expand its appeal. With African-American support declining, Georgia Republicans could not rely solely on "the management level" in the cities or "the unhappy conservative" in the countryside if they hoped to create a vibrant two-party system.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ralph McGill, "GOP Advance in the South," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 21, 1960, p. 1; Editorial: "Republican Need a Broader Base," November 2, 1960, p. 4; Gene Britton, "Georgia Republicans Nibble More Into The Democrats' Pie," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 13, 1960, p. 45; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 475-476; "Davis Carries 7<sup>th</sup> District Three to One," *Cobb County Times*, November 10, 1960, p. 1; "Davis Gets Easy Victory for Congress," *Marietta Daily Journal*, November 9, 1960, p. 1; Curtis Driskell and Fred Powledge, "GOP's Shartzter Quits; Dorsey Takes Over," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, p. 1, 19; "GOP Opens Permanent Offices In DeKalb, Names Full-Time Staff," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 9, 1961, p. 17; Reg Murphy, "Republican Set Georgia Party On New Course," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 14, 1961, p. 28.



The Georgia Republican Party had begun the decade in disarray and disrepute. That began to change when the Tucker faction finally vanquished the “old guard” Foster group at the 1952 Republican National Convention. Although triumphant, peace within the party proved short-lived as disaffected “old-line” Republicans led by Roscoe Tucker and Barnaby Hill sought to exert outsized influence in an effort to undermine the ascendant Atlanta faction. This group of well-connected, highly motivated Republicans worked closely with the Eisenhower administration and the Republican National Committee to quell the dissident Tucker-Hill uprising before turning its attention to long-term party-building efforts. Committed to the pragmatic, forward-looking “Modern Republicanism” espoused by Dwight Eisenhower, the Atlanta Faction organized the state party around the principles of economic growth, racial moderation, and political respectability during the 1950s and early 1960s. The party also banked small, but noticeable, electoral gains during the same period. Still, the progress had failed to live up to the hype many Atlanta faction members manufactured and consumed. With political turmoil brewing between the Republican Party’s conservative and establishment wings and the upheaval over race and civil rights promising to upend social norms in Georgia and across the South, the Georgia Republican Party stood at a political crossroad as the turbulent 1960s began.

## CHAPTER 4

### CAPTURE AND CONSOLIDATE, 1962-1967

Georgia Republicans converged on Atlanta's Municipal Auditorium for their quadrennial state convention in early May 1964 to finalize the delegation to the upcoming Republican National Convention in San Francisco. Delegates would also elect a new slate of officers to the executive board of the Republican state central committee. Since 1952, the Atlanta faction, with its close ties to establishment leaders in the Eisenhower administration and the Republican National Committee, had held sway. Led by the likes of Elbert Tuttle, Bill Shartzer, and the Snodgrasses, this group managed to defeat Senator Robert Taft's "Old Guard" supporters in 1952 and rout "old-line" post-office Republicans by mid-decade. The Atlanta crowd's political fortunes, however, had declined since Eisenhower left office. Shartzer had resigned as state party chairman in early 1961 after the party's performance the previous fall. His successor, James W. Dorsey, opted against seeking re-election in 1964. Republican national committeeman Robert Snodgrass did likewise. Instead, anti-establishment conservatives—many attending their first Republican convention—controlled proceedings from pillar to post. An alliance of "Old Guard" stalwarts, energetic "New Right" activists, and reactionary former Democrats outmaneuvered and out-organized the Atlanta faction in the weeks and months preceding the convention in Atlanta. This conservative coalition had coordinated a grassroots campaign to capture the Georgia Republican Party and deliver its convention delegates to Senator Barry Goldwater, leading critic of the GOP's Eastern Establishment. The plan came to fruition on May 3 when Goldwater Republicans won the state party's three highest-ranking offices and delivered a pro-

Goldwater delegation to San Francisco. “The party leadership,” boasted an exultant Roscoe Pickett, Jr., the newly Republican national committeeman, “is now in the hands of the conservatives.” The political fallout from the conservative capture and subsequent consolidation of power in Republican politics was considerable, and it extended far beyond the Peach State.<sup>1</sup>

Analyzing Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign and the rise of the political right during the 1960s has proven a fruitful endeavor for historians and other scholars. Goldwater’s role in the transformation of southern politics has also received its fair share of attention. Focusing on the underlying causes of the conservative coup in Georgia helps contextualize and reimagine the conventional narrative of Republican development in the state. Scrutinizing the interactions of the local, state, and national Republican activists who successfully drafted and nominated Barry Goldwater for president compels historians to re-conceptualize the familiar timeline of events. By altering its demographic composition and shifting its ideological trajectory, the Georgia GOP took a right turn in its quest for political viability during the turbulent 1960s.

Writing to Quentin Davidson in 1954 during the Atlanta faction’s purge of “old-line” patronage peddlers, Barnaby Hill fumed at that group’s perceived treachery. Those Georgia Republicans were “knifing the so called ‘old-liners’ in the back.” An irate Hill warned Davidson, “So help me there will come a day of reckoning.” His premonition would appear prophetic less than a decade later when the Atlanta faction collapsed before a conservative onslaught. It was the culmination of several trends. Long-simmering factional rifts within the Georgia GOP fused with an increasingly restive conservative movement to redefine Republican politics in the state during the 1960s. This conservative counterrevolution denied establishment Republicans influence over the state party’s direction and tone. In the long run, the conservative takeover in Georgia denied

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Pou, “Tribble, Pickett Get Top GOP Jobs,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 3, 1964, p. 1.

the establishment wing of the national Republican Party a raft of convention delegates it had grown to rely upon since the early 1940s. Without guaranteed support from Georgia and other southern states, the Eastern Establishment proved vulnerable to conservative challengers in presidential nominating contests.<sup>2</sup>

Conservatives notched a victory in early 1961 when Kentucky senator Thruston B. Morton stepped down as Republican National Committee chairman. U.S. representative William E. Miller of New York emerged as the early frontrunner to succeed Morton. Miller's current job as Republican Congressional Campaign Committee chairman had brought him into close contact with Republicans across the country, and he boasted strong support from top conservatives including Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire and Barry Goldwater. Lacking both animus toward Miller as well as an obvious alternative, moderate and liberal Republicans acceded to Miller. Once chairman, Miller brushed aside calls from within the RNC to rebuild the GOP's image in the urban North and Midwest. Instead, he doubled down on "Operation Dixie" as the party's best hope to win back the U.S. House of Representatives while laying the groundwork for future electoral inroads in the region. During his tenure as RNC chairman, Miller approved increased funding to the party's southern division. By 1964, that particular division accounted for almost a full third of the entire Republican National Committee's expenditures—some \$500,000 annually. This influx of cash paid for an enhanced Republican outreach effort across the South that included a professionally produced magazine. *Southern Challenge* extolled the Republican Party's commitment to conservative policies and attacked southern Democrats as

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<sup>2</sup> W. Barnaby Hill to Quentin Davidson, November 3, 1954 in Series 1.1, Box 12, Folder 7 in Tuttle Papers; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 116.

dupes of their northern and liberal counterparts. The RNC also hosted regular workshops and conferences throughout the region to boost Republicans going into the 1962 midterms.<sup>3</sup>

One such meeting in November 1961 made national headlines and served as something of a turning point for the Republican Party's southern strategy. Republicans from across the region convened in Atlanta to meet RNC strategists and hear from elected officials in what William Miller described as a two-day "muscle-building operation to establish a genuine two-party system in the South." Panels on topics ranging from campaign organizing and research, voter registration, fundraising, and the role of women in campaigns [based on the premise that women were *not* running for elective office] were offered. The minutiae of strategy and tactics, however, was soon overshadowed by Senator Barry Goldwater. Delivering the conference's keynote address, Goldwater castigated the Democratic Party's liberalism, repudiated Modern Republicanism, and offered succor to conservative southerners weary of both. According to Goldwater, the GOP was now the "only party where conservatism can be expressed," and he promised to "bend every muscle I have to see that the South has a voice" in forthcoming party platforms. Goldwater's statements at a subsequent press conference proved even more jarring than his prepared remarks. Goldwater brushed aside concerns about the John Birch Society and retorted, "[T]he extremists groups on the left are far more dangerous than those on the right." Most controversial of all were his unvarnished comments on race, civil rights, and the role of African Americans in the Republican Party. Since the GOP could not possibly "outpromise the Democrats" in the area of civil rights, the Republicans should seek votes elsewhere. "We're not going to get the Negro vote as a block in 1964 or 1968 [so] we ought to go hunting where the

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<sup>3</sup> Goldman, *The National Party Committees and Chairmen*, 531; Rae, *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans*, 68-69; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 184-185; Klinkner, *The Losing Parties*, 53-55; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 117; Joseph E. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 2008), 60-61.

ducks are,” he declared with characteristic frankness.<sup>4</sup> Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution* reckoned Goldwater’s “cynical play to the extreme segregationists” had made him a “hero of the klans, klaverns, [and white citizens] councils.” Indeed, Goldwater and his supporters were well aware of the electoral roadmap favored by Modern Republicans that ran straight through the racially diverse urban centers in North.<sup>5</sup>

Goldwater’s rhetoric and policies ran counter to the centrist approach favored by the Georgia Republican Party’s Atlanta-based leadership. Fulton County Republicans, for instance, were among the most vocal proponents for open schools during the desegregation crisis in the early 1960s. The county party had issued “Report on Governmental Responsibility in Maintenance of Law and Order at Institutions of Public Education” when massive resistance and riots threatened to close the University of Georgia in January 1961. The report claimed Republicans deplored “federal intervention in areas of local responsibility,” including public education, but it added, “[I]n areas where local authorities have failed in their responsibilities to the people for the preservation of constitutional rights...a situation arises whereby the federal government and its instrumentalities have no choice other than to intervene in local affairs.” Such a situation had arisen in Athens when state officials, students, and others sought to thwart federal court orders through legal and extra legal means. By the end of January, the Fulton County GOP had issued a twelve-point program overhauling government policies related to

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<sup>4</sup> “GOP Looks South, Miller Says Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1961, p. 15; Claude Sitton, “G.O.P. Parley Charts Campaign for a 2-Party System in South,” *New York Times*, November 19, 1961, p. 72; Margaret Shannon, “Goldwater Hits Racial Force,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 19, 1961, p. 1, 26; “Goldwater Solicits G.O.P. Votes From Southern Segregationists,” *New York Times*, November 19, 1961, p. 70; Reg Murphy, “GOP Will Teach How to Win Dixie,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1961, p. 3; Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, 169-171.

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Patterson, “The South Meets Sen. Goldwater,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 21, 1961, p. 4; Ralph McGill, “Goldwater, New Klan Hero,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 22, 1961, p. 1.

education, taxation, legislative apportionment, and criminal law. Far from circumspect, Atlanta Republicans demanded swift, sweeping changes in nearly all facets of public life in Georgia.<sup>6</sup>

Spearheading this progressive push was Rodney Mims Cook. A thirty-something native Atlantan, Cook had returned from Virginia's Washington and Lee University to set up a profitable insurance agency on the city's prosperous Northside. Like many Republicans his age, Cook had become politically active during Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 presidential campaign. Although he campaigned for Richard Nixon in 1960, Cook claimed the party's "slipshod planning and execution" compelled him to organize and lead the Fulton County Republican Planning Committee in 1961. Cook's committee served as the county party's official research and policy shop. Cook and fellow Republican Richard Freeman also lifted Republican spirits that year when both won seats on the Atlanta Aldermanic Board. Officially nonpartisan, both men identified openly as Republicans through their campaigns and both won comfortably in runoff elections by assembling a broad base of support that included endorsements from the *Atlanta Constitution*, the Atlanta Negro Voters League, and the African-American Westside Voters League. These no doubt helped the pair win solid majorities from both upper-income whites and blacks. That both Cook and Freeman participated in the same RNC regional conference as Barry Goldwater barely a month after their elections underscored the gulf between the Georgia GOP's leadership and the conservative wing's rising star. More importantly, it indicated the times were changing in Republican politics.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Committee Report on Governmental Responsibility in Maintenance of Law and Order at Institutions of Public Education, January 1961 in Series IV, Box 77, Folder 4, Thrower Papers; Recommendations of the 1961-62 Planning Committee, January 6, 1961 in Series 1, Box 14, Folder 9, Rodney Mims Cook Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Fred Powledge, "Fulton GOP Calls For Big Change in State Government," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 29, 1961, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Reese Cleghorn, "Young Men on the Go: Richard Freeman and Rodney Cook," *Atlanta Magazine*, March 1963, p. 74; "Alderman Candidates Announce," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 17, 1961, p. 14; Dick Herbert, "2 GOPs Make History Here," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 23, 1961, p. 8; Editorial, "In Important Board of Alderman Races We Endorse These 15 as Best Qualified," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 7, 1961. P. 4; "Negro Units Tell Whom

While Cook and Freeman elections had buoyed Republican spirits in Atlanta, the GOP's lack of success in midterms proved disheartening. They had high hopes of defeating James C. Davis, the arch-conservative Democratic incumbent, who had represented the Fifth Congressional District for more than a decade. Thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Baker v. Carr* decision, which mandated the "one person, one vote" doctrine, Davis's Democratic rivals ousted him before the Republicans had the chance. *Baker* would benefit the Republican Party in the long run, but the ruling robbed metro Republicans of their most potent campaign issue as well as a vulnerable general election target in Davis.<sup>8</sup> Fifth District Republicans had lined up behind stockbroker and former Atlanta School Board president James O'Callaghan who ran on the perennial promise of establishing a two-party system in Georgia, but he also offered a little something for everyone. For ideological conservatives, he pledged to cut taxes, defend the free enterprise, and "establish faith in the individual as the foundation of our national life." For voters interested in a responsive electoral system, O'Callaghan promised to "strengthen the two-party system in this district and the state." Finally, for African-American voters tired of Davis's racist rhetoric and segregationist policies, he vowed "to represent all the people of the Fifth District." In short, O'Callaghan's platform represented a continuation of the Modern Republican approach.<sup>9</sup>

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They're For," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 12, 1961, p. 48; Reese Cleghorn, "Shooting an Elephant: Nixon's Southern Strategy," *Nation*, March 30, 1970, p. 359; Murphy, "GOP Will Teach How to Win Dixie," 3. An African-American Republican, Q.V. Williamson, and another white Republican, Mac Johnston, lost their aldermanic bids. Williamson, however, would win a subsequent bid as an at-large candidate.

<sup>8</sup> *Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 168 (1962); *Gray v. Sanders*, 372 U.S. 368 (1963). For a thorough analysis of U.S. election law and the development of "one person, one vote" see, J. Douglas Smith, *On Democracy's Doorstep: The Inside Story of How the Supreme Court Brought "One Person, One Vote" to the United States* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), quote on 106; Reg Murphy, "Court Ruling Peps Up Republican in Dixie," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 30, 1962, p. 5; Reg Murphy, "GOP to Meet Today to Select Ed Smith, Set Up Platform," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 31, 1962, p. 1, 13; "GOPs Push 2-Party System, Say Unit Isn't Only Issue," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 17, 1962, p. 1, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Pamphlet: "O'Callaghan the Congressman Will Work for You and Georgia Here's How...", in Series 4, Box 75, Folder 1, Thrower Papers; Ted Lippman, "GOP Going All-Out In Districts 5 and 7," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 1, 1962, p. 16; Reg Murphy, "GOP Gets A Foot in The Door," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1962, p. 1, 12; Ted



O'Callaghan, though, never got the chance to implement his strategy against Davis who fell in the Democratic primary runoff to liberal challenger Charles Weltner. Facing a moderate-to-liberal Democrat with a proven record of attracting considerable black support, upended the campaign. With the race issue effectively neutralized, the O'Callaghan-Weltner race evolved into a referendum on the Kennedy administration. The Republican managed majorities in affluent Northside Atlanta wards, but Weltner won among lower- and middle-income whites as well as African-American voters. That Weltner managed to carry over a sizeable share of the black vote into the general election from the Democratic primary in spite of O'Callaghan's endorsement from the Republican-leaning *Atlanta Daily World* disrupted the urban-affluent coalition Atlanta Republicans had nurtured since Thomas Dewey's presidential campaigns. This presented a troubling portent for the GOP in Atlanta across Georgia.<sup>10</sup>

In a post-election letter to George L. Hinman, Republican National Committeeman from New York and Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller's top political advisor, Atlanta faction leader Robert Snodgrass admitted O'Callaghan's weaknesses as a candidate. He was a poor retail politician when campaigning in unfamiliar surroundings who booked ill-advised television appearances when "physically and mentally exhausted." Chalking those failings up to inexperience, Snodgrass admitted candidly, "We failed miserably...in forecasting what was to happen in the Negro precincts. We lost the election in these precincts. We literally just got

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Lippman, "O'Callaghan, Ivey Take GOP Course," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 6, 1962, p. 18; "O'Callaghan, Ivey Rip One-Party Rule," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 25, 1962, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 52-53; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 86; John Heritage, "O'Callaghan and Weltner Square Off," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 10, 1962, p. 6; "O'Callaghan Trades Jabs with Weltner," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 12, 1962, p. 10; John Heritage, "Weltner, O'Callaghan Get Tough in the Final Stretch," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 29, 1962, p. 7; John Heritage, "Weltner Defeats O'Callaghan by 10,000," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1962, p. 1, 10; C.A. Scott to Randolph W. Thrower, October 26, 1962 in Series 4, Box 75, Folder 1, Thrower Papers; Marion Gaines, "Negro Democrat Wins; Republican Upset Lokey," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1962, p.1, 12. Republican Dan MacIntyre managed to upset his heavily favored Democratic opponent, Hamilton Lokey, thanks to a strong support among affluent white voters in the Northside's 40<sup>th</sup> District where few African-American voters resided. See, Editorial: "Weltner Victory Reassures Democrats But GOP Struck Oil with MacIntyre," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1962, p. 4.

clobbered, George.” In a separate postmortem, Republican advertising executive Alexander Bealer III touched on several structural and stylistic weaknesses that had plagued O’Callaghan throughout his congressional bid. In addition to the dearth of capable campaign workers and poll watchers, Bealer highlighted O’Callaghan’s poor messaging. He had devoted too much time and effort “developing too many different issues” that often muddled his overarching themes. Bealer also noticed O’Callaghan tendency to deliver only the most basic stump speeches in African-American precincts. Future Republican office seekers needed to tailor their talking points to appeal more effectively to different demographic groups—especially African Americans.<sup>11</sup>

Snodgrass’s dismay and Bealer’s analysis, however, ran counter to the Republican National Committee’s new southern strategy. RNC operatives produced and distributed a short film, “New Breed in the South,” that showcased the region’s new Republican officeholders. Although it included a short segment on Atlanta alderman Rodney Cook whose campaign had appealed directly to black voters, the film neither mentioned nor featured African Americans. Instead, the film included several clips of white Republicans denouncing “reckless spending” and demanding “constitutional government.” It was, as *Washington Post* reporter Richard Lyons noted, a pitch “aimed chiefly at the rightwing conservative who believes in Sen. Barry Goldwater...but votes Democratic out of habit.” Georgia Republican chairman James Dorsey predicted black voters would return to the Republican fold since the Atlanta faction had long welcomed and shared power with African Americans. At the same time, though, the Atlanta

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<sup>11</sup> Robert R. Snodgrass to George L. Hinman, November 9, 1962 in Record Group 4, Series J.2, Politics-George Hinman Files, Box 62, Folder 296, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gubernatorial Records, Campaigns, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY; Confidential Memo: Alec W. Bealer to [Randolph W. Thrower], n.d. in Series 4, Box 75, Folder 1, Thrower Papers.

faction's relative moderation on the race issue was proving simultaneously insufficient to attract black votes and detrimental to outreach efforts directed at rural, white conservatives.<sup>12</sup>

This conundrum was apparent during Republican A. Edward Smith's brief campaign for governor in the early 1962. Before perishing in a fatal, late-night car crash, Smith had mounted the GOP's first serious statewide race since the turn of the century. Careful to feature standard Republican boilerplate material referencing the evils of the county unit system and the need for a two-party system in Georgia, Smith tacked hard right in stump speeches. So strident was Smith's partisan rhetoric, that the *Atlanta Constitution* reasoned "Goldwater Republicans" must be his target audience. Campaigning two years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became the law of the land, Smith departed from the Atlanta faction's advocacy of a "slow, evolutionary process" when it came to school desegregation and public accommodations. At times, Smith also issued tone-deaf statements regarding African-American rights. Responding to a query regarding the state's black voters during a question-and-answer session at Georgia Tech, Smith asserted, "[T]hey should work to improve their voting status. Then they would start getting what they want." Whether Smith was oblivious to the numerous barriers to African-American voting in Georgia and the South or simply indifferent to them was unclear. Smith perished in early June 1962 even before his campaign could place his name on the ballot. It is impossible, therefore, to know how voters—white and black—would have responded to his conservatism. Republicans pledged to find a replacement, but no one came forward.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Confidential Memo: Alec W. Bealer to [Randolph W. Thrower], n.d. in Series 4, Box 75, Folder 1, Thrower Papers; Richard L. Lyons, "GOP Goes All-Out for Southern Vote; New Techniques Used, Gains Conceded," *Washington Post*, August 18, 1962, Sec. A, p. 4; Ted Lippman, "GOP Film Aims For Dixie Votes," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 18, 1962, p. 20; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 85-86; Roscoe Drummond, "GOP in the South," *Washington Post*, December 24, 1962, Sec. A, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Editorial: "Wrong Way To Go After GOP Votes," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 30, 1962, p. 4; Margaret Shannon, "Happy GOP Opens Smith Campaign," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 1, 1962, p. 1; 22; "Don't Rush Integration, Smith Asks," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1962, p. 13; Reg Murphy, "GOP to Meet Today to Select Ed Smith, Set Up Platform," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 31, 1962, p. 1, 13; Reg Murphy, "Ed Smith Dies in

Anti-establishment Republicans maintained a principled conservative could sweep the South and carry a host of Republicans into office on the ensuing electoral wave. That was precisely the logic behind a movement to draft Senator Barry Goldwater into a presidential campaign in 1964. The brainchild of F. Clifton White, a former aide to New York governor Thomas Dewey and leader of the Young Republican National Federation; William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*; and freshman Ohio representative John Ashbrook, this draft movement began operating secretly in mid-1961 with White mapping out Goldwater's path to the nomination. Having learned the hard lessons from Senator Robert Taft's unsuccessful campaigns, White explained the importance of seizing control of the South's Republican organizations. If the group could organize pro-Goldwater conservatives at the county, district, and state levels, they could gain control of enough national convention delegates to wrest control of the party from the eastern establishment and nominate Barry Goldwater. By early April 1963, the group had gone public as the National Draft Goldwater Committee (NDGC) and set about recruiting conservative activists in Georgia, the South, and across the nation.<sup>14</sup>

The NDGC found Georgia fertile ground for cultivating support for the Arizona senator. Apart from the Atlanta faction, the Georgia Republican Party had grown increasingly devoted to doctrinaire conservative principles. For example, Republicans from rural northwest Georgia's Seventh Congressional District had approved a platform in 1962 espousing "Republican Conservatism." The platform warned, "The great danger to our country is not from an immediate changeover to complete government ownership and control but from the creeping socialism the

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Crash; A Replacement in July Promised by State GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 6, 1962, p. 1, 12; Reg Murphy, "State GOPs Will Try To Salvage Campaign," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 18, 1962, p. 3; Sam Hopkins, "Republicans Give Up On Governor Candidate," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 28, 1962, p. 1, 14; Paul Duke, "Shift in Dixie Politics," *Wall Street Journal*, November 29, 1962, p. 1, 22.

<sup>14</sup> Schickler, *Racial Realignment*, 260-261; Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Nation Books, 2009), 176, 178-180, 193; Philips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 130-131; Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the Republican Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 67; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 357.

Democrats would force upon us,” and stressed states’ right ahead of “so-called ‘civil rights.’” Furthermore, a survey commissioned by the *Atlanta Constitution* in early April 1964 found more than 80 percent of southern Republicans preferred Goldwater over alternatives like Senator Thruston Morton and Governor Nelson Rockefeller. State party chairman James Dorsey surmised three-quarters of Georgia GOPers would potentially back Goldwater for the party’s presidential nomination. Rank-and-file Republican activists and organizations were clearly diverging philosophically from the reigning Atlanta faction, which remained committed to the pragmatic Modern Republicanism favored by the Eastern Establishment.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to persuading current Republicans, the Draft Goldwater movement won converts to the GOP banner. Among the most prominent of these new recruits was Howard H. (Bo) Callaway. The West Point-educated son of wealthy textile magnate Cason J. Callaway, Bo Callaway grew up in a staunchly pro-Talmadge Democratic household. Governor Eugene Talmadge appointed the elder Callaway to the University System Board of Regents—a position Bo would later hold during the Herman Talmadge and Marvin Griffin administrations in the 1950s. After resigning his commission in the U.S. Army in 1953, Bo Callaway returned to assist his father at Callaway Gardens. He also grew increasingly interested in politics. By the early 1960s, Callaway had become a regular guest speaker at area service clubs, chambers of commerce, and school groups delivering talks on free enterprise and the communist threat, in which he urged audiences to “become informed” by reading such famous and (infamous) anti-communist volumes such as J. Edgar Hoover’s *Masters of Deceit*, Fred Schwarz’s *You Can Trust*

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<sup>15</sup> “1962 Republican Platform – Seventh Congressional District of Georgia,” June 30, 1962 in Box 1, Folder 15, Cole Papers on the Cobb County (GA) Republican Party, 1913-1966, Kennesaw State University Archives, Kennesaw, GA; Reg Murphy, “Dixie’s GOPs Line Up for Goldwater,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1963; Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 87; Boyd, “A Suburban Story,” 86; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 131. In the face of rising southern opposition to the Kennedy administration, the Republican state central committee refused to weigh in on the president’s proposed civil rights bill. See, “GOP Taking No Stand On Rights, Dorsey Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 6, 1963, p. 3.

*the Communists*, and Cleon Skousen's *The Naked Communist*. Callaway's politics also led to his involvement in an obscure organization known as The League to Save Carthage. According to investigative journalist Jane Mayer, the group served as "an informal network of influential, die-hard American conservatives" during the early 1960s that sought to prevent the country's perceived decline. Callaway's participation in the League—especially his relationship with Tennessee attorney and Republican activist Frank E. Barnett—put him in contact with principals in the Draft Goldwater committee.<sup>16</sup>

After speaking with a friend (most likely Barnett) who had attended one of Clif White's draft Goldwater confabs, Callaway agreed to raise money and organize on the senator's behalf. Callaway later joined forces with state Senator Joseph J. Tribble of Savannah who became chairman of the Georgia Draft Goldwater Committee in 1963. Tribble claimed to have left the Democratic Party in 1960 after the national party drifted away from "the individualistic principles of Thomas Jefferson." Tribble, Callaway, and others initiated a formidable, grassroots campaign in Georgia on behalf of the National Draft Goldwater Committee.<sup>17</sup> By the time Goldwater formally announced his candidacy in early January 1964, state chairman James

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<sup>16</sup> Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 61; Millard Grimes, "The Bo Callaway Story, Part I: The Long Quest of Bo Callaway," *Georgia Trend*, August 1995, p. 23-24, 78-79; Howard H. Callaway, Address to the Southeast District Recreation Executives Conference, Mobile, AL, April 18, 1963 in in Series 3, Subseries A, Box 5, Folder 11, Howard H. (Bo) Callaway Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; "Speeches by Howard H. Callaway," in Series 3, Subseries A, Box 5, Folder 12, Callaway Papers.

<sup>17</sup> "Tribble Will Seek GOP Chairmanship," *Savannah Morning News*, March 14, 1964, Sec. A, p. 1, 2; F. Clifton White to Ralph Ivey, September 12, 1963 in Box 17, Folder Georgia, F. Clifton White Papers, #2006, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY; Howard H. (Bo) Callaway, Oral History, December 1, 1988, Georgia's Political Heritage Program, University of West Georgia, in Carrollton, GA; J. William Middendorf, *A Glorious Disaster: Barry Goldwater's Presidential Campaign and the Origins of the Conservative Movement* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 28; Grimes, "The Bo Callaway Story, Part I," 79; "Tribble to Lead Georgia Drive For Goldwater," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 18, 1963, p. 6; "Bo Callaway Pushes for Goldwater, Says He's 'Most Loyal Democrat,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 2, 1963, p. 25 "Atlantans to Organize Goldwater Club Tonight," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 27, 1963, p. 44. Callaway confided in National Draft Goldwater Committee chairman Peter O'Donnell, "My close friend, Frank Barnett, has kept me informed of some of your activities." In the same missive, Callaway revealed, "We have raised some \$20,000 in Georgia for Senator Goldwater in a most haphazard fashion. With good organization, we can raise much more money and can also get more enthusiastic hard work." See, Bo Callaway to Peter O'Donnell, May 20, 1963, Box 17, Folder Georgia, White Papers.

Dorsey had already endorsed the senator and national committeeman Robert Snodgrass confessed reluctantly that Goldwater would more likely than not carry the state's delegates into the 1964 Republican National Convention.<sup>18</sup>

By fall, the Draft Goldwater movement shifted into high gear as funds poured into the NDGC from business leaders, private foundations, and other wealthy, conservative donors. In October, Alabama Republican Party chairman John Grenier became the NDGC's southern states coordinator. Grenier, who had masterminded Republican John Martin's upstart campaign that came within 7,000 votes of ousting long-serving Democratic U.S. senator Lister Hill in 1962, worked closely with Callaway, Tribble, and other high-ranking Georgia Draft Goldwater leaders like G. Paul Jones of Macon and Marilu Smith (Ed Smith's widow) of Columbus in the months leading up to the crucial county conventions. Pausing only briefly after President John F. Kennedy was felled by an assassin's bullet in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963, the Georgia Draft Goldwater Committee plowed ahead. By the time Barry Goldwater announced his candidacy in early January 1964, Georgia state party chairman James Dorsey had already endorsed the senator and Robert Snodgrass admitted reluctantly that he would more likely than not carry the state's delegates into the 1964 Republican National Convention.<sup>19</sup>

Goldwater's candidacy did not go unchallenged in Georgia. Governor Nelson Rockefeller had campaigned quietly since failing to win the nomination in 1960. Rockefeller possessed several advantages over his rival. He boasted high name recognition, strong support from

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<sup>18</sup> Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties*, 69-71; F. Clifton White with William J. Gill, *Suite 3505: The Story of the Draft Goldwater Movement* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1967) 254, 260-261; White, *The Making of the President, 1964* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1965), 136-137; "GOP Leaders Here Back Goldwater," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 20, 1963, p. 1, 18; Reg Murphy, "State's GOPs Join In Victory Chant," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1963, p. 1, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph J. Tribble to District Chairmen, Georgia Goldwater Committee, November 26, 1963 in Box 17, Folder Georgia, White Papers; White, *Suite 3505*, 254, 260-261; Bo Callaway to John Grenier, October 24, 1963 and Marilu Smith to John Grenier, December 18, 1963 both in Box 3, Folder 96, John Grenier Papers, Auburn Special Collection, Auburn University Libraries, Auburn University, AL; Untitled Statement by Joseph J. Tribble, January 2, 1963 in Box 3, Folder 97, Grenier Papers.

moderate Republican officials and organizations, and a vast personal wealth enabling him to run a slick, high-tech campaign in the nation's priciest media markets. What Rockefeller lacked, however, was the high-energy, grassroots campaign designed by Clif White and implemented by individuals like Joe Tribble and Bo Callaway. Rockefeller's 1964 campaign relied on the same party-insider strategy that had secured the Republican presidential nominations for Thomas Dewey and Dwight Eisenhower. Unfortunately for Rockefeller and the Republican establishment, that approach proved both outmoded and insufficient against the Goldwater groundswell.<sup>20</sup>

Robert Snodgrass served as the Rockefeller campaign's chief contact in the state. George Hinman, New York Republican national committeeman and close Rockefeller aide, began actively cultivating Snodgrass's support after an RNC executive committee meeting in 1961. Impressed by the Georgian's "remarkably enlightened views on the approach that the Republican Party should take on the negro problem," Hinman informed Rockefeller, "I think he can be brought our way." Snodgrass, he surmised, "Could be a powerful influence for us in the South." In subsequent conversations, Snodgrass shared with Hinman the names and backgrounds of those men and women he considered the South's top Republicans. Those included obvious contacts like state party chairman James Dorsey, national committeewoman Mary Baker Rice, and Fulton County chairman Randolph Thrower—to which he added, curiously, Elbert Tuttle, John Minor Wisdom, and John Robert Brown—all of whom sat on the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and took no part in partisan politics. Evidently, Hinman was not the only establishment Republican operating with outdated information.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 160-161; Richard Norton Smith, *On His Own Terms: A Life of Nelson Rockefeller* (New York: Random House, 2014), 428.

<sup>21</sup> George L. Hinman to Nelson A. Rockefeller, August 10, 1961; Hinman to Rockefeller, October 26, 1961; Memo: Robert R. Douglass to Louise A. Boyer, October 10, 1961; Hinman to Robert R. Snodgrass, June 29, 1961;



Snodgrass continued passing along positive assessments and wildly optimistic forecasts to the Rockefeller camp throughout 1962. In February, Snodgrass had predicted he could deliver between one-half and two-thirds of the state's twenty-four delegates. By the end of July, he surmised "the Georgia Republican organization was almost solidly for Nelson." Snodgrass's tone began to change by early 1963 when the Rockefeller organization began receiving less-than-rosy reports from the Peach State. More distressing, perhaps, was a telephone call from Bill Corbett, New York Young Republican College chairman, to Rockefeller aide Robert Douglass. Corbett had traveled to Savannah and attended Republican gathering there. To his shock, the event "turned out to be a full-scale draft Goldwater meeting" complete with an announcement that Joe Tribble would spearhead the statewide effort. "Corbett feels that practically all of Georgia is now for Goldwater except in Fulton County," Douglass relayed to George Hinman. Unfortunately for Rockefeller, Corbett's judgement proved more reliable than Snodgrass's insider information. By the time Rockefeller launched his campaign in November 1963 on the NBC *Today* show, Georgia was already Goldwater country.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, James Dorsey had already endorsed Goldwater and, perhaps more importantly, announced his decision to forego another term as state party chairman. Robert Snodgrass, too, opted against seeking reelection as national committeeman. Randolph Thrower, Fulton County Republican chairman, did his best to downplay the moves, denying "pressure" from conservatives had any impact. The news, however, certainly heartened Goldwater supporters. Joe

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Snodgrass to Hinman, July 5, 1961; Memo: GLH to IJS, November 2, 1961 all in Record Group 4, Series J.2, Politics-George Hinman Files, Box 62, Folder 396, Rockefeller Papers. Archibald L. Gillies III also transmitted a shallow list of "Top Possibilities" for assistance in the South. See, Archibald L. Gillies to Jack Wells, December 10, 1963 in Record Group 4, Series J.2, Politics-George Hinman Files, Box 19, Folder 111, Rockefeller Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Memo for Files: GLHinman, February 21, 1962; Memo for Files: GLH, July 30, 1962; Memo: RRD to GLH, June 19, 1963 Robert R. Snodgrass to George L. Hinman, January 29, 1963 all in Record Group 4, Series J.2, Politics-George Hinman Files, Box 62, Folder 396; Novak, *The Agony of the G.O.P.*, 176-177; Reg Murphy, "Rockefeller Camp To Sound Out Dixie," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 1963, 1963, p. 6; Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 215; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 357.

Tribble exuded confidence and promised Goldwater Republicans would fill the state party's top posts. Two-party boosters and Atlanta faction allies were considerably less upbeat. Jack Spalding, *Atlanta Journal* editor, wrote positively of the Republican organization the Atlanta faction had fashioned, "The party had some pretty positive people with it. Conservatism, Georgia Republican style, was attractive and made sense. It was not blind."<sup>23</sup>

The Atlanta faction was reeling, and Fulton County was ground zero in the political war between Goldwater Republicans and the moderate Atlanta faction.<sup>24</sup> Even the usually cool and collected Randolph Thrower grew edgier in the lead up to the Fulton County Convention. In a letter co-signed by such establishment figures as James Dorsey, Robert Snodgrass, Rodney Cook, Richard Freeman, Dan MacIntyre, and James O'Callaghan and distributed to approximately four thousand Fulton County Republicans, Thrower stressed the "real issue is not Goldwater," but that "an alien and extremist group using the Goldwater guise, is seeking to gain control of the part[y] at the County Convention on Saturday." It concluded, "We cannot abide in a narrowly based Party of the radical right affected by racism and fanaticism, rather than responsible Republican principles." One day later, just before midnight, Randolph Thrower issued a press release heralding an accord between the "[r]esponsible leaders of the Republican Party of Fulton County and of the Fulton-Goldwater organization." Driven to the negotiating table by a "narrow and unrepresentative segment of the Goldwater forces," likely members of the John Birch Society, Thrower announced the rival camps had agreed on a compromise slate of

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<sup>23</sup> Randolph W. Thrower Speech, December 2, 1963 in Series 4, Box 78. Folder 1, Thrower Papers; Eugene Patterson, "Who'll Run the Georgia GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 21, 1963, p. 4; Jack Spalding, "The Republican Renaissance Is in Crisis," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 24, 1963, Sec. B p. 10; "GOP Leaders Here Back Goldwater," 1, 18; "Dorsey Stands With Goldwater," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 8, 1963, p. 9; "Goldwater Backers Expect to Head GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 20, 1963, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Reg Murphy, "Fulton GOP Vetoes Goldwater Move," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 14, 1963, p. 5; Jim Clotfelter, "Fulton GOP Splits On Barry Support," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, December 29, 1963, Sec. A, p. 4; Allen O. Jones to John Grenier, January 2, 1964 in Box 3, Folder 97, Grenier Papers; Fulton County Republican Executive Committee [Margaret W. Deimling, Recorder], "Minutes of the December Meeting," December 13, 1963 in Series 4, Box 77, Folder 1, Thrower Papers.

party officers headed by establishment figure Donald L. Whittemore, a Citizens & Southern executive. Moreover, the Atlanta faction would name fifty-nine delegates to the Fifth District convention while the Goldwater organization would name fifty. In exchange, Goldwater supporters received a firm guarantee that a resolution committing the county's 109 delegates to Barry Goldwater would receive an up-or-down vote.<sup>25</sup>

The agreement notwithstanding, three distinct groups emerged at the Fulton County convention: establishment Republicans who preferred an uncommitted delegation, Goldwater Republicans who preferred delegates bound to the senator, and a smaller, extreme faction of Goldwater's more dogmatic backers who rejected the accord struck between the two organizations. The latter faction emerged at the outset when the presiding officer opened the floor to nominations for a temporary chairman. Per the agreement, Goldwater leaders Ed Noble and Whitey O'Keefe nominated Randolph Thrower while an unidentified voice from the floor seconded the nomination "[i]n the name of Party harmony and Barry Goldwater." Meanwhile, George Bender, a self-proclaimed "transplanted Yankee," nominated former Fulton County commissioner R.L. (Shorty) Doyal. Doyal strode to the microphone and delivered a meandering, combative harangue. "I have been labeled, probably, by the Atlanta Press as an extremist," he declared only moments after claiming "Philistines" had seized total control of the federal government. "I am extremely patriotic...I believe extremely in extreme nationalism. I believe extremely in constitutional government," Doyal persisted. Claiming he did not desire the post,

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<sup>25</sup> Randolph Thrower mailing to Fulton County Republicans, February 18, 1964 in Series 4, Box 77, Folder 2, Thrower Papers; "Extremists Back Goldwater, Thrower Tells Fulton's GOPs," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 19, 1964, p. 17; Statement released by Randolph W. Thrower, February 19, 1964 and Untitled, Undated document on Fulton County Convention both in Series 4, Box 77, Folder 2, Thrower Papers; Randolph W. Thrower to The Editor, *Atlanta Constitution*, February 25, 1964 and Fifth District Goldwater Headquarters, "GOLDWATER Pledged Delegate Slate," n.d. both in Series 4, Box 77, Folder 3, Thrower Papers.

Doyal offered to withdraw his name if Thrower did likewise. Thrower, unsurprisingly, demurred, and the accord held when Thrower prevailed by a vote of 858 to 414.<sup>26</sup>

The convention then tackled the motion to pledge Fulton County's delegates to Goldwater. A pre-selected group of pro-Goldwater Republicans spoke first in favor of the motion. Dr. John Savage, Fifth District Goldwater chairman, opened the debate by revealing DeKalb County had just pledged its entire delegation to Goldwater, and he suggested Fulton follow suit. William Dowda, Ed Noble, and Julian LeCraw all followed before yielding the floor to retired Colonel J.G. Mayton whose party identification stretched back to 1920. "Not since the days of Senator Taft," he affirmed, "have we had a man like Barry Goldwater." Richard Denny Jr., an attorney with King & Spalding and the only establishment Republican to speak in favor of the resolution, rounded out the pro-Goldwater group. Opposing the resolution were several high-profile establishment figures like Atlanta aldermen Rodney Cook and Richard Freeman, state Senator Dan MacIntyre, attorney Michael J. (Mike) Egan, African-American insurance and banking executive T.M. Alexander Sr., and retiring Republican national committeeman Bob Snodgrass. Alexander and Snodgrass delivered the most impassioned speeches in favor of an uninstructed delegation. Alexander informed the audience, "Over the past years Senator Goldwater's name, unfortunately, had been associated with individuals and groups considered by my race to be anti-Negro." Goldwater, he claimed, had given "the impression that he is not really concerned with any aspirations of the Negro people and does not understand...the racial issue." Warning that binding the delegates to Goldwater would imperil Republican gains among African-American and urban voters, Alexander asked for an unpledged delegation. Finally,

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<sup>26</sup> Lawson Thigpen, "1964 Fulton County Republican Convention, Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta Georgia," February 22, 1964 in Series 4, Box 77, Folder 3, Thrower Papers; Sally Rugaber, "Fulton GOP Votes To Back Goldwater," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 23, 1964, p. 1, 6.

Snodgrass took the floor to raucous applause asking for an uninstructed delegation. After brief rebuttals from each side, Thrower opened voting, and the resolution passed 704 to 457.<sup>27</sup>

Not all Goldwater supporters approved of how the Fulton County convention unfolded. Oliver W. Dredger, Jr., Chairman of South Fulton County Georgians for Goldwater, complained in a letter to Barry Goldwater a few weeks later. “Leadership fell apart in the Goldwater forces, and as a result, most of the conservatives feel they have been sold out by the people running your campaign in the Atlanta area,” Dredger claimed. Dredger revealed he and fellow conservatives had drafted Shorty Doyal to run for presiding officer after William Dowda withdrew and endorsed Whittemore. “Our chances of electing conservatives locally are dim in a party composed of liberals and soft headed conservatives,” Dredger grumbled. Don Whittemore, meanwhile, found himself fending off rumors that the Atlanta faction had traded its delegates for power. Whittemore asserted the deal had been necessary to prevent the John Birch Society a foothold in Fulton County Republican politics. The new county chairman remained upbeat despite his faction’s declining fortunes, “I think the Republican Party in the state is still to be considered a moderate or progressive party.” But Fulton and DeKalb counties had both pledged their delegates to Barry Goldwater. Indeed, the conservative capture of the Georgia Republican Party appeared to be a *fait accompli*.<sup>28</sup>

The Goldwater campaign rolled over what little establishment opposition remained in Georgia. Joe Tribble announced he would run for state party chairman in early April. Alexander Bealer III rose to the challenge him, but the county and district convention results and Dorsey’s

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. For an overview of the DeKalb County Republican Convention see, Charlotte Johns, “DeKalb GOPs Tiff, Back Goldwater,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 23, 1964, p. 6 and “DeKalb County Republican Party, *The Republicans Are Here: A Political History of the DeKalb GOP, A Handbook for Political Action* (Atlanta: American Printing Company, 1969), 9 in Series 6, Box 6, Folder 65, William Armstrong Smith Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

<sup>28</sup> Oliver W. Dredger, Jr. to Barry M. Goldwater, March 14, 1964 in Box 3, Folder 97, Grenier Papers; Rugaber, “Fulton GOP Votes To Back Goldwater,” p. 6; Reese Cleghorn, “Why Fulton’s GOP Wants Barry Goldwater,” *Atlanta Magazine*, March 1964, p. 26-28 (quote on 27).

endorsement of Tribble made the Atlanta advertising executive the clear underdog. Incumbent national committeewoman Mary Baker Rice of Vidalia also faced a potent challenge from Marilu Smith of Columbus. Smith's status as a top Goldwater organizer and widow of the late Ed Smith made her the favorite. The race to replace Robert Snodgrass as national committeeman was less certain. Randolph Thrower announced in early April and enjoyed strong support from Fulton County. The unexpected entrance of Roscoe Pickett, Jr., however, unsettled the contest. Pickett's emergence from the political wilderness surprised some of Georgia's most seasoned political observers. In fact, one of the last and most indelible images the public had of Pickett was of the barrel-chested attorney "snake-dancing down the aisle" and out the amphitheater door with the Georgia state banner aloft after Barry Goldwater withdrew his name from nomination at the 1960 Republican National Convention. Since then, he had expanded his family law practice to DeKalb County, become the largest principal investor in the upstart *Atlanta Times* newspaper, and masterminded the takeover of the once-moderate DeKalb County Republican Party. In Roscoe Pickett, the Georgia GOP's "Old Guard" merged with the nascent "New Right."<sup>29</sup>

The suspense proved unwarranted as conservatives controlled the convention from the outset. Even out-going state party chairman James Dorsey—who had endorsed both Barry

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<sup>29</sup> Eugene Patterson, "State's 24 Back Nixon—Almost," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 28, 1960, p. 1, 10 (quote on 1); "Tribble Seeks State GOP Helm," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 14, 1964, p. 5; "Atlantan Seeks State GOP Helm," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 17, 1964, p. 13; AP, "Tribble Endorsed By GOP's Dorsey," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 31, 1964, p. 18; Reg Murphy, "State GOP Control Bitter Issue," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 19, 1964, p. 25; Jarvin Levison to Fellow Republican, April 4, 1964; Dan I. MacIntyre to Fellow Republican, April 6, 1964; Open Letter by Ed Noble and Jim J. Germany, April 29, 1964 all in Series 4, Box 78, Folder 2, Thrower Papers; Joseph H. Baird, "Georgia Republicans Stay With Goldwater," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 1964, p. 11; Reg Murphy, "GOP Pickett Joins Goldwater's Side," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 19, 1963, p. 22; Bruce Galphin, "Georgia GOP Counts Out Rockefeller," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 20, 1960, p. 1, 9; Eugene Patterson and Charles Pou, "Cool Georgians in Back Row," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 24, 1960, Sec. C, p. 1; Joseph H. Baird, "Georgia GOP for Goldwater," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 5, 1964, p. 4; Richard Hyatt, "The Atlanta Times: A Forbidden Dream," in Millard B. Grimes, ed. *The Last Linotype: The Story of Georgia and Its Newspapers Since World War II* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press and the Georgia Press Association, 1985), 130, 132; Charles Pou, "Mountain Man Pickett 'New Blood' in DeKalb GOP," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 1, 1964, p. 24. Pickett's influence helped sideline Republican moderates in DeKalb County such as Charles Moye in favor of younger conservatives Ed Manget.

Goldwater and Joe Tribble—failed win the privilege of presiding over the convention. Weighed down by his establishment ties, Dorsey lost out to Rome attorney Ralph Ivey 419 to 137 in the first of several crushing defeats for the besieged Atlanta faction. Tribble subsequently outpolled Bealer 396 to 217. Both Roscoe Pickett and Marilu Smith won Georgia’s two slots on the Republican National Committee. In a subtle yet significant jab, Goldwater conservatives also elected Harry Sommers as honorary state party chairman. Sommers had withdrawn from active politics after he ran afoul of the nascent Atlanta faction at the 1952 Republican National Convention. In Georgia Republican politics, Pierre, Viscount Cambronne’s apocryphal words rang true, “The Old Guard dies, but it does not surrender.” Nor, it seemed, did it forget.<sup>30</sup>

The state convention also elected an overwhelmingly pro-Goldwater slate. Twenty-two of the state’s twenty-four delegates supported the Arizona senator while eighteen of those were bound to Goldwater. Two establishment holdouts, James F. Brophy of Rhine and Robert Cloer of Young Harris, remained uncommitted. All four at-large delegates, G. Paul Jones, Willard Strain, T.E. Addison, Jr., and Whitney O’Keefe were committed to the senator. The conservative rout exacerbated an already simmering conflict within the party. The conservative rout exacerbated the simmering conflict within the party—especially among its sizable African-American contingent. For the first time in decades, not a single African American sat on Georgia’s Republican National Convention delegation. After the convention, an unnamed Republican official declared triumphantly, “The Negro has been read out of the Republican Party of Georgia today.” Joe Tribble’s subsequent comments only made matters worse. Speaking candidly a couple days after the convention, he admitted the majority of black Republicans did not support

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<sup>30</sup> Sam Hopkins, “State’s Goldwater GOPs Score At Convention, Electing Ivey,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 2, 1964, p. 9; Pou, “Tribble, Pickett Get Top GOP Jobs,” p. 1, 26; Charles Pou, “Sanders, Beagle Welcome Barry,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 1, 1964, p. 1, 16. The Atlanta faction managed to secure one leadership position—T.E. Addison as fundraising chair. The conservatives may have seized power from the Atlanta establishment, but they also recognized the vast majority of Republican donors still lived and worked in the capital city.

Barry Goldwater because most African Americans “don’t agree with Sen. Goldwater’s philosophy.” Seemingly unconcerned with a likely drop in black support, Tribble predicted Goldwater would pick up enough new white votes to offset the loss.<sup>31</sup>

Tribble’s impolitic statements and the lily-white complexion of the party’s leadership and delegation served only to further enrage the vanquished Atlanta faction. John H. Calhoun, Atlanta’s most prominent black Republican spokesman and organizer, predicted the Goldwater campaign would not “get a single Negro vote in Georgia the way they are going.” Jarvin Levison, Fifth District Republican chairman, penned a long letter to Tribble on May 5 elaborating on his myriad concerns. Levison pledged to do what he could to tamp down resentment in Atlanta, but he admitted, “[T]he statements attributed to you...did not help our situation and I would hope that here were either taken out of context or you were misquoted.” The Atlanta Republican also mentioned several top donors had hinted their contributions would be far more restricted “if leadership in the Republican Party is going to be limited to those who believe in only the philosophy expressed by Senator Goldwater.” Atlanta Republican officeholders were, if anything, more strident in denouncing Tribble’s comments and the exclusionary tack steered by the new state leadership. In a joint statement, Dan MacIntyre, Rodney Cook, and Richard Freeman declared, “Responsible Republicans refuse to write off the votes of any group, and the Republicans of the Atlanta area will not be read out of the party to

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<sup>31</sup> Claude Sitton, “Georgia Is Cool to Goldwater Bit He Gets 22 of 24 Delegates,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1964, p. 72; “Goldwater Can Survive Loss Of Negro Votes, Tribble Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1964, p. 1, 14 (quote on 1); “1964 Republican National Convention: Georgia” in Series 3, Subseries M, Box 139, Folder 4-GA, The Personal and Political Papers of Barry M. Goldwater, Charles Trumbull Hayden Library, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 131, 145; Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 88



which they have contributed so much.” Recognizing that conservative gains endangered its political livelihood, the Atlanta faction remained defiant in defeat.<sup>32</sup>

Factional squabbling continued in the lead up to the Republican National Convention in San Francisco. Some held out hope a “Stop Goldwater” coalition would coalesce and deny him the nomination. A handful of high-profile Georgia Republicans endorsed Pennsylvania governor William Scranton who emerged as the strongest anti-Goldwater candidate after Rockefeller’s campaign collapsed. Any hope of stopping Goldwater at this juncture was an “exercise in futility,” according to Oregon governor Mark Hatfield. Goldwater could not be stopped. Georgia cast twenty-two votes for Barry Goldwater, whose first ballot victory demonstrated the conservatives’ grassroots strength and their superior pre-convention campaign strategy.<sup>33</sup>

Witnessing what had become of the Atlanta faction and the Georgia Republican Party he had helped build, Robert Snodgrass lashed out during the general election campaign. In a speech to the Atlanta Rotary Club, the man known throughout Georgia as “Mr. Republican” bemoaned his party’s rightward turn. “[T]he Republican Party of Georgia cannot afford, and it must not be led by hatemongers like the Ku Kluxers, the John Birchites, the cast-offs and has-beens of the Democrat Party,” Snodgrass declared in a veiled reference to the likes of Roy Harris, Marvin Griffin, KKK grand dragon Calvin Craig who had all endorsed Goldwater. The Rotarians

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<sup>32</sup> Rodney M. Cook to Allan C. Brownfield, May 1, 1964 in Series I, Box 14, Folder 7, Cook Papers; AP, “Rift in Atlanta G.O.P. Develops on Goldwater,” *Washington Star*, May 6, 1964 in Series 3, Subseries M, Box 139, Folder 5, Goldwater Papers; S. Jarvin Levison to Joseph Tribble in Series 4, Box 78, Folder 3, Thrower Papers; Reg Murphy, “Leaders Wrecking GOP, Say MacIntyre, Cook, Freeman,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 6, 1964, p. 1, 10 (first quote on 1, second on 10); Acsah Posey, “State’s GOP Isn’t Split, Say Party Leaders Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 7, 1964, p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 357; Remer Tyson, “Goldwater Victory Seen Boosting State’s GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 4, 1964, p. 17; “Alex Bealer Backs Scranton,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 8, 1964, p. 11; Sam Hopkins, “Georgia Gives Him The Once-Over,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 30, 1964, p. 1, 6; Reg Murphy, “Scranton’s Side Gains One Delegate, Wires Goldwater for Release,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 30, 1964, p. 1, 6; “Levison’s Release Request Draws Fire from Fulton GOP,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 12, 1964, p. 20; Reg Murphy, “Negro Vows Fight To Back Scranton,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 13, 1964, p. 1, 9; *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Republican National Convention Held in San Francisco, California: July 13, 14, 15, 16, 1964* (Washington D.C.: Republican National Committee, 1964), 359, 362. The hopelessly ineffectual “Stop Goldwater” movement is examined in Dickerson, *Whistlestop*, 147-166.

erupted in applause. He elaborated later, “My basic objection is the lily-white direction the Party is taking...I do not think you can today deny rights to any group of people.” He wondered aloud, “Where can a party like that go in this country? What will be its future?” Despite numerous calls for Snodgrass form a Republicans-for-Johnson organization in Georgia, Mr. Republican—ever the party man—declined.<sup>34</sup>

Senator Goldwater and his running mate, RNC chairman William Miller, made a handful of campaign stops in Georgia including an almost obligatory parade down Peachtree followed by a speech in Hurt Park. Internal Goldwater campaign documents described Goldwater’s tour of the South as a “personal triumph” with enthusiasm for Goldwater bordering “on idolatry.” In its final analysis of its Georgia campaign, the Goldwater organization concluded, “[C]ivil rights is THE issue, as it is in the rest of the South.” Republicans strategists discounted the negative press it had received in the Atlanta papers since “their bias is so apparent.” The polling trend as well as anecdotal evidence made Goldwater headquarters cautiously optimistic as the campaign entered the final stretch. In Georgia, at least, that optimism proved well founded.<sup>35</sup>

Although the conservative senator from Arizona suffered a historic, landslide defeat outside the Deep South, Goldwater put Georgia in the Republican column for the first time with 54 percent of the vote. In some cases, counties that had delivered John F. Kennedy more than 60 percent of the vote went to Goldwater by comparable margins four years later. Goldwater

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<sup>34</sup> Reg Murphy, “GOP Moves Into Platform Battle As Goldwater Wins Test on Seating,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 14, 1964, p. 1, 6 (quote on 1); Frank Wells, “Snodgrass Says GOP Wants No Hatemongers,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 15, 1964, p. 3; Claude Sitton, “Georgian In G.O.P. Asks End To Hate,” *New York Times*, September 15, 1964, p. 21; David Kraslow, “Both Parties in Georgia Busy Counting Up Defectors,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1964, Sec. A, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Memo: Dick Thompson to Pam Rymer, n.d. in Series 3, Subseries B, Box 122, Folder 2, Goldwater Papers; Memo: Richard E. Snyder to Mr. Whitlock September 12, 1964 in Series 2, Box 22, Folder 36, Dean Burch Papers, Charles Trumbull Hayden Library, Department of Archives and Special Collection, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ; “State By State Analysis, Newspapers/Polls,” October 19, 1964 in Series 3, Subseries M, Box 137, Folder 5, Goldwater Papers. Goldwater’s pollsters still admitted another campaign trip to Georgia would likely prove beneficial. In the end, Bill Miller made a late-October campaign appearance in Marietta. See, Selby McCash, “Bill Miller Brings Republican Campaign Tour to Cobb County,” *Cobb County Times*, October 29, 1964.

performed best among disaffected conservative Democrats in Middle and South Georgia where he swept the rural countryside and carried Bibb, Muscogee, and Richmond counties. President Lyndon Johnson, meanwhile, ran strongest in Fulton County and North Georgia where he benefitted from a more racially homogenous population, support for his Appalachian development and anti-poverty bills, and opposition to Goldwater's statements on privatizing the popular Tennessee Valley Authority. The 1964 presidential election, therefore, inverted historic voting patterns in Georgia. Evaluating the previous day's results, the *Atlanta Constitution* sounded remarkably similar to the Republican campaign's own, pre-election analysis.

