

Bates College

SCARAB

Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection

Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library

6-13-2001

McTeague, Patrick Neil oral history interview

Jeremy Robitaille

Follow this and additional works at: https://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh

Recommended Citation

Robitaille, Jeremy, "McTeague, Patrick Neil oral history interview" (2001). *Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection*. 256.

https://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh/256

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact batesscarab@bates.edu.

Interview with Patrick Neil McTeague by Jeremy Robitaille

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

McTeague, Patrick Neil

Interviewer

Robitaille, Jeremy

Date

June 13, 2001

Place

Topsham, Maine

ID Number

MOH 278

Use Restrictions

© Bates College. This transcript is provided for individual **Research Purposes Only**; for all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: The Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library, Bates College, 70 Campus Avenue, Lewiston, Maine 04240-6018.

Biographical Note

Patrick Neil McTeague was born in Cleveland, Ohio on September 25, 1937. His father served in World War II in the 1st Infantry Division, and his mother worked in a department store. He attended public schools and Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He participated in the ROTC program, and was a Government and Economics major. He earned his law degree at Ohio State. He entered the Navy in 1962 as a Staff Legal Officer. He opened a law practice in Brunswick, Maine, and from 1968 to 1974 served in the Maine Legislature and was a member of the Labor Committee.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Maine Legislature 1946 to 1949; Muskie's two terms as Governor; the 1960 John F. Kennedy-Lyndon B. Johnson presidential campaign (Muskie and Kennedy pictured at Elks Lodge, Brunswick); 1968 vice presidential campaign; 1977 or 1978 attempted ambush on Muskie about Clean Water Act at building trades meeting; environmental protection; Democratic Party in Maine; Uncle Frank, the Pipe Fitters Union; Robert A. Taft, election of 1948, Cincinnati vs. Cleveland, Taft-Hartley Act; Harry Truman; 1948 Democratic National Convention; college life: Miami Independent Association, anti-fraternity group; Young Democrats national intercollegiate debate: Right to work law, nationalization of railroads;

election of 1958 when Democrats gained in the House and Senate, Ohio governorship, major offices, Ohio legislature, Public Referendum on the right to work issue; 1968 election: running for Maine Legislature; Labor Committee: Municipal Public Employees Bargaining Bill; unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, minimum wage; Ken Curtis' 2nd term; Joe Brennan in the Navy; John Martin; Maine income tax; Maine voting for Richard Nixon, election of 1960; the Freedom of Information Act, OSHA, ERISA (retirement and health insurance act); comparison of Rumford, 1986 strike and Jay, 1987-1988 strike; Klu Klux Klan (KKK) higher membership in Maine than in any other northeast state; and BIW.

Indexed Names

Allen, Tom
Alpren, Israel
Baldacci, John
Baxter, Percival
Bonaparte, Napoleon
Brennan, Joseph E.
Burke, Tom
Carey, Richard "Spike"
Case, Jim
Chisholm, Hugh J.
Clinton, Bill, 1946-
Coffin, Frank Morey
Collins, Susan, 1952-
Cook, Gary
Curtis, Kenneth M., 1931-
Dorsky, Benjamin J. (Benjamin James), 1905-
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969
Feighan, Edward
Feighan, Michael
Fitzgerald, Buzz
Ford, Gerald R., 1913-
Gignoux, Edward Thaxter
Gorham, Ed
Harding, Floyd
Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
Jalbert, Louis
Jeffords, James Merrill
Joly, Cy
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
King, Angus
Lausche, Frank
Levesque, Emilien
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Lott, Trent

Martin, John
McGillicuddy, Dan
McTeague, Patrick Neil
Mills, S. Peter, II
Mills, Sumner Peter, I
Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994
O'Leary, Charles J. "Chick"
Reagan, Ronald
Richardson, Harrison
Snowe, Olympia J. (Olympia Jean), 1947-
Sweeney, Martin
Sweeney, Robert E.
Taft, Robert A. (Robert Alphonso), 1889-1953
Thurmond, Strom, 1902-2003
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972
Violette, Elmer

Transcript

Jeremy Robitaille: . . . is June 13th, 2001 at the office of Patrick McTeague on Union Parkway in Topsham.

Patrick McTeague: Union Park.

JR: Union Park. Jeremy Robitaille is interviewing. And to start out could you please state your name and spell it for the record?

PM: My name is Patrick, middle initial N, Neil, last name McTeague, I spell M-C-capital T-E-A-G-U-E.

JR: Thank you. And what is your date and place of birth?

PM: Twenty-five September 1937, Cleveland.

JR: And what are your parents' names?

PM: My mother was Mary Calletta Lynch, L-Y-N-C-H, and my father was Neil Thomas McTeague.

JR: And where were they from?

PM: My mother was raised in Cleveland, the near west side, Blessed Sacrament parish; my father came across the pond, he grew up in southeastern Ohio in a town called New Lexington.

JR: And what were their occupations?

PM: Well, my parents were divorced when I was young, about two or three years old, and my mother had been, when she met my father, a waitress/soda jerk. He had come back from the First World War, he'd served in the First Infantry Division. He was quite a bit older, I think about ten years older than her. She was about eighteen when they were married, and he was about twenty-eight. So my mother had been basically a waitress/soda jerk and my father had been in the service, he had worked on oil rigs, and later in his life he was a salesman for a soap, Lever Brothers I think soap company. And my mother, after they were divorced, came home to stay with the family in Cleveland with me, worked in a department store which she did for the balance of her active life until she was about sixty-five.

JR: Now, you mentioned earlier that you pretty much grew up with your uncle, right, in your uncle's family?

PM: Well, my aunt's husband, my uncle-in-law formally, was the male in the household, if you will, or the permanent male. When my mother and I first moved in with my Aunt Cile, who was my mother's older sister, and my Uncle Frank who was her husband, my grandmother lived there, my Aunt Cile had a daughter of prior marriage, my cousin who lived there and took care of me, she was a teenager. And my mother had a maiden sister, my Aunt Agnes who lived there, and two of my mother's four brothers who were in their early twenties also were still living at home. We had a total of thirteen people, and that was, in those days we first lived in what they called an up-and-a-down, a two family house, and there weren't enough, there were only two bedrooms and there were thirteen people so my mother and I, although we took our meals with our family upstairs, we used to sleep in the, what was the dining room area of our neighbors downstairs. People were very friendly in those days.

JR: You also mentioned to me that your uncle was politically involved. Can you tell me about that?

PM: Yes, he was a Dem-, he was active in the pipe fitters union and he was an active Democrat. My whole family were Democrats, we kind of assumed that that was the way to go, and I heard a lot of discussion. The one family meal that we always took together was supper. We ate breakfast sep-, I'm not speaking now when I was two or three, when I was eight or ten or twelve, at supper we all came together, absence a very unusual circumstance. And everyone talked over the events of the day, what had happened, what was going on, what was the scandal, what was the politics, who was with who, and so there was a lot of political discussion at the supper table. It wasn't all philosophical very much, it was about individuals.

JR: And which individuals do you, how do you, any specific examples that you remember?

PM: Yes, there was a congressman from the west side of Cleveland then who had been in for a long time. There had been a guy earlier who, before my time, by the name of Martin Sweeney, but he was either dead or out of office, they talked about him a lot. And there was Feighan, Eddie [*sic* Michael] Feighan was the congressman. His family owned a brewing company, were

quite well to do. The brewing company was called Erin Brew, and they used to sponsor the Cleveland Indians baseball games on the radio. But Feighan was a big, actually Feighan remained active in politics and in the house until I think the early mid sixties. He was chair of a committee on immigration [The Joint Committee on Immigration and Nationality Policy]. And President Kennedy changed the immigration system from a, what was called a national origin system, in other words so many from Ireland, so many from Germany, so many from Italy and so on, to a different system which was a reuniting families and a job skills system. And Feighan was still in the Congress during the Kennedy era, which was what, '61 and '2, '63? Yeah. So, and those were the, that was the top level if you will.

