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Anastasio, Frank and Phil oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with Frank and Phil Anastasio by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Anastasio, Frank

Anastasio, Phil

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

October 30, 2000

Place

Rumford, Maine

ID Number

MOH 235

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Biographical Note

Frank Anastasio was born in Rumford, Maine on October 4, 1913, the son of Sicilian immigrants Frank and Rose (Pettinato) Anastasio. He grew up in the Rumford area and went to school with Ed Muskie. Frank was the oldest boy in the family and his father died (1922) when he was young. He began working at the age of 9 to support the family and later married Diana and became a barber. Frank passed away September 16, 2006.

Phil Anastasio was born in Rumford, Maine on January 3, 1915, the son of Sicilian immigrants Frank and Rose (Pettinato) Anastasio. He grew up in the Rumford area and went to school with Ed Muskie, graduating from Stephen's High School in 1933. He served 5 years in the Maine State Guard during World War II. He married Evelyn (Brennick) Anastasio on September 4, 1939. She died March 15, 2005. Phil passed away on September 20, 2006.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background; Frank and Phil's childhood; going to school with Ed Muskie; Eugene, Lucy, Elizabeth, Frances and Irene Muskie; Ed Muskie's

characteristics, personality, and style; Stephen Muskie; Josephine Muskie; Muskie hobbies: photography; fishing; track team; Rumford, Maine; and Rumford ethnic groups: French, Scottish, Lithuanian, Polish, and Italian.

Indexed Names

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Chaisson, Irene (Muskie)
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Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
McInnis, Austin
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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. Frank Anastasio and his brother Mr. Phil Anastasio. The date is October the 30th, the year 2000, and we're at, is it Sunnyside?

Frank Anastasio: The Rumford Community Home.

AL: The Rumford Community Home in Rumford, Maine. And you had just mentioned a family connection, a family by the name of Quinn.

FA: Quinn, yes.

AL: And they came from Buffalo, New York?

FA: Now she was a sister to Mr. Muskie, Mrs. Quinn.

AL: Oh, Mr. Stephen Muskie, Ed Muskie's father?

FA: Ed Muskie's father, Mrs. Quinn was Mr. Muskie's fathers, they were brother and sister, yeah. He owned the laundry, Rumford Steam Laundry, which is not there today but yeah, the family was in there at the time, yeah. And the family all came up and I recall one boy and two girls, how many do you -?

Phil Anastasio: Oh I know one was Marguerite, I knew Marguerite, but I can't remember the other girl's name.

PA: Theresa I think, something like that. Anyway, I don't know, anyhow, and I knew the family, they'd come up and visit. And he was a member of the police force in Buffalo, New York at the time, they must be all dead by now, I don't know.

AL: So you said they owned a laundry here? Did they eventually move here?

FA: They lived here, yeah, at one time, then they moved away, see?

AL: And then they came back to visit.

FA: They'd just come back to visit, yeah.

AL: Okay.

FA: But he still owned the laundry, see, then he sold the laundry. He sold it to Mrs. McLean.

PA: Yeah, McLean owns the laundry.

FA: And they must be dead now (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: So none of them have actually ever come back and lived here, once -?

FA: How do we know?

AL: Right.

PA: Not to live, they never came back here to live. But it's been years anyway since I've seen any of them.

FA: Well that must be in the early, well that was the late thirties, early thirties, way back there. See, we were married, me and Helen, we were married then. I got married in '42, so that was way in the thirties.

PA: Right, I wasn't married because I went to parties and movies all night. If I was married I wouldn't have done that.

FA: When did you get married?

PA: 1939.

FA: See, so that was early. That was in the early thirties I'd say.

AL: Now tell me you, when did you first know Ed Muskie, was -?

FA: Always knew him.

PA: Always knew him.

FA: His father had a tailor shop, and he shined shoes when he had a tailor shop.

PA: I shined shoes, the shoeshine parlor was downstairs, and he had his tailor shop upstairs. And of course we'd lived in the same neighborhood for years.

FA: Oh yes, yes. It was just a street, just a -

PA: Then we lived in their house, in one of, they owned two houses and we lived in one of them right next door to them.

