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Interview with David MacNichol by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

MacNichol, David

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

April 8, 2002

Place

Portland, Maine

ID Number

MOH 335

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Biographical Note

David MacNichol was born April 18, 1932 in Eastport, Maine, the son of Alexander MacNichol and Genevieve (Roche) MacNichol. He attended the University of Maine in Orono where he majored in History and Government and graduate school at the University of Maine. He left college to serve in the Army during the Korean War. His mother, Genevieve, was the secretary to Dexter Cooper when the idea was conceived for the Passamaquoddy Tidal Project. His father, Alexander, was from Eastport and was the Commissioner of the Roosevelt-Campobello International Park. His brother, Alex, is a lawyer with the firm Jackson & MacNichol in Portland. MacNichol worked with his father at Campobello, and later became a banker.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Eastport, Maine history; MacNichol's family, educational, and military background; his involvement with Campobello through his father, Alex; his experience with the Roosevelts and the Johnsons; Maine as a Republican state during Muskie's gubernatorial years; the Muskie whiskey story; and experiences with Muskie at Campobello.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. David MacNichol at his home at 21 Austin Street in Portland, Maine, on April the 8th, the year 2002. This is Andrea L'Hommedieu. And if you could just start by giving me your full name, where and when you were born?

David MacNichol: David MacNichol, born in Eastport, Maine, 18th of April, 1932.

AL: And did you grow up in the Eastport community?

DM: We grew up in Eastport, Maine, that is correct.

AL: Can you tell me a little bit what the community was like?

DM: Eastport was a very small, very isolated, very provincial seaport town in eastern Maine. The principal occupation of the town was sardine factories - they call them canneries on the west coast. And economically, socially, everything revolved around fishing and the canning of sardines which began when the season started in April and went through until about October, November, depending upon the season of the year. At that point, when I grew up, there were approximately almost twenty factories in Eastport. Lubec had a number of factories, Jonesport, Machiasport, Rockland, these were the principal ports in eastern Maine. And now I think Stimpson has one factory remaining around Clyde ---somepl--- Port Clyde, I believe, in Maine. That's the only one at this point in time. So that entire industry, if you will, has been virtually wiped out and the canneries that now exist are either in Norway, or Scandinavian countries, and maybe a few in Morocco and places of that sort. I can recall the NRA, the Blue Eagle. I can recall the Depression quite dramatically because, Eastport was always in a depression, and has always been in eastern Maine. I can recall many times sitting down at the table at an evening, at supper, and the doorbell would ring and there would always be a man there in well-patched coveralls looking for a job on the WPA. And it's rather interesting, the WPA was of course a program started by FDR, and in Maine it was always a misnomer because it really didn't do much of anything. The projects were basically streets, sidewalks, and things of that.

When we went out to the west coast after, during WWII when my father was stationed there, we eventually saw what they had constructed on the west coast and I was amazed at the amount of buildings, particularly well-constructed buildings, public buildings if you will, put up by the WPA. (*unintelligible word*), So it gave me a whole new feeling of what could actually have been done, if you will, and was never done in Maine. And I always wondered why, if you will.

Eastport had a renaissance in the thirties when of course the Quoddy tidal project commenced. Again, a concept of FDR who resided summer times in Campobello and was aware of the tidal current in Cobscook Bay and the harnessing of that, which had been done economically in Europe but never in this country. The project began with great fanfare, and then was killed politically particularly by power companies, and also by Senator [William E.] Borah who coined the word "boondoggle", and he was a senator from Idaho. And he, with Central Maine Power and Bangor Hydro and that group, determined that public power in Maine would simply lower the cost of power, would reduce their market share that they had, and the competitive value, and should not be done. And it was not, it was basically killed.

Then of course WWII developed, if you will, and a whole host, and the thought of government and the process of government then became secondarily as the process of arming this country and going forward to war. So that was Eastport. Eastport was, as I say, the defining moment in Eastport was basically WWII, people went to work, they were finally employed. Unemployment was virtually unknown, sardine factories worked year round, many of the men were inducted in the service and of course got away from the town, got away from eastern Maine, could broaden their horizons. Then they came back of course, then they had the G.I. Bill, and they all were

educated. So there was a whole sea change, if you will. And to sit here today and try and think back what it was like, that poverty, no TV, radio was just coming into its own, and many people didn't have radios. Nobody read the newspaper, today as they do. There was no TV of course. So it was a very different society, entirely different, and it was quite unique. So that was eastern Maine.

AL: Can you tell me your mother's name and how she was involved with the conception of the Passamaquoddy tidal project?

