

Bates College

SCARAB

Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection

Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library

6-19-2001

Cole, John oral history interview

Jeremy Robitaille

Follow this and additional works at: https://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh

Recommended Citation

Robitaille, Jeremy, "Cole, John oral history interview" (2001). *Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection*. 96.

https://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh/96

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact batesscarab@bates.edu.

Interview with John Cole by Jeremy Robitaille

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Cole, John

Interviewer

Robitaille, Jeremy

Date

June 19, 2001

Place

Brunswick, Maine

ID Number

MOH 287

Use Restrictions

© Bates College. This transcript is provided for individual **Research Purposes Only**; for all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: The Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library, Bates College, 70 Campus Avenue, Lewiston, Maine 04240-6018.

Biographical Note

John N. Cole was born on February 26, 1923 in New York, New York to Helen (Dodd) and John N. Cole, Sr. His mother was a homemaker and department store window dresser. His father was a venture capital broker. He grew up and attended schools in New York City, but his family had strong ties to East Hampton. His father was a pioneering preservationist of the East Hamptons in the 1940s and 1950s, preserving two properties slated for development. Following school, Cole was a fisherman in New York for seven years. He then began to write, getting published in *Esquire*. He moved to Maine to become an editor at the *Kennebunk Star* in 1958. After making that paper profitable, he moved to Brunswick, Maine in 1960 to be editor for *The Brunswick Times Record*. In 1968, he and Peter Cox founded the *Maine Times*, which became a profitable and popular statewide weekly paper in Maine. At the *Maine Times*, Cole became friendly with Ed Muskie. He briefly left Maine to edit the *World Paper* in Boston. Upon his return to Maine, he continued to write editorials for the *Maine Times*, but as a freelance writer. In 1999, the *Maine Times* ceased publication. Publishing resumed after a two month hiatus, but the paper once again ceased publication early in 2002.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: early historic preservation of the Hamptons; writing an article

for *Esquire*; beginning the *Kennebunk Star* newspaper; *Times Record* newspaper in Brunswick, Maine; John Reed, Ed Muskie; Muskie's efforts to clean the environment; leadership within the Maine Democratic Party through the 1960s; creating the *Maine Times* newspaper; refinery and terminal issues in Maine; Muskie's primary loss in Massachusetts; writing about Muskie in his later years; Democratic clambake; importance of environmental legislation on the nation; Bill Hathaway; Republican Party passing progressive legislation in the 1960s; Jim Longley; Maine politicians and politics since Muskie; and journalism in Maine.

Indexed Names

Austin, Phyllis
Baez, Joan
Blethen, Frank
Brook, Alex
Brook, Sandy
Byrd, Robert
Chisholm, Hugh J.
Coffin, Frank Morey
Cohen, William S.
Cole, Helen (Dodd)
Cole, Jean
Cole, John
Cole, John N., Sr.
Cox, Peter
Curtis, Kenneth M., 1931-
Dos Passos, John
Faulkner, William, 1897-1962
Gingrich, Arnold
Gould, John
Hansen, Don
Hathaway, Bill
Hemingway, Ernest, 1899-1961
Hildreth, Horace, Jr.
Jalbert, Louis
King, Angus
Liebling, Joe
Longley, James, Sr.
Longley, Susan
MacLeod, Ken
Makes, Harry
McGee, Frank
McGovern, George S. (George Stanley), 1922-
Morgan, Dodge
Morgensen, Mark
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Muskie, Jane Gray
Nicoll, Don
Niven, Campbell
Niven, Paul
Pollack, Jackson
Reed, John H. (John Hathaway), 1921-
Richardson, Harrison
Sewall, Joe
Simon, Dick
Smith, Margaret Chase, 1897-1995
Snowe, Olympia J. (Olympia Jean), 1947-
Thurmond, Strom, 1902-2003
Wyman, Hollis

Transcript

Jeremy Robitaille: The date is June 19th, 2001, and we are here with John Cole at his residence on River Road in Brunswick, Maine, and interviewing is Jeremy Robitaille. Mr. Cole, to start out, could you please state your name and spell it for the record.

John Cole: Yeah, but you should call me John, Jeremy. And my name is John, J-O-H-N, Nelson, N-E-L-S-O-N, Cole, C-O-L-E.

JR: Thank you very much. And what is your date and place of birth?

JC: 2/26/23, New York City.

(Telephone interruption.)

JR: All right, and again, your date, New York and-?

JC: Oh, 2/26/23, 969 Park Avenue in New York. The building is still there, by the way.

JR: Really?

JC: Yeah.

JR: Great. Okay, and-.

JC: I'm thinking of putting up a plaque.

JR: Cool. And what were your parents' names?

JC: I'm a junior, John N. Cole, and my mother was Helen Dodd Cole.

JR: Okay, and where- were they both originally from New York?

JC: No, my father was from North Carolina, Winston-Salem. My mother was from New York.

JR: And what were their occupations?

JC: Well, my mother was a homemaker for quite a while, but then she ended up doing windows for major department stores in New York. She did Macy's windows and she did Bonwit Teller's windows, both those stores, well Macy's still around. But that was pretty late, we were almost grown up then.

My father was a stockbroker and a promoter, there's a different name for what he did, though. He got people together with venture capital, he helped raise venture capital for businesses, and then he became involved with one of the businesses, which was alcohol and water injection device for internal combustion engines, gasoline engines, to save fuel and give better performance. And it was used on airplanes during the war when they needed that, but after the war the fuel companies, the gasoline companies, they didn't want devices that saved gasoline, you know, so it didn't really, it never really caught on. But, he was his own boss, he worked as a, it wasn't really a job, job, he just brought people together, he knew different people with different interests. Anyway, not much to do with Ed Muskie.

JR: That's all right, we'll get to him. We still want to know a whole lot about you. Were your parents at all involved in the community, like was your dad specifically ever politically involved?

JC: Well, we had a summer place in the East Hampton, which is now, I'm glad my father's not still alive because he would consider it ruined. But he was very active there in the preservation and the restorations of the old historical buildings in East Hampton. There was Home Sweet Home, which was, I guess it's authenticated, where that, whoever wrote that song wrote it. But it was an old building, built sometime in the seventeen hundreds. And he helped raise money to restore it and protect it, and to make sure that it was never bought privately, that it always remained a kind of a public building, open to the public. And he also did the same kind of thing with another old homestead called the Mulford Homestead, which I think was about to be bought by some developer. He raised the money and, he helped raise the money, got the Mulford Homestead protected. So he was a little bit ahead of his time when it came to protection of landmark buildings. That was back in the late thirties, early forties, on into the fifties. He died, he died in the early sixties, '61, pretty sure. But those buildings are still there. But my father, if he hadn't died then he would certainly be dead by now, because what's happened to East Hampton would have given him a heart attack for sure. He didn't ever want it to become a place for celebrities, which it is.

My mother was primarily interested in, she was a painter and she also was interested in home decorating. She spent most of her energies making our homes pretty, as my father used to say. But she wasn't that involved with the community; she was pretty shy. She did work with the Ladies Village Improvement Society, but primarily on, they had an annual fashion show she

worked on. She was more creative, and shy.

JR: Okay. What do you remember about New York growing up as far as, perhaps like the Great Depression, do you remember like how that affected how you lived and how the community operated?

