6-1-1999

MacDonald, Clyde, Jr. oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Clyde MacDonald, Jr. by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
MacDonald, Clyde, Jr.

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
June 1, 1999

Place
Hampden, Maine

ID Number
MOH 106

Biographical Note

Clyde MacDonald, Jr. was born in 1929 in Old Orchard Beach to Nellie MacDonald and Clyde MacDonald, Sr., who were both of Canadian descent. The oldest of four children, MacDonald enlisted in the Army and served during the Korean War in Germany. After he left the military, he became interested in politics at the local level. He attended Portland Junior College for two years and then Bates for two years. He later earned a doctorate at the University of Maine while teaching undergraduate classes there. During this time, he became active in local Democratic politics and found himself in more regular contact with Senator Muskie. He worked for Senators Muskie and Mitchell.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: the General Services Administration (GSA); George Bartlett; Brownville railroad inspection; Wesley, Maine post office; hot-air balloon publicity stunt; Muskie's temper; MacDonald and Muskie's constituents; Muskie and Bar Harbor Airlines; the Manchester Union Leader incident; Jeremy Bentham; Muskie as the major Maine political figure; Muskie's incorruptibility; Muskie staffers; Common Situs Picketing Bill; Muskie's speaking style; the Dickey-Lincoln power project; Charlie Micoleau; Anita Jensen; George Mitchell; differences between Muskie and Mitchell; Mitchell's ultra-efficiency; MacDonald's

position on Senator Mitchell's staff; and Muskie's contributions to Maine and the United States.

Indexed Names

Albright, Madeleine Korbel
Anderson, Jack, 1922-2005
Asbell, Bernard
Bartlett, George
Bentham, Jeremy, 1748-1832
Billings, Leon
Brennan, Joseph E.
Bright, David
Carson, Rachel
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-
Cory, Gayle
Curtis, Kenneth M., 1931-
Dorsky, Benjamin J. (Benjamin James), 1905-
Emery, Dave
Hathaway, Bill
Hilsum, Harvey
Jensen, Anita
Limpersinger, "Limpy"
Loeb, William
MacDonald, Clyde, Jr.
MacDonald, Clyde, Sr.
Marshall, George
Micoleau, Charlie
Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-
Monks, Bob
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Muskie, Jane Gray
O'Neill, Tip
Pearson, Drew, 1897-1969
Poulin, Art
Quimby, Brooks
Violette, Elmer

Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is the second interview with Mr. Clyde MacDonald in Hampden, Maine at the Edith L. Dyer Library on June the 1st, 1999. Last time we were speaking, we were talking about some of your experiences in politics. Was there anything that you'd like to add from that interview before we [begin]?

Clyde MacDonald: Well, yeah, I think one thing should be made clear, is the staff people often maybe take credit for doing things, because they're the kind of agents for the senator. But I think it's important to know that if it had not been for Senator Muskie's stature and reputation, staff people couldn't have done a darn thing, you know. And one thing that I call to mind that I feel pretty good about was. . . . The General Services Administration is the agency that runs all the government buildings, does government contracts and things like that. And they had a major headquarters in Boston under a name, gentleman that had been there for years named Mr. Griffin who was very close to Tip O'Neill. And then he created, I, rumor has it, or scuttlebutt has it that they had a tremendous political machine going. He always could rely on Tip, you know, and so on. And they had a program that they had introduced to try and hire the handicapped.

It was way back in the early '70s. And in the Federal Building in Bangor there was an individual named George Bartlett who had been born and raised in Waterville and something happened to him when he was a sophomore in high school. And he had sort of a stroke, which he never fully recovered from. And he walked with kind of a shuffling gait, and it affected his speech. He could talk clearly but it was kind of a forced, like he was under pressure all the time to speak. And George did a lot of things around the Federal Building. You know, he was responsible for turning off the lights and I guess checking locks and he swept up and, you know, he just was kind of an all-around person. And he'd been there for four and a half years. And I'd, I know that he was there before I went there.

And I learned (in, I don't remember what year this was, '79 or '80, along there), that he was on the fifth year of his contract and they weren't going to renew it. This was like a five-year program. And so his father called me from Waterville and said, "Gee," he said, "you know George, this has just sort of made George's life," which it had. And everybody liked him. And he, you know, he was a good worker within the limits of what he could do. And they're going to terminate him. I said, "Oh God, they can't do that."

So I called the General Services Administration in Boston and finally got a fellow on the other end, it was one of I guess Griffin's assistants, that was very sympathetic toward the program. And we talked about it, but they didn't see where we could do much about it. So I met with George Bartlett's father and I had this inspiration at the time. There's nobody comparable today I think that has a column, a national column, but in those days Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson were the two biggies. They were nationally syndicated columnists, and if anything was wrong with the government, you know, it was apt to appear in there. So I wrote a three and a half page letter, two and a half page letter, from Mr. Bartlett to Jack Anderson, or Drew Pearson, whichever one it was at the time or both, and, outlining how well George had done, you know, and how they were terminating this contract and so on and how unfair it was because the fellow could obviously perform the work, you know, that was assigned to him and so on. And George Bartlett's father signed it, I added the name of George Bartlett's father because he said he couldn't write such a letter himself. And so he wrote it and he sent it off to Jack Anderson.

Well, about three weeks later, (in the meantime we're calling GSA, still trying to get this thing renewed), the column appears and it's mentioned in Jack Anderson's column about how the GSA is pulling the plug on this hard-working guy and so on. And so the assistant, one of his assistants in the Boston office called me. And he said Griffin had read this article in Jack

Anderson's column and he hit the roof and said that he never wanted to hear George Bartlett's name mentioned again. He said, this means of course that we're going to renew his contract and keep him on. And I, you know, but see, having friends on the inside like that assistant, who was pretty high on Muskie, you know what I mean, enabled staff people to do things that they would not otherwise be able to do. I just wanted to make that point. George Bartlett was retired from there. He got married and I remember he went to Hawaii on vacation with her and he came back with one of those tropical shirts, you know, with the palm trees. It was a wonderful story anyway, but.

AL: That's great

CM: There are some other things that. . . . I'm not sure whether I mentioned the surprise inspection we made on the railroad people in Brownville? Okay. This was another- Muskie got tremendous publicity on this in the press at a time when we needed it. There were, some of the best jobs in rural Maine were on the railroad that was owned by the Canadian Pacific; it ran a passenger service from, on the line, as well as freight. And it ran from Vanceboro right through to, (oh what's? I forget the name), in the northern part, but through Jackman and into Canada. And of course there was a lot maintenance to be performed on the tracks. Well, I get these calls from these union guys complaining that Canadians were taking their jobs, and these Canadians were bonded Canadian labor. And I think the last time I explained on the woodcutters what the, what the bonded labor program was like.

And so I'd heard from enough of them and was convinced (I got to know a couple of the guys anyway), and was convinced they were telling it straight. So I arranged with the head of the immigration service (oh gosh, what was his name? I'll think of it in a minute), who was a very close friend of Muskie's. And we decided that we would do, that the immigration service would pull a surprise inspection on the railroad to check the bonds, because with bonds you have to only perform the labor for which the bond has been required. And Art Poulin was the name of the immigration service director, office in Portland, that was a friend of Muskie's.

So anyway, Arthur and I, we had this thing all set up and we kept it hush, hush and no one knew a word about it. All of a sudden one day, several immigration agents descend on a railroad project just outside of Brownville Junction, and they found thirty-two I think it was, either twenty-six or thirty-two, I think it was thirty-two, Canadian laborers working out of position. And these were jobs that Maine people should have had. And we got a headline in the next paper, in the paper the next day, you know, saying twenty-six or thirty-two, whichever it was, Canadians get sent back, you know, and Muskie gets full credit for it. It was really quite a coup. What I learned subsequent to that was that a lot of the brass in Montreal, you know, the executives in Montreal, used these Maine railroad projects as a way for their college student sons to get summer jobs. And so that's what a lot of these bonds were. And anyway, we sent them back and this resulted in more Maine employment and we just, you know, it was a great thing for Muskie.

Something similar to having friends on the inside also worked with respect to another success we had which I don't think I mentioned last time, which had to do with the reopening of the Wesley, Maine Post Office. Okay. Well, Wesley, Maine is located on the Airline [Route 9 between

Bangor and Calais] miles and miles almost from nowhere. It's a little small town and you, you know, there's a little motel and a store there and that's about it, you know, you're gone. It's mostly, it appears to be, from Route 9, to be mostly woods. And they had a little town office. And so the Postal Service had decided that there was not enough business there to justify continuing the post office, and when the Post Master retired they weren't going to continue the service; they'd do it all by delivery vehicles. Well, I, people contacted us and, you know, I learned that there was a catchment area there for miles around, all the way from Cranberry Lakes or whatever, and that your opportunity to get stamps you needed, you know, it was hard for them to get to the post office, it was several miles. And that if they had a delivery truck, they just didn't see how this would work out.

