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Clark, Clarence "Chubb" oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with Clarence “Chubb” Clark by Andrea L’Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Clark, Clarence “Chubb”

Interviewer

L’Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

August 27, 2000

Place

Presque Isle, Maine

ID Number

MOH 221

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Biographical Note

Clarence “Chubb” Clark was born in Millinocket, Maine in 1922. His parents were Canadian and they moved to Maine so that his father could work in the Great Northern Mill. After a few years, they moved to Aroostook County where they were able to survive the Depression through his father’s skills as a carpenter and a steady supply of potatoes. He graduated from Tufts University as a history major and taught history at Fort Fairfield High School for over twenty years. While teaching, he was an active member of the Democratic Party in Maine. He was Bill Hathaway’s campaign chairman in 1962 and 1964.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: first impressions of Muskie in 1954 and early indications of his interest in the environment; the Great Depression and its effects on Maine; the New Deal; men of that era and their service in World War II; Bill Hathaway; Mabel Desmond, state legislator; Hathaway's election in 1962; John Kennedy; Humphrey and Muskie in the 1968 presidential race: Chicago and campaigning; Ken Curtis; King Harvey, newspaper owner in Fort Fairfield; sugar beet industry and Fred Vahlsing; Elmer Violette; Marcella Violette; Dana

Childs; Joe Freeman; Fort Fairfield vs. Presque Isle politics; Aroostook County politics; Floyd Harding; St. John Valley; Glen Manuel; John Baldacci; Angus King; Peter Kyros, Sr.; Stan Tupper; President Johnson's visit to Portland, Maine; Don Nicoll; and Chubb Clark's friendship with Ed Muskie.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. Clarence Chubb Clark at the Northeastland Hotel in Presque Isle, Maine on August the 27th, the year 2000, it's about 9:00 A.M. And, Mr. Clark, you wanted to say a few things before we start with my questions?

Clarence Clark: Yes, I'd just like to say that Ed Muskie first came to Aroostook County running for the governor, for governor for the state of Maine in 1954. And he got off the B&A bus in front of this hotel, and some of the fellows who met him thought it was a basketball player because he had a, not only was he six foot three or four tall, but he was carrying a little overnight bag that looked like a basketball player going to the next town to play ball with his gear in it. And little did we know what was happening to the Democratic Party in the state of Maine from that, you might call it inauspicious meeting here in Presque Isle back in '54. But it was the

beginning of a long friendship for myself with Ed Muskie and he reintroduced me you might say to politics along with everyone that he touched I think.

AL: Well what were your first impressions of him?

CC: Well, I didn't expect an awful lot but it wasn't very long before you knew that he was in command, that he had a lot of great personality and he was a winner and he wanted to win. And we needed a change. We had the previous governor, Republican governor, well at the present Governor Cross, Burton Cross. We were very disillusioned with him. And the idea that we weren't getting any respect, the Republicans told us to, if we wanted a larger caucus room just to pick out a telephone booth in Augusta. And this probably, people have heard that before, but I mean that was, that was what was thrown at us. So we, it wasn't easy, it wasn't hard to rally around Ed and to promote him and he was always our figurehead.

And what struck me was the people that he brought into the party. I remember my Republican friends saying where the heck do you get all these candidates? And I can mention Governor Curtis, later on to become Governor Ken Curtis, Bill Hathaway who became a congressman and senator, Frank Coffin who was one of the early leaders with Ed Muskie. And not only, not only national figures like that but people like the late Senator Elmer Violette from Van Buren, and Floyd Harding from Presque Isle, and many others, Glenn Manuel from Houlton, they all took up the gauntlet you might say. They didn't make any money running, because they lost money, but they wanted to serve.

And Ed Muskie was the figurehead; he was the guy that we chased. And, no, it was a great, well it was I would say the beginning of the Democratic Party in the state of Maine in modern times. There might have been one back in the eighteen hundreds but we didn't amount to too much except for a few years in the thirties during the Depression until Ed arrived on the scene and led us to the promised land you might, you might say something like that. But he was, I can well remember him getting off that old B&A bus. He had a lot of class after that, he was big and tall and everybody, I liked him very much.

AL: I know this was a long time ago but do you remember any of the issues that, or ideas that he spoke about when he started running?

CC: Well, you know, I came over here in 194-, '54, with some friends from Fort Fairfield and we had a, he was governor elect at the time. And this was the latter part of November or the first of December, and I come over with our friends and I said, "I want to hear his plans." Well he talked like George Bush did at the convention this past summer, Republican convention. He was above everything and around everything and I went home thinking, well, I don't know really what he's going to do. But he was smart not to lay out his hand. He had a Republican legislature to face and he beat them like a drum.

He gave us programs for education and help for, as I remember, help for the people who needed help, and business. And he drew everyone to his side. I can remember many, many Republicans

who weren't married to the Republican Party that supported him, farmers after farmers who were going to. I can't really remember any specific issues but I know it was strong education, and also the environment. I think that half his speeches were laced with references to Governor Baxter and Baxter Park, and Ed always seemed to be interested in the environment.

AL: Even that early?

CC: Even that early. It was one of the first things to do my wife to, what little I could get her involved in politics, to the, to politics. Because of the environment because she's always been a great environmentalist, a great nature lover and so on like a lot of women are. But that was, I always remember, and then when they called him Mr. Clean when he got on the national scene it was just a natural. I can always remember a picture of him when he ran for vice president in '68 standing on a hill overlooking Los Angeles and the smog, and I think it was a tremendous shot at the time of Ed making his statement for the environment.

But I'd like to mention that meeting again that we had here after he had been elected governor. I came over, and a few previous years to this I had left college in Boston and I brought with me a prize coat that I spent my last nickel on. It was a beautiful English raglan, gabardine, raglan sleeve, fully lined gabardine coat, and very proud of it. And I wore it over here to the banquet that night and I never saw it again. When I went out to pick my coat off the rack here in the lobby, there was an eighteen-dollar Dick Tracey belt in the back in its place. So I went up to governor elect Muskie and an old representative from Fort Kent named Reny Cyr. He was in his eighties but he was a good staunch Democratic from Fort Kent, and I accosted them about it. And Ed kind of laughed and Reny said, "Son, run for the legislature, there's a lot of coats down there you can pick up." But I remember that very well, the, listening to him speak and going home. I refused to take the Dick Tracey coat home with me far as that goes, I left it here.

But, I think another humorous story was he and Bill Hathaway were good friends and they, Hathaway was a real good golfer. And I worked on his staff for fourteen years and one of the things you had to do was, if we had an hour or two, was to make sure we got to the best local golf course and play a few holes if we possibly could. So Senator Muskie picked up the game in the sixties somewhat and after Hathaway got to Washington they kept talking about getting together. So Senator Hathaway, Congressman Hathaway at the time, called up Senator Muskie and invited him out to the Congressional Country Club in Washington to play golf, which Hathaway was a member of. And Ed thought that would be fine, and then at the last moment Hathaway had to go to a meeting or something and couldn't get out of it and he called Senator Muskie up and told him about it. And he said, "Gee, Ed," he says, "I hope I didn't inconvenience you any." And Ed very slowly says, "Well no," he says, "but I did go buy a new pair of sneakers to play with." And I'd play golf at Congressional with Hathaway, and I can see Ed showing up with that size fourteen foot of his in a pair of sneakers to play golf there with all those rich Republicans. We laughed about that, and Ed laughed afterwards about it, thinking about it, you know, I did buy a pair of new sneakers.

Well, anyway, those are a lot of my fond memories. Any time that Senator Muskie came to

Aroostook County or to my town, Fort Fairfield, we always got him a, easy to get him a nice big crowd to speak to. The kids at the high schools liked him, they paid tremendous attention to him. He was a real national figure. That's my last, my last remembrance I have of him. He come up and spoke at my high school and I introduced him, where I taught school in Fort Fairfield.

AL: What year was that?

