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Hary, Edith oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Edith Hary by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Hary, Edith

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
September 2, 2004

Place
Pemaquid Point, Maine

ID Number
MOH 439

Biographical Note

Edith Hary was born on September 18, 1922 and grew up in Camden, Maine. Her mother was a homemaker and her father was a textile designer. After graduating from high achool, Hary moved to Northampton, Massachusetts to be an aid to a handicapped girl. She returned home and began working at the Camden Public Library. She then attended Bates College, majoring in Government with a minor in English. While at Bates, she worked in Coram Library. After graduating in 1947, she was offered a job at the State Library in Augusta. She would later become head of the Law and Reference section. She also was named citizen member of the Board of Bar Examination.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background; early life in Camden, Maine; economic and social structure of Camden; Bates College social life 1943-1947; Coram library; Maine State Law Library; Maine legislature and law; Muskie speeches; Louis Jalbert; description of work in the law section of the library; and the Law pamphlet.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview on September 2nd, the year 2004 at Pemaquid Point, Maine, with Edith Hary, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. If I could start just by having you spell--, say your full name and spell it?

Edith Hary: Edith Lydia Hary, H-A-R-Y.

AL: And where and when were you born?

EH: I was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, by mischance, on September 18th, 1922. My mother was planning to come home to Rockland to have me born, and my brother, who was just an infant, came down with polio so I was born in Rhode Island. And since I was nine months old I have lived in Maine, which the legislature tried to cure by giving me a Maine birth certificate but I don't know the difference.

AL: So when you came back to Maine it was Rockland where you lived?

EH: Well, actually it was Camden.

AL: Camden, and your parents, what were their occupations?

EH: Well, my mother was brought up in Rockland in a comfortable family, and her mother died when she was one and her one idea was that being the youngest in her family she wanted to have a family of her own because she'd never been permitted to do anything domestic and she wanted to. All the rest of her family was well educated and went to college; mother wasn't interested. My father's father was a mill superintendent, and my father was trained to be a textile designer, which he hated and which his parents had chosen for him, particularly his father, and, he hated all of it and ultimately, after having five children he simply left. I don't have anything further to say about him except that I know he lived to be quite old.

AL: And growing up in that area, what was it like politically, religiously?

EH: Well, Camden was a very quiet town then. It was mostly, the occupations of people were running the five or six mills. That's why my grandfather was in Camden originally, and then he left to have a mill of his own in Woonsocket where my father was working when I was born. And there were, I don't know, there were five or six mills along the river in Camden that made a variety of fine textiles, and the last one made what they called "paper maker felts," which were used in the paper industry in Maine, and they finally went out of business, and that's where MBNA, the credit card company, is headquartered.

Camden was a very quiet town. When I started school, I went to a one room school house with, several classes and by the time you got to the second grade I know that the first day the teacher

said, Now boys and girls, pack your pencil boxes and get your partner, and we're going on an expedition. And we walked from Millville, as that part of town was called, to the brand new brick school on Hilton Street, and that was very exciting. And from then on I was in regular school with classes, which shows you that Camden was slowly developed. They had a lot of boat business, repair and so forth, they always did that.

And they had the summer colony that was centered around people from Philadelphia and the Curtis Institute of Music because the Bock-Curtis family, lived in the area and they had musicians who were summering there all summer. We had wonderful music. You could hear a harpist in any house, sometimes two or three practicing because there was a big harp school there because [Carlos] Salzedo [http://www.harpa.com/salzedo/] was a Curtis Institute person. And my godmother's daughter, who was a very close friend of mine would study cello in the summer with some of the Curtis Institute. And it was a time of very good music, very good music.

And I read everything, mother said poetry to us when, to go to sleep, then she'd finish, fold up their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away, and she would slip off. But we always read, we all could read because we were taught to read by the time we were three, and that was a very great help.

AL: That was something your mother believed strongly in?

EH: Oh well, she was a self educated person and she always read, she read to us, and the first of her marriage and living in Camden, her cousin, who had brought mother's family up, who was a very elderly lady, lived with us and she taught us how to read and so on. And there were every known variety of churches in Camden, I'm sure. And half of my family went to the Congregational church, because they went with mother who had been brought up with that in Rockland, and half went with Auntie Kay who was an Episcopalian and her nephew was Bishop Slattery and started the Episcopal church in Camden and Rockland, or one of the forebears, not her nephew. But, so some of us went, we didn't have any particular denomination. I don't now; I belong to two churches and don't go to either except if the spirit moves. At Bates, of course, we were confronted with the UB church, and it was a Bates man, I think, Dr. Leonard who was the head of the church, and we all went there first and then people gradually settled down and found one of the churches they went to.

But Camden gradually became more wealthy in many respects. The mills began to be, less prominent in the life of the town, and the Depression was very hard on everybody, very hard. And then during the war, by the time I graduated from high school in 1940, I didn't have any money, I didn't have anything special to do and someone suggested that, I was a nice girl, and I could go to Northampton and be sort of a companion to a girl in a professor's family at Smith who needed help because she was like this, she was twenty four and she was paralyzed from the waist down, and she had advanced arthritis. But she was a very talented girl and she needed some physical help, and she needed some companion. So I stayed down there for three or four months until she had a knee operation, and after that she went west to Tucson.

