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Interview with Marshall Burk by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Burk, Marshall

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

August 6, 2003

Place

Winthrop, Maine

ID Number

MOH 407

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Biographical Note

Marshall Burk was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on July 24, 1929. His father was a contractor in Boston, and suffered economically when the Depression hit. He graduated from Swampscott High School and joined the Army during World War II. After returning, he attended the University of Maine at Orono on the GI Bill, until he was recalled by the Army to serve in the Korean War. He finished his degree in wildlife and forestry upon his return from the South Pacific. He taught middle school for nine years, then went to work for the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Swampscott, Massachusetts community; the Great Depression; education; Natural Resources Council of Maine; Fish and Game Clubs of Maine; environmental issues; Baxter State Park; Bob Patterson; Charlie Pierce; environmental newsletter; different stances on the environment; impressions of Muskie; Muskie on Allagash issue; Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; and Dickey-Lincoln.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Marshall Burk, in Winthrop, Maine on August the 6th, the year 2003, it's about 1:30, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. If you could just start by stating your full name and spelling it?

Marshall Burk: Okay, it's Marshall Francis Burk, B-U-R-K.

AL: And where and when were you born?

MB: Where was I born? I was born in Lynn, Massachusetts in July 24th, 1929, before everything collapsed.

AL: Yes, and did you grow up there?

MB: I went to high school in Swampscott, Massachusetts, and attended school and lived most of my growing up years in Swampscott, Massachusetts, which is on the north shore of Massachusetts. Very nice, upscale community.

AL: What was it like? Do you have a sense of what it was like politically and religiously?

MB: Politically, oh boy, politically it was actually, I think it was a well thought up bedroom community to the Lynn area, Swampscott was. And the high school was one of the better high schools in the state, and it still is. And it was, politically I had no idea what the politics were. If anything, I'd say they were primarily Republican. My folks I know were both, I think my mother was an active Republican. Dad had, he was in business and was a builder of houses and small factories, small businesses around the north shore, Salem, Beverly. And when the Depression

came, he went down with most of them and we lost our home and so forth. And I can remember what the WPA stood for, because I used to go down and get food there when I was a youngster because mother and father wouldn't go.

AL: And did you move at that point?

MB: No, we lived all my growing up years and high school until I went into the service within a hundred yards of the beach at Swampscott. And my family was involved, my mother's family was involved in the fishing industry. I worked on the beach and I lobstered, I was a stern man in high school and used to work with nets and big trawlers and so forth. But it was, a good way to live, a good way to bring up, and I dealt with a lot of the fishermen, lobstermen, gill netters and the seiners and so forth that worked out of Swampscott. Now I guess there's none of them there. Or very few if they are, they just import it, very small operation.

AL: Just like the communities of Cumberland and Falmouth?

MB: Possibly, yeah, possibly a lot of communities on the Maine coast resemble it, yeah, yeah.

AL: Now tell me, what brought you to Maine, was it college or something else have a connection for you?

MB: No, my dad had gone to the university, my uncle had gone to the University of Maine in Orono, and when I came home from the service and I had the GI Bill, I was working at the General Electric plant, and my father was a second shift night supervisor of construction and so forth, and he asked me if I wanted to stay there the rest of my life and I says, "No," and he says, "Why don't you go to school?" And so I got into the university and I went there for a couple of years until I got called back in the service in the Korean War. My first duty was I, when I was seventeen I joined the Army and was stationed in Italy with the 88th Infantry. And came back, went to college for two years, then went in the Korean War and then I came back from that and went back to the university and finally got a degree, got married my senior year, and went teaching school for nine years in (*unintelligible word*) Maine, or most of it was in Rockland. That gives you an idea.

AL: Yeah, now what did you teach?

MB: I taught math and science mostly. The first two years I taught everything, in the eighth grade. I stayed in junior high school level, which my advisor had advised me to keep out of. They lose more teachers in the middle school, in the junior high school, than any other part of school. But I enjoyed it, and then I had a chance to, I heard about the Resources Council and I had been active with the Knox County Fish and Game Association and the Maranacook Fish and Game Association. But Maranacook, there was one over in Camden, but I belonged to both outfits.

So I applied for an interview and got talking with Mr. Patterson, who was the president of the Resources Council, and went down to Bar Harbor and had lunch with him one day, and a couple nights later I got interviewed and when I got home that night they said I was hired. I guess there

was about a dozen people that they had interviewed and they wanted somebody with no political connections, with no industrial connections and who hadn't been in politics or in public relations. And they picked me as the one to try to keep them informed and let them know what was going on at the State House, and it was an all new experience for this person.

AL: Now, what gave you an interest in this to begin with?

MB: Well, the interest, I've always been interested in the outdoors, and I, well in my college years I started out in forestry and went into wildlife my first two years and I worked for the Forest Service in California. And I just thought that there was a need of more activity, or more public involvement in the resource use of the state. And I thought that was the future of the state, was in the wise use of what we had here.