CC: That was in the seventies, that was in the seventies, and I can't remember, probably '73 or four, through there. He was, I don't, he never came to Fort Fairfield after that and I don't think there were many other trips he came to Aroostook County after that. But in the fifties and the sixties you would always depend on, whether he was running for office or not, to make a trip up here. But I always remember the admiration and respect that people had for him.

AL: I have a couple questions for you. Actually I have quite a lot of questions, but let me start with, could you tell me your full name?

CC: Clarence Raymond Clark. And I've been nicknamed since I was a kid as Chubb Clark because it was my father's nickname. And I'm not as big and as chubb like is my father, but my father, not only did I get his name but I got his love for the Democratic Party and politics. It was an interesting thing, I, the first time that I voted in a primary was in 1946 and I was home from the service and I was going back to college. And they had a, it was one of those, there was a primary fight over in my, the town of Fort Fairfield. And this old friend of the family was a Republican and he yelled at me to come on in and vote and I says I'm not registered, he says I'll take care of it. So in those days all you had to do was to put his name down I guess because I went in and I voted for this old gentleman and he won.

But then a few years later I became Democratic chairman of Fort Fairfield and it come out in the paper that there were two Clarence Clarks and one was a Republican and one was a Democrat. So I, believing it was my father I said, I told him, and he says, "Well you better go down and check because there's no way that I'm a Republican." And I did find out that I was Democratic. I knew I was Democratic chairman of the town but I was also a registered Republican at that particular time. No real repercussions, I quickly changed my registration. But that's my name anyway.

AL: Now where were you born and what year?

CC: I was born in Millinocket, Maine. My father and mother both came from Canada. They come over here and my father was an American citizen because his father was an American citizen. And they went to Connecti- went to Millinocket to work in the Great Northern. Dad worked in the Great Northern mill down there and I was born down there in 1922, and we lived there for a few years and then come back to Aroostook County.

AL: How old were you when you moved to Aroostook County?

CC: Oh, four or five years old, I can just barely remember coming back here. And we had a few good years left in the twenties, but then we had the Depression that, all during the thirties. I can remember the Depression well.

AL: You can? Can you tell me -?

CC: Right up through until I got out of high school, all up through the -

AL: Can you -?

CC: All through the -

AL: I'm sorry -

CC: Go ahead.

AL: Could you tell me about the Depression and what it was like in your family and in the community?

CC: Well, my family, my father was a carpenter but, and I'm very proud because he was a good one and he always had a job. He could work, he always could find work even in the winter time. And even today there are some older potato houses and quite a few houses in my area that he built back in the thirties. And we lived on a dead end street with a few other homes and we had some animals and never went hungry. But I can tell you that I saw a lot of families with just boiled potatoes and white margarine and bread for noon meal. And you wondered what they had for supper. We didn't have any programs then, until Roosevelt got his New Deal going and there was, there were programs to help. But there was no real help, you know.

I picked potatoes for five cents a barrel and glad to get a job. I remember picking potatoes with a young fellow whose father and uncle brought him here from Wisconsin to pick potatoes. They followed the, sort of followed the, like a migrant worker, they followed the jobs across from Wisconsin all the way up into northern Maine to pick potatoes. It was nothing to see people come in from Massachusetts and you name it to pick potatoes in fall for a few dollars. And times were tough.

But I think a lot of the New Deal programs helped up here because there was always a, there was, the WPA put up a building or a park or something in every town in Aroostook County. And my father always said that, and I've heard him say this a dozens of times, that we didn't know the Depression up here because we're an agricultural area and we had food. It was easy to have, you could always have a potato because there were lots of potatoes around, and you were always raising chickens and people had pigs and you wouldn't believe. They, well it wouldn't happen there today, put it that way, like the back yard.

But we never knew the Depression like they knew it in the cities. I taught history at Fort

Fairfield High School for over twenty years and I got, and I majored in history. And what I read about the Depression, I think those are accurate, that's an accurate statement. We never knew the Depression up here like they did in the cities. A lot of people lost their farms, but they were small subsistence farmers and they worked out, the people worked out. But it wasn't until 1938 and '39 that the young people in Aroostook County started leaving to go get better jobs. It was nothing to see sixteen, seventeen, twenty-year-old young men hanging around for a day's work for several years.

Then all of a sudden, I think it was the late summer and fall of 1938 when they had a, we had a big hurricane that, had a lot of damage to New Hampshire. And I can remember a family of young men from my town, it was two or three boys of that family went to New Hampshire to help clear up the blown down trees and they never come back. They stayed there and they went on to Connecticut working in the defense plants and went on to the service after that. But I always felt it was kind of tragic for a young fellow to grow up in the thirties and not have the advantage of an education and being poor besides, and then having to face the WWII, which they did.

They did in my town, there were several of them that left. A few died and never come back and a few were wounded. But, I even got in on the end of it, but I always felt that was a sort of sad generation in a way. But they were a great generation, you know, the WWII veterans. Brokaw's book, Tom Brokaw's book pretty much describes it, doesn't he? So, no, the Depression wasn't fun, it wasn't fun at all. But like I said, up here it wasn't as bad as it was other places. You didn't have to starve and we survived.

AL: And what was your mother's name, including her maiden name?

CC: My mother's name was Bea, Beatrice. She was a schoolteacher, and her last name was Bishop, came from Canada and they were a great family of liberals. And the few remaining cousins I have are still liberals over there. The, one of her older brothers was, he'd be like a district federal judge over here. He was in politics with the best of them and he introduced me to premiers and even one, one or two prime ministers of Canada that happened to be coming by and I went down and met them, (*unintelligible phrase*). So there was a little bit of a political background on my mother's side that I, sort of brought me to it.

AL: And she, so she emigrated but she kept contact with her family in Canada.

CC: Oh, we lived right across the border from them, ten or fifteen miles. My uncle, the uncle I mentioned only lived in Woodstock County, which is forty miles from home. So, no, no, we were a very close, a very close family. My mother and father's family both were near the border so we didn't fall out of contact at all, and still have contact while we're spread out. I have a, my father's sister a week from Saturday will be a hundred years old and she's in St. John in a nursing home and has all her faculties and I'm going to have a, I'm going down to a party, a birthday party. I go every year but this is a little special, a hundred years old. But we're, as I, we're right on the border.

I own a Christmas tree farm that is on the border. It just so happens that it was bordered. My property borders the Maine-New Brunswick border so it. I say my Christmas tree farm, it isn't that I export trees across the border or anything like that.

AL: Now you said you worked for Bill Hathaway for fourteen years?

CC: Yes, I was his campaign chairman in '62 and '64 and I set up his congressional offices and, took a year off from teaching, set up his congressional office in Bangor and in Lewiston. And then I went back to teaching and I kept an office in Fort Fairfield for him until, until he left congress fourteen years later. Doing constituent work, you know, in the county and I think that's the, I think that's the mark of a good congressman, you know, or anyone in the state legislature, is good constituent work. Can you believe that right in this area west of us, (*unintelligible word*) out there, there's a little Democratic lady, a retired teacher named Desmond.

AL: Mabel?

CC: Mabel Desmond, and her constituent work is so good that the Republicans don't even put up an opponent. And I say her constituent work is because she's fabulous for it and they don't even oppose her. That says something for taking care of your constituents. And she, she's always, as far as I can see, she's just been fair. She's a Democrat, she believes in the Democratic Party and the principles, but evidently so do all her constituents. So I think that, Bill Hathaway's office was the first one in Aroostook, and after that everyone had one here and everyone had everywhere, but that's what we built his campaign on was simple service, and it gets you votes, too. So, no, it was fun doing that.

AL: How did you come to meet Bill Hathaway and he come to ask you to work for him?

CC: Well, he wanted to run in 1962 when he went over to the legislature in Augusta from his, from Lewiston where his office was. And he was talking to some of the Aroostook County legislators, and we had a Democratic legislator from Fort Fairfield who was a good friend of mine. And we had won the election in the town that Governor Reed was from, Governor Reed being a Republican, we still won the election. So, this man's name was Representative Louis (*name*), he recommended me to Bill, Bill Hathaway. So the next thing I know this guy calls me, he introduced himself and says he wants to run. And I says, "Well, you would have to run against Cliff McIntire who's been in a long time." But I says, "No one deserves to be beat, to be defeated any more than Cliff McIntire because he was, he was so conservative and I didn't think he was doing anything to our economy up here, especially the farmers."