AL: Okay, for how many years, or what ages?

FA: Now I'm, we'll say thirty, that's seventy years ago? 1930? Well of course I'm only sixty-five, I'm eighty-seven and he's eighty-five, see, so, so you can see it was early thirties, yeah.

AL: Right, and now how many years did you live in that house next door to the Muskie's?

PA: You have any idea, Frank?

FA: That I don't know. From there did we go to the Duncan's after that, or was the Duncan's there before that?

PA: I don't know.

FA: *(Unintelligible phrase).*

AL: Well let me ask a different question, do you have recollections of Ed Muskie's parents?

FA: Yes, couldn't help it.

AL: Tell me who they, what were they like, how do you think they're?

PA: Well, Mrs. Muskie was kind of, well, I don't want to say odd person, but a different person. I used to wait on her because I worked in the grocery store for years. And, oh Mr. Muskie was a very quiet man, wasn't he Frank?

FA: Of course I knew a little more because I spent lots of time in the house, see, and I used to eat meals there, and Mr. Muskie would come around after meals, come on, let's wash dishes. The males would wash the dishes, oh yeah.

PA: I played cards there a lot.

FA: Oh, cards, they played cards all the time, sure, they'd play cards or whist. And Mr. Muskie had a backyard that he fooled around with, you know, and she had a flower garden, yeah. And they were very good, they, like he says, he was there, I was there, they always welcomed you in, yeah.

AL: What kind of card games did they like to play?

Both: Whist, Bridge.

AL: Whist?

FA: And she would be cooking the, and she was a good, made good cakes and stuff, always had cakes, yeah, always, yeah.

AL: Did they ever, did she make a lot of Polish food?

FA: Only that sauerkraut. (*Unintelligible phrase*) he had a little bit of beer, too. So that's, but he was in the Elks every Sunday morning, he belonged to the Elks, yeah. And (*unintelligible word*) he'd do a little gambling over there. But he was very good, he was a family man I'd say. He'd go up swimming with, you know, good swimmer.

PA: He owned a Caddie, Cadillac, he had a big Cadillac.

FA: Yeah, first it was a (*unintelligible word*) he had, then he owned a big Cadillac.

PA: And he used to take all the kids and we'd go up to Roxbury Pond.

AL: A whole car full of kids?

PA: Yeah.

AL: Wow.

FA: And he and Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Gagnon with his son, and Mr. Muskie with Steve, they'd go fishing. And they loved fishing. They were, people (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Now, go ahead.

PA: I went to school with Lucy, we graduated the same year, his sister.

AL: Yes. Lucy who married a Paradis?

PA: Paradis.

FA: Yeah, yeah.

AL: Well what was she like? She was very, she did very well in school, didn't she?

PA: She was a very smart girl, very smart.

FA: Yeah, she (*unintelligible phrase*), that's how smart she was. Oh yeah. And then Irene, of course Irene, she worked in the mill with my wife. She used to play the piano, she married a Chaisson who used to go out, have a band once in a while, so he's got a two horn dance band. And there was a, now who did Frances marry?

AL: Chouinard.

PA: Chouinard, he was a milkman.

FA: Yeah, then Elizabeth was married to Ben Breault, he's still living the last I knew.

AL: Who?

FA: Ben Breault.

AL: Yes, I've heard that name but I haven't been able to find him.

FA: He was in Muskie Building last I knew. And I think from there, if he went anywhere else, there's a woman there who would know where he was. (*Unintelligible phrase*).

PA: In fact he lived there for a long time.

AL: And what was his connection again?

FA: He was the husband to Elizabeth, the younger daughter.

AL: Oh, okay, okay. And now what about Eugene, what was Eugene like as a kid?

PA: He was altogether different than Ed. Altogether different, I mean like night and day. He was a fellow that didn't, he didn't care what happened, you know.

FA: He took everything in stride. Worked in the mill, working the rewinders.

PA: He did work in the mill?

FA: In the rewinders, yeah, they liked him. But he was strong, boy, yeah, yeah, yeah. Funny as a devil, laughing all the time.

AL: Was he big and tall like Ed Muskie, too?