And so I called a meeting at the town hall on a, I think it was seven o'clock on a weekday night. I don't remember which day of the week it was. I'd come back from a, was coming in, and I remember breaking the speed limits to go from Augusta to Wesley to get there in time for the meeting. And I just couldn't believe it. This, several people told me, this was the largest public meeting that had ever been held in the town hall at Wesley. They were hanging from the rafters, and, I mean, we had about eighty or ninety people there in this little town; it was amazing. And that's where I learned about Cranberry Lakes and all these other places I'd never heard of before. And so, you know, I just told them that I had not, that I'd only spoken with the senator; we didn't know if we could do anything, but that we would, that he wanted to go all out on it.

And in addition to the merits of the thing, and they really should not, they should have had a post office there. In addition to the merits of it, there was also this thing is that you recall that in 1975, '76, the problem was reestablishing Muskie as a person that was interested in Maine people, ordinary Maine people. Well, here's this dinky little post office that, you know, way out in a rural area that we're giving all this attention to. And we did get a little press on it. And so anyway, I remember negotiating with the Postal Service guy in Washington, who again was a bureaucrat who was enamored of Muskie- thought Muskie was a, you know, really fine public servant; hoped he'd be President some day and so on. And I said, well, he said, "I need some strong arguments." And I said, well, I said (I was all prepared), I said, "Well take out a map." I'd sent him a map, no, I didn't send it to him; he had one. He located a map of Maine. And I said, "Now you see where Wesley is." And I said, "As you draw, take your compass and draw around there; there's not another federal institution of any kind within a thirty-two mile radius of this town," I said, "not a single federal facility, like the Federal Building." And he says, "That's the argument." And so a few days later they announced they were going to reopen the Wesley post office and going to continue it. And again, we got good coverage on that and it helped establish that Muskie, you know, was interested and was giving his full energies to problems of ordinary Maine people.

And there's a postscript to that, but it's kind of sad. The, two or three people in the town said, "Well, could you help? We'd like to have the post office located in our establishment," you know. And I said, "I can't deal, we can't deal with that." I said, "The Senator would never deal with that." I said, "We'll get it for the town, and then it's up to you folks to fight it out to see who gets the particular facility." Well the people that got the facility were the people that had it before, and something happened to the woman. She absconded with the funds about two years later and ended up being arrested in New Hampshire for writing bad checks. And of course it

was in their house, and they, I guess, I think they got divorced. And so the whole thing broke down, so Wesley ended up not getting their post office. But, and today the postal service has closed down numerous small post offices, and they have worked out a delivery system that does seem to be pretty satisfactory to most of these communities. But at the time that was a new idea and we just didn't think it would work.

The final thing that I'll volunteer here and then you can probably, we can get on some different subjects, was to me one of the most fantastic possible events that I was ever associated with. And, there was a, and I don't know if I covered this last time; if I did, stop me. There was a, the National Geographic Magazine had decided to sponsor the first, what they hoped to be successful trans-Atlantic balloon flight, and they were looking for places from which to take off. And they found this location that was ideal. I think it was in Milbridge, Maine. It was in Washington County, a small town; I think it was Milbridge. And I regret that I cannot remember this woman's name. But they were going to, they set up tents and they were living on her property. And she called me; she was a great admirer of Muskie. And she told me all about the event.

And we worked out a thing whereby. . . . By the way, when the balloons were to ascend in England, the National Geographic was going to cover it with live television; it had all been set up. And we had worked it out that, we had a huge "Reelect Ed Muskie" banner inside the balloon, inside the thing, which when the balloon is descending (and this was in September or October if I remember, it was not too long before election in 1976), that the National Geographic and all this attention, the people in the balloon were going to drape this "Reelect Ed Muskie" sign over the side and we would get national coverage on television. And so, you know, and I can't tell anyone about this, you know, I mean I was just waiting and waiting. And then the balloon goes off and then, but the problem was that it crashed in the North Sea and didn't make it. So this wonderful opportunity that I thought we had, you know, went by the boards. Anyway, those were three of the stories that I wanted to mention to you before, before you ask me any questions. Or I can volunteer the stuff.

AL: Okay, sure, let me pause for just a moment.

CM: I'd like to make a few comments on Muskie and his famous temper. I think that this temper that he's supposed to have had was derived from a very keen sense of self that he had. One of our great playwrights wrote an essay on this, about a sense of self, one time. And it made quite an impression on me, and I always tied it in with Muskie. He felt that, he, it really used to irritate him, he felt the staff made decisions concerning his non-Senate floor time as to what he should be doing in Maine and in Washington, without regard to his own needs or his own personal feelings. And I think he had a sense that, he felt that he'd earned the right to be in control of his own life, and yet he knew intellectually, you know, that this couldn't be, that, you know, if he's going to continue as an elected leader. And, but I think it's this sense of self that's somehow related to this temper, and it also relates to his refusal to be bullied. I think I mentioned that last time, that I thought this was one of his most noticeable characteristics, that he would blow up when someone would try and bully him during a public meeting or on the street or wherever. He just would simply wouldn't stand for it. And so he would express his indignation and, you know, really force some of these people down. And I think that had, a lot

had to do with his, the comments about his temper because, you know, he really was pretty harsh on rare occasions on some of these individuals.

But I remember one time when we were riding somewhere, (I don't remember where), and I felt it was an appropriate time because I'd always wanted to say this. And I said, "You know, Senator, people keep talking about your temper," I said. "But I don't think," I said, "it's my impression, my opinion, that you're always in control; that you never really lose your temper, that you use your temper as a way to defend yourself against people that are trying to embarrass you or people that just plain make, you know, make all stupid remarks or something." And he just, he didn't answer me, he just looked at me, smiled, you know, this very knowing sense of smile. So I was never the victim of his temper, you know what I mean, and so I just never saw it. I mean I saw it in these public occasions.

And he was also quite intolerant of some newspaper reporters that would ask him questions that would, you know, especially if they worked at *The Bangor Daily News* and so on. And rather than answer criticisms in print in *The Bangor Daily News*, he just never did that. And he would, and if I mentioned this last time stop me, but in his speeches on the stump, you know, he would really let, he would quote from *The Bangor News*, you know, and show how unfair they were and so on and so forth. And we had a rally one night at John Baptist High School I remember. And it was really, it couldn't have been staged by Hollywood any better. The, he was expounding on some subject and he was also railing against *The Bangor News* for something that they had written. I remember he pounded his fist in his hand. He says, "And *The Bangor Daily News*," and all of a sudden the lights went out and this huge clap of thunder hit. And you see the lightning out through the thing, and the lights went out for, oh, thirty seconds or so. David Bright was the reporter that was covering that at the time. I'd had David as a student when I was at Maine and I always liked the guy, and he was a Democrat, you know. And I remember the next day in the newspaper where, Muskie after that, when the lights came back on, he says, "You see, even God knows I'm right." And, you know, David printed that, or words something to that in *The Bangor News* and it was really, made quite a conversation piece for us for a long time to come.

I think that this sense of self he had also led him to maybe respect it or something in others. Because, when I first went to work for him, I was worried about the political process, and I didn't know Muskie, as I explained the last time, and so on. And I too have this limits I guess you'd call it where on rare occasions would explode. And so I told him that if, Charlie Micoleau, that if I were going to work for the Senator, I would want to be able to tell three constituents a year, no more, no more than that, to go to hell. And I'm surprised that he agreed to that. And we did, I mean, it happened more than once that someone would call up and, oh, I remember we had a guy and Muskie, no, that was after his term as senator, it was when he was Secretary of State, was flying to Spain on a mission for President Carter in the presidential jet. And this guy from out in the boondocks, Dexter or somewhere, called up and wanted to know why we couldn't take commercial flights, you know, to save taxpayers' money. And I remember telling him, "Well why don't we put him in a sampan with a pair of oars and let him row over," I said, "that wouldn't cost you anything, you know."

And then we had another guy one time when the Panama Canal Treaty was being negotiated.

And he called up about a month before the election and wanted to speak to Muskie, that he'd retired from service at the Panama Canal. And this was a major mistake; the Panamanians couldn't possibly do anything. The issue at the time was that there was a guerrilla movement, and President Carter and many others felt that if we didn't make out some deal with them, they could destroy the canal very easily, you know, with bombs and stuff. So anyway, Carter worked out this thing with the Panamanians that they would, we would share responsibility and then in 1999, this year, they would take over full management of the canal, something that the French had done with the Suez Canal. And it worked out quite well there when everyone was predicting it wouldn't.

