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Lindholm, Milt oral history interview

Stuart O'Brien

Rob Chavira

Interview with Milt Lindholm by Stuart O'Brien and Rob Chavira

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Lindholm, Milt

Interviewer
O'Brien, Stuart
Chavira, Rob

Date
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Place
Lewiston, Maine

ID Number
MOH 037

Biographical Note

Milt Lindholm was born June 3, 1911 in Collinsville Connecticut to Helen (Hess) and Rev. Lambert Lindholm. His father, a Swedish Congregational minister, died when Milton was one year old. Lindholm's mother moved her family to Waltham, Massachusetts, to live with her parents, and work at the Waltham Watch Factory. After graduating from Waltham High School, Lindholm worked for two years, and then went to Bates College in the Class of 1935. At Bates, he was on the football team, playing in a scoreless tie with Yale University. He was also part of the Student Council, Athletic Council, basketball team, and was Class President. After graduation, Lndholm taught for a few years at the Kent's Hill School, then he sold text books for seven years. Milt returned to Bates College as Dean of Admissions in 1944, and stayed there for thirty-two years, retiring in 1976. At the time of interview, Lindholm was Dean of Admissions Emeritus. The Bates College Admissions Office bears his name.

Scope and Content Note

The interview covers a variety of topics, including: Covenant Church; Waltham, Massachusetts; the Depression and Bates; Bates football; Bates in the 1930s; Lewiston and Bates; the Lewiston

trolley; Bates Student Council; Student Council and Ed Muskie; Bates professors; chapel at Bates; and Muskie as a politician and as a person.

Indexed Names

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Transcript

RC: Will you start by stating your full name and spelling it for us?

Milt Lindholm: My name is Milton Lindholm, L-I-N-D-H-O-L-M.

RC: And where and when were you born?

ML: I was born in Collinsville, Connecticut in the year 1911, June 3.

RC: And that's not where you grew up, though?

ML: No.

RC: Where did you grow up?

ML: I lived there in Collinsville one year, at which time my father died. And my mother moved with me and two older siblings to Waltham, Massachusetts where I lived until I went to Bates.

RC: And what were your parents' names?

ML: My father was Lambert Lindholm, Rev. Lambert Lindholm, and my mother was Helen Hess Lindholm.

RC: And growing up with a single mother, what did she do to get by by herself?

ML: Well, she brought her brood to Waltham where her parents lived, so in effect I was brought up by grandparents, both of whom were immigrants to this country from Sweden. My first language was Swedish. My grandparents didn't speak English, so I grew up in a home where Swedish was the language. You asked how my mother survived with three kids, well, she went to work immediately and worked all of her adult life after my father's death in the Waltham watch factory. Are you aware of the Waltham watch? Well, up until fairly recently, it was probably the most prominent watch in the world. They had a factory in which were three thousand employees making watches, so most of my relatives worked in Waltham watch. In fact, Waltham was called the watch city.

TOB: How old were you when your father passed away?

ML: One year old.

RC: He was a reverend; was your mother also a very religious person?

ML: Oh yes, I would say so, yes, church going, religious person.

TOB: What denomination?

ML: Well it was a Swedish denomination which now has, is a fairly prominent denomination country wide referred to as the Covenant. There were Covenant churches throughout the country. In those days the church that I grew up in in Waltham, which is the church my mother grew up in before she was married, was called the Swedish Congregational Church. It had affiliations with the Congregational, the American Congregational denomination. There is still a, in Waltham, a Swedish Congregation church. It's not called Swedish any longer because that language is not used and most of the members of that church are not now Swedish. It's called the Covenant Church.

RC: Now is Waltham predominantly Swedish immigrants?

ML: No, although there was a sizeable Swedish population in Waltham. There were two Swedish churches, the Lutheran church which was the state church of Sweden, and then this other church which, like the pilgrims and puritans in England, broke away from the state church, and they called themselves mission friends. This was comparable to puritans and pilgrims, and they had churches throughout the country. But they protested the state church in Sweden and many of them came to this country because of that.

RC: Can you tell me a little bit about Waltham, what it was like growing up? Was it predominantly Protestant and Anglo, was it a very conservative town?

ML: Well in those days it was a city of about forty thousand people, fairly sizeable. It's not much larger than that now, but it's on Route 128 and it has had growth as a result of that. You probably go right through Waltham on your way home to (*name*), don't you?

TOB: Actually I take Route 1. I go through Saugus.

ML: If you use 128 you do.

TOB: Yeah, yeah. During traffic I do.

TOB: A lot of mills?

ML: It was an industrial town; it had the watch factory which was the predominant industry. But there was also a cotton mill called the Boston Manufacturing Company for some reason or other which was, had a thousand or more employees. And it was the industry that my grandfather, who was the financial support of the Lindholms, worked in. But other than that it was a typical cosmopolitan community with many different nationalities represented, French, a lot of French, Polish, Italian, Swedish.