FA: Oh yes, well I wouldn't say he was tall.

PA: He was tall but not as tall as Ed.

FA: Not as tall as Ed.

PA: He's taller than me.

FA: Oh yeah, but he wasn't quite as tall as Ed, he was tall and a likeable fellow, yeah. You wouldn't say they were brothers, the two brothers, if you saw them, because he didn't care a knack for books and Ed was a bookworm.

PA: Everything was funny, he laughed. He and Joe were great friends.

FA: Oh, jes- yeah. Now, getting back to Mr. Muskie, he'd sit down on the porch, they had a swing there, and he'd tell about his days in Poland. And his folks were, he got them out of Poland, they didn't want to stay there because of the conditions, and he'd tell us about the conditions in Poland. And I think that got into Ed's head a lot, because I think that's why Ed was such a man to help people when he went in Congress. And I think he recalled what his father said about Poland. And he'd sit there and he'd talk there for hours, and we'd sit there and listen to him. It was interesting because it was somewhat different than our country. And so I think he got a lot of that into Ed. Didn't mean to perhaps, but just the talking, and Ed got into it, yeah. He was a good family man. He walked a lot. He didn't, to go to work he went from Virginia down to Congress Street, about a mile.

PA: Yeah, about a mile. Yeah, he walked it all the time.

FA: And he'd talk to everybody. And like Phil says about her, I wouldn't call it odd, there was something, but she was a wonderful person, oh yeah, yeah.

PA: Quiet.

FA: Quiet, I spent a lot of hours with her in her flower garden. She knew flowers, you know, boy oh boy, and anything I know about flowers I got from her.

AL: So, -

FA: And everybody in the area knew them, everybody knew them.

AL: They were a very visible family?

FA: Oh, they were sociable, that's right, they'd invite you in, they were real sociable. And they had, they were friends with the Barkers. They thought a lot of the Muskies. Matter of fact one of the Barkers, Charlie Barker thought a lot of him. Charlie wanted to (*unintelligible phrase*), he and his wife, wanted to (*unintelligible word*).

AL: You said the last name was?

FA: Barker, B-A-R-K-E-R.

PA: See, they were neighbors for years, side by side.

AL: What, so did you get a sense of what the community thought of the Muskies?

FA: Who?

AL: How the community looked at the Muskies, that they were approachable and . . . ?

FA: Oh yes, the Muskies went to church regularly and all that. Oh yeah, they liked them.

PA: Well see, he was a businessman for years, I mean he was a tailor for years. And actually the best tailor we had in town.

FA: And he was smart, he could talk. Oh yeah, yeah. But he was smart. Those people who come from the old country, they learn their trade in school. But my father was a shoemaker, he could make shoes, he learned that in the old country. But he died young, he died in 1922, see. But Mr. Muskie came here and he was a good tailor, made a lot of suits. Matter of fact, he made me a couple of suits and I'm telling you, yeah.

AL: So in the Rumford community growing up, there were different ethnic groups. It was pretty diverse in this community, wasn't it? What were those different groups and how did they -?

PA: We had the Smith Crossing which was the Italians, and down on Spruce Street was the Lithuanians or whatever you want, we called them Slavs, but, and then they had the French section which is Pine Street and Waldo Street. The Scotch, the Scotch.

FA: They had a little group of their own, too, yeah, yeah.

PA: Different sections.

FA: I would say there was either four or five Polish families in the area, they were over in Mexico. One was Eikel, one was Muskie, one was uh I can't even think of it, there were two girls there, but there were either four or five.

PA: There were a lot of Lithuanians, though.

FA: There were a lot of Lithuanians, yeah.

PA: A lot of people didn't, I didn't know the difference between the Lithuanian and the Polish.

FA: No, we didn't know the difference, no, no.

AL: There was Frances Austin's family was Polish.

FA: Frances what?

AL: Frances Austin? I mean, I'm sorry, I'm saying that wrong, Frances McGinnis. Yes, Frances and Austin McGinnis is what I was thinking of.

PA: Yeah, they lived in the park.

FA: Yeah, they lived in the park, yeah.