Well anyway, so I got another call about a week later and then finally about four or five days before the election, this fellow called again from Millinocket. And he said that, with he and his wife and his two brothers, they all lived in this big apartment house, that he had thirteen votes in his family and that if Muskie did not call him personal to discuss the Panama Canal thing before the election (this was like on a Friday let's say, Thursday or Friday, the election being the following Tuesday), that he would march all thirteen of these people down to the polls and they would all vote for Robert Monks. And I just, you know, I raised the hackles on my neck, the way he said it, and he was, I interpreted his voice as being rather arrogant. And I said, "Mister," I said, "Ed Muskie's been in public life since, at least since 1954," and I said, "if he is in so much political trouble that he needs the votes of you and your goddamn family," I said, "then he deserves to lose." And I hung up on him.

But that was one of my three, you know what I mean? I usually didn't use three, but it was nice, it was a comfort to me to know that I did. And I usually told him about it when it happened, and he wouldn't say anything, you know. So I think he kind of, I think this was something that was kind of in tune with his own personality. That's probably not fair to him, but. To show that he was a paper tiger, I'm going to tell you a story of one of the most amazing incidents, if I didn't cover it last time, that I ever witnessed. It has to do with Bar Harbor Airlines. Did I mention that last time?

AL: No.

CM: Okay. Well when the Senator came to Aroostook he liked to stay with friends, and so he was, he would stay like with the Freeman family. And I would stay at the motel, at Keddy's or the Northeastland or whatever. I stayed at the Northeastland this particular occasion. So here we are, we're up in Aroostook and we, the plane is to leave for Washington, Bar Harbor Airlines plane flight, at seven o'clock the next morning. And so I get up, you know, independently, whatever, and I get out to the airlines at twenty-five after six. And I'm waiting, and I'm waiting, and Muskie doesn't come. Twenty to seven, quarter of seven, and the people in the waiting room I noticed got up about twenty to seven and headed out to the plane. The plane was on the tarmac, and, with the blocks under the front wheels; it was rather a small plane.

And so then the dispatcher had got up and he went out with his clipboard, and he came back, and this was quarter of seven. And ten to seven comes and I see him kicking the traces out from under the wheels and the plane is warming up, and it begins to move a little bit. And I said, "Hey." So the guy was coming in again with his clipboard. I says, "Is that plane moving?" And

he says, "Yeah." And I says, "Well, is Muskie on that plane?" And then I heard this tap on my shoulder and I turn around. Muskie's standing behind me- he just got there at ten to seven, which was ten minutes before the flight was scheduled. And he said, "No," he said, "the flight's taking off." And I said, "Ten minutes early?" I said, "Senator Muskie's got to be on that plane." And I said, Recall it." By that time he was at his desk and I was sitting with Muskie. I said, "God," I said, "I thought you must have been on the plane," I said, you know, "I can't believe this."

And so I rushed up to the desk again. I said "Recall that plane; we're demanding that you recall that plane." He just looked at me, you know, as if I was from outer space somewhere. He says, "I can't recall it." And I said, "But it's taking off ten minutes early without the senator." And the reason this was so important was that the Voting Rights Act was up for renewal in the Senate that day and it had made, you know, national press as to whether it was going to pass. It was nip and tuck, maybe the Vice President would have to cast a tie-breaking vote or whatever, and so Muskie had to be there for that vote. And here's this guy, you know, letting the plane go off.

And so Muskie realized what was happening. I remember him pounding his hand into his fist and he says, "The FCC's going to hear about this." And he says, and that didn't make any impression on the guy. And so he says, "Who in the hell are you, anyway? The chairman of the local Republican Party here?" And boy he was mad, you know, I could see the; and the guy didn't, wouldn't answer him, you know. Well Muskie just started ranting and raving, he says, "I tell you, the FCC's going to. . . ." So I get on the phone and call Gayle Corey in Washington. Gayle was our all, everything person when we had problems. And she decided that, "Well, he's got to get back to Washington, we're going to have to just commandeer an Air Force plane and fly him back that way."

So I called the commander at the base and explained the problem and told him we're going to work on the other end. He says, "Well there is a training flight that's due to leave West Virginia," or "for West Virginia," somehow Michigan had something to do with it, anyway, it was a training flight that was. . . . He says, "We can reroute that and land it in Washington," he said. But he'd have to get dressed up in pilot's gear and all this kind of stuff, you know what I mean. So I got him out to the, out to the base and the base people took over. I didn't see him after that. I was kind of hoping I'd see him in this, you know, with goggles and one of these funny, you know, flap hats on and so forth, if that's what he wore. I don't know what he wore. But anyway, they put him in the plane and got him back and, in time to cast his vote for the Voting Rights Act. Which Gayle told me a few days later had passed by one vote. I've never checked this out historically, you know, to find out whether that was indeed the case or not.

And, but, I'm seeing in, you know, what this guy did, and it was just sheer malice that he did it. He was a Republican, I found out later, and he was, evidently looked upon this as a way to get Muskie. And so then, and I think it was this same guy, wrote a letter to Drew Pearson or Jack Anderson, whichever the national columnist was. And a few weeks later there's this column appears, part of a column, saying how Muskie was abusing the taxpayer's money by, instead of paying, you know, take the money to go back through regular airlines, he'd commandeered a special Air Force flight, you know, to fly him back to Washington and so on and so forth. And there was a letter to the editor appeared anonymously in *The Bangor News* which called attention

to this also. And I did my damndest, I had friends on the inside of the news, to try and find out if I could get a copy of this letter. And the only way it could be done was they stole it from the files, and no one there quite dared to do that. And I thought maybe a year or two later I would get it. I wanted it for the records some day. But we never did get it.

But there's a sequel to this story that's rather interesting. About fifteen years later, there was a guy from Old Town named Harvey Hilsum. He used to run a men's clothing store. And Harvey became a consultant for Bar Harbor Airlines. And Bar Harbor Airlines wanted to do a special day for some Maine political figures in relationship to Hartford, Connecticut. Their Hartford run I think they had viewed as being the cornerstone of their new service, and, or whatever. And so myself and several Maine legislators went on this trip, and so we're going to have lunch at this place. We, or the President of the Senate in Connecticut took us over and we met with him and someone. And they were going to treat us to lunch, and we went back to this place to have lunch.

And so as we're starting lunch, I'm saying to the people at the table, I says, "You know, I just can't believe that I'm having lunch at the expense of Bar Harbor Airlines," and I told them the story. Well one, as I started the story, this guy across the table from me got up and whispered in Harvey Hilsum's ear and they took off, in the men's room. They came back about five minutes later. Well, anyway I told the story and Harvey Hilsum told me, he says, "You know who's sitting across the table from you, don't you?" And I says, "Who?" He says, "The guy that was the dispatcher that let that plane go early." And I called him a name, you know, in kind of a friendly way. I said, "Boy, that was the rottenest thing," I said, "that has ever happened to me in all my career, political or non-political." I said, "I still don't see how you could have done such a thing." I said, "I remember Muskie saying you must have been a strong Republican," and he nodded. And that was the end of my story. But, oh, no, the end of my story is, what happened to Muskie's famous temper and his complaining to the FCC - not a word, not a word. I mean, I felt that I shouldn't do it from where I was, that this is something that a top staff should be involved with and really put the heat on, and maybe Muskie would call them personally and get this guy fired. Not a word, see, so, I mean, he's a paper tiger, you know what I mean? So I think that these stories about his temper are much, much magnified.

It was his temper that got him in trouble, I think, because I think it was a justifiable exercise of temper when. . . . Remember when he ran for President and they said that he cried over some editorial that Loeb had written for *The Manchester Union Leader* concerning Jane, his wife? You know, he and Jane were very close always throughout their life. But he told me privately, I mean, he'd had no reason to distort this. Muskie is absolutely certain, he went to his grave absolutely certain that he never, never did cry. He said it was spitting snow and he said, maybe you know, some snow landed on his cheek and that run down, but he said he thought they had a very successful day, and he attacked the Union Leader just the way he used to, *The Bangor News*, you know. And I guess he pounded his fist. I wasn't there, this was a campaign event before I knew Muskie but, it was in what, 1968, 1972, so I wasn't there. But Elmer Violette was, Judge Violette, and he claimed Muskie didn't cry. And he said they got back to the motel room that night and they put on the seven o'clock news to see how they covered that day in New Hampshire, and he said, "We were just astounded. All the networks carried the same thing." And, he said, "You know," he said, "that ruined my chances," he said, "because there were so

many conflicts in the country over Vietnam and Civil Rights and other things, that I was, that the source of my political strength was that I was looked upon as a center of stability in a world that was going mad." Or, he didn't use that word, but, "in a world that was in turmoil." And, I said, "Once they said that I cried on, you know, the thing," he said, "It just," he said, "that was the end of my campaign." But he, so he, you know, he, he, I've always thought of Muskie as a very honest person, and I just, I know that he knows that he did not cry. And I will never, I've seen television reviews of it and it looks to me like he did, but I'm willing to accept that he didn't.

