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Interview with George A. Carroll by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Carroll, George A.

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

November 20, 2000

Place

Limerick, Maine

ID Number

MOH 243

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Biographical Note

George A. Carroll was born in Limerick, Maine on March 3, 1919. There he grew up and graduated from high school in 1937. Due to the unemployment rates, he served 18 months at the Bridgton CC Camp as assistant leader. On April 12, 1941 he was drafted by the U.S. Army and served seven years in North Africa and Italy during World War II. A severe injury in Italy sent him home to Maine, where, limited by his injuries, he bought and ran a dairy farm with the help of his sons. After 45 years, he passed it on to his youngest son. He served on the local school committee and sponsored a bill and then became a member of the 102nd Legislature for Maine. His other son, Arthur Carroll, is active in politics and worked for and with Muskie.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background; George's farm in Limerick; Arthur Carroll; farming in Maine; Carroll family and Limerick history; workers' unions and the Democratic Party; teacher's pay scale and his work in the 102nd Legislature; his war injury; education in Maine; Ed Muskie and his relationship to the legislature as senator; Maine politicians: George Mitchell, Dana Childs, Buddy Reed, Ken Curtis, Joe Brennan, Dick Flanagan, Severin Beliveau, Roger Hare; Maine Turnpike; Muskie's 1954 campaign; Jane Muskie; Bill Hathaway; Muskie's

environmental work as his legacy; and Carroll's own close campaign and recount fiasco.

Indexed Names

Beliveau, Severin
Bittues, Arno A.
Brann, Louis
Brennan, Joseph E.
Carroll, George A.
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-
Childs, Dana
Cross, Burton
Curtis, Kenneth M., 1931-
Curtis, Polly
Dutremble, Richard "Dick"
Flanagan, David
Gamache, Al
Gore, Albert, 1907-1998
Hare, Roger
Hathaway, Bill
Jalbert, Louis
Longley, James, Sr.
Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Reagan, Ronald
Reed, Carlton "Bud"
Reed, John H. (John Hathaway), 1921-
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
Ross, Linwood
Sanford, Terry
Sewall, George Joseph
Smith, Margaret Chase, 1897-1995
Smith-Peterson, Marius

Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. George Carroll on November the 20th, the year 2000 in his home town of Limerick, Maine. If you could start just by telling me your full name and spelling your last name for me?

George Carroll: My name is George A. Carroll, C-A-R-R-O-L-L.

AL: And where and when were you born?

GC: I was born in Limerick, Maine, March 3rd, 1919.

AL: And did you grow up here?

GC: I grew up and was educated in Limerick and graduated from the high school in 1937, and due to the unemployment situation I went into the CC Camps. I served eighteen months in the Bridgton CC Camp, I was the assistant leader and I also ran the camp store and the post office. And after eighteen months there I came home, worked on construction, and then I was enlisted for draft on April 12th, 1941. And I served approximately seven years in the Army of the United States, the United States Army. I received a field commission in North Africa for WWII. I served in Africa and Italy and I was severely injured in Italy and I, and after seven years in the military I came back here to Limerick, to my grass roots. And because of my war injuries I bought this farm, started a dairy farm. And my sons and I ran this farm for, I reckon for about forty-five years we had it. When I passed it over to my youngest son I had sixty-five milking cows and we had about a hundred and fifty head of cattle here. We own two hundred and thirty-five acres right here in Limerick. We just purchased another hundred and twenty-five, and I own approximately five hundred acres in south Cornish. There's two farms there and I, that we use, we have a forest there and some pasture land.

AL: And so your youngest son has continued in the family tradition?

GC: Yes, yes, he is running the farm now. And he is a Waldo State Committee and the Agricultural and Stabilization Conservation Service, he's a member of the state committee, that's what it used to be called. I believe it's now called the Farm Service Agency. Arthur Carroll, my oldest son, went to college in New York state and during the Vietnam war he went into service, and he served in the States here and then he was discharged and came back. He started running a sawmill here and when President Carter was elected, Arthur Carroll was nominated by, I was in the legislature and I put his name forward and submitted his name to Senator Muskie in Washington for the appointment of executive director of the Agricultural and Stabilization Conservation Service. It appeared to me, in my contacts in Augusta while I was in the legislature, that (*name*), who was the executive director was a Republican appointed by the Republicans. And when Carter came in he was told if he changed his enrollment he could keep that appointment. I was told that this was a deal of Sen. Hathaway's making, and I was quite upset thinking a Republican was going to stay there. So I, it was the reason I submitted my son's name. And I had numerous friends in the legislature who wrote to the senator and believed in what I was doing and they approved my son's appointment. And Senator Muskie appointed him as executive director of the Agricultural and Stabilization Conservation Service in the state of Maine.

He served there during the Carter administration. Then when the Republicans came into power they dismissed him, and then they hired him back to help out with the crop insurance because they were a mess. He served with them there and once he got everything straightened out they started cutting back his hours and they starved him into resigning. So he resigned, came home, started his own business, he started a crop insurance business, he now has a substantial business. He covers I think in six states, New England states. He has offices in Massachusetts, he has an

office in Connecticut, and he has just established a contacting office in Vermont. He covers New Hampshire and he covers Maine out of his Limerick office. And he is recognized as an authority on crop insurance, he many times goes to Washington and testifies on the crop insurance.

AL: So your family's really been involved in farming and continues to be.

GC: Oh yes, we still run the farm.

AL: Do they feel that there's a strong future for the farm?

