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Lee, Shep oral history interview

Chris Beam

Interview with Shep Lee by Chris Beam

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Lee, Shep

Interviewer
Beam, Chris

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Place
Lewiston, Maine

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Biographical Note

Shephard Lee was born November 13, 1926 in Lewiston, Maine to Ethel and Joe Lifshitz. His parents were both Russian immigrants, his mother a housewife, and his father an automobile dealer after the Depression. He attended the Lewiston public schools, graduating from Lewiston High School in 1943. He then went on to Bowdoin College, taking a break from college between 1945 and 1946 to enlist in the Navy. He returned to Bowdoin after his service, and graduated in 1947 with a degree in government and economics. At that time, he and his brother also changed their names to Lee to avoid discrimination against Jews in education and in careers. Lee returned to Lewiston after graduation, and went to work at his father's automobile dealership. Soon after, he became active in Lewiston-Auburn Democratic politics. In 1956, he was campaign manager to Frank Coffin's Congressional campaign. In 1963, he bought out his father's partner in the automobile dealership, and eventually took over the entire business. Lee was an active Democrat during and after Ed Muskie's career. He was a key fundraiser for the Maine Democrats, and loaned many vehicles to campaigning candidates over the course of his career. He retired from his automobile dealership in the late 1990s.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: the Lifshitz (Lee) family history; the Lewiston/Auburn Jewish

community; changing his name from Lifshitz to Lee; Lewiston schools; Bowdoin College; discrimination at Bowdoin; the influence of Lee's brother; his service in the U.S. Navy; Professor Ernst Helmreich; Bowdoin Christian Association; discrimination in Lewiston; creating the first non-discriminatory fraternity at Bowdoin; bankruptcy during the Depression; choosing a career; professors at Bowdion; city manager government in Maine; working with his father and taking over the family business; his apprehension about downtown Auburn urban renewal; Muskie appearances at business openings; 1948 Henry Wallace campaign; meeting Frank Coffin through a United Way Committee; Liberal philosophy; getting involved after a 1952 Coffin speech; municipal debate in Lewiston; attempting to sell a City Administrator government to Ernest Malenfant; Malenfant's unwillingness to speak to non-Franco people; personal political activity; Lee's children; balancing family and politics; enjoying the political scene; informal debates with Muskie over the years; personal relationship with Frank Coffin; getting tapped to be Frank Coffin's campaign chairman; balancing business with Coffin's campaign; Louis Jalbert's opposition to Frank Coffin's campaign staff at the 1956 Lewiston caucus; Labor's role in the elections; the Dorsky incident at Judge Delahanty's home; meeting and befriending Muskie; Muskie's hatred for fundraising; raising money for the United Jewish Appeal at the home of Joe Koss in Auburn; and Jim Longley.

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Chris Beam: This is an interview with Shepherd Lee on September 17th, 1991 at two o'clock at the Muskie Archives. Okay, Shep, what I want to do today is I want to discuss with you not only your relationship with Ed Muskie, but also your own background: your education, your business career, your political interests and activities as well, so I want to cover a fairly broad range of topics. And so, before, while we, for starters what I'd like to go into is some of your own background. You were born in Lewiston, is that correct, Shep?

Shep Lee: I was, yeah.

CB: When were you born?

SL: In 1926, November 13th.

CB: November 13th, I see. And your family, what did your father do? He owned an auto dealership, right?

SL: My father was an automobile dealer in Auburn. He and a partner from Portland, the guy that put the money up for it, they started the dealership in 1936. And then I went to Bowdoin, and joined them the day after I got out of Bowdoin in 1947.

CB: Nineteen forty-seven. Now, you were educated in the Lewiston schools?

SL: The Lewiston, all Lewiston schools, Lewiston High School. And in those days the Bowdoin population, the civilian population, was very sparse. The Navy Meteorology School, there were other things that, the war was on. So they were anxious to get public school students, civilians. So they came to Lewiston High School looking for students. And my brother was already going to Bowdoin. And I remember the time they tried to induce me to leave school mid year in the senior year -

CB: Oh, is that right? Almost like football recruiting.

SL: Right. But my parents thought I was too young, and they were right. I had skipped a grade, by accident, so I was sixteen. And so I went, in June of '47 when I graduated from high school, I immediately went to Bowdoin.

CB: Okay. Now, where did you, what street did you grow up on?

SL: On Tampa Street. I was born and brought up on 29 Tampa Street.

CB: Twenty-nine Tampa Street.

SL: I still go by occasionally, it's in Lewiston.

CB: That's right over near Lewiston Lumber, isn't it?

SL: Next door. I once set the field, where Lewiston Lumber is, on fire.

CB: Oh, you did?

SL: When I was five years old.

CB: It was a field then?

SL: It was a field.

CB: Was that the outer part of Lewiston or was it just a vacant lot?

SL: That was a vacant lot. No, it wasn't really the outer part, it was, it wasn't as heavily populated as today but it happened to be a vacant lot at that time.

CB: And where did your parents come from, Shep?

SL: Russia, but whether it was Lithuania or whatever it was, I suspect it was somewhere, if there's a Russian-Lithuanian border it was there. We really don't know the history, and we were never really able to get it out from them. They were typical Eastern European Jewish immigrants who came over. I'm sure, my father came over because his parents didn't want him to serve in the Russian Army. Which was the same reason Muskie's father came over.

CB: Right, right, I was going to say, it sounds like you two have -

SL: We used to compare notes. This is jumping ahead, but I once got, I was once president of the United Jewish Appeal here in Lewiston, so I got him to come give the speech. And he had just gotten back from a trip to Poland, the first time. He had gone and sought out his relatives. I can't remember what year it was.

CB: I think that was either 19-, it was after he got elected to the Senate and it was like 1959 or maybe a little later.

SL: Was it? Well anyway, the Jewish Community Center, which was on College Street, was absolutely packed. And the story he told could have been the story of the parents of most people in that audience, because it was a typical East-European immigrant story. It was a story of parents who wanted their kids not to be in the Russian Army and not fight for the czar, all of that. The difference was his father got out and came over, well I guess it wasn't such a great difference. My father was always reluctant to talk about his parents because, I really feel they felt a sense of guilt leaving Russia. And I think they all expected to bring their parents over. But his parents were so old that he never saw them again after he left.

CB: You mean a sense of guilt about leaving their family members behind to suffer.

SL: Leaving their parents behind and, well, I just think they felt a sense of desertion. This is conjecture on my part. But when I would try to get my father talking about his parents it's as though he didn't want to think about it.

CB: Is that right.

SL: Because, I suspect because, I think the feeling was when people his age left, they'd get here, they'd do well, they'd send for their parents. But most of them never did and I think the parents maybe were at an age where -

CB: Did your mother and father come over together?

SL: No, they met in New York City. Actually my father's older sister was instrumental in bringing them together.

CB: I see. And did, after they married did they move up here, or?

SL: My father was living in Lewiston, you know, I don't really know. I think that they married and my mother came up. My father was here, because his older sister was here. And that was, the tradition was you went where your family members were. And he lived for a short time in Canton, Ohio. He had a cousin there. But he came and ended up in Lewiston, Maine as a peddler. And, you know, the early days he used to love to tell the story of how he couldn't, he couldn't read English, and he surely didn't know French. But what they did is they took Jewish characters and they transliterated. And he would take pins and needles and buttons and he'd knock on doors and say, *voulez vous acheter*, he'd read the Jewish hieroglyphics and make it come out French. They taught him how to count, he said, the first thing they did was they taught him how to count. Then, and that's how he started. He was a peddler.

But that was a very really common story for East European Jewish immigrants and all that sort. So, so that's how he got here and that's how he got started. And he worked, he peddled, he peddled clothing for Ward Brothers. Larry Ward, who is a very good friend of mine, his father and uncle started this clothing store and there was a clothing store named Cortell's and he would take clothing out and go knock on doors and sell it. And he did that until he got a job selling cars for a Dodge dealer and a Chevrolet dealer, and uh. . . .

CB: That's how he got into the business.

SL: Yeah, and then somebody approached him from Portland, and said, "If I put up the money, eleven hundred dollars, we'll get a DeSoto franchise."

CB: DeSoto, okay.

SL: And so nobody knew what the hell a DeSoto was. So I started as a DeSoto salesman.

CB: And that was located over in Auburn, right?

SL: In Auburn, yeah, was always in Auburn -

CB: And is that, and that was in, where exactly was it located? Was that down by Great Falls

SL: It was right next to what was then the Auburn post office, the urban renewal area. You know the great big building, the Platz building?

CB: Yeah, down by the plaza there, yes.

SL: Yep. That was where my dealership was, and I still have a lot of pictures of the dealership being there and, of course when I first knew Muskie he would come visit there all the time. Yeah, it was right in that, in that downtown area which is now the Great Plaza or whatever plaza

[Great Falls Plaza].

CB: Been redeveloped and so forth.

SL: Right, right, they tore all the buildings down, tore the post office down.

CB: And your mother, did she, was she basically a homemaker?

SL: Yeah, yeah, she never worked. She, well she worked in New York in uh, New York City, in a textile factory and then. . . . They were just typical immigrants and never, neither had an education. But my father was very smart, and I think if he had had the benefits I had in education he would have done, I think he did a reasonable amount for himself.

CB: Now, was Lee, was Lee the original name?

SL: The name was Lifshitz.

CB: How would you spell that?

SL: L-I-F-S-H-I-T-Z, and an interesting story because Bates and Bowdoin both played a role. I see both of us as having both connections with Bates and Bowdoin, but you didn't go, where did you go to school?

CB: I went to Williams College.

SL: You went to Williams, yeah okay. Well there's a connection. Hey there was a *(unintelligible phrase).*

CB: But I, I mean I always feel this emotional tie to Bowdoin.