AL: I have a question about environmentalism and how that plays into the Natural Resources Council. Does it always go hand-in-hand or are there sometimes conflicts?

MB: Oh boy, I think the Resources Council, which I was pleased to, open the door and hire the first secretary and was actually the first full time employee, was a, had its goals, its, wise use of the state's resources, its land and its forests, the whole environment. I just, it just seemed to click with me, and I said the right things and there were enough people on the executive committee of the Resources Council and the officers that, to guide me, and they wanted somebody that had a sympathy for what they were trying to do. And they were able to more or less give me great leadership people like Mr. Patterson, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Little and Mr. Dow, old Dorothea Marsden and Mrs. Rowe, these are all people that were on the, John McKee, Charlie Pierce, these are all people that were on the executive committee and we used to have some very good meetings.

Some of them would go until midnight almost, eleven o'clock at night. And we used to meet the first Friday of every month in the evening. And it was hard, I mean if you had people getting out to meetings like that you had some very dedicated people. And they were people basically that represented the Nature Conservancy, the Garden Club, the Fish and Game people, and all had no financial involvement but just the, altruistically, what was the best for the state in the long range. And it was a, I learned a lot from the meetings and I learned a lot from the people that I had to work with. It was a great experience for a person that, for a young fellow that all he'd been doing was trying to teach school, to work with these gentlemen.

AL: What was Bob Patterson like?

MB: Bob Patterson was a remarkable, remarkable man. He was a, professionally he was an architect. He had a lot to do with the Bar Harbor people. He knew the Rockefellers, he knew a lot of these people. He also was a registered Maine guide and he had a wilderness camp in northern Maine. Just a remarkable, well-meaning person. And after him Mr. Townsend from Skowhegan was able to take over from Bob, and has been, still is involved in most of the environmental issues in the state of Maine. All of these people were great to work for and were very supportive. Basically, my job was, as Mr. Patterson said, he said, "Keep us informed of what's going on over there at the State House, get out a monthly newsletter, and during the

legislature get out a weekly legislative report alerting us to what's coming up and what the hearings are and who's behind them, and we'll give you an idea which ones you should talk to and which ones you should support, and which ones you should try to get people to show up for, for or against.”

And that was the start of it. We got involved in the DDT issue and the pesticide issues, and the keep Maine scenic, and the bottle bills and the billboard bills, and of course the Allagash issues and the whole forestry issues. It was quite interesting, at first, a couple of weeks in the legislature I remember being challenged by some of the lobbyists for some of the industries in Maine: “Who is paying you? Who's behind you? Why are you doing what you're trying to do?” And they couldn't believe that it was somebody that was interested in Baxter Park, the maintenance of Baxter Park, and proper cutting practices in the Maine woods, and the water quality of the state and the air quality of the state. And that there was an organization, a group that was, the media gave me a lot of support.

They were kind of surprised and kind of thought it was unique that there was an organization with staff trying to do this! And you, I've some very interesting experiences with some of these people, particularly the promoters of the Cross Rock Dam accused me one day of working for Central Maine Power on the side somehow, and that my office was at 9 Green Street, and I didn't even know where 9 Green Street was at the time! I had to figure out where that was! And so it was a rewarding thing, and people used to start coming in and volunteering their help. And I had people that volunteered to come in and help me with the paperwork and keep the membership records and things like that, and inviting me out to speak to different groups around the state. Fish and game clubs and Rotary clubs and doing the, what they call the rubber chicken circuit I guess, or something like that. So it was a, for me that stage of my life, I had two children at the time and a wife that was very sympathetic, and it was a great, great experience.

And as I say, the media did a lot. I got to know some of the best media and the wire services and Associated Press and the *Bangor Daily News*, and I could usually talk to them or try to give them a monthly bulletin that had two or three pointed articles in it that, talked about some of the issues that were in the legislature, or being considered. We had a very, it was a very interesting experience, to put it mildly. I have a hard time, I'm trying to think back now of some of the more, I remember the Forestry commissioner one day, he said, “You've got to stop having your people write me about DDT, I'm sick and tired of it, I don't want to hear any more about DDT!” And, “I'm sorry, Commissioner,” I said, “I really haven't told people to write to you.” And he says, “Well I'm getting an awful lot of mail on it!”

AL: Who was commissioner then?

MB: Well, one-hundred year old (*Unintelligible name*). But they invited me to sit on the Western Maine Forestry Forum, be on the advisory program committee and go to the monthly meetings in Lewiston, which was quite interesting. And I found that there was support in the staff of the Forestry Department that were somewhat sympathetic to what we were trying to do. And, I had different people in different agencies, the Water, I mean the old, we called it the old Water Bureau or the Water and Air Bureau, whatever it was. I remember talking with Commissioner Coombs, I think it was Coombs, but one of the first water improvement

commissioners. I used to go out and have coffee with him in the morning, with the staff, all sixteen of them I think. No, it wasn't even sixteen because I remember counting sixteen desks where they, their office, and there was only ten staffers and the commissioner at the time told me he didn't think he'd ever see all sixteen desks filled up. And now there's hundreds of them in the Water and Air Improvement Commission, they're so diversified.