DM: Mother came to Eastport as a secretary for Dexter Cooper, and Dexter Cooper was the resident engineer in charge of the Quoddy project. He was a hydraulic engineer of international fame, and his brother Hugh Cooper was also an engineer and he was approached by the Bolshevik government of the Soviet Union, in the twenties, and of course we did not recognize them as a legitimate government then, and asked to go to Russia and head the project (*unintelligible phrase*) dam, which he did. He was smart enough and probably had good advisers, before he went he said he'd go on one condition that, one, he was in charge of the project, and two, he'll be paid in advance in gold deposited to a Swiss bank of his choice. The Russians agreed, and he went and was in charge of that project and built that dam, until it was destroyed in WWII. Dexter Cooper was the engineer in charge, and that was a huge undertaking because you were bringing in engineers, you were bringing in work people, you were bringing in a complete infrastructure of people in a very small town to develop a very large project. So they had to have their own infrastructure, if you will, they had their village in the town, and they developed Quoddy Village at that point in time, that was developed, and then all the engineers and the people associated with the project lived there and stayed there. And that existed until WWII when it was turned into a, when the project was abandoned, was turned into a Seabee base, and then later Grossman bought the project and then sold off portions of that. It still exists today, but now it's part of Eastport as just such. And that was the project.

So mother came, and Dexter Cooper lived in Campobello and he used to commute to Eastport back and forth, they had an office in Eastport and Campobello. So mother went to Campobello a lot, so that's how our relationship I guess with Campobello began, through my mother originally. And the only way to get to Campobello at that point, or that time was by boat, because there was no bridge of course connecting the mainland, Lubec, to Campobello.

AL: And your father, could you tell me his name and his occupation, and how he became involved?

DM: Well, my father's name was Alexander MacNichol, and he worked for my grandfather, David MacNichol, and they had a sardine factory in Deep Cove. Dad was really the general manager of the facility. The sardine factory burned in 1935 and of course it was the height of the Depression, everybody running short on insurance, the first thing you cut when things are difficult is you forego the insurance. The factory burned, it was a very large factory.

My grandfather then turned into importing rock salt, or, pardon me, salt which we got from Turk's Island in the Caribbean. It came up, it was ground and used in the sardine industry

because of course when you pick sardines up, when you carry sardines from the weir, if you will, where they're impounded to the factory, there's a tremendous amount of heat being generated in the vessel or the carrier, so what you do is you load the sardines in and then cover them with salt, then keep loading them, and that way the sardines of course are preserved in the salt. They don't putrefy, if you will, decompose, and you can run to the carrier, run to the factory, and unload them and handle them. So salt was used, tremendous amounts of salt were used. I can remember as a little boy we had what they call a ship mill, where the sea salt came in. It was then ground up, and then we handled it in burlap bags. And I can recall, as a child of course, in this large warehouse jumping up on the salt, which reached to the rafters. And I have no idea how many salt bags there were, but it was just something else. We'd play tag in there with the other children.

So that was, and then my father was a reserve officer in the Army reserves and he was called to active duty in 1940. And we left Eastport and went to Brooklyn, New York, and I was always taken aback because even though he was on active duty, at that point in time war had not been declared, he didn't have to wear a uniform. The only time he wore a uniform was when he accepted his pay once a month, and then he had to put his uniform on. But as soon as, of course, Pearl Harbor came and we were actively engaged, then he wore a uniform all the time. And from there, New York, we went to California, we lived in southern California for a few years during the war. When the war was over my father was mustered out, and we went back to Eastport and we did various things. We ran a Ford dealership there, we had owned the property and the building and the dealer wanted to basically do something else, the principal, so he left and we took it over and ran that for a period of time. Ran that until really, until my father went on with the Campobello project and the park, and that's how we became associated with the park.

AL: Do you remember how he came to begin work at Campobello, in terms of the connections?

DM: Well, we always I guess had a connection. One of my first recollections of Campobello, and to answer your question on the side unfortunately, is meeting FDR. Probably I would be one of the few people who can recall meeting Franklin Roosevelt. He was there in the summer of 1938, and probably many summers, but, and when he was there he used to always kind of hold court, if you will, and he would stand, supported by his sons, Elliott, John and Franklin would bolster him up so that he could stand unaided. And even though, of course, he had paralysis, he was never pictured in any capacity where he would be in a wheelchair or incapacitated, there was never any inkling that anything had happened to this man that he was not a leader of this country, and i.e., was in full power of his faculty, if you will, and physical attributes. So he was standing, and he wore a Navy cloak which was I thought very good because the cloak, of course, was a big blue cloak and it would hide his crutches that he was standing on. So, and he would be able to have his hand free because they were Canadian crutches with the, just holding on the arm, with a hand free to shake hands. And I remember I had a sailor suit on and went over and shook his hand in the group going through, and he said, "Hello my little sailor, how are you?" And that was my first meeting of FDR. We saw members of the family from time to time in Eastport because, of course, they would come to Eastport in the summer time. The railroad ended in Eastport, and there was no railroad in facility, in Lubec, so they would come to Eastport and then they would go by boat to Campobello. So we used to see Eleanor quite frequently, and

the various sons who used to sail there, until the war, if you will, then things changed.