"Goldwater's support of 'states' rights' and opposition to 'big government' had appeal, too. But these are only abstractions. Race is a tangible issue," the editorial read. While many white Georgians certainly interpreted the Arizona senator's opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act as an endorsement of their own racist worldview, others found themselves drawn to the Goldwater campaign out of a desire to bolster the free market system and shrink the federal government. No amount of parsing can disguise the fact that race, class, and economic self-interest were inextricably linked in terms of political behavior and culture. Ultimately, racial preconceptions, no matter how overt or covert, still informed the voting behavior in Georgia, the South, and nation in 1964. Undoubtedly, though, Goldwater's abysmal showing among Georgia's African-American voters only reinforced contemporary and future race-based analyses. Richard Nixon had 58 percent of Georgia's black vote in 1960. Four years later, Barry Goldwater barely managed 1 percent according to an NBC exit poll. Had Goldwater maintained Nixon's level of black support, he would have almost certainly won Fulton County—the only metropolitan county he failed to carry in 1964.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Editorial, "Georgia's GOP: No Passing Fancy," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1964, p. 4; Reg Murphy, "Republican Captures State for First Time," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1, 11; "Election Shatters

Race and civil rights also emerged as major campaign issues in congressional campaigns. Roscoe Pickett made his opposition to the legislation a centerpiece in his contentious campaign against liberal Democrat James Mackay in the DeKalb-based Fourth District. “If you believe the so-called civil rights law is unconstitutional and should be repealed vote for me,” Pickett declared. Bo Callaway, seeking the Third Congressional District seat being vacated by the retiring E.L. (Tic) Forrester, ran a more nuanced campaign than Pickett, but he still highlighted his opposition to federal civil rights legislation in this predominantly rural West Georgia district. Callaway blamed the proliferation of urban riots and violent crime on the Civil Rights Act, and his campaign opted against seeking black votes. “Forget all Negroes in precincts and surveys. Do not solicit the Negro vote,” read the minutes of a campaign meeting attended by Callaway and top campaign aides. Of the Georgia Republican Party’s congressional candidates, only Callaway rode Goldwater’s coattails successfully in 1964. Roscoe Pickett, Jr., who had campaigned on the slogan “Back Barry, Pick Pickett,” lost by 58 points. Not only did African Americans desert Pickett but so did many Republicans who followed Robert Snodgrass’s advice and cast their ballots for James Mackay. Pickett’s poor showing surely provided a modicum of gratification to the vanquished Atlanta faction. At the same time, though, the loss of African-American support sank James O’Callaghan in his rematch against Charles Weltner in the Fifth Congressional District. Elsewhere Democratic incumbents like John W. Davis and Phil Landrum who

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Georgia Tradition,” *Savannah Morning News*, November 5, 1964, Sec. D, p. 5; Thomas P. Petri, ed. *Election '64: A Ripon Society Report* (Cambridge, MA: Ripon Society, 1965), 20,59; Reg Murphy, “There’s Not Much Backlash—Except in the Deep South,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1, 11; Scott, *Cobb County*, 481, 231-232, 344-345; Selby McCash, “Barry’s Margin 4,000 in Cobb,” *Marietta Daily Journal*, November 4, 1964, Sec. A, p. 1, 2; Reg Murphy, “Dixie Moving to GOP, Tribble Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1964, p. 1, 16; James C. Topping, Jr., John R. Lazarek, and William H. Linder, *Southern Republicanism and the New South* (Cambridge, MA: Ripon Society, 1966), 62-63; Stephen Hess and Davis S. Broder, *The Republican Establishment: The Present and Future of the G.O.P.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 340; J. Morgan Kousser, *Colorblind Injustice: Minority Voting Rights and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 208; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 61; Donald S. Strong, “Further Reflections on Southern Politics,” *Journal of Politics* 33, no.2 (May 1971): 241-243; Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, 187; Black and Black, *Politics and Society in the South*, 215-216.

capitalized on their name recognition and conservative voting records to fend off Republican challengers.<sup>37</sup>

While the Republican National Committee was busy contemplating if and when to oust Barry Goldwater's handpicked chairman, Dean Burch, Georgia Republicans remained jubilant. In a congratulatory postelection letter, Joe Tribble offered no apologies for how the election season unfolded. He commended Republican leaders "on a tremendous job extremely well done," but singled out "members of the Liberal Establishment" like Nelson Rockefeller and George Romney who "sat on their hands throughout the most crucial political campaign in our history." Without identifying Robert Snodgrass by name, Tribble took aim at Atlanta faction members who "tell us now how the Republican Party should function." He continued defiantly, "We must studiously ignore these insincere voice and aggressively continue to strengthen the Republican Party as the voice of Conservatism." One of those voices belonged to George Lundquist, an unsuccessful candidate for state Senate, who bemoaned the election results loudly and publically. "Every conservative, and some bigots from the Democratic Party, who dislike Lyndon Johnson jumped for Goldwater, but they were not concerned with the party's overall national attitude," Lundquist explained, "I hope to see a true rally of the moderates that will bring the membership of true Republicans up again...I hope the Negroes can be brought back

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<sup>37</sup> Editorial, "Georgia's GOP: No Passing Fancy," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1964, p. 4; Pickett quoted in Petri, *Election '64*, 20, 59, 61 (quote on 61); "Tuesday Meeting – Columbus Bank and Trust Company Building," August 4, 1964 in Series II, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder Agendas, Callaway Papers; Kelly Mansfield, "Pickett Race Is 'Shocking,' Mackay Says," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 1, 1964, p. 40; Reg Murphy, "Republican Captures State for First Time," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1, 11; "Election Shatters Georgia Tradition," *Savannah Morning News*, November 5, 1964, Sec. D, p. 5; Reg Murphy, "There's Not Much Backlash—Except in the Deep South," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1, 11; Reg Murphy, "Dixie Moving to GOP, Tribble Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1964, p. 1, 16; Topping, Jr., Lazarek, and Linder, *Southern Republicanism and the New South*, 60-63; Howard H. Callaway to Kathryn Johnson, August 25, 1964 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder Mr. Howard "Bo" Callaway, Callaway Papers; Sam Hopkins, "Callaway Wins One for GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1, 2; Joe Brown, "Mackay Defeats Pickett, Runs Far Ahead of Ticket," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1964, p. 1; Sam Hopkins, "GOP's Snodgrass Backs Democrats' Mackay," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 21, 1964, p. 1, 14; Reg Murphy, "100 Republicans in 4<sup>th</sup> District Join to Endorse Mackay in Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 26, 1964, p. 7; Reg Murphy, "Georgia's 16 Republican Legislators," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, January 10, 1965, p. 6-7, 38.

into the Republican Party.” Whose vision, Tribble’s or Lundquist’s, would win out would determine the future course of the Republican Party in Georgia.<sup>38</sup>

African-American Republicans in Georgia remained confident during the summer of 1964 that Goldwater was a passing fancy for disgruntled Democrats. These men and women who had flooded into convention halls and defeated the Atlanta faction, they promised, would not remain in the Georgia Republican Party. Clayton Yates, a wealthy pharmacist and long-time Republican financial backer, told *Jet* magazine, “We’ll get back in because these new folks won’t—and can’t—support the party.” John Calhoun agreed, “They’re not interested in local politics...and won’t run candidates. The party can’t survive like that.” Their optimism proved ill-founded as the Atlanta faction remained active and influential in the city and its surroundings, but the Atlanta crowd remained a moderate redoubt encircled by increasingly emboldened and experienced conservatives.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, Goldwater’s coattails were sufficiently long to elect sixteen Republicans to the Georgia General Assembly, where there previously been only nine. Hailing predominantly, but not exclusively, from urban and metropolitan districts, that number doubled after court-ordered reapportionment mandated special elections in June 1965. Intended to remedy decades of malapportionment, redistricting shifted political power from the rural countryside to the cities and suburbs where Republican organizations were strongest and potential candidates most numerous. Electoral advances obscured the ongoing ferment within the state party organization. State party chairman Joe Tribble continued to antagonize Atlanta faction remnants still smarting from their ouster, which the Savannah Republican had helped orchestrate. His apparent lack of

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<sup>38</sup> Joe Tribble to County Chairmen, Goldwater County Chairmen, District Goldwater Chairmen, and State Committee, November 8, 1964 in Series 4, Box 78, Folder 3, Thrower Papers; Lundquist quoted in Petri, ed. *Election '64*, 61; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 207 Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 366.

<sup>39</sup> John H. Britton, “The Great Purge of Negroes from GOP Hierarchy in Dixie,” *Jet*, July 9, 1964, p. 1-12 (quotes on 12).

initiative galled many Republicans. Tribble failed to organize an official Republican delegation at the state capitol, and he balked at electing minority leaders in either house. Especially irksome to metro Republicans was Tribble's failure to produce a Republican-sponsored reapportionment plan during the 1965 legislative session. To be sure, Roscoe Pickett, Jr., the state's polarizing national committeeman, also experienced his share of resistance, but Tribble's numerous missteps, public exposure, and combative relationship with the press made him vulnerable if and when the party's liberal and moderate elements identified an acceptable alternative.<sup>40</sup>

Mounting opposition to his continued leadership compelled Joe Tribble to resign as state party chairman in late May 1965. Citing a recent promotion at the Union Bag-Camp Paper Corporation where he worked, he stepped aside in favor of Georgia GOP vice chairman G. Paul Jones of Macon. Jones descended from a long line of Bibb County Republicans and served as Goldwater's state campaign coordinator. His conservative credentials were undisputed, and few expected Jones to depart radically from the party's rightward tack. Unlike Tribble, though, Jones on relatively friendly terms with the jilted Atlanta faction. Alexander Bealer, whom Tribble had routed to become state chairman, called Jones "the most competent man we could find who has the time to take on this job." More importantly, he was acceptable to all elements of the party. Once sworn in, Jones attempted the complicated task of consolidating conservative gains while broadening party's base by re-engaging moderate white and African-American Republicans. From the outset, though, the gambit appeared unlikely to win over many black voters upset by

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<sup>40</sup> Reg Murphy, "Georgia's 16 Republican Legislators," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, January 10, 1965, p. 6-7, 38; Ted Simmons, "GOP Sees Reseating As a Boon to Party," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 24, 1965, p. 6.; Bartley, "Part Six," 399; Reg Murphy, "Georgia's GOPs Triple Seats in House," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 18, 1965, p. 3; "Pascal Grubbs, "Transit Voted Down Here; Jordan Sweeps By Teague," *Marietta Daily Journal*, June 17, 1965, Sec. A, p. 1, 16, 21; Reuben Smith, "2 GOP Factions Must Unite All the Way, Says Sen. Gordy," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 20, 1965, p. 3; Charles Pou, "Goldwaterites and Moderates Set First Skirmish for Macon," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 31, 1965, p. 23; Reg Murphy, "State GOP Battered By Split," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 24, 1965, p. 3; Alex W. Bealer III to Thruston B. Morton in Box 13, Folder 9, Morton Papers. Of the forty-nine seats contested by Republicans, twenty-eight were located in metropolitan Atlanta.

the state party's standoffish tone regarding race and civil rights. Jones would only pledge to support "policies favorable to all Georgians regardless of race, not by making special praise or appeal to groups of people." This refrain combined with his refusal to denounce the John Birch Society indicated conservatives remained in power with G. Paul Jones at the helm. If anything, his cross-factional ties forestalled another intraparty revolt. Any moderate anticipating an imminent center-left resurgence in the Georgia GOP would find only disappointment.<sup>41</sup>

With the state party's leadership situation settled, Republicans looked ahead to 1966. Facing the prospect of a deeply divided Georgia Democratic Party shackled to an unpopular Johnson administration, hopeful Republicans sought to mobilize the Goldwater coalition to elect the party's first governor since Rufus Bullock. G. Paul Jones, Atlanta banker William R. (Bill) Bowdoin, and U.S. representative Bo Callaway were floated as potential candidates for governor. Jones never seriously considered entering the race, and he would eventually launch an unsuccessful congressional bid that year. Bill Bowdoin, an executive with the Trust Company of Georgia, had served four Democratic governors in various administrative capacities. He had most recently directed the Governor's Commission on Efficiency and Governmental Operation, better known the Bowdoin Commission, which sought to identify and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in state government. His work led journalist Reese Cleghorn to proclaim Bowdoin, "The Businessman's Politician," and an ideal Republican candidate. Unfortunately for Georgia Republicans, Bowdoin remained a self-identified Democrat and declined to run.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Billy Watson, "State GOP Chief Jones Vows To Press Political Competition," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1965, p. 3; Charles Pou, "Georgia Republicans' Man in the Middle," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, November 21, 1965, p. 10-12, 34-35 (quote on 34); "Georgia GOP Chief Tribble Steps Down," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 30, 1965, p. 1, 24; "G.P. Jones To Remain GOP's Head," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 11, 1965, p. 30; Reg Murphy, "GOP's Jones Wants to Keep Birchers," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 8, 1965, p. 14; "Cook Hits Refusal To Oust Birchers," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 14, 1965, p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Reese Cleghorn, "The Businessman's Politician: Bill Bowdoin," *Atlanta Magazine*, MONTH, 1964, p. 50-55 (quote on 50); Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 87; Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 89; Reg Murphy, "Moderate Minded GOP Counts Gains in State," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 11, 1965, p. 6; Reg



With Bowdoin and Jones out of the running by late January 1966, attention shifted to Bo Callaway. Political observers had expected Bo Callaway to seek higher office ever since he had won his seat in Congress. He had defeated former Lieutenant Governor Garland Byrd in that election by running a nuanced, multifaceted campaign that maximized his strengths and minimized his not insignificant vulnerabilities. Callaway effectively tied his Democratic opponent to the unpopular Johnson administration and pledged to rein in federal spending, fight communism at home and abroad, and support the “[r]ights of individuals to choose their associates and to live and work without federal interference.” The latter, of course, was code for Callaway’s outspoken opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which he labeled a “civil wrong to people” that “puts us under a dictatorship.” In Congress, Callaway opposed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, federal school aid, urban renewal assistance, and an increase in the federal minimum wage. Callaway earned a near-perfect rating from the American Conservative Union to distinguish himself as Georgia’s most conservative member of Congress—no mean feat in a delegation that included Richard Russell, Herman Talmadge, and Phil Landrum. Callaway’s determined resistance to the Great Society won him legions of conservative admirers in both parties. He was well-positioned to replicate Goldwater’s success and win the governor’s mansion in 1966.<sup>43</sup>

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Murphy, “The Bowdoin Commission: Experiment in Limbo,” *Atlanta Magazine*, May 1967, p. 37-39 (quote on 39); James F. Cook, *Carl Sanders: Spokesman of the New South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), 115; 160-163, 224-225; Reg Murphy, “The Million Dollar Marathon,” *Atlanta Magazine*, March 1966, p. 44; “GOPs Pledge Candidate For Governor—Bowdoin?” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 15, 1966, p. 23; G. Paul Jones to Richard M. Nixon, January 21, 1966 in PPS 214, Wilderness Years, Series 5, Appearance File, Box 20, Folder 01 – Correspondence, Nixon Papers. For Bowdoin’s own take on politics and government see, William R. Bowdoin, *Georgia’s Third Force: Thoughts and Comments on the People of Georgia and Their Government* (Atlanta: Foote and Davies, 1968). In some ways Bowdoin echoed Georgia’s past as the possible inheritor of the business-progressive politics embraced by Democrat-turned-Republican James V. Carmichael. He also represented the future as an early prototype of the technocratic, managerial, efficiency-minded administrations of governors Jimmy Carter and George Busbee who served during the 1970s and early 1980s.

<sup>43</sup> Callaway Campaign Advertisement, 1964: This Is What “Bo” Callaway Believes in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 11, Folder – Schley County, Callaway Papers; Callaway Political Advertisement, 1964: A Civil Wrong Does Not Make A Civil Right in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – Newspapers, Callaway Papers; “Tuesday Meeting –

Callaway initially played coy regarding his political future, but the Republican announced his intention to run for governor after former vice president Richard Nixon had revealed Callaway's intentions in one of his syndicated newspaper columns in early spring 1966. Nixon had been networking throughout the country in preparation for another White House run in 1968. He had met privately with Bo Callaway and his administrative assistant, Bill Amos, a few weeks after a high-profile Lincoln Day Dinner in Atlanta. During that meeting, Nixon encouraged Callaway to enter the race. A subsequent, confidential memo claimed Nixon had insisted that "Bo must run, and that Bo could win." Nixon even hosted a fundraising dinner on the Georgia congressman's behalf. Invitations touting Callaway as the "brilliant young Congressman...now favored to be elected the first Republican Governor of Georgia in a hundred years" went out to the leading figures of American industry and finance. The final guest list included the likes of Roger M. Blough, U.S. Steel chairman; George Champion, Chase Manhattan Bank chairman; Gilbert W. Fitzhugh, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company president; James E. Thomson, President of Merrill Lynch; and the Honorable John Hay Whitney, venture capitalist, publisher of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and, most recently, U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Together with Richard Nixon, these pillars of the Eastern Establishment dined on Little Neck clams, Restigouche River salmon canapes, and beef filet with Béarnaise Sauce and sipped 1959 Château La Mission Haut-Brion wine while filling the Callaway's coffers. According to Champion, those attending would be hard pressed to find "a

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Columbus Bank and Trust Company Building," August 4, 1964 in Series II, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – Agendas, Callaway Papers; Gene Stephens, "G.O.P. Threatened in South by Loss of Backlash Vote," *New York Times*, October 9, 1966, p. 1; Margaret Shannon, "Bo Callaway Has a Strong Hand And Georgia Democrats Know It," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 17, 1965, Sec. B, p. 6; Sam Hopkins, "Here Are 6 Who Help to Keep Machinery Oiled and Moving," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 11, 1965, p. 6; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 423; Concluding Statement in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – Statements and Releases, Callaway Papers; Howard H. Callaway to Kathryn Johnson, August 25, 1964 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder Mr. Howard "Bo" Callaway, Callaway Papers; Margaret Shannon, "Conservatives Give Callaway Top Ranking," *Atlanta Journal*, August 18, 1965, p. 11.

better investment” than spending an evening with Richard Nixon, Bo Callaway, and fellow titans of business and industry at the exclusive Links Club on Manhattan’s tony Upper East Side.<sup>44</sup>

Early on, Callaway’s historic campaign took a backseat to a wide-open Democratic primary that featured six candidates: former governor Ellis Arnall, former lieutenant governor Garland Byrd, state Senator Jimmy Carter, former Democratic Party of Georgia chairman James H. Gray, Atlanta businessman Lester Maddox, and perennial longshot Hoke O’Kelley. After a contentious campaign, Ellis Arnall and Lester Maddox earned spots in the runoff. Maddox had run unsuccessfully for Atlanta mayor in 1957 and 1961 as well as for lieutenant governor in 1962. He had gained national notoriety in 1964, when his Pickrick restaurant became a flashpoint in the ongoing civil rights movement when Maddox refused to serve black customers in defiance of the recent Civil Rights Act. To make matters worse, Maddox accosted protestors outside his restaurant with clubs, axe handles, and firearms. Seeking to capitalize on his newfound fame (and infamy), Maddox sold the Pickrick and launched his full-time political career.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> [Bill Amos?] Confidential Memo, February 23, 1966 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – 1966 Gubernatorial Election – Memos, Callaway Papers; Richard M. Nixon to George Champion, July 22, 1966 in PPS 214, Wilderness Years, Series V. Appearance File, Box 27, Folder – 01\_Callaway Dinner Invites, Nixon Papers; George Champion to John C. Griswold, September 15, 1966 in PPS 139, Wilderness Years, Series IV. 1966 Campaign, Correspondence by State File, Box 13, Folder – Georgia, Nixon Papers; Charles Pou, “Bo Callaway Looks Pretty Likely As a GOP Candidate for Governor,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 9, 1966, p. 4; Charles Pou, “Capitol Question—If ‘Bo’ Runs, Will GOP Line Up Other Candidates,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 27, 1965, p. 6; Remer Tyson, “Oops—Nixon Has Callaway Running,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1966, p. 1, 6; Sam Hopkins, “Callaway Is In, But Can He Win?” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1966, p. 3; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 372-373; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 212; Telegram: Rose Mary Woods to G. Paul Jones, October 19, 1965 in PPS 214, Wilderness Years, Series 5, Appearance File, Box 20, Folder 02 – Campaign, Nixon Papers; Charles Pou, “Georgia GOP Hopes Nixon Visit Will Give Party ‘a Shot in Arm,’” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 6, 1966, p. 10; Richard M. Nixon Dinner, September 8, 1966 and Guest List – September 8 – Dinner in honor of Congressman Bo Callaway given by Richard M. Nixon both in PPS 214, Wilderness Years, Appearance File, Box 27, Folder 01\_Callaway Dinner Invites, Nixon Papers. For a discussion of the influential Links Club and its ties to the nation’s political and economic elite including the creation of the Business Roundtable in the early 1970s, see, Benjamin C. Waterhouse, *Lobbying America: The Politics of Business from Nixon to NAFTA* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), esp. 76-105.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Harold Paulk Henderson, *The Politics of Change in Georgia: A Political Biography of Ellis Arnall* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 230 Remer Tyson, “Callaway Revs Up Governor Drive After Talmadge Rules Himself Out,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 24, 1966, p. 1, 8; Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia,” 308; Billy Burton Hathorn, “The Frustration of Opportunity: Georgia Republicans and the Election of 1966,” *Atlanta History* 31 (Winter 1987-88), 37, 40; Grimes, “The Long Quest of Bo Callaway: Part One,” 81;

Waging an underfunded, unsophisticated campaign, Lester Maddox outdueled the aging Ellis Arnall in the runoff. Hamstrung by his liberal leanings, condescending tone, and years away from the political spotlight, Arnall ran well among upper-income whites, African Americans, and liberal residents in cities and college towns. His support among middle- and lower-income white votes—especially those in small towns and the countryside—was anemic. Maddox, the archconservative, rabble-rousing restaurateur capitalized on resentment toward LBJ’s Great Society and a significant wellspring of anti-Arnall sentiment to win 54 percent in the runoff to set up a general election showdown featuring two candidates who had endorsed Barry Goldwater for president in 1964.<sup>46</sup>

Although contemporary observers speculated large numbers of Republicans, believing Arnall the greater threat, cast ballots for Maddox in Democratic runoff, scant evidence of any organized cross-over operation exists. Indeed, Maddox’s victory seemed to surprise Callaway who had anticipated campaigning against the unabashedly liberal Ellis Arnall who had declared in a recent stump speech, “I am local Democrat. I am a state Democrat. I am a national Democrat. And those who don’t like it can go to hell.” Instead, Georgia Republicans were confronted with Arnall’s antithesis. Maddox had long espoused his dedication to states’ rights, free enterprise, and fundamentalist Christianity. He had opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with almost unsurpassed vigor. Not only had Maddox demonstrated his appeal among the state’s white majority, but he had also run a winning campaign against more experienced, better

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James F. Cook, *The Governors of Georgia, 1754-1995*, revised and expanded (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 284.

<sup>46</sup> Georgia Department of Archives and History, *Georgia’s Official and Statistical Register, 1965-1966* (Atlanta: Longino & Porter, [1967]), 1738; Henderson, *The Politics of Change in Georgia*, 234-235; Bernd, “Georgia,” 344-345; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 72, 74-75; Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia,” 326-327; Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 148; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 424; Ovid R. Davis to J.W. Jones, September 30, 1966 in Series 1, Box 70, Folder 8, Woodruff Papers; Roy Reed, “Maddox Victory Gives Georgia A Choice of 2 Goldwater Men,” *New York Times*, September 30, 1966, p. 36. Contemporary and subsequent observers have noted the white backlash did not necessarily guarantee victory in 1966. Georgia House speaker George T. Smith defeated incumbent and outspoken segregationist Peter Zack Geer.

financed opponents. Getting to the right of Lester Maddox was practically impossible for the genteel Callaway. If Callaway could not count on conservative, rural white voters, the backbone of the Goldwater coalition, then the Republican would have to look elsewhere for votes.<sup>47</sup>

Callaway failed to bridge the gap. He had kicked off his general election campaign on September 30 with a parade down Peachtree Street amid throngs of cheering supporters holding aloft “Go ‘Bo’” signs before addressing thousands of supporters. This highly anticipated speech proved to be the first of many missed opportunities for Callaway to expand his appeal. Declining to employ partisan labels, Callaway had refused to soften his criticism of Governor Carl Sanders. Instead, the Republican nominee hammered away at the Democratic incumbent for, of all things, running a budget surplus. His barbed attacks against Sanders doubtlessly offended many moderate and liberal Democrats hoping that Callaway might prove an acceptable alternative to Lester Maddox. Curious omissions similarly diminished the effectiveness of Callaway’s rollout. He made no mention of civil rights, racial equality, or Maddox’s antipathy for both. He also failed to juxtapose his own conservative brand against his opponent’s extreme, “ax-handle emotionalism.” Callaway recalled many years later that candidates “walked a lot of tightropes” in the 1960s to avoid “offending South Georgia” where the state’s most racially conservative voters lived. These voters had helped carry the state for Barry Goldwater and put Callaway in Congress. Rather than concede this key demographic entirely, Callaway attempted to chart a middle course in an effort to reshape the electorate in his favor.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph H. Baird, “Polls Favor GOPs Callaway as He Joins Ga. Governor Race,” *Washington Post*, September 1, 1966, Sec. A, p. 2; “Bo: An Echo, Or a Choice,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 30, 1966, p. 4; Bradley R. Rice, “Lester Maddox and the Politics of Populism,” in *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: From Ellis Arnall to George Busbee*, eds. Harold P. Henderson and Gary L. Roberts (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 193-194; Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, 113; Kruse, *White Flight*, 230-231; Bruce Galphin, *The Riddle of Lester Maddox* (Atlanta: Camelot Publishing Company, 1968), 119.

<sup>48</sup> Sam Hopkins, “Callaway Kickoff Slaps Sanders; Republican Refuse to Talk Party,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1964, p. 1, 8 (quote on 1); Howard H. (Bo) Callaway, interview by Mel Steely and Ted Fitzsimmons, December 1, 1988, transcript, Georgia’s Political Heritage Program, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA; John P.

Callaway did manage to make inroads among Georgia's commercial civic-elite, which could not countenance Lester Maddox or the threat he posed to the state's business-progressive image. According to historian Numan Bartley, the difference between the "rich-folk segregationist" Callaway and the "poor-folk segregationist" was extremely important to establishment figures who insisted government maintain social order, promote economic growth, and project a positive public image. The ad hoc Democrats for Callaway (DFC) argued Lester Maddox posed an existential threat to Georgia's economy and reputation. DFC chairman Judge John Heard explained, "[I]t is in the state's interests to give Bo Callaway a mandate for law and order, responsible government and peaceful conditions for progress and opportunity for all our people." At a DFC press conference, Bill Bowdoin declared Callaway "a young man of character, courage and capacity—reinforced by ability, understanding and a deep sense of dignity so necessary and appropriate to the highest office in our state." Marietta industrialist James Carmichael endorsed Callaway because he feared a Maddox administration would end in "anarchy and mob rule." In perhaps the most high-profile DFC event, John Sibley delivered an address carried live by television and radio. He framed the choice between Callaway and Maddox as one between "ability or lack of it, between responsibility or lack of it, between stability or the lack of it, between law and order and the lack of it." To promote, "continued progress," Sibley implored voters to back Republican Bo Callaway.<sup>49</sup>

To his credit, Callaway modified his campaign message after his botched rollout. He espoused increasingly the rhetoric of "responsible conservatism" based on social order and

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Baum to J. Arch Avary, Jr., October 11, 1966 in Series 1, Box 62, Folder 1, Sibley Papers. For an entertaining analysis from a contemporary political insider see, Bob Short, *Everything Is Pickrick: The Life of Lester Maddox* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), esp. 83-100.

<sup>49</sup> Boyd, "The 1966 Election in Georgia," 328-330 (quote on 330); Statement by William R. Bowdoin at Democrats for Calloway [sic] Press Conference, October 14, 1966 in Series 1, Box 62, Folder 1, Sibley Papers; "Carmichael Pledges Votes for Callaway," *Augusta Chronicle-Herald*, October 23, 1966, Sec. A, p. 2; "Address by John A. Sibley to Democrats for Callaway," October 24, 1966 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 4, Folder 5, Callaway Papers.

economic growth. He also softened his segregationist tone somewhat by styling himself publicly as “not an integrationist.” In a choice between two unabashed conservatives, the *Marietta Daily Journal* opined, “Callaway is a responsible conservative whose weapons are logic and reason. Maddox is a sincere but irresponsible racist whose weapons are ax handles and epithets.” As the endorsements of Democrats for Callaway group and other establishment organizations demonstrated, but extremist antics designed to preserve white supremacy at all costs held no appeal among this particular subset of the electorate. Callaway, a wealthy businessman from a well-connected family, facing the out-spoken gadfly Lester Maddox, won over the establishment almost by default. The political consequences of its shifting priorities and allegiances continued to reverberate in Republican politics well after 1966.<sup>50</sup>

Callaway made progress with the state’s commercial-civic establishment, but he failed to make similar inroads with black voters. The Republican had maintained a tenuous relationship with African Americans since his 1964 congressional campaign. Prominent roles in the Draft Goldwater movement and the senator’s subsequent presidential campaign lowered Callaway’s standing still further among the state’s black population. Prominent black Republican leader Q.V. Williamson claimed Bo Callaway as not “capable of leading the State Republican Party” during a talk at Georgia State University. Callaway’s congressional voting record did little to improve his appeal. In an effort to mend political fences within the black community, Coca-Cola Company vice president Ovid R. Davis arranged for Callaway to meet with several of Atlanta’s most prominent African-American leaders. According to Davis, the gathering did not go as he had planned. Upon noticing the distinguished group enter the room, Callaway implored, “Come

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<sup>50</sup> Bob Cohn, “Callaway Segregationist? Answer: ‘Not Integrationist,’” *Savannah Morning News*, October 26, 1966, Sec. A, p. 1; Editorial: “We Endorse Bo Callaway,” *Marietta Daily Journal*, September 29, 1966, p. 1; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 427; Bob Cohn, “Bo Links Maddox with ‘Great Society,’” *Augusta Chronicle*, October 5, 1966, Sec. A, p. 1; Galphin, *The Riddle of Lester Maddox*, 140; Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia,” 330.

on in, boys!” His informality was met only with silence. Callaway later told the group, “I’m going to treat you just like I treat everybody else.” Journalist Frederick Allen mused, “It was hardly an inspiring promise.” Indeed, Callaway’s wide-ranging, nine-point campaign platform included such worthwhile topics as highways, mental health, and crime, but it made no mention of either racial equality or civil rights. Perhaps the fact that he was not Lester Maddox represented Bo Callaway’s best and only pitch to Georgia’s African-American electorate.<sup>51</sup>

Voters went to the polls on November 8, but neither Callaway nor Maddox was able to claim an outright majority with the Republican securing a 46.5 percent plurality to Maddox’s 46.2 percent. A write-in campaign on behalf of Ellis Arnall polled just over 7 percent to deny either major-party candidate an outright victory. Organized by the AFL-CIO’s E.T. (Al) Kehere and Reverend John B. Morris, an Episcopal minister from Atlanta, the quixotic-yet-principled Write-In Georgia (WIG) drive maintained Bo Callaway and Lester Maddox were practically indistinguishable on racial issues. WIG leaders beseeched voters to defeat both Callaway and Maddox by casting their ballots for Ellis Arnall instead. The majority of Arnall’s some 53,000 votes, cast predominantly in metropolitan precincts, almost certainly gave the Republican nominee the win because Callaway had run strongest among in the state’s urban and suburban counties. Despite his poor outreach to and support among black voters generally, statistical analyses estimated that Callaway scraped a 52-percent majority among black voters. Arnall ran second with 46 percent while Maddox polled 7.6 percent. Historian Tim Boyd has demonstrated that Callaway performed best “among the largest, fastest growing, most educated, and richest

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<sup>51</sup> “Q.V. Williamson Lashes At State GOP Leaders,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 13, 1965, p. 10; Quoted in Frederick Allen, *Secret Formula: How Brilliant Marketing and Relentless Salesmanship Made Coca-Cola the Best-Known Product in the World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 347; “Bo Callaway Speaks On The Issues,” 1966 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – Campaign Files, 1966, Callaway Papers; Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, 115; Memo: G. Paul Jones, Jr. to Howard H. Callaway, November 15, 1966 in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 1, Folder 8, Callaway Papers.



counties, while Republican support collapsed in the smaller, poorer, less educated, and proportionately blackest counties” the bulk of African-American residents still failed to exercise the franchise. The 1966 gubernatorial election, therefore, represented a return to more traditional, statewide voting patterns. What these results portended for future campaigns remained unclear since both candidates were ideological conservatives whose campaigns differed primarily in tone and sophistication. Muddling its significance still further was the notable lack of popular-vote majority victor. Only after considerable legal wrangling, did the Democratic-dominated General Assembly finally elect Lester Maddox by a vote of 182-66 in early 1967.<sup>52</sup>

Any attempt to identify a single reason why Bo Callaway failed to capitalize on Barry Goldwater’s performance and defeat the underfunded, outrageous Lester Maddox is an exercise in futility. Contests decided by such narrow margins and under such unusual circumstances defy simple, mono-causal explanations. Past scholars have emphasized the white backlash against civil rights while more recent historians like Tim Boyd have argued the 1966 gubernatorial election was merely a “fluke” determined by unforeseen and contingent factors such as former governor Ernest Vandiver’s heart attack, Senator Herman Talmadge’s decision to opt out of the race, an organized write-in movement, and, ultimately, the Georgia General Assembly’s decision to elect Lester Maddox. “The central ambiguity of the white backlash,” according to Boyd was its unpredictability. It could be exploited for gain, or it could backfire. The backlash had helped send Bo Callaway to Congress in 1964, but it also denied him thousands of black votes that might well have elected him governor in 1966.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia,” 334; Hood III, Kidd, Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 91; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 176; School Teachers Committee for Write-In Georgia, “Bo Callaway: The Lesser of Two Evils? As Evil? Worse?” in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, John B. Morris Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Bartley, *The New South*, 382; Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, 117.

<sup>53</sup> Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 157; Boyd, “The 1966 Election in Georgia,” 309.

The organization and mechanics of the Callaway campaign have received significantly less scrutiny. Leading up to the election, Bo Callaway and Bill Amos planned a modern, high-tech campaign that borrowed techniques from the business and consulting world. For example, Amos, a building contractor, had employed a system known as Critical Path Method (CPM) during Callaway's 1964 congressional campaign. Amos described CPM simply, "It's nothing but a roadmap or a network for a series of events that are tied together. You make sure that each event occurs so that the other events will occur on time." Once identifying specific way-points in the campaign, staying on schedule became the top priority for Amos and the rest of the Callaway campaign. In addition to computer-driven techniques like CPM, the campaign utilized door-to-door surveying and developed a detailed neighborhood-precinct organization, overseen by future Georgia GOP executive director Alex Hodges, to expedite a process known colloquially in campaign circles as "find 'em, vote 'em and count 'em."<sup>54</sup>

"[N]o campaign in Georgia history is better organized from a mechanical standpoint," Ovid Davis informed his boss Robert Woodruff. Indeed, CPM performed perfectly throughout the Callaway-Maddox race. "[P]erhaps too perfectly," *Atlanta Magazine* correspondents Steve Ball Jr. and Bob Cohn noted wryly. Combined with the candidate's notorious stubbornness and self-assurance, the campaign's standardized approach and rigid adherence to deadlines reinforced Callaway's negative persona as "cold" and "aloof." A post-election "gripe session" organized by state party chairman G. Paul Jones with party leaders from metropolitan Atlanta revealed additional shortcomings. "Everyone with whom we talked indicated that they were quit[e] upset with the Callaway Organization," Jones noted in a post-meeting memo to Callaway. These Republicans implied Callaway's finely tuned campaign had walled itself off from the party leadership, spurned outside assistance, and "tended to overlook the personal contact so

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<sup>54</sup> Steve Ball, Jr. and Bob Cohn, "The New Politics," *Atlanta Magazine*, November 1969, p. 43-44 (quote on 43).

necessary to win campaigns.” This personal touch escaped Callaway, who failed to connect with “the common man.” An ill-advised decision by Callaway to opt out of a candidate survey distributed by *The Christian Index* also cost him an opportunity to appeal directly to culturally conservative Georgians.<sup>55</sup>

Although Callaway fell just short of the governor’s mansion, he probably helped to elect two Republicans to Congress. In the Fourth District, state Representative Ben Blackburn defeated incumbent Democrat James Mackay by fewer than five hundred votes. In the Fifth District, state Senator Fletcher Thompson won by a comfortable twenty-point margin. Certainly, Thompson benefitted from moderate incumbent Charles Weltner’s decision to drop out of the race in late September rather than pledge support for the reactionary Lester Maddox. Atlanta Democrats found a replacement, but Fulton County Commissioner Archie Lindsey failed to gain traction. Blackburn, Thompson, and Callaway all campaigned as conservatives, but the congressional candidates had faced—and defeated—liberal Democrats. The Georgia Republican Party contested every congressional district with the exception of Maston O’Neal’s Second and Phil Landrum’s Ninth in 1966. Elsewhere conservative Democrats fended off Republican challenges with relative ease.<sup>56</sup>

Despite Callaway’s near-miss gubernatorial campaign, the half-decade between 1961 and 1967 proved tremendously consequential for the Georgia GOP. After all the talk of establishing a competitive two-party system in Georgia, the Republican Party had finally made good on its pledge. Beyond that point, the situation remained a muddle. Republicans had secured popular-vote majorities in 1964 and 1966, but the electoral coalitions forged by Republicans during those

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<sup>55</sup> Ovid R. Davis to R.W. Woodruff, December 5, 1966 in Series 1, Box 70, Folder 8, Woodruff Papers. Ball, Jr., and Cohn, “The New Politics,” 43; Jones to Callaway, November 15, 1966; G. Paul Jones to Ray C. Bliss, November 21, 1966 in Series 2, Box 41, Folder 35, Ray C. Bliss Papers, Ohio History Center, Columbus, OH.

<sup>56</sup> Hood III, Kidd, and Morris, *The Rational Southerner*, 91; *Georgia’s Official Register*, 1965-66, 1806-1812.

two contests looked markedly different. Middle- and upper-income whites residing in suburban communities and affluent urban enclaves generally supported both Goldwater and Callaway. As the Blackburn and Thompson elections demonstrated, those voters remained the most reliably Republican. Beyond this demographic, however, Republican support remained highly conditional. Contingent factors such as the party's ability to recruit an attractive, capable candidate, a vulnerable Democratic opponent, a divided Democratic electorate, and the presence of a prevailing issue superseding traditional voting patterns largely determined the outcome of elections featuring two major-party nominees.<sup>57</sup>

Increased Republican success at the polls had failed to fully unite Republicans who remained divided on how best to consolidate recent electoral gains and forge a durable electoral coalition. Goldwater had won thanks to conservative, white Democrats who had abandoned their party's nominee. Callaway had amassed huge margins in the cities and suburbs to win the popular vote while the vast majority of those 1964 ticket-splitters returned to the Democratic fold. More centrist, establishment Republicans who bemoaned Callaway's ties to Goldwater and his indifference to black voters could make a credible case for the party to moderate its tone and positions to attract African Americans while appealing to white Democrats offended by Lester Maddox's segregationist antics. Befitting their Old Guard and New Right lineage, states' rights conservatives argued Republicans performed best in Georgia when they wedded social and cultural conservatism with traditional, free-enterprise economics. Republicans grappled with this paradox as well as its internal divisions—both old and new—as conservatives consolidated power and pursued a durable Republican majority in Georgia.

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<sup>57</sup> Bartley and Graham, "Whatever Happened to the Solid South?" 32. According to the authors, these contingent factors, as well as a lack of partisan identifiers, compelled a resource-strapped political party like the Georgia GOP to plan and participate one election at a time.

## CHAPTER 5

### NO NEW MAJORITY, 1968-1974

“Ah, to be a young Republican in Georgia,” read the *Atlanta Constitution* headline in early 1969. The accompanying article explained “a euphoric air envelops Republican leaders...[who] believe their party, so long an underdeveloped area, is approaching take-off point.” That Republicans exuded such optimism regarding the party’s prospects in Georgia was understandable. The Georgia GOP had enjoyed a considerable run at the ballot box since 1964. Although Bo Callaway had failed to win the governor’s mansion in 1966, he had received the most popular votes. Metropolitan Atlanta voters also sent two conservative Republicans, Ben Blackburn and Fletcher Thompson, to Congress that year. Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon had placed second behind American Independent Party candidate George Wallace but ahead of Democrat Hubert H. Humphrey in 1968.

Georgia Republicans remained upbeat. Nixon had lost to Wallace, but he won the presidency. Several high-ranking state Democrats had defected to the GOP following the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Remarking on the party’s youthful dynamism, Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. noted, “The Republican leadership in this state is composed of 40 young business executives, using sound development tactics...They are arousing enthusiasm that the old Democratic coalition is incapable of dealing with.” Following the 1968 election, the Georgia Republican Party boasted twenty-seven state representatives, seven state senators, two congressmen, five statewide officeholders, and over three-hundred local officials. Surveying the

state of the GOP in Georgia in early 1970, state party executive director Alex Hodges announced, “Today the party stands proud of the successes of the last decade.”<sup>1</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party hit rock bottom just six short years later. Writing to party leaders in the aftermath of the disastrous 1974 midterm elections, state party chairman Robert J. Shaw admitted “the Republican Party of Georgia is feeling mighty low.” Not only had the state party waged a lackluster gubernatorial campaign, Ben Blackburn had also lost his congressional seat to an unabashed liberal Democrat. Encouraging Republicans to keep the faith, he averred, “There is no need for Georgia Republicans to panic.” High inflation, soaring food prices, and Watergate had convinced voters in Georgia and around the country to deliver a “sock in the nose” to the GOP. Blaming electoral setbacks on external events beyond the Georgia GOP’s control was no doubt comforting, but it failed to address the party’s longstanding, endemic weaknesses that bedeviled its ability to compete consistently for political power in the state.<sup>2</sup>

Although Shaw declined to enumerate any one of those problems plaguing the state party in his postscript to the 1974 election, he and others were well aware of its lingering deficiencies during this period. Former state party chairman G. Paul Jones had lamented the dearth of reliable funding. “I am confident there must be those in Georgia who are interested and willing to see a strong Republican Party, to the extent we can count on their heavy financial support,” Jones told Alex Hodges in late 1968, “So far we have not turned up these folks except in rare circumstances, and you know as well as I do that our financial situation is awfully tight.” The situation had not improved by the time Wiley A. Wasden, Jr. succeeded Jones in 1969. Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> E.W. Kenworthy, “Ah, To Be A Young Republican In Georgia,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 23, 1969, Sec. A, p. 2; Alex Hodges, “Party Development in 1970 Republican Party of Georgia,” submitted to Chairman Wiley A. Wasden, Jr. and the Executive Committee Republican Party of Georgia, May 2, 1970, in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 3, Callaway Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Shaw to Republican Leaders, December 14, 1974 in Box 9, Folder 11, Porter Carswell Papers, Zach B. Henderson Library Special Collections, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA; Lou Kitchin and Associates, “Operation Breakthrough,” a presentation for Howard H. Callaway [1973] in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 4, Folder 5, Callaway Papers.

the state party owed Wasden \$15,000! Others including Bo Callaway and Whitney O’Keefe had cosigned loans to keep the party afloat financially between election years.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to its poor financial footing, a confidential analysis of the Georgia Republican Party recognized apathy and frustration among local party leaders and activists. “Discontent is evident among the active District and County chairmen, who believe that strong leadership at the State level is necessary,” the report read. Not surprisingly, the unknown analyst(s) recommended long-range party-building initiatives, but subsequent documents from 1972 indicate the state party had made little, if any, progress toward remedying its structural woes. “The Republican Party is perhaps at its low ebb since 1964,” that later document revealed, “This is readily evident through the lack of monetary support as well as through the inefficiency of the local organizations.” State Republicans appeared either unwilling or unable to address its glaring organizational weaknesses. Until it did, the Georgia Republican Party would continue to suffer at the polls against a reinvigorated Democratic Party.<sup>4</sup>

The confluence of the African-American civil rights movement with the “rights revolutions,” the modern conservative movement, and the transformation of the American political economy has made this one of the most studied and scrutinized periods in American history. Scholarly work devoted to Republican Party activity in the South during this time has generally focused on political messaging and interactions with the Nixon White House. Although essential to understanding the Georgia Republican Party’s development during these years, they

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<sup>3</sup> G. Paul Jones to Alex Hodges, October 28, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 7, Callaway Papers; Wiley Wasden A. Wasden, Jr. to Florence H. Cauble, Howard H. Callaway, G. Paul Jones, Jr., George W. Peake, Jr., and T.E. Addison, Jr., September 19 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 4, Callaway Papers.

<sup>4</sup> “Confidential 1969 Political Profile – State of Georgia,” December 14, 1969 and Untitled, Undated document both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Numan V. Bartley and Hugh Davis Graham, “Whatever Happened to the Solid South?” *New South* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1972), 32; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 429. For the Georgia Democratic Party’s biracial counterattack see, Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 93-106 and Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, esp. 209-244. Membership in the Georgia GOP’s “Thousandaire Club” required a \$1,000 donation to the party.

remain insufficient since communication, strategy, and electoral performance must be viewed within the context of internal party politics. Conservatives who had come to power in Georgia during Barry Goldwater's grassroots presidential campaign still controlled the party apparatus, but conspicuous differences in ideology, temperament, and goals persisted. Indeed, Republican activity between 1967 and 1974 not only underscores the diversity of opinion within the GOP but also highlights its abiding factionalism. Additionally, organizational issue such as inadequate financing, grassroots apathy, amateurish campaigns, and an overreliance on presidential coattails lingered. Ultimately, these structural problems frustrated the party's quest to become Georgia's conservative, majority party during this tumultuous period.<sup>5</sup>

Historian Numan Bartley noticed the results of the three-way 1968 presidential campaign had "etched the basic divisions in Georgia politics more clearly than any recent political contest." The same might well be said for the Republican Party of Georgia. The same contingent of conservatives that had unified behind Barry Goldwater, ousted the moderate Atlanta faction, and seized control of the state central committee in 1964 found itself at odds fewer than four years later. Georgia Republicans entered the 1968 election cycle deeply divided with competing factions seeking a nominee who reflected their particular political values. Indeed, a changing of the guard had not altered internecine reality in Georgia Republican politics.<sup>6</sup>

The Republican Party boasted an impressive stable of potential presidential candidates spanning the ideological gamut. Richard Nixon had never stopped seeking the presidency since his narrow loss to John F. Kennedy in 1960. The former vice president relocated to New York

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, esp. 83-109; Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*, esp. 134-200; Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich*; Lassiter, *Silent Majority*; Kruse, *White Flight*; Boyd, "A Suburban Story."

<sup>6</sup> Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 83; Reg Murphy, "A View from the Stump," *Atlanta Magazine* (October 1967), 39-41.



City and remained active in Republican politics. In addition to a lucrative legal career, Nixon developed into one of the GOP's top fundraisers and campaign surrogates. Unlike several other high-profile national Republicans, Nixon endorsed and campaigned on Barry Goldwater's behalf. Barry Goldwater toasted his fellow Republican at a subsequent Republican National Committee dinner, "I want to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Dick Nixon...who worked harder than any one person for the ticket this year. I will never forget it!" Nixon subsequently threw himself into the 1966 midterm elections. He later estimated he traveled 127,000 miles, visited 40 states, addressed 400 groups, and raised \$4 million for Republicans between 1964 and 1966. In Georgia, he had keynoted the state party's 1966 Lincoln Day dinner and held a private fundraiser benefiting Bo Callaway's gubernatorial campaign. Although Nixon endeavored to keep his nascent presidential campaign under wraps, most political observers recognized he would prove a formidable candidate.<sup>7</sup>

Governor George Romney of Michigan launched the first campaign volleys in early spring 1967. A successful business executive who had rescued the American Motors Corporation from insolvency, Romney had won the first of three terms in 1962 by uniting Republicans and appealing to African Americans, union members, and the youth vote. He had proven himself a capable, progressive administrator who had expanded government in Michigan by increasing education and social welfare spending. Romney's political advisors argued his private sector experience would appeal to centrists while conservatives would settle for him as an acceptable alternative to Nelson Rockefeller.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 171-174 (quote on 172); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 673; Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 272; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 371-372; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 212.

<sup>8</sup> Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 354; Michael A. Cohen, *American Maelstrom: The 1968 Election and the Politics of Division* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 184-185; Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party* (New York: Oxford University

The Romney organization had appraised his standing in Georgia as far back as 1966. An internal memo on Republican politics in Georgia described both the state and party in unflattering terms. “Georgia people are generally racist, extremist types,” the brief opened, “The new national committeeman Roscoe Pickett is wierd [sic] and very much bad news.” The memo’s author (most likely John B. Martin) recognized that carrying the state’s delegation would be an uphill battle. Remnants of the old Atlanta faction including Robert Snodgrass, Kil Townsend, and Jarvin Levison all offered Romney assistance, but their influence within the state party had waned considerably since 1964. In fact, Townsend warned that Romney’s prospects of winning any delegates outside Atlanta were dim. Romney had dropped out of the race entirely by February 1968 amid plummeting poll numbers and declining political fortunes. Romney’s abortive foray into Georgia suggested any establishment Republican candidate would find Georgia a tough row to hoe in 1968.<sup>9</sup>

After initially ruling himself out, Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York entered the Republican presidential campaign on April 30, 1968. He inherited what remained of Romney’s paltry support in Georgia. Foremost of this small coterie were former Atlanta faction members including Snodgrass, Levison, John Calhoun, and Randolph Thrower. Governor Rockefeller also won endorsements from state Senator Dan MacIntyre and state Representative Kil Townsend. Joining the fray mere days ahead of Georgia’s Republican state convention, Rockefeller found himself down in the polls and way behind in delegate support.<sup>10</sup>

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Press, 2012), 208-210; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 373. Ohio governor James Rhodes described Romney’s ill-fated 1968 campaign somewhat more colorfully, “Watching George Romney run for the presidency was like watching a duck try to make love to a football.”

<sup>9</sup> “Georgia,” September 19, 1966; JBM, “Memorandum re: Robert Snodgrass,” November 21, 1966; JBM, “Memorandum for Files – Georgia,” December 19, 1966; John Martin to Leonard Hall, June 19, 1967; Lawrence B. Lindemer to Georgia File, January 19, 1968 all in Romney Associates, State Files Series, Box 9-RA, Folder Georgia 3, George Romney Papers, University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>10</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 439; Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, *An American Melodrama: The Presidential Campaign of 1968* (New York: Viking Press, 1969),

For the most part, the presidential primary campaign in Georgia was a two-horse race between Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Barry Goldwater's campaign had mobilized and unified conservative Republicans in 1964, but displacing the moderate Atlanta faction had not ended intraparty conflict in the state. Indeed, Georgia Republicans were once again divided in their loyalties. While an ambitious band of doctrinaire conservatives from DeKalb County launched a high-profile "Draft Reagan" movement in 1967, former congressman Bo Callaway led a more low-key effort backing Richard Nixon. The events of the next year would eventually transform the Georgia GOP from the "Party of Barry" into the "Party of Bo" as Callaway asserted his political will in Georgia Republican politics.<sup>11</sup>

California governor Ronald Reagan claimed his pledge to serve out his term as governor precluded him from seeking the presidency in 1968. A handful of suburban Atlanta Republicans, however, decided they would draft Reagan into a White House run. DeKalb County state Representative James Westlake and a handful of Republican colleagues organized the "Georgians for Ronald Reagan Committee" in the summer of 1967. Governor Reagan and his staff asked top Georgia Republicans including G. Paul Jones and Bo Callaway to squelch the movement shortly after it began. Jones assured Reagan, "[T]he situation that exists is a clear indication of the wide popularity that you presently enjoy in Georgia...Bo [Callaway] and I will do everything in our power to cooperate with you and your staff to work for the best interest of the Republican Party, both in Georgia and nationally." Reagan had followed F. Clifton White's

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189; Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 268; Relman Morin, "Rockefeller Joins Race, Faces Uphill Struggle For Georgia Delegates," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 1, 1968, p. 1, 9; "GOP's Snodgrass Comes Out Of Retirement to Aid Rocky," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 17, 1968, p. 1, 15; Eugene Patterson, "Out of the Chute, Snodgrass," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 17, 1968, p. 4; Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 517; GLH, "State Summary – Georgia," n.d. in Series 5, Subseries 8, Box 92, Folder 1258, Rockefeller Papers; Remer Tyson, "Believed To Be No. 3 In State," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 1, 1968, p. 1, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Shannon, "The Losers: Callaway Watches, Waits..." *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 16, 1967, Sec. A, p. 6; "Reelection Is Expected For GOP Chairman Jones," *Macon Telegraph*, May 4, 1968, p. 1, 10; DeKalb County Republican Party, *The Republicans are Here*, 13-14.

advice when he asked Georgia GOP officials to halt the draft effort. White planned a covert, non-campaign that held Reagan out as a potential nominee if Nixon or Rockefeller faltered. A conspicuous effort like Westlake's "Georgians for Ronald Reagan Committee," thus, ran counter to White's strategy. Nevertheless, Westlake's effort continued, indicating a potentially deep vein of support for the conservative Californian in Georgia.<sup>12</sup>

Clif White later recalled that neither Nixon nor Rockefeller were Reagan's main foes. He reserved that distinction for "the conservative Republican leaders who were so determined to get a 'winner' in 1968 that they could not hold back on committing themselves to...Dick Nixon." Individuals like Peter O'Donnell and Fred LaRue who had worked diligently for Barry Goldwater in 1964. The same was true of Bo Callaway. Although he played coy publicly, Callaway was Nixon's chief supporter in Georgia. In addition to wrangling support for the former vice president, Callaway sought a position of power within the state party to exert his influence during the upcoming presidential campaign. He began soliciting support for a bid to become the party's new Republican national committeeman, and with enthusiastic support from some of Georgia's most influential party members, Callaway launched what would prove a grueling intraparty fight against the wily Roscoe Pickett, Jr.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> G. Paul Jones to Ronald Reagan, August 8, 1967 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 24, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; DeKalb County Republican Party, *The Republicans are Here*, 13-14; G. Paul Jones to Lyn Nofziger, August 7, 1967 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 24, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; F. Clifton White and William J. McGill, *Why Reagan Won: A Narrative History of the Conservative Movement, 1964-1981* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1981), 87, 92-94; Lewis L. Gould, 1968: *The Election that Changed America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 29, 100; Jeff NeSmith, "Reagan Turns Down Visit To State, Repudiating Draft," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 16, 1967, p. 1, 7; "Westlake Blames 'Meddlers' If Reagan Is 'Embarrassed,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, August 17, 1967, p. 12; Remer Tyson, "Reagan Echoes In DeKalb," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 4, 1967, Sec. C, p. 1; "GOP Leaders Like Reagan, Poll Shows," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 5, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> White and Gill, *Why Reagan Won*, 97; Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 354 Phil Gailey, "1968? Georgians Conservative and Cagy," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 13, 1967, Sec. A, p. 22; News Release, n.d. [circa April 30, 1968] in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Remer Tyson, "Callaway Seeks Pickett's Post As Republican Committeeman," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 18, 1967, p. 1, 8; Special File on National Committee, November 16, 1967 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10, Callaway Papers.