Then the local politicians who were, Tom Burke was mayor of Cleveland, later was [Frank John] Lausche who became Governor and Senator, was Mayor. But a lot, it was pretty local and pretty parochial, who was the local councilman and so on was quite important. Perhaps they would have more information on more local basis than they would either city wide or state and national basis. We knew we didn't like Taft, Robert E. (*sic* A.) Taft, and he was the senator from Ohio and quite well known. I had a newspaper route before the '48 election, I think starting about '47, and I always used to sit down and read the newspapers, they'd drop off a bundle of newspapers, you know, before you deliver them to different houses. And I was absolutely convinced that there was no way that Robert Taft would be reelected senator from Ohio in 1948, but he was reelected in a huge landslide which went to show that our supper table was not necessarily representative of the whole state. He had sponsored, in addition to being a Republican, he had other bad characteristics we thought. He was from Cincinnati which was the southwestern end of the state, Cleveland was the northeastern, they were quite different. And he had also sponsored a bill called the Taft-Hartley Bill which my uncle considered was, the characterization was a slave labor act. They hated it. It was, it made it harder for the unions to organize and to exercise bargaining powers.

JR: You mentioned going to see Hubert Humphrey as a child?

PM: No, I never saw him while I was in college. I went to see Harry Truman as a child.

JR: Oh, okay, okay, I'm sorry.

PM: And that was in '48, and I went with my uncle who took, I shouldn't say, my uncle took me would be a better way to say it, and we were very, very enthusiastic and all the people there were. Television was a real rarity, you might see it in an occasional bar or store where they were selling televisions, but the '48 election was basically about what you hear on the radio and what you'd read in the newspapers. Television was not very much then.

JR: Where did you attend elementary school?

PM: St. James.

JR: St. James. How about high school?

PM: Two years St. Ed's, and then I was invited not to return and I went to the public school.

JR: All right then. Do you remember like any major influences, experiences, anecdotes from that, your time?

PM: Yeah, one of the things, and one of the reasons I mentioned here at lunch before, that I think really had a big influence on me in addition to my family, which was big, probably the biggest, but we had, an order of nuns taught at St. James and our school was all white. People were mostly of Irish, German, some Italian, Polish heritage. We certainly were not mixed as far as Blacks and Whites. I remember at that time we were not quite into the ecumenical spirit even between Catholics and Protestants. There were some minor tensions, but Blacks just were not in our picture. We lived on the west side of the city which was entirely White, the Blacks were all on the east side, there was firm residential segregation. We were, we had a conflicting pull on us, we didn't know what Blacks were, they were strange, we'd see them, we'd go downtown or go to a ball game.

I remember we used to get the afternoon off on St. Patrick's Day, there'd be a parade downtown, and we thought the funniest thing in the world was to see Blacks marching or maybe riding on top of a beer truck. The beer companies would be big in these parades on St. Patrick's Day. So we were very narrow in our views.

On the other hand, the dear sisters who taught us, who were our teachers, really tried to impart upon us many deep values and I think they had an impact on us. Not that we always kept the values, but we were aware of them and we knew what was right even when we did what was wrong, or what was smart-alecky. And we knew, before I heard of Hubert Humphrey, and the reason I think I was prepared when I listened to his speech on civil rights, and President Truman was talking about civil rights, too. But before then I had been prepared really by the sisters who told us things like, every human being is a child of God, God loves every one of you. For you to dislike or hate, or to prejudge someone because they're different from you, Black as opposed to White would be a main difference, it is wrong. It's wrong, it's a sin. And that was kept in the back of our minds, not because we never committed sins but because we kind of knew when we did. Now, it wasn't a very practical thing because we had, we didn't live with Blacks, we didn't go to school with Blacks, or for that matter people that were significantly different from us in any way.

We used to think a mixed marriage, if you'll forgive the joke, was when an Irish Catholic married a German Catholic. So society's changed greatly and very much for the better in our whole country in those times. And as a child growing up I also, my youngest aunt, my Aunt Agnes was, she was, she read a lot and she thought a lot and she was a strong believer in what I call social justice as well. And, although her views weren't always popular even at our supper table, she would express them and I think that had an impact on me, too.

JR: And you say you went to college at Miami?

PM: Miami at Oxford, Ohio, yes.

JR: Why did you choose to go there?

PM: Well, two reasons. Number one, it was, the first reason I became interested in Miami was it was the furthest from Cleveland of a state university. Like most kids at seventeen, I wanted to get away. And secondly, they had an ROTC program.

JR: Okay, so in there you did ROTC?

PM: Yes.

JR: What did you major in?

PM: Government and economics. A lot of fun.

JR: Okay. Were you involved in those like extracurricularly, like in government or economics, or politics perhaps?

PM: In two, I was involved in the, we had a thing we called the Miami Independent Association. Miami was significantly a fraternity school; a lot of the well known national fraternities were founded there, and I was always a bit of a rebel, I didn't have too much extra money either. So we had, we organized the Independent Association that had some, we participated in student elections for the Miami student senate. We had some social and educational functions, but mostly it was an anti fraternity group, to be honest about it. To make sure the Greeks didn't dominate the student elections. I also participated in the Young Democrats, what else? And we had a national intercollegiate debate topic, you know, I think it was my junior year, 1958, which was the right to work law which I was gung-ho about, thought I knew something about. And I was a member of Miami's debate team which I enjoyed and spent a lot of time on it. We also debated things like nationalization of railroads, which I don't remember so well. Each year they would pick a different topic.

JR: All right. Were there any like professors who really had an impact on you for your time at Miami?

PM: Yes, yes. I would say Ralph Straits, who I had for freshman government, who was the Democratic chair of, I'm trying to remember the name of the county. I think it was called Hamilton County, but I'm not sure. Maybe it was Butler County [It was Butler County]. I get them confused. But anyway, it was the county where the college was located. He had an impact, he really had an impact on all the Young Democrats. The '58 election was a wonderful election from the point of view of the Democratic Party. It was an off year election, the Democrats gained very considerable numbers in the House and Senate, we controlled the Ohio governorship and the major offices in the Ohio legislature for the first time, and that right to work issue was on the ballot, a public referendum in the state of Ohio and we won that one real good. Better than three to two. We did a lot of organizing, the students were using door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, whatever, you know, all the standard political techniques before television; although TV was around by then.

JR: So after college did you join the service?

PM: No, after the college I got a deferral, didn't have to go on active duty, I asked to go to law school and they said "fine". So I went to law school.

JR: In Ohio State?

PM: Yes, Ohio State in Columbus, and then after I finished up and took the Bar in that, then I came in the Navy.

JR: Okay, and what year was that that you went in the Navy?

PM: I went on active duty in '62.

JR: Okay, and I think you mentioned that you were stationed here in Brunswick.

PM: I was. Wasn't that a hard place to be stationed?
(*Laughter*)

JR: Oh boy, great. What did you do during your three years, your time in Brunswick, like what was your job specifically?

PM: My official job is I was a staff legal officer for Fleet Air Wing Three [FAW-3], which was the over all command head. We had five squadrons, the air station, the Marine barracks, and let's see, something called (*name*) [Arctic Survival Training School] which was the survival school and certain ASW training. And I worked for the wing commander who was the general court martial authority, who had supervision over these other subordinate commands. My work was probably sixty or seventy percent as a lawyer, and thirty percent doing other duties. Mostly as a lawyer, thank God.

JR: And so after you left the Navy you went back to Cleveland for a short time?

PM: I went back to Cleveland for a short time, I left I think in November and I came back to Maine in March. I had changed in the time I was in Maine, I had never lived anywhere but Cleveland, except for going to school, and I never thought of it, but I really liked Maine, I liked the air station, I liked Brunswick. I came back and opened an office, and got involved in Democratic politics.

JR: All right, who was part of your original office when you opened, who else -?

PM: I was alone.

JR: Oh, just alone, okay.

PM: I was around the corner from three older lawyers who, one of them who gave me a manual typewriter for free. They all allowed me to use their books, and they all gave me the crummy cases that they didn't want. They were really pretty good to me all in all.

JR: Who were they?

PM: That was Leon Spinney, Arthur Dolloff, and Orville Ranger. It was in the, what is, we used to call it Canal Bank Building, it's a building over on Main Street in Brunswick. And I had a, my secretary was a person who was a senior at Brunswick High School, her name was Carol Potts, and she'd come in about three o'clock when school was out and work until about five, working on that manual typewriter.

