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McPherson, Anna oral history interview

Mike Richard

Interview with Anna McPherson by Mike Richard

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
McPherson, Anne

Interviewer
Richard, Mike

Date
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Place
Wiscasset, Maine

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Biographical Note

Anna O. (Blodgett) McPherson was born May 5, 1915 in Brandon, Vermont where she grew up. Her father was a machine designer. Her parents were not politically active. She went to Boston to attend Forsythe Dental School to be a dental technician. During WWII, she worked in W.H. Nichols defense plant and tested supercharger pumps for airplanes. When the war was over, she attended classes at American University in Washington, DC. She and her husband moved to Augusta, Maine in 1946. In 1980 she went to San Miguel in Mexico to attend art school. She worked for the IRS part time, and for the legislative offices at the State House, as a secretary for Dana Childs, and later as an executive secretary for Ed Schlick.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Brandon, Vermont; Ed Schlick; working in Dana Child's office; working in Emilien Levesque's office; Louis Jalbert; Peter Kyros, Sr.; Tom Delahanty; Dick McMahon; Marjorie Hutchinson; Muskie's temper; Jefferson-Jackson Dinner; Ken Curtis; and perceptions of Ed Muskie.

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Transcript

Mike Richard: The date is August 4th, 1999, and I'm here at the Sheepscot School in Wiscasset with Anna McPherson, interviewing is Mike Richard. And Mrs. McPherson, could you please state your full name and spell it?

Anna McPherson: Anna O. McPherson, my maiden name was Blodgett, A-N-N-A, O-L-E-T-I-A, maiden name Blodgett, B-L-O-D-G-E-T-T, married name M-C-P-H-E-R-S-O-N.

MR: And when was your date of birth?

AM: Five-five-fifteen.

MR: And where were you born?

AM: In Brandon, Vermont.

MR: And for how long did you live in Brandon?

AM: I lived there for eighteen years; I lived there until I graduated from high school. Then worked one year, and then went to Boston to go to dental school.

MR: Okay, I guess we'll talk a little bit about your family background. How many siblings did you have?

AM: My sister is fifteen years younger than me. There's the two of us, she's fifteen years younger than me.

MR: And what's her name?

AM: Patricia Blodgett Lettel.

MR: And what has she done for a living?

AM: She didn't do, didn't work too much at all until she married and moved to California. And there, she worked on in companies that made parts for nuclear, for the nuclear industry. And another job she had in California was for a company that made, oh, estrogen, that sort of, drug products. Not drugs drugs, but medicinal drugs. She's just moved back to this state. And she lived in Vermont, too, but she's just moved back to Maine; bought a house and moved back here

after twenty-five years in California.

MR: And what were your parents' names?

AM: My father's name was Vern Clifton Blodgett. My mother's name was Mildred Rosalind Washburn Blodgett.

MR: And what were their occupations?

AM: I don't think my mother ever did anything. She did a little babysitting for friends and got paid for it. But my father was a machine designer. And he worked for a company that, a toy factory, and if they, if someone designed a new, a toy, then he came up with the machine to tool this toy. And then sometimes they'd send him, they had a couple of branch factories, and sometimes they would send him to set up the factory. So basically I guess he was a machine designer. He did lots of other things, too, jack of all trades, but basically he was a machine designer.

MR: And what were your parents' political beliefs?

AM: Being in Vermont, they probably were Republicans, but I really don't know. I left Vermont when I was eight-, about nineteen because I worked a year after I got out of high school. And I only went back for a couple weeks at a time after that; I never lived consistently with my parents. And I don't think we were a political family at all. I think politics entered my mind, entered my life, after I moved here to Maine. When I was in Massachusetts I had nothing to do with politics, and I lived in Washington, D.C. for a while and had nothing to do with politics. I did not have any interest in politics until I moved here to Maine.

And the way that I became interested was that I was working at Internal Revenue as a temporary, and a girl that I worked with, Joan Williams [Arnold], what's her name now, she married, it'll come to me what her name is, but she was in the governor's office. We had worked together in Internal Revenue, she worked in the governor's office on a permanent basis. And when they needed someone to do that, work for the survey of state government, she, it was cost management survey. And she suggested me, and they called me in and that's when I was hired. And that was my first relations with the state work or with politics at all. That was in '55, but before that I had not been politically inclined at all.

MR: What were your parents' religious beliefs?

AM: Episcopalian. My father wanted to join the Episcopal Church when he was a little boy. And his parents were Methodists and did not want him to join the Episcopal Church, and he didn't. But then when I was, oh, probably five, six or seven years old, he didn't. I wasn't encouraged to go to Sunday school or to go to church. Because of that experience that he had had, he felt that I should be able to choose what church I wanted to go to when I was old enough to choose. And I also chose the Episcopal Church. And my godparents were Episcopalians and through them I went to church. My father was a religious man in his own way, but he did not go to church, and I never knew of my mother going to church.

MR: And how do you say that your parents' attitudes and beliefs affected you in general while you were growing up in Vermont?

AM: Just that, my mother was not that fond of children, and I was included in that. She was, I was never abused, she never; but I lived with my grandparents more than I lived with my mother and father. But I feel that my father was a very good influence on me because we, my mother wasn't a bad influence on me, she just was more interested in riding horseback and that sort of thing than she was taking care of me. And so my grandmother took care of me a lot. But my father was very, very strict and he was very democratic and cosmopolitan and just brought me up with a sense of fairness. And, that, well I guess it's sort of trite, but to say that all men are created equal.

He, I remember one day I was making fun of someone, we were, my father and I were going fishing. And we were driving up this back road, mountain road, to where we were going fishing, and there was a woman walking along the street that I didn't consider was my equal. And he waved to her and spo-, and stopped and gave her a ride home. Well, when she got out I said in this nasty voice, "Who's your friend?" And my father stopped the car and he said, "Get out." And so I got out and he went on up fishing, and I walked back home. I wasn't more than a mile from home, and so I walked back home. And when he got home he gave me a very severe lecture on the fact that I was no better than the woman that I had made fun of. So it was those sort of things that he did for me that, well, sort of influenced my life, that I wasn't supposed to make fun of other people.

MR: And what was the Bradford community like when you were growing up?

AM: It's Brandon.

MR: Oh, Brandon, I'm sorry.

AM: Brandon, and well, it was like any little country town. You, if you were driving down the street and you saw somebody you knew and wanted to talk to, you stopped your car and got out. And you didn't bother to park it at the curb, you just left it in the street and got out and went on the sidewalk and talked with somebody. Other cars went out around you. It was a very, very respectable, nice little town. It's a very pretty town now, too. I go back, I'm going back next month for, only for a few days, but I'm going up.

My mother and father are both buried in Vermont. My mother died two years ago and we took her remains back to Vermont. And I have not had, there's, there was a headstone for, a big headstone, for my grandparents on one side and my parents on the other side, and I've never had the headstone for my mother engraved. And I tried to do it through the mail and over the telephone and it became so confused that I just figured, well, I'll go up and see it being done. Because the man got confused, thought I wanted to buy a new headstone, and so I'm going back to Vermont.

But, and it's, it's not, it's still the same. It's beautiful, Brandon is a beautiful town. I was

actually, I actually lived in Forestdale, which is a little part of Brandon, the town of Brandon but the Forestdale's a little section. And it's beautiful with wide streets and beautiful trees. And, between the sidewalk and the road is probably, oh, fifty or a hundred feet with beautiful trees and landscaping and green grass, and it's just a beautiful town.

MR: And what was the social position of your family in the town?

AM: Social? Well, I don't think there was any social class in the town. There was a few people that had a little more money, but there wasn't any social distinction. They may have had more money but they didn't, you wouldn't know it to associate with them. It was just one big town and everybody knew everybody in our little section. I don't really know much about Brandon, what Brandon was like, but Forestdale was one big family practically.

MR: And you went through public education there through high school?