PA: That's where all the mill people worked, lived, that worked in the mill, in the park. Chisholm built that for the mill workers.

FA: And he built the homes along Hancock Street and some down on Cumberland Street. Oh, he did well. He had the institute, yeah. It was a roaring country, Rumford. Rumford and Bangor was the two fastest towns in the state.

AL: Really?

FA: Well, we had the Oxford mill, the IP mill, Guilt mill, we had a stamp mill, made postcards and, for the government. Of course they went out. Where they're gone I don't know. And the laundry, there's no more laundry, there's nothing there. (*Unintelligible phrase*), and now it's so damn dead.

AL: When you were growing up with Ed Muskie, what, I mean what was he like as far as, as a kid and in what ways did he, was he distinctive?

FA: Well, he'd come out of school and go home, see, and study.

PA: He did have, excuse me, he did have his own place where he used to develop his own film.

FA: Develop his film, few people that knew that, they didn't know, he used to develop films.

AL: Develop films?

PA: That's right.

AL: A black room. Okay.

PA: Up over his father's garage. I spent a lot of time up there with him.

FA: That's right. And since I got that call yesterday I started thinking about Muskie, and then it come to me, about developing films. He'd do anything -

PA: And he liked to go fishing, he was a, he liked fishing. But he didn't come out and play ball or anything with us.

FA: He'd throw a football around, he'd throw a baseball around, outside his house fast, and he liked to pitch horseshoes, remember?

PA: Yeah.

FA: So, what else can you talk about. Well he did have a girlfriend after a while, way back in the senior year.

PA: Oh yeah, I remember her.

AL: What was she like?

FA: She was nice, she was nice. Paradis?

PA: Paradis.

FA: Yeah, she was nice. (*Unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Was she quiet like him?

FA: She was I guess, yeah.

AL: Now, I mean, Ed Muskie, when he came to into the public view and we all met him, you know, became governor and then went on to be senator, he was very articulate as to what he thought about things, he had his opinions. Did you get a sense of that, did he talk to you about

how he felt about things when he was a kid, or was that -?

FA: If you was with him, yes, yes he did, yes. Sometimes he'd discuss things, current events, and he had a, yeah, that's always one thing that sticks in my mind. In Lent, that's a Catholic, he used to go to mass every morning, and I had to go with him. So one day I said to one of the sisters, "He's going to be a priest." Well I really was off.

PA: My mother used to say, every time she saw Ed she'd say, "Ed, you're going to be president."

FA: Oh, that's right. She always said that.

PA: She always said that. Ed, you're going to be president. And he'd talk about it.

FA: They were, had quite a friendship, the two of them, yeah.

PA: My mother used to make bread, the big round ones, Italian, and the whole neighborhood used to know about it, because the Hansons and the Soules, and we all lived in the same, and she used to make that dough that they sell at the carnivals there.

FA: I know what you mean, yeah.

PA: Fried dough. But they don't make fried dough the way she did. She took it right off the -

FA: Everybody called her ma, that's how much they knew her.

PA: And everybody had to have fried dough.

FA: And if somebody was sick they got a bowl of something, or bread or something, yeah. That's the way it used to be, all the neighbors. Nowadays they don't even know the next-door neighbor. And I miss that, yeah.

AL: I miss it, too.

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

PA: In high school he was just a regular guy, I mean, -

FA: Oh yeah, I took, I was a senior, see, and that, and I took some subjects, sometimes, because I took six subjects every year, sometimes I'd have a study hall, see, and I took geometry one year. Well, what fun I had, you know, he'd look at me, "What'd you get?" And I'd show him that. "How'd you do that?" Ed was smart, see. And Frenchie, and I didn't do bad myself, see, and he kidded me a lot about that. How did you do it? I didn't know how I did it, I did it. And we'd compare a lot of things like that, yeah, Ed and I, yeah.

PA: One thing about Ed, if he came to town he always remembered us. Because remember he went down to Andy's and had his cocktail and (*unintelligible phrase*). He, you know, he was a regular guy, I mean he, just because he was a governor it wasn't that he had to meet with the big shots. He'd just come meet with his friends.

