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Hobbins, Barry oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with Barry Hobbins by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Hobbins, Barry

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

September 9, 2003

Place

Saco, Maine

ID Number

MOH 408

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Biographical Note

Barry J. Hobbins was born May 17, 1951 in Biddeford, Maine and grew up in Saco, Maine. Aside from two years that he spent at St. Michael's College, he has lived in Saco all of his life. Hobbins became involved with politics in 1972 when he was elected to the Maine state legislature. He ran for the U.S. Congress in 1984, and served in the state senate from 1988 to 1990. He was also the state chairman at one time. He worked on Ed Muskie's presidential campaign in 1972 and his senatorial campaign in 1976. At the time of this interview, Barry was the Democratic state representative from Saco.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family and educational background; interest in politics; 1960 presidential nomination; Maine legislature; 1972 presidential campaign; Muskie's campaign for reelection to the Senate in 1976; Muskie's pro-war stance; Muskie's appointment as Secretary of State; 1980 Democratic National Convention; Muskie's environmental legislation; and connections to various political figures in Maine.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Barry Hobbins at his office at 110 Main Street in Saco, Maine, on September 9th, the year 2003, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. If you could start just by giving me your full name and spelling it?

Barry Hobbins: Yes, it's Barry J. Hobbins, B-A-R-R-Y, J as in John, Hobbins, H-O-B-B-I-N-S.

AL: And where and when were you born?

BH: I was born in Biddeford, Maine, on May 17th, 1951.

AL: And is that where you grew up?

BH: I grew up in Saco, the neighboring town of Saco, and basically lived here all my life except for two years when I went away to college at St. Michael's College from 1969 to 1971. It's been my hometown since I was born.

AL: What was Saco like when you were growing up, and how has it changed?

BH: Well, Saco and the neighboring of Biddeford were a lot like Lewiston and Auburn. Essentially they were mill towns located on the Saco River, mostly concentrated in factories for textile mills and, you know, similar in nature of Franco American population, more in Biddeford than in Saco. As the people in Biddeford would say, the mill owners lived in, bosses lived in Saco and the workers lived in Biddeford. But those differences have gone; they've gone in the past I think as the years have gone on.

AL: And what was the town like politically as you were growing up?

HB: Well politically, Saco was a Republican town, had more enrolled Republicans than Democrats until 1972 when there was a group of young legislators, young individuals, and I was one of them, who ran for the legislature at a very young age, and we were able to do grass roots campaigning. It was during the time of the anti-war issues and so Saco changed at that time. The transition became more Democratic and today the Democrats outnumber the Republicans, but the unenrolled voters outnumber Democrats. In neighboring Biddeford it was a different situation back growing up. It was all Democrat, there were a very few Republicans. There was one Republican mayor I believe in the whole history of the era, and that was in the early sixties because I think there was more political infighting among the Democrats. But it was a very highly charged political area back then, and has a lot of political history.

AL: And when did you start to have an interest in politics?

HB: Well, I would say my first interest was, you know, when I was probably old enough to read and to watch TV. I became very interested. My father I think brought the interest in politics to me early on. He was active behind the scenes but never was an elected official until into the mid-seventies. But he is the one, for example, you know, I watched the 1960 nomination process, or the convention, of President Kennedy, and I saw the, he was very active back then. I remember in those early years of seeing all the local political people. But my father, you know, had a true respect and liking to Ed Muskie, and I think that he finally got, he finally got focused on politics during the Muskie campaign early in '54 when there was a real change and a real upset, and I think that's when he first started to get really interested. Even though he was a little interested growing up in Democratic politics, but during the Muskie era he became active in municipal politics, and that got me interested.

I ran for the legislature at a very young age in 1972, and I was twenty years old in the primary, so I was a very young participant but had volunteered in the '68 campaign, was active then. And believe it or not, in 1971 I ended up going down to a major event in October of 1971, I believe it was October of '71, where they had a group of the Muskie supporters go down to the Shawmut Inn in Kennebunkport, Kennebunk Beach, and there was a major summit conference of major political types who were going to support his candidacy, and I was one of the drivers, believe it or not, volunteer drivers who went down. There were three or four of us from at that time the University of Maine, that went down as volunteers. And I remember seeing Charlie Micoleau. In fact, I think he directed me around of where I should drive the important people. So it was quite an interesting process, and that was really the beginning of my involvement in the electoral process in '71. And when I was elected into the legislature in 1972, I was the youngest member of the Maine legislature.

AL: Now what were your parents' names and occupations?

BH: Yes, my father's name was Raymond Hobbins, and his real name was John Raymond Hobbins, and he grew up in Biddeford and he. . . . My grandmother was, my grandfather James Hobbins married Alice Remillard, who was all Franco-American, was born in Canada in a town called Lévis outside of Quebec City. And so I was, my father was half French and half Irish. And back in those days, everyone spoke both languages, and my father, for example, learned

how to speak French before he learned how to speak English, because my grandmother, my memere, would speak English very seldom except for at home because she would work in the mills. And so it was an interesting, I think, an interesting time.

My mother, on the other hand, grew up in Lewiston and quite frankly was brought up more Irish than French. She was all Irish and her maiden name was McDonaugh, and my grandmother's name was Kane, K-A-N-E. And so my mother grew up in Lewiston, graduated from Lewiston High School in 1941, and knew some of the other political figures, Judge Coffin, for example. My mother knew, my mother and her two sisters knew Judge Coffin and his whole family, and also knew the Longley family. My mother graduated from high school in the same year Jim Longley graduated from high school. So she knew the Longley family too and, I think, quite frankly, quietly supported Jim Longley over George Mitchell. In our family that would have been a, if she ever told my father, but I believe she, her whole family supported George Mitchell, and I don't think George Mitchell knows that to this day either. So my family, I had the influence of my mother from Lewiston and followed politics pretty strongly over the years from Lewiston and obviously the Biddeford -Saco things, too. But again, similar, the towns Biddeford-Saco are a lot like Lewiston and Auburn in their make up.

AL: Right. Did you have a sense that she was a strong Muskie supporter?

BH: Oh, gosh, she was a very strong Muskie supporter. In fact, my, in fact my mother worked in Waterville for one year with the telephone company when Senator Muskie was courting Jane at the time, and she knew of Jane. I think Jane was working at a clothing store, women's clothing store downtown, and she remembers going in there shopping, believe it or not, back in the 1940s. But my mother and few operators, telephone operators, there was a whole group of them from Lewiston who would fill in in different places, and my mother went up and worked first in Lewiston, then Waterville for a year. So she knew Ed Muskie when he was a young lawyer back in the late forties or 1946 when he first came back from the war. So she always thought a lot of him, always thought a lot of Ed Muskie and thought a lot of Jane.