And I got to know people in these different positions, and most of them were friendly and realized that I was just trying to help them and support them. So a lot of them became members, dues paying members, and they were on our mailing list and the different agencies. And as I say, it was a real growing experience for a person who had spent the first nine years of his life working with eighth graders, seventh and eighth graders.

AL: You mentioned some of the reporters that you worked with in terms of media contributions, and do any of the reporters stick out in your mind as ones you remember quite well?

MB: Well, the Associated Press people went to Washington, two of them that I dealt with. Oh, Phyllis Austin was involved, the people at *Maine Times* were quite supportive. Oh boy, trying to think of the name, one just died that was a great writer, quite outspoken person, he was the editor. And John Heald was with the *Bangor Daily*. I'm forgetting the names now.

AL: Well, it was a long time ago.

MB: Yeah, and some I've lost track of and some have moved on, some have passed on. But it was a good experience, and I think you had to have, you had to be willing to listen to some of these people for advice and counsel. And there were a couple of people in the legislature, almost always there'd be a few legislators that would give me advice and counsel as to the passing of a bill or an issue, and they'd say, "Marshall, you ought to see so-and-so, he can help you on this, and so-and-so's the chair person, you ought to talk to him and get somebody to talk to him." And so there were bits and pieces of advice and counsel that were available and I used to try to cultivate those when I realized that I had a friend there that I didn't know from Adam. And it was surprising. I remember during the Prestile Stream issue, there was a man from I think Mars Hill who had a business there and he was in the legislature, and he told me, he gave me some good ideas on what to do and how Vahlsing was polluting that whole area because of the sugar beet issue. So -

AL: Well, what did you think of the sugar beet issue, did you know much about it in that -

MB: Oh, yeah.

AL: I mean, the two different things, you know, conceptually?

(Pause)

AL: And so we were talking about, a little bit about the Natural Resources Council and how the media related to you. And you mentioned a couple of people that I'd be interested to go back

and have you tell me a little bit about in terms of their full names and what they did. You mentioned a Mr. Little?

MB: He died.

AL: Who was that?

MB: He was in the, (*unintelligible word*) was a Bowdoin graduate who was a demographer by training, very brilliant man. And he was very up on what was going on in the state demographically, I guess you'd say, and was a great source of advice to me. I used to be able to go and sit and talk with him and he'd say, you know, you ought to be alert to this and this, that and the other thing, you know. John McKee was a famous artist who was at Bowdoin, he had the art exhibit that was down there, and I think he was director of photography or art at Bowdoin, and he used to be quite active. Of course, Mr. Townsend you've talked with. Oh, gosh.

AL: Charlie Pierce?

MB: Charlie Pierce was a lawyer who, he was one of the actual founders, he was one of the original dozen or so that founded the council, and he just kind of dropped out of it after a while. And he was, oh, he got to be teaching environmental law at Unity, that's the last I heard of him. I think he's passed on now. Mrs. Rowe is a Garden Club person, she was very active in the state Garden Club Federation. She passed on. Dorothea Marsden, she was a, Dorothea gave me five one hundred dollar bills one day. I'll never forget it, I was just kind of shocked. And she used to come in she'd write letters, she and Dorothy Rowe and, oh, is it Rachel Carson, I think were the two that started the Nature Conservancy in Maine. You've heard of Rachel Carson?

AL: Oh, yes, we have the Freeman collection at Bates which is the letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman, which is an extraordinary, it's been turned into a book, it's a wonderful book.

MB: Wonderful. Freeman?

AL: Yup.

MB: That Dr. Freeman's wife? Wow, I remember that name from somewhere. Well, Dorothy was a great lady, she, if there was a statue built of a lady fond of the environment, she would be it. She gave Colby College the land, the Kettle Bogs in central Maine, for research and so forth. In fact, she gave me a couple, she used to come and sit right there at the end of the table and have dinner with us once in a while. And she gave us, told me to come in and pick up some furniture from her and she said, "I'm going to Florida and I won't be back." She was in her eighties, late eighties then. Yeah, she was just a great person. She had a lot to do with starting the Nature Conservancy in Maine, raising money for them. And never send anything out that isn't in writing with your name on it and so forth, just a mimeograph I don't want to see, I mean she was that type of person. She was really of the classics, she had been a school teacher in New Jersey. She was an old Hallowell, family in Maine. And there was, as I say, these are people that I look at back as a sign of the people I felt the most responsible to and gave me the guidance

and encouragement.

One night Mr. Patterson came in early and he said, "We going to have many people here tonight?" And I said, "Gee, I really don't know, Bob." And this was when we were in the law office on State Street, and I said, "Well, we might have enough to fill the room." He says, "Oh, that's good, that's good," and he said, "some day we'll have them sitting on the stairs here and so forth." And now it's maybe a million dollar operation, million dollar building, with Brownie Carson who's got the right attitude and the right reason and has a done a fantastic job with it. They had some stumble blocks in between, didn't do too well that they passed on, but Brownie's been remarkable.