RC: And politically how would you characterize it?

ML: I would say probably predominantly Democrat in its inclinations. I grew up in a politically and religiously conservative home and I suppose there were a lot of homes comparable to that.

RC: Did your family try to instill conservative, sort of political values in you, Republicanesque?

ML: My family I don't think was particularly politically occupied. I think our activities other than working were pretty much centered around the church, and the church I think had a very conservative outlook.

RC: And at what point did the Depression become a factor?

ML: Well, of course I attended Bates in the Depression years, entered in '31, graduated in '35 which was right in the depth of the Depression. But I don't have any recollection that the Depression affected us at all. We never had anything and consequently we didn't lose anything in the Depression.

RC: Makes a lot of sense.

ML: Yeah. Unlike my wife, when she was interviewed, she went from riches to rags in the Depression. She came from a very affluent family and they lost everything. So we didn't feel the effects of the Depression, except as in college you didn't have anything, any money to spend, you know. You had to work. In that respect you felt the effects of the Depression.

RC: Even if your family didn't feel it, were the effects themselves noticeable around with other people and so forth?

ML: Oh, I would say so. But everybody was pretty much in the same boat in those years, you know.

RC: So no one was really distinct from one another in terms of aff- ?

ML: I don't think so. At Bates there was very little in the way of affluence. If a person had an automobile it was very unusual.

TOB: How did you end up at Bates?

ML: I worked two years after graduating from high school. And my mother in her wisdom saw that I wasn't going anywhere and she thought I needed further education, so she sent me to a man who was connected with the Congregational denomination in Massachusetts. He had been a clergyman, was now working for the state organization as secretary or in some capacity. He had befriended my father and so he was a sort of a friend of the family. I went to see him, he was then probably in his late ''80s or early '90s. And I remember him telling me that he had connections with two colleges that might be helpful, one was the University of Iowa and one was Bates College. And I told him that I thought it was important for me to get away from home. In the two years that'd I'd been out of high school I had probably gained some friendships that would help in my future in any respects, but I didn't want to go as far away as Iowa. Now, did I want to go to a college in Boston? And he explained to me that Bates College was not in Boston, it was in Lewiston, Maine. So he wrote a letter on my behalf to Harry Rowe, have you run into Harry Rowe in your deliberations?

RC: Yes, Ruth Rowe's father.

ML: This man's name was Emrich[1]. Can't remember what his first name was although I have a, in my library I have a biography of him. And he was a Bates graduate and had been a Bates trustee, and he sort of paved the way. So one Fourth of July weekend I drove up here to Lewiston, Maine, saw Bates for the first time and had an interview with Harry Rowe and he told me I could come to Bates in the fall.

RC: And you went to Waltham High School?

ML: Hm-hmm.

RC: Tell me a little about your high school experience. Were you really involved extracurricularly and so forth?

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1 Rev. Frederick Ernest Emrich. Graduated Bates in 1876. Served on the Bates College Board of Overseers from 1891-1921.

ML: Yeah, my chief activity was sports, I was a captain of the football team. And I am a member of the hall of fame in Waltham High School, football hall of fame. I could show you lots of plaques and stuff. You'd be interested that the traditional game for Waltham in those days played on Thanksgiving morning was with Brockton next door, right? And I played some baseball and basketball.

TOB: Any extracurriculars as far as student government, debate?

ML: Not in high school.

RC: Did you stay involved with the church when you became older and got into high school and more independent?

ML: Yeah, I stayed involved in the church, right. In fact, I contemplated the ministry myself and I majored at Bates in religion. So I was involved those two years, throughout high school and in those two years I was out of high school, before I ...

TOB: What were you doing for work?

ML: In those two years? I worked one year for a construction company out in New York State road building, and I worked one year with the Waltham watch factory in the purchasing department office.

TOB: So you came to Bates in 1931. Where did you live?

ML: In Bates?

TOB: Yeah, at Bates.

ML: Well, that's sort of interesting in that there were not enough dormitory facilities for all incoming students. And about twenty of us were told that we couldn't live on the campus and go find a place to live. But they had a list of people in those days that welcomed students as roomers and boarders. They welcomed them because they needed the income. So one day one of these twenty and myself walked down Nichols Street and went to 136 Nichols Street, which is two houses below the health center, rapped on the door and told them that we were looking for a place to live, and they welcomed us. So for the first semester of my freshman year I lived off campus. Then it was customary in those days, you could not work on the campus as a freshman, but they made an exception in my case and gave me a job in the dining hall in the second semester. But in order to do that job I had to live on campus. There were some openings. So I and one of the other guys down at 136 Nichols Street came and lived on the top floor of Parker Hall, in a room that no longer exists. But we lived in that room, or I lived in that room for three and a half years, the same room in the top floor of Parker Hall, East, what in those days we called East Parker. Parker was east and west.