And then I kind of rattled around and I had already read all my way through the Camden library

and the librarian said to me, well, when I started reading in the adult section she said, well, maybe you'd like to learn how to discharge the books and shelve them and so on and so forth, so I thought that was wonderful. And she told my mother about the apprentice course at the State Library, and Mother had never heard of it, nor had I, and she arranged for, well she just kept talking about it and Mother wrote, and the assistant State Librarian said, well, have Edith come over and we'll talk about it. So I did, and was thought to be acceptable material, and she said to me, would you like to see your uncle?

I thought, I don't have any uncles in Augusta, that's for sure. The only uncle I could think of were my two uncles that were Mother's brothers. Well, it turned out that my uncle, through a political turn of fate, was the state librarian, which was totally unknown to me. He was really the editor of the *Bangor Commercial*, and he was Mother's uncle, he was my great uncle. And apparently, the state librarian had retired about that time, and Governor Barrows was from Bangor, or the area, and he had asked Uncle Hall if he'd come down and pinch hit for a while until they figured out, the library situation.

AL: What was your great uncle's name?

EH: It was Oliver Lee Hall, and it was great grandpa Hall who started this house. And, so I started, and there was a couple from Rockland who lived in Augusta and they had a little girl, and they said I could live with them, that would be good. But it wasn't enough to have just five dollars a week, which was all the money I had, so I didn't, I had to give it up, because I couldn't afford it. So I went home and I had various, impromptu jobs, I guess you'd call them, and then I went through sort of a bad patch and finally someone said, well, we're going to get you back to the library.

And at that time Mrs. Stubbs was the law librarian, Marianne Stubbs, and her husband had unexpectedly died and she had a nine year old son and she was looking for someone to live there. So I went over and was interviewed, and she said she'd been thinking of having someone younger to live in the house because her son was young and she was old to be a mother, I think she told me she was forty four when Bob was born, which is common nowadays but wasn't then. So that began my twenty six years that I lived in the Stubbs family, until she died and Bob was married and she wanted to come home, so that worked out.

And, so I had a wonderful time taking the apprentice course for a full year at the State Library. And the State Library is a public library, but it's not a reading, it's not full of novels and that sort of thing, it's got every category of the Dewey classification, plus it's start was as a law library and the way the law library was developed when it started was that they exchanged the laws that were passed by the legislature with other states, and they exchanged court reports of the Supreme Judicial Court of the state, and sometimes they exchanged department reports, but that was later. The start was purely law. And gradually it developed that they had education and they had religion, and they had every known subject, which were freely for loan to anybody in the state of Maine, because it was a totally tax supported library, and still is.

And the law section was a very active section, and Mrs. Stubbs had worked in a law office before she became the legislative reference librarian. She was not an attorney but she was a

very, very intelligent woman, and she ultimately became state librarian. So I was in the apprentice course for a year, and then I graduated and I became the first step on the ladder which was assistant circulation assistant. And my boss now has a place on the Chamberlain Road, and we kind of laugh sometimes about those days when we run into each other at the post office.

But all the time, I was thinking about going to school Mabel Eaton, of Bates, was very interested in the fact. She knew people in the library field simply because she was an active librarian. And - I'm saying much more than you want, aren't I?

AL: No, that's fine. I was going to ask you how did, in what way did you know Mabel Eaton, and what was she like?

EH: Well, you see, a lot of teachers in Maine went to Bates. Our English teacher went to Bates, Mr. Woods' family were Bates people, and one of my classmates had gone to Bates immediately from high school. Bertha Clason, who was from Gardiner originally, the Clason family, was very instrumental in supporting Bates, and did throughout my knowledge. In fact, Miss Clason used to give me a hundred dollars every year when I stayed at Bates, privately, not to be known. And she was our Latin teacher. So, I had more feeling about Bates without knowing it, just from the people that I'd associated with in going through school. Another classmate of mine went to Bates, [Francis E.] Elijah Richards [class of 1948], and went at the right time, and he became an English teacher, I believe.

Anyway, they were very short staffed at Bates because of the war, and Miss Eaton said, if you come to Bates I will help you, through Harry Rowe, to get some kind of scholarship aide if you get through the first semester, and you can work student hours, as a staff member, but you have to take more responsibility than a student. And I thought that was thrilling, I really liked being in a library, and so I had the great privilege, I thought then, after supper, after we'd had supper, to take the key to that great bronze door of Coram and open up for the evening hours, which were seven to nine-thirty. Actually, they were seven to ten, but by 9:40 I think you began going upstairs and closing the Baptist Room, the hard shell Baptists, because they had straight backed chairs and we pushed them all in. And Miss Eaton was a real stickler for having everything right, and I remember one day, I think I was, I must have been a junior by then, I forgot the date and I didn't go to work. And she had a way of raising her eyebrows, which told you that that was not acceptable.