And then obviously, they were kind of the first family to ever really have active children that people talked about and were seen publicly, and so I think she kind of emulated a lot of that because I'm of the same age as a couple of the Muskie's kids. And so I think growing up she kind of, she could really identify with Jane and with Ed Muskie. And I think that whole post WWII generation, that's what I think their strength was, that they looked like regular people. They had, their kids were doing regular things and they were, you know, all throughout, when he became governor they lived in the Blaine House but you would never know it. I mean, they weren't wealthy people and they were just, I think that people can identify, the average person in Maine, and that really I think, really set the foundation for the success of Ed Muskie throughout. That's what my mother and my father would say, that that was the real success. And then, you know, then when he ran for the United States Senate, you know, he was very successful and, you know, he was positioning himself very well for a major run back in the, really back in the early sixties, and then Frank Coffin ran for governor in 1960. There was a, they began to position, I think that whole "era" of individuals began to position Muskie for the national scene.

AL: Did your parents have, or your mother have recollections of the Delahanty family in

Lewiston?

BH: Oh yes, I mean Judge, the Delahantys and the Cliffords. My family, the McDonough attorneys were the Cliffords so my, and so obviously the Cliffords and the Delahantys were all part of the, they were all part of the same group. They were interrelated, they married, and so we, you know, I always heard stories about the Cliffords and the Delahantys. In fact, one of the Cliffords probated my grandfather's estate when he died, so it was very, you know, I knew all, my mother knew all of, my grandmother and my aunts would always talk about John Delahanty and Tom Delahanty, and they're a little older than me but it was the same era growing up, and their athletic attributes. And Tom Delahanty ended up going to St. Michael's College where I went to school for a few years, and so that was kind in the conversation.

But Lewiston politics, there was a group of, there was a whole group of Irish supporters that really, in Lewiston, besides the Franco legislators there were a bunch of. There was a fellow named Maloney who ran for governor, ran for congress in the fifties, in the third congressional district, was put on the ballot, and I think that he was put on in a, kind of a sacrificial lamb just like Judge Delahanty ran for congress at one time. And then Frank Coffin happened to win. It was kind of a fluke, I mean, but they all took their turns. It was kind of a, the Democratic Party at the time was housed in Lewiston, and that was kind of a beginning, before it moved to Augusta, that was really the only real true foundation of the party. You had Biddeford, and Biddeford always could deliver the votes, but you had more, and I think maybe it was the, maybe it was Bates College, maybe it was the intellectual environment or whatever, but you had a lot of people that began the roots in Lewiston politics and have done well in the process.

AL: You said you entered the state legislature in '72?

BH: Yes, '72, I was twenty years old.

AL: Was Louis Jalbert still in the legislature?

BH: Louis Jalbert was the, he was the self proclaimed dean of the Maine legislature. And I remember the first day of the Maine legislature when I was sworn in in 1972. I was sworn in, I had a brand new suit and I had just, I was twenty-one years old, and I remember walking out of the chambers and I saw this guy kind of point at me, his finger at me, and called me over and he said, "Bring these documents down to Sam Slosberg's office." Well I, first of all I didn't know who Sam Slosberg was and I didn't know where his office was. And thirdly, I kind of got the idea that Mr. Jalbert, Louis as we would refer to him, or Mr. D. that he liked to be referred to as; he thought I was a page. There weren't many young people in the legislature, so he assumed I was just one of the young pages. So I told him, I said, "Mr. Jalbert, I want you to know I'll do that, I'll find out where it is." And he said, "That's good." He says, "Make sure you get it down there." But I said, "I want you to know one thing, I'm in the legislature, and I'm a state representative. I took Camille Diddard's place from Saco." "You took the camel's place?" - - they called Camille the camel as a nickname - - and he just shook his head, he says, "Oh boy." I think he was surprised at my youth, that there weren't many young legislators at the time.

There were several younger ones, Frank Murray who is now Father Frank Murray, Father John

Murray, who was at the time in 1972 twenty-four years old, and I was twenty-one years old. But there were a few young legislators. The only, the youngest legislator in the Androscoggin county delegation I think was Leighton Cooney, who Louis Jalbert hated, because Leighton had voted for John Martin for minority leader in 1970 instead of, of course all the young Turks had courted John Martin, and I think Louis was the only, Leighton was the only one in Androscoggin County that would admit it, that he didn't support Louis Jalbert. And Louis beat John Martin by one vote for minority leader, and that was a big deal back then. So Louis held a grudge against poor Leighton Cooney, he probably holds it to this day, Louis having passed away, but I'll give Leighton Cooney credit, he did go to Louis Jalbert's funeral, as I did.

So Louis was an interesting character. He had his strengths and he had his weaknesses, and he, and you know, he goes down as someone, you know, someone in history in Maine politics. How he rates, he doesn't rate at the same level obviously as the Ed Muskies or George Mitchells, but he has his place during the process. He was one of the very few Democrats that served in the legislature; it's when they used to caucus in a telephone booth. And he served with Ed Muskie during those early years, when I think there were probably sixteen legislators of twenty legislators who were Democrats in those days. There weren't many early on, during the early fifties.

AL: Did you have any contacts with Senator Muskie during your time in the legislature, or people from his office?

BH: Yes, in fact I had, before I ran, you know, I had volunteered on his presidential campaign and knew people like Neil Rolde and Democrats who were active in the Curtis administration, but I also knew some of the other staffers. And one in particular who I grew up with, Dave Dupree, went to Washington in 1967 to go to American University and became active and worked as a volunteer. He originally was from Ashland, Maine, and he became, he worked after school and in patronage jobs during those times in college and knew Charlie Micoleau, they were old friends. So I knew all of the, I knew, you know, I began with a lot of the younger staffers that served in the Muskie era. And also, my first cousin's wife, Carol Hobbins, was best of friends in high school with Alexis (*name*) Muskie, and they were very close friends and to this day they're very close friends, now they're fifty-five years old and they're very close friends. And they, you know, I knew Alexis' family very well, they owned the Wonderbar Restaurant in Biddeford, which was really the big political restaurant in the area, and where Ed Muskie spent a lot of time even before he moved to Kennebunk Beach, Kennebunkport, he had a lot of, spent a lot of time there.