AM: I went to my first seven, first seven grades I went to Forestdale, and . . .

(*Interrupted by visitor.*)

MR: . . . were talking about your experience in school.

AM: Oh, the school, okay. I went, the first seven years I went to school in, public school in Forestdale. Then because a teacher decided she didn't like me, my father paid my tuition and I went to Brandon for my eighth grade. And then I went to Brandon High School for the four years. And I worked in a mental hospital for summers. And, the one year that I didn't, before I went away to school, and then I went to Boston, I went to Forsythe Dental School. And then, from there I went to; there's quite a bit of time elapses between these things; and I went to Washington, D.C. to live for a couple of years and I attended American University not as a regular student. My husband was going as a regular student and I just took courses. And because I worked in the office of the president of the university, I could take the courses without paying any tuition, so I just took advantage of it and took various courses.

And, well then, we're still talking about school, right? Then I went to San Miguel in Mexico and I went to art school at two different art schools there and, one the American school and one the Mexican school. The Mexican school is subsidized by the government, it's a cultural center where they have, oh, like the Bos-, the Philadelphia Philharmonic came to, came there and put on a concert and you don't have to pay anything to go. And then from Mexico, I just came back and I guess probably the next association with school is here.

MR: And what were some of your interests through the high school period?

AM: I guess just to get through high school. My interests, well I always belonged to like the 4-H clubs and Campfire Girls and my grandmother was a great one for teaching me to sew and to cook and I've always liked horses a great deal. I never rode an awful lot, but I took a lot of care of them. And, I don't know, I can't remember having any particular interest of what I would want to major in. For instance, at one point I thought I wanted to be a doctor, but then I got very

ill and lost a couple of years and it cost a lot of money and so becoming a doctor. And then I also realized that I was not good at chemistry and so I could not make it as a doctor. So I settled for being the dental technician.

MR: And actually, just to pick up one thing, what were your grandparents' names?

AM: My grandfather's name was Charles Washburn. My grandmother's name was Ella Washburn, her name was Ella Tyler Washman, Washburn. I can't talk, which is unusual for me.

MR: And when did you graduate from Forsythe Dental School?

AM: About 1940, something like that.

MR: And then you said you went to Washington for a couple of years, and worked in a defense plant?

AM: Well, for a while I worked in the defense plant. Maybe I should have sort of put these things in chronological order when I was thinking about coming down here. I, during the war, during 1945, I worked in a defense plant and tested supercharger pumps for airplanes. And that, after the war was over was when it was, when I went to Washington, in 1944, '45 when my hus-, my husband was badly wounded at Anzio and when he came back to this country, he was at the hospital in Framingham for a while, Cushing Hospital. And then we, when he was able to, he went down to American University on the Bill of Rights - on the Bill of Rights, on the G.I. Bill . . . . G.I. Bill, yeah. And then, that was when I went to American University, too. And then we came back to Maine in '46. Not back to Maine because he had lived in Waltham, Mass. and that's where I lived for a while when I was going to school in, at Forsythe, and then while I worked at W.H. Nichols, the defense plant. And then we, when he was able to we went to Washington. And then we came, we went, we stayed in Bos-, went back to Boston for six months from Washington. Then we went to Manchester, New Hampshire for six months, then we came to Maine.

MR: And your art school experience in Mexico, did that fit in in that period?

AM: That was while I, no, that's since, let's see. I was in New Mexico around 1980 and went to the two art schools, just hiked around Mexico.

MR: Do you speak Spanish?

AM: No, no, I made out fairly well in the markets, though. And I imagine I got gypped quite often. But we lived on fifty dollars a month, our rent plus fifty dollars a month. Groceries were, food was very inexpensive.

MR: And did you ever have the opportunity to use your skills that you learned from dental school from Forsythe?

AM: I worked one year and my husband didn't like it. I started working for a young dentist who

was just out of dental school and he was very, you know, just very gung ho to build up a practice. And he just got the idea that I should be in the office day and night. And so my husband didn't like it, and I thought of taking the civil service exam but I never did. And so I only used the dental experience one year.

MR: Now where did you meet your husband?

AM: I met him at Sears Roebuck. And, I was going to dental school and I was working in Sears, in the Waltham Sears store. And I was only working weekends and I came in Friday night, into the store Friday night. And I went through the store and this tall handsome, well-dressed gentleman came up to me and said, "May I help you?" And I said, "No thank you." And I walked up through to the office. And the girl in the office said, "Before you settle down to do any work, would you mind going to the post office and getting some stamps?" So I went back down through and the same gentleman said, "May I help you?" And I said, "No thank you." So then I came back from getting my stamps and I walked through the door and he said, "May I help you?" And I said, "No thank you," and I went up in the office. And then he came up in the office for some reason and saw me up there.

And then a couple of weeks later he asked me if I wanted to go, you won't believe this, shooting rats. So we went. There was a piggery and all the garbage from all through the city was taken here and put in trucks. And then they'd swill the pigs, and you opened the door and the rats just going. You have a .22 and you're ping-ping-ping-ping-ping-ping-ping.

MR: That's a different first date, I think.

AM: Yes, it was very different. So, we were married for about, let's see, from '45 to '63. And then we got a divorce and, he got a divorce and, so now I'm on my own.

MR: Okay, and when you went back to Maine, which town did you first return to?

AM: When I came, when I came, when I moved to Maine?

MR: …Or in '46. Right.

AM: Okay, to Augusta. He was stationed at, my husband was stationed at Togus, the VA Center. He was a, he had trained to be a service officer, which is comparable to being an attorney but you work just with veterans. He, like he didn't go to law school, but this special course that he took trained him to handle claims for veterans, and help them get their just rights like compensation or a pension or the things that they were entitled to because of their service. And then if they had a problem that, it was Disabled American Veterans that he worked for, you may have heard of it.

MR: Yeah, I've heard of the organization.

AM: And, what did you ask me?

MR: Oh, I, yeah, I just asked you where you moved to.

AM: Where I met him? I met him at Sears Roebuck and we moved to Maine together in '46, we lived out in north Augusta.

MR: And how long did you live in Augusta, or north Augusta?

AM: Well, only a, only a few months because the house didn't have any water. It was a very cute little house, and it didn't have any water. The people who owned it had, were on a tour of duty in Germany and they wanted to rent it, and we found out. What we had in mind, the rent was very, very low, and so we had it in mind that in the spring we'd move there and put up with the fact that it had no running water. And we would, there was a well outside, and we just decided we'd put up with it having no running water until spring. And then we would have a bathroom put in at our own expense because, because the rent was so low we could afford to. Then in the spring we found that it was not going to be that inexpensive, that it was all sandy soil and it would have been quite a job to put in a bathroom and to drill a well. That, and, and we wrote and asked them if they would sell us the house and they said they wouldn't.

And my husband's boss from the head of the organization was in Cincinnati, Ohio, and he wrote and said that he was making his voyage to Maine. He came to Maine every ten years and this was his year he was coming and he would like to stop off and spend a few days with us. Well, you couldn't imagine asking this man to live in a house that had no bathroom and no running water, so we immediately started looking for a house. We found a very nice house over in Readfield on a pond, beautiful house. And, but Mr. Kemp died very suddenly and never did make his trip to Maine. But we lived, and we lived in Readfield, I can't, we lived in this Readfield house a long time. Then we moved out to Sydney in a very nice house out in Sydney. Then we moved down to south Gardiner, then we got a divorce when we were living in south Gardiner. Then we, I moved to Richmond, and then after that bought the house in Dresden. So I've lived in north Augusta, Readfield, Sydney, south Gardiner, Richmond and Dresden since I've been in Maine.

MR: And, well this may-, is a pretty broad question I guess, but what have, what have some of the similarities and differences been living in all those communities? Just the atmosphere of the community, or the . . .?