AL: What year did you start at -?

MB: Sixty-four.

AL: Sixty-four, and you stayed for how many years?

MB: I stayed until, well I think the organization got too big for me. And these people, they, Bob as I said wanted me to keep them informed and get out a newsletter and get a, do the legislative thing. In fact we used to do the legislative thing right here on Thursday night, try to get it in the mail by Friday for the hearings the next week. And that was good at the time, because it alerted a lot of people that were looking for some guidance in what was going on.

AL: Do you remember Larry Stuart?

MB: Oh sure, commissioner, yeah, he was, we had a lot of good times with Larry. He was the Park commissioner and, yeah, I think he's just passed on in the past two years. I don't know whether he has or not, I haven't seen him for a few years. But he was, I know we invited him to, Mrs. Rowe was the kind that had us down to her place, her summer home down at Boothbay Harbor and have a lobster feed for the executive committee, and I remember one year Larry and his wife were there. And they had a swimming pool built into the side of the ledges there, she always said, "Marshall, you and the girls from the office come down and use the pool and for the meetings." And it was, you know, it was a good thing. She was that classy lady, she had a lot to do with (*unintelligible phrase*) and getting support and so forth.

Larry Stuart was, he was one I remember having (*unintelligible word*), Bill Townsend and I had meetings with him a couple of times when the Allagash came around and they were looking for final suggestions on different things, and he took them. There was a group called, oh boy, Governor Reed I think it was appointed a committee to give him. See the forestry people, the forest industry people set up their own Allagash group, advisory group. And then Governor Reed I guess, that fizzled somewhat, and then I think it was Governor Reed that set up a group that Townsend and Patterson were both members of, Zeke was on it, and Guy Emerson, George Emerson was on it. He was the one that ran the (*name*) Camps.

I can't remember all the others, but there was a group and they kind of torpedoed the private industry proposals, or the one that was coming to the front. Boy, I'm hazy on a lot of this, what

happened, but I remember I had to bring to Senator, president of the Maine Senate, (*name*) Reed, a notice that they had voted down. And I remember walking up and handing it to Senator Reed and he thanked me, he looked at it, you know, not surprised, something like that. But that was some of the politics that got into it.

AL: So you're saying that on the Allagash issue there was a group that the forestry people formed that was different from the stance that the Natural Resources Council people were taking?

MB: Oh yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

AL: And there was a clash there?

MB: Yeah, oh yeah. And then you had your people that were, you had your Cross Rocks people. Cross Rocks was a development group of people that were trying to flood both the Allagash and the St. John and that whole area. Then you had the Corps of Engineers and the government proposal of sorts. You had, some of those predate my knowledge, I mean, and they had, you had different pressures, you had economic pressures, these people that were promoting the Cross Rocks were basically, they came out with a beautiful pamphlet, and all about the Big Dam, pictures of it and so forth. Then I guess they never paid for it, the printer that did the job on it. At least as I recall; I remember hearing talk about that from the printer.

And they were looking for finder's fees, you know, people get involved in a big project and then the guys that promoted it, they get a finder's fee, they get put on the board and give them salaries and so forth. And a lot of people don't realize this, particularly some of these big economic projects. And there's always, what are they in here for, are they, and they were modeling it after dams on the St. Laurence Seaway that generated power. I'm not really sure of all of this. Maybe Townsend could tell you, he was more -

AL: Well, do you recall what, in what ways it was that the forestry people were opposed to the Allagash?

MB: Yeah, they were, I mean it was their private land, it was their land.

AL: The state's land.

MB: No, it wasn't state land, it was private land. And here a group of do-gooders were trying to tell them how to manage and run their land and how this, that and the other thing. It was, if you own a piece of land and somebody's coming around and says you're going to do this with it, you know, it's like the cutting laws and the clear cutting laws and the stripping laws that have just been passed recently. Well, these were all talked about years ago and they're just coming to fruition now. Just like this recent Allagash thing that, the current park commissioner has thank God done a reasonable job with. In fact I think he's done a remarkable job from what I read.

Pat McCallum, I remember, he was in the House, and he's done quite well with it, that there would be so many access sites, it would be people that could come in at the top or come in at the

bottom and one or two places in the middle to get on there. But all that is, you know, it's, what we've got is a, what I think that we've got here in Maine is a unique, you know, the first wild river in the whole country. And the Wilderness Society and these people are all very conscious of that.

In fact I had to, I made arrangements for the Wilderness Society to meet at George Emerson's camps up at (*name*), and gave them the phone number and so forth and they talked with him, and they invited me to go up and sit with them when they had their meeting up there at Baxter Park. I had the experience of sitting down in a meeting in Washington with William O'Douglas and his young wife, my wife and I did, at a four-person table at a meeting in Washington, a dinner table. And I sat with Olson of the Wilderness Society. I've known some pretty good, you know, some, they're in the books, and written the books.