So I took a car load of friends and we went down to Augusta to the Sand Hill, to the annual meeting of this French club down there, can't think of the name of it now, and that's where I met Bill. And we put on a grass roots campaign, his first, his first. If Lewiston had voted in any strength in '62 Bill would have won. We only lost, we only lost by a thousand votes or something like that, and Lewiston only voted ten thousand votes in '62. And in '64 for John

Kennedy they voted twenty-two thousand votes. They just, just didn't get the vote out in the Lewiston-Auburn area. It was one of those off years and there was nothing there to galvanize them like, of course like John Kennedy. Ed Muskie brought John Kennedy in 1960 to Augusta to meet the leaders of the Democratic Party and he got all the, he got all the delegates, Kennedy did. And one reason was because of Ed Muskie and because we liked John Kennedy, too, you know, it wasn't hard to help him.

So that's how I met Bill. We're still friends, still great friends and our families and all that. I don't see him like we used to but. But there were some great people to work for. Ken, Ken Curtis to me was one of the great governors and a great person. And I like Joe Brennan and I, all those guys that I worked with down there. They were, they were interested in good government.

And another thing I have to tell you about Ed Muskie. Back in the, back in the fifties we had this patronage of the postal department. And John Kennedy was president at the time, and we needed a new postmaster. The old one had retired in Fort Fairfield. So we were looking around for a good Democrat to put in there, a capable Democrat. So one night Ed calls me up and gives me the name of this guy and I says, "But he's a Republican." Well, he's got great credentials, and he was the assistant postmaster at the time. And I says, "Well give me some more reasons." I was calling him Ed then because I was a little hot under the collar to think that we weren't going to get a Democrat, reward a Democrat for it. He says, "Well you know Frank Coffin, I've always campaigned on the idea that the best qualified person for the job should be given the very best consideration, top consideration." Well I knew the guy who he was talking about, and he was a Republican but he wasn't up and down the street pounding on Democrats, you know. I mean he was a, he just was a little misguided you might say. But, so I swallowed hard and had to convince the boys on the town committee that there was a, we couldn't, that they couldn't say that we didn't practice what we preached because we did preach. And I always remember Ed saying that, he says, "Frank Coffin and I, this is what we run on." And Coffin, remember, ran for the governor. He was a congressman from the old second district in Lewiston, Waterville, through there. And he was another great guy that helped bring the party back, Frank Coffin was, great, great person. But we didn't get our postmaster, but I think we got a good reform movement going anyway far as that goes. Anything else?

AL: Yeah, now you worked locally for Bill Hathaway. Did you ever go to, you went to Washington with him, too, at some point didn't you?

CC: No, he offered me the job.

AL: He offered it.

CC: Oh he offered me the job. He called me right that night after he won and said, "Now, if you want to come down we'll, the job is yours and I wish you'd take it." And I didn't want to move my family. And I'd always wanted to, wanted to teach history in the high school and that. I had taught four years in the, in the elementary school and if I hadn't had the opportunity to teach history in the high school. I had gone to Tufts University and majored in history and I

liked history, and that's what I wanted.

So I turned that down and I'm glad I did far as that goes, because I didn't want to uproot my family. My mother and father were both alive. I was the only one of three of, I had a brother and sister, they didn't live here. My wife is an only child, her mother and father were still alive and still living there in town and one of them, her father, had had a heart attack. So it was a no-brainer, we're going to stay there. And my wife did agree to go to the Bangor area for a year until we got the offices set up and then I come back, back up here.

AL: Now, although you stayed here did you get a sense of how Muskie, Ed Muskie and Bill Hathaway worked together as part of the Democratic delegation to Washington?

CC: Well I think they all pushed the same legislation that I can remember. I was always pushing for education, being in teaching, you know, and Bill was on the education, education, labor, education, there was labor and education I think was the committee he was on. I remember it was a large committee, like there was twenty-six members on it. But in '64, see, we had an enormous, I think there was seventy five brand new freshmen representatives went down there that year, it was a wipe out. And there was a, but, and of course that was when the Lyndon Johnson, Lyndon Johnson had brought in all his, well he, the extension of the Kennedy program plus his own great poverty programs and so on like that.

No, Ed and, Ed and Bill were right in the middle of it, they were. But they always could help the farmers up here, you know, there was always something they could do for them or something. I always felt if, of course when Bill went in he and Ed were the only two congressmen at the time and Ed took the first district for any patronage or most of the constituent work, except other people would call him anyway with being known all over. And we handled the constituent work up here. And Bill took a man from Lewiston, Al Gamache, to Washington with him, and Al was a, he was a natural for that type of work. I mean, he did an excellent job. He went on to become a representative of the legislature from Lewiston here a few years ago and tragically he died just unexpected to me. I knew he took sick but I didn't know how sick he was, he had cancer. But we had, now see, we were running around up here doing our work, but all the legislation meshed, you know, it was the environment. I remember Ed was always stuck in the environment.

Very disappointed that he and Humphrey hadn't won in '68. Got an awful late start, terrible year. I was going to go to the Chicago convention, at the last minute I didn't go and Floyd Harding and Elmer Violette went and Jean Harding took my place. And I was glad I didn't go to that convention. But I, that wouldn't have been great. I think there's one, there's one campaign that the vice presidents had a real difference. And I can remember the commentators talking about the quality or the difference, with Agnew and Muskie. There was a difference all right as you remember.

But Ed had a way, this heckler one time, he was heckling and Ed invited him down to the stage, he says now you tell them your program. And all the guy could do was shout from up there and he got down there and he was a slobbering clown, you know, he, Muskie pulled his teeth. So it

was a great shot I thought of, “Oh, you want to talk, well I’m going to give you the mike. You tell them your program,” something like that. So it was, Ed wouldn’t stand and shout at him, and Ed had a beautiful temper, too, but he didn’t. He says you come on down and talk.

And I thought Ed was a big plus for that ticket. It just, they just didn’t quite, they ran out of, they didn’t run out of steam, they just gathered steam maybe a week or two early. I think they would have won in another two weeks. That would have been great for Ed. And I think his senate, his run in ‘72 was too much based on endorsements by, by personal people, personages, you know, instead of like McGovern going out and getting the grass roots. That’s, they steered Ed wrong, because I remember Hathaway being discouraged about that. He said he went to a couple meetings and some guy would come in and he’d, Ed was there and these hot shot counselors, campaign chiefs and so on said, “We’ve got it made. We got this, we got that,” but they didn’t have anything. They had the head of the painter’s union, they had the head of this union or this governor like that, but they didn’t have the people who were out in the boonies, you might say. The Floyd Hardings and Chubbs {Chubb Clark} and Elmers [Elmer Violette], you know, like that.

So I, that, I was very, I felt very bad for Ed and I felt bad for the country because I think he would have been one heck of a president. You know, he just, well he beca-, he went on to become secretary of state, so. No, those are, it’s funny that all that legislation got up to a point and then we had to go back and reinvent the Democratic Party, become a, the new Democratic Party. I think we had to risk not winning. Can you imagine Clinton winning? I mean, really? But he did, because he crafted a new direction. (*Aside: Load of potatoes going.*)

AL: There go the potatoes.

CC: That’s the second, they just started to dig. Now, they just started to dig.

AL: That time of year.

CC: Yup, that time of year.

AL: Hold on just a second, I’m going to turn the tape over and start the other side.

End of Side A, Tape One
Side B, Tape One

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Mr. Chubb Clark, and we were talking about Bill Hathaway.

CC: Yes, after Bill was defeated in ‘78 he became the, he became the, he was on the Maritime board and he was the only chairman that attended every meeting. He took it serious, he really took it serious. And he liked it.

AL: Did he serve with Ken Curtis? I know Ken Curtis was involved in the Maine Maritime at one point.