AM: They're, I've been, oh, in north Augusta we were accepted. It was the last house on a dead end road and quite remote, and there were probably four or five houses. And we were accepted very readily and became very friendly with two of the families on the road, and the others were too far away to become friendly with. Then in Readfield, the house we rented in Readfield was owned by the Dumaines (sp) who were very, very wealthy important people in Manchester, New Hampshire. Mr. Dumaine owned the mills there, the big mills, and he lived in Weston, Mass. But in, so we were friendly with the son and his wife. And my husband working at Togus, our friends were mostly people who were at Togus.

And then we moved out to Sydney and the little towns around are all pretty much the same. And we just had a small group of friends in each town. Got together for breakfast once in a while,

usually on Sunday morning, and a lobster cook out once in a while in the back yard. And one summer when we lived in Sydney, we, for the fire department, we hosted a big lobster cook out and gave the money to the fire department. And then in south Gardiner, it's pretty much the same situation. You're, you meet a few people and we pretty much, as I said, were friends with people at Togus. And then I don't know that we formed that many friendships because we did a lot of hunting and fishing and went places like Jackman into one of the camps and I guess we pretty much lived our own lives without mingling a great deal with other people.

And now in Dresden, I do have a big circle of friends and basically because of taking care of children, and all their, their great parents, great kids and great parents, and so I have a big circle of friends. When I was, on my eightieth birthday, they had a party for me; there must have been two hundred people there. They had it down at the Masonic Hall and there must have been two hundred people there. And they, I had started working here, so a lot of the parents and the children from here came. All the parents from around Dresden, and then, if they knew of the person, people who planned the party, if they knew of somebody that I had known in another town, they invited them, so there was about two hundred people. And they gave me a huge picnic table and they had Anne Dotson come and sing. And they had, and then they came the next day and shingled my barn roof as a birthday present. So it was a pretty neat birthday. And they've promised me another one comparable to it on my eighty-fifth birthday.

MR: Oh, neat. And, so you mentioned you were working in the IRS for a while before you worked with Governor Muskie?

AM: I worked at Togus, I worked at the three agencies. I worked at Togus because my husband became very friendly with the manager at Togus. And whenever there was somebody out on pregnancy leave or was on vacation or something, I just filled in. And Mr. Stoddard would just give me a call or he would tell the department head to call me; and I just worked short times, short periods of time. And then for the filing period, they hire extra help at Internal Revenue, and I worked I think two filing periods. You go in, I think you go in about the first of the year and you work probably through June, when they're getting all the returns in, you know. This was in Augusta at the… And then I worked-. I worked, in the State House I worked in several legislative offices in addition to working for, in the governor's office. I worked in the legislative research with Sam Slosberg, and I also was secretary to Dana Childs when he was, when he was minority leader. I think, you know, we were in the minority at that time; when he was minority leader I worked as Dana's secretary. And then, I think those were the only two jobs I had with the. -. By the time that Dana became a speaker, I was then working with Ed Schlick as, he was executive secretary and I was his secretary of the Maine Democratic Party.

MR: And so how did you become involved in the Democratic Party, or what, what made you decide to choose the Democratic Party versus the Republican Party?

AM: Well, just, the first choice was because Joan Williams had recommended me to do, to work on that survey and Muskie was a Democrat and, but he didn't. This is another kind of story that I think is kind of cute. When I was working on that survey, I worked in the office of the clerk of the house. It was an off session and so I worked in the office of the clerk of the house, and on my own. They would be out interviewing people or doing something in the various departments.

And so I would be there in the office just doing the secretarial work, typing up their reports and things. And so Harvey Pease, whom you've probably never even heard of, but Harvey Pease was clerk of the house for years and years and years and years, and he was sure that there was not going to be any more legislature when he couldn't be there any more. But I needed a job when, after I was, got a divorce, I needed a job badly and so I went in. While I was working there, Mr. Pease would come in and he would say, "I like you. I like the way you work. You don't have to have somebody standing over you all the time. If you're ever looking for a job, you come and see me."

So I was looking for a job, and I went in and I applied. And he said, "Well, I haven't got my staff lined up yet. You come back in a couple of weeks and see me." Well, I went back a couple of weeks, same thing, "You come back." So it was getting to the point where all the legislative people were hired, the extra people that they hire were, the jobs were all being taken up. So I said to him, "You know, really, I can't keep doing this. I really need a job and I can't keep doing this. Are you going to hire me or aren't you?" And he said, "You're a Democrat." And I said, "Yes, I am a Democrat." And when I went to work in Governor Muskie's office, he didn't ask me if I was a Democrat or a Republican, he asked me if I could type and then walked out. So, I just fell into being a Democrat; I didn't make a conscious decision to become a Democrat. And then, after that legislature was over, when I had worked for, in the legislative research office and then in Dana's office. Then Ed Schlick became the executive secretary of the party and I had met him. He was then a reporter for the *Lewiston Sun-Journal*, and I had met him and he asked me if I would work as his secretary for the party. So I drove from south Gardiner to Lewiston for five years, every day.

MR: Oh, wow, must have been, what, forty-five minute commute?

AM: Yeah, just about. I tried various ways to get there with the-. And it wasn't that bad though because I could just think what I was going to do that day, you know, and so it really wasn't that bad. But then we moved the, where did the party head-? I'm trying to think. Oh, it was, the party head- they were in Frank Coffin's office on Main Street, 465 Main Street in Frank Coffin's office, and then we moved down onto Lisbon Street. And one day I was on my noon hour and I was walking down the street, and this tall, good looking man stopped me and said, "Can you tell me where the Democratic headquarters is?" And I said, "Sure." So I told him where it was and then I went about my business, did my errands and then went back. And I walked in and Muskie said, "I didn't recognize you on the street." It was Muskie who had stopped me and asked me where the Democratic headquarters were. And then when I got back to the off-, when I got, seeing me in the context of the office he recognized me, but on the street he didn't recognize me, after all the years I had worked for him.

MR: And you worked with, as Ed Schlick's secretary from the mid '60s or so and for a few years, is that right, or . . .?

AM: Yeah, probably from about '62, and we probably ran the headquarters for five years, something like that. And then when he got through with the headquarters, oh, I know what happened. We, Ed and I started a business, public relations business, and we had that for about fifteen years. You're going to think I'm about a hundred and five years old with all the different

things I've done.

MR: Hey, I've got a busy life. So what was your time like as a secretary to Ed Schlick, working with the Democratic Party?

AM: Ed Schlick? Well, that was great fun. We instigated the Five Hundred Club, I don't know if they still have that or not, but we started the Five Hundred Club and there was a lot of organizing and soliciting for memberships, and then we always arranged things like the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner.

And then the year that the Democrats took over the governorship and the two houses, we moved, we hired an office near the State House and we just were sort of liaison, lobbyists or something like that, for the party. We wrote speeches for the different legislators and did some research for them. And, they didn't have as many committees then to do things for the legislators, and so Ed and I did work for them.

And we also, this didn't have anything to do with the Democratic Party, but we were stringers for UPS, UPI. And I covered the house and Ed covered the senate. And then we went up on the fourth floor and sent the news and, the latest news over the wire and the latest legislative news over the wire.

I can remember the day that Kennedy was shot. We were getting ready for our Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner and we were busily making signs and all the things that you have to do to get ready for a dinner and the phone rang. And it was Bill Hathaway's secretary and she said, "John Kennedy's just been shot." And I said, "Oh come on, Colleen, I don't have time for jokes, what is it?" And she said, "No, it's not a joke. Kennedy's been shot." And we just, everybody just fell apart at that point. I often think of where I was and what I was doing at the time he was shot.

MR: What was Ed Schlick like to work with, and as a person?