SL: Sure, sure. Well, my brother, we grew up with the name of Lifshitz here in Lewiston. And when I was in the Navy my brother graduated college, and he couldn't get into medical school. I think he was second in his class at Bowdoin, Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude*. He had all the academic credentials. But there was a quota on Jews in medical school. So he, he came to Lewiston and he worked at Bates helping out in the biology lab. And there was a professor Pomeroy, Fred Pomeroy, wonderful guy, who had good medical school connections. And Professor Pomeroy said, "Harold", he said, "If you changed your name to an Anglo Saxon name you'd have a much easier time in getting into medical school". So Harold wrote to me, this was correspondence when I was in the Navy, and told me the story. And there was a funny incident because there was a family in Lewiston named Supovitz, it was a Jewish family -

CB: You remember how that's spelled?

SL: S-U-P-O-V-I-T-Z. And they had a clothing store, Supovitz Brothers Clothing Stores here in town. Well there's some of them still around. But five of the Supovitz family changed their names and they all took a different name, so there was a Manny Mannings, Irving Brooks, Paul

Shepherd. Anyway, so we all used to kind of poke fun at the Supovitz family, all of whom now had their own individual last names. So my brother and I said, well, whatever we do let's end up with the same name. So we were having this exchange of correspondence. I wanted the name to be Lehman. And I wanted it because I didn't want anybody to accuse me of running away from being Jewish. But anyway, by the time, while we're having this debate Harold went ahead and changed his name to Lee, so when I got out of the Navy I said, that's crazy, you know, I don't want a different name -

CB: So you didn't change your name until you got out of the Navy.

SL: Right, but I went through the whole Navy period with the name Lifshitz, which must have inured me to all kinds of things.

CB: Now what was your father's dealership? He founded the dealership in '36, did he call it - ?

SL: He called it Advance Auto Sales. Still today it's Advance Auto Sales.

CB: Advance Auto Sales, same one down here on Route 4.

SL: Yeah, same one.

CB: Okay, okay. What, now what elementary school did you go to, Shep?

SL: I went to Garcelon School.

CB: That was over here on the corner of East Avenue and Sabattus, where the Elizabeth Ann gas station -

SL: Well, before then it was a school for emotionally retarded. Because my daughter and my wife were driving by one day, and my daughter was four. And I guess someone had told her it was a school for emotionally retarded and she said to my wife, "Was daddy retarded when he was young?" I always enjoyed that. That was a true story. Then I went to Frye Grammar, then I went to Jordan Platoon.

CB: Jordan Platoon?

SL: Jordan Platoon.

CB: P-L-A-T-O-O-N?

SL: Yeah.

CB: And that was Jordan Platoon School?

SL: It was the Jordan, yeah, it was Jordan, then it became Jordan Junior High or something

after, long after I was gone. Then I went to Lewiston High School.

CB: Lewiston High School, and that's located right across the street here.

SL: Yeah.

CB: Was it across the street here?

SL: Yeah, it's next to the Armory.

CB: Right, okay.

SL: I don't know what it is now, it's not a high school now.

CB: No, it's a junior high school now.
SL: Junior high, well that was the high school. Then I went to Bowdoin.

CB: And you graduated from high school when?

SL: '43.

CB: 1943. Okay. How'd you do in high school, you must have done very well?

SL: No.

CB: You didn't.

SL: Until I was a junior I didn't pay any attention to studies at all.

CB: Is that right?

SL: And my brother, who was a real influence in my life, he's now dead, he came to me and he said to me, "You're not going to get into college." He says, "You need grades of B's and C's, and," he says, "it's very tough to get into college". And, so about the middle of my junior year I got serious about it, and from then on I got good grades. Bowdoin and I did well. Your father ruined my academic career, I still accuse him of (*unintelligible phrase*).

CB: I know, he gave you a B, yeah, that's what he says.

SL: I still accuse him of ruining my. . . . But in high school I really didn't do well until, until my brother made an impact on me about the need for doing that.

CB: Now how much older was your brother, Harold?

SL: Four years, Harold.

CB: Four years, so there's actually a fair amount of distance between you, or did it, was that significant when you were growing up?

SL: Well, I guess I saw him as kind of, I'm sure he was kind of a role model. I remember, now my parents were immigrants, they never read books. When I was in high school Harold came to me and he said, "You know, you should read books." And he says, I'll chip in a half and we'll join the Book of the Month Club for you. And I think that's the first, probably the first books I ever owned were in high school when I joined the Book of the Month Club, and he was the influence there.

And then, when I did apply to Bowdoin and I got in, anybody who applied got in I think in those days. I was going steady with a young lady from Lewiston High who was the carnival queen, beautiful young woman. And he says, "You know, you're going to have to break up when you go to school," he says. "You're not going to have any time. You're going to be studying all the time, you won't have any time to see her." And I did, I broke up and I went and I studied all the time for about three weeks. And I was about a month ahead, and I said, you know, I believed what he told me literally. And after about three weeks I said, this is crazy, I don't have any, I'm way ahead in all, in everything I had to do, because I really took him seriously. Well, and the other thing, he was a very good student. So everybody, "Oh, your Harold's brother, well, we're expecting big things of you." So there was that, that ghost I had to contend with.

CB: Now he had gone to Bowdoin?

SL: He was there at the time.

CB: Oh, he was.

SL: He was, yeah. So that, he must have graduated in '44 I think.

CB: Yeah, and now what did he do after he got out, did he go to medical school eventually?

SL: Yeah, he went to medical school.

CB: Where?

SL: He went to BU med school, and then he became a psychiatrist.

CB: Psychiatrist, and he practiced where?

SL: He ended up in Massachusetts, he was the assistant superintendent of Medfield State Hospital and he was on the faculty of BU med school teaching neurology. And really was enjoying quite a successful career when he died at 45 of leukemia in 1968.

CB: Nineteen sixty-eight. Now, when you got to Bowdoin, now you entered Bowdoin in 1943?

SL: Right.

CB: And you were there how long? Because you had a, there was a, you went into the Navy for a while, didn't you?

SL: Yeah, well, in those days everybody wanted to get into Officer Graduate Candidate School. And you had to have three years of college to do that. So the trick was, how did you get that before they drafted you. So I entered in the summer of '43, and everybody took extra courses, one semester I think I took seven courses. And, and I was there for a year and a half, I was there until the end of '44. I went in the Navy in '45, have I got this right? Forty-three, '44, yeah, I went in the Navy in '45 and got out in '46, right, so I was there for a year and a half. So by taking courses I was able to complete three years academically before I got out.

And then I joined the Navy, I took this test, the Navy recruiter told me about the EDDY test, E-D-D-Y. And it was easy and I passed, and so they made me an electronic technician's mate. And I'm the dumbest mechanic in the world, I mean there's noth-, I can't do anything mechanically. But they sent me to school to become an electronic technician's mate as a result of that. So that I was gone from '45 until the middle of '46. So I was lucky I came back, I only had a year to go, and so I finished up with my class.

CB: What did you major in, Shep?

SL: Government and economics.

CB: Government and economics. Did you have any career ambitions at the time, or did you plan to go back to working as an auto dealer?

SL: Well, the problem was I really was interested in all kinds of things, and I was very involved in stuff on the campus, we organized all kinds of things. I was the president of the Bowdoin Christian Association. Helmreich wrote a book about religion at Bowdoin, and he's got this wonderful squib about this Jewish student in the beginning of the year.

CB: How did you do that, I mean that seems -

SL: Well, because of Bowdoin's practice of making every student pay a blanket tax to support the Bowdoin Christian Association. So they made, it was really, ultimately they changed the name to the Bowdoin Religious Association after I was gone. But when I was at Bowdoin they belonged to the World Student Christian Conference or something, so I went as the delegate of Bowdoin College to this sheb-, to Urbana, that's the University of -

CB: Urbana, Illinois, yeah, sure, that's where I went to graduate school.

SL: I went to represent Bowdoin and when I got there, there was this great debate going on about the divinity of Christ. I knew which side I was on. So, nobody asked me what my religion was because it was a Christian Association, whatever, so I joined the fray there. But everybody automatically was a member of the Bowdoin Christian Association so that it was a

nondiscriminatory. . . . So I don't know, I just got that, I liked political kinds of things there in the -

CB: Did you ever experience any discrimination, either here in Lewiston or at Bowdoin for being Jewish?

SL: Sure, sure, oh yeah.

CB: I mean, your brother obviously did, ran up against it when he applied to medical school.

SL: Yeah, now in Lewiston, oh yeah, there was, anti-Semitism always existed. And that, now I didn't feel the effects as much in a way that I regarded as very negative. Well, the first memory I have where I really was upset about it, I helped organize a High Y, now High Y was affiliated with the YMCA. And I was, before I got into high school, and when they, when, I really was instrumental in organizing this.

CB: This is about at what age?

SL: It was before I got to high school so I must have been twelve. And then when they elected officers they said I couldn't be an officer because I wasn't Christian. And that was really upset. . . I remember that, that was the first instance I can remember. Now I'm sure as a kid it must have been incidents, but I didn't grow up with any great sense of that. Now at Bowdoin it was absolutely clear that you couldn't get into a fraternity. And this very morning I had breakfast, I was at a Bowdoin breakfast and I sat with Paul Nixon's son, you probably know -

CB: I don't know him.

SL: And Nixon was the dean when I first got there. And was not very taken with the idea of allowing us to start a nondiscriminatory fraternity, which we did at Bowdoin. So though we had exciting Bowdoin days because they discriminated, because they wouldn't allow us to join. And the whole breakdown of discrimination took place when, when I was in school, and they were exciting days.

CB: So you, but you, did you ever feel like you were blackballed by anybody either here in Lewiston or at Bowdoin because you were Jewish, or (*unintelligible word*)?

SL: Well at Bowdoin they wouldn't allow me to join a fraternity.

CB: Okay.

SL: Now, and fraternities were very important.

CB: They were the social centers.

SL: Sure, so that, that certainly let you know who you were and where you were and all of that. Here, I didn't have any great sense of being left out of things. As I said, that High Y story

is my first memory.