GC: Well, we feel we have to be available to switch our priorities. We had to, here we have a firewood processing, and my grandson's a forester and he works for a forestry outfit for three or four days a week, and then he comes home and runs the processor. It's a one-man operation, one man can run it. Due to the big ice storm we had a couple years ago, we had so much wood that had been destroyed, we own substantial forest. So we bought a processor and we are salvaging all these hardwoods that were destroyed by the ice storm. And we had a lot of timber that was damaged and we had to salvage that, so, everybody-. We also, my son that runs the farm, he has a hay business, we sell hay, we sell silage, we sell firewood, and he had a construction business where he was out doing foundation work. So if you're going to farm in the state of Maine, you have to adapt to your resources. And it's so discouraging because of the vandalism. We have people driving through our corn crops and they do vandalism to it. And we have so many hunters bow hunt here that we, the state has imported the turkeys, and last year we had ninety seven turkeys living on this farm. So we have many problems that continue to hurt the agriculture, we have a substantial deer herd that lives here, we grow the crops, we feed the game, and the state of Maine sells it.

AL: Now, you were born here in Limerick and grew up here. Your parents, where were they from?

GC: They came from England.

AL: And what were their names?

GC: William Thomas Carroll was my father's name, my mother's name was Mary Ann Fox Carroll, and they came from England in 1910. My father worked his way to America on a cattle boat. And my mother came over with three children. How many was there? There was four children, and they came over on a boat when they were just little, very small children. And they landed in New York, in Staten Island, my father landed in Montreal, Canada on a cattle boat. So, they settled here in Limerick and my mother died when I was a baby, and my father raised a family of eight children. He never remarried until I was twelve years old. He worked in the mills in Limerick and he had a farm that he was growing crops on at the same time.

AL: So he was the first generation farmer in your family up there?

GC: Yes, he farmed this, yeah.

AL: Now did he have any brothers or sisters that lived around here as well?

GC: Yes, there was eight of us in the family, there were six boys and two girls, and we all lived in this vicinity. And of course now they're all spread out, and I'm the youngest in the family and I'm eighty-one years old so there's only two of us left. There's my brother that lives in York, he has a home on a development in York Beach, and myself and I live here in Limerick, Maine.

AL: What was the Limerick community like when you were growing up? And I'm speaking in terms of religiously and politically and economically, what was the community like?

GC: Well, this community was a, we could call it a Baptist and Congregational society in Limerick. We were Catholics, and if you were Catholic in Limerick, when I was a little boy my parents used to say, they used to hold church services in the Limerick mills, in the shipping room, because there was no Catholic church. And they used to point their finger at my parents when they were going through the door and try to scare them out of going to church. And this is what you had, growing up as a little boy in Limerick, if you were a Catholic you had two strikes on you. But we've seen a great change now. Now, we treat the human being equally, and that's the way it should be.

AL: Now, -

GC: You mentioned about what was it like when I was a little boy, when I was a little boy in Limerick there used to be a railroad station down in East Ford Road. It was called Westcott, and the yarn and materials for the mill used to have to come from the railroad station. And in the wintertime they had horses and sleds and they would haul the tops, the yarn material to Limerick mills, and they would ship it out with horses. And there used to be a stagecoach when I was a little boy that used to come from that railroad station here. And, it's amusing when you look back on the mode of transportation in the past because my wife, Rita Carroll, Rita Bowen Carroll who is deceased now, when she was a little girl her mother, they lived on a farm in Limerick, her mother and her went to Springvale, Maine. It took a day to go from Limerick to Springvale, Maine. They took a stagecoach to Westcott, they got on the train, they went to Springvale on the train, and they got off. And it was day, it took her a full day, she said to go from Limerick to Springvale, Maine, which is now twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two miles.

And then as the era changed they had these trucks, these old chain driven trucks to haul the tops into the mill. And in the winter they used to get stuck, and they couldn't get them out of the snow because in those days they didn't have the modern equipment. And the results was, they'd come down with a lot of oxen, seven or eight teams of oxen, and hook onto those trucks and haul them out. And that, in the winter things come pretty much to a standstill once we got snowed in. They used to take rolls and roll the roads, and I can remember it as a little boy. And then we, the Limerick mills bought the first plow, to plow roads in this town. And it was an old Caterpillar tractor and it had a big, big monstrous blade on it that V-ed right into the rig, and they used to plow the roads. And we lived on a farm and it would be two days before it would come by and

plow us out after a heavy snowstorm. So that's the era that I grew up in.

AL: So did you have one small community school in the area, or how did that work?

GC: Well we had the, when I was a little boy there were various community schools around here, they were small schools. They had a consolidated one on Back Street here that would take, I think it took from one to seven, but there was very few students. Then they had some over towards Sawyer's Mountain it was called, they had a school. And then they had a school over towards the Haye's neighborhood, and they had a school over towards the (*name*) Ridge neighborhood. And then in 1924 they built the consolidated elementary and high school in Limerick. They also had a Limerick Academy where people went to school, high school. So they built a new school and I was in the first class that went to school in that new school. It was a tremendous undertaking for the community. Charles Bolton was the head of the Limerick (*unintelligible word*) Mills and he encouraged them and made a big donation. I was told that he gave twenty-five thousand dollars towards the building of that school.

AL: Now he was the doctor in town.

GC: No, he was a textile man, he owned the mill.

AL: Oh, okay.