JC: Well, in those days, in today's terms, you would say my father and mother were upper middle class, in the sense that, you know, we never had a lot of money but we had enough money and- to lead, I think, a pretty privileged life. We had servants, which you don't see these days. But in those days having servants was it was a middle class thing to do. There were immigrants, Irish and Germans and, I'm trying to think of all the nationalities we had working, people that came, so anxious to get to this country that they would take jobs, you know, for very little money that would allow them to stay here long enough to get a citizenship.

So, but what I remember mostly about New York City is the you know park and, mostly how glad we were to get out of there because it's not a place for, it's not the place for-, here's a picture of my father and me and my brother and sister and our other brother in front of the house we lived in on the corner of 65th Street. So we were, my brother and I, we liked the outdoors and the only place you could go in New York was Central Park. My grandfather was great guy. He took us to movies all the time, and he also took us on the subway, which we loved. I mean, when he did it. He had some badge that the mayor of New York had given him, and he'd flash that at the guy sitting in the booth so we got to ride the subway for free.

And, but mostly what we did in the city was to go to school, when we were little boys, and look forward to leaving, to getting out to the country. And my grandfather and grandmother felt the same way about getting to the country, so they would start going-, our house didn't have any heat out there, but it had a kitchen stove and a coal stove, heat the hot water-, but they would take us out there as early as they could, you know, Easter or before Easter we'd go out there for weekends and fire up the stoves. And that was where, you know, that was where I really decided that I was never going to live in the city, because all the best times of my boyhood were out there in the country. And East Hampton, I mean, you can't describe to people now what a small, modest place East Hampton was in those days because now it's like East coast L.A., or some of those other resorts around Los Angeles. But, in those days it was innocent place and we could go anywhere. And we had an old rowboat we took out on the water. We dragged that boat over the dunes and took it out in the ocean. I mean, we did a lot of things we probably shouldn't have done, but we sure had fun.

And as I, you know, as I got into my teens, I just, I knew that I was, I wasn't going to be a city guy, I wasn't going to start looking for jobs in New York City. I ended up working in the city for a year, year and a half maybe. And then I just quit and became, went out to East Hampton and became a commercial fisherman, because I figured that was, I didn't know any other way to make a living. I certainly couldn't make it, I never did make a living commercial fishing, but I stayed at it for seven years. I'm glad I did. That's some of the people I knew when I was fishing out there, that's me in that dory there. I mean, it wasn't big time commercial fishing, it was like, you know, very small scale. But, the East end of Long Island's a good place to do that because it's kind of a migratory crossroads so that different fish, different shellfish, you could work at

pretty much all through the year. There's not like one big season. So it was subsistence living, but it sure was fun.

And then when East Hampton, I started, you know, you could tell even then, I just knew I was never going to make enough money to live in East Hampton so I started looking around for a place on the coast. And it was a conscious decision. And that's when I decided that Maine, the coast of Maine would be the place. Because it hadn't been, what Huckleberry Finn called, hadn't been civilized yet. So when I came up here in 1958 it was really the beginning of, you know, a life that I'd always looked forward to. But instead of coming as a fisherman I came as a newspaperman, just barely. I mean, I hadn't had that much experience but I had sold articles to the newspaper down in East Hampton.

JR: Yeah, okay. So when you came to the newspaper in '58, did you start writing right away? Had you -?

JC: Oh, yeah.

JR: Had you been, like what got you started in writing, in journalism?

JC: Well, one thing, another catalytic thing that made the difference was when I was in, when I was commercial fishing, I lived in a community called The Springs, which was where a lot of artists and writers lived. Jackson Pollack, he was my neighbor.

JR: Okay, I remember reading that.

JC: And I saw a lot of Jackson's art, sometimes too much. But another friend just down the road was a writer named Joe Liebling who wrote for *The New Yorker* and wrote books. He was a superb journalist, reporter, very, very good writer. And he liked to write about sports. I took him out fishing a few times, and we were friends. And every now and then he'd give me a research job to do, you know, for some article that he was writing, I'd go to the library and do some research for Joe. And that was his way of helping me, you know. But, and I, he told me, he said, "You know, you should write more." And so I told him this idea I had for an article about these commercial fishermen going out to a place called the Gully, which in those days was a pretty rugged duty for small boats, about a hundred miles offshore in the winter. And, so I wrote that article and Joe sent it to his agent, a guy named Mark Hannah who was a pretty famous agent in New York, and he sold it to *Esquire* magazine. And they sent John Gross, who was also a well recognized artist in those days, they sent him down to meet me and do the illustrations for the article. *Esquire* was a different magazine then, too. They published a lot of good writers, I mean Dos Passos and Hemingway, Faulkner. Arnold Genrick, the then editor, who was a famous trout fisherman among other things, but he was a literary man, not a, *Esquire* wasn't kind of an upscale *Playboy*, *Esquire* was a literary publication. And it had some drawings by Petty, which in today's terms wouldn't classify, you know, as erotic in any way. But, it was a masculine publication.

Anyway, the article appeared in *Esquire* with John Gross drawings. They gave it a good play, and they sent me a check for eight hundred bucks, which today would be like sending me a

check for, you know, four thousand. And I'm thinking, "Jesus Christ, I can write," you know, and that was some sort of verification that I could do what I wanted to do. And about a week after the article appeared, an old guy knocked on our door down in the The Springs, and he says, "Hi, I'm Dick Simon from Simon & Schuster." He said, "I read your article in *Esquire*, he said, how would you like to write a book about commercial fishing? We'd be happy to give you an advance." And I was just floored by that, but I told him, I said, "Look, I don't really know enough about it yet to write a book about it." But, I said, "You know, I'm very flattered." And, you know, he, how many times does a publisher come to you, knocking on your door, literally. So that verified again, you know, that I was considered a writer by people who ought to know, a) the editor of *Esquire*, b) Simon of Simon & Schuster, so I'm thinking, okay, I'm going to be a writer. So, I told my father I was giving up the commercial fishing business to be a writer and he said, "John, you can't even spell." He gave me a dictionary, I still got it.

But, so then, I was a friend of Alex Brooke who was Sandy Brooke's father. Alex was a painter. I knew a lot of artists and writers, almost all my friends in East Hampton, except for my fishing friends, commercial fishing friends, were creative people of some kind. And Alex Brooke's son, Sandy, whom I didn't know that well, but I knew, but his father was really my friend because he liked different kinds of fresh fish, little delicacies, skate wings and shad roe. I used to take him things, when we'd haul the nets I'd save the fish he-, because those were trash fish anyway and I'd take them, they were in those days. And Alex, he gave me a couple of paintings. Jackson gave me a painting. Anyway, Sandy Brooke was then working on Wall Street but he wanted to get out of the city. He had a little money, so, a little, not much, but he bought the *Kennebunk Star* and then he called me and said, "You know, I need an editor." He also called me I think because he knew I was so anxious to get to Maine I'd work for nothing, which I did. I mean, not a hell of a lot, I think it was a hundred bucks a week or something. Anyway, that's how I got to Maine. And-

JR: Okay. What were your first responsibilities, like you said you were the editor, but what did you actually, did you just do anything for the *Kennebunk Star*, or what did you do?

JC: I wrote the editorials, and I edited the copy, and I did a lot of reporting.

