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Bosworth, Kenneth oral history interview

Jim Ross

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Interview with Kenneth Bosworth by Jim Ross

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Bosworth, Kenneth

Interviewer

Ross, Jim

Date

July, 1985

Place

Mexico, Maine

ID Number

MOH 009

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Biographical Note

Kenneth Bosworth was born in Rumford, Maine on December 9, 1912. He grew up in the same neighborhood as the Muskie family. He knew Ed Muskie as a youth, and the two attended school together, continuing to keep in touch in later years.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: community history of Rumford; family memories of the Muskie family; insight into Ed Muskie's early student life, his introduction to politics through debating and his skills as an athlete; and the relationship Ed Muskie maintained with his hometown friends after getting into politics.

Indexed Names

Anastasio, Frank

Bosworth, Kenneth

Chaisson, Irene (Muskie)

Chouinard, Frances (Muskie)

Fossett, Celia Isadora (Cleary)
Gagnon, Alfred
Harvey, Pearl
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Muskie, Eugene
Muskie, Josephine
Muskie, Stephen
Paradis, Lucy (Muskie)
Paradis, Henry M.
Puiia, Vito

Transcript

Jim Ross: What is your name and current address?

Kenneth Bosworth: My name is Kenneth Bosworth, 45 (*unintelligible word*), Mexico, Maine.

JR: When and where were you born?

KB: I was born in Rumford, 1912, December 9th.

JR: All right, now did your parents, did they, were they born in Rumford or in Maine, or were they immigrants?

KB: My father was born in Hartford, Maine. My mother was born near Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

JR: How did they end up here? I mean, what, how, did they bring you here or did you, were -?

KB: Oh, I was born here.

JR: You were born here so how did they come here, was it the jobs, the mill?

KB: Yes, my father come from Hartford, Maine up here and worked in the old International Mill, then they had the strike. And then back in 1918, WWI, he went to Dover, New Hampshire. He worked in the shipyard in Portsmouth, making the wooden boats at that time. Then he come back here and went on his own doing electrical work. Then in 1921, that's when he passed away.

JR: So he was, you were pretty young when your father died.

KB: I was nine years old.

JR: Nine years old. That's similar to, is it Mr. Anastasio, his father died when he was very young, too. Did you, as a result -?

KB: Ed's father, Ed was, I think that's when he went into the Senate when his father died.

JR: Yeah, yeah. Did your mother, did she, would she do anything in the town or was she just a housewife?

KB: Her folks, her father, mother and her sisters and brothers come from Nova Scotia, they come down here. I don't know what year, when they came here.

JR: And so what did she do in the town, was she just a housewife, kind of a mother?

KB: That's right.

JR: Now how many brothers and, did you have any brothers and sisters?

KB: No.

JR: You're the only one. Okay.

KB: That's the reason I had to get out from school, just on my own.

JR: And earn some money. All right, so then, now your relationship with Ed began, when did it begin? In high sch-, in Virginia, elementary school?

KB: Don't know. Oh no, Christ, we all went to Virginia school with him. Of course, as I say the whole family, I knew the whole family well, I'd grown right up with them.

JR: All right, that's good.

KB: All the sisters and the brother.

JR: That's great because I want to ask you about that in a minute. Good, I'm glad to hear that. All right, so you, so then you obviously lived near, you lived in Virginia then.

KB: Right.

JR: All right, and you lived near them, you said above them?

KB: I lived above them, the street above them. Now they lived on, we called it Hemingway Street, and the street just above their house was Dutton Street, that's the street that I lived on, Dutton Street.

JR: D-U-T-O-N or something like that?

KB: And they lived down as I say on Hemingway Street. And, from where I was to down over the banking probably from here to that other banking over there. I don't know if it was that far -

JR: Not very far at all, huh.

KB: Because they, his mother, they had a little garden always out back, she always had a nice flower garden up on the banking, too, there.

JR: So they, now did the family have two gardens out back there, or, in the back of their house.

KB: In the back of the house.

JR: They had a flower garden and a vegetable garden both?

KB: Little vegetable garden and a flower garden.

JR: All right. Now did you, all right, now starting with elementary school, that was when you first got to know him. Did you know him before elementary school?

KB: Oh yes.

JR: You did.

KB: Well when they moved there, see, they didn't originally live there.

JR: Yeah, they lived on Spruce Street before that.