AL: What were your impressions of Eleanor? Did you ever get a, see her enough to get a sense of her?

DM: Oh yes, you had, she was very, very low keyed. You could call her an unadorned woman, really. She was very large, rather awkward in her movements, not well coordinated. But that was, she never cared for that, that was not her, that was not part of her. She always appeared in Eastport in a, what we would call I guess today a cotton dress. But they were, there was a name they had, I don't recall it, but anyway women always wore them. There were no slacks of course, or jeans in those days, they all wore a house dress, and she always appeared in a house dress, usually with a cardigan, because it was cold, cool in Maine, and tennis shoes. I never saw Eleanor dressed in anything other than tennis shoes. And we often wondered if she ever really had high heels or something like that. But she was very gracious, extremely gracious, knew everybody's first name, and everybody could stop and talk to her on the street and she would always pause, listen, and say something. And she was most gracious in that respect, and you think today of the president's wife just walking in the street, unencumbered by any type of agents or any phalanx of entourage and you just can't imagine that happening today in our society, but it did then. And she'd walk up and down the street with a shopping bag, go in and out of the stores, know people by name, and you could even talk to her. And it was quite, again, quite refreshing to see somebody of that type. So that was Eleanor.

AL: Now, I understand that you were at the alongside your father at some point on Campobello?

DM: Oh, I was attending the University of Maine then, my second time there after the Korean conflict, and dad asked me if I would assist him, he said it would be good experience and look good on a resume, of course, and I naturally agreed. So I went over there and just with no real title or anything, just kind of assisting in any way, shape or form, and it was interesting because we were dedicating the plaque, I can recall at that point in time, and in dedicating the plaque we had of course the prime minister of Canada, Pierson, was there, along with Johnson, the president from Texas and his crew, [Lester B.] Pearson and then there were various congressmen there, senators there, and Mike Mansfield was there representing the United States along, of course, with Margaret Chase Smith. Peter Kyros was the representative from the first district. I don't recall, I think we had three districts at that point in time. Mr. Hathaway might have been there, and I'm not sure who the others, and the governor and I'm not sure if the governor was John Reed or Ken Curtis, but they were all there.

AL: What year was this?

DM: This would have been, that's a good question, Don Nicoll could tell you. Probably, I'm not sure, 1968, but it might not have been, it might have been before then. I don't recall. It was the dedication of the park. And the first time I had seen LBJ and could take his measure, and I had a little office right in the house, if you will, it was in the closet connecting the kitchen to the dining room, kind of a pantry. And I had telephone connections in there and all sorts of pads and papers and things to coordinate, if you will, and basically to take care of the detail work which

my father had a great deal of at that point. So I was in a position to overhear a great deal and to observe, and I can give you a couple of little anecdotes I'm sure that you haven't heard. One was meeting LBJ for the first time and observing him, and of course his wife Lady Bird. Lady Bird was most gracious, very smart, and I had the immediate feeling that if there were, pardon me, brains and ability in the family that Lady Bird probably had the, more than her share and was the, she was a very, very articulate, very smart, very smooth individual. She had a very keen eye, and I don't think anything went by without her appearing, or knowing what it was.

LBJ was very domineering, he was 6'4", and he had a huge head and hands. His ears were the largest ears of any politician I've ever seen, tremendous ears. And he was very demanding, he had a great entourage, and they were, I always thought a great deal of yes-men, if you will. Nobody ever argued with him, or gainsaid him in any way, shape or form. One of the things I recall was his daughter Lynda Bird was there, and maybe the other daughter, I'm not sure which one, there, too, and she was going at the time with Hamilton, the actor, George Hamilton. So I was naturally interested, being about the same age, to take, if you will, take the measure of this gal from Texas. And so there was a group meeting and she was sitting off to one side and made no effort to greet people or to be nice, or to be just convivial. And I remember Lady Bird grabbed her and asked if she could use my office pantry, which she did, and called her in there and told her in no uncertain terms that her daddy was president, and they were here in eastern Maine to meet these people, and she had better get her act together and go out and shake hands and be gracious to people, and that was it. Lady, get out there. And she went out and was very nice after that, so that was kind of interesting.