But the effect of working in the library was that except for studying and working in the library, I didn't really have a college experience, in the way that I would like to, as I look back on it. And I was very discouraged from the outset because my roommate, we lived up Chaney which was fun, my roommate wrote home to her family that she had been rooming with an “older woman,” and that made me feel as if three years out of high school made me, you know, practically gray. Then they had a reception over at Frye Street, what was the -?

AL: Frye Street Union?

EH: Frye Street Union, and I had a hat, I'd never worn a hat but they told us that we were going to have a tea for the women over there, and so I had gloves and I had this hat that my aunt

had given me, because everyone had tried to scramble up enough clothes, to, get me started, and it was a hat I never think I would have worn. And I could hear Miss Clark say to Miss [Lena] Walmsley, "Don't those girls look old now. They'll be so much younger when they graduate." And I could feel her looking at that hat of mine. Oh, dear. (*Aside: They're feeding the gulls over there. That makes me so mad, because those gulls now are as big as geese from the leavings of the sea gulls.*)

Anyway, I really enjoyed Bates, but I was very immature, and I was used to working, was used to being very private. And the many social aspects of Bates which I think are probably treated better now, but there wasn't much to help you. You felt quite private and, you couldn't understand that girls weren't really falling in love with you, or that they were just growing up and so forth, and that made you, withdraw more than, I mean they didn't fall in love, but as I look back I know that. But then it was just all the girls together, just the way probably the boys felt great comradeship and so forth, and I didn't know how to handle that. And I think Bates didn't have that kind of counseling that would help you.

But I did quite well in my things. I think hygiene was the lowest because I found it very uninteresting, but everyone had to take hygiene, it was required. Everybody also had to have a semester of speech. I remember I had the trots the whole term because I was so nervous about having to get up and make speeches, and having Miss Schaeffer there clicking her fingers, pick it up, or can't hear you, or heckling you from the back of the room which she did to make you loosen up, you know, which was very good. Now I can speak better than I can write, and it's easier, and I always hold a book in my hand because that makes me feel comfortable.

But a lot of people say, well, weren't you in Bates the same time McKusick was? And I say, no. Oh, you weren't? I say, no, I was '43 to '47. Well, Vincent McKusick came back to Bates after the war, but he finished in June of that year, I think. And we, when we got into the war, and so many going, the V-12 came along, and I think, President Howard, just before he retired a year or two, talked with the 50-year class, and he said, I don't believe any of you realize how close Bates was to collapsing because the enrollment was so low. Well, we had two relocated Japanese, (*unintelligible word sounds like:* ***Knee-See***) Japanese from camps in Utah, I think, and they were just princes. And we had a very mixed bag of men who were of college age and unfit for service, and then the V-12 came along and that was a real shot in the arm for the college. But I worked almost every night at the library, and I loved that. I loved Mabel Eaton, we gave her a wonderfully nice retirement- luncheon at Miramar. I don't know if Miramar still exists, but that was Mabel Eaton's favorite place to eat over in Auburn.

AL: I don't think it is.

EH: Of course, Muskie graduated '36, didn't he?

AL: Yes.

EH: When I graduated in '47, Ed worked at the library every summer, in Augusta, had done something, whatever was available for project work. I worked, well I always worked in the law section because I liked it a lot. And I got, majored in government at Bates, with an English

minor, and, the position of law librarian was open, when I graduated. And Miss Stewart, the state librarian who was about to retire, said if I would promise that I would get my library degree as soon as they offered a special libraries course, that I could go to, that I could have the job. So I was thrilled, and the girl that was in the job wanted to take another job in the library as the head of Maine reference work, so that was wonderful.

And Muskie, had served in 1947, but the year started in January, the political year for the legislature and that, so I didn't really have any particular knowledge of him then. But the governor, who preceded him, I think, fixed in one's mind what governors were like in a way. All the man's predecessors hadn't been like this, I think, but Governor Cross, who survived just one term, would come into the State House and he'd walk as if he didn't want to be recognized, he'd kind of hold his head down. And you'd think, now, here's a perfectly nice man, you know he is, you've met his wife, he's got two daughters, you know them, a little bit, perfectly nice, but he'd always look so gray and as if, he'd go through the corridor to go up to his office and, you know, it was sort of unapproachable. I think he was terribly shy, but the effect that it made was that it was a very quiet governorship. And he'd lived through a scandal in the liquor commission that Frank Coffin, I think, was the attorney for one side. But, and Frank was his usual brilliant self early on. Oh, he's a wonderful man. And all these people sort of coalesced, and the next session, of course, we were very aware of Muskie, and he became the floor leader right off.

And I think that, he stood, he was tall and he had a seat in the back row. But all of a sudden you began to be more impressed with him all the time. And my assistant in the law library was Alice Nute, and Alice and I were just fast friends. She came into the library about the same time I did, one or two, and, she was down in the extension to begin with but then she was in the main library, and sometimes we'd hear that Muskie was going to speak on a particular subject and we'd quick, squirrel up to the balcony, and sit and listen. Because, he was so different from the people one was used to. I mean, when he said something he'd be very quiet, unassuming, and you'd think, well, what is he going to say. And by the time he was finished, you just felt like making a burst of applause, or you wanted to go back and think because he had filled you with an entirely different thought or way of approaching a problem, or said a few quiet words. And he had such a quiet manner but, what he said, and I noticed that in any time I've ever heard him that he could be, forceful, but he always had a quiet, not controlled, but just a quiet way of saying what you were listening to, and the more you listened the more you heard.