AL: Now, I heard you mention to your son that you were going to spend time at Campobello. Is that the Roosevelt Campobello, International Park?

MB: Yeah, yeah.

AL: And have you enjoyed that over the years?

MB: No, no, this is going to be our first time to go down and stay a couple of days. A fellow I know is down there and wrote a nice article about it, it appeared in the paper. And I called him up and asked him who it was he talked with and where his site was, and so I called those people last night and made reservations for a couple of days.

AL: Well, I just wondered because Senator Muskie had done a lot of work on establishing that park years ago, and I just wondered if there was a Natural Resources connection there or not.

MB: No, there's no connection to my knowledge, no.

AL: Do you remember Roland Cobb?

MB: Sure.

AL: Well, what was he like? I've never had a chance to interview him.

MB: Oh boy, he went a long while ago. He was a buddy of my father's.

AL: Was he?

MB: Yeah, I found some correspondence, or some college stuff between the two of them, which kind of surprised me. I wish I'd known that because I've gone to functions for Roland Cobb, well, I've gone to a cocktail party where Roland Cobb was there and I never even realized that my, I had no knowledge that he had been a college friend of my dad's. Kind of a small world.

AL: Did you know him in his role as Inland Fisheries and Game commissioner?

MB: I had written to him about the Allagash back when I was teaching school and told him I thought it was, you know, a great thing to do was to set it up as a wilderness area.

AL: Do you remember Ron Green?

MB: Ronny Green? Sure.

AL: What was his role in any connection with you?

MB: Just because he had been a local small fisherman that made commissioner of Marine Resources. I knew him to speak to, and he was familiar with Rockland and I knew people in Rockland that he knew and so forth. Bob Dow, who was commissioner for a brief period, of Marine Resources, he was active on the board, on my executive committee of the Resources Council. And Bob was a very open, outspoken remarkable man and was a, you knew where you stood with Bob Dow. And I think, I forget who made him commissioner, somebody for a brief period. Where did you get Ronny Green's name from?

AL: He has come up a lot. He must have been working for the state during the Muskie gubernatorial years, because he's come up quite a bit in our research.

MB: Oh, for goodness sake. I never knew him to be, maybe that's how he got to be commissioner.

AL: That might be. I'm not positive.

MB: Because he, I don't think he was a trained biologist or anything. From what I understood, he was just a small boat operator that got active, involved, and ended up being commissioner.

AL: Did you know Stan Tupper at all?

MB: No, I didn't know Tupper, no. I know he was a successful congressman, and I've always heard good about him.

AL: You talked about the Machiasport issue? And one of the two times that you testified?

MB: That I remember testifying at.

AL: What was that experience like, what did it involve, and what were your impressions of Senator Muskie?

MB: Well, I mean, Senator Muskie at the time was a great national leader, and he wanted to do right and he was curious. And there'd been some studies done about, you know, the idea of an oil refinery closer to Europe and on the coast of Maine, and people like Mr. Dow were dead set against it. And most of the Marine Resource people were dead set against it, as were the

lobstermen and people of that area. Although there were economic interests that thought it was going to make everybody rich down along the coast, with an oil refinery.

Then you had that conflict, which is usually, it happens when people, you've had, oh boy, we've had two or three other projects like that. We had one in Casco Bay, for an oil depot in Casco Bay, a major one. I tried to get to all of those hearings, just to follow them. Aluminum smelters, we had a couple of aluminum smelter operations going and I think that because, another one, just a finder's fee and they could get people to invest in it but somebody would end up with a good job on their board and so forth.

AL: This is the end of Side A.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B.

MB: Is your goal now to put together a book or a manuscript or something?

AL: We haven't decided on a sort of specific end product. What we're trying to do initially, by the end of the project, is to have everything indexed and organized and duplicated and preserved so that anybody who wants to do research and write a book or anything down the road will have all of it there.

MB: Wow.

AL: But I think an audio book would be an excellent idea.

MB: Well, I think it's great that you're doing this. I'm kind of surprised, it was funded by a grant from Congress?

(Pause)

MB: I remember getting him to speak at a meeting; I think the first big meeting I had in Portland. I remember the table right in front of where he spoke was all Gannett newspaper people, half a dozen of them. And he did a good job, and we tried to pin him down on, I didn't but people from the Resources Council and others tried to pin him down on definite things. You know, someone politically there that hoped to get quoted and so forth and get noticed. And others were trying to, you like to think this, when you have a big audience like that, and you have the media there from different places and so forth, you try to be careful, you know, just how, one of these people that's slinging arrows or trying to support or find holes and weaknesses. And I used to, I mean in my limited knowledge I used to find it quite fascinating.

I remember Governor Reed I think it was, God, was he there or am I thinking of Curtis? I remember my wife, one of them was holding my wife's hand in the car, waiting for Muskie and the entourage to come. My wife had a big kick out of that, you know, holding hands with the ! I

forget whether it was Curtis or Reed. And coming into the meeting and how he came from the airport, and I think Mr. Townsend and Mr. Patterson had both gone to the airport to bring him to the meeting. And that was the beauty of working with those people. They were, Townsend and Patterson were both great men. Townsend still is, he's a great leader.