FA: The time he became governor when they had, the day they swore him in, Jim (*name*) and I, Jimmy was a hard (*unintelligible word*), a real hard (*unintelligible word*). And so he says, "Let's go down." I says, "I wasn't invited." "I wasn't either, let's go down." We went down, got in the line, when he saw us, "Oh you're here. What are you two doing here?" I says, "I'm hoping you'll come pitch horseshoes with us." Well then he laughed, he said, "Frank, I wish I was pitching them now." But we said goodbye and we left.

AL: So did you get to see him much in the years after he left Maine and went to Washington?

FA: When he'd come, he'd come in, he'd see people, yeah.

PA: Well, of course his folks were still, they were still living in Rumford. He made it a point to come to the graduation of all the Anastasio's, four or five that graduated in one year, and he was a speaker.

AL: Now are these, that would be your children?

PA: No, well, one was my sister's, and the other one was Andy's, and -

FA: See, we were the only Anastasio family in the town anyhow, so we got all those sisters.

PA: So, I think there was four or five that graduated the same year.

FA: Oh yeah, he, yeah.

AL: Do you have any particular recollections, things that stand out in your minds from those childhood days that -?

FA: Well the only thing is, I think he (*unintelligible phrase*), I figured that some day he would be somebody, you know what I mean? I thought so much of him, you know. And so did my mother because, well I think people all thought well, in that sense, everybody liked him. You couldn't help liking the guy.

PA: He played basketball in the high school.

FA: Yeah, and track team, he was our high jumper. So what else?
(*Break in taping.*)

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*) quite a doll.

AL: She was quite a doll?

FA: Yeah.

AL: I think I've heard that before. Now did you have her for classes at all?

FA: Yeah, I'd sit there and look at her, you know.

PA: I had her. Cleary, too, I had her.

AL: Now what was she like? I haven't heard much about Mrs. Cleary.

PA: Oh, see she didn't stay here too long I don't think.

FA: She was kind of small, but she was -

PA: A little bigger than you about, not quite as short, but oh, she was a nice lady.

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

AL: So they, he's said over the years that they really influenced him. Did you have a sense of Miss Hicks as being someone who would really -?

FA: I think yes, because she used to hang, she used to be in politics a little bit, not that she'd run for office, but she was there when they wanted her, see. I don't know what party. I mean, (*unintelligible phrase*), she didn't run but everybody knew her. Abbott, yeah, Mrs. Abbott, her son's are in the University of Maine now. They were football coaches, yeah, they're football coaches.

AL: Yeah, she has one son there and one son who practices law in Auburn.

FA: That's right. But I think they all were instrumental in Ed being the way he was, you know. In fact (*unintelligible phrase*).

PA: Didn't Ed get (*unintelligible word*) for his college education by Bingham?

FA: Yeah, he was working in the summer time at these hotels. And when he went to college, at the end of college, he got a check all paid up, Bingham paid him.

AL: Neat, did -

FA: Of course Bingham had helped quite a few of them, he was one of these men. He actually-

AL: He's a doctor?

FA: No, I don't think, I don't know, but he was, he came from Philadelphia and Bethel, did quite a few of Bethel.

PA: What do they call these people that back up these hospitals and stuff like that, you know? Give money.

FA: Oh yeah, he -

PA: Philanthropist or something, you know. He had money.

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

PA: Then we went to a hospital in Boston that he was, his name was right up there.

FA: Oh yeah, he was a very smart man. He helped a lot of people.

AL: And where, did he live in this area?

PA: No.

AL: No he didn't.

FA: Philadelphia, I think.

AL: Oh, Philadelphia.

FA: Yeah, but he did a lot for Bethel, so he must have gone there to Bethel.

PA: Frank, I wouldn't be surprised he lived in Bethel sometimes, summers or something.

FA: Oh yeah, (*unintelligible phrase*), yeah. Nice town, Bethel, beautiful town.

AL: Now were you, were either of you ever actively involved or support Senator Muskie during his reelections?

FA: Ed?

AL: Yeah.

FA: You mean Ed himself?

AL: Yes.

FA: Well, his track running, his basketball.