And it was really electrifying because there hadn't been anyone like that, that you wanted to run up and hear. And when they were trying to get rid of the council, finally, one man who was a sculptor here in Maine, (*unintelligible phrase*) for years after, got up and said, well, the executive council was a pimple on the nose of progress. Well, that was hardly, high speech, and Ed Muskie didn't go to high speech, but he spoke with such thoughtfulness. And he had such ideas that you were just galvanized, and it made everything about the State House seem more exciting.

We were not political at all in the law library. Mrs. Stubbs, who became the state librarian after Miss Stewart, had her personal political beliefs which were never aired at all, but she never missed an election to vote, and she was a very quiet person who was promoting library service to the people of Maine. And under her influence my idea was that you, were, a public library for

everybody in the state, and the law section was just as public. If you wanted to know what the Supreme Court said about school prayer, or you wanted to know what act incorporated the city of Lewiston, or whatever it was, that's what we were there to provide. And to do that you had to both educate yourself and you had to educate the people who might find the library useful. And, so, that led to just, one full day after another.

I loved every day that I was at the State Law Library. The law section became a separate entity at the time that the State Library moved into the cultural building. And at that time, the, legislature said, no way, the law library is, Law and Legislative References, the whole name, is going to remain in the State House near us, near the attorney general. We don't care about the rest, they've got the cultural building, but we will keep the law library. And the next year when the legislature met, the speaker, took the rather unusual step of putting in the legislation which would make the law section into an arm of the legislature rather than part of the State Library. And I had a fair track record by then, and I was treated just the way the other agency heads were, the revisor of statutes, and of course it meant a rather handsome, for then, jump in what I was paid, although the law librarian now gets three times what I was paid, which is, at my best, which is the ways things change in government.

But everything became more interesting because, not only did Muskie come, but there were always people around him, who were the Frank Coffins, and the Ed Schlicks and the Don Nicolls, and the Al Mavrinacs, and these were people who were thinkers. I mean, being a law librarian is not making footnotes for book reports; it's dealing with everyday problems, whether they're political or legal or whatever that people have. And it demands a lot of you, and it rewards you, by the interesting things that come up. I mean, these aren't people who are going to say, “I slipped and fell on my landlord's steps.” I mean, we're not lawyers at all. And, the people who were working for Muskie as he, when he went through that business of being the, I guess the temporary directory of Office of Price Stabilization for a while, and he had another job, and then he broke his back. But he recovered from all those things, and when he ran for governor, and all these people were so excited!

There was just this magnetism that ran through, and people were sick of Burt Cross going through the corridors with his head down, you know. And it wasn't, it was more an election of Ed Muskie than it was a refuting of Burt Cross, because within his rights he was all right. He did start the, (I think it was during his term) that they started the office building which was behind, and Mr. Ealer, who was one of the legislators, said, well, if the State Library doesn't have enough room they can just back one of their book mobiles up there and put some of their overflow in it - he had no idea of what a bookmobile would do - and run around the state with it. That's the way he saw the State Library. (*Aside with/re cat.*)

So, I noticed it said in Don's questions that you sent me, he mentioned Alice putting the -

AL: The inaugural -?

EH: The governor's messages together. I didn't know that until afterward. Alice had as strict a feeling about politics as I, and in the Law Library we didn't have any. You had to deal with everybody in the legislature, and thanks to the Muskie period we suddenly had more Democrats.

One of the things that Ed had tried to do early on was, to get more Democrats appointed to the standing committees. And at first he didn't have much success, but his own success, as governor, lead to a breaking down of the terrible stranglehold that the Republicans had on the committees. And they used the committee assignments to spank Republicans just as much as to ignore Democrats. I remember once Mr. Savage from I think out Skowhegan way didn't support the man who became president of the senate, and so he was appointed to the lowest committee on the - and he was a fine man, but he was spanked, that's all there was to it. Look what you've done, now you can serve on the committee on public buildings. Very low on the totem pole. Frankly, nonexistent. And so, Ed came in with the idea I think, not only of looking at these inaugurals, which he apparently found very intriguing, and perhaps gave them a sense of what he'd do with his own. But he also saw that, he'd seen what the past was and he had to chart a way for what was to come. And so he had been wanting, I think, an agency that would lead to industrial development, economic development, whatever you want to call it, and he put in some legislation for that, which hadn't gone anywhere. But I suppose that, in his kitchen cabinet they decided that, having a survey of state government would be a helpful thing. Because they would look at where all these departments were and how they should be shaken up and changed or not changed, or reorganized or not, and so forth.