CC: No, no, no, I'm talking about the federal maritime commission.

AL: Oh, I'm sorry, okay.

CC: Yeah, Ken Curtis was the president of Maine Maritime Academy.

AL: Yes, I'm sorry.

CC: And Ken Curtis did an excellent job down the Maritime Academy. I know a couple of my former students who went there when Ken was there, how much they liked him. And the *Bangor Daily News* has given Ken Curtis many, many praises for his job. Which is, Ken took over a bad situation and turned it around, did a heck of a job there. But the federal maritime commission, Joe Brennan is on that now. He recently was appointed to that by President Clinton. Oh, I guess it was confirmed about six months ago, took a, quite a while to get confirmation through.

But Bill liked that job. And, you know, I says well do they need it? And he says, he showed, he told me how the, you know, the benefits of having the commission, what they could do to, instead of losing money they were actually saving money if you did the-. Because I knew a fellow from Maine who was on that committee and I said, "I thought he was on this federal maritime commission." "Well he is." I says, "Well every time we go to a fund raiser or a meeting any place he's always there." "Well, he doesn't have to go to them." I said, "Well that's a great deal, he's on it and he's just getting a big check." But Bill Hathaway really liked it, really enjoyed working on it.

AL: Now do you have any recollections, or did you know King Harvey of the *Fort Fairfield Review*, and who was he? I've heard the name but I don't know really who he is.

CC: Well I can tell you, Mr. Harvey. King, he liked to call himself a mugwump. He suffered at the end of his-. His father owned the *Fort Fairfield Review* and I remember in the thirties playing baseball in Fort Fairfield. King Harvey always came up and kept the scorebook for the local high school teams. And sometimes you'd hit the ball and get on base, and you'd come back to King and say that was a hit and he'd say no and we'd get into a big argument about whether it was a hit or an error or whatever, but he was very good at that. And King was very glad to see Muskie come into office, and he was a good friend of Bill Hathaway's. And he ended up supporting Bill Cohen, Harvey did, when he ran against Hathaway, which didn't cause me very much happiness. We had, we had three or four go-arounds about that.

I, I, Harvey had the only paper in town and it became too personal and everyone in town knew that. I mean he could, well for instance, this young fellow went down, committed suicide, and everyone knew it naturally, a small town. And Harvey put it in his front page, so and so hangs himself in the cellar. It didn't have anything about tragic death or something like that, like good

taste would have had it. But King had that, that way about him that did not endear him too much to the, to a lot of local people. I admired him for some of his, some of his crusades. Like he, we had a couple murders in town and he kept crusading for it and they finally went and got a very well known state detective, Otis [Ernest] Labrie, and brought him in on the case. And Otis solved it, and I think King deserved a lot, lots of credit for that because he did keep the issue alive.

But he had his up sides and his down sides. For me, I can't say that he was a dear and loving person or like that because I, for me it wasn't true. His wife was. She was a nice person. But King had his, well he had his detractors and he had his people who thought he was great. But pretty hard for a politician to, not to beat their way to his door because he had a, quite a following, you know. He had the paper and it was nothing to see when Muskie come to town or anyone else come to town, they went in and saw King to have a little interview, how that goes. And his son had to run the paper for a while but it just, I'm surprised the paper is still alive.

AL: Is it still in the family?

CC: No.

AL: No.

CC: No, it's owned by another company and I, I, no sense in me trying to give you a description of who they are. But we have, well it, they aren't making much money but they're hanging in there, put it that way. They do well to get the advertising. It doesn't take you too long to read it. The editor is a lady, she does a great job for the schools, she's always interviewing the kids, the coaches, pictures of the kids in their athletic programs and anything they do up there. So it's, it's got a nice little, nice little niche you might say, and I hope they can keep going.

We need all the help we can get over there, we got flooded out there a few years ago but now we're getting a new dike. The dike will be completed this fall. But things have changed up here, we have this, Presque Isle has a shopping center and Easton is the french fry center. And you probably heard that McCain's are building another large plant, processing plant up here. So things are doing all right, we're getting a little bit of the national economic boom up here. Our Loring Air Base is doing a great job I think attracting businesses and industry and so on, and I think it'll even do better because they have a tremendous airport over there. And of course you have your Internet now that makes, you don't need transportation so much, you know, with shipping stuff in and out, they can help that way.

AL: Now you were talking about McCain's and that reminded me of the, Freddy Vahlsing and the sugar beet industry. And um

CC: Yes, yes, yes. Ed Muskie, Ed Muskie you might as well say said, "We want the sugar beet industry," and he went out and practically got it I think. Because he called Fred Vahlsing

up, far as I know, he called him up and the University of Maine told everyone that sugar beets were a viable crop in Aroostook County. And Ed convinced Fred Vahlsing and Ed went out and got loans and support, plus the quota, which had to come from the federal government, but it didn't work out. Not that Ed Muskie didn't try, and other politicians in the state didn't try. But they, they rushed it too much. I think they rushed it too much because they had to have a quota and they planted, they planted sugar beet in places it never should have been planted.

And it, there's no sense in pointing your finger because it's all over with, there's no more sugar beets up here. The Huber Corporation come in and took over that, and they have a beautiful big plywood plant in Easton, so we probably got a hundred and fifty good stable jobs and a lot of woods operations that goes with that old sugar beet plant. And the other Vahlsing plant there is now owned by McCain's and they're, they just recently spent seventy-five million dollars expanding that. So those are two real stable industries here.

AL: So there were structures that were built for the sugar beet industry.

CC: Right.

AL: And then Huber's and McCain's were able to utilize them in other ways so it wasn't a complete washout for the -

CC: Yes, yup, no, it was, certainly not. The only thing that they didn't use was this huge storage for sugar, it would be like a large silo. But a local business man got that and it's used for storage of grain, so I don't think there's anything in the old complex there in Easton that's not being utilized for the benefit of all of us, and they're very stable industries. There's no whims of coming and going, you know, like there would have been with the sugar beets or this or that but uh

AL: Now do you have any, were you involved at all when the sugar beet industry was forming? Did you get a sense of who Freddy Vahlsing was?

CC: Oh, I knew Fred well.

AL: And who else was involved in that?

CC: Yes, yeah, Fred Vahlsing and Bill Hathaway were very good friends. And I mentioned Al Gamache, he come up here several times to meet with Fred. Because Fred always needed some support in something, and he liked Bill and he liked Ed. And I suppose, I know he was after Hathaway's office all the time and I'm, and I'm sure he would have been chasing Ed Muskie's office, too. So he was a real character, this Fred Vahlsing. A nice guy, a nice guy. He, I, the sugar beet deal was a, well it was a failure, but not that he didn't try and not that Ed Muskie didn't believe in it when he went out and got it. The state of Maine wanted it, the University of Maine said it was a viable crop and Ed Muskie put his reputation on the line. He went to bat and got the work done for it and Hathaway followed up on it. And even afterwards when a local

group bought the plant, some local farmers put quite a lot of money into it. I remember, I remember taking, picking Bill up at the plane and driving him to meet some of these guys like Hershel Smith, now retired, but a large farmer, established some farms here, and people like that.

So it, but no, we had the secretary of agriculture up here, Freeman, from, he was the former governor of Minnesota, Orville Freeman. And it was funny, you couldn't draw a crowd, a big crowd, you know, even though it was important. And I give an awful lot of credit to this, the, my good friend, Floyd Harding from town here, former senator. Orville Freeman come up in the fall of the year, roughly this time of the year, and toured the sugar beet facilities down here and Ed Muskie wasn't with him but Hathaway was and they had a meeting right here. Right in, right in the Northeastern Hotel here, Freeman and Hathaway, they had a press conference. And then we left and went over to the fair, the fairgrounds here in Presque Isle. They have the Great Northern Fair, Northern Maine Fair every summer, late August. And there was this huge crowd and Floyd orchestrated the whole thing. He had them drive right down the track and stop and there was all these lights on them and I think Orville Freeman got out and spoke on a small platform put up there.

