

STATEMENT BY J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR USE IN SYNDICATED COLUMN, "WHEN I WAS A TEENER." NOVEMBER 23, 1948.

"WHEN I WAS A TEENER"

By Governor J. Strom Thurmond

(Governor of South Carolina, and States' Rights Democratic candidate for President of the United States in the recent election. Governor Thurmond received 38 electoral votes from South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana--more than any third party candidate has received since 1912. He is a veteran of World War II, serving with the 82nd Airborne Command, and is the holder of 14 decorations, including the Purple Heart.)

Events that stir the childish heart are often reflected in the man. One boyhood incident stands out clearly in my mind as a beginning point for a career. It was during a heated gubernatorial campaign in South Carolina. As a boy of 10 years, I had listened with interest while my father, a man who had often been in public life, explained the issues of the campaign to me. Because of his influence and encouragement, I attended a political meeting at my home town of Edgefield one day.

The two leading candidates for Governor were scheduled to speak that day from the same platform. One of them (he later was elected) so dominated the other that I was amazed. Even I could recognize that one candidate, by means of his great oratorical ability, had made a sorry spectacle of the other. I felt embarrassed for the "underdog" because he had made such a miserable showing.

As a consequence, I resolved that I would learn to speak, and that I would never let another man make a fool of me on the platform. The hot discussion of the issues involved in that campaign aroused my deep interest in public affairs to such an extent that I determined then and there to run for Governor some day. This I successfully did in my first attempt 34 years later.

During my 'teens, a colorful South Carolina political figure, the late Senator Benjamin R. (Pitchfork Ben) Tillman, encouraged me in my ambition and gave me a few pointers from his own experience. But the real start came to me as a boy of 10 back there at that Edgefield rally.