One of the things that's often not mentioned about Muskie is, I always viewed him as a very, as a, not very, but as somewhat of a philosophical man. He gave a lot of thought to things. He often expressed a sense of wonder as he was going from event to event or whatever, as if he were sort of more of a spectator rather than someone that was doing it. It's sort of like he marveled that all these things were happening around him, you know, and it was, well, almost a child-like freshness that he had. There was an author named Bernie Asbell, who gained national recognition in historical circles by having edited the Franklin Delano Roosevelt newspaper, oh, newspaper, library and all of his manuscripts and stuff, and spent years doing it. Well Bernie came to Maine and wanted to do a thing on Muskie and his staff. In fact he came to our house, and, with Muskie, and Bernie wrote this thing up. Bernie had this kind of freshness about things, too. The name of the book was <u>The Senate That Nobody Knows</u>, and if you're doing an historical project, I would consult that, especially this chapter on Gayle Cory, because Gayle is dead now and it's, if there were three people in the world that I thought you ought to talk to to really get some insight into Ed Muskie, you know, it would be Gayle. But he did a nice chapter on her. And anyway, I was getting to the point that I thought that Muskie, like Bernie Asbell, had this kind of child-like freshness about things, and that Muskie kind of marveled that all these things were happening, other people were doing these things as if, as if he were truly a spectator. I know I'm repeating myself. I'm not being very articulate, but I really can't express it, this feeling. And I saw it time and time again.

As far as his religious beliefs, I wouldn't call him a regular church-goer. Although he had this sense, I think, that he couldn't skip too many, and sometimes even though he was tired on the road, he'd get up and go to church. Of course, being Catholic he'd go to a Catholic church. Every once in a while, you know, but not really religious. I know the abortion issue caused him a lot of problems with the Catholic hierarchy. And I remember one trip we had, he, it was a bishop I think, named Tardichek (*sounds like*) who was head of the, I think, Portland diocese. I mean, my facts may not be precisely correct on that. And he was coming, the Senator was coming to Aroostook later that day, but he met with Tardichek that morning in Portland.

And the next day we met with one of the leading kind of political gurus of the Catholic church who had a parish up in Madawaska. And I remember, it was still about the abortion issue, and I have no idea what he said to Tardichek. In fact I don't have a very clear idea what he said with this gentleman, this priest in Madawaska either. I do remember that the priest considered this to be at the highest level of negotiations. And he looked at me and then he looked at Muskie and he says, "Well, how about him?" you know. And Muskie kind of raised his eyebrows, and he says, "Are you Catholic?" And I said, "No." I remembered I'm not religious in any way, I just don't, you know, in fact I've been an atheist for fifty years. But the, my mother had baptized me Episcopalian. And I always remember that and used to ask her why, you know, and she could

never give me an answer. But anyway, I said, "No," but I said, "I'm Episcopalian." He said, "Oh," he says, "well that's close."

And so we, I sat on the porch there with them and they discussed the abortion issue. My recollection of it was that Muskie wasn't very responsive, wasn't very communicative. But they had a session, when I went out to the car, alone for about three minutes before we left. And, you know, they may have discussed something more substantive to them. But the upshot of it was that he wasn't attacked by the Church and, openly, on this issue. So I don't know what his position was. As proof of his depth of knowledge and thinking about politics, I raised the question one day about Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy Bentham was a famous English political philosopher, you, I see you've heard. . . .

AL: I've heard a little bit about him. Who had himself, what's the word, he wanted to keep himself in the muse-, as a museum piece.

CM: Oh, he donated his bones to the medical college, is that what you mean?

AL: His whole body, actually.

CM: Yeah, of course there's only bones left now.

AL: They tried to preserve the whole thing.

CM: Oh, they did?

AL: Yes, apparently it didn't work very well, though. But go on, tell me your story.

CM: Well, I saw him one day. You know, I said, "You know Senator, it seems to me that your political philosophy is a lot like that of Jeremy Bentham." And I said, "You ever heard of Bentham?" "Oh yes," he said, he'd heard of Bentham. And so we talked about Jeremy which pleased me to no end, because Jeremy Bentham was an empiricist who said that you really have got to make sure you get your facts straight before you make any comments, or before you recommend any policy changes. And this is one thing that both Senator Muskie and Senator [George] Mitchell both, you know, were, insisted upon. You've got to get, you know, if you were a staff person, you better get the facts straight rather than issuing opinions, and, things that wouldn't stand too much scrutiny.

And so, and Bentham was studying British government and government in general and made some recommendations. And he felt that the legislator was the key element of government, or that it should be in the future. And of course the British Parliament at that time was just beginning to exert more independence from the king and so on, when Bentham was writing. And so, he kind of wrote this as instructions for the ideal legislator, and, that's my recollection of it anyway. And, you know, you should be empirical and that the principle that you should operate under when you legislate is that you should do things that represent the greatest good for the greatest number; or the greatest happiness for the greatest number, I don't remember which. There's not too much of a difference I think between the two.

And the thing that occasioned me, when I mentioned that about Bentham, and as I started to say, you could sort of, and I knew he'd read Bentham. And I think, I accepted a lot of things that Bentham said, certainly. Maybe he was just a natural Benthamite; I don't know. But one of the things that reminded me of, I think that occasioned me to make that remark was, caused me to make that remark was, one day, and I really, this was kind of an eye opening thing for me for Muskie that, we were talking about some military contract in California. And I don't remember the issue at the time but it was in the press. And it was whether Nixon would, and the Nixon administration would go along or something, that represented this huge contract for this defense firm that hired thousands of people. And you know, Muskie said that the reason that he was for this, that he favored this whatever it was, this contract, because it represented jobs for thousands and thousands of workers. And here I'd been reading in the paper, you know, where these Republicans were for it because it represented profits and income, you know, for the major corporations, and I never had tumbled to that before. Probably most people could see that out of hand.

But, you see, you know, so here we have the situation where Democrats will favor one thing and maybe the Republicans also favor it, but for completely different reasons. And sometimes, you know, the severe critics of Democrats will say that they're in bed with the military contractors and so on and so forth. Well, if they were in bed with anybody, I think it was with the unions and the work forces that were dependent on these, and you got, you know. And it does make a difference, you know, at least as that, in shaping your, where you want to go or what you want to do. And I learned that from Muskie.

I also learned, too, that coming from academe, I probably never have taken economics as seriously as economics majors would anyway. But I didn't realize that Muskie didn't either. And we were coming back from Aroostook and he had, that was the year he'd been named chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. And we were talking about some issue and Muskie said, and it had been in the newspapers I guess from the day before, and he said, well, he said, "That's one we heard, their economist came on and gave their side of the day," their whatever it was. And he said, "Then the next day we had ours, you know, we had our economist." In other words, we're giving the views that support our contention, as if economists were mere political wisps in the wind so to speak, you know. And I said, "Oh, that's great," you know, to think that he would see that. Because I thought I was, you know, might be one of the few people that thought that at the time, and here's Muskie, you know, way ahead of me as usual.

AL: I'm going to stop right there so we can turn the tape over.

CM: All right.

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

AL: We are now on side two of the second interview with Mr. Clyde MacDonald on June 1st, 1999.

CM: The, we often, well no, not often but frequently we had discussions about American history, you know, and the Constitution and what the founding fathers intended, usually with reference to something that had come up, you know, in the last few days or something. But as I guess indicated before, I felt that, that the Senator enjoyed silences as much as anything, you know. And so these would be infrequent occasions when I thought he was in the mood. You just drop some line and he responded readily to it, you know, and then you'd engage in conversation. But my point in mentioning this is again to show that he was very reflective about the American tradition, you know, and was a student of politics. Now I don't know whether he qualified from an academic point of view, you know, as a strong student of politics. But as a, he was certainly more than a layman, you know, and of course that was his career. George Mitchell has always said that Muskie was the state's greatest political figure, and I had a chance to see that. He would come back, he wouldn't be back to Maine let's say for three, four, five weeks. And he'd come back and he'd size up the political scene here in ways that was just unbelievable, you know. He had a tremendous antennae for public opinion, what the public was thinking and so on.