One other thing that always amazes me, during the speech, if you will, the dedication ceremony, LBJ being the president led off after, of course, an introduction. And as I indicated, he was 6'4" and a very large man, and he had an RCA what they call people-eater, and this was the first time, he had two, one in the White House and one on Air Force One which was always there when he traveled. Now, the people-eater was a machine, which I had never seen which allowed the individual to see a speech and make eyeball contact at the same time with the audience. Before you had this, you had to read the speech, as most do, and then put your head up from time to time and make eyeball contact, come back down. With the (*unintelligible word*), you didn't have to, you could sit right there and look at the people and see the words scrolling across. It was a marvelous device. But, again, he was 6'4" so when Lester Pearson was going to speak, they said well, could he use the (*unintelligible word*). And by all means, LBJ was most gracious, said certainly. But of course Pearson's only about 5'7", so how would he appear in the (*unintelligible word*), you'd never see him, you see. And of course naturally being the first person in Canada, we couldn't have Canada being any diminished than the United States. So we had to arrange some device where Pierson would appear miraculously in front of the (*unintelligible word*), if you will, and give his welcoming speech. So we thought, how would we do this? And we decided what we'd do is we'd get an old Coke wooden container, and these were large, and we'd keep that in back of the guards, if you will, running up to the podium. And just before, just before Mr. Pierson made his entrance and LBJ had finished, we would place very carefully this little crate in front of the people-eater, so Pearson could come up and then jump up on the, and make a speech. And he did that. And of course we had all sorts of thoughts, supposing he stumbles and falls, supposing he misplaces this, and what are we going to do. But he didn't, he was very good, he got on that and gave his speech and away we went after that. So that was

interesting.

And then of course they all retired to a place up in the Shurncook hills, Pearson and the Canadian group and of course LBJ and the politicians that were there, and they had a great deal of lobster. I remember they brought the lobster back and the lobster had been prepared, they flew in to undertake the cooking and the preparation of the food various chefs and staff from the Chateau Frontenac. No expense was spared, of course. I think the place that they probably used was that of one of the harvings but it could have been one of the sardine people, I don't know. And so we did have plenty of lobster after that. So that was kind of an interesting escapade. I did get a chance to meet the Queen Mother, who has just recently died, when she came in the royal yacht Britannia, and she was most gracious and a very easy person to talk to, the Queen Mother. And I dealt with her (*unintelligible word*), if you will, at the time, and I don't recall his name but he was very nice. So you met a lot of people there at Campobello and you got to see a number of people. Interesting, too, the difference between the Canadian groups and the American groups. Now, this was the summer time, of course, and it was warm, and the Canadian women were done up in furs and extremely well turned out, and the Canadian gentlemen were always well dressed. And yet the Americans were kind of nonchalant, I mean here we were at, they weren't dressed to the occasion. The Canadians were extremely dressed, well dressed, and that was kind of a difference, a difference in style, if you will, difference in the character of the two countries, kind of interesting.

AL: So you started at the University of Maine in Orono?

DM: Oh yes, yes indeed.

AL: And then left to serve in the Korean War?

DM: Korean conflict.

AL: In what branch did you serve?

DM: In the Army, in the Army, yes, yes.

AL: And how long did that take you away from your studies?

DM: A long time, because it took the two years of active duty, and then I went back to eastern Maine and realized that, at some point, that I had to have an education and I had to do something else, that you simply couldn't make a living in Washington county, in Eastport, and the best thing to do was to, pardon me, get your act together, as everybody did, and go to Maine. When everybody said Maine, that meant the University of Maine at Orono, that was before of course the number of campuses that exist today, there was the one campus and that was Maine, everybody that wanted an education went to Maine, if you will. And that automatically meant Orono, so I went, I finished up there in the class of 1967.

AL: And what did you major in?

DM: Majored in history and government.

AL: And from there did you go to graduate school?

DM: Yes, I finished up, I went to graduate school there, and then took an exam for the federal government and worked as a federal bank examiner for a number of years, and then went into banking here in Portland, Maine, and I worked for the bank for twenty years in Portland. And then I went to work as a broker, and I'm still working as a part time broker at this point.

AL: And do you think that your connections and experiences with the Roosevelts and the Johnsons led you to your interest in pursuing history and government, or was there something else that brought you to that point?

DM: That, I'm sure that had a background influence, there's no question of that. But I've always had an interest in politics and government. Even now I work, as I say, whenever is necessary for Tom Allen's campaign. I usually can be counted on to work there. My first, I guess, campaign that I recall was using ballot, what they call a lit drop, and as you know a lit drop is simply handing out the literature, and I remember doing that in the 1940 campaign for FDR. And I was a curly headed little boy, and of course even Maine in the height of the Depression, which should have been Democratic was not of course, it was rabidly Republican, and my father was in the legislature at that point in time, one of the few Democratic legislators prior to WWII, so he would give me the literature and I would accompany him. And obviously if there's a Democrat with a, perhaps a good looking little boy running along, people would not be so disinclined to throw away anything they might get, particularly if it was for FDR or the Democratic Party. So I guess you might say I was weaned in the Democratic Party in that respect, and I recall working with, and still doing lit drops.