AL: I had a wonderful conversation with him last year.

MB: Did you go into his house, or what?

AL: No, his law office.

MB: Law office, yeah, he was able to take the time to spend with you. I've seen him in action, I had to go, I used to have to go up monthly and have him go over the bulletin and he'd edit it and say, "Gee, you ought to put it this way, you ought to put it that way, you know, and where did you find this out?" And I'd try to tell him where we found it out from and, "Good," you know, and "Ah, don't use this." He'd cross it out. You know, trying to be the, he'd evaluate, and I think one of the first times I went up there, my God, is this on now?

AL: Yeah.

MB: Oh. It was interesting meeting him, and I used to have to go, or many months I went up on monthly basis when Bill was president. And he, but it was a good group to work for and I was very fortunate when I got, see, there I was with a wife and four kids because Becky was born when I was working for them. And I had no retirement, I paid my own insurances and everything, no, the only thing I have is Social Security. And when you're a married man with four kids, and no retirement, no nothing, and you're paying it out of your own pocket, and I think it was around ten thousand dollars a year, and it was pretty lean pickings.

But they wanted somebody that could raise money, and we hired a couple of guys that were supposed to be going to be good fund raisers and neither one of them panned out. One of them told me, he says, "I'm making my salary, that's it." It was interesting. And there were some darn good people that did go to work for the council, and I'm so pleased to see they have such an extremely well run organization now, and Brownie does such a terrific job. But it's kind of thin sledding after a while.

AL: Do you recall Senator Muskie or Senator Muskie's office having direct dealings with the Natural Resources Council in regards to the Allagash issues?

MB: It was basically Don Nicoll, and we were hoping that possibly Muskie could come but Don Nicoll showed up and came in, and he was looking for, I really don't know. Of course, I had a lady keeping notes of the meeting and it was quite, I really didn't, I'm trying to think of how to put it. Don was Muskie's staff person and a Colby College graduate, and planned on getting into the ministry I think, did you know that?

AL: Yeah, his early leanings were that way.

MB: And we had him one night for a meeting and I think questions came up about, would you people support this or that, and they never committed themselves to supporting what Don was trying to promote. And they were trying to get Don to agree to have Muskie come out openly in favor of the Allagash business, and I don't think that happened until the end of it. I went to the dedication up at Chamberlain, and I drove in there the night before with my two sons and another guy. We tented out there, and it was amazing to see the planes come in with all the dignitaries, and they come out and they set up a podium in the park. I did get invited with my two sons to a luncheon that the State Park put on, a wilderness type luncheon which was quite adequate. And the dignitaries, Muskie and his crew, and they got into a canoe and he had his own television camera and stuff, and they did footage of Muskie going down in the canoe and so forth. It was quite interesting.

Then he gave an appropriate speech, you know, happy that this had come to be and so forth. It was interesting trying to get, when it came to a vote on the Allagash, I went down to the Gannett papers and I tried to get a bandwagon page of all the different outfits, names and endorsements by the Republican State Committee, by the Democratic State Committee, and Joe (*name*) here and Mrs. Brown over here, and the Fish and Game Club from Presque Isle and the Fish and Game Club from here and there, and the Nature Conservancy and the Garden Club, all these different outfits and do a full page ad just a week before the vote.

And when I went into the Gannett papers with that that night, and they wanted me to pay for it right there. And I just, I had never placed a full page ad in the paper, let alone a half page ad, and I had to go upstairs and see the lawyer. And he was, had been Baxter's lawyer, and I got into a discussion with him about Baxter, and he just wouldn't believe who the heck I was or what I was representing. And so I said, would you talk to Mr. Patterson who is the president, and I said, "I'll get him on the phone, would you talk to him." And I got Bob on the phone to talk to him, and Bob was, "Bob, I'm having trouble, I'm in the Gannett papers and I'm having trouble getting the ad in the paper for the vote and so forth." And Bob talked with him and afterwards he more or less agreed, well, that's who you are and so forth. It was quite a, I'm trying to recall, I wish I could recall what his name was, but I remember he was connected with Baxter and the Baxter Park Authority.

AL: And which newspaper was this, Portland?

MB: Yeah, the *Portland Press Herald*. And, I got to tell him that these are good people that are going to try to keep Baxter Park as it is, and possibly see it broadened and tightened up. "Oh, you are?" You know, and he was very surprised and I said, you know, this is the type of organization, these are the people. And it was news to people like him. I can remember having a time with the Republican State Committee chairman, I got him on the phone and I says, "Look, the Democratic State Committee is supporting this ad, it's going to be in the paper, it's going to be all the people and all the organizations that are interested in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, I really think the Republican State Committee ought to be on here."

And, God, and he's passed on, too, the fellow I talked with, he was one of the big lobbyists. And he said, "I'll have to call you back." And after a while, this was before I went down, I didn't, before I went to the paper. And he called me back after about fifteen minutes and he'd touched base with some of the leadership I guess, and he says, "Yeah, dammit, we're going to have to go

on it.”