Pickett, a veteran insider who had waged battles in Georgia on behalf of Bob Taft and Barry Goldwater, refused to cede power to Callaway without a fight. The two men had had a stormy relationship dating back to Callaway's 1966 gubernatorial run. While hosting Callaway at his luxurious penthouse suite in Atlanta, Pickett had allegedly offered to resign his post on the Republican National Committee if it would help Callaway win the governor's mansion. Callaway then traveled to Manhattan for a private meeting with Richard Nixon where Callaway delivered a "somewhat exaggerated" overview of his contentious relationship with Pickett. Nixon urged Callaway to replace Pickett as soon as possible. In a sharply worded missive, Callaway sought Pickett's resignation in early April 1966. "I strongly feel the best thing that you could do at this point would be to resign from the National Committee," Callaway wrote, "I was pleased that you previously offered to do this, and I'm disappointed that you are not now prepared to do so." Pickett, meanwhile, flatly denied he had ever offered to resign. Pickett played no part in Callaway's gubernatorial campaign, and the two men rarely spoke afterward.<sup>14</sup>

Pickett cast himself as a besieged party loyalist, but he had spent months traveling the state fomenting opposition to Bo Callaway and other high-ranking Republicans among the party rank and file. For example, Pickett had "made a very long impassioned plea for new leadership in the Republican Party" at a First District Republican Committee meeting on April 27. Mike Hudson warned Callaway after that event not to underestimate Pickett. "No matter what your opinion may be of Roscoe, he is not stupid," Hudson counseled, "He has been playing with Republican conventions in Georgia every four years for the last 16 years." Callaway promised to

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<sup>14</sup> Confidential Memo, [circa February 22, 1966]; Confidential Memo, [circa February 18, 1966] both in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder – 1966 Gubernatorial Election Memos, Callaway Papers; Charles Pou, "Atlantan Fights for Spot Among GOP Delegates," *Atlanta Journal*, May 4, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1, 9.

wage a positive campaign. Pickett proved less restrained while campaigning for his political life.<sup>15</sup>

Limiting his public statements and working behind the scenes, Callaway managed to avoid an open feud with Pickett while assembling an impressive roster of supporters who transcended ideological and geographic lines.<sup>16</sup> He counted on strong support from his own Third District, which included Columbus. More importantly, though, Callaway's political spadework in the delegate-rich Fourth and Fifth districts encompassing DeKalb and Fulton counties proved fruitful. In the Fifth, Callaway allied with conservatives such as Congressman Fletcher Thompson; moderates like state Representative Mike Egan and African-American Atlanta alderman Q.V. Williamson; and liberals Jarvin Levison and Kil Townsend who relished an opportunity for payback against Pickett. In the Fourth District, Callaway exploited anti-Pickett sentiment in the national committeeman's own backyard. On April 12, just over a week before Republicans were slated to meet at district conventions, Callaway spent two hours at the Glenwood Hardware Store chatting with Republican nabobs Tom Davidson and state Senator Frank Miller. Neither Davidson nor Miller were "particularly close to Roscoe," and they opposed many of Pickett's most ardent supporters. "I did not make any kind of commitment or offer to them," Callaway recorded in his personal notes, "but I got the feeling that they would very much like to go along with the winner if they could find some excuse." His Glenwood Hardware Store excursion seems to have succeeded since Pickett withdrew from the race just days before the

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<sup>15</sup> Mike Hudson to Bo Callaway, May 1, 1967; Howard H. Callaway to Mike Hudson, May 16, 1967 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 24, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Walter Rugaber, "A Split Develops In Georgia G.O.P.," *New York Times*, December 3, 1967, p. 56; Frank Wells, "Pickett Hits Callaway On Entry," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 1, 1967, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Special File on National Committee, November 16, 1967; National Committee File, January 11, 1968; National Committee File, March 20, 1968; National Committeeman, March 21, 1968; in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10, Callaway Papers; Memo to Mimi, March 23, 1968; National Committee – Matt Mattingly, January 12, 1968; National Committeeman – Porter Carswell, January 12, 1968; National Committee, March 4, 1968; National Committee File – Information, April 8, 1968; Political, April 22, 1968 all in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10, Callaway Papers.

district convention. With Pickett out of the way, Callaway entered the state convention in Atlanta unopposed and the prohibitive favorite for national committeeman.<sup>17</sup>

The question confronting Georgia Republicans then was precisely how much influence Bo Callaway wielded within the party. The competitive race to replace outgoing Republican national committeewoman Marilu Smith proved the best gauge of factional strength. Jeanne Ferst of Atlanta and Florence Cauble of Canton emerged as the frontrunners. A Chicago native, and lifelong Republican, Ferst held leadership posts in various civic organizations including the Georgia Federated Women's Clubs and the Republican Women's Conference. An accomplished and well-connected fundraiser, she served on numerous finance and ways-and-means committees in a time when women were almost always assigned menial tasks or shunted into auxiliary roles. Ferst's fundraising prowess and close ties to the Atlanta commercial-civic elite made her an appealing and formidable candidate.<sup>18</sup>

Frances Cauble, too, had proven herself a committed Republican activist. She had held numerous high-ranking positions in the Georgia Federation of Republican Women, Cherokee County Republican Party, and the state central committee. Unlike Ferst, however, Cauble boasted extensive county- and state-level campaign experience. She also enjoyed a close

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<sup>17</sup> National Committee, [circa April 12, 1968] in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10, Callaway Papers; National Committee File – Information, April 8, 1968 and Political, April 22, 1968 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10; National Committee Files, April 10, 1968; National Committeeman, April 17, [1968]; National Committeeman, April 18, 1968; National Committeeman [sic] (Cont'd), April 18, 1968; National Committeeman – Killian [sic] Townsend, April 19, 1968; National Committeeman – Earl Patton, April 22, 1968; National Committeeman, April 23, 1968; National Committee, April 25, 1968; DeKalb County Republican Party, *The Republicans Are Here*, 2-5; UPI, "State's Republican Book District Conventions," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 22, 1968, p. 18; Jim Wynn, "State GOP Picks Pro-Nixon Slate," *Columbus Ledger*, May 5, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Retiring Committeewoman In GOP Won't Take Sides," *Macon Telegraph*, May 3, 1968, p. 3?; Rick Badie, "Fund-raiser worked to benefit the GOP: Chicago native's civic service spanned decades," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 1, 2010, Sec. B, p. 3; "Plan Eisenhower Dinner Decorations," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 14, 1965, p. 24; "35 Georgians to GOP Conference," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 1, 1969, p. 22; "State GOP to Hear Dirksen At \$100-a-Plate Dinner Here," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, October 22, 1967, Sec. A, p. 7; Judy Hippler, "Atlanta Delegate Hails Opportunity," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 5, 1968, p. 17. See also, Cathy Yarbrough, "Political Party Distaff Side Through With Dirty Work?" *Atlanta Constitution*, March 10, 1972, Sec. B, p. 5. See also, Morris, "Building the New Right."

working relationship with Bo Callaway who endorsed her for Republican national committeewoman in 1968. Although the arch-conservative Pickett back Ferst, a Rockefeller Republican, in a last-ditch effort to thwart Callaway, Cauble won handily. Bo Callaway had triumphed at the state convention, and he remained well positioned to not only shape the state's Republican leadership but also boost Richard Nixon's presidential prospects in Georgia.<sup>19</sup>

Although Callaway helped select a decidedly pro-Nixon state delegation, the vast majority of southern delegates were not bound to any candidate in 1968. Unlike 1964, southern Republicans insisted the presidential contenders court the region's sizeable bloc delegates. The brainchild of three Republican state chairmen—Harry S. Dent of South Carolina, Bill Murfin of Florida, and Clarke Reed of Mississippi—the Southern Association of Republican State Chairmen invited Rockefeller, Reagan, and Nixon to address that group during its mid-May conference in New Orleans. Both Rockefeller and Reagan traveled there while Nixon scheduled his southern summit to coincide with a later campaign swing through the region.<sup>20</sup>

G. Paul Jones and Bo Callaway both traveled to the New Orleans to greet Reagan and Rockefeller. Reagan, along with advisors Lyn Nofziger, Tom Reed, and Clif White, met with the group on May 19. The California governor spoke candidly on a number of issues important to the region's Republicans leadership. For example, Paul Jones inquired about the role independent Reagan groups, such as Westlake's organization, would play in his presidential run.

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<sup>19</sup> AP, "2-Party System Vital, Callaway Tells Women," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 26, 1967, p. 64; Pou, "Atlantan Fights for Spot Among GOP Delegates," Sec. A, p. 9; Harry Thomas, "Florence H. Cauble, 69, shaped Republican party in Cherokee," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 16, 1999, Sec. C, p. 6; "Canton Woman In GOP Campaign," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 2, 1964, p. 12; "Florence Horkan Cauble (Mrs. John A.)," n.d. in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Political, April 22, 1968; National Committeeman – Earl Patton, April 22, 1968; National Committeeman, April 23, 1968; Political, April 23, 1968 all in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 10, Callaway Papers; Charles Pou, "Nixon Sews Up 23 State GOP Delegates," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 5, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1, 14; Political File, May 7, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 8, Callaway Papers; "Georgia Confidential," [May 1968] in Series 5, Subseries 8, Box 94, Folder 1294, Rockefeller Papers.

<sup>20</sup> Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 332; Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 210; Harry S. Dent, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 79-81.



Reagan pledged to coordinate with the regular Republican organizations and eschew the informal clubs that had proliferated in past presidential campaigns. On the matter of patronage—always a foremost concern among southern Republicans—Reagan promised “he would not be an Eisenhower.” President Eisenhower had dismayed many in the South by appointing liberal Republicans and a host of Democrats to political posts throughout the region during his two terms. Overall, Callaway considered Reagan “very effective, very charming,” and noted that he had “said the things everyone wanted to hear.”<sup>21</sup>

The next morning’s breakfast meeting with Nelson Rockefeller proved far less compelling. Rockefeller also brought his campaign team, which included Robert Snodgrass, to parley with the southern leadership. According to Callaway, his team devoted most of the meeting to defending the governor’s behavior during the 1964 presidential campaign. “I don’t think that many of those present were impressed,” Callaway noted afterward. Rockefeller’s subsequent campaign stops in Atlanta did little to boost his standing among Republicans in Georgia or across the South. In the end, the candidate interviews confirmed that either Reagan or Nixon would secure southern support at the upcoming national convention.<sup>22</sup>

Just before arriving in Atlanta for his meeting with southern leaders, Nixon and his campaign announced the formation of “Georgians for Nixon.” Led Stanley P. Meyerson, an Atlanta attorney and Nixon’s former Duke Law School classmate, the organization included at

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<sup>21</sup> Untitled Document on Reagan Meeting, May 19, 1968 and “Meeting of Southern Chairmen with Governor Rockefeller,” May 20, 1968 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 6, Callaway Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; AP, “Rockefeller Courts South, See Reagan, Finds No Gap,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 21, 1968, p. 2; Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 332; Crespino, *Strom Thurmond’s America*, 210; Harry S. Dent, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 79-81; Remer Tyson, “A Winner, Not Choice or Echo, Say GOP Chiefs,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 22, 1968, p. 14; Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 283; Art Pine, “Nixon Will Visit Atlanta May 31,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 3, 1968, p. 16; “Rockefeller Will Campaign Through South Next Week,” *New York Times*, May 18, 1968, p. 17; Remer Tyson, “A Winner, Not Choice or Echo, Say GOP Chiefs,” *Atlanta Constitution*, p. 14; Remer Tyson, “Rockefeller to ‘Stump’ Here Today,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 23, p. 1, 16; Richard Dougherty, “Rocky Lessens GOP Opposition in South,” *Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 23, 1968, Sec. G, p. 2.

least three former Draft Goldwater organizers—Charles Bickerstaff, Ed Noble, and Robert Redfearn. Further demonstrating the inroads Nixon had made with the Georgia Republican Party’s conservative element, Nixon campaign manager John Mitchell revealed Bo Callaway would serve as Nixon’s southern regional chairman. Only after these conspicuous displays of organizational strength did Nixon finally sit down with southern party leaders at the trendy Marriott Motor Hotel in Downtown Atlanta.<sup>23</sup>

Although *Atlanta Constitution* editor Eugene Patterson proclaimed Nixon “the inevitable Republican nominee,” some southern party leaders still looked askance at the former vice president’s past positions and statements. For example, Nixon had campaigned as a moderate on race and civil rights issues during his 1960 presidential campaign. Perhaps most controversially, Nixon had offered southern Republicans some unsolicited advice in a syndicated newspaper column. “Republicans must not go prospecting for the fool’s gold of racist votes,” Nixon wrote, “Southern Republicans must not climb aboard the sinking ship of racial injustice. They should let Southern Democrats sink with it, as they have sailed with it.” That Nixon’s Atlanta trip came just days after the U.S. Supreme Court had invalidated so-called “freedom of choice” schemes used by states throughout the South to preserve unconstitutional dual school systems only heightened the stakes for Nixon and southern Republicans alike.<sup>24</sup>

During an initial give-and-take, Richard Nixon fielded questions from the southern delegation regarding the Supreme Court, compulsory busing of schoolchildren, law and order,

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<sup>23</sup> Remer Tyson, “Nixon Here Today for Dixie Push,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1968, p. 1, 13; “Georgians for Nixon’ Organized Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 28, 1968, p. 17; David S. Broder, “Nixon Building Solid Southern Base of Support for Presidential Nomination Bid in ’68,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968, p. 32.

<sup>24</sup> Eugene Patterson, “It’s How You Win or Lose,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1968, p.4; Richard M. Nixon, “GOP to Be Reckoned With in South,” *Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 8, 1966, Sec. E, p. 3; Quoted in Hess and Broder, *The Republican Establishment*, 180; Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 283-284; Remer Tyson, “Nixon Here Today for Dixie Push,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1968, p. 1, 13; Robert B. Semple, Jr., “Nixon’s the Happy One,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1968, Sec. E, p. 3; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 339-440; Gould, 1968, 104; *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

and a host of other issues. Nixon performed admirably. The most critical moment of Nixon's Atlanta trip had come during a meeting with Senator Strom Thurmond at the Riviera Hotel. Harry Dent recalled that Thurmond had sat in on a subsequent question-and-answer and approved. Nixon pledged appoint strict constructionists to the Supreme Court, he promised to nominate a running mate conservatives could back. Although Thurmond did not endorse Nixon immediately, the former vice president did win public support from several southern state party chairmen during the Atlanta trip. Georgia party chairman G. Paul Jones endorsed Nixon at a 1,500-person fundraising dinner later that evening. "For those who have doubts that this man could lead us to the White House," Jones declared, "certainly this man has laid those doubts to rest." Thurmond would eventually endorse Nixon on June 22 when the South Carolina switched its support from favorite-son candidate Thurmond to Nixon at the senator's behest saying, "Mr. Nixon needs and wants our help, and we need him as our President."<sup>25</sup>

Thurmond's endorsement was a political body to Reagan's presidential hopes. Clif White recalled later, "Strom Thurmond was the key to the South and Nixon simply stole our key." The South Carolina senator and Nixon's other high-profile southern supporters thwarted Ronald Reagan's eleventh-hour challenge to secure a first-ballot victory at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. Georgia's delegation offered only minor surprises as Reagan had picked off seven delegates while two backed Rockefeller. The remaining twenty-one delegates cast votes for Nixon. Unfortunately, an individual tally of the delegation does not exist, but

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<sup>25</sup> Charles Pou and Hugh Nations, "Nixon Nearing Magic Number," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 2, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1, 22 (quote on 1); Robert B. Semple, Jr., "Nixon Building Up Support In South," *New York Times*, June 2, 1968, p. 27; Statement by Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) at Columbia, South Carolina, Endorsing Former Vice President Richard M. Nixon for President, June 22, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 3, Callaway Papers; Dent, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power*, 81-83; Perlstein, 284-285; Tyson, "Nixon Here, Is Backed By 3 Dixie Chairmen; Aide Predicts Shoo-In," p. 1; AP, "Nixon Backers Win Fla. GOP Control," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 2, 1968, Sec. A, p. 4; UPI, "Nixon Rests in Miami, Tries on Nehru Jacket," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 3, 1968, p. 11; Remer Tyson, "Sen. Thurmond Rallied Dixie for Nixon," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 11, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1, 18-19; AP, "From Thurmond to Nixon," *New York Times*, June 23, 1968, p. 49.

subsequent statements and reports indicate Mike Egan and Q.V. Williamson (one of only twenty-six African-American delegates at the 1968 convention) voted for Rockefeller while the most likely Reagan supporters were DeKalb County Republicans Roscoe Pickett, Jr., Joe Higginbotham, Frank Miller, James Westlake; First District delegates George Whaley and Carl Gillis, Jr.; and Fifth District delegate Priscilla Smith—founding president of the South Fulton County Federation of Republican Women. This breakdown reflected not only the Georgia GOP's ideological complexion but also the competing power bases within it. Once again, Bo Callaway triumphed over Roscoe Pickett and the party's arch-conservatives.<sup>26</sup>

Richard Nixon's chief competitor in Georgia and across the South during the subsequent general election campaign did not come from the Democratic Party. Vice President Hubert Humphrey had emerged from a badly fractured convention marred by protests both inside and outside the hall. Neither Humphrey nor his party's liberal platform offered the white South much comfort. Additionally, the Democratic National Committee's decision to split Georgia's delegation between a group led by African-American state legislator Julian Bond and Governor Lester Maddox did little to improve the Humphrey's prospects in Georgia. It also prompted several high-profile Georgia Democrats—known in the press as the “Capitol Clique”—to switch parties in protest. Left only with his core of support among African Americans and white liberals, Hubert Humphrey floundered against his two, more conservative opponents.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Republican National Committee, *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Republican National Convention Held in Miami Beach, Florida: August 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1968* (Washington D.C.: Republican National Convention, 1968), 370, 378-379; Mike Egan interview with Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, April 29, 1974, interview A-0067, transcript, Southern Oral History Program Collection, University of North Carolina Center for the Study of the American South, Chapel Hill, NC; “Georgia Confidential,” [May 1968] in Series 5, Subseries 8, Box 94, Folder 1294, Rockefeller Papers.

<sup>27</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 440-441; Bernd, “Georgia,” 351; Art Pine and Remer Tyson, “2 Delegations for Georgia Spur Convention Floor Fight,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 27, 1968, p. 1, 8; Art Pine and Remer Tyson, “Most State Regulars Quit,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 28, 1968, p. 1, 8; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, 181-209; Achsah Smith, “Bolt by ‘Capitol Clique’ Previewed by Past Acts,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 19, 1968, p. 1, 18; Remer Tyson, “Many Events Led to Revolt,” *Atlanta Constitution*,

Instead, Governor George Wallace of Alabama offered Nixon's stiffest competition in the South. A reactionary populist and arch-segregationist, Wallace waged an antiestablishment, states' rights campaign in 1968. He offered vocal support for the military and police while castigating student protestors, Washington bureaucrats, and the U.S. Supreme Court with aplomb. Wallace decried social welfare programs, civil rights legislation, and new legal protections for accused criminals, and he promised to undo them if he became president.<sup>28</sup>

To manage his Georgia campaign, Wallace tapped veteran political operator Roy Harris. Harris, in turn, recruited other conservative Democrats including former governor Marvin Griffin, ex-lieutenant governor Peter Zack Geer, and Fred Hand (Bo Callaway's uncle). Wallace stressed multiple issues and articulated many policy proposals throughout his third-party presidential campaign, but Roy Harris summed up the Alabama governor's appeal more succinctly. "When you get down to it," Harris told the *Atlanta Constitution's* Margaret Shannon, "there's really going to be only one issue, and you spell it n-i-g-g-e-r." Taking stock of the campaign's leadership, Shannon determined, "[T]he Wallace team in Georgia had men who knew how to spell." With Wallace in the picture, the presidential campaign in Georgia would be a showdown between conservatives in 1968.<sup>29</sup>

The Nixon campaign recognized the Wallace threat early on. An analysis of potential Wallace voters conducted on behalf of Nixon's campaign revealed the governor's core supporters were overwhelmingly lower-income whites who identified as Democrats but felt "intensely alienated from the National Democratic Party." Relaying these findings to Nixon and his campaign managers, Mississippi state party chairman Fred LaRue described Wallace

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September 20, 1968, p. 1, 8; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 83-86; Bass and DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, 138.

<sup>28</sup> Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 83-86; Bass and DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, 138.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Shannon, "The Next President's Georgia Campaign," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, November 3, 1968, p. 54-56 (quote on 54).

supporters in starker terms. “They are simplistic in rationalizing issues, anti-intellectual...They feel threatened and insecure,” LaRue wrote. He then articulated Nixon’s Wallace strategy in the South. “To attack Wallace risks solidifying for him marginal support which, by other means, might be converted to Nixon votes by November.” Thus, campaign speakers and canvassers should “sell” Nixon as the best candidate instead of attacking the governor directly.<sup>30</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party employed this campaign strategy. In a letter distributed in late October to farmers and rural residents, Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Phil Campbell reminded anyone “who is against Humphrey becoming President should vote for Richard Nixon” because a Wallace vote might throw the election in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives. “The above is not intended as a criticism of George Wallace for whom I have high regard,” the Democrat-turned-Republican Campbell hastened to add. Perhaps trite, Campbell was following Nixon campaign protocol by offering effusive praise for George Wallace while simultaneously asking Georgians to cast their ballots for the Republican candidate.<sup>31</sup>

Just as Nixon had straddled the GOP’s factional divide to win the nomination, he offered a general election campaign and policy program that appealed both to moderates and conservatives. Historian Joseph Crespiro has recognized, “The mix of issues that Nixon engineered in 1968—law and order, freedom of choice, free enterprise politics—was designed to entice...middle-class, college-educated suburbanites, inside the South and out.” Kevin Kruse, too, has argued similarly, “Despite the strong imprints of Old South segregationists, Nixon’s

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<sup>30</sup> Fred LaRue to Richard Nixon, John Mitchell, and Peter Flanigan, September 7, 1968; David R. Derge, “Countering the Threat of the Wallace Candidacy,” n.d. both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 12, Callaway Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Phil Campbell to Fellow Farmer, [October 25, 1968] in Series 5, Box 37, Folder 16, J. Phil Campbell Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Robert P. Hey, “Nixon advised to lay off Wallace in Southern tour,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 1968, p. 23. Although Campbell praised Wallace in his letters, several Georgia farmers responded angrily.

‘southern strategy’ was not an appeal to the rural and working-class whites who supported Wallace and Thurmond.” Kruse has indicated the selection of Bo Callaway to lead his southern campaign demonstrated Nixon’s outreach to the region’s affluent suburbs. Callaway, however, snagged considerable negative press that summer for suggesting, “Perhaps we can get Governor Wallace on our side. That’s where he belongs.” The Georgia Republican eventually issued a lengthy statement clarifying his comments after moderate Republicans protested. Callaway’s gaffe notwithstanding, Nixon proved adept at appealing to racial fear and antagonism among the state’s white electorate without stooping to Wallace’s boorish level. As a result, he could also campaign for the votes of moderate whites and African Americans outside the South.<sup>32</sup>

Although various “law and order” issues predominated the 1968 president election elsewhere, civil rights and school choice remained the most salient issues in Georgia during the fall campaign. Bo Callaway reminded Fred LaRue in a mid-October memo, “Having talked to a number of people, including Senator Thurmond...I believe that ‘freedom of choice’ is the key to the campaign in Georgia and South Carolina.” Thurmond himself reiterated these points in leaflets, radio and television spots, and speeches in Georgia and across the South during campaign. “Mr. Nixon is advocating freedom of choice,” Thurmond declared during a campaign stop in Dublin, Georgia, “and I’m advocating freedom of choice...It is time for the federal government to keep its filthy finger off state institutions.” Other high-ranking campaign surrogates including Senator Paul Fannin, U.S. House minority leader Gerald Ford, and South

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<sup>32</sup> Crespino, *Strom Thurmond’s America*, 227; Kruse, *White Flight*, 253; Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, “Nixon High Command Keeps Silence on Racial Views of Southern Backers,” *Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 14, 1968, Sec. A, p. 19; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 182; Editorial, “The Foot Still Isn’t Out,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 29, 1968, p. 4; “Rockefeller Warns Nixon To Disavow Bo’s Remark,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1968, p. 12; “Egan Asks GOP to Shun Wallace, Hits Callaway,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 26, 1968, p. 8; “Callaway Denies Urging Wallace to Join GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 26, 1968, p. 8; Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 252; James C. Cobb, *The South and America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 130-131; Statement By Bo Callaway, June 24, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 23, Folder 6, Callaway Papers.

Carolina congressman Albert Watson made appearances in Georgia to bolster turnout in Republican areas and undercut Wallace support among conservatives.<sup>33</sup>

“Georgia has changed noticeably for Nixon in the last week as Wallace voters realize that they can only help elect Humphrey,” Bo Callaway asserted in his final campaign report. Citing no polling data to back this claim, Callaway offered a “fearless (and hopeful)” Election Day forecast predicting Nixon’s two-vote victory over Wallace in Georgia. Unfortunately for Nixon, Callaway’s prediction missed the mark as Wallace carried the state with 42.8 percent of the vote. Nixon placed second with 30.4 percent, and Humphrey finished a poor third with just 26.7 percent. As expected, Wallace routed his two major-party rivals in the state’s rural and small-town counties. He also carried Bibb and Muscogee counties, which Nixon had won in 1960. The Republican, meanwhile, won a handful of traditionally Republican counties in North Georgia while outpacing his opponents in Cobb, DeKalb, and Richmond counties where large numbers of middle- and upper-income voters resided. The Republican also eked out a narrow victory over Humphrey in Clarke County—home to the University of Georgia. Bolstered by almost unanimous support among African-Americans—roughly 19 percent of the state’s electorate—Humphrey won a cluster of majority-minority counties in East Georgia and along the coast. Humphrey also carried Fulton and Chatham counties. Indeed, the 1968 presidential election in Georgia fell along race and class lines.<sup>34</sup>

Winning only paltry support from black voters and unable to pry lower-status and rural whites from Wallace, the Georgia GOP remained the party of the white voters residing in

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<sup>33</sup> Bo Callaway to Fred LaRue, October 11, 1968; Bo Callaway to Fred LaRue, October 18, 1968 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Remer Tyson, “Nixon’s Like Me—Thurmond,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 24, 1968, p. 1, 16; Crespino, *Strom Thurmond’s America*, 211; Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 344; Robert P. Hey, “GOP pushes campaign to seize Georgia vote,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 21, 1968, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Bo Callaway to Fred LaRue, November 2, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 83, 101-102 (quote on 83); *Georgia’s Official Register, 1967-1968*, 1652-1663; Bernd, “Georgia,” 351; Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 96; Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 215.



suburban communities and affluent, urban enclaves. Republican performance down-ballot in 1968 reinforced this conclusion. Incumbent Republican congressmen, Ben Blackburn and Fletcher Thompson, defended their seats successfully. Blackburn routed former representative James Mackay by a fifteen points. Nixon's coattails proved shorter in the Fifth District, but Thompson managed to defeat Charles Weltner, who had voted in favor of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by more than eleven points. Both Blackburn and Thompson had campaigned as conservatives against two unabashed liberals, and white voters in both districts responded favorably. The Georgia GOP's other congressional candidates fared less well. Atlanta businessman Earl Patton, the Georgia GOP's first U.S. Senate candidate in more than a century, suffered the same fate Herman, losing by a more than a three-to-one margin. The electoral trend, thus, continued. Conservative Republicans might defeat liberal Democrats, but conservative Democrats triumphed over Republicans of all stripes in Georgia during this period.<sup>35</sup>

Republican state legislative candidates experienced similar challenges at the ballot box. The state party had distributed "Targets for Victory '68" to prepare Republican officials and prospective candidates for the upcoming election cycle. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative analyses, this confidential report identified more than 100 "competitive" Senate, House, and county races. "Victory in these races in 1968 is essential to our Party's development and growth in Georgia," it advised. The party held its 7 seats in the state Senate and increased its presence in the state House from 21 to 25, but this showing fell far short of expectations. With the sole exception of House Minority Leader Jamie Oglesby of Thomasville, every Republican senator and representative hailed from six urban and suburban counties. Although conservatives

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<sup>35</sup> Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 88; Philip Gailey, "Republicans Win 2 District Races," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 7, 1968, p. 1, 8; Morris Shelton, "DeKalb Did Her Thing for GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 24, 1968, Sec. C, p. 18; *Georgia's Officials Register, 1967-1968*, 1668-1670; 1672, 1674-1675; Bartley, *From Thurmond to Wallace*, 88-89.

had controlled the organization since 1964, the party had yet to appeal far beyond its traditional metropolitan base.<sup>36</sup>

On the eve of the election, journalist Margaret Shannon had lauded the “well-heeled, well-oiled nature” of the Nixon-Agnew campaign in Georgia. State party chairman G. Paul Jones explained the less formal “Georgians for Nixon-Agnew” played a critical role distributing signage and other advertising around the state. In addition to Republicans William Dowda, Ed Noble, and Bob Redfearn, the “Georgians” group included erstwhile Democrats such as Harold Sheats and Frank G. Etheridge, a well-to-do real estate financier who pumped large sums of money into the independent campaign organization. This positive press, however, belied the party’s problematic finances and rickety organizational infrastructure. “Local fundraising has been the most difficult of my experience,” Bo Callaway informed Fred LaRue. Callaway added that he had “personally committed” approximately \$100,000 to fund Nixon’s late-October campaign stop in Atlanta because “the entire campaign in Georgia collapsed for lack of funds.” Even after fundraising initiatives, Callaway surmised the state party would end the campaign with an estimated \$20,000 of debt. Without adequate financing, Georgia Republican could neither boost Nixon nor maximize his down-ballot coattails.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to its financing woes, the state party also suffered considerable logistical problems. The party not only lacked a sufficient supply of campaign materials, but it also lacked an effective field staff that might have provided “better leadership, better coordination and better communication” during the campaign’s final weeks. These complications had festered since the presidential campaign’s opening weeks when Callaway warned the Nixon high command that

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<sup>36</sup> The Republican Party of Georgia, “Targets for Victory ‘68” in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 8, Callaway Papers; Patton for U.S. Senator Press Release, November 4, 1968 in Box 1, Folder 10, Earl and Mary Patton Papers, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>37</sup> Shannon, “The Next President’s Georgia Campaign,” 9, 56; Callaway to LaRue, November 2, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 1, Callaway Papers.

the Georgia campaign suffered from conspicuous understaffing due to a “lack of proper financing” and rural resistance to formal campaigns. The latter compelled Callaway to centralize distribution of what few campaign materials he possessed after an “initial bottleneck” slowed the process. Ultimately, a lack of sufficient financing, inadequate staff, and a dearth of campaign materials remained sources of considerable frustration to Republican leaders in Georgia as well as a major impediment to the Nixon’s campaign in the state.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, the 1968 presidential campaign had yielded a crop of experienced, high-profile party-switchers. What should have been an undeniably positive development proved increasingly problematic for Georgia Republicans in subsequent months. The *Atlanta Constitution*’s Remer Tyson, a perceptive political observer, hinted the Capitol Clique’s defection might well spark a renewed wave of intraparty friction. “[S]hould the merger of former Democratic officials and Republican Party officials turn out to be a vicious political battle,” Tyson cautioned, “it could damage the GOP considerably.” A confrontation between one defector, Comptroller General Jimmy Bentley, and two DeKalb Republican leaders in late November 1968 foreshadowed the internal party struggle that would eventually consume the Georgia GOP.<sup>39</sup>

State senator Frank Miller and Roscoe Pickett visited Bentley to determine whether or not the former Democrat had struck a deal with Bo Callaway regarding the 1970 gubernatorial election. Miller also informed Bentley, “We feel slighted. We waited for you to come to us, and now we finally have to come to you.” A seemingly petty complaint on the surface, but it revealed much about conflict. Not only did Pickett and Miller still consider themselves influential party

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<sup>38</sup> Jones to Hodges, October 28, 1968, Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 7, Callaway Papers (second quote); Bo Callaway to John Mitchell, September 13, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 17, Folder 1, Callaway Papers (third quote); Shannon, “The Next President’s Georgia Campaign,” 9, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Remer Tyson, “A One-Party System Of GOPs on Way?” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 19, 1968, p.1, 18 (quote on 18).

leaders, but they also intended to flex the DeKalb County Republican Party's muscle in future party matters. Speaking to reporters afterward, Miller recounted his exchange with Bentley, "I reminded him that he was politically astute enough that he could look around and see that the largest bloc of Republican votes in the state was DeKalb County, and that Bo [Callaway] didn't have anything to do with DeKalb County." Bentley took the confrontation in stride, "Those DeKalb County boys don't always see eye-to-eye with Callaway." He would soon learn the truth of that statement before the next election cycle was over.<sup>40</sup>

The most immediate threat to the inroads blazed by Georgia Republicans over the past three election cycles actually emerged from the Nixon White House. Nixon had devoted the better part of three years to wooing southern Republicans to win the nomination, and he had spent the entire general election campaign reassuring white southerners that he was an ally. During his first term, however, Georgia Republicans fretted continuously as the president seemed either unable or unwilling to follow through. Top Nixon aides had already started walking back Nixon's campaign promises prior to Inauguration Day. For example, Secretary-designate of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Robert Finch had announced the Nixon administration would, with a few modifications, maintain the rigid deadlines established by the Johnson administration for halting all federal funding of school districts failing to initiate immediate racial integration. On matters related to the tax-exempt status of private schools, proposed racial integration of white suburbia, and U.S. Supreme Court, the Nixon administration

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<sup>40</sup> Duane Riner and Gene Stephens, "Bentley Gets a Taste Of Division in GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 28, 1968, Sec. A, p. 1, 21 (quotes on 21); Selby McCash. "Bentley Says Reception By GOP Has Been Friendly," *Macon Telegraph*, December 27, 1968, p. 1; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 39; Remer Tyson, "Sixth Official Resigns From Democratic Party," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 20, 1968, p. 1, 8.

frustrated and disappointed many white southerners—especially Republicans—whose high expectations the White House were routinely dashed.<sup>41</sup>

Historian James C. Cobb has noted that Nixon never promised to roll back the hard-fought gains of the civil rights movement, “[B]ut from a political standpoint it clearly made sense for him to give southern whites the impression that he was trying to do just that.” Indeed, Tommy Hooks III, an insurance and real estate broker from Americus in Southwest Georgia, conveyed his delight to Bo Callaway following Nixon’s election. “Thank the Lord for you and Strom Thurmond,” Hooks wrote, “I have never seen people so hungry for proper leadership in a different direction—a direction back toward yours and my Grandfathers’ good old ‘Americanism.’” Of course, Hooks’ statement may have connoted any one of several possibilities, but Harry S. Dent, special counselor to President Nixon, offered perhaps the best summation of the sentiment expressed by Hooks and others. Dent authored a memo dated January 23, 1969, outlining the parameters by which Nixon’s success or failure in the region would be determined. “[S]o far as Southern politics is concerned, the Nixon Administration will be judged from the beginning on the manner in which the school desegregation guidelines problem is handled.” He concluded, “Other issues are important in the South but are dwarfed somewhat by comparison.”<sup>42</sup>

Bo Callaway had reached a similar conclusion regarding the Republican Party’s prospects in the South. Callaway affirmed in a memo to Harry Dent, “[O]ur primary hope for any meaningful development lies in the realm of education and the direction that HEW officials will

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<sup>41</sup> Lawrence J. McAndrews, “The Politics of Principle: Richard Nixon and School Desegregation,” *Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 1998), 188; Michael A. Genovese, *The Nixon Presidency: Power and Politics in Turbulent Times* (New York and Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990), 85; Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 50.

<sup>42</sup> Cobb, *The South and America since World War II*, 132; Tommy Hooks III to Howard H. Callaway, November 9, 1968 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 10, Folder 2, Callaway Papers; Harry S. Dent quoted in Genovese, *The Nixon Presidency*, 85.

take when dealing with school systems in the South.” Less than three weeks into Nixon’s term, however, Callaway admitted, “I can’t help but feel that we have been a little cheated in this regard.” Citing the appointment of moderate James E. Allen, Jr., Callaway reminded him, “All along we have said that the one vital post is that of Commissioner of Education. Around him revolves all our hopes for constructive growth of the Party, and the people of the South were led to believe—in fact, promised—that their views would be considered.” Noticeably frustrated, Bo Callaway articulated the mounting concern felt by many Republicans in Georgia and the South as their high expectations met the stark political reality of governing.<sup>43</sup>

Upset with the increasingly pointed edicts emanating from HEW’s Atlanta regional office, Athens physician Bolling S. DuBose, Jr. reached out to Ben Blackburn, Fletcher Thompson, and Bo Callaway. He advised, “[T]he Republican party is a dead issue here if the public schools are destroyed for the sake of forced integration and appeasement of the left wing.” Barlow Autry, a Dunwoody Republican, expressed his dissatisfaction with the way Georgia Republican Party had presented Nixon during the campaign. “Perhaps you know it already, but there are some of us who are beginning to feel that we were ‘sold down the river’ on Nixon,” Autry informed Fletcher Thompson, “After all, there really isn’t much of a difference between a Republican Socialist and a Democratic Socialist.”<sup>44</sup>

Letters like these compelled Bo Callaway to dispatch a confidential memo to Attorney General John Mitchell regarding the administration’s treatment of the South. Disclaiming any desire for “special treatment,” Callaway insisted nonetheless, “We do not deserve to be misled, nor to have our hopes raised one day to be forgotten the next.” Nixon had supported “freedom of

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<sup>43</sup> Howard H. Callaway to Harry Dent, February 7, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 7, Folder 1, Callaway Papers.

<sup>44</sup> Bolling S. DuBose, Jr. to Ben Blackburn, Howard Calloway, and Fletcher Thompson, February 20, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 7, Folder 6, Callaway Papers; Barlow Autry to Fletcher Thompson, February 24, 1969 in Series 3, Box 82, Folder – Nixon Administration, S. Fletcher Thompson Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

choice” during the campaign, and southern Republicans remained determined that he “meet the commitments pledged” as president. Inundated with correspondence opposing the Nixon White House’s commitment to the Johnson administration’s integration guidelines, Nixon met with John Mitchell and Robert Finch in mid-March to discuss potential alternatives. In the meantime, however, press coverage of the GOP’s declining approval in the South only intensified throughout the spring and summer of 1969 as individual Republicans and organizations began airing publicly their grievances with the White House in a bid to hasten a new approach.<sup>45</sup>

Looming deadlines lent a sense of urgency to the matter. On May 19, Georgia state party chairman G. Paul Jones composed a memo regarding federal court orders governing four county school systems in the state. Jones claimed local Republicans had begged him inquire whether or not the U.S. Justice Department could “withdraw and drop the case.” Both Jones and school officials clung to the hope that freedom-of-choice plans could be modified to comply with the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Green*. Jones invoked partisan politics more explicitly in an accompanying memo. Describing the “chaotic condition in the Washington County schools” and an “untenable political situation in Georgia,” Jones informed Harry Dent, “It is quite important that this thing be reversed.” The Georgia Republican leader continued, “We have been given assurances by some very wealthy individuals who are in a position to contribute substantially to the Republican Party that...there will be little financial worry for the Republican Party in Georgia if the school situation in Washington County can be worked out.” Such a proposition

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<sup>45</sup> Howard H. Callaway to John Mitchell, March 7, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 8, Folder 1, Callaway Papers; McAndrews, “The Politics of Principle,” 189; E. W. Kenworthy, “Nixon and the South: Many Democratic Defectors to G.O.P. Now Complaining About President’s Actions,” *New York Times*, March 24, 1969, p. 27; Bill Shipp, “GOP to Replace HEW’s Page Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 7, 1969, p. 1, 7; Resolution of the First Congressional District Republican Committee, May 30, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 7, Folder 6, Callaway Papers.

must have seemed incredibly enticing to someone like Jones who had grappled with shaky finances and anemic fundraising endeavors since taking over as state party chairman in 1965.<sup>46</sup>

Dent forwarded Jones' memo to L. Patrick Gray, Executive Assistant to HEW secretary Robert Finch requesting that, if possible, Attorney General John Mitchell "please delay the appeal of these cases until an overall policy on school desegregation can be completed." He added, "The Georgia people say this is vital to them." Indeed, Harry Dent remained one of the most dogged impediments to the swift desegregation of public schools in Georgia and across the South during his time in the Nixon White House. By July 1969, Dent had been promoted as Nixon's chief political liaison. By late summer, historian Joe Crespino has argued persuasively, White House conservatives such as Mitchell and Dent had overtaken the more moderate Robert Finch on the southern school situation.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to public education, race-infused issues like the tax-exempt status of private schools and the possible proliferation of federally subsidized, low-income housing weighed heavily on the minds of Georgia Republicans. Ironically, the individual at the center of the controversy surrounding the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) proposal to strip private schools failing to comply with integration mandates of their federal tax-exempt designation was none other than Atlanta Republican Randolph Thrower. Nixon had nominated Thrower, a highly regarded tax attorney, to lead the IRS in early 1969. That Thrower had been a top Atlanta faction leader during the 1950s and early 1960s earned him little goodwill with his former Republican

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<sup>46</sup> G. Paul Jones, Jr. and Harry Dent (re: Decatur, Webster, Screven, and Crisp counties), May 19, 1969; G. Paul Jones, Jr. to Harry Dent (re: Washington County), May 19, 1969 in White House Files Series, Box 3, Folder 17, Harry S. Dent Papers, Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University, Clemson, SC.

<sup>47</sup>; Memorandum for the Attorney General, May 22, 1969 all in White House Files Series, Box 3, Folder 17, Dent Papers; Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 54-55; Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 231-232.



colleagues when the IRS began writing new policies clamping down on racial discrimination in private school admissions.<sup>48</sup>

The partisan political implications of Thrower's policies were clear to both the White House and the Georgia Republican Party. Writing to presidential counselors Bryce Harlow and Egil (Bud) Krogh, Harry Dent fingered Thrower as "one of the prime movers" in altering the tax code. "[W]hile Randy Thrower is from Atlanta, Georgia," he noted, "He is known as a very liberal Southerner." Dent also warned the fallout from the private school situation would be "all the hay Georgie Porgy would need for 1970 and 1972." Fletcher Thompson and Ben Blackburn also lambasted the proposed tax revisions. When reporters Bill Shipp and Bob Hurt erroneously linked Thrower to Fletcher Thompson's 1968 congressional campaign, Richard Ashworth, Thompson's aide, corrected Shipp in a sternly worded rejoinder. Thrower had served no role in the campaign. Moreover, Thompson "did not recommend Thrower" for the IRS post. Ashworth offered, "[W]e expect it originated with the old liberal [Robert] Snodgrass faction of the party." Although the Nixon administration would eventually rein in the use of federal tax code to compel racial equality in private education, Thrower's role in crafting and promoting the controversial policy had not only angered his former Republican colleagues but also weakened the party's standing in Georgia among the state's conservative electorate.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Remer Tyson, "Thrower Is Choice For Top U.S. Tax Post," *Atlanta Constitution*, p. 1, 5; "Thrower Sworn as IRS Chief," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 3, 1969, p. 35; "Eileen Shanahan, 'IRS to Curb Private Pupil Tax Freedom,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1; Kruse, *White Flight*, 169-179.

<sup>49</sup> Harry Dent to Bryce Harlow and Bud Krogh, December 10, 1969 in White House Files Series, Box 3, Folder 17, Dent Papers; Richard A. Ashworth to Bill Shipp, July 24, 1970 in Series 1, Box 26, Folder – S-1970, Thompson Papers; G. Paul Jones to Editor, *Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 6, Callaway Papers; Bill Shipp and Bob Hurt, "Southern GOPs Call Off Integration Policy Talk," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 24, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1, 20; Bill Shipp and Bob Hurt, "IRS Ruling Inept, Thompson Charges," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1, 20; Kruse, *White Flight*, 169-179; Harry S. Dent, Memorandum for The President, July 21, 1970 in White House Files Series, Box 7, Folder 1, Dent Papers. Randolph Thrower resigned as IRS commissioner on January 26, 1971 citing personal reasons and a desire to allow the president to make midterm changes. In reality, Thrower quit after White House officials pressured him to audit the tax returns for political purposes. See, Duane Riner, "Thrower Resigns As Revenue Chief," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 27, 1971, Sec. A,

Republicans across the South raised a similar furor over Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) proposals to expand integrated public housing in suburban communities around the country. HUD pushed to integrate not only federal housing developments but also middle-class white neighborhoods by constructing affordable, government-subsidized homes. Recognizing that fairer housing policies would almost certainly have negative implications in the South, Harry Dent recommended the president meet with southern Republican leaders to mend political fences in the region. The White House convened an “off-the-record” summit on August 6, and Georgia Republicans Fletcher Thompson and Ben Blackburn proved two of the most vocal critics in attendance. Thompson, whose 1966 congressional campaign had denounced federal open-housing legislation as an existential threat to “real estate as an investment,” worried about the economic impact of erecting low-cost and public housing “in the midst of \$35,000 and \$75,000 homes.” Blackburn was also an avowed critic of suburban integration. “Suburbanites have invested their lives in their houses and they don’t want to see them ruined,” Blackburn asserted. Although both Republican congressmen generally employed the “colorblind language” of economic rights and personal freedom while inveighing against low-income housing and other civil rights programs, racial politics remained front and center. “[W]e in the South are motivated by race,” Fletcher Thompson stated bluntly during the White House summit. Ultimately, these complex socioeconomic and racial issues remained politically salient as Nixon pursued a confusing “zig-zag” approach to civil rights that pleased few but deflected the political costs onto the president’s aides and appointees.<sup>50</sup>

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p. 1, 8 and Paul Vitello, “R.W. Thrower Dies at 100; Ran I.R.S. Under Nixon,” *New York Times*, March 18, 2014, Sec. B, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> Harry S. Dent, Memorandum for the President, n.d.; Harry S. Dent, Memorandum for the President, [August 6 or 7? 1970] both in White House Files Series, Box 7, Folder 1, Dent Papers; R.E.P.W.H.H.E.O.W. [Real Estate People Who Have Had Enough of Weltner], September 5, 1966 in Subject File, Box 20, Folder 7, Charles Longstreet Weltner Papers, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA; Kruse, *White Flight*, 252-253; Chris Bonastia, “Why Did Affirmative Action in Housing Fail during the Nixon Era? Exploring the ‘Institutional Homes’

At the same time, the Georgia GOP grappled with a transfer of power as state party chairman prepared to step down. Jones had informed Bo Callaway and Florence Cauble at the end of April that he had neglected his family and professional responsibilities for too long. Jones then called a special meeting of the state central committee for May 15 to elect his successor. Attempting to smooth the transition, Jones appointed Frank Troutman to lead a nominating committee to narrow the field of candidates. Although Jones foreswore any desire “to restrict the activities of the Committee or exert undue influence,” he nonetheless suggested Wiley A. Wasden, Jr. of Savannah to succeed him. “In my opinion, no one is better qualified than Wiley to direct the affairs of the Party at this time,” Jones confided to Troutman. Citing his campaign experience, willingness to serve, and ability to devote the time, Jones placed Wasden’s name into consideration. A prosperous, 33-year-old investment adviser, Wasden had helped the party meet its financial obligations becoming politically active in 1964. According to political scientist Robert J. Huckshorn, a willingness to grant and loan personal funds was among the most important factors underdeveloped parties like the Georgia GOP considered when filling top leadership posts during this time. Like Bo Callaway and G. Paul Jones, Wasden fit the profile.<sup>51</sup>

His wealth and Jones’ endorsement ensured Wasden’s frontrunner status. The names of other prominent Republicans like Dillard Munford and Nolan Murrah were floated, but neither entered the race. Instead, DeKalb County state representative Joe Higginbotham and Gene

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of Social Policies,” *Social Problems* 47, no. 4 (November 2000), 523-524; Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP*, 186-187; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 306-308; Dent, Memorandum for the President, July 21, 1970 in White House Files Series, Box 7, Folder 1, Dent Papers; Chris Bonastia, “Hedging His Bets: Why Nixon Killed HUD’s Desegregation Efforts,” *Social Science History* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 19-20. For the most thorough treatment of federal suburban housing policy during this period see, Christopher Bonastia, *Knocking on the Door: The Federal Government’s Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>51</sup> G. Paul Jones to Frank Troutman, April 30, 1969; G. Paul Jones to Howard H. Callaway and Florence Cauble, April 30, 1969 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 5, Callaway Papers; Achsah Smith, “GOP State Chairman To Step Down in June,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 3, 1969, p. 1, 10; Robert J. Huckshorn, *Party Leadership in the States* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 51.

Miller, a Columbus car dealer, challenged Wasden. Higginbotham had the DeKalb Republican machine's backing while Miller boasted an endorsement from Florence Cauble. According to an unnamed source, Frank Troutman's committee deadlocked on nominating a candidate until Jones broke the tie in Wasden's favor. Although Higginbotham and Miller's supporters argued a political unknown like Wasden could not lead the Georgia Republican Party, both men withdrew before the full state central committee had an opportunity to vote. Thus, Jones had succeeded in elevating his hand-picked successor, but Wasden proved less adept than the outgoing chairman at managing intraparty rivalries and defusing factional squabbles.<sup>52</sup>

Wiley Wasden outlined an ambitious plan to "destroy the Democrats in 1970" in his first speech as state party chairman. "My main objectives will be to put the party on a businesslike basis and revamp and reopen the lines of communication from the state organization in Georgia," Wasden told the state central committee. He also insisted the party needed to expand its electoral appeal and reach the point where rural voters "will not be afraid to go into the polling place and ask for a Republican ballot." Wasden also pledged to meet Republican leaders in every congressional district, and he also proposed a series of workshops—titled appropriately, "Giant Steps"—to educate party members on the basics of organizing winning political campaigns. The party conducted these workshops in Marietta, Augusta, Albany, Atlanta, Savannah, and Macon between October and November 1969 to prepare for the upcoming 1970 election.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Achsah Smith, "GOP Will Name Chairman Today," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1969, p. 20; Charles Pou, "Wasden Support Increases in GOP," *Atlanta Journal*, May 15, 1969, Sec. A, p. 1, 10; Achsah Smith, "Wasden Heads Georgia's GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 16, 1969, p. 1, 8; Charles Pou, "Georgia Republican Party Names Wasden Chairman," *Atlanta Journal*, May 16, 1969, Sec. A, p. 17; Bob Cohn, "2 Oppose Wasden For GOP Position," *Savannah Morning News*, Sec. A, p. 1, 2; Bob Cohn, "Local Republican Named Party Leader," *Savannah Morning News*, May 16, 1969, Sec. A, p. 1, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Bill Douthat, "Wasden Won't Pull Punch In Battling for State GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 8, 1969, Sec. A, p. 6; David R. Lawson, "Wasden Airs Objectives," *Savannah Evening Press*, May 16, 1969, Sec. A, p. 1, 2 (quote on 1); Minutes of the Republican Party of Georgia State Executive Committee Meeting, Howard Johnson's South [Atlanta, GA], June 29, 1969; "Giant Steps Workshop Series," [1969] both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 5, Callaway Papers.

Past historical treatments have tended to view the 1970 elections through the lens of Richard Nixon's notorious "Southern Strategy." Kevin Phillips, a Republican strategist and former aide to Attorney General John Mitchell, published *The Emerging Republican Majority* in 1969. Speaking to journalist Garry Wills in 1968, Phillips had asserted bluntly, "[T]he whole secret to politics [is] knowing who hates who." *The Emerging Republican Majority* expounded on this premise by encouraging Republicans to stoke white racial resentment against African Americans and other minority groups for political gain.<sup>54</sup>

Inside the Nixon White House, Harry Dent outlined the administration's response. "We should disavow Phillips' book as party policy," he insisted in a presidential brief, "On the other hand, we must realize the old political loyalties have been dissolved by the racial situation and that we have an unprecedented opportunity to garner [white] votes in large blocks." Dent, like Phillips, counseled Republicans to foment and exploit a conservative white backlash to perceived lawlessness, cultural decay, social welfare, and so-called social engineering projects like forced busing, affirmative action, and open housing. Issues like these had proved salient in past elections, but the Southern Strategy avoided the obvious pitfalls of blatant demagoguery and race-baiting. Practitioners instead utilized coded language and "colorblind" policies stressing fundamental rights such as "the sanctity of individual freedom, the evils of centralism, and the importance of efficient fiscally sound government." Perhaps the October 1969 Atlanta mayoral election should have chastened Southern Strategy proponents, but the localized, nonpartisan nature of the race led the White House to discount Republican Rodney Cook's surprising loss to

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<sup>54</sup> James Boyd, "Nixon's Southern strategy 'It's All In the Charts,'" *New York Times*, May 17, 1970, p. 215; Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, esp. 187-289.

Democrat Sam Massell. Perhaps the progressive Cook's inability to carry more than a modicum of the African-American vote even reinforced the arguments proffered by Phillips and Dent.<sup>55</sup>

Historian Matthew Lassiter has argued the Southern Strategy enabled moderate "New South" Democrats "who rejected the divisive racial politics of the past, championed the principle of color-blind nondiscrimination, endorsed compliance with court-ordered desegregation, and projected a regional future of interracial progress" to run successful, centrist campaigns in 1970 and write "the epigraph for open-race baiting in the political culture of the New South." Building on Lassiter's earlier effort, Tim Boyd has examined that year's Republican gubernatorial primary contest between Jimmy Bentley and Hal Suit. Dismissing it as merely a way-station on the party's long road from political ignominy to dominance, Boyd also concluded the campaign provided a cautionary tale for politicians who appealed to the electorate's lowest common denominator. Differences in style, tone, and strategy between the candidates, however, tell only part of a more complex tale that underscored the political diversity that flourished within the Georgia GOP as well as the lingering impediments to Republican success. Indeed, that race served as a political proxy war in the ongoing battle among the state party's competing personalities and rival factions.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Harry S. Dent to the President, October 13, 1969 in White House Files Series, Box 2, Folder 6, Dent Papers; Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man* (Boston and New York: Mariner, 2002 [1969]), 256; Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 4; Mason, *The Republican Party and America*, 223; Richard Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Real Majority: The Classic Examination of the American Electorate* (New York: Primus, 1992), 269-272; Kruse, *White Flight*, 235-236; Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 276; Harry S. Dent to the President, October 22, 1969 and Ed Sexton to Dick Richards, October 24, 1969 both in White House Files Series, Box 1, Folder 22, Dent Papers. For recent works detailing the Southern Strategy's supposed inadequacies see, Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 3-6, Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 236-245; Boyd, "The 1966 Election in Georgia," 306.

<sup>56</sup> Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 251; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 92; Boyd, *Georgia Democrats*, esp. 181-208. See also, Randy Sanders, "'The Sad Duty of Politics': Jimmy Carter and the Issue of Race in His 1970 Gubernatorial Campaign," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Fall 1992), 612-638 and *Mighty Peculiar Elections: The New South Gubernatorial Campaigns of 1970 and the Changing Politics of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

The primary got off to an early start in the spring of 1969 when Comptroller General Jimmy Bentley began meeting with Republican groups across the state. State Senate Minority Leader Oliver Bateman of Macon, meanwhile, began testing the political waters later that fall. After receiving a letter from Bateman seeking his advice, Bo Callaway suggested he and Bentley reach an agreement for one to seek the governor's mansion while the other ran for reelection to his current post. Another party leader, Gene Miller of Columbus, asked Bateman to consider the sacrifices involved in waging a statewide campaign. Above all, Miller warned the Macon legislator against launching a campaign simply "because certain of the Party's leaders are romancing you down the primrose path to block others...and to further their individual political aims." Both Bateman and the Georgia Republican Party, Miller insisted, had too much to lose.<sup>57</sup>

Jimmy Bentley also solicited advice from Republican grandees, but he galled many Republicans in the state by claiming to enjoy the active support of Bo Callaway, Richard Nixon, and the Republican National Committee. Former state party chairman G. Paul Jones, who backed Oliver Bateman, contacted RNC chairman Rogers C.B. Morton complaining about Bentley. Jones fretted that Bentley was "putting the [Nixon] Administration and prominent Republicans in an awkward position." Seeking to allay Jones' fears, Morton suggested an "eager beaver" aide to Bentley had probably concocted the story "to be provocative and draw comment from Republican leaders, such as yourself, in Georgia." If that was the Bentley campaign's goal, then Jones did not disappoint. The former state party chairman blasted the Comptroller General for making unverifiable claims that were "rather disconcerting and even somewhat embarrassing."