He also had a, and I think this was again part of his reflectiveness, kind of a keen sense of time where he didn't get quite as excited about things as a lot of people. I remember in 1975 I think it was, 1976, along in there, fuel prices went out of sight overnight. And I remember Muskie would say that, well it's true that this is happening and so on, and it's very upsetting and it's going to cause a lot of hardship and so on, that the problem is that it's happened so fast that, you know, that people need time to adjust and that people don't react well to sudden changes, or sudden adverse changes. But, he said, "Eventually," you know, "this will settle down and people will accept it and," you know, "it won't be considered a crisis as it is today." And this sense of perspective that he had, you know, it was something that he worked into all of his speeches, and I think it was one of his strongest points.

He would, people say he talked too long, and I agree that often times he did, but he said he learned from Professor Quimby at Bates, you know, that a speech always has a beginning and a middle and an end. And when you combine that with his sense of trying to put things into perspective, you know, it led to rather long speeches. But it was an education to hear him put things into perspective because he had such a keen way of doing it, I think, at least I consider myself as having learned a tremendous number of things from him along the way.

I think also one of his traits that's not mentioned is a tremendous modesty. I've been on the stump with him time and again, and George Mitchell had the same quality. Where people would give him credit, you know, for this and that, the Clean Air Act or whatever it happened to be, and would single him out as the person that did this or did that or whatever; it didn't have to be easy. And he would always take a self-deprecating thing and call attention to what other people had done, you know, "And if it wasn't for this, this couldn't have happened, and if-," you know. And, I mean, it's a prime political opportunity, you know, to be up on the stump and having the head of the Kiwanis or the Lions or whomever, you know, telling their audience there what a great feat this man has accomplished, and then have the person point to others and downplay his own role in it. And he just did that time and time again. I've heard lesser politicians, you know, that just will look, instead of going that way will expand on things, you know, to try and show, "Well, I did even more than you think," you know?

And he, the reason that, I think I mentioned last time that he kept so much good staff was because of their awareness of his sense of integrity, that they never, they knew they'd never be compromised by anything that he did. There'd be no surprises and things and this meant a lot to me. The first time I ran into this was, one of the early trips I made with him. We went to the Great Northern Paper Company in Millinocket and they had a special guest house there. And they treated us to, I remember having prime rib and drinks and everything until the wee hours of the morning and the next day and treated like royalty. And the occasion was that they didn't want Muskie to make a waterway, part of the Allagash, a national and scenic river. I'm not sure whether it was the Allagash or whether it was a part of the, another river system, but whatever it was, you know. And here I am, and I'm saying, "Gee, this is the way politics is I guess," because it was one of my first trips, early trips. And how can he say, "no," after all this treatment? But he did. He didn't do what they wanted him to do.

And that just, you know, it was so, just made my day or made my years I guess to realize that, you know, you can accept favors from special interest groups, but that doesn't mean that you have to do what they want if you don't think it's right. And he taught that lesson time and time again. And I think that the fact that he was of presidential caliber, had a national reputation, had so much integrity was the reason he kept, he attracted so much brilliant staff. And, well I'm not going to include myself in that, but people like Madeleine Albright, Charlie Micoleau, Gayle Cory, Leon Billings and others, oh, God, I've got to mention Anita Jensen. These were, and I probably shouldn't mention, because he had some other outstanding people, too, that I haven't mentioned. But, you know, they just were there, year in and year out for him.

And yet, you know, he never really did anything for any of his staff people that I could see. In fact when I first took the job, I had a friend of mine who was an outstanding political thinker, political theorist at the University of Maine. He said, "Well are you sure you want to go work for Muskie?" He said, "You know, he's never done anything for anybody that ever worked for him. It seems to me like he's a rather selfish loner-type of person." But, you know, that, it wasn't that either so much. I mean, I remember when President Carter made him Secretary of State in 1980. Here I had kind of given up or set aside my academic career to go to work for him, and I think he felt badly about it. Well, he didn't say it so expressly, but he offered me a chance to go to Washington to the State Department with him in 1980. And I, you know, I was really, I thought that was a tremendous, and I told him, I thought it o-, I said I wanted a couple days to think it over. I talked it over with my wife, and we decided not to because, as I told him, I said, "You know, Senator, I don't think you really have a special role for me in mind by doing that." I said, "I think you're just doing it because you think you owe it to me or something. And I don't, you know, I wouldn't want to accept a position under those circumstances and Trudy and I would rather take our chances here in Maine. But I, you know, the fact you offered it. . . ." And I think again the fact that he offered it when he never, doesn't seem to have done anything for any of his former staff people. . . .

And I, this gets back to this special relationship that I believe I had with him and never being the butt of his temper or a barbed remark. And he just treated me like an equal all the, the whole time I was with him. And in fact they went out of their way sometimes to do things special for me. I don't remember the year it was, but I'll guess it was 1976, maybe it was 1977, it could

even have been ’78. A bill was on the floor of the Senate called the Common Situs Picketing Bill, and it was one of the great issues of the time. It had to do with the power of labor unions, and of course at the time labor unions hadn’t been broken by foreign trade and the other things that our present President is doing. The, and by *common situs*, it’s a Latin term, they meant that if a specialty union, let’s say like the electrical workers, struck Great Northern or struck Bath Iron Works, that instead of it being an issue between the electrical workers and management, that the whole place would be shut down and that no workers from any union could cross the picket line. And so it was called “common site,” or the Common Site Picketing Law. And so that, if you have a labor problem in one part of the site, it involves the whole site.

And, why, of course the National Association of Manufacturers and, you know, all the establishment was against this terrible bill. It just couldn’t be, it would bring everything to its knees; it would interfere with the national defense and all. And so how was Muskie, you know, Muskie took his typical stance. He didn’t react quickly; he thought it over and he thought it over and he went back and forth. And everyone on the staff, like he’d come to Maine and they’d call and say, “Well, you know, has he said anything about common sites? Has he? Has he? No?” But then I got invited. They said, “Well we want you to come to Washington next week,” and I said next Tuesday or next Wednesday or whenever it was. And Charlie Micoleau I think was the AA then, as a matter of fact I stayed with Charlie. And he said, it was Gayle Cory that called, I think. And, didn’t say anything else about that, “Oh, the Senator just wants you to come,” so I said, “All right.”

So anyway, I went down; my second trip, I think, to Washington since I had been on the staff. And I was working on a project; they wanted me to deal with a piece of legislation, a very minor piece of legislation, do the research on it, make a recommendation to the Senator, just to see what the process was like so it was kind of a toy thing. But the real reason I was there was, at about one o’clock or whenever, one thirty, whatever, the Senator’s personal secretary, whose name escapes me, came in and said, “We, I want you to come with me,” he says. They had a special liquor closet and they said “We’ll take some goodies over to the inner sanctum.” And I said, “The inner sanctum?” Well, what I didn’t know at the time was that senators who had worked their way up through the process, there were some special rooms just off the Senate floor with little narrow doors, oh, a door maybe twenty inches wide or so. And only seven or eight senators had rooms there, had the keys. And no staff people were supposed to have keys unless they’d been given to them for that moment.

And, so anyway, I took over some vodka and whiskey, whatever we had, you know; my arms were loaded. And I went with this secretary; she had some stuff too. And we went over to this little door and she unlocked and went in, I went in. And the second door, we opened it up, and there’s this beautiful room. Small, but it had a fireplace and marble-top mantle, and you could see the view of the city and it had this lovely furniture, and this was the inner sanctum. She said, “Well you,” and she still didn’t tell me. I sat down. “You wait here,” she said, “I’m going to leave.” And, she said, oh she, there was a snack cabinet there and we got some snacks out and some mixer out, and there was some more booze there and so on and so forth.

Well, about an hour later, three quarters of an hour later; it seemed to me like a long time, who comes in but Ben Dorsky. And Ben Dorsky was the head of the Maine AFL-CIO, and with him

is the head of the National Machinists' Union, a very famous political active union leader named Limpersinger, "Limpy Limpersinger," they used to call him. No, it was Limpersinger that came first, and he introduced himself to me, that's right. And then a few minutes later in comes Ben Dorsky. And so then of course, I mean by this time I know, any idiot would know, that he's going to vote for the Common Situs Picketing Act or these people wouldn't have been there, see? So we had this reception with some of the key top for union leaders in the country in the inner sanctum. And I guess I was probably the first person on the staff, maybe except for his personal secretary that knew how he was going to vote on it, you know? But, I mean, that was something that he did for me. It was a really, such a nice thing to do, you know.