AM: He's not very good at giving orders, you know, telling you what to do. You sort of have to work on your own initiative. And I can remember, he has quite a temper, he doesn't get angry very often, but if he does it's sort of like Muskie. Muskie had a bit of a temper, too. But Ed was easy to work with. We worked day and night it seemed for the party. And I remember one day somebody resigned. We had all these lists of the county chairmen, and the town chairmen, the county chairmen, the state committee, and all these lists that we had to keep up to date. And so, and we sent out newsletters and mailings to them. And we had a beaten up old address machine with the metal plates that, when you cut the plate it clanged, and you could hear it all over Lewiston. And there was this gentleman by the name of Butram Brooks who, I think he resigned or maybe he died, but for some reason or other we had to eliminate him from all the lists. And it seemed as if he was in on everything, and so we had to eliminate him from all the lists. And one day, he got out some sort of a publication and when he proofread it, there was Butram Brooks' name. And he said, "Can't we ever get rid of this goddamn Butram Brooks?" And he tossed the paper and he had to do it over again, take Butram Brooks' name out of it. And before the days of computers it wasn't as easy to correct something; if you made a mistake it wasn't as easy to correct it as it is now. But we worked well together and just. And then as I say we started a

business and left the party, and left, and started a public relations business. I guess that's all I can say about how, I still have an association with Ed, as Don probably told you that too, so.

MR: And who were some of the other people that you worked with regularly while you were in the office of the Democratic Party?

AM: Severin Beliveau, Jack O'Brien, Jadine O'Brien, Dana Childs and Jean [Childs], and Emilien Levesque. I was Emilien Levesque's secretary for a while. And, it's hard to remember who was around at that time. Oh, Brooks Brown, he, Brooks was a Republican but we, back then in the legislature, there were Democrats and Republicans when the session, when the legislature was in session. When a session was over, they were not, they were not Democrats or Republicans, we all palled around together. There was Kurt Payson and Brooks Brown and Pete Danborn, and Dave Benson. And, I'm trying to go down through and think, oh, Dick Broderick from, at the time that I was there for, there was the executive council, that was before they abolished the executive council. And, oh, Bob Haskell was president of the senate. I can't think of the different ones that-.

MR: That's okay. Of that list, who were the people that you really worked, or got the closest to working with over the years?

AM: Oh, well, Emilien Levesque; I was his secretary. And Dana, I was his secretary. The others I sort of just knew on a social basis for after hours. It was a lot of us that palled around together, and I just can't remember the names.

MR: What was it like to work in Dana's office, Dana Childs' office?

AM: You had to be able to concentrate pretty much, and you had to be able to find your way through the smoke. It was just sort of a little, it was when he was the minority lea-, floor leader, it wasn't when he was clerk of the house. And he just had a little cubicle of an office here, a long narrow office, and as I, and it was sort of, they didn't have the rooms that they do now for the, retiring rooms I guess they call them. They have one for the women and one for the men where they go, they don't go in the offices like they used to. But at that time, the only place that they got together was to chitchat and discuss the bills and that sort of thing, was in the Democratic offices. And we were not given a lot of space either; we were not very popular. And so they, there was always a lot of legislators sitting in there talking. And I just had to be able to concentrate in order to get my work done and make believe they weren't there so I could ignore them. And at that time they could smoke in the State House and so they, they would all come in there and sit and smoke. But as for working with Dana, you just, you just could not have a better person to work for than Dana. He wanted the work done, but he was very good about it. Did you ever know Dana?

MR: Oh, no, not Dana, no.

AM: He died just a couple months ago. He ran for governor. He and Bud Reed and Ken Curtis ran for governor at the same time, and Ken got the nomination. And Dana was, Dana and Jane and Ed and I were very friendly, and Jadine and Jack O'Brien. And we went, the night of the

election we went down to be with Dana and his group. And we called at the house first and his youngest son, Billy, was there. And we got, Ed went to the door, we both went to the door, and Billy came to the door. And we said, "Where is your dad?" And he said, "He's behind, that's where he is." And then we said, "No, no, where is he?" Well they'd gone to such and such a place to listen to the returns. And so the next day Dana said, "I don't understand why I didn't win. Everybody I see voted for me."

And then, Ken got the nomination and he became governor. I can't remember who the Republican was, Jim Irwin, maybe somebody like that. But, Bud Reed was very upset about the whole election. Ken had assured Dana and Bud that he would not. He was secretary of the state, and he had assured them that he would not start campaigning until the legislature was over so that they would all start on the same footing. But then Ken didn't; he started. I'm not sure he did it deliberately, he probably didn't do it deliberately, but in his position as secretary of the state he got a lot more exposure than Bud and Dana did, as president of the senate and secretary of the house, so, secretary of the senate and clerk of the house, and so Ken became the governor.

MR: Okay, actually I'm going to flip the tape right here.

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

AM: . . . back, won't you?

MR: Oh, yeah, well if you want to edit the transcript anyway, you can let us know. We'll be sending you a copy of the transcript and the tape.

AM: Okay, yeah, because there are so many 'ers' and 'ands' and 'buts' that . . .

MR: Oh, that's okay. I'm saying plenty of those myself. This is the second side of the tape of the interview with Anna McPherson on August 4th, 1999. And I'd like to ask you also about, we were talking about your time with Dana Childs in his office. And also I'd like to ask you about your time with Emilien Levesque, working for him as a secretary.

AM: It was pretty, it was the same office and it was pretty much the same situation, that the Democrats from the house, members of the house, had to, had no other place to go to discuss things and they would sit there. And you just had to, Emilien would find some time during, Emilien and Dana both, would find some time during the day when they could dictate any letters that they wanted written, and they could, or any research that they'd like me to do. There was times when the house was in session that they could come out of the house and it would be just the two of us in the office so that the serious things that needed to be done and, that they wanted me to actually do, they would talk to me about it when there was nobody else in the office. This is not very kind, but it was a joke really, because Emilien came from Madawaska and was, spoke broken English and Emilien was dictating a letter one day when Dana came in. And then after Emilien went out, Dana said, "What did he major in, broken English?" And, Dana had quite a, quite a, he never meant, he wouldn't have meant that to be an unkind remark, it was just a flip remark. There really wasn't an awful lot of work to it, it was letters to be written and memos to

be written to other legislators, and it was just an easy job.

MR: And was that kind of similar to your time in the legislative research office?

AM: No, that was work. That, sometimes we'd work until nine or ten o'clock at night because they have to, like if the, they have to write up all the bills in the legislative research office. And if the bill is changed in any way or another… Like in some instances you would use the dash and delete something out of a thing, and then you'd have to put in what replaced that that you had taken out and then everything had to be proofread and had to be taken to be printed. And that, in the legislative office you, from the time you went in, it was legislative research, and from the time you went in in the morning until your break at noon, or you had a break about ten o'clock, and except for breaks and your noon hour, you worked every single minute.

It was Sam Slosberg who was in charge of that office at the time I worked there. He wasn't a slave driver, it was just the work had to be done. And in order to get it done you had, there was four of us, and in order to get it done you just had to work every minute that you were there. And then there was one woman, Bernice, who was especially good at proofreading. And so one or the other of us, one of the other three of us, would proofread with Bernice. Everything had to be proofread very thoroughly before it went to be printed. They, it's, where they make up the bills that are passed out each day.

MR: And all during this time in the, I guess it was early '60s or mid-'60s, did you have much direct contact with the house and the senate or, were you on the floor of the house or the senate for any reasons?

AM: Well, not in, not in connection with the job for the party. But as I said before, we were stringers for UPI and so I sat in the legis-, in the house balcony and listened to all the proceedings. This is when I was, oh, when I was, no, while I worked for Dana and Emilien and Sam Slosberg. I did not have anything direct to do with the house and senate. This was when I was, Ed and I were working for the party. And, just for extra money, we worked for UPI and covered the… I took notes on all the bills and then reported it to the UPI, and he took bills on all the senate bills, he took notes on all the senate bills.