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<sup>57</sup> Gene Miller to Oliver Bateman, October 7, 1969 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 6, Folder 7, Callaway Papers; Margaret Hurst, "3 Go Politicking Early in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1969, p. 1, 16; Reg Murphy, "Governor's Race Begins Shaping," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 2, 1969, p. 4; Bill Shipp, "Politics: Bentley Is Running—and Hard," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1969, Sec. A, p. 14; Oliver Bateman to the Honorable and Mrs. Howard H. "BO" Callaway, September 26, 1969 and Bo Callaway to Oliver Bateman, October 15, 1969 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 6, Folder 7, Callaway Papers.

He continued, "This may be accepted and expected procedure in the Democrat party," but Jones assured Bentley that maneuver would backfire and hurt his candidacy. Jimmy Bentley responded saying the criticism only confirmed his status as frontrunner.<sup>58</sup>

Wiley Wasden finally intervened and requested that all party officials "maintain a neutral role so the election can be carried on efficiently." Georgia Republicans honored the directive through the fall and winter, but Bo Callaway broke ranks by endorsing Jimmy Bentley in a mid-March 1970 press conference. "I support Jimmy Bentley without reservation," Callaway announced, "I am confident that he has the energy and ability to run an outstanding campaign." The Republican national committeeman had decided to make his support official after WSB-TV newscaster Hal Suit entered the race. The party, Callaway maintained, needed to unite behind Bentley rather than running a potentially destructive primary. Hal Suit declared in response, "Callaway's action will draw the battle line, and there's nothing I like better than a good, clean fight." Others also denounced the Callaway endorsement. Oliver Bateman likened the move to "horsetrading." At least two county Republican organizations from Middle Georgia passed resolutions censuring Callaway. Rank-and-file Republicans were resentful not only of Bentley's ill-considered statements, but they also chafed at Callaway's effort to anoint an up-jumped newcomer over Republicans of longstanding.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> G. Paul Jones to Rogers C.B. Morton, November 7, 1969 and Rogers C.B. Morton to G. Paul Jones, November 18, 1969 both in Republican National Committee Series, Box 191, Folder 7, Rogers C.B. Morton Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY; Jones quoted in Charles Pou, "Jones Raps Bentley On GOP Support," *Atlanta Journal*, November 18, 1969 in Series 3, Box 9, Folder 8, John J. Flynt Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Selby McCash, "Several GOP Leaders Lining Up With Bentley," *Macon Telegraph and News*, October 26, 1969, Sec. A, p. 5; Bill Shipp, "Bentley May Ask Nixon Help in Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1969, Sec. A, p. 16; Selby McCash, "Bentley on the Defensive After 'Crisis a Minute,'" *Macon Telegraph and News*, November 23, 1969, sec. A, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Achsah Smith, "Bentley Blasted By Jones," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1969, Sec. A, p. 1, 13 (quote on 1); Bo Callaway to J. Bruce Haddock, March 18, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 3, Folder 3, Callaway Papers; Charles Pou and Hugh Merrill, "Callaway Will Stay Out, Support Bentley's Race," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 15, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1, 18; Resolutions Adopted at Houston County Republican Convention,



Unable to marshal the financial resources and political capital necessary to compete in a rough-and-tumble primary, Oliver Bateman withdrew. Fulton County Superior Court judge Jephtha Tanksley eventually entered the race, but the primary proved a divisive contest between Bentley and Suit. With the exception of Bo Callaway and Atlanta-area state Senator E. Earl Patton, who served as Bentley's campaign chairman, most Georgia Republicans declined to support the party-switching Bentley. Instead, most opted to support a candidate whose Republican pedigree dated further back than 1968.<sup>60</sup>

The bulk of Republican leaders in Georgia eventually lined up behind Hal Suit, a moderate transplant from Ohio who embodied the party's core constituency. Oliver Bateman headlined an endorsement luncheon for Suit during the primary campaign. Congressman Fletcher Thompson backed Suit. G. Paul Jones, a close friend and supporter of Bateman's, endorsed the WSB-TV newsman. Highlighting Suit's "integrity and sincerity," Jones affirmed, "I am tired of losing—and you are too. Join us in nominating Hal Suit—a Republican who can win!" Bill Dowda, Fifth District Republican chairman, admitted that he had cheered Jimmy Bentley's defection but had soured on him since. Bentley, Dowda declared, represented the "old faction of the Democratic Party" while Suit had proven to be "conservative without being reactionary [and] progressive without being liberal." The Republican Party of Georgia had embraced Hal Suit, and his support cut across ideological lines.<sup>61</sup>

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March 21, 1970 and Peach County Republican Convention Resolutions, Peach County Court House, March 21, 1970 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 3, Folder 2, Callaway Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Leon W. Lindsay, "All-out gubernatorial primary stirs Georgia GOP," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 13, 1970, p. 4; Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 193; E. Earl Patton Jr. to Howard H. "Bo" Callaway, July 2, 1970 and "State Senator Earl Patton Becomes State Chairman of Bentley for Governor Campaign," *Friends for Bentley Newsletter*, July 5, 1970 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 2, Folder 4, Callaway Papers; Mike Bowler, "Pressure In GOP Charged," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 21, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> G. Paul Jones, Jr. to Howard H. Callaway, September 1, 1970, Series II, Subseries B, Box 6, Folder 5, Howard H. Callaway Papers; Duane Riner, "Dowda Backs Suit Candidacy," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 5, 1970, Sec. A, p. 12; Steve Ball Jr., "Suit's On-Off Supporters Finish Up Strongly 'On,'" *Atlanta Journal*, June 6, 1970 in Series 7, Box 5, Folder 8, Flynt Papers; "Stirring Issues Lacking in Georgia Gubernatorial Race," *Washington Post*,

Although winning control of the U.S. Senate remained the Nixon administration's top priority, Harry Dent also kept tabs on the gubernatorial race in Georgia. One of Dent's top deputies, Tom Lias, apprised Dent of the divisive Bentley-Suit contest. Like most political observers, he rated Bentley as the odds-on favorite to win the Georgia GOP's nomination for governor. Even if he won the primary, though, Lias argued Bentley stood little chance of defeating his Democratic opponent in the general election. The race, therefore, failed to garner much attention outside of Georgia. Nevertheless, its outcome had significant consequences in Georgia where state Republicans had placed their reputations on the line.<sup>62</sup>

Jimmy Bentley and Hal Suit ran wildly divergent campaigns over the course of the summer. Bentley, a former segregationist Democrat, emulated George Wallace in an effort to woo conservative white voters into the Republican primary. He stressed his opposition to compulsory busing throughout the campaign in a series of racially charged advertisements. One print ad showed the front-end of a school bus flanked on either side by headshots of the president and vice president. The caption read, in all caps, "Here's your only chance to tell Nixon and Spiro to stop it. Trust Jimmy Bentley." Additionally a pro-Bentley television spot featured a school bus cruising down the road while a voiceover intoned, "Last year this [bus] went to only one neighborhood. This year it will go to two." No African Americans ever appeared in any of these campaign pieces, but Bentley's advertising appealed nonetheless to white racial fears.<sup>63</sup>

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September 4, 1970, sec. A, p. 2; Seagull, *Southern Republicanism*, 100; Hal Gulliver, "When Is Darkhorse Not a Darkhorse? Or, the Republican Question Is, Will Hal Suit?" *Atlanta Magazine*, June 1970, p. 36; "Bidding for Majority Status," *Ripon Forum*, July-August 1970, 38-39.

<sup>62</sup> Harry Dent to Herb Klein, Ron Ziegler, Jerry Warren, and Jeb Magruder, April 21, 1970 in Republican National Committee Series, Box 260, Folder 8, Rogers C.B. Morton Papers; Tom Lias to Harry Dent, April 29, 1970 in White House Files Series, Box 4, Folder 38, Dent Papers.

<sup>63</sup> Bentley for Governor advertisement in *Ripon Forum* 6, no. 11 (November 1970), 8; Steve Ball, Jr., "Bentley Tried Hard With a Little Help," *Atlanta Journal*, July 27, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 13; Cohn, "Gubernatorial Trio Shifts to the Right," p. 1, 9; Boyd, "The Ambiguity of the White Backlash," 337; Lamis, *The Two Party South*, 96-97; Bill Shipp, "Bentley Takes Turn to the Right; Sees 50-50 Chance to Win," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 15, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 10; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 91; Randy Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections*, 166.

Hal Suit, meanwhile, represented the more moderate alternative in the Republican race. Unlike the career politician Bentley, Suit cast himself as a “concerned citizen” who pledged to run government in a commonsense, business-like manner. He labeled Bentley a “fraud” for proposing “miracle” solutions to busing and desegregation. The former newsman, on the other hand, insisted Congress and the courts should provide clear guidance on those complicated issues to ensure a peaceful and orderly society. Some of Suit’s positions—such as his support for a three-day waiting period for handgun purchases, off-track gaming, and government-subsidized, scatter-site housing in white-majority suburban counties—were shockingly progressive for a Georgia politician in 1970. Such moderate stances encouraged the Bentley campaign to label Suit—not inaccurately—to the “left of the Democratic candidate[s].”<sup>64</sup>

Ultimately, few Georgia Republicans denied Jimmy Bentley possessed the energy and experience to govern the state, but many party members, especially those in the cities and suburbs, worried his abrasive tone threatened the state’s—as well as their party’s—image and reputation. While metropolitan and chamber-of-commerce Republicans could support a principled conservative, many worried Bentley might just be bad for business. On the flipside, Hal Suit tended to deliver anodyne and analytical speeches devoted to complex issues like streamlining the government bureaucracy. The 1970 Republican gubernatorial campaign, therefore, showcased candidates who differed as much in style as they did in substance.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Bill Shipp, “Hal Suit’s Television Style Helping in Governor’s Race,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 18, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 24; Phil Garner, “Hal Suit Greeted: ‘Hello, Mr. Sanders,’” *Atlanta Journal*, July 20, 1970, sec. A, p. 2; Mike Christiansen, “Suit: No Instant Answers on School Desegregation,” *Athens Banner-Herald*, August 19, 1970, p. 1; Gene Stephens, “Republican Hopefuls Step Up Handshaking,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 8, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 16; Duane Riner, “Carter Backs Down on Ouster of Harris,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 22, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 18. See, Gene Stephens, “Suit Proposes New Towns,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 21, 1970, sec. A, p. 14; Steve Ball, Jr., “Bentley Tried Hard With a Little Help,” *Atlanta Journal*, July 27, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 13.

<sup>65</sup> James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1973 [1983]), 365; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 3-5; James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Economic Development, 1936-1990*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 122, 150.

The primary proved an unmitigated disaster for Jimmy Bentley who lost badly to newcomer Hal Suit. Bentley's campaign's operating premise that conservative, white Democrats would embrace a Republican who opposed forced-busing decrees, demanded law and order, and espoused "traditional" cultural values bears some responsibility for the loss. Many of these particular voters may have supported Bentley in a general election, but they failed to materialize in the GOP primary. Without Democratic crossovers, Bentley had to contend with a Republican electorate that accentuated Hal Suit's strengths and mitigated his own. Few Georgians identified openly as Republicans in 1970, and most still participated in the Democratic primary. That term-limited Lester Maddox was seeking the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor hurt Bentley's chances still further. Maddox's loyal following of conservative, white voters would have to pull a Democratic ballot—not a Republican one—to support him at the polls. Apart from Maddox were dozens of Democrats seeking legislative seats, county posts, and local offices. Bentley and his team miscalculated how important these down-ballot races were to men and women accustomed to voting straight-ticket Democratic beneath the presidential level, and the mistake proved crippling.<sup>66</sup>

The remaining pool of Republican primary voters skewed suburban, moderate, and affluent. From the outset, Jimmy Bentley's anemic levels of financial and political support in the Atlanta area had worried top advisors like Bo Callaway. To overcome Suit's metropolitan firewall, Bentley needed to rack up huge margins in white, rural and working-class precincts across the state. When that groundswell did not materialize, Bentley practically ceded the nomination to Hal Suit. Only thirteen counties cast more than 1,000 Republican ballots, ninety-nine cast fewer than 200, and only *one* person voted Republican in rural Quitman County. As a result, Suit routed Bentley in the Republican primary. Although Bentley carried 108 of Georgia's

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<sup>66</sup> Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 176.

159 counties, his showing netted him only 37.4 percent of vote. Suit, meanwhile, garnered approximately 58.5 percent. Particularly notable was the newscaster's critical 11,000-vote margin of victory in the anti-Callaway stronghold of DeKalb County. In Fulton County, where Fletcher Thompson enjoyed outsized influence, Suit bested Bentley by almost 10,000 votes. Exacting a modicum of revenge on behalf of Oliver Bateman and G. Paul Jones, Suit carried Bibb County with almost 59 percent of the vote on his way to nomination.<sup>67</sup>

The Ripon Society, a liberal Republican think tank, applauded Georgia Republicans for rejecting Bentley's racially antagonistic campaign and hailed Suit's victory as a blow to the party's conservative wing. Jimmy Bentley admitted he had proven "a bit too anxious to run a general election campaign" and "a bit over-enthusiastic about our primary support." More than anything, however, he blamed the "kamikaze politics" of top Georgia Republican leaders. "It is a shocking sort of thing not only to see your career ended," he moaned in a lengthy, postelection interview, "but to see this party I joined in good faith just decimate itself" surprised even a seasoned politician like Bentley. A year later he confessed joining the Georgia Republican Party was a mistake. Bentley's defeat, though, cannot be blamed on a single issue but, rather, several interrelated factors that would continue to bedevil the Republican Party as it attempted to compete consistently for elective office and establish a viable two-party system in Georgia.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Howard H. Callaway to Mrs. L.T. (Clara) McVey, September 2, 1970 and Howard H. Callaway to Robert Hamilton, September 2, 1970; Murphy and Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy*, 176; Gene Anderson to Bo Callaway, August 25, 1970 all in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 6, Folder 5, Callaway Papers; Terry Moshier to Bo Callaway, June 25, 1970, in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 2, Folder 5, Callaway Papers; Alfred C. Warrington IV to Jimmy Bentley, September 10, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 2, Folder 2, Callaway Papers; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1969-1970*, 1669-1671; Bernd, "Georgia," 355-356; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 92.

<sup>68</sup> Gene Stephens, "Bentley Explains Defeat," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 8, 1970, Sec. B, p. 16; Bill Shipp, "Bitter Loser of the Big Race," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, January 3, 1971, sec. A, p. 6, 12; James Lynwood Bentley, Jr., interview by Hugh Cates., February 18, 1971, interview OH-110, transcript, Richard B. Russell Oral History Project, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, Athens, GA. "Bentley Blasts GOP, Promises Allegiance," *Augusta Chronicle*, August 14, 1971, p. 13; "GEORGIA: Victory for a Moderate GOP?" *Ripon Forum*, November 1970, p. 8; Bill Shipp, "Nixon Aide Offers to Help Bentley," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 11, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 22.

In any event, Bentley's loss proved a boon to Georgia Democrats. With Jimmy Bentley out of the running, Democratic nominee Jimmy Carter no longer needed to risk alienating critical African-American voters in a bid to win white conservatives. He attacked Hal Suit's moderate positions on capital punishment, gambling, and gun control. He also distanced himself from controversial supporters like Roy Harris since the specter of Bentley no longer loomed in the race. Ultimately, Jimmy Carter's trend toward moderation culminated in his surprising inaugural address declaring "the time for racial discrimination is over." Nevertheless, Hal Suit eased his Democratic opponent's transition to the political center by refusing to appeal explicitly to white conservatives who may have harbored second thoughts about the Democrat. Both Carter and Suit expressed almost identical positions of public education: both favored freedom of choice, opposed compulsory busing, but neither, in Suit's words, advocated "turning back the clock."<sup>69</sup>

Had Suit utilized a conservative Southern Strategy of his own in the general election, he may have compelled Carter to continue on the controversial, racially tinged tack he had charted during the Democratic primary campaign against former governor Carl Sanders. Bo Callaway, who endorsed Suit following the Republican primary, deemed the GOP nominee's campaign weak outside the Republican-friendly Atlanta metropolitan area. Writing to Terry Moshier, past chairman of the Georgia Young Republican Clubs, Callaway warned that Jimmy Carter would steamroll Suit on Election Day unless the Republican could win over rural whites there in South

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<sup>69</sup> Jimmy Carter, "Inaugural Address," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, [http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/inaugural\\_address.pdf](http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/inaugural_address.pdf) (accessed October 25, 2010); E. Stanly Godbold, *Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter: The Georgia Years, 1924-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 160-161; "The Nation: A New Day A'Coming," *Time*, May 31, 1971; "Nine Questions for Carter, Suit," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, November 1, 1970, sec. A, p. 6; "Carter Riot Stand," *Atlanta Journal*, October 26, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 4; Harry Murphy, "Suit, Carter Declare Harris on Way Out," *Atlanta Journal*, October 16, 1970, sec. A, p. 2; Boyd, "The Ambiguity of the White Backlash," 338; "Roy Harris Laughs At Carter and Suit," *Savannah Morning News*, October 17, 1970, p. 2; Robbi Blanton, "Hopefuls Vie for Support," *Red and Black*, 20 October 1970, p. 1; Duane Riner, "Carter Backs Down on Ouster of Harris," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 22, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 18. See also, Harry Murphy, "Harris In or Out? Carter Won't Say," *Atlanta Journal*, October 27, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 4; Bill Shipp, "School Desegregation Has Failed, Suit Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 21, 1970, sec. A, p. 1, 20; "Platform: Jimmy Carter for Governor, 1970, Jimmy Carter Vertical File, The Georgia Room, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Georgia. Suit's lagging support in the southern portion of the state led Callaway to propose a bold course of action. "The plan, if pursued energetically enough, could be successful and should not cost any city and North Georgia votes," Callaway maintained. Callaway never revealed the plan's specifics, but it is obvious he had urged Suit to employ a "South Georgia Strategy" to erode Carter's base of support among conservative, rural whites. If Suit held his urban and suburban base and polled respectably elsewhere, he would have a fighting chance. Ultimately, Suit passed on several "opportunities to take the easy road of political expediency." His high-road strategy, however, led only to defeat. Suit managed to prevail in metropolitan Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton counties, but Jimmy Carter swept rural Middle and South Georgia in a landslide 61-39 percent victory. In addition to Suit, the party's candidate for lieutenant governor as well as seven incumbent state legislators went down in defeat in a particularly grim election for the Georgia GOP. Running well, even extremely well, in Republican-leaning metro counties remained insufficient to secure an electoral breakthrough for the GOP in Georgia.<sup>70</sup>

State party chairman Wiley Wasden was among the few Republican Party leaders to confront the party's organizational shortcomings head on in the wake of the 1970 debacle. Speaking at a press conference in Atlanta, "We didn't turn out the Republican vote," he admitted, "Our organizations did not function properly and we lost because of it." Recognizing the limitations of top-down party building, Wasden pledged to "rebuild the party structure" from

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<sup>70</sup> Bo Callaway to Hal Suit, September 17, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 8, Folder 6; Bo Callaway to Terry Moshier, October 15, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 2, Folder 2; Bo Callaway to Hal Suit, October 19, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 8, Folder 6; Hal Suit to Howard "Bo" Callaway, November 7, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 8, Folder 6 all in Callaway Papers; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1969-1970*, 1752-1753; Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 99; Reg Murphy, "Republican Strategy Fails in Dixie," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1970, Sec. A, p. 17; *Georgia's Official and Statistical Register, 1969-1970*, 1765-1766.

grassroots up. The centerpiece of his proposal was a two-year program designed by a professional political consultant familiar with the inner-workings of the modern GOP.<sup>71</sup>

Ray Humphreys, a former top Republican National Committee staffer, pitched the Georgia state central committee a three-part plan. The first, structure and organization, focused on identifying, training, and motivating party personnel. The second concentrated on candidate recruitment at all levels while the third created a permanent, state-level research and development organization to craft Republican policy proposals. Humphreys stressed to the committee, “This undertaking, by far the most comprehensive I have ever suggested in the state level, would be my most ambitious one.” Some Georgia Republican leaders claimed Humphrey’s plan had been tried before while Hal Suit maintained the party’s fundamentals were sound. Newt Gingrich, a West Georgia College history professor, insisted the party rank-and-file simply lacked motivation. Hiring a professional, outside consultant made sense to Al Warrington “because this group cannot get the job done or it would have done so already.” After considerable debate, the state party’s executive committee agreed unanimously to consider Humphrey’s proposal before recessing for the holidays.<sup>72</sup>

Wasden reconvened the meeting on January 8, 1971 and introduced Ray Humphreys who discussed his proposal at length before taking questions and comments. Republicans assailed Humphrey’s proposal from the outset. William Dowda, Fifth District chairman, contended the plan would not “convert anyone in Georgia who is not already involved.” Wilbur Owens questioned how the consultant had arrived at his proposed \$25,000 fee—a considerable sum for the perennially cash-strapped party. Footz Quinn, a close friend of Bo Callaway, argued the

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<sup>71</sup> UPI, “Wasden Sees ‘Paper Tigers’ in State GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1970, Sec. D, p. 14; Wiley A. Wasden, Jr. to Officers of the State of Georgia Republican Party, December 14, 1970.

<sup>72</sup> Raymond V. Humphreys to Wiley Wasden, December 1, 1970 both in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 8, Folder 7, Callaway Papers; Minutes of the Republican Party of Georgia State Executive Committee Meeting, Republican State Headquarters, Atlanta, December 21, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 2, Callaway Papers.



money would be better spent on a full-time executive director. In the end, the motion to hire Ray Humphreys failed seven votes to eleven. Perhaps Republican leaders recognized their party's flaws, but hiring a pricey political consultant was not the right answer at this juncture.<sup>73</sup>

A vote on Humphreys' consulting contract transformed into a "showdown" between Wasden and other high-ranking Republican officials. Reportedly organized by Hal Suit supporters who had chafed at the chairman's unwillingness to release party funds to aid his gubernatorial campaign, the anti-Wasden alliance grew to include Republicans from all factions. "[Wasden] knew all the answers. He never once asked us in DeKalb County about anything," State senator Frank Miller claimed while Jimmy Bentley said of the state party chairman, "He was just a heckuva bull-headed fellow." Viewing the executive committee's veto as no-confidence vote in his continued leadership, Wiley Wasden resigned.<sup>74</sup>

Wasden's resignation elevated Robert J. Shaw, an Atlanta insurance executive and former gospel singer, as interim party chairman. Shaw had become active politically in the late 1950s, and he had campaigned on Richard Nixon's behalf in 1960. Shaw received only token opposition when he sought a promotion to full-time chairman, which he won by a 125 to 7 vote of the state central committee. Shaw's victory represented either an incredible endorsement of his leadership potential or a sad commentary on the sorry state of the party that no one else seriously contested the race. Perhaps Shaw saw matters similarly since he announced the

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<sup>73</sup> Minutes of the Republican Party of Georgia State Executive Committee Meeting, Republican State Headquarters, Atlanta, Reconvened on January 8, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 2, Callaway Papers.

<sup>74</sup> "Wasden Resigns in Revamp Row," *Atlanta Journal*, January 9, 1971, p. 1; Bill Collins, "Atlanta's Shaw in Running For Wasden's Post in GOP," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 10, 1971, Sec. A, p. 2; Bill Shipp, "Wasden Quits as Top GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 9, 1971, Sec. A, p. 1; Joe Ryan, "Proposal Rejected; Wasden Leaves GOP," *Savannah Morning News and Evening Press*, January 10, 1971, p. 1.

formation of a blue-ribbon committee composed of representatives from every faction to seek input make recommendations on how best to improve the Georgia Republican Party.<sup>75</sup>

Speaking at a Republican luncheon, Shaw declared affirmatively, “We are not a Depression Party.” To which an audience member replied, “But you sure are a Depressed Party.” Approximately \$40,000 in debt and with the telephone company threatening to cut off service to the party’s Atlanta headquarters, Shaw had his work cut out for him. He recognized two specific problems facing the party. First, “We are not well enough organized in the counties,” and second, “We were never as well organized as we thought we were in the 1960s.” Goldwater and Wallace, he averred, would have won the state’s electoral votes “whether or not there was any organization or money” in the state. Finally, Georgia Republicans were largely on their own in this party-building process. While the Nixon White House busied itself staffing the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP), RNC chairman Rogers Morton encouraged southern party leaders to view the RNC as “service organization” that would offer assistance but remain in the background. So detached were Washington Republicans that a generally restrained Bo Callaway upbraided RNC co-chairman Tom Evans on the matter. “There is no effective effort now being made by anyone in Washington to build the Republican Party in the South,” Callaway asserted, “and very little apparent concern.” Perhaps out of frustration, Callaway began withdrawing from

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<sup>75</sup> Phil Garner, “Coming to the Aid of the Party,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, February 17, 1974, p. 8, 41-42, 44, 47 (quote on 44); Bill Shipp, “Shaw Views GOP as a Business,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 12, 1971, Sec. A, p. 9; Collins, “Atlanta’s Shaw in Running For Wasden’s Post in GOP,” Sec. A, p. 2; Harry Murphy, “GOP Not Carpetbaggers, Shaw Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 14, 1971, Sec. C, p. 2 Bill Shipp, “Shaw Is Elected By State GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 10, 1971, Sec. A, p. 6; Minutes of the Republican Party of Georgia State Central Committee Meeting – Howard Johnson’s South Motel, Atlanta, February 9, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 2, Callaway Papers; Minutes of the Republican Party of Georgia State Executive Committee Meeting, Republican Party State Headquarters, Atlanta, March 3, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 2, Callaway Papers.

full-time politics in early 1972 when he joined InterFinancial, an Atlanta-based insurance holding company, as its executive vice president and CEO-in-waiting.<sup>76</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party needed to “humanize” itself by reaching out to long-neglected voters residing in non-metropolitan counties. “What’s really hurting the feelings of most Republicans,” Shaw quipped in an interview with *Atlanta Constitution* political editor Bill Shipp, “is that outside of 17 or 20 counties we haven’t got a lot to talk about.” According to Shipp, the party had to do a better job of identifying issues that mattered in the “boondocks” where self-identified Republicans were few and far between. Bo Callaway confirmed these sentiments observing, “[T]he rural white is pretty disillusioned with Nixon now.” Antipathy toward HEW, HUD, and the Supreme Court still lingered. “Nixon is given practically no credit for personally fighting against bussing [sic],” he noted with dismay. If George Wallace mounted another general election campaign challenge in 1972, he would likely carry most of rural Georgia. How Republican candidates fared below the presidential level where the GOP had demonstrated its only consistent electoral appeal among non-metro voters was anyone’s guess.<sup>77</sup>

Congressman Fletcher Thompson represented the Georgia Republican Party’s best hope for winning a major, morale-boosting victory in 1972. After the death of U.S. senator Richard B. Russell, Jr. on January 21, 1971, Governor Jimmy Carter had appointed David Gambrell, Georgia Democratic Party chairman, to fill the venerable senator’s seat. That Russell’s successor was a bookish, well-healed ally of an increasingly unpopular governor heartened Republicans in

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<sup>76</sup> Bill Shipp, “Shaw Pressed to Revive the Georgia GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1971, Sec. A, p. 2; Robert J. Shaw to Republican Leaders, March 8, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 9, Folder 2, Callaway Papers; Galvin, “Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered,” 53; Bo Callaway to Tom Evans, June 18, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 1, Folder 2, Callaway Papers; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 382-384, 388; Gene Tharpe, “Callaway Quits Politics, To Join Interfinancial,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 21, 1972, Sec. D, p. 8; “Callaway, Nixon’s Aide In ’68 Campaign, Takes Post at Interfinancial,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1972, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Bill Shipp, “GOPs Try to Boost Image in Boondocks,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1971, Sec. A, p. 8; HHC, Memo for File, July 1 and 2, 1971 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 10, Folder 2, Callaway Papers. Bill Shipp, “Republican in South Georgia Becoming Increasingly Scarce,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1971, Sec. C, p. 1.

the state. After seeking input from colleagues, Thompson decided seek a promotion from the House to the Senate. Perhaps his district's changing demographics had convinced him. "In six or seven years Fulton County will be predominantly black," Thompson noted, "The NAACP is trying to frighten most of the whites out of town...and frankly they appear to be succeeding." Although he singled out the NAACP for scorn, the Democratic-controlled General Assembly had complicated the Thompson's reelection prospects during the most recent round of legislative redistricting. After several legal challenges, the U.S. Justice Department finally approved a congressional map placing Thompson's East Point home as well as most of conservative South Fulton County in the rural-dominated Sixth Congressional District. Redistricting had also increased the Fifth District's black population from 38 to 44 percent, which made it nearly impossible for an unabashed conservative Republican to win. Unbeknownst to anyone at the time, Fletcher Thompson's awkward campaign launch at an Albany gas station portended ill his general election chances. After purchasing a dollar of gasoline, he shook the hand of a "startled service station operator" and announced, "Hello, I'm Fletcher Thompson, and I'm running for the United States Senate."<sup>78</sup>

Embracing racial and cultural conservatism, Fletcher Thompson waged a general election campaign in 1972 similar to the one Jimmy Bentley had run two years earlier in the Republican gubernatorial primary. He endorsed massive-resistance style protests in Augusta where school

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<sup>78</sup> Bob Hurt, "Thompson Near Race For Senate," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 5, 1971, Sec. A, p. 8; UPI, "Senate Race Begins At Service Station," *New York Times*, March 18, 1972, p. 36; Bob Hurt, "Richard Russell Dies at 72; Nixon, LBJ Lead Tributes," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 22, 1971, Sec. A, p. 1, 11; "Senate Post Goes To David Gambrell," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 2, 1971, Sec. A, p. 1; Godbold, *Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter*, 170-190; Patrick J. Buchanan to Harry S. Dent, January 24, 1972 in White House Files Series, Box 12, Folder 11, Dent Papers; Laughlin McDonald, Michael B. Binford, and Ken Johnson, "Georgia," in eds. Chandler Davidson and Bernard Grofman, *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act, 1965-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 88; Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie, *The Triumph of Voting Rights in the South* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 87-88; Philip D. Carter, "Edited Film Heats Up Atlanta Race," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 11, 1970, Sec. A, p. 1, 9; Harry S. Dent to the Attorney General (John Mitchell), December 14, 1971 in White House Files Series, Box 9, Folder 36, Dent Papers; Bob Hurt. Thompson Decides—He'll Go for the Senate," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 27, 1972, Sec. A, p. 3.

officials and local residents had attempted to thwart a federal order desegregating the city's school district via busing. "During the senatorial campaign, Thompson seemed to be running less against his Democratic opponent...than against school buses," one contemporary analysis of the Republican Senate candidate's style affirmed. Thompson also assailed liberal, famous and obscure alike, during major events and speeches, including visits from Vice President Spiro Agnew and Arizona senator Barry Goldwater. When President Richard Nixon visited Atlanta in early October, the Republican congressman inveighed against that city's integration efforts as part of his full-throated, anti-establishment campaign.<sup>79</sup>

Thompson's conservative campaign was aided throughout by a Georgia Republican Party that had redoubled its commitment to anti-busing endeavors following the Supreme Court's *Swann v. Mecklenburg* ruling. Robert Shaw had proposed an anti-busing resolution at the Southern Association of Republican State Chairman meeting the previous December, and the state party chairman had also led the Georgia delegation in a walkout of Senator Hugh Scott's speech to the Republican National Leadership Conference because the moderate Pennsylvanian had opposed legislation designed to end the practice of compulsory busing for desegregation purposes. In a complete reversal in style and substance from Hal Suit's campaign, Georgia Republicans doubled down on racial conservatism in an effort to crack the Democratic Party's statewide election lock.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 100; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 92; Jim Dillin, "Republicans hustle in Dixie for U.S. Senate seats," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 31, 1972; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 450-451; David Nordan, "Fletcher Thompson Denies Using Racist Digs," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 10, 1972, Sec. A, p. 6; Bob Fort, "Nixon Hailed Here by 500,000, Pledges Inquiry on City Schools," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 13, 1972, Sec. A, p. 1; Harry S. Dent to the President, February 24, 1972 in White House Files Series, Box 13, Folder 11, Dent Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Bob Hurt, "Dixie GOPs Seeking Anti-busing Push," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 11, 1971, Sec. A, p. 2; Bob Hurt, "Ga. Delegation Boycotts Scott," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 4, 1972, Sec. A, p. 3; AP, "Georgia GOP Boycotts Scott As Protest on Busing Stand," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 4, 1972, Sec. A, p. 4.

Unfortunately for Georgia Republicans, Fletcher Thompson did not face David Gambrell in the general election. Instead, State representative Sam Nunn, Jr. emerged from bruising primary and run-off elections to win the Democratic nomination. Nunn, a 34-year-old attorney from Perry in Middle Georgia, had forged an unlikely coalition of African-American and rural white supporters to defeat not only Gambrell but also former governor Ernest Vandiver. With the deeply unpopular George McGovern topping the ticket, Nunn sought support from U.S. senator Herman Talmadge who invoked his family's legacy as well as his perch atop the Senate Agriculture Committee as reasons to elect Nunn. The Democrat also traveled to Alabama during the campaign to receive the endorsement of George Wallace. Thompson would, therefore, find it much harder to get to the right of Sam Nunn than the patrician David Gambrell.<sup>81</sup>

Political scientists Earl and Merle Black have argued the Thompson-Nunn race illustrated "how conservative Democrats could often suffocate conservative Republicans in the Deep South." Indeed, the Nixon White House recognized the GOP's chances of capturing the senate seat in Georgia had declined considerably when Gambrell fell to Nunn. "The state Democrat leaders are putting everything on these races and screaming about southern chairmanships," Harry Dent informed Nixon in the fall. "Thompson is linking Nunn to McGovern, while Nunn sings hymns to George Wallace," he continued. In the end, Sam Nunn won with 54 percent of the vote even though Richard Nixon carried Georgia with more than 75 percent of the presidential vote. Fletcher Thompson had clearly improved on Hal Suit's performance. The Republican Senate candidate had increased his party's showing in rural and small-town precincts, but Thompson performed worse in metropolitan Atlanta. Moderate Republican

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<sup>81</sup> David S. Broder, *Changing of the Guard: Power and Leadership in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 367-368; Richard L. Lyons, "Senate Race in Georgia Centers on Who Is Furthest Right," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 31, 1972, Sec. A, p. 10; Bob Fort, "State GOP Chiefs Blast Talmadge Pitch for Nunn," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1972, Sec. A, p. 5; Lamis, *The Two-Party South*, 100.

Rodney Cook's five-point loss to African-American civil rights activist Andrew Young in the race to fill Thompson's congressional seat suggests Thompson's strident tone and racial conservatism had hurt the Republican prospects in and around Atlanta.<sup>82</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party suffered another loss the following May when President Nixon tapped Bo Callaway to become Secretary of the Army. Callaway, a West Point graduate, accepted with pleasure. His withdrawal from Republican politics in Georgia triggered yet another intraparty scramble to fill the coveted post of Republican national committeeman. A trio of familiar names—Nolan Murrah, Roy Foster, Jr., and Frank Troutman—surfaced in the press as Republican insiders jockeyed for advantage.<sup>83</sup>

A close friend of Bo Callaway, RC Cola executive and Columbus resident Nolan Murrah enjoyed the support of the outgoing national committeeman's extensive political network. Since Callaway still enjoyed relatively strong support among state Republicans, Murrah had the inside track to succeeding him. The Republican state central committee convened in Atlanta on May 24. Roy Foster, Jr. dropped out and endorsed Troutman just before the meeting commenced. After a motion to delay the vote until June failed, Nolan Murrah won on a 102 to 61 vote. Addressing the committee afterward, a triumphant Murrah pledged to grow the party through federal patronage and aggressive candidate recruitment. Asked if the rapidly metastasizing congressional investigation into the Watergate scandal concerned him, Murrah, who had served as the Georgia co-chairman of CREEP during the 1972 campaign, replied, "I think Georgia Republicans deplore the situation as much as anyone and I don't really think that Georgians will

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<sup>82</sup> Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 120; Harry S. Dent to the President, October 10, 1972 in White House Files Series, Box 12, Folder 11, Dent Papers; Dennis Rhinow via Ed DeBolt to Rogers C.B. Morton, October 12, 1972 in Republican National Committee Series, Box 283, Folder 10, RCB Morton Papers; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1971-1972* (Atlanta: HML&P, [1973]), 1835-1837, 1850-1851. The theme of a "Democratic smother" has since been employed by historian Tim Boyd. See Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 92.

<sup>83</sup> UPI, "Nixon Picks Callaway As Army Secretary," *New York Times*, May 3, 1973, p. 24.

hold the local Republican parties responsible for what a few misguided people did in Washington.” Georgia voters, however, would prove Murrah’s confidence ill-founded.<sup>84</sup>

Most top Georgia Republicans brushed off Watergate as a non-story throughout 1973. The whole affair was certainly unfortunate, but few worried the state party would pay a political price. Robert Shaw told Vice President Agnew that Georgians “were getting tired of hearing about Watergate” while Georgia Republicans affirmed their “personal faith” in Richard Nixon at the 1973 state convention. Congressman Ben Blackburn, meanwhile, went on the offensive during an address to Young Republican Convention in Atlanta. Declaring the televised Senate Watergate hearings “comedy TV,” Blackburn wondered aloud why “we never have learned the full story of the Mark Spitz of Chappaquiddick,” a thinly veiled reference to Senator Edward Kennedy’s automobile accident that left Mary Jo Kopechne, a young aide, dead. Denials and deflections on the part of Georgia Republicans, however, failed to make the Watergate story abate as the party prepared for the 1974 campaign.<sup>85</sup>

With both Fletcher Thompson and Bo Callaway gone from the political scene and the specter of Watergate bearing down, the state party found it difficult to recruit a crop of top-tier candidates in 1974. Ben Blackburn, one of the party’s remaining high-profile personalities, declined to run for governor, opting instead to concentrate on his increasingly uphill reelection campaign. In the end, the Republican gubernatorial primary field included a host of unknowns

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<sup>84</sup> Milo Dakin, “Old Feud Boils In State GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1973, Sec. A, p. 25; Constance Johnson, “GOP to challenge Brinkley—Murrah,” *Columbus Ledger*, May 25, 1973, Sec. A, p. 1, 2 (quote on 2); Milo Dakin, “Too Many Candidates Threaten Callaway Foes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 23, 1973, Sec. B, p. 2; Milo Dakin, “Murrah to Fill Callaway Post,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 25, 1973, Sec. A, p. 18; David Nordan, “‘Callaway Wing’ of GOP Elects Murrah to Post,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 25, 1973, Sec. A, p. 6; AP, “Murrah Picked To Fill GOP Post,” *Savannah Morning News*, May 25, 1973, p. 1; Beryl Sellers, “Committeeman Eyes Active Role,” *Columbus Enquirer*, May 25, 1973, Sec. A, p. 1, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Howell Raines, “Watergate Is Becoming Bore, Agnew Told Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 18, 1973, Sec. A, p. 14; UPI, “State GOP to Put ‘Faith’ in Nixon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 30, 1973, Sec. A, p. 2; Claudia Townsend, “Blackburn Asks Faith In Nixon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1973, Sec. A, p. 1, 9 (quotes on 1); Howell Raines, “Watergate Treated as Joke,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 18, 1973, Sec. A, p. 3; Bob Fort, “No Impeachment, No ’74 Issue, Shaw Says,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 2, 1974, Sec. A, p. 2.



including Cobb County commissioner George Lankford, DeKalb County commissioner Bill Coolidge, state Representative Harry Geisinger, and businessman Harold Dye. The notorious Mayor of Macon, “Machine Gun” Ronnie Thompson, was the GOP’s only well-known gubernatorial candidate that year. Thompson had shocked the political establishment and elated Georgia Republicans when he first won election in 1967, but his histrionic behavior and bombastic statements led Republican leaders to distance themselves from the gospel-singing, law-and-order Maconite. Thompson had earned his ominous nickname in 1968 when he warned civil rights activists who ventured down beyond approved demonstrating areas would be “mowed down and stacked like cordwood.” That Thompson had suffered a mental health episode during his 1972 congressional race against Democrat Bill Stuckey did little to improve his standing in the party. The 1974 Republican primary proved an exercise in the absurd and demonstrated just how far the Georgia Republican Party really could fall.<sup>86</sup>

Barely 48,000 voters pulled a Republican ballot in the five-person primary. Ronnie Thompson—the choice of reactionary conservatives—led the field with 41 percent while recent Republican convert Harold Dye placed second with 23 percent. Thompson defeated Dye by 1.5 percent after a brief but nasty runoff campaign to become the Republican gubernatorial nominee. By comparison, The Democratic runoff between Lieutenant Governor Lester Maddox and state Senator George Busbee, the eventual nominee, drew over 920,000 voters.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Manis, *Macon Black and White*, 259; Howell Raines, “Blackburn Campaigns With Heavy Bear Nixon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1974, Sec. A, p. 15; Howell Raines, “GOPs Find No Heavyweight,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1974, Sec. A, p. 1, 15; Wayne King, “Macon’s ‘Machine-Gun Mayor’ Wants to Run for Higher Office,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1974, p. 17; Roger Williams, “What Makes Ronnie Run,” *Atlanta Magazine*, January 1971, 74-75, 92-99, 102; John York, “GOPs Heating Up Governor Drive,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 25, 1974, Sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1973-1974* (Atlanta: HML&P, [1975]), 1791-1793, 1844); William G. Seddon, “Let Me Make One Thing Perfectly Muddy,” *Atlanta*, October 1974, p. 58, 122-134; “Republican candidates clash over issues of campaign,” *Rome News-Tribune*, August 30, 1974, p. 3, 5; Mark Berman, “Thompson Slips In,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 5, 1974, Sec. A, p. 1, 22.

The general election proved no contest as George Busbee practically ignored his Republican opponent throughout the campaign. Ronnie Thompson, meanwhile, directed his sharpest attacks against fellow Republicans. He had capped off the victory speech following his runoff win by calling on state party chairman Robert Shaw to resign. Alleging a conspiracy between Shaw and Dye, the Macon mayor also demanded the U.S. Justice Department open an immediate investigation into the Georgia Republican Party's handling of the election. Shaw assured Thompson of his and the party's continued support throughout the campaign, but a gaggle of Thompson supporters apparently took umbrage when the chairman dropped by the candidate's election night party. Shaw left the party bleeding from a gash on his forehead. Neither the wounded Shaw nor most Georgia Republicans were surprised at the results. Thompson and the party were buried in a landslide. Busbee crushed Thompson in a 61 to 31 percent rout. Congressman Ben Blackburn, one of Richard Nixon's staunchest defenders, also went down in defeat. For the first time since 1965, the Georgia GOP had no representation in Washington. The party shed practically all the electoral gains it had made since the conservative wing vanquished the Atlanta faction in 1964.<sup>88</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party's political star had been on the rise since the mid-1960s, but it came crashing down with surprising quickness. Republicans had entered the Nixon years with high hopes, but party leaders failed to address the GOP's systemic vulnerabilities in any sustained or meaningful way. Indeed, voting behavior at the top of the ticket between 1964 and 1972 papered over considerable structural problems such as inadequate financing, systemic apathy and infighting among party regulars, and the absence of a coherent strategy to target

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<sup>88</sup> Bass and DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, 147; Mark Berman, "Shaw Should Quit—Ronnie," *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. A, p. 1, 26; Ken Willis, "Shaw Says GOP Backs Thompson," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 1, 1974, Sec. A, p. 3; Frederick Allen, "Shaw Shaken After Altercation," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1974, Sec. A, p. 11; Buddy Kelly Moore, "'Machine Gun' Ronnie Thompson: A Political Biography," (master's thesis, Georgia College, 1976), 128; Boyd, "A Suburban Story," 93.

voters beyond the party's established base of support. Indeed, the GOP's feeble party infrastructure remained totally incapable of waging competitive campaigns or undertaking sustained party-building projects to improve and expand. Its coalition of upwardly mobile, white suburbanites, meanwhile, remained far too small to guarantee victory outside of a handful of legislative districts in a few metropolitan counties across the state. How to compete against the electoral challenge posed by so-called "New South Democrats" who appealed effectively to conservative whites and African Americans alike consumed Georgia Republicans well into the next decade. Until it solved that riddle, the Republican Party of Georgia would continue to languish at the polls against a reinvigorated Democrats.

## CHAPTER 6

### REPUBLICAN FOUNDATIONS, 1975-1986

Republican state Representative Robert Irvin penned a lengthy memo outlining his party's plight following the disastrous 1974 election cycle. A twenty-something law student who had bucked the Democratic wave and won reelection in a heavily Republican Roswell district, Irvin argued that both Watergate and Ronnie Thompson's poor gubernatorial campaign had doomed the party. More disconcerting to Irvin, though, was the sharp decline in Republican voting in metropolitan precincts. "Our natural base was the urban whites," he wrote, "many of whom were northern immigrants, most of them experiencing a new prosperity, and almost all of them sick and tired of Democratic wool hat politics." Many Republicans running in erstwhile strongholds like Columbus, East Cobb, North DeKalb, and North Fulton County were dismayed to learn many of their voters "continued to regard themselves as Independents...[and] voted Democratic for a broad range of offices for the first time in a decade." Without support from these voters, the Georgia Republican Party proved incapable of winning local elections in 1974 much less statewide contests.<sup>1</sup>

According to Irvin, the Georgia GOP first had to win back its core voters before it contemplated expanding beyond its base. Republicans had benefitted from the galvanizing backlash to the civil rights movement, the counterculture movement, and the anti-Vietnam War protests, but those developments had run their course. Furthermore, Georgia Democrats like Jimmy Carter and Sam Nunn had consciously defined themselves in opposition to their

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<sup>1</sup> Political Memorandum by [Robert A. Irvin], [Late 1974 or 1975] in Series 3, Box 165, Folder 5, Paul D. Coverdell State Senate Papers, Ina Dillard Russell Library Special Collections, Georgia College, Milledgeville, GA.

increasingly liberal national party. Shrewd partisan branding had enabled Democrats in Georgia to fuse an unlikely biracial coalition of voters able to withstand Republican landslide elections like President Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection. "Our first priority must be to win these [Independent] voters back," Irvin asserted. "If we do not," he warned, "our time as a real political party is limited indeed."<sup>2</sup>

Irvin outlined a bold plan to rehabilitate the Georgia Republican Party stressing grassroots, state-level party building initiatives in a subsequent document entitled, "The Need for a Georgia Republican Reform Movement." In it, he recognized, "Republicans have pinned their hopes on national developments to build a Republican Party and those hopes have been thwarted." As a result, "Georgia Republican have no choice except to develop their own plans for a home-grown party which can stand on its own two feet." A new generation of Georgia Republicans heeded Irvin's call and began implementing a long-term, forward-looking, party-building strategy after rising to power within the state party during the mid-to-late 1970s. These new leaders resolved to build and maintain a professional party organization capable of overcoming the Democratic Party's tremendous institutional advantages in Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

By developing a well-financed, technologically savvy, party organization capable of performing essential political functions like fundraising, issue and opposition research, candidate recruitment and training, and public relations, the Georgia Republicans not only resuscitated their party but also laid the foundations for future electoral success by the middle of the next decade. To be sure, the Georgia GOP remained a distinct minority in terms of legislative seats

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1973-1974* (Atlanta: HML&P, [1975]), 630. Irvin did not attach his name to this memo, but it matches the style and tone of subsequent memoranda bearing his name. Historian Mel Steely has also ascribed this particular post-1974 election document to him. See, Mel Steely, "The Georgia Republican Party in the 1970's: Reform and Redirection," unpublished paper, n.d. in Series 10, Box 66, Folder 22, Mel Steely Papers, Annie Belle Weaver Special Collections, Irvine Sullivan Ingram Library, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA.

<sup>3</sup> Irvin Memo; [Robert A. Irvin, "The Need for a Georgia Reform Movement," [1975] both in Series 3, Box 165, Folder 5, Coverdell Papers.

and statewide offices held during this period, but the Republican Party far outpaced the dominant Democratic Party of Georgia in practically every aspect of modern political party building. In the years to come, Georgia Republicans up and down the ticket would benefit politically from the exhaustive efforts of dynamic Republican leadership during this transformative period.<sup>4</sup>

In general, presidential politics and Mack Mattingly's upset victory over Senator Herman Talmadge in 1980 have largely overshadowed the Georgia Republican Party's tremendous party-building endeavors. Indeed, newspaper headlines, columns, and editorials highlighting the party's electoral futility and questioning its future viability appeared with dispiriting regularity throughout this period. For example, the *Atlanta Constitution's* Hal Gulliver announced in November 1978, "The Republican Party of Georgia passed away quietly several years ago, yet no one has really had the decency to bury the poor creature."<sup>5</sup> Gulliver conveyed a sentiment shared widely by contemporary political observers and subsequent historians alike.

While native son Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign and subsequent administration have produced a raft of historical treatments, and Ronald Reagan's ensuing success in the region prompted considerable discussion among pundits and scholars about the "elephants in the cotton fields" and the "vital" South's role in electing American presidents.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hills, *Red State Rising*, 41; John A. Clark, "Georgia," in *State Party Profiles: A 50-State Guide to Development, Organization, and Resources*, eds. Andrew M. Appleton and Daniel S. Ward (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1997), 67-69; Paul Bernstein, "GOP 'prospecting for Republicans,'" *Atlanta Journal*, July 23, 1985, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Hal Gulliver, "Late Lamented Republican Party," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 1, 1978, Sec. A, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> For Carter see, David D. Lee, "The South and the American Mainstream: The Election of Jimmy Carter," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (Spring 1977), 7-12; Phinizy Spalding, "Georgia and the Election of Jimmy Carter," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (Spring 1977), 13-22; William Lee Miller, *Yankee From Georgia: The Emergence of Jimmy Carter* (New York: Times Books, 1978); James T. Wooten, *Dasher: The Roots and the Rising of Jimmy Carter* (New York: Summit Books, 1978); Gary M. Fink, *Prelude to the Presidency: The Political Character and Legislative Leadership Style of Governor Jimmy Carter* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Betty Glad, *Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980); Bruce Mazlish and Edwin Diamond, *Jimmy Carter: An Interpretive Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980). For Reagan and the South see, Greenhaw, *Elephants in the Cottonfields*; Richard N. Current, *Northernizing the South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983); Black and Black, *The Vital South*; Nicol C. Rae, "The Democrats 'Southern Problem' in Presidential Politics," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1992), 135-151.

Only recently have scholars begun analyzing the party-building efforts undertaken by Georgia Republicans during these years.<sup>7</sup> Political scientists have produced a bulk of the scholarly research related to the organizational development of political parties during this period, and most have either downplayed or ignored entirely the extent to which state-level developments were informed by past experience. The Georgia Republican Party serves as case in point.<sup>8</sup>

Mack Mattingly's election as Republican state party chairman in 1975 marked a break from the Georgia GOP's traditional Washington-centric focus. Instead of relying so heavily on the quadrennial presidential election cycle to drive Republican growth in Georgia, Mattingly and his allies initiated a host of grassroots party development programs. Rather than a tool of the Republican National Committee or rival presidential campaigns, the Georgia Republican Party transformed instead into a more coequal partner of both. The introduction of a presidential preference primary during the 1976 election hastened this change. By refocusing on issues at the state level and below, Georgia Republicans managed to mitigate, but not eliminate, factional strife while dissociating the state party and its leadership from lingering taint of Watergate.

These forward-looking Georgia Republicans received a considerable boost when former U.S. senator Bill Brock of Tennessee became RNC chairman in 1977. Like Mattingly and his successors, Brock invested heavily in grassroots organizing and critical party infrastructure like

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<sup>7</sup> For Georgia-centric studies discussing the 1970s see, for example, Steely, "The Georgia Republican Party in the 1970s; Reform and Redirection"; Hills, *Red State Rising*; Eric Johnson, "The Georgia Republican Party: 1856-2006, 150 Years to Victory," in author's possession; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment."

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, John S. Salona and Frederick H. Sontag, *Political Parties* (New York: Vintage, 1972); John F. Bibby, "Party Renewal in the National Republican Party," in *Party Renewal in America: Theory and Practice*, ed. Gerald M. Pomper (New York: Praeger, 1980), 102-115; M. Margaret Conway, "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Party System," *Journal of Federalism* 13 (Winter 1983), 1-17; Paul S. Herrnsen, *Party Campaigning in the 1980s* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988); Klinkner, *The Losing Parties*, 1994; John C. Green, ed., *Politics, Professionalism, and Power: Modern Party Organization and the Legacy of Ray C. Bliss*, ed. John C. Green (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994); Joseph A. Aistrup, *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Matthew Corrigan, "Top-Down Republicanism in the South: A View from the Local Level," *State & Local Government Review* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2000), 61-69; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 2010; Galvin, "Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered," 2013.

communications, fundraising, and technology. Like Bill Brock's work at the national level, the Georgia Republican Party's gradual, capital-intensive rebuilding effort was not without critics who demanded immediate, tangible results in the coffers and at the ballot box. Nevertheless, Bill Brock's tenure at the Republican National Committee provided considerable political cover for reform-minded Republicans committed to bolstering the Georgia Republican organization.<sup>9</sup>

After President Ronald Reagan took office in January 1981, the Republican Party of Georgia adopted several additional party-building strategies implemented by the new president's handpicked RNC chairman, Richard Richards of Utah. Richards made additional RNC-funded tools and training programs available to state parties. Additionally, Richard DeVos's brief tenure as RNC finance chairman between 1981 and 1982 proved extremely consequential for both the national and Georgia Republican Party. DeVos, the billionaire Amway cofounder and multi-level marketing pioneer, revised the Republican National Committee's fundraising programs to cultivate large- and small-donors as means of expanding the party's base of reliable supporters. These efforts did not pay off right away at the ballot box. As political scientist Daniel Galvin has indicated, the goal of party-building was to construct "a new majority, which was inherently long-term in proposition." Investments, even in politics, rarely pay immediate dividends.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the Georgia Republican Party first had to rehabilitate its public image, secure its metropolitan voting base, and deepen its pool of potential candidates that had dried up since the Watergate washout. Accomplishing these essential tasks compelled Georgia Republicans to develop new, dynamic political organization. The party still suffered electoral setbacks—some

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<sup>9</sup> Rhodes Cook, "Rebuilding the GOP: Bill Brock Concentrates on the Grass Roots, But Conservatives Are Critical," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 37, April 28, 1979, p.775-779; Frederick Allen, "Georgia's GOP: Can It Make a Comeback?" *Atlanta Constitution*, November 14, 1977, Sec. A, p. 1, 17. See also, Philip A. Klinkner, "A Comparison of Out-Party Leaders: Ray Bliss and Bill Brock," in *Politics, Professionalism, and Power: Modern Party Organization and the Legacy of Ray C. Bliss*, ed. John C. Green (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 135-148.