Now the other thing is see, Lewiston was predominantly French and I got along. In my neighborhood everybody was French except for one Irish kid, one Irish family, and our family. And in the Irish family there was an altar boy who brought some water, stole it I guess is what you do, from the church. Because when they found out I wasn't baptized they thought that was a terrible thing and my little gang got together in our camp and they baptized me.

CB: Oh really.

SL: Yeah, when I was five.

CB: Were you, you thought they were trying to do you a favor, or?

SL: No, this was, we were all part of a group and my best friend's older brother was an altar boy, Johnny Beggett. And he found out, he says, "That's terrible, you're going to go to hell, you're not going to whatever it is." So he brought home some holy water and we had a meeting of our little, in the cabin, all the members who belonged, and they baptized me and after that I went home and said to mother, "I'm baptized". She thought that was funny, said "go out and play." whatever it was. And I became very friendly with a priest in the Navy who said, "You're as legitimate as anybody can be," he said.

So that I didn't feel, I didn't feel any sense of great loss because of whatever discrimination took place, and I don't feel it was a lot. And the French were wonderful people, too, you know. They were discriminated against so that it was a very ethnic kind of place. Bowdoin was a different story.

Now I didn't, my experience at Bowdoin was a very happy one ultimately because I felt, as I say, it was my period of success, it's been downhill ever since from my college days. But in terms of discrimination it was clear, and I have friends who went to Bowdoin the same time I did who have very bad feelings about -

CB: You mean Jewish students?

SL: About, Jewish friends, yeah. I can't remember their names. It doesn't matter.

CB: Why do you think that's the case? I mean, you're obviously a very loyal Bowdoin alumnus and yet others at the same time felt very bad. Do you think it was just more their temperament or -?

SL: I suspect, I suspect more, more temperament. My brother-in-law was there when I was there, he was my roommate in college, I don't think he has bad feelings. But if you asked them the same question they'd all answer the same way, that if they were there during that period that, you know, they clearly were discriminated against. We had to go plead our case with Casey Sills for quite a while before he allowed us to form that nondiscriminatory fraternity.

CB: And you did form one?

SL: Yeah, we did, and they made -

CB: Which one was that, what fra- ?

SL: ARU, which stood for All Races United, they called it Alpha Rowe Epsilon, but that all came from All Races United. And Casey Sills' argument, he says, "When I went to Bowdoin they wouldn't take Catholics in fraternities. And he said, "if we'd started a fraternity that was a Catholic fraternity, that would have let the others off the hook." He says, "We don't want to let them off the hook." And anyway, so but finally we said, "Look, that may be true for those in the future but we're not enjoying the fruits of our college living now." So he finally went along and that was the beginning of (*unintelligible word*).

CB: Now was your family able to support you at Bowdoin, I mean did you have to work or get scholarship money?

SL: Well, I really had the G.I. Bill afterwards, although it was only a year. My father was able to put me through. I did better, I was the youngest of four kids. I had two older sisters, still living, and my brother and I. Now I think when they were younger they had a little harder time. I don't think we were ever very poor. Well, I shouldn't say that, my father went bankrupt during the Depression.

CB: Oh, he did?

SL: Yeah, and lost his house.

CB: He started in '36, he started Advance Auto in '36.

SL: That was after the bankruptcy.

CB: Oh, I see.

SL: That was after the bankruptcy because, I'm not absolutely clear about this. It was clearly, he didn't go bank-, once he got into business it was after the bankruptcy so it had to be before then. But I remember when he lost his house.

CB: The house that you lived in?

SL: You know, I'm not even sure I should say they went bankrupt. I'm not sure of that. I know he lost his house because I remember that, and the bank allowed us to stay there and rent it for a while, and then we moved to an apartment house.

CB: So you moved from Tampa Street to . . . ?

SL: Bradley Street.

CB: Bradley Street.

SL: We took the middle apartment in a three story apartment house. And eventually my father started to do better and he ultimately bought that apartment house.

CB: Oh, he did. And did they remain there in the apartment house or did -?

SL: Yeah, yeah, when I got married I was still living in that apartment house.

CB: Now you have two other sisters, you have two sisters?

SL: I do have, they're still living.

CB: You do have. And how old were they, when were they born?

SL: They were five and six years older, my parents had three kids right in a row, then a four year hiatus and then I was born, so.

CB: And tell me about them, what were their names?

SL: Sylvia and Dorothy, and they've always remained single. Dorothy had periodic emotional depressions, still periodically does but is doing okay. And Sylvia left home early, went to work in Germany for the Army. And she's been the legal secretary for Lloyd Garrison, you know William Lloyd Garrison? This has to be a grandson or great-grandson.

CB: Probably great-grandson.

SL: He's ninety-two, or ninety-three, and she's been his secretary for twenty-five -

CB: In where?

SL: New York.

CB: In New York.

SL: He's the founder of a big important law firm there and he's been writing his, I guess it's biography, whatever. But he's not in very good shape now.

CB: Now do they go by the name Lee, did they change their name?

SL: Not legally. Sylvia uses the name Lee in the law firm. Dorothy still uses Lifshitz, Dorothy lived with my parents and -

CB: And where is, is she still living?

SL: Yeah, she lives on Webster Street, if you look in the Lewiston phone book it probably still says Joseph Lifshitz, she's very passive, never changed those things. And, yeah, she's been retired for years and lives there.

CB: I see. And did she, what, did she work?

SL: She worked at Advance Auto Sales a few years, and she lived for a while in New Jersey. She worked for Geiger Bros. before they came to Maine, when they were in New Jersey. And, but she hasn't worked for years. And when she did, the last several years were working at the dealership in the office.

CB: Now you graduated from Bowdoin in 1947. Did you have any, and did you go directly to work for your father at Advance Auto Sales?

SL: I did, right.

CB: Did you have any notion of either leaving the state or perhaps going into some kind of career?

SL: I thought about all kinds of, I thought about teaching. And Ernst Helmreich[1] was a great influence on me and he really, well, I'll tell one quick story.

CB: Sure.

SL: This is about me instead of -

CB: Not at all, no, actually, Shep, quite frankly I want as much information about you because, as with your relationship with Muskie because I think this is very interesting.

SL: Well, I feel a certain sense of guilt talking about myself.

CB: Not at all, I want you to talk, I want you to feel free to talk about yourself.

SL: Well, this was very significant in my life. I came, I thought about all kinds of things. Helmreich tried to persuade me to go take the, to go the Fletcher School of Diplomacy [at Tufts University] and he thought I would, I would enjoy that kind of life. I thought about teaching, I thought about college teaching quite seriously. Your father probably discouraged me by giving me that lousy grade.

CB: It was only a B!

SL: Anyway, what happened is I went to work for my father. I thought about all these things and I said, well, I'd probably enjoy business as much as anything. But I went to work in the

[1] See attached biographical information at end of transcript.

summer of ‘47, and I went to work selling. And I can remember waiting on a real bum, and I was trying to sell him a car for a hundred dollars, I’ll never forget this.

CB: A used car or brand new one?

SL: No, it was a used car. And he was kicking the tires and slamming the car and closing the door, and using the foulest language imaginable. And I remember walking, and he didn’t buy it after all that -

CB: After all of that.

SL: I remember going back in the office and saying to myself, am I going to spend my life dealing with people like that, who perform that kind of a function? So I called up Professor Helmreich and I said “I’d like to come down and see you.” And I went and I spent the afternoon, and I told him that experience. I says, really made me wonder whether I did the right thing in choosing this career. And I says, “I’m really thinking maybe college teaching is what I should have done.” And he was really wonderful because he says, “Well,” he says, “you know you were a very good student,” he says, “but the truth is you’re not a scholar.” He says, “If you had a choice between talking to somebody and reading a book, you’d always choose to talk to somebody.” And he says, “Besides which,” he says, “teaching isn’t all that I think you think it is.” He says, “I think your perception is you read good books and you have wonderful conversations with brilliant students.” Then he went into committee work, and teaching and, but the story that I remember best is he said, “I want to tell you about a . . . .” They don’t call, the selectmen who govern Brunswick, are they selectmen? It’s not a city council.

CB: It used to be, well, I think they’re still selectmen.

SL: Are they? Well, I think they were selectmen, because he says, “I went to a selectmen’s meeting last Monday and I want to tell you about this.” He said, “I had given some thought this zoning proposition that they were dealing with.” And he said, “I got up and I gave my talk what I thought they ought to do.” And, he says, “And I could just see them saying here’s this ivory tower professor who has never met a payroll, who’s probably absent minded and, he said, they were polite but they didn’t really pay any attention to me,” he said. Then, he said “Al Senter,” who was a businessman, “Al’s probably still living I guess and he had the store,” he says. “He got up later on and he said essentially the same thing that I did.” Now I always loved this about Helmreich. Helmreich says, “You know, I think I’m at least as smart as Al Senter is.” And I always enjoyed that because Al Senter did not have a reputation for brilliance in that committee. And he said, “But clearly because they regarded Al Senter as a hardheaded, hard nosed, pragmatic, practical, meet-a-payroll type, they listened to him.” He says, “If you go into business you can do as much with your life and as much good for the community as you can teaching whatever else might be.” And he also combined that with talking about correcting papers, you know, all the side of teaching that a person like myself wouldn’t have seen.

Well, I left that day and his advice always stood me in good stead, because my life has been very satisfying in terms of doing those things. And I think without having been reasonably successful in business I couldn’t have done these things. First I couldn’t have taken the time, and secondly

just business gives you the opportunity to make a lot of acquaintances, connections, whatever else that are useful.

And of course everybody needs to deal with automobiles so that every Democrat, every Democratic candidate that ever come in the State of Maine, borrowed a car from me, you know. John Glenn, you go through the list of everybody that ran for president. So for me it was a fun way of meeting all these people and getting involved with all of them, all that kind of stuff. So that, anyways, I really feel a debt of gratitude to Helmreich, who I still periodically go see.

CB: Is he still alive?