And so I knew, I got to know the Muskie staff early on, and we were, and basically in the '72 campaign, you know, some of the Muskie volunteers were very helpful to me when I ran. And it was kind of a difficult time in Maine, running in 1972, because George McGovern won the nomination and we all had to swallow pretty deeply and heavily to support George McGovern. But we all did, I mean we all got behind him, and Ed Muskie came back to Maine and campaigned for him. In fact, in 1972, it was a very interesting time. Muskie invited Ted Kennedy to come to Maine to campaign for Bill Hathaway and to campaign for the ticket, the Democratic ticket. And one of the stops was a famous stop, was in Biddeford; Biddeford was again one of the major strongholds of Democratic politics. And they held a, we had a rally at

Biddeford High School, and Kennedy was very strong, had done very well in Biddeford, in 19-, his brother John Kennedy in 1960 received ten thousand votes out of ten thousand three hundred votes cast. It was an incredible amount of votes in one particular area. And so Ted Kennedy had been campaigning there on numerous occasions. They came in 1978 and campaigned for Hathaway, Bill Hathaway, for the United States Senate, had campaigned earlier on in earlier years, too.

And so Kennedy came and there was a huge rally and the bands were there, and so I drove down in my, from college, I was at the University of Maine at Orono, in my '62 Buick Special, and had my borrowed sport coat on. And I had my own cheering section, we had all my, all these volunteers that we had put together to campaign, younger people and other people, and we had this cheering section at this big rally. There were about twenty five hundred people crammed into the (*name*) White Memorial Gym. And they introduced, in the front row of course you had Elmer Violette, you had Ted Kennedy, and you had Bill Hathaway, and you had Peter Kyros. And really, the rally was mostly for Hathaway, but they really wanted to showcase Elmer Violette who was slipping badly at that point. It was the end of August, I mean end of October, and his lead had been evaporating and Cohen was catching up.

And I'll never forget, I was in the back row, of course I'm a state representative (*unintelligible word*) the back row, and they introduced me and all of a sudden I remember I looked, and I found out afterwards, there was a huge, there was a kind of embarrassing applause when I stood up, and all these people had some signs, and I was a little embarrassed. I probably wouldn't be embarrassed now, but twenty-one, I was very embarrassed. And all of a sudden the front row, I heard later what happened, but in the front row Kennedy said, Senator Kennedy said, "Who in the hell is that?" And so Muskie says, "That's a young fellow, Barry Hobbins, who's running for the legislature." And so Hathaway says, he says, "He's been working real hard for me." And I didn't hear afterwards until Bill Hathaway told me of the conversation, but all of a sudden, I'm in the back row and there were four heads that all turned at the same time, and they all kind of looked at me and I'm kind of giving, I'm kind of waving at them, you know, kind of sheepishly waving at them and they all smiled at me.

And afterwards, we were in this little reception area, Ed Muskie brought me over and was standing there, and he motioned to me as he would, and he kind of grabbed me to move me over and he said, he said, "Senator, I'd like you to meet Barry Hobbins, he's the guy," he said, "he's the guy, he's the fellow that had the big gallery out there." And they both were laughing, and he says, "You had quite a cheering section," he said, and he wished me good luck, Senator Kennedy wished me good luck. And it was a very exciting moment for me, I'm twenty-one years old and here's Senator Muskie acknowledging this twenty-one year old kid who was running for the legislature and introduces me to him, that was 1972, and it was a big thrill for me. And to have someone compliment me on all the people and the cheering for me was kind of, it was kind of nice. So that's a real fond memory that I have of that.

But, you know, over the years there was a group of us who really took a, kind of emulated toward Muskie as kind of guy we liked, he was considered, you know, clean water, clean air, he was progressive liberal. He was someone that when you went out of state, they'd always ask about because he really impressed people during the '68 vice presidential campaign and were,

you know, and as the years went on respected him. And the other thing I think we all worried about during the early seventies, after that '72 election, we were concerned that he had been out of state a lot and that he became not just a Maine senator but a national senator. And there were, during the Watergate era, we all looked at a very ambitious young man in Bangor named Bill Cohen, and most of us who were young, in our twenties, were concerned that Cohen had really, he'd done a good job of empowering younger people within the Republican Party, but also was able to, in 1972, get a disproportionate vote in Franco-American areas in the second congressional district, which was troubling. And there were a bunch of people that foresaw the problem: Charlie Micoleau was one, you know, Don Nicoll was another. They foresaw some problems that were stirring.

And what occurred was is that they basically, the Muskie people, the older Muskie people, got a lot of young fellows like, and young women, involved early on in the process. I think that they were worried about 1976, and early on in '74, '73, '74, they started getting around a little bit more. John Delahanty was hired as the Muskie driver in 1973 and began driving him, and they would make more trips into Biddeford-Saco. But they would also call ahead and connect a lot of the younger legislators that were involved in the process, you know, whether it was Jay McCloskey or Frank Murray in Bangor, or myself down here, in Lewiston-Auburn. They would contact the local legislators, in Portland they would keep the connections with the Brennan, of course we had, you know, you the Brennan group and you had the Muskie group and you had the Mitchell group, they were, it would, everyone was concerned early on during that period and got him back here a lot more, and got him more involved back in those times. And there was a new staff involved in those early times. You had, Micoleau became the AA, and then you had, you know, after Micoleau, he handed the ball off to a bunch of other good people. So it was a good situation when Don moved back to Maine, you know, they were able to organize for the 1976 election. And quite frankly, I think that that early effort, from late 1974 through 19-, the fall of 1975, I think really kind of bluffed in a way Cohen out of the race, I think that there was a lot of work that was done, and Cohen decided to take a pass on the election. And it was because, that Muskie, Ed Muskie, he acknowledged that he had a, that he needed the younger people, and he knew, he held his arm out and took us all in. And he could have just said, you know, "I don't need this, I'm Ed Muskie." But he remembered his earlier humble roots, and that I think demonstrated something to me.

I remember having a meeting on Labor Day weekend, it was the weekend before Labor Day, and it was down in Kennebunk Beach at a hotel. And there was a meeting of basically York County Democrats and some other Democrats because they, and they laid it all out. Essentially it was, you know, Charlie Micoleau, Phil Merrill became actively involved, in fact one of the payroll, Mary McAleney who was, got involved, so we got her involved, and there was a bunch of other people early on that got on staff early on for the Muskie, the Senate reelection campaign of 1976. But the focal point was to try to get him around, get him connected with the new generation of leaders from Maine, Jim Tierney, there was a whole group of, Charlie got a lot of, Charlie Priest was involved, and there was a bunch of other people that were, that all got early, involved early in the process. And we all knew that, you know, that things could happen if we didn't work harder, you know, in that fall of 1975. And Ed Muskie led the way, he got good at campaigning (*unintelligible phrase*) going through factory gates. And he complained a little bit and all of that, but he got the job done, and he was a real energized fighter.

AL: Do you recall the Potato Blossom Festival in Aroostook County the year, it was the summer that Cohen was considering running against Senator Muskie?

BH: It was the summer of '75.

AL: Seventy-five?

BH: That's correct.

AL: Were you there?