And so he did persuade the legislature to pass a resolve that provided enough money for a professional study to be made, and that was called the PAS Study, the Public Administration Service, and they were well known Chicago outfit I think, somewhere, out there, I forget now. And they made a study which was pretty much bread and butter with some recommendations. And then the follow up, was to appoint a citizens committee on state government, on the survey, citizens committee on the survey of state government to whom all this data would be given and they would chew it over and see which things, which suggestions were most desirable, and winnow it out and really translate from a professional group to the citizens of Maine speaking to the government.

And that got started, it was called, the papers as I recall it, a Blue Ribbon Committee. And I was appointed to it by the governor, and after a bit I thought that probably it wasn't so desirable to be thought of as a member, but I had become the secretary, someone always picks a woman, you knew that, I'm sure, would be their research assistant or consultant or whatever. And the appointment was so broad that there were both Republicans and Democrats and a very wide net had been cast to get these people.

I remember there was a Mary Payson who was from a very wealthy family, but who had a whole lot of civic interest, and Mary Worthly who was a big elephant of a woman, Bates graduate I think, and she was a temperance supporter and she was one of the grandest people you ever met in your whole life, and she'd come up to the . . . . . her hair would be flying in all directions because it couldn't quite stay in a knot, you know. And she and Mary Payson wound up on the same committee. So there were two real powerhouses on this committee. But it's just an example of how intrigued people became by what they were doing, and it was very seriously handed, but not too much came of the time around.

I think the four-year term for governor came quite shortly, and of course none of the things that affect the governor happen during his incumbency. So that you don't raise the governor's pay

hoping that will help out anything until the next governor comes along, or until an election has ensued. And so the four years that Muskie was there, in that period, the library was very active in a lot of things. I think that what was, what I felt about it, was that it charged the atmosphere with a sense of excitement and possibility, we have a direction, whatever it is, that we're taking, and everybody is welcome to participate. And it made you want to do just your durndest, to help out in any way that you could. These were not political helps at all. They had nothing to with elections or whatever. I think I was on every legislative procedure committee that existed during the time I was in the State House. I got involved in everything that anybody said would you do so-and-so, I'd say yes. I didn't always, wasn't always bright, but I felt as if the world was my oyster, and I would eat it, and I would find it delicious.

But the, Mrs. Stubbs retired as librarian and the position was open, and it began to appear in the columns of people like Lorin [“Doc”] Arnold with the Bangor paper, and Peter Damborg in Portland, that it was open and there were so many, there were two or three candidates and my name always appeared as a potential person, or somebody they wanted to have. And I said to Mrs. Stubbs, I know it would please you, if I accepted, but I really love working in the law section, and I really do not want to get involved in budgets and personnel, I really want to do what I'm doing. And I'm not interested in money. If you don't have any it's awfully easy not to be interested in it. Generally speaking, that was true. And she said, well, whatever you want to do is what I want for you, so she never urged me further. But one day I was up on the third floor on some errand, and the library was on the second floor at that time, and Pete Farley who was a senator I think from York county was standing in the door of the office, as he went toward the governor's office which was then on the third floor, in the corner. He was standing there with his cigar and so forth, and he stuck out his hand and he said, “Edie, take it.” The governor never once offered me the job, and I think this is how things are done, that they don't dilute their power by offering something that you refuse. They wait until they think things are lined up and you're going to accept. Anyway, I said, well Pete, that's not really in the cards. That was the only time that I thought somebody was speaking, close, who was trying to really get me to take it.

And that answer that I have just said was, the way feel about it now and the way I felt about it then, that I really loved working in the law section. We had a very active section, the lawyers all liked having a young person starting, they were all very helpful. Innis MacLean, who was a Bates graduate, and a very well known industrial attorney, used to come over and in a very quiet way educate me about different things. The attorney general's office had one or two men, and one was Neil Donahue from Auburn and the other was Abe (*unintelligible phrase sounds like: Brightbard*), were assistants, and they'd say, “Well, you have to look this up again, this might help.” And there were a lot of people who were mentors, who were quiet mentors. And it was exciting, I just loved it. The first time I was asked a law question when I became, was some man by the name of Jack Frost. He worked for one of the departments and he came in and he wanted something about drafting a will, and I thought, oh, what would you give to anybody if they wanted, you know, my mind just went blank. So I excused myself for a moment and I went in to the office where we had a lot of stuff, and I stood there staring at it, and all of a sudden this little book that said, layman's book on drafting a will or something. I thought, there, it isn't that hard after all. Isn't it funny how these things happen?

AL: Let me stop and flip the tape.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B.

EH: After Muskie was governor, he retired just a day or two, or three or four, before his term expired because he had been elected to the U.S. Senate. And Bob Haskell was the president of the senate, and Bob was a, well you think about, Bob Haskell was the president of Bangor Hydro, and his word was law. And when he decided he would do something, that was the way it was done. He had a lot of power, and he and Ed Muskie just took to each other and it was because Ed was very open and Bob was sufficiently, charmed, by such a powerful personality that they managed to work hand in glove, although neither of them I'm sure bragged about it, but they did. They may have afterwards, but at the time, and Bob was thrilled with those four or five days that he was governor. He just loved having that title, and of course the minute the legislature came in the ordinary elected person came in. Who was that, Governor Payne?

AL: Clauson.