And I didn't know what was going on, I'd been driving around all day with Bill Hathaway. And here was, and Freeman, here was this, it must have been a hundred Democrats up in the stands and they're all cheering, you know, like this. And I looked all around and all the rest of the stand was completely filled, and they're all along the tracks and I said, "There's something wrong here." And what they'd showed up for was some sort of a tractor pull or some, some hell drivers or something like that. And they sat there and they cheered a little, too, but the Democrats got the speech in and got out of there. I always laughed about that. I said, "Floyd, you really have a captive audience."

AL: What year would that have been?

CC: That would have been like '66, I think, I think it was just about '66. Yeah, because he was the, he, Orville Freeman talked about what I think he called it constructive federalism, the mix between federal and state laws, you know, and programs and something like that. And it was a boost to the, they were trying to boost the sugar beet industry at the time, plus had the other program, but that was the main feature.

I remember Fred Vahlsing stepping out into a sugar beet field in Easton, just outside of Easton, and showing the group there, which, secretary of agriculture Freeman was standing there, and Fred was not a real suave person. There he's standing with this no doubt expensive suit, three-button suit with every button buttoned. And he was a big man, and he yanked this great big sugar beet out of the ground and when he pulled it up there his coat ripped underneath his arm, and he's standing looking like some hick, you know, clothes falling off him, showing off this great big sugar beet. And I always remember how funny it looked, you know, because every-, all the politicians and the, Secretary Freeman were dressed in their suits, nice you know. And there's Fred with his, put on his Sunday best and half of it fell off him, you know.

AL: Did you ever, did you ever, or you must know John Cancelarich?

CC: Oh yes, oh yeah, sure.

AL: He worked with Freddie Vahlsing for years.

CC: He sure did, before he went from there to the potato service, yeah. Oh, I know John, still know him real well. I don't see him like I used to but a good Democratic operative and a smart fellow. He and his wife are nice people and the family, and I don't see him like I used to because you saw him all the time. He was very constructive in the Democratic Party. I mean he'd take on the job of, like one time when they wanted, the Aroostook County committee asked him something about some, putting these records on computers. Well I know nothing about anything like that, you know, I can just imagine the tremendous job it must have been. But John worked diligently to get this all accomplished, you know, whatever the programs were and set up. And this was quite a few years, eight or nine years ago. And I really think that it would be much easier today with technology, but John was into it, he was smart enough to be able to figure that out.

No, John was, I remember one time Fred Vahlsing said to John, it was something about the color of french fries, and he said, "Can we do that John?" He says, "Yeah, we can do it." But John was a chemist, see, he would, a little splash of this or splash of that. He said, "Can we do that John?" He says "Yes, we can do it." No, he was Fred's right hand man, I know that, yup.

AL: Elmer Violette, you mentioned earlier.

CC: Yes.

AL: Could you tell me more about, we had, we had the honor of interviewing him twice for this project.

CC: Did you? Oh, that's great. Oh, he's a great guy. I went to law school at Boston University in 1947 and Elmer Violette and Floyd Harding were in that class, only they studied and I partied. I wasn't married and I don't think Floyd was married, he might have been, but Elmer was married. They studied and they both graduated and, that would have been, well Floyd just had his fiftieth year, that, they had a little party for him, his office is across the street here. But Elmer Violette, I knew him. He played a little baseball for Van Buren, I remember playing baseball against him once. But I knew him from the late forties. I met him before I met Floyd and, four or five years before I knew Floyd. But those are two great guys.

And Elmer Violette, he had, in 1964 he and Floyd and Glenn Manuel put their name up for the senate that year. And in those years you run county wide, you didn't run by districts like you have today. And Bill Hathaway campaigned with them a lot. I remember us being in Ashland and Houlton and all over, we were always traveling. And Bill got a tremendous amount of advice from them. You know, I mean they were, Glenn would know something about here and

Floyd and Elmer. But I always remember them having to go down because they won the election, they were elected, and they had to leave their law practice and Glenn's farming practice and go to Augusta.

And I remember that was when Elmer started the Allagash Waterway Bill and how much it meant to him. He had a brother that was in, that was in the woods operations and, one of his brothers, Elmer's brothers, and he knew all about it. He knew all about the cutting and he knew, he liked the outdoors and he was the, the prime mover of that Allagash Waterway Bill. And I remember before Ken Curtis was elected in, it would have been '66, yes, Stewart Udall, who was the secretary of the interior and a great environmentalist, he came up here and flew over the Allagash. And he told Governor Reed at the time, not that Governor Reed was not an environmentalist or anything, but it was Elmer who was pushing it with the Democrats, and I wouldn't say there weren't some Republicans involved in it, you know, but it was Elmer's bill. But Stuart Udall told Governor Reed, he says, "Governor, you do it or I'll do it." In other words, the Allagash is going to be preserved and if the federal government had to do it they would have done it, but he said preferably it should be the state. I remember Udall making that statement. And Elmer, I'd talked to him a thousand times about how his bill was coming and the cutbacks. I mean you could cut so close to the Allagash, you know, and he, I remember him telling me, he said, "I wish we could get more," but he says, "This is all we can get." In other words, he couldn't get back as far as he wanted to but at least he got the bill passed.

And I remember going up and picking Elmer up and driving, we drove up to Eagle Lake and flew in to Churchill Dam and Ed Muskie was there, Peter Kyros was there. Bill Hathaway couldn't make it, I represented him. And they had the dedication of the Allagash and Muskie spoke, Elmer spoke, you know. And I think that was one of, one of the best things, well I think Elmer would say this, it would be the top, one of his top priorities that he accomplished when he was in the state senate here. A real nice guy. He loved the St. John Valley.

His wife is a very strong person, too. If you ever heard her charge up an audience, she could do it with the best of them. I remember they always had some idea they were going to close the Fort Kent, University of Maine at Fort Kent because it wasn't economically viable or some reason like that. They didn't take into consideration the people up there and their unique situation. And it used to infuriate me and an awful lot of people. Well I remember they had the big meeting up there and Marcella, Elmer's wife, got up to speak and I can remember her thundering out, you don't have to go to Selma, Alabama to be discriminated against. Boy, did that set that place off. They practically throwing the chairs up, oh yeah, it was a great speech. And they didn't, and it's the fastest growing branch of the University of Maine system today.

AL: Really? Wonderful.

CC: It is. They have a, they have a new president up there the last couple or three years and they've grown, and it's got a unique character to it. And I'm awfully glad they do and glad that it's here in Aroostook County, it's great. And I think they're quite solid by now, but they used to trot this out every couple three years. Some group would come in and look the situation over,

you know, and make this decision that for economic reasons, don't think of anything else, all the good reasons of keeping open, that we're going to close it. But they haven't done that for quite a few years now, and I don't think they will now because they need, they need more buildings now. They're living in the, living all over town up there, so it's great. But Elmer Violette is one old buddy and he and Floyd were probably two of my best political allies and friends. Yeah, we go way back to the fifties and it was fun working with them, really fun working with them. I don't know if you know Dana Childs?

AL: Yes.

CC: You do. Well he was a Republican from the Portland area and he switched to the Democratic Party, and we elected him as speaker of the house. That was quite an honor, but he was a good legislator. And I'll never forget some party we had in Portland, a fundraiser or something like that, and my wife went to college with his wife -

AL: Jean?

CC: Yes, that was her name, right? And I said, "Dana, how are you doing?" He says, "I don't know what I was ever doing in the Republican Party, I'm having so much fun." Yeah, he said that a dozen times, he said it a dozen, I'm having so much fun, you know.

AL: Yeah, we were lucky to interview him as well.

CC: Have you? I haven't talked to him in ten years. Is he well and everything?

AL: He passed away.

CC: When?

(Taping stopped.)

CC: Another great fellow was Bud Reed from Woolwich. He was the president of the Maine senate for a time and got elected in a touch Republican district, but it just showed the caliber of some of those people, you know. Bud Reed and Ken Curtis and Dana and that bunch, they were, they were, no wonder we turned the party around, you know. But I must have forgotten about Dana.