BH: No, I was not. We all heard about him, because that's, and that was one of the reasons, that was one of the reasons for these meetings, because we were afraid of-There were some mixed feelings in Aroostook County and that area about Ed Muskie, and about the Prestile Stream and Freddie Vahlsing, and some issues that were used, that were, what the Cohen people were doing is that they were basically dropping some information about those instances that occurred earlier on about Fred Vahlsing and about the loan guarantees that were defaulted upon. They were setting up some negative stuff on Ed Muskie early on. And I can't prove it was the Cohen people, but I'm sure it was. It wasn't Bill Cohen, but I'm sure it was some of the Republicans up there. But I don't recall, all I know is that I think that, what I remember is I think that Muskie was a little surprised at Cohen's support. Now, I don't know if that's how it was, but.

AL: Well, I remember the Cohen campaign trying to emphasize Cohen's youth as compared to Muskie's older stature.

BH: It was. Well, again, I think what, it was a wake, I think it was a wake up call for some because Cohen, you know, Cohen put the jeans on and had the shirt, had the flannel shirt, or the denim shirt rolled up and he was going side to side in downtown Fort Fairfield. I've marched in that parade a couple times and I know, it's really, it's a throwback to the fifties. It's one of the towns that it's a throwback to the, you know, to soda pop and motherhood and apple pie. And for some reason, Bill Cohen had, he connected. And he was, early on we all saw it, and I saw it in 1972 when I was at Orono. We did some polling with Ken Hayes, Professor Ken Hayes who ended up as a state senator, and he was my college professor. And Ken Hayes and I, we did some polling in 1972, and the polling we did, we did some early tracking polling and that was unusual back then. And the towns we were calling, we had this call list of Bradley and Houlton and some of the towns surrounding Bangor, and Violette was not running strongly in some of those towns, and he was running less than he should have been running from benchmarks that were done in the past. And we were concerned. But Cohen connected early, Cohen had that ability, and he was politically dangerous, even before Watergate you could see a star on the rise.

And 1975 was the turning point for both Cohen, ironically, both Cohen, Senator Cohen and Senator Muskie. If Senator Muskie had not come back to Maine and put together an early campaign, Nancy Chandler and Bruce Chandler, there was a whole group, I mean Tony Buxton, there was a whole group, you can go on and on and on. Because we were not that, we were sitting in 1975, in January of 1975, with an independent governor, Jim Longley, who had

defeated George Mitchell who was, the party was in shambles and things were not going well for us back in '75, it was not a good time. And there was a real move on in that Potato Blossom Festival, which I didn't go to, but I heard was a wake up call by a lot of people that saw it. Someone who I believe, I had a conversation once with Chubb Clark, who was the field representative for Bill Hathaway and was a school teacher at Fort Fairfield High School, I believe, at one point.

AL: I had the honor of interviewing him a couple years ago.

BH: You did. And I believe, I believe, he told me a story about that in the '78 campaign, because I had gone up to the Potato Blossom Festival and marched in it. And I remember driving around, and I believe he told me, he told me he was worried and that they kind of got a big relief, but the problem was is that, is that Cohen ended up being strong enough, he took the pass, didn't run, I don't think he wanted to throw the dice. And quite frankly, Muskie was ready for the fight, I mean I think he was geared up and ready for the fight, and I think he would have won but it would not, it would have been a long drawn-out campaign. We would have won the fight, but Cohen was smart to take the pass and then focused his whole attention upon Bill Hathaway, and Bill Hathaway didn't know what hit him. And that campaign, Bill Hathaway's campaign was over the minute Cohen decided to run in December of 1976. It was all over, it was all over from then on, very difficult, because Cohen had come out of that year in very good shape and taken the pass. The people among the Muskie supporters supported really, I think respected, grudgingly respected Cohen, too. They knew he was a factor to be dealt with. And the irony of the whole thing is that Bill Hathaway, who I like a lot, did not learn from the Ed Muskie mistake, didn't spend enough time back in Maine. That was the irony of the '78 campaign, that he didn't learn from the mistakes of Ed Muskie, of not coming down to the state early enough; stayed in Washington too long.

AL: Do you have a sense of how the Vietnam War factored into as early back as Ed Muskie's campaign for the presidential nomination in '72 and earlier?

BH: Yes.

AL: Into the seventies?

BH: Yeah, I think it was a, I'm sorry, but I think it was a, that hurt Ed Muskie. Ed Muskie, because of his national position of having been on the ticket in '68, having been an ally of Hubert Humphrey, did not, supported the administration probably too long, and I think it quite frankly hurt him. You still had McGovern and you still had, you still had the McGovern influence and you still had the McCarthy, the potential McCarthy people out there, and he, I think it hurt him and the McGovern people, it divided the Democratic Party. I remember going to a Young Democratic convention in Poland Spring in April of, March of 1972, and the anti-war group were there and they almost, it took a lot of effort on the part of Neil Rolde, Tony Buxton, Doug Smith, Frank Murray, a bunch of, you know, a bunch of people like that, to stop the onslaught of some momentum that was building up for anti-war Democrats who were supporting George McGovern.

At that particular Young Democratic convention, it was like the last nail in the coffin. They were trying to get the Young Democratic convention to endorse George Mitchell in Muskie's own back yard. So, and it came close to that happening. It was, it ended up about a tie, but we could have been, it was being set up by the McGovern people, and quite frankly we got caught in that process. Could have been very embarrassing for Ed Muskie. It was, you understand, at that point it was, he was in the last legs of his presidential campaign, did not look good, you know. Maine had the Democratic convention in May in Waterville and, you know, we all supported the favorite son but it was not a good time. There was a real feeling of anti-war feeling at that convention, the Young Democratic convention, the state conventions in '72, and I think it really hurt Ed Muskie in his presidential campaign. He did what he thought was right, he supported the establishment, probably should have pulled the plug a little sooner and, you know, if you ask him, if he were alive today, he'd probably tell you the same thing.

AL: What's the next logical place where you have recollections?

BH: I think the other interesting, if I can bring you up to date, in 1979 there was, Harold Pachios was the state party chair who was a very, he was, again, part of that whole Muskie-Johnson group and was going to run for congress in the first congressional district against David Emery. And there was a group of Democrats that wanted to support me. Most of them, by the way, were Muskie, the Muskie type, the Muskie, the group, and also some of the George Mitchell supporters. And at the time, Joe Brennan was governor and obviously there were some mixed, there were some interesting politics. I didn't support Joe in 1978 for the Democratic nomination, I supported Phil Merrill, I was one of the Muskie group that supported him. And there was always a little resentment among some of the Brennan people toward the Muskie campaign because of that.