JR: That's great. And so how were you involved with Democratic politics, like when you first came here, your first office?

PM: Well, the first office I ran for was selectman. Brunswick did not have a charter at that time, it was a selectman-town meeting form of government. I ran and I lost, which was a good experience. You don't learn by winning as the saying goes. I'd only been back out of the service maybe six months or something so I was real, I think I was a bit premature. And then I worked through the town committee. We had an active town committee, it really turned out the vote, and we did the very traditional but I think critical things to politics. Brunswick was a significantly Democratic town with a great history of Democratic party involvement, and a well organized town committee. They had a lot of card files and things like that, and they really, they did a good job not only for formal things like announcing you're going to open a headquarters, but in the two weeks or so before election they really did a job. They did the grunt work that no one wants to do, and they did it thoroughly and well. And that tradition has carried on significantly in Brunswick over the years.

Then there was a fellow named, there were two guys in the legislature, Brunswick had two seats in the house, and one of them died, Max Sawyer, and his widow Mrs. Sawyer, Mary Sawyer, ran and was elected. And then Charlie Lowery died, who was the second Democratic legislator, and his widow Pat Lowery ran and a Republican was elected, it was a special election. So in '68 there was an opening, if you will, from the Democratic perspective.

And there was a Democrat who'd been about seven or eight years, seven or eight terms in the Maine legislature by the name of Bert [Bertrand] LaCharite, sometimes called Ben LaCharite, who was kind of a grandfather to the Democratic party in Maine and he helped me and encouraged me to run. And I ran in the, we had a primary and I was fortunate there, and then the general election was pretty much a fore ordained thing in Brunswick. LaCharite, who was of French background, I'm of Irish background, told me that the Republicans had a scheme because I was a new guy in town, I'd been in the service and all that, that they were going to knock me off by running a candidate on the Republican side who was of French background. But he said not to worry because this guy had been a paymaster in the mill, and most of the French people in town knew that and they didn't like him too well, and everything would be fine. I also had what I called my four French grandmothers who helped me out and spread the word, and it worked well.

JR: Who were your four French grandmothers?

PM: Let's see, Almosa LeClair, Tony, Antoinette Martin, who's still alive, Lillian Michaud, and Cecile Pateau.

JR: O.k. So they were just

PM: They were active Democrats in the town, Tony later was in the legislature herself, she'd been on the town council and school committee. Almosa ran the book store, Almosa LeClair ran the book store at the college, Cecile Pateau worked at the college, and Lillian Michaud lived down here on Water Street. I think her husband Noel worked over at the Pejepsco Mill. But they were just good, solid, active Democrats who were respected particularly among the senior citizens in the French community. And if they spread the word it was very helpful.

JR: What committee did you serve on while you, or first of all, how long were you in the legislature?

PM: Three terms.

JR: Three terms, okay, so until '74.

PM: Yes.

JR: And what committees did you serve on?

PM: The first session I served on the labor committee. The second session, I was the assistant, and third, I was the assistant Democratic leader, and I don't think I was on any committees.

JR: Oh, okay, when you were leader, okay. And what do you remember from like your time in the labor committee, like major legislation that was brought up?

PM: Well, the biggest thing was, in my first session in the legislature on the labor committee, was the public employees bargaining bill. Historically, only the fire fighters had bargaining rights under a separate law. And this was called I believe the Municipal Public Employees Bargaining Bill. It applied not to the state or the court employees, but to the town, the municipal employees throughout the state: police, fire, public service, what have you. And so that was a big bill at that time. There were other bills involving unemployment compensation and workers' compensation, minimum wage. But I would say the Municipal Public Employees Bill was the biggest bill during the time I was on the labor committee.

JR: Okay, what, like who served on that committee with you during your time, like what other legislators who were influential?

PM: Well, one I remember, the chair of the, you know, Maine has a unique system for a bicameral legislature, we have joint standing committees. I call it half way to unicameralism, and it means that for the public and for the legislature you have joint committees so there's one report that goes to the House and the Senate, and I think there's a lot of efficiency out of that, and a lot to be said for it.

But the one person, there were other people, but the one I remember in particular is Wakine [G.] Tanous from East Millinocket. He was a state senator, Republican, representing upper Penobscot County and I think part of Aroostook County. And he and I weren't as philosophically disparate as our political party affiliation might have suggested, because he represented a paper mill town. In those times we had a lot of Republicans in the legislature who represented mill towns, who were Republicans for historic reasons, you know, the Civil War, fought the state of the union and all that. But they were really, there was a lot, there were a lot of Republicans at that time that were pretty open and moderate to new ideas. And the effective majority in the legislature for the whole time I was there, even though on paper it was Republican.

But Ken Curtis, a Democrat, was governor. He had really learned to work well with the legislature, particularly in his second term. And we had a lot of moderate to progressive Republicans so that much of the legislation, whether it was labor, environmental, civil rights, taxation, education; the operating majority in both the house and the senate was almost all the Democrats and I'd say perhaps twenty percent of the moderate Republicans. That used to drive the Republican Neanderthals nuts.

JR: Would you say that Ben Dorsky was another one of -?

PM: Ben was the president of the Maine AFL-CIO from the mid-thirties, and he was a well established old warrior with a gruff exterior and a kind heart; an enrolled Republican, by the way. And he, and that was part of the, there was no idea then that the labor movement was the alter ego of the Democratic Party. It was recognized that most Democrats were inclined to support things that were, favored Maine workers, but there were a lot of Republicans. There were a lot of Republicans, not only Ben Dorsky, but in the leadership of various unions. Some of the paper mill unions, Local 6 at Bath Iron Works had a lot of Republicans in it at that time, and likewise the building trades had a lot of Republicans.

JR: Now, can you think of any names, any particulars?

PM: Well, let me think of one, Buster Hawes was the president of Local 6, was a Republican. Walter Birt, who was the assistant Republican leader in the Maine house was a member of the Fireman and Oilers Union, ran the boilers at East Millinocket. There were a lot of people like that. It wasn't, the political parties were not so, the Republican Party in particular was not so ideological, either in Maine or nationally as it become. You've seen Senator [James Merrill] Jeffords of Vermont recently changed to Independent status. There were a lot of Republicans in Maine who were more like Senator Jeffords of Vermont than like, say, Trent Lott of Mississippi who I consider more "right wing" type Republican. And by the way, when I'm speaking moderate Republicans, Olympia Snowe is there and I would consider her a barely moderate Republican at that time; delightful lady, but barely moderate. I consider her pretty conservative. Susan Collins certainly wouldn't have fit under the standards for a moderate Republican that I'm talking about.

JR: Okay, what other, well, I remember earlier you mentioned like Louis Jalbert and John

Martin.

PM: Yeah.

JR: Tell me about them, like in your time in the legislature.

PM: Well, Louis had been there, Louis Jalbert had been there for a long time. And he knew a lot about appropriations and he focused a lot on the fiscal, the appropriation process because naturally the expenditure money for public purposes is a lot of what government is. John Martin was very intelligent, extremely dedicated young fellow, he's younger than I am. He had been in the legislature I think at the earliest age as it was possible, like twenty-one. And John had been there already two or three terms when I was elected.

The Democratic floor leaders, when I was elected, were Emilien Levesque from Madawaska, who had been president of the union and the paper mill, uh, Frasier, wonderful human being, still alive. Matter of fact, I hadn't known anyone from the St. John's Valley before I went to the legislature, and generalizations, even favorable ones, are difficult to uniformly justify. But if there's ever a man that was a saint, it was Emilien Levesque. Just a decent, honorable, upright person. The assistant Democratic leader was Joe Brennan, who I had known before because he had defended some of our court marshals when I was in the Navy. And, but I knew him under more favorable, friendly circumstances when he was our Democratic assistant leader in my first term. So both Emilien Levesque and Joe Brennan left, and John Martin and I took their places.

JR: If we could kind of shift gears a little bit and just talk about your work with the labor movement and this law firm. First just kind of try and get like a general impression from you of like, of how labor has influenced politics or vice versa in Maine, kind of start there.

