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Chassie, Robert C. oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Robert C. Chassie by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Chassie, Robert C.

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
May 7, 1999

Place
Farmington, Maine

ID Number
MOH 087

Biographical Note

Robert Chassie was born in Woodland, Maine in 1914. He grew up in Rumford, Maine. He went to Albany, New York to work for Montgomery Ward. He attended Farmington Normal School (later known as Farmington State Teacher's College), from which he graduated in 1937. He was a major in the Army during World War II and spent 12 years in the Reserves. He met Ed Muskie, whom he knew from Rumford, once again in 1952 when he was campaigning for Governor. Lucy, Ed Muskie's sister, was his classmate and later worked for him. He recruited Republicans to vote for Muskie.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: being babysat with Ed Muskie by his Uncle John (John Perreault); going to grade school and high school with Ed Muskie; ethnic and religious demographics of Rumford; becoming reacquainted with Ed Muskie in Rumford in 1952; the gubernatorial inaugural ball; Ed Muskie's greatest strengths; recruiting Republicans to vote for Muskie; and Lucy Muskie.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is Andrea L'Hommedieu conducting an interview on May 7th, 1999 at 109 Perham Street in Farmington, Maine with Robert Chassie. Mr. Chassie, would you please state your full name and spell it for me?

Robert Chassie: My name is Robert C. Chassie. And spell my last name you mean?

AL: Yeah.

RC: My last name is spelled C-H-A-S-S-I-E.

AL: And where and when were you born?

RC: I was born in Woodland, Maine in 1914.

AL: And where did you grow up?

RC: I grew up in Rumford early on because my family resided there. My grandparents and my mother and my father at the time was working in Woodland, and joined us shortly thereafter, because he was his father's head man and had to close up affairs there and then came to Rumford and got a job in the mill. And we resided in Rumford from then on until such time as I went to Albany, New York to work at Montgomery Ward and from there into the service.

AL: And when did you attend college?

RC: I attended college at then Farmington Normal School and they changed the name to Farmington State Teacher's College before I graduated in 1937.

AL: And what were your parents' names?

RC: My mother was, maiden name was Ethel L. Perreault (*whispered - want that spelled? No?*) and my father's name was William Chassie and. . . .

AL: Did you have brothers and sisters?

RC: Only child.

AL: Only child. Now tell me about your association with Ed Muskie. When did that begin?

RC: It began I would say about the time we were both three or four years old. And I'll explain that by saying that I was unaware of any of the circumstances, and I'm sure that he was, too. My uncle John Perreault, who was my grandmother's youngest son and in whose home we were living at the time. . . . We were not, my mother and father and I were not living there alone; we were living with my grandfather and grandmother. And my grandmother had one child of her five that was still living at home and he was my uncle John, the youngest, fourteen years old. And I was about three or four.

And Uncle John used to like to tell me, after we learned about Ed's illustrious career when, years after, he'd say, he told me, "You know that I used to babysit you and Ed Muskie when you were three, four, five years old." And he said "I'll tell you, I didn't enjoy it one darn bit." And he said Nana Perreault who was my grandmother and his mother, would say to John, "John, take Bobby downstairs to play" and being a fourteen year old boy, he said, "I wanted to be out playing ball, baseball or tag or whatever we boys were playing, I didn't want to be out there babysitting you," he says. "But, nobody defied Grandma Perreault."

So, he said, "I'd grab you and I'd start downstairs," and he said I think Mrs. Muskie must have latched on to the knowledge that I was taking you to play. This was mostly in the summer time. And he said, "Every time I'd go downstairs and go by her door to get down to the first floor, there would be Mrs. Muskie standing in the woodshed right as you were going down to, saying, "Oh John, you're taking Bobby downstairs to play; you won't mind taking Eddie with you will you?" And he said, "Of course we were trained to be very polite to older people, and I'd say well I don't, and I'd be saying to her yes I do dammit." And he said, "I'd take the two of you down and Nana used to have me stay down with you while you fellows played in the sand, whatever," he said. "And I'd, I have to say," he says, "the two of you didn't always play too well together either." And he said, "I hated that job so," he said, "and I got stuck with it every summer for two or three years." So, he says, "that was my meeting with Ed Muskie. Little did I know I was going to be famous for it," he said. So that was my first association with Ed. We were number one, children playing together with my uncle for a babysitter.