JR: What did you report on?

JC: There were only two of us.

JR: Oh, okay. Yeah.

JC: Sandy, he also, we had kind of divided it up in circulation areas, Sandy did mostly Wells and Ogunquit, and I did Kennebunk and Kennebunkport and, which was like the home base of that paper. I worked with the correspondents, who really, you know, the only people you had were the so-called "personal correspondents." They don't do it any more, but weekly papers used to have what they called personals, which was a little tiny, one paragraph, two sentence items about who was visiting whom, and who went to Portland on a shopping trip. And, I mean, you know, just the minutiae of their lives. But, that's what made those papers community papers, you know, people liked to read about what their neighbors were doing. And every now and then

you'd get an item like Mr. Jones and Mrs. Smith spent a weekend at Carrabassett, and we'd wonder, "Well, should we print this? But"

Anyway, so yeah, there were, and we did everything else, I mean it was just incredible that we survived that. We didn't know how to run the press, but we had to run it, and it was a job printing shop, we didn't know how to do job printing. Jesus, I don't know how many pieces of type I broke trying to learn, on the job training. We worked there, I mean, you can't do it now, I mean people, we worked seven days a week and a lot of nights I slept at the *Star*. It was amazing what we did. But we got the paper shaped up within a year. But then we had a successful publication that really didn't need two big egos running it, so that's, you know, and Sandy was the guy that had the money in the paper, Sandy was the guy that took the big risk. So that's when I started looking around.

I came to Brunswick 1960. I got to Maine in, a little after St. Patrick's Day in '58, so I worked the rest of '58 and then '59 at the *Star*, and then came to Brunswick, where we are now, in the sixties to be the editor of the *Brunswick Record*. And Paul (*name*) who was publisher, he said, this is an auspicious day for both of us. Well, it turned out his father-in-law had died. Paul had been waiting for his father-in-law to die for I don't know, so he could take over. But I also found out from the guys in the shop that the *Brunswick Record* had had something like nine editors in four years, and they had a pool out there on how long I was going to last. The guy that got six months was very discouraged because he, nobody thought I'd last for six months. But different things happened, so I turned out to be the only guy that hadn't been fired there. And so I stayed on at the *Brunswick Record*, and so we started *Maine Times*.

And then that's how I met, I knew Peter Cox from Kennebunkport, and his father worked in Washington but they had a nice place in Kennebunkport, the Booth Tarkington House. Peter was at Yale when he came to work during the summer with the *Kennebunk Star*. He was pretty, just a volunteer, but he was bright, and I liked his father. His father was a very bright guy, and I used to go there for dinner a lot when we and-, and that's when we first started talking about a statewide publication, that's where *Maine Times*, the idea for *Maine Times*, got started.

But, so that, my position of the editor of the *Kennebunk Star* was what got me involved with the political people of that day, and there was a gubernatorial campaign, John Reed was running for governor.

JR: This would be what, in 1960 about?

JC: I think it was, this was early, this was at the start, this was in the fifties, in '59. And, he had some York County coordinator, a guy named Harry Makes, I think, from Sanford. And I wrote an editorial, John Reed stopped by the office, I wrote an editorial after his visit and said I hoped people didn't vote for him because he was a rimless zero. And Makes came into the office, he was, he looked like he was ready to smash the presses. He was really angry. He said, "What are you doing, calling this guy a rimless zero?" I said, "Well, that's just an expression but, I said, I don't think he's really qualified to be governor."

And I think Frank Coffin was running as a Democrat. And that's how I got involved with Maine

Democratic politics because Peter's father, Oscar Cox, was a contributor to the party and was one of the bright people that they used to write position papers and stuff. And Peter, that same summer, was a volunteer for the Coffin campaign, Frank Coffin was running for governor, and that was in addition to his so-called duties at the *Star*, which weren't that rigorous. And, but Peter introduced me to Frank Coffin, and I think that was probably the first time I met Ed Muskie, who was, let's see, I can't really remember whether he was in Congress, I think he was in Congress, I don't think he was a senator.

JR: No, right after governor I think he became senator. I think in '58 he became senator.

JC: Okay, maybe he was just a new senator. Okay. And then, so that little period of time at the *Star* is interesting and seminal in the sense that, because of the gubernatorial campaign, because of Peter's father's involvement with the Democratic Party and Peter's volunteer work for Frank Coffin, it was kind of a fast education for me, you know, in Maine politics.

And, when I came to edit what was then the *Brunswick Record*, which was a weekly paper, the League of Women Voters in Brunswick was very active, well that was one of their projects or whatever they called it for the year, it was to work on Maine's water, river pollution problem. And of course the Kennebec and the Androscoggin were the two major rivers that were also, you know, terribly polluted. They were like zero oxygen content. And so I started writing editorials in the *Brunswick Record* about the need to start cleaning up these rivers, which, if it hadn't been for circumstances, either PK wouldn't have let those editorials appear or I would have been fired for writing them. But his son Cam had started to take over the paper then, and PK wasn't that well. And the circulation of the *Record* was going up, because there had been a feisty editor.

And I went up to Augusta with some of the League ladies and heard these guys from the paper company argue against the water classification bill, because they were going to close down all the paper mills in Maine if they started trying to clean up the rivers, which was bullshit. But anyway, that interest, the picking of that project as sort of a, well the editorial stance that the *Brunswick Record* was making, you know, led me to Ed Muskie, who was then just beginning to become Mr. Clean in the Senate.

And I never, you know, I'm not aware of the circumstances that led him, I think he, he was on a committee, one of the committees, that he was assigned because they thought it was like a nothing committee and he was a freshman senator, and if they put him over here they weren't going to hear much from him for a while. But instead, you know, he picked up on the issue and began to really fight for federal involvement in water cleanup efforts, air and water. And so, I started then, I think, talking on the phone to people in Muskie's office about different, well, different aspects of the federal, you know, what money was available from the federal system under the different water classification acts that Muskie was championing, you know, in the Senate, and in the headlines. And, because the Kennebec and the Androscoggin were from his home state, but they were right up there in the top ten polluted rivers in the whole country. So, you know, circumstances led to my involvement with Ed Muskie's office.

And then, I'm not sure of the sequence but, so there was that back and forth, and I think, you know, I hadn't really seen, I didn't see him that much, but I was in touch with his office because

of the information that we needed to know about what federal aid was available, and what the federal laws were. And the water classification act was pretty clever really, in the sense that it operated in stages. They weren't going to just come down, they classified A, B, C, and D, and then there were built in phases of stepping from D, which was what the Kennebec, up to C, and that's how the state got involved because the legislature had to decide, you know, on the time frame for that improvement.

Anyway, it was, the federal government was involved. And, I can't remember the sequence of events, but I think Ed Muskie had to run for reelection again, no, oh I know one of the things that happened. Somewhere in there, back in the early sixties, at the same time the water thing was going on, there was a Democratic convention in Maine, and there was a rivalry between two candidates, either for Congress or for governor, I can't remember. But I know that there was a lot of, it was contested and there were factions at the convention supporting candidate A and candidate B. And Ed Muskie, who was then, by that time, was sort of the head of the Maine Democratic Party, I mean he wasn't, he didn't hold any specific office but he was definitely running things. And, so I was up there in Lewiston reporting on that convention, I'm pretty sure it was Lewiston, and I found out that Ed Muskie was meeting with different people who, from the delegates, to set things up so that the candidate he wanted, I wish I could remember who it was but that was forty years ago. But anyway, Ed of course got what he wanted, and the vote, you know, in the end the convention supported his candidate.