EH: Clauson, oh yes, there was Clauson and then he died. I was trying to call the State House about something and you couldn't because the lines were all jammed, because the governor had just died. I remember my uncle John was going to be a personal secretary to Governor Parkhurst, and Governor Parkhurst died after just days in office, he had some sickness and died, and it was, the total crushing of my uncle's life. He thought that was going to be such a wonderful experience. Anyway -

AL: What year was that, do you recall?

EH: Parkhurst? I think it was 1921, wasn't it? Let's so, no, 19-, I think was Milliken.

AL: That era, though.

EH: Yeah.

AL: Do you recall Louis Jalbert?

EH: Oh, who could ever forget him? One of the times when he thought he was dying, he decided that there would be a big banquet in his honor, in Lewiston. And I, was chose because no one else would agree to do it, but at least I didn't say so, to represent the legislative agencies as a spokesman at this dinner party. Louis was a great user of the library; he was also a great rascal. And he would come in and he would say, Edie, I know that last year or the session before, I was speaking about this, and would you find it for me in the legislative records so I can repeat it? We would spend hours, Alice and I, looking through the record. Could we find it? No. And we'd tell him, we can't find it, Louis. Well, I realized after a while that he made these statements that weren't true, that he never said it, but he liked to say that he'd said it before and that he'd looked it up in the library. He didn't say we couldn't find it, and I would find that that

was a little way that he had of establishing his record as being for or against something. And, he used the library a lot, and he promoted it as a user, and he would come in often and he'd say outrageous things to you.

Always very friendly. He married, it seems, Yvonne Sproul from, whatever you call that, Pemaquid Falls. And one of his boasts were, boy, are they going to turn over in their graves down Pemaquid way when my ashes are brought to the Harrington Cemetery. This Lewiston frog, he said, is really going to put them on. I mean, he was outrageous in the way he talked. But he knew the budget thing, and I made up a really cracking good roast for him. John Sproul, his brother-in-law, was just so tickled. They had people hanging from the rafters at this. All I could think of was Mayor Daly, you know, who had Chicago under his thumb. Louis had Lewiston under his thumb so, that, the policemen came in their uniforms and came up and greeted him at the table, and the firemen came in, and there were people hanging from the rafters. It was the most incredible time, and his sister sat beside me at the head table and she said, "What is a nice girl like you doing in this mob?"

But Louis was a very active supporter of the library, and he used it a lot. And he loved the title of Mr. D, he just loved it. And he knew the budget backward and forward, inside out. And I said, when I talked about him at this dinner, banquet, you couldn't call it anything less than a feast, that he had seen how sensible it was to sit behind the gentleman from Auburn, Mr. Jacobs, because he was the chairman of the appropriations committee and he had learned how to handle that be assiduously paying attention to what Mr. Jacobs did; then he'd picked a seat on the aisle so he could shake the hand of everybody who came up because he'd be right on the aisle with his right hand stuck out, so he'd meet all the luminaries. All of these things are true.

Oh, yes, I knew him very well. He came in one day and he said, "Edie, I could snap the snap the garter right off the your leg without your even knowing it if I wanted to!" And I said, "don't you dare try it!" And, you know, it was this kind of, not offensive because it was he, but Alice would laugh, it would make her, oh, he'd get so.

But we were very actively engaged with the legislature. As I say, part of our job was educating ourselves because we were dealing with cases that the attorney general was researching. When they passed the income tax they had a court case to see whether the legislature had exceeded its powers in some way, and they hired two outside lawyers and we spent a week in the library, night and day with them, getting material for them. Not judging the material, just preparing it, for them to use. They said they were going to Harvard, and I said what are you going to get from Harvard? Well, they thought, well, by the time they got through they said, well, we don't need to go to Harvard, it's right here, we just needed to know that it was here.

And there were so many ways that you had to educate yourself. I mean, just flip two hundred periodicals a month, just to see what was in them and who your clients were that were working on this from the AG's office. When the legislature was in session, the library always stayed open, if they were open at night, if they had a night session we always stayed open for the law section. If they had a parliamentary snarl, and they got to the point where they couldn't, they'd say, well, we'll recess for a minute and we'll ask Miss Hary down in the library to look up this point. And this was a of just calming people up there, I guess. And so we became sort of an

unofficial parliamentarian for the legislature. And we just became an integral part, well, we tried to, of people's information needs.

None of it had anything to do with politics. Alice was somewhat chagrined at one time because she, and I didn't know this until afterwards which I found very interesting, she and Jane Muskie would make sandwiches for the men who were working late over at the Blaine House. Alice never mentioned anything that she did outside the office. It was entirely her own affair. And I never asked her because it didn't occur to me. I mean, you were very busy in the library.

And Tom wrote, when he was with the UP, and he wrote a column for the Westbrook paper, *Westbrook American*. He was a very active Democrat, and he did serve Muskie, and it was an overwhelming job for him, much too much. He began to drink some. And Alice was such a stout wife, she never mentioned any, you couldn't help seeing it in the paper, but we never discussed Tom's difficulties ever. He was just a wonderfully interesting person. He read widely, he had had a lot of experiences in the service, he had a wonderful memory. And there was a period when the Stubbs boy was a real pain in the neck. And Alice used to invite me up for supper about every Saturday night for a while, and, well, they're just dear friends.