PM: Well, the idea that I think we tried to espouse in Maine, and even though I'm talking about '68, and of course Senator Muskie was the ultimate subject we're going to talk about, had already been, what, eight years or so in the U.S. Senate. Indeed, that year he was our vice presidential candidate with Hubert Humphrey. But Muskie had set the tone in Maine. Maine was never the same after Muskie's governorship. The state was opened up. This inward looking, backward looking attitude had fundamentally changed. And beginning the change was the idea that Democrats were some type of pariahs. We were a minority still in the legislature, but a significant majority [*sic* minority], I'd say roughly forty, forty-two percent. I think we must have had, the house is a hundred and fifty-one, and I think there was something like sixty-four Democrats and whatever the math would work out, eighty-some Republicans so, you know, it was fairly close. And the senate was about the same proportions. And Muskie had made the Democratic Party respectable in Maine. The Democratic Party had historically been mostly a party that picked up jobs when Democrats were in the White House. A party that might have been significant in the mill towns: Lewiston, Biddeford, Brunswick, Waterville, St. John's Valley --- not a mill town but. But aside from that, even Portland was known as a strong Republican city. That's incredible when you think of it now.

There was also, Muskie had cracked the ice in Maine, not only in Democrats and Republicans but on the fact that government should be more than simply a night watchman; that we should

care a lot, for example, about the level of education and the level of education funding that kids got in every town in Maine. If you were from Cape Elizabeth, for example, and your town was well off, you might say it didn't matter, that in those days the educational system in Richmond, Maine, Richmond on the Kennebec was very meagerly financed. Almost all dependent on the local real estate tax. And so not my first session but my second, we passed with two-thirds majority, it was essential to get the two-thirds, the Maine income tax. And it was sustained by the people in Maine in referendum by over two to one. Just imagine that. The people voted more than two to one to impose an income tax on themselves because they felt it was needed for the benefit of the state, significantly for education, but for other things, too.

So it was a time of change and ferment, very much so. You know, some people think that Maine is in some ways eight or ten years behind the national norms. Maybe we are in some ways, although I think the nation could emulate us in many ways and they'd be better off, too. But I think on the political flow at that time, you remember John Kennedy did not win in Maine, Richard Nixon won in Maine. But Maine was beginning to make up for it in the mid-sixties and the seventies, and Ken Curtis was a progressive governor in many ways. And having the governor's office gives you a chance to set the legislative agenda, which he did. And he had really developed an attitude of trust and mutual respect with a lot of Republicans in the legislature. So, that it was realistic to think that many of the goals that he had, government reorganization, which sounds terribly dull and structural, was another reform that Curtis really pushed. Environmental, I mean Maine did pretty good for a small poor state in the environmental field. The reason we did was because we had progressive leaders, including Ken Curtis, to push it. Including some Republicans like my friend Harry Richardson, so progressive Republicans would never nominate him for governor even though he probably would have won.

JR: Yeah?

PM: But there was a lot of ferment in the air. There wasn't the belief about getting government off our back. The feeling was more, according to Abraham Lincoln's statement, government should do, we should do together as a Democratic government what we can't do as well alone. There was more of that thrust. It was an activist legislature, and we believed in an activist government. You know, we forget that before, in the national level at this same time, we were of course getting the environmental laws, Senator Muskie played a tremendous role. But we were also passing laws like the Freedom of Information Act, like OSHA, Occupational Safety and Health Act, like ERISA which is the retirement and health insurance act. We didn't, probably, it's sad to say but the Nixon administration and the Congress during that time was in my opinion more progressive, or less reactionary at least, than any administration since then, and frankly I would include the Clinton administration.

I think on economic issues, not perhaps out of belief but out of the way the politics were, there was better legislation passed during the Nixon years, Nixon-Ford is probably is a better way to say it, than during the Clinton years. Now I don't approve of many of the activities obviously of Nixon, or for that matter of Clinton, and I'm a Democrat. But what I'm saying is the whole spectrum has seemed to me to shift to the right so far that even a Democratic president can't espouse things, that a Republican president felt perfectly at ease with thirty years ago. Sign of getting old. I'll be sixty-four this summer, and I guess when you begin to lament things

changing, that means you're getting old.

JR: What role do you think unions have played in Maine, like in politics and with how labor is ?

PM: Well, the unions were the core of the Democratic Party. They provided activists, campaign workers, they passed the word informally. I mean, if you would take a paper mill or a shipyard or a construction site, well any place of public gathering, you hear a lot of cynicism talk. But overall when people go out and vote, they mostly know that their union is good for them, they mostly know that union wages and fringe benefits are probably on average thirty percent above the non-union. They, some people, by the way, resent that because they would like to keep Maine poor and unions aren't in the business of keeping Maine poor, they're in the business of raising the wages in Maine.

I've heard very prominent citizens talk about when Bath Iron Works was expanding, a guy that couldn't get anybody to work for eight dollars an hour any more. They're all running over to the shipyard and getting thirteen or fourteen. Well, it depends on your perspective, whether you think that's a good thing or bad thing. I believe, and I think the vast majority of Democrats believe that that's a good thing. We need more of it, not less of it. But, you know, you have to be a realist and say that if you're in a business which is keyed to low wages, you're not in favor of high wages because they cause dissension among your work force, as well they should. We haven't talked much about Ed Muskie.

JR: Oh, we're getting to it.

PM: Okay.

JR: Don't you worry about that. We're really, for this summer project we really want to get a sense of labor and how it relates to Muskie, so.

PM: Well, I wasn't here when Senator Muskie was first elected governor.

JR: Right, in '56 -- '54, excuse me.

PM: But I've heard the stories many times, about when he first went to the legislature. I think there were eighteen or nineteen, out of one hundred and fifty-one, Democrats in the house, they used to talk about caucusing in a phone booth. To put people in pigeonholes, whether by labor affiliation or that, is artificial. Everybody, all of us are complex people. We belong to a lot of organizations, have a lot of different sometimes conflicting beliefs and values, but I would look at it this way. The Maine Democratic Party was built on three historic bases. Remember (*Latin phrase*), did you take Latin in high school?

JR: I didn't.

PM: No -- (*Unintelligible phrase*), but truly, and maybe we'll find a four because a four legged chair is more stable. But really, the mill towns and mostly people of French-Canadian

background were the essential core, were and are I believe, the essential core of the Democratic Party in Maine. And that was mostly but not entirely in certain geographic areas. Secondly, it was labor. A lot of overlap, but far from total. As I mentioned to you when we were talking before, when you go into paper mill towns, or maybe I haven't mentioned this. In the sixties in Brunswick, on Main Street, the people that were retired that stood in front of the Kennebec Fruit and Day's Jewelry Store and so on and shot the breeze, very often that was in French, not English. That's pretty rare today, and I think it's, I think Brunswick is fairly typical of other towns. There's so many yuppies or retired yuppies in Brunswick, it's changed a lot. But that was a core. And people who had the value, who believed it was their duty as a citizen to go out and vote, and who would vote whether it rained or snowed on Election Day. And very often in those days we used to have something called the big box.

JR: That's right, yeah, yeah. Yeah, all Democrats.

PM: Okay, easy to count.

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

PM: . . . it's a mill town but it's only five miles from downtown. You notice things like this. I did, because fortunately or unfortunately, as a child growing up I was very conscious of ethnic origin and names. We knew what names were Irish, we knew what names were German, we knew which were Bohemian, which were Polish and that. When the war happened over in the Balkans, one of the advantages, or disadvantages, of growing up in Cleveland was I knew the difference between Slovenians and Slovakians. I knew that Croats were Catholic and used the Latin alphabet, and that Serbians were Orthodox and used the Cyrillic alphabet. Why did I know that? Because I went to school with the kids and you just pick it up. And some people would say because the Irish are, kind of in a sense they've often been fortunate to be the, be a vehicle or be the intermediaries for other people, and that was true in Cleveland, very true.

But anyway, what I noticed going there, say to Millinocket and East Millinocket, we decided to represent the unions in various places. First at Bath and then the different constructioners, different paper mills and that, what I noticed was the names. Instead of being all Yankee or all French, there would be a lot of Yankees and a lot of French, there would be Irish and Italian. And my friend Wakine Tanous, who I think is half Lebanese, and it was what I call an all-American combination, okay? And I noticed that there was less separation. People lived, even though there might have been a Sons of Italy Hall, I'm thinking of Rumford. Pretty much the people were all together, my impression was. They had, in the most natural way of all, they'd been together under the covers so that, you know, families were. I'm thinking of Danny McGillicuddy, I think his mother's French and his father's Irish and I mean, you know, this is America, the way it works. So I saw a lot of that.