KB: Yeah, before that. And then they come up, I think it was their uncle that had that house and he was running a steam laundry at that time. And when he left, went to Massachusetts, and they moved into that house.

JR: Oh, all right, and so he went probably down to Boston or something like that.

KB: Yes, their uncle was a Quinn.

JR: Okay, all right, that makes more sense. All right, so then, and you were there when they all moved in then I take it and you -

KB: Yes.

JR: All right, and what was, all right then, what, I take it that there was a relatively close, the neighborhood kids were relatively, you know, as a group, right? What was the family, well what was Ed and kids, you know, like Irene [(Muskie) Chiasson] and Lucy [(Muskie) Paradis] and Eugene, Frances [(Muskie) Chouinard], what was their, how did they fit in right away, did they?

KB: They fit right in.

JR: Did they really. And they just -?

KB: Yes, they fit right in. As I say, we used, right out front of the house there on Hemingway Street, there was a little field there, but we used to play ball right in front of the house, all of us.

JR: Oh really. How many of there were you about?

KB: Oh, probably seven or eight or more than that at times.

JR: Really? Okay, now who, I take it Frank would be there and Vito.

KB: Frank and his brother.

JR: And his brothers, all right. And who would, who else would be there besides, and the sisters and then you and Ed.

KB: Well, there was the McPhee family lived there.

JR: They weren't too close to the McPhee family were they?

KB: No.

JR: Yeah, I didn't -

KB: The McPhee family didn't live too many years, they had moved. Because they lived right in the next house where Irene, the house that Irene did live in.

JR: I heard that, Irene told me that Mr., well Stephen Muskie didn't like them at all.

KB: No.

JR: What were they like?

KB: Oh, they were beautiful. I used to, well I'd, like when I'd go down over to Henry had his camp, down to the workplace. We'd go down there, Henry Paradis had the camp, we'd go down there and Mr. Muskie would be out and he'd set there on the porch and he had started talking to me. And he'd tell me all, I don't know how many times I heard the old story when he come to this country.

JR: Oh really, he was very proud.

KB: Oh, he was a nice man. And so was his mother, too.

JR: All right, all right, now let's, okay, describe his father. What was he like? You say, okay, very proud of his -

KB: Oh yes, he was very proud of all his children. He was just a proud man. He was a nice man.

JR: Was he strict, was he, I mean, did you ever find he was strict with you all, or -?

KB: No, no, I wouldn't say he was that strict. Steve was a nice man.

JR: How did he treat you?

KB: Good.

JR: Did he?

KB: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JR: Now how did, when he was with the kids, would he play with the kids, would he, or would he, would he not do that?

KB: Him and Ed, he used to take Ed up to the lake fishing a lot. He loved to fish and so did Ed, and his father would take him with another, well I think it was Mr. Gagnon, Alfred Gagnon and his son Robert that just passed away here a year ago. The four of them would go up the lakes and fish. That was when you used to have to take the train out of Rumford and go to (*town name*).

JR: Oh really? There was a train into Rumford then?

KB: Oh, there was a train all the way from Rumford up to Kennebago. Back then they used to have what they called the, the Yankee Clipper or something like that, they had a name for it. It come from New York, had the big dining cars and sleepers on it. it was actually for the -

JR: For the, for the -

KB: Summer.

JR: Is there, is it still used at all, or, do they still use that railroad, is the railroad still in operation? I mean not that specific one, but -?

KB: No.

JR: When did that -?

KB: Now actually all the trains coming north are all just freight.

JR: Really, all right. Now, back to the father, what was he like physically? I mean, can you describe him, what he looked like as a, I mean was he big -?

KB: He was a tall man, he wasn't, I'd say he was just a tall man, an average man. He wasn't -

JR: He wasn't like really (*unintelligible phrase*).

KB: Wasn't overweight or anything. Tailors always had stories to tell.

JR: What kind of stories would he tell? I mean, about, you said about his coming from Poland and stuff. What kind of things, I mean what would he talk about? I mean, would he say -?

KB: Well, yeah, when he'd come here. I think, they come, yeah, I think he'd come through, or she did, from Buffalo because there's a lot of relatives I know in around Buffalo they had.

JR: Okay, and so he ended up staying here then.

KB: Yup, in the tailor shop.

JR: How did the tailor shop do? I mean, how was that, how was the tailor shop, was it a -?