So I wrote an article for the *Brunswick Record* about how Ed Muskie had, you know, made sure that his candidate was the guy that got nominated, and that ran in the *Brunswick Record*. That was in late summer, they had their conventions later then. But anyway, that winter, sometime after the election in November, somewhere in there the Associated Press sent me an award, I hadn't even known the article was being considered, they sent. I won the award for the best political reporting in New England for that year, it was something like a hundred bucks, but from the Associated Press. So the next morning I go into the office, there's a telegram from Ed Muskie on my desk, and he said, "John, congratulations on your award," he said, "I'm glad you never let the truth get in the way of telling a great story."

JR: That's great.

JC: Or words to that effect.

So, but I think after that piece came out that he became, he became we became more easygoing about exchanges back and forth and about. And I didn't have any trouble ever getting through to him about this or that, and we were becoming more friends than just a reporter and a senator. And after that, oh, but then, then the war started, Vietnam. But then the other thing that happened as the back and forth kept going with his office then, in terms of cleaning up the Androscoggin and the Kennebec, which are both, you know, in Brunswick, so I mean it was a local story. But it was also a national story. But anyway, then the *Times Record*, well it was then the *Brunswick Record* and the *Bath Times*, they merged and became a daily, and that's when I hired Peter Cox from the old days back in Kennebunk, he was then, he had a paper in Saranac Lake, a small daily, which was owned by a Democrat who was a friend of Ed Muskie's. So there were, there were connections maintained. And then Peter and I, of course, quit the *Times Record*

to start *Maine Times*. And-

JR: Yeah, tell me about that.

JC: That was October 10, the first issue of *Maine Times* came out October 10, 1968 and Ed Muskie was on the cover.

JR: That's right, yeah, he was compared to (*unintelligible phrase*), right?

JC: Because he was running for president, I think. I'm sure of it.

JR: Vice president in '68.

JC: Vice president, right, vice president. And, so there was more communication back and forth. And Don, I think Don Nicoll, he was there then, I'm not sure, but anyway we, I didn't have any trouble getting, oh, I know one other thing that happened while I was still at the *Brunswick Record*, or the *Times Record*. I wrote an edi-, I don't know why they did this, but anyway, I wrote an editorial, you know, there's like ten thousand of these editorials, but about, because there'd been a series of bad auto dealer truck accidents, so I wrote, you know, about the need for better regulation and truck driver's who were being overworked and needed more rest. It was a standard, you know, drive safely and better, you know, behaved, etcetera, etcetera, higher standards, more police work, blah-blah-blah to prevent people from getting killed. So, lo and behold, John Reed, the very same guy that I called a rimless zero, he was then in Washington working as a lobbyist for the American Trucking Association. So they picked up on that editorial, and I got a letter from John inviting me and my wife down to Washington to get the award from the truckers for, you know, this editorial trying to co-opt me into, anyway, so I'm thinking, "Hey, I don't care, I'll take a trip to Washington any day." So then we stayed in one of those great old hotels, the (*name*) or someplace, it was pretty well organized, that trip.

But Ed Muskie found out we were coming down there, and I must say he did a great job. He kind of co-opted the ATA. I went to that dinner, but the next day Ed arranged a reception in one of the Senate rooms, like what you would call a cocktail party, before dinner reception. And, man, he pulled out all the stops. Strom Thurmond was there, the guy [Robert] Byrd from West Virginia, he was there, and Ed was just shoving me around, me and Jean around the room, introducing us to all these high powered senators. And it was just a charming moment.

So, you know, I remember saying to Jean when it was over, I said, "Man, he's got a lot of clout for, you know, a senator from Maine, he got all these heavy weights down there just to meet some little dinky newspaper editor." And Republicans, too, I mean Strom, so funny, Strom Thurmond even in those days seemed old to me. His hair was almost incandescent, he was using some shitty dye. But, I thought that was very, very sweet of Ed Muskie to do that, and he did it well. I mean, it wasn't any half-assed reception, it was a time that, you know, Jean and I would hardly ever have that kind of a chance to meet all those people at the same time. And, I mean, there was nobody else there, it was just for us. Anyway -

JR: Wow. Yeah, let me switch the tape over real quick.

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

JC: . . . another sort of seminal moment in the sense that, you know, it cemented our friendship.

JR: Right.

JC: And then *Maine Times* came, and at the same time that he ran for, he was being considered as Vice President. A whole other set of circumstances started up in Eastern Maine and we're trying to, these things just, they- like bonfires, they just spread all of a sudden. They decided that Maine's deep water ports should be used as terminals for oil refineries that would be built along the coast in small places, like Machias was one, Machiasport really was where the -

JR: That's right, the trade zone.

JC: - refinery and the terminal was going to be. And there was another one at Eastport, and there was another one in Portland Harbor, and there was another one somewhere else. And so they started, and *Maine Times*, you know, we were looking for issues. I was, I mean I was the editor of *Maine Times* and I, you know, I didn't have to clear anything with anybody. And so we just went, I decided that one of the things we should do was to try and stop these oil refineries. And Ed Muskie got involved, and I don't understand the mechanics of it, but he, he set up a series of hearings, congressional hearings up and down the coast, maybe three or four, in these communities where the oil refineries proposals, I don't know, you know, I'm not sure of the procedures that just allow a guy to say, okay, we're going to have a set of congressional hearings. But he engineered that, and of course *Maine Times*, which had got so much invested in opposing these refineries, so much energy, not money, but, you know, I felt I had to go to those hearings, even though they were miles and miles up the coast. And I put a lot of miles on the car then, driving to places like Machiasport.

Anyway, Ed showed up at a couple of those hearings, and we talked, and of course he was prominently mentioned in the editorials and columns that I wrote about, you know, the need to stop these things. None of them ever came through, none, not one. The closest was Pittston up in Eastport, that went on and on and on. And somehow, I can't remember the specifics, but Campobello got mentioned, and so I got a call from Ed Muskie, or maybe it was a telegram or, I think it was a phone call. He wanted, he was on the commission with Canada and Campobello Preservation Commission or something. He asked me if I'd like to come up to Campobello because the commission was going to meet then and I could sit in on a couple of their meetings, and of course I said yeah. That was another long trip, but at that meeting, you know, we saw a lot of each other because that's kind of an isolated place, I mean, there weren't that many people around. So we talked, you know, we did quite a bit of talking about non-governmental things, you know, Maine in general, and I, you know, I was delighted to be able to be involved with Campobello. I'd never seen it, it's a beautiful spot.

JR: I've never been.