AL: And this was at the home on Spruce Street?

RC: On Spruce Street, yes.

AL: And so tell me, what are your recollections of Ed Muskie's parents?

RC: Well I knew Mr. and Mrs. Muskie, of course, because as I got older I knew them better and I was there for several years. Mr. Muskie was a tailor as you probably were aware, and Mrs. Muskie was a housewife. They had I think it was five children, but I can only remember four of them. There was Ed, and there was his brother Eugene. And then there were I think three girls but I only remember two. Irene was the oldest girl and Lucy worked for my mother for years in the various Rumford stores my mother was in. And Lucy was in my class in 1933. So I knew her as well as I knew Ed, and we were friends for years, too. And I think there was one other girl but I can't remember her name.

AL: Yeah, there is one other.

RC: Now, as far as, you know they were Polish people, (I'm assuming you know these things), they were Polish immigrants. And Mr. Muskie was a very fine hard-working man and Mrs. Muskie was a housewife who raised obviously a very fine family. And that was mostly my association with them. "Good morning Mr. Muskie. Good morning Mrs. Muskie." And my grandfather and grandmother, of course, were quite close friends with them. And my mother and father knew him well too.

AL: Did they ever socialize together?

RC: No, I can't, at least I can't remember that. We had a separate set of friends I suppose as everyone does. But neighbors, you know, can be friends and not be active socially together. And besides, the women in those days, Andrea, they pretty much were home and the men were working six days a week, or the most part. And so there wasn't a great deal of socializing in either family. As far as being together, we spoke and we were on good terms and all that but. And maybe they'd talk over the railings, I don't know. But no, there was no real, real association in that way, parties or things like that you know.

AL: How many years did you, the two families live in that home together?

RC: My mother and father and I were there from about, I'd say as a family, we lived with my grandmother from about 1916 until about 1924 when we moved to Spruce Street, I mean to Pine Street in Rumford, which was quite a ways away from Spruce Street. So our relationship from the standpoint of Ed and myself seeing each other a lot was limited only to school, because we both went to grade school in Pettingill, the eight, the seven or eight years we were in grade school. And then we were four years together in high school, actually three because I was there one year longer than him. And we were friends there.

But it used to be the custom, much more then than today, that you were with the friends in your own class, class meaning class at school, than you were with others, because you started right

from kindergarten and you went right up with the same people all the way through grade school and high school. So Ed was always with the same classes and I was always with my own classmates at a time like that. And although we played on the playgrounds together and we saw each other and like that, you tended to be in association more with your fellow students in your own class.

I can remember John, a fellow named John Bartash. The other thing was that in those times they always sat you alphabetically and Johnny Bartash always sat in front of me all through grade school and all through high school. He became one of the, he became owner of the, one of the, what the heck was it? Wait a minute, he was a druggist. He left school, became a druggist and a prominent citizen of Rumford at the time. But Johnny was always the one that sat in front of me all the time, so, you know. And when we went to high school they used to, they divided us alphabetically at that time, too, so Muskie was not in my class. And then he was always still a class ahead of me all the time. So at, (*something deleted?*), let me see now, you can mull that stuff out, can't you there?

AL: Yeah.

RC: In high school we had a different situation. We had divided into two groups, again alphabetically so, for our homeroom. And Muskie was in a different homeroom than I was because I was C and he was M. But if you were taking college courses, you were taking courses that involved wood working or you were taking the . . . what were some of the other? Oh, the business courses and you were taking the general course or something, then we all separated again. So in high school I went with the group that was taking the college courses because I was expecting to go. So we subdivided, if I make myself clear, into different groups stemming from the homeroom.