KB: Oh, he was the only, no, there was two tailors at that time, but he was the one that lasted out the longest.

JR: So, did you ever get stuff done at, had stuff made by him?

KB: Everything, he made all the clothes.

JR: Was he a good, was he expensive, or was he -?

KB: No, no, no, he wasn't at all expensive, he'd make, in fact you could buy your (*unintelligible word*) suit there just as cheap as you could go to a store and get it off the rack.

JR: So he was reasonably fair at least in what he charged.

KB: (*Unintelligible phrase*), too, what helped a lot. Your clothing stores at that time, there was a lot at one time here, people would go in and get suits or something, pants, and he'd do the (*unintelligible word*) for them.

JR: And so he was pretty much thriving. What hap-, do you remember when it burned down, the store burned down?

KB: Yes and no, to tell you the truth. So many of them burned that -

JR: Really, a lot of -? I'm surprised. What, why would, I guess everything was made of wood then, around then.

KB: Let's see, after the first place he had burned, he moved over onto Exchange Street. He was right on Congress Street the first.

JR: And then it, and then he changed. Now, the building that he was in, one floor was his -

KB: Yeah, and down underneath was the shoe shop.

JR: All right. Was there something on, was there a second floor above or not?

KB: No.

JR: There was not, nothing up there. All right, so he, and did he have other people working with him?

KB: Oh yes, he had a, now I couldn't tell you what the fellow's name was that worked for him.

JR: He did have someone working for him. Okay, was it busy in there a lot, or was it often -?

KB: He was always busy I think.

JR: Really? Was Mr. Muskie involved in like things in the town, very involved in the community?

KB: No, I don't think, no, not that I can remember ever he was involved with anything. He did belong to the, yeah, he did belong to the Elks.

JR: So he just kind of stuck to his own, he went to work, and when would he go to work in the morning, early? Was he like an early man who went to work early, stayed, came home, and then went to bed early? Or was he -?

KB: Oh, I think he used to get down there to go around eight o'clock I think he opened up. Stay until five, five thirty or six.

JR: And would he eat his lunches away or home, or where would he, where would he, would he come home, or, for dinner I guess you'd call it?

KB: Oh, I don't know if he ever come home for dinner or if he took a lunch. At that time up there they had to walk all the way, there was no transportation then.

JR: There was no buses or anything.

KB: No.

JR: All right. So, for the most part he, he wasn't really involved in a lot. I mean he just kind of kept to his own, doing his own kind of thing back and forth.

KB: I can remember him not being involved in too much.

JR: Would he play, would he play with you all, I mean would he go out there and play football with you, or was he more -?

KB: No, no, no, I never seen him out playing.

JR: Was he more restrained?

KB: He'd be out back working while we'd all be playing.

JR: Really, in his garden.

KB: Yup.

JR: Did he do a lot of upkeep on the house, I mean was he that kind of -?

KB: Oh, the house was always kept up nice. He always was good at that.

JR: He was always very much a handy man I take it.

KB: He did a lot himself, and he had a lot hired to do it.

JR: People would come in and do work for him? Would he, like would he cut his own grass?

KB: Oh yes. He wasn't afraid of work.

JR: He would just go out and do it.

KB: Well, you stop and you look at some of these old people, if you could picture any of the old people from the old country, they worked. Work never bothered them. I know my father-in-law here, he was from Lithuania. And he push-mowed the lawn, mowed everything, he had a big garden always, besides working in the mill three shifts.

JR: Are you serious? Three shifts?

KB: Well you had three, the mill run three shifts. Seven to three, three to eleven, eleven to seven.

JR: Boy oh boy, that's tough. So now, okay, so how about the mother, what was the, what -?

KB: She was a real nice person.

JR: Was she? What, what -?

KB: I always used to have a lot of fun with her.

JR: Why do you say that?

KB: Every once in a while I'd kid her, I used to kid with her. I (*unintelligible word*) one time I

was kidding her and she said, oh, damn you Kenny. But she was nice (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: What kind of things would you joke with her about, just about anything?

KB: Anything, yeah, nothing special. Anything come up, you'd say something to her, and she'd take it no matter what you said, she would take it and, because she'd never get mad at you.

JR: So she wasn't, well all right, then who was the disciplinarian in this home, I mean who laid down the laws or who punished if anyone was going to be punished, who did this?

KB: Now I don't know. I never know when they ever got punished to tell you the truth.