TOB: Where did that room go?

ML: Well, if you look at Parker Hall today, on each end of the building is a staircase, are you familiar with that? That staircase was not there in those days. Those are additions to the building, and that's all that we lost is a staircase. But when they made major renovations in that building, oh I would say around maybe the middle '60s or even the late '60s, the building codes required an external staircase. Prior to that the staircases were in the building. And my room, this room that I occupied for three and a half years was at the end of the old building. And in constructing the addition to East Parker, that room was done away with so it doesn't exist. So you can't go and say Lindholm lived here any more.

TOB: So, working in the dining services, you worked in JB, John Bertram Hall? Were you a waiter or a bus ...?

ML: Yes, yes, I was a waiter for three years, I was a head waiter for one year.
TOB: So you worked with Muskie then?

ML: Oh yeah, yes. He was a waiter there, too.

TOB: Tell us about being a waiter. It's a very different dining experience than students have now. Students would come in for dinner, sit down and you would serve them just like a restaurant?

ML: That's right.

TOB: They could order different things?

ML: No, no, there was a standard meal, everybody was served the same meal. But they were served by a waiter, white linen table cloths, linen napkins, much more formal experience than you guys have now.

TOB: What was the food like?

ML: Oh, we thought it was good, we were getting three square meals a day. A lot of people in those days weren't. We were fortunate.

TOB: Now did everyone who lived on campus eat in the dining hall?

ML: Yes, there were two dining halls, you know, one for men and one for women. There was a dining hall in Rand Hall where the women ate.

TOB: And could everyone fit in there at once?

ML: No, they had two servings. Probably three quarters of an hour apart, or something like that.

RC: Now, you became involved in a lot of activities when you came to Bates. Student council and so forth.

ML: Yes, I did.

RC: Did you have some sort of political awakening or something like that because you get involved in something other than sports?

ML: No, but I was an active undergraduate student in that I was president of my class, junior and senior year. And I was president; I was on the student council for three and a half years. The student council in those days was a significant mens governing student body, organization. And I was also president of two other organizations. One was called the athletic council which in those days ran the athletic program of the college. And the athletic council was made of, as I remember, three or four students, a couple of faculty members, the athletic director, and three alumni, that was the athletic council and they were responsible for the athletic program. And I was in my senior year president of that organization elected by the male student body. And then there were also in those days the YMCA and the YWCA, later became the CA, the Christian Association, later became the Campus Association. What it is now I don't know but it was, in those days the Campus Association was pretty much responsible for the extracurricular life of the campus. The YMCA was essentially a religious group and I was president of that.

I was involved. I said at the time, I was president of four major campus organizations which was unusual. In fact, I was told by the then dean of the college, Harry Rowe, that I couldn't do that, that it was against the rules of the college to have more than two major organizations. And that was all right with me. And I told him, okay, I will give up the presidency of the student council because the student council the year before had had lots of problems, disagreeable things and I ...

RC: It still does.

ML: Does it? And so I wasn't terribly anxious to be the head of that organization. But Harry Rowe, and I said I would, Harry Rowe said, you can't, we need you in that position so you can't resign from it. Then I says, well, I'll give up the presidency of the YMCA. And the then faculty advisor of that organization who was a man called Ray-, Professor Rayborn Zerby, Professor Zerby, said you can't, we need you as the head of that organization. And I refused to resign as president of the class. That was a distinction and an honor that the classmates had bestowed upon me that I was not willing to forego. And I refused to give up the presidency of the athletic association. So I wound up with all four of them.

TOB: Now, was Muskie, what was your major interaction with Muskie? Were you friends with him, did you meet him straight off for your first year? Well, he came your second year.

ML: Yeah, he came when I was a sophomore. I didn't get too well acquainted with Muskie until he became a member of the student council, which he did I think as a junior, maybe as a sophomore. Yeah, I think he was student council president, uh, member for three years, his sophomore, junior and senior years, so I would have known him for two years. And we became good friends. When I was president of the student council he was the secretary-treasurer of the student council. And he was obviously an outstanding student and smarter than all of the rest of us and in fact, he was sort of my ghost writer. I was president, he was secretary, and if I needed

to make some kind of a statement to the student body, I'd always go to Ed Muskie and ask him to write it. So he was very active, very prominent in student affairs. And I considered him a good friend. We didn't pal around together much because there was, you know, a difference in our class. My friends were, close friends, were roommates and classmates, you know. But he also roomed on the top floor of East Parker Hall, so we had that proximity and saw each other.

TOB: What was he like socially?