So Ed and I knew each other in high school; we belonged to some of the clubs together. I specifically remember, that picture there is of me when I graduated from, that jacket is the R Club, which is mentioned prominently. And we both belonged to the R Club because we were both athletes and we both belonged to the dramatic club and I guess there were some others besides. So we maintained a friendly relationship. I didn't mean to suggest that you didn't associate with the freshmen or the sophomore. We tended to be more with our own groups, unless you went into school affairs in which you played sports or things like that, then of course you were all mixed. So I wasn't as close to Eddie, I mean I wasn't with him as far as socializing; he was socializing more with the members of his class and I was socializing more with the members of mine.

AL: Now what was the Rumford community like when you were growing up? What was the ethnic make-up, and. . . .

RC: Well you probably are aware Rumford of course was a mill town then of about twelve thousand people, which is considerably larger than it is today, and it had three big paper mills there. But when we went into the Depression era two of them left and there was only the Oxford Paper Company and times were pretty rough there. The ethnic make up of the town was principally French, which I am French, or other immigrant areas most of whom were like Polish

people and Lithuanians and Italians. And Scottish people who came over from Scotland and who held most of the executive jobs because apparently Scotland was a place that bred mill workers in the paper industry. So we had a large ethnic group of which the major portion were Catholic, as opposed to Protestant, and were working members of the various mills and that made up the largest, the largest segment. The rest were a microcosm I suppose of business people and others, you know, that would make up the concept of a whole town.

But at school we were all friends; that was another great thing about it. We, there was no, no discrimination that was apparent in any way, shape or manner. My friends, your friend might be the minister's son and all the others. We got along fine together; there wasn't this difficulty you have in schools today with, you know, mixtures of ethnic groups that sometimes, as you know from politics and elsewhere, there are frictions. And there were no frictions that I can recall; we were just friends. All categories, all religions, all races, we were all friends.

AL: Why don't we skip ahead until, you say there was a gap from the time you graduated from high school until you saw Ed and connected with him again. Can you tell me when that time was?

RC: Well, right after we both graduated from high school he went to Bates and I went to Farmington State Teachers College, and then the war. We worked for four or five years and then the war intervened in 1941. Ed served in the service, as I'm sure you know, as an officer. And I was in the World War II also; I was a major in the Army and also served twelve years in the reserves. And [I] spent most of my time in New York where I worked for Montgomery Ward, which was a big retail mail-order house. And I always wanted to come back to Maine, and I always wanted to come back not to Rumford but to Farmington.

And to make a long story short, my mother and Ralph Stearns, his father was Judge Stearns of Rumford, and he was also with Sears Roebuck. . . . And he bought a store that was the old E.K. Day Company in Rumford. My mother was his head girl and one day they decided, my mother wanted, I wanted to come home; I wanted to come back to Maine. This store in Farmington, which was Guy Campbell's store, became available so Ralph, my mother, and I bought it and I left Montgomery Ward. I was operating superintendent of the sixth floor at the time but I wanted to come home. [I] came home and I spent the rest of my life here.

And this is where I renewed my relationship with Ed. As I said, I don't know if that's important, we, I also, I was instrumental in bringing the first cable TV company here, myself and a fellow named Denny Shute who was the deputy secretary of state and owned a radio station here. And my other business partner was a businessman from Wilton named Nick Cray. We bought it and I ran it, because Denny was in the State House at the time and Nick lived in Wilton. So, I ran it and I was the only one that got paid. Because we used my headquarters down as the office and I ran all the operations as long as we kept it and until we sold it.

So about that time, as I told you previously, mother called that J. Harold [McQuade] was coming up here and opening a travel agency and, you know, that I knew him. And she said, "I told Harold that to be sure and stop in and see you so that you could help him in any way you could." So at about that time Ed, this was in 1950 that I came back here, and about 1952 if I'm correct

was the year that Ed first had decided to run for governor. And so that's when he first made a visit up here that I spoke of that we met.