SL: He just was honored by Bowdoin at the graduation. He's eighty-nine, and he got this prize, I forget the name of the prize. Gave this wonderful speech, got two standing ovations. It was just great to see that.

CB: What other instructors at Bowdoin were influential on you? You mentioned Helmreich, and you must have had contact with Kenneth Sills.

SL: Yeah, I did. I can't say, I liked him, everybody liked him. The other one was Orren Hormell.

CB: Orren Hormell?

SL: Hormell was the head of the Government Department.

CB: Do you remember how his name is spelled?

SL: H-O-R-M-E-L-L. And he started the Bureau of Municipal Research, and I worked for him. I assisted in the Government Department in the Bureau, doing I can't remember what.

CB: This was something he -

SL: I was probably an archivist.

CB: Something he had going at Bowdoin?

SL: He had going at Bowdoin, I have no idea if it's still going there. And Maine at one time had the second highest number of city manager forms of government in the country. Michigan was first, really because of Hormell. And there was a guy named Dow at the University of Maine who also was very active in this field. But Hormell had an influence because I was a government major and I helped in that area. And then Psycho Burnett, Prof. Burnett taught psychology there -

CB: Psycho Burnett? That was his nickname?

SL: Yeah, everybody referred to him as Psycho Burnett. He taught psychology, B-U-R-N-E-T-

T. And my brother was his assistant in the psychology department. And he asked me, Prof. Burnett, to be his assistant. And I did I think for probably two weeks and I didn't really like it at all, whatever it was.

But I took psychology, and then Prof. [Norman] Munn came along, and I'm not sure how influential Munn. Now Munn was the advisor, I got to know him well because he was the advisor to our group. And then Sam (*name*) took over as advisor to the ARU fraternity group.

But anyway, in terms of real influence I, you know, Helmreich was far and away the most influential in my personal career choices and all that kind of stuff. In terms of teachers I enjoyed a number of the teachers, but I had Daggett, and Daggett was, you know, we were friendly. But I would say Hormell and Daggett because I was a government major. But Helmreich was the most influential, yeah.

CB: Now tell me about your business career. Okay, you decided to stay with working as an auto dealer. How did your business career develop? I mean, your father died when, or left the business when?

SL: Yeah, now he didn't die, he was eighty-seven when he died, so that was in 1977.

CB: 1977.

SL: Right.

CB: Okay.

SL: And he stayed in the business, now in the early years it was a very rocky road in terms of my relationship with my father, it was bad. And I'm sure I was typically, I was twenty when I went to work, and I'm sure in the first year I felt I knew everything that every twenty year old feels they know. And I really, I didn't have formal business instruction, I did pretty much what I wanted to do. But my father said, "Well you ought to learn to know every aspect of the business as you can." So I worked for a while in the parts department, in the service department, but essentially I was selling. And just naturally developed from there that I took on more and more responsibility. But it really wasn't until I bought my father's partner out that I felt I was in charge.

CB: And that was when, what, do you remember -?

SL: That was in 1963.

CB: 1963, so it was essentially from 1947 to '63 you were an employee of your father?

SL: Yeah, I worked for my father, I really didn't own any part of it. And, well what happened is I was going to go into business for myself, and I went to my father and I told him that, and I went to his partner who didn't really think I was serious, "Well. . . . you wouldn't. . . . " So then I went to General Motors and they had a program where they help you finance dealerships. And

they, they were willing to do that. So I could have been a Chevrolet dealer in town and gotten that franchise.

And it was at that point, it wasn't until that point that the partner realized I was serious and sold out his fifty percent to me, so that I stayed, so then I stayed.

CB: So essentially you were a partner with your father after '63.

SL: Right.

CB: And he got out of the business when?

SL: Well, he really never got out of the business until he died, except I would say from '63 on he became less active. And in the seventies, we built the new building in '69 and it was, so we built an office for him. And he and the bookkeeper who'd been with him for thirty years, would go in his office, they'd pull the shades down, lock the doors, and everybody thought there was an important business conference. They were choosing the race horses. My father was a great racing fan, never bet a big amount but loved, he went to the races almost every night. And they would go in there and people would say, "Well don't bother them, they're having a business. . . ." or whatever meeting it was, and of course anybody who knew them knew what they were doing. That they were looking at the racing sheet and they were picking the night's winners in the -

But he really never, ever got out of the business. And he was very good at telling me what I was doing wrong. And he thought when I built the building out on Center Street I was crazy. You know, it was way the hell out in the country and the farm, who's going to go out there. And when I built a house out there, he thought the same thing, you know, so that he was -

CB: Now how long was, how long were you located down in downtown Auburn?

SL: Until 1969.

CB: Until 1969.

SL: Until urban renewal. It must have came in the mid-sixties. But until, we didn't really move until '69.

CB: See, I don't remember that much about this area at that time. Was that sort of a business district, was that the -?

SL: Oh yeah, it was right. We were the, I was upset because we were the only downtown garage. And I thought that was an advantage so people who came downtown would park their cars there and, you know, -

CB: Get repairs, sort of like -

SL: We were, yeah, we were right next door to the post office which was a heavy traffic area, so I felt that was a big advantage. Now it turned out urban renewal did me a big favor because it worked out much better, because it worked out much better.

CB: Because that what, it would allow you to expand?

SL: Yeah, we built a new modern facility on much more land, we had much more room, and we were always tight for room where we were in Downtown. And, well I think in some ways being downtown is not an advantage, parking was not as easy and all that kind of stuff. So yeah, we moved out in '69 and. Let's see, that was right after Muskie became, no, no, it was ten years after, okay, that was '58. He came to every opening we ever had.

CB: Oh, is that right?

SL: Oh yeah, every single one. It's part of the price he had to pay for being a friend. But he was good, I remember the opening at Advance Auto, George Mitchell claims he gave him this line, which I suspect is right, but Muskie came in. We had all, we, now what would happen, I would always be able to get the big shots from the factory there, the president of the company, the president of General Motors. The first time, only time he ever came to Maine was all because Muskie was going to be there. And in the early days Muskie was chairman of the air pollution commission of course which is what they were interested in. But I remember this line because it got such a laugh. I think I have a picture of everybody laughing at this line, where Muskie is looking at the president and the chairman of the board of Chrysler Corporation. And he's saying, "Some of you may wonder why I was late. He says, I was driving in my new Chrysler and it broke down. So, George has used that line since then when we've had openings with him.

CB: Now, Shep, you've been politically active for a long time. When did you really get interested in politics? I know you majored in government and so forth, but when did you get interested in partisan type politics and things of this nature?

SL: Well, my first experience was in 1948 when I was a Henry Wallace supporter. And Henry Wallace was coming to Maine and they asked me if I would not only provide a car but drive him around, which I regarded as a delight. So I took him to Bowdoin College where he was speaking. You've probably heard this story. And I didn't know where he was speaking and neither did he, so the first person I ran into on the campus that I knew was Eton Leith.

CB: Eton Leith.

SL: Eton Leith, Prof. Leith, he just died in the last year or two.

CB: The name doesn't ring a bell, but how would you spell that?

SL: L-E-I-T-H.

CB: L-E-I-T-H.

SL: He was a professor French, and the most wonderful, gentle person, I'm sure conservative, I'm sure totally non active politically. But what he did is, I said, "Professor Leith, do you know this is, this is Vice President Wallace –"

(*Interruption in taping.*)

SL: What were we talking about?

CB: Let me see if this is running. Yeah, we're getting near the end, but go on. You were shepherding, excuse the pun, but escorting Henry Wallace around.

SL: That's good. So we met Professor Leith, and I said, "Professor Leith, do you know where Mr. Wallace is supposed to be speaking?" He says, 'Yes," he says, "Follow me." So Eton Leith led Henry Wallace up to the steps of the Moulton Union. Well people looked at him and said, "Jeez, what a weird." You know, "We didn't realize Eton Leith was a Wallace supporter." So he always would remind me of how I ruined his political reputation because of that, he probably didn't even (unintelligible phrase) in Wallace -

CB: Was he fairly conservative?

SL: Well, he was conservative and totally non political. And he probably knew who Wallace was because of being the vice president. But anyway, that was the beginning of my political, the first activist thing I ever did outside the Bowdoin campus was then. I remember trying to persuade Frank Coffin to support Wallace in '48.

CB: Oh, you knew Frank Coffin then?

SL: I knew him because Father Drouin from the big church, and Frank and I were appointed to what was then the Community Chest, the United Way committee to see if Lewiston-Auburn needed a psychiatrist. There was no psychiatrist.

CB: Oh really?

SL: Yeah, so we served on this committee together. And that's how I got to know Frank initially.

CB: What was your conclusion?

SL: That they did.

CB: That they did, yeah.

SL: And they attracted a whole series of weirdos, all of whom got kicked of the staff, all of them, two or three of them were kicked off the staff at St. Mary's. That's another story, but that's how I got to know Frank.

CB: I see. Now what, let me ask you this, Shep. I mean, you've been a successful business man and, I mean, most businessmen at least from my, from what I understand, are sort of conservative. What drew you, and you've been active in very liberal politics. What, you know, tell me something about your political philosophy. I mean, it seems like there's, the -

SL: I don't know, I don't really know if I understand what makes a person, I've had this discussion with Muskie and with others. And Muskie would tend to tell you it's intellectual and I don't believe that. The fact is, my parents were Jewish immigrants. Their parents were the subjects of pogroms in Russia. Always had this sense of identifying with the underdog, I think that's the first aspect of it. And I think that that gave me the sense of, I really believe the Democratic Party philosophy has always identified itself more with the underprivileged and the poor and the working person, and with a sense of fairness with those who are not privileged. I think if you combine that with the sense of being on the outside of, you know, the privileged class at least. Certainly not WASP-ish, or the opposite of all that, I think that's where a sense of, you know. Injustices always bothered me. Now, I guess I believe these are all emotional things rather than intellectual things. Values, I think values are probably emotional instincts. I believe that.