JR: They weren't that kind of they weren't, that kind of kids.

KB: No, no, very good. Just like you see Ed today. Today he's the same as when he grew up. I don't see a bit of difference in him, no.

JR: Really, you think so. Why do you say that, what -?

KB: Well, we talk the same to one another as we always did. Because I forget where we was, oh, I think it was at his mother's place, Ed and I were talking. Well, some of his (*unintelligible phrase*) come up, want to talk politics or something. He says, I'm talking to Kenny, he says, when Kenny and I get done talking I'll find time for you. That's the type he was.

JR: Really, wow, that's incredible. So he, you don't think he's changed very much in that aspect.

KB: No, he, as I say, we talked then as we always did, he's no, never put on that he was senator or governor or anything, you never know it when he's around.

JR: So, okay, now let's say you and Ed came in for, after playing around, came into the house, and what, how would the mother, how would his mother, you know, deal with you all just coming, I mean, would she -?

KB: She'd never change.

JR: Really, she just, come on in?

KB: Yeah, she never changed, she was always the same. And you know, it's surprising, too, but she was always the same to us, never changed.

JR: She never got mad at you. Now, I mean -

KB: Not to my knowledge. If she ever did, she never let us know it.

JR: What was her house like, what was, I mean how did she keep it?

KB: Very nice. She had a nice clean house (*unintelligible word*), always. In fact, you'd go in that house I think you could eat off the floors anywheres.

JR: Really. Was it, would you consider it a (*unintelligible word*)?

KB: It was a family home, it was a home for the family.

JR: So anyone could -

KB: You wouldn't say it, if you went in and she didn't want you in this room or that room, she never -

JR: And she'd never, you know?

KB: I think that's the way the children was brought up. Any of the children, you go to their house, it's a family home for the kids, too. Their friends come in just as well as -

JR: Did your mother belong with, did she, was she close to Mrs. Muskie at all? I mean did she ever? There was a sewing club, or a sewing group.

KB: I wouldn't say that she ever belonged to the sewing clubs up there the women had or not, I wouldn't dare to.

JR: Okay, so, and but Mrs. Muskie just basically made the meals and cooked and cleaned and. Do you see any of Ed now or Ed in the, you know, as he grew up, of his mother in Ed? I mean, any of her characteristics, like the way she laughed, the way she talked, or ways she -?

KB: Well, to tell you the truth, I never noticed. I never noticed.

JR: No. Really, so you don't, who do you think rubbed off more on Ed, mother or the father? Or, all right, maybe I should say this different, who did Ed seem to fancy more as a child

KB: Now, I wouldn't say he fancied either one any more than the other, he thought the world of both of them, I'd put it that way.

JR: Really. He spent, from what I gather a lot of time with his mother. He'd read while she was -

KB: Well, he spent time with his mother, yes. Naturally, (*unintelligible phrase*), when he was growing up there was his sisters there, too. It was pretty hard when you have a family to spend too much time with one when you got, there was three girls and the two boys.

JR: Yeah, exactly.

KB: No, there was four girls.

JR: So now, all right, when you started to go to school with him, all right, in Virginia, it was the first time you went to school with him, you were in the same class?

KB: Yes, we always was in the same class. I can't even tell you now, it's been so long ago, what class he started when he come to Virginia. I think, Ed was in school, must have been the Bisby School or something when he, before they moved to Virginia.

JR: Bisby School, what, I haven't heard of that.

KB: I mean Pettingill School, that was just up over the hill from Spruce Street.

JR: All right, so it was for like grades one to four or something like that?

KB: Oh no, right to seven. And Virginia School's the same, to seventh grade.

JR: Oh, one to seven also.

KB: (*Unintelligible phrase*) and then the junior high was, they had to come down to Rumford for that.

JR: Eighth grade.

KB: Coming down to Rumford (*unintelligible phrase*) Virginia down.

JR: So what did you two do before, so when he moved to Virginia you both were about to go to school then, in Virginia. I mean you were about to go in to enter the first grade basically, well you're not sure, but.

KB: I'm not sure what.

JR: All right, well what was Virginia like, just from your experience, what was Virginia School like?

KB: Virginia was a good school, a nice big school, eight grades, classes and grades and everything.

JR: Teachers, what were the teachers like? Were they, did you have different classes for different teachers or what was that like?