<sup>10</sup> Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 123-127 (quote on 127).



surprising and others embarrassing—but the reforms implemented by a cadre forward-thinking leaders transformed the party’s image and culture from an insular club of often self-aggrandizing members into a modern, professional political party dedicated to winning elections and crafting public policy. Ultimately, the Georgia GOP emerged from this period as a relevant, respectable opposition party capable of contesting the Democratic Party at the ballot box.<sup>11</sup>

Ford White House advisor Gwen Anderson delivered a political memo to the president in late January 1975 describing the Georgia Republican Party “to be in the worst shape both organizationally and morale-wise” in the Deep South. Georgia Republicans had reached the same conclusion. Republican National committeeman Nolan Murrah argued state party chairman Robert Shaw’s close ties to the disgraced Nixon administration and dismal handling of Ronnie Thompson’s hapless gubernatorial campaign had disqualified him from leading the state party. Although Shaw remained personally popular within the party, Republican leaders lined up behind Mack Mattingly as a potential successor.<sup>12</sup>

An Indiana native, Mack Mattingly had relocated to coastal Georgia in the late 1950s where he eventually became an IBM sales representative in Brunswick. Like most Georgia Republicans of his generation, he had become politically active during Barry Goldwater’s 1964 presidential campaign. By no means a newcomer on the Georgia political scene, Mattingly nevertheless exuded youthful vigor, enjoyed a positive relationship with the press, and maintained close ties to Republicans statewide. He became the immediate frontrunner to replace Robert Shaw when he entered the chairman race in April 1975.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Politics: States,” *Ripon Forum*, October 15, 1975, p. 7; Steely, “The Georgia Republican Party in the 1970s,” 3.

<sup>12</sup> Gwen Anderson via Robert Hartmann to President Gerald Ford, January 30, 1975 in Box 5, Folder Georgia 2/3-4/75, Gwen A. Anderson Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; David Nordan, “Murrah Seeks New Leader,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 23, 1975, Sec. A, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Hal Gulliver, “GOP Death Wish,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 26, 1975, Sec. A, p. 4; Gary Hendricks, “Georgia GOP For Reagan?” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 29, 1975, Sec. C, p. 4; John Huey, “Move to Oust GOP Chief Shaw Gaining,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1975, Sec. A, p. 3; Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History

Carrying every congressional district with the exception of Bob Shaw's Fifth, Mattingly became the Chairman of the Georgia Republican Party at its convention held in suburban DeKalb County. While Shaw blamed his downfall on Watergate, Mattingly argued his election demonstrated a desire among Georgia Republicans to win elections by focusing on basic party functions. In an obvious effort to differentiate himself from his Washington-obsessed predecessors, Mattingly declared, "I am not the national Republican chairman. I am the working chairman of the Georgia Republican Party." Mattingly promised to unveil his list of priorities and goals following an obligatory statewide listening tour.<sup>14</sup>

Mattingly pledged to develop a sound financial base, establish party organizations in every county, craft popular policies, and recruit viable candidates for public office. His proposals were not altogether original. Deficiencies in these areas had long plagued the party. Alex Hodges, the former executive director of the Georgia Republican Party, had delivered a comprehensive party development blueprint to former state party chairman Wiley Wasden in May 1970. Hodges had urged party leaders to implement a broad-based finance program so it could intensify public relations, issue development, candidate recruitment, and voter targeting efforts. If the Georgia Republican Party wished "to build a larger and more efficient party,"

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Collection, ROGP 014 Mack Mattingly, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA; Rex Granum, "Mattingly Enters GOP Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 1, 1975, Sec. A, p. 18; John Huey, "GOP in Tatters," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 18, 1975, Sec. A, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Shannon, "A New Face for the Georgia GOP," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, September 28, 1975, p. 10; "Glynn Countian Elected To Head State's GOP," *The Brunswick News*, June 2, 1975, p. 18; David Nordan, "Georgia Republican Unseat Shaw," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 1, 1975, Sec. A, p. 1, 21; Rex Granum, "Georgia's GOP: A White Elephant Facing Backwards," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 2, 1975, Sec. C, p. 2; Selby McCash, "Mattingly Ousts Shaw as State's GOP Chairman," *Macon Telegraph and News*, June 1, 1975, Sec. A, p. 1; Christopher Bonner, "State GOP Trying to Rebuild," *Macon Telegraph and News*, July 20, 1975, p. 1.

Hodges counseled, “the entirety of this report must be carefully considered and if approved, implemented with total dedication.”<sup>15</sup>

There is no indication that the state party endorsed Hodge’s program. Bob Shaw, Wasden’s successor, had appointed a blue-ribbon commission to study the problems confronting the party, but Watergate and its aftermath smothered Shaw’s committee as well as ambitious proposals like “Operation Breakthrough.” Devised by Lou Kitchin and Associates, “Breakthrough” promised to “change the course of the Republican Party of Georgia so as to build a firm foundation for GOP victories on the local level as well as future statewide races.” The Georgia Republican Party, therefore, did not lack for clever ideas; instead, it needed leaders willing to commit to the long-term proposition of resolving systemic weaknesses through party-building and organizational development. “We’re trying to get back to the basics, trying to orient the party more to the state of Georgia,” Mattingly told the *Atlanta Constitution*’s Margaret Shannon. The party seemed to have found just such a leader in Mack Mattingly.<sup>16</sup>

Organizing the Georgia Republican Party’s Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) represented Mattingly’s first major step in shifting the GOP’s focus away from big-ticket elections and toward party building. The LRPC was an official version of Mattingly’s informal Republican “brain trust” that included Paul Coverdell, Newt Gingrich, Bob Irvin, John Linder, and Richard McBride. “Our planning committee is a group with good minds and very divergent opinions,” Mattingly told reporters from *First Monday*, the RNC’s in-party magazine, “Together we are discussing ways to improve old ideas and thinking of new ideas and ways to implement them.” Meeting at least once a month, state Senator Paul Coverdell later recalled the members

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<sup>15</sup> Alex Hodges, “Party Development in 1970 Republican Party of Georgia,” submitted to Chairman Wiley A. Wasden, Jr. and the Executive Committee Republican Party of Georgia, May 2, 1970 in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 15, Folder 7, Callaway Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Lou Kitchin and Associates, “Operation Breakthrough: A Presentation for Howard H. Callaway,” n.d. in Series 2, Subseries B, Box 4, Folder 5 Callaway Papers; Shannon, “A New Face for the Georgia GOP,” 38.

committed their time zealously to the committee during these years. Prioritizing nuts-and-bolts political development, the LRPC served as an incubator for many of the state party's most successful future initiatives. Although its membership changed over time, the LRPC proved essential to rebuilding the party's organizational capacity, cultivating new leaders, recruiting candidates, and rehabilitating the state party's tarnished image.<sup>17</sup>

The political fortunes confronting Republicans could hardly have been worse in the year following Richard Nixon's resignation. The economy remained in shambles as the Gross National Product (GNP) had fallen by over 4 percent. While inflation drove consumer prices up by nearly 17 percent annually it also kept home-mortgage interest rates above 10 percent. By May 1975, the U.S. unemployment rate had peaked at 8.9 percent—the highest point since the Great Depression. Meanwhile, President Gerald Ford's controversial decision to pardon Nixon for his role in the Watergate scandal gave the appearance of impropriety. Perhaps seeking to project strength in his new role as the chief executive, Ford also vetoed a raft of popular legislation such as increased school funding. In addition to Ford's declining approval among the American electorate, he also faced mounting dissension within his own party as restive conservatives proved reluctant to support an establishment Republican who lacked the New Right's fervent commitment to a more orthodox brand of conservatism. With former California

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<sup>17</sup> "Winning Small Is The Key To New Success In Georgia," *First Monday*, November-December 1975, p. ? in Series 6, Box 2, Folder 2, Mack F. Mattingly Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 436; Steely, "The Georgia Republican Party in the 1970s," 6; Rex Granum, "Rebuilding Is State GOP Task," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 15, 1975, Sec. A, p. 14; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 41; Mel Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia: The Biography of Newt Gingrich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 68; Coverdell, Paul, Interviewed by Clifford Kuhn, 4 March 1989, P1989-07, Series B. Public Figures, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta, Ga.

governor Ronald Reagan conspicuously eyeing a primary challenge, Gerald Ford looked South to shore up his vulnerable right flank.<sup>18</sup>

Passing over more seasoned political hands such as Melvin Laird and Rogers C.B. Morton, President Gerald Ford chose Secretary of the Army Bo Callaway to serve as Chairman of the President Ford Committee, his reelection organization. Callaway's Republican roots reached back to the Draft Goldwater movement of the early 1960s, and his 1966 gubernatorial bid had boosted his national profile within the party. He had also nurtured working relationships with fellow Republicans in the South and across the country during his five-year stint as the Republican national committeeman from Georgia. Despite these attributes, Ford's pick baffled many political observers. Neither Ford nor Callaway had ever run a national campaign. The Georgia Republican also boasted close ties to Richard Nixon's scandal-plagued political operation. Journalist James Witcover explained the appointment as "an obvious gesture to conciliate the GOP right wing, and Republicans in the South particularly." In this regard, Callaway proved woefully inadequate as Ford's campaign chairman.<sup>19</sup>

Bo Callaway made several gaffes during his short tenure as Ford's campaign chairman. He had dubbed Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, the campaign's "number one problem," and ignored the advice of countless regional leaders by attacking Ronald Reagan during the 1975 Southern Republican Conference in Houston. He even mentioned that winning the South was not

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<sup>18</sup> Douglas Brinkley, *Gerald R. Ford* (New York: Times Books, 2007), 117-118; Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 487-502; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 459; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 395, 402-407; James Cannon, *Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment with History* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 405-406.

<sup>19</sup> Jules Witcover, *Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency, 1972-1976* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 52, 101, 405 (quote on 52); Editorial: "Ford Looks South," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 20, 1975, Sec. A, p. 4; Lou Cannon, "Southerner with Ties to GOP Right," *Washington Post*, June 19, 1975, Sec. A, p. 2; "Ford's Campaign Chief," *New York Times*, June 20, 1975, p. 12; Millard Grimes, "The Long Quest of Bo Callaway, Part Two," *Georgia Trend*, September 1995, p. 64-65; Terry O'Donnell, "Visit To Fort Benning Columbus, Georgia," June 14, 1975 in Box 47, Folder 1975/06/14 – Visit to Fort Benning, James M. Cannon Files, Ford Library; Beau Cutts, "Bo Callaway To Run Ford Campaign," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1975, Sec. A, p. 1, 21. For an entertaining overview of the Ford-Reagan nomination fight see, Dickerson, *Whistlestop*, 187-218.

an essential element of Ford's nomination campaign. Constantly at odds with top Ford administration officials, Callaway stepped down in March 1976 amid reports that he had pressured the U.S. Forest Service to approve developments at his ski resort in Crested Butte, Colorado. Always a risky selection, Callaway's appointment demonstrated just how far the Republican base had shifted southward geographically and rightward ideologically by 1976.<sup>20</sup>

A new primary election law passed by the General Assembly in 1975 altered the process by which the two major political parties in Georgia selected their national convention delegations. While Georgia Republicans still chose individual delegates via precinct, county, and district caucuses, the party bound those delegates to the presidential candidate receiving the most votes in each of the state's ten congressional districts. The candidate securing a statewide majority, meanwhile, would receive eighteen at-large delegates. Most importantly, a Georgia statute required those delegates to vote for the primary winner for the first two rounds of balloting. The legislation did not spell out any specific penalty for breaking the primary election law, but potentially poor optics and political cost of flouting the law proved sufficient to thwart faithless delegates. Although the move to a primary election system mitigated some of the more sordid elements of presidential politics, it certainly did not end intraparty factionalism in Georgia.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Maurice Fliess, "Bo Callaway—Boon or Bumbler?" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 13, 1975, Sec. A, p. 5; Louis H. Bean, "Why Ford looks southward," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 1, 1975, p. 28; Smith, *On His Own Terms*, 668-669; David Morrison, "Bo Says Ford Doesn't Need Dixie," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 21, 1975, Sec A, p. 1. 18 and Mimi [Austin] to Bo [Callaway], August 29, 1975 in Box A6, Folder Callaway State File – GA 1, Chairman's Office Files, President Ford Committee Records; Mike Christensen, "Bo Quits Campaign In Wake of Charges," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 14, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Claudia Townsend, "Primary: In Georgia It's Delegates, Not Candidates Who Count," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 1, 1975, Sec. A, p. 6; David Morrison, "'Victory' Might Not Mean Delegates," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 4, 1976, Sec. A, p. 9; Rex Granum, "Georgia Primary Scheduled May 4," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 19, 1975, Sec. A, p. 2; Claudia Townsend, "It's Law: Georgia GOP to Vote Reagan," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 15, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 20. The Democratic Party of Georgia employed a different system of selecting and dividing delegates. Georgia voters casting a Democratic ballot were required to vote not only for their preferred candidates but also the individual delegates representing that candidate for their votes to be binding. See, Rex Granum, "30 Pct. Of Vote Could Win All in Ga. Primary," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 21, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 10.

Indeed, Georgia Republicans divided their political loyalty between President Ford and Governor Reagan. Reagan had always enjoyed high levels of support in Georgia, and the former California governor would be the favorite in a head-to-head matchup against the president. The Ford campaign, however, remained unconvinced throughout the fall of 1975 that Reagan would actually challenge the president. In fact, the Ford campaign remained so confident it would carry Georgia that it assigned the state a “Priority One” rating—the same designation as New Hampshire and Florida.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike recent presidential contests, most members of the state party’s central committee did not take leadership roles in either campaign. As a result, relatively unknown Republican activists led both the Ford and Reagan campaigns in Georgia. The President Ford Committee appointed Matthew H. (Matt) Patton as its Georgia campaign chairman. An Atlanta attorney, Patton had worked on behalf of Barry Goldwater in 1964, Bo Callaway in 1966, Earl Patton (no relation) in 1968, Rodney Cook in 1969, and Fletcher Thompson in 1972. The Ford campaign also recruited veteran fundraiser Julian LeCraw to chair the president’s Georgia finance committee. Also backing President Ford were a host of prominent Republicans including Paul Coverdell, Mike Egan, Harry Geisinger, Bob Irvin, Earl Patton, and Fletcher Thompson. Former state chairmen James Dorsey, G. Paul Jones, and Bob Shaw all endorsed Ford during the primary campaign. Ford, therefore, was the undisputed choice of Georgia’s Republican establishment.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Craig Shirley, *Reagan’s Revolution: The Untold Story of the Campaign that Started It All* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2005), 58-61; “Hays/Davis Summary: Georgia,” February 6, 1976 in Box C35, Folder Georgia, Political Office Files, President Ford Committee Records, Ford; Witcover, *Marathon*, 64.

<sup>23</sup> Rex Granum, “Bo Urges South to Get Edge,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 3, 1975, Sec. A, p. 6; [Bo Callaway], Memorandum for the Record, September 24, 1975 in Box A6, Folder Callaway State File – GA 1, Chairman’s Office files, President Ford Committee Records; Mimi Austin to Stu Spencer, December 8, 1975 and “Georgia President Ford Committee,” both in Box A6, Folder Callaway State File – GA 2, Chairman’s Office Files, President Ford Committee Records; “Making Georgia First,” *The Inside News*, n.d. in Box C8, Folder Primary States – Georgia 2, Political Office Files, President Ford Committee Records.

Shortly after Ronald Reagan officially entered the race in November 1975, DeKalb County Republican Party vice chairman Sam Tate became Georgia Citizens for Reagan (GCFR) chairman. An executive at the Edison Industries textile firm, Tate received assistance from conservative party veterans including former state chairman Joe Tribble. The former governor also benefitted immensely from Carl Gillis's appointment as southern states campaign coordinator. The wealthy proprietor of a modular home manufacturing firm in South Georgia, Gillis boasted an immense personal fortune and a sterling reputation statewide. Reagan also tapped into Georgia's extensive network of conservative female activism. Former Georgia Federation of Republican Women (GFRW) president Margaret Holliman joined as campaign co-chair while two additional members from GFRW's hard right, Dot Brewer and Jan Whaley, served as district committee chairs. Several Republican elected officials including John Linder endorsed Reagan and served on his Georgia campaign advisory committee.<sup>24</sup>

Both organizations ran similar campaigns in Georgia. Perhaps getting into the bicentennial spirit, the Ford campaign divided the state into red, white and blue counties based on recent Republican voting trends. Taking it a step further, GCFR broke those figures down to the precinct level and assigned canvassers, mailings, and phone-banking based on three priority levels. Both candidates visited the state in 1975 and again the following April. The Reagan organization expanded its outreach to target Democrats, reminding them they could crossover without registering as Republicans. Ford's campaign, meanwhile, struggled to implement its targeted canvassing program, and the results bore out its inability to "find 'em, vote 'em, and

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<sup>24</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 460; "Reagan Win In Ga. Seen," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 20, 1975, Sec. A, p. 14; [Bo Callaway], Memorandum for the Record, August 17, 1975 in Box A6, Folder Callaway State File – GA 1, Chairman's Office Files, President Ford Committee Records; Austin to Spencer, December 8, 1975; Claudia Townsend, "Ga. GOPs Picking Sides," *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. A, p. 2; "Georgia Citizens for Reagan Officials," n.d. in Box 30, Folder 7, Citizens for Reagan Records, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.



count ‘em.” In the end, Reagan captured just over 68 percent of the vote and won all 48 of Georgia’s delegates. Adding insult to injury, Ford even failed to carry Bo Callaway’s Harris County. The results confirmed what establishment Republicans had long suspected about presidential primaries in Georgia. If voters had the option, they would more likely than not choose the conservative candidate regardless of whom party officialdom had endorsed.<sup>25</sup>

Georgia Republicans endorsed Reagan’s smashing victory a few weeks later at their state convention in Savannah. Both Nolan Murrah and Nora Allen had earlier announced their intent step down from the Republican National Committee, and delegates selected Carl Gillis and Roena Mosely—both Reagan supporters—to fill their posts. The state’s delegation to the Republican National Convention in Kansas City also reflected Governor Reagan’s popularity. GCFR chairman Sam Tate secured an at-large delegate slot and served as the Georgia delegation’s chairman while several early Reagan backers won either delegate or alternate positions. Ford supporters, however, were not completely shut out as Matt Patton and a handful of others were added to the slate in a show of party unity. Nevertheless, President Ford secured a first ballot nomination winning 1,187 votes to Reagan’s 1,070. After passing over southerners Howard Baker of Tennessee and John Connally of Texas, Ford selected Kansas senator and former RNC chairman Bob Dole as his running mate. An able legislator amenable to

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<sup>25</sup> Frederick Allen and Jim Merriner, “Reagan Ahead in State, Ford Says in Visit Here,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 14; “The President’s Briefing Book: Questions and Answers for: Georgia Trip, April 23, 1976,” in Box 19, Folder President’s Briefing Book 1976/04/25, David Gergen Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Sam Tate to David A. Keene, December 11, 1975 and “Ronald Reagan’s Successful Campaign in Georgia,” both in Box 30, Folder 7, Citizens for Reagan Files; Hays/Davis Summary: Georgia, March 26, 1976 in Box C2, Folder GA, Political Office Files, President Ford Committee Records; Memorandum from David A. Keene, n.d. in Box 30, Folder 7, Citizens for Reagan Files; Jim Merriner, “Reagan Woos Wallace Crossover Vote in Georgia Primary,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 29, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 15; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1975-1976*, 1720-1723, 1649, 1661; Frederick Allen, “Reagan Stuns Ford in Georgia,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 5, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 6; Wayne King, “Georgians Back Carter, Reagan,” *New York Times*, May 5, 1976, p. 1, 25. Gerald Ford managed to defeat Reagan in Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

conservatives and moderates alike, Dole's top qualities were his availability and the fact he was not Nelson Rockefeller, who had withdrawn from consideration the previous November.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately for Georgia Republicans, Jimmy Carter of all people emerged from a chaotic, seventeen-person Democratic primary as the party's presidential nominee. The Carter candidacy reframed the Republicans' political calculus in Georgia and across the South in 1976. "While it is not inconceivable that the President could carry Georgia," Bo Callaway wrote James A. Baker III, Ford's campaign chairman, in early September, "we know it is not likely." Indeed, Ford did not contest the Deep South in 1976. Although Ford managed win narrowly among white voters in the region, Jimmy Carter won every southern state with the exception of Virginia. The former Georgia governor carried his home state with nearly two-thirds of the vote.<sup>27</sup>

Watching returns trickle in from the grand ballroom in Atlanta's upscale Marriott Motor Hotel, Matt Patton admitted, "Of course we knew that Georgia was going for Carter. That was no surprise for us." Although no surprise, Carter's down-ballot effect must have disappointed Republican Party regulars who had shifted their time, money, and focus to congressional and legislative races. With absolutely no presidential coattails at the top of the ticket, most Georgia Republicans languished despite visits from various national Republican figures. Only Newt Gingrich, waging his second consecutive contest against Democratic incumbent Jack Flynt, managed to run competitively. Improving on his 1974 showing, Gingrich outperformed Ford in the district by garnering just over 48 percent of the vote. His persistence would pay off two years

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<sup>26</sup> Jim Merriner, "A Triple Whammy For Georgia's GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1976, Sec. A, p. 8; *Official Proceedings of the Republican National Convention held at Kansas City, Missouri: August 16, 17, 18, 19, 1976* (Washington D.C.: Republican National Committee, 1976), 376, 126-129, 253-254, 422-423; Townsend, "It's Law: Georgia GOP to Vote Reagan," p. 1, 20; Jim Merriner, "Power Play Fails to Swing Three Georgia Votes," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 18, 1976, Sec. A, p. 6; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 461; Cannon, *Time and Chance*, 408; Witcover, *Marathon*, 507-508.

<sup>27</sup> Bo Callaway to James A. Baker III, September 7, 1976 in Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Howard H. (Bo) Callaway Papers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Earl Black and Merle Black, *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 81; Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 462-463.

later when he defeated state Senator Virginia Shapard to win a seat in Congress. In the end, the Jimmy Carter effect prevented Georgia Republicans from mounting an effective comeback in 1976 as most Georgia Democrats dispatched their Republican opponents with ease.<sup>28</sup>

Georgia Republicans gathered in Atlanta two weeks later for what Mack Mattingly dubbed a “critical self analysis.” Those attending found ample material for criticism. Speaking to the party’s lack of racial diversity, Newt Gingrich declared melodramatically, “In 1978, if 10 per cent of this room isn’t black, we’re out of business.” Other attendees were less concerned with the optics of a single room than they were the Georgia GOP’s overall image. “People have branded us losers,” Tommy Thompson bemoaned. “Without building the party...at the local level, it’s all over with.” Two-time congressional candidate Quincy Collins agreed, and he urged party leaders associated with past failures to step down in favor of “new enthusiastic leadership.”<sup>29</sup>

Still, Republican leaders found some reason for optimism. The party only lost a single seat in the General Assembly in very trying election cycle. The state party’s decision to target districts based on past voting data and extend limited financial and in-kind assistance had helped stem the Democratic tide. On the other hand, the party had recruited some poor prospects lacked the political skills necessary to win. Top Georgia Republicans resolved to improve its candidate recruiting and training programs to bolster its future electoral prospects.<sup>30</sup>

To this end, the GOP’s Long-Range Planning Committee proposed six specific pieces of direct assistance to future candidates including campaign manuals, precinct-level district

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<sup>28</sup>; Sam Hopkins, “Georgia GOPs View Returns in Silence,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 3, 1976, Sec. A, p. 8; Merriner, “A Triple Whammy For Georgia’s GOP,” p. 8; Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia*, 79, 99-105; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1975-1976* (Atlanta: Perry Communications, Inc., n.d), 1883-1890.

<sup>29</sup> Beau Cutts, “Georgia GOP Leaders Meet for a Post Mortem,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1976. Sec. A, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> [Richard McBride?], “Candidate Recruitment and Assistance Lessons from 1976,” [1976-1977] in Series 2, Subseries A, Box 10, Folder 4, Georgia Republican Party Records, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

analyses, opposition research briefs, training seminars, financial contributions, an overall “reform theme” candidates could deploy against entrenched incumbents. By fostering a “reform” atmosphere in Georgia politics, the LRPC argued the state party’s “technical assistance will be of maximum usefulness” because Republicans would put Democrats on the defensive. Not surprisingly, the LRPC proposal drew heavily on Bob Irvin’s earlier party-building strategy.<sup>31</sup>

Bob Irvin proffered additional recommendations following the 1976 election. Since the party lacked even a single statewide or congressional office, Irvin claimed, the Georgia General Assembly represented the most important “forum we have for developing a two-party system.” Georgia Republicans had to rely on its legislative caucus to drive the political agenda. To assist the caucus, the state party needed to develop its research and public relations programs to tailor appeals to reach an array of key voting demographics and interest groups. Looking ahead, Irvin suggested Georgia Republicans stress the party’s efforts to shrink government and make it more transparent. Additional proposals to increase teacher pay and oversight of welfare programs would reinforce the “reform” image the Georgia GOP coveted. Indeed, Georgia Republicans implemented a bulk of Irvin’s suggestions in subsequent years. The Republican legislative caucus also grew more assertive in the General Assembly after Mike Egan, the amiable House Minority Leader, joined the Carter administration in 1977.<sup>32</sup>

Mack Mattingly announced he would forego a second term as party chairman in March 1977. The ensuing campaign evolved into not only a contest among erstwhile Ford and Reagan supporters but also a party-wide referendum on Mattingly’s reform agenda. Boasting the

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<sup>31</sup> Republican Party of Georgia Long-Range Planning Committee document, [1977] in Series 3, Box 165, Folder 7, Coverdell Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Irvin to Republican Legislators, 1977-78 Term, Mack Mattingly, Richard McBride, Newt Gingrich, and John Savage, December 27, 1976 in Series 3, Box 165, Folder 5, Coverdell Papers; Jim Merriner, “GOPs Wonder What to Do,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 14, 1977, Sec. A, p. 6; Steely, “The Georgia Republican Party in the 1970s,” p. 20.

endorsement of Sam Tate, Ray Norvell anticipated strong support from conservatives and Reagan supporters and party conservatives. Challenging Norvell was former Atlanta alderman and state Representative Rodney Cook. A former member of the defunct Atlanta faction, Cook had drifted steadily to the right since his unsuccessful race for Atlanta mayor in 1969. Nevertheless, he still enjoyed strong ties to the party's remaining liberals and moderates in addition to his working relationships with conservatives.<sup>33</sup>

Norvell framed the race as a purely ideological contest while Cook argued Republicans should focus on "who can best help out candidates in office and provide the kind of leadership to make the Republican Party a strong and viable force in the politics of this state." Robert Simpkins, Sixth District Republican chairman, entered the fray as a compromise candidate just as the convention opened. In the end, Cook's broad-based appeal and superior delegate-hunting operation led by Paul Coverdell and Doug Howard prevailed. Cook won over 60 percent of the vote and carried every district with the exception of the conservative-dominated Fourth. Delegates also elected Reverend James Webb as first vice-chairman—the party's first African-American officer since the Eisenhower administration. In the end, the 1978 state convention demonstrated the Georgia Republican Party's resolve to win back its core, metropolitan voters by embracing a more moderate, welcoming image.<sup>34</sup>

Rodney Cook sounded a refrain during his first address as state party chairman. "We're going to start work tomorrow to elect Republicans to local office," he announced. Promising to rebuild the party and broaden its appeal, Cook promised down-ticket races would receive the

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<sup>33</sup> David Morrison, "Norvell To Seek GOP Post," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1977, Sec. A, p. 15; Jim Merriner, "Mattingly to Resign Chairmanship of GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 19, 1977, Sec. A, p. 7; David Morrison, "Brock Raps Carter Programs," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 21, 1977, Sec. A, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Mike Christensen, "Cook Is Elected State GOP Chief," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 22, 1977, Sec. A, p. 1, 14; Dewey Knudson, "Black Ft. Valley Pastor Gets High Post in GOP," *Macon Telegraph and News*, May 22, 1977, Sec. A, p. 1, 7; *News...from the Right Side*, June 10, 1977 in Series 6, Box 2, Folder 6, Mattingly Papers.

lion's share of attention and resources. Elaborating later, Cook contended presidential politics had distracted too many Georgia Republicans during the Nixon years. Republicans "forgot our primary objective, which is to build a strong base." John Crown, an *Atlanta Constitution* columnist, lauded Cook's candor and pragmatism. "[I]t's refreshing to find that Rodney Cook isn't carried away by grandiose and unattainable goals which would only make the Georgia GOP look ridiculous." Cook appeared committed to the party-building blueprint Bob Irvin, Mack Mattingly, and other reformers had laid out before him.<sup>35</sup>

In an ironic turn of events, Rodney Cook launched a last-minute challenge to Governor George Busbee. The Republican chairman explained his rationale during a special meeting of the state executive committee. First, if the party did not enter a gubernatorial candidate, television viewers would see only Busbee and other incumbent Democrats. The subsequent media blackout would hurt down-ballot Republicans. Second, as a candidate, Cook could demand equal coverage from media outlets to amplify the GOP message. The third, unspoken, reason for Cook's late entry was the impending candidacy of Harley T. (Uncle Bud) Herrin, a flamboyant building contractor from Jesup. Herrin's platform called for loosening the state's liquor laws and legalizing pari-mutuel gambling. Confronted with the prospect of "Uncle Bud" atop of the Republican ticket, state party leaders backed Cook's decision to enter the race.<sup>36</sup>

After dispatching Uncle Bud easily in the August 8 primary, Cook faced the popular, practically invincible, Busbee in the general election. Cook campaigned hard on issues like education, inflation, utility rates, and, above all, taxes. Throughout the fall, Cook attempted to

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<sup>35</sup> Christensen, "Cook Is Elected State GOP Chief," 1; "Rodney Cook: He's After People For GOP Ranks," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 6, 1977, Sec. A, p. 12; John Crown, "Rodney Cook Charts Course for the GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. B, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> "Georgia Republican Party State Executive Committee Meeting," June 13, 1978 and "Georgia Republican Party State Central Committee Meeting," June 13, 1978 both in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 8, Coverdell Papers; Frederick Allen, "Memory of '78 haunts GOP," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 11, 1986, Sec. D, p. 1; Henry Eason, "Cook Running On a 'Long Shot,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, July 6, 1978, Sec. C, p. 1, 2; "A Preview," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 24, 1976, Sec. A, p. 4.

manufacture the grassroots resentment that had fueled Howard Jarvis' successful Proposition 13 referendum, which had restructured property taxes in California and triggered a nationwide "Tax Revolt" movement.<sup>37</sup> Cook harried the incumbent Democrat Busbee on taxes and other pocket-book issues in almost every stump speech and in a series of press events called "Questions of the Week." Confronted by Cook, Busbee ceased making public statements regarding "tax modifications" to fill the state's budgetary gaps and reiterated his opposition to raising additional revenue through taxes. Despite Cook's best efforts, Georgia voters backed their "workhorse" governor with almost 81 percent of the vote. Nevertheless, victory over Busbee was never Cook's goal. His campaign slogan was "Cook Yes! Taxes No!" but it could just as easily been *Primum non nocere*—first, do no harm.<sup>38</sup>

Both U.S. senator Sam Nunn and Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller also won reelection against token opposition in 1978 as Republicans lost four House seats and gained one in the Senate. Newt Gingrich's victory in the Sixth Congressional District was the only real bright spot for the party, but the high-profile defection of two Atlanta-area legislators just days after the election detracted from Gingrich's triumph. DeKalb representative George B. Williamson and Fulton County representative and former Republican lieutenant governor candidate John Savage switched parties after winning reelection in GOP-friendly districts. Williamson argued he could better serve his suburban constituents as a Democrat since the Republican Party had no clout in

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<sup>37</sup> *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1977-1978* (Atlanta: Perry Communications, [1979]), 1771; Henry Eason, "Cook Will Use Dean's Campaign Themes," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 10, 1978, Sec. C, p. 1, 4; Henry Eason, "GOP's Cook Close To Challenging Busbee," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 9, 1978, Sec. C, p. 1, 4. Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics*, 253-254. See also, Samuel H. Baker, "The Tax Revolt and Electoral Competition," *Public Choice* 115, no. 3-4 (June 2003), 333-345. Baker argued the Tax Revolt revealed its primary impact through partisan campaigns and *not* the enactment of California-style referenda.

<sup>38</sup> Allen, "Memory of '78 Haunts GOP," p. 1; Henry Eason, "GOP's Cook Says Busbee Insensitive To Tax Gripes," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 8, 1978, Sec. C, p. 5; Henry Eason, "Cook Says Busbee Using Scare Tactics On Taxes," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 13, 1978, Sec. C, p. 2; *News...From the Right Side*, July 14, 1978 in Series 6, Box 2, Folder 7, Mattingly Papers; Hal Gulliver, "Yes, There Is A Governor's Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 23, 1978, Sec. A, p. 4; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 44.

the General Assembly while Savage explained, “I was just frustrated with the Republican approach to party politics...you never do anything.” Reflecting on the 1978 election and its aftermath, Hal Gulliver offered a characteristically harsh appraisal, “The Republican Party in Georgia is a myth.” Most Republicans surely disagreed with the acerbic Gulliver, but many still had to wonder when, or if, their party-building efforts would be pay off.<sup>39</sup>

Georgia Republicans aired those concerns at their state convention in May 1979. Meeting at the Marriott Motor Hotel in Atlanta, convention delegates elected a decidedly conservative, pro-Reagan leadership slate. Matt Patton, a former Ford backer, had endorsed the former California governor and early GOP presidential frontrunner. Patton defeated Paul Womack, another Reagan supporter, by a vote of 217 to 77. Atlanta engineer Ted E. (T.E.) Stivers had orchestrated the Reagan faction’s triumph behind the scenes. After the balloting, Ronald Reagan addressed approximately 600 Republicans at a fundraising dinner. Despite the palpable pro-Reagan sentiment at the convention, Congressman Newt Gingrich offered a word of warning in a subsequent address, “[T]he central ballgame is not the presidency.” Instead, he urged his fellow Republicans to invest their time and resources on races situated at the bottom on the ticket.<sup>40</sup>

Heeding Gingrich’s call, Matt Patton disseminated an ambitious three-year program outlining four key objectives. First, Georgia Republicans sought to “[b]uild broad public support for the Party” ahead of the March 1980 Republican presidential preference primary. Second, the party planned “an effective attack on the Democrat establishment in the State House and Senate” by highlighting “the differences between Republicans and Democrats on the state level.” Third,

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<sup>39</sup> Savage, John, Interviewed by Sally Flocks, 1 May 1987, P1987-06, Series B. Public Figures, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta, GA; Hal Gulliver, “The Republican Myth in Georgia,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 20, 1978, Sec. A, p. 4; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1977-1978*, 1795; Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia*, 104-105; Barry King, “DeKalb GOP Chief Blasts Defectors,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 16, 1978, Sec. C, p. 6; Frederick Allen, “Savage May Switch, Run At Talmadge,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 15, 1976, Sec. A, p. 1, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Selby McCash, “Reagan Allies Capture State GOP Leadership,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 20, 1979, Sec. A, p. 8.



it would increase its presence in the General Assembly. Fourth, Republicans would “[i]ncrease the Party’s financial base by aggressive fundraising through major gifts, small contributions, direct mail fund-raising and the Leadership Commitment Plan.” Patton’s blueprint also proposed candidate support programs such as district targeting, issue research, recruitment, and training. Ultimately, Matt Patton may have won the state chairman post with conservative, anti-establishment support, but he embraced the party-building vision articulated by Irvin, Mattingly, Coverdell, and the party’s Long-Range Planning Committee since the mid-1970s.<sup>41</sup>

Following the precedent set by Mack Mattingly in 1976, Matt Patton remained neutral during the presidential primary season. The responsibility of running those state campaigns fell to others. Surveying its Georgia organization in June 1979, a top Reagan staffer (most likely top strategist Charlie Black or Lee Atwater) recognized it was undoubtedly the strongest campaign in the state. Indeed, Reagan had held together the bulk of his key supporters from 1976 and added several more. Ted Stivers managed the state campaign while Ed Noble and Bill Probst chaired the finance committee. National Committeewoman Roena Moseley was also an early public supporter.<sup>42</sup>

State Senator Paul Coverdell, meanwhile, chaired former CIA director and RNC chairman George H.W. Bush’s Georgia campaign. He received assistance in that role from former Georgia Power president and chairman Edwin I. Hatch. Bush’s Georgia steering committee even included Mildred Snodgrass, the widow of former Atlanta faction chief Bob Snodgrass; Dillard Munford, founder and owner of the Majik Market convenience store chain;

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<sup>41</sup> Republicans of Georgia to Members of the Georgia Press, n.d. [1979] and Georgia Republican Party, “Plan, 1979-1980,” both in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 47, Democratic Party of Georgia Records, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

<sup>42</sup> [Charlie Black or Lee Atwater?] “Georgia,” June 4, 1979 and Ted Stivers to John Erthein, August 30, 1979 both in Series 2, Subseries D, Box 97, Folder Georgia, Ronald Reagan 1980 Presidential Campaign Papers, 1964-1980, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA; Selby McCash, “GOP Pinning Its Hopes On One-Time Democrat,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 27, 1979, Sec. B, p. 6; *News...From the Right Side*, June 5, 1979 in Series 6, Box 3, Folder 1, Mattingly Papers.

former congressman Fletcher Thompson; and Robert M. Wood, a prominent Atlanta attorney and future president of the Central Atlanta Progress development association. Ronald Reagan drew his strength in Georgia from the conservative grassroots, but George Bush relied almost exclusively on the state's political and business establishments.<sup>43</sup>

Confronted by Republican rivals with deeper roots and better conservative credentials, the Bush campaign did not invest heavily in Georgia. With the exception of its steering committee, it operated only a skeleton crew of two paid staffers and a handful of phone banks. Bush only gained in the polls there after southerners Howard Baker and John Connally withdrew days before the March 11 primary. Bush still ran a distant second to Reagan who won just over 73 percent and captured the state's entire delegation. Paul Coverdell blamed Bush's poor performance on his lackluster second-place finish in New Hampshire, which stalled any momentum he had developed after winning in Iowa. On Reagan's side, Ted Stivers admitted John Connally's eleventh-hour decision to drop out all but guaranteed a sizable Reagan win. In truth, Reagan's political standing in Georgia had only improved since 1976, and his victory was never in doubt.<sup>44</sup>

Ronald Reagan did not write off the Deep South as Gerald Ford had in 1976. After securing the Republican nomination, his campaign dispatched Lee Atwater to Atlanta for a two-day strategy session in early August where he pledged to emphasize the South to deny the floundering Carter campaign its base of support. Atwater, though, remained realistic about

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<sup>43</sup> "Coverdell Aids Bush Candidacy," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, February 25, 1979, p. 8; Bush for President National Steering Committee, [February 21, 1980] in Series 2, Personal File, Box 1, Folder 10, Dent Papers; Martin, *Atlanta and Environs*, vol. 3, 497.

<sup>44</sup> Selby McCash, "Bush Neglects Georgia, Gains Support, While Active GOP Campaigns Slip Here," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 24, 1980, Sec. B, p. 9; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80* (Atlanta, GA: Department of Archives and History, 1981), 272-292; Frederick Allen, "Carter, Reagan Win 3 Dixie States," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 12, 1980, Sec. A, p. 1, 6.

Reagan's prospects in Georgia, but he still encouraged his superiors in the campaign to visit Atlanta in an effort to boost down-ballot Republicans in Georgia and throughout the region.<sup>45</sup>

Reagan never made the trip to Atlanta, but Mack Mattingly campaigned extensively in the populous metro region in his bid to oust U.S. Senator Herman Talmadge. A Senate ethics scandal and personal problems stemming from alcoholism and a nasty divorce plagued Talmadge who faced his first serious primary challenge since entering the Senate in 1957.<sup>46</sup> Confronted by a host of challengers including Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller, Congressman Dawson Mathis, and Judge Norman Underwood, Talmadge failed to win an outright majority. He then faced Zell Miller in a runoff. The lieutenant governor openly courted African-American voters and made the senator's segregationist past a cornerstone of his campaign. Senator Talmadge, meanwhile, reached out to rural voters and business establishment allies to fend off the insurgent Miller. After three weeks of acrimonious, expensive, and divisive campaigning, Talmadge captured 58.6 percent of the vote and moved on to the general election to face Mack Mattingly.<sup>47</sup>

With Jimmy Carter's name appearing on the ballot, Georgia Republicans admitted major gains down-ballot were unlikely. Instead, the party pivoted away from its election blueprint and devoted maximum effort to elect Mack Mattingly. Mattingly identified closely with Ronald Reagan and the national party's conservative platform throughout the campaign. He stressed deep cuts to federal regulatory agencies and opposed the federal government's \$1.5 billion

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<sup>45</sup> Linda Field, "Reagan Workers Meeting To Plan Strategy In South," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 14, 1980, Sec. A, p. 10; Lee Atwater to Paul Manafort, September 8, 1980 in Series 11, Subseries G, Box 386, Folder Georgia, Ronald Reagan 1980 Presidential Campaign Papers.

<sup>46</sup> Mike Christensen, "Mattingly's Senate Hopes Lie In Georgia's 8 Big Counties," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 31, 1980, Sec. B, p. 1, 6; William Cotterell, "Ga. GOP Targets Talmadge," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 7, 1979, Sec. A, p. 25; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 440; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80*, 294. For examples of negative press see, Margaret Shannon, "Talmadgism: A Dynasty Without a Future," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, November 20, 1977, p. 8-9, 13, 19, 21; Seth Kantor, "The Fading Fortunes of Herman Talmadge," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, September 30, 1979, p. 14-17, 19.

<sup>47</sup> *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80*, 294-299, 406; Timothy J. Minchin, "'An Historic Upset': Herman Talmadge's 1980 Senate Defeat and the End of a Political Dynasty," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 99, no. 3 (Fall 2015), 177-181; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 101-102;

bailout of Chrysler Motors. Mattingly called for military spending hikes while also endorsing expansive tax cuts. He also made in-roads with social conservatives, a growing political force—around the country, by opposing both the Equal Rights Amendment and federal funding for abortion. In the end, Mattingly had tacked so far to the right that neither Herman Talmadge nor the Democratic Party of Georgia could possibly paint him as a liberal while endorsements from several major daily newspapers provided Mattingly with legitimacy and establishment support.<sup>48</sup>

On Election Day, Ronald Reagan carried 44 states and secured 489 electoral votes in a smashing victory. Jimmy Carter managed to hold onto his home state, but Reagan improved on Ford's 1976 showing by 8 points—winning almost 41 percent. The Republican also carried 13 counties including Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, and Rockdale in Metro Atlanta. Carter, meanwhile, carried both Fulton and DeKalb thanks to strong support from African Americans and other reliably Democratic voters.<sup>49</sup>

Contemporary press reports, subsequent historical treatments, and Herman Talmadge have all cited “Reagan’s coattails” to explain why Mack Mattingly defeated the long-serving Georgia Democrat in 1980. Mattingly actually outperformed the top of the ticket in each of the metropolitan counties Reagan won. Unlike the presidential standard bearer, the Republican senate candidate also carried both Fulton and DeKalb. Reagan, meanwhile, managed to outpace Mattingly in several rural counties. Thus, Mack Mattingly had managed an unlikely feat: He re-forged the anti-Talmadge, urban-affluent coalition one more time to carry the day with 50.9 percent of the vote. Reagan’s presence at the top of the ticket surely helped pull conservatives to

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<sup>48</sup> Minchin, “‘An Historic Upset,’” 185; Mack Mattingly: On the Issues, May 1, 1980 and Mack Mattingly, Candidate for U.S. Senate, Supports, June 18, 1980 both in Series 2, Box 1, Folder 18, Democratic Party of Georgia Records; Charles Hayslett, “Georgia GOP Chances Hardly Look Grand,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 7, 1980, Sec. B, p. 16; Bill Shipp, “Mack Mattingly: An Honest, Conservative Candidate,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 13, 1980, Sec. B, p. 2; Editorial: “Mack Mattingly,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 27, 1980, Sec. A, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80*, 440-453, Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 462.

Mattingly, but Herman Talmadge lost in 1980 because of the cloud of personal and political scandals surrounding him. Additional missteps like refusing to recognize the threat Mattingly posed earlier, opting against debating the inexperienced Mattingly, declining to loan his cash-strapped campaign money for a last-second advertising also contributed to Talmadge's downfall. Sensing an opportunity to rid the state of Gene Talmadge's son and heir, key elements of the Democratic coalition—African-Americans and young voters—either stayed home or cast their ballots for the Republican. Whether Mattingly could subsequently transform those thousands of anti-Talmadge votes into pro-Mattingly ballots would provide considerable insight into how genuine the 1980 Republican breakthrough in Georgia really was.<sup>50</sup>

The Georgia GOP made meager gains apart from Mattingly's upset win and Gingrich's easy reelection. It added three representatives to bring the Republican House Caucus to twenty-three, but its Senate foothold remained at five. Patton congratulated Georgia Republicans nevertheless for holding their own in 1980 despite Carter's presence on the ticket and relatively little financial support from the RNC. He argued the state party had made notable strides beyond the ballot box, too. It had launched a party newsletter, organized thirty-one new county organizations, and expanded the party headquarters to offer additional training and resources. Taking a page from RNC chairman Bill Brock, Georgia Republicans had begun furnishing a computer data bank containing 85,000 names and contact information available for candidate

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<sup>50</sup> Carole Ashkinaze, "Mattingly Outruns Talmadge By 22,008," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1980, Sec. A, p. 1, 17; Tom Wicker, "Coming From Behind: Southern Democrats in Senate Races," *New York Times*, November 2, 1980, Sec. E, p. 23; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 44; Talmadge with Winchell, *Talmadge*, 350-352; Frederick Allen, "Talmadge's Wounds Were 'Self-Inflicted,'" *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1980, Sec. A, p. 1, 14; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 103-104; Minchin, "'An Historic Upset,'" 186-191; Michael B. Binford, "Georgia: Political Realignment or Partisan Evolution," in *The South's New Politics: Realignment and Dealignment*, eds. Robert H. Swansbrough and David M. Brodsky (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 181.

and party use alike. “What the State Party has been able to accomplish these past two years,” Patton averred, “is a testimony to the present leadership of the Party.”<sup>51</sup>

The chairman’s boasts notwithstanding, a “dump-Patton” movement emerged not long after Reagan’s inauguration in January 1981. Led by Mack Mattingly, Newt Gingrich, and Georgia Senate Minority Leader Paul Coverdell, this group sought to remove Matt Patton and sideline Ted Stivers, Reagan’s former campaign manager. Stivers had drawn Mattingly’s ire during the campaign when he had appointed a close Talmadge associate to chair a Georgia lawyers for Reagan group while Patton had transferred only a few hundred dollars from the state party to Mattingly’s campaign. Stivers also had expected to play a leading role in patronage matters following the 1980 election since Patton and his wife, national committeewoman Mary Stivers, would have constituted a majority on patronage decisions and judicial recommendations. He had not anticipated Mattingly’s election to the U.S. Senate. As the highest-ranking elected Republican, Mattingly directed the state’s patronage. He deferred to Gingrich on appointments for northwest Georgia, but Mattingly saw no part for Stivers or Patton to play otherwise. Mattingly, Gingrich, and Coverdell, thus, had concluded the state party would be better served by new leadership more aligned with their particular vision and personal interests.<sup>52</sup>

They drafted Fred Cooper, a Thomasville attorney and corporate counsel for Flowers Industries, to challenge Patton. Cooper had little experience in Georgia Republican politics, but he had chaired Flowers Industries PAC, served as one of Mack Mattingly’s top fundraisers, and belonged to the prestigious Republican Senatorial Trust. Writing to fellow Georgia Republicans

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<sup>51</sup> Henry Eason, “2-Party System Not Yet Reality In Georgia,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1980, Sec. C, p. 1, 2 (quote on 2); “Accomplishments of Georgia Republican Party, 1979-1981,” [November/December 1980] in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 47, Democratic Party of Georgia Records.

<sup>52</sup> Frederick Allen, “Dump-Patton Moves Reported In GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 24, 1981, Sec. B, p. 7; Frederick Allen and Sam Hopkins, “State GOP Squabble Deepens,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 21, 1981, Sec. B, p. 1, 3; Frederick Allen, “Ga. GOP’s Ranks Split Over Post,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 27, 1981, Sec. C, p. 2; Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia*, 135.

in early February 1981, Cooper declared, “We must have an effective organization from precinct level to the state headquarters.” He pledged to revamp and expand the party’s fundraising capacity to achieve that lofty goal. Affirming that “[f]undraising is where my greatest strength lies,” Cooper proposed a bold four-point financial plan promising to double the state party’s fundraising capacity. According to Cooper, money was the secret ingredient to political dominance in Georgia, and the GOP needed more.<sup>53</sup>

Shortly after Cooper’s announcement, Senator Mack Mattingly circulated a letter of support cosigned by almost twenty current and former top Georgia Republicans including Newt Gingrich, Paul Coverdell, Phil Campbell, Mike Egan, Carl Gillis, and Robert Shaw. Cobb County Republican Doug Howard expressed his candid assessment of the race, “[Fred Cooper] is just a whole lot better man for that job...I know he’s a fireball, and a fantastic fund-raiser. Poor old Matthew—he just hasn’t got it.” Undeterred, Patton brandished endorsements of his own from Fletcher Thompson and several state legislators. Ironically, Patton pointed to Mattingly’s success as his main accomplishment for reelection purposes. He had assumed command of a party at low tide, but he had overseen the election of a Republican U.S. senator.<sup>54</sup>

Republicans convened at the Northwest Atlanta Hilton in Cobb County to choose between Patton and Cooper. With the vast majority of high-profile GOP officials backing him, Fred Cooper defeated the incumbent Patton 788-509 to win what the *Atlanta Journal*’s Mike Christensen called “one of the most challenging and thankless jobs ever invented by politicians—Georgia Republican Party chairman.” Reflecting on Cooper’s victory, Paul

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<sup>53</sup> Fred Cooper to Fellow Republicans, February 12, 1981 in Box 9, Folder Politics 8, Carswell Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Maggie Willis, “The GOP Convention: Cooper Given The Edge In Race For Chairmanship,” *Marietta Daily Journal*, May 29, 1981, Sec. A, p. 1, 2 (quote on 2); Frederick Allen, “Patton To Face Ouster,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 24, 1981 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 15, Folder 9, Mattingly Papers; Allen and Hopkins, “State GOP Squabble Deepens,” p. 3; AP, “Ex-Rep. Thompson Backs Patton As GOP Chairman,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 28, 1981, Sec. C, p. 2; Frederick Allen, “Rumors Fly As GOP Gathers For Orgy Of Backbiting,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 29, 1981, Sec. C, p. 1, 2; Lenard W. Nolen, Sr. to Mack Mattingly, April 13, 1981 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 13, Folder 13, Mattingly Papers.

Coverdell concluded Patton and Stivers were simply “unable to weather this coalition of pragmatists” that had asserted itself within the party since the mid-1970s. Cooper struck a similar chord in his first speech as chairman by reiterating his plan to increase large- and small-dollar donations, hire additional, full-time staff, and broaden the party’s appeal through targeted advertising campaigns. A true, nuts-and-bolts chairman, Cooper sought to improve the party’s critical infrastructure to amass the resources necessary wage competitive campaigns.<sup>55</sup>

Fred Cooper’s proposed four-point fundraising plan included a “broad-based Financial Committee” to elicit donations from the business community, oversee a massive small-donor outreach initiative, initiate large-dollar fundraising events, and invite prominent state and national Republicans to fundraising programs throughout the state. To oversee this ambitious plan, Cooper brought Waffle House president and CEO Joe Rogers, Jr. onboard as party treasurer. In his report to the Republican state central committee on July 25, 1981, Rogers indicated the state party had paltry a balance of \$7,071 in its bank account. Cooper, Rogers, and company clearly had their work cut out for them.<sup>56</sup>

The state party, therefore, needed to tap new revenue streams if it had any hope of implementing its party-building initiatives. Republican national committeewoman Mary Stivers also reported to the state central committee on RNC finance chair Dick DeVos’s plan to restructure the national party’s fundraising apparatus by cultivating sustaining members or “shareholders.” DeVos had also proposed a new tiered-system of party memberships designed to

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<sup>55</sup> Mike Christensen, “Cooper knows job: Make Republican Party grow,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1981, Sec. A, p. 12; “Convention Elects Fred Cooper, Chairman,” *The Georgia Republican News*, July 1981 in Series 2, Box 10, Folder 31, Georgia Republican Party Records; Coverdell Interview, March 4, 1989; Debbie Newby, “State GOP Convening in Cobb This Weekend,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 28, 1981, Sec. F, p. 9; Ron Woodgeard, “Cooper Ousts Patton as GOP Chairman,” *Macon Telegraph and News*, May 31, 1981, Sec. A, p. 1, 4; David B. Hilder, “State GOP picks ally of Mattingly,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 31, 1981, Sec. A, p. 1, 12.

<sup>56</sup> Fred Cooper to Fellow Republicans, February 12, 1981; “Plan for the Georgia Republican Party,” [1981] in Series 3, Box 165, Folder 11, Coverdell Papers; Minutes of the Georgia Republican Party State Committee Meeting, Atlanta, GA, July 25, 1981 in Series 3, Box 3, Folder 2, Bob Barr Papers, Bentley Rare Book Gallery and Special Collections, Horace W. Sturgis Library, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA.



entice large-dollar donors to give more generously. The DeVos model proved a smashing success nationally, and the Georgia Republican Party adopted many of its key elements to improve its own financing scheme and fundraising figures.<sup>57</sup>

In 1980, the state party had raised a total of \$169,000 while neighboring states, with smaller populations and economies, had raised an average of \$550,000. In response, Georgia Republicans focused on improving three key areas: party memberships, special events, and direct mail solicitations. First, the party created various clubs whose members were entitled to special benefits that varied based upon the donor's level of giving. Georgia Republicans could join the Charging Elephants Club for only \$10 or become a Year Round Republican for \$360. Donors giving \$1000 or more annually were invited to join the Chairman's Council. Second, it organized special fundraising events featuring prominent state and national figures. Finally, the state party launched a direct mail program to reach other potential donors. Ultimately, the effort paid off. By the end of the 1981-1982 cycle, fundraising surpassed \$1 million for the first time.<sup>58</sup>

Fred Cooper continued to work closely with Mattingly, Gingrich, and Coverdell to implement additional elements of the party's overall strategic plan over the next two years. With both Mattingly and Gingrich residing almost full-time in Washington D.C., though, Coverdell served as the "surrogate for Georgia's Republican delegation in Washington" and enjoyed an outsized role developing party policy. Cooper and Coverdell oversaw key staffing appointments, hiring a full-time executive director and a new director of organization and communication to handle public relations and member outreach.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 123-124; Conway, "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Party System," 10-14.

<sup>58</sup> Hills, *Red State Rising*, 47; Johnson, "The Georgia Republican Party."

<sup>59</sup> "Plan for the Georgia Republican Party," [1981], Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia*, 136; Coverdell interview, March 4, 1989; "Joyce Carter Named Executive Director," *The Georgia Republican News*, July 1981 in Series 2, Box 10, Folder 31, Georgia Republican Party Records; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 47; Paul Coverdell to Mack

The earliest test for the Cooper program came during the 1982 gubernatorial election. Exuding confidence following Mack Mattingly's election, the Georgia Republicans refused to sit out 1982. Two experienced Republicans, former congressman Ben Blackburn and state Senator Bob Bell, announced for the race. Since being drummed out of office in 1974, Blackburn had chaired the conservative Heritage Foundation's board of trustees. Bob Bell, a sales representative, first won election to the state House in 1968 before moving up to the Senate in 1973 where he had developed a reputation as a moderate, suburban Republican. Bell opposed tax increases reflexively, and he had sponsored a cost-containment legislation governing the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). On the other hand, Bell had also voted in favor of boosting teacher pay and increasing education spending. Ultimately, Bell's voting record and political stances placed him squarely within the political program Bob Irvin and the Long-Range Planning Committee had advocated since the 1970s.<sup>60</sup>

Both Blackburn and Bell campaigned extensively in metropolitan Atlanta where Republican primaries were won and lost during this period. Bell's campaign had retained former RNC communications chief Eddie Mahe, Jr. to craft its messaging strategy, which emphasized the candidate's experience and commitment to realistic policy solutions. He also stressed strong, anti-crime and anti-corruption themes targeting "old time politicians." Exploiting his ubiquitous presence in the state Senate well and the capitol press room, Bell maximized free press and earned media. His support among the party's influential core led by Paul Coverdell, meanwhile,

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Mattingly, July 20, 1981 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 15, Folder 9, Mattingly Papers; Mack Mattingly to Fred Cooper, July 14, 1981 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 15, Folder 8, Mattingly Papers.