ML: Oh, he was a good guy. He was quiet, reticent, extremely able, well liked, not exceptionally popular as an undergraduate but popular. He was president of his class as you know. I was amazed when I resigned as president of the student council, because I was a senior and graduating, I think everybody expected that Ed would be elected president, but he wasn't. The president was a guy by the name of Bob Saunders, and he then became vice president of the student council. To be on the student council was probably the most prestigious role that one could play on campus at that time and I'm surprised that Muskie didn't make it. But you had to be elected to that office of course.

RC: You say you and Muskie didn't chum around ...

ML: No, we didn't.

RC: ... what did people do to chum around at Bates at that time? Like, what were some of the free time activities that people partook in on a regular basis?

ML: Well, if you were involved in extracurricular activities, that was somewhat time consuming. And you'd horse around as students do these days, I suppose, to a degree. You were limited in what you could do because nobody had any money. As an example, to improve conditions in the dining hall, you know . . . Sometimes they got a little bit rowdy and what not and kids' manners weren't the best. And there we were sitting at tables with white table cloths and linen napkins and stuff, and they instituted an idea of having a person sit at the head of the table and serve students. So the waiters would bring in the food and it would be a dish of mashed potatoes, let's say, and a dish of meat and a dish of, and maybe you do this at home, your father served. And these were tables of eight. But to be at the head of the table, you would be paid fifty cents a week. And those were desirable jobs. Fifty cents a week. That's hard to believe, isn't it? And they'd pay you at the end of the semester. So at the end of the semester which was what, how many weeks, ten weeks? You'd get five bucks. Five dollars, that's a lot of money. So ...

TOB: How far would fifty cents go?

ML: Well, you could buy an ice cream cone for a nickel; you could go to the movies for ten cents.

RC: Were there many things that students could do in Lewiston? How was Lewiston different back then?

ML: Well, there was not much involvement on the part of students in community affairs and city affairs, and I think it was largely a reflection of the economy. We were pretty much confined to the campus. Nobody had any automobiles. And you'd go downtown, you'd walk or you'd ride the streetcar.

TOB: There was a streetcar?

ML: Haven't you heard about the figure eight?

TOB: No.

ML: Oh, well, you should know about the figure eight, that's an institution. There was a trolley car that came down Campus Avenue, right down Campus Avenue, made the turn onto College Street, went downtown across the bridge, made a loop in Auburn and came back across the bridge and went down Lisbon Street and up Pine Street, up to Campus Avenue. That's why it was called the figure eight. It made a loop, see, like a figure eight. That cost a nickel.

TOB: That was fairly expensive for a trolley ride, for your nickel.

ML: So you were limited. What I'm saying is you were pretty much limited in what you could do by the fact that nobody had any money.

RC: Were town-gown relations just as bad then as they are now?

ML: I don't recall that there was any problems in those days, none.

RC: Just a lack of maybe involvement.

ML: Yeah, I think so. I think people in Lewiston, they were having a hard time, a lot of unemployment, and the kids were having a hard time, too.

RC: Comparatively speaking, even though it was the Depression and so forth, was Bates still considered a wealthy institution?

ML: No.

RC: Not like it is today?

ML: No, no, it was rather considered, and I don't know how you would compare this with other institutions in those days, as a poor institution, it was poor. There was no affluence, any evidence of affluence at all.

RC: Did a lot of, did most of the student body come from more privileged backgrounds or varying degrees, or?

ML: No, I'd say that very few students came from affluent backgrounds. I suppose there was a wealthy class in those days, but it was extremely small. Bates in those days was not as prestigious an institution as it has become and is today. It's interesting that the prestigious institutions in New England, and New England then as now, was thought of the acme of higher education. The prestigious institutions were the single sex colleges. It was Harvard and Yale and Dartmouth and Amherst and Williams and Wesleyan on the one hand, and Smith and Mt. Holyoke and Radcliff and Vassar on the other hand. There were only, among the private institutions, three coeducational schools, that was Bates, Colby and Middlebury. And it was much more prestigious to go to one of the single sex institutions in those days than to go to a coeducational college.

TOB: How did you find living in Lewiston after living in Waltham?

ML: We've lived in Lewiston now for fifty-three years.

TOB: So you obviously liked it.

ML: We had a good living here.

TOB: You were coming from outside of Boston, and you know, pretty cosmopolitan place, pretty, you know, it was the Depression, but coming up to Lewiston which I'm sure was very, very ...

ML: I didn't find life, I had a better life here at Bates than I had at home. You know, we had a hard time having enough money, having enough food on the table. I got three square meals a day, good meals, too, you know, here. So I didn't find life much different here, maybe better than I had at Waltham.

TOB: How much did you get paid as a waiter and then head waiter, a week?