But we, didn't venture into the political world, we left it alone. And Alice's own participation in it outside of the library was entirely hers, and at one time she was accused by one of the members of the legislature, well, of course they couldn't depend on anything she did. And I just lit right into him, because that was not the case. Alice is one of the best reference librarians you ever saw. She has a great imagination, she has a wonderful knowledge of what's out there for sources, and as a staff, we used to spend time studying out books.

We'd look at Maine books and see if they were right or wrong, and we'd correct them. We found, one of the major publishers in the country that published the *U.S. Law Week*, was citing an edition in the stack that was ten years out of print. And, you know, we took a lot of responsibility for the material that we had. We used to try to read over the Byrd list, and it was, well, the Byrd book, the list of legislators who had been elected, because when they came to Augusta a lot of them came from places that had no library, or had no concept of what a law library had in it, and we were always included in the orientation sessions. We found among various of father's stuff, "Your arguments are sound; all sound," and I used to like to use that as a, when I was speaking in the legislature as the orientation part, I said, don't let them be all sound.

You know, it's very possible to listen to what you hear from legislators. When someone would come in and say, I want so-and-so, and you'd get for them and say, just a minute and I'll charge this out to you, immediately their hand goes in their pocket. We dropped the word charge so quickly it would make your head swing, because we realized that we had to be very careful not to use anything that was, hinted at something that wasn't the fact. I mean, there was no charge in using the law library. That's just an expression that librarians use, but we just dropped that. Things like that. And I loved seeing legislators from all over the state, that was such fun. We had our favorites and our non-favorites, and we had this one and that one that we came to know better and better as they were members. Some never said a word, but you discovered why the people in their area had sent them to the legislature. Not to get rid of them in town, but because

they saw in them some helpful things that thought would be good in Augusta. I mean, the legislature is endlessly interesting.

And when Muskie went to Washington, I think we really, we, just felt proud. I mean, here was a Maine man who was representing us beyond belief in every way that you could imagine. And I had a girl from Colby, they had a January plan, I don't know if they still have it, and they had to spend a month working on some project. And she was the daughter of a legislator from Hallowell, and I said, yes, we would be delighted to have her for a month. And she enjoyed it so much that when she got to her summer program that she developed, she had to develop while she was at Bennington, she said that she thought she'd like to go to Washington and see if there was any kind of summer job.

So I did write to Ed about that and, just to introduce her and say he might hear from her, and he said summertime was a pretty poor time to find jobs, but he'd be glad to meet her. I think we had the most fun, thinking about him when he came back to the State House. I remember when he came back, after he'd been gone the first time. And the whole, everybody was hanging out the windows of the State House, they were so thrilled to see him. And so, you know, everybody took pride in the fact that he was our man in Washington. It was just, it didn't have anything to do with politics at that point. It was just this enormous pride. Who else do you want to know about?

AL: Ummm-

EH: I think what I'm trying to say is that we had a lot to do in the library. We didn't really tell any other department how to work, we gave any help that the legislature asked for, anything that the governor's office asked for, we got asked more and more because we were thought to be a reliable source of information, and careful. We did mail books to people all over the state. The League of Women Voters became a very active user of the library and we, I spent days every year, or every other year, working on their publication with Mrs. Allen from Portland on how the legislature works and how elections work. We brought them up to date every two years, and the legislature bought hundreds of copies and gave them out because they were totally impartial, totally accurage.

AL: When you say Mrs. Allen, was that Tom Allen's mother?

EH: Yes, Suki, yeah. And I just loved that woman, oh, she was such fun. I have two things on my desk, one is that set of Shakespeare in that little bookcase that's on the left hand side, and the other is a tiny desk that she gave me when I retired, and she said, I always want you to have a desk to look at. And it's a beautifully crafted little miniature of a roll top desk. And I just loved Suki. And Charlie, her husband, was a wonderful man. He's died. All my bright lights in Portland now, Sumner Bernstein and Charlie Allen and Suki.

Then I was on the distributing committee, Judge Webber from Auburn suggested my name when they had a vacancy. They have a, the Maine Charity Foundation had a certain amount of money that they had to distribute, the income from, I guess those were common funds. Most of them are now handled by the Maine Community Foundation, and Alice is now, but I was on that quite

a while, and there was a wonderful Bates man on that, a Mr. Moulton. His daughter was in my class at Bates. It was fun. And I noticed that Bob Williamson died the other day. Bob Williamson Jr., he was the chairman for a while, the last of my being there.

And of course I always thought of things that libraries needed, and they were thrilled because most of them were answering requests they had, but I would bring in a list and usually they would say, yes, of course. Which was fun. Of course they weren't supporting budgets, they were supporting projects. In other words, not general upkeep but if you had to have a new furnace, or if you had to renew the lights or, something more of a project nature.