But I guess I always had that sense of identification, that's how I got active with Civil Liberties. I was for thirteen years on the national board, I was vice president nationally of the ACLU. And I think all of these values have always for me been consistent.

And I got involved initially because of Frank Coffin got me involved in the fifties when he gave a speech at the Democratic convention. The first one I ever went to, a Maine convention. And I was so impressed with what he said that I wrote him a letter and offered to help. And so he took me up on it and I was his campaign manager for -

CB: Now what led you to support Wallace in 1948? Because after all he was running not only against the Republicans but also against the Democrats as well. And he of course right at the beginning of the Cold War had a very controversial stand on relations with the Soviet Union and so forth?

SL: Naiveté, this is what led me. I was very much I think the idealist and the idea, I remember he wrote a book called Sixty Thousand Jobs and that was regarded as an impossible goal at the time. And I remember to this day I'm still taken with the same argument. He would make the argument about how much education you could buy with the cost of one battleship, how much, you know, all of these things. I guess I've always felt that's true, and I felt that defense is waste and money we spend for useful things is good, and that if we could have a world where you didn't have to spend money for defense, look at how much better we could educate people and deal with Harlem and all that, so this is a little pet of mine.

CB: So, in 1948 though you were not involved in Democratic Party politics at all?

SL: No, no, no I really didn't become involved until right after. Frank gave this first talk he tells me in 1950, I always thought it was '52 but I'm sure he's right. And so that it was shortly

thereafter I wrote to him. And I really, I got involved in, from '52, '53. When Muskie first ran I didn't really play much of a role in that campaign, '54.

CB: You mean in the 1954 gubernatorial campaign. Were you active at all in local politics before, let's say before, let's date it from before 1954?

SL: Well, I wrote my major thesis at Bowdoin on a comparison of the Auburn city charter which was a city manager form of government, the Lewiston commission form which was the screwiest, keep the power away from the people form of government -

End of Side A
Side B

CB: Okay, Shep, you were talking about your early involvement in politics.

SL: Okay, right, and I remember because I had done that, someone learned of it and they asked me if I would participate in a debate in Lewiston with Frank Hoy who owned station WLAM at that time, and owned the first TV station, and [Louis] Phillipe Gagne, there's another name in there. He was the mayor and he was a little short guy.

CB: What was his name now?

SL: Gagne, his name was Phillip. I'm missing one middle name there, Phillip somebody Gagne.

CB: G-U-A-Y?

SL: G-A-G-N-E.

CB: G-A-, oh, G-A-G-N-E.

SL: Gagne, yeah. and he was very well known because he ran WCOU. He was the commentator on the COU, he didn't own it, Faust Couture owned it, but he was the -

CB: What was his name?

SL: Louis Philippe, they called him, Louis Philippe Gagne, and he had been mayor. He was a very short guy, but he was probably the preeminent French spokesperson in Lewiston at that time. So we had a debate, the three of us, with Louis Philippe representing the strong mayor form of government which the Franco American, some of the Franco American people wanted to get back to. Frank Hoy representing, well I always regard it as the old line conservative Yankee whatever it was. He was a good person, but I'll never forget this debate. And I represented the city manager form which I was pushing for. And I'll never forget the debate because I was collecting things from the newspaper that were ridiculous examples of what was happening in the Lewiston city government. And what I remember was the fire chief had two or three accidents with his car. And the fire commission decided to punish him by not fixing the car. It

ran, and the door had a hole in it, but they were going to make him drive that way to teach him a lesson. And this was big news in the newspaper.

So I remember going to Frank Coffin, who was corporation council, either was or had been, I'd have to check the year on this. And Frank had been a great debater, I never took debating. And Frank says, now, he says, I remember giving both sides or an argument and Frank says to me, he says, now in this discussion, he says, "You're not compelled to give the other side of the argument," he says. "You're trying to prove the case for the city manager form of government. It's their role to pick apart what you're saying, not your role to show what's wrong." I was trying to make this balanced approach, whatever it might be, and it was my first insight into what debating's all about because I didn't really understand the debating mentality.

CB: Was this in, was this a radio debate, was this -?

SL: It was a debate in City Hall in the, whatever the largest room there was. And I don't know who sponsored it. I really can't remember now who sponsored it. But it was a debate, it was very well attended. And the thing I was appalled at, Frank Hoy was telling about how corrupt the Lewiston city government had been. Now I'd have to check this, there was a Mayor Levesque. I think he went to jail but I'm not sure, for embezzlement. And Frank Hoy got up and did this imitation of Mayor Levesque with a French accent, which Frank was an old line Yankee, who was a decent guy, but I was appalled that he would do that with this very largely French audience, you know. And I can remember Regina Guay was a union activist getting up and really giving Frank Hoy hell, not for that but for the argument he was making. And that was really my first memory of doing something concrete trying to affect the political process. But the other great story, do you really have time to waste on these?

CB: Oh, I want to hear it all, really, this is great.

SL: The other great story is, did you know Larry Pelletier, he was a professor at Bowdoin College?

CB: No, I've heard the name, I've heard the name.

SL: He became president of Allegheny College. Prof. Pelletier was very Anglicized, and wanted to be called Prof. Pelletier. I would look at the name and say this is "*Pelchie*" because I grew up in Lewiston, Maine and Pelletier's grocery store is where we did all of our shopping and stuff. So the mayor at the time was Mayor Malenfant, have you ever heard of Mayor Malenfant?

CB: I've heard the name, L-A, M-A-L-E-N-F-A-N-T, right.

SL: Ernest Malenfant was a gate tender for the railroad on, near little Canada, and he knew everybody and shook hands with them all and was friendly. And he used to spit, he had this mannerism. And Phil Isaacson was his corporation council forever, so that we were still trying to get the charter changed to a city manager form of government. Now Malenfant wanted it to be a strong mayor form of government because he was the mayor. He pictured himself as mayor forever. So we got Phil to influence Malenfant, and Malenfant had great respect for Phil, in the

appointments and we got appointed to this charter commission, John Donovan, do you who he is?

CB: Donovan?

SL: Donovan was a professor at Bowdoin -

CB: Yes, right.

SL: - and at Bates and worked for Muskie?

CB: Right, sure.

SL: All that and ran for congress? He was a very good friend, Frank Coffin's best friend was John Donovan. Bill Hathaway, do you know who he was?

CB: Sure.

SL: Myself, a guy named Guy Ladoucer who ran station WCOU, and -

CB: Ladoucer?

SL: Ladoucer.

CB: How do you spell that, Shep?

SL: L-A-D-O-U-C-E-R, and, I am embarrassed to say, a woman whose name I do not know who was not very active. Anyway, we all knew that Malenfant would only listen to someone who was French, he was very ethnocentric. And so I called up Larry Pelletier, who I knew of. I never had him for a course. And I said, "This is going to be a strange request, but let me tell you what we're trying to do." We're trying, now Larry was a great believer, as the whole Bowdoin government department was in the city charter form of government. So we said, "If we could bring Mayor Malenfant down to talk to a French professor Pelletier *["Pelchie"]* and have him tell him the virtues of the city manager form of government, that would be worth more than we could do in five years." So I did that because I knew he wouldn't like being called Prof. "*Pelchie*" but I knew, if we introduced him as Pelletier, that would kill the whole thing as far as Malenfant was concerned.

So Hathaway, Donovan, and I went down, I don't think, yeah, I think it was the three of us, made the appointment, went down to see Prof. Pelletier and it was, Mayor Malenfant, this is Prof. "*Pelchie*" (*unintelligible word*). We had this great discussion where Pelletier couldn't have done, couldn't have been more eloquent in telling Malenfant the whatever it is. We came back and we laboriously wrote this great report on why we ought to have a city manager form. Malenfant looked at it, I don't think he ever read the goddamn thing through. He says, "We need a strong mayor, that way the. . . ." But anyway, so Hathaway and, we haven't talked about this for quite a while but we're still good friends and all that. So that was one of the early efforts to

do something in Lewiston.

CB: Now you were living in Lewiston?

SL: I was living in Lewiston.

CB: And how long did you live in Lewiston?

SL: I live in Lewiston, I lived in Lewiston until I built that house in 1967.

CB: And this was out in where? In Auburn?

SL: Yeah, I built a house out on Maple Hill Road, around Lake Auburn, up on Maple Hill Road which I still own and would like to sell because I don't live there anymore. So it's. . . . But, those are the early political pre Frank Coffin-Ed Muskie days in the effort, unsuccessful effort, to influence the Lewiston city charter.

CB: Did you ever think of running for office yourself at the local level, Shep?

SL: I ran for the school board in Auburn.

CB: Oh, you did?

SL: Yeah, I was on the school board for several years.

CB: Oh, in Auburn.

SL: I never seriously con-, my interest was really almost always in, in, in majoring in national office and activities. These are things I found most interesting. I got interested in state government, I've been on every state reorganization, their still at it, you know. Don Nicoll is now, what, the co-chairman of, do you know Don, yeah, of course you do.

CB: Oh, I know Don Nicoll, but -

SL: Yeah, we were on that same kind of committee when Ken Curtis was governor, and I was on one when Joe Brennan was governor, when Jimmy Longley. I've been on every one of the reor-, I'm not sure we've reorganized anything yet. So I always, you know, stayed interested in state government, but I always found national politics the most fascinating.

CB: So local office, except for school board in Auburn, really didn't attract you.

SL: Yeah, I didn't, I didn't have, and I never felt I could. I probably felt I couldn't have won, and I also felt, I didn't have enough of that political drive to want me to give up what I was. I felt practically I couldn't, you know, I had four kids, had to support them, all of that. Now, others did it, Muskie did it with five kids so that it can be done.

But no, I guess I never really. . . . I enjoyed the role but it was always, you know, I didn't play golf, I was involved in political stuff. And I always did that from the earliest time, I always took, I don't know, twenty-five percent of my time, whatever, and got involved in, initially, political activity and I always enjoyed it.