GC: At that time when Bolton was here and the mill, the town was flourishing at that time, it was the mill. We had two doctors and two lawyers and two dentists in Limerick. Today we have one doctor just opened an office, we don't have a dentist, he moved to Standish a while ago and retired, and we have one lawyer in Limerick. So you can see what has happened to rural America. As the automobile progressed, so did the doctors and lawyers and dentists, they moved out of town and went into the cities.

AL: What were some of the things that you would do in town socially as you grew up?

GC: Well, there was, it was amazing, you know. I had a young lady that, her assignment in school was to interview older citizens and find out what we did when we were young. And in the wintertime we'd go sliding and skating down on the mill pond. We'd have big fires down there at night and we would have hot dogs and refreshments. Didn't have much, you know, we didn't have much money to buy a hot dog, but it was great. And when the wind was blowing we used to go way up to the head of the lake and put a piece of cardboard behind us and sit on, stand on our skis and it would blow you right out in the lake, right out towards the mills. And then we had a carnival, when I was in high school we had a winter carnival here. And we used to compete with surrounding towns in basketball and baseball. And when I was young, baseball, we had a baseball team here, the Saco Valley League. And we competed against Kezar Falls and Sanford and these surrounding towns in baseball. Every Saturday, it was unheard of not to go to the ball game, we always went to the ball game, the local ball game. And there was a lot of competition, and it was a great thing.

I think our young people, because of television and the automobile and everything, you don't have the local ball teams, you don't have that local sport enthusiasm you had. Everything now has got bigger. The results of it is, we now have a consolidated school here, we take in seven towns, six towns, six or seven belong to our school district. And so now Massabesic Mustangs just beat Bangor, which was an upstanding accomplishment in football. But how many people play football? It isn't like when we had a scattering of sports activities. So there's been a change. It's great, I think it's wonderful education wise because I think my consolidated, we have developed an educational system that is second to none. Many people say that we're not keeping up with the rest of the world, but those people are not, not educated as to what we're doing today and what we did forty years ago, or fifty years ago.

AL: Now politically speaking, did you have a sense of what the town of Limerick was like then? Was your father at all active in the community?

GC: Well, politically there wasn't too much activity as far as we were concerned because we were Democrats in a Republican dominated community. And during the Depression when Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected, the Democrats, there was food given out by the Democrats. And I'll never forget it, there was a local store in town, he had had a lot of hams that came from the government and they were to be given to the people in the town. And there were poor families that came up there and wanted some. And they asked about those hams, and the store, at that store they were told no, you're not getting them. It's like I remember all the Republicans and they were giving it out to their friends. So my brother and another fellow called the governor of the state of Maine, who was Louis J. Brann, Governor Brann, and told him what was going on. And he called the store and told them that they would give those hams to the people, to everybody, not to just, if they were in need they were to have those hams. And so we got one of those hams.

And we also got some seed to plant gardens with, this was all part of that new era, the era they said was going to bankrupt America. What a joke. And when Social Security come out, name voted against it and he said it would never pay his first check, it would go bankrupt. That was a joke, too, wasn't it. Think of what Social Security has done for America. And I'm opposed to anybody drawing their Social Security amount and investing it in stocks. I think that's a hair-brained idea because they do not have the knowledge to invest that money in the stock market. I hope I'm not getting you off track.

AL: Not at all, not at all. Now you said your family were Democrats, so your father had a strong democratic leaning?

GC: Oh yes.

AL: Do you know where that came from?

GC: Well, it came from the workingman. The workingman never got a square deal in America until America got organized. You saw what Ford Motor Company did when the workers tried to organize, they turned the guns on them years and years ago. My father worked in the coalmines

in England, and they went on strike in England. My father used to play the bagpipes and the flute, and his father could. They used to go begging on the street corners of England for money to feed the miners while they were on strike. So the workingman has always been a Democrat. And he has a short memory, he forgets what the Depression was like, and he gets foolish and he votes Republican once in a while. But he gets a rude awakening when you got a man like Reagan that says trickle down will give you some money. Trickle down never worked.

AL: Nope. So tell me about, you ran for the legislature? What year was that?

GC: The 102nd Legislature. We had on that year the Johnson landslide against Gore. We were the first Democrats to take power in the state of Maine in fifty years. Ed Muskie became governor prior to that, and I have to (*unintelligible word*) this in here now because it concerns Ed Muskie. Arno Bittues was the treasurer of the Kennebec Savings Bank in Augusta.

AL: What was his name?

GC: Arno Bittues. And Arnold had a Republican come to him and say, I've got five hundred dollars here I want to give to Ed Muskie but I don't want anybody to know. So he gave it to Arnold and told Arnold he couldn't tell Ed where it came from. And Arno Bittues gave that money to Ed Muskie's campaign for governor of the state of Maine. And I lived with Arno Bittues when I was in the legislature, he was a fine man, a Democrat from the word go. And he spoke so highly of Ed Muskie to me, and he was a great believer in the Democrats coming to power. And of course when we did come to power, the Republicans, we had a pre legislative conference in Orono, and we went up to Orono, and I'll never forget it. We were sitting here in this hall having a banquet that night, and lo and behold there was another table with Harvey Pease and the former treasurer of the state of Maine and all the Republicans were all seated there. And they were having quite a discussion, you couldn't help but hear it. And Harvey Pease says, the Democrats don't know what the hell they're doing, they're going to fall on their face. And the former treasurer (*unintelligible phrase*), he said, "They don't know how to raise money and they're going to squander every nickel." Well, I think the Democrats surprise them. I think because Ed Muskie would come back and give us a pep talk once in a while. And I have to tell you that he trusted us because the Republicans after fifty years in power had become (*unintelligible word*) and arrogant and they never dreamed that we the Democrats could ever take over the state of Maine.