As I say, I keep saying that I thought I had a special relationship with him, and I think I did. The, last year, in 1997, 1998, I had three or four very long telephone conversations with him. And I think it was in 1998, I raised this thing because I always wondered about relations between him and staff, and so I just said offhand, I said "Well of course, Senator," I said, "You know you had one of the most outstanding staffs that anybody ever had." There was this long silence on the other end, and he says, "Well," he says, "it didn't get me elected president." And then there was a little more silence and I said, "Well," he says, "but you know, he says, "several of them have done quite well for themselves haven't they?" And of course by this time Madeleine Albright is Secretary of State, you know, and I can't remember where some of these other people ended up. George Mitchell, you know, and of course George Mitchell I think he always would set aside; he recognized him as an outstanding person so I don't think he was referring to him.

But I wrote Senator Mitchell a letter the next day and said, "You know, I think this is the first time in his life that Muskie has ever thought about staff." I says, "It sounds odd," but I said, "I really do." He was taken aback and there was this long silence, then he began musing out loud about this one and that one and how well they had done, and he ended up concluding that, yes, they must have been people who had a lot of outstanding ability there. And so I'd be interested in your interviews, if you ask other people about what Muskie thought about staff, because to me it remains somewhat of a mystery to this day.

One of the things I'd say about Muskie was he was pretty conscious of the fact that he was a poor man. Of course you didn't have to be in politics or someone with his stature if you wanted to do some things that were less than, what, I don't mean legal but, you know, there are ways he could have enriched himself legally. He never mentioned his father to be in a complaining way. But once in a while he'd say that. . . . He was a terrible golfer, he hardly ever played golf I guess, and there was this Burning Tree Country Club in Washington where the fees to belong were many, many hundreds of dollars. A couple of times he mentioned in passing that, he says, of course, that he wished that he had a membership in that. And when he retired they bought him, the staff I think bought him a membership in that country club, which was nice because he was still living in Washington.

He also said that the reformers were making it very difficult for poor people like himself (relatively, for him, he was never a poor person), but people of relatively modest means I think is what he always said, to do anything politically. And one of, some of the things they did in the seventies was, for example, they took away speaking fees. These could only, and he said that, you know, if it wasn't for the speaking fees, he never could have spent all those, time on all those

trips to California and Michigan and other places he went in the 1960s to try and develop support for the Clean Water Act.

And he, I remember him saying to me one time, he always felt that government people, you know, got bad press. And he felt that, I remember him saying one time that. . . . I had said that I wanted to, that I'd been a Democratic activist and I wanted to continue to participate in his campaign, or other campaigns on my off-time. And I think some of our staff in Washington said, "Well, there's a new law been passed or something and you can't do that," or whatever, and I mentioned it to Muskie. He says, "Well," he said, "just because you work for the federal government, that doesn't mean you should lose your rights as an American citizen," you know, which meant I had the green light from him. So I was willing to challenge the law and I went out and deliberately did a couple of things that, if anyone had picked up on it, (and I thought it was likely that *The Bangor News*, that they would), that they would have, that they would have done something, but they didn't. And so the law was never challenged. And it shows you the, what you can do, you know, when you have a favorable press. The Republicans, for example, have always used their congressional offices on campaign stuff where we would never dare to, because if we ever did, you know, it would hit the press and would cause a national scandal. But the Republicans have always known, like, at the time, with *The Bangor News*, that there was no possibility of anything like that ever getting reported or printed, rather. And so they could, they could do this.

The other thing I'd like to say about Senator Muskie, to go back to this thing I said about him being a great speaker, that my first contact with him was in 1964 in Brewer when we raised money for Bill Hathaway. We went to this Democratic rally and I had never heard Muskie before. And he went on and on and on in his speech. They used to tell me he'd had a little wine before, and, something he gave up later. But he gave the most marvelous speech. I mean, I, as I say, he put everything into perspective. I was an historian and I just really appreciated the quality of his mind. He did it all, you know, without notes. And, as I say, he credited his ability to speak to Professor Quimby at Bates. Muskie said that he was a, kind of a very shy, stumbling, bumbling person when he was a kid and in high school and when he entered college. And he deliberately took up debating in order to overcome that. And he credited Professor Quimby with that.

One of the greatest examples of a great speech occurred I think it was in 1978. We'd just learned that Limestone Air Force Base (which later called Loring, people called Loring; I guess it was then too but we referred to it in those days as Limestone), was on the list to be closed. And Muskie-, I got a call; he was in Kennebunkport. [He] recently bought this place in Kennebunkport where he loved to be on at least part of his weekends or off-time. And [he] said that he was coming up the next day, or Sunday, (this was on a Friday I think), [and] that we had to arrange a public rally in Limestone, basically again taking this perspective thing, to try and reassure the people they weren't going to be left flat. [He said] that closing is the worst-case scenario, and even if the worst-case scenario comes about, there are things the government could do that he would commit to that would serve as a bridge, you know, so that they wouldn't feel the full effects overnight. And so I, so he was going to fly into Bangor Sunday, Sunday morning, and I was going to take him to this rally, I think it was at two o'clock in the afternoon at Limestone High School.

Gosh, we got there and they were hanging from the rafters. I've never seen such a large crowd I think anywhere. I mean, there were just thousands, it seemed to me like thousands of people there. And I had a tape recorder and I tape recorded this speech, something I rarely did. Oh, sometimes I'd tape record it because our newsmen always wanted to know, "What did he say, what did he say?" So I carried a tape recorder and sometimes to help them out with that and turn it on and off. So I recorded this little speech. And months later. . . . Oh, by the way, and he just had, without a note, he reviewed the history of Limestone and the history of base closings and what the law said, and what the political situation at the moment was, and the kinds of things that they could do, you know. And, wow. [And he said] "And I urge you to get organized and get aroused and form a committee and keep the pressure on," and all these things that you could do, and, which they did do. And months later I took that tape and tried to transcribe it by hand, you know, you've probably done this, back it up and write something, back it up and write. Tedious, tedious thing. I did two or three pages, and I never did finish it.

But I just marveled, I mean, I have written, you know, not a, I don't consider myself a great writer. But I've written a lot of essays and letters and things and theses, and this was just a marvel of composition that he did on the spur of the moment. I mean, every, there was a lead sentence at the head of every paragraph, and the follow-up to the lead explaining the lead sentence, and then there was a tie-in at the end that pointed to the next paragraph. And there would be pauses, like where the, you'd think a comma would be. And it was just absolutely perfect. I said, "I could have worked on this for months and not come out with as perfect a document as this was." But it just shows the power of his intellect and his ability to, you know, to do these things. So when Mitchell says that he was our greatest political figure, I mean there's no one else in Maine that's ever come close, I think, to that. Although Mitchell, well Mitchell maybe, but this was truly an outstanding performance.

He also had a, it was interesting, sometimes, to hear him muse and reflect on his mistakes. One of his most favored projects was the Dickey Lincoln Power Project, which I mentioned before. And I think he was surprised at the depth of opposition and the unfairness of the attacks that were made on the thing. And, you know, he brought President Kennedy up there to fly over it and to see what it was like and what it could do. And he said all these Maine businesses complaining about high power rates and, you know, New England's never had a public power project, and that's why we have high rates. And it would, you know, increase our competitive position enormously by providing unlimited amounts of cheap power. And it would also create a lake, a marvelous deep-water cove, lake, that would, surrounded by mountains that would have been a marvel, too, by damming the St. John River and so on.

But he, I think in 1968 or '70, along in there, got the Allagash River, (which is just to the west of the St. John River, part of the same, maybe a purist wouldn't agree with this, but it all seemed to me like it was part of the same system), and he got it established as a national wilderness waterway. And most of the attacks that came on Dickey Lincoln was that it would destroy the Allagash. And you couldn't get this point across that the Allagash had been preserved, that it would have no effect on the Allagash. But you couldn't get it through. So I remember him saying one time, he says, you know one of the biggest mistakes he ever made politically was that, in getting the Allagash waterway bill through before he got Dickey Lincoln through. If

you'd linked them together and said, "Look, we're going to build this dam with this beautiful lake and we're going to preserve the Allagash at the same time," it probably would have went sailing through. And Maine would have been in a tremendous position today, you know, economically. But he considered that one of his greatest mistakes, was the, you know, in doing those things singly when they should have been done both all at once, both at once. Well those are the things that come to mind, anyway, as my experiences with Muskie. I'll stop and if you have any questions I'll try to answer them.

AL: Yeah. Do you- you were talking about some of the staff people who you knew quite well. Charlie Micoleau, what was his role?