AL: The Freeman family, did you know Joe and Ann Freeman?

CC: Oh, Joe and Anne, yes. Anne's still around and I know her son Greg in town here. But Joe Freeman, he was one of the guys that got us really pushing up here in Aroostook County. He was always there.

AL: He did?

CC: Oh yes. He was the guy that Ed Muskie called and met him right at the, when he, as he stepped off the, stepped off the bus here. Yes, it was Joe Freeman. Oh yes, you could count on him. I had, in 1960 we had a field day in Fort Fairfield and Lucia Cormier was running for the senate at the time against Margaret Chase Smith, which no question was going to be a real uphill battle. So I had the idea that we'd go out to a local pond in Fort Fairfield, a good size pond, and we'll have a party and we'll have a big crowd. And they said how are you going to do that? And I said, we're going to have free hot dogs and free Pepsi. And we raised a little money and I got tons of hot dogs, I know that. We had six hundred people show up there. No one could believe it until they saw the crowd. But Joe Freeman gave us the Pepsi. And any time, any time we had a party like that, Joe would send the Pepsi over and you could always count on him, always count on him.

And I always remember on Election Day in the fifties and early sixties he'd drive over to Fort Fairfield and probably some union or some, had sent some money up and he'd come over and give us our share to get the vote out. Yup, and Joe would be there, he would be there all the time. He was a very, very faithful Democrat and person and nice guy. He was a real, this friend of mine used to call him a polished gentleman and I always remember him that way. He was a nice guy, a very nice guy.

AL: His son, has he also carried on the tradition?

CC: Well, not to that extent, but he, you have a party Greg is there. Yeah, he's always there, no question about that, he always shows up as far as that goes. You know, the people in Presque Isle, being what they are, never really gave Joe his due. They wanted to, they used to play golf at the Fort Fairfield golf course, country club, and it was getting crowded over there and Presque Isle, being a real thriving town and a go-getter town you might say, they wanted their own golf course. So they left Fort Fairfield and come over and built their own over here. And then they got in deep financial troubles, so they turned to Joe Freeman to raise them some money, which he did. He was an avid golfer himself, a good golfer, and he gave them the money.

Then they had an election for the state senate and instead of getting behind Joe-. it wasn't a regular election, it was in the winter time and I can't remember the reason for it but, now I remember we had an awful stormy day. But to make a long story short, if Presque Isle had supported Joe Freeman he'd have been the state senator. Now he could have done them some good, see. He could go out and get the money for the golf course, but they would never elect him, you know. It's too bad because he was, he was a great businessman, good for the community, he'd do anything for the community. But he was never honored with an elected position like that, like I always felt that he should have been.

AL: Can you tell me what sort of, the relationships between politics in Fort Fairfield and Presque Isle, was there a difference?

CC: Well, yeah, we're a, we're always more of a, I don't know, a Democratic town I guess.

See, we have a lot of potatoes over there, we raise more potatoes. And back when you shipped a lot we had all these, we raised more potatoes than any other town in Aroostook County and we had big companies over there, like the Reid Brothers, Nightingale's, and Houlton's and Edmund's and Powers and like that. So there was an awful lot of working people there. And once you organized them, got them to, and it was very, very hard to, you didn't have the, for instance you didn't have the absentee ballot. You had to go to a doctor and the doctor was always a Republican doctor and it was very hard to get anyone who could just walk you might say, to get them an absentee ballot. But I always noticed that the Democratic ch-, Republican chairman, the Republican chairman always walked in with an arm full of these ballots. And it was Ken Curtis that got the absentee ballots started with a notary public and justice of the peace. It was Ken Curtis, it was his, his baby, I remember that.

Well once we organized in Fort Fairfield we started holding our own. And in 1958, the year that Ed Muskie won the senate seat, he beat Payne, former Governor Payne, we elected a Democrat to the legislature and I don't know if we'd ever had one over there because we just never ran one and if you don't run you can't win. But since then we've done all right. Of course they've redistricted us now and they've thrown us in with towns that are very Republican. Now our strategy is to go to those towns and get a Democrat and have them split the vote there, and we've done all right on that. But it's more of a Democratic town but it's because we're much better organized. In spite of the fact that we had a governor from Fort Fairfield, John Reed, we still elected Democrats to the legislature, but it's organization.

John Kennedy gave us a tremendous boost in 1960. We had a hundred and twenty-five registered Democrats in 1960, in the spring of the year, and we culled the books, I mean we started all over. And there weren't any state laws that said they had to keep their local town registrations up to par, you know, like there are today. And that fall we had over a thousand registered Democrats. Yeah, we had a real good organization. And it was Kennedy and Muskie. I mean Muskie had been in, well he'd been governor for four years and he'd been elected senator and he was always around, so we organized real well.

But it's pretty hard now, us old fellows. I'll be seventy-nine my next birthday and I'm getting kind of tired, you know, and the young people don't seem to want to get involved that much. I remember the first meeting I went to, a fellow asked me if I wanted to go to the Democratic meeting, I said, yeah, I'll go down with you. Three or four of us walked in and everyone there was old, you know? They're in their sixties, early seventies. Well they thought it was wonderful, this half a dozen young people come in, three of us just out of college. The other two guys I remember were smart young businessmen. It made a big difference. And it was a lot of fun, it really was a lot of fun. Especially if you won, yeah. We had our lumps but actually we did well. Everyone in the state of Maine knew how well we had done. Peter Damborg used to write about it in the *Portland Sunday Telegram*. I talked with his wife recently, a couple times, she works for the state board of education.

AL: What is her name?

CC: She recently got remarried, because Peter had died, he had a heart problem, two or three years ago.

AL: Oh, that's okay.

CC: Well anyway, but, and the *Bangor* used to drop hints about, but everyone knew, the crazy school teacher up there and that bunch, you know, that. I'll tell you a great campaigner in Presque Isle was Floyd Harding's wife, Jean Harding.

AL: She did a lot of campaigning?

CC: Oh, listen, she beat these people over here for the, she ran for the city council, she beat them like a drum. They couldn't beat her. And she finally retired. Yessir, yessir, she was a great campaigner. She and I used to go to, went to Caribou a couple times to register voters, you know, just because they weren't, we felt they needed some help. And I remember going over there a couple times with her like that. Great campaigner.

AL: The other question I had about politics in the county was how do the different areas of the county relate to each other? Like, I'm speaking of the valley and then the central and then the south, like Houlton, Presque Isle, Fort Fairfield, then up in the St. John?

CC: Yeah, well you know, my understanding was in the late forties and early fifties the St. John Valley was fairly Republican. I know Elmer Violette got elected to the legislature as a Democrat in '46 or '7 or sometime like that. It was after the war, he was in WWII. He served at least one year in the state legislature. But - . . .

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

AL: We are now on tape two of the interview with Mr. Clarence Chubb Clark. And you were saying about St. John Valley?

CC: Yes, up until, up until when Ed Muskie was running and especially when John Kennedy ran, Fort Kent, I mean the Valley was not as Democratic as it is today. I can't remember there being too many Republican representatives but I knew they were strong. The Republicans were much stronger because I faced them. I remember being up there and Frances Freeman, who would be a brother of Joe Freeman there, he lived in Fort Kent and he was chairman of the Democratic Party. And Pat Desjardins and Emilien Levesque in Madawaska, and Elmer, I remember those guys talking about the opposition up there.

But later on, I say later on, after John Kennedy with the influence previous to that of Ed Muskie, and when Bill Hathaway ran in '62 we did a lot of campaigning up there. And the Valley really became a Democratic stronghold all the way down, as far down as Limestone, clear up to Allagash, you know, through there, although the Allagash used to have quite a few Republicans

in it. But then you come to central Aroostook and if you have a real good candidate, if you have a Floyd Harding or a Peter Kelley from Presque Isle and Caribou, they could win but you had to put a real good candidate out, you know what I mean? When the Republicans didn't have to. They, they just, and I'm not going to say anything about the caliber, there's been some good Republican representatives down there. But I will say it right out, they weren't as good as our good ones, as far as I'm concerned. And I could back that up with a lot of good legislation that really got passed. And not this idea of saying, look what we passed down there when, as if they did all the work for it and, but I know what the votes were behind the scenes and in the committees, you know. I'm talking about winning with guys like, guys like Floyd and Pete, like that. Then Mabel Desmond for instance who went right out and door to door and followed up with good constituent work. I mean people like that can win.