You want me to tell you the, the? So, as it happened at that time, I was sitting in my office and I heard a commotion in the girls down front and this deep gruff voice, "Is Mr. Chassie here?" And I heard the girls, "Yes, yes he is, you know, he is." And I heard, one of the girls came running up and, "It's Mr. Muskie, the man that's running for governor, Mr. Chassie." So I heaved up and I said, "Send him up," you know, and he came up and you know, it was "hi Bob." "Hi Ed," and "Gee it's good to see you again. Do you see this one now? And have you seen so and so? Have you seen [Wendall] Chummy Brumhall?" Or, you know, or, and we're talking about all our old friends. And I had the girl leave the office because there wasn't room for more than two people in the office. So he planted himself, like you and I, be sitting there and he's sitting down in my bookkeeper's chair, sprawled out there and we're just talking about old times.

He said, "I'm campaigning for governor." Now, this is not verbatim, I mean, the general, at this point, he says, "I'm campaigning for governor, you know?" And I said, "Yeah, I know Ed." And he said, "I didn't bring any of my entourage with me because, you know, it's all the leading Democrats in Farmington who are taking me around to meet people and the various businesses and so forth." But he said, "I wanted to see you and I wanted to see you alone." So he says, "Here I am." So we chatted a while. And at that time there were three candidates running for governor as I recall within the Republican Party, none of whom I knew but, at the time. And here was Ed, Ed Muskie my close friend, childhood friend. And I, in the course of the conversation I said to him, "Ed, I know there's a lot of people who know you and respect you like I do and like anybody who knows you does," and I said, "I get the word that there's a lot of the Republicans who are favorably disposed of you, of which I am one." And I said, "I will do everything I can," I off-, he didn't ask me to. I said, "I will do my darndest because I know you; I know the kind of person you were, man and boy." And I said, "I will do everything I can to help you here." "Well," he said, "Bob I'd appreciate it if you would; that's very nice of you, you know. And we talked a while longer and, "Well I got to go meet the crew and I've got to go around to the various. . . . Awfully good to see you again, Bob, thanks for everything."

So to make a long story short, I lined up a lot of Republicans for Muskie. And many, many people said that he got elected, or a major factor I should say of his being elected, was that so many people knew the type of man Ed Muskie was and that he was a man of character, and character counts in my book and I think in the book of a lot of other people. And tremendous numbers of the independents and tremendous, so-called, and tremendous numbers of Republicans voted for Ed and he won easily.

So one of the things he did, he sent me eight tickets so we could go to the thing, and said, "Give some of these to some of your; I can't give any more, Bob, here's eight tickets and I hope you and your wife will come to the inaugural ball, the inauguration or the inaugural ball. And bring, here's six extra tickets for people to come that you may want to give who were instrumental in coming up." So I had no trouble distributing them. Problem was Dr. Duffy was called to go on a case, a maternity case at the last minute and he couldn't go. And his wife was so disappointed, Mary was so disappointed. But she says, "I'll have to stay with him because he may be there all night," and, but the rest of us went. And there again, there was always, whenever we got

together he would always disengage himself from the others. He'd introduce me to the people and say, "Excuse me just a minute." We'd walk to one side. So when we went through the receiving line he just for a minute stepped over and chatted with me and, "So nice to meet you, Mrs. Chassie, you know, and thank you for your support, coming." And then [he] kidded along with me for a few min-, and went back into the line. I felt embarrassed and didn't want to hold him up, you know. But he would always stop and get just a little bit out of the way and talk with me, and so we went to that.