KB: No, you had the same teacher for each class, I mean like each grade, you had one teacher for each grade. (*Unintelligible phrase*), you didn't change classes, you just-

JR: Yeah, right, right, like in high school. All right, so you didn't really, for the most part you stayed in one class.

KB: That's true.

JR: And you didn't, you wouldn't go from one to, so you were in the same classroom -?

KB: You wouldn't go from class to class, different classes, you stayed with -

JR: Would you sit next to Ed during class ever?

KB: No.

JR: Or was it by alphabetical, or?

KB: Yes, yeah, sometimes, you couldn't pick your own seat anyway.

JR: You couldn't? Yeah, I guess they, yeah. Well now was, were the classes strict, I mean did they have homework and they'd expect you to hand it in?

KB: We had homework. Oh yes, they had homework. A lot of people never had to do it, like a guy like Ed, he had it all up here that he could look at something and that would be it.

JR: So he didn't have to, he didn't have any problems with that kind of stuff.

KB: No, that's why he's such a talker, too, I think. They got him on the debating, talked him into going on the debating team in high school.

JR: And they, and from there I guess kind of opened -

KB: From there he opened up.

JR: So, all right, now when you started to go to elementary school, you would walk to school with him, right?

KB: Not every day. Sometimes he'd be alone and some, there was quite a bunch of them around there from Virginia, what we called the lower Virginia where we were, that would go.

JR: So you never, well you'd for the most part go to school with him in the morn-, for the most part. What was he like on that walk? It was a relatively, it wasn't a long one, but what was he like, would you just sit there?

KB: In school, walking to school?

JR: Yeah.

KB: He was just the same as the rest of us.

JR: Just sit there and chat about, what did you talk about, what would you talk about?

Just about anything?

KB: At that time I don't know what the devil we'd be talking about, it's so, you stop and figure back.

JR: This unit takes much longer, so - Anyway, so when you, okay, when you got into junior high and going to college, did you all start to, what was that like when you, did he start, did he change at all or was he same?

KB: Just the same (*unintelligible phrase*), never changed, didn't change a bit.

JR: He didn't change his, so he really into studying.

KB: He was always studying there in school.

JR: Did he study more than he played?

KB: I think he did, really. He did play basketball. I think that's about the only sport, now I wouldn't say, I think that's about the only sport. He got on that debating team, they talked him into going into debating.

JR: How did he, do you remember when he first started to do that, I mean -?

KB: Well, it was the year after they had the big debates when they'd go to different schools, how good they were, they'd come home, tell you how good they were.

JR: Was Ed very proud of his -?

KB: Ed was proud (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: He really enjoyed that, then, I take it. Going out there and doing that. All right, so -

KB: I tell you, he had to, that's what got him into politics.

JR: You think so. Do you think the debating -?

KB: Yeah, and then he went to law school. I suppose he figured where he's such a good debater, put a good argument, too -

JR: Yeah, he could take up arguments really quickly.

KB: So that's why I say, I mean as a governor I know, I remember when he run for governor -

JR: The first time that he ran.

KB: When they had the governor's ball, we all got our invitations.

JR: Really, he kept in touch with you. Why do you suppose he kept in touch with you?

KB: I don't know, I have no idea why. Just because I was good friends, always good friends with the rest of the family.

JR: What was Eugene like?

KB: Gene was good. He was a big boy. What was it we used to call him? We had a nickname for Gene, because he was a big, rugged boy, Gene was. Tall, but he was ruggedger than Ed I think.

JR: Would you say -

KB: Gene wasn't in the same class as Ed, very smart guy.

JR: Oh really, so, yeah, more, coarser in a way.

KB: Gene was more of a, well he was always raising the devil a lot (*unintelligible word*). He wasn't what you'd call a studious homebody.

JR: Did he have a hard time living up to his brother's reputation?

KB: I don't think so, I don't think it bothered Gene a bit.

JR: Really, (*unintelligible phrase*)?

KB: I don't think it bothered Gene a bit. I don't think it bothered any of the family. They was all proud of him.

JR: Even when they were young guys, old guys, you know, when Ed was getting these straight A's and all this kind of stuff?

KB: No, I don't think that bothered any of them.

JR: Okay. Now what was, what were the sisters like? How did these two brothers get along with the three sisters, or four sisters?

KB: They always got along, I don't know how.

JR: Really, I mean they didn't, you know -?