Well we did, the 102nd Legislature came in and we called in all the monies from all over the state. You know, one of the ways the Republicans built up power was they'd take money and put it in these little banks in every little town, and put it in a checking account, doesn't earn any interest. So when we came in we called all this money in. We was amazed when we found out how much money was lying idle in the state of Maine in these little banks all over the state. And of course the Republicans always got elected, that was one way of staying in power. We called it in and that's when we jump started education in the state of Maine, that's when we put in a teachers' pay scale. I sponsored that legislation, and I was surprised when they came to me. I was a new comer, and they asked me to sponsor a teachers' pay scale, and this was the head step so after so long you wanted to get a pay increase. And I said, "Why do you come to me? I don't

know anything about this.” They said, “Because you beat Raymond (*name*) and he was from your district and he always killed the teachers’ pay raises. He was always against it, and we want you to sponsor it.” I says, “All right, I will.” So we did and the legislature passed it and that’s where the pay scale from teachers that you operate on today, that’s where it originated, the 102nd Legislature. And I sponsored that legislation and I’m proud to stand here, sit here and say I did. But what amazes me is all those teachers that got all the benefits of that pay raise, when I go out now and I talk with them and I look at the registration in my town, they’re registered Republicans. I can’t understand why people can forget where their bread comes from.

AL: Maybe they don’t know their history.

GC: Once in a while I remind them. I’ll tell them in a nice way, you know, it was the Democrats that made it possible for you to retire with honor. Because years ago, teachers, when they retired they didn’t have much retirement coming to them.

AL: Now, you came back from the service in 1948?

GC: Yes, I came back 1948.

AL: And you came back to the farm and started working there?

GC: Yes, and the house had burned on this farm and I bought this farm. I dismantled my barn because I didn’t have the money to buy first class lumber. And the materials in the upper stories on the barn that had not been sold, my cattle and horses. I did not have the (*unintelligible word*) farms, I used all the materials for my house, and my brother-in-law and I built my house. And I started a dairy farm, I was disabled, I came back from the war wearing a steel brace. I had a spinal fusion back in North Africa and Italy, and I had numerous other injuries. And so the VA discharged, the Army discharged me in 1946 and it had to call me back to active duty in the fall of ‘46 because of hospitalization, and tried to pawn me off on the VA. And we fought it and the results was I was recalled to active duty. And I went back to active duty as a first lieutenant, that’s what I retired from the service, or left the service as, and they had to do an operation on my spine.

I went to a civilian specialist, I wouldn’t to no one in the Army because they told me all my trouble was in my head and not in my back. I went to Smith Peterson, he’s the man that developed the (*unintelligible word*) cup for a man’s hip up on Beacon Street in Massachusetts, and he diagnosed my case. He was a consultant to the Army at Waltham Hospital, Murphy General Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts. He was coming in every day, he was supposed to see people like me but they screened the ones that he could see. So when he came in for his visit after my going to him, I went to him and I said, “I want an unbiased diagnosis of my case. I want you to tell me if it’s in my head, and if it isn’t I want you to tell the Army where it is.” So he wrote me a letter, and then he came in, he asked to see me and they brought me in. And he had me get on the examining table, he examined me and read my X-rays and he told the colonel if I didn’t have a spinal fusion I would probably wind up a paraplegic because of this injury. The Army colonel says, “You know, the government’s like a big insurance company, all these guys are trying to get money out of the government.” I said, “I never asked you for a dollar, but I did ask

you for a sound body. I went into the service sound, I expected to come out sound.” So the results was he did a, they did a spinal fusion on me at Murphy General Hospital, and while I was hospitalized and bedridden and recuperating, I drew first lieutenant’s pay until I was discharged on April the 16th, 1948.

They discharged me, they denied me officer’s retirement. The controller general of the United States said I had no right to it even though a retirement board diagnosed me. And I find out now that the (*unintelligible phrase*), but after fifty years, I’m an old man, they just laugh at you when you tell they robbed you. I am now a totally disabled war veteran of WWII. And that’s what I get, two years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, I didn’t have it. I fell, took the medicine for Parkinson’s disease, I kept falling, I ruptured a disk in my back, I had to have surgery in my back. And the medicine they gave me because of my Parkinson, they had me following, and the results of that I had a heart attack from the medicine. And I went into Maine Medical Center where they fixed my heart, they operated on my back and fixed my ruptured disk. And then I went to a Parkinson’s disease specialist, Dr. (*name*) and he told me I didn’t have it and not to take the medicine any more. So I stand before you now, I’m a totally disabled war veteran that’s been diagnosed, and I don’t have Parkinson’s disease and thank God for that. But my wife was pushing me around in a wheel chair with a bad heart, and I lost her, she died.

AL: Now, I’d like to switch gears a little bit and talk some about politics. When, so you were back here and you were working on the farm, and when did you feel like you wanted to get involved in politics? Were you involved at the community level before you went to the state legislature, how did that happen?

GC: Yes, I served on the school committee, when I come back from war. It was while serving there we realized that we would have to have a consolidated school if we were going to accomplish what we must accomplish in the field of education. As to, students were, we were losing some of our students, they were moving elsewhere. Some of them were, they had the money to send their children into the city schools, and I had a brother who sent his son to Chevrus High School. So I wanted to see if I could do something in the state level, and so when I got elected I went down there and I asked to be put on the committee on education. And they had in the state of Maine the Sinclair Act.