CB: Yeah, I'm interested in how you divided your time. Now, you got married when?

SL: In '51.

CB: You got married in '51. And where was your wife from?

SL: She was from Worcester, Massachusetts.

CB: And how did you meet?

SL: I met her because my roommate from Bowdoin married her sister.

CB: Oh I see.

SL: And she came to Westbrook College and she then, when we got involved, transferred to Bates. And she ended up not only graduating from Bates but she ended up teaching at Bates.

CB: Oh, she did. What did she teach? Nancy, right?

SL: Nancy, yeah.

CB: What did she, I never met Nancy. What -

SL: Well, the truth is we've been separated for a few years and will be divorced at some point. We're still very friendly but after thirty-five years together we separated. She started at Westbrook, transferred to Bates, and we were, she was still in college when we got married. So that we got a little apartment and then we bought a house and then ultimately in '67 we built this house in Auburn.

CB: So you had a house here in Lewiston before you -?

SL: No, yeah, yeah, excuse me, we did, we had a house up on Labbe Avenue, right near -

CB: Oh yeah, right where Dick and -

SL: Right near the Sampsons.

CB: The Sampsons live.

SL: Yeah, they're lifelong friends because we met them in '53, when my son Jonathan was born we bought that house.

CB: Now your children, how old are your chil-, when were your children born?

SL: Well, I can tell you their ages better than I can tell you the years they were born.

CB: Well, give me their ages and we can, I can calculate.

SL: My oldest son is thirty-eight, my oldest daughter is going to be thirty-six -

CB: And your oldest son is who?

SL: Jonathan.

CB: Jonathan.

SL: Cathy is my oldest -

CB: Is that C-A-T-H -?

SL: C-A-T-H-Y, Catherine it really is, she's a lawyer in Portland. My oldest, my youngest son is thirty-two and -

CB: And his name is?

SL: His name is Adam.

CB: Adam.

SL: And my youngest daughter is twenty-eight, her name is Beth.

CB: Beth.

SL: I have a wonderful picture of Ed Muskie shaking hands with Adam with my parents standing with them, which had to be in '69 when we opened the dealership, where . . . . It was the first really opening of a dealership that, the first dealership I opened that he came to, because it was the first one I opened. But he'll give you, if you ask him, he'll tell you ad nauseam we compelled him to come to every goddamn opening we ever had of any sort.

CB: So Jonathan was born in '53 and that's just about when you were starting to get active. How did you divide your time? I mean, you had this dealership and, by 19-, what '63 you had bought it out, but you must have been quite busy with your business, your family, and your political activities.

SL: Well I was always blessed with a lot of energy. I think that, I don't think anybody makes choices there, I just, I had a lot of energy. Always worked hard, but I always, I needed to be involved in something that for me provided the interest aspect. I've always enjoyed business, to

this day I still do, but I think if all I had done was to be in business I really wouldn't have enjoyed life at all. But it was mixed, I integrated it so that to this day, and this has always been true, if I'm dictating letters, you know, I can dictate two business letters, one political letter, one banking letter, whatever it might be, and I always seemed to be able to do that.

Plus the fact, because in the early days my father was really active. And I suspect in my own unconscious that I knew when I first went to work it was my father's business and he was the boss, he was calling the shots. And I think I probably had this need to prove myself in some area where I did it myself, and I think the political arena gave me that opportunity. I was running a congressional campaign when I was in my twenties, and I think that was very satisfying to me and -

CB: Now your father, was your father or mother politically active?

SL: No, neither.

CB: Neither one of them were. Now what were their, were they Democrats or Republicans?

SL: Well, they would have been Democrats in that Franklin D. Roosevelt was their great hero. From their point of view I think, tap an East European immigrant and there's an old Roosevelt, you know, so that from that point, they had no, -

CB: And you never talked politics at home?

SL: No, no, not in terms of issues. I think my father got a certain sense of pride out of my involvement over the years.

CB: Oh, he did, so he didn't see that as conflicting, or -?

SL: Well, well he did, no, he thought it, he probably thought I spent too much time on all of these things other than business. But I suspect part of that was he saw this as competition for attention to him. And so I think he had a lot ambivalence about my involvements, and as I say I think he enjoyed it. And he enjoyed the status, whatever, but he also probably resented it to some extent. But I think if he hadn't been in the business in the early days I couldn't have taken the time. Because I didn't start off running it, I was a salesman, I was, you know, whatever. As I say, it really, it really wasn't until '63 that I felt I really took over.

CB: Now, what about the rest of your family? Nancy and your children, did they get involved, did they support your, these extracurricular political activities, or did, did you find it to be a conflict?

SL: I think probably I - I didn't feel too much of a conflict. I suspect that Nancy probably felt in the early days that, she probably resented some of my activity, although I must say that she never really said, "Don't do this." I remember when I had a chance to be on the White House commission, Carter appointed the Small Business Commission and I remember saying to her that I'm going to have to travel, have hearings all over the country, and she encouraged me to do it

because she knew how much satisfaction I got out of that kind of thing. And she liked, she wasn't, she didn't like political affairs but she liked the people.

And I have to say, Maine has had an unusual, in my lifetime, an absolutely unusual breed of politician. And I don't know people, if they weren't politicians, I don't know people who are finer in the best sense of the word than Frank Coffin and Ed Muskie. Or than Ken Curtis or George Mitchell. I mean these are really unusual people whatever field they would be in. And so, and she liked them. And they would come to the house, Muskie would stay over with us and we'd have wonderful arguments, as you know there's nothing he enjoys more than a good argument. And I can remember Jonathan, when he was young, he says, he has a wonderful memory, and he must have been about five and he says he can remember we we're having an argument. Oh wait a minute, he had to be more than 5. We're arguing about Vietnam, so he had to be, '53, when were the early, '63, '64, when was the first -?

CB: Well, '65 was when the U.S. sent troops into there.

SL: Did the arguments start before then? Well, all right -

CB: Well, yeah, there was some debate but it, I don't think it got public attention until-

SL: Well the argument was about Vietnam, and I can remember because he said, he must have been eleven or twelve. He says he was sitting in the living room and he could remember Muskie pounding the coffee table, talking to Nancy, saying, "Goddammit, Nancy!" Whatever it was he said. And he says he was really scared, this great big man who was yelling at his mother. He would have, now this was a typical kind of discussion that Muskie enjoys but, so they all got an early exposure. And we would have, I remember when the woman who was the governor of Connecticut, can't -

CB: Ella Grasso?

SL: Ella Grasso, came and we had a little affair there and she changed in my bedroom and next day they called and wanted to know if I'd found a petticoat, the governor's petticoat, (*laughter*). So they were used to politicians being in and out of the house and there were always, you know, good discussions so they grew up with that. Nancy did not like going to political affairs which she did early on and then stopped going, but she always was interested in the issues and enjoyed them, the people. You know, we used, we went on vacation with George and Sally Mitchell when they were together, and we were together. And as people she always liked them, because they were unusual people. I mean they really were very good people. And to this day the Coffins are still very good friends of mine. These are all forty year relationships now that have persevered, you know, all that time. So that the kids all were liberal. You know, at one time three of my kids, all four of them were in public service activity once in a while. I'm sure because they grew up feeling that's what you're supposed to do, but that's good.

CB: Getting back to the fifties, Shep, when you were getting more involved in political activity, remind me again, when did you first meet Frank Coffin? Now he was corporation council for Lewiston?

SL: He was corporation council in Lewiston, and he was very well known in Lewiston. He was *suma cum laude*, he was a big debater, he was a figure who was very admired.

CB: Even that early because, now he graduated from Bates it was after Muskie so it must have been after '36.

SL: Oh yeah, Muskie's older than Frank is.

CB: So he must have really gotten off to a fast start in his career.

SL: I don't think he would say that. I think that -

CB: Because I mean he was corporation council for, you know, by 1948.

SL: Yeah, but when Frank, I can't remember the year he started practicing law, it wasn't, it was, I bet it was the mid-forties but you'd have to check me on that. He was in the Navy, too, you know. But he, when I first met him he was, it wasn't a law partnership but he was sharing an office with, oh God I can't remember. It was a woman lawyer, in an office above the Lamey Wellehan shoe store. And the first time I went in to see, I had met him because we got on this committee together, and he says, "Come on in." I heard this voice, and then when I went I couldn't find him, I couldn't see him, he was hiding under the desk. And that was, this was his way, his sense of humor. It was, (*laughter*), I looked all around, I knew I heard the voice but I, there was no Frank Coffin there.

And that was the, so I met him and got to know him in the late forties, I think, it had to be '48. I'm assuming, I got out of college in '47 so it had to be within that next year I got to know him and we, as I say, we got friendly being on this committee. So it was the early fifties I got to know him much better. And in the, in the Muskie campaign I probably did a few things -

CB: The Muskie campaign of what, '54?

SL: Governor, '54, I did a few things and I did them with Frank and for Frank and all of that.

CB: What sort of things did you do? I mean, I'm interested in the role that you played. I mean your, not only personal relationship but the role that you played in some of these campaigns.

SL: Well, in the '54 campaign I did, the truth is I probably did some fund raising, some organizing, the truth is I can't remember. The one thing I remember was, this had to be in '55, or even '5-, no it was probably '55 because Frank wasn't yet running. Where I was interested in mental health at the time. And Frank came to me and said, "How would you like to help write a mental health section for the governor's inaugural?" And I thought that was the most exciting thing in the world, you know. I remember I got Jean Sampson to help me, and we put together this and there must have been two sentences in the inaugural that I recognized. And all that made me feel so good that, you know, I played a role in that there. I didn't do anything very significant. And then, now in '56 when Frank decided to run for congress then I became his

campaign chairman.

CB: You were his campaign chairman?

SL: For ‘56, ‘58 and ‘60.

CB: Oh, really?

SL: Two congressional campaigns and a gubernatorial campaign.

CB: Gubernatorial campaign.

SL: And that was the most active time I had.