And I saw that slowly, not immediately, not overnight, there was a strong Republican tradition. You got to remember, if you go back historically to the Civil War for example, the Republican Party was the party that was for the Union, for the freedom of the slaves, for decent reconstruction so that we wouldn't have had to have a civil rights movement in the 1960s, we

would have had it in the 1860s. And the Democratic Party was the party in a sense of disunion, and so you know, there were reasons that people, there were very strong values with Abraham Lincoln and the foundation of the Republican Party. I've got a bust of Abraham Lincoln over there, I got a bust of John Kennedy here, but because I identify the two of them. And so I'm saying it's very understandable, and also family pride in history. It's so much easier if you're kind of inclined some way anyway, and it's the tradition of your family, it's what you heard when you were growing up, hey.

Peter Mills, that I was in the legislature with, not the Peter Mills in the legislature now, he was a crochety old guy, he was U.S. attorney. He's still alive and I'd say that about him because he knows I love him. He was U.S. attorney at the end of the Eisenhower years, little turnover, and then he was a captain in the Naval Reserve. So I, this is Peter, Sr., if you will. He must be eighty-eight or something like that now. When we had some cases on the base, if there'd be a homicide or a death or something, different parts of the base, the U.S. Attorney's office would be involved. So I had gotten to know that Peter was a former U.S. Attorney who was in the Naval Reserve. And I felt that, I used to call him and ask him, and he knew a lot about that so I came to know him a little bit when I was still out at the air station before I, you know, was, well I was living in Brunswick but before I was in the legislature. Well then I saw him again up there. And I could see how the Republicans, not all, that's wrong, many of the Republicans absolutely hated Peter Mills. Why? Because he was a Republican, he was a Yankee, he was a Wasp, but he was an independent thinker, he was a decent and humane human being. Crochety as hell on the outside, you know, but for example, Peter Mills was a very strong supporter of the Human Rights Bill. Some of the Republicans, not all, but some hated him for that.

Well, at different levels, different people, different families, guys who worked in paper mills, a lot of these guys were Republicans. Eventually, over time. Hey, before the strike in Jay in '86, Jay was represented by a republican in the legislature. The folks took care of that. You heard a lot of propaganda that the community in Jay was divided. P.S., the community wasn't divided, the people were united, management lives out of town, okay? The people in Jay were not divided, that's propaganda, you know. It's like saying the Civil War was not about slavery or something, it doesn't recog-, it tells a fairy tale about what happens. But experiences like that, and I use Jay as an extreme example. A lot of people in unions were Republicans until the Republican party finally got so rancid on these issues that they couldn't stand it any more. What was the essential difference, comparing two strikes in '86 at Rumford and in '87 at Jay, I think I have my years right, I might be off a year, both in western Maine, twenty miles apart, relatively similar communities, similar people, similar challenge. Unions lost both of those, workers lost both of those. At Rumford we had very little job loss, very little permanent replacement that stuck. At Jay we haven't finished dealing with it yet, and we're almost, well the strike ended I think '89. What's the biggest reason?

In one case Joe Brennan was governor of Maine, he called up the chairman of the board of what was then, I'm trying to think of the name, Boise Cascade over in Jay, and said, "Hey, this is a serious situation. I want you to send a fully authorized representative down to meet at the State House." Unions same thing. Was it a victory for the unions? No. Did we get our people replaced by people who came here to take jobs during strikes from the south or something like that? No. What was the reason? The reason was who was governor and how he was willing to

exercise the moral authority and the considerable influence of government over that. Do you think there's any Republicans left in the town of Jay now among those people? Hell no there ain't. Or Rumford.

So my point is that there was a gradual process. The sixties and seventies, it was a gradual, voluntary process. By the time of the eighties and the nineties when the Republicans nationally really became more extreme and more anti-worker in their attitudes it, it accelerated. I mean, you go from Ben Dorsky to Charlie O'Leary and Eddie Gorham, I mean, it's pretty obvious. On the other hand I would say Ben Dorsky was a Republican because when he started out the Republican Party was the only party where the action was. Famous election in Maine history was in 1924 or '26 [*sic* 1920 or 1922]; it was the election Percival Baxter was elected governor of Maine¹. I forget the name of the fellow that ran against him [Ralph Owen Brewster?], that action was only in the Republican primary. Democrats forget it, you know, you're not going to get a quarter of the vote.

The Irish community in Portland, which for historic reasons went back to Ireland and that, as well as things that had happened in America, is very sensitive towards the Ku Klux Klan, which was strong in Maine. There weren't many Blacks in Maine to go against, so the Catholics were used as a surrogate target. But the Irish community in Portland, which historically has been Democratic, was still not a majority community then, it was, you know, a minority, but pretty well organized and pretty communicative with each other. They all switched enrollment. They weren't going to waste their vote for a Democrat. They knew they had the Klan, Percival Baxter was a Republican but they considered him a decent and honorable person who was not a hater. He won the Republican primary, thank God, thank God for the state of Maine. You know we had the highest rate of Ku Klux Klan membership in the northeast?

JR: Okay, in the twenties.

PM: Yeah, the twenties. But what I'm saying is people, that's a dramatic example, but people will change if there's a dramatic threat and they perceive it. Probably what we've, what happened in Rumford and Jay is comparable there. It became untenable to be a Republican activist. And it became unrealistic to have Republicans represent mill towns and that in the legislature; just, you know, not going to happen. Well, so the second major leg is the labor movement, and what's happened to the labor movement? Well, it's a lot. You know the story of shoes. It's not unique to Maine, it's the whole United States. You know the story of textiles; pretty much the same. It's happened in my lifetime, a lot of that. It started in the forties, accelerated. I haven't figured out what happened to the what we used to call the chicken pluckers, but there used to be a lot of chicken packed in Maine, in Augusta and in Lewiston and Belfast, that's all pretty much gone.

Ironically all three of those areas of employment were historically low wage areas, and yet I think what the movement of those things prove is if you're low, somebody else can still get lower, whether it's South Carolina or China. Somebody will beat you to the bottom. Well, we

¹ Percival Baxter was governor of Maine from 1921-1925, winning elections in 1920 and 1922.

had, the good wage jobs in Maine had been basically in about three categories. We represent the unions in these categories and I have some considerable familiarity with them. The, I consider it a miracle that ten to fifteen years after the end of the Civil [*sic* Cold] War, that Bath Iron Works still has approximately eight thousand employees. Because when I first started representing Local 6, in I think 1968 or '9, they only had about a thousand or eleven hundred, and that was, the Vietnam War was going on then big time. They had, a lot of the destroyers and DEs from WWII were worn out, I mean they rehabbed them a couple of times, those ships, they needed new ships. The war's going on, not much gets done.

Here we are, peace has broken out, in 1989, 1990, Berlin Wall, whatever you use to mark the end of the Cold War, and we're building ships like you wouldn't believe. Thank God, God love the United States Navy, right? Because it provides good jobs in Maine and because we have a law that says that our ships must be built in the United States. Merchant ships, forget it. You know the only large country in the world that doesn't subsidize the building of merchant ships? Us, the United States. That's Reagan's economic philosophy, everybody else can subsidize the building of merchant ships, we won't.

So the end of the, the last chapter in the story is, we don't build them. The last time they tried to build merchant ships at Bath was the so-called railroad ship in '74 or '75. We'll never build any merchant ships as long as we have one hand tied behind our back, that we compete on an unequal basis. We used to think paper was perhaps, the paper industry, perhaps immune from this. It's a capital, not a labor intensive industry. When you had the Cold War going on, they didn't want to pay, you know, today a modern paper with say two paper machines, power production, everything, you're talking about a billion dollars. This is heavy capital investment. You might employ six or eight hundred people. Figure out what the investment is per worker. This isn't like setting up a shoe shop, okay?