CM: Charlie Micoleau, when I was hired, was kind of the assistant, AA we'd call them. There was a fellow there, Maynard Toll, who became an international financier in Japan or something. I was never impressed with Toll- didn't know him that well; probably shouldn't say that. But I do remember that the Muskie correspondence was under the control of the AA and it was absolutely awful. I mean, it was like his letters were not (*unintelligible word*), they were calculated not to reveal what the Senator's real position was and I just hated them. And I ended up drafting my own letters for him, of sitting him down and got a lot of them approved. But you hi-, if a letter really needed, it would be like a form letter that would be in the catalogue, like, you know. He could send it out on the same issue. And the AA had control over those and it was terrible.

Well, when Charlie Micoleau took over, that changed and I think he must have really never said it, but I think he recognized that as a problem. And I just think that as a person and as a person that made good decisions, you know, Charlie was outstanding as an AA. And I have tremendous admiration and respect for him to this day. And Charlie knew him at that critical transition time. I think Charlie had supported him politically in the late, you know, in the '60s and so on and so had a background of early association with Muskie that I never had. And then he left the staff to come to Maine to practice law and so he kind of lost contact with the later Muskie; you know what I mean? But, if you can possibly, I mean, Charlie Micoleau would be a great one to interview.

AL: And you mentioned Anita Jensen. What was her role?

CM: Anita Jensen came here from Australia with a, what I always thought was an English accent but obviously it was an Australian accent. And she was a very impatient. . . . I would say that when I went on the staff I didn't like her, and no one else did either, except that I respected her tremendous ability and intelligence and all. So did everyone else. And she ended up kind of endearing herself to people later. She was one of the carry-overs to the Mitchell staff. And I'd recommended to Mitchell that, when he was replacing some people, that no matter what he'd heard about Anita, you know, "You should keep her on because she's one of the most invaluable staff people you've got." And she went, was attached to Muskie because she thought he would become President.

She became a great speech writer; she wrote a lot of Muskie's speeches or participated in writing a lot of Muskie's speeches. And she participated in writing a lot of Mitchell's speeches, which is

a real tribute to her because, you know, I don't think there was anyone else on the staff that could write a speech that Mitchell would give in anywheres, in any semblance of the original form. But, and she was a scholarly type and, you know, she did her research. She was a good Benthamite I guess you'd call it, getting her facts straight. And she had a tendency to use academic words that I remember Mitchell or, and some of Muskie's staff people would always, you know, change to something that would be more in the vernacular. But, I don't know where Anita is now. But she would probably not have much on the personal side to say. My guess is that their relationship was always at an arm's length. But she's such an intelligent person that her comments would, I think, always be welcome.

AL: And George Mitchell- did you have a chance when he was working with Muskie to observe their relationship?

CM: No. Only when, I mean when they would come together on an event. We, one of the things that Mitchell did, was to, he wanted to name a building after Muskie, so we did- the federal building in Bangor. And at the same time he recognized that Margaret Smith had been given the shaft by the Republicans. And she'd always been good with him, and he just respected her career, you know. And so he decided to introduce a bill that would name the Augusta federal building the Margaret Chase Smith building, and the Bangor one the Edmund S. Muskie building; he'd do them both in the same legislation.

And so when the dedication of those buildings came about they came to Bangor together. And I, of course, was with them throughout and drove them around and all that stuff. And I remember Muskie gave a speech, of course, at the dedication, and also at the one in Augusta. And he mentioned Margaret, I remember he mentioned Margaret Smith in one. I remember them joking in the back, you know, saying, Muskie said "Well, Mitchell said well, he says I thought your speech went over fairly well," or whatever. Muskie's saying, "Well, I hope I didn't do too much damage to the truth of history," and all. And they were chuckling about that because they, I think he exaggerated a little bit, maybe a little bit of hyperbole there and that. But it was always a very easy, I mean, you could tell they were friends, you know.

AL: Now, and then you went on to work with Senator Mitchell?

CM: Oh yes, yeah.

AL: Tell me a little bit about that. What was it, or, maybe in terms of, what were the similarities and differences between working with Senator Muskie and working with Senator Mitchell?

CM: Well, Senator Mitchell, now Muskie, of course was ol-, much older, and he was coming back to Maine at the end of his career. And for him to maintain a schedule in Maine, a vigorous schedule, something that got under his skin, by the way. . . . Because I remember one night, he came in on a Tuesday morning. The, he was a great football fan; he loved to watch them Red Skins. And George Marshall was the owner of the Red Skins; had Muskie in his private box. But it was an overtime game and Muskie got into Bangor like at, let's say eight-fifteen or seven-fifteen Tuesday morning after having been up almost all the night, you know, with the football

game and getting home and everything. And I outlined to him what the day's events were going to be. We were going to do this and, and I can remember him saying, "Well, what about me?" You know, "What about, don't I count for anything?" I mean, "Gee," he says, "I've been doing all these things all my life." And he says, "What about what I want?" And he really was a little bit peevish; one of the few times he ever was with me. I understand with Gayle he was this way a lot, and sometimes rather vehemently. But I say, I never saw that side to him. But we did, we had quite a schedule for the guy. And I think I mentioned last time his recuperative powers, how he would, you know, get worn out and then would come back.

Mitchell on the other hand, maintained a schedule that was, I would call it superhu-, almost superhuman. Nobody ever used the clock like Mitchell did. And because he had done scheduling for Muskie when he was on Muskie's staff, and because he'd been a Mainer all his life, he had a sense of the roads and distances that was very, very keen. Like if we had a, if I'd worked something out with our schedule where we were going to allow thirty-five minutes, let's say, to go from an event at Bangor City Hall, let's say on a woods issue, to a town meeting in Ellsworth, and I'd allow thirty five minutes, he'd cut it down to twenty-eight. "Oh, you can make that in twenty-eight minutes," you know? And then, I mean it was that way the whole schedule. We have a drop-in at a coffee at someone's house and I'll allow three-quarters of an hour. "Oh, well, we can do that in thirty-five minutes," you know.

And, so that from the time he got up in the morning until the end of the day, every minute was accounted for, and it was a steady stream thing. And he just, and, of course, this stood him in very good stead in 1982 when he ran for election in his own right. I mean he was just everywhere. I mean, Emery couldn't possibly, you know, have mastered, and of course he didn't need to early on because it was a foregone conclusion that Mitchell was going to get mopped like he did in the governor's race. But, you know, and he was that way right to the end of his career. I mean, management of the clock was just unbelievable. I mean, I've heard stories about the old Puritans in New England, you know, and how they, you know, Monday was wash day and Tuesday was ironing day and Wednesday was something else and so on, as an example of how they managed the clock. And they would do it on their daily chores so they could get so much done. But he was, from that sense, the king of the Puritans. I mean, well, as I say, I'm almost speechless.

Also, Mitchell had the quickest intelligence of anyone that I've ever known. I said Muskie was, would usually arrive at a well-reasoned position, but would almost never respond to anything important early. And it drove his staff crazy because, you know, he wanted to filter all these things and have as long as possible to think about it and so on. Whereas Mitchell, everything was right there, and he would process a question and usually he'd have an answer on the spur of the moment, and give the reasons why, you know. He was a tremendous machine. I would say not very reflective, but that's not quite fair because usually the positions he ended up with were ones that he stuck with and that did stand up over scrutiny of time.

And so he just had a unique, extraordinary intelligence that was different from Muskie's. I would say less reflective, maybe a little bit less deep. But, oh, he could just balance and take into account so many factors at once in the spur of the moment and articulate them in a way that everyone could understand. When he gave a speech, he did less with the cont. . . . Muskie

would give you a lot of facts to set something in context; Mitchell would put things in context, but it would be a quick context, you know. Two or three things, enough; you know, to hit and move on.

He too had this self-deprecating thing. He would not take credit for things. Just like Muskie, you know, would, people would want to give him credit for this and that and praise him to the skies. And, you know, he would draw back and give others the credit, which is, for a politician, is an extraordinary thing. Those are the two, (they were very, they were quite similar in many ways I think), those are the two most noticeable things that I feel comfortable commenting on.

AL: What about in terms of the way they related with staff?

CM: Mitchell was much more, much more, engaged in much more personal interrelationships with staff and expressed to staff appreciation when they'd done a good job, and this and that, you know. And [he] would take their views into account and work with the staff, whereas Muskie was more like an island, you know with memos going in and Gayle and the AA or whoever filtering these things. And that's why the staff person on the scene like Larry Benoit (?) and myself were so important in the Muskie operation, because we had personal contact with him and the others didn't.