And the Sinclair Act was an act that said the state would give a bonding state subsidy if the small towns consolidated and built one school in a central location. And the Sinclair Act, as it was written, wasn’t doing the job. The Sinclair Act was a good act, but it had never been changed, nobody dared to touch it. So I sponsored a bill, they used to call it the Carroll Bill but I don’t believe they do any more, and that was that the towns could work out their own method of financing the school district. If the bonding house, it was (*name*) and Gray at that time, if they would approve the funding, there was no reason towns couldn’t get together and build a school. But you see, we had, we had towns that had industry, we had towns that didn’t. And so if you did it according to valuation, the town that had industry would be paying more for that school than the town that didn’t. So the results was we had to work out a formula. And other people before me had worked on this formula and they submitted this to me as a possible legislation to pass. So I went to Augusta with this proposal, fifty percent valuation, fifty percent enrolled. And

I'll never forget, they got up and they said, "You're going to destroy the Sinclair Act." And I said, "It's time we destroyed it if it isn't doing the job, it's time we made some changes."

So my bill passed, we formed a district here in this town, fifty percent enrollment and fifty percent valuation. We got the rich town that had all the lakes and that had the industry to come in, because before that you couldn't get them to come in. They said, "Oh, we're not going to go into this district, we're going to pay all the bills." So that, we have it, after passing that bill these other towns all came in and they started going a forty-sixty deal, or a thirty-seventy deal. (*Name*) and Gray came in and told the education committee they, any formula that was sound, basically sound, they would approve. But you must remember if you sold bonds on that formula you could never change it until all bonds were paid off, all the debtors must be paid before you change the formula. And so we have towns that formed school districts of sixty-forty, fifty-fifty, or any other basis they came up that met the (*name*) and Gray bonding house's approval. We made tremendous strides in the field of education under the Democrats. We were told we were bankrupting the state. We never bankrupted the state, we got the state on a roll and it's been there ever since. Education has moved forward, children have gone on and got good educations, and I think that's what makes America great, democracy in action.

AL: Did you get a sense from your father growing up that he felt education was important?

GC: Oh yes, yes, we did. I was the, my sister graduated from high school, when I was in second- there was only two of us out of eight that graduated from high school, but we were very poor and we couldn't afford to have them staying in the high school. But my father knew that that was right, to send them to school to get an education.

AL: And when did you first meet Ed Muskie or hear about him?

GC: Well, of course when he became governor we heard about him. And I met him when I was involved in the legislature, and also while I was involved with the legislature I was county chairman. And as county chairman I had communication with his office and talked with his people. And we had him come to field days, the sheriff in York County, Dick Dutremble used to have field days and so Ed Muskie of course came to those field days. But he also came to the 102nd and addressed us and he counseled us and told us, you know, that we had a very serious responsibility. And that was to be sure that what we did was right, and be sure we were fair, and to be sure we used the vote wisely that there was to be used. And we always felt that he was watching over us even if he was in Washington. We always knew that if we had serious problems that all we had to do was go to the phone and call his office and he'd make arrangements to come down and sit down with us and talk with us. And so when I was county chairman we had him come to our field days and give us a pep talk, talk to the Democrats in our county.

And he, I'll never forget one day he started talking and this heckler kept heckling him, and it, we all wondered what was going to happen. Pretty soon Ed stopped and he said, "Now fella, you just wait a few minutes and I'm going to address your problem. But I'd like you to be quiet while I continue to talk." So the fellow did quiet down and Ed gave us a rousing speech, you know, he could when he got a little bit stirred up, and he gave us a good one. When he got done, he turned

to the fellow, now, he says, what was your question, and the fellow walked right away. Ed Muskie (*unintelligible phrase*) in a nice way, and he got a big hand from the audience and we were quite proud of the fact that hecklers can come and hecklers can go, but you can still tolerate them and you can answer their questions.

That was one thing that you had always to watch, you'd have a field day, you know, a lot of refreshments there. And of course Governor Curtis got elected governor, you know, he beat John Reed. And so whenever they'd come to a field day while I was chairman, I'd always watch and be sure that nobody had come up and tried to give them a can of beer or a drink, especially if they're addressing the people. And also I didn't want them to have their picture taken with that man, I knew that fellow had been drinking heavy, (*unintelligible phrase*) from a fellow coming up trying to give him one. But you know it wouldn't look good if you had a picture of them with a can of beer in their hand on a field day, would it? So I always made sure when I was county chairman that I would be observant and leaders could be sure that these things didn't happen.

AL: Do they still have field days here in Limerick?

GC: Well, we used to have them, but this wasn't in Limerick, this was in Baldwin down to Osprey Lake. It was in the, Osprey Lake's a beautiful lake and there was a fellow there he used to have a, he had a big area that he owned and he had nice cottage. And he always made it available to Dick Dutremble and, the man came from Biddeford so he, Dick came from Biddeford. It was a wonderful place, we used to have our field days there at his cottage back when I was younger.

AL: I think I interrupted your thought, were you about to go on to something else? Now, so you saw Ed Muskie at those times, what were your impressions of him?

GC: Well, of course, my impressions of Ed Muskie was that he was going to be the next president of the United States. I always felt that he was robbed of that opportunity. And when he ran for president, in the primaries in New Hampshire, and they needed some French speaking people to go over there and work on the phones. So my wife was French Canadian and she went on over there on the phones. And she was amazed that Muskie's opponent, what was name now, the fellow (*unintelligible phrase*), he came, and these people came in and pushed the operators right away from their phones and took them away from them. And this happened over in New Hampshire in the primaries. And I feel that uh, I've never been too happy with New Hampshire ever since, I've always felt that they robbed us of a future president of the United States by what they did to him in the primary in New Hampshire.