AL: Now, did you, did your parents have people stay over at the house during campaigns and things like that? Was there that sort of -?

DM: It was, Eastport was, again, a very small community. There was a hotel called the Hotel East, but the hotel was designed basically as a place where you would serve liquor and the rooms were incidental to the liquor. So it was not a place where you would take anybody or let anybody stay. Other than that there were a few rooming houses and things of that nature, but whenever somebody would come to Eastport, if they were Democrats, they naturally knew of my father and we had a large home, and the home was always available to them and many times we had Ed Muskie and his wife Jane, they used to stay there frequently when they were in eastern Maine, so we saw them. I'm thinking, Lucia Cormier came, and we even had Mag Smith to tea on a few occasions. So, even though she was a Republican we nonetheless felt that she was perhaps a Republican that we could deal with and talk to, and she felt the same way about us I'm sure, being Democrats, so she would come to tea. So we did see a number of people from time to time in various categories.

AL: Do you remember how, whether the Muskies stayed there during Senator Muskie's run for governor in '53?

DM: Oh yes, yes he did, he and Jane, and I remember his staying on several occasions. That was kind of interesting because then the Democratic party was moribund in the state, the state was a Republican, Republican state, and people look back on it now and think, with the Democrats in the majority, isn't this terrible. But yet I can recall from the time, if you will, from the Civil War period up until WWII, this state was archly Republican and very conservative. So it took Muskie, if you will, and the whole infrastructure of people, Frank Coffin was one, Muskie, Cormier, and probably a good number of Democrats that, who go unknown, to break this stranglehold, if you will, and to induce representative Democratic government in the state, and to at least give people a choice which they didn't really have. They always used to say, hold your nose and vote Republican, and that was about it. If you went to register, and you had to register in the communities, register and enroll, if you will, it was automatically assumed that if you wore a shirt and a tie, why, you were a Republican, and it was just taken as it was a given, if you will. And if you said you were a Democrat, why, there was almost a momentary hush. Why, this person is a Democrat? There must be something wrong with his marbles. So you had this entire belief, if you will, that had settled in, and yet Maine was so benighted, you wonder why this ever got started, how it ever was perpetrated, and for what reason when obviously they had so much to gain from the New Deal and the various social programs invoked by FDR, which basically turned this state around. So it's a, we've come a long way. We have a long way to go, tremendous long way to go, and this perhaps bothers me somewhat when I realize just how geographically isolated we are from the mainstream of this country, and how unaffected we are economically, and how dependent we are on so many things on our coastline, on our fishing industry which no longer exists, if you will. The potato industry in the county, the timber harvesting and things of this nature, it's a state, you know, the governor has a new program, "Maine is on the move," and I, it's a catchy program but it doesn't bear any resemblance to what is going on economically in the state.

AL: So you question the substance.

DM: Oh, there's none, there is none, there is none. And this, again, gets back to reporting the news. Nobody, you can be a bull or a bear and nobody wants to talk about problems and moreover the depth of the problem and how you would deal with the problem. They want a glib answer, they want a quick sound bite, and then go on to something else. And this is not the way things, conditions are done, it takes a great deal of time, a great deal of effort, a great deal of planning. And this bothers me, that we don't seem to have this. And I don't say this, you know, from a point of being, pardon me, old and crotchety, if you will, but it's a point that has always bothered me. It's a superficial inheritance to anything that will pass and we can do something else. I'm almost of the point that we're getting to the British idea of, their concept was, well, we will, quote, muddle through. And yes, you can, you can muddle through, there's no question, of course you can. But it's not in the best interest of the country or a region or a state or individual to muddle through. You should have a program, a plan, and understand how you're going to accomplish this. So these are things that have always bothered me.

AL: Now, the times that you did encounter Senator Muskie, or first Governor Muskie, what were your impressions of him, and do you have any stories that sort of illustrate his character?