AL: He didn't want the bad PR, is that the way he thought about it?

MB: Well, you know, I hate to be quoted but I guess I am being quoted, but it gave me the impression that they were concerned that it was not good image for them to be involved in this big environmental thing, or at least they didn't consider it the big issue that it got to be and was getting to be. As I say, when you're in the third floor over there and you're dealing with some of these people and some of them are, and once in a while some of them will talk to you and give you advice and counsel, and some will try to torpedo you, too, to a degree, and you have to be conscious of this give and take.

AL: Do you recall what role the paper companies played in this issue, and were they vocal?

MB: Oh yeah, yeah, the paper companies set up their own organization, Multiple Use of Maine Timberlands. And they hired their own executive director and his job was just to beat, and his name was, he went to work for International Paper, they guaranteed him a job with International Paper after this whole thing was over. He went to Maine with me, I'm forgetting his name now.

AL: That's okay, I can find it.

MB: And he lives over here in Wayne right now. He handled IP during that last strike they had and so forth. I'm having a mental -

AL: That's okay, if you think of it just let me know later.

MB: Yeah, yeah, but it was interesting because they did hire their own organization that tried to point out that, the fallacies, or what they thought were fallacies in take over of private lands for public use and so forth, and that story. They only wanted, I don't know, fifty feet aside or something like that, and you know, minimal, minimal things. Although there were some ownerships like the Wheatlands and the Pingrees that were somewhat supportive. Mr. Patterson knew Steve Wheatland who was the leader I guess of the Pingree ads and so forth. You get what I'm trying to say?

AL: Yeah, I do, and I wanted to go back to Austin Wilkins just for a minute and ask, because he had some, he sort of didn't agree with what the Natural Resources Council was doing in some respects? But also, I look at it from the side that he worked with Percival Baxter to set up the park.

MB: Yeah, in setting up Baxter Park, right, he was always, he was very involved in that, yeah.

AL: In a way it seems like those two ideas were similar.

MB: Well that was done by a private man buying the land, and this is it, “I'm giving it to you.” I mean, that's altogether different than taking land from private ownership and saying what you

can do with it and what you can't do with it. There's a difference. Now, Mr. Wilkins definitely was, when I used to go to the Forestry Forum meetings, and like these mechanical harvesters, the machines that come along and grab a tree and just lift it up and then cut the bottom off and lay the tree down, these Danish things, Swedish things. And I had occasion to visit Great Northern and go out into the woods and have breakfast in the woods with them, and the PR man was a good friend of mine, he lives here in town. In fact, he had worked for Larry Stuart before he got hired to be the PR man for Great Northern.

But I remember, when that came up one of the employees of the Forestry Department asked the commissioner what he thought of these things. Were they going to have an impact in forestry in Maine, were they good or bad or indifferent? And I'll never forget the comment that was made - - I haven't discussed it with the management people yet - - and they just laughed, the dozen or so forestry people that were there just kind of laughed. I said, "My God, do you have a comment? How it affects the topography, how does it affect the ecosystem, these big tractor vehicles and what they can do?" It was an interesting time. We used to hold our meetings at Stekino's in Lewiston. I forget, it was during the week but it usually got a good turnout.

AL: Where in Lewiston?

MB: At Stekino's restaurant. Do you remember that?

AL: I remember the name, but I don't remember the restaurant.

MB: I play bridge with the guy that used to be the owner, he's in our bridge group at the (name) Center. Carlo Vangeli, he used to run Stekino's, he ran two or three restaurants in Maine. Good bridge player, so loves to ride me.

AL: Outside of the hearings that you testified at over the years, did you have any contacts with Senator Muskie or his staff?

MB: Actually the only one that I remember is, was Don Nicoll. The only one that I remember coming to one of our meetings. There's no doubt in my mind that his men in Maine were at our things. Like they have staffers, I know, twenty, a dozen, these other people do have staff. I had no direct contact, to my remembrance now.

AL: When you testified, you testified at the U.S. Senate, is that where you testified?

MB: No-no, no-no, these were hearings in Maine.

AL: The state hearings, yes.

MB: Field hearings.

AL: Field hearings, okay.

MB: No, I never went down to Congress, no. I did go to Congress, I mean I did go down to

Washington on a couple of occasions to sense them out, how the Clean Air Act was going, were all the congressional people, I remember one day walking down the corridor in the House and I was trying to find Olympia Snowe when she was in the House, and she came up behind me, Marshall, do you want to see me or something. She remembered me from being over here. I remember the day her first husband got killed. He was a hell of a good, Peter, Peter Snowe. But I had no, we used to try to get into, he was at, I don't know, we got him to speak a few times, I know that, over the years. I don't know how many, I can't recall now, but I know he was accessible to a degree. And of course, that was his thing was the environment, and here was a group in his home state.