And in the southern part it's pretty tough for Democrats. You can win occasionally if you have a good candidate. We had a young fellow who won two elections in Houlton. His name's on the tip of my tongue, but he had to quit because he couldn't afford it. He was a young man, he just could not go down there because you do well to break even. And Glenn Manuel won down there. But it's not a given, you know, that you're going to win because you're just throwing your hat in unless you put up a real good candidate.

But, maybe that's good, but I wish that we did have, we've got the people but they can't run. I could name you half a dozen guys that could, that could go out and win an election but they have families and they have jobs, you know. Think what it was back when you had to get some people who were retired and they didn't have the, if they had any real ability you were lucky to get them, you know. And they got twelve hundred dollars a year. It was expensive, real expensive to go down there. Now they, they, I guess they can break even if they don't give too many parties, something like that. But I always found that any time you had a good candidate, even the Republicans can't win in the Valley, but they can win through here. And if we have a real good candidate we can make it tough for them. Key is to get the vote out and get them interested.

AL: Did you know Glen Manuel?

CC: Knew him well, knew his family. Great guy.

AL: What was he like?

CC: Well he, he was a farmer, and I used to be a farmer for a while, my father was. And I used to go down there on tours, like that, and he could find more things to laugh about. And I remember his first time down there he got tangled up with the, with the fish and wildlife, and he became game commissioner under Joe Brennan later on. But we used to kid him about, he really went after the moose season and all he could talk about was moose. And we used to haunt him, well what's this moose stuff, you know, like that. No, Glenn was a, he was another one of those good guys, I mean he was a good Democrat and he was interested in the economy of this state and this county one hundred percent. There wasn't any other reason that he went down there and

nothing else he was willing to talk about. He was that way. And he'd support it, he'd back it up. No, he, he has a daughter works in D.C. now. Charlotte, is it? I forget her name.

AL: And a daughter Barbara who works in Bangor.

CC: Oh yes, right, right, right, that's right too.

AL: I'll be interviewing her soon.

CC: Okay, that's great.

AL: You also said, before we started recording you were telling me a little bit about John Baldacci and his family. Could you tell me what you know about his family background, who, how far back do you go with his family?

CC: Well, John's father, Bob Baldacci, and his brother Vasco had a little, small, Baldacci's Italian Restaurant right under the overhead in Bangor, a little small place. And I remember going down there and eating there.

AL: Was it called Baldacci's?

CC: Called Baldacci's at the time. And it was, there's where the, you might say the Democratic politics were talked over. And, starting in the fifties, all up through the sixties and the seventies I knew those people, you know. Of course they expanded and they shouldn't have built it. It was too early, and they lost out on the big expansion and then they ended up, well Bob Baldacci went up and opened up Mama Baldacci's, which is still going. And John's mother runs that. She's there a lot now and you can still get a good meal there, and she looks well. I was in there about two months ago, I don't go to Bangor like I used to but I always try and stop there.

But John Baldacci, the first time I remember meeting him I went in to see John one time and his wife said, he's in the cellar making meatballs. So I, and this was, this was twenty years ago or twenty five years ago or something like that, because I went down cellar and I remember Bob hollering "Chubb Clark, how are you? I haven't seen you." like that. And I says, "What are you up to?" "Oh," he says, "the boys and I are making some meatballs," and there was John and his brother, younger brother, he's a lawyer there now in Ban-

AL: Yeah, Joe, Joe? No. I don't, he's got several brothers, I don't know which one is the lawyer.

CC: Yeah, I know, but this is the, I'm pretty sure this is the lawyer who's on the, he's a lawyer, I know that, he's on the city council there in Bangor.

AL: Not Joe?

CC: Well, it could -

AL: It might be.

CC: It could be. I couldn't put a name on him, I can put a face on him. And I remember he was making meatballs twenty-five years ago with his, with John and their father down in their cellar and that's the first time I remember seeing John Baldacci. And he, the year he ran they had a mini convention here in Presque Isle and I didn't, I wasn't really paying that much attention. A good friend of mine, I had come over to it from Fort Fairfield and this lawyer brother of John's come up and asked if I was. We were delegates, and we said yes, and would you consider voting for John Baldacci. And we got talking with him, and I had in the back of my mind that I might support Mitchell, this nephew of George Mitchell, was it John Mitchell? He was Democratic chairman of the state for a while and he was out of the Bangor area. Very attractive young man, like that, but pretty soon John Baldacci showed up and I got talking with him and I support him ever since, how that goes. He had, he hadn't announced. Mitchell had announced first and, but John organized, and he organizes spaghetti meals all over. And he's a great campaigner, people love him, they really do like him very much.

And we'd be fortunate to have him as governor because he would, he would do one thing. I'm sure he would address this two Maine deal much better than it's been addressed for years. The rural areas in Maine, not only Aroostook County but all the rural areas, ever since the McKernan years down there when they had these budget problems and so on, and the state school aid was cut and cut and cut. The local rural areas have had to raise their property taxes. They can talk about giving a tax reduction on the federal and state level for income tax. But the people who don't have to pay an income tax but own a little house, when their property tax goes up they're being taxed heavier. They don't get the income tax benefit but they got the problem of paying higher property taxes to maintain the services in town, especially the schools.

So, I mean there's one big problem I think in rural Maine is the fact that the state is not funding the school programs to the extent they should. Now they can say what they did with the three hundred million dollar surplus and what they're doing for schools and like that, especially the buildings, which they need. But they haven't done enough for me because the property tax is still high in rural Maine and it isn't going to go down. We ought to have more state aid for it. And I'm interested in that, in John Baldacci's, talking about him, I think he would address that.

You know, John Martin told me one time, I went up and interviewed John back in the early sixties. They said this young fellow wants to run for the state legislature and I was on the county committee, and I had the summer off. So I said I'll go up and see this guy, see what he's like because he had an uncle or something like that who was a Republican. And so I went up and John was twenty-one years old, just out of University of Maine, and he was packing cans in a grocery store for his uncle where he worked. And I determined very quickly that John was no Republican and we've been great friends ever since.

But John told me one time that the dividing line between, in the legislature, is around Bangor. In

other words where, you wouldn't go directly north but you'd curve down towards the coast. There were as many legislators north of this area, right around the Bangor area, as there were south. Now it's Augusta, and you can't blame a legislator south of Augusta for not taking care of his constituents, but that doesn't help us in the rural areas. And I think, I think Baldacci would address that in a fair, a more fair light, you know. Because we're talking about the kids of the state of Maine, you know. We're not talking about whether you make more money in a business or you, we're talking about fairness. And it used to be.

I remember, I remember some of these communities like Van Buren, they got a tremendous amount of money in the state aid, because of their valuation in the town. And they've cut that down so they've all suffered. I know my answer for it, I would go down there, I'd like to go down there and talk to the Republican and Democrat alike from the rural areas and say, now let's get together. Never mind what the leaders say, let's just tell the leaders you either do this or you aren't getting our vote on it. And you could create a big block of voters that had, would have to be dealt with. I'd like to see them try something like that.

Because I talk to too many people who worry about their local property tax. People who are on fixed incomes, a lot of times only Social Security. And that doesn't go up as fast as, as fast as the property tax goes up. So, but we've done some good things far as that goes. I think this new deal on the, on medication that the state passed, the idea of sitting down and bargaining with the, of course the federal government's got to do something with that. I've seen man-, I saw an old man about four or five months ago crying because he didn't have sixty-five dollars to buy a, right in front of me at a Rite Aid in Fort Fairfield, tears on his cheeks. And then, that's not an unheard of story all over, you know. I think it's tragic, I think it's just downright tragic.