AL: Now who are some of the other people that you've met and worked with in politics in Maine?

GC: There's one more thing about Ed Muskie I'd like to bring up.

AL: Oh, sure.

GC: We had a day here where we invited all the neighbors and everybody from around to our farm and we invited him and he came and gave a talk. And he gave us a very nice talk, it was, these people were all Republicans, Democrats, and people that wanted to see the United States senator, so they came and they listened to Senator Muskie. He gave a very, very good talk and when it was over they came to me, many, many of those people and they said that they really enjoyed it and they thanked him (*unintelligible word*). What was that question you had now?

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Mr. George Carroll on November 20th, the year 2000, this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Well, the question I was going to ask next was about who were some of the other politically active people that you've known over the years in Maine. Can you pick some out and tell me about them, people who stood out or who were very close to you?

GC: Well, there was George Mitchell, he ran for governor in Maine. I feel we have an upstanding man there. And Severin Beliveau, very active in the Democratic Party. Dana Childs, he was the speaker of the house, 102nd, Dana was a real upright man. And Buddy Reed who ran for the, tried to get the nomination for governor back when Ken Curtis got it. He was president of the senate in the 102nd. Ken Curtis, governor of the state of Maine. These are people that I had a lot to do with, I used to go into his office. Joe Brennan, the governor of the state of Maine. Joe Brennan, I used to, I was the house chairman and chairman of the education committee four terms and I used to meet with him. Dick [David T.] Flanagan, now the president of the, was the president of Central Maine Power before it was sold, now he's presently involved in, I think he's still the president.

AL: What were some of those people like in, at, like what was it like to work with Joe Brennan, what sort of a person was he, is he?

GC: Joe was a hard working governor, he, of course he came here as a city boy and he didn't understand agriculture the way I'd hoped that he would, but he did a good job. I sponsored legislation for bond issues and, he al-, they'd always have me come in and meet with David Cunningham. And David would give me a little pep talk before I'd go and meet with the Republican leadership on the bond issues. And then I used to go and meet with George [Joseph] Sewall and, he was president of the senate when the Republicans controlled the senate. And I'd sit down with him and go over the bond issues and we'd have our tete-to-tete, whatever you want to call it. (*unintelligible phrase*) I'd tell him what we the Democrats were going to do and that's what we agreed to do, we would do. And so we'd finally accomplish what we felt we'd be able to in the bond issues.

AL: Now in what capacity have you known Severin Beliveau?

GC: Well, he was the state chairman of the Democratic Party, he was also a lobbyist in Augusta. And I've known Severin a long while, and he, he used to be at about every session of

the legislature, you always knew where Severin was. And of course, when we bought our head building in Augusta for the Democrats, for our headquarters, they owed quite a lot of money on that building, there was some talk we were going to lose it. But you know Severin, during the Watergate episode, Severin Beliveau was one of the people that they, I think he was the head of the national Democratic, I don't know what his title was. But anyway he was in Washington and he was at the Watergate building and they broke into his desk and got into his files there. So he got a cash settlement out of the Watergate scandal, and he gave quite a bit of that money to the Democratic Party to buy that building and pay for it. (*Unintelligible phrase*) they've sold it, they don't own the building any more. And I think it was wonderful that we had a man we could count on, Severin Beliveau, to serve as, go and serve at the national level and during Watergate and have them break into his desk, and do what they did, and be man enough to stand up and fight to get, to have it righted. And he got some cash settlement out of it, and they had to pay a fine for that. And I don't know how much he got but I know he gave a substantial amount to the state Democratic Party. You could always count on Severin if you needed money, the party would always turn to him and he was always there waiting to help, either help raise the money or help to

AL: Now, is the town of Limerick more Democratic than it used to be?

GC: Oh yes, yes, it sure is. Just this recent election we had, Gore did carry Limerick. I know all the state senate candidates, he just lost by a very few votes in this district, and he just lost by a very few votes in the town of Limerick. And I think if you put forth good candidates they're going to win. You just got to be sure you pick good men to work for public office.

AL: Now Roger Hare's someone that you've known for years.

GC: Yes, I've known Roger quite a while.

AL: And he represent-, he's represented labor, is that right?

GC: That's right, yes.

AL: Did he work with you at all when you were in the legislature?

GC: I used to talk with him quite often, he came out of Buxton which is a good sized town in York county? And I'd see him at Democratic meetings. And, I used to get around a little more than I do now. But we did talk politics and about what's going on. Of course, you remember when Jim Longley became governor, he said that we didn't need that income tax money, that we'd overtaxed the people and we were to give the money back. It always amused me, he didn't retire the bonds with that money, but he wanted to give it back to the people. Do you know, to give people back a dollar, it costs two dollars in administrative costs, find out who had it coming to them and, give it to them. I never heard of such a fiasco.

I was in the legislature under Jim Longley's administration (*unintelligible phrase*). We had a study, transportation committee had a study of the Maine turnpike because there were people that

said that we should take the tolls off the turnpike. So that study, we had meetings and we always invited the governor's office and made sure, I made sure because I was the house chairman, when your party was having a meeting you might have a representative at the meeting. Well when we finished our study and submitted our report, we decided to keep the tolls on the turnpike because it was a moneymaker for us, it helps, we didn't have the funds to do otherwise. We met with the governor and told him what our report was. And he said, "You never consulted with my office, you never invited us to your meetings, and now you sit there and you want to do this." And just a minute I said, "You've gone as far as you're going with this one. Every meeting we had we invited your office to participate. Sometimes they came, sometimes they didn't. But don't you sit there and tell us we never let you be part of this study. Your office was invited to participate and failed to do so." Because that was the year the *(unintelligible phrase)*.