And so in 1979, I went to Washington and I saw some of the staffers that were down in Washington at that time. Jim Case was working in Washington at that time, and he was working on the Muskie, and there was the other, a bunch of other people that were down there, Estelle Lavoie and a few others. And they, basically I told them I wanted to run for, I was encouraged to run for state party chair. So that fall I quietly went around to get support for the state party chair. And I went in and told Senator Muskie when I was down there, right, this was in September at the national legislative conference. And I saw him, and Jim Case just brought me in and I, we talked, and I walked over to his, I walked over to Russell, from Russell office building through the elevator and took the train over to a roll call, which I was thrilled about being able to walk with them, and it was quite an event to walk over. And I told him what I was going to do and reminisced about the old days, of the old politics days when they first, when they were in Lewiston, and he talked about, you know, the old executive directors and those who ran the party and there was a, he kind of reminisced a little bit.

And he told me that that was a good stepping stone politically, he said, it hasn't been utilized very often lately, but he said George Mitchell was the former state chair, and Bill Hathaway was the former state chair. He thought it was a good idea that, he thought that that might be a good stepping stone to think about as an organizational piece. And he told me, "What you need to do, though, is you need to get out and build the party and get people, and get the younger people involved. See, that should be your strength." Because at the time, I'm twenty-eight years old

and, you know, usually that position goes to someone older and more experienced. So he was very helpful in that I think he told the right people. I know that he had, he mentioned it to Bob Dunfey and to a bunch of others, that he thought it was a good idea. So I kind of had the blessing, I kind of went to him as the godfather of the party just to ask him what he thought. I probably would have run anyway, but it was good, I think he felt good that I did it. But I know that Jim Case is the one that told me to do it, so it was a smart move on his, they thought that it would be good protocol because he was the leader of the Maine Democratic Party. And, you know, Joe Brennan was the governor but Ed Muskie was the leader of the Maine Democratic Party.

And so I ended up running and I got elected, and Ed Muskie called me, obviously I think he had the phone call given to him and, you know. I think Mrs. Cory probably, Gayle was probably the one that gave him the phone call, made the phone call for him, because Gayle Cory was just a, she liked me and she was very encouraging throughout my whole political career and was very close to, I always kept in touch with her, and she was always close, always let me know what was going on and knew what his schedule was and so, you know, I kept close to the campaign. He called me the day after I won and was very, very good. And he personally, when Ed Muskie got sworn in as secretary of state, they personally invited me down to the swearing in, and I flew down with George Mitchell and with Ed Muskie, I'm sorry, George Mitchell and with Joe Brennan. But it was, the Muskie staff and Ed Muskie who thought it was good idea to have the chair of the party be part of, symbolically be part of that because, and it was.

I was personally invited and went to the swearing in, I was right there with the VIPs, I was, with (*unintelligible phrase*) and all of his cabinet. I was standing at George Mitchell's, with George Mitchell, and all of the Maine people he invited down there, but I was there in the front and that was Ed Muskie's doing because he felt that I was part of the future, and he was there as a part of the past of Maine. He wanted that, I think he's a symbolic person, his staff was symbolic, and he was very, I mean he was very generous and very good about that whole process. But I was there at the swearing in, and it was quite an experience at the White House. But, so he kept me informed. The other thing I remember was receiving a telephone call from -

AL: You know what? Let me stop and just flip it over and we'll get the whole story on one side.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B of the interview with Barry Hobbins.

BH: On a Tuesday, I believe it was the third week or second week of April of 1980, there was a special election in Saco to repeal a tax cap that was imposed, and I was at the polls, having been a state representative at the time, I was at the polls. And I got a phone call, they traced me down through my office, and I got a phone call in the principal's office, a very important phone call that I had to take. And it was about ten thirty in the morning, and the phone call was from Leon Billings, and it was from Jim Case. They were in the office and they called, and they wanted me to know that they were making the, call list, that the senator would be resigning, there

would be an announcement that the senator would be appointed as Secretary of State and that there would be a news conference in half an hour, and I was not to tell anyone. But they wanted me to know just in case I got called, and that they also wanted me, after, within an hour, when I went back to my office, to call in order to be briefed about the background and what to say and what not to say, just to make sure that everyone was on the same page.

This was a very touchy situation because at the time Ted Kennedy was in a very bitter contest with President Carter for the election, and this, the nomination or the appointment of Ed Muskie was considered to be one of the last straws that they needed to pull in order for the survival of the Carter administration. So it was a very important time. They were trying to end the insurrection of the Kennedy campaign so, but it was quite a thing to be sitting there, you know, at the polls. I went back to my office knowing that Ed Muskie is going to be the Secretary of State, has not been announced yet, but I was one of the very, and I'm saying to myself in history, I'm standing, and I can't tell anyone, and I didn't tell anyone, I didn't even tell my father who came in. So I'm counting away, and I think it was, it was either, he was going to be announced at ten-thirty or eleven, but it was like twenty minutes beforehand when I found out about it, and it was interesting, I finally was able to, I told my father afterwards, and he was kind of mad I didn't tell him but he finally realized that I couldn't tell anyone because, you know, having been a young lawyer, I knew you had to keep quiet sometimes, but that was quite an experience.

But that year was an interesting dynamic year in Maine politics because you had Ed Muskie who was really kind of passing the torch of Maine politics, that was a, I think, and he hand, basically I think he wanted, he hand picked, really hand picked in his own mind George Mitchell who he really had already taken care of as United States attorney, politically taken care of when George lost the '74 election and named him U.S. attorney. And he named him federal judge. But, there was a big but there, knowing Ed Muskie, he let the governor, he let Joe Brennan make that choice, and I know that Joe could have appointed many people to that position. The logical choice was Ken Curtis, and that was the first choice. But there was something that many people didn't realize, and that is that Ken Curtis supported Ed Muskie, supported Phil Merrill for governor over Brennan and that, there was always that, a little bit of bad blood, and also was critical, Ken Curtis was critical of Joe Brennan's lack of reappointment of Maurice Pilot as a superior court judge from Bangor, so there was some resentment there. And I think that a lot of the Muskie people knew that, so I believe when Ed Muskie flew in on a private, flew in on a jet to Brunswick Naval Air Station and met with Joe Brennan privately, told him he could appoint who he wanted to appoint, but I'm still not convinced to this day that there weren't, that they spoke in code and that maybe Joe Brennan really got the true word from Ed Muskie.