So, but to answer your question, we did not have any, or I did not have any real direct contact other than to write letters for any legislator that wanted a letter written. And they didn't do that much, as much as they do now. Now there are all these committees and they have committee clerks and so the clerks do a lot of that work for the legislators. There's still a separate secretary for the clerk and the speaker, but the rest of the legislators have committee clerks that they can turn to to write letters.

MR: And while you were working for UPI and you were in the house, do you remember witnessing any debates or any legislators that stood out, any stories from . . .?

AM: Not really. I don't remember that there was anything spectacular happened. It was sort of the mundane day to day process of the legislature. But I don't think that, if there was an important bill or something I don't, and there probably was some bills that were more important

than others. But a lot of them were like whether they pay twenty-five cents for every porcupine ear that was brought in, and abolishing the executive council; that was a big one every year until if finally got abolished.

MR: And did you get to know any of the legislators either personally or professionally through that, though, beyond your witnessing of the debates on the floor?

AM: Well, Kitty Carswell and I became very friendly. And, of course I met Severin at, during the legislative sessions. Severin was in the group that I went around in and we were friendly, but nothing outside of the legislature. And at that time I lived in a house at the end, at the dead end, a dead end road, the last house, and there was a lot of land that went with it. And we used to always have a big, couple of big parties. Set up a badminton net, you know, and have, in the barn we had a big table with a horse race game. Socially they used to come down to my house, oh, probably ten, fifteen would come down at a time and we'd have sort of cookouts and outings and things. But I, just anybody and everybody came that wanted to. It wasn't, it wasn't that I had any close friends other than Dana and Jean and Jack and Jay, Kitty and Charlie; I think were about the only ones that I became real friendly with. Dana and I stood up for Kitty and Charlie when they got married.

MR: And did you notice, I'm not sure if this was before the time you were in the House, but maybe Louis Jalbert?

AM: Oh, yes, Louis Jalbert, yes, yes. I, how could I have forgotten Louis. Oh, he was the bane of my existence. I remember they were going to ha-, he was a big chiseler. You've probably heard a lot about Louis Jalbert from other people that you've interviewed. Well, I remember one day Ed and I were at the Democratic headquarters and it was going to be the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. And Louis liked to be a big entrepreneur and that sort of thing. And so he wanted some free tickets to the Democratic, to the J-J dinner and, so that he could pass them out to his friends, you know, and be a big shot. And so he came into the Democratic headquarters and he was building up to it and building up to it. And he, I can see this in my mind's eye, he went over to the file cabinet and he put his elbow on the file cabinet and his head on his hand. And he was building up to asking for the tickets. And I said, "No Louis, I'm not going to give you any free tickets to the J-J dinner". And he, "Goddamn you, Ann McPherson, after all I've done for you?" I said, "That's right, Louis, after all you've done for me you're not getting any free tickets." He stormed out of the place. But he was quite a guy.

MR: Had he ever actually, well, had he ever actually done anything for you that you remember?

AM: No, no, no, he was, he was . . .

MR: That was his way, though.

AM: . . . he was a member of the, what is it, the Montague Club or something like that?

MR: Oh yeah, was it one of the snowshoe clubs?

AM: Yeah, he was involved in that and they had a club house out, you go up Sabattus Street and then you go take a left and you go out here, and they had a club out there. I think it translates to the Mountain Club doesn't it, or something like that?

MR: Oh yeah, the Montaigne Club, the Montagnard.

AM: Yeah, that's the one. So, they had a clubhouse out there and a swimming pool. And through Louis' membership Ed and I could go out there and eat our lunch and go for a swim, but that was about the only thing Louis ever did for me. But he was, he was really, he was really a great guy. I remember he was going up in the elevator one day and he said, they were talking about a certain bill, and Louis said, "I was talking to the attorney general and that bill is unconstitutional." He did not say that the attorney general said it was unconstitutional, he said he was talking to the attorney general, and that bill was unconstitutional. And, he had all these devious little ways of doing that, he never out and out said anything that wasn't true, I don't think, but he twisted the facts a lot.

And Ed always says that he told them stories so many times that he really got to believe it himself. He'd tell these tall tales of, he was always finding a lot of money that nobody knew about. And he'd study the different bills and figures and he was always coming up with some hidden money that nobody knew about that they could spend for something. Whether it was true or not, you know, whether it really proved out that there was that hidden money, I'll never know. But he was really a great guy. But you had to, you couldn't trust him as far as you could throw a dog by the tail.

MR: Well who were some of the, I guess some of the people who were involved in the early Democratic resurgence in the '50s that you got to know? I know, Frank Coffin you probably had some dealings with?

AM: Yes, I didn't know Frank the way I did Dana and Bud and Ken. I think those are probably the main ones that I ever got. Severin was a big wheel in the Democratic Party, and Ed Pert, you've probably interviewed Ed, haven't you?

MR: Yeah, I think, if he hasn't been already he will be, he's on the list.

AM: He should be.

MR: Dick McMahon, did you know him?

AM: Oh yeah, I knew Dick very well, yeah. Oh, Elsie Bowen, have you interviewed her?

MR: Oh yeah, yeah, she's been interviewed.

AM: She could really give you some good information on, because she worked in the office for a long, long, long time. I see Elsie every once in a while, she and I went to the, remember when they had the program, the memorial for him at Bates College, in Chase Hall?

MR: Oh that was just a couple years ago, yeah.

AM: Yeah, and Elsie and I went to that together.

MR: Did you get to know, I'm trying to think of a couple names, Paul Fullam?

AM: I didn't know Paul Fullam, I knew of him but I never met him. I knew that he ran for congress, didn't he?

MR: Yeah, yeah, I think congress or senate.

AM: I'm pretty certain it was congress. I wish I could, oh, Peter Kyros, I knew him very well.

MR: Was that junior or senior?

AM: Senior, well I knew junior too because he was working with his father a lot. And he was still in, oh, I'm going to say even in high school at the time that his father was, his father was executive secretary of the party for a while.

MR: So what was he like, did you get to know him . . .?

AM: Peter Kyros [Sr.]?

MR: Yeah.

AM: He was big bag of wind. I remember he came in the office one day and he said, he was smoking a pipe, and he's very dramatic, and he was telling us about something and he just would stride from the desk to the file cabinet and back and forth smoking his pipe. And he said, "I have never been a meek man. I have always been a strong man." And he'd take a puff on his pipe and let the smoke encircle his head. And he was endowed with his own importance, self-importance, but I guess he did a good job in congress. I don't know where he is now.

MR: I think, I'm not sure, I think he might have passed away actually, last.

AM: Oh, really?

MR: I think so, I'm not sure.

AM: Tom Delahanty I knew. Maybe I should have had some sort of an inkling of what, prepared myself a little bit better for this.

MR: What was Tom Delahanty like?

AM: Very, very gentlemanly, nice, very, nice sense of humor, very, very educated, not suave but, and not really sophisticated, but just very genteel and a great person, with a good sense of humor. Carl Cianchette was another one that was a member of the executive council. Dick

Broderick was another one that I got friendly, that we were friendly with.

MR: And we mentioned, you said you knew Dick McMahon a little bit? What was he like?

AM: He was another one that was, had a great sense of humor and smart as anything. He could, you know, he could project what the vote was going to be. And, like, on an election night, early in the evening, he could start to, when certain figures came in from certain areas of the state, and he could project pretty much what the outcome was going to be by even the earliest returns. And he was really a big help to Muskie. He was, he was, oh, Bob Hewes was another one that worked in Muskie's office; he was an assistant. Floyd Nute. One day Bob Hewes, no, Maurice, Maury Williams, you must have heard of Maury Williams. And Maury was, opened the door to the governor's office just as an ashtray came hurling through the air. I don't know why the ashtray was hurling through the air, but it was. Something went wrong and the ashtray came hurl-, no. But Maury went there. Maury was financial advisor. And, I'm trying to, the names come to me as we go along, but I don't . . .

(*Visitor interruption.*)

MR: So how about John Donovan, did you get to know him at all?