But two or three different times I heard Ed speak, I think once was at Bowdoin, and I thought, gee, he isn't saying anything. And the more you listened, the more he said. Just, still had that wonderful cumulative effect on what you were listening to, that you went away thinking, isn't that great. But he grew, except for the people who were around him, I think he pretty well grew away from Maine. Because he was such a national figure. And, there we were, pointing with pride at Frank Coffin who was on the court of appeals. When he was first appointed, I was planning a program for the Law Librarians of New England which I was president, and Frank said, "Well," he said, "if I say yes I don't want it to get around because everybody will think I'm available to speak, but I couldn't possibly say no to you." And so he did speak at the meeting. I always remember something he was talking about, and he said, "As Jesus Christ said, and rightly so!" Somehow that little expression always stuck in my mind.

I remember that because it struck me as being so funny. But I heard him speaking about Dick Sampson, and Dick Sampson speaking about him once over at Bates not too long ago. They're such witty people, they're just wonderful people, Frank is wonderful. But I think Don got pretty well used up, by the trouble with getting into such a big, Don said to me once, it gets so big, yes, but you use up an awful lot of people on the way. And Don got used to the nth degree. And then they kept going on, and I always felt that was rather harsh for Don. But I've seen it myself in so many ways, that, you know, people who get to the top use up a lot of people on the way up. They draw from them every ounce that they have to give, and then they want to draw from somebody else something else, and it's very difficult. And I think it's one reason that some people, the minute they begin to go up, and up and up, somebody down below, or the press, or somebody begins to say, "Oh," "they've got feet of clay." They probably don't have, but in America it seems to be the case that the higher anybody gets the more we want to cut them down. And I always liked an expression that, I think it was Albert Camus, the writer, said: "Don't walk ahead of me, I may not follow. Don't walk behind me, I may not lead; but walk beside me and be my friend." And that's what I really believe myself, that you're not trying to be either ahead or behind, but you have a whole thing that is your life and you want people to march along.

And I think that it's awfully hard for people who succeed greatly. It's very hard. And they have to be great people, like Ed Muskie or Frank, you know. Olympia Snowe, started out as a researcher in the planning office, and she used to use the library quite a bit. And then she married Snowe, Peter Snowe, and he was killed one day driving home, on a slippery day, and everything changed overnight. And look at her now. I think she's grown a lot. And, oh, how the Bushies would like to pull her down, because she's not a conformist. Who else do I know about?

AL: Do you have memories of Elmer Violette?

EH: Yes, I do. Oh, what a sweet man, what a sweet man. He became a judge. And he was very intense. I had a little correspondence with him and I did a little work. One of the things that I took on was out of the, my part was, the duty of the law librarian was to work, to see what, in the county law libraries, and to see if there were any conformity in the way they were run. Most of them didn't have a librarian, the only one was in Portland that did. And so I used to make a circuit every year or two, I'd try to get to every county law library in the state. And of course up in Aroostook they had two, they had one in Houlton and then they had another one in Caribou, and I think most of the county now is moved up to Caribou but they still have a court house in Houlton. But Elmer was always very interested in that. He used to call me Harriet. I think he never quite remembered my name; he always called me Harriet and I always answered because I knew who he was speaking to. (*Aside re blowing nose.*)

People that were on that list, like Maury Williams and so forth?

AL: Yeah.

EH: You just thought, or I just thought, that they were people who were doing their job. Mr. Goss was known for his standing up and reading the proclamation in the governor's election, and saying in this voice charged with emotion when he swore in the governor or announced the election returns for Governor Muskie, God save the state of Maine. And his voice quivered with feeling. And this was a traditional thing to say, but he infused it with more feeling that most people remembered. But Harry Williams knew his job, and he was a wonderful pick I think for Muskie. But I don't know that personally, whether he was or not. But everybody thought it was a good choice, and he was a very, very knowledgeable, nice man.

I got involved in so many things. We had the PAS Study. For some reason, I was the one who was asked to write the subject on the legislature when they put out the book on legislative procedure, up at the University of Maine. When the League of Women Voters put out their manual on state government, to which our Bates man, who went to Bowdoin, wrote a little introduction, I was the one who wrote about the constitution. I used to give a little talk to the judiciary committee before the session each year, saying what the Maine constitution required, or stated, because that was the subject. I was a public member of the judicial council, when (*name*) Phillips retired I was appointed to his position, on the council. I was on it for years. And I was the public member of the Board of Bar Examination, when they decided that every board should have a public member, and everybody turned Jim Longley down, he was then governor, and he said, “You've got to say yes.” And I had a wonderful time, because the men, were, mostly people that I knew and they just expected me to pull my share of the work, and there were things that a public person could do.

So I've always had challenges, and I had the very great pleasure, entirely aside from my job, of publishing a manuscript which contained a large part of the Ballard Diary. And the Ballard Diary became the famous book, The Tale of the Midwife , or Midwife's Tale, which you may have heard of which was written by Ulrich who on the strength of that went from University of

New Hampshire to be an early Americanist at Harvard, and started really a cottage industry I would say because there's now a Ballard birthing room and all the other things. That just happened. But I'm still alive to tell the tale, and I worked very hard, and I loved every minute of it, and now I'm learning how to play.

AL: Thank you very much.

End of Interview