PA: But she means -

AL: I mean during the campaigns?

PA: During the campaigns.

AL: When he ran for senator, did you or Phil ever go out and actively help get him reelected?

FA: Well, there was (*unintelligible phrase*) people come in and that's all. But that's, Ed never knew that or anything, but, you couldn't help it with a kid like him. Even in the store, someone would come in, oh sure I know Muskie. You can't help saying that.

PA: But actually as far as being on any committees I don't, I was never on one, on any committee.

AL: Now your parents both came from Sicily?

Both: Right, yeah.

AL: So you were first generation American citizens.

PA: Right.

AL: And there must have been a lot of Italian spoken in the house?

PA: Not really.

FA: No, well -

PA: No, we had to speak English, my mother had to learn how to speak English.

FA: After father had died, and we had to help my mother, we did it that way.

PA: See, we were eight children. My father died, I was seven years old. So you can see that we didn't have much time. We had to, we used to get our own wood. I sold soda and I sold newspapers.

FA: In a wheelbarrow.

PA: We did everything to make a living.

FA: Sunday papers. We did. I would shine shoes for customers at D'Angelo's pool, a pool table, full pool. I was eight and a half, see. While he went to work -

PA: Shining shoes.

FA: Yeah, for (*unintelligible word*).

PA: No, no, Nick (*unintelligible word*).

FA: And he had, how many chairs did he have?

PA: Had nine chairs, nine shoeshine chairs.

FA: That's right, and busy all the time.

PA: Well, see, Rumford had almost fifteen thousand people at one time.

FA: Oh yeah, all these mills and everything.

AL: Boy, this was the place to be in that time. This was sort of a center.

PA: Well, at one time we had more cars for the size of the town than any place in the United States.

FA: And the winter sports, we had nine class A ski jumpers. Yeah, and we used to put on the sports, boy, they were something. The town would fill up, all the rooms would be taken up, yeah. They really were. The Chisholm Ski Club.

PA: They used to have a train come in from Boston for the winter carnival, pick people up all the way. And I used to go down, they used to have a band go down and meet the train when it come in on Sunday morning. So we had quite a town at one time.

FA: And we had some big orchestras in the town, in the past, big orchestras. Now the place is dead. You can close the street up seven o'clock at night now.

PA: On sports, my goodness, even Siemens was right up there, class A all the time.

FA: Well they actually went class A as far as the attendance. But they played class A, they won the New England championships a couple of times, state of Maine quite a few times. I'm glad you mentioned that, oh yeah. Anything, football, basketball. And they had that summer, they had a baseball team in the summer time that the mill supported. Remember Foss and that bunch? The Smalls brothers, Charlie Smalls and brothers.

PA: I'll never forget talking about that, the softball team had to go to a tournament in Portland and naturally they brought hard cider and after the games they got feeling good, and nobody to drive but me. I didn't know enough about Portland. But we got home, we got home.

AL: Enough said, huh?

PA: I didn't drink.

FA: The Bates used to run, too, in those days. Bates tournament, remember that? Sometimes we'd bum, we stayed overnight.

AL: Well what changed for Rumford? When was it that all this changed?

PA: Industries are leaving. Bass Shoe, what's that place in Dixfield that improved, that hired so many people?

FA: Wasn't that a toothpick mill?

AL: Forster's?

FA: Forster's, yeah, yeah, you're right. And they had a, way back they had this little plant that made cards for the government, that's way back before your time.

PA: So the mill employed over three thousand people. Today they only got twelve hundred.

FA: Plus all the wood mills there, there was (*unintelligible word*) mills, look up in Virginia and they had the lumber mill there. Some people would be working two mills.

PA: See they, actually the paper mill was the big thing. It had over three thousand people, and today twelve hundred. Automation.

FA: And they were the largest state mill in the world at one time, Rumford, and the IP mill the number two paper mill. I worked there for two or three years until it went down. Then I went to work in (*unintelligible word*). Yeah, everybody was employed.

PA: So Andrea, where are you from?

(*Pause in taping*).

AL: I mean, is there anything, because I've asked all the specific questions that I had thought of, that, is there anything I haven't asked or, you know, I've sort of skipped over that you feel is important? Or anything, final things that you'd like to say.