JC: So that was another meeting. And then, you know, this was the best time we had, was out of the blue, somewhere back in the late sixties. I know, because Jean and I, we were living at the place in Pownalborough, and we lived there until '72 so it was in the sixties, it's somewhere in there. I got a phone call, Ed Muskie's office said he was going to be landing at the Brunswick Naval Air Station and he had two or three different places he had to be in Maine, and would I meet him at the airport and drive him around for the day to these places. So of course I said yeah. But we didn't have much of a car, you know, but, it was a Ford station wagon, I think it was a Falcon. Anyway, so I drive out to the Naval Air Station and I, he was all alone, he got off the plane and got in the car, in the front seat. It was pretty chilly, it was some, you know, it was in the fall. Anyway, we drove around. I can't remember exactly where we went, I know we went to Lewiston for one meeting, but then there were a couple more places. Anyway, and we had lunch together and then towards the end of the day, 4:30 or five, I took him back to the Naval Air Station, he got on the plane and flew back to Washington. But, so then I put a big sign on the front seat of that car, it said, "Ed Muskie Sat Here." Nobody is going to use this seat for at least a week.

So that was a nice day together. And I didn't see so much of him after that, although then, when he ran for president I drove over to Worcester, Massachusetts because one of our daughters was working for George McGovern, who was also in that primary. And she was coordinating get out the vote, you know, in the McGovern campaign in Worcester, and that was the night of the Massachusetts, or the day of the Massachusetts primaries, so I drove over there to be at the Worcester headquarters, the Democratic Party headquarters, to see who was going to win. Because that primary, the Massachusetts primary for one reason or another was critical to Ed Muskie, and he lost. So I came back and I wrote a column for the *Maine Times* about "The Night They Drove Old Muskie Down", there was a, Joan Baez had a song, "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down".

JR: Okay, The Band did it. Right.

JC: Yeah. So I took those verses and just paraphrased them a little bit, and wrote about the high cost of the famous scene in New Hampshire when he lost it a little bit, I think mostly from fatigue. But anyway, so that was, you know, I felt badly about that, not about the column, but I felt badly about the fact that he lost because I thought he would have been a good president. Objectively, not, you know, just because I knew him. Just because I thought he was a good man.

And then after that I started drifting away from *Maine Times* and I got involved with a publication called *World Paper* which was started by a friend of mine, and I went to Boston to be the editor of *World Paper* and kind of pulled away from Maine a little bit. For a little while, not long. Then I came back to Maine, but by that time Peter had pretty much taken over *Maine Times*, and then he put *Maine Times* up for sale so, in effect, I really didn't have any responsibilities there, although I contributed a column, I still do. But, I can't remember, I've written so many pieces. But somebody called me and asked me to do an article about Ed Muskie in his sunset years, or some shit like that, but he was down in Kennebunk, Kennebunk Beach really, near the golf course there. He liked to play golf. And so I called him up and I asked him if I could interview him for a while for this article. It was primarily about his reflections, you

know, looking back.

So I went down to Kennebunk Beach, and I think that golf course is (*unintelligible phrase*), anyway, he lived pretty close to it, he and Jane was there. He was very mellow, sitting out on the porch and just a sweater and a, you know, very informal. And we just talked a lot about the old days. It was a, you know, it was not a hard news article, it was just more of a reflection of his days in Washington and as Secretary of State and how he looked back on all of these things. I don't think that article had any real insights in it, it was just a kind of a general piece. But it was, of course, friendly. I liked it. And I think we only talked maybe half an hour about the piece, and the rest of the afternoon we just talked about this and that. Had a nice time.

Then, I didn't see him again for quite a while. My friend Gary Merrill, who's since died, he lived in Falmouth, he and I, we were always doing this and that politic-, you know, he was a very active guy politically in the sense that he got involved in the issues, and I loved his energies. So he called me up, Gary, he called me all the time, and we talked almost every day. I ended up writing a book about his life. But anyway, he said, "Hey, you know, Ed Muskie's going to be in Brunswick at a Democratic clambake," he said, "Why don't we go over and pick on him?" And Gary was, he was a true radical, I mean neither party ever went as far as he wanted them to go. He was outraged by the war, and he used to pick on Ed Muskie about why he didn't oppose the war more strenuously. But he liked Ed. And so anyway I said, "Sure, I'll meet you out there." Thomas Point Beach, not far from here. So I went out there and, I got this picture where, this was taken at that clambake. And that's Gary and me and Ed. And that turned out to be the last time I saw him.

JR: Really?

JC: Yeah, and I was glad I got that picture. Then of course we didn't talk about anything except jokes and stuff, but -

JR: Do you remember about when that was?

JC: Well, I was trying to think, it had to be sometime in the mid eighties. When did Ed Muskie die?

JR: Oh, he died in '96.

JC: Yeah, so that was the mid to late eighties, actually. And he came not for any other reason except as, you know, Maine Democratic Party royalty. He was there just as a presence to, you know, to help the party in the best sort of old style politicking. But, he was very friendly, you could tell, I mean we were glad to see each other. And by that time, you know, I really, I didn't have any connection then with *Maine Times* except my column, but I was working pretty much just as a freelance writer. And I ended up also somewhere along the line, God, it's just so, if you write a couple of thousand pieces, you know, they, it's hard to file them all away in your mind. But I did another article about Rumford, and about his father as a tailor in Rumford, and about young Ed Muskie as an attorney in Rumford, and I got a little note from him about the article, just saying, you know, good job or something. But I can't remember why or who I did that

article for. I just know that, I also knew Hugh Chisholm whose father started that, the company that made Rumford, you know, what it was. Goddammit, I just- I got to know Rumford pretty well in the process of writing that piece, and also more about Ed Muskie's parents than I had known. And I think that was a, that was my last contact.

But the really, the really supercharged days were back there when we first started with the rivers, and then moved on to the oil refineries. I mean, that's when things were really happening, and differences were being made, you know. Differences were being made primarily because of Ed Muskie and because of the way he took advantage of that opportunity when he was assigned to a nothing committee, and was bright enough to make it bigger than anybody ever thought it could be. And became the key guy in Washington and Maine to look to when you needed federal intervention to, you know, to clean up the rivers or stop the oil refineries. And, those were heady days.

I was on, NBC had a program, kind of a counterpart to "60 Minutes", had a guy named Frank McGee, they came up to Maine. God, everybody was flying up to Maine from the New York City networks. And I was on television up at Machias with McGee and, talking about Muskie and about how to stop the refineries. Things were very active in those days. And Maine, the Maine coast was red-hot copy for a lot of national publications. *Time Magazine*, *Maine Times* was in *Time Magazine* two or three times, and of course Ed Muskie was all over the place. And that was when he and I, you know, we both kind of knew we were, we were making things happen, so that was fun.

So he never wavered, and he never, you know, he never let me down, he never said he was going to do something and didn't do it. He was very, you know, trust-, he was one of, he was a good, for a guy, for a so-called politician, he was a really good guy. He was great. Yeah, I don't know, he did, he did a couple of other things for me, but I can't really remember the details. I mean he asked me down there, and then Bill Hathaway, of course, got elected. And he thinks he got elected because of what I wrote about him in *Maine Times*, but I never disabused him of that, but.

JR: What did you write about him?

JC: Oh, I said that I thought Hathaway was going to beat Margaret Chase Smith. I mean, it wasn't a big deal, but I said, you know, Margaret is beatable. Everybody thinks she isn't, but she is, because she's getting old, she's senile. And, so Hathaway won that election and he came charging into *Maine Times*, he said, "John, you know, you're the guy that got me elected." So then I had two senators in Washington yanking me down there from time to time. So we, you know, it was friendly. I like Bill Hathaway. Bill Hathaway still calls me once in a while. Anyway, those were good times, very heady times for a, you know, a newspaper guy who didn't know shit from Shinola really. But I learned; but anyway.