<sup>60</sup> David Nordan, "Look Away, Dixieland: Eclipse of the Southern Gothic Election," *Atlanta Magazine*, June 1982, 64-70; Greg McDonald, "Republicans look eagerly at state races," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 1, 1981, Sec. B, p. 1, 7; Bill Shipp, "State GOP Nears Crest In Uphill Climb," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 25, 1982, Sec. A, p. 4; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1981-82* (Atlanta: Department of Archives and History, [1982]), 51; T.L. Wells, "Bob Bell Becomes 9<sup>th</sup> Candidate In Governor's Race," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 3, 1982, Sec. A, p. 16; Tom Crawford, "GOP's Bob Bell looks ahead to November," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 27, 1982, Sec. A, p. 8.

was lower in profile. The strategy—combined with Blackburn’s absence from politics—enabled Bell to secure the Republican gubernatorial nomination by a comfortable 18-point margin.<sup>61</sup>

Bob Bell faced stiffer competition in the general election against state Representative Joe Frank Harris, a pious, conservative businessman from Cartersville. Few prognosticators had predicted Harris would emerge from that year’s crowded field of Democratic hopefuls, but Harris had placed a surprisingly strong second when establishment favorites Norman Underwood and former Carter White House staffer Jack Watson divided the metropolitan Atlanta vote. Harris issued a popular no-tax pledge and attacked Congressman Ronald (Bo) Ginn as a spendthrift throughout the subsequent runoff. Abstemious in his personal life, Harris shunned alcohol and tobacco, denounced gambling, and opposed abortion rights as well as the ERA. This blend of social and economic conservatism proved popular among Democratic primary voters. Harris captured almost 55 percent of the vote by running up huge margins in North Georgia and performing well in rural, small-town precincts. If Harris could hold his rural base and appeal to African Americans, the second element of the Democratic Party’s biracial coalition, then Bob Bell’s electoral prospects were dim.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, Harris’s nomination complicated Bell’s general election strategy. In Harris, Republicans were confronted with a candidate of unimpeachable moral rectitude and a legislative portfolio to boot. Eddie Mahe, Jr., Bell’s chief campaign strategist, warned it would be almost

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<sup>61</sup> Eddie Mahe, Jr. to Bob Bell, Marvin Smith, Guy Milner, Sarah Martin, and Buddy Bishop, June 8, 1982 in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 5, Coverdell Papers; “The Bell Campaign,” n.d. in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Tom Crawford, “Blackburn, Bell pinning hopes on metropolitan area,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 18, 1982, Sec. B, p. 1, 4; Dick Williams, “State GOP candidates: A race to the unknown,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 17, 1982, Sec. B, p. 2; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80*, 453; Frederick Allen, “GOP Primary Is Horse Race Of Different Color,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 2, 1982, Sec. A, p. 2; Nolan Murrah, Jr. to Bell, Milner, Smith, Little, Hydrick, Coverdell, and Amos, July 19, 1982 and “Brief Campaign Outline For The Bell Campaign,” n.d. both in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 6, Coverdell Papers; Sam Hopkins, “Bell claims victory in GOP race,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 11, 1982, Sec. A, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 306-309; Nordan, “Look Away, Dixieland,” 67-70; Thomas G. Walker and Eleanor Main, “Georgia,” in *The 1984 Presidential Election in the South: Patterns of Southern Party Politics*, eds. Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland, and Tod A. Baker (New York: Praeger, 1986), 99; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1981-82*, 151-158, 295-298.

impossible for Bell to position himself to the right of Joe Frank Harris; running to his left, meanwhile, would likely rupture his Republican base without procuring enough swing votes to justify the risky maneuver. As a result, Mahe argued Bell needed to make the contest “one more of style than substance.” He encouraged the Republican to intensify his anti-corruption to paint Harris as “some kind of off-beat, can’t be trusted type...who’s in the clutches of Tom Murphy,” the powerful but polarizing House speaker. Bell implemented the plan, but Harris shrugged off charges of corruption. Positive press, another key assumption of Bell’s campaign, proved elusive. Most voters seemed to agree with *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editor Jim Minter. Bob Bell was “a good man with a bad platform.” Joe Frank Harris crushed Bob Bell—62.8 to 37.2 percent. Unfortunately for Bob Bell and the GOP, Mack Mattingly’s victory over Herman Talmadge in 1980 did not herald a Republican breakthrough in Georgia.<sup>63</sup>

Georgia Republicans had pinned their electoral hopes on a strong showing in metropolitan Atlanta, but Joe Frank Harris effectively neutralized Bell’s appeal there. The Republican had carried both DeKalb and Cobb, but he did so in the latter with only 51.3 percent—a far cry from Mack Mattingly’s 40-point margin of victory there in 1980. High turnout among African-American voters in the City of Atlanta, meanwhile, overwhelmed Bell’s strongholds on the Northside and in North Fulton County. The benefit of having Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller as Harris’s running mate cannot be underestimated either. His primary challenge against Herman Talmadge in 1980 had won him legions supporters among core liberal groups such as labor, women, and minorities. Miller would have won a third consecutive term

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<sup>63</sup> Eddie Mahe, Jr. “Strategy Against Harris,” August 30, 1982 in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Jim Minter, “Bob Bell: a good man with a bad platform,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 5, 1982, Sec. D, p. 2; Bob Bell for Governor Political Advertisement in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 4, Coverdell Papers; Hank Ezell, “Bell, Harris lay out campaign approaches,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 2, 1982, Sec. A, p. 1, 19; Dick Williams, “Growing-pains of a two-party system,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 25, 1982, Sec. B, p. 2; Bill Shipp, “Ask not for whom the bells toll; it’s the GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 3, 1982, Sec. C, p. 2; Editorial: “Democratic landslide a lesson for the GOP,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 3, 1982, Sec. A, p. 4; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1981-82*, 374-375.

with or without Joe Frank Harris, but his name on the ballot undoubtedly garnered his capable, yet uninspiring, running mate additional votes.<sup>64</sup>

All was not so bleak for Georgia Republicans in 1982. The GOP picked two additional seats in the state Senate. The Bell challenge had also proven just potent enough that the Democratic Party of Georgia “borrowed and spent like drunks and dug out their traditional voters by the busload,” according to political reporter Tom Teepen. Predictions of a competitive two-party Georgia may well have been premature, but, all in all, the party’s showing in 1982 evinced an underlying strength neutralized by several contingent factors beyond its immediate control.<sup>65</sup>

Neither Fred Cooper nor Paul Coverdell had expected the party-building program they championed to succeed in the span of one election cycle. One cycle, however, was all Fred Cooper lasted as chairman. Promoted to a higher position within his company, Cooper no longer had the free time necessary for what had become a full-time job. Georgia Republicans on the state executive committee turned to its titular leader, Bob Bell, who had surrendered his seat in the General Assembly to run for governor. Bell accepted the position on two conditions. First, he refused to preside over a divided party. Second, party members, leaders and rank-and-file alike, had to redouble their efforts to meet long-term goals. The full state central committee ratified his election by acclamation during a meeting at Callaway Gardens. Most political observers considered Bell’s appointment a positive development for the party. Bill Shipp remarked, “One is tempted to shrug off Bell as just another well-intentioned, tough-talking but ineffectual GOP chairman...[but] Bell is a of a different stripe.” He had devoted his long legislative career to

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<sup>64</sup> Sam Hopkins, “Bell admits defeat after hopes vanish,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 3, 1982, Sec. A, p. 14; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 104-105; Jim Lovejoy, “A Study of 1982 and 1980 Turnout and the Swing Vote,” n.d. in Series 3, Box 175, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1981-82*, 374-375; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1979-80*, 453.

<sup>65</sup> Tom Teepen, “State GOP gaining inch by inch,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 11, 1982, Sec. A, p. 22; Bill Shipp, “Real 2-party system is still a dream,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1982.

crafting careful policies, confronting his Democratic colleagues' real and perceived shortcomings, and promoting the Republican brand with zeal. Bob Bell, therefore, fit the Republican mold developed by the state party's core of reformist Republicans.<sup>66</sup>

Bell continued and expanded the party-building initiatives his predecessor had introduced. He hired Republican strategist Tom Hockaday to serve as the party's new executive director. Hockaday worked closely with Joe Rogers, Jr. to enhance the fundraising program first envisioned by Cooper. Perhaps the most meaningful step undertaken by Bell, Hockaday, and Rogers was to intensify the party's pursuit of high-dollar donors. With little state-level political clout, major donors in the business community and elsewhere gave sparingly, if at all, to the Republican Party of Georgia. To address this major shortcoming, the state party established the Georgia Republican Foundation to cater exclusively to major donors. Hockaday noted that previous major-donor programs similar to the Republican Foundation had raised "a good deal of money and helped to fund the party," but he also recognized they had done "little to establish a sense of longevity to the financial arm of the party." Without a clear sense of purpose and continuity between administrations, these critical fundraising programs had ceased.<sup>67</sup>

Republican leaders anticipated the Georgia Republican Foundation would provide the bulk of the party's operating budget. As a result, its chairman needed to be "an aggressive person" able to raise vast sums of money. "The key to obtaining these high dollars," Hockaday informed Bell, Rogers, and finance committee chairman Mark Stevens, "is to insure the

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<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Georgia Republican State Committee Meeting, Callaway Gardens, January 15, 1983 and Minutes of the Georgia Republican Executive Committee Meeting, Callaway Gardens, January 15, 1983 both in Series 2, Subseries C, Box 10, Folder 14, Mattingly Papers (quote from first document); Bill Shipp, "Bob Bell: Moses of the state GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 9, 1983, Sec. B, p. 2; Sam Hopkins, "Bob Bell elected GOP's state party chairman," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1983, Sec. C, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Schedule of Fundraising Events for 1983, n.d.; Georgia Republican Party Finance Committee Duties, n.d.; Tom Hockaday to Bob Bell, Joe Rogers, and Mark L. Stevens, August 24, 1983; Paul D. Coverdell, Political Memorandum, December 18, 1985 all in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 19, Georgia Republican Party Records; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 50.

contributors that there is a sound investment for their money and a positive return for their contribution.” In addition to maintaining its balance sheets separate from other party accounts, Hockaday proposed investing the bulk of foundation money into highly visible forms of candidate assistance like campaign workshops and “modern equipment,” like computers, that would give Republicans a technological edge over their Democratic opponents. To a lesser extent, these funds would also enhance research, recruitment, and outreach efforts ahead of the next election. “The Foundation is critical and instrumental for our success,” Paul Coverdell wrote in late 1985, “Of course, it supplies media, cash, [but] more importantly, it builds a legacy...A footing for the Party, so that it does not ever have its back against the wall.” That was a rosy proposition indeed for a political party that had functioned on an ad hoc, hand-to-mouth basis for virtually its entire existence.<sup>68</sup>

With no serious challenge to Senator Sam Nunn and the Reagan-Bush '84 committees integrated with the RNC, Jay Morgan, Tom Hockaday's successor, oversaw an extensive down-ballot campaign in Georgia. At the legislative level, the state party coordinated with an independent group spearheaded by former Republican national committeeman Nolan Murrah and state Representative John Linder. Originally referred to as “Progress Georgia,” Murrah renamed the organization “Operation Breakthrough,” a political action committee composed of “businessmen and concerned citizens...to bring to Georgia a two-party system and a modern, business-like approach to government.” The program focused exclusively on recruiting and resourcing state legislative candidates while augmenting similar programs provided by the official Republican organization. Although independent of the party, Operation Breakthrough's leaders had agreed to “tithe” ten percent of its fundraising haul to the Georgia Republican Party. State party chairman Bob Bell also maintained a seat on its board to ensure its adherence to “the

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<sup>68</sup> Minutes of the State Committee Meeting, Atlanta, November 19, 1983 in Series 3, Box 3, Folder 2, Barr Papers.

goals and objectives of the Legislative Campaign Plan,” which targeted four state senate seats and approximately ten seats in the General Assembly’s lower house. By mobilizing a well-funded, multifaceted campaign program, Georgia Republicans found themselves in a position to compete more efficiently and effectively than they had in years.<sup>69</sup>

The Reagan landslide extended to Georgia in 1984. Not surprisingly, Ronald Reagan won 135 counties and carried the state with just over 60 percent of the vote against a Mondale-Ferraro that had done little to excite Georgia Democrats. Former vice president Walter Mondale had won Fulton County with 57 percent of the vote, but the Republicans captured the surrounding suburbs. This increasingly familiar voting pattern popularized the image of a metropolitan Atlanta “doughnut” with Republicans dominating the suburban periphery with Democratic Fulton County representing the hole at the center. Reagan’s popularity in the “doughnut” proved an asset to Republican Pat Swindall who rode the president’s coattails to a 53.1-percent victory over incumbent Democrat Elliott Levitas in the suburban Fourth District. GOP candidates also won a smattering of county and local seats in these increasingly Republican suburbs during the 1984 cycle. Democrats, however, proved far more resilient outside the “doughnut” as Republican congressional and statewide candidates remained incapable of mounting serious challenges.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> [Jay Morgan], “Georgia Legislative Program: Campaign Plan,” [1984] in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 19, Georgia Republican Party Records; “What Operation Breakthrough Is,” n.d. in Series 2, Box 10, Folder 4, Georgia Republican Party Records; Ann Woolner, “Reagan comes to Georgia,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 26, 1984, Sec. A, p. 1, back); Minutes of the State Committee Meeting, Macon, February 11, 1984 in Series 3, Box 3, Folder 2, Barr Papers; Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 131-132; Jay Morgan to Bob Bell, February 14, 1984; Georgia Republican Party Plan for 1983-84, [March 15, 1984] both in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 19, Georgia Republican Party Records; Jim Galloway, “GOP vying to crack Democrats’ control of Georgia politics,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 14, 1984, Sec. A, p. 1, 16-17; “Georgia Republicans begin the road to two parties,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 2, 1984, Sec. C, p. 2; Operation Breakthrough: Georgians for a Two-Party System, June 8, 1984 in Box 2, Folder 7, Marguerite Williams Papers, Bentley Rare Book Gallery and Special Collections, Horace W. Sturgis Library, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA; Bill Shipp, “Dixie is now Reagan country,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1984, Sec. A, p. 18; Bob Dart, “Mattingly optimistic about Georgia GOP’s increasing strength,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 12, 1984, Sec. D, p. 9; Walker and Main, “Georgia,” 109-110.

<sup>70</sup> Deskins, Jr., Walton, Jr., and Puckett, *Presidential Elections, 1789-2008*, 480-482; *Georgia Official and Statistical Register, 1983-84*, 219-220; Ellie Novek, “South the ‘battleground’ for Republicans, party strategists are



In the General Assembly, Republicans captured another pair of seats in the state Senate and three more in the House—all five Operation Breakthrough targets. This brought the Democratic balance of power in the upper house to 45-9 from 47-7 and to 154-26 from 157-23 in the lower house. An additional eight contests targeted by Operation Breakthrough were decided by between one and five points. “An analysis of election results should be very encouraging to those interested in a two-party system in Georgia,” Nolan Murrah boasted in a late November letter to the PAC’s contributors.<sup>71</sup>

Although limited and highly concentrated in suburban counties, Republican electoral gains nonetheless boosted Republican morale and raised additional funds since the Georgia GOP’s long-term, party-building initiatives had begun yielding positive returns on investment. Whether or not these newly elected, mostly inexperienced, Republican officeholders could retain their seats in future elections would determine how just how entrenched the Georgia Republican Party’s foothold was in its metropolitan Atlanta and how far its appeal extended beyond the suburban “doughnut.”

Just a matter of months after declaring the 1984 election “a foundation we can continue to build on in 1985,” Bob Bell announced he would not seek another term as Republican Party chief. Another victim of career-related pressures, Bell recommended Senate Minority Leader Paul Coverdell succeed him. In many ways, the job represented the logical conclusion for the consummate party insider who had played an instrumental role in formulating the party’s resurgence for the better part of a decade. Senator Mack Mattingly, U.S. representatives Newt Gingrich and Pat Swindall, Georgia House Minority Leader Johnny Isakson, and Macon mayor

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told,” *Atlanta Journal*, March 1, 1985, Sec. A, p. 4; County Chairmen’s Conference Summary, Macon, January 12, 1985 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 32, Georgia Republican Party Records; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 508-512.

<sup>71</sup> Nolan Murrah to Operation Breakthrough Contributors, November 11, 1984 in Series 2, Box 10, Folder 4, Georgia Republican Party Records. Republicans gains came in legislative races for seats in Chatham, Cobb, Columbia, Fayette, Glynn, and Gwinnett counties.

George Israel were among the 150 signatures on a joint letter delivered to over 500 influential state Republicans endorsing Coverdell. A concerted effort on behalf of the Georgia Republican establishment to forestall any credible challenge to Coverdell, the deluge of endorsements worked, and the veteran legislator won unopposed at the party's state convention in Macon. Dubbing himself a "principled architect of new outreaches," Coverdell began an intense campaign to broaden the Republican Party's appeal ahead of the 1986 campaign.<sup>72</sup>

Mack Mattingly's reelection bid devoured the bulk of press attention and party resources throughout 1985 and into 1986. With assistance from the RNC and the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the state party operated on the assumption that boosting Mack Mattingly's reelection effort would benefit Georgia's down-ballot Republicans. Utilizing a new, expanded database of potential Republican voters, state party officials were able to facilitate registration, outreach, and turnout more effectively.

After analyzing recent election returns, the state party developed a list of 43 "target counties" ahead of 1986. Of this number, 19 received "priority A" designation, 20 listed as secondary "B" counties, and the remaining 4 counties included to facilitate registration and outreach lists. In priority counties—mostly metropolitan and suburban ones—the GOP continued its full slate of party-building initiatives while it focused almost exclusively on candidate recruitment in secondary counties where high-profile, statewide Republicans had performed well. Once party officials identified potential candidates, Operation Breakthrough helped "close the sale" and convince prospects to qualify and run as Republicans. Afterward, these candidates would receive campaign support from national, state, and PAC sources depending on the office

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<sup>72</sup> Robert H. Bell to Mack Mattingly, December 5, 1984 in Series 2, Subseries C, Box 10, Folder 12, Mattingly Papers; Robin Toner, "Coverdell seeks state GOP post," *Atlanta Journal*, March 26, 1985, Sec. A, p. 11; Sam Hopkins, "Bell recommends Coverdell take over GOP," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 23, 1985, Sec. C, p. 1; Jim Galloway, "GOP holds 'Mattingly convention'—State party to solidify support for '86 effort in Macon get-together," *Atlanta Journal*, May 17, 1985, Sec. B, p. 2.

being sought. The tactic appeared successful as the party fielded one of its largest legislative slates in the party's modern history. Twenty-three Republicans qualified for state Senate races while sixty-one House candidates waged campaigns in 1986. Additional Republicans also qualified local races in heavily targeted areas like West Cobb, Cherokee, Clayton, Fayette, and Gwinnett in a concerted effort to solidify GOP gains in the Atlanta suburbs.<sup>73</sup>

Paul Coverdell and other top Republicans remained reluctant to challenge Governor Joe Frank Harris. They reasoned a serious contender would only boost turnout among Democratic voters who might otherwise sit out an election where Harris and other popular Democrats like Zell Miller and Secretary of State Max Cleland were unopposed. Mack Mattingly, Newt Gingrich, and Pat Swindall, they contended, would prove a sufficient draw for Republicans without expending resources on an uphill race against Harris. Other Republicans, however, recalled 1978 when Rodney Cook offered himself as a candidate to prevent Uncle Bud Herrin from seizing the nomination. "I think we ought to be finding some good candidate for all these offices," argued former state chairman Bob Bell, "If they attacked windmills and lost, so what?" Refusing to challenge the incumbent governor in 1986, these Republicans reasoned, only reinforced the party's image as a weak and ineffectual—a caricature Republican leaders like Coverdell had spent more a decade attempting to dispel.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Political Operations – Briefing, [1985] in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 32, Georgia Republican Party Records; Jay Morgan to PDC, August 30, 1985 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 34, Georgia Republican Party Records; Lanny Griffith to William I. Greener, III through Ed Brookover, II, April 2, 1986 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 23, Georgia Republican Party Records; Jim Galloway, "Mattingly ties re-election to GOP survival," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 19, 1985, Sec. B, p. 1; Georgia GOP, 1985-86: Comprehensive Candidate Program Executive Summary, n.d. in Series 3, Box 31, Folder 21, Georgia Republican Party Records; David Morrison and Sam Hopkins, "GOP fails to field a full slate, focuses on legislative contests," *Atlanta Journal*, June 12, 1986, Sec. D, p. 15. Cooperation between the Georgia Republican Party and Operation Breakthrough was not always harmonious. See, Jay Morgan to PDC, November 15, [1985] in Series 2, Box 10, Folder 4, Georgia Republican Party Records and James L. Morgan, III to John Linder, November 20, 1985 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 34, Georgia Republican Party Records.

<sup>74</sup> David Morrison, "GOP plans to pass up statewide races, focus on Mattingly," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5, 1986, Sec. A, p. 1.

Journalist Bill Shipp remained confident “some do-dah, clutching a pauper’s oath and wearing a beanie with a propeller on it, will finally come forward to run for governor as a Republican.” Much to the chagrin of the party leaders like Coverdell, his prediction came to pass. Shipp admitted Sandy Springs attorney Guy Davis, Jr. was no beanie-wearing, crank candidate, but his eleventh-hour defiance of party officials ensured he would wage a pauper’s campaign against the heavily favored Joe Frank Harris. A former homicide detective and assistant district attorney, Davis was a political gadfly with no experience running for office. His platform, which included planks supporting pari-mutuel gaming and abortion rights, was shockingly liberal. Buoyed an improving economy and a successful no-tax pledge, Harris cruised to victory against Davis with 70.5 percent of the vote.<sup>75</sup>

The Georgia Republican Party pursued a Mattingly-first campaign strategy in 1986. Apart from Gingrich and Swindall, it fielded only Presbyterian minister Joseph Morecraft, III to offer a pro forma challenge against George (Buddy) Darden in the Cobb-centric Seventh Congressional District. Darden dispatched Morecraft with ease—winning two-thirds of the vote. With Guy Davis ignored by the GOP as well as Joe Frank Harris, all eyes were on Mattingly’s reelection contest against Atlanta congressman Wyche Fowler.<sup>76</sup>

Fowler had represented Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District since 1977 when President Jimmy Carter appointed Andy Young to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Fowler had earned a reputation as a center-left Democrat in-step with his heavily African-

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<sup>75</sup> Bill Shipp, “State GOP can’t make inroads on the basis of single combat,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 12, 1985, Sec. A, p. 9; David Morrison, “GOP gubernatorial candidate Davis qualifies for race,” *Atlanta Journal*, June 4, 1986, Sec. B, p. 1; Bill Shipp, “Gubernatorial candidate Guy Davis doesn’t fit GOP conservative image,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 25, 1986, Sec. A, p. 13; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 275; AP, “Georgia Governor Coasting To Second Term,” *Ocala (FL) Star-Banner*, October 10, 1986, Sec. A, p. 7; Sam Hopkins and David Morrison, “Harris wins easily over GOP’s Davis—Governor: 3-1 margin is ‘vote of confidence,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1986, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> “The House,” *Washington Post*, November 6, 1986, Sec. A, p. 54; Sam Hopkins, “Republican Davis runs lonely race for governor—Candidate is snubbed by Harris, own party,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 2, 1986, Sec. B, p. 9.

American district's progressive priorities. He was a known liberal with practically no name recognition outside metropolitan Atlanta, and most political observers expected Mattingly to win reelection. Yet, as a skilled retail politician, Fowler proved remarkably adept at shifting to the political center and boosting his appeal beyond Atlanta.<sup>77</sup>

The Atlanta Democrat had already successfully demonstrated his campaign strategy during the Democratic senatorial primary contest against Carter confidante Hamilton Jordan and state Representative John D. Russell. Jordan and Russell were more conservative than Fowler, and both attempted to tag him as a stereotypical Atlantan, too liberal to appeal to voters statewide. Fowler, however, worked tirelessly defying this image. He campaigned heavily outside the metropolitan area. Never failing to mention his votes in favor of agriculture spending, he also endorsed tougher penalties for drug violators and stricter anti-terrorism measures. A throwback to a bygone era of Georgia politicking, Fowler even crooned spirituals on the stump from time to time. The strategy paid off. Fowler carried Atlanta and won enough rural and small-town votes to secure the nomination without a runoff. He applied the same strategy with aplomb in the general election campaign against Mack Mattingly.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the obvious hurdles confronting any Republican candidate for statewide office in 1986, Mack Mattingly failed to lay a solid groundwork for reelection by ignoring constituents and pursuing a misguided effort to broaden his electoral appeal during the general election. Owing perhaps to his lack of political experience, Mattingly neglected critical activities familiar to most Georgia voters. Herman Talmadge had relished constituent services; his successor did not. Arriving in Washington fresh after winning an outsider campaign, the Republican attempted

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<sup>77</sup> Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 273-274.

<sup>78</sup> William E. Schmidt, "2 Democrats Gain In Georgia Drive," *New York Times*, August 10, 1986, p. 27; David S. Broder, "Fowler Swamps Jordan, Could Avoid Runoff," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1986, Sec. A, p. 1, 10; David S. Broder, "Fowler Wins Senate Nod In Georgia; Bond, Lewis Facing Runoff in House Race," *Washington Post*, August 14, 1986, Sec. A, p. 3; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 273-274.

to remain above politics by refusing to involve himself in local matters back home in Georgia. “At times, his efforts to appear beyond approach, to seem interested only in the government’s business,” Steve Oney of the *Atlanta Constitution* wrote of the freshman senator in 1981, “gives him a priggish air.” He routinely neglected to return phone calls from business and community leaders from Georgia, and he even returned a portion of his senate office allotment rather than bulk up constituent outreach efforts. Instead, Mattingly appeared more at ease parsing arcane subjects like supply-side economics and banking regulations than discussing more familiar, bread-and-butter issues confronting Georgia voters. When he did travel home during recess periods, he usually spent his time in St. Simons or Atlanta rather than touring the state or making appearances at special events. This aloofness led Georgia Democrats to impugn the freshman Republican as the “Senator from Georgetown.”<sup>79</sup>

Mattingly relied heavily on expensive television and radio advertising throughout the campaign to compensate for his perennial absence from the state. He also devoted precious time and resources courting the African-American vote, which had proven essential to his success against Herman Talmadge in 1980. “Friends of Mattingly” purchased radio spots featuring “upbeat, funky” music that aired on African-American radio stations around the state. These substance-free ads afforded the Fowler campaign an opportunity to dredge up unflattering votes, such as the senator’s unwillingness to sanction South Africa over its apartheid policies. Mattingly routinely touted his support for the national Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, but he spent almost as much time reiterating his concerns regarding its potentially negative economic impact. Mattingly boasted the endorsement of Tyrone Brooks, an influential and outspoken African-American Democratic state legislator from Fulton County. Brooks offered a litany of

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<sup>79</sup> Steve Oney, “Mack Mattingly’s Mission,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 14, 1981, Sec. K, p. 12; L. Marvin Overby, “Political Amateurism, Legislative Inexperience, & Incumbency Behavior: Southern Republican Senators, 1980-1986,” *Polity* 25, no. 3 (Spring 1993), 405, 414-416.

reasons why he supported Mattingly, but the inclusion of strident statements insisting he was “Not A Yellow-Dog Democrat” suggested his endorsement of Mattingly served the dual purpose of repudiating Wyche Fowler—a long-time rival. Mattingly’s stands against affirmative action and compulsory busing, however, did little to endear him to black voters. With Herman Talmadge out to pasture, the vast majority of the black voters who had backed Mack Mattingly in 1980 returned to the Democratic fold in 1986.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, Wyche Fowler shocked Mack Mattingly and the Georgia Republican Party on Election Day. Fowler assembled the biracial coalition essential to any statewide Democrat’s electoral fortunes. He won handily among black voters and carried approximately 40 percent of the white vote. Mattingly had outperformed his previous showing in rural precincts across the state, but the suburban Republican surge that had carried him to victory in 1980 never materialized. “The doughnut’s still cooking,” Mattingly had insisted as suburban votes continued trickling in well past midnight. Fowler, an Atlanta Democrat, secured a 10,000-vote margin in metropolitan Atlanta by running up votes in Fulton and DeKalb counties and cutting into Mattingly’s lead elsewhere. Sweeping the majority-minority precincts both in the metro and the Black Belt and winning just enough rural white votes elsewhere, Wyche Fowler defeated Mack Mattingly by 51 to 49 percent.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Hal Straus, “Mattingly radio spot targeting the black vote—33% supported senator in ’80,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 8, 1986, Sec. A, p. 6; Tyrone Brooks, “Why I Will Vote Again For U.S. Senator Mack Mattingly,” October 17, 1986 in Series 1, Box 4, Folder 2, Georgia Republican Party Records; Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 124-125; Jim Galloway and Kevin Sack, “Campaign 86—Ebullient Fowler stumps in South Georgia; Mattingly opens office in black-community,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 24, 1986, Sec. A, p. 12; Jim Galloway, “Mattingly makes gains with black—Fowler supporters contesting the size of Republican drift,” *Atlanta Journal*, October 27, 1986, Sec. A, p. 1; 1986 Debate Prep Notes in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 31, Folder 3, Mattingly Papers; Tyrone Brooks to Richard [Moore], September 25, 1986 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 32, Folder 3, Mattingly Papers; Joe Ledlie, “Fowler’s Gift Horse Bites Him,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 27, 1977, Sec. A, p. 6; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 441-442; Minchin, “An Historic Upset,” 194-195.

<sup>81</sup> Kevin Sack, “Republican backers stunned by Mattingly’s loss to Fowler,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 5, 1986, Sec. A, p. 13; Binford, “Georgia: Political Realignment or Partisan Evolution,” 185-186; Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 125.

Like Mattingly's victory in 1980, any number of factors contributed to his defeat six years later. He was one of six Republican senators, including three additional southerners, to lose in 1986 as Democrats won back control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since 1981. Tim Ryles, a political scientist working as a legislative director for the Communications Workers of America, authored a post-election analysis entitled "The Anatomy of Defeat." Ryles, who would go on to defeat Billy Lovett in 1990 to become Georgia's Insurance Commissioner, argued three factors cut against Mattingly in 1986. First, Mattingly misinterpreted his previous victory. He had attracted large numbers of upwardly mobile, well-educated metropolitan voters against the rural-based Talmadge in 1980. Replicating that strategy against Wyche Fowler, who had represented the Fifth Congressional District for almost a decade, would be difficult since the Democrat possessed a "firm beachhead...in the center of Mattingly country."<sup>82</sup>

Second, Mattingly had erred by attempting to broaden its base, especially with key Democratic groups like African Americans and young voters, rather than "intensifying commitments from voters already aligned with him." By eschewing a base-oriented campaign, the Republican incumbent overestimated his appeal among both his suburban voters as well as more marginal groups. This misguided strategy only served to reinforce Fowler's electoral clout with those same constituencies.<sup>83</sup>

Third, Mattingly's organization did not lack for money and resources in 1986, but its media strategy misfired badly. He overemphasized Fowler's absenteeism from the House of Representatives as well as his opponent's liberalism. Both strategies had already failed when Hamilton Jordan had pursued them in the Democratic primary. Ryles suggested a media strategy linking Fowler with high-profile bogeymen on the left may have succeeded. Paul Coverdell had

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<sup>82</sup> Tim Ryles, "The Anatomy of Defeat: Fowler Versus Mattingly, 1986," in Series 3, Box 162, Folder 7, Coverdell Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



urged Mattingly to develop new anti-Fowler ads, and Newt Gingrich had implored him early in the campaign to employ an “us-versus-them strategy.” Mattingly’s campaign evidently declined both suggestions. Ryles also blamed low turnout for the incumbent’s defeat—a rationale Georgia GOP executive director Jay Morgan also stressed in his own election postmortem.<sup>84</sup>

Lost in the postelection media churn, were successful down-ballot Republicans in Georgia. Although the GOP picked up only a single Senate seat and held even in the House, Republicans won 14 of 19 partisan county races. In metropolitan Atlanta, Republicans ousted the remaining Democrats on the Fayette and Gwinnett county commissions. The GOP also enlarged its majority on the Cobb County Commission when Chuck Clay defeated Democratic incumbent Butch Thompson. Beyond Atlanta, Lee Neel and Herb Beckham won commission seats in Richmond County, and Republican commissioners also won in Glynn and Harris counties. “The ever-struggling GOP is building itself up, layer by thin layer, like an onion,” surveyed columnist Tom Teepen in the election’s wake.<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, a number of future Republican heavyweights—in addition to future Georgia Republican Party chairman and State senator Chuck Clay—won election in 1986. Future Senate Minority Leader Arthur B. (Skin) Edge, IV defeated former Georgia attorney general Arthur Bolton to win a seat representing Spalding, Coweta, and Pike counties. Sallie Newbill, the GOP’s first female member of the General Assembly, tallied the party’s highest vote total—73 percent—in her successful race for a seat situated in the Republican heartlands of East Cobb, North Fulton, and South Forsyth counties. These small electoral gains may have seemed like

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 275; Frederick Allen, “Political assumptions lose in Senate campaign,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1986, Sec. A, p. 22; James L. Morgan to Paul D. Coverdell, November 18, 1986 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 34, Georgia Republican Party Records; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 430-431; Dick Williams, “Coverdell wrong target of the frustrated GOP,” *Atlanta Journal*, November 11, 1986, Sec. A, p. 11; Newt Gingrich to Mack Mattingly, July 11, 1986 in Series 1, Subseries C, Box 31, Folder 1, Mattingly Papers.

<sup>85</sup> Tom Teepen, “Step by step, state GOP gaining,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 6, 1986, Sec. A, p. 20; Bert Roughton, Jr., “Republican victories in ‘doughnut’ leave Democrats in the hole,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 6, 1986, Sec. B, p. 1.

small comfort for Republicans mourning the loss of Mattingly's Senate seat, but several future leaders won their races. Thanks to the state party's recruitment, training, and targeting initiative, these Republican won office and gained valuable experience.<sup>86</sup>

Given the number and severity of campaign missteps, as well as his opponent's unique skillset, Mack Mattingly's loss is not altogether surprising. That he managed to keep his margin of loss so small in an off-year, statewide election is largely overlooked and underappreciated. A drop in the suburban vote may well have doomed Mattingly in 1986, but his performance in the small towns and rural countryside of Middle and South Georgia reassured Republicans like Jay Morgan who understood the party's future success relied on its ability to expand its appeal beyond its suburban strongholds. With the exception of 1980, Republican candidates had largely failed to woo African-American voters away from the Democratic Party. If black voters would not crossover and vote Republican, then perhaps the rural, white element of the Democrat Party's "night-and-day" coalition would. Indeed, Jay Morgan urged state chairman Paul Coverdell, "We must make our move now and exploit the coming fight between southern Georgia white populist/conservatives and their soon-to-be adversaries—the metro, urban blacks and liberals." Capitalizing on this rift, Morgan reasoned, would rupture the Democratic Party's fragile, biracial alliance to the long-term benefit of Georgia Republicans.<sup>87</sup>

Elaborating on the 1986 midterm election's significance, political scientist Alexander Lamis concluded, "[T]his recent round of election leaves the South littered with memories of many hard-fought two-party campaigns and gliding forward on a level partisan plane." Others, like Bill Shipp, observed political storm clouds gathering in the not-too-distant future. According to Shipp, Mattingly's defeat, the GOP's inability to field a serious gubernatorial candidate, and a

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<sup>86</sup> Jay Morgan to Paul Coverdell, November 18, 1986 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 34, Georgia Republican Party Records.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

strong desire among establishment Republicans in Georgia to nominate George Bush for president in 1988 were “the main ingredients in this current recipe for rebellion.” Indeed, Republican national committeeman Carl Gillis had admitted as much after conservatives failed to challenge Paul Coverdell at the 1985 state convention. “The conservative group lost out, not knowing what was at stake,” Gillis explained following Coverdell’s coronation, “What was at stake today was probably the 1988 delegation the national convention.” All three proved correct.

Through sheer dint of hard work and political will, a new generation of leaders revived the Georgia Republican Party. These Republican leaders had strengthened ties to the Republican National Committee and developed modern, hi-tech party machinery, which enabled the state party to maximize its limited resources, rebuild its electoral base in the suburbs, and enhance its down-ballot appeal statewide. A decade of pragmatic state leadership and a modicum of success at the ballot box had allayed factional strife within the party, but those divisions did not dissipate entirely. Just as ideological conservatives inspired by Barry Goldwater’s principled opposition to Modern Republicanism had seized control of the party apparatus from the moderate Atlanta faction in 1964, a new breed of insurgents rebelled against the Republican establishment in 1988. In the short-term, this grassroots challenge led by social conservatives energized by Pat Robertson and the Christian Right threatened to divide the party and imperil its hard-fought gains. In the long-term, however, the influx of cultural conservatives into the Georgia Republican Party during the late 1980s and 1990s provided the party with additional activists, recruits, and volunteers. These resources combined with the critical party-building initiatives implemented during the previous decade enabled the Georgia Republican Party to capitalize on long-term structural transformations like population growth and demographic change to crack

the Democratic Party's biracial coalition by uniting white conservatives across the state under the Republican banner.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 297; Bill Shipp, "Georgia GOP at crossroads: will it take a hard right?" *Atlanta Constitution*, December 19, 1986, Sec. A, p. 23; Carol H. Morita, "Atlanta's Coverdell takes helm of Republican Party in Georgia," *Macon Telegraph and News*, Sec. C, p. 1, 2 (quote on 2); Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 443-444.

## CHAPTER 7

### FUNDAMENTALS AND FUNDAMENTALISTS, 1987-2003

Prior to winning election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978, Newt Gingrich had distinguished himself as a perceptive political strategist in Georgia. Working alongside Paul Coverdell, Bob Irvin, and Mack Mattingly, Gingrich had helped reinvigorate a moribund state party and laid the foundations for a modern, professional Republican Party in Georgia. Once in Congress, Gingrich devoted the lion's share of his attention to national politics, but he still drew inspiration from his Georgia Republican roots. Looking ahead to the 1988 election, Gingrich drafted "A Proposed Shift from the GOP's 1974 Survival Model to a 1988 Ascending Model of Politics." Faced with the prospect of extinction, post-Watergate Republicans had "invented a modern professional GOP aimed specifically at creating a technically-driven, financially-strong minority capable of surviving by optimizing its ability to gather and direct resources." True of both the Republican National Committee as well as the Georgia Republican Party, Gingrich warned the GOP risked becoming a permanent minority. Direct mail, high-dollar donations, mechanical turnout operations, and centralized planning, had kept the party afloat, but Gingrich argued those strengths had become "proof of elitism" and "an easy target for Democrats seeking to regain the populist label." Gingrich counseled Republicans to embrace "the permanent campaign-government cycle" to shape the agenda. Republicans nationwide must appeal to voters "within their culture on their terms and within their organization." Republican organizations at all levels should function in concert with likeminded organizations and outside groups "to

combine our vision with the public will to achieve power.” The party organization must serve as the conduit for rather the driver of the Republican message.<sup>1</sup>

The modernization efforts undertaken by the Georgia Republican Party during the mid-1970s and early 1980s informed much of Gingrich’s analysis. Mack Mattingly, Paul Coverdell, and company had rebuilt the flagging Georgia GOP by emphasizing “nuts and bolts” party-building initiatives and investing in critical organizational infrastructure like computer technology, data analysis, and human resources. The state party had limped along on a pauper’s budget following Watergate, but it boasted a regular cash flow of several hundred thousand dollars by the time Coverdell prepared to step down as chairman in 1987. Georgia Republicans had stopped the bleeding and began making small, but steady, progress. Nevertheless, it remained a distinct, geographically concentrated minority in Georgia.<sup>2</sup> Its base of support remained too small, its image too elitist, and its party leadership—based in the affluent, Atlanta suburbs—prevented Republicans from achieving a major political breakthrough in Georgia. Offering only sporadic competition in statewide and congressional contests, the party had relied on Republican presidential candidates to boost its down-ballot fortunes. This strategy, however, remained woefully inadequate as ticket-splitting remained common in presidential contests. In short, the Democrats still outnumbered and outgunned Republicans in Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Newt Gingrich, “A Proposed Shift from the GOP’s 1974 Survival Model to a 1988 Ascending Majority Model of Politics,” n.d. in Series 5, Box 51, Folder 1, Stealy Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Binford, Tom Baxter, and David E. Sturrock, “Georgia: Democratic Bastion No Longer,” in *Southern Politics in the 1990s*, ed. Alexander P. Lamis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 128; Paul Coverdell to Jay Morgan, Lee Raudonis, and Dan Searby, November 20, 1986 in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 22, Georgia Republican Party Records.

<sup>3</sup> See, Joseph A. Aistrup, “Top-Down Republican Party Development in the South: A Test of Schlesinger’s Theory,” Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 1989; Joseph A. Aistrup, “Republican Contestation of State Senate Elections in the South,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (May 1990): 227-245; Charles S. Bullock III, “Republican Officeholding at the Local Level in Georgia,” *Southeastern Political Review* 21, no. 1 (March 1993): 113-131; Charles S. Bullock III, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?” in *The New Politics of the Old South*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., eds. Charles S. Bullock III and Mark J. Rozell (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 52-53.

Nevertheless, several structural developments hinted at a brighter future for the Georgia GOP. First, the Republican Party had become a modern political organization by the late 1980s. Neither cash-strapped nor bereft of talented professional staff, the Republican Party outpaced its Democratic counterpart organizationally and technologically.<sup>4</sup> The Georgia GOP's operating budget, which averaged approximately \$50,000 in the 1970s, had grown to over \$500,000 by the mid-1980s. By 1996, the state party's annual budget neared \$3 million. Georgia Republicans also benefited greatly from technical assistance unavailable to Peach State Democrats. For example, the state party adopted the Optimal Republican Voting Strength (ORVIS) system from Texas in 1987. A sophisticated, targeting instrument utilizing statistical analysis, ORVIS enabled Georgia Republicans to overcome inadequate and, often, nonexistent local party organizations by allocating time, money, and other resources effectively in the most competitive districts. High ORVIS scores, according to political scientist Charles S. Bullock III and former Georgia GOP executive director David J. Shafer, also proved a useful recruiting tool since party officials could point to high ORVIS ratings to persuade potential candidates to run.<sup>5</sup>

With a modern, professional political organization at its disposal, Georgia Republicans were better positioned to capitalize on a second major trend. Spurred on by traditional inducements like low taxes, few regulations, and an overall "business friendly" image as well as massive in-flows of federal dollars undergirding its sprawling military-industrial complex, highway systems, and housing industry, the so-called Sunbelt South had undergone a

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<sup>4</sup> Democrats still maintained significant fundraising advantages thanks to incumbency and ties to deep-pocketed lobbies and interest groups. Republicans began narrowing this advantage as the party grew increasingly competitive and won statewide offices like insurance and public service commissioner in the early 1990s. See also, Lawrence R. Hepburn, "Georgia," in *The Political Life of the American States*, eds. Alan Rosenthal and Maureen Moakley (New York: Praeger, 1984), 171-195 and Eleanor C. Main, Lee Epstein, and Debra L. Elovich, "Georgia: Business as Usual," in *Interest Group Politics in the Southern States*, eds. Ronald J. Hrebienar and Clive S. Thomas (Tuscaloosa and Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1992), 231-248.

<sup>5</sup> Charles S. Bullock III and David J. Shafer, "Party Targeting and Electoral Success," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (November 1997), 573-575 (quote on 575); Clark, "Georgia," 67-68; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 128.

demographic and economic explosion since the 1970s as millions of new residents flocked to promises of high-paying employment and low-cost living.<sup>6</sup> Since 1970, that demographic change had favored Republicans. Out-migration of upper-income whites had ceased while in-migration of similar residents from other parts the country accelerated after 1970. Between 1980 and 1990, Georgia's population expanded by 18.6 percent and added over one million new residents. By 2000, Georgia had grown by an additional 26.4 percent to a total population of 8,186,453.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of these new residents settled in Georgia's suburbs. Just as Urban Republicanism had flourished in the relatively self-contained enclaves in and around post-World War II Atlanta, suburban drove Republican Party development in Georgia at century's end. While bedroom communities had sprung up in Cobb and DeKalb counties beginning in the 1950s, newer suburban developments had emerged along Atlanta's suburban periphery since 1970. Suburban population growth, however, was not confined to metropolitan Atlanta. Several suburban counties proximate to the state's other major urban centers had also experienced rapid growth during the Sunbelt era.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, metropolitan Atlanta remained the epicenter of population growth. In 1970, the total population of the nine-county Atlanta Metropolitan area stood at 1,469,764. Of that figure, 45.5 percent, resided within the City of Atlanta Limits. A decade later, the region's population had grown by almost a half-million people to 1,844,483, but the City of Atlanta's share had actually declined. Concomitant suburban growth and urban decline continued into the 1990s. Older suburban counties like Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, and Gwinnett have recently

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<sup>6</sup> The historiography dedicated to the "Sunbelt South" is vast. Republican political strategist Kevin Phillips is credited with coining the Sunbelt term in his landmark *The Emerging Republican Majority*. See also, Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*; Cobb, *The Selling of the South*.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence R. Hepburn and K. Imogene Dean, "Population Patterns," in *Contemporary Georgia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Lawrence R. Hepburn (Athens: The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, The University of Georgia, 1992 [1987]), 101, 110; Marc Perry and Paul J. Mackun, "Population Change and Distribution: Census 2000 Brief," at <https://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-2.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> These counties included Columbia and McDuffie counties outside Augusta; Jones and Houston counties near Macon; Lee County in South Georgia; Bryan and Effingham counties along the Georgia Coast.



grown more racially, economically, and politically diverse while newer exurban counties like Cherokee, Fayette, Forsythe, and even Hall have grown rapidly as white residents from both the urban core and suburban fringe began moving outward during the 1980s and 1990s. By the start of the new millennium, these latter counties had emerged as reliable Republican bastions.<sup>9</sup>

Population growth prompted significant legislative redistricting efforts in Georgia following the 1990 and 2000 censuses. In the long run, this process benefited the GOP since the bulk of new residents lived in Republican-leaning districts. Although the minority party, Republican legislators in the Georgia General Assembly had worked closely with African-American Democrats since the 1980s to draw district boundaries amenable to both groups. A contentious special session in 1981 had redrawn the Fifth Congressional District's boundaries to include more than 65 percent black voters. As a result, the neighboring Fourth District grew whiter and more Republicans. Thanks largely to redistricting, Pat Swindall defeated incumbent Democrat Elliott Levitas in 1984. Redistricting, therefore, represented one of the Georgia GOP's best opportunities to grow more competitive at the ballot box.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, an influx of socially conservative, fundamentalist Christians into the party's ranks provided new, highly motivated Republican activists. That the so-called Christian Right would eventually prove a boon to the GOP was by no means clear when religious conservatives

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<sup>9</sup> Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, eds. *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 11; Bill Shipp, "Elephant Walk: Will Republicans kick donkey in Georgia?" *Atlanta Magazine*, September 1989, p. 43; Benjamin J. Schultz, "Emerging Patterns of Growth and Change in the Southeast," *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (Winter 2011), 553-554; Truman A. Hartshorn and Susan M. Walcott, "The Three Georgias: Emerging Realignment at the Dawn of the New Millennium," *Southeastern Geographer* 40, no. 2 (November 2000), 142-145; Frederick Allen, "Planning for 'outer perimeter' beyond wishful-thinking stage," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 7, 1986, Sec. A, p. 2; Jason Mark Henderson, "Contesting the Spaces of the Automobile: The Politics of Mobility and the Sprawl Debate in Atlanta, Georgia," (PhD diss., Athens: University of Georgia, 2002), 75; Carlton Wade Basmajian, *Atlanta Unbound: Enabling Sprawl through Policy and Planning* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 145; Amy A. Helling and David S. Sawicki, "Disparate Trends: Metropolitan Atlanta since 1960," *Built Environment* 20, not. 1 (1994), 14; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 431; Drew Whitelegg, "'Selling Lifestyles, not Homes': Growth and Politics in Forsyth County, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 45, no. 1 (May 2005), 105, 109-110; Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 24-25; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 126-127.

<sup>10</sup> See, McDonald, *A Voting Rights Odyssey*; Bullock and Gaddie, *The Triumph of Voting Rights*.

burst onto the Georgia political scene in the late 1980s. Antagonized by court rulings regarding public education and abortion rights as well as a protracted “rights revolution” seeking expanded the rights and privileges for women, gays, lesbians, and other historically marginalized groups, the Christian Right mobilized in Georgia and around the country to advance its culturally informed political priorities.<sup>11</sup>

At the national level, Christian conservatives had backed Ronald Reagan’s successful 1980 presidential campaign, but many grew disillusioned with his administration when their concerns were repeatedly ignored. At the state level, the Christian right’s emergence on the political stage proved politically ambiguous in early 1980s. With culturally conservative Democrats like Governor Joe Frank Harris and Speaker of the House Tom Murphy controlling state government, Christian conservatives need not turn to Republicans for support. Although most Republicans opposed the ERA during the 1981-82 ratification fight, several prominent elected officials including Paul Coverdell, Dorothy Felton, and Kil Townsend—all of whom represented upper-income, cosmopolitan districts in Fulton County—endorsed the controversial amendment. The sudden influx of Christian conservative upstarts during the 1988 Republican presidential campaign exacerbated lingering factional tension within the Georgia Republican

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<sup>11</sup> The historical literature related to the Christian or “Religious” Right is voluminous. See, for example, Ruth Mary Brown, *For a Christian Nation: A History of the Religious Right* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010); Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the Conservative Movement* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996); Clyde Wilcox, *God’s Warriors: The Christian Right in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) and *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For historical treatments of Christian Conservatism in the modern South see, Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, “Second Coming: The Strategies of the New Christian Right,” *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 271-294; Charles S. Bullock III and Mark C. Smith, “The Religious Right and Electoral Politics in the South,” in *Politics and Religion in the White South*, ed. Glenn Feldman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 215-230; Robin Morris, “Organizing Breadmakers: Kathryn Dunaway’s ERA Battle and the Roots of Georgia’s Republican Revolution,” in *Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South*, eds. Jonathan Daniel Wells and Sheila R. Phipps (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 161-183; Williams, “Voting for God and the GOP,” 21-37.

Party. The new Christian Right joined forces with the party's ideological right wing during that campaign in a bid to wrest control from what one disaffected Georgia Republican called the "Perrier Crowd" in Atlanta.<sup>12</sup>

Intraparty tension stoked by Christian conservatives proved an immediate curse but ultimately a blessing for the Georgia Republican Party. On one hand, the Christian Right's hardline positions on hot-button cultural issues like abortion sometimes offended moderate Republicans and alienated independent voters. On the other hand, the Christian Right identified and mobilized new voters in Republican as well as Democratic strongholds throughout the state. Their money and manpower could turn elections. Over time, leading Georgia Republicans shifted their tone and positions to win support from influential groups like the Christian Coalition and the Georgia Right to Life. By the early 1990s, Republican candidates needed to "unite religious conservatives and traditional Republicans" to succeed. By the beginning of the new millennium, the Georgia GOP had won over fundamentalist Christians, capitalized on the other fundamental structural transformations, and reshaped the state's entire political landscape.<sup>13</sup>

Paul Coverdell announced he was stepping down as state party chairman in late 1986, and political observers anticipated a bitter, intraparty scramble to replace the veteran Atlanta legislator. Four candidates entered the race. John Stuckey, a Coweta County attorney and Sixth

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<sup>12</sup> Renee D. Turner, "Bell, Davis seek top GOP post," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 22, 1986, Sec. E, p. 2; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 305-312; Georgia, 1981 Legislature in Field File, 1978-82, Box 57, Folder Georgia ERA History 1, ERAmerica Records, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>13</sup> Q. Whit Ayres, "Georgia Voting Trends Since 1980 and What They Mean for Republican Candidates," April 1993 in Series 6, Box 20, Folder 20, Mattingly Papers; Charles S. Bullock III and John Christopher Grant, "Georgia: The Christian Right and Grass Roots Power," in *God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections*, eds. Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 47-65; Charles S. Bullock III and John Christopher Grant, "Georgia: Purists, Pragmatists, and Electoral Outcomes," in *God at the Grass Roots, 1996: The Christian Right in the American Elections*, eds. Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 51-65; Charles S. Bullock III and Mark C. Smith, "Georgia: The Christian Right Meets Its Match," in *Prayers in the Precincts: The Christian Right in the 1998 Elections*, eds. John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000), 59-76; Charles S. Bullock III and Mark C. Smith, "The Influence of Christian Conservatives in the Empire State of the South," in *Representing God at the Statehouse: Religion and Politics in the American States*, eds. Edward L. Clearly and Allen D. Hertzke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 73-99; Gilliland, "The Calculus of Realignment," 443-445.