But I don't know that, I mean I don't ever believe that the Brennan, that Joe Brennan and Ed Muskie were very close. They respected each other politically, but they were not close friends. So there was a little bit of rivalry, not rivalry among themselves but among some of their supporters. A lot of the supporters in 1974 of Ed Muskie supported very strongly George Mitchell over Joe Brennan in 1974 when they ran against each other in the primary. So there was some history there, '74, '78, and that 1980 election was really the bell weather, I mean Ed Muskie basically, when Mondale lost in 1980, that was really his segue into private life and to a different period in his life. And it was the beginning of George Mitchell's mercurial rise to ironically reach a certain stature that was close to Ed Muskie's. Never would be higher than Ed

Muskie's, but did very well on his own then. And so it was an interesting era, Ed Muskie I think handed off the (*unintelligible word*) to him very well.

The 1980 Democratic Convention, it was, he came back to Maine after he had gone to Europe in May. May 16th and 17th and 18th there was, we did a convention in Bangor, and he had flown in on Saturday basically to say goodbye to everyone. And he had, we basically had a receiving line for Ed Muskie that went on literally for three hours straight where people would leave the convention hall and go into another area of the Civic Center and would stand in line literally for an hour or so just to shake Ed Muskie's hand and to say thank you and to say goodbye. And it was very, very emotional, and I saw a lot of people, you know, hug him and cry. And Muskie, I think it was important to him to say his goodbyes to a lot of people politically. Obviously he, you know, because he had been in the United States Senate for so long, had been the head of the Democratic Party for so long, but this was a, he was going on to a different part of his life.

It was quite a thing to see it all happen and, you know, that particular convention I'll always remember because Ed Muskie did two things: when he first got up to speak, before he got up to speak, (*unintelligible phrase*), he said, "Before I speak I just want to wish someone a", and he went on and he wished me a happy birthday and they brought this birthday cake out, which Alexis Muskie, his daughter-in-law, and Donna Stern, Marshall Stern's spouse, had run down to a bakery and, a bakery ironically right near the, right near Bill Cohen's, not the same bakery, but a bakery near the Cohen bakery, and brought me this birthday cake. And Ed Muskie presented me, in front of four thousand people, with a birthday cake with a, with one candle on it which came off, and he led, which is surprising, he led the singing of Happy Birthday to me in front of four thousand people. Now, that will always go down in history as something that's very special, that had Ed Muskie who was the Secretary of State, and he was a good sport about it. He took his picture with me, and the picture that he took was on the front page of the *Bangor Daily News* and all the newspapers that Sunday, we did that on a Saturday. And it was quite a thing to have Ed Muskie involved.

And then that, the other thing I'll tell you about 1980 is that the Democratic National Convention was being held in Madison Square Garden, and the Kennedy campaign decided they were going to have his name placed in nomination and they asked, they asked former governor Joe Brennan to second his nomination. And Joe Brennan was the only governor, Democratic governor to support Ted Kennedy, Senator Kennedy over President Carter. There was a movement that was going on though, behind the scenes, very, a good movement going on among a lot of us for a "Draft Muskie" movement for President, in 1980. And I have to say I was part of a group that, behind the scenes, with no authorization from Senator Muskie at all, he did not authorize it, Leon Billings did not authorize it, no one authorized it. But there was a group of us from Maine, Phil Merrill was part of it, Jim Tierney was part of it, I think Charlie Micoleau was part of it, he won't admit it, but he was. What we were going to do is, I was party chair at the time, and I made, I was asked to make some phone calls.

There was a group in Washington, they were not happy with Carter but they could not stomach the, going with Kennedy, so what they, what was thought of was that maybe Ed Muskie could be the compromise candidate nominated by the floor and, put his name in nomination. So there were buttons, "Draft Muskie" buttons at the convention. And before that though, I was asked to

call a couple of the state party chairs, which I did and, to see what the strength was. And that was about a month before the convention, three weeks before the convention, I went to a meeting, a pre convention conference of state chairs in New York City, and I talked with the chair of the Iowa delegation and I laid out what might happen. Well, he said he loved Ed Muskie, but he was also a loyal Carter person and felt that we should stick with the president. He kind of told on me, and I was told, I was told to kind of back off a little bit by some people who thought that maybe that would be not the right thing to do. And by the way, off the record, even though as I say Jim Case was part of that group, there were some of the Mitchell staffers, even though George probably, behind the scenes, knew what was going on, he didn't encourage them but he didn't discourage them either.

So we went to the convention with "Draft Muskie" stickers, and we were hauled, and there was big talk on the first night of the convention, and we were on the floor and we had a couple of "Draft Muskie" buttons on, and we were, I was taken, I was. When Muskie came into the hall that night, he was going to come into the hall to speak that night, and Leon Billings came with a group of his entourage and came right on to the floor, took me, took Sam Shapiro, who was former state treasurer and who ran against me for state party chair, but an old Muskie guy from Waterville. They took us, and they brought us into a trailer where basically we were told by Leon Billings that, and Judy Powell and a few of the people who were there from the Carter campaign were in that trailer, and he told us that we had, he said, "I've got word, I've been authorized by my boss to tell you personally not to, that Senator Muskie, the secretary is not behind this, will not accept a nomination and asked that you not proceed any further." I was told to do that, to tell you the truth I was shaking a little bit because I was, you know, I was, you know, Leon can be a little difficult to deal with, and I was told basically, you know, I kind of, maybe didn't take it like I should of and just roll over. But basically I got the message not to proceed any more, and I was told to tell the rest of the Maine delegation the story that the senator would not accept a nomination, would not be a candidate, and instruct the delegation not to.

So I instructed the delegation, and in fact the next day spoke to the delegation, (*unintelligible phrase*) this meeting and spoke to the delegation and told them, did not tell them of the events because I didn't want to say that I was hauled off, and many of them saw me being basically taken. He pointed to me, he says, "Barry, come with me." And, you know, I felt like I was a school kid being punished, you know, I was ready to have the hickory stick slapping my wrist. But, you know, I think that he had to do that, I think that Leon had to do that because it could have got out of control. Because the timing of it was, you know, the next night with the nomination speeches and different speeches, and it could have got out of control. Behind the scenes, just so you know, Joe Brennan thought it was a great idea. He would have, and there was a group of people that I think that Brennan would have gone to, Brennan was for it and Brennan would have gone to Kennedy and Kennedy would have backed off, if that would have happened. I believe that that would have happened, I think Kennedy, I think Joe Brennan was going to be the liaison if that would have happened, but he was very supportive of a draft, ironically, a "Draft Muskie" movement if in fact Kennedy decided to withdraw.

But those, this in 1980 was an interesting time, and I just played a bit part on the theater of the national political scene, but you know, I like many in Maine at the time were young understudies to the lead act, and none of us have ever got close to playing any of those roles but it was fun to

be a understudy in how politics should be run, and that was in the Muskie campaign, in Muskie's era. So there's no one to replace them, and I think that's the real shame of the Maine Democratic Party, is that we have not, we don't have anyone presently of that stature. Although John Baldacci has shown tremendous promise to follow the same philosophical, in the same philosophical steps, and along with Tom Allen, of Ed Muskie. Tom Allen interned for Muskie one time, back in the old days in Washington under the tutelage of many good people. And so I think that the, I think that Don Nicoll, he worked with Don Nicoll, and I think he worked with, he worked in that era.