KB: I never seen them argue about one another, or with one another. No, just a good family.

JR: Okay, so they were relatively, they must have had their spats, though, or whatever.

KB: If they did, well it was never open.

JR: They were kind of, they kept things to themselves, though, too, at times, certain things like that. Were they, do you think they were concerned about their image? I mean, the family was about how people thought of them?

KB: No, I don't think so. I don't think any of them thought how people think of them. They were Muskies and they were Muskies.

JR: And so they didn't, they wouldn't let people, they wouldn't expand upon their home problems or whatever if they ever had any.

KB: No, no, they was nice.

JR: Would they often go to the help of other people that knew them, or, you know?

KB: Oh yeah, yes, if somebody really needed help.

JR: Yeah, they would. Okay, now what was Rumford like as a town during this, when you were growing up?

KB: It was a busy town. We had two mills here at that time. Fact is, we had the International and then the (*unintelligible word*), three of them. Plus the Oxford. Virginia they had the big steam laundry and the big sawmill. Long logs would come floating down the river, and that was the big mill.

JR: And they'd cut them up. All right, so most of the -

KB: That's where us kids played a lot.

JR: Oh really, up there, on the logs.

KB: On the Rumford sawmill. They had tracks and they had these little, on wheels, four wheels like the railroad tracks, they'd stack the lumber and they'd take it down these tracks. Well, we'd run over at night and get on them and go down the tracks. If the watchman would chase us, we would run and get the other one, go the other way.

JR: So you guys were just, that was just, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*)?

KB: Just kid stuff.

JR: Yeah, just kind of fun stuff.

KB: Nobody did anything to hurt anything, it was just kid stuff. It's too bad the kids today couldn't have something like that.

JR: Because they don't, it's more, they can't play in the fields or anything like that I guess, from what I gather.

KB: Too much of that other stuff going around for kids today.

JR: Yeah, I've heard that from quite a number of people. What was Rumford high school like?

KB: The old high school was good, good school. It was modern, at that time it was a modern school. Nothing like the new ones, though.

JR: And what was its reputation.

KB: We had one big room on the upstairs, the upper floor of the old school would be a study hall. That would take in, probably two or three hundred kids could go in there and study. It was a big study hall.

JR: So there was no like free time. I mean you were either at class -

KB: Or you could go to the study hall.

JR: And for the most part it was, what was Miss Cleary [Celia Isadora (Cleary) Fossett] like? Did you ever have her?

KB: She was a very good teacher. She was nice, friendly. Fact is, when I had that class reunion in '82, the fiftieth, she was there.

JR: Oh really. So what were some of the other, did you ever take any classes with Ed?

KB: No, no Ed was all in the college courses.

JR: And what, you took the business or the -

KB: Just the general.

JR: The general. How difficult was it to get in the college courses?

KB: If you took them, you had a lot of studying. That's the one that, if it was easy then anybody could take the college courses.

JR: But you had to -

KB: But you really had to be a book worm.

JR: And he even did, now, oh, another one, did you know a Pearl May Harvey, Pearly May?

KB: Pearl Harvey, yeah.

JR: Pearl Harvey, is she still alive do you know?

KB: I think she's over around South Paris.

JR: Were they close, were they -?

KB: No, I wouldn't say.

JR: Did he ever have a girlfriend, did Ed have a girlfriend?

KB: I never knew of Ed going with a girl around here.

JR: Really? He never had any interest in that at all?

KB: Not to my knowledge, no. Maybe he did, but.

JR: You never knew about it.

KB: And after we got into high school we was going in different direction a lot.

JR: Did you ever see Ed playing basketball, I mean did you ever see him -?

KB: Oh yeah, I used to go to all the games.

JR: How did he do?

KB: He was good, he was good center.

JR: Was he really? Was he, I mean was he a good center, or was he just kind of, just because he was tall?

KB: He was tall, but he was a good center.

JR: What was he like when he was, you know, really excited about it, I mean would he really get into the games or would he, or was he just kind of, you know, there as, I mean would he really jump up and down and scream?

KB: No, I don't think he got too excited at those. But he was in there to play, he'd play.

JR: So would you consider him an athlete?

KB: Not really.

JR: Not really, he's not an athlete, or just -

KB: I think basketball, I don't know if he did any track or not, but basketball was the only thing he was really -

JR: But he, I guess he just wanted to do something, or they wanted him to do it, and he'd give it his best.

