



“Little To Crow About”

Courtesy of the Boyd Collection at the University of West Georgia

By the mid-1960s, many white southerners were leaving the Democratic Party. One of Murphy’s greatest challenges as Speaker was maintaining a Democratic House in an increasingly Republican Georgia.

He met this challenge in part through the shrewd redrawing of legislative districts. Murphy also helped forge a successful if surprising alliance between rural whites and urban African-Americans, an alliance that enabled the Democrats to hang onto power even as the Republicans attracted ever-larger numbers of white suburban voters.

Murphy resisted the surging Republican tide as long as he could. He saw Republicans as political enemies, and felt no responsibility to train Republicans for future leadership positions in the House.



“Declining Health”

Courtesy of the Boyd Collection at the University of West Georgia



Voters send Southern Democrats packing

Orlando Sentinel, November 9, 2002

The end of over a century of Democratic rule came in 2002, when Murphy lost his House seat to a Republican and Georgia elected its first Republican governor since Reconstruction. Two years later, the Republicans won control of the Georgia State Legislature, including Speaker Murphy’s beloved House of Representatives.

Election 2002: Sine die, Mr. Speaker

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 7, 2002

Republican Tide Washes Away A Southern Political Legend

Wall Street Journal, November 7, 2002



"You know it would have been war over there with me and the governor and all those Republicans. I'm glad I'm not over there. I'm too old to fight like that anymore."

- Tom Murphy

Senator Saxby Chambliss, Senator Johnny Isakson, and Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue
Courtesy of Senator Johnny Isakson