ML: You got paid, you didn't get any cash. You got paid by receiving credit for, depending on how much you worked, half board or full board. In other words, if you worked as a waiter, depending upon how many hours you worked, you'd either get credit for the cost of your meals full or half. The same thing was true with your room. Now I was, the last two years that I was in East Parker Hall, I was a proctor and I got my room for free, no cash.

RC: What was the enrollment of Bates back then? Was it a really large school?

ML: I think about half the size of the present enrollment, about eight hundred.

RC: So it wasn't that small, I mean, it still had a good deal of people.

ML: Oh yeah.

TOB: What other kind of social activities were there? Were the football games popular, were there dances or anything like that?

ML: Yeah, I can remember football games at which there were ten to fifteen thousand people at Garcelon Field. The field was surrounded with grandstands, both end zones.

TOB: Would Bates win, ever?

ML: Oh, sure. We had a good team.

TOB: Actually that's true, I remember ...

ML: I played on a team that played Yale to a scoreless score.

TOB: Yeah, that was the heyday of Bates football teams. You beat U Maine that year, right, in the state championship?

ML: Two out of the three years that I . . . We had freshman football, you know, freshmen were not eligible yet. You had freshmen teams, so you didn't become eligible for varsity football until you were a sophomore. But two out of the three years that I played, we beat Maine.

TOB: And Colby and Bowdoin?

ML: Well, my recollection is, we beat Colby both years, two, the last two years I know. Bowdoin I think beat us once and then we beat them once.

TOB: There was one year when you won the state championship, which was a big deal back then it seems.

ML: Yes, it was.

TOB: It seems that there was a lot more coverage in the Lewiston paper of Bates activities than there is now.

ML: There certainly was.

TOB: It seems like now all you hear about in the Sun Journal is negative things that will seem embarrassing to the college, and anything positive doesn't get put into the paper. But back then it seems like they were really proud to have Bates in Lewiston and that it was part of the community.

ML: I think that's true. Certainly the newspaper coverage was much better in those days, and the coverage of sports was a lot better in the local newspaper than it is today. Prior to a game, there would be pictures of the opposing team, there'd be pictures of the Bates team, there would be write-ups of the game. And then after the game much the same. I've been turning pages here, you asked about the dining hall and there's a picture in here somewhere of the dining hall staff. I thought it would be interesting to you.

RC: Speaking of which, what was Muskie like in that sort of setting, working? He worked under you I suppose for awhile.

ML: Well, in a sense he did because I was a head waiter, although I think he became a head waiter in his senior year.

RC: He did.

ML: There was another interesting rule at that time, that you could not be employed by the college when you were a senior. And that was simply to give, to spread the jobs around. I suppose they figured that if you got to be a senior, somehow you'd be able to pay your bills, you know, without work. And the only job that was available to students on the campus was the head waiter in the dining hall, and that was only for the first semester of your senior year. So I worked, I was fortunate to be able to work the first half of my senior year. And I think that was true of Ed Muskie, too. But, I don't see a picture, go ahead.

RC: You have one of the best quotes I've heard, I think in the yearbook, described as a, I guess a, the description of you in the yearbook, in response to that you said, apparently my Waltham reputation as a two time ...

ML: I've never known quite, see, I didn't get a particularly good write up in the yearbook here. For example, under the student council, let me find that, it should be right in the beginning here, yeah, "the 1934-35 student council was typically inactive." This is the write up in the yearbook. "Some effort was made to supervise Sunday tennis on the campus." We were not permitted to play tennis on Sundays. "And the council organized the interesting mayoralty campaign in which Frank O'Neil was elevated to the position of mayor of Bates. The council tried but failed to have the constitution of the mens assembly amended. Milton Lindholm was a popular leader." That's the extent of the write up. And the editor of this Mirror and I were not good friends. And where they got that quote about, you know, they . . . I was chosen what, the most popular man on the campus, and then they said something about, you quoted it as my Waltham reputation hadn't caught up with them.

RC: I thought you said that.

ML: No. No, I think they said that, didn't they?

RC: Oh, that changes the whole color of it.

ML: I think that's the way it was.

RC: As a two timer even.

ML: As a two timer, yeah.

RC: My Waltham reputation as a two timer.

ML: Yeah, and I don't know what was meant by that, you know. Because I didn't have any reputation when I came up here, from Waltham particularly. They were interested in me somewhat as a football player, but in those days they didn't recruit the way they do now. I was recruited by the University of New Hampshire, which is a sort of an interesting story. Both years that I was out of college, between high school and college, I had applied and had been accepted at the University of New Hampshire. But the family circumstances were such that there was no way that I could go to college in either of those two years. So I'd been out of school a couple of years, well, you're right about this apparently, (*reads*) " my reputation as a two timer hasn't reached Bates." That makes it sound like it was a quote from me, right?

RC: But it wasn't?

