Three Governor’s Controversy—one of the strangest events in Georgia political history

1946 Governor’s Race Summary:

Eugene Talmadge won the gubernatorial election (Governor’s election) in 1946 (November) but died in December before he was sworn in which was scheduled to take place in January. The state constitution did not specify what should happen if the governor-elect died before taking office. So, three men claimed the office: Ellis Arnall, the outgoing governor; Herman Talmadge (Eugene’s son), who had received write-in votes during the election; and Melvin Thompson, the newly elected lieutenant governor. He was not sworn in either. It became known as the Three Governor’s Controversy and the dispute continued until the Georgia Supreme Court ruled that Melvin Thompson was the rightful governor of the state until a new(special) election could be held. Once the special election was held in 1948, Herman Talmadge won and became the newly elected Governor.