JR: With your work at the *Maine Times*, you covered the State House, right?

JC: Yeah.

JR: Tell me about that, like who, like what were the major, did you incorporate -?

JC: Well, the thing was, when we started *Maine Times* in '68, you know, I said to Peter, I said, you know, "One way we're going to compete with the dailies is they don't have anybody really working at the State House." They have a, I think it was Phyllis Austin who we hired away, but I said, "They have the AP bureau up there, a couple of people, and that's it." You know, I mean the *Press Herald* was running Associated Press coverage out of Augusta, and so was the *Bangor Daily News*. I said, you know, "There's a hell of a lot going on up there." Especially in those days when environmental legislation was red-hot. So I said, you know, "I think we ought to have somebody in Augusta." And Peter was the publisher, you know, and in charge of all the money, he said, "We can't afford it." And I said, "Well, I'll go up there." So I went up there and that was fascinating for me because I didn't know anything about the legislature. But there were some bright people in the legislature in those days. I think, ahh, I don't want to get into that, but I mean, I think the quality of the people in the Maine legislature's really gone down in the last forty years. But some people were up there because they felt it was their obligation to be there. Guys like Joe Soule, he didn't need that job. And Harry Richardson and Hoddy Hildredth, I mean they had more money, you know, than they knew what to do with. But they were at the legislature because they felt an obligation to Maine, they wanted, and it was, hell Peter, that's the closest he ever came to hitting me. He said, "You got to stop writing about these Republicans." I said, "Hey, they're the only guys that are doing anything," I said, "the Democrats don't have, you know, people capable enough to do this, you know, they got Louis Jalbert." And he said, "Yeah, but". I said, "Peter, the Republicans are doing the very things that *Maine Times* has been editorializing about, they're the ones that are drawing up the legislation to protect Maine's harbors, they're the ones that are drawing up the legislation to clean up Maine's air and to clean up the rivers." They're in charge, you know, and they, you know, they're working with Ken Curtis, who was a Democrat, they're working with Ed Muskie to get the federal, whatever the federal, you know, cooperation is. Boy, he had his fists clenched. And, but he got over that. But guys like Joe Soule, and Hollis Wyman who was a blueberry king from Washington County, he was a big right wing, well, not a right wing, not like the Ku Klux Klan, but he was a conservative Republican. I wrote a big article about him and that pissed Peter off. But I liked Hollis, I didn't necessarily approve of some of his politics, but he was an honest man. And he, you know, he wanted to maintain the integrity of the blueberry fields in Maine. Besides, he was charming. He asked me up, he asked me, he invited me and Jean up there. Charming.

Anyway, those were the guys that were getting things done. Actually, the 101st legislature, or the 99th, right around there, the 100th, all those three (*unintelligible word*), the laws that were passed then that are still in effect have done more to protect Maine than any other laws passed by any other legislature. And they, Joe Soule was a doctrinaire Republican, he was this bright guy, he was in touch with Ed Muskie's office about what the feds could do. You know, there was a cooperation there on Maine's, on behalf of Maine's environmental integrity, and it was, and you know, a lot of times Joe and Ken McCloud, who was another Republican, that they would ask me, you know, based on the articles that we'd been writing in *Maine Times*, you know, "What do you think we ought to do?" It wasn't political, it was in Maine's best interest. And, so those laws are still on the books, the site selection law, which in effect, you know, prevented sloppy oil refineries and that, the aluminum refinery at Trenton, God, they had some wild schemes, boy.

They didn't, you know, and those guys, they were never really interested in a refinery, they were interested in their, in the fees that they could get for raising the money for these projects, you know. So they'd go down to Wall Street and raise twenty or thirty million dollars, and they'd get whatever their fee was, five percent of that. They didn't give a shit if those refineries ever got built, but they were up there plugging them so they'd get that money. And of course none of them ever did get built.

But anyway, so no, my time in Augusta in those days, I couldn't have timed it better because all of those issues were coming up, you know. If I had been up there this, there's nothing up there this term. I mean, there's teacher fingerprinting and the budget, deposits on cigarette butts. But nothing, nothing that has Maine at stake. In those days they were building legislation that, you know, that decided, in many ways decided Maine's future in terms of preventing the over-industrialization of the coast. Also, regulations about land use, and the exploitation of the Maine woods. Lot going on back then. Anyway, which involved Ed Muskie indirectly in the sense that every time any of these issues came up in the legislature one of the first questions was, you know, "What sort of assistance can we get from the federal government?"

Yeah, that was fun. I learned a lot about Augusta. I had a great time up there, too, in the sense that all the senators, the state senators and the people in the house that I talked to, they were all very bright, good people. And they didn't, nobody up there ever bullshit me, I mean, they told me the truth about what was happening, or they didn't say anything, but they didn't lie to me. No, we had a good relationship. And Ken Curtis, I thought, was a good governor, and I had a fine time with him. We were always, he was a straight guy. Sit in his office, he'd be smoking a cigar.

But no, I don't know, for a kid who wanted to be a reporter, I got to be one. And I always thought that, I thought I'd made a good decision about the state legislature once I got up there. I mean, I found it to be exciting. And after the Bangor paper and the Portland paper editors started reading the *Maine Times* coverage of the legislature, all of a sudden they hired State House people, and they put good people up there. So, in one way, *Maine Times* was responsible for better coverage of the legislature. Now that *Maine Times* isn't doing it, the *Press Herald*, man, the poor old *Press Herald*. But anyway, they're not doing any coverage, you know, and it's back to the AP again. The Bangor paper, the *Bangor Daily's* doing the best job now covering the legislature. So, yeah, that was fun.

JR: How about, I read that you actually had a bunch of interesting editorials about Jim Longley? Tell me, talk to me about him.

JC: Jim, ha-ha, Jim Longley. Yeah, well, I always thought Jim Longley was, I said, before he was elected I wrote an editorial for *Maine Times*, or a column, I forget which, they weren't that different, but I wrote about Boris Karloff in "The Lost Patrol", which was an old movie about these legionnaires who were lost in the desert. It was a classic. That's the trouble with you young guys, you don't get this, Hollywood doesn't make movies like, good movies anymore, not many. But anyway, there were ten or fifteen of these legionnaires out in the Sahara who had been cut off by, well, whatever native troops that were, those guys riding camels. And Boris Karloff was a religious fanatic and, a legionnaire, who carried his Bible around all the time, and

he, they were running out of water, you know, the way they do in movies, everybody's thirsty. And Boris went bananas, he wandered off into the desert because he thought he saw palm trees ahead of him. Then he had this really wide-eyed sort of stare, when he was going absolutely nuts, wandering off. He died out there, but, because he kept thinking God had brought him water. So I wrote this column and I described Boris Karloff in that movie and said, "The only other person I've seen with that look in his eyes is Jim Longley." I said, you know, "He's nuts." And that didn't endear me to him. But then he became governor and that was another time that Peter and I almost came to blows. Peter thought Jim Longley was going to do a good job for Maine because Jim Longley claimed to be a businessman but, and I kept, I kept writing, I'd go up to Augusta when Longley was up there and I kept writing about the fact that he was all talk and no action, and that he'd call these press conferences at like seven o'clock in the morning but then never said anything, it was just bombast. And I said, you know, this is the most wasteful four years in Maine history, the guy's never going to do anything. He would never speak to me.