So we've been blessed that, it's good to see people still connecting who have, I think the continuity, (*unintelligible phrase*) to tell the story of several of us and having Don Nicoll be the leader of this, the leader of putting this, the words together to talk about an era that is irreplaceable, and one that we have good memories of, and I think the good news about this project of the Muskie Archives is that it will immortalized, and there'll be other generations in the future to know that there were a lot of bit players that came on to the scene and were part of the act. But all for the good of Democratic Party, not for the good of individuals. Ed Muskie was just, he projected himself as someone, he was just the, he was the conduit that brought the ideas forward. It was not about Muskie. You know, he had an ego obviously, we all have egos, all of us, but he understood his place in developing Maine and the Democratic Party, he understood it well, and he really took it seriously. That's something that is lacking now is loyalty to principles and to values and to democratic principles. I don't see that in young legislators any more. I see it a little bit in Tom Allen. I see it in Baldacci, but I don't see it with the others.

AL: Do you see term limits as a factor in that?

BH: Yes, I do. I do. I think that, you know, there hasn't been an ability to term limits to develop leaders, develop people in places. Most of the speakers of the house and the presidents of the senate have been one termers, and that's not. I understand what we've done is we've overreacted to an era, and part of it was brought on by (*unintelligible phrase*) the John Martin situation. And I think we overreacted and we haven't really corrected ourselves. I mean, I think the course has to be corrected for Maine politics or else we're going to have a real default in leadership in Maine. I don't think Ed Muskie would be supportive of term limits. I think his attitude would be that the voters are the final deciders of issues when it comes to elections. (*Unintelligible phrase*), you win some, you win some, you lose some, you lose some. He was pretty successful, you know, he lost once as mayor of Waterville, and he didn't like losing, that's one thing about Ed Muskie, and he really never had a real challenge except with, the challenge that could have happened with Bill Cohen. That was probably the closest he ever came to losing an election, except for the presidential caucuses and primaries and the nomination.

AL: What strikes me is in terms of long term planning, such as environmental legislation that he developed over two decades, we just would not have that with term limits.**BH:** Oh, gosh, he would never, he would have never, you know, he would never have even, for example, you know, even though the congress doesn't have term limits, you would never have the leadership without the continuity of-. We would never have had the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act as we know it today, we would never, you know, there are so many things that that generation of leaders in Washington did that really is deficient now. You know, when Cohen and Mitchell

left, things have not been the same in Washington, no disrespect to our two members of the Senate. But things are different and, you know, the eras of the Ed Muskies, of getting landmark legislation passed, I just don't see it any more, I don't see that in the future, in the future horizon. But Muskie understood, things took power, and he understood authority and he knew when to play the card and when not to play the card. I mean, he was a shrewd, he was shrewd in the process, but he did respect his opponents and he did respect the system.

That's one of the, I think among young legislators, and I'm not young any more, I'm fifty-two years old, but when I first began my respect for Ed Muskie was back in the early sixties. I remember 1964 when he came to Saco, Maine, campaigning for him, and I still have that image of this tall, lanky guy kind of looking down at me as a young kid, and I remember seeing him introduce the president of the United States on the City Hall steps in 1964 when Lyndon Baines Johnson came to Maine and they had a big parade down on Congress Street and he spoke, he spoke on the steps of City Hall, there were a hundred thousand people there. And there was Ed Muskie, and it was quite an experience, quite an experience to see that and I had the, I got introduced to him back in '64. And being part of the Muskie family, too, I mean being a friend of Steve and Alexis back in those eras, Steve and Alexis Muskie came to Donna and my wedding in 1980, we were that friendly, you know, I was that friendly with Steve that, you know, he would, that I would go to, I went to his wedding.

And to wrap it up, I'm just going to tell one more story, and it's a 1976 story of Ed Muskie campaigning, of having the juices flowing, things are going well, the polls are doing well, two weeks before the election, a week before the election is we're in Saco, Maine at a football game in 1976. And it was the Thornton Academy-South Portland game, and we were going to, we campaigned at that game, and I was asked to campaign with him. And so I'm, you know, I'm with them, and in fact Alexis and Steve Muskie was there. Steve was taking photographs, he was working at the time at the *Journal Tribune* as a photographer. So we went to the game and when, it was an incredible situation, we went, he was extremely, extremely well received. We went on the South Portland side, extremely well received. As we were walking by, and we didn't want to disturb anyone because the game was going on, we just walked the sideline around. And we didn't want to shake hands, didn't really want to shake hands while the game was going on, really wanted to respect the fans. They gave him a standing ovation on the South Portland side, but then we went on the Saco side, the Thornton Academy side. The band started playing Jesus Christ Superstar. It was the most incredible thing I've ever seen, the band struck up Jesus Christ Superstar as he walked off, and everyone simultaneously got up, gave him a standing ovation. And it was the first time in my life I've ever signed an autograph. It was absolutely incredible.

I was with him, I'm, you know, I was twenty-five years old, twenty-four years old, and they were rushing down from the stands with their football programs to have him sign his autograph. And he stood there, he was embarrassed because the game was still going on, and he really didn't want that to happen. But he's on the Saco side, right near the Thornton Academy bench, signed a couple autographs, he goes, "Let's go watch the game now." And trying to get away, and some kids said, "Well you must be important. Can you sign my name?" So I kind of nervously signed my own name, and the kid didn't know who the heck I was, he said, but I must be important because I was with Senator Muskie. So we went, and it was an incredible experience because they swarmed him. I've never seen anything like that.

And that wouldn't have happened two years before, he wouldn't have had that, because he had gone back and had campaigned hard and he was running a hard campaign against Bob Monks. He got his juices flowing, and so we got back in town, he was invigorated. And he was absolutely invigorated, and he gets in the car and he's, and the radio got turned on, and I believe Charlie Jacobs was driving the car, and the radio came on, it was a Bob Monks commercial about, and the commercial was about the prices of oil or something and he said, "That guy," he said, "I'm getting sick of that guy." He says, "You know, he wants deregulation but prices would all go up and everyone would freeze here." You know, and he was really, he had the juices flowing. And afterwards we went to, he invited me up, he says, "Why don't you come with us?"