ML: No, I'd never say anything like that. A lot of this stuff is made up, be sure, be sure.

TOB: So football was popular. Everyone would go to basketball games and ...

ML: My, my junior year we played Harvard and Dartmouth, my sophomore year we played Yale, my senior year we played Harvard ...

TOB: Did you win?

ML: ... and Ivy League football in those days was the best football that was being played in the United States, Ivy League, and you know what an Ivy League is of course. I had a thought, so, you know, we had scoreless tie against Yale, unbelievable. That was an interesting experience for ...

TOB: Did you play at Garcelon Field?

ML: No, we played at Yale Bowl. I don't know how much I should go into this stuff . . .?

TOB: We've got time.

ML: You got time? We went to New Haven by Pullman sleeper. We were bussed to Portland, got on the train Thursday night, we were in New Haven early Friday morning. Friday afternoon, we were in the Yale Bowl for the usual pre-game instructions and what not. And the coach, whose name was David Morey, a very unique person, after we had done the usual things like running down under kicks and passes and running through some plays and so forth, preliminary to the game the following day, suggested that we take the next fifteen minutes and go up into the stands of the Yale Bowl. The Yale Bowl seats eighty thousand people ...

RC: This is in '34 that this happened?

ML: ... this is in '32, to become acclimated. Here, we had played most of our games on Garcelon Field, and here we were in the Yale Bowl. And he was afraid that if we walked into the Yale Bowl on Saturday at the game that it would be an awesome occasion. So go up in the stands, and then he says come back and we'll assemble on the fifty yard line for some very last

minute instructions. I was standing beside a substitute fullback by the name of Bob Dylan. And as the coach was speaking to us, I saw Bob Dylan with this expression on his face, he looked like this. And then I heard him in sort of a stage whisper say, there's nothing like this in Machias. I think that's funny, don't you? And he was so sincere. God, he said, there's nothing like this in Machias. You know, you could have put the population of Machias, Maine into the Yale Bowl twenty times. Well anyway, that ended up a scoreless tie. We played Dartmouth for fourteen to nothing, they beat us, they scored both their touchdowns, one at the end of the first half and one at the end of the second half. They had much more manpower than we did.

TOB: What position did you play?

ML: I played center. And we played Harvard and, you know, very presentable scores. We were in the ball game throughout. The next year ...

End of Side One
Side Two

ML: ... that's enough about Bates and football, I guess.

RC: I have a question. You say that you had quite a few associations with Muskie even if you didn't chum around, you still had interactions with him.

ML: Oh yes, we had student council meetings every week probably, every other week. We met in the john at the top floor of East Parker frequently. I was in his room, he was in my room. He, his junior year he roomed with a guy who was somewhat of a friend of mine by the name of Joe Biernacki and, another Polish guy, and who was a very good friend of Muskie's. If you ever, he could tell you a lot about the personal side of Muskie, he lives in Connecticut. Joe Biernacki.

RC: How would you characterize Muskie's general demeanor. Was he a really loud, extraverted type of person, very shy?

ML: No, he was shy, somewhat reticent, very articulate. You know, he didn't, he had friends, I don't know that he dated at all at Bates.

RC: What was dating like at Bates? Was it really common, did everybody have a girlfriend or a boyfriend?

ML: I married a Bates student, and that was not uncommon in those days. It isn't, you establish relationships and it's not uncommon at all.

TOB: Do you remember any stories about Ed during college, anything that sticks out in your mind, anything that's particularly indicative of what he was like?

ML: No I don't, unfortunately. I was, prior to coming here I was giving it some thought and, no. Of course he was an exceedingly good debater and I had no particular interest in debating, so I didn't have that association.

RC: You were both exceedingly good students and ...

ML: Well, he was a *phi beta kappa*, you know, he was, we didn't have it in those days but he was a four point student. No question about that. I was not far from being that.

RC: Did you ever sit and have any really academic sort of conversations with ...?

ML: No, not with Ed.

RC: Not with Ed?

ML: No.

TOB: Was he a very neat person?

ML: Yeah, I guess so.

RC: Would you say your, just from being in student council and so forth together, would you say your political ideas agreed? Did you find yourself in agreement with a lot of things he felt about . . . ?

ML: Yeah, and there wasn't a whole lot of conversation in those days amongst students about the state or the national political situation. I think probably among the debaters there were because they debated topics, you know, that were relevant to the political economic situation in those days. But I never had much conversation with Ed about things of that sort.

RC: Now, you weren't on the debate team?

ML: No, no, I had no particular interest in that.

RC: Tell me about some of the professors that taught at Bates at that time. Was there anybody that was particularly influential to you, that you'd like to mention their name, maybe?