And Mitchell was extremely thoughtful. I mean, I used to run in the morning, for example. And I fell on, under the new Veterans' Bridge and broke my arm. And he heard about it and, God, he called me twice, you know, to find out. And then someone would die, you know and, not just staff people but people that had been good to him or whatever throughout his life. And no matter how tired he was or where he was, like, he'd call. Just last year [he] called Mrs. Sullivan in Bangor, who had been mayor of Bangor, and her husband. And she had been on the city council and they were good Democrats. He had a couple of receptions for him and Mr. Sullivan died. And he was in Ireland involved in these conversations, yet he called her, you know.

So Mitchell, although he would never reveal it, emotionally you would think he was almost like a machine, had this very deep humanistic quality underneath that I saw. He said in his recent book that he broke down and cried when his brother died. You know he was, the Senator was in Ireland at the time. And I remember his mother was a patient in a Waterville nursing home with a complete Alzheimer case in the last few years. And I'd stop and wait until he come out and he'd just be visibly shaken, you know. But the Mitchell that the world saw was never this kind of a person, it was always Mitchell the machine, you know. And as I say, he's one of the most thoughtful, humane, decent people that, you know, you'd ever want to meet. And, of course, I would say Muskie's the same way, but I mean, Muskie lived on an island and didn't have that much concern or awareness. And, maybe a wall had been left there where he wasn't as aware of things happening to staff either. I have no way of knowing that.

AL: And how long did you stay with Senator Mitchell?

CM: Throughout every day of his senatorship, 1980, May of 1980, no, when was he named? Muskie became Secretary of State in May of 1980. Governor Brennan, Senator Mitchell was a judge at the time, and I called him and asked him if, I said, do you know if, because he'd run

against Brennan in 1974 and it was a very bitter thing. But he and Brennan had become friends during this, that's the way Mitchell was during the, and so I called Mitchell; it was Judge Mitchell, and asked him if he wanted me to do such and such. I thought there was some way we could get to Brennan. He says, "Clyde, I can't do any of those things; I'm a judge." And he says, "Complete hands off from anything that I would do." And I said, "Oh, okay," and I. . . . so I didn't do anything either because I felt that's what he wanted, you know. Well, I did do a couple things but things that I would have done anyway, you know what I mean? And, I'm not saying I had any role in the decision; I didn't. But the, Brennan, again recognizing this outstanding ability and personal qualities, you know, made the right decision. Governor [***sic*** Ken] Curtis was pretty hurt by it; because he thought that he should have got it, and Bill Hathaway was hurt by it, he thought he should have got it, but the right man got it. Believe me. George is such a credit to everything.

AL: I think I'm going to stop this side of the tape now.

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

AL: . . . . the second interview with Mr. Clyde MacDonald on June 1st, 1999. We were just going to wrap up here and I was hoping maybe you could give me sort of in general your impressions of Senator Muskie. What [do] you think his major contributions were to Maine and to the United States?

CM: I think one of the major contributions to the country was the, (let's see, how shall I put this?), the, "honor" isn't quite the word, that he brought to the political process. [This was] at a time when, you know, throughout the twentieth century there has been a tremendous number of people that we call right-wing or conservatives that have tried to denigrate the political process, because they don't want people looking to government to help them in any way. The corporations and banks they represent they feel are so powerful that they don't need government help, although they're there with their hands out. But they just don't want anyone else using the government for that process. And so they tend to seize on anything they can to make the political process look bad. If there's a little corruption here, then it always gets reported, and it should. Or if some liberal politician is helping some special group, you know, they like to point it out and so on. And then there will charge people with being wishy-washy, you know, to being political.

Well, you know I would like to comment on that just for a moment. When you or I or the man on the street is asked a question about something, you know, we can pop off the top of our heads and no one ever remembers it; it doesn't mean that much. I mean, all right, so you might have had an effect on another person's opinion. But when Senator Mitchell or anyone in public life, Senator Muskie, comments on an important issue, whether it's about something, the Vietnam War or expenditures in the budget or priorities or energy shortage or Dickey Lincoln, or, you know, whatever, it gets widely reported. And because a lot of people look to them for leadership it affects the public opinion of a lot of people. I've seen this time and time again.

And so you can't be a pop-off person; you can't just say the obvious thing, or the things that

comes into your head. You need to be responsible and offer a reasoned opinion. Especially Muskie was this way because he would want to think and think about this thing and then offer the basis for his thought along with it, even more so than Mitchell would. And it gave him the appearance, it gives politicians who are this way, and almost all politicians are this way, (I say, "Thank goodness"), the appearance of being people that won't give you a straight answer, you know, or won't respond like ordinary people. Well, they want to run back and try and figure some political way of making an answer. And it isn't, it wasn't that way with either of these men. I mean, that's a, and it's a question of being responsible. And, because, you know, whatever you say does have an important effects on other people, and they're not, and. . . . Now I don't know how I got on that sidetrack. It was something that you asked.

AL: Your general impressions of what you think he contributed.

CM: Oh yeah. So I think ennobled the political process. You know, I alluded earlier in the first time about all the Muskie Republicans in Maine and how some of his chief critics when he was a governor in the legislature, you know, leader, came even to support him. Because integrity has a way of enduring, I think, more than, you know, more than lesser qualities, shall we say. And I think nationally that was true. You remember that during the 1968 election when Hubert Humphrey was, couldn't bring himself to separate himself from Johnson on the war. And there was this mass protest in the country, and the thing was, "How do you put down the protesters?" and so on. And how Muskie at a rally invited a student to come up and take the microphone, forcing the student to be responsible really in his comments, even though he didn't change them. I mean, they were harsh comments, but nonetheless. And then Muskie dealing with him.

See, that, and I mean that's, but part of this, I think he just ennobled the whole political process. To this day there's never been a hint of scandal about either man, Muskie or Mitchell, and there never will be because, I mean, they weren't that way, you know what I mean? And so, you know, I worked, served with both of these men with a great deal of pride, and so did the whole staff. And I think so did those elements of the population that supported them politically. It made them feel good about being part of the American political system, and I would say that that is the, ranks near the top.

As far as specific things, Muskie was the pioneer in calling attention to the, what was happening to the environment. I mean, Rachel Carson's book, I don't remember when it came out, but it dealt pretty much exclusively with the effect of pesticides on plant and animal life of the ecostructure. Muskie went after Clean Water and tried to get funds to make the public aware. He went from one end of the country to the other, you know, speaking on this year's ahead of time, and finally got the support for it. And then [he] used the stature that he gained from that to extend it to clean, the Clean Air, and so that the Clean Air. And that was near the end of his, 1968 to 1970, 1980 he was involved with Clean Air. But Mitchell really picked up the Clean Air thing and went beyond what Muskie had been able to do on that. I think if Dickey Lincoln had been built, it would have been his greatest legacy to Maine. I think it's one of the great tragedies, tragedy, but great losses to Maine that this was never built. And our low standard of living, lower standard of living is a direct, you know, offshoot of high power rates and things that we would have on that. The question takes me a little bit aback because I really hadn't thought about specific accomplishments so much. Those are the ones that popped into my head.

AL: Yeah, or, general was fine. We talked quite a bit about his strengths. Was, did he have any weaknesses that you think limited his achievements?

CM: I don't think they limited his achievements. I think his greatest weakness was a kind of feeling sorry for himself, that he was being bandied about and not master of his own time and everyone else planning his life so continuously. He resented that, and as I say I saw a little bit of it on that time that I mentioned when he came in after the football game. But I know that Gayle, poor Gayle Corey and people in Washington got the brunt of this. And I guess it was pretty severe at times. And yet he knew that this was for his own good, you know. And he just, so to me that was his major shortcoming.

AL: When he talked to you a little bit about Brooks Quimby and debating, did he ever articulate for you what it was that Brooks Quimby taught him? What were the elements of debating that Brooks Quimby stressed that maybe he developed in his speeches?

CM: The only thing he ever mentioned is what I mentioned earlier, that, you know, every time you give a talk, it has to have a definite beginning, a definite middle, a definite end so that you know where you're going. No ad-libbing along the way, which means everything has to be thought out. And then I think that he did that so many times throughout his life that by the time he made that Limestone speech it was automatic. It just became, become part of his personality. I know his appreciation for Quimby was very great. I mean he, in that whatever Quimby taught him, his classes and that debating converted Muskie from a stammering and shy kid, you know, into a person that could express himself confidently. And if he didn't have that then he never would have had a political career, so that, beyond that, no.

AL: Was there anything else that I haven't asked you or mentioned that you would like to add?

CM: No, I think we're, that I've pretty much shot my wad.

AL: Thank you very much for your time.

CM: Well thank you for doing this. It's, we need, the public needs to know more about Ed Muskie.

End of Interview