Then came the second campaign, well, that, and he came alone that time. And walking in, "Is Mr. Chassie in?" Or "Bob," I can't remember which. "Yes, he's there." One of the girls said to me, "It's the governor." He says, this was his campaigning for his second term. He says, "Yup, it's me Bob," he says, "be right up." So he came up, when he'd go down to the floor and wait for somebody. We'd, so he says, "Came all alone, again, Bob; didn't want no entourage with me at the time, you know, just wanted to visit with old friends, old schoolmates, old neighbors." And we sat and we talked, you know, maybe a half an hour or so. "Well, got to get back, and go." And I said, "Still getting the Republicans out for you, Ed. Don't worry about it." And he became. . . . Same thing repeated the two or three times he ran for senator. Always came in; we'd go through the same thing, the door o-, come in. We'd go either out back if, because the phone was ringing a lot of times so we'd either go out back or we'd sit in the office and we (*unintelligible phrase*), "Yeah, yeah and how's Lucy? And how's, how's your wife?" and all. We'd talk about old times and old school times. "Well, got to get going." Did that three times in a row until he came in when he ran, up to the last time he ran. Then as you know he was appointed Secretary of State before he had finished his last one. And then he retired and he retired; I never saw him after that because my parents had both died and left Rumford. I had no occasion to go back to Rumford except I went once in a while to visit cousins or people like that. Never was there when Ed was there; never had any occasion to come to Farmington. And the last thing I knew he had passed away at eighty-four. And I was eighty-four, I was eighty-three at the time I think it was, but became eighty-four in the same year. But, and, I say just, I mean, you know, he was a remarkable man, Andrea, he was a remarkable man.

AL: What do you think his biggest strengths were?

RC: He had character. If a person has character he doesn't need anything else. And Ed had character. I can't imagine him ever doing anything that would bring shame or blame on him; he just was not that type. Never heard an opponent that got personal with Ed Muskie, because Ed never got personal with them. He went for the issues and that was it, and anybody who knew him couldn't help but respect him. Great man.

AL: What do you think his, the biggest thing is that he did for the state of Maine?

RC: Well, I think, I would have to hazard a couple of guess. I think, among other things, he brought back the Democratic Party to Maine, which was a good thing. A monopoly of any kind tends to, to go the wrong way after a while; things are not good when they are that way. And I think when he brought them back he was known to be a man who could secure cooperation between both parties. The Democrats worked with Ed almost as well, if not as good, as with the Republicans. He had that knack of making friends and being believed. If Ed told you he would

do something he would do it. And if he told you he wouldn't do something, he wouldn't do it.

And I think it was the respect that both parties had for him that we had an era in government that, in the state, that I would say was the least acrimonious of any time that I can remember. Because when he decided to go and run for state senator, we had the same thing, Republicans for Muskie. He had that ability because you instinctively knew that the man could be trusted. I can't, I can't imagine Ed doing something that was wrong because he knew the difference between right and wrong. And you may draw any allusion you want to that with regard to some politicians we have today. I mean, Ed, I cannot think of anyone who ever accused him of doing anything that would bring shame or disgrace to him or to his party; he was a great man.

AL: When you said you helped organize Republicans for Muskie during the '54 campaign, how did you go about doing that? From someone my age, I'm interested in understanding how you go about gathering the support. Is it a lot of talking? Did the television come into play during that campaign? What helped you?

RC: For me it was personal, one-on-one. I mean, I'd meet friends and I was active in a lot of activities and organ-, the Legion and things like that. And I just talked to my Republican friends both in Farmington and others. I was around a lot and I talked a lot. So I think it was, I don't mean to imply from that that people said, "Oh, we'll do it for you Bob." That was not the thing. I put it from the standpoint that this is a unique and extraordinary man and I think it would be wise, you aren't, you being another Republican let us say, you and I are not the only ones who think he's great. There are a lot of us like us who will be supporting him. I hope you will support him; I can vouch for him, and he is the tops. And a lot of them did, some didn't.

AL: Was he quite visible in this area during campaign time?