So labor costs are relatively insignificant regarding the total cost of production. It's mostly the capital costs of building the paper mills. Secondly the costs for the wood, the chemicals, the energy that goes into the production of paper. And probably only third, the labor costs. But here we thought we were invulnerable. We made more paper in the United States than we used, we were a net exporter of paper and paper products. That's begun to change. First of all, although it's a very sophisticated business calling for highly skilled people, don't ever kid yourself, the Chinese and Brazilians and Indonesians can't learn the skills. They're as human as we are, they can study as hard as we do, they can learn by trial and error and they do. The idea that, you know, you have to have white skin to make paper is absurd on its face, it simply doesn't mean anything.

But even though your labor costs may be, I'm just going to grab a figure, it depends on the type product and paper you're dealing with, but say labor costs may be twenty percent, maybe fifteen percent. But nevertheless, if you can knock them down to two or three or four percent by going to one of these countries, you're saving ten or fifteen percent, it's pure profit, right? It's happening. Also, environmental laws. When they threatened us in Maine by passing laws in the Maine legislature around environmental protection and they said they'd go elsewhere, we didn't believe them, and we were right, and it was a false threat. But when they talk about going overseas, they're not going to close a paper mill immediately, but they are less likely to make the

continuing capital investments to keep it modern and competitive. So in ten or fifteen to twenty years, you got an old paper mill that isn't worth pulling off the machines any more.

Lastly, of course, taxes. Not that, not that paper pays too much in the way of taxes, but they can go to these other countries overseas that are corrupt, you pay hardly any taxes, you just bribe some big shot. End of story. So if you save ten percent on labor, environmental's pretty big, ten percent on environmental, maybe five percent by avoiding taxes, you can make paper if you can make paper twenty-five percent cheaper. And the United States is, and the Republican Party and too many Democrats buy this free trade. Free trade means that American environmental standards cannot stand. It means that American labor standards cannot stand. It means that what used to be the American ideal, with taxes on big business, successful and profitable big business at a reasonable level, those are gone. We'll tax the little people, we'll knock down people's wages, and we'll go back to polluting our air and water, and people.

So, as I look at the future, not two to three years but twenty and thirty years, and when I read these magazines put out by the paper industry, which I do, and I see ads in there for a paper mill manager, paper machine superintendent, maintenance manager, energy manager, you know, the four or five people that are the top dogs that run the paper mill. If you go over to these countries for three to five years on contracts, they'll send you home twice a year. You're going to train the local guys in how to run the paper mills. Will they be as efficient as us immediately? No. In four or five years will they be significantly the same? Yes. Except, we are then put into the position, if we want to, quote, "compete" we have to repeal our environmental laws, no taxes on business, and pay our people a dollar an hour.

Free trade is not free to the American people. A guy like Muskie, grew up in Rumford, he hadn't spent, he went to grade school and law school, he'd seen some of the world, he'd been an officer in the Navy. But he didn't buy this theoretical unrestricted free trade as being the greatest value because he'd lived life, and he knew, if you talked to Ed Muskie about stuff like this, he knew what you were talking about. When we talked to some people, Republicans, many of them, have what I call a religion. Capitalism, move it all as free trade and all that. It's like a religion, it's a theology. They don't say, "What's the consequence of what you do?" And a lot of Democrats will either buy into the Wall Street syndrome, or think it's inevitable, you might as well lay back and relax and enjoy it. Or very often are so interested in campaign contributions from big manufacturers and traders, they don't care about their people.

This is a threat to the state of Maine because if we, paper is an absolute key for Maine. Ship building we talked about. Construction, the good construction in Maine frankly is mostly related, the high wage earning construction in Maine, is related basically to paper mills, the power plants, big projects. If you don't have the big projects, by the way, that gas pipe line was very good when it came through. The spin offs, the power plants from this. But when we, quote, deregulated electricity, see that in California? Maine legislature followed that like lemmings off the end of a cliff. No real thought. We represent the IBW, CMP employees, the people who got severed and sent to other companies, who got pretty good additions to their pensions and some other benefits. But was there any real thought given? No. Where were those ideas concocted? They concocted them in Wall Street, people would make their money by moving money around. They'd never built a power plant or done anything like that in their

lives. Is that good for Maine? No. Because more and more, our basic industries and the economic decisions that affect us are made by people that have no ties to the state of Maine and no feelings.

Some of these paper mills, most of these paper mills were founded, like S.D. Warren, we used to say Mother Warren. I'm trying to think of the name of the guy that started the Rumford mills.

JR: Oh, [Hugh J.] Chisholm?

PM: Chisholm, right, you got it, Chisholm. A lot of these paper mills had a local origin. GMP was a Maine company. That's all gone. For a short period of time the shipyard, which had been independently owned within Maine basically, was, it was owned by Prudential Insurance. They didn't know a damn thing about the shipyard, they lost money by the bucketfuls. But, I fought with these guys, by the way, at different times, but at least Bill Haggart and Buzz Fitzgerald grew up in Bath. You knew them, they didn't want to look like shitskies in their own town. There was a little bit of restraint on them. When everything is run from afar, it's not too good.

So you might say, well everybody can go and become a stockbroker or a lawyer or a college Prof.; pretty hard. You might say, well we're going to go and make calls for MBNA, or tell people how to work their computers from Envisionet. Well, some of us can. But you compare those wages with the wages people make in paper mills and in the shipyard. Not happy for the grand old state of Maine. And this lament that I'm singing, it's proven by the fact that roughly over the last fifteen, I think it's roughly '85 to 2000, I could be off a year or so, we've dropped from twenty-six to thirty-seven in per capita income in the United States.

The critical issue in the state of Maine is, we have wonderful people and we've got a wonderful place. What we need is a wonderful standard of living spread equitably among our people. The labor movement lives there, Ed Muskie understood us in a, with his heart. He wasn't with labor unions, he was with working people. That was, and if the unions were for the people, he'd support them. But he wasn't some union pawn. He had his correct ties.

Susan Collins, Olympia Snowe, are they going to match Ed Muskie? Forget the, forget for a minute my obvious bias, philosophical bias, but just in terms of the ability to deliver. Regardless of what the people from Washington state, who edit the *Portland Press Herald* think, Olympia Snowe is gaining increased power in Washington because the Democrats now have a majority in the Senate. That was the article, a week ago Sunday in the paper, and I'm reading that stuff and saying, how, I'm trying to figure what's going on here. I am very glad of this, that Trent Lott is no longer, the senator from Mississippi is no longer the majority leader. And aside from that, I mean hey, those guys, you scratch and (*unintelligible phrase*). Boy that shows where their morals were lacking.

They had a program I was watching on C-Span the other day on Strom Thurmond; makes me sick to my stomach. Not because of his age, but because of his votes and work against the Civil Rights Bill. Does he hire Blacks now? Sure he does, because he wants to get reelected, he plays the game a little bit. But do I think people like that have the same type commitment to America that includes all people like Ed Muskie? No way.

JR: No way.

PM: I'm not suggesting, by the way, that either Olympia or Susan are segregationists, but they're not going to fight. They don't want to intentionally hurt someone, but the idea of some, the idea that the role of government is to restrain the excesses of capitalism, they would think is a very old fashioned idea. Ed Muskie would not. He knew it was a critical idea to making our country better and better and fairer and fairer. That's the history of the WWII generation and what they did. You know, the greatest generation? And they believed in, I mean, public service. One type of public service is like the guys that landed in Normandy and took the ships across the North Atlantic.

I had a cousin that was stationed in Portland during the war on a DE, back and forth for three, half way across, meet the Brits, and then they'd come back to Portland. By the way, he criticized and said, "You could never get a beer in Portland." It was so crowded during the war, they had so few bars, he told me. But, the people who did things like that, you don't do that for me, me, me. You do that for us, us, us and because it's right. We need a little bit more of the us, us, us in our society. And unions, imperfect like every human institution, not only the Democratic party but the church. Is the church imperfect? My God it is, God must cry when he sees some of the things done by the church. And all human institutions are that way.

I don't say, Muskie, I want to tell you a great story about him, and I'm jumping ahead with this story.

JR: Go ahead.