KB: Basketball and debating I think was his two things.

JR: What about his time when he was just running for governor, not when he'd been elected yet, but what was he, was he, did he come, what was he like at that time? Did you, I mean, hear from him, or what was he like, what was going on with him at that time?

KB: I never seen any difference any time, when he was running for anything. To me he was always the same.

JR: Always the same. What was, well what was, what did he do? I mean, he barnstormed, or what, didn't he go across, all over Maine that was relatively unex-, because I mean that victory was relatively unexpected wasn't it?

KB: It was I should imagine. But I don't know how much of the state Ed covered when he was running, we never seen him.

JR: Did he never come over to Rumford or anything like that?

KB: No, he went to Waterville and he was, that's where he started politics.

JR: So he kind of stopped, stopped. Did that annoy a lot of Rumfordians, I guess?

KB: But he'd come home very often, you know, even when he was governor. Back when he was governor, I was living on Hancock Street, and the car pulled up, and I seen his big car pull up, State Police get out, opened the door, out comes Ed. He says, I can only stay a few minutes.

JR: That's great, so he, you know, he didn't -

KB: And he come in, and the state cop with him, the sergeant, he was a local boy, too, (*unintelligible word*), and head out to the kitchen and they come right out in the kitchen and we talked. I said, you want to have lunch, he says, yeah. I says, what about chicken, (*unintelligible phrase*). He says, Kenny, Jimmy's in the other room. What he does in there I don't know. I poured, took a little shot into Jimmy. Ed and I had our lunch. And after a while he says, you all done, Jimmy, he says, we got to go.

JR: Oh, that's great. So what, now when, Mr. Muskie had a still didn't he, or some kind of a press for alcohol. He had like beer, he had homemade beer every now and then didn't he?

KB: I imagine they had homemade beer, I don't know what they had down in the cellar.

JR: But, oh yeah, you didn't, you never -

KB: Never got down in the cellar there. Fact is I never knew Mr. Muskie to drink that much.

JR: Really? He was kind of straight laced person I take it.

KB: Couldn't beat him, very nice guy.

JR: What kind of memories do you, that one memory of his, him on the porch, I guess that really -

KB: Oh, he'd set there and he'd talk to you. As long as you wanted to sit there, he'd talk. A lot of stuff about what it was in the old country, when they come to this country. Seems every time you sit down with, you'd be there and you'd sit down and talk, that's the same old, nice man. Nice woman, too, she was. We all called her Ma.

JR: Really, you just, it was that kind of relationship, you were that close to her.

KB: Well, like the time that she was down to the camps there with her daughter, and we'd go down, always hi Ma.

JR: So you didn't have many, did you ever go swimming with the Muskies or go to their camp?

KB: Not to Muskie's camp. The camp I went to was down here to the Paradis'. And Irene was always there, too.

JR: What was Irene like, being the older sister, was she kind of a -?

KB: No, no, Irene when she was growing up was just like she is today.

JR: Really, and it took them a while to get married, too, didn't it? I mean they -

KB: Yeah. Irene had a rough life, she had a rough life with her husband.

JR: Died when she was pretty young I gathered.

KB: Yeah. Now she's nice, I mean she's always been nice, but she, she's more fun now.

JR: Carefree and everything, yeah. She was very kind, she offered to drive me to, you know, and I was like, oh that would be great, you know. That was very nice of her. But is there any like one memory you have of Ed that you kind of, you know, when you were kids, that, you know, you kind of, if you think of your childhood and Ed what do you think of?

KB: Well, the only thing I can think of when he was a kid in our childhood, he was just like he

is now, he's the same. I've never seen a difference in him growing up at all.

JR: In the way he acts and so? Just in the way like, goes, well what -?

KB: Well I remember playing ball out in front of his house down here. He didn't change any, didn't get excited about it.

JR: And when he was like, did you ever see him want anything, I mean really want something?

KB: No, I don't know if he ever wanted anything or not. You'd never know it.

JR: Kept to himself quite a bit.

KB: I don't think any of the family, if they wanted anything you'd never know it. Even today.

JR: Even today, I guess that's true. Just like with, when there were problems they kind of kept to themselves. And they were always there if you wanted to, that's true. If you needed anything.

KB: It was their problems, kept them to themselves.

JR: Great, all right, that's fantastic.

End of Interview