AL: What was it like in the legislature when Ken Curtis was governor?

GC: Well, you bring up Ken Curtis, the governor of the state of Maine. You know when I, I was in the legislature, John Reed promised the national, at the national conference that the state of Maine would join the educational compact of the states. And I was on the education committee at the time and we didn't agree with it. So we voted not to, that Maine would not become a partner in the compact in education for the states. We had quite a discussion, so John Reed invited the governor who was from the Carolinas, it was a Democratic governor that was active in that, to come up and talk to the legislature and get them to vote to join the compact. Well, we got into quite a heated discussion on that. And he talked with us and we told him no, we just wasn't going to do it. We felt it, we had some reservations about joining a compact of that nature. And the results was that John Reed was embarrassed to think that he'd told him, because he was chairman of the national conference of, at this conference on compact of the states. And he had assured them that we would join it, so *(unintelligible phrase)*.

We were interested in Curtis being the next governor of the state of Maine, and of course naturally, you know, you're always looking for issues that would help your candidate. So the results was that Ken Curtis and the legislature, we didn't join the compact of the states. And I think it was Terry Sanford was the governor of, down there, that came up and talked with us about joining it. But we didn't.

And of course they tried to pass a, they wanted to increase the sales tax. And you know, the Republicans was in power when Ken came in and, you know, we all remember old, good old Louis Jalbert. Well, Louis had promised, he was really new, you know Louis, he *(unintelligible phrase)*. And he had promised the Republicans that he was going to provide them with so many votes to *(unintelligible phrase)* a sales tax. And Joe Bennett and Jim *(name)* and I, we had a meeting one night before the next caucus, and we decided we was going to have to take care of Louis because we was afraid he was going to break ranks and we were never going to pass a sales tax. It would have been bad for us Democrats, be accused of being the tax party. So when Louis got up and started talking at the caucus and he started one of his *(unintelligible word)*, I got up, said something, and he got kind of sassy and I took off after him. He took off out of the room, he wouldn't come back until they got me to promise I wouldn't bother him. I said, "Huh, I didn't hit him." But I said, I says, "He knew that he was wrong and I was right."

At that time it held our ranks together, we never passed a sales tax when Ken Curtis was governor. He did increase it, which would have been bad for him. And I thought that Ken did a very good job as governor, he had Linwood Ross in the motor vehicle division, and was a very good administrator. And he made other appointments, his appointments were all good appointments and I thought state government went along very, very good under Governor Curtis.

AL: Who was Linwood Ross? I've heard the name before but not much about the person.

GC: Well, Linwood Ross' wife, Olive, she used to work at the Blaine House for Polly Curtis, and they were very nice people and they were good public servants, she was very nice as a hostess for Governor Curtis' wife, Polly, and he was a very good administrator of the motor vehicle division. And I felt that they contributed quite a lot, because when Governor Curtis ran for governor, even though he ran for Congress and was defeated, Linwood Ross was his campaign man and so when he ran for governor, Linwood Ross was working for him. And when he got Secretary of State, before he became governor, Linwood Ross was right there with him.

AL: I want to step back to 1954 when Ed Muskie was running for governor for the first time. Do you have any recollections of that time period, when he was going around the state running for governor, or hearing anything or, you know, maybe there'll be a Democratic governor, or was there that sense of wow?

GC: Well, I knew there was a lot of dissatisfaction with Burton Cross, the Republican governor. I was quite surprised that Ed got the governorship, and so was a lot of other people. But we also were in a new era. This was the era of the veterans of WWII and they were not satisfied, having traveled around the world, being in the war and everything, with the progress our state was making, and what it was doing in regards to education. And it wasn't keeping up with the other states in regards to being a progressive. So I think Ed came along just at the right time, they were looking for a man of his caliber. He had the ability to convince the people that what he was wanting to do was something that the state needed. And I think that's, plus the fact that they had a mediocre governor called Burton Cross at that time that they were very dissatisfied with, and Ed toed the line and became governor. I didn't know him, it was about, (*unintelligible phrase*) and we didn't know him as well then, I got to know him as I went along in politics.

Of course you know Ed had a wonderful wife there. I said to him, because she was a really nice person. And I was at a meeting one night, they were serving refreshments and I got this glass, and I don't know who mixed it but it was pretty strong stuff. And she happened to see me and she came over and spoke to me and I spoke to her, she was, very nice of her. And she says, you know, "The senator has a little trick he plays when they give him a refreshment that," she says, "he tries to plant it on a windowsill somewhere and then he goes and has one mixed and he watches them mix it, and he makes sure that it's just ginger ale." That's (*unintelligible phrase*), I learned that you have a drink at a party if they want you to have one, but you watch it, you watch them when they mix it. And I've always warned other people about the same thing. Because it's a, many people try sometimes to get a person overloaded, and it's not good for him or the party.

AL: Now, are some of the things that I haven't asked you that you think might be important to add today?

GC: Well, I can't think of much of anything that you -

AL: So you had mentioned Bill Hathaway earlier, in what capacity did you know him and sort of what were your stories surrounding him?