PM: I've always been really simpatico with the building trades because I was raised in it and I understand it. And most of the stuff about the building trades and labor law is very different in a practical sense than the industrial unions. Because basically the unions, the people work for the unions, the unions kind of run off the people for different employers. The unions run the training programs, the apprenticeship, they run the pension funds, they run the health and welfare funds. People identify with the unions there most strongly. The unions run the hiring and all, who goes to work, all this kind of stuff, so they're more powerful. People are tied to them. Okay.

The building trades would sometimes meet every week and sometimes every other week. Building trades is I think sixteen or eighteen separate crafts, all autonomous, but voluntarily associated together in something called a Building Trades Council. We call it the Maine Board of Trades Council. Some of them are, there might be the Greater Boston Building Trades Council or something like that. Okay, here we are in Maine. Of course, what do the unions want in Maine, the construction unions? Very simple - construction, you know. Why? Because that's the jobs. What's the job of a business agent with a building trades union? To keep his members employed, it's very practical. What happens to a business agent when there's eighty percent unemployment and an election comes up? He's usually out of there, okay? So it's a very practical arrangement.

I get a tip off about two or three days before a building trades meeting, we used to have them at

ten o'clock on Thursday up on Sand Hill in Augusta, the IBW Hall behind St. Augustine's Church there. I get a tip off that a very active lawyer-lobbyist from the paper industry has decided to launch a big attack, this is about '74 I'd say, on Senator, maybe '75, on Senator Muskie. No, no, it was after that because [James "Jim"] Case was in Muskie's office. It must have been '77 or '78. I get tipped off. They're going to invite, one of these jerkos, is going to invite this lobbyist to this meeting of building trades business agents, that Ed Muskie has been invited to for about two months. Usually it's an attaboy type thing, you know, we all love you and all that. And they're going to bushwhack him because they're going to say, "Muskie, because of this Clean Water Act you put in, Maine is going to have no more paper industry construction. You did this to us." And, "How could you do it?" This is their theory, this is what this lobbyist has worked out.

We found out about it. So I pick up the telephone and I call Jim Case, who was down there working for Muskie. I said, "Hey, they're setting up an ambush for Senator Muskie." He said, "Tell me about it," he says, "who's involved?" I named the guy. The guy's still in Maine, by the way, just say a large law firm in Portland, representing some paper companies, we'll leave it there. He's now moved into semi-conductor industry, but the guy's still around.

And so he got to this meeting. We had one guy in the building trades who I would say was not too smart to allow something like this happening, and he pounded the hell out of these guys for half an hour, and how terrible it was. And what he wanted them to do was when they met with Muskie, to become his spokesperson, basically say don't push this bill or weaken it or exempt the paper industry and all this stuff. Well Muskie is prepared, and you know he was a bit of an actor, too. But then, so was Abraham Lincoln, okay? Of course he knew it was, he would have handled it anyway but he could handle it better because he knew it was coming. He goes in there, he's loaded for bear, and Case comes out of the car, he couldn't restrain him, he wanted to kill these guys. He gets up there, he said, "Well, you know, there's some people who know who their friends are, and some people who trust their friends. And there's some people, unfortunately, are so naive they trust their enemies." You know? And then he went through and this guy was sitting there, let him have it. He used him like (*Unintelligible phrase*). (*Laughter*)

And of course he was right, because it was federal legislation, and we had the Cold War and heavy capital investment. They are so afraid, the big companies, and Wall Street, the stock market, are so afraid they're going to put a billion dollars in a paper mill and have it expropriated. Hey, I'd love to see some of these countries like China expropriate some stuff. Of course, most of it is small shit, it's like they're making telephones and baby dolls and baseball hats and, you know, there's no capital investment there, but they built some of those paper mills.

Muskie was a fighter, he knew who he was. You know the type of guy who's trying to be something he isn't and he's a little bit insecure? The worst thing that happens when they go to the legislature, and I think it happens also when they go to Congress. A person, I don't care if he's got degrees from Bowdoin and Harvard Law School, if he doesn't really know who he is and what his values are inside. He gets to you with contribution and with going out to dinner, and more than anything it's the prestige of the people who represent big interest in Washington, and to a lesser, much lesser extent, in Augusta. You see the personalities that are insecure are soon seduced, they actually get themselves in a, and I use the word seduced, they get themselves

in a mind frame where they become almost a puppet, and it happens again and again. And you know something, sadly, it happens not only to politicians, it happens to some union leaders, too. And people who are on the other side, they're intelligent, they know this, they can observe things just like you and me. You see, Muskie in that regard was like a rock. He knew who he was, he knew where he'd come from, where he was going, he knew what his values were and he knew what his duties were. That's what's unique about that.

Have we had some other good people in the Senate and legislature? Sure. John Baldacci's a good guy. Does he match Ed Muskie? No. Tom Allen is a very intelligent guy. Does he match Ed Muskie? I don't think so. It's not to criticize those people. It's to say that Muskie was very, very unique. I often wonder how much influence physical size has on things. You know, they say Napoleon was very short, Muskie was large, Abraham Lincoln was large. I think it's probably an advantage. It gives them a certain air of self confidence, whether in a room or speaking or that But I often think that Ed Mus-, I don't know this, I just speculate on it, that Ed Muskie's family must have given him a sense of self worth that made him impervious to these types of actions.

The last thing I'd say, and the reason I identified so strongly with this person, that is the, after my cousin who I told you about took care of me when I was two and three, grew up and all that, pretty much the only one that was at home all the time was my grandmother. And the poor lady, she put up with a lot of stuff. But, she had this philosophy, some people wouldn't agree with it: if I came home from school with my report card and I had some B's and some C's, no great grades, didn't matter. My grandmother, this was her philosophy, she would always tell me, my uncle would be on me a little bit, she'd always tell me, "You're a smart boy, Pat, you'll be fine, just stick with it." Somebody like that, a grandmother, mother or father or someone can give you so much feeling of self worth, you don't give a damn what other people think. You know they're wrong and you're right so you keep right on doing what you believe. Muskie had that in him, Muskie had that in him. You try to give that, when you're a parent. That doesn't mean you don't encourage them to get all A's, but you're trying to give them that feeling of inner self confidence that will carry them through life. And he really had that. So that's one good story I can tell you about it, the bushwhack deal they tried.

Well, one last thing I can say, this also happened to involve the building trades. After, I told you this a little bit at lunch, but it's the practical power of a senator, congressman, something every senator or congressman wants to do, dreams about doing, but truthfully over all is critically important when you come from a poor state. If you come from California, they're going to prosper no matter what, I mean they've got an economy bigger than Canada, what is it, fifth or sixth biggest in the world, thirty plus million people or something like that. If you come from a state like Maine, you always need to remember how fragile our economy is. And it's not evenly distributed either. When you talk about per capita in pay income, I mean you look at the southwestern coast, you look from Kittery about to Wiscasset, you look at the physicians and lawyers and bankers and corporate executives, doing fine, super fine. But then when you go not only to Millinocket, but you go to Dover, you go to Biddeford, you go to Belfast, despite MBNA, almost any town in Aroostook county except maybe Madawaska, you see how people, people need additional physical things. Education's a physical thing, medical care is a physical thing. They need money, and if a senator is able to do things, like Ed Muskie did, number one

the Clean Water Act, clean up the environment.

You talk about an alliance between environment and labor, you see Ed Muskie could make that alliance. You know why? Because he could deliver for both of them, and he cared to deliver for both of them. He wasn't so intimidated that I'm a thousand percent for labor, but when this lobbyist tried to set up a hokey deal to bag him, that he did, he punched his way right out of the bag. On the other hand, as I mentioned to you, he brought in over four times our proportionate share of the clean up money and the wonderful result is clean rivers and decent wages.

Now there are a lot of people who think that the way to help Maine, we can't ever increase the minimum wage, so the saying goes, although the governor [Angus King] did sign a bill finally, because it would make us uncompetitive. We can't have environmental laws because it would make us uncompetitive. We can't focus, we focus our economic development efforts as often, as giveaways for corporations who, what's the sense of giving money or a tax break to a corporation that even though they're going to create jobs, the jobs they create pay on average eight dollars an hour, and there's no health insurance and no pensions. We don't need eight dollar an hour jobs. We need jobs that are pretty steady, that pay pretty well, that pay a living wage, a family living wage.