RC: Oh yes, oh, he was a good campaigner. And he campaigned in Franklin County, all the towns; he always came. Now you can't afford not to do that; I mean, you know, you've got to come. We're the shire town in Franklin County; he has to put in an appearance in Franklin and that's hard to do. You know, everybody, sometimes, "Well, he never came to our town." My God, he doesn't have enough time to hit every one, but he made the rounds. He went out and campaigned and campaigned hard wherever he was. I think he kind of liked campaigning, I think he did. So, it's just he, he appeared at major events in the towns, you know. But he couldn't spend a lot of time up in smaller communities; he had to spread himself pretty thin. But he, he did as well or better than any other person could do with the amount of territory to cover.

And he was a great campaigner, good speaker. Was a debater on the Stephens High Team, he was on the debating team and he could debate. He was a, he could confront anybody and in a nice way make his case, and as I say never get personal. Never knew him to, now. Some, this I, some people told me Ed had a temper. If he ever had a temper, I never saw it; he was always a gentleman. And if he had a temper maybe sometimes he had a reason to have one as far as I'm concerned. But he was always gracious and always a gentleman.

AL: Do you feel that he. . . .?

RC: Do you think my voice is coming through okay, Andrea, yeah?

AL: I'd also like to ask you about your sister Luc-, Ed's sister Lucy, who worked with you. Can you tell me about that?

RC: Well, Lucy happened to go through grade school and high school with me. She was in my class, the class of 1933. And she also worked in the retail stores in Rumford, in E. K. Day Company, where my mother initially was the head office girl at the time. Then the store burned down in 1928 and it was reopened again and Lucy went back to work for, and my mother went back as the head girl in it. She and Mrs. Bowers, and a woman named Mrs. Bowers was the head, was the owner. And then her nephew Ralph Sterns bought it and my mother continued as the head girl. And Lucy worked, was one of the girls that worked under my mother all the time. So she was always asking, "How's Bob?" And I'd, always, "oh how's Lucy?" because probably I knew Lucy better, you know, in some ways than I, as far as associa-, I'd see her more frequently than I would Ed. Any time I'd go to Rumford, when Ed was gone, I'd see Lucy and we'd always talk and so forth and so on. So yes, she was a classmate and a well-known personal friend of mine, too. Knew the other, I knew Eugene, her broth-, their brother, but only casually. And I knew Irene, another sister that was, knew them casually. But it was Ed and Lucy that I knew the best, my major association.

AL: Was Lucy tall, like Ed?

RC: Beg your pardon?

AL: Was Lucy tall, like Ed?

RC: She was tall I would say, for a woman. Now, my wife was a tall girl, she was about five-six or five-seven, and she wore high heels. And I was five-eight, she was just about. You know, and we used to say, "Can't go out with a girl that's taller than you are." So I made sure my wife wasn't taller. But no, Lucy was what you would call a tall girl, I'd say she was five-six or five-seven. Not tall like Ed, Ed was center on the basketball team here, and I guess he was around six-three or six-four, very tall man. By today's standards, a basketball player that's six-three is small, you know. In fact in our other, I'd say were normal average size girls.

AL: How do you think Ed Muskie's family and parents were viewed in the Rumford community when you were growing up?

RC: I know they were well respected because their father Stephen was a tailor, was a businessman, his own business that he owned. And they were hard working immigrant people. I'm not sure and I don't know as I (*unintelligible word*), I think they spoke a little different, with an accent, a little different. Most French people did, too, a lot of them. But I wouldn't want to say that categorically, but I. And Mrs. Muskie was a typical housewife in that she was home all the time, not out working or, you know like today's people, which are wonderful. My wife worked, every, a woman has to work today if they're married and they want to, you know, have enough income to get by.

They were typical people, they have, a husband worked and he probably worked six or seven days a week. And she was a housewife who did the washings on Monday, the ironings on Tuesday and the egg man came on Wednesday and the iceman came on Thursday; always home with the children. No, she was not a social, they were not a social family I would say in the sense of being out and around. Now when Ed got to be a, you know, senator and governor I'm sure they, they, you know, attended a lot of things. But I can't comment on that; I don't really know. But I'm sure that they were much more active socially than they had been then.