CB: Now, let me ask you this, why did he select you? I mean, there were probably, weren’t there some other people who, you know, had political experience and so forth? I don’t mean this is a pejorative way but I was curious as to -

SL: Yeah, no, I understand, I’m not sure I can give you the whole answer. First of all, we, I volunteered, after I heard him speak in ‘50 I was very impressed with what he had to say, I identified with the goals and the ideals, and I wrote to him, I remember, and said, “I’d like to help in whatever you do.” And then became state chairman and they asked me to help probably fund raising initially, probably organizing and stuff like that. I always enjoyed that. And so by ‘56, and then I, again, I helped in the ‘54 campaign some. By ‘55 and ‘56, you know, we’d known each other for probably six or seven years and I think we liked each other and got along well. And I think I was willing to do it and enjoyed doing that, so I guess I, I seemed like a natural.

CB: Now did you, let’s say for the ‘56 congressional campaign for Frank Coffin, did you have to take, did you have to take time off from your business? I mean did you have to stop working in a sense for the business?

SL: No, I didn’t -

CB: How did you arrange that?

SL: No, I didn’t, no, in that sense no, I just took more time off. I never stopped working totally, I just took a lot more time off during the critical periods. And nights, some weekends and it was just a total immersion into the campaign.

CB: Now the election was in September, right. So you, the intense periods of activity must have been, what, in the summer time?

SL: Now, summer, for us it was, it really was from the time Frank announced, I can’t remember. I remember that the first organization meeting was in Herbie Brown’s house and -

CB: In Brunswick.

SL: In Brunswick, and -

CB: And Brunswick was a part of the second district at that time?

SL: No, Brunswick was not. But our organizing meeting took place there, I'm not even sure why, and Frank will not remember this I'm sure. He never asked me if I'd be his campaign chairman. We had this meeting, I always played a role in helping organize it in Herbie's house, and Frank was, there probably were I'm going to guess twenty people there. And Frank announced this is his campaign organization and he says, Shep is going to be my chairman, and Tony Karahalios was going to be treasurer I assume -

CB: Karahalios?

SL: Karahalios, Tony Karahalios.

CB: Do you know how to spell that, Shep?

SL: Karahalios, yeah, K-A-R-A-, just the way it sounds, Kara-, H-A-L-I-O-S.

CB: Okay.

SL: Tony was his, was his treasurer, and he just announced this campaign -

CB: He hadn't consulted with you about it?

SL: He never said a word to me. Now I guess he assumed that I'd do it because I'd been so involved with, you know, the whole, everything there. But we went to a Democratic convention, we went to a Democratic convention and Louis Jalbert, you know that name?

CB: Oh, sure.

SL: Louis Jalbert, he was drinking in those days, which I guess he didn't later on. And had had a little bit too much to drink, and got up at the Androscoggin County Caucus and really blasted Frank and Ruth. I remember it because Ruth started to cry. And he says, "You haven't got a frog on the whole goddamn committee," he says. "You got a Jew, you got a Greek. . . ." And, so I remember Frank gave this eloquent answer where he said, "I didn't consider anybody's ethnic background in choosing my committee." I chose them on the basis of kind of a. . . ." And there also were all kinds of Franco Americans involved. But Louis was jealous, I think, that he wasn't consulted about whatever Frank did. But anyway, that was the early campaign. I remember that first organization meeting at Herbie's house, and -

CB: Do you remember when that took place roughly?

SL: Boy.

CB: Would that be in the spring, maybe, of 1956?

SL: I can be wrong, yeah, it had to be the spring, would it have been in the spring of '56? I'd have to check on that one. That sounds logical, but I'm not really sure. I suspect that was it.

And I remember picking up the paper the next day and my picture was on the front page, Tony's picture was on the front page. Now Don Nicoll was then Executive Secretary, I guess they called it, of the Maine Democratic Party, and was very heavily involved in that same campaign. And went to Congress with Frank when Frank went as his administrative assistant. But that was the period of the beginning of the intense involvement so that the real time consuming, most activist period for me would have been from '56 to '61.

CB: Now what would you do as chair of Frank Coffin's committees? Both his, the '56 congressional election, the reelection campaign and then his gubernatorial race.

SL: Well, really, you did everything that's involved in a political campaign. Now, Frank, I guess you'd have to say that in many ways Frank was really his own chairman. Not his own chair-, his own campaign manager because he always was involved with the strategy of the campaign. And issues were always very important to all of us. Now, I think we really, I think we were young and we were idealists and we really believed we were going to change the world and all that. And, but there's just a tremendous amount of organizing that always starts with fund raising and getting out the vote and doing, I mean all the things that are involved. You got to be sure that I tell you the story. What I regard as the greatest political story that -

CB: Tell it. Tell it.

SL: Well, this is in 1960. And labor was very helpful to the Democrats more because they provided man power more than money. But they also were a big pain in the neck because they always wanted a tremendous amount of attention. So that I had to meet with labor every, I think Tuesday afternoon for this period where they would tell us what their concerns were -

CB: Labor meaning, what, like the leader of the -

SL: Meaning Ben Dorsky and Denny Blais and, the heads of the AFL-CIO.

CB: Right, right.

SL: Okay, now you've heard about Dick McMahon from that last meeting, the short Irish Pol, okay, with the cigar and the big fat belly and all, but this really wonderful guy. Well McMahon was Muskie's good friend and his earliest chauffeur, all of those things. Well, we had, Tom Delahanty was a judge, his son was a judge, etcetera. Tom Delahanty ran for Congress in '54 just to help Ed Muskie fill out the ticket. I don't think he ever really felt he could win. And Delahanty, Muskie made him judge. Muskie, and Delahanty was the only Democrat in that group who had house that was nice enough or big enough to have a meeting in. None of these people, the other rich, Delahanty wasn't rich, but Henry Benoit was the other guy that, he was in

Portland, who had a nice, a house nice enough to do something political in, in those days. So labor said, "We've had a poll, we had a secret poll, and we have some fascinating revelations that are going to help you win the election. And we want to have a meeting, secret meeting." Whatever it was, because they didn't, nobody wanted to be thought of as being in the pocket of labor.

CB: Oh, really. Okay.

SL: So we arranged to have a meeting at midnight after some affair at Tom Delahanty's house, which was a no-no to begin with because he was a superior court judge. But we couldn't think of any other place that would accommodate this. And I remember Lucia Cormier was running against Margaret Chase Smith, Muskie was not running but he was there. Anyway, so we all went over to Delahanty's house, we went down to his playroom. Tom Delahanty had an ulcer and didn't drink, and Tom was a wonderful guy, and so we gave everybody else a drink.

And Ben Dorsky was even then older, white haired, portly. And he was the head of the Maine labor movement and Denny Blais was the head of the local whatever. So as we're all sitting there talking, standing around, having a drink, milling around, and Muskie, and Frank, and Lucia Cormier, and John Donovan had to be there. Anyway, we're all there. All of a sudden we look over and Ben Dorsky drops seemingly dead. And we all look at him, and, "Jesus Christ, what are we going to do because here we are at midnight at a judge's house with every top candidate in the Democratic Party." And we all saw the next day's headlines.

So McMahon came over there, he was absolutely serious. He says, "Look," he says, "We got a real problem here." Now Tony, I mentioned Tony Karahalios, he lived across the street. So he said, "Look," he says, "there's only one thing we can do. Shep," he says, "you take his legs and I'll take his arms and we'll put him on Tony Karahalios' lawn." He says, "If he's going to be found, you know he can't be found here, we've got to put him over there." So I was looking at McMahon first trying to think, is he serious? And it was obvious he was serious. I says, "Dick," I says, "we can't do that," I says, "you're going to take a dead man, we're going to carry him over and leave him on that guy's lawn?" He says, "Do you know what the headline's going to be tomorrow morning?" He says, "Get his legs, I'll get his arms." So we're having this argument about what can we do with this dead body who's the labor leader for the state of Maine who's going to ruin our entire campaign. And Tom Delahanty, who's the coolest guy there, walks over with a glass of water, shakes Dorsky, wakes him up and gives him the glass of water. But anyway, there was absolutely no question that everybody there, maybe with the exception of Tom, just had all of these thoughts about what the hell are we going to do now, the labor leader drops -

CB: Now, was Dorsky faking it?

SL: No, no he had this physical problem.

CB: Oh, I see.

SL: He had a physical problem and he collapsed. And, uh- no, no, no, he was genuine, total

whatever. And he was very shaky when he got up. But anyway, the next day I happened to go to Rotary with Frank Coffin who had introduced me as a Rotarian, to Lewiston- Auburn Rotary, and I says, "Now Frank, tell me the truth, what were you thinking when you saw Ben Dorsky collapse dead to the ground?" He says, "I'm too ashamed to tell you what I was thinking." And that was the only answer I ever got out of him.

But now years later, this is the interesting thing, now that happened, everything I told you was absolutely true. Years later we're having dinner at my house, and it happened the Coffins and the Muskies, they don't see each other a lot socially, they've never been, it's interesting, they've never been as close socially in terms of personal friendship as I guess I have been with each of them individually. So, but I got them over to the house, and periodically I'd try to get them together because they always enjoy each other and they have this great history of. . . . But it'll be from, you know, it could be a one or two year period when they won't see each other. And we're having him at the house and I remember telling him that story, and both of them says, "you know, I can't remember that." I thought that was so funny. Because, now, the truth is it probably never registered in quite the same way. But boy, they were very aware at the time what was happening. Now I regard that as one of the most unusual political things, and there have been a thousand stories of all kinds of things. The Muskie presidential campaign, when they delivered fifty pizzas that Segretti ordered and stuff like that, that kind of stuff.

CB: Oh yes, the dirty tricks.

SL: Yeah, all of that kind of stuff. But I really thought McMahon suggesting to me in dead seriousness that I take the legs and he take the arms and we'd move him across the street and leave him. And he never had a thought as to what Karahalios would do, you know, in the, who wasn't in the room at the time at the, anyway. I wanted to be sure and get that story on this tape because I regarded it as such a good one.