GC: Well, I think Bill Hathaway, of course he came up from Massachusetts, he had, he was involved in, he ran against Margaret Chase Smith. But I think when he beat Margaret Chase Smith and he went to Washington, he was a junior senator. Ed Muskie was a senior, and I think that Bill tried to flex his muscles just a little bit. And I think that I can detect, it never was told to me by anybody, but I could detect that there was a little coolness that developed between he and Ed. And I just felt that it was because he kind of, he encroached on Ed Muskie's territory a little bit in regards to the senatorial meetings. It's never been told to me by anyone, but I just surmised that because

AL: So you had a sense that there was a little something.

GC: Well, I did, and I sensed it more when he ran for reelection and got beat. And I didn't see Ed Muskie out there stumping like he did for others. Perhaps he did, but I was not aware of it, you know, he could. But I think when he ran for reelection he had to run on his own, and before that he had a lot of help.

AL: Did you know Bill Hathaway?

GC: Not as much as I knew Ed Muskie, no, no. But I do know when I put my son's name forward for the executive director that Bill Hathaway's man in Auburn, George [sic] [Al] Gamache, called here to offer him a position over in state committee. And so he told him he wasn't going to tell everybody that I'd even named him. So he called here and he told me, he says, they've offered me a position on the state committee. I says, "Well, you aren't going to take it. No, you're going to be executive director, it's either that or nothing." And so he called him back and told him no. Now, this is because Willis Lord, who was the executive director of the Republicans had been promised that job. He told people that Bill Hathaway told him if he changes enrollment he could keep that job. And that's when I put forth Arthur Carroll for. I wanted a Democrat in there, there wasn't anybody running but I said to them, "By God, I'll get my son to run." And they assured me they'd support me, so we did.

Because he grew up on a farm, he worked on a farm out in New York when he was going to college out there and he had a lot of agricultural experience, and I felt that he was qualified. And one of the things he discovered when he got in the job was that there was a lot of antagonized feelings there, there was a lot of hard feelings there, and he told me (*unintelligible phrase*). They had different groups in Maine, they was fighting with each other, (*unintelligible phrase*). The leadership was encouraging it instead of calling them all together and telling them, well this has got to stop. We got to work together for the good of the state of Maine.

AL: What do you think it is that Ed Muskie will most be remembered for in Maine as a state, and also nationally?

GC: Well, of course we go back to Lincoln-Dickey [*sic* Dickey-Lincoln] Dam, Ed was involved in that. And he also, he grew up in a small, in Rumford. And he was more of a rural America and we always felt that when he spoke he knew that, that he came from a small state but it was just as important to be sure that that small state got a fair shake. And I think Ed Muskie represented us well in Washington, that he was never timid when it come to going to bat for the state of Maine. Of course you know he became known for his Clean Water bill, for cleaning up the rivers and that, and I think that's probably one of the greatest things you can do is to get these waters. And everybody that's ever set here in Limerick, which is twenty-five miles from Westbrook, and smelled the S.D. Warren mill, the mill, that pollution in the air has to end. The automobiles (*unintelligible phrase*) today, they're still making too much pollution from the automobile. I feel it can be solved because they've come a long ways with the electric auto and they could cut way back on the emissions if they wanted to. I think that's what Ed Muskie is going to, you know, when they analyze his career, they analyze Ed Muskie over his clean waters and clean rivers and clean air he was involved in. He was way ahead of his time because it took a long while for the others to realize just how bad the situation was.

AL: I think that's all my questions. Thank you very much.

GC: You're welcome, and I hope that I've enlightened you a little bit about the senator. And I'm sure that there are those that are more qualified than I am because they worked closer to him. But I knew him as the county chairman of the Democratic Party and I knew him after serving in the legislature. And of course when he ran for president I was a county chairman and we tried to help him all that we could. It would have been a tremendous gift to the state of Maine to have had that man in the White House.

AL: Thank you.

(Pause in taping.)

AL: And we just want to add one story to the end of this here.

GC: All right, I served seven terms in the legislature and four times I had recounts. In the 102nd I had a recount with Irvine (*name*), I beat him by, I don't know for sure, I think fifty some votes. And when, I had another recount when the town clerk in Hollis ran against me, I beat him by five votes, and we had a recount and I beat him by eighteen. And then the, I can't remember just who else it was I had all these recounts with, but I became known as landslide Carroll, I win by as much as five to twenty-one votes.

AL: And the recounts, were, did it always, did the election look like you'd won and the recount confirmed it, or did it ever go the other way?

GC: Well, it was, each time I picked up more votes. And this is why, you know, when they say that these recounts, handling the votes, hand counting them is not accurate, the machine is the inaccurate one. Because you have these people sitting there and there can be no hanky panky with the ballots. That's ridiculous to make a charge like that because there's people watching you all the time. And those that are sitting there with you, you're a Republican, a Democrat, Republican, a Democrat. You're watching, you're looking at the ballot and you're making darn sure that there isn't anything being done wrong. Then you've got people outside observing you. So there's no chance for what they say is going on. And I'm quite sure you'll find that when this recounting business is all said and done, that a hand count is the only accurate count, that machine can really (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Now for, when you ran for the legislature and they did, and the elections took place, did you have, were there hand ballots at that time, or were there machines already in place?

GC: Well, they were hand ballots.

AL: They were.

GC: Yes.

AL: So that's what -

GC: But you waited a long time to get the count. I'd have to wait sometimes until two or three or five o'clock the next afternoon to get a count to figure out whether I'd won or lost.

AL: Great, thank you.

GC: You're welcome.

End of Interview