I don't know how you feel about this, about whether women should be required to work outside the home. I think it's entirely clear, and this is so true that I feel funny saying it, obviously women, men, are, the common humanity is the essential thing. The particular gender is an incidental thing. If a woman wants to work, if a woman wants to become a Ph.D., if a woman wants to be president of the United States, or for that matter pope, it's a good thing. They are free people, they should have the right. And there has been discrimination and holding down and glass ceilings, and that is wrong. But if a woman has two or three or four children, and she wants to choose, or for that matter if her husband wants to choose, one or the other, to spend more time with the children and less time with work, particularly during the critical growing up time for the, she should have that right, the children should have that right, or the husband should have it, whoever's doing it.

But, hey, it was my dream as a child, my grandmother loved me dearly and I had more love than I knew what to do with, but I used to go down every night when I was a little one, to meet the streetcar and then change over to the bus, when my mother would get off and come home from work. I wasn't allowed to do it when it was dark during the winter, but in the spring and fall when it was light I'd go down there, because I wanted to see my mother, you know? A child should have that opportunity.

And many, not most, I should talk, by the way, here we are, we're a dozen lawyers and forty staff and all the staff aside from Rich Fisher, who's my son-in-law by the way, who takes care of the building. And Dale Dorr who's our librarian, a super guy, all the staff are females, and all the lawyers, with the exception of are, let's see here, I think I'm right, two, are male. Both the lawyers have, female lawyers have children at home. People should have that right. Society can't dictate and shouldn't try to determine whether people stay home or not. But, man, I am convinced that very often, I'm not speaking about the lawyers here, I'm speaking about the staff, I'm convinced, not always but very often, it isn't a matter of choice, it's a matter of economic

necessity.

My daughter, who left at noon, she's got three kids, she's filling in for my secretary Dee Dee who had surgery yesterday on her neck. She had to make a choice, when she had one child, she continued to work. My wife basically took care of our granddaughter, our oldest granddaughter. Then she had two, it got pretty hard. She had three. Edna's sixty now, Edna said, "Leanne", you know, so Leanne stopped working. We have kids, my son was in the environmental field in Washington state, doesn't make much money at all, but he's single, he doesn't give a damn. Rich who works for us makes a little dough, but not a lot of it. Kelly is in New Hampshire, he makes more money, but he's getting divorced and he's paying a lot of child support, too. My daughter in Denver, married a lawyer who really struck it rich, Republican, he's making money hand over fist. And I'm glad for all of them, but I see the, I see among these kids how much of an impact their economic standing has on their lives, and on their children's lives.

We've got probably fifteen to twenty percent of the people in this state who don't have decent health insurance. That's wrong, that's very wrong.

JR: Yeah, that's horrible.

PM: I should get to Muskie more. Throw some, how is it, he was an old established guy and I was a young guy. And he was a big shot, and I was a little pipsqueak. But he, the guy always talked to you like you were a serious person. He would listen to you like you were a serious person. And not always, but very, very often, he was able to, he took an interest in what you were interested in. It'll be a long time before we have somebody like him again.

George Mitchell - (*timer beeps*), hey, I've given you too much.

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

JR:

PM: . . . okay, let me think about that. Let's hold the tape a minute, let me put a little work on that.

(Pause in taping.)

PM: Bruce King, United Brotherhood of Carpenters. He's been active both in the labor movement and the political end of it for I'd say twenty-five years. See, Muskie went out in what, in 1980, right, so you almost got to get twenty, you got to go over twenty really. His office is in Augusta, he lives in Bangor, maybe it's Camden, Bangor area, and I think he's a serious guy both from a labor and a political perspective. . . . a real activist

Gary Cook -

JR: Okay, yeah, I've heard his name before a couple of times.

PM: Gary Cook has a couple of characteristics that raises some exposure to Senator Muskie. Number one, he's from Livermore Falls, which is close to Rumford.

JR: Right.

PM: Secondly, he was in his younger years, in the early seventies, he was the Secretary o Treasurer of the Maine AF of L, so he worked in the legislature and he worked some on Muskie, with Muskie through that, too. And third, he is now the regional, Region 1 vice president for the paper workers union, it's kind of, I think it's New York, Jersey and New England. His office is in Augusta. He lives in Livermore. It's now called PACE, not the UPIU, the name of the union is Paper Allied Chemical Energy Workers, so they merged with some other unions but it's all paper work. And he had, I think he's had exposure in a number of ways.

Let me just take a minute now, I'll think a little bit more. Another possibility in the Paper Workers Union would be Lucien Dechenes. He's from Madawaska. He's not that old but he started out, he got active in, and he's an impressive personality, got active very young, and he covers Madawaska and Millinocket and East Millinocket. His office is in his home in, these guys are what you call international reps, like they're full time in the union.

JR: Where's his office? Up in Madawaska?

PM: Yes, although you might be able to meet him, the reason I suggest is Millinocket or East Millinocket, it's an easier trip, you might be able to meet him there because he tends to be down there a day or two every week.

JR: Okay.

PM: Geez, a lot of the guys I'd really love to have you talk to on the political end unfortunately are dead. Oh, geez, here's one you should talk to if you don't have the name already. Floyd Harding.

JR: Okay, I think he's been interviewed, buy yeah.

PM: Okay. You know what we used to call him? Rasputin. He was a hell of a conspirator, he, what a, he was, he used to drive the Republicans in the senate absolutely crazy. Elmer Violette is dead. You know John Martin, you've talked to him.

JR: Yeah, I think we've got a couple of interviews with him; he's been talked to quite a bit.

PM: Let me think a minute and I'll - You ought to see if Cy Joly is still alive.

JR: He was mayor of -?

PM: Waterville.

JR: Waterville.

PM: He beat Ed Muskie. (*sic* Russell M. Squire defeated Edmund S. Muskie in the 1947 Waterville, Maine mayoral race)

JR: That's right, yeah.

PM: He was a Republican. I think he'd probably be, you know, he'd probably be eighty-five, I don't know if he's alive or not. Oh, you know somebody who you might talk to, he's still around, is Spike Carey. Richard Carey.

JR: Richard Carey.

PM: Richard Carey, Spike.

JR: Richard 'Spike' Carey.

PM: He was from Waterville, I think in more recent years he was town manager of Belgrade or Belgrade Lakes or something. But he lives in the Waterville area, he's in the legislature. Let me get my legislative book, and he's in the legislature, again, his health is so-so but not too bad. And I haven't talked to him myself in over a year.

Antoinette Martin from Brunswick, have you talked to, she would be, even though she was in the legislature in later years, I think of Tony as more of a local rather than a state politician, but with the Democratic Party. You know, in the Elks Lodge over here in Brunswick, they got a picture of Ed Muskie when he came in in 1960 with Jack Kennedy, that was a big deal. (*Looking through book.*) By God, Spike isn't there. Shows you how far out of it I am, I don't know who's in the legislature any more.

I think, Richard D. I think it is, Carey. And Spike and I ran against each other for legislative office, but he's still a hell of a guy to talk to. He would, I'm trying to give you people that were involved in the Democratic Party before Muskie became a senator. Have you hit some of those already?

JR: Yeah, we've gotten, like, we've definitely interviewed some of the older people who were involved in those first campaigns. Like, that's been kind of our priority in doing it, and now we're kind of expanding out beyond that a little.

PM: You surely interviewed Judge Coffin.

JR: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I think several times, I'm sure.

PM: You see, Muskie could bring people together, all the way from common to very intellectual to . . . Tony Martin is a wonderful person who has a lot of good common sense, and is no shrinking violet, but who basically spent a lot of her life, aside from having three kids, working in the Varney Mill here. You know, Muskie, (*unintelligible phrase*).

I was just thinking, you know, I got all these different decorations around here but I don't have anything on, well. It's hard to put yourself in, put your mind inside his brain. And just think about it, you know. The man was pretty uptight.

JR: Yeah. Okay. Alright, I think I've -

PM: Well, I'm going to ask you for one more favor.

JR: Okay.

PM: I'm going to ask you to give me a ride over the way home, if my car is ready.

JR: Sure, alright.

End of Interview
moh278.int