ML: Oh yes. Well, the person who was the head of the department in which I majored was Rayborn Zerby who was a relatively young professor, just out of graduate school at that time, but who became dean of the faculty before he retired. And he stayed at Bates for thirty, forty years or so. In fact he performed our wedding, Rayburn Zerby did, so we were ...

TOB: Was he a minister or a justice of the peace ...?

ML: No, he was a clergyman and, although he, I don't think he ever had a church. He was a professor of religion and was entitled to have a church. He was probably an ordained clergyman, and he may have had a church for a year or two prior to his coming to Bates, I don't know. He came, he went to the University of Chicago, I know, and he was a very learned man. He was I think by far, even in my day as a young man, probably the best read, most learned man on the

faculty, Rayburn Zerby was. But then there were a lot of characters among the faculty that we became attached to. Have you heard about Goosey Chase?

TOB: No.

ML: George M. Chase, there's a biography of him in the library. He was a professor of classical languages, essentially Greek. He was the son of the second president of Bates. President Chase, and his son whom we called Goosey because he looked like a goose, had a beak, and everybody called him Goosey. All the professors had nicknames in those days anyway. This yearbook was dedicated to a guy by the name of Paul Bartlett, and he was known as, by the students as Sleepy Joe because he practically fell asleep while he was delivering lectures. Paul, Paul [Burroughs] Bartlett. There was professor of government who was highly respected by the name of R. R. N. Gould, known to the students as Pa Gould. Uncle George [Erwin] Ramsdell in the math department. And I think our relationships, I can't say this with a certainty, but because of the size of Bates and the size of the faculty in those days, I think we were probably closer to faculty, our relationships were closer than they may be today.

TOB: Tell us a little bit about chapel in the morning. What was that like?

ML: Chapel, required chapel, six days a week. Six days a week, including Saturdays. We had classes on Saturdays in those days, you know.

TOB: Full day of class?

ML: Saturday mornings. You know, you took five courses in those days, you guys what, take four, or three? We took five, so you usually, your schedule worked out to be three hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and two hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. So you arranged your schedule in such a way that you finished by noon time on Saturdays. Chapel, the first class was at twenty minutes of eight, seven forties, you used to try to avoid having seven forties because that was pretty early in the morning. Never bothered me because I was working in the dining hall and I had to be there at six o'clock in the morning. And the first period ran from seven forty to eight forty. Chapel was from eight forty to nine, then the classes were on the hour, nine, ten, eleven.

It was called chapel but except for Wednesdays as I remember, the programs were pretty secular in nature, they were more in the nature of assemblies than chapel. Wednesday was always thought of as a religious service. And we were required to be in attendance, they took attendance in the chapel. There were monitors up in the balcony and when I was a student, those monitors were faculty members. They were up there with a seating chart and they indicated whether you were in attendance or not. One of the famous, first famous pastimes was for a student to, if you couldn't go, you'd find a student who had not been absent much to sit in your place, because all these monitors could see was the back of your heads and they probably wouldn't recognize the back of your head and they'd call you present. But you were permitted so many absences, cuts as we called them in those days, and this was true of class attendance also.

Class attendance was mandatory. You were permitted, if you had a three hour course, three absences in the semester, that's all. If you had a two hour course, you had two absences, two cuts, and a record was kept of that. One of my wife's jobs, part time jobs when our kids were growing up, they couldn't get anybody else to do it, was to be in charge of what they called the cut book. And on the, in the registrar's office was this book with a page for every student and on that page was recorded that student's absences from class or from chapel. And if you exceeded the allotted number of cuts, there was a penalty. And the penalty in those days, instead of what we call four point, three point ratios, there were what they called quality points. And if you absented yourself more than the number allotted, you were denied certain quality points which had an effect upon your academic average. So, you made sure you went to class and you went to chapel.

RC: Was Bates very cliquey back then, did athletes tend to hang out with athletes, some of the more academic students hanging out with the more academic students, everybody had sort of a circle of friends would you say?

ML: Yeah, I think that is an accurate description. I think of my roommates, I had three roommates, one of them was, all three of them were football players; one of them was an end, one of them was a quarterback - two of them were ends. My best friend was my senior year roommate who was an exceedingly good football player. My junior year a substitute quarterback who was a fine student, who was also active in religious affairs, who became the youngest dean of the Chicago Divinity School. So my roommates were people that I had something in common with.

RC: What clique would you say Muskie belonged to?

ML: I would say, except for Joe Biernacki who was a very good friend of his and who also was a very good football player, big guy, his friends I think were more academically oriented. They were probably the debaters. Debating in those days was very important, very prominent. They had exceedingly good debate teams, as they do today. The perennial debate coach, the speech coach, Brooks Quimby was, you know, the best in the country. He had that reputation. He made great demands on the student debaters.

RC: Once you finished Bates, did you follow Muskie's political career at all?