AL: Are there others in the, from the Rumford community when you grew up who you feel might be valuable sources for this project?

RC: Well, I would have assumed that J. Harold would have known and contacted, if he contacted me up here in Farmington. . . . That fellows like Chubby Brumhall and there's, there's, there are people living in Rumford still who were schoolmates of Ed's. Just like there are schoolmates of mine that are still living there. They're up in their eighties like I am; I'm eighty-four. And they're there, and I'm sure J. Harold, if you knew J. Harold, he's ferreted all of them out. Because he, in his letter he said he was so glad that someone that knew Eddie as well as I did, having lived in the same house and been a neighbor. . . .

But I, my guess would be, Andrea, that Rumford people have been pretty well combed over by the committee. I, I, you know, I know some of my people that are there but I don't, can't say I know too man-, I can't say offhand, I couldn't name you a one that I know of his. But I know several of mine because I went to my fiftieth anniversary not too long ago. But I would dare venture that J. Harold has dug all of them out, people that have helped him or the committee that's functioning there has ferreted out as many as who are around, you know. The question would be better addressed to one of them, you know, because I really couldn't say.

AL: Is there anything that you feel we've, that I've missed in asking you about you and your times or your association with Ed Muskie that you'd like to add?

RC: No, because, I, because as far as those of us who are associated with him, what we did or what we do is not what the project is about; it's about Ed. And as far as my associations involving Ed, anything involving me beyo---, that didn't involve Ed is of no consequence as I view it. I mean people are interested in the Muskie thing. So those are the major areas where, except that we were friends from childhood until the time he died, we were active friends in the periods I've given you. Always knew what was going on with him; always aware of that. I'm sure he probably knew things that were going on with me or Lucy would say, "Bob was down and, you know, visiting his mother, he would always ask, you know, Lucy about me. But that I don't consider to be anything of any great moment. This is something you'd do if you went into a town where you had school, if so and so is still here. And so, unless I misinterpret your question, I can't think of anything that, you know, involving Ed or me that wouldn't be majorly covered by these two eras in my life.

AL: Okay, thank you very much for your time.

RC: Well, you're very welcome and I hope I gave you some information you can use. And I

hope you'll edit if I wandered a little bit here in getting down to fundamentals, because it's kind of hard to talk off the cuff.

AL: You did a wonderful job.

RC: I will say to you, now this is apropos of that, that I took the Dale Carnegie course when I was, got out of the Army because I had a friend who took it and he was very, very good. And he said, "Bob, it isn't just for people that don't know how to talk. It's for people who know how to talk and want to talk better." And I was always admiring of this fellow who was a close friend of mine. We were in the Veteran's Administration working there at the time, and he said, "You should go and do it just for the heck of it; it's covered in the G.I. Bill," he said. So I went and of course I had done a lot of they say dramatics and things of that type which I don't want him, that isn't what I want. So I went.

And to make a long story short, I've got the picture here if you would want to see it, I'll show it to you. We had a big meeting and this was in Boston, I was in the Veteran's Administration at the time, Andrea. And at the Hotel Somerset they had a meeting of all the classes that were in that year which was in 194-something and, at the Hotel Somerset that shows us all around the tables. And I represented my class as the best extemporaneous speaker; that was the category that was most admired. And what you did was, if you went down somewhere, you'd walk down in this great room, all these people here, everything. You pick a category out of a box. And it might say "railroads," and you had to compose a speech of five minutes that was entertaining, humorous and/or, and informative about railroads. And the trick was, you just got something in there about railroads and you could, around any speech you had to be able to tie it in. So I tied it in and I came out second in the whole class.

So extemporaneous speaking is something that I did more than anything else. They would call on me to speak on a, or, something, and I'd always have something to get up and say. So when you said, I said about that I spoke that way most of the time without notes, I don't have any notes or anything here didn't do anything. Let me just show you that so that . . . .

End of Interview