AM: Didn't we just talk about John Donovan?

MR: Oh, no, actually we were talking about Maury Williams.

AM: Yeah, but then earlier I said, I mentioned the name John Donovan, and he was in congress. Yes, I did know him. Not, you know, on a basis so that I went to his house or he went to my house or anything, but I did know him. And felt bad when they announced that he had dropped dead while he was shaving. He was supposed to give a speech that noon and he just. And the same thing happened with Maury, he was; well Maury wasn't supposed to give a speech, but he was going to go to work and he was standing in front of the mirror and just slumped down and was gone.

MR: And what about Floyd Harding, did you meet him?

AM: Yes, he was on the exec-, he was on the state committee, I knew him. He didn't want us to have an IBM electric typewriter. And Jay O'Brien said, "Well they have to have." And he wanted us to buy some other kind of a typewriter for the Democratic headquarters, something that was cheaper. And Jay went to bat because it was a, the Cadillac of all typewriters.

But, and also they put a motion before the, I think this was Floyd Harding that said this. And there was another one, Elmer Violette, and, but anyway they put a motion before the state committee to give me a raise. I was getting something like sixty dollars a week and Ed put in for me to get a hundred dollars a week. And I think, it was either Elmer Violette or, it doesn't seem quite right, but at any rate one member of the executive council stood up and said, "No woman is worth a hundred dollars a week." And so that turned the eight members of, the sixteen women, see there'd be, there was somebody from each county. So that would be sixteen women and

sixteen men on the state committee. Every one of the women just rose up in support of me getting a hundred dollars a week. And so they raised my salary to a hundred dollars a week. This is back in '63 or '64, something like that. But it was either Floyd or Elmer Violette or somebody else that was on the executive committee that said, "No woman is worth a hundred dollars a week."

MR: Did you encounter a lot of things like that, a lot of prejudice or?

AM: No, no, not really. No, and if you did, there was an equal amount of women on the thing and they would overpower the men. If some one man came, rose up and made some sort of remark like that, the women would just mow him right down.

MR: And what about Armand Duquette, did you know him?

AM: I know the name. Cote', what was Cote's name. That big fat guy?

MR: Oh, Al Cote'?

AM: Al Cote', yeah. He went, Al Cote and Ed and I went to the, to a snowshoe convention in Sherbrooke. And Al weighed well over three hundred pounds, and it was Ed's car and he really broke the seat of Ed's car on that trip up to Sherbrooke. When we started out there was the worst snowstorm of the year, but we went just the same, and Al really did a job on the car. Who did you ask me if I knew? Armand Duquette? Yeah, I can't remember what, do you know what he, if he was a legislator, or . . .?

MR: Yeah, he was a legislator, but I'm not even sure, I'm pretty sure he was in the house. He might have also been in the senate later.

AM: I doubt if he ever got in the senate. I did know him but I can't picture his face, or I can't, I know the name, but I can't picture his face or what he was, I imagine he was in the house.

MR: How about someone else in the house, Roger Snow?

AM: He was a Republican, big, a big time Republican.

MR: Yeah, and I think he changed to Democrat for a period of time, for much of the time he was in the house.

AM: I think he did change. Yeah, I think he did. Dick Berry was also a Republican but somebody that was very, you know, didn't look down on the Democrats, and we were very friendly with Dick. He was a Republican.

MR: Well I guess we'll talk about your time in the office of Muskie when he was governor. And you said you were first introduced I've forgotten, who you were first introduced to the job as the time?

AM: Pardon?

MR: Who first introduced you to the job in the governor's office?

AM: Oh, Joan Williams [Arnold] was the one, I had, yeah, I had worked with Joan Williams. I can't think what her married name is, she married a boy whose parents owned a hardware store in Waterville. And she was very, she and her husband were very friendly with Muskie and Ja-, with Jane and the governor.

Well, what I did was not one of the top jobs in the governor's office. My daily work was to answer letters from people who wanted to know what the governor's favorite dish was and how he liked to have lobsters cooked, and what his viewpoint was about the American flag and what his viewpoint was on the death penalty, and where he liked to go on vacations and. So that was the sort of thing that I did for him; just answer these, those kind of letters. And I, there was more or less a form letter; we had all these things. And also they'd ask about life in the Blaine House. And I had form letters that I used as a basis, but just sort of personalized them a little bit and changed them around a little bit, but the content had to stick to the form letter. But, so it didn't look like a form letter I was supposed to put in some little personal touches. And they'd want to know, maybe somebody would write in and want to know what, even what his favorite color was or something. And then what it was like at the Blaine House, and.

But then when there was serious typing to be done, we all had to turn to it. Like if he was going to make a speech, we all had to turn to and help. I remember one night he was going to make a speech, and Mary Dearborn was working in the office too. She was a Republican and had worked for Paine and several Republican governors. So she and we're sitting in our office typing just as fast as we could type. He would write out something and Marge Hutchinson, his personal secretary, would bring it out to Marianne and me and we would type it up. And then, there was only one copy machine in the whole state complex, and it was a wet copier; in addition to the fact that there was just one copier, it was a wet copier. And so I would take, when we got several pages done, I would take it. And I had to go over to the state office building, the copier was in the department of finance and administration, and I'd have to go over there and have copies made and have it punched so it could be ring bound for him to use on the podium. And I think we, I don't know why he left it until the last minute, and why he wanted to write it himself, but he wrote most of his own speeches. Anyway, so I'd run over and get those few pages copied and come back and do some more typing, run over and get those few pages. And, but when we, when he left, he had his little book all, two or three copies, some for the press. And he had his little book all ready and he left, and he went sweeping down the corridor past our office and he never even looked our way. And Mary Dearborn was furious because he didn't stop in and thank us for. We stayed until about seven o'clock to get it done, and she was furious to think he didn't stop and thank us. But that was not him. He just, I don't know, he couldn't seem to thank you for extra things. I'm sure he appreciated them, but he just… I remember Dick McMahon said one time, "He only remembers the names of people that are important to him."

And, but he was very nice to us, and they quite often would have us over to the Blaine House for some, a drink or some hors-d'œuvres after work. Between the time that we got through work and that we would go home, we'd go over to the Blaine House. And they had, at that time they used

to have legislative dinners, luncheons. And they would, they'd group the counties, if it was a big county that county might have a day of its own, but if, the small counties, they'd group them. And then the legislators and their families, their wives would come and they'd have a luncheon for them at the Blaine House. And we were always invited to go over to the luncheons. We were supposed to sort of act as hostesses when we went over to the Blaine House for lunch, and I always liked that. They were very nice to us personally and it was a very, it was a great, really a great place to work.

MR: Who were some of the other people on the staff that you worked closely with? You mentioned [Marjorie] Marge Hutchinson?

AM: Marge was the head secretary. And then there was this Marianne Dearborn and Elsie Bowen, Joan Williams and me.

MR: Was Doris Cyr, I think that was Marge's sister, Doris Cyr?

AM: She wasn't there at any time that I was there. She must have come after I got through.

MR: So what was, first of all, what was Marge like?

AM: She was great. She was a beautiful lady, tall, very regal looking. Beautiful lady, hair always done just so and dressed beautifully, and very efficient and very intelligent. She had worked for him in his office before, when he was an attorney; before he came in as governor, she had been his secretary. And she was, and she, she always kept things going; there was never any upheaval, never any. Nobody ever got mad at anybody or, of the staff members, the ones that were there.

I believe that's the only ones I worked with were Joan and Elsie and Marianne. I can't remember that there was anyone else on the governor's staff while, at any time that I worked on the staff. And she, once in a while Marianne would get upset about something. Elsie was, she was a very, very good secretary. And once in a while Marianne would get upset with Elsie for some reason or other. And, Elsie wanted something and Marianne wanted something and Elsie got it. So Marianne said to me, "It's just that goddamn Elsie Bowen getting her own way again." And yet Marge never, she never made a big issue if there was any, any little trouble between two of us, you know. She never made a big issue out of it, she just sort of let it resolve itself and it always did. That's about the only time I can remember anything definite was the time that Elsie won a point over Marianne and Marianne said, "It's just that goddamn Elsie Bowen getting her own way again." We were, we worked together well and liked each other.