So, I got in the car and, because I was, I had gone in another car and met him there, I'd met him at the game outside, we shook a few hands. So I got in the car and we went to Steve and Alexis' house on Lincoln Street and we went upstairs, and there was a dance that night, and he wanted to refresh himself and all of that. But Steve had an old scrapbook of old political stuff that they had there, and believe it or not, I went in and he said, "I want to show you some things." And he had a scrapbook where there were family pictures of Steve and his sisters and his younger brother Ned, and it was all, it was really, it was politically related, but there were family. And he was sharing that stuff with me, which is really interesting because we're in the bedroom, we're in this little bedroom, an alcove bedroom, and he's supposed to, and he says, "I want to show you," and we just talked a little bit. And then he, he had seen my father at the game, you know, he said, "You going to be there at the dance tonight?" And I said "Oh yeah, I'll be there tonight." There was a Biddeford dance, we had to go to a Biddeford political dance at the Steve White Memorial Gym. So we, and he spent some time, just some crazy time like that with me, and then I left and I'm still pricking myself, I still can't believe it. Now, that was in '76.

Fast-forward to 1990, and we had a cookout at his house, at the Muskie lobster bake, and I got there early, and I was a state senator at the time, with Donna. And Dave Brennan, used to be an executive director of the Democratic Party, was there early with his wife Nancy, and he took my wife Donna and Nancy, and they went out and he showed them all his flower gardens, he went around and showed them, very proud gardener, he went around and showed the garden, showed the flowers, and he could give a darn about what was going with the politics, he was just kind of showing everyone around. This was a big political year, this is when Brennan's running for election against McKernan, and it was a big deal. And we had, geez, we had, you know, everyone was there and, but he was out showing his flower gardens when there's probably got two hundred people around. But that was, he had the luxury to do that because he was the United States senator. So I thought that was another cute little story to share.

AL: I have a question for you. In terms of doing this project, it is important for me to ask people what they remember about Don Nicoll in terms of, because he's one of the only a few left from 1954 when Muskie ran for governor, and he followed you all those years. But I'm wondering, what interactions you had with him over the years, what was his role, and how did you view his (*unintelligible word*)?

BH: Well, you know, what's interesting about Don is that he was the policy guy (*unintelligible phrase*). He was the political, he was the, you know, he did everything from lick stamps to start

the Democratic headquarters in downtown Lewiston, goes to Washington and really is kind of a, he was kind of a Maine connection, kind of brought the Charlie Micoleau types and other people into the process. I mean, there's a whole group of Muskie people that have gone through that office. And then he came back to Maine, and he always stayed active, he always stayed active, and he always kept in touch during those years. I mean, it was in '72 or '76, he, with me, he also was encouraging to me in 1979 to run for the state party, and he would reminisce about that it's important, you know, to get out there. He says, "Make it about the party and not about yourself. And if you do that you'll do very well." And he told me that that's what Mitchell did and that's what Hathaway did and that's what Frank Coffin did when he was party chair. He went all the way back to the early days of how you should, you know, how you should act.

Even back to the days of Owen Hancock, who was then I think party chair, for a short period of time. So he understood that grass, he understood early on the importance of grass roots politics, because they did something unique. It was a combination of things: one was TV and one was grass roots politics. Very, two powerful mediums. And I think what he, what Don saw in a lot of younger people who were going through the process, and there was probably thirty, forty, fifty, maybe a hundred of us. He saw, I think he might have seen himself in a way, too, you know, enthusiastic, principled and issue orientated, wanting to better Maine or better society. And those sound like corny values, because, but they're really true. I mean, if you look at all the people that have gone through the process, you know, we all have egos and we all like to see our names in the paper and read about ourselves and play the political games, but basically we all had the same, we all come from the same values, we have the same souls. And, you know, he was always a person I respected.

He was kind of a person that, he met with me in 1970, he met with me in 1981, I remember, and he was concerned about the Democratic Party, that we were not being issue-orientated, that he thought we needed to have issue seminars and listening seminars, listening conferences about, and getting out and having this party renewal, commission on party renewal. And he kind of gave me that idea to have a commission on party renewal, to try to get back to our roots. He thought, back then, we were missing a lot of that.

So this was, it was post, it was after '80, and it was after Reagan had taken over and he could see that the party was starting to lose it a little bit. And he was concerned about the reelection of George Mitchell, and whether it was George Mitchell or Ken Curtis or whoever would be the nominee, his concern was we were going to lose, we potentially could lose, you know, the legacy that Senator Mitchell had for so many years in Washington, the power and the authority. He understood all that. And he was telegraphing it early, and so, you know, I remember meeting with him, gosh, in, early on in 1981, and we started to do a little bit of getting more issue oriented and doing more of that stuff, and it was, you know, because he, he I think foresaw a lot of what was going to happen. And he always would keep in touch. I mean he would go to the legislator and keep in touch with the young legislators. Then he became a, he got some real knowledge in health care issues, too, and I think he changed the discussion focal points to health care. You know, we had environment, we had the environment, and then he also saw the need for health care reform early on and then he pushed a few people that way, too. He's a unique guy.

I think if you ask Don, one of the things that he'll remember is the, Ed was, Senator Muskie, there were a lot of the national (*unintelligible word*) were trying to take over things, and I think that that was one of Muskie's downfalls in '72, was the (*unintelligible word*). And it's not so much that Ed Muskie didn't listen to Don and a lot of his people, it's just that he didn't want to have a confrontation and a lot of those, there was a whole group of them that I think, you know, just kind of let it happen, and it was too late to get it back. And that's a personal observation about that. I think that was a real problem. The Charlie Lander were kind of pushed aside a little bit, there were a bunch of people that were real loyal to the senator that were pushed aside a little bit. And I was, voluntarily decided to segue themselves into their own lives, and I think that's what Don did. But it's wonderful that he has a sense of that history, and it's wonderful that he saw the younger people coming up, the younger leaders coming up and kept in touch with them. It was very important.

AL: Is there anything else that I haven't asked that you feel is important to ask?

BH: Oh, gosh, geez, I've probably talked your ear off. It's just, as I'm talking I'm staring at his picture.

AL: I should tell the listeners on the tape, when you were describing Senator Muskie giving you the birthday cake, that you have a beautiful framed picture on the wall of your office of that.

BH: I sure do, and I have one of, I have one at a reception with senator, on Senator Mitchell when he was sworn into the United States Senate, which I was very blessed and honored to have been invited to attend. And also I have a photograph of Walter Mondale, interesting enough, in 1983 that, when he won the Maine straw poll, which is an interesting picture with George Mitchell in the background and myself in the background. That was a, I don't know if we could ever recapture that era of politics in Maine. I wish we could, but with term limits and with the changing type of political campaigns that ironically started with the Muskie television ads, but those are so primitive compared to what's going on now that I think the memories that we'll cherish will be at least remembered in the archives at Bates College.

AL: Great, thank you very much.

BH: Thank you.

End of Interview