Congressional District chairman, enjoyed the bulk of establishment support, including Coverdell's endorsement. Also in the running were former gubernatorial candidates Guy Davis and Bob Bell. Brunswick banker Ben Slade rounded out the field. Davis appeared most interested in rehashing his lingering feud with Coverdell and Jay Morgan, the Georgia GOP's executive director, over their perceived lack of support for his 1986 race against Joe Frank Harris. Slade, a close friend of Mack Mattingly, argued his election would demonstrate Republicans' interest in building the party beyond suburban Atlanta. Bell, meanwhile, cast himself as a unifying figure that stood above factional squabbles. Despite moments of acrimony, the 1987 chairman's race failed to live up to the media hype. John Stuckey remained far ahead of his rivals throughout the campaign, and his lead expanded when Guy Davis dropped out of the race in early April. With the solid support of establishment Republicans, Stuckey won with 908 votes. Bob Bell ran second with 393 delegates. Following the vote, Stuckey pledged to unite the party by growing the Republican grassroots statewide and remaining neutral throughout the upcoming presidential election. It would prove a remarkably tall order for Stuckey.<sup>14</sup>

A preview of Stuckey's difficulties came during a Saturday prayer breakfast prior to chairman vote. Televangelist Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and host of the syndicated *700 Club*, delivered the keynote address featuring his signature blend of cultural and economic conservatism. Robertson informed his audience, "I'm dreaming of time when husbands and wives love each other and families hold together...and when little children once again can pray in the schools of America." So, too, did many Georgia voters, and those men

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<sup>14</sup> Sam Hopkins, "Bitter fight brewing over chairmanship of state Republicans," *Atlanta Journal*, January 22, 1987, Sec. D, p. 9; Mel [Steely] to Mary, February 27, 1987 in Series 10, Box 68, Folder 2; Bill Shipp, "Factionalism rends fabric of Georgia's GOP," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 4, 1987, Sec. A, p. 11; Mel [Steely] to Mary, Newt [Gingrich], and Liz, March 27, 1987 in Series 5, Box 48, Folder 11, Steely Papers; Mike Christensen, "Guy Davis pulls out of the state GOP race," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 12, 1987, Sec. C, p. 1; David Corvette, "State GOP elects Stuckey chairman," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 24, 1987, Sec. B, p. 2.

and women began quietly organizing Pat Robertson's 1988 presidential bid. Meanwhile, the state party's top brass went to work for Vice President George H.W. Bush's campaign. For example, Paul Coverdell chaired Bush's Southern Steering Committee while Fred Cooper managed the Vice President's campaign in state. Still others endorsed a smattering of also-rans. Few, if any, notable Georgia Republicans endorsed Pat Robertson. Instead, the televangelist relied on relatively inexperienced activists like Brant Frost IV who became Robertson's Georgia campaign coordinator in August 1987. Frost had become a born-again Christian during an Amway rally in 1980, and he drew on that experience organizing in conservative churches throughout the state. Frost explained Robertson's appeal in a February 1988 interview. "It's going to be good for [parents] when Pat get to be President... You won't have to send them to public schools. Public schools are full of drugs and pornography." The message may have lacked broad appeal in Republican ranks, but it resonated with a growing number cultural conservatives.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, Robertson surprised many by running a strong second behind Senator Bob Dole but ahead of Bush in the Iowa caucuses. Bush, however, rebounded in New Hampshire and looked ahead to March 9—"Super Tuesday"—when nine southern states, including Georgia, cast their ballots. While Bush ran a media-centric campaign in Georgia, Frost plotted a different strategy that hearkened back to an older era of Republican politics. Robertson's supporters planned to seize control of Republican convention process. Although delegates were bound to support the winner of the state's primary election at the national convention, they were free to

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid; Dick Kirschten, "The GOP's Wild Card," *National Journal*, February 27, 1988, p. 520; David Morrison, "Sen. Coverdell to lead legislators across U.S. in campaign for Bush," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 17, 1987, Sec. A, p. 16; Kevin Sack, "State GOP chief quits to join Bush campaign," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 15, 1987, Sec. A, p. 6; Mike Christensen, "Bush names leaders for Georgia campaign," *Atlanta Journal*, August 12, 1987, Sec. A, p. 17; Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 438-440; Bill Shipp, "State GOP may face battle with fundamentalists for party leadership," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 26, 1986, Sec. A, p. 9; Christina Jeffrey, "The Holy Wars: Georgia's 1988 Republican State Conventions," *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* 19 (1998), 148; Brant Frost interviewed by Christina F. Jeffrey and Thomas A. Scott, January 15, 1998, Georgia Government Oral History Series, Kennesaw State University.

their conscience on party rules, platform questions, and the vice-presidential nominee. Pat Robertson exhorted his “invisible army” of supporters to flood the caucuses. They heeded the call and elected majorities in seven of the ten counties that held precinct caucuses. Shocked at Robertson’s evident grassroots strength, the Bush campaign organized a counteroffensive to prevent Robertson from making further inroads.<sup>16</sup>

Three days after George Bush won 54 percent in the state’s primary, Georgia Republicans met for county conventions. According to RNC operatives Lanny Griffith and Jay Morgan, “Our people played tough, grassroots convention politics, often outsmarting the Robertson campaign leadership with clever maneuvering on the floor using years of party convention experience.” Bush supporters challenged Robertson delegates’ credentials across the state and succeeded in disqualifying enough delegates to ensure Bush would control the subsequent district conventions. Afterward, Robertson campaign officials cried foul. While most challenges regarded voter registration and residency questions, Republican officials in Cobb County had employed less scrupulous methods. Convened at Lassiter High School in East Cobb, party regulars had chained shut all but a single doorway to control the flow of delegates into the building. Challenged delegates, most of them Robertson supporters, were directed down a meandering maze of hallways and instructed to wait for further instructions. Once sequestered, Republican officials opened the convention and ruled the challenged delegates ineligible. Robertson supporters and other disputed delegates subsequently convened a rump convention in

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<sup>16</sup> Tom Baxter, “Robertson’s ‘invisible army’ dominates Ga. GOP caucuses,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 7, 1988, Sec. A, p. 15; Charles S. Bullock, “The Nomination Process and Super Tuesday,” in *The 1988 Presidential Election in the South: Continuity Amidst Change in Southern Party Politics*, eds. Laurence W. Moreland, Robert P. Steed, and Tod A. Baker (New York: Praeger, 1991), 3-19; Gould, *Grand Old Party* 441-442; Jeffrey, “The Holy Wars,” 148; Tom Baxter, “Robertson to Ga. Backers: Show up at GOP caucuses,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 27, 1988, Sec. A, p. 6; The Georgia Republican State Committee and John M. Stuckey, Jr., “Georgia Republican Party Call for the 1988 Republican Election District (Precinct), Rule 40 District, County, Congressional District, and State Conventions of Georgia,” n.d. in Box 4, Folder 5, Williams Papers; Lanny Griffith and Jay Morgan to The Vice President and Fred Cooper thru Lee Atwater, Rich Bond, Ede Holiday, August 12, 1988 in Series 3, Box 130, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 609.

the Lassiter High School parking lot and elected a rival delegation to the Seventh District convention. Such political chicanery compelled Robertson forces to contest the nomination process in court and provoke the most contentious Republican state convention since 1952.<sup>17</sup>

Bush's Georgia campaign offered a compromise to defuse the intensifying standoff. The proposed accord called for the convention to split the state's eighteen at-large delegates three ways. The Bush and Robertson campaign would each name one-third of the slate with the remaining third filled by "party leaders" who had backed other candidates or remained unaffiliated. Bush operatives also requested the right to name Joe Rogers, Jr. and Marguerite Williams to the Republican National Committee. Brant Frost rejected the deal. A frustrated Fred Cooper apprised state party leaders on the negotiations on May 6. "There are many fine people in the Robertson organization," Cooper admitted, but Georgia Republicans "cannot and should not, however, willingly permit a small, untested minority to bulldoze aside those who have worked to build our Party." Negotiations continued, but Georgia's Republican establishment remained extremely wary of conceding any ground to the Robertson insurgents.<sup>18</sup>

Other top Georgia Republicans, however, bristled at Cooper's "high-handed" attitude toward the Robertson supporters. Republican national committeeman Carl Gillis accused state party leaders and staff of colluding with the national Bush campaign to keep the Christian Right out of Georgia. "[W]e must remember the benefits of the 'Goldwater takeover,' seek to guide

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; Abramowitz and Davis, "Georgia: Ripe for the Picking," 59; Charles Walston, "Cobb Republicans rebuff supporters of Pat Robertson," *Atlanta Journal*, March 2, 1988, Sec. C, p. 2; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 609-611; Mr. and Mrs. William Samford to Mrs. Thomas L. [Marguerite] Williams, March 22, 1988 in Box 5, Folder 1, Williams Papers; Jeffrey, "The Holy Wars," 150-152; Tom Baxter, "Robertson supporters make waves at state GOP's county conventions," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 13, 1988, Sec. A, p. 15; Tom Baxter, "Bush, Robertson forces carry delegate dispute to Georgia GOP panel," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 14, Sec. A, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Fred Cooper to R. Marc Nuttle, Richard Pinsky, Brant Frost, IV, Americans for Robertson Campaign, May 3, 1988; Fred Cooper to Georgia Republican Party Leaders, May 6, 1988; Paul D. Coverdell to Senator Joe Burton, May 5, 1988 all in Series 3, Box 130, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Tom Baxter, "Fireworks likely as Georgia GOP convenes," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 20, 1988, Sec. A, p. 4; Griffith and Morgan to the Vice President and Cooper thru Atwater, Bond, and Holiday, August 12, 1988.

and educate where possible such newcomers, not illegally exclude them from the process,” Gillis declared. In addition to Gillis, several prominent Reagan supporters sided with the Robertson crusade leading up to the state convention. These conservatives had come to power in Georgia after Reagan’s nomination in 1980, but party moderates had reasserted control when Newt Gingrich, Mack Mattingly, and Paul Coverdell installed Fred Cooper as state party chairman. Afterward, these conservatives found themselves sidelined within the party. Gillis appeared determined to extract at least of modicum of revenge in 1988.<sup>19</sup>

The state convention opened in Albany on May 20. Robertson supporters protested throughout the first day of proceedings. Just as the second day of proceedings were about to begin, a superior court judge ruled in the Robertson campaign’s favor. Judge Loring Gray found the Georgia Republican Party had illegally disqualified 968 Robertson delegates, and he ordered them seated immediately. State party chairman John Stuckey denounced the court order as unconstitutional and adjourned the convention before conducting any official business. “I do not intend this party to be taken by storm,” Stuckey informed reporters as he left the convention hall with 300 delegates in tow. The remaining Robertson delegates convened an impromptu rump convention, elected Matt Patton interim chairman, and selected its national convention slate. The state central committee elected a rival delegation when it met two weeks later in Atlanta.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bo Callaway to Newt Gingrich, May 10, 1988 in Series 2, Box 27, Folder unlabeled, Callaway Papers; Carl L. Gillis, Jr. to Delegates and Alternates to the Georgia Republican Convention, May 12, 1968 in Box 5, Folder 1, Williams Papers; Paul D. Coverdell to Ronald C. Kaufman, May 24, 1985 in Series 3, Box 140, Folder 11, Coverdell Papers; Tom Baxter, “GOP’s old guard, new zealots join forces to reshape party,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 31, 1988, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Tom Baxter and A.L. May, “GOP rift sets up 2 convention slates,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 22, 1988, Sec. A, p. 1; Tom Baxter and A.L. May, “Feud splits Republican convention—Robertson forces in Ga. vow to take over today,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 21, 1988, Sec. A, p. 1; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 612-613; Jeffrey, “The Holy Wars,” 155; In the Committee on Contests, Republican National Committee in re: Georgia Republican Party, Brief of Georgia Republican Party Contestants in Support of Contest, n.d. in Series 3, Box 174, Folder 5, Coverdell Papers.



Negotiations between the Bush and Robertson camps continued, but an amicable settlement remained elusive. Paul Coverdell worried the insurgents might overwhelm the state party and undo years of party-building progress. “It is important, while we endeavor to be conciliatory, that we do not forget our own troops that we have had in the trenches for many years now,” Coverdell informed Vice President Bush. Fred Cooper’s contentious relationship with Brant Frost proved another stumbling block. Dubbing Frost “an insufferable, arrogant, zealot,” Cooper halted negotiations. With control of the state party as well as personal pride at stake, it is no wonder neither side surrendered before the Republican National Convention convened in New Orleans.<sup>21</sup>

Bush’s Georgia leadership expected a favorable ruling when it went before the Contests Committee a week before the national convention began. Coverdell, Cooper, and other high-ranking Georgia Republicans believed Lee Atwater, George Bush’s national campaign manager, would help secure a victory. Anxious to end the Georgia spat, however, the national campaign declined to intercede on the state party’s behalf. After several hours of oral arguments, the committee awarded 27 seats—and control of the Georgia delegation—to the Robertson camp. Bush backers reacted angrily. “We have been betrayed!” exclaimed Melodie Clayton. State party chairman John Stuckey bashed the ruling as “appeasement” before departing the convention early. “[W]e were the victims of the most calculated and callous sellout of a State Campaign by a National Presidential Campaign ever on record,” Stuckey told Paul Coverdell. Outgoing Republican national committeewoman Marguerite Williams left not only the Republican

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<sup>21</sup> Paul D. Coverdell to The Vice President, May 31, 1988 in Series 3, Box 150, Folder 6, Coverdell Papers; Fred Cooper to Rich Bond, August 1 in Series 3, Box 130, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Griffith and Morgan to the Vice President and Cooper thru Atwater, Bond, and Holiday, August 12, 1988; John W. Mashek and A.L. May, “GOP’s national chairman fails in bid to settle Georgia dispute,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 17, 1988, Sec. A, p. 10; Fred Cooper to Members of the Georgia Delegation to the National Convention and Georgia Bush Leadership,” August 2, 1988 in Series 3, Box 130, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 613.

National Convention but also the GOP. Heiress to the Maybelline cosmetics fortune and a prolific Republican donor, Williams declined to contribute to embattled congressman Pat Swindall's reelection campaign. "I am pro-choice and think the religious right is far more dangerous than the liberals," Williams remarked. Party regulars like Clayton, Stuckey, and Williams not only felt betrayed by an expedient Bush campaign, but they worried its capitulation would have serious long-term consequences for the party in Georgia.<sup>22</sup>

Tension lingered between the Republican factions, but the feud did little to diminish George Bush's electoral prospects in the state. Most Bush supporters did not follow Marguerite Williams's example. Coverdell, Cooper, Stuckey, and others remained at their posts throughout the fall campaign. Running against liberal Democrat Michael Dukakis, Bush won nearly 60 percent of the vote statewide and carried every major metropolitan area with the exception of Fulton and DeKalb counties. The Republican garnered 73 percent of ballots cast by white voters while the Democrat captured an estimated 91 percent of black ballots. A racially polarized electorate spelled danger for the Democratic Party of Georgia. If this trend trickled down-ballot, it would mean the end of the party's biracial coalition and its dominance in state politics.<sup>23</sup>

George Bush's victory, however, did nothing to settle the intraparty feud between establishment Republicans and nascent Christian Right, and the race to replace John Stuckey as state party chairman would be another battle in the proxy war between the two rival groups. Bainbridge businessman Alec Poitevent entered the race in late December 1988. An

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<sup>22</sup> Melodie H. Clayton to Paul Coverdell, August 11, 1988; John M. Stuckey, Jr. to Senator Paul Coverdell, August 12, 1988 both in Series 3, Box 130, Folder 1, Coverdell Papers; A.L. May and Tom Baxter, "Georgia GOP Chief May Quit As Dissidents Rule Delegation," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 11, 1988, Sec. A, p. 1, 10 (quote on 1); Marguerite Williams to Robert H. Bell, September 2, 1988 in Box 5, Folder 2, Williams Papers; A.L. May and Tom Baxter, "GOP panel to Make Robertson the Winner of Georgia Party Feud," August 10, 1988, Sec. A, p. 1; Abramowitz and Davis, "Georgia: Ripe for the Picking," 59; Jeffrey, "The Holy Wars," 156-157.

<sup>23</sup> David Beasley, "Coverdell Says 'Schism' Over, Georgia GOP Fully Backs Bush," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 24, 1988, Sec. A, p. 9; Abramowitz and Davis, "Georgia: Ripe for the Picking," 60-67; Lamis, *Two-Party South*, 308-311.

establishment favorite, Poitevent had served the state party in various capacities since the late 1970s and advised the Bush campaign on agribusiness issues in 1988. If elected, the South Georgia Republican promised to bring a “business management approach” to the office. Arguing Republicans needed to replicate its success in the “Doughnut” in other areas of the state, Poitevent proposed additional candidate recruitment and training programs. To succeed at every level, the Georgia Republican Party “must be willing to be competitive in all environments.” Opposing Poitevent were Republican Fourth District chairman Stanley Baum and former state party chairman Matthew Patton. With the backing of conservatives and erstwhile Robertson supporters, Patton pledged to “unite the latent power of all portions of our Party.” The outcome of the race would demonstrate the relative strength of each faction. It would also determine which group would control the party apparatus going into the new decade.<sup>24</sup>

In an effort to replicate its 1988 success, the Christian Right campaigned assiduously in the weeks and months preceding the state convention. In DeKalb County, the Conservative Coalition organized a meeting to prepare their delegate slates and practice caucusing strategies. Jimmy Fisher, the organization’s president, declared, “Our goal is to elect Christian leaders in all levels of government.” Don Balfour, President of the Cobb Conservative Caucus, articulated a similar message, “The time has come! It is time for Christians to wake-up and accept the challenge and responsibility of restoring our government back to the principles ordained in God’s word!” He exhorted “Christian political activists” to participate in the upcoming

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<sup>24</sup> Alec Poitevent to GOP Executive & State Committee Members, December 23, 1989 and Stanley M. Baum to Fellow Republican, January 2, 1989 both in Series 2, Box 6, Folder 3, Mac Collins Papers, Annie Belle Weaver Special Collections, Irvine Sullivan Ingram Library, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA; Matt Patton to George Mitting, May 14, 1989 in Series 2, Box 23, Folder 7, Georgia Republican Party Records; A.L. May, “Patton Wants to Head State GOP; Battle Expected,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 29, 1989, Sec. C, p. 4; Carolyn Meadows and Dorsey Dodgen interviewed by Christina F. Jeffrey and Thomas A. Scott, February 17, 1998, Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 48, Kennesaw State University; A.L. May, “State GOP Regulars Close Ranks For Meeting,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 19, 1989, Sec. D, p. 4; Alec L. Poitevent to Republican Leader, February 1, 1989 in Series 2, Box 23, Folder 8, Georgia Republican Party Records; “Georgia Notes and Quotes,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, January 9, 1989, p. 4.

Republican precinct caucuses and the entire convention process. Christian Right leaders in Savannah distributed mailers printed on Pat Robertson's personal letterhead promising "[t]he few hours you invest in your Precinct and County Conventions will pay off in new Party leadership that will recruit, run, and elect candidates who are committed to the traditional Judeo-Christian values that made American great." If Georgia's Republican establishment intended to maintain control, it would have to outduel an emboldened and increasingly organized coalition of Christian conservatives.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike 1988, however, the Republican establishment was prepared for the onslaught. Republican regulars turned back the Christian right and its conservative allies, electing Alec Poitevent. "It looks like we've handled them, fairly handily," outgoing state chairman John Stuckey gloated. "It shows whose side God is on," he added immodestly. Eric Johnson, Chatham County chairman, claimed the Christian Right's inconspicuous, pre-caucus activities had actual backfired by energizing regular Republicans. Poitevent also had the assistance of the state party's professional staff, which monitored the race and lined up support through the state. The Christian Right and its allies regularly asserted the establishment played favorites. In 1989, at least, this was true. Regular Republicans closed ranks and marshaled their resources to defeat Matthew Patton and the Christian Right.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Jimmy W. Fisher, Conservative Coalition Meeting Announcement, [January 1989]; Don Balfour to Christian Political Activist, January 6, 1989; Pat Robertson to Friends in Chatham County, n.d. all in Series 1, Box 6, Folder 13, Georgia Republican Party Records; Hal Suit, "Robertson Republicans' goal leadership," *DeKalb Neighbor*, February 8, 1989, Sec. A, p. 5; Carole Ashkinaze, "GOP Is Ready for Battle With Robertson's Zealots," *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. A, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> A.L. May and Tom Baxter, "GOP Elects Regulars, Turns Back Right Wing," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 12, 1989, Sec. B, p. 1; Steve Harvey, "GOP Regulars Keep Control of Party," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 23, 1989, Sec. K, p. 1; Anne McMahon to John Stuckey, Paul Coverdell, Lee Raudonis, Fred Cooper, John Teasley, Joe Rogers, March 3, 1989 in Series 1, Box 6, Folder 13, Georgia Republican Party Records; "This week: 7 days in May that may make or break the Georgia GOP," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, May 15, 1989, p. 1-2. Matt Patton even compared the establishment Republican leadership in Georgia to Soviet apparatchiks clinging to power at the expense of the organization. See, A.L. May, "Candidates Not Pulling Punches in GOP Race," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 15, 1989, Sec. C, p. 1.

The establishment's victory was by no means a triumph. It required four rounds of balloting before Alec Poitevent vanquished Patton. His margin of victory, 961-794, was also considerably narrower than recent contests. The hard-fought campaign and touch-and-go voting suggested both the Christian Right was no passing fancy. That faction and its allies were potentially more numerous and powerful than establishment regulars recognized. Although it remained a minority faction within the minority party, the Christian Right would not surrender willingly. Instead, as one Patton supporter muttered during Poitevent's victory speech, "We'll just have to start building a party within the party."<sup>27</sup>

The two sides faced off again in the 1990 Republican gubernatorial primary. Since the Georgia GOP lacked anything approaching a majority in either chamber, winning the governor's chair represented the party's only hope to influence public policy. The Republican establishment landed a quality recruit when House Minority Leader Johnny Isakson entered the race in May 1989. First elected to the House from East Cobb County in 1976, Isakson was the young, successful president of Northside Realty. Journalist Deborah Scroggins called Isakson "the complete suburban man." His upbringing and career informed his particular brand of conservatism—a political philosophy prioritizing balanced budgets, low taxes, minimal government regulations, and other mainstays that typified a pro-growth, business-friendly politician.<sup>28</sup>

Congenial, straightforward, and moderate, Isakson lacked the combative approach employed by firebrands like Newt Gingrich. Some Republicans wondered if the good-natured Isakson could wage a competitive campaign against a top-tier Democratic opponent. He also ran

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<sup>27</sup> Dick Williams, "Georgia GOP Claims Unity But Deeper Divisions Await," *Atlanta Journal*, May 23, 1989, Sec. A, p. 15; A.L. May, "Poitevent Is Elected Chairman of State GOP," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 21, 1989, Sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Deborah Scroggins, "Salesman Isakson hopes to close deal with voters," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 15, 1990, Sec. A, p. 8; Andrew Jaffe, "Isakson Awaits Developments," *Atlanta Magazine*, June 1988, p. 4.

afoul of hardline, fiscal hawks who considered his longstanding support for local-option sales taxes as beyond the pale for any conservative Republican. Cultural conservatives, too, harbored serious misgivings. Isakson opposed pro-life legislation denying women the right to seek an abortion. He also supported a statewide referendum to determine the fate of a proposal to fund education through lottery gaming. Tepid support for Isakson among conservatives and the ascendant Christian Right encouraged lesser-known Republicans to enter the race.<sup>29</sup>

Three candidates challenged Isakson in the primary. Judge Greeley Ellis and retired Colonel Eli (Link) Veazy failed to gain traction. Bob Wood, a Norcross real estate broker, offered Isakson his stiffest competition. Wood cast himself as a populist outsider and Isakson as the tool of the Republican establishment. “If we Republicans are going to get the vote of the people, we must have a candidate of the people,” Wood proclaimed, “my opponent is the establishment.” Wood had a point. Isakson had hired former Georgia GOP executive director Jay Morgan to manage his campaign, and Waffle House president Joe Rogers, Jr. signed on to chair Isakson’s finance team. Isakson’s experience, wealth, and establishment ties did not hinder his candidacy against the cast of underfunded also-rans arrayed against him in 1990. Far and away the strongest candidate, Isakson avoided a runoff and coasted to victory with almost 70 percent of the vote in the Republican primary. Still Bob Wood’s energetic campaign and surprisingly

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<sup>29</sup> Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 32; Scott, *Cobb County, Georgia*, 506-507, 586-587; “The rollcall of candidates for No. 1 swells,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, July 24, 1989, p. 1, 2; “Will Democrats’ fighting make Johnny governor?” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, March 26, 1990, p. 1, 3; Bill Shipp, “An Ardent Moderate,” *Georgia Trend*, January 2005, p. 21; 55, 506-507; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 33, 53; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 112; “Johnny Isakson’s New Partnership For Georgia’s Future,” n.d. in Series 2, Box 19, Folder 28; “Young, Miller Top Democratic Primary, Face Georgia Runoff,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 19, 1990, p. 6; Other Georgia Republicans who considered entering the 1990 gubernatorial primary but declined included 1986 nominee Guy Davis, Sixth District GOP chairman J. Randy Evans, and Macon mayor George Israel. See, “One year away, the line for governor is forming,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, July 24, 1989, p. 1, 2.

strong performance suggested the Christian right remained a growing force within the Georgia GOP.<sup>30</sup>

Isakson squared off against Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller in the general election. A household name throughout Georgia, Miller placed first in a crowded primary that included former governor Lester Maddox, future governor Roy Barnes, and former U.N. ambassador and Atlanta mayor Andrew Young. Miller advanced to face Isakson after dispatching Young in the runoff. Stylistically, Miller and Isakson were complete opposites. Although the soft-spoken, suburban Republican lacked his Democratic opponent's folksy wit and charm, he ran a professional campaign. The state party opened a record ten campaign headquarters south of Macon, and the candidate made several appearances below the Fall Line. Winning South Georgia was a "pipe dream" according to Jay Morgan, but the Republican could narrow his margin of loss among this historically Democratic constituency. When all the votes were tallied, Zell Miller defeated Johnny Isakson 52.9 to 44.5 percent. Although he lost, Isakson ran stronger than any Republican gubernatorial nominee since Bo Callaway in 1966 and better than any statewide GOP candidate since Fletcher Thompson in 1972. Despite lingering intraparty tension, Georgia Republicans continued to expand statewide.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Bob Wood's Announcement To Run For Governor of Georgia, Gwinnett County Courthouse, January 4, 1990; Bob Wood, Candidate for Governor, 1990; Bob Wood to Fellow Republican Leader, February 21, 1990 all in Series 2, Box 16, Folder 19, Georgia Republican Party Records; *Countdown to Victory: Johnny Isakson Governor, A Campaign Update* 1, February 1, 1990 in Series 4, Subseries A, Box 26, Folder 2, Zell Miller Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Jay Morgan to Joe Rogers, Jr., February 1, 1990 in Series 2, Box 19, Folder 28, Georgia Republican Party Records; AP, "Lt. Gov. Miller Faces Young in Georgia Runoff: No Democrat Nominated in Governor's Primary," *Washington Post*, July 18, 1990, Sec. A, p. 14; A.L. May, "Round 2: It's Miller vs. Young, Isakson sweeps past Republican challengers," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 18, 1990, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> A.L. May, "Courting the South," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 22, 1990, Sec. C, p. 1; Lamis, *Two-Party Georgia*, 319; Richard Hyatt, *Zell: The Governor Who Gave Georgia HOPE* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 244-246; A.L. May and Mike Christensen, "Isakson seeks Bush help for tough race," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 9, 1990, Sec. A, p. 1; Deborah Scroggins, "'Honored' Isakson Enjoys a boost," *Atlanta Journal*, October 11, 1990, Sec. E, p. 1; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 112.

In his election postmortem, Jay Morgan confessed, “The 1990 election for Governor of Georgia did not live up to its early billing as potentially one of the most exciting races in Georgia history.” On the positive side, Isakson had managed to expand beyond the party’s suburban base. He had carried a half-dozen counties in Southwest Georgia while narrowing Miller’s strength in other rural counties. Morgan credited Isakson’s media strategy and personal appearances, but Bainbridge resident Alec Poitevent’s influence also improved Republican prospects in the region. Since becoming state party chairman, Poitevent had helped recruit a record number of non-Metro Atlanta Republican candidates and increased the Georgia Republican Foundation’s non-metro membership by 20 percent. Even in defeat, Isakson demonstrated the party’s increased capacity to perform competitively outside of its traditional, suburban strongholds.<sup>32</sup>

Even without the governor’s mansion, Georgia Republicans resolved to “keep the state’s Democrats reasonably honest in the drawing of new district lines” during the 1991 legislative session. “Technology is on our side,” Alec Poitevent warned Democrats. Indeed, Poitevent, who won easy reelection as state chairman that year, was implementing a long-standing, party-building strategy developed by the Republican National Committee. The RNC’s so-called “1991 Plan” stressed the importance of legislative redistricting in boosting Republican prospects nationwide. The national party dispatched field teams, legal experts, and computer specialists to assist state parties with the complicated and costly redistricting process. Additionally, Poitevent and other Republicans reached out to African-Americans Democrats in an effort to draw maps benefiting both sides. Both the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus and the GOP insisted the General Assembly create a second majority-minority congressional district. “The Voting Rights

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<sup>32</sup> Jay Morgan, “Michael Dukakis Could Have Won The Georgia Governor’s Race Or Did He? An Analysis of the 1990 Gubernatorial Race and What it Portends for the Future of Republican Prospects in Georgia,” November 30, 1990 in Series 3, Box 64, Folder 4, Barr Papers; “Despite setback, Republicans strength is creeping upward,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, November 12, 1990, p. 1, 2; “GOP numbers climb in non-metro areas,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, May 7, 1990, p. 1, 2.



Act prohibits the dilution of minority voting strength, and we call on the General Assembly to observe that law,” Poitevent asserted in statement before joint reapportionment committee. The Republican state chairman submitted a map that included a 59-percent black-majority district stretching from South DeKalb County east through rural Putnam, Hancock, and Warren counties before jutting northward into urban Richmond County. Such a map would have created a second majority-minority district, but it would have also boosted Republican prospects in adjacent districts by “bleaching” them of minority voters. Unsurprisingly, the Democratic leadership declined to utilize Poitevent’s map.<sup>33</sup>

After three attempts, the U.S. Justice Department finally approved the General Assembly’s maps in 1992. The new congressional map benefitted African-American Democrats and white Republicans by adding two new, majority-minority districts in addition to John Lewis’s majority-black Fifth. The Eleventh District stretched 260 miles southeast from DeKalb County through Middle Georgia’s Black Belt and into downtown Savannah, and the Second District sprawled across much of rural, southwest Georgia. Two African-American state legislators, Cynthia McKinney and Sanford Bishop respectively, won these seats in 1992. Republicans, meanwhile, gained a safe seat in the northwest Atlanta suburbs. Newt Gingrich relocated from Carrollton to Marietta to run in this friendlier district. Three additional Republicans joined Gingrich in Washington following the 1992 election. Savannah Republican Jack Kingston won in the First District. Michael A. (Mac) Collins, a Henry County Republican, won in the Third, and John Linder captured Fourth District in Atlanta’s eastern suburbs. The

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in “Redistricting battle lines: Technology, Justice Dept. may keep Democrats honest,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, January 28, 1991, p. 1, 3; Press Release: “State Republican Chief Calls For Second Minority District, Introduces Maps In Testimony Before Reapportionment Committee,” April 22, 1991 in Series 1, Box 3, Folder 20Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*, 143-146, 149-151; Jeanne Cummings, “Redrawn maps put political lives on the line,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 21, 1991, Sec. C, p. 1; Rhonda Cook, “GOP maps 2<sup>nd</sup> black district,” *Atlanta Journal*, April 23, 1991, Sec. D, p. 1; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 446-447.

GOP won three more congressional seats—the Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth district—in 1994.

After Democratic congressman Nathan Deal crossed the aisle in 1995, Republicans held eight of the state’s eleven congressional seats. By the mid-1990s, Republicans were regularly competing in and winning not only suburban seats but also in districts inhabited by the rural white voters Democrats relied on to maintain power in Georgia.<sup>34</sup>

The redistricting process also produced additional Republican legislative seats in the suburbs and exurbs while black Democrats gained ground in Georgia’s urban centers. The Georgia GOP implemented “Breakthrough ‘92”—an aggressive targeting program blending traditional party-building initiatives like candidate recruitment, county-level organizing, and voter contact with the data-driven ORVIS program—to win these newly competitive seats. By any definition, “Breakthrough ‘92” succeeded. Seventeen Republicans won House seats, and six new Republicans entered the state Senate. These electoral advances more than doubled the Georgia Republican Party’s membership in the General Assembly since 1987. Thanks in large part to the GOP’s coordinated redistricting strategy, Republicans occupied more legislative offices in Georgia than at any time since Reconstruction. These victories also expanded the

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<sup>34</sup> David Lublin, *The Republican South: Democratization and Partisan Change* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 104-106; Bullock and Gaddie, *The Triumph of Voting Rights*, 87-94; Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 32-34; Bullock, “Georgia,” 65; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 114-121; Kevin Sack, “Court Draws Georgia Map Of Congressional Districts,” *New York Times*, December 14, 1995, Sec. A, p. 22; Kevin Sack, “A Redistricted Black Lawmaker Fires Back,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1996, Sec. B, p. 6; Charles Walston, “Gingrich plans to run in redrawn 6<sup>th</sup> District,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 8, 1991, Sec. E, p. 1; Gary Pomerantz, “Even if Bush didn’t carry Ga., voters sending 4 Republicans to Congress,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1992, Sec. A, p. 1. Lieutenant Governor Pierre Howard allegedly drew Johnny Isakson, his former University of Georgia fraternity brother, a favorable State senate district. Conveniently, Isakson announced he would not challenge freshman U.S. senator Wyche Fowler in 1992 despite encouragement from state party leaders. He chose instead to run in the district drawn by Howard. The veracity of this supposition is unconfirmed. See, “Georgia Notes & Quotes,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, August 26, 1991, p. 4 and Mark Sherman, “Isakson will run for state, not U.S. Senate,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 13, 1991, Sec. F, p. 2; Ben Smith III, “GOP welcomes Bowers to fold; Democrats upset,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 6, 1994, Sec. D, p. 1. McKinney and Bishop’s districts were eventual redrawn to include a lower percentage of minority voters when the United States Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision in *Miller v. Johnson* 515 U.S. 900 (1995) ruling the Georgia General Assembly had violated the Equal Protect Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment by relying predominately upon racial concerns when determining legislative district boundaries.

GOP's stable of potential candidates. Indeed, several future statewide and congressional officeholders first won election to the General Assembly in the early-to-mid 1990s.<sup>35</sup>

The Republicans' biggest breakthrough in 1992 came when Paul Coverdell upset Senator Wyche Fowler. Before he earned the right to face Fowler, however, Coverdell first had to win a competitive primary. Most political observers had expected Mack Mattingly to seek his old seat, but the former senator bowed out just two weeks after entering the race. His abrupt exit in November 1991 left two Republicans—former U.S. attorney Bob Barr and former U.S. Peace Corps director Paul Coverdell—in the race. Waycross mayor John Knox entered the fray the following spring.<sup>36</sup>

With high-name recognition, years of legislative experience, and close ties to both national and state Republicans, Coverdell enjoyed the bulk of establishment support during the primary. Barr and Knox, meanwhile, attacked Coverdell as a “Washington insider” out of step with the party's growing number of social conservatives. Barr placed his commitment to “traditional family values and human life” up front, and he asserted the nation's problems could not be resolved “without re-establishing the family, rather than government, as the cornerstone of American society.” Described by *Bill Shipp's Georgia* as the candidate “brought to you by the same folks who backed Pat Robertson for president,” John Knox campaigned on the slogan, “For your family, For your freedom, For your future.” Hailing from deep South Georgia and endorsed

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<sup>35</sup> “Breakthrough ’92: A Two Year Campaign Plan for the Georgia Republican Party,” submitted by Alec Poitevent, Chairman, [and Staff] for approval of the State Executive Committee, June 29, 1991 in Series 2, Box 12, Folder 32, Georgia Republican Party Records; “Georgia Republican Party Breakthrough ’92: A Report On Our Progress,” Confidential Report Prepared For Mr. David Shafer, Executive Director by the Georgia Republican Party, Alec Poitevent, Chairman, n.d. in Series 1, Box 6, Folder 11, Georgia Republican Party Records; Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 34; Bullock, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark,” 51.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Sherman, “Mattingly's ‘no’ to race shocks GOP,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1991, Sec. D, p. 1; “Coverdell jumps out front,” *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, October 21, 1991, p. 1, 2; Mark Sherman, “Coverdell starts drive to unseat Fowler as senator,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 12, 1991, Sec. C, p. 4; Mark Sherman, “GOP's Coverdell targeted by foes in Senate race,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 20, 1992, Sec. D, p. 6.

by the Christian Coalition, John Knox campaigned primarily among conservative groups who shared his view on hot-button issues like abortion and school prayer.<sup>37</sup>

Coverdell placed first in the July 21 primary, but his paltry 37.1-percent showing demonstrated the appeal of hardline, cultural conservatives continued to grow among Republican voters. Barr and Knox, meanwhile, dueled for a place in the August 11 runoff with Barr eventually surpassing Knox—24.3 to 23.9 percent. With Knox out of the race, the most prominent Christian Right organizations in the state—the Christian Coalition, Family Concerns, and Georgia Right to Life—opted against endorsing in the runoff. Barr attempted to reassure anti-abortion conservatives during the abbreviated runoff, but Coverdell exploited his inconsistencies. Dubbing his opponent the “Dancing Barr,” Coverdell hammered the former prosecutor as a “flip-flopper.” Casting himself as a steady hand and a reliable Republican, Coverdell sought to hold his moderate base and win over just enough social conservatives to reach the general election. Coverdell’s strategy succeeded—but just barely. The veteran Republican heavyweight squeaked by the relatively unknown Barr with 51 percent of the vote. Those Barr voters may well have provided the Republican nominee’s margin of victory in the general election runoff against Wyche Fowler. Trekking back to the polls to register dissatisfaction with Democrat Bill Clinton’s presidential election as well as a statewide referendum approving a new state lottery to fund education, Christian conservatives had

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<sup>37</sup> Mark Sherman, “Coverdell pursues inside track,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 30, 1992, Sec. B, p. 3; Press Release: “Washington ‘Tour De Force’ By Barr Enlists Conservative Support,” February 24, 1992 in Series 2, Box 16, Folder 6, Georgia Republican Party Records; Barr U.S. Senate, “Traditional Family Values and Human Life,” n.d. in Series 3, Box 65, Folder 4, Barr Papers; “State GOP mired in doldrums: About to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory?” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, April 20, 1992, p. 1, 3 (quote on 3); John Knox for U.S. Senate Campaign Mailing, n.d. in Series 4, Subseries A, Box 29, Folder 7, Miller Papers; Mark Sherman, “Waycross mayor says he’ll seek GOP nomination,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 18, 1992, Sec. B, p. 3; Mark Sherman, “Coverdell: Long ‘work in the trenches’ for GOP,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 8, 1992, Sec. C, p. 5; Mark Sherman, “Abortion a ‘life-and-death issue’ in campaign of GOP’s John Knox,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 9, 1992, Sec. C, p. 1.

demonstrated the energy, enthusiasm, and voting power it wielded both in the GOP and Georgia politics broadly.<sup>38</sup>

Looking ahead, Christian conservatives would eventually emerge as the single most cohesive and, perhaps, influential force in Georgia Republican politics. Assembled into groups such as the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women of America, Eagle Forum, Family Concerns, Georgia Right to Life, and a multitude of smaller, unaffiliated organizations, conservative Christians voted in every precinct in the state. Precise numbers are difficult to ascertain since religious affiliation is not included on voter registrations, but a 1993 figure estimated that the Christian Right composed between 20 and 25 percent of the Republican electorate in Georgia. By 1996, that figure had grown to approximately 40 percent. Although not a majority, Christian conservatives wielded enough political clout to transform inexperienced, underfunded, fringe candidates like John Knox into a political force to be reckoned with in Republican primaries. “You can’t be their nemesis. There is a lot of fear of what they’d do to you if you crossed them,” said one Republican elected official of the Christian right, “The key is getting them not to work against you.” Indeed, Johnny Isakson withdrew from the 1994 Republican gubernatorial primary just one week after announcing his candidacy. Isakson blamed his change of heart on increased business and family responsibilities. Near unanimous opposition from Christian conservative groups, however, may well have proved the difference. Isakson may have bowed out rather than

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<sup>38</sup> Mark Sherman, “Coverdell, Bar eye anti-abortion vote,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 2, 1992, Sec. C, p. 1; Press Release: Coverdell: The Case Against Bob Barr, August 4, 1992 and Mark Sherman, “Coverdell leading GOP senate race—Barr, Knox vie for runoff spot,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 22, 1992, Sec. C, p. 1; Mark Sherman, “Coverdell leading GOP Senate race,” *Atlanta Journal*, July 22, 1992, Sec. C, p. 1; A Georgia Right to Life newsletter indicated subsequently that Barr “is more favorable to the pro-life cause than Mr. Coverdell.” See, Mark Sherman, “Barr goes after anti-abortion vote,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 5, 1992, Sec. C, p. 1; Mark Sherman, “Coverdell claims narrow win,” *Atlanta Journal*, August 12, 1992, Sec. D, p. 1; Mark Sherman, “Mixing Religion, Politics, Coverdell Looks to Fundamentalists, Fowler to Blacks,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 12, 1992, Sec. A, p. 1; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 117; Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa, eds., *The Almanac of American Politics, 1994* (Washington D.C.: National Journal, 1993), 334; Gilliland, “The Calculus of Realignment,” 448-450.

fight the Christian Right. Evidently, this increasingly influential voting bloc could not only make Republican candidates, but it could also break them!<sup>39</sup>

With Isakson out of the running, most establishment Republicans endorsed former House Minority Leader Paul Heard ahead of the 1994 gubernatorial primary. A multimillionaire, small-business owner from suburban Peachtree City, Heard boasted an impressive and attractive resume for a Republican gubernatorial candidate. Applying lessons learned from the previous Isakson and Coverdell campaigns, Heard crafted a broad-based platform. He stressed lower taxes for mainstream Republicans and “Christian family values” for the party’s social conservatives. Nevertheless, Heard languished in the polls and failed to make the runoff. Despite boasting endorsements from Johnny Isakson and the vast majority of the Georgia Republican Party’s legislative delegation, the establishment Republican placed third behind two social conservatives.<sup>40</sup>

The 1994 Republican gubernatorial primary featured multi-millionaire businessman Guy Millner and Christian Coalition darling John Knox—who never really stopped campaigning since 1992. Millner was the exceedingly wealthy founder and CEO of Norrell Corporation—the nation’s largest temporary employment firm. A first-time candidate, he had participated in Georgia Republican politics as a donor and fundraiser for more than a decade. Nevertheless, Millner campaigned as a successful businessman and political outsider. Perhaps more

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<sup>39</sup> Bullock and Grant, “Georgia: The Christian Right and Grass Roots Power,” 47; Mark Sherman, “Religious right’s strength could be GOP’s weakness,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 25, 1993, Sec. G, p. 1; Bullock and Smith, “The Influence of Christian Conservatives in the Empire State of the South,” 81; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 118-119; Tom Baxter and David Beasley, “GOP’s Isakson steps out of governor’s race,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 17, 1993, Sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Tom Baxter, “Why isn’t Heard leading GOP herd?” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 30, 1993, Sec. C, p. 2; Heard Campaign Advertisement: Paul Heard, Conservative Republican for Governor, n.d. in Series 4, Subseries A, Box 6, Folder 8, Miller Papers; Marilyn Geewax, “The GOP split widens,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 22, 1994, Sec. A, p. 15; Lyle V. Harris, “Heard: A moderate bent,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Sec. B, p. 3; Heard Campaign Advertisement: The Conservative Republican For Open and Honest Government,” n.d. in Series 4, Subseries A, Box 6, Folder 8, Miller Papers.

importantly in 1994, he staked out conservative positions on abortion, homosexuality, and a host of other social issues important to the Christian Right. Although chronically uncomfortable on the stump and incredibly gaffe-prone, Millner ran an expensive, media-savvy campaign directed by former Georgia GOP executive director David Shafer. Narrowly missing an outright nomination, Millner defeated Knox 58 percent to 42 percent in the runoff. Perhaps in Guy Millner—absent the morose countenance and unfortunate gaffes—Georgia Republicans had a template for blending a mainstream Republican image with socially conservative policy appeal.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, Guy Millner was in many ways a typical Republican who just happened to be a “born-again” Christian who attended regular Bible study with his third wife. Flush with cash and willing to draw on his personal fortune, Millner had proven more successful than any Republican at uniting the Georgia GOP’s establishment and Christian conservative wings. As a result, Millner headed into the general election against a vulnerable Zell Miller with the political wind at his back. But the Democrat launched an expensive, hard-hitting counterattack touting his moderate image and experience while attacking Millner as an out-of-touch plutocrat. Governor Miller also painted the Republican as an extremist on social issues like abortion. In the end, Miller escaped with a 51.1 percent victory over Republican Guy Millner. That lesser-known Republican candidates won lower-profile statewide offices like State School Superintendent and Insurance Commissioner suggests Millner’s conservative social stands may have hurt him among more moderate Republicans. Zell Miller’s surprisingly strong performance in metropolitan areas supports this conjecture. Conservative stances on social issues could, therefore, help Republican

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<sup>41</sup> Ken Foscett, “Knox has rural appeal,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 6, 1994, Sec. B, p. 3; Mark Sherman, “An outsider businessman,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 8, 1994, Sec. B, p. 3; “’94 governor’s race: From start to finish,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1994, Sec. C, p. 3; “Georgia Notes & Quotes,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, December 13, 1993, p.4; Ken Foscett, “GOP runoff gets going on high road,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 21, 1994, Sec. C, p. 1; Mark Sherman, “It’s a Millner-Miller matchup,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 10, 1994, Sec. A, p. 1.

candidates like Millner win their party's nomination, but those same positions could also prove ruinous in general elections where social conservatives were less numerous.<sup>42</sup>

Social conservatives continued their intraparty winning streak the following May when Rusty Paul, a longtime Republican activist from North Fulton County, defeated four contenders to succeed Billy Lovett as state chairman. Lovett had run and won unopposed two years before, but the Democrat-turned-Republican ran afoul of Millner supporters who accused him of "trying to play the role of kingmaker" during the gubernatorial primary. Paul had entered the race at the behest of several supporters including Christian Coalition of Georgia chairman Pat Gartland. Although Paul was far from the only candidate boasting ties to the Christian Right, he drew enough support away from establishment favorite, state Senator Don Balfour, to win in a four-way race. Described by state Senator Sallie Newbill as "everyone's second choice," Rusty Paul triumphed because he bridged the gap between the party's two wings.<sup>43</sup>

Reflecting on his tenure as state party chairman, Rusty Paul recalled "I didn't want to be the Moses of the Republican Party. I wanted to be the Joshua. I want[ed] to be the one to guide us to the Promised Land." Paul served two terms as chairman from 1995 to 1999, but he did not quite fulfill that lofty goal. Nevertheless, the political program Paul and his staff implemented helped the party grow and develop. Operating the Georgia GOP like a political consulting firm,

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Ben Smith III, "Runoff could cause rift in Ga. GOP," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Sec. G, p. 1; Nick Ragone, *Presidential Leadership: 15 Decisions that Changed the Nation* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2011), 274; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 118-120; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 339-340; Terrel L. Rhodes, *Republicans in the South: Voting for the State House, Voting for the White House* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2000), 75; Mark Sherman, "Zell Miller's giant scare," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1994, Sec. A, p. 1; "8 reasons why Zell survived," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 14, 1994, 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> Tom Baxter, "New leader shows GOP growing up in Georgia," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 16, 1995, Sec. B, p. 3; "Notes & Quotes," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, October 17, 1994, p. 4; "Battle heats up for GOP chair," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, April 17, 1995, p. 4; "Georgia Notes & Quotes," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, February 22, 1993; "Notes and Quotes," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, August 29, 1994, p. 4; Lucy Soto, "Becoming a majority party is key issue in race to lead GOP," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 9, 1995, Sec. R, p. 10; "Fourth candidate enters contest for GOP chairman," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, February 13, 1995, p. 3; Rusty Paul interviewed by Bob Short, October 27, 2010, Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, 121, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga; Tom Zoellner, "Paul's star rises at GOP convention," *Savannah News-Press*, May 14, 1995, Sec. A, p. 1, 8.



the state party lent resources when possible and guidance when necessary.<sup>44</sup> Paul oversaw increasing down-ballot success as Republicans won an increasing number of local and county offices, and the GOP held over 40 percent of seats in the Georgia General Assembly by the time he stepped down in 1999.<sup>45</sup>

Unfortunately for Rusty Paul and the state party, Guy Millner acquitted himself far better in Republican primary contests against establishment moderates than he did in general election campaigns where he faced seasoned, centrist Democrats. Stung by the closeness of his 1994 defeat, Millner entered the 1996 race to replace the retiring Sam Nunn. Five other Republicans joined Millner in the primary including state Senators Johnny Isakson and Clint Day. Attempting to distinguish himself from his more socially conservative competitors, Isakson embraced his pro-choice credentials and even ran a television commercial featuring his family. He affirmed, “I trust my wife, my daughter and the women of Georgia to make the right choice.” Although he maintained his pro-choice stance did make him “an advocate for abortion,” it was a risky strategy considering the state party’s increasingly rightward tilt on social issues like abortion. Nevertheless, his gambit proved successful enough to force a runoff with Millner who placed first ahead of Isakson and Day.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See, Victory ’98: Making History Through Leadership,” Georgia Republican Party, Rusty Paul, Chairman, n.d. in Series 1, Box 9, Folder 12, Georgia Republican Party Records.

<sup>45</sup> Tom Baxter, “New leader shows GOP growing up in Georgia,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 16, 1995, Sec. B, p. 3; Rusty Paul interview; Rusty Paul Memoranda to State Convention Delegates/Alternates in Series 1, Box 7, Folder 17, Georgia Republican Party Records; Bullock, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?” 51; Charles Walston, “GOP alters tactics, boosts influence,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 29, 1999, Sec. C, p. 1; Charles S. Bullock III, “The 1996 Presidential Nomination: Short and Sweet,” in *The 1996 Presidential Election in the South: Southern Party Systems in the 1990s*, eds. Laurence W. Moreland and Robert P. Steed (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 13-15; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 125-126.

<sup>46</sup> Kathy Alexander, “Isakson gambles by pushing abortion-rights stance in ads,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 13, 1996, Sec. B, p. 2; Bullock and Grant, “Georgia: Purists, Pragmatists, and Electoral Outcomes,” 54-55; Ken Foscett, “Millner tosses hat in to ring in packed GOP Senate race,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 16, 1995, Sec. E, p. 2; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 124; Jill Vejnaska, “Abortion issues strikes at Republican unity,” *Atlanta Journal*, June 25, 1996, Sec. C, p. 2; Ken Foscett, “Battle royal likely in GOP Senate race,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 11, 1995, Sec. E, p. 1; Ken Foscett, “Isakson announces for Senate,”

The runoff focused almost exclusively on social issues like abortion, and Isakson shifted neither his tone nor position to woo the Christian right. He lashed out at special interest groups like the Christian Coalition and Georgia Right to Life declaring, “Millner has joined with the most extreme elements of the Republican Party in an effort to win the nomination at all costs.” Considering the conservative firepower arrayed against him as well as Millner’s three-to-one spending advantage, it is perhaps remarkable Isakson managed to capture 47 percent of the vote. He ran well in metropolitan Atlanta and other suburban centers, but Millner managed to keep his margins of defeat narrow enough and win Fayette, Forsyth, and Gwinnett counties. Millner won the nomination based on his appeal in rural Georgia where Christian conservatives were more numerous and far more intense than their more pro-choice, metropolitan brethren.<sup>47</sup>

That Isakson had fused a relatively potent coalition of moderate Republicans, conservative Democrats, and independents suggested Millner would face an uphill battle against Georgia Secretary of State Max Cleland in the general election. Perhaps hoping to avoid riling Christian conservatives, the Cleland campaign avoided the abortion issue. Instead, the popular Democrat employed significant elements of Isakson’s attack lines deployed against Millner in the contentious GOP primary and runoff elections to tar the Republican as a cultural extremist and hypocrite who lived lavishly while failing to pay taxes. With strong support from women,

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*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 12, 1995, Sec. C, p. 2; Mark Sherman, “2 GOP candidates vow to fight abortion,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 16, 1996, Sec. G, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ken Fosskett and Kathy Alexander, “Day backs Millner in GOP Senate runoff,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 18, 1996, Sec. C, p. 3; Mark Sherman, “Millner, Isakson head for runoff,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 10, 1996, Sec. A, p. 1; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: Unofficial Results of the July 9, 1996 Primary Election, United States Senator Republican,” at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1996\\_0709/0000320.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1996_0709/0000320.htm) (accessed June 25, 2017); Bullock and Grant, “Georgia: Purists, Pragmatists, and Electoral Outcomes,” 57-58; “Christian Coalition takes aim: Guy vs. Johnny: Is abortion the only issue?” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, July 22, 1996, p. 1, 2; “Whither the GOP? Runoff a tug of war between party factions,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, August 5, 1996, p. 1, 2; Mark Sherman, “Millner wins Senate race,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. A, p. 1; “Cash and Christians rule the day,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, August 26, 1996, p. 1, 4; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: Unofficial Results of the 8/6/96 General Primary Runoff Election, United States Senator Republican,” at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1996\\_0806/0000320.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1996_0806/0000320.htm) (access June 25, 2017).

minorities, and pro-choice voters, Cleland won 48.9 percent to Millner's 47.5. A key factor explaining Millner's near miss was his margin in Cobb County, which he won with only 56 percent. A Republican candidate needed to run up the vote there to overcome Democratic turnout in DeKalb, Fulton, and other urban centers. In the end, the contentious primary against Cobb County's favorite son, Johnny Isakson, may well have cost Millner since Republican voters there failed to turn out in force.<sup>48</sup>

It is worth noting that Millner may well have succeeded in 1996 had it not been for a state election law enacted following Paul Coverdell's upset victory over Wyche Fowler in 1992. After Fowler had lost, the Democratic-controlled General Assembly rewrote a law requiring a popular-vote majority in general election contests. Legislators dropped that condition; instead, a candidate needed only a 45-percent plurality to avoid a runoff. Prior to this revision, Georgia remained the only state in the nation to mandate a 50-percent plus one vote margin of victory outside of primary and municipal elections. A vestige of the Solid South, the majority election rule had helped ensure Democratic dominance during an earlier period defined by bifactional, intraparty political competition. In 1966, the rule had helped Georgia Democrats retain control of the governor's mansion when Republican Bo Callaway failed to secure an absolute majority over Democrat Lester Maddox, but it had cost the party a U.S. senator when energized Republicans mobilized to elect Coverdell in November 1992. Past experience and future electoral trends suggest that Guy Millner may have won the retiring Sam Nunn's seat had the 1996 election

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<sup>48</sup> "Bad omen for Democrats: Max won but GOP looms larger than ever," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 11, 1996, p. 1, 4 (quote on 4); Kathey Alexander, "Millner hasn't won over all his GOP foes," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 15, 1996, Sec. B. p. 3; David Sutton, "Big Dough, Small Change: The Elections of 1996," *Appalachian Journal* 24, no. 3 (Spring 1997), 301; Bullock and Grant, "Georgia: Purists, Pragmatists, and Electoral Outcomes," 60; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the November 5, 1996 General Election, United State Senator," at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1996\\_1105/0000200.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1996_1105/0000200.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017); Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 125.

proceeded to a runoff since Republican voters had demonstrated a greater proclivity to return to the polls for runoff elections.<sup>49</sup>

Millner's third and final statewide defeat came at the hands of another Cobb County legislator, Roy Barnes, in 1998. At the outset, Republicans rushed to endorse Attorney General Michael Bowers' gubernatorial campaign. A West Point graduate with a sterling legal career and bipartisan appeal, he seemed like the ideal Republican candidate. Many party leaders also hoped a strong show of support for Bowers would convince Millner to sit out the race. "Guy has had his shots, and he's blown them," one top Republican elected official confided privately. The primary took a sudden turn, however, when Bowers convened an early June 1997 a press conference where he admitted pursuing a decade-long affair with a former subordinate. Bowers remained in the race, but the revelation sapped much of the initial enthusiasm surrounding his candidacy. Sensing an opportunity, Millner and two others entered the race. The businessman consolidated support among both Christian conservatives and establishment Republicans to win the nomination without a runoff. Questions concerning Millner's statewide appeal continued despite his strong showing. Bowers, who most political observers had counted out, won nearly 40 percent of Republican primary ballots. If Millner could not seal the deal in the general election, Georgia Republicans would have to reassess its statewide campaign strategy.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Arnold Fleischman and Carol Pierannunzi, *Politics in Georgia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 109, 120; 429-431; Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 166-167. Georgia Republicans have since reinstated the majority plus one vote rule for general and special elections.

<sup>50</sup> Tony Heffernan, "A message for Millner: 'Stay Out,'" *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, May 26, 1997, p. 2; Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, "Georgia," 134; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 347; Bullock and Smith, "Georgia: The Christian Right Meets Its Match," 61-62; Jim Wooten, "GOP rushes to embrace a winner," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 1, 1997, Sec. C, p. 5; Kathey Alexander and Peter Mantius, "Impact of admission uncertain, analysts say," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 6, 1997, Sec. D, p. 4; Elliott Brack, "Republicans need to renew race for decent candidate," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 9, 1997, Sec. J, p. 2; Kathey Alexander and Mark Sherman, "Millner brings cash, reputation to race," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 29, 1997, Sec., C, p. 4; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the July 21, 1998 Primary Election, Governor Republican" at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1998\\_0721/0000220.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1998_0721/0000220.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017); Kathey Pruitt, "Millner calling it a win—GOP rival Bowers says a recount is called for," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1998, Sec.