MR: And what were, you mentioned that you got to go over to the Blaine House sometimes. Did you get to know Muskie, kind of more the personal side of Muskie there? Was he, what was he like when you were over there, (*unintelligible phrase*)?

AM: Very jovial, just jovial and a very good host. It was just like, just like visiting anybody else, you know, as if I'd gone to the house next door. It wasn't considered any great big deal at all. They'd just have us over there because, I think because they appreciated the fact that we all

were loyal and worked hard. And it didn't happen every week or anything, but, and they always had a Christmas party as I remember it, and gave us Christmas presents.

And Floyd Nute was then. Floyd had a big drinking problem, and he was there then, so they always were a little bit cautious about Floyd. There was always the feeling that Floyd ought not to have too much to drink when he was there. Floyd told the story that one time Floyd was traveling with the governor on some trip and he ordered ham and haddock for breakfast. And the governor looked at it and said, "Are you going to eat that or did you just eat it?" He was pretty witty. He could, and this has probably been told by a lot of people, but he could look at a page and he had read it. You know, like, if that page was in front of me and I looked at it, he would, he could just sight read a whole page at a time. It was a very good experience working in the governor's office and I liked all the people I met, and I wish I could remember the names of more of them, but.

MR: Did you get to know Jane at all, Jane Muskie?

AM: Not the way Joan Williams did. Joan became really friendly with her. And Elsie became more friendly. I don't think I worked there consistently enough to, you know, I would work a few months. And then I'd want to go on a trip or something and so I'd not work there for a few months. And then I'd go back and work a few months. And so I never got to know her as well as the others did, but she was very, very nice. She didn't come in the office very often, but when she did she was always very cordial to us and she was, she was a good first lady.

MR: I was wondering if you, you mentioned a couple of times, or at least once, Ed's temper. What were some of the encounters you've had with that, was that in connection with you or observing it with someone else that that came out?

AM: Ed Schlick, or Ed . . .?

MR: Ed Muskie.

AM: That's the only time that I ever witnessed. I know that he did have, I know only by hearsay, that he did have a tremendous temper. And then people, the governor would get all these gifts and, just things coming through the mail. And one day he got a dozen golf clubs, and Maury was a big golfer and Maury hinted and hinted that he'd like to have the golf cl-, balls, not clubs. And Maury hinted and hinted that he could use those and he'd like to have them. And the governor, there wasn't, he wasn't angry with this at all but he just said, "No way. They were sent to me, buy your own golf balls." But the only time that I ever, and I didn't witness the hurling of the ashtray, it was only talked about. But he just had the reputation. I never actually witnessed it myself, but he had the reputation of having quite a temper.

One other time that Ed Schlick displayed temper was that, we were getting out something and I was typing just as fast as I could type and he was copying the things as fast as he could get them copied. This was when we were at the headquarters, and I made a mistake, a typing error. And because it was late at night and because he was tense and irritable, he made quite an issue of the fact that I had made a typo. And I really didn't think, anybody was entitled to an occasional typo.

So when he criticized me for it I said, “Don’t you ever make a mistake?” And he was walking away from me down to the other end of the building. And he told me later that he said, “Nope,” under his breath. And if I had heard him, if he’d said it loud enough so I heard him, I think I would have slung something at him at that point. But I didn’t even hear him, so I didn’t. I, I think that’s about the only other time.

And one time somebody used a palette knife, which is a very, he paints, and they used a palette knife for, to open a can with and it, of course it bent it. And he picked it up and he said, “Who did this?” And nobody answered. So he kept going and walking around and around and around with this here, “I’m goddamn mad about this, I’m goddamn mad about this.” But it didn’t fix his palette knife at all. Those are really the only times I ever saw him get angry. I know there’s times he’d been angry, but he never would express it.

And as I say, I only know Muskie’s, that Muskie had a temper, by reputation. At the time that he, I guess I said this, about the time that he went to, yeah, I know I told you this, about the time that he had to report for the senate, there was two or three days between the time that he got through being governor and had to be sworn in in the senate, that I worked for Bob Haskell. I lived closest to the office and Joan lived in Waterville, and Marge lived in Waterville, and Elsie lived in (*name*). And nobody wanted to come up and work. And I lived in south Gardiner, which was ten miles. So I went in the office those three days and just wrote a few letters for Haskell and, just the idea that there was somebody in the office.

MR: Did you also work under Governor Clauson?

AM: Yes, he was really a dear old man. He just was really, I’m not sure he was governor material, but he was a dear man. It seems as if I’m saying a lot of negative things and I don’t mean to, but Governor Clauson would come, the, I had the little office just outside. The governor’s office used to be on the third floor of the State House, and the senate was here, and there was a corridor, and the governor’s office was at the end of the corridor. And over here, opposite the, across the corridor from the senate was the executive council room. And then outside the executive council room was a little office; that was my office. And behind the door there was a little stand with a coffee pot and coffee and sugar and powdered cream and tea bags and stuff. And Clauson used to come in and make his own cup of tea or make his own cup, I think there was instant coffee, and he’d make his own cup of coffee. And, he was just sort of a Santa Claus type man in my mind.

MR: And did you continue to work through, I think, correct me if I’m wrong, was it Governor Reed after Clauson?

AM: Reed, yeah. I think I stayed on just a few weeks after we’d, until he got a permanent staff, you know, and just.

MR: So those were the four governors you were talking about at the beginning of the interview? Muskie . . .

AM: No, let’s see, there was Muskie and Clauson and Haskell, (*unintelligible word*). There was

just, and Reed for a couple of weeks but I wouldn't consider that I worked for Reed really.

MR: So you didn't, probably in a couple weeks you didn't really get to know him too well, so.

AM: No, but he had been president of the senate, so, he was a typical Republican.

MR: What would that be like?

AM: Well, sort of prissy and their nose curled up a little bit. I have nothing against Republicans, like Pete Damborg and Brooks Brown and Curt Caison were all Republicans and they were just regular people. But some of the Republicans were definitely, the Republicans were very conservative and sort of prissy, you know. But then on the other hand, a lot of them weren't. Dick Berry, as Republican as he was, after the legislative session was over and he went out fraternizing with the Democrats. And socially he liked the Democrats better than he did, but politically he liked the Republicans.

MR: Okay, I guess just a couple other names, people maybe you got a chance to work with or know. George Mitchell do you know at all?

AM: I knew Mitchell in, oh, just like, he would, might be the guest speaker at the J-J dinner or, I'm not sure. At the time that I worked for the party years ago. I think he would have recognized my name, you know. But I'm not sure that if you was to say something to George Mitchell about Ann McPherson, I'm not sure that he would be able to put a face to the name. And he might remember the name, but he probably couldn't really describe me or identify me. And I think if I were to meet him that he would probably remember me, but we wouldn't really be buddies and have anything much to talk about. We'd just say, it's good to see you and how are you and that sort of thing.

But I have great admiration for George Mitchell; he's gone a long way. He used to, there was a Jane Callan Kilroy who was, she always wanted to sing the Star Spangled Banner at the J-J dinner. And her voice left a lot to be desired, and she was George Mitchell's aunt. And one time she, anyway. Ed was telling a story about Jane Callan Kilroy and her singing the Star Spangled Banner, and at the table, she was a member of the state committee too, and at the table it turned out that she was seated beside Dana. And after the dinner was over Dana said to Ed, "If you ever seat me next to Jane Callan Kilroy again, you're fired." And so Ed was, they were laughing about Jane singing the Star Spangled Banner, and who was he telling it to but George Mitchell. And we all knew, yeah, so he's telling George, started to tell George Mitchell about Dana, what Dana said, and I'm tugging on his coat, you know, in the back, trying to get him to change the subject. And he got right to the point where he was going to say Jane's name and he just veered off and put somebody else's name in there, because we wouldn't want to, you know, hurt George Mitchell's feelings or say something about his aunt to him. That was a funny little incident about George Mitchell that I remember. Do you have any other names that you can think of?