But in the end, you know, I don't take any pleasure in being right, but he never did do anything. He didn't sponsor one serious piece of legislation the whole time he was up there. But everybody, a lot of people, thought he was popular because he kept attacking the bureaucracy and government, saying he was going to straighten it out. He never straightened out. And then I kept picking on him because he said he was going to do something and then he wouldn't do it, so I would remind people in the paper that Longley said this on such and such a date, now it's today and he hasn't done anything. Which really pissed him off. But, yeah, I, you know, I didn't really dislike him, I mean I just thought he was so totally incompetent, and it surprised me that all, everyone was sort of taken in by him. But in the end they weren't; he proved over the years he couldn't do much. He was a good insurance salesman.

I had to go, I was asked to speak at Holyoke, Massachusetts, I mean the college.

JR: Mount Holyoke.

JC: Is it Mount Holyoke? Yeah. So I drove over there. I think, It wasn't a big lecture, it was just to talk to the students who were interested in journalism. There couldn't have been more than fifty or sixty of them there. So, I'm talking about the need to, you know, be perceptive and honest about people and saying, you know, a lot of the journalists in Maine never really asked Jim Longley the right questions, they never pressed him. They just were swept away by the fact that he was an Independent, I said, but you know, he doesn't know how to govern. And so this person stands up and she, in the question thing, and she said, "Why, why do you think that?" And I said something, and then I asked her her name, and she said, Susan Longley. So that was kind of a rough moment there. But she's still active.

JR: Yeah, she's in the legislature. She's a Senator.

JC: But, well by and large Maine's had good leadership, but it never was better than it was during the Muskie years, you know. I don't think, I know Bill Cohen pretty well. He's a competent guy, but he's, he never did as much for Maine as Ed Muskie did. You know, Ed Muskie was rare in that sense, in that even though he, you know, he was vice presidential nominee and presidential hopeful at one point, and Secretary of State, he never, ever forgot

Maine. And he was always operating in Maine's best interest, he was. I don't think Olympia and Susan, they make a big deal out of paying attention to this and that, and of course everybody in Washington from Maine supports the Bath Iron Works, but they don't have the vision to generate the legislation that benefits Maine as much as Ed Muskie did.

And there's been a lot written about the fact that some of the reasons he did that was because he was stuck on what was supposed to be a do-nothing committee. But, you know, I, that doesn't, in my view that doesn't lessen the, you know, integrity of his accomplishments, you know. I don't care what the motive is. A lot of people could have done a lot of different things with that same position, but he did a great deal for Maine's future. And, you know, since Ed Muskie there hasn't been any, there haven't been any public figures of his stature operating on Maine's behalf. He was, he's a good model for anybody who wants to run for office from Maine. But-

JR: Did you know, did he have many critics among Maine journalists?

JC: Oh, I don't know, well, you know, some Maine journalists just have to be Republicans, so they were critics in the sense that they don't want to see federal intervention in any, they say they don't. So, you know, their dogma was, you know, less federal regulation. But no, I don't think anyone, they didn't ever criticize him as an individual, only as a leader of a philosophy of government that they oppose, or say they oppose. I'm not sure they do. You know, if the feds come along and say, oh we're going to give all the paper companies in Maine a fifty percent tax break, you wouldn't find those guys very critical of federal intervention. But that's always been the Republican criticism about the Democrats in a kind of classic philosophical sense, is that the Democrats spend too much public money on behalf of the public as opposed to the Republicans who spend public money on behalf of business.

But, I don't know any, I never read anything critical of Ed Muskie as an individual. You know, I've read a lot of stuff. I've read a lot of controversial interpretations of a famous snowy day in New Hampshire, about why he broke down. And I read stuff here and there in different biographies and different magazine pieces about his temper, but I never, ever, the whole time, all those years, I never ever experienced that temper. I never saw even the slightest indication that he might lose his temper. But I guess it had to be there because I read about it a lot, but it never surfaced in any of our -

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

JR: We're on Tape two, Side A, of the interview with John Cole. And, well along that vein, what I was asking about with his critics, I've read that John Gould, of the Lisbon Enterprise, that he was, he hated Muskie, I think I heard that.

JC: Well, John Gould, John, I like John, I mean, but he, John Gould didn't like any Democrats. I mean, you know, if Joan of Arc had been a Democrat he would have found something snotty to say about her. John Gould, he adopted that pose in many ways. But I mean, he felt that his constituency readership of his *Lisbon Enterprise* had to be conservative Republican, I mean that's who he was writing for. And he was writing, he was satirizing all government and, I don't

think, but I'm never sure whether John was serious or not. He's kind of a bright, cranky guy; very funny man. But the *Enterprise* didn't last that long anyway. I don't think it made it through the year, maybe two, but not more than two. It was funded by, you know, by the conservative Republicans, the business owners who, you know, they put a couple of thousand dollars here and there, you know, give John the money to run it. It wasn't making any money as a publication, it wasn't self-sustaining. There was never enough advertising. It was kind of an odd paper. But I'm sure Johnny's in his nineties, now I got a note from him not long ago, I reviewed his book, he sent me a note, it said, "Thanks." But I think John, if you pinned him down about Muskie as a person, as an individual, as a man, John Gould would have said, "You know, he's okay." I think he picked on him as a Democrat.

Yeah, I mean, you know, John Gould was right around the, I mean Muskie broke the mold as far as the Democratic Party in Maine was concerned. If it hadn't been for him, the you know, the Republicans would, at least in their eyes, the Republicans would be in charge.

JR: Okay. I guess beyond that, just to kind of get a sense from you, like I've read, I see your book Striper there, and how it actually had an influence on a moratorium on bass fishing, with I think Senator (*name*) McCaffey?

JC: No, not really, she's an airhead.

JR: All right, I just wanted to get, just a general impression from you of how you think your work as a journalist, or like just how journalism in general, like influences government and also public opinion?**JC:** Oh well, I think it depends on how perceptive any journalist is about the issues affecting the future. In other words, I think that a good journalist has to be able to define the issues that are about to happen, so that the people who read the publication can comprehend what needs to be done. I don't think, I think, you know, one of the aspects of journalism is to report on the explosion at the herring factory yesterday, you know. But the important thing about that story outside of the, you know, the damage, etcetera, is why did it happen, you know, what needs to be done to prevent it. The Kennebec got transformed from one of the richest rivers on the planet, in terms of the marine life that occupied each cubic foot, to one of the worst rivers in America, and absolute, no marine life of any kind, it was dead. Not even the most stubborn, primitive stuff could live there. But that happened right under the noses of so-called journalists. A newspaper's supposed to report on what's happening. Ninety percent of them didn't see it, ninety percent of them were so kind of swept away by the idea that the paper companies were paying people, you know, ten dollars an hour or whatever the hell it was, you know, the high wages, that they, and cities like Augusta pouring their shit in the river, nobody, a good journalist would have seen that and would have thought, would have been able to define that issue so the readers of that publication understood that this might not be in their long term best interests.