ML: Yeah, of course he went to law school, Cornell, and he established a practice, all this that you know, in Waterville. My first job out of Bates was to be a teacher-coach up at a private school here in Maine called Kent's Hill, you know it? It's up, twenty miles from here. And that's when he was in law school so we didn't have much contact then. Then, for seven years I became a book salesman. I worked for a publishing company that published educational textbooks and I was here in Maine. My customers were school superintendents and school principals and so forth, so I traveled a great deal in the state of Maine. And at that time Muskie had established his law office in Waterville. So whenever I was in Waterville we'd get together and have lunch and chat, visit. And when he became governor he used to stop in here, ring the doorbell, come in and stretch out his legs and ...

TOB: This house?

ML: ... yeah, and visit.

TOB: Do you remember any, what you talked about or how he changed?

RC: How he changed, yeah.

ML: No, I think, you know, I think, you know everybody predicted big things for Ed Muskie even in his student days. And it was, he was a friendly guy and we had that kind of a relationship so that he could, if he was in Lewiston he usually rang the doorbell and would come in and visit.

RC: Did you support him as governor? When he was campaigning?

ML: Yeah, and of course his campaign, and you know these things, was pretty much run by Frank Coffin and John Donovan, and John Donovan was a professor here at that time. Frank Coffin was practicing law in Lewiston at that time. So we all became very much interested in it because there had not been a Democratic governor for fifty years or something of that sort. Maine was predominantly Republican and not many people gave Muskie much of a chance.

RC: That brings up another question for me, going back a little ways, was Bates a predominantly Republican school would you say, or was it more left of center?

ML: I don't know. And when I was a student here and afterwards, I don't know what the political affiliations were of faculty people and so forth. Pa Gould, who was the professor of government, people always speculated and he would never reveal in his class lectures and discussions what party he was most interested in. People used to speculate as to whether he was a Democrat or a Republican.

RC: Didn't he used to joke that he was a Communist? Somebody told me that.

ML: Did he? I don't remember that. He was far from being a Communist, though, but he may have, because everybody knew he wasn't he may have made some remarks about it.

TOB: How would you characterize Muskie as a politician? Knowing him as he developed after college and . . .

ML: Well, he must have been a pretty good politician, he was elected, what, to the state legislature a couple of times and became the minority leader as a very young man. Of course the legislature was dominated by Republicans, but he was the leader of a minority, and so he must have been respected by Democrats. And then of course he became a candidate for the governorship and he was elected the first time, and then reelected, so he must have been a pretty good politician. And then, I don't think he ever was in Congress except as a senator, was he?

RC: He was just a senator.

ML: Yeah, he ran for the Senate and was reelected three times, I think he served three terms, he was reelected twice. I think he served three terms, now that's eighteen years, right? And so, but I think I would characterize Muskie more as a statesman than as a politician.

TOB: What do you mean by that?

ML: Well, he stood for the right things in my book, I'm sure ...

TOB: Which were?

ML: Well, clean air, clean, you know, environment . . . And he came from a very poor background, he was interested in the distribution of wealth in this country. He stood for things that I certainly stood for. I was raised in a Republican family but it wasn't long before I became a Democrat.

RC: In retrospect, if you could think, I mean, you got the opportunity to see him in college when he was green, as a freshman wandering around in a work atmosphere in college, you got to see him and know him as a politician or a statesman as you put it; if you could think of two or three words that most aptly describe or illustrate what Muskie was about, what would they be?

ML: Well, certainly you'd have to describe him as highly intellectual, you would have to describe him as, in his student days as being a serious, hard working student. And I would say those attributes carried on after he got out of college and went to graduate school and became a government official. He was, as I've said before, he was on the quiet side as an undergraduate. He was a very effective speaker.

TOB: A very effective speaker.

ML: Yeah, affable, friendly, smart, a good guy.

TOB: Just in conclusion, what do you think was Muskie's biggest contribution to the state?

ML: To the state?

TOB: Yeah.

ML: And to the nation?

TOB: Just to the state.

ML: Well, I would say probably that he made the state of Maine into a two party system, which I think is very important. The Republicans needed competition, they ran things pretty much as they wanted to. And here was a guy who came along and, you know, opposed many of the things, and successfully opposed. I would say that would be his biggest contribution. There's a famous quote of Muskie's that said when he was elected governor you could put the whole

Democratic party in a phone booth and there'd be space left over, or something like that. You know, Democrats didn't amount to anything. And yet he must have, by the, just by the strength of his personality and his intellect, convinced the voters of the state of Maine that he was the guy, that it was time for a change. I think that might, I would classify that as, you know, as far as his legislative program in the state, I can't at this time think of, there'd be other people who would be much more aware of that. Some of the people that you've interviewed who were more closely allied to the whole political process.

TOB: All right, excellent. Thank you very much.

End of Interview

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