MR: Just a couple, maybe Ken Curtis, who you did mention a while ago.

AM: Yeah, he became, we became very friendly with him, he and Polly, and used to go to the

Blaine House when Ken was there. And there was Lynn Ross, who was quite a, quite influential during Curtis' administration. Jo Gaccetta, Clyde Bartlett, they were, they didn't hold any offices, but they were Democrats and did a lot of work behind the scenes. And Jo [Josephine] Gaccetta was, managed Ken Curtis' campaign and was head secretary when he was, while he was governor, she was head secretary. She now lives in Portland.

MR: And what was Ken Curtis himself like, maybe professionally or personally as you got to know him?

AM: Just a great guy, just, fun and witty and fair, just, you know, just really a great guy. And Polly was very, you know, just very down to earth. And they told that one day she, like these things I don't, I didn't hear her say it, it's just from hearsay, that she, he went home for lunch and. They were like two kids sort of, and, even though they had the two daughters. And so she, I guess they might have been having words about something until she said to him, "Oh, go on over to the State House and play governor." They were just cute people.

MR: Okay, I'm going to flip the tape actually.

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

MR: This is the first side of the second tape of the interview with Anna McPherson on August 4th, 1999 down in Wiscasset, Maine. And could you tell me about Governor Longley, you mentioned off the tape was a personal friend of yours. What was he like?

AM: Well, he was a person who was here, there and everywhere all at once. And we knew, I didn't know him in connection with his being governor, but I knew him personally at that point. And I had the publication relations business and had an office on Cony Hill in Augusta. And he would come into the office at noon. And he, we had, oh, we had anywhere from five to fifteen people working for us, depending on how our work load was. And we'd hire people temporarily and let them go, we probably had five that stayed all the time. And Gov. Longley would come in and he would say, "What do you want for lunch? What do you want for lunch? What do you want?" And somebody would write it down and he'd have them go over to Mike's, which is across the road, and bring all this food back. And he'd sit down and eat with us and he just . . . .

But he was, before he became governor, he was in charge of survey where different companies loaned people, loaned some of their top people to do a study of state government, and it was called a cost management survey. And, I got the name of the one that I worked on for Muskie, I got that confused with the one that we worked on for Longley, but I think Longley's was called a cost management survey. And as I said, companies like Blue Cross\Blue Shield or different banks would loan their, some of their top people, one of their top persons, to work on this survey. I think it was a twelve-member team that they had, and they were surveying state government to try to find places where they could be, could economize and save money for the state. So Longley hired our firm to sort of facilitate this and attend their meetings and get out bulletins for them or look up, do research for them, or whatever they asked us to do. And then at the end of this survey they came up with a list of recommendations as to how the state could save

money. And one of the things that they came up with was that no one of the state departments could hire an outside PR firm, and we had accounts with probably half a dozen state departments. That meant that one day we were quite, our company was quite prosperous, and the next day after this, they made these recommendations that none of the departments could have an outside, they had in house PR people, but they also contracted with us to do PR for them. And Longley's survey said that they couldn't hire us any more.

So everyone but Dr. Fisher and Ruth Hazelton, the librarian and Dr. Fisher, the other departments just cut off our contracts, just ended our contracts, but Dr. Fisher and Ruth Hazelton continued them until they expired. And we always sort of laughed tongue in cheek with, about the fact that Longley was our personal friend but it was he who was more or less responsible for the demise of our business.

And then Ed went to work in Longley's office, but he, and he was very generous, he did a lot of things that nobody was aware of. For instance, there was a couple of Vietnam families that he was supporting. But nobody was supposed to, the general public was not supposed to know this, you know, that he had, there were a couple of families in Augusta that he was subsidizing on his own. And he just did things like that. He was a very compassionate person, did a lot for many people.

As far as his ability or his legacy that he might have left as governor, he did save the state quite a lot of money.

But in my own opinion, I felt that it was at the cost of the next governor, that he, if a person got through, through attrition, he did not fill that position. And he didn't do very much maintenance on the buildings and things. So the next governor inherited some things that probably should have been done during Longley's administration. So that, so that even though he saved some money, it had to be spent in the next term. But as far as a person, he was very compassionate and the only thing I could say that would not be flattering to Governor Longley was that he was dogged in that if he got down on somebody, he was like a bulldog hanging on to something; he would not let go until he had, not punished them, but had . . .

(*Visitor interruption.*)

AM: I guess the last thing I had said was that the only thing I could possibly say that's not positive about Governor Longley, was his doggedness. That if he, if he, if for some reason he didn't like a person or for some reason took a, got the idea that they ought not do whatever they were doing. He was just dogged until he got rid of them. I remember Roberta Weil would, he, she was doing something on a contract basis outside state government. And for some reason he didn't like her or didn't like what she was doing. And he just shook her until she, like a bulldog would take some, another dog and just shake them and, until either she finally left or some reason. But that was his only unpleasant trait that I ever knew of. As I said, he was very compassionate and very nice to us and to everybody that worked for us.

MR: And, well this is something we were talking about a little bit off the tape, but if you want to talk about how you think the Democratic Party in Maine has changed over the years, and also

the Republican Party for that matter, (*unintelligible phrase*).

AM: Well, I don't truly think that I'm much of an authority on that because I, after I got through, as, with the party, with Ed being executive secretary and me his secretary, I really haven't had an awful lot to do. But I think basically each one has become more serious and there's not the frivolity in the State House that there was at one time during the sessions. They just, they just sort of keep their noses to the grindstone and try to get their work done and leave. And I, I'm not that political any more. I don't really think I was a true politician. It was more that they were jobs that I had and I liked the jobs and I could do them. And at the time I was doing them I [*sic*]. I am still a Democrat but I don't attend functions and take much part in them any more. Like a lot of people have sort of dropped out, the people of my generation that I knew when we were in the, when I was in the legislature and they were too. We've just sort of taken a back seat and other people have taken over. And I haven't kept up with the times. I think if you interviewed Ed, when you interviewed him, if that question was asked of him that he could give you a definitive answer as to what the changes are in the party. And the only one I can come up with is that they've become more serious and just get their work done and go home.

MR: Okay, well I guess just a final question about what you think Ed Muskie's legacy was for the state and state politics?

AM: He just, I don't know how to express it, but I have the utmost praise in my mind if I did know how to express it. That he was the, he just turned the Democratic Party around and he made the Democratic party. He's just somebody that Maine can be very proud of. He gave us, I don't know how to, I guess I just can't answer it very intelligently other than that he was great and he did leave a great legacy. To name specific things, to witness the fact that, like the federal building in Augusta is named for him and you people are doing this project at Bates, and I think that speaks for itself. That he was one of the greatest people Maine has had up to, in my opinion.

MR: Okay, well is there anything else that you'd like to talk about that we've maybe haven't gone over or missed?

AM: No, I really can't think of anything. I think we've gone a little bit far afield at times, but.

MR: Well, it's been great though, so thanks a lot for your time.

AM: I've really enjoyed doing it and I wanted to do it. And I just never could get it together to get a time, you know. And it was way last spring when I first started talking with Andrea and I asked the head honcho here at the school if it was all right to meet here. And the reason I wanted to meet here is that I have a funny little old fashioned house that's not, it's not kept very, my housework is not always kept up to date at this point. And so I thought if I meet here I won't be embarrassed.

MR: Well, it's been great, though. Thanks.

AM: Okay, I've enjoyed it.

End of Interview