AL: Something has to be done with health care.

CC: They do. And I think this is why, and I didn't think it until a week ago, that Gore is going to beat Bush because of the issues. And that is one of them right there, one big one right there. And I think he can lick him on Social Security and I think he can beat him on education because -

AL: And environment.

CC: Environment, hands down on the environment, beat him hands down on the environment. You take, you take education and taking money and give it to a private school. What's going to happen to the public school if you take these vouchers and yank out the kids out of that school and send them to a private school, what's it going to do to the public schools? This country was built on the public school system. There's something wrong with it, fix it, just plain fix it. Pay the teachers, fix the buildings, educate the kids, they can do it.

Well I, that, speak-, going back to John Baldacci, I find him as good a campaigner as I ever worked with in fifty years. Very knowledgeable, very knowledgeable about the, not that the other guys weren't, far as that goes, they were, there's no question about that. You talk about

Hathaway and Muskie and those guys, and Ken Curtis, they had everything on their fingertips. We were smart, we were lucky to have smart people like that. But John Baldacci's one heck of a campaigner. He's alive today and he's in there and he's, he's going to get an awful lot of support for governor in two years. I've mentioned it four or five times to people and I says, "I hope he does." You know, Angus King and I are personal friends. He was on Hathaway's staff.

AL: He went back; his background is Democratic politics isn't it?

CC: Yes, yes, he's campaigned with me, he stayed at my house, I know him well. But I don't agree with him on a lot of things. I'm not saying I have to agree with everyone that goes to Augusta, you know, whether he's Angus King or even a Democratic governor. But I don't know anything about laptops or schmaptops or anything else but I'll say one thing, the idea of fifty million dollars to me for give away laptops doesn't resonate. They can add it up and subtract it and point up to the fact that it's good, but fifty million dollars could be spent for computers in the systems throughout the state on a fair basis. It wouldn't have to discriminate any way they went, like that. I just, and that's not all I, Angus is a little bit too much business oriented. Not that I don't like business but I think there's a lot of things that he should have done a little differently.

But I can't, I hope I'm around and able to work for Baldacci in 2002. Really, I'd like to see a Democratic governor down there and I'd like to see John Baldacci down there. And I hope we don't get into a big balderall primary over it. Between you and me, Baldacci's going to have the cash to run it. I know that because he's got a lot of people who want him to take this on, from Bangor north. And he's got the labor on his side; he isn't going to lose that. Well, I think we're lucky. And John's an extension of a lot of the good, a lot of the good people we've had in the Democratic Party. He's an excellent legislator. And I think Tom Allen's a tremendous legislator. The only guy I never agreed with is Peter Kyros. Smart guy, doing real well, but we have a statement up here, we say he's a 'gilly.'

AL: What's a gilly?

CC: Well, a gilly's a guy like Peter Kyros. He's got to get in trouble or doesn't do something right or something and, that's an old statement that I heard and I always promoted it. "What a gill," I'd say. But, I'll tell you someone I liked for a Republican was Stan -

AL: Tupper. Yeah.

CC: Tupper, real great guy, real great guy. There's a guy, it shows you what the people admire someone that will stand up for convictions, in '64 when he wouldn't endorse Goldwater. Went to the Northeastern Hotel and they spit on him. Republicans spit on him going in to the hall. He was the only one left standing after the election. I stood like this on the side of LBJ when he came to Portland that fall. Over a hundred thousand people, met him, went down from the airport, down through. I don't know if you heard the story but there was a, Governor Reed, he had to go meet the president of the United States at the airport. And Lyndon says, "Come on

Governor, get in here,” so he put him in the car . . .

AL: Didn't give him much choice, did he?

CC: No, he didn't. And then, then he made them stop halfway downtown, Congress Street, to the, where the meeting was, there was a square down there. And Lyndon got out to shake hands, he says, “Come on Governor,” and there was John Reed shaking hands outside the car. And I'm up on the podium, like I say, Lyndon Johnson, Lady Bird was there, and I turned around there was John Reed. And I went over, “Hi John, how are you?” And John trying to wish himself a thousand miles away, but he was stuck. There was this big mob there and Johnson was towing him right along. Johnson knew what he was doing far as that goes, he knew what he was doing.

But Tupper won the election that year, yeah. I remember going to the teacher's convention in Portland that year and all the teachers in the first district said, “Now we're going to vote for Stan Tupper. We're going to vote for Stan Tupper. And we're with everybody else, John Kennedy and all, but we're going to vote for Stan Tupper.”

AL: Well, our time is almost up.

CC: Well, it's all right by me. I've kept you a long time.

AL: Well this is wonderful. I just wanted to, if you had a few things you wanted to say in the end, something I didn't ask you that you feel is important to add to the record, or any final comments that you'd like to make?

CC: Well, I guess I rambled about as much as I can. I was very pleased when I met Don Nicoll a year ago last spring in Augusta, I always liked Don. He was a guy that could very quietly set the record straight, you know, on everything, a very knowledgeable person. He was Muskie's campaign chairman in '64 and he had a barrel of money and he shelled some out to the Hathaway campaign, and we not only could use it, we did use it far as that goes. So I always remember him for that.

And he was another one of those smart young men in the party, you know. I mean we had, we had, I'll tell you, I had a lot of Republicans say to me that we didn't know where you'd get all the people, you know. You know, someone told me one time that if we hadn't had all people, great people in the Party, I call them great people, the people we've been talking about, that Bill Cohen would have ran as a Democrat. I had a fellow tell me that one time, from Bangor. He said, “I don't know how many, it's been quite a few years ago, but they actually, a lot of the good guys were frozen out.” They didn't want to go up against those guys, you know. Just because they were capable.

So it's been a real fun time, you know. I was never pushing a dog uphill, you know. I've done a few local people in that way, but when you were pushing a Muskie, you were pushing a winner, so.

Now, one time when John Kennedy came to, in the summer of '62 came to, go up the coast, he landed at Brunswick Naval Air Station, went up to Gene Tunney's estate, some island off Boothbay. My brother and I happened to have our families on a little place called Squirrel Island. And you could drive out to it, and we're there at the same time. And I remember going to this local restaurant, nightclub, pub type of deal and there's Pierre Salinger dancing, you know, with a cigar in his mouth. He had a lot of class that guy did, with a cigar in his mouth and dancing like that. Well one of those nights, I don't know if the president had gone back, I know Ed Muskie had been out on a sailboat with Kennedy because I saw pictures of it.

But one of the kids, it was a big old house, either one of my kids or my brother's, he had three girls and I had three girls there, they said, "There's someone here to see you Uncle Clarence." And I went over, there was Ed Muskie and Jane. And Ed was a poor guy for remembering names. He looked at me, and it wasn't light out, it was in the evening, and he say, "What are you doing down here Aroostook County?" At least he remembered that and pretty soon he, "Oh Chubb, Chubb, that's it, yeah," like that, see. Well he was interested in buying the place, he had a camp in China Lake for years and I think he did buy someplace along the coast but he was interested in that house that we were renting. It was kind of funny, you know, I looked up and, I took him in and introduced him to some of my, my girls there, in bunks. And Ed was tall enough he could look right, right in the bunk. I was looking up at my daughter, Ed was looking right down on us. We often laughed about that.

Yeah, oh those were fun times. I just, I wish I had a lot of my old buddies back to go out and hustle votes and, you know, we could, if I heard of something going on in Bangor or Augusta I could get three or four guys, just call them up, away we'd go. We just, we just like to go, that's all, and like to participate. There aren't many young people like to do that any more I guess, I don't know. You don't have to be young, we were, we were in our thirties, early forties, (*unintelligible word*). Yes, I didn't really, I didn't really get moving down there until, well, anywhere between thirty-five and forty-five. And I had to do something this year just because of the, some of the local legislators. I had really, there's no one, I can call John Martin and get more done than anyone around here because we don't have any Democrats around here. But I think I got a winner this time and I won't have to worry.

AL: Thank you so much for your time.

CC: Well I'm pleased very much to, this is going to take a -

End of Interview