FA: Well, one thing I had before I come here, he mentioned the film thing, see, I didn't know if people did that thing. That he did that.

AL: No, so Ed Muskie used to take pictures and then go develop the film?

FA: Yeah.

PA: He loved taking pictures.

FA: Yeah, yeah, he loved it.

PA: And he used to, he didn't do it as a business, he did it for himself, as a hobby.

AL: As a hobby, yeah. Did he take them of his friends and things, or nature, or do you recall?

FA: I think nature, fishing and everything. With the father, the two fathers, Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Muskie, would take the boy Robert and Ed fishing, yeah. They had some good times those people.

AL: Yeah. Do you know if Mr. Gagnon's son is still living?

FA: He's gone to live down in Dixfield.

PA: That wouldn't be the son, Robert, that would be Robert's son.

FA: Robert's son, and the family, yeah.

AL: So Robert's passed away?

FA: Well, his father passed away. We're talking about his grandfather, his grandfather was the fisherman, and now I'm wondering, could be -

PA: And young Robert's dead, he died.

FA: Yeah, I know. (*Unintelligible word*) died.

PA: All the fellows in the neighborhood, Jesse Soule, Kenny Bosworth, Ed Hanson, all -

FA: Oh yeah, yeah, Leroy Thurston.

PA: They're all dead.

FA: Yeah, yeah, all but us I guess.

AL: You said Leo Thurston? Does he have a widow who's still living?

FA: Who's that?

PA: He say Roy Thurston.

FA: Leroy, Leroy Thurston.

AL: Leroy Thurston.

PA: Yeah, that was our neighbor. But I don't think he had much to do with the rest.

AL: No.

FA: No, they just knew him I guess, (*unintelligible phrase*), they knew him but, of course nobody I'll say, you couldn't say, did know them. They knew (*unintelligible word*), you know, yeah.

AL: Okay. What do you think Ed Muskie's biggest contribution was to the nation?

FA: Well, purifying the rivers and waters, I think that's one of them.

PA: That would be one of the biggest things.

FA: I think a lot of, a lot of them knew Muskie, they all liked the Muskie and they all respected Muskie.

PA: But you know a funny thing, you could sit and talk to him, he wouldn't feel as if he was above you and you could discuss things. Now, when his sister died I went, after the funeral we went to Madison's and we had wine and we sat there and talked. And any time he came to town we used to get together and

FA: I think he remembered his folks in Rumford, but a lot of the people in Rumford didn't like Muskie because they said he claimed Waterville as his hometown. Well after he went to Waterville, he was living in Waterville of course, you know what I mean, like anybody else.

PA: See, they don't understand that he was, lived here while he was in high school, then he went to college. Well, then he found his life and they lived, and that was where he was in business. So -

FA: Nothing wrong with that. I, a fellow said the other day, Tom Delano, bald guy, same class as us, he says, "Huh, he never claimed Rumford as his hometown." I says, "Look, he did when he was here." Little bit of jealous, perhaps.

PA: Well, like I've heard the same thing, 'What did he ever do for the town of Rumford?' A lot of people don't understand that, that he did for the town like he did for the nation. I mean, for everybody, not just for around here.

FA: We all benefit by it, that's right.

AL: Did you have any sense from the way he was when he was a kid that he had those visions for the environment?

FA: When he was a kid? We used to say all the time that some, that he'd become somebody. Oh yeah, I thought, first it was a priest. Then his sister says, "A priest?" You couldn't help thinking of that.

PA: While I was, when he was in high school and then when he was in college, he'd come home, I'd say, "Ed, you're going to get someplace. I know you're going far."

FA: That's right, yeah, you couldn't help thinking that. What, we didn't know, but something, yeah. And I think if those two instances hadn't happened down in Florida and, he'd have made it. When they said that he called the French, what was that now?

PA: I don't remember that at all.

FA: They accused him of -

AL: They accused, yeah, or something about his wife.

FA: That's right, something about his wife.

PA: And then in New Hampshire -

FA: Oh, that publisher there, that publisher, yeah. He's still around, too, I think.