DM: One of the stories I can recall was at one of the occasions at Campobello, there was my

father and Ed Muskie, Frank Roosevelt, Jr., and LBJ. And they were sitting together outside the pantry, it was late in the afternoon, and my father said, asked me if I would get the gentlemen a drink. And I replied, of course, so I opened up a bottle of Johnny Walker Black and put that on a tray with four glasses, a little ice, and brought that out. And my father was first in line, and father took the Johnny Walker bottle and splashed it on some ice, passed it to Ed Muskie who did likewise, it went to Frank Roosevelt and finally LBJ who passed me the empty bottle. These were four men who had consumed, pardon me, poof, in a moment's, a fifth, and I must confess at that point in time I was mostly impressed with these gentlemen, who could do that and maintain their equilibrium, conduct a conversation, and without falling on the floor. But then I met Ed Muskie later, or even before I guess, at OPS, he was in charge of OPS. Mike DeSalle was the administrator, if you will, and Ed Muskie was in charge for the state of Maine. And I remember meeting him here in Portland, they had an office in Portland, that was probably before he was governor I believe.

AL: Yes, it was.

DM: It was, yes. So then he ran for governor, if you will, and there was really no thought that you probably would think that he'd become the governor. Republicans, they say, had a stranglehold, and it took a complete grass roots appeal to get Ed Muskie in, and once he got in of course he still had to deal with the governor's council, which has now been abolished but was a holdover of course from the old colonial days and basically acted as a veto on any sort of new concept, new ideas that had to flow through. Because of course it went as a law, but then the council, if you will, could basically put the kibosh to it and you had to have their advice and consent basically for any projects or any things of this nature.

So Ed Muskie had to do away with that, and he had to be very careful in his projects, he had to go very, he had to get along with both the parties, the state, and the state publications, particularly the newspapers then were Republican, the state was a Republican state, he was a Democrat and he was in the minority, and yet he had plans for the state, he had goals he wanted to do, basically in education, economics, things of this nature, and to implement them took a good deal of tact and he had to be very gracious about it. So it was a very difficult job to accomplish all this. So we do owe a great deal to Ed Muskie for his forward thought, I guess, or his planning and the manner in which he led the Democratic party out from the woodshed into the higher planes of government in this state. That still happens.

AL: In your father's position of commissioner of the park at Campobello, did he have to communicate regularly with Muskie and work on things, do you have any recollections of what your father talked about in terms of that?

DM: No, other than the fact that he had to deal with Ed, Ed was one of the members of the board, and there were equal number of Canadians and Americans and the chairmanship would rotate I believe on an annual basis between the United States and Canada. But obviously, Muskie by virtue of fact, he was a senator and then of course had a preeminent position. One of the other gentlemen who was there representing the Canadian government, who impressed me no end, was Mr. McNaughton, Canadian MP, and I think the thing that impressed me most about Mr. McNaughton was the fact, one time I watched him give a speech and then turn around in

fluent French and give the same, like that, and I thought, wonderful, I thought, they actually can do that in Canada. Because I never had heard anybody do that, and having gone to Quebec, if you will, on several occasions and enjoyed the food there and the people, I'm always amazed at the ability to speak English and French, and I often wish I could speak French as well as German. My German is failing somewhat now, but, and I'm learning a little bit of French, so.

AL: But as a general thing, did your, do you have an impression of your father and how he worked with Senator Muskie?

DM: Not that well. I know we had a great deal of, Ed Muskie was always considered, if you will, to be an excellent politician and a friend. Perhaps more a friend than a politician to be sure. That was our feeling with that man, and particularly with his family, Jane, his wife Jane. So my dad always spoke very well of Ed Muskie and was able to work closely with him on a number of various projects. Because the park project at that time was basically to take over the complex, which was the Roosevelt, the Franklin Roosevelt place, given to Franklin by his mother, and develop that. And then of course the concept of a park, if you will, a park and a complex, international complex for various seminars or meetings of that nature evolved, and now it's become a good sized compound, if you will, much larger and certainly greater than was the first thought. Whether that was the concept initially or it evolved, I'm not sure, but I'm sure there was a good deal of planning on that. One of the commissioners, other than Ed Muskie, that I recall was Sumner Pike, and the Pikes of course were always associated with the park. Don Nicoll would know Sumner very well, and Sumner was a Republican but yet he was head of the FCC, no mean feat, and headed the AEC, the Atomic Energy Commission after David Lilienthal in the forties. So Sumner was a commissioner. The commissioners were, the general trend of the commissioners were very, very influential people either in the United States or Canada, and I always thought they were very well connected, and hard working certainly, and had the best interests of the park and relations between the United States and Canada which I'm sure the park has helped cement.

AL: Let me stop and flip the tape.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B of the interview with Mr. David MacNichol. And we were talking about, well I had a question, so that was Sumner Pike, and there was also I believe Moses and Radcliff, and was there an Algernon as well?