CB: Well I have it in my notes here to ask about Ben Dorsky because you'd mentioned it in our initial phone call.

SL: Yeah, well I wanted to be sure I told you that story.

CB: Yeah, yeah. Now when did you first meet Muskie?

SL: Well I really met him for the first time when he was still the OPA or OPS director, which I think was in 1950 or something like that, or later than that?

CB: Yeah, he was, no, '51 to '52.

SL: Okay.

CB: For about a year and a half I think.

SL: That was my first, I went to a business meeting, he spoke, I introduced myself and he wouldn't have known who I was. I really then didn't really get to know him until he became

governor. Now I knew him when he was running some, I shouldn't say, I knew him when he was running some, but I really didn't get to know him until he became governor. I got to know him better then. And through Frank, rather it was from Frank's involvement with the, Frank was chairman of the party. And then I got to know him much better when Frank ran for Congress, because we were always together, campaigning together, and I guess I probably got to know him.

I think he stayed, he started staying at my house. I'll never forget this, he was a Senator, so this had to be in '59. And Don Nicoll, who I got to know very well called up and said, "I'm going to be in the state and can I stay with you?" so I said, "Sure." And we were then in the smaller house on Labbe Avenue and we had a den, so we put Don in the den. So Muskie showed up that day and says, "Can I stay over with you?" He had never stayed over before. And I says, "Yeah," I says, "you can, but I want you to know Don is staying." We had one bathroom, four kids, I says Don is staying and he was already ensconced in the den. So we got a rollaway bed from downstairs and we put Muskie in the dining room, sleeping in there, and it never occurred to me that I should have said to Don, "Why don't you let the senator stay. . . .?"

CB: But Muskie didn't mind.

SL: He probably did mind, but he never said anything.

CB: Never said anything, right.

SL: Yeah, and it's probably not right to say he did mind. I suspect that he minded but I mean he dealt with it in, you know, never complained, let me put it that way. So I don't know if he minded or not, I shouldn't say that I suppose.

But anyways, so we became friendly and I think we always both liked and respected and appreciated each other and - And the other thing I would do, I suppose in a conventional way I've done a lot in terms of raising money, and automobile, stuff like that.

I always felt, and I have always told him and Jane both this, that I always got more than I gave in terms of the satisfactions it brought me, plus the fact it gave me a certain reputation. During the president, when Muskie was running for president I would get calls from people everywhere who wanted to meet him, wanted to spend time, wanted to influence him, etcetera. And I had more offers, you know, a crooked politician in that role could make a lot of money, you know, whatever it might be. And, you know, I was always very conscious of that. But I think we just always felt comfortable with each other. And I think it's true to this day. He's a big punster, I always get a big kick out of his puns.

And I can remember probably Charlie Micoleau calling me one day and saying, "who do you know in Maine that calls Senator Muskie by his first name?" And he says, "You were the only guy we could think of since McMahon died and Dick Dubord died." And so I'm not sure that he had a lot of close friends. I think he had a lot of friends in Washington. Again I don't know, in terms of close friends maybe nobody has a lot of close friends. And I think politicians tend to be very protective and suspicious and all that kind of stuff with the. . . . But we just always had a

very comfortable relationship and enjoyed each other. And I think to this day, you know, can have a good time together.

CB: Now you did a lot of fund raising for Frank Coffin and Ed Muskie. You know, which is a kind of activity a lot of politicians, and I understand Muskie in particular, doesn't like.

SL: He hates it.

CB: Yeah. What did, what would you do for fund raising? I mean, that's difficult for, because I could see that it would be a difficult thing to go out and ask people for money.

SL: Well -

CB: You know, if you're not going to offer anything in return except for -

SL: It isn't really difficult. Now I suppose it depends on what your background is. Jews have a long tradition of, of charity, of raising money. The United Jewish Appeal has probably been the most successful fund raising effort in world history, I suspect. And they learned to play hardball. And my early fund raising experience came from being involved in the United Jewish Appeal.

When I was in my twenties I remember the, they decided, they being the wealthier Jewish men in Lewiston and Auburn, that they ought to get a younger group involved. Now what you learn in fund raising is a poor person has a hard time soliciting money from a rich person, you need peer pressure in order to be a successful fund raiser. But I remember going to a United Jewish Appeal breakfast, it was called then a "Big Gifts Breakfast," and the speaker was a guy, an Irishman who had been on "The Exodus", remember the picture, "The Exodus", okay.

CB: Oh yes, the movie.

SL: Great, great speaker. And I'll never forget this because a guy named Joe Koss who was an immigrant like my father, had run a shoe factory, he had two or three factories -

CB: How do you spell his name, Shep?

SL: K-O-S-S.

CB: K-O-S-S.

SL: His sons still live in town. Koss Shoe Co. existed for years in Auburn, Maine. It was at his house. I was president of the group but didn't run the big gifts meeting, the old time, the rich shoe people ran the big gifts meeting. But I'll never forget, because my eyes must have been bulging, as they went around the room and they'd call the cards. There must have been I'm going to guess twenty-five people there, having breakfast. And then they'd say, "Okay, Meier Greene," he owned Lewiston Hardware, "How much are you giving?" And he says, "Oh, I'll pledge fifteen thousand dollars." And somebody else, "How much are you giving?" And these

were the days when the shoe people were all these people, business was good, it was after WWII, whatever. So they must have raised I'm going to guess, and this is guess work, but the range would be reasonable, they must have raised a hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars in that room from these people.

CB: And this is when, what year about?

SL: Oh boy, I'm going to guess this had to be the fifties.

CB: That's a lot of money.

SL: Well, understand that World War II and Hitler and Israel and maybe the early fifties, not long after the creation of Israel, and these were people who made a lot of money and were prospering from whatever might be. But after they did that, now I thought it was a remarkable success, I never saw so much money raised in such a short time, whatever it is. Joe Koss got up and in an accent I wish I could imitate, he says, "You bastards haven't given from the heart." He says, "Meier, I saw you drive up in a new Cadillac." He says, "Sam where'd you get that tan, you just get back from Florida?" He went around the room, he says, "There isn't a guy in the room who's going to not eat as well tomorrow." He says, "If you give twice what you gave, I'm going to call the cards again." And he raised another hundred and something thousand dollars by going around the room another time. It was the, this was the severest kind of peer pressure imaginable.

Well that's where I got my fund raising training, in the United Jewish Appeal. Now you can't do that in political things, but you learn. You learn techniques, you learn organization, things like that. And for me it was never hard to raise money for somebody else, to call. Not this ACLU, I've done this for, whatever. But my first was, well I probably did it for the United Way, but was political fund raising. So that it wasn't hard for me to organize. I knew the people, I knew, and I'd always grown up and lived here, and so that, that came easy as organizing goes. And there are a lot of people, as you say, who hate the idea of calling people to raise money.

And one of the things you learn, and I did this really, the Civil Libertarians are the worst fund raisers in the world. You know, they're all good idealists, wonderful people, but they don't know how to raise five cents. So that's what I learned is you get them all together, and I used to do this at my dealership, you know. I'd get them out on the same floor, assign each one an office, and we'd go through a script. And we'd give them all a card and then I would circulate through the office, say, "Well did you get a hold of him? How did you do?", and I'd make a call, whatever it is. If you reinforce each other, they overcome, and now it becomes almost a game, they'll make a call, they'll get somebody to give twenty-five bucks and they'll run in and say I just got a hold of this guy and he gave twenty-five bucks, whatever it might be. If they see others doing it they get over their fear of rejection, that's what it really amounts to.

And fund raising is fund raising, it doesn't matter what it's for. As Muskie always says, it's much harder to get a solicitor than it is to get people to give money. Much harder to get somebody to ask for money than it is to get someone to give money, and it's always been true. And George Mitchell is very good at raising money, he's not afraid to ask somebody for money.

And he's so unlike Muskie in that sense, he's got to be one of the best political fund raisers I've ever seen. But some people are -

CB: Now who, when you for example in '56, '58 and '60, working for Frank Coffin at the time and later on for Muskie, who did you ask for money, to contribute? Were they labor unions, business men -?

SL: Yeah, I didn't do the labor union soliciting, and I didn't do the Washington group soliciting, I did the individual. I mean I organized the individual go after one person after another. Now, you went after, we probably got a United Way list from wherever we could, we had a Democratic Party, we got every list we could. In Lewiston-Auburn it wasn't hard to call anybody for Frank because Frank had a reputation and it doesn't matter an ounce. Rock root Republicans wouldn't give in support of a Democrat, he's too liberal for me, whatever it might be. But there were all kinds of people who are nonpolitical who would give money for Frank because they just admired him, you know. And I don't know how many people we got to give who had never given to a political campaign before. It was never big money, but, you know, I can't remember but if you got, fifty bucks you probably got a good contribution. So that we went after everybody without worrying whether they were Republicans or Democrats, you know, we didn't spend a lot of time. I remember we had a meeting in my office and Jimmy Longley was, you know who Jimmy Longley was?

CB: James Longley who became governor in the seventies? Yeah.

SL: Yeah, right, yeah, went to Bowdoin, friend, etcetera. I was on the bank board, Casco Bank board with him for years. He was on my committee and I'll never forget this because he had fifteen names of people and everyone, he says, "Shep, I can't really call this guy, he's a client, he's this, he's that, you ought to see him, you ought to see that." And he'd call me every day with three more names. So finally I said, "Hey Jimmy," I says, "I got more goddamn names than I can call, I need somebody to call these people." I said, "You're not doing us any good unless you're willing to go approach some of these people." He says, "Well I really can't do that." So he was good at giving us names of people who can give. And many, many people just don't like to do the calling. I never found it hard, and as far as techniques, I'm sure I learned what I knew about it through working the United Jewish Appeal. And I was used to seeing people give, you know, because I think there was a - . . .

End of Side B
End of Interview

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