A good journalist anticipates and defines the issues for the reader. You know, the *New York Times* is a good newspaper because it perceives the issues on a national and international level, and it defines those issues so clearly that the readers, including guys in Congress, know what needs to be done to correct it. They don't always do it, but at least they've been shown what needs to be done that will affect the future. And, that's what good journalism is about as far as

I'm concerned.

And that's what we tried to do at *Maine Times*, was to define the issues that affected the future of Maine so that the people in the legislature and out would know what needed to be done. You know, we covered the news, but we didn't cover many murders and we didn't cover, you know, disasters. Too much journalism is, you know, yesterday's facts as opposed to tomorrow's necessity. And I've had a lot of arguments with people about opinionated journalism. And what I've always said was, you know, all, all reporting is subjective, and there's no such thing as a piece of reporting that doesn't have opinion in it, you know. We have a line that defines so-called objective journalism, (*unintelligible phrase*) and I would say, well, you could say there are 0-0 trees in Russia, you know, just fill in the blank, once you count those trees, and that's objective journalism. But it really doesn't tell anybody anything, you know, it's just a fact. You need the facts to certify opinion, and that's why you have to do the reporting, you got to be in the place, you got to listen to what people are saying, you got to do your research. But you should also write so that you provoke people into thinking, you give them enough information so that they can think clearly about the issue at hand and how to, how it might best be resolved.

And you don't find much reporting like that, you know, shit, I read the *Portland Press Herald* now and I'm thinking, man, I read this newspaper, I still read a lot of newspapers cover to cover, I'm reading this newspaper, what do I know about Portland, what do I know, what have I learned about Maine? Not a hell of a lot most of the time. What have I learned about the issues affecting Maine? Zip, most of the time. You know, they're reporting after the fact. And they say, oh well, Angus may veto the fingerprinting bill. What the hell does that mean, I mean what's important about, why is the fingerprinting bill controversial, you know, etcetera, etcetera. That's what, good journalism should define that issue for the reader so that they know what, the basic value systems involved, you know, what they are, and what their choices are. And nobody's ever interviewed Angus thoughtfully about his pig headed support of that bill, you know. Why? Why is Angus so locked into fingerprinting? He's one stubborn sonofabitch when it comes to, you know, these kinds of things. But why not spend a couple hours with him and try and find out, what is it in his life, what is it in his experience that makes him so stubborn about this one issue. But, you know, they don't do that much these days. There are not many thoughtful publications. You know, people object to the *Times* because it's big and it's rich and it's Democratic, but goddammit the *Times* is good journalism in the sense that they do define the issues.

So, I don't see much of that going on. I certainly don't see any at the *Press Herald* now, and the *Press Herald* is Maine's biggest daily paper and it shits, and that's primarily because Frank Blethen has just crucified the staff there. I know for a fact that eighteen good people have quit there in the last year and a half. I don't know how the hell they're getting the paper out now. I look at it, I count the number of locally generated stories, put them up against the wire services or the syndicated pieces, there are very few local pieces. And there's nobody at the State House, you know, so. Good journalism is journalism that defines the issues that affect the future of the town, of the village, of the county, of the state, of the country, you know, whatever scale you want to put it on. You don't get that on the Internet. Everybody says, what you get on the Internet is baseball scores, if you're interested, you know, and the results of the U.S. Open. Or the vote count on the bill to, you know, lend Russia money. But you don't get any, you don't get

what I call information, you don't get anything off the net that allows you to define the issue in your own mind.

But, so you know, in that sense I'm proud of *Maine Times*. We did that, that was, *Maine Times* was a reflection of those concerns of mine. We tried to define the issues. And people say that I was opinionated and that I was a radical. You know, a lot of guys in the Maine legislature would stand up and call me a Communist, as if they knew, you know, what a Communist is. But, but we did get, we got people thinking about the issues. And so, right or wrong, I think that we were successful at least in reflecting my values, my journalis-, I mean my definition of journalist, and I didn't give a shit if people complained. What I was concerned about was how, who was reading *Maine Times*, and how they were responding. And so it turned out that they responded, they responded, negatively or positively, I didn't care about that. I didn't, you know, I didn't mind the letters that were upset with what we wrote. That meant they were thinking about it. That was the whole point. And it was, you know, there was enough interest in the paper to allow it to sustain on its own; it made money. Not a hell of a lot, but it was self-supporting and generated its own income, it generated its own fuel. And that's how, you know, that's another definition of what journalism should do. You know, you should be provocative enough to sustain the publication so that you don't have to go out and keep borrowing money to keep it going.

I read a piece in *The New Yorker* yesterday about New York journalism, written by (*name*), he's a very good reporter. Those guys, they're borrowing like fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty-two million dollars to finance a publication, you know, on the Internet that was supposed to give people information. But it didn't work. Of course it didn't work. First of all, they weren't giving them anything really important, they weren't helping them think. They were just giving them facts about who was borrowing this amount of money and, I don't know, so-called business publication. Thirty-two million dollars, just gone. And Peter and I started *Maine Times* for thirty thousand dollars, and we borrowed another thirty or forty. And we started making money in our second year, and we made money up until Dodge Morgan bought it, stupid (*unintelligible word*), so he started throwing money at it thinking it needed to be improved, hired that dickhead who's the editor at the *Globe* now, Matt Storm, paid him a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a year to head it. *Maine Times* for Christ's sake? That was our total budget. And, you know, all of a sudden, for the first time *Maine Times* was losing money, and readers. I mean, that's what happens. Dodge, he's an engineer, he's not an editor. He made his money off of fuzzi busters.

JR: What's that in the jargon?

JC: You know, radar in the car.

JR: Oh, okay. Oh, yeah, yeah.

JC: But that's okay. *Maine Times* may be coming back now. I'm not sure, have to wait and see. But it's still going. It's a little timid, though. There isn't any really outspoken newspaper in Maine. The best newspaper in Maine now may be the *Lewiston Sun-Journal*.

JR: You think?

JC: Yeah. I think Mark Mogensen, he's a good editor, they're putting some effort into their reporting. I think, yeah. I don't really see that many good weeklies around. *Falmouth Forecaster's* not too bad. Small, but still, pays a lot of attention to the community, does try to outline the issues. Does that answer that question?

JR: Quite well, yeah. I think I'm just about done. One, I would say one question to ask would be, do you know of anyone else that you think we might want to interview, to get like, you know, either from the journalism world or otherwise, that would be able to give a perspective on Ed Muskie and Maine in general?

JC: Oh. No, I don't know, Don Hansen, is he still alive?

JR: I think we've interviewed him.

JC: Yeah. And Peter Cox?

JR: Yeah, we've interviewed him, yeah, we got him.

JC: Well those are the two guys that I know of. Too bad Gary's not still alive; he'd be a great interview.

JR: Gary?

JC: Gary Marrow.

JR: Oh, yeah.

JC: He had a love-hate thing with Ed Muskie going, but in the end he really liked him, and they were friends. No, I can't think of anyone.

JR: That's right, Gary had calls with him about his, Muskie's position on Vietnam, right?

JC: Yeah. But no, you know, I mean, there are not many guys, we're getting old. There are not that many guys around.

JR: Yeah. All right, well thank you very much for your time.

JC: Well, yeah, hey- I wish I could be more specific about some of the dates, but -

JR: No, that's all right, I mean, you had plenty of detail in your stories so that's what we go for.

End of interview

moh287.int.wpd