AL: I guess what I'm trying to zero in on is when you look at what you knew of Senator Muskie's career from your perspective at the Natural Resources Council, what are your impressions, or what are you left with when you think about Senator Muskie?

MB: Oh, he was the leader in the country in the Clean Air Act and the Water Act, I mean he was one of the bright lights in the whole congressional scene in Washington. And here he was from a little hick state, Maine, you know. And I remember one fellow from the Wildlife Federation calling me, we were the, stayed affiliated with the Wildlife Federation and I had occasion to go to a few of the national meetings, the national Wildlife Federation, and he called me, he says, I just came down from Canada and I decided to go through Rumford, Maine, he says, "My God, doesn't that place have an awful distinct odor!" And it did at that time. And I says, "Yup," and he says, "Wow, no wonder Muskie's got a hot issue with the air quality and so forth."

AL: Did you see the rivers change over the years in terms of their cleanliness?

MB: I tried taking pictures of it a few times, and I had occasion to be on it with the Federal Fish and Wildlife person over here at Twin Bridges. And, oh yeah, it's changed. And then I remember a fish kill when everything turned upside down, you know, and they had a mistake or a goof or something broke. Those things still do happen once in a while, but now they've got the equipment and they know how to stop it. On the oil issue on the coast, there was the fellow was president, would have been a sea captain on an oil tanker, and he came on after I got through and I tried to get him involved when I first met him. He used to come in and make a contribution in the office and he and wife used to attend the meetings. And he had a lot to do with giving very personal counsel and advice and speaking at public hearings on the oil proposals for Passamaquoddy and Machiasport and so forth. Oh boy, I forget his name. I don't remember his name, but he was a great guy.

AL: Were you involved in the Dickey-Lincoln a little bit?

MB: Oh yeah, a little bit. This is what I was saying, the Dickey-Lincoln thing was to dam the whole area, the whole St. John, and that was such a big promotional scheme. And when you looked at it, and if you read the, I remember having the Corps of Engineers books on it, and when you looked at what they had for figures for paying wages and so forth, they were, you could never have gotten, I don't think, Maine people to go up there and work for those wages in the black fly area and so forth. It would have been mostly Canadian laborers, like a lot of them,

most of our, a lot of our wood work is done now by Canadian labor that comes across. Although with these, you know, the machinery that we have now compared to what it used to be, and it's changed a lot in the past fifty years, forty years.

AL: Was there anything else you'd like to add that I haven't touched upon or asked you?

MB: No, I'm having a hard time trying to think of what I should say, what I should remember. I used to keep notes on a lot of this stuff. But I, I used to keep files and records of it, but I don't have that any more and I never thought anybody would ever ask me questions like you've asked me. I just hope I've been honest.

AL: No, you've been a great help, thank you.

MB: I just hope I've been honest. As I say, my experience with the Resources Council has been great. I tried to do what I was hired to do, and that was to keep them informed of what was going on at that time in the legislature. And make friends for them with the media, and try to get, see, there used to be an organization, the Council's idea was having all the different environmental groups and groups that were interested in the environment form and send a representative to Augusta to participate in these hearings. Now it's all private membership organizations, see, now it's Joe Dokes from here who's a millionaire and Joe Dokes from over here is a millionaire and Joe Dokes over here is a multi-millionaire, and the idea of membership is, I think a lot of, although there are a lot of John Q. publics on there, too. I mean there are some John Q. publics on there, but these are people who have, I've known Dean Bennett since he was school teacher, classroom teacher, and he'll tell you that. Have you talked to him?

AL: We haven't talked to him, no. Don Nicoll has worked with him some on the Allagash issue, the most recent one.

MB: And I can remember, well, I tried to get him involved back in the early sixties and now he's the authority and he's written, I just bought his book a little while ago, his latest book, which is a fantastic piece. No, a lot of things have changed, a lot of people have changed and some of the real good ones have passed on. But I think Muskie did a, Muskie was just the right politician, the right background, and you know, the son of a tailor in Rumford, Maine who went to Bates College and did good, was on the debating team over there, and rose to be, well, vice president nominee. And I think if he hadn't screwed up, I think he would have been, I don't know, I think he would have, well, he retired as secretary of state didn't he? So I think that's great, he'll go down in history as one of our leading environmental people.

And there aren't too many. I mean, I think there'll be more, I think there's more coming along. And of course here you've got the tree huggers now, you got the Sierras and some of these other people. I always get a kick out of talking with Sierra Club kids who come around and are paid to raise money going door-to-door, and I always button-hole them, come here and sit down, have a talk with them, and they still don't get mad if I don't even give them ten dollars but (*unintelligible phrase*). That whole concept of, remember ecology, the word ecology, the first Earth Day, the, the green flag, that's a Communist flag, they're making a Communist flag out of our flag, I remember hearing that on the first Earth Day. We used to give out pins, Earth Day

pins that were green with white stripes on them, and then they came out with the American flag. People thought that was a Communist conspiracy of some kind, back in McCarthy days, you know.

AL: Well, thank you very much.

End of Interview