DM: Algernon, that's correct. Mose, Mose Pike, was a sardine packer, and they all lived in Lubec. Sumner was a very unique individual. At the height of the Depression, he and Alger I understand went to Wall Street, and that impressed me no end of course, made quite a bundle in those days, and then retired back to Lubec. And anybody who could do that I always felt certainly had to be a world beater, among other things. Whether that's true or not, I don't know, but this is the story that I was told growing up.

One of the things I remember about Sumner was his voracious reading. At that time he had

cataracts, or a cataract, which would impede his reading and his ability to read, and yet, but he had a standing order with a number of publishing houses in New York and Boston, whatever they published in scientific data or anything that pertained to oceanography, basically history and government, to send him a copy. So by his chair, by his chair, he had piles of books all around. And I didn't believe anybody could read as much as Sumner as quickly as he did, so my father said, "I want you to watch him." We went there one time, and he was very, he liked all the Pikes and we got along with them for a number of years and knew them of course, being packers. So Sumner had, would take the book and hold it up to his eye and just start turning pages. And that's, and I was watching him and I thought, oh no, there's something wrong. Nobody, no one, can read that quickly. So I asked Sumner, my father gave me a poke, he said, "Ask Sumner what he's reading." So I said, excuse me, and we never called him Mr. Pike, in eastern Maine everybody was called by their first name. And I says, "Sumner, what are you reading?" And he said, he was reading something on oceanography. And I said, "Well that must be very interesting." And he went on to describe it and my father said, "That contradicts what I was reading on page so-and-so," and Sumner said, "No, as a matter of fact on that page it went this way," and he recited what was on that page. And I had a, let's say, a different feeling of Sumner Pike at that point.

But Sumner, there was Sumner and Rad, Rad was very interesting, Rad had served in the Spanish Civil War which always made me kind of a hero worshipping because I always thought that must have been very interesting. And Rad did not serve in WWII, I don't think Sumner did. Sumner never could drive, this is another thing that I always thought, Sumner always had to have somebody to drive him around, he never learned to drive. Rad could drive, obviously, but Sumner never did, so if you had to pick Sumner up or get Sumner to someplace, you had to make arrangements to physically move him. But once you did that, he was a brilliant man. And he and Rad were bachelors, Mose and Alger were married and had families, and they had a, Sumner and Rad had a large home in Lubec. And one of the things that Sumner would never abide was TV, and the TV was on the third floor, and if you wanted to see TV or the news, you had to go up to the attic. And they had it fixed up, of course, very nicely, and you could see it there but Sumner said he didn't want the damn thing in the living room where it would interfere with his reading or communication with people who came in, so it was up there.

And one of the things Sumner did whenever he and Rad finished reading, if you will, they used to turn all the books over to the Lubec library. So it had a very well stacked library, much better than Eastport. Sumner was also an overseer of Bowdoin College and a member of that board for a number of years. I asked Sumner if, if Bowdoin would, he would help me to get to Bowdoin, and he looked over my transcript and said, you better go to Maine. And he was right. So, he said, well, we could probably get you in in a year, but you'd have to go to prep school, and I said, no, forget it. At that point I wasn't interested in that, so I did go to Maine. But, so that was Sumner and the Pikes.

AL: They were all brothers?

DM: They were brothers, that's right. I'm not sure, the eldest I believe, well I don't recall. They all appeared to be about the same age, as a young man, if you will, as a young child. I don't believe any of them, I think they're all deceased now. Mose died a few years ago, one of

his daughters still lives in Portland, Mary. He had two daughters, Mary and Ann, they were both contemporaries of my brother and myself, and I think Mary is married and living away. Ann, I believe, is still living in Portland, although I don't know her name. I know she doesn't go under the name of Pike. So that whole group, if you will, from Eastport and Lubec no longer exists.

And it's always amazing when you think of eastern Maine and you talk to people, they say, oh well, do you know this person or that person. And there was a time in eastern Maine, if you gave your name they automatically knew where you came from. Kind of unique. And that no longer exists now with greater mobility in our society, but you could say you were from so-and-so, like being a Cyr or a Daigle, well if you have that name you're automatically from the county. And then there were other people with a name, like a Pike you automatically came, or McCurdy, that meant you were from Eastport or Lubec, if you will. And Wilson's an Eastport name. And so many of them originally came from Canada, most did, emigrated the United States at various points in time.

AL: Are there questions about Ed Muskie that I haven't asked you, or observations, recollections you have that are important to add to give a full perspective of your impressions of him?