Roy Barnes, a wealthy Cobb County attorney with conservative leanings, posed a considerable general election threat in suburban Republican strongholds around Atlanta.<sup>51</sup> While Senator Paul Coverdell, a pro-choice stalwart, ran opposed for re-nomination and cruised to a comfortable 52-45 victory over Democrat Michael J. Coles, Millner struggled mightily against Barnes. The Republican's "Plan to keep Georgia moving forward" fell flat with voters while the well-funded Barnes championed pocketbook issues popular with both Democrats and traditionally Republican suburbanites. Racially tinged campaigning further undermined Millner's campaign. Both Millner and Mitch Skandalakis, the party's lieutenant governor nominee, advocated vociferously for ending affirmative action, rolling back welfare, and seeking stricter penalties for drug offenders in a bid to boost turnout among white voters. The Republicans' implicit and explicit racial appeals may have backfired. African Americans, the most reliably Democratic demographic, turned out in historically high numbers. Compounding the GOP's problems, turnout among Christian conservatives fell as Millner stressed social issues less in 1998 than he had during his two previous campaigns. Only 19 percent of white voters identified as Christian conservatives in exit polls in 1998—a decline of 7 points from 1994 when Guy Millner almost upset Zell Miller. Roy Barnes defeated Guy Millner 52.5 to 44.1 percent. Buoyed by high African-American turnout, a Democratic candidate could handily defeat Republican statewide who failed to maintain high appeal among social conservatives. On the other hand, Millner's considerable political baggage among moderate Republicans may have doomed his

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A, p. 1; Tom Baxter, "Razor-thin majority shows Millner's vulnerability," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 23, 1998, Sec. E, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Whit Ayres, Jon McHenry, and Cheryl Martin, "Georgia Voting Trends and the 1996 Election," February 1997 in Series 1, Folder 9, Box 12, Georgia Republican Party Records.

final campaign. Either way, the Georgia GOP would undeniably benefit by combining an appealing fresh face with a broad-based appeal to segments of the party.<sup>52</sup>

Considering the magnitude of Republican disappointment following the 1998 election cycle, Cobb County state Senator Chuck Clay succeeded outgoing state party chairman Rusty Paul at an amazingly harmonious convention. Endorsed by state Senate colleagues Eric Johnson and David Ralston as well as Christian Coalition lobbyist Linda Hamrick, Clay highlighted his ability to unite disparate wings of the party. Hoping to move beyond ideological and factional conflicts, Clay maintained, “We are not a debating society or a philosophical society. Our job is to win elections.” The party needed to allow candidates to run on issues that mattered most to their particular constituencies because the future of the party “lies beyond Atlanta in areas such as Blue Ridge and Thomasville.” Clay’s message rang true. Only when Republicans wed its metropolitan base with those voters residing in the smaller towns and rural country sides would the GOP finally achieve its ultimate electoral breakthrough. To do that, Republicans had to unite its competing wings as state party chairman Chuck Clay had just done with surprising success.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “Guy Millner’s Plan to Keep Georgia Moving Forward,” n.d. in Series 1, Box 8, Folder 4, Georgia Republican Party Records; Quoted in Matthew J. Streb, *The New Electoral Politics of Race* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 77; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the November 3, 1998 General Election, United States Senator,” at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1998\\_1103/0000100.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1998_1103/0000100.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017); Kathey Pruitt, “Barnes seen as threat on GOP turf,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 26, 1998, Sec. D, p. 1; Kathey Pruitt and Charles Walston, “Growth and Development; Highways a troubling issue for all candidates,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 12, 1998, Sec. D, p. 5; Charmagne Helton and Charles Walston, “GOP accused of playing race card,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Sec. C, p. 2; Lee Raudonis, “Mitch’s campaign a GOP shame,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, October 26, 1998, p. 4; Charles Walston and Kathey Pruitt, “Barnes wins—GOP loses its bid for hefty U.S. gains,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 4, 1998, Sec. A, p. 1; Bullock, “The Contemporary South and the 1998 Elections,” 102-103; Bullock and Smith, “Georgia: The Christian Right Meets Its Match,” 66-66; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 348. Millner significantly underperformed Paul Coverdell in both Cobb and Gwinnett counties. Coverdell won 59.9 percent in Cobb and 64.7 in Gwinnett while Millner managed only 51.4 and 59.2 percent, respectively. See, “Georgia Election Results, Official Results of the November 3, 1998 General Election, Governor,” Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/1998\\_1103/0000200.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/1998_1103/0000200.htm) (accessed June 25, 2017).

<sup>53</sup> Lee Raudonis, “GOP preparing for a fresh start,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, May 17, 1999, p. 1, 2 (quote on 2); Lee Raudonis, “Chuck Clay’s GOP,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, May 31, 1999, p. 1, 2 (quotes on 2); Clint Williams, “GOP hopeful Clay getting ducks in a row,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 20, 1999, Sec. JG, p. 1; Kathey Pruitt, “State GOP to pick new leaders,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 20, 1999, Sec. D, p. 3.

Unfortunately, Georgia Republicans suffered a tragic electoral setback when Senator Paul Coverdell died unexpectedly in July 2000. Governor Roy Barnes appointed Zell Miller to fill Coverdell's post. By filling the vacancy with someone as broadly popular as Miller, Barnes had markedly improved Democrats' chances of holding the seat. Republican leaders floated several possibilities, but the state party struggled to identify a consensus candidate. Eventually, Mack Mattingly pitched himself. "Democrats have called Zell Miller down from the mountains. I want you to call me up from the beach," the longtime St. Simons Island resident and former senator implored the Georgia delegation at the 2000 Republican National Convention. Some Republicans were understandably dubious since Mattingly's name had not appeared on a ballot since 1986, but no other serious contender emerged. Despite assistance from popular Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush for Mattingly, Miller won without a runoff. Miller proved too popular—even among Republicans—for someone so long out of partisan politics and the public eye.<sup>54</sup>

Republicans suffered additional down-ballot losses on Election Night in 2000. With another round of legislative redistricting looming, the GOP needed to control at least one chamber or it would, once again, be at the mercy of Democrats. Although the party won two seats in the state Senate, it fell five short of a majority. The GOP fared worse in the House losing seats for the second consecutive election. As a result, House Republicans revolted against

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<sup>54</sup> Jim Galloway, "Mattingly makes pitch to delegates," *Atlanta Journal*, July 31, 2000, Sec. A, p. 1; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 341; Kathey Pruitt, "Miller steps in; GOP scrambles," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 25, 2000, Sec. A, p. 1; Kathey Pruitt, "Miller selection puts heat on GOP," *Atlanta Journal*, July 25, 2000, Sec. A, p. 1; Mark Sherman and Kathey Pruitt, "GOP delegation fails to tap a Senate pick," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 26, 2000, Sec. A, p. 1; Steve Visser, "Isakson elected to replace Gingrich," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 24, 1999, Sec. A, p. 1; Steely, *The Gentleman from Georgia*, 389-394; Dick Yarborough, "Georgia GOP clueless—still," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, August 7, 2000, p. 4; Bill Shipp, "The return of the 'Giant Killer,'" *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, August 7, 2000, p. 5; "Notes & Quotes," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 6, 2000, p. 6; Kathey Pruitt, "Miller's outright win foils GOP's strategy," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 2000, Sec. D, p. 9; Charles S. Bullock III, "Georgia: Another Mixed Partisan Result," in *The 2000 Presidential Election in the South*, eds. Robert P. Steed and Laurence W. Moreland (Westport, CT and London, Praeger, 2002), 67, 70-72.

Minority Leader Bob Irvin, replacing him with Lynn Westmoreland of Sharpsburg.

Westmoreland had served in the House since 1992, and he had also belonged to the Conservative Policy Caucus, which had promoted a more conservative line on taxes, spending, and social issues like abortion. In Westmoreland and Earl Ehrhart, the new Minority Whip, House Republicans had found two leaders who would pursue a much more conservative agenda with considerably more vigor than the amiable Irvin.<sup>55</sup>

Chuck Clay also stepped down as state party chairman. In addition to veteran party activist Maria Stollo, two top-tier candidates to succeed Clay emerged in early 2001. The first, David Shafer, had served as Georgia GOP executive director under Alec Poitevent during the early 1990s. An expert strategist and organizer, Shafer had managed Guy Millner's 1994 gubernatorial campaign, served as Deputy Insurance Commissioner under John Oxendine, and ran unsuccessfully for Secretary of State. The chief criticism of Shafer concerned his close ties to the party establishment, many of whom had endorsed his bid. Shafer's chief rival, Ralph Reed, had risen to prominence outside Republican Party circles. The Stephens County native had served as the Executive Director of the Christian Coalition during the 1990s. His close ties to the Christian Right led opponents to label him beholden to social conservatives. Reed was more complex than his naysayers suggested. He had attended the University of Georgia where he had led the Georgia College Republicans before earning a doctorate in history from Emory University. After resigning his post at the Christian Coalition in the mid-1990s, Reed had returned to Georgia and founded the Century Strategies consulting firm. He had also managed

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<sup>55</sup> Kathey Pruitt, "GOP selects new House leader after losses," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 14, 2000, Sec. D, p. 1; Bullock, "Georgia: Another Mixed Partisan Result," 75-76; Lee Raudonis, "Clinton-style tactics? GOP leaders: 'Barnes will pay a price,'" *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 13, 2000, p. 1, 2; "Setback spells trouble for House's Irvin," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 13, 2000, p. 1, 6; Kathey Pruitt, "New leader to nudge GOP to the right," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 21, 2000, Sec. E, p. 5; Lee Raudonis, "New day for GOP: Novice minority chief takes aim at Barnes" *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, November 20, 2000, p. 1; "Whither the GOP? In search of a chief to the Georgia tribe," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, April 2, 2001, p. 1, 2.



several statewide campaigns in Georgia and Alabama before joining Texas governor George W. Bush's presidential campaign as a strategist and fundraiser. Stressing his fundraising background and a three-point plan—legislation, lobby, and litigation—to ensure a fairer redistricting outcome, Reed embodied the Christian Right's evolving role in Republican Party. Both Reed and organizations like the Christian Coalition had grown less monolithic and inflexible. Both had become more pragmatic and, as a result, were willing and able to work within the Republican structure and with establishment Republicans. Incorporating the Christian Right into the formal party apparatus represented the Georgia GOP's best opportunity to unite its competing wings and emerge as the state's conservative, majority party. Indeed, with over 60 percent of the vote, Ralph Reed transcended the party's internal divisions to become state party chairman.<sup>56</sup>

Following his convincing victory, Reed proclaimed, "Today marks the beginning of the end of the Barnes-Murphy-Cleland era." In response, journalist Tom Baxter noted the Republican faithful in Georgia were familiar with "Promised Land talk," but with another round of legislative redistricting just over the horizon, Reed's assurances seemed more confident than in years past. "The party's salvation lies in the census numbers that will be produced in 2000," the dean of Georgia political reporters Bill Shipp had written in January of the year, "They will show massive increases in population in traditional Republican regions and startling declines in old-line Democratic areas." Shipp was correct. By 2000, more than half of all Georgians lived in metropolitan Atlanta—the heart of Peach State Republicanism. Population surged in older suburban counties like Cobb and Gwinnett, but growth in Atlanta's outer suburbs proved more

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<sup>56</sup> Kathey Pruitt, "A Decision For Republicans: Is there a Grand Old Party pooper?" *Atlanta Constitution*, April 30, 2001, Sec. B, p. 3; Lee Raudonis, "Is Ralph Reed the candidate to beat?" *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, April 9, 2001, p. 3; John McCosh, "Reed bids to head state GOP at conservative rally," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 28, 2001, Sec. C, p. 9; Jim Wooten, "Parties seeking unified front in 2002 races," *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, Sec. E, p. 10; Kathey Pruitt, "GOP rivals talk unity amid chairman's race," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 25, 2001, Sec. B, p. 3; "Ralph Reed: Georgia Republican Leader," n.d.; Ralph Reed, Jr. to Fellow Georgia Republican, February 10, 2001 and "The Reed Plan to Build a Republican Majority," n.d. all in Series 3, Box 103, Folder 13, Barr Papers; Bullock and Smith, "The Influence of Christian Conservatives in the Empire State of the South," 87-89.

fantastic. Forsyth County, for example, had expanded by an astonishing 352 percent since 1980! The metropolitan counties nearest Atlanta had become more diverse racially and politically as more racial minority residents settled there, but the exurban counties outside the original “doughnut” remained overwhelmingly white and increasingly Republican. The Democratic Party was all too aware of how tenuous its grasp on political power in Georgia had become since 1991. Redistricting afforded Democrats an opportunity to stem the Republican tide.<sup>57</sup>

Working closely with Governor Roy Barnes in 2001, Democrats drew nakedly partisan maps designed to maintain their majorities in the General Assembly. By this point, Republican legislative candidates had been winning a majority of ballots for state House and Senate races since 1996. Indeed, Republicans had carried 52 percent of votes cast in state Senate contests in 1998, but that figure translated into only 39 percent of seats. Similarly, GOP state House candidates won 53 percent of the vote in state House races that year, but Republicans held only 43 percent of the seats in the lower chamber following the election. By 2000, Republican Senate candidates had increased their vote share to 55 percent, but the party still controlled only 45 percent of the upper chamber’s seats. Republican voting strength, thus, continued to increase. Undemocratic legislative districts appeared to be the Georgia Democrats’ last, best hope of holding back the surging Republicans at the turn of the new millennium. Indeed, with the Democratic Party’s legislative majority imperiled, African-American Democrats declined to resume their coalition of convenience with Republicans. Instead, black Democrats worked

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<sup>57</sup> Rhonda Cook, “Christian conservative Reed elected to top spot in state GOP,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 6, 2001, Sec. A, p. 1; Bob Barr, Charlie Norwood, Eric Johnson, and Lynn Westmoreland to Fellow Republican, April 5, 2001 in Series 3, Box 103, Folder 13, Barr Papers; Tom Baxter, “Georgia GOP pins hopes on redistricting,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 8, 2001, Sec. A, p. 9; Bill Shipp, “A glimmer of gold for gloomy GOP,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, January 10, 2000, p. 5; Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 120-122; Whitelegg, “Selling Lifestyles, not Homes,” 109; Jim Galloway, “The party’s shifting in suburban politics,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 6, 2000, Sec. A, p. 1; Clint Williams, “The ‘Doughnut’: Democrats edge into Atlanta’s suburbs,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 2000, Sec. D, p. 10; Ralph Reed, “Show us the maps! Reed outlines GOP takeover strategy,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, June 11, 2001, p. 1, 2.

closely with party leaders to draw districts benefitting the Democratic Party as a whole. Georgia's Legislative Black Caucus overwhelmingly supported new district boundaries shifting minority constituents into new ones in an effort to bolster the prospects of white Democrats. Democrats also overpopulated reliably Republican seats. By "packing" safe Republican seats, Democrats diluted potential GOP strength in surrounding districts to increase its partisan advantage. Finally, Democrats pitted several Republican incumbents against each other by redrawing district lines to incorporate both legislators' residences.<sup>58</sup>

Georgia Democrats devised a similarly partisan congressional map in 2001 in an effort to dilute growing Republican voting strength. Thanks to population growth, Georgia had gained two additional seats in Congress. As a result, Democrats sought to maximize their advantage while also targeting Republican incumbents. New boundaries placed the First District's Jack Kingston into the same district as Eight District representative Saxby Chambliss. Democrats did likewise to suburban Atlanta Republicans Bob Barr and John Linder. Following the 2002 election, Democrats won five congressional seats. Benefitting from weak Democrats opposition, Republicans managed to win eight seats and maintain its edge on the congressional delegation. Despite the best efforts of Georgia Democrats, the Republican Party remained ascendant.<sup>59</sup>

Republicans responded with anger and dismay. Ralph Reed denounced the Georgia Democratic Party for "splitting 87 counties, shattering local communities, splintering precincts, and in some instances literally traversing mountains and lakes" while making "no attempt to hide

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<sup>58</sup> Bullock and Gaddie, *The Triumph of Voting Rights in the South*, 96-97; Charles S. Bullock III, "Georgia: The GOP Finally Takes Over," in *The New Politics of the Old South: An Introduction to Southern Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. Charles S. Bullock III and Mark J. Rozell (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 59-60; Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 142-143.

<sup>59</sup> Charles S. Bullock III, "Redistricting the Peach State," in *The Political Battle over Congressional Redistricting*, eds. William J. Miller and Jeremy D. Walling (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 88-92. For an exhaustively detailed analysis of the 2001 redistricting process in Georgia see, Ronald Keith Gaddie and Charles S. Bullock III, "From *Ashcroft* to *Larios*: Recent Redistricting Lessons from Georgia," *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 34, no. 3 (April 2007), 997-1048.

its partisan intent.” State Senator Tommie Williams of Lyons, meanwhile, compared the maps to a Jackson Pollack painting. The Georgia GOP eventually succeeded in throwing out the 2001 state legislative map following a federal court ruling. *Larios v. Cox* (2004) declared the legislative boundaries favoring urban residents over rural ones violated the “One Person, One Vote” principle established by *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964). Unfortunately for the GOP, however, the Democratic maps remained in effect during the 2002 election and Democrats maintained their majorities in both chambers.<sup>60</sup>

The audacity of the Democrats’ gerrymandering scheme was matched only by the stunning fulfillment of Ralph Reed’s prophecy on Election Day 2002 when Republicans defeated Roy Barnes, Max Cleland, and Tom Murphy. Most shocking was Governor Barnes’ political fall. Three Republicans lined up for the opportunity to unseat Barnes; State School Superintendent Linda Schrenko, former Cobb County Commission chairman Bill Byrne, and state Senator George E. (Sonny) Perdue. Perdue, a former Democrat from Bonaire in Middle Georgia, was the only non-suburban Republican in the race. Schrenko resided in Columbia County while Byrne called East Cobb home. Perdue assembled a dynamic campaign organization staffed predominantly by young Republicans and overseen by former state party chairman Alec Poitevent. Political pundits indicated argued Perdue would need to carry Middle and South Georgia by wide margins if he had any hope forcing a runoff against either of his better-known opponents. Perdue shocked many of those same observers by winning the nomination outright with 50.8 percent of the vote. Perdue not only ran up huge margins in key counties along and

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<sup>60</sup> Lee Raudonis, “Maps unconstitutional? Ralph Reed spells out GOP’s concerns,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, August 27, 2001, p. 1, 2 (quote on 1); Hills, *Red State Rising*, 88; Tom Baxter, “Democrats’ map draws GOP venom,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 7, 2001, Sec. B, p. 8; *Larios v. Cox* 300 F. Supp. 2d 1320 (N.D. Ga. 2004); Bullock and Gaddie, *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 144.

below the Fall Line, but he also carried Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett counties. He even scraped 35 percent of the vote in Cobb while Byrne managed only 44 percent there.<sup>61</sup>

A similar dynamic played out in senatorial primary where South Georgia congressman Saxby Chambliss defeated state Representative Bob Irvin of Atlanta. Chambliss, a Moultrie native, topped the polls throughout the primary and won easily with 61.1 percent of the vote. Irvin, a moderate stalwart who had run afoul of insurgent conservatives, ran a distant second. Chambliss's victory, as well as Perdue's, suggested the Georgia Republican Party had overcome its historic mistrust of party-switching newcomers. It also demonstrated the party's willingness to expand beyond its suburban core. "Long dominated by the suburbs that circle Atlanta," political reporter Jim Galloway wrote following the primaries, "the GOP is going a little bit country" in 2002. By nominating two candidates with cross-factional appeal within the party who hailed from traditionally Democratic sections of the state, the Georgia GOP finally embraced a new nominating strategy.<sup>62</sup>

That particular milestone would prove small consolation for Georgia Republicans if the nominees failed to score victories in November. Despite leading consistently in the polls and outspending his opponent six to one, Roy Barnes lost to Sonny Perdue. A number of immediate factors helped doom the incumbent Democrat. First, Barnes had angered two key segments of his base, rural whites and public school teachers, during his term. His decision to remove the Confederate Battle Standard from the state flag hurt him with the former while his tone-deaf

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<sup>61</sup> Jim Galloway, "Rural Ga. swing votes central to GOP vision," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 4, 2002, Sec. B, p. 4; Bill Shipp, "The GOP meets town & country," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, June 24, 2002, p. 5; Jim Galloway, "Bill Byrne: Man on the outside always ready for a fight," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 11, 2002, Sec. F, p. 1; "Primary 2002 Analysis," *Bill Shipp's Georgia*, August 19, 2002, p. 3; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 110-112; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the August 20, 2002 Primary Election, Governor Republican," at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/2002\\_0820/0000220.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/2002_0820/0000220.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017).

<sup>62</sup> Galloway, "Rural Ga. swing votes central to GOP vision," p. 4; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the August 20, 2002 Primary Election, United States Senator Republican," at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/2002\\_0820/0000120.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/2002_0820/0000120.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017).

approach to education reform alienated the latter. Second, Barnes had run afoul of metropolitan residents by supporting the proposed Northern Arc—an expensive highway project opposed by affluent neighborhood associations and deep-pocketed environmentalist groups alike. Already unpopular in the Republican-dominated suburbs, Barnes did himself no favors by championing the controversial roadway. Finally, Barnes’ role in crafting the General Assembly’s highly partisan legislative maps may have also contributed to his defeat. Unaccustomed to “cracking” and “packing,” rural voters turned out in force to oppose the heavy-handed “King Roy.” His Republican opponent, meanwhile, ran a commendable grassroots campaign. Perdue targeted voters in all 159 counties while devoting additional resources in some 70 counties carried by both Paul Coverdell and Roy Barnes in 1998.<sup>63</sup>

Saxby Chambliss also ran a vigorous campaign and triumphed over his Democratic opponent, Max Cleland. Cleland, who had voted in line with the national Democratic Party during his term, angered conservative Democrats and independents who had expected him to emulate Sam Nunn. Cleland also looked incredibly out-of-step when compared with Zell Miller who had grown increasingly conservative since becoming the state’s junior senator in 2000. National Republicans made Cleland a top target, and President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney both stumped for Saxby Chambliss who had promised to support the administration. the same coalition of suburban and rural voters who opposed Barnes voted against Cleland.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Tim Darnell, “GOP victorious: Elephants stampede into history,” *Bill Shipp’s Georgia*, November 11, 2002, p. 1; Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 351-352, 356-357; Charles S. Bullock III, “It’s a Sonny Day in Georgia,” in *Midterm Madness: The Elections of 2002*, ed. Larry J. Sabato (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 179-181; Bullock, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?” 57; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: Official Results of the November 5, 2002 General Election, Governor,” at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/2002\\_1105/0000200.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/2002_1105/0000200.htm) (accessed on June 25, 2017).

<sup>64</sup> Darnell, “GOP victorious,” 1; Jim Tharpe, “Chambliss topples Cleland,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 6, 2002, Sec. C, p. 1; Bullock, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?” 57-58; Bullock, “It’s a Sonny Day in Georgia,” 181-183; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: Official Results of

Perhaps no race demonstrated the enormity of the Georgia Republican Party's victory more than Speaker of the House Tom Murphy's defeat. First elected in 1960, the oft-autocratic, always indomitable Murphy had ruled the lower chamber since becoming speaker in 1974. From redrawing district lines, killing GOP bills, and delaying the Democrats' leftward drift, Speaker Murphy had rightfully earned the opprobrium Georgia Republicans heaped upon him during his long career. In the end, however, Murphy was not immune to the tectonic shifts that had subsumed Roy Barnes and Max Cleland. Running in a less favorable district squeezed between Atlanta and the Alabama state line, Murphy's party label finally proved too heavy a burden for the cigar-chomping, "yellow dog" Democrat from Bremen, Georgia.<sup>65</sup>

The Democratic Party's ignominious defeat in 2002 demonstrated the long-term political trends had finally turned in the Georgia Republican Party's favor. Ongoing suburban and exurban population growth continued to swell Republican ranks. The urban core and rural countryside, the twin pillars of the Democratic Party's once-redoubtable "night-and-day" coalition, continued to show slow or even no population growth. Compounding Democratic woes, conservative rural whites had finally abandoned the party of their fathers and grandfathers to seek political refuge in a Georgia GOP. Republicans had hastened this conversion by forcing racial gerrymandering and the Confederate battle standard to the forefront during the 1990s and early 2000s. The party's decision to embrace social conservatives as well as socially

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the November 5, 2002 General Election, United States Senator," at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/2002\\_1105/0000100.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/2002_1105/0000100.htm) (accessed June 25, 2017).

<sup>65</sup> Alan Judd, "Speaker Peril: Murphy on verge of losing to Heath," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 6, 2002, Sec. C., p. 1; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Returns: Official Results of the November 5, 2002 General Election, State Representative – District 18," at [http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election\\_results/2002\\_1105/house.htm](http://sos.ga.gov/elections/election_results/2002_1105/house.htm) (accessed June 25, 2017); Alan Judd, "Sine die, Mr. Speaker," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 7, 2002, Sec. D, p. 1; Richard Hyatt, *Mr. Speaker: The Biography of Tom Murphy* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 72-73; Brenda Goodman, "Tom B. Murphy, 83, Dies; a Longtime Power in Georgia," *New York Times*, December 20, 2007, Sec. B, p. 9; Robert D. Novak, "Sweeping Up in the South," *Washington Post*, November 7, 2002 at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2002/11/07/sweeping-up-in-the-south/88431b92-9be7-43a9-ad22-1d0e4e9170e8/?utm\\_term=.3835a86e2b04](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2002/11/07/sweeping-up-in-the-south/88431b92-9be7-43a9-ad22-1d0e4e9170e8/?utm_term=.3835a86e2b04) (accessed June 27, 2017).

conservative positions on abortion, same-sex marriage, and education also helped make political inroads with rural and small-town voters. After more than a century of seemingly interminable intraparty strife, Georgia Republicans had finally fashioned a party organization capable of capitalizing on fundamental demographic transformations and uniting conservatives to crack the Democratic Party's final stronghold in the South. If the Republicans could defeat the Democratic titans like Tom Murphy, Max Cleland, and Roy Barnes, then it confirmed Governor Sonny Perdue's inaugural proclamation. It was truly "a new day for Georgia."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jim Galloway, "Governor, Legislators Assume Office: 'A new day for Georgia,'" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 14, 2003, Sec. A, p. 1.



## CHAPTER 8

### EPILOGUE: A PERMANENT REPUBLICAN MAJORITY?

Reflecting on the mercurial nature of politics in Georgia in 2010, former Republican state party chairman Rusty Paul identified a single factor explaining why the Democratic Party, which had weathered repeated Republican onslaughts for more than fifty years, crumbled so quickly. “[T]here was only one thing that was holding that coalition of Democrats together, and that was power. That was control of the General Assembly and the governor’s office,” Paul explained. The Georgia GOP had seized control of one power base when Sonny Perdue upset Governor Roy Barnes on Election Day 2002. Just days later, two Senate Democrats—Dan Lee and Don Cheeks—crossed the aisle. Jack Hill of Reidsville and Rooney Bowen of Cordele joined them to give Republicans control of the General Assembly’s upper chamber. Afterward, Senate Republicans summarily stripped Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor, a Democrat, of his traditional authority to appoint committee chairs.<sup>1</sup>

Just over a year after fulfilling his pledge to take Georgia Republicans to the political Promised Land, state party chairman Ralph Reed relinquished his post in 2003 to work on President George W. Bush’s reelection campaign. Reed’s resignation freed Sonny Perdue—the official head of the Georgia Republican Party—to select a chairman who would build the party around his political brand and help achieve his agenda. Perdue tapped Alec Poitevent who had

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<sup>1</sup> Rusty Paul interviewed by Bob Short, October 27, 2010; Jim Tharpe, “Resurgent GOP to convene: What a difference in a year,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 16, 2003, Sec. C, p. 1; Rhonda Cook and James Salazar, “Switchers put GOP in control,” *Atlanta Journal—Constitution*, November 9, 2002, Sec. A, p. 1; Andy Peters and Charlie Lanter, “Ray Looking At Future GOP Switch,” *Macon Telegraph*, December 20, 2002, Sec. B, p. 1. Jack Hill, a Reidsville Democrat, had shared an apartment with Sonny Perdue over the course of ten legislative sessions. Hill had made several public statements insisting he would not change parties, but he crossed the aisle when Perdue made a personal request. See, “GOP takes Hill,” *Savannah Morning News*, November 13, 2002 at <http://savannahnow.com/stories/111302/LOCJACKHILL.shtml#.WXTc6YjytxA> (accessed July 19, 2017).

served two terms as state party chairman before managing the new governor's successful campaign for the job. The Republican Party's most dedicated members and activists subsequently applied their imprimatur at a rapturous state convention in Macon. "We're training, we're recruiting, we're moving forward," Alec Poitevent declared following his formal investiture as state party chairman in 2003. Indeed, the Republican Party's march on the road to political dominance in Georgia had only just begun.<sup>2</sup>

Political observers remained split over the long-term consequences of Sonny Perdue's initial win. After all, Roy Barnes had only lost by a narrow margin after alienating key Democratic constituencies. Did Perdue's victory, therefore, represent a Republican victory or merely a negative referendum on an unpopular incumbent? That Saxby Chambliss ousted Senator Max Cleland in a mean-spirited campaign the same year seemed to hint that Republican fortunes were genuinely on the upswing in Georgia. Indeed, the party continued building on the historic gains it made in the 2002 election by consolidating political power at all levels with surprising speed.<sup>3</sup>

Republicans seized control of the Georgia House of Representatives following the 2004 election. That cycle also saw Johnny Isakson finally win statewide election over fellow U.S. representative Denise Majette to fill the retiring Zell Miller's seat in the U.S. Senate. Utilizing its control over the General Assembly, Republicans initiated a rare, mid-decade redistricting effort to redraw the maps concocted by besieged Democrats in 2001. Sonny Perdue defeated Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor in 2006 to win a second term while Casey Cagle, a Hall County Republican, replaced Taylor as the state's second-ranking executive. In 2010, Congressman Nathan Deal, another former Democrat, succeeded Perdue by spoiling former

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<sup>2</sup> Jim Galloway, "Reed resigns as state GOP chair," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 21, 2003, Sec. D, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cook, *The Governors of Georgia*, 351-352; Bullock, "Georgia: The GOP Finally Takes Over," 60-61.

governor Roy Barnes' political comeback. After winning reelection in 2008, Senator Saxby Chambliss announced his retirement prior to the 2014 election cycle. Businessman David Perdue, the former governor's cousin, emerged from a crowded primary field with the nomination and defeated Democrat Michelle Nunn in the subsequent general election. Governor Nathan Deal also defeated the scion of another prominent political family, state Senator Jason Carter, to win reelection the same year. Compared to decades of political frustration, the string of Republican victories in high-profile elections is truly remarkable.<sup>4</sup>

The long process of partisan realignment that began in Georgia over a half-century ago has finally come to pass. Indeed, the totality of Republican rule in Georgia politics is difficult to overstate. Republicans occupied all fifteen statewide partisan offices following the 2010 election. As of 2017, the GOP still controls these influential posts. The party enjoys large majorities in both chambers of the Georgia General Assembly. That situation is unlikely to change anytime soon since the state's legislature ranks among the least competitive in the nation. Gerrymandered districts and myriad structural advantages favoring incumbents have given Georgia Republicans the upper hand under the Gold Dome.<sup>5</sup>

Republicans also enjoyed a nine-to-five advantage on the state's congressional delegation in 2011, and that margin expanded by one after the GOP finally succeeded in ousting John Barrow in 2014. With Barrow gone, the Deep South lost its final white Democratic member of

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<sup>4</sup> Bullock, "Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?" 57-60.

<sup>5</sup> Bullock, "Redistricting the Peach State," 87, 92-102; Bullock, "Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?" 59-60; Chris Joyner, "Watchdog: Georgia elections among least competitive in nation." *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 6, 2017 at <http://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/watchdog-georgia-elections-among-least-competitive-nation/xSs6pSakUBAp8OF1ECtzSO/> (accessed June 27, 2017); Greg Bluestein, Tamar Hallerman, and Jim Galloway, "Wall Street expressed its doubts about rural Georgia's viability," *AJC.com*, June 28, 2017 at <http://politics.blog.ajc.com/2017/06/28/wall-street-expresses-its-doubts-about-rural-georgias-viability/> (accessed June 28, 2017). As of the 2017 legislative session, Republicans controlled over two-thirds of the Georgia state Senate—a "super-majority."

Congress. The party also controls both U.S. Senate seats, and recent political trends suggest Republican candidates will maintain their electoral edge in those races.<sup>6</sup>

Given the state's rapidly changing demographic make-up, the extent of Republican power in Georgia will likely never reach the level Democrats enjoyed at the apex of the Solid South in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the Georgia Republican Party enjoys both structural and organizational advantages over its Democratic counterpart. First, the Georgia Republican Party has benefitted from the racial and ideological polarization in the state's electorate. As white voters have cast Republican ballots with greater regularity, the Democratic Party of Georgia's reputation as the exclusive domain of racial minorities has solidified. Additionally, the Republican Party has seized the mantle of social and economic conservatism. As the majority party, the GOP can now claim, with some veracity, to represent "mainstream" Georgia values. Democrats, meanwhile, are increasingly tagged as "liberals," never a particularly sizeable subset of the Georgia electorate.

African-American voters in Georgia almost universally identify with the Democratic Party, and statewide Democrats regularly win 90 percent or more of the black vote. The Democratic Party has accordingly relied on maximizing minority turnout to compensate for its declining popularity with white voters who still compose a majority of the electorate. This strategy has so far proven ineffective for Democratic candidates seeking statewide office. Roy Barnes, the last non-incumbent Democrat to win statewide election, captured 39.7 percent of the white vote in 1998. In 2010, Barnes won a meager 23 percent of white ballots—the same percentage as Barack Obama in 2008. Michelle Nunn and Jason Carter performed similarly in 2014. Exit polls taken during the 2016 presidential election indicated Secretary of State Hillary

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<sup>6</sup> Bullock, "Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?" 66; Joshua Stockley, "Louisiana Senate Race: Landrieu (D) v. Cassidy (R) and Obama: The End of an Era in the Deep South," in *The Roads to Congress, 2014*, eds. Sean D. Foreman and Robert Dewhirst (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 348.

Clinton may have performed even worse with this crucial demographic with only 21 percent of white voters supporting the Democratic presidential nominee. So long as the Georgia electorate remains so starkly polarized along racial and ideological lines, Republicans stand to benefit since the raw numbers and voter turnout trends favor the GOP.<sup>7</sup>

Second, the Georgia Republican Party remains the most robust political organization in the state. With the party firmly in control at all levels of government, the GOP enjoys access to immense financial resources and human capital. These have enabled the party to construct a superior political organization and run better campaigns capable of maintaining the GOP's electoral advantage up and down the ballot.

The Republican Party enjoys a deep pool of current and future talent in Georgia. The party also boasts an extensive network of activists, donors, consultants, and volunteers. Beginning in the late 1980s and 1990s, young political talent has flown increasingly from the state's high schools and college campuses into the Republican Party and its auxiliary organizations. The pace has only accelerated. For example, few top aides on Sonny Perdue's 2002 gubernatorial campaign were older than thirty-five. His young personal assistant, Nick Ayers, has gone on to manage Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty's unsuccessful 2012 presidential campaign, serve as Executive Director of the Republican Governors Association, and chair Indiana governor Mike Pence's 2016 vice-presidential campaign. Ayers went on to serve as a top executive at America First PAC, an advocacy group dedicated to promoting

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<sup>7</sup> Charles S. Bullock III, "Georgia: Where Competitiveness Came Late," in *A Paler Shade of Red: The 2008 Presidential Election in the South*, eds. Branwell DuBose Kapeluck and Laurence Moreland (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2009), 60-65; Bullock, "Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?" 62-65; Charles S. Bullock III, "Georgia: Even Redder," in *Second Verse, Same as the First: The 2012 Presidential Election in the South*, eds. Scott E. Buchanan and Branwell DuBose Kapluck (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2014), 52; Greg Bluestein, Daniel Malloy, and Jim Galloway, "Starved of white voters, Tuesday night was 2010 redux for Democrats," *AJC.com* at <http://politics.blog.ajc.com/2014/11/05/starved-of-white-voters-tuesday-night-was-2010-redux-for-democrats/> (accessed June 27, 2017); CNN Politics, "Exit Polls, Georgia President," CNN at <http://www.cnn.com/election/results/exit-polls/georgia/president> (accessed June 27, 2017).

President Donald Trump’s policy agenda. He has since taken over as chief of staff for Vice President Pence. Although Ayers is an exceptional case, he represents a new generation of political operatives who have emerged from a Republican-dominated Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

Republican officeholders and their staffs have gained invaluable institutional experience since becoming Georgia’s majority party. By crafting public policy and guiding it through the byzantine legislative process, Georgia Republicans continue to develop the expertise and professionalism long denied them during the party’s lengthy absence from power.

Georgia Republicans also enjoy the fundraising edge over Democrats in Georgia as deep-pocketed lobbyists and donors seek to curry favor with the General Assembly’s majority party as well as Republican officials who oversee influential agencies like Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Office of Insurance and Fire Commission. Although outside interest groups and recent changes in election finance laws may alter the political expenditure landscape in Georgia, Georgia Republican almost certainly continue to benefit from the party’s lock on statewide offices and wide majorities in both houses of the General Assembly.

A recent special election in Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District demonstrates the structural and organizational advantages currently enjoyed by state Republicans. Following the 2016 election, President Donald Trump tapped Congressman Tom Price to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. His appointment prompted a mad scramble to fill the suburban Atlanta seat. Democrats, encouraged by Donald Trump’s slim margin of victory in the district, lined up quickly behind telegenic, investigative filmmaker Jon Ossoff. Eleven

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<sup>8</sup> Binford, Baxter, and Sturrock, “Georgia,” 128; Hills, *Red State Rising*, 111; “40 Under 40, New Civic Leaders, Nick Ayers,” *Time* at [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2023831\\_2023829\\_2025203,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2023831_2023829_2025203,00.html) (accessed June 27, 2017); Russ Choma, “‘The Most Hated Campaign Operative in America’ Just Joined the Trump Team,” *Mother Jones*, July 20, 2016 at <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/07/nick-ayers-republican-consultant-joins-trump-campaign/> (accessed June 27, 2017); Greg Bluestein, “Veteran Georgia operative Nick Ayers promoted to vice president’s top aide,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 30, 2017, Sec. B, p. 2.

Republicans and a handful of independents also entered the special election campaign. Buoyed by millions of dollars in donations, an army of energized volunteers, and the poor national standing of the Trump administration, Ossoff won 48.1 percent of the vote in the nonpartisan special election.<sup>9</sup>

Facing what proved to be unreasonably high expectations to win in a GOP-friendly district, Ossoff squared off against Republican Karen Handel in a June 20 runoff. Handel had served as the Chairwoman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners before becoming Secretary of State in 2007. Handel had run unsuccessfully for her party's gubernatorial nomination in 2010 and senatorial nod in 2014. Despite her spate of recent electoral setbacks, Handel benefited from high name recognition in the area and, perhaps more importantly, the Republican label. With strong support from local, state, and national Republicans, Handel's Republican base turned out in force in late June 2017 to turn back the Ossoff onslaught. Handel won with 51.9 percent of the vote in the most expensive congressional special election in history. The inability of Jon Ossoff and the Democratic Party of Georgia to flip this suburban congressional district has caused no small amount of consternation in progressive circles. On the other hand, the result has calmed the jittery nerves of Republicans in Georgia who deployed a superior campaign organization to turn out its voters.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the Republican Party of Georgia faces a handful of potentially serious pitfalls that may imperil its majority status in the future. First, demographic trends now favor Democratic constituencies. Just as demographic shifts hastened the growth of the Republican

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<sup>9</sup> Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "April 18, 2017 Special Election," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/67317/Web02-state/#/> (accessed on June 25, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Greg Bluestein, "How Handel won over 6<sup>th</sup> District," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 22, 2017, Sec. A, p. 1; Greg Bluestein, "Handel Victorious in 6<sup>th</sup>," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 21, 2017, Sec. A, p. 1; Alan Abramowitz, "The real lessons of Handel-Ossoff: What Georgia's special election tells us about the AHCA and Trump's strength in 2018 and 2020," *New York Daily News*, June 21, 2017 at <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/real-lessons-handel-ossoff-article-1.3265465> (accessed June 22, 2017).

Party in Georgia during the latter part of the last century, those trends now threaten to loosen the GOP's grip on political power in the state. Georgia remains one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, and both its population and electorate are growing increasingly diverse. Whites composed about 75 percent of the state's electorate in 1980, but that figure dropped to approximately 59 percent in 2016. Minority voters—who are generally predisposed to support Democratic candidates—now comprise almost 40 percent of the state's electorate. Similarly, college-educated white voters now represent nearly a quarter of all Georgia voters. This particular demographic—especially college-educated, white women—has demonstrated a propensity for Democratic voting in recent elections. Republicans, therefore, may soon find the Peach State's political climate far less hospitable—especially in an increasingly “purple” metropolitan Atlanta.<sup>11</sup>

Conversation regarding demographics and the electoral destiny in the region reached a fever pitch in Georgia following the 2012 election when Barack Obama won reelection with strong support from racial minorities, women, and young voters across the country. Some pundits dubbed these voters the “Obama Coalition” or the “Coalition of the Ascendant,” denoting those groups' growing size and commensurate political clout. Journalists and a handful of scholars have remarked on the possible, long-term consequences of demographic change on

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<sup>11</sup> Ronald Brownstein, “The States That Will Pick the President: The Reach States,” *The Atlantic*, February 11, 2015 at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/02/the-states-that-will-pick-the-president-the-reach-states/431859/> (accessed July 11, 2017); Patrick Oakford, “The Changing Face of America's Electorate: Political Implications of Shifting Demographics,” Center for American Progress, January 6, 2015 at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2015/01/06/101605/the-changing-face-of-americas-electorate/> (accessed at July 11, 2017); Mark J. Rozell and Whet Smith, “Memo to Democrats: Look to the Southwest and Southeast, Not Midwest,” *Politico Magazine*, November 30, 2016 at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/11/democrats-electoral-map-midwest-southwest-southeast-demographics-214489> (accessed July 11, 2017); Greg Bluestein, “A deeper look at Georgia's fast-changing electorate,” *AJC.com*, April 16, 2015 at <http://politics.blog.ajc.com/2015/04/14/a-deeper-look-at-georgias-fast-changing-electorate/> (accessed July 11, 2017).



southern politics.<sup>12</sup> The Democrats' poor showing in the 2014 and 2016 election cycles has, however, quieted many who have pinned their hopes and expectations on rapid political realignment via demographic change. Democratic candidates continue to perform exceedingly well with minority voters, but none have managed to capture even a quarter of the white vote since 1998. Nevertheless, a more gradual realignment may be underway since Georgia Republicans have tethered their political destinies to a white electorate whose vote share continues to dwindle. By 2020, white voters will likely cast only a slight majority of ballots as the number of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian residents in Georgia continues to grow.<sup>13</sup>

Still, Democrat Hillary Clinton achieved an improbable electoral feat by carrying both Cobb and Gwinnett counties in a losing effort in 2016. Once the epicenter of suburban Republicanism, these older Atlanta suburbs have become increasingly diverse. Cobb County grew by 8.7 percent between 2010 and 2016. During that same period, its combined African-American, Hispanic, and Asian population grew from 41.8 percent to 46.2 percent. Gwinnett underwent an even more dramatic demographic shift. Its total population expanded by 12.6 percent while the combined black, Hispanic, and Asian population there grew from 54.3 percent

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<sup>12</sup> See, Ruy Teixeira, ed. *Red, Blue, and Purple America: The Future of Election Demographics* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Ruy Teixeira and John Halpin, "The Obama Coalition in the 2012 Election and Beyond," Center for American Progress, December 2012 at <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ObamaCoalition-5.pdf> (accessed October 29, 2015); Nate Cohn, "America's Evolving Electorate," in *Barack Obama and the New America: The 2012 Election and the Changing Face of Politics*, ed. Larry J. Sabato (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 119-128; Bob Moser, "The End of the Solid South," *American Prospect* 24, no. 3 (May/June 2013); Scott Arceneaux, "Painting Dixie Blue: Can Democrats retake the South? Yes, and here's how," *Politico Magazine*, February 20, 2014 at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/02/south-democrats-painting-dixie-blue-103746> (accessed October 29, 2015); Nate Cohn, "Changing South Is at Intersection of Demographics and Politics," *New York Times*, August 14, 2014 at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/upshot/changing-south-is-at-intersection-of-demographics-and-politics.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/upshot/changing-south-is-at-intersection-of-demographics-and-politics.html?_r=0) (accessed October 29, 2015); See also, Susan A. MacManus, "The South's Changing Demographics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Southern Politics*, eds. Charles S. Bullock III and Mark J. Rozell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 47-79.

<sup>13</sup> Rozell and Smith, "Memo to Democrats."; Jan E. Leighley and Jonathan Nagler, *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Ed Kilgore, *Election 2014: Why the Republicans Swept the Midterms* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 2015); Larry J. Sabato, Kyle Kondik, and Geoffrey Skelley, eds. *The Surge: 2014's Big GOP Win and What It Means for the Next Presidential Election* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

in 2010 to 60.9 percent six years later. Clinton also received a boost in from college-educated white voters reluctant to support Donald Trump. These forces combined to give the Democratic nominee a 50.2 percent victory in Gwinnett, flip a state legislative district, and come within a few hundred votes of ousting another incumbent Republican state representative. Republican U.S. senator Johnny Isakson, who had won 64.8 percent of Gwinnett ballots in 2004, scraped only 49.8 percent in 2016. The 2016 results suggest these formerly Republican bastions have evolved into true electoral battlegrounds.<sup>14</sup>

Similar demographic trends in other metropolitan counties have buoyed Democratic spirits in Georgia. A recent Atlanta Regional Commission population projection has indicated that Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties will all be majority-minority counties by 2040. By that time, Gwinnett will likely be the state's most populous county while white residents would represent a bare plurality only in Cobb. Democratic candidates are more likely to win in these particular counties as the demographic tides turns against Republicans in places like Douglas and Henry counties. Douglas County has grown by 7.4 percent since 2010 while Henry has expanded by 8.8 percent during the same period. Both are now majority-minority counties. Unlike Cobb and Gwinnett where Asian and Hispanic residents accounted for the bulk of minority population growth, African-Americans have driven the diversification process in Douglas and Henry. Approximately 39.5 percent of Douglas County residents were African-American in 2010. By 2016, that figure stood at 45.9 percent. In Henry County,

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<sup>14</sup> Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Cobb County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Cobb/64025/183446/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Georgia," Statistics for All States and Counties at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/map/GA,US/PST045216> (accessed July 11, 2017); Curt Yeomans, "Election showed Gwinnett shifting from Republicans to Democrats earlier than expected," *Gwinnett Daily Post*, November 12, 2016; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Gwinnett County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Gwinnett/64059/183797/Web01/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017).

meanwhile, black residents accounted for 36.9 percent of the population in 2010. That number had swelled to 43.6 percent just six years later. Those stark demographic shifts have already altered the electorate in those formerly Republican-friendly counties. Douglas County backed Democrat Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 after supporting Republican George W. Bush with over 60 percent of the vote in 2000 and 2004. Henry, however, only shifted into the Democratic column in 2016 after supporting GOP presidential candidates since 1984.<sup>15</sup>

The Democratic surge in Douglas and Henry have produced down-ballot consequences as well. Johnny Isakson failed to win a majority in Henry County while Democrat Jim Barksdale carried Douglas County with 50.9 percent of the vote. Democrats now hold majorities on Douglas County Board of Commissioners and its board of education. Douglas voters also elected African-American Democrats as coroner, sheriff, and tax commissioner. Henry County also elected three African-American county commissioners—two Democrats and one Republican—in 2016. The Henry County Board of Commissioners is now split evenly between whites and blacks, but Republicans still hold a majority for now. Henry resembles an increasingly competitive county while Douglas’s Democratic realignment appears complete.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission, “Atlanta Population to Change in Surprising Ways by 2040,” *ARC News Center*, April 12, 2016 at <http://news.atlantaregional.com/atlanta-population-change-surprising-ways-2040/> (accessed July 11, 2017); United States Census Bureau, “QuickFacts: Georgia.”; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Douglas County,” at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Douglas/64040/183555/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Hasten Willis, “Political power shifts in Douglas,” *Douglas County Sentinel*, November 11, 2016; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Henry County,” at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Henry/64067/183247/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Tammy Joyner, “Diversity comes to Henry County,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 26, 2016, Sec. B, p. 1. Since 2008, Democratic presidential candidates have also carried Douglas, Newton, and Rockdale counties. See, Bullock, “Georgia: Republicans at the High Water Mark?” 61. For pre-2016 presidential election results see, Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections,” at <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/> (accessed July 11, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Douglas County.”; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, “Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Henry County.” For a contextual analysis of Hispanic voting in Georgia see, Charles S. Bullock III and M.V. Hood III, “A Mile-Wide Gap: The Evolution of Hispanic Political Emergence in the Deep South,” *Social Science Quarterly* 87, no. 5 (December 2006), 1117-1135. Both Michelle Nunn and Jason Carter carried Henry County in 2014.

Demographic shifts, however, have yielded some positives for Georgia Republicans. The party retains a sizable edge in the suburban and exurban counties north of Atlanta such as Cherokee, Forsyth, and Hall. Not only are these counties growing at a faster pace than the increasingly Democratic inner- and southern suburbs, they have also remained predominantly white and heavily Republican. The white share of Forsyth County's total population has declined only slightly from 85.4 percent in 2010 to 82.2 percent in 2016, but the white populations of nearby Cherokee and Hall counties actually increased during the same period. Republican Donald Trump carried all three counties with over 70 percent of the vote while Senator Johnny Isakson outperformed the GOP presidential nominee there in 2016.<sup>17</sup> Trump and Isakson performed even better in counties like Barrow, Bartow, and Jackson, which have all grown increasingly more suburban since 2000. Indeed, the northern Atlanta fringe provided Trump's margin of victory in the state, and it represents the Republican Party's electoral bulwark against the rising Democratic tide.<sup>18</sup>

Second, intraparty factionalism within the Georgia Republican Party has not ceased; it has merely transformed. The obligation of governing has wrought new pressures. Writing laws

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<sup>17</sup> United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Georgia"; Atlanta Regional Commission, "Atlanta Population to Change in Surprising Ways by 2040"; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Cherokee County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Cherokee/64020/183485/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Forsyth County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Forsyth/64050/183469/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Hall County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Hall/64061/183301/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Dan Chapman and Michael E. Kannell, "Building boomlet marches north," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 10, 2016, Sec. D, p. 1; Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Barrow County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Barrow/63999/183396/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Bartow County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Bartow/64000/183329/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017); Georgia Secretary of State, Elections Division, "Georgia Election Results: General Election, November 8, 2016, Jackson County," at <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/Jackson/64070/183312/en/summary.html> (accessed July 11, 2017).

that pass constitutional muster, fit within budgetary parameters, enjoy a reasonable level of popularity among the electorate, and, finally, manage to win the backing of legislators and the governor, compel Republican leaders to forge an effective approach to governance. Above all, this has required Georgia Republicans to identify core priorities as well as areas of compromise. Consequently, this has exposed longstanding rifts among the party's competing factions and within the electorate.

Internal disagreements among Republicans once played out chiefly in party conventions or primary elections. Now disputes over policy and process also spill over into public debate, committee hearings, and contested votes. Long-simmering tensions between competing wings of the party have ebbed and flowed since the GOP's earliest days in Georgia. So-called establishment Republicans have sought to implement policies intended to promote economic growth and maintain social order. As governing conservatives, these particular Republican politicians generally acknowledge a role for government in important facets of daily life. Ideological or "movement" conservatives, meanwhile, have proven more reluctant to brook alliances of convenience or cast votes that might jeopardize ideological purity.<sup>19</sup>

The controlling faction of the Georgia Republican Party is, in some ways, the inheritor of the region's "business progressive" tradition, which broke with hidebound conservatism and championed efficiency, order, and a positive public image to boost the region's overall economic

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<sup>19</sup> The late sociologist and veteran North Carolina state legislator Paul Luebke divided lawmakers in his home state between "traditionalists" and "modernizers." Traditionalists tended to embrace fundamentalist Protestantism and the social traditionalism emanating from that particular value system. Although traditionalists welcomed economic growth, few were willing to cast aside long-held social mores or practices in exchange for such development. On the other hand, modernizers prioritized economic growth when crafting public policy. While not necessarily hostile to traditional social values, modernizers have proven more willing to reassess or discard certain practices, such as segregation, when economic vitality was threatened. According to Luebke, neither traditionalists nor modernizers should be considered social or economic egalitarians. Modernizers were generally less antagonistic to social welfare programs, but this group preferred to redress economic inequality through growth. See, Paul Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics: Myths and Realities* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 18-22, 35-37. Another political scientist, Augustus B. Cochran III has applied this framework to the Democratic Party of Georgia. See, Cochran, *Democracy Heading South*, 80-83. Viewing the Georgia Republican Party through Luebke's conceptual framework appears equally valid and insightful.

health and prospects. Similarly, these particular Republicans also resemble what historian Numan Bartley dubbed “business conservatives.”<sup>20</sup> Building and maintaining a positive growth environment for business and enterprise lay at the heart of this political brand. Republicans like these often campaign forcefully against taxes, regulations, and government programs, but their opposition is neither reflexive nor universal. Support for local option sales taxes for infrastructure development and internet sales taxes to level the playing field between online merchants and more traditional brick-and-mortar stores are two more recent examples.<sup>21</sup>

Ideological or “movement” conservatives who are generally motivated more by doctrinaire principles than practicality, hearken back, in Bartley’s words, to a “Bourbon preoccupation with social stability, low taxes, and limited government.”<sup>22</sup> Social welfare programs—even public education—were considered unnecessary extravagances that threatened the economy in government to which they aspired. Heirs to a “Jeffersonian populism” that prized states’ rights and limited government interventions into the economy, movement conservatives consider individual liberty—nurtured by thrift, hard work, and self-reliance—the most treasured value in modern society. Accordingly, those who espouse this particular brand of conservatism tend to guard against growth in government—especially in the economic realm. Establishment Republicans, conversely, hail from the Hamiltonian school of economic development via

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<sup>20</sup> Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 222-223; Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 22-27. “Business conservatives” embodied many of the same qualities and concerns as a group Bartley called “urban affluents,” who believed “anything that promoted urban-suburban growth was good; anything that did not was not so good.” Although not ideologically liberal or egalitarian in racial or economic sentiment, these men (and sometimes women) espoused an ethos of economic growth that sought high-paying jobs without necessarily ending segregation or welcoming organized labor. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 193.

<sup>21</sup> Edward A. Hatfield, “A Well-Tied Knot: Atlanta’s Mobility Crisis and the 2012 T-SPLIST Debate,” *Southern Spaces*, April 29, 2013 at <https://southernspaces.org/2013/well-tied-knot-atlantas-mobility-crisis-and-2012-t-splolist-debate> (accessed February 27, 2015); Jim Galloway, “The case of Ga.’s incredible shrinking tax base,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 15, 2015, Sec. B, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Numan V. Bartley, “In Search of the New South: Southern Politics after Reconstruction,” *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982), 154.

government support. This ideological power struggle has long raged throughout Georgia, the region, and within the Republican Party itself.<sup>23</sup>

Historian Bruce Schulman has noted the rise of southern Republicans “ensured the triumph of Whig politics in the region” since “development-oriented politicians ruled both parties in the South after 1960.”<sup>24</sup> The Republican ascendancy, though, has laid bare the stark ideological divisions long obscured by the party’s minority status, and increasingly strident disagreements within the Georgia GOP now call Schulman’s once-axiomatic assumption into question. Indeed, ruptures within the ranks of the Georgia Republican Party over a kaleidoscope of issues ranging from transportation, religious liberty, the Confederate memorials, and so-called “opportunity school districts” have pitted pro-growth, establishment Republicans against more ideologically conservative members of the party—many of whom were elected in the wake of the 2010 Tea Party revolt.

More often than not, ideologically conservative Republicans in Georgia have found themselves outmaneuvered by establishment Republicans loyal to Governor Nathan Deal, who won reelection in 2014 in large measure by touting Georgia as “the number one state to do business.”<sup>25</sup> When establishment figures could not water down right-wing resolutions or bills, establishment Republicans have relied on Democrats to compensate for conservative defections.

Democrats proved essential to passing the 2015 infrastructure spending bill that increased

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<sup>23</sup> Monroe Lee Billington, *The American South: A Brief History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 212; Michael Lind, *Up from Conservatism: Why the Right Is Wrong for America* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 124-125; Michael Lind, “Why Big Business Fears the Tea Party,” *Politico Magazine*, June 15, 2014 at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/why-big-business-fears-the-tea-party-107842> (accessed June 16, 2014). This longstanding factional tension within the GOP is explored more fully in Heather Cox Richardson, *To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party* (New York: Basic Books, 2015) and is examined in her earlier *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies during the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 217-218.

<sup>25</sup> Greg Bluestein and J. Scott Trubey, “Rating brings cheers, jeers,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 9, 2014, Sec. B, p. 1.

gasoline taxes among other revenue enhancement measures.<sup>26</sup> The pro-growth consensus in Georgia politics appears strained. Donald Trump's upset victory over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election may further exacerbate historically problematic factional divisions among Georgia Republicans. How the Republican Party of Georgia copes with these political shocks may well define not only its next establishment, but also determine its future viability.

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<sup>26</sup> Jim Galloway, "The political art of transportation deal," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 5, 2015, Sec. B, p. 1.



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