AL: The publisher? I don't know.

PA: A lot of people claim if that, instead of Ed running for vice president, if he was running for president and the other guy as vice president, they'd have won the battle, but.

AL: Yeah, if it had been a Muskie-Humphrey, instead of Humphrey-Muskie ticket?

FA: I heard that a lot. Even, I saw that in print a couple of times.

PA: But it wasn't to be.

FA: And I was disappointed. I think (*unintelligible phrase*), that Eugene had come up, and he says, "If he makes it, what are you going to do?" I said, "I'm going." He says, "Good," he says, "I'll make plans." Yeah, poor Eugene.

AL: So Eugene has never really come back to this community over the years?

FA: No, no.

AL: When the sisters died, did he come back for those funerals?

FA: Eugene never came, did he?

PA: Never seen him. You know the last time I saw him was when I think Ed was running for vice president.

FA: Yeah, he came.

PA: He came, and I'll never forget that because he was (*unintelligible phrase*) in the fire station across the street. I went in the fire station to take a short cut, I run into a ladder, and they had to take me to the hospital because I did. And I hollered to Eugene, you know, and I was just going back and then I walked right into a ladder. That's the last time I seen him.

FA: That's the last time he came to town, too. I'm pretty sure. But he wouldn't have come to town, not unless his brother was running the Still, he married.

PA: Well, all I can think of Eugene, one big slob that ain't, didn't care for nothing. So different than that brother.

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

PA: Ed Muskie used to love to grab a hold of you and tickle you something, oh, he had big hands, and he'd come up from behind you and, oh.

AL: He'd tickle you?

PA: Oh yes.

AL: Oh gosh.

FA: He used to tickle everybody, yeah, yeah.

PA: You know how much, you know, it used to get me. We'd only be four playing cards over to his house, so before the father come home I'd try to get over there and be one of the four, see, Ed, Lucy and Frank and I or something like that.

FA: And then Mrs. Muskie would play.

PA: No, she wouldn't play with us, Frank.

FA: No, she used to play with us then.

PA: No.

FA: Well I think after a while she'd got (*unintelligible phrase*).

PA: She was hard of hearing.

FA: Yeah, she was hard of hearing.

PA: I played cards there quite a lot.

AL: So you would get over there so you could be one of the four?

PA: Yes.

AL: Did he ever play cribbage, was that something that was ever played there?

FA: We never played then, but we play now.

PA: But, we'd play at the Muskie's, see, we'd play four so we played bridge most of the time.

FA: That's all I do now is play cribbage. Yeah, we have a lady who comes in here and who conducts these sing-alongs. She called me up the other day, says, "I'm coming, ten thirty, will you play cribbage until eleven o'clock?" Judy (*name*).

AL: Now, you said that Stephen Muskie, Ed Muskie's father, would talk about his time in Poland. Do you recall any of the stories specifically or just the general -?

PA: No, Frank would know more, but, because I never, I knew Mr. Muskie, I knew him real well because -

FA: Well, we all did, yeah, but -

AL: Different circumstances.

FA: (*Unintelligible phrase*) he'd go out on the swing, whoever was there he'd talk, you know. And he'd tell how the Polish, the Russians used the Polish government as far as church is concerned, you know, they had to look out, you know, and all that stuff. And he recalled going to confession. Boy oh boy, you'd stay there two or three hours and make sure you confessed yourself, yeah, and all that. (*Unintelligible phrase*), we don't know, see, but, but then they (*unintelligible word*) Mr. Muskie out of the country. How they did that I don't know, but yeah.

AL: Is there anything else that we should add here today?

FA: No, I'm glad Phil was here.

(*Pause in taping.*)

PA: . . . something, if he saw you he had to point you right out and say, "Hi Phil, how are you doing?" or something. He always remembered his friends.

FA: Too bad there wasn't any more politicians like that. The way he, when he tried out for governor, no money in his pocket, didn't have gas sometimes or anything, but still did it; did it on his own. He did a lot for the state of Maine. He was the first Democrat, wasn't he?

AL: Well, in a long time. Thank you very much.

End of Interview