DM: I don't think so, because again, my father was more connected with Ed, and we only saw him, I saw him on peripheral occasions when he came and he stayed at our home. Again, when he stayed at our house, he and Jane would generally then be out attending a Democratic rally, if you will, or meeting someplace in the county, and then would come back to Eastport, probably have dinner or at least a night cap, and then go on from there. So that was my recollection of Ed, usually on the campaign trail, if you will, and that was very difficult in those days because everything was, he campaigned alone, that was always unique, just he and Jane. And today you think of the governor or, well he wasn't governor then, probably being with a handler, if you will, advance PR people or things of that nature, a whole phalanx of handlers, media people, things of that nature. And in those days that didn't exist. He and Jane campaigned, and they would arrive in a town, they would meet generally a Democratic constituent, if you will, who would then take them through the various establishments where they would walk up and down the main street, be introduced and shake hands and take any questions. It was a very informal Democratic basis. And then at night they would appear at a rally or, usually with a dinner, and if you were going to Lubec you never had to worry what you were getting, you always knew it would be something with clams. And I often wondered if Lubecers ever ate anything other than clams, but you never had the, they always say the rubber chicken, well in eastern Maine it was always clams if I recall, and usually put on by a group of people in a church supper setting and then the conversations after that, and that would be it. So, that was campaigning under those circumstances.

AL: Your brother mentioned having met Mr. Hammer. Do you have any recollections about him?

DM: The two brothers, there was Armand and Victor, and they have a rather checkered career. They escaped, they're interesting individuals, they left the Soviet Union, I'm not sure, it's either during the Bolshevik Revolution in '17, or sometime during the twenties, and apparently they

were able to come out with some means, which takes a great deal of planning, if you will, given the nature of the Russians, if you will, and particularly the state controlled apparatus going in or going out of the country, you simply didn't do it in those days. But they were able to come out with, to establish themselves, and they became principals in Occidental Petroleum, Occidental P, which is still traded on the big board. And then they also ran the Hammer galleries in New York, and the Hammer galleries were basically art and antiques, I believe, and that was on Park Avenue. I never have been there; my mother has been there, had been there, but I never had. And then the first we knew of the Hammers was the fact they had purchased the Roosevelt Campobello Park after the war. They then removed a good deal of the furniture from there and took it to the Hammer galleries where it was sold, naturally sold as FDR's this or FDR's that.

A good deal was retained in the home, and of course as the park expanded and other buildings were taken into consideration, then the furniture from those other buildings could be moved in, which was in keeping with the park. Because the furniture, that was very camp style, it was never very gracious. Again, Eleanor was not a social animal. FDR was, of course, but Eleanor purposely was not and they always said she ran a very frugal White House and whenever anybody came there, a visiting state person, they always would complain about the food, which was very poor. Now, of course, the White House is known for its cuisine, but not with Eleanor. It was always run very frugally, and there was always the thought that this was one way of getting back at FDR. Whether this is true or not, I don't know, but it was always a statement. So the house, as I say, was done in camp style, it was never gracious, it was, even though he was the president of the country. As my brother has told you, of course I'm sure, of the Hammers selling the shingles.

AL: Yes, yeah.

DM: Yes, you've heard that tale so I won't repeat that, but that gives you an idea of the Hammers who at this point traveled in a Lear jet to Lubec and were in corporate America suddenly a force to be reckoned with, if you will, CEOs of Occidental Petroleum, no mean feat, millionaires in their own right, and yet stopping whatever they were doing to sell a shingle. So that's, it kind of illuminates, if you will, the personalities of that group. They were interested, we used to see them, they would fly in on any occasion, I'd not say any occasion, and they had a Lear jet, they would land at Eastport and then come over to the park, and they of course would always sit on the podium and bask, if you will, in the reflected glory of whomever might be there. And of course always making a point, I'm sure, of whatever they were doing, of getting at least an ear full or being able to talk to a representative or congressman concerning problems they might have in their business dealings. And I'm sure that's; so they were able to use leverage, if you will, at Campobello very, very well. They were very smooth. I never knew them, was never, I might have been introduced to them once or twice, I can't recall, and I can't even recall what they looked like except they were very, I would say at this point, nondescript but always in the background and always talking, and you always had the feeling they were making business at this point. Whether they were or not, but you always had that feeling. So this was the Hammers.

AL: Anything else you'd like to add?

DM: I could sing my Goddamned Republicans, but I think my brother has done that. And of

course, as I say, if somebody should use that, as he said, we do get the royalties of that song, of course. And I did sing that at a Democratic meeting a while ago, and everybody was astonished that you could recall those words and lyrics, if you will, from Wendell Willkie's campaign.

So that's about my only feeling, if you will. I would, if this goes, I would like to see some of this. Not necessarily what I said, but what other people said particularly regarding the state, the feeling, the structure of the state. Interested in history, of course, and naturally what the other perceptions of my recollections and somebody else's, and that I think would be very interesting just to hear that oral history. It's very interesting.

AL: Thank you very much.

DM: You're entirely welcome, thank you.

End of Interview